

Special Needs excerpt

*Connie fitting a partially made, very feminine prom dress on Omega. As Connie fits Omega, she keeps glancing out the window. The sound of a bus driving up the block. Connie now, hides behind the curtain and watches out the window. After a moment, she scoots quickly back to Omega and resumes the fitting. Pierce enters. He dumps his backpack, heads straight to the kitchen.*

CONNIE

Hey, honey.

*Pierce returns with a soda and a piece of cold pizza and immediately settles in front of the television, game system controls in hand.*

CONNIE  
(Loudly)

HEY, HONEY.

PIERCE.

Oh. Yeah. Hi, Mom.

*Alpha enters. He gives Omega and her partial dress an odd look and then quickly settles next to Pierce on the couch.*

OMEGA  
(To Alpha)

She wants some information.

ALPHA  
(Ignoring Omega, to Pierce)

The cave. We can get to it but we have to double back through the minefield.

CONNIE

How was school?

OMEGA  
(To Connie)

Get specific.

CONNIE

Hello? Did Mrs. Rasp give the test?

ALPHA

Get through the minefield and then we can move on to the next test.

OMEGA

*(Loudly)*

The test.

PIERCE

What?

CONNIE

The test?

PIERCE

Test?

CONNIE

The test. The test. Math. School. The location of today's skirmish.

PIERCE

Oh.

ALPHA

*(Frustrated)*

This is testing me. Let me rest. Let me fight.

PIERCE

Oh. Yeah. It was okay.

CONNIE

Okay. Now, to get me off your back, you could ask me how my day was. This is what people call having a conversation.

PIERCE

*(Moaning)*

Mom...

ALPHA

Omega...

CONNIE

What?

OMEGA

If you want to fight that battle, you have to finish this one.

Okay. How was your day? PIERCE

First you tell me. CONNIE

Oh, she's a wily one. A cunning adversary. ALPHA

I took the test. It was good. I'm good at remembering stuff, okay? Okay? PIERCE

*He and Alpha turn towards the television.*

Okay. Now me. CONNIE

Mom... PIERCE

Ask me. CONNIE

*Alpha throws himself at Omega's feet.*

When will this interrogation end? ALPHA

I am not interrogating you. You have to interrogate me. OMEGA

What? ALPHA

What? PIERCE

Ask me about my day. CONNIE

This is like chewing shards of burning, molten glass. ALPHA

How was your day, Mom? PIERCE

CONNIE

Thanks for asking. It was pretty good. I've almost finished this one. Only three more to go.

PIERCE

That's great.

ALPHA

This is brutal.

OMEGA

He must learn. He must learn to fake sincere interest.

CONNIE

Don't look away. I'm not done. Then I made reservations for the Sanibel Island trip.

ALPHA

Appease her. That's our only hope.

PIERCE

Cool.

OMEGA

He's appeasing me. Good skill.

CONNIE

With the appearance of your feigned interest, my motherly job is now done. You may commence nuking your brain cells with suspect computer games.

*Pierce and Alpha instantly focus on the game system. Jen enters, chucking her backpack across the room to land in the pile of shoes and boots.*

Hi, honey. How was your day?

JEN

Brutal. Agony. Felicia texted her mom during Spanish and not only did Miss Juarez take her phone-

CONNIE

-which is to be expected. It's against school policy-

JEN

-not done, Mom.

CONNIE

Just making the point that Miss Juarez-

JEN

Whatever! She grabbed it in the middle of the conversation so her mom now thinks Felicia was being disrespectful, which she wasn't-

CONNIE

-except to Ms. Juarez-

JEN

But Felicia's mom is this raging crazy woman who wants to kick Felicia out of the house! I told Ms. Juarez after class but she still wouldn't-

CONNIE

-I'm getting the gist. This has been going on since we've known them. Has Felicia considered speaking to her mom face to face? I know, I know. Radical concept. Communicating in person. Or the school social worker maybe?

JEN

If her mom kicks her out, can she live here?

CONNIE

What? Felicia live here? Um...no?

*Pierce and Alpha grunt simultaneously at the game screen. Connie waves Omega over to resume her fitting position and begins working on the hem. Jen eyes Omega.*

JEN

That is quite...elaborate, Mom

CONNIE

The girl wanted something special. I sketched it out for her.

JEN

It sort of looks like that character from Pierce's game. The Princess of Light and Goodness.

*Pierce looks up. Connie steps back and observes the dress.*

CONNIE

Oh my god. It does!

*Lights dim on Connie and Jen and a special comes up on Omega. Pierce, and now Alpha, watches her. As Connie and Jen continue to talk, their words are without sound. Omega turns and smiles at Pierce and Alpha.*

OMEGA

We can join forces if you make it to the top of Mount Sinai. But you have to complete the nine trials first.

*Jen turns toward Pierce and is mouthing words to him but he is completely focused on Omega.*

Make sure your lantern is filled and you have at least twenty arrows in your quiver.

*The lights begin to resume to normal level.*

I can't help you up the mountain but there will be others along the way who-

JEN

*(Looking at Pierce)*

-can help?

*Lights are now normal and Jen is looking at Pierce.*

Hello? Can you? So?

PIERCE

“So” what?

JEN

Mom!

CONNIE

What?

PIERCE

What?

JEN

“What”?! He won't help.

CONNIE

Pierce, help your sister.

PIERCE

With what?

JEN

With my math, for the hundredth time!

OMEGA  
*(To Connie)*

Did he hear her?

CONNIE

Did he hear you? *(To Pierce)* Did you hear her?

ALPHA  
*(To Pierce)*

I didn't hear her.

PIERCE  
*(To Connie)*

I didn't hear her

*(To Jen)*

I didn't hear you.

JEN

How could you not hear me?

OMEGA  
*(To Jen)*

You know how.

CONNIE

Perception is nine/tenths of the haul.

JEN

I know. I know. *(To Pierce, slowly)* Can...you...help...me...with...my...math... homework?

PIERCE

Mom.

ALPHA

She's being evil.

OMEGA  
*(To Alpha)*

She's merely a tough warrior. One to have in our corner.

CONNIE

Jen, that isn't exactly a way to elicit the response you want.

JEN

I've got this mountain of math homework. So?

PIERCE

Okay. I'll do it.

JEN

Great. *(To Connie)* So, can I-

CONNIE

-No!

JEN

You haven't even heard what I-

CONNIE

He's not going to do your math homework for you, Jen!

JEN

Oh.

CONNIE

Pierce!

*Pierce and Alpha are refocused on the game.  
Omega throws a pillow at them.*

PIERCE

What?

CONNIE

You *help* a person with their mountain of homework. You can't climb the mountain for them, okay?

PIERCE

Mom, I wasn't going to do it for her. I'm not an idiot.

CONNIE

I know you're not an idiot. You're the opposite of an idiot. I'm just saying-

JEN

-Hello! What does that make me?

What?  
CONNIE

Are you saying I am an idiot?  
JEN

It's not an either/or proposition!  
CONNIE

I just have trouble at math and he doesn't. Mom, I help him with stuff.  
JEN

I know. I know you do.  
CONNIE

What stuff do you help me with?  
PIERCE

I allow you to continue to breath.  
JEN

I accept you.  
OMEGA

I don't kill you.  
JEN

I defend you.  
OMEGA

I make sure you don't look too radically stupid, which is every day.  
JEN

I protect you.  
OMEGA

And I laugh at your stupid jokes.  
JEN

I love you to the ends of the earth.  
OMEGA

*MY* stupid jokes?! The queen of the knock-knock jokes calls my jokes stupid?  
PIERCE

*Alpha, intent on the game, pokes Pierce in the ribs.*

ALPHA

The two-headed serpent awakens.

*Pierce instantly turns back to the game.*

JEN

MOM! He's not finishing the fight again!

PIERCE

JEN! Do you mind? I'm fighting the two-headed monster.

CONNIE

No shit! You and me both. God, you guys make me nuts!

*Jen, Pierce, Omega and Alpha start to laugh.*

ALPHA  
*(To Pierce)*

She is fun when she loses it.

PIERCE

Mom, you're not supposed to say shit.

CONNIE

You all drove me to it. I cannot and will not referee every encounter, exchange and action in this house.

ALPHA

Thank you, god! Freedom.

JEN

But Mom, isn't that, like, your job?

CONNIE

No, it is not. I will not become the evil micro-manager-

OMEGA

-too late-

CONNIE

-who tells everybody how to behave.

OMEGA

I mean, that boat has so sailed.

CONNIE

You both are both old enough...I mean, Pierce, you're almost fourteen. Jen, do I even need to tell you?

JEN

I do know my age, Mom!

CONNIE

No, I meant-

OMEGA

She's just messing with you to rile you up.

CONNIE

*(To Jen)*

Stop playing stupid.

*Pierce and Alpha turn back to the game.*

And don't you dare look away from me, young man.

*Pierce and Alpha put the controls down but their eyes remain on the screen.*

LOOK AT ME!

*Everyone looks at Connie.*

*Silence.*

JEN

Um, Mom? What?

CONNIE

You both need to...um...if you both don't...um...

OMEGA

*(Prompting her)*

Micro managing.

CONNIE

Yeah! That's it. You both need to start negotiating life better or else I'll pack you both off to Sunday school again with Rabbi Gold.

PIERCE  
Mom, I already go to Sunday school with Rabbi Gold.

CONNIE  
Stop splitting hairs. I'm making a point.

ALPHA  
Which is?

CONNIE  
All of you...behave, do your homework yourself, be moral and quite bothering me. *(To Alpha)*  
Turn that thing off.

PIERCE  
Mom-

CONNIE  
Are you messing with me?

OMEGA  
*(To Alpha and Pierce)*  
I wouldn't mess with her.

*Alpha pushes a control button.*

ALPHA  
It's paused.

PIERCE  
It's off.

CONNIE  
It's on pause. I said off. You want me to do it? I'll be happy to unplug the entire-

ALPHA  
No!

PIERCE  
NO! I got it. It's off!

*The lights dim except for a spot on Pierce. Alpha shines a floor lamp or a flashlight on Connie. She begins speaking but no audible words come out.*

She's going on about...something. It is hard to hear. Hard to see.

*Pierce stares at her intently. Alpha begins plugging and unplugging the light or turning the flashlight on and off so every time the light from the light hits her, Connie can be heard. The rest of the time, she is mouthing her words.*

CONNIE

Responsible...

PIERCE

What does that mean? Response? Responsible? Am I supposed to respond? Respond to what? What does respond mean? Does she want me to respond to this? How? Am I supposed to smile?

CONNIE

...because without rules, ruling your own world, both of you....

PIERCE

Rules. Rulers. Something about me and Jen.

CONNIE

Okay? Okay? So? Yes or no?

*He looks at Jen. She leans into Connie's spot and nods furiously, indicating for Pierce to nod as well. He does.*

JEN

Absolutely, Mom.

PIERCE

Okay. Yeah.

*Alpha rises.*

ALPHA

Can we return?

PIERCE

Can I-

CONNIE

No. Homework.

PIERCE

I'm just going to finish this battle and then-

What did I just say?  
CONNIE

What?  
PIERCE

About personal responsibility?  
CONNIE

I have no idea.  
ALPHA

Um-  
PIERCE

CONNIE  
I JUST SAID IT WHILE YOU STOOD THERE NODDING!

*She struggles, resumes control and somewhat  
calmly, prompting him*

Following through. Committing to your tasks, without me having to remind you every afternoon.

Knock, knock.  
JEN

What?  
CONNIE

Come on, Mom. Knock, knock.  
JEN

Who's there?  
PIERCE

No. Mom?  
JEN

Jen, I'm not in the mood-  
CONNIE

Come on, Mom. Knock, knock.  
JEN

No. This is not the-

CONNIE

-I'll do it.

PIERCE

No.

JEN

*(To Connie)*

Knock, knock.

CONNIE

Who's there?

JEN

Warrior.

CONNIE

Warrior who?

JEN

Why are you fighting with us when we're all on the same side?

CONNIE

*(Laughing, throwing her hands up)*

You win! I give up!