

THE WONDER YEARS

"Our Miss White"

by

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Production Script

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The Wonder Years

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

1 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

1

Miss White's English class is in session. The lights are off, and she is showing to the class a film of Martin Luther King's 1963 "I Have A Dream" speech. Twenty-odd students pay varying degrees of attention.

THE SCREEN

KING

"...my country 'tis of thee, sweet
land of liberty, of thee I sing..."

MISS WHITE

off to the side of the screen, watching the film intently.

KEVIN

in his seat, watching the film. Then, his eyes shift over to Miss White.

MISS WHITE

brushing aside a tear.

NARRATOR

Miss White. I'd always liked her, thought she was a good teacher, and all that. But on this day, for whatever reason, my feelings for her took a quantum leap forward. Yes, this was the day, the moment, that Miss White stirred something powerful within me.

Miss White blows her nose loudly into a Kleenex.

KEVIN

smiles warmly at this.

WIDER SHOT

of the entire room, as the film concludes.

KING

"...free at last, free at last,
thank God Almighty we are free at
last!"

Miss White turns off the projector and flips on the lights, then
walks to the front of the room.

KEVIN'S POV

of Miss White, her face, as she speaks to the class.

MISS WHITE

Well, people...we certainly lost a
great man last April, didn't we?

She takes a deep breath, still obviously reeling a bit from the
emotional impact of the film.

NARRATOR

What was it about her that affected
me so profoundly? Her sensitivity?
Her warmth? Her intelligence?

Kevin's eyes, our POV, travel slowly down from Miss White's face to
her breasts.

NARRATOR

Maybe all of those, maybe more.
Maybe much more.

MISS WHITE

Kevin?

Kevin's eyes, our POV, shoot back up to Miss White's face.

KEVIN

KEVIN

Yes?

WIDER SHOT

MISS WHITE

Do you agree with Leslie, that this
speech changed people's feelings
about civil rights?

KEVIN

Yeah. Um-hm. Yup. I do.

Miss White smiles.

MISS WHITE

How do you think it might have
changed people's opinions? Anyone?

Kevin raises his hand.

MISS WHITE

Kevin?

KEVIN

I think it showed a lot of people
that America couldn't be as great a
country as they wanted until
everybody had equal rights.

MISS WHITE

as she smiles with warm approval at Kevin, cocking her head
slightly to one side.

NARRATOR

Ah, that "look." That lopsided,
smiling look that bestowed upon its
recipient all of the warm approval
one could possibly need to get
through life. It was as if she
sensed my feelings for her, and was
reciprocating in her way.

MISS WHITE

Very good, Kevin.

(to the rest of the class)

What other effect do you think this
speech had on people?

Kevin's hand shoots up again.

MISS WHITE

Kevin?

KEVIN

Well, I think that um, maybe before
that speech people thought of
Negroes as a group, you know, that
maybe they didn't like, but the
speech made them realize that the
Negroes are just people, and that
they have the same feelings that
whites do.

Miss White again reacts to Kevin with the "look."

NARRATOR

Two "looks" in one day. It was too good to be true. I was tempted to try for a third, but I didn't want her to pull a muscle in her neck or anything.

SFX: CLASSROOM BELL

In an instant, the students all rise to leave.

MISS WHITE

People? I haven't dismissed you, have I?

The students all sit reluctantly back down in their seats.

MISS WHITE

Um...today is the last day to sign up for the fall play, and there are still several key roles open. As you know, the play is about the civil rights movement, and I hope today's film will inspire some of you to participate. Okay?

THE STUDENTS

stare at her blankly, waiting for the signal to leave.

MISS WHITE

Class dismissed.

As a single organism, the students now move quickly for the door. Kevin makes sure to pass close by Miss White on his way out. Their eyes meet, and he smiles at her.

MISS WHITE

Kevin? Can I speak with you a minute?

KEVIN

Sure.

MISS WHITE

I, um...was wondering if you had any interest in playing Robert Kennedy. You see, Kevin, I wrote this play, and it's very important to me that the Kennedy role be played by someone with the right...presence. And sensitivity. Are you interested?

KEVIN

as he considers this.

NARRATOR

I'd never acted before. Never had much interest in it. She was asking for nothing less than a dramatic restructuring of my personal priorities.

KEVIN

Sure.

Miss White is clearly pleased. She puts a hand on Kevin's shoulder meaningfully, and gives him the "look" again.

MISS WHITE

I'm so happy to hear that, Kevin.

NARRATOR

Three looks! The hat trick! That clinched it -- we were officially in love.

KEVIN

Well...see you tomorrow.

He smiles and exits, a little bounce in his step.

DISSOLVE TO:

2

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

The family eats dinner.

NARRATOR

My father always encouraged my artistic endeavors...

JACK

(frowning at Kevin)
A play? What kind of play, for cryin' out loud?

NARRATOR

...in his own way.

KEVIN

It's called "The Times, They Are A-Changin'." Miss White wrote it herself. It's about, um, the civil rights movement, and stuff like that.

Sc. 2 (cont.)

WAYNE

What are you gonna be? The guy who opens the curtain? Heh-heh.

KEVIN

No, stupid. I play Robert Kennedy. Miss White said I have the right, um...presence.

NORMA

This sounds wonderful, Kevin.

JACK

What the heck's going on in that school of yours? I thought school plays were like, "My Fair Lady," or about Christmas or something.

KAREN

Dad, theater is supposed to be a form of political expression.

JACK

Not when you're twelve.

KAREN

Don't you understand? A play like this can raise people's consciousness about racial oppression. Sheesh.

NORMA

Karen, watch your tone with your father.

WAYNE

Yeah. And gimme that potato if you're not gonna eat it.

KEVIN

(to his mother)

We have to rehearse until 5:30 every day. I'll need a ride home. Is it okay? Can you pick me up?

NORMA

Well, gee, Kevin, I'm in the middle of fixing dinner at 5:30. Jack? Can you swing by the school and pick him up on your way home?

JACK

who doesn't look too happy.

NARRATOR

Two hours every day with Miss White, the only thing I needed to make my life complete. But it depended on my father's willingness to drive ten minutes out of his way each evening. Ah, the hurdles that life throws in our path.

JACK

(a grunt)

Sure-what-the-hell.

KEVIN

Yes!!

Jack shoots him a look.

KEVIN

I mean, thanks.

DISSOLVE TO:

3 INT. SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - EVENING

Play rehearsal is in progress. Miss White stands on the elevated stage giving directions to the eight or nine participating students, who include Kevin and Paul. Kevin sits cross-legged at her feet, his crush in full bloom.

MISS WHITE

The important thing about this scene is that it convey...tension. Kevin, remember that Kennedy was a very passionate, forceful man.

KEVIN

Okay.

MISS WHITE

And Paul? Remember to speak up.

PAUL

Right.

MISS WHITE

Let's try it again.

She steps off to the side. Paul takes his place behind a desk, which seems to engulf him. A couple of other students sit in chairs next to the desk. Kevin enters from the left, holding his copy of the play. He crosses to a girl who sits in a chair downstage, presumably representing a secretary in an outer office.

KEVIN

(to the girl, in a Kennedy-
esque Boston accent)
I'm Attorney General Robert
Kennedy. I'm here to see Mister
Hoover of the FBI.

NARRATOR

Okay, I wasn't Lawrence Olivier.
But remember, I wasn't in this thing
to win an Oscar.

GIRL

Go right in, Mr. Kennedy.

Kevin goes into the "office."

THE BACK DOOR OF THE AUDITORIUM

as Jack enters and takes a seat, observing the rehearsal.

BACK ON THE STAGE

KEVIN

(to Paul)
Mister Hoover, I need more, um...
(checks his script)
...support from you. The Negroes
are fighting for their rights and
we must help them.

PAUL

(trying to be ominous, but
not pulling it off)
Are you trying to tell me how to run
my agency?

KEVIN

All I'm saying is that we should
give all the help we can to Dr. King.

PAUL

That man is a threat to the...
(his glasses fall down on his
nose. He pushes them back up)
...to the American way of life.

Paul's "aides" ad-lib agreement.

KEVIN

No, he's not. He's fighting for
the cause of freedom.

He bangs his fist on the desk.

Sc. 3 (cont.)

MISS WHITE
(applauding)
Very good. Very good. Kevin, that
was wonderful. Good anger.

KEVIN
Thanks.

As she speaks to the group, Miss White walks behind Kevin and rests her hands on his shoulders. Kevin basks in this affection.

MISS WHITE
Much better, Paul. And everyone
else, good work. Tomorrow, we'll
rehearse the town meeting scene, and...

TIGHT ON KEVIN

happy. He then spots his dad in the audience. He smiles,
waves hello.

JACK

pointing to his watch.

BACK ON STAGE

KEVIN
Miss White? I have to go.

MISS WHITE
Ooh, it is late. Okay, learn your
lines everybody. See you tomorrow.

The kids start to disperse. Kevin hops off the stage and over
to his father.

JACK
You ready to get out of here?

KEVIN
Yeah.

Paul passes by.

JACK
Hey, Paul.

PAUL
Hi, Mr. Arnold.
(to Kevin)
Do you think I came off as unlikeable?

KEVIN

You're playing J. Edgar Hoover.
You're supposed to be unlikeable.

PAUL

I know. But Miss White said I
should try to find complexity in the
man.

KEVIN

Keep trying.

Paul exits. Miss White passes by.

KEVIN (Cont.)

Oh, um, Miss White, this is my
dad.

JACK

(extending his hand)
Jack Arnold. Nice to meet you.

MISS WHITE

(shaking Jack's hand)
Hi. Diane White. It's a pleasure.

KEVIN

NARRATOR

Diane White? Didn't seem to fit.
To me, she was more of a...Miss
White.

JACK AND MISS WHITE

MISS WHITE

I must tell you, Mr. Arnold, Kevin
is such an extraordinary young man.
It's a pleasure to have him in my
class, and of course, in the play.
You should be proud.

JACK

He's a good kid.

NARRATOR

Let's face it. I was well-liked.

JACK

You, uh...you do a good job with the
kids up there.

Sc. 3 (cont.)

MISS WHITE

Thank you. So do you. I mean, with Kevin. And Wayne. He was in my class two years ago.

JACK

Oh, Yeah. Right, right. I remember.

MISS WHITE

Well...nice meeting you.

JACK

Take care.

Miss White crosses away.

KEVIN

(calling after)
Bye, Miss White.

MISS WHITE

Oh. Bye, Kevin.

She exits. Kevin and Jack head out another way.

INT. ARNOLD LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

as the family watches TV together.

NARRATOR

Well, my father seemed to like Miss White, which definitely made me feel good. After all, I certainly liked her, so I suppose I felt that my taste in women was vindicated. Yeah, at home that night, everything seemed right with the world. Miss White, me, my family...Miss White. A perfectly balanced universe. Everything in perfect, tranquil harmony.

Wayne belches.

NORMA

Wayne!

KAREN

God, Wayne, that is gross.

WAYNE

That wasn't even a good one.

Sc. 4 (cont.)

Jack gives Wayne a light smack on the back of the head.

JACK
What's wrong with you?

KAREN
He is disgusting.

She gets up and exits.

NORMA
Karen, come back in here.

TIGHT ON KEVIN

blissfully oblivious to it all.

NARRATOR
More or less.

DISSOLVE TO:

3 INT. AUDITORIUM - EVENING

5

Rehearsal in progress. Kevin, as Robert Kennedy, addresses several of the other students seated in chairs before him.

KEVIN
I see a more compassionate
America. A nation in which all
people, black, white, and brown,
have the opportunity to build a
better life for their children...

MISS WHITE

off to the side, nodding, smiling.

ANGLE ON THE DOOR

as Jack enters.

ANGLE BACK ON STAGE

KEVIN
An America where all people can live
free of oppression and violence...

NARRATOR
Yeah, I was getting pretty good. I
suppose Miss White had seen a talent
in me that I didn't even know I had.
All that sensitivity and perception,
and a great body, too. To what did
I owe my luck?

JACK

walking down the aisle toward Miss White, limping very slightly, rubbing a spot on his leg. Miss White moves a couple of steps toward him to say hello.

KEVIN

finishing his speech.

KEVIN

...some men see things as they
are and ask "why?" I see things
as they might be, and ask "why not?"

With that, Kevin turns to get Miss White's approval. She is not where she was a moment ago. Kevin looks around.

KEVIN'S POV

of Miss White and Jack in the aisle of the auditorium, talking.

KEVIN

A little taken aback.

KEVIN.

Miss White? Was that okay?

MISS WHITE

(turning)

Hm? Oh, very nice, everybody.
That's it for today. Please have
all your lines memorized by Monday.
Only two more weeks.

The students all file out. Kevin hops down and walks over to where his father and Miss White are standing.

NARRATOR

I wasn't upset or anything. I just
couldn't imagine what nice things
they had to say about me that
couldn't wait until the end of the
rehearsal. Oh, well. Didn't
matter. I liked it when they talked
about me.

JACK

Yup. Two years in Korea.

NARRATOR

Wait a second. I never spent two
years in Korea.

JACK

Got a small piece of shrapnel in my leg, but I didn't think the limp was noticeable anymore.

NARRATOR

Oh. Him.

MISS WHITE

Barely. Just a little bit. Hardly at all, really.

KEVIN

looking unhappy.

NARRATOR

A question to consider: Why, at that moment, did I wish that I had shrapnel in my leg?

JACK AND MISS WHITE

JACK

Listen, I consider myself lucky. A lot of my buddies never made it out of that place.

MISS WHITE

War is such a terrible thing, isn't it?

NARRATOR

(annoyed)

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

KEVIN

Miss White. Was I okay today?

MISS WHITE

Hm? Yes. You were fine, Kevin.

(turns back to Jack)

Does the experience...haunt you at all?

JACK

Well, sure, I think about it now and again. It's only natural.

(beat)

I guess nothing's ever quite the same after going through something like that.

Miss White looks at Jack with an expression of admiration and sympathy. In fact, it is the "look!" Kevin takes note of this, unhappily.

NARRATOR :

The "look." That was my look, but she was looking at him! I considered leaping up in front of my dad and intercepting the "look," but no, that would be a ridiculous thing to do. I had to be stoic. I drew upon every ounce of strength in my body and forced myself to wait out this awful moment in resolute silence.

KEVIN

KEVIN

Dad Let's go!!

JACK AND MISS WHITE

surprised at the outburst. They look at Kevin.

KEVIN

smiles sheepishly.

FADE OUT

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

6 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

as the family eats dinner in silence.

KEVIN

poking at his food, preoccupied.

NARRATOR

I just couldn't understand it. I had been so sure that Miss White and I had a special bond, a one-in-a-million connection. But if that were true, why had she given him the "look?"

Kevin looks up at his father.

JACK

chewing.

NARRATOR

Him, of all people. Could he possibly be deserving of that "look?"

Jack makes an unpleasant face, reaches into his mouth, pulls out a small chicken bone, and examines it.

NARRATOR

There. Look at that. A man with the table manners of a cheetah, and he gets my "look." The world was upside down!

NORMA

How's the play going, Kevin?

KEVIN

Fine.

NORMA

You don't sound very enthusiastic.

KEVIN

It's fine.

Sc. 6 (cont.)

NORMA

How does it look, Jack?

JACK

Good. It seems to be going okay.
Isn't it, Kevin?

KEVIN

Um-hum.

JACK

Speak up, son.

KEVIN

(blowing up at his dad)
I said it's going fine. What do
you want from me?

Karen and Wayne look up from their food, expecting, perhaps even hoping, that Kevin's wisecrack will elicit a harsh response from Dad. To their surprise, and Norma's, it does not. Jack just shrugs and continues eating. Karen and Wayne exchange a surprised look.

7 INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY 7

It is after rehearsal, and Jack and Miss White sit in the first row of the audience, engaged in animated conversation.

NARRATOR

The days passed and the situation, at least from my perspective, continued to deteriorate. My dad and Miss White continued to have their little chats after rehearsal, while I was left to watch and wait. Although, I must say, outwardly I handled the situation with my customary poise and dignity.

KEVIN

in another part of the auditorium, running through a row of seats, loudly flipping each of the folded seats down as he passes. He gets to the end of the aisle, stops, sees that his father and Miss White are paying no attention, and runs back through the row, flipping the seats back up. He stops at the end, now breathless, and looks over at his father and Miss White.

KEVIN'S POV

of Jack and Miss White, from behind, still talking.

Sc. 7 (cont.)

NARRATOR

What could they possibly be talking about? I had to know.

WIDER SHOT

as Kevin quietly slips into a seat in the row behind Jack and Miss White.

JACK

...Well, the next time that happens, just pull over and check the spark plug wires. Sounds like one of 'em might be coming loose on you.

MISS WHITE

Oh, okay, okay. How do you know so much about cars?

JACK

I worked in a garage part-time when I was in college. That's how I paid my tuition.

Miss White, impressed, gives Jack a modified version of the "look."

KEVIN

making a disgusted face.

KEVIN'S THOUGHTS (V.O.)

Oh, gee, worked in a garage. Mr. Cool.

NARRATOR

Okay, I was bitter. I'll admit it.

8 EXT. HOUSE - DAY 8

Jack and Kevin play catch in the yard. Jack kneels on the lawn, holding his mitt in front of him. Kevin stands, with mitt and ball, about twenty feet away.

JACK

Okay, let's go.

Kevin fires the ball to Jack, who catches it.

JACK

Low and outside.

He tosses the ball back to Kevin, who winds up, and throws the ball again, a little harder. Jack catches it.

Sc. 3 (cont.)

JACK

Ball two.

KEVIN

What?!

JACK

Too high.

KEVIN

It was not!

Jack tosses the ball back to Kevin.

JACK

'Fraid so, son. C'mon, concentrate.

Kevin rears back and fires the ball as hard as he can. Jack catches it, grimaces, and pulls his hand out of his mitt.

JACK

Ow. Come on, Kevin, what're you trying to do, break my hand?

NARRATOR

Not a bad theory.

Kevin throws his mitt down.

KEVIN

That was a strike, and so was the last one!

He storms past Jack toward the house, but Jack grabs his arm and stops him.

JACK

Hey, what's the matter?

KEVIN

Nothing.

JACK

C'mere, you.

He pulls Kevin down to the ground and begins wrestling with him playfully. But Kevin, not in a playful mood, struggles fiercely.

JACK

(as they wrestle)

Hey, come on, huh? Relax. We're just kiddin' around here. Okay, they were strikes, okay?

Kevin continues to struggle, but Jack, far stronger, pins him easily. Kevin tries to writhe free, but cannot.

NARRATOR

There was no getting around it. I was out of my league. Completely overmatched.

9 INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Kevin, naked but for a towel slung over his shoulder, enters to take a shower. Just as he closes the door behind him, Jack emerges from behind the shower curtain, naked and soaking wet. He grabs a towel from the rack.

JACK

I'm done. It's all yours.

KEVIN

whose eyes are on his father's face. Then, he looks down to a lower part of his father's anatomy.

NARRATOR

Yup. Completely overmatched.

10 INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

10

Rehearsal in progress. Paul, Kevin, and some of the other students are on stage rehearsing the Hoover-Kennedy confrontation scene. Kevin seems distracted and out of sorts.

KEVIN

The...the, um...The Negroes are fighting for their rights and we must help them.

PAUL

Are you trying to tell me how to run my agency?

Kevin, having forgotten his line, stands there silently for a few moments.

PAUL

I said, are you trying to tell me how to run my agency?

Kevin shifts nervously, then looks over at Miss White, who urges him onward. Kevin is still at a loss.

PAUL

(trying to help)
Or are you saying that we should
just try to help Dr. King as much as
we can? Because if you are, I
disagree.

MISS WHITE

Um...let's stop for a moment.
Kevin, do you need to go over your
lines?

KEVIN

No.

MISS WHITE

Is something wrong?

NARRATOR

Yeah, something was wrong. The
prospect of my father walking
through that door in an hour for
another one of his little chats with
Miss White was robbing me of all
ability to function.

KEVIN

Can I make a phone call?

MISS WHITE

Well, sure. Of course.

Kevin hops off the stage and out the back door.

MISS WHITE

(to the others)
Take five, everybody.

PAUL

Five what?

11 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

11

Kevin enters from the auditorium and runs to a pay phone,
deposits a coin, and begins to dial.

NARRATOR

I suppose this was what they refer
to, in legal terms, as an act of
passion.

KEVIN

(into phone)

Jack Arnold, please. This is
Kevin Arnold.

(beat)

Dad? Hi. It's me. Um,...I
don't need a ride home today...
Yeah, I got a ride. Yeah, I'm sure.
See you at home. Bye.

He hangs up.

NARRATOR

Interestingly, I had given no
thought to the matter of how I would
get home, or even whether I'd get
home. It didn't really matter.
Keeping my dad and Miss White apart
was the goal, even if it meant
spending the night in the woods with
a pack of coyotes.

11 INT. AUDITORIUM - LATER

12

The students in the play are all filing out at the end of
rehearsal. Kevin sits slumped in a chair in the first row
of the auditorium. Miss White walks past him, then stops,
and comes back.

MISS WHITE

Isn't your father picking you up,
Kevin?

Kevin shakes his head.

MISS WHITE

Then how are you getting home?

KEVIN

I'll walk, I guess.

MISS WHITE

Can I give you a lift?

MUSIC CUE: 1812 OVERTURE

Kevin brightens.

KEVIN

Okay.

13 EXT. SCHOOL - EVENING

13

Kevin and Miss White walk past a sign which reads "Teachers
Only" toward a group of parked cars.

NARRATOR

I had never been inside a teacher's car before, let alone Miss White's. In fact, until this moment, I had thought that knowing a teacher's first name was the ultimate possibility in student-teacher intimacy. But here I was, about to spend ten minutes with the woman I idolized, in her automobile, no less. Maybe things were turning my way again, after all.

KEVIN'S POV

A Chevy van parked amidst the other cars.

NARRATOR

Could that be it?

14 KEVIN'S FANTASY

14

Kevin and Miss White get into the van. It is luxurious, circa 1968. Large padded seats, and strings of beads hanging down separating the front area from the rear. Kevin spreads the beads and looks back. The back of the van is lit in seductive black lights, the floor is covered with plush shag carpeting, and there is a bed, covered with large Persian pillows. Kevin looks at Miss White, who smiles at him seductively. Kevin smiles back suavely.

MISS WHITE

How soon do you have to be home?

KEVIN

Thanksgiving.

15 BACK TO REALITY

15

As Kevin and Miss White walk past the van to the car parked next to it -- a beat-up, very spartan Volkswagen beetle.

NARRATOR

Oh, well. It was hers. That was the main thing.

16 INT. CAR -LATER

16

Miss White drives as Kevin looks over the inside of the car.

NARRATOR

It was just like any other car. Imagine that.

Sc. 10 (cont.)

MISS WHITE
Kevin? Are you all right?

KEVIN
Yes.

MISS WHITE
You've just seemed very distracted lately. You don't seem like your heart is in the play anymore.

NARRATOR
It's not. Of course it's not.
Can't you see it's not?

KEVIN
(shrugs)
It is.

MISS WHITE
Well, I don't mean to harp on it, but the play is tomorrow night, and, well...I'd hate to see you not be at your best because you're upset about something.

(beat)
What's been on your mind, Kevin?

KEVIN
I just, um...I didn't know if...I mean, I just thought that, that maybe you thought I'm not good enough.
(beat)
In the play.

MISS WHITE
Oh, Kevin, don't be silly. You know how much this play means to me. I asked you to play Robert Kennedy because you have that special, wonderful quality that the part needs.

KEVIN
I do?

MISS WHITE
Of course you do.

The "look."

NARRATOR
Hel-lo.

Sc. 16 (cont.)

Kevin smiles.

KEVIN

Okay, Miss White. I'll do great tomorrow. I promise.

Miss White smiles again at him, then is distracted by something that's happening with her car. The car sputters, and she pulls over, annoyed.

MISS WHITE

Oh, my. It's the same problem again. Darn it.

KEVIN

(full of confidence)
Let me have a look at it.

MISS WHITE

Oh, do you know about cars?

KEVIN

Do I know about cars? Pshh.

17 EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

17

as Kevin and Miss White get out of the car. Kevin walks around to the front of the car, and opens the hood.

KEVIN'S POV

The trunk of the car which, of course, on Volkswagens, is in front.

KEVIN

Looking into the trunk, realizing his error.

NARRATOR

You didn't have to be Andy Granatelli to see that I had taken a misstep here.

WIDER SHOT

MISS WHITE

What are you looking for?

KEVIN

Oh...tools. Any tools? No?
That's okay. I don't need tools.

He closes the trunk and walks around to the back of the car. He pulls on the hood handle, but it won't open. Miss White comes over to help.

MISS WHITE

I think you have to push down and
turn the handle at the same time...

She does so, as Kevin is still trying to force the hood up. It
finally springs loose and flies up, catching him in the chin.

KEVIN

Ow!

MISS WHITE

Oh, my goodness, are you all right?

KEVIN

Sure, sure. You ought to have
the tension in that spring
checked, though. Okay, let's see
what's going on here.

Kevin stands over the engine and surveys it. He scratches his
chin.

KEVIN

Um-hm...Aha...

MISS WHITE

Your father said something about
spark plug wires.

KEVIN

(still looking the engine
over)

Could be, could be...Um-hm...Um-hm...

NARRATOR

My best plan of action, I figured,
was to keep scratching my chin and
saying "um-hm" until nightfall.

Just then, Jack pulls up alongside them in his car.

JACK

(leaning out his window)
Car trouble?

NARRATOR

No, Dad. Miss White is just very
proud of her engine, and wanted
me to see it.

MISS WHITE

Yes. It's that same problem I told
you about.

Jack pulls over, gets out of his car and walks over.

JACK
Excuse me, Kevin.

Kevin steps aside.

JACK
Yup. - Spark plug wire.

He makes an adjustment and closes the hood.

JACK
Should be okay now. Try her out.

Miss White gets into the car, starts the engine. It runs smoothly.

KEVIN
(trying to salvage something)
Yeah, it was your spark plug wire,
all right.

MISS WHITE
Thank you so much, Jack. Well, see
you tomorrow, Kevin. The big day.

KEVIN
Bye.

JACK
So long.

They watch her drive off.

18 INT. KEVIN AND WAYNE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

18

Karen runs lines with Kevin as Wayne tosses balled-up socks through a wire-hanger "hoop" on the door.

NARRATOR
As the events of that afternoon had demonstrated in dramatic fashion, my only realistic shot at winning the battle for Miss White's affection was to give the performance of my lifetime in the play.

KEVIN
...The Negroes are fighting for
their rights and we must help
them.

KAREN
(prancing around the room as
she reads, overacting badly)
Are you...trying to tell me...how to
run...my agency?

KEVIN

All I'm saying is that we should
give all the help we can to Dr.
King.

A ball of socks, thrown by Wayne, hits Kevin in the face.

KEVIN

Wayne!

WAYNE

You were in the way of the basket.

KEVIN

Do you mind? I'm trying to
rehearse.

WAYNE

Okay, well, then you tell Mom and
Dad that I've had to listen to this
stupid play ten times, so I
shouldn't have to go see it tomorrow.

KEVIN

Fine! Don't come see it. That's
mean one more seat for a normal
person.

KAREN

Real nice, Wayne. Why don't you
try being supportive of your brother
for once?

WAYNE

Hey, who asked ya?

The three of them lapse into argument.

NARRATOR

Well, I was definitely not in
danger of over-rehearsing.

19 INT. AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

19

Show night. The auditorium is packed. Norma, Jack, Wayne,
and Karen sit in the second row, watching. Actually, Wayne is
asleep. Karen elbows him, and he jolts awake and gives her a
dirty look.

KEVIN

onstage, doing the climactic Robert Kennedy speech. His
performance is emotionally charged.

KEVIN

...a nation in which all people,
black, white, and brown, have the
opportunity to build a better
life for their children.

MISS WHITE

in the wings, watching, a tear in her eye.

JACK

in the audience, clearly proud of his son.

KEVIN

KEVIN

...some men see things as they
are and ask "Why?" I see things
as they might be, and ask, "Why
not?"

The curtain is lowered. Thunderous applause from the
audience. The curtain rises again, and the cast takes a
curtain call. The curtain drops, and the houselights
come on.

20

BEHIND THE CURTAIN

20

as Miss White runs onto the stage to congratulate the
students.

MISS WHITE

You were great! All of you! It was
wonderful!

She hugs all of them, one by one. Paul and Kevin are
standing off to one side. They shake hands, congratulate
each other.

KEVIN

You were really good, Paul.

PAUL

Not too unlikeable?

Jack, Norma, Karen and Wayne enter, having come backstage to
congratulate Kevin. Paul's parents also come up, and he is
off to the side being congratulated by them.

NORMA

Oh, honey, I'm so proud of you.
(she hugs him)

KEVIN

Thanks, Mom.

Jack tousles Kevin's hair.

JACK
Nice goin', kid.

KAREN
Yeah. You were great. Kevin.
(to Wayne)
Tell him he was great.

WAYNE
I was sleeping. I don't wanna lie.

Miss White is now a few feet away from Kevin and the Arnolds, congratulating and hugging her performers one by one. Slowly, she is making her way over to Kevin, and he is keenly aware of this.

KEVIN

watching Miss White as she draws nearer.

NARRATOR
The moment that would make it all worthwhile was only seconds away. True, my father was standing right next to me, but even so, this was my night. Even he couldn't keep me from the "look," and the hug I so coveted. Could he? Could he?

KEVIN'S FANTASY

Everyone is in the same positions as in reality, but just as Miss White is hugging the student standing next to Kevin, Jack nudges Kevin out of the way and stands in his spot. He straightens his tie. Miss White finishes hugging the other student, then stands in front of Jack.

MISS WHITE
Oh, Jack, thank you for fixing my car.

She hugs Jack.

BACK TO REALITY

As Miss White finishes hugging the student next to Kevin. She is about to come over to Kevin when STEVEN, a nice -looking, professorial type man in his mid-30's enters the backstage area. He spots Miss White.

STEVEN
Diane!

MISS WHITE
Steven!

SC. 10 (CONT.)

Steven crosses to her.

STEVEN

The play was superb, my love. It
really was. Just magnificent.

They hug, then kiss for several moments.

JACK

who watches this for a moment, then looks away with a bit of
embarrassment.

KEVIN

who reacts in identical fashion as his father.

WIDE SHOT

as Miss White and Steven conclude their embrace. Miss White
then turns her attention to Kevin.

MISS WHITE

Kevin, you were so, so wonderful.
I couldn't be prouder of you.

She gives him the "look," then hugs him.

WIDER SHOT

as Miss White introduces Steven to the Arnolds.

NARRATOR

Miss White had given me a hug, and
the "look," and all that, but coming
as they did in the wake of her
passionate embrace with Steven, the
moment wasn't quite what I'd hope
for. But I guess I had to admit to
myself that, all things considered,
Miss White was probably better off
with Steven than with any member of
the Arnold family.

(beat)

Still, even to this day, I can't
help but feel that what existed
between me and Miss White was more
than just a figment of my adolescent
imagination. If only I had been
older than twelve...If only I had
been taller than four feet
seven... If only, if only...Well,
like so many "if only's" in life,
we have no choice but to
remember, and find a way to be
happy with, what was.

Sc. 20 (cont.)

Miss White, still chatting with the Arnolds, puts a hand on Kevin's shoulder. Kevin looks up at her fondly, and we,

FADE OUT

THE END