

GROWING UP BEAUTIFUL

Welcome to Milan

First Draft - Pilot
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GROWING UP BEAUTIFUL PILOT

TEASER

FADE IN

MILAN, ITALY - SEPTEMBER 1984

INT. BELLA MODELING AGENCY - MAIN ROOM

The agency is spacious, brightly lit, modern in design. Two walls are lined from floor to ceiling with rows of model composites. THROUGH THE WINDOWS, century old buildings layered in a patina of black soot are visible.

A large circular desk in the center of the room is manned by MARCELLA, (36), ordinary features under meticulously applied make-up, impeccably dressed. She adds casting information on model work charts.

ANTONIA, 26, ordinary features, no make-up, also sits behind the circular counter, sorts a stack of model head-shots.

CLAUDIO CONTE', (37), professional, ex-model handsome, enters, tosses three composites on the counter in front of Marcella. (Conversation in Italian, English subtitles.)

CLAUDIO

When are these three arriving?

C.U. on headshot of girl-next-door, CASEY TOWNSEND, a color fold-out of a dark-haired beauty, JOANNE BROOKS, and a grainy color xerox of a striking blonde named STAR.

MARCELLA

Day after tomorrow.

CLAUDIO

Make dinner arrangements at the Cigno de Nero Restaurant. Invite our biggest clients, and a few photographers. I want these girls working immediately.

MARCELLA

Of course.

CLAUDIO

And schedule a car to pick them up at the airport.

Claudio waits, locks eyes with Marcella, makes Antonia nervous.

CLAUDIO (cont'd)
Marcella?

ANTONIA
I will make the call.

MARCELLA
No, Antonia.

Marcella picks up the phone, dials. Satisfied, Claudio exits the booking area. Marcella hangs up the phone.

ANTONIA
Claudio warned you about interfering with his models.

MARCELLA
I own forty percent of this agency. They also belong to me. If they want an easy life in Milan and success at Bella, they must understand this.

ANTONIA
But they owe the agency money for their airfare and will soon owe for their pension room.

MARCELLA
I am aware. Even the foolish ones will work.

ANTONIA
Low-end catalog jobs.

MARCELLA
Until their debt is paid, and the next plane full of hopefuls arrive.

Antonia nods. She has witnessed these outcomes before, continues to sort model head-shots.

GROWING UP BEAUTIFUL PILOT:

ACT ONE

EXT. SAN FERNANDO VALLEY - MODEST NEIGHBORHOOD - LATE DAY

MIKE, (16), sun-bleached hair, easy manner, peddles his bike down the center of a tree-lined street. CASEY, (17), sweet, uncomplicated, shapely woman-child, sits on the handlebars.

MIKE

You want to catch a flick at the drive-in tonight? Last chance before you leave.

CASEY

International models don't peddle into Drive-in movies on bicycles.

MIKE

I'll borrow my brother's car.

CASEY

You only have a learners permit.

MIKE

My brother doesn't care.

The bike slows, turns into the driveway of a tract home, stops. Casey hops off the handle bars.

CASEY

(adorable smile)

Bye, Mike. See you in a month.

INT. TRACT HOME - KITCHEN

Typical '80's color pallet and appliances. Mrs. Townsend (early 40's) plump, deep frown lines, her back to the kitchen, mindlessly stirs hamburger in a pan on the stove. Casey enters, retrieves a cookie box from the cupboard.

MRS. TOWNSEND

You're late.

CASEY

You said to be back by five-thirty.

MRS. TOWNSEND
(glances at wall
clock)
It's quarter to six. I was getting
worried.

CASEY
Why do you have to make such a big
deal out of everything?

MRS. TOWNSEND
A lot can happen in fifteen minutes.
I saw a girl who looked just like you
on one of those missing person fliers
I get in the mail.

CASEY
If I ever disappear, I want you to
use the photo on my modeling
composite. I love that one.

MRS. TOWNSEND
I'm being serious, Casey.

CASEY
I'm home now. Why are you freaking
out?

Mrs. Townsend shuts off the gas burner, faces Casey.

MRS. TOWNSEND
Your ticket to Milan arrived today.

CASEY
Cool.

MRS. TOWNSEND
It's not cool. You're too young to be
running around Italy on your own.

Casey opens the box, takes out a cookie. Mrs. Townsend takes
the cookie box from her, returns it to the cupboard.

MRS. TOWNSEND (cont'd)
I wish your father hadn't encouraged
you to go. He's never been one to
think things through. He's always
left that up to me.

CASEY
He said he went to Europe after high
school and had a great time.

MRS. TOWNSEND

He was lucky he didn't get mugged or worse.

CASEY

He told me he met a lot of interesting people.

MRS. TOWNSEND

He's never been a good judge of character.

CASEY

He thinks I can do this.

MRS. TOWNSEND

(frustrated sigh)

Pretty girls like you can attract the wrong kind of attention. Trust me. I know.

Casey is curious, waits for an explanation.

MRS. TOWNSEND (cont'd)

Promise me you'll never go anywhere alone. Not even to the bathroom.

CASEY

I told you I'm traveling with two other models.

MRS. TOWNSEND

Make them your best friends. And then stick to them like glue.

CASEY

(typical teenage
exasperation)

Mom, stop. You're taking all the fun out of this trip.

MRS. TOWNSEND

If something happens to you...if you get yourself into trouble...I'll be too far away to help you.

CASEY

Relax. My Italian agent will be there to look out for me.

EXT. PACIFIC COAST - UPSCALE NEIGHBORHOOD - MORNING

Three-story mansions line the shoreline. High tide crashes against stone barriers keeping the ocean at bay.

INT. MEDITERRANEAN STYLE HOME - JOANNE'S BEDROOM

The ocean is visible through French doors leading out to the terrace. The room is tastefully decorated. A leather suitcase and model portfolio have been placed by the door.

JOANNE, (19) in a Chanel jacket/skirt, stares out the French doors. There is sadness about her, a sense of loss. She taps a letter against her skirt a beat, sets in on her pillow, exits.

C.U. LETTER: Stanford Leave of Absence approval for Fall 1st quarter classes.

INT. MEDITERRANEAN STYLE HOME - STAIRCASE - FOYER

Joanne pulls her suitcase down the last step, hears...

MR. BROOKS (O.S)
...Stop talking about it. We don't
need your hysteria making the
situation worse.

Joanne glances toward the open dining room door; there is an empty place setting at the end of a table. She drags her suitcase toward the front door, passes under a life-size portrait of herself wearing a Valentino gown...and the same sad expression.

MRS. BROOKS (O.S)
You're right. In a few days, Joanne
will be living at the university, and
her momentary lapse of sanity will be
forgotten. Modeling.
(brittle laugh)
Can you imagine opening the Sunday
paper and seeing our daughter's face
on a coupon for tampons?

A MAID enters the foyer with a tray carrying three breakfast plates, sees Joanne opening the front door, is surprised.

MAID
Miss Brooks? Your parents are
expecting you to join them.

JOANNE

Please, don't say you saw me.

MAID

Are you leaving early for Stanford?
Your father was looking forward to
driving you there.

MRS. BROOKS (O.S)

Where is she? I'm not going to be
happy if I have to go up those stairs
to remind her where she needs to be.

A chair in the dining room scraps against the floor.

JOANNE

I have to get away from them for a
little while. To clear my head.

The Maid nods in understanding, enters the dining room.

INT. EDDIES DINER - KITCHEN - DAY

The kitchen is dingy 1960's decor. A SKINNY TEEN flips
burgers on the grill.

STAR, (18) stands in front a metal locker by the back door,
stares at her reflection in a mirror Scotch-taped inside.

C.U. STAR'S REFLECTION IN MIRROR. Star pulls a blonde curl
down over her forehead, tilts her head to the side, her
confident blue eyes hold an inviting, captivating gaze.

STAR

(into mirror)

That's right, darling.

(flirty smile)

At least three carats, or you can
fuck off.

JENNY, (22) harried waitress, enters, bangs a plate on the
side of a plastic trash container, knocks off a half-eaten
tuna melt and soggy fries.

JENNY

Get out of that mirror, Star. The
place is packed, and I've got a
real jerk in my section tonight.
Keeps asking me for ketchup.

(MORE)

JENNY (cont'd)
(snorts out a laugh)
Like I'm gonna go out of my way to
get it, when he can reach over to the
next table and grab the bottle like
everyone else.

Star pulls a worn out duffel bag from the locker.

STAR
Can you cover the rest of my shift? I
still haven't packed and my flight
leaves in a few hours.

JENNY
Are you kidding? I've already got
more customers than I can handle.

Jenny walks up to the food counter, hits the order bell,
hooks two order slips on the rotating wheel.

STAR
C'mon, Jenny. You can have my tips.

Star removes a handful of crumpled dollars from the pocket
of her uniform, holds them out.

JENNY
Don't you need that money for Italy?
And what about your paycheck? Eddie's
not gonna give you a dime if you take
off before your shift is over.

STAR
It's only a half hour early. And I
already took sixty bucks from the
register, plus an extra forty for
putting up with that asshole.

Jenny removes three plates from the serving station,
balances them along the length of her arm.

JENNY
Fine. Go, but only if you promise to
treat me to lunch at the Plaza when
you get back. I want someone to wait
on me for a change.

Star stuffs the bills into Jenny's apron pocket.

STAR
Deal. Next time you see me, I'll be
dripping in diamonds from my rich
boyfriend.

JENNY

Beautiful women have it so easy.

Jenny uses her ass to push through the double doors, momentarily lets in the sounds of a full diner. Star glances at the Skinny Teen busy flipping burgers, grabs a bag of coffee off the counter, stuffs it under her leather jacket.

EXT. BROOKLYN - EDDIE'S CAFE - BACK EXIT - RAINY DAY

The back door slams shut behind Star. She tilts her head back, closes her eyes, lets raindrops splash across her face a beat, then runs down the street through puddles.

INT. BROOKLYN APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - SAME DAY

Mismatched pieces of furniture and chotskies fill the dimly lit room. The front door opens, Star enters.

STAR

Hey, Ma. I'm home.

Star tosses the bag of coffee on the couch. It bounces off the cushion, lands on the floor with a thud.

STAR (cont'd)

Mom?

STAR WALKS DOWN THE HALL. Grease on the bottom of her work shoes stick to the hardwood slats. She peeks inside a door left ajar, sees STEFANIE, (36) sitting in the dark, holding a bottle of cheap vodka. The sight affects Star deeply; her eyes reflect both love and despair.

STAR (cont'd)

I brought the coffee you wanted.

BROOKLYN APARTMENT - BEDROOM

Star approaches her mother, notices a picture frame on the floor, face down. She picks it up, turns it over.

C.U. on photo shows Stefanie and a heavily intoxicated man sitting at a bar.

STAR

Darryl isn't worth a two-day bender,
ma. None of those fuckers are.

Stefanie looks up. She is a worn down version of Star.

STEFANIE
Why do they always leave?

STAR
(tosses frame in
trash)
You're better off without him.

STEFANIE
(grabs Star's hand)
I don't want you to go, baby.

STAR
Waitressing isn't going to get us out
of here.

Stefanie nods, lowers her head. Star stands motionless,
holds her mother's hand in the dark.

EXT. NEW YORK - JFK AIRPORT - EVENING

Heavy rain. A 747 plane waits at the terminal.

INT. 747 JET CABIN - ECONOMY

Impatient travelers jam the aisle. Flight attendants wrestle
with excess carry-on baggage. Joanne sits in the window
seat, pages through a fashion magazine. Casey, in corduroys
and a t-shirt, sits on the aisle armrest, checks out new
arrivals.

CASEY
I bet that blonde girl is the model
who's joining us. She's gorgeous.

Star, Jet's baseball cap, leather jacket, duffel bag tossed
over her shoulder, stops next to Casey, checks her ticket.

STAR
Damn. Cheap seats are not what I
signed up for.

Casey moves into the center seat.

CASEY
I'm sure all the exciting stuff
happens once we get to Milan.

Star takes her aisle seat, pushes her chair back into a
reclining position. She retrieves a cigarette and a plastic
lighter from her pocket, ignites the tip, exhales gray smoke
rings.