

SPINNING

BY

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FADE IN:

INT WOMEN'S RESTROOM NIGHT

ESTER, 18, in a 1974 prom dress, the big skirts and high necklines of the time. She's as pretty as most girls on prom night. She rinses a handkerchief in a sink.

ESTER

Of course, he's stupid. He's a boy. You can't expect him to resemble anything even remotely human. It's a chromosome thing. 'Y' stands for yuck, right?

She wrings out the handkerchief and walks to JORGA, 18, in a similar prom dress and obviously trying to stop crying as she sits on a bench.

ESTER

If I thought it would ruin your night, I never would have told you.

Which causes Jorga to burst into more tears. Ester plops on the bench.

ESTER

Oh, please, it's Ron Little. He's a five minute cry at best.

JORGA

It's prom night.

ESTER

And what, you were expecting to get laid? Ron Little? From what I've heard, his name says it all.

JORGA

You don't understand. You've never been in love.

ESTER

Love, love! My god, this isn't love. It might be lust or maybe pity, but it's hardly love.

Jorga defiantly thrust out her hand, Ron's too-large ring on her finger.

JORGA

What's that, wishful thinking?

ESTER

That's an investment. That's Ron Little's down payment on a fantasy stoked, wrinkled tuxedo and crushed corsage orgasm. That's the key to your shaved, little--

JORGA

Ester!

ESTER

Oh come on. Every girl in our class thinks shaving will make her irresistible.

JORGA

Not Sylvia Goins.

ESTER

Sylvia Goins would have to start with her mustache and work down.

Jorga half snorts a laugh.

ESTER

It's true, and it totally doesn't matter. What matters is this silly crush you have.

JORGA

It's not silly.

ESTER

OK, it's not silly. It's true love. You and Ron are destined for each other, two sides of the same coin, yin and yang, stiffy and bald--

JORGA

Ester!

The door opens, and two GIRLS in prom dresses enter laughing. They stop when they spot Jorga.

Ester stands and points to the door. The Girls turn and hurry out.

ESTER

We have to go, so let's run the numbers. You forgive Ron, run out to the lake tonight, dance the ram-tango, and pledge eternal love. As these things go, he's gonna want servicing on a regular basis, which means your chances of getting prego go up like a rocket. Now, I think Ron would do the right thing which means a baby, a trailer bought by your parents, and Ron stumbling in at two AM after a night with the 'boys'.

JORGA

It wouldn't be like that. We'll go to college.

ESTER

Even better. The bambino strapped to your chest, sucking away during English Lit and giving all the dudes a little titillation so to speak. A smelly, hot apartment over a Chinese restaurant and Ron stumbling in at two AM after a night out with his 'study' grope.

Jorga and Ester stare at each other. Jorga has stopped crying.

ESTER

All for a silly crush.

JORGA

A silly crush.

Jorga pulls off Ron's ring and offers it to Ester.

JORGA

You'll give it back?

ESTER

Want me to knee him in the balls
too?

Jorga laughs.

ESTER

I'll do it. You know I will. Jam
'em right up--

JORGA

Ester, no, no, no, don't you dare.

Jorga opens her arms, and they hug, true friends.

ESTER

Ready?

JORGA

Ready. I did shave, you know.

Ester laughs as they leave the restroom.

JORGA

Everyone did, except--

INT SORORITY ROOM DAY

Two beds, two desks, Greek paddles, tankards, some posters
of movie and rock stars from 1978.

Into the room giggle Ester and Jorga, college seniors, in
graduation gowns and mortarboards. They shove each other and
flop on the beds.

ESTER

Did you ever think we'd see this
day?

JORGA

It's not over yet. That was
practice. There are finals, you
know.

ESTER

Finals, schminals, we can skip them
and still graduate.

JORGA
Graduate school, babe, graduate
school.

Ester sits up and studies Jorga.

ESTER
I thought it was wedding bells.

Jorga sits up.

JORGA
Graduate school after the bells.

ESTER
Till death do you part?

JORGA
You'll stand up with me, won't you?

ESTER
Of course.

They stand and hug and strip off their gowns.

ESTER
Although, I don't know why you're
settling.

JORGA
I'm not settling.

ESTER
Settling, settling, settling. All
those yummy hunks and you dart the
zoo keeper.

JORGA
Just because you don't like men--

ESTER
I love men, I adore men. The zoo
keeper doesn't qualify.

JORGA
His name is Mark.

ESTER

He keeps a turtle named Mick Jagger
and a parrot named Neil Diamond.

JORGA

It's a parakeet.

ESTER

Which makes him a zoo keeper.

JORGA

Which shows he cares.

ESTER

He better because on the He-man
scale he doesn't register.

JORGA

Looks aren't everything. He's
sensitive.

ESTER

When was the last time he banged
the drum?

JORGA

That's none of your business.

ESTER

Hah! I thought so. Mr. Sensitive
has the libido of a Pope. No,
wait, some of those old popes
visited the nunneries on a regular
basis.

JORGA

He values the cerebral.

Ester begins to strip.

ESTER

I can picture your wedding night.
You in diaphanous lace stretched on
the nuptial bed while Mr. Cerebral
catalogues the moths circling the
lights outside the bridal suite.

JORGA

Stop it. I'm sure Mark will perform as expected.

In bra and panties, Ester looks fetching.

ESTER

And a year later? What happens when your engine is purring and his is sputtering like a lawn mower running on cat piss? What then? A handheld device?

JORGA

You think you're so smart you can see the future. You know it all, don't you?

Ester puts on a robe and manages to strip off bra and panties without revealing anything. Still sexy.

ESTER

I know that five years from now you'll be eyeing the pool boy and figuring out which motels rent by the hour.

JORGA

You're a bitch, you know that? A mean, dry bitch!

Ester sits next to Jorga who pushes her away.

JORGA

Get away from me!

ESTER

I'm just trying to help.

JORGA

How? By convincing me Mark is some kind of asexual asshole?

ESTER

Oh no, he's cerebral.

JORGA

Go to hell!

Jorga goes to the window and starts to cry quietly. Ester sighs and joins Jorga at the window.

ESTER

Jorga, baby, girl, don't you see?
The zoo keeper--

JORGA

Mark!

ESTER

Mark will always be there. One
year, five years from now, he'll
still have the parrot--

JORGA

Parakeet.

ESTER

And he'll still be cerebral. Don't
you see? He'll always be there.
But the others--

JORGA

There are no others.

ESTER

(rubs Jorga's shoulder)

The others are here now. The hunks
are here now. The virile, funny,
wired men who live fast and never
sleep, those men, those lovers will
be gone, settled down and moved on.

Ester massages Jorga's shoulders, kneads her, almost sensual.

ESTER

These are our years, Jorga, our
time. We need to cruise, howl,
conquer. I don't want to do it
alone.

JORGA

Our time?

ESTER

Cerebral comes later.

Ester wraps her arms around Jorga, hugging her.

JORGA
Our turn to howl?

ESTER
Like the insatiable sluts we are.

INT BOARDROOM NIGHT

A high-powered board room in a high rise, with a great view, and a table as long as an ocean liner. Jorga, 30 and looking comely in a power suit, sips wine and looks over the city. Ester, in her own power suit, enters.

ESTER
The next time, you interview the
Nesbitt sisters.

Jorga turns from the window.

ESTER
Whoa, hey, what are we celebrating?
You made partner?

Jorga points to a goblet and wine bottle on the table, and Ester helps herself.

JORGA
Before you say a word, I want to
talk.

ESTER
Like I dominate conversations?

Jorga's look would silence a yenta.

JORGA
This isn't about partner or work or
the condo or anything. It's...I'm
getting married. And don't try to
talk me out of it. I've decided.
David is ready, and at thirty, I'm
ready too. It's time for me, for
us to form a family.

Ester opens her arms and gives Jorga a big hug.

ESTER

I'm so happy for you.

Jorga is taken aback as Ester backs up and offers a toast.

ESTER

To marriage and family.
Congratulations.

They sip, and Jorga is more than surprised.

ESTER

When is the wedding? As your best friend, I insist on hosting a shower.

JORGA

We haven't decided. In fact, David hasn't proposed, but he will.

ESTER

I'm sure. And you'll be moving to a house in the burbs, right? A good place to raise kids?

JORGA

I suppose.

ESTER

Part-time work while you're starting your family? Oh, I do envy that. No more dashes to the airport to catch a late flight. No more pressure meetings or kissing a partner's ass. You can blissfully ignore those continuing Ed classes, those boring seminars. You can sleep during the DAY!

JORGA

I plan to maintain my skills. I mean, I don't want to quit completely.

ESTER

Of course you don't. But think!
Send David off in the morning, hand
off the baby to the nanny, and go
to yoga class. Perfect.

JORGA

Why are you being so good about
this?

ESTER

Because it's the right thing for
you.

JORGA

If you liked men, it would be the
right thing for you too.

ESTER

I love men, but my particular
Lochinvar hasn't surfaced yet. When
he does, I'll move in next door to
you.

JORGA

Right. Well, I'm glad you're OK
with this. I was afraid you'd be
upset.

ESTER

Upset? My dear, I couldn't be
happier for you.

Jorga eyes Ester, wondering.

JORGA

What is it? This isn't like you.
Why are you so happy?

ESTER

I'm not. Actually, I'm devastated,
but I realize this is right for
you.

JORGA

I'm up for partner, aren't I?

ESTER

What? I have no idea.

JORGA

That's what you assumed when you walked in. You knew I was up for partner and guessed they had offered.

ESTER

I have no idea.

JORGA

And they won't offer if I go part-time or get married, right?

ESTER

I'm not a partner.

JORGA

But you will be if I'm out of the running. I drop out, and you move up the ladder, taking the spot that should have been mine.

ESTER

You're getting married, remember? Hubby, kids, a dog, the envy of all your friends.

JORGA

The partnership is mine! I deserve it! Haven't I worked like a coolie for years? Remember Hansai? A flight to Bangkok at the last minute, so sick my ear drum burst on the plane. I beached that whale and earned the biggest bonus of the year.

ESTER

Yoga, teas, teacher conferences, bridge. Please tell me ladies still play bridge.

JORGA

You're not fooling anyone. You're happy because you'll make partner instead of me.

Ester merely smiles.

JORGA

Well, forget it. I'm not going to lose out on my chance to make partner.

ESTER

But David, the kids.

JORGA

They can wait.

ESTER

You're thirty.

JORGA

A few months won't make any difference.

ESTER

You shouldn't, not this way.

JORGA

I've worked too hard and sacrificed too much. Once I'm partner, my maternity benefits will be even better.

ESTER

But--

Jorga holds up her hand to silence Ester.

JORGA

(toasting)
To partnership.

ESTER

To partnership.

INT JORGA'S OFFICE DAY

Jorga picks up a wedding invitation in each hand and studies them.

A KNOCK and in strides Ester. At 40, both women have held up well.

JORGA

I need an opinion. Which looks better? The Old English or European Modern?

ESTER

Doug popped the question?

JORGA

We window shopped rings over the weekend. It won't be long.

ESTER

And you need my opinion about your invitations?

JORGA

Don't be that way. Tell me what you think.

ESTER

I think you'll need a big house.

JORGA

Not so big. At forty, we're not talking lots of kids.

ESTER

Not kids. Parents. Your mother's stroke, remember?

JORGA

She's in therapy. Besides, she has dad.

ESTER

And he has a heart problem, doesn't he?

JORGA

The bypass solved that. He should be sound.

ESTER

You've told Doug about them?

JORGA

My parents' health isn't going to dictate my life. They wouldn't want that.

ESTER

Of course, they say that. They're obliged to say that. But they expect you to be there for them.

JORGA

In my case, they mean it. They don't want to be burdens.

ESTER

My parents said the same thing. Then mom's lungs went to hell, and dad had the prostate thing, and before you could say leave of absence I had to move in with them. You remember. Career on hold, relationship on hold, life on hold. I thought Bill would hang in there, but it was so open-ended, well, he had a life too.

JORGA

I know what you're trying to do, and it won't work. You can't derail me this time. My parents' issues aren't mine. They don't expect anything.

ESTER

The problem with parents like ours is that they thought one child was enough. All they needed was one devoted child to shoulder the burden. I'm it, you're it.

JORGA

Even if I have to care for them,
Doug will understand.

ESTER

Of course he will. Isn't his
mother a diabetic and his father on
dialysis? No siblings? I'm
guessing you'll be moving in his
parents before you move in yours.

JORGA

There are facilities. Long term,
short term, elderly, I'm sure we'll
be able to place them adequately.

ESTER

Of course you will. Doug will
insist upon it, won't he? Weren't
you at their house for birthdays,
their anniversary? How often does
he talk to them? He'll insist on
an institution I'm sure.

JORGA

He's devoted. That's not a bad
thing.

ESTER

Devoted to his job and his parents.
Terrific! Devoted to you too?

JORGA

No, not this time. You can't
discourage me. Doug loves his
parents, and maybe, maybe he'll
move them in for a while. But
that's OK with me. We'll cope,
we'll cope.

ESTER

Things will be ducky. You, your
child, two sets of parents, and a
husband. You'll raise coping to an
art form.

Ester stands and heads for the door.

ESTER

By the way, the modern is tres
chic.

Jorga watches Ester leave. Then she slowly rips up both
invitations.

INT CHAPEL DAY

Jorga, dressed in black, fashionably 50 now, sits in a pew.
Ester, also in black, enters and joins Jorga in the pew.

ESTER

It's done.

JORGA

I apologize for not going to the
grave. It's just...

ESTER

I understand. It was too quick,
wasn't it?

JORGA

Mine, yours, mine, yours, it wasn't
that long ago, they were all alive.

ESTER

It's the end of life or maybe the
beginning of better. We did the
best we could.

JORGA

Did we? I wonder. We never gave
them grandchildren, did we?

ESTER

Let's not go there.

JORGA

No, let's, let's go down that road.
Why didn't we give them
grandchildren? Why didn't we marry
and pop out a bambino or two? We
were going to, weren't we? We were
going the traditional route,
weren't we? At least for a while?
What happened? All those years,

JORGA (CONTD)

all those men, all those plans, all those opportunities, why didn't we ever follow through?

ESTER

Does it matter? We could have, we didn't. It's all past tense. It's water over the dam, sand through the hourglass, calendars x'ed out. We didn't. Case closed.

JORGA

I've been sitting here, and I've been recalling the years, the close calls. High school and college, those decade milestones. Remember Old English and European Modern?

ESTER

European Modern was the right choice.

JORGA

Every time I was ready, you talked me out of it.

ESTER

I did not.

JORGA

And I let you. That's the really odd part. I let you talk me out of it.

ESTER

I never talked you out of anything.

JORGA

As crazy as that sounds, it's true. I was never strong enough to follow through.

ESTER

You never really wanted to follow through.

Jorga stares at Ester who shrugs.

ESTER

You didn't. You wanted reasons not to do it, and I provided some. If you had really wanted it, I couldn't have talked you out of it.

JORGA

But you knew what you were doing.

ESTER

I was saving you from yourself.

JORGA

You were saving me for yourself.

ESTER

Forgive me for taking care of you.
Forgive me for looking out for you.
Forgive me for not letting you
flush your life down a toilet.

JORGA

Forgive you? Forgive you! Who appointed you to take care of me? How could you know that marriage was wrong for me? What gave you the right to sabotage my life?!

ESTER

I was supposed to stand by while you tossed away your career and life for a man and a baby? Can't you see that was wrong for you?

JORGA

Wrong or right, it was my choice, not yours! If I wanted to shoot heroin and rob gas stations, it was always my choice!

ESTER

Heroin and robbery would have been better than David or Doug and a hot tub in the BURBS!

JORGA

I don't believe this. You honestly believe you were doing me a favor?

ESTER

Someone had to save you from
yourself.

Jorga rushes out of the pew and heads for the door. Only to
stop and come back.

JORGA

No, no that wasn't it. It was
never about me. It was about you.
You torpedoed my relationships
because you didn't want to be
alone.

ESTER

I've always been alone.

JORGA

You've never been alone. You've
always had your parents and me. No
one else.

ESTER

More men than you ever had.

JORGA

Never an engagement, never a man
for more than what, six months? No
real friends besides me.

ESTER

Friends you've never heard of.

JORGA

You knew you were never going to
get married.

ESTER

I never found the right man

JORGA

You knew you would be all alone
after your parents died.

ESTER

I don't mind being alone.

JORGA

You can't stand being alone!

Ester jumps up and heads for the door.

ESTER
I don't have to listen to this.

JORGA
(softly)
Neither can I.

But it's enough to stop Ester.

ESTER
What?

JORGA
Neither can I. I can't live alone.

ESTER
I don't--

JORGA
Yes you do. It's exactly like you
planned. We're both alone and too
old to go chasing anyone else.
Doors closed, no new doors to open.
Just us.

ESTER
How long have you known?

JORGA
I think I've always known, ever
since you lied about Ron Little.

ESTER
You knew I lied?

Jorga gives her a don't-be-stupid look.

JORGA
I didn't know why you lied. At
least, I wouldn't admit why.

ESTER
And the partnership?

JORGA
They talked to me the day before.
I was at least a year away.

ESTER

Then, why?

JORGA

He was wrong. I knew that, but I was in so deep. I needed your courage to end it.

ESTER

And?

JORGA

And I knew, somehow knew that it was you and me. We were meant to grow old together.

ESTER

I've always known that. It was the only thing that made sense, you and me.

They study each other.

ESTER

I do love you, Jorga. I think we can stay together a long time.

JORGA

I'll still date when I wish.

ESTER

I'll vacation with friends.

JORGA

And bring home a man once in a while.

ESTER

Christmas in Miami.

Jorga holds out her hand, and Ester takes it. Together, they walk out.

JORGA

Separate bedrooms and baths.

ESTER

And a two car garage.

JORGA
Separate offices.

FADE OUT.