

Scooter

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. SUBURBS - DAY

An idyllic sunny day in a little pocket of suburbia. Garden sprinklers on perfectly manicured lawns, station wagons and toys strewn in driveways.

SUPER: *SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA - CIRCA 1970s*

A quiet street, long and straight, crossing an intersection, with a steep hill to the north end.

EXT. NATURE STRIP - DAY

LIZZIE GARNER (12) blonde, cute, but not yet a 'looker', lies on the grass with her head in her hands. She looks up with a big grin at:

The top of the hill where five boys, all around (14), take their marks on flashy push-scooters, preparing for the descent.

Lizzie stares transfixed as the boys fly down the hill at breakneck speed, whooping as they go. They whiz straight past her... more whoops and hollers.

NINA (O.S.)

You should ask Mum and Dad for one.

Lizzie turns her head to see NINA GARNER (15) also blonde, behind her. She's got three years on Lizzie and it shows, she's more woman than girl.

NINA

Looks like a lot of fun.

EXT. NATURE STRIP - LATER

Lizzie and Nina watch the boys push their scooters back up towards them. One of the boys - AARON SPENCER, long dark hair falling over his eyes, deep tan, turns, glances in their direction. He smiles at Lizzie.

Lizzie blushes, hurriedly looks away. Nina waits till he's out of earshot.

NINA

You like him.

LIZZIE
Do not.

NINA
You do!

INT. GARNER DINING ROOM - NIGHT

A modestly furnished fibro' clad home. An artificial Christmas tree in one corner.

At the table - MUM (40s) an apron permanently tied to her waist. DAD (50s) casual attire, easy going, still reading the paper.

Lizzie and Nina join them for a dinner of franks and beans.

NINA
Lizzie's in love with Aaron
Spencer.

Lizzie blushes beet red.

LIZZIE
I am not.

Mum and Dad exchange a glance the girls do not see.

INT. GARNER BEDROOM - NIGHT

The girls lie in their separate beds in their pyjamas.

NINA
Well?

LIZZIE
Well, what?

NINA
Did you ask?

LIZZIE
Yep.

She turns away from her sister, hugs her pillow.

NINA
And?

LIZZIE
She didn't say it.

NINA

What?

LIZZIE

'You never know your luck'.

NINA

That doesn't mean...

LIZZIE

You know it does. You get that, and you just know it's a dead-cert.

Nina turns the light out.

Lizzie's voice through the darkness.

LIZZIE

It's not about Aaron Spencer, you know...

NINA

I know.

LIZZIE

...It's about...

NINA

I know.
(pause)
Night.

LIZZIE

Night.

EXT. NATURE STRIP - DAY

Another picture perfect day. Lizzie sits on the grass, head in hands. She smiles wistfully as one of the boys counts down: 5,4,3,2,1...the scooter boys once again fly down the hill at breakneck speed.

As the hill slopes to a more even plane they zig-zag and cut in and out of one another - practised expert manoeuvres.

Aaron and his mates push their scooters back up the road. As he approaches Lizzie, Aaron breaks stride with the group.

AARON

How's it going?

Lizzie makes eye contact just long enough to blurt out a response.

LIZZIE
I'm good... thanks.

Aaron smiles, pauses, awkward.

AARON
Hey, do you want a go?

He gestures to his scooter.

Lizzie hesitates for a second, gets to her feet. She looks around at the boys further up the road. RICK (14) a curly carrot-top haired boy, wearing a 'Queen' emblazoned t-shirt turns to look at his mate.

RICK
Hey, Aaron. C'mon, hustle man!
We're doin speed trials.

Aaron suddenly uncomfortable, shuffles from one foot to another, blows his hair out of his eyes.

AARON
I gotta go, sorry.

He hurries to catch up with his mates.

LIZZIE
(quietly, to herself)
That's okay.

Lizzie watches him go.

INT. GARNER KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mum washes dishes, Lizzie dries them.

LIZZIE
Mum...?

MUM
Yes, love?

Lizzie opens her mouth, about to speak.

LIZZIE
Um... nothing.

MUM
Something on your mind?

Lizzie dries the last saucepan.

LIZZIE
No. Everything's fine.

A reassuring smile, she hangs up the tea-towel walks into the:

LOUNGE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dad sits in an armchair watching a documentary on television. Lizzie sits in an adjoining chair. A commercial break interrupts the program.

DAD
So, what's been happening with you today, Miss Lizzie?

LIZZIE
Hmm... not much. I did want to ask you...

Dad seems enthralled by one of the ads.

LIZZIE
Dad, I asked Mum, but... I was just wondering...?

Dad still has his eyes glued to the T.V. set.

DAD
Nina tells us you're pretty keen on the boy up the road.

LIZZIE
What? No. I...I mean he seems nice, but that's not why I...

DAD
(eyes still on the TV)
You know, your mother and I met while I was playing district rugby, but I think we've probably told you that, right?

LIZZIE
Yeah.

Dad gets up to turn the volume up on the TV.

DAD
Yeah, course. And you're nowhere
near that age yet. Silly me.

LIZZIE
Dad?

Dad backs into his armchair.

DAD
Yes, honey?

The documentary program resumes. His eyes focus on the
screen.

DAD
Look at this, honey. Amazing.
That's 'aurora borealis', also
known as the Northern Lights. Have
you learnt about this at school?

Lizzie nods her head, dejected.

LIZZIE
No.

INT. GARNER BEDROOM - LATER

Lizzie faces the wall. Nina faces the other way in her bed
reading a book. She closes it, turns to her sister.

NINA
I don't think you should ask Dad.

LIZZIE
What?

NINA
About the scooter.

LIZZIE
Why?

NINA
Cause I heard them talking and I
just don't think this is a good
time.

LIZZIE
What do you mean?

NINA

I heard them talking about Dad's work, and I don't think things are... I just don't think it's a good idea, that's all.

LIZZIE

Well, I already did.

NINA

You did? What'd he say?

LIZZIE

Well I didn't really get that far...

NINA

Well don't, okay?

Lizzie huffs her frustration.

LIZZIE

Okay, I won't.

NINA

Good.

Nina switches off the light.

EXT. NATURE STRIP - DAY

Lizzie lies on her back, looks up at the sky. She shields her eyes from the sun, as birds soar overhead and the whir of spinning wheels and kid's whoops and shrieks sound in her ears.

She closes her eyes. Drifts off.

FANTASY SEQUENCE

Imagines herself soaring down the hill on a scooter. Looks over to see Aaron as he flies down the hill beside her.

Listens as he repeats her name over and over:

AARON (V.O.)

Lizzie. Lizzie. Lizzie...

Only it isn't Aaron saying it at all.

END SEQUENCE

It's Nina's voice that snaps her out of her reverie. Her eyes blink open. The sun has gone down.

NINA
Lizzie.

LIZZIE
What?

NINA
Mum sent me up. Tea's ready.

INT. GARNER LOUNGE ROOM - DAY

SUPER: *CHRISTMAS DAY*

The family sit amongst the rubble of Christmas wrapping paper. Lizzie opens a present, holds up an ABBA t-shirt, smiles.

MUM
You seemed to like that one. Think it'll fit?

Lizzie holds it up against herself.

LIZZIE
Yeah. It's great Mum, thanks.

MUM
Right. Looks like we're all done for another year. Time to get this lot cleaned up.

Mum gathers up used Christmas wrapping paper puts it in garbage bags as Nina collects plates from the table and takes them to the kitchen.

Lizzie looks downcast. She picks up a book and a few of the other presents at her feet, glances over at her father engrossed in an issue of National Geographic.

DAD
(still eyeing his magazine)
You happy with this year's Christmas haul, Miss Lizzie?

LIZZIE

Yeah.

DAD

Really? Cause I'm looking at what you've got there and it occurs to me that something might be missing.

Dad looks around the room.

DAD

Hmm, I suppose that's it... it's just I could have sworn there was something else.

LIZZIE

What?

Dad calls out to the others.

DAD

Hey, girls!

Mum and Nina walk into the lounge room.

DAD

I was just saying to Lizzie that I could have sworn we've forgotten something. Another gift perhaps, that we've overlooked?

Mum and Nina adopt a mock innocent look.

DAD

I mean something that's *really* special?

MUM

Don't think so.

NINA

Not that I know of.

DAD

Hmm, hang on a sec.

Dad is on his feet. He zips out of the room, then re-enters tooting the horn of a BRAND SPANKING NEW SCOOTER embellished with pink tassels.

Lizzie jumps to her feet...

LIZZIE

Oh, thankyou, thankyou, thankyou.

Throws her arms around her father's neck, kisses him.

DAD

It's got everything. Twelve and half inch pump-up tyres, front and rear lights, a bugle horn...

Dad toots the bugle horn again.

DAD

...chrome mudguards - also front and rear, a flower basket for your knick-knacks. It's the latest Cyclops, finished in iridescent cherry-red.

Lizzie's face beams.

LIZZIE

Thank-you, it's...

DAD

You're welcome, my darling.

She trails a hand over the new paint.

MUM

Go on then. Go try it out.

Nina winks at her sister.

LIZZIE

(to her sister)

You knew!

They exchange a look, smile at one another.

Lizzie heads for the front door.

EXT. GARNER HOUSE - FRONT YARD - DAY

Lizzie, screwdriver in hand, removes the scooter's flower-basket. She toots the horn lightly, runs a hand over the gleaming paintwork. Balancing on the scooter's platform, she bounces gently up and down.

EXT. STREET - LATER

Lizzie rides around the cul-de-sac on the scooter, getting a few moves down pat.

EXT. STREET - LATER

Lizzie wheels the scooter up the road, approaches the intersection. She stops suddenly, listens to the sounds of the neighbourhood kids' hoots and hollers.

Her face lights up, she grips the handlebars.

She strides to the intersection, peers just over the crest, sees all the neighbourhood kids at the top of the hill...

...on their NEW BICYCLES. Her smile fades.

Aaron, a quick glance at Lizzie, pedals fast by her.

Lizzie, a lone figure stands by her scooter.

FADE OUT.