

From Anna and August by Don Zolidis

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ANNA, 18, a hyper-intelligent girl about to go to the prom

ANNA'S MOTHER, 40s

ANNA'S FATHER, 40s

ANNA'S MOTHER enters carrying a gigantic pink, fluffy ridiculous dress she's making herself that somehow manages to be thirty years out of date.)

ANNA'S MOTHER

Hold still.

ANNA

I'm not wearing that.

ANNA'S MOTHER

It's not finished yet. It's going to look better.

ANNA

I don't like pink, Mom. I'm not a pink person.

ANNA'S MOTHER

I think I know what colors you like better than you do. You used to wear pink all the time.

ANNA

I was a baby. I didn't have a choice in the matter.

ANNA'S MOTHER

And you looked so cute too. Let me get this over your head.

ANNA

Why can't we buy a dress?

ANNA'S MOTHER

Sweetheart, if I have the skills to make a dress from hand, why would we ever waste money and buy a dress? That would be silly.

(She fits the dress on ANNA. It is a hideous abomination of pink ruffles and bows.)

Wow. Don't you just love it?

ANNA

No.

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ANNA'S MOTHER (*hurt*)

You don't love it? But... I worked so hard on it.

ANNA

Mom, it's gross. I am a hideous abomination of pink chiffon—like some kind of crystallized pepto bismol fountain.

ANNA'S MOTHER (*near tears*)

I thought it was pretty. What everyone has been telling me has been true: I can't do anything right. Anything at all. I'm a failure.

(she begins to sob)

I'm sorry baby. I was trying my best. I guess my best isn't good enough for my only child. I tried to give you everything. I tried, honey. I tried.

(she dissolves into a puddle of sniffles and sobs.)

ANNA

Mom it's okay.

ANNA'S MOTHER

No it's not!

ANNA

No I like it.

ANNA'S MOTHER (*crying uncontrollably*)

You're just saying that. You hate it. I'm a failure as a mother. I'm going to sit at home and eat tubs of ice cream every night until I die.

ANNA

No I... adore it. It's magnificent.

ANNA'S MOTHER

You're just saying that. You hate it.

ANNA

No it's very... it's very... floral and... exuberant and... full of a rare and spectacular beauty.

ANNA'S MOTHER

I'm so glad you love it.

(she calls off)

You hear that George!?! She loves the dress! You owe me twenty bucks!!

ANNA'S FATHER (*off-stage*)

She doesn't love it!

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ANNA'S MOTHER

She just said she did! She wouldn't lie to her mother!! Now darling, it's time we had... the talk.

ANNA

What?

ANNA'S MOTHER

It's time you learned about boys.

ANNA

Mom, I don't know that I want to have this talk—
(ANNA'S FATHER enters.)

ANNA'S FATHER

All right, now anybody tries anything tonight you know what to do.

ANNA

Dad.

ANNA'S FATHER

Tell me. Let's act out a dangerous scenario.

ANNA'S MOTHER

I'm trying to talk to her, dear.

ANNA'S FATHER

I'm your date, Mr. Feely Hands. We're on the dance floor—
(He approaches and tries to dance with her.)

ANNA

Dad this is wrong on quite a number of levels.

ANNA'S FATHER

So I got one hand up here and then the other hand is going to sneak around here—what do you do?

(She grabs his wrist and twists his fingers.)

Ah! Ow!

(ANNA kicks him in the stomach. Her FATHER backs off to regain his breath.)

ANNA'S MOTHER

Stop it!

ANNA'S FATHER

Nice moves. I've taught you well. You have one more lesson—I call this one: Mr. Antsy Pants wants to start something in the car. We're sitting down.

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ANNA'S MOTHER

Get out! Get out! We're trying to have a talk.

ANNA'S FATHER

All right, but just remember Anna: I won't think any less of you if your date ends up in the hospital tonight. Got me?

(He leaves.)

ANNA

I think he might have preferred a son.

ANNA'S MOTHER

Nonsense. Where were we? Boys.

(she sighs deeply)

Do you remember when you were six and little Joey from next door kicked you in the back of the head and you lost a tooth? Boys will do that to you your entire life. But instead of chipping your tooth, they're going to chip your heart. I remember when I was young, I was in love with this boy who lived down the block. I thought he was keen. That was slang we used back then. Everything was keen. Well he was keen. His name was Armando. He was from Guatemala. Oh... Armando. What a ripe specimen of young manhood he was. He used to mow the lawn with his shirt off, his tanned, sinewy body glistening in the summer sun. His taugt, rippling abs—

ANNA

Mom, why is everyone around here wildly inappropriate?!

ANNA'S MOTHER

Sorry. My fondest memories of Armando were hiding in the bushes outside his window at night while he slept. He was so peaceful. Like a muscular Guatemalan angel. I used to take pictures of him when he wasn't looking and then I'd cut out his little head and glue it onto the covers of Men's Health magazine. But he was afraid of my love. He didn't understand me. But no restraining order was going to keep us apart, so one night he left the door of his car unlocked, he drove a Volvo Station Wagon, and I snuck in and... sometimes life isn't fair, honey. Sometimes even when you go through all the effort of faking an appendicitis in the back of someone's car in the vain hope that they'll fall in love with you on the way to the hospital, it doesn't work out. Anyway, we weren't meant to be. So, in the immortal words of Stephen Stills: "If you can't be with the one you love, honey, love the one you're with. Do do do do do." So I settled for your father and that's how you came into the world.

ANNA

Whatever happened to Armando?

ANNA'S MOTHER

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It doesn't matter. He lives at 1441 Walker Street and drives a silver Toyota Camry with ninety-four thousand miles on it, but it's not like I'm still stalking him or anything.

(she gathers herself)

But darling, if you get your heart broken tonight, remember: you can always settle for another guy who isn't quite as good. And that's how you go through life and end up not going crazy. I'm glad we had this talk.

(She leaves.)

ANNA

The question occurred to me: Was August going to be my Armando, or my father?

(short pause)

That didn't come out right.