

THE THINGS MY FATHER NEVER TAUGHT ME

Written by

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DJANGO REINHARDT'S "TEA FOR TWO".

FADE IN:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT.

ALBERT, a middle-aged man, feeds MELVIN, a two-year-old.

ADULT MELVIN (V.O.)

I loved my father and he taught me many useful things. But he didn't teach me anything at all about women. There was a time when I resented that. And then, one day, it occurred to me that perhaps he didn't know all that much about the fairer sex.

On the other side of the room, CORINNE, a vulgar, morbidly obese woman, sits on the couch and devours a large packet of potato chips.

ADULT MELVIN (V.O.)

One look at my mother and I had conclusive proof.

She burps loudly and gives a smile of satisfaction.

EXT. EAST PERTH STREETS - PRESENT DAY.

MELVIN, now thirty-two, walks along with MIKE, three. Both are bespectacled.

MELVIN

Here's what I'm going to do, son. I'll give it to you straight. I'm not going to fill your head with

stories about fictitious characters like Santa Claus or the Easter Bunny or God. There's only one thing you need to worry about in this life and that's women. And I'm going to teach you everything I know about the art of meeting, courting and seducing 'em. Don't worry about anything else, there's nothing more important. Reading, writing, toilet training you can learn later in life.

2.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY.

Mike, wearing cute denim overalls with a teddy bear embroidered on the front, stands on a footstool in front of Melvin and a TAILOR.

MELVIN

Clothes maketh or unmaketh the man.
What were you thinking when you put that on this morning? That you were going to spend the day in the sandpit?

Mike responds with a look of innocence and confusion.

MELVIN

(to tailor)
We'll take the best you've got.
(to Mike)
The finer the threads, the more inclined the ladies will be to tear them off. I know, don't try to make sense of their logic. They have none.

EXT. CAFE - DAY.

Melvin at a table with Mike, who is now dressed in smart casual attire and looks more like his father.

MELVIN

Of course, it's not all about clothes. It's the way you carry yourself too. You've gotta make a conscious effort to be relaxed but in control in all situations. And a little playful. Go for an expression where you're suppressing mild amusement. But don't overdo it. You want to look dignified at all times.

Melvin glances over to Mike, who is picking his nose.

MELVIN

Damnit, son! Are you not listening
to a word I say?

Mike freezes, unsure what to do, his finger still planted
in his nostril. Melvin yanks it out.

3.

EXT. PRESCHOOL - DAY.

Melvin and Mike approach the entrance.

MELVIN

Now meeting the right person is
really all about spending enough
time in the right places. So we're
going to a new preschool today. One
in a higher socioeconomic suburb.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY.

Melvin and Mike sit on a bench and watch children at play.

MELVIN

Well?

Mike looks around then points.

MELVIN

You like the girl over there?

Mike nods. She's MOLLY, three. A shy, bespectacled
girl, she sits on her own and reads a book.

MELVIN

Uh ... yeah. I think there's enough
geek genes in our family. It's time
to diversify.

Elsewhere, BRITTANY, four, is taunting another child.

MELVIN

And avoid that bitchy girl. She may
be pretty but believe me, it's not
worth the trouble. You definitely
don't want to get involved with
someone like your mother.

Melvin keeps looking. He points out AMELIE, three, well-dressed and eating a baguette.

MELVIN

Stay away from the French girl too.
French women have no morals.

4.

MELVIN

It might be great for a bit of slap and tickle after midnight when the only meat your buddies are getting is at a kebab shop. But there's no word in French for "fidelity" and what we're looking for is a serious relationship. I mean, what you're looking for.

(awkwardly unconvincing)

I'm fine.

SARAH, three, blonde and dressed in pink, sits at a table nearby. She talks excitedly with a group of girls.

MELVIN

She's popular, good-looking. She seems friendly enough. I think Barbie there might be worth a try.

Mike doesn't look so sure.

MELVIN

Go and talk to her.

Intimidated, Mike shakes his head, his eyes pleading.

MELVIN

C'mon! It's better to get shot down than wonder "What if?"

Melvin gives him a push in Sarah's direction.

MELVIN

Just show an interest in the things that interest her and you'll have plenty to talk about.

Mike, looking completely out of place in his flashy clothes, apprehensively approaches the girls. They stop talking and watch him.

He picks up Sarah's handbag and admires it, putting it over his shoulder. Then he tries on her sun hat and

slips into her discarded pink shoes. The girls laugh at him and run away.

Melvin covers his face in disbelief.

5.

A MOMENT LATER.

Back on the bench, Melvin scolds Mike.

MELVIN

Would you like to go to the toyshop later on? You can pick out a nice fairy costume. What are you doing to me, boy?!

Mike shrugs defensively.

MELVIN

We need to toughen up your image now. Most girls are attracted to bad boys. See if you can start some sort of altercation with her. Understand?

Mike thinks, then nods his head.

A MOMENT LATER.

Mike grabs a handful of sand from the sandpit, marches up to Sarah and throws it forcefully into her face. Sarah starts to cry, drawing the attention of everyone in the playground. Mike smiles and looks to his father for approval. Melvin is horrified.

INT. FLORIST - DAY.

Mike struggles with a large arrangement of flowers. Melvin pays the FLORIST.

MELVIN

Well that was over the top but at least you got her attention. And it's better to be known as a jerk rather than a fruitcake. The good news is you now have the opportunity to apologise. If you can feign sincerity and a desperation for forgiveness, you should be able to endear yourself to her.

(to florist)

Leave the price tag on. We want
her to know how much we paid.

6.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY.

Melvin watches from the other side of the high fence.
Mike carries the flowers across the playground.

He sees Sarah being comforted by her friends. Then he
sees Molly, who is still reading her book.

Melvin gestures for Mike to give the flowers to Sarah.
Mike thinks, then gives them to Molly instead.

Melvin groans and throws his hands up in frustration.

EXT. CARPARK - DAY.

Melvin points his finger in Mike's face.

MELVIN

I'm trying to do the right thing
by you and you mess everything up!
You're as incompetent as ... the
government film funding bodies!

MARY, early thirties and attractive, approaches with
Molly, who carries the flowers.

MARY

Molly loves her flowers. Thank you.

Melvin's attitude changes immediately.

MELVIN

Oh. No problem. They were my idea.

MARY

Well it was a very nice gesture.

She continues walking, then stops.

MARY

We're going to lunch at the cafe on
the corner. Would you and Mike like
to join us?

MELVIN

Absolutely. We'll see you there.

Mary and Molly leave. Melvin turns back to Mike.

7.

MELVIN

Great work my friend! Looks like we're in for a double date.

He claps a high five with his son.

MELVIN

And the perfect chance for you to learn from a master at work.

INT. CAFE ON THE CORNER - DAY.

Melvin, Mike, Mary and Molly sit around a table. Before eating, Mary and Molly bow their heads in prayer. Mike watches them and does the same.

Unseen by the others, Melvin decides to give thanks too. And not for the food in front of him.

EXT. PARK - DAY.

Melvin and Mary sit and watch their children laugh as they chase each other about.

MARY

They seem to like each other.

MELVIN

They certainly do.

MARY

Molly has a birthday party coming up. Would you like to come?

MELVIN

Absolutely.

MARY

I'm thinking about a sleepover? Or is it too soon?

She smiles at him. Melvin raises an eyebrow seductively.

MELVIN

A "sleepover" would be great. No such thing as "too soon" when you're with the right person.

He moves closer to Mary. He puts one hand on her leg and uses the other to play with her hair. She pulls away violently and stands.

MARY

What are you doing?!

MELVIN

Getting to know you. Before the "sleepover".

MARY

I meant Mike coming over to spend the night. Not his Dad.

MELVIN

Oh.

Unimpressed, she walks over to Molly, lifts her into her arms and they leave. Mike stares coldly at his father, his hands on his hips.

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY.

Mike picks flowers from a nearby garden. Melvin sits alone, dejected. Mike approaches and whispers in his ear.

MELVIN

It's better to get shot down than wonder "What if?"?

Mike whispers more.

MELVIN

I now have the opportunity to apologise and endear myself to her?

Mike presents his father with a small arrangement of hand-picked flowers. Melvin thinks.

MELVIN

Yeah! Yeah, you're right. I've taught you well!

He takes the flowers, leans over and kisses his boy fondly on the head.

