

BRUCE, ROY, HELEN
SMALL ALLISON
CHRISTIAN
JOHN

SMALL ALISON. (*Pulling a bag from Helen's arms.*) Are these your costumes?

HELEN. They are.

JOHN. I wanna see!

CHRISTIAN. Me too!

The kids pull period dresses out of the bags.

HELEN. Careful, careful!

ROY. (*Entering.*) Hey, everybody. Que pasa?

The three kids sidle up to him, shy but thrilled to see him.

SMALL ALISON. Hi Roy.

CHRISTIAN. Hey Roy, what's goin' on?

ROY. (*To John.*) Hey, you look like a guy I met the other day. Are you that same guy? I know what he looked like upside down.

He picks John up and turns him upside down as all three kids laugh and squeal with delight.

START →

HELEN. Hello. I'm Helen Bechdel.

ROY. (*Putting John down to shake her hand.*) Ah, Mrs. Bechdel, yeah, I'm Roy— sorry, I know who you are, my aunt and uncle talk about you all the time, they see your plays, they're crazy about you. They're always saying you're so much better than Irma Hornbacher.

HELEN. (*Blushing.*) Oh. No, Irma's wonderful.

BRUCE. Come on, you're in a different class!

(*To Roy.*)

I've seen a lot of New York theater, even by those standards she's exceptional.

As he says this, he puts his hand on her shoulder in a gesture that only he and Helen notice is awkward.

SMALL ALISON. Our mom's in a play called Mrs. Warner and the Professor!

HELEN. *Mrs. Warren's Profession.*

SMALL ALISON. She studied in New York with Uta Hagen.

Do you know who that is?

ROY. I don't even know what you just said.

BRUCE. Wanna get started?

ROY. Sure. Whatever you want. Lemme get my tools.

BRUCE. 'kay

Roy heads out to his car, with the three chattering kids clinging to him.

SMALL ALISON. Hey Roy, did you see *Herbie Rides Again*?

CHRISTIAN. Oh, yeah! It's the best movie.

JOHN. Herbie is a car!

ROY I didn't see it.

JOHN. *The Love Bug*? You didn't see *The Love Bug*?

When they're gone, Helen asks lightly:

HELEN. Who is that? Why is he here?

BRUCE. I hired him.

HELEN. To do what?

BRUCE. To help me out.

HELEN. Where is he from?

BRUCE. When we went to the lumberyard last week he was there working for Arnie. Kid has a truck, he does hauling. Arnie said he did a good job and he was looking for more work.

HELEN. Oh, so he's just hauling.

BRUCE. Hauling. Other things. I don't know.

HELEN. Oh. So... You're thinking he's going to be working here, at the house?

BRUCE. What difference does it make?

HELEN. I- I- I just-

BRUCE. Arnie recommended him, okay?

HELEN. Okay. I'm just, I'm trying to get a sense // of-

BRUCE. Chrissakes! I know him. He was my student a few years back. Okay? What, do you think I'm bringing some bum around? Is that the bug up your ass? Christ.

END

The chattering group returns.

JOHN. You know something else about the movie that's funny? It's that the car is called the love bug. // It's a car, but they call it a bug. Even though it's a car.

BRUCE. (*Monster-charging the kids.*) Raaahr!

The kids laugh and scream.

Okay, that's enough. Come on, Roy, let's go inside. I'll show you that wallpaper.

JOHN.

CHRISTIAN.

SMALL ALISON.

Aw!

No, come on!

But dad!

BRUCE. Enough!

(To Roy.)

Bunch of little monsters.

Bruce and Roy leave. Helen watches them go.

CHRISTIAN. Mom, can we watch TV?

HELEN. Sure.

*SHIFT to Roy and Bruce entering the library.
Helen at her piano. The kids watch TV.*

ALISON.

*I want to know what's true,
dig deep into who
and what and why and when,
until now gives way to then...*

ROY. Whoa. Nice room.

BRUCE. So this is the wallpaper. William Morris. The real deal. God, it's gorgeous.

ROY. You read all these books?

BRUCE. Working on it.

ROY. That is not something I can imagine.