PROLOGUE

Setting: A Lecture Hall, Columbia University, 1989. HEIDI stands in front of a screen. Slides of paintings are shown through the lecture.

HEIDI
Sofonisba Anguissola’s depiction
Sixteenth century visual description
See her sisters, six in all, skilled artists
Painting, playing chess, proving who is smartest
Sofonisba
Sofonisba
Wisdom of the name!
Quality compared to that of Sir Titian
But her fame did not come to fruition

STUDENT (off)
Excuse me, Miss,
But this sounds prejudiced

HEIDI
That’s Doctor Miss, Sir, and I think not
I’ll take this time to put you on the spot
Look for one, but you won’t see
From the current or any past century
Find a female artist in your textbook
When you do, I’ll let you off the hook

Let’s discuss Clara Peeters
The measured lines and meters
An artist of her time unparalleled
Cylinders, disks, triangles all tell
Of cheese
Of cheese
She painted cheese for quite a prolonged spell

Here Lily Martin Spencer was inspired
By the women we have just admired
See Sofonisba’s style and strict formality
Fading flowers and a clock warn of mortality

Contrast the detail of the woman’s dress
And the jewelry of the female noblesse
Reminding us that youth and beauty pass
Please remember this for the midterm next class

Write it down!
Write it down!

Sofonisba – formal
The Titian of her time, think gowns and crowns
Peeters still life showed cheese and other nouns
Remember Mrs. Lily Martin Spencer’s display
Jewelry and dresses symbolizing play
And the fading rose reminds us nothing stays
SCENE 1

Chicago, 1965, high school dance, the Shoop Shoop Song is playing. Susan and Heidi are two 16-year-old girls who are in the corner looking at the dance floor

SUSAN (singing)
“Is it in his eyes?”

HEIDI (singing)
“Oh no you’ll be deceived”

SUSAN (singing)
“Is it in his eyes?”

HEIDI (singing)
“Oh no, he’ll make believe”

SUSAN
Jeans and tweed, what’s his name? Heidi, look at that guy!

HEIDI
Jeans and tweed, they’re all the same, why should I?

SUSAN
He’s cute and he looks sweet
The one in the vest looks like Bobby Kennedy

HEIDI
He can twist and smoke, but don’t be too naïve

SUSAN
Men rely on first impressions, trust me
(Susan unbuttons her sweater, pulls a necklace out of her purse, and puts it on)

HEIDI
You’ve got your necklace stuck in your bust, geez

SUSAN
Can you adjust me?
(Heidi helps her, begins to dance, and doesn’t notice Chris approach her)

CHRIS
I’m Chris, Student Council President here
HEIDI
I’m Heidi, I don’t go here, but I’m Newspaper Editor this year

CHRIS
Great, we’re peers, so can I ask you to dance?

HEIDI
Well, I’m with my friend Susan here, so I really can’t

CHRIS
Oh, you’re not alone? (Begins to walk away)

SUSAN
Hey wait, please don’t go

HEIDI
We can hully-gully all together
One-two-three birds of a feather

CHRIS
Keep the faith
I gotta go, I see my head master

SUSAN
Sure thing!
Boy meets Heidi in the Chapel of Disaster
Ladies’ Choice, the next dance is another chance (rolls her skirt up)
Watch my twist and smoke Bobby Kennedy romance

HEIDI
Best of luck, I mean, keep the faith!
You know, there’s no difference between him and us. Be safe!

(Susan waves good-bye to HEIDI and exits. HEIDI sits on a bench, takes out a book, reads for a moment, then puts it on her lap as she stares out. PETER, a young man in a private school blazer approaches and looks at her. She smiles and looks down.)

PETER
You look bored. I assume you are very bright.

HEIDI
Huh? Excuse me? I’m sorry?

PETER
Don't apologize, you're all armor, but I'm a knight.
Bored, depressed, anxious – all lovely qualities
I’m unable to twist and smoke simultaneously

HEIDI
I helped her hike her skirt up, why is it that ---

PETER
She is the unfortunate wench
Why should you spend this dance on the bench?
It’s not right. Tell me, what is that book you are reading?

HEIDI
“Death Be Not Proud”

PETER
I can’t say you were misleading
I saw you help your friend shorten her skirt
I admit it drove me a little bit berserk
The most attractive woman on this cruise

HEIDI
Cruise?

PETER
Dock tonight, then the farewell forever blues
We have only this one night together
Before I go to the ---

HEIDI (interrupting, coughing into handkerchief)
Sanatorium forever
Alas, my parents wanted me to finish school

PETER
Tonight may be our only night

HEIDI
You must take me for a fool

PETER
At least honor me with the last dance as your knight
I must ask you, dear, will you marry me?

HEIDI
I covet my independence and must be free

PETER
I want to know you all of my life
Be my greatest friend if you won’t be my wife
I'll keep your punch cup forever in my nightstand
Hully-gully with me, come give me your hand  (they dance awkwardly)

SCENE 2

1968, A Dance. Heidi refuses a joint offered by a hippie. Scoop, intense and charismatic, goes to her and takes a beer from a bucket on stage.

SCOOP
Are you guarding the chips tonight?

HEIDI
No

SCOOP
Then you must be the difficult type

HEIDI
Take the whole bowl (begins to walk away)

SCOOP
Where are you going?

HEIDI
I'm just here for the music

SCOOP
Vocals A minus, band C plus
We can, of course, discuss
Less interesting than The Kinks

HEIDI
Is difficult an insult?

SCOOP
What do you think?
You shouldn’t let people give you a label

HEIDI
Don’t confuse difficult with being unstable

SCOOP
We’re here for Eugene McCarthy
So you’re a liberal clearly

HEIDI
I’m actually here with a friend

SCOOP
I find that hard to believe
In this weather, why not ski? *(eats chip)*
B minus texture, C plus crunch
You go to Vassar is my hunch
Neat and clean for Eugene

HEIDI
Excuse me, please

SCOOP
Nice chatting with me
Let’s see, looks B minus but terribly rude and –

HEIDI
Tell me, why the grading?

SCOOP
I was once a good student
Til I dropped out of the Ivy League and then
Began work for Adlai Stevenson

HEIDI
A real-life radical changing the scene

SCOOP
I’m a Jew named Scoop

HEIDI
I’m not sure what that means

SCOOP
Radical, no. I played college lacrosse

HEIDI
Now it all makes sense

SCOOP
Don’t put me in a box
I’m just a journalist reporting the news
With McCarthy and Paul Newman over some brews
HEIDI
Is that so? Tell “Paul Newman” I said hello

SCOOP
Don’t you believe me? Would you like to go?

HEIDI
I can’t.

SCOOP
Why not?

HEIDI
I came with friends.

SCOOP
So?
You have to talk birth control and Norman Mailer?

HEIDI
You’re really irritating!
I’ll see you later

SCOOP
For once she speaks an honest thought
You’re prissy, but I like you a lot

HEIDI
Ha, well I don’t know if I like you

SCOOP
I’m difficult and arrogant. Why should you?

HEIDI
Well at least we agree

SCOOP
Yes, but I’m smart so you’ll put up with me

HEIDI
What message do men receive that women can’t get?
I mean, why the fuck are you so confident?

SCOOP
Ten points for you!
HEIDI
What happened to the grades?

SCOOP
Speaking your truth – politico and brave

HEIDI
No thank you, politics is not for me
My degree will be in art history

SCOOP
Don’t be suburban, rise above the norm
Form over content beats content over form

HEIDI
That’s not how I see human expression

SCOOP
It comes down to the person’s perception
Take “Homage to a Square”, what do you see?
Society’s gross inadequacies
The isolation

HEIDI
The integration

SCOOP
You’re so far fucking left, you could be Marx or Marcuse

HEIDI
Isn’t Paul Newman waiting for you, Scoop?

SCOOP
What’s wrong, have you never read Marcuse?
And isn’t your friend waiting for you?
Back to reporting for Liberated Earth News

HEIDI
Impressive

SCOOP
Circulation 362
Heidi, some advice, don’t be afraid to speak up

HEIDI
I’m not afraid, and how do you know my name?

(SCOOP peels nametag from her shawl)

SCOOP
Keep up.
You’re serious and good, a combination I covet
A true believer connecting equality to profit

HEIDI
Equal rights and equal pay, I’m sure you’ll agree

SCOOP
I told you I’m here just to write what I see

HEIDI
A woman’s life shouldn’t be inconsequential
All people deserve to fulfill their potential
A well-educated woman shouldn’t have to spend her life
Making tuna fish sandwiches and being someone’s wife
Wasting her own life to look after the kids
Doing what we’re told because it’s what our mothers did

SCOOP
I promise you this – I’m on your side here
Educated or not, life is more than yes and no, dear
Heidella, I want for you all the things you’re dreaming

HEIDI
Don’t call me that, it’s diminutive

SCOOP
You mean demeaning
But I’m trying for endearing to get you in bed
Tell me, Heidella, is there a maidenhead?

HEIDI
Excuse me, how dare you?!

SCOOP
If you say yes, I’ll get my answer

HEIDI
No.

SCOOP
I know you’ve got your bras to burn.
I'm sorry

HEIDI
It's okay

SCOOP
I meant torching lingerie
Remember me fondly when you're thirty-five
Picking your kid up for the after-school drive
I'm imagining daily lessons on the cello
And a psychiatrist dad who collects Miro
I'll be watching my son perform Johnny Appleseed
With a wife who manages to put up with me
Reminiscing on my time as a liberal news area editor
And when I thought I could fall in love and what happened to her

HEIDI
Are you guarding the chips?

SCOOP
No, I trust them (He kisses her passionately, begins to leave, and then turns back to HEIDI. She follows him. He clenches his fist in success.)