

Working Title:

Something's Missing

[pigeon intro. time is 1989.]

CHARACTERS:

mom (andrea)

girl (anna)

person 1 (anna)

person 2 (kash)

person 3 (derek)

other voices (at least 3, cartoonish, A. Andrea B. Derek C. Kash D. Anna)

sergeant brown (kash)

cop on radio (derek)

operator (andrea)

(Open on the sound of a carousel in the background, a little creepy, as carousels can be. Then . . .)

OPERATOR (through a phone)

If you'd like to continue the call, please deposit 10 cents. If you'd like to continue the call, please deposit. . .

PERSON (anxious, as operators used to make us)

Hey, i don't got a dime, I'm at that indoor park at Town Square, where the carousel is, come meet me!

(sounds of excitement in the background)

I don't know what that's about,

OPERATOR

If you'd like to *continue this call

PERSON

i think I heard someone scream. . .

(Call is cut off. Then, the crackle of a police radio.)

COP (on radio)

Child missing at Town Square Park. . . Units in the area please respond. . . Child missing at Town Square Park. . .

(We hear people shouting, going from in the background of a phone call to live. First, MOM. Getting closer.)

MOM (overlapping)

Jennifer, Jennifer! Don't you play with Mom now. Jennifer, please come out.

(Other people shout.)

MORE VOICES (many, overlapping)

A. Jennifer? Jennifer?

B. We're looking for you, Jennifer!

C. Hey! Have you seen a little girl? Her mother says she's lost!

D. Has anyone seen a little girl?

(The sound of the carousel grinding to a halt with the calypso music coming to a slow eerie stop too.)

SERGEANT BROWN

I'm Sergeant Brown. St. Paul Police. Let's, uh, get the facts. When did you lose track of her?

MOM

I didn't lose her. You think I'm a bad mother? She wandered off in a second when I turned my back maybe.

SERGEANT BROWN

Uh, let's calm down. How old is she?

MOM

You calm down. --She's 7.--Don't tell me to calm down. I was in this store here, you can ask these people, they saw, and I told her, "Don't you move while Mom is in the store. You play right there or else," I said.

PERSON 3

She went up to the park.

PERSON 2 (know-it-all)

Course she went up to the park. She's a kid. She's hears a carousel and she's going. Like the Pied Piper.

(Other voices:

A. Yeah, I saw that.

B. It's only logic.

C. Kids gonna kid.)

SERGEANT BROWN

Can you tell me what she was wearing, Mother?

MOM

She was. . . What was she wearing?

PERSON 2

Don't tell me you don't even know.

MOM

You're not a parent. Just happy to get her out of the house dressed. I just. . . She was wearing. . . I love my little girl. You're not a parent if you don't understand.

PERSON 3

I saw her. She was clean. Her shirt had bright flowers on it, and she had

MOM

Flowers on her pants. Yes. She loved. . .

SERGEANT BROWN (to PERSON 3)

Did you talk to the girl?

PERSON 3

She was standing outside my store and looking up through the ceiling above the park at the tall buildings.

MOM

Saint Paul is too big.

I don't remember these tall buildings being here. We're visiting from Rochester.

PERSON

They just got built. 1980.

MOM

We're supposed to go to that new Ordway Center for the Performing Arts tonight.

PERSON 2

O, so fancy.

Ask me and I say its all ugly and its not going to work. They killed downtown when they did all this "urban renewal". You know you're doomed when the bureau'crats are making up words.

PERSON 3

You don't know what you're talking about. We had to do something because people were going to those indoor malls in the suburbs. I'll tell ya, George Latimer is the best mayor this city has ever had.

SERGEANT BROWN

[clearing his throat] So, the girl, uh, Jennifer--

MOM

I'm not standing here with these people any longer. I'm looking.

(wandering off, shouting)

Jennifer! *Jennifer!

(to people farther away)

Have you seen my little girl, about seven years old, flowers, she was wearing.

SERGEANT BROWN (calling after, * overlapping)

Maam, please. . . Mother! . . . ok. . . well.

(to PERSON 3)

You said that she, uh, was standing in front of your store.

PERSON 3

She was standing outside my store. Looking up. I said, you're looking at a shining city on a hill. And she said,

GIRL

What?

PERSON 3

i said, young lady, you're a citizen of the greatest city in the greatest country in history. Great things are in store, Young Lady. We have won the cold war, so you can have freedom and democracy and happiness. She said,

GIRL

Freedom?

PERSON 3

I said, you work hard and you climb the ladder to an office in one of those towers there and you'll see. You'll be able to look down at us and from up there in the future, we'll be able to see how great we've become.

(A scream of joy!)

PERSON (from somewhere else)

Found her!

(Footsteps rushing toward them. The sound of the carousel restarts in the background, slowly, creepy at first, and then getting up to normal speed again.)

MOM (embracing her)

Baby, baby. Where, where did you go?

GIRL

I went to the carousel and then I climbed the ladder.

PERSON 3

What ladder? The ladder I was *talking about?

MOM (*overlapping)

What ladder?

GIRL

And I circled above the city.

SERGEANT BROWN

young lady

MOM

O dear

GIRL

There were lots of people. With jet packs on. And cars too. The buildings poking all the way up to the clouds. Way way way high. And and, I could see, parks on the ground, everywhere, water, and places for people to play music and play. Everyone was so happy.

PERSON 3

She saw the city of the future. I told you George Latimer was a great mayor.

SERGEANT BROWN

Why were they happy, Girl?

(OTHER VOICES:

A. O a sense of community

D. Of course. That's right.

C. convenience and community

B. and creativity!)

GIRL

Also, there was no money.

(2 beats.)

GIRL

They did what needed doing and then they came downtown where they knew they could relax. Everyone just had whatever they needed.

MOM

She's bumped her head.

SERGEANT BROWN

We'll get her to a hospital immediately.

(Sound of police radio again.)

COP ON RADIO

Need an ambulance at Town Square Park

(sound of coins into a pay phone. PERSON talking into phone again)

PERSON (on phone)

Yeah, I took some coins from the fountain . . . They found the girl who went missing and--listen to this--she bumped her head and became a communist. yeah. yeah! Commie. We're going to be fighting that dirty business forever! A commie!

THE END