

The Blue Dress

by

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Based on his short story

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INT. WISEMAN HOUSE, REBECCA'S BEDROOM - DAY

A girl's hands work on a needlepoint pillow. They pause when the girl's mother, EDITH WISEMAN (40s) calls from downstairs.

EDITH (O.C.)
Rebecca! You'll be late for school!

REBECCA WISEMAN (12, tall, cute but not beautiful, with an intelligent face) continues with her needlepoint.

EDITH (O.C.) (CONT'D)
(insistent, impatient)
Do you hear me?

Rebecca stops sewing with an audible sigh. Sound of footsteps on the stairs.

REBECCA
(resigned)
I'm coming.

Rebecca puts the needlepoint on her desk and leaves room.

INT. WISEMAN HOUSE, DOWNSTAIRS HALL - DAY

Their home is typical working class. Rebecca's mother, hands on her hips, watches Rebecca come down the stairs.

EDITH
Let me look at you. Be careful of
your skirt. Next time you rip it,
I'll be patching the patches.

She smooths Rebecca's sweater. Rebecca fidgets, pulls away.

EDITH (CONT'D)
Your uncle is coming for a visit--

REBECCA
(interrupts, not happy)
Uncle Wallace? When's he coming?

EDITH
Tomorrow night. Dad's meeting him
at the train station.

REBECCA
Is Aunt Vera coming with him?

EDITH
No. She's staying--

REBECCA

She never comes.

EDITH

Try to be happy to see him.

REBECCA

He makes fun of Dad and me for reading too many books.

JACKIE (O.C.)

Becky!

EDITH

There's Jackie. Off you go.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

JACKIE (12), Rebecca's friend, and Rebecca walk to school. They wave to friends and skip over cracks in the sidewalk.

REBECCA

My uncle's coming to visit tomorrow.

JACKIE

The one from Texas? What do you think he'll bring you for a gift?

REBECCA

I don't know, but it's never anything I want. Why does he have to come anyway?

INT. WISEMAN HOUSE, REBECCA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Rebecca is working on her pillow. Hearing her mother in the upstairs hall, she throws it on her bed and pretends to study. Edith enters the room and examines the needlepoint.

EDITH

This is the best work you've ever done. I'll be taking lessons from you before I know it.

REBECCA

I'll finish it tonight.

EDITH

Be sure you do your homework first.

Edith places the needlepoint out of reach on the bureau.

REBECCA

Will you show me how to sew on the
back tomorrow?

EDITH

Your uncle will be here. Maybe on
the weekend.

EXT. WISEMAN HOUSE, FRONT YARD - DAY

Rebecca rakes leaves onto a blanket and hauls them out to the
curb. She dumps them and brushes her hands.

MICHAEL (O.C.)

What are you up to, young lady?

Rebecca doesn't see her father, MICHAEL WISEMAN (40s, over
six feet tall, thin, distinguished looking, wears a suit),
behind her. Although startled, she's excited to see him.

REBECCA

Dad!

Rebecca jumps into his arms. He twirls her around.

MICHAEL

How's my best girl?

REBECCA

(conspiratorially)
Don't let Mom hear you.

Putting her down, he places his finger on his lips.

MICHAEL

Our secret.

REBECCA

How long is Uncle Wallace staying?

MICHAEL

Not long. Don't you like hearing
stories about his cattle ranch?

REBECCA

No. He always says I read too much.

MICHAEL

That's why you're so smart.

REBECCA

He says I'll have to wear glasses
some day and boys won't talk to me.

Michael laughs as they walk up the stairs to the porch.

INT. WISEMAN HOUSE, DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

Michael opens the screen door. He and Rebecca come in. Edith meets them in the hallway. The parents kiss perfunctorily.

EDITH

Dinner will be ready in a minute.

Edith watches Rebecca take her father into the living room.

REBECCA

Let me put them in.

He gives her his pocket change. She drops the coins in a jar.

MICHAEL

Have to save for retirement.

EDITH

The car should be fixed before you worry about your retirement. Whenever that will be.

Edith returns to the kitchen. Michael ruffles Rebecca's hair.

MICHAEL

It's really for your college.

REBECCA

But I'm only twelve.

INT. WISEMAN HOUSE, DININGROOM - DAY

The family is at the diningroom table eating dinner.

EDITH

What time will you and Wallace be back from the station?

MICHAEL

The usual time. Unless the train's late.

EDITH

I want dinner on time. I expect Wallace will be hungry.

REBECCA

Why does he wear cowboy clothes?

EDITH

That's what he wears when he's out with his cattle all day.

REBECCA

There's no cattle around here. Dad, what's a 'drugstore cowboy'?

EDITH

(angry)

Where did you hear that?

MICHAEL

She must have heard me talking to Mr. LeClerc.

Edith gives her husband a dark look.

EDITH

Your father was trying to be funny.

REBECCA

I don't get it.

EDITH

You don't need to. It's NOT funny.

REBECCA

I hope he brings me a ring. He gave one to Emily last year.

EDITH

Your cousin's older than you are. And don't always expect a present. I'll get dessert.

Edith goes to the kitchen. Michael leans toward Rebecca.

MICHAEL

After dessert, young lady, how about we burn some leaves?

INT. WISEMAN HOUSE, UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Rebecca hears her parents talking downstairs. She's in pajamas and sits on the top step to hear them better.

EDITH (O.C.)

I don't think Rebecca will get her ring.

Rebecca makes a face to show her disappointment.

MICHAEL (O.C.)
 He's filthy rich. Could he get her
 something she wants for a change?

EDITH (O.C.)
 He always manages to buy something
 nice for my niece.

Rebecca tiptoes to her room and closes the door.

FADE TO BLACK

INT. WISEMAN HOUSE, REBECCA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Rebecca looks from the window at her father and uncle on the street. UNCLE WALLACE (50s, tall, portly, ruddy features; wears cowboy clothes, boots, hat) carries an overnight bag. This get-up would look odd on a less-imposing man.

REBECCA
 Mom, they're here!

Sound of Edith running down the hall and opening the screen door. Heavy footsteps on the porch.

EDITH (O.C.)
 (laughing)
 Wallace. It's so good to see you.

UNCLE WALLACE (O.C.)
 (like a square dance
 caller)
 Allemande left and a dosey-do...

EDITH (O.C.)
 (girlish squeal)
 Put me down! Wallace, stop!

INT. WISEMAN HOUSE, UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

Hearing this, Rebecca makes a face and shakes her head.

UNCLE WALLACE (O.C.)
 ...skip to ma lou my darling.
 (out of breath, but loud)
 I need a drink, Michael. That train
 ride worked my nerves something
 awful. Bourbon. And make it neat.

EDITH (O.C.)
 Michael, bring it to the table.
 Dinner's ready. Rebecca! Dinner!

INT. WISENAB HOUSE, DININGROOM - DAY

In the dining room, Rebecca tries to sneak past her uncle. He reaches out to catch her. She squirms when he tries to tickle her. She only lets him kiss her once.

UNCLE WALLACE

How's my favorite book worm?

REBECCA

I'm fine. How are your cows?

UNCLE WALLACE

(ignores her sarcasm)

Aunt Vera sends her love. She's sorry she can't be here.

EDITH

How is she feeling?

UNCLE WALLACE

Better. Still a little tired.

(changes the subject)

Fine cooking, Edith.

[DISSOLVE to]

Same scene later in the meal. Wallace is in mid-sentence. During the conversation, Michael looks bored and irritated, but tries to keep smiling. Wallace talks with his mouth full; rarely does he expect a reply.

UNCLE WALLACE (CONT'D)

...need some get up and go. You can't be a store manager all your life. Your problem is you read too many books. Not me. I read magazines. And not just about cattle ranching...

Wallace holds out his plate to Edith.

UNCLE WALLACE (CONT'D)

More of that delicious chicken. Hell, Michael, it's 1951. You gotta read the Wall Street Journal and Fortune. Get your juices flowing.

MICHAEL

I look 'em over on my lunch hour at the library. Too conservative for my taste. I prefer The Nation.

UNCLE WALLACE

That Commie rag! Those Reds'll take the banks over, along with everything else. Don't let your boss see you reading that horse shit.

EDITH

Wallace!

MICHAEL

Actually, he's very pleased with--

UNCLE WALLACE

That's all well and good, just don't get stuck there all your life. Think big. My sister deserves better. You won't get ahead reading books. You don't see me on my ass.

MICHAEL

I hardly sit around. There's more to managing a store than you think. Besides, I read novels to relax.

UNCLE WALLACE

I don't have time to relax. You're getting hare-brained ideas from writers like that commie Sinclair.

MICHAEL

Upton or Lewis?

Wallace is caught off guard, suspicious he's being teased.

UNCLE WALLACE

What?

REBECCA

Are you talking about Sinclair Lewis who wrote *Main Street...*

Wallace is dumbfounded by this 12-year-old child's knowledge.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

...or Upton Sinclair, the author of *The Jungle*?

UNCLE WALLACE

One of those guys, goddamnit. People need to wake up?

EDITH

Dessert anyone?

MICHAEL

We'll have it on the side porch.

Wallace stands up, his napkin still tucked under his chin.

UNCLE WALLACE

Let me get my bag with the presents
and I'll be right down.

Wallace leaves the dining room. Edith carries some plates to the kitchen. Michael leans toward Rebecca and winks.

MICHAEL

I guess you showed him.

REBECCA

He always says mean things.

MICHAEL

Half the time he doesn't mean it.
Just likes to hear himself talk.
Now go help your mother.

Michael leaves dining room just as Edith comes back from the kitchen. Sound of Uncle Wallace coming downstairs.

MICHAEL (O.C.) (CONT'D)

Another drink, Wallace?

UNCLE WALLACE (O.C.)

Don't mind if I do.

Sound of front screen door opening and closing.

EDITH

I'll do the dishes, if you still
have homework.

REBECCA

I'll help you clear.

Through the front window, they watch Michael and Uncle Wallace walk toward the side porch.

EDITH

Try to be happy to see your uncle.
He won't be here long and he does
look forward to seeing you.

REBECCA

I'll try.

EXT. WISEMAN HOUSE SIDE PORCH - NIGHT

A screened porch with cane furniture and a bare bulb. The uncle's bag is open beside his chair. A bottle is on the table. Rebecca and Edith come around from the front porch.

UNCLE WALLACE

There they are. Come over and sit beside me, Rebecca.

Rebecca instead takes a seat beside her parents. Uncle Wallace holds up the bottle.

UNCLE WALLACE (CONT'D)

This is for you, Michael. Peach brandy. You can do the honors.

EDITH

It looks delicious, Wallace.

UNCLE WALLACE

It's my favorite after dinner drink.

Rebecca is sarcastic, impatient and anxious about her gift.

REBECCA

(speaks almost to herself)
Mine too.

She's ignored. Wallace passes a small box to his sister.

UNCLE WALLACE

It's made by Indians with stones from the Southwest.

Edith holds up a necklace.

EDITH

It's lovely, Wallace. Thank you.

Wallace takes a glass with brandy from Michael.

UNCLE WALLACE

Here's to good health. Ah..h..h.
(smacks his lips)
And this is for you, bookworm. From your Aunt Vera.

Wallace hands a package wrapped in brown paper to Rebecca. She's disappointed. It's not a ring. Unwrapping it, Rebecca finds a blue dress. She takes it halfway out of the box.

EDITH
Rebecca, stand up. Let's see it.

When Rebecca stands, the dress unfolds in front of her.

EDITH (CONT'D)
Oh, Wallace, what an unusual blue.

UNCLE WALLACE
Vera remembered that blue is your favorite color.

REBECCA
(speaks very softly)
What about know *my* favorite color?

No one listens to her. Edith takes the dress from Rebecca.

EDITH
Let's go inside where the light's better.

Wallace and Edith cross the porch toward the front door.

UNCLE WALLACE
The dress was Vera's--

EDITH
(not listening to Wallace)
With a few alterations, it should fit perfectly.

UNCLE WALLACE
--and it's brand new. She's only worn it once.

Wallace takes Edith's arm. Rebecca pushes ahead of them.

INT. WISEMAN HOUSE, DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Rebecca is upset and starts up the stairs to her room.

EDITH
Where are you going?

REBECCA
It's late. I have homework.

MICHAEL
Aren't you forgetting your manners?

REBECCA
Thank you, Uncle Wallace...

She hesitates, wonders if this is enough 'thanks.' It isn't.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
...for the dress.

UNCLE WALLACE
(not offended)
Your welcome, young lady.
(softly)
Don't stay up all night reading.
(laughs)

INT. WISEMAN HOUSE, REBECCA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rebecca is upset and crying. She pounds her knees in anger.

REBECCA
I hate it. I hate it.

FADE TO BLACK

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Rebecca and Jackie are walking to school. Rebecca is unhappy.

REBECCA
He gave me a dress! A dress! It
looks old and it's too long.

JACKIE
Can't your mother shorten it?

REBECCA
She can shorten it up to here.
(indicates her throat)
And it smells. They didn't even
wash it.

JACKIE
(makes a face)
What are you going to do?

REBECCA
I'll think of something.

INT. WISEMAN HOUSE, REBECCA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Rebecca is studying at her desk. Edith enters bedroom.

EDITH
I have time to help you with your
pillow.

REBECCA
(excited)
Great.

EDITH
But then YOU try on the dress so I
can see what needs to be altered.

Rebecca isn't happy about this bargain, but doesn't argue.

REBECCA
I've already made a velvet backing
for the pillow.

They sit side by side on the bed. Edith starts to sew.

EDITH
Remember to take your time. It's
not a race. You don't want to take
it apart and start over.

Rebecca concentrates on her mother's fingers.

EDITH (CONT'D)
Now you try it.

Rebecca takes the pillow and sticks in the needle.

REBECCA
Ouch!

EDITH
Right. You want to avoid sticking
yourself. Make sure the thread
isn't twisted. Now pull it tight.
Excellent.

Rebecca grins. She loves the praise and learning a new skill.

REBECCA
It's not so hard when you know what
to do.

Edith takes the pillow to show her how to sew the corner.

EDITH
Straighten each corner to keep the
velvet from bunching along the
seam. You don't want the corners
curling when the pillow lies flat.

Edith turns the pillow over to examine the stitching.

EDITH (CONT'D)
Beautiful. You should be very proud.

REBECCA
I'm giving it to Mrs. Lefave for Christmas. She always knows the best books to read. I think she's read every book there is.

EDITH
You're giving it to your teacher? After all this work? Well...think about it.

Rebecca frowns: why doesn't her Mom think it's a good idea?

EDITH (CONT'D)
You could donate it to the Christmas fair at church.

Rebecca is horrified. Edith gets up to go downstairs.

EDITH (CONT'D)
Come now. Your aunt's dress is downstairs.

INT. WISEMAN HOUSE, UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

Rebecca, carries the pillow, follows her mother into the hall.

REBECCA
We won't have enough time before dinner and I have to set the table.

Edith walks down the stairs ahead of Rebecca.

EDITH
We'll have plenty of time. Uncle Wallace is taking us out to dinner. In a taxi.

Rebecca stops on the stairs. Nothing works out her way.

EDITH (O.C.) (CONT'D)
I bought a new package of cotton batting for stuffing the pillow. I thought I had enough left over, but I can't find it anywhere.

Rebecca continues down the stairs.

INT. WISEMAN HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

While Rebecca slips out of her school uniform, her mother shakes out the dress. She lowers it over Rebecca's head.

REBECCA
(irritated)
Ow, it's caught on my barrette.

Rebecca has trouble getting her head through the opening.

EDITH
Careful! Don't rip it. Wait! I need
to unbutton it.

Rebecca gets up on a stool; Edith kneels on the rug.

EDITH (CONT'D)
You're almost as tall as your aunt.
Blue is a perfect color for you.

Rebecca leans over and smells the underarms. She makes a face. With pins in her mouth, Edith mumbles during the scene.

EDITH (CONT'D)
Rebecca, don't fidget.

Rebecca concentrates on turning around on the stool.

REBECCA
Why doesn't Aunt Vera come to
visit?

EDITH
Some people don't like to travel.
They're happy just staying at home.

REBECCA
Is she sick?

EDITH
She was for a while.

REBECCA
Why don't they have any kids?

Edith pauses while checking the hem with a tape measure. She doesn't look up at Rebecca.

EDITH
They had a baby, but it died.

Rebecca reaches down and tenderly pats her mother's hair.

EDITH (CONT'D)
Such a beautiful dress. Wait till
you see yourself in the mirror.

Rebecca sees her father and Uncle Wallace on the porch.

REBECCA
They're here.

Rebecca tries to step off the stool, but her mother is holding the dress.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
(more desperate)
Mom, we can finish it tomorrow.

As the front door opens, Rebecca turns her back to the hallway. She acts self-conscious.

UNCLE WALLACE
We're home. Are you ready--?

The uncle falls silent. Rebecca wonders what's happening.

UNCLE WALLACE (CONT'D)
My God. Vera?

Uncle Wallace is shaken by mistaking Rebecca for his wife.

EDITH
Doesn't she look lovely?

UNCLE WALLACE
(still shaken)
She's a beauty. A real heart
breaker, Edith. What a shame she
can't wear it tonight.

Blushing, Rebecca jumps off the stool, clutching the dress in front of her. She doesn't stop to grab her needlepoint.

REBECCA
I'll be right down.

INT. WISEMAN HOUSE, REBECCA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Rebecca yanks the dress over her head, bunches it into a ball and throws it in the corner. Sitting on her bed, she pounds her knees with her fists.

INT. WISEMAN HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Uncle Wallace is examining the needlepoint.

UNCLE WALLACE
 (to Edith)
 Did she do this all by herself?

Edith nods with pride. Rebecca comes into the living room.

UNCLE WALLACE (CONT'D)
 (to Rebecca)
 You'll be as good at needlepoint as
 your aunt before you know it.

He holds the pillow up to catch the evening light.

UNCLE WALLACE (CONT'D)
 She'd love to see your work. It
 might encourage her to start again.

Rebecca acts suspicious. Michael calls from the front door.

MICHAEL (O.C.)
 Taxi's here.

Wallace holds out his arm to his sister.

UNCLE WALLACE
 Your carriage awaits, my dear.

Rebecca walks behind her uncle and mother. She sighs.

UNCLE WALLACE (CONT'D)
 That's a big sigh, young lady

REBECCA
 I'm just thinking.

INT. WISEMAN HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Rebecca and her mother are listening to a comedy show on the radio. Michael comes home, acting ill-at-ease and distracted.

EDITH
 How's Wallace?

MICHAEL
 He's feeling better.

EDITH

What did the doctor say?

Michael listens to the radio, but doesn't laugh at the jokes.

EDITH (CONT'D)

Michael?

He's startled back to the present.

MICHAEL

Probably food poisoning.

Rebecca smiles slightly. She moves closer to the radio, but still listens to her parents' quiet conversation.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

He's going up to Lowell tomorrow.

EDITH

Why's he going all the way up there?

MICHAEL

Business.

EDITH

What business does he have in Lowell?

The radio show is over and the theme music starts to play.

MICHAEL

He swore me to secrecy.

To her surprise, Rebecca's father turns off the radio. He sits in his chair, leaning forward, massaging his forehead. Rebecca watches her mother whose slight shrug says 'Don't ask me.' Her father speaks to Rebecca without looking at her.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Do you remember when Uncle Wallace was admiring your needlepoint? He says you're very talented.

Looking up, Michael acts unhappy, doesn't look at Rebecca.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

He'd like to take your needlepoint back with him as a gift for Vera.

Rebecca is stunned. She can't believe he's saying this.

REBECCA

NO! I won't.

EDITH

Michael, you didn't say she would, did you? She's giving it to her teacher.

REBECCA

It's not fair. I've never even met Aunt Vera. Why should I give her anything?

MICHAEL

(speaks calmly)

Uncle Wallace has given you many presents.

REBECCA

Nothing he ever made. He just buys things I don't want. He didn't even buy that dress.

(pleads with her mother)

Tell him I don't have to. I don't have enough time to make another one for my teacher.

EDITH

(angry, but determined)

Michael, tell my brother, she'll send Vera something at Christmas.

Michael sighs, looks miserable, but is out of patience.

REBECCA

I'll throw it away before I give it to him.

EDITH

(to Rebecca)

No, you won't.

(to Michael)

If you won't tell him, I will.

No longer reasonable, Michael stands up, suddenly angry.

MICHAEL

She will give the pillow to him and that's final.

Rebecca bursts into tears.

REBECCA

He can take that smelly old dress
back. I hate it.

Rebecca runs for the stairs. Edith sadly shakes her head.

INT. WISEMAN HOUSE, REBECCA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Rebecca runs into her room and slams the door. She falls onto
her bed in tears. The front door slams.

EXT. WISEMAN HOUSE FROM STREET - NIGHT

INT. WISEMAN HOUSE, REBECCA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The bedside light is on. Upset and shaking, Rebecca works on
her pillow. The front door opens and footsteps in the hall.

MICHAEL (O.C.)

No, I didn't talk to him.

Rebecca cannot hear her mother's reply.

MICHAEL (O.C.) (CONT'D)

Yes, if you must know. I've had
three drinks.

(Pause)

You will not call him!

The sound of the porch door banging against the house.

Rebecca puts her hand inside the pillow. It needs to be
stuffed. She sees her mother's pinking shears on her desk.
Beside them lies the new, unopened package of cotton batting.
The dress is draped over a chair.

A knock on the door. Rebecca's mother enters. She hugs her
daughter, rocking back and forth.

EDITH

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

Over her mother's shoulder, Rebecca stares at the blue dress.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Rebecca is grinning mischievously.

JACKIE

What have you done?

REBECCA

I've thought of something. Promise
you won't tell a soul?

JACKIE

Cross my heart and hope to die.

Rebecca stops and whispers in her ear. Jackie's eyes widen.

REBECCA

He'll never know.

FADE TO BLACK

INT. WISEMAN HOUSE, REBECCA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Rebecca is writing a note. She thinks for a moment, then signs her name. She wraps the pillow in the same brown paper the dress came in. She slips the note into an envelope and tapes it to the top of the package.

The sound of a car horn. Looking out the window, Rebecca sees her parents hurrying toward a new car at the curb. Her uncle gets out of the car and, opening his arms, presents the car. Edith runs to hug her brother.

EXT. WISEMAN HOUSE, SIDEWALK IN FRONT OF HOUSE - DAY

Rebecca's uncle and parents stand beside a new, royal blue car. Its chrome glitters in the sun. Porch door opens.

UNCLE WALLACE

There she is.

(to Rebecca)

Come see your Dad's new car.

Rebecca drops the package on the porch and runs to Michael.

REBECCA

When can we go for a ride?

UNCLE WALLACE

Hold your horses, sweetheart.

You'll get your chance.

She stares closely at the car. Her reflection is distorted.

MICHAEL

It's a beauty, Wallace. Thank you.

EDITH

We'll be quite hoity-toity driving around town.

UNCLE WALLACE

Nothing's too good for my baby sister.

EDITH

I'll make some coffee before we go to the station.

INT. WISEMAN HOUSE, DINING ROOM - DAY

They sit around the table drinking coffee. Rebecca acts impatient to be in the car. Michael looks at her, raises his eyebrows, and mouths the words 'the present.' Rebecca leaves to get the package from the porch.

MICHAEL

(fawningly)

It's the first new car I've ever owned.

Uncle Wallace smiles, accepting the praise for his largesse. Rebecca returns to the table.

REBECCA

(formally, a faint irony)

Uncle Wallace. This is for Aunt Vera. To thank her for my dress.

Uncle Wallace acts like he's truly touched by her gesture.

UNCLE WALLACE

Thank you, Rebecca. Your aunt will always treasure this.

REBECCA

There's a card for Aunt Vera.

Wallace puts on his reading glasses and opens the card.

UNCLE WALLACE

Let's see. "Dear Aunt Vera. Thank you for the dress. It is very pretty. I am sending you a pillow I made. When you rest your head on my pillow, think of me wearing your blue dress. Love, Rebecca."

Wallace looks up at Rebecca with genuine affection.

UNCLE WALLACE (CONT'D)
 Your aunt will be touched by your
 kindness. This is the nicest
 present she could get.

Rebecca responds to his kind words and allows him to kiss
 her. Uncle Wallace is suddenly embarrassed by his emotion.

UNCLE WALLACE (CONT'D)
 (all business)
 Now where's my ride? Can't be late
 for the train.

The two men leave the room. Rebecca picks up the coffee cups.

EDITH
 We'll do these later. Put the
 bottle of milk in the fridge.

EXT. WISEMAN HOUSE, SIDEWALK IN FRONT OF HOUSE - DAY

Uncle Wallace opens the back door of the car when he sees
 Rebecca and her mother on the porch.

UNCLE WALLACE
 In you go, ladies.

REBECCA
 (mimics her uncle)
 Our carriage awaits.

The women get into the car.

INT. NEW CAR - DAY

The women settle down against the soft cushions. Edith rubs
 her hand on the upholstery. Michael is at the wheel.

EDITH
 It's very comfortable, Michael.

Wallace gets into the car as Michael looks back at his wife.

MICHAEL
 Isn't this the life?

Michael starts the car. Wallace gestures with the pillow.

UNCLE WALLACE
 A fair trade, don't you think,
 Michael?

Edith leans over and pats Rebecca's knee. Her voice is low.

EDITH

I noticed the new package of cotton
batting wasn't opened when I
changed your bed this morning.

Rebecca acts guilty and looks away. Edith begins to smile.

EDITH (CONT'D)

(speaks as if mystified)
Where did you find the package that
was already opened? I looked
everywhere for it.

Rebecca turns toward her mother, thinking she's in trouble.

EDITH (CONT'D)

Oh, and I found these on the floor.

Her mother holds up two scraps of the blue dress. She puts
her finger on her lips.

EDITH (CONT'D)

Our secret.

Michael releases the clutch; the car moves down the street.

FADE TO BLACK