

My Big Fat Greek Wedding

(Comedy) (2002)

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Major Characters

Toula Portokalos.....Nia Vardalos

A 30 year old woman who lives with her crazy parents in Chicago and works in the family's Greek restaurant. She is sad, single and going nowhere in life until she goes back to school, gets another job, and most importantly, meets Ian.

Ian Miller.....John Corbett

A young Chicago high school teacher who is smart, fun and looking for love, and who is perfect for Toula, except for one thing---He's not Greek.

Gus.....Michael Constantine

Toula's Greek-American father who is convinced that almost all human accomplishments come from Greek culture, and thus Toula must marry a nice Greek boy.

Maria.....Lainie Kazan

Toula's mom, who spends much of her time helping take care of the family restaurant and feeding her huge family.

Nick.....Louis Mandylor

Toula's younger brother, who loves to play practical jokes.

Aunt Voula.....Andrea Martin

Toula's closest aunt, who offers her a job in her travel agency.

Plot Summary

This film is a sweet look at the American immigrant family, and specifically, the tension that has existed between many immigrant parents who want their children to marry a person from their own ethnic background, and those children who find partners from elsewhere in the great American "melting pot." Specifically, it is the story of Toula, a 30 year old woman who lives with her Greek parents in their comfortable Chicago home, but who is sad and lost, in part because she thinks she's too old and unattractive to ever find a husband. One day she decides she cannot work forever in her parents Greek restaurant, so she returns to school to study computers, gets a job in her Aunt Voula's travel agency, learns to effectively use makeup, and then meets Ian, a warm and charming vegetarian high school teacher. Soon after, Ian and Toula fall in love and decide to get married.

Gus has a hard time accepting that his oldest daughter is going to marry a long-haired American with no Greek background, but after Ian agrees to become an official member of the Greek Orthodox Church, Gus has no choice but to accept him into his family. Soon, all of Toula's relatives, including her parents, siblings, aunts, uncles and 27 cousins, are preparing for a traditional Greek wedding, with Ian and his very conservative parents soon caught up in all the love and insanity that such an event produces.

A note on the language used in this film: Toula's parents and aunt are first generation Americans, and as such, they often speak English with charming but incorrect grammar. Some of these mistakes are pointed out in the glossary, but regardless, you should be aware that a lot of what is said is not standard English. There are also quite a few times when Greek words are used, but they are only noted in the glossary when they are considered important to the film or of more general interest to ESL learners.

The use of asterisks (*): If a line from the film has an asterisk at the end of it, this means the words were spoken in Greek and subtitled in English.

Some Words and Expressions that You May not Know

Toula tells us of her loud and crazy Greek-American family, and of her life going nowhere as a 30 year old single woman.

The other girls were blond and delicate,
and I was a swarthy six year old with sideburns.

If a girl is "delicate," she is pleasing to look at. A person who is "swarthy" has dark colored skin or complexion, like people from the Mediterranean. "Sideburns" refer to hair that grows down the face, in front of the ears.

Eating their wonder bread sandwiches.

"Wonder bread" is a well known type of American white bread.

It's moussaka. :: Mous-ca-ca!

"Moussaka" is a well known Greek food made of meat and eggplant. "Caca" is a child's word for referring to shit or crap.

While the pretty girls got to go to brownies, I had to go to Greek school.

A popular organization for girls who are still too young to be part of the "Girl Scouts," which is the largest club of girls in the US.

My mom was always cooking foods filled with warmth and wisdom...

"Wisdom" is an important word meaning the ability to understand and use knowledge or facts intelligently.

...and never forgetting that side dish of steaming hot guilt.

If a food is “steaming hot,” it’s so hot that steam rises from it.

“Guilt” refers to the act of feeling bad for something you have done in the past---A key word in the Jewish and Catholic religions, and apparently, in Greek culture.

Don’t play with your food. When I was your age, we didn’t *have* food.

Note that mothers are always telling their young kids to not “play with their food” at the dinner table, but the second line is clearly not true!

Our house was modeled after the Parthenon, complete with Corinthian columns and guarded by statues of the Gods.

If a building is “modeled after” another one, it’s made to look similar to it.

The “Parthenon” is a famous structure that was built in Ancient Greece, in Athens. “Corinthian columns” refer to thick white posts that were used to make buildings in Corinthian society, which was part of ancient Greece.

In case the neighbors had any doubts about our heritage, they could just check out our subtle tribute to the Greek flag.

In this case, a person’s “heritage” is their ethnic background, or more specifically, where their parents or grandparents had come from.

“To check out” something is to explore or look at it. “Subtle” is a key word that means not obvious or difficult to notice or understand (Here, though, the word is being used sarcastically).

He believed that any ailment, from psoriasis to poison ivy, could be cured with Windex.

An “ailment” is a disease or medical problem. “Psoriasis” is a skin disease and “poison ivy” is a very itchy skin condition caused by touching a poisonous plant. “Windex” is a well known brand of window cleaner.

Every morning our father would lecture us on the history of our people, the great civilizations, the Greeks.

“To lecture” is to give a speech or talk, the way a professor might in a class. A “civilization” refers to the culture of a particular time and place.

Astronomy, philosophy and Democracy! :: Bravo, very good.

An Italian word used in English to express great pleasure after a musical or acting performance. People often scream “bravo!” while applauding.

How about “arachnophobia?”

A word, with Greek roots, that means fear of spiders.

How about ‘kimono?’

A Japanese word for a robe (And a word with no Greek roots at all!).

My dad brought his mother over from Greece to live with us because we weren’t weird enough.

An excellent word meaning very strange, odd or bizarre.

“Listen up, ugly Turk. You’re not kidnapping me!”*

It’s worth noting that historically, Turkey and Greece have fought many wars and there is often tension between the two cultures.

Niko, be careful. She has a very mean punch.

If a person has a “mean punch,” they are strong and can hit with great force.

Here I am...thirty and way past my expiration date.

An “expiration date” is the date that a product is considered no longer good or useable. It usually refers to milk or food, and not people!

What’s up?

A common and colloquial way of greeting a person if you have not seen them for a while. An alternative to “what’s new in life?”

She was supposed to come and curl my hairs.

“To curl” hair is to shape it into a curved or circular shape (Note that in English, hair is almost never used in the plural, though given this common mistake in Toula’s family, it apparently is in Greek).

My brother has two jobs; To cook and to marry a Greek virgin.

An important word for a person who has never had sexual intercourse.

If nagging was an Olympic sport, my aunt Voula would have a gold medal.

“To nag” is an excellent verb meaning to annoy, bother or harass. A “gold medal” is the highest award that an athlete can win in the Olympics.

Sorry, sorry, don’t “sorry” me!

Note the use of “sorry” as a negative imperative verb to show anger!

Look at this rash!

An irritation on the skin, often marked by redness or small bumps.

My sister married young and became a Greek baby-breeding machine.

“To breed” is a scientific word meaning to have children or reproduce.

Come on, get out!

The most versatile phrasal verb in English, in this case meaning “hurry up.”

Pantyhose are on sale for 99 cents.

Nylons or stockings that women wear over their legs.

Then the priest is coming to bless the new house.

A “priest” is a religious official in a Church. When a priest “blesses” a house, he officially asks God to take good care of it.

Now I have to go open the travel agency because some jack-off and his big-assed girlfriend are too busy!

As a noun, a “jack-off” is a rare but fun word for a jerk, idiot, etc., although as a verb, “to jack-off” is a common and slangy way of saying to masturbate. If a person is “big-assed,” they, have, of course, a large butt!

Do you know who’s at the dry cleaners?

A store where clothes are cleaned in a way that does not use water.

Angelo, bite me! :: Disgusting, be a lady!

“Bite me” is a silly way of expressing anger or frustration with a person. “Disgusting” is a powerful adjective meaning very unpleasant, offensive, repulsive or more colloquially, gross.

No more fun and games.

What you would tell a person who you feel has not been acting seriously enough or working hard enough.

And the pizza for the buffet!

A “buffet” is a meal that is served on an open table, where people serve themselves to various dishes.

I want to drive. :: You’re driving me crazy!

What you say to a person who is very much annoying or bothering you.

You’ll always have Toula to run the restaurant.

“To run” a business is to be in charge of it.

Toula decides to change her life, sees Ian for the first time, and helps invite her grandma into the family house.

Cool place. :: Yeah, it’s adorable.

A common colloquial adjective meaning good, excellent or agreeable.

You missed a hell of a party the other night.

A slangy filler expression which means great or worthwhile.

You set me up with her already.

“To set up” one person with another is to bring them together in order to see if they would be interested in each other romantically.

Have you ever had one of those days?

A question that you would ask if you have just had a horrible day where everything went wrong.

I love the spice on those potatoes. What is that? :: Like I care.

A cynical and fun way of saying “I don’t care.”

I'm giving a pop quiz, and I can't wait to hear the groans.

A "pop quiz" is a small test a teacher will give to their students without warning them that they are going to be tested. A "groan" is the sound a person makes when they're in pain (or, perhaps, when having sex).

Man, you're tough. :: I'm giving a test on Hamlet, but I give fair warning.

In this case, if a person is "tough," they are mean or even scary. "Hamlet" is a famous play by Shakespeare, and if a person gives you "fair warning," they tell you of the possible dangers so that you can prepare.

You like this, pops, for the new menu?

A slangy way of addressing your dad.

Dad, I've been going through our inventory and I've noticed that we're doing a lot of unnecessary ordering.

In a business context, "inventory" refers to the supplies that a company orders and has in stock. Here, "ordering" refers to company purchases.

Maybe we should update our system.

"To update" a computer system is to make it as modern as possible, or literally, to bring it up to date.

I got all As in computers, but there's a lot of new stuff to learn now.

Here, "As" refer to the letter grade in school. "Stuff" is a widely used word for things in general, though here it refers to computer technology.

You have a spirit. You want to see things, you want to learn.

In this case, a "spirit" is a lively or energetic attitude toward life.

Dad is so stubborn. What he says goes.

If a person is "stubborn," they are inflexible and refuse to change their mind. "What he says goes" is a way of saying that whatever he wants he gets, often said about a man who controls his house and family.

The man is the head, but the woman is the neck,
and she can turn the head any way she wants.

This is Maria's way of saying that she can convince Gus to do whatever she wants, even though he thinks of himself as head of the family.

Somebody will say "Take this bag down to the bus depot."

A "bus depot" is the same as a big bus station (and in some major American cities, it is the place where people sell illegal drugs).

And I teach Sunday school!

School that children attend on Sunday mornings, usually to learn about their parent's religion (so that, of course, it will become *their* religion).

Lucky for me, I have you to tie my shoes!

“To tie” your shoes is to the only verb to use when describing the action of making knots for your shoelaces, to keep your shoes on your feet.

There’s this course, it’s a seminar.

A “course” is another word for a class, and a “seminar” is a class for a small group of graduate or advanced students doing research on a topic.

There are all the latest applications and programs.

In the context of computers, “applications” and “programs” refer to software that allow you to use the computer for different goals, from creating web pages to playing chess or video games.

I could apply it here, and your business would double or triple.

In this context, “to apply” a computer program is to use it.

You could take a vacation. I could book it for you.

“To book” a flight or hotel room is to officially reserve or pay for it.

Would you hire me?

“To hire” a person is to officially employ somebody in a job.

We must let Kostko think this was his idea, that he came up with it.

“To come up with” an idea is to think of it or create it yourself.

Ma, he’s gonna figure it out.

Note that in rapid speech, “going to” ---> “gonna.”

“To figure out” a problem or mystery is to solve it.

Oh, woe to me. Business is bad.

An old-fashioned but still poetically used word for great sadness.

Thanks for holding. OK, your request pulled up confirmed.

“To hold” is the verb that is used when a person is told to wait on the phone. In this case, “to pull up” is to appear in a computer database.

I’m going to need a hard click on that one.

The soft sound that is made when tapping on a computer mouse.

Roger, copy that.

A ridiculously slangy way of saying “I understand.” Police and others who talk on two way radios will often use “Roger” to mean ok.

“Bloodthirsty Turks!”*

If a person is “bloodthirsty,” they are extremely violent or ruthless.

For God’s sake, I know. Listen, keep your mother off my lawn.

“For God’s sake” is said at the beginning of a sentence to express anger or frustration. A “lawn” is grass, often found in the front yard of a house.

***Toula and Ian meet, fall in love, and decide
to get married---despite their families....***

Do you want to see some brochures?

A “brochure” is a small booklet or pamphlet that usually contains descriptive or advertising material.

And then, whoosh, you were gone. I thought you fainted.

“Whoosh” is the windy sound that a basketball makes going through a basket. “To faint” is to lose consciousness and collapse.

I was swept off my feet by your very cool opening line of ‘hi.’

If a person is “swept off their feet,” they are totally charmed or seduced by somebody. “Cool” is a critical slang word meaning good or excellent. An “opening line” refers to the first words that a person uses, often when they want to romantically attract somebody.

Was that a biker fight or a nose job?

In this case, a “biker” refers to those people who drive big and loud motorcycles, who are often in motorcycle gangs and getting into fights. A “nose job” is a common way to refer to plastic surgery which is done to change the way a person’s nose looks.

If I had survived an old lady ass-kicking, I think I’d brag about it.

An “ass-kicking” is a very slangy way of saying to be badly hurt or physically beaten by another person. “To brag” about something is to talk too proudly about it, or to show it off in a boastful manner.

Hey, Jesus, ouch.

“Jesus” is a common way of expressing emotion, from surprise to anger. “Ouch” is the most common way to express physical pain.

Actually, I wasn’t in education. First, I was pre-law.

An academic specialization that university students take if they eventually want to go to law school (Classes are taken in such subjects as logic and political science).

It just wasn’t for me, so I picked a new major.

“It wasn’t for me” is one way of saying “I didn’t like it.” In an academic context, a “major” is a specialized area of study, such as history or math.

The parents weren’t too pleased, you know.

If a person is not “pleased” about something, they are not happy about it.

You’re that waitress! :: Seating hostess, actually.

A “hostess” in a restaurant is a person who escorts people to their tables.

I was kind of going through a phase, up until now.

“To go through” something is to experience it, often with great suffering.
 “A phase” is usually a short and separate period of time when a person is acting in a way they don’t normally (although in this case, Toula is saying that this phase lasted the first 30 years of her life!).

I don’t remember “Frump Girl,” but I remember you.

This expression doesn’t really exist, but if a girl is “frumpy,” she is usually plain looking and dressed poorly.

I’m taking a pottery class.

The art of making pots, bowls and other tools that are made from clay.

My mom makes roast lamb. :: With mint jelly?

“Roast lamb” is a favorite Greek dish of slowly cooked meat.

“Mint jelly” is a type of soft gelatin that is used as a sauce.

My aunt Voula forks the eyeball and chases me around to make me eat it because it gonna make me smart.

Although rare, the verb “to fork” means to stick or stab with a fork (In this case so Aunt Voula can scare Toula with the horrible sight of an eyeball stuck to the fork).

I have 27 first cousins alone...and my whole family is big and loud and everybody’s always in each other’s lives and business.

A “first cousin” is the child of one of your parent’s brothers or sisters (A second cousin is more distantly related). If people are “in each other’s business,” they’re too interested in other people’s personal lives.

Greeks marry Greeks to breed more Greeks, to be loud, breeding Greek eaters.

“To breed” is a scientific word meaning to reproduce or have children.

You’re wonderful, but I don’t see how this is going to work out.

If a situation “works out,” it goes well for all involved.

What’s to work out? We’re not a different species.

“Species” is a scientific word that refers to the division of animals into groups (For example, humans, dogs and bears are from different species).

We come from different backgrounds....

In this context, “background” refers to ethnic origin (Greek, German, etc.)

You’ve got a weird family---who doesn’t?

“Weird” is an excellent word for strange or bizarre. “Who doesn’t it?” is a clever way of responding to a person who is depressed that they have a strange family. This same type of question can be used in many contexts (“Sure, I’m completely insane, but who isn’t?”).

I'm the least of your worries. :: Listen, the family knows.

If a person tells you that they are “the least of your worries,” they are saying that you have a lot of other very big problems.

Vikki Paulopolis saw you sucking the lips off his beard in the Denny's parking lot.

“Sucking the lips off his beard” is Nikki’s ridiculous way of saying that Toula was kissing Ian passionately. Denny’s is a well-known restaurant.

She told her ma, who told your ma... Let me put it this way---You're busted.

“Ma” is a dated word for mom. In this case, “to put it this way” means to say or explain it in a certain way. If a person is “busted,” they have been caught doing something illegal or wrong and are thus in deep trouble.

You sneak around all over Chicago, but you never come here to ask me, can you date my daughter?

“To sneak around” is to continue moving in a secretive way so as not to be caught or seen. “To date” a person is to go out with them romantically, (Note that Gus fails to use indirect speech correctly; “...you never come here to ask me *if* you could date my daughter).

A nice Greek boy? No, no Greek. A xeno!

A xeno with big long hairs on top of his head!

“Xeno” means foreigner in Greek. It is not a word in English, but it is the root of some important English words, such as xenophobia (fear of foreigners). Note that the word hair rarely takes a plural ‘s’!

It means orange, like the one that you peel, not the color.

“To peel” a fruit is to take off its skin.

Didn't you once have a Greek receptionist?

A person who answers phones and greets clients in an office.

Is Armenia close to Greece? :: Not exactly.

A small country East of Turkey (Greece is West of Turkey).

Who?! :: My secretary, for heaven's sake!

A somewhat dated way of expressing frustration, anger or other emotion.

Oh, that's right. She was Guatemalan.

A person from Guatemala, which is a small country in Central America.

Is he from a good family? Is he respectful? I don't know.

If a person is from a “good family,” this generally means they are educated and at least middle class.

My daughter engaged to a xeno.

To be “engaged” to a person is to be officially planning to marry them.

I always think she's going to be married in the Greek Orthodox Church.
The official Church of Greece to which most Greeks belong.

Sometime the roof is so big that the roof can't support itself so it collapses.
If a building collapses, it caves in on itself or physically breaks down.

Can we go to Vegas, or Niagara Falls or Fiji?
Three places where people can get married fast and cheap, although only Las Vegas is famous for this (Niagara Falls is a beautiful waterfall between New York State and Canada, and Fiji is a small island in the Pacific Ocean).

Our wedding should be this joyous thing, but it won't be for them, because it can't be in our church.
If something is "joyous," it is filled with great happiness.

Why do you love me? :: Because I came alive when I met you.
In this context, "to come alive" is to find a renewed sense of energy and happiness.

We're not going to skulk off and get married, as if we're ashamed of ourselves.
"To skulk off" is to leave or move in a secretive manner, as if the person is ashamed or wants to hide, but this verb is fairly rare.

Ian joins the Greek Orthodox Church, and thus wins over the hearts of most of Toula's family.

So, you're going to be baptized tomorrow.
"To baptize" a person is to make them spiritually pure in a Church ceremony. Usually, it's babies and young children who get baptized.

Nikki's going to be your godmother.
A woman who sponsors a child at a baptism, or more generally, a close family friend who supports and inspires a child as they grow up.

That's where we dip the baby in a beautiful, little silver basin.
"To dip" something is to lower it, and a "basin" is a shallow bowl or container that is used for holding water to wash.

Are you kidding? Any minute he's going to look at me and go "Right, you're so not worth this."
"To kid" about something is to joke around or not be serious about it.
Note that here, "so" functions as an intensifier like totally or absolutely.

Happy Easter.
The Christian holiday which celebrates Jesus' resurrection, or rising from the dead (in theory!).

“When my people we’re writing philosophy,
your people were still swinging from trees.”*

This is a funny line that shows how chauvinistic or overly proud Gus is of his Greek roots. “To swing” between trees is to sway or move back and forth between them while hanging on to a rope or other material.

You turn their brains to mush.

A good word for something soft and shapeless like thick soup or cornmeal. Here, it means crushed (brain) matter without the ability to think, but it can refer to nonsense words or overly sentimental emotion.

I’ll get you some earplugs, because the Portokalos women, if they’re not nagging somebody, they die.

“Earplugs” are little devices put in the ear to keep noise from bothering you. “To nag” a person is to constantly bother or annoy them, usually by constant talking, complaining or criticizing.

Jesus, it’s just a joke.

A common way to express surprise, frustration or other emotion.

Yeah, I’ve got a gun, and I swear I’ll jam it right up ...Ian, I got you again.

“To swear” to do something is to promise to do it. “To jam” an object into something else is to force it in, often violently. Note that here, the versatile verb “to get” is used to mean to fool, or make to look stupid.

I could snap you like a chicken!

“To snap” a bone is to break it forcefully into two pieces.

Come on, lighten up. :: I’ll lighten up when I take out your kidneys.

If you tell a person to “lighten up,” you’re telling them to stop taking life so seriously, or perhaps to relax. A person’s “kidney” is a critical organ that is used to help the body get rid of waste products like urine.

We set a day for the big day.

“To set” a day for an event is to officially schedule it for that day. “The big day” refers to any important event, in this case, Ian and Toula’s wedding.

The North Shore Country Club, for the wedding, of course.

A “Country Club” is a building on a golf course, often where rich and conservative people come to eat and celebrate various events.

She tends to save things. This is from her prom.

If a person “tends to” do something, she generally does it quite often. A “prom” is a large and important dance that is held for high school seniors just before they finish school.

The Parthenon backdrop is optional.

The Parthenon is a famous building in Athens. The “backdrop” to a view or scene in a movie is what can be seen in the background or distance

It's like you'd rather go bankrupt than not invite anyone from the church.

"To go bankrupt" is to legally declare that you cannot pay money that you owe other people.

No more punching Thio Niko's nads, ok?!

"To punch" something is to hit it with great force. "Thio" is the Greek word for uncle, and "nads" is a slang term for a man's testicles or balls ("Gonads" is the official medical word).

Did she spit on him? :: It's for good luck. Keeps the devil away.

"To spit" is to eject or spray saliva from your mouth.

"Nice boobs"*

A common and not-too-crude slang word for female breasts.

I don't want something that your cash-only connections get us that falls from the back of a truck. :: Yeah, but they come through, right?

A "connection" is a personal contact (here referring to a small informal business that only accepts cash, as opposed to checks or credit cards). If a person "comes through," they do what they had promised to do.

For God's sake, let the man talk. :: Why are you always so stubborn?

"For God's sake" is a common way of expressing anger, frustration or other emotion. If a person is "stubborn," they refuse to change their mind and are generally very inflexible.

I didn't notice, so I bet they won't.

Note that "to bet" often means to be certain or sure.

I've got the biggest scoop! Look at the earrings
I have found to make the bride's maids dresses.

A "scoop" is a colloquial term for an important piece of secret information that you find out before others are told (It is also a large spoonful of food). "Earrings" are jewelry that hang from a person's earlobes, and a "bride's maid" is one of several women or girls who are called on to do official important duties for the bride in a wedding.

We have a customer at the dry cleaners who is a custom jewelry designer.

A "custom designer" is a person who manufactures things, in this case jewelry, that is individually designed or created, rather than manufactured in huge quantities.

What do these match? Not that fabric you showed me last week.

"Fabric" is any type of cloth or other material that is used to make clothes.

That's because you couldn't visualize it.

"To visualize" something is to see it in your mind or to make a mental image of it.

That's classy.

A great adjective that means stylish, elegant, or done in very good taste.

Toula, don't let your past dictate who you are,
but let it be part of who you will become.

In this context, "to dictate" is to determine, require or force.

That "Dear Abbey," she really knows what she is talking about.

The name of a very famous advice column found in
daily newspapers throughout the United States.

***Ian's parents meet Toula's family, Ian marries Toula, Gus buys them
a house, and soon there is a new Greek-American generation.***

What are you doing? :: I peel the potatoes.

"To peel" a fruit or vegetable is to take off its skin (Note
that Maria has a lot of problem with English verb tenses!).

They might as well meet the whole family, right?

"Might as well" is an alternative and stylistic way of saying "should."

OK, put it on the spit.

As a noun, a "spit" is a thin metal rod or
stick that is used for holding meat over a fire.

It's a bunt.

A type of thick round cake with a giant whole in the middle.

I'm not falling for that again, Nick.

In this case, "to fall for" a lie is to mistakenly believe that it's true.

I have three testicles!

The official word for a man's balls (Sexual organs that produce sperm).

All my life, I had a lump at the back of my neck.

A "lump" is a abnormal swelling or a small bump on a surface.

Then I start the menopause and the lump got
bigger. From the hormones, it started to grow.

"Menopause" is the phase of life when a women stops having her
menstrual periods. "Hormones" are chemicals in the blood that control
many biological functions, such as sex drive and growth.

He did the bubopsy.

Voula is trying to say "*biopsy*," which is a the medical term for an analysis
of organs to see if they have any disease ("Bubopsy" is not a word!).

Inside the lump, he found teeth and a spinal cord.

A person's "spinal cord" is the thin bone-like structure that runs from the back of the head all the way down the middle of the back.

They just got here. Let them settle in.*

"To settle in" at a party is to get comfortable, both socially by starting to talk to people and physically, by finding a nice place to sit.

You're Greek now. Don't be shy.

A way of telling a person that they should be energetic and spirited and say what they think, rather than being scared or hesitant.

They different people. No honey, no jam, just dry like toast.

This is Gus' way of saying that Ian's parents are boring like dry toast, as opposed to sweet and delicious like bread with honey or jam.

In Toula's church, the best man is actually part of the ceremony.

In a wedding, the "best man" is the most important assistant to the man getting married, who often makes the official toast to salute or honor the newly married couple. A "ceremony" is any formal act or ritual that is in honor of a major event, such as a wedding, funeral or baptism.

So I can't ask you to be my best man, although technically you are.

"Technically" is a very important word meaning legally or true if strictly speaking, even though most others don't see it that way.

I am touched. I had no idea you had so few friends.

In this context, if a person is "touched," they are made to feel a little emotional or sentimental about something that someone did for them.

Just give me a little badge that says "best man" on it or something like that.

A "badge" is a small metal device that people wear on their clothes for identification (The police and government officials usually wear a badge).

No offense, but this girl's family has got you by the short ones.

"No offense" is a slangy way of saying "I don't mean to offend you, but..." The rest of the sentence is Mike's way of telling Ian that Toula's family is completely controlling or dominating him (This is not nearly as crude as saying "they have you by the balls").

They say jump and you pull out the trampoline.

A "trampoline" is a sheet of nylon supported by springs in a metal frame which is used to jump up and down very high. This is another way of telling Ian that he is too willing to do whatever Toula's family asks him to.

My life is shit. :: Toula's got a lot of cousin's to fix you up.

"To fix up" a person with another is to try and get them together to see if they would be romantically interested in each other.

Turkish, German, they all made a mess.

A “mess” is a dirty, unorganized or untidy state or condition, or more generally, a chaotic or horrible situation.

It’s a zit! :: I have cover-up.

A “zit” is a slang word for a pimple or acne. “Cover-up” is makeup that is designed to cover such things as pimples or scars.

Dad, is that my tux?

Short for “tuxedo,” which is a very expensive and formal suit that men wear at such events as weddings.

You’re all nuts.

An excellent colloquial adjective for crazy or insane.

Let me pop it!

“To pop” a pimple or anything else is to burst or explode it.

My mother said to me “Greek women, we may be lambs in the kitchen, but we are tigers in the bedroom.”

Maria’s way of saying that Greek women are great at sex.

You need sponging?

“To sponge” a person is to wash them with a sponge, which is a material that is usually used to wash dishes.

I’m a snow beast.

A “beast” is a scary or big animal.

How are we supposed to know what’s going on? :: It’s all Greek to me.

If something is “Greek to you,” you do not understand it or are not familiar with it. A well-known expression outside of this film!

Don’t dab! Wipe, wipe off!

“To dab” is to wipe or stroke very gently and briefly.

Who did your makeup, your aunts? :: Drag queens could get a few tips from those aunts.

“Makeup” is another word for cosmetics, such as lipstick or eye shadow.

A “drag queen” is a man who dresses up like a sexy woman, and in this case, a “tip” is a small piece of useful advice.

I’m covered. :: Like a big frosted cup-cake.

If a cake is “frosted,” it has frosting on it, which is a type of very sweet dessert topping. A “cup cake” is a popular type of very small cake.

Help me with the veil.

A “veil” is a head covering, like those worn by women in the Middle East.

Too late to elope now.

When a couple “elope,” they secretly travel far away in order to get married, without any family or friends.

I put some Windex on it.

A well known type of glass cleaner (and the product that Gus thinks is a cure for almost every health problem).

I’m going to be a painter. :: Good, you can start with our fence.

A funny exchange that shows a painter can be a person who paints houses and other buildings, or a serious artist like Picasso or Van Gogh.

Bottom’s up!

One way of saying “cheers,” or offering a toast when people drink.

Yes, we roast lamb on a spit in the front yard, and wherever I go, whatever I do, they will always be there.

A “spit” is a metal pole or stick on which meat is cooked over a fire. This is Toula’s way of saying her family is strange, but she can always count on them for their support if she needs them.

Mom, I want to go to brownies.

The well known organization that young girls join if they are still too young to join the Girl Scouts.

My Big Fat Greek Wedding

Some Possible ESL Questions for Class Discussion

1. This movie seems to be about Greek-American culture; In fact, is it really about all kinds of ethnic Americans? How so?
2. If you were Ian, would you have agreed to join another church in order to marry Toula?
3. How does your family compare to Toula's? What about compared to Ian's?
4. Has the United States largely succeeded in creating a great "melting pot" (in which people from all cultures have blended together), or is it more like a "salad bowl" (in which people from different cultures stick to their own groups)?
5. Did you like this movie? Why or why not?