

The Marriage of Marcus Tyler

by

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CHARACTERS

VICKI TYLER	An eccentric middle-aged woman.
ANDREW TYLER	Very sarcastic and casual attitude. He is in his late 20s, is a perpetual college student and still lives at home when not at school.
DONALD TYLER	Stoic head of the household who is obsessed with his plants.
ALLISON TYLER	The youngest daughter and proclaimed favorite child. Avid jogger and Christian.
JULIE NICHOLS	The bride to be. Overly polite, but has a breaking point.
JEROME GOODWIN	The grandfather. Very right-wing WWII veteran.
ALICE GOODWIN	The grandmother. Very concerned with the image of the family and the recently deceased.
MARCUS TYLER	The groom to be.

SETTING

The play takes place in the Tyler family living room in suburban Chicago. A modest room with a couch, chair, and coffee table. There should also be numerous plants scattered throughout the room. Not so many that they become a distraction, but more than would be normal.

TIME

The present.

Act I - approximately 2:00pm.

Act II - approximately 6:30pm.

ACT 1

(Lights rise on the living room of the Tyler family home in suburban Chicago. ANDREW is sitting on a sofa center stage in nothing but boxer shorts. He is eating a roast beef sandwich and drinking a can of coke.)

ANDREW

(To the audience.)

If there is one thing I hate more than my family, it's my extended family. And if there is one thing I hate more than my extended family, it's company. And if there's one thing I hate more than company, it's when the extended family is the company. Today is one of those days, so I'm sure you can imagine why I'm still in my underwear at two in the afternoon.

(VICKI enters.)

That's my Mom, we hate her.

VICKI

Andrew!

ANDREW

(To audience.)

Okay, hate is a little strong—

VICKI

What are you doing?

ANDREW

(To Vicki.)

I'm having breakfast.

VICKI

Get out of here. They're going to be here any minute.

ANDREW

Who's going to be here any minute?

VICKI

Marcus and his fiancé.

ANDREW

What?

VICKI

Would it kill you to use a napkin?

ANDREW

Excuse me?

VICKI

You're getting crumbs all over. And for the four thousandth time will you please use a coaster—

ANDREW

Marcus and who, are coming over?

VICKI

Gayle.

ANDREW

Gayle?

VICKI

No, no, Julie.

ANDREW

Julie?

VICKI

She's your brother's fiancé.

ANDREW

What?

VICKI

She's your brother's—

ANDREW

When did this happen?

VICKI

A couple of days ago.

ANDREW

How come nobody told me?

VICKI

You were standing right next to me when Marcus called. I put it on speaker phone for Christ's sake.

ANDREW

(To audience.)

My mother, much like the Catholic Church, has a way of bending the truth to fit any situation.

VICKI

All I know is that you were there with me.

ANDREW

I just got home last night.

VICKI

Maybe if you didn't always ignore me—

ANDREW

Maybe if you weren't always bitching—

VICKI

Do not start with me young man—

ANDREW

I'm not starting anything—

VICKI

Move out.

ANDREW

You love having me here.

VICKI

Would you go put some pants on for Christ's sake!

ANDREW

Leave me alone.

VICKI

I can't. My future daughter-in-law is going to be here any minute and the first thing she sees in my home is not going to be your naked body.

ANDREW

I'm not naked.

VICKI

I don't care. Now get out of here.

ANDREW

Not until I finish my breakfast. You always said that breakfast was the most important meal of the day.

VICKI

Are you trying to upset me? Is that your goal?

ANDREW

(To audience.)

Yes.

VICKI

Dr. Fitzgerald said that my blood pressure was up twenty points since you came home. Twenty points. You know that you're killing me don't you? That you're killing your poor mother?

ANDREW

I just came in from school last night, how could I have possibly raised your blood pressure? All I want is a couple of minutes by myself without you nagging.

VICKI

And all I want is for my twenty seven year old son to grow up and move out.

(DONALD enters. He has a newspaper, and a spray bottle, which he uses to water the various plants throughout the room.)

ANDREW

(To audience.)

That's my Dad. He's replaced his children with plants.

DONALD

Did somebody touch these ferns? It looks like somebody has been touching these ferns.

VICKI

Nobody's touched your stupid plants Donald. Now will you two get out of here so I can clean up!

ANDREW

Watch out Dad, I think Ma is going to take us out with that twenty-two she has hidden in her closet.

DONALD

You have a gun sweetheart?

VICKI

Of course not Donald. Your son is trying to be funny at my expense.

(To Andrew.)

Maybe you should try a little harder next time dear.

ANDREW

I'll do my best Mom, but—

VICKI

I don't want to hear anymore.

ANDREW

Don't stifle my creativity Mom.

VICKI

You had better just thank your lucky stars that you didn't get your father's sense of humor.

ANDREW

Thank you Jesus, for giving me my mother's sense of humor.

VICKI

That's enough Andrew.

ANDREW

And I know I should have said this earlier Mom, well, thanks for sending me to wit camp.

VICKI

I said that's enough.

ANDREW

At first I didn't think it was going to be any fun, and the witticism drills were hell; but looking back on it, I'd have to say that it was probably the highlight of my life.

VICKI

THAT'S ENOUGH!

(Pause.)

DONALD

I'm a funny guy. Why did you say that?

VICKI

Say what?

DONALD

That I'm not funny.

VICKI

You are funny dear, just in a non-conventional way.

DONALD

My students think I'm funny. They tell me all the time.

ANDREW

(To Audience.)

My Dad is a pharmacy professor at Northwestern. After each semester all of his students write out an evaluation and he

makes us read them out loud at the dinner table. One girl eleven years ago said his lectures were, quote, 'amusing'.

VICKI

You're a real laugh a minute Donald.

DONALD

(Sits on the sofa.)

Thank you dear. So, when is little Marcus going to be here?

VICKI

Any minute.

DONALD

What's her name again? I don't want to embarrass myself like I did with your prom date Andrew. Do you remember that? I just couldn't remember that girl's name.

ANDREW

(To audience.)

I've relived this story at least once a week for the past ten years. It's my Dad's 'Who says I don't have a good sense of humor?' defense story.

DONALD

Andrew? Do you remember?

ANDREW

(To Donald.)

Yup.

DONALD

When I called her Amy?

ANDREW

Uh-huh.

DONALD

But her name wasn't Amy was it?

ANDREW

Nope.

DONALD

It was Erin.
But I called her Amy.
Do you remember that?

ANDREW

Yup.

DONALD

You got so red.

ANDREW

I bet.

DONALD

I could have sworn her name was Amy.
Now that is a funny story. Who says I don't have a good sense of humor.

(ANDREW reaches between the sofa cushions and pulls out a pack of cigarettes. He lights one. Short pause.)

DONALD

So what was her name again?

VICKI

Erin.

DONALD

No, the girl. Marc's gal?

VICKI

Gayle.

ANDREW

Julie.

(To Audience.)

My Dad has a doctorate and he can't remember a girl's name.
I guess that's the price of genius.

VICKI

What in the hell is that?

DONALD

Sounds Anglo-Saxon to me.

ANDREW

What?

VICKI

Are you smoking?

ANDREW

No.

VICKI

You are not allowed to smoke.

ANDREW

I'm not? Oh Jesus.

(He puts it out in his coke can.)

VICKI

Since when do you smoke?

ANDREW

Since a while ago.

(To audience.)

A while ago meaning since I was fourteen. What can I say?
Peer-pressure's a bitch.

VICKI

Where did you even get them from? Don't tell me you keep
cigarettes in your underwear.

ANDREW

What's the big deal?

VICKI

What's the big deal? What's the big deal? Do you hear this
Donald?

DONALD

(From behind his newspaper.)

Can you believe that the Cubs lost again.

VICKI

I will not allow you to sit in my house and smell everything
up with your smoke. I don't want to smell like your smoke.
Do you want to smell like Andrew's smoke honey?

DONALD

Unbelievable.

VICKI

Donald!

DONALD

(Peeking around his paper.)

What?

VICKI

Do you want to smell like your son's disgusting smoke?

DONALD

Um, no honey. I don't.

(Goes back to his paper.)

ANDREW

I put it out.

VICKI

I don't see how you can sit there and fill your young, pink, healthy lungs with that disgusting smoke. So young, and you're throwing it all away.

ANDREW

You make me too tense.

(To audience.)

Don't tell me that your mother doesn't make you tense.

VICKI

I make you too tense? Oh, this is priceless. Are you listening to this Donald? What your son is saying?

DONALD

Eleven in a row. I don't think they'll ever win again.

VICKI

Do you remember those pictures your father brought home for Allison's birthday?

ANDREW

(To audience.)

Whenever one of his offspring turns sixteen my dad hangs up a collage of unhealthy organs on our fridge to try and scare us straight.

VICKI

Do you want your lungs to end up looking like that? Do you?

ANDREW

It might take me twenty years, but you taught me to perser-

VICKI

Would you two get out of here-

(ALLISON enters through the front door.)

ALLISON

Hey guys.

ANDREW

(To audience.)

That's my little sister Allison. She is a better child than me in every way.

DONALD

(He puts his paper down.)

Hi sweetheart, how was your run?

ANDREW

(To audience.)

Mostly because she's sixteen and she's already a yuppie.

VICKI

Take your shoes off dear. You're traipsing mud all over.

ALLISON

Sorry Mom.

(She takes her shoes off.)

ALLISON

It was okay. Just a quick ten mile cool down after yesterday.

DONALD

That's just great Ally. Just great how you stay in such good shape.

ALLISON

Thanks Dad.

VICKI

It would be a shame to waste such a healthy young body.

ANDREW

What are you staring at me for?

VICKI

Those tobacco companies are lying to you Andrew.

ANDREW

What? But I thought they-

VICKI

Don't you start.

ANDREW

You should really be yelling at super-star over here.

(To Allison.)

You're sixteen, what the hell are you running for?

(To Vicki.)

I'm telling you Ma, she's got all the signs for anorexia. She exercises excessively, she's young, a vegetarian, I'm pretty sure she's a closet lesbian-

I'm not a lesbian. ALLISON

If the bomber hat fits. ANDREW

Stop it. VICKI

You're just jealous that I can walk up the stairs without having a heart attack. ALLISON

I might get a little short of breath, but a heart attack? Come on now Allison. Don't you think that's a bit much? ANDREW

Dad! ALLISON

If you two don't cut this bullshit right now I will kill the both of you. VICKI

(To audience.)
My mother has threatened to kill me one million, three-hundred and fifty two thousand, seven hundred and eighty nine times in my life. ANDREW

God as my witness. VICKI

How? ANDREW

I swear to God you are two seconds from death. VICKI

Jesus Christ Mom, lighten up. ANDREW

Mom! ALLISON

Andrew Matthew Tyler, if you take the Lord's name in vain one more time! VICKI

ANDREW

(To audience.)

Did I mention that at sixteen my sister is also somehow a born-again Christian?

(To all.)

I'm sorry Jesus, God, et al; but sometimes I just forget how important you are to me.

ALLISON

Mom!

VICKI

Andrew!

ANDREW

I guess if my mother had done a better job of instilling religious beliefs into my life when I was younger I wouldn't so liberally take your name, however, since I never received those precious values as a child I am finding it difficult to change as an adult. I hope you can forgive my mother Jesus for her flawed parenting.

VICKI

(To Donald.)

Are you just going to sit there while your son brow beats me?

DONALD

No.

VICKI

(Pause.)

Well, what are you going to do?

DONALD

(Pause. He resumes reading his paper.)

ALLISON

When's Marcus coming?

VICKI

I don't know. Five minutes.

ALLISON

Okay. I'm going to go take a quick shower before he gets here.

(She exits.)

DONALD

I sure can't wait to meet Marc's new gal. I bet they're real happy.

VICKI

Of course they're happy.

ANDREW

Or he's afraid to say no to her.

VICKI

Please try to keep your asinine comments to yourself.

ANDREW

I don't know if I can, or should Mom. I mean, you're the one who gave me this sharp wit, don't you want to see me using it?

VICKI

I wish I did have a gun upstairs because I'd kill you both and move to a cabin in the woods.

ANDREW

(To audience.)

My mother has threatened to move to a cabin in the woods one million, three-hundred and fifty two thousand, seven hundred and eighty nine times in my life.

DONALD

Honey.

ANDREW

I could go pick you up a shotgun at Walmart if you'd like?

VICKI

Fine, give our family a bad name. Let Marc's fiancé think we're trailer trash.

ANDREW

You'd rather it was a joint effort?

DONALD

I take it that you want us to put on our happy faces?

VICKI

We are going to be a happy, normal family tonight, you understand?

ANDREW

Why don't you go have a drink.

VICKI

I don't drink.

DONALD

Honey...

ANDREW

(To audience.)

One time in the 80's my mother got drunk at one of my dad's university Christmas parties. Every year since he has enrolled her in an AA class as an anniversary present.

DONALD

You're never going to get better until you admit you have a problem.

VICKI

Oh shut up. I got drunk one time fifteen years ago—

ANDREW

Do you want your liver to look like the one on the fridge?

VICKI

Go to hell.

ANDREW

Why don't you go clean my room Mom. I didn't make my bed or put away my clothes. What if Julie went in there, wouldn't you be embarrassed?

VICKI

I can't go anywhere until this room is clean.

ANDREW

You haven't touched anything in ten minutes.

VICKI

Because your naked body is all over everything.

DONALD

We'll take care of this room dear, why don't you go upstairs and change.

VICKI

I'm already dressed.

DONALD

Oh.

ANDREW

Good one Dad.

(Pause.)

I'm going to change.

VICKI

No, you look fine.

DONALD

I feel too old in this.

VICKI

I didn't mean that.

DONALD

Don't flatter yourself. I could care less what you think. If this room isn't clean when I get back I will drive a knife through your hearts.

VICKI

(She exits.)

God, she drives me crazy.

ANDREW

Who?

DONALD

Mom. Mom drives me crazy Dad.

ANDREW

Oh.

DONALD

(Pause. There are many pause during the following encounter.)

Did you see who won the game last night?

What game?

ANDREW

The Cubs game.

DONALD

No.

ANDREW

Tough one. Bullpen blew it again.

DONALD

ANDREW

I bet.

DONALD

Should have won.

ANDREW

Shoulda.

DONALD

Too bad really.

ANDREW

It is.

(Pause.)

DONALD

So, how are you?

ANDREW

Fine.

(Pause.)

DONALD

How was school this year?

ANDREW

It was real good.

DONALD

When are you going to be done?

ANDREW

Soon.

DONALD

Seems like you've been at that school for a long time.

ANDREW

I know.

(Pause.)

DONALD

Do you have a girlfriend?

ANDREW

No.

Why not? DONALD

I don't know. ANDREW

Oh. DONALD

(Pause.)

DONALD
(More curious than anything else.)
Are you ever going to move out?

Hopefully. ANDREW

DONALD
(Accusatory.)
Did you mess with my ferns?

ANDREW
Don't you have somewhere else you could be for five minutes?

I guess. DONALD

Could you maybe go there? ANDREW

I suppose if I wanted to. DONALD

Shouldn't you check on the lawn? ANDREW

I already checked twice this morning. DONALD

ANDREW
(He hands DONALD his coke can.)
Why don't you take this into the kitchen and clean up in there. You know, do the dishes for Ma. I bet she'd appreciate it after your little clothes comment.

DONALD
I'm not quite sure I know how to do the dishes.

ANDREW

What?

DONALD

I don't know how to do the dishes.

ANDREW

(To audience.)

My Dad has a doctorate and he legitimately does not know how to do the dishes. The price of genius.

DONALD

I've never had to do them.

ANDREW

Just put all the dirty dishes in the sink, pour some water on them, then put some soap on them, then pour more water over them.

DONALD

That seems like an awful lot of water.

ANDREW

Dad!

DONALD

What?

ANDREW

Would you just leave me alone for five minutes?

DONALD

Fine, fine. I'm going.
Just trying to bond with my son before he gets married and moves out too.
Be all alone.

ANDREW

Cut the guilt trip Dad.

DONALD

I'm not trying to guilt you into spending time with your only father...who might be dead in a few years. I'm not doing anything like that.
Did I mention heart disease is hereditary?

ANDREW

It's not going to work Dad.

DONALD

Fine, I'll go. You broke my spirit. I hope you're happy now.

(He exits.)

ANDREW

Finally, some peace and quiet around here.

(ALLISON enters.)

ANDREW

How could you possibly be out of the shower already?

ALLISON

It was just a rinse.

ANDREW

Sorry. I thought you only believed in different levels of hell, I didn't realize that it carried over into showering.

ALLISON

What's your problem?

ANDREW

I can't get five minutes to myself.

ALLISON

Neither can I but you don't hear me complaining.

ANDREW

That's because you've found Jesus.

ALLISON

Shut up Andrew.

ANDREW

Plus you're Mom and Dad's favorite. You can waltz around here and do whatever you like and not hear a word.

ALLISON

That's so not true. Mom yells at me all the time.

ANDREW

(To audience.)

My Mom has yelled at my sister exactly one time. The next day she got a new bike.

ALLISON

Maybe if you weren't such an asshole all the time—

ANDREW

Ah, the innocence of youth. What a tough life you must lead.

ALLISON

You don't think it's hard having two older brothers that are always picking on you?

ANDREW

I'm sure it's most difficult having somebody around to take all the blame.

ALLISON

Shut up.

ANDREW

(Mimicking her.)

Shut up.

ALLISON

I'm not playing your stupid little games.

ANDREW

What's the matter? The big girl too mature for my little games?

ALLISON

Somebody in this family has to be.

ANDREW

That was harsh Al.

ALLISON

Truth stings a bit, doesn't it.

ANDREW

Not really.

ALLISON

What happened to you Andrew?

ANDREW

Lack of privacy.

ALLISON

What are you doing with your life? I mean, you're almost thirty, and you're still in college, and you still live at home, and you're younger brother is getting married, how pathetic is that-

ANDREW

I live at home part-time, okay? And 27 is not almost thirty. And I'm getting my Master's-

ALLISON

Yeah, in comparative literature, whatever that means. And you've been getting it for four years.

ANDREW

Oh, I know what this is about. Don't worry, Jesus and I are back on speaking terms. We both agreed that it was nobody's fault.

ALLISON

You're so immature it boggles the mind.

ANDREW

What have you done that's so great?

ALLISON

I got straight A's last semester, and Ms. Nelson is helping me get a patent for one of my-

ANDREW

Shut up.

ALLISON

Isn't it way weird that Marc is getting married?

ANDREW

Way.

ALLISON

I'm serious.

ANDREW

(To audience.)

Deathly.

ALLISON

I mean we're going to be in-laws, and aunts and uncles. I mean she's going to be Marc's wife. His wife. Mr. and Mrs. Tyler. Mom and Dad are Mr. and Mrs. Tyler.

ANDREW

As long as she isn't my wife I don't care.

ALLISON

I wonder what their wedding will be like.

ANDREW

Decadent.

ALLISON

You don't even know what that word means.

ANDREW

(To audience.)

Touche.

(To Allison.)

All weddings are overdone.

ALLISON

Mine won't be. Mine will be just perfect.

ANDREW

You're sixteen.

ALLISON

So what, I'll probably get married before you.

ANDREW

Committed. Lesbians can't get married-

ALLISON

Shut up Andrew.

ANDREW

I'm sure your wedding will be way cool.

ALLISON

It will be. I've already got it all planned out. After a two year engagement Jean-Paul and I-

ANDREW

You're marrying the pope now?

ALLISON

Pope John-Paul passed. How do you not know that?

ANDREW

Shut up.

ALLISON

My Jean-Paul is a French expatriate. Anyway, it'll be on June ninth, two-thousand fourteen, at two-seventeen in the afternoon. And they'll let out a thousand butterflies as we finish reciting our personally prepared vows, his in English and French, and share our first kiss as man and wife. And I'll have the most beautiful, yet highly traditional and elegant gown. And we're not having a flower girl. It is my day, and there is no way some prissy little brat is going to ruin it.

ANDREW

Like you did with Aunt Doris's wedding?

ALLISON

Shut up.

ANDREW

What if John-Paul doesn't want to get married like that?

ALLISON

Then I'll find a new husband.

ANDREW

Real mature Al.

ALLISON

No man is going to waltz in and ruin my day. My wedding is about what I want, and have wanted since I was a little girl.

ANDREW

News flash Al, you still are a little girl.

ALLISON

And you're an ignorant thirty-year-old mamma's boy.

ANDREW

That's it. You asked for it.

(ANDREW pins ALLISON on the floor and begins mercilessly tickling her.)

ANDREW

How does the little girl like the big dumb mamma's boy now?

ALLISON

Cut it out.

ANDREW

Can't the big mature woman handle getting tickled?

ALLISON

I'm warning you.

ANDREW

She can plan a wedding but she can't handle being tickled?

ALLISON

This is your last warning.

ANDREW

The big girl gonna-

(ALLISON breaks free and hits ANDREW in the face.)

ANDREW

Fuck! What the hell did you do that for?

ALLISON

I told you to stop.

ANDREW

You didn't have to hit me.

(To audience.)

She probably did. I probably would have kept going until she peed herself.

ALLISON

News flash Andrew, I don't like being tickled.

ANDREW

Christ, is it bleeding? It tastes like there's blood in my mouth.

ALLISON

Oh no, I'm not falling for that.

ANDREW

I could be dying.

ALLISON

I'm not an idiot. You're going to get me to look at your mouth and then, when I've let my guard down, you'll put me in a head lock.

ANDREW

(To audience.)

What happened to me? I can't even out-wit a teenage girl anymore.

ALLISON

Mom was right about you.

ANDREW

You really shouldn't pay her any attention. It just feeds her illness.

ALLISON

Why are you so hard on Mom all the time?

ANDREW

What's it to you?

ALLISON

Anytime anybody even mentions her name you throw out some juvenile insult. Maybe if you moved out and got your own life you could move past your juvenile rebellion.

ANDREW

You wouldn't understand.
(To audience.)
The favorite never understands.

ALLISON

Don't make me hit you again.

ANDREW

I'm not trying to be a jerk, you just wouldn't understand.

ALLISON

Why?

ANDREW

Because I hate Mom and you love her.

ALLISON

You love Mom too.

ANDREW

Sure I do. But I also hate her and you don't. Therein lies the crux of the problem.

ALLISON

What did Mom ever do to you?

ANDREW

Are you wired? What's it to you?

ALLISON

I'm just curious.

ANDREW

Take her voice for example. It probably doesn't pierce your ears like a tiny dagger.

ALLISON

What?

ANDREW

You can't feel the cold sterility of the blade ripping through the soft virginal tissue of your ear canal. Slowly slicing through you as it makes its way toward your ear drum until – BAM! Then, just when you think the worst is behind you, you feel it slowly being pulled back out, further carving your minced ear. And then back in again. In and out. In and out. Over and over again while your head throbs from the pain until you can't take it anymore and you wish that it would just stab you in the heart and end your miserable existence right then and there.

ALLISON

(Pause.)

That's sick Andrew. You're a really unhealthy person.

ANDREW

I told you you wouldn't understand.

(Pause.)

ALLISON

Gosh it's been a long five minutes. When is Marcus gonna get here?

ANDREW

I don't know, six minutes.

ALLISON

I can't wait to meet Julie.

ANDREW

Me either!

ALLISON

I bet she's just beautiful.

ANDREW

Uh-huh.

ALLISON

What do you think she looks like?

ANDREW

A girl.

ALLISON

No you idiot. What do you think she looks like?

ANDREW

Are you being serious?

ALLISON

I bet she's tall and thin and she has long brown hair and she's probably got-

ANDREW

You really are a lesbo.

ALLISON

Forget it. Why don't you go put some pants on?

ANDREW

I'll do it later.

(Pause.)

ALLISON

When is everybody else coming over?

ANDREW

What?

ALLISON

You know, Grandma and Grandpa.

ANDREW

Excuse me?

ALLISON

Oh, Uncle Lenny and Aunt Doris might be coming too.

ANDREW

How come nobody ever tells me anything?

ALLISON

What's the big deal?

ANDREW

Have you met any of these people?

ALLISON

Of course I have.

ANDREW

Whose child are you?

ALLISON

It's normal to like other people Andrew. You're the freak.

ANDREW

(To audience.)

Don't act like you love every person you ever met.

ALLISON

I'm sure that Julie will get a kick out of meeting everybody.

ANDREW

Oh, I'm sure she'll love Grandpa's three rules of the family, and hopefully he'll make her shoot his gun. And don't forget Grandma's passive-aggressive insults. And let's all remember what a courteous person Uncle Lenny can be as he's asking her about her panties. And...well, I guess I don't really know what it is about Aunt Doris that I don't like but I just don't.

ALLISON

You're too hard on other people.

ANDREW

I'm honest.

ALLISON

Except when it comes to every other aspect of your life.

ANDREW

Whatever little miss Mother Theresa.

ALLISON

Don't you ever mention her name.

ANDREW

Why, is she dead too?

ALLISON

You're joking right?

ANDREW

We aren't even related to Lenny and Doris.

ALLISON

Doris is Mom's third cousin through marriage.

ANDREW

What does that even mean?

ALLISON

It means that she's our family.

ANDREW

(To audience.)

It means that she, and Lenny by marriage, have the right to visit us on national holidays.

ALLISON

I'm sure everything will be fine.

ANDREW

Throw Mom into the mix and I almost feel sorry for Julie.

ALLISON

Give Mom a break.

ANDREW

I'm just saying that I'm glad I'm not Julie.

ALLISON

I'm sure everybody will love her. Marcus told me that she was really cool.

ANDREW

Radical.

ALLISON

How about you try not making fun of somebody for two minutes? Oh wait, that's right, I forgot that your life is so great.

ANDREW

It isn't so great. Pretty good. Better than yours. But it isn't so great.

ALLISON

You're an idiot.

ANDREW

An idiot I may be.

(To audience.)

I don't think I'm fooling anyone on this one.

(To Allison.)

But at least I know how things work around this house.

ALLISON

You should after thirty years.

ANDREW

Twenty-seven. For example, I bet you didn't know that Mom makes up stories about us when she's talking to people. It's like she's ashamed of what we're really doing, so she tells them what she wishes we were doing instead.

ALLISON

That's not true.

ANDREW

Grandma thinks I'm going to college on a tennis scholarship, which has lasted nine years.

ALLISON

Mom only makes things up about you because you don't do anything worth telling other people about. You don't even put on pants half of the time.

(DONALD enters.)

DONALD

What's all this commotion about?

ANDREW

(To audience.)

My Dad probably heard us fighting five minutes ago and meant to come in and check it out, but just didn't get around to it until now. Price of genius.

ALLISON

Andrew is just being an idiot.

DONALD

(To Andrew.)

Stop being an idiot.

(To Allison.)

Is Marcus here yet?

ALLISON

Not yet.

ANDREW

Are the dishes done?

DONALD

I'm not sure.

ANDREW

Add more water.

DONALD

More water it is.

(DONALD exits.)

ANDREW

I never realized how helpless Dad is.

ALLISON

What do you think you're going to end up like?

ANDREW

I won't be completely helpless. When necessity forces me to do the dishes I'll at least grasp the process.

ALLISON

You'll go crawling to your wife the second you get a hole in your sock, just like Dad.

ANDREW

If she's going to sew it for me, why not let her?

ALLISON

You're missing the point—

ANDREW

What if she really likes sewing? I'm supposed to keep her from sewing?

ALLISON

You're such an ass—

ANDREW

So I'm supposed to take everything that my wife has an interest in and keep her from doing it? That's a pretty backward way of thinking Al. I don't think it'll go over well with your partner.

ALLISON

Shut up. Why can't you ever be serious?

ANDREW

I can be serious.

ALLISON

Yeah right.

ANDREW

Try me.

ALLISON

I'm worried about Mom and Dad.

ANDREW

Did Mom not yell at Dad today?

ALLISON

Forget it.

ANDREW

No, I'm being serious. Maybe the way they stay together is by having little fights all the time instead of holding it all in until everything blows up.

ALLISON

You're such an idiot.

ANDREW

You're right. Dad told me this morning that they are only staying together until you move out.

ALLISON

Shut up.

ANDREW

I hope you're proud of yourself for making Mom and Dad miserable.

ALLISON

Shut up.

(The doorbell rings. Pause. Commotion.)

VICKI

(From off-stage.)

You better have that room spotless or I swear to God I'll kill all of you.

DONALD

(From off-stage.)

How long until I use the water again?

ALLISON

They're here! This is so exciting.

ANDREW

What did Dad just say?

ALLISON

I bet she's just beautiful.

ANDREW

Why would Marcus ring the bell?

ALLISON

Who cares? Get the door.

ANDREW

I'm not getting the door. I'm older. You get the door.

ALLISON

What? No, you get the door.

(The bell rings again.)

ANDREW

You're keeping them waiting.

VICKI

(From off-stage.)

Somebody get the Goddamn door!

DONALD

(From off-stage.)

I'm gonna add more water now.

ALLISON

I'm only getting it because Mom asked.

ANDREW

Right, kiss ass.

ALLISON

Whatever. Why don't you go put some clothes on?

ANDREW

Why don't you just answer the door?

(ALLISON answers the door. JULIE is there, alone. She is holding her bags and is dressed very well.)

JULIE

Hello.

ALLISON

Hi.

JULIE

Is this the Tyler home?

ALLISON

Yes.

JULIE

I'm Julie. Nichols. Marc's fiancé.

ALLISON
I'm Allison. Tyler. Marc's little sister.

JULIE
(Pause.)
It's a pleasure to make your acquaintance.

ALLISON
Likewise.

JULIE
(Pause.)
How are you?

ALLISON
I'm fine. How are you?

JULIE
I'm a little uncomfortable.

ALLISON
Why?

JULIE
Well,
(She readjusts the bags she is carrying.)
I'm just a little nervous to meet Marc's family.

ALLISON
We're excited to meet you.

JULIE
You seem rather nice.

ALLISON
They aren't all like me.

(Pause.)

ANDREW
Would you stop staring at her chest and let her in the house you idiot?

ALLISON
(She lets Julie in the house. To Julie.)
Oh. I'm sorry. I didn't mean—

I know. I didn't want to JULIE just barge in-

No. That would have been ALLISON rude.

I know. JULIE

(The two share a laugh. Pause.)

That was funny. JULIE

Yeah, it was. ALLISON

(Pause.)

How rude of me, let me introduce you to my brother Andrew. Sorry if he repulses you, he's kind of an idiot.

ANDREW
Nice to meet you. I'm Marc's brother Andrew.

JULIE
Nice to finally put a...
(She notes his choice of clothes.)
...face, with the name. I've heard quite a bit about you. Marcus is rather fond of you.

ANDREW
Did you hear that Al? Marcus is rather fond of me. Wait a second, is it just me or did he not seem to mention you. That's so odd. I mean you'd think he'd at least mention his only sister to his fiancé, unless he didn't love her.

JULIE
Don't be silly, he thinks the world of his darling sister.

ALLISON
So there.

ANDREW
Shut up.

ALLISON
(To Julie.)
So where's Marcus?

JULIE

He got held up at work on a last minute sort of a deal. He should be here later this afternoon.

ALLISON

Oh.

(Pause.)

ANDREW

I'm sorry, Allison is being horribly rude, let me take those bags off your hands-

JULIE

No, I can take-

ANDREW

Hey Ma! Come and get Julie's bags!

JULIE

It's okay-

ANDREW

Don't be silly, she loves doing this sort of thing.

(To Vicki.)

Hurry it up Mom!

(To Julie.)

I do apologize, she's usually far more punctual.

JULIE

It's really okay, I can take care of them myself.

(VICKI enters.)

ANDREW

Well it's about time Ma, she's been waiting here for like five minutes.

VICKI

Oh Julie dear - you're simply divine! Marcus never told us how darling you were. Come here and give me a hug!

(JULIE tentatively crosses to VICKI and they awkwardly embrace.)

ANDREW

(To Audience.)

My mother likes to pretend that she's some sort of forties dame whenever we have company over. I guess it's just easier to pretend you're somebody else. I know.

JULIE

It's nice to meet you Mrs. Tyler.

VICKI

Put those bags down and have a seat dear.

(To Andrew.)

Do get up off your fat ass dear and let Julie sit.

ANDREW

Spare us the act Mom, the academy isn't here to witness it.

VICKI

Oh Andrew darling, you're such a kidder!

ANDREW

(Speaking in a British dialect.)

Aren't I though Mummy? It is so joyous to be a kidder around Mummy, she just loves it so!

VICKI

Allison, would you kindly take Andrew upstairs and clean him up a bit for our visitor.

ALLISON

Do I have to?

VICKI

Yes.

(To Andrew.)

We'd hate to be rude.

ANDREW

Dear sister, do as Mummy says and lead the way to the lavatory so that I may wash. I am simply filthy from my day in the garden.

(ANDREW and ALLISON exit followed by a moment of uncomfortable silence.)

VICKI

That boy is quite the character.

JULIE

(Uneasily.)

He seems nice.

VICKI

Doesn't he though?

(Pause.)

JULIE

You have a very lovely home Mrs. Tyler.

VICKI

What? This old place? Between you and me I don't know how I keep it standing with this family living here.

JULIE

I guess I see where Marcus gets his tidiness from.

VICKI

So you two live together then?

JULIE

Marcus didn't tell you?

VICKI

No darling, he failed to mention it.

JULIE

I hope it isn't a problem? He said that he had talked to you about it. Oh, if I had known that it was a problem—

VICKI

Problem? Of course it's not a problem.

JULIE

We just thought that it would be a good idea to live together before we got married.

VICKI

That does seem to be the latest trend.

JULIE

If I would have known that you didn't approve—

VICKI

Darling, you misinterpret me. I don't have a problem at all, I just feel bad for you.

JULIE

I'm afraid I'm not quite following.

VICKI

What I mean is that if I had it to do over again I would have insisted that I have my own apartment.

JULIE

An apartment?

VICKI

Yes. Go over to the house for brunch on Sunday's and then retreat back into the luxury of my personal high-rise oasis.

JULIE

So you don't want me to marry Marcus?

VICKI

Heavens no! You're missing the point dear. Of course I want you to take him. I'm begging you. Go ahead and take Donald and Andrew while you're at it.

JULIE

So you want me to marry him, but not live with him?

VICKI

I thought I had made that clear.

JULIE

I'm not sure if-

VICKI

I'm not saying that you have to do anything drastic, certainly nothing across state-lines; but believe me darling when I tell you that your marriage and life will be exponentially better if you have your own place - a sanctuary, a haven, a refuge from him - filled with potpourri and oil paintings and whatever your heart desires, and to live in it man free! Oh, Julie darling, create your paradise and revel in its existence.

JULIE

(Pause.)

That's certainly a unique approach to marriage Mrs. Tyler.

VICKI

I'm not trying to force anything on you dear, but at the very least do me this one favor...

JULIE

(Apprehensive.)

Anything...

VICKI

At least get twin beds. Trust me, after thirty years you won't want that lug lying next to you.

JULIE

I'll be sure to discuss it with Marcus, Mrs. Tyler.

VICKI
Mrs. Tyler. Call me Vicki, darling.

JULIE
Okay, Vicki.

VICKI
How divine, you called me Vicki.
Will you call me Mom?

JULIE
Um, sure.
So Marcus tells me that you're a school librarian, that must
be very rewarding.

VICKI
It's simply spellbinding.
(She aristocratically chuckles.)

JULIE
(She chuckles.)
I'm sure it is.

VICKI
Although you wouldn't know it by the way I'm treated around
here. All they think I do is stamp books.

JULIE
I'm sure they're just teasing you Mrs. Tyler.

VICKI
You needn't spoil me with flattery dear.

JULIE
I wasn't trying to-

VICKI
I've grown beyond the stage where I care what other people
think.

(Pause.)
Oh how rude of me, you must be simply parched! Would you
like something to drink? Perhaps a nibble to eat?

JULIE
Oh, no thank you, Mrs. Tyler, I'm fine.

VICKI
Mom.

JULIE

Um...

VICKI

I won't look down on you if you'd prefer a real drink. I too like a nip every now and then to get me through the day.

JULIE

It's a little early for me—

VICKI

It's nearly three o'clock dear.

JULIE

I know, but I'm just not in the mood right now.

VICKI

How about some water? You must be in the mood for water. Everybody drinks water.

JULIE

I appreciate the offer Mrs. Tyler—

VICKI

Mom. How about a sandwich? I could make you a sandwich?

JULIE

I'm not really hungry either.

VICKI

But you're so skinny. You need to eat something.

JULIE

I had a late lunch.

VICKI

(To Donald, who stays off-stage.)

Donald, honey, could you bring Julie a glass of water and a sandwich?

DONALD

(Off-stage.)

Who?

VICKI

Julie, honey.

DONALD

Who's Julie, honey?

VICKI

Our son's fiancé. Could you bring her a glass of water and a sandwich?

Really Mrs. Tyler— JULIE

Mom. VICKI

Does she want real water or your seltzer crap? DONALD

VICKI
(To Julie.)
Everyone's a comedian.

I'm not thirsty— JULIE

VICKI
(To Donald.)
My seltzer water, dear.

What happened to Gayle? DONALD

Who's Gayle, honey? VICKI

The gal Marc's marrying. DONALD

VICKI
The young woman that Marcus is betrothed to is Julie; who is, as we speak, dying of thirst, so could you please bring her a glass of water.

Does Julie want some fruit? DONALD

VICKI
(To Julie.)
Would you like some fruit dear? Perhaps a kiwi?

JULIE
(To Donald.)
No thank you Mr. Tyler. You don't have to bring me anything, I'm just fine.

DONALD

(To Vicki.)

Was that her?

VICKI

Yes, dear.

DONALD

Hello Julie. I'm Marc's father.

JULIE

It's a pleasure to finally meet you.

DONALD

I'll have your stuff ready in just a minute.

VICKI

Thank you darling.

(Pause.)

JULIE

(To Vicki.)

Could you show me to the bathroom? I'd like to freshen up before I have anything to eat.

VICKI

Of course darling. You just go right through there, turn left at the plant, go up the staircase, follow the hallway and it's the third door on the left.

JULIE

Thank you.

(JULIE exits.)

VICKI

Such a sweet girl.

(DONALD enters carrying a tray with a sandwich, a bowl of fruit and a glass of water and sets it on the coffee table.)

DONALD

Where did she go?

VICKI

She went to the bathroom.

DONALD

Why did she go to the bathroom?

VICKI

To freshen up.

DONALD

And this is Julie who went to the bathroom?

VICKI

Yes.

DONALD

Where's Marcus?

VICKI

I don't know. He must still be at work.

DONALD

Why is he still at work?

VICKI

I don't know.

DONALD

Do you think she'll mind if I have some of her fruit?

VICKI

Shut up Donald!

DONALD

Sorry.

(Pause. He takes an apple.)

VICKI

(Pause.)

Why are you eating that?

DONALD

I'm hungry.

VICKI

It's for Julie.

DONALD

She won't eat all of this.

VICKI

At least chew with your mouth closed.

DONALD

I am.

VICKI

I swear, you're worse than a two year old.

DONALD

What's that supposed to mean?

VICKI

It means that you need your mommy around to take care of you every second.

DONALD

I do not.

VICKI

And God forbid you ever say something.

DONALD

I talk all the time.

VICKI

Except when you're supposed to. You just sit there and stare at people, just like a mentally handicapped two year old. You make things very tense. I mean, would it kill you to open your mouth and say something?

DONALD

(Pause.)

So what's for dinner tonight?

VICKI

Meatloaf!

DONALD

Oh good, that's my favorite. Can I talk about meatloaf tonight?

VICKI

No. Just keep your mouth shut and try not to make an ass out of yourself.

(JULIE enters.)

JULIE

Oh, I feel so much better, thank you.

VICKI

You look ten years younger dear.

JULIE

Then your son is headed to jail Mrs. Tyler.

(She chuckles. No one else does.)

VICKI

Mom.

JULIE

Sorry.

(To DONALD.)

We weren't properly introduced earlier—

DONALD

Gayle right? I'm Donald, Marc's father.

VICKI

Julie. Her name is Julie, darling.

DONALD

I thought Julie was the one who wanted the sandwich?

VICKI

This is her.

DONALD

But she's not eating anything.

VICKI

Please trust me on this one dear.

DONALD

So Julie is the one who went to the bathroom?

VICKI

Right.

JULIE

I'm sorry to have confused you sir—

DONALD

So Julie and Gayle are the same person?

VICKI

No, Gayle doesn't exist.

DONALD

(To JULIE.)

So you're Julie?

JULIE

Yes.

(The phone rings.)

VICKI

I bet that's my mother. Probably going to blame me for traffic.

(To Donald.)

Be a dear darling and entertain Julie for a spot.

(She exits to the kitchen.)

(Long pause.)

DONALD

That must be some phone call, huh?

JULIE

Yeah.

(Awkward pause.)

DONALD

Do you like meatloaf?

JULIE

I'm a vegetarian.

DONALD

Oh. I like plants too.

Growing them. Not eating them.

I like eating them too.

(Pause.)

JULIE

So, Marcus tells me that you are in pharmaceuticals? That must be very exciting.

DONALD

I guess being a drug dealer is kind of cool.

(Chuckles.)

JULIE

(Catching on that this is a joke.

Chuckling.)

Oh yes, a drug dealer. Very clever Mr. Tyler.

(Long pause.)

(VICKI enters.)

VICKI

I see that you have made things incredibly awkward for Julie, dear.

JULIE

Oh no Mrs. Tyler, we were having a lovely conversation.

(ALLISON and ANDREW, who is now wearing jeans and a t-shirt, enter.)

ANDREW

(In British.)

Are you happy Mummy? I am cleaned and dressed in my Sunday best. Shall I sing a song for you Mummy?

ALLISON

Is Marcus here?

VICKI

Not yet dear.

JULIE

He must have gotten tied up at work.

VICKI

(To Julie.)

Why didn't he just take the day off?

DONALD

I did.

JULIE

I'm not sure.

ANDREW

(To audience.)

And they're off.

VICKI

That seems a bit odd, doesn't it darling?

JULIE

Well, yes, but—

VICKI

Does he not get vacation days? Everybody gets vacation days. Perhaps he doesn't think this day is important enough to use a vacation day.

(To Julie.)

Perhaps he doesn't think you are important enough to use a vacation day.

ANDREW

(Normal voice.)

Jesus Mom! Give the girl a fucking break.

VICKI

Do try to watch your language dear, we're entertaining and we can't be acting like animals, now can we?

ANDREW

(British.)

Sorry Mummy, but I thought you rather enjoyed it when I play lions. ROAR! Look Mummy, I'm a lion! ROAR! Beware Father, I am a big ferocious lion and I am coming to get you! ROAR! I just love playing lions. Hugh and I were playing lions yesterday after academy let out until Headmaster Simon sent us home; oh I hate him so! I'm a lion Julie - are you a poacher? Please don't shoot me dead.

VICKI

You're so cute sometimes that I can hardly stand you.

ANDREW

Oh Mummy, I just love our family so!

(To Julie.)

I'm so glad that you have chosen to join our family Julie. If you'd like, we could play lions together in the garden.

JULIE

No thank you.

ANDREW

(To audience.)

Believe me, this is only the beginning. By the end of the night Julie is going to wish that lions was the worst of it.

VICKI

Now that Andrew has finished his little charade, Julie why don't you tell us a little bit about yourself?

JULIE

Okay. Let see, I'm twenty-seven-

VICKI

Twenty-seven! An older woman. How very non-traditional.

JULIE

It's only a two year age difference.

VICKI

(To Julie.)

You certainly don't look it darling. I wouldn't have guessed a day over twenty four, but I'm sure your clock is ticking away like you're thirty-seven.

DONALD

No, you can see it in her eyes. I'd say thirty-one.

VICKI

Those crows feet are starting to creep up.

ANDREW

(To audience.)

Not to say I told you so, but...

VICKI

And there is a bit of sagging just about everywhere.

ALLISON

I think you're just beautiful Julie.

ANDREW

(Coughing.)

Lesbo.

ALLISON

Shut up.

VICKI

Beautiful? I wouldn't go that far dear. Perhaps attractive, maybe even striking or handsome, but certainly not—

ANDREW

Mom! She's sitting right next to you.

VICKI

What? We all had to sit here and watch you make an ass out of yourself. I was simply making a comment that was relevant to the conversation.

ANDREW

Maybe you should try and keep some of your relevant comments to yourself.

VICKI

Do you see this Julie? The constant verbal abuse? What I have to go through?

JULIE

I'm sorry Mrs. Tyler—

VICKI

Mom! Oh it's not your fault dear, that my son treats me like garbage.

(To Andrew.)

Is that what I am to you? Garbage?

ANDREW

Yes Mom, you are like garbage to me. I like to crinkle you up and then throw you away.

VICKI

Don't you get smart with me. Don't you sit here and think that you're too old to get a beating.

ANDREW

You're going to beat me?

VICKI

I'd kill you if it were legal.

ANDREW

Well, that seems like that rational thing to do, and seeing as how you've based your entire life on reason, I guess the best thing for everybody is if you beat me. Should I get the wooden spoon or would you prefer my belt?

ALLISON

Would you guys cut it out? You're embarrassing Julie.

JULIE

No, I'm quite alright.

DONALD

(To Allison.)

It's Gayle sweetie pie.

VICKI

(To Donald.)

Jesus, you're worse than this one here!

ANDREW

I don't know about that—

VICKI

For the last time Gayle does not exist. She's a figment of your imagination. Julie. Julie is the girl that is marrying our son, and we are obliged to love her; faults and all—

ANDREW

Jesus Mom—

VICKI
Not another word Andrew!

ANDREW
You're the one making—

VICKI
(To Donald.)
Why don't you ever defend me when your son is brow beating me?

DONALD
Because you told me to keep my mouth shut and try not to make an ass out of myself.

ANDREW
And you're doing a marvelous job of it Dad, unlike some people...

VICKI
If you want to rip this family apart go right ahead and rip!
(She exits.)

(Pause.)

DONALD
(To Julie.)
Are you going to finish that sandwich?

JULIE
I'm not that hungry.

DONALD
May I?

JULIE
Sure.

ALLISON
Why do you always insist on upsetting Mom?

ANDREW
Shut up.

ALLISON
You shut up. Maybe if you weren't such an asshole—

ANDREW

Don't lecture me.

ALLISON

Somebody needs to—

(VICKI enters with little bags of ice on her eyes.)

VICKI

Please stop your bickering, you're making my eyes swell.

ANDREW

(To audience.)

According to my mother, whenever she gets upset her eyes swell shut. I think you know where I stand on the issue.

JULIE

Are you okay Mrs. Tyler?

VICKI

Mom. Yes dear, I'm fine. I'll just sit here quietly while my eyes seal shut.

ANDREW

If only your mouth—

DONALD

So Gayle, Marcus tells me that you work for the Cubs.

JULIE

Yes. I work in their PR department.

DONALD

Could you get me some tickets?

JULIE

Of course Mr. Tyler. I think that Cincinnati is in town next weekend, how does that sound?

DONALD

I don't really like the Reds.

ALLISON

Dad!

DONALD

What?

ALLISON

When somebody offers you tickets you don't turn them down because you don't like the team they're playing.

DONALD

Why not?

ALLISON

You just don't.

JULIE

It's okay. If you don't like the Reds I'm sure we can work something else out.

DONALD

Brewers. Do you have any Brewers tickets?

JULIE

I'll check on Monday.

DONALD

I hate the Brewers.

VICKI

He appreciates the tickets darling, but he'll have to decline your most generous offer.

DONALD

He will?

VICKI

Yes, dear, he will.

ANDREW

It's not like they're going to win.

DONALD

I just wanna go to a game.

JULIE

It's okay. I get tickets for Marcus all the time.

VICKI

No.

DONALD

Sorry Gayle, my wife won't let me go to the game.

VICKI

Oh grow up Donald. You're a grown man for Christ's sake.

JULIE

If you'd like, I could just come back with Marcus—

VICKI

Don't be ridiculous dear! We already have one person acting ridiculous, Lord knows we don't need another.

ANDREW

Don't—

VICKI

—say a word Andrew.

ALLISON

Don't go Julie, you just got here and we hardly know anything about you.

ANDREW

Except that you have a crush on her.

ALLISON

Shut up Andrew!

VICKI

Do stay Julie, I would be hurt if you didn't.

ALLISON

Tell us how you and Marcus met.

VICKI

Ah, yes, do tell us your story of unrequited love.

ANDREW

They're getting married Mom, it's not unrequited.

VICKI

Do shut up dear and let her tell her tale of passion.

JULIE

Well, it isn't that great of a story—

ANDREW

As long as it keeps Mother quiet—

VICKI

ANDREW!

JULIE

Well, I was walking my dog Snoopy one day after work when suddenly his leash snapped and he took off like a bolt down

the street. I never did get the whole training thing down. I chased after him but I was in heels, and I'm not an olympian by any stretch of the imagination, so it was pretty useless. I called the cops and put up signs everywhere and all that jazz but he didn't turn up, so I figured that's that; until one afternoon there is a knock on my door and there is this totally adorable guy standing there holding Snoopy. He handed him to me and said, 'Here's your dog.'

ANDREW

'Here's your dog.' What a loser.

JULIE

So I invited him in for a drink and the rest is history.

ALLISON

That's so sweet. He found your little lost puppy.

VICKI

I thought Marcus was allergic to dogs.

JULIE

He's allergic to just about everything.

ALLISON

That's even sweeter.

DONALD

So what happened after he gave you the dog?

ANDREW

(To audience.)

The price of genius.

VICKI

What do you think happened?

DONALD

I don't know.

ALLISON

(Awkward pause.)

What if we play a board game or something until Marcus gets here?

JULIE

That sounds like fun.

VICKI

We can't.

ALLISON

What do you mean, we can't? We have that whole closet full of games.

DONALD

I vote for Trivial Pursuit.

JULIE

I love that game.

VICKI

We can't play Trivial Pursuit.

ALLISON

What about Monopoly?

VICKI

Nor Monopoly.

ALLISON

Pictionary?

VICKI

Alas, not even Pictionary.

ALLISON

Why not?

VICKI

Because I gave all of our board games to Goodwill.

ANDREW

(To audience.)

Among her many faults is my mother's belief that she is a true champion of the poor.

ALLISON

Why did you do that?

VICKI

Because I thought a poor child might like the opportunity to escape from the hellish inferno that is life on the street, even if the escape is only fleeting...

JULIE

I think it's very noble.

ANDREW

It is. Thank God the children of the street won't grow up deprived of the joy that is Chutes and Ladders.

ALLISON

Why didn't you give them food or clothes? What good is a board game?

VICKI

Now you're trying to upset me? Is that this family's goal? Well, I've got some news for you young lady, you'd be a poor child if it weren't for your father and me!

ALLISON

Mom-

VICKI

And all I get in return for my gracious gift to the underprivileged is ridicule?

ALLISON

Mom-

DONALD

Leave your mother alone dear.

VICKI

Well thank fucking god Donald! Thanks for stepping in and clearing up the board game fiasco. Don't say a word while you're son brow beats me, but bring up Trivial-fucking-Pursuit and you step right in with swift and decisive action.

ANDREW

Give it a rest Mom.

ALLISON

That's enough!

(Short pause. A bit shocked that she has silenced the room.)

Everybody just settle down. Mom, why don't you go upstairs and lie down until your eyes are better. Dad, go check on the grass until Marcus gets here.

DONALD

I already checked twice-

ALLISON

I don't care! And you,

(To Andrew.)

Just get the hell out of my sight for five minutes.

ANDREW

(Through fake tears.)

I'm sorry, but you'll have to excuse me. I don't think I can stay here after being embarrassed like that. I'm sorry.

(He exits.)

VICKI

He's such a prick.

ALLISON

You too. Go on. You too Dad.

(VICKI and DONALD begin to leave.)

There you go. We'll see you later, okay?

(VICKI and DONALD exit in opposite directions.)

JULIE

I'm so sorry that I've caused so much—

ALLISON

They're always like this.

JULIE

Always?

ALLISON

Usually.

JULIE

I'm so sorry.

ALLISON

It's okay.

VICKI

(From off-stage.)

Allison, sweetheart, could you bring your dear mother some fresh ice packs for her nearly swollen-shut eyes.

ALLISON

In a minute, I'm entertaining Julie.

VICKI

If I die up here from severe swelling...

ALLISON

Coming.

(To Julie.)

Don't worry, I'll be right back.

(ALLISON exits. Pause. JULIE explores the room for a bit, flips through magazines, takes a few sips of seltzer water before finally sitting on the couch where she sits on ANDREW's cigarettes. ANDREW enters.)

ANDREW

Go ahead, I don't mind, but if my Mom catches you...

JULIE

Oh no, I don't smoke, I just, uh...

ANDREW

So you're really going through with this huh?

JULIE

Yes.

ANDREW

Good for you.

JULIE

Thanks.

ANDREW

You must be something else, boy, talk about a guy afraid of commitment.

JULIE

Well, people change.

ANDREW

You mean accommodate. Men don't change, they accommodate until you're in too deep to leave 'em.

JULIE

You're a very strange person.

ANDREW

Just a wee bit different.

JULIE

Jerry Lewis was different, you need help.

ANDREW

Don't ever compare me to Jerry Lewis.

JULIE

There is no comparison. Jerry Lewis is a man of honor and respect. You're too concerned with trying to make your mother cry to worry about such pressing social issues as muscular dystrophy. You sir, are no Jerry Lewis.

ANDREW

You want me don't you?

JULIE

Excuse me?

ANDREW

I can tell when a woman wants me.

JULIE

I'm marrying your brother.

ANDREW

I'm not the one flirting.

JULIE

I am not flirting with you. I detest you.

ANDREW

Don't be coy. I've seen the way you've been looking at me.

JULIE

You didn't have any clothes on.

ANDREW

Laughing at my jokes, playing with your hair; you've basically thrown yourself at me.

JULIE

Are you out of your mind?

ANDREW

I won't tell Marcus.

JULIE

You are out of your mind.

ANDREW

Relax. I'm just fucking with you.

JULIE

What?

ANDREW

You need to take this family with a grain of salt. Do you really think I'd try to make it with my brother's fiancé?

(To audience.)

Don't answer.

DONALD

(From off-stage.)

Andrew! Come look at this patch of crab grass. I think it's spread since this morning.

ANDREW

It's the best advice I can give you.

JULIE

I'm not sure I understand.

ANDREW

You will.

(ANDREW exits. Pause. Lights fade out.)

ACT II

(It is now early evening. JULIE is as she was at the end of Act I, ie, alone in the room. There is a short pause. The doorbell rings. JULIE looks around. Nothing happens. It rings again. Nothing. Rustling and voices can be heard outside. It rings a third time. Finally, JULIE gets up and answers the door. JEROME and ALICE, the grandparents, are at the door.)

ALICE

(To Julie.)

You sure don't move too fast. What are you, Puerto Rican?

JULIE

Excuse me?

JEROME

(To Julie.)

I wish we could afford a Puerto Rican.

JULIE

I'm sorry. I'm not the help. I'm just—

ALICE

Yes dear, you're a part of the family. I know. I read the magazines.

JEROME

What magazines?

ALICE

The magazines. What's it to you?

JEROME

I'm just curious which magazine you read that said Puerto Rican maids are part of the family.

ALICE

Ah, shut up.

JEROME

So when are we eating?

JULIE

I'm not sure. Mrs. Tyler has been upstairs—

ALICE

Could you ring for her?

JULIE

I'm not the help. I'm Marcus—

JEROME

Where is the little bastard anyway?

ALICE

I can't believe that he's getting married.

(She produces a small photo from her
purse.)

Can you believe it Consuela, that the little boy in this
picture is getting married.

(ALLISON and ANDREW enter as JULIE is
speaking.)

JULIE

Yes because I'm the one marrying him.

ALLISON

Grandma! Bappa!

(She runs to ALLISON and JEROME and they
share an embrace.)

ALICE

How is my little pumpkin patch?

ALLISON

Fine. How are you guys?

ALICE

I'm doing just fine papaya, although Bappa is having a bit
of trouble with his hemorrhoids, among other things, so I
have to carry around this stupid little pillow for him to
sit on. Isn't it the silliest thing you've ever seen.

JEROME

Jesus Christ Alice! What the hell are you telling the kid
that for? You think she cares about my bleeding ass? Are you
crazy? Why don't you just tell her about my—

ANDREW

(To audience.)

Meet Grandma and Bappa.

ALICE

I'm sorry, but she asked how we were doing and she's at the age where we can't lie to her anymore.

JEROME

When did you get the Puerto Rican?

ALLISON

You mean Julie?

ALICE

If I may say so dear, Consuela isn't very prompt.

ALLISON

What?

ALICE

It took her nearly five minutes to get the door, and she doesn't even know what's for dinner.

ANDREW

What the hell Consuela?

ALLISON

Julie isn't our help Grandma, she's marrying Marcus.

ALICE

What a touching story. Young, valiant, noble Marcus takes the poor house-whore under his wing. Isn't that romantic Jerry?

JULIE

I'm not the Tyler's house-whore. This is the first time I've even meet these people.

JEROME

Pretty unbearable, eh?

(He sits on the couch.)

ALICE

If you're going to sit you need to use the pillow. Remember what Dr. Jenkins said would happen if you didn't use the pillow.

JEROME

I'm a grown man. I killed forty-nine Nazi's, thirteen Japs; I'm not sitting on some stupid ass pillow.

ALICE

Fine, but don't expect me to clean up the mess. You're just lucky that Consuela is here.

(To Julie. She hands her their coats.)
Could you take these upstairs.

(To Allison.)
Well now, it looks like somebody here deserves a US Grant.
(ALICE takes a fifty dollar bill out of her purse and hands it to ALLISON.)

ANDREW
(To audience.)
Whenever our Grandmother comes over to visit she give us money. She determines the amount based on how much she believes we love her. Allison usually gets a fifty. Marc a twenty. I haven't got anything bill shaped since I was seven.

ALICE
(To Andrew. Handing him a handful of coins.)
And here's some extra toll money dear.

ANDREW
Thanks Grandma.

ALICE
(Whisper. To Andrew.)
Share some of that with Consuela. Her people are too proud to ask for money and I feel just terrible handing it out right in front of her.

JULIE
I don't need any money. I have a job.

ALICE
And don't you let anyone tell you otherwise.
(To others.)

See what I mean?
(To Julie.)
Now take care of those jackets and maybe you'll earn yourself a tip.

JULIE
I'm marrying your grandson; I'm not the help.

JEROME
Where the hell is your mother?

ANDREW
She's passed out upstairs.

ALLISON

Andrew! She's just taking a nap. Andrew was harassing her all morning.

JEROME

Asleep, eh?

ANDREW

Or passed out.

JEROME

And Consuela here doesn't know what's for dinner. And I don't suppose either of you know what's for dinner...

ALLISON

No.

JEROME

So it's possible that there is no dinner.

ALICE

Would you quit worrying about it. I'm sure everything will be just fine.

JEROME

I don't invite somebody over to my house with the promise of a meal and then not provide the meal.

ALICE

I'm sure—

JEROME

We almost got killed eleven times on that damn expressway, for what? All those kids with their zigging and zagging and zooming.

ANDREW

(To audience.)

What he is failing to mention are the several hundred accidents he almost caused.

JEROME

I tell you, these bastards in their SUV's and mini-vans. And those stupid women and their cell-phones. A car is meant to drive not talk.

ALICE

Relax Jerome, now we just have more time to mingle with our grandchildren.

(Awkward pause.)

(VICKI enters dramatically.)

VICKI

Ah, the deafening sound of family. Mother, Father, how are you?

ALICE

Oh you know us honey, nothing too major, just the usual.

VICKI

Really?

ALICE

Well, I hate to bring it up dear, it's just so tragic, but do you remember your fourth grade teacher? Mrs. Robertson?

ANDREW

(To audience.)

Grandma's favorite past time is telling us tragic stories about people who have recently died.

VICKI

I don't want to hear it mother.

ALICE

Well I thought you'd like to know that she...

(In a loud whisper.)

...passed.

VICKI

Well that truly is tragic.

ALICE

Apparently she had...

(In a loud whisper.)

...the cancer.

(Normal.)

ALICE

They had to carry her around in some sort of harness. Do you remember that Jerome? When they brought her down the hall in that harness?

VICKI

I don't want to hear it Mother.

ALICE

We were in the hospital because your father was having some trouble passing his stones and we saw them bring her by. It was just awful.

JEROME

Do you have to recite my entire medical history every time we go out?

ALICE

I was just telling them why we saw her in that awful harness.

VICKI

Well that's too bad.

JEROME

Why the hell did you invite us over here if we aren't going to eat? To meet a Puerto Rican? I've met plenty of Puerto Ricans.

ALICE

Do you remember the Puerto Rican nurse that you had Jerome? The one that helped you with your prostate-

VICKI

What are talking about?

ANDREW

(To audience.)

I don't know if anything brings me more joy than the pain that my grandmother brings to my mother.

JULIE

They think I'm the Puerto Rican house-whore that is marrying your son.

VICKI

Well, isn't that charming.

JEROME

So...

VICKI

Jesus Dad, can't your stomach wait five minutes. Can't I say hello.

JEROME

I didn't say anything.

VICKI

Fine. You win. I'm going to go finish up dinner.

ALICE

I'll come with you.

VICKI

No Mother, you make me too tense.

ALICE

It just looks like you could use a hand.

VICKI

I'm fine.

(She exits to the kitchen.)

ALICE

Maybe if she wasn't so stubborn she'd have dinner ready. Always been that way, since she was a baby. Do you remember that Jerome? When she was a baby? Boy did we ever have a time with her. Not like her brother Donny. What a sweet boy. A treasure, that one. I remember we used to take—

JEROME

(To Julie.)

So you're marrying Marcus?

JULIE

That's the plan.

JEROME

Has he told you the three rules of the family yet?

JULIE

I don't think so.

ANDREW

Well, you kinda have to be a citizen, so...

ALLISON

Bappa, why don't we do the three rules after we eat.

JEROME

That would be fine by me sweetie, but it don't look like we're going to be eating any time soon. You can't be too sure about anything around here.

ALICE

That's so true. I remember that one Thanksgiving. It was 1987, or was it 1988? Do you remember Jerome?

JEROME

What am I remembering? How can I remember what year it was if I don't know what the hell you're talking about.

ALICE

I think it was 1987, anyway, your mother invited us down here for Thanksgiving and it was just snowing like the dickens—

JEROME

That was 1988. The blizzard of '88. Why are you telling them it was 1987? It was 1988.

ALICE

I asked you what year it was and you said you didn't remember, now all of a sudden you're some sort of weather historian? Anyway, you're probably too young to remember, but your mother and your Uncle Lenny got in a big to-do about the politics. I don't follow the politics myself, too much of this and that with the politics—this one here does, follow the politics. All day he'll be in the basement with the C-SPAN and his short wave radio.

JEROME

Gotta keep your eye on those liberals, Consuela.

ALICE

Well, Lenny holds a grudge, and he usually holds Thanksgiving too, but he didn't invite your family that year, 1987 did I say? because of the to-do about the politics. So your mother invited us over here to celebrate—

JEROME

Could you possibly make this more complicated?

ALICE

Anyway, we had a heck of a time getting down here because of the snow storm and we were, how late would you say we were Jerome?

JEROME

How on earth do you expect me to remember?

ALICE

At least an hour. And then today, on a perfect day, we were almost an hour late again. It just goes to show, you can't be too sure about anything, even in perfect weather.

ANDREW

Wow Grandma, that was a really fascinating story.

JULIE

I remember when I was a kid we would always go to my grandmother's house—

ALICE

I bet you've never even seen snow. How tragic.

JULIE

My family is from Chicago—

ALICE

(To Allison.)

So dear, how was school this year.

ALLISON

It was okay. I got straight A's and my chemistry teacher is helping me secure the patent on one of my inventions. My dad says when the drug companies get wind of it they'll be willing to pay top dollar.

ALICE

Did you hear that Jerome? Allison got the straight A's at school this year.

JEROME

I'm sitting right next to you. Of course I heard her!

(To Allison.)

Good work cupcake.

ALICE

He has a hearing problem. Dr. Jenkins said he was surprised Jerome wasn't completely deaf by now. You're so stubborn it's amazing that he's able to keep you alive.

JEROME

Dr. Jenkins is a quack.

ALICE

A quack?!? A quack — Jerome, how dare you! Don't you take your anger out on Dr. Jenkins. He is a genius. You should be on your hands and knees thanking him.

JEROME

I'm not thanking that prissy boy for anything. He's a chiropractor for Christ's sake! What the hell does he know about anything! All he does is crack my back!

ALICE

And keep you alive.

JEROME

Nobody cares about my problems Alice.

ALICE

So now I'm nobody, huh?

JEROME

I shoulda let one of them Krouts put a bullet in my head.

ALICE

And how is my little tennis star?

ANDREW

I'm doing pretty good Grandma. I made it all the way to the semi-finals this year. They gave me a ribbon!

ALICE

A ribbon! Oh my! A ribbon - that's wonderful! Did you hear that Jerome, Andrew got a ribbon for the tennis!

JEROME

What the hell are you gonna do with a ribbon?

ALLISON

Why don't you show us your ribbon Andrew?

ANDREW

I'd love to. Consuela, be a dear and fetch my tennis ribbon.

(DONALD enters.)

DONALD

I heard all the commotion out back and I knew it could only mean one thing. How are you Ma, Jerry?

ALICE

Oh you know us, nothing too major just the usual.

JEROME

I saw a patch of crab grass out front.

DONALD

It's driving me nuts. I just can't seem to get rid of it.

ALICE

Donald, did you hear about Mr. Van Kirk? Vicki's old violin teacher.

JEROME

Try some whiskey. Canadian Club if you've got it. Clear that crab grass up like that.

DONALD

Really?

JEROME

Like that.

ALICE

I hate to bring it up, it's just so tragic...

DONALD

Is Marcus here yet?

JULIE

Not yet.

DONALD

I wonder what's keeping him.

ANDREW

(To audience. Gesturing toward his family.)

Yeah, I wonder what it could possibly be.

ALICE

But I thought you'd like to know that he...

(In a loud whisper.)

...passed.

JEROME

Would you shut up with all of your stupid stories. Nobody wants to hear it. You want to hear stories about dead people? let me tell you a little story about Brian Peterson.

ANDREW

(To audience.)

The Jerome Allen Players present, The Brian Peterson story.

JEROME

Now this was while I was still in the European Theater, before they sent me to fight the toughest little bastards you're ever gonna meet. If you think they make good TV's, you should see what kind of soldiers they make. I mean those Japs would keep coming even if you shot their legs off. Tough little bastards. I remember this one Jap, Towasaki I think his name was-

ALLISON

Bappa.

JEROME

Anyway, the kid was only seventeen when it happened. Seventeen. Just a kid. Shoulda never been there. Shoulda been in some college with the college girls not in some French field with a bunch a bastards. Joined the Army early, when he was only fourteen, fourteen! that's the kind of man he was. Hell of a kid. Couldn't have met a nicer fella if you met God himself. Saved my life seven times. Seven times he risked his life for mine. Took three bullets that were headed for yours truly. And every time he was back out there with us the next day, just like a Jap. Well, one day when we were out on patrol, November 28, 1944, the Krouts ambushed us. Bullets flying everywhere. I've been in the shit and this was the shit. Now I've got my eye on this Krout across the way, ready to send him to hell when from behind me I hear the loudest noise I ever heard. I thought my head had exploded or something. Next thing I know Brian is lyin' next to me, blood gushing out of his head. Some British lieutenant runs up sayin' he's sorry and what not. Crying like a baby. Claiming his gun misfired. If I've ever been sure of anything in my life it's that that dirty redcoat hit his target. Probably retribution for the revolution. I had to bury my friend in the middle of some French field with my bare hands. I made a cross out of some shrapnel that marks the spot where my friend lay dead. I haven't been to visit his grave in almost sixty years! You wanna talk about dead people, let's talk about Brian Peterson; an American hero.

(Pause.)

ALICE

They said he had...

(In a loud whisper.)

...the cancer.

JEROME

He got shot in the head by a red coat! He didn't have the cancer. For Christ's sake Alice, what the hell are you talking about!

ALICE

I heard it from Mrs. Van Kirk. She said he had the cancer. Why shouldn't I believe her?

JEROME

It should have been me. My god it should have been me.

ALICE

So Allison, your mother tells me that you'll be doing some deep sea diving this summer.

ALLISON

What?

ANDREW

I told you so.

ALLISON

I'm going to violin camp in Milwaukee for a week in August, but—

ALICE

But your mother told me—

JEROME

She just told us that she's not going anywhere. Why the hell would she lie to us?

(To Vicki.)

What the hell is taking so long?

VICKI

(From off-stage.)

Five minutes Dad!

JEROME

Five minutes. We've been here for twenty minutes already!

ALICE

I'll go help her.

VICKI

No Mother! I've got everything under control. Just stay put.

ALICE

Never changes. No matter how hard you try they'll never change.

ANDREW

Isn't she just awful Grandma?

ALLISON

So, Julie, have you two picked out a site for the wedding?

ANDREW

A nice pueblo or something.

JULIE

We're getting married at St. Francis Church near our apartment.

ALICE

St. Francis, I hope it isn't Catholic.

JULIE

It is Catholic.

ANDREW

When her people were colonized—

ALICE

You're not going to take Marcus back with you?

JULIE

I'm from Naperville!

ALICE

Vicki, dear, did you know that Marcus is planning on getting married by a priest?

VICKI

(From off-stage.)

I don't want to hear it.

ALICE

You know, Catholics aren't really Christian.

JULIE

I'm sorry if it is a problem, but Marcus and I decided that this is what we want.

ALICE

It's fine by me dear,

(Gesturing toward the heavens.)

but somebody else might have a problem.

JEROME

So when is all this happening?

JULIE

October.

ALICE

This October?

JULIE

Yes.

ALICE

That's a bit soon, even for your people. Don't you think Jerome?

JEROME

I don't care.

JULIE

We wanted to have a fall wedding.

ALICE

You couldn't wait till next fall?

JULIE

No.

ALICE

Why not?

JULIE

Because we didn't want to wait until next fall.

ALICE

No need to get snippy dear, I'm just trying to be polite.

ANDREW

You know how fiery those Puerto Ricans can get.

ALLISON

She's not Puerto Rican!

ANDREW

Lesbian.

ALICE

(To Julie.)

You're a lesbian?

JULIE

No!

ALICE

Jerome, did you hear that? Consuela is a lesbian and she's only marrying Marcus so she can get her Green Card.

(VICKI enters.)

VICKI

Dinner will be served in ten minutes.

JEROME

Ten minutes? What the hell are you cooking?

DONALD

Meatloaf. It's my favorite.

VICKI

I'm sorry Dad, but I had to whip up a vegetarian menu for Julie.

ALICE

A vegetarian?

JULIE

Yes.

ALICE

Oh dear, a Catholic and a vegetarian.

ANDREW

(To audience.)

My grandmother believes in three things: chiropractors, meat and Protestantism.

ALICE

(To Allison.)

Oh dear, pray for her.

(ALICE and ALLISON share a quick silent prayer.)

JEROME

Do you have some crackers or something to keep me alive?

VICKI

Andrew, get your grandfather some saltines so he doesn't die.

ANDREW

Gladly.

ALICE

You can't have saltines. You remember what Dr. Jenkins said about the salt.

VICKI

Brush the salt off of them then Andrew.

ANDREW

(To audience.)

God bless Grandpa's stomach.

(ANDREW exits.)

JEROME

Should have been me.

VICKI

Would you give it a rest Dad.

ALICE

She's right. You need to watch your blood pressure. Remember what Dr. Jenkins said about losing your temper.

JEROME

Who's losing their temper? Is it me? I didn't think I was but apparently I am.

(To Andrew off stage.)

I swear boy, this is what you have to look forward to.

DONALD

Where do you think Marcus is?

VICKI

I don't know.

JULIE

He said he'd be here by six at the latest.

JEROME

It's nearly seven thirty. Seven thirty and here we are—

ALLISON

I hope he's okay.

ALICE

I'm sure he's fine.

JULIE

It's not like Marcus to be late.

(ANDREW enters with one cracker.)

ANDREW

(He hands Jerome one cracker.)

Here you go Bappa.

JEROME

One cracker! Are you kidding me? How am I supposed to live on one cracker! That's it. I can't take this. Donald, Andrew come with me.

ALICE

Where are you going?

JEROME

To fire the twenty-two.

ANDREW

(To audience.)

To instill in my generation the horrors of war, my Grandfather makes me and Marcus fire his gun whenever he visits.

JEROME

Marcus'll just have to do it after dinner.

DONALD

I don't know if I like Andrew shooting that thing.

JEROME

Do you want the boy to grow up soft? Do you? He needs to know what it feels like to hold a gun. To hold another man's life in his hands. He needs to know!

ALICE

Would you just let it go Jerome? You shouldn't be firing that thing anyway, you know what Dr. Jenkins said about loud noises.

VICKI

He's not firing the gun, Dad, so just drop it.

JEROME

The hell he isn't!

ANDREW

You don't want me to blindly lead the country into war without knowing the true terror of it, do you mother?

VICKI

This family does not use guns and that's final.

ANDREW

But you threatened to kill me with a shotgun just this morning.

ALLISON

Guns kill babies Bappa.

JEROME

Just because I have a gun doesn't mean I'm pro-gun kiwi.
That's the whole point. Now let's go boy.

DONALD

I don't know if our neighbors will appreciate us firing a
gun.

ALLISON

The Henderson's called the police last time.

VICKI

It's illegal Dad.

JEROME

I'll deal with the police.

VICKI

How are you gonna deal with the police?

JEROME

Don't you worry about that missy. You just get in the
kitchen and finish that salad so we can eat.

VICKI

Why don't you just shoot some squirrels and cook them out
back if you're so damned worried about eating.

JEROME

That don't sound half bad.
Consuela, you might have to fight someday, so-

JULIE

I'd better not handle a gun right now.

JEROME

Suit yourself.

(To Allison.)

Blueberry dumpling?

ALLISON

No thanks.

JEROME

Look at this. Here they are whining about equal rights, but
will they shoot the gun?

ALICE

Why don't we play a board game instead of shooting the gun?

VICKI

We can't!

ALICE
Jesus, Vicki, it was just—

VICKI
Drop it Mother.

ALICE
What's the big deal?

VICKI
Mother!

JEROME
That's it. Last chance.

(No response.)

Let's go gentleman and face the horrors of war.

(JEROME, DONALD and ANDREW exit.)

VICKI
I thought I told you that gun was not allowed in this house.

ALICE
I can't keep my eye on him all the time. I'm not a security guard.

VICKI
Forget it.

(Pause. A gun shot can be heard.)

ALICE
How nice is this? Three generations and a Puerto Rican.

JULIE
I'm not—

ALICE
I know dear.

ALLISON
When are Aunt Doris and Uncle Lenny going to get here?

VICKI/ALICE
What?

ALLISON
Aunt Doris—

VICKI

Oh, they aren't.

ALICE

I will not have that man in this house—

VICKI

Relax Mother. They aren't coming.

JULIE

(Under her breath.)

Thank God.

ALICE

I wouldn't be caught dead with that...thing.

VICKI

(Under her breath.)

That was the plan.

ALICE

Not after what he did last Christmas. How dare he. How dare he.

ALLISON

Why did you tell me—

VICKI

Honey, I made a mistake.

ALLISON

What did he do?

VICKI

Nothing.

ALICE

Nothing? Nothing! Nothing?

(A second gun shot can be heard.)

VICKI

This is why we don't ever see each other.

ALICE

Oh, of course. It's my fault. It couldn't possibly be you.

JULIE

I'm gonna go freshen up again.

VICKI

The hell you are.

ALLISON

Mom!

VICKI

You're staying in here with the rest of us. Nobody gets away that easy.

ALICE

I can't even begin to tell you how much he hurt me.

VICKI

It was nothing!

ALICE

Nothing. I don't call taking—

VICKI

You want to know why I told you I invited them dear?

ALLISON

Not really.

VICKI

Because I thought it would keep her away!

ALICE

(Shocked.)

How dare you!

VICKI

Oh don't act so surprised. Where do you think I learned it from?

ALICE

Certainly not me. All I've ever taught you was proper etiquette.

JULIE

(Trying to contain laughter.)

VICKI

You're intolerable mother!

ALICE

(Crossing toward the door.)

Well, I can certainly tell when I'm not wanted.

VICKI

Mother, sit down.

ALICE

If you don't want to see me, I shall be invisible.
(As she exits a third gun shot can be heard.)

ALICE

(From off-stage.)

Oh my God!

ALLISON

What happened?

ALICE

Oh my God!

VICKI

What's the matter?

ALICE

Oh my God!

VICKI

Mother!

ALICE

(She re-enters.)

He shot him! That devil child shot him!

(DONALD, ANDREW, JEROME, ALICE, and
MARCUS, who is holding his shoulder,
enter.)

ANDREW

(To audience.)

Meet Marcus. The man of the hour. He's usually not bleeding quite as heavily.

JULIE

(She runs to Marcus.)

Marcus! Are you okay? Somebody call a doctor.

MARCUS

I'm fine.

DONALD

I'm right here.

ALLISON

What happened?

ANDREW

I kind of shot Marcus. On accident.

VICKI

You're a pharmacist not a doctor.

DONALD

I had to go to med school.

VICKI

Pharmacy school. For three years.

ANDREW

I don't know what to say other than I'm sorry. Completely unintentional.

JULIE

Bullshit!

ALICE

Do watch your language dear.

(She takes a five dollar bill out of her
purse.)

Here you go sweetie. A crisp new Lincoln.

MARCUS

Thanks Grandma.

JULIE

You shot him on purpose.

(To Marcus.)

He hit on me earlier.

ANDREW

He called out my name and I turned around.

JEROME

Trust me Consuela, that wasn't a kill shot.

MARCUS

Who's Consuela?

JULIE

I am. Apparently I'm the Puerto Rican house-whore who you've swept off her feet, and out of poverty.

MARCUS

I think I need to sit down.

ALICE

(She produces Jerome's hemorrhoid pillow.)

Sit on this.

JEROME

What the hell good is that going to do?

ALICE

I don't know.

ALLISON

It's bleeding pretty bad, we should probably take him to the emergency room.

MARCUS

I'm fine.

JEROME

I sutured it myself. Eleven seconds. Still got it! You've got nothing to worry about.

VICKI

Can't you go back outside until it stops bleeding. You're ruining the couch.

MARCUS

(He starts to get up.)

Sorry Mom.

JULIE

Sit back down!

(She tugs him down by his bad arm.)

MARCUS

Honey, my arm—

JULIE

He isn't going outside. He should be going to the hospital.

JEROME

I tell you boy, that was good instinct.

ALLISON

What happened?

JEROME

Turned away from the shot. Reminded me of Brian Peterson.

ALLISON

No Bappa, what happened?

ALICE

That monster tried to kill Marcus. He was always so jealous of his little brother. That's probably why he still lives at home and is afraid to get a real job-

JEROME

You didn't even see what happened. What the hell are you talking about. You walked out and started screaming. Jesus Christ Alice!

ALICE

I knew I shouldn't have let you bring that stupid gun.

VICKI

You let him bring it?

ALICE

No dear, you misunderstood.

VICKI

You just said-

ALICE

I didn't let him-

VICKI

You promised me Mother!

ALICE

He's a grown man. I can't tell him what to do.

JEROME

You sure seem to think so. Always telling me what to do, what I'm thinking, how I'm feeling-

MARCUS

Could you guys please stop fighting. It's making me dizzy.

VICKI

Of course dear.

(Long pause.)

MARCUS

I brought some wine and cheese. It's out in the front lawn if anybody wants some.

JEROME

Cheese don't sound half bad.

VICKI

(To Allison.)

Be a dear.

(ALLISON exits and reenters with a basket full of cheese.)

ALICE

Such a sweet boy. Bringing wine even though he was shot.

JEROME

He didn't know he was going to get shot. It's not like he got shot, then went to the store and bought some wine. Jesus Alice, use your head.

ALLISON

The wine busted in the yard.

JEROME

That's almost as good as whiskey. Clear that crab grass up.

DONALD

Great.

JULIE

He looks pale. I'm calling a doctor.

MARCUS

Baby I'm fine. It's just a mild flesh wound. I didn't even lodge in me. Look, it's practically stopped bleeding.

ALICE

Marcus, I meant to tell you earlier, well, I hate to bring this up, it's just so tragic, but do you remember that grocery store you used to work at?

VICKI

Mother!

JEROME

God-damn-it Alice!

ALLISON

Bappa! Don't take the Lord's name in vain.

ALICE

Well, I thought you'd like to know, that Mr. Simon, that sweet old man, he...

(Whisper.)

...passed.

(Normal.)

Some sort of accident in the stock room. Got buried under produce. I'll tell you more about it later.

JEROME

Are you trying to kill the kid? What the hell would you tell him that for two minutes after he's been shot? Are you crazy?

JULIE

That's it. I'm taking him to the emergency room.

VICKI

Relax. Marcus just got here. We haven't even had a chance to say hello. Have some cheese.

JEROME

It's delicious.

JULIE

Are you crazy? He's dying!

MARCUS

I'm fine.

VICKI

He's fine. We only get to see him a few times a year.

DONALD

How are you son?

ANDREW

(To audience.)

The price of genius.

MARCUS

I'm okay. How are you?

DONALD

I'm good.

Julie is very nice.

JULIE

Thank you Mr. Tyler, now if you'll please excuse us-

JEROME

You can't go. You don't know the three rules of the family.

JULIE

You can tell me later.

VICKI

Nobody wants to hear your stupid rules.

JEROME

They are not stupid!

VICKI

Yes they are. They don't make sense. Just take your right wing garbage and stuff it.

ALICE

Do not speak to your father that way young lady.

JEROME

They make perfect sense. Maybe if you'd seen what I've seen they'd make sense you dirty hippie!

ALICE

Calm down Jerome, remember what Dr. Jenkins said.

MARCUS

Why don't we play a quick board game or something, and then off to the hospital.

ANDREW

Mom gave all of our board games to Goodwill.

ALICE

I remember during the Depression there were so few board games.

JEROME

Jesus Christ Alice. Are you trying to give me a heart attack? Because I'm this close - this close!

JULIE

Come on Marcus, let's go.

VICKI

Five minutes.

MARCUS

Five minutes. Andrew, could I have a word?

(MARCUS and ANDREW retreat to a corner.
Their conversation is unheard by the
others.)

ANDREW

Before you say anything, again, I'm really sorry about shooting you. Believe me, if there was one person that I didn't want to shoot tonight-

MARCUS

It's okay.

ANDREW

I mean you just startled me. And Grandpa was whispering into my ear about the Japanese and I just-

MARCUS

It's okay man.

JEROME

Now, this family functions on three basic rules Consuela-

JULIE

Julie. My name is Julie. Call me Julie.

JEROME

They might not make a lot of sense right now, you might not understand them for years to come-

VICKI

Because they don't make sense.

JEROME

-but if you live your life by these three simple rules-

MARCUS

How did she do?

ANDREW

Really good man. Held up to me, mom, and grandma. And I must say Mother was in fine form. I think you've found yourself a real winner.

MARCUS

I knew it.

ANDREW

Are you sure you're ready for this?

MARCUS

No. But I've never met anyone like Julie before. She didn't storm out. She's the one!

JEROME

Now, rule two also pertains to the Orient. Now it isn't a linear connection mind you, but try and stay with me...

MARCUS

You look like something's bothering you.

ANDREW

Mom.

MARCUS

Seriously.

ANDREW

Grandma.

MARCUS

Come on.

ANDREW

Nothing. You know, it's just that. You know.

MARCUS

What?

ANDREW

Nothing. I just didn't know you were getting married. I'm happy for you, but it's hardly a self-esteem boost when you're almost thirty, still living at home, in your ninth year of college and you find out that your little brother is getting married.

MARCUS

You need to move out.

ANDREW

I know.

MARCUS

C'mon, we'll still be tight. You shot me for Christ's sake and I still love you—

ANDREW

Okay.

JEROME

Now, rule three is the key. Rule three is more important than rules one and two put together. Now, some people, like my no good ingrate daughter!, think that he was a hero, but don't you believe that liberal hogwash-

ANDREW

Will you name your first kid after me?

MARCUS

No.

ANDREW

Why not?

MARCUS

Because Julie hates you.

ANDREW

What?

MARCUS

You did hit on her. And you did shoot me. And you did basically put her through hell today.

ANDREW

Because you told me to.

MARCUS

I just don't think she'll be too keen on the idea. Look, you can be in the wedding, but that's it, no names.

ANDREW

Fine.

MARCUS

Look at her tolerating Grandpa. Isn't she adorable?

JEROME

...And if you remember those three rules, you'll be just fine.

ALLISON

I don't get it Bappa.

JEROME

Well, that is in direct violation of rule number one.

ALLISON

But all you did was talk about the re-mounting Japanese war machine, the terrors of OPEC, and then you blamed all of our

country's problems on Lyndon Johnson. How does that apply to our family?

JEROME

How doesn't it, orange slice.

MARCUS

I think we should be going. I don't feel so good.

VICKI

Five minutes.

JULIE

Mrs. Tyler—

VICKI

Mom.

ALLISON

He looks pretty pale Mom.

VICKI

Five minutes isn't going to kill him.

MARCUS

Okay, five more minutes.

(Pause. He collapses.)

ANDREW

Good call Mom.

JULIE

Oh my God! He's dead! You killed him. You horrible people.

JEROME

He ain't dead. He's just passed out. He'll be fine in the morning. That salad done yet?

VICKI

Have some more cheese Dad.

DONALD

Maybe we should take him to the hospital.

JULIE

Please.

ALICE

Maybe we could check in on Millie Gardner. She has...

(Whisper.)

...the cancer.

JEROME

We aren't visiting anybody. We're going to Ponderosa.

ALLISON

I don't think he's breathing.

VICKI

Well, we'd better get going then.

JULIE

Somebody pick him up.

JEROME

Stand clear.

ALICE

You can't pick him up Jerome, not with your prostate.
Remember what Dr. Jenkins said about lifting heavy things.

ANDREW

I got it.

(He crosses and struggles to pick up
Marcus.)

JULIE

Careful.

ALLISON

Support his head.

ALICE

My poor Marcus. Slain by his own blood.

VICKI

Mother.

JEROME

If I had a nickel for every body I ever carried.

DONALD

Easy now.

JULIE

Hurry up! He's dying!

ALICE

(She takes a camera out of her purse.)

Wait, before we go I promised Erma and Eileen I'd get a picture of the happy couple.

JULIE

Are you out of your mind?

ALICE

It'll only take a second. Now stand next to Marcus Consuela.

JEROME

The boy's in the way.

ALICE

(To Andrew.)

Hold Marcus in front of you killer.

(ANDREW holds MARCUS up from behind.)

ALICE

Okay, here we go, one, two, three say cheese.

(Nothing happens.)

VICKI

You need to turn the camera on mother.

ALICE

It's on it just takes a minute to charge.

JULIE

We don't have a minute. I'll send you a picture tomorrow.

ALICE

Okay, the little light's on now. Ready.

JEROME

Would you take the goddamn picture already?

ALICE

Maybe you could buy me a new camera instead of bitching all the time.

VICKI

You need to open the shutter mother.

DONALD

The lens cap's still on.

ALICE

It's fine.

JEROME

The lens cap is still on Alice. You can't take the picture with the lens cap on. Are you a complete idiot?

ALICE

(Takes the lens cap off.)

Maybe if everybody wasn't yelling at me...Okay, ready, here we go. One, two, three, cheese!

(She takes the picture with her hand obviously over the lens.)

ALICE

That'll be just priceless. How about one with the whole family?

JULIE

No more pictures. Come on Andrew.

JEROME

How many cars are we taking?

DONALD

Well, I'll take the boys in one. Why don't the girls go in another, and you and Ma follow.

VICKI

Make sure you put some towels down. I just got that backseat cleaned. I swear to God if he gets it dirty-

JULIE

I'm going with Marcus. I'm not letting you kill him.

VICKI

Ah, true love.

JEROME

What about dinner?

VICKI

I didn't make anything.

DONALD

There's no meatloaf?

VICKI

There's nothing. I figured they'd leave after a half hour with no food.

ALICE

Our daughter hates us Jerome, she hates us.

VICKI

I don't hate you, I just don't like other people.

ANDREW

(To audience.)

Well said.

(With Marcus in hand.)

Okay, lead the way.

JEROME

Ain't there a Perkins or something down by that hospital?

(All exit except Andrew.)

ANDREW

(To audience.)

Don't worry, he lives.

The End