

"Legally Gray"



*By Marylou Ambrose & Tony Schwartz
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"LEGALLY GRAY"

Marylou Ambrose & Tony Schwartz

A Comedy in Two Acts

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Tonylou Productions
612 Blooming Grove Rd
Hawley, PA 18428
570-226-6207
tonylou@ptd.net

By Tony Schwartz & Marylou Ambrose

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Please address all inquiries to: Tonylou Productions, c/o Tony Schwartz, 612 Blooming Grove Rd., Hawley, PA 18428. Phone: 570-226-8184 or 570-226-6207. Email: tonylou@ptd.net. www.tonylouproductions.com

LEGALLY GRAY was first presented by Tonylou Productions at Ehrhardt's Waterfront Banquet Center, Tafton, PA, opening on June 19, 2013. It was directed by Tony Schwartz. The cast was as follows:

MIKE MALONE.....Tony Schwartz

MARIE MALONE.....Marylou Ambrose

LISA MALONE.....Kelly Anne Walsh

ROSE ESPOSITO.....Veronica Deisler

CHARLIE DOMBROWSKY...Arthur Wehrhahn

CHARACTERS:

MIKE MALONE: Age 62

MARIE MALONE: Age 62

LISA MALONE: Early 30s

ROSE ESPOSITO: Age 84

CHARLIE DOMBROWSKI: 80s

SETTING:

Act 1: Mike & Marie's living room

Act 2, Scene 1: Mike & Marie's living room

Act 2, Scene 2: Audition space

Act 2, Scenes 3-5: Mike & Marie's living room

ACT IScene 1

The living room of Mike and Marie's house. There is a couch center stage, a liquor cabinet stage right, and a small dining table and two chairs are stage left. There is a coffee table in front of the couch and an end table with a phone and lamp at the left side of the couch. Kitchen is stage left and bedrooms are stage right.

Mike is on the couch reading the paper. It's his 62nd birthday. Marie is on the phone with her sister, Gina. The phone call interrupts Marie's dinner preparations.

MARIE:

What do you mean you're not coming? It's Mike's birthday. Lisa will be here. She's coming in from New York. You haven't seen her in ages . . . Of course Ma's coming. You knew that all along . . . This is ridiculous. This thing with Ma has gone on for how long now? Do you even remember what you're mad about? . . . Can't you bury the hatchet just for tonight?

MIKE:

A hatchet? There's one in the basement.

MARIE:

(affectionately)

Shut up, Mike.

(to Gina)

Never mind what he said. Are you coming or not? . . . Fine . . . What? No, I will not tell her you're working late. I'm telling her the truth. Fine . . . I'll see you at the shop tomorrow. Bye.

MIKE:

(still reading the paper)

So, Gina's not coming?

MARIE:

Afraid not . . .

MIKE:

Good. More cake for me . . . Still mad at your mother, is she?

MARIE:

For no good reason.

(CONTINUED)

MIKE:

Oh, I wouldn't say that. Gina doesn't like your mother blowing her money at the casino. I can't say I blame her.

MARIE:

It's harmless. Ma spends \$20 a month.

MIKE:

How do you know?

MARIE:

She told me.

MIKE:

Ha! And you believe her?

MARIE:

Sure. Why shouldn't I? Look, it's more a social thing with her senior group. She gets out . . . she's around people . . . I'm glad she has a hobby.

MIKE:

Knitting is a hobby. Playing bridge is a hobby.
Gambling is . . .

MARIE:

Something my mother enjoys doing. Just leave her alone.

MIKE:

All right, all right, I'll leave her alone. As long as it doesn't affect me, why should I care?

MARIE:

Fine. Enough about my mother. So, Birthday Boy . . .
(sits next to him on sofa, gets cuddly)
how's it feel to be 62?

MIKE:

*(leans back, puts hand behind head,
stretches, looks satisfied)*
Ahhhhhhhhhhh . . . It feels like I'm ready for
semi-retirement.

MARIE:

And are you sure?

MIKE:

Of course I am. You know that movie, Legally Blonde?

MARIE:

Yeah . . .

MIKE:

Today, I'm 62 years old. I think that makes me "legally gray."

MARIE:

(laughing)

Good one!

(pointing to the gray in his hair)

You certainly have the gray coming in to prove it!

MIKE:

Look who's talking . . .

MARIE:

(striking a pose)

What? I'm not gray. Do you see any gray?

MIKE:

Yeah, right. Actually, you have lovely brown hair.

MARIE:

Thank you.

MIKE:

I don't know why you dye your roots gray.

MARIE:

Hey!

MIKE:

Looks like a racing stripe up the center of your head.

MARIE:

That's enough!

MIKE:

At least you're thinking about letting it grow out gracefully. I've seen you reading that book on hair color.

MARIE:

What book?

MIKE:

Come on, don't play dumb. I've seen you reading that book on gray hair. You were reading it in bed last night.

MARIE:

What book on gray hair?

MIKE:

Oh, what's the name of it? Oh yeah, "Fifty Shades of Gray." I saw you reading it.

MARIE:

(laughing)

Yeah, Mike. It's about hair color . . .

MIKE:

(no clue)

It's not?

MARIE:

Forget it. Seriously, are you ready to be legally gray and semi-retired?

MIKE:

(sits up straight again, looks unsure)

Truthfully? I don't know.

MARIE:

(puts her arm around him)

Mike, you're a successful businessman, with people working for you who are already pretty much running the show. You've worked hard all your life to get to this point. It's time to enjoy yourself.

MIKE:

Like how?

MARIE:

I don't know . . . take up golf!

MIKE:

I tried golf. I couldn't get past the hole with the spinning windmill.

MARIE:

I mean real golf, not miniature golf. Or some other hobby.

MIKE:

Fine, I'll take up gambling, like your mother.

MARIE:

(stands up, getting annoyed)

Don't go there, Mike.

MIKE:

Don't go where? You mean, don't talk about your mother, or don't go to the casino?

(CONTINUED)

MARIE:

Don't do either.

MIKE:

(gets up and goes to her)

Okay, okay, I was just kidding. To tell you the truth, I have been giving this a lot of thought. And I agree with you. I think we need to travel. We need to . . .

MARIE:

Make bucket lists!

MIKE:

Great idea!

MARIE:

(sits at table with pad and pencil)

Okay, I'm ready!

MIKE:

(sits next to her)

Not now, Baby. We have plenty of time to make bucket lists. What else needs to be done for this party of mine?

MARIE:

Nothing, really. It's all done. And for dinner, we're having your favorite dish.

MIKE:

Kentucky Fried Chicken?

MARIE:

NO!!

MIKE:

Not tofu chicken again.

MARIE:

That was an experiment.

MIKE:

That was a failed experiment. As for my favorite dish, you've been feeding me so much health food lately, I don't remember what my favorite dish is. Tell me.

MARIE:

Lasagna!

MIKE:

Not vegetarian lasagna. I want meat. It's my birthday and I want meat.

(CONTINUED)

MARIE:

Yes, it has meat in it.

MIKE:

Thank God. Since you opened that health food store with your sister, Gina, I never know what's going to be on my plate.

MARIE:

Look how much better you feel.

MIKE:

(sarcastically)

Oh yeah, I'm a new man.

(leans back, looks like he's remembering the good old days)

Meals are something I used to look forward to.

MARIE:

Me, too.

MIKE:

(sits up straight, alert)

What?

MARIE:

(oops!)

I mean . . .

MIKE:

Tell the truth, the meat in the lasagna isn't just for me, it's for you, too!

MARIE:

No! I was only thinking of you, Darling!

MIKE:

Oh yeah? Then how come last week when I took your car to the car wash, I found stale French fries and a Big Mac wrapper under the seat?

MARIE:

(cracks under the pressure)

Okay! So Gina dragged me into the health food business. It seemed like a good idea at the time.

MIKE:

First, there was "Pampered Pets," your mobile dog grooming wagon, a brilliant move for someone allergic to dogs. That lasted six months. Then you bought the Curves franchise, another brilliant move for someone allergic to exercise! That lasted a little longer -- what was it, nine months?

(CONTINUED)

MARIE:

Mike . . .

MIKE:

And last but not least, the Larry May men's cosmetics line. "Scents and Skin Care for Today's Man!" When you didn't get the blue Cadillac in three months, you gave up that, too. Now, I have enough deodorant, cologne, and bronzer to last me the rest of my life. Just what the hell is bronzer, anyway?

MARIE:

*(starts to answer without thinking,
almost like giving a sales pitch)*

It gives your skin a healthy glow. *(back to reality)*
Hey! I made money on every one of those businesses. Can I help it if I haven't found my true calling yet? You're lucky. You found your career right out of high school.

MIKE:

Pumping septic tanks isn't exactly a calling. I inherited the business from my father. You might say I stepped right into it.

Cracks himself up.

MARIE:

Ewwwwww . . . Poor choice of words, Mike. I see what you mean, though. But you didn't just inherit the company, you've really built it up. You're a successful entrepreneur.

MIKE:

Yeah, like my slogan says, "We're Number 1 in a Number 2 business!"

(patting himself on the back)

Glad I thought of that.

MARIE:

(rolling her eyes)

Real classy, Mike.

MIKE:

And you have a better idea? You want class? How about French? Let's change it from "Mike's Septic Service" to

(faking french accent)

"Michele's Poo Poo Relocation Service." Say au revoir to zee poopie. Eees zat better, my love?

MARIE:

(making quotation marks with her fingers)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MARIE: (cont'd)
Oui, oui.

MIKE:
Wee wee? Yes, we can dispose of zat, too!

(They crack up laughing at their goofy bathroom humor.)

MIKE:
You know damn well I don't care whether you work or not. We don't need the money.

MARIE:
And you know damn well I'd be bored to death sitting around the house. Or doing volunteer work. I'm not the hospital auxiliary type. Besides, I want my own money.

MIKE:
Yeah, okay, we've had this conversation plenty of times. I really don't want to get into this now just before my birthday party. However, the next time you go into a new business, if it involves food, I want to see the menu first.

MARIE:
Look, you know that I got into this health food business to help Gina get started again after her divorce. I'm only at the store a couple days a week. It's not my calling.

MIKE:
Well, in case someone else comes calling, like Avon, don't answer the door. If I'm semi-retired, you should be, too. I want to enjoy this new-found spare time with you.

MARIE:
Agreed! So what should we do first with our new-found spare time?

MIKE:
Get a steak!

MARIE:
For now, you'll have to be satisfied with lasagna. I promise, it has real meat in it. I better go check it.

Marie heads for kitchen.

MIKE:
(shouting to her)
Yeah, remember, the smoke alarm is *not* the oven timer!

She throws towel at Mike and exits. Mike goes back to reading his paper. There's a knock on the door. He gets up to answer. He opens the door and their daughter, Lisa, is standing there.

MIKE:

Lisa! Since when do you knock on your own door?

LISA:

It's not my door anymore. I moved out, remember? I'm respecting your privacy. I'm all grown up now.

MIKE:

You'll always be my little girl. Come on in, Munchkin.

She enters, takes off coat.

LISA:

Dad, you still call me that.

MIKE:

Well, when you were little you loved those Dunkin Munchkins. Except, it doesn't look like you've been eating them lately. You're too skinny! Are you eating?

LISA:

Of course I'm eating. (*evades the question*) I'm eating . . . I'm eating . . . In fact, I am soooooo looking forward to Mom's home cooking! It's been so long!

MIKE:

You're telling me!

LISA:

What?

MIKE:

Around here, tortellini is out, and tofu is in.

LISA:

So she's really taking this health food stuff seriously?

MIKE:

Pretty much. But I've seen the usual signs. She's losing interest, and this time, I'm not complaining.

LISA:

So your birthday dinner is tofu?

MIKE:

No! She's making an exception for my birthday. We're having lasagna, with meat. Anyway, enough about Mom's business.

(gets up, goes to the bar)
 How about a glass of wine, and you can tell me all
 about your job.

LISA:

Oh, uh . . . well, there's not much to tell . . .
(she stretches out on the couch)
 It's so good to be home!

*From the kitchen we hear Marie. She's unaware that
 Lisa is there.*

MARIE:

(from off stage)
 Oh, Miiiiiiiiiiiiike . . . I bought a special outfit
 just for you, Birthday Boy.
*Marie steps into doorway and poses,
 wearing a full apron that looks like a
 bra, panties, and garter belt. She's
 holding a ladle or spatula. She's
 removed her dress and is wearing a full
 slip underneath the apron so at first,
 she looks almost naked.)*
 So what do you think? How about cookin' something up
 with me?

Lisa sits up on couch and sees her mother.

LISA:

Oh God . . .

*She covers her eyes with pillow and falls back
 down on the couch*

MIKE:

(to Marie)
 We may have emotionally scarred our child for life.
 Perhaps it's time you had that little talk with her.

LISA:

(sits up again)
 Oh God . . .

Falls back down on couch again.

MARIE:

Lisa, you're early!

LISA:

(still covering eyes)
 Mom, go put some clothes on!

MIKE:

Take your time.

MARIE:

(laughing, goes over to Lisa)

Lisa, I have clothes on. Look, this is an apron. I got it as a joke.

LISA:

(sits up slowly. Examines the apron)

Are you sure?

MARIE:

Yes, it's for cooking.

MIKE:

Damn, I was hoping it was edible underwear.

MARIE:

(seductively)

It is. It's made out of tofu.

LISA:

(mortified)

Jeez, guys, act your age.

MARIE:

We are!

MIKE:

She thinks we just had sex the one time.

MARIE:

Actually, Lisa, since you've been gone, you'd be surprised at what goes on around here.

LISA:

Well, now that I'm here again, it's got to stop!

MIKE & MARIE:

What?

LISA:

(oops!)

I mean, uh . . . when's dinner?

MARIE:

Yikes! I better get in there before the smoke alarm goes off!

MIKE:

You just might set it off yourself. You are smoooookin'!

(CONTINUED)

Slaps her on the butt

LISA:

(falls back on couch again)

Oh God . . .

Marie exits to kitchen. Rose, Marie's mother, comes right in through front door without knocking.

ROSE:

The porch light is out. I could've fallen and broke my neck. No one cares. You . . .

(pointing to Mike)

You're semi-retired now. You think you could change a lightbulb for an old lady?

MIKE:

(yelling into kitchen)

Hey, Marie, the porch light is out!

MARIE:

(yelling back)

You better change it before your mother-in-law gets here and starts bitching right away.

ROSE:

See? You see how she talks? She got that from you! Or maybe she picked it up from Lisa. That's how the kids today talk. No respect!

LISA:

(sits up)

Hi Nona! Nice to see you, too.

ROSE:

I'm sorry. I didn't realize you were here.

Marie comes in. She has her dress on again. She spots her mother.

MARIE:

Ma! When did you get here!

ROSE:

Just before you told Mike all about his bitchy mother-in-law!

MARIE:

Sorry, Ma.

(CONTINUED)

ROSE:

It's all right. You got a lot to put up with.
(*gesturing at Mike*)
Come here, give your mother a hug.

Marie and Rose embrace.

MARIE:

Good to see you, Ma. And you're just in time. Dinner is almost ready.

ROSE:

Not that tofu shit again?

MARIE:

For the last time, it's lasagna with real meat in it!

MIKE:

Raise your right hand and swear.

ROSE:

Anyone can cook Stouffer's.

MARIE:

No, Ma, I made it myself. It's your recipe.

ROSE:

Why didn't you say so? Wait a minute -- did you make your own sauce?

MARIE:

Ragu is good.

ROSE:

I knew it. Are the meatballs homemade?

MARIE:

(*shrugs*)
Someone made them before they were frozen.

ROSE:

Did you make the noodles yourself?

MARIE:

What are you, crazy?

ROSE:

(*thinking out loud*)
Oh, then it *is* my recipe.

MARIE:

Of course it is. Just like you taught me.

Mike looks shocked. Lisa is giggling.

MIKE:

What? All these years you were both lying? I've been bragging to everyone about the homemade noodles, the sauce that took eight hours to simmer, and some top secret meatball recipe, and it's all store-bought?

ROSE:

Don't tell Gina. She still thinks I cook from scratch.

LISA:

Next, you'll be telling me the Italian cookies you bake are store-bought!

ROSE:

Stella Doro and I are like that.
(she crosses her fingers)
I love passing down family recipes.

MIKE:

I wonder what other secrets people around here are keeping from me?

LISA & ROSE:

None!!!!

MIKE & MARIE:

What?

LISA:

Forget it. So Dad, how does it feel to be an official geezer? You're not going to start wearing your pants up under your armpits, are you?

MARIE:

No, he'll just keep wearing them under his belly, like he always does.

MIKE:

Not for long. Not the way you've been cooking lately.

ROSE:

A well-fed husband is a happy husband.
(looks at Mike)
Most of them, anyway . . .

MARIE:

How about some wine, Ma? Who wants more wine? Anyone?

Marie goes to liquor cabinet.

ROSE:

I'll have a small taste.

Marie starts to pour, waiting for Rose to say stop. The glass ends up full.

MARIE:

Here, Ma, sit over here.

She leads her to a chair.

ROSE:

So, Lisa, how's the big job going? I've been bragging about you to Sophie Russo. She's always talking about her granddaughter with the big job in the auto industry. She works at a friggin' car wash. Not *my* granddaughter. My granddaughter works in -- what the hell do you do again?

MARIE:

She works for GATO Insurance, Ma. You, know, like the TV commercials? The ones with the cute GATO Gator?

ROSE:

Oh yeah. I love those commercials. The gator is cute, although I feel sorry for the poor schmuck who has to wear the costume.

LISA:

No, no, it's computer animated. At least on TV. When the GATO Gator has to make personal appearances, then some poor schmuck has to wear the costume.

ROSE:

Oooh, now I get it. Like Micky Mouse.

MIKE:

Yeah, like Micky Mouse. So what is it exactly that you do at GATO Insurance, Lisa? You've never really explained your position. Are you in sales? Do you handle claims?

LISA:

More like public relations.

MARIE:

How exciting! Well, whatever it is you do there, at least it's a real job. We're so glad you gave up that acting dream. There's a lot of kids without jobs and having to move back home these days.

LISA:
You don't say . . .

MIKE:
Well, we just want you to know, we're very proud of
you, Munchkin.

LISA:
Great . . .

MARIE:
So what exactly does a public relations person at GATO
Insurance do?

ROSE:
I want to be able to brag to that Sophie Russo.

LISA:
All right, the truth is . . .

The phone rings

LISA:
(jumps up)
I'll get it!
(to self)
Saved by the bell...

Lisa answers the phone

LISA:
Hello? . . . Aunt Gina! It's good to hear your voice.
Are you on your way? . . . Oh, you're not?

ROSE:
Of course she's not. She hates her mother.

MARIE:
She does *not* hate you. She had to . . . uh, work late.

LISA:
What? Oh you're working late?

MARIE:
See, Ma. She's working late.

ROSE:
What is so important at that Tofu store? She can't take
a break to see her mother?

MIKE:
Since when is this about you? It's my birthday,
remember?

(CONTINUED)

ROSE:

(ignores him)

You only got one mother. At my age, here today, gone tomorrow. What does my daughter Gina say to that?

LISA:

She said eat tofu. You'll live to be 100.

ROSE:

I'd rather die. Let me talk to her.

LISA:

(to Gina)

Nona wants to talk to you . . . Oh.

(to Rose)

She said a customer just came in. Very busy, she has to go.

(back into phone)

Okay Aunt Gina. Bye bye.

ROSE:

Customer, my ass. She doesn't want to talk to her own mother. Where did I go wrong?

MIKE:

You went to the casino, and never left.

ROSE:

What's that supposed to mean?

MARIE:

Mike -- let it go. It's a party, remember?

ROSE:

No. Let him talk. What's that crack supposed to mean?

MIKE:

It means your daughter Gina worries. She's afraid you're going to piss away all your money. Then what?

MARIE:

Mike -- stop! She only spends twenty dollars when she goes. Right, Ma? Tell him. He won't believe me. You tell him.

ROSE:

(Takes stage. Very dramatic)

Tell him what? He won't believe me. No one believes me. You're all out to get an old lady. Worried I'll blow your inheritance. Vultures. That's what you are. Vultures!

(suddenly totally calm, changes subject)

So, when's dinner? Come on, Marie, let's go in the kitchen and check that family recipe.

Mike, Marie, and Lisa look momentarily stunned. Marie looks at Mike, shrugs her shoulders and exits to kitchen with Rose.

MIKE:

(to Lisa)

I can see where your acting talent comes from. That was quite a performance your grandmother just gave.

LISA:

Yeah, uh, Dad, about that acting talent. Look, there's something I need to tell you.

MIKE:

Sure, what's up?

LISA:

Now, Dad, promise you won't get mad.

MIKE:

I promise not to get mad. What's up?

LISA:

I haven't actually given up acting.

MIKE:

Oh, so you're still doing it on the side? That's great! You can still enjoy it while holding down a real job. Good for you!

LISA:

Dad, listen! That real job *is*, or *was*, acting. Sort of.

MIKE:

(getting a bit concerned)

What are you talking about?

LISA:

I did work for GATO Insurance, but not behind a desk. More like -- inside a suit.

MIKE:

Okay, so you dressed up nice for work.

LISA:

Not exactly. Remember I said the GATO Gator makes public appearances, and someone has to wear the Gator suit? *(mumbles next line very quietly)* I'm that someone.

MIKE:

What? I don't think I heard you right.

(CONTINUED)

LISA:

(louder)
I said, I'm that someone.

MIKE:

What?!?!?!?!?

LISA:

Dad, now you said you wouldn't get mad.

MIKE:

I'm not mad. I'm in shock. You lied about the job?

LISA:

I did not lie! I said I was working for GATO Insurance, and I was. You and mom just assumed it was a desk job, and I went along with it.

MIKE:

So you're an actor working for GATO Insurance. I guess it could be worse. At least you have a job. Wait a minute -- do you still have a job?

LISA:

Dad, you promised . . .

MIKE:

Forget the promise! Do you have a job or not?

LISA:

I guess . . . not.

MIKE:

You got fired from wearing an alligator suit? How can you get fired from wearing an alligator suit? You put the suit on and wave. There's no lines to remember. How the hell could you get fired from a job like that!

LISA:

I didn't get fired.

MIKE:

Oh, good.

LISA:

I quit.

MIKE:

What?!?

LISA:

Look, acting is my passion, and that job wasn't challenging enough. Plus, it was hot and smelly in the suit.

MIKE:

Get industrial strength deodorant.

LISA:

Very funny, Dad. Look, I want to act. Real acting. And to do that, I need to be free to go on auditions. So I quit. And now I've been to lots of auditions.

MIKE:

Okay, so -- how many parts did you get so far?

LISA:

Well -- none. But I have some very good leads.

MIKE:

How are you paying your bills? How are you eating? How are you paying your rent?

LISA:

I'm glad you brought that up.

MIKE:

Oh God. What are you telling me?

LISA:

Now Dad, it'll only be for a few weeks.

MIKE:

Oh God. What are you telling me?

LISA:

Until I get a part.

MIKE:

Oh God. What are you telling me?

LISA:

I'm moving back home.

MIKE:

Oh God . . .

LISA:

How do you think I feel? Moving back out here to the sticks? Back to my old room, which Mom still keeps like a shrine. Do you think I really want to sleep in a room filled with Barbies? I'm too old to sleep with Barbies.

(CONTINUED)

MIKE:

Actually, we sold your Barbies on Ebay. Got a pretty good price for them, too.

LISA:

You sold my Barbies?! I can't believe you got rid of my Barbies! I've got to see this.

Lisa starts to exit. Mike grabs her arm.

MIKE:

Hold it. We're not done yet. First of all, it's not your room anymore. It's your mother's office now.

LISA:

I can live with a desk.

MIKE:

It's filled with exercise equipment from Curves, dog grooming supplies from the petmobile, and men's toiletries from Larry May Cosmetics. But there *is* a sofa bed . . . if you can find it.

LISA:

So where was I going to sleep tonight?

MIKE:

At Nona's. Didn't we mention that?

LISA:

No. Look Dad, it's temporary. I promise. My big break is just around the corner. I can feel it. And while I'm here, I'll earn my keep. I'll do laundry, I'll vacuum, I'll . . .

MIKE:

Find a job.

LISA:

That, too. Just don't be mad. You won't even know I'm here. Right now, I'm going to check out life without Barbie and see if I can get the sofa bed open.

MIKE:

Okay. I'll be in to help you in a minute. I better break this news to your mother. For tonight, you should still stay with Nona. Give your mother a chance to clear a path in the bedroom. Look at it this way, you won't have fleas and the treadmill makes a great clothes rack.

Lisa exits. Mike pours himself another drink, sits, looking glum. Marie and Rose enter.

MARIE:

Dinner is almost ready, Mike. It takes a bit longer to cook when there's meat in it. Where's Lisa?

MIKE:

She went to look at her room.

MARIE:

Oh dear, did you tell her we sold her Barbies?

MIKE:

Yeah, I mentioned that.

ROSE:

You sold the kid's dolls? Meanies . . .

MIKE:

We got 500 bucks.

ROSE:

Five hundred bucks? Marie, where's your old Betsy Wetsy doll?

MARIE:

(Giving Rose a look)

Well, I hope Lisa's not too upset.

MIKE:

Not as much as you're going to be. I have something to tell you.

MARIE:

Oh God, she's pregnant!

MIKE:

No! But uh . . . she's out of work.

ROSE:

She was fired?

MIKE:

No, she quit.

MARIE:

What? Why?

MIKE:

Well, it's a long story. Turns out Lisa was lying about the desk job. Oh, she was in public relations, all right, but her relations amounted to shaking the public's hands while wearing an alligator suit.

(CONTINUED)

MARIE:

(confused)

Excuse me? I don't get it.

ROSE:

I do. My granddaughter was the GATO Gator. Jeez. I hope Sophie Russo doesn't find out. I'll never hear the end of it.

MARIE:

You mean she was . . . oh God.

MIKE:

The bottom line is, she quit her job so she could go to auditions. She still wants to act. And now she's broke.

ROSE:

Uh oh. She's not moving back home, is she?

MIKE:

Yes, for now.

ROSE:

Oh shit.

MIKE & MARIE:

What?

ROSE:

Never mind . . .

MARIE:

(takes stage)

Oh, no! Where are we going to put her? What are we going to do with her? We had plans. I know this is her home, and we said she's always welcome here, but we have a life, too. A new life. We're semi-retired. We have . . .

MIKE:

A daughter in trouble.

MARIE:

Right. You're right. So our plans get put on hold. She needs us. But we have to do something with that room. For tonight, she can stay with Nona.

ROSE:

What?

MARIE:

Oh yeah, we forgot to mention that. We were going to have her stay with you, since her room is full of, uh,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MARIE: (cont'd)
things. It was going to be just for the weekend, and then she'd drive back to the city. But now, it's just for tonight, and we'll have her room ready by tomorrow.

MIKE:
Speaking of that room, let me go and see what she's doing in there.

Mike exits.

MARIE:
So, the empty nest isn't so empty after all.

ROSE:
I need another drink.
(Rose sinks into a chair and looks upset. She holds up her glass for Marie to fill.)

MARIE:
Are you sure? You're driving, and you'll have Lisa with you.

ROSE:
Uh -- actually, no, I won't. Look, we need to talk. I have some bad news.

MARIE:
Ma, please. I've had all the bad news I can take for one day. Save it for tomorrow.

ROSE:
No, Marie, it can't wait. This is serious.

MARIE:
(thinking the worst)
Oh my God, you're sick! What's wrong? Is it your heart?

ROSE:
No, no, no. There's nothing wrong with me. I'm fine.

MARIE:
Oh my God, you wrecked the car! You had an accident. I told you that you shouldn't be driving at your age. Was anyone hurt? Did you total the car?

ROSE:
No! I did not have an accident. As far as I know, the car is fine. The last time I saw it.

MARIE:

What are you talking about, then?

ROSE:

(gets up)

You better sit down, Marie.

MARIE:

I don't want to sit.

ROSE:

(shouts)

Sit down!

Marie practically leaps on the couch.

ROSE:

Now, about that no good, ungrateful, self-righteous sister of yours always bitching about my gambling . . . turns out she was right.

MARIE:

Now hold on, Gina is *not* self-righteous! Wait a minute. What did you say? She was right? Right about what?

ROSE:

She was right about my gambling. Look, I got a little carried away.

MARIE:

(goes to Rose and puts arm around her)

Okay, so you blew a few hundred dollars. So what? It's our little secret. Gina doesn't have to know, and neither does Mike.

ROSE:

Oh -- Mike is going to know. So is Gina. Look, it's a teenie bit more than a few hundred dollars.

MARIE:

(nervous look)

Define "teenie bit."

ROSE:

Everything.

MARIE:

(shocked)

Everything?!? Ma, define "everything."

ROSE:

It's a loooooong story.

(CONTINUED)

MARIE:

(still shocked and angry)
I've got all night. Start talking.

ROSE:

Well, it all started when they took out the Wheel of Fortune slot machine.

MARIE:

What? What the hell does that . . .

ROSE:

Shut up and and let me tell it! It all started when they took out my favorite slot machine, the Wheel of Fortune. I tried playing Sex and the City, but it didn't turn me on. I missed Vanna. I missed Pat. I lost my mojo. After that it was all downhill.

MARIE:

Mojo, schmojo. Get to the friggin' point!

ROSE:

I'm getting there! Now where was I?

MARIE:

Somewhere between mojo and downhill.

ROSE:

Okay, so I had a little losing streak. To make up for it, I started going to the casino twice a week, where I doubled my bets to try and recoup my losses.

MARIE:

Oh, brilliant! How stupid can you get?

ROSE:

Don't talk to your mother like that. So, I doubled my bets, and . . . doubled my losses! But I didn't give up!

MARIE:

Can I say something?

ROSE:

No! You can talk later. As I was saying, things went from bad to worse. I couldn't make the car payments anymore. So, they came and repossessed it.

MARIE:

Why didn't you call us?

(CONTINUED)

ROSE:

I didn't need to call you. I took the bus to the casino. I just knew my luck was about to change, and I could fix all this before you found out.

MARIE:

YOU LOST THE CAR?!?!

ROSE:

No, I did *not* lose it. I know where it is. The repo man has it.

MARIE:

So how did you get here tonight?

ROSE:

That wonderful Sophie Russo brought me.

MARIE:

So you're relying on your friends to get you out of the house?

ROSE:

No, the sheriff got me out of the house.

MARIE:

WHAT?!? Don't tell me you lost the house, too?

ROSE:

Actually, yeah, that too. But relax, I have it under control. No need to panic.

MARIE:

When did this happen? Where are you living?

ROSE:

With my dear friend, that wonderful Sophie Russo.

MARIE:

But when did all this happen?

ROSE:

Two months ago.

MARIE:

What? Two months? You've been homeless for two months?

ROSE:

No, not homeless. I've been living with that wonderful Sophie Russo.

(CONTINUED)

MARIE:

Let me get this straight. You're broke. You lost the car. You lost the house. And you're living with a friend?

ROSE:

Yes, that wonderful Sophie Russo.

MARIE:

So basically, you just have the clothes on your back.

ROSE:

No, I have a few more things in a suitcase in the bushes out front.

MARIE:

In the bushes? Why?

ROSE:

Because that bitch, Sophie Russo, threw me out!

The light slowly dawns on Marie. A look of horror crosses her face as she realizes what her mother is saying.

MARIE:

Are you saying what I think you're saying?

ROSE:

I don't know -- what do you think I'm saying?

MARIE:

You have no place to go, so you're moving in here?

ROSE:

Yeah, I feel terrible about putting Lisa out of her room, but what's a poor old woman to do?

MARIE:

And where is Lisa going to stay?

ROSE:

Tell her to call Sophie Russo.

MARIE:

(head in hands)
Ma! That's not funny!

Mike enters the room.

MIKE:

What's not funny? Marie, are you all right?

MARIE:

I've been better.

ROSE:

She has a lot on her mind. So how is my favorite son-in-law?

MIKE:

Huh?

MARIE:

(gets up and goes to Mike)
Mike, we have a problem.

ROSE:

(doesn't want to be present when it hits the fan; gets up)
Well, I'll go check on the dinner.

MARIE:

Ma, stay right where you are!

MIKE:

Let me guess, Rose, you backed the car through the garage door again.

Rose looks indignant.

MARIE:

She should be so lucky to have a car, and a garage door!

ROSE:

You're making mountains out of molehills.

MARIE:

You be quiet! Mike you better sit down.

MIKE:

I don't want sit down.

MARIE:

SIT DOWN!

ROSE:

You better listen to her.

Mike sits.

MARIE:

Now I want you to listen. Don't react, don't talk, don't shout, don't anything, until I'm through.

(CONTINUED)

MIKE:

Is this going to ruin my party?

MARIE:

It just might ruin your semi-retirement.

MIKE:

Now you have my attention.

Mike sits.

MARIE:

Your worse fears and Gina's worse fears have been realized. You two were right, and I was wrong.

MIKE:

Did you just say I was right? Can you put that in writing? Uh . . . what was I right about?

MARIE:

Ma's gambling was more than just a social thing. We can discuss the specifics later, but the bottom line? She's pissed away all her money and lost her car and her house.

ROSE:

Pissed away is a little strong, don't you think?

MARIE:

Shut up!

Mike is sitting there with his mouth agape. He's speechless.

MARIE:

Mike? Mike, are you all right?

ROSE:

He don't look too good.

MIKE:

So you're telling me you're broke, homeless?

ROSE:

Maybe not homeless exactly.

MIKE:

(The lightbulb goes off. He quickly puts two and two together and comes up with a Plan B)

Ooooooh. So . . . you're moving in with . . . Gina!? Does she know? Marie, you should call your sister RIGHT NOW and tell her Rose plans to move in with HER! Right now!

(CONTINUED)

Marie displays a spark of hope.

MARIE:

Maaaaa . . . maybe you would like to move in with Gina. She's all alone, just like you. Shall I call her for you?

ROSE:

Over my dead body would I move in with that ungrateful daughter. No, my place is here, with you. My favorite daughter and my favorite granddaughter.

MIKE:

(clears throat to get attention)
And your favorite son-in-law?

ROSE:

Yeah, whatever.

There's a beat of silence. Everyone looks tragic. Lisa walks in with one Barbie. The doll's hair is standing up straight and it's obviously seen better days.

LISA:

Look! You missed one!
(looks around at everyone's faces)
Some party. Who died?

MIKE:

No one died -- but the night is still young.

LISA:

I didn't do it. I haven't been home long enough to do anything wrong.

MIKE:

It's not you. It's your grandmother.

LISA:

Did she back the car through the garage door again?

MARIE:

I wish. That would be a lot easier to fix. Ma, why don't you tell your granddaughter what happened?

ROSE:

It's a long story. It all started when they took out my favorite slot machine, the Wheel of Fortune. I tried playing Sex and the City, but it didn't turn me on . . .

.

(CONTINUED)

MARIE:

The condensed version.

ROSE:

Okay, okay. I'm broke. Let's eat.

She starts to get up.

MIKE:

Not that condensed.

LISA:

Somebody -- at this point, I don't care who -- please tell me what's going on here.

ROSE:

(rapid-fire delivery)

Got a gambling problem. Lost the car. Lost the house. Lost all my money. Moved in with Sophie Russo.

(slows down speech, leans in to make a point to Lisa)

Who kicked me out, the bitch.

LISA:

(Goes to Rose, puts her arm around her and begins sobbing)

Oh nooooo, poor Nona! Now you'll have to go live in a nursing home!

Continues to sob.

ROSE:

(consoling her)

Oh, there, there. It's going to be all right. I'm not going to a nursing home. I'm moving in here. I'm taking your old room.

LISA:

(sobbing instantly stops)

The hell you are! I just moved back in there. There's enough room for me and Barbie. That's it.

ROSE:

Marie, is this how you raised your daughter to talk to her grandmother like that?

MARIE:

(not thinking)

Lisa, she's right. Go to your room!

ROSE:

It's my room now.

(CONTINUED)

MIKE:

All right. Enough. First of all, let me thank you all for the wonderful birthday party. At this point I wish it was my last. But enough about me. Let's all calm down and figure this out like adults.

LISA:

Why can't *she* stay with Aunt Gina? (*pointing to Rose*)

ROSE:

What makes you think she wants me?

MIKE:

How do you know she doesn't?

ROSE:

Where is she? She's not here at the party. She didn't want to see me. Anyway, Gina and I wouldn't get along. Two women in one house never works.

MARIE:

Ma, do you hear yourself? There are three women here now!

ROSE:

Oh yeah, well . . .

The phone rings.

MARIE:

I'll get it.

(She answers the phone. It's Gina)

Hello? . . . Yeah, she's here. In fact, we were just talking about you . . . No, nice things. Yeah, I told her you had to work late . . . No, she didn't believe it. Look, we need to talk tomorrow about a lot of things. For now, Ma has house issues and needs a place to stay, just for a little while. We told her we were sure you'd be happy to have her come stay with you.

Holds the phone away from her ear as Gina yells.

ROSE:

See, I told you.

MARIE:

Why? Why can't she stay with you? We don't have the room . . . No, it turns out Lisa is moving back home for a while . . . but . . . no wait . . . no, what? Look, never mind. Good bye.

ROSE:

Well?

MARIE:

She said she lives in a one-bedroom apartment. There's no room.

ROSE:

Is that all she said?

MARIE:

No, but I don't care to repeat the rest right now.

MIKE:

Okay, look, for now the answer is simple.

ROSE:

I am *not* going to a nursing home.

MIKE:

Nobody said you were.

LISA:

(begins to sob)

Oh no, you're kicking me out. I'll have to live in my car.

(hands Barbie to Rose)

Give her a good home.

MARIE:

Oh for God sakes, you two. Knock it off. No one is going to a nursing home, and no one is living in their car. There's a solution for now. Mike, what's the solution?

MIKE:

They're going to share the room.

ROSE:

What? Why can't the kid live in the car? At least she's got a car. If I had a car, I'd be living in it now.

MARIE:

You are both going to stay in that room!

LISA:

But there's only one bed.

ROSE:

Yeah, where would I sleep?

(CONTINUED)

MIKE:

Didn't you bring your coffin with you?

MARIE:

Mike!

MIKE:

Sorry.

MARIE:

There's only one bed and you're going to share it.

ROSE & LISA:

What?

MIKE:

There's no room for another bed with all your mother's junk in there.

MARIE:

It's not junk.

MIKE:

Yeah, whatever. You two are going to share the room, and the bed, until we figure something else out. That's final. If that plan doesn't work for either one of you, there's the door.

Lisa and Rose stare each other down.

ROSE:

Well, at least she's skinny. She won't take up much room. Do you snore?

LISA:

No.

ROSE:

I do. Get over it. Come on, lets go pull out this sofa bed and see what side I want to sleep on. First one in gets to choose.

Rose quickly heads out.

LISA:

Hey, all of a sudden you can move that fast? Oh no you don't!

Lisa chases after her. Mike and Marie stare out, speechless. Then they stare at each other for a few seconds. Both sigh and shake their heads.

MARIE:

Well, this evening certainly didn't turn out the way we thought it would. Some party.

MIKE:

You can say that again. Legally gray, yeah, right. So much for semi-retirement . . . traveling . . . having fun . . . enjoying life . . .

MARIE:

The empty nest sure filled up again real fast. But we always knew this could happen.

MIKE:

Yeah, we knew maybe Lisa would move back home for awhile some day, if she ever got into trouble. And she has. But I never figured on your mother coming to live with us.

MARIE:

Really? You just assumed she'd go to a nursing home someday?

MIKE:

I didn't assume anything. I never gave it any thought.

MARIE:

Give it some now. What if it were your mother?

MIKE:

Don't bring my mother into this, God rest her soul.

(He makes the sign of the cross)

My mother was a saint. She never would've gambled her life away.

MARIE:

We don't know that. And we never will. Look, we probably should've talked about these things before. Instead, we pretended like it would never happen. Now it has, and we have to deal with it.

MIKE:

Is it temporary, or long term? I mean, what's the plan now?

MARIE:

With Lisa or Mom?

MIKE:

Lisa will work out her own problems in time. She's young. But your mother, she's broke and set in her ways. I'm afraid once she settles in . . .

(CONTINUED)

MARIE:

Obviously, there's a lot to talk about. And not just between us. Whether she likes it or not, Gina has to get involved in this. For now, one day at a time. Okay?

MIKE:

Okay.

MARIE:

I know it doesn't seem like the best thing to say right now, but, happy birthday, sweetie.

MIKE:

Thanks. At least I'm getting my lasagna with meat in it.

The smoke alarm goes off. Smoke billows from the kitchen. They look at the smoke, then look at each other.

MARIE:

The lasagna!

She runs out.

MIKE:

Shit.

Lights out.

End of act 1

ACT 2

Two weeks later. An empty stage. Lights up. Rose enters from bedroom. She's dressed in a duster, big furry slippers, ace bandages on her knees, slumber cap with rollers, no makeup and a walker. She walks slowly and carefully, as if she might fall any second. Once at center stage, she stops, looks, and listens. When she's sure no one is around, she parks the walker, and hurries over to the bar . . . She pours herself a glass of wine, then sits on couch, feet up on coffee table, remote in hand. She looks content, like she's living the life of Riley.

Mike calls from offstage.

MIKE:

Anyone home?

Rose leaps to her feet. She pours the wine in a plant, and runs for the walker. She gets to the walker just in time as Mike enters in his work clothes.

MIKE:

Oh, hi, Rose. Is Marie home yet?

ROSE:

Thank God you're home. Can you help an old lady?

MIKE:

(rolls his eyes, lets out a sigh)

Sure. That's what I'm here for. What do you need me to do?

ROSE:

I think I can make it to the sofa. When I get there, maybe you can fluff my pillow and put it behind me.

Rose walks slowly to the couch and sinks down with great effort. A huge sigh. Mike fluffs the pillow and places it behind her back.

MIKE:

Anything else? Bon Bons?

ROSE:

No . . . just let an old lady relax now. I'll be fine.

MIKE:

Okay. I'm going upstairs and change out of these work clothes.

Mike almost exits.

ROSE:

Of course, I could use a teeny weeny glass of wine.

She holds her hand up as if waiting. Mike, looking annoyed, goes and pours her a huge glass of wine and brings it to her.

MIKE:

Here, this should hold you for ten minutes. I have to go change.

ROSE:

Thank God. You stink. Did you pump out someone's septic tank, or did you fall in?

MIKE:

I own the company, Rose. I work at a desk. And that work keeps your wine glass full. Any questions?

Rose shakes her head no.

MIKE:

Good. Now, can I go?

Rose nods yes.

MIKE:

Thank you. If Marie comes home, tell her I'll be down in a minute. Got it?

Rose nods her head yes.

MIKE:

Good.

Mike goes to exit. Rose gives him the finger. When she's sure Mike is gone, she pulls out a cell phone from her bra and calls her bookie.

ROSE:

Hello, Vinnie? It's Rose Esposito . . . Ahhhhh . . . I've been better. I want to place a bet . . . I don't know, it's been a while. I got no privacy around here. So, what looks good in the fifth race?

Marie calls from backstage.

MARIE:

I'm home!

ROSE:

Shit. I call you back later, Vinnie.

Rose hangs up, puts phone back in bra, and slumps on couch.

Marie walks in, carrying her purse and grocery bag, looking tired. She sees Rose slumped over. She rushes over.

MARIE:

Are you all right, Ma?

ROSE:

(pretends to wake up)

What? Oh . . . I'm fine. Just a little nap.

MARIE:

Is Mike home?

ROSE:

Haven't seen him. So, what's in the bag?

MARIE:

Dinner.

ROSE:

I'm afraid to ask. What is it? All this health food is giving me constipation.

MARIE:

It's Stouffer's frozen macaroni and cheese. I don't have time to cook healthy anymore. Between the store, two more mouths to feed, and extra laundry, I'm exhausted.

Lisa enters. She's in bathrobe and pajamas. She's carrying a basket of laundry.

LISA:

Oh good. You're home, Ma. I'm out of clothes. Here.

She hands the basket to Marie. She then goes and sits on the couch next to Rose, and together they put their feet up on the coffee table.

Marie, looking stunned, takes a beat, then drops the basket. She confronts the two of them.

MARIE:

Now, I've had it. I can't work, cook, clean, and do all the laundry myself. I need help!

LISA:

Where is dad? Honestly, men never do anything around the house.

ROSE:

You said it, kiddo. Your grandfather was a slob, and he never lifted a finger.

Mike comes in. Looks around and sees something is up.

MIKE:

What's going on?

LISA:

Mom was just complaining you never do anything around here.

ROSE:

Yeah, she could use a little help, you know.

MARIE:

(really mad)

Mike, I did not say that! Lisa, your father works hard all day. And I have a job, too. You promised to help out around here. So far, you haven't lifted a finger.

MIKE:

(trying to defuse the situation)

Okay, okay, let's all just calm down and discuss this. Lisa, you did promise to help out around here, at least when you weren't out auditioning. And since you haven't gone to one audition yet, maybe you can do your own laundry?

LISA:

I have no time to do laundry. I'm busy all day Googling auditions.

MIKE:

See, Marie, she's busy all day oogling auditions.

MARIE:

That's Googling, Mike.

MIKE:

Right, Google. I get it.

ROSE:
What the hell is a Google?

MARIE:
Later, Ma. Look, Lisa, you have plenty of time to surf the net for auditions and still do a little laundry.

ROSE:
Who's going surfing?

MIKE:
Lisa, your mother is right. I'm sure an audition will come along . . . sooner or later. In the meantime, start helping your mother.

LISA:
Well, for your information, I have an audition tomorrow!

MIKE:
That's great.

MARIE:
Wait a minute. Tomorrow? But you promised to take Nona to the podiatrist tomorrow, and then out for lunch.

LISA:
Why can't you do it?

MARIE:
I'm working at the store. It's Gina's day off.

LISA:
Then why can't Aunt Gina do it?

ROSE:
Yeah, right. As if Gina gives a damn about my toenails.

MIKE:
Don't look at me. I don't like looking at my own toenails.

MARIE:
Lisa, that's it. You promised. What time is your audition?

LISA:
Two p.m. but. . .

MARIE:
No buts. Your grandmother's appointment is at eleven. There's plenty of time for the clipping, lunch, and still make it to the audition.

LISA:
But there won't be enough time to bring her home.

MIKE:
So, take her with you. She might get a kick out of it.
Just drop her off in the corner and let her watch.

ROSE:
What the hell am I, a UPS package?

MARIE:
Ma, you need to get out more. You've hardly left the house since you've moved in here. You're not getting dressed, you're using a walker,
(nudging Mike and winking)
We're really getting worried about your health.

MIKE:
(gets the point, nudges Marie back and winks)
Yeah, if you continue to go downhill like this, we may have to look for other living arrangements for you.

ROSE:
Gina doesn't want me.

MIKE:
We know that.

ROSE:
What are you getting at?

MARIE:
Mike . . .

MIKE:
A nice bed, three square meals a day, you'll meet lots of new friends your own age. You can play bingo. . . you can . . .

Rose's eyes get as big as saucers. She gets up and takes stage, angry.

ROSE:
So, after all I've done for you, you're dumping me in a nursing home. Why am I surprised? I always knew Gina was the good one. Well, I'm not going. Do you hear me? I'd rather die first!

Rose ends up standing between Mike and Marie who are staring down at her with grins, arms folded.

MIKE:
Getting around pretty good without the walker, aren't you?

MARIE:
Ma. . .

ROSE:
(realizes she's given herself away,
looks skyward, crosses herself)
Oh my God, it's a miracle!

LISA:
Nona, you've been faking? Could have fooled me. You're quite the actress yourself!

ROSE:
Well, I did do a some acting in school.

LISA:
College?

ROSE:
No. I was a tree in Mrs. Callahan's third grade production. I didn't have any lines, but everyone said I stole the show.

MARIE:
Well, this has been quite a show you've been putting on around here lately.

ROSE:
What makes you think it was a show? Haven't you ever seen a depressed old lady before? And I have a right to be depressed.

MIKE:
You should have thought about that before you blew all your money.

MARIE:
Mike, we've been through all this. Look, tomorrow may be a new beginning for Lisa, and maybe for you, too, Ma.

ROSE:
How is getting my toenails cut a new beginning?

MARIE:
You're getting out of the house for the first time in weeks. That's a start.

LISA:
Can I say something?

MIKE
Sure, munchkin.

LISA:
This is NOT what I had planned for tomorrow! Do you even have any idea what it takes to get ready for an audition? I have to prepare mentally! I have to do breathing exercises! I have to totally focus! How can I do that when I have to babysit Nona?

MIKE:
You can do all that while she's getting clipped.

LISA:
But, Daddy . . .

MIKE:
It's settled.

LISA:
Mom?

MARIE:
It's settled.

LISA:
Nona?

ROSE:
(to herself)
What do I wear to an audition?

LISA:
AGGGGGGGHHHHHHHHH!

She storms out.

ROSE:
(looking down at herself)
Look at me, I'm a mess. Time to go find an outfit for tomorrow.
(about to exit. Yells to Lisa offstage)
Lisa, I'll need to go to the hairdresser first.

LISA:
(from offstage)
AAAGGGGGHHHHHHH!!!!!!!!!!

Rose exits.

Mike and Marie sit on couch. They're smiling.

MIKE:

Part of me would like to be a fly on the wall tomorrow.
Too bad I have to work.

MARIE:

I know what you mean. If I didn't have to work tomorrow
. . . say, wait a minute. They're both going to be out
of the house for hours tomorrow. It's the first time in
weeks we'll have the house all to ourselves. That's if
we "call in sick."

MIKE:

(cuddling, smiling)

I feel the flu coming on . . .

They kiss.

End of Scene

Scene 2

*The audition. The stage furniture has been moved
around and different lighting is used to create
the look of a different location.*

*Lisa and Rose enter from audience, walk up on
stage, acting as if they're unsure if they're in
the right place. They go to downstage, center.
Rose is well dressed and getting around just fine
with no walker. Kelly carries a small camp stool.*

ROSE:

No one said anything about standing in a line for three
hours. My feet are killing me.

LISA:

That's because that quack podiatrist cut your toe nails
too short. Anyway, you were sitting most of the time.
That's why I brought this stool for you.

ROSE:

My ass is killing me, too.

LISA:

I tried to tell you this is how these things work. You
stand in line. You wait your turn. That's why they
call it a cattle call.

ROSE:

And wait your turn for what? Never mind. I don't want
to know.

(CONTINUED)

LISA:

You wait in line until it's your turn to audition. And here we are.

ROSE:

This is it? That bozo in that booth told us to come and wait in here.

LISA:

That bozo was the director.

DIRECTOR:

(voice only)

And the bozo in the booth can hear every word you say.

LISA:

Nona! Be quiet!

(to voice in back of room)

Sorry! My grandmother didn't mean anything by that.

(Escorts Rose to corner. Has her sit on camp stool. To Rose)

Here, sit on this stool in the corner and don't say another word. Do you hear me? Don't say another word!

Lisa goes back to center stage

LISA:

(to director)

I am so sorry about that. She's never been to one of these before.

DIRECTOR:

Fine. So, who's auditioning first?

LISA:

Excuse me?

DIRECTOR:

We don't have all day. One of you go first!

LISA:

Oh, no. She's along for the ride. I'm the actress.

DIRECTOR:

Fine. What part are auditioning for?

LISA:

The social director.

DIRECTOR:

Fine, you're going to run some lines with one of our actors. I'll send him in with the script. I'm stepping out to get a cup of coffee. We'll get started in a couple of minutes.

(CONTINUED)

LISA:
Okay, thank you.

DIRECTOR:
Yeah, fine.

ROSE:
I would like a cup of coffee.

LISA:
I told you to be quiet!

ROSE:
(whispers)
I would like a cup of coffee.

LISA:
Not now! I have to do a cold reading. I hate those.

Charlie enters from audience to stage. He carries two scripts.

CHARLIE:
I hate those, too.
(he hands Lisa the script)
And who do I have the pleasure of reading with today?

LISA:
(extends her hand to shake)
Lisa Malone. I'm auditioning for the part of the social director.

CHARLIE:
(notices Rose for the first time. Walks over to Rose and extends hand)
And who is this lovely lady?

ROSE:
(refuses to take his hand)
I don't mean to be rude but I'm not allowed to talk.
(glares at Lisa)

LISA:
Don't pay any attention to her. She's just mad.

CHARLIE:
At who?

LISA:
The world. I'm sorry, I didn't get your name.

CHARLIE:

(Lisa and Charlie are both downstage
center again)

Dumbrowski. Charlie Dumbrowski. You're a little young
to remember me, but back in the day, I was Cowboy Chuck
Waggin.

ROSE:

(leaps out of chair, runs over.)

Oh my God, I thought you looked familiar. Cowboy Chuck!
Well I'll be damned!

LISA:

Just who is Cowboy Chuck?

ROSE:

Who is Cowboy Chuck? Who is Cowboy Chuck? Only one of
the biggest TV stars in the 50's! Cowboy Chuck's
Rootin' Tootin' Wild West Show. Every kid wanted to be
in that audience!

CHARLIE:

I'm flattered that you remembered.

*He takes her hand and kisses it. Rose gets weak in
the knees. Lisa rolls her eyes.*

ROSE:

Oh, why Cowboy Chuck, how could I forget? My daughters
and I watched your show every Saturday morning.

CHARLIE:

Well, it's nice to meet an old fan, especially such a
charming one. But these days, it's just
Charlie. Cowboy Chuck rode off into the sunset years
ago.

ROSE:

What happened?

CHARLIE:

Simple. Animation took off. Kids became more
interested in cartoons than real people. So, the show
was canceled. For a while, I still traveled the
country making guest appearances as Cowboy Chuck, but
those audiences grew smaller and smaller, too. It
wasn't long before I was appearing at the local food
markets, and that's when I decided to hang up my spurs.

LISA:

But you're here at this audition. So, you still act?

(CONTINUED)

CHARLIE:

Once in a while I audition for a part. Sometimes I get it, sometimes I don't. Truth is, I invested Cowboy Chuck's money wisely. I mostly act for the fun of it.

LISA:

I mostly act because I'm starving.

ROSE:

She's not starving. Her parents are feeding her until that big break comes along.

LISA:

Nona!

CHARLIE:

Always have a back up plan, kid. It's hard to find that big break. I was lucky.

ROSE:

No, you were great! And so handsome, too. Still are.

CHARLIE:

And you forgot your glasses.

Lisa rolls her eyes and begins to study the script intently.

ROSE:

So, where does Cowboy Chuck live? Probably on a big ranch in Texas, right?

CHARLIE:

Actually, I live in a condo in Las Vegas.

ROSE:

Vegas?!? I'd love to go to Vegas!

CHARLIE:

Oh yeah, you'd love the shows.

ROSE:

The what? Oh, uh, yeah. I'd love the shows.

CHARLIE:

Well, if you're ever out there, be sure to look me up.

ROSE:

Really?

CHARLIE:

Sure! We'll go out on the town. Here's my card.

(CONTINUED)

ROSE:

Out on the town, as in casinos?

CHARLIE:

Sure, if you want to. Ever been to a casino before?

ROSE:

Once or twice.

CHARLIE:

Great. Then it's date. If you ever get out there. So, what part are you auditioning for today?

Rose waves him off.

LISA:

She's not, I am. Nona go back to your corner.

DIRECTOR:

I'm back. Now remember, this movie is about the wacky antics that go on in a retirement village. This scene is where the social director confronts Charlie's character about some hanky panky going on between him and the owner's elderly mother.

ROSE:

(gets up, goes downstage)
Who's playing the mother?

DIRECTOR:

She hasn't been cast yet.

ROSE:

Well, I do hope it's some big star to play opposite Charlie.

LISA:

Nona! Go to your corner!

ROSE:

Sorry . . .

Rose goes back to the corner.

DIRECTOR:

Okay, lets get started. Page 24.

They thumb through the scripts looking for page 24.

LISA:

So, what's my motivation?

DIRECTOR:

What?

LISA:

You know, my motivation?

ROSE:

(gets up goes downstage)

Your motivation is to get a part and get the hell out of your parent's house.

LISA:

Go sit!

DIRECTOR:

Look, this is a cold reading. Just read the lines.

ROSE:

(gets up goes downstage)

She hates cold readings. She just said so.

LISA:

Sit!

DIRECTOR:

Wait a minute, Grandma, how do you feel about cold readings?

ROSE:

I don't know. What the hell are they?

DIRECTOR:

(chucking)

You're quite a character. Have you ever done any acting?

ROSE:

I was a tree in the third grade.

DIRECTOR:

(chuckling again)

Good one. You know, you're a natural. In fact, you're perfect.

ROSE:

Perfect for what?

DIRECTOR:

To play the overbearing, interfering owner's mother.

ROSE:

Oh, I don't know . . .

(CONTINUED)

DIRECTOR:

And you would be Charlie's love interest. Do you have a problem doing love scenes?

ROSE:

I don't know. Wait a minute, will this require full frontal nudity?

DIRECTOR:

Well, now that you mention it . . . yes.

ROSE:

I'll take it!

LISA:

(in total shock)

Full frontal . . . What the hell just happened here? Hey, wait a minute, what about me?

DIRECTOR:

Next!

Lights out. End of scene.

Scene 3

Mike & Marie's living room. They've just spent a romantic, relaxing day together and are cuddling on the couch. They're watching TV and sharing a bowl of popcorn.

MIKE:

I've never felt this good on a sick day in my life.

MARIE:

Me neither. We should get sick more often.

MIKE:

(getting extra cuddly)

Yeah, I'm loooove sick, with no known cure.

MARIE:

Here, have some medicine.

She puts a piece of popcorn in his mouth.

MIKE:

When was the last time we did it right here, on the couch?

MARIE:

Mike, twice in one afternoon?

(CONTINUED)

MIKE:

Sure, why waste the opportunity?

They start to get busy, lying on the couch. Lisa walks in and doesn't see them at first.

LISA:

It's all over for me!

Mike collapses on Marie in frustration.

MIKE:

Me, too.

Marie throws Mike off of her and he lands on the floor.

MARIE:

Oh my God, you're home early!

MIKE:

(slowly gets up off floor)

And what exactly is all over for you now?

LISA:

Whaaaaaa? Were you two just about to . . .? Oh, gross!
The minute I step out!

MARIE:

Where's your grandmother?

LISA:

Where is she? I'll tell you where she is. She's ruining my life. I wanted to leave her home, but noooooo, I had to take Nona to get her toenails clipped. Then I'm stuck with her the rest of the afternoon, had to take her to the audition, where she constantly interrupted and interfered and RUINED EVERYTHING!!!

MARIE:

Oh, come on, she ruined everything?

MIKE:

What did they say?

LISA:

NEXT!

MARIE:

You mean you didn't get the part?

LISA:

Well, after the audition, she had contracts to sign. I wanted to wait for her, but Cowboy Chuck said he'd bring her home.

MARIE:

Cowboy Chuck? THE Cowboy Chuck?

LISA:

Yeah, whatever.

MIKE:

I remember that show. Watched it every Saturday morning. He's not dead?

LISA:

Ohhhhhhh, no! Still a lot of life in the old boy.

MARIE:

Well, if Nona is with Cowboy Chuck, she's perfectly safe.

MIKE:

Yeah, but what about Chuck?

MARIE:

Oh, Mike . . . This is so exciting! Who would ever have thought Ma would meet a movie star?

LISA:

He's Cowboy Chuck, not Clint Eastwood. Look, forget about Nona. What about me? It's her fault I didn't get the part. I was perfect for that role. She's ruined everything again. Our lives haven't been the same since she moved in to our house.

MIKE:

Our house? Did we forget you moved out and then came back?

MARIE:

Lisa, not everything is about you. You should be happy for your grandmother. You have your whole life ahead of you. This could be Nona's last hurrah.

MIKE:

Yeah . . . maybe the old girl will find herself another husband, and move out.

MARIE:

Mike, she's 84. She's too old to get married again. Or anything else.

(CONTINUED)

MIKE:

(to Lisa, chuckling)
So, does she have to kiss him in the movie?

MARIE:

Awwwwwww, does she have to kiss him on the cheek, or on the lips?

LISA:

(now amused)
Oh . . . why don't you ask her yourself. I'm going to lie down now. I'm emotionally drained.

Lisa exits somewhat dramatically

MIKE:

So, do you think she'll bring him in to meet us, or sit in the car and make out?

MARIE:

Mike!! I hope she does bring him in. I'd love to meet him. Wouldn't you?

MIKE:

I guess. It's not quite the same thrill as it would have been when I was 12.

MARIE:

The thrill isn't for you. The thrill is my mother's. She's met someone, and not just anyone. In a few minutes, we'll meet Cowboy Chuck, too.

They sit with smiles, anticipating meeting a Charlie. Lights Out.

Scene 4

Mike is asleep on the couch, papers over his face. Marie is pacing frantically, checking her watch, looking out the window.

MARIE:

(slaps Mike on top of head)
How the hell can you sleep when my mother has been kidnapped?

MIKE:

(wakes up confused)
Wha . . . Kidnapped?

MARIE:

It's been five hours since Lisa got home. She said all Mom had to do was sign some papers. How long can that take?

(CONTINUED)

MIKE:

I thought she was with good ole Cowboy Chuck?

MARIE:

Good ole Cowboy Chuck. Ha! What do we really know about him? Nothing! I'm calling the police!

(She heads for the phone)

I'm filing a missing person's report.

MIKE:

You can't. Someone has to be missing for 24 hours before you can file a missing person's report. It's only been five or six hours. Maybe she and good ole Cowboy Chuck went out on a date.

Mike chuckles to himself at the thought.

MARIE:

A date? At her age? Ridiculous! I'm calling the police!

The door opens. Rose breezes in, quickly closes the door. Her lipstick is smeared.

ROSE:

I'm hooooooooooooooooooooome.

MARIE:

Ma, where have you been? We've been worried sick.

MIKE:

She was.

ROSE:

I've been . . . out.

MARIE:

Out where? Why didn't you call?

ROSE:

I met someone. In fact, I'd like you to meet him.

Opens the door with a flourish.

ROSE:

Ta Da!

Charlie steps into doorway, looking kind of sheepish, not realizing he has lipstick all over his face. He then clicks into the old Cowboy Chuck character. He walks in with a bowlegged swagger, like a cowboy.

CHARLIE:

(with a big wave)
 Howdie, Pardners! I'm . . .
 (Charlie gets embarassed)
 Oh, Rose, this is silly.
 (He walks normally)
 Hi, my name is Charlie Dumbrowski. Pleased to meet you all.

Mike and Marie both stand up, but Mike pushes Marie back into the sofa to get past her to be the first to shake Charlie's hand.

MIKE:

(very excited)
 Cowboy Chuck! My God, Cowboy Chuck!
 (He starts shaking Charlie's hand vigorously and babbles)
 Do you remember me? Mikey Malone? I'm one of your biggest fans! I wrote letters every week. Maybe you don't remember my name because I always signed them The Crisco Kid! Got that name from Ma's kitchen.

Marie clears her throat, stands up.

MIKE:

Oh, and ah, this here's the little lady, uhhhh. . .
 (whispers to Marie)
 What's your name again?

Marie pulls Mike behind her, shaking her head. she extends here hand to Charlie.

MARIE:

Hi, Charlie, Marie Malone, Rose's daughter. You'll have to excuse my husband, The Crisco Kid here, he's a bit starstruck.

CHARLIE:

Oh, that's okay. It's nice when someone remembers the good ole days.

MIKE:

(daydreaming)
 Like they were yester-year.....
 (Looks at Charlie, becomes alert)
 Say, pardner, what's that all over your face?

ROSE:

(proudly)
 Oh, that? He slipped and fell into my lips!

Rose goes and wipes lipstick off Charlie's face.

CHARLIE:

(embarrassed)
It's not what it looks like.

ROSE:

Oh yes it is.

Mike and Marie exchange a look, then shrug their shoulders and ignore it. Marie clicks into hostess mode.

MARIE:

Well, Charlie, welcome to our home. We were just starting to get a little worried.

(gives Rose a look)

Please sit down and make yourself comfortable. Can I get you something to drink?

(Gets a joking look about her)

Or would you like some sasperella?

CHARLIE:

(flustered, not quite sure what to make of all this)

Right now, I can use something a bit stronger. Anything alcoholic?

MIKE:

Beer? Wine?

CHARLIE:

A beer would be fine, thanks.

MIKE:

I'll get it. Be right back.

Mike gets up and walks like a cowboy. Rose and Charlie are sitting next to each other on the couch. Marie sits in the chair. Rose is stuck to Charlie like glue, making Charlie look a bit uneasy.

MARIE:

So, Mr. Dumbrowski . . .

CHARLIE:

Please, call me, Charlie.

MARIE:

Okay, Charlie. So . . . I hear you and my mother are in a movie together. How exciting!

(CONTINUED)

ROSE:

I'll say. Who would have ever thought a day that started with a trip to get my toenails clipped . . .

(Charlie gives her a surprised look)

I mean . . . a trip to my manicurist, would end up with me getting a starring role in a movie!

CHARLIE:

Starring? Hardly. I'd say our roles are a few notches below co-star. But it's fun.

ROSE:

Is there an Oscar category for a few notches below?

CHARLIE:

(chuckling)

Let's not put the cart before the horse, as we used to say on Cowboy Chuck.

Rose laughs too hard. Mike walks in with the beer and sees Rose laughing.

MIKE:

Time for your meds, Rose.

Charlie looks at Rose, not sure whether to believe Mike or not.

MARIE:

Mike, stop.

(to Charlie)

Mom's not on any meds, Charlie. She's healthy as a horse.

(Now Marie cracks up laughing at her own horse joke)

ROSE:

All right already. Enough with the horse jokes. We sound like a bunch of horse's asses.

(they all stare at her blankly)

Sorry, couldn't resist.

MIKE:

So, where have you two been all this time?

ROSE:

Over at Charlie's place.

MARIE:

Oh, you live around here?

(CONTINUED)

ROSE:

No, his motel room.

MARIE:

What?

CHARLIE:

(embarrassed and trying to change the subject)

I don't live here. I flew in for the movie.

MIKE:

Oh, from Hollywood?

ROSE:

Noooo. He lives in Las Vegas! You know, Sin City!

CHARLIE:

Well, on the outskirts. It's a little less sinful there.

MARIE:

Hmmmmmm. . . I thought all movie stars lived in Hollywood. How did you end up in Vegas?

CHARLIE:

I did live in Hollywood at one time. But other interests landed me in Vegas.

MIKE:

Oh, you mean like investments?

CHARLIE:

You might say that. Uh . . . Yeah, there's always acting opportunities in Vegas.

ROSE:

He's widowed.

(cuddling closer)

He lives alone. In Las Vegas.

CHARLIE:

I'm not completely alone. My son lives nearby.

MARIE:

So, tell us more about this movie.

Lisa comes in. Hears the question.

LISA:

(smartass)

Yeah, Nona, tell them about your big scene.

CHARLIE:

(backpeddling)
Hey, it's just acting.

MARIE:

Sure, what's a few kisses?

LISA:

Yeah, Nona, tell them about your few "kisses."

CHARLIE:

(getting more nervous)
Hey, it's just acting.

LISA:

(angry)
Go on, tell them, or I will.

ROSE:

We're required to do full frontal nudity!

CHARLIE:

Hey, it's just acting.

ROSE:

Maybe for you.

Lisa is laughing. Mike and Marie have a blank stare at audience.

MARIE:

Are you out of your mind? Full frontal nudity? You can't do that!

ROSE:

Yes I can. I know can. We just got done practicing!

MARIE:

What? Mike, do something! My mother's a porn star!

MIKE:

Do what? Seems Cowboy Chuck has everything under control.

ROSE:

I'll be right back, Charlie. I just need to grab a few things.

Rose exits to bedroom.

MARIE:

(following her)
Grab a few things for what?

(CONTINUED)

Marie exits

LISA:

Oh boy, I don't want to miss this!

Lisa exits to bedroom

MIKE:

Excuse me, Charlie, I have to go defuse World War 3.

Mike runs in after them. Charlie is left all alone with a very puzzled look. His cell phone rings.

CHARLIE:

Hello? Oh, hi son, how's everything back home? . . . Me? I'll fill you in later . . . Yeah, yeah, yeah... I've been to several of the meetings.

Lisa comes back in and eavesdrops on Charlie's call

CHARLIE:

All is good, I promise . . . What? She misses me? Yeah, let me talk to her. Put her on . . . Hello, Dolly . . . Yes, daddy's coming home soon. Love you, too.
(makes kissing noises in the phone.)

Lisa ducks out again. Rose comes storming in with a suitcase.

ROSE:

(Grabs Charlie's hand and pulls him up, too)
Come on, Charlie, lets go.

They head for the door.

MARIE:

(follows Rose in)
Wait a minute! Why won't you answer me? Where are you two going?

ROSE:

(opens the door, pushes Charlie)
Back to Charlie's place.

MARIE:

What for?

ROSE:

(big grin)
To practice our scene some more! And you can't stop me. Oh, and by the way, when Charlie finally leaves for Vegas, I'll be going with him!

(CONTINUED)

Rose slams door. Exits.

Marie starts for the door to follow. Mike grabs her arm and stops her.

MIKE:

She's a grown woman, Marie. Let her go.

MARIE:

She's 84 years old. She doesn't know what she's doing.

MIKE:

Your mother always knows what she's doing. It may not always be the right thing, but she knows what she's doing.

MARIE:

And what is it she's doing? She's running off with a man she barely knows. She's taking her clothes off in a movie. She's going to . . .

(lightbulb goes off look, she's figured out what her mother is up to)

she's going to . . .

MIKE:

She's going to what, Marie? Use Charlie to get to Vegas and start up old gambling habits again?

MARIE:

I didn't say that.

MIKE:

You didn't have to.

MARIE:

(becoming a more heated argument)

Why didn't you try to stop her?

MIKE:

(angry and defensive)

She's not *my* mother. And maybe it's for the best.

MARIE:

No! You just want her to leave this house, no matter how it happens, so she's out of your hair! But that's my mother! I'm not letting someone take advantage of her like this!

MIKE:

Who's taking advantage of who? Let's be honest here, Marie, Charlie is going to be the victim in all this!

(CONTINUED)

MARIE:

Isn't that just like you, to take the man's side, while my poor defenseless mother has been dragged off to practice full frontal nudity with a complete stranger!

MIKE:

Marie . . .

MARIE:

Shut up. It's a good thing you're sitting on that sofa, because that's where you're sleeping tonight!

Marie storms off to the bedroom.

After a beat, Mike sighs, gets up and heads for bedroom.

MIKE:

Oh, come on, Marie . . .

Marie steps back in, throws a blanket and pillow at Mike. Mike slowly goes back and sits on couch, looks out at audience.

MIKE:

. . . shit.

Lights out.

Scene 5

Three days later. Mike is sitting on sofa reading paper, Marie comes out from kitchen. It's obvious there is still tension.

MIKE:

What's for dinner?

MARIE:

I don't know. Ask the person who's going to make for you.

MIKE:

Marie, how much longer is this attitude of yours going to last.

MARIE:

As long as it takes for you to admit you were wrong about my mother.

MIKE:

Okay, I was wrong. Now, what's for dinner?

(CONTINUED)

MARIE:

Not so fast. Say it!

MIKE:

Marie, I can't say something I don't believe. Right now, I believe your mother is using Charlie to get to Las Vegas.

MARIE:

Or maybe she really fell for this guy! Or maybe she thinks she has to because we want her out! Or maybe... or maybe . . . or maybe you're right.

MIKE:

(gets up, puts his arm around her)
Or maybe it's a little of all those things. Okay?

MARIE:

(smiles)
Okay.

MIKE:

Now, what's for dinner?

MARIE:

Your favorite. Lasagna, with meat.

MIKE:

Fireproof lasagna?

MARIE:

You will get you lasagna this time, I promise.

Lisa comes out, dressed in her pajamas and robe, walks over to couch.

LISA:

(yawning, then sigh)
What's for dinner?

MARIE:

You look tired.

MIKE:

I thought you were napping.

LISA:

Napping can be exhausting. I'm emotionally exhausted. So, what's for dinner?

MIKE:

Your mother is making lasagna. Why don't you go in and make a salad to go with it?

(CONTINUED)

LISA:
Me?

MARIE:
Yes, you. All the stuff is in the fridge.

LISA:
Do you have a cookbook?

MIKE:
For salad? Get in there and earn your keep.

Lisa gets up, stretches, then moves very slowly towards kitchen, almost zombie-like.

MIKE:
Oh brother.

Mike and Marie each grab an arm of Lisa's and bring her back to the coach.

MARIE:
Sit down, young lady.

MIKE:
We need to talk.

LISA:
Oh God, I know where babies come from.

MARIE:
Not that talk. First all, why are you so tired? You should be sleeping just fine since you now have the bed all to yourself.

MIKE:
And it's not like you're over-exerting yourself around here.

LISA:
(likes it's a big deal)
I have to make a salad.

MARIE:
When do you plan on looking for a real job?

LISA:
There's no auditions right now.

MARIE:
A real job!

MIKE:

You haven't left the house, or even gotten dressed in three days, since the audition with your grandmother.

MARIE:

Yeah, actually, it was your grandmother who got the job.

LISA:

Fine. Maybe I'll audition for full frontal nudity, too.

MIKE & MARIE:

NO!

MIKE:

(hands her the paper pointing the page)
Look, I did some of the leg work for you already. I've circled three jobs that sound perfect for you.

LISA:

Acting jobs?

MIKE:

No, acting like a grown up jobs.

MARIE:

You're in a rut. Getting a job, any job, would be the best thing for you.

LISA:

(starts crying)
And give up my dream?

MIKE:

(shouting)
What dream? It's more like an hallucination. For crying out loud, you were wearing an alligator suit!

Lisa cries louder.

MARIE:

(runs to Lisa's side. Puts her arm around her)
Mike, how could you?
(pats her back)
But daddy is right, honey. You need to get a job. I'd be depressed, too, if I were stuck in the house all day. So, come on, promise you'll try.

LISA:

(calming down)
Okay. By the way, you two do the good cop / bad cop thing real good.

(CONTINUED)

Mike and Marie smile at each other.

The door flies open. Rose makes a grand entrance, wearing a fur coat and big sunglasses. She's carrying her suitcase.

ROSE:
I'm hooooome!

MARIE:
(jumps up, runs to her)
Ma, thank God you finally came to your senses!

MIKE:
(sarcastically)
Yeah, thank God.

LISA:
Wow! Look at you all glammed up. Where'd you get the coat?

ROSE:
Oh, Charlie bought it for me. The glasses are to fool the paparazzi.

MIKE:
Lisa, roll out the red carpet for your grandmother. So, Rose, thanks for stopping by for a visit. Say hello to Charlie.

ROSE:
Actually, there is no more Charlie and me. I broke it off. He was smothering me. Who could blame him? But I'm not ready for that kind of commitment. He was moving too fast. I need my space. I need my freedom. I need to get the hell out of this coat. It's hot!

Rose exits to the bedroom

LISA:
Am I going to have to share the bed with her again?

MARIE:
Looks that way.

LISA:
I've got to get a job and get the hell out of here.

Lisa takes the newspaper and heads for the kitchen.

MIKE:

While you're in there, make the salad!

The phone rings.

MARIE:

I'll get it.

(Marie picks up the phone)

Hello? Gina, guess who just walked through the door?
What? . . . A plumber? No, I don't have a number for a
plumber. Why? . . . The toilet is backed up? Hold on,
this sounds like something Mike would know about. Mike
. . .

MIKE:

No. I'm not going over.

MARIE:

She doesn't want you to go over. She just wants you to
recommend someone.

MIKE:

Tell her to call Roto-Rooter. They're in the phone
book.

MARIE:

Gina, Mike said . . . Oh, you heard him. Well, while
you're on the phone, Ma . . . okay. Call me back.

(Marie goes and sits next to Mike on
sofa)

She couldn't talk right now. The toilet overflowed.
She's got to mop up the mess.

*Rose comes out. She's in a negligee and feather
boa, and holding a cigarette holder. She's acting
very dramatic.*

ROSE:

Who's cleaning up a mess?

MARIE:

Oh, it's a long story.

Mike and Marie both look at Rose in shock.

MIKE:

(covers his eyes)

Put your clothes on!

ROSE:

These are my clothes. This is what all the Hollywood
celebrities wear around the house. So . . .

(she strikes a pose)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ROSE: (cont'd)
What do you think?

MARIE:
I'm speechless.

ROSE:
So was Charlie.
(to Mike)
Mike, hand me the TV guide.

Rose goes to Mike's side. He is unaware because he's still covering his eyes. Rose bends down and leans in to get it from him, putting her cleavage right at his eye level.

MIKE:
(slowly lowering his hands from his eyes. Looks and sees Rose's cleavage and is so startled, he slides right off the sofa)
Cover those up!

There's a knock at the door.

ROSE:
Don't answer that!

MARIE:
Why?

ROSE:
Just don't answer it.

Mike gets up off the floor. Marie opens the door. It's Charlie.

CHARLIE:
Is Rose here?

ROSE:
No.

MARIE:
Yes. Come on in, Charlie.

CHARLIE:
Rose, there you are. I've been worried sick. Why did you leave?

ROSE:
I needed time to think.

CHARLIE:

Think about what? I thought it was all settled. We were going to Vegas together next week, right after we shoot that last scene.

ROSE:

Yeah, well. . . I've had second thoughts.

CHARLIE:

But why? What did I do wrong?

ROSE:

Nothing! Okay? Nothing! Look,
(she takes Charlie by the hand and they
sit on the sofa together)
I have a confession or two to make.

Mike and Marie lean in over sofa to listen

ROSE:

Maybe you two can go start dinner?

MARIE:

It's already in the oven.

ROSE:

Go!

MARIE:

Come on, Mike, let's see how Lisa is doing with the salad.

They exit.

CHARLIE:

Rose, what's wrong? Everything was going so well, and then you disappeared. All this talk these last few days about "love at first sight." Is that all it was, just talk?

ROSE:

At first. Okay, I'm going to talk. You're going to listen. No interruptions, okay?

CHARLIE:

Okay.

ROSE:

(gets up, takes stage)
Look, Charlie, I haven't been completely honest with you. I'm not just visiting here with my daughter. I'm here because I have no place else to go.

CHARLIE:

Look, Rose...

ROSE:

I said no interrupting. I need to get this all said before I chicken out. The truth is, I lost my house, and my car, and all my savings. I'm flat broke. Just the clothes on my back. Even these, you bought.

CHARLIE:

My God, Rose, was it identity theft? Were you scammed? Oh no, were you sick? Did it all go to hospital bills?

ROSE:

No, nothing that noble. I uh . . . I . . . You see, I had, no, I HAVE a problem. An addiction. I'm a gambler, Charlie. And not a very good one. I pissed it all away, on the slots, the card tables, the horses, you name, I bet it. My family didn't know until I was evicted and had no place to go. So, here I am. Then you came along. A sweet, kind, gentle man, and all I could see in the beginning was a man who lived in Vegas, where the casinos are. I was using you, Charlie, to get to Vegas and start gambling all over again. That is until this morning.

CHARLIE:

And what happened this morning?

ROSE:

This morning, I realized I was more in love with Charlie the sweet, kind, gentle man, than I was with Charlie the guy who lived in Vegas. I couldn't take advantage of you, Charlie. And I knew if I told you all this, you'd leave me anyway. So I left first. So now you know. And now you can leave.

CHARLIE:

Rose, look, I should be angry. But I'm not. There's things you don't know about me, too. The truth is, years ago I was in the same boat you are. I blew everything with my own gambling problem. All my Cowboy Chuck money went to the casinos. But I got help. I started going to Gamblers Anonymous, and it worked. I've been going to meetings for years. Even when I'm out of town, like now, I go to meetings. Back home, I run the meetings and I sponsor other people with the same problem you and I have. It's nothing to be ashamed of, Rose. And I'm proud of you for telling me the truth. It's the first step.

(CONTINUED)

ROSE:

Charlie, I . . . I don't know what to say.

CHARLIE:

Say you'll come to Vegas with me, and we'll go to some meetings together. Until I met you, I didn't realize how lonely I was. I live alone, except for my dog, Dolly. My son is watching her now. I call her up and I talk to her over the phone. I know that sounds stupid, but really that's all I had, until now. II love you, Rose.

They kiss. Lisa comes in and sees them.

LISA:

Ohhhh. (crosses arms and looks smug) heh heh heh... You gigolo! Tell my grandmother about Dolly! Go ahead. Tell her. I heard you on the phone the other day making kissy kissy noises to her. Go on, tell her.

ROSE:

He already did. It's okay. After full frontal nudity, a menage a trois is no big deal!

Charlie and Rose crack up laughing.

Lisa, shocked, storms off to her room.

Mike and Marie cautiously enter

MARIE:

Is it safe to come in now?

ROSE:

Yes,

(smiling at Charlie)

everything is just fine. Come on in. Charlie and I have something to tell you.

CHARLIE:

Rose has told me everything.

MIKE:

Define "everything."

CHARLIE:

Everything. The gambling, losing it all, house, car, money . . . I know it all.

MIKE:

That's no reason to dump her!

(CONTINUED)

CHARLIE:

On the contrary, I understand. It's a long story, but I understand, and I can help her with her problem.

(to Rose)

That is, if you still want to come out to Vegas with me.

ROSE:

Oh Charlie, yes. I'll go. I'd go with you, no matter where you lived. It's not about Vegas anymore, it's all about you.

They kiss. Mike and Marie look embarrassed.

ROSE:

For now, can I come back to your place?

CHARLIE:

I was hoping you would.

ROSE:

I'll just change.

CHARLIE:

Leave it on.

Rose gets up to exit. Charlie slaps her butt. Rose giggles and exits to bedroom

CHARLIE:

(to Mike and Marie)

She'll be fine. I'll take good care of her. Don't worry.

MARIE:

I'm not totally sure why, but I believe you, Charlie.

Rose comes back out with fur coat, sunglasses and suitcase.

ROSE:

I'm ready.

(to Marie)

Don't worry, I'll stop by and say good bye before heading for Vegas. I promise. Come on, Charlie.

CHARLIE:

So long, pardners!

They exit.

Mike and Marie sit on couch.

MIKE:

For once, your mother truly left me speechless. I don't know what to say.

MARIE:

Me either. Let's just go with it. It's either going to work out, or she'll be back.

MIKE:

I hope it works!
(clasping hands, looking upward)
Please let it work out!

MARIE:

I hope it works out, too. For a lot of reasons.

Lisa comes out dressed in the Gato Gator suit.

LISA:

Ta Da! I have some news that will make you both happy!

They both look at her astonished.

MIKE:

Now what? What's with the costume?

LISA:

Simple. I'm not sharing that bed with Nona again. I made some calls. First, I got my old job back. Not only will I be making appearances again as the Gato Gator, but I also have a desk job now with the company. And, I called my old roommate and told her the situation, and she's willing to have me move back as long as I pay my half. So, I'll be leaving tomorrow for my new job.

MARIE:

What is the desk job? Management?

LISA:

Telemarketing. But it's a start.

MARIE:

Lisa, you know, Nona . . .

Mike stops her.

MIKE:

. . . Is going to be so happy to hear you got your job back and will be moving out!

LISA:

Actually, my new job starts now. I'm making a guest appearance at the shopping mall. Gotta go. Save me some lasagna!

(CONTINUED)

Lisa exits.

Mike and Marie look at each other and both sit back on the sofa looking like the cat that just ate the canary.

MIKE:

Well, my dear, it looks like the house is empty again, and we can go back to planning our semi-retirement!

MARIE:

My head is spinning! One day, our lives get turned upside down in the blink of an eye, and another day, they get turned right side up again! Amazing . . .

MIKE:

Look, for now, just be glad we have the house all to ourselves again. Just the two of us!

Mike goes to cuddle with Marie. The phone rings.

MIKE:

Don't answer it.

MARIE:

I have to.

(she gets up and answers the phone)

Hello? Gina, you'll never guess what just . . . what? Oh no! That's too bad . . . What? You're kidding! . . . You not kidding? Please be kidding . . . No, sure. We understand.

MIKE:

Understand what?

MARIE:

Yeah, okay. We'll be waiting. Bye.

MIKE:

What's up?

MARIE:

(comes and sits next to him)

Gina couldn't get Rotor Rooter to come out. She tried to fix it herself.

MIKE:

And . . .

MARIE:

She broke some pipe and couldn't shut it off. The whole apartment is flooded.

(CONTINUED)

MIKE:

And . . .

MARIE:

It's going to take weeks to fix the damage.

MIKE:

And . . .

MARIE:

She's moving in with us.

MIKE:

When?

MARIE:

She'll be here at 8 o'clock.

They both look devastated. Then Mike starts to smile.

MARIE:

What are you smiling about?

MIKE:

Eight o'clock. That means we have the house all to ourselves for a few hours.

(Mike gets real frisky)

I say we have dessert now, and eat the lasagna later.

MARIE:

(gets the picture)

Sounds good to me!

They begin to smooch. The smoke alarm goes off. Smoke billows from kitchen.

Marie leaps up!

MARIE:

The lasagna!

She runs into the kitchen. Mike looks out at audience.

MIKE:

Shit . . .

The End.

PROPERTY LIST

Newspaper

Small pad & pencil or pen

Phone

Small suitcase (Lisa)

Wine bottles

Wine glasses

Wine bucket

Spatula or ladle

Couch pillow

Barbie doll

Smoke machine (backstage)

Cell phone (Rose)

Plant

Bag of groceries

Basket with laundry

Camp stool

2 movie scripts

Bowl of popcorn

Remote control for TV

Cell phone (Charlie)

Walker

Bed pillow & blanket

Suitcase (Rose)

SOUND EFFECTS

Voice of director (Played by actor playing Mike, sitting in back of audience)

COSTUMES**Mike:**

Act 1: Casual clothes, but not sloppy. It's his birthday party, after all.

Act 2, Scene 1: Work clothes: dark pants and shirt with Mike's Septic Service logo

Act 2, Scenes 3 & 4: Same outfit both scenes, jeans or sweatpants and T-shirt

Act 2, Scene 5: Jeans and a different casual shirt

Marie:

Act 1: Dress with full slip underneath, sexy apron*

Act 2, Scene 1: Work outfit: pants and top or casual skirt and top; purse

Act 2, Scenes 3 & 4: Same outfit both scenes, jeans and top or possibly, nice sweatsuit

Act 2, Scene 5: Jeans and casual top

Lisa:

Act 1: Jeans and top, purse

Act 2, Scene 1: Bathrobe, pajamas, slippers

Act 2, Scene 2: Professional looking outfit for audition, such as nice pants and top or dress.

Act 2, Scene 3: Same outfit as above

Act 2, Scene 4: Sweatpants or pajama pants & T-shirt

Act 2, Scene 5: Same bathrobe, pajamas & slippers as Act 2, Scene 1, then change to alligator suit*

Rose:

Act 1: Stylish, somewhat flashy outfit, makeup, coiffured hair, carrying designer purse

Act 2, Scene 1: Duster, furry slippers, ace bandages on knees, slumber cap with rollers sticking out, walker

Act 2, Scene 2: Stylish outfit similar to Act 1, same purse

Act 2, Scene 4: Same outfit as above, with smeared lipstick

Act 2, Scene 5: Fur coat, sunglasses, purse, negligee underneath (hide negligee under coat until she makes her entrance from bedroom)

Charlie:

Act 2, Scene 2: Sports jacket, dress shirt, ascot & pocket square, dress pants

Act 2, Scene 4: Same as above, except remove ascot for more casual look; lipstick on face

Act 2, Scene 5: Casual pants & golf shirt

* Where to order sexy apron & alligator suit: Amazon.com has both costumes. Just click on "alligator suit" to see a selection. There are several sexy aprons, but the "Attitude Apron" and the "Pretty Woman Sexy Kitchen Apron" are the best. You can also make the costumes if you're lucky enough to have a clever wardrobe person.

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