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# Three Family Sale

## Cast

<p><b>Clare</b></p> <p>Forty-something woman in thrift-store clothing. Appears a bit bedraggled &amp; tired but very pleasant to speak with.</p>	<p><b>Ronda</b></p> <p>A surly, biker chick without much to lose.</p> <p><b>Ronda's Friend</b></p> <p>The best friend you'd expect for a surly biker chick without much to lose.</p>
<p><b>Ray</b></p> <p>Clare's husband. A forty-something lay-about in a pair of stained, too-tight 70's gym shorts &amp; a soiled t-shirt. Has a cast on his foot, and what we assume is engine grease-under his fingernails.</p>	<p><b>Nasan (Child 1)</b></p> <p>The son you'd expect from a surly biker chick without much to lose.</p> <p><b>Child 2</b></p> <p>The younger daughter you'd expect from a surly biker chick without much to lose</p>
<p><b>Elsbeth</b></p> <p>Thirty-something yuppie sort with immaculate hair &amp; nails. Stylish clothing, and in this case, a bit over dressed. Wife of Mitch.</p>	<p><b>Elderly woman 1</b> <b>Elderly woman 2</b></p> <p>Two ladies ages 65-75 out for weekend yard-saling. They are obvious busy-bodies but are kind natured.</p>
<p><b>Mitch</b></p> <p>Elsbeth's husband. Well groomed and also stylishly dressed. In this case- over dressed. Appears formal and uptight in social situations- especially this one.</p>	<p><b>Husband</b></p> <p>Downtrodden, everyman</p> <p><b>Wife</b></p> <p>Self-possessed woman, looking for a cause.</p>
<p><b>Grace</b></p> <p>Young and stylish teenage girl with warmth her mother lacks and an easy smile.</p>	<p><b>Man 1</b></p> <p>Weekend warrior with a thirst for a deal.</p> <p><b>Boy 1</b></p> <p>Very well-mannered, quiet boy.</p>
<p><b>Taylor</b></p> <p>Thirty-something yuppie wanna-be. Dressed stylishly with a trendy haircut. Wife of Tom.</p>	<p><b>Barney the dog</b></p> <p>A rather dirty but somewhat loveable mutt, who stars off-screen only, until the final scene.</p>
<p><b>Tom</b></p> <p>Taylor's husband. Dressed less formally than Mitch or Elsbeth, but well groomed &amp; put together regardless. Tom is in his mid to late thirties and is in good physical shape.</p>	<p><b>Elderly Man</b></p> <p>Older gentleman in his 50's well dressed but rather shy. Appears quite subservient to his mother who accompanies him.</p> <p><b>Mother</b></p> <p>Mother to Elderly Man. Has a sharp tongue &amp; short temper. Scowls on a regular basis and seems to be very bothered by the warm afternoon. (Fans herself constantly with a newspaper.)</p>

**Place** A shelter house in a park adjacent to a suburban cul-de-sac. It is early morning and barely daylight. Down right there is an opening to a storm shelter.

**Time** The Present.

## ACT 1 Scene 1

(At Rise: A forty-something woman enters right, carrying a box of paintings and gently sets them down on right picnic table. She exits right and returns with another good sized load placing them beside the others and exits right again. Finally she returns with one last load, as well as a large sign reading THREE FAMILY SALE. She props the sandwich board sign up down left and sets about arranging the numerous paintings. When she's almost done, a set of headlights appear left and quickly fade. Soon a middle aged man and woman appear looking slightly overdressed and carrying boxes. They watch Clare checking her arrangement of paintings- and finally- decide to place their boxes in the only remaining space, the ground. They watch with interest as she placed price tags, with no apparent reason for her price scale. Finally, she notices them and crosses.)

**CLARE**

Oh Hi! I didn't see you there, good morning. I'm Clare, one of your partners for the day. You must be the Mullers?

**MITCH**

Meullers, we're the Meullers? I'm Mitch and this is my wife Elsbeth. *(He extends his hand).*

**CLARE**

*(Shakes his hand)* Well I'm tired already, my husband Ray will be here later, we live in the blue and red double wide, you know, one eleven?

**ELSBETH**

It "is" different.

**MITCH**

First house here I understand.

**CLARE**

Oh yeah, we'd though no one else would ever move out here.

**ELSBETH**

I guess the city finally reached you.

**CLARE**

They've been developing like crazy.

**MITCH**

It's hot property now, I hear more people would like to move in but there's nothing left to buy.

**CLARE**

I can't believe the houses they're building. I can remember when it was all grass and sand hills. Back then, it didn't matter what our house looked like. We try to keep the yard clean, but Ray's always working on some old car, right there in the front of the house.

**ELSBETH**

Yes, he does always seem to be working on one. Is he a mechanic?

**CLARE**

Not really. He thinks he is but most of his "customers" would disagree. He keeps trying though.

**ELSBETH**

Is he working on those boats as well?

**CLARE**

That's a recent calling for Ray. Two years ago he talked me into letting him buy one old boat, well then it needed a motor and the only motor he could find came with another old boat. In two years he's managed to find six more.

**MITCH**

Any of them run?

**CLARE**

Not yet, but he keeps swearin he'll fire one up one day.

**ELSBETH**

Well, if there's ever a flood, there should be a safe place for everyone in the neighborhood.

**CLARE**

If any of em float.

**MITCH**

You've got a young son haven't you Clare?

**CLARE**

Yes I do, his name is Jack, you've probably seen him around.

**ELSBETH**

He's a tall boy.

**MITCH**

And I'll bet he's a basketball player.

**CLARE**

That would require something he's never had "ambition". And you've got a daughter?

**ELSBETH**

Yes Grace, she's my pride and joy.

**MITCH**

"Our" pride and joy.

**CLARE**

And your name is Elsbeth, that's so pretty. It sounds like a princess right out of a story book. You know I have loved your house since they finished it. Ray says its way too fancy, but if you've got the money, why shouldn't you have a nice house?

**ELSBETH**

Well, um Clare, Mitch and I didn't bring any tables and it doesn't look as if we have any place to put "our" things.

**CLARE**

Oh, oh yeah, what in the world am I "thinking" taking all the room? And Tom and Taylor aren't even here yet, I Know! I'll just put my paintings back in the boxes and let the customers browse em that way. *(Mitch enters right carrying a box, he sets it on the floor of the shelter.)*

**MITCH**

Honey I'm going to get my old clubs and the other "valuables" out of the garage.

**ELSBETH**

Don't be long, and get the lawn chairs.

**MITCH**

Done *(he exits right as Elsbeth begins to unpack her neatly priced items)*

**CLARE**

Hey, I've got some chains and pipe in the truck. I figured we could hang the pipe from the chains and make clothes racks.

**ELSBETH**

That's not a bad idea, do you need help?

**CLARE**

That's a good question. But no honey, I think I can handle it. I'll tell you what though, if you really want to help me, you can put my paintings back in the boxes. Be careful not to scratch the frames, if you don't mind.

*(Clare exits right and leaves Elsbeth to her task.)*

**ELSBETH**

*(To herself)* Great, I'm the curator of Helen Keller's early paintings. It's practically an auction at Kristie's.

*(She collects the paintings and over exaggerates delicate care in stacking them in the boxes. Clare returns with the rack materials.)*

**CLARE**

So Elsbeth,

*(assembling the pipe rack, handing chains from the rafters)*

I can't get over what a pretty name that is *(Elsbeth winces)* What do you do honey?

**ELSBETH**

I assume you mean do I work?

**CLARE**

That's what I mean, if its' not too personal.

**ELSBETH**

It's not too personal. I've been doing secretarial work for my husband's law firm for the last two years.

**CLARE**

Oh, he's a lawyer?

**ELSBETH**

Well actually Clare, he prefers Attorney, but that's just a pet peeve of his. He'd better not be watching television.

**CLARE**

Honey I'm sure he'll be right back.

**ELSBETH**

I don't know, he's an expert at the clean getaway.

**CLARE**

Well, I'll be sure to call him an, "attorney" when he gets back.

**ELSBETH**

If he takes much longer, he may need one.

**CLARE**

You know it's funny. You've lived here two years now and this is the first time we've ever talked. Isn't that weird?

**ELSBETH**

Yes very, you know Mitch and I stay very busy most of the time.

**CLARE**

Yeah, you must with him being a law.. attorney and all. About the only time we catch a glimpse of you guys is when you have your outdoor parties. I never saw so many fancy cars.

**ELSBETH**

Just some of the partners from the firm, we like to celebrate after big cases.

**CLARE**

Yeah, I figured it was something like that.

**ELSBETH**

It looks like we've got just about everything laid out. What on earth is keeping Mitch? If he thinks I'm manning this business all day by myself, he's crazy.

**CLARE**

You won't be "alone" honey; this is a three family sale.

**ELSBETH**

Yes I understand. I just don't want him watching television, while I'm out here slaving the day away.

**CLARE**

I don't know Elsbeth, I think this day might just be a hoot. Boy I tell ya, we better make a little money on this sale. I'd hate to think I stayed up all night putting prices on all our stuff for nothing.

**ELSBETH**

What all are you selling Clare?

**CLARE**

My paintings mostly. I've got a few nick nacks and Rays' got a watch to get rid of, and he's selling his tires.

**ELSBETH**

No boats?

**CLARE**

Are you kidding? That man wouldn't sell any of his "treasures" for nothing. Won't sell em, won't fix em.. I mean, can't fix em.

**ELSBETH**

How do you find room for everything?

**CLARE**

He just keeps makin more room ... Does Mitch collect anything?

**ELSBETH**

He's a man isn't he? He doesn't tell a lot of people, but he collects Star Wars action figures.

**CLARE**

Toys?

**ELSBETH**

Don't let him hear you say that.

**CLARE**

Oh I won't.

(Mitch enters left carrying a golf bag over his shoulder and a large box.)

**ELSBETH**

*(Haughtily)* Oh speak of the devil, what kept you?

**MITCH**

Nick called; the party's been moved to 6:30. Look honey, I scuffed my golf bag. Three years and not a scratch.

**ELSBETH**

Well, with any luck it won't be yours much longer.

**CLARE**

So you're an, "attorney"?

**MITCH**

Yes I'm a lawyer *(looks at the art)* and you're a painter?

**CLARE**

Well, it's just a hobby really. But as soon as I make my first sale, it should all be downhill from there.

**MITCH**

You seem to have a size-able body.

**CLARE**

I know, Ray's been telling me to lose weight but it's not easy once you pass forty.

**MITCH**

No, I meant that you've done quite a few paintings.

**CLARE**

Oh, well let me show them to you, maybe, if you like em, I'll give you a "neighbor discount".

*(Takes a painting from a box, holding it away from audience.)*

**MITCH**

Look Elle, it's an angel. *(looking at the painting)*

**ELSBETH**

It is? Oh, it is, I see it now, sure.

**CLARE**

Yes, she's my guardian angel. You won't believe it, but right after I painted her she saved our lives.

**MITCH**

How did she accomplish that?

**CLARE**

Well, I hung her up on the wall while she was still wet, I was so excited. I'd never painted an angel before. Can you believe that?

**ELSBETH**

Yes.

*(Catching herself)*

Inspiration works that way sometimes.

**CLARE**

Well anyway, she was hanging directly over an outlet that Ray had about a million wires plugged into and sometime that night something shorted out and the wall caught on fire. Me and Ray slept right through since Ray took the battery out of the smoke detector to run Jack's remote control car. Jack was just a little boy back then.

**MITCH**

How'd you get out?

**CLARE**

It's the darndest thing, that fire burned its way up the wall, till it got to my angel, than it just went out.

**MITCH**

Just like that?

**ELSBETH**

Look Mitch, you can see where the frame was scorched.

**CLARE**

I woulda got her a new frame but I didn't want to do anything to change her.

**ELSBETH**

Why on earth are you selling her, it?

**CLARE**

Oh my, I'm not. I brought her to watch over our sale; you notice there's no price tag on "her".

**MITCH**

Well that's an interesting story, but did you ever think this miracle might have had more to do with building materials than guardian angels?

**CLARE**

Oh, I "know" it was a miracle, she watches over me, I can feel it.

**ELSBETH**

I hope she watches over all of us today. I've got a feeling we could use the help.

*(From left, another couple enters carrying their own boxes.)*

**MITCH**

Good morning, Can I give you a hand?

**TAYLOR**

I'd prefer a standing ovation.

**MITCH**

Huh?

**TOM**

Never mind Mitch, she's here under protest. If you wanna help, there's one more box in the trunk. (*Mitch exits left*)

**CLARE**

Good morning, how are you guys? Are you ready for the big sale?

**TAYLOR**

I did not want to get up for this.

**TOM**

Taylor likes to get up at the crack of noon on Saturday.

**TAYLOR**

I think there might be a good reason for that. Who was it that got all this junk together and priced it while you slept peacefully on the couch?

**TOM**

I did not sleep "peacefully"; you made a lot of noise. So what time does this disaster start..better yet, what time does it end?

**CLARE**

Well I told Ray to tell the paper eight o'clock, but you know how yard sale fanatics are, it's a wonder they're not all over us now.

**ELSBETH**

Well I hope we have a decent turnout after all this trouble.

**CLARE**

Is this your first yard sale Elsbeth?

**ELSBETH**

And last.

**CLARE**

You might be surprised, yard sales can be fun. You always meet a lot of really "neat" people.

**TAYLOR**

We had one a while back and it was a nightmare, people wall to wall, and very few of them had "teeth".

**TOM**

You remember that woman who used our bathroom and wanted to buy your mom's dentures?

**TAYLOR**

And they were still bubbling in Polident.

**TOM**

Your mom practically had to fight that lady for them.

**TAYLOR**

At least mom couldn't have bitten her. You don't leave anything lying around that you don't want to sell.

**ELSBETH**

*(Sarcastically.)*

Now I'm feeling better.

**TAYLOR**

Oh Elle, it won't be bad, you'll see, it'll be over in not time.

**TOM**

Just keep your dentures in your mouth.

**ELSBETH**

Taylor would you like some help putting out your things?

**TAYLOR**

Oh that would be sweet of you Elle. Hey, what time is your party tonight?

*(Elsbeth shoots her a look)*

**CLARE**

Oh a party, isn't that nice.

**ELSBETH**

It's not so much a party as a get-together. You know, the partners, some clients, and *(quietly)* Tom and Taylor. It's as six thirty.

**CLARE**

Well Ray and me don't get to many parties. I'm so busy, and Ray would rather be on the couch, and now that he's hurt, well....

**TAYLOR**

*(Changing the subject)*

What happened to Ray?

**CLARE**

Oh, it was Barney that stupid dog of ours, he grabbed Ray's sandwich while he was checkin his oil, so Ray went chasin him around the garage and he cracked his shin on the trailer hitch on the back of his truck.

**ELSBETH**

That sounds terrible, was he hurt bad?

**CLARE**

He broke his shin bone clean, and then he laid there for an hour waiting for me to get home. It's a wonder that dog's still alive.

**TAYLOR**

Ow! That's terrible Clare, how's he getting around?

**CLARE**

With a whole lot of pain and even more whinin. If anyone comes within a mile of that leg, he throws a fit and screams to high heaven, swearin that those bones are twistin around in there. The doctor says that his leg is immobilized but Ray doesn't agree, he swears they got it set wrong.

**ELSBETH**

And he's coming out here today? Wouldn't it be better if he stayed at home?

**CLARE**

Oh. He wouldn't miss out on this for the world, a chance to sit in the middle of his junk while strangers come to pick through it? Are you kidding? For Ray it's like King for a Day.

*(Mitch enters left with a garment bag full of dresses and two lawn chairs. Elsbeth takes the chairs and sets them up stage right. He crosses to the center stage pipe rack, hangs the bag and unzips it.)*

**MITCH**

Any customers yet?

**ELSBETH**

Where have you been?

**MITCH**

I had to make a quick phone call.

**ELSBETH**

I hope you brought the cell phone back with you.

**MITCH**

That's a great idea.

*(He starts to leave.)*

**ELSBETH**

Yes, but then you'd have no reason to go back home. Bring it back with you after the next escape.

**MITCH**

You should have been an attorney; you have a natural talent for going for the kill.

**TOM**

What all are you guys selling, Mitch?

**MITCH**

Oh, most of this "loot" belongs to my lovely wife. Most of what "I" buy, I need.

**ELSBETH**

Like you needed the BMW?

**MITCH**

Now Elle, You know I bought that car for its safety features.

**ELSBETH**

Sure, to prevent a mid-life crisis?

**MITCH**

Tom, my wife has more outfits than Macy's. All of these dresses were procured from exclusive vendors at outrageous prices. If only those designers could see their wares being offered at this enigmatic venue.

**CLARE**

Mitch you talk so pretty. Like a poet or something.

**ELSBETH**

Or "something" is right. I got good use out of all of these outfits.

**MITCH**

Let's take this "garment" for instance, *(He reaches for a dazzling blue dress)*. How many times have you worn this?

**ELSBETH**

I don't know how many times, Mitch. What difference does it make?

**MITCH**

You've never worn it, not "one" time and it cost five hundred and seventy six dollars on sale.

**ELSBETH**

Why are doing this? How do you know exactly how much it cost?

**MITCH**

Because the price tag is still attached! *(Revealing the tag)* Tell me Elle; was it last years' style to wear the price-tag "on" the garment?

*(Ellsbeth is becoming angry.)*

**ELSBETH**

Why do you wait until we're in public to transform yourself into a jerk?

**MITCH**

I was merely making a point darling.

**ELSBETH**

NO! You were stabbing me with it as usual. What would you have me wear a T-shirt and cut offs?  
*(She turns to see Clare wearing a T-shirt and cut offs. The shelter grows suddenly silent.)*

**CLARE**

Well Mitch, you have a very pretty wife. She has to keep up her appearance. You can't put a price-tag on beauty. If we could afford it, I'd wear nice clothes too.

**TAYLOR**

Of course you would Clare.

*(From off right we hear Ray's voice for the first time)*

**RAY**

Clare, get your fat butt over here and help me!

*(They all look at Clare)*

**ELSBETH**

*(Pause)* I'm sorry about what I said Clare. I didn't mean ...

**CLARE**

Oh it was nothing Elsbeth, I'd better help Ray.

*(She exits rights.)*

**MITCH**

As usual "your mouth" has somehow managed to start us out on the wrong foot, I don't know how you enunciate so well with your foot in there.

**ELSBETH**

Don't start on one of your self righteous tirades Mitch, everyone now how you feel about "them."

**MITCH**

Yes, but unlike "you" Elle, I am more expert at keeping my feelings from becoming public knowledge.

**ELSBETH**

Like you did about the dress Mitch? Oh. I forgot. You're only discreet when it "matters".

**TOM**

*(Breaking in)*

Mitch! You were going to tell me what you guys are selling.

*(Before Mitch can answer the sound of Ray screaming in pain is heard off right.)*

**RAY**

Oww, watch it! Do you have to hit every stinkin bump Clare?! You're killing me. It's twistin! Oh man, it's twistin!

*(Clare enters right pushing Ray in a wheel chair. He is more an event than a human. His damaged appendage is propped straight out and secured with duct tape and improvised trusses. On his lap is a television and a box with nearly every snack item known to exist, including pork rinds. He has four sixths of a six pack swinging from his left hand and is holding his wounded right leg with the other.)*

**RAY**

Watch it Clare, don't bump the table!

**CLARE**

You're O.K. Ray; I'm not going to crash you into anything. I'll park you right over here.  
*(She parks him in the down right corner of the shelter house).*

**RAY**

Set up my TV and go back and get the rest of my stuff and my cooler.

*(She reaches for the television.)*

**RAY**

Watch it! Oh jeez that hurts. *(She pauses.)* Go ahead and get the stupid thing off me, Clare! I'm dyin here! Ow, Ow, careful, watch the leg!

**MITCH**

Can I help you with that?

**CLARE**

No it's better if I do it.... How's that Ray?

**RAY**

I'm alive. Set it right there, *(points forward.)* and put it on a box or something.

*(Mitch grabs a box.)*

*(Clare complies and upon doing so realizes that there is no electrical outlet.)*

**CLARE**

Ray! *(Holds up the cord.)*

**RAY**

Don't just stand there, go back to the house and round up all the extension cords you can find and hook me up.

**CLARE**

But Ray, people will start getting here soon.

**RAY**

I'll block em with my chair when they "rush" your paintings.

**CLARE**

Just sell them at the prices marked, don't let them talk you down. And my Angel ain't for sale.

**RAY**

Alrighty hon, Just go...wait! Where's my ice pack?

**CLARE**

Right in here.

*(She reaches into the snack box and extracts a zip-lock bag containing two ice cubes. She sheepishly looks at him, then slowly and delicately places it on Ray's leg. Everyone watches with fascinations, especially Ray. She finishes with a smile. Ray looks at her for a moment.)*

**RAY**

Burr! *(Everyone laughs until Ray shoots them an angry look.)*

**RAY**

You call that an ice pack?

**CLARE**

Well, that's all there was.

**RAY**

There are "two" ice cubes in that bag.

**CLARE**

Well, you “never” refill the ice-trays honey. I did the best I ...

**RAY**

I can't even reach the freezer! I sure didn't leave em empty.

**CLARE**

I'm sorry Ray.

**RAY**

Just go to the house and get my stuff, and while you're at it, bring me two aspirins. No honey, just bring me one aspirin. I wouldn't want the ice pack to feel bad.

*(Clare looking angry, exits right)*

**RAY**

You see what I have to put up with?

**ELSBETH**

So you're the “infamous” Ray.

**RAY**

What's that supposed to mean?

**ELSBETH**

Nothing at all, it's just that your wife has told us a little bit about you.

**RAY**

Whad she tell ya?

**ELSBETH**

Just nice things, and about your accident.

**RAY**

I thought I was gonna die there for a while but the docs pulled me through. Did she tell you how long I had to wait before she came home?

**TAYLOR**

Yes, a whole hour, it sounded terrible.

**TOM.**

Guess you won't be working in the yard for a while.

**RAY**

Oh no. Say that reminds me, about your weed whacker. I was clearing out the weeds under the rabbit hutches when a possum came up out of there and charged me. He hissed once and I cracked him on the skull. On the third swat, the whole end broke off. Now I ask you, what kind of weed whacker can't handle a crazy possum?

**TOM**

Was this before or after you broke your leg?

**RAY**

I sure as heck wasn't out here trimming weeds like this Sherlock. Hey maybe your house insurance will cover it.  
MITCH. Yes Tom, perhaps you have a possum clause

*(Ray looks at him)*

**ELSBETH**

Hey Taylor, it just occurred to me that we don't have any change or bags for the customers. What say you and I get out of here for a "precious" few minutes, before the fun "really" starts?

**TAYLOR**

Sounds like a plan to me, and I could go for a breakfast biscuit.

**TOM**

So you're just going to desert your post?

**TAYLOR**

I would never do that without leaving things in capable hands, your hands look capable.

**ELSBETH**

Don't worry gentlemen, we won't leave town, however tempting that might be ... we'll be back in no time, hurry up Taylor, before they change their minds.

*(They exit left.)*

**RAY**

I guess that leaves just the men. You know, it's bad enough bein with your wife during the week, but having to be with her on the weekend too. Well that's just depressing.

**TOM**

At least we're in this together. Have you met Mitch, Ray?

**RAY**

No, I guess he's managed to avoid me so far. There's no avoidin me today though huh, Mitch?

**MITCH**

I wouldn't say I've been "avoiding" you Ray.

**RAY**

You live in the "mansion" of the col-de-sac don't you? It looks like that house in Gone With the Wind, must a cost a fortune.

**MITCH**

Oh it was cheaper than you might think.

**RAY**

So tell me, how does a guy afford a house like that? I guess you're a doctor or something.

**MITCH**

Hardly, I'm an attorney Ray.

**RAY**

Ah, almost the same thing, except you get to the ambulance "before" the doctors. No wonder he has such a ritzy house.

**MITCH**

I assure you that I am not in the practice of chasing ambulances or any other emergency vehicles.

**RAY**

I shoulda guessed, listen to the way he talks Tom, if that ain't lawyer talk I don't know what is.

**TOM**

Don't get me in the middle of this Ray.

**MITCH**

How you feel about attorneys is not my concern, but when you attack me personally I have no choice but to.

**RAY**

Sue me? I know a lawyer wouldn't dare "hit" a man in a wheelchair.

**MITCH**

I wasn't going to start an altercation with you Ray. I was merely trying to express my feelings about the way you were characterizing me.

**CLARE**

Merely? What kind of word is "merely", I mean for a "man" to be usin'?

**MITCH**

You are making me angry.

**TOM**

He doesn't mean anything by it Mitch.

**RAY**

I don't mean to rile you Mitch. It's just my way, I was mostly joking. You've got to admit, you do talk pretty snooty.

**MITCH**

I would say I talk in a precise, dignified manner.

**RAY**

Like a lawyer.

**MITCH**

There is a large segment of the population that communicates as I do. Wouldn't you agree Tom?

**TOM**

Just because my house is in between the two of you, doesn't mean I want to be.

**MITCH**

Look Ray; let's forget about my avocation, for the moment, can we?

**RAY**

I suppose Mitch, as long as you don't use that lawyer talk on me again. It makes me feel like I'm on trial.

**MITCH**

It's a deal....so Ray, what is it that "you" do, when you're not harassing people over their choice of careers?

**RAY**

Well, I've done a lot of things. I drove a truck for a while, then I worked construction for a few years, till I hurt my back. Boy I coulda used you then, I might have a house like yours by now. Anyway, Clare and I opened a bait shop for couple of months. , but lately I've been working on starting my own business out of my home.

**TOM**

I didn't know you were doing that Ray.

**RAY**

Well its sort a recent event Tom, I been brain storming and I think I've come up with a sure thing.

**MITCH**

What's that Ray?

**RAY**

Oh I'm sure you'd like that, I tell you my idea and you steal it and make a million for yourself.

**MITCH**

I wouldn't dream of stealing your idea Ray, I'm pretty busy at the firm. Besides, you have the inside track. RAY. I don't know. I've had a lot of good ideas over the years and had em stolen before I could use em.

**MITCH**

Like what?

**RAY**

Oh I don't know, a lot, like ... well you know that clapper thing?

**TOM**

Yeah.

**RAY**

I had that idea a long time before it was on TV. See one night I was sitting in my easy chair almost asleep, when all the sudden the station I was watchin went off for the night. I was "real" comfortable but that hiss'n noise made it almost impossible to sleep. I managed to get to sleep anyway, but not before thinking that there should be some way to turn things off without getting up out of your chair.

**MITCH**

They call it a remote control.

**RAY**

They didn't have em then, everyone had to turn their TV's off by hand.  
*(All three guys share a moment of horror.)*

**TOM**

I guess you 'were" ahead of your time with that one Ray. So what's your new big idea?

**RAY**

Not so fast, that was the first time it happened. It happened again a coupla years ago. You know that "club" that's "sposed" to keep your car from bein stolen?

**MITCH**

Yes, I've thought about getting one for my beemer. (Ray and Tom look at Mitch; he realizes his over-enthusiasm and melts.)

**RAY**

Well, you'd a liked my idea a lot better, with my invention there ain't "no way" anyone could steal your car.

**TOM**

Was it like "The Club"?

**RAY**

No. it was a lot better. I thought of it when I first got old blue. Ya see, she came without a steerin wheel, took me almost a year to find one to fit her. I drove her anyway though.

**MITCH**

Without a steering wheel? .. How?

**RAY**

Vice grips son, vice grips. I just hooked em up to the bolts.

**TOM**

Wasn't that a little dangerous?

**RAY**

Ah no. You can trust a good pair of vice grips, they hold like crazy. Ain't no way they'd ever come off... well unless you squeeze that little release mechanism on the handle.

**TOM**

Good grief! That's crazy.

**RAY**

Crazy like a fox, I'd probably still be usin em today, if it hadn't been for Clare.

**MITCH**

Made you get a steering wheel huh?

**RAY**

She don't "make" me do anything, it was her crash that forced me to take action on the vice grip issue.

**TOM**

Clare crashed old blue?

**RAY**

Well she was all excited gettin her license, so I let her use blue for the drivin test. Well the officer in the passenger seat noticed right away that my steerin wasn't up to specs. He probably wouldn't let her use blue but his son was on our boy's little league team so he said he'd overlook it.

**MITCH**

She steered with vice grips?

**RAY**

She was doin real fine too, up to that part where you go through the cones. Never understood what good that part did anyway. Well, with all that turning back'n forth, something was bound to happen, and sure enough on the last cone, she hit the release mechanism and that's all she wrote.

**TOM**

All she wrote?

**RAY**

That man screamed so loud I could hear me from where I was standin! I could see Clare flailing her arms around, I never felt so helpless, I couldn't move, I was laughin so hard.

**MITCH**

Laughing?

**RAY**

You had to be there. They were screamin and flailing and old blue was pickin up speed, I thought they'd never stop.

**MITCH**

Well?

**RAY**

Well, when blue came through the side of that building, that long line disappeared real fast, and them people didn't come out in no single file neither.

**MITCH**

I'm guessing Clare flunked the test?

**RAY**

Heck no! They said it wasn't her fault and there was no "good" reason why she had to come back. The guy with her lost his job though, along with a couple a teeth.

**MITCH**

Ray, was your thief stopping idea vice grips or a DMV building?

**RAY**

Inspiration always visits me at strange times, but when those grips came loose..I thought of it. The detachable steerin wheel. After seein what happened to Clare, I know no crook's gonna get too far.

**TOM**

Unless he has some vice grips.

*(Silence)*

**RAY**

Hum. (Saddened) I hadn't thought of that.

**MITCH**

So what's your current idea Ray?

**RAY**

O.K. I'll tell you, but you better keep this under your hats.

*(Looks around)*

You know how everyone gets all excited about that America's Cup race on ESPN?

**TOM**

You mean that boat race?

**MITCH**

"Sail" boat race.

**RAY**

Yeah that's the one, well Clare's got a brother who's a wrestling coach and he told me he spends thousands a buck every year on wrestling gear.

**MITCH**

I can't wait to see this connection.

**RAY**

Well, put that fact, together with that America's Cup race's popularity and what do you get?

**TOM**

I don't know.

**MITCH**

I'm drawing a blank too.

**RAY**

Aint so easy being a "visionary" boys... Close your eyes and picture it. Making it's network television debut, maybe during the Super Bowl or something. It's all dark and they're playing the national anthem. You can hear the flag flappin in the breeze, and then suddenly the lights pop on and you see it! The America's Cup, .. Cup! A totally American idea in groin protection. A guy can protect himself on the field of athletic battle and at the same time show he's a "real" American. (The two listeners silently resist the urge to laugh.) I'll get that whole America Cup team to wear em. Heck they might even make a calendar.

**MITCH**

You think they'll switch from the brand they "usually" wear during the race.

**RAY**

Them athletes are all the same, throw a little endorsement money at em and they've been usin your product for years.

**TOM**

Do they even wear cups during the race?

**RAY**

They will now.

**MITCH**

I'm speechless.

**RAY**

Don't just sit there boys, tell me what you think. I know you're just kicking yourselves cause you didn't think of it first.

**MITCH**

(Pause)

It's truly a novel idea Ray; I bet no one else has thought of it yet.

**RAY**

That's why I got to move fast, before anyone else does. Now you boys better keep this quiet.

**TOM**

It won't be easy Ray, *(looks at Mitch)* but you can count on us.

**RAY**

If you want to get in on the ground floor, I'm looking for investment money.

**MITCH**

I think you'd be wise to keep this your baby Ray.

**TOM**

Yes Ray, I don't think anyone else see this vision quite as clearly as you do.

**RAY**

You're probably right. It won't be easy, but with faith and hard work, the America's cup could really be great.

**MITCH**

That's the American dream Ray, and we all follow it "wherever" it leads.

*(A customer approaches from stage right and begins to browse. He eyes the items carefully and then pounces on an old pocket watch. He looks it over carefully and then speaks.)*

**CUST. ONE**

This watch, it ways five dollars, would you take fifty-cents?

**TOM**

Ray, this man wants to know if you'll take fifty-cents for your five dollar watch.

**RAY**

My daddy gave me that watch, I shouldn't be sellin it. It went with him all over Korea.

**CUST ONE**

No the price is fine. I'll take it.

**RAY**

All right, I guess, but you better take care of it!

**CUST ONE**

I will, does it work?

**RAY**

I could never bring myself to wind it, daddy wound it last.

*(The man pays Ray and scurries off with his find.)*

**MITCH**

How could you sell your father's watch?

**RAY**

What, that watch? I found it in the parking lot at the Four Kings bar. I dropped my keys, bent down and there it was.

**MITCH**

You lied.

**RAY**

Yep, I also made five green American dollars.

**MITCH**

You lie like an attorney.

**RAY**

*(With appreciation.)*

Thank you

**TOM**

Ray *(Thinking)* that America's Cup idea of yours.

**RAY**

Yeah?

**TOM**

I suppose the cup would be covered with stars and stripes?

**RAY**

Oh yeah.

**TOM**

Who's going to know you're wearing it?

**RAY**

I guess "that's" up to the wearer.

**BOTH MEN**

Oh.

**RAY**

Only in America.

**TOM**

Hey Ray, what ever happened to Old Blue? I mean, after the accident.

**RAY**

Still got her. See that set of tires over there.

**MITCH**

You mean the set of, "three"?

**RAY**

Them's the ones. I had Clare drag em over after she got off work. That whole line was recalled and I didn't get em back to to Sears in time. One of em blew out the night me and Clare left for Branson. See we was drivin Old Blue in a rainstorm and doin next to ninety when the left front one went.

**MITCH**

You get hurt?

**RAY**

No, but Clare broke her nose on the dash, she looked like a coon for two weeks. That was about the time the rumor went around that I was beating her. Anyway my knee broke the ashtray and I bent the steerin wheel, but all in all that tree suffered more than Old Blue.

**MITCH**

Colorful name.

**RAY**

She used to be blue, the insurance painted her back and I went with yellow to change my luck. Never could bring myself to call her Old Yeller though.

**MITCH**

Well whether it's blue or yellow, your truck is truly legendary Ray.

*(From off left Taylor and Elsbeth enter carrying tow bags full of grocery bags.)*

**TOM**

Hey, looks it's the bags.

**ELSBETH**

Watch it Neanderthals. So did you boys bond in our absence?

**MITCH**

Ray has been regaling us with stories of "Old Blue".

**ELSBETH**

I don't even want to know what Old Blue is.

**RAY**

He's not blue any more, he's yellow.

**ELSBETH**

Does that mean his condition is worsening.

**RAY**

Nope, he's better than ever.

**MITCH**

Maybe Ray will take us over and show us Old Yeller later.

**RAY**

I just might.

**ELSBETH**

It sounds like they've bonded. Tom, will you put this change in the cash box and make a note that the box owes us fifty dollars.

*(She hands him the cash.)*

**RAY**

Fifty bucks, that's more than we're gonna make all day!

**ELSBETH**

Speak for yourself Ray, we're offering some premium merchandise. I expect to make at least a thousand dollars today.

**RAY**

Woo wee! What kind of stuff are you guys sellin'?

**MITCH**

We're selling our computer and my golf clubs, among other things.

**RAY**

A computer huh? I could use a computer for my American's Cup project.

**ELSBETH**

Ray you dark horse you; you have some involvement with the America's Cup race?

**MITCH**

I'll tell you about it later Elle.

**RAY**

Don't tell her too much, remember the clapper.

**MITCH**

Don't worry Ray, this is definitely a guy thing.

**TAYLOR**

*(Handing Tom a box)*

Tom, can you price these things? This is the only box I didn't get to last night.

**TOM**

Sure honey, what do I mark them with?

**TAYLOR**

There's a pen and tape in the box?

**TOM**

How much do I ask for this stuff?

**TAYLOR**

Anything you want, except my Foreman grill, I want at least a "dollar" for that.

**RAY**

I'll help you Tom.

**TOM.**

Thanks Ray.

*(He moves a lawn chair and sits beside Ray.)*

Well let's see, how much for the workout tape?

*(Looks at Taylor)*

**TAYLOR**

Don't look at me, I've done my work.

*(The two women look through Elsbeth's dresses.)*

**RAY**

Let me see that Tom. I'm a yard sale pricing expert.

*(He hands the tape to Ray.)*

It's never been opened, that increases the value. On the other hand, it's that Richard Simmons, so we better make a free box.

**TAYLOR**

Hey, I like Richard.

**RAY**

Then how come you didn't bust his thing open and.. *(Reading the cover.)* sweat to the oldies with him?

**TOM**

She's been awfully busy.

**TAYLOR**

My friend Reba's already got one, we all workout at her house and besides *(Pointedly.)* honey, why don't you tell everyone about the four station home gym you never finished putting together. You know the Muscle Master 2000.

**TOM**

I pulled a muscle ripping open the box. It didn't have all its parts anyway.

**TAYLOR**

Oh, is "that" it? I thought that your parts didn't like the way the Muscle Master made em feel.

**TOM**

O.K., O.K. we're even, neither one of use likes to exercise.

**RAY**

Just tell me one thing, *(Still looking at the cover.)* Why doesn't this guy have any hair on his legs, he's got a bushel on his chest? And what's the deal with the hair on his head.

**TOM**

Too much exercise.

**RAY**

If that's true, I'll never be healthy.

**ELSBETH**

I don't think you have anything to worry about, .. I mean what with your injury and all.

**RAY**

I thought that was what you meant.

*(Clare enters from off left stringing a coil of various extension cords and carrying a blue weed eater with a price tag announcing: \$10.00, works. She leans the weed eater against the picnic table.)*

**RAY**

It's about time, I coulda wheeled my way to the stadium by now.

**CLARE**

Ray, I had some trouble rounding up enough cords to reach out here.

**RAY**

Did you look in my tool box?

**CLARE**

Yes that's the first place I looked. You only had two cords in there. I had to borrow cords from all over the house.

**RAY**

I got ten plugged into that outlet in the living room. You didn't unplug my battery charger did you?

**CLARE**

No. One of your cords had a cut in it, it kinda worried me to plug it in.

**RAY**

At's the one I was usin when that possum attacked me, it'll be all right.

**MITCH**

Are you sure it's a good idea to use it with the grass being wet.

**RAY**

It'll be O.K., I don't think it's cut all the way through.

*(Clare plugs the television into the cord while others look on.)*

**CLARE**

It's show time!

*(She turns on the television but nothing happens.)*

**TOM**

Must be a mime show.

**RAY**

Well, that's real nice Clare you spend an hour rounding up cords and I still can't watch baseball.

**CLARE**

I plugged em all in, I don't know what's wrong.

**RAY**

Well go back and check em! One of the ends musta came unplugged, and tape up that little nick. There's a roll of electrical tape in my toolbox.

**ELSBETH**

Mitch, why don't you help her, you can see she's tired.

**MITCH**

*(Looking at her)*

Sure, love, that's a great ideas.

*(He picks up the cord and begins following it, he and Clare exit left.)*

**RAY**

Now there's a team if I ever saw one. Clare, don't get him hurt, he's a lawyer, we can't afford no law suit.

**ELSBETH**

Actually, Mitch "used" to be quite handy with tools when we were first married. I guess he was trying to impress me then. He won't go near a hammer these days. He says it's much too pedestrian.

**RAY**

Sounds like money's turned him into a wimp to me.

**ELSBETH**

Now watch it Ray, Mitch works out three nights a week at the gym. He's a black belt in Judo you know.

*(The television comes on loudly.)*

**RAY**

All right! He must be tougher than he looks!

**MITCH**

*(From offstage)*

Ahh! Unplug it! Unplug it!

*(The television goes off.)*

**ELSBETH**

Oh no!

**RAY**

He found the nick.

*(Elsbeth runs off left, followed by Tom.)*

**TAYLOR**

You think he's all right?

**RAY**

Sure, it's only one hundred and ten volts, heck, I took twice that much when I was installin Clare's dryer.

**TAYLOR**

Were you hurt?

**RAY**

Scorched my finger tips and my hand shook all by itself for a while. Oh yeah, and I peed the bed after it happened.

**TAYLOR**

Oh, that seems kinda strange, I never heard of anything like that. How long did that go on?

**RAY**

Still happens from time to time. All those volts musta affected my bladder. I bet "real" electricians wear those bladder control pads all the time.

**TAYLOR**

Maybe so.

**RAY**

*(Looking off right.)*

Hey he's gonna be all right, she's got em on his feet. (Both of their heads go down.) ..uh oh, he's back down.

**TAYLOR**

He looks a little shaky.

**RAY**

Sure, volts ain't always our friends. Say, is Tom still coaching?

**TAYLOR**

Oh yes, his team was seven and one last season, should I call an ambulance?

**RAY**

No, it'd just embarrass him. Where does he buy his athletic equipment?

**TAYLOR**

I don't know, why?

**RAY**

I'll talk to Tom about it.

**TAYLOR**

Are you still coaching Babe Ruth?

**RAY**

Where have you been hidin? I stopped coaching Jack's team after he quit last year. You know he was a real fine pitcher, the best pitcher in the league, till he threw him arm out.

**TAYLOR**

That's a shame; he couldn't have been a catcher of something?

**RAY**

He's as stubborn as a mule, he said if he couldn't pitch, he wouldn't play ball at all. He can be a real whiner sometimes. Ow! My leg is throbbing. Clare never did bring my aspirin.

**TAYLOR**

At least Jack knows what he wants.

**RAY**

Only when it comes to baseball, as for life, that's a different story. He doesn't have a clue. I keep telling him to take auto mechanics in school but he says he's not sure he's ready to commit to a career yet. If he thinks he's gonna live with us till he's thirty, he's got another thing coming.

**TAYLOR**

I'm sure he'll make up his mind. I mean, did you know what you wanted to be when you were his age?

**RAY**

Heck yes, I was already pumpin gas and changing tires. I was on my way to being Assistant Manager at that Texaco on South Main Street, course it wasn't a Texaco then. I'd probably owned it by now if old Bob hadn't died and willed the place to his "wussy" little son.

*(Mitch and the others enter stage left. Mitch has a makeshift bandage on his left hand.)*

**RAY**

Glad to see you made it, cord zapped ya huh?

**MITCH**

I thought I was going to die, I couldn't let go of it. Thank God the power went off.

**RAY**

You probably flipped a breaker. Do any damage to your hand?

**MITCH**

My fingertips were blackened and my hand keeps trembling.

**RAY**

Just wait till tonight.

**ELSBETH**

What do you mean?

**TAYLOR**

He's kidding.

**ELSBETH**

I don't find this very amusing Ray, Mitch could have been killed.

**MITCH**

Honey, I'm all right.

**ELSBETH**

You're lucky that's all, that "defective" cord could have electrocuted you.

**RAY**

Not enough volts to kill a “man”, I’m just glad it wasn’t my better half that got the juice. Honey, I thought I told you not to get him hurt.

**ELSBETH**

Well he “was” hurt. Honey do you want to go to the hospital?

**MITCH**

I’m fine Elle, just relax.

**TOM**

Look out, customers at three o’clock.

**TAYLOR**

Tom, you didn’t finish pricing that box of stuff.

*(He hurries to comply as a woman and her husband enters stage right and looks around. He looks the golf clubs over as she roams around stopping at the box Tom is pricing.)*

**WIFE**

Can I look in that box?

**TOM**

I’m still putting prices on these things, but if you want to have a look, go ahead.

**RAY**

Richard Simmons is free.

*(Looking the box.)*

**WIFE**

I love these things; did it really work like on TV?

**TAYLOR**

I never tried it. I “personally” hate those things. Those commercials drive me crazy around Christmas time.

**ALL**

*(As she lifts the item.)*

Ch, Ch, Ch, Chia!

**TAYLOR**

I don’t know “where” we got it.

**CLARE**

I do, Ray and I gave it to you as a housewarming gift.

**TOM**

*(Silence)*

How did it get in here? I’m sorry this isn’t for sale.

**RAY**

Don’t be sentimental Tom. Sell the thing for a dollar. We only paid “twenty bucks” for it.

**CLARE**

Walgreens had 'em on sale.

**TAYLOR.**

We'd never sell something that "you" gave us as a gift. I don't know how it got in with our yard sale stuff.

**WIFE**

I think you people should figure out what is and "isn't" for sale "before" you put the sign up, come on Steve! They don't have anything "good" here.

*(He tears himself away from the golf clubs. She kicks the three family sale sign down as they exit right.)*

**ELSBETH**

(Fixing the sign)

Another happy customer.

**RAY**

Clare, bring me that weed whacker.

*(Clare carries it to him.)*

**TOM**

That looks like my broken weed eater, except mine was green.

**RAY**

It wasn't actually broke see, it's just a little bent. I figured you'd rather buy a new one than have the bent one back.

**ELSBETH**

You were just going to keep it? I can't believe that. You had to know that it was only a matter of time before Tom saw you using it.

**RAY**

He wouldn't have recognized it, I painted it blue.

**CLARE**

I'm so embarrassed.

*(She exits left.)*

**TAYLOR**

Blue?

**TOM**

That's mine?

**RAY**

Your own "old blue". I figured since you got all sentimental about the chia pet, the least I could do was give you back your weed whacker.

**TAYLOR**

This is a nice display of neighborly love.

**ELSBETH**

Remind me not to loan him anything of ours.

**RAY**

I wouldn't ask to borrow anything "you" own.

**ELSBETH**

But you'd borrow from Tom.

**RAY**

He's different, he's a friend.

**ELSBETH**

And "because" he's a friend, you steal from "him" exclusively.

**RAY**

Hey, I didn't steal anything! The thing was broke. I didn't think he'd want it back.

**ELSBETH**

You were going to sell it right under his nose!

**RAY**

I don't see where it's any of "your" business. This thing is between me and Tom. Ain't that right Tom?

**TOM**

It's not a bid deal to me Elle. He's giving it back, and with a new coat of paint.

**MITCH**

Yes Elle, let it go.

**ELSBETH**

Fine, it's your "blue" weed trimmer. I guess it's none of my business.

**MITCH**

*(Changing the subject.)*

Hey Tom, would you like to see my game room?

**TOM**

Game room, when did this happen?

**MITCH**

We finished it last weekend.

**ELSBETH**

You talk as if "you" drove that last nail darling, when the most you did was to "try" to open a can of paint.

**MITCH**

Ray and the ladies are here to man the place, let's go take a look.

**TOM**

Sounds good to me, is that all right Taylor?

**TAYLOR**

Live it up. Just be back here before it gets busy.

**MITCH**

We'll be back in flash, OK Elle?

**ELSBETH**

Sure, you boys go play. (Deviously) Are you taking Ray?

**RAY**

You'd trust "me" in your house?

**MITCH**

Ray? (*Reluctantly.*) You don't want to go, do you Ray?

**RAY**

You think I want to stay here with these women? I can't even watch the game.

**MITCH**

I just thought that, with your injury.

**RAY**

If one of you guys push, I'll be just fine, Tom what do you say?

**TOM**

Sure Ray.

**RAY**

Now go easy, watch the leg.

*(Tom maneuvers Ray expertly through the obstacle course and the men exit right.)*

**ELSBETH**

*(Under her breath.)*

Just don't "loan" him anything.

**RAY**

*(From offstage.)*

I heard that! Watch it! Watch the bumps... It's twistin! It's twistin! I'm losing my ice pack!

*(The men exit left.)*

**ELSBETH**

Thank God, I thought they'd never leave. Did you notice how I forced them to take Ray?

**TAYLOR**

Did you see the look on Mitch's face?

**ELSBETH**

I savored it thoroughly.

**TAYLOR**

Did you see those shorts Ray had on?

**ELSBETH**

Are you kidding? I bet he's had them on since he broke his leg.

**TAYLOR**

"I" bet he's had them on since we moved in.

**ELSBETH**

He always wears them when he washes that truck of his, which he seems to do three times a week. If only "he" bathed as much.

**TAYLOR**

Have you seen the way his bell hangs over, and all that hair!

**ELSBETH**

Please, I haven't had breakfast yet. Those shorts and that "trailer" are etched on my memory. It may take years of therapy to get them out after we move.

**TAYLOR**

You're moving, since when? You just built a game room.  
*(Unseen by Elsbeth, Clare enters up right carrying a box of clothes.)*

**ELSBETH**

Now if we could just find a way to hide that hideous trailer and those boats until we sell.

*(Taylor sees Clare and is caught in the middle as Elsbeth goes on.)*

**ELSBETH**

I can't get over it, I love our house I don't want to sell, but that trailer makes us all look like, the Clampetts. Every morning I look out the window and just hope that place is gone. It's junk, everywhere you look! Cars, boats... They've got living room furniture on the porch! The developer had a contract. Ray had to sell. How did he getaway with staying?

*(A moment of silence.)*

**CLARE**

*(HURT)*

Ray never signed .. he kept putting it off, then the property value went up and they never could decide on a price.

**ELSBETH.**

*(Embarrassed)*

Clare, we didn't see you there.

**TAYLOR**

I'm sorry Clare.

**CLARE**

It's all right, I didn't mean to eavesdrop. I guess I knew everyone felt this way...It's nice to finally have it out in the open.

**ELSBETH**

I'm truly sorry Clare. You seem like a nice person, but you've got to know that Ray and his junk don't exactly contribute to the suburban setting.

**CLARE**

I know. I know what Ray can seem like. I've been living with his "junk" for 20 years, but he's a "good" man. He's rough around the edges but he's always been good to me.

**ELSBETH**

Were you just going to stay forever? I don't mean this to hurt you Clare but your mobile home is a little out of context here now.

**CLARE**

This land was the only thing Ray's daddy left him. He was gonna start a trailer park but then that developer showed up and it was like we'd own the lottery.

**ELSBETH**

You could have used the money to buy a nice house, somewhere else.

**CLARE**

I know, but we've been here as long as anywhere and it's been so nice to finally live in a nice neighborhood. I thought if I could get to know you all, that someday we'd be friends. If you're going to sell your nice houses on our account, I'll talk Ray into moving.

**TAYLOR**

Clare, I don't want you to sell your house.

**CLARE**

That's the beauty of a mobile home girls, we don't have to sell it. We'll just take it with us ...wherever we go.

**ELSBETH.**

*(Looking off right)*

Get to your posts ladies we've got a carload of customers.

*(Elsbeth sits at the cash box. Clare half-heartedly arranges her paintings as Taylor stacks the bags. The delegation approaches from stage left and swarms the place, picking over the lot. The group includes two children and two women Harley Davidson enthusiasts. This is evident because both women are wearing black leather pants & jackets- and one woman has the company logo on her buttocks. The logo-wearer eyes Elsbeth's computer.)*

**RONDA**

*(Roughly)*

How much for this computer?

**ELSBETH**

It's priced.

**NASAN**

Mom, can I have this game?

**RONDA**

Hold on a minute Nasan! You've got to be kidding on this price lady.

**ELSBETH**

Why, what does it say?

**RONDA**

It says, seven hundred dollars.

**ELSBETH**

*(Singsong.)*

That's right.

**RONDA**

This is a "yard" sale lady, that's price is way too high.

**ELSBETH**

Why do you say that? How much did you pay for your motorcycle?

**RONDA**

What?

**ELSBETH**

It says "Harley Davidson" on your butt, I assumed you owned one.

**RONDA**

Well you "assumed" wrong.

**ELSBETH**

Look "lady", it's not a Nintendo, it's a Dell with an external hard drive and a laser jet printer, I can't "give" it away.

**NASAN**

Mom can I get it?

**RONDA**

No! Now you go to the car before I whoop your butt good.

*(The child exits with a slumped head.)*

**ELSBETH**

That's really no way to speak to a child, perhaps what you "need" is a book on parenting.

**RONDA**

You've got a smart mouth lady, and someone needs to smack you in it!

**ELSBETH**

What?

*(Clare and Taylor have been watching and come forward as the conflict heats up, as does the woman's companion.)*

**RONDA**

I'm gonna kick your butt right now.

**WOMAN TWO**

Come on let's go Ronda, she's not worth it.

**RONDA**

No, I'm gonna show Miss Superior here what a slap feels like. You ever had a slap in your smart mouth?

**ELSBETH**

*(Still not taking Ronda seriously.)*

I don't think you need to resort to violence at eight o'clock in the morning. I know, why don't you go home, get liquored up and then hop on your Harley and come back and kick my buttocks this afternoon?

*(The woman lunges forward as the other woman moves to intervene. Ronda manages to slap Elsbeth once in the face before Clare tackles her, pulling her hair. Taylor wedges herself between the participants and the other woman. The remaining child shouts from ringside.)*

**CHILD TWO**

Kick her butt mom! Tear her face off!

*(Clare grabs the angel painting and starts hitting Ronda with it)*

**CLARE**

Get off her! I said get off her now! Get out of here, now!

**RONDA**

You hit me with that one more time and you're next!

*(The woman's companion pulls her up and starts dragging her off.)*

**WOMAN TWO**

Come on Ronda, this is stupid, you've got warrants!

**RONDA**

*(To Elsbeth)*

I'll be back, and I'm gonna kick your pretty face it.

**ELSBETH**

*(Shaken)*

I can't wait.

**CHILD TWO**

You're toast lady!

*(The women and child hustle off stage left as the shell-shocked women stare in disbelief.)*

**ELSBETH**

Do we have an ice-pack?

**CLARE**

Are you all right honey?

**ELSBETH**

*(Holding her right eye.)*

Yes, I think so Clare, thanks to you.

**CLARE**

*(Still holding the painting.)*

Thanks to my angel, I told you she watches over me.

**ELSBETH**

I wish she'd been watching over "me".

**CLARE**

She was, that's why that awful woman left.

**ELSBETH**

Coupled with the fact that you beat her with the angel.

**TAYLOR**

Talk about being touched by an angel.

**ELSBETH**

That woman was crazy! I had no idea she would react that way.

**TAYLOR**

I can't believe it happened.

**ELSBETH**

*(Still shaken.)*

They certainly weren't the sort of customers I was expecting. I'm not sure it's safe to stay here.

**CLARE**

The men will be back soon.

**ELSBETH**

What are "they" going to do against a woman like "that"?

**TAYLOR**

You know Elle, you should probably press charges on that crazy woman.

**ELSBETH**

Old Ronda was probably just having a bad day, besides we didn't even get a license number.

**CLARE**

I know her, and I know where she lives.

**BOTH**

What?

**CLARE**

Yeah, Ray rebuilt the motor in her car last winter.

**ELSBETH**

*(Pause)*

Did she strike him too?

**CLARE**

I don't think so, he said they hit it off.

**ELSBETH**

Why am I not surprised?...Sorry Clare

*(Pulls a compact out of her purse and looks at her eye.)*

I'd sue her but she doesn't even have a motorcycle, and I don't wear black leather.

*(The two remaining shoppers, a gentleman and his son come forward with various items. They wait at the table in front of the cash box. Elsbeth returns to her seat to wait on them.)*

**ELSBETH**

Will this be all?

**MAN ONE**

Yes thanks are you OK?

**ELSBETH**

I'm fine, thanks. Just a little misunderstanding.

**MAN ONE**

Well you've got some god oldies here.

*(He holds up a stack of eight tracks.)*

...and he's got a puzzle, and these shorts. I hope we don't have to fight for them.

**ELSBETH**

Money's fine. Let's see, it looks like a dime each for the tapes and a quarter for the puzzle and another dime for the shorts, it all comes to eight-five cents.

**MAN ONE**

That's quite a bargain for these disco classics.

**TAYLOR**

Do you still have an eight track player?

**MAN ONE**

Are you kidding? I wouldn't get rid of it for the world. There's something so groovy about the way the son stops right in the middle and you hear that clunk, clunk, and then it starts again.

**ELSBETH**

It was definitely a "transition" technology.

**MAN ONE**

I still love it though.

*(He hands her a dollar and she makes change and bags the goods.)*

**MAN ONE**

Thanks a lot. You know its' lucky we were driving by. I didn't see this one in the paper.

**CLARE**

Really? Ray said he called it in.

**MAN ONE**

I didn't see it, and we "never" miss a sale.

*(To his son.)*

Say thank you.

**BOY ONE**

Thank you.

**ELSBETH**

You're very welcome.

**MAN ONE**

Come on Joey.

*(The two exit left as the women straighten up the gone-through items.)*

**TAYLOR**

What a cute little boy.

**ELSBETH**

Yes he was. It's nice to have customers with manners. Hey look you two; let's not tell the guys about my little scuffle, OK?

**CLARE**

Little scuffle? But why Elsbeth? I think Ray should know what kind of people he does business with.

**ELSBETH**

If you don't mind Clare, I'd rather we didn't.

**CLARE**

OK Elsbeth, I think I understand.

**TAYLOR**

Is Jack going to help us today Clare?

**CLARE**

If he ever wakes up. He's not too excited about the sale.

**ELSBETH**

How old is your son Clare?

**CLARE**

He just turned nineteen.

**ELSBETH**

Oh, so what's he doing now that he's out of school?

**CLARE**

Well, he's still in school. He had to repeat the twelfth grade.

**ELSBETH**

Does he have plan for after high school?

**CLARE**

Yes, I think his plan was to live with use for the next ten years. Ray says he's going to kick him out at the end of the school year no matter what happens.

**TAYLOR**

I know he'll figure something out before graduation.

**CLARE**

If he doesn't start figurin soon, there won't be any graduation. It might already be too late. He did real fine his freshman year.

(Bragging)

He had a "C" average. Then he just stopped carin for awhile. He's trying to catch up now but I'm afraid he's waited too long. I didn't want him to hafta work as hard as I do.

**ELSBETH**

Where do you work Clare?

**CLARE**

I work down at the school, I'm the head custodian

**ELSBETH**

It must feel good to help support the family.

**CLARE**

Help? Heck I "support" the family ..since Ray hurt his back.

**ELSBETH**

He can't work at all?

**CLARE**

He says he can't, but he seems to work on every car that manages to drag itself into the driveway.

**TAYLOR**

Well I admire you Clare, it can't be easy.

**CLARE**

It's not, custodial work has really messed up my back and my feet hurt so bad sometimes they feel like they're broke.

**ELSBETH**

If you'll pardon my saying it Clare, if I were you, I'd tell my husband to get off his lazy butt and go back to work.

**CLARE**

Oh I don't know. Ray's a good man, he's got dreams. They just never work out quite like he thinks they will.

**ELSBETH**

I'm afraid no one pays you for dreaming.

**CLARE**

I know, and I'm afraid Jack's takin after his daddy, tryin to dream his way through high school.

**ELSBETH**

But if he doesn't concentrate on school, he's not going to have much of a future.

**CLARE**

Maybe "you" could tell him that. He never seems to listen to me.

**ELSBETH**

Does Ray support you on this?

**CLARE**

The best he can, he never did too good in school himself. So it's kind of like the blind leading the blind. You're so lucky to have a girl like Grace, she's so smart.

**ELSBETH**

Of course, I'm biased where she's concerned, but I think she's going to be valedictorian. She's had a perfect 4.0 GPA all through high school. You know, I could ask Grace if she could tutor your son through finals. I can't guarantee anything now, but she might be willing to help out.

**CLARE**

Don't you know? Grace has been tutoring Jack for the last few weeks.

**ELSBETH**

She has?

(Amazed)

Funny she hasn't mentioned it to me

**TAYLOR**

(Relieved)

Look out customers ..and no black leather on any of them.

**ELSBETH**

If you ladies don't mind, I'm going to get some ice on this eye before I develop a "shiner".

**TAYLOR**

Of course not Elle, take all the time you need.

**CLARE**

Go honey.

*(Two elderly ladies enter stage right and browse as Clare and Taylor talk.)*

**CLARE**

Do you think Elle's gonna be all right?

**TAYLOR**

Oh yeah, if you want to know the truth, I think she enjoyed the adventure.

**CLARE**

But a woman like Elle, so ladylike and proper, that was an awful thing to happen. Do you think she was upset about Grace helping Jack?

**TAYLOR**

I'm not sure, but she's tougher than she looks Clare, believe it or not, Elle has a wild side. Of course she hasn't seen it for a few years.

**CLARE**

What do you mean?

**TAYLOR**

Well, and this is between you and me, before Mitch, Elle was married to a terrible man. He would drink and become abusive. I guess she was going through a rebellious phase when she met him. Anyway she got tired of the wild life and all of his trash, so she left him.

**CLARE**

Good for her.

**TAYLOR**

He stalked her for two years. He nearly wrecked her self confidence.

**CLARE**

How'd she get away from him?

**TAYLOR**

He finally died "drunk" in a car crash, it's a miracle he didn't kill anyone else.

**CLARE**

That's terrible, poor girl. So how did she meet Mitch?

**TAYLOR**

Mitch was her divorce attorney, she was feeling lost during the divorce and he was there for her.

**ELDERLY WOMAN ONE**

So you're saying that meeting this Mitch fella was the best thing that could have happened to her?

**TAYLOR**

*(Surprised by the eaves dropping.)*

Well ... I

**ELDERLY WOMAN TWO**

That's nice, no one should be alone. When my Frankie died I found comfort in the arms of the lawn man.

**TAYLOR**

Can we help you ladies?

**WOMAN ONE**

Of course, we didn't mean to spy.

**WOMAN TWO**

Who's doing the paintings?

**CLARE**

I am ...been working on this collection for years.

**WOMAN TWO**

Well I sure do like 'em. They remind me of Bob Ross's work. You know, I cried when he died.

**WOMAN ONE**

That was a terrible thing, he was so kind and gentle, and the squirrels just loved him.

**CLARE**

I think of him ever time I paint one. I kinda paint for Bob now.

**WOMAN TWO.**

Well it shows dear.

*(Looking at a painting)*

I can practically see his face in this one.

**CLARE**

That's a "portrait" of him.

**WOMAN TWO**

Oh, of course it is dear and I've never seen a nicer one. What's your name honey?

**CLARE**

I'm Clare and this is my friend Taylor.

**TAYLOR**

Hello.

**WOMAN TWO**

Hi.

**WOMAN ONE**

Well I love your work honey but I'm afraid I can't afford one right now, I'll keep you in mind though. My husband's birthday is coming up. I just might buy him one, if he lives that long the old coot.

*(Laughs.)*

Come on Nina the cab's waiting.

**TAYLOR**

*(As they exit stage right.)*

Nice to meet you.

**CLARE**

Browsers. The enemy of the modern artist.

**TAYLOR**

How many paintings "have" you sold Clare?

**CLARE**

Well, I haven't made what you might call my "first" sale, yet. I've "given" them away mostly. I just donated one to the Braille reading room at the library. They said they might take a couple more.

**TAYLOR**

That's got to be great, I mean the exposure. Once the people see... It's gotta help.

**CLARE**

Honestly Taylor, sometimes I don't know if I'll ever sell one. It seems like people don't understand my work.

**TAYLOR**

*(Thinking)* Maybe they're not ready for it yet.

**CLARE**

Do me a favor honey; take a look at this one.

*(Holds one up in front of her)*

What do you think?

**TAYLOR**

Well... it's striking, I like it.

**CLARE**

But how does it make you feel?

**TAYLOR**

*(Pauses and takes a long discerning look)* There's a lot of... blue.

**CLARE**

You're getting it, *(Getting excited.)* oh good, go on.

**TAYLOR**

Well the mountains are beautiful and there are a lot of trees..

**CLARE**

I hate to see a tree all alone. You know Bob Ross never left a tree alone. He always gave them a little friend.

Sometimes I get started and I just can't stop.

**TAYLOR**

*(Looking at the painting)*

That little "deer" looks...

**CLARE**

*(Curtly)*

Wolf honey.

**TAYLOR**

Wolf, yes, what did I say? Deer? It's clearly a wolf. I have got to get these contacts checked.

**CLARE**

It's the light, the glare can make it hard to see.

**TAYLOR**

Yeah, that's probably it.

**CLARE**

You seem to understand my work Taylor and the thought of one of "my" paintings hanging on your wall, would make me so happy.

**TAYLOR**

*(Half-heartedly)*

Oh, me too.

**CLARE**

Just don't tell Ray, he said if I don't show a profit soon, I've got to quit painting and help him on his America's Cup project.

**TAYLOR**  
America's Cup?

**CLARE**  
Honey, believe me, you don't want to know.

**TAYLOR**  
I believe you.

*(Elsbeth enters left wearing dark sunglasses and a hat.)*

**ELSBETH**  
How's business gals?

**TAYLOR**  
Not doin much.

**CLARE**  
Mostly browsers.

**TAYLOR**  
How's the eye?

**ELSBETH**  
I just covered with up with some concealer. It's a little swollen.

**TAYLOR**  
You look fine.

**ELSBETH**  
Well as sad as it sounds ladies, our little enterprise might be a bust. The weatherman says a storm front's moving in.

**CLARE**  
Oh no, and after we got everything laid out.

**ELSBETH**  
Let's just see how it goes, it might miss us altogether.

**TAYLOR**  
Yeah Clare, let's not worry while the sun's out.

**ELSBETH**  
When I left the men, they were drooling over Mitch's billiard table.

**TAYLOR**  
What is it about men and games?

**CLARE**  
Men? You mean boys. That's all they really are. Ray can sit for hours, glued to that tube watching football. He just sits there and barks at me to bring him more beer and pork rinds.

**ELSBETH**

Pork rinds?

**TAYLOR**

Oh you know, those snack things.

**CLARE**

Ray loves em; he can sit there and eat a whole bag.

**ELSBETH**

What are they made of?

**TAYLOR**

Pork

**CLARE**

Rinds

**TAYLOR**

I guess men will eat anything when they're watching TV. It's proof that they haven't evolved very far from the caveman. Except now, instead of hunting their food in the wilderness...

**CLARE**

They send "us" to Kroger for it.

**ELSBETH**

I have to admit, even Mitch isn't immune. In the court room he can seem so dignified but put him in front of a football game and he reverts into a regular sloth.

**TAYLOR**

It must be a disease. All men have it, except for gay men. Then it's Broadway musicals.

**ELSBETH**

Or Streisand movies.

**CLARE**

Have you ever noticed how when things break around the house, they get around to fixin them whenever they get the time, but if the TV breaks, we're at Wal-mart lookin over new ones in ten minutes.

**ELSBETH**

It's simple, men can try to hide the fact that they never grow up, but things like football, show them for what they are.

**CLARE**

Or cars

**TAYLOR**

Or tools.

**CLARE**

Or boats.

**TAYLOR**

Or fishing.

**CLARE**

Or Victoria's Secret catalogues.

*(collective sigh)*

**TAYLOR**

Don't forget pork rinds?

**ELSBETH**

And secretaries..

*(Clare and Taylor look at her)*

**ELSBETH**

What?

*(Pause)*

I'm not talking about "Mitch". I'm talking about men in "general". You know how they say some men are attracted to their secretaries.

**TAYLOR**

But you're Mitch's secretary.

**ELSBETH**

You'd better believe it.

*(A woman enters right and looks through the inventory. While Clare helps the upstage, Elsbeth moves Taylor downright.)*

**ELSBETH**

Did you know that Grace was tutoring Clare's boy?

**TAYLOR**

I've seen Grace walking over to their house after school a time or two.

**ELSBETH**

Why didn't you tell me?

**TAYLOR**

I didn't think it was any big deal; she was always carrying a pile of books. It was obvious what she was doing.

**ELSBETH**

And what was that?

**TAYLOR**

"Tutoring", Elsbeth, relax. I don't know what you're getting upset about.

**ELSBETH**

I trust Grace, I do. It's just that I've invested everything I have in making sure she has a bright future. I get a little nervous when it comes to the opposite sex. Especially when we're talking about the offspring of the junkman in the red shorts.

**TAYLOR**

I wouldn't worry, when it comes to Jack you're not just talking about the opposite sex, those two are as "opposite" as they come.

**ELSBETH**

You know what they say about opposites... I'm just being silly, you're right Taylor, I'm going to give myself an ulcer before she goes off to college.

**TAYLOR**

Don't worry Elle; let's just concentrate on getting this sale over with.

**ELSBETH**

By the look of things, (*Touches her cheek*) this will be one of the biggest challenges of my life. I can't believe I'm part of a "yard" sale. This idea of yours better work.

*(The customers have completed their purchases and Clare joins the others.)*

**CLARE**

Well Taylor, you made a dollar seventy five and Elle you made three dollars on your pretty black shoes, still no luck with my paintings.

**TAYLOR**

I'm sure you'll sell some Clare.

**ELSBETH**

It's only a matter of time.

*(The men are heard off right as they enter. Mitch is pushing Ray.)*

**CLARE**

Looks like the boys are back.

**RAY**

Mitch that room is a slice of heaven. I think I could live there for the rest of my life. Ow! Watch the leg!

**MITCH**

Sorry Ray. You know, you can build your own, after you launch your America's Cup idea.

**RAY**

I want your blue prints.

**TAYLOR**

So did you loafers have a good time?

**TOM**

I know what I want for Christmas hon.

**TAYLOR**

What? No, let me guess, pork rinds?

**TOM**

What?

**CLARE**

You boys missed out on a pretty good rush of business.

**MITCH**

We made some money? Hey Elle, what's with the glasses, embarrassed to be seen with our junk?

**ELSBETH**

We've made three dollars so far, but we've met the "nicest" people.

**RAY**

Well we better sell all this junk soon, the weather channel says severe weather's headed this way. Honey my ice-pack melted, I hated to waste that much water, but I threw the bag away. I thought maybe later you could get me another "coupla' cubes.

**TAYLOR**

You think we'll get a storm.

*(looks out)*

There's not a cloud in the sky.

**RAY**

You know Kansas weather, if you don't like it, wait a minute.

**CLARE**

It'll change.

**RAY**

Clare, why don't you run over to the house and get my tarps, in case it does rain, and wake our lazy son up and get him over here, it we're gonna suffer, he's going to suffer with us.

**ELSBETH**

First law of parenthood.

**RAY**

That's right.

**CLARE**

*(Reluctantly)*

I guess I could, you wanna come with me Taylor? I'd love to show you my garden, my zucchinis are huge.

**TAYLOR**

Sure Clare. I'd much rather cover up all this stuff than take it all back home.

**TOM**

We'll probably need some rope or bun-gee cables too.

**RAY**

Back a my truck Clare.

**CLARE**

Gotcha

*(They exit right)*

**ELSBETH**

*(Eying Ray's shorts)*

Those are interesting shorts Ray, how long have you had them?

RAY. I noticed you were starin at em, they're "my" favorite pair too. I wear em when I wash my truck or when I'm out workin in the yard.

**ELSBETH**

Yes, I think I've seen you in them.

**MITCH**

So they sort of stuck in your mind did they?

*(Elsbeth is not amused)*

**RAY**

Well Mitch, since it seems your wife is "smitten" with these shorts, I guess I'll tell ya. I think I got them at K-mart.

**MITCH**

I appreciate that Ray, Elle are getting this down? There's a pencil in that box over there.

**ELSBETH**

Not funny ..What I "was" noticing Ray, was that they look as if you've had them on for a while.

**RAY**

You don't miss much Ellie. As a matter of fact, I've been wearin em since I broke my leg. It hurts too bad to try to take em off. Now don't get me wrong, they're comfortable. It's just that after a week or two they start ridin up something awful.

*(Others wince.)*

**TOM**

*(Changing subject.)*

What about that thunderstorm last week?

**RAY**

Heck of a blow, I tell you, our trailer was rockin and no one came a knockin.

**ELSBETH**

You wouldn't believe what it did to our pool. The wind took the cover off and blew all kinds of junk into the water. By the way Ray, are you missing a pink lawn flamingo?

**RAY**

Yes I am, and I want it back. Its part of a ten piece set.

**MITCH**

I noticed you had a bunch of them. Sometimes it looks like a flock of them landed in your yard to feed.

**RAY**

That's the look I was goin for, and I want that bird back.

**ELSBETH**

I'm afraid Mitch has already painted it blue.

**RAY**

What?

**ELSBETH**

Well it's little leg was bent and Mitch didn't think you'd want it back.

**RAY**

Oh that's "real" funny.

**MITCH**

Ever get scared living in that trailer during storms Ray? I mean it must be hard living in a trailer in Kansas.

**RAY**

Well Mitch, I kinda figure, when it's my time to go, it won't matter where I'm at, I'm gonna get it.

**TOM**

You know Ray; you're always welcome to come over to our place when it storms.

**RAY**

Well thanks Tom, It means more to Clare than me and Jack. She gets nervous every time the wind blows.

**ELSBETH**

Ray, there's a shelter right here in the park.

**RAY**

Don't worry Ellie, I'm not going to bring my screamin wife over to your house in the middle of the next storm...

**ELSBETH**

I just..

**RAY**

We'll be there long "before" it starts.

**ELSBETH**

I wasn't saying that, I was simply telling you that there's a storm shelter not more than fifty yards from your door.

**RAY**

Have you ever been "down" there Ellie?

**ELSBETH**

No, I haven't had a reason to.

**RAY**

Well I have, and I can tell you that that thing has a foot of water down there that smells like a sewer. I think one of you's using it for a septic tank. It couldn't be you though Elle, cause yours doesn't stink, does it?

**ELSBETH**

At least you're ready to wade, in those awful shorts.  
*(Mitch elbows her).*

**RAY**

Can't stop thinkin about the shorts, huh Elle,  
*(She grimaces.)*  
Well you better cut it out before Clare gets back, she gets real jealous.

**MITCH**

Now Ray, Ellie, Elsbeth was only trying to help.

**RAY**

OK, if you say so. But you've "got" to get some red shorts of your own...soon.

*(Another group of customers approaches from stage left. While two children look around, their mother goes straight to the computer.)*

**MOTHER**

*(After a moment)*

I need a computer real bad, seven hundred dollars, huh? It seems a little high. Can you tell me a little about it?

**ELSBETH**

It's mine. I can tell you that only a year ago I paid a lot more for it and the peripherals.

**MOTHER**

O.K.

**ELSBETH**

All the software goes with it and that's a laser jet printer.

**MOTHER**

Why are you selling it?

**ELSBETH**

We simply needed a computer with more memory and it seemed like a good time to upgrade.

**MOTHER**

It seems like a good deal, but it's a little more than I have to spend, would you take any less?

**MITCH**

Make us a offer.

**ELSBETH**

Wait a minute Mitch, I think it's fairly priced.

**RAY**

Oh come on Ellie, cut the woman a break, can't you see she's got kids to feed?

**ELSBETH**

Ray, I really don't think this is any of your...

**MOTHER**

I'd give you three hundred dollars for it.

**RAY**

That sounds good.

**ELSBETH**

Not to me.

**MITCH**

It sounds O. K. Elle. We might not get another offer if this storm comes in.

**RAY**

Yeah, give a "severe weather" special.

**ELSBETH**

But Mitch, it's..

**MITCH**

Come on Elle..

**ELSBETH**

*(Pause.)*

I guess three hundred is all right, but you're getting a heck of a bargain.

**MOTHER**

Well thank you, that's why I shop at yard sales. Will you take a check?

**ELSBETH**

Oh I don't know. I'd feel better if you paid with cash.

**MOTHER**

It's Sunday. I can't get to the bank until tomorrow.

**RAY**

Why don't you fire up that fancy computer and do a credit check on the woman?

**ELSBETH**

*(Ignoring Ray)*

Why don't you give me your name and address and I'll drop it by your house tomorrow afternoon? Do you live here in town?

**MOTHER**

Yes, that sounds fine. It will give me time to tell my husband about it. Come on kids. Thank you very much.

*(After she leaves the information, she and her brood exit left.)*

**RAY**

Well that was "real" kind of you Ellie.

**ELSBETH**

It was rude of you to interfere in "my" transaction.

**RAY**

Hey I wasn't interferin. It's just hard to sit by and see rich people get richer, while the poor get the shaft.

**ELSBETH**

I don't know what you're talking about. That computer was worth every penny of it's "original" price.

**RAY**

It might have been fair, but what's fair isn't always what's right.

**ELSBETH**

Well let's make a deal. I won't tell you how to sell your.. your.. *(looking around)* television, and you stop plea bargaining on behalf of my customers.

**RAY**

The TVs not for sale.

*(Grace enters right looking sleepy.)*

**MITCH**

Hey look who's up.

**TOM**

Late night Grace?

**GRACE**

I was studying late. I've got finals next week. Excuse my frumpy sweats, but I figured I couldn't "under-dress" for "this".

**ELSBETH**

I'm proud of you for working so hard on your studies honey, but you really do need your sleep.

**GRACE**

I know Mom, as soon as finals are over.

**ELSBETH**

Well honey, I'm glad you're up. I'm going to need you to take a shift while I get my hair done.

**MITCH**

You've got a hair appointment "today"? That's suspiciously convenient.

**ELSBETH**

It was the only time Rene' could do me. He's coming in especially for me.

**MITCH**

Heaven forbid I stand between you and the fabulous Rene'.

**ELSBETH**

*(Looking at her watch)*

Look people, I'll be back in one hour. Oh Grace, I sold my computer!

**GRACE**

I guess it "wasn't" priced too high.

**RAY**

It was, your mom's lucky "I" helped her negotiate.

**GRACE**

What?

**ELSBETH**

Oh nothing honey. TA TA everyone, Rene' awaits.

*(She exits left.)*

**GRACE**

What should I do Dad?

**MITCH**

Why don't you watch the cash box hon.

**RAY**

And keep your eye on the do-dads.

**GRACE**

*(Counting the cash.)*

There's almost nothing in here.

**RAY**

Hey Tom, want to do me a little favor?

**TOM**

Sure Ray, what do you need?

**RAY**

I've been sittin here looking at them tires of mine, and I think they'd sell quicker if I had four.

**TOM**

What can "I" do about that?

**RAY**

Over at the south end of my trailer, inside the dog pen, there's a fifteen inch radial with some decent tread on it.

**MITCH**

If it's a good tire, what's it doing in the dog pen?

**RAY**

Barney likes to have something to chew on, he took a liking to the old thing and I didn't have the heart to take it away from em.

**TOM**

Your dog's not going to bite me when I try to get the tire is he? I mean if he's attached to it...

**RAY**

He ain't chewed on it for a while now. I threw him in an old mannequin I found behind JC Penney's. Boy did he tear right into her.

**MITCH**

Good, then it's not as if he's ever bitten anything that resembles a human.

**TOM**

He's gonna bite me isn't he Ray?

**RAY**

Not if you don't show any fear.

**MITCH**

Do you think that's such a good idea? I mean, can you guarantee the dog won't bite?

**RAY**

There no guarantees in this life Mitch.

**TOM**

What kind of answer is that?

**RAY**

Just stay clear of his "woman" and you'll be OK, at least the big pieces.

**TOM**

Pieces?

**RAY**

Come on. That old dog's hardly got any teeth left, besides I keep him fed, so he won't eat much.

**MITCH**

Has the animal been vaccinated?

**RAY**

He's clean, cleaner than you and me.

**MITCH**

Speak for yourself.

**GRACE**

Barney's O.K. dad, his bark is worse than his bite.

**MITCH**

You've been near that animal, Grace?

**GRACE**

Sure daddy, I see him every time I tutor Jack.

**MITCH**

You're tutoring Ray's boy? Does your mother know about this?

**GRACE**

I "think" she knows.

**MITCH**

Well, we'll talk about "that" later, in the meantime, you will stay clear of that dog from now on.

**GRACE**

Sure dad.

**RAY**

Well what do you say Tom, are you "man" enough?

**TOM**

*(Pause)*

Sure Ray ...Ray, is that tire even the same "size" as those others?

**RAY**

Not exactly, but with any luck they won't notice till they get em home.

**MITCH**

That's a rather shabby way to treat someone isn't it Ray?

**RAY**

The way I see it, they're lucky, that old tire will be the only one that hasn't been recalled. Don't worry Tom, you'll be back in a little bite.

*(Snickers.)*

*(Tom looks at everyone as if he's going before a firing squad.)*

**MITCH**

Be careful Tom.

**RAY**

Remember Tom, don't show any fear.

**TOM**

What do you mean by, "showing" fear?

**RAY**

Like you're doin now.

**TOM**

Oh.. O.K. I'm going.

*(Tom exits slowly as Mitch watches with concern.)*

**GRACE**

*(Looking at the sky)*

Is it supposed to rain Dad?

**MITCH**

The television says we've got a storm front coming in.

**GRACE**

So what are we doing here?

**MITCH**

*(Looking at Ray)*

That's a very good question.

**RAY**

What size tires you got on your car, Mitch?

**MITCH**

What Ray?

**RAY**

I was just thinkin. I could make you a real sweet deal on these one's of mine.

**MITCH**

Are you kidding?

**GRACE**

Yes Dad, he is.

**RAY**

I wonder what's keepin Clare and Taylor. I know those tarps are right there in front of the shed.

**MITCH**

How big "is" that shed of yours?

**RAY**

I don't know, I haven't seen the back of it for years, got three boats and a van in there somewhere. I suppose it's about fifteen by twenty-five.

**MITCH**

And that was an original structure?

**RAY**

It was there when we moved the trailer in.

**MITCH**

Does it have a concrete floor?

**RAY**

Yeah, Mitch why are you asking me all these questions about my shed, ya thinking of building one?

**MITCH**

No, I was just wondering what your property taxes were like.

**RAY**

They go up every year, but I'm sure they're not as high as yours, on that "mansion" you live in.

**MITCH**

You ever think of selling?

**RAY**

*(Taking a long look at Mitch)*  
Why, is Tom looking to build on?

**MITCH**

No, I don't think so but I've got a friend at the firm who's looking to build a new house. If you were to sell, what would you ask for the place?

**RAY**

I haven't really thought about it, but I guess around.. a hundred thousand dollars.

**MITCH**

That much? Is that for the trailer as well?

**RAY**

No, just the land, and my nice shed of course.

*(Suddenly from off left the sound of a dog barking wildly is heard.)*

**TOM**

*(Offstage.)*

Ray! Get him off me! he's biting me! Ray! Down! Down! Ray!  
*(Ray starts to roll but Mitch stops him.)*

**MITCH**

I'll go

*(He runs off left, Ray and Grace are transfixed on the area of the trailer off right, after a moment Ray shouts.)*

**RAY**

Don't show any fear!

*(BLACKOUT)*

**END OF ACT 1**

## **ACT 2 Scene 1**

*(The shelter is darker now with occasional flashes of lightning. The yard sale items are covered with tarps. A radio is sitting on top of one of the tarps. Taylor consoles Tom who stands looking angry with a bandaged arm. The dog is still barking off right. The group is assembled minus Elsbeth. They are seated in various positions and look defeated.)*

**TOM**

He's taunting me.

**TAYLOR**

Who?

**TOM**

That evil dog, I swear his eyes were glowing red.

**RAY**

You must a showed fear. I told you not to, and his eyes are just blood shot.

**TOM**

I didn't "do" anything. I just went for the tire and he went crazy on me!

*(Dramatically.)*

He made this low growl, so I froze. I tried to yell for help. I opened my mouth but no sound would come out. It was like a nightmare. Then he started to lunge at me. I'd already closed the gate, so the only place I could think to go was into "his" house.

**RAY**

Big mistake, he's real possessive of his house, *(Looking at Mitch.)* kinda like me.

**TOM**

I know, as soon as I crammed myself in there I knew it was a mistake. He had me trapped!

**TAYLOR**

I'm so sorry honey, I was too afraid to go in there, Tom. First he just stood there growling at me.

**RAY**

You showed fear didn't you?

**TOM**

Of course I showed fear, anyone would!

**TAYLOR**

This whole thing is ridiculous. He shouldn't have been in there in the first place.

**MITCH**

I tried to tell you Ray.

**TOM**

He got a hold of my arm and just started jerking me all over the place. Look how he ripped my pants.

**RAY**

He usually don't go for the leg, he's kinda partial to the butt.

**TAYLOR**

You're a butt. What kind of man keeps a dangerous animal like that in a nice neighborhood?

**RAY**

I keep him locked up.

**TOM**

Why'd you send me in there Ray, if you knew he'd bite me?

**RAY**

I didn't "know" he'd bite you. I'm surprised he had it in him.

**TOM**

You sound like you're proud of him for biting me.

**RAY**

I ain't proud he bit ya. I'm just sayin he stood his ground when his "home" was threatened.

**TOM**

I wasn't threatening his home!

**RAY**

You were "in it" weren't you?

**TOM**

Yes, but not because I wanted to be.

**RAY**

Well, Barney didn't know that.

**MITCH**

Well Ray, seeing as how he broke the skin, that vaccination issue has reared its ugly head again.

**RAY**

He barely scratched his arm.

**MITCH**

It doesn't matter how deep the wound is, if the skin was broken, Tom could be infected.

**RAY**

I told you, the dog was clean.

**MITCH**

Whether the dog is clean or not is no longer the issue. The issue now is whether or not the animal is carrying any diseases.

**TOM**

What! Good Lord, Ray, has the dog had his shots or not?

**RAY**

I don't believe these pansies! I told you the dog is clean. I don't see what the big deal is.

**CLARE**

He had his shots.

*(Group sigh of relief.)*

Two years ago.

**TAYLOR**

Two years! Clare why doesn't he have his "current" shots?

**RAY**

We couldn't afford it.

**MITCH**

Well pay now or pay later.

**RAY**

What's "that" supposed to mean?

**MITCH**

I'm just saying that you may be legally liable for Tom's injury.

**CLARE**

Oh my goodness.

**TAYLOR**

Now I don't think we need to.

**TOM**

Ray, I just want to have the dog checked out, he broke the skin!

**RAY**

Broke the skin? You'd think he tore your arm off, the way you're going on.

**MITCH**

I don't think we have to sort all this out right now. Why don't you take the animal to the vet Monday and have him checked out? He could have rabies Ray!

**TOM**

Rabies!

**TAYLOR**

It's O.K. Tom.

**TOM**

Sure it's O.K. for you, you don't have rabies!

**RAY**

No one has rabies!

**MITCH**

Can't you see? Tom's not going to be able to relax until you have the dog checked. Why are you resisting?

**RAY**

Because I can't afford it...unless you buy my tires.

**GRACE**

They can't check Barney for rabies without killing him.

**MITCH**

Grace, I think it's best if we discuss this "later".

**RAY**

If your talking about killing my dog its gonna be a lot later. Like never.

*(Elsbeth enters right, still wearing sunglasses. Her hair is immaculate.)*

**ELSBETH**

So, what's been going on?

*(Everyone looks at her.)*

**ELSBETH**

What?

**MITCH**

Look, I think we'd be wise to collect our things and go home before it storms.

**TAYLOR**

It does seem like this whole day was never meant to be.

**RAY**

I want to know whether you wussies are gonna kill my dog.

**ELSBETH**

What on earth is he talking about?

**MITCH**

I don't think this is an issue we should discuss at this time. Everyone is too upset.

**RAY**

Well we're going to talk about it! I'm not gonna let you guys sneak off to plan how you're gonna kill my dog and sue us into the poorhouse.

**MITCH**

You're already living there!

**CLARE**

You wouldn't kill Barney would you? Jack loves that dog!

**TAYLOR**

Nobody "wants" to kill Barney. We've just got to make sure that Tom doesn't have rabies.

**RAY**

Are you gonna sue me Tom? ...You and that ambulance chaser?

**ELSBETH**

I won't have you talking to Mitch that way! I'm sure that you...

**RAY**

Now missy, you may wear the pants in your house, but this here thing is between the "men". Why don't you go home before the wind picks up and messes up your fancy hair.

**ELSBETH**

Well you son of a ...

**MITCH**

Elle! I will handle this!

**ELSBETH**

You're going to stand here and let this white trash talk to you this way.

**TOM**

This whole thing is getting blown out of...

**RAY**

You're calling me white trash, you self-righteous snot! You've been looking down your "nose job" at my family since you moved in. I don't know where you come off sitting in judgment over me.

**ELSBETH**

Well at least "my" husband works. He doesn't sit around on his fat butt all day eating "pork rinds" and lowering property values by parking a run-down mobile home in the middle of a beautiful neighborhood.

**RAY**

I knew that's what this was really about. I'll have you know I had my house here, wheels and all, a long time before yours fell from heaven and long before this "was" a beautiful neighborhood.

**CLARE**

Honey stop!

**ELSBETH**

My point exactly!

**RAY**

I'm gonna have my say!

**MITCH**

I think you've said enough!

**TAYLOR**

This isn't happening.

**TOM**

This whole thing is about "my" arm. Now let's just calm down.

**MITCH**

I'm going to have "my" say too Ray! I didn't want to have this discussion but the can of worms is open. The developer had an understanding with you; you were to move when the last house was complete. You were offered more than enough for your land and that "hovel" you call a house. Why then didn't you live up to that agreement!

**RAY**

I'll tell you why...

**CLARE**

It was for me! OK, I'm sorry! Ray "wanted" to leave, he was packing, "I" begged him to stay. I wanted to live in a nice neighborhood for "once" in my life.

*(Sobbing)*

I am "so" sorry I caused all of this. I just thought that if you got to know us, everything would work out. I never dreamed this would happen. We'll leave as soon as we can sell our place. *(Sobbing)*

**RAY**

I hope you're happy, you made her cry.

**ELSBETH**

This was a great idea Taylor, have a stupid sale so we can talk this buffoon into selling his dump. I told you it wouldn't work!

**TAYLOR**

Elle!

**CLARE**

(Hurt)

Taylor?

**TAYLOR**

Clare, it's not like it sounds.

*(Silence)*

Thanks a lot Elle.

**MITCH**

You had to open your mouth.

**ELSBETH**

Someone had to "say" something! You all want them out as much as I do!

**MITCH**

Elle!

**ELSBETH**

You all sit around complaining about that trailer, but not "one" of you has the nerve to tell "them". Well I do, and I did!

**RAY**

You sure did!

**CLARE**

We're moving OK? We're moving so everybody just stop!

**RAY**

The heck if we are! We're never moving! Do you all hear? I'm gonna get ten more boats and a hundred more lawn flamingos! And the next time it storms, I'll bring my whole family to your front door!

**ELSBETH**

You'd better not knock on our door! You'd better not set foot in our yard!

**MITCH**

No "we're" moving. We will not sit by and watch this neighborhood degenerate any further! So you can have as many boats and birds as you want! With your run down house here, it should be easy to sell ours. I'm sure the "crack dealers" will line up for a mile for a chance to buy it!

**GRACE**

*(Upset.)*

Why are you doing this Daddy? Why are you treating them like this? Why do you have to be such a snob? You judge everyone based on money and I'm sick of it! I'm sick of you!

**ELSBETH**

(Amazed)

Honey?!

**MITCH**

Go home now! I'm surprised at your behavior.

*(As all this goes on the storm is getting more intense.)*

**GRACE**

Well I've got a surprise for you "Mommy" and "Daddy". I love Jack!

*(Pause, silence)*

We've been dating for three weeks. Oh yeah! I visit him every evening when you and mom "think" I'm studying. If you ever bothered to take a minute out of your "important" lives to check on me, you might have found out by now!

**ELSBETH**

I can't believe that you've been sneaking around!

**GRACE**

I didn't have to "sneak" around! You didn't even suspect anything! You've never noticed anything I've done!

**ELSBETH**

That's crazy! I have done "nothing" but worry over you for the last seventeen years.

**GRACE**

You haven't worried about me! You've worried about my "future" and how I look to "your" friends. You've had me worrying about my future for so long, I haven't had a life! It's all for you Mom! Everything I've ever done has been for "you"! You know it's true!

**ELSBETH**

That's ridiculous.

**GRACE**

When does "my" life start Mom!... When?

**ELSBETH**

(Shaken)

You're not making any sense.

**GRACE**

I'm going to have a life, now! Not later! Now! There are more important things than college!

**MITCH**

Like what?

**ELSBETH**

This is making me sick!

**GRACE**

You don't know what love is! You don't know how to show love or compassion for anyone unless they have money.

**MITCH**

And I suppose Ray and Clare do? I suppose it's a real loving environment inside that trailer?

**GRACE**

I've been inside that "trailer" enough to know that "their" family spends time with each other, they live for today.

**ELSBETH**

That's because they have no future! They have nothing! You think that boy has anything to offer you? Half of nothing is nothing!

**GRACE**

He's given me a lot... of love.

**MITCH**

(Suspicious)

Just how "much" love?

**GRACE**

What?

**MITCH**

What have you been doing with that loser?!

**RAY**

I'm about to come up out of this chair and bust you one.

**MITCH**

And I'll sue your butt right off this block!

**ELSBETH**

That's a great idea!

(To Grace)

Now "you" go home and wait in your room till we get over there... now!

**GRACE**

No! I won't go home! I'm going to Jack's house right now, and if you come after me, I swear I'll elope with him tonight!

**MITCH**

You'd better be joking.

**GRACE**

No Dad! We've already made plans, so I recommend you don't follow me.

*(She runs off left, crying.)*

*(Elsbeth starts after her, Mitch grabs her arm.)*

**MITCH**

Don't

**ELSBETH**

*(Incredulously)*

What?!

**MITCH**

It will just make things worse; give her a few minutes honey.

**TOM**

Let's pick up our stuff and go, I've had enough.

**TAYLOR**

Me too!

**MITCH**

That's what we're going to do. Ray, I'd appreciate it if you'd send Grace home before the storm hits.

*(Silence)*

**CLARE**

We will.

**RAY**

Now everyone just cool down a minute. Jack and Grace ain't been up to nothin but watchin TV. Me and Clare have been there every time she's been over.

**ELSBETH**

It doesn't matter whether or not they're supervised. The fact is that we do not want our daughter seeing your son!

**RAY**

Why? You think Jack's not good enough?

**MITCH**

We didn't say that.

**ELSBETH**

No, he's not nearly good enough! Clare told us how he's doing in school. I haven't worked all these years to see her run off with a high school flunky!

**CLARE**

He hasn't flunked...yet!

**MITCH**

What we're trying to say, is that we want Grace to finish high school and go to a good college. We want her to meet a boy with similar aspirations and dreams.

**RAY**

It seems to me she's already found a boy she likes and he "has" dreams.

**ELSBETH**

Great! and I guess they'll just live in a room in your trailer until he figures out which "minimum wage" career is dreamy enough.

**RAY**

I am getting sick of you guys runnin Jack down. He's a good boy, he's good with a wrench. (Proudly) He could be a mechanic someday.

**ELSBETH**

That gives me hope, it really does Ray, and just “which” day is that going to be?

**MITCH**

I think it’s best to separate them for the rest of the school year.

**ELSBETH**

For the rest of their lives!

**TOM**

*(Looking out.)*

Turn the radio on honey, the sky looks weird!

**(From the radio)**

*“The storm system once again has increased in intensity and the residents of the town of Hutchinson are urged to take cover, I repeat, a tornado has been spotted on the ground in the area between Hutchinson and Inman, Kansas, and is moving in a southerly direction. Stay tuned to...”*

**TAYLOR.**

*(While turning the radio off.)*

We’d better get out of here.

**MITCH**

Does it seem “still” to anyone?

**ELSBETH**

Totally still...and quiet, too.

**CLARE**

We better do like he says.

**RAY**

Clare, go home and get Jack and Grace and take em over to Tom’s house.

**ELSBETH**

She is coming home with “us”, now!

**MITCH**

Tom’s house should be...

*(Ronda has returned and is holding a gun downstage left.)*

**ELSBETH**

Mitch, shut up! I’ll handle this!

**RONDA**

No, you shut up!

*(Elsbeth turns to see Ronda who is demonic in the lightning. The group gasps as the lights go out.)*

*(Blackout)*

## ACT 2 Scene 2

*(Scene as before, lightning, thunder and Barney barking- can be heard.)*

**RONDA**

Everyone over there!  
*(She motions to the right of the shelter.)*

Not you!  
*(Gesturing to ELSBETH.)*

You get over there!  
*(Gestures to shelter left.)*

**MITCH**

What are you doing?

**RONDA**

I don't know yet, but I'm sure I'll think of something. You just shut your mouth!

**TAYLOR**

She's gonna kill us!

**TOM**

Who is this woman?

**TAYLOR**

She was here before, she hit Elle.

**TOM**

What!

**RONDA**

Everybody shut up.

**TOM**

You can't.

**RONDA**

Now!

**CLARE**

Why are you doin this? You hit "her", she didn't even.

**MITCH**

*(To Elle)*

Why didn't you tell me?

**RONDA**

Shut your mouth! If I was you, I'd be worrying about what was about to happen to "me" right now.

**TAYLOR**

But the storm! What about the storm? We're supposed to take shelter!

**RONDA**

Sure, I'll send the rest of you home so you can call the cops. Besides, a storm can't shoot you... I can. Now you just stay over there and shut up!

**MITCH**

Look, whatever happened, I'm sure we can...

**RONDA**

I told you to shut up!  
(*Pointing gun at him.*)

You didn't tell the "hero" here how you flapped your smart mouth at me? How you acted all superior and she  
(*Points to Clare.*) jumped in the middle of it!

**RAY**

Ronda, what in heaven's name do you think you're doin'? You flipped out or what? Is that a real gun?

**RONDA**

Ray this doesn't concern you! And this "is" a real gun! Now I don't have anything against you or even your nosy wife, but I'm gonna teach this woman here to show me some respect!

**ELSBETH**

I'm sorry! All right? I'm sorry! Now let's just get to shelter before the tornado hits!

**TOM**

Please! This is crazy!

**RONDA**

(Losing it)  
Are you calling me crazy! Are you?! Cause if you are...

**RAY**

Ronda cool off, she's not worth it. I don't know what this is about, but if you don't stop now, they're gonna send you back to jail.

**MITCH**

(Nervously)  
Jail?

**RONDA**

At least they'll have a good reason this time.  
(*A tornado siren is heard offstage, and all look upward.*)  
I've been locked up for a lot of things but this time it's gonna be worth it!

**TOM**

Please, let us get to shelter!

**RONDA**

Come on princess, get over there!  
(*Motions left.*)

**MITCH**

What are you going to do?

**RONDA**

Get over there now!

*(Mitch reluctantly lets go of Elsbeth's hand as she slowly complies.)*

**RAY**

If I were really as tough as you think you are, you'd put down that gun and fight like a man.

**RONDA**

You don't look to me like you're ready for a fight Ray.

**CLARE**

Ray?

**RAY**

It's all right Clare, I know what I'm doin. ..Ronda, I've got a set of tires over there that say "Mitch" can kick your butt good.

**RONDA**

*(Looking at Mitch.)*

You mean "him"? Hah! I could break him in half!

**ELSBETH**

Stop it Ray.

**RAY**

I guess it's true that a woman just can't stand up to a "man".

**RONDA**

There ain't no way that wimp could whip me.

**RAY**

That "wimp" is a karate expert, you're lucky he ain't killed you already.

**MITCH**

*(Nervously)*

Ray...

**RONDA**

*(Tucking the gun in her pants.)*

Come on Karate boy.

**MITCH**

I don't want to fight you.

**RONDA**

What? You won't fight for your woman? Ray, you picked a real stud here.

**RAY**

He's man enough to kick "your" butt.

**RONDA**

All right, all you guys just sit down. *(Mitch starts to sit with them.)* Not you! Get up Grasshopper, let's see what you got!

**ELSBETH**

Be careful honey!

**MITCH**

I... um, I would really rather not fight a woman.

**RAY**

You better change your mind "real" quick, or she's gonna make a fool outta ya!

**RONDA**

Come on!

*(The two slowly look each other over. They slowly circle looking for an advantage. Suddenly, Mitch lets out a high pitched hum and strikes a peculiar pose.)*

**RAY**

No Mitch, not a dance of death!

**RONDA**

What?

**RAY**

Oh yeah, I seen him use this on a guy at the Four Kings, messed him up something awful.

**RONDA**

Dance of death huh? I got a dance for ya!

*(She swings suddenly striking Mitch in the jaw, knocking him down.)*

**RAY**

Get up! Get up Mitch!

*(To Ronda)*

That was a lucky shot!

**RONDA**

Luck had nothin to do with it!

*(Mitch jumps to his feet angered.)*

**MITCH**

All right you asked for it, come on!

**RONDA**

Why. You gonna dance again?

*(Elsbeth starts to rise)*

**RONDA**

Sit down! (She reaches for her gun.)

**MITCH**

Sit down Elle! I'll handle this.

*(They circle as before, Ronda swings and misses.)*

**RAY**

You got her now boy!

*(Ronda swings again, Mitch blocks her and hits her hard in the face. Ronda stands looking momentarily dazed. Suddenly her face becomes very angry, Mitch lets out a whimper.)*

**RONDA**

I'm gonna kill you!!

*(She hits Mitch in the stomach, bending him over, followed by a kick to the face. He falls to the floor.)*

**ELSBETH**

Honey!

**RONDA**

*(Pulling out her gun.)*

Stay put! I guess he wasn't much of a dancer. You really thought he could beat me Ray?

**RAY**

No, but he mighta got lucky.

**RONDA**

*(She eyes the shelter opening.)*

Now all of you. Down there!

*(She motions to the shelter.)*

**TOM**

No, you can't make us go down there!

**RONDA**

Get down there.. NOW! I SAID NOW!

*(She turns to Elsbeth.)*

Don't you move!

*(Elsbeth sits perfectly still.)*

Go!

*(The group slowly moves toward the shelter, Ray and Mitch remain.)*

**RONDA**

I told you to go!

**MITCH**

*(Between gasps.)*

I can't. I can't go without her.

**RAY**

And I can't get down them steps!

**RONDA**

Shut up! Shut up! Just let me think!

*(Elsbeth is crying now.)*

All right, the rest of you are going down there now, or I'm gonna shoot the queen, right here, right now!

**MITCH**

Please Ronda, please let her come with us, I can give you money, our car, whatever you want.

**RONDA**

I don't want your money! I want you to get down that hole before I shoot her!

*(Ronda shoots her gun in the air and everyone jumps, the group pulls Mitch down the stairs.)*

**MITCH**

I love you honey!

*(Ronda points the gun and the door slams on the shelter.)*

**RONDA**

Now Ray, you just stay out of this. You stay right there.

*(It is dark now except for the shelter light and occasional flashes of lightning.)*

**RAY**

Don't shoot her Ronda, she's my neighbor!

*(Ronda turns to Elsbeth.)*

**RONDA**

Now honey, we're gonna have us a little talk.

**ELSBETH**

*(Sobbing)*

Listen, Ronda, I'm "very" sorry for the way I spoke to you, but my daughter is over in that trailer house and I've got to get her out.

**RONDA**

She'll be better off than you are "wherever" she is!

**ELSBETH**

I don't understand "why" you're so angry. What did I say to make you so mad?

**RONDA**

Shut up!...It's not "what" you said, it's the "way" you talked to me. Like you're "so" much better. I've been takin it from people like "you" my whole life. I had my kids taken away by a woman just like you!

**RAY**

If you don't back off Ronda, you're gonna lose em again.

**RONDA**

It's too late Ray. I'm losin em anyway. I'm going back in, I lost my job, my car, my old man took off. This woman's mouth was the last straw. I got nothing left to lose!

**ELSBETH**

Your kids! What about them! They need a mommy Ronda!

**RONDA**

Shut your fat mouth! You don't know anything about life *(Pause)*. All I wanted was that lousy computer, so I could learn some new stuff and maybe get better job, but no, you had to be a...

**ELSBETH**

It's yours! Take it!

*(The shelter light flickers.)*

**RONDA**

It's too late for that now! You're gonna get what you deserve!

**ELSBETH**

All those things that happened to you, they're not my fault. I didn't "do" anything. You think I don't have problems, I do. I've had a hard life. My ex-husband was a jerk and a drunk!

**RONDA**

*(Pause)*

Well that's a "real" sad story. But you had no right treating me the way you did. You put me down just the way that S.R.S. witch did. I'm not taking it anymore! Do you here me! I'm gonna take care of your mouth right now!

*(She starts to take aim)*

**ELSBETH**

Wait! Wait! Please Ronda don't!

**RAY**

Don't kill her Ronda, she's not the one you're made at. If you want to get even with her, burn her house down.

**ELSBETH**

Don't help Ray!

**RAY**

She's treated me like dirt too! But I'm not going to kill her. I'll admit she's a loudmouth and a snob, and she wants me out of this neighborhood as bad as you want to kill her, but it's just not right.

**RONDA**

This is the first thing that's felt right in a long time, and it sounds like I'm doin you a favor too. The only thing I had to live for was my kids, and now I'm losin em.

**ELSBETH**

Why?

**RONDA**

Shut up!

**RAY**

Why, Ronda?

**RONDA**

I'll tell you why, cause some busybody reported me as an unfit mother. Me! I sacrificed my whole life for my kids! I've worked two jobs for the last three years, just so my husband could take all our money and run off with a waitress from the Four Kings.

**RAY**

Which one?...Sorry

**RONDA**

Doesn't matter. He's gone and in a couple days they're gonna take my kids and there is "nothin" I can do! People been kickin me down my whole life, and I've took it. Doctors and teachers and cops and now you! But "you're" gonna be the last.

**ELSBETH**

Think of your kids! If you do this, they'll never get to grow up with you. You won't see them graduate or get married. You don't want to give all that up do you?...I love my daughter, kids are all we really leave in this world...Who's going to raise those kids of yours when you're gone? Is someone else going to love them the way you do? Please, think about it.

**RAY.**

Think about it Ronda.

**ELSBETH**

I didn't know what you'd been through when I met you today. I would have never acted the way I did if I'd known.  
*(Ronda lowers the gun slightly.)*

Why don't you give me the gun Ronda...come on honey.

**RONDA**

*(Slow and seething)*

Don't call me honey! You don't care about me. All you care about is your lousy life. You've said all you're gonna say!

**RAY**

Ronda don't!

*(The lights flicker again and Elsbeth rushes Ronda just before the lights go out completely. In the dark loud barking is heard.)*

**RAY**

Get her Barney, get her!

*(We hear the sound of a lunging dog, Ronda screams in pain followed by a gunshot.)*

## ACT 2 Scene 3

*(The lights come up to about dusk level revealing the shelter strewn with debris "be creative", including a pink lawn flamingo. The actors are gathered around Elsbeth who is petting a ragged dog. Taylor is wrapping cloth around Elsbeth's big toe.)*

**ELSBETH**

Good dog, good doggy, you're a good boy.

**TOM**

I can't believe it.

*(Looking toward the houses stage right. The only one left standing.)*

**MITCH**

We're lucky to be alive.

**ELSBETH**

No thanks to you, Mr. Black Belt!

**MITCH**

I did all I could honey!...She was an animal. You think I liked being down there? *(He puts his hand on her shoulder, which she promptly removes.)*

**ELSBETH**

Well I almost died out here, between Ronda and tornado, I think I had it just a "little" rougher than you did. But "Barney" was here for me, weren't you boy. *(Pets him briskly.)*

**RAY**

Don't forget, it was "me" who gave him the command to attack.

**ELSBETH**

Thank you Ray, I appreciate "everything" you did for me. *(Looking at Mitch)* I was just glad to have a "man" here.

**MITCH**

Now come on Elle, that's not fair.

**RAY**

He did "try" Elle, I wouldn't fight Ronda, at least no in front of anyone.

**MITCH**

And I wouldn't have either, but I had no choice, thanks to Ray.

**ELSBETH**

Yes, "thanks" to Ray. You weren't even going to defend me. You were just going to let her shoot me!

**MITCH**

I just thought there was a better way, better than fighting!

**ELSBETH**

Mitch, sometimes you've got to fight, if you "care" about something! Obviously you don't "care" about me! MITCH. I care, Elle, I do!

**ELSBETH**

You've got a funny way of showing it!

**TAYLOR**

How's your toe feel Elle?

**ELSBETH**

What's left of it feels odd, it doesn't really hurt that much, it just stings a little.

**MITCH**

I'm so sorry hon. *(After a pause she touches his hand.)*

**ELSBETH**

I'm keeping this, *(Holds up the seat of Ronda's leather pants bearing the Harley Davidson logo.)* as a souvenir of my brush with death...I wonder where she went.

**RAY**

She ran off toward "your" house.

**TAYLOR**

You think she's inside?

**RAY**

Maybe.

**MITCH**

Wherever it landed, she can keep it.

**CLARE**

All of you guys are welcome to stay with us a while. We can put Jack on the couch and clear out Ray's motorcycle parts from the extra bedroom. Is that O.K. Ray?

**RAY**

Sure, I guess so.

**ELSBETH**

I don't think that's necessary.

**RAY**

Oh you don't want to be in there with all that junk. You'd get grease all over you.

**ELSBETH**

As much as "Grace" would like that plan, I think we'll stay in a hotel.

**MITCH**

I can't believe the storm took both our houses and left the "trailer" standing.

**RAY**

Must have been looking for a challenge.

**MITCH**

But brick, it was a "brick" house.

**TOM**

So "was" ours.

**TAYLOR**

Suppose Ronda hadn't come, we'd all be in our houses now.

**RAY**

Yep.

**ELSBETH**

*(To Ray and Clare.)*

Our daughter is alive because of you.

**RAY**

I think Ronda is the one you have to thank.

**TAYLOR**

I can't believe this day.

**MITCH**

Just another day at the end of "Ray Road"

**ELSBETH**

I wonder how it got "that" name.

**RAY**

It was part of the deal.

**CLARE**

How about you guys, I suppose you won't be stayin around with your homes gone and all.

|

**TAYLOR**

I'm not sure what we're going to do.

**TOM**

I don't want to think about it now.

**TAYLOR**

I liked this neighborhood.

**CLARE**

We'd sure miss having you around. After all this I can't imagine never seeing you again.

**RAY**

I could, a couple a minutes ago. I don't know what you said to that woman Ellie, but you really torqued her off.

**ELSBETH**

I think it was a matter of bad timing.

**MITCH**

What set her off!

**ELSBETH**

She thought my computer was priced too high.

**RAY**

I told you.

**TOM**

All of this, over a computer.

**ELSBETH**

It was a little more complicated than that.

**MITCH**

Tom, why don't you run over to Ray's house and tell Grace to call an ambulance

**TOM**

Sure, but hold Barney please.

*(He exits right)*

**ELSBETH**

He's OK now, Barney's a good dog

*(To Barney.)*

aren't you boy?

**RAY**

He knows how to get the job done.

**MITCH**

I guess the party's off tonight.

*(Elsbeth laughs.)*

**CLARE**

You could have it at our house.

**MITCH**

It's too late anyway, and under the circumstances, I don't think our guests would mind.

**RAY**

You all should really consider the advantages of a "mobile" home.

**CLARE**

The new double-wides are very nice.

**MITCH**

I'm sure they're very nice but, I think we're gong to want another site built home.

**ELSBETH**

*(Remembering)*

Oh honey, your new game room.

**MITCH**

I know, it's OK, at least the "guys" got to see it.

**RAY**

*(Solemnly.)*

I'll never forget it, it was truly a thing of beauty.

**TAYLOR**

Was your kitty in the house?

**MITCH**

No he was at the groomer's.

**RAY**

Who Rene'?

**ELSBETH**

Taylor, you had decorated so nicely, all that work, gone. You must be so depressed.

**TAYLOR**

It was a lot of work, I spent two years getting it just right. I can't believe it's all gone...I'm just glad nobody was hurt.

**CLARE**

Well, I've got a surprise for you Taylor,

*(She reaches under a tarp and pulls out a painting.)*

I know this one was your favorite, "Midnight Wolf". It can be your first newdecorating item. You can plan your whole house around it.

**TAYLOR**

Clare...I don't know what to say.

**ELSBETH**

Well, "I'm" jealous.

**CLARE**

Don't worry Elle. I've got something "special" for you.

*(She reaches back under the tarp and pulls out another painting.)*

**ELSBETH**

Oh Clare, your angel?

*(Starts to cry.)*

**CLARE**

No honey, "your" angel, after this day, it's clear to me she wants to watch over you.

**ELSBETH**

*(Overcome.)*

Thank you Clare.

*(Crying)*

After all those terrible things I said to you and Ray. Can you ever forgive me?

**TAYLOR**

Me too Clare, this whole day was "my" fault.

**CLARE**

Are you kidding? If we hadn't all gotten together...none of this would have happened.

**RAY**

Mitch would'na got shocked.

**TAYLOR**

Tom wouldn't have been mauled.

**MITCH**

Elle wouldn't have been shot.

**ELSBETH**

And most of us would be dead right now ..and I wouldn't have this beautiful angel.

**MITCH**

Everything's going to be all right honey.

**RAY.**

So. You think you guys'll rebuild, or move on?

**MITCH**

I can't speak for Tom and Taylor but if Elle wants to stay, we will.

**ELSBETH**

I couldn't leave "Barney

**MITCH**

I'm not sure what we're going to do while they're rebuilding our house.

**ELSBETH**

How much does a mobile home cost Ray?

**RAY**

Don't know. I haven't bought one in twenty years.

**MITCH**

I guess it's an option, until our house is completed.

**ELSBETH**

It might be fun, just imagine our first dinner party in the new "trailer" house.

**RAY**

There go the property values. If you do go with the double wide, you should consider skirting. It keeps the possums out in the winter.

**MITCH**

I doubt if we actually going to live in a trailer that long Ray.

**RAY**

With you guys bein new to the mobile home experience, I guess I'll be nurse maidin you along till you get up to speed. If you all need help cleaning up, I know, Clare will bust her butt for you...Can you get a coupla days off work honey?

**ELSBETH**

That's really generous of you Ray.

**RAY**

Hey, whatever I can do. After all, what are "neighbors" for?

**CLARE**

We'll help all we can.

**TAYLOR**

I'll talk to Tom about joining the trailer park. I'd hate to miss out on the fun.

**RAY**

What about storms?

**ELSBETH**

There's a shelter right here in the park.

**RAY**

You still haven't been down there.

**MITCH**

There's no way "I'm" going down there again.

**ELSBETH**

Now he takes a stand.

*(They laugh)*

**MITCH**

...Unless there's a gun on me.

**RAY**

I guess we're all gonna be busy a while.

**MITCH**

That's an understatement.

**RAY**

What with homes to rebuild and a "weddin" to plan.

**ELSBETH**

*(Shocked.)*  
Wedding?

**CLARE**

Oh it's gonna be beautiful.

**RAY**

We could have it right here in the park, and have the reception here in the shelter house.

*(Ronda enters from up right, ragged and holding the seat of her pants.)*

**MITCH**

*(To Ray,)*  
Now wait a minute!

**ELSBETH**

Mitch, shut up.

**RONDA**

No you shut up!

*(Everyone gasps and spins around.)*

**RONDA**

Can somebody give me a ride home? I've got to check on my kids.

*(Everyone stares in amazement.)*

**BLACKOUT, CURTAIN**

*(The end.)*

## **PROPERTY LIST**

Various yard-sale merchandise (Books, clothes, etc.)  
Chia pet  
Sign reading, THREE FAMILY SALE  
15-20 paintings (Fair to mediocre landscapes.)  
Two lengths of chain and a six to eight foot pipe.  
Various boxes Golf bag and clubs  
Computer and printer  
5 –10 eight track tapes  
Pocket watch  
Wheel Chair  
Old portable television  
Practical snack items  
Four sixths of a six pack of pop  
3 tires- matching  
Pink lawn flamingo  
Gauze bandage  
Radio  
Blank pistol- Practical (Starter)  
Board Game  
Puzzle  
Cash-box with paper and pen  
Paper bags  
Dollars and coin change  
5-6 nice dresses, one with price-tag attached  
Ice pack with two cubes  
Two picnic tables  
Cast for leg  
Weed eater – blue

## **SOUND EFFECTS**

Barking Dog  
Snarling Dog  
Thunder- lightning  
Tornado siren  
Wind sound  
Weather service bulletin  
Electrocution Sound