

WHITE PEOPLE

a play by Neil Cuthbert

revised, 2/18/11

registered WGA

CAST

in order of appearance

HAL, the father, late fifties

MAG, the mother, mid fifties

KATE, the daughter, mid twenties

JEFF, the older son, early twenties

BEAR, the younger son, seventeen

GRAMMA, Mag's mother, late seventies

BOO BOO, a visitor, about thirty

SETTING

The action of the play takes place in and around a comfortable middle class house in New Jersey on a Saturday in October of 1975.

There are three playing areas:

The living room/dining room. A red leather chair placed prominently in the living room. A foyer leads to the front door, right. Upstage, a stairway climbs to the second story. A swinging door in the dining room opens to the unseen kitchen. Another door opens to...

The backyard garden with two outdoor chairs.

Kate's bedroom upstairs.

ACT I

Scene 1

(Birds sing cacophonously as the lights come up on the living room/dining room. It is just before dawn. Hal, a sturdily built man in an old bathrobe, comes quietly down the stairs. He stops at the bottom of the staircase... listens to the floor above for a moment... then passes silently in his slipper moccasins through the living room to the door of the kitchen. He stops, listens again, then slips into the kitchen... A beat... and Hal re-enters with a glass of scotch, crosses to his red leather chair, and sits. He sighs heavily, listens to the birds for a moment, then raises the glass, about to savor his first taste.)

MAG

(offstage, from the top of the stairs)

Hal?

HAL

(freezes)

Yeah?

(She's coming down. Hal hides the glass under his chair and assumes a settled pose. Mag, also in a robe, comes down the stairs.)

MAG

Couldn't you sleep?

HAL

The birds woke me up.

(She moves to the front window and gazes out.)

MAG

Car crashes--I kept dreaming of car crashes.

HAL

She'll be home.

MAG

We haven't seen this hour in such a long time--not since that hurricane blew down the tree.

HAL

Edna.

MAG

I'll never forget that--wires sparking--shingles flying everywhere--the town sirens all screaming--it felt like the end of the world. I still think Jeffrey was conceived that night... Should I make us some coffee?

HAL

No.

MAG

I wish she wouldn't drive that old Volkswagen--they crush like cigarette packs you know, and they bounce over railings. I saw it on TV--the dummies were a mess!

HAL

Go back to bed. I'll wait up.

MAG

(after a moment)

Do you think she's a hooker?

HAL

She's a go go dancer.

MAG

She's a topless dancer.

HAL

She's a go go dancer.

MAG

It says in big letters on the outside of the building. "The Seven Dwarves Lounge. Topless Go Go."

HAL

"Stopless Go Go".

MAG

What?

HAL

It says "Stopless Go Go".

MAG

That doesn't mean it's not topless.

HAL

It means it's not topless, but they want everyone to think it is.

MAG

Do you know she's polished off a six dollar bottle of Excedrin in less than a month. I found her sleeping in the tub last week. She could have drowned.

HAL

She's going through a phase.

MAG

I'm fifty-six years old, and I've still got three children living at home.

HAL

They like it here.

MAG

Jeffrey doesn't wear clothes anymore. He lives in his peejays.

HAL

He's writing a book.

MAG

It's pornographic.

HAL

It's science fiction.

MAG

I've read snatches of it. The hero keeps having sex with strange creatures.

HAL

Aliens.

MAG

What?

HAL

They're called aliens. Go to bed. I'll wait up.

MAG

We were so careful, tried to space them all out. Now... they're all bunched up again.

(beat)

Bear's smoking something in the basement... I can smell it... We never should have let him get that earring--we should have laid down the law.

HAL

Your mother is coming.

MAG

What?

HAL

You get like this when your mother is coming.

MAG

(agitated)

She's coming tomorrow--not today--so you've got a day's grace! Go fishing tomorrow--or go to the shop--she's easier to handle when you're not around.

(Hal stares into space.)

MAG (Cont'd)

(after a moment)

Are you drinking again?

HAL

Nope.

MAG

That episode in the Shop-Rite was the most mortifying experience of my life.

(He stares into space.)

MAG (Cont'd)

The Indians couldn't handle it either. You claim that you're part Mohican...

HAL

Mohawk.

MAG

Maybe that's the problem... You gave me your word that you'd quit. That doctor told you it would kill you.

HAL

I haven't touched a drop.

(Silence)

MAG

This isn't what we pictured, is it?... We thought we'd have grandchildren by now.

HAL

(stands)

I'm goin' to bed.

(starts up the stairs)

MAG

Hal?

(He stops.)

MAG (Cont'd)

I'm sorry you're so unhappy.

HAL

Me, too.

(He exits up the stairs. Mag snoops around. She bends down and finds the glass under the chair.)

MAG

(a whisper)

Damn it to hell.

(Kate staggers in the front door. She doesn't see Mag crouched by the chair, moves to the couch, and flops on it.)

KATE

Oh fuck.

(Mag slips the glass back under the chair and stands.)

MAG

(brightly)

How was work?

KATE

Ma!

MAG

Good crowd tonight?

KATE

(pulls herself together)

You don't have to wait up for me.

MAG

I didn't wait up--I just couldn't sleep... I wish you wouldn't drive home like that. That's how your Uncle Eddie died.

KATE

I know.

MAG

He was out with the boys, and they went off the road.

(Kate says nothing.)

MAG (Cont'd)

Do you want some breakfast?

(Kate says nothing.)

MAG (Cont'd)

A soft boiled egg?

Ugh! KATE

How 'bout an alka-seltzer? MAG

Ma, I'm fine! KATE

I wish you'd find a real job. MAG

I have one. KATE

With clothes. MAG

Do you want me to move out? KATE

I didn't say-- MAG

Because it's not a fuckin' problem. I can be out of here
like that! KATE
(snaps her fingers)

(after a moment) MAG
Why do we fight so much? Because we're unhappy?... Or is it
all the fighting that makes us unhappy?

(Kate says nothing.)

Ferdinand was right. MAG (Cont'd)

Who? KATE

Ferdinand the Bull. MAG

Oh. KATE

You loved that story. I used to read it to you, remember? MAG

Ummm. KATE

MAG

All Ferdinand wanted was to sit under his cork tree and smell the flowers, but they took him away and put him in the bullring... but he would not fight. He just sat on his haunches in the middle of the ring, sniffing the flowers in the ladies' hair, and no matter how much they taunted him or poked him with spears, all he did was sit... and sniff. Nothing could disturb his perfect serenity... Nothing.

KATE

And an hour later... they cut him into steaks.

MAG

No they didn't.

KATE

I'm goin' to bed.

MAG

You've changed, Kate.

KATE

Nobody changes, Ma. We just get worse.

(She stumbles up the stairs to bed. Mag turns and steps out the door. Lights down on the living room...)

(And up on the garden... as she steps outside, moves to a garden chair, and sits... Mag pulls herself together and listens to the birds, then closes her eyes and deeply inhales the early morning air... as the lights come down.)

Scene 2

(A voice is heard...)

JEFF'S VOICE

Eyes burning in the toxic fumes, Captain Neutrino crawled from the carnage of his wrecked galacto-hopper. This was his third crack-up this parsec. That meant his warp permit for sure...

(Lights up on the living room... It is late morning. Jeff, still in his pajamas, sprawls in the red leather chair reading what he has just scrawled on a yellow legal pad with his well chewed Bic pen. Crumpled up pages are strewn all around him.)

JEFF

"Great bleeding nipple-cocks of Narzon!" he cussed as he broke open a bag of fortified lunar fudge survival wafers. Lunar fudge was his favorite flavor, but after two burn ups and a B Hole, he was getting damn sick of them. He chewed the cracker into a nutritious glob as he gazed around him. The sky was a lurid green vapor. The ground was sulfuric mush. There was no horizon. The pussy situation... did not look promising.

(Bear enters from the kitchen. A sturdily built miniature of his father, he wears close cropped hair, a flannel shirt, and an earring. His deep voice and hulking presence have given him his nickname. Jeff pretends not to see him. For a long moment Bear just stares at his older brother.)

BEAR

Where are they?... Where the fuck are they?

(Jeff writes, says nothing...)

BEAR (Cont'd)

(moving closer)

Jeffie was always the smart one, always got straight "A"s. Now, look at him. Oh how the mighty have fallen... Where are they, Jeff? They were in my backpack... and you fuckin' stole 'em.

(Jeff writes.)

BEAR (Cont'd)

I wish a helicopter'd chop off both your legs, so all your guts'd come out, and they'd sew you back together and stick you in a wheelchair, but I'd push you in front of a Mac truck, and it would squish you, and all the metal things

(MORE)

BEAR (Cont'd)

would snap off the chair and stick into you, and you'd be laying there squirming in agony and begging me to kill you, but I wouldn't, 'cause I'd be laughing too hard... ha ha ha... and the ambulance guys would come and scrape you off the street with snow shovels and put you in a plastic bag... and every day I'd visit you in the hospital and punch you as hard as I could... and you'd scream and scream... but nobody'd hear... 'cause you'd just be a bag of moosh.

(beat)

You stole my Ding Dongs.

(Jeff writes, says nothing.)

BEAR (Cont'd)

You four eyed bitch.

(Kate staggers down the stairs.)

JEFF

(singing)

Here she comes, Miss America...
Oh my God, what a mess...

KATE

Where's Mom?

JEFF

In the garden.

KATE

(flops on the couch)

Got any aspirin?

JEFF

Nope.

KATE

Tylenol?

JEFF

Nope.

KATE

Shit.

(Bear exits into the kitchen.)

JEFF

I heard you getting sick this morning. Too much funzy wunzy last night?

KATE

Go back to Rutgers, Jeff.

JEFF

At least I graduated.

KATE

Blow me.

JEFF

Besides... how can I go back to Rutgers...

(sexily)

When you're still living at home?

(She ignores him.)

JEFF (Cont'd)

I'll never forget those baths we took together. Splashing in the tub. Laughing. Squealing. Squeaking our duckies... the way the water sloshed against your wet, pudgy little tum-tum. That adorable little belly button, I just can't get it out of my mind.

KATE

(flicks his hand away)

Get a job.

JEFF

Hey, why don't you skip the slow decline and go straight to the sleeping pills?

KATE

Why don't you whack off to death?

JEFF

Laundry hamper.

KATE

Suction cup.

JEFF

Trampoline.

KATE

Compost heap.

JEFF

Dish rag.

KATE

Sponge.

JEFF

Look who's talking?

KATE

I've been here three months--you've been back on the tit for a year and a half.

JEFF

I'm working on my novel.

KATE

(scoffs)

Yeah right. Don't you realize there's thousands of little weirdos hiding in their rooms writing bad science fiction?

JEFF

And millions more reading it.

KATE

Your space turkey won't fly.

JEFF

Wanna bet?

KATE

Your hero just keeps bouncing from planet to planet. There's no plot!

JEFF

So do they like stuff dollar bills in your G-string, or do you snatch the money with your--

KATE

(punches him)

Perv!

JEFF

You did it to me, you tempting little tub bunny!

(He grabs her, and they wrestle to the floor...
Kate pins him.)

KATE

You can't even beat-up your sister... Candy ass.

JEFF

I'm getting hard!

KATE

(jumps off him)

Ick!

JEFF

Don't fight it, darling. You know you want me.

KATE

You're disgusting.

JEFF

Then I guess you don't want... a massage.

(She doesn't respond.)

JEFF (Cont'd)

Come on, baby. You know I've got...
(wiggling his fingers)

The magic fingeros.
(beat)

How's your head? Is it throbbing, aching, pulsing? Is
molten pain surging through the tubes and vessels of your
luscious female brain?

(slips his hands onto her shoulders
and massages)

You want it. You know you want it.

(Kate moans loudly with pleasure.)

JEFF (Cont'd)

That's it... Give it up.

KATE

Ohhhh... Ohhhh... Harder... Ohhhh...

(As Kate continues moaning, Hal, dressed in
weekend work clothes, enters from the front and
crosses like a ghost behind them, exiting out
the garden door.)

JEFF

Is he drinking again?

KATE

That's all we need... More please.

(Jeff complies.)

KATE (Cont'd)

Ohhhh...

(Bear re-enters and puts a small bottle of
aspirin on the coffee table.)

KATE (Cont'd)

Oh God. Bless the Bear.

(She takes them, as the lights come down.)

Scene 3

(We hear birds squawking and chirping... as the lights come up on the garden... Mag, wearing sunglasses, garden gloves, and an old hat, sits in her chair, gazing at her unseen bird feeder... Tools and a basket of fresh cut autumn flowers sit at her feet.)

(Hal enters, stands there.)

MAG

Funny. There can be half a loaf of bread on that feeder, enough to feed a flock, and two of them will fight like drunken sailors over the same piece of crust.

HAL

It's human nature.

MAG

They're birds, Hal.

HAL

Thought I'd cut back the rhodies, maybe paint the shutters... Do you want me to mulch the roses?

MAG

(after a moment)

I found it.

(Hal says nothing.)

MAG (Cont'd)

You promised me, Hal. You gave your word of honor. Why now? Why are you starting now?

HAL

It's just one, every now and then.

MAG

And one leads to two, and two leads to ten, and then you're lying in your own vomit on the floor of the produce section waiting for the ambulance and watching the grapefruits roll by.

HAL

That won't happen again.

MAG

How can you be sure--?

HAL

Because it won't!

(Silence)

HAL (Cont'd)

Should I mulch the roses?

MAG

I don't give a tinker's damn.

(Hal exits into the house, as Mag stares into the yard, and the lights come down on the garden...)

(And up on the living room... Kate lies wretchedly asleep on the couch. Jeff snoozes with his head in her lap. Bear naps in the red leather chair. Hal enters, hedge clippers in hand. He stops and gazes unhappily at his useless progeny... and briefly entertains a fantasy of clipping off their heads. We hear a car door slam outside. Hal goes to the front window, looks out.)

HAL

(quietly)

Shit!... Shit shit shit shit shit...

(He quickly retreats into the kitchen. A beat... the front door opens, and Gramma enters. Pushing eighty, dressed in red and fur, she's slightly hard of hearing and compensates by increasing her own audibility. She surveys the scene.)

GRAMMA

Huh!

(loudly)

What a bunch of bums!

(Jeff, Kate, and Bear come to and see her.)

KATE

(under her breath)

Oh shit.

JEFF

Gramma, darling!

(Jeff goes to her and gives her a big hug.)

GRAMMA

(shoving Jeff away)

Ach! Get off of me, you chiseler! And get a shave.

(Bear pops open Gramma's pocketbook, starts rummaging around.)

GRAMMA (Cont'd)

Hey, you, get out of there! And give your Gramma a huggy.

BEAR

Okay.

(hugs her)

GRAMMA

You're my favorite.

JEFF

(pretends to cry)

Gramma, how could you?

GRAMMA

Ah, shut up.

(She turns her attention to Kate, who has not moved from the couch... as Jeff and Bear secretly pop open her bag.)

GRAMMA (Cont'd)

(icily)

You sick?

KATE

I'm fine.

GRAMMA

You look sick.

KATE

I'm fine.

GRAMMA

Get your monkey mitts out of there!
(pushes the boys away)

JEFF

Where is it?

GRAMMA

Where's what?

JEFF

Your birth control device.

GRAMMA

Too late for that. The damage has been done.

JEFF

You can never be too sure.

GRAMMA

The old pistols I've been seeing, I'm sure, believe me.
Where's your mother? Get out of there! Is this...

(pulls a pair of five dollar bills
from her pocket)

What you're looking for?

(Jeff and Bear clap and bark like a pair of
hungry seals.)

GRAMMA (Cont'd)

That's more like it. Let's see some tricks!

(She flaps the fivers in the air like a pair of
fish, as Bear and Jeff bark and perform. Mag
enters from the garden... and freezes.)

MAG

(surprised to see her)

Ma!

GRAMMA

Hello.

MAG

Is... something wrong?

GRAMMA

No.

MAG

What are you doing here?

GRAMMA

I'm here for lunch.

MAG

We said Sunday.

GRAMMA

It is Sunday.

MAG

(beat)

It's Saturday.

GRAMMA

Nonsense!

(Mag sighs.)

GRAMMA (Cont'd)

Don't sigh at me. Today is Sunday. Yesterday was Saturday.
Frieda does my hair on Friday, and that was yesterday! Today
is...!

(A silence, as even Gramma realizes that it's Saturday.)

KATE

Did you watch the ministers this morning?

GRAMMA

Oh, shut up!

(glares at everyone for several beats)

Well I'll just go home. If I'm a senile old woman who doesn't know what day it is, I'll just go home and eat my lunch alone.

(starts for the door)

MAG

You don't have to go home, Ma.

GRAMMA

(stops)

I don't stay where I'm not wanted!

MAG

We didn't say that.

GRAMMA

In so many words!

MAG

Ma, it doesn't matter. Stay for lunch today.

GRAMMA

I'm not hungry now. I couldn't eat a thing.

JEFF

(a cue to Bear)

Come on, Gramma, stay.

BEAR

Please, Gramma, stay.

(Jeff drops to his knees and implores her.)

JEFF & BEAR

(ad lib)

Stay, Gramma... Please, Gramma, stay... In the name of God, Gramma... Please, Gramma!... We beg you--we beg you!... Please stay!

MAG

Stay for lunch today, Ma. We'd love to have you stay.

GRAMMA

(beat, appeased)

Where's my tea?

BEAR

Ding Dongs.

MAG

Lettuce... celery... tomatoes... ice cream... paper napkins.

HAL

'kay.

(He exits. Gramma, as discreet as a sledge hammer, indicates Hal and belts down an invisible slug of booze. This is intended for Mag and is supposed to be so subtle that the kids don't get it.)

MAG

I'll fix you a cup of tea, Ma.

GRAMMA

Good!

(Mag exits into the kitchen. Gramma follows.)

JEFF

Good old Gramma. Five hundred years ago our ancestors set out in leaky little boats to conquer the world, and Gramma was there...

KATE

Swimming in the water with a big fin on her back.

(There is a knock at the front door. Bear goes to answer it.)

JEFF

(ala Rod Serling)

Yes, it's going to be another fun day... in the Twilight Zone. Nahhhh-nun-nun-nun-nun... nun.

BEAR

(offstage)

Yeah, she's here.

(re-enters)

Some guy to see you.

(Boo Boo enters. He has black hair and wears sharp looking sunglasses, a gold chain or two, and a well tailored black suit. His attitude is nocturnal, intensely cool.)

BOO BOO

(to Kate)

Hey.

(Kate looks at him, says nothing. Boo Boo looks around.)

BOO BOO (Cont'd)

These your bros?

(She says nothing, doesn't introduce them... a beat.)

BOO BOO (Cont'd)

I'm Boo Boo.

(Mag enters from the kitchen, followed by Gramma, dipping a Lipton tea bag in her cup.)

MAG

I thought I heard a new voice.

(Gramma immediately dislikes the look of this newcomer... another beat.)

BOO BOO

I'm Boo Boo.

MAG

How do you do?

GRAMMA

(cool)

Hello.

(Mag looks at Kate, waiting for an introduction.)

KATE

Uhhh... Boo Boo and I met last night... at the party.

BOO BOO

(beat)

Okay.

GRAMMA

What party?

KATE

At my friend's.

GRAMMA

What friend?

KATE

You don't know her.

GRAMMA

Don't want to.

KATE
He's from... where was it?

BOO BOO
All over.

BEAR
Cool.

(An uncomfortable silence. Mag looks at Kate,
then back at Boo Boo.)

MAG
Would you like a cup of coffee?

BOO BOO
That'd be great.

MAG
How do you take it?

BOO BOO
Black.

(Mag exits into the kitchen. Gramma stays
behind, too curious.)

BOO BOO (Cont'd)
Your mom?

KATE
Yeah... Let's go.

(She tries to lead him back out, but Gramma
steps in.)

GRAMMA
Do you always leave your sunglasses on in the house?

BOO BOO
Um-hmmm.

GRAMMA
Drug addicts wear dark glasses to cover up their bloodshot
eyes.

BOO BOO
That's true.

GRAMMA
Are you a drug addict?

BOO BOO
No.

A saxophonist? GRAMMA

Nope. BOO BOO

What sort of business are you in? GRAMMA

I'm... a secret agent. BOO BOO

Is that so? For which government? GRAMMA

I'm not at liberty to say. BOO BOO

But you can tell me you're a secret agent? GRAMMA

As long as I kill you. BOO BOO

Somebody's pulling my leg. GRAMMA
(enjoying this)

(Bear gazes out the front window.)

Shit. BEAR

Language! GRAMMA

Is that yours? BEAR

Yeah. BOO BOO

Cool. BEAR

What is that, some sort of Japanese car? GRAMMA
(looks out window)

It's a Porsche. It's German. BOO BOO

Same thing. The Lincoln is mine. GRAMMA

BOO BOO

Do you live here, too?

GRAMMA

I'm not at liberty to say.

BEAR

She has a garden apartment.

GRAMMA

It stinks. I hate it.

BOO BOO

How come?

GRAMMA

Because the Portugese woman who lives upstairs has no carpets. All day long it's *thunk thunk thunk* on the bare floors! You're not Portugese are you?

BOO BOO

Don't think so.

GRAMMA

My husband and I had a beautiful house in Glen Ridge, but I had to sell it when he died.

BOO BOO

I'm sorry.

GRAMMA

You should be. He was a wonderful man.

BOO BOO

I'm sure he was.

GRAMMA

How can you be so sure? You never met him.

BOO BOO

I'll take your word for it.

GRAMMA

Jack was a self made man. He started in the mailroom and worked his way up. He educated himself at night, read all the great biographies. By the time he was through he had almost two thousand chemists working under him. He didn't make a million, but he came darn close. He traveled extensively in Central America, played golf with all the generalissimos, and beat the pants off of them. They threw him out of Guatemala for criticizing the government.

BOO BOO

What was he in?

Vitamins! GRAMMA

And I bet you took them. BOO BOO

I sure did! Of course their quality has deteriorated since Jack died. I wouldn't touch them now...
(shows him something around her neck)
Do you see this locket?

Yes. BOO BOO

Want to buy it? GRAMMA

Sure. BOO BOO

It's not for sale. It was brought from England by an ancestor of mine. Do you know what ship she came over on?

The Queen Elizabeth? BOO BOO

The "Swift Gain", 1624, Hosiiah Gimbles, Captain. GRAMMA

Wow. BOO BOO

Oh God, here we go. KATE
(sotto voce)

Amos and Honesty Rollinghead leased forty acres from the crown and set up their farm near Duxbury. A year later they were joined by his brother Charles who was thrown out of England for writing plays. Amos and Honesty were childless, but Charles married Bethia Gibbons, sired three children, then fell off the roof during an Indian attack. His sons David and Saul froze to death in Canada, but his daughter Rebecca survived and married the Reverend Richard Surecock, with whom she produced fourteen children. After that the Rollinghead presence in Massachusetts was assured. GRAMMA

I bet. BOO BOO

GRAMMA

The Rollingheads can trace themselves back through the Puritans, the Tudors, and the plagues. We signed the Magna Carta, fought at the battle of Hastings, on both sides, and are directly descended from Alfred the Great. Before that they didn't speak English.

BOO BOO

What did they speak?

GRAMMA

Gibberish!

(studies him)

I know what you are.

BOO BOO

What?

GRAMMA

You're a wealthy Arabian playboy prince, here on vacation.

BOO BOO

Possibly.

GRAMMA

My first gardener was an Arab. He used to pray in the roses. You look like him.

(beat)

Abooboo is an Arab name.

BOO BOO

It's just plain Boo Boo.

(Mag re-enters with a cup of coffee.)

MAG

Black, no sugar.

BOO BOO

(takes it)

Perfect. Thank you.

GRAMMA

I was telling Boo Boo about Ali. You remember him. Mag was just a little girl, but oh did he have a thing for her. He liked me, too, but he was scared of me. Good thing for him. Jack caught old Ali staring at Mag in her sandbox one day, and that was it for him. Fired him on the spot!... but the roses all died.

MAG

Why are we discussing Ali?

GRAMMA

Boo Boo looks Arabian.

Ali was Persian.

MAG

Same thing. They all sell rugs.

GRAMMA

Jesus!

KATE

Where is your family from?

GRAMMA

I don't know.

BOO BOO

They didn't tell you?

GRAMMA

I never met them.

BOO BOO

You never met your own family?

GRAMMA

Nope.

BOO BOO

Where did you grow up?

GRAMMA

Foster homes.

BOO BOO

Cool.

BEAR

(beat)

Well... Moses was left in the bulrushes, and he did all right... Of course he was a Jew... and they *always* do well.

GRAMMA

Jesus!

KATE

What is your problem?

GRAMMA

Could you spare us the anti-semitic remarks?

KATE

I simply said that the Jews do well. Don't be so critical.

GRAMMA

Maybe Boo Boo would like to see the garden.

MAG

KATE

(to Boo Boo)

Come on.

BOO BOO

Nice to meet you.

(Kate and Boo Boo exit out the garden.)

GRAMMA

She's bringing home Arabs now. First it was Cubans, now Arabs. That's what happens. White boys won't touch her.

MAG

He looks pretty white to me, Ma.

GRAMMA

You know what I mean. I saw this coming. I warned you, remember? You let her go to those dances too young.

(Jeff flops in the chair again, chews his pen, writes. Bear exits into the kitchen.)

MAG

Jeff... put some clothes on.

(He ignores her.)

MAG (Cont'd)

Jeffrey.

JEFF

I'm working.

MAG

We have guests. Get dressed!

JEFF

In a minute.

GRAMMA

Hey! Do as you're told, or I'll smack you!

JEFF

(fuss budget)

Grandmother, get a grip... Hmmm!

(exits upstairs)

GRAMMA

Where does he get his sass?

(Mag walks about, picking up papers, straightening things up.)

GRAMMA (Cont'd)

I don't understand what these children are doing with their lives. Why isn't Jeffrey in business? And what's Kate doing still living at home? She's almost thirty.

MAG

She's twenty-six.

GRAMMA

She looks thirty. Promiscuity has aged her.

(Mag picks things up.)

GRAMMA (Cont'd)

You're much too tolerant. You should have smacked them when they were little.

MAG

We don't believe in it.

GRAMMA

(raises her hand)

A slap across the mouth never did you any harm.

(Mag flinches, turns away.)

GRAMMA (Cont'd)

But it was living with that Cubano that ruined her.

MAG

Eduardo was a nice boy.

GRAMMA

He was a communist!

MAG

His family *fled* the communists.

GRAMMA

Or so they say... Daddy would never have stood for this. Remember when you wanted to go to art school? Huh! We nipped that in the bud! You had no talent, and the last thing we needed was a Bohemian in the family.

MAG

Let's change the subject.

GRAMMA

(studies her)

The ice is very thin today... Is Humpty Dumpty drinking again?

MAG

His name is Hal.

GRAMMA

All the King's horses, and all the King's men... Is he?

MAG

Not that I know of.

GRAMMA

Liar.

MAG

Let's change the subject.

GRAMMA

Fine by me. I'm just the guest. I'm not here to stick my nose in... but you married a dud. I'll never forget the day you brought him home. He looked like a workman in that flannel shirt. Didn't say a word, just stood there like he was made of stone.

MAG

Daddy liked him.

GRAMMA

Daddy could see the good side of everyone. It was his only fault.

MAG

Hal had been through hell in the war...

GRAMMA

Ummm.

MAG

And you've never appreciated how hard he works.

GRAMMA

He was handed that print shop on a silver platter.

MAG

He's worked there since he was a boy.

GRAMMA

It should have expanded by now.

MAG

Let's change the subject.

GRAMMA

Fine by me.

(beat)

But you should have left him on the floor of that Shop-Rite!

MAG

He quit after that.

GRAMMA

Once a souse, always a souse!

MAG

I've seen you drunk on more than one occasion.

GRAMMA

There are people in Tennessee who go to church with rattlesnakes, but I don't!

MAG

I miss the point!

GRAMMA

You shouldn't touch what you can't handle.

MAG

Let's change the subject.

GRAMMA

Good idea!

(Mag turns and strides into the kitchen, Gramma following her...)

GRAMMA (Cont'd)

But if he starts that up again, leave him! We'll make up Daddy's bed, and you can come and live with me!

(Lights come down...)

Scene 4

(Lights up in the garden... Kate and Boo Boo enter. She checks to make sure no one's listening.)

KATE
Okay, what are you doing here?

BOO BOO
I followed you home last night.

KATE
Why?

BOO BOO
You were too wasted to drive.

KATE
I was fine.

BOO BOO
You were swerving--

KATE
The road was swerving. I was fine!

BOO BOO
Okay... Didn't figure you lived at home.

KATE
I'm a glutton for punishment.

BOO BOO
So I see... Who's got the green thumb?
(sits)

KATE
My Mom--don't get comfy, okay?

BOO BOO
Brrrrr.

(beat)
So they don't know where you work?

KATE
My grandmother doesn't. My mother does.

BOO BOO
And she's cool with it?

(Kate says nothing.)

BOO BOO (Cont'd)
What are those things?

Acorn squash. KATE

Wow... and those? BOO BOO

KATE
Let's cut to the chase, okay? We had a little thing. It was fun... but that was it. I like you, Boo Boo, but... I'm not in the market for a relationship right now, not even a casual one.

Okay. BOO BOO

KATE
I've been through a lot of shit...

Uh-huh. BOO BOO

KATE
A lot of shit.

Uh-huh. BOO BOO

KATE
And I just need to make a big pile of money and get the hell out of here.

Where you going? BOO BOO

KATE
New Mexico.

What's out there? BOO BOO

Nothing. KATE

Okay. BOO BOO

KATE
I'm going to find a little adobe house way out in the desert, and I'll just paint, weave, throw some pots, grow my own food... and listen to the coyotes.

Sounds lonesome. BOO BOO

Yup... I can't wait. KATE

(Silence... they gaze at the garden.)

Ginger told me. BOO BOO

Told you what? KATE

You know what. BOO BOO

That bitch! KATE
(after a moment)

She's a good Catholic. What'd you expect? BOO BOO

Look, it's not your problem. I was stupid. I'll take care of it. KATE

You're sure it's mine? BOO BOO
(beat)

Yeah. KATE

Positive? BOO BOO

Yes! KATE
(angrily)

Okay, okay... BOO BOO
(beat)

So... what are you going to do? KATE

What do you think? BOO BOO

Don't I get some input? KATE

No. BOO BOO

Why not?

It's not yours. KATE

You just said it was. BOO BOO

Not in that way. KATE

In what way then? BOO BOO

It's in my body. It's mine. KATE

Okay... but it's mine, too. BOO BOO

No it isn't. KATE

We made it together. BOO BOO

We had sex... once. KATE

Twice. We had sex twice... I remember. BOO BOO

You know what I mean. Look, I don't want it. You don't want it. I'll take care of it. KATE

What if I want it? BOO BOO

What? KATE

What if I want it? BOO BOO

Boo Boo... you live in a motel. What are you going to do with a kid? KATE

Feed it. Raise it. Love it. BOO BOO

Alone? KATE

If I have to. BOO BOO

KATE
That's absurd! Look, we had... an amazing night together...

BOO BOO
Amazing.

KATE
But we both got... carried away...

BOO BOO
Totally.

KATE
And I'll take care of it.

BOO BOO
I always pay my way.

KATE
I appreciate that... I do.

BOO BOO
So give me a number. What's it going to cost me...

KATE
Okay...

BOO BOO
For you to have this kid?

KATE
What?

BOO BOO
Name your price. You quit the dancing... and the hooch...
and I'll drive you out to New Mexico and set you up.

KATE
Set me up?

BOO BOO
Nice little adobe house, Jeep, pots, couple of coyotes, the
works. I've got the scratch... and I can tend bar anywhere.

KATE
So I'll be... a kept Mommy?

BOO BOO
You want to make it official, we can stop in Vegas.

KATE
Oh, how romantic!

BOO BOO
Hey, you want me on my knees...
(MORE)

BOO BOO (Cont'd)
(gets down on his knees)

I'm there.

KATE
I am not ready to be a mother!

BOO BOO
I am.

KATE
Boo Boo... you've slept with half the girls at the club...
Knock up somebody else!

BOO BOO
Too late... We have a winner.

KATE
We don't even know each other!

BOO BOO
Who knows anybody? We're all perfect strangers.

(She turns away.)

BOO BOO (Cont'd)
Look, I know this is a lot. Could we at least... do a date?

KATE
A date?

BOO BOO
Yeah, dinner... a movie... miniature golf... whatever you
want... spend some time... work this out.

KATE
There's nothing to work out... I am *not* having this baby...
No way!... I'm sorry.

BOO BOO
(after a moment)
Okay... then I guess I'll just have to discuss this... with
your father.

KATE
You wouldn't dare.
(stares at him)

BOO BOO
Go ahead... call my bluff.

(They stare at each other... as the lights come
down.)

Scene 5

(Lights up on the living room... Mag strides out of the kitchen with Gramma, highball in hand, right on her heels.)

GRAMMA

That damn Irene, deaf old biddy. She tried to tell me that "gurble" is a word. "The gurbling brook", she says. Thinks she's gonna pick off a triple word score. I had "exodus" just waiting for that space! But she says, "Oh no, Fay, gurble is definitely a word."

(Mag pulls up the leaf to the dining table, lays out a tablecloth.)

GRAMMA (Cont'd)

So I said, "Let's ask Mr. Webster." And you know what she says? "You'll just have to take my word for it. I don't have a dictionary." Can you imagine that? She invites me over to play scrabble, and she doesn't even own a dictionary! So I called her a stupid old Mick, knocked the board over, and left.

(Mag exits back into the kitchen, Gramma following.)

GRAMMA (Cont'd)

(offstage)

The church group is after me again. They want me to return to the fold. I told 'em to go to hell...

(During the following Hal enters from the front with a bag of groceries. He hears Gramma holding forth in the kitchen, groans, moves to the dining room table, quietly sets down the bag, then crosses and exits out the front door.)

GRAMMA (Cont'd)

(offstage)

Why should I drive all the way into town just to hear that old fool tell me about the boat people? He doesn't even mention God anymore. You know he was a social worker, don't you? Before he came to the cloth. But he found out there was no money in social work, so he joined the church. Of course the TV guy's a crook. Always wants money for the Philipinos. I sent him a buck last week. Told him it was all that he was worth!

(Mag re-enters with cups and plates.)

MAG

Then don't watch him.

GRAMMA

(right behind her)

He's better than nothing... and at least he's white.

MAG

(sees the groceries)

Hal?

GRAMMA

Do you know there was a Baptist on last week who said that Jesus was "an African"? Right on television! And they have their own talk shows now, too.

(shakes her head in disbelief)

There was a time when you could drive all the way from New York to Chicago and never see a dusky face. That was before... you know who.

(seethes)

(Bear appears in the kitchen doorway.)

GRAMMA (Cont'd)

That son of a bitch. That dirty bastard... He didn't really have polio you know. It was all a big act, to make everybody feel sorry for him.

BEAR

Who you talking about?

GRAMMA

The Devil!

(Mag sets up. Jeff comes down the stairs, wearing a tie, sports coat, and his pajamas.)

JEFF

Ah, luncheon!

GRAMMA

(loves it)

He looks like a pillow salesman!

MAG

Bear, call your sister please.

BEAR

(at the top of his lungs)

KATIE!

MAG

Go *outside* and call her.

(Kate and Boo Boo enter from the garden.)

KATE

I'm here.

MAG
Lunch is ready. Where's your father?

KATE
Sitting in the garage.

MAG
(to Bear)
Go out and get him, please.

(Bear groans and exits.)

MAG (Cont'd)
Boo Boo, will you join us?

BOO BOO
Yes. Thank you.

(Kate turns away.)

JEFF
Where's the white bread?

MAG
Nobody likes it anymore.

JEFF
I do.

KATE
You would.

JEFF
(under his breath)
Fuck you.

GRAMMA
What? What did he say?

JEFF
Fondue. Where's the fondue?

GRAMMA
(not buying it)
Hah!

(Jeff piles up a sandwich)

GRAMMA (Cont'd)
Don't take all the ham.

MAG
There's plenty of ham, Ma.

GRAMMA
Last time you ran out.

MAG
There's plenty today.

(Jeff keeps piling.)

GRAMMA
The starving Armenian. Don't take all the ham!

JEFF
I'm not.

MAG
There's more in the ice box.

KATE
(disgusted)
This is turkey roll.

MAG
It's turkey.

KATE
It's "processed". Ick!

MAG
Boo Boo, can I make you a sandwich?

BOO BOO
No thanks.

MAG
It's no problem.

BOO BOO
I don't eat meat.

KATE
(impressed)
You don't?

(He shakes his head.)

MAG
Would you like a salad?

BOO BOO
(eating a radish)
This is great.

JEFF
I hate whole wheat.

Shut up and eat. GRAMMA

A salad is no problem. MAG

I'm good. BOO BOO

Are you sure? MAG

Ma, he's fine! KATE

GRAMMA
(hasn't been following it)
What's the problem?

There's no problem. MAG

What's wrong? GRAMMA

He doesn't eat meat. JEFF

Who? GRAMMA

(Jeff jerks his thumb at Boo Boo.)

Moslems eat meat. GRAMMA (Cont'd)

He's not a Moslem. KATE

GRAMMA
He looks like a Greek. The Greeks were the first white
people. Of course they got darker over the years.

Jesus Christ. KATE

(Everybody eats.)

You don't eat meat? GRAMMA

Nope. BOO BOO

GRAMMA
Do you meditate?

BOO BOO
Sometimes.

GRAMMA
You're a Hindu then.

KATE
Gramma, he's an American!

GRAMMA
I didn't say he wasn't.

MAG
Can we drop the ethnic issue, please?

GRAMMA
Fine with me... He's a Hindu American. The Hindus are an extraordinary people. They build beautiful temples... and worship monkeys.

(They eat. Bear re-enters.)

BEAR
Dad wants to eat his lunch in the garage.

MAG
Tell him we have guests.

BEAR
Shit!
(goes out again)

GRAMMA
(spells)
H A L doesn't L I K E me.

MAG
The kids can spell, Ma.

GRAMMA
I don't L I K E him either.
(to Jeff)
When are you getting a job?

JEFF
When the food runs out.

GRAMMA
That's what I figured. Your grandfather was running a factory at your age.

MAG
Jeff is working on his novel.

(Kate scoffs.)

JEFF
(at Kate)
What are *you* doing?

GRAMMA
Yes, what are you doing?

MAG
Kate is... between things.

GRAMMA
I'll bet.

MAG
No one's touched the potato salad. Try some, Boo Boo.
(stabs a fork into the potato salad)

BOO BOO
Thanks.

(Hal and Bear enter. Hal goes straight to the food.)

MAG
Hal, have you met Boo Boo?

HAL
No. How are you?

(They shake hands.)

BOO BOO
You're Kate's dad?

HAL
Yeah.

BOO BOO
Can we talk later?

HAL
Okay.

(Kate flashes Boo Boo a look... Hal flashes Mag one.)

GRAMMA
(sensing trouble)
Talk about what?

BEAR

(to Boo Boo)

Dad was in the war. Fought the Japs. Burned 'em alive in their caves with his flame thrower.

(*whooshes* like a flame thrower and screams)

MAG

Bear, we're eating.

BEAR

He got a Bronze Star.

(Hal says nothing.)

BOO BOO

Must have been hell.

HAL

(never talks about it)

Yep.

GRAMMA

(still on Jeff)

So who's going to read this great opus?

JEFF

Communists, child molesters, dope dealers, transvestites, Democrats, everybody.

GRAMMA

(confidentially, to Boo Boo)

I know what his real problem is, but I won't say it. I won't bring it up.

JEFF

What?

GRAMMA

Let's just drop it.

JEFF

Drop what?

GRAMMA

I'm not saying.

JEFF

Saying what?

GRAMMA

I won't say it.

JEFF

What is it?

Just forget it. GRAMMA

Forget what? JEFF

Never mind! GRAMMA

Never mind what? JEFF

(Beat)

GRAMMA
(to Boo Boo)
He's a homosexual.

JEFF
(very gay)
Oh God, at last it's out of the bag! I'm free now! Free!
Yes it's true! Boys! I love boys! All kinds of boys!
Short boys, fat boys, skinny boys, white boys, black boys,
high boys, low boys! Boys with great big ones...

GRAMMA
Eccchhh.

JEFF
Boys with little dingley ones!
(grabs Bear)

BEAR
Douche!

MAG
Jeff, that's enough!

JEFF
Boys! Give me boys!

BEAR
Get off me, weirdo!

(They wrestle.)

GRAMMA
I can't eat my sandwich now.
(throws it down)

HAL
I'll get the mustard.
(exits into the kitchen)

JEFF

Oh God, at last I can be me. Thank you, Gramma! Thank you--
thank you--thank you!

BEAR

Jeff beats off to the Ladies Home Journal!

JEFF

Bear still plays with his G.I. Joe.

BEAR

So?

JEFF

Down in his cave, all by himself...

BEAR

SO?

JEFF

Look out, Sarge! Hit the dirt! It's the Japs!

KATE

You jerk!

(punches Jeff in the arm)

JEFF

Ow!

KATE

Leave him alone!

JEFF

He started it.

KATE

You always start it!

JEFF

What?

KATE

You're a twenty-three year old loser who's afraid to leave
the womb!

(Mag sighs.)

JEFF

I love the womb!

KATE

No shit?

MAG

Kids--

Skunk cabbage. JEFF

Dead snake. KATE

Mouse turd. JEFF

Ringworm. KATE

Kids-- MAG

Yeast infection! JEFF

Pustule! KATE

Hormone! JEFF

Pez! KATE

MAG
(firmly)
That's enough! Jeffrey, go upstairs and get dressed!

(Hal re-enters with mustard.)

Can it, Mom. JEFF

Hey, watch you mouth there, buster! HAL

What did I say? JEFF

You don't talk to your mother like that! HAL

Like what? JEFF

You know what! HAL

What is this, the Soviet Union? JEFF

KATE

What an asshole!

HAL

Listen, young lady, you're the one who stays out all night, keeping your mother awake!

KATE

She keeps herself awake!

MAG

(turns away)

Oh dear God!

KATE

Ma?

GRAMMA

(a broadside at Kate)

You're a disgrace to this family! You've slept with hundreds of men. Now no decent man will have you!

JEFF

Battleship Gramma!

KATE

Who the hell are you to talk to me like that?

GRAMMA

I was married forty-two years--to the same wonderful man!

KATE

Whippy-doo!

GRAMMA

I beg your pardon!

KATE

You've never held a job or seen this country--let alone the world! All you ever do is ride around in your Lincoln, feeling superior to everybody!

GRAMMA

Because I am superior!

KATE

Bullshit!

GRAMMA

I raised a wonderful daughter and a son who died! I kept a beautiful house for thirty-six years. My ancestors signed the Magna Carta!

KATE

You were a kept woman all your life!

GRAMMA

I was provided for--and I still am!

KATE

There's no damn difference!

GRAMMA

The hell there isn't--and you're proof of it!

MAG

Okay--

GRAMMA

Tramp!

KATE

Bigot!

GRAMMA

Strumpet!

MAG

All right, that's enough!

GRAMMA

Floozy!

KATE

Racist!

GRAMMA

Whore!

MAG

Be quiet, Ma!

GRAMMA

I've been quiet for twenty-eight years!

HAL

You've never been quiet a day in your life!

MAG

Hal!

GRAMMA

Souse! Drunkard! Failure!

(Hal looks like he wants to rip Gramma's head off, but he turns and exits out the front, slamming the screen door behind him.)

HAL

(offstage, an explosion)

JESUS H. CHRIST ALMIGHTY!

(Silence)

MAG

Who's ready for ice cream?

GRAMMA

God sent our forefathers across the ocean to build a great new republic... but we've failed. Our children have failed.

(Gramma stretches out ceremonially on the floor.)

KATE

Oh God... not again.

GRAMMA

I'm coming, Jack. I'm really coming this time.

JEFF

Alas, poor Gramma. I knew her well, Horatio.

(He puts his hand on his brother's shoulder.
Bear turns and slugs him hard.)

JEFF (Cont'd)

HEY!

BEAR

(punching)

Fuck you! Fuck you! Fuck you!

(They fight.)

JEFF

Douche bag!

BEAR

(swinging wildly)

Fuckface!

KATE

Stop it, Bear! CUT IT OUT!
(pushes them apart)

BEAR

Everything was fine until FUCKFACE came home!

JEFF

What's wrong with you?

BEAR

(in tears)

YOU ARE!

(runs into the kitchen)

I'm coming, Jack... GRAMMA

All right, Gramma... that's it! Go home and die on your own floor! KATE

Kate... MAG

I'm coming. GRAMMA

This is our house--not her's! KATE

Stay out of it. MAG

Smite the harlot, Lord... GRAMMA

Get up, Gramma! KATE

Just stay out of it! MAG

And send your angels... GRAMMA

Get up, you old witch! KATE

Kate! MAG

To carry me home. GRAMMA

I'll carry you--! KATE

(Kate bends down to pick Gramma up, but Mag pulls her away.)

Katey, stop it! MAG

Mother! KATE

I said stop it! MAG

GRAMMA
Surely goodness and mercy...

KATE
Jesus Christ...

GRAMMA
Shall follow me...

KATE
Will you just stand up to her?

GRAMMA
All the days of my life...

KATE
For once in your life will you fucking stand up to her?

GRAMMA
And I will dwell...

MAG
(flustered)
Just...

GRAMMA
In the house of the Lord...

MAG
(points upstairs)
Go to your room!

KATE
Oh God, you are such A PUSSY!

(Mag slaps her, hard. Everything stops. Kate and Mag look at each other, stunned.)

GRAMMA
Forever.

(Kate turns and strides out the garden door. Boo Boo follows her. Mag stands center stage, shaking... as Jeff looks on uselessly. Blackout... **End of Act I.**)

ACT II

Scene 1

(Lights up on the garden... Mag, still shaken from the previous scene, sits staring into the yard. After a moment, Hal enters.)

MAG

Where were you? Where did you go?

HAL

The garage... What's the matter? What happened?

MAG

I hit her. I slapped her across the mouth.

HAL

Good!

MAG

Our daughter! I hit our daughter, Hal!

HAL

(beat)

Oh.

MAG

We swore we'd never lay a hand on them, and now I have.

HAL

She'll get over it.

MAG

That's not the point!

(Hal groans, stares into space.)

MAG (Cont'd)

Please don't do that. It reminds me of your father, the way he used to sit in his chair, groaning and staring into space... Your mother never really cleaned that house. They lived there forty years, and she never really cleaned it. I'm sorry if I drive you to drink. I'll blow my brains out if you like, throw myself under the car. Maybe we'd both be better off.

HAL

You need to take a nap.

MAG

Mother's sleeping on our bed.

(Hal groans, stares into space.)

HAL

I feel like my leaves are falling off.

MAG

So that's why you're drinking? Because your leaves are falling off? It's called autumn, Hal, and it's followed by winter.

HAL

(beat)

We haven't made love since the kids came home.

MAG

Let's blame it on our sex life. What a good idea.

HAL

Maybe Dad was right. Sit in your chair, drink your Jim Beam, and forget it.

MAG

Your father gave up.

HAL

He knew when to quit.

MAG

Do you want to just end it? Is that what this is all about? Do you want a divorce, Hal?

HAL

Up to you.

MAG

We can call those discount lawyers, have them draw up the papers.

(Hal says nothing.)

MAG (Cont'd)

What about the house? Should we sell the house?

(Hal says nothing.)

MAG (Cont'd)

And the kids? Should we sell them, too? I'm sorry our marriage has become such a hell hole. You'd better blast off before it's too late.

HAL

Good idea.

(Hal turns and exits. Mag glowers at the yard... as the lights come down.)

Scene 2

(Jeff's voice is heard...)

JEFF'S VOICE

Chapter four hundred and twenty-nine. The Moon of Despair...

(Lights up. Jeff sprawls in the red leather chair, reading what he has just written.)

JEFF

The methane fog was rolling in. The light was dying fast. Soon the Zarcusian ice crabs would be tasting earthling for the first time. Neutrino licked the crumbs from the wrapper of his last survival wafer... He'd been in tighter spots than this a thousand times before, but this was different, because this time... he didn't give a shit.

(Hal, glass of whiskey in hand, enters from the kitchen and crosses past Jeff on his way to the front door.)

JEFF (Cont'd)

Is that a good idea?

HAL

Got a better one?

JEFF

Yeah... don't.

HAL

Fuck you.

(Hal exits out the front. Jeff languishes in the chair... Mag appears in the garden doorway. She glares at him fiercely for a long moment. He feels her gaze... and doesn't move a muscle. After a moment, she exits into the kitchen, swinging the door closed behind her. Jeff sighs. Kate and Boo Boo enter from the front.)

KATE

Where is she?

(Jeff points to the kitchen.)

KATE (Cont'd)

My brother's writing a great science fiction opus, but sometimes the vastness of the universe reminds him of the truly infinitesimal nature of his own existence.

BOO BOO

I know the feeling.

KATE
(to Boo Boo)

Wait here.

(Kate strides into the kitchen, swinging the door closed behind her. Boo Boo and Jeff are left behind, uncomfortable.)

BOO BOO
You went to Rutgers?

JEFF
Yeah.

BOO BOO
Great B-ball team.

JEFF
If you like B-ball.

BOO BOO
You don't?

JEFF
Pong is my game... Are you porking my sister?

BOO BOO
Is that a problem?... Because if it is, you could just pull down your peejays and fuck yourself.

(Jeff says nothing. The sound of a rising argument in the kitchen. At first we only hear Kate.)

KATE
(offstage)
You hit me!... I don't care if the neighbors can hear!... It's just an expression!... I was not referring to your vagina, Mother!... Will you stop doing the fucking dishes and talk to me!

(A glass *shatters* offstage.)

MAG
Damn it!

KATE
It's just an old juice glass... I'll get the pieces.

MAG
Don't use your bare fingers!

KATE
I'm fine.

MAG
You'll cut yourself.

KATE
Mother, I'm fine!

MAG
Use a wet paper towel.

KATE
I don't need a fucking wet--OW!

MAG
Damn it, Kate! I told you.

KATE
I know you told me--you don't have to tell me you told me!

MAG
Rinse it in warm water.

KATE
Cold.

MAG
Warm!

KATE
Cold!

(bursts out through the swinging
door, holding her bleeding finger
in the air)
They changed their mind!

MAG
(right on her heels)
Warm for cuts! Cold for burns! You're dripping blood!

KATE
Jesus Christ!

MAG
Kate--

KATE
Just... get out of my face!

MAG
Get out of mine!

KATE
You got it.

(Kate stomps up the stairs. Mag turns and exits
into the kitchen.)

(Boo Boo says nothing, then follows Kate upstairs. Jeff sits in morose silence for a long moment.)

(Mag re-enters from the kitchen, holding a wet paper towel. She moves to the spot where Kate was standing, bends down, and violently wipes the blood off the rug. She stands, gives Jeff another icy look, then turns and exits back into the kitchen, swinging the door closed behind her.)

JEFF

The light was gone. Neutrino could hear the hungry crabs scuttling through the twisted wreckage of his fuselage. It had been one hell of a ride. He smiled as he settled back into the well worn nauyahyde of his control seat and turned up the Doobie Brothers. He gazed up into the stars and sang along, as his finger slowly caressed... the red "fuck it" button...

(explosion)

The end.

(Jeff gathers his papers and exits up the stairs... A beat... Hal enters from the front. His glass is almost empty. He moves to his chair and drops into it... Mag enters from the kitchen.)

MAG

(glaring at him)

Ready for another?

HAL

You bet.

MAG

Would you like me to pour it for you... or should I just run a hose in from the liquor cabinet?

HAL

Either way.

MAG

I'm sorry that our marriage has been such a numbing experience for you. I should have married Bill Davenport. I know that now. Perhaps I could have saved him from leukemia. At least I'd have lived in Connecticut.

(exits into the kitchen, swinging the door closed behind her)

HAL

(staring into space)

Bill Davenport was an A-hole.

MAG

(swings out again)

And I'm sorry if our sex life is no longer satisfactory. Maybe that's the source of your whole problem. You fought a war, came home, took over your father's business, married a homely woman, built a house, and sired three offspring. You played it entirely by the book, and now your leaves are falling off. Well you better do something about it before it's too late, or you'll end up like your father. I mean it, Hal. Don't just sit there... go out and find a paramour!

HAL

Can't afford one.

(Mag swings back into the kitchen... swings out again an instant later.)

MAG

How about that big breasted divorcee down at the public pool? The one with the orange lips. You're always eyeing her. She's nice and meaty, the way you like 'em.

HAL

The pool is closed.

MAG

Or give Doris Heidigger a call. Doris is no spring chicken, but she knows a few tricks, and she couldn't take her hands off you at the Labor Day picnic. Give old Doris a call... I mean it, Hal. You better go out and sow those wild oats, before they fall off, too!

(She swings back into the kitchen. Hal stares into space... Suddenly, Ozzie Osbourne wails as *Black Sabbath* BLASTS up from the basement below.)

MAG (Cont'd)

(offstage, screaming)

BEAR! TURN THAT CRAPPOLA DOWN! BEAR! BEAR! TURN IT DOWN!

(Hal THUMPS his foot on the floor three times, and the whole house shakes. Bear *primal screams* offstage... The music stops... Silence... Hal sips his drink... as Jeff, wearing jeans, a raggedy old Rutgers sweatshirt, and sneakers, comes down the stairs. Hal doesn't look at him.)

JEFF

What's up?

HAL

Not a thing.

Want to talk about it? JEFF

Nope. HAL

Hey... I'm dressed. JEFF

Impressive. HAL

You know that stuff will kill you. JEFF

That's the idea. HAL

Is that fair? JEFF

To who? HAL

Us. JEFF

(Hal says nothing, stands.)

That war really messed you up, didn't it? JEFF (Cont'd)

(Hal says nothing.)

You never talk about it. JEFF (Cont'd)

Nope. HAL

Maybe you should. JEFF

HAL
(thinks for a moment, then speaks)
One day this scrawny little Jap comes staggering out of his cave, covered with shit and maggots. He wasn't surrendering. His mind was gone, and he just didn't know where the hell he was. He was shaking his fists and yammering away, and some of the guys started laughing... and the Jap started laughing, too... and pretty soon we were all shaking our fists and laughing our asses off. Then one of the guys said, "Light him up, Hal!" And all the guys started chanting, "Light him up... Light him up!" So I did... and he went up like a dried out Christmas tree.

JEFF

Jesus.

(A silence. Hal downs his drink and starts for the door.)

JEFF (Cont'd)

Dad... where are you going?

HAL

Out.

JEFF

Want some company?

HAL

Nope.

(Hal exits... as the lights come down.)

Scene 3

(Lights up on Kate's room... Kate, her finger bandaged, lies on her bed. Boo Boo stands, perusing her high school yearbook.)

BOO BOO

(reading)

"Cheerleading, Drama Club, Honor Society." Wow. "Kate will always remember dropping the crown in "Camelot". She plans to attend college, join the Peace Corps, and marry George Harrison." Really?

KATE

I used to imagine there was a secret door in that wall. At night it would open, and George would sneak in. We'd sit here on the bed, holding hands and talking. I'd give him ideas for songs, and we'd plan our wedding... and sometimes the other Beatles would poke in their heads and say, "Come on, George, we gotta go!" And George would say, "Good night, me Katie Cat"... then he'd kiss me... and go.

BOO BOO

Hmm.

(after a moment)

So why'd you move back here?

KATE

I dunno.

BOO BOO

(after a moment)

Who was he?

(Kate says nothing. Boo Boo says nothing.)

KATE

His name was Eduardo.

BOO BOO

Spanish?

KATE

Cuban.

BOO BOO

Hmm.

KATE

He was an actor. We met on Earth Day, and we knew from the first that we were soul mates. He made paella and taught me the samba. I dropped out of college, moved into his place in the city, and worked as a waitress to support his career... for three years.

BOO BOO

Hmm.

KATE

Things were finally starting to break for him--he was doing soaps, and we were planning to get married.

BOO BOO

What happened?

KATE

He went down to Miami to visit his sick aunt, bumped into his old girlfriend at the hospital... and didn't come back.

BOO BOO

Oh.

KATE

He sent me a letter, said he owed me everything and would always think of me on Earth Day... I stayed in our apartment for a year, watching soaps and waiting for him to walk in the door... but he didn't, so I put all our furniture in the street and came home... Now he's got twins and plays Captain Hook at Disney World... and I'm dancing topless at the Seven Dwarves Lounge.

(after a moment)

Why do you want this baby so much?

BOO BOO

Because I do.

KATE

Why? You don't exactly seem like a guy who's always dreamed of being a dad. What if you only think you want it? What if it's there in your lap, screaming and pooping, and suddenly you're not so sure anymore?

BOO BOO

I'll stick it out.

KATE

How do I know? You live in a motel. You're a ladies man and a gambler. How do I know that I won't wake up one morning and find you've pulled an Eduardo on me?

BOO BOO

Because I won't.

KATE

Oh well that's so fucking reassuring, you being a guy and all.

(turns away, unconvinced)

BOO BOO

Kate...

(MORE)

BOO BOO (Cont'd)

(sits next to her)

There's something about me you need to know... My mother left me in a shoe box behind a fish market in Trenton... and it made a big impression on me... I have my faults, lots of them-- I'm vain, I love money, and I'm scared of getting close... but I keep my word, I play the cards I'm dealt, and I don't abandon anybody... ever.

KATE

(after a moment)

You never found her?

BOO BOO

Who?

KATE

Your mother.

BOO BOO

Never looked... She didn't want me. I don't want her.

KATE

Maybe you should find her anyway.

(He shrugs.)

KATE (Cont'd)

Maybe you should.

BOO BOO

Maybe you should talk me into it.

KATE

Maybe I will.

(They kiss.)

BOO BOO

Me Katie Cat.

(He pulls her into his arms, they kiss passionately... as the lights come down.)

Scene 4

(Lights up downstairs... Jeff sits at the dining room table, circling items in the newspaper spread out in front of him. Bear drifts in from the kitchen, stoned.)

BEAR
(hovering over Jeff)
Wanna play lawn darts?

JEFF
No.

BEAR
How come you're circling stuff?

JEFF
Do you mind?

BEAR
Do you mind?... Do you mind?... Do you mind?

JEFF
Are you stoned?

BEAR
Am I stoned?... Am I stoned?... Am I stoned?

JEFF
Cool it.

BEAR
Cool it... Cool it... Cool it, says Mr. Straight "A"s.

JEFF
Hey, it isn't my fault you stayed back.

BEAR
(turns away)
Fuck you, douche.
(drifts over to the front window,
gazes out)

I hate Saturdays. Everybody's home and mowing their lawns and going to Sears... and I don't have a car and my friends all suck... and there's nothing on tv but golf... but soon... there'll be nuclear war, and the sirens will scream, and the mushrooms will sprout, and the wind will come, and we'll all be melted into screaming bones... I can't wait.

(Kate and Boo Boo come down the stairs, toting a packed suitcase and a backpack. Boo Boo takes all the bags out the front door.)

Where you going? BEAR (Cont'd)

Outta here. KATE

Can I come? BEAR

Sorry. KATE

Figures. BEAR

Where's Mom? KATE

In the back. JEFF

Is she still on the warpath? KATE

Oh yeah. JEFF

Tell her I left. KATE

Tell her yourself. JEFF

Mouse turd. KATE

Ringworm. JEFF

Spittoon. KATE

Whoa. Are you *job* hunting? (sees what he's doing)

No, I'm circling the typos in the want ads. JEFF

"Advertising Copywriter"... Get real. (reading) KATE

Get bent. JEFF

KATE
Sling burgers. Be a man.

JEFF
Sling this.
(flips her a bird)

(Boo Boo re-enters.)

KATE
(to Boo Boo)
Let's boogie.
(to Jeff)
See ya.
(heads for the door)

JEFF
Dad's drinking again.
(Kate stops.)

KATE
Where is he?

JEFF
Out.

KATE
Why today?

BEAR
Why not?

JEFF
The guy's in pain.

KATE
We're all in pain.

BOO BOO
Do you want to go find him?

BEAR
He always comes home. That's not the problem.

BOO BOO
What is the problem?

BEAR
He hates himself.

JEFF
What should we do?

(A silence as they ponder this, then hear footsteps upstairs.)

MA

(offstage)

Mag?

BEAR

The Beast awakens.

GRAMMA

(from the top of the stairs)

Mag?

KATE

Shit... You guys hold her off. I'll go talk to Mom.
(exits out the garden door)

BEAR

(to Boo Boo)

I live in the basement.

BOO BOO

I get it.

(Gramma comes down the stairs.)

GRAMMA

(to Boo Boo)

You still here?

(calling out)

Mag?

(heads for the garden door)

BEAR

Hey, Gramma?

GRAMMA

What?

BEAR

Wanna play Crazy Eights?

GRAMMA

No.

(heads for door)

JEFF

Hey, Gramma.

GRAMMA

(stops)

What?

JEFF

How many Presbyterians does it take to change a light bulb?

GRAMMA

How many?

JEFF

Three... one to hold the flashlight... one to call the electrician... and one to mix the martinis.

GRAMMA

Stupid.

(heads for the door)

JEFF

Hey, Gramma.

(She stops again.)

JEFF (Cont'd)

How do Presbyterians camp in the woods?

GRAMMA

How?

JEFF

In tax shelters.

GRAMMA

Huh!

(heads for the garden)

JEFF

Hey, Gramma... How do Presbyterians have sex?

GRAMMA

They don't!

(starts out)

BOO BOO

Hey, Gramma.

(Gramma stops, eyes him. Boo Boo takes a deck of cards from his pocket, expertly fans them out. Gramma is intrigued.)

BOO BOO (Cont'd)

Pick a card... any card.

GRAMMA

All right.

(picks a card, looks at it)

BOO BOO

Now put it back.

GRAMMA

I know this one.

(She slips it back into the deck. Boo Boo
shuffles the cards, then peels one off the top.)

BOO BOO

Was this your card?

GRAMMA

No.

BOO BOO

Huh?... Was this it?

GRAMMA

No.

BOO BOO

This one?

GRAMMA
(losing patience)

No.

BOO BOO

This?

GRAMMA

No.

BOO BOO

Hmmm. I thought for sure...
(looks through all the cards)

GRAMMA

Houdini he isn't.
(starts out)

BOO BOO

Wait a minute... What's that in your blouse?

(She reaches into her blouse and pulls out...
the card.)

GRAMMA
(thrilled)

Do that again.

(Boo Boo shuffles the deck with one hand, as
Gramma watches intently... and the lights come
down.)

MAG
He's your sugar daddy?

KATE
No, Ma, he's not our sugar daddy. A sugar daddy's... never mind.

MAG
A sugar daddy's a big spender.

KATE
Yeah.

MAG
He's just the bartender.

KATE
Yeah.

MAG
Are you two... involved?

KATE
(after a moment)
We had a little thing. He wants it to be more.

MAG
He's in love with you?

KATE
Not exactly.

MAG
Are you in love with him?

KATE
Not yet.

MAG
But you're moving in together?

KATE
I'm just moving out, Ma. I don't know where I'm moving to.

(Mag says nothing.)

KATE (Cont'd)
Dad needs help.

MAG
What he needs and what he wants are two very different things.

KATE
I know, but--

MAG

It's up to him, Kate. He's a big boy.

(Shouts and laughter from inside the house.)

GRAMMA

(offstage)

You dirty dog!

KATE

You really should tell her to go fuck herself.

MAG

What would be the point? You can't win with Gramma, you know that. There's nothing she loves more than a fight. She comes here looking for one.

(stares off, upset)

KATE

I know, you just want to be Ferdinand the Bull. It's a cute story, Ma... but sometimes you've got to lower your horns and charge.

MAG

So we should all just run around trampling and goring each other... and shaking our tits at rooms full of strangers?

KATE

It beats keeping it all stuffed inside.

MAG

There's nothing wrong with a little self-control.

KATE

It's called repression.

MAG

It's called restraint!

KATE

If you say so.

MAG

(sighs)

I thought your generation was going to change everything. Whatever happened to Peace and Love?

KATE

They ODed.

MAG

(after a moment)

I'm sorry that I slapped you.

KATE

I deserved it.

MAG

No you didn't. Your father and I swore that we'd never lay a hand on our children. We took an oath... on our honeymoon.

KATE

Really?

MAG

In Bermuda... so long ago... What a strange week that was. The beach gave your father nightmares, but we got through it and were happy... We built this house. Then you came along... and Jeff... and Bear...

(breaking down)

All I've ever done with my life is be a wife and mother, and now I've failed at both.

KATE

No you haven't.

MAG

No? My husband's an alcoholic. My children are unhappy... and my mother walks all over me.

KATE

Hey... at least you're not a twenty-six year old unmarried pregnant go go dancer.

(Mag looks at her.)

KATE (Cont'd)

'Fraid so.

MAG

Oh, Katie.

KATE

(weeps)

Sorry.

MAG

Oh, Katie... Oh, Katie...

KATE

I'm sorry, Ma.

MAG

Come here.

(She opens her arms. Kate moves into them.)

MAG (Cont'd)
(holding her)
Oh, Katie... Oh, Katie...

KATE
I feel like such a chump.

MAG
It's Boo Boo's?

KATE
Yeah.

MAG
What are you going to do?

KATE
I don't know... He wants to keep it.

MAG
And get married?

KATE
It's... complicated.

MAG
(holds her)
I know... I know... This happened to me, too.

KATE
(shocked)
It did?

MAG
Bear was an accident... We only wanted two.

KATE
Not quite the same thing, Ma.

MAG
I guess not.
(holds her)
So... the two of you need to spend some time together...

KATE
Yeah.

MAG
And work things out.

KATE
(after a moment)
This feels so good.

MAG

Ummm.

KATE

I should get pregnant more often.

MAG

The tomatoes did well this year.

KATE

Even with all that rain.

MAG

Should we tell your father?

KATE

Oh God... I guess.

(sniffles)

What's going on with you guys?

MAG

His leaves are falling off.

KATE

Isn't that what leaves do?

MAG

Um-hmmm.

KATE

(after a moment)

Do you forgive me?

MAG

I love you. Forgiveness is included.

KATE

Oh, Ma... Oh, Mommy.

(They hold each other... as the lights come down.)

Scene 6

(Gramma is heard...)

GRAMMA'S VOICE

Down and dirty... my name's Gerty... Keep your aces in your shirty.

(Lights up on the living room... The light is fading. It is evening. A card table has been set up, and a poker game is in progress. Clockwise around the table: Gramma, Jeff, Bear, and Boo Boo. Gramma deals.)

JEFF

What's the game?

GRAMMA

Five card spit in your eye.

BOO BOO

What's that?

GRAMMA

It's five card draw, and if I don't win, I spit in your eye!
(studies her hand)

You know, Boo Boo, there's some pretty big games down at senior citizens. We could split the take.

BOO BOO

How do I know I can trust you, Gramma?

GRAMMA

(batting her eyelashes)

Oh, you can trust me.

JEFF

Just play cards.

GRAMMA

(meaning Boo Boo)

Look at that smile. He's going to eat us alive.

BOO BOO

Just you, Granny.

GRAMMA

My, what big teeth you have... Wait a minute. Who didn't ante? Randolphe.

BEAR

I put in.

JEFF

I saw him.

GRAMMA
It was you.

JEFF
That's my Jefferson right there.

GRAMMA
I didn't see you.

BOO BOO
I did.

JEFF
It was you, Gramma.

BEAR
It was Gramma!

(Bear and Jeff sound off like a couple of
warning sirens.)

JEFF & BEAR
Senility! Senility!

GRAMMA
All right--all right! Keep your pantaloons on!
(antes)
Who can open?

JEFF
I can.

(Jeff, Bear, and Boo Boo bet.)

GRAMMA
Bump it a buck.

JEFF
A buck!

BEAR
Gramma, it's openers!

GRAMMA
In or out?

JEFF
Christ.

(Jeff and Bear put in.)

GRAMMA
(to Boo Boo)
Low rollers.

Give me three. JEFF

Four! BEAR

Got an ace? GRAMMA

Yes! BEAR

One. BOO BOO

(They study their cards. Bear looks at his hand and sighs unhappily. Boo Boo's hand reaches under the table, taps Bear's leg, and slips him a couple of cards. Bear slips them into his hand.)

Ten centavos. JEFF
(putting in a dime)

Bump it fifty. BEAR

(Kate enters from the garden, switches on a lamp or two around the room.)

Sixty cents to you, Gramma. BOO BOO

Don't rush me... don't rush me. GRAMMA

Change in plans. We're staying here. KATE
(to Boo Boo)

Okay. BOO BOO

I'm in. GRAMMA

Call. JEFF

Full boat. BEAR
(lays down his hand)

GRAMMA
You drew all that in four cards?

BEAR
Yup.

GRAMMA
(throws down her cards)
Dammit!

BOO BOO
You're losing your touch, Granny.

GRAMMA
Shut up.

KATE
One more game and you guys can drive Gramma home.

GRAMMA
I can drive myself.

KATE
It's getting dark.

GRAMMA
Old bats can see in the dark.

KATE
You had three accidents last year.

GRAMMA
Fender benders... besides, I'd rather go out in a burst of flame.

KATE
What if you take a family of four with you?

GRAMMA
That's their problem.

KATE
Last game, Jeff.

GRAMMA
Who put Mary Magdalene in charge? You'd think she was a married woman, the way she gives instructions.
(to Boo Boo)
You don't like her, do you?

(Boo Boo shakes his head no.)

GRAMMA (Cont'd)
You like me, right?

(Boo Boo nods.)

GRAMMA (Cont'd)

See? I've stolen your beau.

(Kate turns away.)

GRAMMA (Cont'd)

She's younger, but I'm richer... and I don't care how many chippies you have on the side, so long as you keep me satisfied.

BOO BOO

Groovy.

JEFF

(dealing)

Five card stud... Gramma's queen.

GRAMMA

Two bits!

(They all put in. Mag enters from the garden.)

GRAMMA (Cont'd)

Where have you been?

MAG

In the garden.

GRAMMA

You look terrible. These kids run you ragged.

JEFF

It's still your queen, Gramma.

GRAMMA

Check.

JEFF, BEAR, BOO BOO

Check.

JEFF

(dealing)

Six. Jack. QUEEN! Ace.

GRAMMA

Thank you, Jesus... Two bucks!

JEFF

Fold.

BEAR

Fold.

Fold. BOO BOO

Lumpen proletariat. GRAMMA
(rakes it in)

(Bear shuffles. Headlights illuminate the front window. A car door slams outside.)

HAL
(offstage, singing)
I am what I am, and that's all what I am...

GRAMMA
Somebody's feeling no pain.

(The front door opens and Hal staggers in, reeling drunk.)

HAL
Home again... home again...

GRAMMA
Odysseus returns.

HAL
(to Gramma)
You still alive?

GRAMMA
No thanks to you.

BEAR
(dealing)
Five card draw... aces, deuces, one eyed jacks, one eyed kings, threes, nines, and sevens wild.

JEFF
What no eights?

BEAR
And eights.

JEFF
Oh man.

HAL
(stands over the table, weaving)
Who's winnin'?

JEFF
Not me.

BOO BOO
Join the game?

HAL
Nope. I stink at cards.

GRAMMA
That's not the only thing about you that stinks! Breathe over there.

(Hal breathes on Gramma.)

GRAMMA (Cont'd)
Cut it out!

HAL
Aren't you ready for the ice flow?

GRAMMA
I'm a white woman--not an Eskimo--and the answer is NO.

HAL
The polar bears would choke on you.

GRAMMA
They'd love me, because I'm sweet. Right, Boo Boo?

BOO BOO
Um-hmmm!

GRAMMA
He's humoring me... but I like it.

MAG
You left the car lights on, Hal.

HAL
Oops.

KATE
I'll get them.
(goes out)

HAL
(stumbles around, singing)
I am what I am and that's all what I am...

MAG
Sit down, Hal...

HAL
And I am what I am and that's all what I am...

JEFF
What's to open?

Jacks or better. BEAR

And I am what I am and that's all what I am... HAL

I got it. BOO BOO

And I am what I am... HAL

Hal? MAG

And that's all what I am and I am what I am and that's all what I am... HAL

Change the record! GRAMMA

And I am what I am... HAL

SHUT UP! GRAMMA

(Hal stops singing.)

I'll play these. BOO BOO

Me, too. JEFF

One! GRAMMA
(throws down her card)

(Bear deals.)

I'm Popeye the Sailor Man... toot toot! HAL
(quietly)

Hal. MAG

Fifty cents. BOO BOO

I'm Popeye the Sailor Man... toot toot! HAL

Bump it fifty. JEFF

Fold. BEAR

I am what I am and that's all what I am... HAL

To you, Gramma. JEFF

I'm Popeye the Sailor Man... HAL

Go to bed! GRAMMA

Toot toot! HAL

Hal--! MAG

I'm Popeye the Sailor Man... (louder) HAL

Stop inflicting yourself on the entire family! GRAMMA

I'm Popeye the Sailor Man! HAL

Just play cards, Ma. MAG

I am what I am and that's all what I am... HAL
I'm Popeye the Sailor Man!

Daddy would never have stood for this! GRAMMA
(on her feet)

Daddy's gone. MAG

Don't I know it! GRAMMA

Good old Jack--what a guy! HAL

GRAMMA

He was ten times the man you are!

HAL

The Great White Vitamin Salesman!
(pounds his chest)

GRAMMA

At least he wasn't a drunk!

HAL

I am what I am and that's all what I am!

GRAMMA

Go to bed!

MAG

Just play cards, Ma!

HAL

You know what Jack told me the night before he died?

GRAMMA

Nothing!

HAL

He said... "Portugese women are the best. They do it on the bare floor!"

MAG

Hal--!

GRAMMA

(on her feet)

LIAR!

HAL

(dances a drunken jig)

I'm Popeye the Sailor Man...

JEFF & BEAR

(joining in singing)

He's Popeye the Sailor Man...

HAL, JEFF & BEAR

I am what I am and that's all what I am...

GRAMMA

Stop acting like a bunch of baboons!

(Kate joins in.)

HAL, JEFF, BEAR & KATE

He's Popeye the Sailor Man! Toot toot!

(The singing continues through the following...)

GRAMMA

(to Jeff and Bear)

You two, take your drunken father upstairs.

JEFF

Cool it, Gramma.

GRAMMA

Do as I tell you... NOW!

(smacks Jeff)

JEFF

Hey!

KATE

Don't you hit my brother!

MAG

All right, Mom, that's enough. Sit down!

GRAMMA

Take your hands off me!

MAG

Behave yourself!

GRAMMA

Oh shut up!

MAG

Mother, this is my house--

GRAMMA

Raspberries!

MAG

And you will do as I tell you!

GRAMMA

Is that so?

MAG

Mom...

(Gramma picks up her highball glass, goes straight to Hal...)

HAL

I am what I am and that's all what I am...

(She SPLASHES the drink right in his face. The singing stops as Hal reels, sputtering and coughing.)

(Mag catches him before he falls, guides him to his red leather chair, and drops him into it.)

GRAMMA

Huh! That sobered him up. Toot toot!

(Gramma goes back to the card table and sits. Mag stares at her, shaking with rage.)

GRAMMA (Cont'd)

Whose deal is it?

(Mag moves to the card table.)

MAG

(shaking)

How dare you... do that... to my husband.

GRAMMA

(scoffs)

Whose deal is it?

MAG

Mine.

(Mag FLIPS the card table over--cards and chips go flying! The kids look stunned. A silence.)

MAG (Cont'd)

Jeffrey, get your grandmother's coat.

GRAMMA

I'm not going anywhere.

MAG

The game is over.

GRAMMA

Says you.

(For a long moment Mag and Gramma stare each other down.)

GRAMMA (Cont'd)

Give me the evil eye... and I'll give it right back.

MAG

I hate you... I have always hated you.

GRAMMA

Hmm!

MAG

You... are a selfish... bigoted... cold hearted... ignorant... stupid old bitch.

GRAMMA

Sticks and stones may break my bones, but names will never hurt me... You've always been a jellyfish.

MAG

Jeffrey... get your grandmother's coat!

(Jeff goes immediately to the front hall closet.)

GRAMMA

I'll leave when I'm good and ready.

MAG

(shaking, but giving no ground)

Oh, you're ready, Mother... and I'm more than ready... and for once in your life you will shut your dirty mouth and go quietly... because if you don't... so help me God... you will never set foot in this house again... and you will die alone.

(For once, Gramma shuts up. Jeff returns with her coat, holds it open for her.)

MAG (Cont'd)

The boys will drive you home.

GRAMMA

I'll drive myself.

MAG

(exploding)

THE BOYS WILL DRIVE YOU HOME!

GRAMMA

(after a moment, quietly)

All right.

(She stands. Jeff helps her on with her coat.)

GRAMMA (Cont'd)

I'm sorry your life has been such a disappointment... and I'm sorry that you hate me... but Jack loved me... and Jesus loves me... They're all I need.

(looks around)

Where's my bag?

(Bear brings it to her. She snaps it shut with finality.)

GRAMMA (Cont'd)

Don't bother to bury me. The state will do it. I'll leave my money to the Indian children. At least they're *real* Americans.

(turns to Boo Boo)

It was lovely to meet you, Boo Boo...

(MORE)

GRAMMA (Cont'd)
(glances icily at Kate, then back to
him)

You can do better.

(Gramma starts toward the door, but stops, looks
out the window... into the growing darkness.)

GRAMMA (Cont'd)
They say that God is kind, but I think he's very cruel...
Where's my chauffeur?

JEFF

Here.

(Gramma seems a little befuddled, and afraid.
Jeff offers his arm. She takes it.)

GRAMMA

Let's go.

(They exit.)

MAG

Bear, follow in our car.

(Bear starts out.)

BOO BOO

Hey...

(tosses him the keys)

Take mine.

BEAR

Cool.

(Bear exits... a silence... Hal has passed out
in his chair. Mag, still shaking, steps out
into...)

(The garden. Kate follows her out. Boo Boo
steps from the house and stands watching, as
Kate wraps her arms around her mother.)

KATE

(in a whisper)

You were brilliant... Brilliant!
(hugs her)

MAG

But I didn't win.

KATE

Yes you did.

MAG
If you say so.

KATE
Need some help with Dad?

MAG
(shakes her head no)
Why don't you two... go for a walk?

KATE
Okay.

MAG
But I still say Ferdinand was right.

(Kate moves to Boo Boo.)

MAG (Cont'd)
Boo Boo... Welcome to the family.

KATE
(takes his hand)
Come on... I'll give you the tour.

(Kate and Boo Boo exit around the house, leaving Mag alone on stage. She takes a moment to pull herself together, then turns and steps back... into the house. She moves to Hal, passed out in his chair.)

MAG
Hal...
(shakes him)
Hal, come on!

HAL
Huh?

MAG
Wake up.

HAL
Where is everybody?

MAG
It's just us.

HAL
Oh.

MAG
Come on.

What time is it? HAL

Bedtime. MAG

Okay. HAL

Are you hungry? MAG

No... Water. HAL

I'll get you some... Come on. MAG
(helps him to his feet)

Whoa. HAL
(staggers)

I've got you... Come on. MAG
(holds him up)

I was dreaming... HAL

Uh-huh... MAG

I was back on the beach... on Okinawa... but there was nobody there... but me. HAL

It's over. MAG

Yeah. HAL

Let's go to bed. MAG

Works for me. HAL

Come on. MAG
(leads him to the stairs)

Hey... HAL

(MORE)

HAL (Cont'd)

(stops)
I love you, you know?

MAG

Lucky me.

(They start up the stairs... as the lights come
down. **End of play.**)