

"Generations Apart"

A Comedy in Two Acts

by

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**Perusal
Only**

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"GENERATIONS APART"

CAST OF CHARACTERS

David Ludling	A man in his 60's - a recently retired History teacher
Sheila Ludling	David's wife - a retired bookkeeper.
Rob	Their son - age 40
Felicia	Rob's wife - age 40
Reston age 12	Rob and Felicia's son
Trish	David and Sheila's daughter - age 38.
Aspen St. John	(Photo journalist) A member of the community Glee Club
Fred Dinsmore	David and Sheila's neighbor - age 67
Several members of the Community Glee Club who double as the House painters and attendees at the party.	

"GENERATIONS APART"

ACT I

SETTING:

A house in a suburb of an Eastern city.

The Kitchen is Down-Stage-Right
With the dining room table (right center).

The Living Room is STAGE LEFT. The front door is up-Stage Left.

The bedroom is on a riser behind and above the Living Room area. The workshop is up-stage of the open area between the kitchen and the dining room.

Action should be almost continuous, with only seconds between scenes.

AT RISE: KITCHEN

DAVID AND SHEILA LUDLING are fixing dinner. Both are attractive people in their 60'S. DAVID is in a WHEELCHAIR but he is quite agile.

They have obviously been cooking together for years, and for them it is a choreographed routine.

(While the stage is still in black we hear:)

Lettuce.

DAVID

Lettuce.

SHEILA

(There is a sound of something being thrown.)

Onion.

DAVID

Onion.

SHEILA

(THE LIGHTS COME UP to reveal Sheila at the refrigerator tossing VEGETABLES across the room to David at the stove.)

DAVID

Tomato.

(A tomato goes flying his way.)

Garlic.

(The garlic goes high and David reaches up for a spectacular catch.)

Whoa! Whoa. To the infield, sparky, to the infield. Come on, got a cripple' guy here!

SHEILA

Right. If you got out of the stupid wheelchair you could effective member of this cooking team.

(DAVID twirls the skillet and points toward a bottle of olive oil.)

DAVID

Just shoot the juice to me, Bruce.

(She deftly slides the olive oil in his direction. Neither ever misses a beat.)

SHEILA

Do you remember the first time we made spaghetti... in New York?

DAVID

Back in the days when we allowed ourselves 17 cents a meal?

SHEILA

Back in the days when we still thought that cooking was foreplay.

(Sheila almost trips over the wheelchair.)

SHEILA

Could you get this stupid 'thing' out of the way?

DAVID

Ahh, come on, 'Penelope,' she just doesn't like you.

SHEILA

That's cute. Real cute. The first senior on the block to have a pet name for his wheelchair. They're going to love you when you go into the home.

DAVID

You know, my dear, I could personally do with a whole lot less talk about 'the home' and 'going into the home.' I feel like the vultures are circling.

SHEILA

Pass the celery. You know, if you'd get out of that wheelchair a little more often you'd probably scare the vultures away.

(There is a KNOCK on the door.)

DAVID

That sounds suspiciously like a knock on the door.

(DAVID spins around and opens the door. At first no one is there. Then a large TROUT dangles in the doorway.)

FRED (O.S.)

And God said let there be fishes...

DAVID

Awesome. Far out. A talking fish. You don't see that so much any more!

(Over his shoulder.)

Sheila, I think it's probably for you.

(FRED DINSMORE enters holding a string of fish.

FRED is a bluff, hearty man who suffers from severe short term memory loss.)

FRED

...and there were fishes aplenty.

DAVID

Fred, those are beauties.

FRED

You missed out this time, Davey boy. Fish were bitin' at everything. Only stopped because it started to rain.

(Holding a fish.)

This one? I wrote the word hook on a piece of paper and dropped it in the water.

SHEILA

Wow! Throw a few loaves in there with those fishes and you could start yourself the First Church Of Fred.

FRED

How many you want?

DAVID

Leave a couple. Come for fish fry tomorrow.

(Fred, obviously at home in their kitchen, starts to wrap the fish to put them in the refrigerator. But as he does this, the other fish are dripping all over the place and Sheila chases him around trying to control the drip damage.)

SHEILA

You want to stay tonight. We're having spaghetti. Just add a little sauce.

FRED

No, not tonight. I have something important to do tonight.
(Stops and thinks.)
I can't right at the moment remember what it is. But I'm certain it's important.

DAVID

Tell me, Fred, how can you run a successful Insurance Company and a thriving Real Estate Office when you can barely remember where you put the keys to your own car?

FRED

Ah, hah! There's the secret. I don't run the company. I go fishing. But the people who do run my company never know when I'm coming in.

(To David)

By the way, are you going to come out and do some fishing tomorrow or are you too crippled to bait a hook?

SHEILA

He'll be there, Fred. It's a matter of life and death.

DAVID

Sheila, it's only fishing.

SHEILA

I've got to get him out of this house before I kill him.

FRED

Good. 5:00 am. I actually told Ray over at the Glee Club that we'd bring back enough fish for the Fund Raiser. You up for that?

SHEILA

I'll kick him out of bed at 4:30.

(As they talk Fred is sampling the food adding more seasonings as he does so.)

FRED

Umm, good. By the way, you will love this. I've got a great idea to prank Ray. You know how he loves the new little Honda of his. Well, look at this.

(From somewhere in his fishing jacket he produces a folded up 8x10 of a car wreck.)

SHEILA

Is that Ray's car?

FRED

No, but it looks just like it. Doesn't it? And this wreck is - at this very moment - out in back of our office. So what I'm thinking...

DAVID

(Gets it right away.)

Yes, yes, yes, and yes indeed...!

FRED

...during rehearsal next week, we get a tow truck to swap cars and...

SHEILA

That's awful!

DAVID

That's brilliant. Brilliant!

(Brightens appreciably.)

Wait. Wait. Better yet, we rig up the camera on my wheelchair; film the whole thing.

(Almost hopping up and down.)

No, no, even better, better yet, we do it during the fund raiser at the end of last song.

SHEILA

Stop it! You guys and your pranks. You never know when enough is enough. You go too far; you always go too far and someone gets hurt.

DAVID

Sheila, my chickadee, you never know how far is 'far enough' until you've gone 'that just a little bit too far.' Somebody said that. Who said that?

FRED

Well, whoever it was, it wasn't me.

(Starts to go.)

See you tomorrow.

(Stops in the doorway.)

Did I say what time?

DAVID

You said you'd pick me up at around 'noon'.

FRED

Okay. Bye. See you at five sharp; be on time.

(The door slams as he goes.)

DAVID

See, I'm not that old.

SHEILA

But he's walking and you're not.

DAVID

Listen, I'm not in this chair because I want to be.

SHEILA

Au contriारे; yes you are! See, that's the thing, Davey, my great good friend and lifetime companion. You do not need to be in that chair - all day long. Falling down and breaking your hip had nothing to do with your heart attack and being in that chair won't stop you from having another heart attack.

(David slams the oven.)

SHEILA (cont'd)

Oh!! Touch a chord? Well, the truth is you don't really have to be in that chair at all. I think you're scared to get out of it.

DAVID

The doctor clearly said ...

SHEILA

'...use the chair when you get tired.' Well, for somebody who doesn't do much you sure are tired a lot.

(Kneeling in front of him.)

Here's the straight dope, lover. At least what I think. You had a scare - big scare - biggest scare there is. Sure. You came that close to dying, and you didn't like it.

(Standing over him.)

But I'll tell you something: I am not -- read my lips -- not going to let you out of your promise to take me to Paris. No way; no how! So start getting out of that chair.

DAVID

Hey, babe, I know what this trip means to you --

SHEILA

To us! We made "us" a promise.

DAVID

To us. And do I look like the kind of lowlife swine who would renege on a promise?

SHEILA

Yes you do. That's why we have non-refundable tickets, darlin'. You are a lowlife swine, but you're a cheap lowlife swine and you won't renege on non-refundable tickets. Catch.

(She tosses him the pot holder just as he is about to open the oven.)

DAVID

Look, I came out of the hospital with two clear instructions from my doctor: One, if it tastes good, you spit it out; two, if you're enjoying it, stop immediately.

SHEILA

Well, I don't think hiding in that wheelchair is going to keep heart attacks away.

DAVID

I'm not hiding; But if my hip gives out and I fall again,...

(The PHONE RINGS.)

SHEILA

That'll be Trish. Dollars to donuts her dumb car broke down again.

(David rolls over to the phone.)

DAVID

Does anyone ever pay off on the 'dollars to donuts' thing?

(Into phone)

Hello.

(Big smile)

Oh, Rob! Hey! Hi, guy. Long time. Where are you?

(To Sheila)

It's Rob.

SHEILA

(Under his conversation.)

I was suspecting that the minute you said, 'Hi Rob.'

DAVID

When? Tonight?! Of course.

(Whispering to Sheila)

He and Felicia are coming here.

(To phone)

We were just cooking dinner. Is Reston with you?

(To Sheila)

Reston is with them.

(To phone.)

We'll jus-t throw another 'fatted calf' on the fire.

(To Sheila)

Put on more sauce.

(Rolls his eyes.)

No, Rob, we're not actually having 'calf'- fatted or otherwise. I know you don't. Yes, people who eat red meat are idiots, Rob. I would never knowingly eat red meat, Rob. Sometimes your mother will force me to eat red meat, Rob.

(Big smile)

What? Stay here?! We'd love it. We'll put Reston in the Trish's room and you two in your old bedroom. Unless you'd rather put that Lexus in the Trish's room and have your son sleep in the driveway.

(Rolls his eyes again)

Yes, that was another attempt at humor, Rob. Your mother told me to say that. Okay. See you when you get here.

(David hangs up.)

SHEILA

In some states there'd be a law against people like you answering the telephone. Now, would you care to translate, leaving out, say, the attempts at humor.

DAVID

They're here - in town. They're coming for dinner. And they want to stay here. Overnight.

SHEILA

Here? Not at the Hilton? Oh, god, dinner! They could have called earlier? Let people know?

DAVID

Ha! Ha ha ha ha! You, being an ordinary person, obviously do not understand: When you make as much money as Rob and Felicia make, you don't have to 'call earlier;' you don't have to 'let people know.' When you are a dot.com genius, you don't have to do anything.

SHEILA

(Suddenly defensive.)

Well, They probably they had a good reason.

DAVID

Whoa! What happened to "They could have called earlier?"

SHEILA

I listen to you and you make them sound like they're monsters.

(Points to the pantry.)

Get me some more sauce.

DAVID

Stop! Hold on here. A documentary film crew should follow us around and tape record us when we talk about Rob. See, you get mad at Rob - that's fine; I get mad at Rob and you rush to his defense.

(Angry)

I mean, they always pull stuff like this and then you always say, 'They probably have a good reason.'

(Slamming down the jar.)

They have a good reason all right; they're selfish. I never see Trish doing anything like this.

SHEILA

You've never seen Trish do anything wrong; she's your little darlin'.

DAVID

Trish may have her faults, but she was never selfish, she was never mean spirited and she never voted for a Republican.

(Sheila stops what she's doing.)

SHEILA

Okay. Stop right there. Let's make a pact before they get here. No jokes and no snide or sarcastic remarks about money, or Republicans or computers, or Republicans, or dot-coms, or Republicans. And we do not talk about politics! Period.

DAVID

It's a sad thing when you can't talk about politics with your own son.

SHEILA

David, listen to me. Reston is with them. I want to see my grandson.

DAVID

What are you talking about? I'm not going to stop you from seeing your grandson.

SHEILA

The last time they were here, you insulted President Reagan and they didn't let us see Reston for two years.

DAVID

I did not insult President Reagan.

SHEILA

You said he was the kind of president that gave actors a bad name.

DAVID

And they took that as an insult!

SHEILA

David, neither of them has a sense of humor, and that lady can hold a serious grudge.

(Warning)

Just stay away from the volatile subjects and you'll be fine.

DAVID

And what are the volatile subjects?

SHEILA

You know, the things that Rob and Felicia feel they are authorities on - like Money...

...or politics,...

DAVID

war...

SHEILA

..and peace,...

DAVID

religion...

SHEILA

DAVID

So, there are really three rules: if it tastes good spit it out, if it feels good, stop, and if it's interesting enough to talk about it - don't.

SHEILA

I was wondering if there wasn't a trade-in policy on used lovers.

(As she says this she passes David running her fingers over his shoulder. He turns adroitly around, grabs her wrist and pulls her back.)

DAVID

(Tenderly)

That's something else we might consider trying again ... Now that I'm almost a new man.

SHEILA

You won't get any argument from me, "Qui-ma-Sabe". I thought that maybe... when we got to Paris...

DAVID

Yes?

SHEILA

Well, I've always had this fantasy of a cheap little hotel out by the Bois d'Bologne... And you and I... possibly a couple of dwarfs...

DAVID

I just realized it, you have a truly, truly dirty mind, don't you. If I could get out of this chair...

(Sheila leans down putting her hands around David's neck.)

SHEILA

I do understand. I'm not the one who had the heart attack and I'm not the one who had the broken hip. I'm the one they sent over from AARP to nag you into not being any older that you have to be.

(They kiss.)

DAVID
You taste good. I'm feeling younger already.

SHEILA
Let's make sure we take this trip.

(They start to kiss again and the DOORBELL RINGS.)

DAVID
That kid has always had the worst sense of timing.

(Sheila goes to the front door and opens it to:

ROB, FELICIA and RESTON -- all talking on cell phones.

ROB is an uptight young exec who wears his self importance on the sleeve of his trendy clothes.

FELICIA his wife, would be wearing a four piece suit if there was such a thing. For her, the home is merely an extension of the office.

RESTON, Age 12, is a nice kid - or might be if his parents would leave him alone. He appears on guard, especially around his mother, and has the vocabulary of a little professor.

ROB holds up one finger to signal that he will be done in a minute. This gesture is copied by FELICIA and finally by RESTON.)

ROB
Listen, I'm losing you. We'll talk tomorrow.

FELICIA
The reception is terrible here. Call me back.

RESTON
I have to go. My phone's all dead.

(They all flip their phones off.)

SHEILA
Come in! Come in! Let's get those coats off. We'll have dinner ready in about 5 minutes.

(Stepping back to look.)
Reston, I swear you've grown a foot since the last time I saw you.

RESTON

(Looking down.)
I'm almost certain this is the same number of feet I had last summer.

(David cracks up.)

DAVID

That's my boy!!!

FELICIA

That'll be enough, Reston.

RESTON

Yes, mother.

ROB

Dad, one thing: can we put the Lexus in the garage?

DAVID

Sheila's car is in there right now.

ROB

Well, if it's too much trouble,...

SHEILA

No, I'll move my car...

DAVID

Your car is all right out in front isn't it?

ROB

Dad, it's a Lexus; it's raining.

DAVID

Isn't it waterproof?

(Sheila, pulling on her coat, kicks David's chair.)

SHEILA

David!

(Smiling.)

It's no trouble; I'll pull the volvo out.

DAVID

(Whisper to Sheila.)

So, is parking a 'volatile' subject?

ROB

What?

DAVID

Nothing.

SHEILA

Come on; we'll run between the drops.

(They get to the door and Rob stops.)

ROB

Eh, mom, This isn't any inconvenience is it?

(BLACKOUT.)

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ROB

SCENE 2: DINING ROOM - THAT NIGHT.

AT RISE: They are finishing dinner.

The dining room is also used as David's study and Sheila's 'painting room.

Throughout the scene Sheila and David are busy serving or clearing dishes. David is limited by his wheelchair, but at no time do Rob or Felicia offer to help.

ROB

That was wonderful. Is there more bread?

(Felicia snatches it before it can get to Rob.)

FELICIA

Rob!

ROB

Perhaps not. She's keeping me trim.

FELICIA

Well, we were thinking about possibly moving here, at some point, to the upstate area.

(Sheila is bringing in the silverware.)

SHEILA

Really?! That would be fantastic.

(Tapping Reston on the head.)

We'd see you a lot more often, young man.

(Sheila continues out into the kitchen.)

ROB

I'd also like to start my own company....

(off Felicia's look)

our own company, and...

FELICIA

...the tax base is a lot more business-and-homeowner-friendly here than in New York.

ROB

At least you're not trying to support three crack addicts for every tax-paying citizen.

DAVID

Well, you're right, property taxes are reasonable, although we're due for an increase...

FELICIA

Fight it! Fight it now!

(Realizes she is over-amped.)

I mean, the time to start fighting increases is before they come. I can show you how to bring any property to a base of zero tax.

DAVID

I think actually we're a little under-assessed right now. I've done a lot of improvements and the housing is going up and so I'm sure we'll get an increase.

FELICIA

It's idiotic... idiotic to pay more taxes than you have to.

(Sheila sticks her head in.)

SHEILA

And what are we talking about?

DAVID

Talking about houses. We're fine.

(To Rob and Felicia)

Taxes are still pretty darn reasonable here and I know they need money to run local government because --

ROB

(Interrupting.)

No they don't. I grew up here. They had plenty of money when Reagan was president. Bottom line: They need tax increases to support welfare chiselers and junkies.

DAVID

(Trying to be accommodating)

Maybe you're right.

(To Reston)

Anyway, how's school, kiddo?

RESTON

We were studying "taxes" in school. - in Civics.

DAVID

Oh, great!

RESTON

I'm writing a paper. My dad's helping me.

(Quoting)

People who get handouts from the government drain our economy.

DAVID

But don't we all kinda get something from the government?
 (Hollering off.)
 Where's that coffee?

FELICIA

(very aggressive)
 The thing is we don't all benefit.

ROB

I don't take welfare.

FELICIA

I don't send my children to the free clinic.

ROB

We're not in line for needles or recovery centers or free lunch, or free rent, or free love, or free anything.

FELICIA

That's what our taxes are paying for. And we paid a lot of taxes last year.

ROB

And got nothing back... but regulations and more regulations. See, the job of government now seems to be to obstruct the people who want to work and coddle the people who don't.

(David sets down his wine glass.)

DAVID

What about all the 'stuff' we do get from the government?

ROB

What "stuff" would that be? Believe me, I don't get any stuff from the government.

DAVID

Oh, I don't know, the City Hospital where you were born - The public schools you went to. And as I recall, those nifty internet satellites probably wouldn't be up there if the government hadn't laid a pretty good foundation.

(David is on a roll now.)

And then, of course, computers themselves would still be glass beads on a string if it wasn't for the R & D the government invested in.

ROB

(laughing)

Dad! Dad! Dad, you exaggerate everything. That's why I don't like to talk to you. You just say foolish exaggerated statements.

FELICIA

Besides we weren't talking about those things.

ROB

We were talking about food stamps and abortions and sex change operations.

DAVID

Yeah, that line item for sex change operations is threatening to bust the national budget again this year, huh?

ROB

See you're being facetious.

DAVID

You know, there's a word: facetious. My parents could use that word and my kids can use that word, but in my mouth a word like facetious sounds - well, facetious.

(Sheila walks in and stops abruptly.)

SHEILA

What are you talking about, David?

DAVID

Nothing. I was being facetious.

(Changing the subject.)

Reston, Did your dad ever tell you that this house was haunted?

RESTON

Haunted? No sir. Dad?!

DAVID

Oh, I hope to tell ya', the ghost of my great Aunt Agatha. And your dad almost took a picture of her one dark and stormy night.

(Really getting into it.)

You see, Reston, when he was about your age, your dad wanted to be a detective, and ...

RESTON

Really, Dad, is that correct? a detective?

ROB

I was twelve...

FELICIA

(Becoming annoyed.)

Uh-hum.

(Sheila kicks David under the table.)

DAVID

Ouch. You kicked me.

SHEILA

(changing the subject)

Save room for dessert. We are going to have my speciality - Super-Pudding?

RESTON

Can I mother?!

(Sees his mother's expression.)

Probably not; too much sugar, huh?

FELICIA

It's up to you how fat you want to be.

SHEILA

I'll bring some fruit too. Maybe a little of each, huh.

(SHEILA goes to the kitchen.)

FELICIA

I love your dining room, Mother Ludling. It is so --

(Seeing the disorder.)

informal.

SHEILA

(Pokes her head in.)

You know, you could just call me Sheila. That'd be okay. Mother Ludling sounds a little like I'm going to get canonized, or buried or sent to knitting school - something kinda un-fun like that.

FELICIA

I was thinking as we drove up, how nice that we could stop to see mother Ludling. I mean 'Sheila.' I said, 'I know Sheila would like to see Reston.'

(To Reston)

Didn't I say that, Reston?

(Reston is totally into his grandfather's story.)

RESTON

Tell me more about the ghost, grandpa. Was it scary?

FELICIA

Pl-ease!!

ROB

Eh..., Fil doesn't like things like ghost stories.

FELICIA

I don't like them because they are not real and they are only told to terrify children and confuse them.

RESTON

I'm not confused, mom, or scared - even a little and I really want to know about --

FELICIA
Reston! Your father was talking.

RESTON
He was? Oh, yes mother.

(Felicia kicks Rob under the table.)

ROB
Ow. You kicked me. Oh, yes. Talking. Yeah, Fil thought we would get a chance to talk...eh, Dad.
(Stalling.)

We haven't had a chance to talk much, about, you know, things like eh, I don't know, History things.

DAVID
Did we... ever?

SHEILA
David!!!

ROB
Still plodding away on the history of Communism?

DAVID
Well, I'm writing an article. We're planning to be in Paris in April and after we exhaust the Louvre, I'm going to do some research on "The pre-DeGaulle government after World War II" - one of the times Communism seemed to actually work.

SHEILA
David!!!

ROB
My dad still thinks that Communism will save the world from -- what is it ,dad? -- from progress? Or freedom?
(Getting pretty hostile.)
Or is it 'intelligent thought' that communism is going to save us from?

DAVID
(Affable.)
I think this is still an area where we will have to agree to disagree, Rob. I knew there was going to be trouble when, as a teenager, I caught you, in the bathroom, looking at pictures of William Buckley.

FELICIA
It must be very interesting to be a professor. All those impressionable young minds.

DAVID
Ex - professor. I'm retired, remember? Besides in High School they don't call you professor.

You're called...eh, Yo Dog - yo teach. I personally prefer just "G" or the big "gangsta teach." That's the best.

FELICIA

I don't...I Don't understand what you're talking about.

(ROB kicks SHEILA by mistake)

SHEILA

You kicked me!

ROB

Sorry.

SHEILA

You're supposed to kick her. I'm supposed to kick him. And no one, no one, is supposed to kick me.

(With a BANG, the back door flies open and TRISH swirls in.)

SHEILA

Trish!

TRISH

Hey, hey, hey, hey ,hey! Where's my favorite bro?
(Hugging Rob.)

You look great.

(She turns to Felicia who freezes her enthusiasm with a look.)

FELICIA

Hello, Trish.

SHEILA

How did you know they were here?!

TRISH

I was driving by - on the way to the doggie clinic - and I saw his Lexus in the garage and her BMW out front and I thought, Oh, god, Capitalists have captured my parents.

(Looking around)

And where is that little child of yours.

(To Reston.)

Excuse me, have you seen a small boy about so high...named Rest-Stop or Rust-Spot, something like that, I believe.

(Reston's reserve collapses in giggles.)

RESTON

Reston! My name is Reston.

TRISH

You can't be Reston. He's just little.

(Twirls him around.)

But you can be my date for Saturday night. You're pretty hunky. Getting muscles too. Yum!

(She swings from Reston to Sheila.)

TRISH (CON'T'D)

You sure don't look old enough to be a grandma. It must be all that regular sex.

FELICIA

Trish! Please...

TRISH

Speaking of sexy,...

(Spins the wheelchair around.)

How's my main man? When are you going to stop malingering and get your booty out of that stupid chair? It's unhealthy.

DAVID

It's amazing how on a humble teacher's salary I was able to send everyone in this house to medical school and everyone has an opinion on my health.

(Trish sits next to Rob.)

TRISH

I give up. I didn't come to talk to you anyway.

(She pulls a chair next to Rob and does a sort of patty cake routine that they must have done as kids where she slaps her hands together and then on her thighs and ends with what would be two high fives - that is if Rob joined in. He stops.)

TRISH (cont'd)

Good to see you, bro. Long time.

ROB

(stiffly.)

So... Still sober?

(This almost throws her, but not quite.)

TRISH

Sober as a judge, Rob. Look at this.

(Shows a medallion.)

Two years. Pretty cool, huh?

SHEILA

You want some dinner? Or dessert, rather.

TRISH

Oh, super-pudding. Sorry, I gotta pass. I have a sick doggie in the van...

ROB

Always attracting strays, huh? How's that motorcycle guy?

TRISH

The 'motorcycle guy' is fine. But we don't call him that; we call him Joe. Joe's fine. I gotta go.

(Points to Reston.)

You. Me. Tomorrow night. Miniature Golf. Seven o'clock. Be there!

(TRISH is gone and the world is a little smaller for the loss.)

FELICIA

Well, she certainly...

ROB

Is she still at the five-dollar-an-hour save-the-drug-addict place?

SHEILA

Oh, yeah, she loves it there and --

ROB

There's a brilliant waste of taxpayer money.

DAVID

She wouldn't leave it even when she was offered a classy six-dollar-an-hour job - say, helping Wal-Mart solve the unemployment problem.

RESTON

I assume History teachers know a great deal about the unemployment problem.

FELICIA

Your grandfather has wonderful ideas, I'm sure...on a variety of subjects.

DAVID

Yeah. If you ever want to know anything about...

(Picking up some papers from the sideboard.)

...say, Upton Sinclair and the socialist solutions to the unemployment problem in the great depression, I could...

SHEILA

David! More something...?

RESTON

That's what my dad needs. He's got an unemployment problem.

FELICIA AND ROB

Reston!

RESTON

What did I do?! You said you were looking for another job. Isn't that what unemployment means?

(A silence.)

DAVID

Is that right? Are you looking to... what? Change companies?

ROB

This is what I wanted to talk to you about. I don't know if you've been reading the financial pages, Dad, but Maxwell Mortgages had a... serious setback this year.

FELICIA

(Rather too quickly.)

Not in our division, of course. West Coast. They're all complete idiots out there!

DAVID

How serious?

ROB

It's a --

FELICIA

(Interrupting)

We arranged for what I like to call a basic 'debt protection structural adjustment.'

SHEILA

What's that?

ROB

We eh...kinda went bankrupt.

DAVID

Bankrupt?!!

ROB

Receivership.

DAVID

Receivership?

SHEILA

David, if you repeat everything Rob says, this is going to take a long time.

DAVID

(Ignores her.)
Maxwell Mortgage?! Bankrupt?! Really!?

SHEILA

(Almost to herself)
Yep, gonna take a long time.

FELICIA

Our department didn't go bankrupt. Overall, our area - SMALL BUSINESS AND SINGLE HOME LOANS - did very well, very well. We were showing a 'substantial future profit' and a clear 'stock profit arc' when the company folded.

DAVID

So your business was doing very well... except for being out of business.

FELICIA

It's not exactly like that... It's hard to explain in the... eh, layman's language.

(Her smile now a grimace.)

Unfortunately, we were personally moving equity assets from the home base to the market base, on margin, of course, and --

SHEILA

I'm not sure I know what a Home Base is...or a Market Base, for that matter?

DAVID

(Gets it.)

You were buying on margin?

FELICIA

(defensively)

Well, yessss.

ROB

MAXWELL was 18 and it was going to go to 40.

FELICIA

We knew this.

ROB

Absolutely.

FELICIA

It would have been insane not to buy Maxwell stock at that point in time.

ROB

Believe me.

FELICIA

Insane.

SHEILA
Except that... it didn't go to 40?

FELICIA
It, eh...

DAVID
It went down?

ROB
It went down. Way Down.
(Bouncing back.)
But Felicia played it very smart, didn't you sweetie?

FELICIA
I simply moved the residential property at a time when it was
at the top...

ROB
...of a relatively low market.

DAVID
Now would that residential property be your residence, your
home - your house?

FELICIA
In a manner of speaking...

SHEILA
You lost your house?

ROB
In so many words...

FELICIA
Yes.

DAVID
(Very blunt.)
So where are you gonna live?

(Sheila kicks David.)

DAVID
Sheila stop it; you'll give me a blood clot. I was just
wondering where you guys were planning to live?

ROB
Well,...
(expansive smile.)
...we're here.

SHEILA
Here?! I mean, 'here-here?'

ROB

We were thinking we might try to stay here a little bit longer than just this weekend?

FELICIA

Oh not long. Until I make a couple of phone calls.

ROB

A week at most.

FELICIA

Oh, yes; for god sake, I can set up an international merger in less than a week.

ROB

She can. I've seen her do it.

FELICIA

We were going to stay at the Hilton,

ROB AND FELICIA

But we remembered how much you would like to see Reston.

FELICIA

And I thought: Why be selfish? It would be so much more fun for you two to be with your grandson. Be like a... eh, vacation.

SHEILA

Well, that is very thoughtful. Vacation.

(Patting Reston's head.)

And I think we can find a way to entertain you, my young friend.

DAVID

I can use him to help me with the boat tomorrow. Do you like to fish?

RESTON

Fishing?! Yeah! Wow!

(Enthusiasm is not safe.)

Well, I mean, mom, is it all right?

FELICIA

You don't actually go out... into water... in a boat, do you?

DAVID

We have life jackets. We haven't had a child drown in, I don't know, in weeks. And even then, it was a child we didn't really like very much.

FELICIA

What?! A child you...

ROB

Dad!!

(To Felicia.)

He was joking, Fil. Remember?

FELICIA

Oh, joking, joking, I see.

DAVID

We're only out for a couple of hours and we'll have him back by 8:30 in the morning.

RESTON

8:30 in the morning? What time do you go?

DAVID

5:00 o'clock.

RESTON

5:00 o'clock?! Are fish even awake?

(David roars with laughter.)

DAVID

(Best Bogart imitation.)

Kid, to quote a great man: I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

(BLACKOUT)

SCENE 3 : BEDROOM/ KITCHEN - NIGHT.

At Rise:

DAVID and SHEILA are cleaning up the kitchen DOWNSTAIRS while...

ROB and FELICIA are UPSTAIRS in Rob's old room.

This room is pretty much like the day Rob moved out except a SMALL ROLL-AWAY BED in the corner - this even though the double bed would probably be big enough for two. RESTON, getting into pajamas, is saying good night.

(IN THE KITCHEN)

SHEILA

I still don't know why they need two beds.

DAVID

Because they found out that people sleeping together leads to some kind of personal intercourse. Or worse. And young urban professionals don't go in for that sort of thing.

SHEILA

That's a truly dumb theory: How do you explain Reston?

DAVID

Virgin birth. They wanted the stock option but they had to take the child instead.

(IN THE BEDROOM)

RESTON

My room is very nice mother. It's right across the hall.

(Holding a digital camera.)

I hope that ghost comes tonight.

FELICIA

Reston, stop talking nonsense! You know I don't like talk like that.

RESTON

When I get back from fishing, Grandma said she'd show me how to paint with oil paints.

ROB

Well, there may not be time for that.

FELICIA

It's messy and there's no point to it. Besides, we have to connect your computer and get back on line with your studies. Now brush your teeth and go to bed.

RESTON

Yes, mother.

(Reston exits. Felicia calls after him.)

FELICIA

And no dreaming.

ROB

Yes, mother.

FELICIA

Put on the CD for your Japanese lessons before you fall asleep.

IN THE KITCHEN:

SHEILA

It's going to be wonderful having Reston for a week.

DAVID

Smart kid. Too bad they got him in a straight jacket.

SHEILA

I've never seen a kid that looked like he needed a swimming hole and a puppy quite as much as Reston. Can't we just keep him?

DAVID

It's not like we did such a great job raising the ones we had.

(SHEILA takes DAVID's hand and turns the wheelchair in a soft waltz movement to the music.)

SHEILA

You know, my love, of all your wonderful talents and abilities, the one I like the least is this recent genius for instant depression.

(SHEILA stops dancing as DAVID picks up a PICTURE OF A YOUNGER ROB from the counter.)

DAVID

I was just wondering, what ever happened to this kid? I really liked this kid.

SHEILA

As I recall you didn't get along that well with your father.

DAVID

Yeah but he was a jerk. We had nothing to talk about.

SHEILA

Oh. Well, in that case I'm sure it made sense.

(UPSTAIRS - IN THE BEDROOM)

FELICIA

I don't think your father likes me.

ROB

My father doesn't like anyone who isn't a socialist or at least an unemployed, dope-eating psychopath. Perfect example of the over-educated liberal.

FELICIA

I don't know how you survived it, but I'll tell you one thing, this house is a mess, and there are going to be some changes around here starting tomorrow.

ROB

Well, they don't use this room and...

FELICIA

Not this room; the whole place. The house is not... not organized - not really; and this kind of food they eat is just intolerable; it's unhealthy. And they waste time... God!! On nothing. On meaningless conversation.

(Turns out the light.)

ROB

Good night, dear.

FELICIA

I think you are a true hero to have risen above this.

IN THE KITCHEN:

DAVID

You know, this could delay our trip.

SHEILA

No! No, no and more no. Listen Snodgrass, I'm going to Paris with someone if I have to call Lotharios-Are-Us and paddle over there in a canoe.

DAVID

There's no such thing as Lotharios-Are-Us. Is there?

SHEILA

Push me and find out. Besides this is February, we aren't going to Paris until April and they're going to be here for one a week -- two tops.

Right. Two. Tops. DAVID

(BLACKOUT.)

**Perusal
Only**

SCENE 4: KITCHEN - ONE WEEK LATER

AT RISE: Sheila is cooking oatmeal.

FELICIA enters. She is holding several sheets of paper.

RADIO

That, of course, was the unforgettable Bobby Darin. Now for local and national news. Congress has once more postponed a vote on --

(FELICIA changes the radio station to CLASSICAL.)

FELICIA

You don't mind, do you? Classical is so much better for the young mind.

SHEILA

No go ahead. I'll get the news ...eh, from the Town Crier when he stops by later.

FELICIA

"Town Crier"... That's humorous...

(seeing oatmeal)

That's not for Reston, is it?

SHEILA

It was. Don't tell me oatmeal is not on his diet.

FELICIA

It's not the oatmeal; it's the sugar.

(Referring to paper)

I've made a list of foods that Reston eats. And this is Rob's diet. You'll notice --

(Picking up a pill bottle.)

Is it safe to leave prescriptions laying around where children could pick them up?

SHEILA

That's David's Nitroglycerine - for his heart. He has a bottle stashed in every room. Just a little bit phobic. But it's probably good for everyone in the house to know because if he needs 'em, he needs 'em fast.

FELICIA

He has attacks?! Heart attacks?!

SHEILA

Not heart attacks, just pain and not very often. One of these under his tongue - no problem.

(RESTON comes running through from the back porch.
He is carrying a paint brush.)

RESTON

Grandma! Grandma!
(Sees Felicia - freezes.)
Oh!!! Hi mom...mother.
(Whispers)
Grandma, the red keeps running into the yellow.

SHEILA

It's probably just too wet. Give me a min' and I'll be right out.

(RESTON goes back out.)

FELICIA

(Calling after him.)
Don't forget the PBS show and you have one more lesson to do before tonight. Today we have to get back on schedule.

SHEILA

(reading))
...cranberry juice, Soy milk, wheat germ... A lot of these things we don't have in the house right now.
(Silence - Felicia waits.)
I'll... I'll have to go to the store.

FELICIA

I noticed a cute little organic food store downtown.

SHEILA

Well, cute can be kind pricey out here. Everything in that store is a third again as expensive as Waldo's.

FELICIA

But, of course, how do you put a price tag on health - you know, food-wise?

SHEILA

We don't, but they do. David and I are pretty price tag conscious - especially since our retirement.

FELICIA

Speaking of money, could you cash a check for me. I don't have any cash.

(Writing)

Will two hundred be all right? And I was wondering if I could ask you a huge favor.

SHEILA

Of course... If I can.

FELICIA

Reston is registered in soccer, at the new school. I guess I'm now a soccer mom. So I need a larger vehicle-transportation-wise. Would you mind terribly if I use the station wagon on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

SHEILA

Sure. I have quilting on Wednesdays, but I guess we could swap cars.

FELICIA

Well, no, ... that's probably not so good. The BMW is a...eh, standard shift.

SHEILA

I've driven standard shift for years. When I grew up they didn't have anything but standard shift. And ponies, of course. That was it - transportation-wise.

FELICIA

I'm sure that's interesting, but this car is so touchy. Very touchy, and very expensive, if you know what I mean....if anything goes wrong.

SHEILA

But if you take my car, what will I...

(FELICIA'S cell phone rings - loud.)

FELICIA

This is Felicia . Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Can you get to the point here a little faster Yes. No! We will not accept less than seven hundred thousand.

(She turns away from Sheila.)

Don, we are suing them for 'wrongful termination,' 'misrepresentation,' 'personal suffering' as well as loss of income. For god sake, we're living in a shanty town here, Don.

(Listens)

All right, you tell that Armbruster woman that I will personally put her in a ringer and squeeze. I want results, not excuses, not postponements. Results. Is that clear? Do it! Now!

(Rolling her eyes)

Then Don, I want you to do one more thing; I want you to find out if \$700,000 will still leverage us into part ownership in Capco. Of course that's what I want. Handle it.

(FELICIA clicks off; flips to tape record mode.)

Look into replacing Don with another business agent before the fifteenth.

SHEILA

Well, that was, certainly, eh, businesslike.

(Felicia nibbles the oatmeal.)

FELICIA

This is pretty good.

(corporate-speak)

You know, Sheila, how much we fully appreciate your excellent contribution here.

SHEILA

Excellent contribution? Well, yes, we're glad to help out... we're big helper-outers.

FELICIA

Because... I don't quite know how to say this: it may just be a little longer than we thought originally.

SHEILA

Oh? Bad news on the job market?

FELICIA

We can't actually 'look for jobs' just yet. We're starting a class action suit against Maxwell - the company. For personal loss due to their going out of business.

SHEILA

A suit? You're suing them for going out of business? This is the company you ran?

FELICIA

It's not as simple as that. But our lawyers think it would look better if we did not take anything - another job - until after the first hearing.

SHEILA

And when is that?

FELICIA

That's it. They don't know. Could be tomorrow; could be two weeks or two ... I mean, it won't be long.

(FELICIA is talking as she goes out the door.)

But they're very pleased - the lawyers - about our being here - like this. It looks good when we're pleading psychological suffering, personal hardship, inconvenience, etc.

SHEILA

I'll bet it does - suffering.

(To herself now.)

That's bad. I hate suffering. Personal hardship too.

(RESTON looks in cautiously. He is covered with paint.)

RESTON

Is my mom gone?

SHEILA
Yeah. You look wonderful.

RESTON
I do?

(Reston is on the edge of tears.)

SHEILA
Kiddo, it's watercolors; it washes right off.

(SHEILA takes the small brush from his hand and dabs at his shirt.)

SHEILA
Sure. But you missed a spot. My feeling is that you haven't started to paint until you've spilled some on you. Want some oatmeal? No sugar. Just molasses.

RESTON
Grandma?

SHEILA
Yeah?

RESTON
She tries to push people around.

SHEILA
Your mom?

RESTON
She does that with everybody.

SHEILA
Even you?

RESTON
Yeah, me too.

SHEILA
Well, she's sure good at it, isn't she?

RESTON
I don't want you to get mad at me.

SHEILA
I don't think you have to worry about that too much. You and me are what they call 'pals.' Finish your cereal so I can see what you painted with all that paint.

(RESTON looks down at his shirt.)

RESTON

You put paint on my shirt. And you're a grown-up. I've never seen anybody do anything like that before.

(BLACKOUT.)

**Perusal
Only**

SCENE 5: KITCHEN / DINING ROOM - ONE WEEK LATER

AT RISE:

The DINING ROOM has been transformed into an office area for ROB who is multi-tasking, talking on the cell, working the palm pilot, printing, making notes, all as he puts a large calendar up on what was Sheila's easel.

In the KITCHEN. DAVID is taking cookies from the oven. There are a couple of baskets of cookies already finished.

RESTON is way too dressed up. He watches from the side, stepping out of David's way, continually looking at his I-phone.

RESTON
Why don't you just buy cookies.

DAVID
Then we couldn't claim they were home-made cookies, could we? Besides I don't like to brag but these, my boy, are probably the finest cookies in the tri-state area. Sure you won't have one?

RESTON
I don't really think my mother would -

DAVID
...would approve? I know. Would you like to help?

RESTON
Mother said to be careful not to get my school clothes dirty.

DAVID
You could take those off, you know. You could put that Palm thing down for a few minutes. I sure would like some help here.

RESTON
Really?

DAVID
Really. Come on.

RESTON

Is there something that would be appropriate for my skill level.

DAVID

Fortunately, although cookies are a great art, they don't require all that much skill level.

RESTON

Well, maybe - just for a minute.

(IN THE DINING ROOM AREA)

(FRED enters the front door, calling loudly. ROB looks up annoyed.)

FRED

Hello-hello. Anybody home?

(Sees Rob.)

Oh, hi, Rob. Driveway was blocked. Lotta cars. Couldn't get to the back. You're all set up here, huh?

DAVID

(Calling from kitchen.)

We're out here in Cookieland.

FRED

(Calling out the front door.)

Hey, Ethel! Tell Miriam to bring the baskets in the front.

(He goes past Rob into the kitchen.)

(The WALL PHONE RINGS; it is between the two rooms. FRED turns back and picks it up.)

FRED

Good morning... Eh, ... somebody's residence.

(Looks around.)

Oh, yeah, the Ludling residence. Oh, Rob? Yes, of course. He's right here.

(Rob grabs the phone from Fred.)

ROB

Hello. Ludling here. Oh, hello. No that was...

(Sees Fred is gone.)

...that was a temp; a handicapped person. Yes. Let me talk to accounting.

(ROB puts phone on hold.)

ROB

Dad, can you come in here for a moment.

(David sticks his head in.)

Close the door. Have a seat.

DAVID

Rob, we're in the middle of...

ROB

Dad, I need to talk to you.

DAVID

(Calls off to Fred.)

Go ahead and put the stuff in the van, Fred; I'll be right there.

(To Rob.)

What's up?

ROB

Where's mom? Where is she?

DAVID

It's the first Friday of the month. She takes the bus into the city for a doctor's appointment, goes to a gallery, has dinner, catches a show. She'll be back tomorrow. Is there something you need?

ROB

Yes. Frankly Dad, this is not working.

DAVID

What?

ROB

I'm trying to talk to people on the phone - I've got New York on hold right now - I'm trying to make contacts here, get out resumes, arrange meetings, there's a lot of prospects.

DAVID

Yeah? That's sounds good.

ROB

And all the time, people are walking through here, strangers that I've never seen, walk right in; there's a noise factor that is unbelievable; people talking at the top of their voice, shouting from room to room. I'm using both phones and your friend, Fred answers this line - a very important manager from the coast, and Fred just takes it. Oh, just a minute.

(Into the phone.)

Accounts? Yeah, listen, I can't talk to you right now. Bye.

(Off the phone, back to David.)

I can't tell you how upset Felicia is. She won't even try to work in this room. This is not efficient, not working, no.

DAVID

Well, we're going to be out of your hair in a minute here. Just getting things set for the Fund Raiser tonight. It's a little hectic with the pageant coming up --

ROB

Oh, okay, but try to keep this area clear.
(Checking his Palm Pilot.)
Now. Question: bathroom?

DAVID

Bathroom? Is that the question?

ROB

You have, of course, only the one, and now that Reston will be in school, we need to make a schedule. I'm assuming you don't mind if Reston is first.

(Refers to Palm pilot again.)

He wakes up at 8:00 o'clock sharp. His breakfast is from 8:07 to 8:17 so that he can be prepared to leave for school at 8:20. So you see any delay is critical.

(Not to complain - but.)

He had to wait this morning, Dad, - several minutes.

(Efficient again.)

Will nine o'clock be all alright for you?

DAVID

My bathroom time is at nine? Okay. Good. Fine. But I'm going to need a full 15 minutes for breakfast.

ROB

Dad, you don't need to make a joke out of everything I say. I'm just trying to get things organized around here.

(He takes David's arm and leads him to the door.)

DAVID

I see your point.

ROB

Good. I'll see you at lunch.
(Stops at the door)
Twelve sharp.

(BLACKOUT)

SCENE 6: WORKSHOP - ONE WEEK LATER

FRED is lettering a sign.
 RESTON and DAVID are working on cutting wooden flowers that will fit on the ends of a picket fence.

DAVID is showing a very apprehensive Reston how to saw on an angle.

DAVID

(Guiding Reston's hand.)

Beautiful. See how easy it is when you don't try too hard. Just let it cut into the wood. That's right - don't force it. Good. Great.

(RESTON holds up a wooden flower.)

RESTON

Maybe you should do it. I'm not as adroit as...

DAVID

Reston, you're doing fine. Just take your time.

(Fred is lettering up a sign that says Historical Society Pageant 2 0 1 --)

FRED

I love getting old. I know the exact dimensions of all the props we're making; I know how to use all these tools; I'm considered an expert at sign painting; and now I can't remember: what year is it?

DAVID

2014.

FRED

Oh, yeah, 2014. Speaking of the year 2014, when are you going to get out of that wheelchair?

DAVID

What? Wait! Hold on!

(Turning to Reston)

Let me ask you, Reston, did what this man just said make any sense... at all?

RESTON

Sure, it's a non-sequitur, grandpa. It's not supposed to make sense.

DAVID

(Laughing with joy.)

I can't wait to see what you turn into when you get really old - like, say, thirteen.

(Realizing. To Fred.)

Whoa! Hold on! Back up! Fred, has Sheila been bugging you to bug me about getting out of this wheelchair?

FRED

No more than twice a week. My guess is she thinks you're using it to weasel out on your trip to Paris.

DAVID

I've got six weeks. I'll be ready.

(Back to Reston.)

Okay, let's ignore Fred and his non sequiturs and finish this up. You're cutting perfect; stay on that line --

(ROB enters.)

ROB

I thought I heard...

(sees the saw)

Ahh!! Reston!!! What are you doing?!

(RESTON drops the flower.)

This is very dangerous!

DAVID

Rob; it's flowers; not even dangerous flowers.

(ROB has grabbed the saw and is waving it around.)

ROB

This tool is dangerous, dad. Dangerous.

DAVID

Yeah, if you keep waving it around.

(Takes the saw from Rob.)

Here, let me have that before you do hurt somebody

(Hand on Reston's shoulder.)

Rob, take it easy. Reston is actually very good with tools. He listens, takes instructions, and has a very steady hand. Want to show your dad what you did?

RESTON

(Picking up broken pieces.)

No, it's nothing. Just junk.

ROB

Well, your mother called to make sure you were watching The Learning Channel at three. You need to keep studying, you know, especially while your stuck in this so-called school.

DAVID

We were learning something here, Rob.

ROB

I don't think puttering in a workshop is going to get this young man into advanced, 6th level studies.

(getting paint on his hand.)

What is this?

(The canvas banner is sort of formless until David shines a blue light on it and then it looks like a picket fence.)

DAVID

Oh, in the opening pageant, this is the picket fence for the Governor's house where he takes kickbacks from the railroad to sell off City property.

ROB

That's in a pageant?

(DAVID turns the canvas sideways and hands the end of the flat to ROB. DAVID then puts a red spotlight on it - now it looks like a wooden pallet. This use of different colored lights will be important later.)

DAVID

And then with a blanket, like so, it becomes the pallet piled with worthless gewgaws that the settlers used to cheat the Indians out of their land and turn them into hopeless alcoholics.

ROB

Cheat the Indians... Dad?

FRED

You know, this pageant has taken kind of a turn to the 'left' the last couple of years.

ROB

Is this supposed to be humorous, dad?

DAVID

Yes, Rob, it is. They're comedy skits. All the business leaders and the people from the Community Theater, the Glee Club - we all get together, eat a lot, drink a little, celebrate Founder's Day, poke a little fun at the town and raise some money for the Historical Society... It's fun.

ROB

See Dad, this is the problem. With you everything is always fun. We're trying to instill, in our son, serious values of work and responsibility;

and you're saying, "Come on, forget the classes, forget the studies, come on and have fun. Fun, fun fun.

(FELICIA enters. They all freeze.)

FELICIA
What in god's name are you doing? !!!

DAVID
Eh,...Reston was showing Rob...

(Rob realizes he is holding the blanket.)

FELICIA
(To Reston.)
Look at you. You have 'wood products' on your face.

RESTON
Mom, it's just sawdust.

FELICIA
(Almost swatting at him.)
And it's all over your clothes.

DAVID
I'll get a brush.

FELICIA
We'll take care of it!
(To Reston)
Did I remind you about the three o'clock show?

DAVID
That was my fault.

ROB
Reston and I will get that Learning Channel thing going.

FELICIA
Thank you, Rob. I need to talk with David.

(As ROB exits with RESTON, FELICIA is still brushing imaginary sawdust off her suit. FRED is inconspicuous behind the machinery.)

FELICIA (CON'T'D)
Is this how you intend to watch Reston?

DAVID
(Trying to smooth it over.)
I'm sorry. I'm truly sorry. I'm just frustrated here. I don't see how watching television in the middle of the day is more educational than building something.

FELICIA

David, I don't mean to be harsh. I appreciate all you've done for us. But we have Reston on a schedule with a plan. You may not approve of schedules and plans, but this is how we try to accomplish things. If we are willing to set a schedule aside every time a diversion pops up, then it wouldn't be much of a schedule would it?

DAVID

You're right, of course. I'm sorry.

FELICIA

And I would prefer it if you don't involve Reston in any more of your little 'projects' without letting me know.

(Pause)

David, I'm very serious about this. When Rob and I decided to have a child, we decided what kind of parenting we would do: 100% hands-on. Can I be honest with you about something?

DAVID

Of course.

FELICIA

Maybe we are too controlling, I don't know. But Rob is still very upset about Trish...her drug addiction.

DAVID

Trish?

FELICIA

Yes, the mess her life was in for so long.

DAVID

I'm sorry. He never...

FELICIA

And I'm not saying that it's your fault what happened to Trish.

DAVID

I understand.

FELICIA

I just can not allow Reston to spend time with you if you are doing things that I am not aware of. You can understand that can't you? Thank you.

(She leaves. FRED comes out of the shadows.)

FRED

Well... she seems like fun.

(BLACKOUT.)

SCENE 7: KITCHEN / BEDROOM NIGHT

(IN THE BEDROOM)

(ROB and FELICIA are getting ready for bed.)

FELICIA

We're fighting for our lives here, Rob. You have to stand up to them.

ROB

I mean, after all, this is their house.

FELICIA

This is your house, Rob. Your house. Look around you. This is your room, this is your bed, your son, your parents.

ROB

It just seems like they've done a lot.

FELICIA

What have they done? They don't do anything, Rob. If my parents were alive and we went to visit, they would take us out to dinner; they would take Reston to the symphony, to the art gallery; arrange dinners for our friends. What have your parents done? Nothing.

ROB

Fil, it's just that they don't have very much money. Dad has a teachers pension and mom has Social Security from a part time job. I'm sure the medical stuff has...

FELICIA

Wrong. You are so wrong. I just found out something very interesting. Do you know what this house is worth?

(She pulls a safe from under the bed.)

ROB

What are you doing?! That's dad's safe!

FELICIA

Right, like he cares. If he really wanted to keep things secret he would hardly put a safe in your room.

(New tone)

He probably wants you to know - to take care of him. He certainly isn't qualified to take care of himself.

(IN THE KITCHEN)

(David and Sheila have bills piled up on the kitchen table and are writing checks.)

DAVID
So how much did you give him?

SHEILA
He needed a hundred dollars and Felicia had their checkbook.

DAVID
And did he say when he was going to pay us back?

SHEILA
Oh, David!

DAVID
What - "Oh David?" How come when we talk about Rob, you get that "Oh, David" tone of voice, and I'm always the one who's wrong? He's not sixteen going to his first prom, I think we're being played for suckers and I don't like it.

SHEILA
Sometimes he does seem a little selfish.

DAVID
You think? Of course, compared to her he looks like St. Francis of Assisi. I mean, the whole idea of suing a company for going broke - when you were one of the CEO's in the company, wow.

SHEILA
Some accounting department will write off the loss and some insurance company'll pay. It's never personal.

DAVID
So what are we? A wholly-owned subsidiary here - a recently reacquired resource?

(IN THE BEDROOM)

(Felicia has opened the safe.)

ROB
Seriously, how did you get the combination? I don't even know that.

FELICIA
It's not Sherlock Holmes. The combination is your birthday. So I opened it. Look at this... And this.

(Pulling out papers)
He has had substantial offers for this house. It's some sort Turn-of-the-Century thing and he's been offered over eight hundred thousand dollars. Eight! Hundred! Thousand! And he's turned it down. Does that sound senile or what?

ROB
They love this place.

FELICIA

Do you know what we could do with eight hundred thousand dollars? Do you, Rob? Really? For eight hundred thousand we could be vested in Capco. We'd be full partners tomorrow.

(Very persuasive)

Then!! Then, we could give your parents anything they ever wanted. I mean you could be the son that I know you've always wanted to be. You want to take care of your parents, don't you?

ROB

Of course, but...

FELICIA

Right now, they seem to be worried about every penny they spend. You would be in a position to put them in the best kind of home, with the best care that money could buy. You could arrange to have them looked after if they ever became sick. Can you do that now?

ROB

No.

FELICIA

This is not about you, or us, or Capco. This is about arranging your parents finances so they can be cared for the way I know you want to care for them.

ROB

I don't think my dad or mom would want to ever sell this house.

(FELICIA puts her arms around ROB.)

FELICIA

This is an opportunity, Rob. And you and me - we never waste an opportunity. Do we?

(IN THE KITCHEN)

(Sheila is looking out the window.)

SHEILA

I'm getting worried about them - and Reston. What are they going to do?

DAVID

They're going to get a job. Maybe not a career, but a "job" to start with. My god they've got 95,000 dollars worth of cars parked out there. They both get unemployment - at the maximum, I'm sure. That's enough for rent and food till they get on their feet.

SHEILA

Rob is afraid they're going to get stuck here.

DAVID

They're 10 minutes from the train station and an hour from the city. They're not stuck; I know that.

(Holding up bills.)

I know that because we've paid for their gasoline in the past four weeks. And they never offer to contribute for anything.

SHEILA

Come on, David, how much can it really cost?

DAVID

A lot. A whole lot. Look at the credit card statement. By the way, is Rob using your credit card?

SHEILA

The gas card, yes. And occasionally the Master Card. You know, sometimes he has to take someone to lunch.

DAVID

Well, our food bill is five times what it usually costs, the heating bill is doubled - even the yard is heated, I think.

SHEILA

They like it warm. So what? Why are you being so stingy?

DAVID

Because we're dipping into our savings and I don't know when it's going to end.

(Pause.)

That's pretty rough, kiddo.

SHEILA

What?

DAVID

You've never called me anything like that before.

SHEILA

What, Stingy? So we dip into our savings. So what? We spent a lot more than that on Trish as I recall.

DAVID

That's our Paris money for one thing.

SHEILA

Oh, give me a break. We're not going to Paris and you know it.

DAVID

No, I didn't know that.

(BLACKOUT)