

Theatrefolk's



**Ten-Minute
Play Collection**

**Sample Pages from
Theatrefolk's Ten-Minute Play Collection**

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THEATREFOLK'S TEN MINUTE PLAY COLLECTION

Football Romeo

Paper Thin

Liver for Breakfast

Walls

*The Four Hags of the Apocalypse Eat Salad at their
General Meeting*

BY
Lindsay Price



Theatrefolk's Ten Minute Play Collection

Football Romeo

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The Four Hags of the Apocalypse Eat Salad at Their General Meeting

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Author's Note

Welcome to *Theatrefolk's Ten Minute Play Collection*. All the plays are perfect for performance or classroom work. They have been included because they represent a variety of character, style and tone. We think the ten minute play is a great format to explore and hopefully you will too!

Football Romeo

by Lindsay Price

Characters

NICOLA CALABRETTA – high school senior

RICK RINDER – her football player boyfriend

MRS. CAVENDISH – drama teacher

DANNY DINNING – also a high school senior

SCENE ONE

The living room of NICOLA's home.

NICOLA stands downstage centre. She is completely enrapt in playing Juliet from "Romeo and Juliet."

NICOLA: Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo

Deny thy father and refuse thy name

Or if thou wilt not but be sworn my love

And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

NICOLA holds a pose of longing. She waits. And waits. It's clear she's waiting for RICK, her boyfriend who is sitting on the couch, to speak. RICK has fallen asleep. NICOLA keeps up her pose as long as she can before she swats him with the script she is holding.

NICOLA: It's your line!

RICK: (*waking up*) Huh?

NICOLA: It's your line!

She shows him his place and gets right back into her pose.

RICK: (*speaking in a completely deadpan voice – like someone who doesn't do much reading*) Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

NICOLA turns to RICK in disgust over his acting.

NICOLA: Rick!!!

RICK: What?

NICOLA: Never mind. Never mind. I'm ready. *(She takes in a deep breath)* I know I'm going to get this part. *(She starts to gather her things)* So, you're going to meet me at the audition tomorrow at 4:00. Can you remember that or should I write it down?

RICK: 4:00. I got it.

NICOLA: Good. *(She gives RICK a peck on the cheek)*

RICK: Why?

NICOLA: Why what?

RICK: Why do I have to meet you at the audition? *(A thought comes to him)* Oh I get it! You want moral support. You want me to cheer you on. Maybe I should borrow a set of pom poms from one of the cheerleaders – “Go Nikki!” *(He laughs to himself at his own cleverness. Then he notices that NICOLA is staring at him.)* What?

NICOLA: Rick. We've been going over these lines for weeks.

RICK: Yeah.

NICOLA: I've been reading Juliet. You've been sort of reading Romeo.

RICK: You're great, Nik. I know you're going to get the part.

NICOLA: We're both going to get the part.

RICK: I'm going to be Juliet?

NICOLA: Try to stay with me. We've talked about this. Planned this. We've been practicing for weeks so that we can audition together and get the parts together and be on stage together.

RICK: On stage?

NICOLA: You – Romeo, Me – Juliet.

RICK: On stage?

NICOLA: Yes.

RICK: In front of people?

NICOLA: That's how it's usually done.

RICK: You never told me that!!!

NICOLA: Rick...

RICK: Uh uh, no way, no can do. It's fine behind closed doors where no one can see us but there's no way I would ever stand...*(he becomes lost in thought – it almost looks like his brain has closed down)*

NICOLA: Rick?

RICK: Tights...

NICOLA: Rick, what's the matter?

RICK: *(holding up the script)* This guy, this Ray...

NICOLA: Romeo.

RICK: He wears tights! *(He drops the script)* Nikki, you want me to embarrass myself in front of the entire football team looking like a ballerina?

NICOLA: There are no tights. Mrs. Cavendish is doing a modern version. No tights.

RICK: No?

NICOLA: Jeans and T-shirts.

RICK: I still can't do it.

NICOLA: Ricky...

RICK: I play football. I take other football players by the head and slam them to the ground.

NICOLA: And you're very good at that. But don't you want to be more than a football player?

RICK: No.

NICOLA: Don't you want to be something else?

RICK: No.

NICOLA: Don't you want to fully experience the wonder, the thrill, the excitement that is William Shakespeare?

RICK: *(like he's eaten a bug)* No!

NICOLA: Fine. I see. *(She picks up the script and moves away)*

RICK: You're mad.

NICOLA: No. Not at all. I'm perfectly – (*RICK moves in to hug her*) Don't touch me!!

RICK: I'm sorry Nikki. It's just not going to work.

NICOLA: I understand.

RICK: Good.

NICOLA: So I guess you'll be OK with the kissing scenes.

RICK: What?

NICOLA: You've been reading the lines Rick; surely you noticed that there are at least two kissing scenes.

RICK: I wasn't really paying attention.

NICOLA: If you're not playing Romeo that means I'll be kissing somebody else.

RICK: Give me that! (*He takes the book from NICOLA and frantically begins searching*)

NICOLA: I'm really impressed Rick. I never thought you would be so open about this. You are really growing as a human being.

RICK: (*whining like a baby*) I can't read this. I hate this guy! Why can't he write English like everybody else?

He hands the book to NICOLA, who finds her page and acts out the scene between Romeo and Juliet at Capulet's masked ball. She plays each part with utter seriousness.

JULIET: Saints do not move though grant for prayers sake

ROMEO: Then move not while my prayers effect I take.
Thus from my lips by thine my sins purged.

JULIET: Then from my lips the sin that they have took

ROMEO: Sin from my lips? O trespass sweetly urged!
Give me my sin again.

NICOLA closes the script with a sigh and holds it to her chest. She is clearly quite moved by the scene. RICK looks very, very confused.

RICK: Is that Shakespeare for kissing scene?

NICOLA: Big time.

RICK: Give me that book. When did you say the auditions were?

NICOLA: (*with a big smile*) Four o'clock.

The lights fade.

SCENE TWO

In the hall outside the auditorium.

The lights come up on MRS. CAVENDISH talking to the audience as if they were group of students.

MRS. CAVENDISH: Thank you all for coming out to the auditions for the spring play. This year we're being adventurous with our tackling of *Romeo and Juliet*. I'm very excited about this project, as it's my favourite Shakespeare play. So, take a few minutes, get yourselves centred, and I'll start seeing monologues.

She exits. RICK and NICOLA enter. RICK is completely calm and NICOLA is a nervous wreck.

NICOLA: I am Juliet. (*Taking in a deep breath*) I am Juliet. I am Juliet.

RICK: Hey Nikki after this do you want to...

NICOLA: Don't talk to me! (*She turns away and starts doing warm-up exercises*)

RICK wanders away flipping through the script, not really reading it. He sees DANNY enter, also reading a script preparing to audition. RICK walks over to DANNY and grabs him by the shoulder.

RICK: Hey. What part are you trying out for?

DANNY: (*somewhat off-balance*) I don't know. What part are you trying out for?

RICK: (*with pride, not realizing he's saying it wrong*) Raymeo

DANNY: Romeo? Then I'm definitely not trying out for him.

RICK: (*letting go of DANNY*) Good. I don't want anyone kissing Nicola but me. You pass that along to your dramoid geek friends.

DANNY: If she gets the part.

RICK: (*he re-grabs DANNY*) Are you saying that Nicola isn't good enough?

DANNY: I'm sure she's perfect.

RICK: (*letting go*) Of course she is.

MRS. CAVENDISH enters.

MRS. CAVENDISH: All right let's get started. (*Consulting her clipboard*)
Rick Rinder.

RICK: Yo.

He struts towards MRS. CAVENDISH.

NICOLA: Break a leg!

RICK: Nikki! I got a game on Saturday.

NICOLA: No it's a...never mind.

MRS. CAVENDISH: (*to RICK*) This is a pleasant surprise. Are you ready?

RICK does a wrestling pose with a large grrrr. He exits. MRS. CAVENDISH follows a little uncertainly. NICOLA follows but still remains onstage. She is straining to hear how RICK's audition is going. DANNY looks up and sees NICOLA. He thinks about not going over to her and then changes his mind. DANNY wanders over to NICOLA.

DANNY: This is your first time huh?

NICOLA: Huh?

DANNY: Your first time trying out for the school play.

NICOLA: Uh huh.

DANNY: You must really like Shakespeare. I do too. I especially like –

NICOLA: (*quite rudely*) Do you mind? I'm trying to hear.

DANNY: Sorry. Sorry. (*Turning away and muttering*) I'll just come over here and bang my head against the wall. No problem.

The lights fade.

SCENE THREE

A hallway outside of MRS. CAVENDISH's office.

*MRS. CAVENDISH enters with a folder in her hand.
NICOLA enters, chasing after her.*

NICOLA: Mrs. Cavendish!!!! Please I'm dying to know about the show.

MRS. CAVENDISH: I'm sure you're not dying Nicola.

NICOLA: I know you said you'd post the list at 1:00 but it's 12:45 now and what could it possibly hurt to let me know fifteen minutes early?

MRS. CAVENDISH: Nicola...

NICOLA: Wait. This is your way of telling me, isn't it? You're subtly telling me not to get my hopes up. I'm a page. That's it. I'm a page. Mrs. Cavendish, I appreciate your sensitivity and –

MRS. CAVENDISH: *(interrupting)* Nicola, calm down. I have the cast list right here and I was just about to post it. *(She takes the list out of the folder and puts it on a board)* There you are.

MRS. CAVENDISH exits and NICOLA dives for the board.

NICOLA: And the role of Juliet goes to... Nicola Calabretta. Nicola Calabretta! That's me! I got it! *(She screams and does a little dance)* And the role of Romeo goes to Ric – *(she does a double take)* Danny Dinning? Danny Dinning? NOOOOOOOO!!!

The lights fade.

SCENE FOUR

MRS. CAVENDISH's office.

DANNY comes running in. He is out of breath.

DANNY: Mrs. Cavendish. Mrs. Cavendish.

MRS. CAVENDISH: Congratulations Danny.

DANNY: You have to take it back.

MRS. CAVENDISH: What?

DANNY: The part. You have to take the part back.

MRS. CAVENDISH: Why?

DANNY: Rick Rinder would make a much better Romeo than I would.

MRS. CAVENDISH: Why?

DANNY: Because he's daring. Because he's good looking. Because he's Nicola Calabretta's boyfriend. Because after he beats me to a pulp I won't be good for much of anything!

MRS. CAVENDISH: He won't do that.

DANNY: How do you know?

MRS. CAVENDISH: I'll ask him not to.

DANNY: (*as if explaining to a child*) Mrs. Cavendish. I know you're a very good teacher. But Rick Rinder's specialty is taking football players by the head and smashing them to the ground. He does it without even thinking. Subconsciously. BAM! Mrs. Cavendish. I don't have a helmet. My head is very precious to me.

MRS. CAVENDISH: Then I'll talk to Nicola.

DANNY: That's even worse. She wants my head smashed. She wants me out of the picture. Goodbye!

MRS. CAVENDISH: She wants Rick to be Romeo.

DANNY: Exactly. You see what I'm saying.

MRS. CAVENDISH: Well, she'll have to live with the decision.

DANNY: She won't do that. She doesn't like me.

MRS. CAVENDISH: I'm sure that's not true.

DANNY: I've known her since the third grade. She still doesn't know my name. If she does speak to me, by accident of course, she doesn't look at me, she looks through me. She looks for someone better to talk to. She doesn't see me. She's certainly not going to say "Romeo, Romeo wherefore art thou Romeo" to me.

MRS. CAVENDISH: Danny. I want you to have the part. You deserve it. But I won't force you. What do you want?

DANNY: Me? I have to decide?

MRS. CAVENDISH: Yep.

DANNY: You're an adult. You have to force me.

MRS. CAVENDISH: Uh Uh. You decide.

DANNY: I...I don't know.

MRS. CAVENDISH: Danny, close your eyes for a second. Don't argue, just close your eyes. Think about being Romeo. See yourself in the part. Now think about not being in the part. How does that make you feel? Do you miss it? Open your eyes. What do you want?

DANNY: I want to be Romeo.

MRS. CAVENDISH: Truly?

DANNY: More than anything.

MRS. CAVENDISH: Then you are.

DANNY's moment of euphoria fades. He sighs.

DANNY: I better go buy a helmet.

DANNY leaves the office. MRS. CAVENDISH picks up the phone.

MRS. CAVENDISH: Louise, can you tell me what class Nicola Calabretta has right now?

NICOLA breezes into the office with great drama.

NICOLA: Mrs. Cavendish!!

MRS. CAVENDISH: *(into the phone)* Never mind, Louise. *(She hangs up the phone)*

NICOLA: I must speak with you immediately!

MRS. CAVENDISH: Aren't you supposed to be in class Nicola?

NICOLA: I spoke with Mr. Green and said that it was imperative that I come to your office. He let me go.

MRS. CAVENDISH: I see.

NICOLA: I must protest about the unfairness of the audition.

MRS. CAVENDISH: Really?

NICOLA: Rick should never have gone first. He's a newcomer to Shakespeare and he needed more time to prepare. You're just going to have to audition him again. That's all there is to it.

MRS. CAVENDISH: Nicola, you love Shakespeare.

NICOLA: Yes.

MRS. CAVENDISH: You have a passion for it.

NICOLA: Yes.

MRS. CAVENDISH: In every fibre of your being.

NICOLA: Oh yes.

MRS. CAVENDISH: Rick doesn't.

NICOLA: Yes he does.

MRS. CAVENDISH: No he doesn't.

NICOLA: Yes he does, yes he does! He loves Shakespeare. If I have to ram it down his throat, he's going to love it.

MRS. CAVENDISH: You can't force someone....

NICOLA: I'm not forcing him. I'm just giving him a little push.

MRS. CAVENDISH: You can't do that.

NICOLA: Why not?

MRS. CAVENDISH: Nicola.

NICOLA: Why not? Sometimes people respond to being pushed.

That's all they need, a little kick, a teeny tiny kick in the butt, like me and math. I hate doing math. I get pushed and I'm fine. (MRS. CAVENDISH opens her mouth to argue and NICOLA cuts her off)
Don't say it! Don't say it! Don't say anything. I know you're going to say that math and Shakespeare are two completely different things. Don't say it!

MRS. CAVENDISH: OK. I won't.

NICOLA: Mrs. Cavendish, won't you please consider Rick for Romeo?

MRS. CAVENDISH: The play has been cast.

NICOLA: But Danny Dinning. Danny Dinning.

MRS. CAVENDISH: Gave an excellent audition and deserves the part, just as you deserve the part of Juliet.

NICOLA: I can't kiss Danny Dinning. Rick will completely freak out.

MRS. CAVENDISH: We'll talk about that in rehearsal.

NICOLA: Danny Dinning.

She slinks out. MRS. CAVENDISH picks up the phone again.

MRS. CAVENDISH: Louise, can you tell me...

RICK rushes into the office.

RICK: Mrs. Cavendish!

MRS. CAVENDISH: Today's my lucky day. Never mind Louise.

RICK: Mrs. Cavendish, I have a big problem.

MRS. CAVENDISH: Tell me all about it.

RICK: Nicola is totally after me for this Shakespeare guy, but I never wanted to do it in the first place but the kissing scenes, I mean, I just can't let some guy kiss Nicola but I know that you know that I know that I couldn't do it, that I just froze up but I can't tell Nicola that. I can't tell her that I got...I got.

MRS. CAVENDISH: Stage fright.

RICK: Me. Rick Rinder. I'm not afraid of nothing.

MRS. CAVENDISH: I see.

RICK: Do you? I lost myself somewhere in the middle.

MRS. CAVENDISH: Do you like Nicola?

RICK: (*very positive – he really likes her*) Yeah.

MRS. CAVENDISH: Why?

RICK: I don't know... she doesn't treat me like a stupid football player.

MRS. CAVENDISH: Do you trust Nicola?

RICK: I guess so.

MRS. CAVENDISH: Then I don't see the problem Rick. All you have to do is trust her.

RICK: I never thought of that. *(He mulls it over)* So I trust Nicola. And I don't turn Raymeo into a Pop Tart.

MRS. CAVENDISH: I would have to advise against that.

RICK: OK. Mrs. Cavendish. We'll play it your way. Mrs. Cavendish, you're not going to tell anyone that I... that I couldn't...

MRS. CAVENDISH: My lips are sealed.

The lights fade.

SCENE FIVE

A hallway.

DANNY is pacing. He is obviously waiting for NICOLA.

DANNY: I'm not talking to you. You got some nerve. I'm not talking to you. I mean I know we run in different circles, different cliques but I have ears you know. I have feelings. And I'm a really good actor. I'm really good. Much better than you. And I'm going to go to Broadway where I will kick the behinds of snotty people like you. I know the only reason you tried out for the spring play was because of some twisted fantasy you and your boyfriend have. And I know you went to Mrs. Cavendish and if it had been any other teacher you probably would have been able to twist her around your finger the way you twist everyone else around here. But for one small flaw in your plan Nicola Calabretta.

He takes a deep breath and begins to act. He is exceptionally good. He becomes Romeo and is no longer a geek. The piece is honest and not melodramatic.

DANNY: Ah dear Juliet.

Here, here will I remain
 With worms that are thy chambermaids. O here
 Will I set up my everlasting rest
 And shake the yoke of inauspicious starts
 From this world wearied flesh. Eyes, look your last!
 Arms take your last embrace!
 Come bitter conduct, come unsavoury guide!
 Thou desperate pilot, now at once run on

Paper Thin

Characters

SWEETIE — male

PUNKIN — female

Two offstage voices, one male, one female (can be prerecorded)

Setting

The scene is a living room. This should be simply represented by a wall (flat) with a couch and a coffee table in front of the flat. Maybe a TV. The setting should represent the living space of an upwardly mobile, two income, childless household.

A man (SWEETIE) is on stage putting the finishing touches to what looks like a romantic evening at home. There is mood music, candlelight, appetizers and glasses on the coffee table. There is also a pad and pencil on the coffee table. He is in the middle of opening the champagne bottle, which he places on ice. He hears keys jingling and the front door opening. In a scurry, SWEETIE looks for something to throw over the champagne – he uses his jacket. We hear the voice of a woman (PUNKIN) offstage.

PUNKIN: (offstage) Hello!

SWEETIE: Don't move Punkin! Stay right where you are.

PUNKIN: (offstage) Why?

SWEETIE: Stay there! (He rushes offstage)

PUNKIN: (offstage) Sweetie, I'm really tired....

SWEETIE: (offstage) Close your eyes.

PUNKIN: (offstage) It's been a horrendous day.

SWEETIE: (offstage) Close them. Now walk.

PUNKIN: Sweetie....

SWEETIE: Left, right, left, right.

SWEETIE leads PUNKIN into the room. PUNKIN has one hand over her eyes; the other is holding an expensive looking briefcase. PUNKIN is very well dressed in a suit, so is SWEETIE for that matter.

PUNKIN: (*talking as she walks, still with hand over eyes*) The Rankin deal went right in the toilet this afternoon. And they are redoing the seventeenth floor so the power cut out three times, and all three times were....

SWEETIE: And stop.

PUNKIN: This isn't very special is it? I am so not in the mood.

SWEETIE: Open your eyes. Wait! Give me your briefcase. OK, open your eyes.

She does so, taking in the room with wide eyes. She picks up the pad.

PUNKIN: No.

SWEETIE: Yes.

PUNKIN: No!

SWEETIE: Surprise!

PUNKIN: But it's Tuesday!

SWEETIE: Are you in the mood now Punkin?

PUNKIN: This is exactly what I'm in the mood for! So when is it? Is he home yet? Do I have time to change?

SWEETIE: There's plenty of time.

PUNKIN: How do you know?

SWEETIE: We had a long chat in the elevator this morning. Are you ready?

PUNKIN: Lay it on me.

SWEETIE: First of all, he has a dinner meeting tonight.

PUNKIN: So he'll be drinking. On a Tuesday!

SWEETIE: And she has been banging pots around for about an hour now.

PUNKIN: Did she know about the dinner meeting?

SWEETIE: I don't think so.

PUNKIN: Crossed lines of communication. I love it!

SWEETIE: And... *(With a flourish, he reveals the champagne)*

PUNKIN: Champagne? What for?

SWEETIE: He also told me that today is their wedding anniversary. I thought we'd do a little celebrating ourselves.

PUNKIN: *(jumping up and down like an excited school girl)* I can't believe it! He has a dinner meeting on their anniversary! She's been cooking for over an hour! This is so great! I'm going to go change. Call me if it starts.

PUNKIN dashes off. SWEETIE pours two glasses of champagne, singing to himself. PUNKIN calls from offstage.

PUNKIN: Hey Sweetie...

SWEETIE: Yes.

PUNKIN comes on in the middle of changing.

PUNKIN: Did you know about this when I called you about the dry-cleaning?

SWEETIE: Yes.

PUNKIN: And when you called me about next weekend?

SWEETIE: Yes.

PUNKIN: You dirty dog! You didn't let on for a second.

She exits again to continue changing.

SWEETIE: I wanted to surprise you. I left work early so I could swing by Henri's.

PUNKIN: *(offstage)* You went to Henri's? This is going to be fabulous!

SWEETIE: Punkin?

PUNKIN: Uh huh?

SWEETIE: I want him this time.

PUNKIN: (*entering dressed in sweats*) I wanted him!

SWEETIE: You always want him, and might I add, you always get him.

PUNKIN: He's more fun. She is so repetitive.

SWEETIE: Just this once. Please?

PUNKIN: Well, since you went to all this trouble. On a Tuesday.... he's yours.

SWEETIE grabs PUNKIN playfully and gives her a hug and a smooch.

SWEETIE: Now, have a seat, drink some champagne, and eat. I'll be right back.

SWEETIE exits. PUNKIN sits on the couch and takes a glass of champagne and picks through the food.

PUNKIN: (*taking a sip of champagne*) Ahhhh. That hits the spot. I can't believe they've been married a whole year. I'm surprised it's lasted so long. And you know it's only our good will that doesn't get them thrown out of the building. When it was just Saturdays, that was bearable. You just stick your head between two pillows for twenty minutes. But then it was Friday, Saturday, Sunday, now Tuesday, who knows where it will end. I mean... ooooh these crab puffs are so delicious! It's a good thing you came up with this idea. It puts a fresh perspective on the whole situation.

SWEETIE enters. He is also wearing sweats. He sits on the couch.

PUNKIN: Have a crab puff Sweetie. Henri outdid himself.

SWEETIE: (*as he sits he grabs a crab puff*) Ahhh. I love these guilty pleasures. Did you try the baby quiches?

PUNKIN: (*her mouth full*) Ummm Hmmm.

They share a moment of chewing.

SWEETIE: Do you ever feel.... you know...guilty?

PUNKIN: About this? Maybe a little. At first. But it's the perfect solution. This way, they can do what they do and we can have some fun. Don't you think?

SWEETIE: (*raising his champagne glass*) To fun.

PUNKIN: (*raising her glass*) To fun.

They clink glasses. A door is heard slamming offstage.

PUNKIN: Is that him? Get the pad!

SWEETIE grabs the pad and pencil from the coffee table. PUNKIN glues her ear to the wall.

SWEETIE: What's happening?

PUNKIN: Nothing yet. He hasn't even said hello to her.

PUNKIN: Did he get her an anniversary present?

SWEETIE: He said he was going to try and remember to pick one up on the way home.

PUNKIN: She starts it.

SWEETIE: I'll bet he's been fuming all day – they had to go to her mother's for dinner last night.

PUNKIN: This is totally unfair! You get insider information.

SWEETIE: Despite which, you always win.

PUNKIN: True. (*She hears something*) Shh. Shh.

The conversation on the other side of the wall becomes clearer. The voices are harsh, contrasting with the bubbly voices of SWEETIE and PUNKIN. The fight should not be exaggerated or funny.

NOTE: These voices can either be live behind the wall or taped. SWEETIE and PUNKIN don't necessarily have to wait for the MALE or FEMALE to stop talking to deliver their lines.

MALE: I told you I had a dinner meeting!

FEMALE: No you didn't. I've been cooking for over an hour.

MALE: That's not my fault. I told you about the meeting.

SWEETIE: One for me! (*He marks a point on the pad*)

FEMALE: When did you tell me? When?

PUNKIN: Did he tell her?

MALE: I told you three times yesterday.

SWEETIE: He's bluffing.

FEMALE: You hardly spoke to me yesterday. I think I would remember if you mentioned a dinner meeting.

MALE: I told you! It's not my fault you forgot.

PUNKIN: I get a point!

SWEETIE: For what?

PUNKIN: He said, "It's not my fault" twice. No repeats!

FEMALE: What am I supposed to do with all this food?

MALE: I don't care what you do with it for Christ's sake.

SWEETIE: Who brings up the anniversary?

FEMALE: Don't you walk away from me!

PUNKIN: Do you have to ask?

MALE: What, what is it?

FEMALE: Did you forget what today is?

PUNKIN: Point!

MALE: Look, I had a hard day. I want to sit and watch TV. Is that too much to ask?

SWEETIE: He's backing off.

PUNKIN: She's on a roll!

SWEETIE: Come on, man. Don't do this to me. Get in the fight!

FEMALE: You did, you forgot.

PUNKIN: You give it to him!

MALE: I didn't forget.

FEMALE: You forgot our anniversary. You forgot the one day that is supposed to mean something in our marriage!

MALE: (*coming overtop*) Mean something! There is nothing in this marriage that means something to me!

PUNKIN: Ooooooh, that's a low blow.

SWEETIE: Point!

FEMALE: What is that supposed to mean?

MALE: You want me to spell it out? OK. This chair means nothing.
(There is the sound of a chair overturning) This food means nothing
(There is the sound of dishes crashing to the floor)

PUNKIN: Is he wrecking the place?

SWEETIE: How many points for that?

FEMALE: Stop it! Stop it!

MALE: This table means nothing. *(There is the sound of a table turning over)*

FEMALE: Stop it! What the hell are you doing!

MALE: You want me to go on? You want me to?

FEMALE: I hate you! I wish I never married you!

MALE: You shut up!

FEMALE: I hate you! I hate you!

MALE: Shut up!

FEMALE: I HATE YOU I HATE YOU I

MALE: SHUT UP SHUT UP SHUT UP!!!

There is the sound of a slap. And another. And another. There is the sound of a female crying out. There is the sound of heavy feet walking away, kicking furniture and broken dishes. A door opens and slams shut. There is the sound of a female quietly crying.

SWEETIE and PUNKIN are frozen in shock.

PUNKIN: He hit her.

SWEETIE: He's never done that before.

PUNKIN: He hit her. *(She puts her ear to the wall)* I don't believe it. He hit her.

SWEETIE: What's she doing?

PUNKIN: Crying. She's not supposed to do that. She's supposed to stand up to him. She was winning. I was winning with her, for the first time. She...

PUNKIN backs away from the wall. She goes to the phone and picks it up.

SWEETIE: What are you doing?

PUNKIN: Calling the police.

SWEETIE: Why?

PUNKIN: He hit her, three times. I'm not going to let him get away with that.

SWEETIE: We don't know what happened.

PUNKIN: I heard slaps.

SWEETIE: We think they were slaps.

PUNKIN: He wrecked the apartment!

SWEETIE: We shouldn't interfere.

PUNKIN: They are our neighbours.

SWEETIE: It's none of our business. He probably won't do it again.

PUNKIN: How do you know?

SWEETIE takes the phone from her.

SWEETIE: I think we should stay out of it.

PUNKIN: Give that back!

SWEETIE: What happens if they resent us for getting involved? What if they don't want anyone to know? I have to see this guy every morning on the elevator; can you imagine what that's going to be like after we call the cops? I have to associate with him.

PUNKIN: And I guess it doesn't matter she's cleaning up a trashed kitchen and nursing a black eye.

SWEETIE: We don't know she has a black eye.

PUNKIN: Why don't we call the police and not leave our names?

SWEETIE: Who else would it be, Punkin?

Liver for Breakfast

Characters

JANICE — oldest sibling

DAN — middle sibling

FIONA — youngest sibling

Setting

A park.

JANICE and DAN sit on a park bench. DAN slurps greedily at his coffee. His knees are bouncing wildly. He is staring intently at something in front of him. JANICE has a juice beside her on the bench. She is doing a crossword. They are both wearing suits.

JANICE: *(musing over her crossword)* 5 letter word for emotional....

DAN: I don't believe it.

JANICE: *(talking to DAN without looking up)* Settle.

DAN: I do not believe it!

JANICE: Dan...

DAN: Well, look at him! He's got no sense of...It's quarter to eight in the morning. *(He looks at his watch)* 7:47:23. Where the hell is Fiona?

JANICE: Late. Or lost.

DAN: Uh Uh. I gave very explicit directions. I drew diagrams, aerial photography....

JANICE: So she's late.

DAN: I don't believe it!

JANICE: *(looking up)* What is he doing?

DAN: He's just sitting there.

JANICE: Ah.

DAN: He should be in school. *(yelling out)* Hey kid! Why aren't you in school?

JANICE: You're going to make a fine parent.

DAN: Am I wrong? Am I wrong? He's sitting there missing out on all the finer points of a well-balanced education...

JANICE: It's early Dan...he's probably on his way.

DAN: ...sitting on his butt in the park (*calling out*) when he should be in school!

JANICE: If Fanni doesn't come in the next five minutes we'll have to go in without her.

DAN: And if that wasn't enough...

JANICE: Thanks Janice that'll be great.

DAN: He's eating Smarties. In the morning. 7:47:56. Would it kill her to be on time?

JANICE: Maybe he likes Smarties.

DAN: Mom would have skinned us alive if we ever ate candy before noon. What is his mother thinking? (*Yelling out*) What is your mother thinking!

JANICE: Maybe he has a fine mother. Maybe he is a punk kid who doesn't clean his room and throws out the fruit in his lunch the second he gets to school and sneaks out before breakfast so he can fine-tune his sugar high.

DAN: (*taking a huge sip of coffee*) My kid is never going to eat candy before noon. I'm going to walk him to school too. Every day.

JANICE: How is Sharon?

DAN: Pregnant.

JANICE: No kidding, I never would have guessed.

FIONA enters wearing sunglasses. At any other time of the day, she would be gorgeous, but anything before noon is extremely too early. She stumbles on stage with a coffee in one hand and a HUGE makeup case in the other.

FIONA: Sorry. Sorry.

DAN: What time is it? What time is it?

JANICE: Hi Fonni. Late night?

FIONA: Sorry.

DAN: Some of us have to work for a living. Some of us have better things to do with our lives than to wait around for you.

FIONA: You're lucky I'm here at all. How do you guys do this every day?

JANICE: (*picking up her juice and toasting with it*) Welcome to 8 o'clock in the morning.

FIONA: It's hideous.

DAN: Can we speed things along here? I've got client meetings lined up all day and if I get even a second behind....

JANICE: (*standing*) Let's go.

DAN: Let's get this over with.

FIONA: Wait. I have a question. (*She takes a sip of coffee*) How old is she?

DAN: What?

FIONA: I want to know how old she is.

JANICE: Fonni, I to be in court at 10 o'clock.

FIONA: I'm here aren't I? No matter how demented I think this is?

DAN: So let's go.

FIONA: I know she's young and I want to know how young.

JANICE: Why?

FIONA: Because.

DAN: That's a stupid answer.

FIONA: I didn't realize I was being graded.

JANICE: Why do you need to know?

DAN: I cannot be late for work.

FIONA: What is she? 35? 30? 29?

JANICE: Fonni....

DAN: This is not up for discussion.

FIONA: Lines have to be drawn here.

JANICE: What does it matter?

DAN: I have allotted a certain amount of time for this and when that time is up....

FIONA: Boundaries have to be set into place.

DAN: I am gone, gonzo, bye-bye.

FIONA: So if the Cherry Bimbo is younger than I am, I'm not walking in there without any makeup on.

DAN: What are you talking about?

FIONA: I'm not being shallow; I just want to be prepared. Mentally and facially.

JANICE: Oh dear.

FIONA: My God. She's jailbait, isn't she?

JANICE: No...

DAN: Listen beauty queen...

FIONA: Don't call me that.

DAN: We don't have time for this.

FIONA: How old is she?

JANICE: In the long run does it really make a difference?

DAN: Janice and I are very, very busy.

FIONA: Come on Jan, I can take it.

DAN: Every second I'm here and not at my desk is another year that....

JANICE: Twenty-two.

DAN: ...my kid won't be... ah, how old?

JANICE: (*reluctantly*) She's twenty-two.

FIONA & DAN: Twenty-two.

FIONA drops her makeup case, opens it and starts applying makeup in a flying fury. DAN is in a state of shock.

DAN: Twenty-two? Dad is dating a twenty-two-year-old girl?

FIONA: This is going to take longer than I thought. I don't have the right equipment.

JANICE: Fiona. You are a beautiful woman. What are you worried about?

FIONA: I'm twenty-six.

JANICE: So.

DAN: Twenty-two.

FIONA: Twenty-six is not twenty-two. Especially when you're on the bad side of twenty-six and she most likely is on the good side of twenty-two. This is not how one draws lines. She is crushing my line.

JANICE: Take a deep breath. It'll be OK.

FIONA: Why are we doing this?

DAN: Twenty-two.

FIONA: *(looking up)* Can they see us?

JANICE: No. His apartment is on the other side of the building.

DAN: The perfect age.

FIONA: I can't believe we're doing this. Can't we be cold and disapproving from a distance? Do we have to be in the same room under florescent light and eat with her? *(she gets a look of horror on her face)* This is Dad's idea of a family breakfast. He's going to make bacon isn't he? I'm going to have to eat bacon. I can't even look at bacon anymore, let alone eat it. What does she look like?

JANICE: If it's only going to upset you....

FIONA: Just tell me!

JANICE: She's tall. Blonde. She's Russian.

FIONA: She can probably eat all the bacon she wants!

DAN: Twenty. Two.

FIONA: Would you shut up!

DAN: Hey! I know about bacon! I know what this means! I'm three months away from fatherhood; you don't have to tell me what bacon means.

JANICE: Guys, she's a vegetarian. There won't be any bacon.

FIONA: Great. She's healthy. (*Hopefully*) Does she smoke?

JANICE: No.

FIONA: Is she stupid? Please let her be stupid.

JANICE: She's studying to become a doctor.

FIONA: Isn't she the perfect jewel. No wonder Dad dumped Mom for her. She's a treasure!

DAN: How come you know so much?

JANICE: Hmm?

DAN: How come you know so much about her. Her. Miki, Mikey, what's her name?

JANICE: Mikela.

DAN: How come you know her name?

JANICE: (*to FIONA*) Are you almost ready?

FIONA: I'm still blending.

DAN: How come you know her name and you can say it without foaming at the mouth?

JANICE: It's just a name.

DAN: OK, how come you know her name and her nationality, and what she wants to be when she grows up?

FIONA: Do we have to be nice to her? That's the point of this isn't it. He wants us to be nice to her.

DAN: Do you know her or something?

JANICE: No.

DAN: So what's the deal?

FIONA: I will sit, I may eat, but there is no way I'm being nice.

JANICE: We had lunch last week.

DAN: Who? You and twenty-two?

FIONA: You and Cherry?

DAN: Fraternizing with the enemy?

JANICE: I ran into Dad and Mikela last weekend and they invited me to lunch and I went.

DAN: And that's why we're here.

JANICE: Sure. Are we ready to go?

DAN: No.

JANICE: Why not?

FIONA: I'm still blending.

DAN: Why are you are so calm about this, i.e., why aren't you upset, i.e., why does having breakfast with Dad and his...

FIONA: Cherry Bimbo...

DAN: ...the twenty-two-year-old he dumped Mom for, why does this not bother you and here to hence and hitherto fore, why does this not leave you a seething mass on the floor.

JANICE: Should it?

DAN: We all know you hate Dad the most.

FIONA: Uh-uh, I hate Dad the most.

DAN: I was looking forward to some sarcastic banter, at the very least some witty repartee. But you're so sedate about the whole thing. And you're not upset! Like we do this every day!

JANICE: Do we have to discuss this now? I have to be in...

DAN: Then you better talk fast.

FIONA: (*she looks in the mirror*) There. I definitely look better than any Russian smart assed vegetarian.

JANICE: You'll be late for work.

DAN: Talk, talk, talk.

JANICE: Look, this really isn't the time or place.

DAN: Hey Fonni, want a ride home?

FIONA: We're not doing breakfast? Great!

DAN: Let's go.

JANICE: OK! OK. (*She takes in a deep breath and exhales noisily*) OK. First of all... I think Mom is actually very happy it ended up this way.

FIONA: Excuse me? Happy?

JANICE: But we can't let Dad know that.

DAN: Why wouldn't she be? It's a top-ten "happy meter" moment.

JANICE: She is happy because, this way, it's not her fault. And everyone is nice to her and mean to Dad. And she gets an easy out, which is something she's been thinking about lately.

FIONA: She has? Since when?

JANICE: Ten years.

FIONA: And you knew?

JANICE nods.

FIONA: Nobody tells me anything.

JANICE: If you had asked, she would have told you.

DAN: That would involve talking to Mom.

FIONA: Details, details.

DAN: As happy as Mom may be, it doesn't have anything to do with why we are here, about to eat bacon with a beautiful borscht brainiac.

FIONA: She's a vegetarian.

DAN: Whatever.

FIONA: I need more concealer.

JANICE: I just think...I think that the impulse to...stray...can happen in any marriage and I'm not in the position to throw stones.

DAN: Barry cheated on you? You're kidding! When did this happen? We played golf a couple of weeks ago and...

JANICE: Not Barry.

FIONA: That means it would have been....

DAN: You? It was you? You cheated on Barry? You? You had an affair?

JANICE: I did.

FIONA: You made a mistake? Jan the first born, the wonder child, made a huge, colossal mistake?

JANICE: Try not to smile so wide Fionni, you'll get wrinkles.

FIONA: I can't believe it. That is so fantasti...cally awful. Really awful. Oh Jan, I feel so bad for you.

DAN: Bad for her?

FIONA: I never liked Barry.

DAN: Barry is the victim here! Jan is the lawless cheater! Barry good. Jan bad.

JANICE: Let's not turn him into a saint just yet, OK?

FIONA: I never find out about anything.

DAN: So when did this dirty deed go down?

JANICE: Two years ago.

DAN: Years?

JANICE: Yep.

FIONA: But you're still together.

JANICE: Yep.

FIONA: Aren't you getting a divorce?

JANICE: No.

FIONA: Isn't that what's supposed to happen?

JANICE: I don't know, it isn't something I usually do.

FIONA: Why aren't you getting a divorce?

JANICE: Because. Why did Dad leave Mom? Because. Why do you need to wear make-up to meet his new girlfriend? Because.

DAN: There goes my sarcastic banter right down the toilet. You're going to support him aren't you.

JANICE: I never said that.

DAN: This was your idea wasn't it. That's why you made such a big deal about the three of us getting together...Janice looks good by being friendly and supportive to all sides.

JANICE: Can we please go?

DAN: This is just like you and the liver.

JANICE: What are you talking about?

DAN: This stinks like liver, it looks like liver, it acts like liver, 100 % Prime-Grade-however-you-classify-it-liver.

FIONA: (*something catches her eye*) Is that kid eating Smarties? In the morning?

JANICE: I'm not following you.

DAN: You eat liver.

JANICE: So what.

DAN: You hate liver. But you always had to be the good one, always had to have something on us and if that meant eating liver then you'd do it. "Janice knows it's good for her and even though she doesn't like it she eats it anyway. You're such a good girl Janice. Why can't you kids be like Janice?" Janice the martyr eats her liver no matter how much she hates it.

FIONA: Ah Dan...

JANICE: You have to be dead to be a martyr.

DAN: You are a martyr and Dad is liver.

JANICE: He is not.

DAN: If this is how you want to atone for your sins, fine, but you can't fool me into thinking this is steak when I know it's not. If you want to be nice to him, fine, but why drag Fanni and I into it?

FIONA: There's something you should know...

JANICE: I don't want to support him! He ran off like a coward in the middle of the night. Support him? God! He wouldn't answer any of Mom's calls, he wouldn't tell her anything, explain anything, and now he wants life to go on as if nothing happened. Support him? I want to ring his freaking neck!

FIONA: (*matching the intensity of JANICE's last line*) Janice never really ate the liver!

DAN: What?

FIONA: Janice never ate the liver. She chewed it until no one was looking then she coughed it into a napkin.

DAN: She did?

FIONA: Every time.

DAN: You did?

JANICE: I guess my reputation is completely shot now.

DAN: There goes my analogy all to hell. Man, I was on a roll.

FIONA: So are we having breakfast, or not?

JANICE: Yes.

DAN: Why?

JANICE: We have to.

DAN: Why?

JANICE: Because.

DAN: Because why? I don't want to, Fanni doesn't want to, and you want to ring his freaking neck.

FIONA: You were hoping we'd just follow you like sheep, without asking any questions. Just because you always know the right thing to do and we weren't smart enough to pretend to eat liver. Actually if you had been really smart, you would cried and said that you felt

Walls

Characters

JAMES – Father

JOAN – Mother

JAMIE – Son

JANE – Daughter

NOTE: The style and the setting of the play should remain abstract. The characters jump from one story to the next without any pauses.

When the characters are talking to the audience, the other characters are either frozen or doing their own activities: JAMES reads the paper, JOAN irons, JAMIE sits in a chair to watch TV, and JANE reads a book.

The lights come up on a two platforms. The parents, JAMES and JOAN are on the upper platform. The children, JAMIE and JANE are on the lower level. They don't look at each other. They look out towards the audience.

ALL: Walls.

JAMES: Tall.

JANE: Thick.

JOAN: High.

JAMIE: Solid.

ALL: Walls.

JANE: So high you can't see over them.

JAMES: So high you can't see anything on the other side.

JAMIE: Sometimes I feel surrounded.

JOAN: Sometimes I feel so shut out.

JANE: I can't get through to them.

JAMES: I just can't get through to them.

JAMIE: They don't see me.

JOAN: They don't see me anymore.

JANE: They don't see the real me.

JAMES: They just don't see.

ALL: Walls.

JAMES: When I was a child, I respected my parents. I did what I was told. I was told that I was going into the family business, practically since the day I was born. And I never thought about doing anything else.

JOAN: When I was little, my mother told me about the wonderful man I would marry. That was all I had to do – find a wonderful man. She was so happy when I brought James home to dinner the first time.

JAMIE: When I was a kid, my Dad coached my baseball team. At first I thought it would be great – me and Dad hanging out playing baseball.

JAMES: Jamie! What do you think you're doing! Don't look at me. Slide! Slide!

JAMIE: Next year I switched to soccer.

JANE: When I was a kid, Mom made take dance lessons. Ballet.

JOAN & JANE: All little girls want to take ballet.

JANE: I wanted to play baseball.

JOAN: Graceful Janie, think graceful.

JANE: I could never keep my tights clean, I could never keep my hair in that little bun and I was not graceful.

JOAN: All little girls want to take ballet.

ALL: Walls.

JANE: So high you can't see over them.

JAMES: So high you can't see anything on the other side.

JAMIE: Sometimes I feel surrounded.

JOAN: Sometimes I feel so shut out.

JANE: I can't get through to them.

JAMES: I just can't get through to them.

JAMIE: They don't see me.

JOAN: They don't see me anymore.

JANE: They don't see the real me.

JAMES: They just don't see.

ALL: Walls.

JAMES: (*almost yelling at JAMIE*) Jamie, what do you think you're doing?

JAMIE: I'm not doing anything. I'm watching TV.

JAMES: And how do you expect to get anywhere watching TV?

JANE: Mom you don't need to iron my clothes.

JOAN: (*to the audience*) She used to be so pretty. She used to wear beautiful dresses. She used to want to watch me do the ironing.

JANE: Mom, you don't need to iron my clothes. I'm old enough. I can do them myself.

JOAN: But I don't mind.

JANE: I can do them.

JAMES: Joan, can you get me a new shirt? I spilled coffee on this one.

JANE: (*to the audience*) That makes me so mad! He treats her just like a servant sometimes. She treats herself like a servant. Why doesn't she want to do anything more with her life? Everyone else in my class, all their mothers are doctors and ad executives, and my Mom wants to iron my clothes.

JOAN: Someday dear, you'll do this for the man that you marry.

JANE: I'm never getting married. If that is what happens to you when you get married, I don't want anything to do with it. She can't even see that I want more out of life than a husband.

JOAN: What do you mean you're studying tonight? It's Saturday night, don't you have a date?

JANE: No I don't.

JAMIE: She couldn't get one if she tried.

JANE: You shut up! What are you doing tonight?

JAMIE: I gotta work. See ya.

JOAN: James, I'm getting worried about Jamie. All he does is work.

JANE: Everyone worries about Jamie.

JAMES: Work? He's not working, he's a busboy at a restaurant. That's not work. That is the fast track to nowhere. I'm going to have to speak with him. He's spending too much time there.

JANE: Hey Dad, I'm taking an accounting course at school. I'm doing really well and...

JAMES: Accounting? What do you want to take that for?

JANE: Well I was thinking...

JAMES: (*completely ignoring her*) Jamie!

JAMIE: What?

JAMES: How do you expect to get anywhere watching TV!

JAMIE: (*to audience*) How do I expect to get anywhere? He knows that I know that he knows that he's not talking about any old anywhere. He's talking about...

ALL: The business.

JAMIE: The business.

ALL: The business has been passed down from generation to generation. My grandfather handed it down to my father and my father handed it to me. And some day, the business will go to you my son.

JAMIE: There's just one teeny tiny flaw in that plan.

JANE: What are you doing?

JAMIE: Nothing.

JANE: That's what it looks like.

JAMIE: What do you care?

JANE: I don't.

JAMIE: So good.

JANE: Good.

Both JAMIE and JANE turn to the audience.

JAMIE: My sister, she gets to do anything she wants.

JANE: *(at the same time as JAMIE)* My brother gets to do anything he wants.

JAMIE: She can get whatever grades she wants and it doesn't matter.

JANE: I get straight A's.

JAMIE: If my grades slip even a little bit, there's practically a riot around here.

JAMES: How are you going to make it out in the world with grades like this? How are you going to make it, that's what I would like to know. Do you think you're going to coast? Do you think you're going to work as a busboy for the rest of your life? Is that what you think? Answer me! Answer me!

JAMIE: He doesn't even look at Jane's report card.

JANE: Mom, Dad, I got straight A's this semester.

JOAN: Good for you dear.

JAMES: Yes, Yes. *(He goes back to his newspaper)*

JOAN: Are you going out on Saturday night?

JAMIE: How fair is that? I get put through the ringer and she gets nothing. Nothing!

JANE: Sometimes, my Dad doesn't even see me. It's like I don't exist. Except when it comes to dating. My brother can do whatever he wants. He can go out and come home at whatever time in the morning.

JAMES: Boys will be boys.

JANE: I have a curfew.

JOAN: It's for your own good Jane.

JANE: He can even drink and not get into trouble.

JAMES & JOAN: Boys will be boys.

JANE: He can take the car out whenever he wants.

JAMIE: Thanks Dad!

JANE: But whenever I try to ask for it...

JAMES: I told you no.

JANE: Why not? Jamie gets to take the car.

JAMES: Jamie is older than you. He's a better driver.

JANE: He had to take his driving test three times. I only had to take it once. The driving instructor said I was the best driver he had ever seen.

JAMIE: She's always throwing that in my face.

JAMES: I told you no.

JANE: But why? You at least have to give me a reason.

JAMES: You're not taking the car and that is final!

JANE: Everything is final in this house. Everything is decided for me! When do I get to make decisions for myself? Mom, why can't I take the car out?

JOAN: Your father said so Jane.

JANE: What do *you* say? You know I'm a better driver than Jamie. Who had that fender bender last year?

JAMIE: She's always throwing that in my face.

JOAN: Jane, your father...

JANE gives a scream of frustration and turns away.

JOAN: (*to the audience*) I thought I was doing the right thing. Stay home for the children. It was the right thing. I don't doubt it for a second. But they're growing up so fast. Both my children seem gone to me. Did I do the right thing? Sometimes I can't even see myself.

JAMIE: Bye Mom.

JOAN: Aren't you staying for dinner?

JAMIE: I have to get to work. I'll get something there.

JOAN: Are you sure you can't wait two minutes? I can make you something...

JAMIE: No time. Bye!

JANE: Bye Mom. I'm going to the library. Sonya and I are going to study there.

JOAN: Can't you study here?

JANE: No way. See ya!

JAMES: I won't be home for dinner. Have a good day dear.

JOAN: These days, the house seems so large. The walls seem so high. How do I get out? How do I get out?

JANE: Bye Mom!

JOAN: Wait a moment. You're not wearing that are you?

JANE: What?

JOAN: Jane. You can't go out in public looking like that.

JANE: What's wrong with it?

JOAN: Wouldn't you like to put a little make-up on?

JANE: No I wouldn't.

JOAN: You look like you dress at the Goodwill.

JANE: I know. That's where these clothes came from.

JOAN: Jane! You can't go around wearing other people's clothes. What if they saw you?

JANE: What if who saw me?

JOAN: What if the people who gave the clothes up saw you in their clothes. How embarrassing!

JANE: I don't care.

JOAN: Jane, wait! They desperately need ironing!

JANE: I'll be late. Bye Mom!

JOAN: James – didn't you see her?

JAMES: (*behind the paper*) See who?

JOAN: Didn't you see what Jane was wearing?

JAMES: Can't say that I did.

JOAN gives a small scream of frustration.

JAMES: Did you say something Joan?

JOAN: Not at all.

ALL: Walls.

JAMES: Tall.

JANE: Thick.

JOAN: High.

JAMIE: So high.

ALL: So high you can't see over them.

JAMIE: Mom, Dad I have something to tell you. I've decided where I want to go away to school next year.

JAMES: You've been thinking about school, excellent, excellent.

JANE: Hey Dad, can I tell you about this great....

JAMES: Later, Jane, later. Please Jamie go on.

JAMES: I want to learn to be a chef. I want to own my own restaurant.

JANE: You what?

JAMES: You what?

JOAN: Oh Jamie!

JAMES: He's not getting any of my money to go to cooking school!

JAMIE: (*to audience*) His money. His money.

JAMES: He's got to be crazy to think I would have anything to do with that. Cooking school?

JOAN: He just mentioned it dear. There's still time for him to change his mind.

JAMIE: I'm not going to change my mind. Not this time.

The Four Hags of the Apocalypse Eat Salad at Their General Meeting

Characters

DEVOUR

PURGE

STARVE

IMAGE

DEVOUR, PURGE, and STARVE are sitting at a large table. There are four salads laid out at four places. An arrangement of fat-free salad dressings stands on one corner of the table. There is a large alarm clock sitting beside PURGE. PURGE is filing her nails. STARVE is slumped on to the table, sleeping. DEVOUR is devouring her salad, with great distaste.

DEVOUR: This is disgusting. (she continues to eat) Ugggh. It's awful. (she continues to eat) Who ordered this?

PURGE: Vi.

DEVOUR: It's Vi's turn? Aw, why didn't somebody tell me?

PURGE: It's hardly rocket science my dear.

DEVOUR: Some one should have told me. Everybody knows how I feel about rabbit food. I would have brought extra or ate before I came.

PURGE: Greens are good for you.

DEVOUR: So why aren't you eating?

PURGE: It's polite to wait for all the guests to arrive.

This stops DEVOUR in mid bite.

DEVOUR: Oh. I guess I should wait too.

PURGE: Whatever you like.

DEVOUR: I can wait.

DEVOUR puts down her fork, and pushes herself away from the table. The pull to eat is tremendous. She has to get up from the table and walk around. PURGE continues to file her nails.

DEVOUR: She's not going to be long, right? I mean, it'll only be what, five minutes?

PURGE: Give or take a few.

DEVOUR: I can wait five minutes.

PURGE: Good for you.

DEVOUR: I can stop eating for five minutes.

PURGE: Of course you can.

DEVOUR: Of course I can. I mean, I'm sure there are many times in the day when I'm not eating therefore I should consciously be able to stay away from food, even if there's some on the table right in front of me. It's only going to be five minutes though, right? I mean she is going to get here on time, not like the last meeting where she made us wait for an entire hour. And of course it was her turn so we weren't just waiting for her, we were waiting for everything and I almost had to eat my chair for the waiting. It's going to be five minutes and not a second longer, right? Right? Tell me it's just going to be five minutes!

PURGE: Breathe darling, breathe!

DEVOUR takes a crazed breath. She lets it go. She takes a smaller breath. She realizes she may have been a bit hysterical and gives a little crazed hysterical laugh.

DEVOUR: Over the top?

PURGE: Much. Oh Dev.

DEVOUR: Sorry.

PURGE: I can't stand to see you suffer. Eat if it's that bad.

DEVOUR: Don't be silly. Immy will be here any minute. I can wait.

STARVE gives a huge snore.

DEVOUR: This is all her fault. She knows how I feel about... The least she could have done was bring dessert. Vi. Vi! Percy, give her a shove. Wake her up.

PERCY: (*gently shaking STARVE*) Wakey, wakey darling.

STARVE: Huh?

DEVOUR: Salad, Vi?

STARVE: (*yawning*) Oh. Sorry, I forgot.

DEVOUR: Huh. No dessert either. This is going to be some meeting.

DEVOUR will try to stay away from the table, but the pull is too great and she eventually starts eating again.

STARVE: I'm trying to lose weight again. Are we starting?

PURGE: Immy hasn't made her grand entrance.

STARVE: OK. (*She slumps back down on the table*)

IMAGE: (*entering*) What was that about my grand entrance?

IMAGE is drop dead gorgeous, in a deep red evening gown.

DEVOUR: Immy!

DEVOUR and PURGE gather around IMAGE. DEVOUR has a hunk of lettuce in her hands.

IMAGE: Hello everyone! Dev dear, don't be a grab hands. Use a fork.

DEV: Sorry. Nice dress.

PURGE: Darling, where did you get that outfit?

IMAGE: Do you like?

PURGE: It's fabulous.

IMAGE: It's a sample. Some of us are just naturally blessed with a size six figure.

PURGE: You look amazing.

IMAGE: I know. Sorry I'm late. I was at a high school reunion making all the men love me and all the women hate me. I was having so much fun I forgot the time. Where does it go? You all look absolutely wonderful. Don't fidget Dev. I can hardly believe it's been a whole year since we've been together.

PURGE: I could never pull off a dress like that.

IMAGE: So few of us can my dear.

PURGE remains silent. She returns to the table. During the following PURGE runs a hand over her stomach. She sits and stares at her alarm clock.

DEVOUR: Reunions. Those are my kind of people. They hate their jobs. They hate their partners. They've got kids, cars, houses, bills, bills, bills, and they can't for the life of them fit into that pair of jeans they've kept since high school. They used to be able to eat French fries for breakfast but now everything clings; layer after layer after layer and no matter what they do it won't come off. And now they've got this reunion to go to and it's late at night and they eat and they are sure that everyone will look better than they do and they eat and they have turned the corner between fading youth and looming middle age but still they eat and they eat and they eat.... Makes me hungry just thinking about it.

PURGE: You're always hungry.

DEVOUR: It's my job to be hungry. And all I've got to eat is rabbit food. This stuff isn't even hitting my stomach. It just sails on through.

IMAGE: Relax Dev, I brought dessert. *(She holds up a box)* Chocolate cake.

PURGE & DEVOUR: Chocolate cake.

PURGE: My favourite. *(She picks up the alarm clock and starts to shake it)*

DEVOUR: *(taking the box in a trance)* It smells divine!

IMAGE: Put it on the table please.

PURGE: *(she bangs the clock on the table.)* Come on damn you!

IMAGE: Don't rush it Percy, it'll go off soon enough.

DEVOUR: *(checking out the box)* Vi won't have any, Immy will hardly have any, that means as least two pieces!

PURGE: Maybe I'll just run and do it now before the meeting.

IMAGE: When the alarm goes off.

DEVOUR: Immy you are the best.

IMAGE: I figured Vi wouldn't bring much. I can't let my girls waste away could I?

PURGE: See, it's not rocket science at all.

DEVOUR: I don't suppose we could throw caution to the wind and eat dessert first.

IMAGE: After the meeting.

DEVOUR: Oh OK.

STARVE gives another snore.

IMAGE: Poor Vi.

DEVOUR: Give her a shove Percy.

STARVE: What? I'm awake. Hi Immy.

IMAGE: Hi yourself. How are you?

STARVE: I lost three pounds yesterday.

IMAGE: What did you eat?

STARVE: Half a lettuce leaf.

The alarm clock goes off. PURGE stands.

PURGE: Finally. Don't start without me girls, all right?

She exits on the run with the file she had been using.

STARVE: Do I look all right?

IMMY: Of course you do. How do you feel?

STARVE: A little tired, but otherwise good.

IMMY: *(shaking her head and giving a disappointed sigh)* Oh Vi.

STARVE: What is it?

IMMY: Nothing.

STARVE: What's the matter? Tell me.

IMAGE: You know I would only say this because we are the very best of friends. Just between us girls.

STARVE: Of course. You can tell me anything.

IMAGE: Time was when you could eat a quarter of a lettuce leaf and lose five pounds a day.

STARVE: I know. I know.

IMAGE: You can't let yourself go like that.

IMAGE: I tried, I really did. But I get so hungry.

DEVOUR: Tell me about it.

IMAGE: Don't drool on the cake please.

STARVE: (*yawning*) I used to be able to go three days without eating. Now I can hardly last an hour. I don't know what's wrong with me these days.

IMAGE: You're just getting older Vi. Happens to the best of us. It's a shame you don't have my metabolism. Everything goes straight to your hips.

STARVE: I know. My hips are so huge. It's not my fault though, large hips run in my family.

IMAGE: If you want to be thin then you do what it takes. It's a matter of discipline.

PURGE: (*entering*) What is?

IMAGE: Percy you're positively radiant.

PURGE: It's the afterglow.

IMAGE: Well it suits you. You see, Percy has everything down to a schedule. She vomits regularly whether there is anything in her stomach or not.

DEVOUR: Yech. (*She gives a little shudder*)

PURGE: I don't even notice any more. It's just like breathing.

STARVE: I'm so hungry.

IMAGE: Discipline Vi, discipline. Speaking of which...(*speaking to DEVOUR who has been picking through everyone else's salad bowls.*) do you think you could leave some for the rest of us?

DEVOUR: Sorry. Vi's little speech got me going again.

STARVE: Are we starting?

IMAGE: Not quite. I have to set up.

STARVE: OK. (*She slumps back on the table. DEVOUR is still eating.*)

IMAGE: Dev!

DEVOUR: I can't help it. It's a reflex action. I need to have something in my hands.

PURGE: You should take up smoking.

DEVOUR: Ewww. Disgusting.

PURGE: But it works.

DEVOUR: Why don't you do it then?

PURGE: I already have a system.

DEVOUR: What do you think I'm? Should I start smoking?

IMAGE: I fear you'd end up eating the cigarettes. Put up the easel will you dear?

DEVOUR runs over to set up the easel. The first sheet of paper has "Annual Meeting" written on it.

PURGE: I brought some pictures in. Second tier models in Japan.

IMAGE: That sounds very nasty.

PURGE: It's a regular vomitorium.

DEVOUR: Were we supposed to bring visual aids?

IMAGE: Of course not darling. Where did I put my graphs?

PURGE: By the salad dressing.

DEVOUR: The fat free dressing. Everything has to be fat free. I hate salad. Last time we had such a great meal.

IMAGE: It doesn't seem to stop you though.

DEVOUR: A girl's got to eat.

IMAGE: *(she hits the gavel on the table)* I call this meeting to order.

DEVOUR: Vi, wake up! We're starting!

STARVE: OK.

PURGE: What's on the agenda?

IMAGE: I want to hear the reports first. Dev?

DEVOUR: Late night snacking is up. Baby boomers are experiencing a significant “life’s work” malaise, which is so beautiful you can’t imagine. Bulges are up, fat free is of course through the roof. Everyone is eating fat free like it’s going out of style. All day, every day.

STARVE: Why so glum?

PURGE: Isn’t that good?

DEVOUR: I hate fat free. It tastes like crap, it’s loaded with chemicals...
(*she sighs*) I would kill for plain old regular ice cream.

IMAGE: But the point is that they’re eating.

DEVOUR: Oh they’re eating all right. It’s a vicious circle to be proud of. The more they eat, the more they maintain their weight and the more they weigh, the more they eat. And so on and so on and so on.

IMAGE: Excellent. Percy?

PURGE: We’re about the same. Up-chuckers just don’t rise in numbers like Dev’s do.

DEVOUR: My numbers only go up when they get older. You have such a narrow market.

PURGE: True. However, the mass media hysteria seems to be building nicely. Everyone’s got to be thin, and not everyone can be like Vi.
(*She turns to STARVE, who is sleeping again*) Right?

IMAGE: Vi? Vi! Someone wake her up.

PURGE: Join the living dearest.

STARVE: Huh?

IMAGE: Your report?

STARVE: (*yawning*) Um, the numbers are up. Way up in California. Those girls are afraid to chew gum for fear of gaining weight.

PURGE: You see? Who knew television would work so much in our favour?

DEVOUR: Nobody eats in California. I’d stick out like a sore thumb on a bumblebee.

STARVE: My median is getting younger too.

IMAGE: How young?

STARVE: Sometimes it's 8 or 9.

IMAGE: Fantastic Vi! How did you do that?

STARVE: (*yawning*) It's nothing really. Most of the work's done for me.
(*She starts to slump again, PURGE pokes her awake.*)

PURGE: Ah, ah, ah.

STARVE: I'm awake.

PURGE: (*to IMAGE*) And how are things at your end?

IMAGE: Delightful. Absolutely delightful. We're getting them young and keeping them longer. They're intimidated, fearful, and continually looking for the unachievable goal of being too thin.

STARVE: Sounds like we're good across the board.

DEVOUR: Great! Let's eat cake.

IMAGE: Before we do that, I have something to share with you all.
This letter was brought to my attention from one of the satellite offices. Tell me what you think.

DEVOUR: I think we should eat cake.

IMAGE: (*reading*) "As I look forward into the next era, my eyes do not rest easy on what the future holds for womankind."

PURGE: You never bother with this kind of tripe Immy.

IMAGE: "As the four horse men of the apocalypse foretell the end of the world, I see four hags who are bringing about the downfall of women."

DEVOUR: (*sitting up and taking serious notice*) What's this?

IMAGE: "It is not men who are to blame. We have been going about this the wrong way. We agree to lose weight when accused of being fat. We believe we must attain magazine perfection. The women who pose for those pictures believe beauty is the only way to survive. Men may say things to us, but we believe them. We act on them. We turn ourselves inside out and for what? For the glory of becoming skin and bone. Soon we will be nothing but skin and bones."

STARVE: Well. (*Yawning*) La, di, da.



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