

The First Supper

a play in two acts

by Karen Schiff

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CHARACTERS

CHUCK WORTHINGTON III, 53 – CEO of Worthy News Corporation

LIBBY WORTHINGTON, 48 – Chuck’s wife, a homemaker extraordinaire

AMANDA WORTHINGTON, 18 – Chuck and Libby’s daughter, a college freshman

BRIAN GRACE, 19 – Amanda’s boyfriend, a college sophomore

JIM GRACE, 41 – Brian’s father, a part-time handyman

BETTY GRACE, 39 – Brian’s mother, a shift supervisor at a discount megastore

EDDIE KAMARA, 33 – a chef, originally from Western Africa

TIME

The present. A Saturday afternoon on a glorious May day.

PLACE

The living room of the Worthington’s sumptuous lake-side home in Kenilworth, a leafy, old-moneyed North Shore suburb of Chicago.

The room is a sprawling sea of white – sofas, armchairs, rugs, credenzas, cabinets, artwork, picture frames, Italian marble floor: all white, whiter and whitest.

French doors at the back lead to an outdoor patio.

Note

When one character starts speaking before the other has finished, the point of interruption is marked /

ACT I

(The lights come up on the Worthington's living room. A doorbell rings. Offstage, we hear giggling and silliness. The bell rings again. EDDIE KAMARA enters)

EDDIE

Alright, alright, man, I'm coming, I'm coming. God help me. I gotta do everything in this place.

(EDDIE exits. Offstage, we hear ...)

AMANDA

(shrieking)

Eddie! Eddie, Eddie, Eddie, Eddie, Eddie, Eddie!

EDDIE

Hello there little one.

AMANDA

Oh my God, oh my God. Is it done?

(AMANDA WORTHINGTON comes bounding on stage, with EDDIE behind her. She looks around the room)

AMANDA (Cont'd)

Oh my God. It's like ... it's like seventeen shades of white.

EDDIE

Eighteen. I counted.

AMANDA

It's kinda scary. I mean, like, what if you spill something?

EDDIE

Oh, don't worry. I'm sure she ordered two of everything just in case. So, what about your guest back there? He looks a little lonely.

(AMANDA looks back)

AMANDA

Brian, what are you doing? Come in, come in.

(BRIAN enters with two small suitcases)

AMANDA (Cont'd)

Brian, this is Eddie Kamara. Eddie, Brian Grace.

BRIAN

Pleased to meet you, Mr. Kamara.

EDDIE

The pleasure's mine. But please, call me Eddie.

BRIAN

Yes, sir, Eddie.

AMANDA

Eddie's our chef. Well, I mean, like, he's not our chef. He works for the company. Dad stole him away from some fancy restaurant downtown. What are you doing here?

EDDIE

Your mother wanted to treat you to a home-cooked meal. You know what that means.

AMANDA

Her home. Your cooking.

EDDIE

Exactly.

AMANDA

(to BRIAN)

Mom's not that great a cook. Just not in her genes.

EDDIE

No, that's not true. She's just a little rusty, that's all.

AMANDA

What are you making?

EDDIE

Something very special.

AMANDA

Good. Cause it's a very special occasion.

EDDIE

Why's that? I heard you bring home a new boyfriend every weekend.

AMANDA

Shut up.

(to BRIAN)

He's totally kidding.

BRIAN

I know.

AMANDA

Brian's not much of a kidder. He's very serious. But very cute, don't you think?

BRIAN

Amanda.

EDDIE

I'll let you decide that. I got to get back to work.

(EDDIE starts to leave)

EDDIE (Cont'd)

Hey, Brian man, I forgot to ask. You're not a vegetarian are you?

BRIAN

Oh gosh no, sir.

EDDIE

Vegan, fruitarian, pescatarian, nothing like that?

BRIAN

No.

EDDIE

Good.

AMANDA

Why, what are you making?

EDDIE

Venison loin with vidalia onion confiture and truffle emulsion.

AMANDA

Ooh, la, la.

EDDIE

That ok with you?

BRIAN

Gosh ... sure. Sounds great.

AMANDA

Eddie, you should have told us. Brian could have brought the meat fresh for you. He's been hunting since he was a kid.

EDDIE

Really?

BRIAN

Yes, sir.

AMANDA

He's one hundred percent meat and potatoes. His whole family is. It's really cool. We have supper there every Sunday. His mom made the best meatloaf last week. It was awesome.

EDDIE

You don't say. Meatloaf.

AMANDA

Yeah. It was incredible. It had this egg, like, right in the middle.

EDDIE

Well, my dear, don't forget to eat your vegetables, too. They're good for you. And delicious. At least the way I make them.

(EDDIE starts to exit again)

AMANDA

Hey, Eddie. Where is everyone?

EDDIE

Your dad went to play golf at the club. And your mom is out shopping I think. So make yourself comfortable. Just don't spill anything; you know they'll blame it on me—never, ever on their Amazing.

(EDDIE exits. BRIAN has wandered up the French doors.)

BRIAN

Is that the lake down there?

AMANDA

Yeah.

BRIAN

Wow.

AMANDA

Isn't Eddie the best? He's super talented. He's a painter, too, you know.

BRIAN

Yeah, he seems really cool. But what was he talking about. Who's Amazing?

AMANDA

Oh, that's what my Dad calls me sometimes. Instead of Amanda. It's dumb.

BRIAN

No it's not. It's the truth.

AMANDA

You think?

BRIAN

Yeah.

AMANDA

How would you know?

BRIAN

I've had experience.

AMANDA

That's not what I've heard.

BRIAN

Yes I have. Enough to know.

AMANDA

Enough to know what?

BRIAN

Enough to know that tomorrow morning, you will be Amazing Grace. You'll be my Amazing Grace.

(BRIAN kisses AMANDA. She tries to pull him down to the couch)

BRIAN (Cont'd)

Amanda, we just got here.

AMANDA

I know. But it was such a long car ride. I missed you.

BRIAN

I was right next to you.

AMANDA

That's way too far.

(AMANDA again tries to pull BRIAN down)

BRIAN

Don't.

AMANDA

Relax. It'll be fine. Just don't "spill" again.

BRIAN

Amanda c'mon, they'll be home soon.

AMANDA

We'll hear them come up the driveway. Come here. Just for a teeny-tiny little bit.

(BRIAN tries to resist, but AMANDA is too enticing. Things quickly get hot and heavy, though they manage to keep their feet off the new couch. CHUCK WORTHINGTON enters and sees the suitcases before noticing the couple on the couch. Not sure exactly what to do, he decides on a small cough. This doesn't work, so he tries a full phlegm clearing.)

AMANDA

Oh my God, Dad. ... Dad, I didn't hear you come up the driveway.

CHUCK

I got a lift from Jerry. He dropped me off down at the gate. I walked.

AMANDA

You walked?

CHUCK

Yes sweetheart. I still have two good legs, you know. And two good eyes. You're the new boyfriend, I assume.

BRIAN

Yes, sir.

AMANDA

Dad, this is Brian Grace. Brian, this is my dad.

BRIAN

How do you do, Mr. Worthington? It's a pleasure to meet you, sir.

CHUCK

Please, call me Chuck.

BRIAN

Yes, sir, Chuck.

CHUCK

Just get here, did you?

AMANDA

A few minutes ago.

CHUCK

You work fast, don't you?

AMANDA

Dad.

CHUCK

(looking BRIAN over)

Well, well, well ... We haven't heard much about you, Brian. Why don't you sit down on the love couch over there and tell me about yourself.

BRIAN

Sir, I'm so sorry about that, really, I am.

AMANDA

Dad, it was my fault. Really. I'm just so crazy about him. I can't leave him alone.

CHUCK

Yes, I can see that, sweetheart. Well, don't worry about it. It's just a good thing it was me who caught you and not your mother. She'd have a cow. Brian, what can I get you to drink? Looks like you could use one.

BRIAN

Oh, nothing, sir, Chuck. Thank you.

CHUCK

You sure?

BRIAN

Yes, I don't—

CHUCK

Oh, right. Underage and all. Well, I don't think big brother's snooping around here today. How about a scotch? Or a beer? That's it, I'll get you a beer—I bet that's your drink. Amanda, what do you want, a glass of wine?

AMANDA

No, Dad, I—

CHUCK

I've got a terrific Pinot Noir. We got it in Christchurch.

(BRIAN, confused, looks at AMANDA)

AMANDA

New Zealand.

CHUCK

2000 reserve—only fifty cases of the stuff released. You'll love it. Mom and I had some when we were over there last month. Forty two a pop. Ridiculous! I'm not much of a wine fan myself, but Libby went crazy over it, so I bought her a few.

AMANDA

What, bottles?

CHUCK

Bottles? No, of course not. Cases.

(CHUCK exits)

AMANDA

(calling out)

Dad really—don't open it just for me.

BRIAN

How many bottles in a case?

AMANDA

I don't know. Like twelve or something. He's always treating her to stuff like that. It's really sweet. I know you're going to like them. They're the best.

BRIAN

You think everyone's the best.

AMANDA

No, I don't. Just everyone I like. Like you.

BRIAN

Amanda ...

AMANDA

Everything's going to be okay. I promise.

BRIAN

Just, you know, ease into it. Don't freak them out.

AMANDA

I will, I will. Don't worry. I love you.

BRIAN

I love you, too.

(CHUCK enters with drinks)

CHUCK

Here we go. One German beer for Brian, one New Zealand wine for his pretty lady, and one Scottish scotch for her poor old dad.

AMANDA

Oh yeah, Dad. Real poor, and real old.

(to BRIAN)

AMANDA (Cont'd)

He's turning fifty-four next week. He's having a little trouble dealing.

CHUCK

No, that's not it. Not at all. What I'm having trouble "dealing" with is that my baby girl is already finishing her first year of college. That's what makes you feel old. Just wait till you're a parent. You'll see what I mean.

(he lifts his drink)

Well, cheers. To my Amazing and her amazing new friend ... Come on now. Let's have a toast.

(AMANDA nudges BRIAN. AMANDA and BRIAN pick up their drinks and raise them in a toast. CHUCK drinks)

CHUCK (Cont'd)

What's the matter with you two? You have my permission. Have a drink. Just whatever you do, don't spill it.

BRIAN

Thank you, sir, but I don't drink.

CHUCK

You don't what?

BRIAN

I don't drink alcohol.

CHUCK

But you're in college for God's sake. What's the point of the whole thing if you don't drink yourself silly every now and then?

BRIAN

I understand what you're saying sir, but you see, I'm a-

AMANDA

Football player.

(BRIAN looks at her)

AMANDA (Cont'd)

He's the quarterback.

CHUCK

Really? Funny, I followed the team a bit. I don't remember hearing about you.

BRIAN

I'm just the back-up.

AMANDA

Yeah, he didn't get to play much. The regular guy was super healthy. It was so annoying.

CHUCK

Well, I'm sure we can fix that. Right Amanda?

AMANDA

Dad!

(BRIAN looks horrified)

CHUCK

Don't worry, Brian, I was just kidding.

AMANDA

He's not much of a kidder.

CHUCK

Yes, I can see that.

AMANDA

Dad's always making jokes like that. When I was little, he would say, "Amanda let's go down to the lake and watch the sunset." And I'd say, "But Daddy, God makes the sun go down the other way, we can't see the sunset." And he'd say, "Oh don't you worry, Amazing. One day God will make the sun set in the East, we just haven't found his price yet."

CHUCK

You remember that?

AMANDA

Of course. Every time I see a sunset, I think, uh-oh, Dad still hasn't made that deal. God's holding out for more.

(AMANDA and CHUCK laugh. BRIAN is not amused.
Awkward silence)

AMANDA

Brian's a big Bears fan, dad.

CHUCK

Oh that team, that team! They're going to send me to an early grave, I tell you.

BRIAN

Oh yeah. They kill me, too. I've been a fan ever since I was like three. My dad – you don't want to know.

CHUCK

He's a fan?

BRIAN

More like a fanatic. When I was like twelve, and they missed the playoffs again, I couldn't take it anymore. I was gonna switch teams and start rooting for the Rams. He made me sit in front of the TV for two straight days and watch the video of the '87 game /

CHUCK

Tampa Bay.

BRIAN

Yeah. Over and over and over again. I had to get his permission just to go to the bathroom. I must have watched that game like nine times.

CHUCK

That was a hell of a comeback.

BRIAN

Yes, sir.

CHUCK

Sounds like dad knew what he was doing. You're still rooting for the home team.

BRIAN

Oh, yes sir. I'll never switch teams again.

CHUCK

Good for you.

BRIAN

I learned my lesson. Through love and faith, sin is atoned for.

CHUCK

Here, here.

(CHUCK raises his glass)

BRIAN

Through the fear of the Lord a man avoids evil.

CHUCK

I'm sorry, what was that?

BRIAN

Through the fear of the Lord / a man avoids

AMANDA

Dad, dad. Brian's got a 3.9 GPA.

CHUCK

Oh. An athlete and a scholar. Looks like you've caught yourself a good one. What are you majoring in, Brian?

BRIAN

Business Administration.

CHUCK

Terrific, terrific.

BRIAN

With a minor in theology.

CHUCK

Oh. Interesting combination. Maybe you can say a prayer for my portfolio. The Dow could use a little divine inspiration these days.

BRIAN

I don't know of a prayer offhand, sir, for the stock market but I'm sure I can find one.

CHUCK

Good, you do that. And what's your excuse, Amanda? Why are you making me drink alone?

AMANDA

I can't.

CHUCK

Why? Are you on the football team too?

AMANDA

No, I—

CHUCK

What are you the running back?

AMANDA
Dad.

CHUCK
Tight end?

(he winks at BRIAN)

AMANDA
Dad, I can't drink. Really, I can't. I mean, like ... I mean, like, I'm pregnant.

CHUCK
Oh boy, she's such a

(he looks at AMANDA)

CHUCK (Cont'd)
Tell me you're kidding.

AMANDA
Brian and I are getting married.

CHUCK
What?

AMANDA
Tomorrow morning. At ten. Reverend Gray is going to do the ceremony. Can you make it?

CHUCK
I have a tennis game.

AMANDA
Can you cancel?

CHUCK
What do you mean you're getting married?

AMANDA
I mean, we're getting married.

CHUCK
Who the hell do you think you are, you little twerp?

BRIAN
I'm a man who loves your daughter, sir, very much.

CHUCK

What a load of crap.

BRIAN

No, sir, I do. Truly.

AMANDA

Dad / calm down.

CHUCK

You could have knocked up half the campus. Why did you go after my daughter? It wouldn't be because her daddy's got a lot of money, now would it?

BRIAN

No, sir, no.

AMANDA

Dad, stop it! We're in love. And I'm pregnant. So we're getting married.

BRIAN

There's no other choice, sir. It's the right thing to do, the responsible thing.

CHUCK

Yeah, I see how responsible you are. Ever hear of a cold shower?

AMANDA

Leave him alone. We didn't have sex.

BRIAN

That's right, sir, I'm a virgin. We both are.

CHUCK

Oh yeah, a regular Mary and Joseph you two. Sorry for interrupting before—didn't know you were working on the Second Coming.

AMANDA

Dad!

(offstage, the front door closes)

LIBBY

(offstage)

Hello, hello, hello!

CHUCK

Oh God.

LIBBY

(offstage)

What a glorious May Day it is! Ohhhh. I see suitcases!

CHUCK

I'm going to get a refill. Then we'll discuss this with your mother.

(CHUCK exits as LIBBY WORTHINGTON enters overloaded with shopping bags from Neiman Marcus)

LIBBY

There she is!

(LIBBY drops the bags and gives AMANDA a big hug)

LIBBY (Cont'd)

How's my baby?

AMANDA

I'm great, mom.

LIBBY

Oh, my, aren't you the handsome one. You must be Brian. So nice to meet you.

(LIBBY kisses BRIAN on one cheek and then goes to kiss him on the other, continental style, which confuses him. They end up with a kiss on the lips)

LIBBY

Whoopsie.

(LIBBY blots the lipstick from BRIAN's lips)

LIBBY (Cont'd)

There, there, that's better.

(LIBBY takes BRIAN's hand)

LIBBY (Cont'd)

I'm Libby.

BRIAN

Yes, ma'am. Amanda's told me all about you.

LIBBY

All good things, I hope.

AMANDA

Of course.

BRIAN

Your living room is very nice. Amanda told me you just redecorated it.

LIBBY

Yes, it was a very challenging project.

BRIAN

I like the colors.

LIBBY

They're harmonious shades of white, dear. Not colors. That's the point.

AMANDA

He was just kidding.

BRIAN

Oh, yes, I think it's, um ...

(AMANDA mouths "fabulous" to him)

BRIAN (Cont'd)

Fabulous.

LIBBY

Well, I think so, too. You're more than welcome to come enjoy it anytime you like.

BRIAN

Thank you. That's very kind of you.

LIBBY

Just don't spill anything.

BRIAN

Oh no, I wouldn't think of it, ma'am.

LIBBY

Oh, please, call me Libby.

BRIAN

Yes, ma'am, Libby.

LIBBY

Where did your father disappear to?

AMANDA

He went to get another drink.

LIBBY

Well, I can see he's way ahead of you two. Oh sweetheart, look. I was downtown and ducked into a few stores. There were the cutest little dresses on sale, I just had to pick up a few for you. They're perfect for that sweet little body of yours. Brian, doesn't she have the most darling figure?

BRIAN

Oh yes, ma'am, she did, I mean, she does.

LIBBY

Did? Let me see. Did you put on a few pounds? I can only imagine what they're feeding you down there.

AMANDA

No, no, mom, I didn't gain any weight. Look, I really don't need any new dresses.

LIBBY

Oh, come on. Just take a peek.

(LIBBY takes a red dress out of the bag—a very sexy number)

BRIAN

Wow.

AMANDA

Oh my God, that's gorgeous.

LIBBY

Isn't it? I thought you could wear it to opening night of the Opera. You know, I'm chairing the gala committee this year, so we Worthington's need to make a grand entrance.

AMANDA

When is it?

LIBBY

About four months from now.

AMANDA

Oh.

LIBBY

What's the matter?

AMANDA

Nothing. I just ... I'm just not sure it's my style, that's all.

LIBBY

Really? I thought it was just perfect for you. Oh well, don't worry, there's lots of others to choose from.

AMANDA

No / mom.

LIBBY

I'm sure there'll be one you'll like. Oh my goodness, look at the time. I've got to run. I have a manicure. My nails are an absolute disaster. Just wanted to say hello to you two. I'll be back in about an hour.

AMANDA

No, no, wait.

LIBBY

Oh you're right, I should see how Eddie's doing. He said he's making you a very special dinner a la Francais. Brian, do you like French food?

BRIAN

I've never-

LIBBY

What a silly question. Of course you do, who doesn't?

(CHUCK enters)

LIBBY (Cont'd)

Oh darling, hello. How are you?

(LIBBY gives CHUCK a quick kiss)

LIBBY (Cont'd)

Look, I've got to run out again. My nails are an utter mess. How's Eddie doing? Does he need anything?

CHUCK

No. He's fine.

LIBBY

What's the matter? You look a bit, I don't know ... nauseas.

CHUCK

Nauseas? Me? No. Though you might want to ask Amanda.

LIBBY

What? Are you sick?

(LIBBY feels AMANDA'S forehead)

LIBBY (Cont'd)

You don't feel hot. Do you have a bad tummy?

AMANDA

No, I'm fine.

LIBBY

Are you sure?

AMANDA

Yes.

LIBBY

Alright, well, I'll be back in an hour. If you're still not feeling well, just tell me. I'm sure Eddie won't be insulted if you have some broth instead. Ok?

AMANDA

Ok, mom.

(LIBBY gives AMANDA a kiss and starts to leave)

LIBBY

Oh goodness, look at these nails. They're just horri-

(LIBBY stops)

LIBBY (Cont'd)

Oh ... my ... God.

AMANDA

Mom, I can explain.

LIBBY

Oh, there's really no need to explain, Amanda. I have an excellent understanding of why an otherwise healthy young girl suddenly becomes nauseated. What were you thinking? How could you have unprotected sex in this day and age?

AMANDA

Mom, we didn't-

LIBBY

I gave you a whole box of condoms before you went to school.

CHUCK

You gave her condoms?

LIBBY

Of course I did. Well, what happened? Did you use them all already? Why didn't you just buy more?

BRIAN

I thought you were a virgin.

AMANDA

I was. I am. Mom we didn't have sex.

CHUCK

Yes, darling, you see, it was immaculate conception. Apparently that's what college kids do now in March, instead of spring break.

BRIAN

Sir, I believe in abstinence before marriage. I did not have sexual relations with your daughter.

LIBBY

Oh, Brian, please. We've all heard that one before.

AMANDA

Mom, he's serious. It was just a freak thing. Brian is incredibly respectful. He's a Chri... he's a total gentleman. Things just got a little hot and heavy one night, mostly cause I wanted to, and he sorta ... right near ... well, really near, but ... you know, not exactly in.

BRIAN
Amanda.

CHUCK
I really don't need to hear this.

LIBBY
You call that abstaining?

AMANDA
Mom, we didn't have sex, I swear.

LIBBY
It's a hell of a fine line you're drawing.

AMANDA
When I went to the doctor, she said it's really rare to get pregnant this way, but it can happen. And, for some reason, it did. It's got to be a sign, you know, that we were meant for each other. Brian's mother thinks so too.

LIBBY
His mother?

AMANDA
Yes, she said it must be a sign from God. That our love was meant to be.

BRIAN
We love each very much. We really do.

AMANDA
We knew even before I got pregnant that we wanted to spend the rest of our lives together. And that we wanted to have lots of babies. This one just came a little early, that's all. So we're going to get married tomorrow morning. I called Reverend Gray yesterday, and he said he'd be glad to perform the ceremony. And I want you and Dad to be there. Please. I need you to be there. I'm getting married, mom. I need you to be happy for me. I need you to be happy for your grandchild.

(pause)

CHUCK
Libby, why don't you help yourself to the Pinot. It looks like Amanda is determined not to drink it.

LIBBY
Amanda, you do realize, don't you, that there are other options.

AMANDA

No, mom. There aren't. I'm having this baby.

BRIAN

No, Mrs. Worthington, there are no other options. We're getting married tomorrow.

LIBBY

But why? What's the rush? Why not think it over a bit?

AMANDA

There's nothing to think about.

BRIAN

That's right ma'am. It's God's will.

LIBBY

God's will? What the hell are you talking about?

(EDDIE enters)

EDDIE

Libby, where is your meat knife? I've looked everywhere, but I can't ...

(he picks up the vibe in the room)

I'll keep looking.

AMANDA

Eddie, how are you at cakes?

EDDIE

Do I look like Betty Crocker?

AMANDA

But you could make us one, right?

EDDIE

For you ... I could make a cake. What kind do you want?

AMANDA

Oh, I don't know, how about a wedding cake?

EDDIE

A what?

AMANDA

A wedding cake. Brian and I are getting married tomorrow. I thought after the ceremony, we could all come back here and have cake and champagne, well not for me.

(she pats her stomach)

The baby and all.

EDDIE

Baby?

AMANDA

And I guess no champagne for the Grace's either, but for mom and dad. Is that ok? A nice lemon cake with white frosting? It'll match Mom's new living room. Bri, do you like lemon cake?

BRIAN

I love it.

AMANDA

Me too. Lemon cake it is.

EDDIE

(looks at CHUCK)

I, uh ... I have to check with the boss first on this one. Wedding cakes require special authorization.

LIBBY

Amanda, c'mon, you can't be / serious about this.

CHUCK

I think Eddie already has enough to do for tonight. If you want a cake tomorrow, we'll stop by the bakery in town and pick something up.

LIBBY

Chuck.

AMANDA

But, dad, he said-

BRIAN

I think that sounds like a great idea, Mr. Worthington. Eddie's awfully busy.

AMANDA

(sighing)

Alright, fine. We'll pick something up.

(EDDIE exits)

CHUCK

What did you mean, no champagne for the Grace's? Are Brian's parents coming too?

BRIAN

Of course, sir. They wouldn't miss it for the world.

AMANDA

They left about an hour after we did. They should be here soon.

LIBBY

What?

CHUCK

They're coming here?

AMANDA

Yes, of course. I want you to meet them before tomorrow. So we all have a chance to get to know each other. It'll be like a rehearsal dinner.

LIBBY

Were you planning on telling us?

AMANDA

Of course. But I had to tell you everything else first.

LIBBY

When did you tell the Graces?

AMANDA

Just a few hours ago.

BRIAN

They were so excited.

AMANDA

We went over their house and told them the news. We couldn't wait to tell you too, so we left right away. They said they just needed an hour or so to pack up. They should be here pretty soon.

CHUCK

Where do your folks live, Brian?

BRIAN

Pinkneyville, sir.

CHUCK

Oh, yes, Pinkneyville. We've got a paper down there.

LIBBY

Where is Pinkneyville?

BRIAN

About half an hour from campus.

LIBBY

Down-state?

AMANDA

Yes, mom. People live down-state.

LIBBY

No, I just meant ... that's a long drive.

BRIAN

It's not too bad. About three, three and a half hours, depending on traffic up here around the city.

AMANDA

I know you'll like them. Brian's dad is really down-to-earth. A total straight-shooter. And his mother is so sweet. She's super active in her community—she does a ton of volunteer work, just like you Mom.

LIBBY

Yes, I'm sure she's a lovely, but—

AMANDA

Oh, and get this. You've both got the same name—Elizabeth.

LIBBY

What a coincidence.

AMANDA

Oh, oh, and wait. Oh my God. I almost forgot. The Graces were so excited to hear this. You're all Republicans! So you see. You've already got lots in common.

(short pause)

CHUCK

Libby, go tell Eddie we're expecting two more guests.

LIBBY

I don't know if he bought enough food.

CHUCK

I'm sure he'll figure something out. ... Go on, Libby.

(LIBBY starts to exit)

CHUCK (cont'd)

Amanda, why don't you and Brian take your suitcases upstairs and get settled.

LIBBY

Brian can sleep in one of the guest rooms.

AMANDA

Yes, mom. We know. I'll put him in the yellow one.

(LIBBY exits)

AMANDA (Cont'd)

I'll put the Grace's in the other guest room, ok?

CHUCK

You invited them to stay here?

AMANDA

Well, of course Dad. It's not like they have a lot of-

BRIAN

Amanda.

CHUCK

What?

AMANDA

I mean, not everyone is head of a publishing company. And it's not like hotels are so cheap around here.

CHUCK

I see. What did you say your dad did again, Brian, for a living?

I didn't.

BRIAN

Well, now's a good time.

CHUCK

He, um ... well, you see we had a hardware store, Grace & Sons. My grandpa started it.

BRIAN

Just like Worthy, Dad.

AMANDA

Yes, yes. What happened to the store?

CHUCK

He had to close it a few years ago.

BRIAN

Why?

CHUCK

A Walmart opened up right outside of town, and he couldn't really, you know, compete.

BRIAN

Hmm. Damn shame. What's he doing now?

CHUCK

He's, like, a handyman.

BRIAN

How's business?

CHUCK

Not that great. Everyone where I grew up is already pretty handy.

BRIAN

Then how's he getting by?

CHUCK

My mom got a job.

BRIAN

Where?
CHUCK

At the Walmart.
BRIAN

Oh my.
CHUCK

Doesn't that suck?
AMANDA

Amanda.
BRIAN

Stink.
AMANDA

(she sticks out her tongue at BRIAN)

This her first job?
CHUCK

Yes, sir. She'd always stayed home with us kids.
BRIAN

How many of there are you?
CHUCK

Six. I'm the oldest.
BRIAN

They were homeschooled, Dad. Isn't that cool?
AMANDA

Your mother stayed home and taught you all?
CHUCK

Yes, sir, until a few years ago when she had to go to work.
BRIAN

Then what happened?
CHUCK

Then I went to the high school in town.
BRIAN

AMANDA

And was the star quarterback.

BRIAN

(embarrassed)

Well, yeah ... sorta.

CHUCK

Are you on scholarship? At State?

BRIAN

Well, partial. Not full.

AMANDA

Dad, please. They can stay here, right?

CHUCK

Who?

AMANDA

The Graces. They can stay here?

CHUCK

Oh, yes. ... Yes, of course they can stay.

AMANDA

Thank you, thank you, thank you! I knew you'd understand.

BRIAN

I really appreciate that, sir. My parents are so excited to meet you and Mrs. Worthington.

CHUCK

Yes, yes, same here, of course.

AMANDA

Dad, can you talk to mom, please? I knew she'd freak out. I mean, the whole grandma thing and everything. It's probably making her feel really old. And you know how she gets about that.

CHUCK

Yes, believe me, I know.

AMANDA

Thanks.

CHUCK

Or sage, or moss, or algae - something like that.

AMANDA

Yuck.

CHUCK

It makes her happy.

(BRIAN and AMANDA exit. CHUCK walks up to the French doors and gazes out to the lake. LIBBY enters)

LIBBY

Eddie said it'll be fine. He has enough food.

CHUCK

Good, that's good.

LIBBY

Oh, Chuck, what are we going to do? I mean, she can't go through with this. She's only eighteen. She barely knows him. She only met him a few months ago.

CHUCK

How come you didn't tell me?

LIBBY

I didn't think it was a big deal, frankly. She mentioned him once and that was it. I never heard about him again until yesterday when she called. And you know, she's had lots of boyfriends, never anything serious, though. I had no idea she was "in love" with this one.

CHUCK

Where did they meet?

LIBBY

At some club, she said, off-campus. I only remember because she was giggling hysterically about it. Said some friends of her convinced her to go hear some band, it had some crazy name, what was it ... oh yes, "Do the Jew".

CHUCK

Do the what?

LIBBY

"Do the Jew". She said at first she was scared to go, thought it might be some radical hate-group sort of thing. But then, of all things, it turned out to be a Christian band.

CHUCK

A what?

LIBBY

They sang songs about the teachings of Christ. She said they, you know, really rocked. The whole nightclub, it turns out, is sponsored by a Christian youth group, as some kind of alternative, I guess, to bars and frat parties. I don't know. Amanda thought the whole thing was a riot. Couldn't stop laughing about it. Anyway, that's the story of how she met Bri- ... Oh no. Oh no, no, no, no, no. Chuck. Do you think? Do you think he's one of those?

CHUCK

One of those what?

LIBBY

One of those Christians.

CHUCK

Libby, we're one of those Christians.

LIBBY

No, no, you know what I mean. The other kind. One of those fanatical evangelical fundamentalist born-again.

CHUCK

Which one, darling? Pick.

LIBBY

Oh, what's the difference? Oh God. Oh God, you have to do something, Chuck. We can't lose Amanda to one of those nutcases.

CHUCK

Libby / calm down.

LIBBY

No wonder she's so intent on having that baby. She's got Mr. and Mrs. Holy Meatloaf brainwashing her every Sunday.

CHUCK

What?

LIBBY

She told Eddie she goes there every Sunday for supper. Last week they had meatloaf. Meatloaf!

CHUCK

With or without the egg?

LIBBY

With. Chuck!

CHUCK

What?

LIBBY

Be serious. You can't reason with those people. They're all fire and brimstone.

CHUCK

Oh, Libby, stop. They can't be that far out there. Their son goes to State, he plays football. He's studying business. Sounds pretty all-American to me.

LIBBY

Oh God, we should never have let her go to that school. She should be in Boston right now, at your alma mater. You should have pushed harder to get her in.

CHUCK

There's only so much I could do.

LIBBY

You mean there was only so much you would give.

CHUCK

Don't start that again, Libby. She's the one who insisted on going to State—said she didn't want anything to do with the Ivies. Plus, she didn't have the grades or the test scores, you know that. She's a beautiful, sweet girl, our Amazing, but she's no Rhodes Scholar.

LIBBY

That is not true, not at all. She may not be a gifted student, but she's extremely intuitive and works very hard. She'll be a great pediatrician one day.

CHUCK

Oh Libby.

LIBBY

What? She's talked about it since she was a little girl.

CHUCK

No, you've talked about it since she was a little girl.

LIBBY

Well, it's not like you've given any indication that you want her to work at the company. What is it you propose she do?

CHUCK

I don't propose anything. It's Amanda's life. She can make her own choices. And for all we know, she may just choose to be a wife and mother. I mean that's what you chose Libby.

LIBBY

Yes, but it's a choice she should make as a mature adult and furthermore there's a world of difference between being Mrs. Charles Worthington and being Mrs. Brian Grace.

CHUCK

I'm not suggesting there isn't.

LIBBY

You know as well as I do that Amanda is nowhere near ready to be a mother, especially a single one, because Lord knows, she is only marrying that boy over my dead body.

CHUCK

Oh come on, he seems like a decent fellow. Bit stiff, but a nice boy.

LIBBY

Yes, but he's a boy. That's precisely the point. Look, I'm not happy about this. Not for minute. I never thought I'd have to see my daughter end a pregnancy. Why do you think I gave her all those condoms? But thank God she has that option. Thank God. Can you imagine if it were illegal?

CHUCK

I'm sure we'd find a way.

LIBBY

Yes, Chuck, but not everyone is us. Not everyone can throw money at a problem and make it go away. ... What ... Why are you looking at me like that?

CHUCK

You just hate the idea of being a grandmother before you're fifty, don't you?

LIBBY

You think that's what this is about? You think that's why I'm upset?

CHUCK

Nails, my ass. You were going to get ...

(he makes a gun with his fingers and points them at LIBBY's knitted brow)

CHUCK (Cont'd)

Bam, bam.

(LIBBY smoothes her brow)

LIBBY

Well, just a quickie.

CHUCK

A quickie, eh? Sounds good to me

LIBBY

Oh Chuck, please ...aren't you the least bit concerned about any of this?

CHUCK

Darling, don't worry. I'll take care of it. There won't be any wedding.

LIBBY

There won't?

CHUCK

No. And there won't be any baby. Not yet. She's got plenty of time for all that later on.

LIBBY

Exactly. That's exactly right. You know, you had me worried there for a second. You almost seemed to get caught up in the whole thing—as if it could actually work.

CHUCK

Well, he is a Bears fan.

LIBBY

Oh, enough with those stupid Bears.

CHUCK

Why don't you go upstairs, Lib - relax a little a bit before our guests arrive.

LIBBY

Relax? Please.

CHUCK

And ask Brian to come down, will you?

LIBBY

What are you going to say to him?

CHUCK

I'm just going to have a little talk with him.

LIBBY

What about Amanda? Should I talk to her?

CHUCK

No, let her be.

LIBBY

But—

CHUCK

Libby. Trust me.

(LIBBY exits. CHUCK spots the glass of Pinot and takes a rather generous swig. EDDIE enters)

EDDIE

Oh. Where did Libby go?

CHUCK

She just went upstairs. Do you need something?

EDDIE

I found the knife, but the handle seems to be loose. I can't use it.

CHUCK

Can't you use another one?

EDDIE

What am I supposed to do? Carve venison with a butter knife?

(BRIAN enters)

EDDIE (Cont'd)

I'll see what I can do.

CHUCK

Thank you, Eddie. I knew there was a reason we're overpaying you.

(EDDIE exits)

BRIAN

Mrs. Worthington, I mean, Libby, said you wanted to speak with me?

CHUCK

Yes, yes. Come on in, Bri. Have a seat why don't you? Can I get you anything? Juice, soda, water?

BRIAN

No, thank you, sir. I'm good. What did you want to speak to me about?

CHUCK

I wanted to commend you Brian, for what you said before.

BRIAN

What's that?

CHUCK

About loving Amanda for who she is and all, and not for her ... social standing.

BRIAN

Well, it's the truth sir. And my parents taught me I should always speak the truth.

CHUCK

Yes, I'm sure. They obviously did a fine job raising you. No doubt they instilled in you a strong sense of personal responsibility for your actions. Am I correct?

BRIAN

Absolutely sir. Godliness comes from taking personal responsibility. Sin is a choice.

CHUCK

Exactly. Refusing to take responsibility for your actions is a sinful choice that leads you away from God's glory.

BRIAN

Exactly.

CHUCK

Good. We're in agreement. So then I hope you won't mind me asking. How is it you plan to provide for your new family?

BRIAN

Sir?

CHUCK

Financially, Brian. How do intend to support them? What's the game plan?

BRIAN

Well, I'm ... I'm still working that out, sir. I mean, we only found out on Thursday that Amanda was pregnant. I proposed on Friday, and here it is, just Saturday. So, the plan is still ... under construction.

CHUCK

I see. Well, from what I can tell, at the time you proposed, you didn't know that Libby and I were going to be able to offer any kind of assistance. And it sounds like your mom and dad can't either. Hard times, and all. So what were you thinking when you asked my daughter to marry you? You did do some thinking, didn't you, between Thursday and Friday?

BRIAN

I ... I just knew we had to get married. If we're going to have a baby, there's no other choice. We have to get married. Right away.

CHUCK

So the urgency is due to the baby?

BRIAN

Well ... yeah.

CHUCK

And if there were no baby?

BRIAN

That is not an option.

CHUCK

That ultimately isn't your choice, is it son?

BRIAN

Yes, it is. That's my child. I'm the father.

CHUCK

And Amanda is the mother. The one who actually carries the child. It's her body.

BRIAN

She totally agrees with me. You can ask her yourself.

CHUCK

I can tell she agrees that she wants this particular baby. I wouldn't be so certain that she shares your ... general philosophy.

BRIAN

She said this would happen.

CHUCK

What?

BRIAN

She said in the car it was going to be hard for you and Mrs. Worthington to accept that she rejects the killing of the unborn.

CHUCK

She said that?

BRIAN

Yes.

CHUCK

Those exact words?

BRIAN

Well, basically, yeah. She was more sure about Mrs. Worthington. She knows for certain that she's for killing ba- ... she's for abortion. She wasn't so sure about you, though.

CHUCK

Why is that?

BRIAN

Well, you've voted pro-life.

CHUCK

I have? When?

BRIAN

She said you voted for Ted Wilson.

CHUCK

Yes.

BRIAN

Well, the Senator's a Christian, sir. A believer in the sanctity of human life. My family volunteered long hours to make sure he got elected.

CHUCK

(ruffled)

Well of course I voted for Ted. He supported lower corporate taxes. Saved the company millions. Not to mention cuts in capital gains tax. What do you think paid for this?

(he points to the living room)

Let me tell you, Brian. This project put a lot of people to work—decorators, contractors. And Worthy—Worthy was able to hire over a hundred new employees. Like Eddie. Tax cuts are good for the economy, Brian. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise. You agree, don't you?

BRIAN

Oh, yeah. Totally. Get the money out of government and back to the people. That's the only way to grow the economy. Like my dad. He used his tax cut to get a new transmission for the van—the one he uses for business. It was in real bad shape.

CHUCK

Oh ... Why didn't he just buy a new one?

BRIAN

What? A new van? Gosh, I don't know what kind you could buy for four hundred dollars. Sir, please, I don't want you to worry.

CHUCK

I'm not. About what?

BRIAN

About Mrs. Worthington. I know that you're Episcopalians and all, but still, you couldn't have raised someone like Amanda if you weren't good people yourselves. I have faith that Mrs. Worthington will come to know God in time. I pray for her salvation. And I'll continue to do so every day until she sees that Christ is the only way.

(short pause)

CHUCK

Well, don't knock yourself out, Brian. ... Libby voted for Wilson too.

BRIAN

She / did?

CHUCK

Look, young man, I still need an answer. How are you going to support your new family?

BRIAN

Like I said, sir, it's all sudden.

CHUCK

You don't have a clue, do you?

BRIAN

That's not true. I have a job. It's only a couple of hours a week now, but I'll quit school when the baby comes and I'll work full time.

CHUCK

And what is it you do?

BRIAN

I work at a copy store.

CHUCK

You make copies?

BRIAN

And send faxes.

CHUCK

And that's going to support a family of three? Or more?

BRIAN

Sir, my mother and father raised a family without a lot of money. They did it with a whole lot of love.

CHUCK

I'm not disputing the importance of love, Brian. I'm sure you have good intentions. But be practical for a second. You are aware, aren't you, that, despite all her recent humble talk, Amanda is accustomed to a certain standard of living. She may think it's sort of fun to try something less lofty for a while, but eventually, she's going to want more. She's going to want a couple of new designer dresses every summer.

BRIAN

How do you know what she'll want?

CHUCK

Because I've known her for almost nineteen years. You've known her for, what, half a semester?

BRIAN

I'll get a good paying job, one day, I will. I won't be at the copy store forever.

CHUCK

Without a college degree? What kind of decent work can you get?

BRIAN

I can work with my Dad.

CHUCK

You said business is lousy.

BRIAN

I'll go back to school. Amanda can work for a little bit while I finish. Then when I graduate, I'll get a good job.

CHUCK

But if Amanda's working, who'll look after all the children you two plan to have? Nannies don't come cheap.

BRIAN

My mom will help.

CHUCK

I thought she's working these days.

BRIAN

Dad's business is gonna pick up. She'll be able to quit then.

CHUCK

Brian ...

BRIAN

Well, maybe ... I mean, we would only do this as a last resort, but maybe you could help us out at some point. Maybe, we could move up here, nearby, and Mrs. Worthington could look after the baby every now and then. I could finish school and Amanda could work. You would be happy, wouldn't you, to have Amanda and the baby close by?

CHUCK

Of course we would, but remember, Libby and I are heathens. No, no that won't do. That won't do at all. Think of the child.

BRIAN

Alright, so I haven't got it all figured out yet. It's only been two days. All I know is that we have to get married tomorrow. We have to. And nothing you or Mrs. Worthington can say is going to stop us.

CHUCK

Brian ... Brian ... is that what you think? You think I want to stop you and Amanda from getting married?

Well ... yeah. BRIAN

Oh no, son. Not at all. Not at all. CHUCK

Then why are you ... BRIAN

I want to help you. CHUCK

You do? BRIAN

Yes. Of course. Absolutely. I think you're a fine young man. CHUCK

But I thought-- BRIAN

Oh yes, a fine young man who's got a terrific future ahead of him. That being the operative word, of course. CHUCK

What? BRIAN

Future. CHUCK

(BRIAN looks confused)

Brian, I can tell that you and Amanda care very deeply about each other and I would never, ever want to get in the way of my daughter's happiness. I have no objection to the two of you dating. None at all. CHUCK (Cont'd)

Dating? BRIAN

In a couple of years, after graduation, when you've both had time to mature a bit, then you can make a less impulsive, more rational decision about whether you really want to spend the rest of your lives together. And if that answer is still yes, then by all means, Libby and I would be happy to see you and Amanda get married. CHUCK

BRIAN

No, no, we're getting married / tomorrow.

CHUCK

And then after you get married, in a few years from now, you can get established in a career, put away some savings, buy yourselves a nice home, accumulate some equity. I'll call Larry, my broker, he'll set you up with a couple of good mutual funds. Not the greatest return, but a nice safe investment for a young couple.

BRIAN

But—

CHUCK

And then, when you are good and ready, you can have all the children you like.

BRIAN

I know what you want, Mr. Worthington. And we are not going to do that. No sir, no way. I'll kill myself before I kill my unborn child.

CHUCK

That's exactly what I like about you Brian. You're a passionate, resolute fellow. I just know there'll be a place for you at Worthy News, after you graduate. We need more fine young men like you. I can imagine there'll be some student loans that need to be taken care of. A nice sign-on bonus would help, wouldn't it?

BRIAN

Sir, are you trying to—

CHUCK

Dad could probably use a little help too, with business so slow these days. That would free up your mother, wouldn't it? She could get back to homeschooling your brothers and sisters. God only knows what kind of liberal crap they're teaching in public schools these days.

BRIAN

Mr. Worthington. Are you trying to bribe me?

CHUCK

You said it yourself, young man. You're a business major with a minor, just a minor in theology. Well, let me give you some advice. You need to think less like a divinity student, and more like a businessman. Your decision to get married tomorrow and start a family before you've secured a modicum of financial stability reeks of bad judgment. No, no, more than that. It's downright irresponsible. And that's where we started out this conversation, isn't it? With personal responsibility. I would be very careful of accusing your future in-laws of being sinners before you

first take a long hard look at yourself. ... Now, look. I know it's disappointing. Believe me, I'm not happy about the situation, either. But in order to be responsible and make sound, rational decisions in life, you have to face facts. You have to be pragmatic. Wouldn't you agree?

(short pause)

BRIAN

You said it was her body, Mr. Worthington, her choice. If that's the case, why would Amanda care what I think?

CHUCK

Because you've clearly had quite an influence over her these past few months. I sense that her thinking might be a little less ... clouded, if you yourself told her you wanted to postpone the wedding.

BRIAN

And support the slaughter of the innocent.

CHUCK

Look here, I don't have time or patience for biblical hoo-ha. The last I heard, the right to end a pregnancy is perfectly legal in this country, particularly for a girl who is only, what, six weeks along. If you're not happy about that, fine. I respect your right to hold whatever opinion you want. But I recommend you park your crusade at the door. There will be no proselytizing in the Worthington home. That would be very, very unwise of you, to say the very least.

(LIBBY enters)

LIBBY

Well, look here ... are you two having a nice chat?

(CHUCK and BRIAN glare at each other)

CHUCK

Brian, why don't you take a walk down to the lake. I find it's a good place to reflect on matters.

BRIAN

Yes sir, I'm sure it is. I hear there's a beautiful view of the sunset.

LIBBY

Oh no, no, the sun sets in the other direction.

CHUCK

He knows, Libby. ... He knows.

(BRIAN exits through the French doors)

LIBBY

What on earth did you say to him? He looked like he'd seen the devil.

CHUCK

I told him to be practical.

LIBBY

That's it?

CHUCK

Among other things.

LIBBY

Well, did it work?

CHUCK

Yes ... yes. I'm sure it will.

LIBBY

Will? You don't know for sure?

(a buzzer rings)

LIBBY (Cont'd)

Oh my God. Oh my God. They're at the gate. Oh Chuck. Chuck. I don't know if I can do this.

CHUCK

Oh, yes you can, Libby. Just put on that face of yours.

LIBBY

What face?

CHUCK

You know, that gracious hostess face. You'll be fine. We just have to make nice until lover boy out there comes to his senses.

LIBBY

Make nice? Shouldn't we be doing just the opposite?

CHUCK

No, trust me. Just be a good girl. Alright?

(CHUCK exits)

LIBBY

What do they drive? Can you tell from the video?

CHUCK

(offstage)

It's a van.

LIBBY

A van?

CHUCK

(offstage)

Yes.

(a car backfires, loudly)

CHUCK

(offstage)

A very old van.

(into the intercom)

Hello there. You must be the Grace's.

JIM

(offstage)

We sure are!

BETTY

(offstage)

Let me say something, move back. Jim, move back. Hi, it's Betty Grace. We are just so dying to meet you.

CHUCK

(offstage)

Well, then, I better buzz you in, quick.

LIBBY

Oh God.

(CHUCK enters)

CHUCK

I'm going outside to meet them. Darling, get a hold of yourself.

(CHUCK exits. EDDIE enters with a long knife)

EDDIE

Libby, there you are. It's just not possible. I won't be able to cut the meat properly with this knife I've tried, believe me. The whole meal is going to be ruined.

LIBBY

What's the matter with it? It should be fine. I sent the set out to be sharpened last week. They just came back yesterday.

EDDIE

Well, something must have happened. The handle's all loose. It's making things very difficult, not to mention dangerous.

LIBBY

Let me see.

(LIBBY goes over to EDDIE and looks at the knife)

CHUCK

Here you go, right this way.

LIBBY

Hmm, that's odd.

(LIBBY and EDDIE stand close together, with EDDIE still holding the knife. JIM and BETTY enter, with CHUCK just behind them, carrying their bags)

BETTY

My it's so ... white.

(JIM spots EDDIE with the knife, and draws a gun)

JIM

Drop it! Drop it, now!

(LIBBY and EDDIE cling to each other)

LIBBY

Oh my god, what does he want?

EDDIE

The knife, I think he means the knife.

CHUCK

Jim.

JIM

I said drop it!

(EDDIE holds the knife out, about to drop it)

LIBBY

No, no, no, don't! Don't! The new floor. Together, slowly. We'll go together.

(Together, EDDIE and LIBBY slowly bend down and place the knife gently on the floor. They rise as one. JIM's gun is still pointed at EDDIE)

JIM

Let her go.

LIBBY

NO!!

(she clings even tighter to EDDIE)

CHUCK

Jim, old boy, if you shoot the cook, there'll be no dinner for you tonight.

JIM

Cook?

CHUCK

Yes. That's Eddie Kamara. Our award-winning chef and very good friend.

JIM

Oh. ... Oh, I ... I had no idea. I just saw the knife and I ... you know, I ...

CHUCK

Reacted. Yes, indeed. I can assure you we're all quite safe. You can put that away. Just for the time being, of course.

(JIM reluctantly puts his gun in his suitcase)

CHUCK (Cont'd)

Eddie, why don't you get back to work. I know you've got a lot to do.

(EDDIE tries to leave, but LIBBY, whimpering, hangs on to him tighter)

CHUCK (Cont'd)

Libby ... let him go.

(LIBBY releases EDDIE. EDDIE exits)

CHUCK

Darling, come now, turn around. Meet our guests. Jim and Betty Grace.

(LIBBY takes a deep breath and, as she turns around, puts on her gracious hostess face)

LIBBY

Hello. I'm Elizabeth Worthington. I'm so ...

(she starts to lose her face)

CHUCK

Libby ...

LIBBY

... delighted you could join us for dinner this evening. Please, do sit down. Our home is your home.

(Blackout.)

ACT II

(The lights come up. LIBBY, CHUCK, BETTY and JIM are as they were at the end of Act One. AMANDA has just entered, wearing her new red dress)

AMANDA

What happened? I heard screaming.

BETTY

Oh my / heavens.

CHUCK

Would you look / at that?

JIM

Hey, hey, hey.

LIBBY

Oh, that is fabulous.

AMANDA

Is everything ok?

CHUCK

Oh yes, yes, honey. Everything's fine.

LIBBY

Turn around. Let me see.

(AMANDA shows off the dress)

LIBBY (Cont'd)

Perfect. It's gorgeous, don't you think?

BETTY

Well, what there is of it.

CHUCK

She's a beauty, isn't she?

JIM

You bet.

BETTY

That's not what you're wearing tomorrow, is it Mandy?

LIBBY

Mandy?

AMANDA

Oh gosh, Betty, no. I've got something very traditional for tomorrow. Not a gown or anything. Just a simple dress. White, of course.

BETTY

Phew.

LIBBY

You got the dress without me?

AMANDA

Mom, it's not like there was a whole lot of time. I just picked it up yesterday.

CHUCK

Come everyone, please. Let's sit. Jim, Betty, what can I get for you? Juice, soda, ice tea?

LIBBY

Oh, we have some very nice Numi Organic tea. Jasmine Puerh. Dr. Oz says it's supposed to be very good for you. Full of anti-oxidants, you know.

(short pause)

BETTY

You got a coke?

JIM

Coke sounds good.

CHUCK

Two cokes, coming up.

AMANDA

Dad, where's Brian?

CHUCK

He took a walk down to the lake.

AMANDA

I want to show him the dress. He'll freak. He's never seen me in anything like this.

CHUCK

Amanda, don't ... You don't want to ruin the dress. Mom just bought it for you, right?

BETTY

You bought it for her?

LIBBY

Of course. I know my daughter's taste. Honey, your father's right. Go upstairs and change. You can show Brian the dress later.

AMANDA

Oh, alright.

(AMANDA starts to exit, but stops for a moment and winces)

CHUCK

You okay?

AMANDA

Yeah, I'm fine, I'm just ...

LIBBY

What?

AMANDA

I'm just a little tired, that's all. I think I'll lie down for a few minutes, if that's ok. I don't mean to be rude or anything.

JIM

No, no.

BETTY

Go right ahead. We understand, don't we Libby?

(she gives LIBBY a wink)

BETTY (Cont'd)

Been there done that, huh?

LIBBY

Yes. We certainly have.

CHUCK

Go on, sweetheart.

AMANDA

Ok. I'll be down soon. I'm so excited everyone's here.

LIBBY

Amanda, did you try the other dresses on?

AMANDA

Yeah. But I liked this one the best. Right again, mom.

(AMANDA exits)

CHUCK

Libby? Want me to freshen up that Pinot?

LIBBY

No, darling, I'm fine.

CHUCK

Alright then, I'll be right back. Don't anyone move.

(CHUCK exits)

LIBBY

Well ... Jim, Betsy, how was your trip?

BETTY

It's Betty.

LIBBY

Betty, of course.

JIM

Not too bad. Traffic wasn't nearly as bad as we thought it would be.

BETTY

I tell you, we'd heard such horror stories about driving up to the city.

LIBBY

Well, Kenilworth is hardly the city. We're a good thirty minutes north.

BETTY

But you got to drive around the city to get up here.

LIBBY

Well, yes, but—

BETTY

People just shooting each other like that. Over nothing. What do they call that again?

JIM

Road rage.

BETTY

Road rage, that's right. That was such a tragedy, wasn't it?

LIBBY

What?

BETTY

Didn't you hear? It was all over the news.

LIBBY

No.

BETTY

It happened on the same highway we were just on. Some boy, probably not much older than Brian, rolled down his window and shot another driver right in the head. A mom with three kids.

LIBBY

Oh my goodness. Why?

JIM

Thought she was tailgating him.

BETTY

It was bumper-to-bumper traffic. What did he expect?

LIBBY

Oh, that's just awful.

BETTY

Isn't it though? Poor soul. I just hope she was ready to meet her maker.

JIM

Yeah, and I hope that son of a gun meets his in the chair.

(BETTY nods. CHUCK enters with drinks)

BETTY

That's right. Judgment day will come for that young man.

CHUCK

What young man are we talking about? Not Brian I hope?

BETTY

Oh my, no.

LIBBY

Some boy on the highway. Took out a gun and shot a stranger. Can you imagine?

CHUCK

Oh yes, I remember hearing about that. A real nutjob. Probably high on drugs.

BETTY

That's exactly what I thought.

CHUCK

Well, you know what they say? Great minds think alike.

LIBBY

They really need to do a better job screening for these people. There should be more controls on who can get a gun in this country. It's just ridiculous.

(JIM looks at her hard)

JIM

A man has the right to protect his family and his property.

CHUCK

Yes. Yes, of course he does. Libby wasn't referring to you, Jim. Just the crackpots and the potheads. Right, my lovely hostess with the face?

LIBBY

Why, yes dear, of course.

BETTY

How is Mr. Kamara doing?

CHUCK

Oh, he's seems to be recovering alright. He's certainly chopping with renewed vigor.

JIM

I feel real bad about what happened. I should go say something to him. Express my regrets.

BETTY

I was thinking that, too, Jim.

JIM

He's in the kitchen, right? Down that way?

LIBBY

Yes, but—

CHUCK

Yes, it's right through there. Down the hall.

JIM

Excuse me. I'll be right back.

(JIM exits)

LIBBY

Chuck, why don't you go too?

CHUCK

Oh, they'll be fine.

BETTY

My husband didn't mean any harm. If there really had been trouble, you'd be thanking him right now, believe me.

LIBBY

Yes, but Betsy—

BETTY

Betty, my name is Betty.

LIBBY

Yes, Betty, so sorry.

CHUCK

We know Jim meant well, dear—it was an honest mistake, of course. Tell you what. I'll just pop my head in—make sure that husband of yours isn't sneaking any snacks in before dinner. What do you say?

BETTY

Well, ok. He does like to put his hand in the cookie jar every now and then.

CHUCK

You see. I knew it. Now, don't you two go anywhere. I'll be right back.

(CHUCK exits)

BETTY

Your husband's such a nice man.

LIBBY

Oh yes, he's a charmer, my Chuck. And Jim, well ... what can I say?

BETTY

He's a good man, my husband.

LIBBY

Yes, yes of course.

BETTY

And a wonderful father.

LIBBY

Yes, I'm sure. How many children do you have?

BETTY

Six.

LIBBY

Oh my goodness.

BETTY

Three boys and three girls.

LIBBY

How old?

BETTY

Brian's our oldest. Johnny's eighteen. The twins, Missy and Mindy are sixteen. Frank is twelve and our baby, Krystal, is six.

LIBBY

Oh my. They must keep you on your toes.

BETTY

Oh they sure do. And now we have another one on the way.

LIBBY

You're pregnant?

BETTY

Oh my goodness, no. Brian and Amanda's baby. I mean, don't get me wrong. I would love to have more myself, but I had some female trouble down there. A few years ago.

LIBBY

I'm so sorry to hear that.

BETTY

It's alright, really. The Good Lord simply decided that at thirty nine it was time for me to be a grandma instead of a ma.

LIBBY

Thirty nine?

BETTY

Yes. Isn't it a blessing? I'll get to spend so many good years with all my grandchildren. And probably even a few of their kids. A great-grandma. Just think about it.

LIBBY

I'd rather not.

BETTY

Oh, but you could be. Mandy says she wants lots of children. Seven or eight, she says.

LIBBY

What?

BETTY

Oh, and you'll have to come down for the baby shower.

LIBBY

Shower?

BETTY

It's early still, I know. But I was thinking I could put one together when the time gets near. You should come down, of course. I know Mandy would want you there.

LIBBY

Well, we'll have to—

BETTY

Oh you should see, I've got my eye on the cutest little outfits at the store. Little giraffes and ducks and snowflakes. They are just darling. You know, I get an employee discount, so I could probably buy two or even three of them without breaking the bank. And, if you want, I can pick you up a couple, too. You can pay me back whenever you can. I'm not really supposed to do that, but I think we can make an exception for a special occasion, right?

LIBBY

Yes, I'm sure we could. Where is it you work?

BETTY

At the Walmart.

LIBBY

Oh. Walmart.

BETTY

You go there, too?

LIBBY

Oh, no, no. It's just ...

BETTY

What?

LIBBY

It's nothing. I think we own some stock, that's all. Only a little bit. It's a very successful company.

BETTY

Yeah. So successful it put our store right out of business.

LIBBY

What store?

BETTY

Our hardware store. Grace & Sons. Jim's grandpa started it. Been in the family over fifty years. When the Walmart opened a few years ago, shut us right out of business.

LIBBY

Oh, no. That's terrible.

BETTY

The town was really split over the whole thing. Half the folks wanted the Walmart to open, half of them didn't. But then the paper came out for it, and that seemed to turn things around.

LIBBY

Which paper is that?

BETTY

The local paper. Pinkneyville Worthy News.

LIBBY

Oh ... oh, I see. But, tell me. How is it you work there, now? I'd be so ... angry, I don't think I could stomach it.

BETTY

Well, I didn't have much of a choice. Jim lost his health insurance. Six kids. Someone's always getting strep or a broken arm or something.

LIBBY

Oh I just hate to hear things like that. I mean, first, your husband's store goes out of business, through no fault of his own, and then he loses his insurance. It's just outrageous.

BETTY

What is?

LIBBY

Health care in this country. It's in such a miserable state. I'm on the board you know, of a children's hospital. You cannot imagine how many people come in to the emergency room who have no insurance. I meet them all the time. Young single mothers who are working dismal part-time jobs with no benefits just trying to stay afloat. It's awful.

BETTY

What kind of people are you comparing us to?

LIBBY

What?

BETTY

We're doing just fine, thank you. I mean, I just hate the fact that I can't homeschool the kids anymore, but-

LIBBY

You homeschool your children?

BETTY

Well, I did. Until I had to go to work. But Jim's business'll pick up, I just know it will. And then, I'll be able to get my kids back home and teach them right again. I mean, I know, it may take a while to get rid of the brainwashing and all, but it'll work out, I know it will. ... Oh ... Oh, I am so sorry. I know that Mandy went to public school. And she came out ok. I mean, much more than ok. She's such an angel. We just love her so much. She's already like a member of the family.

LIBBY

Dear, could you call her Amanda, please. I'm so unaccustomed to hearing Mandy. I don't even know who you're talking about.

BETTY

Oh, but I've been calling her that since I met her. Amanda seemed like such a, I don't know, such a uppity name for such a sweet girl. Mandy just seems to fit her better. Except when she was in that dress. I hardly recognized her.

LIBBY

Well, I did. She looked like my beautiful daughter, whose name is Amanda. You know, Betty, don't you find it a little odd that she never told us about you and Jim, until today. I mean, apparently she's been over your house every week for months now.

BETTY

She's never said anything about us?

LIBBY

No. Not a word. And I speak to her all the time.

BETTY

Huh, that is strange. Well, she must be so head over heels in love, she forgot, that's all.

LIBBY

Or maybe, just maybe, it could be that she didn't think her relationship with Brian was all that serious. I mean, not yet. It's only been a few months.

BETTY

Well of course it's serious. They're getting married tomorrow.

LIBBY

Yes, but there are special circumstances here, wouldn't you say?

BETTY

No, you haven't seen them together, like I have. Those two are crazy in love.

LIBBY

Crazy in lust is more like it.

BETTY

Excuse me.

LIBBY

I mean, they clearly have a strong sexual attraction. But I think it's a bit too soon to be rushing into marriage. Don't you agree?

BETTY

No, I certainly do not.

LIBBY

Oh come on, Betty. Amanda's eighteen. Brian's all of what? Nineteen?

BETTY

He'll be twenty next month. They're the same age Jim and I were when we got married. And the Lord has blessed us with twenty one years of happiness, with many more to come. I know for a fact that he will do the same for Amanda and Brian.

LIBBY

I'm not saying that certain people can't get married at a young age and have everything work out for the best. It's wonderful, of course, that you and Jim have had such a strong, loving marriage. But I know my daughter. She's not ready to be a wife. And she's certainly not ready to be a mother.

BETTY

Well, I don't know if I was ready either, but when the Good Lord says its time—

LIBBY

This is not about the Good Lord. This is about my daughter. This is about her future.

BETTY

Yes. The future that God has willed her.

LIBBY

Is that what you really think? That this is all God's will.

BETTY

Well, yes, of course. Considering the way it ...

LIBBY

What?

BETTY

You know. Considering the way it happened. It must have been God's will.

LIBBY

Oh, I see. How very interesting. So it was God himself who willed your son to stick his penis down my daughter's pants.

BETTY

That is not what I meant, and you know it.

LIBBY

Oh yes. The Good Lord works in mysterious ways, now, doesn't he?

(CHUCK enters)

CHUCK

Well amen to that. And, I'm happy to report, he seems to have infinite healing powers, too.

(EDDIE and JIM enter, friendly as can be)

JIM

I'm telling you, you're welcome to come, any time. There's always room in the van. Be great to have a real chef along. Me and my buddies, we just throw it on a big stick and let it fry.

EDDIE

Oh, no, no, no. That won't do at all. Libby. You won't believe it. Remember that wild boar stew I was telling you about, you know, the recipe from Tuscany. Well, this man shoots them. For real. Down in ... where did you say?

JIM

Texas.

EDDIE

Texas! Who knew? Oh my God, to get my hands on fresh boar. It would be like manna from heaven.

JIM

Betty. Eddie doesn't just cook. He's a painter, too. You know, an artist.

CHUCK

Yes, he's a talented fellow, our Eddie.

JIM

And guess what else, hon? He's from Africa.

EDDIE

Well, I was born there. I grew up in Europe, mostly. And New York.

JIM

His dad was a diplomat.

EDDIE

We moved around a lot.

JIM

Betty and me and the kids went to Africa about ten years ago.

CHUCK

Really? Where did you go?

JIM

To Kenya. That anywhere near where you're from?

EDDIE

No, no. I'm from Sierra Leone. It's on the other side.

CHUCK

Oh, Kenya's incredible. We went on safari there about ten years ago ourselves. It was something else, wasn't it Lib?

(LIBBY nods)

CHUCK (Cont'd)

Wonderful trip. Not your typical beach vacation, eh?

JIM

I couldn't say. We weren't really on vacation.

CHUCK

Oh ... Business?

JIM

In a way. We were teaching English. Building some schools. Spreading the word. That sort of thing.

CHUCK

Oh.

JIM

Just for a summer. Hard to be away from the store any more than that.

CHUCK

Yes, of course. Well ... well, isn't that just terrific. You know, my publishing company has a charitable foundation—been around for years—gives away millions. And Libby, well she does a ton of volunteer work. Between the opera and the Junior League, I hardly ever see her. Oh, and of course, the Children's Hospital. Well, you tell them, darling. Don't be shy. Tell them what you do.

LIBBY

Chuck.

CHUCK

I can't keep track of it all. ... Go on, Libby, tell them.

LIBBY

Chuck, that's enough!

(she rubs her head)

LIBBY

Excuse me. I need to go ... set the table.

(LIBBY exits)

EDDIE

I should go check on dinner.

JIM

Eddie, the offer stands. Be great to have you join us. We've got a trip coming up in a few months.

EDDIE

Yeah, thanks man, but I'm not sure I can get the time off. I gotta talk to the boss first.

JIM

He doesn't look like such a meanie. I bet you we can work on him.

EDDIE

Oh, no. Not that boss, the other one. My, uh ... my wife.

(JIM laughs)

JIM

Aw, don't worry, I'll talk to her.

(confidentially)

<http://www.playfundraiser.com>

I've always had a way with the ladies, you know. What's her name?

EDDIE

Stef.

JIM

Like Stephanie?

EDDIE

No. ... Like Stefán.

(The buzzer rings.)

EDDIE

I'll get it.

(EDDIE exits. BETTY heaves a deep sigh.)

JIM

He's a—

CHUCK

Yes, exactly. He's a terrific fellow. And a hell of ... heck of a cook. He paints, too. Did you know that?

JIM

Yeah. We just discussed it.

BETTY

That's it. I've had enough. I'm going to find Brian.

CHUCK

Really, Betty, it's perfectly safe down there. I'm sure he's fine. Wouldn't you rather just relax here in the house? You had a long drive today.

JIM

Wasn't that long.

BETTY

I want to see my son. Now. Is there a path or something down to the lake?

CHUCK

Here, here. I'll go with you. I wouldn't you getting hurt. There's some tricky spots near the water.

BETTY

You just said it was perfectly safe.

CHUCK

It is. It is. Tell you what. If he's not back in a few minutes, I'll go look for him myself. Now, we have a little time before dinner. Let's just sit and relax. I think Eddie's whipped up some delicious appetizers for us. A little duck foie gras—

JIM

Duck? Oh man. That's my favorite.

BETTY

It is?

CHUCK

Next to your meatloaf, of course.

BETTY

How do you know about my meatloaf?

CHUCK

Amanda raves about it.

BETTY

She's told you about us?

CHUCK

Well, of course she has. She especially loves the egg in the middle. Says it, you know, really rocks.

EDDIE

(offstage)

You know, Betty, I've got a recipe for Meatloaf a la Singapore ...

JIM

Oh, now that sounds tasty.

EDDIE

(offstage)

It's absolutely delicious. Remind me to give you it to you.

(EDDIE enters with an extremely large painting covered with a white cloth. He makes a beeline for upstairs)

JIM

What in the world is that?

CHUCK

A painting, I'd guess. One of yours, Eddie?

EDDIE

Yes, yes. Just a little something for the upstairs.

CHUCK

Oh, terrific. Which room?

EDDIE

The bedroom.

CHUCK

Well, now hold on there. Don't be shy. Let's have a look.

EDDIE

No, no, it's—

CHUCK

He's very talented, you know.

BETTY

Yes, you told us.

EDDIE

It won't look right in this room.

CHUCK

Why not?

EDDIE

The lighting ... it's all wrong.

CHUCK

You can't get much brighter than this. The place is like a blizzard.

EDDIE

Exactly. It's meant to be seen ... in the dark.

(EDDIE tries to leave again as LIBBY enters)

LIBBY

Oh God, is that ...?

EDDIE

The framers just dropped it off.

LIBBY
They're early.

EDDIE
Very. I'm taking it upstairs.

CHUCK
He won't show it to us. He's very shy.

BETTY
But very talented.

(JIM shoots her a look)

BETTY (Cont'd)
He's making duck.

(EDDIE starts to leave again)

LIBBY
Eddie, wait... Show them the painting.

EDDIE
What? Are you ... ? ... Tu es folle?

LIBBY
Fais-moi confiance. Je sais ce que je fais.

(EDDIE takes LIBBY aside)

BETTY
What were they saying?

CHUCK
Oh, I don't know. They just babble in French every now and then. Bunch of show-offs.

BETTY
I didn't know that was something to show off.

EDDIE
(sotto voce)
You know what they'll think.

LIBBY

Yes, I know exactly. Go on. Show them.

No. EDDIE

Eddie. LIBBY

Libby. EDDIE

Libby? My good girl? (nervously) CHUCK

Chuck. EDDIE

Show them. LIBBY

(EDDIE unveils the painting, an artful nude of LIBBY, as AMANDA runs in)

Who was at the door? AMANDA

(she sees the painting)

Oh, Lord. BETTY

Oh, mom. AMANDA

Oh, Jim. BETTY

Mom, you look hot! AMANDA

(BETTY hits JIM, who has been rendered speechless)

Jim! BETTY

JIM

What? ... What?

LIBBY

Happy Birthday, my love.

CHUCK

Oh, Libby, Libby, Libby. ... You really shouldn't have.

JIM

You don't uh, mind, Chuck, letting another man, you know ...

BETTY

Oh, Jim, you are such a—

JIM

What?

BETTY

That's it. I'm going to look for Brian. Right now. He needs me.

JIM

What are you talking about—he needs you? He's not a baby.

BETTY

It's obvious. The Holy Ghost does not abide in this house. Anyone can see that.

CHUCK

Betty, dear, wait.

(BRIAN appears outside on the patio, out of breath)

AMANDA

Brian!

BETTY

Oh thank you ... thank you, Jesus.

(AMANDA runs outside. BETTY starts to go, too. JIM holds her back)

JIM

Let 'em have a minute.

(AMANDA hugs BRIAN. BRIAN, agitated, pulls away and tells her something. AMANDA shakes her head “no”)

BETTY

What was he doing out there all this time?

JIM

Probably just needed some fresh air that's all, cool off a bit. Now that I've been in this house awhile, I can understand why.

(JIM covers the painting)

EDDIE

I'll go check on dinner.

(As EDDIE exits, BRIAN enters. AMANDA, still outside, looks toward the lake)

BETTY

Brian, honey, are you alright?

BRIAN

Yeah, mom, yeah. I'm fine. How was the trip, dad?

JIM

Just fine. Traffic wasn't bad at all.

BRIAN

Van hold up ok?

JIM

No complaints.

BRIAN

Good. That's good. Cause we're leaving.

JIM

We're what?

BRIAN

We're leaving. We're going home.

JIM

Son, what are you talking about? We just got here.

BETTY

See, I told you ...

JIM

Eddie's making us that nice dinner and all.

BETTY

There is no fellowship in this house.

JIM

Plus, we got the wedding tomorrow.

CHUCK

Jim, I think ... Well, I think Brian is trying to tell us something. Am I right?

BRIAN

Yes, sir. Yes, I am. You see, Mr. Worthington, you were right. The lake is a very good place to reflect on things. And so I did. I thought long and hard. And after I did, I made a decision.

LIBBY

You did?

BRIAN

Yes, I did.

CHUCK

And what did you decide?

(AMANDA enters)

BRIAN

I decided to change my major. To theology.

JIM

What?

BRIAN

C'mon Amanda. We're going back to Pinkneyville. We got a wedding in the morning. ... Amanda, come on. We gotta go.

LIBBY

Don't you order her around.

BETTY

Don't you talk to him like that.

JIM

(to BRIAN)

What's going on here?

BRIAN

Nothing, dad, nothing. I just want the whole family to be there, that's all.

CHUCK

You're sure about that?

BRIAN

Yes. Absolutely.

BETTY

Well, I think that makes perfect sense.

JIM

What are you talking about, changing your major?

BETTY

He can tell us in the car. Now go on you two, go get your things. You got a big day tomorrow.

LIBBY

Chuck.

BETTY

You two can come on down, I guess, if you want.

BRIAN

Amanda, please, c'mon. We gotta go home.

LIBBY

This is her home.

JIM

Hold on. Now, just hold on. Look at me.

(JIM grabs BRIAN)

JIM (Cont'd)

I said look at me.

BRIAN

Dad.

JIM

What's going on here?

BETTY
Jim, be careful.

BRIAN
Dad, please, just trust me, we gotta go.

JIM
What were you doing out there?

BRIAN
Nothing.

JIM
You're in God's grace, you know that. You're forgiven. Now tell me what you did.

BRIAN
I swear. I didn't do / anything.

JIM
What did you do, son?

BETTY
Jim!

JIM
WHAT DID YOU DO?

BRIAN
You're asking the wrong person!

(BRIAN shoves JIM back hard and he falls. BETTY runs to help JIM. Pause)

AMANDA
He talked to you, didn't he? He tried to find your price.

LIBBY
What?

AMANDA
That's why you were out there so long, right? You almost saw that sunset.

BRIAN
But I didn't.

BETTY
Mandy, what are you—

AMANDA
How could you even consider it?

BRIAN
I didn't. I didn't!

AMANDA
Then what were you doing out there?

BRIAN
I just needed some time to think.

AMANDA
Think about what? The size of the check?

BRIAN
Amanda, I swear. I swear. I would never hurt the baby. Never. I told him that.

(He looks at CHUCK. BETTY gasps)

JIM
Chuck? ... Chuck, did you say something to him?

CHUCK
We had a conversation, of course, about the future. About his and Amanda's future.

JIM
But, did you ... did you try to influence him in any way?

BETTY
Of course, he did.

JIM
Hush.

CHUCK
Brian's a grown man. He can make his own decisions. He doesn't need my help.

BETTY
I keep telling you. They're not with God.

CHUCK
Everyone, please, just calm down. This is all a misunderstanding.

JIM

Doesn't seem so hard to understand. That musta been quite a tidy amount you were offering my boy.

BETTY

Ask him, Jim. Ask him where he gets his money from.

JIM

It doesn't matter. Let's go.

BETTY

No, no, you ask him. You ask him what pays for his fancy cook and his fancy house.

JIM

I don't want to know.

BETTY

The Walmart.

JIM

What?

LIBBY

My husband had nothing to do with that.

BETTY

Oh, I'm sure you made a pretty penny off it. They own stock in it, you know.

CHUCK

We own stock in a lot of different companies. We have a lot more Worthy News than Walmart, believe me.

BETTY

You have a lot more what?

LIBBY

Chuck.

BETTY

Oh my God.

JIM

Betty!

BETTY

Oh my God!

(she shakes her head, speechless)

JIM (Cont'd)

What ... what?

BETTY

Don't you remember, the paper—how they pushed for the Walmart to open?

JIM

Yeah, so?

BETTY

So, you're looking at Mr. Worthy News, himself. Isn't that right?

(JIM looks at CHUCK)

LIBBY

Oh please. Worthy has hundreds of papers all across the country. Chuck has nothing to do with editorial. Especially in some tiny little place like Pinkeytown.

BETTY

Pinkneyville. It's Pinkneyville!

JIM

(to CHUCK)

You run that paper?

CHUCK

I run the company.

JIM

What's the difference? ... You tell me. What's the difference?

BRIAN

Take it easy, dad.

JIM

You got any positions open at that paper, Chuck? Cause I sure could use a job.

BETTY

Jim, please, let's just get out of here.

JIM

See the paper, your paper, thought it was a good idea to close my store down. So I figure you owe me a paycheck or two.

CHUCK

Yes, exactly. You're exactly right. That's what I suggested to Brian. That I could be of some help to you. Financially, that is.

JIM

You expect me to believe that?

CHUCK

Yes, don't you see ...

LIBBY

Chuck.

CHUCK

It's all a misunderstanding.

LIBBY

Chuck, that's enough!

BRIAN

Dad ... Dad!!

(BRIAN puts a hand on JIM to stop him from charging at CHUCK. JIM shakes BRIAN off and heads toward the French doors)

JIM

I'm fine.

BETTY

Jim.

JIM

I said I'm fine!

(JIM storms out the French doors, slamming them hard. CHUCK picks up his empty glass)

CHUCK

Anyone else need a refill? Libby?

(all look stonily at CHUCK. CHUCK exits)

BRIAN

I'll get our stuff.

(BRIAN exits)

LIBBY

Honey, you know how much your father and I love you. We just don't want you to do anything rash ... anything that could ruin your chance for happiness.

BETTY

Her happiness? Her happiness? What about the baby? You two want to kill my grandchild. Murderers!

LIBBY

Oh, for God's sake. Is this who you want to spend your life with, Amanda – a bunch of fanatics?

AMANDA

Mom, stop it. It's not like they're part of some freaky cult or anything. We're all Christians, here, right? We all believe in Jesus Christ.

BETTY

Honey, your father just tried to buy the slaughter of your child and your mother is running around making porn—

LIBBY

Oh, please.

BETTY

Not to mention lying to you, and you call them Christians?

LIBBY

Lying? What are you talking about, lying?

BETTY

You said Amanda never told you about us.

LIBBY

That's right. Not until this morning.

BETTY

Well, your formerly charming husband said she's told you all about us. Her Sunday visits and all. Isn't that right, Mandy?

(short pause)

BETTY (Cont'd)

Mandy?

AMANDA

I just ... there was never really a good time to bring it up.

BETTY

But you said you talk to her all the time.

AMANDA

I do ... I just ...

BETTY

You just what? I thought you liked coming over.

AMANDA

I do, of course, I do. I love it. Oh, Betty. Betty, I'm so sorry, I am. Please don't take it the wrong way. I just didn't know how to bring it up with them.

BETTY

Bring what up? We were just having supper.

LIBBY

Just having supper? Oh, please. I can only imagine the garbage you were trying to force down her throat. Not to mention the meatloaf.

BETTY

You have some nerve talking to me like that, considering the trash I've seen today in this house which, by the way, is in some serious need of assistance.

LIBBY

From who? The good Lord?

BETTY

No. From a good decorator. Maybe he could introduce you to a simple concept. It's called "color"!

(BETTY storms off through the French doors)

AMANDA

You have no idea what you're talking about.

LIBBY

Is that so?

AMANDA

No.

LIBBY

Amanda, you met Brian listening to a band called “Do the Jew”. His father dragged his six children to Africa to convert the natives. His mother thinks it’s God’s will that you’re pregnant. Doesn’t this all strike you as a little bit over the top?

AMANDA

No. Not at all. It’s nice, actually, to see people devoted to something more meaningful than, you know, manicures or shopping.

LIBBY

What is that supposed to mean?

AMANDA

Mom, when was the last time we ever said grace before dinner? When was the last time we read the bible together and talked about what it means?

LIBBY

And that’s what you do over at the Grace’s?

AMANDA

Yeah, it’s cool. And not just there. Brian and I do it too.

LIBBY

Where? At school?

AMANDA

Yes. Look, I know. Betty and Jim have very strong opinions about things, but at least ... well at least they’re not hypocrites.

LIBBY

(stunned)

And you’re ... you’re saying I am?

AMANDA

Mom—

LIBBY

How?

AMANDA

Forget it, just forget it.

LIBBY

No, young lady, you tell me exactly how I’m a hypocrite.

AMANDA

You want me to have an abortion, right?

LIBBY

It's not that I want you to, you know that. It's just best, given the circumstances.

AMANDA

Cut the crap, mom. Just say it. You want me to have an abortion.

LIBBY

Yes.

AMANDA

Then how can you vote for people who don't support it?

LIBBY

What are you talking about?

AMANDA

You voted for Ted Wilson, mom. He wants to ban abortion and you know it. That was a huge part of his campaign. The Grace's worked their butts off to get him elected. How can you possibly be pro-choice and support him? How can you possibly call Betty a fanatic and vote for the same candidate as her?

LIBBY

Because ...

AMANDA

Because you wanted a new living room, and a new chef, and a bunch of new dresses.

LIBBY

No, darling, those dresses were for you, remember?

AMANDA

You know what I mean. You don't care about who you vote for as long as they're good for your money. Betty and Jim don't do that. They don't put their money first.

LIBBY

That's because they don't have any. God, Amanda, you're so naïve. Life isn't black and white. Sometimes you make compromises.

AMANDA

Why? The Graces don't compromise. Ever. They live their lives according to their beliefs. And I respect them for that.

LIBBY

And what are those beliefs, Amanda? You tell me exactly what those are.

AMANDA

You know like, the Ten Commandments and everything. What could possibly be wrong with that?

LIBBY

And what else? What about that sorority sister of yours – the one who was date-raped and got pregnant – do they think she should have that baby?

AMANDA

Just because they're pro-life doesn't mean they're totally unreasonable.

LIBBY

(emphatically)

Do they think she should have that baby?

AMANDA

I don't know! I don't know every little thing they believe.

LIBBY

Well, what are you waiting for? Tomorrow's your wedding day. That's your new family out there. Go on. Ask them. Ask them what they believe.

(LIBBY pulls AMANDA roughly toward the French doors)

AMANDA

Ow! Stop it!

LIBBY

Or don't you want to know. It might ruin your little storybook ending, right? Not to mention your fairytale about virgin births.

AMANDA

I told you what the doctor said.

LIBBY

And you expect me to believe that? Oh please. You're just protecting Brian, that's all, from his delusional parents. I'm sure they actually believe that their strapping young son would never, ever have sex before marriage – no. God, what a joke. And she had the gall to call me a liar. But a good Christian like our Mandy, well gosh, she would never make up a tall tale, now would she? She would never do anything hypocritical, would she?

AMANDA

Let me go!

(AMANDA breaks free)

LIBBY (Cont'd)

Listen to me, Amanda, please, listen to me. Don't ruin your life. You can always get married and have a baby. What you can't always have is ... is ... eighteen. How are you going to finish school? How are you going to become a doctor?

AMANDA

I don't know. I don't care. I'll just become a nurse.

LIBBY

A nurse! What are you talking about? That's not your dream.

AMANDA

No mom, no. It's not your dream. It's not my fault that you quit med school when you married Dad. That was your choice, not mine.

LIBBY

At least I had that choice. Do you really think that boy will be able to support you and your seventeen children without your having to work?

AMANDA

What are you talking about, seventeen—

LIBBY

Or do you just expect your father to cut you a monthly check for the au pair. You know as well as I do he's no fan of welfare.

AMANDA

How can you say that, mom? He's been giving you handouts for like twenty five years.

(pause)

LIBBY

I suggest you go back and read your commandments, my dear. You seemed to have forgotten one already ... Honor thy father and mother. Or did the Graces conveniently leave that one out.

(BRIAN enters carrying suitcases)

BRIAN

I put that red dress in. I know how much you like it.

(BRIAN taps on the French doors and signals to BETTY and JIM that it's time to go)

LIBBY

Amanda, please. Don't.

(AMANDA looks at her mother intently. CHUCK enters from the kitchen as JIM and BETTY enter from outside. The men exchange a hard look)

BETTY

(to JIM)

C'mon, hon.

(AMANDA picks up her suitcase)

LIBBY

Don't.

JIM

(to BRIAN)

Ready?

BRIAN

Yes, sir.

JIM

Let's move out.

(JIM, BETTY and BRIAN start to leave. AMANDA, still looking at her mother, stays put)

BRIAN

Amanda.

(BRIAN puts out his hand, and after a moment AMANDA takes it and starts to leave with the GRACES)

LIBBY

Oh God, Chuck. Do something!

BETTY

He's already done enough for one day, thank you very much.

CHUCK

Wait, wait, please, sweetheart, Amanda. Amanda, look at me. Please, look at me.

BETTY

Don't, honey. You know what can happen when you look back.

CHUCK

Is this what you want? Look at me and tell me. Is this what you really want?

(AMANDA turns around and looks at Chuck)

BRIAN

Amanda, c'mon. We gotta go.

CHUCK

You really want this baby?

JIM

Life is the Lord's gift, Mandy. You've got to have the child.

LIBBY

She doesn't have to do anything. It's her prerogative.

BETTY

What is wrong with you people? It's not a prerogative. It's a baby. An innocent baby!

JIM

Hon, don't try and reason with a bunch of death-lovers. They're never gonna change. Never.

LIBBY

(enraged)

You bring a gun into my home, point it at my chef ...

AMANDA

What?

LIBBY

and I'm the DEATH LOVER!?

(the following lines all overlap)

BETTY

Oh, for Pete's sake. This is ridiculous, already. Let's go, let's go!

BRIAN

Amanda please— Please ... we gotta get you outta here. Amanda, come on. Come on!

JIM

He had a knife. I was trying to protect her. It was a misunderstanding, that's all. I promise.

CHUCK

Amanda ... It's your choice. ... Amanda ... AMAZING.

(the cacophony ends)

CHUCK

Amazing ...

(AMANDA looks back at CHUCK)

CHUCK (Cont'd)

What do you want? Tell me, honey ... what do you really want?

(AMANDA hesitates and then looks back at the GRACE's a final time. AMANDA puts down her suitcase and turns to her parents. She slowly walks toward them)

JIM

Mandy?

BETTY

Oh Mandy, you ... you can't ... you just can't—

LIBBY

Baby—

BETTY

I'll die.

LIBBY

Baby, it's ok.

BETTY

I'll die. I will. We all will.

LIBBY

It's ok. Come here ... Come here ...

(LIBBY holds her arms open)

Mom- AMANDA

Amanda ... BRIAN

Dad- AMANDA

No! BRIAN

I'm going to have a baby! AMANDA

(AMANDA falls into LIBBY and CHUCK's arms)

What? LIBBY

(BETTY and JIM breathe sighs of relief)

That's what I really want. AMANDA

No ... oh, no, honey! LIBBY
(distraught)

(CHUCK consoles LIBBY as AMANDA approaches BRIAN.
They embrace)

Shhh ... darling, shh, shh, shh. Don't worry. I'll hire a nanny. CHUCK

Hire a nanny? LIBBY

Yes, she'll be fine. CHUCK

You don't even know when you're doing it, do you? LIBBY

CHUCK

Doing what?

(LIBBY, disgusted, breaks away from CHUCK)

AMANDA

I'm sorry. I am. I'm really sorry.

BRIAN

Sorry? What are you sorry for? You're the only one around here who—

AMANDA

I can't ...

BRIAN

You can't what?

AMANDA

I can't marry you.

BETTY

What?

LIBBY

Oh, thank you ...

JIM

No, no, you gotta get married.

LIBBY

Thank you, Jesus.

BETTY

You can't raise that child in sin.

AMANDA

And you can't tell me what to do!

BETTY

But—

AMANDA

No, Betty! I am not getting married.

BRIAN

Why not?

AMANDA

We should wait, that's all. I mean ... I mean, maybe we don't really know each other that well.

BRIAN

But ... but that's my baby, too.

AMANDA

I know. I'm not saying that we can't, like, you know, be a family. Let's just give it some more time before we get married. That way, you can focus on school and graduate and stuff. I mean, you don't want to make copies your whole life.

CHUCK

That's all I was trying to say.

AMANDA

Oh, dad, please, give me a break. That was totally slimy what you did.

CHUCK

But—

AMANDA

Not everyone has a price, dad. When are you going to get that?

(to BRIAN)

So ... so, what do you think?

(long pause)

BRIAN

Don't forget the faxes.

AMANDA

What?

BRIAN

I make copies. And send faxes.

AMANDA

You're kidding, right? Oh my God, you are ... you're kidding. Come here.

(AMANDA and BRIAN kiss)

BRIAN

So ... so now what do we do?

AMANDA

Let's eat. I'm starving.

LIBBY

Amanda, please, you're not suggesting that we still have dinner with the Graces. It's hardly appropriate at this point.

AMANDA

Why not? We're going to be a family. And families have dinner together.

BETTY

Oh, no, no, no. We're leaving. C'mon, Brian.

BRIAN

No. I want to stay.

BETTY

Jim.

JIM

Your mom's right. Nothing here but a bunch of RINO's. We gotta go.

LIBBY

(incredulous)

Did you just ...?

(to CHUCK)

Did he just call me a rhinoceros?

AMANDA

Mom ...

BRIAN

If you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive yours.

JIM

We'll talk about it in the car.

AMANDA

Mom, RINO stands for Republican in Name Only.

LIBBY

Well what in the hell does that mean?

BRIAN

And if it's hard for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?

JIM

Come on, we're going.

BRIAN

Dad, hold on, hold on.

(BRIAN grabs JIM by the arm)

BRIAN (Cont'd)

Never say never. It's only halftime. Plenty of game left to play. Stay ... come on ... Stay.

(JIM and BRIAN look long and hard at each other. After some soul searching and deep breaths, JIM slowly nods)

AMANDA

Oh, good, good, good.

BETTY

Jim.

JIM

We're staying.

BETTY

Jim!

JIM

I said we're staying.

AMANDA

C'mon, everyone, let's all pray.

LIBBY

Amanda, really, I think we've had enough theatrics for one day.

AMANDA

Mom, it's suppertime. I want to pray. Dad.

(CHUCK is lost in thought)

Dad! AMANDA (Cont'd)

What? CHUCK

Make her pray! AMANDA

Who? CHUCK

Mom. Make her pray. AMANDA

Oh yes. Yes. Brian's right, Lib. Plenty of time left on the clock. CHUCK

What clock? What are you talking about? LIBBY

Let's pray. Let's all pray. CHUCK

(He gestures for LIBBY to put on her hostess face. LIBBY looks at CHUCK as if he's gone mad. CHUCK takes LIBBY aside and speaks quietly)

Darling, you know how she is. One day this, one day that. I'll figure something out. For now, just ... pray.

Are you asking me to fake it? LIBBY

Only because you're so good at it. Look, sometimes you have to make compromises to get what you want. CHUCK

Come on, everyone. AMANDA

(She puts out her hands)

Betty, you lead. AMANDA (Cont'd)

What? BETTY

You lead the prayer. AMANDA

(BRIAN joins AMANDA on one side, CHUCK on the other. JIM takes BRIAN's hand and motions to BETTY to join the line. She does so very, very reluctantly. CHUCK reaches out to LIBBY who grudgingly takes his hand)

Go ahead, Betty. AMANDA

What am I supposed to say? BETTY

Whatever you want. It's your choice. AMANDA

(short pause)

Heavenly Father send your holy spirit– BETTY

(EDDIE enters)

Dinner's ready ... Ooh. Ooh, I hear it's a big tent. Can I pray too? EDDIE

Of course, Eddie. BRIAN

Brian! BETTY

Go on, Mom. BRIAN

Jim! BETTY

(Jim shrugs his shoulders)

BRIAN (Cont'd)

Mom, come on. You gotta go on.

(BETTY huffs. Everyone bows their head. As BETTY recites the prayer, LIBBY lifts her head and looks over the line.)

BETTY

Heavenly Father send Your Holy Spirit to renew our love. Watch over the stirrings of life in the womb and bring it to fruition. May it suffer no untimely birth at nature's whim nor violence at our hands.

(LIBBY drops hands, walks away from the others and exits through the French doors, as the lights slowly fade)

Let every human life show forth the Creator's love and strengthen the human family made in your image, let each person thrive and come to fullness in due time. We make this prayer through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

ALL, except LIBBY

Amen.

(Blackout.)