

# THE BIG FIVE OH

A COMEDY IN TWO ACTS

By **Brian Mitchell**

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## THE BIG FIVE-OH

By Brian Mitchell

**SYNOPSIS:** Whoever said life is better after fifty had better be right! George Thomas is turning fifty on Saturday, and it has been a terrible week. His dog is sick, his son is a slacker, and his daughter wants to marry a Republican. With a neurotic wife and a widowed neighbor providing more challenges than even George can overcome, this may be the worst week of his life. Through these trying days, George will discover the wonders of family, the responsibilities of parenthood, and the results of his latest physical.

*The Big Five-Oh* is a hilarious, sometimes touching account of a grown man coming to terms with his age, his relationship with his son, and his future. It is the story of a middle-aged man finally growing up.

### CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3 MEN, 4 WOMEN)

MARIE THOMAS (w) ..... Loving wife of George Thomas, fifty years old. (195 lines)

GEORGE THOMAS (m) ..... A Professor of sociology, fifty years old. (299 lines)

JULIE THOMAS (w) ..... Daughter of Marie and George, twenty-five years old. (152 lines)

ERIC THOMAS (m) ..... Son of Marie and George, twenty-two years old. (293 lines)

DOUGLAS (m) ..... Julie's fiancé, forty-four years old. (52 lines)

KATHY WALTERS (w) .....Widowed neighbor; sweet, grandmotherly type, sixty-five years old.  
(58 lines)

SARA DONAVAN (m) .....Student of George's, nineteen. (65 lines)

### SETTING

The action of this play is set in the combination living room/ dining room of the Thomas' house.

### SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

*Act One, Scene 1:* Tuesday, 6:15 PM

*Act One, Scene 2:* Wednesday, 6:30 PM

*Act Two, Scene 1:* Thursday, 6:00 PM

*Act Two, Scene 2:* Saturday, 10:00 AM

THE BIG FIVE-OH

ACT ONE, SCENE 1

**SETTING:**

Tuesday, 6:15PM.

**AT RISE:**

*As the lights come up on the Thomas' living room, MARIE THOMAS sits on the couch reading a magazine and talking to her neighbor on the telephone. MARIE is in her late forties, with hair colored to hide the gray that has crept in the last few years.*

**MARIE:** *(Turning the magazine to the side to better see the magazine. Into telephone.)* Page twenty-seven? . . . Oh, my. I wonder if those are real. They just stand right out there, don't they? . . . I can't see how anyone can really believe those are natural? *(MARIE rises and stands in front of the mirror. SHE smiles at the mirror and spins, holding HER dress down. SHE checks the magazine and then examines the mirror.)* Nope, those teeth are definitely capped. I knew they looked too good to be true. . . . Kathy, did I have a mole on my chin yesterday? I don't remember it. . . . I hope it isn't skin cancer. I should probably put on some sunblock . . . *(MARIE returns the magazine to the coffee table. SHE checks the clock.)* Oh, crap! George'll be home soon; I'd better check the roast. . . . Okay. You are coming for dinner, right? Don't be late, it drives George nuts. . . . Of course Steve is invited. Okay, bye.

*MARIE exits to kitchen. A moment later, GEORGE THOMAS enters. HE is dressed in a shirt and tie and carries a briefcase and a small stack of mail. HE sets them down on the desk.*

**GEORGE:** *(Looks around the living room, then calls out.)* Annie? Sweetheart, I'm home! . . . Sweetheart? . . . Annie? . . . Where are you? Are you waiting to surprise me in the bedroom? You naughty girl! *(GEORGE looks around the living room and then travels back to the hallway. As HE walks into hallway and HIS back is turned to the kitchen door, MARIE enters from the kitchen and walks to the desk. GEORGE returns from hallway and enters kitchen.)* Annie! I'm home! *(GEORGE returns to living room.)* Where's Annie?

**MARIE:** Annie had to go to the vet's office.

**GEORGE:** Why? Is she sick?

**MARIE:** George, Annie is nearly twenty years old. She's always sick. Doctor Kosimoto says we can pick Annie up tomorrow or maybe the day after. He's going to run some tests.

**GEORGE:** Annie's going to be gone all night? How will I get to sleep without Annie to cuddle with?

**MARIE:** She was sick, I'm not so sure you'd want to cuddle up a sick dog all night, would you?

**GEORGE:** *(Sitting on couch.)* I guess that depends on just how sick she was.

**MARIE:** She had a violent case of diarrhea and was throwing up all over the house.

**GEORGE:** *(Pause.)* Why is the couch wet?

**MARIE:** That's one of the places she was sick.

**GEORGE:** *(Jumping to his feet.)* Why didn't you tell me that before I sat in it?

**MARIE:** Because I sat in it before it was cleaned up. I thought I should spread the joy. I'm not really sure what kind of bacteria might be found in that mess, but I used a whole can of Lysol on it. Look at this mole, George. Does this look cancerous to you? I didn't see it there yesterday.

**GEORGE:** You do not have cancer, Marie. You didn't have it last week, two weeks ago, or last spring when you left the toilet bowl green because of all the Saint Patrick's Day food that went through your system. You are perfectly healthy. Trust me, you will not die of cancer, you will not die of radon gas, and you will not be eaten by marauding army ants. If you keep this up, I'll have the cable company disconnect the Discovery Channel!

**MARIE:** They weren't army ants! They were African termites. And, if I do get devoured, you'll have no one to blame but yourself. What's in the mail, George?

**GEORGE:** A couple of bills. Another nursing home brochure; I'm not really ready for that yet, thank you. Here's an application to join the AARP. I tell you, Marie, when you close in on fifty everyone assumes you're either dying or well on your way to losing your mind. Is the newspaper here yet? I should probably check the obituaries and see if I'm dead.

**MARIE:** You're not. I checked.

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**GEORGE:** Thanks. Here's a birthday card from my lawyer. Hmm . . . He says I should review my will now that I'm entering the "golden years." Golden years! Who does he think he's kidding? Another funeral home wants to show me what they have to offer. *(Reading the brochure.)* "Before you check out, check us out!" Hmm . . . Classy.

**MARIE:** How are their prices?

**GEORGE:** Let's see - - Hey! Whose side are you on?

**MARIE:** Not for you, dear. For me. I won't live forever, you know.

**GEORGE:** No one lives forever, Marie. But you'll outlive me.

**MARIE:** Nothing is guaranteed in this world.

**GEORGE:** *(Pointing to interior of brochure.)* Not true. "Satisfaction guaranteed or we dig you up and try again!"

**MARIE:** It doesn't say that!

**GEORGE:** No, it doesn't, it just says satisfaction guaranteed. But tell me, how dissatisfied is the average corpse these days? *(Pause.)* You know, this is the third funeral home to send me information this week. Is it just me, or is that sort of thing totally inappropriate to send to a man who's nearing his birthday?

**MARIE:** You'll be fifty this year, dear. That's almost three-quarters of the life expectancy in America.

**GEORGE:** So?

**MARIE:** So you're rounding third and heading for home. If they don't target people your age as potential customers, who are they going to target?

**GEORGE:** Old people!

**MARIE:** *(She starts to point at GEORGE. Stops. A pause as she decides not to give him the obvious answer.)* So how was work today?

**GEORGE:** I got through it. I had to meet with John Duppins from biology and go over the usage patterns of computers in relation to our respective departments.

**MARIE:** And?

**GEORGE:** And what? Nobody really knows or cares what the usage patterns are. Duppins kept trying to show me pictures of his kids, and I kept trying to leave for my appointment.

**MARIE:** How did it go with Doctor Jackson?

**GEORGE:** He seemed to spend more time behind me than in front of me. The sadist. He's supposed to call with test results sometime.

**MARIE:** Tests? Are you all right?

**GEORGE:** I'm fine. He just needs to pay for that new Cadillac he's driving. I tell you, Marie, that man sucks the cash out of my pocket every time I see him!

**MARIE:** Doctors are expensive, George. And you're not just paying for the doctor. You're paying for the doctor, the facility, the testing, the nurses and lab people, the equipment, and the Cadillac.

**GEORGE:** Do you know his quote, Marie? "A healthy colon is a happy colon." What is that supposed to mean? My colon sure didn't feel happy with his finger in there probing around, seeing if he could reach my upper palate!

**MARIE:** Well, it's over now. Why don't you get ready for dinner?

**GEORGE:** Is the leech here yet?

**MARIE:** Our son's name is Eric. And no, he is not here yet.

**GEORGE:** If he's not a leech, how did you know who I was talking about?

**MARIE:** I'm sure he'll be here soon.

**GEORGE:** If he plans on eating here every night he could at least be on time, couldn't he?

**MARIE:** Why are you so grouchy tonight? Give Eric a break. He's very busy, George.

**GEORGE:** No, he's not! He sleeps until three o'clock in the afternoon and barely has time to watch his soap operas before stumbling into the shower and dressing so he can freeload at his parents' for dinner. Then he wonders why he can't get a date. As if any decent woman would want to go out with an out-of-work slacker hooked on soap operas.

**MARIE:** You've had a long day, George. Why don't you go change for supper? I had planned on having corned beef, but after cleaning up Annie's mess, I decided on a roast instead. And . . . It's Tuesday. Kathy's coming over for supper.

**GEORGE:** No! I will not have that nutcase of a neighbor over for dinner.

**MARIE:** But we promised her last time we'd have her over to look at cruise pictures.

**GEORGE:** Marie, I only said that to get rid of her.

**MARIE:** But you promised, and she's probably on her way over already.

**GEORGE:** All right. She can come . . . if she doesn't bring Steve.

**MARIE:** Steve is her husband, George.

**GEORGE:** Used to be her husband, Marie. Used to be. I'm getting too old to deal with that unnatural relationship, thank you very much.

**MARIE:** She's coming, and that's final! I'm the one who works all day and then comes home to cook and clean, and if I say someone's coming for dinner, then they are coming for dinner!

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**GEORGE:** *(Pause.)* Fine, fine. It's almost six-thirty. What time did you tell Eric to be here?

**MARIE:** Six-fifteen. And Julie called to say she was coming tonight, too.

**GEORGE:** Why didn't you tell them six? You know they're always late.

*GEORGE exits to bedroom.*

**MARIE:** We don't eat until six-thirty. I thought six-fifteen would give them plenty of time. *(MARIE goes to the front door, opens it, and looks outside.)* They'll be here soon, though. Maybe something came up. Do you think they're sick? Eric looked a little pale last night, don't you think?

**GEORGE:** *(From offstage.)* He's not sick. He's lazy

**MARIE:** *(Ignoring him.)* I think he's working too hard. I tried to tell him that job wasn't right for him, but he just didn't seem concerned. *(MARIE checks the clock.)* And where could Kathy be? She only has to walk a hundred feet. *(MARIE opens door again and checks outside. A low rumble is heard, and SHE shuts the door.)* I hear Eric's car coming. He'll be here in five minutes or so by the sound of it. George? Are you coming out?

**GEORGE:** *(Entering from the hallway, without tie.)* I'm coming. I knew Eric wouldn't miss a free meal. Are you sure Julie is coming?

**MARIE:** She said she was. I told her six-fifteen.

**GEORGE:** She's been late for every event in her life, Marie. Why would she change now? *(Sniffs.)* The roast smells good. Did you cook it?

**MARIE:** Of course I cooked it!

**GEORGE:** You didn't . . . bake anything, did you?

**MARIE:** Homemade rolls. Why do you ask?

**GEORGE:** Marie, I love you, dear, but please believe me when I tell you that your baking is atrocious.

**MARIE:** You knew that when you married me.

**GEORGE:** Yes, that's true. But I thought that you'd improve at some point. Remember how our families got so sick on our wedding cake? I asked you to order one from the bakery, but you insisted on doing it yourself.

**MARIE:** They wanted an arm and a leg for that cake!

**GEORGE:** Maybe so, but at least no one would have gotten ill.

**MARIE:** It wasn't that bad, George.

**GEORGE:** Really? Reverend Hardy could have won a track race on his way to the bathroom. Not bad for a seventy-year-old man! And everyone had diarrhea so badly the place had lines to get into the bathrooms.

**MARIE:** You're exaggerating.

**GEORGE:** I'm pretty sure your aunt Julie didn't make it in time! Remember? She stole a tablecloth and her and your uncle Ralph ran out the back way. Exaggerating? My mother was in the bathroom for seven hours!

**MARIE:** I think she fell asleep in there, so that doesn't count.

**GEORGE:** She couldn't get off of the toilet; her legs fell asleep, remember? We had to break the door down to get her out. I still have flashbacks. Post-traumatic bathroom disorder!

**MARIE:** I don't think it was my cake that made her sick. I use the same recipes my grandmother used for sixty years. She handed them down to my mother, and my mother handed them down to Deb and me.

**GEORGE:** Think how much pain and suffering that must've caused.

**MARIE:** Nonsense. Everyone loved their cakes. You liked Deb's sourdough bread last Fourth of July, didn't you? And her cupcakes?

**GEORGE:** Your sister was a fine baker, Marie, but the only people who ever enjoyed your cakes are now dead. Go figure.

**MARIE:** That's all I've heard since I was six. "Deb is better than you." "She can play the piano better than you, Marie." "Isn't Deb a graceful dancer?" "I like Deb's cakes better than yours, Marie. I should've married Deb instead of you!"

**GEORGE:** I didn't say that, Marie!

**MARIE:** You might as well have! I enjoy baking, George. It's a hobby. You have Annie, and I have baking.

**GEORGE:** Do me a favor. My birthday is coming up. I'll be fifty years old on Saturday, and I know you think that's a big deal. Just please, please don't bake me a cake. I'll give you the checkbook and you can buy one at the bakery, all right? Price is no object. I've had your cakes for every birthday since I turned twenty-two. That's . . . twenty-seven birthdays in a row that I haven't been able to eat my own birthday cake. Please buy this one for me.

*The front door opens and ERIC enters. ERIC is in his early twenties.*

**ERIC:** Hey! I'm here. Is it time to eat?

**MARIE:** Kathy isn't here yet.

**ERIC:** Man, she's really late. It's after six-thirty.

**GEORGE:** You're late, too!

**MARIE:** And Julie should be coming soon.

**ERIC:** See, I'm almost early! Where's Annie? She die?

**MARIE:** She's at the vet's office, Eric. She was sick today. It's a sore subject with your father.

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**ERIC:** Geez, Dad. Get over it. Annie's, like, thirty-seven or something.

**GEORGE:** She's twenty!

**ERIC:** Yeah, to you and me she's twenty. But to dogs, she's like eight hundred and something. She's like Yoda.

**MARIE:** Yoda, dear?

**ERIC:** That little Star Wars dude, Yoda. He's old and creepy, too.

**GEORGE:** Annie is not creepy! It's a glandular disorder!

**ERIC:** Man, you're tense, Dad. I guess with the big five-oh coming up you're starting to face your own morality or something.

**GEORGE:** It's my own *mortality*, and I plan on hanging around for quite a few more years yet. I'm surprised you even remembered I have a birthday coming up.

**ERIC:** Hey, it's gonna be a heck of a party. I have some friends that I promised I'd bring birthday cake to.

**MARIE:** (*Proudly, speaking to GEORGE.*) That's wonderful, Eric. I'm so happy someone likes my cake!

**ERIC:** Yeah, I know. They work at the dog pound and were running low on the injection stuff they kill the mutts with. I told 'em there'd be enough cake to last a couple of weeks. How are things at the college? Still doin' that professor thing?

**GEORGE:** I've been a professor of sociology since you were eight, Eric. I'll still be teaching sociology when you get a real job.

**ERIC:** I got a job!

**GEORGE:** No, you don't. Playing drums is not a real job, it's a pastime.

**ERIC:** Hey, it pays the bills.

**GEORGE:** Good. Then I can stop giving you money.

**MARIE:** George, you know we want to help Eric out.

**GEORGE:** I tried to help him out by getting him an interview with the Olsen and Olsen law firm. Phil Olsen owed me a favor. Eric showed up three hours late for the interview!

**ERIC:** Hey, I had a late gig the night before. Those ambulance chasers wanted me there at, like, ten-thirty! Even if I slept 'til ten, that would've only given me six hours of sleep. Besides, they wanted me to wear a tie. I hate ties.

**GEORGE:** Everyone hates ties! If you hate them so much, how come I've gotten one from you every Christmas for fifteen years?

**ERIC:** In my defense, Mom usually picked them out for me.

**GEORGE:** You couldn't even buy me a present with your own money?

**ERIC:** Why spend good money on something you're going to hate anyway? Man, you're really crabby tonight. I came for supper, not another lecture. Don't you get sick of giving mortality lectures all day at work?

**GEORGE:** *Morality* lectures! Yes, I do! All day. At work. A real job.

**ERIC:** Sure, Dad. Are we gonna eat soon? I wanna catch a nap before tonight's gig.

**GEORGE:** Why don't you sit down and rest? You must be exhausted.

*GEORGE leads Eric to the "wet" spot on the couch and sits him down. There is a knock on the door. MARIE goes to answer it.*

**ERIC:** Did you know this couch was wet?

**GEORGE:** Really?

*MARIE answers the door, revealing KATHY, who enters with a ceramic urn that holds the remains of her husband, Steve.*

**KATHY:** I hope we're not late.

**ERIC:** We?

**KATHY:** *(Holding the urn out for ERIC to see.)* Steve and I.

**ERIC:** Oh, right, Steve!

**KATHY:** I wasn't sure what to wear, and Steve was absolutely no help.

**ERIC:** I would have guessed that.

**MARIE:** *(Hissing.) Eric! Be polite!* Come in, Kathy. Sit down. Would you like something to drink?

**KATHY:** Thank you. Just water for me. *(Speaking to the urn.)* Steve, what would you like, dear? *(To MARIE)* Do you have scotch?

**MARIE:** Yes, I believe we do. With ice?

**KATHY:** No, straight. He always takes it straight. The ice slows him down.

**GEORGE:** Be careful, Steve, scotch is flammable.

**MARIE:** *(Under HER breath.)* Shut up, George!

**KATHY:** Of course, Steve doesn't drink as much now as he did before the accident.

**ERIC:** You don't say.

**KATHY:** He doesn't like to talk about it, but I think the electricity took away his drinking problem. He shouldn't have had the toaster so close to the bathtub! I told him something bad would happen someday. He's just lucky he didn't get hurt!

**ERIC:** Yeah. Something like that could kill you!

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**KATHY:** Now, I brought the cruise pictures with me. (*KATHY opens HER purse and removes a package of photos.*) It was just a lovely vacation, Marie. Very relaxing. You and George should think about going! I have wanted to go on a cruise for so long, and when Steve's insurance money came, we just had to seize the opportunity. It was so hot there, though!

**GEORGE:** I'm sure Steve's seen hotter.

**MARIE:** George! I'm serious!

**KATHY:** It was the first vacation we've been on since . . . thirty-eight years ago when we honeymooned in Las Vegas for three days.

**GEORGE:** That's a long time between vacations.

**KATHY:** Yes. Unfortunately, we didn't see much of Las Vegas.

**GEORGE:** Well, it was your honeymoon, right?

**KATHY:** I got sick on the airline food and spent the whole time in the room, so Steve decided to see Vegas on his own. He spent a thousand dollars watching dancing girls and lost the rest of our savings playing blackjack.

**ERIC:** I'm sure Steve was the life of the party. At the time.

**KATHY:** (*Starts to pull out photos, showing one to the others.*) Now, let's see . . . Here's the port in Tampa. That's our ship preparing to depart.

**MARIE:** Where did you go?

**KATHY:** The Western Caribbean. It was very exotic. See, here we are on deck, getting some sun.

**ERIC:** I hope you used sunscreen. I bet Steve burns easily.

**MARIE:** Eric!

**KATHY:** Oh, yes, he always has. The boat had so much to eat and drink, it was unbelievable! I gained about six pounds over the course of the week. I'm so bad! I wish I were more like Steve. He hardly touched anything!

**ERIC:** Looks like he's lost some weight recently.

**MARIE:** (*Hissing.*) Eric, shut up! I mean it!

**KATHY:** He's always telling me how fat I've become, and then I go and eat like that for a week . . .

**MARIE:** It sounds like a wonderful time, Kathy.

**KATHY:** Oh, yes. And we had the nicest little stateroom. With the sway of the ocean and the sound of the waves against the boat and the activities all day long, we slept like the dead!

**MARIE:** (*Quickly to GEORGE and ERIC.*) Don't even go there!

*The front door opens, and JULIE enters. JULIE is in HER mid-twenties.*

**JULIE:** Hello all!

**ERIC:** Hey Jules. You gotta see these cruise pictures! Missus Walters took Steve to the Caribbean!

**MARIE:** Julie, sweetheart, you're late. Why didn't you call? I was frantic!

**JULIE:** You always say that, Mom.

**MARIE:** It's always true. Once you have children of your own, you'll understand! If you ever get married, which is something I worry about too! You know, you're not getting any younger. Your father and I were married by the time we were your age. You should find a nice man and settle down before it's too late.

**JULIE:** Good news, Mom! I was going to tell you at dinner, but since the inquisition hit me earlier than usual tonight, I'll tell you now. Douglas asked me to marry him!

**GEORGE:** Douglas? Douglas who?

**JULIE:** My boyfriend? Douglas?

**GEORGE:** What did you say?

**JULIE:** I said "yes"!

**MARIE:** But you're too young to get married! You're only twenty-five. Why are you rushing into this?

**GEORGE:** How long have you known this boy?

**JULIE:** It's not how long you know a person, Dad. It's how well you know them!

**GEORGE:** How long?

**JULIE:** Four months. But we've been dating for over half that time.

**GEORGE:** No.

**JULIE:** You can't say no. I'm an adult and you can't control me.

**GEORGE:** No.

**JULIE:** I'm doing this and there's nothing you can do to stop me!

**GEORGE:** Oh? How are you planning on paying for the wedding?

**JULIE:** *(Pause.)* Oh, please, Daddy! He's sweet and bright and - -

**GEORGE:** What does he do for a living?

**JULIE:** He makes a nice living.

**GEORGE:** Doing what?

**JULIE:** He's a . . . political adviser.

**GEORGE:** Republican or Democrat?

**JULIE:** Well, not that it matters, but he's a Republic - -

**GEORGE:** No! I will not have my daughter married to a *(Whispers.)* Republican.

**JULIE:** But he gave me a ring, Daddy!

*JULIE puts her left hand under GEORGE's nose.*

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**GEORGE:** If he's making such a nice living, how come there isn't a diamond in the ring?

**JULIE:** *(Points.)* There is a diamond! Right there, next to the swirl of gold.

**GEORGE:** *(Pulls out his reading glasses and looks more closely.)* I see something glittery there. I can't tell if it's a diamond or not, though.

**JULIE:** It is! I saw it under the microscope at the jewelry store.

**KATHY:** It's a lovely ring, dear. Marriage is a very special thing between two people in love. It's when two people want to be together until the day they die.

**ERIC:** Sometimes even longer!

**KATHY:** No matter how miserable they make each other.

**JULIE:** It's just the perfect ring, isn't it?

**GEORGE:** Well, he sure went out on a limb buying something like this for a girl he wasn't sure was going to say yes, didn't he? I mean, if you'd have said "no," he'd have been out twenty bucks.

**ERIC:** Don't mind Dad, Jules. He's getting old and cranky.

**GEORGE:** I am not old! *(Pauses as they all look at him.)* Well, okay, but I'm not cranky!

**MARIE:** Yes, dear, you are.

**JULIE:** Anyway, I invited Douglas to come for dinner.

**MARIE:** You did? But I'm only having a roast! If I had known you were inviting a guest I would have made lasagna or ham or maybe my special meatloaf.

**JULIE:** Yes, that's why I didn't tell you. Douglas is a vegetarian.

**ERIC:** I thought he was a Republican?

**JULIE:** It means he doesn't eat meat. He didn't want you to go out of your way for dinner.

**GEORGE:** He's a vegetarian-Republican? Honestly, where do you find these guys, Julie? I'm going to change. If we aren't going to eat until midnight, I might as well be comfortable. *(GEORGE exits into bedroom.)*

**JULIE:** Are you happy for me, Mom?

**MARIE:** Of course I am, dear. I'm extremely happy. My young daughter has decided to marry a man she's known for only four months. What's not to be happy about? I mean, even if he is a Republican, how bad can it be? Why should it bother your mother and father that you've ignored every lesson we've taught you over the past twenty-five years? Everything will work out, right?

**JULIE:** Well, as long as you're happy . . .

**MARIE:** We can just go ahead and plan my funeral while we do the wedding. Maybe they'll give us a discount on bulk flowers. Or better yet, we'll just move the flowers right to the cemetery after the wedding and just get a new banner. I'm going to take the roast out of the oven. *(MARIE turns and starts to exit into the kitchen.)* And put my head in there instead.

**ERIC:** *(Calling after MARIE.)* We have an electric stove, Mom.

**KATHY:** I'll help, Marie. Steve, you stay here and talk with the kids, all right?

*KATHY follows MARIE into the kitchen.*

**ERIC:** So where's this Doug guy?

**JULIE:** Douglas. He goes by Douglas. *(Checks watch.)* He should have been here by now. Of course, he was a little nervous about meeting Mom and Dad. Maybe I told him a little too much about them?

*A loud banging sound comes through the front door. ERIC and JULIE rush to the door and look out.*

**ERIC:** Some idiot just smashed my car!

**JULIE:** That's Douglas!

*They hurry out to help and return shortly with DOUGLAS. DOUGLAS is in his forties and is extremely drunk. ERIC helps DOUGLAS walk.*

**ERIC:** He's going to pay for that damage, Julie!

**JULIE:** He's got insurance; it'll be covered.

**ERIC:** It'd better be!

**JULIE:** What's the big deal? Your car can't be worth more than fifty bucks anyway!

**ERIC:** It's all I have, Jules. It's worth twice that to me!

**DOUGLAS:** *(To ERIC.)* Hi sweetie. Did you cut your hair?

**JULIE:** I'm over here, Douglas. I'm right here. Oh, you're drunk! How much did you have to drink?

**DOUGLAS:** Well, I was a wee, tiddly, little bit nervous about meeting your father, so I just had a couple, you know, to take the edge off.

**ERIC:** A couple of beers?

**JULIE:** A couple shots?

**DOUGLAS:** A couple fifths of tequila. *(Pause.)* I'm gonna be fine in a minute, though. Really.

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**ERIC:** I highly doubt that.

**JULIE:** What are we going to do? I can't let Dad meet him in this condition!

**ERIC:** You're totally screwed, Jules!

**DOUGLAS:** No worries. I'll be smashing!

**ERIC:** Don't do any more smashing, all right? My car is totaled.

*ERIC takes DOUGLAS over to the couch and sits him down.*

**DOUGLAS:** Nice couch! It's wet, though.

*MARIE enters from kitchen.*

**MARIE:** Oh! Our guest has arrived. How nice. I'm Julie's mother, Marie. *(She goes to DOUGLAS and holds out her hand to shake.)*

**DOUGLAS:** *(Shaking hands while searching HIS memory for HIS name.)* I'm . . . uh . . . Julie's friend.

**JULIE:** Douglas.

**DOUGLAS:** Yeah, that's right, Douglas.

**MARIE:** *(Concerned over DOUGLAS' age.)* You're Douglas? You aren't what I expected. I thought you'd be much young . . . uh . . . That is, Julie seems a bit too . . . I didn't expect someone so close to my own . . . uhm . . . *(Pause.)* How old are you?

**DOUGLAS:** Uh . . . Well, I'm forty-four.

**MARIE:** Forty-four!

**DOUGLAS:** Pleased to meetcha! It's obvious where Julie gets her poise and charm.

**MARIE:** Oh. Well . . . How sweet of you to say so. Are you all right, Douglas? You look a bit pale.

**DOUGLAS:** Me? I'm fine. Just fine. *(Pause.)* How are you?

**MARIE:** Good. I'm . . . I'm good. Are you sure you're not ill?

**DOUGLAS:** No. It's a bit warm in here, though, isn't it?

**MARIE:** I'm sorry. I was just cooking. I'll go turn the heat down a bit. You're not going to be sick now, are you?

**DOUGLAS:** No, I'm not going to be sick now.

**MARIE:** Well . . . good. I'll be right back. I'll turn the heat down.

*MARIE exits to kitchen.*

**DOUGLAS:** Now I'm going to be sick!

*DOUGLAS rises from the couch, lifts the cushion and noisily vomits, quickly replacing the cushion when he's finished.*

**JULIE:** Oh, you poor thing!

**ERIC:** Ooh! Mom is going to be so pissed when she finds that!

**JULIE:** *(Spraying the couch with perfume from her purse.)* Eric, help him stand, and I'll spray the mess with my perfume. We'll eat and run. Douglas can sober up, and we can blame the mess on Annie.

**ERIC:** You can't really think that plan will work? Besides, Annie's at the vet's.

**JULIE:** Do you have a better idea?

**ERIC:** Why don't you clean it up?

**JULIE:** The cleaning stuff is in the kitchen, Eric. I don't see how we'd pull that off.

**DOUGLAS:** *(To ERIC.)* How about a little smoochie, sweetie?

**ERIC:** Oh, man! Your breath! Do you have a tic-tac or something?

**JULIE:** *(Digging in her purse.)* I've got some gum in here somewhere.

**ERIC:** *(Checking out the couch.)* Oh, jeez! That really stinks! Smells like tequila perfume. We better keep Mom and Dad away from here!

**GEORGE:** *(Entering in jeans.)* Oh, goodie! All the freeloaders are here. Maybe we can eat now before the roast burns. Who's the old guy?

**JULIE:** Dad, this is Douglas.

**GEORGE:** An old vegetarian Republican. Great. Any more good news, Julie? Any criminal record I should be aware of?

**DOUGLAS:** Well, one time in coll - -

**JULIE:** No! Nothing like that, Dad.

**GEORGE:** What is that smell? God, I hope it isn't one of her cakes!

**JULIE:** I don't smell anything.

**GEORGE:** You don't? It's horrible! Do you smell it, Eric?

**ERIC:** Me? Nope. I don't smell perfume or tequila!

**JULIE:** I think it's coming from the bathroom.

**GEORGE:** If you can't smell it, how can you tell where the smell is coming from?

**JULIE:** I . . . just smelled it. Yeah. And since you smelled it first, and you're closer to the bathroom, the smell must be coming from in there. Why don't you and Eric check it out and see if you can find the problem.

**GEORGE:** Why take Eric? I can check it out fine myself.

*GEORGE exits to bathroom.*

**ERIC:** Good thinking, Jules!

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**JULIE:** Quick, help me with Douglas.

**ERIC:** Help you what?

**JULIE:** Let's hide him in the closet for now. We'll clean up the mess and let him sober up before Dad gets back.

*THEY drag DOUGLAS into the closet and shut the door. There is a retching sound as DOUGLAS vomits again in the closet.*

**ERIC:** I think he just puked in Dad's shoes! Now I'm, like, an accomplice! That's just great, Jules! Dad's gonna kill both of us! You owe me big time!

**JULIE:** Not if we can clean up the worst of it before Mom or Dad finds out. We need to get to the cleaning supplies in the kitchen. Go distract Mom and grab the cleaning stuff, okay?

**ERIC:** How?

**JULIE:** Go tell her you need her to look at something, then grab the cleaning stuff and get back in here! Come on, Eric. Use your brain for once! I'm a little frantic right now! I can't think of everything!

**ERIC:** I'm on it, Jules!

*ERIC exits to kitchen.*

**DOUGLAS:** *(A scream from the closet.)* AHHHH! I'm blind! *(Pause. Then, calmer.)* Wait! Maybe my eyes are closed . . . Ow! I just poked myself in the eye! *(Pause.)* Ow! My other eye was open, too! *(Pause.)* AHHHH! I'M BLIND!

**JULIE:** *(Through door.)* You're not blind, Douglas. Be quiet!

**DOUGLAS:** Ooooh! And I smell bad, too!

*JULIE opens the closet door, and DOUGLAS falls out.*

**JULIE:** You're right! That smells terrible! *(Pause.)* Eric was right, Douglas, you puked in my dad's shoes! He's gonna kill us!

*ERIC and MARIE enter from kitchen as JULIE tries to stuff DOUGLAS back into the closet but fails. DOUGLAS falls down, his ear to the floor. ERIC carries a bucket and cleaning supplies.*

**MARIE:** Okay, Eric. Show my why you think the front closet is a better place for the cleaning supplies than under the kitchen sink.

**JULIE:** Mom!

**MARIE:** Julie, why is Douglas sprawled on the floor?

**JULIE:** Because . . . he's . . . he's checking for termites. He has very good hearing, and he can hear the darned things eating away the wood of the house. You should call an exterminator. Right now!

**MARIE:** Termites! I'll call Mister Flea's Pest Control tomorrow.

**JULIE:** I think I read that termites can cause malaria!

**MARIE:** Really?

**JULIE:** Really. So you'd better not wait! I heard they can eat a house to the baseboards in a matter of hours! And I think I read somewhere that termites can pass along mad cow disease! Do you want a rampant plague of mad cows wiping out the whole neighborhood?

**MARIE:** I'll go call right away!

*MARIE exits to kitchen as ERIC and JULIE drag DOUGLAS back to the sofa. DOUGLAS crumples onto the floor.*

**JULIE:** You told her to check the front closet when you knew that Douglas was in there?

**ERIC:** I panicked! The closet was on my mind, and I let the words tumble out before I thought about what I was saying!

**JULIE:** If you were a normal person, instead of a mentally deficient moron, I'd say you were trying to sabotage me! Unfortunately, I know better. This will have to do for now. Help me move Douglas to the couch.

*As THEY lift DOUGLAS up and begin to move him, GEORGE enters from bathroom. ERIC and JULIE drop DOUGLAS, who lands with a thud in front of the couch with his face against the floor.*

**DOUGLAS:** Ouch.

**GEORGE:** Nothing smelled bad in there. (*Sniffs.*) It smells out here, though. Can't you smell it?

**JULIE:** Nope, not at all. How about you, Eric?

**ERIC:** Well, yeah. (*JULIE hits him.*) I mean, no. I did before, but now I don't.

**JULIE:** I think Mom's baking something for dinner. Right, Eric?

**ERIC:** Oh. Right. Yeah, there was a smell in there. I remember now.

**GEORGE:** Maybe if I get in there I can ruin it before she serves it. Julie, why is your Republican lying on the floor like that?

**JULIE:** Douglas is . . . uh . . . uh . . .

**ERIC:** Looking for termites, isn't he?

**JULIE:** No! No, he's getting ready to do some push-ups. He's very fit.

**GEORGE:** He seems to have forgotten the "up" part.

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*MARIE enters.*

**MARIE:** The exterminators will be here soon. Is everyone ready for dinner?

**GEORGE:** What exterminators?

**MARIE:** I called Mister Fleas to take care of the termites Douglas heard in our closet.

**GEORGE:** He heard termites in the closet?

**MARIE:** He has very acute hearing. George, help me bring the food in, will you?

**GEORGE:** Do you smell something, Marie? Something like rotten eggs mixed with burning rubber on top of unwashed feet in a vat of sewage?

**MARIE:** If you don't like my cooking, you can just go without!

**GEORGE:** No, dear. I'm just saying that there's a rancid smell . . .

**MARIE:** Be very careful about the next words that come out of your mouth, George. They could be your last.

**GEORGE:** Know what? Probably my imagination. Can I help bring the food in?

*GEORGE and MARIE exit to kitchen.*

**JULIE:** Come on, Eric. Help me get Douglas to the table. Douglas . . . Time to eat!

**DOUGLAS:** I don't know if I can eat much. My stomach feels a little queasy.

**ERIC:** You can't have much more in there, can you?

**JULIE:** Can you carry him?

**ERIC:** No, but I can help guide him over, I guess.

**JULIE:** Thanks, Eric. Really.

**ERIC:** Yeah, yeah. Let's go.

*THEY move into dining area. DOUGLAS stumbles to a chair on the downstage side and begins to sit down.*

**ERIC:** Don't sit there! No one sits there.

**DOUGLAS:** Why not?

**ERIC:** I don't know. Dad's mom died in that spot, and he doesn't like anyone "invading her spirit" or something like that.

**DOUGLAS:** Oh, that's too bad. They must have been close. When did she die?

**JULIE:** Nineteen eighty-nine.

**ERIC:** I think she and Dad had the same birthday or something.

**DOUGLAS:** Oh.

**ERIC:** Yeah, it's weird. He treats the living like crap and his dead mother like royalty. Sometimes we even catch him talking to her when he thinks he's alone. And he wonders why we're a little warped.

*DOUGLAS moves chair back and sits down as MARIE enters with roast and potatoes, followed by GEORGE carrying cooked carrots, and KATHY, who carries a basket of rolls.*

**MARIE:** Here we are, roast beef and potatoes. Kathy, you can set the rolls down right there.

**KATHY:** Where is Steve? *(Looks around. Seeing the urn, she retrieves it.)* Oh, stop being shy. We're all waiting for you! I swear, it reminds me of the time I had to go looking for you at my mother's funeral. Remember? And you were in the closet with my sister. I still don't know how you could find her coat in the dark, like that. You know, if you'd have left the door open, you wouldn't have sweated so much.

*Everyone sits at the table. Having no more chairs, KATHY sets the urn down in the chair downstage.*

**ERIC:** Oh, no one sits there, Kath - - Ka - - errr, Steve. It's macramé.

**GEORGE:** The word is macabre, Eric. And I suppose if Steve is comfortable there, it would be all right. I guess if Mom wants to make a case of it, she can just track Steve down *(Aside.)* wherever he is.

**MARIE:** Who'd like a fresh roll?

**ERIC:** Are they . . . homemade?

**MARIE:** Of course. I knew you kids were coming.

**ERIC:** No thanks, I gotta work tonight.

**JULIE:** I just got back from the dentist. He says not to eat any more until I heal the damage from last time.

**GEORGE:** I'll let Doug have mine.

**DOUGLAS:** Actually, I go by "Douglas." "Doug" is the past tense of "dig."

*HE begins to reach for a roll.*

**KATHY:** I'd love one. *(She takes a roll and attempts to bite into it, but it is too hard. She bangs the roll against the table with an audible thumping sound.)* I'll let Steve have this one. I should save room for meat and potatoes!

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**DOUGLAS:** (*Retrieving HIS hand, empty.*) I'll pass, thanks.

**GEORGE:** Are you all right? You don't look good. I mean, even for someone of your age.

**DOUGLAS:** Perfectly fine, thank you. Right as rain.

**GEORGE:** Good. Will you say grace?

**DOUGLAS:** Sure. (*Pause.*) Grace.

**GEORGE:** I meant the prayer for dinner. You do pray, don't you? Or are you a vegetarian-Republican-atheist?

**DOUGLAS:** Oh, right. Let me pray. . . . Uh . . . God, help me out here. We sit before you (*Pause.*) and George's mom and Steve to thank you for the butchered cow that was sacrificed so that we might eat. Guide us in our path as we avoid evil and wickedness and homemade rolls. Thank you for bringing . . . uh, (*Points to JULIE.*) uh . . .

**JULIE:** Julie.

**DOUGLAS:** Yes, Julie into my life. And for your support of the Republican Party. Thank you for the rain and . . . uh . . . puppies. Keep our bodies healthy as we violate the flesh of one of your creatures to sustain us, knowing good and well that the fat and cholesterol will likely contribute to our deaths. (*JULIE motions for DOUGLAS to cut the prayer short.*) And . . . and that's all. Amen.

**ALL:** Amen.

**MARIE:** That was . . . very nice, Douglas.

**BLACKOUT.**

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