

HAVE A SEAT, PLEASE

TEN MINUTE PLAY

By Steven Bergman

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SYNOPSIS: *Have A Seat, Please* is about Evelyn, who goes to the dentist in order to ask the dentist's son out on a date, but first she has to get past the dentist's mother in the waiting room. She finally does, and miraculously, not only does the dentist understand what Evelyn is saying while she is having a tooth filled, the dentist agrees to ask her son on Evelyn's behalf.

CAST OF CHARACTERS
(4-6 WOMEN)

EVELYN ANDERS.....An average teenager, age 17.
ZELDA TURNBULLWoman in the waiting room, in her 60s.
DR. GANNINGThe dentist; a nice woman, near 40.

The DRIVER, PRINCIPAL, and RECEPTIONIST can be played by one to three actors of any age.

TIME AND PLACE: Present day, in a dentist's office.

AT RISE:

A split stage: one half is a waiting room – several chairs in some type of shape, with various publications spread about. A woman (ZELDA) is sitting in the furthest chair of a line of three. The other side is the dentist's office, including a dental chair (or a regular chair if a dentist's chair can't be found). EVELYN enters. She tries to decide where to sit, as there are plenty of choices. She finally chooses a seat next to ZELDA, grabs a magazine, and sits down. After a moment or so, she starts to feel as if her personal space has been invaded, so she tries to get the attention of ZELDA.

EVELYN: Excuse me. *(No response from ZELDA.)* Excuse me.
(Still none.) Pardon me!?

ZELDA: Yes?

EVELYN: I'm feeling very cramped here. Could you possibly move to a different chair?

ZELDA: I beg your pardon?

EVELYN: I said, "I'm feeling very cramped here! Could you possibly . . ."

ZELDA: I heard you, young lady. I just wanted to make sure you said what I heard. Sometimes the ears aren't what they used to be, and before I respond to your question, I wanted to make sure that I had, in fact, heard you correctly.

EVELYN: Well?

ZELDA: Well, what?

EVELYN: Did you hear me correctly?

ZELDA: I believe I did, but then I forgot the question. The ears are fine, but my memory, well . . .

EVELYN: I said, "It's very cramped here. Could you please move to a different chair?"

ZELDA: Ah, yes, thank you. No.

EVELYN: Pardon me?

ZELDA: I said, "No." Do you need me to repeat it for you?

EVELYN: I don't think so. I've known that word for as long as I can remember. But now I've got to question my hearing. You said, "No?"

ZELDA: Your hearing is perfect. I said, "No."

EVELYN: You won't move for me.

ZELDA: No.

EVELYN: Why not?

ZELDA: Well . . .

EVELYN: Look, I've had a very stressful day here. My car . . . well, it's actually my dad's car. I just got my driver's license, and my folks haven't gotten a car for me yet . . .

ZELDA: That's wise. They can see what kind of driver you are before you have your own car. Very smart of them. Tell them that next time.

EVELYN: What? Next time?

ZELDA: Yes, of course. Next time you see them.

EVELYN: Oh.

ZELDA: Now you're the one with the memory loss . . . just kidding, my dear. Continue your story.

EVELYN: My story . . . oh, yes. Thank you. So, I had the car to drive to school, and I got into an accident . . .

ZELDA: Oh my, was anyone hurt?

EVELYN: No. Actually, it's kind of embarrassing.

ZELDA: Oh, you can't offend me. Please continue.

EVELYN: Well, I wanted to be the thirty-fourth caller to call KWRD and win tickets to a concert. I was bending over to get my cell phone, and I bumped the woman in front of me. She wasn't too happy with me, and I can't say I blame her.

DRIVER enters and talks towards the audience. EVELYN hears her and is ashamed.

DRIVER: You have got to be kidding! Now? I get hit now? I can't believe this . . . Good thing for you, there doesn't appear to be any damage, so we'll just exchange information in case we need it. Seventeen? God, they're letting them out young nowadays. Well, kid, here you go. You may want to take a couple more lessons before you tackle the "real" roads.

DRIVER exits in a huff.

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EVELYN: After I dug my head out of my knees - - I had buried it in pretty far - - I got back in the car and drove on. As a result of my added adventure, I was late to school, where I received some more tongue talk from my principal.

PRINCIPAL enters to where the DRIVER previously was. She also talks towards the audience.

PRINCIPAL: Anders, you think you can just stroll in here whenever you please?

EVELYN: But, Principal Burke . . .

PRINCIPAL: Don't even think about trying to talk your way out of this one. Usually, being within thirty minutes late for school is only a fifteen-minute detention. But, I need to set an example so that students will take this policy seriously. So . . . one hour a day, the next five days. You can go, Anders.

PRINCIPAL BURKE exits.

EVELYN: A week? Can you believe that? This Friday is the big school dance! So that led me here.

ZELDA: Here?

EVELYN: Here.

ZELDA: Here? The dentist's office waiting room - - here?

EVELYN: Yep. You're right, still nothing wrong with your hearing.

ZELDA: Well, even though you continue to convince me that I'm losing my marbles, I have to ask you to continue this tirade so that I might achieve some sanity by its conclusion. What does getting in a car accident and getting a detention have to do with the dentist?

EVELYN: What did you say?

ZELDA: Why are you here?

EVELYN: Oh, it's only peripheral. I need to talk to her.

ZELDA: The dentist?

EVELYN: Yes. I believe that, here in the twenty-first century, women are liberated. Do you agree?

ZELDA: I suppose. In most areas, women are gaining ground in their attempt to be equal with men.

EVELYN: Good!

ZELDA: But frankly, honey, I'm, as you kids say, "old school." I liked that men and women used to have their separate responsibilities in the world. Back then, women primarily took care of the domestic needs of the families, while the men took care of the financial and the mechanical. Everyone knew their place. No one questioned when the woman was going to get a job - - she had her job, in the home. And no one was concerned with who was going to "bring home the bacon," as it were. It was the man's job.

EVELYN: Oh, I see. So you don't think I should do it?

ZELDA: Do what?

EVELYN: Ask him out?

ZELDA: Ask WHO out, dear?

EVELYN: Justin.

ZELDA: Justin who? My my, my confusion gets greater the more I try to figure out what you're saying.

EVELYN: I mean, I've never done anything like this before. I've only been asked out once and that was so long ago. So I figure, what the heck, I might as well just go for it. He would be having this same conversation with himself - - or perhaps with one of his friends - - if he wanted to ask me out. So I just beat him to it. There's nothing wrong with that, right? Right?

ZELDA: Honey, Justin who?

EVELYN: Oh, yeah. Justin Ebersol. Dr. Ganning's son. He's such a hottie. But I doubt he even knows I'm on this planet. Every day, I see him walking the halls at school, and with Friday being the dance and all, I thought, "Well, since he doesn't have a clue who I am, why don't I just walk up to him and ask him to the dance?" Then yesterday, I overheard him and a friend talking, and he said something about his mom being Dr. Ganning. Well, that made it so much easier! I wouldn't ask him directly, I could totally feel out the sitch with his mom. The same mom who I knew I had an appointment with tomorrow! I mean, today!

ZELDA: Aha! The synapses have connected! Oh, my dear, I'm so pleased!

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EVELYN: You're pleased that I'm here to ask Justin's mom if he'll go to the dance with me?

ZELDA: Oh, no, no. I'm pleased that I'm not losing my marbles. Thank you, my dear.

EVELYN: You're welcome, I guess. But what do you think I should do about Justin?

The RECEPTIONIST opens the door to the waiting room.

RECEPTIONIST: Evelyn Anders? Dr. Ganning will see you now.

EVELYN: Me? But I thought this woman was next?

ZELDA: Me? Oh no, dear. I'm waiting for my daughter to finish her last patient of the day so that she can give me a ride home.

EVELYN: Your daughter? Who's your daughter?

ZELDA: Dr. Ganning is my daughter, love.

EVELYN: You mean to tell me that you're Justin's grandmother?

ZELDA: I'm afraid so. Good luck in there, dear. You seem like a nice enough young woman, though a little bit long-winded.

EVELYN groans as she follows the RECEPTIONIST into the other room. Lights cross fade.

RECEPTIONIST: Have a seat, please, Ms. Anders. Good. Let me put this bib on you. Thanks. Now let's look at your chart. You're here today for a filling today, right?

EVELYN: I'm hoping for a filling, yes. I have an empty space, and I want it filled. Its right here.

EVELYN points to her heart.

RECEPTIONIST: That's lovely, dear. But this is the dentist. You know we don't fill that part, don't you?

EVELYN: Maybe that will all change today.

RECEPTIONIST: I don't think so, but I'll tell Dr. Ganning that you're here. Excuse me.

The RECEPTIONIST exits.

EVELYN: Oh, Justin, if only I can make you see how much I'm willing to sacrifice to be with you. Oh, I hope that I can muster up the nerve to do this . . .

At the end of her sentence, DR. GANNING enters.

DR. GANNING: Oh, don't worry, you're brave enough to handle this.

EVELYN: Dr. Ganning! I didn't hear you come in.

DR. GANNING: So, Evelyn, you're here for a filling, number 15. Let's take a look at it. (*DR. GANNING goes to EVELYN, leans her head back.*) Now, open your mouth wide so that I can get a good look in there.

EVELYN stares at the dentist.

EVELYN: You have eyes just like your mother!

DR. GANNING: I beg your pardon?

EVELYN: Uh, your mother! Your mother . . . uh . . . uh . . . I met your mother in the waiting room! And you and she look very much alike. Uh . . . uh . . . I see a strong family resemblance.

DR. GANNING: My mother's in the waiting room? Oh yes, I forgot I'm taking her home this afternoon. Yes, I guess we look a bit alike. Now, Evelyn, open your mouth. (*She does.*) There it is. Yup, right there on that surface. Okay, let's begin. Open wide. You'll feel a quick bit of pressure, then it'll be done. Nothing to worry about.

DR. GANNING takes the needle and gives EVELYN the injection.

EVELYN: Whatever you SAAAAAAAAY . . .

DR. GANNING: There. Done with that. Now just sit for a moment.

EVELYN: Okay. How long bluz it blake to burk? Obe, I guess it's burking. Boo bo, Bahger, I bo boo buh shame shool ash shore shun.

DR. GANNING: You do? That's nice. You know Justin?

EVELYN: I she hih ih da ha ah da tie.

DR. GANNING: Great. Do you have any classes together?

The dentist starts working in EVELYN's mouth.

NOTE: Everything EVELYN says from this point should be spoken with her mouth wide open.

EVELYN: He and I have the same history class. Okay, I can do this... Dr. Ganning, I think that Justin's a great kid. Actually, I kind of like him. He's really cute.

DR. GANNING: Thank you, Evelyn.

EVELYN: And I was dondering, I mean, wondering, well... okay, here goes. I'd like to ask you if I could ask him to the dance with me on FriDAAAAY!!!!

DR. GANNING: Oh my, sorry about that, Evelyn. I didn't mean to get you there. But I can honestly say in all my years of dentistry, I've never had someone ask my permission to ask my son on a date before. Especially one of my patients, and especially while I'm working on them! That is very sweet of you, Evelyn, and quite chivalrous.

EVELYN: You really think so?

DR. GANNING: I do.

EVELYN: Thank you, doctor. I really didn't know how else to go about it. He really doesn't know me, and I heard you were his mom, and I knew that I was coming here today, so I thought that I wouldn't waste the opportunity. You know, kill two birds and all...

DR. GANNING: Well, good for you. I wish I had been this brave when I was your age, I'd probably be mountain climbing in the Andes today instead of filling your tooth.

EVELYN: Really?

DR. GANNING: Absolutely. That's what I wanted to do when I was your age. But my parents convinced me to go the conservative route, which led to dental school. You did meet my mother, didn't you?

EVELYN manages a chuckle, even though she can't feel her mouth.

EVELYN: Yeah.

DR. GANNING: I rest my case. So here I am with a successful practice and all, but there are certainly days that I wished I had followed my dream. That's an important lesson and it appears as if you're learning it very well. Okay, you're all set. You can close your mouth and rinse.

EVELYN mimes drinking and spitting into a sink. But her mouth is still numb.

EVELYN: So, bill you ash kim bor be?

DR. GANNING: I sure will.

Beat.

DR. GANNING: I wouldn't eat anything for at least an hour, and you may be a bit uncomfortable after the Novocain wears off, but it all looks good.

EVELYN gets up, leaves the bib, and walks towards the dressing room. DR. GANNING follows her into the waiting room and sees ZELDA.

DR. GANNING: Hi, Mom.

ZELDA: I'm ready to head home, dear, I've been waiting for over an hour for you.

DR. GANNING: I know, Mom. Climb any mountains recently?

DR. GANNING and EVELYN share a moment, then DR. GANNING sees JUSTIN offstage.

NOTE: We will never see JUSTIN.

DR. GANNING: Justin, dear! How was your day? Have you come to get Grandma for me?

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EVELYN turns to DR. GANNING in horror - - JUSTIN can't see her like this, especially with her mouth still numb! She makes contact with DR. GANNING and mimes begging her not to say anything.

DR. GANNING: All right, Justin, dear. You go out to the car, and I'll bring Grandma out as soon as I lock up the office. Oh, and remind me to bring something up with you on the way home. *(Beat.)* It's a good thing.

She smiles to EVELYN as EVELYN exits. DR. GANNING exits back into her office and ZELDA just has an "isn't that cute" grin on her face as the lights fade.

THE END