

THE OUTLAWS

AT RISE

The Living room of the THOMASES (Henry and Beth).

Henry and Beth are sitting in lounge chairs.

Henry is listening to “his” music with earphones, eyes closed.

Beth is reading.

PHONE

Beth answers the landline phone.

BETH

Hello.

(listens)

Hi, sweetheart. How are...?

(interrupted; listens)

You mean now?

(listens)

Sure. We’re not doing anything important.

(listens)

Okay.

(hangs up; nudges Henry)

Henry, are you asleep? Wake up. Jill’s coming over.

Beth gets up; nudges Henry harder.

BETH

Did you hear me? Jill’s coming over with her friend.

HENRY

(opens one eye)

Now?

BETH

Yes, now.

DOORBELL

Henry gives a disgusted sigh.

Beth goes to the door.

JILL and MICHAEL are at the door.

BETH

Well, hello. What a nice surprise.

JILL

Grandma, this is Michael Conn.

MICHAEL

It's great to meet you, Mrs. Thomas.

JILL

Grandpa!

Jill walks into the den.

JILL (cont'd.)

There you are. Grandpa, this is Michael Conn.

HENRY

Ah. A Con man. Nice to get it out up front.

Henry Thomas. I also have a third first name
if you're interested.

MICHAEL

Good evening, Mr. Thomas. Jill's talked so
much about you.

HENRY

Where were you when you phoned, in the driveway!

JILL

Actually, yes.

BETH

Sit down.

JILL

I wanted to come by this afternoon, but I know better than to visit you two love birds in the afternoon.

(whispers to Michael)

They call it a nap.

HENRY

Beth calls it making love. I call it...

BETH

(stops him from going on)

Making love is good, Henry.

HENRY

We used to make babies, but that's over. Thank God. What're you two up to? Not making babies, I hope.

JILL

Not yet. But soon. That's what we wanted to tell you. Michael and I are engaged.

Jill shows her grandparents her ring.

BETH

Oh, Jill! Give me a hug.

The ladies hug.

JILL

I wanted you to hear it from me, not mom.

BETH

That was sweet. Wasn't that sweet, Henry?

HENRY

Sweet.

(looks at Michael)

I suppose you want a hug, too.

MICHAEL

I can pass on that.

HENRY

Good. Let's crack open that bottle of champagne that we've been saving for the last five years for a good reason. I have cheaper bottles for no good reason.

JILL

Michael doesn't drink, grandpa.

HENRY

(looks Michael over)

AA?

MICHAEL

No, sir. I just never got started. My family doesn't drink.

HENRY

You go to college?

MICHAEL

Yes, sir. Pepperdine. They don't allow drinking.

HENRY

Well, of course, they don't *allow* drinking. But there are bars in Malibu.

BETH

Henry, he doesn't drink. That's a good thing.

HENRY

You honestly believe that? The second best pastime
in life?

JILL

Grandpa, Michael is getting his degree in Theology.

HENRY

Ah. Theology. Is there a lot of work out there for theologians?

JILL

Michael's going to be a Minister.

HENRY

Oh, well, we haven't had one of those in the family yet.
You don't object to us having a toast, do you, Michael?
Do they ever call you Mike?

MICHAEL

Yes. And no. Please have the champagne. I'll have a sip
of Jill's.

HENRY

No, no. Don't compromise yourself. Beth?

BETH

Be right back.

Beth exits for the kitchen, at the far end of the den.

Jill follows her grandmother.

LIGHTS DIM ON THE DEN; LIGHTS UP ON THE KITCHEN.

JILL

(whispers to her grandmother)

Well?

The following conversation is said in whispers.

BETH

Well?

JILL

What do you think?

BETH

About Michael or you getting married?

JILL

Both.

BETH

He seems very nice.

JILL

Is there a “but”?

BETH

I don't know Michael at all, sweetheart. I can't give an opinion. Now your grandfather on the other hand doesn't have to know someone very well or even at all to give an opinion.

JILL

Do you think it was safe to let them in there alone?

BETH

No, I don't. Let's go.

The women carry the bottle and three glasses.

BETH

I have orange juice. Would he drink orange juice?

JILL

No. You don't toast with orange juice. He can have a sip of my champagne.

They re-enter the den. LIGHTS UP on the den; LIGHTS DIM ON THE KITCHEN.

Beth pours three glasses.

BETH

To a wonderful marriage. Like ours.

HENRY

Don't go giving away our secrets.

(raises his glass)

Happy marriage. Make love every day.

MICHAEL

Good advice.

Michael takes a sip from Jill's glass.

HENRY

Twice on Sunday.

BETH

Henry!

HENRY

Oh, sorry. Saturday.

JILL

Come with me, Michael. I want to show you the
back yard.

Henry and Beth look at each other. They get up and join Jill and Michael at the patio glass doors off the kitchen.

LIGHTS DIM IN DEN; UP IN KITCHEN.

JILL

It's perfect.

HENRY

For?

JILL

For a wedding reception. May we please, Grandpa?
I love the pictures of mom and dad's reception here.

HENRY

That's when we were young, insane and rich.

MICHAEL

We'll pay for it, Mr. Thomas. We want to pay for
everything.

HENRY

Did I miss a memo? Isn't the bride's family
supposed to pay?

MICHAEL

Not this time. If we can't afford it, we won't have it.
That's going to be our mantra, right Jill?

HENRY

Mantra? How ecumenical of you. How do you plan
to afford this wedding?

MICHAEL

I've been saving, Mr. Thomas. I tutor students at
Pepperdine and week-ends I work as a waiter.
Also I have a small trust from my grandmother.

HENRY

And go to school full time?

MICHAEL

Yes, sir.

HENRY

Do you have any idea how much a wedding costs?

MICHAEL

No, sir. I can get the restaurant where I work to cater.
It's Indian cuisine. Very spicy but I love it.

JILL

I don't. Michael, I don't think we can serve that
spicy food to guests no matter how reasonably
we can get it.

MICHAEL

I could get them to tone it down.

JILL

Every time I've ordered it toned down it still
burned my throat. But we'll see.

BETH

Maybe we can come up with something else.

HENRY

When is this shindig?

JILL

Next month.

HENRY AND BETH

(in unison)

Next month?

JILL

We have the church. Michael's church where he
hopes to be the pastor some day.

BETH

Which church is that, Michael?

MICHAEL

First Baptist on Elm.

HENRY

And will the First Baptists be coming to the reception?

MICHAEL

A lot of them.

HENRY

Are we serving alcohol?

MICHAEL

Well... that could be a problem. They're mostly non-drinkers.

HENRY

What about the drinkers? Jill comes from a long line of... drinkers.

BETH

We can have two bars.

HENRY

We can have two receptions. One at the church and one here. I vote for the drinkers' reception here.

BETH

One month is a very short time to plan a wedding, Jill.

JILL

Oh, I have it all in my computer, grandma. I already know the dress I want and the bridesmaids and the cake and Michael and I can listen to some groups for the music and all we have to settle on is where we have the reception and what we're going to serve. Michael and I will talk about it.

Jill sets down her glass and tugs at Michael.

JILL

I hate to run but we have soooooo much to do.
Grandma, mom and I are going shopping tomorrow
for invitations and stuff. We have to get them in the
mail like last week. Will you come with us?

BETH

I'm honored to be asked, sweetheart.

HENRY

But will you go?

BETH

Of course, I'll go.

JILL

I'll call you in the morning about the time. Love
you both. I'll let you know about the reception.
Thanks for suggesting it.

MICHAEL

Very nice meeting both of you.

Jill pulls Michael out the front door.

JILL

'Bye.

Jill throws kisses at her grandparents.

Henry and Beth stand at the door watching the car drive away.

BETH

(closes the door)

Well, that was exciting.

HENRY

Horrifying. I didn't suggest the back yard. Did you?

BETH

No, I didn't. He's a very nice young man.

HENRY

I don't like him.

BETH

Henry!

HENRY

A minister in our family? I'll have to watch my language.

BETH

And your drinking. And your stories.

HENRY

And church on Sunday.

BETH

And tithing. Do people tithe any more?

HENRY

I think that's Mormons. Baptists just...

I don't want to think about it. I know they're
against a lot of stuff that we do.

BETH

Henry... our back yard. In one month. You'll have to resod.

HENRY

You think if I slip him ten thousand, they'd elope?

BETH

It's probably against his scruples.

HENRY

To hell with scruples. It'll cost me twenty thousand to
redo the yard. I don't know. He's too... something.

BETH

I wondered if there was ever going to be a man good
enough for your granddaughter.

HENRY

There isn't. She's trying to lure me into accepting that she's going to get married by bringing home a religious, non-drinking, hard working, principled young man like Michael, but I see right through that.

BETH

Good for you. She should never have tried to put one over on you.

HENRY

Damn right. Talk her out of it, Beth.

BETH

I'll try, dear. Call the nursery tomorrow.

HENRY

You think I got time to build that gazebo?

BETH

Come to bed, Henry.

HENRY

That's your answer for everything.

BETH

It always works.

HENRY

Yes, it does. Do you think Jill and Michael have been... you know?

BETH

I'm not going to think about it.

HENRY

I'm not either. I hope. It could be worse. She could be marrying somebody named Jack. I always worried about that. I couldn't stand the little napkins with Jack

HENRY (cont'd)

and Jill. I'll bet people have been introducing her to guys named Jack all the time, just to be cute. Little did I know what she'd drag home.

Henry turns off the light.

Act One, Scene Two

The next morning.

Henry is on the outside of the patio doors, knocking on one of them.

Beth, dressed for a day out with her daughter and granddaughter, comes over and opens the patio door.

HENRY

I need to run an electrical line to the kitchen.

BETH

And you need me to do what?

HENRY

(holds up a wire)

Run this wire to an outlet. Where are you going all dressed up?

BETH

There's an outlet right below the doors, Henry.

HENRY

(looks down)

Oh. Isn't that convenient.

BETH

Henry, I think we need somebody whose good with...

Beth hesitates to say any more.

HENRY

Good with what?

BETH

With their hands.

HENRY

I'm good with my hands.

BETH

Yes, you are, dear. And I've always loved that about you. But I want you to keep your hands. Maybe somebody who knows carpentry.

HENRY

I built that bookcase in Penny's room.

BETH

That's true, you did.

HENRY

It's perfectly balanced.

BETH

With "Catcher In The Rye" on one end.

HENRY

You don't want me to build the gazebo.

BETH

I'm afraid there isn't time, Henry.

HENRY

Don't placate me, Beth.

BETH

I'd never do that. A gazebo is going to take up a lot of space. And what are we going to do with it after the wedding?

HENRY

We could sit out there in the evening. I could run speakers and we could dance. "In The Mood", "It Had To Be You".

BETH

Do you know how to run speakers?

HENRY

Can't be that hard.

BETH

Maybe you could run speakers to the patio and we could dance there. Or we can take your Ipod outside.

HENRY

I could get spectacular speakers.

CAR HORN

BETH

I have to go, dear. Please promise me you won't be sawing anything while I'm gone.

HENRY

I knew you'd talk me out of building a gazebo. I thought you'd never get around to it. I even dragged all this stuff out of the garage all dusty and...

CAR HORN

BETH

I have to go. You'll put all that stuff back?

HENRY

Just for you, sweetheart.

BETH

There's chicken salad in the frig for lunch.

HENRY

Go! Put in a good word for waiting five years.

BETH

If I get a chance.

Beth leans out the patio door.

Henry leans in. They kiss goodbye.

Beth hurries to the front door.

SOUND OF FRONT DOOR SLAMMING SHUT.

Henry is outside moving the saw and his carpentry table back into the garage when...

DOORBELL

Henry doesn't hear the bell.

DOORBELL.

Henry hears the bell, walks into the house to the front door and opens it.

DICK MORRIS (Henry's son-in-law, Jill's father) is at the door.

DICK

I thought they'd never leave.

HENRY

(checks his watch)

It's eight thirty.

DICK

I've been awake all night. What do you think of
Dobie Gillis?

HENRY

Who?

DICK

Dobie Gillis. Wasn't that the All American boy in
your day.

HENRY

In my day? You mean way back then. Let's see,
who the hell was it?

DICK

You like him?

HENRY

You first.

DICK

He's...

HENRY

Yes, he is.

DICK

What are we going to do?

HENRY

We can't very well eliminate him on the basis of religion.

We got you.

DICK

That's true.

HENRY

So, in our family we have protestants, a jew and now a Baptist minister. Always makes for an interesting Hanukkah/Christmas season. What do Baptists celebrate?

DICK

Christmas.

HENRY

Oh, well, two out of three isn't bad. You're the odd ball.

DICK

I pictured somebody so different for my little girl.

HENRY

As I recall you didn't like Jeannie's husband-to-be either.

DICK

Eh.

Dick waves his hand in the air; so-so.

HENRY

But you do now?

DICK

He's the father of my wonderful grandsons.

HENRY

Whom he is not raising Jewish.

DICK

Tell you the truth, Henry, now that my mother's passed, I don't really care.

HENRY

Blasphemy! Something is going to come down and smite you.

DICK

It probably will. I learned Hebrew for one morning only, my bar mitzvah, and then I forgot it.

HENRY

Mazel tov. Speaking of occasions, I got seven eighths of a very expensive champagne left. Why don't we toast.

DICK

Toast what?

HENRY

You think of something while I get the glasses. How about joining forces to stop this wedding?

DICK

I'll drink to that. But Jill can never find out.

Henry talks while getting the champagne and glasses and carrying them into the den.

LIGHTS UP ON THE DEN; DOWN ON THE KITCHEN.

HENRY

I say we hold his feet to the fire. He'll cave. Did you see that white skin.

Both men are sitting in the lounge chairs.

DICK

Out there waiting on tables when he should be surfing at Malibu. Can you imagine going to school in Malibu and not having a tan? There's something very suspicious about this young man. He's hiding something.

HENRY

We'll find it and expose it.

DICK

Henry... we have to meet the parents.

HENRY

That should be fun. Where exactly will we have this punch and cookies gala?

DICK

(becoming maudlin)

I was looking forward to hanging out with Jill's in-laws some day. Not now, but some day.

HENRY

In about five years.

DICK

Exactly. You think we can talk them into waiting?

HENRY

Not a chance in hell. That's why we have to blow up this engagement.

Both men drink.

DICK

Emily can never find out.

HENRY

Beth either.

DICK

What do women see in a guy like that?

HENRY

A guy who's not going to cheat on their little girl?

DICK

There's no proof of that. Look at those guys with all the wives. And those communes. It can't be his earning power. What do ministers make?

HENRY

Whatever's in the collection basket. Who knows?

DICK

No. They have a Board of Directors or something in their parish. Holy shit! A parish! He might be assigned out of town.

HENRY

No, no. Un uh. Not another suitor coming in here and ripping another granddaughter out of my arms.

DICK

Now you know how I feel. I am totally against this marriage.

HENRY

I'll drink to that.

Henry refills their glasses.

HENRY (cont'd)

Did Jill tell you that she wants to have the reception in our back yard?

DICK

No!

(thinks about it; drinks)

Actually, Henry, that's not a bad idea. Save me a bundle.

HENRY

Spanky's going to pay for the wedding himself.

DICK

How dare he! You see. You can't trust a guy like that.

HENRY

He wants spicy Indian cuisine. Only I think Jill's put the kabob on that.

DICK

Kabosh. Good for her. Indian food. That's where he probably wants to preach.

(tears up)

My baby living in Calcutta.

HENRY

Ain't gonna happen. We got a month. What should we do first?

DICK

How about meeting the in-laws? That should be a great time to point out how unsuitable their marriage is.

HENRY

Good idea. We'll have it on neutral ground. Right here.

Henry raises his glass.

Dick toasts with his.

Act One, Scene Three

The engagement party.

Henry and Beth are busy putting the finishing touches on the house.

(Decorations as the budget permits; flowers everywhere.)

Henry is busy with the bar. Dick is busy drinking Henry's martinis.

Beth and EMILY are nervously keeping an eye on Henry and Dick. They know the boys are up to no good. They are too anxious to meet Michael's parents.

DOORBELL

Henry moves to the door.

HENRY

I'll get it.

Jill, Michael and MICHAEL'S PARENTS (Tom and Connie) are at the door.

Henry greets everyone warmly; hugs and kisses his granddaughter, Jill, hugs Connie as he introduces himself.

HENRY

Connie, I'm Henry. Come in, come in. Michael, this must be your father. Hi. I'm Henry Thomas, Jill's grandfather.

Beth comes up behind Henry, hugs and kisses Jill and Michael, shakes hands with Connie and Tom.

BETH

So nice to meet you.

Everyone enters. Henry motions to the bar.

HENRY

What can we get you to drink? Tom?

TOM

Club soda would be great.

HENRY

(without flinching)

Have you met the father of the bride, Dick Morris.

Dick comes up, without his martini, and offers his hand to Tom and Connie. Pats Michael on the back.

DICK

I'm Dick and this is Emily, my wife.

Emily comes up behind Dick and shakes hands all around.

EMILY

Is it Reverend Conn?

TOM

Just Tom, thanks.

HENRY

Please, sit down. What can I get you to drink, Connie?

CONNIE

Whatever Tom's having, thank you, Henry. What a lovely home you have.

BETH

Thank you. We thought meeting in a home was better than a restaurant.

CONNIE

Oh, much better. So inviting.

BETH

Thank you.

Henry is busy at the bar making the drinks, which Dick distributes.

Beth puts some hors d'oeuvres on the cocktail table and sits facing Jill and Connie seated on the divan. The men are all seated on the opposite side of the room.

HENRY

We promise not to discuss war or politics over here.

TOM

Those are two of the three subjects that I never discuss in public, Henry.

DICK

And what's the third subject, Tom... as if I didn't know.

TOM

You know. Religion.

DICK

Right.

HENRY

(nudges Dick)

You thought sex, right?

BETH

Henry.

HENRY

What? Oh, a toast. To the union of Jill and Michael.

Is that a safe subject, Tom?

TOM

Well, a timely one.

HENRY

What specifically do you do, Tom?

Beth starts to quiet Henry, but Tom replies...

TOM

I'm a bishop.

HENRY

A bishop. Wonderful. Dick?

DICK

I don't know what to say.

TOM

(laughs)

We're just plain people, Dick. Michael is our only child.

TOM (cont'd)

We've been looking forward to meeting you and your family. Connie and I think the world of Jill. We just knew that a young lady like Jill would have exemplary parents and grandparents. You've all done a wonderful job of raising a loving, caring, respectful young lady. I have to agree with Hillary Clinton on one thing only and that's the last I'll have to say on the subject of politics... it takes a village to raise a child. Connie and I are very grateful to be joining your God loving family.

There's nothing Henry or Dick can say to that.

Everyone drinks.

BETH

No one can outdo that toast, Tom. We second it.

Henry and Dick, sipping their martinis, have lost round one.

DICK

I better check on the bar-b-que. Do you eat steak, Tom?

TOM

Love it. Do you eat pork, Dick?

Tom, Dick and Henry get up and walk through the kitchen (LIGHTS UP) and out the patio doors off the kitchen to the bar-b-que.

BETH

(trying to pick up the pieces)

I volunteer to address invitations.

LIGHTS DIM.

When the lights come up again, the guests have gone. Henry is picking up glasses and putting them in the kitchen.

Beth is stacking dishes in the dishwasher.

BETH

That lovely couple thwarted your plans, didn't they?

HENRY

Thwarted? I don't know what you mean.

BETH

Come on, Henry. You and Dick sat there just waiting for the firecrackers.

HENRY

That's another thing I don't like about Michael.

BETH

What?

HENRY

His family. He has a nerve bringing around a bishop and a bishopress.

BETH

I think it evened the playing field.

HENRY

You approve of this marriage?

BETH

Actually, I wish it weren't happening.

HENRY

Ah ha!

BETH

Only because of something I learned from Emily.

HENRY

What? He has a past?

BETH

No. He has a future.

HENRY

And that worries you?

BETH

It worries me where it takes him. Emily told me that Michael wants to be a missionary.

HENRY

I knew it! Calcutta! Typhoid! Malaria! Stinkin' sacred cows.

BETH

Harlem.

HENRY

What?

BETH

Harlem. Or Watts or some other ghetto. He says he's good with young people.

HENRY

This gets worse. Wait till Dick hears.

BETH

It is admirable, Henry. I can imagine that he's very good with young people.

HENRY

I have to call Dick.

BETH

Don't you dare.

HENRY

What is the big hurry to get married? She's not...???

BETH

No. She's not.

HENRY

Then why the hurry?

BETH

Because Michael starts school in September and they'll have to...

(mumbles the rest of it)

HENRY

What? They'll have to what?

BETH

Move to Texas. Temporarily. Just until he finishes his Masters.

HENRY

What's wrong with schools here in California? What good ever came out of Texas?

BETH

Henry, don't be prejudiced.

HENRY

There's not a prejudiced bone in my body.

BETH

Right. Well, I thought Michael's parents were wonderful people. Jill is very lucky to be marrying into...

HENRY

I'm calling Dick. Harlem!

BETH

Don't ruin this night for Jill and Michael.

HENRY

You're on their side.

BETH

I'm not taking sides. I respect Jill's choice for a husband. She's a very sensible girl. I don't know

BETH (cont'd)

how that happened, but she is. She has parents and grandparents who love and support her and now she needs us to show how much we respect her choices.

(pauses)

How's the back yard coming?

HENRY

I quit.

BETH

You and Dick don't think this wedding is going to happen, do you?

HENRY

"Hope" not "think". Hope.

BETH

And the two of you have some sort of plan to sabotage it, haven't you?

No response from Henry.

BETH (cont'd)

I can't believe you would do this to Jill.

HENRY

She doesn't know what's best for her.

BETH

And you do.

HENRY

I know what isn't good for her. Michael.

BETH

How can you think that, Henry? He's industrious, ambitious, gentle, doesn't drink, comes from a

BETH (cont'd)

wonderful family and loves Jill very much. What is there not to like?

HENRY

I don't know. It's just a feeling.

BETH

A feeling? You're ready to ruin your granddaughter's happiness because of a feeling? When have you ever had feelings you could trust?

HENRY

When I asked you to marry me.

Beth looks at Henry, walks over and puts her arms around him.

BETH

We both want Jill to be happy. Who are we to say that she won't be happy with Michael?

HENRY

Does she seem happy to you?

BETH

I think she's caught up with this wedding. I don't know what she's feeling.

HENRY

Can't you talk them into waiting?

BETH

I'll talk to Emily. Meanwhile, promise me that you and Dick will not do anything to jeopardize this wedding.

PHONE

Beth answers.

BETH

Hello.

Beth listens a long time to whomever is calling.

BETH (cont'd)

Where are you?

Beth walks with the cell phone to the front door; opens the door. Emily and Dick are standing at the door, Emily with her cell phone in her hand.

Emily hangs up.

Beth hangs up.

DICK

I need a drink.

HENRY

Does everybody call when they're ready to walk
in a house?

EMILY

Oh, dad, what are we going to do?

HENRY

Come in.

Henry walks back into the kitchen, followed by Emily and Dick and Beth.

They sit on stools at the kitchen island.

Henry makes drinks.

He and Beth stand opposite Emily and Dick at the island.

BETH

How did you get away?

EMILY

We told them that we wanted to give them some
alone time.

HENRY

Where did you tell them you were going?

EMILY

Here. To talk to you about the reception.

HENRY

The answer's "no". Not unless I have a full bar.

DICK

That's perfectly acceptable.

EMILY

No, it isn't, Dick. I think we're going to have to have dinner first...

HENRY

At five o'clock?

EMILY

Hear me out, dad. Dinner. A string quartet. And then, we'll have a reception with drinks and the kind of band that Jill would want. And the Conns and their friends can stay or leave, as they please.

HENRY

Joyous.

BETH

There's no other choice, Henry.

HENRY

Oh, there's a choice, but you don't want to hear it.

EMILY

This is Jill's decision, dad. I thought we might present a united front and approach them tomorrow, after we decide.

HENRY

What About the stag party for Michael? What do we do, go bowling? Pizza and cokes? Do they drink caffeine?

EMILY

That's Mormons.

DICK

Does he have to come?

HENRY

Who? He?

DICK

Bishop Sunumu.

EMILY

Dick! You cannot make jokes about our daughter's future in-laws.

DICK

I wanted Vegas, that French restaurant at Paris, with cigars... Can we smoke?

EMILY

You can't smoke in restaurants.

DICK

Private room, yes you can. Right, Henry?

HENRY

We did at the stag party when Jeannie got married.

EMILY

Jeannie called to congratulate Jill.

HENRY

And...?

EMILY

Jill talked to her. I don't know how it went. I know Jeannie was frantic about the short time we have to get everything done.

HENRY

Can't Jeannie talk her into waiting? In five years
he'll have his own...

EMILY

Five years, dad? You sound just like you did when
I told you I wanted to marry Dick.

DICK

(to Henry...)

You asked Emily to wait five years to marry me?

HENRY

I think in your case it was ten.

DICK

Was it because I'm Jewish?

HENRY

No. Okay... yes. And your mother.

DICK

What about my mother?

HENRY

She wanted a Jewish ceremony. She wanted her
grandchildren raised Jewish. She wanted a kosher
reception.

BETH

Henry, what are you saying? Sarah didn't insist on
any of that.

HENRY

We had to wear those little beanies.

DICK

A big concession.

EMILY

Reverend Parker was there. It was Jewish and protestant.

DICK

My mother was happy.

BETH

I was happy.

HENRY

I wasn't happy.

BETH

Sweetheart, you weren't happy because Jeannie
and Roger moved up north for his job.

HENRY

And did they come back? No. They never come back.
Two grandbabies I never see.

EMILY

That's your fault. There are flights to San Francisco
every hour.

HENRY

What about flights to L.A.?

EMILY

Dad! They're here four times a year. Put yourself
out a little.

HENRY

Put myself out?

PHONE

Beth picks up the cell she's had in her hand ever since Emily and Dick arrived.
Henry and Emily are still arguing as...

BETH

(on the phone)

Hello?

Beth tries to shush down Emily and Henry.

BETH (cont'd)

(on the phone)

What's wrong, sweetheart?

Henry and Emily shut up immediately, hearing that.

BETH (cont'd)

(on the phone)

Certainly. Just a minute.

Beth puts her hand over the phone, hands it to Emily.

BETH (cont'd)

(to Emily)

It's Jill. She's crying.

Emily takes the phone.

EMILY

(on the phone; anxious)

Jill?

(listens a long time)

Oh, darling, I'm so...

(listens another long time)

HENRY

Put her on speaker.

BETH

Henry!

EMILY

(on the phone)

Okay, sweetheart. We won't wake you when we get home. Try to get some sleep.

Emily hangs up, looks at the other three who are anxiously waiting on her word.

EMILY

The engagement's off.

Looks on Henry and Dick's faces go from shock to elation.

Just before they high five...

EMILY

Don't gloat.

HENRY

Wait just a minute. He can't just break off an engagement like that.

EMILY

He didn't. Jill did.

BETH, HENRY and DICK

(in unison)

Why?

EMILY

They were looking through photo albums. Jill came across Sarah's pictures of Dick growing up, his bar mitzvah and our wedding under the canopy.

DICK

What's wrong with that?

EMILY

She told Michael that she wanted that kind of wedding, too, with a rabbi and a minister. I guess Michael flipped out. He said, "no way".

HENRY

Why that little punk. Who is he to say that she can't have the wedding she wants? Where's he live?

BETH

Henry!

EMILY

He went over to tell his parents. They don't live very far from here. I have his cell number on speed dial.

DICK

(kills his drink)

I'll drive.

PHONE

Beth picks up.

BETH

(on the phone)

Hello?

Beth listens, starts to walk with the phone toward the front door.

HENRY

Not again. What is this? What's behind the door?

Beth opens the door.

Tom and Connie (Connie on her cell phone, talking to Beth) are standing at the door.

Beth hangs up her phone.

Connie hangs up her phone.

BETH

Come in.

Dick pours another drink for himself and Henry.

LIGHTS UP IN THE DEN.

LIGHTS DOWN IN THE KITCHEN

CONNIE

We were just so upset. We had to come over.

BETH

We just got a call from Jill.

DICK

Your son...

EMILY

Dad, let me handle this. I understand that Jill told Michael that she would like to have a Jewish rabbi present along with a minister of your choice in a double ceremony and Michael said...

Emily starts to cry. Dick puts his arm around her shoulders.

CONNIE

Can't you talk Jill into reason?

HENRY

Reason? You want reason? My granddaughter is ready to go off with your son to Calcutta or Watts, be his wife and raise his children and you won't allow her to have her own rabbi present at her wedding? The wedding she's dreamed about since she was a little girl?

TOM

Does Jill have her own rabbi, Henry?

HENRY

Well, of course, she does. Right, Dick? That bearded guy who officiated at Jeannie and Roger's.

DICK

Right.

TOM

Well, this certainly puts a new light on things. We were under the impression that Jill wasn't a practitioner of any religion. You keep a kosher home, do you?

EMILY

We celebrate Hanukkah.

TOM

Is that the only holiday?

EMILY

And Christmas, of course.

TOM

But Jill has accepted Jesus Christ as her savior, correct?

HENRY

Don't start with the theology,

(to Dick)

She has, hasn't she?

DICK

Both of my girls were raised Protestant, like their mother. But if they want to have a reminder of their Jewish heritage at their wedding, I don't see any...

TOM

(interrupting Dick)

Unfortunately, Dick, it's more than a reminder. Will Jill also want to raise their children Jewish? Will they celebrate the high holidays in their home as well as the Christian holidays? What effect will that have on their children, practicing a religion that does not recognize the prophet Jesus Christ as

TOM (cont'd)

the son of God and also practicing one that does?

It's more than a reminder.

HENRY

It's a very serious issue.

TOM

Michael's mother and I are against this marriage if Jill intends to raise our grandchildren in the Jewish faith.

DICK

Oh, you are, are you.

TOM

I understand that you have another daughter, Dick.

Is she raising her children in the Jewish faith?

Dick

That is none of your business.

CONNIE

I'm afraid it is, Dick. We want to cooperate.

TOM

I'll handle this, Connie. We will not cooperate whatsoever if the children of this union are going to be raised Jewish.

EMILY

Let's go, Dick

BETH

Bishop Conn... Tom... these two kids obviously love each other. Jill is setting aside a career of her own as a speech pathologist to go to Texas and be with

BETH (cont'd)

Michael while he gets his Masters. She'll be working to help put Michael through school. I don't know whether she plans to raise their children in the Jewish faith. She's never been...

(puts quotations marks around it)

... "Jewish" before this. But I guess tonight she and Michael were looking through photo albums and Jill came across the picture of her mother and father and their wedding which was presided over by a rabbi and a minister. We concurred with Emily and Dick's wishes for that wedding, Tom. They did not raise their daughters Jewish. They were baptized and attended public schools. They went to church on Sunday as a family. We never heard anything about Hanukkah or Roshashana or any of the Jewish holidays, but it was important to Jeannie to have a rabbi at her wedding to bless their union. I believe that's Jill's intention as well.

TOM

I thought it wasn't important to Jill when we discussed religions, but now I'm not so sure. She may say she doesn't care about raising their children Jewish, but she could change her mind.

DICK

My daughter was right to put an end to this engagement.

Emily's PHONE RINGS.

EMILY

(on the phone)

Hello.

Emily listens a very long time.

Finally, she hangs up.

EMILY (cont'd)

That was Jill. She and Michael are on their way to Vegas to be married. She's turning off her cell.

TOM

We have to stop them!

HENRY

Hey! We don't want this wedding any more than you.

(checks his watch)

We can make Vegas before morning if we start now.

TOM

We'll take my car. It seats six. Used to be a hearse.

HENRY

Pit stops.

Everyone scatters.

HENRY (O.S.)

Wait a minute. I just thought of something.

Everyone re-enters.

HENRY

Jill isn't even Jewish. Jewishness comes through the mother. Dick is Jewish because his mother was Jewish. But Emily isn't Jewish so our daughters aren't Jewish. If Jill is so anxious to have a formal wedding with a minister and a rabbi and the reception

HENRY (cont'd)

in our back yard, she's not going to settle for a tacky
little chapel with Elvis out front.

(to Tom and Connie)

Go home. Wait for a phone call. They're not going
ahead with it. Believe me. I know my granddaughter.

Tom takes Connie's arm and they head for the front door.

TOM

You better be right.

HENRY

Count on it.

The Conns leave.

EMILY

If I've ever wanted you to be right, dad...

HENRY

You'll see. I couldn't take four hours in a hearse with
the Bishop.

Dick hugs Beth, looks at Henry, shakes his finger, decides not to say anything.

Emily and Dick leave.

Beth decides not to clean up the kitchen.

She shakes her head and leaves the kitchen to go to bed.

Henry looks up to heaven.

LIGHTS DIM

In the middle of the night Henry comes into the kitchen wearing pajamas, looking very worried.
He opens the refrigerator, takes out a carton of o.j., starts to drink out of it.

PHONE RINGS

Paralyzed, Henry stares at the phone, shaking.

In a minute, Beth comes out of the back rooms in her nightie.

BETH

That was Emily, Henry. Jill and Michael are
married.

CYMBALS CLASH

BLACKOUT

ACT TWO

In the dark

DOORBELL RINGS continuously.

Henry, still in his p.j.'s answers it.

Dick is at the door.

DICK

Get dressed. We're driving to Vegas.

HENRY

It's too late.

DICK

It better not be.

HENRY

It's five thirty. Don't you think by now they've...

DICK

Don't think about it.

HENRY

I'm trying to block it out.

DICK

My little girl in the arms of that...

HENRY

Minister.

DICK

Yes. No. That gold digging charlatan.

HENRY

Gold digging?

DICK

That act he put on about paying for the wedding himself.

With what? Tips?

HENRY

I'll meet you in the back.

Henry exits to change clothes.

Dick exits the front door to wait for Henry.

Seconds later,

DOORBELL

Beth enters from the back room barely dressed, zipping up her pants.

BETH

Henry? Where are you?

Beth goes to the door, tucking in her shirt.

Emily is at the door.

She falls into her mother's arms, sobbing.

EMILY

We ordered the invitations.

BETH

As soon as they open we'll call and cancel. What else?

EMILY

Jill's dress.

(sobs again)

BETH

I'll cancel it.

EMILY

No. I'm mother of the bride. I'll do it.

Breaks down.

Car starting up outside. It's heard pulling away with screeching tires.

BETH

Where is Henry?

EMILY

He and Dick are driving to Vegas.

BETH

What? They don't even know where the kids are staying.

EMILY

Dick said he'd tear the town apart until he found them.

Cries uncontrollably.

BETH

I'll make some coffee.

After a few seconds of trying to no avail to calm down Emily, Beth makes some toast and coffee.

BETH (cont'd)

Eat something, sweetheart.

EMILY

Dick is going to make everything worse.

THE FRONT DOOR OPENS.

Jill and Michael walk in.

JILL

Hello. The newlyweds are home.

Jill shows her ring to her mother, who is speechless.

JILL

Just what I wanted, a plain gold band. Isn't it beautiful?

Where's dad and grandpa?

Emily accepts a hug from Jill and then from Michael.

EMILY

Have you called your parents, Michael?

JILL

Mom, that's the first thing you have to say? No mazeltov,
Welcome to the family, Michael?

EMILY

I've been caught offguard, sweetheart. I wish you both
every happiness, if we can just get through the next twenty
four hours.

MICHAEL

I tried to call my parents, but there was no answer. Even
their cells are off. What's going on?

EMILY

Michael, what is going on is everyone is terribly distressed
that you decided to run away and get married. All our
wedding plans. Jill, your dress, the invitations, dad's
renovation of the back yard.

JILL

It's going to be all right, mom. We can still have the reception
here and I'll wear something white... something short, I think, with
a tiny veil. We will have to cancel the dress.

BETH

And the invitations. We're waiting for the shops to open.

JILL

I'm sorry to put you both through this, but we decided that
what we wanted was just to get married and it was beautiful.

EMILY

What was beautiful?

JILL

The chapel. And we met this young couple who stood up for us and we stood up for them. They're just the greatest couple. They live in Van Nuys. They didn't tell their parents either. We had a champagne breakfast with them before we left.

MICHAEL

I had orange juice, Mrs. Morris. May I call you "mom"?

Emily tries to smile at that.

EMILY

Of course, Michael.

MICHAEL

I wish I could get in touch with my mom and dad.

BETH

I have a feeling, Michael, that they may be headed for Vegas.

MICHAEL

What? Oh, no! It's Sunday. They both turn off their cells on Sunday. Why would they go to Vegas? My parents have never been to Las Vegas.

BETH

Maybe they wanted to surprise you.

MICHAEL

But they didn't even know which chapel. That's crazy.

EMILY

The last twenty four hours have been crazy, Michael.

PHONE RINGS.

JILL

I'll get it. Maybe it's dad.

BETH

(holds Emily's hand)

That's what I'm afraid of.

JILL

(on the phone)

Hello.

(listens)

Grandpa! It's Jill. We just got home. We're married.

Henry screams so loud that Jill has to hold the phone away from her ear.

JILL

(on the phone)

I hope what you meant to say was, "Congratulations!"

(listens)

Grandpa, you're going to have a heart attack. Where did you say you are?

(listens)

Was he speeding?

Jill puts her hand over the phone to tell the others...

JILL

Dad and grandpa were picked up by the police.

Something about dad going over ninety and his license expired and he has to stay in jail until somebody bails him out. Here, mom.

(hands the phone to Emily)

You talk to him. He's not very friendly.

Emily takes the phone.

EMILY

Dad? It's Emily. Calm down and tell me what's going on?

(listens; puts her hand over the receiver)

Mom, they need dad's attorney's number.

(back on the phone)

Dad, let me talk to Dick.

(listens)

He's where?

(listens)

You mean in a cell with other...

(listens)

Okay, okay. The off ramp just before Highway 15.

(writes something on a napkin)

Got it. Will they let you drive Dick's car if I arrange bail?

Emily shakes her head "no" at Jill and Michael.

EMILY (cont'd)

He has an expired license. What about you driving Dick's car?

(shakes her head "no" again)

You forgot your wallet.

(sighs)

Okay, dad, I'm on my way. I'll turn the phone over to mom so you can get the attorney's number. Will they let you have more than one phone call?

(listens)

Dad, it's six o'clock on a Sunday. Should we be calling...?

EMILY (cont'd)

(listens; nods)

Okay. You pay him big bucks. I don't think I'll say that. Give me the number of the jail so mom can give it to him and he can call you.

Emily waits, writes down the number, hands it to Beth who has re-entered the kitchen from the back rooms.

EMILY

(on the phone)

I'm leaving now. Don't go... I guess you can't go anywhere. I'll see you shortly. Here's mom with the number.

Emily hangs up.

EMILY

(to her mother)

Here's the number of the jail. Call the attorney and give him this number so he can talk to the Sergeant who's holding them. I'm going out to arrange bail.

Beth takes the phone; talks quietly to Henry.

JILL

(to Emily)

Where were they going anyway at this hour?

EMILY

To Vegas.

Jill looks at Michael, puzzled.

Michael is equally puzzled.

MICHAEL

Maybe we should go to church and try to
find my parents.

Emily exits the front door.

Jill and Michael exit right behind her.

Beth comes back into the kitchen.

She hurries to the front door, sticks her head out.

BETH

Emily?

(closes the door, looks around)

Jill? Michael?

LIGHTS DIM

Act Two, Scene Two

An hour later.

Emily, Henry and Dick re-enter.

Beth hurries over to Henry to make sure he's all right.

DICK

I'm fine, too.

BETH

What can I get you?

HENRY

Scotch. A bottle.

DICK

Aspirin. Jack Daniels.

BETH

Sit down. Have some coffee.

HENRY

And scotch.

BETH

I'll get the aspirin.

Beth goes into the back room.

Emily shakes her head at the sight of her husband and father, Henry still wearing his pajama tops.

HENRY

The Sergeant had a daughter who eloped. You'd think he'd have more compassion.

DICK

He was a jerk. Emily, Jill has to drive you back to pick up my car.

EMILY

Dick, the kids haven't even been to bed yet.

HENRY

They've got forty years for that. Take Beth with you.

She can drive Dick's car.

Beth returns with the aspirin bottle, gives it to Dick. Pours him some water.

DICK

I take 'em with Jack.

BETH

Good God.

She walks to the bar separating the den from the kitchen and gets a bottle of Jack Daniels.

DICK

Never mind a glass.

Dick pops some aspirin into his mouth, takes a slug of Jack.

HENRY

I'm glad nobody drinks Jack but you.

(looks around)

Where are they? Is he afraid to show his face?

They aren't in Jill's room, are they? The Princess room?

Henry starts to get up from the kitchen stool.

BETH

Calm down. They went to talk to Michael's parents.

HENRY

Oh, joy.

BETH

(checks her watch)

Tom and Connie are probably in church.

DICK

Hiding.

BETH

They turned off their cell phones.

DICK

Cowards.

(to Emily)

Can you believe that Podunk Sergeant charged me
six hundred dollars?

HENRY

He doubled the fine when you mentioned knowing
the governor.

DICK

Did I? I don't remember saying that.

HENRY

You wanted to call him, get him out of bed.

DICK

I said that? Emily, I was so distraught.

EMILY

Of course, you were, dear.

DICK

I need to lie down.

EMILY

Come into the den.

Emily and Dick go into the den.

Henry and Beth whisper to themselves.

HENRY

(nods toward Dick in the den)

He tried to toss his weight around. Made everything worse. A lot worse.

BETH

Did the attorney get in touch with you?

HENRY

He was great. Whatever he said to that Sergeant got us sprung, after Dick paid the fine. He still has to appear in court out there.

BETH

(sighs)

Could this get any more stressful?

HENRY

I haven't even spoken to my granddaughter yet.

BETH

Oh, yes, you did. On the phone. And you weren't very friendly.

HENRY

Friendly? She's lucky I didn't scream at her.

BETH

You screamed, Henry.

HENRY

Oh, and as we're leaving the police station with Emily, that Sergeant has the nerve to ask us if we wouldn't like to purchase four tickets to the Policemen's Benefit at seventy five dollars a pop? Another four hundred dollars.

BETH

Chalk it up to a hasty decision to head to Vegas
before you thought it through.

HENRY

It's what a father does.

BETH

But that's why God made grandfathers, to stop
fathers from making rash decisions.

HENRY

What made you so smart?

BETH

Practice, Henry. I want to go back to bed.

HENRY

Good idea.

BETH

Let's go. I think Emily fell asleep in there with Dick.

Beth and Henry start to head for the back rooms when the

PHONE RINGS

HENRY

Go to the door. It's probably them. Tell them we'll
talk later.

Beth answers the phone.

BETH

Hello?

(listens a long time, eyes get big, bigger)

Where are you now?

(listens; turns to Henry)

Jill and Michael are headed for Barstow.

HENRY

What the hell's in Barstow?

BETH

Tom and Connie. They were on their way to Vegas and got a flat tire. No spare. The hearse takes a special kind of tire.

HENRY

Tell them to call the Automobile Club.

BETH

They aren't members. Jill is.

HENRY

Of course Jill is because her grandfather had the good sense to sign her up when she turned sixteen and pays her membership every year since then, I might add.

Beth is listening to Jill on the phone.

BETH

(on the phone)

Okay, dear. We'll be here if you need us.

Beth hangs up.

BETH

(to Henry)

Now keep your voice down, Henry. We don't want to waken Dick. Jill called her garage...

HENRY

MY garage.

BETH

YOUR garage. They have a tire. That nice guy I like, can't think of his name, is going to meet Jill and Michael at the shop. Then Jill is going to drive to Barstow.

HENRY'

(too loud)_

WHAT? Jill is driving to Barstow after being up all night?

BETH

She's young, Henry. She's been up all night many times.

HENRY

Not driving, she hasn't. Where's that bum she married?

BETH

Sh-h-h. Don't talk about Michael like that. He has to fill in at church for his father. His first sermon, Jill said, and she won't be there to hear it.

Emily comes walking out of the den, rubbing her eyes.

EMILY

My eyes feel like they're full of sand. Who won't be where to hear what?

BETH

Oh, dear. Okay. Sit down. Jill called.

EMILY

Where is she?

BETH

On her way to Barstow. Tom and Connie were
headed to Vegas...

EMILY

WHAT? Without us?

HENRY

Exactly.

BETH

Stay out of this, Henry. Tom called Michael to pitch
in for him at church this morning. That's who is doing
what and Jill won't hear it.

HENRY

Tell her the rest.

BETH

Be quiet, Henry. Why don't you go back to bed?

HENRY

Not on your life. I can't wait till Dick hears this.

Dick gets up off the sofa, comes into the kitchen.

DICK

Can't wait until Dick hears what?

HENRY

Oh, good. Get Jack ready.

DICK

Hears what?

BETH

Michael is giving Tom's sermon this morning. His
first one.

DICK

I can definitely wait to hear that.

EMILY

Why is Jill on her way to Barstow?

DICK

WHAT?

BETH

Tom and Connie were on their way to Vegas...

DICK

Are you kidding me? Wait till I...

EMILY

The peacemakers! Blessed are they.

BETH

(screams)

Be quiet!

(when all is quiet again)

Tom was driving the hearse and they ran over

something in the road and chewed up a tire.

There's no spare. And the hearse takes a special

tire which is not available in Barstow, so they called

Michael to take over for Tom at church this morning

and Jill volunteered to call her mechanic...

HENRY

MY mechanic.

Beth glares at Henry until he cowers back and sits quietly.

BETH

The mechanic has a tire and is meeting Jill at his shop.

Then Jill is driving to Barstow.

DICK

I'll kill him.

EMILY

Who?

DICK

Sunumu.

Emily takes out her cell phone.

BETH

What are you doing?

EMILY

Calling Jill.

Beth takes Emily's phone from her.

BETH

Oh, no, you aren't. None of us is going to interfere any more with this couple's decisions. Michael is going to give his first sermon. Jill is going to Barstow. Then the kids are going to Michael's apartment and crash. And we will be standing by when they need us which won't be for another several hours.

HENRY

That's why God made grandmothers.

BETH

Go to bed, everyone. I'm turning out the lights.

You two...

(nods toward Emily and Dick)

take Jill's room. Goodnight.

DICK

Henry... I think we should head for Barstow.

HENRY

I'm too sleepy. You're wasted. Emily's...

(decides not to say)

And Beth... well... I have to sleep with her.

BETH

HAVE to?

HENRY

Hope to.

(hugs his wife)

For the rest of my life. Besides, Dick, you don't want to face off with that Sergeant again. He's got your number.

DICK

We take Emily's car.

HENRY

Not your license number.

Emily takes Dick by the ear and starts to drag him into the back rooms.

EMILY

You didn't used to have to be dragged to bed.

Say goodnight, Dick.

HENRY

I've got a very funny line here, if anybody's interested.

BETH

Nobody is, Henry.

Beth hits the lights.

IN THE BLACKOUT

BETH (cont'd)

I'll waken everyone in two hours so we can all go and
hear Michael's first sermon.

GROANS from the guys.

END

