

THE BARE TRUTH

A Comedy

by
H. G. Brown

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Cast of Characters

JACK BAXTER: A man, age 70.
BETTY BAXTER: His wife, age 68.
JAMES DEAN (J.D.) BAXTER: Their son, in his mid 40s.
TERRI BAXTER: J.D.'s wife, early 40s.
LLOYD MORTON: A man, 64.
EVE MORTON: His wife, 60.
JUDITH BAXTER SHORT: Jack and Betty's daughter, 42.
NICK TREADWAY: A man, mid 40s.

A Note On Casting: It is the author's wish that open casting - multi-racial, multi-ethnic - be encouraged. The author has no problem with surnames being altered to suit Asian or Latin actors taking roles in the play

Scene

The living room of Jack and Betty Baxter, in South Florida.

Time

The present.

ACT I

Scene 1: Friday afternoon.
Scene 2: Nine PM, the same day.
Scene 3: Sunday afternoon.

Act II

Scene 4: Monday evening, eight o'clock.
Scene 5: Wednesday, early afternoon.

ACT I

Scene 1

SETTING: JACK and BETTY's living room in South Florida. It opens on a lanai that runs the length of the room. A pool is located off stage, right, a continuation of the lanai that cannot be seen. The main entrance to the house is through a foyer, left, and cannot be seen. The kitchen is located offstage, down left. Bedrooms, baths, etc are offstage, right.

The room is simply but attractively furnished: sofa, armchairs and a lounge chair. A bar is located downstage of the kitchen entrance. It is a spacious room, with a few Ben Shahn prints on the walls, left and right. Sliding glass doors open to the lanai, giving the room an open, airy feeling. Palms and bottlebrush beyond the lanai contribute to the feeling of the room continuing to the outside world.

AT RISE: Friday afternoon: JACK, BETTY, LLOYD and EVE are having drinks. JACK and BETTY are casually dressed, well-tanned LLOYD and EVE even more so.

(J.D. enters, from the lanai.)

J.D.

You need to watch your sprinkler setting more carefully, Dad. Twenty minutes a zone, and you have five zones.

JACK

I'll keep an eye on it, J.D. Have you met Lloyd and Eve -?

J.D.

Sure, sure - the friendly neighbors. Good to see you.

LLOYD/EVE

Hello - Good to see you - How're you doing - (etc)

JACK

My son, the dentist - excuse me, oral surgeon.

BETTY

We are so proud of him.

J.D.

Cut it out, Mom. I've been practicing for over fifteen years. You'd think I just got out of dental school.

LLOYD

Say, Doc, I've got this problem with my teeth -
(he sticks his fingers in his mouth)

See? What I mean?

(removing his fingers)

I keep biting my tongue!

(he laughs)

EVE

Lloyd! Honestly!

J.D.

No, no, that's okay. I can fix that for you, Lloyd, if you don't mind eating through a straw.

LLOYD

You got me there, J.D.! Thanks, but no thanks!

EVE

A fix without teeth has no bite. A big-time gambler told me that.

(pause)

Something to do with horse racing.

BETTY

Where is Terri?

J.D

Oh, fussing with your garden, digging around.

BETTY

I wish she wouldn't do that.

J.D.

You're new to Florida, Mom, and she's an old hand at native plants -

BETTY

But really, dear, I can manage my own garden.

JACK

Yeah, you kids have better things to do than spend your time checking up on the old folks.

(Enter TERRI, from lanai)

TERRI

Betty, you really ought to hire a yardman. The Bougainvillea is going wild, and - Oh, hello - Lloyd isn't it? And Eve! How nice to see you.

EVE

Hello, Terri.

LLOYD

How're ya doing, kid? Good to see you again.

TERRI

You've become real friends of Mom and Dad, haven't you?

EVE

Well, we are next-door neighbors.

LLOYD

Might as well be friends.

JACK

Wouldn't want him for an enemy. It's been known to happen.

EVE

The couple in this house before you were - well, no, I won't say it. If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all, I always say.

LLOYD

Aloof, but noseey.

J.D.

Is that why you have those high shrubs and palms between your houses?

EVE

Oh, those! We put those in years ago, to hide the pool.

LLOYD

Got them on the other side of the house, too.

EVE

And in back - to hide the pool from the dock.

TERRI

To hide the pool?

LLOYD

Yes, the pool is our Eden, our own Secret Garden.

EVE

We love to sun bathe.

LLOYD

Moon bathe, too - and swim, of course.

TERRI

It must be lovely. Are you just coming from a swim?

LLOYD/EVE

No.

EVE

(laughing)

I know, we always look like we're either coming from or heading to the pool. We're terrible, but that's how we are.

LLOYD

The ever-casual Mortons!

(They laugh, and hug each other.)

JACK

Drinks, anyone?

J.D.

No thanks, Dad, Terri and I have to be on our way.

TERRI

Melody will be home from school, soon.

J.D.

Ted has soccer practice. Team expects to take State this year. Won't see him till dinnertime.

TERRI

We'll be back, don't worry. Betty, I will bring you a short list of lawn maintenance people - really good people, and reasonable. Bye now!

J.D.

Oh, Dad, did you make the spare key yet?

JACK

Not yet, J.D., I'll get around to it.

J.D.

I can do it for you.

JACK

No, no, I'll do it.

TERRI

It's important, Jack - for emergencies.

J.D.

Ace Hardware, Home Depot, Lowe's- any hardware store.

JACK

It's on my to-do list, J.D. Top of the list.

J.D.

Okay, Dad.

TERRI

Bye-bye!

(Exit, TERRI and J.D.)

JACK

Top of the list, like hell.

BETTY

Now, Jack -

JACK

Now-Jack-nothing. That's all we need. J.D. would pop in here any time he feels the urge to check up on us -

JACK (cont.)

The old folks! You'd think a dentist wouldn't have so much free time.

BETTY

Oral surgeon, dear.

JACK

And Judith is just the same.

BETTY

Our daughter. She found this house for us; she's a realtor, a real estate broker. We told her we wanted to live on the water - with a dock, of course - and a pool.

JACK

Florida: if you don't play on the links, you play on the water. I don't play golf.

LLOYD

Never took to the game, myself. Now, tennis -

JACK

Don't play tennis either.

LLOYD

Neither do I.

EVE

Lloyd loves to watch others play. Oh, but we do play volleyball. Wonderful exercise, very aerobic.

LLOYD

So, it was Judith who found this gem for you?

JACK

Yes, and no sooner had she handed over the keys she told us she kept a spare one for herself - just in case.

LLOYD

For emergencies -

JACK

You got it. The old folks can't be trusted. They might go to bed and forget to put out the cat.

BETTY

And we don't have a cat.

JACK

So what I did was I had all the locks changed. She came over early one morning, and couldn't get in. Woke us up with the doorbell ringing and her pounding - very upset, of course. I told her we lost one of the keys and knew she'd be angry about that, so we had all the locks changed. Said I'd get her a spare as soon as I could.

BETTY

That was weeks ago.

JACK

She hasn't got it yet, and she's not going to.

EVE

We only met Judith briefly, shortly after you moved in. She seems all business - and a bit driven.

JACK

She's forty, divorced and raising a teenager. It doesn't get much worse than that.

BETTY

(warning him)

Jack...

JACK

On the other hand, she makes a lot of money.

LLOYD

Yes, money solves a lot of problems.

JACK

Don't get me wrong; Judith works hard - a real go-getter - gets that from me. I built a business from nothing -

BETTY

It was his father's business.

JACK

And it was nothing, believe me. Well, nothing to speak of - a small accounting firm. Took nearly fifty years to build it up, but when I sold my share - Ahh, I don't want to brag. Let's just say we did very well.

BETTY

Very well indeed, dear. You should be proud.

JACK

I am proud, and I'm proud of the kids, too. I just wish they'd back off.

LLOYD

I've got to hand it to you: taking a business, building it up and selling it - that's beyond me. Way out of my league.

BETTY

But you seem to have done so well.

LLOYD

I got lucky.

EVE

We won the lottery, up in New Jersey. Power Ball.

LLOYD

I don't pretend we deserve it, but there it is.

EVE

A lifetime of just getting by, and we hit the jackpot.

JACK

Well, I'll be... How did you ever -?

LLOYD

I picked the right numbers. It does happen; it happened for us.

EVE

And we were smart enough to invest wisely.

LLOYD

Or wise enough to invest smartly. Either way, we came up roses.

BETTY

I don't know what to say. Congratulations!

JACK

In all my years I never met a lottery winner.

LLOYD

You've met one now - two, in fact!

EVE

(snuggling up to him)

We count as one, darling.

LLOYD

I hope you won't hold it against me, Jack, just because of a lucky break.

JACK

What are you saying! Of course not! I am absolutely amazed!

(The DOORBELL rings.)

BETTY

Oh, there's the door. I'll just see who it is.

(Exit BETTY.)

JACK

The lottery.

LLOYD

Power Ball. Only in America!

JACK

I'll be darned.

EVE

Say, if we're going to Romero's for dinner, we better get a leg on.

LLOYD

Eve and I need to head back to the house and change. You and Betty are fine as you are, but we are way too casual for Romero's. What do you say, Eve?

EVE

(laughing)

Talk about casual, they should catch us at home!

(Enter BETTY with JUDITH, who is smartly dressed for business. JUDITH leads the way, obviously in a rush.)

BETTY

Look who just dropped by for a visit.

JUDITH

I have a house to show in thirty minutes -

JACK

Judy! You've met our neighbors, the Mortons, Lloyd and Eve?

JUDITH

Yes! I believe so - the day you moved in -

EVE

We brought over a key lime pie -

LLOYD

Home made -

JUDITH

A pie, yes, good to see you again.

EVE

It's so nice to see you.

JUDITH

Yes, thank you - excuse me, I'm in a bit of a rush.

BETTY

She has a house to show.

JUDITH

In thirty minutes - or less. I'll make this quick. It's Lila. She didn't make the cheerleading squad and she's heart-broken.

JACK

But she's only - what? - a sophomore. You didn't make cheerleaders till you were a junior, sixteen years old.

JUDITH

I know, but she's heart-broken.

JACK

She's fifteen years old, Judy. She'll get over it.

JUDITH

Oh, you think so! Lately she is always trying to compete with me. She knows I didn't make cheerleader till I was a junior, so of course she has to make the squad as a sophomore. Her grades are tops - I can't complain - better than mine were at her age - and she always gets a part in the school play -

JACK

Well, then -?

JUDITH

This competitive streak of hers is getting impossible. She came home from tryouts and went straight to her room and sobbed all night. She refused to come out for supper. This morning she caught me by surprise in the bathroom and wanted to know my cup size when I was fifteen. I've never seen her in such a funk. I don't know what to do with that girl; I'm too busy for this!

BETTY

Too busy! Dear, I hardly know what to say.

JACK

You just missed J.D. and Terri; they're full of advice.

JUDITH

Could she stay with you, just for the weekend? You could talk to her. If she heard it from you - what a mess I was at her age - the self-image problems, training bras, boys, you know? - all the stuff I put you through.

BETTY

Well -

JUDITH

You see, I have a date Saturday night, with a guy I just met.

JACK

A dentist?

JUDITH

No, Dad, and he's not a doctor, either!

JACK

Well, I can hope, can't I?

JUDITH

Can you help me out here, Mom?

BETTY

We were just about to go to dinner with Lloyd and Eve.

JUDITH

It's just for the weekend! After all, she is your granddaughter!

JACK

Did you ever think we might have plans for the weekend?

JUDITH

Terrific, Dad! That's just terrific! After I find this great house for you and go through hell to get the owners to come down - and you lost the key!

JACK

Now just a minute, young lady! That was business and you did your job - to the satisfaction of all concerned, I am proud to admit. I couldn't care less about your hot date Saturday night, but I am concerned about my granddaughter. I'll call you tonight and let you know what we decide about this weekend. Now, you better see about that house you've got to show.

JUDITH

(the repentant daughter)

Yes, Father. All right.

(she is about to leave)

It was good to see you again, Lloyd, Eve.

EVE

Good luck with the house, dear.

JUDITH

Thank you.

(to JACK)

Dad, if you could call around nine -

JACK

We should be back from dinner about then, yes.

JUDITH

(kissing her mother on the cheek)

Bye, Mom.

BETTY

Good-bye. Don't worry, dear.

JUDITH

Sure. Not to worry: I'll try it on for size.

(Exit JUDITH, followed by a moment of
embarrassed silence.)

JACK

I knew she'd bring up the key.

BETTY

Oh dear, what are we going to do?

JACK

We are going to dinner. By the way, I mentioned Romero's
to J.D. He recommended Arturo's.

LLOYD

I know the place; it's not bad, if all you want is pizza or
spaghetti.

EVE

Romero's seafood is wonderful. I'm sure you'll love it.

BETTY

That poor girl.

JACK

Who? Lila or Judy? Well, you can see what were up against.
It never let's up. One crisis after another - and they're
hardly what I'd call crises, and that includes the
irrigation system and the begonias and whatever James Dean
and Terri find that needs fixing.

LLOYD

James Dean?

BETTY

Our son, James Dean Baxter.

EVE

James Dean?

JACK

Baxter, yes. How about a refill? Lloyd, Eve?

LLOYD

No, thank you. How did he come by that name, if I might ask?

BETTY

Here it comes.

JACK

(pause, he shoots BETTY a pained look)

After he was born I had an epiphany.

BETTY

Shortly after delivery I learned that he put James Dean Baxter on the birth certificate. We had agreed to name him Emerson Parker Baxter, after my grandfather, Emerson Parker.

JACK

I had not actually agreed to that, but I was willing to go along with it. Until I had this... epiphany. I can only call it that.

(EVE and LLOYD look at each other,
then at JACK.)

LLOYD

Well, you can't ignore an epiphany.

EVE

And Judith?

BETTY

Judith was named after my grandmother.

JACK

No epiphany there. I waited, but...

(he shrugs)

Judith was a very popular girl: good student, chorus, cheerleader -

EVE

I was a cheerleader! That can be very important for a girl. They are the polarizing figures in high school- admired by some; held in contempt by others. Every girl wants to be a cheerleader. And, all the boys dream about them, whether they admit it or not.

LLOYD

I admit it. I admit it.

EVE

You never saw me in my cheerleading days. We met long after.

LLOYD

I saw you in Vegas. You stole my heart.

EVE

I was a showgirl.

BETTY

You were?

LLOYD

She was, and she was dazzling. Still is!

EVE

You are such a sweetheart.

LLOYD

The costumes! I couldn't take my eyes off her.

EVE

Those costumes gave new meaning to the word skimpy. All us girls were out there to dazzle. And the shows! Sammy Davis Jr., Frank Sinatra, Engelbert Humperdink!

LLOYD

I hounded her for weeks before she agreed to date me. She nearly called the cops on me - for stalking her.

EVE

What do you mean, nearly!

(LLOYD and EVE laugh.)

LLOYD

That was forty years ago, can you believe it? We've been together ever since.

BETTY

I hardly know what to say. A showgirl, imagine that.

JACK

(smiling)

It isn't hard to imagine. Not at all.

(BETTY gives JACK an OK-for-you-Buddy look.)

JACK

Are you sure I can't get you another round?

EVE

No, thank you. I'm fine.

LLOYD

(hugging her)

You can say that again.

EVE

Oh, Lloyd.

LLOYD

Listen, I know a sure fire way to get the kids off your back, give you some breathing room.

JACK

I'm open to suggestions, believe me.

LLOYD

Well, there is a way...

EVE

Lloyd...

LLOYD

(to EVE)

It worked for the Nolans, didn't it?

EVE

Yes, but -

LLOYD

(to JACK and BETTY)

It worked for the Nolans.

BETTY

What?

LLOYD

Tell the kids - J.D., Terri, Judith - tell them you decided to become nudists.

(pause)

You know, I think I will have another round.

JACK

Sure. Help yourself.

(laughing)

That's a hot one - nudists, you say!

BETTY

You aren't serious?

EVE

Oh, yes he is.

(handing LLOYD her glass)

Freshen mine too, darling, while you're at it.

(BETTY and JACK laugh.)

LLOYD

Just tell them you want to explore nudism. The climate here is perfect; camping is available year round, plenty of sites to choose from.

BETTY

Really, Lloyd, we couldn't tell them that. It would be a lie.

LLOYD

No it wouldn't. Not exactly.

BETTY

Then what, exactly?

LLOYD

Look, let's be honest. Do you ever lounge around the house in your skivvies?

BETTY

I beg your pardon?

JACK

He asked if we ever lounge around the house -

BETTY

I know what he asked.

EVE

How do you sleep at night?

JACK

Very well, thanks.

EVE

No, I mean— do you ever sleep in the altogether?

(JACK and BETTY look at each other.)

LLOYD

Do you ever sleep in the nude?

BETTY

Well... that's a rather personal question.

EVE

Of course it is. Do you?

JACK

Sure, we do.

BETTY

Jack!

JACK

Just the other night, in fact.

LLOYD

Ah-ha! You see?

EVE

Closet nudists.

BETTY

Well, I'd hardly call that nudism, would you?

LLOYD

Call it what you want, the fact is most couples do sleep in the nude from time to time.

EVE

Certainly on special occasions: the Saturday night get-together, the weekly share-holders meeting, the "Punch and Judy Show" -

LLOYD

And many people continue in the nude, out of the bedroom and into the house - to grab a midnight snack or use the bathroom. Maybe not in the nude, but lightly attired.

EVE

"Lightly attired" - I like that.

JACK

Okay, Lloyd, I'll admit that sometimes -

LLOYD

If your son or daughter popped over in the middle of the night, you'd probably have to scramble to get something on before you answered the door.

JACK

Either that or give them one hell of a shock.

BETTY

I am so embarrassed.

JACK

He's got a point. When I get up to go to the bathroom or get a drink of water I don't bother to put on a robe, I just go.

(to BETTY)

And so do you, I've often noticed.

BETTY

(smiles wanly, to EVE)

He's always been a light sleeper.

EVE

Lloyd and I sleep in the nude all the time.

LLOYD

It's common practice.

EVE

So you wouldn't actually be lying to your kids.

LLOYD

Especially if you extend it a bit: lounge around the house
- or on the lanai, in the wee hours.

EVE

Enjoy a glass of wine and the night air, the stillness, the
stars. Bathe in the light of the moon.

BETTY

Could we actually do that? Take it out on the lanai?

LLOYD

Of course you could. Just keep the lights off.

BETTY

Nudists, oh my -

EVE

If you want the kids to give you some space in your lives,
this is a sure-fire way to do it.

BETTY

Jack? You aren't really thinking...? Jack?

JACK

That's it. We'll tell the kids we're nudists.

BETTY

Oh, Jack, I don't know.

JACK

I think it's a great idea, just bold enough to work. It
worked for- for -

LLOYD

The Nolans.

JACK

The Nolans, right!

BETTY

Do we know them?

EVE

Wonderful people; we'll introduce you.

JACK

And it worked for them? Same situation?

LLOYD

More or less -

JACK

And we won't be lying. Not really. After all, we're halfway there. We just won't tender a public offering.

LLOYD

Interesting way to put it.

BETTY

We won't have to expose ourselves in front of strangers?

EVE

Of course not. Not unless you want to.

(SOUND: BETTY's cell phone chimes.)

BETTY

Oh... It's Judith... Hello, dear. How is the show going? The house showing... Well, that's a good sign, isn't it? Yes. Oh, yes, I see. Oh, that's good to know.

(she holds the phone away from her face)

Evidently Lila has passed her crises. She's spending Saturday night with friends - a sleepover.

JACK

Let me have the phone.

(JACK takes the phone from BETTY)

Judy, listen, your mother and I would like you and J.D. and Terri to come over on Sunday. We have a surprise for you, and bring the grandkids. Don't worry, I'll call J.D. Yes, we'll make it early. Another house to show, I understand. Come over around one o'clock; you'll make the show, don't worry. Good.

(JACK hands the phone back to BETTY)

She had to end the call - business - she said to say goodbye. Well, we're all set for Sunday. I need to call J.D. and get his crew over here, but the die is cast. We've crossed the Rubicon. We've burned our bridges.

BETTY

I feel as if I just burned my bra.

JACK

We'll tell them on Sunday: we are nudists.

BETTY

I hope I can keep a straight face when you announce this bombshell.

JACK

When we announce it, dear. We are in this together.

BETTY

How did the Nolans get away with fibbing to their kids?

LLOYD

Oh, with them it was different. They became nudists.

EVE

You see, Lloyd and I invited them to a weekend camp.

LLOYD

Members are allowed to bring guests.

EVE

They were shy at first.

LLOYD

Newbies usually are.

EVE

But they got into the spirit of the camp in no time at all.

LLOYD

They decided it was the life they always wanted. They're members, now.

JACK

So, both of you are...?

EVE

Oh, my land, yes. We are.

LLOYD

Have been for years. Well, who's for Romero's?

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT I

Scene 2

AT RISE: It is around nine PM, the same day.
Beyond the glass doors the lanai is dark; the living room is lit with a few lamps: soft, indoor lighting.

(Enter JACK, stage right, dressed as in the previous scene. He carries a laptop, sets it up on the coffee table, sits in front of it on the sofa and boots it up.)

JACK

Damn thing takes forever getting up. Must be getting old. You have my sympathy, pal.

(JACK crosses to the hall, stage right, and exits.)

BETTY

(off)

The night air is lovely, dear. You should come outside. The moon is something to behold, it really is. I wish we had a telescope. I bet we could see our flag on the moon with a telescope. Then again, it would have to be very powerful, wouldn't it? The kind they have at observatories.

(Enter BETTY from the lanai. She wears a light robe, and stands in the doorway, a glass of wine in one hand and the bottle in the other.)

BETTY

Lloyd and Eve are right. Why shouldn't we enjoy a nightcap on the darkened lanai? On the darkened lanai... Sounds like the title of a foreign movie, set in an exotic locale.

(Enter JACK, in Bermuda shorts and a Hawaiian shirt, unbuttoned. He crosses to the sofa and sits before the laptop.)

BETTY

I'm not saying we should enjoy our nightcap... on the darkened lanai... in the nude. No-no-no... Light attire, easily jostled by the night breeze... or the overhead fan...

JACK

(working at the laptop)

Whatever you say, dear.

BETTY

Then again... Care for some wine?

JACK

(absorbed in the laptop)

Um-hmm.

BETTY

White or red?

JACK

Whatever you're having is fine with me.

BETTY

(crossing to the bar, down left)

I'm having red. It seems to go with the night: so rich, so dark, so promising.

JACK

That it does. Do you remember the name of the camp the Mortons mentioned at dinner?

BETTY

(pouring a glass of wine
from the bottle she carries)

They really are nudists. Imagine that. I never would have guessed. Would you have guessed, dear?

JACK

No. It just goes to show...

BETTY

(adjusting her robe)

Show what, dear?

JACK

People - you never can tell about people. What was the name of that camp?

BETTY

(crosses to JACK, sets down his glass)
Blissful something.

JACK

I don't think that was it.

BETTY

Restful. Restful Falls.

JACK

I'll try that.

BETTY

What are you doing?

JACK

Trying to find.. Nope, that's a retirement home.

BETTY

It was a lovely dinner, wasn't it? They were right about Romero's. What a lovely scene: dinner on the veranda. Too bad the sunset was behind the restaurant. Still, the ocean was lovely: so quiet, the waves gently lapping, gulls and pelicans gliding over the water and the sand..

JACK

Gentle Falls doesn't work either.

BETTY

... the gentle voices in quiet conversation..

JACK

No loud music, thank god..

BETTY

It was all so lovely and serene..

JACK

What? What did you say?

BETTY

It was all so lovely - and serene.

JACK

(typing into the laptop)

Serene! That's it: Serene Falls.

BETTY

(reading the screen)

Another rest home... gated community in Tampa... retirement... retirement...

JACK

Have some more wine, dear...

BETTY

I believe I will.

(crossing to bar)

It's such a lovely night; it is a shame to waste it searching the Internet. The breeze is cool, the scent of night-blooming jasmine... Won't you join me on the lanai?

JACK

Serene... Serenity! Falls! Ahh... Come back here and look at this.

BETTY

Must I?

JACK

I think you'd better look at this.

BETTY

(having poured another glass of wine,
She returns with the bottle)

Oh, well, if I must. What is it you want me to see?

JACK

Look for yourself.

BETTY

(standing behind the sofa)

Oh, my!

JACK

You bet.

(he drains his wine glass)

Serenity Falls Retreat and Naturist Center.

BETTY

We are not going to that nudist retreat.

JACK

I know -

BETTY

We are not joining any camp, colony or group with that dress code-or un-dress code -or - I mean - in plain sight of everyone!

JACK

I know.

BETTY

Then, why are you looking - Jack! You dirty, old man!

JACK

Now, Betty -

BETTY

Don't you "now Betty" me. If you want to look at pictures of naked women -

JACK

Nude, not naked.

BETTY

What's the difference?

JACK

Naked is kind of raw, sort of down and dirty. Nude is natural, the way nature intended us to be.

(pause)

Well, that's what it says here.

BETTY

You are looking at naked women.

JACK

The men are naked, too, in case you hadn't noticed.

BETTY

(coming around sofa, sitting)

No, I had not.

(She fills his glass.)

JACK

A few of them have some clothes on - not much, I admit - a towel, at least. They claim to be family friendly. Of course, they don't show the children.

BETTY

I should hope not! People bring their children? I don't believe it.

JACK

Family friendly: that's what they say. Children are only allowed on family days. For some families it's a way of life. But only adults are photographed, and only with their consent. They are very strict about the use of cameras.

BETTY

Why are we looking at this?

JACK

J.D. and Judith - and Terri, as well, not to mention the grandkids - they are all bound to ask questions. I thought we should do some research so we at least appear to know something about it - the subject. About nudism, dear.

BETTY

Why not just ask Lloyd and Eve to enlighten us?

JACK

As a matter of fact, I did. I asked Lloyd if it felt - you know - awkward at first, exposing yourself in front of strangers.

BETTY

When did you ask him? Certainly not at dinner.

JACK

Not at the table, no. When we were alone, in the men's room. I took him aside, and -
What does it matter when? I asked him.

BETTY

And...?

JACK

He asked me if I ever showered in front of other men. Of course I had, at the Y, in the army, you know... He said it's something like that, except -

BETTY

Except what?

JACK

Except for the presence of women. There are women around, as well as men.

(pause, both take a swig of wine)

It can be a problem for younger men, at first, but usually not for us old guys.

(pause, they both take another swig)

He said you have to keep a healthy attitude.

BETTY

I notice they carry towels.

JACK

They all carry towels. They never sit anywhere without a towel between ass and parking place.

BETTY

How very hygienic of them.

JACK

It's called The Rule of the Towel.

BETTY

Well, they certainly come in all ages, shapes - and sizes.

JACK

What does it matter? We won't be going to this place or any place like it. We just have to know what we're talking about.

BETTY

We could tell the kids we're just getting started.

JACK

Right, we haven't chosen a camp, yet. We may just want to practice at home, at any and all hours. So they can't just pop over any time they feel like it.

BETTY

That's good.

JACK

If they want to know what camp we're thinking about, I can always say Happy Falls.

BETTY

(rising, moving to the bar with the bottle)
Serenity Falls.

JACK

Right. Meanwhile, we will learn whatever we can about the natural life, back to nature, sun worshipping, whatever. Let's see what they say here...

BETTY

Always carry a towel.

JACK

Right. Here's some more pictures of the grounds, activities and... Uh-oh.

BETTY

What?

JACK

Oh.. nothing.

BETTY

I'll bet it's nothing. What is it?

JACK

Just some pictures of people - you know - playing volleyball - having a good time.

BETTY

(crossing back to sofa)

Let me see.

(she sits next to JACK)

Oh. My. God.

JACK

Well, Lloyd and Eve did admit to being nudists.

BETTY

They certainly are.

JACK

Serenity Falls. They both look serene to me.

(he closes the laptop)

We have a day to get our act together. We have to get used to the idea that we are, even if we aren't.

BETTY

We aren't?

JACK

No, dear we are. We have to make them believe we are.

BETTY

We are, but we aren't?

JACK

That's right.

BETTY

(after a pause, smiling)

I think we are.

JACK

We can still back out. That is, if you have any qualms...

BETTY

Qualms? No. In fact, I rather like the idea.

JACK

That's my girl. We'll go over everything tomorrow, and we'll be ready for all their questions come Sunday. Of course, we shouldn't tell them too much. There's a lot we don't know... We want to come off firm, but not foolish.

(During the above, BETTY picks up his glass, goes to the bar and picks up her glass and the bottle, and crosses up to the lanai doors. She turns to JACK.)

BETTY

Come along, dear. I want to show you something.

(BETTY walks onto the lanai and offstage, right.)

JACK

(speaking during his move upstage)

I know the moon is full tonight. It's what they call a hunter's moon: a bright, silver moon. I noticed it on the way home: a hunter's moon. Hunter's moon, harvest moon... Blue moon...

(singing)

Blue moon, you saw me standing alone...

JACK (cont.)

Where are you? I can't see you in the... Oh... Well...

(removing his shirt)

Looks like practice begins tonight.

(JACK exits right, on the lanai)

BETTY

(off)

Hello, handsome.

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT I

Scene 3

AT RISE: It is Sunday afternoon. BETTY, dressed in an attractive, above-the-knee caftan and wearing sandals, enters from the kitchen, left, with a pitcher of iced tea. She sets it on the bar, and arranges glasses.)

(Enter JACK from the hall, right. He wears Bermuda shorts and a different Hawaiian shirt than in the previous scene. He also wears sandals.)

BETTY

You look very sporty, dear, very Florida.

JACK

Well, we decided to dress casually for the big announcement - sort of like Lloyd and Eve - like we were, Friday night. Before we got more than casual.

(He gives her a lingering kiss.)

BETTY

Friday night was lovely.

JACK

You look pretty darn casual yourself. What are you wearing under this thing?

BETTY

(smiling)

This "thing" is a caftan - and you know very well what's under it.

(Exit BETTY to kitchen.)

JACK

Nothing like dressing down for the occasion. Well, we've got to convince them we're nudists; that we've just thrown on a few clothes for their sake. Maybe this will do the trick. I don't think they've ever seen us like this - not since they were kids, and we used to take them to the lake cottage. I miss that old cottage.

(Enter BETTY with a platter of fruit and a bundt cake.)

BETTY

Old it was, but we had good times there.

JACK

We sure did. Campfires on the beach, weenie roasts...

BETTY

Then, when we weren't looking, the children grew up.

JACK

What have you got there?

BETTY

A pitcher of iced tea, some fruit and a bundt cake.

JACK

What kind?

BETTY

Lemon iced.

JACK

Oooh, I like that.

(The DOORBELL rings.)

BETTY

So, it begins.

JACK

I'll get it. The door is unlocked, they could just -

(raising his voice)

Come on in, the door's unlocked!

(normal voice)

Most times they just barge in.

BETTY

We are trying to discourage that.

(Enter JUDITH, dressed for business, as usual.)

JUDITH

Hi, Mom.

(giving BETTY a kiss, turning to JACK)

Hi, Dad.

(She offers her hand. He ignores it and gives her a kiss on the cheek.)

JACK

Hi yourself. How's the real estate game?

JUDITH

I've got a house to show at three.

JACK

You'll get there.

BETTY

Is it a good prospect, dear?

JUDITH

They're all good until they walk. My, don't you look relaxed. Both of you.

JACK

Where is Lila? I thought she was coming over, too.

JUDITH

The sleepover has carried on into today. She and several friends went boating with an older brother of one of them. None of them made the cheerleading squad. They're consoling each other - and putting on a show for the boys, no doubt, to convince themselves they've still got it.

BETTY

Putting on a show?

JUDITH

Swimwear is next to nothing these days. They might as well go naked. May I have a drink?

BETTY

Of course! I made a pitcher of iced tea.

JUDITH

Great. I need to stay on top of my game. No alcohol.

(BETTY pours her a glass of tea.)

JACK

What's this about putting on a show for the boys?

JUDITH

Boys - on boats, in the water, on shore - Oh, you know how boys are! They can't get enough of the girls, and it's up to the girls to give the boys just enough to keep them on edge and eager. It's high school. High school is all about hormones. My god, you should know. I had boys sniffing after me constantly.

(taking a big drink of tea)

Now it's my daughter's turn, but the boys aren't sniffing. At least not the right boys; not the "cool" ones. This tea is really good, Mom.

BETTY

Green jasmine, with mint. I'm glad you approve.

JUDITH

I approve.

JACK

Were just waiting for your brother's tribe to arrive.

JUDITH

I hope it's soon, I have -

JACK

A house to show, I know. So, Lila's on a boat, enticing boys.

JUDITH

All under adult supervision. The girls need to feel good about themselves again, after being rejected by the cheerleaders.

JACK

Oh sure, who wouldn't?

(Enter J.D. and Terri)

J.D.

Hi Mom. Dad -

TERRI

The door was open so we just -

JACK

Come on in; open house. It's a friendly neighborhood.

J.D.

Dad, about that key -

JACK

I'm working on it. Where is Teddy?

J.D.

Soccer practice. His team is determined to win State. Practice, practice...

TERRI

Melody is at a pool party-sleep over. The children lead such busy, active lives.

J.D.

Where is Lila?

JUDITH

She's spending the afternoon on a boat with several friends - all girls, all cheerleader rejects. It's just as well she's occupied for the day. I have a house to show.

J.D.

Good luck.

TERRI

Is it that gorgeous two-story you showed us, the one on the river?

JUDITH

No.

TERRI

That was such a lovely house.

JUDITH

It still is - on the market, I mean.

TERRI

I'm surprised it hasn't been snapped up. Melody loved that house; just adored it.

J.D.

Too much house for us, of course.

JUDITH

Of course. Anyway, I'm showing a four-bedroom, three-bath ranch today -

TERRI

With a pool?

JUDITH

I rarely take on a house without one.

(JUDITH and TERRI exchange "smiles".)

JACK

Well, it's too bad the grandkids couldn't make it.

BETTY

Maybe it's just as well.

JACK

Yeah, you can explain it to them.

J.D.

Explain what?

BETTY

Have some iced tea, dear. It's Jasmine mint.

TERRI

Oooh! A bundt cake.

BETTY

Please, help yourself.

JUDITH

Why did you call us here today? You sounded urgent; is anything the matter?

JACK

Well... You see...

BETTY

J.D., Judith, help yourselves. There's a plate of fruit-

JUDITH

I'm good, Mom. What is it? You aren't ill, are you?

JACK

No, no, nothing like that.

BETTY

Our health is fine, dear.

JACK

Never better!

J.D.

(helping himself to cake)

Well, that's a relief.

JUDITH

I don't mean to rush you, Mom - Dad - but I do have -

BETTY

I know, dear. We'll get right to the point. Won't we, Jack?

JACK

You bet. Your mother and I are nudists.

BETTY

(after a pause)

Cake anyone? Judith? Terri?

J.D.

Wait a minute - say that again.

JACK

All right: your mother and I are nudists. I believe I'll have some cake.

JUDITH

Nudists. Since when?!

BETTY

Quite recently. Isn't that right, Jack?

JACK

Yes, quite recently. This cake is terrific. Oh, be sure to tell the grandchildren.

BETTY

Yes, they need to know as well. Fruit, anyone? More iced tea?

(Pause. J.D., TERRI and JUDITH put down their drinks and look at each other, then at JACK and BETTY.)

J.D.

You mean, you... What do you mean?

JUDITH

He means they take off their clothes and walk around naked. What do you think he means?

J.D.

Where? Here? In the house?

JACK

In the house, on the lanai, by-and-in the pool -

BETTY

Only when it's dark, because the neighbors can see into the pool, even though it's screened. We have to keep the lights off.

(TERRI laughs, and then stifles the laugh with some difficulty.)

J.D.

You can't be serious.

BETTY

But we are, dear. That's what we are: serious and nudists. I believe I'll have some wine.

JUDITH

Do you belong to a camp?

JACK

No, not yet.

JUDITH

Because I know about these camps.

J.D.

I'll bet you do.

JUDITH

They bring down property values, smart guy!
(to JACK)
What camp? Which one are you considering?

JACK

We're looking at a few... close by, you know...

JUDITH

Hah! Name one.

JACK

Serenity Falls, for one! We have friends there.

J.D.

You've actually visited this camp, this... whatever?

JACK

(looking at BETTY)

Yes, as a matter of fact. We have... looked into it.

JUDITH

So, in the meantime, you just walk around the house naked.

BETTY

Not naked, dear. Nude.

J.D.

What's the difference?

BETTY

Well, naked is raw, uncultured.

JACK

And rather dirty-minded, if I might add. Nude is natural...
it's back to nature, it's...

BETTY

Back to Eden.

JACK

That's it: back to Eden. I'm surprised at you, J.D.

J.D.

You're surprised at me? You are surprised at me?

JACK

Yes, I am. You and Judith both went to college here; you both settled here after college. I can't say I was surprised about that. You love Florida, both of you. Wouldn't dream of living anyplace else. You met Terri, started a family and built a fine practice; Judith has prospered as well. You convinced us to retire here! You've been here long enough to know that nudist camps and nudists aren't exactly new to Florida. We just joined the party, so to speak.

BETTY

The climate is perfect, you know? Year 'round camping -

JACK

But we haven't decided on a camp yet, so we practice at home.

BETTY

Practice makes perfect.

JUDITH

My god, what if the children should walk in and - and -

JACK

That's just it. You can't pop over any time you please. You have to call first -

JUDITH

To see if you are decent.

JACK

If you want to put it that way, yes. To see if we are decent. By golly, we have always been decent. We raised the two of you decently: you had a decent home, wore decent clothes and ate decent, healthy food. We provided you both with decent educations. You come from a long line of decent people, and we are still decent, fully clothed or buck-naked!

BETTY

Nude, dear.

JACK

Right! I need a real drink.

(TERRI stands up and walks over to them.)

TERRI

I think you are beautiful!

(she hugs JACK and BETTY)

What a wonderful adventure, and you've only just begun. So daring, so bold and brave - and at your age!

BETTY

Thank you, Terri.

TERRI

J.D. you should be happy Jack and Betty have found a new interest in life, something they can share and enjoy together.

J.D.

What's new about getting naked?

TERRI

Nude is not necessarily naked.

JUDITH

Oh, the hell it isn't.

TERRI

The difference is a state of mind, Judy, and we know what state yours is in.

JUDITH

Right now mine is in a state of disbelief. I'm going to look into this Serenity Garden or Valley-

BETTY

Serenity Falls -

.

JUDITH

How much do they charge you to parade "nude" in front of a bunch of leering, old men?

BETTY

They are very reasonable, and staring is considered bad manners, if that is what you mean by "leering." And the men aren't old - at least not all of them. Actually, some are quite young and buff.

JUDITH

Buff?!

BETTY

Well, they are! I've... looked into it.

JUDITH

Mother! Where did you learn a word like that?

JACK

Probably from me, I'm pretty buff, myself. I do twenty-five push-ups every morning, and the same number of sit-ups. I cut a pretty mean figure for my age. So does your mother.

BETTY

Thank you, dear, that was very sweet.

JACK

Well, it's true. Anyway, looks don't matter; nobody's looking. Or leering!

J.D.

(as though to leave)

Hah! This is too much for me.

JUDITH

Where do you think you're going?

J.D.

Home, to take a cold shower.

JUDITH

Not till we get some answers.

JACK

Now, just hold on. Your mother and I are of sound mind and body. We decided to do this, and it's a big step for us.

TERRI

It's an adventure, a kind of journey into self-discovery.

JACK

Yes, if you want to put it that way. It's like going over the falls in a barrel.

BETTY

Serenity Falls.

JACK

It's completely new and exciting. There is an element of danger, but it's the kind of danger that comes from experiencing something we never imagined for ourselves.

BETTY

That's lovely, and so true.

TERRI

Bravo!

J.D.

Don't encourage him.

JACK

The main thing is, your mother and I need time alone.

BETTY

To practice.

JACK

Yes, to practice.

JUDITH

Being...

JACK

Exactly.

(The DOORBELL rings.)

JACK

I'll get it, Betty. You feed the kids.

(Exit JACK.)

BETTY

Judith, you haven't touched the cake. Have some - you too, Terri.

JUDITH

All right.

(accepting a slice offered her)

I'd rather you "practiced" here at home than at this Serenity Falls.

TERRI

(accepting a slice of cake)

Then again, you could get arrested for indecent exposure. Oh, not in the house, of course, but if the neighbors saw you in the pool or on the lanai.

BETTY

We are very careful. We - expose ourselves - at night, with the yard lights off. During the day we practice in doors. And we only have to watch out for the neighbors to the north. Lloyd and Eve are to the south; they wouldn't care.

JUDITH

Oh, really?

TERRI

You just spread your wings, Betty. It wouldn't hurt us to spread our wings, too, J.D. Is Serenity Falls family friendly?

J.D.

I can't believe I'm hearing this.

(Enter JACK with LLOYD and EVE, who are very casually dressed - or underdressed: EVE in short-shorts, halter-top-T, straw hat, sunglasses and sandals; Lloyd in swimming trunks, an unbuttoned Hawaiian shirt, sunglasses and sandals.)

JACK

Look who just dropped by.

EVE

(singing)

Hello there!

LLOYD

We just got back from a night on the boat, anchored on the sand bar at Ocean Point. Lots of boats there, all sizes.

EVE

We had plenty of company and quite a night. Hello J.D., Terri. Hello Judy.

J.D.

Hello. We were just about to leave.

EVE

Awww, please don't go. It's so nice to see you.

LLOYD

We saw your cars parked in the driveway, and thought we'd drop in to say hello and cadge a drink.

JACK

Sure thing - what'll you have?

EVE

Whatever you're having is fine with us.

LLOYD

So? Have you told them the news?

JACK

What news?

EVE

You know...

BETTY

Oh. Yes.

J.D.

You know?

LLOYD

Know what? Ohhh! Yes, yes.

EVE

Isn't it grand?

JUDITH/TERRI

You know?

LLOYD

Well, what are friends for?

JACK

(handing drinks to LLOYD and EVE)

What, indeed?

JUDITH

I give up - what?

J.D.

Are we talking about the same thing?

EVE

I hope so.

LLOYD

I believe we are.

(looking at JACK and BETTY)

Aren't we?

JUDITH

Oh-my-god.

J.D.

Does a place called Serenity Falls ring a bell?

EVE

Ding!

LLOYD

(to JACK)

Looked into it, eh? It's a great retreat.

J.D.

I thought it was a camp?

LLOYD

Camp, retreat, resort, playground...

EVE

Do you like what you've seen of it?

BETTY

What we've seen of it...?

(nervous, laughing)

What's not to like?

EVE

I just knew you'd find it appealing.

TERRI

I'd like to know more about it.

J.D.

No, you wouldn't. We have to leave.

TERRI

I would definitely like to know more about it.

J.D.

Some other time.

TERRI

Betty, you must speak to my women's group. I'm sure they'd love to know more -

J.D.

Terri, we have to leave. Now.

JUDITH

Me, too. I have a house to show.

J.D.

At three. We know.

(to LLOYD and EVE)

Our mother and father have become nudists, so they say. Let me guess: you are nudists, too.

EVE

Why, yes, we are.

J.D.

Let's go, Terri.

TERRI

I'd really like to stay. What is wrong with you, J.D.? I have a lot of questions to ask. Aren't you the least bit interested in why your mother and father decided to make this wonderful change in their lives?

J.D.

Terri, we are leaving. It is time to go.

EVE

Please, don't leave - Judy -

JUDITH

(opens her cell phone to show time))

Another time -- sorry, house to show -

LLOYD

I thought we'd all get to know each other; just have a few drinks and hang out.

(J.D. looks at his parents, LLOYD and EVE as though they were creatures from another planet.)

J.D.

I was afraid of that.

(Exit J.D., TERRI - protesting - and JUDITH.)

LLOYD

(turning to the others)

I hope it wasn't anything I said?

(CURTAIN)

(END OF ACT)

ACT II

Scene 4

AT RISE: It is Monday evening, after the previous scene, around eight o'clock.

BETTY and EVE are at the bar; BETTY is pouring two glasses of white wine.

EVE

None for the boys?

BETTY

Wine? I think not. They are having whisky and cigars on the lanai.

EVE

I thought they were down by your boat.

BETTY

They were. Jack wanted to show Lloyd his new Garmin. It shows depth in glorious color, but not the speed.

EVE

I always say, depth is more important than speed.

(raising her glass, swirling the wine)

You don't want to be left high and dry.

BETTY

I told Jack we should have bought one of those pontoon boats. All we want to do is poke around and explore the canals, look at the houses, bird watch -

EVE

Spot the manatee, see the 'gator -

BETTY

Surprisingly small, aren't they - the alligators?

EVE

Yes, except when they're huge!

(They sip their wine.)

BETTY

Our speedometer doesn't work - on the boat - but Jack says it doesn't matter. He judges our speed by the tachometer; he reads the RPMs. We never go very fast, we just putter along.

EVE

(dreamily)

Mmm, I know what you mean.

(back to earth)

You seem to know a lot about boats.

BETTY

I'm learning. We have an 18-foot bow-rider with a clogged pitot tube. That's why the speedometer doesn't work.

EVE.

Ah, yes.

(They sip their wine.)

BETTY

I don't want to talk about the boat.

EVE

No. Not about the boat.

BETTY

I'm worried about the children, and the grandchildren.

EVE

I'm so relieved! I knew you had something on your mind. I thought it was sex.

BETTY

Eve!

EVE

But it's not; I'm so relieved! I always give bad advice. The best I can offer is, "work's for me!" Now, what about the children?

(EVE sips her wine. BETTY stares at her, and then takes a big gulp herself. She puts down her glass.)

BETTY

"Oh, what tangled webs we weave
When first we practice to deceive."

EVE

I know that poem! Edgar Allen Poe, right? I read it in high school; it's from "The Raven."

BETTY

No, it's... Yes, it's probably Poe.

(smiling, she pauses)

The point is, we might have been better off just telling the unvarnished truth.

EVE

And what is that?

BETTY

Simply, that we need time alone; that we don't want them just dropping in whenever they feel like it - when we're not expecting them.

EVE

Nothing wounds so deeply as the truth spoken with love - or out of love - something to do with love. St. Francis said that or words close to that. Catholic schoolgirl memories. I wore the plaid skirt.

BETTY

Yes, that I understand.

EVE

The plaid skirt?

BETTY

St. Francis. There was just no way to tell the children that we need breathing room. They would be so hurt. After all, they encouraged us to move here when we retired. Judith moved heaven and earth to find the right house for us, very close to J.D. and her. They helped us with the move, and Judith contacted our real estate agent in Illinois to make sure we got a good price on our home and a clean, swift closing. She really stayed on the case.

EVE

Interesting - this is your house, but you feel like home is back in Illinois.

BETTY

Oh, that's just a habit of speech, a reflex. After all, we lived there all our lives.

EVE

Sure, you still have friends and family there.

BETTY

Not family, they all passed away.

EVE

I'm sorry.

BETTY

As for friends, a few remain. We try to stay in touch, but many have moved on to be with their children in Arizona or Colorado or I don't know where - all points of the compass.

EVE

Give it time, Betty. You've only been here a few months.

BETTY

Time. I wonder how much of that is left.

EVE

Stop it! Don't go there! You have all the time in the world that's left to you. Every day is a blessing; enjoy what you have.

BETTY

You're right, of course, and I do. I just wish I didn't feel so guilty about fibbing to the children.

EVE

It's not a fib. Make up your mind to that. Have you been practicing?

BETTY

Yes, I have, I don't mind telling you.

EVE

Isn't it fun?

BETTY

I feel so naughty.

EVE

Hah!

BETTY

I mean - after all - at my age.

EVE

What's age got to do with it? You know, I use to be quite a dancer. I move slower, now, but I enjoy it more, if you get my drift.

(she cackles, takes a sip of wine)

This is good! What is it?

BETTY

Dry Riesling, Washington State.

EVE

Florida wines are terrible; you might as well drink pop. Lloyd says Florida is too warm and too wet to grow wine. Now, tell me: is Jack practicing with you?

BETTY

(smiling)

Of course.

EVE

Oh, good! You're on the same page.

BETTY

He might be a page or two ahead of me.

(both women laugh)

But, I don't think the children are taking this very well, and I have no idea how the grandchildren will react. I know J.D. is very uncomfortable with the whole idea. That really surprises me, he's so well educated. Terri seemed interested, though. Yes, I would say she is definitely interested. She wants to know more about it.

EVE

A bit too interested you think?

BETTY

I don't know. She appears restless, eager to spread her wings. She certainly encouraged me to spread mine! Perhaps she's bored.

EVE

Mmm hmm.

BETTY

Possibly it's because her children are growing up. I know how that is! Teddy is seventeen, a good student and quite the athlete. Melody is only eleven.

EVE

Just coming into the worrisome years.

BETTY

Yes, but it is Judith who concerns me most of all. She is quite successful, but driven. I think she works too hard. And her daughter - oh, that girl! Lila is fifteen years old and a real handful. She reminds me of Judith at her age. I use to count the gray hairs, and weep.

EVE

And Lila's father?

BETTY

Out of the picture since she was nine years old - no, eight years, going on nine. I get their birthdays mixed up.

(she sips her wine)

It was an acrimonious divorce.

EVE

They usually are. Alimony?

BETTY

Judith neither wanted nor received any. She didn't need it; she was the breadwinner.

EVE

Child support?

BETTY

She didn't need that, either - as if he could have provided even a pittance!

EVE

What she needs is a man in her life.

BETTY

She had one. Another like her ex- would finish her.

EVE

I mean a *good* man.

BETTY

They are few and far between.

EVE

I'm making her my project. I have a nose for good men.

(she sips her wine)

I have to say I envy you, having problems like that. Lloyd and I never had children.

We were always moving around, wherever I could find work in a chorus line - Vegas, Reno, Atlantic City, cruise ships. Lloyd would work at whatever he could find, a jack-of-all-trades. Mostly sales or steward jobs on the cruises, so we could be together.

BETTY

It must have been difficult.

EVE

You don't know the half of it! But we managed to stay together through it all. There were tough times, believe you me, and... Well... there were times I thought we might break up. I was a great looking gal, and there was a lot of pressure in my line of work, a lot of pressure to perform... on stage and off.

(BETTY takes EVE's hand.)

EVE

But Lloyd... he was always there. I hurt him pretty bad, but he was always there, you know?

BETTY

Yes, dear. I know.

EVE

Boy! They don't come any better than Lloyd! That's why, when we hit it big with the Power Ball, I told him, "It's all yours, Lloyd, you earned every bit of it." Guess what He says? He says, "We earned it, Babe, you and me. When we had nothing, we still had each other. Nothing's changed but the name of the tune." How about that guy, huh?

(she drains her wine)

EVE (cont.)

Maybe if we had settled down like regular people, we might have had a family, a little house in Jersey or somewhere - who knows? It just wasn't in the cards.

(Enter JACK and LLOYD from the lanai.)

LLOYD

So there I am with this god-awful ugly fish on the line. It doesn't even look like a fish! It looks like some monster out of a horror movie! I tell them, "Cut the line! Whatever it is, I don't want it!"

JACK

What did they do?

LLOYD

They cut the line! They didn't want it, either! But not before they got it close, so they could cut the line short, so they wouldn't leave a lot of line trailing. Give the fish a chance to live, you know? God, it was ugly.

JACK

Sounds like a sawfish. I understand they're pretty rare around here.

LLOYD

Rare, medium, well done: I wanted no part of that critter.

EVE

Have you been telling Jack your fish story?

LLOYD

Yeah, my one, big story! Cost a bundle, too!

EVE

I swear, never again!

LLOYD

You and me both, Babe! You and me both!

EVE

That's the way it is!

(FADEOUT as they laugh.)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT II

Scene 5

AT RISE: The same as the previous scene,
early afternoon on the following
Wednesday.

BETTY and TERRI are seated on the
sofa, drinking iced tea.

TERRI
Thank you for taking the time to see me.

BETTY
Now, Terri, I always have time for you.

TERRI
Well, I realize you and Jack need time alone to... you know...

BETTY
What, dear?

TERRI
To practice. You need time to practice.

BETTY
Oh, that.

TERRI
I was anxious about calling you so soon after your
announcement. After all, the last thing you want is
somebody intruding.

BETTY
You're not just somebody, you're my daughter-in-law, and
you're not intruding.

TERRI
Thank you. I can't help thinking... it must be awkward. I
mean, after all the years of being married...

BETTY
Awkward... yes, I suppose you could say that.

TERRI
How do you do it? I mean, where do you begin?

BETTY

Well... we begin in the morning. We get out of bed.

TERRI

With nothing on.

BETTY

Jack does his push-ups and sit-ups while I make coffee.

TERRI

With nothing on?

BETTY

Nothing on but the coffee.

TERRI

How do you manage the... embarrassment?

BETTY

Well... Jack and I have been married quite a while, as you know.

TERRI

But it's so bright in the morning. I don't look my best in the morning.

BETTY

I don't look my best in the morning, either. Neither does Jack; nobody looks his or her best in the morning. I suppose that's why people make coffee. Anyway, you look like yourself in the morning, and that's always the best.

TERRI

(rises and paces)

I wish I had your confidence.

BETTY

Teri, what's wrong?

TERRI

Oh, everything, just everything! J.D. is upset. He's worried about his practice.

BETTY

What about his practice?

TERRI

(whispering, furtive)

Where is Jack? Is Jack here?

BETTY

He's cooling off in the pool. It's too small to swim laps, so he just walks and stretches. Terri, stop your pacing, sit down and tell me what is wrong.

TERRI

(sitting next to BETTY)

J.D. is worried that his patients will find out that you and Jack are nudists.

BETTY

(after a pause)

I see. Does that matter?

TERRI

Very much, to hear J.D. rant about it. "My parents are nudists. What will my patients think?"

BETTY

I imagine they will think what they want to think.

TERRI

He's afraid his practice will suffer.

BETTY

And what do you think?

TERRI

I think he's full of shi--! I think he's sadly mistaken.

BETTY

I think so, too.

TERRI

This is Florida, for god's sake. Everyone here is a little odd. Look at your friends, Lloyd and Eve.

BETTY

We have. I mean, yes, they are a little odd, perhaps, but very happy.

TERRI

Anyone can see that. And so are you and Jack - happy, I mean.

BETTY

And a little odd?

TERRI

You and Jack are a wonder. So brave, so full of life.

BETTY

Terri, are you and J.D. having problems? Not just about Jack and me, but problems.

TERRI

(after a pause)

Do you and Jack always sleep in the nude?

BETTY

Yes, we have for some time. Lloyd says we're closet nudists.

TERRI

When did you start?

BETTY

Well... I suppose it was after J.D. and Judith were both off to college - certainly after they were out of the house and off on their own.

TERRI

Ted is seventeen - he'll be out of the house soon enough - but Melody is eleven!

BETTY

Maybe it was a little before Judith was out of the house. Girls understand the need for privacy more than boys.

TERRI

J.D. and I haven't been intimate for... My god, I've lost track!

BETTY

That long?

TERRI

Well... occasionally, we... and then it's so practical, so perfunctory.

BETTY

It's like that for all parents, dear. It was for us.

TERRI

(anguished)

Oh, Betty! The romance has gone out of our marriage!

BETTY

It will come back, dear. I promise you.

TERRI

J.D. only finds romance in his practice. He's a regular Rubinstein when it comes to oral and maxillofacial surgery.

BETTY

Dental implants?

TERRI

That, too.

BETTY

He shouldn't worry about his practice. Rubinsteins in any field are few and far between.

TERRI

Would you speak to my women's group? About the joys of naturism, the liberating experience of the clothing-optional life?

BETTY

I think Eve would be a better choice than I.

TERRI

I want you to speak to them. Eve is wonderful, but she does come off a bit...

BETTY

A bit, yes.

TERRI

And you are my mother-in-law, so there is a close connection - to the group, I mean. My group. I'll tell J.D. you're going to speak to them. Let it all hang out!

TERRI (cont.)

J.D. will just have to face the truth, and admit the truth isn't so bad after all. I'll bet half his patients are more than a little odd. I happen to know that one writes lurid, romance novels - those paperbacks with the come-hither covers and embossed titles. He goes by the *nom de plume* of Scarlet Colorado.

BETTY

How do you know that?

TERRI

I've read his books! J.D. saw me reading one, and said, "You'll never believe who actually writes those things." Ha-ha! He had a big laugh over that; couldn't wait to tell him I was a big fan. J.D. is doing extensive work on Scarlet's oral cavity. Scarlet Colorado! I felt so naïve, so betrayed!

(The DOORBELL rings.)

BETTY

(moving to answer the door)

No one has betrayed you, and you are not naïve. Let me get the -

(JUDITH storms into to room.)

BETTY

Judith, you are supposed to call before coming over!

JUDITH

I rang the bell, Mom!

BETTY

Yes, but -

JUDITH

I notice Terri's here.

TERRI

Hello, Judy. I did call first, before coming over.

JUDITH

Good girl, but this couldn't wait for proper channels, standard procedures - whatever you call 'em.

BETTY

Judith, I don't like your tone of voice.

JUDITH

Where is Dad?

BETTY

Judith!

JUDITH

Mother, please! I don't have time!

TERRI

She's showing a house at four.

JUDITH

Three-thirty, in fact! Some of us have actual work to do.

TERRI

I love you too, Judy.

JUDITH

Are you looking to get smacked?

TERRI

(rising)

Just you try!

BETTY

Stop it, both of you! I won't have any of that in my house!

JUDITH

(controlling herself)

Where is Dad? I want him to hear this, too.

BETTY

Hear what?

JUDITH

It's about his granddaughter.

(BETTY goes to the open doors of the lanai.)

BETTY

Jack! Jack! Would you come in, please?

JUDITH

I hope Nature Boy isn't putting on a show for the neighbors.

BETTY

I will not allow you to speak like that about your father. Shame on you!

JUDITH

Shame on me?! Oh, that is so totally off the mark -

TERRI

Care for some iced tea, Judy?

JUDITH

I could use a real drink.

TERRI

As bad as that - and with a house to show.

(Enter JACK, wearing a towel and sandals.)

JACK

Hello, Judy, Terry, I was having a swim. What a gorgeous day!

(mock serious)

I hope you observed our house rules before coming over.

TERRI

I did.

JUDITH

I did not.

JACK

Judy, Judy - what are we going to do with you? You are a naughty girl.

(JACK starts to remove his towel.)

JUDITH

Dad, stop! Don't you dare!

(JACK removes his towel. He is wearing floral-patterned swimming trunks.)

JACK

What the hell's the matter with you?

JUDITH

You're wearing a bathing suit!

JACK

Of course I am. We have neighbors.

(He uses the towel to dry his ears.)

JUDITH

You scared me. I was expecting -

JACK

Expecting what, a floorshow? Sorry to disappoint you. No, no, before we really go to town we have to plant some high foliage to hide the pool from the neighbors. We certainly don't want to embarrass the neighbors - at least not the ones to the north. The Mortons are to the south. There's no embarrassing them.

BETTY

We could always use their pool - until we get the shrubs and bushes -

JACK

Shrubs and bushes? That'll take forever. No, we need tall stuff right away -

JUDITH

Dad, please! We have to talk, and I haven't much time.

TERRI

She's, you know -

JACK

No kidding, another showing? And how was your hot date Saturday night? Not so good? Complete disaster?

JUDITH

It was a blind date, okay? Total wash out, are you happy? There are no available men my age - period! - just jerks and losers. I've decided to become a cougar and seduce college boys or find some rich, old guy looking for a combination trophy wife and nurse.

JACK

(taking her by the shoulders)

You'd make one hell of a trophy, kid. I mean that. Just keep the bar high, okay? Make sure the guy is worth the trouble. Not like the last one.

JUDITH

Dad! Lila is out of control. Ever since I told her about your conversion -

JACK

Conversion? Sounds religious.

JUDITH

Are you listening to me? Lila is out of control. She wants to become a nudist, too. She thinks it will help her image, help her make the cheerleading squad.

JACK

That's ridiculous.

JUDITH

Try telling her that! She claims she is practically a nudist anyway. That boat trip she took with her friends? All the girls went topless.

JACK/BETTY

What!

(TERRI stifles a laugh)

JUDITH

Oh, these girls! They all wear bikinis a size too small. One of them stripped off her top and dared the other three to join in the fun. They all did, including Lila.

JACK

I hope the adults put a stop to that.

JUDITH

Adults! The older brother of the family that owns the boat and his tramp girl friend - those were the adults - barely over twenty! The tramp girl friend joined in the fun, all the girls waving their tops like flags on the fourth of July! I dread to think what big brother waved.

BETTY

Lord's sakes, they could have been arrested.

JUDITH

Lila called it a "liberating experience." "I can see why Gramps and Granny are into it." She wants to go with you to your nudist camp.

JACK

Tell her we haven't decided on a camp - not yet, anyway.

JUDITH

Dad, this can't go on! She walks around the house bare-ass naked - what am I supposed to do, spank her, scream at her? She's as big as I am; she can scream as loud and probably hit back as hard and I don't want to go there! I try to ignore her, but she's making it very difficult.

BETTY

Judith, you have spoiled that child.

JUDITH

You're right; I have, yes! Without a man in the house, a father to lay down the law - She has resented me ever since the divorce.

TERRI

I have the same problem with Melody, and J.D. is no help at all! After we sat down with Mel and Ted, and explained the situation - your situation - Ted just said, "Is that all? Cool," and drove off to soccer practice. He thinks it's great! Melody went straight to her room, removed her clothes and told us she wants to live with her grandparents. Then she made a beeline for the pool. What a sight we made: Mel streaking, and me chasing her.

BETTY

Jack, this is serious.

JACK

Sure sounds like it.

TERRI

I told Mel she can parade around the house, with the blinds drawn, but she's not to go outdoors or embarrass her brother.

JUDITH

Nothing like taking a firm stand with an eleven-year-old child.

TERRI

I told J.D. she is just going through a stage. He gives her a week to go through it.

BETTY

Your father and I will speak to our grandchildren. We will explain to them that nudism is not exhibitionism; that there is a spiritual component to it that has nothing to do with exposing one's body merely because it is exciting or shocking or fun. Even if it is, to some extent - at first blush - so to speak... We will explain the bare truth to them, won't we, Jack.

JACK

Oh, sure, it's the least we can do.

(crossing to the bar)

I need a drink. Anyone else? Not you, Judy, you have a showing to show.

JUDITH

Yes, I'd better be on my way. I'm actually afraid to leave the house these days. I don't know what Lila will do next. She and her friends want to form a group, a clothing-optional group, very exclusive: no cheerleaders allowed. I told her, flat out, she is not to form or join any club outside of school-supported activities - and, above all, to keep her top on and her bottom up!

(The DOORBELL rings.)

JACK

Now what?

(Enter J.D. before JACK gets to the door.)

J.D.

I rang the bell, but the door was already open -

JACK

Unlocked, you mean.

J.D.

Same thing, almost. You might as well hold an open house. What about that key? I suppose I don't rate one now, since you've restricted our visiting privileges.

TERRI

J.D., what are you doing away from the office?

J.D.

My last appointment cancelled. Don't worry, he'll pay for that.

TERRI

I hope it was Scarlet Colorado.

J.D.

As a matter of fact, it was. What are you drinking, Dad? Having a nip?

JACK

I always have a "nip" this time of day to remind myself I'm not dead, yet. I'm just enjoying my Golden Years. Help yourself.

J.D.

A little early for me, but I don't mind if I do.

(as he mixes a gin and tonic)

I drove straight home when Harry Cross cancelled - that's Scarlet Colorado, Terri's favorite author.

BETTY

(to TERRI)

Is he any good?

TERRI

Mmm.

J.D.

He seems to know a lot about women. I wish he knew more about oral hygiene. Anyway, Terri wasn't home and the Jeep was gone. I figured she be here, with all the stress over the recent situation. I wanted to tell her - tell you all, in fact - that I've had a change of heart.

(takes a big slug of his drink)

Boy, that tastes good.

TERRI

A change of heart?

J.D.

I've got a whole, new perspective on this matter.

JACK

Conversion, situation, matter - what's left? Issue? Problem?

J.D.

No problem, Dad. I don't see the issue as a problem.

JACK

Issue and problem: check.

JUDITH

Why? Because you suddenly have a new perspective on dropping your drawers in public.

TERRI

Judith, will you stop it?

JUDITH

(mock shock)

Judith! She called me Judith! This must be serious.

TERRI

Aren't you running late? The showing?

JUDITH

I've got time.

BETTY

What about this new perspective, J.D.?

J.D.

Well, I got to thinking... Terri, you know Moira, my receptionist?

TERRI

(served cold)

Yes. I certainly do.

J.D.

Moira just happened to mention that she and her boyfriend are... well... nudists. Imagine that.

JUDITH

I'll bet you can.

J.D.

It seems that it is fairly common down here. People you would never suspect...

(he laughs)

Well, there you are! And not only Moira - and her boyfriend - but also my nurse, Allison, and her husband and two children! Have been for quite some time: nudists! Well...

(he laughs)

Small world, isn't it?

TERRI

Very small. How did they just "happen" to tell you this?

J.D.

Out of professional concern, Terri. I was obviously in a bad mood this week - distracted, upset - and they noticed.

(he finishes his drink)

Mind if I have another, Dad?

JACK

Looks like you could use it. Not too early, I hope?

J.D.

(refreshing his glass with tonic water)

I'll forgo the gin this round, and just whisper over the glass.

(He whispers "gin" over his glass and drinks.)

TERRI

Do continue.

J.D.

What? Oh, yes... where was I?

JUDITH

Something about professional concern.

J.D.

Well, so... I told them about my - our - little problem.

JACK

Problem.

J.D.

Little problem, Dad. I happened to mention it, and what do you know?

JUDITH

The problem is not a problem?

J.D.

Yes! No! Exactly! It really isn't a problem at all. It seems that Miles Kaufman and his wife are.. you know..

TERRI

Dr. Miles Kaufmann? The cardiothorasic surgeon?

(to JUDITH)

He's a heart doctor; we'll try to keep it simple for you.

J.D.

I spoke with him today. He and his wife have been nudists for years. They combine it with yoga to relieve stress.

TERRI

So, because your two office bimbos -

JACK

And one heart surgeon -

TERRI

I suppose now you want us to join a camp, just so you can ogle Moira and Allison and -

BETTY

Dr. Kaufmann.

TERRI

Oh! You make me so mad!

J.D.

What did I do? Moira? Allison? You can't be serious! And don't tell me you haven't taken a good, hard look at the shirtless studs our association hires to trim the hedges - and god knows what else!

JUDITH

Oooh! I'm moving where you live!

TERRI

(turning on JUDITH)

You! Why don't you go show a house!

JACK

That's enough! Everyone settle down. J.D., are you saying you're okay with your mother and me pursuing this?

J.D.

If Miles Kaufmann is okay with total exposure-yoga-sunbathing, that's good enough for me. He's tops in his field. Quite frankly, so am I.

TERRI

J.D., how would you feel if I told you that I wanted to join a nudist camp?

J.D.

Not without me, you don't. You're far too attractive to be on your own, even fully clothed, darling.

BETTY

Textiled.

(pause)

Textiled - it's a British term. The textile world is what we call normal - people who wear clothes. It's an old term. I found it online, at a naturist site.

(pause)

I would like a glass of wine, dear.

JACK

(going to the bar)

Isn't it amazing what you can find online?

BETTY

Now, don't worry, Judith. We will have a serious talk with Lila.

JUDITH

Soon, Mom.

BETTY

Yes, and with all the grandchildren. Bring them by tomorrow, after school, or Saturday, if you like. Although Ted seems to have taken the news quite well.

TERRI

All he thinks about is soccer.

J.D.

His team is set to win State.

BETTY

(taking the glass of wine)

Thank you, dear. Is that all Ted thinks about - no girlfriends?

J.D.

One girlfriend, also into soccer. She plays for the high school team.

TERRI

(a bit envious)

They shower together, Ted and that girl. I know it for a fact.

JUDITH (sarcastic)

Thank you for sharing that, Terri. Excuse me, I've got a house to show.

(Enter LLOYD and EVE, casually dressed, as usual, with an impossibly handsome man in his early forties.)

NICK TREADWAY is over six feet tall, lean and muscular: a Greek god come to life, a Hollywood Leading Man. He is dressed in a suit or sport coat, shirt and tie, dress shoes. A business man, he is tanned and exudes good health and clean living. His eyes and smile are warm and friendly. His bass-baritone voice is calm and reassuring.)

EVE

Hello, everyone!

LLOYD

Your door was open - well, unlocked anyway - Open house, eh?

JACK

Sure, why not?

EV E

Jack and Betty Baxter, we want you to meet our friend, Nick Treadway.

NICK

(offering his hand)

Hello. Lloyd and Eve speak of you often. I understand you recently moved here.

JACK

(shakes hands)

That we have, a few months ago. It's starting to feel like we've been here forever.

NICK

Helps to have friendly neighbors, doesn't it? Nice to meet you, Betty.

EVE

Nick, this is their son J.D. and his wife, Terri...

NICK

How do you do?

LLOYD

J.D. is a dentist.

J.D.

(shaking hands)

Oral surgeon.

NICK

Oh? I am impressed. Glad to meet you. And... Terri?

TERRI

Terri, yes. It's short for Teresa.

NICK

I thought so. Beautiful name; it suits you.

JACK

And this is our daughter, Judith.

NICK

So... Judith. I have heard a lot about you.

(JUDITH is awe-struck. That is the only word for it. She stares at him.)

JUDITH

(nervous laugh)

Oh, none of it true, I'm sure! Well, maybe some of it, depending... on what you've heard!

(laughing, then serious)

What have you heard?

NICK

That you are a very successful person: real estate agent, mother of a teen-age daughter and a remarkable woman. You found this house for your folks, didn't you? It's quite a find.

JUDITH

Well, that's what I do best. One of the things I do best. I do... lots of things. What do you do, Nick?

NICK

I operate Serenity Falls.

BETTY

Oh, my.

(JUDITH shakes loose her hair)

LLOYD

He not only operates it, he's the major shareholder.

EVE

Also the Health and Recreation Director, Membership Director - he screens all, new members for priors - he is a busy man, wears many hats!

JACK

At least he wears something - while on duty, I mean. Oh, never mind, I don't know what I mean.

TERRI

Serenity Falls? The nudist camp?

NICK

Retreat, actually. Serenity Falls Retreat and Naturist Center. It's a haven where our members and guests can retreat from the cares and pressures of the textile world.

BETTY

That's an old, British term: textile world.

NICK

Yes, it is, Betty: the world of class distinctions and status, where clothes make the man - and woman. At Serenity Falls our members can retreat from all that and get back to nature, if only for a week --

(turning to JUDITH) or even a weekend.

LLOYD

(to JACK and BETTY)

The Nolans recently joined. I told you about them.

EVE

There's a pool and a lake with canoes and rowboats, nature trails -

LLOYD

A restaurant and bar - and a special patio where a guy can light up a stogie and relax. .

NICK

It's basically a smoke-free environment, but a lot of the old guys just won't give up their cigars.

EVE

Oh, and there's tennis - and volleyball. I love volleyball.

NICK

Volleyball is very popular with the younger set, and the children.

TERRI

Children?

NICK

On family days. We are a family-friendly retreat.

JUDITH

So-o-o... you are a nudist?

NICK

(laughs)

Not at this moment. But, in the proper setting, yes I am. I just dropped by to see Lloyd and Eve on a business matter, and they suggested I come over and introduce myself.

TERRI

It's a pleasure to meet you. Isn't it J.D.?

J.D.

Yes, a pleasure. Do you by any chance know Dr. Miles Kaufmann?

NICK

I do! The Kaufmann's are long-time members. Tell me; is J.D. short for James Dean?

J.D.

(after a pause)

How did you know?

NICK

Lucky guess.

J.D.

It was my father's idea. He had an epiphany when I was born.

NICK

It happens to some people.

J.D.

Getting born?

NICK

Epiphanies. The name suits you. James Dean might have looked like you, had he lived to middle age.

(turning to JUDITH)

It is a pleasure to meet you, Judith. I'd like to discuss some real estate matters with you. Perhaps we could have dinner some time?

JUDITH

When?

NICK

Anytime. At your convenience.

JUDITH

Tonight is convenient. I mean, I have a house to show -

(checking her cell phone)

oh my god, in ten minutes! - I just have time to make it.

NICK

Six o'clock at Romero's. Do you know the place?

JUDITH

Yes!

NICK

I'll meet you there.

JUDITH

Yes! Oh, but my daughter...

NICK

Bring her along.

JUDITH

No! Well, maybe - I'm sorry; I've got to run.

NICK

Here is my card. If you can't make it, call me.

JUDITH

Oh, I can make it. I wouldn't miss the chance - to discuss real estate and - whatever! Six o'clock at Romero's. I'll be there. Bye-bye all! Wish me luck!

(Exit JUDITH.)

NICK

Extraordinary woman.

JACK

That she is.

TERRI

Someone should tell her it's not polite to stare.

J.D.

Hah!

NICK

I'll be on my way. I hope you folks will come out to visit Serenity Falls. Jack, you can come as you are.

JACK

I was enjoying a nice swim before the invasion. I'm sure bathing is common at your retreat.

NICK

Yes, but you will have to lose the trunks. Goodbye, for now. I'm glad we met.

(Exit NICK.)

TERRI

What a nice man.

J.D.

Hmmm!

TERRI

Do I detect a note of jealousy?

J.D.

I am an oral surgeon. I am jealous of no man.

BETTY

He is impressive.

EVE

Isn't he, though?

JACK

Lose the trunks, indeed!

LLOYD

Camp rules, Jack, at least in the pool area.

JACK

It's not a camp, it's a retreat, remember? I suppose there is a difference. Well, at my bivouac everyone wears a bathing suit in the "pool area" -- morning, noon and...

(pause)

Well, what comes off at night is not my concern.

(JACK and LLOYD have a big laugh.)

BETTY

Oh, you! You think you're so funny.

J.D.

If I can get in a serious note here... You won't have to talk to Mel and Ted. That's our job; we'll take care of it.

J.D. (cont.)

Ted is okay; he thinks you're pretty cool, and I guess you are, at that. We will get Mel to tone it down. It's just a stage after all.

BETTY

I hope Judith can do the same with Lila.

J.D.

We could ask Ted to speak to her. She's always had a crush on him. Remember that time - she was thirteen; he was fifteen --?

TERRI

I think we'll let Judith sort things out with Lila. Okay? Good-bye, Mom, good-bye Dad. Come along, dear.

J.D.

I guess we'll be going. So long, Lloyd, Eve.

(Goodbyes are said all around.)

TERRI

Here are the keys to the Jeep; give me the keys to the Jaguar.

J.D.

Why?

TERRI

(taking the keys)

Because I'm driving the Jag. I feel fast and loose today. Hurry home, dear.

(TERRI gives him a kiss and exits.)

J.D.

Fast and loose? Excuse me; I've got to - Excuse me! Goodbye!

(Exit J.D.)

JACK

Well, I hope that's that. Who knows what tomorrow will bring?

EVE

Sufficient unto the day, I always say.

LLOYD

Actually, we just popped over to cadge a drink and invite you to a casual supper. We're grillin' by the pool.

BETTY

That sounds lovely.

EVE

Very southern - Lloyd is grilling fish - what kind of fish, dear?

LLOYD

Shrimp: skewered, plank roasted and Cajon seasoned - a specialty of mine.

EVE

And I'll make collard greens and black-eyed peas - and buttermilk cornbread.

LLOYD

That's what I like about the South!

BETTY

Can we bring anything? Some wine?

LLOYD

Too high falutin.' We are talkin' a Bourbon and beer dinner.

EVE

Or iced tea, if you prefer. Lloyd? Remember?

LLOYD

That's her telling me I should ease up. We've looked into naturism - the naturist side of the life - but they're into vegetarian diets -

EVE

Or vegan, which is even stricter.

LLOYD

No alcohol or tobacco. Well, what can I say? I love a good cigar. And I do like to drink.

EVE

But we are cutting back.

LLOYD

You bet. First thing tomorrow.

BETTY

Lloyd - Eve - we appreciate all you've done for us.

JACK

The nudist ploy worked - better than expected - but when it comes to actually joining a camp or retreat -

BETTY

We don't know if we're ready for that - or if we ever will be.

LLOYD

Heck, I know that. Not to worry! Now, Terri and Judy are another story.

EVE

Oh, yes indeed. I can tell.

BETTY

You can?

LLOYD

She has a sixth sense for these things. If Judy clicks with Nick -

EVE

And I believe she will -

LLOYD

Then you can expect some big changes in her life. Same thing for Terri.

EVE

Oh my, yes. I don't know about J.D., though.

BETTY

Actually, J.D. has found a "new perspective," he says. You can credit Dr. and Mrs. Kaufman for that.

JACK

Not to mention Moira and Allison.

LLOYD

Amen, she always says. Well, you come on over. The Nolans are coming, too.

EVE

You haven't met them yet, a wonderful couple.

JACK

Looks like we're finally going to meet the Nolans.

BETTY

We'll be right over, as soon as we change.

EVE

Oh, there's no need for that. Just come as you are.

LLOYD

Sure, no need to change. Well, you might want to put on some clothes, Jack. No telling who might drop in.

(exit LLOYD and EVE)

BETTY

Jack, you don't have to change for me.

(exit BETTY)

(JACK folds the towel, places it on the chair)

JACK

Rule of the Towel

EXIT JACK

END OF PLAY