

**Our American Cousin**

Written and Directed by Elliot Guerra

Based on the play by Tom Taylor

Segments borrowed and rearranged from the play, *My Perfect Life* by Elliot Guerra and Peter Donahue

In 1865 John Wilkes Booth stole a great theatrical comedy from America.  
In 2018 the Academy of Our Lady of Mount Carmel is stealing it back.

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## Act 1 Scene 1

*Interior. A psychiatrist's office. Ed lies on a couch, a psychiatrist sits in a chair next to him and takes notes on a legal pad. A timer is on the table between them.*

Ed

No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no!

PSYCHIATRIST

Ed, relax I don't think you're handling this very optimistically.

ED

What do you mean? I'm a positive person!

PSYCHIATRIST

Really? When I asked you if you could think of any ways to change your predicament you just yelled "no" a dozen times.

ED

Look, I'm a positive person, if the glass is half full or half empty I say it is half full. It's full of poison but the glass is full.

PSYCHIATRIST

Let's start over. Maybe it'll help if you can reframe your situation

ED

What's to re-frame? My name is Edward Tretchard, I'm 54, I have four kids, a wife, I take care of my aging mother, I'm the CEO of one of the biggest banks in the country, one my father built from scratch! I'm a celebrated author and public intellectual in finance, my oldest daughter Florence is getting married but I lost all my money to a horrible investment! I'm strapped for cash, I don't know what to do, I have a son in Harvard... a reputation, what's my wife going to think?

PSYCHIATRIST

OK. And you've spoken to your financial advisors?

ED

Yes, the board said there is nothing we can do.

PSYCHIATRIST

So you'll have to downsize?

ED

No way! I can't do that— a man of my status? Where would I go the outer boroughs? New... New... I can't even say it? New Jersey.

PSYCHIATRIST

What's wrong with New Jersey? I'm from New Jersey.

ED

It's New Jersey! You can love it all you want, the space, the towns, the safe neighborhoods, but every morning when you wake up you're still in New Jersey. It's chilling to think about.

PSYCHIATRIST

You know Ed, I'm not saying life isn't hard or painful, but if you can change your arrogant world view, perhaps you can change your situation.

ED

What arrogant worldview?

PSYCHIATRIST

You think to seem you're always right?

ED

I am! Is that my fault?

PSYCHIATRIST

You think the world revolves around you?

ED

Of course not— just me and a few others.

PSYCHIATRIST

Let's try and look at this from a different perspective. Perhaps you feel like you're living a lie? Like all your success is hollow? Or perhaps given your situation you should take this time to realize what is truly important, not money or status but faith and family.

ED

Yeah whatever, I mean, what do you know? Come on Doc, I know we're both Ph.d's but you're not a real doctor unless you can save my life.

PSYCHIATRIST

I happen to have you know I got my degree from Rutgers University.

ED

Oh yeah the Harvard of New Brunswick, Rutgers! Please, they give those degrees out like free samples.

PSYCHIATRIST

Edward, there's no doubt you are brilliant and you've done a lot of good work but don't you worry that your pride can blind you to things in your own life? As they say, "pride comes before the fall."

ED

I'm not that arrogant. Well, I mean... it's not my fault I haven't made a mistake since 19... 85.

*A buzzer goes off.*

PSYCHIATRIST

Whatever. Our time is up.

ED

What do you mean our time is up? What am I a three-minute egg, your timer goes off and that's it.

PSYCHIATRIST

I'll see you next week.

ED

No, no. Come on, I know I can be a jerk sometimes.

PSYCHIATRIST

Sometimes?

ED

Ok all the time, but I'm stressed out, I need healing. Let's get to some more breakthroughs. Want to talk about my childhood?

PSYCHIATRIST

Next time Ed, good-bye, I have other clients.

ED

I'm crazy Doc, I'm telling you, I hear voices! I have night terrors. I see dead people!

PSYCHIATRIST

Good bye! *(The psychiatrist kicks Ed out.)* He's impossible.

*Blackout.*

## **Act 1, Scene 2**

*The lights come up on the finely decorated home of the Tretchard family. Ms. Anne, a maid, is cleaning while Louie, the family driver is sitting reading the paper.*

LOUIE

I'll tell you Ms. Anne, I don't know how you may feel but I think this is a family in a most uncomfortable position.

ANNE

Very uncomfortable.

LOUIE

I'm afraid Sir Edward is in a tough spot, look here; all these banks are in danger of collapsing! Three hundred lay offs already right on the cover of The New York Times.

ANNE

Yes, you know only this morning, Mr. Binny says he—

*Mr. Binny enters with mail.*

BINNY

Mind your own business instead of your betters please! I'm disgusted with you Ms. Anne, I know you have many other things to do than gossip and Mr. Louis, shouldn't you be in the garage minding to the automobiles?

LOUIE

Yeah, but last month's garage fees haven't been paid.

ANNE

And Miss Florence has not had any new dresses from London all winter.

BINNY

That'll do, that'll do. Remember to check your curiosity is the first duty of men and women in livery. Go to!

LOUIE

Yeah, but Mr. Binny this is our livelihood too!

ANNE

If the Tretchard family goes under, we all do!

BINNY

Enough. It is not our business. Ms. Anne set out the coffee and go to!

*Louie and Anne exit.*

BINNY

*(Opening the mail.)* More bills, of course. Oh dear, what are we to do. What's this? For Miss Florence Trenchard, via Mulberry, Tennessee?

*Enter Florence.*

FLORENCE

Good morning Mr. Binny. Any news from my fiancée Harry?

BINNY

No ma'am. I'm just going through the mail now.

FLORENCE

Have you ever been in love Mr. Binny?

BINNY

I love my day off ma'am. That is all.

FLORENCE

Still an old grouch, even after all these years! Well, I'm in love Mr. Binny with the wonderful Harry Mountchessington of the Navy! *(Looking at her engagement ring.)* I can't wait until our engagement party this weekend.

BINNY

Preparations are being made for what I'm sure will be a wonderful evening.

FLORENCE

Oh I hope so! The Montchessington family is the wealthiest family in New York and papa has never met them, but I'm sure it'll go great. I just wish Harry were here to help me with the planning; he's still out to sea until Friday.

BINNY

Absence makes the heart fonder madam.

FLORENCE

I suppose.

BINNY

This letter came for you. From a Mr. Asa Trenchard of Mulberry, Tennessee.

FLORENCE

Mulberry, Tennessee. Where's that, Mr. Binny?

BINNY

In Tennessee I'd imagine ma'am.

FLORENCE

Don't be fresh! Tell papa and all, that the mail has come; I'll be on the terrace.

BINNY

Very good ma'am.

*Florence exits.*

BINNY

Ah, look at these bills, blessed budget that descends upon Trenchard Manor, like rain on a duck pond.

*Binny exits. Claire enters wearing headphones and exercising in the apartment. After a few moments Ed walks in.*

ED

Honey I'm home. *(Claire ignores him as she's jogging around the apartment he is doing what she is doing.)* Hello?

CLAIRE

*(Yelling.)*

Oh good, Eddie you're home.

ED

You're yelling.

CLAIRE

What am I selling?

ED

No, you're yelling— your music.

CLAIRE

Well fine you can choose it but I think the theme of the dinner should be winter extravagance.

ED

*(Taking out her ear bud.)*

Can you please just stop for a second?

CLAIRE

I got to get my steps in!

ED

OK, but maybe for a second we can just talk about this dinner. Extravagance? It sounds expensive.

CLAIRE

*(She drops and does a "suicide" exercise.)*

Suicides!

ED

*(He copy her.)*

What?

CLAIRE

Star jumps!

ED

*(Following her lead.)*

Ow!

CLAIRE

Gotta run, I'm meeting our designer for decorations for the party. Don't worry I have your credit card.

*Claire jogs off.*

ED  
Wait my credit car—

*Just then we hear a toilet flush and Frank emerges from the bathroom wearing his pajamas, a robe and eating a sandwich.*

FRANK  
My man fifty grand, hey Eazy E!

ED  
Frank, what are you doing in my bathroom?

FRANK  
Using it, duh.

ED  
Don't you have your own bathroom?

FRANK  
Well yeah, but then I have to *clean* the bathroom, which I hate doing so I use yours.

*(He sits and makes himself comfortable.)*

ED  
I'm assuming that's my food you're eating too?

FRANK  
Well I don't know if it was yours E but it was in your fridge.

ED  
You know I don't mean to be rude but how is it that you can live in this building?

FRANK  
Easy peasy lemon squeezy. When I say rent, you say controlled! Rent, controlled!

ED  
And your rent controlled apartment across the hall doesn't have a fridge?

FRANK  
Yeah E, but then I have to fill my refrigerator with, you know, food. So its better the way I use it now. I unplugged it and laid it down, threw a mattress right on top, I use it as my bedspring.

ED  
You're insane.

FRANK  
Well I appreciate that Ed, you can accomplish things to if you put your mind to it.

ED  
Speaking of accomplishing things have you decide to look for a job?

FRANK  
*(Stares at him blankly.)* For what?

ED  
OK well Frank you gotta go.

FRANK  
I hear ya E, oh by the way, I borrowed one of your cars.

ED  
What? Which one?

FRANK  
I don't know the red one.

ED  
I don't own a red car.

FRANK  
Yeah, yeah I know that. Don't worry about it.

ED  
Frank did you steal someone's car?

FRANK  
Gotta go E!

ED  
Frank!

*Just then Tyler and Mark come running into the living room fighting each other. Knocking over Ed.*

MARK  
Give it back!

TYLER  
It's mine!

ED  
Mark! Tyler! Hey! Stop it!

*Sarah comes into the house with a protest sign.*

SARAH  
That is it! I can't believe they arrested me!

ED  
Seriously knock it off boys. Wait what, arrested? Sarah you were arrested?

SARAH  
Dad I told you, Sarah is my slave name, call me Peaceflower.

ED  
I think Sarah is a beautiful name, what's wrong with Sarah it was my grandmother's name. Wait, did you say you were arrested?

SARAH  
Uh, I wish. Just detained. We were trying to remove the Bull statute in Wall Street.



ED  
Hey that's public art, I thought you cared about art.

SARAH  
It's a symbol of capitalist greed.

ED  
Yeah OK, and you know, public art.

MARK  
*(Beating up his brother.)*  
Why you hitting yourself? Why you hitting yourself?

TYLER  
*(He breaks free of his brother and charges at him.)*  
That's it!

*Ed catches him.*

ED  
Listen, love rose.

SARAH  
Peaceflower!

ED  
What are you doing running around with those crazy people, think of our reputations.

SARAH  
So sorry to ruin your "reputation" but I was not asked to be born into this family of capitalist thieves.

ED  
Well these thieves pay for your school.

SARAH  
Well, I haven't gone in two weeks.

FLORENCE  
*(Coming in from the terrace.)*  
Our cousin Asa is coming to my engagement dinner!

ED  
You've been cutting sch— Who's Asa?

MARK  
I don't want to play PlayStation anymore anyway. Let's throw water balloons off the balcony.

FLORENCE  
Our cousin from Mulberry, Tennessee

ED  
Wha— where's that?

SARAH  
Probably in Tennessee.

ED  
Probably.

TYLER  
Let's fill the balloons with bleach!

MARK  
Great idea! Let's do it!

*Mark and Tyler run off.*

ED  
Stop! Mr. Binny!

BINNY  
Sir?

ED  
My sons are engaging in chemical warfare with Central Park West, my daughter is about to join the Symbionese Liberation Army and my wife is going to bankrupt me with buying party decorations, and I think I am an accessory in grand theft auto, please help.

BINNY  
Of course sir. Ms. Peaceflower to your room if you please. Boys! Oh sir, your business partner Mr. Richard Coyle and his associate, a Mr. Abel Murcott are here to see you.

ED  
Send them up.

BINNY  
Of course.

*Sarah and Mr. Binny exit.*

ED  
Ok, so who is this Asa?

FLORENCE  
Our cousin from Mulberry, Tennessee, look. (*Hands Ed the letter.*) I had Anne call around, he is your cousin, his father was your late uncle Mark Tretchard. Do you remember him?

ED  
Vaguely, maybe at a family wedding when we were kids.

ED  
Did he call?

FLORENCE  
No, he sent this letter he comes in later this afternoon.

ED  
It's strange.

FLORENCE  
It's old fashioned.

ED

He can be some crank! I'm sorry, but with everything going on we can't welcome someone new, even if they are related.

FLORENCE

Oh please Dad! Asa says that he's in New York on business anyway and how great would it be to introduce Harry's family to our cousin from the gentry south? Asa can help show off our storied family history.

ED

Absolutely not, we can't have a stranger at our family dinner.

FLORENCE

Fine. Maybe we can meet him?

ED

Yeah sure, have his carrier pigeon drop off a note on the balcony.

*Richard Coyle and Abel Murcott enter the apartment.*

COYLE

Sorry did we come at a bad time?

ED

Richard! Um, yes. It is always a bad time, but please come in. Richard you know my daughter Florence.

COYLE

Of course, charmed.

FLORENCE

Hello Mr. Coyle.

COYLE

Please, Richard. Allow me to introduce to you my associate Mr. A—

FLORENCE

Oh Hi Abel.

ABEL

Hi Florence.

COYLE

How do you two know each other?

FLORENCE

Abel was in a lot of my classes.

ABEL

We went to school together.

COYLE

What a small world.

ED

Yes, well, Florence, please excuse us.

FLORENCE  
Of course.

ABEL  
It was really nice to see you again Florence.

FLORENCE  
Likewise Abel.

COYLE  
OK, so let's get to business.

ED  
How bad is it?

ABEL  
Pretty bad. First quarter earnings are looking terrible, ever since that terrible investment it looks you'll have to sell the bank.

ED  
For what price? Even if I sell I'd still be finished, there's no way I can make money on a deal. What we need is someone to back us and get us above water.

COYLE  
Well have you thought about what I've offered Ed?

ED  
Yes Richard but I can't, I can't in good conscience let you buy me out.

*Abel looks suspiciously at Mr. Coyle.*

COYLE  
It would be great for all of us, isn't that right Abel.

ABEL  
I guess. Yeah.

*Mr. Binny enters.*

BINNY  
Sir Edward, your wife is on the phone sir, something about a snow machine.

ED  
Oh no! Excuse me guys, I have to take this.

*Ed and Binny leave the room leaving Mr. Coyle and Abel alone.*

ABEL  
I don't like this Mr. Coyle.

COYLE  
Oh shut it Abel! Thanks to your wonder math he'll never know that he never made a bad investment and it was me that stole the money. He'll have to sell the company to me, I'll fire him and all this can be mine.

ABEL  
Sir, the Tretchard's are a good family.

COYLE

Oh please! Good? Edward Tretchard is one of the most arrogant people I've ever met! We came up together and he always had to best me and let everyone know how smart he was! You agree of course, don't you Abel, or do I need to remind you that I still own the deed to your mother's house!

ABEL

No you don't sir.

COYLE

I didn't think so. It would be terrible if I had to kick her into the cold streets!

ED

Sorry about that guys, Florence is getting engaged and we're having a big party this weekend. My wife is going well...

ABEL

Florence is getting engaged?

ED

Yeah, maybe we can get you an invite to the party, seeing that you're old college friends.

COYLE

Well. OK, back to business, there is one small issue. According to board rules and company policy you have a... well a cousin it looks like, a Mr. now, how do you pronounce this, Asa Tretchard, that owns shares in the company—

ED

Who did you say?

ABEL

Ed, apparently years ago when your father started the bank he gave some shares to his brother, when your uncle died he left his shares and considerable wealth to his son Asa.

COYLE

So it looks like this cousin of yours can decide whether to help riase the company out of the sink hole or can sell his shares to me.

ED

He's some hillbilly?

ABEL

He may be a hillbilly but he is very wealthy. His money is in oil, in fracking he's made a fortune. Worth nearly a billion dollars.

ED

Louie!

*Louie enters.*

LOUIE

Yes sir?

ED

Go pick up a gentleman by the name of – what's his name again?

FLORENCE

Asa!

ED

Asa Tretchard from the airport.

LOUIE

Where's he coming in from?

ED

Uh, Alabama-Georgia-Tenne- I don't know America, he's our American cousin.

LOUIE

Uh OK.

*Louie exits.*

ED

Leave it to me boys, I know my cousin, Asa, we go way back! Raised like brothers.

COYLE

Are you sure? I've never heard—

ED

Oh sure. We're very close he's coming to the party. I'll make sure to get invites for you guys. I'm gonna have to excuse me.

COYLE

This is serious Ed, perhaps we can meet—

ED

No, no. Family business. I'll call you guys soon!

COYLE

I don't mean to be forward Ed but I want this company and I'm going to have Asa sell me those—

ED

Take care!

*ED escorts them out. ED exits. Anne enters with a Window washer.*

ANNE

Ok, so we have a big event here this weekend and we would like the windows cleaned and sealed. Everything has to be perfect!

WINDOW WASHER

No problem ma'am, not please stand back this adhesive is very sticky! It seals everything shut.

ANNE

OK, I'll leave you to it.

*The window washer gets stuck in buckets of his own equipment and his mouth gets sealed. Coyle and Abel re-enter. The Window Washer hears the whole thing.*

COYLE

I forgot my phone. Here it is! This family doesn't know what it is about to hit them. The days of Edward Tretchard and his arrogant ways are over!

*Coyle exits. Abel looks sad and walks out with him. Ned enters with his grandmother in a wheelchair. The window washer tries to speak but can't he hears a commotion and exits.*

NED

Ok grandma here we go.

GRANDMA

Thank you darling, please make sure the butler tips you.

NED

You don't have to tip me, I'm Ned, your grandson. I came from school to pick you up; we're here for Florence's engagement party this weekend.

GRANDMA

Yes, of course, of course, what time is high tea I should put on my gloves and things before.

NED

Whatever grandma.

*Florence enters.*

FLORENCE

Ned! You're back! Hi Grandma.

GRANDMA

Ah! Who is this dreadful wench? Ned, please tell the butler that this servant girl's haircut wants cutting.

FLORENCE

I'm not a servant girl grandma, I'm your granddaughter.

GRANDMA

Away!

ED enters.

ED

Ned! Welcome back, hi mom.

GRANDMA

Charmed. Charmed. Be a prince child and fetch me my gloves.

ED

Right. Why is she speaking in an English accent?

NED

I don't know it's grandma.

*Claire enters with bags.*

CLAIRE

Anne! Anne! (*Anne enters.*) Please help me with these bags. Ned you're back!

*The boys coming running in chasing each other.*

MARK  
Gifts!

TYLER  
*(Going through the bags.)*  
Did you get us stuff?

MARK  
What did you get us!

CLAIRE  
It's not for you two, stay out of there!

MARK  
There isn't one thing in here for me!

CLAIRE  
Boys stop it. Sarah!

ED  
Guys knock it off!

SARAH  
It's not Sarah, my name is Peaceflower!

CLAIRE  
Will you please help me this afternoon with decorating?

SARAH  
I will not defy my hands by helping you with all that, the things you own, own you.

ED  
Hey Karl Marx, don't be disrespectful.

SARAH  
Whatever. I'm going to a protest.

*Sarah exits.*

ED  
I don't understand her, did she make her clothes? Her phone?

*Grandma begins to sing a patriotic English song. Sarah enters. Mr. Binny enters.*

BINNY  
Sir, a Mr. Asa Tretchard to see you.

ED  
Mom please! Really? Oh ok, um... ok, listen everyone, um, ok, our cousin from Mul-something Tennessee is here to visit, it is very important that we greet him and be respectful and well, yeah. OK send him up.

BINNY  
Of course.

CLAIRE



You didn't tell me we were having company over! Nothing is ready. I'm not dressed.

ED

He's from Tennessee we'll be lucky if he's wearing shoes. Boys! Sit up, tuck your shirts in. Mom, try not to be so, well you know, like my mother.

LOUIE enters.

ED

Louis where is he? Did you pick him up?

LOUIS

Um... yeah.

ED

And?

LOUIS

He's on his way up. He insisted to carry his own bag.

NED

Ok, what's the problem?

LOUIS

Um... nothing sir. Here he comes?

*Asa walks in. Louis exits.*

ASA

Howdy y'all!

TYLER

You're our cousin? Hahahahahaahahaha! Hahahahahahahaha!

ASA

Why thank you.

CLAIRE

Tyler! Excuse me Mr. Tretchard.

ASA

Mr. Tretchard is my father's name! Call me Asa! (*Gives Claire a big hug.*) Hiya Ned! You must be the big man on campus? How are you?

NED

Good to meet you sir.

ED

*(Aside to Claire.)*

See this isn't so bad.

CLAIRE

I don't know. The only guy in a red hat I trust is Santa Claus.

ASA

Madam, I am Asa Tretchard I'm your grandson! Do you remember me?

GRANDMA

Once more unto the breach dear friends! Let us fill the breach with our English dead!

ED

Um, Ned.

NED

Yeah.

ASA

I like her, she's feisty and apparently speaks with an English accent, that's nice too. Florence, you must be the lady of the hour. Men and women falling into young love, well that's as old as the hills, I reckon you're excited.

FLORENCE

I am, it's nice to meet you Asa.

ASA

You wild horses must be Tyler and Mark! I got you guys these! *(Reveals his present.)*

TYLER

Machetes!

MARK

Sick!

FLORENCE

How'd you get those on a plane?

ED

You know what Asa, maybe we'll just put their gifts away for now.

ASA

Well OK. You boys enjoy those hunting knives. Papi gave me my first knife when I was seven.

*The boys go running off.*

MARK

Let's go chop down trees!

TYLER

Nice!

ED

Mr Binny! Please unarm my sons—weird that's the second time I've had to say that today. Ha, kids. So, Asa.

ASA

Woo wee! My dogs are barking! Mind if I sit?

FLORENCE

Of course, Anne! Drinks for Mr. Tretchard.

Sarah enters.

SARAH

Ugh. The protest isn't until tonight.

ASA

Why hi there little lady, ain't you pretty as a peach. You must be Sarah.

SARAH

You must be our Neanderthal cousin from some flyover red state.

CLAIRE

Sarah! Forgive him Asa.

SARAH

Sarah is my slave name. My name is Peaceflower.

TYLER

Ha!

MARK

Our sister is a hipster.

CLAIRE

Your name is Sarah!

ED

Don't be difficult honey just be polite.

ASA

Well, pleasure to meet your acquaintance Peaceflower. I'm Asa your cousin.

SARAH

Thank you for calling me by my name.

TYLER

Why are you dressed like an extra on Thomas the Tank Engine?

CLAIRE

That is enough! You're grounded!

TYLER

It was just a question.

ASA

Oh that's OK Claire! I always heard you New Yorkers pack more punch than Carter's got little pills! Its OK, I had a tough mama too kids. We'd be out by the mud hole all day long and mama would holler until the cows came home and she'd be madder than a wet hen when we come back all filthy, but when she see what we bring her home, she'd be ok. Mama was spunky too though, I betcha if she had her duffers she'd be out there with us shootin' them deer.

SARAH

You shoot and eat deer?

ASA

Well sure.

NED

I didn't even know deer were edible. Isn't that like eating a possum?

ASA

Why, I eat them critters too!

SARAH

I'm going to be sick.

ASA

Sick of what?

FLORENCE

Sarah is a vegetarian.

ASA

Oh well me too. Except I also eat meat.

SARAH

Excuse me.

SARAH exits.

ED

Say Asa! I was wondering maybe you could tell us some of the things you are looking forward to doing while in New York.

ASA

Well I know you 'all knowledge types so I don't want to lower yawl standards. Doing all the touristy stuff.

ED

No, no of course, whatever you want to do is fine with us.

ASA

No, no I studied up; I watched a lot of Big Bang Theory and Young Shelton so whatever cultural attractions you have to offer I'm

CLAIRE

Maybe we'll see a Broadway play.

ASA

I heard Hamilton is good we can just walk in no problem I'm sure.

ED

Maybe just Times Square.

ASA

Yeah, you can learn a lot from them shows, like Law and Order: SUV, I know New York is dangerous but that's why I have ol' Bessie here.

ASA reveals a small pistol. The family freaks out.

ED

Woah!

TYLER

Cool.

CLAIRE

Um, Asa, cousin Asa.

MARK

We don't really believe in the second amendment in this part of the world.

ASA

Y'all don't? Isn't it just something that is, you don't have to believe in it.

ED

I guess that's how all of life works I suppose.

ASA

But what about protection?

ED

I wouldn't worry about it, the last time someone was mugged Dewitt Clinton was the governor.

ASA

Now, bengazi that's...

CLAIRE

Pizza! How about we all go out and get some pizza? That sounds like fun right? Authentic New York pizza.

ASA

Wow Clair that does sound like fun. I'm fixin' for some supper myself. Hey y'all heard of Dominoes, my friend Earl says I gotta try it, authentic pizza it's gonna be my treat!

CLAIRE

No, no it is quite alright.

ED

Kids, get your coats. We're going out.

ASA

No, no, don't be silly, with all of Ed's money troubles. I'd be my privilege.

CLAIRE

Excuse me?

*Blackout.*

## **Act 2, Scene 1**

Lights come up on the Montchessington House. Mrs. Montchessington is sitting in the parlor watching TV with a remote. Her uncle, Lord Dundreary is reading the paper. Augusta and Georgina are taking selfies and are on their phones. Nick the butler arrives crying in tears reading a paper.

Nick

"Rose are red. Violets are blue. I can't be with you, so I'm crying boo hoo, hoo." No that doesn't work, "Roses are red, violets are blue you broke my heart and turned it into stew?" No.

Georgia  
Ill. Like what are you even doing?

Augusta  
Nick changed his relationship status. Duh.

Georgia  
Whatever.

Nick  
I can't believe she left me.

Mrs. Montchessington  
Please quiet down Mr. Adams I'm watching my stories.

Dundreary  
Now, now, now good chap. Chin up, chin up! These things are the very stuff of life, the milieu of modern existential existence.

Mrs. Montchessington  
My dear Mr. Adams what is the matter?

Augusta  
Our butler Mr. Adams broke up with his girlfriend.

Georgia  
It's like forever old news. Next!

Nick  
I'll never love again!

Mrs. Montchessington  
Well, move on! There's work to be done in this house! How long were you and the madam seeing each other?

Nick  
Three days.

Mrs. Montchessington  
Oh please. Let me finish my real housewives of new jersey and then there's real work to do.

Nick  
Oh why did the good Lord give me such a perfectly handsome body and a vulnerable heart!

Augusta  
Ill.

Georgia  
Whatever.

Dundreary  
Oh perhaps this can be remedied, the soaring spirt of young love is often tumultuous. Children can be impetuous.

Nick  
She wrote a letter.

Dundreary

Oh what is the matter let me see here, let me see here. (*opens a letter*) Dearest Nicholas, That's you. It's over. I don't love you. I never loved you. Instead of Nicholas I shall call you Malcolm. Why Malcolm?

Nick

Keep reading.

Dundreary

Because you're my ex.

Augusta

Who's that?

Dundreary

That is bad.

Harry enters the room on the phone.

Harry

No, I love you more. No, I love you more. OK I just got home I gotta go, you hang up first, no you hang up first. (He hangs up.) Family, I just want to say it is so good to be in love!

Nick (Cries)

Why?

Mrs. Montchessington

Mr. Adams when you get a minute can you re-freshen my tea.

Georgia

Yas, I also need some too.

Nick

Get it yourselves.

Nick exits all mopey.

Georgia

Ill.

Augusta

Whatever.

Harry

Hello? Earth to family? Isn't anyone getting ready? We have my engagement party tonight!

Dundreary

Bully for you Harry. A lieutenant in the navy and now engaged. I'm sure the youth is seismically silly about it, I am of course a youth from yesteryear, so I must be an observer of young love, but as has been said by kings and queens I am not a lesser observer. You're betrothed awaits your presence but ah, absence makes the heart grow fonder.

Harry

Did you just say Absinthe?

Dundreary

Absence, absence. Absence. What?

Harry

Lord Dundreary, you're my great uncle, I love you, but I have no idea what you're saying.

Dundrary

Am I not being super significantly saliently clear? It's absolutely preposterous to think I have a speech impediment.

Mrs. Montchessington

Can you please all be quiet! I'm watching my show.

Georgia

Uh, we are quiet.

Georgia

Yeah, ill.

Augusta

Whatever.

Mrs. Mountchessington

Uncle Dundreary, remember your vocal exercises. Diction is done with the tip of the tongue and the teeth!

Dundreary

Diction is done with the tip of the tongue and the teeth.

Harry

Listen everyone, the car is going to pick us up at 6 for dinner at Florence's house, I don't want to be late so start getting ready soon.

Mrs. Mountchessington

After Keeping Up with the Kardashians!

Georgia

Why do we have to go to this party anyway I hear, Florence's family is like super poor.

Augusta

Ill.

Harry

No, no that's just rumors. Mr. Tretchard is very successful.

Dundreary

Yes! I remember I did read something in the Sunday Style Section of the Times!

Mrs. Mountchessington

You know I don't read newspapers!

Georgia

Ill they better not be boring.

Augusta

Yeah.

Harry



Look, I promise you all that tonight's dinner is going to be a perfect evening.

Mrs. Mountchessington

Well, I hope so, we are the wealthiest family in New York! And frankly son, if this family isn't up to snuff I'm not going to give her my blessings and you're not going to be supported like you've...

Harry

Mom. Just give the family a chance.

Mrs. Mountchessington

Fine, my dear, we'll go and support you, but I'm bringing Mr. Adams, who knows what kind of servants they hire.

Harry

Mom.

Mrs. Mountchessington

What? Fine. Only for you son, girls! Let us get ready for the party!

Augusta

Ill.

Georgia

Whatever.

*Blackout.*

## **Act 2, Scene 2**

Anne and Louie are in the apartment of the Tretchard family. Anne is cleaning. Louie is sitting reading the paper.

Louie

You think that Florence will be able to get married now?

Anne

Oh I hope so, I'd hate to see young love spoiled over something as silly as money! You know I've always dreamed of falling in love and getting married one day. Oh well, just a dream I suppose.

Louie

What do you think of our American cousin?

Anne

Ugh. Gruff to say the least. I asked if he needed any clothes cleaned and pressed and he said "no ma'am" and then I noticed he washed his clothes by hand and then hung them out on the balcony to dry!

Louie

Wow, it really is like we live in two different countries isn't it? Well, tonight's the big party; the Tretchard's and the Montchessington's will finally meet!

Anne

I know it is Louie, I can't help but notice you're not exactly helping set up.

Louie

The times isn't going to read itself.

Mr. Binney enters. They both stand at attention.

Binney  
Now this is once again, most out of order! Servants lounging about.

Anne  
With all due respect Mr. Binney I was cleaning.

Binney  
Yes, Anne I see and being distracted as well! Louie, go down and prepare the garage for our guests, would you please?

Louie  
Alright, alright, breaks over. I'll see you all later, looking forward to the fireworks tonight!

Binney  
That is enough Louie.

*Louie exits.*

Anne  
Oh Mr. Binney I feel so terrible for this family you think our American cousin can help?

Ed and Claire enter the apartment.

Claire  
Ed, I can't believe you didn't tell me! We are near financial ruin? Our daughter is getting married!

Ed  
I know, I know, Claire, it just doesn't make sense to me though; I keep going over and over it in my head. I thought it was a bad investment but now the numbers aren't making sense!

Claire  
You are telling me the only reason you invited Asa here is to get you out of ruin! He is our cousin, he is sweet and generous

Ed  
He's a moron!

Claire  
He is colorful. And you're using him! I can't even with you sometimes Ed!

Binney  
Miss Anne, let us go somewhere that is not here.

Anne and Binney exit.

Ed  
I don't know what to do! I have to convince Asa to buy the company before Mr. Coyle convinces him.

Claire  
Well that's Asa's decision. And if he wants to take your side it'll because he chooses to, not because you fake flatter him! And if we need to downsize that is OK. As long as we have family nothing else matters.

*Frank enters.*

Frank  
Don't mind me, just need some mayonnaise to go with my sandwich.

Frank goes to the fridge.

Claire  
Ok. Ok. Let's just get through tonight. Meet the Mountchessington Family, who I'm sure are lovely people and we can speak to Asa tomorrow, you're going to tell him the truth, not accept a buyout on false terms and we will live more simply but happily.

Ed  
You're right. I'm sorry. I let my ego get in the way.

Claire  
Frank, I thought you were making a sandwich? Why are you eating mayonnaise out of the jar?

Frank  
I said, it goes *with* my sandwich, I ate that already. I get it you need space.

Ed  
Harry is that my robe?

Frank  
Yes. If you need to borrow it let me know. See you tonight!

*Frank exits.*

Claire  
Did you invite him in?

Ed  
No.

Claire  
Let's go get ready.

Claire and Ed exit. A few minutes later. The Window Washer exits the bathroom, freed from his mishap. He scares at the sound of people entering.

Liddy  
Hello! Hello! Charmed. I'm Liddy Maxwell, owner of Poppy, Petals and Flower Patch.

Binney  
Welcome, you must be the caterers for tonight's party.

Liddy  
Of course, charmed, charmed. Oh! Look at this space! Look this place its very English townhouse meets Victorian homeless shelter with a Dickensian feel.

Binney  
I'm not sure what that means ma'am but I leave you to it. Mrs. Tretchard has left the decorations for you.

Binney Exits.

Liddy

Girls! Get to work, we have four hours before the best engagement party ever, spoil alert, I even called page six of the post to come and take photos!

Susan / Erin  
Yes Miss Maxwell.

Liddy  
Phone call. Yes Mr. Mayor? Of course your wedding is going to be amazing! Just wait until you see the spread I'm doing over here at the Tretchard / Mountchessington, you'll just die. Uh, what are you doing hanging around? Get to work! Sorry Mr. Mayor, its so hard to find good help these days. So yes, I think your wedding is going to be fantastic, well, fifth times the charm!

Susan  
I can't wait until the day we get to start our own catering company and stop working for her.

Erin  
Absolutely! She's so mean! But where can we find the money to start our own business?

Susan  
Well, if we keep saving up and working these jobs.

Erin  
I suppose.

Liddy  
Actually Mr. Mayor, I'm so excited about this party why don't you come over tonight to see it! Two of New York's wealthiest families uniting! It's quite the new york story. Great! I'll see you tonight then. Don't drop that! That's five thousand dollars worth of organic grass fed beef! Without it our guests will starve! OK, you girls got this, chop, chop, make it spectacular.

Liddy exits.

Erin  
Look at this place!

Susan  
Must be nice to live here.

Erin  
How much do you think this place costs?

Susan  
If you have to ask, right?

Erin  
Only in America.

Susan  
Well I think one day we will have it all! We'll have our own business. If we work hard and do our best we can succeed too! Right?

Erin  
Only in America.

Susan  
Well we'll need help too, hire workers, we can't get started without them either.

Erin

You're right we just need a couple of more people and we can get it going.

The Window washer tries to flee but hears people coming turns off the lights and hides.

Asa (*in darkness*)

Ok, be careful now! Woah, this fella is big!

Bear sounds.

Sarah (I.D.)

Just lead him into the bathroom. Tomorrow we can release him into the wild.

Bear sounds.

Asa

Ok, he's in the bathroom.

Sarah

I'll turn on the lights.

Asa

Woo wee! Heaven's to betsy, you got gumption Peaceflower!

Sarah

That was amazing! Cousin Asa you are such a rebel! Who knew a meat eating southerner would enjoy an environmental protest so much!

Asa

Well you see, we love the environment in the south too! We hunt and fish but we have to keep the water and air clean for that.

Sarah

I know! I just, I can't believe you helped me steal a Kodiak bear from the zoo!

Asa

We had to let him be free! You think he'll be ok in the bathroom overnight?

Sarah

Sure, we'll just give him some of these steaks, tomorrow I'll have my friends pick him up.

Sarah goes into fridge and removes all the steaks and throws them in the bathroom and shuts the door.

Asa

I really feel alive for the first time in a long while. First we had some great pizza, then we made a snow man, well, snow person, you taught me not until the snowperson grows up and chooses its own identity can we call it a snowman or woman, and then we braved the big city streets and went to a protest at the zoo!

Sarah

You're a wild man cousin Asa, it was your idea to break the bear loose.

Asa

Wrastlin that old lug wasn't hard at all! Well, we should get ready for tonight's big party.

Sarah

Sounds good!

The window washer gets up to go to leave and hears others approaching. Mark and Tyler are yelling off stage.

Tyler  
It's mine!

Mark  
No it's mine!

Ned  
Give back grandmas cane!

Mark (acting as if the cane is a light saber)  
I'll never join the dark side!

Tyler (acting as if he has powers from his fingertips)  
Join me now!

Ned  
Guys! Come on, we have to get ready!

Grandma begins to sing Great Britain's national anthem.

Ed  
What is going on in here?

They all start talking at the same time. Tyler and Mark keep saying "what?"

Ed  
Oh whatever, you guys are in high school and can't even get ready? Let's go mom we have to get ready!

The doorbell rings.

Ed  
Don't worry Mr. Binney, I'll get it.

Rico de la Cruz  
Hey how are you? I'm Rico de la Cruz. You must be the man of the house, you're Ed. Your sister told me so much about you. First, congratulations on the engagement, that's great news, second what a beautiful home you have here.

Ed  
I'm sorry. I... no comprende.

Rico de la Cruz  
Ed right? What's up, it's me Rico de la Cruz, I'm here with your sister she's on her way up, catching up with your driver Louie right? Man, what a beautiful house you have here, I do well but man, a place like this, you gotta be doing well.

Ed  
I don't.. I can't speak, OK. Hola. Mi llamo. Ed. Yo soy un bibloteca por favor. Tu estas Nublado?

Rico de la Cruz

What are you saying? We should probably wait for your sister...

Miriam enters.

Miriam  
Ed!

Ed  
Miriam!

Miriam  
I see you've met my husband Rico Del Cruz

Rico de la Cruz  
What's up.

Ed  
Your husband? I thought your husband was um, taller.

Miriam  
Oh yeah that was the third one, Oh it was a private thing you know on a yacht off a private island it was just charming, charming.

Mark and Tyler come running in tuxedos.

Mark  
Yo I look Like James Bond in this!

Tyler  
Come, come Mr. Bond. You'll never escape my death grip!

Ed  
Boys! Come see your aunt and your new uncle I guess.

Tyler / Mark  
Presents! Presents!

Miriam  
(Miriam is not pleased.) Ugh. Hi boys, maybe later.

They run to Rico and steal his hat.

Rico  
Hey! Wait a minute give that back!

They run off laughing.

Ed  
Boys!

Miriam  
I still don't see the point of children Edward but my niece is getting married and you know what I always say you only get married once.

Claire entering.

Claire  
Or four times. Good evening Miriam.

Miriam  
(Coldly)  
Oh hi Claire.

Ed  
Claire you know my sister Miriam of course

Miriam/Claire  
Yes.

Ed  
And this is, I'm sorry, what's your name again?

Rico de la Cruz  
I don't understand you people, am I stuttering? I'm speaking perfectly clear. My name is Rico, Rico de La Cruz.

Claire  
Ed why don't you invite your sister and this one inside to the grand hall.

Ed, Rico and Miriam exit.

Ed  
Do you even speak Spanish?

Claire  
No its wonderful isn't it.

The doorbell rings.

Binney  
Ma'am, if you don't mind perhaps you can get it, your sons think they are secret agents apparently.

Claire  
Of course.

She opens the door la la iriving comes screaming in!

La La  
Claire! Oh you look so good I can just die! Thanks for inviting me, you know I just came back from this wonderful expedition in South America with the acirema tribe! I got this beautiful mask from them, I'll be gifting it to Florence, for the engagement its priceless you see, beautiful.

Claire  
Hi La La, come in, its so good to see my only sister.

La La  
Yes, yes of course. In ancient tribes they would bless a space with a ritual dance, it's just amazing how they do it.

Claire  
Let's catch up, I can get you a drink.



La La

In time, but what the elders of the tribe do is gift the youngest member of the council with the faloo foo stick, and this thing is just beautiful, hand carved. Let me bless this beautiful space first.

Claire

Ok well, when you're done we'll be down the hall.

La La

Fine, fine.

La La begins to dance and Asa walks in and begins to dance with her. She takes off her mask and screams.

Asa

Hi. I'm Asa!

La La Irving

Oh you startled me? I'm La La Irving, professor and anthropologist, renowned, you see I was doing a tribal blessing on this house.

Asa

A blessing? Shoot, every time mama wanted to say a blessing we'd just bow our heads and thank the Lord for making Possums so plentiful.

La La Irving

Possums? Fascinating, many tribes eat rodents for food, what tribe were you and your mother studying?

Asa

Uh, I don't follow.

La La Irving

Where did you eat possum?

Asa

In my living room!

La La Irving

Ah, I see. Suddenly I feel a little queasy, from the dancing of course, I think I'll use the bathroom.

Asa

Woo-No!

La La Irving

Excuse me?

Asa

Uh I mean the Woo-No Tribe that's what, I was, me and my mama are also professors and anti-hero-lists. We were studying the Woo-No Tribe uh, maybe you should use the restroom upstairs?

La La Irving

Uh ok. The Woo No Tribe? Fascinating we'll have to talk about that.

Asa

Uh sure yeah.

La La Irving exits. Asa opens that bathroom door. The window washer falls out of it all torn up.

Window Washer  
There's a bear in there! A bear in there!

Asa  
What are you doing here?

Window Washer  
I was washing, the, I was... hey listen, thanks you guys have to be careful there's someone trying to steal from...

The Doorbell rings. Asa freaks out and throws the window washer back in the bathroom the bear roars.

Asa  
Tell me later, Sorry partner, but we got guests.

Windowwasher  
Nooo!

Binney enters.

Asa  
I got it Mr. Binney, no worries all under control.

Binney  
Yippy.

Binney exits.

Coyle and Abel enter.

Asa  
Howdy y'all!

Coyle  
You're, you are...

Asa  
Asa Tretchard how you boys doing?

Coyle  
Yes, yes, yes, yes.

Asa  
Uh.. Thank you.

Coyle  
Your Ed's cousin from the South.

Asa  
Yessir and who you fancy fells might be? You're looking shinier than a couple of new dimes.

Abel  
Hi, I'm Abel and this is ...

Coyle  
Asa. You and Ed very close?

Asa

Oh sure, me and Ed we're like shrimp and grits, peas and carrots, moonshine and a bathtub. Just a night ago we went out to dinner and we was laughing it up like a couple of school boys, you fellas ever heard of authentic new york pizza. This place called dominoes. Can I help y'all with something?

Coyle

To be coninuted.

Florence enters.

Florence

Asa, thanks for getting the door.

Abel

Hi Florence you look lovely.

Florence

Thanks Abel, we're so happy you made. Do come in Mr. Coyle, we're in the grand ballroom.

Asa

Them fellas are up to something, if dem boys are planning on being ugly they are barking up the wrong tree.

Florence

I'm sure its fine

Asa

Well what brings you out here, you should be with your family.

Florence

You are family Asa.

Asa

I 'preciate that Florence, getting to know y'all has made me happier than ol' Blue layin' on the porch chewin' on a big ol' catfish head. But what brings you out here?

Florence

Oh I just needed some air. I'm really excited for everyone to meet the Montchessington family and Harry but, I guess, well Asa, I love my family I really do, but we can be a little rough around the edges and well, Harry's family is so refined and proper. I just hope we all get along.

Asa

Oh Florence, don't you worry your little bean head. I know families may seem different or strange, shoot, some families talk with their tongues hanging out their shoes but were all the same, doesn't matter what shape a family takes, as long as they got faith and love and each other they'll be ok.

Florence

Thanks cousin Asa.

Asa

Of course, now go back in there and enjoy them

Florence

You'll come too?

Asa  
Faster than green grass through a goose.

Florence exits. Asa runs to the bathroom door. The window washer gets out.

Window Washer  
That bear is brutal he's got a paw the size of a frying pan. He's really angry.

Asa  
Yeah well I'm sorry about that but we rescued him from the zoo.

Window Washer  
He was at the zoo? Wasn't he already rescued?

Asa  
Well, now that really dills my pickle, Peaceflower says all animals should be free.

Window Washer  
Who's peace flower?

Asa  
Why that's my cuz...

The doorbell rings.

Window Washer  
No. No Don't you do it!

Asa  
Sorry partner.

The bear roars as Asa pushes him back in the bathroom.

Window washer (o.s.)  
Down boy!

Liddy, Erin and Susan walk in.

Liddy  
What do you mean the steaks are missing! That's thousands of dollars worth of steak!

Erin  
We don't know what happened but it was here and then it was gone.

Susan  
We swear Mrs. Liddy.

Liddy  
You better

Asa  
Hey listen you can't be talking to those ladies like that.

Oh please.

You heard me girls! I'll be back.

Erin  
What are we going to do?

Susan  
The party is going

Asa  
Oh I feel awful about this ladies, I got your burrs in a saddle. I stole your steaks.

Susan  
What?

Erin  
Why?

Asa  
Kind of a long story—a tall tail—you wouldn't believe it but I'll get ya out of it. I'm gonna get you some food for dinner, you keep pouring dem drinks and giving out those horse dervs and I'll be right back.

Erin  
Where are you going to go, all the major food purveyors will be closed.

Asa  
I got me an idea, but first I'm gonna need 'ol Bessie.

Asa grabs his gun and exits. The girls look at each other and exit.

### **Act 3, Scene 1**

Lights come up at the party; everyone seems to be enjoying himself or herself.

Claire  
Have you seen anything interesting this past season, Ed and I went to the Lincoln Center Opera house for...

Mrs. Mountchessington  
Oh this season has been superb! The Bachelor is absolutely great but who can keep up with all the amazing reality shows when and don't even get me started on HGTV. People say rustic modern is boring but I can't get enough.

Claire  
We saw Brahm's performed two weeks ago.

Mrs. Mountchessington  
What channel is that on?

Claire  
Forget it.

Mrs. Mountchessington  
What are your favorite reality shows?

Claire  
Oh I like the housewives, of you know all of them.

Augusta

This is like super boring.

Georgia  
Seriously. Ill.

Tyler  
Yeah this is terrible, our parents won't let us leave.

Mark  
This stinks on hot ice.

Georgina  
I have an idea, let's text some of our friends to come over.

Augusta  
Yas, it'll be so much fun.

Mark  
That sounds awesome!

Tyler  
Nice!

Coyle  
Once this idiotic evening is over we can talk to that Hillbilly and make sure he never sells to Ed. With that done, the Tretchard family will be history!

Abel  
I still don't like this Mr. Coyle, you're the one who stole the money!

Coyle  
Don't forget, you have to do what I say or your poor mama is out in the cold!

Rico de la Cruz  
So then after traveling around the world I did some school work in Europe, I even traveled to Antarctica, but then

La La Irving  
I'm sorry; I can't understand a word you're saying. Your dialect though is superb; it reminds me of my travels among the Pop-len peoples of the Eurasiaic plateaus.

Rico de La Cruz  
You people are so strange, why can't you understand me; I'm speaking perfectly fine!

Asa  
So the proletariat, that's the workingman... or woman.

Sarah  
Yes, the working class have nothing to lose but our chains!

Asa  
Gotcha, OK, tell me again about the industrial prison system.

Ned walks in with grandma and sits next to Lord Dundreary.

Ned

Lord Dundreary I want you to meet my grandmother.

Dundreary

My dear lady. Searching high or low, Never have I supplanted my eyes on such a superior nymph as yourself.

Grandma

Oh I must say sir, I love your accent.

Dundreary

I am positively enamored madam.

Nick

Have you ever been so heartbroken that you can't stop crying.

Binney

I have never cried Mr. Adams. Not even on my first birthday. Anne can you see that Mr. Adams gets a tissue.

Nick

What's your name?

Anne

I'm Anne. Who are you?

Nick

I'm in love, I mean I'm Nick.

Anne

How long have you been working for the Montchessington family?

Nick

Oh ten years or so, Anne, do you like poetry.

Anne

I love poetry.

Nick

Roses are Red, violets are blue.

Harry

Well, Florence I think tonight is perfect. You look wonderful.

Florence

Thanks. I have to say Harry I thought your family was going to find us, well, it sounds terrible but embarrassing.

Harry

What? Oh never, I thought you would find my family embarrassing.

Florence

The evening is going really nice so far.

Harry

Yeah, it is really great!

Liddy

Ladies and gentlemen, can I have your attention? I want to introduce to you all the Mayor of New York, the honorable William Bennett.

Ed

Mr. Mayor, what a surprise!

Mayor

Well, I had to come by to see these two great New York families join together. I also wanted to remind everyone I'm running for re-election.

Sarah

Corporations own you!

Mayor

Excuse me?

Ed

I'm sure my daughter means, corporations owe you a lot of praise.

Mayor

Ah, I see. Well if you don't mind I'd love to mingle and congratulate the young couple, we won't be long, ah, I almost forgot allow me to introduce to you my assistant from Alabama, Miss Mary Meredith.

Mary

Woo wee! Y'all know how to throw a party! See my papa grew up poor, he was so poor, he had a tumbleweed as a pet! I've been looking for fin folks like y'all ever since I left mama and papa, I've been shy I guess I've been too poor to paint to proud to whitewash, if y'all get my drift.

Asa drops his glass.

Asa

Peaceflower, I think I'm in love. This beautiful stallion of a lady. My heart got stuck in my throat like a hair on a biscuit.

Miriam

That dinner was most delicious by the way ladies; I absolutely thought it was great.

La La Irving

Yes, the food was amazing! Great dinner!

Susan

That's kind of you.

Erin

Thank you. (to Susan) Don't tell anyone what's in it.

Susan

Tell me about it.

The doorbell rings and Britney and Holly. They start cheering.

Britney

What up party I'm Britney.

Holly



Hey I'm Holly.

Mayor  
I'm sorry who are you?

Augusta  
These are my sorority sisters from school! Busta Kappa Kappa!

Holly  
We were told its gonna get lit up in here.

Tyler  
Mark, are you seeing what I'm seeing?

Mark  
Tyler, are you seeing what I'm seeing.

Mark / Tyler  
I think we're in love.

Ed  
Um, perhaps you ladies could um... come back at another time.

Mrs. Mountchessington  
Don't yell at my girls like that!

Ed  
Oh, I wasn't I was just saying...

Claire  
Don't overreact!

Mrs. Mountchessington  
Whatever you snob!

Claire  
Who are you calling a Snob?!

La La Irving  
You know ancient tribes resolve conflicts by dancing!

Miriam  
Don't yell at my sister like that.

Mayor  
Maybe we can all just relax a little.

Tyler / Mark  
Fight! Fight!

Asa  
I don't mean to run with the big dogs, I should just stay under the porch. But Mary Merideth?

Mary  
Yes?

Asa  
Would you like to get some authentic new York pizza?

Mary  
Dominoes?

Asa  
Woo Wee!

Mayor  
Mary, let's go, I'm using the bathroom and we're leaving!

Sarah  
Don't use the bathroom!

Ed  
Don't be ridiculous of course you can use the restroom Mr. Mayor!

The Mayor goes to use it. Asa attacks him. Ed attacks Asa.

Liddy  
Don't attack the mayor!

Peaceflower  
Down with injustice!

Holly / Britney  
Let's get turned up!

Music begins blasting and there is absolute chaos on stage. Frank enters and begins to eat on the couch, then leaves. Just then two police officers enter. The music stops.

Officer 1  
Does anyone want to tell me what's going on?

Officer 2  
Oh no they didn't!

Everyone talks at the same time.

Officer 1  
Shut it! I'm officer O'Shaughnessy, this is my partner McGillicutty and we're gonna shut this down! You are messing with the Po- Leece!

Officer 2  
NYPD!

Officer 1  
The city's finest! That's the Classiest police force in the world!

Officer 2  
You understand that?

Ed  
Uh yeah.

Ned

Look we could explain all this.

Sarah

You don't have to explain anything Ned, we know our rights!

Officer 1

I'm shutting it down! Pull the lever shutting it down!

Officer 2

You Wanna go? We can go all day - pack a lunch get your mom to sign a permission slip because we're going on that field trip!

Mayor

Officers, I'm glad you're here.

Officer 2

Save the llama drama for your mama!

Liddy

Do you know who that is? That's the mayor!

Officer 1

Please! I've seen a dozen imposters in Times Square!

Claire

Can you at least tell us why you're here?

Officer 2

I'm asking the questions around here!

Officer 1

Yes you are.

Officer 2

I'm in the car, I'm driving this rig!

Officer

Yes ma'am, honk the horn, strap in, going on the ride.

Officer 2

Apparently there was a stolen red car with evidence back to this address.

Frank

Oh snap look its something to look at!

Frank runs out the door.

Officer 1

We better call back up.

Mrs. Mountchessington

Is that necessary?

Officer 2

Oh you did it now. We're calling. Back. Up!

Officer 1

We were being nice. Protecting and serving but you're making us bring in back up.

Officer 2

Say hello to the most feared members of law enforcement in the country. Say hello to officer Tiny and Retribution.

Two more officers show up one has Frank by the collar.

Harry

Wow. Let me guess you're tiny?

Officer 3

No, I am.

Officer 4

I came here to do two things. Chew bubble gum and bust some heads, and I'm all out of bubble gum.

Officer 3

Oh look what we found here! (she reveals the machete's?) Someone's hiding weapons.

Ed

Oh I can explain them!

Officer 3

Sit down!

Ed

Yes ma'am.

Officer 2

Woah! This guys is armed!

Asa

Now, that's 'ol Bessie! I have a right to have that!

Sarah

Don't worry cousin Asa I'm filming all of this! No justice, no peace!

Ed

That's it. (he grabs a machete) this is a dumb gift from our cousin! This is my entire fault, all I ever wanted was a normal evening! But I let my ego get in the way and that's why I invested terribly. I'm sorry honey but we can't afford a wedding!

Florence

What do you mean?

Harry

It's ok.

Officer 4

Sir, if you don't drop that weapon I'm going to be on you like white on rice on a paper plate in a snowstorm.

Ed

Sorry Asa, you seem really nice but the only reason I ever invited you over was to help me out with my money failings, It wasn't because we are family.

Asa  
What do you mean Ed?

Ed  
I wanted to you to buy me out, I was using you!

Florence  
That's awful!

Coyle  
This is amazing! This might be the greatest day of my life.

Officer 3  
Sir!

Dundreary  
My dearest friends perhaps this is a bad time but, I am announcing that this beautiful lady and I are getting married!

Everyone begins to talk. Ed raises the machete.

Ed  
What?

Officer 1  
Sir! Put the weapon down!

Officer 2  
You heard her.

Officer 4  
That's it!

The police hit him on the head.

Ed  
Florence, I'm lost.

Officer 4  
I hope this visit in no way inconvenienced you fine people and enjoy your stay in the city of New York.

Blackout.

#### **Act 4, Scene 1**

Lights come up on a stark prison cell. ED sits playing a harmonica blues style. Crazy Chris comes out of the shadows.

ED  
Who's there? Are you going to hurt me?

CHRIS  
Hurt you? Nah man. Just saying hi. What are you in for.

ED  
Long story.

CHRIS  
I got time. Hi I'm crazy chris.

Ed  
Crazy Chris why do they call... you know what, that's cool. That's a cool name.

CHRIS  
Thanks essay. So, why are you in the slammer?

Ed  
Well technically I think I broke ten laws but really I'm just in here for being a terrible husband and father.

Chris  
I don't think that's the truth Ruth. You know they should put people in jail for that but they don't. Something tells me you're being hard on yourself. Maybe you should let Johnny q law do that part and offer forgiveness.

Ed  
I know I need to ask for a lot of forgiveness.

Chris  
Nah man. I mean you got to forgive yourself.

Ed  
Wow. Thanks Crazy Chris. You have a lot of wisdom.

Chris  
These streets teach you a lot.

Ed  
Is that where you got all those tattoos?

Chris  
Nah, I got these in the center.

Ed  
County?

Chris  
Early Childhood center.

Ed  
What? I don't know why I'm asking but, what did you do?

Chris  
It's terrible brah. Worst thing you can ever do. You know those tags on pillows that say don't remove.

Ed  
Yeah?

Chris  
I remove them. Just can't help myself that's why they call me crazy chris.

Ed

That doesn't seem that crazy.

Chris

I also open peoples mail and read it.

Ed

Ok, great, well good to meet you.

Chris

Looks like you got company. Excuse me.

Claire enters.

CLAIRE

Hi.

ED

Hi. I really messed up didn't I?

CLAIRE

Yeeeaah you did. You couldn't stand your gun toting republican cousin and you ended up in

ED

Yeah. I really blew it and in front of Harry's family too, I'm so embarrassed. Is Florence upset?

CLAIRE

You know, I don't know. You can ask her, she's on her way.

ED

I don't want to see me in here.

CLAIRE

I don't know, I think you've earned the right to be punished in front of your kid.

ED

Who says liberals aren't tough on crime. I don't know Claire. It is just.. Is this every American family or just ours?

CLAIRE

Pretty sure it is everyone's house. Family isn't a word, sometimes it's a whole sentence.

ED

Or a paragraph.

CLAIRE

Yeah. Well, I'm going to pay your bail. I never thought I'd say that, "pay my husband's bail." Hugs.

ED

Not bugs.

CLAIRE exits. ED sits back down. A few moments later he hears a voice.

Chris

I'm gonna cry. This is beautiful.

Claire  
Did you say something?

Ed  
It was just crazy chris. See you later.

FRANK (O.S.)  
Oh snap! You look like Suge Knight in there!

ED  
Hey Frank.

FRANK  
Hey Shawshank.

ED  
Wow, you clean up nice. You dress up for me?

FRANK  
Please E. Nah, I got a job interview this morning.

ED  
A job interview? Really? Finally, wow. Where are you applying?

FRANK  
Bank executive, Goldman Sachs, its not a big deal.

ED  
Wow, Goldman. Don't you want to try something maybe, I don't know, a little more entry level?

FRANK  
Why? It's all made up titles anyway, how hard can chief financial officer be? I got my speech down and everything... "Four score and seven innings ago, blah, blah, facts, numbers, math stuff, file that, where's my desk, page me I'm on vacay!"

ED  
You know, I think while Claire bails me out I just want to be on my own.

FRANK  
Time to think in the clink, I get it. Never give up hope Hurricane, but take this. (Reveals a sharpened weapon.)

ED  
What are you doing? I'm going to be out in a few minutes.

FRANK  
Yeah OK, I saw that documentary Green Mile—remember first guy you see—shiv! Show dominance. Hey Yo Crazy Chris is that you?

Chris  
What up Frank!

Frank  
Looking good.

Chris



Feeling good.

Frank

Well, I gotta get out of here, this place brings back too many memories. Watch your six bro.

ED sits back on the bench. ASA enters with FLORENCE and HARRY.

ASA

Now Ed, I know you're fixin to holler and cuss at me, but what you think of me doesn't amount to a hill of beans to me, I'm going to buy the bank so that crooked partner of yours!

Ed

Asa.

ASA

Now this is all my fault and...

Florence

Cousin Asa it is not your fault, Dad, don't even think about blaming him, You're the one...

ED

Florence, Florence, save your breath. This isn't your fault Asa. This is my fault. I let my ego and pride cloud what is really important in my life. Asa, you're not going to buy the company, I know what really matters in life now. Harry?

Harry

Yes sir?

Ed

Do you love my daughter?

Harry

Heart and soul, forever and always.

Ed

And if you marry her you know you may alienate your family and I can't support you financially.

Harry

Well, to quote my new American cousin, it don't matter a hill of beans!

Ed

Right answer. Ok, you guys go ahead and let mom bail me out I'll see you soon.

Florence

Thanks Dad.

Florence and Harry exit.

Asa

That's sweeter than pecan pie Ed, mama always said can't never could, and well love always can! life isn't about money or fame.

Ed

It's about faith and family.

Asa

You're not so different you and me. Democrat, republican, push ups, sit ups, its all exercise!

Ed

I agree Asa. I never gave you a shot. I just let my ego get in the way.

Asa

Ah, schucks Ed. We're fuller than a tick with blessings. We got a great family, we got a great country. It's like the Ol' Gipper used to say...

Ed

How about we just sit here quietly for a while Asa.

Asa

Sure thing cuz.

*Blackout.*

### **Act 5, Scene 1**

Back at the Tretchard House Louie is reading the paper and Mr. Binney walks in.

Mr. Binney

Louie, I see you still think the paper subscription is your personal subscription.

Louie

Crazy party last night huh Mr. Binney? It even made the news.

Binney

All fodder, you can't believe any of that. It was just a simple misunderstanding.

Louie

I heard Cousin Asa tackled the Mayor.

Binney

Nonesene! Actually, he did! It was quite amazing!

Louie

Ok, back to the garage? Oh where's Anne by the way?

Anne enters with Nick Adams.

Anne

Right here! And we are off Nick and I are going to the movies!

Nick

Then we're going to go to one of my poetry readings. Violets are red, roses are blue you are better than an iced cold yoohoo.

Anne

Isn't it great?

They exit. Ned enters.

Ned

I'm going out to play basketball. Those cops are really mean man.

Binney  
Mr. Ned what about grandma?

He exits. Dundreary and Grandma enter dancing.

Dundreary  
I could've danced all night! I could've danced all night!

Louie  
Ma'am what about your wheelchair?

Grandma  
Love's wings shall carry me! Come on Dundreary let's get married!

Dundreary  
That's the idea!

They exit.

Binney  
Like I said Mr. Louis, quite amazing.

Claire and Ed walk in.

Binney  
Perhaps we should leave Louis.

Louis  
You're right!

Binney and Louis exit.

Ed  
Well, you were right Claire. Everyone was right. We'll sell the house and use some money to pay for a simple small wedding. I just feel so bad for Harry his family was very upset.

Claire  
I think this is better, we don't need material things to be a family. All we need is love,

Ed  
And faith!  
Asa and Sarah walk in.

Sarah  
Oh I see, so corporations can help in infrastructure planning, private wealth, public need like a partnership.

Asa  
Exactly!

Ed  
Asa! Sarah, I'm glad you're here. Get the rest of the family!

Sarah  
Yo, peoples! Dad wants to say something!

Tyler and Mark enter with Holly and Britney.

Mark

Dearest father and mother, we'd love to stay but my brother Tyler and I will be accompanying these ladies to the opera house.

Holly

It's gonna be baller.

Britney

Yeah it is.

Tyler

Upon our return we shall listen patiently to your words. Shall we go brother?

Mark

We shall brother.

Tyler

After you.

Mark

No, no, after you.

The four, Britney, Holly, Tyler, and Mark exit.

Ed

Were those our sons?

Claire

Yeah, I guess they decided to mature a little bit.

Asa

Love has a strange way with things!

Florence and Harry enter.

Florence

You wanted to see us?

Ed

Yes, we've decided to sell the house, to downsize.

Claire

We may not be able to afford a fancy, really awesome school like Seton Hall, you may have to settle for a really bad one like Rutgers, but we have faith and love!

Mary enters.

Sarah

Speaking of love, look who it is Asa.

Mary

Hi folks, I just wanted to say, I spoke to the Mayor and he has decided to put the whole thing behind him. He's gonna let bygones be bygones.

Sarah  
That's great news!

Mary  
Well, OK, I just wanted to, well, you know say that. Bye y'all.

Sarah  
Asa, now's your chance!

Asa  
Ok, ok. Uh, Miss Mary?

Mary  
Yes Asa.

Asa  
I know you probably think that I'm so stuck up, I'd drown in a rainstorm, on account of me eating at fancy places like Dominos, but I think you're prettier than a hog on Easter.

Mary  
Whatcha saying Asa?

Asa  
Well, I'm saying, I want you to make me an honest man. Miss Mary? Will you marry me?

Mary  
You mean? You want me to marry you? Yes! Woo- wee! Well, I'm happier than a wart on a frog!

Coyle and Abel walk in.

Coyle  
Well I'm so sorry to break up this little cumbuya party but effectively immediately I own the company, and well I hate to do this, Florence for your wedding I'm going to close it down, fire all the employees and put this family in finance ruin forever. Abel, read off the letter to the board if you will.

Abel  
Happily Mr. Coyle. Let it be known that Mr. Coyle, that's you, will no longer be a part of this company and his illegal and immoral business practices, please see the attached math to prove his stealing!

Coyle  
What! Let me see that?

Abel  
It's no use Mr. Coyle! I've already sent digital copies to all the board members, you're done.

Coyle  
I'll be foreclosing on your mother's house then!

Asa  
Uh, actually, you can't do that. After Abel called me this morning I already bought it and gave it to Abel here.

Coyle  
Well.... Well... you will all... See ya!

Coyle tries to run and Frank stops him at the door.

Frank  
Not so fast homes.

Sarah  
Don't you love it when corrupt banking executives go to jail.

Asa  
These colors don't run. Give me some.

Claire  
This means you still own your company Ed!

Ed  
Well, how do you say it Asa? Woo-wee!

The bathroom flushes. The window washer comes out.

Window Washer  
There's a bear in there and that guy is stealing from you!

Ed  
There's a bear in our bathroom?

Claire / Ed  
Peaceflower!

Sarah  
Gotta go see ya!

Sarah runs out.

Mary  
What are we going to do with this miscreant?

Harry  
I know who to call! (He makes a call.)

Florence  
Abel, thanks so much! Mr. Coyle was such an evil man.

Abel  
It was my pleasure Florence, it was the right thing to do and I hope you have a beautiful marriage.

Coyle  
You all might have won the battle but the Tretchard family will fall at my hands!

A knock at the door.

Florence  
Who can that be?

The police officers arrive again.

Retribution  
I came here to do two things and I'm all out of bubble gum.

Coyle  
No! No! Leave me alone!

Officer McGillicutty  
Enjoy your day in the city of New York folks.

Coyle  
Nooooooooo!

ASA  
Well it doesn't matter what political party you belong to...

ED  
What religion you belong to.

HARRY  
Or how much money you make...

Claire  
We are all one crazy American family.

ALL  
God bless America.

Dundreary pops his head in.

Dundreary  
That's the idea!

Blackout.

The End