



Sample Pages from Among Friends and Clutter

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AMONG FRIENDS AND CLUTTER

A SERIOCOMEDY IN ONE ACT BY
Lindsay Price



Among Friends and Clutter

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Characters

MELISSA

TREVOR

JOANNE

ASHLEY

ICABOD

KATHERINE

BOBBY

There are seven main characters and many secondary characters. This version of the play is written for seven actors playing all the secondary parts. It has also been performed with seven actors playing the main roles and a chorus filling in the other roles.

Author's Note

This play is made up of seven lives. Each of the scenes are fragments of those lives; moments that the audience is allowed to see. The fragments do not run in sequence from one section to the next but there is a definite flow to the play. The play works best without blackouts and complicated set changes. Actors for one scene should be moving in as the actors for the previous scene are moving out.

Cutting Note

In order to make this play competition length, you have permission to cut full scenes that are not the “Mrs Morton Grade 2 class” scenes.

FRIENDS

Lights come up. Seven characters in a tableau.

ALL: Group project. Mrs. Morton's grade two class. Friends.

MELISSA: For our group project, we gotta print in books. Mrs. Morton calls them journals.

TREVOR: I think it's a trick. I think it's a trick to make us practice our printing. I hate printing.

JOANNE: My name is Joanne Klien. J-O-U-R-N-A-L. Journal. It's a new word on the spelling list and I got it right 'cause...

ASHLEY: Ashley Gordon. Age seven.

JOANNE: ...I peeked on Melissa Koziol and she never knew.

ASHLEY: This is my journal for Mrs. Morton. I decorated the cover and got a gold star. We have to write every day on topics she tells us.

TREVOR: Trevor Stamos. Seven and a half. I hate group projects.

ICABOD: Today's topic is friends.

KATHERINE: Katherine Green. I'm seven. I don't have any. Friends. I don't have any friends. Friends are stupid. I like plants. They don't lie by saying that they are your best friend and then go skating with Ashley Gordon 'cause she's popular.

MELISSA: I tried to tell her it was just the one time. Katherine doesn't have any skates. I can't go skating with her.

ICABOD: I guess Trevor is my friend. We play hockey. He got a stick in the face once and there was blood all over the place. It was cool.

BOBBY: Bobby Templeton. Age seven. I have two best friends. My mom calls us the Three Musketeers. I like Joan better 'cause she likes to play GI Joe and makes spit balls.

ICABOD: Bobby is not my friend. I punched him once and he cried and my mom made me apologise.

BOBBY: I never cried.

JOANNE: STICKY ICKY! STICKY ICKY!

ICABOD: I don't much like that Joanne either.

JOANNE: I don't like the people in my class. Yesterday I hid the lunches and everybody said...

ALL: JOANNE IS NOT MY FRIEND! JOANNE IS NOT MY FRIEND!
JOANNE...

JOANNE: BUT I DON'T CARE! Tomorrow I'm gonna hide the
chalkboard brushes.

BOBBY: My mom thinks I should be friends with Joanne 'cause she's
friends with Mrs. Klien. But I'd rather eat worms.

MELISSA: What is a Friend? by Melissa Koziol. "A friend is nice. A
friend likes you. And you like them. A friend will let you pat their
dog 'cause dogs are man's best friend." None of my friends have
dogs though. Katherine Green has a lot of plants.

KATHERINE: I have a plant named Jack and one named Matilda and we
sing and play games. The only problem is you can't go for bike
rides 'cause they fall off the handle bars.

TREVOR: I have a friend who lives in my closet. He does my homework
for me. On Mars.

MELISSA: I like bike rides.

TREVOR: My daddy says my friend is i-mag-in-ary. That he's not real.
My friend is too real. He just doesn't want to meet my daddy. I
don't blame him.

KATHERINE

*KATHERINE is sitting slowly on a park bench. MILLIE
has a watch and a clipboard.*

MILLIE: (*when KATHERINE finally sits*) 4 minutes and 53 seconds.

KATHERINE: God.

MILLIE: You're slipping Katherine.

KATHERINE: 53 seconds?

MILLIE: You started off well but when your knees locked it was slow
down city.

KATHERINE: Happens every time. Monday was good though wasn't it?

MILLIE: Today is Monday.

KATHERINE: God.

MILLIE: (*writing on clipboard*) 4 minutes and 53 seconds.

KATHERINE: Lucy can run around the apartment, overturn every cushion on every chair, put on every dress in my closet, and throw up chocolate milk all in about five minutes.

MILLIE: How old is she now?

KATHERINE: 25.

MILLIE: Honestly.

KATHERINE: She's four. I get to have her for the whole weekend.

MILLIE: Where's Sarah?

KATHERINE: She and Alex are going on a second honeymoon.

MILLIE: Those crazy kids.

KATHERINE: I don't think they're that crazy. "Come on mom, Lucy really wants to spend some time with you. Lucy loves you mom, are you going to deny your one and only grandchild from spending time with you?" I don't think they're crazy at all.

MILLIE: Well I'm sure Lucy tires them out too.

KATHERINE: It takes me 4 minutes and 50 seconds to sit down. I think I'm entitled to a little leeway here.

MILLIE: 4 minutes and 53 seconds.

KATHERINE: Are we old, Millie?

MILLIE: I feel pretty spry.

KATHERINE: An old spry.

MILLIE: Speak for yourself.

KATHERINE: I was pretty wild in my day. Now the most exciting thing I can come up with is sitting on a park bench. I can't do the things I used to.

MILLIE: Do you want to do the things you used to?

KATHERINE: When I was ten I used to snort milk through my nose.

MILLIE: A pleasant memory.

KATHERINE: When I was twenty I used to snort beer through my nose. Now that clears out your sinuses. I can't drink beer anymore. Gives me gas. *(she gives a big sigh)*

MILLIE: What's up Katie?

KATHERINE: How long have we known each other Millie?

MILLIE: 43 years.

KATHERINE: Would you change anything if you could?

MILLIE: I wish I'd never let you talk me into that home perm 16 years ago. My hair has never been the same since.

KATHERINE: I ran into Georgia Keller the other day.

MILLIE: How is old George?

KATHERINE: She's surfing.

MILLIE: She's 77.

KATHERINE: She's the senior's champion.

MILLIE: She used to use a walker.

KATHERINE: Now she does this thing where she's surfing, excuse me she's catching a wave, and this guy is catching a wave and he stands up on this moving surf board then she stands up and she stands on his shoulders pulls a Canadian flag out of her suit and waves it around.

MILLIE: You're pulling my leg.

KATHERINE: Millie, I have a good imagination but not in my wildest nightmare could I think up a story involving Georgia, a moving surfboard and hiding a Canadian Flag in a bathing suit.

MILLIE: Bikini or one piece?

KATHERINE: Guess.

MILLIE: That's what is bothering you? A 77-year-old woman in a bikini?

KATHERINE: I always thought other people got old.

MILLIE: Surprise.

KATHERINE: I get lost going to the bathroom in my own house. I'll bet Georgia Keller knows where her bathroom is.

MILLIE: I've seen Georgia Keller's bathroom. It's worth losing.

KATHERINE: What was my time today?

MILLIE: Four minutes and 53 seconds.

KATHERINE: God.

ICABOD

ICABOD and KIM are watching a scary movie. The two lean in towards the set and...

ICABOD: AAAAAAGGGGGGGHHHH!! (*He leaps on KIM and hides in her armpit*)

KIM: Get off me! I hate watching scary movies with you.

ICABOD: Sorry.

KIM: Icabod MacIntyre. We go through this every time. I say maybe we shouldn't watch them, 'cause you always FREAK out. "I can handle it," you say. And I always give you the benefit of the doubt. So here I am watching scary movies with you and you're cutting off the circulation in my arm.

ICABOD: Sorry.

KIM: We could have rented an action move. Or a comedy. But nooooo.

ICABOD: It's ridiculous, I can get an A in Calculus, I should be able to watch a stupid horror movie.

KIM: It's not a law or anything. Thou must watch a horror movie every Saturday night.

ICABOD: I can do it. I swear. Let's watch the movie.

KIM: No.

ICABOD: I'll be ok.

KIM: Just concentrate on the stupid things. Horror movies are pretty dumb.

ICABOD: Right. Look at that guy. Going into a dark alley without a flashlight. Pretty dumb right. What a dumb guy. (*To the screen*) Hey you're really dumb!

KIM: Don't talk to the screen Icabod.

ICABOD: Oh no. It's the scary music.

KIM: Don't listen to the music. Put your hands over your ears.

ICABOD: I can still hear it! Where's the remote!! Where's the remote!

KIM: Oh Icabod.

ICABOD: (*puts his hands over his ears and sings*) Oh Canada!!
Our home and native land! True patriot love, In all our...
AAAAAGGGGGGGHHHH!!!

He lunges at KIM and hides in her armpit.

KIM: What are you doing?

ICABOD: You have a piece of lint right here.

KIM: Is that why you screamed loud enough to wake Switzerland?

ICABOD: It's morning over there. Maybe they need a wake up call.

KIM: These tactics might work better on a girlfriend you know.

ICABOD: I don't know anything about girls.

KIM: Thanks a lot.

ICABOD: You can't be a girl because I get nervous around girls and I don't get nervous around you.

KIM: Have you ever asked a girl out?

ICABOD: Why don't we get back to the movie?

KIM: Have you ever asked a girl out?

ICABOD: I get nervous around girls. I sweat. I stutter. I get totally tongue-tied.

KIM: It's not a disease Icabod, it's just dating. Didn't you ever talk to your brother about girls?

ICABOD: He was busy flushing my head down the toilet. Dating never came up.

KIM: Didn't anyone talk to you about horror movies, either?

ICABOD: At least I don't cry at every movie I see.

KIM: There is nothing wrong with a sappy movie.

ICABOD: You cry at everything.

KIM: I do not.

ICABOD: Bambi made you cry.

KIM: When Bambi's mother died...

ICABOD: Commercials make you cry.

KIM: Just the long distance phone ones.

ICABOD: Star Wars made you cry.

KIM: Look, I'll cry and you can scream and I won't say another word about it.

ICABOD: Deal.

KIM: Deal.

Pause...

ICABOD: AAGAGAGAGAGAGAGGHHHHH!!!

MELISSA

MELISSA stands separate from the others in the scene.

ALL FOUR: Friends forever, Friends for life. Friends through good and bad. We'll be friends forever more, the best we ever had.

MELISSA: We said that chant every day for three years.

JANA: Phone me when you get home?

CAROL: I got it! I got my sister's lipstick!

SUZE: What are you wearing tomorrow?

MELISSA: We lived in the same neighbourhood. We spent all our time together. We wore the same clothes.

JANA, CAROL, SUZE: Tommy, Tommy four eyes, glasses seven stories high!

MELISSA: We tormented the same boys.

JANA: I'm so glad you're my friend.

CAROL: You're the best friend I ever had.

SUZE: Forever!

MELISSA: Why is forever so short when you're eleven years old?

JANA: Why did you talk to Mona Ferguson?

CAROL: You always liked red.

SUZE: What are you wearing?

MELISSA: Jana moved away.

JANA: Write me!

MELISSA: Carol became popular.

CAROL: Oh. Hi.

MELISSA: Suze just disappeared.

SUZE: Oh look, we're not in the same class this year.

MELISSA: Nobody really has an explanation. Ok, maybe some people have an explanation, I don't. It just sort of happened. I felt sort of guilty...

SUZE: Why haven't you called me?

MELISSA: And then it's gone. Wearing the same clothes. Tormenting the same boys. It happens all the time. From every single day, to once a week, to a phone call, to a Christmas card. It happens to everybody. Why should I feel guilty? Why should I feel guilty when I walk down a certain street in a place that I don't usually go? And I catch someone's eye.

CAROL: Melissa?

MELISSA: And it's her. Popular Carol. I mean she wouldn't even talk to me in high school. Only she looks like she hasn't eaten in a couple days, or slept, or washed. I catch her eye for a fraction of a second. But long enough to know it's her. And long enough to turn my head and walk right on by.

JANA: We'll be friends forever.

MELISSA: I just... I just... walked right past her. Like she never existed. And every fibre of my body was screaming at me "go back and talk to her." But I didn't. I just kept on walking.

JANA, CAROL, SUZE: Friends forever, Friends for life. Friends through good and bad. We'll be friends forever more, the best we ever had.

MELISSA: It happens all the time.

BOBBY

BOBBY weaves towards the bride and groom.

BOBBY: Well as the best man in this grand ceremony, I get to stand up and make fun of the bride and groom, with horrific and embarrassing childhood stories, telling the world what idiots they are for actually settling down and getting married. Don't look so worried guys, I'm just kidding. I have known John and Joan. I have known John and Joan. I have known John and Joan, you know it's the beginning of a cute relationship when their names start with the same letter. I have known John and Joan for a very, very long time. Practically since birth. Our parents called us The Three Musketeers. AND, I take pride in telling you all that I was the first person to see Joannie naked. We were both four at the time but it was a roller coaster ride from there.

The three of us, we have been through everything. The summer when we were ten and we all sneaked into that old house and John fell through two floors of rotten wood. Or when we all learned to swim at the Y. ORRRRR the time we ran away because our parents wouldn't take us to the circus. We survived high school chemistry together, car accidents, brothers dying, dateless Friday nights, or horror dates. DATES FROM HELL. Like when Joannie implored us to meet her at the movies one night so we could casually interrupt her evening with Fish Lips Floyd.

Then John and Joan went off to the same university and I went elsewhere. I always seem to be going elsewhere. The Three Musketeers became the two young lovers and comic relief. I got mad for awhile, plotted revenge for awhile, got drunk for a long while, hated you both. And I... and then, I opened my eyes. I stopped feeling so very very sorry for my little self long enough to see two people who really, truly, deserve to be together. Why should I try to break up a set? For all of these years, all of them, you guys never stopped being my friends. And I love you both so very much. To John and Joan. From birth to now and forever. Friends.

JOANNE

JOANNE is in a hospital lounge. Both of her wrists are bandaged. MAY and HELEN enter hesitantly.

JOANNE: Hi there.

MAY: Hi.

HELEN: Hi.

MAY: Hi.

JOANNE: Hi.

MAY: Hi.

HELEN: You said Hi already.

MAY: Sorry.

JOANNE: (pause) Want to see my scars? (She holds up her wrists)

MAY: You scared the hell out of us Joanne.

HELEN: What were you doing anyway?

JOANNE: I don't know.

MAY: You could have talked to us.

HELEN: Why didn't you talk to us?

JOANNE: I don't know. I was just... I don't know.

HELEN: Well.

JOANNE: Nobody else wanted to come?

MAY: I saw your Mom in the hall just now.

HELEN: People are weird Jo. They don't like to talk about it.

MAY: She's putting an apple crumble in your room.

HELEN: It's pretty gruesome you have to admit. No I didn't mean gruesome.

MAY: She said that apple crumble is your favourite.

HELEN: Gruesome is a bad choice of words. I've never known anyone who...

MAY: I like apple crisp myself.

JOANNE: May, what are you talking about?

MAY: I don't know.

JOANNE: Thanks for coming. It's been pretty lonely, well there's my mom but...

HELEN: Are you alright?

JOANNE: No. No.

MAY: Oh. Are you going to a shrink?

HELEN: May!

MAY: My mother says you should see a shrink. (*HELEN hits her*) Hey!!!

JOANNE: Maybe I'll just eat apple crumble.

MAY: Food always cheers me up. Makes the blues just disappear.

HELEN: Maybe she doesn't want to be cheered up.

JOANNE: No go ahead. Cheer me up. Please. Everybody is pretty dreary around here. Almost makes you want to kill yourself.

HELEN: I have to get going.

JOANNE: I'm sorry.

HELEN: No, I really have to go.

JOANNE: Don't go yet. You haven't been here five minutes.

MAY: We'll come back tomorrow, ok Jo?

HELEN: We'll come back soon.

MAY: Bye Jo.

The two leave the scene in a hurry.

JOANNE: Wait!

ASHLEY

ASHLEY runs into the bathroom screaming, with JANE close behind. During the scene ASHLEY primps while JANE watches.

ASHLEY: SCREAMMM

JANE: Ashley, what are you doing in the bathroom?

ASHLEY: Ooooooh Jane did you see them? Did you see them?

JANE: You spend way too much time in the bathroom.

ASHLEY: They looked right at us.

JANE: Who.

ASHLEY: Kevin and Jim.

JANE: Oh. Them. They're just going to play catch with us Ash.

ASHLEY: I can't play catch I'll get all dirty. Look at that. Flat as a board.

JANE: So what.

ASHLEY: Do you think he likes me?

JANE: Who?

ASHLEY: Jim of course. Sometimes you are so stupid.

JANE: He's just a boy Ash.

ASHLEY: Do you think he likes Meredith better than me? I hear she's got her period. And she's got breasts.

JANE: Breasts just get in the way of playing catch.

ASHLEY: Don't you care about boys? You hang around them enough.

JANE: I care about baseball. Boys play baseball.

ASHLEY: Jane... will you do me a big favour? I'll be your best friend.

JANE: I thought you already were my best friend.

ASHLEY: Jane, I'll die if I don't find out if Jim likes me. You've got to find out for me. Will you please ask Kevin to ask Jim? I'll die if I don't find out.

JANE: Ashley you won't die. People don't die because of that stuff.

ASHLEY: My sister says there's this girl in this book, Wuthering Heights? She dies of a broken heart, and wanders the moors crying – "Heathcliff! Heathcliff!"

JANE: What a stupid name.

ASHLEY: I could die and wander the moors.

JANE: What is a moor?

ASHLEY: Wander the moors calling Jim... Jim...

JANE: Why don't I just ask Jim?

ASHLEY: Don't you dare.

JANE: Why don't you just ask Jim?

ASHLEY: Jane. Just ask Kevin ok?

JANE: Alright.

ASHLEY: Thanks.

JANE: Can we play catch now?

TREVOR

It's the weekly "Boys' Night" card game.

LAINE: Look at that! I won again! I can't believe how easy this game is.

BOB: Look at that. She won again.

JOHN: Isn't that great!

TREVOR: Come on guys.

BOB: Isn't that great Trev?

LAINE: I need to freshen up. Can you tell me where your powder room is?

JOHN: First door on your left.

LAINE: Thanks! I'll be right back! Don't get too lonely Trevie. (*She exits*)

BOB: Watch out for the seat.

TREVOR: All right what's going on? You guys are acting like jerks.

BOB: I don't know what you mean. Trevie.

JOHN: What did you have to bring her for? And how come she has to win?

TREVOR: She wanted to come. She said she misses me on Friday nights.

BOB: This is guys' night out. It's always been like that.

JOHN: NO women allowed. That was your rule. Pals, not gals.

TREVOR: It's just this one time. Oh, except for next week.

BOB: Ah HA! What has she got you doing Trevie?

TREVOR: I have to have dinner with her parents. Don't laugh. It's true.

JOHN: Geeze Louise. You are caught.

BOB: Hook, line, and sinker.

TREVOR: I am not.

BOB: Poker comes before woman. Who said that?

TREVOR: Look it's just one...

JOHN: No woman will ever come between me and my pals?

TREVOR: This is different. I'm just...

JOHN: You are a fish in the pan.

BOB: Fried alive.

TREVOR: I am not! Pals still come first. I could get out of it if I wanted to.

LAINÉ: (*she reappears*) Here I am boys. Ready to play another hand?

TREVOR: Laine, I have something to tell you.

LAINÉ: Yes dear? Oh Trevie you have a beer stain on your shirt.

TREVOR: Really? Oh it doesn't matter! Now, it's about dinner. With your parents.

LAINÉ: They are so looking forward to meeting you.

TREVOR: Well... I... you have to understand... fish... hook... line... I...

LAINE: You're not backing out on me are you? You wouldn't do that would you?

TREVOR: No, of course not.

LAINE: Good.

BOB: Nothing comes between me and my pals.

JOHN: Hook line and sinker.

TREVOR: Shut up and deal.

FAMILY

Seven characters in tableau as they are at the top of the play.

ALL: Group project. Mrs. Morton's grade two class. Family.

TREVOR: I hate my relatives.

KATHERINE: Mrs. Morton says we can write anything we want in these journals. I think she wants stuff to snitch with on parent's day. But it doesn't matter 'cause my family is boring. Everybody loves everybody: no bodies in the basement, no twisted sick uncle locked in the attic, nothing neat at all.

ICABOD: My name is Icabod. My parent's names are Ian and Irene. My brother's name is Ira, my sister's name is Ilse. My mom loves introducing our family. "Ian, Irene, Ira, Ilse, Icabod." I think it sucks. Everyone calls me Icky.

JOANNE: Sometimes my daddy takes me to the park. Sometimes he doesn't know me at all.

MELISSA: I see my dad every second weekend.

JOANNE: Not that I care.

MELISSA: He picks me up at 3:30. I take a gym bag and my Snoopy. I already got a toothbrush there. He brings me home on Sunday in time for dinner. He and mom don't talk.

KATHERINE: I wish my parents were divorced then I'd get two Christmases!

BOBBY: My mother makes me wear a snowsuit. All the other kids get to wear snow pants and jackets. I'm the only one who has to wear a baby snowsuit.

JOANNE: Ashley looks so perfect, I'll bet she's got a perfect family.

ASHLEY: I wish I was adopted.

TREVOR: My grandmother has the back room at our place. She's really, really sick. My mother says she's dying only she spells it out whenever I'm in the room. D-Y-I-N-G. When my grandmother dies, I get her room.

BOBBY: I have an older brother and a baby sister. People think it's cute when my sister throws up. Nobody thinks it's cute when I throw up.

JOANNE: STICKY ICKY! STICKY ICKY!

ICABOD: My mom says I have to stop beating up kids who make fun of my name. Dad says I just can't hit the girls. That's not fair 'cause girls are the worst. I told my parents it was their fault I had such a stupid name. I got so mad that I called my dad 'Peein Ian' to show him how bad it was. It didn't work. I got sent to my room.

KATHERINE

She runs into her bedroom and throws herself on her bed.

KATHERINE: I don't want to talk to you anymore! I HATE YOU!!

GRANDPA: Katherine, can I come in?

KATHERINE: No.

GRANDPA: Well, thank you. Mind if I sit down?

KATHERINE: I don't want to talk about it grandpa. I want to be alone.

GRANDPA: What's that? I can't quite hear you.

KATHERINE: Whatever.

GRANDPA: Now then. Was that anyway to talk to your father? You are almost a lady and there you are caterwauling away just like...

KATHERINE: I don't want to talk about it.

GRANDPA: I only yelled at my father once in my life.

KATHERINE: Grandpa...

GRANDPA: And he tanned my hide so hard I couldn't sit for a week.

KATHERINE: What did you fight about?

GRANDPA: I don't remember. Whatever it was though, I was so sure that I was right and he was wrong.

KATHERINE: Grandpa how can he talk about marrying that woman. What about mom?

GRANDPA: Your mother has been dead for 3 years.

KATHERINE: You don't understand either.

GRANDPA: Now hold on miss. Do you think you're the only one involved here? Miss Green has the right to sulk for three whole years?

KATHERINE: That is not fair!

GRANDPA: You may have lost your mother, but I lost my daughter and your father lost his wife.

KATHERINE: You don't...

GRANDPA: Did you think your father was going to erect a shrine and become a hermit? You know what your mother was like. She is probably up in heaven cheering him on. Go for it!!

KATHERINE: Don't you care?

GRANDPA: Of course I care. We all care. Just remember, you only knew her for 15 years. I knew her for 35. That's 35 years of missing I have to do. It's a long time.

KATHERINE: Sometimes I miss her so much.

GRANDPA: She's around. Peeking over your shoulder, mine too. She picks my lotto numbers for me.

KATHERINE: Grandpa she can't do that.

GRANDPA: And why not? She won me 20 bucks last week. In her honour I went to the zoo. We did that a lot, your mother and I.

KATHERINE: I'm sorry.

GRANDPA: Here. I have a picture for you. I don't like that one you keep on your desk. It makes her look like she had horse lips.

KATHERINE: I forgot how pretty she looked in that dress.

GRANDPA: Woman had the biggest lips I have ever seen. She certainly didn't get them from me.

KATHERINE: Will you tell dad I'm sorry I blew up at him?

GRANDPA: I will not. You tell him yourself miss. Do I look like an errand boy to you?

KATHERINE: Not at all.

JOANNE

She is sitting with her comatose father in the garden

JOANNE: There we are, don't want to catch a cold. But I don't think you'll have to worry today. The sun is so warm. Not hot, just warm. A perfect day. The tulips look great Dad. The colours are so beautiful. Mom said you planted them last year. She thought the frost might have damaged them but they look just fine. Mom looks tired. More tired than usual. I came as quick as I could. I went for a walk this morning, down by the river. Everything has changed so much. Would you believe it, I ran into a girl I went to high school with. She's never left town. Helen... funny I can't remember her last name. Anyway she had the most beautiful child, a baby boy with red cheeks and the curliest blond hair you have ever seen.

The house looks a little sad. I think I'm going to go down to the paint store and pick up something for the shutters. You always said that good-looking shutters can hide a thousand flaws. Mom told me you've been like this for a while now. Although she swears you said her name last week. Your face is warm. Are you feeling the sun, somewhere in there? Are you in there somewhere? Can you see me? This afternoon we'll go to the park and watch the kids play on the swings. As long as it doesn't rain. Would you like that? Would you like to go to the park? Please say something Daddy. Anything. Please.

ICABOD

IRA, ILSE, and ICABOD are sitting with arms crossed, not looking at each other.

IRA: I like your hair.

ILSE: It's just a perm.

IRA: It's nice.

ILSE: It was like this at Christmas.

ICABOD: This isn't going to work.

IRA: I was paying you a complement.

ILSE: You didn't pay me a compliment at Christmas.

ICABOD: This isn't going to work.

IRA: Read the letter again.

ICABOD: (*reading*) “My darling Ira, Ilse and Icabod. I love you all very much but I’m tired of the fighting and the screeching and the whining and the childish behaviour.”

ILSE: Childish.

ICABOD: “Your father is turning in his grave.”

IRA: I’m not childish.

ICABOD: “Please get together and settle your differences so we can be a happy family again. Don’t call me, I’ll call you. Love Mother.” Who is she kidding? We have never been a happy family.

IRA: She can’t do this. She’s our mother. She’s supposed to love us unconditionally. Don’t call me, I’ll call you. What is that?

ILSE: I’m 48 years old. It’s inconceivable that I am childish.

IRA: I’m older than you.

ILSE: Icabod can be childish.

ICABOD: Why do I get to be childish?

ILSE: You work with children.

IRA: He works at a university.

ILSE: He’s a teacher.

ICABOD: I’m a professor.

ILSE: Young people are childish.

ICABOD: What are we going to do about Mom?

IRA: What do you care? She loves you.

ILSE: Let’s have her declared insane.

IRA: You can’t do that.

ILSE: Bernard could.

ICABOD: She’s not insane.

ILSE: Bernard could whip something up.

IRA: How do you whip up insanity charges?

ICABOD: What kind of psychiatrist is he?

ILSE: He loves me.

ICABOD: This is not going to work.

IRA: Stop saying that.

ICABOD: Ira, the three of us haven't been in the same room since the Osmond Incident.

ILSE: I knew you would dredge that up. I don't understand why you got so upset.

IRA: I don't want to talk about it. I don't want to talk about it.

ILSE: All I said is that I didn't understand why the Mormons always wear black and drive around in buggies.

IRA: Those are Mennonites not Mormons.

ILSE: Donny Osmond is obviously not a very good Mennonite because he wears leather.

ICABOD: He's not a Mennonite. He is a Mormon.

ILSE: What do they do?

IRA: Two years of therapy down the drain.

ICABOD: Well, they... They don't drink caffeine.

ILSE: What a silly religion.

ICABOD: It's not a silly religion, you can't say that. You can't say that.

ILSE: (*overtop of ICABOD*) It is too. Who ever heard of people not drinking coffee?

IRA: (*interrupting*) Look we have to try harder at this. I'd like to see Mom before she starts shrinking.

ICABOD: All right.

ILSE: I'm doing everything I can.

ICABOD: Let's try and have a normal conversation.

ILSE: Ok.

ICABOD: Ira, you start.

IRA: Ok. Let's see. (*To ILSE*) I like your hair.

ICABOD and ILSE slowly glower at IRA.

ASHLEY

A bridal boutique. MOM is staring in horror at ASHLEY.

MOM: It's red.

ASHLEY: It's beautiful.

MOM: It's a red wedding dress.

ASHLEY: Great isn't it?

MOM: Ashley, when you said you didn't want to get married in white, I was envisioning a pale pink, or maybe even ivory. I didn't expect to see my daughter coming down the aisle looking like a maraschino cherry.

ASHLEY: Red is my favourite colour, you know that.

MOM: I'm very fond of plaid but I didn't get married in it!

ASHLEY: Sounds like a great idea.

MOM: Is Jim going to look like Thor the fire god to match?

ASHLEY: No, he's wearing a black tux.

MOM: Good.

ASHLEY: And alligator slippers.

MOM: What?

ASHLEY: Mom, we talked about this. I don't want a serious wedding. I don't want a wedding at all but if I have to have one it's going to be my way. You have to play nice.

MOM: Nice? I can be nice. But do I have to be nice to alligator slippers?

ASHLEY: Mom...

MOM: I really wished you had let me help you plan this.

ASHLEY: I did just fine.

MOM: You do realise how interesting the wedding pictures are going to be.

ASHLEY: I'm getting a headache.

MOM: My daughter? Oh, she's the one dipped in red paint standing next to the man with reptiles on his feet.

ASHLEY: There is an alternative. With no red dress and no slippers.

MOM: Darling, it can be absolutely anything.

ASHLEY: Oh mom!

MOM: What is it?

ASHLEY: A wedding under water. Everyone can scuba dive at the same time!

MOM: You get this from your father's side of the family!

TREVOR

TREVOR screams and clutches at MARIE.

TREVOR: Pregnant! I'm pregnant? I can't be pregnant, that's biologically impossible.

MARIE: Trevor.

TREVOR: Oh. You're pregnant. You're pregnant. Pregnant. Oh. OH!!!!

GEORGE: I thought you said he'd be able to help.

MARIE: Give him time.

TREVOR: How did that happen? I don't mean how did it happen, I mean how did it happen. I mean you were safe, right?

GEORGE: Here we go.

TREVOR: You were safe right? Answer me Marie. George. What did you do to my sister George? What did you, you low life miserable excuse for a human being. I'LL KILL YOU, YOU NO GOOD...

GEORGE: Help!!!

MARIE: Get off of him Trevor. It's both our faults.

TREVOR: Sorry, sorry. I know George is a good guy. Right George?

GEORGE: Absolutely.

TREVOR: It's an older brother's prerogative to try and hurt someone. On the whole, we don't know what to do so we resort to brute force. Usually works.

GEORGE: If this is how your brother is handling it, what are your parents going to do to me?

MARIE: Shhh.

TREVOR: Are you going to keep it? Give it away? Join the foreign Legion?

MARIE: Trevor. This is serious.

TREVOR: I'm sorry. I'm sorry. It was a feeble attempt at humour. It was sub humour. Below that. Sub sub humour. I'm babbling right?

GEORGE: Right.

TREVOR: Shut up.

MARIE: We need your help Trevor.

TREVOR: Have you told mom or dad yet?

GEORGE: Groannnnnn.

TREVOR: I'll take that as a no.

MARIE: We want you to tell them.

TREVOR: Dad would kill me if I got a girl pregnant. Dead. Everyone in the neighbourhood would go on TV and talk about our father as one of those nice quiet guys who goes on a killing spree. Only they'd say he was justified 'cause his stupid son knocked up his girlfriend.

GEORGE: Groannnnnn.

MARIE: I don't want Dad to turn George into a pop tart.

TREVOR: Are you going to keep it?

MARIE: I don't... we don't know.

TREVOR: You have to tell them. You have to be responsible here. This is a big thing. It's like the goldfish. I killed the goldfish. I came clean.

MARIE: This isn't goldfish Trevor.

TREVOR: It's the same principal. Come clean. You're not a kid anymore.

MARIE: Now you tell me. Great.

GEORGE: Am I going to die?

TREVOR: Relax George. I'll be your silent support. Besides, things always work out better when I don't open my mouth.

MELISSA

MELISSA: (*singing on the phone*) Happy late birthday to you! Happy late birthday to you! I know I'm a rotten daughter and I don't have any excuses. Happy birthday to you. I thought it was kind of cute. So how did it go yesterday? Did you get any good loot? What do you mean "Thanks for the cheap card." I looked for the perfect card

for you. I spent weeks scouring the hallowed halls of Hallmarks across the country just for you. I described you to thousands of mall rats so that they could help me pick out the shining glory worthy enough of celebrating my mother's birthday. I'm not exaggerating. There's a woman in Wawa who is sending you a card.

Mom you're not forty-nine this year you are fifty. You are too. Yes you are. You had me when you were twenty-five making you twenty-five years older than me. I am twenty-five and that makes you fifty. Leap years have nothing to do with it. Besides you have to be born in a leap year to lay a claim on it. Didn't Grandma give you a happy Fiftieth card? She's not losing her marbles. What was the matching present? Fifty carrot peelers. Ok maybe she is losing her marbles. Last year was pretty good, didn't you get 49 pairs of nylons? I'd love to get 49 pairs of nylons. What are you going to do with 50 carrot peelers? I have one thanks.

No I don't have a real job yet. Yes I'm still bent on acting. No I'm not trying to drive you to an early grave. Grandma seems to be doing that for me. Does this mean I'm going to get 26 spark plugs next year or something? I talked to Dad this week. He wishes you a happy birthday. He does. I'm not trying to drive you to an early grave. No he said it quite nicely. Mom... Mom. It's been twenty years mom... No... No... well I could... no... I just thought that... no... uh huh... I thought for your birthday maybe we could... uh huh... Look mom, I have to go. I'll talk to you next week all right? Happy birthday.

BOBBY

BOBBY is standing centre stage.

BOBBY: I was twelve years old the first time my dad woke me up to go fishing. We were at our cottage and he came into my room before it was even light out and pulled me out of bed.

DAD: What are you doing sleeping the day away you lazy sack of bones? Get your clothes on you stupid boy. We're going fishing.

BOBBY: He scared the hell out of me. When I hit puberty I became the creature from outer space. I hated my parents, I hated my sister and brother, I hated my friends. And I was not what you would call an outgoing kid. A polite person like my mom would say that it was just a phase. More correctly I was a fat spoiled sulky brat. Of course I didn't know it at the time. (to DAD) "I don't want to go fishing. I want to sleep."

DAD: Bullfeathers. Robert Templeton, you've been sleeping ever since we got here. Let's go before I start throwing lighted matches at you.

BOBBY: Dad was from the old school. Anyway, away we went. Me grumbling all the way. "I don't want to do this. I want to sleep. I want breakfast. I'm gonna tell mom."

DAD: Ah shut your yap.

BOBBY: Dad had fishing in his blood. His dad was a fisherman and his dad before him. Mom was a city girl and she dragged dad to where she was comfortable. Tall buildings, cars and shopping malls. He let her, as long as once a year during the summer he could drag the lot of us up to the cottage where he could fish to his heart's content.

DAD: Smell that.

BOBBY: Ugh that's awful! What is it?

DAD: Live bait. Now get the lead out, you haven't even picked up your rod yet.

BOBBY: I don't want to and you can't make me.

DAD: You will do as you're told or I'll toss you in to catch the fish by hand.

BOBBY: "Where did you say that pole was?" Every day for two months he dragged me out of bed at dawn, forced me to bait my own hooks, and since I never caught anything, clean his fish.

DAD: Would you look at that bass? So beautiful it brings tears to my eyes.

BOBBY: I thought it was the cruellest punishment I had ever gone through. "Mom, he makes me touch them."

DAD: Stop your snivelling. You better get to bed. We're going out at five tomorrow.

BOBBY: Along the way, something happened. Against every decision to be as miserable as possible, I began to enjoy myself. Dad would talk, about his childhood, about his family, about stories that his dad told him. "You're kidding."

DAD: As long as I live and breathe my cousin Jake caught a fish as big as you. It took off his left hand and he clubbed it to death with a bottle of scotch.

BOBBY: Sometimes we wouldn't say anything. I watched sunrise after sunrise and I noticed how beautiful a lake is in the morning. How quiet and still. I never really talked to dad at home. I'd never really talked to him at all. He was a stranger and I was getting to know him for the first time. And I'll never forget how proud I was when on the last day we were there, I actually caught something.

DAD: Will you look at that? Won't we eat well tonight boy, what a catch.

BOBBY: It was a tiny sun perch. But he brought it home...

DAD: Hey mother look at this!

BOBBY: And it was the best fish I've ever tasted. My dad and I went fishing every summer after that. Mom bought us matching hats and we would truck off into the dark loaded with poles and tackle boxes. Even when I got older and moved away I made sure to get in at least one fishing weekend. And when he was in the hospital, we used to try and put sinkers into the bedpan.

DAD: Now is that one hell of a fish, or is that one hell of a fish.

BOBBY: Tomorrow, I'm going to wake my son up at the crack of dawn. We're going fishing.

LOVE

Same tableau as top of show.

ALL: Group project. Mrs. Morton's grade two class. Love.

TREVOR: Mrs. Morton's got a new boyfriend so she is making us write about love and dating and gross stuff.

ASHLEY: I hate boys.

ICABOD: I hate girls.

TREVOR: I hate group projects. I want to draw pictures. I want to do something about animals of the desert.

MELISSA: I can't wait to start dating. Just like on TV.

ICABOD: I don't really hate girls. I just wish they'd play fair. If Katherine Green socks me 'cause she wants the empty swing, why do I get in trouble when I sock her back?

KATHERINE: ICKY MACINTYRE EATS SNAKES AND WEARS BUNNY PJS!

ICABOD: I changed my mind. I hate girls.

JOANNE: Melissa and Bobby sitting in a tree...

BOBBY: Melissa Koziol kissed me in the playground today.

JOANNE: k-i-s-s-i-n-g

BOBBY: Joanne Klien saw 'cause she was hiding on the jungle gym.

JOANNE: First comes love, then comes marriage.

BOBBY: She says Melissa is my girlfriend.

JOANNE: Then comes Bobby in the baby carriage.

BOBBY: Tomorrow, I'm gonna push Joanne off the jungle gym.

ICABOD: Yep, I'm never gonna have a girlfriend.

ASHLEY: My sister says don't fall in love. My sister says Love is a four-letter word. My sister says love is evil spelt backwards. I told her evil has an I not an O. She told me to shut up and get out of her room.

JOANNE: Shame shame double shame, now I know your boyfriend's name.

BOBBY: That Joanne's a real big pain.

KATHERINE: I think Bobby should go out with me. I'm older than Melissa by four whole days.

MELISSA: I seen my brother kiss. I want to be like Cinderella and go to the ball and have a pretty dress. I'm going to have a perfect boyfriend and we are going to hold hands all the time.

ASHLEY: My sister is going on a date tomorrow. She locks herself in the bathroom and makes faces in the mirror and screams about pimples. Boys can't be worth this much trouble.

JOANNE

JOANNE and DARREN are on opposite sides of the stage facing the audience. They are practising for their blind date with each other.

JOANNE: Hi.

DARREN: Hi.

JOANNE: (bouncy) Hi!

DARREN: (indifferent) Hi...

JOANNE: Maybe more casual.

DARREN: Maybe more masculine.

BOTH: HI!

JOANNE: This is silly.

DARREN: My palms are sweating.

JOANNE: I'm not a teenager anymore.

DARREN: That is definitely sweat.

JOANNE: Why am I nervous over a silly little date?

DARREN: What if she tries to shake my hand?

JOANNE: I'm not supposed to get nervous.

DARREN: What are we going to talk about?

JOANNE: What if he's a talker?

DARREN: The weather?

JOANNE: Maybe he likes movies.

DARREN: Did you get stuck in that rainstorm yesterday?

JOANNE: Have you seen that new movie at the Cineplex?

DARREN: Do you like sports?

JOANNE: Food!

DARREN: Music!

JOANNE: Do you go dancing?

DARREN: Ever been skydiving?

JOANNE: Did you know some spiders eat their young?

DARREN: Did you know it's legal to take home your roadkill?

Pause.

JOANNE: Joanne Klien, this is the dumbest idea you have ever had.

DARREN: I hate blind dates.

JOANNE: I'm no good at this dating stuff.

DARREN: I hate sweaty palms.

JOANNE: I should cancel.

DARREN: Oh...

JOANNE: No...

DARREN: I'm not going to be chicken.

JOANNE: I can do this.

DARREN: I can do this.

JOANNE: Easy as pie.

DARREN: Piece of cake.

JOANNE: Ok.

DARREN: Time to go.

Both turn and look at each other.

BOTH: Hi.

TREVOR

TREVOR is standing. JEN is wrapped around his leg offering the occasional whimper. ANNE and BILL observe the situation before coming over. The scene is a tall building.

BILL: Hey, Trevor, how are you doing?

TREVOR: Oh. Ok.

BILL: Isn't the view great from up here?

TREVOR: I suppose.

ANNE: Trev, isn't that Jen?

TREVOR: Yes.

ANNE: Attached to your leg?

BILL: Do you know why?

TREVOR: She's afraid of heights.

JEN: WAIIIIIIII

TREVOR: I didn't know. I swear I didn't know.

ANNE: Jen, honey what happened?

JEN: DON'T USE UP MY OXYGEN!!!!

TREVOR: Don't use up her oxygen.

BILL: You didn't know she was afraid of heights? How long have you two been going out? Even I knew she was afraid of heights.

TREVOR: It never came up. Do you want to see a movie, are you afraid of heights, it never came up.

ANNE: Jen, it's going to be ok.

JEN: WE ARE ALL GOING TO DIE!!!

BILL: Even my mom knows she's afraid of heights.

TREVOR: Shut up about the heights.

KAREN and JOE stroll over.

KAREN: Hey, guys. What's... happening?

BILL: Trevor didn't know Jen was afraid of heights.

JOE: Everyone knows that.

KAREN: You didn't know that? You've been going out for a month and you didn't know that?

TREVOR: We've just got through our warm childhood stories. We haven't got to fears that make you want to curl up and die yet.

ANNE: What possessed you to take her into a tall building?

KAREN: Hey, Jen, your hair looks great. It's so blond.

JEN: NOT DYED!!!

TREVOR: I was trying to be romantic. She didn't complain when I said the view was great from up here...

JOE: You are right, what a view!

JEN: AGHAGHAGHAG!!

TREVOR: I didn't know.

KAREN: It doesn't happen until she's actually looking out of a high place.

ANNE: Do you remember Monica's? We had to call the fire department to pry her out of a tree.

BILL: We knew and you didn't. That's amazing.

TREVOR: Do you think you can get her off my leg?

JOE: I don't know.

ANNE: Could be tricky.

BILL: She's clamped on pretty tight.

KAREN: Eventually I guess...

JEN gives a small whimper.

TREVOR: Forget it. Just help me to the elevator so we can get her downstairs.

ANNE: Are you sure?

TREVOR: Absolutely.

ANNE: Did you know she's scared of photocopiers too?

ASHLEY

ASHLEY is sitting in front of the TV and calling to her husband who is sick in bed in the next room.

ASHLEY: (*singing*) "Catch a falling star and put it in your pocket" ...JIM... "never let it fade away" ... "save it for a rainy day"... I love the rodeo. Jim ok it's starting. Are you sure you want me to shout out the results like this? Ok. This TV is way too big. How come we have such a big and heavy TV? The biggest and the best. I'm going to go to Peri's tonight and get her portable TV. That way we can watch those poor cowboys gets their brains beat in together. My mother would turn in her grave if she knew I loved watching this stuff. It wouldn't surprise her though. After she met you, nothing surprised her. (*singing*) "For love may come and tap you on the shoulder, some starless night. Something, something, something hold her. You'll have a pocket full of..." oh too bad. Jim the first rider just got trampled on by a bull. I think he's dead. No. No. He's getting up. He's just got the wind knocked out of him. I don't see any blood. No score! No score! Marla came by the store today I think she's stuffing her bra. Either that or she got one whopper of a Birthday present. I wish Peri wouldn't fuss about the girl's looks so. Marla'll be just fine. She doesn't give those boys any slack. It's poetry watching her break their hearts. Pure poetry "Catch a falling star and..." oooooh this one looks bad. This bull is bad. Firefly. What kind of a... Three – nothing, Jim. Are you keeping score? Jim are you sure you're ok? I can't hear you. Is there anything wrong? Jim? I know I'm pretty deaf but... Jim? Jim?



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