

CHARACTERS

Carl	The middle brother, 30's-40's
Mom	60's-70's
Dad	60's-70's
Michael	The older brother, 30's-40's
Jill	Michael's wife, 20's-30's
Stacy	The younger sister, 20's-30's
Jerry	The gentleman caller, 60's-70's
Mrs. Enquist	The neighbor (<i>Voiceover only, could double cast</i>), 60s-70's

PLACE

The living room and front porch
of the Lundeen family.

TIME

The present.
Thanksgiving Day

Act 1

Scene 1: Thanksgiving Day morning

Scene 2: The same day, a little later, before dinner

Act 2

ACT I

Scene 1

(The setting is a living room complete with couch, coffee table, an easy chair, fireplace, bookcase, and a small desk. A golf trophy is on the mantle along with family pictures. A golf putter is leaning against the mantle. Upstage left is a door to the kitchen. Upstage center is a hallway that leads to the bedrooms. There is a dining table upstage left near the kitchen. Downstage right is the front porch of the house, leading to the front door. A window separates the outside porch from the living room.)

A brisk November morning. Carrying a small suitcase, wearing a jacket, and carrying a little newspaper, CARL walks up to the front porch of the house. As he approaches the front porch, he has a conversation with MRS. ENQUIST, the neighbor across the street. He can't seem to break away from her. We don't see MRS. ENQUIST.)

CARL. Yah, it was good seeing ya again, there, Mrs. Enquist.

MRS. ENQUIST. *(Offstage)* Oh, you too, Carl. I didn't even recognize ya. Ya got so big since you were little.

CARL. Yah, well, ya know. I got bigger.

MRS. ENQUIST. (*Offstage*) What size are your feet, now?

CARL. (*Taken aback.*) Ten and a half.

MRS. ENQUIST (*Offstage*) Oh, my Lord! How do ya walk?

CARL. Oh, ya know, like everyone else.... Okay, say hi to Rita for me, there, would ya, Mrs. Enquist?

MRS. ENQUIST. (*Offstage*) You betcha, Carl. And look at your head. It's huge.

CARL. Yah, well, it's ... proportionate....

MRS. ENQUIST. (*Offstage*)... It's huge.

CARL. Okay, you have a happy Thanksgiving, there, Mrs. Enquist.

MRS. ENQUIST. (*Offstage*) Yah, you too, Carl. Say hello to your mother for me, will ya?

CARL. You betcha. (*CARL walks up to the front door and stops. He takes a deep breath. The door is slightly open. CARL pushes the door open and slowly enters.*) Hello, it's me.... Carl. ... Anybody home?... Hello?... Mom?... Mom?

(*MOM enters from the kitchen wearing her bathrobe. CARL sees her, sets the paper on the table, then goes over to hug her.*)

MOM. Oh, for goodness sakes. I thought I heard someone out here.

CARL. Hi, Mom. How ya doin'?

(*They hug.*)

MOM. I'm doin' just fine, Michael. How are you doin'?

CARL. (*Thinks.*) Carl.

MOM. Did I say, "Michael"?

CARL. Uh huh.

MOM. *(Hopeful, looking around.)* Is he here?

CARL. Not yet.

MOM. Oh ... I'm so glad you made it. When did ya get in?

CARL. Just now.

MOM. Uh huh.

CARL. Ya know, Mom, you should really try to lock the door. I just walked right in.

MOM. Oh, for the love of Pete.

CARL. Mrs. Enquist says hello.

MOM. Who?

CARL. Your neighbor.

MOM. Oh, yah.... Is she still alive?

CARL. *(Concerned.)* Yah?

MOM. Oh, I'm just kidding. You're so serious all the time.

CARL. *(Pulls out cake mix from his bag and hands it to MOM.)* I brought you some cake mix. Cinnamon streusel.

MOM. Oh, you're such a sweetheart. *(Looks at her watch.)* Oh, for look at the time. I better get ready. You make yourself at home. You know where everything is.

(She hands the cake mix back to CARL then exits to the bedroom.)

CARL. Alright.

(DAD enters from the kitchen. CARL doesn't see him.)

DAD. Good morning.

CARL. *(Casually looks over to DAD.)* Oh, hey, Dad. *(Startled double take, CARL jumps realizing how wrong this picture is.)* Whoa, jeez!

DAD. A little high strung, are we?

(DAD takes a few steps toward CARL.)

CARL. *(Puts his hand up.)* Okay, right ... right over there is just fine, okay?

DAD. This is how you welcome the person who changed your diapers?

CARL. Mom did.

DAD. Okay, maybe Mom did the changing, but I supervised.

(DAD takes a few more steps toward CARL.)

CARL. *(Puts his hand up again.)* Okay, just ... just give me a minute here, alright?

DAD. Oh, relax, would ya? I told ya I'd be back.

CARL. Yah, well, that was at the funeral. Who'd a figured?

DAD. I wanted ya to get used to me. Work into it slowly.

CARL. Yah, well, this just isn't something ya get used to, alright?

DAD. What isn't?

CARL. Well, besides the fact it was *your* funeral....

DAD. ... Can we please get past that?

CARL. Oh, yah, sure. No problem.

DAD. Good.

CARL. And this sudden attention is because?...

DAD. Oh, come on. Can't I be interested in my own son?

CARL. Yah, that would have been nice.

DAD. Look, I'm sorry I died, okay?

CARL. Yah, well, me too.... And you're haunting me be-

cause?...

DAD. ... I need a favor.

CARL. Okay, well, there it is, then.

DAD. One favor and I'll leave ya alone.

CARL. You'll leave me alone? Well, that brings it back to the old days.

DAD. Oh, come on, have I ever asked you for a favor?

CARL. You never asked for anything.

DAD. Okay, I can tell we're getting off on the wrong foot here. Why don't we just start over?... So, how's everything going, then?

CARL. Things are going just fine.

DAD. Uh huh....What are ya doing these days?

CARL. You're kiddin', right?

DAD. Oh, come on. I'm trying to talk to ya.

CARL. Ya gonna make fun of me?

DAD. No.

CARL. Okay.... I'm still a writer.

DAD. A waiter?

(DAD laughs.)

CARL. See that? Ya just have to make fun of me, now, don't ya?

DAD. I'm kidding.

CARL. Yah, well, you're real funny.... Ya, know, actually, I'm a journalist, so there.

DAD. I thought ya drove a truck for Pillsbury.

CARL. Dad, ya can't tell people ya drive a truck. They won't take ya seriously as a journalist. They'll think ya drive a truck.

DAD. Ya do drive a truck.

CARL. I know. But I'm also a ... *(Picks up newspaper on the coffee table.)* ... ah, just forget it.

(CARL puts paper back on table.)

DAD. *(Picks up paper.)* I put you through four years of college and not one letter. Now you want to be a writer. *(Reading the paper.)* The "Prior Lake Weekly Tattler." *(Acting impressed.)* Well. *(Finding the article.)* Oh, here. *(Reading the paper, making it up.)* "Carl's Random Observations" by Carl Lundeen. "I was driving my truck the other day, when suddenly I hit a gopher. Startled, I spilled hot coffee on my crotch. Boy did that hurt. The end...." Can't wait to see the movie.

CARL. *(Takes paper from DAD.)* It doesn't say that.... Ya know, if you're gonna make fun of me, you can just go back to where ya came from, alright?

DAD. I'm just kidding. Boy, are you sensitive.

CARL. A little encouragement goes a long way.

(CARL grabs the putter and gets ready to putt.)

DAD. Hey, hey, hey. Be careful. That was my favorite putter.

CARL. Yah, whatever.

DAD. Okay, I'm sorry. I'm just kind of nervous about today.

CARL. Why would you be nervous?

DAD. Because everyone's gonna be talking about me. *(CARL gets ready to putt. DAD interrupts him.)* Be sure to play the break.

CARL. What?

DAD. The living room breaks to the right.

CARL. (*Angry.*) Would ya just let me putt!?

DAD. Ya never did take direction well.

CARL. Okay, how about just telling me what the favor is so we can speed this whole thing up?

DAD. I don't know why *you're* so snippy. *I'm* the one who's dead?

(*MOM enters from the bedroom, still wearing her bathrobe. She walks right past DAD.*)

MOM. Oh, would ya look at that. Ya found Dad's putter.

CARL. Yah. Just playing around.

MOM. Boy, did your dad love that putter. He won a lot of tournaments with that, ya know.

DAD. He wouldn't know.

CARL. (*CARL drops the putter.*) Oops.

DAD. Watch it!

MOM. Oh, ya better be careful, dear. (*She picks up the putter and looks around the room.*) I thought I heard ya talking to someone. Is Debra here? I am so crazy about that girl. She's warm and sweet and pretty and

CARL. ... We broke up.

MOM. She wasn't right for you.

DAD. Tell her what happened.

CARL. She met someone else.

DAD. A doctor.

MOM. Oh, you'll find another girl, dear.

DAD. Ya think?

MOM. Your brother is married, ya know.

CARL. Yah, I know. I was at the wedding.

MOM. Of course ya were.

DAD. (*Sadly.*) Is she losing it?

MOM. He'll be here later, ya know.

CARL. Yah.

MOM. With his pretty wife. She's so warm and sweet and pretty.

CARL. Yah, I've seen her.

MOM. I wish you'd meet someone like that.

DAD. She is pretty.

MOM. Looks like your Aunt Noreen.

CARL and DAD. Aunt Noreen?

(*DAD walks over to the bookcase where he sees an old picture of Aunt Noreen.*)

MOM. Thirty years ago. Before she gained the weight.

DAD. Ah, Noreen. The early years....

CARL. ... Mom, you don't have any coffee, do ya?

MOM. Oh, here, let me make ya some, then. (*She walks toward the kitchen.*) I'm so glad you could come. It's the first Thanksgiving, ya know, without (*Holding in tears.*)

DAD. ... Here we go.

CARL. Yah, I know.

MOM. I miss him so much.

(*She goes back into the kitchen.*)

CARL. (*Rolling his eyes.*) Yah, me too.

DAD. That wasn't very sincere.

CARL. Ya want sincere, go in the kitchen.

DAD. Ya know, a little respect would be nice. I am your father.

CARL. I respected you till the day you died. And what did I get for it?

DAD. How about food, clothes, putting ya through school.

CARL. Yah, you're right. What else is there? I'm sorry. You're father of the year.

(MOM returns from the kitchen carrying a cup.)

MOM. What's that, Carl?

CARL. Oh, nothing.

MOM. I thought ya said something.

(MOM hands CARL the cup.)

CARL. Oh, no, I'm just ... working on a new column for the paper. Sometimes I tape record my thoughts. See?

(He takes a tape recorder from his pocket and holds it up.)

MOM. Would ya look at that? A little tiny tape recorder. With little buttons on it. Does it work?

(She tries pushing the little buttons.)

CARL. Yah. *(He takes a drink from the cup.)* Mom, this is hot water.

MOM. Oh, I'm sorry, you wanted *(Thinks.)*

CARL. Coffee?

DAD. Coffee?

MOM. Coffee, that's right. Let me make ya some.

CARL. No, no, that's okay. Hot water is fine. I'll just have

the hot water. It's better for ya, anyway.

MOM. Ya sure?

CARL. Yah.

MOM. It's no problem. Really.

CARL. No, I'm sure.

MOM. Okay, then.

(MOM looks up and smiles.)

DAD. She's going down hill fast.

CARL. Are you okay, Mom?

MOM. Yah, yah, I'm fine.... I was just thinking of the time Dad took me to Charlie's for our 50th wedding anniversary.

CARL. Mom, weren't you and Dad married for just 35 years?

MOM. Seemed like a hundred.

DAD. *(Thinks.)* Is that good or bad?

MOM. I think I'm going to start getting ready. Help yourself to anything ya want. There's Jello salad with marshmallows in the fridge. Put some Cool Whip on it.

(She goes into the bedroom.)

CARL. Alright. *(To DAD.)* Why did ya have to eat so many pork chops?

DAD. It wasn't the pork chops.... It was the bacon.

CARL. Ya see what ya did to her?

DAD. It's not the way I planned it, ya know.

CARL. And you want me to do you a favor?

DAD. Yes. And it has to be today. I only get one chance.

CARL. Wait a minute. This is the *second* time I've seen

you.

DAD. The funeral doesn't count.

CARL. Are you just making this up?

DAD. No.

CARL. Well, why didn't ya ask me at the funeral?

DAD. I couldn't get a word in. All those wonderfully touching, incredibly beautiful eulogies.

CARL. And don't think I got over that, okay. Walking up, sittin' next to me in church.

DAD. Ya screamed so loud they called 911.

CARL. I haven't wet my pants since ...

DAD. ... eighth grade. *(DAD laughs. CARL shoots a look at him. He suddenly stops.)* I'm laughing with ya, not at ya.

CARL. So, what happens if I don't do your "favor"?

DAD. They send me to Purgatory.

CARL. We're Lutheran. We don't have Purgatory.

DAD. Well, it's *like* that. You really want that on your conscience?

CARL. So, why today? Why show up today? Why not ... a month ago?

DAD. I wanted the whole family to be together.

CARL. What, are ya gonna jump out of a cake or something? "I'm back!"

DAD. You're the only one who can see me.

CARL. Yah, what's that all about? I mean, why me? Why not Michael?

DAD. He's busy.

(We hear a knock on the door. The door opens and in walks MICHAEL, Carl's older brother, and JILL, Michael's wife.)

MICHAEL. Anybody home?

DAD. Michael!

CARL. Hey, Michael, Jill.

DAD. The perfect couple.

MICHAEL. Carl, how are ya doin', there?

CARL. *(They shake hands, insincerely.)* Good. Good. How are you doin', there?

MICHAEL. Great. Great. Couldn't be better.

(After an awkward moment, CARL and MICHAEL realize they have nothing else to say to each other.)

CARL. Okay.

MICHAEL. Yah.

(MICHAEL and CARL turn away.)

JILL. Hi, Carl.

CARL. Hey, Jill.

(CARL hugs JILL a little too long.)

JILL. You're looking good.

CARL. *(Enthusiastically.)* Yah, you too. You're ... you're lookin' good, too. Real good.

JILL. Thanks.

DAD. Enough, already. She's married.

(CARL shoots DAD a look.)

MICHAEL. Where's Mom?

(MOM enters from the bedroom, still wearing a bathrobe.)

MOM. Is that Michael and Jill?

MICHAEL. You betcha.

(They hug.)

MOM. Oh, for goodness sakes. I'm so glad you could make it. And Jill, look at you. You're just the prettiest thing.

(They hug.)

JILL. Did I ever tell you, you're my favorite mother-in-law?

(JILL starts to cry.)

MOM. Oh, you. *(JILL continues to cry.)* Are you alright, Jill?

DAD. That's interesting.

JILL. I'm sorry.

MOM. That's okay.... Oh, would ya look at me. I'm just a mess. Ya came early. I'm not ready, yet.

MICHAEL. We wanted to get an early start in case there was traffic through the Twin Cities.

MOM. I'm going to finish getting ready. Can I get ya some coffee?

MICHAEL. No, no, we're fine. Don't worry about us.

DAD. *(To MICHAEL.)* I never did have to worry about you. *(CARL shoots a look at DAD.)* Get over it.

MOM. I'll be out in a jiffy. Go ahead and make yourselves at home. I bought some of those fancy Pepperidge Farm cook-

ies. Sausalitos! Show them where they are, would ya, Carl?
(*As MOM exits to the bedroom.*) So, Michael, are you on call, today?

(*MOM exits.*)

MICHAEL. Yah. I don't think it will be too busy, though.

(*STACY, Michael and Carl's younger sister, enters carrying four suitcases.*)

STACY. Could someone give me a hand, here?

MICHAEL. Oh, sorry. I forgot about you.

(*MICHAEL takes the suitcases and sets them down.*)

STACY. Hi, Carl.

CARL. How are ya doin', Stacy?

(*They sort of half hug.*)

STACY. Fine. Fine. You?

CARL. Yah, I'm fine.

DAD. Okay, we're all fine, then.

MICHAEL. I just love this house. (*Walks around the living room.*) Brings back such great memories.

CARL. (*Insincerely.*) Yah, it sure does.

DAD. Ya better not roll your eyes.

MICHAEL. Remember when Dad used to play basketball with us on the driveway?

DAD. Double or nothing from the top of the key.

MICHAEL. We used to play "Horse." He always let us win.

CARL. I don't remember that.

MICHAEL. Maybe that was just me.

(DAD walks over to CARL.)

DAD. *(To CARL)* Pssst.

CARL. What?!

DAD. What's the deal with Stacy?

CARL. Stacy?

STACY. Yah, Carl?

CARL. Nothing.

STACY. What were you going to say?

CARL. Nothing, honest.

STACY. That I'm getting fat? Is that what you were gonna say?

CARL. No. No, I wasn't.

STACY. I have gained a little weight.

CARL. Didn't notice.

STACY. I'm not outta control or anything.

(Everyone looks uncomfortably at STACY.)

DAD. *(After a few beats. "That's interesting.")* O...kay?

JILL. *(Breaking the awkward moment.)* I remember when your dad took us to the Vikings game.

CARL. Against the Packers.

JILL. We tailgated in the parking lot.

DAD. It was 50 below zero.

JILL. I forgot my gloves so he let me wear his.

DAD. Your hands were cold. You needed them.

STACY. I forgot mine that day, too.

JILL. Oh, no.... He always made me feel so welcome in your family.

(JILL cries.)

DAD. Again?

MICHAEL. It's alright, honey. *(Looks around the room.)* She's just a little emotional.

DAD. *(To CARL.)* At least someone is.

(DAD starts reading the paper on the mantle.)

STACY. I remember Sunday mornings. Waking up, walking into the living room. Dad would be reading the paper. "Dad, Dad, Dad, Dad, Dad, hey Dad, Dad, Dad, hey Dad, look, look, look Dad, Dad, look at this, Dad, Dad, look, look at this...."

DAD. ... I'm reading, honey.

(Everyone looks at each other uncomfortably. MICHAEL looks out the window. He breaks the silence.)

MICHAEL. Well, well, well. I see you're still driving that Pillsbury truck.

CARL. Still driving it.

DAD. Driving Mr. Doughboy.

MICHAEL. Yup. There it is.... Big Pillsbury truck. Right in front of Mom's house.... Right there.

CARL. Pretty cool, isn't it?

MICHAEL. Oh, yah. A real babe magnate.... What do you do, you deliver Pop Tarts to grocery stores or something?

DAD. Actually, it's not that glamorous.

JILL. He's just kidding. "Pop Tarts to grocery stores." (*To MICHAEL, playfully.*) You little kiddler.

CARL. Ya know, I'm also a writer.

MICHAEL. What restaurant?

(*MICHAEL and DAD laugh. JILL playfully hits MICHAEL.*)

DAD. "What restaurant?" (*Laughs.*)

CARL. It's hereditary.

JILL. Oh, that's right. Your mom says you're writing a column for the *Prior Lake Tattler*.

CARL. Yah, I am. "Carl's Random Observations."

(*JILL laughs. CARL shoots her a look. She quickly stops.*)

JILL. You're serious. I'm sorry.

CARL. That's okay.

MICHAEL. That *Prior Lake Tattler*, that's a weekly paper, isn't it?

CARL. Yup. Once a week.

JILL. She says you're trying to get a job with the *Star Tribune*.

DAD. (*Sarcastic.*) Good luck.

CARL. (*To DAD.*) Yah, they have an opening for a writer in the "Living" section.

DAD. Very funny.

JILL. Well, good luck.

CARL. Thanks.

JILL. Would that be a full time deal, then?

CARL. Uh huh.

MICHAEL. So, you'd have to quit your truck driving job, then.

CARL. Yah, if I get it. I'm still waiting to hear.

JILL. I think that's wonderful that you're pursuing your dreams.

MICHAEL. So, does a job like that pay well?

CARL. No.

MICHAEL. Better than your truck driving job, though?

CARL. No.

MICHAEL. Must have some good perks, then.

CARL. No.

MICHAEL. (*Thinks.*) Okay.

JILL. I hope ya get it.

CARL. Thanks.

DAD. Can we please move on?

CARL. So, how's the doctor business?

DAD. Thank you.

MICHAEL. It's been busy. Real busy. I inherited a lot of Dad's patients and it's been nonstop ever since.

DAD. They're in good hands.

JILL. He's been on call all month.

CARL. Don't ya split that with your partners?

MICHAEL. I've been on call more lately. Trying to pay for the new car.

DAD. He got the new Beemer, ya know.

JILL. And the new house.

DAD. It's huge.

MICHAEL. Tell me about it.

CARL. It sounds like things are going real well for ya, then.

MICHAEL. Well, I can't complain.

JILL. He could but no one would listen.

(JILL laughs.)

DAD. And she's funny, too.

CARL. *(To himself.)* Oh, Lord.

JILL. Is Debra coming?

CARL. No, we're kind of not going out anymore.

JILL. Oh, I'm sorry.

MICHAEL. Your choice or hers?

CARL. She, ah, ... wanted to "explore new vistas."

DAD. With a doctor.

JILL. Oh, I'm sorry to hear that. She was so warm and sweet ...

DAD. ... and pretty.

CARL. Yah, I know.... So, how's the teaching going?

JILL. Oh, I'm not teaching this year.

CARL. Really?

JILL. Yah.

MICHAEL. She's taking care of the house. A lot to do, ya know.

DAD. It's a big house.

CARL. Yah.

(MOM enters from the bedroom.)

STACY. Hi, Mom.

MOM. Hi, hon. *(MOM gives STACY a tap on the shoulder and continues to the kitchen.)* Can I get coffee for anyone?

CARL, MICHAEL, and JILL.
No thanks. I'm fine. Had

STACY.
Sure, I'll have some.

some earlier. Maybe later, etc.

MOM. *(Continuing to the kitchen)* Ya sure ya don't want any?

CARL, MICHAEL, and JILL.

STACY

Yah. I'm fine, thanks anyway, etc. I'll have some.

MOM. Last call for coffee.

(She goes into the kitchen.)

STACY. I'd like ... never mind.

JILL. I think Stacy would like some coffee.

MOM. Is Stacy here? *(Sticks her head out of the kitchen.)*
When did ya get here, hon?

STACY. I came with Michael and Jill.

MOM. Oh. *(She goes back in the kitchen briefly then comes back out with only one cup of coffee.)* Now, then. Where were we? *(Takes a sip from her coffee.)* Oh, for goodness sakes. It's hot water.

(She goes back into the kitchen.)

DAD. It's a Marx Brothers' movie.

STACY. I'll help ya, Mom.

(She goes into the kitchen.)

MICHAEL. *(To CARL.)* How has Mom been doing?

CARL. I don't think she's doing very well. When was the last time ya saw her?

MICHAEL. The funeral.

CARL. That was ten months ago! How could ya let her go so long without seeing her?

MICHAEL. Work has been real busy. I couldn't get away.

DAD. A chip off the old block.

JILL. Still, we should have come earlier.

CARL. I saw her a couple weeks ago.

MICHAEL. Yah?

CARL. She's getting worse. I mean, real forgetful, and kind of ... despondent.

MICHAEL. "Despondent"? There's a fifty-cent word.

(STACY enters the living room with a cup of coffee.)

JILL. Michael.

STACY. Who's despondent?

MICHAEL. I'll take a look at her. Sometimes they lose their will to live when their spouse dies.

DAD. Oh, hogwash.... *(Hopeful.)* Ya think I meant that much to her?

JILL. Maybe she's just excited because we're all here.

DAD. She's just excited.

CARL. Actually, I think she just misses Dad.

JILL. Well, this is just what she needs to cheer her up. A nice family gathering.

(MOM sticks her head into the living room from the kitchen.)

MOM. I like jumbo shrimp!

(She goes back into the kitchen. Everyone looks at each other uncomfortably for a few moments.)

MICHAEL. Well ... maybe we should take our bags to our rooms. Stacy, could you, ah ...?

(MICHAEL looks at STACY, then at the bags, gesturing for her to get them.)

CARL. Michael.

MICHAEL. I'll get 'em.

STACY. Thanks.

MICHAEL. You betcha.

JILL. I'll help ya.

(MICHAEL picks the bags up and takes them down the hall to the bedrooms. JILL follows MICHAEL with a small bag.)

STACY. Ya want something, Carl? Mom's got some bars.

CARL. No thanks.

STACY. Okay.

(Stacy goes into the kitchen.)

CARL. *(Into his tape recorder.)* "Jumbo" shrimp, "male" etiquette ... a "nice" family gathering.

DAD. *(Making a "buzzer" sound, as if answering a Jeopardy question.)* What are oxymorons?

(CARL points to DAD acknowledging Dad's correct answer. JILL re-enters the living room.)

JILL. So, what kind of stuff do ya write about?

CARL. Oh, just, kind of, everyday stuff. Mostly, observa-

tions I make about ... people and ... stuff that happens. You know.

JILL. Oh, yah, sure.

CARL. (*Surprised.*) Really?

JILL. No, actually, I don't.

CARL. Well.... (*DAD starts to make snoring sounds, pretending to be asleep.*) Dad, for example.

DAD. Huh?

(*MICHAEL comes back into the living room from the bedrooms.*)

MICHAEL. What about Dad?

CARL. I wrote an article titled, "The man who loved his wife so much he almost told her."

JILL. (*Laughing uncontrollably.*) That is so true.

(*She then stops laughing and starts crying.*)

DAD. Oh, boy.

MICHAEL. Are you okay, honey?

JILL. Uh huh.

MICHAEL. What's the article about?

CARL. It's about emotions and feelings and stuff. You wouldn't be interested.

DAD. *I'm* interested.

(*MOM and STACY enter the living room from the kitchen drinking coffee.*)

MOM. Does anyone want to know what the schedule is today?

EVERYONE. Yah, sure. What's the schedule? Etc.

MOM. We're gonna be eating about three.

(MOM takes a sip of her coffee while everyone looks at her expecting more. After a few beats:)

MICHAEL. Is, ah ... is that it?

MOM. Yah, why? Did ya want to do something else?

EVERYONE. No, no. Not at all. That's fine, etc.

MOM. 'Cause we can do something else if ya want.

EVERYONE. No, that's fine. That's good, etc.

MOM. I just figured that we should eat some time today.

EVERYONE. You're right, absolutely right. Thanksgiving. Eating is good, etc.

DAD. Someone please stop this.

CARL. Mom. Is there anything we can do to help ya?

MOM. Oh, I'm glad ya asked. I need a few things from the store. Michael, would you do me a big favor and pick some things up for me at The Red Owl?

MICHAEL. Sure.

MOM. Thanks.

(MOM takes another sip of her coffee and sighs. Everyone looks at each other expecting more from MOM. After a few beats:)

MICHAEL. Mom?

MOM. Yes, dear?

MICHAEL. Do ya have a list or something?

MOM. For what?... Oh, of course. For crying out loud.
(MOM takes out a list from her dress, and gives it to MICHAEL.)
I'm so forgetful. If my head wasn't screwed on, it would ... oh,

my, it would fall off, now, wouldn't it?... Mrs. Jenson's cat brought a bird home without a head once. (*JILL lets out a little whimper.*) I felt so bad for it. Remember, Michael? You cried for a week.

(*MOM turns and walks into the kitchen. Everyone looks at each other for a few beats.*)

MICHAEL. Yah, okay, I'll, ah, be back in a little bit, then.

JILL. I'll go with ya.

DAD. Stacy, can you please give us a moment?

STACY. (*After a beat, to MICHAEL.*) Can I go too?

MICHAEL. Sure.

STACY. Thanks.

(*CARL gives DAD a puzzled look.*)

DAD. She senses me.

(*MICHAEL, JILL and STACY grab their coats and hurry out the door. MOM comes out of the kitchen and looks at CARL.*)

MOM. They make such a nice couple.

CARL. Yah, they sure do.

MOM. Don't ya just love this time of year. Remember when Dad would hide the eggs and you and Michael and, uh

CARL. ... Stacy.

MOM. You and Michael and Stacy would, uh....What was I talking about?

DAD. Dear Lord.

CARL. How we would look for the eggs that Dad hid. Mom,

that was Easter. This is Thanksgiving.

MOM. Of course it's Thanksgiving. Did ya get mixed-up or something?

(DAD gives CARL a nod, "yes.")

CARL. Yah, I guess I did.

MOM. Oh, I just remembered. I wanted to show ya something.

(MOM walks into the bedroom.)

CARL. Okay ... need any help, there?

MOM. *(From the bedroom.)* No, I got it.

CARL. *(To DAD.)* She's getting Alzheimer's, isn't she?

DAD. No! She's fine. It's the holidays.

CARL. Yah.

DAD. So, ya don't think I ever told your mom I loved her?

CARL. I never heard ya.

DAD. Just because ya never heard me, doesn't mean I didn't say it.

CARL. Did ya?

DAD. Of course I did.

CARL. When?

DAD. *(Thinks.)* It was implied.

CARL. *(Sarcastic.)* Wonderful.

DAD. I want to talk to your mother.

CARL. It's a little late for that, don't ya think?

DAD. I want to tell her that I ... well, *you* know.

CARL. Ya should have thought of that *before* the funeral.

DAD. I wanted to tell her. Really I did. But I was always busy. Look, I told ya, I didn't plan it this way.

CARL. So, what do ya want *me* to do?

DAD. I want ya to tell her for me.

CARL. Uh huh. And when were ya gonna tell *me*?

DAD. You too?

(MOM enters from the bedroom with a manila folder in her hand and some papers.)

MOM. I found it.... I always lose this thing. Should put a string on it.

(MOM sits at the dining room table and opens up the folder. CARL sits next to her.)

CARL. What is it?

MOM. The file on our estate.

DAD. I was wondering when she'd get to this.

CARL. Estate?

MOM. Dad's investments.

CARL. Why do ya want me to see this?

MOM. Because I'd like you to be the Executor and Trustee.

CARL. Uh huh.

MOM. So, you'll decide things like what investments to make, how to manage the estate, final distribution of the assets. Stuff like that.

CARL. Mom?

MOM. Yes, dear.

CARL. I'm Carl.

DAD. Oh, jeez.

MOM. I know who ya are, dear.... Now, what do ya say, will ya do it?

CARL. Well, what kind of investments are we talking about?

MOM. Oh, I'm sorry. I meant to show ya the statements. Here.

(She places a piece of paper in front of CARL. CARL takes the paper and looks at it.)

CARL. Oh, no. No, no, no, no, no.

MOM. What is it, dear?

CARL. That is ... way beyond what I am capable of being responsible for.

MOM. Oh, don't be silly.

CARL. I'm serious. I, ah ... I just ... I just don't think I'm the right guy. This is Michael's job. Thanks anyway, though. I appreciate it. Ya want more coffee?

(CARL starts for the kitchen.)

MOM. Carl?

DAD. Carl!

CARL. *(Stopping.)* Yah.

DAD. Sit down.

MOM. You can do it. It's not that hard. Just keep about half in T-Bills, and the rest in equities. I like to have some in equities because the market has outperformed bonds for seventy years. If you keep the equities in mutual funds, split between large cap value and large cap growth, you'll be fine. Small cap companies are just too risky, in my opinion.

CARL. Why don't *you* do it?

MOM. Oh, I don't know anything about that stuff.

(CARL looks over to DAD.)

DAD. She's a lot smarter than you think.

CARL. Uh huh.

MOM. Besides, I'm getting older, and, well, if something happens to me....

CARL. ... Nothing is going to happen to you.

MOM. Yah, that's what we thought with your dad.... So, what do ya think?

CARL. Well....

DAD. Oh, for Pete's sake.

CARL. Why me? Why not Michael?

DAD. Oh, just let Michael do it, then.

MOM. Why you? I guess because ... you're very careful with money. Ya just don't spend any. I mean, you're cheaper than your dad.

DAD. Wait. What?

MOM. So, I'm not really worried about you losing the money. It's not in your nature. Your nature is to hold on to every single dollar ya ever made and to guard it with your life, God forbid ya ever spend any and enjoy yourself just a little bit....

CARL. ... Alright, alright. I'll do it. Fine. Will ya just ... let me know what I need to do?

MOM. Of course.... Thank you, dear. I'll have the lawyer revise the Will.

(She kisses CARL on the cheek, then turns and drops the folder in a little garbage can by the desk. She then starts walking into the bedroom.)

CARL. Mom?

MOM. Yes, dear.

CARL. The folder?

(CARL retrieves the folder and hands it to MOM.)

MOM. Oh, for look at that. What was I thinking?

(MOM takes the folder and heads into the bedroom.)

CARL. She goes in and out.

DAD. It was an easy mistake.

CARL. I never knew ya had so much money. We always lived so ...

DAD. ... Modestly?

CARL. Yah.

DAD. The country club was expensive.

CARL. Not that expensive.

DAD. I want ya to tell your mom I loved her.

CARL. Are you still on that?

DAD. It's important.

CARL. Okay, so, is this the favor you're trying to ask me?

(MOM comes back into the living room and heads for the kitchen.)

MOM. What favor, dear?

CARL. Oh, I'm just recording.

(CARL holds up tape recorder.)

MOM. Oh.

(She goes into the kitchen.)

DAD. Would you please tell her?

CARL. And why would I be any better at saying it than you?

DAD. Because *I* can't.... I want you to channel me.

CARL. Oh, cripes.

DAD. Channel me with your mom. I want to talk to her.

CARL. I don't know how to channel.

DAD. Come on. It can't be that hard.

(Suddenly MOM pops her head out of the kitchen.)

MOM. Spam makes me laugh!

(She goes back into the kitchen.)

DAD. *(Gesturing to the kitchen.)* Huh? How about it?

CARL. Hey, why don't *you* do *me* a favor and go "rest in peace."

DAD. That's just it. I can't until you help me.

CARL. Why me? I mean, ya short change me growing up, and now that you're dead I can't get rid of ya. Why don't ya just go to Mom directly?

DAD. They won't let me. Penance or something.

CARL. Lutherans don't have Penance.

DAD. Well, what do we have?!

CARL. Hell.

DAD. Oh, for.... Are ya gonna help me or what?

CARL. What about Michael, the boy wonder? He can't be that busy.

(MOM comes out of the kitchen catching the tail end of CARL's conversation.)

MOM. Who's not busy, dear?

CARL. (*Holding up the recorder.*) More later.

MOM. Oh.

CARL. Mom?

MOM. Yes, dear?

CARL. How did ya feel about Dad?

DAD. I don't want to hear about me.

MOM. What do ya mean, dear?

CARL. Well, what was your relationship like?

MOM. Our relationship?... Oh, he was a wonderful man.

CARL. Yah? In what way?

MOM. In a lot of ways, dear.

CARL. I'd like to hear some.

DAD. Keep this up and I'll leave.

MOM. He was a man of great character and integrity. He was cheap....

DAD. ... Thrifty!

MOM. But he was well respected.

DAD. What's wrong with thrifty?

MOM. Ya know what he used to say?... A penny saved, is a bird in the hand.

DAD. That, I don't remember.

MOM. He had so much going for himself. He was honest, smart, handsome, loyal. I never once had to worry about him chasing women.... They don't make men like your dad anymore.

CARL. No, they don't.

MOM. And he was so funny. He used to tell those Ole and Lena jokes. Like the one where Ole was ... doing that thing, and then he ... did something else, and, and then Lena came over and did something, and ... (*She laughs.*)

DAD. ... That was my favorite.

MOM. You kids probably didn't see it as much because he was always working. He was a good provider. We always had everything we needed. And boy could he golf. Well, *you* know. You caddied for him.

CARL. Yah, he was great.

MOM. I was so proud to be married to him. He was a wonderful man. Good in bed too.

CARL. Mom!

DAD. Hey, let her talk. Go on.

MOM. I hope I was a good wife to him.

DAD. You were the best.

MOM. He just went too soon. There was no warning.

DAD. Don't do this to yourself.

MOM. We never really talked about our feelings for each other. I guess it was just understood ... yah, it was understood.

DAD. (*To CARL.*) Tell her I loved her! (*CARL turns away.*) Don't you turn away. You tell her.... Oh, I see. You're punishing me for not telling *you*. Well, shame on you! (*To MOM.*) I'm here, Helen. I'm right here. I wish you could hear me.

MOM. I just miss him so much.

DAD. (*Emotional, to CARL.*) Please tell her.

MOM. I think I'm going to get a smaller bed ... maybe it won't feel so empty at night.

DAD. I'm sorry I left you. I'm so sorry.

MOM. Does that answer your question?

CARL. (*Looking at DAD.*) Yah.

Scene 2

(MICHAEL, JILL, and STACY enter the house. STACY is carrying a small bag of groceries. The living room is empty.)

MICHAEL. We're back!... It's like a morgue in here.

JILL. Michael.

MICHAEL. Anybody home?

(MOM enters the living room from the kitchen, wearing an apron.)

MOM. Oh, for goodness sakes. Michael, you made it! And Jill. I'm so glad you could come.

MICHAEL. *(Looking at JILL, awkwardly.)* We just went out to get groceries, remember?

MOM. Of course, ya did. Yah.

MICHAEL. Where should we put them?

MOM. Oh, wherever.

MICHAEL. Alright.

(MICHAEL motions to STACY who takes the groceries in the kitchen.)

MOM. Did ya have any trouble?

MICHAEL. Nope. We found everything on the list; turkey-dogs, bird seed and sparklers.... What, if I might ask, are we having for Thanksgiving?

MOM. The usual.

MICHAEL. *(Thinks.)* Uh huh.

JILL. Where's Carl?

(STACY comes back into the living room.)

MOM. He went out for a walk. Can I get anybody a drink or anything? The bar is open.

MICHAEL. *(Looking at JILL.)* No, we're fine for now.

STACY. I'll have one.

MOM. Alright, hon.

(MOM doesn't move.)

STACY. I'll make it.

(STACY goes back into the kitchen.)

MOM. It's so nice to see you two.

JILL. It's nice to see *you*.

MOM. So ... when are you two gonna have kids?

JILL. Maybe I *will* have that drink.

MICHAEL. Honey, do ya think that's a good idea?

JILL. Just one.

(JILL goes into the kitchen.)

MICHAEL. We're working on it.

MOM. Any luck?

MICHAEL. Not yet.

MOM. Well, how long have ya been trying?

MICHAEL. About three years.

MOM. Uh huh.... So, are ya having any problems, there?

MICHAEL. No ... well, sort of.

MOM. Well, ya need to wear boxer shorts.

MICHAEL. Oh, no. It's not *me*. It's ... well, Jill is, ah, not

MOM. Producing?

MICHAEL. Yah.

MOM. She should try those fertility drugs. I hear they really work.

MICHAEL. She is.

MOM. Oh, good. Triplets.

MICHAEL. We're being very careful, taking regulated doses.

MOM. I hope so. Those things really do something to your hormones.

MICHAEL. You noticed?

MOM. Oh, yah.... Your dad never did have a grandchild. I hope I have grandchildren.... That's not too much to ask, is it?

MICHAEL. You will, Mom.

MOM. I'd like three.

MICHAEL. That might be a little ambitious.

MOM. I can't count on Carl. He'll never get married.

MICHAEL. There's always Stacy.

MOM. Who?

MICHAEL. Stacy!

(STACY and JILL enter the living room from the kitchen carrying glasses of wine.)

STACY. Yah?

MICHAEL. Nothing.

STACY. I shouldn't be drinking? Is that what you were gonna say?

MICHAEL. No.

STACY. Because, I'm just having a glass of wine. That's all.

MICHAEL. Okay.

STACY. It's red wine. That's okay, isn't it?

MICHAEL. Yah.

STACY. Merlot.

MICHAEL. Fine!

MOM. I don't think Stacy will ever get married, either. She was never real popular with the boys. Kind of a loner. Just like your Aunt Noreen.

STACY. I can hear you.

MOM. Oh, you don't mind being alone, do ya, hon?

STACY. Well....

(CARL walks up to the front door.)

CARL. *(Motions to his head.)* Yah, it's really not as big as it looks, there, Mrs. Enquist. *(He enters the house and sees MICHAEL, JILL and STACY.)* You're back.

MICHAEL. Hey, Carl.

JILL. How was the walk?

CARL. It was good. I ran into, ah, ...

(CARL looks around for DAD who is absent. CARL smiles.)

MOM. What are ya looking for, dear?

CARL. Oh, nothing. I was talking to Mrs. Enquist across the street. Rita is coming in from Milwaukee.

MICHAEL. You had a little thing for Rita, there, didn't ya?

CARL. Oh, yah.

MOM. Is she available?

CARL. Nope.

MOM. Oh, for.... Why do ya do that?

CARL. It's my nature?

MOM. Oh, would ya look at the time. I better get the appetizers ready. My Hotdish Tuna Tango. It's good on crackers. Could you girls give me a hand?

JILL. Of course.

STACY. Sure.

(The women go into the kitchen, leaving CARL and MICHAEL in the living room.)

CARL. Did ya take a look at Mom?

MICHAEL. I'll look at her after dinner.

CARL. Ya think she's getting Alzheimers?

MICHAEL. It's hard to say. She might just be depressed.

CARL. Yah.

MICHAEL. She wants grandchildren.... Three.

CARL. Well, ya better get busy, then.

MICHAEL. Yah, well it's not going to be that easy.

CARL. Why?

MICHAEL. Jill and I are having some problems in that area.

CARL. Hmm. Ya need someone to step in there for ya?

MICHAEL. No!

CARL. So, what is it, then? Bad eggs?

MICHAEL. You're talking about my wife.

CARL. Hey, I'm just trying to help. Jeez.

MICHAEL. Hey, I have an idea. Why don't *you* get married and have kids so *I'm* off the hook for once?

CARL. What about Stacy?

STACY. *(From the kitchen.)* Yah?

CARL. Nothing. *(MICHAEL gives CARL a "you've got to be kiddin'" look.)* Yah, never mind.... Ya know, I don't see why ya think you're on the hook for this.

(STACY comes out of the kitchen and puts a bowl of chips on the coffee table. She overhears the conversation.)

MICHAEL. I guess because Mom and Dad always saw me as the responsible one. The one that met all their expectations. To be the doctor, to get married, to join the country club. And now, to have children.

CARL. Well, don't have children, then.

MICHAEL. That's easy for you to say. Always doing whatever ya wanted to do. Not a care in the world.

(STACY goes back to the kitchen still eavesdropping. Just as she is about to enter the kitchen, the door swings open and hits her in the nose. STACY quickly grabs her nose, and holds her head back.)

STACY. That's a bleeder.

(JILL comes out, not realizing she hit STACY. JILL begins to put napkins around the table, while STACY continues to writhe in pain.)

CARL. I care about stuff.

MICHAEL. Yah, like what?

STACY. *(Still fumbling around.)* I'm alright.

CARL. Well, I care about the Vikings, and the Twins.

MICHAEL. See what I mean?

STACY. Don't get up.

(JILL sees STACY.)

JILL. Oh, my gosh.

(JILL rushes over to STACY, puts a napkin to her nose, and leads her back to the kitchen.)

CARL. I'm just kidding. I care about Mom, I care about a lot of stuff, okay. You need to relax.

MICHAEL. I can't relax. I got a huge mortgage, car payments, a house full of new stuff.

CARL. Yah, so? You make a lot of money.

MICHAEL. Yah, and most of it goes to the IRS. Which reminds me.... Oh, forget it.

CARL. Forget what?

MICHAEL. Nothing.

CARL. No, you can't do that. You can't just say, "forget it."

MICHAEL. Can too.

CARL. Can not.

MICHAEL. Can too.

CARL. Can not.

MICHAEL. *(Thinks.)* Well, I owe a little money to the IRS.

CARL. Really?

MICHAEL. Yah.

CARL. How much?

MICHAEL. About sixty thousand dollars.

CARL. Holy jeez!

MICHAEL. Yah, no kidding. And if *you* ever assume any responsibility, *you* might know what pressure is, too.

CARL. Owing money to the IRS is responsible?

MICHAEL. Just drop it.

(Suddenly, MOM pops her head out of the kitchen.)

MOM. I'm as hungry as a wood tick!

(She goes back in the kitchen. MICHAEL and CARL react.)

MICHAEL. That's a new one.

CARL. Yah.... How did ya ever let that IRS deal happen?

MICHAEL. *(Looking around.)* It's Jill. She's out of control. Ya know, the pressure of not being able to have a baby. And now that she's not working....

CARL. ... Why did she quit?

MICHAEL. I guess because it was too hard to be around kids. So, now, she needs something to keep her mind off it ... like spending money. She just bought a new Lay-Z-Boy so she can watch her "soaps" and cry.

CARL. Does she know about the IRS? *(No response from MICHAEL.)* Are you insane?

MICHAEL. She has enough worries, already. If I start pressuring her, she might ... I don't know ... leave.

CARL. *(Get outta here.)* Nooo.

MICHAEL. You know how hard it is to hold on to a beautiful woman like Jill?

CARL. *(Thinks.)* No, I really don't.

(JILL enters and stands at the kitchen door. MICHAEL sees

her.)

MICHAEL. Shhh!

JILL. It's Tango time. (*JILL dances seductively into the living room from the kitchen with a plate of appetizers in one hand and a drink in the other. While she dances, she sings. She's a little tipsy.*) Hotdish Tuna Tango, tastes real good on crackers, makes me wanna watch the ... Vikings play the Packers....

MICHAEL. ... Okay, hon!

JILL. (*She stops singing.*) Oh, you ... anyone for Tuna Tango?

CARL. Sure. (*CARL takes some Tango. MICHAEL doesn't.*) Thanks.

JILL. Are you talking about my eggs?

MICHAEL. Jill.

JILL. Oh, c'mon. Carl is family. I'm barren. Drink anyone?

CARL. I'll have a beer.

MICHAEL. Is there any pop?

JILL. Pop? Oh, you're just a stuffy man, today, aren't ya. A stuffy, stuffy man.

MICHAEL. I'm on call.

JILL. Oh, that's right. Trying to make more money. Money, money, money, money, money, money.

(*JILL starts to head into the kitchen.*)

MICHAEL. See?

JILL. (*Stops and turns back.*) I bet Carl doesn't worry about money.

MICHAEL. He doesn't have any.

JILL. (*Walks up to CARL.*) Carl, tell me a random observa-

tion.

CARL. Okay. (*Thinks.*) You ever notice that the size of an overhead storage bin in an airplane is just about the size of a screaming baby? (*JILL starts to laugh, stops, then starts to cry.*) Oh, no, I didn't mean it in a bad way.

MICHAEL. Way to go, butthead.

(*We hear a knock at the door. We hear MOM from the kitchen.*)

MOM. Is that somebody at the door?

CARL. Yah, I'll get it. (*CARL goes to the door and opens it. JERRY MYERS enters. CARL is surprised.*) Jerry! Haven't seen you for awhile. Come on in.

JERRY. Hey, Carl. Happy Thanksgiving.

CARL. Yah, you too.

(*MOM and STACY enter the living room from the kitchen.*)

MOM. Is that Jerry?

JERRY. You betcha.

MOM. You all know Jerry Myers, don't ya? Dad's old golfing buddy?

JERRY. "Old"?

EVERYONE. Yah, hey, Jerry, how are you?, etc.

MOM. Jerry is going to be joining us for Thanksgiving. He's my date.

(*MOM takes JERRY's arm. She and JERRY laugh. Suddenly, DAD pops his head out of the bedroom.*)

DAD. He's your what?!

JERRY. Oh, you.

DAD. (*Entering the living room.*) Did she say, "date"?

JERRY. I'm sorry about your father. He was a great man.

EVERYONE. Thanks, appreciate it, that's nice of you, etc.

DAD. What's he doing here?

JERRY. I sure do miss him.

MOM. That's nice of you.

DAD. I could have sworn she said, "date."

JERRY. Your dad and I used to put our long underwear on, go out, and play golf on Thanksgiving.

DAD. (*To MOM.*) It's too early. You should still be in mourning.

JERRY. I sure have a lot of wonderful memories of your dad.

DAD. Can't ya see what he's doing?

JERRY. What a great golfer.

(*JERRY puts his arm around MOM.*)

DAD. He's groping her.

MOM. Oh, you're getting me all emotional.

DAD. That's what he wants. (*JILL starts to cry.*) See.

JERRY. Sorry. Didn't mean to start the flood gates.

JILL. I'm sorry.

JERRY. That's okay. It's good to have a nice cry every once in awhile.

JILL. Uh huh.

JERRY. (*Sees the putter.*) Is that your dad's putter?

CARL. Yah.

JERRY. That putter took more money from me....

DAD. ... Not enough.

MOM. Jerry, can I get you a drink?

JERRY. I'll make it. Where's the bar?

MOM. In the kitchen. Here, I'll show you.

(MOM and JERRY go into the kitchen, arm in arm.)

DAD. See that? He's gonna move into my house, sleep in my bed, and wear my slippers!

CARL. *(To DAD.)* Stop! *(Everyone looks at CARL. CARL quickly takes out his tape recorder. Into recorder.)* Stop all that ... pain and suffering in the world.

STACY. If only we could.

JILL. Amen.

DAD. I want him out of here right now!

CARL. No! *(Looks at the others. Again, into his recorder.)*
No, no, never give up hope.

STACY. Okay.

DAD. He's hitting on your mother and I'm not even cold yet.

CARL. Stop.

DAD. She's vulnerable. She'll give in.... You get him out of here right now!

(CARL chases DAD around the room trying to get him out.)

CARL. That's it! Get out! Get out, right now! Go!

(MOM and JERRY enter the living room from the kitchen, catching CARL in the act. CARL stops and slowly turns to them.)

STACY. He's chasing out pain.

JERRY. Uh huh. Yah, I know what you're going through,

there, Carl.

CARL. Ya do?

JERRY. Yah, I remember when my father died. It was pretty traumatic.

STACY. Were ya close to him?

JERRY. No, I hated him. I remember how the rest of the family reacted, though. Real sad.

DAD. That's inspiring.

JERRY. So, Carl. I read your Random Observation column last week on marriage. "When a man and woman get married, the woman always hopes the man will change, and they never do. While the man always hopes the woman will stay the same, and they never do." You hit that on the head. And you're not even married. Great article.

CARL. Oh, thanks.

DAD. (*Referring to JERRY.*) You're good. You're very good.

JERRY. Michael, is that your new BMW out there?

MICHAEL. Yah, it is. Ya like it?

JERRY. Nice. Very nice. Suits you well.

DAD. (*To JERRY.*) You are ruthless!

JERRY. Jill, I saw you hitting practice balls at the club a while ago. You have really improved.

JILL. Oh, well ... I've been practicing.

JERRY. Well, it shows.

DAD. Pure evil.

JERRY. And Stacy?...

STACY. ... Yah?

(STACY anxiously awaits her compliment. JERRY takes a deep breath and just nods his head. STACY continues to wait, but no compliment. Finally, JERRY turns to the others.)

JERRY. What a family!

DAD. This man is a professional!

MOM. Well.

DAD. We have to talk.

CARL. No.

DAD. Meet me outside or I will be your worst nightmare.

CARL. You already are!

MOM. Did you say something, Carl?

CARL. Oh, um ... the *car*. I forgot something in the car. Be right back.

STACY. Ya want some company?

CARL. No, thanks.

STACY. Okay.

(CARL takes the tape recorder, then leads DAD through the front door to the porch.)

MICHAEL. Has Carl been acting a little strange lately?

MOM. It's the holidays.

(Outside on the porch.)

CARL. What do you want?

DAD. *You* have to get that man out of this house.

CARL. And *you* have to leave *me* alone.

DAD. Why do you want me to leave so badly?

CARL. Maybe it's because you're a constant reminder of how crappy my life turned out.

DAD. What?

CARL. Oh, come on. "Hi, I'm Dr. Lundeen, and I make about 50 billion dollars a year. On the weekends I play golf and I

win every frigging tournament I enter. And this is my son, Carl. He drives a truck and makes random observations."

DAD. Are you through?

CARL. I'm a big dumb truck driver, driving Mr. Doughboy. *(CARL starts pretending he's driving a truck.)* "Where to, Mr. Doughboy? The bakery? Alright, hop right in, there."

(He starts making engine noises while driving around. In the living room, MOM watches CARL through the window.)

MOM. I thought I was losing it.

JERRY. What's he doing?

(They all look through the window to see what CARL is doing. CARL sees her and holds up the tape recorder for her to see.)

MOM. I think he's writing.

MICHAEL. He's what?

MOM. His column. Sometimes he tape records his thoughts. He's got a little tiny tape recorder, with little buttons on it.

MICHAEL. Oh.

DAD. Can we get to me now?

CARL. Thank God Michael stepped up to the plate. Ya finally got your doctor, and your country club man ya wanted.

DAD. Alright, fine. If ya want me to go so badly, I'll make a deal with ya. Get "back-slappin'" Jerry out of my house, and I'll leave ya alone.

CARL. Okay, so.... Is this the favor you're asking me or is it the other one about Mom?

DAD. *(Thinks.)* Both.

CARL. Oh, come on.

DAD. I need two favors now.

CARL. I'll give ya one. Make a decision.

DAD. We can't do the one with Mom until Jerry's gone. He's in the way.

CARL. Why do you have a problem with Jerry, anyway?

DAD. He's a weasel. And he's moving in on your mother.

CARL. So?

DAD. "So?" He'll ... he'll get her to marry him.

CARL. Oh, for crying out loud.

DAD. Then, he'll glom on to her money like a leach. And he'll take your inheritance.

CARL. I don't care about the inheritance.

DAD. I did not raise you well. *(Thinks.)* Your brother cares about the money.

CARL. Yah, but I don't care about him. Well, I do, but in kind of a brotherly way.... What am I talking about? He made my life a living hell.

(CARL picks up a rock and throws it at the car.)

DAD. Not the Beemer! *(We hear a loud "clunk.")* Oh, that wasn't good.

CARL. No, it sure wasn't.

DAD. Okay, maybe you don't care about your brother. But you care about your mom, and she cares about your brother. So do it for Mom.

CARL. Ya know, I think you're jealous.

DAD. That's absurd.

CARL. You can't stand the thought of another man being with Mom can ya?

DAD. Ya know what? You're wrong. I love your mother very much. But she's been going down hill since I died. And right now what she needs is her family to support her. Not some "Joy Ride Jerry" who might get her hopes up then dump her like yesterday's coffee grounds. That would kill her for sure. Is that what you want?

CARL. No.

DAD. Then get him the hell out of here.

CARL. If I do that, you'll leave?

DAD. I promise.

CARL. I mean really leave this time.

DAD. Cross my heart, hope to die ... again.

CARL. Gone forever.

DAD. Oh, would ya just do it, already!

CARL. Okay, alright ... I can't believe it.

DAD. It's for the best.

CARL. (*Up to Heaven.*) Forgive me for what I am about to do.

(*CARL enters the front door. Everyone looks at CARL.*)

DAD. Fasten your seatbelt, gigolo boy!

ACT II

Scene 1

(Everyone is seated around the table except for STACY who is sitting at a small TV tray by herself. Dinner is almost over.)

JERRY. That sure was good, Helen.

EVERYONE. Sure was. Real good, Mom. etc.

STACY. May I have another corndog?

MOM. Turkeydog, dear.

(Everyone ignores STACY's request for the turkeydogs.)

JERRY. Turkeydogs on Thanksgiving. Helen, you are an original.

MOM. *(Thinks.)* Why's that?

(Everyone reacts. After a beat, DAD notices STACY sitting by herself.)

DAD. *(To CARL.)* Did Stacy always sit by herself?

JERRY. Here's a good one. This guy walks up to your dad on the practice range and says, "hey, doc, my golf game has been terrible all year. Any suggestions?" Your dad says, "take two

weeks off then quit.”

(Everyone laughs except STACY and CARL.)

DAD. He’s relentless.

JERRY. His one liners were classic. He used to say, “I hate this game, but it’s the only fun I have.” *(Everyone laughs but STACY and CARL.)* “I can play better than this, but I never do.” *(Everyone laughs but STACY and CARL.)* “I’m playing worse and worse every day, and today I played like next month.”

(Everyone laughs.)

DAD. *(Up to Heaven.)* Please take me back.

(As they laugh, STACY picks up a butter knife and pretends like she’s cutting her wrist. MICHAEL notices her.)

MICHAEL. Stacy, what are ya doing?

STACY. Cutting my wrist.

MICHAEL. That’s a butter knife.

(JILL, a little tipsy, goes over and sits with STACY.)

JILL. Ya want some company?

STACY. Okay.

JERRY. Everyone at the club sure misses Carl. Carl Senior, that is.

CARL. Actually, our middle names are different. I’m not really a Junior.

DAD. Don’t forget your mission.

CARL. So, Jerry. What are ya doing these days?

JERRY. You mean for recreation, or for leisure?

(He laughs. JILL laughs with him then stops suddenly.)

DAD. See that? A deadbeat.

JERRY. I'm retired. I spend a lot of my time golfing.

CARL. I forget. Do ya have any kids?

JERRY. Two. Janet and Mark, both married. Three grandchildren!

(JILL cries when she hears "three grandchildren.")

JILL. Ohhh.

DAD. Here we go.

MOM. You are so lucky.

JERRY. Yah, I am. Children are great, aren't they? Especially grandchildren. You can go home and they're not there.

JILL. Ohhh.

JERRY. Are you alright, Jill?

JILL. *(In tears.)* There's just so much pressure. The country club, the auxiliary. You can't make eggs when there's so much pressure.

JERRY. Can't you just put them in boiling water?

DAD. Uh oh.

JILL. *(Turns to JERRY.)* That would kill them!... Murderer!

MICHAEL. Alright, Jill. That's enough. *(MICHAEL gets up to lead JILL into the bedroom.)* She isn't feeling well. It's, ah ... the flu. Why don't we take a little nap, huh, honey?

JILL. *(Getting up, emotional.)* This isn't me. It's the drugs talking.

(JILL walks with Michael into the bedroom.)

MICHAEL. Here, we go.

JILL. I need stronger drugs.

MICHAEL. Into the bedroom.

JERRY. I hear ya, Jill. I was at Woodstock.

(JERRY mimes smoking a joint. He then looks around and sees that no one is laughing.)

DAD. That scares me.

JERRY. So ... how about you, Carl? You were dating someone this summer, weren't ya?

CARL. She died.

MOM. Carl.

CARL. I mean, the relationship died. Didn't work out.

JERRY. That's how I felt about my second wife. What a shrew. She took everything. Cleaned me out. You know why divorces are so expensive? Because they're worth it.

(He laughs. CARL is very uneasy.)

DAD. What are ya waiting for?

CARL. Mom?

MOM. Yes, dear?

CARL. Can you help me with something, outside?

MOM. What is it?

CARL. Um ... it's, my eye. I got something in my eye.

MOM. Can Stacy help you?

(STACY gets up to help.)

CARL. No. I really need *you*.

(STACY sits down.)

MOM. Alright. Stacy, keep Jerry company, will ya?

STACY. Okay.

(CARL leads MOM out the front door to the porch. DAD follows. STACY and JERRY look at each other uncomfortably, not saying a word. MICHAEL comes out of the bedroom and goes into the kitchen.)

MICHAEL. *(To JERRY and STACY, on the way to the kitchen.)* I'm just gonna get Jill some coffee. It's good for the flu.

MOM. Let me take a look, dear.

CARL. Oh, it's gone. See, ya got it.

MOM. Oh, that's good.

(She starts to head back in.)

DAD. You're losing her.

CARL. Uh, Mom. Jerry is, ah, ...

MOM. He's funny, isn't he?

CARL. Yah, yah, he's funny.... Um, Jerry is "just a friend," right?

MOM. Yah, a good friend. Your dad and I have known Jerry for twenty years.

CARL. *(To DAD.)* So, you're ... "just friends" and that's it, then?

MOM. Yah, friends. Jerry was there when your dad died, ya know.

DAD. Why did she have to say that?

MOM. Is your eye okay, dear?

CARL. Yah, yah, it's fine. Thank you.

MOM. You're welcome. *(Looks out to Beemer.)* Is that a dent in Michael's new car?

CARL. I think that's just a shadow.

DAD. A big, deep shadow.

MOM. Oh.... Can we go in, then? It's cold out here.

CARL. Oh, yah, sure.

MOM. Okay.

(She starts for the door.)

DAD. *(To CARL.)* She's going inside!

MOM. *(Turns back to CARL.)* You coming?

CARL. Yah, in just a minute.

MOM. Alrighty, then.

(MOM goes back inside leaving CARL on the porch. DAD stares at CARL.)

CARL. Don't look at me like that.

DAD. Ya never did have the killer instinct.

CARL. Hey, I'm trying, alright.

(MICHAEL goes into the bedroom with coffee.)

DAD. Maybe I should just get Michael to do it.

CARL. Oh, that's good. Yah. Play the Michael card on me.

DAD. If the shoe fits.

CARL. Ya know, it might occur to you that Jerry is just here

for, oh, maybe, Thanksgiving dinner?

DAD. That's what he wants ya to believe. This man is a pro.

CARL. Yah, well, Mom seems a lot happier since the "pro" got here.

DAD. And bacon makes ya happy, too, until it kills ya. Now get back in there and finish him off.

(CARL and DAD enter the living room from the porch. CARL sits down at the table.)

MOM. Things are not usually this strange around here.

JERRY. Oh, don't worry about it. By definition, any family with three or more people is dysfunctional.

(MICHAEL enters the living room.)

MOM. I have an idea. Why don't we all go around the table and say what we're thankful for?

(CARL, MICHAEL and STACY all grumble at MOM's idea.)

JERRY. I think that's a great idea. I'll go first.... I am thankful to be spending Thanksgiving with the Lundeen family. You have all been so very gracious and I thoroughly enjoyed myself.

DAD. Where's my shovel?

MOM. Michael?

MICHAEL. Well ... I'm thankful for a wonderful family, and the chance to get together today for Thanksgiving.

DAD. *(After a beat.)* That's weak.

MOM. That's nice, dear.

CARL. Um, I'm thankful for a lot of things.... Especially for such a wonderful mother. Super Mom. Making breakfast for us every morning. Dinner every night. Ya kept the house immaculate, drove me to practice, took care of me when I was sick, and ya never complained. Not once. Ya always made me feel so special. And ya know, I've been very selfish. Because I never said thank you. So, thank you for being such a perfect mom.

MOM. (*Emotional.*) That was beautiful. Thank you, dear.

MICHAEL. (*Raises his hand.*) Can I go again?

MOM. No.

CARL. And I will do anything in my power to protect you from anyone who might try to harm you or take advantage of you in any way.

DAD. It's a start.

MOM. Thank you, dear.... Well, I'm, ah, ... ya made me cry.... Alright, my turn. I'm thankful for my family. You have all made me so very happy. I couldn't have a better life. And I'm thankful for your father. I know we all wish he were here right now. But, of course, he's in a better place.

DAD. Wishful thinking. Right, Carl?

CARL. Uh huh.

MOM. Without your dad, none of you would be possible. Well, *you* would, Jerry. And the one in the bedroom.

MICHAEL. Jill.

MOM. Right. Your dad was so special to me and to everyone who touched his life.... No one will replace your father.... Anyone want pie? (*She starts to get up.*) Oh, I forgot the Cheese Whiz.

STACY. Mom, it's my turn.

MOM. Oh, I'm sorry, dear. Go ahead.

(She sits back down.)

STACY. Well ... I'm thankful for Mom and Dad, may he rest in peace. For my brothers, and ... I'm pregnant.

(Everyone stops and stares in silence, stunned at what they just heard. DAD clenches his left hand and puts his right hand over his heart as if having a heart attack. He finally drops to the floor, face down.)

CARL. *(To DAD.)* Quit fooling around.

STACY. I'm not. I'm really pregnant.

MOM. Oh, my.

MICHAEL. Are ya sure? I mean, sometimes those pregnancy tests are unreliable.

STACY. I went to a doctor.

MOM. Well ... who's the husband?

(DAD regains consciousness and raises his head off the floor.)

STACY. There is no husband.

(DAD groans.)

MOM. I see.

STACY. I'm gay.

(DAD falls back to the floor, unconscious. Everyone else is in shock.)

MOM. I'm not really sure how to respond to that.

CARL. How can ya be pregnant *and* gay?

(A groggy JILL walks into the living room with a cup of coffee.)

JILL. Did I miss anything?

MICHAEL. Stacy is pregnant.

CARL. And gay.

JILL. Oh. (*Casually takes a sip of coffee.*)

MOM. Are ya sure you're gay?

STACY. Yah.

MOM. How do ya know?

CARL and MICHAEL. Mom!

MOM. Maybe it's just a phase.

STACY. It's not a phase.

MOM. How do ya know?

STACY. I just do.

MICHAEL. Didn't ya use any protection?

STACY. No.

JERRY. Why don't I go to the store and get some ... Cheese Whiz?

(JERRY gets up and heads for the door.)

JILL. I'm sorry I thought you were a murderer, Jerry.

JERRY. Oh, no problem. I get that all the time.

(JERRY grabs his coat and heads out the door.)

MOM. How can ya be so irresponsible?!

MICHAEL. Mom, I'm a doctor. Let me handle this.... How

can ya be so irresponsible?!

CARL. Michael.

STACY. Ya said ya wanted grandchildren.

CARL. Ya did say that, Mom.

MOM. Yah, but

STACY. ... And no one else was stepping up to the plate.

CARL. She's right, there, Mom. *(Points at MICHAEL.)*

MICHAEL. It's not my fault.

STACY. And I'm getting older. My eggs are drying up.

JILL. *(Crying.)* Ohhh!

(JILL exits to the kitchen.)

STACY. Sorry.

MICHAEL. Well, how did it happen? I mean, how did ya ...

(Motions with hands while thinking of the right words to say.)

STACY. ... Well, I wanted to have children, ya know, to take care of and pay attention to and stuff.

MICHAEL. And?

STACY. And I was kind of ... experimenting.

MICHAEL. What kind of a sick, twisted world do you live in?

STACY. Well, I wanted to make sure I was gay.

CARL. Did ya like it?

MICHAEL. Don't encourage her ... did ya?

STACY. No, it was awful.

(DAD regains consciousness and raises his head up.)

MOM. Maybe it was just the guy.... Was it a guy?

STACY. No, it was a turkey baster! *(DAD, MICHAEL and*

CARL groan. DAD falls back down to the floor.) Of course it was a guy. What do ya think I am?

MICHAEL. We know what you are.

CARL. It could have been a turkey baster, ya know, with all the technology and everything.

MICHAEL. You're not helping.

MOM. You're not gay, dear. Who wants pie?

STACY. Yes, I am!

MICHAEL. Prove it.

CARL. *(To MICHAEL.)* What are ya doing?

STACY. Ya want to see my tattoo of a testicle with a knife sticking through it?

MICHAEL. Okay! Alright! Let's just take a step back, here.

MOM. My family is completely out of control.

MICHAEL. Let's just gather ourselves for a minute.... How pregnant are you?

STACY. One hundred percent.

MICHAEL. When are ya due?

STACY. In six months. May.

MICHAEL. Well, how do ya plan to take care of the baby?

STACY. Feed it. Change its diapers. The usual.

MICHAEL. No, I mean.... What do you do again?

STACY. I'm an Environmental Hydroponic Engineer.

MICHAEL. A what?

STACY. I can afford the baby.... And I go to movies, and I travel, and I buy groceries. I even have an opinion.

MICHAEL. Really?

STACY. Yah.

MOM. You'll have to move home.

STACY. No!

MOM. Don't be silly. Ya can't take care of the baby by

yourself.

STACY. I don't want to move home.

MOM. You're being ridiculous.

CARL. Mom, she probably has a life partner.

MOM. A what?

CARL. A woman friend.

MOM. Oh, my.

STACY. I don't have a "life partner."

(DAD slowly gets up.)

DAD. Is this what ya call "payback"?

MOM. When did ya decide to be gay?

STACY. It's not a decision ya make. I didn't choose to be gay.

MICHAEL. It's hereditary, Mom.

MOM. Hereditary?... Must be from your dad.

DAD. Excuse me?

CARL. *(To MICHAEL.)* Ya know, this is the most I ever heard Stacy talk.

MICHAEL. It's just a means of getting attention. A cry for help, if you will. Exhibiting standard behavioral mannerisms for that sibling cohort. Very common with the youngest child when there are two dominant older brothers.

STACY. I can still hear you.

CARL. Would ya quit with all that doctor crap?

MICHAEL. Oh, sorry. I guess Mr. Truck Driver might have a more scientific explanation. *(Hick southern accent.)* "She went and got a lube job." Or maybe ya made some "random observation" about her behavior that I missed.

CARL. Quack.

MICHAEL. Illiterate.

(JILL enters from the kitchen.)

MOM. Now, boys.

STACY. I don't feel very well.

MOM. What's wrong?

MICHAEL. Morning sickness.

STACY. No, listening to you two. Excuse me, I think I'm gonna barf.

JILL. Ya need any help?

STACY. Okay.

(As STACY approaches the hallway, she passes DAD.)

DAD. Stacy, what happened?

STACY. *(Stopping.)* Did you say something, Carl?

CARL. No, no. It was just a ... cold breeze.

STACY. Oh.

(STACY and JILL disappear down the hallway.)

MICHAEL. Mom, would it be okay to take a look at you for a minute? Check your pulse, blood pressure, that sort of thing?

MOM. If ya think ya need to.

CARL. I'll go check on Stacy.

(CARL exits down the hallway. He nods for DAD to go with him.)

DAD. Go ahead. *(He looks around the room.)* Hey, Jerry's gone!

(DAD stays. MICHAEL opens up his doctor bag and takes out a blood pressure gauge, a tongue depressor, a stethoscope, and an ear light. He begins to give MOM a check-up.)

MICHAEL. Mom, try not to worry about Stacy. She'll be alright.

MOM. It's all so sudden.... I wasn't prepared for that.

MICHAEL. Well, it's hard to prepare for something like that.... She'll be okay.

MOM. I know she will. She's always been able to take care of herself.... At least I get a grandchild.

DAD. A grandchild.

MICHAEL. That's right, you get a grandchild. That's good news.

MOM. Take some pressure off Jill. Maybe she won't cry so much.

DAD. You noticed too?

MICHAEL. Yah.... Mom, I was wondering.... Jill and I got ourselves in a little bit over our heads with the mortgage and all, and

MOM. ... Over your heads?

DAD. What now?

MICHAEL. Yah. We spent a little more money than we should have and, well

MOM. ... Do ya need money?

MICHAEL. It's nothing to get alarmed about or anything....

MOM. How much do ya need?

MICHAEL. Sixty thousand dollars.

MOM and DAD. Oh, my God!

(CARL enters the living room. DAD "shushes" him. He quietly

moves behind MICHAEL and MOM to listen. MICHAEL and MOM don't notice CARL.)

MICHAEL. It's not that bad. It's really not.

MOM. What's it for?

MICHAEL. Well, we didn't realize how much our taxes would be and

MOM. ... Taxes?

DAD. Dear Lord!

MICHAEL. Yah, and we didn't withhold as much as we should have.

MOM. You owe money to the IRS?!

MICHAEL. It's not that bad.

MOM. Ya keep saying that.

MICHAEL. The money isn't due for a couple months.

MOM. Well.... How did all this happen?

MICHAEL. It was Jill.

MOM. What?

DAD. Always blame the woman.

MICHAEL. Well, there's been a lot of stress not being able to have children.

DAD. Adopt! Get Jill off the hormones.

MICHAEL. And with all the pressure, one thing led to another, and, before we knew it

MOM. ... Who's pressuring you?

MICHAEL. You.

MOM. Me? Oh, you're being silly.

MICHAEL. Well, you wanted grandchildren.

MOM. I'm going to get a grandchild, from Stacy, my gay daughter.

MICHAEL. Well, this happened *before* that.

DAD. *(To CARL.)* He really has no people skills.

MOM. *(Thinks.)* Michael?

MICHAEL. Yah, Mom?

MOM. Do ya think, maybe, that considering I just learned my daughter is pregnant and gay ... you might have waited a little while before breaking this to me?

MICHAEL. I'm sorry, Mom. I really didn't plan it this way.

MOM. *(Thinks.)* Alright, dear. I'll do what I can to help ya out.

MICHAEL. Thanks, Mom.

MOM. But you're going to have to ask Carl. He's the trustee of the estate.

MICHAEL. Carl? *(CARL starts whistling, "We're in the Money." MICHAEL looks around and sees CARL.)* Carl?

CARL. Yah, that's what I said.

MOM. I'm sure there's something he can do for ya. Are ya through, dear? I think I need to go and lie down.

MICHAEL. Yah, I'm through. You're blood pressure is a little high.

DAD. *(No kidding.)* Noooo!

MICHAEL. You'll be just fine.

MOM. Thanks.

CARL. Thanks again for the great dinner, Mom.

MICHAEL. Yah, thanks.

MOM. You're welcome.

(MOM exits through the bedroom hallway. MICHAEL and CARL are left looking at each other.)

DAD. This should be good.

CARL. Well, well, well ... well, well, well, well, well ...

well, well, well, well, well....

MICHAEL. ... Alright ... okay, I'm sorry.

CARL. Excuse me?

MICHAEL. Would ya just give me a break?

CARL. Ya know, I don't know what that means 'cause I'm just a dumb trucker, and I don't know nothin' 'cause I'm stupid.

MICHAEL. You're not stupid. You know that. In fact you're very smart. Ya just haven't applied yourself as well as ya could.

CARL. Ya know, seeing as how I am the trustee of the estate and you need money right now, ya might want to consider kissing my butt a little more.

DAD. I'll be over here if ya need me.

MICHAEL. How did you get selected as trustee?

CARL. Oh, I don't know. Maybe because Mom knew I would never get myself into the kind of mess you got yourself into.

MICHAEL. Alright, fine.... *(Half sincerely.)* I'm sorry I treated ya poorly, now can ya please help me out?

CARL. How much did ya need again?

MICHAEL. Sixty thousand dollars.

CARL. *(Over-reacting.)* Oh, my God!

MICHAEL. Would ya knock it off. I feel bad enough about it.

CARL. Yah, well, you need some tough love, there, if you're gonna learn your lesson.

MICHAEL. I've learned my lesson, okay? Now, can we please see if we can do this, or I'll have to figure something else out.

CARL. Alright, just hold on for a second. *(Thinks.)*

DAD. Your mother can give money to you kids, tax free.

CARL. Isn't there something that says ya can give money to

your kids tax free?

MICHAEL. Yah, I think ten thousand dollars a year.

DAD. Close enough.

CARL. So, if Mom says, "yes," she can give ya ten thousand dollars tax free.

DAD. Right.

MICHAEL. Right.

DAD. Jill too.

CARL. How about to Jill? Can she give ten thousand to Jill?

MICHAEL. Yah, I think the spouse, too. I'm pretty sure.

DAD. Correct again.

CARL. By the way, why don't you adopt? Get Jill off those hormones.

MICHAEL. Yah, yah, fine. Go on.

(CARL looks at DAD.)

DAD. I wasn't that bad, was I?

CARL. Okay, so she can give *you* ten thousand and she can give *Jill* ten thousand.

MICHAEL. *(Excited.)* Alright, so that's twenty thousand dollars.

DAD. Per year.

CARL. That's twenty thousand a year, right?

MICHAEL. Right.

DAD. Now, you're getting it.

CARL. And when do ya need the money?

MICHAEL. January.

CARL. Okay, so, if ya don't need the money until January, she can give ya twenty thousand now and another twenty thousand after the first of the year.

MICHAEL. (*Real excited.*) Okay, so that's forty thousand.

CARL. Ya need how much?

MICHAEL. Sixty thousand.

CARL. Holy jeez!

MICHAEL. Would you stop that?!

CARL. Just relax, would ya?

MICHAEL. (*Tighter than a drum.*) I am relaxed!

DAD. This is relaxed?

CARL. (*Thinks.*) Okay, I got it.

MICHAEL. Yah, yah?

CARL. Sell your car.

MICHAEL. Not the Beemer.

DAD. Anything but the Beemer.

CARL. The car is not as ... perfect as you might think.

MICHAEL. Jill loves that car.

CARL. Get a Buick.

MICHAEL. Ughh!

CARL. Well, ya can always take out a second mortgage....

Unless ya don't need the money.

MICHAEL. I need the money, okay?

CARL. Yah, that's what I thought.

DAD. Okay, ya won, already.

CARL. Yah, I, ah, I wouldn't worry about it. I think we can work it out, if ya can make a few sacrifices.... That is, if Mom approves.

MICHAEL. You'll put in a good word for me?

CARL. (*Looking at DAD.*) Ya know, we do have a situation that might crater this whole deal.

MICHAEL. What's that?

CARL. Jerry.

MICHAEL. What about him?

CARL. I think Mom likes him.

MICHAEL. So?

CARL. "So"? Jerry is a con artist. The guy has been married twice. He's broke. A guy like Jerry preys on people like Mom. And Mom is vulnerable right now. If Jerry gets his mitts on her, he'll clean her out. Which means you get nothing.

DAD. Very nice.

MICHAEL. Where did ya get that?

CARL. Dad.

MICHAEL. What?

CARL. I mean ... think about it. It hasn't even been a year since Dad died. Jerry is smelling an opportunity.

MICHAEL. That bastard!

CARL. (*Looks out window.*) You don't want Jerry to take your money, now, do ya?

MICHAEL. Where is that sleazebag?!

(*We hear a knock at the door.*)

CARL. Come in! (*JERRY enters carrying a small grocery bag.*) Hey, Jerry.

JERRY. Got the Cheese Whiz!

(*He holds up the bag with the Cheese Whiz.*)

DAD. Cheese for a rat.

MICHAEL. Hey, Jerry.

JERRY. Where's Helen?

CARL. She's resting. Give us "guys" a chance to talk.

MICHAEL. "Guy" talk.

JERRY. Okay.

MICHAEL. So, Jerry, you think you'll ever get married again?

JERRY. Maybe. If I can find someone who will have me.

MICHAEL. I'll bet. Someone you can win over with your "Jerry" charm, capture her heart, marry her, then take all her money and fly to Acapulco.

DAD. This is great.

JERRY. Excuse me?

MICHAEL. What are your intentions with Mom?

JERRY. What?

MICHAEL. Your intentions with Mom. What are they?

JERRY. I'm not sure I know what you mean.

MICHAEL. Oh, come on. You've been divorced twice. You're broke. You see Mom as easy pickings, don't ya?

JERRY. I'm just here for dinner.

MICHAEL. Oh, you're good. You're very good.

CARL. Michael, I think you're off base, here.

MICHAEL. You stay out of this.

JERRY. Maybe I should go.

MICHAEL. Oh, sure, leave. Then when I'm gone, you come back and it's wham, bam, thanks for all your money, ma'am!

DAD. Pure magic.

JERRY. You think I'm here to take your mom's money?

MICHAEL. That's right, buster. I can see through your plan. You're a Class A con artist after her money.

(STACY and MOM enter the living room from the bedroom.)

MOM. What's all the commotion?

MICHAEL. Jerry, here, is after your money.

MOM. Oh, don't be ridiculous.

JERRY. I think I better go.

MICHAEL. Not before ya empty your pockets.

MOM. Oh, for crying out loud.

JERRY. I turned down a golf game for this?

MOM. Oh, no.

JERRY. Yah. I'd quit but I have too many golf shirts.

(JERRY laughs. No one else does.) That one was mine.

MICHAEL. Always with the jokes, aren't ya?

JERRY. I'm sure things are a little stressful for everyone.
Thanks for dinner, Helen. I'll see ya, later.

(JERRY starts to leave.)

MOM. Wait a minute!

JERRY. We'll talk later.

(He leaves.)

DAD. Good riddance.

CARL. Mom, Michael was way out of line, there. I tried to tell him, but

MOM. *(To MICHAEL.)* ... Why did you do that?

MICHAEL. He was after your money, Mom. It was for your own good.

MOM. It was for *your* own good. *(MOM starts feeling faint.)*
Oh, my.

DAD. Helen?!

STACY. Oh, my gosh!

MICHAEL. What's wrong, Mom?

MOM. I'm feeling a little woozy.

STACY. Oh, no!

MICHAEL. Just sit down, Mom.

(MICHAEL helps MOM to the couch.)

DAD. Someone get a wet towel!

STACY. I'll get a wet towel.

(STACY goes into the kitchen.)

CARL. *(Crowding them.)* Is she alright?

MICHAEL. Give her some room.

DAD. And some water, Stacy.

STACY. *(From the kitchen.)* I'll get some water, too.

(JILL enters from the hallway.)

JILL. Did I miss anything?

CARL. Michael upset Mom.

JILL. Oh, Michael.

MICHAEL. She's just a little woozy.

MOM. I'm alright.

CARL. Can I do anything?

MICHAEL. Just give her some room.

CARL. Ya sure you're alright, Mom?

MOM. I'm fine.

DAD. *(To CARL.)* She'll be okay.

CARL. I'll be outside, if ya need me.

*(CARL goes out the front door. He motions to DAD to follow.
DAD follows him.)*

MICHAEL. Just sit back, Mom.

MOM. Oh, would ya stop fussing.

(STACY comes out of the kitchen with a wet towel and some water.)

CARL. Are you happy, now? Getting Mom all upset over Jerry.

DAD. Jerry was a con man. You said it yourself. It was the right thing to do. And it's better she's upset now rather than later when she could really get hurt. *(Smiles.)* Getting your brother to do your dirty work.... Brilliant.

CARL. Okay, I did your "favor" now will you please leave?

DAD. What "favor"?

CARL. Oh, come on, we had a deal, remember? Get rid of Jerry and you leave.

DAD. That wasn't the *(CARL shoots DAD a look.)* Alright, alright. I'll go.

CARL. Good.

DAD. You'll thank me later.

CARL. Ya know, I don't think so.

DAD. Okay, I'm going.

CARL. See ya.

DAD. This time I mean it.

CARL. Good bye.

DAD. I'm not kidding.

CARL. Would you go?!

DAD. I'm walking away. I'm walking, and I'm walking, and I'm walking....

(DAD slowly walks backwards until he's out of sight. CARL stays on the porch.)

MOM. If you're trying to kill me, there's a shotgun in the basement. It would be less painful.

MICHAEL. Mom, why don't ya just relax for awhile.

STACY. Just sit back, Mom.

MOM. I'll be fine. Don't worry about me.

JILL. Can I get ya something?

MOM. Some more water would be good ... and a cookie.

JILL. Be right back.

MOM. Sausalito!

MICHAEL. What else can I do for ya, Mom?

MOM. I think you've done enough for now.

MICHAEL. (*To STACY.*) Will you watch her?

STACY. Yah.

(*As MICHAEL goes to get his coat to leave:*)

MICHAEL. I'll just be outside.

STACY. Uh huh.

MICHAEL. On the porch.

STACY. Okay.

MICHAEL. If ya need me.

STACY. We won't.

MICHAEL. (*Trying to make up for upsetting MOM.*) I like your dress, Mom. It matches your hair. (*MOM rolls her eyes, reacting.*) And Stacy...?

STACY. ... Don't even.

MICHAEL. Yah.

(*MICHAEL exits to the front porch. He sees CARL.*)

CARL. Way to go, butthead.

MICHAEL. Me? *You* started this whole thing.

CARL. Fine. If blaming it on me will make you feel better about yourself, go right ahead.

MICHAEL. I screwed up didn't I?

CARL. Yah.

MICHAEL. Mom will never give me the money, now.

CARL. It's hard to say.

MICHAEL. The IRS is gonna throw me in prison, aren't they?

CARL. Probably.

MICHAEL. Great. Now, I'm gonna be someone's bitch.

CARL. Ya know, I'd be a little more concerned about Mom's health right now.

(JILL comes back with water and a cookie for MOM.)

MICHAEL. What happened?

CARL. Ya got her all upset.

MICHAEL. I mean before that.

CARL. I don't know.... Dad died?

MICHAEL. That was ten months ago.

CARL. Feels to me like he was just here.

MICHAEL. You think about Dad very much?

CARL. I can't seem to get him out of my mind.

MICHAEL. Sometimes I feel like he's still with us.

CARL. Actually, I think he's gone this time.

(MICHAEL gives CARL a puzzled look. Inside, the women are hovering around MOM.)

JILL. Stacy?

STACY. Yah, Jill?

JILL. I was wondering if ... if it would be okay to help you with your baby.

STACY. Oh, my gosh. Of course, it would be okay. I would really appreciate that.

JILL. I can help at the birth, or baby-sit, or run errands, or whatever ya need.

STACY. Oh for, that is so nice of you. I don't know what to say.

JILL. I'm just so happy for you. *(She cries.)* I'm sorry. It's these darn fertility drugs.

STACY. Have ya talked to Michael about it?

JILL. About what?

STACY. Well, there are other ways to have children.

JILL. I suppose.

MOM. Jill, honey, I'd like to tell you a story about another little girl. She was about your age. Only younger. That little girl was on drugs, too. Only her drug was called "love." The love for a good pizza. Oh, sure, she liked pepperoni and mushrooms, Canadian bacon and green peppers. But her favorite was extra cheese. Too bad she was allergic. Then one day, while walking to the pizza parlor, that little girl got hit by a bus. Then she died. You get what I'm trying to tell you, dear?

STACY. *(Thinks.)* She should have ordered out?

JILL. You're right, Helen. I'll talk to Michael about adopting.

(MICHAEL and CARL resume their conversation on the porch.)

MICHAEL. He was a good father, wasn't he?

CARL. I guess.

MICHAEL. Not a real affectionate man.

CARL. Nope.

MICHAEL. He was toward you, though. The "Chosen One."

CARL. You're kidding, right?

MICHAEL. Oh, God. It was so obvious.

CARL. How?

MICHAEL. Okay. Dad has what, a hundred golf trophies? So, what does he put on the mantel? Your junior club championship trophy. Now, why do ya think he would do that?

CARL. It's just a metal golfer on a cup. That doesn't mean anything.

MICHAEL. He named you after himself.

CARL. So?

MICHAEL. They usually name the first son after the father. Not the second.

CARL. They probably ran out of ideas.

MICHAEL. What about making you the trustee of the estate?

CARL. Dad didn't do that, Mom did.

MICHAEL. Right.

CARL. She did.

MICHAEL. That's not a decision Mom would make.

CARL. Really?

MICHAEL. Yah, really.

CARL. Yah, well, he played basketball with you.

MICHAEL. That's because it was convenient. A half hour on the driveway and the game was over. He took you fishing. You got him the whole day.

(MICHAEL looks over to his Beemer.)

CARL. You never had the attention span to fish all day, any-

way. Besides ...

MICHAEL. ... is that a dent in my Beemer?

(MICHAEL cuts CARL off and walks to his Beemer. CARL reacts, then goes inside.)

CARL. How are ya doing, Mom?

MOM. I'm a little tired.

CARL. Um, Stacy, Jill, can I talk to Mom for a minute?

JILL. Sure. I'll go start the dishes.

STACY. I'll help ya.

(JILL and STACY clear the table and go in the kitchen.)

MOM. What is it, dear?

CARL. Mom, *you* chose me as the trustee, right? Not Dad?

MOM. Why, are you having second thoughts, dear?

CARL. No, no, I'll do it. I, ah, I was just wondering who chose me.

MOM. Ya promise ya won't be mad?

CARL. No, I won't be mad.

MOM. 'Cause it's in your nature, ya know, to get all bent out of shape over this stuff....

CARL. ... I won't be mad.

MOM. Okay.... Well, actually, you were named as trustee by Dad before he died.

CARL. I thought ya said ya had to change the Will to put me in it.

MOM. I'm sorry, dear. I asked you so you would feel like it was *your* decision. Not Dad's.

CARL. So *Dad* wanted me to be the trustee?

MOM. Yes, dear. He felt you had more business experience than Michael.

CARL. I'm a truck driver.

MOM. You're a journalist, dear.

CARL. Yah, but he never knew that.

MOM. Are you kidding? He loved your articles.

CARL. He never read them.

MOM. Oh, for crying out loud... Do me a favor, would ya, dear?

CARL. A "favor"?

MOM. Yes, a "favor." Ya say that like I'm puttin' ya out or something, 'cause God forbid I put ya out. I mean I only carried ya for 9½ months, and 10 pounds, 4 ounces later there ya are, but Lord knows I don't wanna be puttin' *you* out....

CARL. ... Mom, Mom?

MOM. Yes, dear?

CARL. What would ya like me to do?

MOM. Go over to the desk, would ya, dear, and open up the drawer? (*CARL goes to the desk and opens the drawer.*) There's a photo album in there. Take it out for me, would ya?

(*CARL takes the album out of the drawer and opens it. CARL is shocked.*)

CARL. Did *you* do this?

MOM. (*Nods "no."*) Dad subscribed to that paper ya wrote for. After he read your articles, he would cut them out and put them in that album.

CARL. *Dad* did this?

MOM. Yah. He used to show them off to his friends.

CARL. Why didn't I know that?

MOM. I don't know, dear. Ya probably chose not to. You were always kind of stubborn.

CARL. I never thought Dad was that interested in what I did.

MOM. Oh, dear. Your dad was interested in everything you did. Your school, sports, your work. He was so proud of your golf trophy. He thought ya might pursue golf. And when ya didn't, he was so sad.... That's what killed him.

CARL. (*Shocked.*) Oh, my gosh.

MOM. Oh, I'm just kidding, dear. You're so serious all the time.

CARL. Why do you do that?

MOM. It's my nature? (*CARL reacts.*) Oh, would ya just relax. When ya decided to be a journalist, your dad was still happy.

CARL. Yah, but Michael joined the country club and became the doctor. That's what Dad wanted.

MOM. Your dad loved Michael, too. He loved all you kids. You and Michael, and ... (*Thinks.*)

CARL. ... Stacy?

MOM. And Stacy. He couldn't stop talking about ya. We would be at parties and he'd be bragging and bragging about you kids. Couldn't shut him up.

CARL. Really?

MOM. Yah. He loved *you* because *you* followed your passion, writing. That's what made you happy. He envied you for that.

CARL. Envied *me*? He was a successful doctor.

MOM. But his passion was golf. He loved that game. He said you could tell a person's character by the way they played.... Remember caddying for him in the Birchmont International?

CARL. It was called "International" because they had two

Canadians and a Mexican.

MOM. Your Dad won that tournament four times.

CARL. He had that classic Bobby Jones swing. Down the middle off the tee, and within 150 yards, he could knock the pin down. And his putting

MOM. ... When he was on his game, no one could touch him.

CARL. Why didn't he ever turn pro?

MOM. Oh, he considered it. But then we had you and, well ... his dreams were shattered.

CARL. (*Shocked.*) What?

MOM. Oh, I'm just kidding, dear. You never learn, do ya? (*CARL reacts.*) Sure, he considered the tour, dear, but it's such a tough life, ya know. Lots of travel. Nothing is certain.

CARL. Yah, but if it was so important, how could he pass up a chance to do it?

MOM. Easy. His family. He loved you kids so much. You were the most important thing to him. He wanted to give you everything he didn't have. And he wanted to be around to watch you grow up. So he became a doctor. He didn't spend a lot of money on himself because he wanted us to be taken care of if something ever happened to him.

CARL. So he put everyone else ahead of himself.

(*JILL and STACY enter from the hallway.*)

STACY. How are ya doing, Mom?

MOM. I'm feeling kind of sad.

CARL. Mom, I'm sorry about Jerry.

MOM. I lived for your father. I counted on him to be there for me.... Why did he have to leave? Was it me?... I was a good

wife, wasn't I?

CARL. Yah, you were.

STACY. It's not your fault.

MOM. (*Realizing.*) Oh, my, Lord. He didn't want to be with me anymore.

STACY. That's not it, Mom.

CARL. He died of a heart attack.... There's nothing you could have done to prevent it.

STACY. Maybe you should go and lie down, Mom.

(*STACY takes MOM by the arm and leads her to the bedroom.*)

MOM. Alright, dear. (*MOM walks with STACY to the bedroom.*) I don't know if I have the strength without him.

(*MOM and STACY disappear down the hall. MICHAEL walks up to the house, depressed.*)

JILL. We need to do something to get her spirits up.

CARL. Yah.

(*MICHAEL enters the house.*)

MICHAEL. (*Depressed.*) There's a dent in my Beemer.

JILL. (*Overreacting.*) Oh, my God. (*She cries.*)

MICHAEL. It's alright, Jill.

JILL. (*Crying.*) It's not alright. It's your Beemer.

MICHAEL. We'll get through it.

JILL. How?

MICHAEL. I don't know.

CARL. Excuse me. We have a situation, here.

JILL. (*Still weeping.*) I know.

CARL. Mom is really depressed right now.

MICHAEL. She is?

CARL. Yah.

MICHAEL. Let's take her out for ice cream.

CARL. No.

MICHAEL. How about a movie? She likes movies.

CARL. No.... What about Jerry? He made her laugh.

JILL. I could sing.

(*MICHAEL and CARL look at JILL.*)

MICHAEL. I'll call Jerry.

CARL. Yah.

MICHAEL. Where do ya think he is?

CARL. I don't know. If he's not home, try the golf course.

MICHAEL. Right.

(*MICHAEL exits to the bedroom leaving JILL and CARL in the living room.*)

JILL. I made a fool out of myself at dinner, didn't I?

CARL. When?

JILL. Oh, ya know, that whole "Jerry's a murderer" deal.

CARL. (*Laughing.*) Oh, yah. Yah, ya sure did.

JILL. I am so embarrassed.

CARL. Jill, there is nothing *you* could do that would upset this family. Believe me.

JILL. Thanks.... Michael really admires you, ya know.

CARL. Well, yah, I mean that goes without saying.

JILL. I know he doesn't show it, but he really does. He's

such a good person ... (*CARL gives her a look.*) ... inside.

CARL. Yah, well, discussing your feelings is not really a Lundeen trait.... So, how are things going with you and Michael?

JILL. Ya want to know the truth?

CARL. (*Thinks. He's unsure.*) Okay.

JILL. I'm afraid I'm gonna lose him.

CARL. Get outta here!

JILL. I'm serious. He's been real distant lately. I know there are things on his mind. He just doesn't share them with me.

CARL. (*Can't believe what he's hearing, starts to stutter.*) Well, well, ya need to talk to him.... I mean, ya, ya just....

JILL. I feel like I failed him.

CARL. What?!

JILL. Because I can't have children.

CARL. Oh, no!

JILL. And so I try to make up for it by devoting more time to him.

CARL. Ohh!

JILL. I just bought him a new Lay-Z-Boy so he can relax a little. He works so hard, you know. But, lately, he's just been pushing me away.

CARL. No! No, no, no, no!

JILL. And to top it off, I think I dented his Beemer.

(*She cries, then falls into CARL's arms, hugging him. CARL consoles her.*)

CARL. No, no, ya didn't. Listen....

(*Suddenly, MICHAEL enters the living room.*)

MICHAEL. ... I couldn't find him.

(He sees CARL and JILL hugging. They separate. There's an awkward silence.)

JILL. Michael, can I talk to you for a minute?

MICHAEL. If you're leaving me for Carl, I'll just shoot myself right now.

JILL. Carl? *(She laughs.)* That's funny.

CARL. Why is that funny?

JILL. Carl, can we?...

CARL. ... Yah, yah. Why don't I go and, ah, heat up a tur-keydog or something.

(CARL goes into the kitchen.)

MICHAEL. What is it, honey?

JILL. Promise you won't be mad at me?

MICHAEL. I won't be mad. What is it?

JILL. Okay.... I think I dented your Beemer.

(She cries.)

MICHAEL. Thank God, I thought it was something serious.

JILL. It is serious.

MICHAEL. It's just a car. We can fix it.

JILL. Are ya sure?

MICHAEL. Yah.

JILL. I was so worried.

(She cries.)

MICHAEL. Honey, please don't take this the wrong way, but ... I think you should go off the fertility drugs.

JILL. Really?

MICHAEL. Yah. Your system doesn't seem to react well to hormones.

JILL. (*Up to Heaven.*) Thank you!

MICHAEL. So, you're okay with that?

JILL. Yah. Those things are making me crazy.

MICHAEL. Well, why didn't ya tell me?

JILL. I don't know. I didn't want ya to get all upset.

MICHAEL. What?

JILL. Well, I know how important children are to you.

MICHAEL. Oh, honey....

JILL. ... You see, there was this little girl who loved pizza with extra cheese. Only, she was allergic. Then she got hit by a bus, and, well....

MICHAEL. ... What do you think about adopting?

JILL. Have you heard this story, before?

MICHAEL. What story? No, no. It's just that you're important to me, and it's just not healthy to get so emotional about a dent in a car when we have so many bigger problems.

JILL. Do we need a tune up?

(*She cries.*)

MICHAEL. No, no. Forget the Beemer. Other problems.

JILL. Other problems?

(*She cries.*)

MICHAEL. None that we can't solve.... We'll get through

all this.

JILL. You promise?

MICHAEL. I promise.... I know ya like that car and everything, but we may have to sell it.

JILL. I don't like that car.

MICHAEL. Ya don't?

JILL. No.

MICHAEL. I do.

JILL. Tell me more about how important I am to you.

MICHAEL. I love you.

JILL. I love you, too.

(They kiss. In the middle of their kiss, STACY enters the living room.)

STACY. Why don't ya get a room or something?

(MICHAEL and JILL break apart. They look at each other.)

MICHAEL. Okay.

JILL. Sounds good to me.

(MICHAEL suddenly takes JILL's hand. He quickly leads her into the bedroom.)

STACY. I didn't mean now! Jeez.

(CARL comes out of the kitchen with the tape recorder in his hand. He doesn't see STACY.)

CARL. *(Into the recorder.)* Sex.... If it's good, it makes up about 10% of the relationship ...

STACY. ... and if it's bad, it makes up 90%.

(CARL turns and looks at STACY. She smiles. Suddenly, DAD enters the living room from the hall.)

DAD. Michael and Jill will work it out. *(DAD looks at STACY.)* I'm sorry, Stacy.

STACY. *(To CARL.)* Sorry about what, Carl?

CARL. *(Thinks.)* I'm sorry I didn't ... spend more time with ya, growing up.

STACY. Me too.

CARL. And I'm sure Dad would feel the same way.

STACY. Thanks.... I'm gonna get something to eat. Ya want anything?

CARL. Oh, I just had something. Thanks, anyway.

STACY. Okay.

(STACY goes into the kitchen.)

DAD. *(To CARL.)* Thanks.

CARL. You came back.

DAD. I forgot to do a few things.

(He looks at the kitchen door.)

CARL. Yah, so did I. I owe you an apology.

DAD. For what?

CARL. For misjudging you. For thinking you were a different person than you are.

DAD. I'm not a person anymore, remember?

CARL. Yah, I keep forgetting that.

DAD. I'm sorry, too.

CARL. Why? I'm supposed to be the expert observer. I should have known.

DAD. I could have made it easier on ya.

CARL. Yah.

DAD. I just didn't know any better. That's how I was raised. "Ya gotta be tough. Only the strong survive, and only the weak need affection."

CARL. Yah, but that's old school. Things are different now. It's the millennium. People are wussies.

DAD. You're not a wussie.

CARL. What, are you kiddin' me? I'm the Mayor of Wussieville.

DAD. I'm sorry I wasn't a better father.

CARL. Ya gave us everything we needed.

DAD. Not everything. I never told you how special you were to me.

CARL. Ya did by your actions.

DAD. I should have told you.

CARL. Why did you come to me? Why not Michael?... Or Stacy?

DAD. Because Michael is too much like me. And I don't like myself very much right now.

CARL. Don't say that.

DAD. And Stacy?... When you have a family, promise me you won't make the same mistakes I did. (*CARL nods.*) Look after Stacy for me, would ya? Raising kids is no picnic. (*CARL nods.*) Ya know your friend, Rita, from Milwaukee?

CARL. Yah?

DAD. Ya might want to go see her.

CARL. Why?