

Herb

CAST **Amanda Stowe:** **a woman in her sixties**
 Cordelia **Amanda's daughter**

Narrator: **The time is winter. The setting is Amanda Stowe's apartment in lower Manhattan . A snowman stands outside of the apartment house looking towards the audience. He is partially dressed. As the lights come up the phone is ringing. Amanda enters to answer it.**

Amanda: **Hello.**

Cordelia: **(On a cell phone, singing)Happy birthday to you. Happy birthday to you. Happy birthday dear, mother. Happy birthday to you.**

Amanda: **Oh, good Lord. Cordy? Is that you?**

Cordelia: **Who else would sing the birthday song to you at 7:00 in the morning?**

Amanda: **(laughing) Well, the song is nice, but couldn't it have waited until lunch? We are still going to lunch aren't we?**

Cordelia: **Not unless I can turn my car in for a bobsled. Haven't you been watching TV?**

Amanda: **No.....I just got up.**

Cordelia: **Well, take a look outside.**

Amanda: **Oh my goodness. It snowed. It snowed a lot.**

Cordelia: **That's an understatement. New Jersey got fourteen inches and so did Manhattan. Buses and cars are stranded all over the turnpike. Even the subways aren't running today. They're saying things won't be normal until Saturday.**

Amanda: **Oh, dear. I suppose that means you won't be coming into the city.**

Cordelia: **Like I said.....not unless I can find a bobsled. I guess Mother Nature is telling us that we'll have to celebrate this weekend.**

Amanda: **Oh, well as long as Mother Nature says so, I understand.....Only.....**

Cordelia: Only what?

Amanda: Oh.....nothing.

Cordelia: What? Do you want to put in a complaint to the weatherman?

Amanda: (laughs) I would if I thought it would help. No. It's just that I was really looking forward to this, to seeing you. I miss you. I miss Richard and the children; I even miss that dumb dog of yours. What's his name?

Cordelia: Rocky.

Amanda: Oh, yes, that's right, Rocky. Oh, I know New Jersey's only across the river but for all that I get to see you, you might just as well be living on the moon.

Cordelia: You know how we could change that, don't you?

Amanda: Oh, Cordy, not again.

Cordelia: Yes, again. Why not? Our house is big enough. We certainly have the room. And we like you. That's a plus. I'm not saying that you'd have to live with us forever. I know you like your space. It would be just until you could find a place of your own.

Amanda: Oh sweetheart, I'm flattered. And....and thank you for asking..... but.....the answer's still the same. I....can't. I just can't.

Cordelia: Why not? Daddy's been gone almost a year. There's nothing to tie you to that Beecher Street claptrap anymore.

Amanda: Oh, Cordy. It's not a clap trap. When your father and I moved in, it was one of the nicest on the block.

Cordelia: Yes.... and when was that? Forty years ago? All of your friends have moved. You told me you don't know anyone in the building except the superintendent, what's her name.....Mrs. Polidori? And you don't even like her.

Amanda: I never said I didn't like her. I said she's a little overwhelming..... sometimes.

Cordelia: Whatever. The point is you're not happy there, and you haven't been for a long time. You're stuck in that place with scrapbooks and memories. Daddy would want you to have more than that.

Amanda: Oh dear. You make my life sound so dismal, and it isn't. I...I do things. I have my needlepoint...my music....my book club. You know I love to read.

Cordelia: Ah, yes. The Great Book Club. And it meets where? When?

Amanda: (Defensive) Once a month. We pick a book to read and meet at each other's homes to discuss it.

Cordelia: Great. So once a month you meet with some ladies to eat cheesecake and discuss a book. Big deal. The rest of the time you're at home, doing needlepoint and watching T.V. That's not you.

Amanda: (Quietly) And who am I, Cordy? Just who do you think I am?

Cordelia: I don't know, mother.....but... when I was little you were a tiger. You taught, you did the faculty wife thing for daddy and still managed to get me to girl scouts and do volunteer work on the side. Remember the Christmas you rang the bell for the Salvation Army?

Amanda: (Laughs) Oh, my goodness. The coldest December in thirty years. I froze two toes..... but my basket took in the most money.

Cordelia: (laughs) I know you're not 35 anymore but you're certainly not ready to sit in a rocker all day. Look.....this year has been a bitch....and you still miss Daddy, but he'd be the first to tell you to get back into the world.....and.....do something.

Amanda: Ummm.And do you have any something to suggest?

Cordelia: I don't know. How about tutoring? You did some before Daddy got so sick. What about that little parochial school near you....St. Agnes? They're always screaming for help.

Amanda: St. Agnes? (pause) No. I went there.... last fall. They...they said they didn't need me.

Cordelia: Well, try again or go somewhere else. The most important thing is to get out of that apartment.....meet people....tell them who you are.

Amanda: (To herself) My name is Amanda Stowe.

Cordelia: What?

Amanda: Nothing, dear. Just prattling .

Cordelia: Oh, okay. I'm sorry, mother, I didn't mean to pick. It's just that I love you.....I want you to be happy.

Amanda: I know you do, dear.But I'm fine....or I will be. I..I just need more time to adjust.

Cordelia: All right. I will shut up.....and hang up right now. Happy Birthday mother. Enjoy the day. We'll see you Saturday. Bye.

Amanda: Saturday. Yes. Goodbye .