

SCENE ONE.

*(Modern day. A middle-class home just outside of Poughkeepsie New York. 6:30PM. It is autumn, and the sun is setting.)*

*The living room of JUDY and GEORGE BOSWELL's home. A sofa and coffee table are down right, the front door to the house is upstage center, stairs upstage left lead to bedrooms. There is a door under the stairs that leads to a small bathroom. The kitchen is off left. The door to the garage is stage right. A small table with a drawer is by the front door. The home is well lived in and baby things lie about the floor and sofa.*

*JUDY, 34, comes down the stairs in a nice dress and heels. She's dolled up for an evening out. GEORGE, 36, reluctantly follows her. HE wears his pajamas. They are mid-argument.)*

JUDY

You might as well murder me, you know that? You're ridiculous and childish and ruining everything important to the people who care about you most.

GEORGE

Judy, you're being very silly.

JUDY

I'm silly? Who's wearing pajamas?

GEORGE

I'm one hundred percent certain that I'm not the only man in the world currently wearing pajamas. I bet your dad's wearing pajamas right now.

JUDY

People in nursing homes are allowed to wear pajamas at six p.m., George. My husband is not. Go put on a suit or jeans and a T-shirt for all I care, but put something on and get in the car.

GEORGE

Firstly, it's closer to six-thirty, and secondly, the sun's almost down. I'm getting in bed before my blood pressure peaks for the day. I talked this over with Randy, and he was completely understanding.

JUDY

That's great for Randy, but my sister will never let me hear the end of it if we don't show up for dinner.

GEORGE

Then show up! I don't mind you going to the dinner alone. You can tell me everything about it in the morning.

JUDY

I can tell you everything about it before we even go. I'll drink too much and Randy will say something racist and Louise'll get sleepy and regret hostessing. They'll try to make us watch some form of sport by the end of it all, and the other guests will awkwardly sidle to the door.

GEORGE

It's football in the fall. You like football.

JUDY

No, I don't. You'll either be too quiet the whole night, or you'll condescend to everybody without realizing it. We'll say thank you without meaning it, and drive home bitching about family obligations. The end.

GEORGE

That sounds absolutely terrifying.

JUDY

It is.

GEORGE

Then why would I go?

JUDY

Because you're my husband! You're supposed to go to these things with me. I go with you to visit your mom.

GEORGE

Once a year. And my mom never makes us watch televised sporting events.

JUDY

It's not my fault your mom lives so far away. Or that my sister lives so close. I wish she didn't. I truly wish she didn't.

GEORGE

See? You don't want to go either. Let's just sleep.

JUDY

I'm not going to bed at six p.m.!

GEORGE

Six-thirty. You look sleepy, too. It's what nature intended. The sun wouldn't set at six-thirty if you were supposed to stay up much later.

JUDY

*(crossing to the light switch)*

Oh, oh! Look at that! *(She turns the lights on and off)* All this light! Goodness, what will mankind think up next? We've mastered nature. As if we were created in god's own image or something. Wow.

GEORGE

You know I'm talking about melatonin, not electricity. Electricity messes with your system.

JUDY

No. I don't know that you're talking about melatonin. I don't give a rat's ass about melatonin. And you mess with my system far more than electricity.

GEORGE

You would give a rat's ass about melatonin if your body wasn't producing the correct amount just naturally.

JUDY

Jesus Christ.

GEORGE

You're gonna wake the baby. Please just take a breath.

*(JUDY breathes in and out slowly for a moment, closing her eyes.)*

GEORGE

Better?

JUDY

Not really.

GEORGE

I've missed dinner parties before. And you have, too. Why be angry? Anger isn't a natural state.

JUDY

So much bullshit, George. I'm sick of you striving to always be in a "natural state." What does that even mean for Pete's sake.

GEORGE

At least I'm not nude, right?

*(JUDY snorts and embarrassedly covers her mouth and nose.)*

Please give my regards to Louise, and avoid her stuffed mushrooms. I don't want the toilet waking me up all night.

JUDY

You're not making me like you any more.

GEORGE

What do you want me to do?

JUDY

Put on some clothes and come with me. Be present. Represent yourself as if you're even slightly sane. Don't leave me alone there to have to defend you the entire night. Do you know how hard it is to answer questions about you right now? "How's George?" "Is he looking for a job?" "Is he still doing that weird schedule thing?"

GEORGE

The answers are, "getting better," "soon," and "yes, and it's not that weird."

JUDY

God, George, it is! I get it. Okay, I get it. People are supposed to sleep when it's dark and be awake when it's light. But no one lives by that completely. Not in this country anyway.

GEORGE

Some people do!

JUDY

No one who isn't a farmer, George. Be a farmer if you want to, though. It's an income of sorts. Be anything! Be something, but please stop being crazy.

GEORGE

Judy, I...

*(The doorbell rings.)*

JUDY

Great. Marna's here.

GEORGE

You hired the sitter?

JUDY

You can't leave a baby alone, George.

GEORGE

She's not alone. Anyway, she's totally a toddler by now, right? When do you stop saying "baby"? I think if they can stand up it's toddler.

JUDY

Irrelevant. Of course, I hired the sitter.

GEORGE

But I'm not coming. I told you last week.

JUDY

Forgive my optimism.

*(The doorbell rings.)*

JUDY

What are you going to say to her?

GEORGE

Probably "hello." Maybe, "how are you?" I don't usually deal with her.

JUDY

And you'll just send her away? She lives on the other side of town.

GEORGE

It's a small town.

JUDY

That's not the point!

GEORGE

Give her ten bucks and tell her we don't need her tonight. No big deal.

*(The doorbell rings.)*

JUDY

Ten bucks? Whose ten bucks? Do you have ten bucks?

GEORGE

Logistics. I assume you were planning on paying her more than that for the whole night.

MARNA

*(from off)*

Hello? Mrs. Boswell?

JUDY

*(Loudly to Marna)* Just a minute. *(To GEORGE)* Of course, I was going to pay her more than ten dollars, but for a service. She's not providing that now. That's the point. I don't like my money going to waste. Am I just gonna take that ten out of the grocery fund?

GEORGE

Sure! See? You already have all the solutions. I'll buy generic brands this week. Clip some coupons. Et voila! Have fun tonight.

*(The doorbell rings again.)*

JUDY

Get the door!

GEORGE

I'm in my jim jams.

JUDY

Jesus Christ.

*(JUDY answers the door, revealing MARNA, a 22 year old grad student with a backpack.)*

*Silence as all three stare at one another.)*

MARNA

Hi, Mrs. Boswell. Mr. Boswell.

GEORGE

Hi there, Marna. How's life?

MARNA

Average to poor.

GEORGE

Very good. Clever.

JUDY

We're sorry to hear that. George, do you have something to tell Marna?

GEORGE

Oh! Marna, I'm so sorry you drove all the way out here, but there's been a misunderstanding. Mrs. Boswell got a little mixed up, but we don't actually need a sitter tonight.

JUDY

Fuck you, George.

*(JUDY exits in a huff.)*

GEORGE

She's going to a party. Nerves.

MARNA

Oh. Okay.

GEORGE

It's at her sister's place.

MARNA

Oh.

GEORGE

Her sister's pushy. There's all sorts of childhood competition leftover there. I mean, their mother's dead, finally, but they don't really know how to function together now that they don't have to vie for her attention any more. Which is weird, because their mom lived, maybe, three hours drive away, so why bother at all? It's not like they saw her all the time. They were trying to impress her over the phone. Who cares? My mom lives in California. Plus I'm an only child. Which was lonely sometimes, but I think better ultimately. For me anyway. Maybe my mom wanted more kids, but who knows?

MARNA

You could ask her about it.

GEORGE

Hmm?

MARNA

Your mom. About whether she wanted more kids.

GEORGE

True. I've never asked, but, then again, I might not like the answer.

MARNA

So... I should come in? Or I guess that I can just leave, yeah?

GEORGE

Oh, god! Come in, come in!

*(GEORGE ushers MARNA in and closes the door behind her.)*

GEORGE

Catch your breathe a minute. Let me find you some cash to cover your gas.

*(GEORGE opens a drawer in a small table by the door. He digs around. The drawer is most likely just full of safety pins, coupons, menus, old batteries, etc. It's a junk drawer.)*

MARNA

You really don't have to do that.

GEORGE

Nonsense. It's the least we can do after bailing on you like that.

MARNA

I mean, it's pretty expensive, but I understand.

GEORGE

A young woman shouldn't have to spend money on gas just to wind up empty handed. You thought you'd be earning a few bucks tonight.

MARNA

No offense, but "young woman" sounds really creepy, Mr. Boswell. I recommend you ditch that term in future. You could just say "person" or "you." Or "one." I like when people say, "one."

GEORGE

Really?

MARNA

Yeah, like, "one does not simply walk into Mordor."

GEORGE

No, I mean, is "young woman" really creepy?

MARNA

You have to be a lot older or I have to be younger for it to be not creepy, I think. But yeah.

GEORGE

I don't interact with people your age very often. Usually just first officers and flight attendants. They're all closer to my age.

MARNA

What's a first officer?

GEORGE

Copilot. I don't really know how old everybody in air traffic control is. They talk a lot, but it's all letters and numbers.

MARNA

Do you have a cold?

GEORGE

No. Do I sound stuffed up?

MARNA

You're in pajamas.

GEORGE

Yes.

MARNA

It's like six p.m.

GEORGE

Six-thirty. Six-forty. I think it's past sunset now, isn't it?

*(MARNA simply stares at GEORGE.)*

GEORGE

I try to go to bed early.

MARNA

Weird.

GEORGE

It's just natural.

MARNA

Those look like polyester to me.

GEORGE

Oh, well, they're probably a blend of some sort. I've had them for years.

MARNA

Mr. Boswell?

GEORGE

Yes?

MARNA

Are you okay?

GEORGE

Of course.

MARNA

I don't really talk to you ever, but, well, I heard... never mind.

GEORGE

Everything you heard is probably true.

*(MARNA doesn't respond.)*

GEORGE

But I'm trying to fix things. As much as I can anyway.

MARNA

But are you okay?

GEORGE

Of course I am.

MARNA

Yeah?

GEORGE

Yes, Marna. How are you? How's high school?

*(MARNA laughs.)*

GEORGE

What?

MARNA

High school? Seriously?

GEORGE

You go to Thomas Jefferson? Or are you at St. Mary's?