

Kidnapping the Bride
By Frank Moher

(A clearing in a scrubby forest, on the edge of a small town in northwestern Alberta, on an August evening. It is dusk; as the play proceeds the setting will very slowly grow darker. We hear the sounds of a distant, rowdy wedding reception: A huge white multilayered wedding cake, with bride-and-groom figurines on top, sits slightly askew in the clearing; there is also a firepit, dug into the ground, with a few logs arranged around it. The clearing is empty for a moment; the band at the hall plays. Then, we hear a pick-up truck approaching, then the truck trundles into the clearing, its windows open, as:)

TERRI
(In the passenger seat; screaming.)

AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

GARY
(Driving, singing, some stupid made-up tune.)

Ooooooooooo, Terri ——

TERRI
AHHH!!

GARY
(Singing.)
Terri with the sweet red lips --

TERRI
YOU SONUVABITCH!

GARY
And sweet red eyes --

TERRI
HELLLLLLLLLLLLLLPPPPPP!

GARY
Please. I am trying to drive.
(The truck lurches to a stop.)

TERRI
Let me out. Let me outta here Gary or I swear ta god I'll --

GARY
Well you go right ahead.
(She tries to get out. The handle comes off in her hands.)

TERRI
Oh great. Oh great, Gary. Do ya wanna put this handle back on or do you want me ta beat ya with it?

GARY
Darn. Darn these Japanese trucks.
(TERRI starts to clamber out her window.)

TERRI
Well, if you think that's enough ta stop me --
(GARY gets out his door, starts around the truck.)

GARY
Woah now, careful now!

TERRI
-- you ain't knowed me long enough!
(She has climbed onto the roof of the cab, sits there, taking off her heels.)

GARY
Here now, let me help you --
(TERRI throws her heels at him; GARY ducks.)

Woah! Woah!!
(TERRI jumps down into the box and heads for the gate. GARY moves to intercept her.)

TERRI
(Stepping over beer cans in the back.)
Taking the handle off ---

GARY

(Now at the gate, he opens it for her.)

Please. Please Terri. Let me help you down.

TERRI

Why?

GARY

Because. Because -- I want to.

(Beat. Then she takes his hand and starts down.)

TERRI

One false move and yer --

(GARY scoops her up in his arms or throws her over his shoulder. She screams:)

AHH!

GARY

(Carrying her into the clearing.)

Ooooooo, Terri --

TERRI

PUT ME DOWN.

GARY

(Singing:)

Put me down she said --

TERRI

I mean it, put me down!

GARY

(Singing, carrying her around the clearing:)

I mean it put me down --

TERRI

(Pummelling him.)

You are gonna die Grignon, you are --

(Suddenly, they fall to the ground.)

GARY

WOHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

(Pause. Then, mock—petulant voice:)

There. I hope you're happy now.

TERRI
(Lying there.)
Yer toast.

GARY
Scuse me?

TERRI
Yer dead. Yer toast, Grignon. See that bug right there?
(She drills it with her hand.)
That's you.

GARY
(Regarding the bug thoughtfully.)
I see.

TERRI
(Rising:)
You are gonna regret this to your dying day. I am going to make your life so miserable
you are going to wish –

GARY
I had never been born.

TERRI
YES!

GARY
Well I dunno, you might wanna think about that Terri.

TERRI
I don't need to think about it.

GARY
I mean if I wasn't here, who would you have to make your life so miserable?

TERRI
I don't need anyone to make my life miserable, thankyou very much. That's why I left
here, isn't it? To get away from people like you!
(She sees the cake.)

Awww, Gary.

TERRI
What's no fair?

GARY
 This. This is no fair.
 (Beat.)

TERRI
 You make one smart remark about my weight and --

GARY
 No no no, I don't mean yer weight. I mean yer in a dress -- and I'm not. So. I'm just gonna stand here -- and let you come and get me.
 (Pause.)

TERRI
 Yer fulla you-know-what, Gary.

GARY
 You-know-what. Tsk tsk. Your language, Terri. This is what livin' in Edmonton has done to you.
 (Pause.)
 C'mon.
 (Pause. TERRI saunters up to GARY, stands facing him. They stare at each other.)

Kiss the bride?
 (GARY moves to kiss her. TERRI looks like she's going to let him. Then she grabs his arm, flips him onto his back and straddles him across the chest, all the time yelling:)

TERRI
 KISS THIS, YOU YOU-KNOW-WHAT, KISS THIS, AN WHILE YER AT IT WHY DON'T YOU KISS MY BUTT?

GARY
 Love to.
 (She strangles him.)
 AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

TERRI
 HA HA!

GARY
(Like the heroine in a melodrama.)
Heyyelp! Oh heyyelp!

TERRI
Shut yer trap.

GARY
(Dr. Freud accent.)
You know all zis hostility is really just a mask for –

TERRI
An quit doin them phony accents, they never been any good.
(She continues to sit on him.)
Ya give?

GARY
Give?

TERRI
Give!

GARY
(Singing:)
Gimme gimme good lovin --
(She chokes him.)
All right, I give, I give.

TERRI
An I'm never gonna do it again.

GARY
Good.

TERRI
Say it!

GARY
And I'm never gonna do it again.

TERRI
Ever.

GARY
Ever.

TERRI

An I'm a no-good, half—crazed outta my mind asshole who didn't deserve to get invited to Terri's wedding.

GARY

Well I don't know about --

TERRI

Say it!

GARY

And I'm a no-good, half-crazed outta my mind -- what?

TERRI

Asshole!

GARY

Asshole, who didn't deserve to get invited to Terri's wedding.

(Pause. TERRI releases her hold, starts to get off of him.)

TERRI

All right. Better. An you take it back an you just remember -- I am gettin' bigger all the time.

GARY

(Getting to his feet.)

Hoo. Hoo. You're not kidding.

(TERRI makes a move. GARY backs off.)

Hey. How come you can make fun of your weight and I can't?

TERRI

I don't make fun of my weight. I enjoy my weight. There is a big difference.

(Dusting herself off, muttering.)

Never even shoulda talked to you in the first place. Shoulda jus pretended you weren't there. The minute I saw yer mug in the doorway, I shoulda jus called the mounties.

GARY

Oh, well that would have been a friendly thing to do.

TERRI

I don't feel friendly, Gary, that is not the way I feel toward you.

GARY

Awww c'mon, Terri, you must still like me a little bit.

TERRI

No!

GARY

(Little boy voice:)

Not even just a widdle bit?

TERRI

No! Not even just a smidgen of one little bit.

GARY

And ya aren't even the teensiest bit glad I invited ya out here?

TERRI

Some invitation.

GARY

Well what was I supposed ta do, they won't even let me into the hall? Besides, it's tradition to kidnap the bride.

TERRI

It's tradition, Gary, but it wasn't supposed to be you!

GARY

Oh, and who was it supposed to be -- Mike Duetrich I suppose?

TERRI

Damon Babichuk. At ten o'clock Damon Babichuk was supposed to kidnap me from the reception and take me to Faust bar, not here. Bill was gonna help Gabriel do the collection, cause he needs some of the money to pay for the "Dusty Four". Then they was gonna do the exchange, and have me back in the hall by ten-forty-five. And what time is it now?

(She checks her watch.)

Quarter to ten. Well there y'go, Grignon. Ya lucked out again.

GARY
Gabriel, Gabriel. That would be . . .

TERRI
You know who Gabriel is, Gary.

GARY
Oh, right. That's the guy in the white suit.
(He grins.)
Well, look at it this way, Terri. Maybe if yer lucky . . . you'll get kidnapped twice.
(Beat.)
Uh-oh.

TERRI
Uh-oh what?

GARY
Yer dress, it's kinda uh –

TERRI
Kinda uh what?

GARY
Kinda uh -- ripped.

TERRI
What? Where?
(She looks, sees.)
Ooooo, you are gonna be responsible for this, Gary. I am gonna go back there night
now and —

(She moves to go.)

GARY
Oh no, hey now --

TERRI
Get out of my way!

GARY
(Whipping a flask out of his pocket.)
Hey now, I deserve one little drink with you, don't I? Don't I? Just one?

No!
TERRI

GARY
C'mon, Terri, just one little drink, an then you can go. It's my constitutional right on something, it's in the constitution, old boyfriends will get at least one drink with their old girlfriend on night of said old girlfriend's wedding. It's in there that I'm actually supposed to get invited to the wedding too, but hey, if you have one drink with me, I won't call the Prime Minister.

(Wiggling the flask.)
C'mon. Just one?

TERRI
All right. One.

GARY
Give er!

TERRI
I said one, Grignon, one! And after that you are driving me back.

GARY
(Pouring her a shot in the flask cap.)
Wellll, we'll see about that.

TERRI
You are, Gary, you --
(GARY hands her the shot.)

GARY
There. You want some ice with that?

TERRI
You got some?

GARY
(Checks his pockets.)
No.

TERRI

(Laughs a little.)

Huh. You are just as fried as ever, you know that? Well. Least some things never change.

(Pause. We hear music coming from hall.)

GARY

Hey. Hey, listen Terri They're playing the Chicken Dance again.

(They listen. "The Chicken Dance" is heard coming from the hall, accompanied by the appropriate clapping, whoops, etc.)

Hey, all right! That's only the fifth time this evening!

TERRI

Gawd, I hate that song.

GARY

Yeah, me too.

(He does a bit, mockingly.)

"Doo-doo-doo-doo-doo-doo-do." What is it people like about that song? Gettin to act like a chicken, I suppose. Gettin to watch Baba Shewchuk squat down and fall over.

(They smile a little. TERRI drinks. GARY watches her. Then:)

A toast to the bride!

TERRI

Oh cripes, Gary, don't.

GARY

The lovely bride. How charming she looks in her lovely white-with-scuff-marks ensemble.

(Old fart's voice:)

When first I met young Terralynn --

TERRI

Gary, don't.

GARY

It was a lovely summer's night, just like tonight. And she was pumping gas at the Petro-Canada on Highway 33.

TERRI

I was running the till.

GARY

She was lovely even then, with her fingernails painted bright red and her hair tied up in a little bun.

TERRI

If you don't stop, yer gonna be tied up in a little --

GARY

I drove up in my silver Lamborghini. "Fill 'er up?" she asked. And I replied: "Do you mean my heart . . . or my gas-tank?"

TERRI

Seeing's how the station was self—serve, that story don't make too much sense.

GARY

The station was self—serve?

TERRI

Yes.

GARY

(Pummelling his forehead.)

My god, I am losing my mind.

TERRI

But. Least it was better than Lorin Nygaard's toast.

GARY

Ho yeah. Now wasn't that something!

TERRI

You heard?

GARY

"I hope Gabriel knows what a good little girl he's got there. Mind you, I hope he doesn't find that out tonight. Har har Har." Yeah. I heard.

TERRI

Cripes, I hardly know that guy, what's he doing giving the toast to the bride?

GARY

Makin a big fat mess of it I guess.

(Moving to the truck.)

Hey Terri, ya want a beer to go with that?

TERRI

No. I gotta stay sober.

GARY

(Getting a beer from the box.)

Don't see why Terri, nobody else is . . . So hey. Whadja think a the decorations at the hall?

TERRI

What about them?

GARY

What about them? I helped put them up.

TERRI

You did?

GARY

Sure. I seen Auntie Marta truckin down the street with a whole armload a tinsel an' stuff, so I stopped, give her a ride.

TERRI

Well gee Gary, that was almost human of you.

GARY

You bet. Give her a hand too. Ja like the way I put up the sign? "Good luck, Terry and Gabriel".

TERRI

It's Terri with an "I", Gary.

GARY

It is? Oh, right, it is.

TERRI

Jesus. After all these years.

GARY

Hey, an ja like the way I lined them mason jars up against the windowsill?

TERRI

That was your idea?

GARY

Well, Auntie Marta brought em along, thought you should have em somewhere there. But she wanted to just put em out on a table, I said you line em up against the window and yer gonna be able ta see the water in em a whole lot better.

TERRI

Well, it was kinda nice havin' them there.

GARY

Sure it was.

TERRI

Now let's go. I gotta get back before they notice I'm gone.
(She rises to go.)

GARY

Well wait wait wait. You uh . . . you don't want another one of those?

TERRI

No, thankyou.

GARY

Just to fortify ya?

TERRI

Let's go, Gary. Before Ma takes a fit.
(She starts out. GARY lingers.)

GARY

An then a course I just couldn't get over Gabriel's stunning white suit.

TERRI

(Warning:)

Garrrry --

GARY

No no, I mean that Terr, because really -- you hardly see those anymore.
(Pause. TERRI gives him a "fuck you" look.)
He's, uh -- he's quite a guy, Gabriel.

TERRI
Yes. He is.

GARY
Did he rent that suit, or did he buy it off a Dickie Dee man?

TERRI
I knew you couldn't say something nice.

GARY
Well Terri --

TERRI
You can't, can you? You are incapable of saying one thing nice.

GARY
That's not true.

TERRI
Go on then. Go on and say one thing nice.

GARY
About who?

TERRI
About Gabriel!

GARY
Well I mean uh --- well I mean uh -- I don't even know the guy.

TERRI
Make something up.
(Beat.)

GARY
All right then. Uh . . .
(Pause.)

Uhh . . .
(Pause. GARY makes all sorts of little inchoate sounds, as if trying to squeeze something out. Makes flailing motions like Joe Cocker. Possibly falls to the ground as if having a seizure. Finally:)

Yer right. I can't.

TERRI

(Moving to go.)

Fine. See? I don't know why I even bother --

GARY

But I would like to, y'know. I would like to know the guy better so I could say something nice about him.

TERRI

If you think this is gonna get you invited back to the reception --

GARY

No no, but you could tell me. Please, tell me. Tell me everything there is good to know about Gabriel.

TERRI

Yeah right, Gary.

GARY

No, really.

TERRI

Yeah right. So you can go out and tell everybody what a dink he is.

GARY

I would never do any such thing!

TERRI

Traci Dandenaud says you told everybody he was a Moonie who come from a commune in Oregon.

GARY

Well if I'd never met the guy, how was I to know differently?

TERRI

Well you didn't have to lie!

GARY

Well for all I knew it was true!

TERRI

Besides, you met him, you met him that time you come to our apartment in Edmonton.

GARY

That was one time, Terr, for about ten seconds. I hardly think that little episode counts. C'mon. Tell me. Tell me anything you think I should know.

TERRI

You want to know.

GARY

That's what I'm saying.

TERRI

Do you promise if I tell you not to make any jokes after?

GARY

Absolutely. Absolutely no jokes.
(Pause.)

TERRI

He's an engineer.

GARY

Uh-huh. Good.

TERRI

He works for Hudson Dewitt, which is just about the biggest engineering firm in the city.

GARY

Engineering firm, I see.

TERRI

He used to have his own company, but that went broke about five years ago.

GARY

A lotta people did.

TERRI

He bought that white suit. He happens to own about ten.

GARY

White suits?

TERRI

Suits. He likes to wear a different one every day.

GARY

I see. So we're, uh -- well off, are we?

TERRI

We're -- comfortable.

GARY

Uh—huh. Comfortable meaning comfortable, or comfortable meaning so much filthy money it'd be disgusting even to talk about it?

TERRI

Comfortable meaning -- somewhere in between.

GARY

Ah hah.

TERRI

He has to work long hours, but, like he says, if he wasn't up late workin' he'd be up late worryin' about where the next contract was coming from. So's you pick yer poison.

GARY

Right, right.

TERRI

An after all, that's what makes it so I don't haveta work anymore.

GARY

What, you don't even have a job?

TERRI

Nope. Quit Telus about a year and a half ago.

GARY

Really.

TERRI

Yep. Just walked in there one day and said "So long."

GARY

Wow. That's great.

(Pause.)

So, uh, basically the guy neglects you and you sit at home watchin TV a lot, is that about it?

TERRI

Well gee, that was really good Gary. You kept yer promise for — (Checks watch.)
-- two whole minutes! Wow!

GARY

You mean that's not about it?

TERRI

No. No, that's "not about it", Gary, except in yer fondest wishes. I'm very happy with Gabriel, thankyou very much. An now I think I'll go.

GARY

Hey, hey, what's yer rush?

TERRI

My rush is I just got married, remember?

GARY

Because I'm very glad to hear that, y'know, because, actually, that's not what some people are saying.

TERRI

What are some people not saying?

GARY

About Gabriel. About Gabriel being such a dead-ahead guy. Actually some people are saying he's kind of a . . . wuss.

TERRI

Who said that?

GARY

Candace Dempsey.

TERRI

Oh, well her.

GARY

Dale Slawsky. Angus Skelly. Sandra Peski and Jim Gaudette. Mikey Gawryluk, Wade Niven, Mary-Jane Willans. Baba Szybunka.

TERRI

All right, Gary.

GARY

Gus Alder, Helmut Beaupre.

TERRI

All right, Gary. I hardly think Baba Szybunka is gonna say something like that!

(She sits.)

I suppose they all think I'm crazy for not coming back here and marrying you or something.

GARY

Well y'know, Terr, it is kinda hard to figure out.

TERRI

Oh well that woulda been a big success, wouldn't it? Talk about sittin alone at home a lot, it's what I'd be doin for the rest a my life. And as for Candace Dempsey, she's just jealous cause she's married to that dope-smoking hippy.

GARY

Actually, he got his hair cut.

TERRI

Prob'ly fell out, from havin to look at her.

(Beat.)

Christ that makes me mad, y'know? Not one a those people had the time a day for me when I was living out here. Not one a them thought I was good for anything cept maybe having babies and goin on Weight Watcher programs. An now that I come back out here with a guy who's just a little bit different from what they're used to -- they're all lookin' at me like I ruined my life.

GARY

Just a little bit different from what they're used to?

TERRI

That's right!

GARY

Terr -- you might as well a come out here with a space alien.

TERRI

He's not that bad.

GARY

He's pretty bad, Terr.

TERRI

Only to rednecks like you. An I suppose I was a whole lot better off when I was livin out here anyway! Haulin shit outta the barn and freezing my butt to get to school. Workin at the feed store and draggin around fifty—pound bags a Dr. Ballard's. Yeah! Livin in a condo in Edmonton is a whole lot worse n that!

GARY

Well, maybe to some people it is.

TERRI

Well I'm not some people, I'm me!

(Pause.)

An' then there was sittin in the bar on Friday nights, wonderin whether or not you was gonna show up.

GARY

Wait a minute, wait a minute. That's how you remember me?

TERRI

Well? Isn't it true?

GARY

No!

TERRI

Oh cripes, Gary, the only reason you went out with me is because Alison Dominiuk was booked up three months in advance.

GARY

That is not true.

TERRI

Oh really?

GARY

(He means it.)

That is not true, an I resent you sayin that it is!

(Pause. TERRI is a bit taken aback.)

TERRI

Well all right then. Maybe I'm a little off-beam.

GARY

You are.

TERRI

Well all right then. Forget it. Forget I said anything at all.
(EVELYN is heard approaching, off.)

EVELYN

Terri?

TERRI

Oh frig, there's Evelyn. Oh Jesus. Lookit the time!
(EVELYN enters. She is seventeen, wears a bridesmaid's dress. She also wears a white brace around her neck. She sees TERRI and GARY, frowns.)

EVELYN

Thought I'd find you two out here.

TERRI

Hi, Evvy.

EVELYN

Yeah right, "Hi Evvy." "Hi Evvy"'s gonna help you a lot.
(She moves to the cake.)

How'd this get out here?

TERRI

Guess.

EVELYN

Smooth move, Grignon.

GARY

Well y'know, ya can't have a wedding without a cake.

EVELYN

It's not your wedding, Gary.

GARY

It isn't? What a horrible error in taste!

TERRI

Did they notice I'm gone?

EVELYN

Yeah right, Terri. The bride disappears from the reception and nobody notices a thing.

TERRI

Well -- what was I supposed ta do? He kidnapped me!

EVELYN

Forget it, Terri. You don't get kidnapped unless you wanna be.

(EVELYN takes GARY'S cigarettes from his pocket, lights a smoke.)

TERRI

Well . . . do they know where we are then?

EVELYN

No.

GARY

How'd you know?

EVELYN

Well at first I didn't, naturally. Thought you mighta gone back to Auntie Marta's ta change. Then I went lookin in the car wrecks, thought you mighta gone out there for a smoke.

TERRI

I don't smoke anymore.

EVELYN

Saw you smokin this afternoon.

TERRI

That was just one.

EVELYN

And then when I got back to the hall Traci Dandenaud tol me she seen Gary hangin around. Put two n two together an here we are.

GARY

Evelyn Huffer, Girl Detective.

TERRI

Evvy always was the one got A's in school. You didn't tell Gabriel, did you?

EVELYN

No. But Bill's takin a fit in the kitchen. And Damon Babichuck's gettin up a group a guys to come beat the shit outta you, Gary.

GARY

Oooooooooo, Damon Babichuk, whatever shall I do?

EVELYN

Laugh all ya want. He's just about ready ta throttle ya.

GARY

Yeah, but he don't know where I am, does he?

EVELYN

Well with you Gary . . . where else would it be?

(Moving to the cake.)

Anyway. Now that I do know yer out here, I guess I'll just take this back there and report in.

TERRI

Evvv, no --

EVELYN

See how Gabriel feels about all this.

GARY

Woh, hold on there, Evvy, hold it, wait!

(He grabs the cake away. Holds a finger to it. Like a gangster.)

You take one more step and I'll shoot this cake! I'll do it! I will!

EVELYN

Somebody musta once told you you were funny or somethin', eh Gary?

TERRI

Evvv, just sit down a minute an then I'll go back with ya.

EVELYN

Yer just makin it worse by stayin out here, ya know.

TERRI

I know. But now that I stayed out here this long I gotta think of a really good excuse why.

GARY

Ya wanna drink?

EVELYN
(Frowns.)

Yeah sure.

(GARY prepares to pour her one in the cap. She grabs the flask.)

Don't really wanna go back there anyhow. Buncha idiots. Wouldn't dance with em if they asked.

(She drinks.)

TERRI
Seen Bill an you dancin, jus before I left.

EVELYN
Yeah. So?

TERRI
That musta just about made your day.

EVELYN
S'all right.

TERRI
You ask him or did he ask you?

EVELYN
Mom made him ask me. Cause she knew with this thing on my neck nobody else would.

GARY
It don't look so bad.

EVELYN
Yeah right. Don't look so bad if you wanna look like a geek.

TERRI
He ask you to do that a lot?

EVELYN
What, dance?

TERRI
Dance and, y'know – other things besides.

EVELYN
Oh jesus.

GARY
What?

EVELYN
Oh Jesus. You ain't never gonna get off that kick, are ya?

TERRI
I'm just askin.

GARY
Askin what?

EVELYN
Terri thinks just cause she had problems with Bill, which maybe she did or maybe she didn't –

TERRI
Oh I had em all right –

GARY
Oh yeah, I get it.

EVELYN
Everybody's gonna have em. Includin me.

TERRI
I didn't say that. I just asked --

EVELYN
Yeah, you just "asked," we all know what you was just "asking".

TERRI
What? That don't make sense, he can't get his kicks with me any more, so he might start in on you?

EVELYN
I told you, he isn't --

TERRI
That don't make sense to you, Gary?

GARY
Well yeah it makes sense but –

TERRI
Well there y'go.

EVELYN

He is our step-father y'know, Terri.

TERRI

So?

EVELYN

So I just don't think you should be goin around tellin everybody he did that stuff to ya when –

TERRI

I didn't go around tellin everybody, I told exactly two people, you an Gary, an then I told Bill to fuck-off when I finally got enough sense together to move myself inta Edmonton. Which, if you had any sense, you'd be doin too!

EVELYN

Yeah? Well some of us like it around here, y'know!

TERRI

Why? So Bill can treat you like a skank the way he –

EVELYN

I TOLD YOU HE ISN'T DOIN' ANYTHING!

GARY

Yeah, yeah, hey Terri? You are kinda ridin that horse to death a little bit here.

EVELYN

Oh really? I suppose you don't think Bill did nothin to me either!

GARY

No no, I know he did that stuff to ya. I know that. But the thing is . . . y'know . . . Evvy told us there's nothin happenin to her, an I believe her, and I don't see any reason you shouldn't neither. An the fact is . . . coupla months ago I went up to Bill at the auction and I says to him, I says: I ever hear of you layin a hand on Evvy the way you used ta do Terri, I'm gonna crack yer skull wide open. An I know a lotta guys that'd be glad to help me do it.

EVELYN

You told him that?

GARY

Uh-huh.

TERRI

Whad he say?

GARY

Nothing. Just walked away and made sure for the rest of the day he was on the other side of the tent from me. But I think he got the message.

EVELYN

That's why he been so polite around me lately!

TERRI

Well. I just think, once a asshole, always an asshole.

GARY

Not in this case I guess, eh?

TERRI

Well. I guess I'm just bein suspicious. I don't know. Weddings always did leave me sort of fried.

GARY

Well sure, that's what they're for, isn't it? So people can dress up and act ridiculous. Y'wanna maybe share the flask there, Evvy?

EVELYN

Oh. Yeah. Sorry.

(She hands it back.)

GARY

An have yerself another smoke here. That one looks about done.
(She takes a cigarette from the pack. Pause.)

EVELYN

You guys see Stevie back at the hall?

TERRI

Uh-huh. Still looks like Barry Manilow.

EVELYN

He danced with me too, actually.

GARY

He did, huh?

EVELYN

Uh-huh. Well for a little bit anyway.

GARY

He break anything on ya this time?

EVELYN

Don't talk that way, Gary. It wasn't his fault this happened to me. It was the truck's.

(Pause.)

Actually, I was the one who had ta ask him to dance. You shoulda seen his face when I did. Went all white and just kinda looked at his shoes. Course this was the first time we seen each other since the accident, so I guess it figures. An ever'one standin around watchin the two of us. He couldn't say no. Then it'd look like he wasn't sorry.

(Pause.)

An all the time out there he didn't say nothin about this thing on my neck. An I wasn't about ta bring it up. So I just talked to him about everything but. Bout tutoring them two Pakistani kids who moved here. Bout maybe goin out to visit Deb Albert in B.C. this fall, though I don't know if that's gonna work out.

GARY

I thought you was goin to university.

EVELYN

Nah, that kinda got put on hold. Bill says we can't afford it this year.

TERRI

Yeah, he used the same line on me for years. Till I figgered out why he really wanted to keep me around.

EVELYN

Terri, shut up.

(Pause.)

So finally, I decided to make a little joke. To Stevie this is. I said I knew he'd always told me he was gonna break my neck, but I never figgered he'd actually go and do it. An I laughed. He just looked at me. An then he kinda pushed me away slow, like I was somethin he didn't want too close, an just held me there. Then he turned round and left the hall. I s'pose he's at Faust bar right now, tellin everybody what a bitch I am. Me n my big trap.

GARY

Stevie's a jerk.

EVELYN

No he's not. He just doesn't know what to say.

TERRI

I heard they wouldn't pay out the insurance on his truck. That's probably what his real problem is.

GARY

Well that thing was a piece of junk.

EVELYN

Well the roll-bar was, that much we know.

(Beat.)

But hey, that's just the way she goes. Y'got any beer with ya, Gary?

GARY

Yes ma'am.

(On his way to the truck.)

An I'll just get the old tape deck goin --

TERRI

Don't get the old tape deck going, Gary. I gotta get back.

GARY

Well now hold on, hold on.

TERRI

Gary. No.

GARY

No?

TERRI

No.

GARY

"No" is such a negative word, Terri, such a --

TERRI

Look, Grignon, it's been real nice comin out here with you an everything. I mean I coulda broke yer neck to begin with -- sorry, Evvy -- I coulda killed you to begin with, but I'm kinda glad I did after all. But now I gotta go. Okay?

GARY

Okay. Okay. I can understand that.

Right. So . . .
G'bye.

TERRI
(She kisses him on the cheek.)

Bye.

GARY

Evvy?

TERRI

You go ahead, Terri. I'll help Gary with the cake.
(Beat.)

Right.

TERRI
(She starts to go.)

Hey Terr?

GARY

What?

TERRI
(Stopping, exasperated.)

I wish you all the best, Terr. I really do.

TERRI
(Smiles, shakes her head.)
Take care a yerself, Gary. God knows somebody better.
(GARY nods sagely. TERRI starts off again. Just after she exits:)

GARY
Of course, if you really don't want to see your wedding presents, that's fine by me.
(Pause. TERRI re-enters.)

What?

TERRI

What?

EVELYN

GARY

I said, if you really don't want to see your —

TERRI

Our wedding presents are back at the hall.

GARY

That's true.

TERRI

So?

GARY

Some of them.

TERRI

Some of them?

GARY

And some of them are . . . kind of . . . around here.

(Pause.)

TERRI

You are fulla --

GARY

You-know-what, I know.

(Like in a western:)

You two stay here, the rest come with me.

(He exits. TERRI and EVELYN look at each other.)

TERRI

Gary, if this is some kind of a —

GARY

(Singing:)

"If you go down to the woods today, You better go in disguise, If you go down to the woods today, You're in for a big sur —" BANG. AGGGGGGGGHHHH! THUD.

(Hick southern:)

"Hey, Vern. Ah bagged me another one of them Teddy bears."

EVELYN

Gary --

GARY
(Off.)

Down. Set. Hup.

(A gift-wrapped wedding present comes sailing into the clearing. TERRI has to scramble to catch it.)

Did you get it?

TERRI

What the hell --

GARY

Good. Here's another one.

(Another one comes sailing on. Then another. Then another. All this time GARY is yelling:)

And another one. And another one! They're all over the place!

(Like a TV pitchman:)

We're going CRAAAAAAAZZZZYYYYY!!!!

(TERRI and EVELYN have to run all over to catch them all.)

EVELYN

Gary!

TERRI

Gary!

EVELYN

Gary, if you don't stop we'll --

GARY

Sorrrrrry. No time to talk, I'm busy!

(Another one sails on.)

TERRI

GARRRRRRRRRRYYYYY!

(Pause. GARY re-enters.)

GARY

There. How'd ya do? Five for five. All right kids! I think we got a place for you on the team!

(Pause.)

TERRI

These better -- all be from you -- or you are in -- big trouble.

GARY

Five presents? All from me? Hey, Terri, I love ya, but not that much.

EVELYN

(Checking a tag.)

Who is this from? "Lonny and El"?

(Checks another.)

"Gramma and Grampa?"

GARY

Prob'ly a cheezie bowl.

TERRI

(Checking one too.)

"Auntie Vera and the kids." Oh Jesus, Grignon, this is too much.

GARY

(Modest.)

It was nothing.

TERRI

TOO MUCH, GRIGNON, TOO MUCH.

GARY

Well. If you don't wanna see what's in em, take em away.

TERRI

With your help, thankyou kindly.

GARY

Uh-uh. Uh-uh. If you can't invite me to your wedding, I can't help you with those.

TERRI

You really are pissed off about that, arencha?

GARY

You could say that.

TERRI

Well I'm kinda pissed off about findin halfa my presents out here.

(She moves to gather them up.)

C'mon, Evvy, gimme a hand.

EVELYN

Well, I wasn't actually thinkin of going back just yet.

TERRI

(Stares at her, can't believe it.)

Oh fine. Fine . . .

(She starts picking up the presents.)

First I get dragged own presents around out here, an now I gotta lug my own presents around . . .

(She tries to pick and carry all the presents, but doesn't have much luck. GARY stands nearby, smirking. Eventually, all the presents fall and TERRI loses it.)

TERRI

OH CRIPES GARY WOULD YOU PLEASE GIMME A HAND!

GARY

(Laughing.)

C'mon Terri, sit down an open up just one.

TERRI

No way!

GARY

Just one, an then I'll give you a hand.

(Beat.)

TERRI

Do you swear?

GARY

Absolutely.

TERRI

Brownie's Honour?

GARY

That too.

(Pause.)

TERRI

Gimme Auntie Vera's there.

GARY

(Going to get it.)

Give er!

Terri, no!
EVELYN

TERRI
I'll just open up one, Evvy. I think I know what it is, I told her my pattern was at Holt's.
(GARY gives her the present. She opens it, takes out a large wooden platter, painted like an American one dollar coin.)

What is it?
EVELYN

TERRI
(Turns it over, reads.)
"Las Vegas, Nevada. I Won Big."
(Pause. GARY starts to laugh.)
I don't believe it.
(GARY'S killing himself.)
I don't believe it! She took this off her rumpus room wall!

EVELYN
No, wait a minute, lemme see it --

TERRI
She did! She give me a souvenir! A used souvenir!

GARY
No, no, y'know what? I think that's from Holt's Las Vegas collection.

TERRI
Screw off, Gary.

EVELYN
Y'know this isn't so bad, if you look at it.

GARY
Oh yeah, it's byoooooteefull.

EVELYN
No, look, I think it's for serving chips or something!

GARY
Ya hang it on yer rumpus room wall.

EVELYN

You do not!

TERRI

She did Evvy, I've seen it there.

GARY

Yeah, good ol' Auntie Vera. Ain't she the one with the spoon collection?

TERRI

Yeah.

GARY

Yeah, well, just thinka the sacrifice she made here, Terri. I mean when's she gonna get to Vegas again? Open up that ugly one.

TERRI

No way, uh-uh, I can't take anymore like this.

GARY

C'mon, it's from some of Gabriel's friends. I wanna see if they're freaks like him.
(TERRI takes the present [just to show him], opens it. It is an oblong abstract sculpture.)

GARY

Ooooooooooooo.

EVELYN

What is that?

TERRI

I dunno. Maybe there's some more in here.
(They all look in the box. Nope.)

GARY

Ooooooooooooo.

TERRI

Oh come on, Gary, it's a sculpture or something.

GARY

It's a doorstep.

EVELYN

That really is weird, Terri.

TERRI
It is not weird, it is art!

GARY
That's art?

TERRI
Yes!

GARY
(Picking up the dollar coin.)
Uh-uh, no way. This is art.

TERRI
Gary --

GARY
(Grabbing the sculpture.)
Do you think it's possible, just possible, just —
(Like Rod Serling:)
-- Within the Realm of Possibility . . . that Gabriel is part of some strange religious cult and this is an object of worship? Or worse! -- that it's some kind of sexual "fay-lic" symbol -- that's it, Terri! — all the men have genitalia that are shaped like this and tonight, when the moon is full --

EVELYN
Gary, that is gross . . .

GARY
Gross? Gross? It's abnormal, that's what it is! Who's it from?
(He checks the tag.)

"Katie and Samuel".
(Mock weeping.)

Oh my god Terri, Katie and Samuel, they're in on it too!

TERRI
Give it here.

GARY
Ooo. Gladly. Get that thing away from me.

TERRI
(Putting the present away.)
You think yer so funny. Well. This is probably by somebody very famous.

GARY

Yeah, Ronald Macdonald. Open up Lonny and El's.

TERRI

Why, what is it, a rat or something?

EVELYN

Actually, El said it was somethin' really good. Actually, she said she almost kept it for herself.

(TERRI takes the present, opens it. Takes out a broken electric coffee maker.)

GARY

Oh.

TERRI

Yeah. Oh, Gary.

GARY

Hey it mighta been broken before --

TERRI

You are a jerk, Gary. That's all you are, yer just a jerk.
(She tries again to gather up the presents.)

GARY

Look, I'll buy you another one or something.

TERRI

Forget it, Gary, just -- forget it.

EVELYN

(Picking up the coffee—maker, which TERRI has accidentally dropped.)

Or maybe we can fix this one.

GARY

That's right, we can get it fixed!

TERRI

(Still picking up presents.)

Ya wreck my presents, ya wreck my wedding. Why doncha wreck somebody else's life for a change?

GARY

Well doncha think yer kind of over-reacting?

TERRI

No! No! I don't think I'm "over-reacting"! I think yer acting like a kid!

(Beat.)

Y'know this is the reason you weren't invited to the wedding in the first place. Cause we could be just about sure you were gonna cause some kinda trouble.

GARY

"We" could.

TERRI

That's right!

GARY

Is this you n Gabriel ya mean, or were you talking to yerself again?

TERRI

As a matter a fact it was Gabriel said we shouldn't invite you, and thank god he did.

GARY

Ah-ha, so it was his idea not to invite me.

EVELYN

Gary, just forget about it.

GARY

No, this is interesting, Evvy, I kinda figured this all along!

TERRI

He said he only had to meet you that one time an he could tell what the deal was with you.

GARY

Oh yeah? And what was that?

TERRI

"Delayed adolescence" he said. "The worst case of delayed adolescence I have ever seen."

GARY

Well that's pretty good, seeing's how the guy only ever met me for about ten seconds!

TERRI

That's all it took.

GARY

And as I remember we exchanged about five words!

EVELYN

When did you meet Gabriel?

GARY

Though he did have his head so far up his ass he probably couldn't see!

TERRI

That is my husband you are talkin' about, and you better just quit it right now!

GARY

Yeah, well maybe if I got invited to the wedding Terri, I might have something nicer to say!

(Beat.)

You like him? Huh? That is what you like? Well then go ahead and have him, but you are screwing your life up worse n you could ever know!

EVELYN

Don't say things like that, Gary.

GARY

No? No? Have you seen, him, Evvy? Sittin up there at the head table in his white suit, drinkin his soda water or whatever. He won't even kiss her proper when the people clink their glasses, he just gives her a little peck on the cheek like this. What is that, Terri, huh, what is that? — a chicken eating feed?

TERRI

Screw you, Gary.

GARY

Huh?

TERRI

Screw you! Gabriel has more class n you could understand!

GARY

Class? Is that what you call it? I call it bein a wimp.

TERRI

Trust me, Gabriel is not a wimp.

GARY

No?

TERRI

No! An he does not have to prove his manhood by slobberin all over me, er by kidnappin me, like some people I could name!

(Beat.)

He works out. Didja know that, Gary? He works out just about every day! In fact that's how I met him, we was both workin out at Fitness World an he told me I didn't have to, that I was perfect just as I was! See, that's another thing about him, Gary, he knows how to give somebody a compliment.

EVELYN

Well Terr, if ya believe a line like that –

TERRI

It wasn't a line. He was very sincere!

GARY

An that's why you like him? Because he told you it's okay to get fat?

TERRI

That is not what I --

GARY

Well I'll tell ya what, Terri, marry me cause I'll tell ya it's okay ta get huge! Ta explode, get as big as you want! Or maybe I'll tell ya to turn green! Or ta cut yer right leg off! Or ta tie a cement block around yer leg an jump off the Grizzly Point Bridge, wouldja do that, huh? WOULDJA DO THAT TOO!?

(Pause.)

TERRI

No. I don't think I would.

GARY

Well good. Good. That's very good to hear.

(Pause.)

EVELYN

Maybe you should just get going, Terri.

TERRI

(Regarding the presents.)

Can you get these back to the hall later?

EVELYN

Yeah, I'll take care of em. Just go.

(TERRI hesitates a moment, then starts to go.)

GARY

Uh, uh, wait, just wait a minute. I got one more.

TERRI

One more what, Gary?

GARY

Present. My present. And it ain't a souvenir from Vegas.

(Pause. He goes to a rock, reaches behind it for a small gift. Holds it out to TERRI. She takes it, opens it. It is a mason jar filled with water.)

TERRI

Is this one a my old ones? You didn't steal that too, didja?

GARY

No. It's a new one. It's from the river down there.

(Pause.)

I was thinkin . . . how Auntie Marta used ta do that for you all the time . . . bring you back a jar of water from all the places she travelled. And I realized you had jars from the Pacific Ocean, and the Nile, and the St. Lawrence, and the -- what's it called? In Paris?

TERRI

The Seine.

GARY

The Seine. Yeah. But then I realized. You didn't have one from up here . . . An now yer living in Edmonton, I guess this counts as a foreign place too. So there you go. Real Smokey River river water. Bottled it myself.

(Pause.)

Don't forget us, eh Terri?

(Pause. TERRI takes the mason jar, turns to go. Suddenly she turns back, kisses GARY, then starts to run towards the path.)

TERRI

(Checking her watch as she exits.)

Oh Jesus, it's almost ten-thirty, I am gonna catch such hell!

(She is gone. We can hear the "Chicken Dance" coming from the hall.)

GARY

Huh. Huh. They're playing the Chicken Dance again. (Melodramatically:)
My god. Will it ever stop?

(He sits, smoking, lost in his thoughts. It has gotten quite dark.)

EVELYN starts gathering up gift-wrap.)

EVELYN

Well hey, we oughta get a bonfire goin here.

GARY

Uh, I don't think so, Evvy.

EVELYN

Why not?

GARY

Actually, I was thinking of packin up the truck an getting this stuff back there right now.

EVELYN

What for? You got until gift-opening tomorrow, y'know.

GARY

Yeah I know, but –

EVELYN

Besides, you don't think they're gonna let you in, do ya?

GARY

Well they might, just fer late lunch.

EVELYN

I don't think so, Gary.

GARY

You don't think so?

EVELYN

After you stole the wedding cake? I don't think so, no.

GARY

Well I'll just take my chances. Besides, the cake's hardly even wrecked.
(GARY starts to load up the truck.)

EVELYN

So. I heard you went up to Peace River.

GARY

Oh yeah? Who told you that?

EVELYN

Yer Mom. Said you might get work on the new mill up there.

GARY

Yeah, well. I went up there at any rate.

EVELYN

And didja?

GARY

Did I what?

EVELYN

Get any work?

GARY

Evvv, if I got any work, would I be standin here talking to ya? I went by the mill, but they're not hirin anymore.

EVELYN

Oh. Musta been sorta disappointing for you.

GARY

Yeah, well, I got to see Andy Grecko up there. He's workin for the government now, so he's gonna keep an eye open for me.

EVELYN

That'd be good.

GARY

Government job? You bet.

EVELYN

Make you wear a suit.

GARY

Maybe.

EVELYN

Guys in suits are hot. Guys in suits make me wanna do this.
(She kisses him. A long, serious kiss. Pause.)

Really. GARY

Uh-huh. EVELYN

GARY
(Moving away.)
Yeah, well . . . we don't wanna be getting Stevie mad or nothing, do we? That guy's dangerous. Might invite me for a ride in his truck.
(He resumes packing.)

EVELYN
Cripes. If Terri only knew how many times we been out here together like this, eh?

GARY
Yeah, well. That was a long time ago now.

EVELYN
Not that long.

GARY
Hey Evvy, why don't you pick up that sculpture thing there, lend a hand.

EVELYN
I'm not really goin out with Stevie no more, y'know. That one ended. Ended about half an hour ago on the dance floor.

GARY
Is that so?

EVELYN
So we --

GARY
Look, I don't really care if you're going out with Stevie or not. Mostly I just want to get this stuff back to the hall. And then if they won't let me in . . . I'll just go to Faust bar.
(He closes the gate on the truck.)

EVELYN
Well – could we stay and have a dance at least?

GARY
Could we what?

EVELYN

Well sure. Can't have one back at the hall, might as well have one out here.

GARY

Evvy, that'd be stupid, havin a dance in the woods.

EVELYN

(Moving to the cab.)

Why? You got a tape deck, doncha? That's all you need when you wanna have a dance.

(She turns on the tape deck. It plays something slow and country.)

There. It's playin a slow one. Just like you like it.

(She holds her arms out to him.)

'Kay?

(Pause.)

GARY

All right. I'll have one dance with you. One. Just till the end of this song.

EVELYN

We'll see.

GARY

Gawd, I think yer drunk, Evvy. And I don't know as I'm too sober myself.

(They dance.)

EVELYN

Seen Shawna Riegel at the hall. Stevie danced with her. 'Course the accident ain't the only reason he won't dance with me, I know that. It's this thing on my neck too. Makes me look like a goon. You oughta see what she's wearing. Got on this strapless blue an magenta gown with the gold stitching, an these silk satin pumps. An here I am. Looking like I got my wardrobe outta Barbie's closet.

GARY

You don't look that bad, Evvy.

EVELYN

Yes I do. You don't haveta tell me that. I don't know why they always have to make the bridesmaids look so awful. Er yes I do. It's to make the bride look good.

(Pause. They dance.)

So I told her, you can have him. I don't care. I don't want him. But she does, you can just tell. Mind you, so do half the other women around here. Soon as I told everybody I was movin inta Edmonton, they all started movin in on Stevie. An now that I'm not goin, they're still movin in on him. Like I'm invisible. Frankly, ever since the accident everybody's treatin me like I'm dead anyway. Like I went and died anyway. Guess they

just can't stand looking at me with this thing on my neck. Sometimes I think I mighta as well a died in that truck. Least then Stevie wouldn't have to cross the street every time he sees me comin.

(EVELYN has started to cry. GARY consoles her.)

GARY

Oh hold on now, don't do that.

EVELYN

It's true, isn't it? Save everybody havin to look at me!

GARY

No, no, it ain't true! Now that's just stupid, Evelyn. Nobody's thinking like that.

EVELYN

No?

GARY

No! Now c'mon and dry those tears. Don't wanna go back to the hall looking like you been bawlin.

(The song changes, to something uptempo.)

Besides, we ain't done dancing.

EVELYN

We're not?

GARY

No. Hell no! Who ever told you I only like the slow ones?

(GARY cranks up the sound, returns to EVELYN. They jive.)

Woo-hoo!

EVELYN

Give er, Grignon!

GARY

Y'ask me, Terri left too soon! Party's just getting started!

EVELYN

One thing about you, Gary, you always was a good dancer.

GARY

Woh yeah.

EVELYN

Hey, hey, you remember you taught me how ta polka at Baba Kryzak's birthday?

No. GARY

EVELYN
Yeah, you did! An you taught me to do this!
(She dips him.)

Wohhhhh! GARY

EVELYN
Give er, Grignon!

GARY
Jesus! Evvy!

EVELYN
Ya gotta be quick with me, pal! I don't just dance fer fun!

GARY
Hey, hey, maybe we shouldn't be doin this.

EVELYN
Why not?

GARY
Well, you know, with your neck an everything.

EVELYN
Hell, I don't even think there's anything wrong with my neck anymore. In fact, I don't even think I need this thing anymore. I don't. I'm gonna take it right off.

GARY
Well now I wouldn't do that.

EVELYN
(Taking off the brace.)
I don't! Y'ask me, all those doctors are idiots. There. See? No problem. Shoulda took it off last month!
(Suddenly, her head slumps limply to one side. Her tongue lolls.)

Evvy!
GARY
(He moves to help her. She straightens her head; it was a prank.)

Yes?
EVELYN

Judas priest --
GARY

EVELYN
(Lolling her head from side-to-side.)
Oh no, It's going this way! That way! That way! This way!

GARY
I don't think that's very funny.

EVELYN
(She clasps her head in both hands, as if to hold it upright.
Laughs.)
Oh no! I've got to get hold of myself!

GARY
Stop it, Evelyn!

EVELYN
Oh c'mon, Gary –

GARY
This is stupid.
(Moving to the truck.)
I don't even know what we're doing out here, dancing in the woods.
(He turns off the music.)

EVELYN
Aw no, don't turn off the music, Gary!

GARY
We got too much ta do.

EVELYN
We was just starting to have fun!

GARY

Yeah well, fun's your word for it. My word is let's get this stuff packed up.
(He resumes work. Pause.)

EVELYN

Jesus, Gary. I's just tryna have a good time.

GARY

Sorry.

EVELYN

(Mostly to herself.)

Just a good time. Just a good time fer one goddamn night . . .

(She takes a slug of beer, watches him.)

Well could we go somewhere else for awhile?

GARY

Yeah. The hall.

EVELYN

No, like I mean . . . after that. I could go up to Faust bar with you. Or we could go back to my place. Won't be anybody there for at least . . . two er three hours.

GARY

That right.

EVELYN

Uh-huh. We could, you know.

GARY

Why doncha just put that neck brace back on?

EVELYN

We could.

GARY

Could what, Evvy?

(Pause.)

EVELYN

Whaddaya think?

(Pause.)

GARY

I think we oughta get in the truck now. An I'll just take you back ta where you're supposed to be.

(GARY gets in the truck, slams shut the door. Starts the truck, sits there with it idling. EVELYN doesn't get in.)

EVELYN

You think she's gonna come back to you or something, doncha Gary? You think yer gonna go back there an she's gonna call the wedding off. Don't you? Well it's too late fer that, Gary, ya can't turn back the clock that far. Fucked it up when you had her, y'think you can make it better now?

(GARY throws the truck into gear, tries to back out. EVELYN gets in his way.)

Gabriel's an engineer, did you know that Gary? That's how come he can afford that white suit! He makes about a hundred thousand a year! Whaddayou make, Gary? How much is yer EI -- er are you on welfare yet? Gabriel wanted to pay for the whole reception, Gary, didja know that, but Bill'd only let him go halfers. But that's why there's four bottles a wine on each table! He bought them himself!

(GARY has tried to manoeuvre the truck so he can drive out headfirst. But EVELYN just climbs up on the hood and yells at him through the front windshield.)

YOU THINK YER GONNA GO BACK THERE AN SHE'S -- WHAT? JUS GONNA THROW HERSELF AT YER FEET? JUS BECAUSE YOU GIVE HER A JAR A SMOKEY RIVER RIVER WATER? WELL I'LL TELL YOU SOMETHING, GARY -- SHE DON'T WANT A JAR A SMOKEY RIVER RIVER WATER. THAT'S WHY SHE LEFT HERE, I'N'T IT? SHE'S TRYNA FORGET ABOUT US!

(GARY bursts out of the truck, makes a bee-line for EVELYN, drags her off the hood, she scrambles away from him, screaming, GARY yelling, grappling after her:)

GARY

DON'T YOU TELL ME SHE DON'T WANT THAT PRESENT! THAT IS MY PRESENT. THAT IS THE BEST GODDAMN WEDDING PRESENT SHE IS GONNA GET!

(He has grabbed her arm, drawn back his fist as if to punch her. Doesn't. Pause.)

EVELYN

That was a joke, Gary. Jesus, can't you take a joke?

GARY

(Moving away.)

No it weren't.

EVELYN

Well maybe it weren't. But that don't mean you have ta go snake on me.

(Suddenly, GARY wheels and savagely kicks the door of the truck about five times in rapid succession. Pause.)

EVELYN

Well that'll teach yer truck.

GARY

Huh. Yeah.

EVELYN

Mind you . . . better yer truck than me . . .

(She moves to him.)

You don't, do you Gary?

GARY

Don't what?

EVELYN

Think Terri's gonna come back to you or something?

GARY

No. Well yeah, for a minute there, I wondered. Right after she kissed me. But no. I know I'm not the guy.

EVELYN

Yer sure not acting that way.

GARY

Yeah, well I'm not so sure Gabriel's the guy either.

(He sits.)

I mean it could be so good now, y'know? That's all I'm thinkin. It could be so good. If we was just startin now. And we hadn't been so young and stupid. I hadn't been so young and stupid. And there weren't all this other shit in the way. But. There y'are.

EVELYN

(Moving to sit beside him.)

Guess we both got dumped tonight, eh?

GARY

Guess so.

EVELYN

You don't think she really loves Gabriel, do ya?

GARY

I dunno.

EVELYN

I don't see how she could. I couldn't. Y'know why he told Candace Dempsey he's wearin that white suit? So he could look like Jesus Christ.

GARY

Yeah?

EVELYN

Looks more like the guy from Fantasy Island to me.

(Pause.)

You went in an seen him one time?

GARY

Uh-huh. Well, not him. I thought I was goin to see her.

(Pause.)

This was about – two, three years ago, eh? When I was in there looking for work. An there wasn't nothin. I mean nobody was hirin, not even the 7-11s. An I was stayin at Rob Prokopchuk's place, but when I couldn't pay my second month's rent, he threw me out. An I don't blame him, eh? Nobody said he hadda be a one-man welfare centre.

(Pause.)

So I ended up sleepin at the Sally Ann. But that turned out to be fulla guys who had a bit too much lighter fluid to drink. Slept next to one old codger one night, he got up in the middle a the night n started throttlin me. Yellin I was the anti-Christ or some dumb shit thing. So I got outta there fast enough. Thought, jeez, I shoulda moved inna Edmonton before now. Never knew I was missing all this.

(Pause.)

So the next night I ended up sleepin on a bench above the river valley. An it was pretty, eh? All the skiers on the ski hill across the river, them big lawn-sprinkler type things pumpin out snow. All lit up . . . But, seein's how it got to be about twenty below out, that didn't work out too good neither. So I decided. Next day I was gonna go n see Terri. Called up her Mom and got her address from her. Decided I was gonna give her a surprise.

(Little laugh.)

Well I give her a surprise, all right. Show up the next day, colder n a Eski-Pop, little icicles hangin off my beard, I had a beard by then. Knock on the door . . . an there he is. Gabriel. I mean I thought maybe he was just visitin her or something, but it turned out the place was his. So I told em I'd just come ta deliver a message from Terri's Mom, gave em some crap about how her phone was broke, n I made something up. An then I just stood there. Stunned. Little icicles meltin off my beard. An in that moment, standin there, Terri standin just inside the apartment lookin over Gabriel's shoulder . . . she looked so beautiful to me . . . she looked more beautiful to me than I ever remembered . . . Gabriel had one thing right I'll tell ya. She was just about perfect . . . just as she was.

(Pause. Rising:)

So then I come back out here. Decided Edmonton could go screw itself, same way Wayne Gretzky did. Only difference is, he's livin in L.A. with the movie stars, and I'm back out here, livin in my Mom's basement. But hey, other than that, we're just about exactly the same.

EVELYN

Plus ya both like blondes.

GARY

Hey yeah. That's right.

EVELYN

You still gonna go back to the hall?

GARY

Naw. You're right, what's the use?

EVELYN

Get em back there tomorrow.

GARY

Yeah, I guess so.

EVELYN

Well we could still go up to Faust bar . . . I mean, we could if you still want to do that.

GARY

(Beat; a decision:)

Sure. Why not?

(Pause.)

An hey Evvy?

(He picks up the neck brace, takes it to her.)

Don't let nobody tell ya ya look like a goon in this. I think it looks real good. If I were you . . . I'd wear it all the time.

(He moves to put it on her. She kisses him. Pause. He kisses her back. Once. Then again, longer. His hand moves to her breast. She pulls his head nearer. He pushes down the straps on her dress. Lifts her, she wraps her legs about him, he places her up on the truck hood, she lies back, he climbs atop her. They begin to make love.)

Eventually . . . TERRI is heard approaching from the distance.)

Gary? Gary!

TERRI
(Off.)
(GARY and EVELYN break off.)

What the -- hell --

GARY

Gary?

TERRI
(Off.)

EVELYN
(Hurrying to put on the neck brace.)
Cripes. What is she doing back here?
(TERRI runs on, breathless, her veil askew, her dress even dirtier than before. She is still carrying the mason jar of water. She straggles to a stop, gasping, unsteady.)

Gary?

TERRI

Yeah hey Terr -- what's the matter?

GARY

Nothing. Nothing. I just -- gotta sit down.
(She collapses.)

Terri!

EVELYN
(A scream.)

Holy jesus, what's wrong?

GARY
(Moving to her.)

I don't -- I don't --

TERRI

Lift her head or something!

EVELEYN

GARY

I don't know if I should move her!

EVELYN

She's just hyperventilating, Gary -- lift her head!
(EVELYN moves to do so.)

Terri? Terri, you okay?

TERRI

I'm not -- I just -- I gotta catch my breath.

EVELYN

Okay.

TERRI

(She struggles to her feet.)

I ran all the way here. Through the mud and the trees and everything. I climbed out the washroom window, and I ran all the way.

GARY

You uh — forget something or something Terri?

TERRI

No. I just didn't wanna stay there anymore. They can all just go and have last dance together.

(GARY and EVELYN look to each other sceptically.)

TERRI

Hey. I know. Let's open some more of the presents.
(She moves to get one from the truck.)

EVELYN

What? No!

TERRI

It's my wedding Evvy, I'll open the presents if I want.
(She opens one. Takes out some towels.)

Oh, towels. Towels! Isn't that nice? Specially since we was gonna move into a house in Wolf Willow next year. Three bathrooms, need all the towels you can get.
(She throws them aside.)

EVELYN

Gary, would you say something to her?!

TERRI

What's he gonna tell me, Evvy, tell me ta quit?

(She takes up another unopened present, shakes it.)

What's in here? What's in here ya think?

(She shakes it really hard.)

Do ya think it's fragile? What do ya think is in here?

GARY

Why don't you just gimme the present, Terri --

TERRI

(Eluding him.)

No I --

GARY

Just gimme the goddamn --

(She opens the present. Takes out an automatic can opener.)

TERRI

Oh! It's a can opener! Oh well that's why it didn't break so easily, you gotta work really hard to BREAK THOSE.

(She lobs the can opener to the ground. Pause.)

GARY

Why don't you just tell us what's wrong, Terri.

TERRI

Why? So you can just tell me how right you was?

(Pause.)

He's gone. Gabriel's gone. He even has my travelling clothes with him, this is all I got to wear.

EVELYN

He left?

TERRI

Guess he didn't think it was too funny my comin out here. Course it didn't help that Traci Dandenaud told him who I was with. So. He took the car. And he left.

GARY

Oh jesus, Terri, I'm sorry --

TERRI

No. No! I am not going to cry about this! That would be really stupid, that would be a really stupid waste of a good cry!

(Pause.)

You been right about a lot of things, Grignon. Life with Gabriel hasn't exactly been a barrel of laughs the last coupla years. Not that I was gonna admit that an hour ago, but . . . this is just about typical.

GARY

You mean he took off like this before?

TERRI

No. No, it's more like – it don't matter if he's around. I might as well be alone anyway.

(Pause.)

I mean we sit there sometimes . . . The two of us, me tryna make a conversation, an him working on papers or something . . . an I might as well be talkin to the video screen. We got one a those big video screens, an I might as well be talkin to that. Sometimes I do. I just start talkin to the people in the show, "Hello Will, hello Grace, how are you doin . . . Ohh, fine thankyou, thankyou for asking." An he just gets up and walks out of the room!

EVELYN

Well whaddayou expect?

TERRI

What do I expect? I expect somebody who can maybe carry on a conversation with me sometimes! I expect somebody who knows I'm there! I expect somebody who doesn't wanna keep me cooped up in the condo all day like I couldn't be trusted!

GARY

He does that?

TERRI

Well, he made me quit my job. I didn't want ta quit, he made me quit. Said we didn't need the money anyway. Then he starts phonin up every two hours from work "just to chat". Just to make sure I'm there is more like it.

GARY

Jesus, Terri —

TERRI

An next thing you know, he's telling me he don't even want me goin to Fitness World. Well screw that! He wants a bloody pet around the house, he can go visit the SPCA!

(Pause.)

An tellin me I'm not twenty anymore. An tellin me he can do better anytime he wants to. Well. Looks like he finally made his decision. An I sure as hell made mine.

EVELYN

Well ya can't just not —

TERRI

Forget about taking the presents back to the hall, Gary. I need you to give me a ride.

EVELYN

Terri. Terri, you gotta go back to the hall. You gotta go back there night now.

TERRI

I don't have ta do anything, Evvy.

EVELYN

Yes you do! Because if Bill finds out —

TERRI

Bill's fine. Bill's got the money to pay for the "Dusty Four", Bill's fine. Bill thinks I'm in the can gettin' ready so's he can drive me to catch up with Gabriel.

GARY

Ya sure that's not what you want to do, Terri?

TERRI

I wanna go into Edmonton. I just don't wanna go home.
(Beat. Then EVELYN starts out.)

EVELYN

Well if you won't go back to the hall, I will.

TERRI

Evvy, no.

EVELYN

Oh yes, go back there and get Bill and --

GARY

(Blocking her.)

I wouldn't do that, Evvy.

EVELYN

Maybe you wouldn't --

GARY
I'm not gonna let you.

EVELYN
You can't stop me –
(She darts around GARY, makes a run for it. He pursues, grabs her.)

GARY
I'M TELLIN' YOU EVVY, JUST --

EVELYN
(Struggling in his arms.)
YOU CAN'T STOP ME, LET GO OF ME, LET GO OF ME, I'LL DO WHAT I WANT!
(GARY holds her firmly where she is.)

GARY
Just calm down Evvy.

TERRI
Hold her there, Gary. She's not gonna calm down.
(TERRI moves to them.)
Evvv. Evvy, you really want Bill out here night now? He's drunk and he's pissed off, Evvy, is that who you want?

EVELYN
I'm not --

TERRI
And don't expect Gary here to take care if things, Gary and me'll be gone.
(EVELYN stops struggling.)
Is that what you want? Is that who you want out here?
(Pause.)

EVELYN
No.

TERRI
No. I didn't think so. Let her go, Gary. She ain't gonna leave.
(GARY releases EVELYN.)

EVELYN
Well. Well I don't know what you married him for, if you knew he was such a creep.

TERRI

I didn't know. Besides. He told me I was perfect. What else was I gonna do?

(Beat.)

Let's just go, Gary, before she changes her mind.

GARY

(He moves to the truck.)

You got somebody you can stay with in there?

TERRI

Yeah, I can stay with my friend Sondra. She's got an extra room.

GARY

Right.

TERRI

An hey Gary? I was thinkin . . . maybe you could stay there with me when we get there. For awhile. I mean . . . if you want.

(GARY stops, turns. Beat.)

GARY

You want me to stay there with you, Terri?

TERRI

Yeah. I mean, I could ask Sondra. I don't think she'd mind.

(Pause.)

You know what I think? I think movin inna Edmonton was the biggest mistake I ever made. Er no, wait, I don't think that. I'm glad I moved into Edmonton. I just shoulda asked you to come.

EVELYN

What a lotta --

TERRI

It's true Evvy. Gary's the only good thing that even happened to me out here!

Sometimes I think he's the only good thing that happened to me ever!

(Pause.)

I mean I was walkin back to the hall just after I left you guys -- stumblin back is more like it, cause I's cryin — an I thought: all the presents I got back there, an all the presents that are out here, none a them means as much to me as this jar a river water. This stupid jar a river water . . . An I was standin there with all the people starin at me, an Mom pourin herself another glass a peach brandy, and flashbulbs goin off because, I don't know, some people thought it was the entrance a the bride all over again . . . an I thought -- none a these people means half as much to me as you do, Gary. None a them. And that includes Gabriel. Even before I knew he was gone.

GARY

Terri, I think maybe yer just --

TERRI

An somehow I already knew he was gone, I could feel it, I could tell he was gone the minute I walked in!

(Smiles a little.)

I guess it was cause I couldn't see his white suit there, eh?

GARY

Guess so.

TERRI

Yeah. I guess that was it.

(Pause.)

So I'm askin you. I'm askin you now to come in with me. And stay. Stay for just however long you want.

GARY

Terr, I don't think --

TERRI

Please.

(Pause.)

GARY

Oh jesus. Oh jesus, yes.

(GARY moves to her, they embrace, kiss, for a long moment. EVELYN stands perfectly still, watching. GARY and TERRI look at each other, laugh.)

TERRI

Cripes. Some wedding, eh Grignon?

GARY

Yeah. Little do they know -- the real party's out here!

(They laugh again, break apart.)

Well hey, c'mon -- we better get outta here. You don't, uh, wanna come inta Edmonton with us, do you Evvy?

EVELYN

(Quiet.)

No.

GARY

Yeah, well uh listen — wait five minutes, then go back to the hall and get some guys to come help you with this stuff.

TERRI

Evvy. You gonna be all right out here, Evvy?

EVELYN

Yeah. I'm fine.

TERRI

I'll call you, okay? I'll call and give you the number where we're at.

EVELYN

That's fine.

TERRI

An Evvy. I'm sorry I give you all that trouble about Bill. I know it's not true. I just – just be careful, okay?

EVELYN

Yeah. Just go.

(Pause.)

TERRI

Well.

(She starts to leave.)

EVELYN

It was Gary who fucked me, actually. He did. Whole buncha times. First time was down here.

(Pause. TERRI stops.)

TERRI

Don't be mad at me . . . please Evelyn?

EVELYN

I'm not. I'm just telling you what happened. Fact, you shoulda been here ten minutes ago. Seen what there was ta see then.

(Pause.)

TERRI

That's crazy.

EVELYN
 He ain't arguing . . . is he?
 (TERRI looks to GARY.)

TERRI
 Is that true?
 (GARY doesn't reply.)
 Well jesus. I figgered you hadn't been celibate, Grignon. But she is only seventeen.
 (Pause.)
 Let's go.

EVELYN
 The first time was four years ago. It was while you was still living out here. As a matter of fact, I believe you were at work.
 (Pause.)
 Terri was workin at the Petro—Canada then, remember Gary? An she had to work somebody else's shift. An we come out here.
 (Pause.)
 You don't remember that? She was at work and you'd been sitting in Faust bar drinking. An I was waiting around outside the bar and we come out here.

GARY
 Shut up, Evvy.

EVELYN
 You was driving your Mom's station-wagon then. I remember, because the back was fulla --

GARY
 Just shut up.

EVELYN
 You don't remember that?

GARY
 EVVY, JUST CLOSE YOUR MOUTH.
 (Pause.)
 Terri, it was --

TERRI
 Tell me she's lying, Gary.

GARY
 I'm telling you, it was --

TERRI
Tell me -- she's lying.

(Pause.)

GARY
It was one time then. We didn't even see each other again until after you went into Edmonton. It was just that one time.

EVELYN
But you do remember, eh Gary?

GARY
I WAS DRUNK, YOU KNOW I WAS, YOU WAS WAITIN' OUTSIDE THE BAR!
(Pause. Then TERRI suddenly moves away from him.)

TERRI
Jesus. Oh jesus --

GARY
Terri, listen to me --

TERRI
Don't come near me.

GARY
It was her idea, she was the one who --

TERRI
DON'T TOUCH ME, DON'T COME NEAR ME, I DON'T WANT TO SEE YOU. Oh jesus.
Oh my god.

(Pause. Then she looks to EVELYN.)
You was waitin outside?

EVELYN
Well. I couldn't go in, could I?

TERRI
An it was his idea?

EVELYN
No. He told you. I come up to him.
(Pause.)
I loved him, Terri. I still do. So I don't know what yer crying for. It was what I wanted.

TERRI
That ain't love, Evvy.

EVELYN

It is! It is love, doncha think I know my own feelings? An I'm glad you know now, I am, cause now we don't have to sneak around anymore, like we was criminals, like what we was doin was somethin wrong!

(Pause.)

Y'know what we could do, Gary? Right now? We could just go back there, arm-in-arm, waltz right in there for late lunch. Wouldn't that be something? Huh? An if anyone said anything, I'd just tell em you was my date. An instead of Terri and Gabriel dancin to last dance . . . it'd be us. That'd show em, eh? Stevie and Bill and -- the whole goddamn hall.

(Pause.)

An then you know what else we could do? We could just go. Get in the truck and just -- take off. If I ain't goin to university next fall, I might as well go someplace else. Jasper. Wood Buffalo. Go up to the lake there, just . . . sleep in the box. Or y'know where I've always wanted to go? Whitehorse. I always thought that was the nicest name. Whitehorse. Like you can almost see one . . . runnin' away.

(Pause.)

Wouldn't you like to do something like that, Gary? We could leave right now.

GARY

No we can't, Evvy.

EVELYN

Sure, stop by my house and --

GARY

Evvy. We can't.

(Pause.)

Look Terri, I'll drive you inta Edmonton, we can --

TERRI

Gimme the keys to your truck. I'll drive myself.

GARY

Well wait a minute -- I thought we were --

TERRI

Gimme the keys. I'll get the truck back to you tomorrow.

(Pause. She turns to EVELYN.)

An yer comin with me. Ya got any stuff back at the hall? No? Then let's go.

EVELYN

I'm not going anywhere.

TERRI
Yes you are.

EVELYN
I'm not --

GARY
I'll drive, Terri, I toldja I'd --

TERRI
I would rather walk, Gary, than drive with you! Get yer purse then, Evvy. Let's go.

EVELYN
You don't even know how yer gonna get inta Edmonton.

TERRI
If he won't give me the keys we can hitch.

EVELYN
You hitch. I'm not --

TERRI
I am not leaving here without you Evvy! And believe me, once we are out of here, we are not ever coming back!

(Pause.)
You think that's fine? You think that's fine what he done to you? You think that's all right, comin' down here with you?

EVELYN
Well jeez Terri, I'm seventeen years old.

TERRI
I don't mean now, I mean then. I don't care what yer doin now, I don't care what was goin on ten minutes ago even. But you was thirteen years old, he was twenty-five, an I don't care how drunk he was, it just is not right!

EVELYN
Well isn't that kinda for him and me to decide?

TERRI
No, I don't think so!

EVELYN
Isn't that kinda between me n him?

GARY

Yeah, that's right!

TERRI

What he done to you is no different than what Bill done to me, Evvy.

GARY

That is such bullshit --

TERRI

Why, Gary? Because she's not yer stepdaughter? That makes it all right?

GARY

She asked me.

TERRI

And you said yes!

GARY

Well what was I supposed to do, she --

TERRI

You know what you was supposed to do! You know!

(Pause.)

An you think you saved Evvy from Bill, Gary? For what? For yerself, is that who you "saved" her for? Or maybe you saved her till Bill figures out how fulla shit you are. Huh? And then Evvy finds out why he really don't want her goin to university. Saved? By you? Hell, you and Bill might as well be the same goddamn person, Gary. You might as well be twins!

(Pause. She turns back to EVELYN.)

Are you comin with me? I know I can't make you. But I wish you would. Are you?

(Beat. EVELYN shakes her head, "No." Pause.)

Then I'll call you tomorrow. Maybe by then you'll figure it out.

(She starts to go.)

GARY

Hey hey, Terr.

TERRI

Leave me alone, Gary.

GARY

Yeah but wait a minute --

TERRI
(She turns to him.)
Do I walk or what?

GARY
Well stay here n talk about it.

TERRI
I guess I walk.
(She starts to go.)

GARY
I LOVE YOU, TERRI. I LOVE YOU. I DO.

TERRI
You love me?

GARY
Yes!

TERRI
Then give me the truck keys. If you love me Gary that's what you would do.
(Pause.)

GARY
Go to hell then.

TERRI
That's what I thought you'd say, Gary. Just what I thought.
(TERRI goes to the mason jar, picks it up. Regards it for a moment. Goes.)

From the hall, the first notes of the Chicken Dance are heard, played by a lone guitarist. GARY laughs grimly.)

GARY
Hey. Hey. Listen Evvy! They're playin the Chicken Dance again!
(He starts to sing along, inchoate, drunk.)
Doo doo doo doo doo doo doo.
(He starts to do the movements.)
Doo doo doo doo doo doo doo. Doo doo doo doo doo doo doo. Doo doo doo doo.
(He pauses a moment, then continues, faster, louder, oblivious to the music.)
Duh duh duh duh duh duh duh. Duh duh duh duh duh duh duh. Duh duh duh duh duh duh duh. Duh duh duh duh.

(Faster, louder.)

Duh duh doo doo doo doo duh Duh duh duh duh duh duh Doo doo duh duh doo doo duh, DUH DUH DUH DUH.

(Faster, louder.)

DUH DUH! DUH! DUH! DUH -- !

(He loses balance, falls to the ground. The music is gone. EVELYN stands frozen, not looking at him.)

Huh. Huh. Chicken Dance. Yeah. Played it one time too many . . .

(Beat. Then EVELYN becomes suddenly active, picking up paper, as earlier.)

GARY

(Still on the ground.)

What are you doing, Evelyn?

EVELYN

Picking up stuff.

GARY

Yer pickin up stuff, are ya? Pickin up stuff . . .

(Beat.)

Get out of here.

EVELYN

Well we can't just –

GARY

Go on. Go catch up with your sister before she's gone.

(Beat. He struggles to his feet.)

You think I want you out here, Evvy? After what you done tonight? That was supposed ta endear you to me or something? Well it didn't work. I never liked you all that much Evvy. And now I don't like you at all.

EVELYN

Gary don't –

GARY

That thing on yer neck? Makes you look like a goon. Christ I'm having trouble even looking at ya. What makes you think I'd wanna hang around with you?

EVEYLN

Yeah but you said we'd --

GARY

Yeah, I said, I said we'd what. Your sister's right about me, Evvy, there's a lotta shit I say.

EVELYN

Yeah but we –

GARY

Yeah but what. Go. Just go. I'll take care of the presents. JUST GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE. GO.

(EVELYN stares at him. She starts to back away.)

An Evvy.

(She stops. He fishes in his pocket.)

Take the truck. An go get Terri. An don't come back here.

(He throws the keys to her.)

Now go.

(EVELYN regards him for a moment more, then gets in the truck, starts it, backs out. Is gone. We hear the truck start to drive away.

GARY looks around the clearing, opens the flask. Begins to sing:)

GARY

Terri . . . Terri . . . with them big red lips . . . and big red eyes . . .

(Off, the truck stops. We hear the sound of a truck door opening, closing. GARY listens. The truck idles for a moment, then drives away. Pause. GARY moves to the cake, stares down at it. Raises his flask to the figurines on top.)

To the bride.

(Pause.)

The bride.

(He drinks.

No sound from the hall.

Fade.)

End

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