

The Moon and The Tide

INT.BEDROOM.MORNING

(Slightly darkened bedroom. The sun is just beginning to shine in through the shades. The bedroom is neat and organized with every piece, including the window shade, in its place.)

A man's grunt is heard followed by a flying alarm clock that hits the shades, knocking it off the wall to fall on the floor.

MELVIN

Great.

Melvin Sommers, 60-70 year-old is lying in bed with his eyes staring at the ceiling. He glances toward the now naked window and winces at the light before returning to the ceiling.

MELVIN

Okay, Evelyn. It's your turn to make breakfast. I've done it for the last 525 days. It's about time to pull your weight around here so get those buns up and get hopping.

No response.

MELVIN

Yeah. That's about what I thought. Guess I'll get it. Again.

Pull back to reveal the other person in bed with Melvin is a CPR dummy in a long, blond wig with poorly scrawled lipstick over its lips. He kisses it on the cheek and struggles to sit up, feet dangling over the side of the bed. He looks back at the dummy.

MELVIN

You just get some rest, sweetheart. I'll take care of breakfast, of course. Guess I'll need to take care of that shade as well.

Melvin gets out of bed, walks over to where the clock is resting on the shade and kicks the shade with one slippersed foot.

MELVIN

Thank you, inferior Chinese products.

He moves off toward the bathroom.

INT.KITCHEN.MORNING

Melvin is frying some eggs on the stove-top in a particularly feminine-looking kitchen. The CPR dummy, or at least the top half of the CPR dummy, is seated at one of the chairs at the table.

MELVIN

I'm tired of being rat-holed up in this house all the time. 'Bout to drive me buggy. Think I'll head up to Nooma's after fixin' that shade.

He frowns.

MELVIN

No, I ain't gonna cause trouble. I just want to have some fun. Is that too much to ask.

He turns to smile at the dummy.

MELVIN

Maybe I'll pick you up some of that apple pie you're so fancy on.

He turns back to the eggs, frowning.

MELVIN

(mumbling)

Or maybe I won't. Dang apple pie costs more than a new car. Can't even enjoy an apple pie on this budget. Might as well die.

He turns back to the dummy.

MELVIN

What, dear? No, I ain't mumbling like a lunatic. I'm just clearing my throat. Can't a man clear his throat in peace for once?

Back to the eggs.

MELVIN

(mumbling)

Dang woman's gonna drive me to drink.

Theatrically, Melvin clears his throat, glancing back at the dummy with squinty eyes.

INT. BASEMENT. LATER

Melvin is digging through his toolbox. Meticulously, he lays out a screwdriver, hammer and wrench on his workbench, grabs a tool belt and secures it around his waist. He places the tools in his belt, turns off the work light and heads up the basement stairs.

MELVIN
(yelling as he pauses by
kitchen)
I'll be in the bedroom if you need
anything, Evelyn.

Hearing no reply, he grunts and starts up the stairs toward the bedroom. Once in the bedroom, he stops by the window, untangles the clock from the shade and gently places it on the night stand. He picks up the shades and lays it out on the bed.

Bending down, Melvin picks up the piece that held the shade in place in the window well. While reaching for his screwdriver, he glances out the window and stops dead.

There is a four-year-old boy, Boudroy, pants around his ankles and no shirt on, standing on the back door stoop of the house next door and peeing onto the ground.

Melvin lowers the screwdriver and slowly places his hand on the dresser next to him.

MELVIN
Oh, Jesus...

Suddenly his hand touches something on the dresser and he looks down to see his hand resting on a bible. He rolls his eyes heavenward.

MELVIN
...deliver me from insanity.

Boudroy, urination complete, pulls up his pants. He immediately grabs a plastic bat and leaps off the stoop, swinging the bat wildly.

Melvin slowly shakes his head as he again raises the screwdriver.

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MELVIN

Gonna have to have a talk with that woman. Can't have those kids running around half naked, peeing on things. What's this world coming to when kids run around half naked, treating the world like its their toilet? Thank God it was only number one.

Melvin glances through the window again, finally catching sight of Boudroy again, chasing a big black dog with his bat.

MELVIN

Hope that dog eats him.

INT.FRONT DOOR.LATER

Melvin is working his way into a jacket.

MELVIN

It's getting late in the day and I need a new drill bit to finish the job. Gonna head to the hardware store, Evelyn. You sure you don't wanna come?

The CPR dummy is now seated on the couch with some soap opera playing on the television in front of it. Melvin nods.

MELVIN

I'll be back momentarily.

He grabs the keys off a hook by the door and exits. Closing the door, he takes a step forward and stops.

There are two college-aged boys on the front porch, looking at him apprehensively. They each take a moment to look one another over.

After the boys don't venture an introduction, Melvin rolls his eyes.

MELVIN

What do you want?

One of the boys, tall with blond hair, clear his throat.

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COLLEGE BOY 1
Professor Bronson, down at the
college...

MELVIN
...is an idiot.

COLLEGE BOY 1
No. He, uh, he sent, um...

College Boy 1 shrugs toward the second boy.

COLLEGE BOY 2
Professor Bronson sent us down to
see a Doctor Sommers.

Melvin stares at the boys for a few moments. COLLEGE BOY 2
stares back. COLLEGE BOY 1 examines the bushes for signs of
an escape.

MELVIN
Do I look like a doctor to you,
boy?

COLLEGE BOY 2
Well, I uh...hm.

COLLEGE BOY 1 shrugs again, apparently deciding that
shrugging is now his best response. After a second or two
of struggling ensues...

MELVIN
Well, why did he send you down
here? Need a prostrate exam?

COLLEGE BOY 2 looks at COLLEGE BOY 1, who quickly shakes his
head.

COLLEGE BOY 2
No. I think when Professor Bronson
was talking about a doctor, he
didn't mean a health doctor.

MELVIN
He didn't mean a health
doctor? How many kinds of stupid
is that, boy? Well, what kind of
doctor did he think I was?

COLLEGE BOY 2
I think he meant, um...a college
doctor?

MELVIN

A college doctor? I don't have
time for this. I've got places to
go.

Melvin takes a step past the boys and then turns back to
them. He points a finger at COLLEGE BOY 1, who shrugs.

MELVIN

Look, you go tell his highness that
I don't play those games
anymore. And I definitely don't
have time to babysit his
students...even the
mentally-challenged ones.

Boudroy comes bounding into Melvin's front lawn, still
chasing the dog with the bat.

Melvin points at Boudroy.

MELVIN

And don't use my back yard as a
bathroom!

Boudroy stops and stares, as do the college boys as Melvin
steps off the porch and moves toward his beat-up pickup.

COLLEGE BOY 2 yells after him.

COLLEGE BOY 2

Hey. We need to interview you for
a paper. For our class.

MELVIN

(not turning back)
Go interview him.

He points at Boudroy.

MELVIN

The college doctor needs to shove
off.

Melvin gets into his truck, starts it up and heads down the
street.

Boudroy holds his bat toward the college boys.

COLLEGE BOY 2 holds up his hand.

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COLLEGE BOY 2

Hey.

The college boys take off down the street as Boudroy starts chasing the dog.

EXT.TOWN CENTER.LATER

Melvin pulls into a parking spot in front of the hardware store and goes inside. As he enters, an older man, kinda round and behind the counter, immediately recognizes him

WALTER

Dr. Sommers. Hey

Melvin frowns at him but stops

WALTER

Hey, Dr. Sommers. How ya doing? I haven't seen you in forever.

Melvin stares back.

WALTER

Me and the guys from the group have been meaning to stop by and check on you. You doing okay?

MELVIN

I need a drill bit, Walter.

Walter steps out from behind the counter and walks toward him.

WALTER

That's aisle five, Dr. Sommers. Here, let me show you...

Melvin turns and walks off.

MELVIN

No thanks.

Walter purses his lips and turns his head, watching Melvin walk down the aisle.

EXT.TOWN CENTER.LATER

Melvin's truck pulls into a parking spot outside of Nooma's Coffee Shop, a college-town coffee shop with large over-stuffed chairs and overflowing bookshelves lining the walls. Toward the back of the shop, by the bathrooms, they are a boyfriend and girlfriend seated in front of a faux fireplace. There are also three business men in suits and open laptops. The rest of the shop is empty. Melvin watches as a young lady enters, backpack on shoulder. She gets a cup of coffee from the front counter and sits down next to a bookshelf marked "philosophy."

MELVIN

Well, what do we have here? Got a wanna-be philosopher in our midst.

The young student sets her backpack down next to her chair and pulls out a magazine.

MELVIN

Bah. World's gone downhill.

Melvin rolls down his window.

MELVIN

(Yelling)

Disappointing!

The young lady glances up and out the window. Melvin, in return, waves his hand in her direction in disgust and throws his car in reverse. He backs out of his space and takes off down the street. It's getting dark now. He reaches the edge of town square and heads out down the main road out of town. The road is void of buildings until Melvin reaches the outskirts of the city and passes a brightly lit strip club called Gentleman's Paradise. Melvin glances over, then back at the road.

MELVIN

Hmm. Gentleman's club. What kind of gentleman would go there?

EXT.GENTLEMAN'S PARADISE.SECONDS LATER

As Melvin passes the strip club parking lot, the door to the club opens and Casey, dressed in a long raincoat, exits. Two drunk college students loitering outside the club notice her

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DRUNK 1

Hey baby. Wanna give me a free lap dance?

DRUNK 2

Me first.

Casey turns around and cracks open the door to the club.

CASEY

Alex. Give a girl a hand.

The door opens wide and Alex, a huge bouncer in a wife beater, all muscles and grinning sadistically, pops out.

ALEX

What's the matter, Case? Can't find your car?

Casey nods her head toward the two drunk kids. Alex's grin drops.

ALEX

What are you two punks still doing out here?

The two kids take a step back.

ALEX

Didn't we already have this conversation? I distinctly remember telling you guys that you're both too drunk and need to get out of here before I whooped your butts.

The two kids glance at each other.

DRUNK 1

But, we're drunk.

ALEX

So?

DRUNK 1

So, we're not supposed to drive. We could get a ticket

ALEX

So, call an Uber.

DRUNK 2
But I don't have any money.

ALEX
How is that my problem?

CASEY
Thanks, Alex.

ALEX
Sure. Have a good night.

Casey begins walking toward her car.

DRUNK 1
Well, what do you want us to do,
man? Start walking?

Alex stares at him, so Drunk 1 turns to Casey as she's walking past.

DRUNK 1
Hey, can you give us a ride?

ALEX
Hey!

The two drunks turn back to Alex, allowing Casey to keep walking toward her car.

ALEX
You are not allowed to talk to her.

DRUNK 2
Why not?

ALEX
You're not good enough to talk to
her.

Drunk 1 looks as Casey gets into her car, a beat up Pinto with a huge dent in the driver's side door, and slams the door shut. Drunk 1 looks back at Alex with an eyebrow raised.

DRUNK 1
Are you sure?

ALEX
Oh yeah.

Casey pulls out into the main drag and heads toward town.

EXT.DARK ROAD.SECONDS LATER

Melvin slows down and pulls onto a gravel side road. He makes his way down the barren road, hedged in by trees and finally reaches a gravel circular lot. With no other cars in view, Melvin parks and gets out. He walks toward a clump of trees, pushes through them, revealing a bluff overlooking a cliff above a lake. Slowly, he sits down with his legs dangling off the side of the cliff. He picks up a rock and throws it, waiting for the plop to sound, but it never does.

Melvin sighs and looks out over the lake. There's just him and the lake and the sounds of nature.

Slowly, he gets to his feet and stands at the edge of the cliff, looking down. There are big rocks on the edge of the lake about 75-100 feet down. Melvin draws a huge breath, then lets it out in a slow sigh. He raises his foot like he's going to take a step off the cliff

Suddenly, there's a rustling in the bushes behind him. Melvin turns his head and a deer pops its body out from the bushes, staring directly at Melvin. Melvin stares back and neither move for a few minutes.

MELVIN

What?

At the sound of his voice, the deer retreats, bouncing away into the foliage. Melvin collapses onto the ground and onto his back. He stares up at the clouds.

MELVIN

Okay, I get it. No easy outs for me. Eternal damnation starts now. Great. God I owe you one.

The sky doesn't answer.

EXT. MELVIN'S HOUSE.LATER

The street is dark. Melvin pulls into his driveway, parking. He looks toward his front windows and sees the glow from the television inside. He shakes his head.

MELVIN

Woman probably fell asleep watching her shows again.

Melvin enters the house. He enters the living room, switching on the light, and the CPR dummy is still propped up on the couch and the television is still on. Melvin sighs and turns off the television.

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MELVIN

All right, sweetheart. Let's get you to bed.

Melvin scoops up the dummy and heads up the stairs.

INT.BEDROOM.MORNING

The phone on the bedside table rings. Melvin pops his eyes open and turns to the dummy, which is staring up at the ceiling. He turns his head and looks at the phone, slowly reaching for it and picking up the receiver.

MELVIN

Yeah?

CASEY

(over the phone)

Mr. Sommers?

MELVIN

Yeah?

CASEY

Mr. Sommers, this is Cassandra Marsh. I'm your tenant at 510 West Beech. Mr. Sommers?

MELVIN

Yeah?

CASEY

Okay, I thought you were dead. Anyway, there's something wrong with the heater. I got home kind of late last night and it was freezing in the house. Thermostat said it was 52, but I have it set higher...I don't know...like on seventy-something. I checked the thermostat and it was on, but it ain't coming on. Do you think you could come over and take a look?

MELVIN

Uh...

CASEY

Look, Mr. Sommers, I've got two kids and they were literally freezing to death last night when I got home. Freezing to death. I need this heater fixed now.

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MELVIN

Uh...

CASEY

Mr. Sommers!

MELVIN

Yeah. Um, sure. I'll be there about 11. Is that okay?

CASEY

Sure. That's fine. Thanks.

Click.

Melvin replaces the headset and glances back at the CPR dummy, which is still staring at the ceiling. Melvin groans, lays back down and throws the blanket over his head.

INT.FRONT DOOR.LATER

At his front door, Melvin straps on a tool belt and exits the house. He walks down the driveway, turns and walks up to the neighboring house. As he approaches the front door, the big black dog runs around the corner of the house and stops in the middle of the yard, staring at Melvin. Melvin stops walking and stares at the dog.

MELVIN

What?

The dog sits down and continues to stare. Melvin sighs and walks the rest of the way to the door. He rings the doorbell.

CASEY

(from inside)

Just a minute.

The door squeaks open about a foot and Boudroy steps into the gap. He stares at Melvin. Melvin frowns down at Boudroy. Suddenly, the dog behind Melvin barks and Boudroy races out the front door and leaps onto the dog.

CASEY

Can I help you?

Melvin looks back at the front door and there is Casey Marsh, dressed in really short shorts, a tight-fitting shirt and high heels. She has a tattoo of a snake curling around her right thigh and a cigarette dangling from her mouth. His jaw hanging slightly open, Melvin's eyes travel

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up her legs, over her blouse and up to her face, where she is clearly frowning at him.

CASEY

Get an eye-full, perv?

MELVIN

What? No. I'm...I'm Melvin Sommers.

CASEY

Get an eye-full, Melvin Sommers?

MELVIN

What? No! No, I'm sorry. I'm an idiot. I, uh, don't know what came over me. I'm not usually this rude. I didn't mean to...

CASEY

Don't have a heart attack, Melvin. I'm just giving you a hard time.

MELVIN

Yeah. Sorry. Again. I'm, uh, here to fix the heater.

CASEY

(looking over his shoulder)
Boudroy! You get off Duke right now!

Melvin looks back to see Boudroy riding the dog like a horse.

CASEY

Come on in. Don't mind the mess. We don't.

Melvin steps into a living room that looks as if a trash bomb had recently gone off. There are half-filled glasses everywhere. A plate of spaghetti, covered with fungus, is on a book case shelf. There's a nine year old girl, Monkey, blond hair in a ponytail, lying on the couch, playing on a cell phone.

MELVIN

Y'know, as your landlord, I'm gonna have to...

Casey waves her cigarette in the air.

CASEY

Yeah. Sorry. I've been real busy. I'll get it back in shape. There's no structural damage.

MELVIN

Well that's...good.

Casey stops and turns back to Melvin.

CASEY

Sorry, I'm not being very neighborly. That's my daughter, Monkey.

Monkey looks up from the phone long enough to realize the old man isn't going to be very interesting and turns her eyes right back.

MELVIN

Is that her real name?

CASEY

Technically Maureen, after her grandma. But after I got over honoring her grandma, I realized it was an old woman's name, so it's been Monkey ever since. You already met Boudroy

MELVIN

What's a Boudroy?

CASEY

That's my son's name. And I'm Cassandra, but you can call me Casey.

Melvin extends a hand.

MELVIN

Melvin. Melvin Sommers.

Casey looks at his hand, before turning.

CASEY

Yeah. We already met. You remember that, right?

MELVIN

Yeah. It was two minutes ago.

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

Just making sure. Dementia, you know. My grandma Maureen had it real bad. Scared the hell out of Monkey. Right before she died, before Boudroy was around, me and Monkey would go see Grandma Maureen at the home. And Grandma Maureen, she wouldn't know me, of course. But she'd get downright hostile toward Monkey. Last time I took her, Grandma Maureen grabbed Monkey by the hair and started dragging her, shouting, "Get these damn kids out of here. I don't want them and I don't want you!" I couldn't take her back after that.

MELVIN

It must have scared you too.

Casey pauses and takes a drag off her cigarette.

CASEY

Yeah, I guess. Just sad really. Especially remembering how she used to be.

Suddenly Casey stops in the middle of the hallway, in front of some folding doors. She gestures grandly with her hand.

CASEY

And here we are.

MELVIN

Yeah. I remember. Thanks.

As Melvin opens the door and starts peering around the furnace, Casey casually looks over his shoulder.

CASEY

So, did you used to live here? In this house?

MELVIN

No. Once upon a time, I came into some money and my neighbor, Professor Gottlieb, got a job at a college in Nebraska. So, I bought it up cause I could and have been renting it out ever since. I've got to say, however, that in the

(MORE)

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MELVIN (cont'd)
history of tenants I've had here,
none of them have ever had your
taste in decorating.

CASEY
Uh huh. So, what's the problem
with the furnace?

Melvin stands up, reaches his hand in between the furnace
and the wall and flicks a switch.

MELVIN
Kinda figured.

CASEY
What?

MELVIN
There's an on/off switch in the
inside wall. I'm betting your
Boudroy maybe flicked it off.

The furnace kicks on.

MELVIN
I'd fix that thermostat before it
gets too hot in here.

CASEY
Yeah. I'll do that. Thanks.

Melvin shuts the doors on the furnace.

MELVIN
If I were you, I'd tape a box over
that switch, just to make sure it
doesn't happen again.

He moves into the living room, followed closely by Casey.

CASEY
Yeah. Box. What kind of box?

MELVIN
Tell you what. I've got a box in
my basement that'll suit you just
fine. Give me a second and I'll go
get it.

CASEY
Sure.

Casey takes a seat on the arm of the couch as Melvin makes his way to the front door. As he opens the front door, Boudroy is standing in the doorway with a huge grin on his face.

MELVIN

Don't tell me. You killed the dog.

CASEY

Boudroy! Get out of the way

Boudroy obediently steps into the house, allowing Melvin to step outside. He walks back to his house, enters through the front door and heads down to the basement.

He moves to a shelf, digs around and comes up with an old nail box. He empties the nails into a bucket, looks around and grabs some duct tape.

Finished, he heads back up the stairs and out the front door. At the front door to Casey's house, Melvin knocks. No answer. Cautiously, Melvin opens the door and sticks his head in)

MELVIN

Hello?

Casually, Melvin looks around the living room and sees Monkey still on the couch.

MONKEY

Are you lost?

Melvin slips into the house.

MELVIN

Not that you know of. Where's your mom?

MONKEY

Oh, she took off. She said she was gonna see Drew before she had to be at work.

MELVIN

Who's Drew?

MONKEY

Her boyfriend this week.

MELVIN

Ah well, this'll only take a second.

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As he nears the hallway, he stops, recognizing Boudroy, who is on the top of the bookcase, eating out of a bag of Cheese Doodles. Melvin frowns, reaches up and grabs Boudroy, then places him on the ground.

Immediately, Boudroy extends his arms toward the bookcase and starts making grunting noises.

Melvin turns toward Monkey.

MELVIN

What's wrong with him?

Monkey shrugs.

MONKEY

He wants his chips.

Melvin reaches up and grabs the chips, handing them to Boudroy, who takes them and wanders toward the kitchen.

MELVIN

No. I mean, why doesn't he talk?

Monkey shrugs without looking up from her phone.

MONKEY

What's the box for?

MELVIN

There's a switch that turns the furnace off and on, which I'm pretty sure your brother switched to off. I'm gonna put the box over the switch so he can't do it again.

MONKEY

Uh huh. And how long do you think it'll take him to get through that box?

Melvin looks down at the box and considers.

MELVIN

I'll pick up something a little more secure tomorrow. So, does your mom often leave you two here by yourselves?

Monkey shrugs

MONKEY

Yeah. Pretty much.

Melvin turns toward the hall.

MELVIN

Don't let DFS find out.

MONKEY

I won't if you won't.

Melvin shakes his head and moves down the hallway, opening the folding doors.

MELVIN

So, what do you do for dinner when your mom isn't here?

MONKEY

What we do when she is here. Boudroy's eating his dinner right now. I'll probably make some soup or Mac and Cheese later.

Melvin breaks the sides of the box and places it over the switch on the wall. He takes the duct tape and begins ripping off pieces, fastening the box to the wall. Suddenly, he stops and frowns down at his hands, internally debating.

MELVIN

Hey, you kids want to come over to my house for dinner tonight? I mean, it's not much. It's just me. But I can make enough for all of us.

MONKEY

I don't know. What are you making?

Melvin continues to work.

MELVIN

I haven't given it much thought. I've got some fish in the freezer. Maybe some mixed veggies.

MONKEY

No thanks. Sounds like single old man food. Plus, mom says we're not supposed to go anywhere with strangers.

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Melvin finishes up and closes the folding doors. He enters the living room.

MELVIN

Yeah. That's probably a good idea. Don't want to get kidnapped and forced to live in your own filth.

MONKEY

Bonus, old guy.

MELVIN

So, what kind of food do you like? Besides soup and Mac and Cheese?

Boudroy casually walks into the living room, carrying a toy rifle over his shoulder and his other hand holding the bag of chips.

MONKEY

Boudroy like pizza.

MELVIN

I'm not supposed to eat pizza anymore. Gives me heartburn.

MONKEY

Sucks to be you. I like chicken and fries.

Melvin reaches for the door knob.

MELVIN

Looks like you're getting Mac and Cheese tonight.

He opens the door.

MONKEY

Uh huh. Hey, don't forget to close the door. Don't need Boudroy getting out.

Boudroy is seated on the floor next to the bookcase, looking at a comic book, with his hand still jammed in the bag of chips.

MELVIN

Tell your mom I'll be back tomorrow to put something a little more secure on that switch.

MONKEY

If she gets back early enough I
will. Otherwise, she'll find out
when you knock on the door
tomorrow.

MELVIN

(shaking his head)
Unbelievable.

Melvin exits, closing the door behind him.

INT.BEDROOM.LATER

Melvin is standing, looking out the window at the house next door. All the lights are on next door. As he watches, Casey's car pulls up in the driveway. She gets out and walks into her house, shutting the door behind her. The living room lights go out.

MELVIN

Yeah. I hear you. I'll be in bed
in a minute, dear.

INT.KITCHEN.MORNING

Melvin is in the kitchen, cooking breakfast. The dummy is seated at the kitchen table.

MELVIN

I've got to go into town this
morning, Evelyn. Tenants next door
need me to do a little work on the
furnace today so I'll be in and
out. I think they need someone to
look after them. Think that mom
doesn't have a clue.

Melvin pauses to stare out the window, then regains awareness and wipes his hands on a towel.

MELVIN

Well, I'm off. Won't be back till
later this afternoon.

EXT.TOWN CENTER.LATER

Melvin's car pulls into a spot in front of the hardware store and goes inside. Walter is behind the counter, reading a magazine. He looks up and recognizes Melvin, walking straight toward him.

WALTER

Dr. Sommers. Twice in one week. What a treat.

MELVIN

Walter, you got any of those switch pate covers? The box ones?

WALTER

Sure. Sure. Down aisle thirteen. Want me to...

Melvin takes off. Walter shakes his head and picks up his paper. After a moment, Melvin is back, but Walter doesn't notice.

MELVIN

Hey Walter. Wake up.

Walter puts up his paper.

WALTER

I'm awake.

He takes the box cover from Melvin.

WALTER

You know, Doctor Sommers, the group still meets on Wednesdays and we'd love to have you come by sometime.

Melvin grunts.

WALTER

Well, you're welcome whenever. That'll be \$2.33.

Melvin hands him the money then walks out without saying a word. Walter shakes his head and picks up the paper.

EXT. CASEY'S HOUSE.LATER

Melvin is at Casey's door and knocks. He hears a man's voice, Andrew, from behind the door.

ANDREW

Get it.

The door opens and out pops Monkey's face. She smiles broadly.

MONKEY

I forgot you were coming over.

Monkey opens the door wider, so Melvin can see the entire living room, which looks moderately cleaner. There's a guy, Andrew, covered with muscles, tattoos on his bulging arms and with a military buzz cut, sitting on the couch. He's sipping on a beer and has a cigarette burning in the ashtray. He grins.

ANDREW

And who might you be, stranger?

MONKEY

This was the guy...

ANDREW

Monkey, go to your room and let the adults talk.

Monkey leaves the room, heading down the hallway as Melvin takes a cautious step inside.

MELVIN

I'm Melvin Sommers. I guess you could say I'm the landlord.

Andrew smiles broadly.

ANDREW

Well then, welcome in.

Andrew stands up, setting the beer on the table. He extends a hand toward Melvin, who takes it and shakes. Just then, Boudroy comes in from the kitchen with a ceramic jar with something in it that he is rolling around and making noise. Andrew's smile drops.

ANDREW

(yelling down hallway)
Case, come get your boy.

(CONTINUED)

CASEY
(from bedroom)
I'm coming.

Casey enters from the hallway. She has a towel wrapped around her head and is in jeans and a t-shirt. She recognizes Melvin, but continues on toward Boudroy.

CASEY
Well, if it isn't my landlord.

ANDREW
Case, you need to move your butt and get ready. We got places to go.

Casey, without stopping, scoops up Boudroy and moves back to the hallway.

CASEY
I'm almost there, baby.

Andrew shakes his head.

ANDREW
Women. Takes them forever to get ready, forever to make up their mind. You got a woman, Mel?

Melvin shakes his head. Andrew picks up his beer and sits back on the couch.

ANDREW
Probably a good thing. More trouble than they're worth. So, what's up, Mel? She late on rent again?

Melvin holds up a bag.

MELVIN
Melvin. No. I'm gonna fix the heater switch. Her son probably tripped it the other day, shutting it off.

Andrew takes a drag from his cigarette, then points it at Melvin.

ANDREW
And what did I tell her? I told her that boy did something to jack up that heater. He needs a good whipping.

Casey exits her bedroom and enters the living room.

CASEY

You're not whipping my boy, Drew Cortage. Don't even think about it.

Andrew gives her a look like, "that's what you think", but just winks.

CASEY

Sorry, Melvin Sommers, but we gotta scoot.

Andrew leaves his beer on the table, cigarette smoldering in the ashtray and heads toward the door. As he reaches the door, he turns back to Melvin.

ANDREW

Now, don't you be touching my beer in the fridge, old timer.

MELVIN

Wouldn't dream of it.

Andrew and Casey leave. As soon as the front door shuts, a bedroom door opens. Monkey sticks her head out into the hallway.

MONKEY

Are they gone?

MELVIN

Yeah. They just left.

Monkey opens the door wider and shouts over her shoulder.

MONKEY

Boudroy, you can get out of my room now.

She stands by Melvin as Boudroy walks past them, dragging a large inflatable hammer. Melvin opens the door to the heater as Monkey looks on. After a moment, he looks up to see her standing over him.

MELVIN

You know, being as old as I am, I'm not fond of vultures looking over my shoulder.

Monkey casts a quick glance toward the front door then steps back.

(CONTINUED)

MONKEY

Sorry. I just want to see, in case there's an emergency or something.

MELVIN

If there's an emergency, you come get me.

He goes back to work.

MELVIN

You don't like him very much, do you?

MONKEY

No.

MELVIN

Yeah. He didn't seem like the nicest of fellas to me either. How's he treat your mom?

MONKEY

Oh, he's all right with her.

MELVIN

Has he ever hit her?

MONKEY

Casey? He wouldn't dare. She'd hit him back.

MELVIN

Kind of what I thought too. Has he ever hit you?

Monkey shakes her head.

MELVIN

Boudroy?

Monkey looks down the hallway.

MELVIN

Don't worry about it. How long has he been dating your mom?

MONKEY

I don't know. A little less than a year.

Melvin stands up.

MELVIN

Well, I wouldn't worry too much about it. These things have a way of blowing over before too long.

Melvin heads to the front door, then stops and looks down at Monkey.

MELVIN

Tell you what. You have any problems that you can't handle, you come over and see me. I'll take care of you and your brother.

MONKEY

And what if my problems take care of you?

MELVIN

Oh, I wouldn't worry too much about that. I can take care of myself.

MONKEY

Do you have a gun?

MELVIN

No. But I have the truth on my side...and the law.

MONKEY

And that'll protect you?

MELVIN

It has up until now. If not, God'll protect me.

MONKEY

Casey doesn't believe in God. She says there's too much pain in the world for it to be created by a God that's supposed to be good.

MELVIN

First year philosophy of religion stuff there. Gotta factor in free will.

MONKEY

Yeah?

MELVIN

Yeah. I'll tell you all about it sometime.

(CONTINUED)

Melvin reaches the door.

MELVIN

Say, what are you and Boudroy
having for dinner tonight?

Monkey shrugs.

MONKEY

Whatever's in the fridge.

MELVIN

Tell you what, you ask your mom
before she goes to work if you and
your brother can come over and eat
with me. I'll get some pizza.

Monkey smiles.

MONKEY

Okay.

Melvin exits, leaving Monkey to stare at the door a moment longer.

EXT.MELVIN'S FRONT DOOR.LATER

A delivery driver, holding a pizza knocks on Melvin's front door. Melvin opens the door.

PIZZA GUY

Hey. What a night, huh?

MELVIN

How much?

PIZZA GUY

Not much for small talk I
see. That'll be \$15.23.

MELVIN

Fifteen dollars and twenty-three
cents? For a pizza? Am I getting
this right?

PIZZA GUY

Hey, things are tough all over. Am
I right?

Melvin frowns and begins writing the check while the delivery driver gets the pizza out of the warming bag.

(CONTINUED)

PIZZA GUY

Something tells me I'm not getting
a tip.

Melvin takes the pizza and hands the delivery driver the
check.

MELVIN

It's not your fault that your boss
is a crook. I added a little
something for your troubles.

Pizza Guy looks at the check.

PIZZA GUY

All right. Fifty cents. You just
made my night. Now I can finally
afford college.

MELVIN

You know, there's probably a pretty
good reason you have this job.

PIZZA GUY

That's what mom keeps telling
me. Have a good night.

Melvin grunts and closes the door. Inside, Melvin takes the
pizza into the dining room, where Monkey is seated with a
paper plate in front of her. Boudroy is on top of the
serving hutch.

MELVIN

Boudroy, get off my hutch.

Boudroy gets down and sits next to his sister. Melvin opens
the pizza box in front of the kids, who eagerly grab
pieces and stick them in their mouths, chewing loudly.

MELVIN

How about you close your mouths
when you eat, so I don't have to
see your food?

They obey...to a degree. Melvin shakes his head.

MELVIN

So, your mom said you could come
over?

MONKEY

Casey hasn't been home since she
left. She probably went straight
to work.

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN

Why do you call your mom by her first name?

Monkey shrugs.

MONKEY

She calls me by my first name.

MELVIN

That's different. She's your mom.

MONKEY

How is that different?

MELVIN

I don't know, but I'm willing to make something up if you'll buy it.

MONKEY

No thanks.

MELVIN

Yeah. Didn't think so. So your mom started to rent from me about a year ago. Were you guys living in Richland before then?

MONKEY

Yeah. We moved around a bit. But I've been living here since I was born. Case...mom says she used to go to school here and then hung around after she had me.

MELVIN

And do you have grandparents?

MONKEY

Well, Grandma Maureen I met twice. I don't think Casey got along too well with her parents. I heard them talking on the phone once...well, screaming on the phone. So, what about you? Have you been around here for long?

MELVIN

I used to teach at the college. Oh, for a good twenty years or so.

(CONTINUED)

MONKEY

What did you teach?

Boudroy finished, leaves the table and heads toward the living room.

MELVIN

Oh, I taught quite a few things in my time. I had a class in bible study, New Testament History. I even taught a class on how to write research papers. But my main area was in Christian Apologetics.

MONKEY

You had to teach Christians how to apologize?

MELVIN

Yeah, you'd think. But really apologetics just means having a defense for what Christians believe. Y'know, giving people reasons and proof for why I believe there's a God and why I believe the Bible is true.

MONKEY

Casey...mom says the Bible is just made up from men a long time ago and isn't really worth much anymore.

MELVIN

Well, my job was to train others how to prove your mom wrong.

MONKEY

And why don't you teach anymore? Did you find out the Bible was wrong?

Melvin laughs.

MELVIN

No, I just...my wife got sick.

Boudroy enters the dining room, dragging the CPR dummy behind him. Melvin stands up, angry.

MELVIN

Hey! Put her down!

(CONTINUED)

Boudroy, shocked at getting yelled at by Melvin, stops and drops the dummy on the floor. Melvin rushes over and gently picks up the dummy.

MELVIN

Oh Evelyn, are you all right? What did they do to you?

Melvin begins to take the dummy into the other room and is stopped by Monkey.

MONKEY

Is that your wife? I don't think she's doing well.

MELVIN

What? No, this isn't my wife. I buried my wife.

Melvin walks into the other room, leaving Monkey and Boudroy alone. The minutes drag on.

MONKEY

Mr. Sommers?

Nothing. She begins to cram all the pizza back into the box.

MONKEY

(yelling)

Hey, we're gonna take the rest of this and split, okay? C'mon Boudroy. Let's go home.

Boudroy nods and follows his sister, who has grabbed the pizza and is heading to the door. She exits, and just as Boudroy is closing the door behind them, he shoves one of the dummy's arms in his left hand. He closes the door.

INT.MELVIN'S HOUSE.MORNING

Melvin is carrying the dummy down the stairs.

MELVIN

Evelyn, I'm so tired today. Think I'll stay away from that woman and her kids. They just wear me out. Yes, I know dear. But I don't care. They're not my problem. They can take care of themselves. Yes, dear. Of course, you're right dear...But you're just

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN (cont'd)
imaginary so I don't have to listen
to you. Of course, dear. I didn't
mean it.

He reaches the living room and places the dummy on the
couch. He places one of its arms in its lap and reaches for
the other one but can't find it.

MELVIN
Evelyn, you're falling apart. Why
couldn't you take better care of
yourself.

He looks around the living room and, seeing nothing, heads
back up the stairs. He reaches the bedroom, checks on the
bed, on the floor, under the bed. He begins to get a little
frantic. He rushes down to the living room and starts to go
from one piece of furniture to the other, looking and not
finding.

Suddenly, he stops and looks out the window to the house
next door. His eyes narrow.

MELVIN
I'm gonna kill that kid.

EXT. CASEY'S HOUSE.LATER

Melvin knocks on the front door of Casey's house. The door
opens to reveal Casey. She looks a wreck, bloodshot eyes
and hair a mess.

CASEY
Mr. Sommers?

MELVIN
Where is it?

CASEY
What?

MELVIN
Your son took my wife's arm and I
want it back.

Casey closes her eyes.

CASEY
You're making my head hurt more.

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN

That's not my problem. Now,
where's that son of yours?

Casey shakes her head, backs up for a moment and then swings the door wide open. She shoves Boudroy in front of Melvin and takes off to her bedroom.

CASEY

You figure it out. I'm going back
to bed.

Melvin drops down to look Boudroy in the eyes. He points a finger into his face.

MELVIN

Now look, I know you've got
Evelyn's arm. What did you do with
it?

Boudroy stares at him, silently.

MELVIN

Oh...kay. Look, I can get really
nasty if I need to. You don't want
me to get nasty. Now where is it?

Boudroy keeps staring.

MELVIN

You wanna play the silent game,
huh? Well, I mastered that game a
long time ago.

They stare at each other. Finally, Melvin stands up.

MELVIN

Okay, that's it. I'm...

Boudroy looks past Melvin to the lawn, smiles and barks. Melvin looks around and sees the dog, which is standing in the middle of the lawn and has the CPR dummy's arm in its mouth. Melvin's eyes casually scan the surrounding houses. Seeing nothing, he takes after the dog.

In the kitchen, Casey enters, grabs a glass and begins filling it with water. She swallows two ibuprofen and washes it down with the water.

Looking out the window, Casey sees Melvin playing tug of war with the dog. The dog pulls really hard, knocking Melvin down to his belly, where he loses a grip on the arm. The dog grabs the arm again and takes off with it.

(CONTINUED)

CASEY
(yelling)
Boudroy!

Boudroy steps into the kitchen.

CASEY
What did you do to that poor man?

Boudroy shrugs as Casey looks out the window again to see Melvin running after the dog with the CPR dummy's arm in its mouth.

CASEY
Boudroy, go help him get that arm
back.

She looks back and Boudroy has disappeared.

CASEY
Boudroy!

In the back of the house, Melvin is walking around the corner. The dog is nowhere to be found. He rounds the corner and the dog is lying on its back while Boudroy is scratching its belly. The arm is nearby in the grass. As Melvin approaches, Boudroy reaches over and picks up the arm. He offers it to Melvin, who grabs it as he passes.

MELVIN
I'll take that.

Melvin walks over to his house with the CPR dummy's arm clutched in his hand, shirt ripped, mud on his pants, to see the two college kids back on his porch. They look surprised at his appearance.

COLLEGE BOY 2
Dr. Sommers. Hi. We brought you
something.

College Kid 2 nudges College Kid 1, who brings out a cake from behind his back.

MELVIN
No thanks, I'm diabetic.

College Kid 1 shrugs at College Kid 2.

COLLEGE BOY 2
Sorry. If we could just have five
minutes of your time.

Melvin walks past them toward the door.

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN
Too busy. Can't talk.

COLLEGE BOY 2
But Professor Bronson...

MELVIN
...is an idiot. I
remember. Thanks.

Melvin opens the door.

COLLEGE BOY 2
But this is for a class.

Melvin shuts the door on them.

COLLEGE BOY 1
Now what?

College Kid 2 gets a piece of paper from his back pocket and unfolds it.

COLLEGE BOY 2
We could try Dr. Sparks again.

COLLEGE BOY 1
No thanks. I can't stand that
smell twice. Hey, do you mind if I
have the cake?

COLLEGE BOY 2
We'll split it.

They walk off the porch

INT.MELVIN'S HOUSE.MOMENTS LATER

Melvin is sewing the arm back on the CPR dummy. The arm has a bunch of bite marks on it and one of the holes has stuffing coming out of it. Also, there's a finger missing.

MELVIN
Oh Evelyn, what did that monster do
to you?

There's a knock at his door.

MELVIN
What is it now?

Melvin strides to the door and yanks it open, glaring. On the front steps is Monkey.

(CONTINUED)

MONKEY

Hey.

MELVIN

What do you want?

MONKEY

Casey wanted to make sure you were okay. Wanted me to check on you.

MELVIN

As long as that brother of yours stays away, I should be fine.

Monkey enters, moving around Melvin, heading toward the living room.

MONKEY

So, how's your doll?

MELVIN

It's not a doll.

She stops in front of the couch, where the CPR dummy is seated.

MONKEY

Looks like a doll. You know, we had one of those at our old school. It didn't have arms or legs though.

MELVIN

Look, isn't it time for you to go home?

MONKEY

Drew's at home, so I'd rather not be there.

MELVIN

Well, can't you go somewhere else?

MONKEY

Why do you act like that dummy's your wife? Do you think it's your wife?

Melvin collapses on the couch.

MELVIN

No, I know it's not my wife. I just kind of...it used to be my

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN (cont'd)
wife's. She was a nurse and she'd travel around to elementary schools with it. She had this thing she did...a little presentation where she'd teach all the kids CPR and some other stuff. She took it with her all the time. Heck, it's been around here for the last fifteen years. Always had it sitting in some chair or the other. After Evelyn died...

MONKEY
Her soul went into the doll?

MELVIN
No, her soul didn't go into the doll.

MONKEY
It happened with Chucky.

MELVIN
Your mom shouldn't be letting you watch those movies.

MONKEY
Why?

MELVIN
Because it's not right.

MONKEY
I like scary movies.

MELVIN
Good for you. Anyway, no. After Evelyn died, I had to have someone to talk to and that dummy was there. Funny thing was, after a while, it started to answer me just like Evelyn would have.

MONKEY
It started talking? Are you sure it's not Chucky?

MELVIN
It's not Chucky. I just meant in my head. I heard her voice in my head.

Monkey tilts her head, like a questioning dog.

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN

And no, it's not telepathic.

MONKEY

I was wondering.

MELVIN

No, I was probably just trying to remember my wife, so I'd imagine what she said.

He looks over at the dummy.

MELVIN

Anyway, I probably took it too far. Should take it down to the basement before people think I'm weird.

MONKEY

Too late.

MELVIN

So, yeah. I'm okay. You can go home now.

Monkey moves to a side table where there's a picture of Melvin and his wife. She studies it.

MONKEY

When did your wife die.

MELVIN

I...about a year and a half ago.

MONKEY

She has a nice smile. I bet the kids liked her.

MELVIN

Yeah, they did.

MONKEY

So, how did a nice woman like that wind up with an old, dried up guy like you?

Melvin's mouth falls open as he struggles to find an answer.

MONKEY

Maybe you were a nicer guy when you were younger.

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN

I was a nicer guy a year and a half before God took my wife.

MONKEY

So, you hate God because God killed your wife?

MELVIN

What are you, my therapist?

MONKEY

Do you need a therapist?

MELVIN

No. Look, God didn't kill my wife. She just died. And I don't hate God...I'm just not too fond of Him right now.

MONKEY

But it's been two years.

MELVIN

A year and a half. Seemed like it just happened. And so what if it was five years ago? That doesn't mean anything.

From outside, the sound of a motorcycle starting up.

MONKEY

And there goes Drew. Guess I can go home now.

MELVIN

How much do I owe you?

MONKEY

I'll send you my bill.

Monkey leaves as Melvin shakes his head. He waits a moment, thinking. Finally, he stands up and considers the dummy.

MELVIN

Okay, dummy. I think it's high time you went into storage. Besides, your chewed up arm makes you look like some kind of monster.

He grabs the dummy, treating it a but rougher than before and heads down the stairs to the basement. He stops and looks around the basement, before placing the dummy on a stack of boxes. He sighs.

Just then, the doorbell rings.

MELVIN
(yelling)
I'll be there in a minute!

Melvin starts up the stairs as the doorbell rings again.

MELVIN
If it's those kids from school
again, I'm getting a restraining
order.

He opens the door to find Casey, holding her eye and leaning on Monkey, who's struggling to support her weight.

CASEY
Look, I didn't want to bother you,
but Monkey made me.

Melvin grabs her arm and leads her inside.

MONKEY
Your hurt, mom.

MELVIN
What happened?

Melvin gently guides her into a chair in the dining room.

CASEY
He hit me.

Melvin goes into the kitchen

MELVIN
Who hit you? Boudroy?

CASEY
No, Drew. He got mad cause I
wouldn't...whatever. He got mad
and after telling him "no" one too
many times, he punched me and
left. I hope he crashes his bike
and dies.

Melvin comes back in with a glass of water and hands it to Casey.

MELVIN

Here. Now, let me see what we've got.

CASEY

It really hurts.

MELVIN

I'll get you some aspirin in a minute.

CASEY

Already took one.

Casey removes her hand to reveal an eye that's already beginning to turn black and blue. Melvin winces.

CASEY

How bad is it?

MONKEY

It's huge.

MELVIN

Monkey! It's uh...it's pretty big. No cuts though. That's a relief. A big guy like Drew. You're lucky he didn't take your head off.

CASEY

I'll take his head off...next time I see him. Crap!

MELVIN

What's the matter? Besides the black eye and getting hit in the face and the boyfriend thing?

CASEY

I've got to work tonight. If Irma sees me like this...I'm so fired.

MELVIN

Wait. Where's Boudroy?

CASEY

Monkey, honey, can you go back and watch your brother?

MONKEY

How much?

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

Just do it.

Monkey leaves.

MELVIN

Who's Irma?

CASEY

My boss. I hate to ask, but do you have, like a big steak I can put over my eye?

MELVIN

I don't have any steak. Doctor's orders. I've got some frozen peas though. That should help with the swelling.

Melvin goes into the kitchen.

MELVIN

Why would your boss fire you for getting a black eye? It wasn't your fault.

CASEY

Doesn't matter. I'm in the image business.

MELVIN

You are? And what business is that?

CASEY

I'm an exotic dancer.

MELVIN

An exotic...you're a stripper?

CASEY

An exotic dancer. I work down at Irma's Club on Outer 50.

MELVIN

Oh, that Irma. That makes sense.

CASEY

You've been there?

MELVIN

What? No! I've just...seen the sign..from the road.

(CONTINUED)

Casey smiles and then winces.

CASEY

Ow.

MELVIN

Sorry. Aspirin. Right.

Melvin takes off into the kitchen again.

MELVIN

Can't you call in sick?

CASEY

If I don't work, I don't get paid. If I don't get paid, I can't afford your hefty rental fees.

Melvin comes back in with a jar of aspirin.

MELVIN

Don't worry about it. I think I could let you go for one month.

He removes the cap, gets out two aspirin and waits until she swallows them.

MELVIN

It may take a minute to kick in.

Casey's hand reaches back to cover the eye.

CASEY

Can I get those peas from you?

MELVIN

Sure.

Melvin goes back into the kitchen.

MELVIN

So, when you get to feeling a bit better, I'll drive you to the police station. We'll have to take the kids...

CASEY

I'm not going to the cops.

MELVIN

What are you talking about?

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

Look, he's gone now. I like him better that way. If I tell the cops, they'll drag him in and...

Melvin comes back into the dining room with a bag of frozen peas and a dishrag.

MELVIN

And what? You can't just let him get away with hitting you.

Casey takes the peas and rag from Melvin.

CASEY

And what if me calling the cops on him gets him even more angry? When he comes back to my house late at night and beats me till I can't move? Or kills me? Or hurts one of my kids? No thanks. It's better that he's gone.

MELVIN

And what happens if he comes back?

Casey stands up, peas covering her eye.

CASEY

He won't. And what's he gonna say? I'm sorry for punching you in the eye? Look, thanks for the aspirin and the peas, neighbor. And thanks for feeding my kids last night. They told me what you did. That was really nice.

Melvin shrugs as Casey heads to the front door.

CASEY

If he comes back, I'll call the cops. You better believe it. But I'm not gonna do anything right now to tick him off again. That hurt too much the first time.

They stop at the front door.

MELVIN

If he comes back or threatens you, come over here.

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

Thanks, Melvin. I appreciate the help. Don't worry. He won't be back.

Casey opens the door and steps through. She stops and holds up the peas and rag.

CASEY

Hey, do you mind if I hang onto these for a while?

MELVIN

Go ahead.

Casey heads back over to her house. Melvin closes the door.

INT.MELVIN'S KITCHEN.NIGHT

Melvin is in his kitchen, washing a small amount of dishes, when there is a ring on his doorbell. He carefully dries his hands, heads to the door and opens it to reveal Casey, holding a cake.

CASEY

It's slightly diabetic, but I couldn't stand making a cake with absolutely no sugar in it. It just didn't sound right.

MELVIN

Well, you didn't need to do that.

CASEY

I know. I was bored. Didn't have work. Don't currently have a social life.

Melvin holds the door wide open.

MELVIN

Well, thanks.

Casey carries the cake into the dining room as Melvin closes the door.

MELVIN

But you and the kids will have to help me eat it. Afraid I don't eat a ton of sweets these days

(CONTINUED)

CASEY

I just wanted to thank you again for everything you've done, but I've got to get back. The kids, you know.

MELVIN

Yeah. Who knows what they'd do if they were left alone. Sorry, that was inappropriate. I'd blame it on the fact that I haven't had human interaction in a while, but that'd just be a cheap excuse. Tell you what. Sit with me on the porch for a moment. You can listen for the kids better out there.

CASEY

Okay. Hate to ask, but do you got anything to drink?

MELVIN

Do you mean liquor...

CASEY

No, just water'll do. Unless you have a beer or soda.

MELVIN

Never was much into beer. Thought it tasted a bit like urine.

CASEY

And you know that how? Sorry. Now, I'm sounding like Monkey.

MELVIN

It's all right.

Melvin goes into the kitchen and brings out two bottles of soda. He leads Casey out to the porch, where he takes a seat in a rocking chair. She sits on a bench. They sit in silence for a moment.

MELVIN

So, Monkey tells me that you used to go to school at the college. What was your major?

CASEY

It started out in the culinary arts, then led to journalism.

(CONTINUED)

MELVIN

That's quite a switch. Find out you weren't any good at cooking?

CASEY

Actually, I got into a few arguments with the instructors. They tried to tell me how to cook one way and my grandma had taught me something different. It all came to a head in this class on meringue. He was trying to tell us his way and I kept arguing on how to hold the whisk. He got real quiet at one point but I just couldn't let it go. I mean, I wanted to stop. I could see he was beyond ticked. But I just couldn't stop pushing him. Eventually, I had to talk with the dean and one thing led to another.

MELVIN

So, onto journalism.

CASEY

They suggested it. Actually Professor Spradley suggested it.

MELVIN

I remember Jerry Spradley. Smug little turd.

CASEY

Yeah. That's him. He said, with my inquisitive nature and persistence, I'd be better off in journalism or being a lawyer. I got one look at the number of classes I'd have to take to be a lawyer, and it was off to journalism. That wasn't too far out of high school. Didn't know a thing but boys.

MELVIN

Seems like a lot of girls come here just so they can get a husband.

CASEY

Not me. I wanted to leave my mark. Boys were just a

(MORE)

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