

DEB: But, it's not even your thing yet so I thought maybe your thing could be our thing.

MARTY: Why can't I have my own thing?

DEB: No reason, I just thought it might be nice, that's all.

MARTY: It's not that I don't want to do things with you it's just that... well... you know.

DEB: Sure, I get it.

MARTY: You're OK with that?

DEB: Yeah, sure. (*changing the subject*) So... when you go out, stop by Olsens Bakery and pick up half a dozen of those little cream tarts for dessert.

MARTY: I'm not sure if Fred can eat pastry this week, it may be on his culinary no fly list. If he won't eat them, more butter tarts for us.

DEB: *Cream tarts.*

MARTY: Same thing.

DEB: No they're not. Want me to write it down?

MARTY: Of course not, I can handle a few tarts.

Marty exits

DEB: That's what *he* said.

Lights down, End of Scene Three

ACT ONE SCENE 4

PLACE: Living Room

TIME: Shortly after eight pm

Lights Up. The coffee table is back in place. One of the downstage legs has been very obviously and poorly repaired with duct

tape. There is a bakery box on the coffee table. Deb enters from the kitchen stage left.

DEB: *(calling to Marty who is offstage in the bedroom)* Marty, what's taking you so long? Fred and Gladys should have been here fifteen minutes ago.

MARTY: *(from offstage)* Gimme a second.

DEB: Well hurry up, that's all you have. And where did you put the... *(she sees the bakery box)* Oh never mind, found it.

She picks up the opens it.

(to herself with resigned frustration) Butter tarts.

(calling down the hall as she exits to the kitchen) You had one job Marty!

MARTY: What?

There is a knock on the door.

DEB: *(calling from the kitchen)* What did I tell you, they're here.

MARTY: *(calling from down the hallway)* Tell them to wait.

DEB: No!

MARTY: I can't get the door, I'm not ready yet.

Another knock on the door

DEB: Oh for crying out loud! *(even louder)* Come in, it's open!

Fred and Gladys enter. They are about the same age as Deb and Marty.

FRED: You're lucky it's us, we could have stolen your TV.

GLADYS: Fred, don't be such a master of disaster.

Deb enters from the kitchen wiping her hands on a tea towel

DEB: You want our TV, you're welcome to it, there's never anything on anyway. *(she hugs Gladys)* Hi hon...

GLADYS: Hi, sorry we're late but we had to go back, Fred forgot his hand sanitizer.

FRED: I didn't forget it, I had to refill it.

GLADYS: Oooh, do I smell sausage rolls?

DEB: Maybe. They've been in the freezer so long, I've forgotten what they are.

FRED: So those are actually sausage rolls I smell?

DEB: More than likely.

FRED: Good, I thought I was having a stroke.

DEB: You're fine Freddie, nice to see you.

Deb goes to greet Fred with a hug but he backs away.

FRED: Nope, better not. I sneezed three times on the way over here; I may be coming down with something. *(offers his wrist to Deb)* Here, check my pulse, does it feel too slow?

GLADYS: She doesn't want to check your pulse.

FRED: Last night it was skipping every third beat, every third beat! I don't know what's going on. Where's Marty?

DEB: He's in the bedroom; he says he's not ready yet.

FRED: What, is he naked? If he's wearing pants, he's ready.

GLADYS: Don't make him come out if he's not ready.

FRED: *(feeling his own wrist)* That's definitely too slow. *(calls out)* Marty!

GLADYS: *(to Deb)* Last night he said he had no pulse at all for twenty minutes.

FRED: One big pump, then nothing for the entire last half of the Antiques Roadshow, I was clinically dead. *(calls down the hall)* Marty, stop primping it's a waste of time!

GLADYS: Well as least now that he's retired he still makes an effort. Unlike some people I know.

FRED: I refuse to shave every day, it's bad for the skin.

DEB: *(calling down the hall)* Marty, will you get out here?

MARTY: *(from down the hall)* I'm coming, I'm coming!

Marty enters. He's wearing a red plaid flannel shirt, a leather carpenters apron and work gloves. He is holding a hand saw. He proudly presents himself.

MARTY: Well, what do you think?

FRED: It's a saw.

MARTY: I know it's a saw, I'm not a complete idiot.

GLADYS: Why are you holding a saw?

MARTY: It's not just the saw, it's the whole package. Take in the whole package. What do you say?

FRED: Trick or treat?

MARTY: Figures. Gladys, what do you think?

GLADYS: Are you going to grow a beard?

DEB: You're not are you?

MARTY: No!

FRED: What's the deal?

MARTY: It's my new direction.

GLADYS: Where are you going?

DEB: Insane.

MARTY: It's more than a new direction, it's a new beginning.

FRED: Well, you're beginning to look ridiculous; I suppose that's a start.

MARTY: I'm expanding my horizons. I'm taking up woodworking.

FRED: Woodworking? You'll saw your hand off.

MARTY: That's what Deb said.

FRED: Smart woman.

MARTY: I won't saw anything off. I've signed up down at the high school woodworking shop. Lots of retired guys go there, I never knew! Twice a week Fred, keep the mind and body active. What do you say, why don't you sign up too?

FRED: I'll saw *my* hand off. And maybe yours too.

MARTY: Come on, what's the highlight of your week besides hanging out at the coffee shop flaunting your surgical scars.

FRED: I don't flaunt.

MARTY: What do you have to lose?

FRED: My left hand.

GLADYS: Think of the great scar you'll have.

MARTY: Here, hold this. (*he hands the saw to Fred*). There, how does that feel?

GLADYS: He looks good. You look good honey, you look very manly.

MARTY: See!

FRED: You plan to take up woodworking wearing that get up?

MARTY: Of course.

FRED: Shows how much you know, what about safety goggles?

MARTY: Nobody mentioned goggles.

FRED: Are you kidding? One errant chip of wood and you're the neighborhood pirate. If you're serious about doing this, you can have mine. I bought a pair when I played ping pong with the Robertsons.

DEB: You wear ping pong goggles?

FRED: I happen to have unusually large eye sockets and a flying ping pong ball could lodge right in there. But that's nothing compared to what this thing could do. (*he brandishes the saw*) I could cut my head off with this!

GLADYS: But why would you?

FRED: It's a worst case scenario. You really think this makes me look manly?

GLADYS: As long as you don't try to use it.

FRED: *(to Marty)* You see? I'm useless at this sort of stuff and you are too, so you're just setting us up for failure. Besides, we have a guy who takes care of all the handyman jobs.

GLADYS: And he's very manly.

FRED: You think our guy is manly?

DEB: *(to Gladys)* Our guy is manly too.

MARTY: Well we're not going to need our thirty dollar an hour "manly guy" much longer.

FRED: *(to Gladys)* What's so manly about our guy?

GLADYS: What can I tell you?

FRED: How long have you thought he was manly?

GLADYS: Now dear, watch your blood pressure.

FRED: *(puts his hand to the side of his neck)* It does feel high.

Fred pulls his shirt out of his pants

GLADYS: No Fred, not here!

FRED: You know very well my scar changes colour if I get too upset.

*Fred puts his hand on his surgical scar
(lower abdomen)*

I think I can feel my pulse in it.

*Fred, with one hand on his surgical scar
places his other hand on the side of his neck*

Uh oh... somethings wrong.

GLADYS: What now Fred?

FRED: The pulses don't match. What does that mean?

GLADYS: Sit down, I'll get you something.

*Fred sits on the couch, Gladys exits to the
kitchen*

FRED: *(to Marty)* I was clinically dead last night, do you know that? I was going to call you but I wanted to leave the line open in case I needed to call nine one one.

MARTY: Well next time you die, be sure to let me know.

Gladys returns with a glass of water

FRED: My pulses still don't match.

GLADYS: *(hands Fred the glass of water)* Here, this will help.

FRED: It's only water.

GLADYS: Just drink it honey.

FRED: *(holds out his glass)* Marty, throw a little Scotch in here, will you?

MARTY: Anything for your pulses.

Marty takes the glass, goes to the drink cabinet and makes two drinks

MARTY: Anybody else?

DEB: I'm going to have a beer. Gladys?

GLADYS: Oh, why not.

Deb exits to the kitchen and returns with two beers.

MARTY: *(hands Fred a drink)* Listen Fred, about what I mentioned a minute ago.

FRED: You mean the woodworking classes? Nah, I don't think so.

MARTY: Come on, I don't want to go by myself.

FRED: It's just not my thing, it would only...

MARTY: *(interrupting)* There's a reason why your pulses don't match.

FRED: There is?

MARTY: Absolutely. It's your Feng Shui. Your physical Feng Shuis *(shways)* are all out of whack. *(to Deb)* It's a thing, isn't it hon.

DEB: If you say so.

MARTY: Because you've neglected the practical, hands on part of your life, your body's energy planes are out of sync and your internal organs aren't harmonizing with each other.

FRED: You know, I haven't been feeling right lately.

DEB: Maybe I'll have that Scotch after all.

Deb makes another Scotch on the rocks.

MARTY: The human body is a complicated mechanism, ignore one facet and the whole biological balance is thrown off. That would explain why you've been feeling a little foggy lately.

FRED: Have I been feeling foggy?

MARTY: Fred, if you have to ask.

FRED: See Gladys, I told you something else was wrong with me!

GLADYS: *(to Deb)* Scotch here too.

MARTY: I don't think you have to worry Fred, this is easily fixed, you just have to bring back the balance nature intended. We've both lived very intellectual lives, me in the world of academia and you as a bean counter.

FRED: Chartered Accountant!

MARTY: That's what I said. Anyway, my point is, as stimulating as that was mentally; we have both failed to develop crucial facets of our manliness.

GLADYS: Bring the bottle Deb.

DEB: *(already going to the drinks cabinet)* Way ahead of you.

MARTY: What do think Fred?

FRED: You're talking nonsense.

MARTY: Really? Feel these hands.

Marty takes Fred's hand and rubs his palm on Fred's.

See? Smooth as a baby's bottom.

FRED: How would I know, we never had kids.

MARTY: They're soft Fred and so are yours. Soft from a lifetime of avoiding honest labour. It's time to express our virility! Remember... your pulses don't match, do they?

FRED: That *is* a little worrisome...

MARTY: Whaddya say?

FRED: You're so full of crap!

MARTY: Come on Fred, live a little, try something new.

FRED: I don't need anything new. I've got my routine, I know what I'm doing and more importantly, I know *why* I'm doing it. I don't need to go waving sharp tools at pieces of wood trying to build something that nobody needs.

GLADYS: How often do these classes run?

MARTY: What?

GLADYS: I said, how often do these classes run.

MARTY: Twice a week.

GLADYS: Every week?

MARTY: Seven til nine Tuesdays and Thursdays.

GLADYS: Fred, you're going.

FRED: What?

GLADYS: You're going.

FRED: I don't want to go.

GLADYS: You do the same thing every night and it's time you broadened your horizons a little, Marty is right.

FRED: My horizons are just fine, my evenings are full already.

GLADYS: Full with watching television while Googling symptoms on your laptop.

FRED: There's nothing wrong with being aware of the state of one's own health, especially at my time of life.

GLADYS: Last week you watched a gardening show about growing tomatoes and spent the next two hours convinced you had Blossom End Rot.

FRED: If you hadn't forced me go bicycle riding for the first time in ten years that never would've occurred to me. Besides, I'm not the only one getting ideas from TV, you spend half your time watching travel shows.

GLADYS: It's the only way I'm ever going to see Venice!

FRED: If you want to travel half way around the world and be exposed to all sorts of foreign infections, which I probably have no immunity from, be my guest. I'm staying put.

GLADYS: You're being ridiculous.

FRED: You think so? One sneeze from a Gondolier and I'm stuck in a foreign hospital with an oxygen tube up my nose and a nurse I can't understand.

GLADYS: Deb, you talk to him.

DEB: Tell him to take you to Venice?

GLADYS: No, that's a lost cause, just say the same thing you said to Marty that got him out of the house.

DEB: Ok... Fred, if you don't take the classes, I'll drag you behind my car so you know what it feels like to fall off a motorcycle.

GLADYS: What?

DEB: You asked.

Gladys sits down beside Fred and takes his hand.

GLADYS: Fred, listen to me. I love you dearly but you're driving me crazy. It's been almost a year, and since you retired you're home all day and all evening. All day and all evening, do you understand what that means? You're home *all the time!*

FRED: But, that's good isn't it?

GLADYS: No. I married you for better or worse, richer or poorer ... I said nothing about "24-7".

FRED: I'm beginning to feel wheezy. How long does it take for a lung to collapse?

GLADYS: Haven't you noticed that you never thought you were sick before you retired?

FRED: I was too busy to be sick.

GLADYS: No, you were too busy to *think* about being sick.

FRED: Maybe I just never noticed how sick I was. Thank goodness I retired or I might have died from not knowing I was sick.

GLADYS: Let me put it this way. If you don't find something to occupy yourself, I will.

FRED: What do you mean?

GLADYS: I'll make up a "Honey Do" list, the likes of which the world has never seen.

FRED: You wouldn't.

GLADYS: Try me.

FRED: *(to Marty)* Woodworking you say?

Lights down, End of Scene Four

ACT ONE SCENE 5

Place: A coffee shop

Time: The next morning

The coffee shop can be represented by a bistro table and two chairs down right in a pool of light. Fred and Marty are sitting at the table with paper coffee cups.

FRED: One word Marty, one word! Last night all you had to say was one word and everything would have been fine.