

YOUR DILLY DILLY HEART

By Scott Gibson

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YOUR DILLY DILLY HEART

Your Dilly Dilly Heart was produced by Celebrationworks and received its World Premiere on January 15, 2010 in Denver, CO. The cast and production crew were as listed below.

CAST

MERLE-----Nita Froelich
JANIS-----Nancy Thomas
BEAU-----Anthony Bianco
DANIELLE-----Catharine Pilafas

PRODUCTION CREW

DIRECTOR-----Bernie Cardell
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR-----Meg Ralph
STAGE MANAGER-----Jonathan Ruiz
SET DESIGNER-----Bernie Cardell
PRODUCER-----Carol Roper

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**TO KAREN KARGEL AND SUSAN HICKEY:
WHO INSPIRED MERLE AND JANIS AND MY OWN DILLY DILLY HEART.**

ACT ONE

THE SCENE: The central playing area is a motel room. The design and décor suggest these are economy-type lodgings. There are two double beds in the room. Both are unmade; one is considerably more disheveled than the other. The top mattress has been removed and lies on the floor in front of the door leading outside. There is a twisted mass of blankets and pillows on top of the mattress. The rest of the room is cluttered; fast food bags and cups litter the nightstand and a small downstage table. There are wadded-up napkins and a pizza box on the floor. On the upstage wall, there is an exit leading to the bathroom; the door is closed. Downstage left is a second playing area; it features a small round table and two chairs. Downstage right is the third playing area, consisting of two black boxes. These face the audience; each box is long enough to accommodate two people sitting side by side, and one box is directly in front of the other. At rise, JANIS is seated on the edge of the less-disheveled of the beds, the palms of her hands resting on her legs.

NOTE: Whenever a character is described as ‘speaking outward,’ s/he is delivering lines unheard by the other characters. The character speaking does not look directly at the audience, but nonetheless talks as if aware that someone else is listening.

JANIS. *(Outward)* Afterwards, when people would ask how it all happened, I was never quite sure where to begin. So, sometimes, I would start one place, and other times, I’d start somewhere else. I guess it depended on who was asking. Or the mood I was in at the time. *(Pause)* And, of course, in the retelling, things that seemed important on one occasion didn’t necessarily seem that way other times. And it’s funny... I thought I’d remember every detail with crystal clarity. If I lived through it all, of course. But I don’t. It’s just certain moments that have stayed with me. *(Considers this)* I haven’t lived that remarkable a life. It’s not like there were so many other exciting things going on that the memory of this should be crowded out. But anyway... *(JANIS’ reverie is broken when the bathroom door opens and MERLE steps into the room.*

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She is roughly the same age as JANIS. Both women wear casual, but fairly expensive-looking attire that is somewhat rumpled)

MERLE. What are you doing?

JANIS. Sitting

MERLE. Well, I can see that. I meant what else are you doing?

JANIS. Nothing. Just sitting. What else is there to do?

MERLE. So, he isn't..?

JANIS. No. *(Pause. MERLE crosses and sits on the opposite side of the bed from JANIS. They sit with their backs to each other.)*

JANIS. Did you sleep?

MERLE. No, of course I didn't sleep. What kind of a stupid question is that?

JANIS. I think I must have. At least a little. I don't remember lying awake all night, anyway.

MERLE. You're an idiot. *(MERLE lifts her feet up onto the bed, resting her back against the headboard.)*

JANIS. *(Outward)* I'm an idiot. I remember that part.

MERLE. You should have locked the back door. This is all your fault.

JANIS. *(Outward)* I should have locked the back door. *(to MERLE)* Yes, I should have locked the back door. I'll remember that next time.

MERLE. Oh, yes. Levity, Janis. That's what we need right now. God Only Knows what's going to happen to us, so let's resort to sarcasm. *(JANIS turns to look at MERLE thoughtfully. Then she turns back, rises and crosses down into the downstage left playing area. She stands behind one of the chairs, fingering it as she speaks.)*

JANIS. *(Outward)* There's that old cliché...what is it? You never really know a person until you travel with them. What's odd, I suppose, is that this was actually the third summer I'd made one of those car trips with Merle. So I knew what I was in for. I had no one to blame but myself. Another friend, Eileen Morgan, had gone with us the first time. Afterward, she said to me, "Never again, Janis." *(JANIS pulls out the chair and sits. MERLE rises and crosses down into the downstage left area and sits in the other chair. She picks up a travel guide from the table and opens it.)*

JANIS. This place is charming. I love the wallpaper.

MERLE. The soup was too salty. And cold.

JANIS. Really? ine seemed to be fine.

MERLE. No. It wasn't. Okay: We should be able to get to the Kilkenny Flea Market by three-thirty. It's about five miles off the interstate. It says, "Look for a tower." Radio tower, I think. It says, "Do not be dissuaded by the preponderance of fresh produce stands that seemingly dominate the Kilkenny landscape during the summer months. Tucked amidst the vegetables and homemade jam displays, there are regularly a sizable number of sellers' booths catering to junk hunters and bargain seekers of all types." Hm. Probably nothing but a bunch of rusted-out farm machinery, but it's worth a look. *(Looking around)* Where is that waitress? Miss? Check, please.

JANIS. I was hoping to try the pie. The rhubarb-lemonade—

MERLE. —You don't need the pie. You can have pie with dinner tonight, if you like. We want to get going.

JANIS. But, rhubarb-lemonade. I've never seen that anywhere—

MERLE. WAITRESS? Could somebody bring our check? *(to JANIS)* Small-town ambiance is one thing; but when it's just thinly-veiled, inattentive laziness, that's something else altogether, no matter how many knick-knacks you toss up on a shelf, or how cute the wallpaper is. *(Standing)* If you need to visit the restroom, you'd better do it now, because I don't want to stop again once we're on the road. I'm going to go find somebody. *(MERLE crosses back up into the motel room and resumes her position on the bed. JANIS waits until she is re-settled there before speaking.)*

JANIS. *(Outward)* When Eileen found out I was going to make the trip with Merle again the second year, she said, "Either you have the patience of a saint, or you're a glutton for punishment." *(Pause)* I wasn't sure myself. *(JANIS rises and crosses back into the motel room and sits on the bed next to MERLE, her feet up on the bed, and her back against the headboard, just like MERLE.)*

MERLE. I've been thinking: At some point, a maid is going to knock on the door. When she does, when she says, "Housekeeping," we—

JANIS. —The *Do Not Disturb* sign is on the door.

MERLE. I know that. Will you please not interrupt? It doesn't matter, because eventually she'll knock, anyway. We only paid for one night, and checkout time is—

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BEAU. *(Off)* --Is eleven o'clock, and if either one of you yells or screams, I'll slice your throat open before you get two words out. ...Something you might want to think about. *(At the sound of BEAU's voice, both women jerk with fright. Pause.)*

JANIS. *(Outward)* There was no reason not to believe him. Especially since the first time I'd laid eyes on him, he was looking over a display of big, ugly hunting knives at one of the booths. He was just some stranger then, a kid with a dirty t-shirt, one face in a crowd of people at a flea market. He stuck in my mind, though. Because of the knives, I suppose. I can't think what else about him might have been so memorable. *(The blankets and pillows by the door begin to move, and after a moment, BEAU emerges, blinking sleepily. His hair is disheveled.)*

BEAU. *(Stretching)* Your jabber woke me up. I know you thought you were whispering, but I've noticed when people get old, they don't hear so good. They think they're talking all hush-hush, but pretty much everybody around can hear what they're saying. Maybe you should think about getting a hearing aid. *(BEAU gets to his feet. He wears nothing but a tattered pair of jockey shorts.)*

BEAU. Didn't yesterday seem like a dream? It did to me. *(laughs)* Probably like a nightmare to you. You were probably all disappointed that it wasn't. Sorry about that.

MERLE. When did you take your clothes off? And why?

BEAU. After we turned out the lights. It was hot in here last night, didn't you notice? Anyway, I don't like to sleep in my things. My grandma used to say you oughtn't wear restrictive clothing when you sleep. Bad for the circulation.

JANIS. I've heard that. *(MERLE turns to look at JANIS, annoyed. She starts to say something, but thinks better of it. She turns back to BEAU without actually looking at him.)*

MERLE. I would appreciate it if you would put on some pants. *(BEAU studies MERLE, smiling. He crosses and sits on the other bed, facing MERLE, who shifts uncomfortably and continues to avert her eyes.)*

BEAU. See, now, you slept in your things, didn't you? That's why you're cranky this morning. And your outfit is all wrinkled. *(Gesturing to a pair of jeans and a t-shirt in a pile on the floor)* Now, see, my stuff

is still going to look neat and tidy when I put it on. I like to take a little pride in my appearance.

MERLE. Yes, that must be it. I'm cranky because my clothing is mussed. There couldn't be another reason, could there? *(BEAU laughs. He rises, takes a straight-backed chair and wedges it under the door leading outside. The women react with slight discomfort. Once BEAU has secured the chair, he turns and points at MERLE. He gestures to the bathroom.)*

MERLE. (appalled) Oh, for... I am not going to do this again! *(BEAU picks up a coiled piece of cord he's pulled from the table lamp and twists it around his hand.)*

BEAU. Yeah, you are.

MERLE. Why me again? *(Looks at JANIS)* Make her do it this time.

BEAU. I don't think so. *(A moment passes, MERLE staring at BEAU. Finally, resigned, she stands and crosses to the bathroom door. BEAU turns to JANIS who obligingly puts her hands behind her back. He crosses and appears to tie them with the cord.)*

MERLE. This is disgusting. You're disgusting.

BEAU. It's not like I make you watch. *(BEAU finishes tying JANIS' hands. After just the slightest hesitation, MERLE opens the bathroom door and steps inside, disappearing from view. BEAU crosses to pick up his jeans and then follows her in. He also disappears from view, but leaves the door standing open.)*

BEAU. *(Off)* In there. You know the drill. *(The sound of a glass door sliding on a track is heard.)*

JANIS. *(Outward)* He made her be the one to go in with him because I guess he just knew that, even if I managed to get free, I wouldn't run. Not while he could hurt Merle. *(Small laugh)* I suppose he wasn't as sure that she would be as considerate of me. Nor was I. *(imitating MERLE)* "Well, be logical, Janis. I knew I had to take the chance. I knew the odds of him inflicting serious damage on you before I could get help were fairly small." *(From the bathroom, there is the sound of BEAU urinating. JANIS' initial reaction to this is slight embarrassment. She manages a sheepish smile.)*

JANIS. *(Outward)* She told me he made her stand in the shower while he used the toilet. Insurance, is what he called it. *(Pause. The sound of urination continues.)*

JANIS. *(Outward)* I know this is awful of me, but I found the whole thing kind of funny. Merle, trying to maintain some semblance of dignity while standing in the bathtub. *(Pause. The sound of urination continues. JANIS listens. After some time, it seems as though it is finished, but then it resumes anew.)*

JANIS. *(Outward)* He drank a lot of soda last night. *(Another second passes and then JANIS removes her hands from behind her back. They are not tied. She stands and crosses down into the DS right playing area. She crosses to stand SR of the downstage black box, which is currently representing the front seat of a car.)*

JANIS. *(Outward)* We found The Kilkenny Flea Market, no problem. It was funny to me, this odd little farmer's market/bazaar/what-have-you, just out in the middle of nowhere, Midwestern farm country. Late on a Wednesday afternoon. Dozens and dozens of people milling about, poking through boxes of secondhand stuff, antiques, buying ears of corn, homemade aprons, crafts of all kinds. Where did these folks come from? Surely they weren't all like us, with nothing better to do than drive from flea market to antique shop to rummage sale all the livelong day?

(MERLE appears from SR, crossing briskly behind JANIS, to stand SL of the DS black box. She carries a purse.)

MERLE. Well, I'd say this was worth it, wouldn't you? That Mosby glassware was gorgeous. Of course, she knew what she had, so she wasn't going to let it go cheaply. That's the trouble; people are becoming a little more savvy, and they won't just give it away any longer. Most of the time, they know just enough to know they've got something, and then they'll be asking a ridiculous price, just for fear that they might be letting something go for a decent amount... *(The two women cross and sit on the black box, "getting into the car." As MERLE gets into "the driver's seat," she continues talking, digging in her purse for a pen and a small spiral-bound notebook which she removes. She leafs through some pages and makes some notations.)*

MERLE. It was absurd, what she wanted for that stemware; I mean, you can find that just about anyplace. But I really did have to have the salt

and pepper shakers. Oh, and did you see those ivory chopsticks at that other spot? The young couple, selling things off the tailgate of their pickup. Imagine! Where would they even come into a pair of ivory chopsticks? Isn't it illegal to even own those things now? I was tempted to tell them that, but really, who's going to care out in the middle of a place like this? They'd probably just think I was trying to dicker down the price.

JANIS. Her great-aunt died.

MERLE. *(Still occupied with writing)* What?

JANIS. It was mostly things left in her great-aunt's house. They'd been living with her, but they're hoping to buy one of those double-wide trailers.

MERLE. *(Amused)* Listen to you! Two minutes with somebody, and you know their life story. It's a gift. I admire that in you, Janis. *(Returning the notebook to her purse)* So, I put my stuff in the box with that fabric you bought the other day. I figured it'd travel safely in that. *(Laughs)* The trunk is full already. Just as well; it helps me be more discriminating in what I buy when I have to think, "Now, is there room left to get this back home?"

JANIS. It's probably a gorgeous old house.

MERLE. What?

JANIS. Her great-aunt's place. Oh, I suppose it's run-down. Or has plumbing problems, or things like that. But, a trailer? I guess something that's new and never lived in by anybody else seems very appealing, especially when you're twenty and never been able to live on your own. I just think there'll come a day when they regret making this choice.

MERLE. Yeah, the day that a tornado swoops down on their little double-wide and drops it in a cow pasture in the next county.

JANIS. Merle!

MERLE. Oh, come on, Janis! Look around you. This is the kind of landscape tornados just love. You want to live in a trailer around here, you're just asking for trouble. *(Pause)* I saw those kids, too. No offense, but one look, and you can tell they're the sort who thinks that if they just put their washer and dryer outside on the front porch, that ought to keep things weighted down nicely. *(The women look at each other solemnly. After a few seconds, both laugh.)*

JANIS. Oh, you're awful!

MERLE. You were thinking it, too. Or something like that. (*Setting her purse between them*) I should get gas before we get back on the interstate. What time is it? (*BEAU enters from SR, wearing jeans, sneakers and a t-shirt identical to the t-shirt on the floor in the motel room. He looks around as if trying to decide where to go next; he spots the two women and crosses rapidly to them. MERLE, meanwhile, mimes extracting the "key" from her purse and inserting it into the "ignition."*)

JANIS. (*Looking at her watch*) It's four-forty. Hm. I thought we'd been here longer than that. Funny how you don't keep accurate track of time when you— (*BEAU slides onto the black box positioned behind the women, as if he has just jumped into the "back seat" of their "car."* Both women utter cries of fright. The next few lines of dialogue overlap.)

JANIS. Oh, my God!

BEAU. Drive! Drive!

MERLE. Who..? What do you think you're doing? Get out of my car!

BEAU. Shut up! Just start the engine and get us out of here!

JANIS. Oh! Oh, Merle!

MERLE. I will not! (*MERLE presses the "horn" on the "steering wheel."* A car horn sounds.)

MERLE. Get out! Get out right now! (*BEAU looks around desperately, then wraps his arm around MERLE's neck, holding her tightly. With his other arm, he pulls her hand away from the "horn."* The car horn noise stops. All three of them continue to struggle. JANIS tries to pull BEAU's arm off of MERLE. MERLE is also clawing at BEAU's arm. With his free hand, BEAU shoves JANIS roughly, knocking her away.)

JANIS. Stop it! Let go of her!

BEAU. Get your hand off that horn!

MERLE. (*Choking*) Get off of me! Get...out...of my...car...

JANIS. You're hurting her!

BEAU. Shut the hell up! Both of you!

MERLE. (*Choking*) Janis, get out... Go...get someone...

(*JANIS tries to get out of the "car."* As she begins to move, BEAU grabs her and roughly pulls her back. She cries out.)

BEAU. Get back here!

MERLE. (*Choking*) Scream...Janis...

JANIS. *(Shouting)* Help! Somebody help us! *(BEAU clamps his hand over her mouth. His left arm is still holding MERLE. He pulls both women towards him. Each of their heads is pressed against his own.)*

BEAU. Shut up! Shut up! I will kill her, I will snap her lousy neck if you both don't keep quiet... *(His final words are the crescendo of the fight, and all three of them fall silent and stop struggling. For seconds, there is nothing but the sound of all three of them breathing heavily. BEAU continues to hold both women tightly.)*

BEAU. *(Out of breath)* Start the engine, and put it in gear. *(MERLE reaches out as if to turn the "key." Before she can, BEAU jerks her roughly and speaks into her ear.)*

BEAU. Touch that horn again, and you are dead, understand? *(MERLE nods. She starts to reach for the "key" again.)*

BEAU. No. Better yet...*(Looking at JANIS)* You turn the key. *(Looking at MERLE)* You give it some gas. *(As JANIS reaches over to turn the "key" in the "ignition," DANIELLE enters from SL and stands by the DSL table and chairs.)*

DANIELLE. *(Outward)* There are people who just...take hold of you, somehow. I think most of us have met somebody like that. They don't have to be pretty, or good-looking. Though, he was. To me, anyway. They don't have to be smart. *(Laughs)* He wasn't. Maybe, in another time, another place, you wouldn't even look twice. But for some reason, they step into your life at just the right time, when there's something wrong, or something's missing. *(BEAU is rummaging through MERLE's purse, pulling things out, putting some back again. He is looking at her driver's license. MERLE is driving.)*

BEAU. Huh. You're a long way from home. What are you doing around here?

JANIS. We're on a road trip. A vacation.

BEAU. Yeah? Where you headed?

JANIS. Oh, well. There really isn't a destination so much. It's the trip itself. We're just—

MERLE. —You don't have to answer him, Janis. It's none of his business.

BEAU. *(To MERLE)* Now, see, you're just being rude for rude's sake. We're having a nice conversation here. *(To JANIS)* Gimme your purse. *(JANIS hands her purse to BEAU. He talks as he rummages through it.)*

BEAU. Getting to know each other, and you can't even be civil. Seems to me like you could at least make an effort. *(Holds up a photo)* Who's this?

JANIS. My granddaughter, Alex.

BEAU. We're traveling together. The time'll pass a lot more pleasantly if we at least pretend we're having a good time.

MERLE. You're going through our things, taking whatever you like, and you think we should be civil about it all.

BEAU. *(shrugs)* I'm just saying. *(DANIELLE sits at the table.)*

DANIELLE. *(Outward)* I was seventeen and starting my senior year when I first laid eyes on him. Rockaway wasn't exactly a small town, but it wasn't so big that you didn't know practically everybody in school. There were three new kids that fall. Tim and Roselle Chambers, brother and sister. Tim was in my grade and Roselle was a freshman. And there was Beau Saint Every. He was the mystery kid. Staying with Sam and Paulette Hendry. He wasn't their son. They didn't have kids. Maybe a nephew, or a cousin; they never said. They were the kind of people who mostly kept to themselves. Yet all of a sudden, there he was, living at their place.

JANIS. Look, couldn't you just take our money and let us go? Take the car, maybe.

MERLE. I am not giving him my car! *(BEAU, rummaging in JANIS' purse, pays no attention.)*

JANIS. I don't know why you're doing this, of course, but we'll just slow you down. You could make much better time without us. *(Facing BEAU)* We could stop at an ATM machine. I'll give you my PIN number for my credit card. I have a fairly high limit.

MERLE. Oh, for pity's sakes!

JANIS. If you'll just let us go.

BEAU. *(Pulling out a roll of breath mints)* Ooh! Breath mints! Can I have one?

JANIS. Sure. So...what do you say? *(BEAU puts a mint in his mouth and hands JANIS back her purse.)*

BEAU. Wintergreen. Cool. Spearmint's my favorite, but wintergreen's good, too. *(Pause)* Nah. I think we should all hang out for awhile. If I drop you off somewhere, I'll get, what...ten, twenty miles further down the road before you have the cops on my ass?

JANIS. We could promise not to call them. *(Both BEAU and MERLE look at JANIS for a few seconds.)*

BEAU. Yeah... I hope you won't take offense at this, but I kind of have to think you'd be lying.

JANIS. What if you kicked us out of the car in the middle of nowhere? We wouldn't be able to call, then.

MERLE. Oh, honestly, Janis! Just be still, won't you?

BEAU. *(Considering this next idea thoughtfully)* Or, I could kill you. Dump your bodies in a ditch someplace. *(Looking out the "window")* It's a pretty lonely spot right here...

MERLE. *(To JANIS)* Now see what you've done?

DANIELLE. *(Outward)* Beau Saint Every swaggered into English Lit that morning, and everybody looked up, including Mrs. Ontmeyer. You know, now that I look back, he wasn't much besides a scrawny little dweeb in black jeans and a kind of polo shirt that must have come from The Salvation Army thrift store or someplace, because it hung practically down to his knees. But, he sold it, you know? Had the attitude down completely. Didn't even have to say a word. Not just that he didn't want to be there; more that you knew he'd already made up his mind he wasn't going to learn anything in that class. Up until then, I'd kind of been thinking I'd hook up with that other new kid, Tim Chambers. But right then, my standards had just gone up a notch or two. Oh, I knew he was scared to death. New kid in school? All of us staring at him? But he made his choice. Instead of being all meek and not making eye contact and just finding a desk, he stood there. Looked us all over and then looked away again with a little shake of his head. Like he'd never seen a bigger collection of losers. I wonder if he'd been like that where he was before he came to Rockaway. I never thought about that before. You get to re-invent yourself when you move someplace new. *(Heavy metal music blares from the "radio" in the "car." BEAU is jamming to it in the back seat. MERLE's and JANIS's miserable*

expressions indicate they have been listening to this for a long time. Finally, MERLE reaches over and shuts it off.)

BEAU. Hey! Turn that back on!

MERLE. I would sooner you kill me than have to listen to that God-awful racket one more second.

BEAU. *(Reaching for the “radio”)* I said, turn it back on! *(JANIS puts her hand on BEAU’s, restraining him.)*

JANIS. I do have to say, it was giving me a headache.

MERLE. Amen.

JANIS. It’s two to one, then. I’m afraid you’re outvoted. *(BEAU holds up a menacing-looking knife.)*

BEAU. Yeah, well this gets a vote, too. And it votes for the radio. *(The women turn to look at the knife, and then at each other before facing forward once more.)*

JANIS. That still just makes it two to two. The score’s tied. *(BEAU holds the knife to JANIS’s neck.)*

BEAU. How about we make it two to one, then?

MERLE. I would sooner you kill her, too.

JANIS. Merle!

MERLE. Well, I already told him he could kill me! It’s not like I was singling you out! Anyway, I’m driving. If he cuts my throat while we’re doing... *(MERLE presses the “gas pedal,” and all three of them lurch backward.)*

MERLE. ...eighty miles an hour, we’re all going to die, anyway. *(Pause. BEAU and JANIS look at MERLE, who continues to stare directly ahead. Finally, BEAU lowers the knife and leans back.)*

BEAU. You are a seriously crazy old broad, you know that? You both are. *(Pause; pouting)* What do you have against music, anyway?

JANIS. Maybe we could just talk. Get to know each other. *(Beat)* I’m Mrs. Dunlap. Well, you know that already, having gone through my purse.

MERLE. Janis...

JANIS. ‘Janis’ is my given name. Ordinarily, I think young people should address their elders as ‘Mr.’ or ‘Mrs.,’ but I guess if you want to call me ‘Janis,’ that would be all right. What’s your name?

BEAU. Raggedy Ann.

JANIS. So... Are you from around here, Raggedy Ann?

MERLE. Oh, can we stop this, please?

JANIS. Well, we could turn the radio back on. *(BEAU leans forward to touch the "radio." JANIS slaps his hand and he pulls it back.)*

JANIS. But I think this is kind of nice. So, Raggedy... How did you get into this line of work? Kidnapping people from flea markets?

BEAU. *(Pointing)* Get off at the next exit. *(To JANIS)* And shut up. *(BEAU pulls money from his pocket.)*

BEAU. We're going to look for a hamburger place. A drive-through. Maybe one that has onion rings, if we can find one. Does Tastee-Freez have onion rings?

MERLE. I wouldn't know. I don't eat at Tastee-Freez.

BEAU. *(Digging in one of the purses)* Well, sucks to be you, doesn't it?

JANIS. I don't think they do.

BEAU. *(Holding up a credit card)* And then we're going to find a motel. One of you is going inside with me to get a room, and the other one gets to wait in the trunk.

MERLE/JANIS The trunk's full.

JANIS. We've been buying a lot of stuff.

BEAU. Dammit. *(Thinking)* Okay... After we get off the interstate, but before we get into town, we're gonna look for a side road someplace... *(Lights fade gradually on the "car" area. BEAU and MERLE exit around the back wall; JANIS returns to the motel room and resumes her position on the bed, arms behind her back.)*

JANIS. *(Outward)* On a dirt road some ways back from the highway, he made Merle pull over and get out. He told me to stay in the car. I was afraid... Well, we were so far from anywhere. Nobody would have seen or heard anything... *(Pause)* He had her open the trunk, and he pulled out nearly all the things we'd bought, threw them on the ground and into the bushes. All those things... Some of them quite valuable, I suppose. I think losing them bothered Merle even more than being forced to ride in the trunk... To add further insult to injury, he made me drive the car to the motel. Merle has never let me drive her car. *(JANIS smiles. The lights fade and come up on DANIELLE. She is eating lunch from a paper bag. BEAU enters SL. He wears a different shirt. He pauses by the*

table, then plops down in the chair opposite DANIELLE. She watches him and goes on eating.)

DANIELLE. Pull up a chair, why don't you. *(BEAU, leaning back in the chair, ignores her throughout the next several lines. DANIELLE eats potato chips while she talks.)*

DANIELLE. I watched you come into English Lit today. You think you're something, don't you? *(Beat)* somebody might be sitting there, you know. Maybe I was saving that seat. *(Beat)* I hate English Lit, but Mrs. Ontmeyer doesn't make you do anything, so that's all right. *(Beat)* Where are you from, anyway? How come you're starting in the middle of the year? *(Beat)* How come you're not eating lunch?

BEAU. *(Not looking at DANIELLE)* I'm not hungry.

DANIELLE. What classes do you have this afternoon? I've got Civics and Earth Science. You got either of those? Civics is even more boring than Lit, if that's possible. My desk is right by the radiator, and sometimes it's really hard to stay awake. *(Beat)* So, who are The Hendrys to you, anyway? I heard you're staying with them. *(BEAU looks at DANIELLE, then looks away again.)*

DANIELLE. *(Digging in her bag)* I've got an apple I'm not going to eat, if you want it. And chips. ...I'm Dani. Danielle, but Dani. You're a senior, right?

(DANIELLE sets an apple on the table.)

BEAU. You talk a lot. *(BEAU takes a few of the potato chips and begins eating them.)*

DANIELLE. Nobody said you had to sit here. *(BEAU starts to get up.)*

DANIELLE. If you'd maybe say something, then it wouldn't be me doing all the talking. *(BEAU stops.)*

DANIELLE. You're too cool for that, though. You think you're such a hotshot, but you're probably going to get your ass kicked. *(Without looking at DANIELLE, BEAU reaches over and takes the apple. He crams it into the pocket of his jeans and exits. DANIELLE watches him go.)*

DANIELLE. *(Outward)* He did, too. A couple of times. Bloody nose, eye swollen shut for almost a week. You don't just show up, a new kid, and act like that. People had to show him it's not his town. *(Shrugs)* Next day, I packed an extra sandwich.

(Lights fade on the table area and come up on the motel room. After a few seconds, BEAU enters from the bathroom. He wears only his jeans again. He closes the bathroom door and crosses to JANIS, untying the cord “binding” her hands behind her back. JANIS rubs her wrists.)

JANIS. Where’s Merle?

BEAU. Taking a piss. Or maybe a dump. I didn’t hang around to ask. *(BEAU pokes through the empty pizza box and fast food sacks, looking for something to eat.)*

JANIS. I understand that it’s necessary to keep us intimidated by acting rough-and-tumble, but you don’t need to be vulgar. That doesn’t accomplish anything. I bet you don’t usually talk that way. *(BEAU pulls a crumpled piece of paper from his pocket. He digs around under the mattress and blankets by the door, pulling out the motel room’s phone, which he carries to the nightstand and plugs into the wall. He dials the number on the paper and listens while JANIS watches. After several seconds, he slams the phone down. He unplugs it again and tosses it onto the mattress. He paces.)*

JANIS. Who do you keep trying to call?

BEAU. Just be quiet, okay?

JANIS. *(Outward)* We knew it was someone named Dani. He’d been calling that number from as soon as we got into the room. First, nobody was home, and then when someone finally answered, it was her roommate or someone. He talked to that person a couple of times. He wanted to know when Dani would be back. Either the person on the other end didn’t know, or wouldn’t tell him. He got mad and started yelling. You can imagine how well that went over. But before he got hung up on, he told whoever he was talking to that he was going to keep trying to reach her. That’s when we knew it was ‘Dani’ with an ‘i,’ not a ‘y.’ *(The bathroom door opens and MERLE leans out.)*

MERLE. Could we at least get our bags out of the car? I would like to brush my teeth. *(BEAU continues to pace, ignoring her.)*

MERLE. *(Exasperated sigh)* Just how long is this going to go on, anyway? Whether you kill us or not, you can’t stay in this room indefinitely. *(BEAU looks around, then grabs up one of his shoes and throws it, hitting the bathroom door.)*

YOUR DILLY DILLY HEART

BEAU. Just...shut...up! (*MERLE, still in the bathroom, closes the door. BEAU, clutching his head, sinks to the floor on his mattress.*)

BEAU. SON OF A BITCH! (*Beau pulls his knees up to his chest and buries his head in them, still making incoherent sounds of rage. JANIS has not reacted to any of this.*)

JANIS. (*To BEAU*) You realize that if anybody is in the room on either side of us, they're probably calling the front desk right now, to complain about the noise. If anybody needs to shut up, it's you.

(*JANIS watches BEAU, who ignores her. The bathroom door opens and MERLE enters the room. JANIS stands and crosses into the bathroom, closing the door behind her. MERLE sits on the foot of the bed, facing BEAU, and watches him silently. Several seconds pass. BEAU's tantrum is fading, and he finally raises his head, noticing MERLE watching him.*)

BEAU. What? (*MERLE shakes her head and lifts her hands in a kind of I-don-t-believe-this gesture. She turns away from him.*)

BEAU. Still upset about your stupid toothbrush? Do you know how long it's been since I brushed my teeth? (*BEAU crawls on his hands and knees to where his t-shirt has been lying. He stands and pulls it on over his head.*)

MERLE. You're like my grandson. He's fourteen. I don't like him, either. (*BEAU looks at MERLE, then laughs.*)

BEAU. You're nothing like my grandma.

MERLE. Yes. Well, maybe you should try stealing her car, forcing her to stay in a motel room against her will, and threatening to kill her. You might see a different side of her. (*BEAU looks at MERLE thoughtfully.*)

BEAU. Maybe we could try something... Yeah... (*MERLE puts her hand to the front of her blouse protectively.*)

BEAU. I need to think awhile how to do it. (*BEAU digs through the things on the table, finally producing a room service menu.*)

BEAU. Let's order breakfast, first. (*Looking at the menu*) What do you want?

MERLE. I'm not hungry.

BEAU. Suit yourself. (*BEAU crosses and knocks on the bathroom door.*)

BEAU. Hey, lady! Janis! We're ordering breakfast. What do you want? (*JANIS opens the door and looks out.*)

JANIS. Breakfast? Do they have French toast? (*JANIS leans through the door, looking over BEAU's shoulder while he consults the menu.*)

MERLE. Oh, for Pete's Sake!

BEAU. I don't see it.

JANIS. (*Pointing*) There it is.

BEAU. Where?

JANIS. Right there. Below blintzes.

BEAU. (*Looking*) Blintzes? What're those?

JANIS. Well, they're these little pancake-things.

MERLE. (*Unable not to correct JANIS*) Crepes.

JANIS. Yes, that's it. They're crepes. Thin pancakes with things rolled up inside them.

BEAU. What things?

JANIS. Well, see what it says there? Apples, blueberries, sour cream, cottage cheese...

BEAU. You've got to be kidding me. That sounds terrible. Who would eat that?

JANIS. It's an acquired taste. They're pretty good, actually. Although you probably don't want to try them from a room service menu your first time out.

MERLE. Oh, can we just please order?

BEAU. Though you weren't hungry. (*MERLE stands and crosses to him. She yanks the menu from his hand, studies it a moment, then hands it back to him.*)

MERLE. (*Crossing back and sitting on the bed*) Oatmeal. Skim milk. Wheat toast. And orange juice.

JANIS. I'll have the French toast. And coffee. Oh, and orange juice, too.

BEAU. I'm gonna get the steak and eggs.

JANIS. Oh, you know what? We could also get the blintzes, and split them. You could see if you like them.

MERLE. Sure, why not? It's not *your* credit card all of this is going on.

JANIS. How about this is my treat? (*To BEAU*) You have my card too, don't you? Put it on that.

MERLE. This is not a vacation, Janis. This is not a...a pleasure trip!

JANIS. Well, it was supposed to be. And I didn't get to have that pie. (*JANIS steps back into the bathroom and closes the door. BEAU crosses*

to the phone. He carries it back to the nightstand and sits on the bed while he plugs it back in the wall.)

BEAU. So, are you two sisters, or what?

MERLE. Sisters? *(Snorts)* No.

BEAU. *(Punching numbers)* You act like it. *(Into the phone)* This room service? *(Covering the receiver with his hand)* Like last night, you keep your mouth shut. *(Into the phone while consulting the menu)* Yeah, we need a French toast, an oatmeal, three orange juices, some coffee, a steak and eggs, medium rare and scrambled, and blintzes. Blueberry, I guess. *(To MERLE)* That it?

MERLE. Skim milk.

BEAU. *(into the phone)* Skim milk.

MERLE. And wheat toast.

BEAU. *(into the phone)* And wheat toast.

MERLE. Lightly buttered.

BEAU. *(into the phone)* Put a whole lot of butter on it. Oh, and you might as well send up a chocolate shake, too. Room 234. *(BEAU unplugs the phone. He continues to study the menu with the phone resting on his lap.)*

MERLE. Red meat first thing in the morning. Blintzes and a chocolate shake. Well, with any luck, your arteries will clog, you'll drop dead of a stroke or a heart attack, and we can be out of here by noon.

BEAU. I bet you're a lot of laughs at family get-togethers. You're the kind of old gal, people see you coming, they duck down alleys or climb trees just to keep from saying hello. *(Beat)* What's so bad about your grandson, anyway? *(When MERLE doesn't answer)* You brought him up. *(MERLE rises and crosses to sit in one of the chairs at the table.)*

MERLE. He's rude... He's ungrateful... *(The bathroom door opens, and JANIS steps into the room, rubbing lotion on her hands.)*

MERLE. He has developed an outrageous sense of entitlement. For which I should blame his parents, I suppose. He hasn't yet graduated to menacing people with knives and stealing cars, but it's just a matter of time, I'm sure.

JANIS. Are we talking about Edward? *(To BEAU)* Her grandson.

BEAU. I didn't steal your car.

JANIS. It's hormones, don't you think? He's going through that difficult stage.

MERLE. Oh, really? Six, eight years now. He was only moderately unpleasant when he was five. Hormones, Janis?

BEAU. Your car is right outside. I didn't steal it.

JANIS. Well, I don't know, Merle. I was just trying to...

MERLE. Make excuses? Yes, that's what you do best, isn't it? You excuse bad behavior in everyone and everything so that you can just go along, not making waves, putting up with whatever insolence and bad attitudes people think they can get away with.

BEAU. *(Louder)* I don't steal things. I never steal things.

JANIS. Why are you attacking me, Merle? All I'm trying to do is—

MERLE. —Is what, Janis? Be nice? Be so insufferably patient and easygoing and...and spineless? Do you have any idea how annoying that is?

JANIS. Well, excuse me if trying to be pleasant is so very offensive! Excuse me if not being rude and dismissive and judgmental like some people—

MERLE. —And for that matter, it's not like your grandchildren are such angels, either... *(BEAU stands up abruptly. The phone on his lap crashes to the floor.)*

BEAU. I HAVE NEVER...NEVER STOLEN A FUCKING THING IN MY LIFE, DO YOU HEAR ME? *(In one quick motion, he is leaning over MERLE in her chair, his face inches from hers.)*

BEAU. Where do you get off saying I stole from you? You don't know me! You met me yesterday! You don't know anything about me! *(BEAU grabs the back of MERLE's chair and shakes it violently. Both women gasp.)*

JANIS. Stop it! *(Grabbing BEAU's arm)* Stop it right now! What's the matter with you?

MERLE. *(Standing and backing away)* Oh, isn't this something? You stand here, insulted because I insinuated you were a criminal.

JANIS. Merle...

MERLE. Well, let me take it back, then. Maybe this has all been just a huge misunderstanding. Maybe you're just a bully and a coward. *(BEAU pulls his arm away from JANIS.)*

JANIS. Stop it, Merle.

MERLE. You would have hit me, wouldn't you? To show us what a big, strong man you are.

JANIS. *(Turning to MERLE)* Shut...up...Merle. My "insufferable" patience is just about to give out. If you only knew all the times that I wanted to...to just...thump you...myself!

MERLE. Don't you threaten me, Janis Dunlap.

JANIS. *(Pointing to BEAU)* He's the one with the knife. You're unarmed. I have nothing to lose by smacking the dickens out of you! *(MERLE stands frozen. BEAU seems lost in his own thoughts. JANIS takes a step or two away from MERLE.)*

JANIS. *(Outward)* That's how I seem to remember it. But, you know, time has a way of making things seem better than they were. It especially makes us seem better. I did tell her to shut up. But I probably wasn't as composed or as eloquent as it seems now. It was cathartic, though. It felt pretty good. *(After a beat, BEAU crosses and flops down on his mattress by the door. JANIS crosses to BEAU.)*

JANIS. I'm sorry to have to tell you this. Maybe you hadn't stolen anything up until yesterday, but you have now.

BEAU. No.

JANIS. You threw out all the things in our trunk.

BEAU. That's not—

JANIS. —You have used our credit cards to buy a lot of food, rent a motel room, and make long-distance phone calls. However you are rationalizing that in your mind, it's still stealing. I'm not trying to hurt your feelings or anything, but, well, there you are. *(BEAU rubs his face with his hands, then studies JANIS. He stands. JANIS backs away from him. He digs in his pocket for the piece of paper again and crosses to the nightstand. He picks up the phone from where it fell and plugs it into the wall.)*

BEAU. Come here. *(Neither of the women move.)*

BEAU. *(To JANIS)* Come here! *(BEAU begins dialing the number on the paper as JANIS moves to the bed.)*

BEAU. I have an idea. You're going to talk to her.

JANIS. Me? I'm...what? Who am I going to talk to? *(BEAU has the phone to his ear, listening. He thrusts it at JANIS, who doesn't take it.)*

YOUR DILLY DILLY HEART

BEAU. To whoever answers. Ask for Danielle Benson. (*BEAU continues to thrust the phone at JANIS, who reluctantly accepts it. She holds it to her ear.*)

JANIS. But I don't know... (*Into the phone*) Oh! Uh, hello. Could I... Could I speak to Danielle...

BEAU. Benson.

JANIS. (*Into the phone*) Benson. (*Listens; covers the mouthpiece*) She wants to know who it is.

BEAU. Say you're her mother. No, wait! Her aunt. She's got a whole bunch of those.

JANIS. (*Into the phone*) Um, I'm her—

BEAU. —No! Say you're somebody from work; from her job!

JANIS. (*Into the phone*) I'm from the office. I just needed to speak with her—

BEAU. —I didn't say, say “office!” She doesn't work in any office! Or she didn't used to. (*JANIS has hastily covered the mouthpiece again as BEAU started talking.*)

JANIS. Well, how was I supposed to know that? (*Into the phone*) Excuse me for just one moment, please. (*Covering the mouthpiece*) You can't just hand me the phone and tell me to start talking without letting me have some idea of what—

(*MERLE crosses and snatches the phone from JANIS.*)

MERLE. Oh, give me that, will you? (*Into the phone*) I'm so sorry about that. My assistant, Ms. Dunlap, is new, and doesn't really know what she's doing yet. I am Mrs. Henderson. I'm from the state lottery office. This is in regards to a couple of tickets that Danielle purchased from us recently. Yes, I'll hold. (*MERLE hands the phone to BEAU and walks away.*)

MERLE. Just a hunch.

BEAU. (*Into the phone*) Hello, Dani? ...Dani, it's Beau! Yeah, babe! I know! I... (*Glancing at the women*) ...I got off the work farm! I... No, I'm not working at the lottery office. That was just... Look, can we get together? ...*Yeah, now!*

JANIS. (*To MERLE*) You didn't have to say I didn't know what I was doing.

MERLE. Well, did you?

BEAU. (*Into the phone*) I sorta got paroled. I can explain better when I see you.

JANIS. And why am I your assistant?

MERLE. Oh, for pity's sakes, Janis! Do you really care about the opinion of someone who believes that the state lottery office would actually have the name and phone number of everyone who bought a couple of scratch tickets?

BEAU. (*Hands over the mouthpiece; to the women*) Shut up! Shut up! (*Into the phone*) It's just a couple of women—old women—who gave me a ride. ...We're about an hour away. In Delderfield. Can you come over here, or can we meet someplace? (*JANIS clasps MERLE's hand.*)

BEAU. ...Why? ...Aw, come on. ...No! Because she hates me, that's why. Did she even tell you I've been calling since last night? ...You did? When? Still, she coulda let you know. Yeah, sure! We're at—now, you're not gonna tell her, right? ...Okay, it's... (*Grabbing the room service menu and looking at the front of it*) ...It's the Sky-View Motor Inn, on Old Highway 10. We're in Room 234. Me and the old ladies. ...No, they're just...(*looking at the women again*) Well, when you see them, you'll know....Yeah. Believe me. As soon as you can! I can hardly wait! It's gonna be great, Dani. Everything we ever talked about. You'll see. (*BEAU holds the receiver a second longer, then hangs up.*)

BEAU. (*Ecstatic*) I knew it! I knew it! She doesn't live there anymore! She just happened to drop over this morning. And yeah, that skank Trish hadn't even told her I called. (*To MERLE*) That was pretty smart, that bit about the lottery office! Trish totally bought it. Probably figured she'd get a cut of the winnings, is why she handed the phone right over to Danielle. Whore. Stupid whore.

MERLE. So, this Danielle is coming here?

BEAU. Yeah.

MERLE. he'll be here in a little while.

BEAU. An hour or so, yeah.

MERLE. And...then what? (*BEAU holds up a finger in a hold-on-a-minute gesture. He picks up the receiver and presses a couple of digits.*)

BEAU. (*Into the phone*) Yeah, this is Room 234. We've decided we'd like to stay one more night. Is that all right? ...Yeah, on the card. Thanks. (*He hangs up and unplugs the phone*) That takes care of that.

(JANIS and MERLE look at each other. JANIS crosses and sits on the foot of the bed some distance away from BEAU.)

JANIS. How are you going to explain us?

BEAU. Already did. You gave me a ride.

MERLE. *(Gesturing around the room)* But what about this? She's going to believe two complete strangers shared a motel room with you?

BEAU. Well, you did, didn't you? *(MERLE studies BEAU with an expression of disbelief. Finally, she turns away.)*

JANIS. I think what we want to know is, what is the bigger picture? Your long-range plan? What...what happened after Danielle gets here?

BEAU. *(After a thoughtful pause)* Wish I could take a shower before she sees me. But what would I do with you guys?

MERLE. I am certainly not going to sit in the bathroom for that.

JANIS. I take it that Danielle is your girlfriend? *(BEAU does not answer. The women look at each other.)*

JANIS. So, what's going to happen, Beau? After she gets here? Do you plan to kill the two of us and take off in our car?

MERLE. Janis!

JANIS. Living off of our credit cards and the money from our purses?

MERLE. Stop this right now!

JANIS. I feel like I have the right to know that much, Beau. Because if that's what you're thinking, well, I would have ordered something other than French toast for my last meal. *(BEAU stands, carrying the phone, and crosses back to the mattress by the door. He carefully winds the phone cord into a neat coil and sets down the phone.)*

BEAU. I dunno. How big's the credit limit on your cards, anyway? *(MERLE gasps.)*

MERLE. You can't keep still, can you? You just natter away, giving him all kinds of ideas.

JANIS. He was teasing, Merle.

MERLE. He was most certainly not teasing! He... *(Looking at BEAU)* He...

(BEAU has his back to the women. MERLE studies him for a moment and then looks back at JANIS. BEAU utters a small laugh.)

MERLE. That is in very poor taste. Both of you!

JANIS. Did you say something about being on a work farm?

MERLE. (*Warningly*) Janis...

JANIS. So, then... Whatever you've done probably wasn't serious. Well, of course it was *serious*. But they don't send you to a work farm if you've committed armed robbery or kidnapped somebody.

MERLE. Janis!

JANIS. I'm just trying to establish that whatever Beau... Whatever happened... in the past, isn't so terrible that it isn't still fixable. Probably.

MERLE. Are you forgetting the last twenty-four hours? (*There is a knock on the door.*)

VOICE. (*Off*) Room service!

BEAU. (*To the women*) In the bathroom! (*MERLE crosses to the bathroom and exits inside.*)

JANIS. (*Outward*) I suppose it goes without saying that this was the last trip Merle and I took together.

BEAU. Did you hear me? Get in the bathroom, now! (*JANIS crosses up to the bathroom door. BEAU watches her and then turns and begins moving the mattress and things away from the outside door. JANIS stops by the bathroom.*)

JANIS. (*Outward*) The blintzes were pretty good, I thought. Beau didn't care for them. (*JANIS exits into the bathroom, closing the door. The lights fade as BEAU continues to drag things away from the door. He pauses, taking a deep breath before reaching to open it. BLACKOUT.*)

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