

Apples from the Same Tree

a short play

CHARACTERS

TISHA	Female, 15-17 years old, any ethnicity
JENNIFER	Tisha's mother, may be of mixed ethnicity or not
YVONNE (EVIE)	Tishas' grandmother, with longish hair, Caucasian or Latinx

SETTING

Somewhere in the U.S.

TIME

The present.

SCENE 1

(Offstage. Presumed to be at Jennifer's house. All shouting.)

TISHA

You are *not* seriously making me go to Great-Gramma's house!

JENNIFER

Gramma Bessie's house.

TISHA

Gramma Bessie's house.

JENNIFER

Yes, and you are coming because you chose that as your punishment for—

TISHA

It's legal!

JENNIFER

Not at your age, it isn't.

TISHA

Anyway, I thought you were kidding! Why can't Gramma Evie go with you?

JENNIFER

She's meeting us there.

TISHA

Aaargh!

JENNIFER

Get your jacket. It's pouring.

SCENE 2

(Gramma Bessie's home. YVONNE/EVIE stands inside putting things in boxes. There are two piles of boxes, some on the right and some on the left.)

(TISHA rushes in shaking off rain, followed by JENNIFER. YVONNE hands them old 1950's-pattern towels.)

YVONNE

You're making a mess here! Wipe yourselves. Careful. That rain's gonna get in the boxes.

TISHA

Oh God. That smell.

JENNIFER

That's Tabu. Gramma Bessie's "always" perfume.

YVONNE

Puts you right there, doesn't it?

TISHA

Does it have to be so pungent!?

JENNIFER

Do you know I smelled that at my hairdresser's a few weeks ago—or dreamed it. This older woman was just leaving and there it was—that penetrating combination of—I don't know—moss, and patchouli, and some musky whatever's in it. Cloves.

YVONNE

I bet it brought mom right back. That, and Pond's whatever-it-was.

JENNIFER

That stuff she put on her face every night.

TISHA

Moisturizer, Mom!

JENNIFER

Well they didn't call it that back then.

YVONNE

Cold cream.

TISHA

Well it smells like an old person in here.

YVONNE

(Not angry.)
Shut your mouth.

(TISHA picks up a rotary phone.)

TISHA

What is this?

YVONNE

You're kidding, right?

TISHA

No. What is this?

JENNIFER

It is a phone, for god sake, what did you think it was?

TISHA

I don't know. A modem? Some kind of weird analog modem?

YVONNE

A modem for what?

TISHA

(Like duh!)

A computer. Anyway it smells like an old person in here. Or something.

YVONNE

Don't be disrespectful.

(Beat.)

There's an aerosol in the bathroom. And bring that box I left on the floor in there.

(TISHA exits.)

JENNIFER

What's with the two piles of boxes?

YVONNE

The ones near the window go to the thrift store. I'm selling the ones over there on eBay.

(JENNIFER starts looking through the things for eBay.
TISHA returns with aerosol and an open box. She starts to set it down.)

YVONNE (cont.)

(Pointing to the ones for eBay.)

That goes over there.

(TISHA sets it in that group.)

(JENNIFER takes a manual typewriter from a box.)

JENNIFER

Are we really selling this? They're coming back in fashion, you know.

YVONNE

That's why we're selling it. *I'm. I'm* selling it. She was, after all, my mother.

TISHA

What is that?

JENNIFER

A typewriter.

TISHA

A what?

JENNIFER

(Like duh!)

A typewriter. An analog PC. Like an abacus, but for words.

(TISHA has no idea what an abacus is. Then, fascinated, she starts exploring the typewriter.)

TISHA

Wow! Like you write on this?!

YVONNE

That's what the letters are for. On the keys . . . ?

TISHA

Where's the plug?

JENNIFER

It has no plug.

TISHA

Then how do you turn it on?

YVONNE

You don't turn it on. You just type.

(YVONNE finds a paper and demonstrates.)

Like this.

YVONNE (cont.)

OMG! That is so cool! Can I try?

TISHA

Yes.

YVONNE

(TISHA tries it out.)

Do you just . . . ?

TISHA

Yes, dear.

YVONNE

(TISHA haltingly types using a very slow hunt-and-peck.)

OMG! The words are appearing right up there on the paper! Look!

TISHA

(JENNIFER looks through the box just brought from the bathroom. Takes out 1950's brush rollers and picks.)

It's like a mini printing press!

TISHA (cont.)

Now it's my turn to "Oh my God!"
(To Yvonne.)
I almost remember you wearing these.

JENNIFER

I never wore those after you were born.

YVONNE

Yes you did! I remember you sleeping in them!

JENNIFER

Really? I thought I'd gotten a curling iron by then.

YVONNE

(TISHA turns from her hunt-and-peck typing.)

That's so dangerous!

TISHA

What's so dangerous?
YVONNE

Sleeping with a curling iron. Are you five?
TISHA

No Tisha. In *those*.
YVONNE

(YVONNE picks up brush rollers and picks and demonstrates.)

You'd wrap your hair around the roller and then hold it in place with a pick, like this.
YVONNE (cont.)

And then go to sleep.
JENNIFER

With those on your head? All over?
TISHA

Yes.
YVONNE

Oh my God! How could you sleep that way?
TISHA

You got used to it.
YVONNE

Why?
TISHA

(Mimicking Gramma Bessie.)
"Beauty hurts."
(Then, laughing.)
When we were in high school we would put those things in our hair after school or on weekends and wear them to the store.
YVONNE

Again. Why?
JENNIFER and TISHA

Because if you went to Piggly Wiggly that way, it was like a badge of honor.
YVONNE

TISHA

Piggly Wiggly?

YVONNE

The grocery store. Anyway, it implied you had a date that night.

JENNIFER

I never knew you were that vain, Mom.

YVONNE

I guess I was—lording it over the other gals.

JENNIFER

(Teasing.)

You nasty, nasty woman.

(To Tisha.)

Your grandma was a vain, vain creature.

YVONNE

Who lorded it over the other girls.

JENNIFER

They probably stayed home from Piggly Wiggly on weekends. Embarrassed not to have curlers in their hair.

TISHA

That's the most crazy ass-backwards thing I've ever heard of.

(TISHA is now seriously looking through the "eBay" boxes. She lifts out a very heavy sewing machine.)

TISHA

Okay. Let me guess. This is a sewing machine. For making clothes. Did people really make their own clothes when Gramma Bessie was a girl?

YVONNE

I made my own clothes, and I made your mother's. Most of them. When I couldn't get hand-me-downs or couldn't find anything suitable at the thrift store. When I wanted something special.

JENNIFER

You told me you made me overalls. And onesies.

YVONNE

(To Jennifer.)

And costumes for the Renaissance Faire when it was still funky.

TISHA

(Mocking.)

When it was groo-oo-oo-vy!

YVONNE

Don't make fun. But it was. Small. Relatively undiscovered.

(To Jennifer.)

But I also made your dad ties and an overcoat.

(Beat.)

I wish I still had some of the things I made for myself when I was young—sun dresses and, I don't know, other stuff.

(Beat.)

Gramma Bessie made my prom dress.

TISHA

With this!?

YVONNE

That very one.

(TISHA fiddles with the knobs on the sewing machine.)

TISHA

How do you program it?

YVONNE and JENNIFER

You don't program—

TISHA

Kidding!

(Still fiddling.)

I bet all these things mean something.

YVONNE

They do.

(JENNIFER pulls a weed pip out of the "eBay" boxes.)

JENNIFER

What is this!?!??

YVONNE

Oh, I don't know. Put that back.

JENNIFER
 Mom! This is a hash pipe!

YVONNE
 (Feigning innocence.)
 Is it?

JENNIFER
 You knew that or you wouldn't have put it in the "eBay" boxes.

TISHA
 Oh my God. Gramma Bessie was a hippie!

YVONNE
 She certainly was not!

JENNIFER
 Then why did she have a hash pipe!?

YVONNE
 Because she took it away from me and I never saw it again until yesterday.

TISHA
 You were a stoner, Gramma Evie!

YVONNE
 I went through a little rebellious stage, maybe. Little! A little one.

TISHA
 (To Jennifer.)
 Ha!
 (Beat.)
 Wait! This is—there is—there is still weed in here.

JENNIFER
 (Accusingly to Yvonne.)
 Why would you put that in that box?

TISHA
 And it's pretty fresh!

YVONNE
 (Not really hearing Tisha. To Jennifer.)
 It's vintage. I bet I can get \$250 for it.

TISHA

I am getting a whole different picture of Gramma Bessie!

(TISHA pulls more things out of the “eBay” boxes.)

TISHA (cont.)

You are not selling these things on eBay!

(TISHA pulls some snapshots out of the “eBay” boxes, and she and JENNIFER look through them.)

JENNIFER

(To Yvonne.)

Why would you put photographs in here? Seriously Mom.

YVONNE

I just put them with the things I’m taking home.

TISHA

Is this you, Gramma?

JENNIFER

At the Renaissance Faire?

TISHA

Oh wow. Ridiculous. You were beautiful when you were young, Gramma Evie.

YVONNE

Took after my mother, dear. And you take after your mom. And I bet there was lots of beauty in the girls who never got to wear rollers to the grocery store.

TISHA

No wonder Gramma Bessie liked a perfume called Tabu.

YVONNE

It was pre-e-e-tty strong.

JENNIFER

Maybe that’s why she wore it.

(The three women are overcome with laughter.)

TISHA

Do stores still sell it? Ta-boooooo.

JENNIFER

Why? Some aroma you want to cover up?

TISHA

(Sincerely.)

No. No really, Mom. Really. It's just that I have hardly any memories of Gramma Bessie, and my view of her—my view of her—has completely changed. Maybe it would bring her back—for me.

JENNIFER

Maybe it would. Let's finish packing these boxes and—

YVONNE

Let's just go take a look. Who knows. Maybe we can find some. On eBay at least.

TISHA

And don't sell that. Don't sell *any* of these things.

JENNIFER

Tisha's right. They're heirlooms. Pretty shocking heirlooms some of them. But heirlooms nonetheless.

TISHA

What's in the "thrift store" boxes?

(TISHA starts taking things from the "thrift store" boxes.
She pulls out a fringed leather vest from the late 60s.)

JENNIFER

I want that!

TISHA

No, no. I get it!

YVONNE

Come to think of it, that is definitely mine.

(End of play.)