

Blooming Cactus

A full-length comedy

CHARACTERS:

GRAN - F, 70's.

DENNY - M, 70's.

JEAN - F, 70's.

JOEY - M, 18.

BRUCE - M, 40's

MARSHA - F, 40's

SETTINGS:

Gran's apartment at the Blooming Cactus Independent Living Center, Yuma, Arizona.

The US/Mexico border.

TIME:

Present day.

ACT I

SCENE 1

Gran's apartment. Early morning. The generic cream walls and carpet of the Blooming Cactus Independent Living Center are covered with what remains of Gran's worldly possessions - family photos, treasured knickknacks, worn chairs, and her late husband's urn.

Gran sits in a wheelchair. She is dressed for the Arizona heat. Denny sits at the table next to her, counting out a stack of bills and making notes in a ledger. Gran speaks into a cell phone.

GRAN

Yes, I know - I know - Everyone does - That's right - Not a problem - I can have that for you this week - Of course - Alright, bye now.

Gran puts the phone down.

GRAN (CONT'D)

Put Martha down for two bottles of Lipitor.

DENNY

Who's Martha?

GRAN

New lady. Moved into 13C last week. From Denver.

DENNY

Gotcha.

Denny makes a notation in his ledger. The stacks of money are neatly sorted. He begins to put rubber bands around them. A toilet flushes.

DENNY (CONT'D)

Someone's awake.

GRAN

Christ. I almost forgot.

DENNY

(chuckling)

Maybe that's the answer. Pretend you've gone senile and don't remember him.

GRAN

God no. He'd just call his parents, and the last thing I need right now is a lecture from my idiot son.

Denny laughs. Joey enters. He is a lanky kid, fully grown but still wearing little boy pajamas. He looks scared of everything.

JOEY

Hi Gran.

DENNY

(overly gregarious)

Joey, my boy, how did you enjoy your first night at the Blooming Cactus?

JOEY

It was OK. I mean, fine. I mean, it's weird not being in my own bed, but I'll get used to it. So it's fine.

DENNY

Fantastic. Glad to hear it. Are you hungry?

JOEY

Yes.

DENNY

Great, your Gran here will fix you something right up.

Gran gives Denny the middle finger where Joey can't see it.

GRAN

(pointing towards the kitchen)

There's still some eggs and toast on the stove. Go help yourself.

Joey exits towards the kitchen. Gran takes a swipe at Denny.

GRAN (CONT'D)

You're no help.

DENNY

How long is he going to be here, anyway?

GRAN

The whole fuckin' season. Or so they tell me. Something they call a "gap year." We'll see.

DENNY

What did he do to get banished to Yuma?

GRAN

Probably had an impure thought or got an A minus on a quiz or something. I don't know, his mother's batshit. One of those crazy religious types that home-schools and doesn't eat gluten. If it wasn't for her, I would still be in my own home instead of warehoused at the Blooming Cactus.

DENNY

So what do they expect you to do with him?

GRAN

Fuck if I know. My idiot son said something about gaining some social experience, but I wasn't really listening.

DENNY

How is an eighteen year old supposed to gain social experience at an old folks home?

GRAN

Exactly. My son is an idiot.

(pointing to the money)

How'd we do?

DENNY

Not bad, considering. I'll be happier when the season starts and everyone comes back. But we ought to be good until October, I think.

Denny puts the money and his ledger into a leather pouch.

DENNY (CONT'D)

I'll deposit your share by the end of the day.

GRAN

Thanks, Denny.

DENNY

Always a pleasure.

(shuffling towards the door)

Well, I best be off. Gotta get my chair yoga class in before it gets too hot. See you at lunch?

GRAN

Sure thing.

Denny exits. Joey brings his breakfast in from the kitchen and sits at the table. He barely makes noise. Gran starts when she realizes he is there.

GRAN (CONT'D)

Christ on a stick! Where did you come from?

JOEY

The kitchen.

GRAN

Well, I - yes, that's not - never mind.

Uncomfortable silence. Joey eats.

GRAN (CONT'D)

I guess we need to figure out something to do with you.

JOEY

Like what?

GRAN

I have no idea. What do teenage boys do?

JOEY

I dunno.

GRAN

No, I don't think you would.

JOEY

What do you like to do?

GRAN

Casino. I like the nickel slots.

JOEY

Oh.

GRAN

Yeah, so that's off the list. What else is there?

JOEY

Dad says I am supposed to help you. Like with stuff you can't do from the wheelchair.

GRAN

My idiot son told you that, huh? The chair is just temporary until my knee heals. And I can do enough just fine on my own.

JOEY

OK.

GRAN

Which brings us back to the bigger question - what are we going to do with you? Yuma is great for snow birds, not kids.

JOEY

Maybe I should get a job or something?

GRAN

Have you ever had a job before?

JOEY

No.

GRAN

Perfect.

JOEY

But there's got to be something you need. Like I can clean stuff or do the shopping or drive -

GRAN

All of which I can do myself, thank you.

JOEY

I'm just trying -

GRAN

You know what you can do for me?

JOEY

What?

GRAN

Remind me to strangle my idiot son.

There is a quick knock at the door, and Denny enters again with Jean right behind him. She is a whirlwind of enthusiasm.

DENNY

Knock knock.

JEAN

Hello! I'm back!

DENNY

Look who I found.

Jean walks over to Gran and gives her a big hug. Gran tolerates it, but barely.

JEAN

I just got in this morning, so of course I had to immediately come say hi. Oh, and I heard about your knee! You poor thing! How are you feeling? Are you alright?

GRAN

I'll live.

JEAN
(noticing Joey)

And who is this handsome fella?

GRAN

This is my grandson, Joey.

Jean hugs Joey too. He is even less comfortable
with it than Gran.

JEAN

So nice to meet you, young man! My name is Jean, and I live two apartments over that
way, so you let me know if you need anything, alright?

JOEY

Yes, ma'am.

JEAN

Listen to him, "yes, ma'am." Isn't he polite? He is just the cutest!

Jean hugs him even tighter. Joey looks terrified.

DENNY

Leave the boy alone, Jean. He's too young for you.

JEAN

How old are you, honey?

JOEY

Eighteen.

JEAN

Sounds like the perfect age to me.

GRAN

Enough, Jean. You're too much. How was Wisconsin?

JEAN

It was Wisconsin. Saw my kids, checked on my house, went to a couple of funerals. The usual.

DENNY

Sounds about right.

JEAN

But let me tell you what, I am so glad to be back! This is where it's at, kid, this is the fountain of youth. And don't let your Gran here tell you different.

JOEY

The fountain of youth?

GRAN

She exaggerates.

JEAN

No, I'm not kidding. I've been saying that about this place for years. Why do you think all the old folks come here every year?

GRAN

The climate.

JEAN

No, it's because everyone here is alive! They're fun, they're active, they're living! All my friends back home are either dead or about to be. But here - I feel rejuvenated already.

DENNY

And the pills here are the finest in the land.

GRAN

Oh, hush, both of you.

JEAN

So how long are you here for, Joey?

JOEY

The whole season. But I don't know what that means.

JEAN

That's what we call it down here. October through April. That's when the snow birds come to town for the winter. And it's grand.

JOEY

Are you a snow bird, Gran?

GRAN

Thanks to your mother, no. I'm a year-rounder.

JEAN

And that makes her the lucky one, trust me. If I could sell my house and live here year round, I would.

JOEY

Why don't you?

JEAN

My daughter and her useless husband are living in my house now, and I can't get them out.

GRAN

You could still sell it.

JEAN

I know, but I would feel bad about it. And every time I mention it my son-in-law starts talking about squatters' rights, so it doesn't seem worth it.

DENNY

Damn kids.

JEAN

Right? But it's fine because I am here now.

(turns to Joey)

But enough about me, I want to hear more about you. Let me guess, you were captain of the football team?

JOEY

We didn't have a football team.

DENNY

He was home-schooled.

JEAN

Why? Is there something wrong with you, honey?

GRAN

Just his mother.

JOEY

It's not that bad. There's a whole group of us. We have activities.

JEAN

I just can't imagine. I remember the best part of my high school was all the things we did after class - football games, parties, prom. Did you have a prom?

JOEY

Well, no.

JEAN

That's an absolute shame.

JOEY

But we had a graduation. All the kids in my home-school group attended. And each kid got to perform a talent on stage.

DENNY

Really? What was your talent?

JOEY

I performed magic tricks.

DENNY

Of course you did.

JOEY

Here, I can show you.

Joey picks up a pen from the table and makes it disappear. Everyone claps politely.

JEAN

That's wonderful, honey. Probably not as good as a prom, but still wonderful.

GRAN

Alright, that's enough excitement.

JEAN

Yes, yes, I should get going. And I have so many new people to meet! Did you here about the new couple moving in to 4H?

GRAN

No, I didn't.

JEAN

I am going to drop in on them this afternoon. Can't have too many friends, right?

Jean winks heavily at Gran, who ignores her.

DENNY

Sounds like a plan.

JEAN

And I'll be back with my order later, too. I am running low on everything.

Joey looks confused. Gran starts to move Jean towards the door.

GRAN

It was nice seeing you, Jean. Glad to have you back. We'll see you later.

JEAN

Absolutely! Later!

Jean gives another round of hugs, then leaves.

DENNY

I guess that means the season has officially begun.

JOEY

What does she order, Gran?

Gran and Denny exchange a look.

GRAN

Nothing. Go get dressed.

Lights out.

SCENE 2

Several days later. Gran, Jean, and Denny are seated in the living room. Jean reads from a note pad. Denny writes in his ledger.

JEAN

And Jim and Pat in 2B need 3 bottles of Crestor, 4 boxes of Synthroid, and one Albuterol. Agnes in 7D needs 3 boxes of Fosamax, and Ronald in 4A needs 2 bottles of Cialis.

DENNY

Got it.

JEAN

And that's just what I have so far. I went to the regulars first, of course, but there are lots of new people that I haven't even talked to yet. And that's just at Blooming Cactus! I plan to visit Desert Rose later this week. One of the ladies from my water Zumba class lives there, and she said there are tons of folks who would be interested.

GRAN

Good to hear. And I'm making a trip tomorrow, so I can have those orders ready by tomorrow evening.

DENNY

Are you sure you can handle it?

GRAN

I've already made the trip once in this stupid chair, and I can do it again.

DENNY

If you say so.

GRAN

I do. And really, the chair makes it easier. So many more places to hide bottles than what I had before.

DENNY

Good. Just want you to be safe.

GRAN

I am. I promise.

JEAN

Where's that handsome grandson of yours?

GRAN

I sent him to the grocery store. I have got to find more excuses to get him out of the house.

JEAN

You could always send him to my house.

GRAN

Yeah, right.

DENNY

He could be useful, you know.

GRAN

How?

DENNY

He could look out for you, watch your back, that kind of thing.

GRAN

Watch my back? Why?

DENNY

When you cross the border. When you make a buy.

GRAN

(bursts out laughing)

Have you seen my grandson? He's about as intimidating as a Jello mold. There's no way.

DENNY

I'm just saying I would feel better if you didn't always go alone.

JEAN

I agree. We never know what kind of risk you're taking.

GRAN

Please, there's hardly any risk. I just walk into the farmacia, get what I need, and then hide it in my bag on the way back. The whole point of this little business is that no one is going to search a little old white lady at the border. Piece of cake.

JEAN

If you say so.

GRAN

I do. And it's not like I am the only one. Last time I stood in line for over an hour because a bus full of nursing home patients was already ahead of me. Came all the way from Phoenix.

JEAN

Oh, I know, there's more and more every day.

DENNY

Damn drug prices. How are folks supposed to afford these medications anymore?

JEAN

Exactly. And I don't know about you, but my social security check is stretched about as far as I can get it.

DENNY

Mine too.

JEAN

And look - I mean, I don't have exact numbers yet or anything - but I really think this season we may be looking at a large increase of people in need.

GRAN

What do you mean? Desert Rose?

JEAN

Not just that. Like you said, entire nursing homes are coming down here. But what about the folks who can't travel? I mean, we've just been helping out our friends, but what about everyone else?

GRAN

I can only carry so much, Jean.

DENNY

Yeah, but now you have your grandson.

Gran looks from Jean to Denny and back again.
She smells a rat.

GRAN

What have you two been cooking up?

DENNY

Just an idea. We've been doing alright, but we can do better. There are a lot of folks that need us. And let's face it, there's money to be made.

JEAN

And I could really use the extra cash, truth be told.

DENNY

Yeah, me too.

JEAN

There's room to expand. And maybe Joey could help with that a little.

DENNY

Plus, we've always stayed away from the hard stuff before. Now it might make sense.

GRAN

Uh-uh, that shit is not worth it.

DENNY

It might be if we charged a little extra for the trouble.

JEAN

There's a huge market for Xanax.

GRAN

OK, hold your horses. One teenage boy does not take us all the way to Xanax.

DENNY

No, but a teenage boy pushing your wheelchair does. You said it yourself, no one is going to search an old lady. Think of how much more we can do because no one is going to search your wheelchair?

Y'all are losing your minds.

GRAN

Just think about it, OK?

JEAN

Fine, I'll think about it.

GRAN

The front door opens and Joey walks in carrying an armful of grocery bags. He stops when he sees all three seniors looking at him, sizing him up.

What's going on?

JOEY

Lights out.

SCENE 3

The border. Gran and Joey are standing in line, waiting for their turn with the border agent. Gran holds a plastic shopping bag in her lap. Joey looks nervous.

GRAN

It's very simple.

JOEY

Are you sure, Gran? Because, I mean -

GRAN

Yes, I am sure. Everything will happen just like I said it would.

JOEY

OK.

(Pause)

And if it doesn't?

GRAN

Oh, for Christ sakes, stop looking at me like that. He'll look at our passports, ask us why we were in Mexico, I will say that we were just visiting to get some medicine, I will show him my little baggie here, and then we'll be through. You just keep quiet.

JOEY

What if he asks me a question?

GRAN

Just say you are helping your poor feeble grandmother who is confined to a wheelchair. Alright?

JOEY

OK.

The line moves forward a bit. Joey looks around at all the other seniors standing in line (this can be implied or simulated with projections; there do not actually need to be other people on stage).

JOEY (CONT'D)

There's a lot of people here.

GRAN

Thousands, I would guess.

JOEY

And this happens every day?

GRAN

Yep.

JOEY

I've never seen so many old people in one place before.

GRAN

They come down here by the bus load.

JOEY

And everyone is getting their prescriptions?

GRAN

That, or they're getting glasses or dentures or hearing aids, or whatever else old folks need.

JOEY

And it's legal?

GRAN

Of course. And a hell of lot cheaper too.

JOEY

So why -?

Joey surreptitiously gestures towards Gran's lap. He is not nearly as sly as he thinks he is. Gran slaps his hand.

GRAN

Stop that! I can bring over pills for myself. It's just the stuff for other people that can raise some eyebrows. So we have to be -

(MORE)

GRAN (CONT'D)
(searching for the right word)

Subtle about it.

JOEY

Right. Subtle. I can do subtle.

Joey attempts to look subtle. He fails. The line moves a little bit forward.

GRAN

Look, it's going to be our turn soon, so just - just remember that these agents have been doing this all day, OK? They are tired and bored and hot, and all they want to do is get us through the line so they can move on to the next geezer. Got it?

JOEY

Yeah, Gran, I got it.

GRAN

OK, then.

The line moves forward.

GRAN (CONT'D)

We're up next.

Lights out.

SCENE 4

Gran's apartment. Gran and Joey are back from the border. Joey has never felt so alive.

JOEY

Woohoooo! Yeah! We did it! Gosh dang it!

GRAN

(unenthused)

Yep.

JOEY

I mean, we did it! We got away with it. Oh my god, do you know what this means? I am a drug smuggler. I have smuggled drugs.

GRAN

For fuck's sake.

Gran tries several times to hoist herself out of the wheelchair and into a nearby chair, but to no avail. She winces when she puts too much weight on her injured knee, and she can't get enough momentum going to propel herself forward. She sighs.

JOEY

I should grow a mustache.

GRAN

Get me outta here, will ya?

Joey hurries over to Gran and, leaning in, tries to wrap his arms around Gran and lift her up. He can't do it. He makes multiple attempts from multiple angles, grunting and panting, but can't get her out of the wheelchair. He finally succeeds by just upending the wheelchair and dumping Gran onto the couch. She chafes at the indignity of it all, and gets herself right side up.

GRAN (CONT'D)

Hand me those pills.

There is an inflatable donut on the wheelchair seat, and Joey reaches through its center to a hidden pocket underneath. He pulls out bottle after bottle of pills and hands them to Gran.

GRAN (CONT'D)

There we go.

Gran lines the bottles up on a side table. There is a short knock on the door, and Denny enters.

DENNY

Hi there, kids. How'd it go?

He sees the bottles on the table.

DENNY (CONT'D)

Excellent!

JOEY

I did it! I mean, we did it! And I didn't throw up or anything!

DENNY

Proud of you, kid. Welcome to the club.

JOEY

When can we go again?

GRAN

Slow down, Joey.

JOEY

Why?

GRAN

If we cross too often, they might start to notice. We have to pace ourselves.

JOEY

Well, but - if we go on different days, there will be different border agents, right? They won't recognize us.

DENNY

It's not that, it's the passports. They can see your history.

JOEY

Oh.

GRAN

Exactly.

DENNY

Even more reason to get as many pills as we can per trip.

GRAN

Where's Jean?

DENNY

It's dollar night at El Vaquero.

GRAN

Oh right, I forgot. She loves fajitas.

DENNY

She'll come by to pick up the orders later.

(to Joey)

So tell me all about it, kid. Was it everything you imagined?

GRAN

Don't encourage him.

JOEY

Did you know it's called the Purple Pharmacy? It's called the Purple Pharmacy. And it's right there, the first thing you see when you cross the border. Big and purple. And they have everything, every kind of medicine you can think of. And all we had to do was ask for it! It was bigger than Walgreens.

DENNY

That's impressive.

JOEY

And all the Mexican people spoke English, and Gran even bought me lunch! We had tacos.

DENNY

Sounds like quite the day.

JOEY

I am a drug smuggler now.

DENNY

Just wait until your mother finds out.

GRAN

Shut your mouth! Under no circumstances will we be saying anything to her, do you understand?

(to Joey)

Do you understand?

JOEY

Yes, Gran. Not a word.

GRAN

Christ, if she found out what you were doing, they would ship me to Florida.

DENNY

God forbid.

GRAN

Exactly.

DENNY

So I guess we can call this trial run a success.

JOEY

It was!

GRAN

Uh-uh, don't start.

DENNY

It's a conversation worth having.

GRAN

Is it, though?

DENNY

I think so.

JOEY

What conversation?

DENNY

Expanding our services.

GRAN

It's risky.

DENNY

It's lucrative. And necessary.

GRAN

How many people are really asking for the hard stuff?

DENNY

Jean says it's more and more every day. Xanax, Vicodin, Valium, Percoset, Oxy, Klonopin, they're asking for it all.

JOEY

What?

DENNY

Pain killers. Mood stabilizers. Schedule two stuff.

GRAN

Maybe they shouldn't be wanting them in the first place.

DENNY

We're old. At this point in our lives there are two choices, suffer and die or just die. Some folks would rather skip the suffering part.

GRAN

That's morbid.

DENNY

Am I wrong?

JOEY

Wait, people want to die?

DENNY

Well, no, not immediately, but they don't mind enjoying themselves on the way down.

GRAN

I still say it's too risky.

JOEY

Why? Why is it too risky?

GRAN

If I get caught with an extra bottle of Lipitor, no one really cares. I can just tell the agent that my feeble old lady brain forgot and "I am so very sorry, officer." But with Oxy? I'm a good talker, but not that good.

DENNY

Yeah, but like you've said, what are they going to do, throw a little old white lady in jail?

GRAN

Or worse. I am not spending my remaining years stuck in some cage at a border patrol compound.

DENNY

You don't really think it would go that far, do you?

GRAN

It could. How do I know?

JOEY

But there has to be some way we could do it, right? Some way around the risk?

DENNY

That's what we need to figure out.

GRAN

If you've got some grand ideas, please share with the group.

DENNY

Maybe we recruit some more mules?

GRAN

Absolutely not. Jean does sales, you do finance, I do procurement. Small, controlled group. That's exactly how we like it. We have trust. And more money for each of us.

JOEY

What about me?

DENNY

Yeah, what about him?

JOEY

I mean, I am a drug smuggler now. I can help.

DENNY

See, he says he can help.

GRAN

Don't be a fucking moron.

JOEY

C'mon, Gran, I can do it. I can. I can help.

GRAN

I am not asking you to do that.

JOEY

You're not asking, I am volunteering.

DENNY

He's volunteering.

Gran gives Denny a dirty look.

GRAN

And I can say no.

JOEY

Please don't, Gran. I want to. I really want to. My whole life, all anyone has ever told me is what I can't do, what I am not supposed to do, and the list of things I am not allowed to do is really long. Like really long. Like super long. And I can do this, I know I can. I can smuggle drugs across the Mexican border. I was born to be a drug smuggler.

GRAN

Oh, for fuck's sake.

DENNY

The kid has a point.

GRAN

Denny, you are a treasured friend, but you need to shut the fuck up.

DENNY

I have said my peace.

JOEY

Please, Gran. Trust me.

GRAN

I am not sure this is what my idiot son meant when he said I should expand your horizons.

Joey takes that as a "yes." He throws himself at Gran in a big hug.

JOEY

Thank you, Gran! I won't let you down.

GRAN

Jesus, let's hope not.

Lights out.

SCENE 5

A few weeks later. Joey and Gran have just arrived home from a border run. Gran is sitting on the couch, tired, her wheelchair beside her. Joey is wearing an ill-fitting, baggy shirt. He is high on success. He may even have a hint of a mustache.

DENNY

Any issues?

GRAN

Nope, none.

JOEY

They barely even looked twice at us.

JEAN

That's wonderful! Lordy, I was on pins and needles this whole time. I just kept thinking to myself, if anything happens to them, I would not be able to live with myself. Not at all. But you made it back, and you're fine!

GRAN

Yes, Jean, we're fine. Considering this was your idea, I appreciate your concern.

JEAN

It wasn't just my idea!

DENNY

No, it wasn't. Leave her alone.

(pointing to the canula on Gran's face)

And why are you wearing that?

GRAN

(pulling the canula off)

I forgot. Wow, that's better. Now help me unload all this.

Denny and Jean approach Gran's wheelchair and begin removing bottles and boxes from the false bottom.

Denny removes the oxygen tank from the wheelchair's side and unscrews the top. He removes more bottles and boxes from the inside.

DENNY

(to Jean)

Help the kid, will ya?

JEAN

With pleasure.

Joey lifts up his baggy shirt to reveal multiple small boxes of pills taped to his chest. Jean slowly, almost seductively, peels the tape off and removes the boxes.

JEAN (CONT'D)

Oh my, look at how many muscles you have.

JOEY

Gran lets me use the community pool. I've been doing laps.

JEAN

Yes, yes you have.

GRAN

Take it down a notch, Jean.

JEAN

What? There's no harm in looking. Or appreciating. The boy's worked hard, someone should say so, that's all.

GRAN

And now you've said it, so you're done.

JEAN

You're no fun.

They all arrange the bottles and boxes on the coffee table, separating by kind.

When they are finished, they step back a bit and admire their haul. It's an impressive amount.

DENNY

Damn.

JEAN

That's a lot.

GRAN

Yes, it is.

JEAN

The most we've ever done.

JOEY

Is that going to be a lot of money?

DENNY

Yes, it will be.

JOEY

Hot damn!

Gran, Jean, and Denny look at Joey. He's never used a curse word before.

DENNY

(slapping Joey on the back)

Proud of you, son.

JEAN

We all are.

GRAN

Come here, Joey.

Joey sits next to Gran on the couch. She puts her arm around him.

GRAN (CONT'D)

If your mother could see you now.

They all laugh, Joey loudest of all.

JEAN

I think this calls for a celebration, don't you?

Jean walks straight to the kitchen without waiting for a response.

GRAN

OK, I guess we are celebrating then.

Denny takes some tote bags from the table and begins filling them with the bottles and boxes.

DENNY

Might as well get these out of the way.

Denny reaches across Gran to get to some of the bottles. Gran is acutely aware of the closeness.

GRAN

Pardon your reach, buddy.

DENNY

(winking)

You've never minded before.

Gran just scoffs, but with a little smile. Jean enters from the kitchen with a tray full of margaritas.

JEAN

Here we go!

DENNY

My favorite!

Denny takes the tray from Jean and passes around the glasses. Everyone sits. Denny makes a grand gesture out of presenting Joey with a glass.

DENNY (CONT'D)

For you, my fine sir, I present the finest tequila that your Gran's money can buy, mixed with the juice of only the freshest, most delectable limes, and a dash of salt to keep you humble.

Joey takes the glass. He stares at it with lust and wonder. He takes a small sip, and it is as if he has eaten from the tree of knowledge. His eyes have been opened.

JEAN

So what do you think?

JOEY

Is there more?

GRAN

Jesus.

DENNY

As much as you want, son.

GRAN

Why are you doing this to him?

DENNY

Doing what? He deserves a reward.

JEAN

We're celebrating! And there's no better way to do that than with margaritas. Right Joey?

JOEY

Right!

DENNY

Margaritas are the whole reason I moved here. And fish tacos. I said to myself, Self, where can I have margaritas in one hand and fish tacos in the other? Yuma, that's where.

JEAN
(lifting her glass)

To the fountain of youth!

They cheers. Joey downs his drink.

JOEY
Jean?

JEAN
My, my, look at you! Of course, honey.

Jean gets up and goes to the kitchen.

GRAN
Hey, take it slowly, you understand?

JOEY
It's all good, Gran. It's all fine.

GRAN
Uh-huh.

DENNY
We're getting him drunk.

Jean re-enters with a fresh pitcher of margaritas.

JEAN
Here you are, young man.

Jean fills Joey's glass. He gazes at it lovingly.

GRAN
Careful.

DENNY
Joey, is this the first time you have gotten drunk?

JOEY
Yes, sir. Very first time.

DENNY

A margarita virgin! I'll be damned.

JEAN

My favorite kind of virgin.

DENNY

You like all kinds of virgins.

JEAN

You make me sound horrible! I mean, it's true, but you make me sound horrible.

DENNY

You're not horrible, Jean.

Denny leans in for a kiss, and Jean reciprocates. It lasts longer than is appropriate in mixed company. Joey blushes. Gran coughs.

JEAN

Oh my, look at us. We are getting carried away.

GRAN

Yes, you are.

Denny notices Joey's flushed and embarrassed expression.

DENNY

You ever been laid, kid?

GRAN

Denny!

DENNY

It's an honest question.

GRAN

It's none of your business.

JEAN

Surely there must have been some cute girls in your - what did you call it? - home school activities?

JOEY

I mean, sure, there were girls, but, I mean, it's not like, ya know -

GRAN

You're making him nervous. Ignore them, Joey.

JOEY

It's OK.

GRAN

No, it's not.

JEAN

Do you like girls, Joey?

GRAN

Jean!

JEAN

What? I'm hip. I know how the kids are these days. They're all "fluid" and such. And they say "queer" now and it's a good thing.

GRAN

It's still none of your business.

JOEY

It's OK, Gran. Yes, I like girls.

DENNY

Still doesn't answer my question, though.

Joey just looks down.

DENNY (CONT'D)

That's what I thought.

JEAN

That's alright, honey. Take your time.

DENNY

Nonsense. We've got to get this boy laid.

GRAN

I am this close to kicking you out of my house, Denny.

DENNY

Why? He's here to get some experience, right? No better experience than your first time, am I right? When I was your age, kid, my platoon sergeant took a bunch of us to the local whore house to get the job done.

GRAN

You are not taking him to a whore house.

DENNY

I know, I am not suggesting that. Just saying he's plenty old enough.

GRAN

There aren't even any girls his age around here anyway.

JEAN

Maybe he would prefer a more experienced woman?

GRAN

Jean!

JEAN

I'm just saying -

JOEY

It's alright, OK, I don't need help, thanks.

DENNY

Maybe one of those websites?

GRAN

You heard him, he doesn't need help.

DENNY

OK, kid, but if you do, I am an excellent wing man.

JOEY

Thanks, Denny. But, I mean, that's kind of like - I mean, no offense or anything, but aren't you kind of old?

GRAN

Yes, he is.

DENNY

Not for the Blooming Cactus, I'm not. Thank you, Viagra.

JEAN

(giggling)

Indeed. Thank you, Viagra.

DENNY

Don't fool yourself, Joey. Old folks do more bed hopping than "Melrose Place."

JOEY

Than what?

DENNY

Never mind.

JEAN

He just means that we're not prudes, that's all. And you can ask us anything.

DENNY

Exactly. Do you have condoms, kid?

JOEY

No.

GRAN

I doubt my idiot son even taught him about condoms.

JEAN

You can't be serious!

DENNY

OK, OK, let's start at the beginning. What did they teach you in that home school?

JOEY

Well - I mean - when a husband and wife love each other -

DENNY

Stop right there. This is worse than I thought.

GRAN

I told you it was none of your business.

DENNY

Alright. Alright, I don't know yet how we are going to solve this problem, but we will. I promise you that. You will not leave Yuma a virgin.

GRAN

You seem to be taking this very personally, Denny.

DENNY

I care about the next generation.

Gran laughs.

GRAN

And I care about your blood alcohol level. Go home, Denny.

DENNY

Fine, fine, I can take a hint.

Denny rises from his chair, a bit wobbly. Jean helps him out.

JEAN

Whoa there, cowboy. Let's find your feet.

DENNY

You're too good to me, Jean.

JEAN

Yes, I am.

DENNY
(flirty)

How can I ever repay you?

JEAN

I'll show you.

DENNY

Yes. Yes, you will.

Jean and Denny walk towards the door. Gran watches them.

DENNY (CONT'D)
(towards Joey)

Until next time, my good sir!

JOEY

Bye, Denny. Bye, Jean.

They exit.

GRAN

Good lord. Sorry about all that.

JOEY

It's OK. I like them. I do. They mean well.

GRAN

Why do I get the feeling you've had to say that about most of the adults in your life?

Joey just shrugs. Gran tries to hoist herself up off the couch.

GRAN (CONT'D)

Well, I am tired, and it's about time for bed anyway. Help me up a bit, will ya?

Joey holds on to Gran's arm and helps her towards her bedroom. She hobbles, but she is able to put some weight on her injured knee.

GRAN (CONT'D)

You're a good boy, Joey. You are.

JOEY

Thanks, Gran.

Joey helps Gran towards her bedroom, and she exits. Joey goes back to the couch and sits down. He refills his glass, finishing what is left in the margarita pitcher. He drinks.

Lights out.

SCENE 6

Several days later. Gran, Jean, and Denny sit at the table, drinking coffee. Denny finishes counting out money and puts it into rubber bands.

GRAN

So?

DENNY

Not bad. Not bad at all.

Denny hands stacks of bills to both Gran and Jean. They hold the money lovingly.

JEAN

Mama's gettin' a new pair of shoes.

GRAN

Really? That's what you spend your money on?

JEAN

No, I'm really spending it on one of those recliners that lifts up so it's easier to stand, but I like to think I am spending it on fancy new shoes.

DENNY

Old age is expensive.

JEAN

No shit. What are you buying?

DENNY

Better hearing aids. They come Bluetooth enabled now.

JEAN

Well, hey there, big spender. Look at you.

DENNY

I know.

JEAN

(to Gran)

So how are you spending your money?

GRAN

I'm saving it.

JEAN

For what?

GRAN

If you must know, nosy, I'm saving for a trip.

JEAN

How exciting! Where?

GRAN

One of those Alaska cruises.

DENNY

Good for you.

GRAN

(looking at her husband's urn)

Charlie and I wanted to for years. We always talked about it, what we wanted to do with retirement, and Charlie had his heart set on Alaska. I never really understood why. But I guess he thought it would be an adventure, sailing the seas, walking on a glacier. So different from anything we grew up with.

JEAN

And you never got to go?

GRAN

Charlie got sick. Then he died. And now I'm here.

DENNY

(raises his coffee mug)

Here's to second chances.

They clink mugs.

JEAN

Where's Joey?

GRAN

In his room. He's been there all morning. He said he needed to look something up.

JEAN

That sounds - well, odd.

DENNY

God, I hope he is masturbating like a normal person.

GRAN

Denny!

DENNY

What? I mean it. It's normal.

JEAN

Yes, normal would be good for him I think.

GRAN

I am sure he is fine. I think he's adjusted to Yuma quite well actually. Better than expected.

DENNY

He blends in perfectly. He is a teenager, and the rest of us just act like teenagers.

JEAN

(laughing)

He's finally with his own kind!

GRAN

I feel like you might be right, and that disturbs me greatly.

Jean and Denny laugh. Joey enters carrying a tablet.

JOEY

I think I've found it.

GRAN

Found what, Joey?

JOEY

The perfect cover.

JEAN

What are you talking about, honey?

JOEY

There's a charity organization, Los Niños del Sol, and they operate just across the border. They do, like, food and medicine for the migrants that are waiting to cross over, or for those that can't get across, or whatever. They've got a whole operation.

GRAN

OK, good for them.

DENNY

Do you want to volunteer or something?

JOEY

Yes, exactly. Except not. I think we can say we are volunteering, and then we could cross the border every day if we wanted to. And the agents would never know.

Joey shows Gran the tablet.

JOEY (CONT'D)

See? They need volunteers. And if we could get something from them, something that says we have a reason to be there, then we can cross whenever we want.

DENNY

That's not a half bad idea.

JOEY

And we don't have to worry about the passports.

GRAN

But we don't speak much Spanish.

JOEY

The agents won't know that.

JEAN

And you're not really volunteering, so what does it matter?

GRAN

But how are we going to get documentation saying we work with them?

JOEY

Well, I figured maybe we could volunteer once, or whatever it takes, and then just not go back.

GRAN

I don't know.

DENNY

It's better than any other idea we've come up with.

JEAN

With that kind of freedom, we could move hundreds of pills a day.

JOEY

That's what I was thinking, too.

DENNY

No one is going to throw a little old white do-gooder lady in jail, right?

GRAN

I guess we better set up a meet and greet with Los Niños del Sol and see what can be done.

JOEY

Yes! Thanks, Gran. I'll arrange everything.

Joey takes his tablet and goes back to his room.

JEAN

This day is turning out even better than I thought.

DENNY

The more I think about it, the more I like it.

GRAN

OK, but we still need to iron out all the details. We don't know if it will work yet.

DENNY

I have great confidence in Joey's abilities.

There is a knock at the door. Gran looks perplexed.

GRAN

Who on earth?

JEAN

Were you expecting someone?

GRAN

No, not at all.

JEAN

Ooh, a mystery.

DENNY

Do you want me to get that for you?

GRAN

No, no, I'll do it. I need to get in the exercise.

Gran slowly hoists herself out of the chair and leans heavily on a cane. It is slow going, but she walks stiffly towards the door. Another knock, more forceful this time.

GRAN (CONT'D)

I heard you! I'm coming!

Gran opens the door. Bruce and Marsha enter.

BRUCE

Hello, Mother!

MARSHA

Hello!

Fuck.

GRAN

Lights out.

END OF ACT I

ACT II

SCENE 1

The same as the end of Act I. Gran closes the door behind Bruce and Marsha. Marsha's judgmental gaze takes in the room. Jean and Denny are watching them strangely.

GRAN (CONT'D)

What are you doing here?

Bruce leans in to give his mother a kiss on the cheek. Marsha does the same, but Gran steps back.

BRUCE

We came to check on you and Joey.

GRAN

And you couldn't call?

MARSHA

We didn't think we had to. Should we have?

GRAN

It might have stopped the heart attack I'm currently having.

BRUCE

Heart attack? What?

MARSHA

She's exaggerating, dear.

GRAN

It's just the shock.

BRUCE

But surprises are fun, right? We thought we were being fun.

MARSHA

(taking charge)

I'm sorry, we haven't been introduced. I'm Marsha.

DENNY

(extending his hand)

I'm Denny. Nice to meet you.

(to Bruce)

And you are?

BRUCE

(nodding towards Gran)

Her son, Bruce.

JEAN

Oh shit.

MARSHA

Excuse me?

DENNY

She said, "Oh shit."

BRUCE

Mother? Are these your friends?

GRAN

Something like that.

Denny and Jean begin surreptitiously moving around the room, picking up stray bottles, boxes, and cash and stuffing them under the couch cushions. Gran and Joey try to keep Bruce and Marsha's focus away from what Denny and Jean are doing. This continues throughout the dialogue.

MARSHA

Where's Joey?

GRAN
(yelling towards the bedroom)

Joey!

Joey enters. He freezes when he sees his
parents.

Oh shit.

JOEY

Joseph!

MARSHA

Marsha walks towards her son and pulls him in
for tight hug.

Since when do you use that word?

MARSHA (CONT'D)

Sorry, Mom.

JOEY

Bruce joins them and also hugs Joey, somewhat
tentatively. Showing emotion is not his strong
suit.

Hi, Dad.

JOEY (CONT'D)

You look a little different.

BRUCE

(to Marsha)

Does he look different to you?

Maybe...

MARSHA
(eyeing him more closely)

Joey puts his hand over his upper lip.

I'm still the same, I promise. Totally the same. Nothing is different. Why are you here?

JOEY

MARSHA

We missed you, honey. You haven't been calling.

BRUCE

Have you been taking care of your grandmother?

GRAN

I'm just fine. So is he. We don't need help.

MARSHA

Oh, everyone can use a little help sometimes, right? How's the knee?

GRAN

(swinging the cane)

Up and about, as you can see.

BRUCE

That's wonderful, Mother. Are you still in pain?

GRAN

Not until now. So how long are you staying?

BRUCE

We only planned on a couple of days.

MARSHA

Or however long it takes to make sure Joey is doing OK.

GRAN

What on earth makes you think he isn't OK? The boy is fine.

JOEY

Yeah, Mom, I'm completely fine.

MARSHA

It's my job to worry, honey. How is your stomach? Are you eating enough? Have you been going number two?

JOEY

Mom!

BRUCE

Marsha, didn't we say we would try to treat him like an adult?

MARSHA

No, you said you were going to try and treat him like an adult. I never said any such thing.

BRUCE

But -

MARSHA

He needs his mother. End of discussion.

Having hidden all they can, Denny and Jean
move towards the door.

DENNY

You know what, we should get out of your hair.

GRAN

You don't have to go.

JEAN

It was nice to meet you, I think.

DENNY

Yes, delightful. Illuminating. We'll see you later.

Denny and Jean hurriedly rush out the door.

BRUCE

Who are those people, Mother?

GRAN

They live here.

(changing the subject)

So are you taking him back with you?

JOEY

No, Mom, please, I like it here, I really do. And I have been so helpful, I swear. I help Gran carry the groceries, and I make her coffee, and I push her wheelchair, and lots of other stuff, too. I don't want to leave.

MARSHA

We can figure that out later. But I am so happy to hear you have been making yourself useful. I am sure your Gran is grateful to us for sending you, isn't she?

GRAN

Sure, Marsha. Of course. Have I not said thank you enough? If it wasn't for this bum knee, I would be down on the ground kissing your feet to show you grateful I am for your benevolence.

BRUCE

Mother, there is no need to use sarcasm.

GRAN

There is always a need for sarcasm.

MARSHA

We're just thinking of what's best for you.

GRAN

How about you let me do that.

BRUCE

Alright, alright, we didn't come here to start an argument. We'd love to hear more about what you two have been doing.

JOEY

Doing?

MARSHA

Yes, this is why we were concerned. This is the first time I don't know where you are or who you're with at all times. I need to know.

JOEY

I mean, I've been, ya know, around and doing stuff, and, um - swimming!

MARSHA

Swimming?

JOEY

Yes! I've been doing laps in the pool every day. See?

Joey shows off his biceps.

BRUCE

That's sounds wholesome.

MARSHA

OK, what else?

JOEY

What do you mean?

MARSHA

You must do more than swim. What else?

JOEY

Well, so, I, um - help others!

MARSHA

Others? Who?

JOEY

The other Blooming Cactus people. They are all so, um, lonely, and they need groceries just like Gran does, so I get them what they need. Yeah. Like that. I help people.

GRAN

He actually has made a big difference around here.

MARSHA

Really?

GRAN

Absolutely. Some of these old folks would be in real trouble without Joey.

BRUCE

Trouble?

GRAN

You don't know how many people couldn't get the - groceries - they need without his help.

JOEY

It's true.

BRUCE

I never would've thought - I mean, I assumed this place had some staff for that kind of thing.

GRAN

You must be thinking of the Golden Sunset. Those uptown places have activity directors and concierge service. Those of us at the Blooming Cactus can't afford such amenities.

MARSHA

Not this again.

BRUCE

Mother, we have explained a thousand times, Blooming Cactus is the best I can afford.

GRAN

Bullshit.

MARSHA

Language!

GRAN

Excuse me?

MARSHA

I would prefer it if you didn't use that kind of language around my son. You know that.

GRAN

I will say whatever I want in my own house.

MARSHA

(under her breath)

That we pay for.

Gran heard that, and she grips her cane like she is ready to use it.

BRUCE

Look, I'm sorry this isn't the Golden Sunset, but we're working with what we have. Dad's medical bills ate up the retirement savings, and there is nothing I can do about that.

GRAN

You could've left me in my own house.

BRUCE

Mother, please, you know that wasn't an option. You couldn't even afford to keep the place up. And it's better here, isn't it? You're not alone.

GRAN

You don't know the meaning of "alone."

Joey is struck by that statement. He moves closer to her.

MARSHA

Well, I don't - this is just not the way I thought this little surprise was going to go. I thought it was going to be much more pleasant.

GRAN

Sorry to disappoint.

JOEY

(loudly)

I'm hungry!

BRUCE

What?

JOEY

I'm hungry. It's lunchtime. We can go out to eat, right?

MARSHA

Of course we can, honey. Whatever you want.

JOEY

Great! Then let's go.

BRUCE

A nice lunch as a family. I think that's just the ticket.

MARSHA

Where should we go? What's the best kind of food in Yuma?

GRAN

Mexican.

BRUCE

That makes sense.

MARSHA

I love authentic Mexican food. And what are those things the waiters wear? Sombreros?

BRUCE

I'll drive.

They all move towards the front door. Gran brings up the rear, moving very slowly and emphasizing her use of the cane.

GRAN

You go on ahead. I'll be right there.

JOEY

You need me, Gran?

GRAN

I'm good, kid. Just slow going. Don't wait.

Joey, Bruce, and Marsha exit. Gran moves as quickly as she can to grab any remaining items and stash it under the couch cushions.

JOEY

(off stage)

Gran!

GRAN

Coming!

Gran scans the room one last time, then exits, closing the door behind her.

Lights out.

SCENE 2

The next day. Gran sits at the table, coffee mug in front of her. There is a tentative knock at the door. Denny slowly opens the door and peaks his head in.

DENNY

Is the coast clear?

GRAN

For now. Come in.

Denny enters and closes the door behind him.

DENNY

Did they leave?

GRAN

They stayed at a motel.

DENNY

And Joey?

GRAN

(gesturing towards his room)

He's still asleep.

DENNY

So what's the plan?

Gran pulls out a small bottle of whiskey, opens it, and pours some into her coffee.

GRAN

That's my plan.

DENNY

Excellent.

GRAN

Care to join me?

DENNY

Don't mind if I do.

Denny briefly exits to the kitchen, but re-enters carrying a coffee mug. He sits at the table, and Gran pours whiskey into his mug. Both sip.

DENNY (CONT'D)

Fuckin' kids.

GRAN

Yep.

DENNY

When are they leaving?

GRAN

I don't know yet. Not soon enough.

DENNY

You think this is going to screw us up?

GRAN

Is that what you're concerned about? Jesus.

DENNY

I just didn't know if I should tell Jean to spread the word that orders might be delayed for a while.

GRAN

We might miss a few days, but I can't imagine it being more than that.

DENNY

If we lose Joey, that's going to set us back.

GRAN

Why are you telling me things I already know? I will handle it.

DENNY

Yes, ma'am. Just checking.

They sip.

GRAN

Where's Jean this morning?

DENNY

Bocce ball tournament.

GRAN

Of course. I forgot.

DENNY

Did you get your bet in?

GRAN

Yep, twenty bucks on Dale and Karen.

DENNY

Really, you went with Dale and Karen? They're a dark horse.

GRAN

I've seen Dale practicing. His time has come.

DENNY

I put fifty on Mark and Joanne. They won last week.

GRAN

Yeah, but Joanne's arthritis has been acting up. She added more extra strength ibuprofen to her list.

DENNY

That's cheating!

GRAN

(mock alarm)

Oh no, is it? You mean I might have broken the unspoken rules when betting on which octogenarian can throw a two-pound ball? I don't know how I will live with myself.

DENNY
(rolling his eyes)

It's still cheating.

GRAN

It's an educated wager.

DENNY
Whatever, you missed the fun last night. Jean and I went to disco bingo again.

GRAN
Oh. You and Jean? Just the two of you?

DENNY
Yeah, sure.

GRAN
I didn't realize that was still happening. I mean, you and her.

DENNY
It happens sometimes, and then other times it doesn't. She's good company.

GRAN
I bet.

Gran pushes herself up out of her chair and
picks up the mugs.

GRAN (CONT'D)
More coffee?

DENNY
No, I'm fine. Does that bother you?

GRAN
No, why should it?

DENNY
You just seem a little -

GRAN
I'm not.

Gran shuffles gingerly towards the kitchen.
Denny gets up.

DENNY

I can do that.

GRAN

I've got it.

DENNY

Let me.

He reaches for the mugs, but clasps her hands instead. They look at each other. There's a moment. Then the front door swings wide open.

JEAN

Winner, winner!

Gran and Denny separate.

GRAN

Christ, Jean, what are you talking about?

JEAN

You won! Well, Dale and Karen won, but you won the pool.

Jean excitedly waves money in the air, then hands the winnings to Gran.

DENNY

Look at that.

JEAN

Congratulations!

DENNY

And they say cheaters never win.

JEAN

What?

GRAN

Shut up. Thanks for the money.

JEAN

(a little confused)

Sure, of course. Did I interrupt something?

GRAN

Not at all. We were just discussing how to deal with my idiot son and she-who-shall-not-be -named.

JEAN

They don't know anything, right?

GRAN

No, of course not.

JEAN

Then what can we do? Just wait them out.

DENNY

Wait them out, and make sure they don't take Joey.

JEAN

Which means you have to be nice.

GRAN

Excuse me?

JEAN

Nicer than usual, I mean. I just think they will leave Joey here if you are on good terms.

DENNY

She's right. You might need to rein it in a bit.

GRAN

I am reining it in. I haven't said half the things I want to say to them.

DENNY

And they would deserve every word of it, but now is not the time. We have bigger fish to fry.

GRAN

Yeah, yeah, I hear you, fine. I will be the definition of magnanimous.

JEAN

Good. Then we'll be fine, right?

DENNY

Completely fine.

Joey enters. He looks like he has slept in his clothes.

JOEY

What's going on?

JEAN

Good morning, sunshine!

GRAN

We're just drinking coffee.

JOEY

Yes, please. I need coffee.

JEAN

You betcha.

Jean exits to the kitchen and brings back coffee mugs for everyone.

DENNY

No offense, kid, but you look like hell.

JOEY

I couldn't sleep. I tried figuring out another way, but I can't.

GRAN

Another way? What does that mean?

JOEY

Los Niños del Sol. They e-mailed yesterday to say that they can take us through orientation, but only if it happens today.

JEAN

Today?

JOEY

I e-mailed and asked for another time, but they said there weren't any.

GRAN

Well, there goes that idea.

JOEY

I'm sorry, Gran. I thought I had it all figured out.

DENNY

But if you leave now -

JOEY

We'd be there all day.

GRAN

Where would we tell his parents we had gone?

JEAN

This sucks.

DENNY

There will be another chance, right?

JOEY

Maybe? I don't know. It's pretty chaotic.

DENNY

This sucks.

GRAN

And they ruin yet another thing in my life.

JOEY

It's my fault.

GRAN

Absolutely not. It's the opposite of your fault.

JEAN

Don't think that, honey. You're the best thing to happen to any of us in - well, a very long while.

DENNY

That's the truth.

There's a knock at the door.

GRAN

Speak of the devil.

JOEY

(resignedly)

I'll get it.

Joey opens the front door and Bruce and Marsha enter.

BRUCE

Good morning!

(Noticing Jean and Denny)

Oh, look, your friends are here again. How nice.

DENNY

Back already? How was the motel?

MARSHA

Horrible. The website made it sound like an oasis in the desert, but instead it was just dirty and noisy, and when I complained the staff just looked at me like, "What do you expect me to do about it, lady?" I expect you to do your job, that's what.

BRUCE

Sorry, we're a bit crabby this morning. We didn't sleep well.

GRAN

That's a shame. Guess you will just have to cut your trip short and go home.

BRUCE

Mother -

JEAN

Ha-ha, she's kidding! Of course she's kidding. Can I get you some coffee?

BRUCE

Thank you.

Marsha picks up Gran's mug and takes a sip before Gran can stop her.

MARSHA

That's OK, I'll just have a little -

She sputters and coughs when she tastes the whiskey.

MARSHA (CONT'D)

Mother!

BRUCE

What's the matter?

Marsha hands Bruce the mug and he smells it.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Mother!

GRAN

What? Haven't you ever had Irish coffee before?

MARSHA

It's barely past eight a.m. and you're already drinking?

BRUCE

How often does this happen, Mother?

MARSHA

Are you drunk in front of my son?

JEAN

Oh, now, this is just silly! You two are getting hyped up about nothing. I've already had a mimosa this morning myself.

DENNY

It's one of the joys of retirement. Nothing unusual at all.

MARSHA

(to Joey)

Is she like this every morning?

JOEY

No, Mom, it's fine.

MARSHA

Has she given you alcohol?

GRAN

Marsha -

JOEY

I - No. No. I mean, no. She hasn't. Alcohol? No.

MARSHA

Oh my God. You gave him alcohol! This is just - you know our rules. How could you?

DENNY

To be fair, your rules are stupid.

MARSHA

Excuse me? Who are you again?

JEAN

Maybe we should all just take a deep breath and calm down.

GRAN

I hear booze calms the nerves.

BRUCE

Mother, don't make it worse.

MARSHA

I just - I can't. No. Absolutely not. I will not have my son in this environment.

BRUCE

Honey -

MARSHA

No. You said he needed to do some maturing, learn some independence before college, and I went along because I figured at least he would still be living with family and they could help each other, but -

JOEY

I am helpful! And Gran helps me so much.

MARSHA

Joey, I'm sorry, but we'll have to find someone else to get the groceries.

JOEY

No, Mom, please. I can't leave.

GRAN

Marsha, really, you are blowing this all out of proportion.

JEAN

Surely we can work this out.

DENNY

The kid is happy here.

BRUCE

Look, I don't know who you are, but this is a family matter. And we need to figure out what is best for our son.

JOEY

This is what's best for me. I'm staying.

MARSHA

No, you are not. You need to pack your things.

BRUCE

I'm sorry, Joey, but we should just do what your mom says.

Joey looks terrified, like he might make a run for it. Then he grabs Denny's coffee and chugs it down.

MARSHA

What are you doing?

JOEY

(defiantly)

Drinking Irish coffee.

MARSHA

Joseph!

JOEY

And another thing! I'm a grown man, and I will live where I want, with whomever I want, at any time that I want, and you can't stop me! See this -

(points to his upper lip)

See this? I'm growing a mustache. Because I'm a man. And that's what men do. And you know what else? Gran treats me like a man, and she listens when I talk, and when I have ideas, and she takes me seriously. And I have responsibilities here. I have people who depend on me. I have a purpose, and we're making money, and we're helping old people, and I'm good at it. Better than good. I have a plan, and I thought it up on my own, and I am not leaving. So you can either accept that, or - or else. That's my final word.

Joey looks very pleased with himself.

Everyone else is a little shocked.

BRUCE

You're making money? On what?

GRAN

Nothing.

JEAN

Well, that was exciting. Maybe we should all just take a break? Get some fresh air?

MARSHA

You have a purpose? What does that mean?

DENNY

He really likes buying groceries.

MARSHA

What are you talking about, Joey?

BRUCE

Mother, what is going on?

JEAN

It's really nothing -

MARSHA

I demand an explanation.

JOEY

(backpedaling)

I just meant - in general, you know - that I'm happy here, and - you know - it's my decision.

MARSHA

How could you speak to me that way?

BRUCE

We were hoping you would learn to be a little more grown up, but clearly that hasn't happened. Real adults know how to behave a lot better than that. I think you owe us an apology.

JOEY

I - I just -

GRAN

Apology for what?

BRUCE

We did not raise him to speak to his parents like that.

GRAN

And I did not raise you to speak to me like that.

BRUCE

Mother -

MARSHA

Joey, it's time to get your things.

Joey looks cornered, petrified. He looks to Gran, Denny, and Jean for help.

JEAN

Maybe this has gotten a little out of control. Why don't we all just sit down and talk this out?

GRAN

Bruce, the boy wants to stay.

MARSHA

We are not changing our minds.

BRUCE

Joey, go get your things, and we'll be right here when you're ready.

Bruce sits down on the couch. There is a loud crunching noise. Bruce gets back up and lifts up a couch cushion. Underneath he finds boxes and bottles of pills and stacks of money. He looks at Gran. Gran looks at Joey.

JOEY

We can still make it to that orientation. If we leave now.

Lights out.

SCENE 3

Later that afternoon. Bruce and Marsha are tied to dining chairs, dish towels wrapped around their mouths. Denny is on guard duty.

DENNY

So we were in the mausoleum, and I'm at the lectern, right? Giving this fantastic eulogy. I mean, one for the ages, if I do say so myself. I'm talking about how my brother was quite the rascal when we were kids, and he would pick up any kind of creepy-crawly he saw along the way - frogs, snakes, turtles, you name it - and put it in his pocket and bring it home. My mother stopped doing his laundry because she got so sick of what she would find in his pockets sometimes. Anyway, I'd had a stomach bug the week before the funeral, and I'd lost a little weight. And, like an idiot, I had forgotten to pack a belt for the trip. So I'm standing there, in front of the casket, jabbering on about my brother, everyone watching me, and then my pants hit the ground. Boom, just like that. I reached down and grabbed them as fast as I could, and I'll tell you what, I didn't even miss a beat. Just kept right on talking. Well, up until the roaring laughter started. Can you believe it? My dead brother pantsing me at his own funeral! Or at least that's what I like to think anyway.

Denny chuckles at the memory.

DENNY (CONT'D)

Best funeral ever.

Bruce and Marsha struggle a bit against their bindings.

DENNY (CONT'D)

Hey now, none of that. Don't worry, we'll untie you as soon as they get back. We just don't want you causing trouble until we've had some time to talk this out.

Marsha tries to talk despite the dish towel, but it just comes out garbled.

DENNY (CONT'D)

It's really not that bad, I swear. Let me just explain a few things. When you reach our age, you gain some perspective. Like me, for instance. Did I tell you I worked as an accountant? Yeah, I was an accountant for thirty-five years. Followed all the rules. Met a nice girl, got married, had some kids.

(MORE)

DENNY (CONT'D)

Thought I was doing what I was supposed to, you know? Then my wife leaves me, takes half of everything, and my ungrateful children blamed me for it. Can you believe that? They blamed me. So when you look at it, what did following the rules get me? Nothing. Worse than nothing, actually. It got me the Blooming Cactus.

Denny makes a hand gesture with his middle finger. It resembles a cactus. Bruce says something garbled.

DENNY (CONT'D)

So you see, we're just making lemonade out of our lemons, that's all. One last hurrah, if you will. Who wouldn't?

Jean enters from the kitchen carrying a glass of water with a straw in it.

JEAN

Alrighty, who needs a water break?

Jean pulls Bruce's dish towel out of his mouth and inserts the straw. Bruce drinks.

JEAN (CONT'D)

There you go, honey.

BRUCE

This is insane! Let me go -

Jean quickly moves the dish towel back in place, and Bruce continues to garble.

JEAN

Now, now, honey, none of that. We all just have to make the best of a difficult situation, now don't we?

DENNY

See? That's just what I was explaining to them.

Jean repeats the water routine with Marsha, who then starts praying.

MARSHA

Forgive them, Lord, for they know not what they do. Jesus, please -

Jean puts the dish towel back in Marsha's mouth.

JEAN

That's sweet of you, but no one here is asking for forgiveness.

The front door swings open, and Gran and Joey enter. Both are wearing Los Niños del Sol T-shirts and official-looking lanyards around their necks.

JOEY

We are officially volunteers!

DENNY

Congratulations!

GRAN

They've actually got a good little operation going on there.

JOEY

That we will never visit again.

GRAN

Exactly.

Gran and Joey collapse on the couch from satisfied exhaustion. They look at Bruce and Marsha.

GRAN (CONT'D)

So how'd it go with these two?

JEAN

They were very well behaved.

GRAN

Wonders never cease.

DENNY

Now what?

Gran looks at Joey. He sighs.

JOEY

Do we have to?

GRAN

Unfortunately, yes.

JOEY

Fine, fine.

Joey gets up and unties his parents and removes the dish towels. They sputter and stand up.

BRUCE

How dare you? Mother, I - I - we trusted you, we trusted you with our son. And this is what you do?

MARSHA

(on the verge of tears)

Joseph, what has happened to you? To my precious boy?

JOEY

See, that's part of the problem right there - I am not precious or a little boy. I'm a drug smuggler.

MARSHA

Dear God.

Marsha sits back down, distraught.

BRUCE

If Dad were here -

GRAN

Your father died, Bruce. He left me alone. And by the way, so did you.

BRUCE

So this is my fault?

GRAN

It's everyone's fault. Maybe it's no one's fault. All I know is that after seventy-some-odd years of thinking I had it all figured out, my life suddenly disappeared. All of it, all at once. My husband, my house, and after that my friends, my town - everything that made me ME. And on top of everything, I couldn't even move in with my own son.

BRUCE

Mother, we've talked about this -

GRAN

Don't blame it all on Marsha - although I can certainly understand how you could - but this was your decision too, Bruce. You stuck me here. You abandoned me.

BRUCE

I - I - Mother, that was not my - I was not trying to - I thought I was doing what was best for everyone, alright? Why is that so hard to understand?

GRAN

Because you don't have to live with the consequences. I do. And the fact that you don't realize it is exactly what makes you an idiot. But I am taking my life back. This is my life now, and don't you dare stand there and think you can judge me.

BRUCE

So what are we supposed to do now? Just pretend like you and my son aren't running a drug cartel?

DENNY

Damn, we're a cartel now? I had no idea.

MARSHA

We can't just leave him here, Bruce.

JOEY

Again, Mom, not your decision.

GRAN

Do what you want.

JEAN

Wait now. Not whatever he wants.

GRAN

It's fine, Jean. Who's going to believe him? And even if they did, please, please put me in front of a jury of my peers. Put me in front of twelve Yuma senior citizens. There's not a single person in this town who would convict me.

BRUCE

This is completely insane. You've gone insane.

GRAN

Not insane. Just liberated.

Gran takes a long look at Denny, then walks right over and kisses him passionately. Bruce gasps.

BRUCE

Mother!

Joey walks over to Jean and kisses her passionately. Or tries to. Clearly, he does not know what he is doing.

MARSHA

Oh, sweet Jesus! I think I'm going to pass out.

BRUCE

That's it, I'm done. We're leaving. Mother, I - I - I just don't know.

Bruce helps Marsha up and supports her as they walk towards the door.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

(one last plea)

Joey, son -

JOEY

Thanks, Dad. But I've got it from here.

Bruce and Marsha exit. Gran, Denny, Jean, and Joey all look around, then at each other.

DENNY

So we should probably hide everything, just in case, right?

GRAN

Definitely.

DENNY

Better move that ledger then.

Denny heads for the door.

JEAN

And you, young man. I can think of all kinds of places I'd like to put you.

GRAN

Knock it off, Jean.

JEAN

He kissed me! Didn't you see that?

GRAN

Go hide the customer lists, Jean.

JEAN

Alright, I'm going, but this is not over.

GRAN

Bye, Jean.

Jean and Denny exit. Joey takes off his lanyard.

JOEY

I'll hide this stuff.

GRAN

Thanks, Joey.

Gran walks towards the kitchen. Joey moves towards his room, then turns back.

JOEY

Hey, Gran.

GRAN

Yeah?

JOEY

You're not using your cane.

Gran looks down, then notices the cane by the front door. She hadn't realized she had set it down.

GRAN

Huh. Well, would you look at that. It's a miracle.

JOEY

So we should head back down again tomorrow, right?

GRAN

First thing.

JOEY

Sounds like a plan.

Gran starts to move towards the kitchen again.

JOEY (CONT'D)

And Gran?

GRAN

Yes, Joey?

JOEY

Just so you know. I mean, in case you were wondering. You're not alone. You have me.

GRAN

Thanks, kid.

JOEY

Now go stash the drugs. Some p lace other than the couch this time, please.

GRAN

For fuck's sake.

Joey laughs and exits. Gran takes her lanyard off, looks at it, then places it around her husband's urn. She pats the top of the urn, and smiles.

Lights out.

END OF PLAY.