



Dwight Watson

Norman Maine Publishing



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Norman Maine Publishing
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Dapple Gray

*This play is dedicated to Jamie
with special remembrances
of Robert C. and Betty Ritchie*

Dapple Gray

Dapple Gray was first produced at Wabash College, Crawfordsville, IN: Kaizaad Navroze Kotwal, production stage manager; Rob Hartz, scene design; and Laura Conners, costume design.

PARALEE MARCH: Jamie Ritchie Watson

CATHERINE MARCH-WRIGHT: Dana Warner Fisher

CHARLES MARCH, JR: Brian W. Buckley

Dapple Gray

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Selected play, American Theatre of Actors Director's Festival, 2002
Winner, Actor and Playwrights' Initiative Playfest, 1994

COMEDY. After numerous therapy sessions, Catherine and Charles have finally figured out the reason for their horrible headaches – their mother Paralee! But how can they delicately tell their mother that she is a real pain in the #&@? Why, organize a family picnic, of course! At the picnic, Catherine and Charles try to find the perfect moment to tell Paralee that her meddling ways have got to stop, but with Paralee's gift for gab, it's hard to get a word in edgewise.

Performance Time: Approximately 75-90 minutes.

Characters

(1 M, 2 F)

PARALEE MARCH: 55, graying widow; moves with determination and speaks with unreserved confidence; looks like she spends plenty of time in local craft shops—wears a sweatshirt with a mallard duck stenciled on the front and a pair of sweatpants the color of dyed Easter eggs.

CATHERINE MARCH-WRIGHT: 32, Paralee's daughter and new mother; wears a flowered print jumper.

CHARLES MARCH, JR.: 31, Paralee's unmarried son who works as a clerk at a local hardware store.

Setting

The present. A park, late spring. A wooden picnic table is located near a few trees. A tree stump sits several feet away from the table. A grassy area circles the table and stump, and the first flowers of the season are popping up.

Synopsis of Scenes

ACT I: A park on a bright sunny day.

ACT II: The park, a few minutes later.

Props

Golf ball	Knife
Baby carriage	Fake tree
Picnic table	Bowl of dip
Diaper bag	Magazine article
Tablecloth	Purse, for Catherine
Baby doll	Napkin
Baby blankets	Tree stump
Picnic basket	Mustard
Cooler	Park bench
Thermos	2 Shopping bags
Shoulder bag with a mallard stenciled on the side	Container of Wet Wipes
Paper plates	Ragged stuffed gray pony
Silverware	Bowl of potato salad
Bag of potato chips	Gaudy fake flower arrangement
Bottle of pickles	Bottle of aspirin
Carrots	Bottle of Tylenol
Celery	Framed photo decorated with Campbell's Soup labels
Relish tray	

Sound Effects

Baby crying
Car horn

NOTE: Lyrics from "Huggin and Chalkin" by Kermit Goell and music by Clarence Leonard Hayes, as performed by Hoagy Carmichael, have been reprinted with permission of the lyricist.

"There is a very thin line
between joy and sorrow,
tears and laughter."

- Paralee

Act i

(AT RISE: A park on a bright sunny day. The park is peaceful and clean. The quiet is interrupted by the sudden appearance of a golf ball, which bounces onto the picnic area, rolls, and then stops near the table. Catherine enters from the opposite direction of the golf ball. She is pushing a baby carriage with her child sleeping inside. Dressed neatly in a flowered print jumper, she stops at the table and places the diaper bag on the bench and a folded tablecloth on the table. She searches for a shady place to leave the baby carriage. She decides on a spot, and then lifts the sleeping child from the carriage. The baby is rapped tightly in blankets. Caressing the child, she moves past the stump and studies the landscape. She has strong memories of this place—strong memories and impressions which light up her eyes, and eventually, force her to speak.)

CATHERINE: *(To baby.)* On the other side of that hill, past the grove of trees, is a cemetery. Yes. The cemetery begins where the city park ends. Your granddaddy, Charlie March, is buried there. You didn't know that? Well, it's true. Your granddaddy, Charlie March, would have liked you. Look carefully. From here you can see the tops of a few grave markers. *(She strolls slowly in the other direction.)* At the other end of the park is the YWCA, where we had our high school dances. When I was 16—a sophomore—I left a “Y” dance with Walter Scott. Don't ever tell your father. He might not understand. Besides, there are things that only you and I need to share. Walter was the high school basketball star. Your granddaddy used to love to watch him play. I used to love to just watch him. *(She walks back to the carriage.)* Basketball was everything to Walter Scott. A metaphor for his life. He didn't walk or talk—he dribbled. *(She lays the sleeping child in the carriage and covers her with blankets, then moves to the table and begins to unfold the tablecloth.)* Walter lured me away from the dance of the Young Women's Christian Association. We made our way past that grove of

trees, and there we lay down in the autumn leaves on the fringes of granddaddy's cemetery. And on that patch of earth, which has long since been turned over to the resting place of someone – someone I never knew – Walter scored.

PARALEE: *(From offstage, piercing the mood.)* Katydid!

(Catherine rushes to adjust the infant's blanket.)

CATHERINE: *(To baby.)* Shhhh.

PARALEE: *(Offstage.)* Katydid!

CATHERINE: *(To baby.)* Here comes your grandmother. Not a word.

PARALEE: *(Offstage.)* Katydid! Katydid!

CATHERINE: *(Waving.)* Here, Mother. We're over here.

PARALEE: *(Offstage.)* Yes, I see you now. I've got the picnic basket and everything else out of the car, Katydid. There's no need for you to make another trip. *(Paralee enters. Always the mother, she moves with determination and speaks with unreserved confidence. She is by no means slow, but at the moment, she is somewhat overheated. Paralee is the picture of a graying woman who spends plenty of time in local craft shops. A mallard duck is stenciled on the front of her sweatshirt; her sweatpants are the color of dyed Easter eggs. Burdened by a picnic basket, cooler, thermos, and shoulder bag – with a stenciled image of a mallard on the side – she stops a few feet from Catherine.)* Whew! Well, don't just stand there. Give me a hand.

CATHERINE: Oh, I'm sorry. *(She takes the picnic basket, cooler, and thermos, and places them on the table.)*

PARALEE: *(Irritably.)* You know, Katydid, there are picnic tables right next to the parking lot.

CATHERINE: Yes, I know.

PARALEE: We could've backed the car right up to one of those tables, opened the trunk, and kept half of this junk in the trunk.

CATHERINE: That's too easy. March family picnics are rare. So when we decide to have one, we must carefully consider the spot.

(Catherine begins unpacking the basket—paper plates, utensils, potato chips, pickles, etc. Paralee looks around.)

PARALEE: If you say so. I haven't been on a picnic in this park in well over 25 years. Since you were just a little girl, Katydid.

CATHERINE: Where's Grandma March?

(Paralee points off left and then sits on the bench.)

PARALEE: In my car. Let me catch my breath, and I'll go back after her.

CATHERINE: Is she still sleeping?

PARALEE: *(Exasperated.)* Yes, child. She's been asleep since we left the house. Her lungs were working so hard—she was snoring so heavy and sucking up all the air in the car, I felt if we didn't get here soon, we'd both die from lack of oxygen.

CATHERINE: Maybe she's better off resting, Mother. Are the windows rolled down? *(Moves to the baby carriage.)*

PARALEE: All the way.

CATHERINE: Well, in that case, don't bother her—let her rest.

PARALEE: Do you think it's safe?

CATHERINE: What? To let her rest?

PARALEE: No. To leave her in the car.

CATHERINE: *(Reassuring.)* She's not that far away.

PARALEE: What if she wakes and discovers she is alone?

CATHERINE: Mother, she wakes up alone every day.

PARALEE: *(Fretful.)* But, what if she wakes and tries to get out by herself? She could break her hip again. Maybe I should go get her. *(Starts to go.)*

CATHERINE: *(Giving up.)* It's up to you.

(Paralee stops.)

PARALEE: Don't you think I should, Katydid?

(Catherine covers the baby with another blanket and then returns to the picnic table.)

CATHERINE: You know how cranky she is when you wake her.

PARALEE: Yes, I know. "Why don't I ever get rest!" she'd say. I know. I know how cranky she is. But, Katydid, we must remember she is approaching 85, and we can't expect her to be all there, all the time.

CATHERINE: No, I guess not.

(Paralee turns to the baby.)

PARALEE: How's the baby?

CATHERINE: It's her naptime. She'll probably sleep through the picnic.

PARALEE: Sleeping again? Oh, my! *(Studies the baby.)* Katydid, I believe she sleeps too much.

(Catherine begins setting the table.)

CATHERINE: She's only a baby.

PARALEE: Well, I can see that! This child is just too quiet. She never cries! Not a peep. A baby needs to work her lungs once in awhile. *(Working her lungs.)* She needs to let people know she's alive. *(Secretively.)* Are you still breastfeeding her?

CATHERINE: Yes, Mother.

PARALEE: Well, that's it, Katydid!

CATHERINE: What's "it"?

PARALEE: You are starving this poor child.

CATHERINE: Mother!

PARALEE: She's so weak, she can't make a sound. Poor baby.
I think it's time to take her off the breast – yes, *off the breast* –
and give this starving child a bottle and some real food.

CATHERINE: No, Mother, I'm going to nurse her for at least
five more months.

PARALEE: Five months! Good lord! Even the local dairy bar
shuts down during the winter season.

CATHERINE: Cows' milk is great for calves, Mother. But my
baby is going to have all the milk I can make.

PARALEE: (*Knowingly.*) Your milk is not as clean as cow's
milk.

CATHERINE: Who said?!

PARALEE: It isn't pasteurized!

CATHERINE: It doesn't need to be!

PARALEE: All those filthy nipple germs.

CATHERINE: My nipples are not filthy!

PARALEE: Do you wash them before each feeding?

CATHERINE: No. I do not! They are clean!

PARALEE: But not squeaky clean – not like a rubber nipple
boiled in water.

CATHERINE: I will not boil my nipples in water! It isn't
natural! Why am I discussing this?! (*She moves away from
Paralee.*) Please, let's stop talking. I have a headache, and
I'm beginning to let down.

PARALEE: You see, that baby is sucking the life out of you!

CATHERINE: I said, "let down" not "run down." I'm
beginning to lactate.

PARALEE: What?

CATHERINE: Make milk, Mother.

PARALEE: You're making milk right now?

CATHERINE: Yes.

PARALEE: That's disgusting! You have no business doing
something you can't control.

CATHERINE: I'm a person, not a faucet!

PARALEE: Yes, and next, you'll be chewing your cud!

(Catherine turns away and moves quickly to the baby.)

CATHERINE: Quiet, please! No more!

PARALEE: You were bottle-fed and you turned out all right, now didn't you? *(No response.)* Katydid, didn't you turn out all right?

CATHERINE: No.

PARALEE: What do you mean, "no"?

CATHERINE: I mean...I don't know. I mean...I guess so. Look, my baby is healthy and happy. Let's talk about something else.

PARALEE: Okay, okay. What would Katydid like to talk about?

CATHERINE: *(Surprised.)* I get a choice?

PARALEE: Why, of course.

(Catherine moves toward the stump.)

CATHERINE: Well, in that case, I'd like to talk about Katydid.

PARALEE: About Katydid?

CATHERINE: Yes, Katydid would like to talk about Katydid's real name and not her nickname "Katydid."

PARALEE: Speak plainly.

CATHERINE: My name is Catherine.

PARALEE: I know that. I named you. *And...*I fed you with a bottle.

CATHERINE: Catherine. Catherine March-Wright.

PARALEE: Why, of course! I know your name is Catherine. You were named after your father's mother. Catherine. Catherine March. Your namesake is sound asleep over there in the car this very moment. Grandma Catherine March. Your father's mother.

CATHERINE: *(Trying to get a word in.)* But—

PARALEE: *(Ignoring her.)* It's just that I've called you "Katydid" since you were two.

CATHERINE: But—

PARALEE: I see no good reason to change now. Even at 32, you are still my Katydid.

CATHERINE: Mother—

PARALEE: *(Smiling.)* You may be Catherine Wright to your husband Thomas. You may be Catherine March-slash-Wright to your fellow workers, but you are still my Katydid.

(Catherine sits on the stump, rubbing her head.)

CATHERINE: Okay, Mother. Forget it. Let it rest. I didn't really want to talk anyway.

PARALEE: Yes—we'll let it rest. And we'll let Grandma March rest, too.

CATHERINE: Good.

PARALEE: She needs sleep more than she needs our company.

CATHERINE: True.

PARALEE: Besides, the car is in plain view. If she stirs and screams, we're not that far away. And I do need a break. Oh, Katydid, you have no idea the amount of time I give to your father's mother. And now to discover that she is incontinent...

CATHERINE: Incontinent? Grandma March?

PARALEE: Yes, incontinent to the core. Oh, it's a terrible thing to grow old, Katydid. Mrs. Marble, the social worker at the Happy Valley Retirement Center, said that Grandma March is incontinent. Her words, not mine.

CATHERINE: It must be hard to control an 85-year-old bladder.

PARALEE: Old bladder, indeed. Katydid, she doesn't listen except when she talks to herself. And now she expects me to wait on her day and night. Grandma March has always been a family burden, but ever since your father died, I feel like some mean old person has locked a chain around my ankle, and he is making me march through the rest of my

days with a ball on that chain the size of Arkansas. And guess whose name is carved on that ball?

CATHERINE: Grandma Catherine March.

PARALEE: Bingo!

CATHERINE: *(Saddened.)* And now she's incontinent?

PARALEE: To the core.

(Catherine rises and looks off toward the car and Grandma March.)

CATHERINE: Grandma March was always so independent.

Poor Grandma...alone...with no control of her bodily functions.

PARALEE: No, Katydid, she is not alone; she's with me. And she has total control over the functions of the body. She is quite regular. It's just that...oh...my...it's so hard for me to even say it...my dear Katydid, promise me you will never leak a word of what I am about to tell you to anyone. Not even your brother.

CATHERINE: What is it, Mother?

PARALEE: Well...Mrs. Marble...told me...that Grandma March is... *(Hushed.)* ...sexually incontinent.

CATHERINE: Sexually?!

PARALEE: That's right, dear, sexually incontinent. Grandma March is unable to control her appetite for sex.

CATHERINE: Her...appetite?

PARALEE: The Happy Valley staff has recorded in the past month over...well...*several*...instances of sexual misconduct.

CATHERINE: Did you say "several"?

PARALEE: Yes, I did.

CATHERINE: How many is "several"?

PARALEE: Th—

CATHERINE: Three?

PARALEE: Thirty—

CATHERINE: Thirty?

PARALEE: Five.

CATHERINE: (*Laughing.*) Five! Thirty-five?! Oh, my...Grandmother!

PARALEE: (*Appalled.*) Catherine! This is not a laughing matter.

CATHERINE: Sorry, Mother. But it's just that...well...good lord! Thirty-five times in one month!

PARALEE: Maybe more. They aren't sure. Isn't that disgusting?!

CATHERINE: I don't know. Who's her lover?

PARALEE: Who isn't?!

CATHERINE: (*Suppressing laughter.*) Oh.

PARALEE: (*Not amused.*) Yes, well, Mrs. Marble said that Grandma March had given new meaning to the name *Happy Valley* Retirement Center. She is creating a retirement home scandal. "*Merrily we March* along" has become the theme song of all the gentleman residents.

CATHERINE: No...seriously?

PARALEE: Do I look like I'm joking? Mrs. Marble told me if I didn't remove her from Happy Valley, she would. What was I to do? After all, she is your father's mother. There is no one else to look after her. She's outlived her children by over ten years, and now she's trying to push me into my grave.

CATHERINE: Mother, you're exaggerating. As usual, you—

PARALEE: No, Katydid, you have no idea the torment I have gone through this week. But let's not talk about it. Let me just rest. Let me just take this moment to sit here and breathe fresh air. (*She sits on a bench and breathes deeply.*) There. That's better. (*Abruptly.*) Is your brother bringing the chicken?

CATHERINE: Yes.

PARALEE: Where is your brother?

CATHERINE: I don't know.

PARALEE: Didn't you say he would meet us at noon?

CATHERINE: He should be here soon.

PARALEE: Well, I hope he gets here before Grandma March wakes up. Maybe then we can eat our lunch in quiet.

CATHERINE: It's really hard for me to even imagine...35 times in one month!

PARALEE: Katydid, remember, you promised not a word to your brother about Grandma March and Happy Valley. There are things that you and I need to share. No one else.

CATHERINE: Yes, Mother.

PARALEE: *(Fighting back tears.)* Your brother would not appreciate the seriousness of Grandma March's infirmity.

CATHERINE: *(Fighting back laughter.)* You're probably right.

PARALEE: He'd laugh and make jokes.

CATHERINE: Yes.

PARALEE: *(Slightly tearful.)* And there's nothing funny about this...thing...about your grandmother.

CATHERINE: *(Slight laugh.)* No.

PARALEE: *(Cries.)* She is sick and what she is doing is disgusting.

CATHERINE: *(Silent laugh.)* Yes.

PARALEE: So, not a word.

CATHERINE: *(Promising.)* No.

(A moment of silence.)

PARALEE: Well...here we are. The table is set. Waiting. Waiting. Always waiting. Always late. Just like his father. Your brother is just like his father. If your father hadn't been stone-cold dead, out like a mackerel, he would have been late for his own funeral.

CATHERINE: Have some chips.

(Catherine hands Paralee a bag of chips. Paralee opens the bag and begins eating uncontrollably.)

PARALEE: Your father wanted to punish me. He did, Katydid. So he left me with his tardy son and incontinent

mother. I don't want to think about it. No—I refuse to give one more thought to it. Refuse to allow myself to get all worked up over your dead father's oversexed mother! *(Almost out of control, she crumples shut the potato chip bag.)* Some things are simply out of my hands. Yes! Out of my hands! *(Exploding the anxiety.)* Poop! I'm a rabbit! *(Hopping around.)* I'm a snow white rabbit bouncing gaily over hill and dale. *(Sings.)* "Oh, what a wonderful feeling to be free and soft and cuddly." *(Turns to Catherine.)* Now it's your turn. Poop! I said, "Poop!"

CATHERINE: No, Mother. Not now. *(Busies herself cutting carrots and celery for a relish tray.)*

PARALEE: Oh, come on, Katydid. Join in the fun. You used to be so good at the Poop Game. We played it ever since you were two. Remember?

CATHERINE: Yes, Mother. I remember the game.

PARALEE: You'd yell, "Mammy. Poop!" I'd say, "Quick. Sit on your potty."

(She rushes Catherine over and seats her on the tree stump.)

CATHERINE: Mother—

PARALEE: And you would, without a moment's hesitation. We'd look into each other's eyes, and with intense concentration you'd say, "Poop!" I'd say, "What are you today?" And you would describe some furry animal. You'd finish your business and then together we would sing, "Oh, what a wonderful feeling to be...free and soft and cuddly." *(She lifts Catherine up and turns her around to look at the stump.)* And then, as proud as punch, we would look in the potty, and with total surprise, you'd say, "Look what Katy did!" *(Tweaks Catherine's cheek. Catherine isn't amused.)* You were so smart. So smart! Not like your tardy brother and his incontinent grandmother. Do you think she's still asleep?

CATHERINE: *(Trying to leave.)* Wait here. I'll go see.

PARALEE: (*Stopping her.*) No, stay with me. I'm sure the old bladder is out like a light or else we would have heard her by now. What made me say that? That was cruel. I don't mean to be cruel...I'm just overwrought. Tense! Anxious! (*Exploding with anxiety.*) Poop! I'm a lamb. (*Fanning her fleece.*) I'm a little lamb with fleece as white as snow. (*Sings.*) "Oh, what a wonderful feeling to be free and soft and cuddly." (*Breathes deeply.*) There, I feel better now. Let's open the pickles. Take these chips away and give me a pickle. Let me see. What kind are they?

CATHERINE: Dill.

PARALEE: (*Fighting the anxiety.*) Yes. Oh, yes. I need a dill pickle. Open that jar immediately, my Katydid. Where is your brother? Where is the chicken? Where is your brother with the chicken? You know, sometimes, he makes me want to swear!

CATHERINE: Go ahead—swear. Just don't wake the baby.

(*Paralee tiptoes to the carriage.*)

PARALEE: Yes, my lovely little grandchild. Lovely, little, hungry little baby. (*Surprised.*) Katydid, it's almost summertime. Look at all these blankets. What are you trying to do? Suffocate my only grandchild? (*Removes a blanket.*) Whew! Give that child some air. If you refuse to feed her, the least you could do is give her air.

(*Catherine hands Paralee a pickle.*)

CATHERINE: Here, Mother.

PARALEE: My, my. What a huge pickle. Thank you. (*Takes a bite.*) Yes, what a huge, tasty pickle. You know, even though you and your brother were born on the same day in May, one year apart, you are as different as different can be.

CATHERINE: He's probably held up in traffic. He'll be here soon.

PARALEE: Don't make excuses for your brother.

CATHERINE: I'm not making excuses –

PARALEE: He needs to learn to honor and respect the time of others. Grandma March will wake at any moment and spoil our picnic, and it will be your brother's fault.

CATHERINE: Charles is 31 years old.

PARALEE: I know that.

CATHERINE: He's a grown man.

PARALEE: He's a child.

CATHERINE: No one needs to make excuses for him. He'll be here soon.

PARALEE: Katydid, you don't have to defend him just because he is your brother.

CATHERINE: He's also your son.

PARALEE: Yes. And I've known him a lot longer than you have.

CATHERINE: That isn't possible. I'm older than he is, and like you, I've known him all of his life.

(Paralee sits at the table.)

PARALEE: No, Katydid. You know who he was, and maybe who he is, and that he was always around, and that he wasn't leaving anytime soon...but...you are only his sister, not his mother. He lives less than five miles away—five miles—and not once this year has he stopped by the house. Not once. Pass the chip. *(Catherine hands her the chips.)* Oh, yes, he did stop by last month to pick up his dead father's golf clubs.

CATHERINE: Charles is playing golf?

PARALEE: I don't know—he wouldn't talk—whipped through the house like an angry tornado. Said he didn't have time to stay. If you don't have time for your own mother, then who do you have time for? Pass the chip dip. *(Catherine hands her the dip, then sits beside her mother.)* Katydid, come by the house soon to see what I did to your

potty poop chair. I gave it to Mrs. Coffee, who, ever since her husband died, is making an honest living at tole painting. Katydid, she tole-painted your old wooden potty. She did! It will be worth a fortune some day. But for now, I've planted a fern in the potty bowl and placed it on the library table in the bay window. It is lovely. Promise me you'll stop by soon to see it.

CATHERINE: (*Uncertain.*) I will, Mother. The first chance I get.

PARALEE: It is truly lovely. A potty to remember. (*Studying the chip bag.*) Katydid, you paid too much for these chips. You did, dear. If you and Thomas expect to have anything in this life, you'd better learn to cut a few corners and clip a few coupons.

CATHERINE: I've tried, Mother. But it hardly seems worth the effort.

PARALEE: What you need is a coupon organizer. Something to organize your coupons from A to Z. I have an extra one. I'll bring it by tomorrow morning.

(*Catherine rises and moves away.*)

CATHERINE: Please, don't bother.

PARALEE: Katydid, it's fun, not bothersome.

CATHERINE: Okay. But...wait until the baby's dressed, and Thomas goes to work.

PARALEE: (*Suspiciously.*) Why should I wait for Thomas to go to work? Is there something wrong with Thomas?

CATHERINE: No...it's...well...he's just tired. That's all.

PARALEE: He's tired at 7:30 a.m.?

CATHERINE: Yes.

PARALEE: Oh. What is he like at the end of the day?

CATHERINE: Dead tired.

PARALEE: I see. Well, I'll bring him some new vitamins Doc Hardy gave to me. They'll pep him up.

CATHERINE: Very well.

(Paralee looks around.)

PARALEE: I'm glad you suggested a picnic. Isn't this fun?!

This park brings back memories. Such sweet memories.

CATHERINE: Yes, it does.

PARALEE: It does, yes. *(Pause. Paralee and Catherine stare at a patch of earth near a grove of trees to their right. Unaware of each other, they smile as each savors a memory.)* Katydid, did I show you that picture of Walter Scott?

CATHERINE: *(Surprised.)* What?

PARALEE: Walter Scott. Your high school sweetheart.

CATHERINE: Yes. Why?

PARALEE: He looks so much like his father in that picture— like Walter Senior when he and I were in high school together. Ahhh. *(Catherine laughs.)* Did I say something funny?

CATHERINE: No, Mother. It's just hard for me to remember what I was like in high school much less imagine you a high-schooler.

PARALEE: To me, it was only yesterday. *(A slight look into each other's eyes, a familiar smile, and then Catherine decides to check on her baby. Paralee begins performing light exercises.)*

You know, I believe I'm beginning to unwind. Up and down and around...over...under...and through. Yes, yes, unwind.

(Catherine spots something off left.)

CATHERINE: Mother.

PARALEE: I think I'm beginning to relax for the first time.

CATHERINE: Paralee...

PARALEE: That's me. Yes...up and down and around...over...under and through. Ahhhh... *(Sits on a bench.)* ...I'm unwinding for the first time all day. I almost feel...well...

CATHERINE: Mother?

PARALEE: *(Reclining.)* Shhhh. I almost feel...at ease...yesssss...

CATHERINE: Mother, there's a—

PARALEE: Shhhh...yesssss...peacefully at ease.

CATHERINE: The police.

PARALEE: *(Suddenly alert.)* What?!

CATHERINE: Isn't that the police?

PARALEE: Where?

CATHERINE: Beside your car. On the hill.

PARALEE: Yes. I believe it is!

CATHERINE: I wonder what they want.

PARALEE: I'd better go check. They might think Grandma March is a vagrant or something. I'll be right back. *(She rushes SL to the car. Offstage.)* Hello! Hello, there! Mr. Police! Please don't wake up the old lady! I'm coming! I'm coming!

(Catherine checks the baby and then returns to the table to finish making the relish tray. Once Paralee is clearly out of sight, Charles March appears SR, peeking out from behind a tree. He seems very nervous.)

CHARLES: Psst. Psst. Over here.

(Catherine looks around.)

CATHERINE: Charles?

CHARLES: Yes. Catherine—

CATHERINE: Why are you hiding behind that tree?

CHARLES: Where did Mother go?

CATHERINE: She went to see if Grandma March is still asleep in the car. How long have you been hiding there?

CHARLES: Not very long. A few minutes. *(He moves toward Catherine.)* Have you told her yet?

CATHERINE: No. I've been waiting for you.

CHARLES: Oh.

CATHERINE: I thought we were going to tell her together.

CHARLES: *(Anxious, staring off left.)* What do the police want?

CATHERINE: I don't know. They just pulled up. Did you bring the chicken?

CHARLES: The chicken?

CATHERINE: Yes. You were supposed to bring the chicken.

CHARLES: Damn!

CATHERINE: Why are you so nervous?

CHARLES: I don't know! I guess I forgot! There's a "Flick-a-Chick" place down the road. I'll be right back.

(Starts to leave.)

CATHERINE: No. Forget the "Flick-a-Chick." We'll do without. I've brought "expensive" chips, pickles and other things. Are we going to tell her?

CHARLES: *(Avoiding the question.)* Homemade macaroni salad?

CATHERINE: No. Deli potato.

CHARLES: Oh.

CATHERINE: Sorry. Are we going to tell her?

CHARLES: Of course. That's why we're here. Right?

CATHERINE: I've worried about this picnic with Mother all morning. She's liable to say or do anything.

CHARLES: At least you are on speaking terms with her. She hasn't called me by my name in over 13 years.

(Catherine sits on the bench and rubs her head.)

CATHERINE: I woke up with a headache again.

(Charles moves to the stump and rubs his head.)

CHARLES: So did I.

CATHERINE: I thought my head was going to explode.

(Charles and Catherine are both consumed with pain. Due to the pain, the following lines begin to build in intensity and slightly overlap.)

CHARLES: Like someone had taken a sledgehammer to my brain...

CATHERINE: So much pain...

CHARLES: ...I couldn't concentrate.

CATHERINE: Neither could I.

CHARLES: My boss at the hardware store is watching my every move. I'm going to lose my job. I know it.

CATHERINE: This morning I poured orange juice into the coffeemaker.

CHARLES: I left the cash register open. A man walked out with 150 bucks.

CATHERINE: Thomas laughed, "Piping hot orange juice, yum, yum." I'm lucky he has a sense of humor.

CHARLES: My boss is as funny as a concrete slab. He eats nails for breakfast, 2 X 4s for lunch, and shits wooden patios. (*Sits on the stump.*) God, what a headache!

CATHERINE: Is that true?

CHARLES: What?

CATHERINE: She hasn't called you "Charles" in 13 years?!

CHARLES: Yes. I sat down and worked it out the other day. And the best I can figure, the year I lost my virginity, when I was 18, Mother forgot my name.

CATHERINE: You think the two are connected?

CHARLES: They must be! I don't know how else to explain it.

CATHERINE: Curious.

CHARLES: I'll say. And It started me thinking, worrying, that every time I make love or take pleasure in being close to someone, I'll lose a little more of my identity. Do you ever feel that way, Catherine?

CATHERINE: No, Charles. You're thinking too much. (*Moves to the carriage.*)

CHARLES: Maybe I am. Or, maybe you're still a virgin. Maybe you never lost your mother's love...*Katydid.*

CATHERINE: That could be true. Sometimes I feel she deliberately revels in my past so she can ignore the present me.

CHARLES: But you're not a virgin.

CATHERINE: *(Tapping the baby carriage.)* We can safely rule that out.

CHARLES: I guess so. When was your first time, Catherine?

CATHERINE: I didn't hear that.

CHARLES: When did you make love for the first time?

CATHERINE: This is not conversation between a brother and sister.

CHARLES: *(Persisting.)* C'mon, when did you lose your virginity?

CATHERINE: I don't remember. About the same time as you, more or less.

CHARLES: 18?

CATHERINE: More or less.

CHARLES: More?

CATHERINE: Or less.

CHARLES: 17? You were always ahead of me.

CATHERINE: What difference does it make?

CHARLES: If you were a brother, we would have compared notes a long time ago.

CATHERINE: All right! All right. I was 16.

(Charles rises.)

CHARLES: No! 16? You're lying.

CATHERINE: I'm not!

CHARLES: You're bragging.

CATHERINE: Charles!

CHARLES: Yes, bragging. It's part of that macho image you like to project.

CATHERINE: Sure.

CHARLES: You're trying to impress me, right?

CATHERINE: Yes. Are you impressed?

CHARLES: Wow! That means Thomas was 16 as well.
CATHERINE: Thomas?
CHARLES: Yes – Thomas – your husband.
CATHERINE: Oh...yes...I believe he was 16...once. What time do you have to be back at work?
CHARLES: (*Looks off left.*) I don't think we need to worry much about that. What's Grandma doing in the car?
CATHERINE: Sleeping.
CHARLES: Sleeping?
CATHERINE: I guess so.
CHARLES: Why isn't she sleeping at Happy Valley?
CATHERINE: I'm not supposed to say.
CHARLES: Oh, okay. Why not?
CATHERINE: It has to do with lack of self-control. (*Moves to the stump and sits.*) Mom might tell you later.
CHARLES: I just thought it might explain the strange reception I got last night at Happy Valley.
CATHERINE: You went to Happy Valley last night?
CHARLES: Yes.
CATHERINE: Why?
CHARLES: I thought I'd talk to Grandma about Mother. I went into this room where five old men were playing dominoes. "Excuse me," I said, "I'm looking for my grandma." At first they didn't hear me, so I spoke a little louder. (*Louder.*) "Excuse me, I'm looking for my grandma." (*NOTE: As Charles recalls the visit, he gives each man a distinctive voice.*) Finally, an old man chewing gum said, "What did he say?" Before I had a chance to repeat myself, his cigar-smoking friend yelled, "He said he was a booker for a groundhog."
CATHERINE: "A booker for a groundhog?"
CHARLES: Yeah. The chewing-gum man agreed, "That's what I thought he said." "No," said this man with a tic on the other side of Cigar, "he said, 'He was a hooker for a groundhog.'" By this time, even I was confused.
CATHERINE: I can see why.

CHARLES: "No," I said, "I am a hooker...I mean...a looker...I mean I'm looking for my grandmother." "Oh," they said. Chewing Gum pointed to the room across the hall, and Cigar shouted, "The TV room is full of 'em. Just help yourself." I was about to leave the room when this man with this black streak, in what was otherwise a perfectly gray head of hair said, "Son, if you're really a hooker for grandmas, you should have been here yesterday before they released Happy Valley's Queen Catherine." "Long live the Queen," they all screamed. Over and over. Louder and louder. "Long live the Queen!" "Long live the Queen!"

CATHERINE: *(Slight laughter.)* Oh, no.

CHARLES: Finally an angry nurse rushed into the room, flipped their game table over and shouted, "Domino Five!" – I guess that's what the staff calls these old men – "Domino Five! Old people come to Happy Valley to play out their years quietly watching a few of their favorite TV shows. So pipe down!" They did. *(Sits on a bench.)* And, while I helped them pick up the pieces of their game, I made it clear to Domino Five that Catherine March was my grandmother. You know, after that, it was very strange, but they treated me like royalty. Called me Prince Charles, gave me the captain's chair between the Cigar and the Tic, and stuffed me with homemade fudge and cookies. *(Confused.)* They said I was always welcome at their table, and that if I would bring Grandma along with me the next time, they would be much obliged.

CATHERINE: I'm sure they would.

CHARLES: *(Innocently.)* You know, when we first put Grandma March in Happy Valley, I had reservations. But now I can see it is the right place for her. She is surprisingly well-loved.

CATHERINE: She certainly is...

CHARLES: Daddy was just like his mother, Grandma March. Neither one ever met a stranger. Never, ever. Daddy could

make conversation with a banker or a bum. He could talk to anyone.

(Catherine casts a look toward the cemetery.)

CATHERINE: It's true. While most of us are trying hard to dodge the sight of people—people we'd just as soon not see—Daddy was busy etching their names in his memory.

CHARLES: Yes, his memory. Catherine, who's buried in Grant's tomb?

CATHERINE: What?

CHARLES: I've been thinking a lot this week about Ulysses.

CATHERINE: Ulysses?

CHARLES: Yeah. Ulysses S. Grant, the Civil War, and the headaches. Don't you remember the story Dr. Carter told during our last visit?

CATHERINE: Oh yeah, Grant's headache. I can't remember.

CHARLES: The end of the Civil War was near and Grant's pain was so severe, he couldn't sleep. He tried everything to get rid of the ache. Bathed his feet in water and mustard, but that didn't work, so he just rubbed mustard all over his body. Still, he woke the next morning with a blinding headache. But then a message arrived from General Lee.

CATHERINE: "We surrender."

CHARLES: Yes, "We surrender." And with those simple words, Ulysses S. Grant's pain vanished immediately. Is that possible?

CATHERINE: I don't know.

PARALEE: *(From offstage left, piercing.)* Katydid!

CATHERINE: Charles, here comes Mother.

CHARLES: *(Quickly heads SR.)* Maybe I better go after some chicken.

CATHERINE: No, Charles, wait.

CHARLES: *(Nervously.)* She was expecting me to bring chicken. Wasn't she?

CATHERINE: Charles, forget the chicken and listen. I thought I'd read Mother this article—"The Mechanisms

behind Parental Headaches" –as a way of breaking the ice. Then I was hoping the three of us would sit down to a quiet, mature, open discussion. What do you think?

CHARLES: Yeah, sure. First Mother can browbeat me for forgetting the main course, and then we can have our quiet, mature, open discussion.

CATHERINE: Whatever she says, it's important that we stay calm.

CHARLES: You're right! You're right.

CATHERINE: We must show her that we are in control and that what we have to say is important to us.

CHARLES: I agree, totally. Totally!

PARALEE: *(Offstage.)* Katydid! My dear, Katydid!

CATHERINE: Remember, Charles. Calm and mature.

PARALEE: *(Offstage.)* Is that your brother?

CATHERINE: Yes, Mother. *(To Charles.)* Remember, Charles...

CHARLES: Calm and mature.

PARALEE: *(Offstage.)* Did he bring the chicken?

CHARLES: No, Mother! I forgot the goddamn chicken!

CATHERINE: Charles...calm and mature.

CHARLES: Yes, Catherine. I'll do my best.

(Charles sits on the stump, and Catherine sits at the table. Paralee enters from SL and moves between the two.)

PARALEE: Well, Katydid, the March family picnic can begin. Your father is buried in the city cemetery less than 100 yards away. His son is finally here...*without* the chicken. And Grandma March is snoozing like a baby gargoyle.

CHARLES: A gargoyle?

PARALEE: Yes, a gargoyle.

CHARLES: You mean, she's sleeping like a baby with an ugly face?

PARALEE: No! Of course not! What a thing to say! I meant like an angel. Like a... *(Turns to Catherine.)* ...what is that word, Catherine?

CATHERINE: Cherub?

PARALEE: Yes. Cherub. I always get the two mixed up.

CHARLES: Why didn't you just say "angel"?

PARALEE: Why didn't you bring the chicken?

CATHERINE: *(Changing the subject.)* Mother, what did the police want?

PARALEE: It's appalling. Some people are beyond all hope. Simply sick, sick in the mind, simply sick, sick, sick, sick.

CATHERINE: Why? What happened?

PARALEE: The police were following up on a report that some deviate was using your father's cemetery as a golf course. Can you believe that?!

CHARLES: *(Looks toward the cemetery.)* It's no wonder. They keep the grass so neat and green.

PARALEE: Katydid, tell your brother to close his mouth and show some respect. His father is buried in that cemetery. May he rest in peace without some pervert teeing off on his grave.

(Charles approaches Catherine, who is at the table.)

CHARLES: But Daddy loved golf, didn't he, Catherine?

CATHERINE: Daddy loved all sports.

PARALEE: It's true, Katydid, your father loved golf while he was alive. But it just doesn't seem right now to have your father's eternal rest interrupted by some insane putt-putter.

CHARLES: What was that joke he used to tell about the golfer, Catherine?

CATHERINE: He had so many.

PARALEE: I don't want to hear any of your father's sick jokes.

CHARLES: It wasn't sick; it was funny. It was about a man playing golf with his wife and his golfing buddy. Remember?

PARALEE: I told you it wasn't funny.

CHARLES: They were on the third hole—par 4. And between the hole and the man's golf ball was a covered bridge.

PARALEE: Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

CHARLES: Wait. There's more. The golfing buddy advised the man to use his 3-iron, and, instead of going over the covered bridge, he told the man to smack the ball straight through the opening. He said if the ball was hit hard and straight through the opening, the man would be sure to go under par for the hole. *(Animated.)* "Okay," said the man, "I can do it! Just stand back!" He took his stance over the ball, his wife behind him to his right, the buddy to his left. He hit the ball with a smack—he followed through beautifully. But instead of going through the opening, the golf ball ricocheted off the wall of the covered bridge, hit the wife in the head, and killed her! *(Smiling, he studies his mother's reaction.)*

CATHERINE: I remember that joke, now.

PARALEE: And it's not funny. It's sick.

CHARLES: A few weeks later, the man was back on the course with his buddy. When they arrived at the covered bridge hole, the buddy sadly turned to the man and said, "I guess you remember what happened here the last time." "Damn right!" said the man, "You told me go through the covered bridge instead of over it. I tried, and took a double bogey on this hole!" *(Catherine laughs slightly. Paralee doesn't laugh at all.)* I guess it was funnier when he told it. *(Moves to the left side of Catherine.)*

PARALEE: I hate the kind of joke that excludes people on the basis of quirky language. "Double-bogey"...hmp! It would be no less funny if you said, "I tried, and took a double cheeseburger on this hole!" Besides, grieving-widow jokes are not funny.

CHARLES: I'm sorry. I had no idea that today we're a grieving widow.

PARALEE: No—today, I'm a grieving widow, and *you* are a tardy comedian late for the picnic, as usual.

(Catherine is caught between Paralee and Charles. Catherine offers pickles to Paralee.)

CATHERINE: Pickles?

CHARLES: When Daddy died, you told people that being a widow was nothing new to you—that you had been a golf widow for years. Remember?

CATHERINE: *(To Charles.)* Carrots?

PARALEE: Yes. I do. And there was more than a little bit of truth to that statement.

CATHERINE: *(To Paralee.)* Celery?

PARALEE: I'm surprised your brother remembers anything I've said!

CATHERINE: *(Offering.)* Dip? Anyone?

CHARLES: I will never forget Daddy's funeral. The laughter...the fireworks. The cherry bombs and Roman candles, sparklers and confetti. Willy Wyatt's Five-Piece Jazz Band, the pig on the spit, and the open bar...it was quite a celebration, right, Mother?

PARALEE: Your father was buried on the Fourth of July! I didn't plan it that way. It was a coincidence! Your father died suddenly. Party invitations were all ready out, and friends were coming in from as far away as Charleston. If I'd known he was going to *die*, I would have postponed the annual Fourth party. Besides, your father had no business playing golf that day. It was too hot! Blazing hot!

CHARLES: Daddy died of a heart attack while taking his clubs out of the car. Not a sun stroke.

PARALEE: What difference does it make?! If he had listened to me, he would have been sitting upright here at this table, wishing for some chicken, instead of lying parallel in the ground in that cemetery over there... *(Trying to find the words, her hands and arms move as if she were conducting.)* ...over there...composing.

CHARLES: "Composing?"

PARALEE: *(Still conducting.)* Yes, composing.

CHARLES: You mean Daddy is over there making music.

PARALEE: No, that is *not* what I mean! *(Turns to Catherine.)*
What do I mean, Katydid?

CATHERINE: *De*-composing?

PARALEE: Yes, that's it! *De*-composing. *(To Charles.)* And it
doesn't sound like very much fun, now does it?!

CHARLES: No, I guess not. But that's a curious thought. If,
when we die, our bodies are decomposing, does that mean
as long as we are alive we are *com*-posing?

*(Paralee stares at Charles as if he were an alien creature, then turns
to Catherine.)*

PARALEE: What is he talking about?

CATHERINE: Well...he's...well...I don't know.

CHARLES: *(Quickly.)* Okay, then, let's try this one. Who's
buried in Grant's tomb?

PARALEE: I don't care!

CHARLES: No, that's wrong!

PARALEE: Katydid, your brother is making me very nervous.

(Charles moves to the table and begins his search for the mustard.)

CHARLES: Mustard!

PARALEE: Tense and anxious.

(Catherine pulls a magazine article from her bag.)

CATHERINE: Mother...

CHARLES: God! What a headache!

PARALEE: Jumpy and jittery...and...the invitations were all
ready out! What was I to do?!

CATHERINE: Mother, I want you to read this article.

PARALEE: He died suddenly, Katydid!

CHARLES: Has anyone seen the mustard?

PARALEE: Yes, suddenly! What is this?

(Catherine thrusts it toward her.)

CATHERINE: An article, Mother. Read it.

PARALEE: Put it away! Do you hear me? I can't read when I'm edgy!

CATHERINE: All right, all right! I'll read it to you then.

PARALEE: Fine! You read it!

CATHERINE: *(Reads.)* "It is a well-known fact—"

PARALEE: Friends were coming in from as far away as Charleston.

CATHERINE: Listen, Mother... *(Reads.)* "...a well-known fact that time and distance intensifies—"

PARALEE: I can't listen to "time and distance" when I'm edgy!

CHARLES: Where's the mustard?!

CATHERINE: Okay, okay! Forget the article for now. Just help me take this test. Help me answer a few questions with a simple "yes" or "no"!

PARALEE: I'll try.

CHARLES: *(Anxiously searching.)* The mustard?

CATHERINE: Question number one.

CHARLES: Mustard!

CATHERINE: *(Reads.)* "Are your parents of a calm nature?"

CHARLES: Did anyone bring the mustard?!

PARALEE: Forget the mustard! There is no mustard! If you can't find it yourself then forget it! *(Collecting herself.)* What, Katydid?

CATHERINE: I'll just mark "no" to that one. Let's move on to question number two.

PARALEE: Yes. Move on to number two.

CHARLES: Paralee's answer to everything: "If you can't find it, forget it."

CATHERINE: *(Forging ahead.)* Question number two. *(Reads.)* "Do you know the rhythm of your parents' moods?"

PARALEE: "Parents"? Your father is dead. You don't have "parents." Only one parent – me, Paralee. Invitations were out...all ready out –

CHARLES: I can't believe that!

CATHERINE: (*Struggling for control. To Paralee.*) Just answer "yes" or "no!"

PARALEE: And you know as well as I, Katydid, that people often have dinner parties...

CATHERINE: (*On the verge of tears.*) A simple "yes" or "no"!

PARALEE: ...yes...dinner parties or receptions...

CHARLES: What's a picnic without mustard?!

CATHERINE: It's in the basket, Charlie!

CHARLES: Thank you! Thank you very much. (*Goes to the picnic basket and locates the mustard.*)

PARALEE: ...dinner parties and receptions after a funeral. Your daddy's wake was just a bit more...a bit more...*festive* than most.

CHARLES: I'll say.

PARALEE: (*To Charles.*) That's right! You'll say about anything to get attention.

CHARLES: Poop!

(*Pause.*)

PARALEE: What? What did you say?

CHARLES: You heard me. "Poop!" I said, "Poop!"

CATHERINE: Expensive chips?

PARALEE: (*To Charles.*) Don't! Do you hear me?! Don't say "poop" again.

CHARLES: Why not? Poop!

CATHERINE: Charles, don't.

CHARLES: I can't help myself, Catherine. When I'm around her, I lose all control. (*He moves to the stump.*)

PARALEE: (*To Catherine.*) Don't listen to your brother's lies. He has never had, nor will he ever, have any self-control.

(Charles stands on the stump.)

CHARLES: Poop!

PARALEE: Just like his father. If it feels good, do it! No control. No self-control.

CHARLES: Poop! I said, "Poop!"

PARALEE: Don't you say "poop" again! "Poop" doesn't belong to you. *(She grabs Catherine and rushes her to the stump. She pushes Charles off the stump and forces Catherine to sit.)* You know "poop" is something special between my Katydid and me.

CATHERINE: It really wasn't that special.

CHARLES: Poop.

PARALEE: To a "T"—you are your father's son. He isn't dead. Every cynical ounce of him lives in you.

CHARLES: You may be right, Mother.

PARALEE: I know I am.

CATHERINE: Excuse me! *(Rises and moves to the picnic table.)*

CHARLES: Every day at the hardware store, customers walk up to my counter and recognize something in me that reminds them of Daddy. "You're Charlie March's boy, aren't you?" "Yep. I can see his eyes." "I can see his nose." "I can see him in the way you walk and talk." *(Moves to the table.)*

PARALEE: Every cynical ounce.

CHARLES: "What's your name, Son?" they say. "Charles," I say. "Why, Charles, he even left you his name!" "Yes, I guess he did," I say. "Your daddy, Charlie March, had a big heart."

PARALEE: Ha!

CHARLES: "Did he leave you any of that heart, boy?" I never know what to say to that. So, usually, I just kinda laugh, and then ask them if their purchase is cash or charge and if they need help carrying it out. Daddy died the year that I turned 16. Fifteen years ago, my daddy died. Catherine and I mourned his death. But, Mother, I always believed that

you were relieved the day my daddy died. So, Mother, I say, "Poop!" *(He squirts mustard in the palm of his hand.)*

CATHERINE: Charles...calm and mature.

CHARLES: *(Rubbing mustard on his face.)* Poop!

PARALEE: What is he doing?!

CATHERINE: Raising Ulysses.

CHARLES: *(Continuing to rub mustard.)* I said, "Poop"!

CATHERINE: Charles...don't...

(Paralee turns away.)

PARALEE: There is a very thin line between joy and sorrow, tears and laughter.

CHARLES: Poop! Poop! It sounds like fireworks! Doesn't it, Catherine. Poop!

PARALEE: Stop it!

CHARLES: *(Staring daggers at Paralee.)* Fourth of July fireworks! Poop! Poop! Poop!

PARALEE: *(Retreating into the game; trying to shut him out.)* I'm a deer. I'm a Bambi deer. Yes...a Bambi deer with big brown eyes and a little leather nose. *(Sings.)* "Oh, my, what a wonderful feeling to be free and soft and cuddly."

(Charles draws closer to Paralee.)

CHARLES: And more poop! Sparklers and confetti. Poop!

PARALEE: I'm a kitten. Yes, a kitten. A white Persian kitten with long, silky fur. *(Sings.)* "Oh, what a wonderful feeling to be free and soft and..."

CHARLES: *(Relentless.)* Poop! Poop! Poop! Poop! Poop!

PARALEE: *(Shouts.)* Stop it!

CATHERINE: Please don't wake the baby!

PARALEE: Just like his father Charlie March!

CHARLES: Yes, Mother. You want me to march? How's this? *(He begins to march around the picnic area singing "poop" to the tune of the "The Washington Post March.")* "Poop, poop,

poop-poop-poop, poop-poop-poop, poop-poop-poop,
poop..."

(Paralee chases after him.)

PARALEE: Stop it, I said! Stop it! Do you hear me?! Stop it!

(Sound of baby crying.)

CATHERINE: Oh, the baby!

(Catherine rushes to the carriage. Charles continues to march and sing. Sound of a car horn, loud and constant, off left.)

PARALEE: Damn! Look what you've done! Grandma's awake! Yes, awake! Damn! Awake! I'm coming! I said, I'm coming!

(Paralee rushes off SL toward the car. Catherine pushes the carriage between the table and stump. Charles picks up a napkin from the table, returns to sit on the stump, and begins to wipe the mustard off his face.)

CHARLES: Poop!

(Blackout. Intermission.)

[END OF FREEVIEW]