

# Thanksgiving on Serendipity Lane

George and Jane (definitely NOT the Jetsons) are having the whole family over for their first Thanksgiving in their new home. With this slightly dysfunctional family, anything goes - and usually does! As a new part of the "ritual", each member is asked to share a recent serendipitous event in their lives.

You are invited to join the table, so grab a seat and get ready to laugh. Turkey, anyone?

3M, 4F  
1F child

Great Stage Publishing

# Thanksgiving on Serendipity Lane

A Comedy in Three Acts

by  
Kathy Campshure

Great Stage Publishing

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## **Thanksgiving on Serendipity Lane"**

Written by Kathy Campshure

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### **Synopsis**

George and Jane get settled into their new house on Serendipity Lane just in time to invite his mother and their grown children over to celebrate Thanksgiving. But, when Jane asks each family member to share a serendipitous event from their recent lives, she gets more than she bargained for. Share this hilarious holiday comedy with the most dysfunctional family in the USA, and you'll never view Thanksgiving the same again.

### **Cast of Characters**

- Helen: George's mother; 80-years-old
- George: 52 years old
- Jane: George's wife; 46 years old
- Lisa: Jane & George's daughter; 19-year-old college student
- Rog: Lisa's boyfriend; 32 years old
- Tony: Jane & George's grown son; 27 years old
- Candy: Tony's wife; 22 years old
- Cindy: Tony & Candy's daughter; 5 years old

The time is 4 P.M. on Thanksgiving. The set is Jane & George's dining room, present day.

### **Setting**

This play is set in the dining room of Jane and George Fuller. A large table with six chairs sits at CS (center stage), an upholstered chair is DL (downstage left) from the table, and a china buffet is UC (upstage center) from the table. A door at CR (center right) leads outside; a door at CL (center left) leads to the kitchen and living quarters of the house.

**Props**

- Cell phone for George
- Punch bowl
- Oven mitts
- Folded linen napkins
- Miller Lite beer (in cans)
- Wine decanter and glasses
- Wheelchair
- Burnt turkey on platter
- Two sets of china
- Deck of cards and poker chips

**Sound Effects**

- Cellphone ringing/vibrating
- Smoke alarm

**Act One**

*Lights up on the dining room of Jane & George Fuller. At 'lights up', George is setting the table. After a beat, Jane enters CL and crosses to the table carrying neatly folded linen napkins. She stops short when she reaches the table.*

**JANE:** George, this won't do!

**GEORGE:** *(Continuing to set plates around the table.)* Why, what's wrong?

**JANE:** Why aren't you using the good china?

**GEORGE:** *(Beat.)* The good china? What are you talking about—what the hell is that?

**JANE:** You know perfectly well what I'm talking about!

**GEORGE:** I do?

**JANE:** Now stop that! We don't have time for games—not today!

**GEORGE:** What games? Since when do we have good china?

**JANE:** Don't be obtuse, George! Would you please just get the good china out of the cabinet *(pointing to the buffet)* and put this old stuff away?

**GEORGE:** *(Looking down at the plate in his hand.)* Ob-what?

**JANE:** Obtuse, George—'thick-headed'.

**GEORGE:** I should have known it was something like that. What happened, did "dumb" go out of style?

**JANE:** George—

**GEORGE:** Good china; I heard you. *(Crossing to the buffet and removing a stack of plates from within.)* Well I'll be damned. How long have we had these?

**JANE:** Seriously, George. Your aunt Liz gave them to us for our wedding. Don't tell me you don't remember.

**GEORGE:** That was 27 years and two kids ago. Of course I don't remember! How come I've never seen them before?

**JANE:** You saw them; you were standing right next to me when I unwrapped them at your mother's house.

**GEORGE:** The day after the wedding—our wedding—27 years ago?

**JANE:** *(Finishing placing the napkins around the table.)* Well, we certainly wouldn't have unwrapped them after somebody else's wedding—of course our wedding! Are you purposely trying to start an argument? Can't you see I'm under enough stress already? This is our first Thanksgiving in the new house; I just want everything to be perfect. *(Beat.)* Serendipity. Isn't that a wonderful name for a street? We now live on Serendipity Lane. Do you know what that means?

**GEORGE:** A new 30 year mortgage at 6.5%.

**JANE:** No, silly. Do you know what ‘serendipity’ means?

**GEORGE:** Haven’t a clue.

**JANE:** It means a ‘happy accident’ or ‘pleasant surprise’.

**GEORGE:** Oh, you mean like finding out that we actually own good china?

**JANE:** There you go, trying to start an argument again.

**GEORGE:** I’m *not* trying to start an argument; I’m just wondering aloud why, if we’ve owned *good china* for 27 years, I haven’t seen it before today.

**JANE:** For God’s sake, George. Forget the whole ‘new house’ angle. It’s Thanksgiving. Isn’t that reason enough for me to want to use the good china?

**GEORGE:** I suppose, but what was wrong with Thanksgiving last year—and all of the 27 years before that? Why today?

**JANE:** I was saving it, alright?

**GEORGE:** For what? These plates aren’t wine, you know—they’re not going to get better with age.

**JANE:** George, I am not going to play this game with you—not today. Just set the damn table, okay?

**GEORGE:** I *am* setting the table. See, this is me, setting the table (*putting the plates around and collecting the old ones*) with the *good china*. Happy now?

**JANE:** Ecstatic. And when you’re done with that, don’t forget to change your clothes.

**GEORGE:** Why, am I embarrassing the good china?

**JANE:** No, you’re embarrassing me. Besides, your mother likes to see you all dressed up.

**GEORGE:** She could care less what I’m wearing. She’d love me in my birthday suit.

**JANE:** Please, George, there’s going to be food in the room. Those two images are totally incompatible.

**GEORGE:** So what are you saying, that I disgust you?

**JANE:** You’re doing it again.

**GEORGE:** Doing what?

**JANE:** You’re trying to goad me into one of our god-awful discussions and I am simply not going to do it—not on Thanksgiving!

**GEORGE:** So, are you saying that you’re not going to argue with me today?

**JANE:** That’s right; you got it.

**GEORGE:** Hot-diggity-dog, one more thing to be thankful for.

*Jane throws him a look of reproach and exits CL. She returns after a beat carrying a floral centerpiece which she places on the table. George watches her, then looks around, confused.*

**JANE:** (*Noticing George’s expression.*) What is it? What’s wrong?

**GEORGE:** Something's missing.

**JANE:** (*Looking around with George.*) What? What's missing?

**GEORGE:** (*Sniffing loudly.*) Hey, how come I don't smell any turkey? It's 4 o'clock. If we're going to be eating at five, I should be smelling turkey by now. Jane, don't tell me you forgot the turkey!

**JANE:** Of course I didn't forget the turkey!

**GEORGE:** So?

**JANE:** (*After a beat.*) Candy and Tony are bringing the turkey this year.

**GEORGE:** What?! (*He angrily begins collecting the plates from the table.*)

**JANE:** What are you doing? Put those plates back! What are we going to eat off of?

**GEORGE:** Not to worry; if you're allowing our son and his wife to bring the main dish, no one's going to be eating anytime soon. There'll be plenty of time to reset the table while we listen to all of their lame-brain excuses for being late. (*In a falsetto voice.*) "I can't understand it; we left the house on time," or, "Cindy had such a hard time picking out the right dress to wear, but doesn't she look just peachy?" or, my personal favorite, "I'm sorry, what time were we supposed to be here again?"

**JANE:** (*Scolding.*) That's not nice!

**GEORGE:** No, but it's sure as hell honest. Tell me one occasion when they arrived on time—just one.

**JANE:** Their wedding. She was definitely on time that day.

**GEORGE:** Good thing, too. If she'd come too late for that she might have had the kid right on the church steps!

**JANE:** George! What an awful thing to say!

**GEORGE:** Maybe so, but it's the truth. (*He removes his phone from his pocket and begins to poke at the screen.*)

**JANE:** And what are you doing now?

**GEORGE:** Getting the number for Applebee's. Maybe it's not too late to make a reservation.

**JANE:** Put that phone away right now! We're eating *here*, not at Applebee's.

**GEORGE:** (*Putting the phone back in his pocket.*) But *what* are we eating? That's the question. It's Thanksgiving, and I'm hungry, and there's no turkey in sight.

**JANE:** (*Aside.*) I'm not so sure about that.

**GEORGE:** Go ahead, talk smart. You'll be singing a different tune when it's 7 p.m. and we're still waiting for them to arrive.

**JANE:** Come on, George. That's not fair. She called last week and asked if they could bring the main course. What was I supposed to say?

**GEORGE:** No.

**JANE:** Very funny! What would *you* have said if you'd answered the phone and she'd asked you?

**GEORGE:** (*Matter-of-factly.*) No.

**JANE:** Honestly, George. You're impossible—

**GEORGE:** It's Thanksgiving—I'm hungry! If anyone is being impossible, it's you!

**JANE:** Me? What did I do?

**GEORGE:** Aside from the whole turkey thing?

**JANE:** Yes, aside from that.

**GEORGE:** Okay, it's 4 P.M. on Thanksgiving Day. Listen carefully; what do you hear?

**JANE:** What do I *hear*? I thought we were discussing food.

**GEORGE:** Humor me. What do you *hear*? (*They both look around the room, listening carefully.*) Anything?

**JANE:** (*Confused.*) What am I supposed to be listening for?

**GEORGE:** Do you hear any cheering, an announcer stating that "it's fourth and ten", some ecstatic voice shouting, "And he's—going—all—the—way!"

**JANE:** (*Hands on hips.*) Is this about the game?

**GEORGE:** (*Feigning surprise.*) Game? Is there a game today? Can they really do that—have a sports presentation on a national holiday, when it just so happens that every man in America is off work and able to watch it—every man, that is, except me?

**JANE:** Stop being so dramatic. It's not going to kill you to miss one game.

**GEORGE:** One game? It just so happens to be *the* most important game of the season.

**JANE:** Sure it is; every weekend—according to you—is *the* most important game of the season.

**GEORGE:** (*Pleading.*) But if they win this one, they've got a real shot at the playoffs!

**JANE:** (*Sarcastically.*) Oh yippee, let's extend the season and watch games all the way through the holidays.

**GEORGE:** (*Solemnly.*) That's so cold.

**JANE:** (*Crossing to him.*) Tell you what. If it helps, why don't you check on the score so you're not wondering about it, okay?

**GEORGE:** (*In disbelief.*) You mean it? (*George takes his phone out of his pocket and begins to eagerly work his way through the screens. Without warning, Jane grabs it away from him and tucks it down the front of her shirt. George looks from her chest, to her face, to her chest, and up again.*) There was a time when I would have gone after that.

**JANE:** There was a time when I would have let you. (*As the two face off, the phone—set on 'ring' and 'vibrate'—goes off. Startled, Jane jumps. Digging for the phone.*) Shit!

**GEORGE:** I'll get it.

**JANE:** The hell you will! (*She turns away from him, retrieves the phone and answers it.*) Well hi, Sweetie. . . . No, you didn't dial me by mistake. I'm just answering your father's phone for



**JANE:** (cont.) him. He's busy setting the table. . . . Of course I'll tell him. See you in a little bit. *(She hangs up and tucks the phone back in her bra.)*

**GEORGE:** *(From the table where he's rearranging the dishes.)* So, which of our children was that?

**JANE:** Tony. He and Candy will be here in a few minutes. See, all of your worrying was for nothing. They're actually going to be early. What do you have to say now?

**GEORGE:** I'm speechless. *(Beat.)* Except . . .

**JANE:** Except what?

**GEORGE:** It just seems too good to be true. Did he actually say that they had the bird with them? Did they offer to put it on the phone as proof? *(Crossing to confront her.)* Did you actually get to talk to the turkey??

**JANE:** *(Placing her hand lovingly on his chest.)* Believe me, George, I get to talk to the turkey every day.

**GEORGE:** Keep it up and I'll have to report you to APECS.

**JANE:** APECS? What's that?

**GEORGE:** The Association for the Prevention of Extraordinary Cruelty to Spouses. *(Jane raises her finger to scold him; the doorbell rings.)* Ah, saved by the bell!

*George rushes to open the door and Lisa enters carrying a large bowl. She crosses and sets it on the table. Jane meets her and they embrace briefly.*

**JANE:** It's so good to see you, honey.

**LISA:** You too, Mom. *(Pointing to the bowl.)* That's a special holiday punch. I found the recipe online. Maybe we can find a spot for it in the refrigerator.

**JANE:** In a minute. How's school going? Are you surviving? Are the teachers being fair?

**LISA:** The teachers are great; school's great. Don't worry about me, Mom. College was a big adjustment at first, but I'm getting it.

**JANE:** Well, you sure look happy. Doesn't she look happy, George?

**GEORGE:** Happy as a lark. Can I have my phone back now?

**JANE:** *(Ignoring the question.)* How's your roommate? Is she still hogging three quarters of the room?

**LISA:** Actually, I wanted to talk to you about that. You see—

**JANE:** How about helping me out in the kitchen; you can make the salad and we'll talk while we work.

**LISA:** Sure Mom, but—

**JANE:** No 'but's', now come along. *(Jane turns and begins to cross to kitchen, then stops abruptly. Turning back to Lisa.)* Oh my God. Weren't you supposed to pick up Grandma on the way? You didn't forget Grandma, did you?

**LISA:** Of course I didn't forget Grandma. Geez, what kind of a person do you think I am?

**JANE:** Lord, don't tell me you left her in the car alone! I hope you pulled the keys. The last time she was left in a car alone we had to go fetch her three counties over. She'd run four stop signs and sideswiped a Schwan ice cream truck. Our insurance rates still haven't recovered.

**GEORGE:** We heard there was frozen food and ice cream novelties scattered for an entire city block. The kids in that neighborhood had a field-day snatching it all up.

**JANE:** As did your mother! When the cops finally got her into the back seat of the squad car, she had a shepherd's pie tucked under both arms and a turtle drumstick in each hand.

**GEORGE:** Ah, the good ol' days. Being in that wheelchair has sure slowed her down.

**JANE:** *(To Lisa.)* Please tell me that you didn't leave her in the car alone.

**LISA:** *(Defiantly.)* Of course I didn't!

**JANE:** Then where is she?

*The door at CR opens and Helen, an elderly woman in a wheelchair, is pushed to CS by Rog as Jane and George watch, speechless. Lisa crosses to Rog and lovingly kisses him on the cheek. As Lisa busies herself with introductions, Helen extracts a copy of Kama Sutra from her handbag and proceeds to look through it, twisting the book from side to side to better view the illustrations. No one notices her.*

**LISA:** *(Beaming.)* Mom, Dad, this is Rog. *(Beat. There is no response from her parents.)* I hope you don't mind that I invited him. You've always said that my friends are welcome anytime.

**GEORGE:** *(To Jane.)* Did you know about this?

**JANE:** Of course not; I'm as shocked as you are.

**GEORGE:** How come I'm always the last to know about anything?

**JANE:** You're not the last to know, now will you please shut-up and let Lisa explain? *(To Lisa.)* So, you were saying?

**LISA:** This is Rog. He's in my economics class. His family is out on the west coast and he didn't have anywhere to go for Thanksgiving, so I invited him to spend the holiday with us.

**JANE:** *(Hesitantly.)* That's nice, dear, but aren't you home for the entire weekend? We don't have that much room in this house. You and Grandma are going to be sharing the guest room. Where is Rog going to sleep?

**GEORGE:** I vote for in the car.

**LISA:** *(Ignoring George's remark.)* He's not fussy; he can crash on the couch.

**GEORGE:** Over my dead body!

**JANE:** George, be nice!

**GEORGE:** I *am* being nice—I didn't say over *his* dead body!

**HELEN:** *(Sarcastically.)* Hello everyone, so nice to see you all, too!

**GEORGE:** *(To Jane.)* He's not sleeping on the couch—period!

**JANE:** Well, where else can we put him?

**HELEN:** He can sleep with me. I don't mind.

**GEORGE:** *(To Jane.)* He can go to a motel. Better yet, he can drive back to campus and come back to pick Lisa up on Sunday night.

**HELEN:** I heard he's an ax murderer that escaped from San Quentin. Is the turkey done yet?

**JANE:** George, he's Lisa's friend. We have to be hospitable.

**GEORGE:** The hell we do! Out of the clear blue our 19-year-old daughter brings home a man that's—*(To Rog.)* How old are you?

**ROG:** Thirty-two.

**GEORGE:** *(Rolling his eyes.)* I rest my case. No 32-year-old man is going to sleep on our couch; the hell with being hospitable!

**HELEN:** *(Putting the book away.)* How come I don't smell any turkey?

**LISA:** Mom, Dad, this really isn't a problem, is it?

*George answers 'Yes' as Jane simultaneously answers 'No'.*

**HELEN:** Is anyone else concerned that it's Thanksgiving and I don't smell any turkey? Hello?

**JANE:** *(To Lisa.)* Why don't you and I go and finish making that salad while Rog and your dad get to know one another better?

**HELEN:** What am I, chopped liver? And what about that turkey, hmmm?

**GEORGE:** *(To Jane.)* Oh no, you're not leaving me alone in here with him!

**JANE:** Now George, I'm not leaving you alone with him—your mother is right there.

**HELEN:** Finally, someone noticed! I was starting to think I was invisible.

**JANE:** Of course you're not invisible, Mom. Now, you three just get acquainted and we'll be right back.

*Jane and Lisa exit CL. Rog and George stare at one another as Helen looks on.*

**HELEN:** Sorry son, but if the two of you are going to get into a brawl, my money's on the young fella.

**GEORGE:** There's not going to be a brawl, Mom.

**HELEN:** Then I guess that's one more thing we can all be thankful for. Now, about that turkey—

**GEORGE:** Don't worry about the turkey, Mom. Candy and Tony are bringing it.

**HELEN:** Damn, another holiday shot in the ass.

**GEORGE:** Mother, I'm surprised at you. That's no way to talk!

**HELEN:** Why not? It's the truth. If they get here on time for the meal, I'll be shocked. If they remember to bring the turkey—and it's actually edible—be prepared, you'll probably have to perform CPR on me. Whose bright idea was this, anyway, allowing the family nutcase to bring the main entrée? I don't have that many more Thanksgivings left, or hadn't that occurred to anyone?

**ROG:** Tony would be Lisa's older brother, and Candy would be his wife, correct?

**HELEN:** Well, they're not the president and the first lady.

**ROG:** And which one, exactly, would be the family nutcase?

**HELEN:** What?

**ROG:** You specifically said, "Whose idea was it to allow *the* family nutcase—singular—to bring the main course?" As Tony and Candy are arriving together, in the same vehicle as the turkey in question, which one is the 'family nutcase'?

**GEORGE:** What are you, some kind of a wise guy? Do you think you can just walk in my house and start insulting my family?

**ROG:** I didn't insult anyone. Your mother said—

**GEORGE:** You leave my mother out of this, buddy! This is between you and me!

**HELEN:** (*Aside.*) My money is still on the young fella.

*The door at CR opens and Tony, Candy and Cindy enter. Tony is wearing oven-mitts and is carrying a large metal roaster.*

**TONY:** (*Crossing to the kitchen.*) I'll be back to deliver my 'hello's' in a minute; got to get this turkey in the oven. (*He hurriedly exits CL with the metal roaster.*)

**GEORGE:** (*To Candy.*) He means to keep it warm, right? He wants to get it in the oven to keep it warm. It is roasted, right? (*Candy avoids his gaze.*) Please don't tell me you brought a raw turkey.

**CANDY:** Of course it isn't raw.

**GEORGE:** Is it roasted?

**HELEN:** Let's stop beating around the bush, shall we? What he wants to know is, is it edible?

**CANDY:** As is?

**GEORGE:** Well of course 'as is', unless you plan on serving it for Christmas!

*Candy bursts into tears and races off CL, calling for Tony.*

**HELEN:** That's got to be a record. It usually takes you fifteen minutes to bring that girl to tears.

**GEORGE:** Me—what did I do? I only asked about the turkey.

**HELEN:** Well, at least they got here on time. That's got to be a first. I suppose we ought to give them some credit for that.

**GEORGE:** You're absolutely right. And when we're all seated around the table, staring at one another and salivating, I for one will be so glad that there won't be any empty chairs between us. After all, misery loves company.

**CINDY:** Are you mad at Mommy, Grandpa?

**GEORGE:** Of course not; I'm just hungry and there seems to be an issue with our main course.

**CINDY:** (*Hands on hips, stomping her foot.*) Well, don't blame Mommy; it's not her fault!

**GEORGE:** Oh no? And whose fault is it?

**CINDY:** I don't know!

**GEORGE:** (*Aside.*) Boy, if I had a dollar for every time I heard a female say that, I'd be rich. But I didn't think they started that young.

*Jane and Lisa enter SL.*

**JANE:** Everything's under control. Supper will only be about 45 minutes late. I think we can all live with that.

**GEORGE:** Speak for yourself; I'm hungry now!

**LISA:** (*Crossing to Rog.*) It's okay if we eat a little late, isn't it?

**ROG:** Fine with me. There's nowhere I have to be.

**GEORGE:** Don't be so sure about that. We haven't finished that conversation yet.

**HELEN:** (*Crossing in wheelchair to Jane.*) Well then, what have you got to tide an old woman over?

**JANE:** Tide you over?

**HELEN:** You don't want me to faint from malnutrition, do you?

**JANE:** Of course not, Mom. What would you like?

**HELEN:** A Bud.

**JANE:** A Bud? Seriously?

**HELEN:** Well, I'd really prefer a Manhattan. Can you make one of those? (*Jane shakes her head.*) I didn't think so, but it was worth a shot. You *do* have a Budweiser though, right?

**JANE:** The only thing we have that's cold is Miller Lite.

**HELEN:** Some holiday this is turning out to be—no turkey, no hard booze, and no Bud. Would someone please tell me exactly why I came?

**ROG:** To spend time with your family, am I right? Isn't that what holidays are for?

**HELEN:** Oh great . . . who invited Dr. Phil? Listen Rob—

**LISA:** His name is Rog, Grandma. We've been over this a hundred times in the car on the way here.

**HELEN:** Rob, Rog—what's the difference? The point is, if holidays are all about spending time with family, why isn't he with his?

**LISA:** Grandma, that wasn't nice!

**HELEN:** Nice? Do you want to know what's *nice* about being 86 years old? I don't have to be nice anymore—that's it. Now who's getting me that beer?

**CINDY:** (*Enthusiastically.*) I'll get it, Granny!

**GEORGE:** Oh no you won't! Rog, make yourself useful and go get the beer. It's in the bottom of the fridge. Make it two; oh hell, grab one for yourself while you're at it. We might as well make the most of the wait.

**ROG:** (*Heading toward the kitchen.*) Gee, thanks.

**GEORGE:** Oh, and you'd better knock before you go through that door. Let's see . . . Tony and Candy have been alone in there for (*checks his watch*) five minutes. There's no telling what they're up to by this time. Unless, of course, you never want to view a Thanksgiving turkey in quite the same way again.

**CINDY:** What do you mean, Grandpa? Why does Rog have to knock?

**GEORGE:** It's nothing, Cindy. Don't worry about it.

**CINDY:** What are Mommy and Daddy doing in the kitchen, Grandpa? Aren't they're cookin' the turkey?

**GEORGE:** Well, Sweetie, I suspect they're cooking; I only hope to God the turkey isn't involved.

**ROG:** Wait a minute. You don't mean they'd be—

**JANE:** George is right; you should knock. Better safe than sorry. Heck, I'd knock and I live here!

*Rog crosses to the door at CL and hesitates. He raises his hand, getting ready to knock, when the smoke detector in the kitchen goes off and the door flies open, pinning him behind it. Candy races out waving flaming oven-mitts over her head. Tony follows closely behind yelling "Fire!" They drop the mitts into the punch bowl on the table to extinguish the fire.*

**HELEN:** So much for the turkey. There's another holiday shot in the ass—and where's my damn drink?

*Lights down.*

**Act Two**

*(An hour later.)*

*Lights up on the family seated around the table, eating their meal. Helen (in her wheelchair) and Cindy (in a folding chair) are seated between the table and the door at CL using TV trays. Cindy is pouting, leaning back in her chair, her arms folded.*

**CANDY:** Cindy, darling, are you eating?

**CINDY:** I want turkey!

**CANDY:** I know you do, sweetie, but there isn't any turkey. So please eat what's on your plate, okay?

**CINDY:** No! *(Helen spears the roll from Cindy's plate and takes a bite of it. Cindy screams.)* Grandma stole my roll!

**HELEN:** You weren't eating it. *(Gesturing to the girl's plate.)* Are you going to eat those potatoes?

**CINDY:** *(Crossing her arms and leaning back in the chair again.)* No! *(Helen reaches over and takes a forkful of potatoes from Cindy's plate. Cindy screams again.)* Mommy!

**GEORGE:** Seriously, I vote we put the both of them in the other room.

**CANDY:** That's not very nice.

**GEORGE:** Well, if you could control your daughter—

**CANDY:** My daughter!? What about Grandma? Maybe you should control your mother! *(George and Jane stop eating to exchange a glance, then they shake their heads. In unison, "Nah.")*

**HELEN:** Ha! *(She steals and eats another forkful of food. Cindy squeals and moves her plate out of her grandmother's reach.)*

**LISA:** It's so unfair; you didn't even get to try my punch!

**GEORGE:** No, but that's okay. It needed more alcohol anyway.

**ROG:** How do you know that? You didn't even get to taste it!

**GEORGE:** Didn't have to. If there'd been enough alcohol in it, those flaming oven-mitts would have gone up like roman candles!

**LISA:** This is all your fault, Tony! If your wife hadn't managed to start a fire in Mom's new kitchen—

**CANDY:** Me? What makes you think *I* started the fire?

**LISA:** What are you saying—that Tony started the fire and told you that the flaming mitts were a fashion accessory, so you put them on?

**GEORGE:** Here we go. First no turkey for the main course, now a cat fight for dessert.

**JANE:** There's not going to be any fights—cat or otherwise. Right ladies?

*Candy and Lisa exchange a long glance, then return to eating.*

**ROG:** Call me old-fashioned, but I—for one—am grateful for that. It is Thanksgiving, after all—even if it did turn out a bit . . . um . . . unusual.

**TONY:** (*Eating the last bit of food from his plate.*) Unusual? How so?

**ROG:** You're kidding, right? (*Tony stares at him but doesn't reply.*) You really don't know?

**TONY:** Should I?

**ROG:** You mean to tell me that all of your holidays are like this?

**GEORGE:** (*Defensively.*) You have a problem with the way we do Thanksgiving?

**ROG:** No—well, yes. I mean, it's just not what I'm used to, that's all.

**JANE:** (*Interceding.*) Tell us, Rog. What are Thanksgivings like with your family?

**GEORGE:** Oh boy, here we go. (*Rising and heading for the kitchen.*) I'm getting a drink, anyone else want one?

**HELEN:** Can *you* make a Manhattan?

**GEORGE:** Sure, but it'll look and taste just like a Miller Lite; even comes in the same can. Still want one?

**HELEN:** Why not . . . bring two glasses; I'll share it with Cindy.

*George exits SL.*

**CANDY:** Oh no you won't!

**JANE:** Rog, you were going to tell us about Thanksgiving in your home.

**ROG:** Yes, well. There's . . . a . . . just a lot less drama, that's all.

**LISA:** Less drama?

**ROG:** Yes. We all sit around the main table and talk about the past year—

**HELEN:** And eat turkey.

**ROG:** Yes, we generally have turkey and all the fixings. But mainly, we just enjoy each other's company.

*George enters with three beers. He takes one to Helen before returning to his chair at the table. He places the remaining two beers on the table in front of him, opens one and drinks. Tony reaches for the other beer and George pulls it out of Tony's reach.*

**TONY:** What, I can't have a beer?

**GEORGE:** Sure you can. You just can't have that one.

**TONY:** Why not?

**GEORGE:** It's mine. There's a whole case in the fridge; help yourself.

**TONY:** Fine. (*Tony rises and exits CL.*)

**ROG:** Well then, as I was saying, we talk about the past year and catch up on everything that's happened.

**CANDY:** That reminds me, are we going to do that Thanksgiving 'thing' again?



**JANE:** Thanksgiving thing—what ‘Thanksgiving thing’?

**CANDY:** You know—the one where we go around the table and everyone has to say what they’re thankful for this year.

*Tony enters with three beers. He sits at the table and places them on the table in front of him. He opens one and takes a drink. Rog reaches for one and Tony pulls them out of his reach.*

**TONY:** (*Wagging his finger.*) Ut, ut, ut—get your own. (*Pointing to CL.*) The fridge is that way.

**ROG:** (*Rising.*) All right, I will. Would anyone else like one? (*No one responds.*) Okay, one beer it is. (*He exits CL.*)

**JANE:** (*To Candy.*) I’d forgotten all about that—it’s a wonderful idea! Except (*beat*), let’s add a new twist this year.

**LISA:** A twist?

**JANE:** This year, you have to tell us something you’re thankful for AND you have to share a serendipitous event that happened to you recently.

**TONY:** (*Taking another drink.*) ‘Seren’ what?

**JANE:** Serendipitous. It means a “happy accident” or “pleasant surprise”. Kinda like if you were single, and you put your car in reverse in some parking lot and you back into someone. But, instead of it being a *bad* thing, the person you backed into turns out to be the love of your life.

**GEORGE:** Wait a minute, that’s how we met!

**JANE:** See? It works.

**GEORGE:** And how many men, exactly, did you back into before me?

**JANE:** Honestly, George, not now.

*Rog returns with two beers and sits at the table. He opens one and takes a drink.*

**GEORGE:** Is that why your auto insurance premiums were so outrageous when we got married?

**JANE:** That’s *one* reason why.

**GEORGE:** What would the other reason be?

**JANE:** Too many speeding tickets.

**GEORGE:** Speeding tickets? I’ve known you for 28 years; you don’t even drive the speed limit most of the time. Everyone behind you thinks they got caught up in an unmarked funeral procession. What could have ever possessed you to speed?

**JANE:** Well, not everyone I backed into was as nice as you, George. Sometimes the best thing for me to do was simply apologize and get the hell out of there. Hence the speeding tickets.

**GEORGE:** You outran them?

**JANE:** Most of them. It turned out that three were off-duty cops; I probably could have ditched them, too, but they didn’t play fair. They radioed ahead.

**TONY:** (*Amused.*) Are you saying that my mother, miss ‘prim and proper’, use to outrun cops?

**JANE:** Well, I certainly tried to a time or two.

**ROG:** I’m the newcomer here, of course, but I just can’t see it.

**GEORGE:** Speaking of things you can’t see, we haven’t decided where you’re spending the night yet.

**LISA:** Daddy, don’t be a prude!

**HELEN:** We have prunes? I’ll take some.

**LISA:** Not ‘prune’, ‘prude’, Grandma!

**HELEN:** Rude? Who’s being rude?

**CINDY:** You are—you keep stealing my food!

**HELEN:** What do you care? You ain’t eating it.

**CINDY:** Mom!

**GEORGE:** (*Opening another beer.*) Great; here we go again.

**JANE:** No we don’t; we’re all going to share our ‘thankful’ and ‘serendipitous’ items now, right? (*She looks around at her family, but no one responds.*) Tony—why don’t you start?

**GEORGE:** Wait, who needs another drink?

**LISA:** Another, I didn’t get my first one yet!

**GEORGE:** Lisa’s first drink, coming right up.

**JANE:** George, please, you’re just stalling—

**ROG:** No, he’s right. We should toast each other’s ‘thankful’ items.

**GEORGE:** Exactly!

*George crosses to the buffet and returns with a large bottle of wine and several glasses. He opens the bottle of wine, pours some of his beer into a glass for himself, and passes the wine and glasses to Candy. She doesn’t pour any, but instead hands the bottle and glasses to Tony. Tony pours a healthy glass before handing the bottle and remaining glasses across the table to Rog. Rog pours Lisa’s first, then pours one for himself. He hands the bottle to Jane, who sets it down without pouring any.*

**GEORGE:** (cont.) Okay, we’re set now, right? Take it away, Tony, what are your ‘thankful’ and ‘serendipitous’ items?

**HELEN:** Excuse me—and where’s my glass of wine?

**JANE:** Sorry, Mom. I thought your beer would do.

**HELEN:** I’ve got two hands, and I ain’t driving nowhere.

**JANE:** Here you go. (*She fills a glass and takes it to Helen.*)

**HELEN:** That’s more like it. (*She downs the contents of the glass, belches and resumes eating.*)

**JANE:** Mom, we were going to toast with that—

**HELEN:** Toast? No thank you. I'm getting full. *(She resumes cleaning off her own plate while eyeing up Cindy's.)* Maybe for breakfast though.

**TONY:** Are we ready then? *(Everyone nods.)* Well, I know you wanted me to start, but I think the ladies should go first. Let's start with Cindy.

**CANDY:** Good idea! Let's have Cindy go first, then Grandma.

**LISA:** *(Glancing at Helen.)* It would appear that Grandma's still eating.

**GEORGE:** She can talk between mouthfuls.

**JANE:** George!

**CINDY:** If Grandma can talk with food in her mouth, so can I! *(She scoops a forkful of food into her mouth, chews a beat.)* See? It's only fair!

**CANDY:** Well, at least she's eating.

**TONY:** Cindy, swallow that food please, and then tell us something that you're thankful for.

*Cindy takes another bite without responding.*

**CANDY:** Cindy, honey, can you please tell us one thing you're thankful for?

**CINDY:** *(Making a face and spitting the food back onto her plate.)* Yuck! I want turkey!

**CANDY:** *(Growing exasperated.)* Yes, darling, we know. We've been over that. Now tell us something that you're thankful for.

**CINDY:** *(Holding up a piece of food.)* I'm NOT thankful for these fish-sticks. Even the pilgrims didn't have to eat this crap!

**GEORGE:** *(Taking a drink.)* How do you know—were you there?

**CINDY:** We studied it in our social studies class.

**GEORGE:** Social studies class? What grade is she in, anyway??

**JANE:** *(Placing a sympathetic hand on his arm.)* They start them much younger today, dear.

**CINDY:** Besides, Grandma could tell us what the pilgrims ate, right Grandma? I'll bet you were there!

**HELEN:** *(Still eating.)* What do you want to know?

**CINDY:** What did the pilgrims have for dinner on Thanksgiving?

**HELEN:** Corn, wild turkey and squash.

**CINDY:** Really?

**HELEN:** Yup. Then the Indians attacked the pilgrims, scalped them, collected all that hair, and invented dreadlocks.

**JANE:** *(Shocked.)* Mother!

**HELEN:** What—were you there?

**JANE:** No, but—

**HELEN:** Then shut up and let me talk.

**ROG:** Helen, it's really not politically correct to tell children stories like that. It leads to racial inequality, profiling, and—

**HELEN:** Get a life, Rog. She's five. She won't remember any of this tomorrow. Trust me. She won't remember if she peed today. Are there any potatoes left?

**CANDY:** Cindy, honey, we're all still waiting; what are you thankful for—really?

**CINDY:** (*Indignantly.*) Fine—I'm thankful that I don't have any stupid little brothers and sisters that I'd have to share everything with!

**CANDY:** (*Getting up and going to her.*) Cindy, that doesn't count. You're supposed to tell us about something you're thankful you *have*, not something that you are thankful you *don't* have.

**CINDY:** What's the difference?

**CANDY:** Well, I . . . ah . . . Tony, darling, can you please explain this to her?

**TONY:** (*Rising and crossing to Cindy.*) Come on, sweetie. There must be something you can think of that you're thankful for.

**CINDY:** Sure—there's you and Mommy.

**TONY:** See, that wasn't so hard.

*Tony and Candy exchange a smile and return to their chairs.*

**CINDY:** And I'm thankful that you were really trying to cook the turkey in the kitchen before, not whatever Grandpa was talking about. Why would anyone knock before going in the kitchen anyway? That's stupid!

**TONY:** What?

**LISA:** (*Changing the topic.*) Okay then, Grandma—it's your turn. What are you thankful for?

**HELEN:** Prune juice.

**JANE:** Mother!

**HELEN:** What? It's true! I haven't needed an enema in four weeks. Now *there's* something to be thankful for!

**GEORGE:** Mom, I don't think that's quite what Jane had in mind.

**HELEN:** Why not? It's a two-way street, too, you know. If she worked there, then I could be glad that I'm not *getting* them and she could be thankful that she's not *giving* them.

**GEORGE:** Mother!

**HELEN:** Fine. Let's see . . . I'm glad that I have a compassionate family that doesn't intend to leave me in that assisted-living facility indefinitely. I'm thinking I should be bunking in with one of you by Christmas.

**GEORGE:** And what's wrong with the Pleasant Meadows Assisted Living facility?

**HELEN:** Plenty. Where would you like me to start? And what happened to those potatoes I asked for? You didn't eat them all, did you?

**LISA:** I thought you liked Pleasant Meadows, Grandma.

**HELEN:** It's a nice place to visit, I just wouldn't want to live there—which I do. So you guys can decide over dessert who wants me to move in. Potatoes? Anyone?

**GEORGE:** *(Rising and crossing to Helen's right.)* It's not that simple, Mother.

**HELEN:** What isn't, me moving in or the potatoes? I'll eat instant; I'm not fussy.

**JANE:** *(Rising and crossing to Helen's left.)* But they take such good care of you there. Do you know what a relief it is for us knowing that we don't have to worry about you?

**HELEN:** Or feed me, or entertain me—I get it.

**GEORGE:** That's not what Jane meant, Mother. You're not being fair.

**LISA:** *(Interrupting.)* Could we possibly get back to the game while some of us still have something to be thankful for?

**JANE:** *(Holding up a hand to silence Lisa.)* Mother, you know that George works all day. He's gone from 6 A.M. until almost 5. I couldn't possibly help you into and out of that chair, or give you the care you need all by myself.

**HELEN:** So that's the holdup—the chair? *(She gets out of the chair and pushes it DL, then crosses back.)* Problem solved. Oh, and I can get my own damn potatoes, too! *(She carries her plate to the table and spoons more potatoes onto it as the family looks on, speechless.)*

**GEORGE:** *(Sternly.)* Mother, I think you've got some explaining to do.

**HELEN:** *(Sitting at the table in the spot vacated by George.)* About what?

**TONY:** Grandma, how long have you been able to walk?

**HELEN:** Can't say for sure, but I think I was 14 months old when I took my first steps.

**JANE:** *(Scolding.)* Mother, that's not what Tony means and you know it! He's referring to the wheelchair.

**HELEN:** *(Giving a dismissive wave of her hand.)* Oh, that thing. Telly Sevalas had his lollipop, Elvis had his gyrating hips, and Liberace had his bling—me, I've got my chair.

**CANDY:** Are you telling us that your wheelchair is a fashion accessory?

**HELEN:** And a damn important one! Without it, I'm just another old lady.

**GEORGE:** And with it?

**HELEN:** I get to go to the lunchroom ahead of the other old biddies, and cute male orderlies push me around the grounds when the weather is nice.

**ROG:** *(Looking around.)* Is anyone else troubled by this?

**GEORGE:** Of course we're troubled by this—just what kind of a family do you think we are?

**HELEN:** *(Rog starts to answer but Helen cuts him off.)* Now boys, you're making way too much of this! Look on the bright side, George, when it's your turn to list what you're thankful for during this stupid game, you can say that you're thankful I'm cured!

**JANE:** *(Sitting, dejectedly.)* I don't think I like this game anymore.

**CINDY:** You mean Grandma's been faking it? Cool!

**TONY:** Not cool. Very bad.

**CINDY:** Not ‘bad’, cool!

**LISA:** Is anyone even the slightest bit interested in what I’m thankful for?

**ROG:** I don’t think this is the time, Lisa.

**LISA:** Well I do! It’s still Thanksgiving and I want my turn! The holidays suck! They’re always all about Grandma and Cindy. The rest of us don’t even count!

**JANE:** Lisa!

**LISA:** It’s true! You called me three times last week, and every single call was to remind me to pick Grandma up on the way—and you still thought I forgot her!

**JANE:** (*Defensively.*) What was I supposed to think when you walked in without her?

**CANDY:** And what about Cindy? What kind of a crack was that?

**LISA:** As if you didn’t know.

**CANDY:** Know what?

**LISA:** That you’re raising a prima donna!

**GEORGE:** Oh boy, does anyone else sense that cat fight coming on now?

**LISA:** Just once can’t we have a normal holiday without arguing, and fires, and family drama, and a spoiled kid who won’t eat—

**GEORGE:** And an unexpected male tag-a-long.

**LISA:** Male tag-a-long—are you referring to Rog?

**GEORGE:** Well, he wasn’t invited by either Jane or me, and you never informed us that you were bringing a guest. As for the ‘male’ part, that was a leap of faith on my part. Please tell me I was wrong.

**LISA:** Well Father, I’m going to take my turn in the game, and I’m going to do it right now. Do you know what I’m thankful for? I’m thankful that I have two wonderful, understanding parents who will totally get it when I tell them that I’m dropping out of college so Rog and I can spend next year abroad.

**JANE:** You’re dropping out of college?

**LISA:** Let’s just say I’m taking a break.

**JANE:** But . . . but what will you live on? What will you use for money?

**LISA:** Rog has some money stashed away. He’s going to take a sabbatical from school—

**GEORGE:** When a student leaves campus, it’s called ‘dropping out’; it’s not called a sabbatical.

**LISA:** (*Smugly.*) Oh, didn’t I tell you? Rog isn’t my classmate, he’s my teacher.

**GEORGE:** I’ll kill him!

*He lunges for Rog, who ducks behind Lisa. Tony steps in-between and struggles to hold George back.*

**TONY:** (*Restraining him.*) Now Dad, take it easy. Lisa is technically an adult now; if she

wants to travel somewhere with Rog—

**GEORGE:** Over my dead body!

**JANE:** Now George, try to take it easy. It could be worse. After all, Tony's right, you know. Lisa is all grown up and—

**GEORGE:** Well, as far as I'm concerned, she's still my little girl.

**ROG:** Then I guess you're going to have to learn how to share her.

**GEORGE:** (*Lunging toward him again.*) You—

**LISA:** (*Moving to Rog and taking his arm.*) If you hurt him, Dad, I'll never forgive you!

**JANE:** (*Frantically.*) Tony, what are you thankful for?

**TONY:** Not now, Mom!

**JANE:** Yes, now!

**TONY:** (*Still restraining George.*) Okay, I'm thankful for unemployment.

**JANE:** What?

*George stops struggling and everyone in the room looks at Tony.*

**GEORGE:** What do you mean 'You're thankful for unemployment'?

**TONY:** (*Releasing George.*) I got laid off, Dad—downsized.

**JANE:** No!

**CINDY:** What's 'laid off'?

**CANDY:** It means that your father doesn't have a job anymore.

**CINDY:** Does that mean he can stay home and play with me all day?

**GEORGE:** (*Sitting at the table.*) Oh boy!

**LISA:** See what I mean—hello? I'm dropping out of college; I'm going abroad with Rog? Does anyone care about that anymore? Hello?

**JANE:** Not now, Lisa. Didn't you hear? Your brother lost his job!

**LISA:** Oh, and that's more important than me going thousands of miles away?

**GEORGE:** Of course it is; you'll be coming back. (*Beat.*) You will be coming back, right?

**LISA:** Well, sure—

**GEORGE:** There you have it. (*To Tony.*) What happened?

**TONY:** The company downsized. They sent my job to Mexico.

**LISA:** (*Exasperated.*) I don't believe this!

**JANE:** It happens all the time, dear—especially in today's economic climate.

**LISA:** That's not what I meant!

**JANE:** Then what, honey?

**LISA:** Never mind!

**HELEN:** (*Crossing to Lisa.*) Don't take it so hard, sweetie. This family's dynamics is a little like playing cards. The best catastrophe trumps smaller ones; it's that simple. Now, if you had been pregnant *and* you were running off, you'd have the floor!

**LISA:** But that's so unfair!

**HELEN:** Unfair? Do you want to know what's *really* unfair? Your father is the only kid I brought into this world. Do you know why? So he wouldn't have any siblings to bicker with. I thought I'd have a peaceful life and picturesque holidays, just his father, him, and me. But no, his father up and dies, and George here meets Jane, knocks her up—

**JANE:** (*Shocked.*) Helen!

**HELEN:** And before you know it, here I am—listening to *his* kids bicker. Fate's a real bitch—and she's got a twisted sense of humor.

**JANE:** (*Scolding.*) Mother, I believe we were discussing Tony and his job situation.

**HELEN:** (*To Lisa.*) See what I mean about catastrophe rankings? You and I aren't even in the running, sweetie. (*Crossing to Tony.*) Okay, you're off the hook for taking me in. Obviously, you're going to be broke, and I really don't like ramen noodles all that much. (*Turning back to Lisa.*) And you're leaving the country to escape this madness, so—(*turning back to George and Jane*), I assume the guest room is where I'll be staying. As soon as I get back to Pleasant Meadows, I'll give them the news and start to pack up my crap so it's ready.

**GEORGE:** Mother, you can't move in here.

**HELEN:** And why not?

**GEORGE:** Because . . . well . . . Jane, darling, explain it to her.

**JANE:** Me? She's your mother!

**HELEN:** Well, I see how it is. Lisa, Rog, I'd like to leave now. Please take me back to Pleasant Meadows.

**LISA:** (*Smugly.*) We'd be happy to.

**JANE:** Oh no you don't; no one is going anywhere. We're going to finish this damn game if it kills us! Now, I want everyone to sit down and shut up. (*Everyone sits.*) Now let's see—who'd like to go next?

**CINDY:** (*Jumping up.*) I thought of something else I'm thankful for!

**CANDY:** What's that, honey?

**CINDY:** I'm glad to not be in school for a few days. I really needed a break.

**GEORGE:** (*Checking his smart-phone; without looking up.*) At your age? You've got nothing but a break.

**JANE:** Okay then. George, I don't believe we've heard from you.

**GEORGE:** (*Quickly putting his smart-phone away.*) I'm grateful that the Packers are currently beating the Colts 21 to 3.

**JANE:** (*Threatening.*) George—

**GEORGE:** Okay, I'm glad that the house didn't burn down when that turkey went up in flames.



*Candy bursts into tears. Tony drapes his arm around her and throws George a look of reproach.*

**TONY:** Was that really necessary? She feels bad enough.

**JANE:** *(Coolly.)* George, try again.

**GEORGE:** Fine. I'm grateful that Thanksgiving only comes around once a year. Is that alright with everyone?

**JANE:** *(Giving George a reproachful look and turning to Candy.)* Candy, dear, what are you thankful for?

**CANDY:** *(Still sniffing.)* I—I'm grateful that the house didn't burn down, too.

**JANE:** That's nice, dear. Anything else? *(Candy shakes her head.)* Okay then, my turn. I am grateful for our new house. And I'm sure that the insurance company will help us get the kitchen back just the way it was. Now, before anyone even *thinks* about getting into another squabble, we're going to share our serendipitous items, right?

*Jane looks around sternly, but no one objects.*

**HELEN:** And just what the hell does that mean again?

**ROG:** Serendipity—it means a 'happy accident' or 'pleasant surprise.'

**HELEN:** Trust me, the accidents you have at my age are neither 'happy' nor 'pleasant'.

**JANE:** *(Sternly.)* Mother, I've had about all I'm going to take of—

**HELEN:** Fine. All things considered, I'll pass. I'm too damn old for surprises, anyway.

**JANE:** All right then, Cindy—what about you? Have you had any happy accidents or pleasant surprises lately?

**CINDY:** *(Furrows her brow and thinks for a bit.)* Oh yeah! I was surprised that kissing boys isn't as gross as Molly said it was.

**TONY:** *(To Candy.)* And who, exactly, is Molly?

**CANDY:** Just a friend.

**TONY:** Remind me to talk to that girl's mother.

**CANDY:** You and me both!

**JANE:** Okay then; who's next. Lisa, I believe everyone here already knows what your and Rog's 'pleasant surprise' is, so we'll move on to your father.

**LISA:** What, we're limited to one surprise? Since when?

**JANE:** Do you have another one you'd like to share?

**LISA:** No, but—

**JANE:** So there you have it. George, any pleasant surprises recently?

**GEORGE:** *(After a beat.)* Oh yes, we have good china. *(Looking around the table.)* Did anyone else know that?

**JANE:** Tony, can you think of anything?

**TONY:** Lots of surprises, none pleasant. Sorry.

**JANE:** That's okay, sweetie. Maybe next year will be better. Candy, do you have a serendipitous item to share? (*Candy looks around the group, suddenly very hesitant.*) It's okay, Candy. We're family; we love you. You can tell us anything and that won't change.

**CANDY:** Well, I—ah.

**JANE:** Go ahead, sweetie, we're listening.

**CANDY:** Okay. Well, my pleasant surprise is, um—

**GEORGE:** Oh for God's sake, just spit it out!

**CANDY:** I'm pregnant.

**TONY:** (*Stunned.*) What!? How'd that happen?

**GEORGE:** Do you need a diagram?

**TONY:** No, Dad, I do not!

**GEORGE:** Then, in the future, might I suggest a pleasant little surprise called 'birth control'?

**CINDY:** What's 'pregnant'?

**HELEN:** It means that the turkey wasn't the only thing your mother has in the oven. Hopefully this next one doesn't come out as dark as that one did.

**GEORGE & JANE:** (*In unison.*) Mother!

**HELEN:** What—am I wrong? It would take more than baking soda to put that fire out! (*Beat.*) So, am I moving in here or not?

**JANE:** (*Bursting into tears.*) You guys are all impossible! I wanted this Thanksgiving to be something really special, but obviously that was too much to ask. I hope you're all proud of yourselves!

*Jane rushes out CL.*

**HELEN:** (*Beat.*) Well now, wasn't that special. What's up with your wife, George?

**GEORGE:** How the hell would I know?

**HELEN:** My mistake; I momentarily forgot that you're a man.

**TONY:** (*To Lisa.*) Maybe you should go after her and see if she's okay.

**LISA:** Me? Why don't *you* go?

**TONY:** You're a woman.

**LISA:** So?

**HELEN:** I think George should go. After all, he's the one who promised 'for better or worse'.

**LISA:** (*To Candy.*) Come on, let's go and see if Mom's okay.

**CANDY:** (*To Cindy.*) Cindy, would you like to help us cheer up Grandma?

**CINDY:** (*Looking at Helen.*) Why, she's not crying.

**CANDY:** Not Grandma Helen, Grandma Jane.

**CANDY:** (*Shrugging.*) Sure.

*Lisa, Cindy and Candy exit CL. Helen crosses and looks after them before crossing to the buffet. She pulls a deck of cards out of a drawer, sits at the table, and shuffles.*

**HELEN:** Alright gentlemen, let's get down to it before they get back and spoil the fun.

**ROG:** (*Sitting down to Helen's right.*) What do you have in mind?

**HELEN:** Poker—what else?

**TONY:** For money?

**HELEN:** (*After a beat.*) No, I was thinking strip poker, and I'll shoot anything I haven't seen before. Of course for money! What do you think I am?

*They all sit at the table and Helen continues to shuffle.*

**GEORGE:** (*Checking his smart-phone again.*) Now, that's what I call a serendipitous moment. The Packers just intercepted the ball on their own 20 yard line!

*Helen snatches his phone away and places it down the front of her shirt. George begins to protest, then changes his mind.*

**HELEN:** Five-card stud is the game, high-hand takes all, no limit. Let's get to it, gentlemen, time's a wastin'.

*Lights down as Helen deals the cards.*

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