

What You Will

A Drama in Two Acts

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Setting

Act 1 Modern-day Columbus, Ohio
Act 2 The same, 10 months later

Cast of Characters

Lisa Beautiful and chubby, 35. A frazzled single mother, Lisa's the ideal candidate for an Oprah-style self-help makeover.

Stacey Lisa's best friend in junior high. Stacey expects things to work out so long as everyone follows the rules.

Jessica A self-described rock-and-roller. In her early-mid 30's, she's secretly wanted to be Madonna since 1984.

Jo Jessica's best friend. 33, but dresses 25 and it looks good on her. Should have been a member of the Go-Gos.

Tina Lisa's mother, in her mid-50's. Fears the worst.

Also

Crystal's Voice, Process Server, Producer's Voice, Machine Voice. Can be played by the actor playing Tina.

Act 1

Scene 1 LISA, STACEY, and TINA in the living room and kitchenette in Lisa's cramped apartment. Dirty dishes are piled in the sink, and papers clutter the countertops and table, where space has been cleared away to accommodate three chairs and a highchair. A jumble of toys and clothes cover the sofa. A near-empty can of chocolate frosting sits on the kitchen counter. LISA wears baggy pink hospital scrubs.

STACEY

Tell him you'll call your lawyer.

LISA

He knows I wouldn't do that.

STACEY

You should do it.

LISA

He's just having some bad luck. It's not like he meant to—besides, it takes money to hire a lawyer. You have to get this retainer thing.

TINA

Well, maybe we could come up with something. How much is a retainer?

LISA

We all know I'm not going to sue Rob. All right, Mom?

All three stare at/play with their mugs.

STACEY

Last week this announcement shows up—all embossed and shit—and I'm trying to figure out who could possibly be getting married. Turns out Kelly's daughter is graduating from kindergarten.

TINA

How cute!

STACEY

So now you have to give kids presents for making it through kindergarten? It's not even really school.

TINA

You suppose they get little kindergarten diplomas?

LISA

Probably.

STACEY

I am such a sucker for little Kaitlin. Next thing I know I'm at the Toys-R-Us looking for a Barbie cap and gown or doctor set or something that encourages her to graduate for real someday. But they're wiped out.

LISA

The kindergarten graduation rush.

STACEY

All they've got left is pink Chanel suits with plastic poodles and this Eiffel Tower scene on the box. I guess nobody wants their girls thinking about Paris. Oh, and wedding dresses.

LISA

Christmas when I was five, the only thing I wanted was Barbie's wedding dress. It came with a plastic cake.

TINA

Judy Winston's daughter is getting married next week. At St. Michael's.

LISA

Which daughter?

TINA

The youngest, I think.

LISA

Ellen?

TINA

The only one who's not already happily married.

LISA

What did you get for Kaitlin?

STACEY

The fairy princess set she wanted for Christmas.

LISA

Why fight it?

STACEY

It's so wierd. Barbie taught us to think of major events in terms of outfits. So then we grow up and start buying clothes for ourselves, but somehow we still think that if we get the outfit, we get the event, too.

LISA

Like how these fabulous duds mean I'm in for another night of glamour at Scioto Hospice.

STACEY

Like how I was sure buying that strappy thing would get Michael to take me dancing.

LISA

What sort of accessory would these come with anyhow?

STACEY

A halo.

LISA

A bed pan.

STACEY

You weren't just my mom's favorite, you made it easier to be there.

LISA

Thanks.

STACEY

And not just because she remembered you from when we were twelve. All the patients love you.

LISA

I try to help, I guess.

STACEY

You do help. That's something to be proud of.

LISA retreats to the kitchenette.

TINA

Don't think I don't remember when you were twelve. Who'd have thought you'd turn out so well?

STACEY

Well, you haven't changed a bit, Mrs. Ryan.

TINA

Tina. Where are you and—oh, darn, what's his name?

STACEY

Michael.

TINA

Where are you and Michael living these days?

STACEY

Not far from your place. Just the other side of Miller.

TINA

Good elementary school by there.

STACEY

Well, sure, I guess that's why we bought the place.

TINA

A house where your kids can walk to school, just like you and Lisa did.

STACEY

That's what Michael thought.

LISA

More coffee? *[no one answers]* Okay.

As she refills her mug from her Mr. Coffee, the phone rings. LISA answers it.

TINA

I wish Lisa could find a place in your neighborhood. The houses are so darling, and some of them are probably affordable. I worry about Jordan going to the schools here.

STACEY

Really? I've heard these are just fine.

TINA

But Reynoldsburg's are better. And the neighborhood is so much nicer. Here you've got what? Sawmill Road, and that's about it.

STACEY

Maybe by the time Jordan's ready for school...

TINA

I hope so.

LISA

Work.

TINA

Judy's girls looked so happy on Sunday. Their husbands, too.

LISA

Hello?

No. I don't know who's on call. It's not on the board?

Oh. What's wrong?

Uh huh, uh huh...

Of course he—he just doesn't want to hear. Yeah exactly.

I know, I know. Tell you what, I'll be in at six. Have him talk to me then, okay?

Okay, thanks. See ya.

[She hangs up and returns to the dining area.]

LISA

Maybe.

TINA

If you went more regularly you could see them yourself and you might know what I'm talking about. It's not just about Christmas and Easter, you know.

LISA

I'm a little busy these days. Sunday mornings are just—you tell her, Stacey.

STACEY

Getting up isn't as hard as I thought.

LISA

You're going again?

STACEY

I started going with Mom. I always figured I would once Michael and I got settled in anyhow.

TINA

They're happy. The Winston girls. All four of them.

STACEY

I thought there were five Winston girls.

TINA

I wasn't including the one who isn't married yet.

LISA

Well, there's a difference between looking happy and being happy.

TINA

I can tell the difference.

[Beat] You know, I don't think it's right for you to wish the Winstons ill, especially right before a wedding.

LISA

Mom! I didn't wish them anything, I just mean that, as an outsider, you don't know how happy someone is, how happy anyone is, for real, unless you're them.

TINA

Because now if there's a tragedy or an accident or something else happens, you're going to feel terrible.

LISA

Nothing's going to happen. It doesn't work like that.

TINA

We'd better hope not. And all because you're jealous.

LISA

Mom, I'm not—

STACEY

Nobody's jealous of those Winston girls, Tina. This isn't junior high.

TINA

But they're so pretty, and their husbands are doing so well...

LISA

Look, I'm sorry about the hundred dollars, okay?

TINA

I don't mind loaning you money.

LISA

I'll just use a credit card or something.

TINA

You're not going to buy groceries on credit. What was the excuse this time?

LISA

He's having a tough time at the shop. I already said it was okay. I'm sure he'll make it up next month.

TINA

Like he did this month.

LISA

He will. He has to turn it around some day.

STACEY

He does?

LISA

And anyhow, I may be getting more money on my own soon.

TINA

You're getting a promotion?

LISA

Oh, no. I'm kind of looking into some stuff on the side.

TINA

What?

LISA

Cosmetics.

STACEY

Yeah?

LISA

This article in the *Dispatch* said lipstick sales are going through the roof right now. Did you know the Lauders are worth almost as much as the Rockefellers? And Estée started her business in 1946.

TINA

You want to start a business?

LISA

No, nothing big like that. I guess I was just thinking of selling some stuff during the day.

STACEY

What, like Avon?

LISA

I don't know. Maybe. What's wrong with that?

TINA

Nothing, so long as you don't buy more than you sell. Remember the Girl Scout cookies?

LISA

Mom! I was nine. And Stacey ate more than I did. Geez!

STACEY

[overlapping, after "than I"] You lie!

TINA

Elisa Danielle...

LISA

She did so.

STACEY

Yeah, I probably did.

TINA

I'll have to take your word for it, Stacey.

STACEY

You should think twice before getting into some kind of sales thing. Companies don't get rich paying too much commission.

TINA

A year ago Eleanor was telling *everyone* in the office how her daughter was starting some cosmetics company. We all thought, oh great, now we're all going to have to buy some because she's the boss, but we never heard about it again.

LISA

What kind of cosmetics? Makeup or soap and stuff?

TINA

I have no idea.

LISA

Makeup would be more fun.

Maybe I should get in touch with her and see.

TINA

I'm sure it's a waste of time.

[Beat]

LISA

Oh, Mom, it's a quarter after.

TINA

Shoot. Father Tim must not be kept waiting. I gave you the diaper bag, right?

LISA

Got it, Mom. *[hugging her]* Have fun.

TINA

[to Stacey] Don't you be a stranger.

STACEY

I won't.

TINA

I always liked her. Okay, tell my little angel Grandma said bye-bye when she wakes up.

LISA and STACEY

Bye/See ya/etc.

TINA exits. LISA loiters by the empty can of icing.