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A Heavenly Blast
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ALSO AVAILABLE FROM OWP

Keeping Faith **by Mark Scharf**

2 Males, 2 Females

Synopsis: Ed and Jane are not about to let their 18 year old daughter Faith marry 45 year old Hartsell (Hart) Edward Thomas Williams IV – even if he does own “Hartsell’s Patio Furniture.” So, on the day before the wedding, they do what any parents would do: they kidnap Faith and drive into the wilds of Arkansas to hide out until things cool down or Faith changes her mind. With Hart and the police in pursuit and Faith refusing to play victim, Ed and Jane have their hands full in this dark comedy which is part extremely-dysfunctional-family-fun and part political commentary.

You May Go Now **by Bekah Brunstetter**

2 Males, 2 Females

Synopsis: Dottie has trained young Betty to be the perfect 1950s housewife; to cook the perfect pot roast, to bake a gorgeous seven-layer cake, to remove any stain. And tonight, Betty’s 18th birthday, it is time for Betty to go out into the world. Only Dottie has failed to mention that the year is 2007, that the world is a vast and complex place, and that there is a reason she cannot abide being called 'Mother'. Ghosts from the past haunt the women and shatter their idyllic, if odd, existence. When a mysterious traveler is stranded at their home, he brings a revelation that forces Betty to choose between the love of her 'mother' and her freedom and sanity. *YOU MAY GO NOW* is an adult fairy tale about a 'mother' and 'daughter' whose love is as real as it is destructive.

A HEAVENLY BLAST



A PLAY BY
ROSE
MARTULA

A HEAVENLY BLAST

By Rose Martula

CAST OF CHARACTERS :

CHARLOTTE -- a crazy, hip-hop loving housewife addicted to speed.

LENNY -- her husband. A sensitive soul prone to emotional outbursts.

UNCLE NICK -- CHARLOTTE's alcoholic brother.

BECCA -- CHARLOTTE & LENNY'S overweight child, age 12.

JOEY -- CHARLOTTE & LENNY'S skateboarding teenage son, a punk-ass with Mommy issues.

SNOOPY-- father to CHARLOTTE & UNCLE NICK, a rich oil tycoon and a wild man.

KITTY -- mother to CHARLOTTE & UNCLE NICK. A foofy woman obsessed with weight.

SETTING: Boston, MA. Another goddamned family dinner.

A HEAVENLY BLAST

ACT ONE-SCENE ONE

(Lights up on a kitchen, dining room, & living room. The three rooms should melt into each other. For example, the oven might reside in the living room, the refrigerator in the dining room, the toilet and front door in the kitchen. This is an exaggerated, heightened world where objects might be oversized. Food is everywhere--pig's heads, huge swordfish, gigantic crab legs, lobster claws, and various pots and pans boil away on the stove. A TV, fireplace, and an Ames recliner sit in the living room. An elegant table sits in the dining room surrounded by chairs.)

CHARLOTTE, reminiscent of a 50's-style housewife, is dressed in a daisy-print dress, panty hose, sneakers, and big curlers in her hair. She cooks up a storm as Jurassic Five's "Quality Control" blasts from a radio. She lip-syncs to the music using a large carrot for a microphone. In an inspired moment, she attempts the Robot.

UNCLE NICK, bundled up in winter gear, suddenly bursts in through the front door at full speed, completely out of breath. He carries two bottles of whiskey, and slams the door behind him. A startled CHARLOTTE jumps, screams, and turns at the slam, switching off the radio with a jolt.)

CHARLOTTE: AAAAAAHHH!

UNCLE NICK: *(Screaming right back in the same fashion)*
AAAAAAHHH!

(CHARLOTTE's looks turns to relief and frustration as she sees who it is.)

CHARLOTTE: Oh, Jesus Christ, Nick! For fuck's sake!

UNCLE NICK: Sorry, sis.

CHARLOTTE: Almost scared the living crap outta my ass!

UNCLE NICK: The door was open. Sorry, I didn't mean to scare ya.

(NICK locks the door, and then pushes his back up against it.)

UNCLE NICK (CONT'D): Wow. Was that rap?

(CHARLOTTE goes to the counter and begins to grate cheese rapidly.)

CHARLOTTE: Hip hop, you ignorant prick, hip hop, there's a difference. Christ. Did you get the sauce?

UNCLE NICK: What sauce?

CHARLOTTE: The sauce, Nick, the fucking sauce.

UNCLE NICK: I don't remember anything about any goddamn sauce!

CHARLOTTE: The sauce that I told you to GET, Nicholas.

UNCLE: Fuck the sauce!

CHARLOTTE: Disgusting. I will NOT fuck the sauce, Nick.

UNCLE NICK: Hey! Listen! They're more important things going on with me right now than goddamned tomato sauce, Charlotte! Can't you see that?! God, I'm sweating like a fucking gorilla over here! Look at me!

(He begins to peel off his layers of coats and clothes.)

CHARLOTTE: Stromboli, Nick, I needed the sauce for this stupid-assed Stromboli, Nick!

UNCLE NICK: Fuck your Stromboli! I hate Stromboli! All that doughy Italian shit, Christ, it's very binding, Charlotte!

CHARLOTTE: Well, that's because you hate everything Italian. I mean, EVERYONE likes Italian food, Nick. What's wrong with you? Who the fuck hates Italian food anyway, huh? Oh, and ya gotta cut that shit out around Lenny, by the way. You know how he's very proud of his roots and all.

UNCLE NICK: Man's obsessed with his roots.

(NICK begins tiptoeing around the kitchen, peeping out doors and windows. CHARLOTTE waves the Stromboli at NICK.)

CHARLOTTE: See this? This Stromboli is naked, Nick, naked!

UNCLE NICK: Alright, enough, can it, motor lips!

CHARLOTTE: Ya know, all you had to do, was make one little stop by the pizza shop on your way home.

UNCLE NICK: Oh, let it die, Charlotte!

CHARLOTTE: Really, Nick, that's the whole reason I sent you out in the first place. I didn't want to go into that shithole all by myself. All those pictures of saints and prophets and Pope-looking fuckers on the walls, they scare me.

UNCLE NICK: Listen to me here, now I got something to say!

CHARLOTTE: No can do, Nick. I've got to do everything here now because that's what I DO, Nick, I do fucking EVERYTHING, Nick!

(She begins to beat eggs viciously.)

UNCLE NICK: Listen, can I close these curtains here?

CHARLOTTE: Can't believe you had to go and forgot the sauce, Nicholas!

UNCLE NICK: And these blinds? I wanna shut myself in here, if that's okay. I just wanna be in, while everything else is out, out there, far away, ya know what I mean.

CHARLOTTE: Oh no, wait, yes I can! Of course! That's right, 'cause you forget everything, Nick!

UNCLE NICK: Hey! Zip it! ZIP the LIPS!

CHARLOTTE: I mean, you went and forgot the goddamned ring at my wedding. And I mean, that was your ONLY responsibility, Nick, all you had to do was bring the fucking ring to the fucking wedding and act like a fucking normal person would, but no, you went and FUCKED that all up. Probably because you were doing so much coke at that particular time in your life and all--

UNCLE NICK: Hey! It was the eighties!

CHARLOTTE: You drank so much booze 'cause you had to go and Hoover so much coke, naturally had to go and puke all over the coconut cake, and I love coconut, Nick! LOVE it! I'm still traumatized from that, you know! Puke and coconut mixing all together, dripping off the table in little puke puddles, it was a lovely day, Nick, wasn't it.

UNCLE NICK: Hey, slow down here, missy. I don't know why Lenny chose ME as his best man in the first place. I mean, shit, we weren't even close. Isn't he supposed to choose someone CLOSE for that shit? Doesn't he have any friends? I wasn't his friend!

CHARLOTTE: I don't ever recall you rolling in friends, either, buddy boy.

UNCLE NICK: Hey. Easy.

CHARLOTTE: Oh admit it, Nick, you were a real dipshit back in the day.

UNCLE NICK: Oh. Right. And you had it SOOO together then, right? Listen, I inherited all the fucked up genes around here. I'm VERY deep, VERY complex.

CHARLOTTE: Oh puh-leeze.

UNCLE NICK: You had it easy, man!

CHARLOTTE: Oh, Jesus. Here we go.

UNCLE NICK: There was us and then there was you. You never had a twin, so you'll never understand that. When you lose your other half—well, you just won't ever understand, Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE: Right. Okay. You win! You're more fucked up than me, Nick. Okay? Happy? YOU'RE the winner!

UNCLE NICK: Listen, Charlotte. Ya better sit. Now, I got something I gotta tell you. I'm a little freaked out here. Say, do these blinds close all the way?

CHARLOTTE: I need to be in my zone now, Nick. Please, you're fucking up my zone.

UNCLE NICK: Listen sis, I---oh God, I think I've really done it this time! See, I, I just--I just hit someone. With my, with my car.

(CHARLOTTE turns, stares at him blankly, and then begins basting a turkey viciously.)

CHARLOTTE: Goodness. Well now.

UNCLE NICK: Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE: Let's see, here we are now.

UNCLE NICK: Charlotte, I'm in a bit of trouble. I got some kind of curse on my soul with cars, I swear.

CHARLOTTE: Would you like a potato puff?

UNCLE NICK: On my way over here, I--I hit someone. I hit a girl.

CHARLOTTE: Boy, let's see. I like potato puffs, yes.

UNCLE NICK: I didn't stop. I couldn't stop, Charlotte.

(CHARLOTTE smiles blindly, and holds up a tray of potato puffs.)

CHARLOTTE: Go on, eat 'em. Eat a potato puff, Nick. Eat the little fuckers.

UNCLE NICK: Cause if I stopped--no wait, what am I saying, I SHOULD stop. I shoulda goddamned stopped. *(NICK begins to pace.)* I think they're after me. They're after me. I just gotta hide here for a while. Figure things out. Just, just sit here and figure things out. I gotta figure it all out. *(BEAT)* And I'm drunk!

(CHARLOTTE studies him for a moment, and then bursts out laughing, lowering the tray of potato puffs.)

CHARLOTTE: Really now, Nick, you mustn't joke about these kinds of things this early in the morning, dear. It aggravates my sinuses.

UNCLE NICK: But I'm not joking.

CHARLOTTE: Yes yes, now, well, why don't you sit down, and rest those jolly, little feet, and let me make you a nice, big, juicy bloody Mary, huh? I know how much you like them so with your breakfast in the mornings.

(She begins to make him a bloody Mary vehemently.)

UNCLE NICK: Charlotte, did ya hear me?

CHARLOTTE: My head is spinning, darling, absolutely spinning.

UNCLE NICK: Are ya hearing me or not?

CHARLOTTE: I've got knots the size of fists in my temples. I'm tense, Nick, I'm very tense.

UNCLE NICK: Charlotte. You're all I got. I'm fucked. I'm so fucked here. What do I do? Tell me what to do. You're all I got, Charlotte.

(LENNY then enters through the front door bundled in hat and coat carrying a grocery bag, slamming the door behind him. CHARLOTTE and NICK both jump at the slam. CHARLOTTE then begins stuffing hot dogs into hot dog buns nervously.)

LENNY: *(Calling)* Yeah hello, I'm home! Isn't it exciting?

CHARLOTTE: *(Calling)* Why, hello, pumpkin, yes! We're in here! How was the store, dear?

LENNY: *(Calling)* Freezing. Absolutely freezing! I feel quite flushed. Yes, yes I'm quite feverish in the cheeks. Really now, Charlotte, you know how much I hate the cold. I get very nippy. I chap all over.

(LENNY puts down the grocery bag, and begins to take off his coat, making his way into the living room. CHARLOTTE laughs nervously.)

CHARLOTTE: *(Calling)* Yes, yes dear, I know, poor baby!
(Whispering) Nick, get your shit together for once in your life, would you.

(She takes out a bottle of pills, and pops one back.)

UNCLE NICK: I can't.

CHARLOTTE: *(Hissing)* I don't believe you.

UNCLE NICK: Believe me, Charlotte. Telling you the truth.

CHARLOTTE: We'll talk about this later. When your head is clear. You're just drunk is all. Now, get your shit together, and KEEP it together. *(Calling)* Lenny darling! Would you mind bringing the eggs in here to me, sweetness?

(LENNY takes off his coat, sits down in the Ames chair, takes off his shoes and socks, and begins warming his fingers and toes by the fire.)

LENNY: *(Calling)* Sorry, but I'm feeling a little faint, dear. Must be from the COLD you sent me out in all alone? So I should probably just sit here, and warm my appendages by the fire for a while, doncha think? Oh, my poor little toes. I think they might be frost bitten. Don't want them to fall off, now do we? Ya don't mind, do ya, dear? I would love a Coke, though. With ice.

CHARLOTTE: *(Calling)* Yes, but I'm cooking, Lenny, I'm cooking for my parents who will be here any minute, Lenny, remember? Just because YOUR fucked up family never sat down for any goddamned dinner together doesn't mean WE have to work that way, now does it, Lenny?

(LENNY suddenly bursts into tears, and begins to cry into his hands.)

LENNY: *(Calling)* Really, Charlotte, I'm so sensitive! I'm like a wet sponge! I just soak everything up!

UNCLE NICK: Is he crying already?

CHARLOTTE: Hush, Nick.

LENNY: (*Calling*) I thought I told you not to bring that family stuff up anymore, Charlotte. You're one big meanie!

UNCLE NICK: (*Muttering*) Oh, for the love of God.

CHARLOTTE: Squash it, Nick. (*Calling*) Lenny, no, please don't cry! I'm sorry, Lenny! (*Hissing at him*) Nick, say something.

UNCLE NICK: SAY something? The hell should I say?

CHARLOTTE: Nick!

UNCLE NICK: Jesus! Fine. (*Calling*) Uh, hey, Len! I feel your pain, Len! I really do!

LENNY: (*Sniffing*) Oh. You do?

UNCLE NICK: (*Calling*) Sure! I mean, fuck all this family bonding, cooking shit, Len! Its peanuts, Len! For the birds! You didn't miss a goddamned thing growing up, I'm telling ya! I mean, I would kill to go OUT for dinner every once in a while, ya know what I mean, Len? Eat a little stinking Chinese or something. Those Asians, I mean, they grub on some good shit, Len.

LENNY: (*Sniffing*) Yes, or better yet, Italian. Ya know, being first generation Italian and all--

UNCLE NICK: (*Muttering*) Oh, Lord.

LENNY: (*Calling*) It's very comforting for me to eat Italian food, Nick. It's my emotional safety zone.

UNCLE NICK: Ah-huh.

CHARLOTTE: (*Calling*) Now, Lenny, no more tears today, okay, darling. The parents are coming, remember, Lenny? I remember. Because I remember everything. More importantly, I remember to DO everything for that matter.

UNCLE NICK: Charlotte? Please. Listen to me. Will you just--listen for a minute?

CHARLOTTE: Why, I'm incredible if you really think about it, aren't I? I'm a machine!

UNCLE NICK I need your help, Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE: Nick, you're fucking drunk. So stop.

UNCLE NICK: (*Numb*) I'm not sure what my life's become.

CHARLOTTE: (*Calling*) Lenny, would you like to come in here and socialize with us now, darling?

LENNY: (*Still sniffing*) I'm still warming my toes.

CHARLOTTE: Nick. Console him.

UNCLE NICK: You're NOT listening!

CHARLOTTE: (*Exploding slightly*) Oh, just conversate with the man already!

UNCLE NICK: Oh, for God's sakes. (*He clears his throat and calls*) So Len! Uh, so what'd you buy at the store today, bud?

LENNY: (*Still sniffing*) Well. Eggs, Nick, if you really must know.

UNCLE NICK: (*Calling*) Oh. I see, Len. Well, I sure hope you bought the kind where they don't torture the damn chickens to death, Len. 'Cause if you didn't, I tell ya, Len, you're a sinner, Len, a sinner.

LENNY: (*Calling*) What? What do you mean? Charlotte, what does he mean?!

CHARLOTTE: Don't be a dick now, Nick. You're being a real dick today now, Nick.

UNCLE NICK: (*Calling*) Ya know, Len, I read recently that on some of these chicken farms, the workers there cut off their damn beaks to make more room in the cages. So they can fit as many damn birds in as possible. So these chickens, Len, I mean, they're sitting there for weeks, I mean, WEEKS until they're slaughtered, with bloody, oozing stumps where their beaks should be. Isn't that disgusting? Boy, made me think alright.

(*LENNY has a look of horror on his face. CHARLOTTE hands NICK his bloody mary glaring at him. NICK pounds his bloody Mary, and constantly pulls at the V-neck sweater he's wearing the whole time as if it's choking him, getting increasingly riled up.*)

UNCLE NICK (CONT'D): The only thing that occurred to me, though, Len, was how in the hell do these chickens eat, Len? If their beaks are already pulled off of 'em, then how in the goddamned hell do they eat, Len, huh? Tell me that. Yeah, you tell me that one, Len, figure that one out for me, will ya. 'Cause I sure as hell can't! I just don't understand how the fucking chickens do it, Len, I mean, I just don't understand it all, Len! In fact I don't understand anything anymore in this fucking pathetic excuse of a life! Oh God, take me away!!

(LENNY bursts into tears.)

CHARLOTTE: Oh for God's sake, Nick, now look what you've done!

LENNY: *(Sobbing)* Why is everybody yelling at me?

CHARLOTTE: Fix it, Nick.

UNCLE NICK: Will you listen to me then?

CHARLOTTE: I said fix it!

UNCLE NICK: Christ! *(Calling)* Say Len! Len buddy! Uh, so! Are we getting ready for some good eats in there today, champ?

(LENNY blows his nose.)

LENNY: *(Calling)* Well, yes, in fact, yes, I am, Nick.

UNCLE NICK: Alright, now there's the spirit! Tell ya, I'm hungrier than a goddamned model myself, Len. Some tasty grubblings sure would sit mighty pretty with all this liquor I got stored up in my gut, yup, tell ya that much.

(He slaps his gut.)

LENNY: *(Calling)* I see. Still drinking, are we, Nick?

UNCLE NICK: Oh yeah, Len, you betcha, I'm still--Oh God! How am I ever gonna look him in the eyes?! He's gonna KILL me!

CHARLOTTE: *(Laughing nervously)* What in heavens are you even talking about, Nick? Nobody knows what you're talking about, Nick, yes yes.

(She begins slicing ham almost violently. LENNY picks up a newspaper and begins reading.)

UNCLE NICK: Dad! Oh God, Dad! He's gonna hate me! He's gonna, he's gonna kill me!

(CHARLOTTE jumps and turns, startled to death, waving the knife she's slicing with around.)

CHARLOTTE: What?! Where? Where is he? Is he here? No, no, wait. Of course not. Jesus, don't scare me like that, Nick. You're getting me jumpy for absolutely no reason. Christ! Don't do that! Don't fuck with the bull!

UNCLE NICK: *(Softly)* Sorry.

CHARLOTTE: Okay, here we are now, where were we. Yes, the pig, the pork, the hog, yes, here we go.

(She goes back to slicing the ham.)

LENNY: *(Calling)* Gosh, folks, the Dow is downright dreadful today. Boy, I think we're all really going down the shitter. Did ya know that, Nick?

UNCLE NICK: Of course I do! Use your head, man!

(He bursts into tears once more.)

LENNY: Waaahhhh!

CHARLOTTE: Christ! Brilliant, Nick, way to go. Oh Lord, Lenny, hush!

(He stops crying and goes back to his paper. CHARLOTTE takes out her pills and pops one back. She begins dumping potato chips into bowls, grinding her teeth together.)

UNCLE NICK: Gee, Charlotte, see we're still hitting the speed these days, aren't we dear.

LENNY: *(Calling)* You know what I think about sometimes, everyone? Mariachi music.

CHARLOTTE: It's not speed, Nick.

LENNY: *(Calling)* Growing up on the South Side of Chicago--

CHARLOTTE: They're diet pills, Nick. And I think they're magnificent!

LENNY: *(Calling)* --We had this family of Mexicans with a million kids of course, and they were always thumping that Mariachi garbage. Still gives me nightmares to this day. I dream that I'm trapped in a cage with a bunch of Mexicans and donkeys and heaping piles of donkey dung--

CHARLOTTE: Now all we gotta do is work on little Becca.

LENNY: *(Calling)* --And we have nothing but a Mariachi band to listen to. Horrible, especially for a tried and true Italian like myself.

CHARLOTTE: Mother keeps insisting to me what a meatball she's become.

LENNY: *(Calling)* Is anybody hearing me in there?

CHARLOTTE: Mother always did say that it's never too young to think about body image.

LENNY: *(Calling)* Hello? Anybody? Please?

(BECCA bounces into the kitchen then from offstage on one of those big, rubber, bouncing, therapeutic balls that one might see in a Pilates class. She sits on top of it, legs straddled, and drags along with her a dog leash, SPARKY, her invisible dog friend.)

BECCA: *(Very revved up)* What are you guys talking about? 'Cause I wanna talk. I feel like talking a lot for some reason. I could talk about anything, anything at all. *(Addressing the invisible dog leash)* Isn't it great to be alive, Sparky? Sparky thinks it's great to be alive. Come on, boy, come on! Sit! And roll over! That's a good Sparky!

UNCLE NICK: Hey. Whoa. Kid. I'll be frank here. You're thirteen now. And that means you're practically a woman. So ya better get over this invisible dog friend shit, tubbs, and QUICK.

CHARLOTTE: Nick, you're being a prick, now, Nick.

BECCA: I like biscuits. Biscuits and gravy. And chicken wings, right Sparky? You like the bones. Isn't the sky pretty? Gosh, I think my heart is skipping beats, is that possible, Mom? Wow, I feel invincible!

UNCLE NICK: Whoa. Whoa, whoa, whoa, Charlotte, ya didn't.

CHARLOTTE: Didn't what?

UNCLE NICK: Ya gave her one of those pills, didn't ya.

CHARLOTTE: Oh, don't be ridiculous, Nick, she's just excited is all.

BECCA: Say something, Uncle Nick, Sparky wants you to say something. Anything. Anything at all. I wanna talk. I mean, I wanna talk like crazy!

CHARLOTTE: Silence! I need silence! I must be at one with the food, child!

BECCA: Gosh, I like you, Uncle Nick. Sparky, too. I mean, you're kinda sad and pathetic sometimes like Mom always says, but I still like you.

UNCLE NICK: Alright, enough, spring chicken, go eat something or something. *(Calling)* Say, Len!

LENNY: (*Calling*) Why yes there, Nick!

UNCLE NICK: You know what I hate most about this city?

LENNY: (*Calling*) What's that, champ?

UNCLE NICK: The way they keep switching around all the damn one way street signs around all the time, ya notice that, Len? Making 'em go in the other freaking direction. I mean, that's a stupid thing to do, Len. Now, I don't care what anybody says, don't care who you are, that'll fuck ANYBODY up, am I right? 'Course I am.

CHARLOTTE: (*Laughing nervously*) Say, where ya going with this, Nick?

UNCLE NICK: Hell, and don't forget about the goddamned pedestrians either, Len. They don't look when they cross the streets, it's unbelievable.

CHARLOTTE: NICK—

UNCLE NICK: I mean, are we supposed to do ALL the work here as drivers? I mean, people on the street gotta look where they're going, too, ya know. Fucking pedestrians.

CHARLOTTE: Nicholas, stop.

UNCLE NICK: They sure got balls on 'em alright. I mean, is it always our fault? Does it always gotta be our goddamned fault? What if it's their fault, huh? What if they're the ones who get in the goddamned way? Am I really the bad guy here? What if, what if--

CHARLOTTE: Stop it! STOP!!

UNCLE NICK: Right. Okay. Right. That's right. You're right, Charlotte. I'll just shut up now, like I always do, right, I'm shutting up now, everyone.

CHARLOTTE: Yes, and let's just keep it shut, shall we, Nick.

(She takes out a couple of king crabs, and begins whapping them with mallets.)

BECCA: Mom, can I get a meatball? Can I get two? One for Sparky.

CHARLOTTE: Becca, how in the WORLD can you still be hungry. Lord. You're an animal.

BECCA: I am?

UNCLE NICK: Meatballs, huh.

BECCA: Dad always says that in the Italian culture, being voluptuous is very desirable. I would be worshipped over there.

LENNY: *(Calling)* That's right, honey! You tell 'em! You eat those donuts now; you eat 'em all up, sweetheart!

CHARLOTTE: *(Calling)* Say Lenny! You wanna help me husk the corn now, darling?

LENNY: *(Calling)* Now, I told you before, Charlotte, I'm feeling quite flushed. I think I need to be pampered today.

UNCLE NICK: *(Calling)* Oh, grow up, you Italian mutt weasel!

(LENNY bursts into tears again. Then NICK breaks down, burying his head in his hands.)

UNCLE NICK: Oh God, I can't go on like this! I just can't sit here and go on! Swear, I'm never getting in a fucking car again!

LENNY: *(Calling)* What did I do? Why is he yelling at me, Charlotte?

CHARLOTTE: Nick, I won't have it today, Nick, I won't! Must you always destroy EVERYTHING in our lives?!

UNCLE NICK: Me?! I destroy?!

CHARLOTTE: Fuck Jesus, I have a headache.

(CHARLOTTE takes out her bottle of pills, and pops another one back.)

UNCLE NICK: Oh yeah, and THOSE are really gonna help.

CHARLOTTE: Piss off. *(Calling)* Lenny, Nick didn't mean it, dear!

BECCA: *(Calling)* I still love you, Dad! Sparky, too! Ruuufff! *(LENNY stops crying.)* Say, what do you call these pills again, Mom? Sparky wants to know.

CHARLOTTE: Uh, yes, milk pills, dear.

BECCA: But don't you have a prescription for these pills, Mom?

CHARLOTTE: Well, uh. My everyone, doesn't Becca just have an ENORMOUS bone structure? My, yes, it's just ENORMOUS. Really dear, you're ENORMOUS.

BECCA: 'Cause I thought you had a prescription for these pills, Mom.

CHARLOTTE: No no, dear. You're confused. As always.

BECCA: I think you're lying.

CHARLOTTE: And I think you're enormous, dear, so there we are now.

BECCA: Humph. Uncle Nick, you look sad.

UNCLE NICK: You're right! I'm SHIT! Oh God, I'm cracking up! What have I done?!

(CHARLOTTE begins to fry bacon in a frenzy.)

CHARLOTTE: Really, Nick, maybe you should ease up on those bloody mary's for a change. Pace yourself. *(Calling)* Lenny! You wanna help me gut the chicken now, dear?

LENNY: *(Calling)* No. I'm feeling very emotionally fragile today.

CHARLOTTE: Nick, talk to him, would ya.

UNCLE NICK: Jesus. Why am I the problem solver? I'm the one who needs the help around here. God, why is this happening to me, Charlotte?

CHARLOTTE: Nick. I won't have it, Nick.

BECCA: Wow, Mom, you sure are taking a lot of those milk pills today, aren't ya.

UNCLE NICK: Sure are, Mom.

CHARLOTTE: PLEASE. I'm very tense, people. Look, look at my face, why it's all puckered at the corners.

UNCLE NICK: Hey, I'll take a milk pill. Since I'm drinking and all, why not. Hey, thank God I'm not driving, right, ladies? Right? Ha! Yeah! I'm not driving, get it? 'Cause I'm already here! Ha! *(UNCLE NICK laughs at his own joke hysterically, slapping his leg.)* Gimme one, Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE: You sure about that, Nick?

UNCLE NICK: Yeah, fuck it, hand it over. Anything to take the edge off for a while. Maybe I'll get lucky and it'll kill me.

(NICK grabs a pill from CHARLOTTE, and pops it back swiftly.)

CHARLOTTE: (*Calling*) Lenny! You wanna help me skin the rabbit now, darling?

(*She takes out a dead rabbit.*)

LENNY: (*Calling*) No! I'm feeling quite weak! Must be my blood sugar! My, I think I need a cookie!

BECCA: (*At the rabbit*) That's NASTY, Mom. Sparky's traumatized now.

CHARLOTTE: (*Exploding*) Oh, fuck Sparky!!

(*CHARLOTTE puts the rabbit away, and begins frosting a cake.*)

BECCA: Humph. Uncle Nick, tell us a story now, would ya.

UNCLE NICK: A story!

BECCA: Yeah! Sparky's frisky! A story!

UNCLE NICK: Okay. A story. Right. We like stories, don't we, little Becca. It's our bond, isn't it. Golf. You ever played golf before, young Becca? Goddamned ridiculous sport, ya ask me. Not even a sport hardly, strictly a class thing. I'm rich and you're not, that's what golf's all about, kid. Well hell, anyway, one time, yeah one time, I had a Godforsaken golf club swung RIGHT at my ball sack. Did ya know that, Becca? Nearly chopped 'em clean off. Wo-wee, I tell ya.

LENNY: (*Calling*) Why, yes, I remember that, Nick. And I believe that was your father's doing, if I'm remembering correctly.

UNCLE NICK: Why, yes Len! And my, my mother just stood there! Just fucking stood there! Twisting her hands and laughing that stupid laugh of her's and just--STOOD there!!

CHARLOTTE: Okay, Nick, okay, let's see here—

UNCLE NICK: And see, Becca, your aunt---who's dead now, but you know she's dead, doncha, fact, we ALL know she's dead, even though we never TALK about the fact that she's actually dead, do we, young Becca.

CHARLOTTE: Alright, Nick, that's enough.

UNCLE NICK: See, she stayed with me the whole time. Just like I tried to stay with her the whole time, in the end, in the end, I mean. (*BEAT as NICK stares off for a moment, and then shakes it off.*) Ah, but we're tough, aren't we. A tough lot we are. It's in our blood.

(He thumps his chest.)

BECCA: Gosh, that's horrible, Uncle Nick. You've had a rough life, haven't ya. *(BEAT)* Mom, I'm hungry. I wanna eat meatballs! I wanna eat meatballs forever!

CHARLOTTE: No, you don't, dear. It's all in your head, Becca. You're weak!

BECCA: Gosh, I am?

LENNY: *(Calling)* Oh, let the poor girl eat for once, Charlotte, it's Christmas.

CHARLOTTE: *(Calling)* It is NOT Christmas, Lenny.

LENNY: *(Calling)* Thanksgiving then, whatever the heck.

CHARLOTTE: *(Calling)* It is NOT a holiday, Lenny, it's SUNDAY dinner, Lenny! You don't even know what day it is, do you? See? What'd I tell ya? He doesn't pay attention to anything, to any of us!

LENNY: *(To himself)* I am not going to cry, I am not going to cry.

UNCLE NICK: Boy, I love drinking.

CHARLOTTE: Well, that's just your problem, Nick!

BECCA: Uncle Nick, you ugly.

UNCLE NICK: Well, you ain't making the cover of Vogue any time soon either kid, so there ya have it.

BECCA: *(Singing like a hoochie-mama)* U-G-L-Y, you ain't got no alibi, you ugly! Uncle Nick is ugly!

UNCLE NICK: *(Losing it)* Oh God! She's right! I'm a piece of shit, and I deserve to be flushed! I didn't mean to hit that poor--God, why! Why do these fucking things always happen to me?

(He buries his head in his hands again. CHARLOTTE chops carrots at a rapid speed.)

CHARLOTTE: Okay, Nick, okay, darling. *(Calling)* Lenny! The eggs, Lenny, I need the eggs!

BECCA: Are we rich?

CHARLOTTE: What kind of question is that? *(Calling)* Lenny! Answer your daughter!

LENNY: (*Calling*) I can't, Charlotte, I'm reading. It's me time. Besides, you know how I get those panic attacks if I'm asked to do too much, dear.

(*CHARLOTTE takes out a pie tin, muttering angrily.*)

CHARLOTTE: Goddamned pansy ass.

BECCA: Ya know, you get way too wound up over things, Mom. You're making Sparky nervous.

(*CHARLOTTE begins to gut an enormous pumpkin.*)

CHARLOTTE: Don't you tell ME what to do, young lady! Focus on yourself! Now, be careful! You're gonna break the floor bouncing around on that thing.

BECCA: I am not! Come on, Spark, keep up!

UNCLE NICK: God, I love getting tanked.

CHARLOTTE: (*Calling*) Lenny darling! You wanna get the fois gras out now, and start passing it around to everyone? Let's look classy for when the parents come, shall we?

UNCLE NICK: Yeah, since we're such a CLASSY family and all, yeah soooo classy! Alright, Becca, gimme some of that there liver, sweets.

CHARLOTTE: Alright, Nick. That's it, I'm cutting ya off.

UNCLE NICK: Like hell you are. (*Calling*) Hey Len! You want a drink in there, old buddy, old pal?

LENNY: (*Calling*) No, Nick. It's not even noon or haven't you noticed.

BECCA: You stink, Uncle Nick.

UNCLE NICK: Can it, tubbs. (*Calling*) So, Len, how's business?

LENNY: (*Calling*) I'm not lending you any more money, Nick.

UNCLE NICK: Jesus! Was I even asking? No! Did you hear me asking? No! What kind of a man do you think I am? Bunch of tight-wadded bastards. Won't budge for nobody, the both of ya!

BECCA: Gross, you smell nasty, Uncle Nick.

UNCLE NICK: Well, you're nasty, kid! Now, get away from me!
And take that mangy mutt with ya! You two are invading my space!

(CHARLOTTE puts on a pair of rubber gloves, pulls out a bucket and brush, and dives to the floor scrubbing it furiously.)

BECCA: Humph! Boy, am I hungry.

CHARLOTTE: Ya know, that reminds me. I've been thinking lately. They say you are what you eat. Does that mean that people who eat a lot have better personalities? I mean, I think sometimes, that if someone opened me up, there'd be nothing inside, yes, nothing at all.

(She stops, contemplates this thought, and then goes back to scrubbing.)

BECCA: Gosh, Mom, that's depressing. Uncle Nick, why does your face get all red when you drink? Are you angry or something?

CHARLOTTE: *(Calling)* Lenny! The fois grois! PLEASE!

LENNY: Alright, alright, I'm coming, I'm moving. Hold your ponies!

UNCLE NICK: *(Calling, plastered at this point)* Horses, Len, that'd be horses!

LENNY: Okay, Nick, okay now, buddy. Let's settle down now, partner. Whoa horsy!

(LENNY stands up, folds his paper, goes into the kitchen, takes a plate of fois grois out, and walks around offering it to everyone still in his bare feet.)

LENNY: Here. We're classy now.

(BECCA begins bouncing around in hyperactive circles.)

BECCA: Gosh, the colors in here are so pretty, Mom. It's like a soft, creamy, eggshell land. Like in catalogues. How the beds are made all perfect and the wind's blowing the curtains just right and nothing's messy and everything's clean. I never really noticed it before. But now I'm noticing. I feel like I'm noticing things for the first time all around me in ways I never noticed before. Things about Sparky even. Why is that?

LENNY: Good God, Charlotte, you didn't give her one of those evil, womanly, diet pills of yours, did ya?

CHARLOTTE: *(In her own world)* Perfect! It must be perfect!

(She takes out a huge feather duster and begins dusting everything, including UNCLE NICK, LENNY & BECCA.)

LENNY: Aw, heck, Charlotte, now what'd you have to go and do that for? Your parents are coming and look at you, the both of ya!

UNCLE NICK: I know, Len, a couple of speed freaks we got on our hands here, buddy, it's terrible!

LENNY: Awful!

UNCLE NICK: A disgrace!

LENNY: Yeah! And that means all the pressure's on ME now to act normal, well that's just great, Charlotte.

(NICK sits down on one of the stools, steadying himself.)

UNCLE NICK: You tell her, Len. Gimme some of that liver. Better even out my buzz here now. Don't wanna seem TOO tanked for when the old man arrives, now do we.

LENNY: No, we certainly wouldn't want that, Nick. You sure don't hold your liquor like us Italians, Nick.

BECCA: Uncle Nick, you look old.

UNCLE NICK: Shut up, kid. You're really killing my buzz here, ya know that? You know how hard it is to get the perfect buzz these days? And you're killing it! *(He slams his bloody Mary and wipes his lips.)* God, I miss her. It's never gonna end, is it. The pain.

(A silence.)

CHARLOTTE: Nick—oh, Nick--

BECCA: Say Dad? Can I get a poodle? Sparky wants a friend and he told me that poodles are the smartest kinds of dogs. Sparky needs to be challenged, Dad.

LENNY: Sure, honey. I love spoiling my children. You know wanna why? Because I was never spoiled. I had to fight for everything. But you'll never have to fight. So in a way, I'll never really understand you, will I.

BECCA: Oh. *(A beat)* Gosh, Dad.

(LENNY pats her on the head, and then goes over and begins nibbling on a plate of food.)

UNCLE NICK: God, I would KILL to be unconscious right about now. I mean--no, wait, I didn't mean that! I don't wanna kill anybody!

(He buries his head in his hands again.)

CHARLOTTE: *(Laughing nervously)* Oh Gosh, Nick, gosh, you're funny.

(She begins spraying air-freshener on everything and everyone.)

BECCA: Say, Uncle Nick, do you like boys? 'Cause Sparky thinks you look like you like boys.

UNCLE NICK: Oh, for Christ's sake, will somebody please shut this kid up already before I implode?! Look at me. I'm a mess. What am I even doing here? I'm the devil! And I deserve to burn!

LENNY: *(A beat as LENNY clears his throat)* Well now.

(JOEY rolls in riding a skateboard wearing a pair of shades.)

JOEY: Alright, people, here's the deal. I have arrived. So we can let the party begin now. Where's the champagne, come on, whose hording the bubbly?

CHARLOTTE: Look, its Joey, Nick, Joey's here. Yes. Let's say hi to Joey now, Nick.

UNCLE NICK: Right. Hello, Joey. Yes. Well. Right. The hell did you just come from?

JOEY: Ah, ya know, the usual. Been busy, Uncle Nick. Places to go, people to see, chicks to bang—

UNCLE NICK: What?!

JOEY: -- Appointments to keep. Ya know how a man's world goes.

UNCLE NICK: Huh. Well, hey, one thing's for sure: *(looking at the skateboard)* sure are making one hell of a damn racket on that machine there, aren't ya, young man.

JOEY: Hey. I'm a MAN, Uncle Nick. I'm a man's man! And I can do whatever I want! Hell, I own this joint! Right, Mom? I'm the king of this cuckoo house!

(He flexes and continues to ride around on the skateboard.)

LENNY: Easy, Joe. No skid marks this time, okay little champ? That means no kick flips, little guy. Your daddy here had to spend a LOT of the old cash money to fix all that tile you chipped away last time, okay special bud?

JOEY: Hey, look at me! Watch me ollie! Don't I rock?

UNCLE NICK: Boy, quit riding around in circles like that. Think I'm about ready to blow chunks here in a minute.

(JOEY rides around BECCA in a circle as NICK rubs his eyes.)

JOEY: Gross. Uncle Nick's gonna hurl. Didn't you hurl LAST time you were here? That's nasty.

BECCA: YOU'RE nasty.

JOEY: Oh hey there, Miss Sausage Ass. How's it hanging? Still loving that sausage, I see.

LENNY: Oh, Joe. You've really got spunk there, doncha buddy. Now, let's be nice.

JOEY: What for? I'm amazing! Uncle Nick, pour me a drink, will ya?

UNCLE NICK: Right away, young man. That's the spirit. From one generation to the next, let's pass the disease on down now.

LENNY: Hey, hold it, I don't think so, Nick. Let's use our heads today for once, shall we.

JOEY: Aw, come on, Dad! I'm a MAN! Mom, tell this sucker what's up!

(LENNY is struggling not to explode into tears.)

LENNY: Okay now, let's just try to be nice and passive for when the grandparents come today, okay there, little champ?

JOEY: Hey, what do you want from me? Ain't my fault I'm the hottest thing that ever did come out of this family. Mom, why'd you marry this fool anyway? Jeez.

(LENNY gasps, sucking back the tears.)

LENNY: Oh, Joe, heh heh. Now, what'd we talk about with all that cockiness talk. I thought we were gonna work on that, little buddy.

JOEY: Ah, fuck all that. I'm ALL cock!