

55 and Over

by

[Zalman Velvel](#)

A Comedy in Two Acts

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A Comedy in Two Acts

Cast of Characters

Annie - 80, widow

Moe – 75, widower

Mr. Z. – 44, manager of Tidewater Housing Cooperative

Ariella - 17, pregnant, Bobby's girlfriend

Bobby – 30, unemployed singer, Moe's grandson

Time

The first act starts Monday morning, 8:00 AM. The second act is a week and a half later.

Place

The Tidewater Housing Cooperative, a 55 and over community, in Boca Raton, Florida.

The Set

Stage right is the hallway between Moe's rented co-op and the co-op that Annie owns. Their doors are opposite each. The rest of the set is the interior of Annie's co-op, the living room and attached kitchen, with 1 bedroom stage left. The bathroom, stage right, is always offstage.

Summary of Scenes

ACT ONE

Scene One – the present, 8AM, hallway of co-op building (**page 4**)

Scene Two – 8 AM, the next day, Annie's co-op (**page 13**)

Scene Three – 8 AM, one week later, Annie's co-op (**page 24**)

ACT TWO

Scene One – 6 AM, two days later, Annie's co-op (**page 44**)

Scene Two – 9 AM, the next day, Annie's co-op (**page 60**)

Scene Three – afternoon, the same day, Annie's co-op (**page 70**)
Then a week later, noon, Annie's co-op

55 and Over

ACT ONE

Scene One

[It is 8 AM on Monday morning at the Tidewater Housing Cooperative in Boca Raton, Florida. **Mr. Z. ENTERS** upstage right. He is carrying a bolt cutter and a large ring of keys. He walks down the hallway and stops at Moe's door. He listens, **hears a TV**, then sighs loudly.]1

MR. Z.
(knocking)

Moe?

(knocking louder) Come on Moe, I can hear your TV.
(the TV is turned off)

(knocking even louder) Moe, come on. Open up.
(Mr. Z. shakes the huge set of keys)

MOE, I HAVE THE KEY. IF YOU DON'T OPEN UP, I'M COMING IN ANYWAY!

Okay, we'll do this the hard way.
(Mr. Z. puts in a key, and opens the door. It stops after a few inches because the chain is hooked.)

MOE
(talking through the space in the door)

Go away ... you bastid!

MR. Z.
Moe, either you unhook the chain ... or I'm going to cut it with my bolt cutters.

MOE
(still through the space in the door) Leave me alone, you bastid son of a bitch!

(**ANNIE ENTERS** stage left in her co-op. She puts on a scarf, grabs her Bible, and then her rosary beads. She hears the commotion outside her door, opposite Moe's. She walks over and stands at her door and listens.)

MR. Z.
Moe, we gave you the whole weekend to move.
You have the notice.

MOE

What notice? I didn't see no notice.

MR. Z.

What notice?!

(tears the notice from the door)

This notice. The one that's tacked to your door!

(hands notice through the door)

Here!

MOE

Oh, that.

I lost my glasses.

I don't read so good without them.

I thought it was the bug man saying he was coming to spray.

MR. Z.

Well, if you read the notice,

it says the Marshall is coming today to kick you out.

He was going to do it Friday ... but I asked him to wait.

I did you a big favor ... gave you the weekend to move.

Now what the hell are you still doing here?

MOE

What am I still doing here?

I gave you my son's check, you bastid son of a bitch bastid!

That's what I'm still doing here.

I paid you.

MR. Z.

Your son's check bounced ... like we all knew it would.

Now are you going to open up, or not?

[Moe pushes the door closed, then opens it with the chain off. **MOE**
ENTERS standing in the doorway.]

MOE

I ain't invitin' you in.

You can just stand there and talk to me.

MR. Z.

(looks around Moe and shakes his head)

You're not packed!

MOE

Why would I pack?
Where else do I got to go?
Nowhere, that's where else.

Look, Mr. Z., here
Let's work this out.

MR. Z.

What's this?

MOE

Some of the rent I owe.

MR. Z.

One hundred and twenty ... one ... two ... three dollars?
I can't take a hundred and twenty-three dollars.
You're two thousand behind in rent, and you hand me a 123 dollars!

MOE

It's all I got.
Everything.
Tell the owner to take it until I get more.
I'll get more.
I'm workin' on it.

MR. Z.

We're beyond asking the owner for anything, Moe.
He told me not to take any more partials, so I can't take partials.

MOE

But that's everything I got.
Everything.
My new heart medicine costs \$500 a month ...

MR. Z.

(imitating Moe's Brooklyn accent)

... and I only got a thousand a month social security.
And I still need to buy food and pay the electric and gas.

(Back to his regular speech) Yeah, I heard that sob story.

MOE

It's the truth, you bastid son of bitch bastid ... bastid.

MR. Z.

Okay, that's it!
I'm the manager here ...
I put my job on the line for you ...
I postponed the marshal to get you some extra time ...
I tried to help you ...
and then you curse me out?!

Go to hell Moe.

MOE

Wait a minute, Mr. Z., damn it!

MR. Z.

No, I'm not waiting any minute.
I'm all done waiting.
The Marshall is going to be here in an hour.
Whatever he finds, he's putting out on the curb.
That means you, too, if you're still in here.

MOE

You can't do that!

MR. Z.

Wanna bet?

Look, take some good advice.
Put whatever you have that's worth a damn in a suitcase and skee-daddle.

MOE

And then what?

MR. Z.

You ain't my problem after you skee - daddle.
You've had months to figure this out.
And all you figured out is how to call me a son-of-a-bitch bastid bastid.

So ... see ya ...
Wouldn't want to be ya.

[Mr. Z. walks back down the hallway. Moe comes out into the hallway.]

MOE

YOU BASTID SON OF A BITCH BASTID ... BASTID ... **YOU BASTID!**
That's a triple bastid, you bastid!
AND KISS MY ASS while you're at it! HERE! KISS THIS!

[MOE PULLS DOWN HIS PANTS, AND MOONS MR. Z.]

MR. Z.

Pull your pants back up, you crazy son of a bitch!
You'll get arrested for extreme ugliness.

MOE

No, you kiss me right here. (points)
Plant a big wet kiss right on my ass.
Give me a hickey on my hemorrhoid while you're at it.
And then I'll fart in your face.

You cold blooded bastid!

MR. Z.

You're trash.
Always knew you were.
New York City trash.
Goodbye Moe.

[MR. Z. EXITS]

(Annie opens her door. Moe is still standing there with his ass hanging out)

ANNIE

Moe!

(She turns her head, embarrassed)

MOE

Oh!
I'm sorry Annie.
Let me get buckled up here.
(Moe hurries to get his pants back up.)

ANNIE

Are you okay?

MOE

What?
Am I what?

ANNIE

Are you okay?
I couldn't help but hear ...
I was on my way to 9 o'clock mass ... and ...

MOE

Yeah ... yeah.
You couldn't help but hear.
Why you askin' if I'm okay ... if you couldn't help but hear?

For your information, I'm not okay. Nowhere close to okay.
In fact, I'm fucked!
I got no place to go!
(he clings to her and starts crying)

ANNIE

Moe ... Moe ... Let go!
We're in the hallway. People will see us.

MOE

I never thought my life would come to this ...
75 years old and I got nothin'.
Nothin'.
Just nothin'.

ANNIE

Moe, please.
Let go.
You're embarrassing me.

MOE

(let's go of her)

I'm sorry, Annie.
This ain't your problem, I know.

ANNIE

(fights a battle inside herself, then opens her purse)

How much do you need?
I have a few dollars in my purse.

MOE

Two thousand.
That's how far I'm behind.
But I got 123 dollars, right here.
Take that off the two thousand and that's what I need.

ANNIE

I don't have that much!
I'm on Social Security just like you ...
like everyone else here at the co-op.

MOE

Yeah.
Like everyone else.
Only nobody else is renting – they own their places.
I'm the only one getting kicked out. Just me.

ANNIE

Look, Moe, I have to go or I'll be late for church.
Here's a hundred dollars.
It's all I can spare.

Then the best I can do is pray for you.
I'll ask Jesus to help.

(Annie walks down the hallway now)

MOE

Yeah, sure ... ask Jesus.

ANNIE

Jesus watches over us.

MOE

I'm Jewish, Annie.

ANNIE

He helps Jewish people, too.

MOE

Yeah, sure.
He was a big help during the Holocaust.
(Moe runs down the hallway and stops Annie)

ANNIE

I'm going to be late.

MOE

Annie ...

ANNIE

They start right at 9.

MOE

Annie ...

ANNIE

I have to get going.

MOE
Annie ...

ANNIE
(sighs) Yes, Moe ... what is it?

MOE
We've been passing in the halls for what, 5 years now?

ANNIE
Yes, that feels about right.

MOE
I never been in your place ... and you never been in mine.

ANNIE
No, we haven't visited.

MOE
Your place is probably the same size as mine. One bedroom. Right?

ANNIE
Yes, it's a one bedroom.

MOE
And you got a separate living room and a kitchen, right?

ANNIE
Yes.

MOE
Do you have a couch in your living room?

ANNIE
A couch?
Why would you ask about ... oh.

MOE
I figure I have a better chance with you and your couch ... then with prayers.

ANNIE
Moe ... it wouldn't be right.

MOE
Is it right for me to live out of a suitcase in the woods?
I'll be dead in less than a month.

ANNIE

Moe ...

MOE

Maybe sooner.
My heart ain't no good no more.

ANNIE

Moe ...
I helped ... I offered you a hundred dollars!
And I offered to pray for you!

MOE

And I'll still be dead as a doornail.

Look, I wouldn't be no trouble, Annie.
I take care of myself –
do all my own cooking and cleaning and laundry.
Been doing it for more than 20 years ...
since the missus passed.

You could come inside my place and see how I live.
It ain't so bad.

Annie, no one would know I'm stayin' with you.
I'll be quiet as a mouse.

ANNIE

Mr. Z. has spies everywhere.
(she walks down the hall, away from him)
No, I'll pray for you ...
That's the best I can do.

MOE

My Mother used to say:
You shouldn't ask God ...
for something you can do yourself.

Annie, you're gonna have my death on your hands.
You coulda helped ... given me your couch ... but didn't.
Tell that to Jesus.

(Annie stops walking, thinks about it, and lights go down)

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ACT ONE

Scene Two

[It is 8 AM on Tuesday, the next day, at the Tidewater Housing Cooperative. **MR. Z. ENTERS** upstage right. He walks down the hallway and stops at Annie's door. He listens, hears a TV. **THEN HE KNOCKS.**]

MR. Z.

Annie, you in there?

[There is the sound of a toilet flushing, offstage, in Annie's co-op. **MOE ENTERS** from the bathroom wearing an old pair of pajamas. He looks through the peephole in the front door and then knocks on Annie's bedroom door. **ANNIE ENTERS** wearing an old bathrobe.]

(the conversation between Annie and Moe is in whispers until noted different)

ANNIE

Who is it?

MOE

The son of a bitch bastid.

[**MR. Z. KNOCKS LOUDER**]

MR. Z.

Annie?
Annie, you home?

ANNIE

What should I do?

MOE

Don't answer and he'll go away.

MR. Z.

Annie, I hear your tv.
Come on, answer the door.

ANNIE

He's not going away.

MOE

Give him another minute and he'll walk.

[MR. Z. KNOCKS EVEN LOUDER]

MR. Z.

Come on, Annie. Open up!

[MR. Z. KNOCKS LOUDER STILL]

ANNIE

He's not walking.

MOE

Yeah, he's a triple scoop of bastid.

ANNIE

(calling out) What do you want Mr. Z.?

Mr. Z.

There's rumors you have someone living with you.

ANNIE

I told you he has spies everywhere.

Mr. Z.

I have to come in and make an inspection - check things out.

MOE

Let me handle him.

ANNIE

No.

MOE

You don't gotta let him in.

MR. Z.

I have the passkey, Annie. (he shakes his keys)

ANNIE

I'm letting him in.

MOE

No.
You don't gotta.
Let me handle it ...
I been handlin' bullies like him in Brooklyn my whole life.

ANNIE

Are you sure you can handle him?

MOE

Watch me.

ANNIE

Okay.
But be nice.

MOE

Oh sure. I'll be nice.

(they stop whispering)

MOE

(opens the door a little way because the chain is on)

What do you want Mr. Son of a Bitch Bastid?

ANNIE

That's nice?

Mr. Z.

You can't stay here, freeloader.

MOE

Says who?

MR. Z.

Says the rules.

MOE

Yeah, what do the rules say?

MR. Z.

No cohabitation.

MOE

We ain't cohabitin'.
We're ... roommates.

Roommates is cohabitation, you jerk.

MR. Z.

Yeah, well ...
well ...
well ...

MOE

Well, what, dummy?

MR. Z.

Well ...

MOE

Some time while I'm young.

MR. Z.

Well, we're getting' married.
You putz.

MOE

Bullshit.

MR. Z.

Moe, have you lost your mind?!

ANNIE
(whispering)

That's right, you shmucky putz.
Annie and I are getting' hitched.

MOE

Well, unless you can produce a marriage license, you're getting booted out of here.

MR. Z.

Nobody is booting anyone.
Annie and I are going down to city hall ... today!
That's right today.

MOE

Moe!

ANNIE

And then we'll be married ...

MOE

MR. Z.

Yeah right.

MOE

Yeah, that's right!

And then you can shove your cohabitating rules where the sun don't shine ...
Watta you think of that,
you bastid son of a bitch bastid?
With a double scoop of eat shit and die!

ANNIE

Moe!

MOE

You want I should show you again?
Here, take a look at this.
(Moe turns around and pulls down his pajamas and shoves his ass up to the door)
Now kiss it.
Go ahead and kiss it.

ANNIE

MOE!

MR. Z.

God damn it, would you stop flashing your boney ass at me!
It's disgusting!

MOE

You're even more disgustin',
you dumb son of a bitch putz shmuck bastid –
With a **triple** scoop now of eat shit and die!

MR. Z.

I'll be back here at 5.
If you can't produce a marriage license, I'm calling an emergency meeting of the Board.
They'll toss both of you out onto the street.

Annie, I'm surprised at you!
You're a good Catholic ... a church goer.
I didn't think you were like this.

ANNIE

I'm not like this!
It's Moe ... he's-

(Moe puts his hand over her mouth)

MOE

You can't give in to him.
Let me handle it.
I tell ya, I can handle him.

MR. Z.

You're both gonna be out on the street, with the rest of Moe's garbage.

[MR. Z. EXITS]

ANNIE

You have lost your mind!
You have definitely lost your mind.
I said I would help you out.
I didn't say anything about *marrying you*!

Because I'm not marrying you!
I am definitely NOT marrying you!
How did ever get that idea?

MOE

I don't know ... it just come to me ... like an inspiration.

ANNIE

Yes, well, now you've inspired yourself right out here.
And I'm not going with you.

(There is a long pause while they both think about it)

MOE

Hey what's so bad about it?

ANNIE

What's so bad about it?!
What's so bad about it?
What's so bad about it?!
You just don't up and marry someone!

MOE

What do you have to lose?

ANNIE

What do I have to lose?!
What do I have to lose?!
What do I have to lose?!
I'm not giving you half of what I own!

MOE

I don't want anything of yours – I'll sign any paper you want about that.

ANNIE

And I'm not sleeping with you!
NO! I'm not sleeping with you!
I'm definitely NOT sleeping with you!
I'm not sleeping with you ... ever!

MOE

You don't have to keep repeatin' things.
I can still hear pretty good.

ANNIE

I want to make sure you hear me.
I'm not sleeping with you – ever!

MOE

I'm not asking to sleep with you.
The couch is just fine.

ANNIE

Yeah, you say that now.
You say that now.
You say that **now!**

MOE

You're startin' the repeatin' again.

ANNIE

If you come creeping into my bed ... in the middle of the night ...
I'm warning you, I'll keep a butcher knife under my pillow.
You come creeping and I'll start chopping.
Cut that thing right off.
I'll just cut it off! Do you hear me?

MOE

I said I can still hear pretty good.

ANNIE

And then I'll put it in a pot of boiling water and make a soup out of it.
Do you hear that?
I'll cut it off and make it into a soup.

MOE

I said I can hear you – not that I want to hear about *that*.

ANNIE

Just wanted to make sure you heard me.

MOE

Don't worry - you won't have to waste your energy –
My equipment don't work so good anymore.
It hasn't for a while.

And from the looks of you, your equipment has been in lay away longer than mine.

ANNIE

That's none of your business!

MOE

Okay. Okay. Your equipment ain't none of my business.

ANNIE

It sure as hell isn't.

MOE

Annie, using the word 'Hell?'

ANNIE

It's your fault. You've made me craZ.y with all this talk of marrying.

MOE

Now, just to set the record straight ...
Is there anything else that's gripin' you about getting' married ...
Except giving me half of nothing ...
And sneakin' into bed with you –
Which I ain't gonna do because I like the way my putZ. is attached?

ANNIE

Well ... there's religion.

MOE

What about it?

ANNIE

You're a Jew.

MOE

Yeah, so?
What difference does it make?
I mean, do you want me to convert?

ANNIE

Would you?
Would you get baptized?
That might make it all right in the eyes of God.

MOE

No. I can't get baptized.

ANNIE

Why not?

MOE

Cause I can't!

ANNIE

Why not?

MOE

Cause ... cause ... just because.

ANNIE

Because what?

MOE

If you gotta know, because of my mother.
She made me promise ... on her deathbed ... that I would always be a Jew.
She lost her whole family to the Nazis ...

You want me to break a sacred deathbed promise to my mother?

ANNIE

No, you can't break a deathbed promise.

MOE

Look Annie ... are we going to have children?

ANNIE

I'm 80 years old!

MOE

Then we can both practice Voodoo for all it matters.

ANNIE

I'll have to ask Father Mulcahey for his permission.
If he says I can't marry out of my faith, then I can't.
I'll be excommunicated!

MOE

We don't need Father Mulcahey.
We'll get married by a Justice of the Peace.

ANNIE

No!
It has to be right in the eyes of the Church.

MOE

Well, if it has to right in the eyes of the church,
then let's go right to the top ... over Father Mulcahey's head.

ANNIE

You'll never get to speak to the Cardinal.

MOE

Higher.

ANNIE

The Pope is too far away.

MOE

I'm talkin' even higher.
We'll go right to Jesus

ANNIE

We can't go to Jesus.

MOE

Of course we can.
Jesus is everywhere ... ain't he?
He's in your church ... and he's right here, in this co-op, ain't he?
Well, ain't he?

ANNIE

Yes, I guess he's here.
(she covers her face) OH! What he must think of me?!

MOE

You'll see what he thinks of you.
We'll get dressed and go right down to your Church.

And when we get there, you'll kneel down and pray.
You'll tell Jesus you're saving an old man from death and starvation by marryin' him.
Then you'll ask Jesus what he thinks of that.
I'll go along with whatever Jesus says.

ANNIE
Jesus would never allow it!

MOE
We'll see about that.

Jesus is love, ain't he?
I see that written everywhere.
Jesus is love.

ANNIE
Yes.

MOE
And helpin' people is an act of love, ain't it?

ANNIE
Yes, but-

MOE
But nothin'.
If Jesus says no, then it's no.

ANNIE
Okay ... that's fine with me.

MOE
But we have to hear, "No."
A clear straight no.
It can be words ... or even a sign.

If he don't say nothin' ...
if we can't see or hear a clear straight answer of no
Then you gotta go down to the Justice of the Peace and marry me.

ANNIE
He'll say no.
You'll see.
You'll see.
You'll see.

MOE
You're starting the repeatin' again.

55 and Over

ACT ONE

Scene Three

[It is morning, a week later at the Tidewater Housing Cooperative. **THERE IS THE SOUND OF A TOILET FLUSHING** and then **MOE ENTERS** downstage right wearing the same pajamas. He busies himself in the kitchen making 2 cups of tea. **HE KNOCKS ON ANNIE'S BEDROOM DOOR**, stage left.]

MOE

I made you tea ... the way you like it ... 2 sugars and milk

You want it inside, or are you comin' out?

ANNIE

(offstage) How much milk did you put in it?

MOE

I been making you tea for a week now.

First I forgot the milk ...

Then it was too much milk.

Then it was not enough milk ...

I think I got it right now. Three tablespoons.

(he opens her door)

So you want it inside ... or -

ANNIE

(offstage) MOE!

MOE

I didn't see nothin'!

I didn't see nothin', I tell ya!

ANNIE

(offstage) Remember the rules - we're supposed to knock and ask permission before we open any doors ...

bedroom doors ...

and ...

MOE

... bathroom doors.
Yeah, I remember.
I'm sorry!

ANNIE

(offstage) Leave it on the kitchen table, please.

[ANNIE ENTERS wearing her old bathrobe]

MOE

You want I should also make you a toasted bagel?

ANNIE

How are you going to butter it?

[ANNE EXITS to the bathroom downstage right]

MOE

I been making you a toasted bagel for a week now, too.
First, I put cream cheese on it, like I like ...
but you don't like cream cheese.

No, it had to be butter.

So first, I put on too much butter.
Then I didn't put on enough butter ...
I think I got the right amount of butter now. **Two** tablespoons.

So you want a toasted bagel or not?

ANNIE

MOE!

PLEASE!

I'm busy right now ... you know I don't like to talk when I'm in the bathroom.

[**BOBBY ENTERS** upstage right, in the hallway. He walks down and
KNOCKS ON MOE'S PREVIOUS APARTMENT DOOR.]

ANNIE

Is that someone at our door?

MOE

(looks through the viewer)

No, it's across the hall.

ANNIE
WHO IS IT?

MOE
Don't know.

[BOBBY IS KNOCKING LOUD AND INSISTANTLY. His back is to Moe. There is a guitar strapped to his back.]

MOE
(Moe opens the door)
Who're you lookin' for?

BOBBY
What?
(turns around)

MOE
Bobby?

BOBBY
Gramps?

MOE
Come here, you!
(they hug)
What's it been – five years?

BOBBY
More like ten.

MOE
Maybe ... time slips away as you get older.
(they stand apart now)

BOBBY
I was told your place was 2E.
(looks at piece of paper)
Yeah. 2E.
What're you doin' at 2F?

MOE
It's a long story.
So how's your father doin'?

BOBBY

They locked him up two months ago.
He's doin' a nickel to a dime in Sing Sing for kiting checks.

I stayed in his place until the landlord evicted me.

MOE

Yeah, it runs in the family.
So you came here?
There's such a thing as a phone call, you know.
I'm too old for surprises.

[ANNIE ENTERS. She walks up to the door and stands there.]

BOBBY

I called.
Your phone is out of order.

ANNIE

Moe, who is your guest?

MOE

Sorry ...
Bobby, say hello to Annie.

BOBBY

Hi.

ANNIE

Hello.

MOE

Bobby is my grandson.

ANNIE

Oh?

MOE

Annie and me just got married.

BOBBY

Oh?

MOE

But we ain't sleepin' together.

ANNIE
Moe!

MOE
She doesn't want to.

ANNIE
Moe!

MOE
Don't matter, really,
My equipment is broken.

ANNIE
MOE!

MOE
I mean, I ain't sure if it still works ...
been a long time since it's been called into service ...
if you know what I mean.

ANNIE
Moe, stop spreading our business all around the hallway.
Invite your grandson in!

MOE
Oh ... yeah ... Bobby come in.

[Bobby enters the apartment and Moe closes the door]

ANNIE
Can I get you something, Bobby?
Tea?

BOBBY
Do you have any coffee?
I need something strong.
We were hitchhikin' all night and just got dropped off.

ANNIE
I have instant – Taster's Choice

BOBBY
Taster's is fine.
With extra milk and sugar, please.

MOE
(whispers to himself)

We?

ANNIE
One instant coffee coming up ... light and sweet.

BOBBY
Thank you ... m'am?
You know, Gramma Annie doesn't sound right.
What should I call you?

ANNIE
Just plain Annie is fine.

MOE
(whispers to himself again)
We?

ANNIE
So do you play that guitar professionally, Bobby?

BOBBY
Yes ... but work is slow now.
Look, do you mind if I use the bathroom?
I'd like to wash the road grime off of my face.

ANNIE
No.
Help yourself.
It's over there, to your left.

[Bobby takes the guitar from his back, and leans it against the wall.
BOBBY EXITS to the bathroom. We hear the sound of water running.]

MOE
We?!

ANNIE
Moe, why do you keep saying "we?"

MOE
Because Bobby said "we."
I'm sure I heard him say, "**we** were hitchhikin' all night."

(knocks on bathroom door) Who was the "**we**," Bobby?

[**BOBBY ENTERS** wiping his face with a towel]

BOBBY

“We” what, Gramps?

MOE

You said “we.”

You said, “We were hitchhikin’ all night.”

BOBBY

Oh yeah. Me and Ar -

Christ! Jesus!

I forgot all about her!

[**BOBBY EXITS** running. Annie does not see him leave.]

ANNIE

Coffee is ready. I’ll put it on the –

Where’s Bobby?

MOE

I think he went to get the ‘we.’

[**There is a knock on the door.** Moe goes over and opens it. **ARIELLA ENTERS ALONG WITH BOBBY.** She is 17, and has a large valise beside her. **She is VERY pregnant.** Bobby leads her into Annie’s living room to sit on the couch.

BOBBY

Here, baby.

Sit down and rest.

[Bobby runs back to the doorway, and rolls the valise in, putting it next to his guitar.]

MOE

Well, now we know who the “we” is.

BOBBY

Ariella, meet my Grampa Moe ... and his wife, Annie.

ARIELLA

Hi Grampa Moe ...
and Grandma Annie.

BOBBY

She ain't my real Grandma ... my real one died 20 years ago.
Annie and Gramps here just got married ...

MOE

But we're not sleeping together.

ANNIE

MOE!

MOE

Well, I figured you wanted her to know, too – save your reputation.

BOBBY

It's okay.
We don't mind, do we, Ariella?

ARIELLA
(southern accent)

My momma used to say:
“Whatever two adults do in the privacy of their bedroom is their own business.”

Of course, Momma was a major slut.
The noises that came outa her bedroom ... oh Lordy!
Woulda made Jesus fall off the cross.

Whatsa matter, Annie?
You don't like sex no more?
I heard it's that way when you get elderly.

ANNIE

Why is sex always on everyone's mind?
Moe and I have a marriage of convenience.
That's all.
We arranged a license so he could stay with me ... instead of being homeless.

BOBBY

Homeless?

MOE

It's a long story.
(looks at valise) Speaking of which ... are you two going to be staying in town?

BOBBY

We hope so.

MOE

Watta you mean - you hope so?

BOBBY

We were hoping we could stay with you.

[It is dead quiet. Then **MOE WHISTLES LOUD**]

MOE

Well, what do you think of that, Annie?

ANNIE

Oh no! They can't stay here.
This is strictly 55 and over.
No no no no no.
NO!

BOBBY

Can't you at least have visitors?

ANNIE

During the day. Yes.
But overnight company?
No!
No no no no no.
NO!

MOE

The old folks here like their peace and quiet.

ARIELLA

Sounds more like a prison than a co-op.

ANNIE

Either way, that's the way it is.
You can't stay here.
No no no no no.
NO!

MOE

Annie gets to repeating herself when she gets excited.

BOBBY

But we don't have any place else to go.

ARIELLA

Nowhere.

ANNIE

You must have some other family.

BOBBY

Not really.

My Mom run off right after I was born.

My Dad's in prison ...

ANNIE

Moe, your son is in *prison*?!

BOBBY

I guess she didn't know about that, did she, Gramps?

MOE

No, but now she does.

BOBBY

Grampa Moe is the only family I got ... on the outside.

ARIELLA

And my family is mostly all dead.

Drink got to 'em.

Everyone was a poster child for Southern Comfort.

Biggest bunch of diseased livers in the Charleston Baptist cemetery.

Oh!

Look at that!

Baby is moving and kickin' up a storm!

[**MR. Z. ENTERS** walking down the hall. He is tiptoeing to not make any noise and he is holding a toilet plunger. **He knocks on their door**]

[Annie stares at Moe. Moe stares back at her a long time]

BOBBY

You want me to get it?

ANNIE

NO!

Moe will do it.

Moe ...

MOE

(gets up and goes to the door, looks out the peep hole)

What do *you* want?

MR. Z.

I got a call.
Neighbors saw two young people coming up the elevator.

MOE

Yeah, so?

MR. Z.

You know all guests have to be registered with the front office.

MOE

How do you know they're in here?

MR. Z.

Because you're the only troublemakers in the building.

MOE

Go to hell!

MR. Z.

Are you saying they're not in there?

MOE

You're not listenin' good.
All I'm sayin' is go to hell.
Go straight to hell!

Oh, and before you go there ... if you want ...
I'll open the door and stick my ass out at ya again.
Yeah, you ain't seen my ass in almost a week now.
Since me and Annie got married.
You probably miss it.
You can plant a great big wet kiss on it, like an old friend.

MR. Z.

You stick your ass out at me one more time ... and ... and ...

MOE

Yeah?
And what are you gonna do, *Mister Z.*?

MR. Z.

I'll stick this toilet plunger so far up your butt ...
you'll have a rubber lips.

ARIELLA

(whispers) Look at my belly!
Feels like the baby is doing summersaults.

MR. Z.

You opening the door or not?

MOE

Not for you.

[Mr. Z. puts his ear to the door. Moe looks out the peephole and sees him.]

MR. Z.

I can hear other people moving around in there.

MOE

It's the tv, you rat hole.

[MOE bangs on the door]

Now how do you like listenin' to that?!
Did you hear it good!?

[Mr. Z. jumps back and falls down]

MR. Z.

Ow!
You broke my eardrum!

ARIELLA

(whispers) I swear the baby is doing push ups!
And now it's clapping its hands!
Feel it, Annie.
You ever seen anything like that?

MOE

Now you get away from our door and stop botherin' us!

MR. Z.

You're going to regret the day you did this.
You got anyone in there, I'm going to find out.
Then I'm going to get you kicked out of the co-op.
I'm going to see to it personally.

MOE

Well personally, you should eat shit and die, you rat bastid!

MR. Z.

You'll see.
You'll see.
You'll see!
BOY WILL YOU SEE!

[MR. Z. EXITS]

MOE

He also starts repeatin' himself when he gets excited.

ARIELLA

Would you look at that!
The baby stopped moving!
It turned over and went back to sleep.

ANNIE

Moe, do you see what you've done?
You've got me in trouble again with the co-op.
You two can wait here a few minutes more ... but then you have to go.

MOE

But they got no place to go, Annie.

ANNIE

That's not my problem.
Your grandson and his wife can NOT move in.

ARIELLA

Beggin' your pardon m'am, but we ain't married.

ANNIE

Oh Lord!
Oh lord oh lord oh lord oh lord.
Another illegitimate child in the world.
Just what we need here.

ARIELLA

Beggin' your pardon again, m'am, but there's no such thing as illegitimate.
God don't make no junk.
That's what my Momma used to say ...
She shoulda known – she had 8 children by 6 different men.
Wasn't no marriage licenses among any of them.

ANNIE

Six different fathers?

ARIELLA

Makes you wonder about a woman like that, don't it?
I asked a few of my daddies what it was about her.
They said she was the best piece of ass they ever had.

I guess men don't seem to care much passed that –
Until sharin' their paycheck is more important than sharin' a bed.

Yeah, in our home, the daddies came and went – Momma stayed.
Till she died of the drink.

ANNIE

Moe, please see that your grandson and his ...
Well what do we call you if you're not his wife?

BOBBY

She's my lady.

Wait a minute ... that reminds me ...

[Bobby starts singing a cappella, "Having My Baby" by Paul Anka]

"Havin' my baby
What a lovely way of sayin'
How much you love me

Havin' my baby
What a lovely way of sayin'
What you're thinkin' of me

I can see it,
face is glowin'
I can see in your eyes
I'm happy you know it.

That you're havin' my baby.
You're the woman I love
And I love what it's doin' to you."

ANNIE

Please stop singing.
I have a headache.

MOE

Maybe we should ask Jesus again what He thinks?

ARIELLA

Jesus?
Sure, let's ask Jesus.
Play Amazin' Grace, Bobby.

(he grabs the guitar)

(she sings in a beautiful choir voice)

"Amazing Grace ...
How sweet the sound ...
That saved a wretch
Like *me!*

I once was lost,
But now I'm found.
Was blind,
But now I see."

ANNIE

(puts her hand over the guitar strings, stopping Bobby from playing)

No.
No no no no no.
NO!

No more Jesus.
We've bothered Jesus enough.

Look, my head is spinning.
I think I'm getting a migraine.
I have to lie down.

Moe, please see your grandson and his *lady* are gone by the time I come back out.

[ANNIE EXITS TO THE BEDROOM. The lights go down on stage.

When the lights come back up, MOE ENTERS THE BEDROOM.

Annie is lying down on the bed.]

MOE

Here's some aspirin.

ANNIE

(sits up and takes aspirin, then glass of water)

Thank you.

MOE

What if they become completely silent?
I mean no noise at all. Can they stay then?

ANNE

No.
No no no no no.
NO!

MOE

You're startin' up with the repeatin' again.

ANNIE

Oh, leave me alone.

(She turns her back to him)

MOE

Look, Annie, you been good to me.
I know that.
You took me in ... when I had no place to go.

Then you even married me so I could stay here.
You shared your life with me ...
When you really didn't know me from a hole in the wall.

ANNIE

And it's never enough.

MOE

I'm sorry.
I truly am ... to be such a burden to you,
You're my only friend left in the world.

Before you, it was just me in a lonely old rented co-op apartment ...
and the tv.
Never turned it off.
Left it on mornin' noon and night.
I needed to hear the sounds of other people.

But that's no kind of life.
The damn thing plays and you think you're not alone ...
but you are alone.

ANNIE

My husband used to do that too, before he passed away.
In his last months, when he got sick.

MOE

You don't talk about him much.
I'll bet he was a good guy.

ANNIE

He was a good man.
I still miss him.
It'll be more than 30 years he's been gone ...
and I still miss him.

MOE

I'll bet he was a good man.

Look, Annie, it you don't want them kids here,
then it's your right to demand it.
And it's my duty to respect your rights.

[There is a knock on the bedroom door.]

[ARIELLA IS STANDING outside the bedroom door. A spotlight is on her]

ARIELLA

M'am?

MOE

We're talkin' in here young lady.

ARIELLA

I can see that.

Bobby and me are fixin' to leave now.
But before we leave, I wanted to speak to your missus.

MOE

Annie?

ANNIE

No.

MOE

Sorry, but she ain't in the mood for talkin' face to face right now, Ariella.
She still has a fierce headache.
So say what you got to say outside there ...
and then leave.

ARIELLA

M'am, it's so hard to say what I got to say ... facin' this way.
It's so cold lookin' at this door.

It'd be easier if I could see your face and look into your eyes, m'am.

ANNIE

No.
Tell her no, Moe.

MOE

Annie says to say what you got to say, where you are, and then go.

ARIELLA

I wanted to say somethin' to you face to face before we leave.
Just a few words, m'am.

But if you want it said this way ... then okay.
(Ariella pauses a long time and draws in her breath)
M'am, I ain't never had no grandparents.
They was all dead before I was born.

As near as I can tell, you ain't never had no children.
There's no photographs ... no diplomas on the wall ...
no trophies on the shelves ...
There's no signs of any young'uns.
There's just you and a man wearing a brown suit.
And that suit looks like it was his daddy's –
a couple of sizes too big for him.

I figure that was your husband before Gramps here came along.
Weren't it?
Was that your man?

ANNIE

Yes.

ARIELLA

M'am I'm only 17 years old.

ANNIE

17!
She's a baby having a baby!

ARIELLA

I'm not wise in the ways of the world like my momma.
My momma used to bring home a lot of different men from the bar.

I only been with one man ... Bobby.
And I love him with all my heart.
This here baby in my belly is my expression of that love.

ARIELLA (cont'd)

Well, m'am, I only got 3 weeks left before I deliver this baby out into the world.
That's what Bobby and me counted.
3 weeks more.

I don't want to have the baby out on the street ...
But if we can't stay here, then it'll probably be out on the street ...
Or in some homeless shelter ... if'n it starts rainin'.
You ever been in a homeless shelter, m'am?

M'am?

ANNIE

No.

ARIELLA

We been in one, Bobby and me.
Everything smelled terrible bad.
Worst smell I ever smelled.
Made me gag to be there.
Like livin' in a toilet.

Don't want my baby comin' into this world and it smellin' like that.

M'am, I know you don't want us here ...
But if you can find it in your heart to let us stay ...
Just until the baby comes ...
Three weeks ...
Just three weeks is all.

Three weeks don't seem like such a long time, does it?

We'll be as quiet as can be.
No one will know we're here.
We won't talk ... or sing ... or argue ... none of that.

And when it's time for the baby ...
Bobby and me will walk out of here ...
We'll go out outside, past that guard gate in front,
Down to the shopping center across the street ...

We'll call 911.

No one will know where we come from ...
They'll send an ambulance.
And we'll get drove to the hospital ...

ARIELLA (cont'd)

If it don't happen that way, well, then I'll have the baby out in the street.

As far away from here as we can get.

It ain't no big deal, I guess.

I guess mothers have been havin' babies outside as long as there was babies to be made.

M'am it would mean so much to me and the baby ...

If we could just stay here until the time comes.

This feels like a right good home to me.

M'am?

[THE LIGHTS GO DOWN]

[INTERMISSION]

55 and Over

ACT TWO

Scene One

[It is 6 AM, two days later at the Tidewater Housing Cooperative in Boca Raton, Florida. **MOE ENTERS** upstage right in the hallway, pushing a shopping cart filled with food. **MR. Z. ENTERS** upstage right, seconds behind him, wearing pajamas and a bathrobe. He is out of breath. Moe turns around, sees Mr. Z., sighs and shakes his head.]

MR. Z.

Up kinda early to go shopping, aren't you, Moe?

MOE

They was havin' a sale.

MR. Z.

(lifts a jar out of one of the bags) On pickles?

MOE

Yeah.

The special kind I like.

The kosher ones.

Ba-tampte garlic pickles.

They're the best.

[There is a long silence as they watch each other]

MOE

Other than checkin' out my groceries,
you got some kind of business with me?

MR. Z.

You know you have a lot of food there.
Much more than two people can eat.

MOE

We're stockin' up.
I heard a hurricane might be comin'.

MR. Z.

No, I watch all the weather reports.
I didn't see any named storms.

MOE

There here's a new one. A special one.
Just named it this morning.
They're callin' it Tropical Storm Z.
After a snooping sneaky nasty asshole.

MR. Z.

You got a big mouth, you know that, wise guy?

MOE

And a big ass ... that you can kiss.
You want to see it again?

MR. Z.

I spoke with the people below you.
They said it sounded like an army marching above them.

You sure you don't have any visitors you didn't register?

MOE

No.
Just Annie and me.
Husband and **wife**.
Sometimes we get a little frisky ... so we dance around.
We sound like heard of cattle when we do.

You got any other business with me?

MR. Z.

Just waiting to hold the door for you ...
Help you carry in some of those bags.

MOE

I don't need no help.

MR. Z.

They look kind of heavy.

MOE

I'm fine.

MR. Z.

I'll wait in case you need help.

MOE

I said I don't need no help.

And I ain't openin' it while you're standing out here.

MR. Z.

Yeah, why not?

MOE

Because Annie's walkin' around in her pajamas ...

And she's very shy ...

So I'm protectin' her privacy.

You should take a clue from her with that raggedly bathrobe you got on.

You shouldn't be out in the halls lookin' like you do.

Why don't you go back to sleep and quit botherin' people early in the morning.

MR. Z.

(walking slowly away)

I know you got something going on.

And when I catch you, you're history around here.

MOE

Yeah yeah.

Nighty night.

Don't let the bedbugs bite.

MR. Z.

I got my eye on you!

MOE

Yeah yeah.

MR. Z.

You ain't smart enough to fool me.

MOE

Yeah yeah.

Yeah yeah.

[MR. Z. EXITS]

[Moe cautiously opens the door and watches down the hallway to see if Mr. Z. is returning. He takes the bags out of the cart, one by one, and places them inside the front door, while standing guard outside. Moe empties the cart and leaves it out in the hall. When he lets himself inside, the lights go on, Annie is sleeping on the couch. The easy chair is covered with a sheet, which is Moe's new bed.]

[**BOBBY ENTERS** from Annie's bedroom.]

BOBBY
(whispers)

You want help putting the food away?

MOE
(whispers)

Sure.

[**ARIELLA ENTERS** from Annie's bedroom.]

ARIELLA
(whispers)

The baby is pitchin' and a rollin'!
Is that nasty manager man around here?

[**Moe looks through the peephole, then bangs on the door.** The lights go on outside the door. **MR. Z. is standing there**, holding his head.]

MR. Z.

Ow!
Damn it!

MOE

I spoke to the Police, Z.
The only way you're getting' in here is if there's a fire ... or with a search warrant ...
and you ain't got neither.
No you *skee-daddle*.

MR. Z.

Oh, are you gonna be sorry.

[**MR. Z. EXITS** down the hallway]

ARIELLA
(whispers)

Would you look at that!
The baby settled down.

ANNIE

You don't have to whisper.
I'm up.
Between Moe's snoring and Mr. Z.'s shenanigans, I got maybe 2 hours of sleep.
The only thing worse than being 80 years old is being dead tired and 80 years old.

ARIELLA

Don't talk like that, Gramma.
(reaches out her hand) Come on.
Sleep inside with me.

ANNIE

You don't mind?

ARIELLA

Mind? It's your bed honey-child.
Here let me feel your feet, first.

ANNIE

My feet?

ARIELLA

Bobby has the coldest feet in the universe.
He rubs them on me in the night,
Wakes me right up.
Feels like ice water's been thrown on my legs.

ANNIE

You're tickling me.

ARIELLA

Well look at that!
Bobby, come here and feel her feet!
They're like two Alabama blast furnaces.

ANNIE

(runs away) Please ... Bobby ... not this early in the morning.

ARIELLA

Don't blame you.
His hands ain't no warmer than his feet.
Like being grabbed by two ice trays.

Oh, I'm gonna sleep right fine next to you, Granny!

[ARIELLA AND ANNIE EXIT to the bedroom]

BOBBY
Look who's becoming friends.

MOE
Yeah.
Here, have a great garlic pickle.

BOBBY
Gramps, it's a quarter after 6 in the morning.
Too early for anything garlic.

MOE
Okay. I'll have me one.
Hand me them eggs.

BOBBY
Here's the milk, too.

MOE
Thanks.

BOBBY
Gramps, why you lookin' at me that way?

MOE
What way?

BOBBY
Like I'm the biggest loser in the world.

MOE
If it's too early for garlic, then it's too early for that conversation, also.

BOBBY
No.
You have something to say, say it.

MOE
Okay ... since you asked me.

To my way of thinkin', you ain't livin' up to your responsibilities.
That little girl loves you.

It's your child she's carryin' ...
your child she'll be deliverin' soon.
And it's my first great grandchild.

BOBBY

I'm doing the best I can.

MOE

No you ain't!

She's talkin' about homeless shelters and givin' birth out on the street.

That's NOT taking care of her, or the baby that's comin'.

Or even yourself.

You say that's the best you can do?

I don't think so.

BOBBY

There isn't any performing work right now.

MOE

So?

You get whatever work is available. You do what you got to do.

That's what a man does – he takes care of his own.

I shoveled the Police Barns near Central Park when I was out of work.

It was full of the smelliest foulest horseshit covered with flies and maggots.

I did what I had to do for your grandma and daddy.

BOBBY

Yeah, right.

(Bobby mumbles under his breath) You took real good care of my daddy.

MOE

What was that?

BOBBY

Nothin'.

MOE

I thought I heard you mutterin' somethin' about your Daddy.

BOBBY

Never mind.

MOE

No.

You got somethin' to say, you say it.

What about your Daddy?

BOBBY

If you took such good care of him,

Then why's he been in and out of prison since he was 18?

MOE

That's because he figured the world owed him somethin'.
And when he couldn't collect on that debt, he took the easy way out.
He stole.
And when you steal, you eventually get caught,
And then you get thrown into prison.

You gotta understand, Bobby, the world don't owe nobody nothin'.
You need to get up off your ass and get a job.

BOBBY

Yeah.
Right.
Where do you want to put the bread?

MOE

Give it here.

BOBBY

Gramps, I have worked jobs just for the money.
I been a waiter and a dishwasher and even a garbage man.
All the while, my eyes fixed on the clock ...
Watching the second hand drag around ... moving so slow.
All the while, thinking I'm trading a slow death, for dirty green bills.

MOE

Hey, them dirty green bills give you a roof over your head, and this food here.

BOBBY

But when I get up on stage ... and I'm singing ...
And the audience is dancing ... or singing along ...
then clapping when I'm done ...
Well, then I feel alive ...
It's all I want to do.
All I can think about.
Bein' alive on that stage ...

MOE

Yeah right.
Give me them bagels.

BOBBY

One night, about a year ago, at a nightclub in Gatlinburg,
This beautiful young girl just walked up on stage and joined me in a gospel song.
She sang so sweet and pure, it was a miracle.
We sounded like a living miracle. That's how I met Ariella.

MOE

She does have a beautiful voice.

BOBBY

She sings like an angel ... just like an angel.
We got a lot of work around Tennessee and the Carolinas,
but when the baby started to show ...
The work dried up.
Seems like people don't want to be serenaded by a pregnant woman.

Gramps, I can fend for myself out on the streets ...
but with a woman and a baby ... it ain't possible.

[Moe starts crying]

What's the matter Gramps?

MOE

It feels like everything is goin' to shit.
Straight to shit.
You won't work ... and I can't work.
Everyone thinks I'm too old to do anything useful.

Got nothing to show for a lifetime of hard work 'cept a bad heart.
A bad heart that needs expensive medicine I can't afford.

I'm 75 and put out to pasture.
The world is waitin' for me to die and make room for the next.
I see it on the younger generation's faces comin' up behind me:

(shouts) "Come on, old man. Give up the ghost. Get out of the way!"

BOBBY

Gramps, I got an idea for you.

MOE

What kind of idea?

BOBBY

You ever tried to get a job at Walmart?
They got old people standin' up front they call greeters.

MOE

What's a greeter?

BOBBY

Someone who smiles at the people comin' in.
They direct you to right place in the store. Check your receipt when you leave.

MOE

We ain't got no Walmarts close by.
And even if I could get there, my lousy outlook on life is written all over my face.
People would take one look at me and run out of the store.

BOBBY

I don't know.
Maybe you could learn a better attitude.

MOE

Yeah sure.
I got 75 years of piss poor attitude stored up in each wrinkle.

BOBBY

You can change.
Here, let's give it a try.
Give me a smile.

MOE

Give you a what?

BOBBY

Give me a smile. Go ahead.

MOE

This is stupid.

BOBBY

No .. go ahead ... smile.
Lift up the corners of your mouth ... like this.
(Bobby moves Moe's lips. It is funny.)
Come on, Gramps, try harder

MOE

Hey, let go of my face.

BOBBY

I was just showin' you how it's done.

MOE

Ah, leave me alone.
And don't touch my face no more.
Now I got to go wash it.

[**MOE EXITS** to the bathroom. **The lights go down in the living room and go up in the bedroom.** It is 3 hours later. **ANNIE and ARIELLA** are lying together in the bed.]

ARIELLA

Granny, you sleepin'?

ANNIE

I was ... until you started poking me.
What time is it?

ARIELLA

Almost eleven.

Granny ... did I ever thank you for takin' us in?

ANNIE

Only about a hundred times.

ARIELLA

I couldn't remember.
Seems like my hormones are all workin' overtime and my memory is shot.

ANNIE

Wait until you get to be my age.
The hormones dry up along with your memory.

ARIELLA

Do you know what I was sitting here thinkin'?

ANNIE

No. But I'm sure you want to tell me now, don't you?

ARIELLA

I was sitting here thinking about when the baby comes.
I don't have any ideas on where to go.

ANNIE

Well, we can hide you here until it comes –
as long as you're quiet and don't go outside.

ARIELLA

We can do that, I promise you.

ANNIE

But even if you make it to the hospital and back without Mr. Z. finding out -
Babies are noisy. They cry and wail and fuss.
We won't be able to hide that.
When they find out we have you here ... and a baby ...
Well ... they're not easy people to get along with.

ARIELLA

I don't get it.
Why do old people not want to be around young people?

ANNIE

Not all old people are like that.
I love young people.
I should – I taught kindergarten for 35 years.

But parents nowadays don't take care of their kids like we used to.
They let their kids run wild with no discipline.
Some just open their front doors and let them out like caged animals.
Inflict them on the world around them.

When you get old, you lose patience with that kind of behavior.
We want peace and quiet.
And no surprises.
Young people are full of noise and surprises.

ARIELLA

Beggin' your pardon, m'am, but I used to work in a senior center in Charleston.
Excuse me for sayin' it ...
But them old people didn't do nothin' 'cept sleep ...
and wait for meals.
Oh, and watch an awful lot of tv.

What's so special about that kind of life?

ANNIE

Well, maybe it's better to be bored than be aggravated.

ARIELLA

(suddenly trembling and shaking)

Look at me.
I'm shaking!
Look at my hands ...
and my legs ...

I'm scared, Granny!
Really scared!

ANNIE

(hugging her)

There there.
Come here, you.

ARIELLA

We have no place to go, Granny.
I don't want to bring up my child out on the streets.

If social services finds out, they'll take my baby away.

ANNIE

There there.

Let's try to get you some help from above.
Maybe if we both pray very hard, God will send some.

ARIELLA

I been praying for good things to happen since I was old enough to walk.
God just ain't been listening to me ...
He keeps turning a cold shoulder to my problems.

ANNIE

No.
Let's try it together.
Come over here,
and get down on your knees with me.

ARIELLA

Help me down.
This big belly of mine makes me awful clumsy.

ANNIE

Okay, now close your eyes.
Say it with me:

Jesus, pray for me now.
Help me and my baby.

ARIELLA

Jesus, pray for me now.
Help me and my baby.

ANNIE

Fill my heart with faith ...
Open my lips with praise.

ARIELLA

Fill my heart with faith ...
Open my lips with –
Granny, this ain't workin'.

ANNIE

You have to try harder.

ARIELLA

No, these are old tired words from my younger years.

Let me call Bobby in.

I'll show you what works for me.

Bobby!

[BOBBY ENTERS.]

BOBBY

Yes, darlin'?

ARIELLA

Bring your guitar in here ...

[BOBBY EXITS]

ANNIE

You didn't really give it a good try, Ariella.

ARIELLA

You listen to us ...

Then you tell me if I ain't tryin'.

[BOBBIE ENTERS holding his guitar.]

BOBBY

What do you want to sing, Ariella?

ARIELLA

How about "Motherless Child?"

BOBBY

Sure.

ARIELLA

"Sometimes I feel like a motherless child.
Sometimes I feel like a motherless child.
Sometimes I feel like a motherless child.
A long long way from home, true believer,
A long long way from home."

ARIELLA (cont'd)

Join me now, Bobby.

BOBBY and ARIELLA

“Sometimes I feel like I’m almost gone.
Sometimes I feel like I’m almost gone.
Sometimes I feel like I’m almost gone.
Way up in the heavenly land,
Way up in the heavenly land, true believer,
Way up in the heavenly land.”

ARIELLA
(holding her stomach)

Ow!
Owww!

BOBBY

What’s wrong, darlin’?

ARIELLA

Something’s wrong with the baby ...
It hurts somethin’ awful inside.

BOBBY

Lay down, sugar.

ARIELLA

Help me up there.

BOBBY

Now go ahead and stretch out.

ARIELLA
(laying down)

Yes, that feels bbb-
Owww! Owwwwww!
The pain’s still there!

Bobby, you got to call 911.
I tell you, somethin’s wrong with the baby.

BOBBY

Just stay still and see if it don’t pass.

ARIELLA

No! Call the ambulance!

BOBBY

If we call the ambulance, we're going to get thrown out of here, Ariella

ARIELLA

I don't care!

I'm gonna lose the baby if'n you don't.

Call 911!

Call it right now!

[The lights go down. Offstage, **THERE IS THE SOUND OF A SIREN** growing closer. **THERE IS A SOUND OF A PARAMEDIC'S RADIO WITH 911 OPERATOR.**]

911 OPERATOR

(offstage)

What's the situation, Bravo - 1 - 9?

PARAMEDIC

(offstage)

We have a pregnant girl losing a lot of blood.

We're setting up an IV now.

911 OPERATOR

(offstage)

Are you bringing her in?

PARAMEDIC

(offstage)

There isn't time.

The baby is coming right now.

911 OPERATOR

(offstage)

What are the vital signs of the baby, Bravo - 1 - 9??

PARAMEDIC

(offstage)

We don't know.

We have a heartbeat ... a very faint one ...

We may be losing him.

It's a boy.

[The lights go down.]

55 and Over

ACT TWO

Scene Two

[It is 9 AM, the next day at the Tidewater Housing Cooperative. **MR. Z. ENTERS** upstage right and walks down the hall, whistling happily to himself. He stops at the door to Annie's co-op and listens. He knocks and then looks at the pack of legal papers he is holding.]

[The light goes on in the co-op. **MOE is sleeping on the easy chair.** He stirs when he hears the knocking, gets up, yawns, and scratches. He goes over to the door, looks out the peephole, shakes his head, and opens it.]

MOE

What the hell do you want?

MR. Z.

Here.

You've been served.

MOE

I don't have my glasses.

What's it say?

MR. Z.

What do you think it says?!

You have to go.

[There is the sound of a baby crying offstage.]

You all have to go.

All of you.

**The Board rejected the right of any of you to live here.
Permanently.**

MOE

They can't do that.

MR. Z.

Oh yes they can ... it's in the bylaws ... and they did it.

MOE

Annie owns this place.

MR. Z.

(Like he's reading a rule book)

"Fragrant violation of the rules may result in permanent expulsion by the Board."

You don't move out, they'll foreclose on Annie and take her unit.

Get it through your thick head.

You've been expelled, wise guy!

I told you not to mess with me.

MOE

The mother and baby ain't well enough to travel yet.

She only gave birth yesterday.

MR. Z.

That isn't my problem.

MOE

Yeah, right.

Just what is your problem?

MR. Z.

You want to know what my problem is?

You are my problem.

You've been my problem since you moved in.

There was peace and quiet before you.

[There is the sound again of a baby crying offstage.]

Now we have a little bastard crying his lungs out all night and day.

MOE

Hey, don't you call him that!

Don't you never call him that!

That's my great grandson.

MR. Z.

Yeah?

Well else do you call a child when the parents ain't married?

I checked the birth certificate, asshole.

MOE

Let me ask you something, mister manager asshole.

MR. Z.
(turning away)

Go to hell!
You and me don't have anything more to say to each other.

MOE
Turn around, you!
Turn around and listen ...
When you look in the mirror in the morning,
how do you keep from throwing up?

MR. Z.
Yeah, right ...
See ya ...
wouldn't want to be ya.
Ha ha ha ha ha

[MR. Z. EXITS down the hall, laughing out loud.]

MOE
YOU PIECE OF SHIT!
YOU'RE A MISERABLE PILE OF RAT TURD!

MR. Z.
(offstage)
Yeah, well at least I have a place to live ... you old turd.

MOE
(Slamming the door)
FUCK YOU!

[ANNIE ENTERS from the bedroom. She is wearing her church clothes and holding her rosary beads and Bible. When she opens the bedroom door, we hear **THE SOUND OF A BABY CRYING.**]

ANNIE
Moe, watch your language! We have a child around here now.

MOE
Yeah, yeah.

ANNIE
What's that you're holding?

MOE
A love letter from the Co-op Board.

ANNIE

What's in it?

MOE

We're all being evicted from the Tidewater.

ANNIE

All.

You mean they're kicking *me and you* out, too?!

MOE

That's what the paper says.

(Like he's reading from the same rule book)

"Fragrant violation of the rules may result in permanent expulsion by the Board."

We're been permanently *expulsed*.

ANNIE

They can't do that!

MOE

These papers say they can.

ANNIE

We'll fight them!

MOE

With what?

You got the money for an attorney?

I don't.

The board's got one.

A great one.

The local branch of Dewey Screwem and Howe.

You ever been in court against an attorney ... and you don't got one?

I was once.

It ain't no fun, I can tell you that.

They made mince meat out of me.

Look, let's postpone this depressing discussion for another time.

How's the little mamma doin'?

ANNIE

She's pale and weak ... but holding up.

MOE

How's the baby?

ANNIE

Wailing up a storm when he doesn't get fed.

MOE

How's Bobby handlin' things?

ANNIE

Bobby's not here.
He left early this morning.

MOE

He did?
I didn't hear him leave.
Where'd he go?

ANNIE

We don't know.
I was asleep on the couch.
Ariella saw him leave.

He took his guitar.

MOE

Oh boy.
You think he took off permanent?

ANNIE

Probably.
But we don't know for sure.

Look, I want to go to church.
Would you mind keeping an eye and ear out for Ariella and the baby?

MOE

No, I don't mind.

Annie ...

ANNIE

What?

[Moe clumsily moves toward Annie and takes her in his arms]

MOE

Thanks.

ANNIE

What are you doing?

MOE

Tryin' to give you a hug.

ANNIE

Oh.

Okay.

MOE

You been real good to me and mine.

And we ain't been nothin' but trouble ... startin' with me.

ANNIE

It's the Christian thing to do.

Moe, you can let go now.

Moe?

Moe ...

MOE! Look at you!

MOE

I'm sorry.

I ain't held a woman in a long time.

It just happened.

I didn't think it could still happen ... but it did.

You feel so good ...

I never felt a lady with such warm hands ...

I'm sorry.

ANNIE

(turns away)

Please fix yourself.

MOE

(Moe turns away)

I'm tryin'!

ANNIE

Moe? Moe ... Moe ...

MOE

Yeah?

ANNIE

Moe, you don't have to be embarrassed.

MOE

But I am.

ANNIE

I haven't had that effect on a man in a very long time.

Decades I think.

I forgot what it was like.

It was sort of ... nice ...

MOE

Did you say nice?

ANNIE

Yes.

Now let's both think about it while I'm out.

[**ANNIE EXITS** out the front door. The lights go out.]

[It is noon when the lights come back on, MOE is watching TV. The volume is low. **ARIELLA ENTERS** from the bedroom, wearing regular clothes, carrying her suitcase.]

MOE

Ariella, what are you doin'?

ARIELLA

Fixin' to leave.

MOE

Leave?

ARIELLA

We brought enough trouble on you and Granny.

MOE

Aren't you waitin' for Bobby?

ARIELLA

Bobby's gone.

MOE

I can't believe it.
Didn't think he was still like that – to high tail it and run.

ARIELLA

Truth be told, that's exactly what he's like.
He didn't want a family.
His own family weren't no blessing to him.
He didn't have no good basis for comparison.

MOE

I tried to help him growing up ...
but as his grandfather, I always felt like I was intruding.

So where you goin'?

ARIELLA

Charleston.
I think I still have a step sister living there.
If she is, I'm hopin' she'll put us up.
Give us her basement, maybe.
It'll be cold and damp, but it's shelter.

MOE

How you getting' there.

ARIELLA

Same way we got here - hitchhikin'.

MOE

Hitchhikin'?

ARIELLA

That's what you do when you don't have any money.

MOE

Well, here.
It's all I got.
20 dollars.
20 lousy dollars.

ARIELLA

Thank you, Gramps.
It ain't enough for a bus ticket, even if I hold the baby in my lap.
But it'll do fine ... in a pinch.

MOE

You're really takin' the baby with you?

ARIELLA

Of course.

MOE

You gotta be crazy ... takin' the baby on the road ...
There's nutcases out there. Lots of nutcases

ARIELLA

It's okay. That little boy is a fighter.
He fought hard to get into this world.
He'll fight hard to stay in it.

He'll be just fine, don't you worry.
He's sleepin' just fine in the big drawer in Annie's dresser.
Didn't know you could that.

MOE

That's what we did when we were young and poor.
Bobby father spent the first weeks of his life in one.
You have a month, maybe two, before you need a crib.

ARIELLA

Let me get the baby.

[**ARIELLA EXITS** to the bedroom.]

MOE

(walks around, slapping his leg in anger)

This ain' right.
This ain't right.
This ain't right.

[**ARIELLA ENTERS** from the bedroom. She is holding the baby wrapped up in a blanket.]

ARIELLA

Well, give us a hug before we go.

MOE

This ain't right! It just ain't right!

ARIELLA

It is what it is, Gramps. Give your great grandson a kiss goodbye.

MOE

You pick a name for him yet?

ARIELLA

I was readin' Annie's Bible to get an idea.
We Baptists like to do that.
I found a right pretty one. I'm calling him Moses Aran.

MOE

Moses Aran?

ARIELLA

Because your name is really Moses,
and Aran sounds a little like Annie.
I wanted him to be a reminder of you ... and your Missus.

MOE
(crying)

A reminder of me?
Why would you want that?
What good have I been to you?

ARIELLA

If it weren't for you and Annie, he'd be born out in the street.
Or out in a woods somewhere.
Your name is a reminder of kindness.

I have a feeling this little boy is going to be luckier than me.
I never got a chance to meet my great grandfather ...
and he did.

[THERE IS KNOCK ON THE DOOR]

MOE

Yeah, well, let's see how much luck is on the other side of this door.

[Lights go down]

55 and Over

ACT TWO

Scene Three

[It is a few seconds later at Annie's co-op in the Tidewater Housing Cooperative. Moe is inside the living room, standing near the door. Ariella is holding the baby, also standing in the living room. There is a packed suitcase next to her.]

There is an insistent knocking on the door. Moe peeks through the peephole and shakes his head.]

MOE

Well, I'll be damned.

ARIELLA

Who is it?

MOE

You'll see.

[Moe opens the door. **BOBBY ENTERS** carrying his guitar. He's excited.]

BOBBY

You'll never guess what –

Ariella, what are you doing, honey?
Shouldn't you be laying down –

Wait a minute -
Why do you have the baby all bundled up?
Why ... is your ... suitcase ... here?

ARIELLA
(bursts out crying)

Oh Bobby!

[Bobby goes to her, holds her and the baby]

MOE

We thought you left us ... for good.

BOBBY

Why would I do that?

MOE

It was just a hunch ... based on 30 years experience.

BOBBY

Well forget your hunch.

I've been out all morning looking for work.

MOE

Work?

Did you say you were looking for work?

Oh I gotta sit down now.

My heart can't take this many surprises.

[The baby wakes and starts fussing.]

ARIELLA

Before you start explainin',

let me put him back in his ... drawer.

[ARIELLA EXITS to the bedroom.]

MOE

You hungry?

You want somethin' to eat?

A buttered bagel?

BOBBY

No.

I'm fine.

I'm too excited to eat.

[We hear the baby wail, and then settle down. **ARIELLA ENTERS.**]

ARIELLA

Gramps, do you mind if I sit next to you?

MOE

Mind? I would enjoy it.

Come here, little momma.

(Moe puts his arm around her when she sits down next to him)

ARIELLA

Now go ahead, Bobby ... start explainin'.

BOBBY

Well ... this morning, I left early.

MOE

Yeah, we got that.

BOBBY

I hitched a ride to downtown Boca to look for singing work ...
But there were no places hiring.
This town is full up with singers ... but no jobs singing.

MOE

You think so?

BOBBY

I know so.
I wore out a lot of shoe leather finding that out.

Just when I was about to give up,
I passed by a Walmart ...
and I thought about you, Gramps.

That's when this great big monster of an idea hit!

MOE

Being a stock clerk was a monster of an idea?

BOBBY

No, better than that.

MOE

Oh, workin' a register?

BOBBY

No, no.
Much better than that.

MOE

I give up.
Ariella, you got any ideas?

ARIELLA

I'm as puzzled as you, Grampa.
Bobby, tell us your great big monster of an idea before we all have a conniption.

BOBBY

Well, I walked into the entrance, where they keep all the carts.
I put my guitar in one of the empty carts, and took it out of the case.

MOE

(making snoring noises)

Someone wake me up when the monster appears.

BOBBY

Listen to me, Gramps!
I took out my guitar and sang to the people walking in.
I made up a song about shopping at Walmart.

MOE

Did you at least pass the hat afterwards?

BOBBY

No,
But before I finished the song, the store manager came over.
Man, was he pissed off.
He said he would call the cops if I didn't leave.
The people standing around booed him.

So I just kept on singing ... and making up more songs.

ARIELLA

Did you get arrested?

BOBBY

No.
Because the manager, he finally got it.

MOE

Got what?

BOBBY

You mean you don't get it neither?

MOE

What is there to get?
You were just actin' crazy.

BOBBY

Crazy as a fox!

You still don't get it?

ARIELLA

Bobby, have you been drinkin'?

BOBBY

I was a singing greeter.

Do you get it now? A singing greeter!

Here, this was the favorite.

Listen to this:

(takes out his guitar and sings)

“Welcome to Walmart

You're my sweetheart and my honey

We love to see you shopping here

And save you so much money.”

MOE

Hey, that ain't half bad.

BOBBY

I tell you, the people were crowding around me.

They were clapping their hands, singing along.

The little kids were dancing.

ARIELLA

What did the manager do?

BOBBY

I tell you, he didn't know whether to shit or spit wooden nickels.

When folks left me they went through the store with big smiles on their faces.

By the time they came out, I made up another song:

“Please come back

Come back real soon

We love you - every one of you

It's like a honey moon.”

MOE

So?

ARIELLA

Yeah, so?

BOBBY

So he hired me!

I'm the first singing greeter in the history of Walmart.

And that isn't the best part.

MOE

You getting' a job sounds like a pretty good part.

BOBBY

But it ain't the **best** part!

I told the manager I knew someone who was older, and could also sing.
He would be more in keeping with the seniors that were greeters ...
Only musical.

I got him a job, too.

ARIELLA

And who was that?

BOBBY

Gramps.

MOE

What are you kiddin' me?
I can't play the guitar.

BOBBY

I'll teach you.
I can set up the guitar to play only chords.
You just have to push down one finger on the frets.
Like this:

(Bobby plays with straight tuning)

If that don't work, we can get you a portable karaoke machine.

MOE

But I can't sing neither!
I sound like a bullfrog ... with a sore throat ... gargling marbles.

BOBBY

Look, you just do the best you can, and folks will appreciate it.
Gramps, it's work.
You said you wanted to work, but no one would hire you.
Well, I got you hired.
I'd think you'd be a little more appreciative.

MOE

When I get over the embarrassment, I'll try to be more appreciative.

BOBBY

Good, because you still ain't heard the *best part*.

ARIELLA

There's more?

BOBBY

Sales in the store picked up *a bunch* while I was there singing.

I mean a whole bunch – like it was Christmas!

The store manager got so excited, he called the regional manager ...

And she got so excited she called the national manager ...

The national manager called the *worldwide manager*.

Walmart has stores all around the world, you know.

Even in China.

ARIELLA

What does that have to do with you?

BOBBY

They want me train their greeters all around the world to sing!

ARIELLA

All around the world?

BOBBY

They have 11,000 stores in 27 countries.

I'll need a translator to go from English to Chinese.

ARIELLA

(jumps up and hugs Bobby)

I'm so proud of you.

BOBBY

Thank you, honey.

But that *still* ain't the *best* part.

MOE

I can't take this.

I need some more heart medicine.

BOBBY

No, wait a minute Gramps.
This is going to make your old heart just purr.

If this works, with the singing greeters ...
They're going to put me on TV.
Doing commercials.

ARIELLA

Commercials?

BOBBY

Do you know how many commercials Walmart runs each day ...
All around the world!?

Why, I'll be famous enough that I can get work anywhere.
Wait a minute ...
I mean *we'll* be famous enough *we* can get work anywhere.

I want you to perform with me, Ariella.

[Ariella and Bobby are standing, embracing. Moe is watching, smiling.]

[The front door opens and **ANNIE ENTERS**. It takes a while before
anyone realizes Annie is there.]

ANNIE

Why does everyone look so happy?

MOE

Annie? We didn't hear you come in.
We was celebratin'.
Bobby here got a job.

ANNIE

Well, congratulations!

MOE

And he got me a job, too.

ANNIE

Doing what?

MOE

A singing greeter at Walmart. Please don't ask.
It's a long story.

ANNIE

So is that all?

MOE

That's all for right now.

ANNIE

Has anyone given any thought to where we're going to be living ...
after we all get thrown out of here?

MOE

I didn't want to ruin the fun.

ARIELLA

Bobby, let go of me for a second.
Granny's right.
We still got a big problem on our hands.
Does anyone have any ideas on what our next move is?

ANNIE

Did you say *our* next move?

ARIELLA

Well, we're family now ... ain't we?

ANNIE

Yes, we are.

(Ariella and Annie hug)

And yes, I have an idea. A great idea.

MOE

Uh oh.
It sounds like another great big monster of an idea.
I definitely need to sit down for this one.

ANNIE

Well, this idea came from above ... when I was in church.

I went into the Confessional, sat down ... and said:
"Bless me Father for I have sinned.
It has been a week since my last confession."

And then I became hysterical.
I cried my eyes out to Father Mulcahey.
I told him about all of us getting permanently expelled.
Do you know what he did, the good Father?

MOE

I'm afraid to ask.

ANNIE

He started laughing.

He actually burst out laughing!

I said, "Father Mulcahey, how can you have the gall to laugh at my troubles?"

And do you know what he said?

He said, "Annie, you need to have more faith in the Almighty.

The Lord has already provided a solution to your troubles."

I said, "A solution, Father? Where do you see a solution?"

MOE

Yeah, I don't see any solution neither.

ANNIE

Shhh!

Be patient and listen.

So he said, "Do you know who sat in this Confessional just minutes before you?"

I said, "No."

He said, "Mary Beth Williams.

And she was also crying her eyes out."

MOE

Is that what you Catholics do, cry in the confessional?

At least we Jews carry our guilt in silence.

ANNIE

Moe! Hush!

So I asked, "Father, why was she crying?"

He said, "Because her husband, Mike, left this world a year ago.

And the house he left Mary Beth, she could no longer take care of.

It was too much for her – four bedrooms and lots of upkeep."

MOE

I still don't get it.

ANNIE

You will get it if you can keep quiet for just a little bit longer.

So Father Mulcahey said, "Annie, please go to Mary Beth.

She sits up front, in the left pew.

Tell her I said The Lord came to me."

MOE

I have something to say ...

(Annie give him a dirty look.)

But I'm not going to say it.

ANNIE

Father Mulcahey said to tell her, 'Trade your house for Annie's co-op.
You will both be enriched in ways you cannot imagine.' "

I went to Mary Beth and told her. She seemed to like the idea ...

ARIELLA

The Lord does work in mysterious ways.

ANNIE

Not so quick ... she wanted assurance from a higher power before she signed anything.

MOE

Jesus?

ANNIE

No, Harvey Goldberg.

MOE

Who's he? One of the Disciples?

ANNIE

No, her attorney.

We should know within a week whether we have a deal or not.

[The baby starts crying offstage.]

[The lights go down. When the lights come back up, Moe, Annie, Bobby and Ariella (holding the baby) are onstage. Bobby and Moe both have valises sitting next to them. Annie is carrying a bag. The co-op is empty of contents.]

ARIELLA

Are you gonna miss this place, Grampa?

MOE

Not one damn bit.

I'm sick and tired of a "Board" making up rules.

And I want to be around you young people.

You make me feel alive again.

[There is a knock on the door. The baby starts fussing. The lights go on outside the door and there is MR. Z.]

MOE

Now I wonder who that is?

(He opens the door.)

MR. Z.

Annie left a message she wanted to see me.

ANNIE

Yes, Mr. Z.

Here are the keys for Mary Beth Williams.

I said I would leave them with you.

And wait a minute ... there's something else.

(She goes to the top of the refrigerator and pulls down a wrapped present with a bow)
And this is for you.

MR. Z.

Why thank you, Annie.

ANNIE

You're welcome.

No! Please don't open it now.

It's a special family recipe and it will lose its freshness.

Wait until after lunch, if you don't mind.

MR. Z.

(Holds it up to his nose and smells)

If it's anything like the chocolate chip cookies you made on Christmas,
I'm going to love it.

Thank you, Annie.

[MR. Z. EXITS]

MOE

I don't believe it!

After all the grief that man gave us, you baked him cookies?!

ANNIE

Grief?

If it wasn't for him evicting you, you wouldn't have slept on my couch.

If it wasn't for him not letting us be roommates, you wouldn't have married me.

And if you wouldn't have married me. I never would have known how lonely I was.

I'd say that man became a blessing.

BOBBY

And if he didn't threaten to throw Ariella, the baby, and me out in the street,
I never would have found a whole new career at Walmart ... along with Gramps.

Annie is right - seems like every nasty thing that man did ... was turned into good.
[They all leave by the front door and walk down the hallway to the
elevator. They stop at the end of the hallway by the elevator.]

ARIELLA

Someone push the elevator button.
My hands are full.

MOE

Annie, I gotta ask you ...
what was that present you made for Mr. Z.?

ANNIE

Well, you know that big old dog across the street.
The one that's over 200 pounds.

MOE

The bull mastiff?

ANNIE

That's the one.
Well, this morning, he left one of his "presents" outside the Tidewater gate.
It was huge!
So I scooped it up ... and then wrapped it up.
Then I went to Bob Green downstairs.

MOE

Bob Green? Why him?

ANNIE

He was a Navy Seal. In demolitions. I asked him to rig it so when you pulled on the bow
[There is a loud explosion]
It set off a small explosion.

MR. Z.

(offstage)

MOOOEEEEEEEEEEEEEE! YOU BASTARD!!

MOE

Annie ... come here and give me a hug.

THE END