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Dramatic Publishing

HOUSE FOR SALE

A Play in Two Acts

by

RON HILL



Dramatic Publishing

Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand

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RON HILL

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HOUSE FOR SALE was first presented by the Fremont Community Theatre, Fremont, Ohio, January 16, 2004. The cast, in order of appearance, was as follows:

HELEN (TWINK) Tracy Armentrout
MR. GOODSSELL Tim Bolton
GLEN MARTIN Ron Hill
MAX Hank Povolny
GARY Stephen Hayward
KATE Lauren Meyer and Ali Woodruff
CHUCK Pete Lowry
APOSTLE Mason Lowry
FANNY MOSS Linda Rich
SYLVIA Judith Smith
FAYE Claire Zimmerman

PRODUCTION STAFF

Director Michael PJ Foos
Assistant Director Mary Jo Foos
Technical Director James West
Set Design Michael PJ Foos, Ron Hill
Set Construction James West, Pete Lowry, Hank Povolny,
Ron Hill, Michael PJ Foos, Mary Jo Foos, Delilah Foos,
Cyrus Foos, Jill Simpson, Stephen Hayward
Set Decoration Elizabeth Stetzel, Ron Hill, Mary Jo Foos,
Michael PJ Foos, Pete Lowry, Mason Lowry,
Chelsea Lowry, Bill Burkett Mike Amos
Stage Crew Kate Burkett
Stage Manager Karen Auxter
Costume Design Elizabeth Stetzel
Properties Karen Auxter, Ron Hill & the Cast
Makeup & Hair Stylist Cathy Williams
Lighting Design Michael PJ Foos, Bill Burkett
Lighting Execution Ali Woodruff
Sound Design & Sound Execution Bob Bell
Program Editing Elizabeth Stetzel, Daleen Askins
Publicity Elizabeth Stetzel, Daleen Askins, Ron Hill
Box Office Claire Zimmerman
House Manager Jill Simpson
Refreshments Judy Smith
Logo Design Michael PJ Foos

HOUSE FOR SALE

A Play in Two Acts
For 6 Men, 5 Women

CHARACTERS

GLEN MARTIN: A widower in his mid-seventies, stubborn and independent. He dresses in cotton pants, long-sleeve shirt and dress shoes. Though he knows he is ill, he refuses to admit it to anyone.

HELEN (TWINK): Glen's only child. She is in her late thirties and dresses in a professional manner. She loves her father and worries about him constantly. She tries to be patient with him, but can be just as stubborn.

MAX: The widower next door and Glen's best friend. He is a few years older than Glen but has a zest for living. He is a retired physics teacher who dresses in the same manner as Glen.

GOODSELL: The real estate agent, probably in his mid-forties, though his age is unimportant, as long as he is older than Helen and younger than Glen. He wears a suit or sport coat and tie.

GARY: Young man of college age who makes deliveries for Sankey's. He wears jeans, a T-shirt with the sleeves rolled up, and loafers.

KATE: A cute, bubbly, talkative twenty-year-old who has a tendency to take over a situation. Her hair is in a pony-tail. She wears pedal pushers, bobby sox and penny loafers.

CHUCK: This guy has just had an argument with his wife and is a little drunk and very tired. He looks and is dressed as a laborer, perhaps in a shirt with his name over pocket.

FANNY: She comes on strong and is obviously husband-hunting. Slightly younger than Glen, she is well dressed and has nearly a Mae Westian manner.

APOSTLE: One of those annoying proselytizers who rings doorbells without warning. He is dressed in robe and sandals and carries religious pamphlets.

SYLVIA: She is at least Glen's age or older. Direct and to the point. She has never taken any guff from anyone and isn't about to start now. She carries a cane and doesn't care how she dresses.

FAYE: She appears in a dream sequence, dressed in funeral garb. She is sixty years old but quick witted and funny.

SCENE: The living room of Glen Martin's home.

TIME: Before technology and at a time when people in their seventies were old. A good year—1956.

ACT I

Scene i

SETTING: *The living/dining room of Glen Martin.*

AT RISE: *It is mid-morning on a Saturday in August 1956. The curtain opens on the living/dining room of a comfortable-looking home decorated in the style of the early '50s. It is in a state of disarray—not sloppy—but definitely with a lived-in look. The dining table L is strewn with a jigsaw puzzle under construction. A basket of unfolded laundry is next to couch. Doorbell rings and someone calls “Dad?” There is a loud knock and the door opens. HELEN enters, followed by GOODSELL. He carries a clipboard.*

HELEN. Dad! Are you here? *(There is no answer.)* He might be next door. He'll be back any minute. I hope you can convince him to sell the house. As I told you, my father can be very stubborn. *(Straightens magazines and putters around.)* Well, obviously, this is the living room. A small kitchen, through there is a den or bedroom, and there's two bedrooms and a bath upstairs.

GOODSELL. Has your father said that he wants to sell?

HELEN. Well, no...not really. But I thought maybe—

GOODSELL. You know you can't force him to sell unless he's declared incompetent and you become his guardian.

HELEN. Well, he's definitely not incompetent, but he is careless when it comes to taking his medicines. And he falls asleep at the drop of a hat. He's nearly burned the place down several times.

GOODSELL. Younger people do those things too, and no one considers selling their houses. It's really none of my business, but you and your father should have a serious talk.

HELEN. I've tried to talk with him, but he just shuts down...won't listen to anything.

GOODSELL. Have you considered a nursing home? There's a number of good ones in your area.

HELEN. No...definitely not. I won't have him in a place like that. Besides, he isn't that bad. All he really needs is someone to sort of look after him. Paul and I can't move closer because of our jobs. We want Dad to live with us. I thought maybe you could convince him.

GOODSELL. If the man won't listen to his own child, what makes you think that he'll listen to a perfect stranger? When I agreed to come here, I didn't realize—

HELEN. Please, Mr. Goodsell. Just talk to him. Tell him what the place is worth. Maybe he'll at least think about selling.

GOODSELL. Well, it isn't good for my business, but has he considered renting it? That way he wouldn't be faced with moving and selling at the same time. It might be easier for him.

HELEN. Either way, he would still have to move, and that's the problem. It's just a house, but he's lived here for years. I was born here, my mom died here, and it's filled with memories for him, but there's more to life

than memories. Please, won't you at least try to convince him to sell?

GOODSELL. Well, I can try, but I don't think I'll have much luck.

HELEN. Thanks. Maybe the advice coming from a stranger will carry more weight. I'll go see if he's next door or in the backyard. Feel free to look around.

(GOODSELL looks around the room, jots a few notes, crosses R to door or arch and goes into adjacent room. At this point we hear a toilet flush and presently GLEN MARTIN, mid-seventies, enters at the top of the stairs, UL, zipping his pants. He is surprised, but not startled to see GOODSELL.)

GLEN *(entering)*. Hello. *(Shaking his legs and stomping his feet.)*

GOODSELL. Hello. Is there a problem?

GLEN. My feet are asleep. Happens all the time. *(Watches as GOODSELL continues to measure the room.)* Let me give you a hand with that.

GOODSELL. Oh, thanks, take that end. *(They take several measurements.)*

GLEN. Am I getting new carpet?

GOODSELL. I don't know. Are you?

GLEN. Not that I remember.

GOODSELL. How many bedrooms in the house?

GLEN. Two...maybe three.

GOODSELL. Do you happen to know the number of square feet you have? *(Jots figures on clipboard.)*

GLEN. Two. *(Looking at his feet.)* Neither one is square though.

GOODSELL. I mean the house. How many square feet does it have?

GLEN. No idea. Why would I have to know that?

GOODSELL. Well, it would save me some measuring.

GLEN. Can I ask you a question?

GOODSELL. Sure, what is it?

GLEN. Who are you?

HELEN (*entering from kitchen*). Oh, there you are.

GLEN. Oh, hello. Helen.

HELEN. Hi. You left the door unlocked again. I called and didn't get an answer so we just came in.

GLEN. I was in the bathroom.

HELEN. And you didn't hear me yell for you?

GLEN. I fell asleep. Did this guy come with you or is he one of those porch apostles who happened to be out there when you opened the door?

HELEN. Oh, I'm sorry. Dad, this is Mr. Goodsell. Mr. Goodsell, my father Glen Martin. (*The two men shake hands and exchange pleasantries.*)

GOODSELL. Hello.

GLEN. Hello. And?

GOODSELL. And??

GLEN. Are you a carpet salesman or what? What's with all the measuring? Why are you here?

GOODSELL. I came with your daughter.

GLEN. I know you came with her. I asked why?

HELEN. Mr. Goodsell is a real estate agent. I told you we were coming. Don't you remember?

GLEN. No, I don't. Goodsell?? And he sells real estate? What a bunch of crap! I don't know of any place around here that's for sale unless Max is selling his place and he hasn't mentioned it.

HELEN. Dad, we aren't talking about Max's place. We are talking about this place.

GLEN. Helen, we have been through this so many times. I don't want to sell. There is no reason I should.

HELEN. I know you don't want to sell, but your health—

GLEN. Nothing wrong with my health...I'm as healthy as a horse.

HELEN. I'm not saying you have to sell. Just let Mr. Goodsell give you his opinion.

GLEN. No offense, young man, but your opinion doesn't mean squat to me.

GOODSELL. I understand, Mr. Martin. Helen is only trying to do what she thinks is best for you. She worries about you.

GLEN. My daughter has an inborn need to worry. She got it from her mother.

HELEN. I don't enjoy worrying about you, but I have a right—

GLEN. You have no right to bring someone here with the intention of selling my home!

HELEN. Dad, please. I don't want you to get upset.

GLEN. Then why do you insist on hounding me about selling this place!

GOODSELL. I didn't think this was going to work. (*Starts for door.*)

HELEN. Please don't leave, Mr. Goodsell. (*To GLEN.*) Dad, just let him look around. He can at least give you some idea of what the place is worth.

GLEN. I know what it's worth to me. I don't care what it's worth to anyone else. And I certainly don't care what he thinks it's worth.

GOODSELL. Helen, you said it would be touchy, but I had no idea your father would be so opposed to this. I thought he knew I was coming...this should have been discussed. Maybe another time—

GLEN. No, not another time. I've told you hundreds of times. I'm not selling, Twink.

GOODSELL. Twink?

HELEN. I'll explain later. Why don't you go out back and check the foundation, or roof, or something. *(She takes him to the kitchen and he exits.)*

GLEN. Check all you want. I'm not selling.

HELEN. Dad, please. We have to come to a decision.

GLEN. The foundation is cracked, and the roof leaks, and that's how I like it.

HELEN. Please, Dad.

GLEN. And the neighborhood is going to hell in a hand basket! Location! Location! Location!

HELEN. Calm down! I know how much this place means to you and you don't want to sell, but we have to do something. I worry about you constantly. You aren't eating right and I don't know if you are taking your medicine as you should.

GLEN. I'm eating just fine. In fact, I was just going to call the store and have some things delivered before you barged in.

HELEN. I didn't barge in. I told you I was coming. It isn't my fault you don't remember. If you took your medicine, you wouldn't be so forgetful.

GLEN. I don't have to take medicine. There's nothing wrong with me.

HELEN. So now, by some miracle, your blood pressure is just fine and you no longer have a heart condition?

GLEN. Until what's-his-face showed up here, my blood pressure was hunky-dory and my "heart condition" is nothing more than a flutter...once in a while...like a butterfly in my chest. And, as far as I know, a butterfly never killed anyone.

HELEN. You know it's more serious than that.

GLEN. No, I don't know. It's butterflies. Nothing more.

HELEN. You simply can't continue to live alone. I have to make an hour's drive several times a week to check on you.

GLEN. I never asked you to check on me.

HELEN. Paul and I have talked it over and we want you to come live with us. We have the extra room. You'll have your own space.

GLEN. I have my own space and it's right here.

HELEN. You spend too much time alone. We want you closer to us.

GLEN. Then you shouldn't have moved so far away.

(MAX, a man around GLEN's age, enters from the kitchen.)

MAX. What's all the yelling? Oh, hi, Helen.

HELEN. Hello, Max.

GLEN. Hi, Max.

MAX. Hey, Glen, there's some guy out back poking around your foundation and checking things out. What's the problem? Do you have termites?

GLEN. Not that I know of, but plenty of other pests. *(He looks at HELEN.)*

HELEN. That's Goodsell. He's a real estate agent.

MAX. Real estate? Why would a real estate guy be snooping around your place?

GLEN. Why do they usually snoop around?

MAX. You figuring on selling the place?

GLEN. I'm not...she is!

MAX. Aw, you don't want to sell out. I won't let you. Where would I go for my morning coffee?

HELEN. Your morning coffee aside, he's my father and my concern. I can't be driving down here all the time to check on him. He isn't well in spite of what he might have told you.

MAX. He tells me everything. That's what friends do.

HELEN. I doubt he tells you everything.

MAX. What's the problem? He seems well enough to me.

HELEN. You aren't his doctor—thank God!

MAX. What? High blood pressure? At our age, we all have that.

GLEN. You tell her, Max. *(Sits at table and fusses with puzzle.)*

HELEN. He can't live alone any longer and my job won't allow me to live closer. I can't be driving down here several times a week to check on him. It's driving me crazy!

MAX. You're just a schoolteacher. Get a job here in town.

HELEN. Just a schoolteacher!? Max, you are incredible!

MAX. Thanks.

HELEN. I didn't mean that as a compliment! I like my job and want to keep it.

GLEN. And I like my home and want to keep it.

HELEN. It's not the same thing.

MAX. Why not? Sounds like it to me.

HELEN. Max, please. Dad, you don't have a job to give up. You don't have a husband and his job to consider. Even if I were willing to change schools, I can't ask Paul to start all over again.

GLEN. But you can ask me.

HELEN. It's not the same th...don't even say it, Max.

MAX. I wasn't even thinking it.

GLEN. And I'm staying put.

HELEN. Why do you have to be so unreasonable?

MAX. Here's a thought. I'm in and out of here all the time. I'll check on him for you.

GLEN. I don't need anyone to check on me.

MAX. I know that, but if it will make Helen happy—

HELEN. Please, Max, let me handle this.

MAX. Sure, but we've been friends and neighbors for years. We look out for each other.

HELEN. This is a family matter.

MAX. Fine, I'll have my family look out for him. Florence or one of the grandkids is in and out of my place every day. It wouldn't be any problem to stop in here.

HELEN (*softening a little*). Thanks, Max, I appreciate the offer, but Florence has her hands full and he is my responsibility.

GLEN. When did I become your responsibility? When my hair turned gray? When I retired? I'm responsible for me. I do just fine on my own.

HELEN. Responsibility probably isn't the best choice of words. Concern is better. I'm concerned about you. You're my concern.

GLEN. Now you are patronizing me.

HELEN. Oh, Dad.

MAX. Why don't you just phone to check up on him?
(*Paying no attention to GLEN.*)

HELEN. And when he doesn't answer, then what? I can't be bothering your daughter—

GLEN. Hello!! I'm right here.

MAX. Forget Florence. Phone me. I'll look in on him and let you know.

HELEN. I've tried that and didn't get an answer at your place.

MAX. If it was in the morning, I was probably over here.

HELEN. If you had been here, someone would have answered the phone!

GLEN. I don't need a babysitter or a keeper. There's nothing wrong with me! (*Rubs arm and sneaks a pill.*)

MAX. What day was it when you called?

HELEN. I don't remember. Maybe Tuesday or Wednesday. Last week sometime.

MAX. What time of day?

HELEN. I don't remember! And what difference does it make! No one answered the damn phone!!

GLEN. Helen! If your mother heard you talk like that—

HELEN. I'm sorry, Dad, but what difference does the time make?

MAX. Well, because Tuesday night is my bowling night—

HELEN. I don't remember—

MAX. And Thursday afternoon I play cards at the center.

HELEN (*on the verge of losing it*). I told you!! I don't remember when it was! All I know is that I had to make the drive and when I got here the fire trucks were outside because he had fallen asleep with something on the stove and the house was filled with smoke.

MAX. Yeah...I remember that. That was a Tuesday...I was bowling.

HELEN. Oh, for crying out loud.

GLEN. Hey, have you ever been lucky enough to pick up that 7-10 split?

MAX. Close, but no cigar. I think if I stand a little more to the left—

HELEN. A little more to the left.

MAX. Huh?

HELEN. More to the left. So far left that you find yourself out the door. We have things to discuss and you aren't helping. Goodbye, Max.

GLEN. Well, that was rude. Max is a good friend, he means well. He deserves better treatment than that!

HELEN. I know he's a good friend and I'll apologize later, but right now we have things to discuss and his bowling night is not one of them.

GLEN. We have nothing to discuss. My home is not for sale and never will be as long as I'm alive.

GOODSELL (*entering from kitchen*). Well, Mr. Martin, your home appears very sound and well maintained. A really nice yard with lots of mature trees. I didn't see any evidence of foundation cracks, and the roof appears to be in fine shape. You said it leaks?

GLEN. Only when it rains. Not when the sun is shining, you goofy twit.

HELEN. Now who's being rude? The roof doesn't leak! It was replaced about eight years ago—just before Mom passed away.

GLEN. And they did a lousy job! On a rainy day you can take a shower in any room upstairs.

HELEN. That isn't true and you know it. Come with me, Mr. Goodsell, and I'll prove it. *(They go upstairs.)*

GLEN *(calling after them)*. Don't go in my room! The plaster is falling off! *(More to the audience.)* And I didn't make the bed. *(The stage is empty when GLEN goes to the kitchen. We hear a rattle of glasses and he enters with a glass of water. He washes down a couple of pills. He rubs his chest and left arm.)* Damn those butterflies. *(Crosses to Faye's picture.)* Maybe she's right, Faye. Maybe I am getting too old to live alone. But I just can't leave after all this time...not now. No place else could ever be home to me. *(GLEN goes to the phone and dials.)* This is Glen Martin. Is Gary working today? Good. Could I get him to deliver a couple of things? Well, I need a quart of milk, a loaf of wheat bread, a pound of baloney, and...hold on a minute. *(Goes to kitchen and we hear the refrigerator open and close. He enters and from across the room yells.)* And a jar of mustard! Did you hear that? Yeah, a jar of mustard. Yeah, that's it. Oh, could you ask him to stop at the bakery and get a couple dozen molasses cookies? I'll pay him when he gets here. Thanks. *(Hangs up.)*

GOODSELL *(offstage)*. He really doesn't want to sell and legally you can't force him, but I'll do my best to convince him. It shouldn't be any trouble finding a buyer. It's a seller's market right now.

(HELEN and GOODSELL enter on the stairs.)

HELEN. Well, there's no sign of any leaks.

GLEN. It's been a dry summer.

GOODSELL. You have a well-built, solid home, Mr. Martin. The stars and clouds on the ceiling of Helen's room are very nice. She told me the story.

GLEN. Hey, that's family stuff.

GOODSELL. How long have you owned this house, Mr. Martin?

GLEN. Oh, she didn't tell you that, too? Bought it thirty-five years ago this October. Paid twenty-seven hundred for it. Thought we'd never get it paid for, but Faye, that's Twink's...um, Helen's mother, was always good with money.

GOODSELL. Well, Mr. Martin, I can guarantee that this house would sell for three, maybe four times that amount on today's market. That's a very good return on your investment. That is, if you are willing to sell.

GLEN. Which I'm not! *(Sits on couch.)*

GOODSELL. I realize that you don't want to feel dependent, but circumstances in our lives change as we grow older, Mr. Martin. My mother had a stroke and we couldn't take care of her. She went to a home, and all her decisions had to be made for her. Independence is being able to make your own decisions. I hope you'll reconsider. *(Hands business card to GLEN who refuses to accept it. HELEN takes the card.)* Please call me at the office when the situation is resolved. Goodbye.

HELEN. Thank you, Mr. Goodsell, I'll do that. *(GOODSELL exits.)*

GLEN. Over my dead body.

HELEN. I didn't mean to upset you. It's just that I worry about you constantly. *(Sits on couch next to GLEN.)* If I lived closer, if I were not your only child, if Mom were still living—

GLEN. If ifs and buts were candy and nuts, it would be Christmas every day.

HELEN. You used to say that all the time when I was a little girl.

GLEN. Yeah, one of my favorites.

HELEN. But I'm not a little girl any longer, and you are no longer that dark-haired, young man that I thought could do everything. *(Begins to fold and place towels on coffee table.)* Changes are called for now, Dad. Can't we think of something that will make us both happy or, at least, be acceptable to both of us.

GLEN. Acceptable for you means I move. Acceptable for me means I stay. This is not exactly a win-win situation.

HELEN. Every problem has a solution. You taught me that.

GLEN. I don't know...I just don't know. Certainly, I don't want to cause you more worry, but I can't bear the thought of selling our home. What would I do? Go to an old folks' home? Move in with you and Paul?

HELEN. That's exactly what we want you to do.

GLEN. That's a bunch of crap. You guys need your privacy. How else will I ever get any grandchildren? *(GLEN refolds each item and places it on another stack.)*

HELEN. Dad! For crying out loud! *(Stands and moves DR.)* You know that's out of the question.

GLEN. Doesn't keep one from trying though. Your mother and I had to try for eight years, and just when we had given up you came along.

HELEN. Well, Paul and I have been married eleven years and it hasn't happened yet and probably won't. But this isn't about Paul and me. It's about you and your living

alone. (*Realizing what GLEN is doing with the laundry.*)

What are you doing?

GLEN (*looking at her innocently*). Folding laundry.

HELEN. But that's already folded.

GLEN. I'm doing it the right way, like your mother taught me.

HELEN. What difference does it make?

GLEN. It goes on the towel rack better. (*Folds towel and drapes it over his arm.*) Look, whether you think so or not, I know how to fold laundry and I'm perfectly capable of living by myself. Max has done it for years and so can I.

HELEN. His daughter lives just blocks from here. She married a Catholic, for God's sake, and has an entire pew full of kids. There's someone in and out over there all the time.

GLEN. Max says that gets to be a pain in the...backside.

HELEN. For once I have to agree with Max. He's probably right, but at least he has some company.

GLEN. I have people stopping by all the time, too.

HELEN. Who? Since Mom died, you've isolated yourself. You quit driving, you have no outside interests. You do jigsaw puzzles and crosswords for days on end.

GLEN. It fills my days.

HELEN. But you're alone all the time. You won't even buy a television set.

GLEN. Why should I? It's just a fad...a bunch of crap.

HELEN. It would be company for you.

GLEN. I have plenty of company. Why, this place looks like Grand Central Station at times.

HELEN. And this is just a slow day, I guess.

GLEN. It's still early.

HELEN. Name me three people who stop by. Go on. Just three people.

GLEN. Well, there's Max.

HELEN. Max doesn't count.

GLEN. He'd be happy to hear that.

HELEN. Who? Besides Max. And I don't count either.

GLEN (*remembering his earlier phone call*). Well, there's Gary.

HELEN. Who?

GLEN. The delivery boy from Sankey's. He'll talk your leg off. I practically have to throw him out.

HELEN. I'll give you that one. Who else?

GLEN. The Avon lady comes by once in a while.

HELEN. The Avon lady!?

GLEN. Sometimes. I buy something and we talk.

HELEN. And the third one?

GLEN (*thinking hard and really stretching*). Well, there's the meter reader—

HELEN. Now—

GLEN. And those people with those religious magazines! It's no coincidence that they disturb my nap to give me that magazine! (*Doorbell rings.*) See! What did I tell you?!

HELEN. You're not napping.

GLEN. I wish I were.

(GLEN opens the door. A college-age guy is holding a bag of groceries in one arm and a white bakery bag in the other hand.)

GARY. Hi, Mr. Martin. (*Steps into the room.*) I have your grocery order.

GLEN. Thanks, Gary. (*Shoots a smug look at HELEN.*)

Just put them on the counter.

GARY (*starts toward kitchen*). Oh, and I stopped by the bake—

GLEN. Fine. That's fine.

GARY. They had the cookies—

GLEN. Fine, just put everything on the counter. (*GARY steps into the kitchen.*)

GARY (*returns to living room, slip in hand*). That's \$2.58 total.

GLEN (*hands over three bills*). Keep the change.

GARY. Thanks, Mr. Martin.

GLEN. So, Gary, how's school?

GARY. Fine. I have exams next week. Lots of studying to do. (*Starts for door.*)

GLEN. Keep up those grades. Make the folks proud of you.

GARY. I'll try, Mr. Martin. (*Starts for door.*) I'll try.

GLEN. By the way, how are the folks?

GARY. Well, I guess they're proud of me. They never really said.

GLEN. I'm sure they are. How are they health-wise?

GARY (*looks from GLEN to HELEN and back again wondering what's going on*). They're...just...great.

GLEN. Glad to hear that. They're really good people.

GARY. Do you know my parents, Mr. Martin?

GLEN. Well, no, but most parents are basically good people. Always listen to your parents. (*Directed to HELEN.*)

GARY. Because they live in Akron, and I was wondering how you would know them?

GLEN. Akron? And you live here?

GARY. I'm in college, remember?

GLEN. Oh, so you live on campus.

GARY. No way. Two other guys and I share a place.

GLEN. Roommates, huh? Makes sense.

GARY. Saves money and we keep each other company.

GLEN. Well, just behave yourself and always listen to your parents. Some young people just dismiss their parents.

GARY. Look, Mr. Martin—

GLEN. Hey, sit down and talk like we usually do. (*GLEN squeezes GARY's shoulder muscle and tries to force him into the chair.*)

GARY. Ow!

HELEN. I think Gary has things to do.

GARY. Yeah...lots more deliveries. Gotta run. Bye.

HELEN. He certainly talked your leg off, didn't he? And you call that a visit?

GLEN. He knows if I'm alive or dead. It should count for something.

HELEN. You frightened the poor kid!

GLEN. Nonsense. He just wanted to talk.

HELEN. He thought he was going to be held hostage!

GLEN. He'll get over it.

HELEN. I wish you could see things my way just once.

GLEN. That's a two-way street, Twink. Try to see things MY way. This Goodsell character...what is it he does again?

HELEN. I explained all that. Mr Goodsell is a real estate agent...he sells houses.

GLEN. Well, he's really not a bad guy...rather likable actually and IF I were selling a house I'd give him my business. But this place, with all its faults, is my home. It has been for nearly forty years and I'll be damned...darned...if I'm selling it. Not now...not ever.

HELEN. But Mr. Goodsell said he can get you a very good price and Paul and I would really like to have you closer to us. You could use the money you make to enjoy life.

GLEN. I enjoy my life now. I do as I damn...darn...well please. I go to bed when I want to, get up when I want to, I don't even shut the bathroom door!

HELEN. It's a good thing. No one would be able to wake you.

GLEN. A house is worth only so much, but how much are memories worth? Can you give me a price on those? Your mother is in every room of this place. I sometimes think I can smell her perfume or hear her humming as she works in the kitchen. She's the one who wanted to do your room with the stars and clouds on the ceiling. I thought it was a dumb idea, but you loved it, and I had to sing "Twinkle, twinkle little star" to you every night for years after it was done. Finally, it struck me just how wise your mother was. We had given up hope of having a family, and then you came along...a piece of heaven...our own little star. I can't give up those memories, Twink, I just can't. Please don't ask me to.

HELEN. I'm sorry, Dad, but this little piece of heaven worries about you. Isn't there something we can think of that will make us both happy?

GLEN. Well, I do have an idea, but you probably aren't going to like it.

HELEN. You do? What is it? I'm open for just about anything.

GLEN. Suppose I had someone living here with me? Someone younger and not so "feeble"...would that satisfy you?

HELEN. Well, I don't know. I never thought of hiring someone to come in and look after you. You'd certainly lose your privacy and it would be expensive.

GLEN. I'm not paying someone to look after me. That's not what I mean. What if I charged someone to live here?

HELEN. What are you saying?

GLEN. Maybe a roommate.

HELEN. Gary?

GLEN. No, he already has roommates.

HELEN. You don't mean Max, do you?

GLEN. Good God! No! I said younger and not so feeble. He's in no better shape than I am...if I were in bad shape. Besides, he's a retired physics teacher. He'd bore me to death in less than a week.

HELEN. And where do you plan on finding this roommate?

GLEN. I'll advertise! There must be plenty of people out there who need a place and wouldn't mind looking after a pleasant, older gentleman. And don't ask who the pleasant, older gentleman is or the deal is off.

HELEN. Dad, I'm not sure about this.

GLEN. Let me give it a try. What can it hurt?

HELEN. For one thing, you'll have to start closing the bathroom door.

GLEN. Not if the roommate is downstairs or out of the house.

HELEN. Dad! For crying out loud—

GLEN. Okay! Okay! I'll close the door.

HELEN. And I want the final word on anyone you find.

GLEN. Why? Don't you trust my judgment?

HELEN. Quite frankly, no. I'm not convinced that this is the way to go, but at least it's a compromise. I guess I can tolerate the situation a little while longer...let's say one month—

GLEN. Make it six weeks.

HELEN. One month. But at the end of that month...well, let's leave it at that. *(She looks at her watch.)* This has taken longer than I thought. Paul will be home from his golf game before I get there. Remember...one month. *(Kisses GLEN on the cheek.)* Bye, I love you. I'll give you a call.

GLEN. I love you, too. Drive carefully. Oh, wait a minute. *(He goes to the kitchen and returns carrying a bag.)* Molasses cookies and I didn't burn these.

HELEN. Thanks, Dad. *(Another peck on the cheek.)*

GLEN. Tell Paul I said hello.

HELEN. I will. Take care of yourself. *(Exits.)*

GLEN. That's what I've been trying to tell you! I can take care of myself. *(More quietly.)* I think. *(He walks around the room for a while just looking. He sees a picture of Faye on the table and picks it up.)* Is this what it's come to, Faye? Am I really too old to live alone? And when did that happen? It seems that it was only a few years ago that we were both young, happy to be in our own home, and thrilled to have a baby on the way. Then, you left...at sixty you left...and that's when I became old. It's your fault, Faye. It's your fault I'm old and Twink sees me that way. *(Pause.)* I'm doing it again, aren't I? Blaming you for everything. It's the only way I know to hold on. Sometimes I almost feel you are here.

MAX (*has come in and stands at the kitchen door out of GLEN's sight*). I am.

GLEN. Holy crap! When did you come in?

MAX. I saw Helen leave and thought I'd come over and see how everything went down.

GLEN. Everything went down fine. I gave her some cookies and sent her home.

MAX. What cookies?

GLEN. The molasses ones.

MAX. I thought you burned those up.

GLEN. I did. I bought some others at the bakery to cover my tracks. She won't know the difference. By the way, do you ever have Sankey's deliver groceries?

MAX. No, Florence or one of the kids generally picks up what I need. Why?

GLEN. That kid who does the deliveries, Gary, not much of a talker.

MAX. So did she convince you to sell or not?

GLEN. I'm not selling...not now...not ever. But maybe Twink has a point...maybe I am getting too old to fend for myself. I burn things. I fall asleep on the toilet.

MAX. So what? So do I. I manage just fine and we are the same age.

GLEN. You are two years older than I, but let's not split hairs. Besides, I'm not like you, Max. Twink is the only family I have. Your kids all live right here in town. Florence is only a couple of blocks away and she or one of the grandkids stops in to check on you every day.

MAX. They aren't "checking on me." They come to visit.

GLEN. Face it, Max. When we are young the kids come to visit...or ask for a loan. When we get old, they're checking on us.

MAX. Maybe you're right. What are you going to do? Are you going to go live with Helen and Paul?

GLEN. No. I've convinced Twink that maybe I should get a roommate who would look out for me. It would be less stress for her.

MAX. A roommate? Who? From where?

GLEN. I think I'll put up a notice down at the store and see what kind of response I get.

MAX. Down at Sankey's? Too many college kids. You'll get someone for a few months and they will be gone. You don't want that.

GLEN. That's exactly what I do want. Helen is satisfied if I have a roommate and in a couple of months, she forgets all about it and the roommate disappears. Presto! I have my independence! I'm playing for time, Max, just playing for time.

CURTAIN

PROPERTY PLOT

FURNITURE:

Gossip bench	Straight-back chair
Sofa	Hall tree
Coffee table	Card table w/ two chairs
Wingback chair	Side table for coffee pot, etc.
Sideboard w/ photographs	Rotary phone
Floor lamp	

PROPS:

ACT I; Scene i

Newspapers
Crossword puzzle books and pencils
Wicker laundry basket
Unfolded laundry, towels, socks, etc.
Watch and wedding ring (Glen - used throughout play)
Coffee pot, cookies and cups (from beginning to end of play)
Partially constructed jigsaw puzzle on card table (entire show)
Clipboard, pen, papers, tape measure, business card (Goodsell)
Cardboard box w/ groceries, inc. white bakery bag w/ cookies (Gary)
Three one-dollar bills
Small medicine vial w/ “pills” (Glen - used throughout play)
Faye’s photograph remains on sideboard

Scene ii

Tray w/ masking-tape name tags	Fake beard (Max)
Wide masking tape	Cane (Sylvia)
Grease pencil	Cooking pan
Religious pamphlets	

ACT II; Scene i

Two dessert plates	Cookies
Two cloth napkins	Coffee pot, coffee and cups
Washcloth	

Scene ii

Umbrella (Helen)
Crutches and leg cast (Max)
Woman’s bathrobe
Box of things from basement, including home-canned goods

