

THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY

A COMEDY IN TWO ACTS

By Eddie McPherson

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PUBLISHED BY

HEUER PUBLISHING LLC

P.O. BOX 248 • CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA 52406

TOLL FREE (800) 950-7529 • FAX (319) 368-8011

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SYNOPSIS: A headline in the state newspaper reads, “Annual Fishing Tournament Expecting Record Number of Female Participants.” This news is great for women who love the sport of fishing. It’s even better news for men who love the sport of “picking up chicks.” When Brad and his buddies hear the news, they pack their backpacks and head to Weiss Lake where the tournament is being held. Because the guys know that the women at the tournament will be impressed with men who exude expert fishing knowledge, they conduct research by picking up a couple of fishing magazines at the local Seven Eleven. They figure by the time the “chicks” find out the men know nothing about fishing they have already won them over with their “charm and animal magnetism.” But when one of the men’s inept cousin tags along and accidentally spills the beans to the women about the men’s intentions, the weekend becomes more than anyone bargained for. And then Brad’s fiancée shows up. The women have a plan to put the ego-filled fellows in their place - - and it’s not going to be pretty.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(5 MEN, 5 WOMEN)

ANNIE.....Well spoken and loves sports fishing.
Mid twenties to mid thirties. *(149 lines)*

BLAIR.....A friend of Annie’s who reminds one of
a junkyard dog. Around same age or
older. *(92 lines)*

DONNA.....Another friend who loves fishing.
Stylish. Early to late thirties. *(136 lines)*

MADELINE.....A tomboy, but still enjoys lady-like
things on occasion. Mid twenties to
early thirties. *(64 lines)*

CAROL Attractive and trusting. The same age as Brad. (53 lines)

BRAD Young man mid to late twenties. There's nothing he loves more than himself. (189 lines)

GEORDIE Somewhat naïve in the area of relationships. Mid to late thirties. (156 lines)

MAX A little more levelheaded than Brad or Geordie. Mid thirties. (91 lines)

HAROLD The epitome of a nerd. Goodhearted. Mid to late thirties. (120 lines)

CLIVE Handyman type. Somewhat of an enigma. Mid thirties to mid forties. (38 lines)

PROPS LIST: Tackle boxes; fishing poles; suitcases; backpacks; white bed sheets; telephone; light-weight framed picture; newspaper; fishing magazine; child's bow and arrow; fireplace poker; nice dresses; cell phone; various fishing lures; small headphone; handheld tape recorder; paintbrush; binoculars; poser board with picture of a stickman drawn on it; easel; drinking glass; small step ladder; burlap sack (holding: rusty car tag, rubber boot, deflated inner tube, fake fish); beach towel; Tupperware bowls with lids; comic book; needle-nose pliers; large plastic spray bottle; index cards; empty pizza boxes; cans of soft drinks; fake deer antlers; picture of a moose; apple; cardboard box; tissue or handkerchief; handmade "kick me" sign; pen and small pad; plastic cup; ice cream cone; three blindfolds; Halloween monster mask; fake engagement ring; lighter; large book; loaf of bread.

THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY

PRODUCTION NOTES:

Each time Clive appears at the window, he should don a different disguise, yet clearly recognizable. For example: Cap pulled down over his eyes and a fake mustache, an Indian, Japanese soldier, cowboy, etc.

When the girls are looking over their live bait – gummy worms in Oreo crumbs in Tupperware bowls work well.

The hole in the wall that Clive and Carol use should be covered with black cloth for easy access.

Entrances and exits should be quick, practically on top of one another.

If your lights can't dim in the second act where Harold and Madeline are together, simply skip that business and have Madeline sit beside Harold and Harold jump up and run and stand beside the door.

Song titles mentioned throughout the script are suggestions. Royalties paid to perform this play do not cover the performance of copyrighted music not in the public domain.

ACT ONE, SCENE 1

AT RISE:

It's a fishing/hunting lodge. The front door is up stage center. Long windows grace the wall on either side of the front door. There is a short set of stairs stage right which goes up to some of the bedrooms. An arch stage left leads off to more bedrooms on that side of the lodge. In the corner of the upstage left wall is another door that leads to the kitchen. A fireplace is stage left beside the arch. A deer head hangs above the mantle of the fireplace. Several mounted fish hang about on the walls along with old, rustic and pastoral pictures in wooden frames.

A sofa is center stage with a matching chair sitting left of it. A small, round wooden table sits in the stage right area close to the base of the stairs. A few wooden chairs sit around the table. A large sign that reads "Welcome Tournament Participants" sits on an easel near the window upstage.

The furniture is covered with white sheets. The overall feel should be rustic. The front door opens and ANNIE and BLAIR enter. ANNIE carries all the suitcases, tackle boxes and fishing poles. BLAIR is empty-handed and has crossed arms. She's upset about something. ANNIE sets her load behind the sofa, puts hands on hips and looks around.

ANNIE: Here we are, our home away from home for three fun-filled days. *(BLAIR simply shoots a cold stare ANNIE'S way. ANNIE ignores this and crosses to the dining table and removes the sheet.)* I guess we can start by pulling off these dusty sheets. *(Still nothing from BLAIR. ANNIE crosses to the sofa and pulls off the sheet as she looks stage left and points.)* There's a kitchen through there; half the bedrooms are on that side of the lodge up the stairs *(Stage right.)* and the other half on that side. *(Stage left.)*

The telephone rings. ANNIE answers it as BLAIR takes a seat on the sofa, arms still crossed.

ANNIE: I'll get it. Hello? Oh, hello, Pete. Good to hear from you. How's Maude? Ah, too bad. Tell her to soak it twice a day in salt water. *(She covers the mouthpiece and speaks to BLAIR.)* Maude broke her ankle. *(Back to the phone.)* Two of us are here; Donna and Madeline should be arriving any time now. Yes, we're all competing tomorrow. Thanks, I'll pass that kind word on to the other girls. Oh, and Pete - - we really appreciate you letting us use your lodge, it's beautiful. Don't forget to tell Maude about the salt water. Goodbye. *(She hangs up the phone and looks at BLAIR.)* I'm beginning to feel a little lonely. Blair, aren't you going to say anything all weekend?

THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY

BLAIR: (*Through clenched teeth.*) I-hate-men! I wish they were fish so I could throw them all into Weiss Lake, fish them out with an extra sharp hook, watch them flop around gasping desperately for air until they die a slow, pain-filled death. (*As though the world has been lifted off her shoulder.*)

ANNIE: (*Beat.*) You feel better?

BLAIR: The thought of men dying always makes me feel better.

ANNIE: You have got to get your mind off Walter.

BLAIR: (*Rising.*) How could I have ever thought Walter Higgins was the one for me? I guess it's for the best, since he bugged me so much anyway.

ANNIE: How did he bug you?

BLAIR: For one thing, he always scratched his butt when he was thinking about something. Why do men do that?

ANNIE: That's where their brain is.

BLAIR: I don't know what happened to us. I just don't know.

ANNIE: Have you ever thought about . . . (*Hesitates.*)

BLAIR: Thought about what?

ANNIE: Well, Blair - it's your appearance. The cap, the Grim Reaper tattoos, the wads of chewing tobacco.

BLAIR: You're right, Annie. Only an idiot would give up all this.

ANNIE: (*Changing the subject.*) We're here to have a fun weekend - - so just put all that out of your mind. Let's go upstairs and claim our beds before the other girls get here.

BLAIR: Can't we find a group of fishermen and throw extra large rocks at their heads instead?

ANNIE: (*As she exits up the stairs.*) Blair, you're incorrigible.

BLAIR: Only when I eat too much fiber. (*She exits behind ANNIE. A moment later BRAD and GEORDIE enter and slyly look around. They're still dressed in their shirts and ties since they left for the lodge straight from work in the city. GEORDIE carries only his inhaler which he uses anytime he starts to get nervous; but BRAD is loaded down with the latest fishing gadgets and best gear that money can buy. They each wear a backpack.*)

BRAD: (*To GEORDIE after a quick survey of the room.*) Coast is clear. (*Entering the room.*) Didn't I tell you it's the perfect spot?

GEORDIE: Perfect spot for what? You still haven't told me what we're doing here. At a fishing lodge. In the middle of nowhere.

BRAD: Trust me, you won't be disappointed.

GEORDIE: (*Not sure about what BRAD'S talking about.*) Okay, okay, I trust you.

BRAD: Stay close to me, old buddy, and I'll teach you everything you need to know about chicks, broads, babes and dolls.

GEORDIE: (*Accepts anything BRAD says about women as law - - rubs his hands together, excited.*) If you say so.

BRAD: I've come up here for weekend getaways a couple of times. *(Looking at the uncovered furniture, rubbing his chin.)* But the furniture is usually covered. Here, help me wrap it back up so it doesn't look like we're staying here. *(They talk as they cover the furniture.)*

GEORDIE: Wait a minute, if the furniture is uncovered, couldn't someone else be using the lodge this weekend?

BRAD: Pete said he wasn't going to loan it out until he gets some minor repairs done.

GEORDIE: Then how are we getting away with staying here?

BRAD: Because Pete doesn't exactly know we are here.

GEORDIE: One more question: I know I'm naïve about a lot of things, but what are we doing at Weiss Lake in the middle of a state park? I thought you were taking me somewhere to pick up some groovy chicks. You know, *(To use BRAD'S own words.)* broads, babes, dolls.

BRAD: We, my friend, are here for a fishing tournament.

GEORDIE: That's good. I was beginning to think . . . *(Turns back to BRAD.)* Did you just say fishing tournament?

BRAD: *(Hands GEORDIE a newspaper and points at the page.)* Read that headline.

GEORDIE: *(Reading.)* Typhoon Rips through Cemetery; Hundreds Dead.

BRAD: Not that one. THAT one.

GEORDIE: *(Reading.)* Fishing Tournament Expecting Female Participants in Record Number. *(He looks a little perplexed.)*

BRAD: Do I have to spell it out for you? *(Grabs the paper and points.)* Female participants in RECORD number.

GEORDIE: Wait a minute, are you trying to tell me THIS is where we plan to find the women of our dreams? A fishing tournament?

BRAD: *(Throwing out his arms.)* Surprise! *(Notices GEORDIE'S perplexed look.)* Look, Geordie - - the women fishing in this tournament will be staying the WHOLE weekend. We'll have a captive audience.

GEORDIE: There's just one little detail you've overlooked.

BRAD: What's that?

GEORDIE: *(Frustrated.)* WE DON'T KNOW HOW TO FISH!

BRAD: Just a minor detail, old buddy. We simply fake it. By the time they catch on, we have already won them over with our charm and animal magnetism.

GEORDIE: Fake fishing? You have lost your ever-loving mind. Look, we spend our days in corporate America on our laptops and Blackberries. We give boring PowerPoint presentations to CEOs who wouldn't know a fish if they met one on the street! *(Points to a fish on the wall.)* What's that?

BRAD: A mounted fish, Einstein.

GEORDIE: *(Crosses to the fish.)* This is the kind of fish they catch around these parts?! They're really serious about this stuff!

THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY

BRAD: Then we'll be serious too. We already know the women here this weekend are passionate about fishing. We will automatically have something in common with them.

GEORDIE: Something in common? Didn't you hear what I said? We have never been fishing a day in our lives.

BRAD: No sweat. *(Handing GEORDIE a book he has pulled from his backpack.)* I've been conducting research. I bought that title especially for you.

GEORDIE: *(Reading the front cover.)* Fishing For Reel Dummies. *(Sarcastically.)* Thanks a lot. So, exactly what are you saying? That it's okay to be dishonest with women?

BRAD: Don't call it dishonesty - - call it *(Thinks, but just a moment.)* creative fibbing. We have to be smart about this. The only men these gals are interested in this weekend are serious fisherman. Once Max gets here, I'll fill both of you in on the details.

GEORDIE: Where is he, anyway?

BRAD: He's due any minute. Let's go to the bar in the kitchen so I can spread out my gear and show you what all this stuff does. *(GEORDIE and BRAD exit to the kitchen. A second later, ANNIE enters from upstairs. She sees the covered furniture, and then crosses back to the stairs.)*

ANNIE: Blair!! *(Placing her hands on her hips, she crosses back to the sofa. BLAIR reenters carrying a bow and arrow.)*

BLAIR: What's the matter?

ANNIE: Did you recover the furniture?

BLAIR: *(Playing with the bow and arrow.)* I've been upstairs with you.

ANNIE: Where did you get that?

BLAIR: I found it in the closet upstairs.

ANNIE: It must belong to Pete's little boy. *(Crosses to and yells through the arch.)* Hello? Anyone in there?

BLAIR: Let's look outside. *(ANNIE opens the door and heads outside.)* Don't leave me in here by myself. *(They exit. GEORDIE and BRAD reenter quickly from the kitchen.)*

BRAD: *(Looking around the room.)* Did you hear that? Sounded like a woman's voice.

GEORDIE: Look, the door's open. *(He crosses and looks out the door.)* I don't see anybody. *(He closes the door.)*

BRAD: Must have been down at the lake. *(They head for the sofa when the door opens and DONNA'S voice is heard.)*

DONNA: *(Speaking to ANNIE outside.)* I'll just put my stuff inside.

GEORDIE: *(Panicked, to BRAD.)* A broad! Chick! Woman! What do we do?

BRAD: Under here!

GEORDIE and BRAD lie down on the sofa and cover themselves with the sheet. DONNA enters with her fishing supplies. She drops her stuff and crosses around to the front of the sofa.

DONNA: *(Still yelling to ANNIE.)* This is a great lodge! Looks real comfortable! *(She starts to sit on the sofa.)*

ANNIE: *(Offstage.)* Donna, you might want to take your stuff upstairs. *(This keeps DONNA from sitting.)*

DONNA: *(Shouting to ANNIE.)* Okay! *(She grabs her stuff again, heads for the stairs and exits. GEORDIE and BRAD climb out from under the sheet.)*

GEORDIE: I thought you said no one was staying here.

BRAD: I didn't know!

GEORDIE: We've got to get out of here. *(The front door opens as BRAD and GEORDIE hide again; this time sitting up showing the outline of their heads. They sit straight up.)*

ANNIE: *(Stands and stares at the table and chairs with hands on her hips.)* Well, I know I'm not going crazy. I took every one of these sheets off this furniture.

BLAIR: Maybe we have mice.

ANNIE: *(Heads to the kitchen.)* I'll check the kitchen. *(She exits to the kitchen, leaving BLAIR behind.)*

GEORDIE: *(From underneath the sheet.)* Is the coast clear?

BRAD: I don't know, I can't see. *(BLAIR'S eyes grow wide as she backs away from the sofa.)*

GEORDIE: Why don't you look?

BRAD: Why don't you? *(BLAIR crosses and retrieves an iron poker from the fireplace, then returns and stands beside the sofa.)*

GEORDIE: Okay, but count to three first.

BRAD: One, two, three. *(GEORDIE peeps out from underneath the sheet and looks around. He turns and sees BLAIR holding the poker over her head. GEORDIE jumps and covers his head again.)* Well? Did you see anybody? Is the coast clear?

GEORDIE: Yes and no.

BLAIR: All right, you two scoundrels, come out nice and slow. I'm armed and dangerous.

BRAD peeks out from under the sheet and uncovers himself and GEORDIE.

BRAD: Look, mister, we can explain everything.

GEORDIE: That's right, sir - he can explain everything! Go ahead, Brad - - start explaining. And hurry!

BLAIR: What do you mean, "sir"? *(Holding the poker over her head.)* I'm no "sir" - - *(Removes her ball cap.)* I'm a lady!

GEORDIE: *(Without thinking.)* Hey, Brad, it's a chick.

BLAIR: Chick? *(She raises the poker higher into the air.)* Do you see any feathers here?

BRAD: *(Quickly.)* He meant lady. A beautiful, feminine lady with a breathtaking tattoo of the Grim Reaper on her hairy forearm.

THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY

GEORDIE: *(Trying his best to follow BRAD'S lead.)* Yes ma'am - - nothing says gorgeous like a skull and crossbones forever etched on her leather-like skin.

BLAIR: Stop with the empty compliments and tell me what you are doing hiding that way.

ANNIE enters from the kitchen and rushes to BLAIR.

ANNIE: Blair, what's going on in here?

BLAIR: I found these two *men* hiding out under the sheets.

GEORDIE: *(Pointing at BRAD.)* The whole thing was his idea. I told him that we shouldn't stay here but he said, "Nooooooo!" And I said, "But we might get in trouble." And he said, "We won't get in trouble." And I said, "I bet we will!" *(BLAIR raises the poker higher.)* That's all I've got to say.

BLAIR: They say they're here for the fishing tournament.

ANNIE: *(To BRAD, crossing her arms.)* You don't look like fishermen.

BLAIR: *(Keeping a sharp eye on her prisoners.)* And they said THEY are staying at this lodge.

ANNIE: *(To BRAD.)* Well, now we know you're up to no good, because we're staying here this weekend.

BRAD: Look, all we have to do is call up my good buddy Pete and he'll explain everything. *(Picks up the phone receiver and dials.)* Yes ma'am, Pete will tell you I'm not making this up. *(Into the phone, clearly faking a conversation.)* Pete? Pete, old buddy - - how's everything going? Good! Look, Pete, old pal - - we're out here at your lodge and the funniest thing happened - - it seems you've double booked. *(Laughs.)* Right. We found some . . . um . . . ladies here at the cabin. A mistake? Don't worry about it - - I'm not mad at you, old buddy.

GEORDIE: Let me have that. *(He takes the receiver, faking his own conversation. He speaks without any pauses making it obvious that someone on the other end wouldn't have time to say anything.)* Hey, Pete? Geordie. How are things? Great! And Maude? Out playing ball with the kids, huh? Awesome. So what should we do about our little situation? There's plenty of room? Awesome!

ANNIE: *(Heads for the phone.)* Let me have that phone.

GEORDIE: *(Quickly.)* You've got to go? I understand! Bye now. *(He slams down the receiver. ANNIE picks it up quickly.)*

ANNIE: Hello? Hello? *(To the boys.)* No one's there.

BLAIR: He's lying, I tell you! LYING! All men are liars! *(She raises the poker in the air and heads for BRAD, who backs away from her all the way around the sofa.)* They tell you they care about you! They tell you they'll never leave you or have your name removed from their arm! They say they love you and then what do they do? Leave for a box of Marlboros, never to return again. They rip open your heart and leave it to bleed all over creation! Not to mention not a single cigarette to calm your nerves. *(She has him backed against the table with poker in the air.)* I hate you aaaaall!!

BRAD: *(Beat.)* So, is it okay if we stay?

BLAIR heads to BRAD with the poker. ANNIE steps in between them. BRAD is on top of the table now.

ANNIE: *(To BRAD and GEORDIE.)* Blair's fiancé, Walter, just skipped town, so I'm not sure I would provoke her as long as she's holding a weapon.

BRAD: *(Jumps off the table and kneels in front of BLAIR.)* You've got me all wrong. I'm not Walter, I'm Brad. *(Begging.)* Please don't kill me!

ANNIE: Both of you listen. I don't know who you think you're dealing with, but I happen to know that *wasn't* Pete you were talking to on the phone just now. Maude broke her ankle and is laid up in bed. So why don't you start all over and tell us what you're really doing here? *(The phone rings.)* Blair, get that – I'll watch these two.

BLAIR: *(Answers the phone.)* Hello? Who? *(Covers the mouthpiece.)* Annie, it's Pete.

ANNIE: It is, is it? *(GEORDIE and BRAD exchange desperate glances. To BLAIR.)* Swap places with me. *(ANNIE takes the phone.)* Hello? Pete? Annie. I was just about . . . What's that? *(Looks over at the men.)* Yes, they are, but . . . Are you sure? *(Deflated.)* Alright then. Goodbye. *(Sighs.)* Put the poker down, Blair.

BLAIR: *(Quickly looking over at ANNIE.)* What? Why?

ANNIE: It seems they were telling us the truth after all.

BLAIR: You mean you're asking me to set them free?

GEORDIE: *(Suddenly confident.)* Looks like you don't have much of a choice, now do you, sweetie?

BRAD: Shut up, Geordie.

ANNIE: Pete said he overbooked by mistake. He asked if we would mind sharing the cabin this weekend.

BLAIR: With these barbarians?

BRAD: *(Strutting across the stage.)* I'll be your barbarian.

BLAIR: These Neanderthals?

GEORDIE: *(Taking BRAD'S lead, strutting rather badly.)* I'll be your Neanderthal.

BLAIR: These . . . these baboons? *(After thinking a moment, BRAD and GEORDIE do a monkey dance.)*

ANNIE: There's still something fishy about all this. No pun intended.

THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY

DONNA enters from the stairs. She's holding a couple of nice party dresses.

DONNA: I'm all situated upstairs. Look what I found.

BLAIR: Where did you get those dresses?

DONNA: Found a whole closet full of them in my room. Aren't they darling?

ANNIE: *(Looking over one of the dresses.)* Maude stores her party clothes here.

DONNA: This one is my favorite. *(Puts it up against herself and twirls around, sees the men.)* What's this? *(Slowly crossing to them noticing their ties and dress pants.)* Is somebody being audited?

ANNIE: It seems these *(Through her teeth.)* men are our uninvited roommates for the weekend.

DONNA: But they're *(Leans in to ANNIE in a near whisper.)* of the opposite sex.

BRAD: *(Elbows GEORDIE.)* You hear that? She noticed.

ANNIE: Pete double-booked, so we're stuck.

BRAD: *(Struts to DONNA.)* As you will soon find out for yourself, little lady - - we are not simply men, but tigers, wild beasts, kings of the forests! *(Lets out a roar holding up a "claw.")*

DONNA: *(Crosses between the men.)* You sure don't look much like fishermen. Where is your fishing tackle? Where are your life vests? Do you have a dinghy?

BRAD and GEORDIE look at one another, puzzled. MADELINE enters running through the front door carrying a pole and a tackle box. She heads straight for the stairs.

MADELINE: Girls, upstairs, quick!

ANNIE: Madeline, what's the matter?

MADELINE: I'll tell you upstairs! Come on! *(She runs upstairs.)*

ANNIE: *(Turns to BRAD and GEORDIE.)* We'll settle this later.

BLAIR: *(Follows ANNIE toward the exit, but turns sharply to the men.)* I'm not finished with you two. I don't have the Grim Reaper tattooed on my arm for nothing, you know.

DONNA: *(As DONNA and BLAIR exit.)* Which dress goes best with my eyes?

BLAIR: Donna, let's go. *(They exit leaving GEORDIE and BRAD alone.)*

GEORDIE: *(Furrowed brow, to BRAD.)* What's a dinghy?

BRAD: I guess we'd better find out.

From the window, MAX'S head appears.

MAX: Pssst, is the coast clear?

BRAD: *(BRAD and GEORDIE rush to the window.)* Max, get in here!

MAX: *(To someone beside him who is invisible to the audience.)* You stay right there and DON'T move. *(MAX enters through the door with his own fishing supplies and backpack.)*

BRAD: *(Moving to the window.)* Who are you hiding out there?

MAX: *(Pulling BRAD away, MAX throws his supplies on the floor.)* One thing at a time. Are we in?

GEORDIE: Piece of cake. We even received an unexpected phone call from Pete just now.

MAX: That wasn't Pete, dummy, that was me. *(He holds up his cell phone as he sits on the arm of the sofa.)*

BRAD: Wait a minute; you're the one who called just now?

MAX: *(In his best Pete voice.)* I'm sorry, Annie - - it seems I have double booked. Would it be okay if the men shared the lodge this weekend? *(Coming out of character.)* You gave me the number to this place in case I got lost.

BRAD: *(Patting MAX on the back.)* You old son of a gun, that was genius.

MAX: I was standing outside the window and overheard everything. But there's still something I don't understand. *(Standing and crossing toward the table.)* Why did you bring us way out here of all places to pick up chicks?

GEORDIE: *(Picks up the newspaper and hands it to MAX.)* Because of this article right here. *(Hands it to MAX.)*

MAX: *(Reading.)* Blind Woman Gets New Kidney from Dad She Hasn't Seen in Years.

GEORDIE: Not that one! THAT one.

MAX: Fishing Tournament. Record number of female participants. I like it, I like it.

BRAD: *(Referring to stage left.)* We guys will sleep in the rooms through the arch. *(Points to the stairs stage right.)* The women will be upstairs.

GEORDIE: Come on, let's go check out our rooms.

MAX: *(Looking toward the window.)* Um, you guys go ahead. I need to take care of something. It won't take but a minute.

BRAD: *(To GEORDIE.)* Okay, let's go. *(BRAD and GEORDIE grab their suitcases and gear and exit through the arch stage left. Max makes sure the coast is clear then crosses quickly to the window.)*

MAX: Pssst, Harold! You can come in now.

HAROLD: *(Offstage.)* I don't want to.

MAX: Get in here!

HAROLD: *(Offstage.)* I'm scared.

MAX: Hurry up, we need to talk. *(MAX turns and crosses to the sofa. HAROLD appears at the window and starts crawling through it. MAX turns to him.)* Not through the window; use the door. Geez!

HAROLD: Sorry. *(HAROLD disappears. There's a pause, then a knock at the door.)*

MAX: Harold! *(HAROLD appears at the window again.)*

HAROLD: Yes, sir?

THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY

MAX: Would you get in here? (*HAROLD starts to crawl through the window.*) THROUGH THE DOOR! (*HAROLD disappears and knocks at the door.*) For Pete's sake! (*He stomps to the door and opens it.*)

HAROLD: (*Waves.*) Just me.

MAX: (*He speaks sarcastically as he pulls HAROLD into the room. HAROLD is the classic-looking social outcast: plaid shirt buttoned to his neck; pocket protector; bright suspenders; hair pasted to his head, pants too short.*) Oh, I thought it might have been John Wayne. (*MAX closes the door.*)

HAROLD: (*As HAROLD makes his way into the room.*) You pullin' my leg?

MAX: Yes, Harold - - I'm pulling your leg. Now, remember what we talked about. You let me do all the talking. The guys aren't exactly expecting you to show up.

HAROLD: I'm telling you they're not going to be very happy about this.

MAX: You stay out of sight while the rest of us do what we're here to do, which is pick up chicks.

GEORDIE: (*Appears at the arch.*) Hey Max, you coming? (*By mere instinct, MAX stands between HAROLD and GEORDIE, though it does nothing to hide HAROLD.*)

MAX: Uh, yeah, I'm on my way.

GEORDIE: (*Points to HAROLD, approaching.*) What is that?

MAX: That?

GEORDIE: That!?

MAX: It's a who, not a that - - I mean he's a who. Geordie, you remember my cousin Harold.

GEORDIE: (*Crossing to them.*) I can't believe my eyes! YOU brought him. You BROUGHT him. You brought HIM?!

MAX: Settle down and let me explain.

GEORDIE: One of the most important weekends of our lives and YOU brought HIM! You cannot be in earnest!

HAROLD: No sir, Ernest is my late brother. He's been gone almost five years.

MAX: Harold, I had no idea. I'm sorry.

HAROLD: That's a long time to be late. We're expecting him home any day now.

GEORDIE: Excuse us, Harold. (*GEORDIE pulls MAX downstage center.*) Max, in case you have forgotten, this is our pick-up-chick-weekend. You know, when we flirt, romanticize, strut our stuff?

MAX: He paid me a surprise visit this weekend. What was I supposed to do, leave him back at my place?

GEORDIE: That would have been a start. Brad's going to flip when he sees him!

HAROLD: (*Approaching.*) I told you they wouldn't want me here, Cousin Max.

MAX: Of course they want you here. Geordie, tell Harold we want him here.

GEORDIE: Drop dead, Harold.

MAX: *(To HAROLD.)* See? Harold, we will be right with you. *(He pushes HAROLD back by the window and meets with GEORDIE.)* The only way I can get rid of Harold this weekend is if I go back home with him and I'm NOT going to miss this chance to learn from the master. Brad has guaranteed us we will be a hit with chicks for the first time in our dull lives.

CLIVE: *(Appears at the window wearing a cap and fake mustache.)* Excuse me.

GEORDIE: What is it?

CLIVE: I'm supposed to do some work on the lodge today, is that okay?

GEORDIE: I guess so; I don't own the place.

CLIVE: This is a nice place Pete has here. Lot bigger than most of the lodges in these parts. Well, thanks, fellas. *(He disappears.)*

MAX: *(To GEORDIE.)* Will you at least help me convince Brad to let Harold stay?

BRAD: *(Offstage.)* Hey, Max! *(This time both MAX and GEORDIE try band together and hide HAROLD. BRAD enters.)*

MAX: Yeah, what is it?!

BRAD: Max, aren't you coming up to take a look at the place? There's another whole wing in there.

MAX: Uh - yeah. I'm on my way. *(BRAD exits through the arch. MAX pushes GEORDIE toward the arch.)* Geordie, you go ahead but don't say anything to Brad about Harold just yet.

GEORDIE: *(Shaking his head.)* Okay, okay - - just hurry and get it over with. *(GEORDIE exits through the arch.)*

MAX: *(Grabs HAROLD and ushers him to the sofa and pushes him down onto it.)* Now, you stay right there and don't move and don't make a sound. You got that?

HAROLD: *(Holding up the 'okay' sign.)* Okey dokey.

MAX: I'll be right back. *(He exits through the arch. HAROLD sits extra still and stiff looking off into space. He doesn't dare move or make a sound. DONNA and MADELINE enter from the stairs.)*

DONNA: That really is good news, Madeline. We need any leads we can get with this tournament tomorrow. And you're sure your source can be trusted?

MADELINE: He's lived and fished here his whole life. Like I said, he told us to be sure and fish . . . *(Sees HAROLD sitting looking like a zombie.)* Who's that?

DONNA: *(Crosses to HAROLD.)* Hello? *(HAROLD doesn't move.)* What's your name? *(He stares straight ahead, not moving a muscle.)*

MADELINE: Maybe he's stuffed. *(MADELINE stands on one side of HAROLD, DONNA the other.)*

DONNA: *(Waves her hand in front of his face.)* Heeeellllooooo. Can you speak?

HAROLD: *(Still looking straight ahead, speaking quickly.)* Cousin Max told me not to move a muscle and to stay out of their way.

DONNA: *(To MADELINE.)* He must be with the men who are sharing the cabin with us.

THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY

MADELINE: *(To HAROLD.)* That's okay. Max didn't mean you couldn't talk to us.

HAROLD: *(His stiffness disappears.)* That's a relief. My neck was getting as stiff as road-kill on a desert highway. *(He stands up.)* Nice to meet you, ladies.

DONNA: What's the matter?

HAROLD: I beg your pardon?

DONNA: You stood up, so I thought something might be wrong. Do you have a bad back?

HAROLD: I stood up because two lovely ladies walked into the room. *(MADELINE and DONNA look behind them.)*

DONNA: Madeline, I think he's talking about us. *(To HAROLD.)* I'm Donna and this is Madeline. We're fishing the tournament tomorrow. What's your name?

HAROLD: *(As he shakes their hands.)* Harold. Harold Pipeinhot.

DONNA: Are you from around here? *(DONNA and MADELINE sit on the sofa, place their tackle boxes on their laps and begin organizing their lures.)*

HAROLD: No ma'am - - I'm from Mississippi. But before that I was from Texas. But before that I was from Florida. Before that . . .

DONNA: Your dad must have been in the military.

HAROLD: No, ma'am, the Air Force.

DONNA: Why would you be locked up in your room?

HAROLD: Because I'm really not supposed to be here. I was on my way to see the doctor and I got lost so I just drove over to my cousin Max's house. *(Throws out his arms.)* Here I am!

MADELINE: Why were you going to the doctor?

HAROLD: It was my cousin Max's idea. Every time I do something dumb, he tells me, "Harold, you need to get your head examined."

DONNA: That's a terrible thing to say to someone.

HAROLD: It sure is, and not to mention, a waste of money. The doctor x-rayed my head and didn't find a thing. My family can't afford that kind of mistake. We've always been poor, you see.

MADELINE: What makes you say that?

HAROLD: 'Cause every time I pass somebody on the street, people say, "There goes Harold Pipeinhot. His poor family."

MADELINE: You sure are looking spiffy; and you sure are polite.

DONNA: I bet a gentleman like you gets lots of dates.

HAROLD: You'd think so, wouldn't you?

MADELINE: Aw, poor Harold.

DONNA: There has to be at least one lady that has tickled your fancy.

HAROLD: There was the time at the VFW fair in Rock Mart when my friends set me up with the bearded lady. I had to break up with her, 'cause her whiskers kept tickling my nose every time we kissed.

DONNA: You poor man.

HAROLD: Yes ma'am, we were real poor. *(CLIVE'S head appears at the window. He's holding a small notebook and pen.)*

MADELINE: *(Sees CLIVE.)* Excuse me, can I help you with something?

CLIVE: No, ma'am, everything is just honky-tonky. *(He disappears.)*

DONNA: What was that about?

MADELINE: *(Shrugs her shoulders and stands.)* Well, Harold, it was nice talking to you. You hang in there, okay?

HAROLD: Yes, ma'am, I will.

MADELINE: *(DONNA stands on one side of HAROLD and MADELINE on the other.)* We thought chivalry went out with the Knights of the Round Table. But if you'll excuse us, I was wondering if we could be alone.

HAROLD: Oh, sure - - I understand. *(Turns and looks at DONNA. He turns back to MADELINE and leans in.)* I don't think she got the hint.

MADELINE: No, I meant Donna and I need to talk. That's okay, you just sit right down and rest a bit. I can talk to Donna right over here. *(She pulls DONNA over to the table and chairs.)*

DONNA: *(To MADELINE.)* I was unpacking, so I didn't get the full scoop. What else did the insider tell you?

MADELINE: Okay, tomorrow when we're fishing for bass, we should go all the way to the back of Lick Creek to the right side.

DONNA: Lick Creek, right side. *(CLIVE appears at the window again.)*

MADELINE: He said to slow down because the water is very shallow. We'll see some docks on the bank, and we'll want to start at the brown dock in front of an A-Frame cabin . . .

DONNA: And you're sure about this? *(They freeze, slowly turn and look back toward the window. CLIVE ducks quickly.)*

MADELINE: *(Back to DONNA.)* That's what he said, but remember to keep it to yourself.

DONNA: *(Holding up her tackle box.)* Well, all my designer lures are organized and ready to go. *(To MADELINE.)* Come on, the girls are trying on their fishing outfits. Wait until you see mine. It is sooo cute. *(To HAROLD.)* See you later, alligator.

HAROLD: Alligator?

MADELINE: Yes, it's a fun little phrase you use when saying goodbye.

HAROLD: *(Finds this fascinating.)* Go oooooon. Alligator?

DONNA: Get it? I say see you later, alligator. And you say, "after while" . . . followed by . . . you know . . . another large reptile.

HAROLD: That's plum clever.

DONNA: So, see you later, alligator. *(They exit.)*

HAROLD: *(Yells after them.)* After while, brown-spotted heifers! *(Offstage left we hear BRAD.)*

BRAD: *(Offstage.)* No! No! No! *(As soon as HAROLD hears this, he rushes to the sofa and sits quickly in his original spot. BRAD enters in a rush followed by MAX and GEORDIE. BRAD crosses to the sofa and points to HAROLD.)* He is NOT staying here this weekend! No way! No how!

MAX: Could you at least lower your voice? He's sitting right here, you know?

THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY

BRAD: We have been working too long and too hard on this plan, and I won't have it jinxed by some bumbling half-witted outcast. No offense, Harold.

HAROLD: None taken.

BRAD: How are we supposed to impress the women with this uncivilized, blithering oaf hanging around? No offense, Harold.

HAROLD: None taken.

BRAD: These chicks will take one look at this anti-social, awkward buffoon and laugh us right out of the fishing lodge. No offense, Harold.

HAROLD: That one hurt a little.

MAX: Harold, cover your ears for a second. (*HAROLD does. MAX pulls BRAD and GEORDIE down stage.*) Well, I've heard of cruel, but you are hitting way below the belt. He is a person you know.

GEORDIE: I told you, Max. I told you! We might as well call this whole weekend off. (*Referring to HAROLD.*) I mean, look at him. (*HAROLD is sitting there holding his hands over his ears.*)

MAX: (*To BRAD.*) So, are you telling me that finding a chick this weekend is more important to you than hurting the feelings of a simple-minded imbecile? (*Pats HAROLD on the back and shouting.*) No offense, Harold.

BRAD: Would someone like to tell me what we're supposed to do now?

GEORDIE: (*Becoming impatient.*) There's nothing we can do, Brad! We only have two days to complete our mission, so let's get at it.

BRAD: (*Calming himself.*) Don't worry, my protégée, patience is a virtue. It will all work out. While the girls are catching fish, we'll be catching the girls. (*GEORDIE and BRAD do a fancy handshake.*)

GEORDIE: (*Excited again.*) What's the first thing we're going to do, oh great master?

BRAD: Rule number one. Practice makes perfect. We'll take our fishing poles down to the lake for some fishing practice. Besides, it will be good for the girls to see us hanging out down by the water. Let's go, Dumb and Dumber.

They grab their fishing gear, head for the front door and exit, leaving HAROLD sitting covering his ears. MAX, BRAD and GEORDIE appear at the window looking in.

GEORDIE: Wait a minute, what are we going to do with Harold? We can't just leave him sitting there.

BRAD: Okay, I guess he can come with us, but make sure he stays several yards behind so the girls won't know he's with us.

MAX: I'll get him. (*MAX reenters and taps HAROLD on the shoulder.*) Come on, you're going with us. Fishing practice. (*As they head for the front door.*)

HAROLD: You mean you're going to let me go fishing with you?

MAX: For the time being. Look, Cousin Harold, just go with the flow and try not to make trouble. Poor guy, you couldn't hit water if you fell out of the boat. No offense.

HAROLD: (*Excited.*) Noooooone taken.

They exit. After a second, CLIVE appears at the window dressed in a strange way. He's pretending to paint the windowsill, but he looks mischievously around as though he were looking for something. ANNIE and DONNA enter from the stairs.

DONNA: I wonder where the men are.

ANNIE: Maybe they finally got the hint and went home.

DONNA: (*Sees CLIVE at the window.*) That strange man is back. What he is up to?

ANNIE: Looks like he might be painting the windowsill.

DONNA: There's something awfully suspicious about that guy.

ANNIE: Well, there's only one way to find out. Let's ask him.

DONNA: (*Grabs ANNIE by the arm.*) Have you lost your marbles? What if he's a crazed killer?

ANNIE: You're right, you go first. (*She pushes DONNA in front of her as they approach CLIVE, who isn't doing such a good job acting nonchalant.*)

CLIVE: La de da! La la de daaaa! De lolly!

DONNA: Hello there.

CLIVE: I hope I'm not bothering you out here. I'm just painting the old windowsill. La de da le la de daaaaa de lolly!

ANNIE: Couldn't you work faster if you had paint on your brush?

CLIVE: (*Taken aback.*) I have to get all the dust off of it first. There, it's all nice and clean now. (*He just stands there.*)

DONNA: Well, aren't you going to paint?

CLIVE: Paint? Of course I'm going to paint. What do you think I'm going to do, just stand here all day? (*He pauses as the girls stare at him.*) Adios.

Suddenly the chorus of "I Will Survive" plays as BLAIR enters with a large drawing of her ex-fiancée. It's a large, awkwardly drawn stickman with Walter's name at the top. She takes the fishing tournament sign off the easel and sets the picture up. She takes the bow and arrow, places an arrow carefully on the string, points at the picture and pulls back the string. ANNIE stops her. Music out.*

ANNIE: Blair, wait! If you miss, you'll put a hole in the wall.

BLAIR: Let go of me! All it needs is one sharp arrow right between the eyes.

ANNIE: I wish you could get your mind off that man once and for all.

BLAIR: (*Speaks to the picture.*) What are you looking at – you scoundrel! My mother was right all along!

DONNA: What do you mean?

THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY

BLAIR: The only reason men are on this earth is for lawn care and vehicle maintenance.

ANNIE: Why don't you come over here and sit down?

BLAIR: *(Crosses to and plops down on the sofa.)* I gave him the best eight weeks of my life!

ANNIE: *(With an arm around BLAIR.)* You have to remember that most men hate commitment.

DONNA: They sure do. After two years of dating that last guy, I finally told him, "Either you tell me your name or it's over." *(MADELINE enters from the stairs eating some grapes.)*

MADELINE: What's Walter's picture doing up on the easel?

BLAIR: Target practice for when I see the real thing.

ANNIE: *(Standing in front of the picture and spreading out her arms.)* Ladies, now listen to me. This is NOT what we're here for. Blair, I'm just as sorry as I can be that your love life stinks right now, but our focus should be winning that fishing tournament tomorrow!

MADELINE: Like I was saying upstairs. You have to use psychology when dealing with the opposite sex. The only way I've ever been able to get rid of a man I wasn't interested in was to say, "I love you. I want to marry you. I want to have your children." Sometimes they left skid marks.

ANNIE: We'll all give you a shoulder to cry on later tonight, Blair. In the meantime, we need to walk down to the boathouse and check our supplies before dark. *(She opens the door and there stands CLIVE with a glass up to his ear, leaning against the door.)*

CLIVE: *(Surprised.)* Oh, sorry.

ANNIE: Were you listening in on our conversation?

CLIVE: No, ma'am. I was just thirsty, and so I drank a glass of water and then . . . put the empty glass against the door . . . because . . . I was listening for termites.

ANNIE: That doesn't make sense. You stay away from us. Let's go, girls. *(The girls exit but BLAIR gets one last word.)*

BLAIR: *(Holds the arrow up to CLIVE'S head.)* You'd make good target practice, Mister MAN! *(She exits.)*

CLIVE: *(Swallows with a gulp.)* Have a good afternoon! *(The door closes. CLIVE rushes to the window and makes sure they are gone. He quickly crosses center stage and pulls out his cell phone and pushes a button.)* Frank? Clive. I haven't heard too much yet. Yes, I'm trying. There are more people staying here than I anticipated. There hasn't been much talk about the tournament yet, but when it happens I will be here to catch every syllable. Don't worry, we'll win tomorrow. *(Looking around.)* There are plenty of hiding places in this old lodge. I'll keep you posted. Over and out. *(Closes his cell phone and speaks to himself.)* I've always wanted to say that.

"Mission Impossible" theme plays. CLIVE rips off his outer shirt revealing a black turtleneck. He removes a black stocking cap from his back pocket and puts it on. He now looks like a cat burglar. He performs a few special "spy-like" maneuvers, then finally exits out the front door as the lights fade to . . .*

BLACKOUT.

THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY

ACT ONE, SCENE 2

GEORDIE, MAX, BRAD and HAROLD enter from outside. GEORDIE and MAX are holding BRAD'S arms and drag him to the sofa. BRAD looks deathly sick. HAROLD holds a burlap bag.

GEORDIE: Here we are. Just put him down right here. Nice and easy. Niiice and easy. (GEORDIE and MAX set BRAD on the sofa.) Harold, see if you can find a cold rag.

HAROLD: (Setting down the burlap bag.) Roger.

GEORDIE: And would you stop saying 'roger'?

HAROLD: Roger. (He exits to the kitchen.)

MAX: Brad, are you okay? Can you hear me? Hello? I've never seen anybody get seasick that fast before.

GEORDIE: The worst part is he wasn't even in a boat.

BRAD: (Grabs GEORDIE'S shoulder.) Don't say the 'B' word.

MAX: Brad, it's going to be hard to impress the chicks with our fishing know-how if you're going to get nauseous every time you look at water.

BRAD: (Grabs MAX'S shoulder.) Don't say the "W" word.

GEORDIE: (To BRAD.) When did the sickness start to hit you?

BRAD: When I saw the waves going up, then going down. Going up, then going down. Going UP, then going DOWN.

MAX: There's not one bit of wind out there. The lake is like a sheet of glass.

HAROLD enters with an oversized wet beach towel.

HAROLD: Here you go. (Throws it on BRAD'S head.)

GEORDIE: Harold, couldn't you find anything smaller?

BRAD: (Stands.) Get that overgrown washcloth off me. I'm not sick. I can stand up with no trouble. (He leans to one side and GEORDIE catches him.) Let me go. (He leans to the other side and MAX catches him.)

GEORDIE: Some leader we picked to help us with the fine art of making chicks swoon.

BRAD: Everybody just shut up. Like I said, I'm fine. Let go of me. (They do, carefully.) Did we catch anything?

GEORDIE: (Takes the bag HAROLD set down.) I'm not sure we did too well. (Digging through the bag.) Max, this is yours. (Hands MAX an old, rusty car tag.) Brad, you hooked this after you passed out. (Hands BRAD an old rubber boot.) And this was my catch for the day. (He holds up a deflated inner tube.) Wait, there's one more thing in the bag. (He reaches in and pulls out a fish.)

BRAD: Is that a fish?

MAX: It is a fish. Who caught it?

HAROLD: I did.

GEORDIE: You caught this? (Suspicious.) How?

HAROLD: Put bait on hook, drop hook in lake, pull hook from lake, fish on hook. They call that fishing.

MAX: Harold, since when do you know how to fish?

HAROLD: My Grandpa Pipeinhot owned a little bait and tackle shop when I was growing up. Fishermen would sit around all day talking about the way they caught fish. I'm a good listener.

GEORDIE: (*Placing the fish back inside the burlap bag.*) Now I've heard everything.

BRAD: (*Trying to keep his balance.*) Due to the recent unfortunate developments, we shall move on to part two of our plan.

GEORDIE: (*Regaining hope, rushing to BRAD.*) There's a part two?

BRAD: Of course. Every good game plan has more than one part. And this next part has two sub-parts. Sub part one: (*Points to HAROLD.*) Lock the geek in his room upstairs. Sub part two: We'll put on our fishing outfits and flaunt our masculinity in front of the broads.

GEORDIE: (*Excited again.*) I forgot about our outfits.

MAX: That'll get their boat motors going. Brrrrr! Brrrrrr!

BRAD: Everybody DID bring a fishing outfit, didn't they?

GEORDIE: (*Running for the arch.*) I did, (*Turns to his friends.*) and wait until you see it! Later, alligator! (*He exits quickly through the arch.*)

HAROLD: (*Shouting after GEORDIE.*) After while, red-butt'd baboon! (*To BRAD.*) Mr. St. Clair, about that part where you lock me in my room; I wonder if that might be open for discussion.

BRAD: I'm sorry, Harold - - but I'm afraid your disappearance will benefit everyone. (*Places his hand on HAROLD'S shoulder.*) Especially me. Max, it's time to adorn ourselves in our angler's outfits! The chicks won't be able to resist. (*MAX and BRAD flex their muscles quickly then exit through the arch. DONNA and ANNIE enter from outside. They each carry a Tupperware bowl with their live bait inside. [Check production notes.] They sit at the table transferring their bait from one bowl to another.*)

ANNIE: We can sit over here while we check our bait.

DONNA: Hello again, Harold.

HAROLD: (*Sad.*) Oh, hello, Ms Donna.

DONNA: Annie, this is Harold. Watch this. (*Turns and speaks loudly.*) I think I will take a walk outside.

HAROLD: Let me get that for you. (*He opens the door.*)

DONNA: I changed my mind. I think I'll shut the drapes to keep the afternoon sun out.

HAROLD: I can do that for you. (*He closes the curtains.*)

DONNA: Thank you, Harold. I guess I will sit down and rest a while.

HAROLD: Let me get a chair for you. (*He pulls one from the table.*)

DONNA: (*To ANNIE.*) See what I was telling you? He's the world's last true gentlemen.

ANNIE: I didn't know they still existed.

DONNA: (*Looking around.*) Harold, where are your friends? We haven't had a chance to meet and talk.

HAROLD: They're upstairs getting ready for part two of their plan.

THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY

DONNA: Why don't you come and talk with us while we check our earthworm collection.

ANNIE: It's a rare thing these days to find a man who knows how to really treat a lady. Your girlfriend sure is lucky.

HAROLD: I'm single.

DONNA: By choice?

HAROLD: Yes ma'am, but not my choice.

DONNA: I've been thinking about what you said earlier, Harold. Maybe you need a hobby to help fill your time.

HAROLD: (*Reluctant to say so.*) I used to have a hobby when I was a kid. But I can't tell you what it was. You'll laugh.

DONNA: Why would we laugh?

HAROLD: Everybody laughs when I tell them.

ANNIE: Come on, tell us. What was your hobby?

HAROLD: (*Looks around.*) I used to want to be . . . (*Pause.*)

DONNA: A painter?

ANNIE: A writer?

HAROLD: A ballerina. (*A loud laugh is heard behind the curtain. DONNA rushes over to the window and opens the curtains. CLIVE is on a step ladder, laughing. He's dressed in another ridiculous costume.*)

DONNA: Are you listening in on our conversation again?

CLIVE: No, ma'am. Uh, I just thought of a funny joke. You see, this ballerina walks into a bar . . .

DONNA: Go fix the porch!

CLIVE: Yes, ma'am. (*He grabs the ladder and disappears.*)

ANNIE: (*To HAROLD.*) Did you study ballet when you were young?

HAROLD: Yes, ma'am. When I was a kid, I went to ballerina class. I had to quit when I injured a groin muscle.

DONNA: Was that painful?

HAROLD: I don't know - it wasn't mine.

ANNIE: You poor thing. I bet it was tough for you growing up.

HAROLD: It sure was. One year, when I was ten, I went to a Halloween party and a bunch of kids beat me up.

DONNA: Because you were dressed as a ballerina?

HAROLD: No, ma'am, because I was dressed as a piñata.

DONNA: A least you're out here for a nice relaxing weekend in nature.

HAROLD: I've never been much of an outdoor type ever since my dream.

ANNIE: Dream?

HAROLD: Yes, ma'am. One night, I had a terrible nightmare. I dreamed I was walking in a forest, and all of a sudden, this tree falls right in front of me. Then, out of nowhere, little Keebler elves start running around all over the place trying to dip me in chocolate. I couldn't eat cookies for a week.

DONNA: If you hate nature, why did you come on this fishing trip?

HAROLD: My cousin Max made me come out here. But to be honest with you, I'm pretty sure he thought we were going to a farm.

ANNIE: Why would he think that?

HAROLD: He kept saying he couldn't wait to meet up with the guys this weekend and pick up some chicks.

DONNA: (*ANNIE and DONNA exchange glances.*) Oh, really? (*Dusting off her hands and slowly making her way over to HAROLD.*) What else did your cousin Max tell you? About picking up chicks, that is?

HAROLD: Lots of things. But between you and me, I don't think they're going to find many chickens so far from a farm. But they didn't ask me, so I didn't say anything.

DONNA: You've said more than you'll ever know. But just for the fun of it, let me make sure I'm understanding this. The guys upstairs are not here to fish?

HAROLD: Fish? That's a laugh. My cousin Max hates fishing. He told me that a fisherman is nothing but a jerk on one end of the line waiting for a jerk on the other.

ANNIE/DONNA: (*Looks at one another with raised eyebrows.*) We see.

HAROLD: Don't tell the fellas I mentioned it, but would you ladies mind being nice to them? They've been saying how lonely they've been lately.

DONNA: Don't you worry about a thing. We'll make sure your friends get exactly what they deserve.

HAROLD: I sure do appreciate it. (*BRAD enters, dressed in his over-the-top fishing outfit. DONNA and ANNIE sit quickly at the table. BRAD doesn't see them.*)

BRAD: Harold, I thought I told you to go to your room. You agreed to disappear so you wouldn't mess up our chances this weekend.

HAROLD: (*Whistles.*) That sure is a fancy outfit, Mr. St. Clair.

BRAD: Stop bothering me and do as you're told. (*Shouting through the arch.*) Guys, where are you?

GEORDIE: (*Offstage.*) Coming! (*"Sharp Dressed Man"* plays as BRAD does a runway-type walk across the room. MAX enters also dressed in his best fishing gear - - whatever that might be. GEORDIE, on the other hand, didn't quite understand the concept. He wears a hunting outfit complete with camouflage pants and shirt, hat, and yes, even face-paint. They each do their own runway walk across the front of the stage. After their presentation, they stand center stage with a final muscle pose. Music out.*)

BRAD: (*Still not seeing the ladies, he speaks to HAROLD.*) Well, what do you think? (*ANNIE and DONNA applaud.*)

DONNA: That was amazing. (*Taken aback, the men react.*)

BRAD: Oh, sorry, ladies. We didn't see you. Uh - we were just - uh - trying on our fishing gear.

ANNIE: (*Crossing to GEORDIE and pointing.*) This is a fishing outfit?

BRAD: (*Noticing what GEORDIE'S wearing for the first time.*) Geordie, what are you doing in that getup?

GEORDIE: What do you mean?

BRAD: That's a hunting outfit, you idiot.

HAROLD: Geordie, you're as dumb as a cuckoo clock. No offense.

GEORDIE: (*Ignoring HAROLD.*) We're hunting fish, aren't we? Hunting is hunting.

ANNIE: (*Pretending to be naïve, to BRAD.*) You mean your friend has never gone fishing before? I thought all of you were old pros.

BRAD: Of course he's been fishing. Uh - Geordie is the one with the great sense of humor. He's always going for a laugh. (*Hitting GEORDIE on the back.*) That was funny - - you coming down here in that hunting outfit.

GEORDIE: (*To ANNIE, nervous.*) Yeah, my real fishing suit is at the cleaners.

DONNA: (*Trying to catch GEORDIE.*) Where's your favorite place to fish?

GEORDIE: (*Thinks a moment but isn't sure about his answer.*) Oh . . . I like going up to . . . the Dead Sea up in Canada. I've been going there to fish for so long, I can remember when the Dead Sea was just sick. (*Fake laughter from the men, girls exchange knowing glances.*)

BRAD: (*In an attempt to change the subject.*) Doesn't Max look masculine in his getup?

MAX: (*Also nervous in front of the women.*) I owe most of my good looks to my parents. Especially my mother and father.

DONNA: (*Playing along with ANNIE.*) They sure do look like world-class fishermen to me, Annie.

ANNIE: They just appear so brave and confident . . .

DONNA: And smart and manly. (*BLAIR and MADELINE enter from outside. CLIVE follows them in.*)

BLAIR: (*Turning sharply to CLIVE.*) Would you stop following us?! (*She pushes CLIVE out the door.*)

ANNIE: (*To BLAIR and MADELINE as she makes her way to the front of the group.*) Good, I'm glad everyone is here. I need your attention. If we're going to spend the weekend together in this lodge, we need to become better acquainted.

BRAD: Good idea, sweetie. Allow me to make formal introductions. My name is Brad St. Clair, fisherman extraordinaire. This is my best friend Geordie, this is Max. We're here to catch some base.

GEORDIE: Boose!

MAX: BASS!

ANNIE: (*To BRAD.*) Don't you have one more introduction? (*Looks over at HAROLD.*)

BRAD: Who, him? He just dropped in to ask for directions. (*Crosses and puts his arm around HAROLD'S shoulder and leads him to the door.*) You take a right onto the highway and just keep driving and you will finally get there.

ANNIE: It's okay, Brad. Harold has told us everything.

BRAD: (*Almost at the door, freezes.*) So, just . . . he what? (*Becoming angry.*) He WHAT?

DONNA: We know all about your fishing experience and all the many fishing tournaments you've won all over the state.

BRAD: Let me explain, you see . . . what did you just say?

ANNIE: Look how cute they are, pretending to be so modest.

MAX: Wait a minute - Harold told you that?

DONNA: He sure did. He said there's a lot you could teach us pitiful females about fishing this tournament tomorrow.

BRAD: (*Patting HAROLD on the back.*) Good old Harold. He really knows what he's talking about. (*CLIVE enters through the front door wearing another outfit.*)

CLIVE: Would anyone happen to have a pair of needle-nose pliers I could borrow?

MAX: I've got some on top of my tackle box down the hall. I'll get them.

CLIVE: Don't bother, I'll go. Don't want to bother you serious fishermen. (*Heads to the arch.*)

MAX: Second door to the left. (*CLIVE disappears through the arch.*)

MADELINE: (*To ANNIE.*) I don't know about the rest of you, but I'm starved. I'll run up to the little café and pick up a pizza.

ANNIE: That's a good idea.

GEORDIE: Pizza sounds great! Make mine extra cheese and lots of onions.

MADELINE: I'm getting it for the girls. You men will just have to fend for yourselves.

DONNA: (*To GEORDIE.*) Maybe you could catch yourself some snails.

GEORDIE: No, ma'am - - I prefer fast food. (*MADELINE rolls her eyes and exits.*)

ANNIE: Gentlemen, if you will excuse us, the girls and I need to talk for a moment. Girls? (*The girls huddle upstage right.*)

MAX: (*Moving the men downstage left forming their own huddle.*) Hey guys, I think they like us.

BRAD: Of course they do. They're talking about us right now. (*The girls stop talking, all look over at the men and giggle then go back to their huddle.*)

GEORDIE: (*Getting nervous but excited.*) They like us! They like us! They like us! Did you see how they looked oh so adoringly over here just now? How's my breath?

BRAD: Dang! I forgot my breath spray. Don't let anything happen until I get back. (*He runs and exits through the arch. HAROLD pulls a comic book from his back pocket, crosses to the sofa and starts to sit. MAX rushes to him.*)

MAX: Harold, what are you doing?

HAROLD: Gonna read my "Super Stallion" comic book.

MAX: You can't do that. We're in the middle of something important. Go upstairs and read and I'll let you know when the pizza gets here.

HAROLD: Okay, okay. But it's going to be dark soon. When in the heck are you guys planning to pick up some chickens? (*Exits through the arch.*)

CLIVE enters from the arch holding a pair of pliers. BRAD runs in behind him holding an extra large spray bottle with something blue inside.

THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY

BRAD: (To CLIVE.) Hey, what were you doing going through my backpack?

CLIVE: Uh - sorry about that, I got lost. Bye now! (He exits through the front door. The ladies come out of their huddle and move toward the men.)

GEORDIE: Guys, here they come, look macho! (GEORDIE, MAX, and BRAD each strike a virile pose.)

ANNIE: Okay, gentlemen - - we're ready for our lesson.

GEORDIE: (Still posed.) Lesson?

ANNIE: That's right, our fishing lesson. You do want to show us stupid women how it's done, don't you? (Women back to their huddle.)

BRAD: (To his men.) Don't sweat it, we'll simply deter them by using the smooth pickup lines I taught you last week.

GEORDIE: (Pointing at the oversized bottle BRAD is holding.) What's that?

BRAD: Breath spray. (GEORDIE takes and holds it up and looks perplexed.) It's the economy size. Here, try some.

GEORDIE: (GEORDIE squirts some breath spray into his mouth and coughs and gags.) That stuff is strong.

MAX: Give me some! (MAX tries it - - he also gags.)

BRAD: Easy now.

MAX: (Reads the bottle.) Forty percent alcohol? (He quickly sprays more into his mouth.)

GEORDIE: (GEORDIE grabs the spray from MAX and sprays more into his own mouth.) I'm so nervous; if I could drop dead right now, I'd be the happiest man alive.

BRAD: Men, don't forget the pickup lines.

ANNIE: (To the girls.) If it's stupid broads they want, it's stupid broads they'll get.

DONNA: (Flirty, to the men.) Gentlemen, we're waaaaaiting.

BRAD: Here we come, ready or nooooooot. (To MAX.) Everybody - - one more squirt a piece. (They spray their tongue - - compose themselves, then make their way to the ladies: GEORDIE to ANNIE, MAX to BLAIR, and BRAD to DONNA.) Well, girls, may we get to know you a little better before the lesson?

DONNA: (Twirling her hair around her finger.) That sounds like a peachy keen idea.

ANNIE: Just don't ask us any questions that are too hard.

BRAD: (He looks at an index card where apparently his notes have been written.) You look as if you might be a Libra. When's your birthday?

DONNA: January fifteenth.

BRAD: What year?

DONNA: Every year, silly.

MAX: (To BLAIR.) What's your name, honey?

BLAIR: Blair Teraulkeoggy.

MAX: Blair Teraulkeoggy, huh? How do you spell that?

BLAIR: T - - h - - a - - t.

GEORDIE: (To ANNIE.) Feel that muscle right there, baby. (ANNIE does.)

ANNIE: Hmmm, flex it.

GEORDIE: I am.

ANNIE: (Disappointed.) Oh.

BRAD: If you ladies will excuse us for one second. (BRAD gathers the men again over stage left for another dose of breath spray while the girls return to their own huddle.) They're dumb as rocks. We have hit a gold mine!

GEORDIE: They're impressed, alright. I wonder what they're saying about us right now.

DONNA: Boy, they're stupid.

ANNIE: Shhhhhh. Remember our plan. We can't let them know we're on to them.

BRAD: Breath spray! (They each get their dose.) Men, (His words slightly slurred.) I want you to remember one word and one word only: Impress these women!

GEORDIE: (Laughs, closing his eyes.) You said that backward. (MAX laughs.)

BRAD: (Pointing to his buddies.) Max . . . Geordie . . . wait a minute, there were three of us earlier.

MAX: You're number three.

BRAD: Right. Hey guys, we three are best friends, right? You know what that means?

GEORDIE: We're two of a kind!

MAX: Two of a kind!

BRAD: Amigos!

GEORDIE: Comrades!

MAX: Thelma and Louise!

GEORDIE: (His words run together.) Mr. Brad St. Clair, Max and me - - we just wanted you to know that we think lure the best. (Laughs, pointing to a lure hanging on BRAD'S fishing vest.) Get it? LURE the best! (Shouting.) LURE! FISHING LURE!

BRAD: (Covering his ears.) I get it! I get it!

DONNA: (Very flirty as she waves and blows a kiss.) Yooooo hooooo, Braaaaadley.

BRAD: (Catches the kiss then grabs for the bottle of breath spray.) Give me some more of that! (The boys go back to their huddle.)

ANNIE: (To the girls.) There's only one way to keep these men on their toes.

BLAIR: You mean we're going to raise the urinals?

ANNIE: I mean we've got to keep letting them think we're interested. Keep flattering them. Tell them how great they are.

DONNA: In other words, lie.

ANNIE: Exactly! I've just thought of a surefire plan that will teach these phonies a lesson they won't soon forget. But for my plan to work, we've got to pair up with them.

THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY

BLAIR: Pair up? (*Looking over at the men.*) I'd rather give birth to a porcupine on fire.

DONNA: Blair, this is your chance to get back at Walter, right?

ANNIE: Good, now listen. (*They close their huddle and whisper again.*)

BRAD: (*His words again a little garbled as the men open up their huddle.*) We've hoot the jackpot . . . hit the jackpoot! Let's go chash in our . . . crash in our chips . . . Claim our prize! (*They strut back, though a little weak-kneed and not walking so straight, to center stage. "Well Dressed Man"* plays. ANNIE crosses to GEORDIE, DONNA to BRAD and BLAIR to MAX, then they all head for the front door.*)

MADELINE enters through the same door, carrying a small stack of pizza boxes. She watches them leave. Before ANNIE exits, she throws MADELINE the "okay" sign.

MADELINE: (*Waving and yelling after them.*) Bye! Have fun! (*Music out and everyone is gone. But MADELINE realizes she's alone.*) Hey, what about me? (*HAROLD enters from the arch and crosses directly to the sofa and retrieves the comic book he left behind.*)

HAROLD: (*Holding it up.*) I forgot my comic book. Super Stallion is about to be taken to the glue factory, and I want to see how he gets out of this comical, yet deadly, predicament.

MADELINE: Excuse me, Harold, but are you a fisherman too?

HAROLD: No, ma'am - - just a washed-up ballerina.

MADELINE: Harold, have you ever been in love?

HAROLD: No, ma'am, only stepped in it a few times.

MADELINE: Forget about the comic book. How about a nice, long, romantic walk down by the lake?

HAROLD: That's not a bad idea. (*HAROLD heads for the front door and exits alone.*)

MADELINE: Harold? I meant with me! (*She exits out the front door. CLIVE appears at the window and sticks his head in.*)

CLIVE: Hello? (*He shrugs and enters through the door. He begins looking around the room. He flips through the comic book then throws it back on the sofa. A strange but beautiful lady enters carrying a small suitcase. Her name is CAROL.*)

CAROL: Excuse me?

CLIVE: I wasn't doing anything!

CAROL: I was looking for Brad St. Clair.

CLIVE: He's down by the lake with everybody else.

CAROL: (*Standing in front of the sofa and setting her suitcase down.*) I guess I'll just wait here.

CLIVE: (*Pulls out his small notepad and pencil ready to take notes.*) You wouldn't happen to be some type of fishing specialist, would you?

CAROL: Me? Fishing? I'm afraid not.

CLIVE: You sure you're not Mr. St. Clair's fishing partner?

CAROL: No, I'm not his fishing partner.

CLIVE: His lake guide?

CAROL: I'm not his lake guide.

CLIVE: Then you must be his . . .

CAROL: Fiancée.

CLIVE: (*Putting the pad away, disappointed.*) Oh. (*Realization.*) What did you say?

CAROL: I said I'm Brad St. Clair's fiancée. We're getting married this year.

CLIVE: Fiancée, huh? Then why is he . . . (*Circling her as the realization sinks in.*) Well, well, well - - this sure is an interesting twist in today's events.

CAROL: I beg your pardon?

CLIVE: Nothing, I was just remembering an old Indian proverb: To hide one lie, a thousand more are needed. (*Giggles.*)

CAROL: Is that supposed to make sense to me?

CLIVE: Perhaps not now. But later it's going to hit you like a ton of bricks. See you later, alligator.

CLIVE laughs as he nonchalantly crosses to the front door and exits. The chorus of "You're No Good" by Linda Ronstadt plays. CAROL sits on the sofa, picks up the comic book left behind and flips through it as the music continues and the lights fade to a slow . . .*

BLACKOUT.

END OF ACT ONE.

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