

A woman enters. She is in her seventies. She is very hard of hearing. Percy, a man in his early-fifties, is leaving his mother for the first time. She doesn't want him to go.

MOTHER: *(They sit down. She starts to cry)* I know... I know.

PERCY: *(Raising his voice each time he talks to her)* Oh don't start crying again mother *(He gives her his handkerchief)*

MOTHER: *(She wipes her eyes and blows her nose very loudly and hands it back to him)* Don't you think it's normal that your mother is full of emotion Percy?

PERCY: Yes. I suppose it is mother. *(Pause)* It's only for a few days, isn't it?

MOTHER: Yes, but it's the first time that Percy precious has been away from Mumsy wumsy.

PERCY: *(Under his breath)* Freedom at last!

MOTHER: Pardon dear?

PERCY: *(Shouts)* Be home so fast... You won't notice me gone. I'll be back before you can say "Jack Robinson."

MOTHER: *(Her eyes wide open. Suddenly she bursts into tears)* Jack was your father's name!

PERCY: Oh dear... It's only an expression mother. I'm sorry...

MOTHER: Of course, you don't remember your father, do you?

PERCY: No mother.

MOTHER: Well, you didn't miss anything... He was not a nice man to know. *(She cries)*

PERCY: Mother, why are you telling me all this now? You never talk about father. And look at you. You are upsetting yourself.

MOTHER: It's because you're going away Percy Precious. I will be all alone. *(Crocodile tears)*

PERCY: *(Under his breath)* and I will be free *(Smiles)*

MOTHER: Pardon dear?

PERCY: *(Shouts)* Do you want some tea? I can get you a cup... It will calm you down mother.

MOTHER: No, don't bother dear. *(Pause)* Your father was never at home.

PERCY: *(Under his breath)* I can understand why.

MOTHER: Speak up dear!

PERCY: (**Shouts**) I can't understand why! Let's not talk about him, shall we?

MOTHER: No Percy... It's high time that you know what sort of man your father was. He was always down at the Black Velvet Pub with his drunken friends. You know how I like a game of Scrabble, don't you dear?

PERCY: Yes mother. I do.

MOTHER: Well, your father never played Scrabble with me... He used to say that I cheated.

PERCY: (**Under his breath**) You do.

MOTHER: Pardon dear?

PERCY (**Shouts**) Not you. Not you mother. Never!

MOTHER: Clever? ... Yes, too clever for him. That's why.

PERCY: Yes mother.

MOTHER: You know. (**She looks at him closely**) You have his eyes. I hope you won't end up like your father. You'll always be my Percy precious, won't you dear? And I'll always be your? ... (**Smiles waiting for the reply**)

PERCY: (**Shouts**) Mumsey, wumsey?

MOTHER: Yes dear... It's so comforting... (**Crocodile tears**) I don't know how you are going to manage without me.

PERCY: Mother, I have to learn to stand on my own two feet. It's only for three days.

MOTHER: Three days can seem an eternity for some... I'll have no one to talk to for three whole days.

PERCY: (**Under his breath**) It isn't enough.

MOTHER: Sorry dear?

PERCY: (**Shouts**) It'll be rough... Without you. (**Smiles**)

MOTHER: You're only saying that to make me feel better. (**She takes out a tissue spits on it**) Hold still, there's a good boy...

PERCY: No Mother, please...Don't do that...

MOTHER: Now, now Percy! Hold still... (**She grabs him and wipes his chin with the tissue**) There... Lucky for you, mumsy wumsey is here to take off that nasty tomato soup stain off your chinny chin, chin. (**She laughs**)

PERCY: (**He laughs**) Yes... What am I going to do without you.

MOTHER: (**She cries**) Exactly how I feel Percy.

PERCY: No Mother, you won't be alone... You've got George to keep you company.

MOTHER: George? He isn't much fun, is he? He comes in and out at all hours, When I give him his dinner, he doesn't even give me a single sign of gratitude.

PERCY: Yes, but at least he's there.

MOTHER: Yes. There where I don't want him. **(Pause)** I can't keep him out of my bed.

PERCY: **(Smiles)** George likes his comfort... He's looks for warmth and affection.

MOTHER: That might well be the case, Percy. **(Pause)** He's starting to smell... And you can talk to him until you're blue in the face, and you never get a reaction from him. He just lies there on his back with that stupid look on his face. **(Mimes)**

PERCY: Well, cats will be cats... Look Mother, there is always Mrs. Jones next door. You could invite her in for a cup of tea and a chat... Have a game of scrabble?

MOTHER: If she was the last person on earth, I would not invite her! She is the biggest gossip in town... The woman has no culture! And play scrabble with her? **(Pause)** I would have to get the junior scrabble out.

PERCY: There must be somebody you could invite. **(Under his breath)** To let you cheat.

MOTHER: Sorry dear?

PERCY: To let you meet... someone. You need to get out and meet people... This is the perfect occasion.

MOTHER: No Percy. A woman can't go out alone... You never know what might happen. You never know who I might bump into. **(Pause)** I could be ravished! **(Pause)** I could bump into a man like your father! **(Cries)** I was just a slave to him. Every Friday I used to make his favourite dessert... You know. **(Smiles)** The one I make for Percy precious every Friday... Tapioca Pudding.

PERCY! Ah... Tapioca Pudding. **(Looks away in disgust)** Yummy!

MOTHER: And who's not going to have his favourite Tapioca pudding this Friday?

PERCY **(Under his breath)** Thanks be to God!

MOTHER: Speak up dear. You know I'm a little deaf in this ear.

PERCY: Er... **(Shouts)** I'll be with Rod... Rod. You know Rodney? Nice man.

MOTHER: **(Pause)** He ran off with a London tart.

PERCY: Who Rodney? I don't think so.

MOTHER: No. Silly boy... Your father. He ran off with a loose woman. She only wanted his money. And men. They only think about one thing... Sex!

PERCY: **(Under his breath)** That's all I think about.

MOTHER: Speak up dear!

PERCY: (**Shouts**) Let's not just sit about. Now where's my ticket? Ah yes... Platform two. I have ten minutes.

MOTHER: I hope you don't mind Percy, I put a few more things into your suitcase (**She puts the suitcase on her lap and opens it**) You forgot to pack "Tubby Bear" (**She talks to Tubby**) "Yes Tubby I know... Percy is a naughty boy... Pardon Tubby? Yes, you're right, I ought to smack his bottom" (**Looks at Percy**) And I packed you an extra pair of underpants. (**She shows him**)

PERCY: (**Embarrassed**) Mother! I'm away for three days... So why do I need four pairs of underpants?

MOTHER: You never know Percy. (**Smiles**) Accidents can happen, can't they?

PERCY: (**Angrily**) Right that's enough (**Grabs the suitcase. He stands**) I'm going mother. Are you going to accompany me to the platform?

MOTHER: (**Crocodile tears**) Oh, now I've upset you.... You won't come back to me I know it... I know it. (**Continues to cry**)

PERCY: (**He sits down. Furious**) Me? Upset? Now why should I be upset? I'm 52 years old mother. Look! I don't even have a man's suitcase mother! Why don't I have a man's suitcase?!

MOTHER: Your father's got it! He was a nasty_

PERCY: Stop! Do you remember Pauline? She was the first and last girl I invited into our home! That was twenty years ago! I was 32 years old mother!

MOTHER: Girl?! She wasn't a girl Percy... She was almost twice your age. A cougar! All she wanted to do was to get her hands on your little winkle.

PERCY: Stop it mother! Oh yes, there we were, Pauline and I sitting on the sofa with you mother, sitting in between us! (**She sinks lower and lower into her seat**) Very bloody romantic, wasn't it? And then you embarrassed me in front of her by showing a photograph of me 4 years old straining on the potty! You had made up your mind for me, hadn't you? In your eyes she wasn't good enough for your Percy bloody precious, was she!?

MOTHER: Well, she was wearing a very short mini skirt... A loose woman Percy. Not for my Percy Pre_

PERCY: Don't say another word! Come along Mother... (**He helps her to her feet**) I'll be back in three days. Before you can say Jack_ (**She bursts into tears**) Oh shit! (**They leave**)