

# Kalispell

By  
Kim E. Ruyle

# KALISPELL

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*"There are two things you can run and not hide from – God and a dysfunctional family."*

*~ R. Alan Woods*

*"Sons have always a rebellious wish to be disillusioned by that which charmed their fathers."*

*~ Aldous Huxley*

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*Kalispell* was originally produced by Surfside Playhouse in Cocoa Beach, Florida, in June and July 2018 as winner of Surfside Playhouse Full-Length Play Competition (Arlan Ropp Playwright Award).

### Cast

Bruce Hamilton.....Michael Fiore  
Bud Hamilton.....Geno Hayes  
Cora Hamilton.....Leslie Roth  
Cleve Hamilton.....David Hill  
Claire Hamilton.....Nancy Matican-Bock  
Jeffrey Hamilton .....Gordon Ringer  
Clifford Hamilton.....Steven Mogell  
Dragos Ibanescu.....Joel Shugars  
Tullia Ibanescu.....Jody Hatcher  
Tiffany...,.....Leslie McGinty

### Production Crew

Director.....Chris Tscanos  
Stage Manager.....Joanne Maio  
Sound Engineer.....Mike Mellen  
Lighting.....Gwen Maio  
Sound Tech.....Katie McCall  
Stage Crew.....Deborah Miller

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CAST: 3-4 Women, 6 Men

<u>BUD HAMILTON</u>	Male. 70s. The family patriarch. Bigoted. Tough. Protective.
<u>CORA HAMILTON</u>	Female. 70s. The family matriarch. Blindly loyal to Bud. Dotes on her children.
<u>CLEVE HAMILTON</u>	Male. 40s-50s. Oldest son. Alcoholic. A disappointment to everyone, especially Bud.
<u>BRUCE HAMILTON</u>	Male. 40s-50s. 2nd son. Single, successful plastic surgeon living in Seattle. An articulate metro-sexual experiencing a mid-life crisis.
<u>JEFFREY HAMILTON</u>	Male. 40s-50s. 3rd son. Successful fashion designer living in New York City. Like Bruce, a metro-sexual, but married with children.
<u>CLIFFORD HAMILTON</u>	Male. 40s-50s, 4th son. Former car salesman turned televangelist and host of religious sportsmen's show.
<u>CLAIRE HAMILTON</u>	Female. 40s, daughter. Feminine but tough. Runs a construction company. Avid sportswoman and occasional lounge singer.
<u>DRAGOS IBANESCU</u>	Male. 30s, Romanian immigrant and proprietor of the Sit-a-Spell Cafe'.
<u>TULLIA IBANESCU</u>	Female. 30s, wife and partner in café business with Dragos.
<u>TIFFANY</u>	Female. 30s, attractive tart. Director of <i>God, Geese, and Grizzlies</i> .
<u>DOUBLING</u>	If desired, Tullia and Tiffany can be played by the same actor.
TIME:	Last Thanksgiving.
SETTING:	Near Kalispell, a small city of about 20,000 in western Montana.

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### SETS:

1) Sit-a-Spell Café. A rustic café where a stuffed bear greets customers as they come through the main entrance. 2) Living area of a modern log home. Couch, chairs, and a coffee table strewn with *Outdoor Life*, *Guns & Ammo*, etc. A countertop with liquor bottles. Perhaps an antlered deer head on the wall. The kitchen to one side. A staircase upstage. 3) Television studio. Desk, chair, and perhaps a backdrop (e.g., wildlife surrounding Jesus on the cross), and a TV camera. To one side of the studio is a small room for makeup. 4) Woods. Evergreens, a boulder, and well-marked electric fence. 5) Hospital room. A bed with raised head. Adjacent single chair.

### NOTES

1) Rather than a full-size bear in the café, a large stuffed teddy bear set on a counter can be used with a twin teddy bear, head missing and stuffing protruding from the neck, hidden behind the counter. 2) Regarding Romanian language:

- “Bulangiu” is roughly translated as “jackass;” pronounced, “bu-lan-gwee.”
- “Iubi” is a term of endearment; pronounced, “eeyou-bee.”
- “Dormi cu” is slang for lovemaking.

3) An .mp3 recording of an original song, *Never Got into My Heart*, is available to be played in Act II.

Act 1 Scene 1: Sit-a-Spell Café.  
Act 1 Scene 2: Home of Bud and Cora.  
Act 1 Scene 3: Home of Bud and Cora.  
Act 1 Scene 4: Sit-a-Spell Café.  
Act 1 Scene 5: Woods.  
Act 2 Scene 1: Home of Bud and Cora.  
Act 2 Scene 2: Home of Bud and Cora.  
Act 2 Scene 3: Hospital room.  
Act 2 Scene 4: TV studio.  
Act 2 Scene 5: Hospital room.  
Act 2 Scene 6: Home of Bud and Cora.  
Act 2 Scene 7: Sit-a-Spell Café.  
Act 2 Scene 8: Home of Bud and Cora.  
~ 120 minutes.

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ACT 1  
SCENE ONE

*About 8 a.m. on Wednesday, the day before Thanksgiving. BUD and CORA sit at a table in the Sit-a-Spell Café. DRAGOS serves coffee.*

**BUD.** No, no, no! Don't call it football. Football's a real sport. Soccer's just a kid's game. *(BRUCE stealthily enters and hides behind stuffed bear.)*

**DRAGOS.** Bud, have you ever watch ESPN? Have you ever go to Europe? Have you ever go out of Montana?

**BUD.** Why the hell would I wanna leave Montana?

**DRAGOS.** Montana big. World bigger. Bud, I tell you, football – you call soccer – biggest sport in world.

**BUD.** Ha! Biggest sport in Budapest, maybe.

**DRAGOS.** Bucharesht. I come from Bucharesht, not Budapesht.

**CORA.** Bud, you know that. Dragos is from Romania, not Poland.

**DRAGOS.** *(On exiting.)* No, no. That Hungary. Budapesht is Hungary.

**CORA.** I'm confused. I thought he was from Romania. Did he mean he's from Hungary?

**BUD.** All the same to me.

**BRUCE.** *(Springing from behind bear.)* Grrrrrrrrr! *(Bud pulls pistol from vest as he spins and fires wildly. Bruce hits floor as the bear's nose explodes. Bud jumps to his feet, covers Bruce with pistol while holding arm up, a protective gesture for Cora. Bruce slowly raises his head to see if it's safe.)* Pa! Ma! It's me! Bruce. Uh... Happy Thanksgiving. *(Bud holsters gun, waves arms, sputters profanities.)*

**CORA.** *(Cora leaps to her feet, clutches her chest).* Brucie! My boy! Oh, my boy!

**DRAGOS.** *(Dragos bursts from kitchen with TULLIA on his heels.)* Bud! Bud! Tell me you not shoot again a Dragos customer!

**BUD.** Hell no. Just one of my goddamn kids trying to scare the bejesus out of us. Uh, I might have nicked your bear. Nuthin that can't be patched up.

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*(Bud sits, nonchalantly sips coffee. Dragos helps Bruce stand. Tullia gathers up fur. Bruce and Cora embrace, then Bruce looks for a hug from his pa, but Bud ignores the outstretched arms.)*

**BRUCE.** Happy Thanksgiving, Pa. Thanks for not shooting me.

**BUD.** The hell you mean comin' in here like that? Screamin' like a goddamn immigrant gonna terrorize the place.

**BRUCE.** Sorry, Pa. I was just trying to have some fun.

**BUD.** Real fun. Thought you weren't comin' til tomorrow.

**BRUCE.** I came early. To surprise you.

**BUD.** Surprised us all right. About gave your ma a heart attack.

**CORA.** It's a wonderful surprise. And Brucie, I'm so glad you weren't hit by your father's hollow point.

**BUD.** I pulled up when I recognized him, Cora.

**BRUCE** Thanks for that, Pa. I'm sorry to startle you. *(Turning to Dragos.)* And very sorry about the bear.

**DRAGOS.** Not first time Bud shoot gun in my store. Right here, Bud shoot hat off head of Mexican. *(Bruce turns to look at Bud in horror.)*

**BUD.** Don't look at me that way. Guy was an illegal immigrant and a menace. *(Turning to Dragos.)* Someday you'll thank me for watchin' out for ya. That little Mexican was comin' in to rob and shoot up the place. He was pullin' a pistol from his coat.

**TULLIA.** *Bulangiu!* No, no! Not pistol! Salsa! Man only come to sell salsa! But he illegal and don't press charge on Bud. *(Tullia glares at Bud. Dragos grabs Bruce's hand.)*

**DRAGOS.** Hello. I am Dragos Ibanescu and I come from –

**BRUCE.** Bucharest, Romania.

**DRAGOS.** Yes! How you know?

**BRUCE.** I was hiding behind the bear before Pa drew down on me and opened fire. Good to meet you, Dragos. I'm Bruce Hamilton.

**DRAGOS.** This my wife, Tullia. *(Tullia places fur in apron, shakes Bruce's hand.)*

**BRUCE.** A pleasure to meet you, Tullia.

**DRAGOS.** You say Bruce? Is boy you tell about?! That make living from woman titties?

**BUD.** Yeah, he's the one.

**TULLIA.** *(Exiting to kitchen.)* Men! Like pigs for titties.



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**CORA.** Bud! Don't be crude. You've offended Tullia.

**DRAGOS.** No, no. It okay. Tullia very much know how I like the titties.

*(Cora, exasperated, drops to chair.)*

**BRUCE.** Never mind, Ma. I've grown accustomed to Pa casting aspersions.

**BUD.** Fuckin' fruitcake can't even speak English.

**CORA.** Bud!

**DRAGOS.** I tell you, I think you have very good job. I get for you breakfast, then you tell about the titties.

**CORA.** Dragos!

**DRAGOS.** What you want for eat? Eggs? Ham?

**BRUCE.** Fresh fruit and yogurt would be great. Thanks.

**BUD.** Fruit. See what I mean?

**DRAGOS.** Fruit? Uh, yes. Okay. I get the fruit.

**CORA.** Bud? *(Bud just glares at Bruce while Dragos scurries off.)*

**BRUCE.** Don't you get it, Ma? Pa's told Dragos that I make a living by sculpting breasts. Now he's implying that I'm a fruit.

**CORA.** Fruit?

**BRUCE.** That I'm gay.

**CORA.** Oh, Bud. How could you?

**BUD.** Still deny it?

**BRUCE.** Deny it? You know, Pa, I'm a professional living in Seattle. Not that you'd understand, but it's a large, progressive city. And there wouldn't be a lot of stigma if I came out of the closet. Might even help my practice. Maybe I could become plastic surgeon to the gay community.

**BUD.** Yeah? Then why don't you?

**BRUCE.** Because I'm not gay. Really, I'm not.

**BUD.** Never been married.

**BRUCE.** True.

**BUD.** Dress like a fag. *(Bruce considers his snazzy shirt and blazer.)*

**BRUCE.** Sometimes, I guess. True.

**BUD.** Don't like sports.

**BRUCE.** Well, I don't like NASCAR or cage fighting. True.

**BUD.** Never hunted when you were a kid. Always reading or playing that goddamn cello.

**CORA.** I loved it when Brucie played.

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**BUD.** Kid played cello like nobody's business but never learned to shoot a gun. Tell me, Cora, what kind of boy in Montana picks a cello over a Winchester? Goddamned sissies, that's who.

**BRUCE.** Why don't you give me some shooting lessons so I can join the Thanksgiving hunt tomorrow? Maybe we can do some father-son bonding in the woods. What do you think?

**BUD.** Oh, Christ. You hear that, Cora? Numskull wants to go huntin' with me. Musta asked him a hunnerd times he was a kid did he wanna go huntin'. Never did. Not one damned time. You really think I'm gonna go in the woods with someone who doesn't know the first thing about firearm safety and risk gettin' my head blown off? *(Bruce and Cora steal a glance at the defaced bear.)*

**BRUCE.** Okay, Pa. Maybe next year. *(Tullia enters with meal for Bruce, sits next to Cora. Bruce nibbles and Bud sips coffee as Tullia makes plans with Cora while shooting daggers at Bud.)*

**TULLIA.** Maybe next time Bud not shoot bear and not shoot hat of little Mexican. Maybe he shoot person for real. Maybe tomorrow we must have funeral and not the Thanksgiving.

**CORA.** Oh, no Dear, of course we'll have Thanksgiving. All the children will be home, and you and Dragos must come and join us. It's my very favorite holiday.

**TULLIA.** Yes, nice to have dinner with the childrens. But Dragos and me must be here early for the breakfast. Hunters eat many pancakes and sausages before going out to shoot the deers.

**CORA.** Well, you come when you can, Dear. We never sit down to eat until everyone's back from hunting, probably about five.

**TULLIA.** I bring stuffed cabbages and special savarina for dessert. *(Bud groans, makes a face.)*

**CORA.** Oh, that will be wonderful, Dear. And we'll have turkey, all the trimmings, and pumpkin pie.

**BUD.** Now you're talkin'.

**TULLIA.** I say you are brave lady, Cora Hamilton. *(Tullia exits as CLEVE enters. He's got a two-day stubble, wears coveralls, and sports greasy hands. Bruce rises to embrace but restrains himself to avoid the grease. Instead, they shake hands.)*

**CLEVE.** Bro! Good to see you!

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**BRUCE.** Cleve! Good to see you, too! Whoa! What's that I smell on breath so early in the morning?

**BUD.** Smell on Cleve? The fuck you think you smell? Sure as hell ain't Old Spice.

**CORA.** Bud! Your mouth!

**CLEVE.** Don't smell nuthin 'cept gunpowder. Pa playing villa-janty again?

**BRUCE.** You mean vigilante? (*Nods toward the bear.*) I think he was just warming up for the Thanksgiving hunt.

**CLEVE.** Oh, no shit.

**BUD.** This is the earliest you been up in a month. Or did you even make it to bed last night? (*Cleve takes seat. Tullia appears, pours coffee, quickly exits.*)

**CLEVE.** No, Pa. I've been workin'. Workin' hard. Up late in the office workin' on our business plan and up early this mornin' gettin' the skidder runnin'.

**BUD.** Business plan? Christ, Cleve, what the hell you cookin' up now?

**CLEVE.** Pa, we need a plan for the bank. How long you think that skidder's gonna keep runnin'? We can't move logs without a skidder, and the bank ain't gonna lend money without a plan.

**BUD.** Listen to me, Boy. We don't need another goddamn bank loan. It's my company, and dealin' with the bank's my responsibility. They're not gonna deal with you.

**CLEVE.** Pa, I'm just trying to –

**BUD.** And we don't need a new skidder! That skidder's got plenty a life left in her. And long as we're talkin' 'bout the skidder, you got no business turnin' wrenches when you been drinking. That's the problem with the skidder. The mechanic and operator is a goddamn drunk.

**CORA.** Oh, Bud.

**CLEVE.** Forget it, Ma. A little nip in my coffee on a cold mornin' and it must mean I'm a drunk.

**BRUCE.** You still running the same skidder? That's impressive. Must be, what, ten years old now?

**CLEVE.** Fifteen. Comin' up on fifty thousand hours. Can you believe that? All that poundin' in the woods. Don't remember how many times I

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changed cable, rebuilt the winch. Hell, how many times I rebuilt the engine. Pa loves that piece a crap, but I'm sick a workin' on it.

**BUD.** Love's got nuthin to do with it. Still got plenty a life in her.

**CLEVE.** Yeah, well you should a got rid of it this spring when it –

**BUD.** That's enough, Boy! *(Stands, reloads pistol, and throws bills on table.)* Let's go, Cora. *(Showing tenderness now, Bud helps Cora with coat.)*

**CORA.** Let me just have a moment with the boys, Dear. *(Bud hesitates, then turns to exit.)*

**CLEVE.** Pa! Before ya leave, Mr. Strong over to the bank called and wants to meet. Said it's important. I told him meet us here at the café at ten this mornin'. I know I'm wastin' my breath, but I can handle this ya just give me a chance. I can, Pa. Anyway, I'm gonna be here at ten o'clock. *(Bud storms out. Cleve slumps, shakes his head.)*

**CORA.** Boys, go easy on Pa. He's worked so hard and he's worn out. He's not as calm as he used to be.

**BRUCE.** Okay, Ma. I guess I'll see you at the cabin.

**CORA.** I love you, Brucie. *(Cora gives Bruce a hug and exits. Bruce sits.)*

**BRUCE.** Sounds like the business is in trouble. How serious?

**CLEVE.** Tough time to be in the logging business, Bro. Pa has no idea. Not like it used to be. Housing's depressed. Damn government a total pain in the ass.

**BRUCE.** How long do you think he's going to hang on? You know, to keep control?

**CLEVE.** Til he's in the grave or his hand is forced. Or he's thrown in jail for shootin' an immigrant. I tell you, Bro, he's losin' it.

**BRUCE.** Born in the wrong century. Might have fit in back in the Wild West.

**CLEVE.** Yeah, when a man got credit for shootin' immigrants.

**BRUCE.** Credit? You mean for shooting Indians? Cleve, in the Wild West, we were the immigrants. But still, a hundred and fifty years ago, I think Pa would have fit right in.

**CLEVE.** Or maybe however long ago it was people lived in caves. You know, when men drug women around by the hair.

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**BRUCE.** Pa's traditional, but he's a *protector* of women. Part of the tradition, I guess. *(Pause.)* Why are you meeting with Mr. Strong here instead of the bank?

**CLEVE.** My idea. Figure he'll go easier in here. Maybe Pa'll do a better job controllin' hisself.

**BRUCE.** If the control he exercised in here this morning is any indication, you might be disappointed.

**CLEVE.** We're in deep shit, Bro. Never heard Mr. Strong so serious. Kinda like when the teacher in junior high would lean down and whisper, *You're wanted in the principal's office.*

**BRUCE.** Actually, I don't remember ever being called to the office.

**CLEVE.** Course not. You ever got called to the office, it was probably to get some kinda ass-kissin' award. Me? I got called to the office, it was for an ass-whippin'. God, I can't believe how they used to beat my ass with those wooden hack boards.

**BRUCE.** So, you're in deep shit with the bank?

**CLEVE.** Pa wanted to keep it from you and Jeffrey, but you'll find out sooner or later. *(Off Bruces confusion.)* We had a skidder roll-over this spring. Rolled over and pinned the operator in a creek. Guy would a been okay 'cept he couldn't keep his head above water.

**BRUCE.** *What? He drowned?*

**CLEVE.** Drowned. Yeah. Now there's a big lawsuit and we ain't carrying enough insurance. You know Pa. Hell, we were 'bout bankrupt before the lawsuit. Now, I don't think we got a choice.

**BRUCE.** Oh, my God! Why didn't anyone say anything?

**CLEVE.** Pa's in denial. Thinks we'll work our way outta this and his two city sons won't find out.

**BRUCE.** But why?

**CLEVE.** Respect.

**BRUCE.** Respect? I'm not following.

**CLEVE.** All Pa ever wanted from you was respect. Thinks you don't respect him. You know, goin' to college. Movin' to a big city. A big shot thinkin' Pa's life ain't as important as yours.

**BRUCE.** Oh, my God! Do you know how ridiculous that is? Pa's never shown me an ounce of respect. No acknowledgement for anything I've achieved. Talk about lack of respect.

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**CLEVE.** Yeah, well, I'm just tellin' how I see it. Maybe you should ask yourself do you really respect him. Anyway, I need to get goin', get ready for the meeting with the banker.

**BRUCE.** Wait a minute, Cleve. How are you? Really. How are you?

**CLEVE.** Oh, yeah. You know. Never better.

**BRUCE.** And the drinking?

**CLEVE.** Okay. Yeah, but look, I've got to get cleaned up. I'll catch you later at the house. *(Cleve exits. Dragos enters, sits, stares at bear.)*

**DRAGOS.** Your father is, uh...

**BRUCE.** Crazy?

**DRAGOS.** Yes, maybe little crazy. And sometimes he very smart.

**BRUCE.** He's got some hard edges, Dragos.

**DRAGOS.** Yes, but more. How you say? A riggle.

**BRUCE.** *A riggle?*

**DRAGOS.** Yes. Mystery.

**BRUCE.** Oh, a riddle.

**DRAGOS.** Yes, yes! A riddle. Every day he come in store and drink coffee and talk bad about immigrants. Say bad to everyone about Mexicans. Say immigrants ruin country. But he every day drink my immigrant coffee and he every day very nice to me. A riggle. No, no! A riddle.

**BRUCE.** You're a smart man, Dragos.

**DRAGOS.** Yes. I must always learn much to keep a smart man. So now you tell me how you fix the titties. *(Blackout.)*

## SCENE TWO

*An hour later in the living room of Bud and Cora. Bruce, sits on sofa, flips through magazine. JEFFREY enters with suitcase. Bruce rises to embrace him.*

**JEFFREY.** I know, I know. I'm late.

**BRUCE.** Jeffrey, what happened? I was expecting you at the café this morning.

**JEFFREY.** I'm sorry. Holiday travel's a nightmare.

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**BRUCE.** Flight canceled?

**JEFFREY.** Not exactly. I got held up at the studio, missed my flight, and had to fly into Missoula. Got in late and then drove up this morning. Not early enough, I guess. Sorry to leave you hanging.

**BRUCE.** Well, you're here now, and it's good to see you. Coffee?

**JEFFREY.** Sure. And, Bruce, it's good to see you, too. *(Bruce exits. Jeffrey sits, projects toward kitchen.)* Anyway, I drove straight to the café hoping to be in on the surprise but must have just missed you. They said all the Hamiltons had just left. *(Bruce returns and pours coffee.)*

**BRUCE.** Ah, yes, the surprise. Pa was in rare form. You missed the... God. You missed some excitement.

**JEFFREY.** So, they had no idea we were coming in a day early?

**BRUCE.** Otherwise, there's no good way to explain the gunfire.

**JEFFREY.** Pa?

**BRUCE.** A wild shot, fortunately. But I'll tell you, he cleared his holster like Wyatt Earp.

**JEFFREY.** Please tell me no one got hurt.

**BRUCE.** A stuffed bear will never be the same. Such a disturbing image. Can't get it out of my mind.

**JEFFREY.** Ahh, the mutilated bruin! Couldn't miss it. My first thought – call it a really strong hunch – was that Pa was involved. What an arse. Where is everyone?

**BRUCE.** Pa's meeting with a banker, and Ma's doing some last-minute shopping for Thanksgiving.

**JEFFREY.** How is Ma?

**BRUCE.** Older. Ma is Ma.

**JEFFREY.** Cora the Lion Heart. How about Cleve? Have you seen him, yet?

**BRUCE.** He and Pa got into a tiff at the café.

**JEFFREY.** Did they exchange gunfire or was it just a simple bare-knuckle brawl?

**BRUCE.** I think Cleve's really trying, but it's a lost cause.

**JEFFREY.** A chip off the Old Man's block.

**BRUCE.** Not exactly. He's inherited many of Pa's flaws but few of his redeeming qualities.

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**JEFFREY.** Redeeming qualities? You must mean skills. Pa's got skills. He can size up a stand of timber with a glance. Sharpen a saw faster than he can brush his teeth. But, Bruce, those aren't redeeming qualities. They're skills.

**BRUCE.** Maybe you're right. (*Pause.*) How are things in the Big Apple? How's Carol? The kids?

**JEFFREY.** Everyone's fine. Spending Thanksgiving in Connecticut with the in-laws.

**BRUCE.** You should be so lucky.

**JEFFREY.** What? And miss the Thanksgiving hunt?

**BRUCE.** You know, I asked Pa if I could go along this year.

**JEFFREY.** *On the hunt?* Are you serious?

**BRUCE.** Cleve isn't the only one who's trying. I'm trying, too. Trying to connect with Pa. I've been thinking about it a lot. But if we ever do connect, I guess it won't be during a hunt. Pa said he wouldn't feel safe with me in the woods.

**JEFFREY.** My God, Bruce, you'd be the one in jeopardy! The deer are safer in the woods than you when Pa's on the loose.

**BRUCE.** If Clifford and Claire can hunt with Pa, why can't we?

**JEFFREY.** Pa's used to hunting with them. He sees us differently. Pa sees Clifford and Claire as hunting buddies. Well, the term *buddies* might be too strong. I'm not saying he likes them. But at least he tolerates them. He doesn't even tolerate us, let alone like us. Hell. I don't know, maybe he even hates us. And I guess I feel pretty much the same way about him.

**BRUCE.** Wow! That's a strong word. You actually hate him? You really think he hates us?

**JEFFREY.** At best, he's ashamed of us. At worst, he sees us as devils with forked tails and horns. Maybe not antlers, but horns nonetheless, and Pa would see either one of us as fair game. No, Bruce, don't go into the woods with that arse when he's carrying a loaded gun.

**BRUCE.** Well, I think you're wrong. But don't worry. We'll stay in by the fire, drink brandy, and play chess. Maybe Scrabble.

**JEFFREY.** Ready to get your butt kicked?

**BRUCE.** Dream on, Brother. But hey. How's the fashion design business? Won any more awards lately?



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**JEFFREY.** I'd totally love my work if it wasn't for the clients. Want to guess what made me late for my flight? A Broadway diva demanding last-minute alterations. She's hosting some charity event this weekend and didn't like the way her ass looked in her gown.

**BRUCE.** Oh, I know exactly what you mean. I hear it all the time. *Dr. Hamilton, can you lift my bottom? Tighten my butt? Take the dimples out of my butt? Can you make my butt smaller?*

**JEFFREY.** Yeah, but how many women want their butt to look bigger?

**BRUCE.** What they say and what they mean are often different things.

**JEFFREY.** No, I kid you not. Her exact words were, *I love the gown, but it doesn't do enough to highlight my booty.* She actually wanted the gown to make her ass to look bigger.

**BRUCE.** See, that's a perfect example of what I mean. She didn't say bigger, did she? She said highlight her booty. Plastic surgeons call that buttocks augmentation, and it's a lot more complicated than just making the butt bigger. It's making it bigger in the right places, getting the right shape, getting the right relationship to the rest of her body. Sculpting the perfect ass is tricky business.

**JEFFREY.** And you do this procedure? You augment asses?

**BRUCE.** Not my specialty, but I'm thinking to do more of it. Everyone does breast augmentation. Butt augmentation is the cosmetic surgery du jour. Right now, I'm behind the curve.

**JEFFREY.** So, you need to get ahead of the curve. *(Excited, stands to gesture.)* Your tagline! Ahead of the curve! Apply for the trademark as soon as you get back to Seattle. Billboards all over the city. *Dr. Bruce Hamilton's Ahead of the Curve Ass Clinic.* Or, *See Dr. Hamilton when your Booty needs Boosting.* Or maybe, *Dr. Bruce for Bodacious Buttocks.* *(They share a hearty laugh.)*

**BRUCE.** Pretty damn good with alliteration, aren't you? *(CLAIRE enters. Bruce and Jeffrey leap up for hugs.)*

**JEFFREY.** Claire! How are you? Love the coat. Serviceable for winter but very, very chic.

**CLAIRE.** Well, thank you, Jeffrey. You're not the only one in the family with a flair for fashion, you know. And look at you, Bruce! You're looking pretty spiffy, too.

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**BRUCE.** God, it's great to see you. How are you? (*Claire hangs her coat and sits with Jeffrey.*)

**CLAIRE.** Healthy, happy, and busy. Couldn't be better, really, unless I could find a way to see my two favorite brothers more often. I'm so glad you both came this year. (*Bruce exits to get coffee.*)

**JEFFREY.** Ready for the big hunt tomorrow?

**CLAIRE.** Locked and loaded, as they say. Clifford's getting ready, too. Saw him at Mac's Hunting Supply praying over his ammo.

**JEFFREY.** Seeking divine guidance for bullet selection or asking a blessing for a quick kill?

**CLAIRE.** (*Bruce returns with coffee, takes a seat.*) Neither. I think it was all just for the camera.

**BRUCE.** What do you mean? Posing for store security?

**CLAIRE.** Don't tell me you haven't heard about Clifford's newest venture. He's going on cable TV and had a crew in the gun shop filming a segment for his new show.

**JEFFREY.** My God, his dream of televangelism finally comes true.

**CLAIRE.** He got creative to get the deal. His concept is to combine a sermon with an outdoor sports show.

**BRUCE.** So instead of watching shows like *Hunting with Big John* or *Doug's Fishing Clinic*, the devout sportsman can tune into the *Hunting and Praying with Pastor Clifford Show*.

**JEFFREY.** You know these shows?

**BRUCE.** Using my imagination.

**CLAIRE.** Well, you're pretty much on target. The show's called *God, Geese, and Grizzlies*.

**JEFFREY.** *No shit?* You're not kidding, are you?

**CLAIRE.** First show airs Saturday. Clifford's really pumped.

**JEFFREY.** He's got sponsors?

**CLAIRE.** Some regional sponsors. Sport shops in Kalispell and Great Falls. I don't think Nike or Coca Cola have signed yet.

**BRUCE.** Are they filming the Thanksgiving hunt tomorrow?

**CLAIRE.** No way. One shot of Pa would sink the show before it gets off the ground.

**JEFFREY.** (*Framing scenes like a director.*) The possibilities! Look how adorably Pa flips off the camera! Oh! Catch a glimpse of Pa in the

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background defecating behind a tree. Or God forbid! Pa confronts a party of Mexican hunters!

**BRUCE.** An overnight cult classic! Thanksgiving Day Massacre, Part Two.

**JEFFREY.** Bruce was thinking about joining you tomorrow in the quest for venison. *(Claire gasps, gives a horrified look.)*

**BRUCE.** It was a thought.

**CLAIRE.** Well, if you really want to go hunting, Bruce, I can get you set up. But it's best if you and I hunt together and let Pa and Clifford go their own way.

**BRUCE.** Thanks, Claire. You're such a sweetheart. But my objective was to do some bonding with Pa, and he's not up for that.

**CLAIRE.** Bonding with Pa? Wait a minute. Let me try to get my head around that concept.

**JEFFREY.** Bruce is in midlife crisis and looking for a challenge. I'm encouraging him, for his own safety, to pursue something safer than bonding with Pa. How about chainsaw juggling?

**BRUCE.** I know it won't be easy.

**CLAIRE.** You've got a good heart, Bruce.

**JEFFREY.** A feeble and disturbed mind, but a good heart.

**BRUCE.** Doesn't anyone else think ahead, try to imagine Pa's funeral and life without him?

**JEFFREY.** No.

**CLAIRE.** Of course, I do. But I think about losing Ma a lot more.

**JEFFREY.** God, this is getting maudlin. Can we change the subject?

**BRUCE.** Okay. New topic. Cleve said the business is facing bankruptcy.

**CLAIRE.** He did? He told you? Did he tell you everything? *(CLIFFORD enters. All ad lib hellos and hugs.)*

**BRUCE.** Clifford! We were just talking about you.

**JEFFREY.** Our very own TV star! Talent runs so deep in this family.

**CLIFFORD.** The credit's not mine. It's all by the grace of God.

**JEFFREY.** Oooh, a TV star and modest, too.

**CLIFFORD.** Okay. I haven't even got my coat off, but let the mocking begin.

**JEFFREY.** You know I'm just kidding around, Clifford. I'm proud of you. Here, let me take your coat.

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**CLIFFORD.** Please don't patronize me.

**JEFFREY.** Come on. I was just joking around.

**CLIFFORD.** Don't. We haven't seen each other for a couple of years, and we can't even get through hello before you start mocking. When you mock me, you mock my Calling and mock God Himself.

**JEFFREY.** *God, Himself?*

**BRUCE.** Hey, let's just start over. Clifford, how are you?

**CLIFFORD.** I'm fine, Bruce. Thanks for asking. And how are you?

**BRUCE.** I'm fine, too. Thanks for asking.

**JEFFREY.** Well, now we're on a roll. Let's see, you're fine, Bruce is fine, I'm fine, and Claire's fine, too. Now that we're all caught up, let's do this again in a couple of years.

**CLAIRE.** Dear, God.

**JEFFREY.** I'm sorry, but doesn't anyone else abhor the pretense?

**CLIFFORD.** I do abhor pretense, Jeffrey, but you immediately went on the attack. So why don't *you* drop the pretense? The truth is, you think I'm a phony. You always have.

**JEFFREY.** You want truth. Okay. The truth is –

**BRUCE.** Wait! Let's just back this up a bit and take the focus off the two of you for a minute.

**JEFFREY.** Well?

**BRUCE.** Okay. I'll start. First, I love you all and I'm really glad to see you.

**JEFFREY.** Ouch! Oh, the brutal truth. Enough! I can't take any more.

**CLAIRE.** Let him talk.

**JEFFREY.** You're right. Continue. Let the chips fall where they may.

**BRUCE.** I don't know. Maybe I am going through a mid-life crisis. Lately, I've been taking stock and thinking a lot about the relationships in my life.

**CLAIRE.** I didn't know you were in a relationship, Bruce. Is it serious?

**BRUCE.** No. Not that kind of relationship. I mean with my family. In particular, with Pa.

**JEFFREY.** You can't have a relationship with an arse.

**CLIFFORD.** God is working in your heart, Bruce. You need a relationship with Him first. Then you can work on your other relationships.

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**BRUCE.** You think Pa loves and respects you because of your relationship with God?

**CLIFFORD.** Yes, I do.

**JEFFREY.** I don't.

**CLIFFORD.** What? Don't think Pa loves and respects me? Or you don't value my relationship with God?

**JEFFREY.** I'm not going to criticize your relationship with God if it makes you happy. But Pa's respect and affection for his children only indicates the degree to which he considers us to be like him.

**BRUCE.** So, he has five kids, and he wants five Bud clones?

**CLAIRE.** That doesn't bode well for me, then.

**BRUCE.** Doesn't bode too well for any of us. Least of all for Jeffrey and me. We don't live in Montana. We have professions Pa thinks are contemptuous. He thinks I'm homosexual, for God's sake.

**CLIFFORD.** Please don't use God's name in vain. And Bruce, God can heal sexual deviation.

**BRUCE.** Oh, my God! You, too!

**CLIFFORD.** Bruce, the Lord's name.

**CLAIRE.** Jeffrey designs clothing. Does he think he's gay, too?

**BRUCE.** Jeffrey's got a wife and kids. But I shouldn't have to get married to prove I'm heterosexual.

**CLAIRE.** Well only Jeffrey and Clifford are married with kids, and I doubt Pa thinks that I'm gay. And no way he thinks Cleve's gay.

**BRUCE.** I'm sure you're probably right, but that doesn't mean Pa has even one ounce of respect for Cleve.

**JEFFREY.** What about Claire?

**BRUCE.** I'm not sure what Pa thinks about Claire.

**JEFFREY.** Shouldn't be hard to figure out. He's more transparent than glass. His every thought shines through plain as day.

**CLAIRE.** So, I guess what you're saying is that Pa doesn't even give me a second thought.

**JEFFREY.** The rest of us should be so lucky. (*Blackout.*)

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### SCENE THREE

*A bit past noon, still in the living room. Bruce and Jeffrey play chess. Clifford reads a pocket New Testament. Claire softly plucks a guitar.*

**JEFFREY.** *(Confidently advancing a knight.)* And the noose tightens. Check!

**BRUCE.** Aah. The unwitting fashion designer, no match for his superior opponent, falls into a trap that's been set with surgical precision. *(Moves bishop with a flourish.)* And bishop takes knight.

**JEFFREY.** Oh, shit. *(Jeffrey tips king over. Clifford gives an audible sigh and look of annoyance.)* Okay, you got lucky.

**BRUCE.** No, you blundered. Maybe you'd do better at Scrabble.

**JEFFREY.** No way! I'm taking you down. Two out of three. Let's go.

**BRUCE.** The inferior player displays unfounded confidence and sets himself up for agonizing disappointment. You're on!

**CLAIRE.** How about I take on the winner?

**BRUCE.** Uh... Sure, Claire, if you want to.

**CLAIRE.** Why the hesitation?

**JEFFREY.** Maybe he doesn't want to risk losing to his sis. Do you find it emasculating to lose to a woman?

**BRUCE.** Don't be ridiculous.

**JEFFREY.** Well, get prepared, Claire, because you'll be playing me as soon as I dispose of this chump. And I have no problem taking on a woman.

**CLAIRE.** Why are you bringing up my gender? I expect gender bias from Pa and Cleve and – *(Glances at Clifford and clips speech.)* But not from you two. Playing chess isn't about masculinity or femininity. It's all about skill.

**BRUCE.** I guess Claire has some sensitivity to stereotyping as well as some covert chess skills.

**JEFFREY.** Bring on your skill. And you can even apply your crafty feminine wiles. Or not. Man, woman, or hermaphrodite makes no difference to me. My confidence is unshakeable.

**BRUCE.** And overconfidence will be your undoing. Pawn to queen four. Your move.

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**CLIFFORD.** Is it confidence or pride?

**JEFFREY.** You asking a rhetorical question?

**CLIFFORD.** No, not rhetorical. Just making a point. Confidence based on faith is a good thing. Confidence based on ego is pride.

**JEFFREY.** And you've got something against pride?

**CLIFFORD.** God does.

**JEFFREY.** Oh, God.

**CLIFFORD.** Yes, God. He's pretty clear about it. You can read all about it right here, Jeffrey.

**JEFFREY.** I'll get right on it, Clifford, as soon as I finish crushing and totally humiliating my brother and sister on the chessboard.

**CLAIRE.** I love it.

**JEFFREY.** It's okay, Claire. We're just being brothers.

**CLAIRE.** Oh, I know. It's what I love about the holidays. All of us getting together, loving each other, sharing memories and family secrets, creating memories.

**BRUCE.** Jeffrey and Clifford do love each other. They just have a different way of showing it.

**CLAIRE.** No, Bruce, I get that. I wasn't trying to be sarcastic. I really do enjoy our family dynamic.

**JEFFREY.** Okay, now you're just being weird.

**BRUCE.** Some brothers are lower than others in emotional intelligence. They express love in unexpected ways. For Pa it's even more difficult. And more unexpected.

**JEFFREY.** Oh, that's way beyond weird. Let's see, when Pa welcomed you with his six-shooter blazing this morning, was he showing his love in an unexpected way?

**BRUCE.** Of course not. He didn't know it was me. It was my fault for jumping out and growling. He was startled and thought he was being attacked. That wasn't Pa loving. It was Pa defending.

**JEFFREY.** Defending what? His Denver omelet and hash browns from a ravenous bear?

**BRUCE.** Defending Ma. Defending property. Defending himself and his honor.

**JEFFREY.** What's with you? You want to excuse Pa for everything. Face it. He's old and senile. He used to be a cantankerous troublemaker. Now

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he's a treacherous terrorist. And regarding emotional intelligence, he's retarded.

**BRUCE.** Pa's old but not senile. And, yes, he's always had trouble showing affection for his kids, just like you and Clifford have trouble showing affection for each other.

**JEFFREY.** You're way out of line when you compare us to Pa. *(Claire smiles and softly plays her guitar. Cleve, inebriated and holding a sheaf of papers, enters and surveys the scene. He throws his coat in a corner and hugs his siblings.)*

**CLEVE.** Well, whaddya know? The whole gang.

**JEFFREY.** Cleve. My God. Did you meet Jack Daniels for lunch?

**CLEVE.** Good to see you, too, Bro.

**CLAIRE.** Are you okay? Do you need some food?

**CLEVE.** No, Sis. I'm fine. *(Looking her over suggestively.)* And you're lookin' mighty fine.

**CLIFFORD.** How about a cup of coffee?

**CLEVE.** No, no. I'm tellin' ya, I'm fine. *(Everyone sits. Cleve does so unsteadily.)* You don't hafta stop playin' just cuz I'm here. *(Bruce and Jeffrey look up from chess.)* No, I mean Claire. Don't stop. You play so good.

**CLAIRE.** Thanks, Cleve. Maybe I'll play some a little later.

**CLEVE.** Didja know your lil sis sings in bars on the weekend? Tell 'em, Sis.

**JEFFREY.** Yes, do tell us, Sis. Do we have more than one entertainer in the family?

**CLIFFORD.** *Entertainer?* You're implying that I'm an entertainer?

**JEFFREY.** Let me rephrase. More than one performer?

**CLIFFORD.** And the difference between –

**CLAIRE.** What he means is that I sometimes do some lounge singing on the weekend. *(Off surprised look from Bruce.)* Don't look so amazed. It's not like I'm the next Reba McEntire. It's just for fun.

**BRUCE.** Really? That's great!

**CLEVE.** Got a CD and everything.

**BRUCE.** *What?* You've got a CD?

**CLAIRE.** Don't listen to Cleve. Just a few songs for review purposes.

**JEFFREY.** But still, you must be pretty serious about it.



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**CLAIRE.** No, no I'm not. My construction business is about all I can handle. Singing is therapy.

**BRUCE.** Can I get a copy of the CD? I'd be glad to pay for it.

**JEFFREY.** I'd love one, too.

**CLAIRE.** Don't be silly. You can stream for free online, but don't expect too much. Just six tracks, all different genres. They help me line up gigs.

**CLEVE.** And I bet it helps to pick up guys.

**CLIFFORD.** Don't be so crass.

**CLEVE.** I dint mean nuthin. It's not like she needs help pickin' up guys.

**CLAIRE.** Cleve, you've had a bit too much to drink.

**CLEVE.** I'm just sayin', I wish I could sing.

**JEFFREY.** So you, too, could pick up guys?

**CLEVE.** Damn straight!

**JEFFREY.** You want to pick up guys who are straight?

**CLEVE.** (*Puzzled, then a goofy drunken laugh.*) Oh, hell no. Not guys. You know what I mean.

**BRUCE.** Well, I'm impressed. Even if I had the talent, I couldn't find the time for a second job.

**CLAIRE.** It's not a job, Bruce. Like I said, it's therapeutic.

**JEFFREY.** Even so, it probably brings in some extra income.

**CLAIRE.** I guess.

**BRUCE.** Well, I think it's amazing. Good for you.

**JEFFREY.** Yes. Very cool. What type of music do you play?

**CLAIRE.** A pretty large play list. Pop love ballads. Soft rock and R&B, but my favorite genre is country.

**JEFFREY.** Now why'd you go and spoil it by telling me your favorite?

**CLAIRE.** Why? Are you close-minded, Jeffrey?

**JEFFREY.** No, but I've got standards.

**CLAIRE.** Well, that's unexpected and somewhat disappointing.

**JEFFREY.** Disappointing that I have standards?

**CLAIRE.** I just always figured you for the most open-minded and adventurous of all of us. But I guess that doesn't extend to music. And that's okay. I'm just surprised.

**JEFFREY.** Well, you've made me feel bad enough to reassess the country genre. I'll download some Patsy Cline and Merle Haggard as soon as I return to New York and will listen with an open mind.

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**CLAIRE.** You could do a lot worse than Patsy Cline and Merle Haggard.

**CLEVE.** And she races sleds.

**JEFFREY.** You race snowmobiles? What? You race competitively?

**CLAIRE.** Why? Is there some reason I shouldn't?

**JEFFREY.** Jesus, Claire.

**CLIFFORD.** Jeffrey, please!

**JEFFREY.** Oh, right. *Jeepers*, Claire!

**CLAIRE.** What's the big deal? Construction's slow in the dead of winter so I joined a snowmobile club. They sponsor group outings, a cross-country race, a hill climb, even a drag race on Seeley Lake. It's fun and keeps me active, so I don't see the big deal.

**JEFFREY.** It's just not how I think of you. Growing up, I always thought you'd settle down, be a homemaker, have kids. Maybe be a teacher or librarian.

**CLAIRE.** Why, Jeffrey, you think just like Pa.

**JEFFREY.** Oh. Ouch. I can't believe I'm being compared to Pa, again. I guess I deserved it this time.

**CLAIRE.** Yes, you did.

**BRUCE.** Speaking of Pa, how'd it go with the banker?

**CLEVE.** Could have gone better, but least he kept his pistol in the holster.

**BRUCE.** Tell us about it.

**CLEVE.** Pa slapped me and walked out. Bank's gonna shut us down. Pa and Ma gonna lose the house. *(All ad-lib, shouting questions at the same time. What do you mean shut us down? The house? What's going on? Then, Claire takes charge.)*

**CLAIRE.** Okay, Cleve. Take it slow and take it from the top. What did Mr. Strong say?

**CLEVE.** Ain't got enough assets. We lose the lawsuit, won't be enough to cover damages.

**CLAIRE.** But the business is incorporated and has liability insurance. Unless Pa's named separately from the company in the lawsuit, no one can touch his personal assets.

**CLEVE.** Not what Mr. Strong said, cuz Pa signed somethin' to guarantee the bank.

**CLAIRE.** Yes, but if he doesn't default on any bank loans, there shouldn't be a problem.

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**CLEVE.** Bank's not gonna wait. They're demanding payment, and unless the loan's paid in the next few days, they're gonna take our equipment. They can have it far as I'm concerned. Busted up junk.

**CLAIRE.** How much is the loan? *(Cleve hands papers to Claire. She studies them during ensuing discussion.)*

**CLEVE.** I always liked Mr. Strong. But I think Pa was right. That banker's an asshole.

**CLIFFORD.** Where's Pa now?

**CLEVE.** The hell do I know? Hope he's in the woods choppin' down trees or wrestlin' a grizzly. Man's got frustrations to work out, and I can't take him usin' me for a punchin' bag.

**JEFFREY.** *(Thumb to his mouth, simulates taking a drink.)* I guess we all have our own way of dealing with frustration, don't we, Cleve.

**CLEVE.** Yeah, I guess we do.

**CLIFFORD.** Drinking's not going to solve anything. You need to seek the Lord's help and guidance.

**CLEVE.** Well, didn't the Lord turn water into wine? Like Jeffrey said –

**BRUCE.** There must be something we can do!

**CLEVE.** You can pay off the bank loan, you want to.

**BRUCE.** How much is it?

**CLEVE.** Ask Claire.

**CLAIRE.** It's not as simple as paying off the bank loan.

**BRUCE.** How much?

**CLAIRE.** It's only about ninety kay.

**JEFFREY.** *Ninety thousand?*

**BRUCE.** Are you saying ninety thousand isn't that much?

**CLAIRE.** Not really. Balance sheet doesn't look bad. Pa owns lots of tools and equipment, and almost everything's old enough to be fully depreciated.

**BRUCE.** So how much does he need? Ninety thousand dollars?

**CLAIRE.** Not unless I'm missing something. The bank should loan 80% of the value of his assets. Even if scrapped, all the equipment Pa's got should cover the note. And he's got a couple of trucks and a crawler that are well above scrap value. I can't understand why the bank would ask for a personal guarantee. I can't understand why Pa would agree to it.

**JEFFREY.** I told you he's getting senile.

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**CLIFFORD.** What about the house?

**CLAIRE.** It's listed as collateral with Pa's personal guarantee of the loan. But if he declares bankruptcy, no one can touch the house and up to one acre of property.

**CLIFFORD.** But Pa owns, what, at least a couple hundred acres of timber.

**CLAIRE.** Not sure how that would be treated in bankruptcy. He could lose the timber. I think there are exemptions for farmland, so maybe he gets around it if it's considered a tree farm.

**BRUCE.** What do we do?

**CLAIRE.** First thing, get Pa released from the personal guarantee. We need to meet with the bank and get an attorney involved. We'll deal with the lawsuit when and if we – *(Bud bursts through door carrying bags of groceries and storms through to the kitchen without glancing at his children. Bruce, Jeffrey, Clifford and Claire swivel their heads to follow Bud as he sets groceries on counter, spins, quickly marches to exit. Cleve, as in a drunken stupor, just stares straight ahead.)*

**CLAIRE.** *(Shrugging and turning to siblings.)* We'll get a good attorney if we need to deal with the lawsuit.

**CLIFFORD.** We?

**BRUCE.** Yes, we. Pa and Ma need help. It's time for us to step up.

**CLEVE.** *(Coming to life and applauding slowly.)* Give it up for Bruce. About time someone else steps up. And good luck. Hell, I been steppin' up long as I can remember. Tryin' to, anyway. But Pa's only one can make decisions. I've worked for him more than thirty years, but I still need his okay to take a piss. *(Cora enters carrying just a purse. Bruce and Jeffrey jump up. Cora gives Jeffrey a big hug.)*

**CORA.** Oh, Jeffrey.

**JEFFREY.** How are you, Ma?

**CORA.** Let me get you boys some lunch. *(Bud enters with more groceries. He stops and just stares at Jeffrey emotionless, inscrutably. An awkward pause.)*

**CLEVE.** I don't know about lunch, Ma, but I'm ready for a drink. *(Blackout.)*

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**SCENE FOUR**

*The Sit-a-Spell Café about 5 a.m. on, Thanksgiving Day. Bud, tightly wound, sits at a table. Dragos fills Bud's coffee cup.*

**DRAGOS.** Good morning, Bud. Who goes hunting today?

**BUD.** Lotsa stupid people. Really goddamn stupid. And most stupid assholes have no idea how goddamn stupid they really are.

**DRAGOS.** Who stupid, Bud?

**BUD.** 'Bout everyone you meet, Dragos. Oh, you want an example? Okay. Anyone who is patient is stupid. That's right! Patience is not a virtue. Patience is stupidity!

**DRAGOS.** Okay.

**BUD.** Might be disguised as laziness. As in some lazy bastard usin' patience as an excuse to procrastinate and not get off his fat ass and do somethin'. Or might be some chickenshit standin' in the buffet line using patience as an excuse to not speak up and tell the asshole who's holdin' up the line to make a goddamn decision, stop staring at the food, contemplatin', for God's sake. Just stick a fork in somethin', throw it on your plate, and move on!

**DRAGOS.** Stick a fork?

**BUD.** What I'm sayin', patience is stupidity. Sometimes looks like laziness or chickenshitness. Don't matter the disguise, patience is just stupidity.

**DRAGOS.** Okay. I see. Patient is stupid.

**BUD.** Yeah. Listen. All progress in his world is due to impatient people. Smart people know that. It's the impatient people who don't tolerate the status quo who actually improve things. But all the goddamn stupid people wanna drive in the left lane and slow down the smarter impatient people who are trying to get shit done. And then those same stupid slow-driving patient fuckers look at you like you're the stupid one when you blow by them on the right side flippin' 'em off.

**DRAGOS.** I learn much from you, Bud Hamilton. *(Bruce enters and takes a seat. Bud ignores him and pointedly continues to address Dragos.)*

**BUD.** Stupid people think they're being noble by being patient. Goddamn stupidity. I could give you lots more examples. Don't get me started. It's a

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shitty world we live in with all the stupid people. *(Bud now turns his attention to Bruce.)* The one thing that can keep a man goin' is knowin' that at least his kids aren't stupid, too. Knowin' you passed along some of your common sense to your kids, that's a good feelin'. But if you've got stupid kids... Ya just wanna shoot yourself. *(Dragos pours coffee for Bruce. Uncomfortable pause.)*

**DRAGOS.** Good morning, Bruce. I get you breakfast?

**BRUCE.** Just the coffee, Dragos. Thanks. *(Dragos nods, exits.)*

**BUD.** The hell you want? You're not huntin'.

**BRUCE.** I can tag along. If that's okay. Maybe I can carry something for you.

**BUD.** Carry somethin'? You think I can't carry my own rifle?

**BRUCE.** I'd just like to spend some time with you, Pa. We never talk.

**BUD.** Fuckin' talk. You know who likes to talk?

**BRUCE.** Not you, I guess.

**BUD.** Guilty. That's who.

**BRUCE.** I'm not sure –

**BUD.** You. And Jeffrey. Goddamn guilt must be a heavy load.

**BRUCE.** What do we... What do I have to feel guilty about?

**BUD.** You left. *(Continued.)*

**BRUCE.** *(Overlapping.)* I care about. *(Continued.)*

**BUD.** *(Overlapping.)* Kalispell.

**BRUCE.** My family. *(Pause.)* I care about you, Pa. I hope you live many more years.

**BUD.** The hell you talkin' about?

**BRUCE.** You don't even know me. Don't you want –

**BUD.** You ain't goin' in the woods! *(Dragos enters with plate for Bud, addresses Bruce.)*

**DRAGOS.** I have fruit and yogurt.

**BRUCE.** No thank you, Dragos. I guess I'll be going. *(Dragos nods and exits.)*

**BRUCE.** I love you, Pa. I do. *(Bud just stares, doesn't touch his food. Claire and Clifford enter, take seats.)*

**CLAIRE.** Bruce. You're here. Are you hunting today?

**BRUCE.** I just came to –

**BUD.** Not huntin'!

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**CLIFFORD.** Pa, why'd you leave without us?

**CLAIRE.** We love you, Pa. You know that don't you?

**CLIFFORD.** I can understand what you're going through.

**BUD.** You understand what? That the world's gone to hell?

**CLIFFORD.** I understand that we live in troubled times. The Lord –

**BUD.** Quit it! Just quit. Lord's got nuthin to do with anything. (*Aside.*) I'm surrounded by idiots and fruitcakes. That's the problem. (*Tullia enters, pours coffee for Claire and Clifford.*)

**TULLIA.** Pancakes and bacon for Bud. No breakfast for Bruce. And you, what you like to eat?

**CLAIRE.** Just coffee, Tullia. Thank you.

**TULLIA.** Humph. Just the coffee. And you? Just the coffee?

**CLIFFORD.** Uh, same as Pa. Pancakes and bacon. Thanks. (*Tullia exits. Bud stares, not eating.*)

**CLAIRE.** We'll have to go higher than usual to get into the snow. (*Bud sits trance-like and ignores the others.*)

**CLIFFORD.** What do you think, Pa? Want to get up into the snow? Maybe we should take our usual stands. If the elk are moving, we'll have a good chance.

**CLAIRE.** Pa, you're not eating and looking kind of pale. If you're not up to hunting today, we've got the rest of the weekend before the season closes. We don't have to go out today.

**BUD.** My kids turn against me. You expect me to feel like eating?

**CLIFFORD.** No one's turned against you. The Lord tests us all.

**BUD.** Fifty years I run a business. Where's the respect?

**CLIFFORD.** We all respect you.

**BUD.** All these years, no one takes an interest in the business except Cleve, a drunken idiot. Now the fuckin' bank and the lawyers and the government wanna take it all. Bruce and Jeffrey are fruitcakes. They're no help, and I'll never understand 'em.

**BRUCE.** When will you –

**BUD.** (*Turning to Clifford, pointing finger.*) But you! You coulda showed an interest before now. You could be runnin' the business now you showed any interest.

**CLIFFORD.** God had a different plan for me.

**BUD.** Don't give me that shit. You're just lazy. Would rather –

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**CLAIRE.** I'm interested, Pa.

**BUD.** Oh, Christ. I'll never understand you, either.

**CLAIRE.** That's okay. We're family. We don't have to understand each other. *(Pause.)* You don't have to do business with your bank. I've got good relationships with several banks. They have branches in Kalispell, or we can deal in Missoula or Great Falls.

**BUD.** What do you know about dealing with bankers?

**CLAIRE.** I might surprise you.

**BUD.** Mark these words. I'll die before I declare bankruptcy.

**CLAIRE.** I know. But bankruptcy's going to hinge on the lawsuit.

**BUD.** Fuckin' lawyers.

**CLAIRE.** Are you named personally in the lawsuit or is it just against Bud Hamilton Logging? *(Bud just looks confused.)* That's okay. We'll get this sorted out.

**BUD.** I can't take this shit. My sons are drunk or lazy or sissies. My daughter's the only one showing any balls. I can't take it. I'm huntin' by myself today. *(Bud stands, throws bills on table and exits.)*

**BRUCE.** Dear God.

**CLIFFORD.** Bruce, the Lord's name.

**CLAIRE.** Didn't look good, did he?

**CLIFFORD.** No, he didn't. He shouldn't be out in the woods alone.

**BRUCE.** Shall I go after him?

**CLIFFORD.** With his spirit so troubled, I don't think he'll listen.

*(Clifford takes the hands of Bruce and Claire.)* But we can pray for him.

*(Closing eyes and praying forcefully.)* Heavenly Father, hear our prayer!

Please send your angels to watch over Pa. Keep him safe, oh, Lord. Calm his troubled spirit and work in his heart. *(Dragos enters with Clifford's food, awkwardly waits.)* Lord, we pray you'd intercede in the financial affairs of the business according to your will. We thank you for your love and care for our family and pray a special blessing over this weekend.

Amen. *(Claire and Bruce look up quickly, Clifford more slowly. They turn to look at Dragos.)*

**DRAGOS.** Where Bud go? *(Blackout.)*



## KALISPELL

### SCENE FIVE

*Later, mid-morning in the woods outside of Kalispell. Clifford and Claire enter, lean rifles against a boulder, and sit with the boulder as a backrest.*

**CLIFFORD.** Whew! That was a workout. One clean shot and you dropped him like a rock.

**CLAIRE.** Pa always said high on the neck if you can get the shot.

**CLIFFORD.** Really a nice bull. Eight hundred pounds if an ounce.

**CLAIRE.** Herd's moving. A little rest, then we cross to the other side of the ridge. Give you another shot.

**CLIFFORD.** We'll have to skirt this fenced off range. If we drop one, going to be a lot to pack out.

**CLAIRE.** Might be a mile or two. Even if we quarter it, we'll need a couple of trips on steep ground. I'm up for it if you are. *(Claire gets sandwiches from pack, hands one to Clifford.)*

**CLIFFORD.** Thanks. Big breakfast, but I'm already hungry. *(Claire takes a bite immediately, but Clifford bows head. Claire notices and stops chewing until he looks up.)* I need to get in better shape. Can't be huffing and puffing when I'm doing this on camera.

**CLAIRE.** You must be so excited. Are you ready for the first show?

**CLIFFORD.** Oh, yeah. We've scripted and filmed several video segments, and I'll be in the studio Saturday morning to film the intro and narration. God willing, our first episode will air Sunday afternoon.

**CLAIRE.** I'll bet Julie and the kids will be excited to see you on television. What time are they coming this afternoon? Seems like I haven't seen them forever.

**CLIFFORD.** Uh, they're not going to make it this year.

**CLAIRE.** *What?* Why not? Is someone sick?

**CLIFFORD.** Julie's been stressed out lately. With Pa and Cleve and Bruce and Jeffrey all in the same house...

**CLAIRE.** Does Ma know? I thought she's planning on everyone. She even invited Dragos and Tullia.

**CLIFFORD.** Going to be upset, isn't she? I should have told her.

**CLAIRE.** Is everything okay? Between you and Julie, I mean?

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**CLIFFORD.** It's not easy to be a pastor's wife. I think maybe Julie wishes I was still in sales.

**CLAIRE.** Must be lots of pressure. Well, I can't believe I won't see a single niece or nephew this Thanksgiving. *(Cleve enters staggering and swinging a rifle from side to side. He stops and when his siblings are in his sights.)*

**CLIFFORD.** *(Cowering for cover.)* Cleve! What are you doing? *(Cleve lowers rifle, tries to focus, then laughs uncontrollably. Claire and Clifford rush to him as he raises and drains a flask. Clifford grabs the rifle, and Claire grabs the flask.)*

**CLEVE.** I'm sorry. Did I give you a start? *(Clifford checks the rifle. Claire turns flask upside down.)*

**CLIFFORD.** It's not loaded.

**CLAIRE.** No, but he is. *(Clifford guides Cleve to sit next to Claire.)*

**CLIFFORD.** What are you doing out here?

**CLEVE.** Lookin' for you. Everyone left without me this mornin'.

**CLAIRE.** You know better than to be mixing guns and alcohol.

**CLEVE.** *(Laughs uncontrollably. Guns and alcohol. (Suddenly serious, Cleve grabs Claire's arm.)* I couldn't find my bullets.

**CLIFFORD.** Thank you, Lord. *(Claire pours coffee from thermos. Cleve, shaking, takes cup.)*

**CLAIRE.** Here you go. Drink this. What are we going to do with you, Cleve?

**CLEVE.** Take me huntin'. I ain't shot nuthin in years. Pa never lets me go with him. Where is Pa, anyway, the old bastard.

**CLIFFORD.** Please show some respect.

**CLEVE.** *Respect?*

**CLIFFORD.** Yes, respect. The Scripture says to honor your father and your mother that your days may be long.

**CLEVE.** What makes you think I want long days, Bro? *(Goofy laugh.)* You got anything for longer nights?

**CLIFFORD.** It's sad when you bring shame to the family, Cleve, but more than that. Your bad behavior can impact God's work. Don't you see? That's what Satan's trying to do. *(Cleve goes from goofy drunk to sad drunk. He hands coffee to Claire, releases an agonizing groan. Claire sets*

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*coffee aside as Cleve loses it.)* Satan could use you to get to me, to cause a scandal that will prevent my TV show from reaching lost souls.

**CLEVE.** *(Begins sobbing.)* I'm so sorry, Clifford. Please don't hate me.

**CLAIRE.** Hey, hey. Nobody hates you. And it's not about Satan. It's about you. You're hurting yourself, and if you don't get some help, you're going to end up hurting someone else.

**CLEVE.** I can't stop drinkin'. I keep tryin', but I can't stop.

**CLIFFORD.** God can help you stop.

**CLEVE.** Can he get me a new job? Get me a woman? Help me stop drinkin'? Tomorrow, I mean.

**CLIFFORD.** He's God, Cleve. He created the universe. Of course, He can help you.

**CLAIRE.** I'm sure God can help, and if you're ready to make changes, I'm sure God will want you to get treatment.

**CLEVE.** Like what? You mean detox?

**CLAIRE.** When you're really ready to stop drinking, you need to do whatever it takes.

**CLEVE.** Let me ask ya somethin', Bro. You got anyone in your church could give me a job? I can't keep workin' for Pa.

**CLIFFORD.** I can help you find God. And He can help you find a job.

**CLAIRE.** There's work out there if you're sober. *(Handing coffee back to Cleve.)* And that's the first thing. If you get sober, you'll be able to work through your other problems.

**CLEVE.** And find a woman?

**CLAIRE.** Sure.

**CLEVE.** I had a woman, you know.

**CLAIRE.** Did you?

**CLEVE.** Young and pretty. *(Clifford rises, paces.)* Don't remember her name.

**CLAIRE.** It'll come back to you.

**CLEVE.** Drivin' to Whitefish, picked her up.

**CLIFFORD.** *Picked her up?*

**CLEVE.** Hitchin' a ride, and she was wearin', you know, the real short pants that showed off her butt.

**CLIFFORD.** We don't need to hear the details, Cleve.

**CLEVE.** *(Knowing grin to Claire.)* Boobies comin' outta her halter top.

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**CLAIRE.** (*Affectionately.*) Sounds like a winner.

**CLEVE.** What I thought! Offered her a ride, and we ended up back at my trailer.

**CLIFFORD.** Okay, Cleve.

**CLEVE.** She stayed a week.

**CLAIRE.** Really? Then what happened?

**CLEVE.** Amber! Her name was Amber!

**CLAIRE.** Pretty name.

**CLEVE.** Sex was great.

**CLIFFORD.** Okay, Cleve. Finish the coffee so we can get going.

**CLEVE.** She really got inside my head, you know? (*Pounding chest with his fist.*) But she never got in here.

**CLIFFORD.** She wasn't part of God's plan for you.

**CLEVE.** Yeah. Dint know til she left. Cleaned out my checking account and stole my underwear.

**CLAIRE.** *Your underwear?*

**CLEVE.** Liked to sleep in my boxers.

**CLIFFORD.** Are you done with that coffee? (*Claire begins to gather stuff.*)

**CLEVE.** You go on ahead. I gotta take a piss.

**CLAIRE.** Are you going to be okay?

**CLEVE.** (*Stands, straightens himself, looks resolute.*) You're a good sister.

**CLAIRE.** (*Giving a quick embrace.*) I love you, Cleve. Are you going to be okay?

**CLEVE.** Yeah, fine. Go on ahead.

**CLAIRE.** You can't drive, you know? Did you park your truck by ours?

**CLEVE.** Uh, I think so. (*Claire exits with Clifford. Cleve fumbles with zipper.*) Oh, oh, oooh! I gotta piss! (*Cleve turns, moves to fence adjacent to sign prominently indicating it's electrified. Sound of him relieving himself.*) Aaaaah... (*A bright flash and sparks from the fence. All goes dark as Cleve screams in agony.*) Eeeaaaayyy! (*Blackout.*)

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