

Stuart Gentling
A Play in One Act
December 2, 1963

Characters:

Myra Mendville, middle aged, shrewish wife of David Mendville.
David Mendville, Myra's husband, a kind but ambitiousless man who is easily dominated by his wife.
W.T. Benjamin, David's boss. A man of good taste and refined manner.
Cora, Myra's friend.
Mr. Smith, the boarder.
David Mendville Jr., student.
Sherry, David's girl.

The Place:

The main action takes place in the home of Myra mendville, a Victorian house which like practically all of the others on the edge of the Garden District in New Orleans, has seen better days. Myra inherited the house from her mother who has been dead only a few months. Before the old lady's death she lived in one of the rooms on the upper floor and the rest of the house was occupied by Myra and her family. It started out only as a temporary affair - their living there - but the Mendville family remained for twenty five years. Now that the old lady is dead the room previously occupied by her has been rented out to a man named Mr. Smith, an ignominious person whose name carries something sinister to Myra. Mr. Smith is an alcoholic.

The set:

The stage sets should be simple, even austere and should have very little character to them. Perhaps the use of blond furniture of the late forties and early fifties vintage would suggest the lack of taste which pervades the house and all of the personalities in it. There should be a slightly shoddy, junky feel about the rooms as if they were not picked up very regularly. There should be two central rooms - the kitchen and the living room. Through the kitchen window can be seen the outside stairs up which climbs the boarder to his room. The ceilings of the rooms are high and rise out of view of the audience. This is necessary because certain sound effects are to come from the room above.

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Scene ONE:

Myra comes into the kitchen from the outside door carrying a sack of groceries and a bottle of whiskey concealed in a long paper sack. She is followed by her friend, Cora, who is also carrying a sack of groceries. She does not appear immediately and Myra, as she enters the kitchen door, leans bag out and shouts to her friend.

Myra: (leaning back out the kitchen door.) "Now you don't have to ~~xxxx~~ bring all of them. I'll get Georgie to take care of it." (She comes into the kitchen and places the sack on the corner of the counter. She is dressed in heavy clothes because it is New Years Eve.) "Georgie! Georgie! G-e-o-r-g-i-e! Where is that nigger girl? (she goes to the swinging Kitchen door, pushes it open and shouts again) G-e-o-r-g-i-e! (Myra is still looking through the kitchen door as Cora struggles through the door, over-loaded with packages. She spies a note on the kitchen counter and picks it up.)

Cora: "There's a note here, Myra. It's from Georgie."

Myra: "Oh no, what now?"

Cora: "Here, you better read it. I don't want you tearing my head off."

Myra: (Walks back accross the room, takes the note from Cora.) Oh no, I just don't believe this. Today of all days. Why is it when you need them the most they always poop out on you. Well, she's fired. That's all there is to it.

Cora: Now just calm down. The note says that her little boy is sick.

Myra: Oh sure. They always get sick on Christmas Eve and on Thanksgiving day and on your birthday and your anniversary. You can't depend on them. But you sure can depend on them to be here when its time to pay them.

Cora: Now you just said its Christmas Eve. Don't play Scrouge, Myra. How many yea years has Georgie been working for you anyway? I've seen her since you moved in here with your mother. How many years has that been, Myra."

Myra: ~~xxxx~~ (calming down) More than I would like to count, thank you.

Cora: How long has it been, Myra?

Myra: Well, David is twenty one now. Almost twenty years, Cora.

Cora: Then twenty years of service is enough to warrant some trust I'd think. Afterall. . . ."

Myra: Ok, Ok, you don't have to play the defenders with me. I'm not mad anymore. But God why does it have to happen today. You know how important ~~xxxxxxx~~ tonight is. Mr. Benjamin David's boss is coming over here tonight and he's got a present to give. IT's that promotion, Cora, I know it is. David hasn't said much about it. You know how quiet he always is, especially about important things. I even had to find out that Old man Vinders who is the head

of the accounting department where David already is supervising, has to go to the Mayo Clinic ~~at~~ for a Cancer operation on his stomach or something like that. Of course, you know what that means, Cora? "

Cora: Forgive me, but I don't really.

Myra: It means that job is open.

Cora: (lights up) and David will get it?

Myra: He has to get that job. Old man, Mc Kesson died last year and that makes David top man in years with the company. He has been there now for twenty-five years. That's too much of any man's life not to get some reward for it. It will be twenty-five years next January and with Mr. Vinders out of the picture and Mc Kesson dead that leaves only one left - David. (she starts getting agitated again and begins hurrying about the kitchen taking things out of the sacks and putting them in the refrigerator or in the cupboards)

~~Cora~~ ~~Myra~~: Well I can send Lula-Bell over here if you need her that badly.

Myra: Oh could you. (They embrace) I'd love you to death hun.

Cora: I'll call her now. (she goes to the telephone in the Kitchen and calls the maid. Myra continues to put things away.) . . . Hello, Johnny, this is Momma. Get Lula-Bell on the telephone will you? (she waits for a moment) Lula-bell, how soon can you get away. . . . ~~Myra~~ ^{Myra} Mendville's maid had to leave this afternoon