

# **Siblings**

**By**  
**Karen Fix Curry**

## SIBLINGS

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### **CAST OF CHARACTERS**

**Tillie** - early 60's, the oldest sister. Prim, well off, fundamentalist, desperate.

**Madge** - mid 50's, middle sister. Flamboyant, risk taker, upbeat, savvy. Smokes.

**Paula** - 40's, the younger sister. Introverted, wall flower, pretty.

**Jules Prendisoldi** - 60's, distinguished, charming conman. Italian & Brooklyn accents.

**Roy Livingston** - 40's Montana rancher. Philanderer, tall, charming, handsome cowboy. Paula's husband.

### **SYNOPSIS**

Three sisters. One wants love, one has a new love, and one's love has grown stale.  
And they are all worried.

### **SETTING - Single set**

1990. Tillie's living room of her large, loudly decorated home overlooking the great Mojave desert, near Victorville, CA.

**Dedicated to my Mother and her sisters, who never ceased to amaze.**

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ACT 1  
SCENE 1

*LIGHTS UP on a living room. It is decorated in a hodgepodge of travel mementos of many far flung trips, not cheap, but not really fancy and not coordinating either. Large patio doors look out over a desert scene and a back patio UC. There is a large tacky brightly colored couch stage right with two brightly colored easy chairs and a coffee table overflowing with brick-a-brac. A sports game's stadium noise heard quietly on TV can be heard from UL. The hall to the bedrooms is R, and the front door is DL. TILLIE sits, carefully loading her huge purse in very orderly fashion, while MADGE, her younger sister digs in her purse.*

**MADGE.** How much time have we got before we have to leave for the airport, Tillie? Is there time for one cigarette? I'm not going to last an hour in the car without at least one cigarette before we go. I was on that flight for four hours.

**TILLIE.** If you're going to smoke, you have to go outside.

**MADGE.** I know that. Did I say I was going to light up right here?

**TILLIE.** I'm just saying, if you're going to smoke while you're at my house, Madge, you will have to smoke outside.

**MADGE.** *(to herself)* Like you've said about a thousand times before.

**TILLIE.** What was that? You're muttering, Madge. How am I supposed to hear what you are saying when you mutter.

**MADGE.** I said I'll just smoke right outside this door.

**TILLIE.** Well, you'll have to go around to the side door. I never open the patio door.

**MADGE.** God forbid that fresh air would come in here.

**TILLIE.** What? I don't use that door, you know. It was put in for the view.

**MADGE.** Fine. I'll go around. For pity's sake, sis! *(Madge exits SL and we hear the stadium noise turn off)*

**TILLIE.** I was watching that!

**MADGE.** *(O.S.)* You're in the other room.

**TILLIE.** I was listening to it.

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**MADGE.** *(O.S.)* Who's ahead then?

**TILLIE.** Just turn it back on, Madge.

**MADGE.** *(O.S.)* Fine! *(The SOUND of the television resumes.)*

**TILLIE.** Thank you. *(A DOOR SLAMS. Tillie yells towards patio)* Madge, there's no need to slam the door. *(Enter Madge SL onto patio. It is windy and very bright outside. She gives Tillie a disgusting look and begins to try to light her cigarette with a lighter.)* Those things will kill you, you know. And use the coffee can I put out for you. I don't want cigarette butts on the ground! *(A CELLPHONE RINGS. Tillie searches for the cellphone. She realizes it is in Madge's purse.)* Madge, your purse is ringing. Madge! *(Tillie begins waving and gesturing to Madge's purse. Madge turns and notices, and an elaborate pantomime erupts with Tillie gesturing about the phone, and Madge trying to get her to dig through the mess in her purse and answer the phone. Madge finally stomps out the cigarette on the patio and exits SL, as Tillie at last gets out the phone. It STOPS RINGING. The SOUND of the television stops. Enter Madge into living room SL.)* They hung up.

**MADGE.** Why didn't you answer it?

**TILLIE.** It's your phone.

**MADGE.** Who do you think it's going to be? The President of the United States? There are exactly five people on earth with my cellphone number, and you are one of them.

**TILLIE.** I didn't think I should...

**MADGE.** Just answer it next time, OK?

**TILLIE.** You need a good cellphone if you're going to go driving all over the place alone and-

**MADGE.** The world is full of terrible people just waiting for the chance to attack me and I have to protect my sister and blah blah, blah blah, blah. Who was it who called, Tillie?

**TILLIE.** How should I know? I didn't answer it.

**MADGE.** Look at the caller ID.

**TILLIE.** Look at what?

**MADGE.** Don't tell me. You're one of those people who can't run a computer or a DVR or-

**TILLIE.** What's a DVR?

**MADGE.** For God's sake, just give me the phone. Oh great. It was Paula.

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**TILLIE.** (*frantically getting her purse and digging out her keys*) Paula? Oh no, what time is it? Her plane must have landed!

**MADGE.** There's a text message. She's about to board and she wanted to let us know her plane is behind schedule. If we leave in the next fifteen minutes we should be there in plenty of time. (*Madge crosses to SL to exit.*)

**TILLIE.** Where are you going? We need to leave.

**MADGE.** You didn't hear one word of what I just told you, did you?

**TILLIE.** We're going to be late.

**MADGE.** She's not here yet.

**TILLIE.** Oh. Oh, I knew that. I just think we need to leave sooner than later. We need to stop and get gas and have the air in the tires checked.

**MADGE.** You had the tires checked yesterday.

**TILLIE.** You can never be too safe. It's good auto maintenance to get the tires checked before any long drive.

**MADGE.** I don't think the manual meant every day, Tillie. Why are you so hyper about every area of maintenance of your car anyway? You've never even had a parking ticket, never mind a wreck.

**TILLIE.** Not one that's my fault.

**MADGE.** Are you telling me you've been in a wreck? An actual, bending of the fenders, call the insurance company auto accident? When did this happen?

**TILLIE.** It was not my fault. I turned left and there they were.

**MADGE.** You were broadsided.

**TILLIE.** It wasn't like the entire front of my car was caved in. Just the bumper, and the grill work. (*beat*) And the headlights. The other car just collapsed.

**MADGE.** You were broadsided in front?

**TILLIE.** I was turning left. It was not my fault.

**MADGE.** That you were turning left, or that you got hit.

**TILLIE.** And the other car had to have a new door, and a new fender, and the axle broke. So I make sure my car is in tip top condition.

**MADGE.** Tillie, when the front of your car hits the side of another car, the insurance company considers that to be your fault.

**TILLIE.** They just don't understand what happened. I was driving perfectly. I didn't do anything to cause an accident.

**MADGE.** You were turning left and you hit another car!

**TILLIE.** You don't even know what happened. You weren't there.

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**MADGE.** You were turning left, right?

**TILLIE.** Yes.

**MADGE.** And the other car was going straight, right?

**TILLIE.** Well...yes.

**MADGE.** And the front of your car hit the side of their car, right?

**TILLIE.** But I wasn't doing anything wrong! I had the right of way.

**MADGE.** Oh. You had a green arrow.

**TILLIE.** Well no, I just looked and went. They should have slowed down. They could see that I was trying to turn.

**MADGE.** The world does not have to conform to your rules, Tillie. There was no reason for that guy to think he needed to slow down. Good grief. Nothing is ever your fault, is it? *(beat)* We've got a little time. I'm going to go make a pit stop.

**TILLIE.** That's so vulgar.

**MADGE.** Tillie, if I said I had to piss, that would be vulgar.

**TILLIE.** You should use proper language, Madge.

**MADGE.** Fine. I am going to urinate. Empty my bladder. Pass water. Better?

**TILLIE.** You can be so disgusting.

**MADGE.** That's me. Disgusting me. I smoke, I drink, I make pit stops. So if you will excuse me - *(Madge exits SR)*

**TILLIE.** You do that to upset me. You just want to be shocking.

**MADGE.** *(O.S.)* I'm just going to the bathroom!

**TILLIE.** Don't you dare smoke in there!

**MADGE.** *(O.S.)* Tillie!

**TILLIE.** We need to leave for the airport as soon as you're done. We don't want to be late, so we have to get on the highway before all the traffic hits from Vegas. And we still need gas. I always top off the tank before getting on the highway. I suppose we could wait until we get to the airport area, but the prices are usually better up here. I was thinking of stopping at the discount gas station, but they charge you if you use a credit card, and if we can swing by the Chevron, they'll have air and such to wash the windshield and all right on the island. And I thought we'd take my car. That way it won't smell of cigarettes. And what are all these pictures doing spread out all over the table? I'm putting them back in the box. I don't want the house a wreck when Paula gets here. And don't think there will be time to smoke a cigarette before we leave. Are you OK in there? Do you need any

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help? We need to leave. We're going to be late. (*The SOUND of the toilet flushing, followed by running water. Enter Madge.*)

**MADGE.** You've been outside the door the whole time, haven't you? I wasn't going to escape, you know. (*pointedly*) No windows. In the bathroom.

**TILLIE.** Very funny.

**MADGE.** And talking at me through the door...really? You can't wait for two minutes?

**TILLIE.** We're family.

**MADGE.** Tillie, we haven't lived together as family for decades. Talking at me through the door is just a tad uncomfortable.

**TILLIE.** I'm perfectly fine with it.

**MADGE.** Well I'm not. I prefer a little privacy. And speaking of privacy, we are not going to observe the "underwear rule". You are the only person I know who announces to houseguests you hardly know that walking around in your underwear is considered dressed.

**TILLIE.** You know it's a motorhome rule. You have to have an underwear rule for the people who sleep on the fold down couch.

**MADGE.** First of all Tillie, this is not the motorhome. And no one wants to see you in your underwear. You are not pin-up material. You are not on a campout, and there is no reason to be showing the goods to everyone. And secondly, I think you made up that rule because you want to see other people strutting around your house practically naked. And I, for one, am not comfortable with that either.

**TILLIE.** There's a lot of things you're not comfortable with, aren't there, Madge? I think it's perfectly fine.

**MADGE.** Don't try to blame me. Most of the world is on my side on this one. You have no sense of propriety on this one. This is not Woodstock. We're not in our twenties anymore. At our age baring your chest could cause a heart attack.

**TILLIE.** Fine. (*Aside*) I don't see the problem with the underwear rule. (*beat*) Look at the time! We're going to be late. Paula's going to think we forgot!

**MADGE.** She will think no such thing. (*The SOUND of Madge's cellphone ringing. She answers.*) Hello? Hey Paula, are you here already? You're where? (*Shushing Tillie throughout*) How long? They did what? Oh man, what a pain. That'll be fine. Three hours? Wait, let me get a piece of paper. (*Digs in her purse and pulls out a scrap of paper and pencil*) O.K. I'm ready. Tillie, please! Would you repeat that? 7720. Right. Yeah. Got it. O.K. See you soon. Bye.



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**TILLIE.** We're late! I told you this would happen! She's there isn't she? Oh my gosh, is she delayed? Has she even left yet? What happened? Is she alright? What happened to her flight? Madge!

**MADGE.** Her plane was late arriving in Phoenix and she missed her connection.

**TILLIE.** Oh no, she's trapped in Phoenix! What about her luggage!

**MADGE.** No one's lost her luggage.

**TILLIE.** Yet.

**MADGE.** For heaven's sake. How did your husband put up with you? *(beat)*  
And since there's no rush, I am going outside for a cigarette.

**TILLIE.** You just had one!

**MADGE.** Well, I'm going to have another. In fact, I might even have a third. I'll be outside.

**TILLIE.** How can you be so calm? Our poor sister is stuck in a strange city. What if she gets mugged? What if she gets lost?

**MADGE.** Nothing's going to happen! She's probably sitting in the airport bar having a glass of wine and flirting with the bartender. And I wish I was with her!

**TILLIE.** What's that supposed to mean?

**MADGE.** I mean, Tillie, that you are driving me crazy. I'll be outside. *(Madge exits through patio doors.)*

**TILLIE.** Close the doors. You'll let all the air in!

**MADGE.** *(O.S.)* I'm not listening! *(Madge is seen through the patio doors, lighting up another cigarette. Tillie turns on the TV with the remote. The SOUND of the television resumes. The SOUND OF A PHONE RINGING. Tillie rushes off SL and returns with a portable phone. She is madly pushing buttons on the phone.)*

**TILLIE.** Hello? Hello? *(beat)* Hello? Oh, hello! Yes this is Tillie Rush. Who? Who? Oh! Oh, yes Mr. Pandasolda, oh, Pren-di-sol-di, yes, I remember you. You sat in front of me a church last Sunday. Oh, of course. Jules. Oh, well, thank you...Jules. Oh my. Dinner? Tonight? Oh, I think that would be lovely! Oh wait. I am so sorry, I almost forgot. My family is in town and I'm afraid that I just couldn't get away this week but - Oh, you'll be gone next week? Really. Why Jules, that's so sweet. I don't know what to say. You saw me in my car? But I thought you were - Oh, it's just a sedan really. Nothing special. You don't drive. That's too bad. Yes, I know the taxi's here are quite good. Thank you, Mr....Jules. Yes, Jules. You really think so? That's really nice of you. Well, I suppose I might be able to re-arrange something. Give me your phone number and I can call you

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back with an answer when I know - Oh.. OK.. sure, no problem. I'll wait for your call. I'll talk to you then. Goodbye. (*Tapping on patio door*) Don't you throw that cigarette butt on my nice patio! (*Madge puts out the butt and flicks it US into the yard and enters*) Madge!

**MADGE.** Who was that?

**TILLIE.** Who?

**MADGE.** On the phone.

**TILLIE.** What?

**MADGE.** On the phone! Who was on the phone!

**TILLIE.** Just someone.

**MADGE.** Just someone?

**TILLIE.** Just someone.

**MADGE.** O.K. Have it your way. "Someone" called.

**TILLIE.** I don't see that it's any of your business who called.

**MADGE.** Excuse me. I didn't realize I was prying. Wait. Wait. It was a man wasn't it?

**TILLIE.** I don't really see what-

**MADGE.** It was a man! Are you dating?

**TILLIE.** What if I am? What does that matter to you? I'm an adult. I can do whatever I want.

**MADGE.** (*Laughing*) So, who's the fella? Someone you met at church, right?

**TILLIE.** What if I did?

**MADGE.** Oh, that's fine. So, tell me all about him. When did you two meet?

**TILLIE.** He was a first-time visitor last Sunday. He just moved here from Alaska.

**MADGE.** Really? So, is he rich?

**TILLIE.** Just because you only date rich men doesn't mean that's important to me, Madge.

**MADGE.** He's poor. Come on. Details. How old is he? Is he good looking? Tall? Quasimodo?

**TILLIE.** You have no couth. As a matter of fact he's very nice. Very charming. He's a European. An Italian.

**MADGE.** Ooooh. Tall, dark, and handsome, eh? (*Picking up remote and turning OFF SOUND OF TV O.S.*)

**TILLIE.** Well, not quite. Hey!

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**MADGE.** You'll live. I'm trying to talk to you and I hate having to talk over it. So you were saying...

**TILLIE.** He's short. Shorter than William anyway.

**MADGE.** Honey, everyone was shorter than your William. He was six foot six.

**TILLIE.** I suppose so. Jules is about yay tall. (*Indicating height*) And he's kind of exotic.

**MADGE.** You mean weird?

**TILLIE.** I wouldn't say he's weird, but he's interesting, you know?

**MADGE.** Distinguished?

**TILLIE.** Yes. Definitely distinguished. But not in a George Clooney, Colin Firth way like William was. Jules is distinguished like....Alan Rickman.

**MADGE.** Like Professor Snape in Harry Potter. Sounds interesting. Hey, do you mind if I grab a beer out of your frig? I'm parched.

**TILLIE.** I don't keep beer in my frig. I don't drink, remember? Coke OK?

**MADGE.** Sorry, I forgot. Coke is fine. (*Madge exits SL*)

**TILLIE.** Sure. Go ahead. I should have offered you something.

**MADGE.** (*O.S.*) No big deal. You want one?

**TILLIE.** No, thank you. (*Madge enters, opens the can and proceeds to take a long drink from the can.*) Oh for goodness sake. Get a glass.

**MADGE.** I'm fine. (*Belching loudly*)

**TILLIE.** I can't believe we came from the same parents sometimes.

**MADGE.** You'd think I was downing a fifth of vodka.

**TILLIE.** There is such a thing as decorum.

**MADGE.** Whatever, Tillie. So, getting back to Jules. Tell me about him.

**TILLIE.** There isn't that much to tell. All I know is that his wife died a year ago, and he just moved here to live with his daughter.

**MADGE.** How old is this guy? He's not 90 or something is he?

**TILLIE.** No! He's only a couple of years older than me, actually.

**MADGE.** Then why is he living with one of his kids?

**TILLIE.** Oh, he has some health problems.

**MADGE.** Like what?

**TILLIE.** Just minor things. But they all add up.

**MADGE.** I see. So, when do I get to meet dreamboat?

**TILLIE.** You are NOT meeting him! I don't even really have an official date with him yet. He's supposed to call to set something up.

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**MADGE.** Why don't you call him? You know, get a jump start on the whole thing.

**TILLIE.** I can't. I don't have his phone number.

**MADGE.** Why didn't you get it? I know it's been a long time since you've dated anyone but honestly, get their phone number!

**TILLIE.** I asked him for it. He just thought it would be better if he called.

**MADGE.** Check your caller ID.

**TILLIE.** What?

**MADGE.** Here. Give me your phone. That's a little odd. It's blocked. I hope he doesn't turn out to be some weirdo. You know, like paranoid the government is watching him with a tinfoil hat and a bomb shelter in the basement. Remember Jimmy? Jimmy used to be really strange about other people touching, never mind opening, his mail, even junk mail. Remember? Or was that Roger? No, he was the one who never wore matching pajamas. Said it was bad luck. No wait, that was Don. I can never remember which husband was which anymore. They all kind of blend together after a while.

**TILLIE.** I'm sure seven marriages will do that to you. I wouldn't know.

**MADGE.** I just figure "keep trying until you get it right".

**TILLIE.** I thought you were going for the most marriages in a single lifetime.

**MADGE.** Ha ha Tillie. Me and Elizabeth Taylor. Every time that woman turned around she was married someone else.

**TILLIE.** Who wouldn't want to be married to her? She's fabulous. Besides Madge, she's not the only one who's dated a lot.

**MADGE.** Really. Are you saying you've dated other men?

**TILLIE.** As a matter of fact, I have. There's was this really nice Army Veteran, Buddy. He was so sweet, but I finally had to call it off because he was having terrible memory problems and then he kept telling me the same stories over and over. One time he forgot he'd ever met me...right in the middle of dinner. And then there was that fellow that I met in the hardware store. I took him to dinner once but he never called back. And Milton, from Sunday school whose wife just died. We went out twice. I'd go over to watch football at his house. He never seemed to mind, but then he said his children objected to him dating so soon. Oh, and Wendall. We went out to dinner once. He was so sweet, you know. But his life had been terrible. A real drama. His wife died suddenly, just fell over dead one day, and his son was murdered two days later. Such a tragedy.

**MADGE.** Oh my God. How sad! Where did you two meet?

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**TILLIE.** In line at the movie theatre. I was talking to my girlfriend Sonya, you know, from Sunday School? Anyway, I was telling her about how I was thinking of selling the big old fifth wheeler that William and I used to go camping in. And the next thing I know, there's Wendell, and we're chatting and then he invited me to dinner. It was kind like fate though, because I ended up selling him the trailer.

**MADGE.** Really.

**TILLIE.** Yes. We were talking about it over dinner. I wanted to get \$7,000 for it, and I was planning on placing an ad in the RV Trader the next day. He was so nice, asking me about what it included, how many it slept, all that sort of thing. Then he mentioned that he was in the market for one too. He could only pay \$4,000 so mine was too much. And then we got to talking and he told me about his wife and son and all. So sad. He really couldn't afford to buy the trailer, there was so many terrible things that had happened to him, and lowering the price made him so happy. Of course, right after that he moved and his phone number stopped working so I never saw him again.

**MADGE.** Really? You lowered the price?

**TILLIE.** Yes. We really got along well, and he and I talked quite a bit about what we'd like to do and all. I told him that I was looking to get married again and-

**MADGE.** When was this?

**TILLIE.** On our first date.

**MADGE.** You talked marriage on your first date.

**TILLIE.** Sure. The topic usually came up.

**MADGE.** Did you do this on dates with all of these men?

**TILLIE.** What?

**MADGE.** Bring up marriage.

**TILLIE.** Why sure, why not?

**MADGE.** Tillie! It sounds like you were hunting for a husband with a double-barreled shotgun!

**TILLIE.** Oh please. You're taking this and blowing it way out of proportion.

**MADGE.** No wonder these guys took off on you.

**TILLIE.** They did not take off. It just didn't work out.

**MADGE.** Fine. But do me a favor. When you go out with Romeo? Promise me you won't bring it up.

**TILLIE.** I really don't see that it makes any difference.

**MADGE.** Just promise me.

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**TILLIE.** Fine. (*Tillie's CELLPHONE PINGS. Madge reads the text message.*)

**MADGE.** OK. That was Paula. She got an earlier flight and she's about to board. If we leave now, we'll get there just about the same time she does.

**TILLIE.** Oh! Oh dear. Where's my purse?

**MADGE.** Right here. (*Handing purse to Tillie and they put on coats*) Let's take my car. It's already out.

**TILLIE.** Your car smells of cigarettes.

**MADGE.** Unless you'd rather I smoke in your car?

**TILLIE.** Fine. We'll take yours. (*Madge smiles and gets a pack of cigarettes from her purse. Exiting*) That is really a disgusting habit, Madge.

**MADGE.** It hasn't stopped me from getting married.

**TILLIE.** Seven times.

**MADGE.** Eight.

**TILLIE.** What?! (*Lights change*)

## SCENE 2

*That evening. PAULA, Tillie, and Madge enter. Paula is in her early 40's, in old jeans, a western themed sweatshirt, and tired tennis shoes. She is carrying an old Samsonite suitcase, covered with duct tape and twine. Her backpack purse is slung on her back. Tillie is putting her keys in her purse and Madge is digging out cigarettes.*

**MADGE.** Want a cigarette, Paula?

**PAULA.** No, I quit. Roy was always hassling me about it.

**MADGE.** He's one to talk. Sticking huge wads in his cheek, and spitting tobacco everywhere.

**PAULA.** Well, he had to give up chewing tobacco.

**TILLIE.** Perhaps if he hadn't spit tobacco on the sheriff's shoes...

**PAULA.** (*Giggling*) It was pretty funny. The guy was being as asshole.

**TILLIE.** Language!

**PAULA.** You're kidding, right?

**MADGE.** Never mind her. You're going to need another suitcase, Paula. You're lucky the airline saved some of the clothes.

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**PAULA.** It's OK. I may just use some more duct tape when I go home. Roy will throw a fit if I spend money on a new one.

**MADGE.** Why don't you tell Old Roy where he can get off, huh? What with all those hunting trips, and guns, and dead animal heads everywhere. Gives me the creeps.

**TILLIE.** Now Tillie, everyone has their own decorating style. You really oughtn't criticize either. Look at your house.

**MADGE.** And what's wrong with my house?

**TILLIE.** Well really, Madge. Pink plastic flamingoes in the yard...and those obscene coffee cups. Where did you find those things? They are so vulgar.

**MADGE.** I think they are funny.

**PAULA.** I remember that boob cup! (*Giggling*)

**TILLIE.** I am a Christian woman and I do not think that it is appropriate that-

**MADGE.** Oh get over yourself. It's not like you don't have boobs.

**PAULA.** Yeah. You've got the best set of the three of us.

**TILLIE.** My bosoms are not open for discussion.

**MADGE.** Since when is any topic off limits in this house?

**TILLIE.** I beg your pardon?

**MADGE.** Oh drop it.

**PAULA.** Is it supposed to be warm tomorrow? I don't know if I got any of my t-shirts back. I hope it isn't warm tomorrow.

**MADGE.** It's the desert. It's always warm.

**TILLIE.** As if you'd know. You live in Florida.

**MADGE.** So?

**TILLIE.** As a matter of fact, Paula, it can get below freezing in the desert. Since you asked. And it is supposed to cool down all the rest of the week.

**MADGE.** So your sweatshirts and flannels should be fine.

**PAULA.** That's a relief. It's always cold back in Montana this time of year.

**MADGE.** It's cold in Montana most times of the year.

**TILLIE.** Madge, your idea of cold is 65. Paula, why don't you put your things in the guest room and we'll all go out to dinner.

**MADGE.** My stuff is in the guest room.

**TILLIE.** Oh right. Well, you can sleep in the motorhome in the garage, OK?

**PAULA.** Whatever.

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**MADGE.** Pull out the hide-a-bed in the other room Tillie. Don't make her sleep in the garage.

**PAULA.** I don't mind. Every time you drive it up to visit, I wonder what it would be like to sleep in it. It's fancier than my house. I'll be fine. It's totally fine.

**MADGE.** Suit yourself.

**PAULA.** Is it OK to use the bathroom in there?

**TILLIE.** Sure. There's full hookups in the garage so everything is working.

**PAULA.** OK. I'm going to dump my stuff and be right back. *(Paula exits SR with her suitcase.)*

**MADGE.** Really Tillie. She doesn't even get to sleep inside?

**TILLIE.** You heard her. She sounded excited. It will be fine. My motorhome is nicer than her house, poor thing.

**MADGE.** That's true. If Old Roy spent a nickel on something besides himself once in a while, she'd be a lot better off. You ever wonder how much money he makes? I sure do. I'll bet he's got loads just tucked away, and her living like a pauper most of the time in that big old drafty ranch house. My second husband, Ben, did that. I was sure lucky I found out about it before he made off with it all.

**TILLIE.** I'd forgotten about that. How much was it again?

**MADGE.** The entire proceeds from selling the lumber mill. He just wasn't clever enough to hide part of it and leave some in the bank. Selling a lumber mill and having nothing to show for it was definitely the tip-off. Are you doing OK since William died? You seem to be making ends meet.

**TILLIE.** Oh yes. He took wonderful care of me, and made sure that everything would be fine if anything happened to him.

**MADGE.** He was a good man, Tillie. Not many women get the kind of happiness you had with him.

**TILLIE.** My son tells me that too. But I have to admit - since Will died, I do get lonely all alone out here.

**MADGE.** Well we're here now. And we are going to have a good time, right? Raise a little hell, right?

**TILLIE.** Madge!

**MADGE.** Loosen up. There is such a place as hell, isn't there?

**TILLIE.** Don't try that one. You used to use that all the time when we were kids. *(Enter Paula wearing another western sweatshirt.)*

**PAULA.** I thought I'd put on my good clothes for dinner.



## SIBLINGS

**TILLIE.** You're not going to wear-

**MADGE.** You look fine. Paula, you won't believe what I found out about Tillie today. She's dating.

**PAULA.** Oh Tillie, how exciting!

**MADGE.** Can you believe it? In fact, it's the first time since you were what? Sixteen?

**TILLIE.** Fifteen. Will and I met at summer camp.

**PAULA.** It's been that long for me too. Dating I mean. But not for Roy.

**MADGE.** Let's not get into that now.

**TILLIE.** Get into what?

**PAULA.** Oh it's nothing. Just Roy up to his usual.

**MADGE.** Yeah just the usual. Let's go eat.

**TILLIE.** What usual?

**PAULA.** He's not home a lot. Hasn't been for years. It's just different now.

**TILLIE.** What are you talking about?

**PAULA.** I found out what he's up to. What he's done.

**MADGE.** I know where this is going.

**TILLIE.** What has he done?

**MADGE.** Let's go to dinner.

**TILLIE.** No. I want to know. What do you know?

**PAULA.** Nothing. Nothing that really matters. He doesn't mean anything by it.

**TILLIE.** What?

**MADGE.** We can talk about this later, after we've all had something to eat. I need a drink. You need a drink.

**TILLIE.** Madge, would you stop it? Now, Paula, what is Roy doing?

**MADGE.** What do you think? You know perfectly well what she's talking about. Are you going to make her spell it out?

**TILLIE.** But I don't understand.

**MADGE.** For heavens sake, Tillie. He's seeing other women. There now, are you happy? Can we go to dinner now?

**TILLIE.** Is this true?

**PAULA.** No. It's not that bad. He's just having a little fun, is all. You know him. He's such a cowboy, always flirting with the ladies, and knocking around with the men.

**MADGE.** While you stay home and wait for him.

## SIBLINGS

**PAULA.** It's not like that. He always comes home eventually. I'm used to it.

**MADGE.** You should boot his butt to the next county.

**TILLIE.** Why didn't you tell me?

**PAULA.** What's the point? It wouldn't change anything.

**MADGE.** I'm telling you, Paula. Boot. Right there. (*Madge kicks Roy's imaginary butt*) And wave "Good-bye!".

**PAULA.** I'm not like you, Madge. I won't just quit and move on to the next fellow. I married Roy, and I'm sticking with him.

**MADGE.** A real martyr. I need a drink. Or a steak. Or maybe just a huge piece of chocolate cake...with ice cream. How about it?

**TILLIE.** You stay with him even though you're unhappy?

**PAULA.** You stayed with William.

**TILLIE.** We never had a problem like that, honey. We had a lot of good years together. Really good years.

**PAULA.** Sometimes I don't miss him at all. Like when he eats too much red cabbage and then he farts like a pig all night. I sure don't mind when he takes off after a big dinner of red cabbage! I sit there and think how some other woman has to put up with that terrible stench. Sometimes, I make red cabbage for him just because I know he's going out later.

**MADGE.** Marty's that way too. Woo, what a smell! Only with him, it's broccoli.

**PAULA.** Who's Marty?

**TILLIE.** Number 8.

**PAULA.** Again?!

**MADGE.** Why not?

**TILLIE.** Madge, you have a wedding ring for every finger, not counting thumbs.

**MADGE.** I was thinking of having a tennis bracelet made out of them. Marty says I should. He says it will bring him luck.

**TILLIE.** He probably thinks it will be easier to hock that way.

**MADGE.** I'll have you know that Marty is a high stakes gambler. He has won the last two Texas Hold-em Tournaments he entered, and gets comped at all the best casinos in Vegas.

**TILLIE.** A wonderful reference I'm sure.

**PAULA.** How did you meet him?

**MADGE.** I was in Vegas, getting a quickie divorce from Manny the Mooch. Now that man never worked a day in his life. Anyway, I'm laying by the pool, drinking

## SIBLINGS

a cosmopolitan and I dropped my sunglasses on the ground next to my chair. I reach down, and the fellow next to me reaches at the same time, and we knocked heads together. That was Marty!

**TILLIE.** Too bad it didn't knock some sense into you.

**MADGE.** Thank you Miss "I will date the man ahead of me in line at the hardware store". Anyway, we talked, and we danced, and I went to the casino with him, and he said I brought him luck. He won \$150,000 in one night, and the next week when my divorce was final, Marty and I celebrated by tying the knot. He is so sexy, with his silver streak in his thick black hair, and his silver and turquoise belt buckle. He treats me like a queen, let's me do whatever I want, and buys me all sorts of goodies. He said when I get home he going to buy me a cruise to the Caribbean...and Panama...and Alaska. We'll be on the cruise ship for 4 months total!

**TILLIE.** So he can gamble.

**MADGE.** So? He can do whatever he wants with his money. I'm not worried.

**TILLIE.** How do you figure?

**MADGE.** Two words. Pre - nup. What's mine is mine, and what's his is mine, too.

**TILLIE.** Madge!

**MADGE.** Honey, I've been married so many times I keep a lawyer on retainer. Something you should probably do too, considering the crazy financial decisions you're making these days.

**PAULA.** What?

**MADGE.** Tillie sold her trailer really cheap to some guy who sweet talked her and then took off.

**TILLIE.** It wasn't like that.

**PAULA.** You sold the little travel trailer?

**TILLIE.** Yes, why?

**PAULA.** I thought you were going to sell it to me. I've been saving up my egg money.

**TILLIE.** Your what?

**PAULA.** My egg money. I've been raising chickens in the old barn behind the haystacks. I've been saving for the last two years. Roy doesn't know.

**TILLIE.** I didn't realize. We talked about that a long time ago, and you never mentioned it again.

## SIBLINGS

**PAULA.** It's OK. It was a silly pipe dream. I just thought if Roy and I could get away once in a while, he might...well, you know.

**TILLIE.** You should have told me. I can't read your mind and you live so far away, how was I supposed to know?

**MADGE.** Forget it, Tillie. Look, I am going to implode if I don't get some dinner soon. Remember, it's about 10 o'clock at night for me. Now can we please go get some dinner?

**TILLIE.** Fine. But you're buying.

**MADGE.** How do you figure?

**TILLIE.** Your husband just won \$150,000.

**PAULA.** We could celebrate your wedding.

**MADGE.** Oh hell. Why not? But I'm driving.

**TILLIE.** Oh no. You drove last time.

**MADGE.** You'll want to stop for gas. I can't wait that long.

**PAULA.** Can we please just go?

**TILLIE.** And there's no smoking in my car. *(All three exit SR as the argument over who drives continues. Lights down.)*

## SCENE 3

*Two days later, late at night lights up low. Tillie enters from SR cupping her phone. She is wearing a robe and slippers, and it is the middle of the night. She is trying [not to wake Madge, asleep OS DR.]*

**TILLIE.** I'm really happy you called. No, it's not too late. No, I wasn't asleep. I'm just talking like this so I don't wake anyone. Oh Jules, that's so sweet! Yes, I've been thinking of you. You really think so? Jules. You're just saying that. Oh yes, I have been thinking about seeing you. I had an idea. Just a minute. Let me turn on a light. *(Tillie turns on an end table light and settles into the chair beside it.)* There. That's better. I'm all snuggled up on my favorite chair, and talking to my favorite fellow. *(Giggles)* I had an idea about how we can get together. Yes! Oh Jules...I was thinking we could both go to prayer meeting at church tomorrow, and then, you know, go out from there. Hm? My family never goes to church with me. Hm? I want you all to myself too. Yes Jules. I'll see you tomorrow at church. Night. *(Madge enters sleepy eyed in her sexy nightgown, SR.)*

## SIBLINGS

**MADGE.** Tillie? What's going on? What are you doing in here? *(Tillie quickly hides her phone.)*

**TILLIE.** Nothing! I was just...practicing. My lines. For the women's meeting tomorrow.

**MADGE.** At this hour? It's 3am. Go to bed, will you? You're waking the whole house.

**TILLIE.** I wasn't that loud. Stop exaggerating.

**MADGE.** Hello? I'm standing here, not in bed. Can we please go to bed now?

**TILLIE.** I will go to bed in my own home when I am good and ready.

**MADGE.** What's your problem?

**TILLIE.** Nothing! When I go to bed is none of your business!

**MADGE.** Just keep it down, will you? People trying to sleep here.

**TILLIE.** Fine.

**MADGE.** Fine.

**TILLIE.** Goodnight.

**MADGE.** Whatever. *(Enter Paula from SR. She has been crying. Her bathrobe is a tired, threadbare out of style type over a granny nightgown and ugly socks for slippers.)*

**PAULA.** Oh, you're up. Good. I wanted to talk to both of you.

**MADGE.** Good grief, Paula. What happened? You didn't fall out of that motorhome in the dark, did you?

**PAULA.** I'm fine. No, I'm not fine. I just got a message from Roy on my phone. He's demanding that I come home right now. Tonight.

**MADGE.** He's gotta nerve on him.

**PAULA.** And I could tell he wasn't even home. I could hear music and talking, and a woman was bugging him to get off the phone and come dance with her.

**TILLIE.** So he's out having a good time, and he wants you to come back?

**PAULA.** He said "Get your butt back on the ranch."

**TILLIE.** Sounds like he just figured out you aren't home. After all this time.

**PAULA.** I've been here two days. And he just figured it out. I'm so stupid to care. Why do I care? I'm so sick of hurting.

**MADGE.** At least your man called. I've been trying to reach Marty all day, and I think his cell is turned off. He's probably just not picking up. He ignores his cell when he's playing a tournament.

**TILLIE.** Are you going to leave, Paula?

## SIBLINGS

**PAULA.** No. I can't change my ticket without it costing me. I haven't got the money. *(Beat)* And I don't want to go back. I've been up all night thinking about it. There's nothing worth going back for. When we were first married, it was so wonderful, I felt like we were partners against the world, but now. No, I need to stop fooling myself. It's over.

**MADGE.** Oh honey. Are you sure?

**PAULA.** Who am I kidding? Roy pays more attention to his dog than to me. I'm done.

**MADGE.** Then you need to call my lawyer. He's the best. Really. He can help you with everything. His name's Fairly. Just make sure that you start getting info like financials and all before Roy catches on. *(Digging in her purse and produces a business card)*

**TILLIE.** Why?

**MADGE.** Because men will steal you blind. They hide the money. They make sure you're not listed as an owner. And sometimes, they have the nerve to stop your credit cards and drain your bank account. You listen to me. I've got experience. I'll get my cellphone. Fairly's on speed dial.

**TILLIE.** Madge!

**MADGE.** It's saved me more than once.

**PAULA.** I don't know if I have any money to pay him.

**MADGE.** Don't you worry about that. I've sent him so much business, he owes me. You just tell him I told you to call, and let him do what he does best. Come on, let's go in my room and leave him a message right now.

**PAULA.** It's 3 in the morning.

**MADGE.** Not for him. He's in the Bahamas right now. He's probably up and having his breakfast. Come on.

**TILLIE.** And Paula, you can stay here as long as you like. You can move in if you want.

**PAULA.** Thanks Tillie. And you, Madge. Thanks to both of you. What would I do without you? *(Madge wraps her arm around Paula and they exit SR as Tillie turns off the light, pulls her cellphone out of her pocket and hugs it to her chest, then exits SR behind her sisters. Lights change.)*

## SIBLINGS

### SCENE 4

*The next day. Tillie and Paula enter from SL. They are munching donuts and carrying their coffee cups to the couch, where Tillie sits.*

**PAULA.** Oh my gosh, you know how long it's been since I've had one of these? Roy always told me I'd get fat. I bet it's been five years since I've had one. Thank you so much for getting them, Tillie. You're a doll.

**TILLIE.** I'm glad you're enjoying them. I get donuts every Thursday. The Donut House has them half price, and I always treat myself. I got you some chocolate ones. Will always said that everything looks brighter with chocolate.

**PAULA.** You were so lucky, Tillie. You know everyone envied you. Will was a rare human being.

**TILLIE.** I know. He was pretty special. But without him it's lonely. Really lonely. Oh! I'm sorry. I hope you don't think I'm saying you should go back.

**PAULA.** No. We all loved Will. I understand that it must have been a really big adjustment for you.

**TILLIE.** I think I was sleepwalking for about the first year. I just couldn't wrap my head around him being gone. I'd see something on TV, or read something in the newspaper, and think, I need to tell Will about it, he'll enjoy it so much, and I'd start to turn to tell him...and then I'd realize I can't. He's gone. Those were the times when it really hit me how alone I was. I am. Anyway, enough of this maudlin stuff, look what time it is. I'm going to church in just a few minutes.

**PAULA.** Really? I thought since we were here that you'd -

**TILLIE.** I really have to go to this. There's a special...presentation. Yes, a special presentation, and I have to attend. *(Tillie gulps down some coffee and stands.)* You and Madge just help yourselves to anything you like. I will be back after lunch, about 1, or 2, or maybe 3pm. I'm not sure. I better go. I'll see you both later.

**PAULA.** Oh. OK. *(As Tillie exits SR, she passes Madge entering.)*

**MADGE.** Good morning.

**TILLIE.** Morning. Gotta run.

**MADGE.** What was that all about?

**PAULA.** She's got a meeting at church.

**MADGE.** Today? It's Thursday.

## SIBLINGS

**PAULA.** I know. I think she goes to church most days.

**MADGE.** Whatever. Ooh. Coffee. And where'd you get that? (*Towards the donut*)

**PAULA.** Tillie bought them early this morning. There's more in the kitchen. Help yourself.

**MADGE.** Thanks. (*Madge exits SL to kitchen*)

**PAULA.** I had a nice chat with Mr. Fairly. He called about an hour ago. You won't believe all the things he found out already.

**MADGE.** (*O.S.*) Didn't I tell you he was the best?

**PAULA.** He explained a lot too. Like how when Roy disappeared for weeks at a time last year, and didn't leave me any money, or a car, or anything, I could have thrown his stuff out on the plains and changed the locks. He said it was abandonment.

**MADGE.** Really? I haven't tried that one yet. Good to know.

**PAULA.** He also told me something really surprising. (*Madge enters holding hot coffee and munching a large donut.*)

**MADGE.** What was that?

**PAULA.** He said I own the ranch.

**MADGE.** What?

**PAULA.** I own the ranch. It's in my name.

**MADGE.** Really?!

**PAULA.** That's right. Apparently before Roy's father died, he was worried that Roy wouldn't manage it right or something, and he put the ranch in my name.

**MADGE.** But surely he must have told you.

**PAULA.** I remember him telling me, not long before he died, not to worry. That he'd always take care of me. I thought it was kind of strange and sweet at the time, but now, it makes sense.

**MADGE.** So you're a landowner.

**PAULA.** 50,000 acres, Fairly said. Can you imagine?

**MADGE.** You're sure about this? Does your state have community property? It doesn't matter what your father-in-law put in the will if it's a community property state.

**PAULA.** No.

**MADGE.** Now that's what I call leverage.

**PAULA.** What?



## SIBLINGS

**MADGE.** Leverage. It's a lot easier to get the kind of settlement you want with good leverage. Roy's going to piss himself when he realizes you're serious. You can call the shots.

**PAULA.** I don't want to call the shots. I just don't want to wait for him any more nights alone. Maybe I'm making a mistake.

**MADGE.** Look. You need to grow a backbone, sis. This fellow's been walking all over you, and it needs to stop now.

**PAULA.** I know. Still, the ranch. And Mr. Fairly said there may be more, but he'd let me know tomorrow once things are confirmed. Whatever "things" are.

**MADGE.** I know. That's the standard background and credit check. You'll find out if Roy's got any outstanding bills, hidden accounts, things like that.

**PAULA.** Oh. Well, I better go get dressed.

**MADGE.** Yeah. Gussy yourself up. While Tillie's at church, I think we should go shopping. My treat. You need a new outfit to go with this new life.

**PAULA.** What's wrong with my clothes?

**MADGE.** Oh honey! You can't be serious. Go. *(Paula exits S.R. Madge gets out her cellphone and calls Marty.)* Marty? If you get this, call me, would you?

Thanks, hon. *(hangs up the phone, calls out to Paula)* I'll be on the patio having a cigarette. *(MADGE exits to the patio and anxiously lights a cigarette as Lights down.)*

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