



SETTING:

The living room of Jerry and Alice Sloan in 1980s Stamford, Connecticut.

1) ABE AND JERRY

JERRY (singing): Plotkin's. Ploikin's. The best of all fishes. Plotkin's. Plotkin's. It goes in so many dishes. Plotkin's. Plotkin's. The taste is really delishes.

ABE: Excuse me for butting in Jerry, but it isn't delishes.

JERRY: Abe, I've been writing jingles for 12 years. People understand when I say delishes, I mean delicious. It's poetic license.

ABE: And I've been eating tuna fish for 72 years, and Plotkin's isn't delishes; it isn't delicious; it's rancid. Does your license cover rancid?

JERRY: What do you mean?

ABE: I mean there was a can in the kitchen. I opened it for lunch. It was rancid. You got a good rhyme for rancid?

JERRY: Abe, the people from the ad agency just shot a TV commercial with that can. No wonder it was bad. It was under the hot lights for hours.

ABE: So that's what a jingle written gets, huh? Jerry, if you were an architect or a periodontist or something else respectable, people wouldn't try to pay you off with hot poisoned fish.

JERRY: They only gave it to me so I could look at the can and maybe get a little inspiration.

ABE: Maybe they said indigestion. Anyway, what kind of inspiring name is Plotkin's for a tuna fish?

JERRY: I think it was Mrs. Plotkin's idea.

ABE: Chicken of the Sea! Now that's a catchy name for a tuns fish. Plus it's got a nice mermaid on the can. What does Mrs. Plotkin have on her can, you should pardon the expression? A fish wearing a top hat.

JERRY: That's Mr. Finny. He's finicky about good taste.

ABE: Sure, Mr. Finny. A fish wearing a top hat and tails. He's probably our dancing and whoring around till all hours of the night. Is that good taste? A gigolo tuna fish?

JERRY: I give up.

ABE: Aah, you give up too easy. Six weeks I've been living here, and you never get into a good argument.

JERRY: Why would I want to get into an argument?

ABE: Because you're a son-in-law, it's your God given right.

JERRY: C'mon, Abe, you don't need me to fight with.

ABE: Louise got sick, and me like a fool, I made the mistake of being nice to her. For two weeks, I was smiling and pleasant, and poof, she drops dead. I learned my lesson, Jerry. An argument a day keeps the doctor away...if you get my gist.

2) JERRY, ABE, ALICE

JERRY: Goodbye, mom. (he hangs up phone and turns to Abe) Abe...

ABE: I heard.

JERRY: Did you hear it was only temporary?

ABE: Could I trouble you to define temporary?

JERRY: A couple of weeks, a month, whatever it takes for her to get back on her feet and find a place to live. I couldn't exactly throw her out in the cold.

ABE: It's the middle of July.

ALICE: Abe Dreyfus, you have no right to be so unreasonable! And you, Jerry...don't defend yourself. You did the right thing.

ABE: Am I to understand she's getting my room...excuse me, the baby's room, the one I just graciously volunteered to vacate.

ALICE: Yes. I'd rather you move now into the room you're going to live in permanently. Let Mildred have the baby's room. Please?

ABE: I can't believe it. Mildred the Ripper is getting my room.

ALICE: Daddy, have a little compassion. Her house burned down. She has no place to go.

ABE: Speaking of places to go I suppose I'll have to share a bathroom with her.

ALICE: You suppose right.

ABE: Then I better go and use my bathroom now before she shows up and tries to take over.

3) SOL WASSERMAN AND ABE

WASSERMAN: (Just as Abe hangs up phone) Who's coming?

ABE: Jerry's mother.

WASSERMAN: I think I see what's bothering you.

ABE: They gave her my room.

WASSERMAN: It's their house.

ABE: Their house. My room.

WASSERMAN: Is she staying long?

ABE: Her house just burned down.

WASSERMAN: She's staying long. (He perks up) Maybe she's a nice person.

ABE: That's the trouble with you, Wasserman, always trying to find the good in something.

WASSERMAN: Still and all, she could be a nice person.

ABE: I met her.

WASSERMAN: And?

ABE: Remember from the Wizard of Oz movie, there was a wicked witch?

WASSERMAN: Yes.

ABE: She's not that nice.

WASSERMAN: Her husband, when did he die?

ABE: He's not dead.

WASSERMAN: She's a divorcee?

ABE: No.

WASSERMAN: Not a widow, not a divorcee, what's left?

ABE: You want to know what's left? I'll tell you what's left. One night about 30 years ago, her husband said he's going out for a walk. She said, "Are you going out for cigarettes?" He said, "No. I'm walking out the door, and I'm never coming back.

WASSERMAN: So?

ABE: So he walked out the door and never came back.

WASSERMAN: What about his clothes? His things?

ABE: Ooooh, Wasserman, you're so practical. He probably bought new clothes, new things.

WASSERMAN: But how does she support herself? How does she eat?

ABE: She's a piano teacher. And she probably eats with a fork. Who cares?

WASSERMAN: OK. So her husband left her. Does that make her a bad person?

ABE: Don't you understand? She already was a bad person. That's why he left her. You want to hear something else? At Alice and Jerry's wedding reception, she came at me with a knife.

WASSERMAN: A knife?

ABE: A knife, Wasserman!

WASSERMAN: What could happen that would make her lift a knife to you?

ABE: Nothing happened. I said one thing. One little thing.

4) WASSERMAN, ABE, MILDRED

MILDRED: (Abe opens door to Mildred) Mr. Dreyfus?

ABE: One and the same.

MILDRED: What are you doing here?

ABE: I live here.

MILDRED: You're staying with Jerry and Alice?

ABE: I live here.

MILDRED: Jerry never told me you were visiting with them.

ABE: I live here. Not visiting. Living.

MILDRED: How long are you staying?

ABE: It depends on how long I live. If I drop dead this afternoon, I'm sure they'll have me out by five, six o'clock. Seven at the latest. How long are you staying?

MILDRED: We didn't discuss it.

ABE: Well, the baby is due in March. You're in the baby's room.

MILDRED: (ignoring Abe/to Wasserman) How do you do, I'm Mildred Sloan.

WASSERMAN: Sol Wasserman. Nice to meet you.

MILDRED: You live here too?

WASSERMAN: No, no, I'm just visiting.

MILDRED: How long are you staying?

WASSERMAN: (uncomfortably) I'm not staying. I live down the street. I just came to play cards. I was just leaving. Goodbye, Mrs Sloan. A pleasure to meet you. Goodbye, Dreyfus, I'll see you Thursday for pinochle, yes?

ABE: Of course, of course. My life is not changing. Same as always. If you get my gist.

WASSERMAN: (with knowing inflection) Mmmm hmmm. (exit)

5) MILDRED, HECTOR (Gardener/Handyman), ABE

HECTOR: Please, Mr. Drayfus, it's no big deal to tell her, right? (Abe doesn't answer, but defeat is written all over his face)

MILDRED: Yes, Hector. What are you going to move?

HECTOR: The TV set. Mr. Sloan told me to take the TV set from the new baby's room and put it in Mr. Drayfus' new room.

MILDRED: You're moving the TV from my room?

ABE: It's MY TV set. He's moving it from my old room to my new room. If you want a TV in your room, you can go out and buy one.

MILDRED: What kind of TV is it, Hector?

HECTOR: It's a 19 inch color SONY. Very nice.

MILDRED: Isn't that a coincidence. That's the one I bought for Jerry and Alice when they got married.

HECTOR: No kidding. You bought them a color SONY? When I got married my mother gave us a crucifix to hang in the bedroom. It is very beautiful, but you can't watch it all night.

MILDRED: Well, as long as I already went out and bought a TV set, you may as well just leave it in my room.

ABE: You bought it; you gave it away and now Alice and Jerry gave it to me.

MILDRED: I distinctly remember telling them that I wanted it back when they were finished with it.

ABE: A likely story. Move the TV set, Hector.

Mildred: Leaver it.

ABE: (arm around Hector, leading him to bedroom) Enough is enough, move it.

MILDRED: (Menacingly) Don't...you...dare.

HECTOR: Mr Drayfus. I can't move the TV set now.

ABE: Are you siding with her?

HECTOR: No got cramps. I got to go to the bathroom. You two decide and I'll be down in a few minutes. Just don't try to move it yourself. Not in your condition. (Exit up stairs)

MILDRED: You have a condition?

ABE: You're a doctor?

MILDRED: Just curious.

ABE: OK, Mrs. Curious. I have a condition. Very rare. The only known cure is massive doses of television programming three times a day.

MILDRED: Then I guess you're going to die.

6) ALICE AND JERRY

ALICE: Remember last month?

JERRY: June. One of my favorites.

ALICE: Remember we spent the night at Brian and Sharon's apartment? And we drank all that wine?

JERRY: I don't remember...we drank all that wine.

ALICE: Jer...about that night?

JERRY: (dawns on him) Oh my God, you're pregnant. Are you pregnant?

ALICE (not sure what to say) Well...

JERRY: Alice, if this were the Gallop Poll you'd be entitled to a "No Opinion."

ALICE (having lost her normal bravado) Would you be upset if I were pregnant?

JERRY: Upset? Are you crazy? It would be terrific. We both want kids...you do want kids, don't you?

ALICE: Eventually.

JERRY: Sweetie, you're 35 years old...eventually is right around the corner. You do want to have a kid don't you?

ALICE: Of course.

JERRY: Then you're pregnant.

ALICE: I didn't say that.

JERRY: Alice, are you pregnant? Yes? Or no.

ALICE: (reluctantly) Maybe.

JERRY: Maybe?

ALICE: Probably.

JERRY: (stating the fact) You are probably pregnant.

ALICE: I'm pregnant.

JERRY: You are?

ALICE: Well, I don't know for sure, but a woman knows. (beat) I'm pregnant. Jerry takes her into his arms) Do you love me?

JERRY: Sweetheart, what kind of question is that to ask the father of your child? Of course I love you, and we're going to have a wonderful baby...

ALICE: Happily ever after?

JERRY: I promise.

ALICE: I'm a lawyer. I can sue you for breach of promise.

JERRY: Better yet. I guarantee it. You can sue me for breach of guarantee. (they kiss)

7) ABE, JERRY, ALICE, HECTOR

JERRY: (as Hector descends stairs from bathroom visit) Hector, grab a glass. My wife is going to have a baby. Have some champagne.

HECTOR: Congratulations. (pours champagne)

JERRY: Here's to March 22...is that what he said? March 22? (Alice nods) Here's to March 22 and a happy healthy baby. (they drink)

HECTOR: Here's to the new baby, the new papa, the new mamacita linda and the new Gandpapa, Senor Drayfus.

ABE: Dry. Dry. Dry.

HECTOR: (referring to champagne) Very dry. It's good. Hey...what are you going to call the new baby?

ALICE: I haven't even thought about it.

HECTOR: How about Pepe?

ABE: How about Louise?

HECTOR: That's great. My son is named Luis.

ABE: Not Luis. Louise. My wife was named Louise.

HECTOR: My wife is named Isabella.

ABE: We'll keep it in mind.

HECTOR: (finish champagne) But you got plenty of time to figure it out. Right now, I have to use the bathroom. This champagne goes right through me. Congratulations.

8) ABE, MILDRED, ALICE, JERRY

JERRY: (singing) Free-ee-dom. Freedom! (turn to group) Well, what do you think?

ALICE: Inspirational.

MILDRED: It brings tears to a mother's eyes.

JERRY: Abe? Pretty good, uh?

ABE: Not bad at all. So you're finally writing a show tune.

JERRY: It's a jingle.

ABE: Freedom, freedom is a jingle. We now need jingles for our inalienable rights?

JERRY: It's for tampons.

ABE: Oh God. I know you have to make a living. I can understand you write songs about garbage bags and underarm strays, even toilet bowl cleaners, but...but...(he can't say it)

ALICE: Tampons.

ABE: Thank you, Alice. We all know the word, Jerry, where do you draw the line?

MILDRED: Excuse me for butting in, Jerry, but...

JERRY: Uh, uh, uh, uh. Rule 12. When it's between him and me, you stay out.

MILDRED: There should be exceptions to Rule 12. A mother shouldn't have to sit by and listen to him...

JERRY: No exceptions. No breaking the rules.

MILDRED: I wasn't going to break it. Just bend it, maybe.

JERRY: (changing the subject) I think I'll open a bottle of wine for dinner. What'll it be? Red or white?

MILDRED: Red.

ABE: White.

MILDRED: White is fine with me. Go open a white.

ABE: Wait a minute. If white is fine with her, then she wanted white all along.

JERRY: What's the difference? You wanted white.

ABE: Now I'm not so sure. I need a minute to think.

ALICE: Stop thinking. We're having steaks. Open a red.

MILDRED: Good. That's what I asked for in the first place.

9) JERRY, ALICE, ABE

JERRY: Abe, as you know, it hasn't been easy...the four of us living together. Alice and I have talked this over, and the way we see it, There are three options. Option One, you move out, Option Two, my mother moves out. Option Three, Alice and I move out.

ABE: I opt for Option number two.

ALICE: We sort of figured you would, but could we talk about Option One for a minute?

ABE: Option two makes more sense. First of all, the woman is living in the baby's room. She could move out; the baby could move in. No fuss, no commotion, no hubbub. Trust me, Alice, the last thing a new baby needs is hubbub.

ALICE: Could we get back to Option One?

ABE: Second of all, who was here first? Yours truly. And don't forget why I moved in. I'm a man with a serious heart condition. You start moving me around like a hot potato and bingo, it's all over.

JERRY: This is the first time you ever admitted you have a heart condition.

ABE: A heart condition. I have the worst kind. And do you know where they send the absolute worst heart cases?

ALICE: I give up.

ABE: Chinamen doctors. It's what as known in the medical profession as giving the patient a Chinaman's chance.

ALICE: Daddy, we're trying to have a serious discussion.

ABE: You are trying to have a serious discussion about Option One. I don't wish to discuss Option One. If you would check the ballot box, you will recall that I voted for Option Two.

JERRY: Abe, you know the garden apartment complex on...on Westover Road...a few miles from here? You know...They have a pool...tennis courts...it's nice...

ALICE: It's very nice. It's safe. They have a gamer room. Ping pong.

ABE: Not my game.

JERRY: Shuffleboard.

ABE: They have shuffleboard?

JERRY: Yeah. Four courts. You like shuffleboard?

ABE: I hate shuffleboard. I broke my toe once playing shuffleboard.

JERRY: Well, you don't have to play...

ABE: I'm already happy not playing shuffleboard here. You want me to move someplace else not to play shuffleboard?

ALICE: Daddy, we rented a one bedroom apartment there...furnished. It starts the first of next month.

ABE: And you want me to move in there?

ALICE: Would you?

ABE: Do I have a choice? And what if I say no?

ALICE: Then we'll ask Mildred.

ABE: Sounds good to me. No!

10) ALICE, JERRY, MILDRED

JERRY: Mom, as you know, this living arrangement...the four of us living together...especially you and Abe...well, it's been difficult to say the least.

MILDRED: It's been pure hell. I know the man is your father, Alice, but...

JERRY: What we'd like to talk about is a possible solution.

MILDRED: I'll give you a solution. It's against the law...

JERRY: We rented a one bedroom apartment a few miles away on Westover Road. it's furnished. Very nice.

MILDRED: Wonderful (applauding) When does he move in?

JERRY: He doesn't want to move in. He thought we should talk to...,uh...you...about moving in.

MILDRED: Me? (laughing) He wants me to move into a furnished apartment?

JERRY: It's really very nice. They have a swimming pool, ping pong...

MILDRED: He's staying here and he wants me...(laughing harder, Jerry and Alice join in. she snaps out of it) Over my dead body!

ALICE: (defeated) Oh, Jerrrry. I can't take much more of this. I'm tired. I don't feel well. I'm going to have a baby in three weeks and who cares? Everyone just cares about themselves around here. (Jerry puts arm around her)

MILDRED: Would you look at what that man has done to his poor daughter? Alice. Darling. I'm a woman. I'm a mother. What was your father? A cab driver? When you go back to work, what will the baby need? A taxi? No, darling, it will need a woman's touch. A woman's love.

JERRY: The point is that we've rented this furnished apartment.

MILDRED: A furnished apartment! Jerry, do you know what kind of people live in furnished apartments? Drifters. Vagabonds. Gypsies. People with no roots. (Alice suddenly gasps, grabbing her lower back, then her stomach)

JERRY: Are you OK? What's the matter?

MILDRED: She's in labor.

11) MILDRED, ABE

MILDRED: (sharing coffee with Abe) It's eleven o'clock.

ABE: I can count.

MILDRED: Uh, uh, uh. I thought we were being civil to one another.

ABE: You're right. (beat) Do you happen to have the time?

MILDRED: It's eleven o'clock.

ABE: Thank you, that was very civil of you.

MILDRED: Do you want to turn on the eleven o'clock news?

ABE: They won't have news of the baby. The phone will have news of the baby.

MILDRED: I meant for news about the storm.

ABE: I just looked out the window. The news is it's still snowing.

MILDRED: I thought you were very civil at dinner.

ABE: I promised my daughter.

MILDRED: You've promised your daughter before. But this is the first dinner we didn't argue about something. Anything.

ABE: It was the first dinner I ever drank half a bottle of wine. With coffee I can argue. Wine works just the opposite.

MILDRED: Then don't drink anymore coffee.

ABE: You would leave a man defenseless? (refills his coffee)

MILDRED: That was a very touching story you told about your wife.

ABE: You mean the one about the night she gave birth to Alice?

MILDRED: Yes.

ABE: That was some adventure. I haven't thought about that night in years..

MILDRED: You probably thought about it because tonight the story comes full circle. Tonight your little baby is having a baby.

ABE: Yes. If my little baby ever finished jump starting Hector's car. It's too bad. Years from now it will be hard for Jerry to have a touching story to tell.

MILDRED: Why is that?

ABE: If they were jump starting an Eskimo's car, then the story would have a little romance to it. But Hector is always jump starting his car. No romance.

MILDRED: Were you a romantic when you were younger?

ABE: Who wants to know?

MILDRED: Just curious.

ABE: Well, Mrs, Just Curious. I'll tell you. I was probably the second most romantic guy in the neighborhood.

MILDRED: Who was the first?

ABE: Manny from the fruit store. All the women loved Manny. He was a real hot-blooded fruit man.

MILDRED: I didn't mean a woman charmer. A meant a romantic soul. A romantic spirit.

ABE: Are you kidding? I was a cab driver. All cab drivers are romantics. It goes with the territory. For ten, twenty minutes you're part of somebody else's life. You see it all. Lovers fighting. Lovers kissing. Drunks who want you to know their life story. You take people to weddings, funerals...you even...(thinks back) you even take women in labor to the hospital. And the husband is in the back

seat yelling go faster, go through the red light...ahh those were the days. I drove days, nights, weekends. We were poor; I drove.

MILDRED: And your wife would be waiting.

ABE: Where else would she be?

MILDRED: Did you ever fight?

ABE: With Louise? All the time. She was one of the best.

MILDRED: That sounds like a compliment.

12) MILDRED, ABE

MILDRED: But like I told you the first day I moved in, I'm a survivor.

ABE: That was some day, the day you moved in.

MILDRED: Every day has been some day since I moved in.

ABE: But for now...a truce.

MILDRED: Truce.

ABE: By the way, as long as we're being civil, did Alice and Jerry mention about the lovely apartment they rented?

MILDRED: Yes, they said they fixed it up very nice for you.

ABE: You're a funny lady, Mrs. Sloan.

MILDRED: A survivor can't survive without a sense of humor, Mr. Dreyfus.

ABE: I told them I wouldn't take the apartment.

MILDRED: Me either.

ABE: It has shuffleboard. You could have the Wasserman's over for coffee and shuffleboard.

13) ABE, MILDRED, ALICE, JERRY, MRS. FISHER, JONATHAN (baby)

MILDRED: Ohhhh, the baby! (reach for baby in Mrs. Fisher's arms/ she pulls him away)

ALICE: Mrs. Fisher, my father, Mr. Dreyfus. My mother-in-law, Mrs. Sloan.

MILDRED: Call me Mildred. And what is your name, Mrs. Fisher?

MRS. FISHER: Mrs. Fisher

(Abe grunts a hello as Mildred holds her arms out to take baby)

MILDRED: Can I see the baby, Mrs. Fisher?

MRS. FISHER: He's wet.

ABE: He's invisible wet?

MRS. FISHER: (ignoring Abe) He's a Pisces. Pisces are always wet.

ABE: I thought all babies were wet. It's your medical opinion that the ones born in March are extra wet?

MRS. FISHER: (turning to Alice) Madam, if you don't mind, I would like to change Baby, and then people may see him.

ALICE: Daddy, please. It will only take a minute.

MRS. FISHER: (vindicated) Thank you, Mrs. Sloan. (to Abe) You waited nine months. Another minute won't kill you.

JERRY: Follow me, Mrs. Fisher. The changing table is in the master bedroom. (clearly his throat) Temporarily.

MRS. FISHER: I'll call when Baby is ready. (exit with Jerry)

14) HECTOR, ABE, JERRY, MILDRED, ALICE

MILDRED: (opening door to Hector who carries a hand-made, hand-painted rocking horse) It's Hector. Oh...look at that.

ABE: Hello, Hector. I see you came by horse. Your car didn't start again?

HECTOR: (shaking hands with Alice and Jerry) Congratulations, Mrs. Sloan, Mr. Sloan. (points to horse proudly) For the baby!

MILDRED: It's beautiful! Where did you ever find it?

HECTOR: I didn't find it. I made it. Myself. My wife, Isabella, she help me paint it.

JERRY: It's terrific. Where did you ever learn how to make something like that?

HECTOR: Upstairs. In the bathroom. I find a magazine up there with the plans. It was easy. Just take a lot of time.

ABE: Are you sure you didn't build it up there?