

GRANDMA SOPHIE
A Comedy of Errors
by
Matthew P. Burkholder

Matthew P. Burkholder
224 1/2 21st Street
Apartment 2
Brooklyn, NY 11232
(718) 832-9232

Grandma Sophie
By
Matthew P. Burkholder

Cast

CAL - 20 something.
WILL - 20 something. Law student. Cal's best friend and roommate
SOPHIE - The grandma
CAL'S MOM - Voice on answering machine
JERI - Will's girlfriend
HARVEY - Cal's Dad

Time: the present

Place: A 2 bedroom apartment in NYC

ACT I

Scene 1

Lights up on a simple two bedroom NYC apartment, mid afternoon. The kitchen is open to the living area. There are four doors. One is the main entrance, another leads to the bathroom and the last two lead to the bedrooms. WILL, a man in his 20's is laying on the couch with a book. The front door of the apartment bursts open and CAL, Will's best friend and roommate, storms in.

CAL

God damn son of a weasel ass bitch!

WILL

Jeez!

CAL

(Screams)

WILL

Tough day at work?

CAL

Tough? Tough? Tough. Yeah, I guess so, tough. I got fucking fired.

WILL

You what?

CAL

I got fired!

WILL

No, you gotta be shitting me.

CAL

Does this look like a shitting you face? Does this sound like a shitting you voice? He fucking fired me!

WILL

Why? I mean, man, how come?

CAL

Not good enough! Can you believe he said that? Not good enough! Needs a little more flash!

WILL

What wasn't good enough?

CAL

Some copy I wrote. I spent a week working on this shit contract and he says "not good enough."

WILL

So he fired you over one piece of copy?

CAL

Yes. No.

WILL

What then?

CAL

Well, I kind of got pissed.

WILL

You "kind of" got pissed?

CAL

Yeah. Will, I worked all week on that copy. This was a piece of shit that is impossible to sell and I dug and dug for the tiniest shred of something to like about it and he says it doesn't have flash. He wouldn't know flash if it bit him in the ... Oh my God, I just got fired.

WILL

Cal, this is really not cool. You gotta call him back. Apologize.

CAL

No way! He spat in my face!

WILL

Don't you think you're over reacting? He called your work not good enough...

CAL

No, he spit in my face. He spit in my face!

WILL

Oh man!

CAL

I told you, it got a little heated. He said "this won't do" so I asked him if he'd seen the product. He told me it needed more "flash" then I yelled at him, and he yelled at me, and I tore up some papers which were apparently pretty important, year end reports or something, which in retrospect was probably a bad move, then he threw his nameplate at me. So I threw this bottle of water at him and he spit in my face so I started to climb over the desk. It was pretty ugly.

WILL

And he fired you. Buddy. Oh man. Buddy.

CAL

Bastard!

WILL

OK, OK, can you make rent this month?

CAL

What?

WILL

Sorry to be Mr. Rational here, but hey, I don't want to get evicted.

CAL

I just got fired and you're throwing this in my face? I thought you were my friend.

WILL

I am, I am, I'm sorry. I just don't want to be looking for a new apartment at this time of year. It's a bad time to be looking for a new apartment in New York.

CAL

There's a good time?

WILL

I'm sorry. I take it back.

CAL

OK.

WILL

Shit.

CAL

I can't fucking believe this. I'm gonna get even with him. I'm gonna get fucking even with him.

WILL

Calm down.

CAL

I'm calm. I'm just gonna get even.

WILL

You're gonna ... And just how are you gonna do that?

CAL

I haven't thought it out yet, but I'm gonna get even.

WILL

What? You gonna slit his tires? That kind of get even?

CAL

That's a start.

WILL

Oh my God, I was kidding! I was joking, you know that right? I'm joking.

CAL

I'll want revenge.

WILL

You aren't listening. Why am I talking if you're not listening.

CAL

I'm listening. What other ideas do you have?

WILL

I'm not giving you any ideas. I'm not saying a thing. You're insane, you know that. You're insane. Bonkers. Woooooo.

CAL

No, no, come on. I don't have a lot of experience in this whole revenge thing, you do.

WILL

Oh, well thank you very much, but I'd rather limit my ideas of getting even to the occasional prank phone call. Ordering him pizza, that kind of thing.

CAL

This is good. Let me start writing some of this down.

WILL

Oh man, I'm still talking. Why am I still talking? I need to

shut up.

CAL

Let's see, ordering him pizza, that's good. What was the first one?

WILL

I'm just gonna read my book here, OK?

CAL

Come on, you gotta help me get even with him.

WILL

No I don't.

CAL

Will.

WILL

No. (beat) No.

CAL

Slash his tires. What else?

WILL

This is a really good book. Oprah recommended it. You should read it when I'm done.

CAL

That's good. I'll do that. Help me Will. I need your help. Help me get even with this hate filled, evil, corporate lackey. I know how you feel about corporate lackeys. Come on, help me out here.

WILL

You know what, I just remembered, my Mom called earlier and I haven't called her back yet. I think I'll go do that now.

CAL

OK, fine. Don't help me. I can be pretty creative myself you know. I'll come up with something on my own.

WILL

Why does this not make me feel better?

CAL

Then help me.

WILL

I... I... No! What am I even thinking about this for? I'm not going to help you get even with your boss. My God Cal! You got fired. People get fired every day all over America, all over the

world, for all kinds of reasons. Some of them are stupid reasons, like ... like, they oversleep. An alarm doesn't go off and suddenly they're unemployed. Or they say one thing that the boss doesn't like and they're sent packing. You aren't alone here, hell, there's an unemployment office for a reason! If it were just one or two people they wouldn't set up a whole department of unemployment! You need to accept that you got fired and move on. Find another damn job. You're an attractive young man, people like attractive young men.

CAL

Are you coming on to me?

WILL

Not me personally, I like attractive young women, you understand. But listen to what I'm saying. You can get another job without, oh, I don't know, kidnapping your boss' family.

CAL

What?

WILL

You can get another job.

CAL

No, after that.

WILL

After that? I didn't say anything after that.

CAL

Yes. You did. Kidnapping my boss' family.

WILL

I didn't say that.

CAL

No, I think you're on to something.

WILL

I think you're on something. You can't be seriously thinking...

CAL

I can't?

WILL

I told myself to stop talking, didn't I? Why do I have to keep talking when I know I should shut up. Cal. Cal? Stop thinking Cal. Stop thinking. Stop it! Look. You want me to help you come up with revenge? OK, let's think of something that won't be a felony, OK? Um... OK, non felonious revenge. Let me think.

CAL

No, I think you may have hit on something.

WILL

Quiet, I'm thinking. Let's see, how about... how about... oh! I got it. Itching powder! That's always a classic.

CAL

Now which one?

WILL

How bout getting a whole bunch of anonymous e-mail addresses and flooding his mailbox. Do you like that one? How's that sound? Do you like the e-mail idea?

CAL

Kids are both away at school.

WILL

No? No on the e-mail? OK, I'll come up with another one.

CAL

Divorced, so that wouldn't be much of a revenge.

WILL

All right! Stop! Cal, you are not kidnapping anyone! Is that clear? I forbid you to kidnap anyone! Now there's something I never thought I'd say.

CAL

You forbid me?

WILL

I forbid you! No, on the whole kidnapping idea. Stick to the pizza thing. If you really have to get violent...

CAL

Yeah.

WILL

... which apparently is part of the game plan, do the tires. But I am begging you, no kidnapping.

CAL

I hate him.

WILL

I understand that. I empathize with you right now. You are feeling hurt and betrayed, but you are not going to kidnap anyone, all right? That won't make you feel any better. I may not have passed the Bar just yet, but I seem to recall something in one of my criminal justice classes that said something about not

kidnapping.

CAL

Can I sue him?

WILL

That's at least a little more rational but considering that from the sound of it you left his office a wreck, I think his case is a little stronger than yours might be. I may be grasping at straws here, but I'd say no, you can't sue him for wrongful termination.

CAL

What am I going to do?

WILL

First off, we're gonna eat something, cause I'm starving. Tomorrow morning, you'll go down to the unemployment office and fill out whatever paperwork you gotta do there, and then start looking for another job.

CAL

And plan my revenge.

WILL

OK, good. It's good that you're focused, but let's look at some of the other options, OK buddy? And hey, this weekend I'm going to the Hamptons with Jeri to see her folks so you'll have the apartment to yourself to relax, walk around naked, whatever. I know how you like having the apartment to yourself.

CAL

I do like having the apartment to myself.

WILL

See. I'm leaving Friday night and won't be back til Sunday night. That's two whole days all to yourself.

CAL

Yeah. That's cool.

WILL

All right. So it's all cool. And you aren't kidnapping anyone?

CAL

I guess not.

WILL

Good. I'm glad we settled that.

CAL

I don't know what I was thinking.

you. All right. Bye. Twenty minutes.

CAL

You're right Will.

WILL

About the broccoli?

CAL

No, the kidnapping. Who was I kidding with the whole kidnapping thing. First off, I couldn't get them here, could I?

WILL

Yeah right? What are you gonna do, put a sack over their head and hail a cab?

CAL

Right! I mean, I'd have to have my own car, wouldn't I.

WILL

Better yet, can you imagine the subway? Then again, I've seen stranger things on the subway.

CAL

So, I'd have to rent a car?

WILL

Yeah, I guess.

CAL

I'd have to rent a car. And this is New York, right? People would see me bringing them up here. How could I get someone up here without being seen?

WILL

City that never sleeps. I don't know, I guess you could... oh my God you're still thinking about doing it!

CAL

No! I'm just thinking, it would be impossible.

WILL

You keep thinking that. I can't leave you alone for one minute!

CAL

Impossible.

WILL

I go to order some food and suddenly you're back to plotting your kidnapping scheme.

CAL

I'm not kidnapping anyone.

WILL

That's right. This apartment is barely big enough for the two of us, we don't have room for another roommate.

CAL

I still gotta get him back. He said all my work was shit. He put me down in ways that would have impressed my father, and you know him, he's pretty fucking good at making me feel an inch tall. He has a lifetime of experience at it, Greenbaum has only known me two years and these insults came out of him so easily. He must have been coming up with them since I started. Sitting in his little office and studying me, looking for every little fault, every little weakness so he could throw them all in my face within a five minute window of opportunity. He's gonna pay.

WILL

Maybe you could see my therapist this week in your free time. He's usually pretty booked, but I'm sure he'd make room for a case study like you.

CAL

Hey, I'm gonna go take a shower. Yell if the food comes.

WILL

Will do.

CAL

Hey, Will? Thanks.

WILL

Not a problem. What're friends for? So, um, Cal?

CAL

Yeah?

WILL

The rent thing? Not a problem right?

CAL

No.

WILL

Just checkin. Just checkin.

Lights Fade.

Scene 2

Lights up.

It is late at night and the apartment is very dark. A key jiggles

in the lock and the door opens casting some light from the hall into the apartment. In the doorway are two silhouettes. One is clearly being held up by the other, it is CAL holding up SOPHIE. They move into the apartment to the sofa. Leaving SOPHIE on the sofa CAL runs back to the door, closes it, locks all the locks and turns on the lights. SOPHIE is sitting on the sofa with her head lolling heavily to one side. She is out cold. CAL looks at her from the door with a look of disbelief on his face. He looks around the apartment for a moment and sees the shades are up. He rushes to the windows and closes the shades.

CAL

I did it. Oh my god. I did it!

He moves over to the sofa and kneels beside Sophie.

Mrs. Greenbaum? Mrs. Greenbaum, wake up. Maybe I used too much.

He pulls out a bottle of ether and studies it.

Why don't they put a dosage on this thing.

He opens the bottle and takes a whiff and immediately pulls back, his head reeling.

OK, let's not do that again. Mrs. Greenbaum? Shit.

He takes her hand and feels for a pulse, frantic for a moment, then relieved, he finds one. He rises and stands back, looking at her and reviewing the situation. She looks incredibly uncomfortable. He lays her down on the sofa, puts a pillow under her head and moves off to the bathroom shedding his shirt on the way. Shower time. The sound of the shower starting in the bathroom. He comes back out in a towel, looks again at the sleeping woman and grabs a boom box and brings it into the bathroom with him, closing the door behind him. Music starts playing in the background, something contemporary. After a few moments SOPHIE awakens. She sits up holding her head and surveying the surroundings. Not knowing where she is she looks slightly confused. She rises and moves to the bedroom doors, checking one, then the other, then crosses to the window, raising the curtain she looks out into the street below. She turns back into the apartment.

SOPHIE

Hello?

CAL begins to join into the music, singing along with it. SOPHIE moves toward the bathroom door and goes in.

Hello.

CAL's singing is suddenly cut off with a shout and a crash. SOPHIE retreats from the bathroom quickly and returns to her seat on the sofa. The shower is turned off and the music stops.

Oh dear.

CAL comes out of the bathroom holding his head and with a towel wrapped around his waist. He is still wet from the shower

CAL

What the hell do you think you're doing?

SOPHIE

I'm terribly sorry.

CAL

You should be!

SOPHIE

Did you bump your head?

CAL

Did I...? Yes, I bumped my head! Fuck!

SOPHIE

Let me get an ice pack for you.

SOPHIE goes to the kitchen and starts putting together an ice pack for him, opening cupboards and finding things without any prompting from Cal.

CAL

I may have a concussion here.

SOPHIE

I doubt that dear. Boy's your age are pretty thick headed.

CAL

What were you thinking coming into the bathroom like that!

SOPHIE

I didn't know it was the bathroom. I've never been here before.

CAL

All right, all right. I'm sorry. You're right.

SOPHIE

Where am I?

CAL

My apartment.

Why?

SOPHIE

I kidnapped you.

CAL

Really? How exciting! Here we go.

SOPHIE

SOPHIE places the icepack on Cal's head.

CAL

Thank you, Ow! Easy!

SOPHIE

I'm sorry. You may have a nasty bump but you should be just fine.

CAL

I can't believe this.

SOPHIE

Why did you kidnap me?

CAL

To get revenge.

SOPHIE

Oh, revenge. On who, dear? I'm sorry I didn't get your name.

CAL

Oh, I'm Cal... I mean, no, I'm ... Ah, shit.

SOPHIE

Hello Cal, I'm ... well, I imagine you know who I am since you kidnapped me.

CAL

Yeah.

SOPHIE

I've never been kidnapped before. What am I supposed to do?

CAL

Nothing. You just wait til I get your ransom, then I let you go.

SOPHIE

I've never been very good at waiting.

CAL

Sorry.

SOPHIE

I don't suppose you happened to bring my knitting?

CAL

No. I didn't.

SOPHIE

That's a shame. (beat) It's awfully stuffy in here.

SOPHIE moves to the window. CAL notices the curtain is drawn for the first time and leaps up and runs to the window to pull it down again.

CAL

What are you...? No. Sit! Oh man, how long has this been open?

SOPHIE

A little while. I just opened it to see where I was.

CAL

Don't do that!

SOPHIE

Don't you take that tone of voice with me young man. How was I supposed to know I'd been kidnapped? All I knew was I'd woken up with an awful headache in a strange place. For all I knew I was in Omaha. There was a woman in the home who was found in Butte, Montana. She had bought a bus ticket and when they found her she was living in a teepee on an Indian reservation. She was convinced that she was an Indian and that it was 1810. Did wonderful bead work though.

CAL

Look, I can't have you pulling up the shades and looking out the window. You could be seen.

SOPHIE

How Anne Franke.

CAL

Do you understand me? No windows.

SOPHIE

Yes, I understand.

CAL

Good. Thank you. Oh Lord, do I have a headache.

SOPHIE

Would you like an aspirin?

CAL

Yes.

In the bathroom?
SOPHIE

Yes.
CAL

SOPHIE moves toward the bathroom then stops.

SOPHIE
There isn't anyone else in there I should be worried about is there?

Cal
No. Just me.

SOPHIE
You don't have much experience as a kidnapper do you?

Cal
What?

SOPHIE
Am I your first kidnapping?

Cal
No, I do this all the time. Would you like to see my resume?
What do you think?

SOPHIE
No need to raise your voice young man!

Cal
You... look. I'm just, I'm going to put on some clothes. Don't move.

SOPHIE
Don't you think you should tie me up or something?

Cal
Tie you up?

SOPHIE
I might try to escape.

SOPHIE holds out her hands to him.

Cal
Just don't move all right?

SOPHIE
What if I scream for help?

CAL

We're in New York City, people are always screaming for help.

SOPHIE

You're an awfully trusting kidnapper.

CAL

I don't really have a choice here. I'm doing this on my own. I'll be right in the next room, I'm younger and faster than you. You won't get away.

CAL exits

SOPHIE

So who are you getting revenge on?

CAL

Your son.

SOPHIE

My son?

CAL

Yeah, he was my boss.

SOPHIE

Really? I find that hard to believe.

CAL pokes his head out.

CAL

I'm sure he's the apple of your eye, but trust me, he's evil. He was ruthless. So I decided that since he was divorced and his kids are off at prep schools in Connecticut, I'd get you.

He disappears again.

Took some research to find out what home you were in, but you'd be surprised what you can do when you have nothing but free time on your hands. Did you know you're on the internet? There are pictures of you on your rest home's website.

SOPHIE

Pictures of me?

CAL

Yeah.

SOPHIE

Oh dear.

CAL

So anyway, I rented a car and picked you up. You know, that home of yours doesn't really have any security at all. I just wheeled you out. Didn't have to sign for you or anything. It's harder to get a library book. You might want to let them know that.

SOPHIE

Yes. I suppose I might.

CAL reenters dressed casually

CAL

So, tomorrow morning I'll send your son a little note and we'll get this going. Don't worry, you won't be here long. My roommate will be back Sunday, so I have to have you out of here before then. We're on a schedule, see, I've got it all planned out.

SOPHIE

I see. Very organized. Cal?

CAL

Yeah?

SOPHIE

I'm ... very impressed. My, this is exciting isn't it. Quite the little espionage. Well done.

CAL

Thank you. Now, some ground rules. No escaping. No phone calls. No windows. If you need anything, just let me know. I don't want you too uncomfortable.

SOPHIE

You are very sweet. Your parents must be very proud of you.

CAL

Sure. A real success story.

SOPHIE

Oh, that didn't sound too enthusiastic.

CAL

No, my parents are divorced. Mom is pretty cool, but Dad and I haven't ever had much of a relationship.

SOPHIE

What a shame.

CAL

Yeah, well. You know, you're really nice, it's hard to believe that Mr. Greenbaum is your son. He's such an asshole. Sorry.

SOPHIE

No offense taken.

CAL

What was he like as a kid.

SOPHIE

Oh, as a child? Well, much like he is now I imagine.

CAL

Must have been a terror.

SOPHIE

Of course, all children are.

CAL

I guess. I guess. Listen, I need to get some work done. I've got your ransom letter to write and I need to return the rental car first thing in the morning. Is there anything I can get you?

SOPHIE

No, I'm just fine.

CAL

Good. Um...

SOPHIE

What?

CAL

Well, I hate to do this you know, but I actually do need to tie you up now.

SOPHIE

Oh, Oh, of course. What was I thinking, but I do have this bad back. You can't expect me to sleep sitting tied to a chair.

CAL

I guess not. Well, I suppose you could sleep in my roommate's bed.

SOPHIE

Is it a firm mattress? I can only sleep on a firm mattress.

CAL

I don't know!

SOPHIE

I am an old woman Cal. If you wanted an easy kidnapping you should have kidnapped someone a little younger.

CAL

Look! I'm your kidnapper, and you are going to sleep in that bed whether it's firm or not!

SOPHIE

I've never been much for sleeping in strange surroundings.

CAL

Get in there.

SOPHIE

No need to be rude. But if I've got a nasty backache tomorrow you'll be the one rubbing ben-gay on my back.

CAL

OK, fine! I can't wait. Now go.

SOPHIE goes into Will's bedroom. CAL closes the door behind her and tucks a chair under the doorknob. He stands back rubbing his temples. The door opens inward and the chair falls at Sophie's feet. A beat.

SOPHIE

That won't work.

CAL

I can see that!

SOPHIE

That only ever works in the movies. Even then it never really works very well. Though there was an old...

CAL

Was there something you wanted?

SOPHIE

I need to use the bathroom.

CAL

Fine. Go. Go on.

She goes into the bathroom. Several odd noises are heard. The noises that old women make clearing their sinuses.

Oh man. All right. I can do this. I can do this.

CAL goes to the refrigerator and gets a beer then back to the door to Will's bedroom trying to figure out how he can keep it shut. He tucks the chair under the door again and opens the door easily. He stands back, takes a swig of beer and surveys the door again. He opens it. Closes it. Opens it. He goes into the bedroom and closes the door behind him. Shortly SOPHIE comes out of the bathroom and goes to Will's door. Just as she is about to open it

CAL opens it.

(Screams)
CAL

(Screams)
SOPHIE

CAL
Why! Why do you keep doing that?

SOPHIE
You're going to give me a heart attack before you get one red cent!

CAL
All right. In. In the room. In. Go.

SOPHIE
I'm going. Don't rush me. Have you figured out how to keep me in there?

CAL
"Have you figured out how to keep me in there." Yes. I have. Go on.

She goes into the room and CAL gets a hammer and several long nails and starts nailing the door shut

SOPHIE
What are you doing out there?

CAL
I'm nailing the door shut!

Once done he goes and sits on the sofa drinking his beer.

Lights fade.

Scene 3
Lights up.

The apartment is noticeably cleaner, the only oddity is a coil of rope on the coffee table. SOPHIE is busy in the kitchen. CAL enters the apartment.

SOPHIE
Good morning Cal.

CAL
Morning. How did you...?

SOPHIE

Oh, you didn't do a very good job of tying me up this morning. I was out of there in a jiffy. Never got that knot tying merit badge, did you?

CAL

No, that and the kidnapping merit badge were the only ones I was missing. I was hoping I could earn them both this weekend. I knew I shouldn't have let you out this morning. Should have just kept you in the bedroom.

SOPHIE

I needed to use the bathroom. You're just lucky I held it through the night. Try explaining that to your roommate.

SOPHIE

How did everything go?

CAL

Good. I had the ransom note messengered to him. I'll call in a little bit. What... what are you doing? What's that smell?

SOPHIE

Oh, I made some cookies. I hope you like tollhouse.

CAL

You made cookies?

SOPHIE

Try one.

CAL

I'm your kidnapper! You aren't supposed to make me cookies! Toll... tollhouse?

SOPHIE

Let me pour you some milk.

CAL

I can't believe you made me... did you clean the apartment?

SOPHIE

Oh, I just vacuumed a little. Straightened up.

CAL

We have a vacuum?

SOPHIE

Here's your milk.

CAL

These are good.

SOPHIE

Aren't you a sweet boy.

CAL

All right, now stop it! I don't know what your game is. I'm not letting you go.

SOPHIE

Who said I wanted to?

CAL

Well, I kidnapped you. I took you out of that old folks home where all your friends were. I'm ransoming you to your son.

SOPHIE

My friends? Their idea of a good time is a hopping bridge game and catching Wheel of Fortune. This is much more exciting. And you said yourself, my son is a little bastard who deserves everything that's coming to him.

CAL

Well, yeah but...

SOPHIE

Now you just sit there and enjoy your cookies. Oh, and your mother called.

CAL

I beg your pardon?

SOPHIE

Your mother called.

CAL

On the phone?!

SOPHIE

Is there another way?

CAL

Well, no, I mean... You answered the phone?!

SOPHIE

Don't be silly. I heard it on the answering thingy. She sounded nice. You should call her.

CAL

What have I gotten myself into?

SOPHIE

Oh, now you're working yourself up into a tizzy. It sounds like

everything is going according to plan. You need to just calm down, I'm sure everything will work out for you.

CAL

This isn't just a simple bump in the road of life here, I'm a kidnapper. I snuck into your rest home last night and kidnapped you. I just sent a ransom note to my boss, to your son.

SOPHIE

How much am I going for these days?

CAL

Huh?

SOPHIE

Well, I'm just curious what the black market value of a mother is.

CAL

I asked for a quarter million. Does that seem right?

SOPHIE

A quarter million? Let's see, that's, what... two hundred and fifty thousand? Well, I would think a boy's mother would be worth more than that, but you're the expert.

CAL

I'm no expert.

SOPHIE

Where did you come up with that number?

CAL

It just, well, it seemed reasonable.

SOPHIE

I suppose.

CAL

You think it isn't enough?

SOPHIE

I'm not going to question you. I'm sure you did a good job.

CAL

Do you want to see the ransom note?

SOPHIE

Cal... Cal? Is that short for something?

CAL

Oh, yeah, it's short for Calvin.

SOPHIE

Calvin. What a nice name. Now, Calvin, just what are you so worried about?

CAL

What am I worried about? What am I... I kidnapped you! I'm trying to get a ransom of a quarter million dollars from your son for your safe return, and you want to know what I'm worried about? I have my ass on the line here!

SOPHIE

Ooo, my safe return! You're talking like a kidnapper already!

CAL

You think?

SOPHIE

Oh, definitely.

CAL

Well, I watched a few movies.

SOPHIE

You did your research. Call your mother. The message is still there.

CAL looks after her as she returns to the kitchen. He pushes the button on the answering machine

CAL's Mom

Cal, this is Mom. I called you at the office but they said you weren't working there anymore. Call me. What's going on? I'm worried.

CAL

Shit.

SOPHIE

Cal!

CAL

Sorry. I can't believe this.

SOPHIE

Mothers always know. We always find out.

(CAL picks up the phone and dials

CAL

Hello Mom. Yes. I know. Well, I got fired. He's a jerk, that's what happened. No, I'll be fine. I've got some money saved up and... and I've got something in the works right now. No, it pays

really well if it comes through. So how's everything? Mom, stop hyperventilating, I'll be fine. I've been out here for seven years and I've been all right so far. Something always comes up. Right? Am I right?

A bell dings in the background, it's the timer for the next batch of cookies. SOPHIE goes to the oven and takes them out.

That? That was, um, I'm making cookies. I can too bake! Look, I need to go so they don't burn. I love you too. Thank you. Yes, I'll call. I love you.

CAL hangs up then buries his face in a pillow and screams.

SOPHIE

Are you all right dear?

CAL

Fine. I'm just fine. Will was right. What was I thinking?

SOPHIE

Who's Will?

CAL

You slept in his bed last night.

SOPHIE

Oh, your roommate. What was he right about?

CAL

He told me I shouldn't kidnap anyone.

SOPHIE

You are doing a fine job. Now you just keep a stiff upper lip and everything will work out. I'm sure of it.

CAL

No, I should just bring you back to the nursing home and call it quits. Pretend this never happened.

SOPHIE

It's a little late for that now, don't you think? You've already had the ransom note delivered.

CAL

Shit!

SOPHIE

Do you want some more cookies?

CAL

Yes please.

SOPHIE

Good boy. By the way, Will's bed was just fine. I don't think I've slept better in years.

CAL

I'm so glad.

SOPHIE

And I just have a good feeling about this. You trust me, don't you?

CAL

I guess.

SOPHIE

Of course you do. Maybe you should call your father too. Don't you think?

CAL

No.

SOPHIE

What if he calls your office and finds out you've been fired? If your mother found out, surely he'll do the same.

CAL

My father hasn't ever called me at my office. Hell, he's only called here once. Like I said, we don't exactly have the best of relationships.

SOPHIE

Why not? What happened?

CAL

Nothing happened. We just never had that relationship that all my friends had with their dads. We never played catch. Can you believe that? I can't remember ever once playing catch with my father. Maybe that's it. We never bonded. Never had that experience of throwing the ball and just talking about stuff. Girls. Whatever. Or not even talking, just quietly throwing the ball to each other. I used to watch my friends play catch with their dads. I never understood it. We went hunting together once, I remember that. That was his best attempt at bonding, only problem was I hated hunting. We went out into the wilderness and went hunting together, I ended up collecting plants. He was off shooting animals and I was gathering up plants in Tupperware. When we came home he had a whole string of birds and I had about 10 cool whip containers with different plants. We always argued over stupid things. Mom would be away at a convention and when she came home, it never failed that Dad and I weren't speaking to each other for some reason or another. When they got a divorce I

was relieved. It meant I only had to see him once a month, and eventually that stopped too. I guess I've always been a disappointment. He probably thinks I'm gay too. You think I'm going to call him now and tell him I just got fired from the best job I've ever held? No. No, I don't think that's gonna exactly smooth things over.

SOPHIE

There's always time for a new start.

CAL

Easier said than done. How about Mr. Greenbaum? Did he have a good relationship with his dad?

SOPHIE

Oh, well, he didn't ever know his father.

CAL

He didn't?

SOPHIE

I barely knew him.

CAL

But, I thought I remembered him going away for his father's funeral.

SOPHIE

His ... stepfather. I married his stepfather when he was a teenager. They got along fairly well. He was a handsome man though. We were deeply in love, I imagine that helped.

CAL

You know, I bet he's gotten the note by now. I dropped it off at the messenger before I returned the car.

SOPHIE

What did it say?

CAL

Oh yeah, I was going to show you.

CAL dashes off into his room and comes back with the note

This was one of the last drafts of it. There are a few misspellings in it, but it's pretty much the same.

SOPHIE

My glasses?

CAL

Where are they?

SOPHIE

I think I left them in the kitchen.

CAL goes up to the kitchen and finds the glasses on the counter. He brings them back to Sophie

Now, let's see here. "Mr. David Greenbaum. I have kidnapped your mother. If you ever want to see here again." See here?

CAL

That's supposed to be "see her."

SOPHIE

Oh. "If you ever want to see her again you will pay two hundred and fifty thousand dollars to me in unmarked bills. I will contact you later today to make payment arrangements. Sincerely, the kidnapper." That's very nice Calvin. Very nice.

CAL

Thanks. I thought about writing more, but decided short and to the point would be better.

SOPHIE

I agree one hundred percent.

CAL

I'm gonna call.

CAL picks up the phone and dials. He clears his throat, when he speaks he attempts to disguise his voice.

David Greenbaum please.

He gives Sophie a thumbs up. She smiles, but looks somewhat uneasy.

Is this David Greenbaum? This is the kidnapper. The ... the kidnapper. Didn't you receive the note? Yes, the package. Well, open it! (Long pause) No, this isn't a joke David. This is very serious. I have your mother right here.

He holds the phone out to Sophie. SOPHIE shakes her head "no" and mouths "I couldn't" but he insists. She clears her throat a little.

SOPHIE

Hello dear.

CAL

That's enough! Do you love your mother David? What do you mean that didn't sound like her? Of course it was her! You want to

what? You want to look into this?

SOPHIE shrugs

Fine. I'll give you fifteen minutes and then I'll call you back. No, there isn't a number you can reach me at! Fifteen minutes.

He hangs up. He stands, walks away from the phone and turns back.

Woo hoo! I did it! I called! What does Will know? Huh? What does he know? Telling me I can't kidnap anyone. In your face!

SOPHIE

Very well done Calvin.

CAL

Thanks! Wow. That's a rush! What a feeling of power! That felt really good.

SOPHIE

Now we have fifteen minutes.

CAL

Yeah. Yeah. Fifteen minutes. What was that all about? If someone called me and told me they'd kidnapped my mother I would have freaked out. "I want to look into this." Please.

SOPHIE

He's always been very detail oriented.

CAL

Yeah.

CAL sits down.

What a rush. Cool. Cool.

CAL looks at Sophie and smiles. SOPHIE smiles back

I need to go to the bathroom.

CAL crosses to the bathroom, closing the door behind him.

SOPHIE

What have I gotten this boy into?

She puts her glasses back on and rereads the note.

Cal? Calvin?

CAL

Just a second!

The toilet flushes and CAL comes out.

SOPHIE

Cal.

CAL

What is it?

SOPHIE

I have to tell you something. I... well, I don't really know how to say this... I

The phone rings. They both freeze and look at it. It rings again.

Are you going to answer it?

CAL

What if it's him?

SOPHIE

Well, then the jig is up anyway isn't it?

CAL

I guess so. Oh man.

He jumps on it and answers.

Hello? Will? Oh man. Hey Buddy, how's the weekend? No, just ran in. What? You... you're what? But you just got there last night. Why? What did you say to her? Will! No, I don't have anyone coming over tonight. All right. No, I'm fine. Just fine. Yeah, I guess I'm a little disappointed. I understand. Sure. See you tonight. Shit! Shit, damn, fuck, Christ!

SOPHIE

Cal?

CAL

That was my roommate! He and his girlfriend ... He's coming home tonight. How can he do this to me? What did I ever do wrong? Please let there be traffic. Please God, I'm down on my knees, let there be a really horrible accident on the Long Island Expressway.

SOPHIE

He's coming home tonight?

CAL

I've got to get this done today. He can't know that I kidnapped you. He can't know!

SOPHIE

Calvin.

CAL

OK, you know what, don't talk to me for a minute. I need to think. I need to figure this out. I always hated his girlfriend. I always hated her. This is all her fault. She always ruins everything. You know that? She always screws everything up. Whenever Will and I try to do anything fun she figures out a way to screw it up for us. What time is it?

SOPHIE

Around ten past one.

CAL

Ten past one. Ten past one. He's in East Hampton, so let's say five or six o'clock. I've got till then to get this all in order. I'll get the money, send you on your merry way and go back to my normal life. That's good. I can do it. I can do this. I'm a very competent kidnapper.

SOPHIE

You've never done this before.

CAL

That doesn't mean I can't get lucky. Haven't you ever heard of beginners luck? This will all work out. You just watch. You just watch. I'll be just fine. This will all fall together for me. Let's see, when did I call. Around one?

SOPHIE

Around one.

CAL

OK. Five minutes. Five minutes. I can wait five minutes.

They sit in silence for several moments. SOPHIE has something to say, but isn't sure how to approach it so says nothing. After a couple more seconds she reaches out and picks up a book from the table. It's the book Will was reading. SOPHIE opens it up and reads the back.

SOPHIE

Oh, Oprah was talking about this book. It's supposed to be very good.

CAL

Uh huh. Will was reading it.

SOPHIE

Do you think he'd mind if I borrowed it?

CAL
When he get's here you can ask him.

SOPHIE
You are very tense.

CAL
Tense? Me? Just a little.

SOPHIE
Perhaps we could play a game.

CAL
What did you have in mind? Charades? How bout Kidnapper? We'll pretend that I kidnapped you.

SOPHIE
All right. Calvin, I need to tell you something.

CAL
Not now. I haven't put a gag on you yet. That doesn't mean that I won't do it.

SOPHIE rises and goes to the kitchen.

What are you doing now?

SOPHIE
I don't know. I've just always gone to the kitchen whenever I was nervous about something. I bake. I bake my cares away. It makes me feel better. When my first husband died I made pies for the entire neighborhood. Blueberry. Peach. Dutch apple. I make a very good Dutch apple pie. I'm nervous. The kitchen is the place I've always felt safe. It's home base.

CAL
OK.

SOPHIE is going through the fridge looking for anything.

SOPHIE
You know you don't have much of anything.

CAL
I'm sorry, I didn't know that I was kidnapping Betty Crocker. Would you like me to do some grocery shopping?

SOPHIE
It wouldn't hurt you to have some fresh fruit around. You need to eat better.

CAL

I need to eat better? Who's been stuffing cookies down my throat all day?

SOPHIE

You're right. I'll make you a nice lunch. How does that sound?

CAL

I'm not very hungry.

SOPHIE

Of course you are. You're a growing boy and you're under a good deal of pressure right now. You just don't think you're hungry. I'll make you some lunch. My goodness. Do you boys live on Chef Boyardee and Ramen Noodles?

CAL

Pretty much. That and pizza and Chinese delivery.

SOPHIE

It's a wonder you haven't died of malnutrition.

CAL

Time to call.

CAL picks up the phone and dials. He disguises his voice again.

David Greenbaum please. Yes, he's expecting my call. Hello, this is the kidnapper, are you ready to talk about payment arrangements? No? I mean, you... why not? What do you mean you just spoke to your mother?

SOPHIE comes down from the kitchen

But, I have her here. I am not incompetent! Don't you... don't hang up. I'm warning you, don't... hang... up.

CAL slams down the phone and turns to Sophie

All right! Who are you?

SOPHIE

I tried to tell you. Really I did.

CAL

Who are you?

SOPHIE

My name is Sophie Greenblatt. Mrs. Greenbaum is in the room three doors down from me.

CAL

Three doors? Oh my God! Oh my God! You aren't her! But... but... I saw your picture on the website!

SOPHIE

They must have gotten the caption wrong. It happens all the time. I get her medicine. She get's mine. It's really very funny. One time she got my ...

CAL

Oh my God! What have I done? I kidnapped the wrong grandma! I'm a complete and total failure! And you! You let me think that you were Greenbaum all along! You knew I had the wrong person! You didn't tell me! Why didn't you tell me?

SOPHIE

Well, you were so earnest and excited. I didn't want to ruin it for you.

CAL

You didn't want to ruin it for me? You've decimated me! I need a cigarette!

CAL goes into his bedroom.

SOPHIE

I didn't know you smoked.

CAL

I quit.

CAL lights up as he returns and throws himself into a chair.

This is perfect. This is just great.

SOPHIE

I'm so sorry.

CAL

You're sorry? That's great! Well, you're free to go now. Have a nice weekend!

SOPHIE

I made you a sandwich.

CAL

Would you get out!

SOPHIE

Calvin.

CAL

Why. Why me? I can't believe this.

SOPHIE

If you want I'll help you kidnap the right person.

CAL

You... What?

SOPHIE

If you want.

CAL

I... No! I screwed this up. I quit. I am out of the kidnapper business for good. Will was right. My dad was right. I'm a complete and total utter absolute top notch failure. I can't believe you didn't tell me. You made it all up. You are a liar!

SOPHIE

You're a kidnapper.

CAL

Why didn't you tell me?

SOPHIE

My children live in Santa Fe and Seattle. How often do you think I see them? I am all alone in that rest home. What would you chose, an exciting weekend of kidnapping or another round of Whist? Calvin. I'm sorry if I ruined your plan...

CAL

No, you didn't ruin my plan. I ruined it. It was ruined before it even began. I kidnapped the wrong grandma. Well, this will be a story to tell the grandkids.

SOPHIE

What about ransoming me to my kids? They've got a lot of money. More than their share, and we could split it. Imagine the guilt I could get out of this. They never come visit me, and then I get kidnapped? I could milk this til my funeral.

CAL

You don't get it. This was never about the money. This is about revenge. Getting revenge on that bastard Greenbaum.

SOPHIE

I'm sure we can come up with something. You and I, we make a pretty good team.

CAL

You have to be kidding.

SOPHIE

I am as serious as a heart attack. Calvin. Let's go in on this

together. We can do it.

CAL

You are insane. Is there any medication that you're missing that I should know about?

SOPHIE

Trust me Calvin. We can do this. My kids will pay more than a quarter million. I know them. You'll be set for life. You could start your own company and put Greenbaum out of business. How's that for revenge? I don't need a lot of money. All I want out of this is some guilt and maybe a cruise. What do you say?

CAL

You're serious.

SOPHIE

Yes Calvin, I am. Look, I'm sorry I didn't tell you earlier about who I was, but we can make this work for us. We can. I know we can.

CAL

This is crazy. You know that.

SOPHIE

So was kidnapping Mrs. Greenbaum to get revenge on her son. You've got a history in crazy schemes. This time around you'll have experience, and you'll have a partner. What do you say?

CAL

How am I going to explain this to Will?

SOPHIE

Does he like tollhouse cookies?

Lights out.

END ACT I

ACT II

Scene 1

Lights up on the apartment. CAL is in the kitchen area visibly tense. He sits on the counter eating cookies. WILL bursts into the apartment slamming the door behind him catching CAL entirely off guard. WILL is carrying an over night bag and makes his way to the bedroom.

CAL

Will! You're back! You're early!

WILL

Yeah.

Just as WILL gets to the bedroom the front door reopens and JERI, Will's girlfriend appears. She is very attractive, but visibly furious.

JERI

Don't you walk away from me! I was talking to you!

WILL

No, you were talking at me.

JERI

First you don't say a word to me the whole ride back, then you pull this on me? What did you expect me to do?

WILL

It's not my fault!

JERI

Not your fault?

CAL

Will, can I...

WILL

Not now Cal!

CAL

OK.

WILL

Look, if you don't want me to say something, then you need to tell me up front!

JERI

I did! I told you that what I was telling you was secret!

WILL

You did not!

JERI

Yes, Will, I did. You just weren't listening. You never listen!

WILL

Oh, OK, here we go.

JERI

Cal, you know full well that Will never listens, does he?

CAL

I don't think...

WILL

Don't try and get him involved in this. You told me she was pregnant. You never told me that it was a secret!

JERI

I did so!

WILL

You told me your sister called and told you she was pregnant. You said she was worried about telling the family, that's all!

JERI

That implies that it's a secret!

WILL

It's not like I announced it at dinner! It was only the three of us!

JERI

You weren't supposed to know!

WILL

Then why did you tell me?

WILL takes a cookie from the plate of cookies.

JERI

You just don't understand.

WILL

She tells me her sister is pregnant so the three of us are sitting and talking. I asked if she had been to a doctor and she bursts into tears and runs away. How was I supposed to know! I didn't even mention the baby!

JERI

You are so insensitive! Cal, you wouldn't do something as

insensitive as that, would you? You would know better.

CAL

Oh, um...

JERI

This is what I get for dating a law student. Insensitivity. My father told me, lawyers are nothing but trouble. You don't want to get involved with one. He'll cheat on you. He'll put words in your mouth. But no. No, I thought Will was different. My father told me. He told me.

WILL

Yes, yes, we all know your father is so wonderful.

JERI

Don't you dare say something bad about my father!

WILL

I wouldn't dream of it. Jeri, listen, I'm sorry. That's all I can say. I misunderstood what you said. I didn't read enough into it. It's all my fault. Is that what you want to hear?

JERI

How am I going to explain this to my sister?

WILL

Look, let's go in my room and sit down. Sorry Cal, didn't mean to get you in the middle of this.

CAL

Yeah, um, can I just mention something?

WILL

Hey, Cal, can it wait a little bit. I need to get this ironed out.

CAL

It's pretty important.

WILL

It'll have to wait.

WILL and JERI go into Will's bedroom and close the door. CAL stands in silence waiting for the inevitable. JERI screams from inside. The door reopens. JERI runs out and goes into the bathroom. WILL follows, much more calm. He takes a few steps toward Cal.

WILL

Cal?

CAL

Would you like another cookie?

WILL

Why is there an old lady in my bed?

CAL

I tried to explain!

WILL

Tell me, oh please tell me, you didn't kidnap Greenbaum's family.

CAL

I didn't kidnap Greenbaum's family.

WILL

OK. Good. That's good. That's a good way to start.

SOPHIE comes out of Will's bedroom.

SOPHIE

I'm sorry, I was taking a nap. I had no idea it was so late.

CAL

Sophie, I'd like you to meet my roommate Will and his girlfriend Jeri is in the bathroom.

SOPHIE

Hello Will, I've heard all about you.

WILL

Oh. Good. Cal?

SOPHIE

You haven't explained yet?

CAL

No. See, I 'tried' to kidnap Mr. Greenbaum's mother, but I made a mistake and got Sophie instead. See, her name is Greenblatt and ...

WILL

Wait. Go back. You said you didn't kidnap her.

CAL

No. I said I didn't kidnap Mr. Greenbaum's mother... which is true. I didn't kidnap her. You know Jeri is right, you don't listen.

WILL

I thought we had decided you weren't going to kidnap anyone! No kidnapping! That's what we said!

CAL
That's what you said.

WILL
But you agreed!

CAL
I had to!

WILL
Why? Why? But what is she still doing here if she's not Mr. Greenbaum's mother?

CAL
Well, that's interesting.

SOPHIE
Allow me.

CAL
Sure.

SOPHIE
Will. Come, sit down. Is that short for William?

WILL
I... yes.

SOPHIE
I love that name. My first husband was William. Handsome just like you.

WILL
Oh, well, thank you.

SOPHIE
Well, now, once Calvin found out that he'd kidnapped the wrong woman, he was going to send me back to the rest home, but it occurred to me that we could make this work out for all of us. You see, I have two children of my own who've done very well for themselves and didn't see any reason that we all couldn't benefit from this mix up. I believe all things happen for a reason. Don't you Will?

WILL
I ... don't know.

SOPHIE
Call it divine providence, call it luck. But no matter what you call it, it's for a reason. By now I'm sure they've noticed that I'm missing from the rest home and have reported me missing, but I

doubt they've told my children. They'll want to clear this up without letting them know if they can, but if my children call to find out they won't have a choice but to tell them I'm missing. So, we're going to collect some money from my children. I'll get a bushel of guilt out of them for not visiting and nearly losing me forever, and Cal will be set for life. Now if you, William, are willing to keep this quiet, I'm sure we could cut you in on this. You look like an intelligent boy. I'm sure law school is expensive. Wouldn't a few extra greenbacks come in handy? What do you say?

WILL

Oh my god. You've kidnapped a grifter.

CAL

I swear I was going to send her back, but she makes a good case.

WILL

I don't believe this. I go out of town for... not even 24 hours and I come back to find not only have you kidnapped someone, but you've become a professional! Why can't you just walk around naked like a normal roommate? Huh?

CAL