

I LEFT MY DIGNITY IN MY OTHER
PURSE

A Play in Two Acts

by

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Cast of Characters

RUTH BAKER: 66 A former VP of Manufacturing for Twila Toilet paper. Funny, deadpan, strong, and naive to all the technology. She has been in the toilet paper game for 50 years. She is successful and has a great eye for art. (She would have been a great art dealer or critic.) She spent her whole life dedicating herself to toilet paper. Attractive and moral-almost to a fault. Never married.

MARGE: 60's. Retired best friend of Ruth. Very strong take-charge woman. She is an artist who sold paintings to Ruth when they became friends. She is a fixer! She has a hard time with disorder and can't move forward until everything is in order. She is loyal but she has her breaking point. A widow and a mother who made a great success of her life.

MAYA FINKEKHEIMER: 60ish. Jewish and rich. Always wears white gloves. She is an instigator by accident. MAYA is clueless! Money and status are her hallmarks. She loves to shop and has no filter or off switch. She has a big heart but because she is clueless, it can be hard to find!

ET AL: (This actor will play all of these characters.) A character actor able to play multiple ages and characters.
DELIVERY MAN 1 DELIVERY MAN 1 in a courier uniform hat.
DELIVERY MAN 2 DELIVERY MAN 2 wears a Steve's Market
DELIVERY MAN 3 and Deli shirt and backward baseball cap
DRIVER GIRL He is in his twenties. DELIVERY MAN 3
JOAQUIN wears a different courier uniform.
ART BUYER DRIVER GIRL wears a blonde wig and a
BOB dress. JOAQUIN is a Latin dancer perhaps
MODEL MAN dressed in an 80's type jumpsuit with a
ART BUYER scarf. MODEL MAN is a male model in
MR. ZINK brightly colored underwear. ART BUYER, a
sleazy over-the-top self-important man
in his forties. BOB is a barfly - a Dick
Martin type. (Rowan and Martin's Laugh-
In) MR. ZINK is a meek and mild lawyer
who has a high-pitched halting speech
and a bad toupee. He stutters when
embarrassed. He is the king of Lawyer-
speak.

(continued next page)

ROY:

Good-looking distinguished Late 60's.
Very charismatic. Roy is bullheaded but
is madly in love with Ruth. He loves how
old-fashioned RUTH is. He is unbendable
and expects others to remain loyal.
Strong and tall. RUTH'S fiancé.

Scene

RUTH's apartment living room. Upscale, well decorated.

Time

Present.

Scenes

Act I

Scene 1	Apartment Balcony	Late evening. Friday
Scene 2	Interior Apartment	Late morning. Tuesday

INTERMISSION

Act II

Scene 1	Interior Apartment	A few days later - late morning
Scene 2	Interior Apartment	A few days later - Evening.

ACT I

Scene 1

SETTING: South Bend Indiana. RUTH'S balcony. March. Night. Upscale balcony overlooking the city. A usable railing is placed in front.

AT RISE: RUTH enters angrily. She is dressed in a gorgeous evening gown and high heels. ROY follows. He is dressed in travel clothes and a jacket.

ROY
Bun Buns, I said I was sorry!

RUTH
I can't believe you! This is the most important night of my life!

ROY
I thought getting engaged was the most important night of your life.

RUTH
This is the second most important night of my life!

ROY
What about our wedding next week?

RUTH
This is the third most important night of my life!

ROY
I'm sorry, Bun Buns!

RUTH
I wore heels for you!

ROY
They look stunning.

RUTH
I may never walk again!

ROY
Please try to understand, if I am to sell my business and retire in the next six months, I have to go to Hangzhou!

RUTH
I'd like to hang you!

ROY

(puts his jacket over RUTH'S
shoulders)

Come back inside. It's cold out here.

RUTH

(throws off the jacket)

I'm plenty hot under the collar! Fifty years! I worked fifty years to finally retire from the toilet paper game and my fiancé can't say no to Mr. Kong Wei Zhang! I have to face a room full of people I hope to never see again... alone! Happy retirement to me! Why did you wait until the last minute to tell me?

ROY

I kept hoping Mr. Kong would let me move the date! I didn't know how to tell you. I knew you'd be angry.

RUTH

Prepare for the wrath of Ruth!

(ROY finally is face to face
with Ruth. He takes her chin
and kisses her. She begins
to melt.)

ROY

I'll make it up to you in Bora Bora.

RUTH

Yes. Yes, you will!

ROY

I'm only gone until Tuesday then...

RUTH

Tuesday????? Our flight leaves Monday!

(ROY pulls out a ticket and
hands it to RUTH.)

ROY

Your flight leaves Monday.

RUTH

I'm flying to our wedding alone???

ROY

First class!

RUTH

My chauffeur can help me carry your body!

ROY
Giles? He can barely lift his head!

RUTH
Trust me I'm stronger than I look!

ROY
You're beautiful when you're angry.

RUTH
I must be a bleeping centerfold about now.

ROY
I'm really sorry, Bun Buns! I would much rather be at your retirement party than fly to China. Sweetie, in only six days you will be Mrs. Roy Tingle.

RUTH
In seven I will be the widow Tingle. I hate parties! Watching everyone get drunk is like trying on bathing suits.

ROY
A sight I can't wait to see! Have a glass of Champagne...

RUTH
You know I don't drink!

ROY
Have a small glass and think of me. I'll toast you from the plane. Just remember it's only six short days. Seven at the outside.

(RUTH tries to strangle ROY.
He grabs her hands.)

ROY (CONT'D)
I'm joking! Wednesday I will be on a beach with you in magnificent Bora Bora. It's going to be tough on me too! I can hardly concentrate. You have cast a spell on me!

RUTH
Let me know when the potion kicks in.

ROY
(pulls RUTH to him and
kisses her as she melts)
I love you! I have from the first moment I saw you on the factory floor. Toilet paper flying like streamers wrapping you in a two-ply wedding gown. You were radiant! I knew I wanted you from that moment.

RUTH
And you were my sexy hero! Swooping in to stop the machine while my own people just stood there looking stupid.

(ROY kisses her passionately
as MARGE enters.)

MARGE
Oh, sorry, am I interrupting?

ROY
Yes.

RUTH
No.

MARGE
The concierge just called. Guests are starting to gather in
the lobby.

RUTH
Just in time to watch me sob in the hors d'oeuvres.

MARGE
Watch your step. Your tortoise crawled right by the door.
You don't want to fall over Speedy in those heels.

RUTH
Doing the two-step with my tortoise is probably the only
dancing I'll do all night.

ROY
Just promise you won't try that flying leap again.

MARGE
Flying leap?

ROY
Dirty Dancing. Patrick Swayze I'm not. At least Speedy
wouldn't drop you. My back is still screaming.

RUTH
I should take Speedy to the party.

(ROY picks up his coat and
feels something in his
pocket. He pulls out a
bottle of pills.)

ROY
Oh, I almost forgot. You left your allergy pills on my
kitchen counter last night.

RUTH
Drat! You uncovered my plan. I intend to scratch my way
through the party with a cake fork.

ROY
Take one before you go and one before bed.

(RUTH takes two pills and swallows them defiantly. She kisses ROY long and hard making his knees go weak.)

RUTH

Think about that while you're missing my party!

(RUTH sashays off stage as ROY watches her smiling.)

MARGE

What does she mean, missing her party?

(MARGE snaps her fingers getting ROY'S attention.)

ROY

I have to fly to China tonight.

MARGE

Tell me you're kidding!

ROY

I have to sell my company and finding a buyer for a toilet paper equipment company is a hard sale. Ruth understands.

MARGE

Did you see her? She's seething!

ROY

Really? She said she was fine. She said I could go.

MARGE

Go tomorrow!

ROY

The buyer, Mr. Kong, King Flush...

MARGE

King Flush?

(laughs)

King Kong Flush, now there's a name!

ROY

King Flush is the second-largest toilet manufacturer in China.

MARGE

Who's the largest, Royal Flush?

ROY

The company started in Flushing New York.

MARGE

Flushing King Flush? Now you're just making this up.

ROY

The President, Mr. Kong, has got to do the deal this weekend or the sale is off.

MARGE

You have to be there tonight for Ruth's retirement party! Why didn't you tell somebody?

ROY

I wanted to tell you, Marge, but I kept hoping I could get out of it.

(checks his watch)

Sorry, Marge, I have to go or I'm going to miss my flight. Please take care of my Ruthie.

MARGE

You're not even staying for the cocktail party? The party was your idea! "Marge, we need to give Ruthie a big sendoff with her friends. A cocktail party before the work party would be amazing. You are the best party planner I know! Can you please help me?"

ROY

It can't be helped.

MARGE

I postponed my gallery showing to help you with *your* cocktail party! "Marge only you can pull this off!"

ROY

I know. I'm sorry. I feel horrible.

MARGE

You should! Do you have any idea what will happen without you here? Maya is coming... Maya. The South Bend white-glove queen! Our very own clueless, filter-less, wonder. You have to be here to run interference. I can't watch her and handle all the guests by myself!

ROY

The timing sucks but it can't be helped.

MARGE

Fix this!

ROY

I've tried!

MARGE

Try harder! Don't let her party go down the crapper.

ROY

Ouch. Toilet jokes too?

MARGE

King Kong Flush jokes are racing in my head. Ruthie always brags how you can fix anything and this, Roy, this is the big thing! You can't make her go through two retirement parties tonight without you!

ROY

I'm a jerk!

MARGE

I can think of a few more nouns to describe you.

ROY

You are the best friend Ruth could ever have. I appreciate all your help.

MARGE

Oh, no. You're not getting off the hook that easily! Your magnetic charm won't work on me, Roy Tingle! I'm onto you.

ROY

How about I owe you?

MARGE

I will collect, and trust me; it will cost you a bundle! I'd better check on Ruth. She's going to need a friend!

(MARGE exits. ROY takes his cell and calls.)

ROY

Nǐn hǎo [Mandarin translation for "Good morning"] Mr. Kong Wei Zhang. This is Roy Tingle. --- I hope you are enjoying your morning. --- I thought I would ask one more time if we can postpone this meeting for two weeks. --- Yes, I know your schedule is tight but this is very important. --- As you know, my fiancé is retiring tonight and she is really upset that I can't be there. --- Yes I'm aware you're looking at another company but you will find Tingle's Toilet Tissue-Matic to be the fastest most economical equipment in the world. --- I can't do next week Ruth and I are getting married on Bora Bora Wednesday. --- Thank you, we are very excited. So can we make it the following week? --- Mr. Kong Wei Zhang I will cut the price twenty percent to make it worth your time. --- Yes, it is regrettable. --- I had to try. --- My plane leaves in a couple of hours. --- Zhù nǐ yǒu měihǎo de yītiān --- Thank you, I will.

(LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT IScene 2SETTING:

South Bend Indiana. April. RUTH'S Living room is upscale and well-appointed. Very expensive looking with many pricey statues, vases, and paintings. It is set with remnants of a large party. The place is trashed! Lots of booze bottles, empty glasses, chips, pizza, cake, cookies, salads, finger food, and assorted plates lying around. Hanging over the back wall is a sign that reads HAPPY RETIREMENT. The portable landline phone and answering machine are prevalent.

AT RISE:

RUTH is lying on the couch buried under trash, newspapers, and plates. She wears a large fluffy bathrobe over sweats and her partially-on evening gown. Tucked in the lower back of her evening gown is a high heel. The door is unlocked. MARGE enters, flips on the LIGHTS, sees the state of the apartment, and groans. RUTH pops up from the couch with an empty bottle of booze.

RUTH

Next round's on meeeeeee!!

(MARGE screams, RUTH screams.)

MARGE

Oh my gosh, you scared me! Ruth honey, are you sick?

RUTH

Party!!

(grabs her head and moans
trying to drink from the
bottle but it is empty)

Party! Ouch!

MARGE

Party!? That was four days ago! What happened to you?

RUTH

The last thing I remember was toasting my retirement. I had one glass of champagne.

RUTH (CONT'D)

(beat)

Then a Long Island Iced Tea...

(beat)

Sex on the Beach...

(beat)

Mudslides... Oh, those were good! And something called a Fireball... That was... was that good? I can't... Oh, and a Tequila Sunrise, Woo Woo...

MARGE

You don't drink!

RUTH

I don't? Now you tell me!

MARGE

And then what?

RUTH

Fireball!

(RUTH makes an explosion
Noise, laughs and stares.)

MARGE

Come on, sit up. Where's ROY?

RUTH

China.

MARGE

Where have you been?

RUTH

It all gets fuzzy after the limo. I looked awesome...

MARGE

The limo that took you to your retirement party? That was four days ago!

RUTH

Four days?

MARGE

Yes! Friday night.

RUTH

What happened since Friday?

MARGE

(loudly)

You tell me!

RUTH

Who are you and why are you yelling at me?

MARGE

I'm Marge and this is Tuesday. Your party was Friday. What have you been doing since Friday? Your place is a disaster!

RUTH

Bombed. Party. Head exploded and I itch all over.

MARGE

You're scratching like you have fleas.

RUTH

Spring has sprung; itching's begun. Skins on fire.
(explosion noise)
Fireball!! I need my allergy pills.

MARGE

Where are they?

RUTH

I dunno. I can't find them. My head hurts.

MARGE

Maybe you left them in the kitchen. I'll get some ice for your head.

(MARGE exits to the kitchen.
The DOORBELL rings. RUTH
moans loudly. RUTH slogs to
the door. DELIVERY MAN 1 is
holding an envelope.)

DELIVERY MAN 1

(surprised by RUTH'S appearance)
Oh! I'm sorry to disturb you, good morning.

RUTH

It is?

DELIVERY MAN 1

It looks like someone just retired!

RUTH

I'll alert the mayor.

DELIVERY MAN 1

I'm looking for a Ruth Baker.

RUTH

I was her. Hey, do I know you?