

SIDE: FEMALE & MALE 60+

CHARACTERS:

LAVINIA: A woman north of 75 years, possessed of great spirit and charm. Dresses smartly, has a chic hairstyle. Once quite a looker. But now suffers from sciatica and other.

HORTENSE: Her lifelong friend of the same age, possessed of considerable snark. Also looks good “for her age.” But clearly plays second fiddle to Lavinia.

BICYCLIST: He keeps blowing his horn in odd spurts like a circus clown as he circles the park, alarming and annoying the two friends. They find he is not in any way who they had assumed him to be. His name is ELMER.

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SETTING:

A city park.

ACT ONE

Scene 2.

BICYCLIST IS ON THE GROUND, TANGLED UP IN THE MANGLED BICYCLE, WHICH IS NEXT TO A TREE. HORTENSE AND LAVINIA ARE GAPING AT THE SCENE JUST OUT OF EARSHOT.

HORTENSE (TO LAVINIA): I saw this coming. Another reckless millennial path-hog getting his just desserts.

LAVINIA: Don't be so mean. I think he's hurt. We should help him.

HORTENSE: I suppose we have to...

They scurry over to the bicyclist.

LAVINIA: Young man, are you alright?

BICYCLIST: Are you talking to me?

LAVINIA: Do you see any other young men around?

HORTENSE: There's a dent in his helmet. Maybe he has a concussion and it's making him confused.

BICYCLIST: What? A dent? *(He pulls off his helmet and looks at it concernedly.)*

When he removes the helmet, it reveals a very bald head, but not the fashionable kind. There are wispy gray hairs on the sides, and his brow appears very furrowed.

LAVINIA: Oh...you're *not* a young man.

HORTENSE: You're old.

BICYCLIST: And also in pain.

HORTENSE: I'm sorry. I've been cursing your millennial ways every time you whiz by us. But you're not a millennial. You're a perennial.

BICYCLIST: What's a perennial?

HORTENSE: An old man who thinks he's young no matter how bald or wrinkled he is.

LAVINIA: Hortense, that's mean! He's already injured.

BICYCLIST: It's okay. She's right. *(He laughs ruefully.)* But would you help me up?

HORTENSE and LAVINIA try to help him up and almost succeed, but they all end up toppling on each other, laughing as they end up in awkward positions. HORTENSE is on top of him, looking down on his face. They silently look at each other.

LAVINIA: Remember Twister? I was so good at Twister, wasn't I, Hortense?

(HORTENSE IS UNCHARACTERISTICALLY QUIET)

LAVINIA: Hortense!

HORTENSE: *(as though roused from a trance)* Twister? Yes, Lavinia, you were the best.

(Hortense extricates herself from atop the bicyclist, stands up, fluffs her hair nervously and remains uncharacteristically silent. The bicyclist props himself up on his elbows.)

BICYCLIST: Lavinia? Hortense? Boy, I haven't heard those names in years.

LAVINIA: *(Offering him a hand up, somewhat flirtily)* Speaking of names, "young man", what's yours?

BICYCLIST: *(Now standing proudly)* Elmer. Elmer Edward Emerson III.

LAVINIA: Elmer? I haven't heard *your* name in years. Well, there was that cartoon character, Elmer...F-something...Elmer...

ELMER: Fudd.

LAVINIA: Yes! Elmer Fudd! That's it. Hortense, remember Elmer Fudd and Bugs Bunny?
(*She laughs uproariously*) They were so funny....

HORTENSE: Oh, Lavinia, everyone remembers them. Even people who can't remember anything else. But I'm sure Elmer hears about Elmer Fudd all the time.

ELMER: Every time I introduce myself.

LAVINIA: Hortense and I were just talking about our names and how nobody has them anymore. We call ourselves "Dead Names Walking." What do you think of that, Elmer?

ELMER: Catchy. You know, I was a Deadhead back in the day.

LAVINIA: I bet you have some stories. We'd love to hear them, wouldn't we, Hortense?

HORTENSE is still in a fog, says nothing.

ELMER: Hortense, would you like to hear my stories, too?

HORTENSE: Whatever floats your boat, Elmer.

LAVINIA: Hortense is always like that. She's the sarcastic one. She just can't bring herself to say that she'd love to have you in our little club.

HORTENSE: I'd love to have you, Elmer. In our club.

LAVINIA: Your bike is in pretty bad shape, Elmer. Maybe you should consider walking until it gets fixed. Do you want to join us tomorrow afternoon?

ELMER: I'd be delighted.

LAVINIA: Four o'clock. We'll meet at that fountain thing.

ELMER: See you tomorrow, Lavinia. (*But he is looking at Hortense.*) Looking forward to it, Hortense.

LAVINIA: See you then.

(*ELMER limps off with his bicycle beside him.*)

LAVINIA: Hortense, what's wrong with you? You were so quiet. And so rude to Elmer. He's actually rather handsome, don't you think? A potential suitor, I think. An active man. Not one of those couch surfers.

HORTENSE: Potatoes.

LAVINIA: What?