

Ham Brown's House

by
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Time Present
Place A farm house in a small town

Characters

Ham Brown- Father, land owner, bread winner, ruler of the coop or thinks he is.

Opal Brown- Mother, has trouble with speech due to an apparent stroke

Ginny Mae Brown- Daughter, takes care of them.

John Brown- Eldest Son, been gone since their younger brother Paul killed himself a year ago. Ham's favored child.

Doc Housman- Family friend and physician, Ham thinks he's in love with Opal, he is.

The Stage

This piece would play quite nicely on a stage able to move with the action of the play. In the first act, this may not seem as relevant, the second act however requires swiftness as action moves directly between kitchen, living room, kitchen, etc. If a moveable stage is unavailable, however, I recommend that the stage be set full out, so that characters may move between rooms without having to wait for set changes. The second act of the play is continuous and would suffer greatly if not designed in a way to allow continuous action from one scene to the next.

The stage is set as the farm house. A kitchen resides stage right with a door out to the backyard. A large table occupies most of the kitchen. There is a swinging door between the kitchen and the living room. Stairs lead up from the living room stage left. The wall of the house curves round just far enough to posit a door near to the stairs. This door opens onto the front porch, which resides downstage left. All of this is visible when lights are up, and at times action will continue in other parts of the house while a scene is occurring in one room or another.

HAM BROWN'S HOUSE

In the kitchen, GINNY, 36, sits at a table, peeling corn. She is a large woman, tall and built for farming. Her thin brown hair sits on her head in a bun, a few escapees drooping into her eyes. As she peels, she sings a hymn. She drops the husks into a large pail next to her. After a minute HAM, 68, enters. He is a barrel-chested old man, with the sun weathered face of one who knows hard work. He wears a sweat stained wife beater and brown pants. He stops when he sees her at the table.

HAM

Your peeling them wrong.

GINNY

What you mean?

HAM

You always leave them little hairs on. Makes me choke.

GINNY

There aren't any hairs on these-

HAM

I can see 'em from here. You gotta' run your hands up and down here, like this.

(grabs corn)

Get all the little ones offa' the cob.

He runs his hands up and down the cob.

HAM

Here, you try.

He hands her the cob.

GINNY

I know how to peel corn daddy.

HAM

You know how you gonna' kill me with that silk- gettin' stuck in my throat.

GINNY

There's not any hair on these!

HAM

Fine, peel 'em any damn way you want. Only, don't be spectin' me to eat any of it.

Ginny picks up the corn sighs, and begins to rub it the way Ham showed her to.

HAM
That's right. Just like that.

Satisfied he turns towards the sink.

HAM
Shouldn't be surprised you're so good at it, should I?

Ginny does not respond. Ham goes to counter.

HAM
Where's my can?

GINNY
Over there. I had to dump it out last night, Louie was getting into it.

HAM
Damn dog, what he want with my can?

GINNY
Oh, he don't know no better. It's over there by the trash.

Ham walks over to the can, looks in the trash.

HAM
Goddamnit Ginny! I told you stop throwing these away!

He pulls a styrofoam square from the trash. It is the styrofoam base from a package of ground meat.

GINNY
What?

HAM
I told you I use these for my work boots!

GINNY
You don't need styrofoam anymore pop. I bought you those Dr. Scholls, remember?

HAM
What you gotta' throw my money away on that crap for? You down there spending my money on fancy things-

GINNY
They're not crap dad. They're gel-

HAM

Waste of good money they are.

GINNY

Dad-

HAM

Take them back. Goddamn waste of money. Look at this, I have to wash this one off now, got my tobacco all over it now. What good that do?

GINNY

Here, I'll do it.

HAM

Naw, get away from me. You always be fussing all over me. Your ma's the one needs fussin', wandering around here like she's half dead. Don't know what day it is. Hell, she don't know what year it is. I got to feed you both, bunch of goddamn vampires. Can't afford to be buying no fancy Scholls.

GINNY

You can afford it just fine.

HAM

How do you know that?

GINNY

What?

HAM

How you know what I can afford?

GINNY

Dad, everybody knows you've got plenty of money-

HAM

Everybody knows shit. That's what everybody knows.

GINNY

Dad-

HAM

You think I got to where I am by wasting my money?

HAM

You think I just got so much of it, I can just throw it away? Is that what you think?

GINNY

I don't think nothing-

HAM

You *don't* think nothing. That's your problem. Walk around here eating my food, drinking my beer, never wonder where that money come from, and how fast you gobbling it up, the two of you. I got to where I could afford you kids cause I worked hard and put that money in the bank. Didn't go throwing it away on fancy foot pads for my shoes like some people. I been saving my money for retirement. Thought maybe I'd go on a trip or something, see the world now you kids is all grown. But your momma go an take sick not one day after I cashed my first pension check. Now I gotta' be stuck here with a goddamn cripple and my bloodthirsty daughter, jes waitin' for me to die. I know you just waiting for my money. Well you can just forget it, cause you ain't gettin' a cent, you hear me? You ain't gettin' a goddamn penny outta' my pocket!

GINNY

You better calm down, you're gonna' give yourself a stroke.

HAM

Yeah, that's what you'd like. Just what you waiting to happen. Hell, you'll probably throw a party over my grave, hopin' to get all my money.

GINNY

Daddy, I don't care about your money. I just want you to have comfortable shoes.

HAM

Yeah, you'll throw a big fiesta on my grave. John won't party though. He'll come home and be the one to rain on your big death parade.

HAM

Now he's out there living, 'stead of hanging round here waiting for me to die.

GINNY

I don't want you to die.

HAM

You'll see, he'll come home, take care of things around here proper. Send you packing! You and your mother both. He come home, we gonna' get in that motorbus out there and get out in the world. Leave you women here to nanny each other all you want.

GINNY

Whatever you say dad.

HAM

That's right, whatever I say! It's still my house you're living in. Still my house goddamnit! Goddamn vulture, sucking the life right out of me.

She gets up, gets pill bottle.

GINNY

Well you better go on and take one of your blood pressure pills. You got yourself all worked up now.

He looks at the pills suspiciously.

HAM

What are these?

GINNY

Those are your pills.

HAM

(snort)
Today the day Gin?

GINNY

What are you going on about?

HAM

You gonna' do it to me in my own kitchen?

GINNY

I'm sure I don't know what you're talking about.

HAM
You gonna' poison me in my own
godamn kitchen?!

GINNY
These are your blood pressure
pills. I got the bottle right
here.

HAM
Aww shit, that don't mean nothin'.
You could have switched the real
pills out for poison-

GINNY
It's not poison!

HAM
Well course you're not gonna' tell
me it's poison.

GINNY
Why would I want to kill you dad?

HAM
You tryin to kill me. Well, you
just wait. Jes' wait and see how
hard it is to kill Ham Brown. I
ain't gonna' just roll over an'
die. I'm too strong for that. You
can't kill me, you just watch.

He swallows the pills defiantly. Ginny goes back to shucking
corn.

GINNY
Better sit down too. Your face is
lookin' pretty red.

HAM
Don't tell me what to do! I know
when I need to sit down. Don't
need you tellin' me what to do in
my own house.

He sits.

HAM
Make sure you get all them hairs
offa' there.

GINNY
Yes dad.

OPAL, 60, stands in the kitchen doorway. She wears an oversized beige nightgown that hangs to her feet, but the top of the nightgown is around her waist and she is naked on top except for a bra a few sizes too big. Her face is pallid, and her hair retains the pressed design of a pillow. She looks vacantly into the kitchen. Ham sees this and jumps up.

HAM

Goddamnit Ginny, what's wrong you
let your momma' walk around half
naked for?

He walks to Opal, she flinches while he tries to pull her gown up on her shoulders.

HAM

Now Opal, you can't be walkin'
around here like that, you gonna'
catch cold you walk around here
like that.

He can't get Opal's arms in the sleeves, and she starts to moan.

HAM

Now, don't be startin' that. We
got to get you dressed.

GINNY

Let me do it Dad.

HAM

I'm fine.

GINNY

She's better with me.

He struggles with her a moment longer, get's fed up.

HAM

Fine. She's all yours. Don't know
why I bother at all. Damn woman
won't let me get near her anymore.
Treats me like some sort of
stranger.

(leans into her)

You forget the last 40 years Opal?
Huh? Where that go? Fly right out
your head with your mouth?

GINNY

Pop.

HAM

Aww, she don't know what I'm sayin.
Staring off into space all day.

(MORE)

HAM (cont'd)
Wonder what she come in here for.
You change her sheets this morning?

GINNY
Yes.

HAM
Well, why she come in here? You
giver her oatmeal?

GINNY
Yes, Dad.

HAM
Don't get snippy now. I just want
to know why she got up in here.

Ginny straightens Opals gown and tucks her hair behind her ears.

GINNY
Maybe she just wanted a change of
scenery.

HAM
Scenery, hell, every minute she got
new scenery. Don't know one
scenery from another.

Opal moves her mouth, trying to talk.

GINNY
Yeah, mamma. What is it?

She moves her mouth some more, but no intelligible sounds
escape. She lifts her arm towards the sink.

GINNY
You want something? Something I
can get you?

She moves her mouth some more. She is almost crying with the
effort, yet her face remains vacant.

HAM
Dammit Ginny, now she's crying.
What is it Opal? What you want?
You want some water? You give her
enough water today Ginny?

GINNY
Course-

Ham marches out to the living room to check. Ginny tucks
Opal's hair behind her ears, dabs at her eyes. Opal reaches
her hand up to Ginny's.

GINNY
What is it mamma?

Opal looks into Ginny's eyes. Ham comes barreling in with an empty water pitcher.

HAM
Goddamn thing is empty. Spilled it all over the bed. Well get in there an clean it up, will you! Is her gown wet? Are you wet Opal? Huh?

He starts feeling her gown, Opal cringes at his touch.

GINNY
She's not wet daddy.

HAM
Well what she takin' off her gown for then? Goddamn water all over the bed. Get in there and clean it up.

GINNY
Let me get momma into a chair first.

HAM
I'll get her into a chair. Just go on and change those sheets before the bed is ruined.

Ginny grabs a towel and exits into the living room. Ham leads Opal into a chair. She stares vacantly.

HAM
Damn kid, don't know which way is up. Why she leaving you a full pitcher anyway? You alright?

She doesn't answer.

HAM
(sighs)
Ginny don't know how to peel corn. She sitting out here all day, leaving hairs on them. How come you never taught her how to cook? The girl's almost 40, don't know how to boil water. That's my curse.

HAM
I got to be stuck here with a mute and that girl in there burning everything all the time.

(MORE)

HAM (cont'd)

What you say Opal, maybe you get better and make one of those pies? I sure loved me your pecan pies. Those pies melt the meanness outta a pit-bull. You sure could make a pie.

Ginny re-enters. With the towel.

GINNY

It was just a little spill dad. She must of knocked it over when she got up.

HAM

You change the sheets?

GINNY

Didn't have to. There was hardly any water there.

HAM

You sure? I don't want your mother getting pneumonia cause your too lazy to change the sheets.

GINNY

They're fine dad.

HAM

Alright. It's on your head then.

GINNY

They're not wet!

HAM

Don't yell at me. I'm just watching out for your mother. Say, you know how to make your mother's pecan pie?

GINNY

I'm sure she wrote the recipe down same as everything else.

HAM

Why don't you make one for dessert tonight.

GINNY

Really?

HAM

Yeah. Be nice to have something good for a change. I'm tired of that ice cream you keep giving me.

GINNY
It's your favorite.

HAM
No, chocolate's my favorite.

GINNY
It is chocolate. It's double fudge
chocolate.

HAM
Exactly. What's wrong with plain
old chocolate? Why you got to get
them fancy flavors when I like
plain old chocolate?

GINNY
You didn't say anything last night-

HAM
Well I'm saying it now Goddamnit!
Can you make me one of your
mother's pecan pies or not?

Opal gets up, walks over to the sink.

HAM
Now what she doin?

GINNY
I don't know. You thirsty mom?

She reaches out, turns on the water and sticks her head in
the flow. Ham and Ginny both jump up.

GINNY
Mom!

HAM
Get outta' there woman! That 'aint
the shower!

They pull Opal from the sink, she is coughing and sputtering
from the water.

GINNY
Mom, what are you doing?

Ginny grabs a towel, starts dabbing at her mother who is
still coughing and trying to speak.

HAM
Fool woman thinks this is the bath.

GINNY
Dad.

HAM
Get her on upstairs then. She
needs some dry clothes. She gonna'
get sick.

Ginny leads a stubborn Opal out of the kitchen.

HAM
Make sure you get her hair dry.

Opal lets out a moan of frustration.

HAM
What is it woman?

OPAL
De-dea-d-

HAM
Can't nobody understand you like
that.

OPAL
De-ead-edd-eda.

HAM
Opal, we don't know what you're
trying to say!

OPAL
DE-DEAD-DEAD-DEAD-DEAD-DEAD-DEAD.

Opal's words get louder and louder.

HAM
You want me dead too?

She points towards Ham as she continues her chant.

OPAL
DEAD-DEAD-DEAD-DEAD.

GINNY
Mom!

HAM
YOU WANT ME DEAD TOO?

OPAL
DEAD-DEAD-DEAD-

GINNY
Dad! Stop! She doesn't know what
she's saying.

OPAL
(continues)
DEAD-DEAD-DEAD-

HAM
Oh she knows what she saying, she
knows good and well what she's
saying. Well don't get your hopes
up honey bee, cause I ain't going
nowhere. YOU HERE ME? Ham Brown
ain't dyin' by NOBODY'S hand but
the HAND 'O GOD!

Lights out as Opal continues her chant.

BLACK.

SCENE 2

A few hours later. The Brown's living room is a modest affair with old, but well kept, furniture and knickknacks. The carpet from the door to the kitchen and stairs is preserved under a plastic runner. The newest edition to the room is a large hospital bed, which has been set up across from the television. The television is itself an old set, but one that would have been expensive in it's prime. A large box sits on the floor, it's contents strewn about.

Opal lies in the bed, asleep. Images from the television screen flash on her face. After a moment Ginny enters carrying another large box. She sets it down on the coffee table, wipes her hands on her pants and checks on Opal. She turns off the TV and opens the box. She removes a few smaller boxes and starts sorting through them. After a moment Ham enters the front door with his shotgun. He closes the door loudly, and sets his shotgun against the wall. He takes off his boots.

HAM
What in the hell happened to my
living room?

GINNY
Hi daddy. Have a nice walk?

HAM
Yeah. What you doing making such a
mess?

GINNY
I been looking for ma's recipes.

HAM
What you mean? She got 'em all
written down in that damn book in
the kitchen-

GINNY

I looked in that one, but it didn't have her pecan pie recipe-

HAM

What?

GINNY

She didn't put all her recipes in there. Anybody coulda' read outta that book. She kept her favorites secret. I know she's got a little box, or envelope here somewhere, just full of all the best ones.

HAM

So you just march up into the attic? Gonna' snoop in every damn box you find? Dump it all over my carpet?

GINNY

I'm not snooping, I just brought down Ma's stuff. Besides, when's the last time you were up there?

HAM

The attic? I don't know... why I need to be going up there for? Just a bunch of knick knacks of your mother's and crap-

GINNY

I think we got mice. I could hear them crawling in the walls. When I get done here I'm gonna set some traps.

HAM

Don't you worry about no traps up there! I'll take care of it. You don't need to be messing around up there. You just need to get all this crap outta my living room!

GINNY

I thought you wanted a pie.

He thinks.

GINNY

Besides, Ma' only got but a couple of boxes to worry about. This is the last one. If it's not in here, then I don't know where she woulda hid it.

Ham peeks in the box, grumbles.

HAM

Well, just make sure you clean this up. This place is startin' to look like a gypsy camp. And be careful up there, don't need you knocking stuff over.

GINNY

Don't worry daddy.
(sees the gun)
What were you doing with the shotgun?

HAM

Some kids got into Pete Taylor's garage last week, stole his fishing tackle and all his tools. Ain't nobody gonna' steal from me.

GINNY

So you were walking around out there with your gun?

HAM

Why not?! It's my property. Those kids think twice before they come over here if they see me out there with that thing.

GINNY

Whatever you say.

HAM

Damn right whatever I say! You just as bad as your mother, always questioning everything I do.
(beat)
Where's my can?

GINNY

In the kitchen, where you left it.

Ham walks to the kitchen, steps on something sharp.

HAM

Ouch! Goddamnit Ginny! Put this stuff away!

Opal wakes up at Ham's shout. She makes a moaning sound. Ginny goes to her.

GINNY

You alright Mama?

HAM

What's wrong with her? I'm the one
done stubbed my foot!

GINNY

You scared her with all your
yelling.

Opal moans some more, tries to talk.

GINNY

What is it? You want some water?

HAM

She's laughing at me.

GINNY

That's ridiculous.

HAM

Well, you tell me what she doing,
over there rattling and moaning.
Don't make no sense to me!

GINNY

She's just woke up is all. Go on
and get some coffee why don't you?
I'm almost done in here, then I'll
clean this up.

HAM

Can't never win around here, you
two clucking at me all the time. I
don't want coffee, I want to have a
chew.

GINNY

Well, go on then.

Ham exits into the kitchen. Opal calms down a bit. Ginny
offers her some water and she drinks it from a straw.

GINNY

He don't know what he's talking
about. Laughing at him. Like you
care if he stubs his foot on
anything.

Opal leans back, tired.

GINNY

You want me to turn the TV back on?

Opal shakes her head "No."

GINNY

You want some more water?

Opal again shakes her head "No", pats Ginny's hand, moves her mouth and a strange gargle comes out.

GINNY
I don't understand Ma.

Opal moans, then looks around at the boxes, frustrated. She gestures towards the room.

GINNY
You want to get up?

She seems to agree. Ginny helps her up and into a chair next to the bed.

GINNY
You must be feeling better. You look better than you did this morning. Lord, did you see daddy's face when you stuck your head in the sink!

Opal is looking at the boxes.

GINNY
Oh, I hope you don't mind me bringing down some of your things. I'm looking for your pecan pie recipe. Do you remember where you put it?

Opal stares.

GINNY
It was probably in that little recipe box. You know, your secret one? I saw you bring it out a couple times... Is it in any of these?

Opal does not respond.

GINNY
Well, I'll just keep looking then...

Ginny returns to the box, takes out a jewelry box. Gasps.

GINNY
Is this your jewelry box? Why on earth would you have stuck it away?

She is about to open it when an envelope slips out. It is full of old pictures. She sets the jewelry box on that coffee table. Opal stares at the box.

GINNY
Oh, momma, look at all these
pictures!

She starts sorting through them.

GINNY
These should be in the album!
They're all of us kids! Look,
here's John, and Paul! Look at how
young you were holding them!

Opal looks at the pictures, holds them, but does not seem to see them. Ginny continues to show Opal the pictures anyway.

GINNY
And here? Where is this? I don't
remember going to the Grand
Canyon... John looks about 3 or 4
here though... Or is that Paul?
(squints at the picture)
I wonder why you put these away?
(she turns the photo over)
"Grand Canyon, Summer 1968" That
must be Paul. Look at that hair!
And this one! "Paul's swim meet,
1970"
(another picture)
Are these all of Paul?

Opal is shaking.

GINNY
Mamma? Why would you hide all of
Paul's pictures?

Opal pushes the pictures back at Ginny.

GINNY
When did you do this?

Opal looks at Ginny, upset. There is a moment of silence. Ginny picks up the pictures, starts stuffing them back in the envelope.

GINNY
Never mind. I know when you did
it.

Opal moans.

GINNY
What? What are you trying to say!?
(silence)
You didn't even go to the funeral.
John and I were so embarrassed.
(MORE)

GINNY (cont'd)
Everyone came to pay there respects
and we had to tell them you were
too sick to come...

Opal reaches for her.

GINNY
(standing up)
I'm not putting him back in that
box!

As she stands the envelope falls and all the pictures come
out.

GINNY
Oh!

HAM
(offstage)
What are you two doing in there?

GINNY
Nothing Pa, just dropped something
is all.

HAM
(offstage)
Sound like a bunch of damn
elephants.

She bends to pick them up, and notices some bits of paper in
with the photographs.

GINNY
What on earth? Grandma's ice
cream? Grasshopper pie- Ma, these
are your recipes. Why on earth
would you put them in here with
Paul's pictures?

Opal stares.

GINNY
Molasses cookies, those were your
favorite. I just don't understand
why-
(looks her over, then back
to the recipes)

GINNY
Did you put the pecan pie in here
too?

Opal reaches out a trembling hand, pulls a picture from the
pile, hands it to Ginny.

GINNY
This one? This looks like Daddy,
in his uniform.

Opal turns the photo around.

GINNY
You wrote it right on the picture?
(reads)
Sugar, corn syrup, eggs... This is
a lot of work, Ma.

Opal does not move.

GINNY
Ma? You alright?
(no response)
Look, I won't tell nobody about the
recipes, okay? It'll be just
between you and me. And maybe we
can sort through these pictures
after. He really should be in the
album with the rest of us. It
wasn't his fault you know...
(beat)
Listen, I'll get rid of these boxes
and then you and I can start on
these pies. How's that sound?

She quickly puts the pictures and recipes back in the envelope sets it on the table. She picks up the stuff on the floor and puts it back in the larger box and heads upstairs with it. Opal stares at the small jewelry box. After a moment she reaches and picks it up carefully. She opens the lid, stares silently into the box for a moment, and then reaches into it, lifts out a well worn photograph and gasps painfully at what lies beneath. She clutches it to her chest, crying. There comes a loud crash from the kitchen.

HAM
(offstage)
Goddamnit Louie! Ginny get in here
and take care of this dog! Ginny!

Opal manages to put the photo back in the box but falls as she is trying to tuck it under the couch.

HAM
Ginny! Where is that girl?

He sees Opal on the floor and rushes to her. Ginny comes back down the stairs.

GINNY
What's all the yelling about?

HAM
Ginny Mae Brown, what have you done
to your mother?

GINNY
What?

HAM
How did she get on the floor!?

GINNY
I.. I'm not sure.

HAM
You're not sure? What do you mean
you're not sure.

GINNY
I- was upstairs-

HAM
You left her alone? Without
putting her to bed? You know you
can't just let her alone to wander
wherever the hell she wants-

GINNY
I, she was fine when I left. She
just, must have been upset.

HAM
Why would she be upset?

GINNY
Well, I was, I found her recipes,
but they were in with some pictures
of Paul-

HAM
(narrowing)
Paul?

GINNY
It was just a family picture, at
the Grand Canyon.

HAM
I don't know nobody by the name of
Paul!

GINNY
Dad-

HAM
Don't talk to me about no Paul!
I want all of this stuff back in
the attic. Now! You hear me?
(MORE)

HAM (cont'd)
You get this stuff outta' my living
room now!

Beat.

GINNY
Yes sir.

HAM
That good for nothing, chicken
shit, coward-

Opal is moaning and crying.

GINNY
Ma-

HAM
I got her. I'm her husband, I'll
take care of her. You just get
this junk outta' here.

Ham walks Opal over to her bed. Ginny gathers the rest of
the items and puts them in the box to take upstairs. She
looks as Opal and hesitates.

HAM
Well? What you waiting for?

GINNY
Nothing Pa.

She heads upstairs.

HAM
(shaken)
That's alright Opal. We'll get you
to bed and you can just forget all
about this afternoon.
(tucks her in)
Here, take one of your pills. You
need to sleep. You take one of
these and just rest easy, don't
have nothing to worry about. Damn
kids don't understand. Ginny Mae's
just a damn fool, bringing that
stuff down here. You take one of
these and go to sleep. You forget
all about it.

HAM
I won't let her upset you again.
No ma'am. I'm gonna stay right
here with you till you're asleep.
Make sure you're alright Opal. I'm
gonna' make sure you're alright.

Lights Fade.

Scene 3: a few hours later

JOHN, a tall, muscular man stands outside smoking a cigarette. He is 33, handsome, and the spitting image of Ham in his youth. He finishes his cigarette, stamps it out, and walks up to the door, giving it a knock. There is a shuffling coming from inside, and after a moment the door opens. Opal stands in the doorway. She stares out over John's head.

JOHN
Hi Ma'.

She does not move, or make any sign that she sees him.

JOHN
Ma, it's me, John.

He moves to hug her, but again she does not move. We hear Ginny's voice coming from the kitchen.

GINNY
(Offstage)
Mamma', what do you think you're
doing with that door open? Gonna'
let all the dust in-

She reaches out to pull Opal back inside and sees John.

GINNY
John?

JOHN
Hiya' Gin.

GINNY
John! I can't believe it! Let me
get a look at you, my, my!

She hugs him.

GINNY
Oh my God, you have gotten so
strong! I feel like I'm hugging a
tractor!

JOHN
You feel pretty good yourself.

GINNY
Oh, posh. I feel like a
marshmallow.

JOHN

A woman's supposed to be a little soft.

GINNY

'Little' I am not. Come in, Daddy be glad to see you-

JOHN

Nah, I didn't come by to see him.

Opal Starts moaning, she takes a step towards John.

GINNY

That's right Mamma', you recognize John?

She starts towards him.

JOHN

She don't look so good.

GINNY

She's fine. She just has a rough time participating in the world sometimes. Pa' had to give her a sedative earlier, she's probably still not too awake-

She moans again and reaches towards John.

JOHN

What is it Ma?
(to Ginny)
You think she'll let me hug her?

GINNY

Only one way to find out.
(to opal)
Mamma, John gonna' give you a hug, okay?

John steps up to reach his arms around her but before he can, she slaps him across the face and starts to laugh a deep raspy laugh. John is totally shocked.

GINNY

MAMMA! Oh my God, John, I am so sorry.

GINNY

You just can't ever tell what she'll do, she just doesn't know what she's doing anymore.

Opal continues to laugh and Ginny starts to wrestle her inside.

GINNY
I'm just gonna' put her to bed- why
don't you come inside, I'll put on
some coffee-

JOHN
No, that's okay. I'm just gonna'
stay out here.

GINNY
Suit yourself. I'll be right back.

She guides the still laughing Opal into the house. John
takes out another cigarette and lights it. His hands are
shaking. After a while he calms down and Ginny comes back
out on the porch holding two glasses.

GINNY
Brought you some tea.

JOHN
Thanks.

GINNY
You shouldn't smoke.

JOHN
I know.
(beat)
How long she been like that?

GINNY
Oh, ever since she took sick last
year.

JOHN
She looked right in my eyes.

GINNY
Oh she don't know who you are John.

There is a long pause.

JOHN
What are you still doing here
Ginny?

GINNY
What do you mean?

JOHN
I mean, that was a year ago. Why
you still here?

GINNY
Somebody's gotta' take care of
them. Take care of Ma'... Pa' too.

JOHN

Aww Gin, nobody gotta' take care of
pop, he's too mean to die.

GINNY

He's sick.

JOHN

What, Pop? He's always been sick,
he's the sickest son-of-a-bitch I
ever knew-

GINNY

Still, he needs takin' care of.

JOHN

He should be dead already.

GINNY

How can you say that?

JOHN

Cause' it's how I see it. Besides,
ain't you got stuff to take care
of? Things you wanna do instead of
wasting away here?

GINNY

What am I gonna do that's so
important I can't help them out?

JOHN

What? Ginny, there ain't no future
here!

GINNY

I got plenty of time to worry about
my own future. I don't need you to
do it for me. Besides, I've got a
couple of students I've been giving
voice lessons too for pocket money.
I can always go back to full time
later.

JOHN

I still say he don't deserve your
help-

GINNY

Well, deserve it or not, I'm going
to give it to them. We're still
family, whatever else we been
through, you can't deny that.
Besides, can't expect Daddy to take
care of Mamma all by hisself.

JOHN
Aww hell, she's just as bad as he
is.

GINNY
How can you possibly-

JOHN
She ain't never helped us out any.
She never stopped him wailin' on
any of us. She never said one word
on the subject.

GINNY
John-

JOHN
Far as I'm concerned, she made her
bed years ago.

GINNY
You're impossible. You come all
the way out here just to lecture me
about the past?

JOHN
Naw, I came out to see the old man.

GINNY
Why? You need money?

JOHN
Why is it every time I come around
you think it's cause I need money?

GINNY
You want to lecture me about the
past-

JOHN
Gin-

GINNY
He ain't here.

JOHN
Where is he?

GINNY
He's busy.

JOHN
Aww, come on Gin, I ain't gonna'
say anything to upset him.

GINNY
You're upsetting *me*.

JOHN

Ginny Mae-

Ham opens up the door in his shorts and a T-shirt, holding his shotgun.

HAM

Which one of you greedy sons a
bitches is out here now?
(sees John)
John? John, Goddamnit! I was
startin to think you'd never come!
Where you been boy?

Ham puts his shotgun down and comes down the steps to clap John on the back.

JOHN

Hi dad. Where's your pants?

HAM

I thought you was one of them other
ones, come round here for more of
my money. Didn't have time to put
on my pants. Just grabbed my gun
and come down... Woulda' known
better if Ginny'd invited you in
proper!

(to Ginny)

What you dong keeping my boy out
here on the porch for? Go on inside
and make some coffee for me an'
John here.

(to John)

Boy, let me look at you. You been
eating? You lookin' a little thin.

(to Ginny)

Ginny, go on in an' make us some
sandwiches. John looks like he
needs to eat.

JOHN

No, Gin, you don't need to do that.

HAM

Aww, don't worry, she can't cook a
lick but she can't hardly mess up a
sandwich.

JOHN

I'm not hungry Pa'.

HAM

Well, just the coffee then. You
deaf girl? Go on in the kitchen
and make some coffee!

Ginny goes.

JOHN
Don't talk to her like that.

HAM
You talkin' back to me boy?

JOHN
I just don't like you yelling at
Ginny Mae pop.

HAM
Aww, don't hurt her none, she's jes
like a mule, skin so damn thick
nothin' gets through. Come here,
lemme look at you. How you been?

JOHN
Been good, pop.

HAM
Well of course you been good. Star
quarterback, state champ, nowhere
to go but up. I know you been
doing good. I bet you got a girl
now, huh? That why you been
missing? Leaving me alone here
with your sister clucking at me all
day- where is she?

JOHN
Where's who?

HAM
You're girl. You got a girl now,
don't ya?

JOHN
Naw, I don't got a girl-

HAM
Well, then, whatcha' been doing?

JOHN
I been working, Pop. Working hard.
Gotta' make a living somehow-

HAM
You savin'?

JOHN
When I can.

HAM
Good! You gotta' save, it's the
only way to make yours count!

JOHN
Mom been talking at all?

HAM
Oh, she say something every once in a while you know, don't make no damn sense. Make me out to be some kind of bad guy, always mumbling away. Her and Ginny in there watching every move I make, jes' waitin' for me to die.

JOHN
Ginny's not waiting for you to die pop.

HAM
The hell she ain't. She and your mother both just waitin for me to die. I been feeding scraps to Louie jes to make sure she ain't poisoning me.

JOHN
Jesus dad!

Ham smacks John across the mouth.

HAM
Don't you take the Lord's name in vain in my house boy.

JOHN
(restrained)
Yes sir.

HAM
I'm not too old to bust you one. This is my house. You respect the Lord in my house.
(beat)
You need any money?

JOHN
What?

HAM
You need any money? Find a girl to take out, buy some new shoes. Man's gotta' have nice shoes.

JOHN
Pop-

HAM
What you need? A thousand?

Beat.

JOHN
A thousand would be good Pop-

Ginny re-enters.

GINNY
Coffee's about ready.

HAM
It's about damn time. What you do
in there? Grow them beans
yourself?
(to John)
I'm gonna go put on some pants,
then you and I gonna get caught up.

Ginny waits until Ham is gone, turns to John.

GINNY
So now you're staying?

JOHN
That's what the old man says.

GINNY
I don't think it's a good idea
John, he's had a rough day. Mom
fell this morning and he got upset.
I found this old envelope of, well,
it was full of pictures of Paul,
and it must of been too much for
both of them-

JOHN
Paul?

GINNY
Yeah, I- I told mama I wanted to
put them back in the album, but
then daddy came in and raised a
ruckus-

JOHN
Did he see them?

GINNY
No. Just got all wound up about
it. I can't believe she hid 'em
all away like that.

JOHN
She took all the pictures out,
after he died. Afraid pop would
burn 'em or something...

GINNY
Why would she think that?

John shrugs, uncomfortable.

JOHN
Who knows. Hellfire and damnation
or some such thing probably... You
still got them down here?

GINNY
Oh John, I'm sorry, of course, I'll
go get them-

JOHN
Naw, naw, I don't wanna' see him.
Can't look at his face- Jesus Gin,
how do you do it?

GINNY
I don't know.

John looks at her for a moment, thinking.

JOHN
Maybe you're right, maybe it's best
I just left.

Ham opens the door wearing his pants.

HAM
What you two still doing gibbering
out here on the porch for? Ginny
Mae, I told you to bring your
brother in and get him some coffee!

GINNY
He didn't want any-

JOHN
I'm not staying Pop.

HAM
Not staying? But you jes' got
here!

JOHN
I know, but- I think maybe it's
best I go-

HAM
(turning on Ginny)
What did you say to my boy?

GINNY
Nothing Pop!

HAM
You out here scaring him off? Huh?
Telling him stories? Chasing off
my boy?

JOHN
Pop, calm down!

GINNY
John's leaving cause he's got
business to tend to, right John?

JOHN
(uncertain)
Yeah-

HAM
Bullshit. What business he have
that's more important than family?
Come all the way out here and then
leave after 10 minutes? What did
you say to him?

GINNY
Nothin' Pa.

HAM
Stop lying to me! You always lyin.

JOHN
She's not lying. Why are you
getting all worked up?

HAM
You jes' as bad as your mother,
wanting all my money! Can't even
let John stay 10 minutes without
chasin' him outta here-
(gasps)
No-good, greedy... vampire

JOHN
Jesus, Pop!

GINNY
Pop? You okay?

He is struggling to breathe.

HAM
Don't touch me. Stay away from me.
You gonna' come near me after you
tryin to run your brother outta
here-

He is almost falling over.

GINNY

Dad, you're gonna' give yourself a stroke-

HAM

You the one giving me a stroke
Ginny Mae. You and your Goddamn
mother.

He collapses.

GINNY

I'm gonna' go get your pills.

She runs into the house. John leans over Ham.

HAM

You gonna' go an leave me here to
die on my front porch? Ginny?
John?

JOHN

I'm right here Pop.

HAM

Course you are. Course you are.
You wouldn't leave me to die alone
with them two. That's good.
That's good. You're the good one
John. Always were the good one,
the only one...

JOHN

Ginny Mae's the good one Pop. She
ain't done nothin' but kindness to
you this past year-

HAM

Agh, she jes' after my money. But
she gonna' be surprised... I give
everything to you. This house, the
land, money, all goin to you John.
They won't get a cent. When I die,
they ain't gonna' get anymore of my
blood.

Ginny enters with the pills and a glass of water, she leans
down to Ham. John backs up, shaken.

GINNY

How is he?

JOHN

He's not making any sense.

HAM

Ginny?

GINNY
Here dad, drink some water.

She props him up, giving him the pills and holding the water to his mouth ever so gently. He swallows them down.

HAM
You not tryin' to kill me now are you Ginny?

GINNY
No dad, I'm not tryin' to kill you.

HAM
That's good. That's a good girl. Where's John?

JOHN
I'm here, pop.

HAM
You , remember what I said, now...

He coughs, cant' speak anymore, and wheezes.

GINNY
Dad? Dad...
(gets up)
I'm gonna' call Doc. Housman.

She goes in the house.

BLACK

SCENE 4:

An hour later. Opal is lying in her bed, asleep. Ginny Mae is tidying up, putting things away. John stands on the porch smoking.

DOC HOUSMAN comes down the stairs. He is in his 60's, and even though his clothes are dirty from gardening, he looks every bit the caring Doctor. As he comes into the room Ginny puts it down on the table.

GINNY
How is he Doctor Housman?

DOC HOUSMAN
Oh, he'll probably outlive us all, if he can ever keep that temper of his down.

GINNY
That's like asking the sun not to shine.

DOC HOUSMAN

Yes, well, he should try. I told him to stay in bed a few days. He didn't have a stroke, this time. But there's no telling with his blood pressure. If he doesn't watch out, he might just have one, and then what? I can't imagine trying to wrestle him out of this house. I've never met a man so dead set against hospitals.

GINNY

He's old fashioned like that.

DOC HOUSMAN

Well, nevertheless, if he has another episode you better call an ambulance. Let those EMT boys deal with him.

GINNY

Of course Doc, I'm sorry. I know he isn't the easiest patient to deal with and you're so busy-

DOC HOUSMAN

No apology needed, Ginny. I was just out in my garden anyway. Got some really good looking tomatoes this year. Brought some over for you, but I left them in the car.

John enters from the porch.

JOHN

Hey Doc, how is he?

GINNY

Doc says he's gonna' be fine.

DOC HOUSMAN

Hello John. Ginny said you were in for a visit.

JOHN

Yeah, wasn't expecting to stay-

DOC HOUSMAN

I'm sure they appreciate it.

John shrugs.

DOC HOUSMAN

How's your mother? It's been nearly 4 months since I've seen her. Has her speech improved any?

GINNY

Not really. Every once in a while she gets a few words out, but-

DOC HOUSMAN

What?

GINNY

Well, I'm never sure if they're the words she's looking for. Like this morning for instance, she was screaming "Dead", just over and over again-

JOHN

Dead?

GINNY

Yeah. It was real strange. She came into the kitchen and stuck her head under the faucet and then started yelling that word.

DOC HOUSMAN

Does she get agitated often?

JOHN

She slapped me.

GINNY

Oh, she was just upset still about those pictures I found of Paul.

DOC HOUSMAN

I don't understand.

GINNY

Oh, I found some old photos of him in one of Mamma's boxes. Set everyone on edge...

DOC HOUSMAN

Hmm, did you find anything else upsetting?

GINNY

No... Why?

DOC HOUSMAN

Such a shame, Paul. He was always so bright. So sensitive.

JOHN

Cream of the crop.

DOC HOUSMAN
Never saw Ginny without him right
on her heels, tagging along. You
were like two peas in a pod. Would
you mind if I took a look at the
pictures?

GINNY
Course not, Doc. I'll go get them.

Ginny heads upstairs.

DOC HOUSMAN
Your mother was never the same
after that. She's the one that
found him, you know.

JOHN
No, I- I thought Dad found him.

DOC HOUSMAN
No. She came home from the market,
Ham was out hunting. I'm sure he
meant for Ham to find him first.

DOC HOUSMAN
He always seemed to love Opal most
of all. She sat right in there and
cried over his body until Ham got
home, oh, I'd say it had been
nearly 4 hours by the time he
called me. I had to sedate her.
She wouldn't let go of him. Kept
crying and rocking... Awful, awful
thing to lose a child like that.

JOHN
Yeah.

Uncomfortable silence. Ginny comes back down clutching the
pictures.

GINNY
Here you go Doc. I'm afraid
they're a bit of a mess, I'm going
to sort through them later and try
to put them back in the album.

DOC HOUSMAN
(turning one over)
My goodness, I remember this one of
you boys- John, you are the
spitting image of Ham!

John looks at the picture, uncomfortable.

GINNY

That was the summer you broke your arm, remember John? Doc had to make you a special sling so's to keep you from falling over, the cast was so heavy...

JOHN

(pale)
Yeah, I remember.

DOC HOUSMAN

John, are you alright?

JOHN

Yeah-

DOC HOUSMAN

I'm sorry, these are difficult memories. You kids did an excellent service for him. I remember the flowers were beautiful.

JOHN

Ginny Mae did everything. I just showed up. Excuse me for a moment, will you?

John heads to the bathroom.

GINNY

You alright John?

JOHN

(exiting)
Yeah, I'm fine.

Opal wakes up.

GINNY

Oh, sorry Mamma. We didn't mean to wake you up. Doctor Housman just came by to see Daddy.

DOC HOUSMAN

Good evening Opal.

Opal makes a gesture and tries to speak.

OPAL

Hhhhhh.

DOC HOUSMAN

How are you feeling? Ginny said you had a rough day?

OPAL
SmmmmllsmsShhhtt hhhmmmm.

DOC HOUSMAN
I'm afraid I don't understand Opal.

She is frustrated.

DOC HOUSMAN
Take a breath.

She does.

DOC HOUSMAN
That's good. Now, try again-

OPAL
(with great effort)
Sstfphbbp-Paulll.

DOC HOUSMAN
Well, seems those pictures made an impression. Yes, I saw them, Ginny showed them to me.

OPAL
Smmmlshshstt,nnno!

GINNY
I'm sorry Mamma'. I really am. I-
I'll put the pictures away-

OPAL
Nnnpooapa.
(frustrated)
Shhhdeadaepoppop-

Opal gestures agitated.

DOC HOUSMAN
(looking her over)
I know, Opal it's frustrating.
It's going to take time. You've
come a long way. How are you
feeling otherwise? Do you feel
alright? Any headaches?

She shakes her head.

DOC HOUSMAN
Well you seem quite a bit more
clearheaded than the last time I
was by.

She leans her head back in frustration.

GINNY

Probably because her sedative is worn off. Daddy had to give her one earlier, she was so upset.

DOC HOUSMAN

Does he have to sedate her often?

GINNY

Oh, when she gets worked up, I guess. Most of the time she's pretty quiet, but then she gets to trying to say something and she gets all worked up.

DOC HOUSMAN

You don't say. You mind if I check her breathing and all?

GINNY

Of course not.

He opens his medical bag and starts checking her over. He is as gentle with her as with a newborn.

GINNY

Oh, I can't believe I've been so rude Doctor Housman, would you like something to drink?

DOC HOUSMAN

I would love some of your coffee, if it's not too much trouble.

GINNY

It's no trouble at all. You alright Mamma?

Opal nods. Ginny exits into the kitchen.

DOC HOUSMAN

(examining)

Looks like Ginny's been taking good care of you Opal. The house looks good. Everything's real clean... I checked on Ham earlier. He's still as mean as ever. Told me to keep my "no-good, baby-killin' hands" away from you... Oh, is that cold? I'm sorry.

(blows on stethoscope)

How's that? Better? Hmmm. Looks like you got a little bruise here-Ginny did say you fell off the couch today- those pictures. He was a fine looking boy.

Opal is trying to speak again, but can't make anything come out. John re-enters from the bathroom, face damp from splashing it, stops, aware that he is intruding, listens from the hall.

DOC HOUSMAN

(he looks her in the eyes)

I sure wish you could talk to me
Opal. Tell me what happened. Some
nights I can't sleep, just thinking
about how I let you down. I should
have taken you away like you asked.

(she touches his face)

How are you doing in there? Are
you as locked away as I feel?

He kisses the palm of her hand.

OPAL

Saamuule-

DOC HOUSMAN

Did he find the money Opal? Is
that what happened?

Ginny re-enters with the coffee. Doc stands quickly.

GINNY

Alright Doc, here you go, coffee,
two sugars if I remember correctly?

DOC HOUSMAN

You do. Thank you Ginny.

She sees John.

GINNY

You want some coffee too John?

John steps fully into the living room.

JOHN

Sure, that'd be nice.

She turns to go, John stops her.

JOHN

I'll get it Gin, you been fussing
over everyone all day.

GINNY

Oh, I don't mind, it's so nice to
have company, cooking for more-
say, Doc, why don't you join us for
dinner?

DOC HOUSMAN

Oh, that's awful nice of you Ginny Mae, but I wouldn't want to impose-

GINNY

Oh, wouldn't be no imposition!

JOHN

Yeah, I'm sure Ma would love to have you! Might just make her whole year.

GINNY

He's right, she's got to be happy to see some familiar faces.

GINNY

Besides, we made you come all the way out here, we might as well feed you! I've got a pecan pie baking in the kitchen... Mama's recipe.

DOC HOUSMAN

Well, it has been a while since I've had one of Opal's famous pecan pies...

GINNY

Good then it's settled!

DOC HOUSMAN

In that case, is there some place I can clean up? I'm afraid I didn't take time to change before I came over.

GINNY

Of course. You can use the hall bathroom. There's some towels in the closet, just help yourself.

DOC HOUSMAN

Thanks. I'll be back in a moment Opal.

He touches Opal's shoulder gently and steps out.

JOHN

He's awful friendly today, isn't he?

GINNY

Who, Doc?

JOHN

Yeah, making eyes at Ma.

GINNY
Lord, you are sounding more and more like Daddy-

JOHN
You didn't see that?

GINNY
No. You're imagining things. He's just being kind. You want me to get you that coffee?

JOHN
Nah, I'll get it.

Heads to the kitchen.

JOHN
Say, were all those pictures of Paul? Or were there any else?

GINNY
I don't know, I haven't looked at them all yet

JOHN
Alright, maybe I'll go through them with you a little later.

He goes into the kitchen. Ginny starts tidying up.

GINNY
Well, those pictures certainly are stirring things up today, aren't they Mamma? Did you see John's face?

Opal is staring at her intently.

GINNY
It's nice to have company, though, don't you think? I suppose Doc Housman doesn't really count, what with him making a doctorly visit and all... But still, it's nice to see him. Poor John, he just came by for a visit and everyone's took sick- what with you slapping him and daddy almost shooting him. Lord, every time the doorbell rings around here he's convinced it's someone come after his money. Ouch!

Ginny Mae stubs her toe on the jewelry box under the couch, bends down to investigate.

GINNY
What the- how'd your jewelry box
get under here? I thought I put
everything away.

OPAL
Mppop, ooop, oppn-

GINNY
You want it? You always did have
some pretty fine jewelry.

Ginny picks it up, brings it over to Opal, and pulls up a
chair.

GINNY
We could play dress up maybe?
Remember when you would dress us
all up? I don't think John liked
to play much, but me and Paul would
be princesses, and you would be the
queen...
(she opens the box and
lets out a gasp.)
Mamma, what on earth are you doing
with a gun in your jewelry box?

Opal starts trying to talk, but nothing is making sense.

GINNY
Ma?
(lifts out the gun)
What's on this thing? Oh, sweet
Jesus, God, momma, there's blood on
this gun! This isn't Paul's gun,
is it? Paul didn't shoot himself
with this gun!? Oh my God, Momma!
What are you doing with Paul's
gun?!

Opal reaches for the box but can't control her hand and ends
up knocking the box to the floor. The gun, some jewelry
pieces, and a film reel scatter about along with some
bullets. The film reel may be in a case so as not to look
obvious as it lands under the bed.

GINNY
Oh. Bullets too? Mamma! What in
the hell were you thinking keeping
that thing?

She starts picking things up. Opal is mumbling and trying to
speak.

GINNY
I don't understand you! Of all the
places, and you didn't even clean
it! I don't-

OPAL
Paaaaul.

GINNY
Yes. Paul. I understand, this is
Paul's gun, what I don't understand
is why you have it!

She puts the, gun, bullets and jewelry back in the box. She
does not notice the film reel under the bed. Opal
stutters.

Ham yells from upstairs.

HAM
(O.S.)
Ginny Mae?!

GINNY
Oh shoot, he's awake.
(yells upstairs)
Just a minute Daddy.

Opal gestures, tries to speak.

OPAL
Shhhhshshshst...ttsshshhwt...

HAM
(O.S.)
You gonna' make me "wait a minute",
when I'm up here dyin'?

GINNY
You're not dyin' Pa. Doc Housman
says you're gonna' be fine.

John opens the kitchen door. Ginny quickly tucks the jewelry
box on a shelf before he can notice. Opal is trying to
speak.

JOHN
Everything all right in here?

GINNY
Oh, Daddy's just hollerin'- must be
feeling better. I'm gonna' go up
an check on him. Can you watch her
for me?

JOHN
Sure.

GINNY
Thanks.

JOHN
Hey Gin-

GINNY
(whirling around)
Yes?

JOHN
You sure you're alright? You're
lookin' a little pale.

GINNY
Huh? Oh, yes I'm fine. Just fine,
John.

HAM
(O.S)
Goddamnit, Do I have to come down
there myself?

GINNY
I'm coming Daddy! Thanks John.

Ginny takes a quick look at the box before nervously going
upstairs. Opal looks at John for a moment, looks away.

JOHN
You alright Ma?

She does not reply.

JOHN
You ain't gonna slap me again, are
you? That hurt. Surprised the
hell out of me too. I suppose you
did it cuz you're still mad at
me...

She stares at him.

JOHN
I was mad at me too. For a long
time. Took what you said to heart.
Took it so much to heart I couldn't
stand to look at my own face. But
you know what? It don't bother me
no more, because I know there
wasn't anything I coulda' done.
Paul killing himself wasn't
nobody's fault.

OPAL
Yyyyyyyyyyyyyyy.
(breaths)
Yyouou kkneeew. Youuu Knewwww.
Knewwwwww.

JOHN
So it's not just Doc Housman you
whisper to.

She stops, stares at him hard.

JOHN
What were you two talking about?

She looks away.

JOHN
Did he steal some of Pop's money?
Is that why Pop hates him so much?
You were awful self-righteous
sitting there pointing blame at me,
all the while cooking things up
with the Doc. Look at me! You
kept me away, burning up with
guilt, but you want to know who's
fault it all was? It was yours.
You the one sitting there watching
Pa hit us, never once standing up
to him- never once helping us out.
I was just a kid! Well guess what,
I did my time, and Pop's is leaving
it all to me. He's leaving me the
house, the money, all of it. If you
and Doc stole that money- you
stealing it from me, and the way I
see it, you already got a lifetime
of debt to pay off. So I'm gonna'
find that money Ma, and I'm gonna
take my inheritance, and you know
what the first thing I'm gonna' do
with it all when I get it? I'm
burning this house down. I'm
lighting it on fire, and watching
it burn to the ground, and then I'm
gonna take that money and never
come back.

Opal looks at him a moment and then starts to laugh. It is a
deep, raspy laugh that gets progressively louder. John
doesn't know what to do.

Lights go down. ACT BREAK.