

# OH MOMMA, OH!

A ONE HOUR PLAY

BY JEAN BLASIAK

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CAST:

Isabel O'Connor (38, Mark's wife)

Mark O'Connor (40)

Stella O'Connor (72, Mark's mother)

Ken Jacobs (65, friend of Mark and Izzy)

Gus, (68, cabbie)

Marie (manicurist, 50)

Dino, (60, club manager)

Geoffrey Barnes (65; insurance advisor)

Retirement Home Advisor (M or F)

NOTE: The roles of Dino and Geoffrey Barnes  
can be played (with disguises) by the same actor.

IN THE BLACK...

voice over

JANINE

Okay family... I have time for a quick email.

I just put Momma on the plane. I'm watching it take off to be sure she doesn't manage to turn it around with one of her dramatic outbursts.

What can I tell you? After Barbara completed three months of watching Momma and we just finished our three months, I can only report that I would rather babysit a house full of teenagers on spring break with illegal I.D.s than go through one more day with Momma. She made one thing very clear. She does NOT want any part of moving into anything that's "assisted". That should narrow your search now for a home with no curfew, and no restrictions coming and going for her and her companions (Stella's demands).

After you've spent forty eight hours with a constant eye for what she's up to, we'll talk. Four hours should about do it.

Lovingly,

Janine

P.S. Barbara and I both think that our one and only brother should be responsible for Stella - body, soul, and financially! We also agree that the home you choose, Mark, should be near you and Izzy in case of emergencies which happen regularly.

Words of caution? Watch her. She's slippery.

Excuse me, sir... where's the bar?

Janine.

## Scene One

Two O'Connor women (Isabel and Stella) arrive at the Towne Club in L.A. for a late lunch. They are walking toward a table when the older woman (Stella) stops the younger woman (Isabel) and whispers something to her.

ISABEL

I'll go with you.

STELLA

No. You go to the table. I can't go when someone's hurrying me.

ISABEL

I won't...

(doesn't want to get into it with her mother-in-law)

Okay. I'll order you a glass of wine.

Stella turns to head toward the ladies room.

Isabel goes to a table to wait.

After Isabel takes some time studying the menu a member of the club (Ken Jacobs; early sixties; handsome; dressed in golf attire) stops by to say hello to Isabel.

KEN

I thought that lovely woman in the foyer might be the gorgeous mother-in-law I've been hearing about.

ISABEL

Ken, I hoped we'd see you. I want to introduce you to Stella but she just went to the ladies room. Will you join us?

KEN

I have a one o'clock tee time, but I'll stay for an introduction.

Ken sits at the table with Isabel.

ISABEL

We'll have you over for cocktails some night this week so you can get to know Stella.

KEN

By starlight?

ISABEL

What?

KEN

Stella by Starlight? Harry James? You are young, aren't you?

DINO, the Club's General Manager, comes up to Ken and Isabel with concern.

DINO

Is something wrong with Senora, Mrs. O'Connor? A party of four arrived by taxi and while I was holding the door for one of them, the beautiful woman you introduced me to as your mother-in-law got into the empty cab. I heard her say to the driver, "Airport, please".

ISABEL

WHAT?

Isabel jumps up and hurries toward the front door, Dino and Ken following.

ISABEL

(anxious)

Where did they...? Why did she...?

KEN

Maybe she wanted to go home.

ISABEL

What home? Our home? She doesn't know the address.

I picked her up at the airport an hour ago. We were going to have lunch and then go to the new house. She's never been.

KEN

Does she know her way around town?

ISABEL

No. Mark's sister, Janine, warned us how Stella has changed since her isolation.

KEN

Changed how?

Isabel appears to be contemplating telling Ken "how", decides to confide in him, leans in to whisper...

ISABEL

(whispers)

She's become obsessed with men. She's...

KEN

Slutty?

ISABEL

Promiscuous.

KEN

Just my type.

I have to cancel my tee time with my partner.

Meet you out front.

Ken hurries off to the men's locker room.

ISABEL

Oh, dear.

Isabel stares in the direction the taxi would have gone to the airport.

LIGHTS OUT

End of Scene One.

## **Scene Two**

MARK (Isabel's husband) and Isabel are inside the O'Connor home (front room) looking out the window anxiously.

MARK

(holding the drape of the front window aside)

What was it that doctor back east called it?

ISABEL

Some kind of phobia brought on by your father's death. Stella told me in the car on the way to the Club that she hasn't had a good night's sleep since your father died. She's searching for him in her dreams.

MARK

In a cab?

ISABEL

Don't start on me, Mark. I told you that your mother wouldn't let me go to the ladies room with her. I thought she was safe at the Club.

MARK

(closes the drape)

They're here.

Mark opens the front door, stands aside.

GUS (taxi driver) and Stella O'Connor appear at the front door.

GUS

Does this lady belong here?

Isabel grabs and hugs her mother-in-law.

ISABEL

Mom... we were so worried.

STELLA

(confused; innocent)

What about, dear?

ISABEL

You took off in a cab. You could have been...

(glances at the taxi driver; decides not to say what might have happened)

But this nice man returned you.

Mark O'Connor reaches into his back pocket for his wallet.

MARK

(to taxi driver)

I can't thank you enough for escorting my mother here.

I guess the dispatcher told you I called.

GUS

I own the company. I was filling in for a driver.

Gus shakes off the offer of money from Mark.

GUS (cont'd)

No tip. Your mother here is a delightful lady. A bit confused.

She thought I was her...

(embarrassed to say "lover", whispers to Mark...)

boyfriend.

(to Stella...)

Take care of yourself, Stell. Let me know if you want to go  
anywhere again.

Without the O'Connors knowing, Gus slips Stella his business card.

Stella palms the card; kisses Gus.

STELLA

Thank you, Gus. I will.

MARK

(under his breath)

Not.

(to Gus...)

Thanks again, uh-

GUS

Gus.

Gus leans in to whisper to Mark...

GUS

You know, some other driver might have taken advantage-

MARK

(breaks off that sort of talk)

Yes, yes. All good that ends well. Thank you, Gus. I'll send

a letter to your dispatcher complimenting the excellent...  
treatment you gave my mother.

Everyone waves, calls...

ALL

Good night.

ALL BUT THE TAXI DRIVER

Thank you.

Gus waves .

Mark closes the door, turns to face his mother, decides not to berate her at the moment.

ISABEL

I'll get you something to eat, mom.

STELLA

Oh, don't bother, dear. Gus and I ate at some lovely standup place  
downtown. Something on a bun with beans and sauce.

Mark and Isabel look at each other.

MARK AND ISABEL (TOGETHER)

Not Tommy's!

STELLA

Tommy's. That's it. Wonderful. I meant to reimburse Gus.

MARK

I'll take care of it, Mom.

STELLA

Cab drivers can't afford to treat their fares to lunch, son.

MARK

I'll include fifty dollars in the check I send in tomorrow. Now, I  
bet you'd like to have a nice shower and get in bed.

STELLA

Gus offered me the same thing, but I told him that I needed some new clothes. I hope the overnight case with my undies arrived while I was gone.

Mark looks to Isabel for an answer to that.

ISABEL

Everything you need, Mom, is in your room. Come with me.

STELLA

(takes Isabel's offered arm)

Thank you, dear. Although I wouldn't have minded wearing Gus's underwear. Wasn't that sweet of him to offer? Do you know I actually fell asleep in the back of his cab. Imagine that! I haven't had such a restful sleep in over a year.

Isabel and Stella exit the door leading to the bedrooms.

Mark is fuming, gritting his teeth, clenching his hands as

DOORBELL rings.

Mark looks out the front window, opens the door.

Ken is at the door.

KEN

I passed a cab coming from here. Is she home?

Mark holds the door open for Ken.

MARK

Come in. Yes, she's home. A cab driver named Gus brought her back to the Club after Mom gave him several wrong directions, including one to the airport in heavy traffic. Then after LAX, they went to Burbank.

Ken enters.

Stella's voice is heard (o.s.)

STELLA (o.s.)

(anxiously)

Did Gus come back, Mark?

MARK

No Mother. It's Ken, our friend from the Club.

STELLA

Oh. I haven't met him. I'll be down after I take my shower.

ISABELA (o.s.)

You can meet him tomorrow, Mom. It's time you got to bed.

STELLA (o.s.)

Why is everyone trying to get me into bed?

Mark glares at Ken, puts a finger to his lips.

MARK

(to Ken)

We're in for a very long four months. It's our turn.

KEN

Well, you can always call a taxi. Or me. I specialize in mothers.

Mark punches him softly, not too softly.

KEN (cont'd)

Ouch! Respect your elders. You may need them these next few weeks.

Mark ignores Ken's comment.

MARK

We proved what my sister Janine warned us about. Mom can't be left alone for a minute.

KEN

She's definitely the overly friendly type.

MARK

Some would-be-psycho-analyst my sister dug up back east told her that Mom is looking for her dead husband. Stella admitted to Isabel that she can't go to sleep without a man in her bed holding her.

KEN

Remember me. I'm available.

(turns to leave)

Get a good night's sleep and bar the door.

Ken waves.

KEN

Call me if you need professional help.

Ken exits.

MARK

(under his breath)

I hope we never get that desperate.

STELLA (o.s.)

Mark... Is that...?

MARK

It's no one, Mom. Go to bed.

STELLA (o.s.)

I never knew a couple so obsessed with going to bed.

LIGHTS DIM

### **Scene Three**

The next morning.

Stella is sitting at the breakfast table, sipping coffee.

Isabel is cooking scrambled eggs, keeping one eye on her mother-in-law.

ISABEL

What would you like to do today, Mom?

STELLA

I don't care, dear. Anything is fine. Shopping, motorcycle racing, knitting...

Isabel turns around from the stove.

ISABEL

What was that?

STELLA

Just checking to see if you're listening.

ISABEL

Don't do that, Stella. If I lose you again...

STELLA

I feel like a pair of gloves that keeps popping up in lost and found.

ISABEL

(under her breath)

Gloves would be easy.

STELLA

Don't let me keep you from your errands, sweetheart. I can stay here and watch my soaps.

Isabel puts a plate of eggs and toast down in front of Stella.

ISABEL

The truth is, Mom, I have a dentist appointment this morning.

Would you promise to be good if I left you...

(Isabel gives that some more thought)

No. No. On second thought I'll take you with me. That nice receptionist can keep an eye on you while I'm in the chair.

STELLA

Or you could leave me at that Club, Izzy. I could call someone, if I needed a ride home.

ISABEL

Oh, no, you don't, you minx. You're not calling Gus on my watch.

Stella pouts.

STELLA

Mark's father drove a cab.

ISABEL

What?

STELLA

For a short time. David thought he could put himself through grad school when I was pregnant.

ISABEL

(ponders that)

Why don't I know about that?

STELLA

Because fortunately my father rescued us with a position in his company.

ISABEL

Grandpa...?

STELLA

Don't worry about it, dear. Mark wasn't very good at it. It was before GPS.

I'll stay home this morning while you go to the dentist. Jenny is jilting Doctor McDreamy on my soap today.

Isabel plops down in a chair.

ISABEL

I'll cancel the dentist.

STELLA

Oh, no, sweetheart. Beautiful teeth are important. Keep them as long as you can.

ISABEL

I suddenly feel very old.

STELLA

I'll make you a cup of tea. You go back to bed.

ISABEL

(staggers to her feet)

Okay. I'll just...

(recovers immediately)

ISABEL (cont'd)

No!

(gets an idea)

I just thought of something. Be right back.

Isabel exits to the back rooms.

Stella checks her watch.

In the blink of an eye, Isabel is back with her purse.

ISABEL

You're going to love this, Stella. A day of pampering.

Ladies go out the kitchen door; enter door leading to a nail salon (segue).

DOORBELL over door to nail salon chimes.

Stella and Isabel ENTER.

Isabel hurries to whisper to the owner of the salon, MARIE, who ENTERS from the back rooms.

ISABEL

The works, Marie. For my mother-in-law. Especially a pedicure.

Drag it out. I'll pay double.

Isabel pulls a toe separator (used to keep toenails dry) out of her purse and hands it to Marie.

ISABEL (cont'd)

(whispers to Marie)

Keep her under lock and key for at least an hour. I'll be back.

(turns to Stella)

You're in for a real treat, Mom. Marie is going to get you sandal-ready for spring. I'll be back in an hour.

Isabel hurries out of the salon before Stella can argue with her.

Marie is left with Stella; takes her by the hand into the back rooms.

MARIE

(while escorting Stella...)

Okay, momma-in-law. Now... what color did you have in mind?

May I suggest silver? It's very in this spring.

Stella is checking her watch as she is dragged into the back rooms by Marie.

STELLA

(laments)

I have to make a phone call.

LIGHTS DIM

When LIGHTS COME UP again, Stella is sitting in a chair with a fashion magazine, checking her watch.

She puts the magazine down, tiptoes to the front door wearing silver flip flops provided by the salon.

Stella LEAVES the salon.

Bell over door CHIMES.

Seconds later Isabel ENTERS the salon from the opposite direction.

Bell over door CHIMES.

Isabel checks her new filling in a mirror on the wall.

Marie ENTERS from back rooms.

MARIE

What do you think of Momma's silver toes, Mrs. O'Connor?

(looks around)

Where is she?

ISABEL

NO! Don't tell me she's lost again.

MARIE

She was right here. I let her use my phone.

Isabel feels faint, plops down in a chair, holds her head as

LIGHTS DIM

#### **Scene Four**

##### **One week later.**

Mark and Isabel O'Connor are sitting in their living room having a cocktail.

Stella uses her key to enter the front door.

Isabel and Mark check their watches.

ISABEL AND MARK

Mom!

ISABEL

Not again. What went wrong this time?

STELLA

That date you set me up with wanted to dance.

MARK

You love to dance.

STELLA

I love to tango. That old geezer wanted to "get down". That's what he said, "get down". And I said, "I'll call a cab."

ISABEL

You didn't! That "old geezer" is the Club President.

STELLA

Gus was waiting around the back when I called him. I didn't look

back but from the sound of laughter, I think the geezer may have split his pants when he got down.

Several seconds of silence.

ISABEL

(gets up, sighs)

You want anything, Mom? Glass of wine?

STELLA

No, I'm going to bed. No more grandpas for a while. PLEASE.

Stella exits into the back rooms.

Mark stands up, angry.

MARK

That's it. It's time.

ISABEL

For what?

MARK

To find Mom a husband.

ISABEL

Husband? Mark, it's only been a little over a year.

MARK

She needs a man like Dad back in her life, someone who can control her.

A man who snuggles her until she goes to sleep, if that's what it takes, in front of their own TV. Some place with care when they need it.

ISABEL

Someone who drives. Oh, wait, we already have a candidate with a cab.

MARK

That is beneath you, Izzy. It's time to cast a blind eye. If Gus is what will make Mom happy staying home, then who are we to...

ISABEL

(interrupts)

Especially if they're living in the state of...

MARK

Bliss?

ISABEL

I was thinking Maine.

Mark sighs deeply, gives in.

MARK

(resigned)

Invite Gus to dinner.

Immediate BLACKOUT

### **Scene Five**

LIGHTS UP on the O'Connor living room

DOORBELL

Stella calls from the back rooms.

STELLA

I'm coming.

Stella appears, ENTERS living room through door leading to the back rooms.

She stops to check her makeup in a wall mirror. She is bare legged with shiny silver toenails.

DOORBELL again.

STELLA

Impatient one.

Stella answers the door.

Gus is standing there with a large bouquet which he hands to Stella. He leans in to kiss her.

Gus is wearing a smart looking black sport jacket with grey pants. The two top buttons of his white shirt are open. Very classy.

GUS

For you, lovely lady.

(hands Stella the flowers)

You are beautiful.

STELLA

Aren't you a dear, sweet Gus.

Stella kisses Gus on the cheek.

Mark and Isabel come from the back rooms to greet Gus.

ISABEL

Good evening, Gus. Gorgeous flowers. I'll take them.

Stella hands off the flowers to Isabel.

Mark glances outside.

MARK

Is that a Bentley?

GUS

Company car for VIP's.

MARK

Good God! A Bentley.

(with enthusiasm)

What can I get you to drink, Gus?

GAS

A beer sounds good.

STELLA

I'll join you.

Stella puts her arm through Gus's.

MARK

(heading for the kitchen)

We invited our friend Ken Jacobs to join us for cocktails.

Unfortunately, he has other plans for dinner.

GUS

(to Stella)

Is that the man who was waiting at the Club for you?

STELLA

Yes. I haven't met him yet either.

Gus and Stella sit next to each other on the sofa, facing the audience.

Isabel returns with the flowers in a vase which she places on the cocktail table in front of Gus and Stella.

She checks her watch.

Isabel

We're going to a new restaurant that's just opened.

DOORBELL

ISABEL

Oh, good. That's Ken. We'll have to hurry.

Isabel goes to the door while Mark hands off two glasses of beer to his mother and Gus.

Ken Jacobs kisses Isabel on both cheeks and ENTERS.

Stella and Gus stand to greet Ken.

Ken walks up to Stella first.

KEN

Mrs. O'Connor, rumors of your beauty have not been exaggerated.

Ken kisses Stella's hand.

STELLA

Mister Jacobs, please call me Stella.

KEN

And it's Ken. My third wife had a sister named Stella. I was very fond of her. More fond of her than her sister, actually. Unfortunately, my wife thought my fondness for women in the family was misplaced.

Oh, well.

(turns to Gus)

You must be Gus. The family was very upset when MahMah (accent on second syllable) here disappeared so suddenly upon arrival.

GUS

A misunderstanding. I don't regret it at all.

KEN

Really? The family was put through...

Mark cuts Ken off mid-sentence.

MARK

Scotch, Ken? We'll have to be going soon. Sorry you can't join us.

KEN

I, as well. Small scotch, please.

Mark leaves to get the scotch for Ken.

KEN

Somebody from the Club has an aunt in town and desperately needs a fourth at the bridge table. Do you play, Gus?

GUS

(fidgets)

No.

STELLA

Gus is a champion billiards player.

Mark returns with Ken's scotch.

KEN

Billiards? I've never found the proper environment for billiards. Most clubs I frequent abandoned it. You learned a lot about Gus in a short time, Stella. You must fill us in.

(holds his glass up to the others)

To new beginnings. I hope to hear all about your adventure, MahMah, when I take you to brunch Sunday at the Club, if you will join me.

Before Stella can respond, Isabel checks her watch.

ISABEL

I'm afraid it's getting close to the time they said we needed to check in with the restaurant's front desk. They won't hold the reservation longer than ten minutes. Sorry, Ken.

KEN

(downs his drink)

My loss. For now.

(kisses Stella's hand)

See you Sunday, beautiful lady. Watch your step.

GUS

I have her.

As the five people exit the front door, Mark takes Ken's empty glass and puts it on a table near the door.

GUS

I'll drive.

MARK

I won't object to that.

(calls out)

Ken, did you see Gus's car?

BLACKOUT

## Scene 6

LIGHTS UP on Mark and Isabel returning from dinner.

MARK

That went better than I thought it would. You coming to bed?

You look foolish standing there like a nervous parent.

(beat)

Come to bed.

ISABEL

I don't see why they had to go for a ride after dinner. You should have put your foot down.

(When Mark doesn't respond)

I think you're afraid of your mother.

MARK

I am.

ISABEL

Oh, Good Lord! Gus certainly isn't timid around her. I heard him whisper something to Stella when Ken was talking about that Sunday brunch date. He'll convince Stella not to go, you watch.

MARK

And see who controls who? Let's go to bed. I don't want to watch the "good night" kiss at the front door.

ISABEL

I wouldn't be surprised if she invites him in.

Mark shudders.

MARK

I can gladly miss that.

Mark EXITS to the back rooms.

Isabel unlocks the front door, resigns herself to going to bed also. EXITS to the back rooms.

LIGHT fades to faint.

Several seconds of dim light.

The front door opens. Stella enters on flaming tip toes carrying her shoes. Goes into back rooms.

After seconds, Stella returns carrying a suitcase in one hand, strappy shoes in the other and a glitzy dress over her arm.

She leaves a note on the cocktail table next to the flowers. Blows a kiss to the back rooms and EXITS the front door.

Sound of a very expensive car PURRRRRRRRING away.

LIGHT FADES

### Scene 7

In the blackout we hear Isabel's voice shout...

ISABEL

VEGAS?????

LIGHTS UP on Isabel and Mark, both in pajamas. Isabel has a note in her hand which she obviously just opened and read.

ISABEL

MARK! Your mother ran off to VEGAS!

Isabel shoves the note at Mark.

What did I tell you!

MARK

(reads the note aloud...)

"Guess what, dear ones. There is both a billiards tournament and a Tango competition in Vegas this week-end. And WE'RE GOING!

MARK (cont'd)

Be back Sunday evening unless we win the semi finals in the Tango competition. Then we will stay over for the finals on Monday. Ta ta! Wish us luck. How do you spell MahMah?"

ISABEL

Didn't I tell you?

MARK

(plops on the sofa)

Tell me what? That my mother would run off to Vegas with a .....  
with a...

(grabs a pillow; crumbles into the sofa)

Isabel sees how distraught Mark is. She sits down next to him on the sofa and tries to comfort him.

ISABEL

There, there, dear. It'll be all right.

MARK

What will be all right? What will I tell my sisters? We lost mom three  
times in one week. This time... Oh, God, this time.

ISABEL

I knew it, Mark. I knew it when I heard Ken ask her to brunch.

I knew that cabbie would find a way to whisk her away again. If  
Stella were a minor, we could have him arrested.

MARK

But she isn't, is she. She's sixty nine. We haven't a leg to stand on.

ISABEL

She's seventy two but admits to sixty nine. For the last three years.

MARK

She wants to be sixty nine, let her be sixty nine. For the rest of her life.

Maybe when we reach sixty nine we'll want to hang out in the upper  
sixties ourselves. I never liked the sound of seventy.

ISABEL

Speaking of ripe old age, your son is going to be the ripe old age of  
twenty one next month. What are we going to tell him?

MARK

About what?

ISABEL

About his grandmother shacking up in the guest room with a younger man.

MARK

You think so?

ISABEL

Either here or his place.

MARK

No. Do you think Gus is younger?

ISABEL

Don't you?

MARK

Maybe a couple of years.

ISABEL

Mark! I'm asking, what if Sean wants to bring home a lady friend for Spring break? What will we tell him about grandma's "friend"?

(hugs her husband)

What are we going to do?

MARK

You didn't happen to get the license number of that Bentley, did you?

ISABEL

No. How many black Bentleys can there be in Vegas?

Mark looks at his wife, dumbfounded.

MARK

You're kidding, right? Vegas is the Bentley capital of the world, new or repossessed.

ISABEL

What would we do if we found them?

(gets up)

I have to call Ken.

MARK

The hell with Ken.

ISABEL

Mark...

(coming up with another brilliant idea)

Why don't you and Ken drive to Vegas?

MARK

And what will I say to her?

Mom... you're grounded.

ISABEL

Maybe Ken will know what to do.

MARK

I'll tell her to "Get in the car! Sorry it isn't a Bentley."

ISABEL

God! You are obsessed with that car.

Isabel thinks about that.

ISABEL

I think we should do nothing. When they return, we act as though nothing has happened.

MARK

What will that accomplish?

ISABEL

We won't be acting rashly which they expect us to do. No harm can come from doing nothing.

MARK

Normally I'd say that's good advice. Call Ken.

Isabel picks up the phone and speed dials Ken.

She gets the answering machine.

ISABEL

Ken... Isabel. Stella went out of town suddenly. We'll talk later.

Just wanted you to know that she won't be here Sunday for brunch.

Call us when you have time. 'Bye.

(hangs up; to Mark)

And when he gets here, you talk to him.

LIGHTS DIM