

DON'T THINK SHE WON'T

(A Serious Comedy)

by

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DON'T THINK SHE WON'T

THE CHARACTERS

HAROLD BLANDERS, A Lawyer, burly, 50s

CAROL BLANDERS, His attractive wife, a college friend of David's, 40s

DAVID HICKS, An insurance agent, 40s

THE PLACE

Harold and Carol's living room

THE TIME

Recently

DON'T THINK SHE WON'T

(Cole Porter's 'Let's Misbehave' is playing. CAROL and DAVID are hugging)

CAROL

(As they break) It's so good to see you!

DAVID

It's good to see you.

CAROL

You look...My God, what happened to you?

DAVID

Thanks a lot.

CAROL

That wasn't really an insult, sweetheart! You just look...different. But we all change, I know.

DAVID

That's true.

CAROL

I'm sure I don't look great, either, do I?

DAVID

You haven't changed...too much.

CAROL

Thanks...I think. You know suddenly I'd really like a drink. But I suppose I should wait for my husband.

DAVID

I'm looking forward to meeting the man you married.

CAROL

I'm not going to tell you what he's like. You'll have to make up your own mind about that. You used to be perceptive. Are you still perceptive?

DAVID

That's a good question. (He chuckles)

CAROL

Don't let him fool you.

DAVID

Will he try to do that?

CAROL

He's a lawyer.

DAVID

I won't ask what you mean by that.

CAROL

(A little laugh) You used to be quite funny, too. Are you still funny?

DAVID

I'm still odd.

CAROL

(Laughs) Oh, that was a good one!

DAVID

(Shrugs) I didn't even try.

CAROL

You know I haven't had a good laugh in years. I mean a really good laugh! Nobody I know is funny! You had this dry sense of humor. It cracked me up. I've really missed that sense of humor of yours. I've missed a lot of things, but I haven't realized it. Seeing you brings it all back. Oh, God, it's so wonderful you've come to sell Harold a Life Insurance policy.

DAVID

(Pause) Um, when do you expect your husband?

CAROL

Oh my, any minute now. He's on his way as we speak. I'll be right back. You took me by surprise. I must look just awful. (Pause; He doesn't respond) Just awful. I need to fix myself up.

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DAVID

Um, what about your husband?

CAROL

Now don't be too sarcastic with him. He's very sensitive.

(CAROL exits quickly. After a minute, HAROLD then enters)

HAROLD

Aha! You must be David. Now what have you and my wife been up to?

DAVID

(Nervous laugh) How do you do? (He offers his hand, HAROLD ignores it) Um, you must be Harold.

HAROLD

Now what have you done with my wife, eh?

DAVID

She's getting dressed. (HAROLD stares at him) I mean she's changing her clothes! It's nice to meet you, Mr. Blanders.

HAROLD

And you're this David I've heard so much about. Let me tell you, it's been David this and David that, until I was getting damn sick of it. So now I finally meet you. I expected to be overwhelmed, but you don't look too intimidating. How do I strike you? Now be honest. Mind you, I've put on a few pounds, but people say it becomes me. Carol loves it. Tell me again. Why are you here?

DAVID

The, uh, insurance policy—

HAROLD

Oh yes, insurance...Right. Tell me something, will you, Dave? Do you mind if I call you Dave? But why not? Tell me about Life Insurance. I mean, at bottom, when you get right down to it, what the hell do I need it for?

DAVID

Well, it's protection. I mean...(He shrugs)...

HAROLD

I'll be dead. So who does it protect?

DAVID

It is a guarantee that your loved ones will be protected, Harold. That they will be secure in their old age. You can feel comfortable that they will be safe and well-provided for.

HAROLD

Suppose I don't want them to be secure? Suppose I want them to work and struggle against the odds, the way I had to?

DAVID

Well... You can change the beneficiaries at any time. I could go into greater detail, if you'd like me to discuss all this with you right now. After all that's what I'm here for, to make sure you are happy with the policy. Any questions you might have—

HAROLD

I'm going to have a drink, Davey. (He pours a shot, downs it in a gulp) Boy, I needed that! Have you ever felt like you needed a drink? I mean you *really* needed the doggone thing?

DAVID

Um...about the policy, Mr. Blanders—

HAROLD

Call me Harold. What would you like to drink, Davey?

DAVID

Oh, nothing for me. Thanks, anyway.

HAROLD

I really think you'd better have something. We're waiting for Carol to make herself beautiful. It might take a while.

DAVID

You think so?

HAROLD

I didn't mean that the way it sounded! I meant she could keep us waiting a while. You know women.

DAVID

I'm not sure I do.

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HAROLD

Now that's a subject!

DAVID

What I *don't* know about women?

HAROLD

But what do any of us know about them! I could write a book on what I don't know about them—starting with my wife!

DAVID

Well, if you write it, I'll be happy to read it.

HAROLD

But you wouldn't learn anything from it, Davey, because I don't know anything about them.

DAVID

(Pause) You know I think I will take one of whatever you're drinking.

HAROLD

Good man! (He pours DAVID a drink). You know my father used to have a saying about women.

DAVID

What was it?

HAROLD

I can't for the life of me remember. It was probably ridiculous.

DAVID

Then it's probably best forgotten, anyway.

HAROLD

You are absolutely right. One for you! My father, in fact, *was* a ridiculous man. Something of an idiot, I'm sorry to say. But yet, he was a *good* man! In fact, he was a wonderful man. I'm having scotch. Yes, dear old dad was a diamond in the rough. A diamond! But very much in the rough. (He pours DAVID a drink.)

How so?
DAVID

I'll be frank with you, Dave.
HAROLD

I want you to be.
DAVE

He was a nitwit.
HAROLD

DAVID
(Sipping his drink, trying to find something to say) Well... there are worse faults.

HAROLD
Now my mother! But we don't want to get into her! That would bust your—buttons!

DAVID
Is she still alive?

HAROLD
Let's leave her in peace.

DAVID
Then I guess she's not.

HAROLD
She died in a hunting accident. It's funny because she never hunted. I don't know how dad talked her into it. Anyway, she never came back. Dad swore it was an accident. Naturally, dad was broken up about it. But he got over it. More power to him. He had a rough couple of days. How's your drink? I hope it's not too weak.

DAVID
No. Um, look...about this life insurance policy, while we're waiting for Carol why don't I just fill you in on the salient points?

HAROLD
Oh, not just yet. (He then chuckles with bonhomie) You know this is a little game Carol plays, this making us wait. She thinks if she takes long enough, I'll get angry.

DAVID

You mean she *wants* you to become angry?

HAROLD

Come on! You know how it works! If I get angry, then that shows weakness, and if I show weakness, it gives her the upper hand. I'm sure you've seen her play that game.

DAVID

Um, no.

HAROLD

Then, you see, she forgives me and we make up. Oh boy! That's the fun part. But I'm sure I don't have to tell you.

DAVID

No. I mean you don't *have* to. I mean I wouldn't know.

HAROLD

Nonsense, man! You *know* Carol.

DAVID

We simply knew each other in college. Years ago...*many* years ago! Oh boy, many years ago.

HAROLD

And she thought a lot of you. She's told me that.

DAVID

She *has*? I'm surprised.

HAROLD

Why would that surprise you?

DAVID

Well, I wasn't that important.

HAROLD

(Pause, palsy) Look, Davey, can I give you some advice?

DAVID

Yes, alright.

HAROLD

Well, what I want to tell you is this. Don't sell yourself short! You have to think of yourself as a unique human being, as an *individual!* Don't ever forget that. You are important! And tell me this, Dave. Without a sense of your own importance, what are you? (Pause; DAVID looks stumped) You are *unimportant*, man! And that's not something you want to be! If you suddenly cease to believe in your own importance, well, Good God, who else can believe in you?

DAVID

I see what you're saying.

HAROLD

Not, of course, that any of us is actually important in this hideous, vast, ice cold universe. But we need to maintain the illusion, don't we? Now isn't that a depressing thought! (He finishes his drink in one swallow) Listen, Davey boy, I really like you.

DAVID

Thank you...Harold.

HAROLD

I mean that! There's nothing phony about me. I'm sure you can see that. You're very sharp! I'll be honest. I didn't expect to like you. Frankly, when Carol told me you were coming over, I literally blew a gasket! I mean what would *you* think? Here I'm expecting this creepy sad sack she knew back in college and who is now reduced to selling God damn insurance! I expected some pathetic sniveling creature, meek as a little mouse, begging a handout from an old friend because he'd fallen on bad times. That was my expectation! Be honest. Can you blame me?

DAVID

I guess not, seeing from that perspective.

HAROLD

But then I find you! Confident, sure of yourself, in command of the situation—

DAVID

Um, So then, about this policy, Harold—

HAROLD

Whoa! Let's not push it, boyo. I like a man with self-confidence and drive, but that sort of thing can go too far. There's something to be said for old-fashioned courtesy. And if you're the man I think you are you'll agree with me on that.

DAVID

Yes, I do. In fact, if I can say it, my father used to have a saying about courtesy—

HAROLD

(Interrupting, as he pours himself another drink) So you remember your old man, do you? I find that admirable. My father was a wonderful man himself. He drank a lot. In fact, he drank like a fish. It caused us some rather embarrassing moments now and then. In fact, I once tried to kill old devil. Of course, it was my mother's idea. But it never got off the ground. Thank heaven for that, because in the end old pop was really a pretty decent sort. In fact, it was mom I came to loathe. (He takes a large drink) I think I actually could have done her in in a second. Of course I'm embarrassed to admit that. And I did learn a lot from her. She was a Professor of Law, at a major university. But what she really taught me about was women! I learned all about womankind from that old—(He notices CAROL now enter)—that dear old mom of mine! Well, here she is! (He kisses CAROL)

CAROL

Hello, everyone. Mm, I think I'll have one of those, all right? (Indicates drink)

HAROLD

All right, my love! Another scotch coming right up! (He mixes it).

DAVID

You certainly look wonderful, Carol.

HAROLD

Doesn't she? I could eat her sometimes. Literally, eat her right up! Take that for what it's worth, Davey!

DAVID

I mean she hasn't changed since I last saw her.

CAROL

It was only five minutes ago.

DAVID

I meant. You know—

HAROLD

She hasn't changed, has she? (Handing CAROL her drink) So tell me, has Davey changed?

DAVE

Oh boy!

CAROL

Yes, I'd say he has.

HAROLD

How has he changed?

CAROL

I hate to be brutally honest, but I find it odd he's selling insurance. I mean we all thought David would become a famous artist. He was bright. He was talented. He was sensitive—

HAROLD

(A 'gestured' elbow in David's ribs) Well, well now, Ho ho! So old Davey was 'sensitive', was he?

DAVE

Oh no. No. I wasn't all *that* sensitive.

HAROLD

Don't be ashamed of it, man. If I may, I'd like to say something about this sensitivity business. As a lawyer, I think I know something about it. I mean I have to deal with clients! They are human beings, you know! And they are often human beings in emotional distress, and I have to minister to their emotional distress, so I can tell you I have learned something about this sensitivity rubbish.

CAROL

That was crude.

DAVID

As a matter of fact, I did go to art school for a couple of years. But in the end I had to give it up.

CAROL

Oh my. I think that's a terrible shame. It was a terrible waste of your talent and sensitivity. Why did you leave?

DAVID

There were many factors involved. (CAROL frowns).

HAROLD

Oh boy! I'm afraid you've upset her, Davey. That wasn't nice. (To CAROL) You know what? You probably need another drink. (He reaches for her glass and knocks her drink all over her).

CAROL

For Heaven's sake! Look what you've done, you boor!

HAROLD

Oh damn, I'm really sorry, sweetheart!

CAROL

Will you please *excuse* me! (She exits).

HAROLD

That was clumsy of me! I wish you hadn't upset her, Dave!

DAVID

I'm really sorry. But listen, Harold—Um, May I call you Harold?

HAROLD

Of course, Davey! What else! (He winks at DAVID).

DAVID

Well, look, I was just wondering do you think we could discuss the policy *now*? I mean it's clear you love your wife very much. You are thinking of taking out a very large life insurance policy to provide for her if, God forbid, anything should happen to you!

HAROLD

You're right. I do love her very much. I mean she is beautiful, she is charming, she is caring and she is witty! Can you think of anything I missed? Who the hell wouldn't love her, man?

DAVID

Everyone would. (Quickly) I mean based on what you said.

HAROLD

(He takes a long drink, looks at DAVE) Of course, as you know, she has her faults.

DAVID

(Laughing nervously) Well, they say no one is perfect.

HAROLD

I wonder who coined that expression? Maybe you can tell me. It was probably some woman talking about men, don't you think? But these are rather serious faults if you know what I mean?

DAVID

No. I think you're putting me on.

HAROLD

Oh yes, Davey boy. In fact when I first met her she was something of a tramp.

DAVID

What? Now I know you're putting me on!

HAROLD

You don't know that? I'm afraid there's no other way to put it. Back in those days she gave a tumble to anything in pants. You wouldn't believe some of the creatures she took to! In my opinion, some of them were barely human! It upset me greatly. The thing is I couldn't understand why such a lovely woman would waste her time, much less become intimate with such miserable specimens of humanity! Of course it did make her more appealing, in some ways.

DAVID

(Chuckles, very uneasy) I'm sure you're just putting me on.

HAROLD

I asked myself why she did it. You know what I decided.

DAVID

Er...What?

HAROLD

I decided it was pity! That's right. I decided she must feel charitable toward such wretched low-lives. But I also felt that charity had its limits.

DAVE

I really find this hard to believe, Harold.

HAROLD

Oh, but the story has a happy ending.

DAVE

So you are just pulling my leg, after all.

HAROLD

Oh no. The happy ending is that when we married, all that... trouble ended. The joy of married life, of married life with *me*, if I can boast a little, cured whatever it was that caused her promiscuity. You might say, if you'll excuse the vernacular, that I scratched her itch. Yes, that's right, and our happiness is now such that I can safely say she has never since felt the desire to roam.

DAVID

I'm glad to hear that, Harold, and if I may say so, you're a lucky man.

HAROLD

You think you have to tell me that, Davey?

DAVID

No. Sorry.

HAROLD

How about you?

DAVID

What do you mean?

HAROLD

How lucky are you?

DAVID

Oh. You mean *my* love life? Actually, at the moment, the girl I've been seeing—well, we're temporarily not seeing each other. There are some problems. But I'm confident things will work out.

HAROLD

Don't get too confident.

DAVID

No?

HAROLD

Oh no. To become over-confident is to lose sight of reality, and you never want to lose sight of reality, Davey. Let me tell you! I once knew a man who lost sight of reality.