

Flannel Sheets and a John Deere

A Play

by Kim E. Ruyle

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Cast of Characters

DANA Female. White. 40s.
MARLENE Female. White. 40s.
EUGENE Male. Black. Mid-30s – 40s.
ADAM Male. White. 30s – 40s, younger than Eugene.

TIME: A recent mid-November weekend.

SETTING: Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, northcentral Wisconsin.

SET: A primitive hunting cabin. Two bunkbeds, table and chairs, pine sideboard, propane camp stove, and a basin with a deep well hand pump. A wall rack holds fishing rods. Lined canvas coats and orange hunting vests hang from a coat rack. Various hunting cabin accoutrements are on shelves, in the sideboard or hang from a wall, including a couple of kerosene lanterns, two cast iron skillets – one large and one small, a cutting board, an assortment of knives, a high-power flashlight, a fire extinguisher, and a full-size axe. Also displayed, a hatchet with a distinctive, stylized metal handle that incorporates a pistol grip. Marlene's family photo hangs prominently, everyone wearing camo and rifles slung over shoulders.

SYNOPSIS: Four factory coworkers meet in a cabin in the Northwoods of Wisconsin the weekend before hunting season to prepare for opening day. Hunting preparations are derailed when they discover unnerving truths about each other that spark hostilities and put everyone in jeopardy. How destructive can polarizing values become on a personal level? These four coworkers are about to find out.

RUNNING TIME: ~90 Minutes, one continuous scene with no intermission.

PRODUCTION NOTES

- Please respect and value all four characters. Each is uniquely flawed, but each is authentic and true to their deeply held values.
- Please avoid favoring any particular viewpoint. None is wholly right. None is wholly wrong.
- Rather than a small plastic polar bear, the prop can be created by carving a bar of white soap to make a figure more easily split with the hatchet.
- Dialogue written in all caps is intense, forceful, impulsive.
- Dialogue written in italics is given accentuation, emphasis.
- A forward slash (/) indicates where the next line of interrupting and overlapping dialog begins.
- Ellipses (...) at the end of a line indicate an unfinished thought, dialogue that trails off. Ellipses within a line of dialogue suggest a verbal pause.
- A dash (–) indicates dialogue cut off, abruptly interrupted.
- Brackets [] indicate sentiment expressed by unspoken words.

"It's easy to take a gun and annihilate your opposition, but what is really exciting to me is to see people with differing views come together and finally respect each other."

~Fred Rogers

"The search for a scapegoat is the easiest of all hunting expeditions."

~Dwight D. Eisenhower

"Vegetarians are cool. All I eat are vegetarians – except for the occasional mountain lion steak."

~Ted Nugent

FLANNEL SHEETS AND A JOHN DEERE

Friday evening, dusk. A rustic hunting cabin, dim and dank and long vacant. A padlock is removed from outside. Marlene opens the cabin door, sticks her head inside to look around before picking up an ice chest on which balances a grocery bag. She enters followed by Dana who is similarly laden. Both women are dressed for the Northwoods: jeans, boots, denim shirts, and down vests. Dana wears a red cap with neither label nor logo.

DANA

A vaporizer! Wouldn't that be sweet? Where you want this?

MARLENE

Not the table. Just here, against the wall.

Marlene sets chest down, lights lanterns, and rummages through supplies. Dana looks around, nods in appreciation of the place, then, animated...

DANA

You know what I mean, though? I want a hood-mounted ray gun. Vaporize those slow-driving assholes. You know the problem, don't you? They don't know how to read!

Marlene grabs paper towels and spray bottles. She and Dana quickly wipe down the table and sideboard and fluff mattresses as they speak.

MARLENE

Indicating a surface to be wiped.

You need to get that.

DANA

Yeah, yeah. But the sign! It says *slower traffic keep right*. Slow – ER. It doesn't say *slow*, does it? ER! Slow – ER.

MARLENE

Pausing to look around, reflect.

God. Just remembering the last time...

DANA

Say the speed limit is 70 and you're going 75 and say I'm going 80. Who's slower? You are! Don't mean you're slow. Jes slow-ER. Nobody wants to be considered *slow*. And *that's* the fuckin' problem.

DANA (CONT.)

Everbody thinks they're speedin' by goin' five over, but some of us don't jes wanna dance around the speed limit. We wanna kick it in the ass. So why can't those slow driving left lane fuckers move to the right lane?

Waiting for a response which doesn't come.

I'm asking. Why can't –

MARLENE

No. *I got it.*

DANA

The left lane is for passing, and if you're making other cars pass you on the right, you should have your ass vaporized!

MARLENE

Okay! Got it!

DANA

Last time what?

MARLENE

Oh. Two years ago. I got a four-point. Greg got a doe. Gave him lots of shit. That was the last time...

DANA

Oh. Sorry... No wonder all the dust.

MARLENE

For tomorrow, we got brats/ and –

DANA

/And lefthand turns.

MARLENE

Jesus, Dana. We're here. Let it go.

DANA

The left lane is for passing and making lefthand turns! Why in hell isn't that the first thing they teach you in driver's ed? Want a beer?

MARLENE

Heavy sigh.

Sure.

They open beers and have a seat.

DANA

Case and a half. Should be enough.

MARLENE

Damn, girl. How much beer –

DANA

Eugene might be a thirsty boy. I'm thinking –

MARLENE

Don't say *boy!*

DANA

What? I dint mean nuthin.

Pause.

Anyways, figure you might need some privacy. *You know.* For –

MARLENE

Nothing's gonna happen!

DANA

Lighten up. Drink your beer.

MARLENE

They say one year for every seven years of marriage.

DANA

That's crazy! Who says?

MARLENE

Book I read.

DANA

So? What? Gonna wait another, what? Another year? Two? You'll be all dried up.

MARLENE

He knows I'm here tonight but pretty sure he's not driving up 'til the morning. Not tonight. Probably won't get here until noon tomorrow, so just lunch. Maybe supper.

Marlene rises, begins looking through the coolers.

DANA

Naw. He'll come tonight. Wanna crawl inta bed with ya.

MARLENE

What are you? In high school?

DANA

Jes sayin'. You've been hanging out on breaks. Do that enough, it counts as a date.

MARLENE

No dates.

DANA

Gettin' all cozy in the breakroom. People notice.

MARLENE

There's nothing to –

DANA

Whatever! But he'll come tonight. And we got plenty a food and beer.

MARLENE

Brats for lunch, but I brought some steaks in case –

DANA

Don't worry. I'll give you some space. And don't tell me this weekend isn't a date.

MARLENE

Will you *please* [give it a rest]? Oh, crap. I didn't bring any eggs.

DANA

Ever do it on one a these bunkbeds?

MARLENE

Throws a glare that says, Shut the fuck up!

Okay, so, for breakfast, just skillet toast and bacon.

DANA

Yeah, all right. Long as ya got coffee.

MARLENE

You hungry? Now?

DANA

Bacon and coffee. That's perfect. Naw, I'm good.

Marlene tosses jerky on the table, sits again. Dana shrugs, opens jerky. They munch on jerky and sip beer. Dana studies rack of fishing rods on wall.

DANA (CONT.)

How far's the lake?

MARLENE

There's a trail. Not far.

DANA

How deep? They got muskies?

MARLENE

You'd need a boat.

DANA

Thought Greg had a boat.

MARLENE

I sold it after [he passed]. Medical bills and...

DANA

Oh, fuck. Sorry.

MARLENE

No, that's [okay]... Good thing about this time of year, no mosquitoes.

DANA

Gonna keep it? The cabin?

MARLENE

Love this place... I don't know. The farm. Don't know if I can keep both. Two kids in college.

DANA

When I split from my ex, all I got was a car payment. Fuckin' loser.

Marlene rises, pulls flannel sheets bagged in plastic from the sideboard, tosses a set to Dana. They quickly fit the bottom bunks as they continue the conversation.

DANA (CONT.)

Let's make up another bunk for Eugene.

MARLENE

Flannel sheets. Make me sad.

DANA

Mild mocking.

Yeah, I've always thought that about flannel. Gives off a sad vibe.

MARLENE

We got married, Greg said he wanted to give me everything. Whatever I dreamed. I told him only thing in life I wanted was him between flannel sheets to keep me warm on winter nights.

DANA

You guys. Should a had a Hallmark movie.

MARLENE

Sell the farm, I'd have to sell the tractor. Can't bear the thought.

DANA

Sell it. Ya don't need the headache. Sell the farm. Keep the cabin.

MARLENE

He loved that tractor.

DANA

Anyways. Comin' up on two years. It's time ya... You know.

The sound of a car door slamming outside. Dana looks out the door, shuts it, and turns around.

DANA

Told ya he'd come tonight!

MARLENE

Who? *Eugene?*

DANA

Not his truck out there, but it's him. Comin' this way. Big as life.

Marlene opens the door to reveal Eugene wearing jeans, boots, flannel shirt, and a down vest.

MARLENE

Oh, hi! You're here. I thought tomorrow, but come on in.

EUGENE

Hey, Marley. Oh. Hi, Dana.

DANA

Marley?

MARLENE

It's okay. Kind of like it.

DANA

Reminds me /of a dog.

MARLENE

/Make yourself comfortable. We've got –

EUGENE

Not a dog! Marley. As in *Bob Marley*.

DANA

Cracking up and flipping Marlene's hair.

Need some dreadlocks, girl.

MARLENE

Dana!

EUGENE

Not the guy, so much, but there's this song.

MARLENE

Don't give her any –

EUGENE

Is This Love. The lyrics –

DANA

Oh, my god!

MARLENE

Don't!

EUGENE

Singing.

Is this love, is this love, is this love that I'm feelin'?

Eugene stops singing with a smile as Dana cracks up. Marlene looks mortified: *Don't give Dana any ammunition!*

EUGENE

What? It's a great song. Roof over our heads. Sharing shelter. Single bed.

DANA

Oh! It's perfect! And flannel sheets, right?

EUGENE

Flannel sheets?

DANA

Marlene – *Marley* – was just telling me how she’s itching to get back in the saddle.

EUGENE

Big smile.

Good to hear.

MARLENE

[Fuck you, Dana!] Don’t listen to her. Have a seat.

EUGENE

Well, here’s the thing. On my way, I made a quick stop at Smitty’s. You know, they’ve got the gas pumps next to the bar. And. You know Adam?

DANA

The new PC?

EUGENE

The one.

DANA

Kinda cute.

MARLENE

[Shut it, Dana.] What about him?

EUGENE

I walked in to pay my bill, and Adam’s at the bar. Not sure how long he’d been there, but he’s way past his limit. And then he, oh, man. The guy makes an offhand comment about the Packers and the Bears.

DANA

Oh, shit! Don’t tell me he’s a fuckin’ Bears fan.

MARLENE

Isn’t he from Chicago? So, [yeah, probably].

EUGENE

How the Bears have more Hall of Famers.

DANA

Bears fans. Bunch a assholes.

EUGENE

Yeah. Well, things got ugly.

DANA

Guy's lucky he's still walking.

EUGENE

Out in the car, in fact.

MARLENE

He's here?

EUGENE

What I'm trying to tell you. Some guys followed him out to the parking lot. Started pushing. When he took a punch, I kind of went to his rescue, helped him into his car and split before they could do some serious damage.

MARLENE

But why'd you bring him/ here?

EUGENE

/He was out of it. And. I don't know. I was already packed and headed this direction. And, you know, I didn't want to backtrack. And he was in no shape to drive.

MARLENE

Yeah, but –

EUGENE

No. If I took him back to his place, wherever, then I'd have to figure out how to get my truck.

Shrug and a sigh.

My truck was already jammed full of stuff from work plus my hunting gear, so I didn't have room for him and I didn't, uh... I, uh, I just made a quick decision to throw him and my hunting gear in his car and split. And once I started driving, I don't know, I just...

Pause. The truth.

I didn't want to miss spending the night [with you].

DANA

And Marley was callin' your name! That's great! Bring him in.

EUGENE

Marley?

MARLENE

Well, yeah. Don't leave him out there.

EUGENE

He's kind of beat up, but at least he's sobered up. Maybe. I think.

Off Marlene's concern.

Well, I don't know. Are you sure?

Marlene nods, and Eugene exits.

DANA

Your guy's kinda sweet. Goin' to the rescue of a manager, and a fuckin' Bears fan no less.

MARLENE

Not. My guy.

DANA

How many steaks you got?

MARLENE

They're not staying the night. Not with Adam here.

Eugene enters followed by Adam who's not dressed for the woods, wearing business casual, no coat. He enters a bit unsteadily. There's a purple shiner on one eye. Dana grabs beers from the cooler.

MARLENE (CONT.)

Hi, Adam. Come on in.

DANA

Got you a beer but. Holy shit! Looks like you need something for that eye.

EUGENE

No more beer.

ADAM

No. I'll take the beer.

Adam takes the proffered beer and sinks into a chair, holds cold bottle against his eye. Eugene shrugs, accepts beer. Everyone sits. Awkward silence.

ADAM

Thanks for the/ beer.

DANA

/Were the guys from the plant? They know you're one a the PCs?

ADAM

Hell, if I know.

DANA

Fuckin' with a manager. Must be outta their minds.

EUGENE

Different shift. Some of them had to know. Probably not the guy who took a swing.

DANA

A pat on Adam's shoulder.

Should know, you can't be raggin' on the Packers.

MARLENE

Want me to make an ice pack? For the/ eye.

ADAM

/No. I'm fine.

EUGENE

Wasn't so much what he said about the Packers.

DANA

What?

EUGENE

He made a comment about the fans.

MARLENE

Packer fans?! What he/ say?

DANA

/Oh, shit! No wonder he gotta black eye.

EUGENE

Something about them eating cheese and shitting creampuffs.

DANA

A good laugh.

For a production controller, you're a crazy fuckin' dude. Wasn't no creampuff hit ya in the eye.

ADAM

Fuckin' sledgehammer, what it was.

MARLENE

So, what's the plan?

DANA

Stay the night! We got four beds.

MARLENE

That's probably not...

EUGENE

I'm not sure...

DANA

Whatcha say, Adam?! Spend the night! Go get Eugene's truck in the morning.

ADAM

Pause, looking around.

Uh, yeah. Maybe. I guess.

Dana beams. Marlene and Eugene look at each other awkwardly, then she shrugs and gives a nod.

EUGENE

Well, if you're sure, I'll go move the car.

ADAM

I can move it. Make sure it's locked up.

EUGENE

I also got some stuff/ out there.

DANA

/Go on ahead. Me and Marley will get the beds ready for ya.

Adam pops the top of his beer, takes a very long swig, then slowly stands. Alcohol's having an effect, and he grabs the back of the chair to steady himself. Others look concerned.

ADAM

Fucker really clocked me. Still kinda dizzy.

EUGENE

Sit back down. I'll take care of the car.

ADAM

Naw. I'll be all right.

Marlene and Dana share a look. Eugene exits and Adam follows unsteadily.

DANA

Jesus.

Marlene gets more flannel sheets. She and Dana speak while quickly making up the top bunks.

DANA (CONT.)

I seen him in the plant but never even talked to him 'fore now.

MARLENE

He needs to lay off the beer. Guy's still really buzzed.

DANA

Bears fans. Chicago. All a bunch a assholes. He starts raggin' on the Packers, better hold me back.

With a devilish smile.

Kinda cute, though. Maybe I give it a shot. Save him from the dark side.

MARLENE

Don't get any ideas. And if he's drunk –

DANA

Why? If you and Eugene are –

MARLENE

Stop!

Thoughtful pause then, hopefully.

You think he's really [interested]?

DANA

Eugene? Are you kiddin'?! Singin' *this is love, this is love*. That boy got a boner size a the Milwaukee City Hall tower growing in his pants jes for you. Gurl. Ya need to sit yerself on top a that tower.

MARLENE

He's a coworker.

DANA

Don't mean ya can't screw his brains out.

MARLENE

Coworker. Bad idea.

DANA

Different department. Anyway, can't let an org chart dictate who ya gonna screw.

Pause.

What's takin' them boys so long?

Dana opens the door a crack to peek out, closes it and spins laughing.

DANA (CONT.)

Them boys are out there pissin' on a tree.

MARLENE

God, men are so [crude].

DANA

Free, what they are. Ain't all embarrassed by their bodies. Tell me you don't wish you could whip it out and let loose a shower anytime mood strikes ya.

MARLENE

No, Dana. I really don't.

DANA

I had a dick, wouldn't let it go to waste.

Eugene and Adam enter. They're loaded down, Adam with an aluminum case. Eugene shoulders a backpack, and carries a rifle case, a crossbow, a hip quiver with broadhead arrows, and a pistol.

DANA

Holy shit! You boys are loaded for bear!

EUGENE

Not really.

ADAM

Not me.

ADAM (CONT.)

Wagging his head.

Should have left this in the car. I don't really believe/ in [guns].

EUGENE

/Didn't want to leave this stuff in my truck back at Smitty's. Grabbed it before we booked out of the parking lot. His car's got no trunk space. And you don't want to leave a gun case in the car.

ADAM

Yeah, it does. The trunk's up front. And this isn't a –

DANA

Don't believe in what?

Adam just gives a look and then joins Eugene in placing their stuff in a corner.

MARLENE

Shall I start supper? Everybody hungry? Or we can just snack for/ now.

DANA

/Don't believe in what? Huntin'? What's in your case?

MARLENE

[Shut it, Dana!] Everybody like steaks?

EUGENE

Sure.

ADAM

Have you got any veggies? Or fruit?

MARLENE

Oh, uh... [Not really.]

DANA

Veggies? Fruit?

EUGENE

Have a seat. Maybe lighten up on the beer. You feelin' any better?

Adam shrugs, sits, and guzzles the rest of the beer.

MARLENE

Well, I've got bread and butter. Bacon. Steak. Brats and buns. Some cheese. And I've got beer and coffee. Oh, and some jerky and pretzels.

ADAM

Not really hungry, but maybe I'll eat some pretzels. Later. Thanks for the beer.

DANA

It's *venison* jerky, that makes any difference. Pretty damn good.

ADAM

Yeah. No. Not really hungry.

DANA

This is so damn amusing.

Don't tell me. You don't eat meat. *And.* You're a Bears fan. *And.* You're in a huntin' cabin in northern Wisconsin. Gotta say, you got some crazy big balls on ya.

ADAM

I hear lots of talk is all. Sports. That's all anybody talks about, but I've got no interest. Don't know anything about the Bears. Or the Bulls. Except what they mean on Wall Street.

EUGENE

Have you got a permanent tree stand or do you need to build something?

ADAM

I've been known to eat fish.

MARLENE

Two permanent stands. Through some woods, about fifty yards north. We've had good luck –

DANA

Pulling fishing rod from the rack.

We can catch ya somethin'! Lake's not far. Where's your tackle box?

MARLENE

It's dark. How are you going to fish in the dark?

ADAM

You've got a lake?

DANA

Returning the fishing rod.

Okay. Maybe tomorrow then. But we could walk down to the lake now. Check it out.

EUGENE

Might be best to wait 'til morning. Rest up a bit.

ADAM

I'm fine.

MARLENE

What about some supper?

DANA

Grabbing flashlight.

No hurry. Let me take the big-balled fish eater on a little walk. The night air'll do him good.

MARLENE

Better check the –

Dana hits Marlene square in the eyes with a bright beam from the flashlight and laughs.

How are the batteries, Marley?

DANA

Marlene shields her eyes. Dana chuckles, turns the flashlight off, and grabs a canvas coat from the rack.

Not that one.

MARLENE

What?

DANA

Take the other coat.

MARLENE

Ooh. Got it. This one was [Greg's].

DANA

Tossing the other coat to Adam.

Okay. Come on, man. Ya can lean on me, ya need to.

Marlene and Eugene share a look of concern, but Adam grins and unsteadily rises.

Lead on, cheese eater.

ADAM

Throwing on the coat.

Adam and Dana exit. Eugene approaches Marlene.

Are you okay with all of this?

EUGENE

Dana will chew him up and spit him out.

MARLENE

They'll be fine. You know, I've been looking forward to this weekend.
Awkward pause.

EUGENE

Placing hand on Marlene's arm.

Didn't know Dana would be here.

Oh. You thought *[what]*?

MARLENE

Turning away to rummage in a cooler.

EUGENE

Relax, Marley. I'm not pushing for anything. I know you need some time.

MARLENE

Turning back to him.

It's just that...

She takes a breath and then approaches directly, intently. She kisses him briefly and steps back.

MARLENE (CONT.)

I'm sorry. I –

Eugene pulls her back, wraps his arms around her and kisses. She doesn't resist. After a moment, they break, regard each other, still in embrace.

MARLENE (CONT.)

I don't think we should [do anything]. Not here. Not this weekend.

EUGENE

Next weekend, then. We can hunt together.

Marlene breaks from the embrace and sits, troubled.

MARLENE

Not here. This cabin has too many [memories].

Eugene sits and takes her hand.

EUGENE

Too many ghosts?

MARLENE

I don't like that word.

EUGENE

Memories then. I get it. You've got memories.

MARLENE

And a couple of kids.

EUGENE

What? They won't like me?

MARLENE

No. I didn't mean that.

Off Eugene's puzzled expression.

No. Actually, I think they'd be happy for me if I, you know, [found someone].

EUGENE

Whenever you're ready. Just let me know what I can do.

MARLENE

Right now, you can sit and watch me fix some supper.

EUGENE

Nothing I'd like better than watching you.

Grinning.

Almost nothing.

Marlene returns the grin, studies their locked hands.
They share a moment before she lets go.

MARLENE

But nothing naughty this weekend.

Rising to look in a cooler.

Shall I fry steaks or brats?

EUGENE

Shrugs. Also rises.

Whatever's easiest.

Wrapping Marlene in a hug from behind.

What did Dana mean about flannel sheets?

MARLENE

Oh. It's just that –

The door bursts open and Dana and Adam enter.
Adam's smiling, showing interest in Dana who's
laughing. Eugene quickly breaks from embracing
Marlene and steps away.

DANA

Oh, my God! Whatchu guys doin'?

EUGENE

Nothing.

MARLENE

Nothing! Not doing anything.

DANA

Uh, huh.

MARLENE

Just getting ready for some supper.

DANA

Chuckling.

Some supper.

MARLENE

[Shut it, Dana!] You can help out with –

DANA

You guys know Adam's been to jail?

ADAM

Hold on! I didn't tell you so you could blab to the world.

DANA

To Marlene and Eugene.

Won't tell me what for.

Lighthearted, back to Adam.

Come on, man. You were jes openin' up. Whatchu do?

Adam just shakes his head while grabbing another beer from a cooler. He pops the top and takes a big swig. They all share a look, then Dana shines the flashlight in his eyes. Adam recoils, nearly falls.

DANA (CONT.)

Teasing.

Get in lotsa bar fights, do ya?

MARLENE

Why don't you put the torch away and make yourself useful? Help me with some supper.

Dana chuckles as she puts the flashlight away. Dana turns, gives everyone a look. An awkward pause.

DANA

What?

EUGENE

Marley's going to fix us some brats. That okay? Adam? Will you eat a brat?

ADAM

I'm good.

MARLENE

You want to get the table ready?

DANA

First, Adam's gotta show us somethin'.

ADAM

Half-hearted grin.

Now, don't start –

DANA

What's in your case? Come on, man. Show us some magic tricks.

ADAM

Coyly, focusing on Dana.

That's okay. You don't want to see that.

DANA

Like hell we don't! This guy ain't jes a production controller. He's a fuckin' magician!

EUGENE

A magician, huh?

DANA

Taking a seat.

What he said. Come on, man. Open up that big ass case and give us a show.

An awkward pause, then Adam, already showing the effects of alcohol, slams another long drink.

ADAM

Stiffening, getting serious and looking at Eugene.

All right. For the hunters... Just one illusion.

DANA

An illusion! Hear that? This guy's the real deal. Come on. Have a seat.

Eugene shrugs. He and Marlene take seats. Adam turns to rummage in his case.

MARLENE

You couldn't have made it to the lake. Not that fast.

DANA

Tomorrow. Got ten yards and guy had to stop to lean 'gainst a tree and take another leak. Whatcha think? Are bear's attracted to smell of a man's piss?

EUGENE

Don't be joking about bears. Probably hibernating by now, but if not, they'll be fattening up for the winter. And they're active at night.

MARLENE

I'd be more concerned about wolves or a cougar.

DANA

Marley doesn't scare ya, does she, Eugene? She's a cougar.

EUGENE

She's not a [cougar]. No. She doesn't scare me.

They watch Adam who's wobbling a bit and still rummaging in his case.

EUGENE (CONT.)

What's he got in there?

MARLENE

I thought it must be a gun case.

DANA

Hey, Adam. Thought ya dint believe in guns.

Adam stands and turns with a pained expression, eyes glazed as if in a trance. A pistol is in his hand. He raises the pistol to his temple and stares ahead without focus. The women scream. Eugene leaps to his feet but is steady, doesn't raise his voice.

EUGENE

Hey, man. What're you doing? Take it easy. Put down the weapon.

A moment with no one moving. The women holding their breath, and Eugene takes a small step forward. Adam looks to Eugene, focuses, and jerks as if mentally jarred. With the mental shift, he turns his attention to Dana and trains the pistol on her. Marlene and Dana gasp, and Eugene steps in his direction as Adam pulls the trigger and a flag springs from the gun barrel. The flag reads, *Bang!*

ADAM

BANG!

Marlene and Eugene release a gasp, but after a beat, Dana, laughing, leaps up, and slugs Adam's arm. Adam recoils. The trance is broken.

DANA

Motherfucker! Dint know if ya was gonna shoot me or ya was jes undressin' me with yer eyes.

Adam shows a hint of a grin and drops the pistol.

MARLENE

Oh, my God! That was your illusion?!

Adam studies Dana, looking deeply into her eyes.

ADAM

Thank you.

DANA

For what?

Adam grabs Dana and plants a kiss. She engages by wrapping her arms around Adam's neck. When they break, Dana gives a coy smile while Adam looks at her closely, seriously.

EUGENE

Not funny, man.

ADAM

Keeping focus on Dana.

What? I thought all you gun-packing woods people would like it?

DANA

I dint mind. I like gettin' banged.

ADAM

What I thought.

Eugene and Marlene share a look of concern while Dana retakes her seat. She's highly animated.

DANA

Okay. What's your magician name?

Off Adam's confusion.

You know. Your stage name.

ADAM

Don't really have one. Adam the Magician, I guess.

DANA

Ah, we can do better than that. Marley. Eugene. Whatcha think? What should he call himself?

EUGENE

Adam the Asshole. Wasn't funny.

MARLENE

Please put the pistol away.

DANA

The Amazing! Adam! Abraaaa... Cadabra!

ADAM

Stumbling with it.

Amazing Adam Abra... Cadaver. I like it.

MARLENE

Oh, my God.

EUGENE

I'm sorry about this. We'll pack up and get going. This was a bad idea.

DANA

No, no. He'll be fine.

Dana retrieves the dropped pistol and hands it to Adam who groans and shakes his head as if clearing cobwebs. He straightens, may even slap himself in an attempt to regain some semblance of composure.

DANA (CONT.)

Won't you? You'll be okay. But Marley's right. We need to see an illusion.

Adam slowly spins and then, managing sleight of hand, pulls a silver coin from Dana's ear and hands it to her.

DANA (CONT.)

Oh, my God. You really are a magician. Can I keep this?

ADAM

Sorry. Part of my kit.

DANA

Returning the coin.

Okay. But I want to see what else you can do with those magic hands.

ADAM

Okay, okay. Have a seat and prepare to be amazed.

Adam rummages in his case. Dana gets more beer from the cooler. She sits and sips beer. Eugene and Marlene ignore the beer but watch Adam with concern. Finally, he turns holding a small plastic polar bear and a large handkerchief. He places the bear on the table and, with a flourish, covers it with the handkerchief.

DANA

Uh oh. Eugene called it. The bears are out! And they're hungry. But ya need to git yerself a black one. There ain't no polar bears in Wisconsin.

ADAM

No. Aren't many polar bears anywhere anymore.

DANA

Oh, God. Don't tell me you're one a/ those.

EUGENE

/Actually, polar bear numbers have been increasing since the seventies. Three times now what it was. More restrictions on/ hunting.

DANA

What the fuckin' environmentalists/ won't tell ya.

ADAM

/Wait! Wait. Prepare to be amazed.

Pausing to steady himself.

But first, I need to go outside.

And with that, Adam staggers to exit.

MARLENE

I think he's going to be sick.

EUGENE

Better outside than in here. Or in the car.

DANA

I'll give him a hand. Make sure he's not eaten by a cougar.
A devilish smile.

Not yet anyway.

Dana wiggles her ass and giggles as she exits.

EUGENE

She's a wild one, isn't she? Doesn't she already have a boyfriend?

MARLENE

Rodney. Nothing serious, I guess. Dana doesn't get serious about much of anything, but she's... She's got a good heart. Will do anything for you.

EUGENE

Do anything for Adam, seems like.

MARLENE

If he'd eat something and lay off the beer, he might sober up before you get him back in the car. Maybe I should make some coffee.

EUGENE

What I can't figure, is this an isolated incident, or does the guy have a problem?

MARLENE

How'd he get the job anyway? Weren't there a bunch of guys in line for a promotion from the plant? He know somebody? Have a hook?

EUGENE

Nephew or cousin of somebody in the front office.

MARLENE

And what about the jail thing? What Dana said, you think it's true?

EUGENE

My guess, guy drinks like this, probably a DWI.

MARLENE

Leans back. Heavy sigh.

This weekend is nothing like I'd planned.

EUGENE

I don't know what I was thinking. I was. In a hurry, I guess. To see you.

MARLENE

Dana said it was sweet. You looking out for him. I get that.

EUGENE

He's such an ass. Glad I get to see the cabin, though. And you. Couldn't wait to [see you].

MARLENE

We started bringing the kids up here when Kevin turned twelve. Lisa was only ten, but she was even more excited than he was about getting her first deer.

EUGENE

Are they coming up for opening day?

MARLENE

Not this year. Their heads are in their books. Hanging out with their friends. I miss them.

Dana enters.

MARLENE (CONT.)

He getting sick out there?

DANA

Oh, yeah. Boy's gonna need some mouthwash. Don't think he's gonna wanna eat nothin' any time soon.

Adam enters looking the worse for wear. He staggers to and collapses on the nearest bunk.

ADAM

I'm just gonna...

And just like that, Adam passes out. Marlene and Eugene share a look of concern, but Dana's amused.

MARLENE

I guess one of us is going to have to take a top bunk.

DANA

No problem. I like being on top.

MARLENE

Yeah. I got that.

EUGENE

Let him sleep it off. An hour or so, we'll give him some coffee, and then we'll hit the road.

DANA

You can't go. *It's a party!* He'll bounce back and continue the magic show. Least he's keepin' things intrestin'.

MARLENE

Oh. Are we boring you?

DANA

You two got your own thing goin'. With magic man here, least I'm not a third wheel.

MARLENE

You know it's not like that.

EUGENE

You're outside with the guy less than five minutes and he's telling you his secrets, spilling his guts. How's that work?

MARLENE

Literally spilling his guts.

DANA

What can I say? I know what men want.

Plumping her breasts. A coy look.

Me and a little alcohol.

EUGENE

More than a *little* alcohol.

MARLENE

Is he out? I mean, can he hear us?

DANA

Why? You got somethin' juicy?

EUGENE

What else he tell you outside? Guy hardly said a word on the drive up here. Didn't even thank me for stepping in to keep him from getting beat all to hell.

DANA

He's takin' a piss, and I asked him if he liked Chicago so much, why'd he move to Packerland. Jes jokin', ya know, I asked if he was runnin' from the law.

MARLENE

He's got a good job if he can keep it.

DANA

Said he wasn't runnin' from the law, but he knows what inside of a cell looks like.

EUGENE

You never know about people.

DANA

Said he had more opportunities to do his magic shows in Chicago. Does 'em for school kids. But said he wanted to go somewhere his vote counts. I get that, the way they mess with the votes down there. Then, he jes shook his peter and turned back to the cabin.

EUGENE

There's more to it than that.

DANA

Well. *Yeah.* He zipped up.

MARLENE

To Eugene.

What do you mean?

EUGENE

I don't know.

DANA

How about you? You grow up around here?

MARLENE

Don't be so [intrusive]!

DANA

What? Fair question. Ya don't see too many guys this part of the state with his, you know.

EUGENE

Complexion?

MARLENE

Dana!

Laying a hand on Eugene's.

I'm sorry.

EUGENE

Why? She's not wrong.

DANA

Jes curious is all. Yer a good guy, and I dint mean nuthin'.

EUGENE

Grew up in Milwaukee and –

DANA

Aaah. Okay then.

Marlene gives a snort of disapproval, but Eugene just chuckles.

EUGENE

Yeah. After my deployment, tech school in Fox Valley. Green Bay for engineering. Lots of job offers. Just kept moving north.

DANA

Senior engineers get, what? Twice the pay of us lowly press operators? You on a salary?

MARLENE

That's enough! You're being rude.

DANA

Not rude. Greg made the big bucks, and if you're gonna –

MARLENE

Stop!

Dana shrugs, sips beer. An awkward pause.

EUGENE

I knew and liked Greg. A lot. He was the best of the execs. Always attended the design meetings and asked good questions. Really smart questions. Not like some of the half-wits in the front office who don't know the difference between a blow mold and an injection mold.

MARLENE

Thank you.

Pause.

What did you mean when you said there's more to it?

EUGENE

Guy's driving an electric car. Bumper stickers. Says he wants to be somewhere his vote counts.

DANA

What kind a bumper stickers?

MARLENE

Where you going to find a charging station?

EUGENE

I don't know. First time I ever drove an electric, but as long as there's something within a hundred miles, we should be okay.

MARLENE

Should get you to Wausau. Probably something there.

DANA

Looks like a pussy ass car but too dark. I dint see no bumper stickers.

EUGENE

Political. Black lives. Environment. Stuff like that.

DANA

Oh, fuck.

Adam rolls and falls onto the floor. Eugene stands as Adam sits up and holds his head.

ADAM

What the fuck?

EUGENE

You okay, man?

DANA

Tell me somethin'. *Are you woke?*

ADAM

Yeah. I'm awake