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NOTHING BUT TRASH

a collection of three contemporary short plays by

REBECCA RYLAND

including

THE INTERVIEW

THE MAN IN THE CAN

A BIRD IS NOT A PET

A Tragic Act of Separation or a Comic Act of Desperation

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NOTHING BUT TRASH

a collection of three contemporary short plays by
REBECCA RYLAND

THE INTERVIEW

2 Women/1 Man

Setting: *An Outer Office*

Characters:

The Interviewer

The Applicant

The Stenographer (Male)

THE MAN IN A CAN

4 Women/2 Men

Setting: *Central Park*

Characters:

Frat Man

Man in the Can

Three Young Ladies

The Bag Lady

A BIRD IS NOT A PET

A Tragic Act of Separation or A Comic Act of Desperation

3 Women/1 Man

Setting: *The Foyer of a Condo Clubhouse*

Characters:

The Woman

The Man

The Secretary

The Blond Woman

Warning: *Gunshot*

THE INTERVIEW

by Rebecca Ryland

(AT RISE: THE APPLICANT seated in a straight-backed wooden chair; THE INTERVIEWER nearby. THE STENOGRAPHER sits at a small typing table left recording the interview as directed. There is a small trashcan next to the typing table and a door up. Otherwise, the stage is bare.)

THE INTERVIEWER

Begin with your name.

THE APPLICANT

Tonya Thompson.

THE INTERVIEWER

Good. State your objective.

THE APPLICANT

In life?

THE INTERVIEWER

No. Why do you want this position? What do you hope to accomplish?

THE APPLICANT

I need work.

THE INTERVIEWER

Wrong.

THE APPLICANT

Wrong?

THE INTERVIEWER

You want the position?

THE APPLICANT

Yes.

THE INTERVIEWER

Why do you want to work here? Why should I hire you over say, any other unemployed, non-thinking, resource-consuming parasite? Why?

THE APPLICANT

I have a mind. I think.

THE INTERVIEWER
No. You do not.

THE APPLICANT
I don't?

THE INTERVIEWER
Not if you want the job.

THE APPLICANT
Why?

THE INTERVIEWER
This is a Level Two position.

THE APPLICANT
I tested at a Level Five.

THE INTERVIEWER
There are no openings at Level Five. Do you want to work?

THE APPLICANT
Yes.

THE INTERVIEWER
Then understand right now, right up front, Level Two's do not think, are not permitted to think, and you will not be hired under any circumstances if there is an inkling the size of an ant's ass that you have any intention now or ever to think. Is that clear?

THE APPLICANT
Yes. Then what do I say when you ask why I want this position if I have nothing creative to contribute?

THE INTERVIEWER
No one mentioned "creative." You will answer in the interview that you are available to carry out in whatever manner deemed necessary the mission of the organization. That you play by the rules and know the fuck how to keep your mouth shut. (*To THE STENOGRAPHER.*) Strike "fuck."

(*THE STENOGRAPHER nods.*)

THE APPLICANT
I can't remember all that.

THE INTERVIEWER

Your final interview is tomorrow at ten. You have plenty of time to study. Tell me about yourself.

THE APPLICANT

Well, I tend to be early. I hope that's not a problem. I contribute it to the fact I was born early. Plucked from my mother's womb, you know, before I was ripe. So I guess I have extra time so to speak. Time I really wasn't supposed to have. So I have time to sit and wait.

THE INTERVIEWER

You will get nowhere if you sit and wait. However, punctuality plays well in an interview. (*To THE STENOGRAPHER.*) Punctuality. P. U. N. C. T. U. A. L. I. T. Y. (*To THE APPLICANT.*) What else?

THE APPLICANT

What? My education? My experience?

THE INTERVIEWER

Non-consequential. You have a résumé don't you?

APPLICANT

Of course. Here.

THE INTERVIEWER

Throw it out.

THE APPLICANT

Now?

THE INTERVIEWER

In the trash. (*Motioning to THE STENOGRAPHER who stops typing and brings the trashcan over to THE APPLICANT.*) Nothing you have done until now will get you through that door.

THE APPLICANT

(*Throwing her résumé into the trashcan.*) I didn't know.

THE INTERVIEWER

Of course not. That is why you're here. Do you have a hobby?

THE APPLICANT

No. Not that I'm aware.

THE INTERVIEWER

I like my employees to have hobbies.

THE APPLICANT
Should I lie?

THE INTERVIEWER
If necessary.

THE APPLICANT
When will I know when it's necessary.

THE INTERVIEWER
Follow the transcript.

THE APPLICANT
So if you tell me to lie, I lie?

THE INTERVIEWER
If I ask you a question and what you respond isn't true, I have neither asked you to lie nor discouraged it. Your response is neither true nor false.

THE APPLICANT
(Unclear) I see.

THE INTERVIEWER
If you take this position you will have to relocate.

THE APPLICANT
I know.

THE INTERVIEWER
I know you know! That is not the point! I ask you a question. Give me the answer. The Stenographer records exactly what I say and the correct response. Do you understand?

THE APPLICANT
Yes.

THE INTERVIEWER
Good. Have you taken the time to look about the city?

THE APPLICANT
Yes.

THE INTERVIEWER
And?

THE APPLICANT

It's scary, you know? It's a big move. I looked through the yellow pages to see if, you know, if there are things here I might find of interest. A bookstore. Outdoor cafés. That sort of thing.

THE INTERVIEWER

No.

THE APPLICANT

No? Why?

THE INTERVIEWER

I've lived here all my life and I've never had need for a bookstore or a café. Do you think you're better than me? *(To THE STENOGRAPHER.)* Strike "think."

(THE STENOGRAPHER nods.)

THE APPLICANT

It's a lovely city. I can't wait to live here.

THE INTERVIEWER

Good. *(To THE STENOGRAPHER.)* Change that to "dynamic" city. *(THE STENOGRAPHER nods. THE INTERVIEWER returns attention to THE APPLICANT.)* You do realize don't you that reading is a hobby?

THE APPLICANT

I thought reading was a means to stimulate the intellect? Joining a horticulture club is a hobby.

THE INTERVIEWER

Did I ask you to think?

THE APPLICANT

I forgot.

THE INTERVIEWER

(To THE STENOGRAPHER.) Strike any reference to intellect. *(THE STENOGRAPHER nods.)* However, I like plants. Plants are wholesome. Plants are a definite possibility. Question: You plan to join the local Horticulture Club? Response: Yes. *(THE STENOGRAPHER types the question and answer into the transcript.) (To THE APPLICANT.)* What kind of plants do you like?

THE APPLICANT

I raised a little hemp while I was in college. In the closet under a grow light.

THE INTERVIEWER

(*To THE STENOGRAPHER.*) Question: Do you have a hobby? Response: I love to read.

THE APPLICANT

If that will make you happy.

THE INTERVIEWER

Yes it will make me happy. Why else are you here? I can give you a hand or I can cut it off. It's neither here nor there.

THE APPLICANT

I don't understand.

THE INTERVIEWER

(*To THE STENOGRAPHER.*) Will you demonstrate? (*THE STENOGRAPHER nods and stands. THE INTERVIEWER returns attention to THE APPLICANT.*) Lie down.

THE APPLICANT

What?

THE INTERVIEWER

Lie down on the floor.

THE APPLICANT

Why? (*THE INTERVIEWER frowns.*) Oh, all right. (*Acquiescing*) Like this?

THE INTERVIEWER

Exactly like that. (*To THE STENOGRAPHER.*) Sit on her.

THE APPLICANT

Wait a minute. No offense but he's got good fifty or sixty pounds on me.

THE INTERVIEWER

Exactly. (*To THE STENOGRAPHER.*) Sit.

THE APPLICANT

(*As THE STENOGRAPHER sits*) Oh!

THE INTERVIEWER

Get up.

THE APPLICANT

Get off!

THE INTERVIEWER

Get up!

THE APPLICANT

(*To THE STENOGRAPHER.*) Are you deaf? She said to get off!

THE INTERVIEWER

(*To THE APPLICANT.*) I told *you* to get up.

THE APPLICANT

(*Struggling*) I can't.

THE INTERVIEWER

And you never will. Not unless I let you. Do you understand?

THE APPLICANT

Yes.

THE INTERVIEWER

Good. (*To THE STENOGRAPHER.*) You may return to your seat. (*He does.*)

THE APPLICANT

(*Slowly rising to her feet and straightening her clothes.*) So what I am to understand is that it doesn't matter how intelligent I am. Not how creative; my history, my experience, my passion, my commitment. It only matters whether I say to you whatever it is that leads you to believe I am able to do the job?!

THE INTERVIEWER

Don't flatter yourself. A Level Two is the heart of mediocrity. Anyone can fill a Level Two position. Are you finished?

THE APPLICANT

I— Yeah, sure.

THE INTERVIEWER

Good. (*Taking finished transcript from THE STENOGRAPHER and handing it to THE APPLICANT.*) Then take this script and memorize it word for word. Add nothing. Take nothing away. Be back here at 10 A.M. Do exactly what I say and I guarantee you'll get the position. Is that clear?

THE APPLICANT

Yes.

THE INTERVIEWER

Good. Then I'll see you tomorrow.

This is Not the End of the Play
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes

CONTINUE TO THE NEXT PAGE
FOR THE SECOND PLAY IN THIS COLLECTION

THE MAN IN THE CAN

by Rebecca Ryland

(AT RISE: A large trashcan center with bushes right and park bench left. The hinged lid to the trashcan opens as a young MAN stands, brushing the remains of a sandwich from his clothes and hair. The FRAT MAN enters from stage left.)

FRAT MAN

There you are.

MAN IN CAN

Where else?

FRAT MAN

Nice day for a picnic.

MAN IN CAN

Depends on your point of view. So, how long did it take for you to get a date?

FRAT MAN

Oh, I never had to do this. That new guy from Jersey came up with it. Not bad, huh?

MAN IN CAN

Depends on your point of view.

FRAT MAN

Don't be a wuss. I was put over on the East docks and told I had to get an old lady on a cruise ship to kiss me *bon voyage*. *(Sniffs)* What's that smell?

MAN IN CAN

Pastrami on rye.

FRAT MAN

Very appealing.

MAN IN CAN

Depends on your—

FRAT MAN

Yeah, yeah. Is that a common saying where you come from?

MAN IN CAN

Well, that depends—

FRAT MAN

Say it and I'll trash your face.

MAN IN CAN

Sorry. Sometimes I wonder if it's worth it.

FRAT MAN

What are we talkin' here? It beats getting hazed! Besides it's the best Frat on campus.

MAN IN CAN

My mother never told me there'd be days like this.

FRAT MAN

If you want in, you gotta do it.

MAN IN CAN

If I had any sense I'd have stayed in Kansas.

FRAT MAN

You'll never make it with that attitude.

MAN IN CAN

Attitude? Attitude?! I've been in this godforsaken can four hours and the closest I've come to landing a date was with a pit bull! I've been spat on, cursed at— had half-eaten pastrami sandwiches thrown at me. I've—

FRAT MAN

Shhhh! Someone's coming. You know the rules. Not a word as to why you're here. You're on your own. Ta ta! (*Exits.*)

MAN IN CAN

Thanks.

(*THREE YOUNG LADIES approach, one drinking a bottle of Evian.*)

FIRST YOUNG LADY

I guess I will pick up a copy. It sounds so— so *alternative*.

SECOND YOUNG LADY

I've read it *three* times. I can't get enough of it. The whole concept of genetic memory is overpowering— and so *fashionable*.

THIRD YOUNG LADY

Absolutely so.

(*MAN IN CAN stirs. THE THREE YOUNG LADIES notice and begin to move away.*)

MAN IN CAN

Excuse me, ladies. Ladies! How would you like a chance to earn \$5,000? (*No response, then quickly.*) \$10,000?! \$20?

FIRST YOUNG LADY

He could be for real, you know.

SECOND YOUNG LADY

Yeah, right. What planet are you from?

THIRD YOUNG LADY

It's possible. Some of the craziest people are the *richest*. Perhaps we shouldn't appear too hasty.

SECOND YOUNG LADY

Okay. I'll bite. (*To MAN IN CAN.*) So, what's your game?

MAN IN CAN

You see, my mother is hopelessly ill— dying from a rare form of astro...uh...astroencephilitosis [or something like that] and she desperately needs an expensive, highly controversial, dangerously *alternative*, but fashionable operation that can only be performed in Africa, and—

(*The THREE YOUNG LADIES look at one another and move away.*)

MAN IN CAN CONTINUES

Hear me out! My father is a borderline Bi-polar alcoholic who snatches old ladies purses during blackouts— *his* I mean— and one of those purses contained a winning lottery ticket with the old bag's name on the back and if I can just persuade some kind, sympathetic, compassionate, *beautiful* young woman like any one of you to pretend to be that lady and accompany me to cash it in, my mother could have that expensive, highly controversial but potentially *life-saving* operation that can only be performed in China— that she so desperately needs... (*FIRST YOUNG LADY looks at MAN IN CAN.*) And we can discuss your share of the take over dinner. You know the old saying— “There's a bit of petty larceny in us all.”

(*MAN IN CAN smiles as FIRST YOUNG LADY approaches.*)

FIRST YOUNG LADY

(*Slapping MAN IN CAN.*) Why you son of a Purse Snatcher! What makes you think that poor old lady he mugged isn't dying from some rare form of astroencephilitosis herself?!

THIRD YOUNG LADY

Or worse!

SECOND YOUNG LADY

(Throwing bottle of Evian at Man in Can.) How dare you accuse us of complicity to commit a crime?!

(The THREE YOUNG LADIES exit.)

MAN IN CAN

Ladies! Ladies! Please! *Please!!*

(BAG LADY pushing a bascart full of belongings appears opposite.)

BAG LADY

Hello!

MAN IN CAN

(Turns, hopeful.) Hell— oh!

BAG LADY

Nice day.

MAN IN CAN

Depends on your point of view.

BAG LADY

Found Fred froze to death behind that bush yesterday.

MAN IN CAN

Sorry I missed it.

BAG LADY

No flies, though. Too cold. That's why he froze. Too cold for flies.

MAN IN CAN

Yeah.

BAG LADY

Or rats.

MAN IN CAN

Rats?!

BAG LADY

Here's some newspaper. Keep you warm tonight when the sun goes down. *(Stuffs papers around MAN IN CAN.)* Nice house.

MAN IN CAN

Stop that!

BAG LADY

Don't want your house. Got my own house. Sleep right there under the bascart. Don't need your house. Don't need to give you papers, either. They're mine anyway.

MAN IN CAN

I don't want your house or anything else you got.

BAG LADY

What's the matter?

MAN IN CAN

Nothing.

BAG LADY

I can tell these things. I can see them. I got special powers. What's the matter?

MAN IN CAN

A headache. That's all.

BAG LADY

(Thrashing through belongings in bascart and then pulling out an old vile.) Want some aspirin?

MAN IN CAN

Don't be so helpful.

BAG LADY

You're mad at me.

MAN IN CAN

I'm not mad at you. I'm *nothing* to you. Would you please just leave me alone?

BAG LADY

You *are* mad at me.

MAN IN CAN

Go away!

BAG LADY

I could never leave you.

MAN IN CAN

Look, this isn't a joke. I'm... I'm a *leper!*

BAG LADY

A leper? A leper? Fred! (*BAG LADY throws her arms around MAN IN CAN and kisses him on the lips.*) Me, too!!

MAN IN CAN

Ahhhhhh! I'm not Fred!!

BAG LADY

Not Fred?

MAN IN CAN

Not Fred.

BAG LADY

(*Desperately thrashing through trash in can.*) Fred? Fred? Where's Fred?! Fred! Fred! What have you done with Fred?!

MAN IN CAN

Calm down!

BAG LADY

Fred! Fred!

MAN IN CAN

Fred's dead.

BAG LADY

Fred, dead?

MAN IN CAN

Yes.

BAG LADY

Dead.

MAN IN CAN

You said so yourself.

BAG LADY

I did?

MAN IN CAN

I'm sorry.

BAG LADY

You do care.

MAN IN CAN
No, I don't. I don't care.

BAG LADY
Fred cared.

MAN IN CAN
I'm sure he did.

BAG LADY
Got anything to eat?

MAN IN CAN
Pastrami.

BAG LADY
On wheat?

MAN IN CAN
Rye.

BAG LADY
No thanks.

MAN IN CAN
There's some *Evian* left in this bottle.

BAG LADY
French. *Mon Cheriè*. You spoke French to me. *Je t'aime!* I love you! I want to sleep with you under my bascart. I want to have your baby!

MAN IN CAN
(*Pushing her away.*) Are you nuts?

BAG LADY
No, I don't think so.

MAN IN CAN
Then what's your problem?

BAG LADY
Lonely, I guess.

MAN IN CAN
Well, you can't expect anyone to pay attention to you when you go around pushing a bascart all day looking like a tramp and calling it home, do you?

BAG LADY
You live in a trash can.

MAN IN CAN
No I don't. I'm only visiting.

BAG LADY
Lucky for you. I live here all the time.

MAN IN CAN
That's not my problem.

BAG LADY
Depends on your point of view.

This is Not the End of the Play
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes

CONTINUE TO THE NEXT PAGE
FOR THE THIRD PLAY IN THIS COLLECTION

A BIRD IS NOT A PET

*A Tragic Act of Separation
or
A Comic Act of Desperation*

by Rebecca Ryland

(AT RISE: The foyer of a Clubhouse; an office indicated. What furnishings seen are tastefully modern, accented with exotic plants and exquisite artwork. A handsome wooden desk separates the waiting area from the office. THE WOMAN enters, apparently frustrated and agitated. THE MAN is seen moving about the office. THE WOMAN waits to be recognized. THE MAN does not come forward. He looks at her then turns away. She waits. No one else approaches. THE MAN looks about. She waits. Finally he speaks.)

THE MAN

Someone will be with you.

(THE WOMAN nods stiffly.)

THE MAN

(Loudly) Some woman in a tizzy over something or other.

(THE SECRETARY approaches.)

THE SECRETARY

May I help you?

THE WOMAN

That all depends on whether you have any authority to *do* anything.

THE SECRETARY

Why don't you tell me what the problem is and then I will tell you if I do.

THE WOMAN

I have been to this office four times to ask what I may do with my trash. I have been to this office four times to ask if I may separate my trash and no one I talked to could tell me.

THE SECRETARY

No you may not.

THE WOMAN

The last time I came I was told that I could. My son— this is very important to him. He went to all the bins and gathered the papers lying on the ground. He stacked them together. He put them with ours. He put the glass and the plastics together, and the tin. All separate— to help the old man when he picks up the trash. But while my son waits for the old man to come, they came and threw out our trash. They came and they threw it in the back of the cart. My son yelled, ‘Hey, where are you taking our trash?!’ A man in the cart shrugged his shoulders and then they just took it away.

(THE MAN is listening.)

THE SECRETARY

I don’t know who said you could do that. As far as I know you can’t do that here. Who said you could?

THE WOMAN

The woman with the blond hair. The only person here who ever seems to be able to do anything.

THE MAN

What woman is that?

THE WOMAN

The woman with the blond hair! The tall woman who works here!

THE MAN

Calm down before you have a stroke. You can talk to here yourself in a minute.

THE WOMAN

My son followed the cart as fast as he could. He saw them throw our trash in the big dumpster down by the car wash, the one that the City picks up and takes to the County Dispose-All.

THE BLOND WOMAN

(Entering) May I help you?

THE WOMAN

I have come to this office four times to find out what I may do with my trash. You tell me the old man who picks up the trash separates what he can and if I would do ours it would help him. And my son and I did. My son, who cares, even picked up the papers thrown by the bins and put them with ours and divided the bottles and plastics and tin. He looked away just for a moment and now they’ve taken our trash and they’ve hauled it away.

THE BLOND WOMAN

Who are *they*?

THE WOMAN

The men in the golf cart. In the work cart. The men who work here.

THE BLOND WOMAN

I told you we don't do that here. I told you the old man who picks up the trash does it on his own.

THE WOMAN

I understand that. And you told me if I separated mine it would help him.

THE BLOND WOMAN

He comes every day.

THE WOMAN

You told me if I separated my trash he would take it.

THE BLOND WOMAN

The old man does not work here. I cannot control what the old man will do.

THE WOMAN

I understand that.

THE BLOND WOMAN

If you spoke Spanish you could ask him yourself.

THE WOMAN

And now they've taken the trash my son and I separated and they've thrown it in the garbage!

THE BLOND WOMAN

They! They! Who are *They*?! What do you want me to do about it?

THE WOMAN

I want you to give me my trash!

THE MAN

Stop screaming.

THE BLOND WOMAN

Do you own your unit or rent?

THE WOMAN

I rent.

THE MAN

(*Condescendingly.*) Of course.

THE WOMAN

That would make a difference? If I owned you would give me my trash?

THE BLOND WOMAN

What do you want me to do? Do you want me to go get your garbage? You want me to climb in the dumpster and go through the trash? I'm not crawling through any dumpster.

THE WOMAN

I do not expect you to crawl in the dumpster. I want the men who took it to give me my trash and I will take it to the old man myself.

THE MAN

This isn't the end of the world.

THE WOMAN

Yes it is. (*THE MAN chuckles. THE WOMAN pulls out a gun and shoots THE MAN.*) I take this very seriously.

THE BLOND WOMAN

Yes, it is very important. If it were up to me we would do it. No one has brought it up to the Board.

THE WOMAN

I have been to this office four times.

THE SECRETARY

You must bring it before the Board.

THE WOMAN

And what should I do, write a letter? And bring a copy of Ordinance 2010?

THE SECRETARY

That might help.

THE WOMAN

(*Referring to THE MAN bleeding.*) I'm sorry about the rug.

THE BLOND WOMAN

Yes, we just finished redecorating.

THE WOMAN

For whom?

THE BLOND WOMAN

For the people who live here.

THE WOMAN

You build a Clubhouse with a sliding glass door that opens onto the deck of a pool but no one can enter in a bathing suit.

THE BLOND WOMAN

Yes, but swimming is not allowed here.

THE WOMAN

You fill the upstairs with game tables and Ping-Pong and cue sticks and marbles but children are not permitted to play here.

THE BLOND WOMAN

They break the paddles and lose the balls.

THE WOMAN

Yesterday a man shoved a gun in a little girl's face. She told him to shoot.

THE BLOND WOMAN

Yes, there is nothing for children to do here.

THE WOMAN

And today a little boy was dragged across the pavement by his neck because a man said he threw a rock at his window.

THE BLOND WOMAN

We keep a file.

THE WOMAN

He didn't do it.

THE BLOND WOMAN

(Looking in file.) The boy takes medicine.

THE WOMAN

Someone was fighting downstairs in my building last night. I was afraid to go out in the hall.

THE BLOND WOMAN

This is the first I have heard about it.

THE SECRETARY

No one filed a complaint.

THE WOMAN

I called the police.

THE BLOND WOMAN

This is the first I have heard of it.

THE WOMAN

A man found six spent gun shells in the second floor laundry room.

THE SECRETARY

No one filed a complaint.

THE WOMAN

I just want to know what is going on around here?!

THE BLOND WOMAN

This is the first I have heard about it.

THE WOMAN

I read books. I was once noted 'Head of My Class.' I make my bed every morning. I cook leftovers on Mondays and Tuesdays and Wednesdays. I want my trash. I am trying to live.

THE SECRETARY

No one complained.

THE WOMAN

Men die to protect my right to live and no one complains.

THE BLOND WOMAN

What do you want?

THE WOMAN

I want to use the Clubhouse.

THE BLOND WOMAN

We require a four thousand-dollar deposit.

THE WOMAN

I want to celebrate the New Year.

THE SECRETARY

What night would you like to reserve?

THE WOMAN

New Year's Eve.

THE SECRETARY

You're in luck. The Clubhouse is open that day. Sign here that you will be responsible for all damages. Make the check payable to The Board. The Board will have to approve your request. The deposit is non-refundable. The Clubhouse closes at Noon.

THE WOMAN

But I want to celebrate the New Year.

THE BLOND WOMAN

The New Year is over.

THE WOMAN

It was a terrible New Year. Yesterday I mailed in my census. It asked "How many ounces of alcohol are consumed in my home each day? One? Less than ten? Less than fifteen?" I answered, 'More than fifteen.' I don't drink. It asked 'What is your spouse's occupation? Professional? Statistical? Bureaucritical?' I wrote 'Unavailable.' It asked if I was married or single and I said 'Detached'. It asked how many people live in your household and I said 'Thirteen' but I live alone.

THE BLOND WOMAN

(Paying no attention. To THE SECRETARY.) Go get the stain remover.

THE SECRETARY

Where will I find it?

THE BLOND WOMAN

Ask the old man who cleans here.

THE SECRETARY

I asked him four times where he keeps it.

THE BLOND WOMAN

If you spoke Spanish he would tell you.

THE WOMAN

I have some in my unit.

THE BLOND WOMAN

What do you want?!

THE WOMAN

I want my trash. My son, who cares, took the time to gather the newspapers blowing in the complex—

THE BLOND WOMAN

Your son. We have a file on your son.

THE WOMAN

There is nothing for children to do here.

THE BLOND WOMAN

(*Looking in file.*) He slashed several tires.

THE WOMAN

With what?

THE BLOND WOMAN

With nails.

THE WOMAN

What kind of nails?

THE BLOND WOMAN

Yellow nails.

THE WOMAN

My son does not have yellow nails.

THE BLOND WOMAN

The boy in unit 1245 has yellow nails.

THE WOMAN

The boy in unit 1245 is not my son. They are friends. His father beats him.

THE BLOND WOMAN

You allow your son to play with boys who are beaten by their fathers?

THE WOMAN

I told him if he ever needs a place to go—

THE BLOND WOMAN

You are irresponsible.

THE SECRETARY

Nothing good will come of this.

THE BLOND WOMAN

He has handcuffs and guns.

THE WOMAN

His mother is a policeman. His father beats him.

THE BLOND WOMAN

He has yellow nails. Your son was seen with him.

THE WOMAN

I tell him not to play with him.

THE SECRETARY

We had a complaint.

THE BLOND WOMAN

From whom?!

THE SECRETARY

The man with the little boy.

THE BLOND WOMAN

The one that takes medicine?

THE SECRETARY

No, the one that tears out the water sprinklers. He says no one will play with the boy.

THE WOMAN

The boy said he was going to kill them.

THE BLOND WOMAN

Them? Them? Who are Them?!

THE WOMAN

The other children. He told me to get fucked. His father laughed.

THE BLOND WOMAN

(Looking in file.) It isn't his father.

THE WOMAN

He carries a gun. He dragged a boy across the pavement who said he didn't throw the rock that hit his window.

THE SECRETARY

The boy who takes medicine?

THE WOMAN

Yes. The police came.

THE BLOND WOMAN

This is the first I have heard of it.

THE WOMAN

My son saw the whole thing.

THE BLOND WOMAN

(*To THE SECRETARY.*) Get me the file on her son.

THE SECRETARY

I don't know where it is.

THE BLOND WOMAN

It's next to the stain remover on the bottom shelf next to the six spent gun shells and the Spanish Dictionary. (*Indicating THE MAN.*) You'll need to move him.

THE WOMAN

I know what it says. He found the man's underwear lying on the hallway floor. He thought it belonged to her. That's why he hung them on her door.

THE BLOND WOMAN

Her husband is dead. (*Taking the file from THE SECRETARY.*) He broke two slats out of a utility room door on the third floor.

THE WOMAN

He locked himself in.

THE BLOND WOMAN

He climbs trees.

THE WOMAN

He's a child.

THE BLOND WOMAN

Children are not allowed in this complex. This Club is for adults only.

THE WOMAN

I have no children. My son is dead.

THE BLOND WOMAN

We allow no pets.

THE WOMAN

The fish drowned and the cat flew away. We flushed the dog down the drain. A bird is not a pet.

THE BLOND WOMAN

You have a car.

THE WOMAN

I have two cars.

THE BLOND WOMAN

Your permit is expired.

THE WOMAN

Which one?

THE BLOND WOMAN

Either or both. Is it important?

THE WOMAN

(To THE SECRETARY.) I need a new sticker.

THE SECRETARY

What building are you in?

THE WOMAN

Four thousand and four.

THE SECRETARY

What unit?

THE WOMAN

Two thousand and ten.

THE SECRETARY

(Checking.) You cannot renew you permit.

THE WOMAN

Which one?

THE SECRETARY

Either one or both. Your lease is expired.

THE WOMAN

The lease is for fifty years and by the decade thereafter.

THE SECRETARY

Fifty years is the minimum.

THE WOMAN

It says fifty years.

THE SECRETARY

And by the decade thereafter. This lease is invalid.

(THE SECRETARY shows the lease to THE BLOND WOMAN.)

THE BLOND WOMAN

You must file a new lease in two days or your car will be towed.

THE WOMAN

Which one?

THE BLOND WOMAN

The blue one and the red one.

THE WOMAN

I paid for two stickers but I have only one parking space.

THE BLOND WOMAN

You are permitted only one.

THE WOMAN

But I have two cars.

THE BLOND WOMAN

You are permitted fifteen. One is expired.

THE WOMAN

The guard at the gate never told me.

THE BLOND WOMAN

You must buy a guest sticker.

THE WOMAN

But I live here.

THE BLOND WOMAN

Do you rent or own?

THE WOMAN

I own.

THE SECRETARY

The lease says the owner lives in Manhattan.

THE WOMAN

I rent from the woman in Manhattan. I am the owner.

THE BLOND WOMAN

She must sign a new lease tomorrow or the guard will turn you away. Now, is there something I can do for you?

THE WOMAN

I want back my trash.

THE BLOND WOMAN

And what do you want me to do? You want me to climb in the dumpster and crawl around in the garbage and—

THE WOMAN

They took it away in the work cart. The little golf cart with the wooden box on back.

THE BLOND WOMAN

They! They! Who are They?!

THE WOMAN

The men who work here. You know who they are. Now, I want you to tell them I separated my trash. I put the papers together and the bottles and the plastics in one container and the tin in another. It isn't much but it's important to me. I want my trash back.

THE BLOND WOMAN

(*To THE SECRETARY.*) Try and reach them on the radio. (*Referring to THE MAN.*) It's in his pocket.

THE SECRETARY

I don't speak Spanish.

THE WOMAN

Tell them I'm going to get my car— the brown one— and I'll meet them over at the dumpster next to the car wash, the one they use for the garbage they take to the County Dispose-All. I want them to get out my trash and put it in my car and then I will give it to the old man who separates it. Tell them I'm waiting at the dumpster. Tell them it's our duty to separate our trash so that men will have something to die for.

(*THE WOMAN exits.*)

This is Not the End of the Play
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes