

Gone With the Winded

A play in one act

by  
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CHARACTER NAME	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	AGE	GENDER
MARNIE	an honest to god handful	83	female
ETHEL	also a handful	79	female
HAZEL	less of a handful	76	female
NURSE	has a handful- <i>of something</i>	32	female

SCENE 1

*Lights up on a nursing home lunchroom. The sterile environment is brightened only by the sounds of chatter. A NURSE(32), wheels a cart of limp salads and flavorless meatloaves, down the aisle, offering a small smile to the residents, who seem less than enthused with their meal options. MARNIE (82), sitting at a table with HAZEL (75), is animatedly gesturing with her fork at Nurse Chloe.*

MARNIE

So, just because Rufus has a little peanut problem, none of us can enjoy ‘em? That’s what you’re telling me? What kind of nonsense is that?

NURSE

He’s *deathly* allergic, Marnie, and lets be honest, you don’t need the salt intake.

HAZEL

(under her breath)

*Or the fat-*

MARNIE

What *are* you two? The goddamn peanut police? Hell, Rufus could use a little fun before he kicks the bucket-

NURSE

*Marnie!*

MARNIE

What? I’m just stating the obvious: the lights are on, but no one’s home, and that’s not just going for Rufus. I’ve been calling Ethel’s name for the past thirty minutes, and the poor things deaf as a doorknob!

HAZEL

Got the figure of one too-

Ethel whips around, a soured look on her face.

ETHEL

**Marnie!** Shut the hell up you fat hag! I heard you the first, second and third time you called my name! Even *after* turning off my hearing aid-

MARNIE

(offended)

You turned off your hearing aid? To drown me out? Well, aren't you a piece of work!

ETHEL

I'm trying to preserve my braincells, Marnie. They say listening to drivel gives you dementia-

NURSE

*Ethel!*

ETHEL

Oh, don't get your knickers in a twist! We're just having a bit of fun-

MARNIE

Ethel and I ditched chit-chat ages ago. We're too old for that nonsense!

ETHEL

We let it all hang out!

NURSE

I can see that.

MARNIE

Yeah, but you young folk just don't get it. We've been through a lot together--

ETHEL

Three husbands, two world wars.

MARNIE

You remember polyester pants?

ETHEL

Oh god, and the perms!

MARNIE

I had one that lasted 6 years.

ETHEL

You did. You *really* did. That god-awful red muppet-looking *thing*.

MARNIE

The ladies at the shop didn't warn me!

ETHEL

I warned you! What am I, chopped liver?!

MARNIE

Ethel, I wasn't going to take advice from you-

NURSE

Ladies, as much as I would love to stand here and talk to you, I really do have to go on my lunch break.

MARNIE

Oh, go ahead, Chloe! Don't let us keep you!

ETHEL

Yeah, go enjoy your tofu seaweed salad or whatever it is you kids eat these days.

NURSE

(laughing as she walks off)

I will. See you in a bit, ladies!

As Chloe walks off, her shoes make an almost comical CLICK CLACK.

MARNIE

You ever notice how *nice* her shoes are?

ETHEL

Oh, I noticed. Girl's got a different pair of designer flats for every day of the week. Who does she think she is, Carrie Bradshaw?

MARNIE

Wonder if she's got a nice man, with all those shoes.

ETHEL

It's a shame she ruins them with the socks.

MARNIE

Oh, the socks! I saw her wearing ones with flamingos on 'em the other day! Did you see?!

ETHEL

(flippantly)

Oh, *I saw*. I see everything, Marnie. *She's a walking circus*.

MARNIE

She certainly runs one, that's for sure.

The pair share a chuckle and glance over at  
Chloe, sitting alone in the break room.

MARNIE

(to herself)

What is she even eating over there?

They both squint, trying to see what the  
nurse is pulling out of her bag. Marnie  
suddenly gasps and clutches Ethel's arm.

MARNIE

Is that-?

ETHEL

(straining to see)

No... it can't be.

MARNIE

It is!

ETHEL

(outraged)

That little sneak!

MARNIE

She's been holding out on us!

ETHEL

(sputtering)

All this time, we've been deprived, and she's sitting there with a whole bag of 'em!

MARNIE

Oh, she's got some nerve, Ethel!

ETHEL

We're over here eating mashed peas, and she's munching on peanuts like it's the goddamn county fair!

MARNIE

Unbelievable!

ETHEL

We oughta storm over there and grab that bag!

MARNIE

Yeah, and tell her to share with the rest of the class!

ETHEL

(flapping her hand)

Or give her a piece of our mind, Marnie! I swear if she doesn't hand them over, I might use this cane for something other than walking!

They both stare daggers at Chloe, who obviously eats her boiled peanuts in the break room.

MARNIE

(to Ethel, muttering)

How much do you think she's got?

ETHEL

(grumbling)

A lot. Probably hoarding 'em like she's expecting a famine. I see the way she pockets those tips from the visitors, doesn't think twice, just shoves the cash in her blouse. Someone like that probably has a snack stashed somewhere.

MARNIE

(pointing towards the window)

Her car! She's always going back and forth to it.

ETHEL

You think she's got a stash out there?

MARNIE

(smiling)

You bet your sweet behind she does. I've seen her popping back out to her car every other break. Probably stuffing her face-

ETHEL

What do you say? Quick break-in while she's still in the lunchroom?

MARNIE

(grinning)

Oh, I'm in. She always leaves her keys on the counter when she goes to the bathroom.

ETHEL

You remember where she parks?

MARNIE

Third spot on the left. Right by the flowerbed.

ETHEL

Perfect. We just need a distraction.

Ethel scans the room before nudging Marnie and nodding toward Hazel.

MARNIE

So... what about it, Hazel? You up for a little performance?

Hazel, who has been absentmindedly munching her lunch, looks up.

HAZEL

Huh?

MARNIE

Do you... by any chance... feel weak in the knees? Wobbly?

HAZEL

Not particularly.

MARNIE

Here's the thing. We need Chloe's car keys. Desperately. And to get them, we need a distraction.

HAZEL

(squinting)

What do you want her car keys for?

MARNIE

Boiled peanuts, Hazel. She's been hoarding them like the queen's jewels.

ETHEL

If you help us out, we'll split the stash three ways.

HAZEL

(raising a brow)

Boiled peanuts? You know I can't stand those things, right?

MARNIE

Okay, four ways! You can have my desserts for a whole week-

ETHEL

(panicking)

I'll- I'll... knit you another sweater!

HAZEL

Another sweater, you say?

MARNIE

Cashmere!

Hazel considers for a moment, then grins.

HAZEL

Alright... I'm in. But I want it red this time, Ethel. None of that ugly mustard yellow bullcrap you tried to pawn off as gold.

ETHEL

Got it. Red. Now fall like your life depends on it!

They watch eagerly as Hazel gets up, shuffles to the middle of the room, and dramatically collapses with a loud gasp. Chloe immediately jumps from her seat.

NURSE

Hazel?! Oh my god, HAZEL!

The lights fade to black as the Nurse rushes to Hazels side.

SCENE 2

*Lights up on a quiet nursing home parking lot. The midday sun beats down on the rows of faded cars. In the third spot on the left, near a slightly overgrown flowerbed, ETHEL and MARNIE stand by CHLOE's car, peering inside with mischievous grins. The lot is empty except for the occasional sound of distant traffic.*

ETHEL

You ready to see what she's got in there?

MARNIE

Oh, I've been ready. I'm just waiting on you. You have the keys.

Ethel gives a wicked smile and pops the trunk open with a satisfying click. The trunk lifts up slowly and then, in a ridiculously cinematic fashion, bundles of cash come spilling out like an avalanche. Bills flutter in the air like confetti.

MARNIE

(staring wide-eyed)

Oh my lucky stars!

ETHEL

(shocked, mouth agape)

Is that-?

MARNIE

(grabbing a handful of cash)

Money! This is... this is real money! That sneaky little--

ETHEL

Oh! It all makes sense, Marnie! It all makes sense! I knew there was something up with that sneaky little bitch! The shoes, Marnie! The designer shoes!

MARNIE

Oh my god, do you think she's...

ETHEL

She's embezzling!

MARNIE

Oh my lord! She's been laundering cash this whole time! And here we thought she was just pinching peanuts!

ETHEL

Look at all this! No wonder she's been walking around in those fancy shoes, acting all high-and-mighty!

MARNIE

And we're over here fighting for mashed peas while she's sitting on a gold mine! No wonder she doesn't want us to get anything tasty, less for us is more for her!

ETHEL

(shaking her head)

Oh, Chloe, you dirty, dirty criminal!

MARNIE

(she grabs a wad of cash)

Ethel... we could turn her in... but then again...

ETHEL

What have we got left to lose?

They both look down at the piles of money,  
then at each other, the decision made  
without a word.

They both scramble into Chloe's car like two teens. Marnie hops into the passenger seat while Ethel struggles to get behind the wheel. Once settled, they exchange knowing glances, the thrill of their adventure crackling in the air.

ETHEL

You ready for this, partner?

MARNIE

Ready as I'll ever be. Let's blow this popsicle stand.

**END OF PLAY**