

*From Chemical Bonding*

DANI, 18  
NURSE ANGELA, 20s  
GRANDPA OTIS, 70s, wheelchair bound.

*(DANI is visiting her grandfather at the retirement home.)*

GRANDPA OTIS

If they give me strained squash again I'll spit it right back in their faces.

DANI

Hi Grandpa?

GRANDPA OTIS

Am I an infant? Am I a terrorist? Why am I being subjected to torture?

DANI

Well I'm sure that for some people, the squash is –

GRANDPA OTIS

It's liquid squash. Liquid. It's like goo.

DANI

Well you don't have to eat it.

GRANDPA OTIS

Did you bring me the good stuff?

DANI

Yeah I got it.

*(DANI takes out a package of cookies as NURSE ANGELA enters. She is very young and sweet.)*

NURSE ANGELA

Otis! There you are!

GRANDPA OTIS

I can eat these if I want.

NURSE ANGELA

Eat what?

GRANDPA OTIS

Never mind woman.

NURSE ANGELA

We were wondering why you left the dinner table.

GRANDPA OTIS

I don't have the freedom to leave the dinner table, is that what you're telling me?

NURSE ANGELA

No we were just –

GRANDPA OTIS

I fought and died for this country, you hear me?

DANI

You didn't actually fight and *die* Grandpa.

GRANDPA OTIS

Oh I didn't? We're rewriting history now, aren't we? I took seventeen north Korean communist bullets to my right hip, *seventeen!* Bam bam bam bam bam bam! Right there in a little row like ants. You take seventeen bullets to your right hip and see what happens to you. I died I'm telling you! Knocked clean out of my jeep. Spirit rose out of my body like it was attached by a tether, the whole bit. Bright light from above, all that crap. And you know why I came back to this earth? You know why?

*(he waits.)*

It wasn't to eat strained squash I can tell you that much!

NURSE ANGELA

That's an amazing story, but –

GRANDPA OTIS

Story? That is the God's Honest truth. And now the communists have taken over anyway.

NURSE ANGELA

No one's a communist here, Otis.

GRANDPA OTIS

That's funny, that's exactly what a communist would say. And now I am a prisoner. A man needs to be allowed certain freedoms, and I do not have those freedoms! If Abraham Lincoln was in my situation he woulda chewed off his hands at the wrists to escape!

NURSE ANGELA

Is this about the television?

GRANDPA OTIS

You're dang right it's about the television!

NURSE ANGELA

We settled that democratically. You were the only one who wanted to watch Gossip Girl, everyone else wanted to watch So You Think You Can Dance.

GRANDPA OTIS

Bunch a leotard-wearing Spanish men dancing around, that's what that show is! They shouldn't call it So You think You Can Dance they should call it leotard-wearing Spanish men putting their hands all over people! I got an answer for you: No! You can't dance!

NURSE ANGELA

Well that was the vote.

GRANDPA OTIS

The vote doesn't count cause two of those people don't even know what planet they're on, they can't vote for a tv show. You're sitting there whispering in their ear – so you think you can dance, so you think you can dance – just so you can watch some people wiggle their bottoms! It's unhealthy for a man to move his hips like that.

NURSE ANGELA

Okay. I just wanted to check on you to make sure you're okay. You're Dani, right?

DANI

Yeah. Hi.

NURSE ANGELA

We really appreciate you coming on by. It's wonderful to see young people here.

DANI

Thanks. I um... I love being here.

NURSE ANGELA

Really?

DANI

Yeah.

NURSE ANGELA

Wow. You really love it?

DANI

I do.

NURSE ANGELAS

You are a very special person. I'll check on you later Otis.

GRANDPA OTIS

Not if I can help it.

NURSE ANGELA

Okay then. Bye!

*(NURSE ANGELA leaves.)*

DANI

Grandpa maybe you should be nicer to people.

GRANDPA OTIS

And the point of that would be what?

DANI

Karma.

GRANDPA OTIS

Karma?

DANI

You know if you put positive energy out there, positive energy returns to you.

GRANDPA OTIS

Uh huh.

DANI

And if you put negative energy out there, negative energy returns to you.

GRANDPA OTIS

I see. So you're saying that instead of trying to shoot the people who were trying to kill me in Korea, if I woulda given them flowers or some crap, they woulda been nice to me? I would not have been shot seventeen times in the right hip?

DANI

Maybe it would have only been fifteen.

GRANDPA OTIS

Don't joke about people getting shot.

DANI

Sorry.

GRANDPA OTIS

All right. You have come to me for wisdom, here it is.

DANI

I just enjoy the company –

GRANDPA OTIS

I know why you're here: wisdom. You're trying to suck it out of me like a leech before I die. So here it is: This is the philosophy I've lived my whole life by: you ready for it? You gotta little notebook you're gonna write it down in?

DANI

Okay.

GRANDPA OTIS

Here it is: Get Yours.

*(he looks at her importantly.)*

You're not writing it down.

DANI

Get yours what?

GRANDPA OTIS

There ain't no Get Yours what, it's get yours. That's it.

DANI

What does that mean?

GRANDPA OTIS

It ain't a fortune cookie, it means get yours. How hard is that?

DANI

That's a pretty narcissistic way of looking at the world.

GRANDPA OTIS

It's a what now?

DANI

Narcissistic. It means you're in love with yourself.

GRANDPA OTIS

I know what narsa-siss-whatever means. Of course I'm in love with myself, who else am I gonna be in love with?

DANI

Humanity.

GRANDPA OTIS

What is wrong with you?! Humanity?! Are you growing up in some kinda hippy commune?! First it's this karma business now it's loving humanity. Is this what young people are into nowadays?!

DANI

I guess a little bit.

GRANDPA OTIS

Sheesh. I don't get it at all. All right: wisdom time's over. Now it's time for the plan.

DANI

What plan?

GRANDPA OTIS

Listen carefully cause I'm only gonna say this once: Bingo.

DANI

Bingo?

GRANDPA OTIS

Bingo. Think about it. All right I don't wanna say too much. Go home and act normal.

*(He wheels off, eating cookies, leaving DANI bewildered. He wheels back on a second later.)*

Don't draw attention to yourself.

*To read more of this play, contact me at [donzolidis@yahoo.com](mailto:donzolidis@yahoo.com)*