

All That Matters Most

by

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Cast of Characters

ROSA: 35

CLYDE: 39

Place

Suburban home

Time

5:30 PM

Setting: An upperclass suburban home overlooking the bay.

At Rise: Rosa is drying dishes in the kitchen when Clyde enters the house and walks straight to the refrigerator.

ROSA: You come home and go straight to the refrigerator. You didn't say hello to me, in fact, you ignored me.

CLYDE: I'm hungry.

ROSA: How about hello?

CLYDE: You know, you don't stop breaking my balls. When is it gonna end?

ROSA: It's me? You have some nerve.

CLYDE: You don't give me a minute to breathe.

ROSA: Oh stop, I don't bother you all day long while you're at work.

CLYDE: As soon as I step foot in this house I have to hear your lip.

ROSA: What husband comes home and doesn't greet his wife?

CLYDE: HELLO, HELLO, happy? Can I eat now?

ROSA: Eat! Stuff your face. Thought you were going on a diet.

CLYDE: I am.

ROSA: When?

CLYDE: After I eat.

ROSA: You've been saying you'r gonna go on a diet for months now.

CLYDE: I'm preparing.

ROSA: The doctor has given you warnings, plus your smoking.

CLYDE: Rosa, listen, I had a really long, miserable day and I just want to make myself a sandwich in peace, sit in front of the television and zone out for a bit, is that so wrong? Why do I have to come home to this shit?

ROSA: You have five children.

CLYDE: I know I have five children!

ROSA: It's parent conference week this week and I shouldn't have to do this all alone. You should be there with me.

CLYDE: I can't run a business and run around to school at the same time.

ROSA: Yes you can, you own the company, why did you hire a staff if you can't take leave when needed?

Clyde begins choking on ham.

CLYDE: Becau---Becau---(he coughs and taps his chest)

ROSA: Are you choking?!

Clyde nods yes.

Rosa runs behind him and starts hitting his back. Clyde growls in pain. Clyde runs to the sink and tries to drink water but it doesn't work. He panics and gestures for Rosa to hit his back again.

Rosa hits his back but it doesn't help Clyde. She then tries the heimlich maneuver but it makes matters worse.

Clyde drops to his knees but miraculously coughs out the ham and begins to catch his breath.

ROSA: Oh my God!!

Clyde waves his hands to say he's okay.

Can you breathe? Can you breathe?!

Clyde gives thumbs up and nods as he regains his breath.

Rosa grabs a cup of water from the sink and brings it to him.

Clyde takes hold of it but doesn't drink. He's just happy to breathe again. He stands.

CLYDE: I don't...I don't need the water...just want to regain my breath.

ROSA: Did you spit it all out?

CLYDE: Yes, yes, I think I did. (he inhales deeply) I have full capacity. (beat) I can breathe. Thought I was gonna die. I swear. Thought I was gonna drop dead right here on the kitchen floor.

ROSA: Maybe you should sit down.

CLYDE: I'm fine.

Clyde sits on a stool.

Rosa cleans the ham off from the floor.

ROSA: Cause you eat too fast.

CLYDE: Cause you make me angry while I eat! I almost just fucking died and you're ready to have another go at me!

ROSA: Alright, alright, calm down.

CLYDE: Would have been the perfect ending to the perfect shitty day I've had.

ROSA: Why was your day shitty, Clyde?

CLYDE: There was a hold up at the place.

ROSA: Hold up?

CLYDE: Yeah! A guy came in with a gun and tried robbing the place but didn't get very far cause of the security I have.

ROSA: What?!

CLYDE: Yeah, pulled the gun right at me and fired a round after I told him to fuck off.

ROSA: He shot the gun at you?

CLYDE: Right at me.

ROSA: What?!

CLYDE: That's why I invested in top of the line security, cause it didn't even make a dent to the bullet proof glass and as soon as he saw that, he took off running.

ROSA: I can't believe it.

CLYDE: Yeah, so I almost died twice today.

ROSA: Why didn't you call me?

CLYDE: And do what?

ROSA: I don't know, tell me what the hell happened?

CLYDE: It all happened so fast, I mean, if I didn't invest in protection, I most likely would have been killed. And what are the chances I come home and almost die choking on ham? I mean, am I supposed to die today?

ROSA: Obviously not, you survived both attempts.

CLYDE: Days not over.

ROSA: Don't talk like that.

CLYDE: Now do you see why I need to relax?

ROSA: Yeah. I guess we'll talk more later about everything. Why don't you make yourself another sandwich and calm down?

CLYDE: I don't even want to move right now.

ROSA: You okay?

CLYDE: ...I'm okay...at least if I died you and the kids would be alright with the insurance policy.

ROSA: It covers choking on ham?

CLYDE: I don't freaking know.

ROSA: Want me to make your sandwich?

CLYDE: If you wouldn't mind.

Rosa begins making Clyde's sandwich.

ROSA: Not everything is about money.

CLYDE: It is right now.

ROSA: Well, what's the plan?

CLYDE: What plan?

ROSA: Are we gonna sell this house and move or not? (beat) We need to make a final decision because Harry has one more year left before college.

CLYDE: I know.

ROSA: Well?

CLYDE: I think we should sell the house. Nothing's picking up...had two customers today and one of them was the gunner, so...I'm doing everything I can do with the business and nothing is working out...nothing.

This has never happened to me before. I've always been able to figure something out...I'm squeezed, squeezed to my max...I can't make people come into my store...doing all kinds of marketing, everything's draining whatever money I have left in the budget...nothing works and time is running out, fast...we're on the brink...living day to day is haunting me, making me remember the early years when we were first starting out together...in some ways those were the best years of my life, but we struggled a whole lot, didn't we?

I remember when twenty bucks was a lot of money to buy groceries; remember when the lights were off for months and we had candles for light at night? I never told you this story but—I think you were away visiting family and I was in the apartment by myself and the lights were out. It was just me and the cat and I had to go to the toilet and brought a candle in the bathroom with me. I set it down on the sink and after I went to the bathroom and started wiping, I leaned over and my shoulder touched the candle and the sweater I was wearing caught on fire. Within seconds, my entire sweater went up in flames and I dove directly into the cat litter box and put myself out. Had a knot on my forehead from the whole episode from the dive, but I stopped myself from getting burned, oh, except for my eyebrow, I had one eyebrow that got singed but it grew back in time before you came back home. Oh, and my eyelid hairs got burnt on one eye, kept sticking together whenever I blinked. For three days I had to deal with that shit, until finally they stopped sticking together. Absolute torture.

It's alright to laugh. (he laughs) Get it all out. (sighs) You're out there having a great vacation and I'm having yet another near death experience. Story of my life. (beat) I'm accident prone. What can I say? (sighs)

...I don't want to sell our home, especially after how hard we worked to get here, but it's a matter of survival. I thought things would kick back by now but things keep holding on and holding on and business is suffering and now...

I made mistakes. Spent too much time focused on having a good time, trying to make memories with you and the kids and have a good life, but now it's all coming back to blow up in my face cause I didn't plan right. I didn't think far enough ahead, I didn't think my business would ever take such a hit for so long a period of time.

I just care about things being good for you and the kids. That's all I care about. I don't give a damn about me. Sometimes I wish I did die, so you can collect the insurance policy and I'd know yo were all okay...I just want things to work out for my family. That's all that matters most.

ROSA (suddenly bursting out with laughter): ...I'm still trying to get over the fact that you went up in flames, while going to the toilet.

CLYDE: Thanks.

ROSA: Can't believe you never told me that story.

CLYDE: I don't know why, probably embarrassed and it just popped up in my memory.

ROSA: Unbelievable.

CLYDE: ...We have about three months, Rosa.

ROSA: Three?

CLYDE: Three months.

ROSA: Okay.

CLYDE: Unless a miracle happens, I don't know what to say.

ROSA: I say we sell, move and salvage what we can while we still have time. It will hurt, it's gonna be a hit but we will manage.

CLYDE: I can't believe this is happening.

ROSA: I know.

CLYDE: Never in a million years did I ever imagine we would run into financial problems again.

ROSA: Me either.

CLYDE: I don't want to give up.

ROSA: You're not giving up.

CLYDE: But I'm losing.

ROSA: It will be temporary. All those memories we've shared will never be forgotten. I have no regrets.

CLYDE: No?

ROSA: Never.

CLYDE: I don't want to lose that life.

ROSA: We're not. We still have each other, don't we?

END OF PLAY