

ACT I

Scene I

AT RISE: Lights rise on the living/dining area of the Lovelace home. LOWELL LOVELACE ENTERS dressed in work clothes carrying a large dream catcher. He crosses to the upstage wall takes down a landscape oil painting and replaces it with the large ornate dream catcher. He stands back to admire his handiwork.

MAGGIE (OFF-STAGE)

Be careful with that picture, honey.

LOWELL

Don't worry about your dumb picture. *(To himself)* Never liked this piece of crap. *(To MAGGIE)* If things work out the way I'm hoping, I'll be replacing this Wal-Mart special with an authentic Rembrandt.

MAGGIE (OFF-STAGE)

Until that day comes, just be careful with it.

LOWELL

Be careful. I'm careful! *(Mumbling to himself)* I don't know why you got to always be running behind me, making sure I'm doing everything the way you want. I'm the man here! That's right! The top dog, king of the castle, the head of state..

(LOWELL has crosses into the kitchen and tosses the picture down the stairs to the family room. There is a loud crash. MAGGIE rushes on stage from the upstage bedroom.)

MAGGIE

What was that?

LOWELL

That was the sound of class triumphing over crass.

(MAGGIE is confused by the statement. She's about to respond when she sees the dream catcher and crosses to the center of the room to get a better look.)

MAGGIE

What in the world is that?

LOWELL

That, my love, is a dream catcher.

MAGGIE

It looks kinda gay to me.

LOWELL

Gay? What do you mean gay?

MAGGIE

You know...a little fru fru.

LOWELL

It's an authentic Indian artifact. There is no such thing as a gay Indian.

MAGGIE

What about that Indian in the Village People.

LOWELL

He wasn't a real Indian. He was just playing a role. What do you know...?

(MAGGIE gives the dream catcher a critical examination.)

MAGGIE

The snow capped Alps is much more appealing.

LOWELL

Those are the white man's Alps. This is my heritage, Maggie. It's time for the black man to embrace his history.

MAGGIE

This is just another one of your harebrain schemes. If you think those Indian investigators are going to fall for your claim of being full or part Indian, maybe that thing is good for catching your foolish ideas.

LOWELL

Oh, you'll be singing a different tune when I'm admitted to the Creek tribe and sharing in the casino moola.

MAGGIE

Lowell, why in the world, would you arrange for this Indian interview on the same weekend that the Barondorfs are due in town.

LOWELL

I ain't putting my life on hold, because my daughter wants to marry into some uppity Philadelphia black family.

MAGGIE

This is very, very important to Patricia.

LOWELL

Acceptance into my ancestral tribe is very, very important to me.

MAGGIE

Okay, Sitting Bull, you've got to promise me you'll be on your best behavior when the Barondorfs get here.

LOWELL

You don't have to worry. I'm gonna give them a welcome they will never forget.

MAGGIE

You'd better not do anything to mess this up, Lowell.

LOWELL

After twenty-eight years of marriage, and you still don't know me.

MAGGIE

Oh, I know you too well.

LOWELL

What kind of name is Barondorf for a black family anyway? Must have gotten it out of a social directory.

MAGGIE

What does their name have to do with our daughter marrying into their family? She's finally found a nice decent young man with enormous promise. Now, that doesn't happen every day.

LOWELL

I don't know what was wrong with Larry Dickson, the guy she dated in high school, captain of the football team, recipient of bowling league member of the year, and National Horseshoe Champion.

MAGGIE

He works as a plumber, Lowell.

LOWELL

So? It's honest work.

MAGGIE

I hear he has a drinking problem.

LOWELL

A few beers after work is not a problem.

MAGGIE

I hear it's a bit more than that.

LOWELL

That's just what a woman needs is a challenge to make a marriage work. That's what they're always yammering about in those women's magazines, ain't it? "How to reshape your man in thirty days." "Three ways to improve your mate." "Don't throw him out, fix him up." If she gets herself a fixer upper, it will keep her mind occupied and her interested in the marriage.

MAGGIE

Oh, you'll never understand women, will you?

LOWELL

If she gets everything handed to her on a silver platter, she'll get bored; develop them wondering eyes...them it-looks-more-exciting-in-someone-else's-boudoir desires, be done jump the fence for greener pastures, and next thing you know, she's gallivanting around with some other young buck.

MAGGIE

Don't be ridiculous.

LOWELL

I don't want no grandchild of mine bearing the name of Barondorf. It sounds like you're constipated or something.

MAGGIE

Lowell!

LOWELL

Well, it's true. My name is Billy...Billy

(Straining as if constipated to get the name out)

LOWELL (CONT'D)

BARONDORF! It sounds as phony as a three dollar bill. When I'm an official member of the Creek Indian tribe, I'm planning on changing the family name to Crazy Beaver, a homage to the honored Crazy Horse.

MAGGIE

You're not changing our name. I will not have people going around referring to me as Mrs. Maggie Crazy Beaver. It sounds so...so pornographic!

LOWELL

Why you got to put down everything I do to get ahead. You'd better get behind yo' man, squaw, if you want to share in the wampum.

MAGGIE

You call me a squaw one more time, and I'm gonna wampum you upside yo' head.

(There's a knock on the side door. MAGGIE crosses to answer it. LOWELL crosses into the kitchen and goes down to the family room.)

MAGGIE

Good afternoon. Come on in, Jenkins.

(DARREL JENKINS ENTERS.)

JENKINS

You're looking radiant as spring magnolias, today.

MAGGIE

Oh, stop it.

JENKINS

How you doing today, Maggie?

MAGGIE

Don't ask.

JENKINS

Where is Lowell at?

(MAGGIE looks around the room for him.)

MAGGIE

He was just here.

(JENKINS notices the dream catcher.)

JENKINS

What in the world is that?

MAGGIE

That is an idiot catcher. If you look closely you'll see Lowell's twisted brain hanging from a thin thread.

(LOWELL ENTERS struggling with a large wrapped object. HE manages to get it through the kitchen. JENKINS helps him move it to the center of the room.)

MAGGIE

What have you bought now?

(LOWELL starts unwrapping the object.)

LOWELL
(To JENKINS)

Make yourself useful and help me.

(JENKINS helps in ripping
away the packaging.)

LOWELL

Got it on EBay for a song.

(The object is finally
unwrapped revealing a seven
foot totem pole.)

MAGGIE

You have truly lost your mind.

JENKINS

If I ever brought something like this into the house, my
wife would shove it up-

MAGGIE

How much!?

LOWELL

The investment will pay big dividends.

MAGGIE

How much!?

(Uneasy pause)

LOWELL

Four hundred and thirty five dollars, plus sixty-five for
shipping and handling.

MAGGIE

You paid five hundred dollars for that piece of junk!

LOWELL

Art! It's an Indian artifact.

(JENKINS examines the totem
pole.)

MAGGIE

I should have listened to mother. She told me you had a few screws loose.

LOWELL

And she should talk.

JENKINS

Why does it say made in China?

LOWELL

What?

(LOWELL rushes to see the marking.)

JENKINS

Gotcha!

LOWELL

You about gave me...

MAGGIE

It can't stay in here.

LOWELL

What do you mean...?

MAGGIE

You heard me. That thing has to be out of my living room by the time the Barondorfs get here. Do I make myself clear?

(MAGGIE storms out of the room.)

LOWELL

(*Imitating MAGGIE*)

That thing ain't gonna be in my living room by the time the Barondorfs get here. Do I make myself clear? (*Beat*) Who does she think she's talking to. I'm the man of the house...the chief of the tribe, the hunter, the provider. The master of all I survey.

JENKINS

And a brow-beaten husband who obeys his wife's every command. (*Beat*) You have truly lost yo' ever-loving mind.

LOWELL

You and that unsupportive wife of mine, gonna be singing a different tune when I'm pulling in the casino revenue.

JENKINS

People don't become part of Indian tribes because they want to make money.

LOWELL

Wouldn't you want to cash in on a profitable blood line? Tell the truth. New Indian casino opening up outside of Branson and the members of the tribe will share in the profits. Cha ching! *(Beat)* I've got 37.8 percent Indian blood running through my vines. Well over the prescribed percentage for entry into the tribe.

JENKINS

It's jumped. The other day you were running at 29.6.

LOWELL

(Spoken in Indian speak)

You have sharp mind like cunning squirrel.

(Back to normal speech)

You see. Most of the Indian comes from my father's side of the family. But, get this, I found out that my mother's great grandmother was half Indian which boosted the percentage. Her mother, my great, great grandma Bess was tipping out on her husband, fooling around with a full blooded Indian, got pregnant, and had herself a half-breed. Grandma Bess came from the naughty pine side of the family tree. Get it. Naughty Pine.

JENKINS

You must have come from the solid oak side of the family. Get it? SOLID oak. Man, when those Indian lay eyes on you they ain't gonna see nothin' but a man as black as my shoes. Slave ship black.

LOWELL

You always trying to sound like you know what you talking about.

JENKINS

I know that if it looks like a duck and walks like a duck, it's probable not an Indian.

LOWELL

Now, that makes a lot of sense.

JENKINS

Don't make a lot of sense trying to be something you're not.

LOWELL

Hey, mister know-it-all, what happen with your prediction that the Rams were going to beat the Steelers by two touch downs last week? Huh? Huh?

JENKINS

Now wait a minute. Hold on there, Chief Running-off-at-the-mouth. They came within two points of my...

LOWELL

Your crystal ball must have been on the fritz.

JENKINS

What about that investment you made in the combination cell phone, computer and electric razor? The cellcommuteshaver. It's a sure fire hit!

LOWELL

You're comparing apples and oranges here. It was an idea that was ahead of it's time.

JENKINS

It was a stupid idea, Lowell. Stupid. Stupid. Stupid.

LOWELL

Okay, so I've made a few mistakes.

JENKINS

A few? What about the time...

LOWELL

Hey, can we stay in the moment?

JENKINS

You have really gone off the deep end with this need to go back to the reservation.

LOWELL

I'm not going to a reservation...

JENKINS

You know I got some Scottish blood in me. My grandmother told me how back in slavery the master played house with my great, great, great grandmother. She bore a couple of his children and hence the Jenkins line. Now I may have a few drops of that white man's blood, but do you see me wearing a kilt and playing a bagpipe.

LOWELL

Now, that would be a sight to behold. You in one those Scottish dresses with your knocked knees sticking out from under the skirt like stove pipe cleaners.

JENKINS

See there. You showing yo' ignorance now. Better watch out I'm gonna break out the dunce cap. *(Beat)* The Kilt is an ancient and noble garment, a remnant of the Celtic race.

LOWELL

It's still a dress in America from sea to shining sea.

(LAX ENTERS with an Ipod listening to heavy rap. He mouths the words and dance to the beat completely unaware of LOWELL and JENKINS.)

LOWELL

(Trying to get LAX'S attention)

Hey! HEY! Shut that mess off!

(LAX is suddenly aware of the two men and takes off his head phones.)

LOWELL

Don't you know how to speak when you come in the house?

LAX

What's up, Mr. Jenkins. It's all good, dad.

LOWELL

What did I tell you about talking that hippity hoppity mess in my house? You speak proper English when you're under my roof.

(LAX finally notices the totem pole sitting in the living room.)

LAX

Whoa! Where did the totem pole come from?

LOWELL

You like it? Pretty impressive, huh?

LAX

Man, that is bangin'

LOWELL

Bangin'? What's that's suppose to mean. (To JENKINS) You're lucky you had two girls.

JENKINS

(To LAX)

I've been meaning to ask you what that nickname LAX stands for.

LAX

That's my rap insignia, know what I'm saying?

LOWELL

LAX stands for the airport.

LAX

You know man, it's an all encompassing metaphor for life, know what I'm saying? You are cleared for take off! Your flight has been cancelled. Women, children, cripples and rich people may board first. Sorry about your lost luggage, but we have bigger fish to fry. Now boarding flight 376, destination unknown. And I am a crash waiting to happen on runway number ninety-nine.

LOWELL

We are truly looking at the lost generation.

JENKINS

Give the boy a break. He's just searching for his identity. Remember our wild days back in the disco era?

(JENKINS displays his "Saturday Night Fever" moves.)

JENKINS

I still got it going on, baby!

LOWELL

Watch out now! You'll be needing a hip replacement. *(Beat)*
This hippity hop stuff ain't no disco. We had real music
back in the day. Donna Summers, Gloria Gaynor, Lionel
Richie. We had style and class back then.

JENKINS

You call three inch platform shoes style?

LOWELL

They should bring those things back. They bringing
everything else back. Mini skirts, bellbottoms, tie dye;
Richard Simmons has even made a come back. Why not platform
shoes?

JENKINS

Because it was a bad idea then, and it's still one.

LAX

Ya'll was looking like Frankenstein monsters.

*(LAX does a mock disco dance
as a Frankenstein monster.)*

LAX

(A la Donna Summers)

Toot toot hey beep beep
Toot toot hey beep beep
Bad girls
talking about the sad girls
sad girls
talking about the bad girls, yeah

(Normal speech)

Ya'll is old school. Make way for the hip hop, gangster
generation.

LOWELL

You ever heard of the Black Panthers? Stockley Carmichael?
They were gangsters on a mission. Not like you hippity
hoppity goof offs.

LAX

Each generation has its own approach to dealing with adversity of the moment. Our words or like bullets to the hearts of the plastic people; our rhythm, scud missiles to the bastilles of corporate power; our poetry, the battle cry that tears down the walls of privileged tyranny!

LOWELL

Baggy pants, gold tooth, nappy head fools is only folks listening to that hippity hoppity mess. So you just rapping to the choir.

(MAGGIE ENTERS from the upstairs bedrooms.)

MAGGIE

(To LOWELL)

Why are you all standing around? There are lots of things that need to get done before the Barondorfs arrive. You said that you were going to take care of that hornets nest outside the car port.

LOWELL

I'm going to get to it. The damn thing ain't bothering nobody.

LAX

Hi, mom,

MAGGIE

Hi, honey. (Beat) I want you to wear your blue suit tonight. (To LOWELL) That hornet's nest is an eye-sore and dangerous.

LAX

(To MAGGIE)

That suit is so lame.

MAGGIE

Lame or not, that's what you'll be wearing.

JENKINS

I'd better be running.

MAGGIE

Don't run off because of these two loafer aren't pulling their weight. (Beat) Has anybody seen my mother?

LOWELL

Last time I saw her she was downstairs watching TV.

(MAGGIE crosses to the kitchen and goes down the stairs to the family room.)

JENKINS

How is the old girl?

LOWELL

Nutty as a Christmas fruitcake and she ain't getting any better with age.

(MAGGIE ENTERS the living room area.)

MAGGIE

She's not downstairs.

(LAX notices a car pulling into their driveway through the unseen picture window downstage.)

LAX

I think grandma Noola has arrived.

(THEY all rush to the downstage picture window to get a closer look.)

MAGGIE

Dear Lord, whose car is that?

LOWELL

I ain't bailing her out of jail again! If she does the crime, she's got to be prepared do the time.

(MAGGIE rushes to the carport door to let her mother in the house. GRANDMA NOOLA ENTERS walking with a cane.)

MAGGIE

Mother, whose car is that?

LAX

Hi, grandma.

(SHE gives him a dismissive wave.)

MAGGIE

Who does that car you were driving belong to?

(NOOLA crosses to the sofa and sits down.)

NOOLA

Is it time for Judge Judy yet?

MAGGIE

Mother, please, try to remember where you got that car.

NOOLA

My father gave it to me.

MAGGIE

Mama, granddaddy has been dead for over thirty years.

NOOLA

I'm hungry. What's for lunch?

MAGGIE

I'm going to have to report this to the police. Oh, mother, don't you understand, if you keep doing things like stealing cars...picking pockets...

LAX

Don't forget playing Three-card Monte at the Crestwood Shopping Mall. Old Lady, Bedford, in the power wheel chair, is her look out.

NOOLA

Why you stinking snitch!

MAGGIE

We're going to be forced to put you one of those places you said you rather die than go into.

LOWELL

Leave her be. She's never strayed too far. She usually takes a neighbors car. They all know she's batty as hell.

NOOLA

I may be batty, but you're fat, ugly, black and stupid.

LAX

O000weee! That was cold.

LOWELL

I'm trying to stand up for you and go...

LAX

Psycho on yo' ass.

LOWELL

(To LAX)

Well, you just...

LAX

Granny still thinks she's a gangster chick. Ain't that right, Granny. The Ma Barker of St. Louis County.

NOOLA

Ma Barker was a Girl Scout.

MAGGIE

Mother! (To LAX) Don't get her started.

(LOWELL and JENKINS have a good laugh.)

NOOLA

You two boys won't be laughing when you're sleeping with the fishes.

(LOWELL and JENKINS laugh harder.)

LOWELL

(To JENKINS)

You hear that? You hear that? "We'll be sleeping with the fishes." (To NOOLA) Maybe you'll slip a horse head into my bed while you're with it.

NOOLA

Or maybe I'll slip your head into a horse's ass.

LOWELL

(To JENKINS)

See what I'm talking about? Coo Coo, coo coo.

JENKINS

Let me get out of here. Ya'll look like you've got a lot to deal with, and I don't want to get in the way.

(JENKINS starts to leave.)

NOOLA

We were the Hodiamount Track Girls, the toughest brawds east of Wellston.

LOWELL

Yeah, right and I'm Tony Soprano.

(The sound of another car pulling into the driveway.)

LAX

(Looking out of the picture window.)

Patricia is here.

(MAGGIE rushes to the window. LAX goes upstairs.)

MAGGIE

Dear God, please don't let the Barondorfs be with her.

(MAGGIE is relieved by the sight of her daughter being alone.)

MAGGIE

Thank you, Jesus.

(PATRICIA ENTERS carrying several bags. She first sees JENKINS standing in the door and gives him a big hug.)