

WAITING FOR GANOL

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CHARACTERS

DONNIE, 34	The father-to-be.
LOU, 34	Donnie's friend.
MARCIA, 32	Donnie's wife, 13 weeks pregnant. Pronounced <i>Mar-SEE-uh</i> . Nickname C.
FRANK, 67	Donnie's father.
MARIA, 29	Marcia's friend. Nickname Mar.

SETTING

The backyard of a South Philly rowhouse. The present.

NOTES

A dash (-) at the end of a line of dialogue means a character is being interrupted. Sometimes characters interrupt themselves.

A slash (/) indicates when the next line of dialogue begins.

A line break within dialogue indicates a short pause. A double line break indicates a longer pause.

[Brackets] indicate dialogue that is implied but not spoken.

Dialogue that ends with an ellipsis (...) indicates an unfinished thought. An ellipsis followed by a period (...) indicates a more conscious choice to move onto a new thought.

"Ten little fingers, 10 little toes, two little eyes and one little nose.
Blue or pink, what do you think? Either way, the diapers stink."

Modern proverb

ACT 1

PROLOGUE

(Audience members enter through the front door of a South Philadelphia rowhouse. It's humble but comfortable, and today it's decorated with pink and blue party supplies.)

(DONNIE, LOU, and MARCIA mill about the living room, welcoming the audience with lines like:)

Hi, welcome, welcome!

Glad to have you here!

How do you know Donnie/Marcia/Frank?

South Philly parking - what a pain, huh?

You want a beer?

You need anything to eat?

You need a bathroom?

Did you hear about the ganol?

(NOTE: If Lou asks this one, he calls it a cannoli.)

Your money on boy or girl?

You live nearby?

(Eventually, Marcia makes her way to the center of the room.)

MARCIA

OK! Thanks everyone for coming. We're still waiting for a few things. And people. *(Motioning)* If you wanna head out back, it's gonna make it a lot easier for me.

Don. You wanna...?

DONNIE

Oh! Sure.

It's right over there. Right this way.

(He instructs them to file out the back door and get settled in the space.)

ACT 1

(The backyard of a South Philadelphia rowhouse. Humble but comfortable: a wooden fence on one side, cinderblocks on another, some plants hanging in the plastic baskets they came in. Refreshments sit on simple patio furniture. Today, blue and pink party supplies dot the space.)

(DONNIE and LOU enter through a storm door that leads inside. They're mid-conversation, beers in hand.)

DONNIE

Chrissy Campadonico.

LOU

(With a chuckle) How many times are we gonna go through this?

DONNIE

Well...

LOU

Chrissy Campadonico's husband isn't her baby's father. You and I / both know-

DONNIE

That's not what Facebook says.

LOU

You're still trusting Facebook? After Richie's fake GoFundMe?

DONNIE

That wasn't- Dammit Lou-

LOU

"Oh, help me, I was in a horrible crash on the Blue Route! Even though everyone and their mother knows I've been in Costa Rica / for the last two months."

DONNIE

I was trying to be nice.

LOU

Well-

DONNIE

And I didn't know he was in Costa Rica.

LOU

Those million posts didn't tip you off? "Here's my daughter with an iguana."
"Here's my weird son with a big snake."

DONNIE

I don't get where Richie got the money to do that anyway. For two whole months? That's like...eight vacations.

LOU

...Lotta people want used cars?
I mean Paul works, too. Are their kids like / one from each?

DONNIE

Stop! You're changing the subject, stop.

LOU

Don. I love you. I hope you get what you want. But nobody has ever found a credible example that disproves The Theory.

DONNIE

"A credible-" Why you trying to sound all fancy? And you're all like dressed up-

LOU

I am not dressed up!

DONNIE

Wait! Sandy! Sandy...uh.../Braggadocio?

LOU

Braccio?

DONNIE

Yeah!

LOU

Sandy Braccio got knocked up? Who the hell would-

DONNIE

Yeah I don't know; he's not from Philly. But I saw him on Facebook: big, tough guy. And she had a girl! Hah! You're not right every single time!

LOU

Hold your horses.

(Lou pulls up her page on his phone. Maybe by now they've taken a seat.)

So that's him?

DONNIE

Yeah.

LOU

Hmm... (*Swiping through photos*) And we're certain he's the father?

DONNIE

(*In a fancy voice*) "We're *certain* he's the father." "We're *confident* he's the father."

LOU

Don...

DONNIE

We're fuckin' sure he's the father, man.

Actually to be honest I don't know anything about Sandy Braccio's personal life.

LOU

Yeah...OK...mmm....Jason...

DONNIE

Yeah, Jason! He's not / Italian, right?

LOU

Jason Smith. That's like a made-up name.

DONNIE

What is that? Irish?

LOU

(*In a movie announcer voice*) "Jason Smith and the Scepter of Destiny."

DONNIE

"Jason Smith and the Tower of Doom."

LOU

"Jason Smith and the Baby Mama Braccio."

(*They laugh.*)

No, it's not Irish.

DONNIE

So now she's what, Sandy Smith?

LOU

I guess...it still says Braccio here.

(*Back to the photos*) OK, so...Jason's working out...he's at a Flyers game...OK, this is.... "Overwhelmed with joy to announce that my *partner* and I are expecting. Our precious new soul *enters the universe* this November."

(*A beat.*)

DONNIE

I hate being in my thirties.
He really wrote that?

LOU

"Hashtag: All the feels. Hashtag: Dad pride. Hashtag: Tearing up."

DONNIE

(Looking at Lou's phone) Dammit!

LOU

He also "Likes" *This Is Us*. So...undefeated.

(Donnie sighs.)

DONNIE

You know, Sandy is as busted as she ever was, and this Jason guy / looks totally normal...

LOU

You don't have to take it out on her.

DONNIE

You're right. I'll take it out on you.

(Donnie throws his empty beer can at Lou. Lou passes him another and they both crack open the new cans.)

I still think the mother could have an effect, you know. Marcia happens to be very feminine. I mean she has, like, strong genes.

LOU

Don, you already know: It just doesn't matter.
I mean it matters in life. But not as far as The Theory is concerned.

DONNIE

Whatever. Let the record show I don't believe you. Marcia is having a girl.

LOU

(Speaking into a fence) Can we get the record to reflect that?

(MARCIA enters and places more refreshments out.)

OK, roger that. / Thank you.

MARCIA

What's doing in the looney bin?

LOU
 Not a lot.

DONNIE
 Lou says we're having another boy.

MARCIA
 Lou! Enough with your-

LOU
 My theory?

DONNIE
 "The Theory."

MARCIA
 Here's a solution hon: Don't listen to Lou. Problem solved.

DONNIE
 But babe. Do you really think I'm that masculine? Like I would keep having boy after boy after boy?

MARCIA
 (With a sigh) OK, what is the stupid theory again?

LOU
 Hold on, that's not what I was saying.

DONNIE
 What you have is determined by the like, the vibe of the father. If he's real like macho and masculine, then it'll be / a boy.

LOU
 Well no-

(The storm door cracks open, and shuts.)

MARCIA
 MATTEO, BACK INSIDE!

DONNIE
 What'd we tell you buddy? Eh?

DONNIE
 He's grounded.

LOU
 Who, Matteo?

DONNIE
 Yeah.

MARCIA
 OK, so if the dad is effeminate the kid is a girl. I get it.

LOU

Not exactly. It's more like, if he has some more feminine qualities. Like, if he's in touch with his emotions. / If he's a cryer....

DONNIE

I'm in touch with my emotions!

LOU

Don! I'm not saying you're at, like four-sons level.

MARCIA

(Under her breath) "Four-sons level"; Jesus / Christ in heaven.

LOU

But you'll definitely have two. Third and fourth are toss-ups.

MARCIA

Fourth, very funny.

DONNIE

I hate this! Why are we even talking about this!

LOU

You brought it up! And [that's what this party is about]....
C, what are you hoping for out of that slip 'n' slide?

MARCIA

Dammit, Lou.
I want a beautiful, healthy baby. How's that?

DONNIE

She wants a girl, too. She's just too chicken to admit it.

MARCIA

Bull. Shit.

DONNIE

Wasn't Maria supposed to be here like an hour ago? I wanna know already!

MARCIA

I don't know; she got held up with something. Then she said they were jammed at Isgro's.

LOU

What, jammed at a...cookie place?

(They both look at Lou like he's crazy.)

MARCIA

What, are you crazy, Lou? It's the best
ganol in the city.

DONNIE

What have you never been to Isgro's?

LOU

Maybe a couple times, when we were kids.

MARCIA

See this is what separates the half-Italians
from the Italians.

DONNIE

We had to go! And the amaretti! Oh my
God...

LOU

Oh, the squishy little...almond cookies! Those were [good]- But we went closer to
us...Varalli's, maybe?

MARCIA

Varallo's.

LOU

That place was cool. Like, like old guys sitting on the sidewalk drinking espresso.
Like, actually from Italy.

MARCIA

Yeah, it's still there. They're still there. But they don't fill their ganol to order....

DONNIE

Maybe that's why Maria's taking so long! They have to fill the whole big thing
fresh!

LOU

I don't know, a cannoli is like so...thick. The ratio is just-

(The landline rings inside.)

MARCIA

There's Frankie. / Just in time to shut your Irish mouth up.

DONNIE

(Getting up) Yeap....

MARCIA

He'll only call the landline.

LOU

C! You think I don't know that?

MARCIA

Excuse me.

LOU

You're excused.

(DONNIE exits.)

I didn't get to tell you earlier you look lovely today, Marcia.

MARCIA

Thank you, dear.

Don said you brought something to drink? Not that I should trust your taste.

LOU

(Pointing to a pitcher) If there's one thing we *do* know, it's drinks.

MARCIA

(Making sure the coast is clear) I hope this man makes it here in one piece...

LOU

What, he's worse?

MARCIA

(Pouring herself a cup) Well. Does still know our phone number by heart....

Only sixty-seven; it's a crime. My nonna was sharper in her eighties.

Donnie says Frank's barely lived to be a grandpa.

LOU

(Gesturing inside) Come on! And he's got what's-his-name's step-son too, right?

MARCIA

That kid is a little shit. Eitan.

Matteo...I don't know, he never took to Frank.

LOU

C. [Get real.] Was that because of him or because of Frank?

MARCIA

Well. Even if Frank does get a kid he connects with more...he's not barely gonna know what's going on.

(She sips the drink. Then immediately spits it all over.)

LOU

Eyy!

MARCIA (Continued)

LOUIS WILLIAM FLANNERY!

What the hell kind of tea is that?

LOU (Continued)

Tea? It's whiskey punch.

MARCIA

Don said it was tea!

LOU

Why would he say that?

MARCIA

And you're not going to say anything while I pick it up and sip it like some lush!

LOU

Not here to judge you, C. My ma always said that's a bit of a wife's tale anyway.

MARCIA

Well that explains a lot. (*Shaking her head*) At a kid's party....

LOU

It's for an unborn baby. That's not the same thing.

MARCIA

(*Blotting some of the drink off of him*) Here.

LOU

(*Doing it himself*) That's fine. That's fine, C.

MARCIA

It was too strong, anyway.

LOU

(*Sipping his own*) Well, you're not Irish.

MARCIA

Neither is anyone else here!

LOU

Sorry, Marcia. That's how I was taught to make 'em.

MARCIA

Because you listen to everything your father tells you?

LOU

I moved back to Philly. He wanted that.

MARCIA

(*Chuckling*) Not for him.

You know she's coming, right?

LOU

Yeah, I know.

MARCIA

Cause you don't have to be here if you / don't-

LOU

What and miss my best friend's gender reveal?

OK, that sounds stupid. Now that I say it.

Anyway I'm happy to be here. I can deal with seeing Maria for an hour.

MARCIA

So you can behave yourself this time?

LOU

C, that was all her- You know what, forget it.

It'll be fine. I'll be fine.

(DONNIE reenters carrying a bowl of chips, which he places on the table and promptly eats a bunch of.)

DONNIE

Did you know Krissy and John are down the shore!

MARCIA

Ugh!

LOU

In September??

DONNIE

I was sure they were gonna come.

MARCIA

Can't tear 'em away from that new house.

LOU

Krissy and John got a shore house?

MARCIA

Well his parents died.

LOU

Wow. Sweet deal. Parents stop bugging you and a free shore house?

MARCIA

It was a massive wreck on 295, Lou, but...I'm sure once they got past that.

LOU

I'm just-

MARCIA

I know.... Anyway, depends who your parents are. Sometimes you get a house you gotta *pay off*.

DONNIE

You talking about Vince Bardo?

(She nods.)

LOU

Why what happened with him? I haven't heard that name in...

DONNIE

So, his father passes, and it turns out he has all this gambling debt. And somehow Vince is on the hook for it. His house isn't paid for, his car's not paid for. Had to take another job for *two years*.

LOU

Can't you just like, declare bankruptcy?

MARCIA

Vinny's too honest, he would never.

DONNIE

He's a pharmacist. Better that he's honest.

LOU

Vince Bardo's / a pharmacist? Hmm.

MARCIA

I'm saying in his personal life.

DONNIE

What does that mean?

MARCIA

Ugh, forget it. Always gotta open your mouth, Marcia.

LOU

Well now you have to say it, C.

MARCIA

Just...if Vinny so much as looks at a woman, Laurie hears about it. From him!

DONNIE

That's weird. That's weird.

MARCIA

Why, who are *you* / looking at?

LOU

I'm gonna have to agree with my client here.

DONNIE

That's like breaking guy code on yourself.

MARCIA

Well I think I just broke girl code, so....

DONNIE

C! Where is Maria! Isgro's is not even a mile away. (*Recalculating*) Ballpark.

MARCIA

Donald. / Cool it.

DONNIE

That's not my name.

LOU

(*Amused*) "Donald."

MARCIA

It is so. I've seen your birth certificate.

DONNIE

That was a fake! That was a fake that you made so that you could-

MARCIA

I would never! I would never commit such fraud!

DONNIE

C, why do you do this to me?

MARCIA

(*Kissing him, maybe in a lovey-dovey voice*) Because I love you, baby. My little baby Donald Duck.

(*Lou makes a quacking noise.*)

DONNIE

That's not what Donald Duck sounds like!

LOU

It's a strong name, Donald.

MARCIA

You could be president with that name.

DONNIE

Just what I need.... Ask my father when he gets here, OK? / It's Don!

MARCIA

Where is your father, by the way?

LOU

Changing the subject. / Suspicious.

DONNIE

I don't know! When he called he was leaving. He's probably taking the Walt again so / it'll take a little-

MARCIA

Why didn't you tell him not to! It's so far out of his way.

DONNIE

Babe. He doesn't like driving on 95.

LOU

It is easier. To go around.

MARCIA

He doesn't need any more time on the road.

LOU

Objection!

DONNIE

Just let it be; he's set in his ways. At this rate he'll get here before Maria anyway.

(She sticks her tongue out at him.)

So Krissy and John are at their *(in a voice)* new house. Carla and Dom have her craft fair thing.... Where are Richie and Paul?

MARCIA

Paul called. Rudolph is sick. *(To Lou)* Their dog.

DONNIE

Like the reindeer.

LOU

Yeah, I'm familiar.

DONNIE

But seriously?

(Marcia nods.)

What are you gonna do for the dog that he can't do for himself? He just lies around! You can't walk over here for an hour?

MARCIA

Honestly, Don, I think they just didn't want to come. Like, when I first invited them, Paul goes, "I didn't realize people still did that."

DONNIE

"Still did that"? I never even heard of this before like five years ago.

LOU

Ehh. Some people don't like all the gender talk...

MARCIA

(Touching her belly) Well. I wasn't not gonna have a party for my baby.

DONNIE

Well plus why would someone show up without the....*suspense* of the ganol?
(Reconsidering) But I mean who *did* show up?
I don't know....

(Marcia's phone rings.)

MARCIA

Hi, doll.

No no, that's fine babe. No- Mar- / No-

DONNIE

Where are you Maria!! Where's my ganol??

(MARCIA makes a "Pipe down" motion and exits. A beat.)

LOU

Well. If Mar doesn't show, it's gotta say in some file somewhere what your baby's packing. Worst case we break into Constitution, hack the computers, and then...find some party poppers and start a forest fire.

(This doesn't get the reaction Lou wants. A beat.)

LOU (Continued)

Bud, what's-
Go. Go.

DONNIE

I don't know-
Sorry-
No.

DONNIE (Continued)

Just.... No one's here, and...

LOU

...It's just a little thing. It's no big deal. Right?

(A few beats. Donnie is thinking about something.)

(In a Bugs Bunny voice he's used a million times) Ehh, what's up, Don?

DONNIE

I just really want a girl.

LOU

I think we got that.

But seriously, it's like, more money, more drama-

DONNIE

It's not more drama.

LOU

How would you know?

DONNIE

Anyway I already told you all this! I just...picture myself with a girl. Like, doing dad stuff. That's the classic thing: mother-son; / father-daughter.

LOU

The classic thing?

DONNIE

You know...cooking together-

LOU

You don't cook!

DONNIE

It's an example! Going to the zoo! Sometimes I see that.

LOU

They actually let boys into the zoo now.

DONNIE

Alright...

LOU

The strides we've made as a society.

DONNIE

Or going to her ballet recitals and shit.

LOU

Ballet recitals? What the hell-

DONNIE

I'm allowed to have this vision!

LOU

Sure! I just don't really see you cheering on all the...pliés and shit.

DONNIE

It's just an example!

LOU

You keep saying that!

DONNIE

Yeah, cause it's true!
And I do cook! Sometimes.

LOU

Don. Taking a premade cutlet...and adding premade gravy...and putting cheese on top...is not cooking. It's...construction.

DONNIE

Whatever.

LOU

I'm just saying. You used to be all juiced about playing catch with Matteo. Now he's here and you never do.

DONNIE

Matteo.... It's its own thing.
I just know it'll be good. If I get the girl.

LOU

Having a girl is gonna magically solve all your problems?

DONNIE

No, it's just- Hey why don't we talk about you, OK? You ever hear back from that shop? On, uh, Oregon?

LOU

I didn't hear shit.

DONNIE

Sorry, man.

LOU

Good thing all Brendan wants for rent is a drinking buddy.

DONNIE

You could go / in there, you know-

LOU

All I'm saying is, you get your girl. You're happy for a little while. It seems easier. But then she wants that new necklace everyone has, and you gotta pay up. Then it's time to date and some creepy guy at school is all over her, and-

DONNIE

Don't- Don't say that man. Stop.

LOU

What?

DONNIE

Just- Forget it.

(The storm door cracks open, and shuts.)

Ey! What did we- Oh...[he's not there].

LOU

You know you don't actually have a daughter. You don't need to be worried about the honor of a figment of your imagination.

DONNIE

I just think it'll be easier.

LOU

(After a moment of thought) Is he in more trouble? Is that-

DONNIE

No, man.... I mean. No...

(Making extra sure the coast is clear) I didn't tell you anything, OK?

LOU

What is he picking on those kids again? Cause that's like a phase, / I mean-

DONNIE

No- It's not like that....

DONNIE (Continued)

Actually, when all that happened, I thought maybe we talked some sense into him.... But then the other day C gets a call. She had to leave the salon; I had to leave this job site, it was just...

I don't even fucking understand this. He...grabbed a girl...you know...

LOU

What the fuck?

DONNIE

Yeah.

LOU

I mean. He's got no idea what he's doing, man. / He's a good kid-

DONNIE

You don't have to say that. Actually, don't- don't say that.

Cause...well, we come home with him. I sit him in the little room [upstairs] and you know I take a second before I go in there. And I'm thinking like, OK, Don: we're not gonna do this the way your Pa would. The kid's not gonna learn nothing from the belt; he's not...guilty until proven innocent.... And all that gets me feeling a little better about it. Like it all felt so crazy at the school but now I'm kinda thinking like, OK, he's a kid, they're all kids; kids do stupid shit and they do shit by accident, and this is probably just like a misunderstanding.

But it wasn't.

He knew he hurt this girl. And he understood...you know, he knew he...scared her, and...

LOU

Why would he-

DONNIE

Some challenge. Some fucking- His friend's account on...God knows what.
(*After a big sigh*) Doesn't even have a fucking phone. But, some other kid....

LOU

Listen. Every kid messes up. / He's gotta test the waters-

DONNIE

No, man. It's- Not every kid gets expelled in second grade.

C is freaking out about where do we send him. But for me?

When I talk to him about it he just...goes blank. Sometimes it kinda seems like he was happy he made her feel that way.

I don't know if it's the internet or video games or fucking...I don't know. But it's scary, Lou. It fucking scares me.

And that's gonna follow him to any school we send him to.

DONNIE (Continued)

And then I can't even talk to C about it, cause it's like, whose fault is it really, you know? Like who showed the kid how to be a man in the world in the first place?

LOU

Don, come on-

DONNIE

Let's talk about it in 10 years or something. You know? If he's not a total fuck up.

But I don't know.... Is it so wrong to like...want the odds stacked a little differently this time?

Is that horrible? I never said that to anyone.

(END OF EXCERPT)