

## Cast of Characters

CY, Yetta's husband, Marty's father

YETTA, Cy's husband, Marty's mother

MARTY, Yetta and Cy's son

## COULDA-WOULDA-SHOULDA by Glenn Alterman

*(Scene: It's about 11:30 A.M. YETTA is seated at the kitchen table finishing her coffee. CY is rushing around getting dressed.)*

CY. You're kidding? He said that?

YETTA. That's what he said.

CY. When?

YETTA. This morning when I gave him his bath.

CY. What a kid.

YETTA. Could you bust?

CY. *(Looking around:)* Where's my belt?

YETTA. On the chair.

*(He gets it, puts it on.)*

Stood up in the tub, put his hand on my shoulder and said, "Ma, I want to be a rabbi."

CY. A rabbi, really?

YETTA. At first I thought he said "rabbit."

CY. *(Stopping:)* What?

YETTA. Yeah, thought he said, "Ma, I want to be a rabbit." Almost dropped the sponge I laughed so hard. I mean can you imagine? But then he looked at me, seemed so serious. You know those eyes of his? Said it again, loud and clear, black and white. Looked like a little Moses in the tub waiting for the waters to part. *(Slowly, very strong:)* "Ma, I want to be a rabbi. A rabbi, you understand?!" I stopped, smiled, what could I...? Said, "Sure, okay, if that's what you want." Washed the soap off, towel-dried him, baby powder, kissed him on the head and gave him a big hug. But then he gave me a look, got upset, started to cry.

CY. Cry? Why?

YETTA. I don't know. I asked him, wouldn't answer. Looked at me like I was the worst mother in the world. Like I'd just stabbed him in the heart or something. Ran to his room, slammed the door, locked it shut. Wouldn't let me in. Couldn't get him out. Been in there all morning.

CY. All morning?

YETTA. All-morning-long!

CY. You're kidding? Where's my shoes?

YETTA. By the sink.

*(He gets the shoes, starts putting them on.)*

I've been sitting here waiting, didn't want to wake you. We've got a problem Cy.

CY. I'll say, our son. *(Calling to him:)* Marty! I'm taking that lock off his door first thing when I get home tonight. Enough of this shit!

YETTA. What are you talking about? You've got to go talk to him.

CY. Me? About what? I didn't have no fight with him.

YETTA. What fight? Who fought? A misunderstanding.

CY. *(Moving again:)* I don't have time for this. He'll come out when he's good and ready. And stop giving him so many baths for Christ's sake!

YETTA. Talk to him.

CY. Didn't you hear me?

YETTA. He's your son!

CY. I'm late. I'll talk to my son—later.

YETTA. When, at four in the morning when you get home?

CY. *(Grabbing his coat, starting to go:)* Whenever!

YETTA. *(Blocking the door:)* The drunks of the world can wait!

CY. Hey, the drunks of the world put food on this table and don't you forget it! You should thank God we got that bar. *(Looking in his coat pocket:)* Where's my keys?

YETTA. *(Ignoring him, looking toward the bedroom, calling sweetly:)* Marty, come on out. Daddy's leaving for work, come say good bye.

CY. *(Looking:)* Where the hell's...?!

YETTA. *(Sweetly, calling to the bedroom:)* Ma-rty.

CY. Where the hell are they?!

YETTA. On the bureau, where you left them!

CY. *(As he storms out, calling to the bedroom:)* Marty, come on out. I don't got all day.

*(YETTA looks anxiously towards the bedroom. Loud banging:)*

Martin get out here! You hear me? Out!

*(It's quiet for a moment. Then returning, carrying the keys, under his breath:)*

He doesn't want to come out.

YETTA. So you're just going to leave?

CY. What do you want me to do, break down the door?

YETTA. *(Turning away, upset:)* Go ahead, go. GO!

CY. *(He starts to leave, but then returning, upset:)* Why's it always got to be this way, huh?! Why, huh?! Why do I got to leave here almost every day with you crying and me with a knot in my stomach?

YETTA. *(Tensely, looking straight at him:)* I am not crying!

CY. Can't I leave here JUST ONCE, YETTA, a pleasant good bye, kiss on the cheek? Why's it always got to be Marty's been bad, or Marty's...? Always something!

YETTA. The drunks of the world are waiting. Go ahead, go!

MARTY'S OFFSTAGE VOICE. STOP IT! BOTH OF YOU! STOP YOUR GOD-DAMN ARGUING!

*(A light change. They both turn towards the bedroom. A door slams. MARTY enters: He's in his forties, wearing large children's pajamas, a pair of glasses and a black hat. He's carrying a pen and pad.)*

YETTA. What? What's wrong?

MARTY. I can't concentrate! This constant arguing, bickering back and forth!

YETTA. You don't have to yell.

MARTY. Why, did anybody ever just talk here?

CY. Told you he'd come out when he was good and ready.

YETTA. Marty, take your hat off in the house.

MARTY. Ma, I'm trying to finish this scene, please!

YETTA. So what's stopping you? We were just...

MARTY. Please, I got a whole play ahead of me!

YETTA. *(Very cool:)* Sorry, mister playwright.

MARTY. Alright, let's just go back a bit. You were standing here Ma, I'm still in the bedroom, and he's about to leave.

YETTA. But you're here now, just say good bye to him. What's the big...?

**MARTY.** Ma, please, don't tell me how to write my play. I'm still a kid in this scene: There's a scene later on when he leaves us; that's the big good bye scene.

**YETTA.** He leaves us?

**MARTY.** Yeah, but it's not for years. There's still five scenes before...

**YETTA.** What happens then?

**MARTY.** Ma!

**YETTA.** What?! After he leaves, what happens then, tell me!

**MARTY.** You divorce. He runs around, starts drinking, becomes a drunk. Finally, burnt out, broke, he has to move back in with his mother, gets diabetes, loses both his legs and an eye. Then there's a big father-son hospital scene. And when I leave, he dies.

**CY.** I die? Alone?

**MARTY.** Yeah, but that's not till late in the second act.

**YETTA.** What happens to me?

**MARTY.** You...never remarry, Ma. End up bitter, alone, miserable in Miami.

**YETTA.** That's it?!

**CY.** This is a comedy?

**YETTA.** Was that all true? Is that what really happens?

**MARTY.** It's a play Ma, make believe.

**CY.** So you made all that up about me, right?

**MARTY.** Let's see, where were we? Ma, you were just about to cry. Dad...

**YETTA.** Does he really leave us?!

**MARTY.** How do I know? I'm not God.

**CY.** 'Course not Yetta! I'd never leave you. Never, I swear!

**MARTY.** You liar! You leave us when I'm eleven years old.

**CY.** I thought you just said...!

**MARTY.** I make it up as I go along.

**CY.** Hey, what are you tryin' to pull here, huh?!

**MARTY.** Nothing.

**CY.** You just gotta start trouble, don 'cha?!

**MARTY.** What?

**CY.** Some things never change!

**MARTY.** Dad, what are you talking about?

**CY.** You, Mister Playwright! S'just like when you were a kid, little mister in-between!

**YETTA.** Why are you blaming him?!

**CY.** How she cooed and pampered you all the time. Her little Lord Fauntleroy.

**MARTY.** I hated...! No dad, that's why I always ran to my room. I hated when... Dad you got it all wrong!

**CY.** Yeah wrong, right! You sucked up all her...! Nothing left for me. No room left at the inn!

**MARTY.** *(Throwing his pad and pen down:)* That's bullshit!!

**YETTA.** What's going on here?!

**MARTY.** You were too busy fooling around with all your girlfriends! Never home. Never...!

**YETTA.** What's all this blame? Blaming?!

**CY.** Only reason I ever fooled around...! Only reason I did was 'cause your mother wouldn't...!

**YETTA.** The play, Marty! Your play!! WHAT THE HELL'S GOING ON HERE?!

*(MARTY and CY look at her. It's quiet in the room for a moment, then:)*

**MARTY.** Nothing ma. This is just part of the play. A dramatic moment, that's all. Dad and me were rehearsing the big father-son confrontation scene, top of the second act.

**YETTA.** So much anger, hostility? Can't you fix it? Make it funny?

**MARTY.** Ma, this isn't "It's A Wonderful Life." You can't always make things better. Now let's see, where were we?

**CY.** *(Putting his arms around MARTY's shoulders:)* Marty, you got to change the ending. Please, me dying all alone like that, it's s'too sad.

**MARTY.** Everybody's a critic.

**CY.** Couldn't you just...?

**MARTY.** *(Walking away from him:)* I'm sorry, I can't.

**YETTA.** You realize you made me the villain here, you realize that?

**MARTY.** No I didn't.

**YETTA.** Couldn't you just...?

**MARTY.** Coulda-woulda-shoulda! What happened, happens. It all stays in the play!

**CY.** (*Upset, starting to leave:*) Well then it happens without me!

**MARTY.** Dad, you don't leave yet. We've still got...

**CY.** (*As he leaves:*) No? Just watch me!

*(He leaves, goes to the bedroom, slams the door.)*

**MARTY.** (*Calling to him:*) Dad, that's my room!

*(MARTY turns to YETTA. She looks at him for a moment and then starts to leave.)*

Where are you going?

**YETTA.** Why didn't you just become a rabbi? ...I'm sorry, Marty.

**MARTY.** But Ma, you don't leave.

**YETTA.** No? You still haven't finished the play yet, remember? And what happens, happens.

*(She leaves, goes to Marty's bedroom.)*

**MARTY.** (*Calling to her:*) Ma! Ma!!!

*(We hear the bedroom door slam and lock. A light change. MARTY slowly looks around the kitchen. He picks the pen and pad off the floor, writes something.)*

"Marty slowly looks around the kitchen. He picks up the pen and pad off the floor, writes something."

*(He sits down, takes his hat off and puts it on the table.)*

"He sits down, takes his hat off and puts it on the table."

*(Suddenly he turns towards his bedroom.)*

"Suddenly he turns towards his bedroom and calls out..."

*(Just as MARTY opens his mouth...)*

*(Blackout.)*

*End of Play*

## CUDDI

by Bekah Brui