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A play by Terry Kroenung

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SCENE: *Bloomingtondale's (or somewhere similar). The morning after Thanksgiving.*

SET: *Picked-over garment racks, plastic and wooden hangers swaying. A couple of mostly-empty bargain bins. A lonely mannequin or two. A tall hat rack. The odd piece of discarded clothing on the floor.*

Eunice and Myrtle browse down left. Not old, not young. Worn out from a long day of bargain battles. They are professionals at this. Rita and Jatonya enter up right. Young, hip, "too cool" to be here. Wayne, a crisply-dressed sales assistant, is at center trying to create order out of the chaotic displays.

Jatonya

So I told that boy, if he was gonna act like that, he could just get his lazy, but admittedly fine, chocolate ass out from under my \$300 Scandanavian goose down duvet and go find hisself a job.

Rita

Amen to that, sister.

Jatonya

I said, "I may have woke up next to you without knowin' your name, but damn! This woman deserves respect!"

Rita

Me and Julio went through the same thing. He was all puffed-up about how he had himself a **busload** of bitches, and I was just "Tuesday" to him.

Jatonya

And so?

Rita

And so I locked him naked out on the fire escape.

Jatonya

You go, girl!

Rita

Just as all the school busses were goin' by.

Jatonya

Wooo!

Rita

He's bangin' on the slidin' door, hollerin': "Come, on, Rita! At least gimme sumpin' to wear while the kids are lookin'!"

Jatonya

And your instant reply was---?

Rita

Threw him my pink baby doll nightie with the marabou stork trim.

Rita/Jatonya

“\$49.95, one size fits most”!

(They slap hands and giggle, hunting through a bin)

Eunice

So, how's your mother?

Myrtle

Better.

Eunice

Better?

Myrtle

Better call the mortician, she's not long for this world.

Eunice

How long's she been sick?

Myrtle

1949. And your darling husband?

Eunice

Ah...touch-and-go.

Myrtle

Sounds like my first honeymoon.

Eunice

Sounds like my last doctor's visit.

Myrtle

So, Eunice, are the kids home from college?

Eunice

Well, their laundry is. I haven't spotted **them** yet.

Myrtle

I sympathize. The only thing dirtier than my Harvey's clothes is his mind.

Eunice

Sometimes I wonder what they're teaching them at those fancy-schmancy medical schools.

Myrtle

No, Harvey's in law school at Columbia.

Eunice

Oh. Well, there you have it.

(Rita and Jatonya have migrated to center)

Rita *(to Wayne; she holds a sweater)*

'Scuse me. Do you have this in a size 2?

Wayne *(looking her up and down)*

Shopping for your Barbie doll collection?

(Rita immediately slaps him upside his head)

Wayne

I'd be delighted to check in the back for you. *(exits up left)*

Rita

Jeez, if I was shoppin' for abuse I coulda stayed home with Julio.

Jatonya *(imitating store announcer)*

"Attention, please! We are now offering huge discounts on ridicule, for a limited time only."

Rita

"Invective now half-off."

Jatonya *(eyes her as if she's from Mars)*
Invective?

Rita
I'm goin' to night school. So sue me.

(Wayne comes back with a sweater)

Wayne
Will a 10 do?

Rita (takes it)
Deal.

(Wayne returns to organizing. Rita and Jatonya move left as Eunice and Myrtle amble to down center)

Eunice
So I said to her, I said, "Gladys, Mrs. Fishbein's son just this week got back from his Doctors Without Borders trip. You need to put that darling daughter of yours in her best dress and march her right down to their apartment with a bowl of matzoh ball soup, before some **other** mother finds out there's an unmarried podiatrist in the building. 14 is most definitely **not** too early to be laying the groundwork."

Myrtle
Doctors Without Borders. A great organization.

Eunice
But doctors without wives---

Myrtle/Eunice
---is a crying shame.

(Wayne picks up a red silk scarf from the floor and drapes it around the neck of a mannequin, up center)

Rita *(poking Jatonya)*
Hey, Jatonya!

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Eunice (*poking Myrtle*)
Myrtle!

Jatonya
Ohhh! I would look so good in that! (*moves toward the scarf*)

Rita
Maybe so, but I spied it first. (*moves toward the scarf*)

Eunice
I can get a mint for that on E-Bay! (*moves toward the scarf*)

Myrtle
Only when you pry it from my cold, dead fingers! (*moves toward the scarf*)

Eunice
Careful what you wish for!

(All four shoppers stalk the scarf slowly, like lionesses creeping up on a herd of antelope. Wayne is backed up against the mannequin in terror; he's been here before)

Wayne
Ladies! Ladies! Please! I have an invalid husband to support!

(Rita lunges for the scarf, but Jatonya grabs her by the neck and flings her stage right, into a garment rack. As Jatonya turns to grasp the scarf, Eunice arrives, head butts her, and grabs one end of the scarf. Myrtle grabs the other. Wayne is tangled between them)

Eunice
Let go!

Myrtle
Why? Do I have "schmuck" written on my forehead?

Wayne
Do I have "organ donor" written on mine?

(Rita picks up a long piece of the broken garment rack, wields it as a quarterstaff. Jatonya picks up a pair of wooden clothes hangers, one in each hand. Eunice, Myrtle, and Wayne move down left as a unit)

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Rita

What you mean, sucker-punching me?

Jatonya

A hard bargain knows no conscience!

(They fight, stage right. At stage left, Wayne is spun toward center stage, where he hides in a bin. Eunice and Myrtle keep hold of the scarf. Myrtle jerks on it, Eunice lurches into her knee, belly-first, and drops. Myrtle wraps the scarf loosely around her own neck. As she tries to rush for the up right exit, Rita and Jatonya stop fighting and bar her way)

Rita

My name is Rita Elena Montano. You stole my scarf. Prepare to die.

(She attacks. Myrtle dives under the center bin as Wayne peeps out the top. He shrieks as he almost loses his head. Myrtle grabs the hat rack and confronts Rita down right. Eunice has recovered. She holds a wooden hanger in one hand and a mannequin as a shield in the other. She stands beside Myrtle. Jatonya takes her place beside Rita)

Eunice

Once more, unto the bitch, dear friend!

Jatonya

God for Armani, Giorgio, and St. Laurent!

(Everyone charges. Rita and Myrtle fight down right, Eunice and Jatonya fight up left. Wayne cautiously exits the bin with a handful of identical red scarves, which he casually drapes decoratively on the up center display as the lights fade out)