

KEEP IT LIGHT

Act one: Scene One: RONNIE AND TERRY'S LIVING ROOM

It's sometime in mid to late August, or maybe September, somewhere in the United States, that's not Indiana or Illinois, in the early part of the twenty first century. This is the living room of Terry and Ronnie; a suburban couple who have been married for eighteen years. The room is affluent, but calculated and cold. There is a large sofa with a chair that matches. The pillows on the furniture match the drapes. A large and tall window looks out into a very dark night. Almost no light comes through the window panes. There is a staircase that leads to the second level. There is a foyer area with a grand door. On hooks near the door, hang color coordinated clothing, that seem like they might have been arranged on purpose. A very well cared for and manicured plant sits near the bottom of the stairs. A bar stocked with expensive liquor and mixers sits in the corner of the room. A table with some flowers and a tablecloth that matches the drapes sits on one side of the room. There is a swinging door leading to the kitchen. And another door that leads to the basement. On the surface the room appears quite familiar. But the windows are just a little bit crooked. The stair treads are not quite even. The doors are just a bit too big, or too small. The living room is slightly raked forward so that we can see the wood floors, which are nearly straight, but not quite. Terry enters the room and begins to look through the closet.

He is about fifty or so, and is dressed nicely. A cardigan sweater, and thick glasses. Then Ronnie, his wife, who is several years younger, enters carrying a platter with cookies and a cake. She is also dressed very nicely, and wears a pair of trendy glasses that it took her hours to pick out. They are preparing for a gathering in their living room. Terry is rummaging through a closet that appears completely arranged like the shelves in a store. Ronnie is arranging a table with cookies and a cake. She is arranging them over and over until they are perfect, which of course they never will be.

TERRY

(In the closet)

Where do we keep the napkins?

RONNIE

The nice ones are in the cabinet.

Terry comes out of the closet. He turns to Ronnie in frustration.

TERRY

Which cabinet is that?

RONNIE

The one with the dishes and all the other stuff, where they've always been.

Terry goes over to a credenza in the corner of the room. Ronnie tries to decide what way the cake server would look best. She walks around the table arranging the server, and inspecting it from different angles. She is quite dissatisfied with her display.

TERRY

I'm looking in there now. I'm sorry, but there are no napkins in there.

RONNIE

Look in the back.

TERRY

(Rummaging around.)

I did.

RONNIE

Way in the back? You looked all the way in there and there were no napkins?

TERRY

Well, I didn't pull everything out, but I didn't see- Ah okay, there they are. They were in the back.

RONNIE

Uh huh.

TERRY

What time is it?

RONNIE

A little past eight.

TERRY

Where is everyone?

Ronnie starts moving the cookies from one plate to another. Hopefully they will look better. Terry has found the napkins. He takes them over to the bar. He begins filling an ice bucket with ice. Ronnie calls over to him.

RONNIE

Do these cookies look crooked to you?

TERRY

Everyone must be running behind schedule.

RONNIE

I think this whole batch looks off.

TERRY

What time is it?

Ronnie looks over at Terry.

RONNIE

Is that what you're wearing?

Terry looks perfectly fine by most people's standards. Terry walks over to Ronnie.

TERRY

What? Should I change?

RONNIE

No. No. It's too late now. Does my ankle still look swollen to you?

TERRY

(taking a quick look)

Not really.

Terry heads back to the bar. Ronnie sits down and begins to massage her ankle.

RONNIE

You know, a lot of people jog in this neighborhood, and this could have happened to anyone. I'm actually a very careful person. It's not safe. Anyone could just trip and fall, and they might not be as nice as me, and they might sue the Association. We really need street lights. I'm glad I called this meeting.

Ronnie stops massaging her ankle and returns to rearranging her platters. She has completely forgotten about her ankle. Terry works on arranging the bar and is sucking his thumb. Ronnie notices Terry.

RONNIE (CONT'D)

Why are you sucking your thumb?

TERRY

The hammer accident. I told you.

RONNIE

When?

Ronnie continues to rearrange her cookies and other baked goods.

Terry continues working at the bar, cutting lemons and limes.

TERRY

(rambling almost to himself)

Either that was a cheap hammer or I have a very powerful swing. I was working away and the head just flew off. It just missed my face by this much. (He indicates how close with his fingers) But that's what I get for buying a cheap hammer.

RONNIE

Do you think I should slice this pound cake? Or leave it as is? It goes stale faster if it's sliced, but if I don't slice it, then probably nobody will eat it because nobody will want to slice it first. And I want people to eat it, because it was a pain to make.

TERRY

Could have been bad. But luckily, no harm done.

RONNIE

I'm going to slice two pieces and leave the cake server here next to it. People will get the idea. It looks nice like this right?

Ronnie slices two pieces of cake with precision.

TERRY

Should I run out and get more vodka?

RONNIE

What?

TERRY

We're a little low on vodka, I'm afraid.

Terry holds up a bottle about half full of vodka.

RONNIE

It's late for that. You should have thought of it before. Why did I bother to make a cake? Everyone is going to go for these cookies.

TERRY

I could run out.

RONNIE

Run out of vodka?

TERRY

Well yes, but I meant run out to the store. I could be back in five minutes. I really think I should go, people like vodka. It's the most popular.

RONNIE

It's too late. We won't run out. It's a quick meeting.

TERRY

Five minutes.

RONNIE

Ugh. These cookies are so damn ugly. Maybe I should just throw them out.

Terry shrugs his shoulders. He retrieves a box from the closet full of various bartending supplies.

TERRY

The new couple...It's her or him from work? I forget.

RONNIE

Her. I am going to ask her to car pool. She doesn't know a lot of people here, it couldn't hurt to get to know her outside the office. And nice to have a co-worker in the neighborhood.

TERRY

What's their names again? I forget.

RONNIE

Blake and Jordan.

TERRY

Right, right. The B.J.'s. Now I remember. Are Taylor and... his wife coming?

RONNIE

I don't know. I'm not sure.

TERRY

You like them right?

RONNIE

Yes, I like them.

TERRY

He's in good shape for a guy his age. Don't you think?

Terry pulls out a box full of glasses. He takes them over to the bar and cleans each one with a towel.

RONNIE

I suppose. I think Blake & Jordan might have some things in common with them.

TERRY

Like what?

RONNIE

What?

TERRY

Like what would they have in common?

RONNIE

How should I know? I barely know them. I said might. They might have some things in common.

TERRY

They might both like vodka.

RONNIE

No, I think Jordan might be an alcoholic.

Terry stops cleaning the glasses and looks at Ronnie.

TERRY

(irritated)

Well, that's rather awkward. Should I offer him a drink or not? Now I don't know if I should drink.

RONNIE

(Snapping at him)

I have to make French onion dip!

Ronnie walks through the kitchen door and immediately comes back out before the door can swing closed.

RONNIE (CONT'D)

I'll be back in a minute. Just finish setting up the bar, but leave room for some snacks okay?

TERRY

I hope we have enough vodka.

Ronnie exits into the kitchen, Terry continues to set up the bar, He rearranges the alcohol several times. He sits on the couch. He looks at his watch. He gets up rearranges the bar again. He looks out the window. He sits. He looks at his watch. The doorbell rings. Terry answers, a very nicely dressed couple are at the door. Jordan is a distinguished gentlemen and Blake is a rather beautiful older woman who takes excellent care of herself. They are obviously a very well-off couple. With them is a very pretty girl. Her name is Kelsey. She looks like she is probably twenty four years old or so. Terry flips on some high powered charm like a light switch.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Well hello there!! You must be Blaine?

BLAKE

Blake. Terry?

TERRY

Blake! That's right! May I call you Blake? (laughs)

BLAKE

Of course.

TERRY

As long as I don't call you at 3AM. (laughs)

Blake goes to shake Terry's hand. Terry smiles and pulls his hand away from hers.

TERRY (CONT'D)

(laughing)

Oops. Sorry. I can't shake. I nearly lost a finger this afternoon and it's tender.

BLAKE

My goodness, what happened?

TERRY

Hammer accident. You know how it is. Does my thumb look swollen to you?

He holds his thumb up to her face.

BLAKE

(trying to be nice)

Oh yes, maybe a little swollen.

TERRY

I thought so!

After a beat, he laughs.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Gotcha! And you must be Jordan?

Jordan goes to shake Terry's hand, but then he realizes what Terry just said and awkwardly pulls his hand away.

JORDAN

It's nice to meet you. How is Ronnie's ankle?

Terry looks at Jordan in bewilderment.

TERRY

Oh the ankle thing! She won't be dancing anytime soon. But she's holding up pretty well, you know Ronnie!

JORDAN

I don't actually know her very well. I see her out jogging in the evenings.

TERRY

Well! Well, well, well. We will just have to remedy that tonight, won't we?

JORDAN

We were very upset when we heard she took a spill. I've been saying to Blake for weeks that this is a very, very dark neighborhood. I've been saying someone is going to get killed by a speeding car, or be attacked by hoodlums, or twist their ankle. It's very dangerous. I said that, didn't I dear?

BLAKE

Yes. You said that.

TERRY

(looking at Kelsey)

Well, well, well. And who might you be?

JORDAN

Oh, I'm sorry, this is my niece Kelsey, she's living with us, and doesn't know many of the people in the neighborhood, so we thought we'd bring her along.

BLAKE

(jumping in cutting Jordan off)

Don't go on and on Jordan, I'm sure Terry has better things to do than listen to you go on and on and on.

TERRY

Not really. (laughs)

Awkward silence.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Ronnie didn't tell me your niece was living with you.

JORDAN

Kelsey has been living with us for about six years now.

JORDAN (CONT'D)

When we moved, she moved here with us.

BLAKE

(Speaking over Jordan)
I love how everything in this room matches! It's so clever.

TERRY

Isn't that something!

KELSEY

May I use your bathroom?

TERRY

Sure- the bathroom is down the hall second door on the left.

Kelsey goes down the hall and disappears. Terry, Blake and Jordan stand awkwardly in the foyer.

TERRY (CONT'D)

Well, come on in, have a seat, Ronnie is in the kitchen making onion dip.

BLAKE

Onion dip. Yum!

TERRY

It's good right?

BLAKE

Delicious.

TERRY

I like it.

JORDAN

Me too. I like most dips. I like dipping things in other things.

TERRY

Yes, it's fun.

BLAKE

It is. Fun.

Jordan and Blake take a seat on the sofa.

TERRY

So! What can I get you to drink?

Terry heads over to the bar.

JORDAN

Vodka, Soda?

TERRY

(Simultaneously vindicated
and concerned.)

Ah, yes. Vodka Soda! A very popular beverage! And for you?

BLAKE

Do you have a Fresca?

TERRY

A Fresca? I don't know. I don't think so. I may have some Sprite stashed away somewhere, but it could be flat. I guess I'm not going to win any bartending awards! (laughs)

BLAKE

That's okay. How about a Gatorade?

TERRY

With vodka?

BLAKE

(a bit proud)

No, no, can't. I don't know if Ronnie told you, but I'm an alcoholic.

TERRY

Oh? You're the alcoholic? Fascinating. But I think we're fresh out of Gatorade.

BLAKE

That's okay, I brought some.