

ACT TWO SCENE 4

Time: One week later

Place: The coffee shop

Deb and Gladys walk into the coffee shop each with a paper cup of coffee and sit at the table.

DEB: Has Fred said anything?

GLADYS: No, apparently the “cloak of secrecy” is up again. They’ve been working on it for a week and a half now and not a word, he just comes home and tracks sawdust into the house.

DEB: They must think we’ll talk them out of it. How bad do you think it is?

GLADYS: How much worse could it be than a coffin?

DEB: To think I was worried about a lopsided coffee table. Now I’m hoping it is a lopsided coffee table.

GLADYS: You’ll soon find out, the big reveal is coming tomorrow evening. But I’ll tell you something, whatever it is they’re building, Fred is the happiest I’ve seen him since he retired. He hasn’t changed the furnace air filter in over three weeks.

DEB: Marty’s been pretty silent about the motorcycle.

GLADYS: That kinda came out of nowhere, didn’t it?

DEB: Yeah, suddenly this mild mannered man... don’t tell him I called him that... wants a Harley Davidson.

GLADYS: Men can go a little strange when they retire, I’ve heard that before. Something to do with their whole identity being wrapped up in their job. Why would they let that happen? We didn’t.

DEB: No, but didn’t you find it a *little* difficult after you retired?

GLADYS: I did, I missed the feeling of accomplishment. Remember how restless I was until I went back to the hospital as a volunteer? Maybe it’s because I’m there on my own terms that makes a difference, but I’m loving it.

DEB: Clubs, that’s what saved me, it was the work relationships that I missed. It’s all about how difficult it is for men after they retire, but it was just as difficult for us.

- GLADYS: Got that right, and we didn't go all wonky like the men did.
- DEB: Well, there was that one class we took...
- GLADYS: That was an accident!
- DEB: Are you sure?
- GLADYS: Yes I'm sure, and I wanted to leave as soon as we found out.
- DEB: No, I'm the one who wanted to leave; you had to talk me into staying.
- GLADYS: Which class are you remembering?
- DEB: Obviously not the same one you're remembering.
- GLADYS: Well it has to be, 'cause that's the only class we took.

Lights fade on the bistro table (coffee shop) as we go into a flash back scene from three years ago. Lights up on an art studio, two artists easels in a pool of light, or the easels can be placed in front of the bistro table. Deb and Gladys are each holding a sketch pad. They stand behind their easels facing the audience.

- DEB: I don't know why I let you talk me into this. I can't draw to save my life.
- GLADYS: Well that's the point isn't it, we're going to learn how to draw. It's another skill set for the tool box.
- DEB: I don't need a toolbox, we have the kitchen drawer.
- GLADYS: Just stop complaining, we're the last ones here, everybody's looking at us.
- DEB: They all look like they know what they're doing. I should have worn my beret.
- GLADYS: You're the one who said "let's try something new, let's stretch ourselves"
- DEB: I didn't mean "let's do something I can't do"! I don't even know what I'm supposed to draw. Where's the bowl of fruit?
- GLADYS: Don't worry; there'll be something here to draw. In fact... here we go!

Deb and Gladys's eyes follow an unseen model who enters the space. The imaginary model will be in front of the women.

DEB: *(pause)* Who's that?

GLADYS: Our model, that's who we draw.

DEB: You didn't tell me we were drawing a real person.

GLADYS: You didn't ask, besides, isn't this better than a bowl of fruit?

DEB: He's really cute!

GLADYS: Careful, he's way too young, even for your imagination.

DEB: *(pointing to her head)* That's OK, I'm still thirty up here.

GLADY: *(nods and points to her own head)* Twenty-five.

DEB: Why is he wearing a toga?

GLADYS: I don't know, maybe he's supposed to be Roman.

DEB: I could maybe draw jeans and a T-shirt, but I don't think I can draw a toga. How do you draw a toga?

GLADYS: Just draw a sheet with wrinkles in it, how hard could that be?

DEB: What's he doing?

GLADYS: I don't know maybe he's... Oh my god!!

They both spin around with their backs to the audience.

DEB: He lost his toga!

GLADYS: It's ok, let's not embarrass him, we'll give him a minute to get decent again and...

DEB: *(interrupting)* Everybody is staring at him! What's wrong with you people!

GLADYS: Now they're staring at us.

The situation is explained to Deb by a classmate, unseen and unheard by the audience

DEB: Excuse me? ... what?... no!....really? ...he's supposed to.... *(realization dawns)* Oooooohhhh...

Deb and Gladys slowly turn around. They're not sure where to look but it's obvious they're somewhat impressed by the good looking young model they have to draw. Despite the fact they're shocked, they are enjoying it.

GLADYS: Well... apparently you won't have to worry about drawing a toga.

DEB: No, but this does present other unanticipated artistic challenges.

GLADYS: Do you think they expect.... anatomical correctness?

DEB: Probably. I'm not sure I can.

GLADYS: It's OK, I've heard of this. We have to draw everything, the whole package.

DEB: That's what I'm talking about!

GLADYS: Not just that, the whole thing, the whole body.

DEB: Wait a minute... you knew about this?

GLADYS: No! They said it was a "life model" not a "nude model". Since when is "life" the same as "nude"? It's not my fault, now let's just get started.

DEB: What if he ~~7~~ sees us looking at him?

GLADYS: I think we're supposed to look at him.

DEB: Well... if I have to.

She looks intently at the model

It's all so... tidy.

GLADYS: The sad part is, I know exactly what you mean.

They both start to draw and after a few seconds, Gladys leans over to see what Deb is drawing.

So *that*'s what you're starting with?

DEB: Because it's in the middle! I'm going to start in the middle and work my way out. *(pause)* I'm going to need a bigger sketch pad.

Lights down on the art studio as Deb and Gladys return to the present time. As the lights go up, Deb and Gladys are seated in the coffee shop.

- DEB: Ok, fine, neither of us wanted to leave.
- GLADYS: And if I remember correctly, we didn't miss a single class for the next twelve weeks. I have quite the red hot portfolio stashed away in the attic.
- DEB: Mine is in a box of wedding photos in the crawl space.
- GLADYS: That's ^aballsy hiding place! Marty never found them?
- DEB: It's a space he'd have to crawl into... no, he won't be going in there.
- GLADYS: I have to admit, I do feel a teeny bit guilty.
- DEB: Come on, it was a fun and harmless secret. Besides, would you want to answer the inevitable comparative question?
- GLADYS: Nope.
- DEB: Me neither.
- GLADYS: Oh my goodness, I remember how we laughed drawing bowls of fruit on the way home so we'd have something to show them!
- DEB: Oooh we were bad!
- GLADYS: We were bad, bad mamas!
- DEB: Mean sketch pad totin' mamas!
- GLADYS: Hey mean mama, maybe you should be the one getting a motorcycle, you'd look great in black leather.
- DEB: Motorcycle Mama! *(pause)* You know... you may have something there....

Lights down, *End of scene Four*