

## Scene 2

*Royce's room at the boarding house and Marguerite's kitchen. Marguerite, with the phone to her ear, is wearing an apron and carries a large wooden spoon. Royce is sound asleep on his sofa bed that he has neglected to fold out, when his phone begins to ring. Right around the third ring, he manages to find the phone.*

ROYCE. Who the hell ... *(Finally answering.)* Hello.

MARGUERITE. *(Singing at the top of her lungs.)* "Blessed Assurance! Jesus is mine! Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!" *(Royce hangs up and rolls over. Marguerite re-dials.)* You're not getting out of it that easy. *(The phone rings three more times. Royce finally answers it. Marguerite picks up where she left off.)* "Heir of salvation! Purchase of love! Born of his spirit! Washed in his blood!"

ROYCE. Good God, Mama.

MARGUERITE. What was that? Was that blasphemy? Did I hear the Lord's name taken in vain?

ROYCE. What time is it?

MARGUERITE. 7:00 A.M. "And the watchman said, The morning cometh and also the night: If you will inquire, inquire ye: Return, come." *(Pause.)*

ROYCE. Uh huh.

MARGUERITE. Isaiah 21:12.

ROYCE. WHAT THE HELL DO YOU WANT??

MARGUERITE. DON'T TALK FILTH! And what are you

doing still laying up in the bed at 7:00? Why aren't you out looking for a job? Are you suffering from a HANG-OVER? Did you spend all evening drinking and dancing and talking filth? Are you laid up there with some harlot?

ROYCE. No, I'm not laid up with ...

MARGUERITE. *(Whacking the phone receiver with her spoon.)*

Harlot! Harlot! Can you hear me out there? Time to get up Harlot! Wake up, Harlot!

ROYCE. Would you stop that! There ain't no harlot here for Gah ... *(He stops himself.)*

MARGUERITE. Did I hear the Lord's name used again?

ROYCE. No, you didn't. What do you want, Mama?

MARGUERITE. Well, I guess a mother can't call up her lazy, good for nothing son just to see how he's doing.

ROYCE. Well, why don't you ask me how I'm doing, so I can go back to sleep.

MARGUERITE. I haven't got time to listen to your problems. I've got too much to do. Your uncle Bud passed this morning.

ROYCE. Good God.

MARGUERITE. That's three. That's three G.O.D.'s and it's only 7:05 in the morning.

ROYCE. What'd he die of?

MARGUERITE. Stroke. No surprise. Been hanging by a thread for years.

ROYCE. *(Lighting a cigarette.)* Well, I'm real sorry to hear that.

MARGUERITE. You want to know what I'm sorry about? Your uncle Bud didn't belong to any church whatsoever. Always scorned and mocked the doings of good Christian people. And you know what that means don't you?

ROYCE. Don't say it, Mama.

MARGUERITE. Roasting on the end of a pitchfork, even as we speak.

ROYCE. Mama, it's awful early ...

MARGUERITE. Cryin' out in eternal torment.

ROYCE. Mama.

MARGUERITE. Flesh torn by demons.

ROYCE. *(Shouting.)* How's Aunt Raynelle! You remember Aunt Raynelle? The widow? How's she doing?

MARGUERITE. How do you think she's doing? Her husband just dropped dead right there at the breakfast table. Awful. She's doing awful. That's why we got to get over there and offer her comfort and Christian counsel.

ROYCE. What do you mean "we"?

MARGUERITE. Are you telling me you're gonna turn your back on your family in this time of tragedy?

ROYCE. Can't Ray-Bud and them come and get you?

MARGUERITE. No, they can't. They've got too much to do. And besides I'd die of shame if they knew my own son wouldn't come over here and drive me over to my only brother's grieving widow. Or maybe you'd like me to walk the twenty miles over to Lula and it 110 in the shade today? Maybe you'd like me to drop dead from heat stroke?

ROYCE. What time do you want to go?

MARGUERITE. When do you think I want to go? Next month? Now! Get your lazy worthless self out of bed and take me over there now. Bud's not gonna keep long in this heat. *(She hangs up and exits.)*

ROYCE. Bye Mama. I love you too. *(He hangs up, rolls over and pulls the covers over his head.)*

**BLACKOUT**