



# Owning It



## CHARACTERS

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| JOAN GELLIN-REED | 46. PTA chair. Stubborn as all hell. Married to Charlie; mother to Gavin.                               |
| BELINDA DeMARCO  | 42. Goody two shoes. Runs the church sale. Married to Ed; mother to Serena and Graham.                  |
| TAWNIA ERIKSEN   | 48. Pessimist. She works hard for the money. Recently divorced from David; mother to Annie and Garrett. |

## SETTING

Evening into night. November 20th, 2009.

The living room/kitchen of Joan Gellin-Reed's suburban home, somewhere in Westchester, NY. An explosion of Pier 1 Imports furniture and TJ Maxx home decor; definitely on that "live, laugh, love" shit. All new appliances and marble countertops. Various family photos in pristine frames are peppered around the house. Maybe some fall decorations? Bottom line: it's gorgeous and we hate it. The "television" is on the fourth wall.

## NOTES

Over the course of the play, from their first sip of Cristal Rosé, the women should visibly become increasingly more intoxicated. What this looks like is for the actors to decide.

**OWNING IT**

(Lights up. Rap music underscores the first few moments, something along the lines of Eminem's "My Mom.")

BELINDA DeMARCO sits on the couch, idly flipping through one of several various issues of *O* magazine spread across the coffee table, while JOAN GELLIN-REED shuffles around the kitchen preparing a cheese plate. Music fades out.)

JOAN

I've got a surprise for you, Bel.

(BELINDA looks up from *O*, and JOAN holds up a box of crackers.)

JOAN

I got you gluten-free crackers!

BELINDA

Oh my God, Joanie, how sweet! You didn't have to do that just for me.

JOAN

Oh, please. I've been considering cutting out gluten myself, actually. Oprah was saying just the other day that—

BELINDA

That going gluten free completely changed Her life?! I just watched that episode on the TiVo!

JOAN

You know what, maybe I'll give it a try. See if it helps with my bloating.

BELINDA

Oh, stop it. You've never looked bloated a day in your life.

JOAN

Ugh, love you for saying that.

(JOAN puts the finishing touches on the cheese plate and brings it out to the coffee table.)

BELINDA

(*re: the copy of O in her hands, which has scraps cut out of it*)

What happened to this one?

JOAN

Gavin cut up a whole bunch of my magazines for that big social studies project in Mr. Hawthorne's class. Of course he didn't think to ask me first, but, you know, when he shows me these clever poster boards and cute little dioramas... I mean, how could I be upset with *that*?

BELINDA

He's such a special boy, Joan. So talented. He was just terrific in the play last week...

JOAN

Sweeney Todd has been his dream role ever since he saw Michael Cerveris play him on The Broad Way. He's been talking about it ever since Charlie and I took him to see it for his birthday a few years back.

BELINDA

Oh my God, with Patti LuPone?!

JOAN

Yes! She was spectacular.

BELINDA

My God, I mean, what an actress. Ed surprised me with tickets to see her in *Gypsy* last year — her Mama Rose was the best I've ever seen.

JOAN

(*trump card*)

I saw her in *Evita* back in 1980.

BELINDA

Stop it. No you did not.

JOAN

Hand to God, she winked at me during the curtain call. I swear. I was in the front row.

BELINDA

When I saw *The Color Purple* musical a couple years ago, it just so happened to be the same night Oprah herself was there—

(JOAN rolls her eyes and begins reciting the story she's heard many many times before, in sync with BELINDA:)

JOAN/BELINDA

With Stedman and Gayle and Quincy Jones and Whoopi Goldberg.

JOAN

Yes, Belinda, I know. You've told me this story hundreds of times.

BELINDA

*(a little hurt, but masking it)*

Oh. Hah! I swear my memory gets worse every day. Sometimes I wonder if I've got like early onset Alzheimers or something. Hah. *(sighs)* I'm sorry.

JOAN

Don't be sorry, honey. Just don't tell me the same story again.

(Beat. BELINDA eats a cracker, then clears her throat.)

BELINDA

So! Has Gavin started looking at colleges yet?

JOAN

Yes, actually. We've been going into the city every now and then for some campus tours. Of course, at this age, he'd rather die than be seen in public with his mother. I asked on our NYU tour if all those rumors about cocaine in the dorms are true — hah! You should have seen the look on his face.

BELINDA

Graham was the same way when we toured Princeton. I tried to take him to see the soccer field he was conceived on, and he flat-out refused.

JOAN

Kids these days have no respect for their elders. If I had an attitude with my mother, she'd make me clean the house all weekend. The 70's were a very different time, I suppose.

BELINDA

My mom was definitely more on the "groovy" end of the spectrum, you know, but the nuns at my school rapped our knuckles with a ruler if they caught us talking in class.

JOAN

*(tut, tut, tut)*

Catholic school.

BELINDA

Can you imagine *our* kids in *that* classroom?! *(chuckling)* Now I would pay to see that!

JOAN

*(very serious)*

My Gavin is the most well behaved boy in his class. He would do just fine in any classroom.

BELINDA

I-I'm sure he would! Hah...er...I just meant Serena and Graham might, uh, have had a hard time.

JOAN

Probably.

*(Beat. Yikes.)*

BELINDA

Um... Is Tawnia still coming tonight?

JOAN

Oh honey, didn't you hear? The divorce was finalized this week. I doubt she'll have the energy to come by. You should have seen her in pilates yesterday — she was such a wreck that Lisa had to end class twenty minutes early.

BELINDA

Poor thing...

JOAN

I swear to God, if I ever find that slut David cheated with, I'm gonna pop her cheap little breast implants with a corkscrew.

BELINDA

*(chuckling)*

Joan Gellin-Reed! You are so bad.

JOAN

I mean it! That bitch fled the scene before Tawnia could even catch a glimpse of her disgraceful ugly pig face. Seriously! What kind of coward—

*(JOAN is cut off by the doorbell. She looks puzzled and goes to answer it, revealing TAWNIA ERIKSEN at the door with a paper bag.)*

TAWNIA

Ding dong! Wine delivery!

JOAN/BELINDA

Oh my God! / Tawnia!

*(Hooray!! Hugs and pleasantries are exchanged. Adlib is encouraged here.)*

TAWNIA

I'm so sorry I'm late — when Oprah told us “everybody gets a car,” She didn't say it would have such shitty gas mileage. Plus I just *had* to stop and pick up some goodies for my girls!

*(TAWNIA reveals several bottles of wine in the bag. JOAN and BELINDA gasp.)*

JOAN

Is that Cristal Rosé?!

TAWNIA

You bet your ass it is.

BELINDA

Oh gosh, we sure are classy! I haven't had that stuff since we celebrated Oprah's birthday. Isn't it expensive?

TAWNIA

There was a special at Wine Connection because it was one of Her Favorite Things this month.

BELINDA

Ha! When *isn't* it one of Her Favorite Things?!

(Collective laugh, but mostly BELINDA.)

JOAN

Thank you, Tawn. You really didn't have to—

TAWNIA

Oh, please. I practically made money on it.

(JOAN takes the bag to the kitchen and unloads the wine bottles.)

BELINDA

Tawnia, honey, I haven't seen you since Gretchen's Halloween get-together.

TAWNIA

Oh, you mean our *fourth* consecutive costume contest victory?

JOAN

Our best one yet!

(JOAN runs back to her friends and they perform the iconic Donna & the Dynamos chant from "Mamma Mia!")

ALL

Dynamos! Dynamite! Sleep all day and WAPPO all night!

BELINDA

(*laughing*)

Oh, man — I'm keeping those go-go boots!

TAWNIA

Hey, you never know when you might need a pair.

(They all chuckle. JOAN goes back to the kitchen and TAWNIA and BELINDA take a seat, chatting over some cheese and crackers.)

TAWNIA

How was the church sale, Bel? Everything go off without a hitch?

BELINDA

Can't complain. We sold lots of stuff, but it's hard to raise much money when everything is under five bucks, you know? Oh! I almost forgot! Someone donated a bunch of those William Faulkner books you like — I saved you all of the ones that were part of Oprah's Book Club.

TAWNIA

Aw, are you just the sweetest or what?

BELINDA

Oh hush! How are you holding up? You look...amazing.

(It's true. She does.)

TAWNIA

I've been working on my revenge body. Treadmill and StairMaster every morning, a juice cleanse, starting to cut out gluten, the whole nine yards. I just finished the Whole30, actually! You know, just staying busy.

BELINDA

That's great! And how about your shrink, are you still seeing her?

TAWNIA

Psychiatrist. Yeah. Feels like I spend more time in her office than I do in my own these days.

JOAN

Hey, at least it's your therapist and not your plastic surgeon, right? Remember that episode where—

BELINDA

Oh my God, I just rewatched that one. Oprah said that woman had 26 operations by the time she was 28 years old. She looked like a frickin' Barbie doll. I mean, really, plastic surgery is *not* a productive way to pacify a douchebag husband. What the hell kind of man tells his wife her nose is too big?

TAWNIA

David told me that.

(Beat. Oh fuck.)

BELINDA

*(backpedaling)*

Oh Tawnia, I'm, er, I'm sorry—

TAWNIA

Don't worry about it, honey, you had no way of knowing.

(JOAN breaks the tension.)

JOAN

Alright, ladies. Five o'clock somewhere! Come on over.

(TAWNIA and BELINDA excitedly hustle over to the kitchen counter where JOAN has 3 glasses of Cristal Rosé waiting.)

TAWNIA

What are we drinking to tonight?

JOAN

Oh gosh, I don't know. Hm... here's to us, finally getting our long overdue girls' night and, um—

BELINDA

To Oprah!

ALL

Cheers! / Love my girls! / Yes! To Oprah.

(The women clink their glasses and giggle. They each start delicately sipping but ultimately down the drinks all at once.)

JOAN

*(pouring more rosé for each of them)*

I'll also toast to tomorrow being the first Saturday since August that I don't have to spend working on costumes over at the high school.

BELINDA

*(quoting Oprah)*

"Well, hello! Let's celebrate that!"

JOAN

I've got a massage booked with Monica first thing in the morning. I mean, of course, I'm so thrilled Gavin had that opportunity to shine, you know—

TAWNIA

Mamma needs a break! You deserve a day off, hon. Treat yourself.

JOAN

Right?! I think so too. I've also got a Groupon for a facial that I've been meaning to use.

BELINDA

*I love Groupon.*

JOAN

Oh, it's just the best. What a neat idea.

BELINDA

Ed and I had one for a salsa class at that cute little dance studio on Hartsdale a couple weeks ago. So fun!

TAWNIA

Ah. David and I went to one of those.

(Beat. Awkward. JOAN sips her rosé and BELINDA sheepishly eats a cracker. She marches onward after a moment:)

BELINDA

It's a shame you didn't get to see the play last weekend, Tawnia. Gavin did such a fabulous job.

TAWNIA

Annie was telling me all about it the other night, she said Gav was just sensational. I am *so* sorry I had to miss it, Joanie. I completely forgot I'd agreed to give this silly lecture on corporate ethics at Columbia — yawn! Trust me, I much rather would have been there in the front row, cheering for your boy.

BELINDA

He was just fabulous. Such a strong stage presence.

JOAN

You know what, I am so proud. He just makes me so proud.

TAWNIA/BELINDA

Aw Joanie. / You're such a great mom, Joan.

BELINDA

And where is the superstar tonight?

(TAWNIA is just about to answer the question, but JOAN beats her to it.)

JOAN

I gave him the keys to the minivan and some cash for the movies — he's been dying to see "Julie & Julia," you know, Meryl Streep and...oh, what's her face? That cute red headed girl—

BELINDA

Amy Adams!

JOAN

Right. Charlie and I usually don't treat him to stuff like that, but he brought home a stellar report card this week, so...

TAWNIA

*(to herself)*

Huh—

BELINDA

Oooh Joan! Didn't Stacey's husband tape the show? I remember him blocking the whole stage with that damn camcorder.

JOAN

Oh my God, I completely forgot! The DVD came in the mail just the other day. You ladies probably don't want to watch that though, on our girls' night — this is our time to unwind! Not have to worry about the kids!

TAWNIA

Don't be silly, Joanie. I would be devastated to miss it.

BELINDA

Please, Joan?!

JOAN

Ah, why not! You know I can't turn down an opportunity to hear my boy sing. Finally, those seven years of voice lessons are being put to good use!

*(JOAN retrieves a DVD from somewhere in the kitchen and pops it in the DVD player.)*

BELINDA

God, you know, I could never figure out how to use a video camera. Too many switches and buttons and—

TAWNIA

David was great with our camcorder.

*(Beat. BELINDA grimaces and tries to comfort TAWNIA, while JOAN struggles with the remote.)*

JOAN

Alright, now the question is how do I use this damn TV? *(grabbing her reading glasses and fussing with the remote)* Usually Gav helps me. I swear all this

technology just keeps getting more difficult. It's like they purposefully make the buttons just small enough for my fat thumbs to hit the wrong one.

TAWNIA

Here, let me have a look.

BELINDA

Did you push input?

(The women all retrieve and put on their readers, huddling around the remote and trying to turn on the television.)

TAWNIA

How do you...

BELINDA

Input. Push input.

JOAN

Input. Where's input? What's that?

TAWNIA

Input! Oh it's right there.

JOAN

Where?

BELINDA

It's that yellow button—

TAWNIA

Are you sure this is the right clicker?

JOAN

Oh shoot, I pressed mute. These frickin' sausage thumbs. How do I...unmute it?

TAWNIA

Press volume up. Turn up the volume, Joanie.

BELINDA

No I think you gotta hit mute again.

TAWNIA

Oh yeah, try that.

JOAN

Mute...okay, how do we get to DVD.

TAWNIA

Press input! God, this is why we shouldn't be allowed to drink before dinner.

(JOAN has successfully hit input, but accidentally turned on cable TV. We hear the voices of news reporters. She tries to get to the DVD main menu.)

JOAN

Oh, shoot—

TAWNIA

Okay, this is the news, hit input again—

BELINDA

Wait...

VOICE OF REPORTER

Breaking news tonight, Oprah Winfrey announced today that the next season of Her hit daytime talk show *The Oprah Winfrey Show* will serve as the finale for the program. After 25 years on the air, Winfrey plans to focus on Her cable channel OWN.

TAWNIA

What?!

BELINDA

No. No no no nononono that cannot be true.

VOICE OF OPRAH

After much prayer and months of careful thought, I decided that next season, season 25, will be the last season of *The Oprah Winfrey Show*.

(Freeze. Lights shift. Oprah's voice echoes and morphs into apocalyptic rap music. A terrifying and animalistic movement sequence ensues. The chaos is reminiscent of the prom scene in *Carrie*, if not scarier. Lights shift back to normal and the scene resumes. The ladies are in shock. JOAN turns off the TV.)

JOAN

Oh my God.

TAWNIA

Holy hell.

BELINDA

*(suddenly sobbing and falling to her knees)*

FUUUUUCK!

TAWNIA

Jesus, Belinda—

BELINDA

OPRAHHHHH!!

JOAN

*(kneeling down to her level)*

Bel. Bel, come on honey, breathe. Breathe.

*(BELINDA is panting. She is in shock.)*

TAWNIA

*(panicking)*

What the fuck do we do?!?

JOAN

Get me her purse, it's on the kitchen counter.

(TAWNIA rushes to the kitchen counter and retrieves BELINDA's purse. JOAN fishes out an inhaler and gets BELINDA to take it. It doesn't help.)

JOAN

Shit. Okay. Bel, honey, listen to me. Look at me. This is your a-ha moment, okay? You can turn this into an a-ha moment.

(BELINDA starts to respond a little bit.)

BELINDA

A-hA mOmEnT...

TAWNIA

Oh my God.

JOAN

Yes! There we go, there's our girl.

BELINDA

This is my A-hA mOmEnT.

JOAN

Good, Belinda!

(TAWNIA rolls her eyes and mutters to herself.)

TAWNIA

Jesus. *(to JOAN)* Do you have anything harder than this rosé, Joanie?

JOAN

Liquor is in the cupboard to the right of the sink. Be a dear and fix me two vodka sodas while you're at it, will ya? *(to BELINDA)* You want a drink, Bel? Will that help?

(BELINDA manages a nod. TAWNIA hesitantly goes to the kitchen and starts fixing some drinks.)

TAWNIA

I don't know if hard liquor is the best idea for her right now—

JOAN

*(a command)*

Make hers a double.

TAWNIA

Whatever you say, boss.

*(TAWNIA pours some crazy drinks.)*

BELINDA

*(catching her breath)*

W-w-why would She cancel the show? What the hell are we supposed to do now?

JOAN

Breathe, honey, keep breathing. Yes, there you go! Hey, we've still got one more season, yeah? And there will probably still be reruns. It's not like She died.

BELINDA

*(worst nightmare)*

DON'T EVEN JOKE ABOUT THAT.

*(TAWNIA is startled and spills a little vodka.)*

TAWNIA

Shit!

JOAN

Okay, okay, I'm sorry! We're going to be fine, you don't need to panic.

BELINDA

Yes I do! For my entire adult life all I've done is followed the path Oprah has paved for me. How am I supposed to go on without Her guidance?

TAWNIA

*(sarcasm personified)*

There's always Dr. Phil.

JOAN

You're going to be just fine, Bel, alright? I promise. Who needs some silly daytime talk show anyway?

(BELINDA hyperventilates. TAWNIA brings over some strong ass drinks and hands them out.)

TAWNIA

Both of you need to lighten up.

(Beat.)

JOAN

Excuse me?

TAWNIA

Well, Joanie, I think it's fair to say neither of you are behaving rationally right now.

JOAN

What the hell is that supposed to mean?

TAWNIA

I mean, you're very clearly jumping to the *extreme* conclusion that Belinda *needs* a daytime talk show in order to properly function and not lose her fucking marbles when another one gets cancelled.

JOAN

(*dismissing*)

I'm sure I don't know what you're implying.

TAWNIA

Don't you remember when someone called in a bomb threat to Oprah's studio? Extremism wasn't the answer then, and it isn't the answer now.

JOAN

Are you insinuating that my comforting my very clearly distraught friend is comparable to an attempted violent act of terrorism?

TAWNIA

No, I'm saying she's very clearly not well!

JOAN

Oh, please. She's fine, absolutely fine—

(JOAN is interrupted by BELINDA beginning to dry heave.)

TAWNIA

Exhibit A.

JOAN

C'mon, honey, drink up. *(raising her drink to BELINDA's lips)* Here we go.

TAWNIA

Jesus, Joan, if she drinks any more she'll be like that comatose mother from season nine who forgot who her kids were.

BELINDA

PAM?!

JOAN

Vodka has restorative properties. She's going to be fine. *(to BELINDA)* You're not gonna be like Pam, are you?

BELINDA

NEVER!

*(BELINDA chugs.)*

JOAN

Of course not!

*(BELINDA has downed her entire drink.)*

JOAN

'Atta girl. *(to TAWNIA, shadily)* You should really finish your drink too, Tawnia. Help you relax. Loosen up a little bit, huh?

*(Beat. Ouch. TAWNIA glares at JOAN and tosses back her drink. It is now evident that all three women are pretty tipsy.)*

JOAN

I never told you girls this, but Oprah came to me in a dream once and told me She was going to cancel the show.

BELINDA

*(bewildered)*

No.

JOAN

I'm serious, it was just a few months ago. She told me in confidence, but now the secret's out, so...

BELINDA

What did She say?!

JOAN

She said Her and Gayle had spent hours talking in Her Hawaii flower garden and they came to the conclusion that, in order for Her to accomplish all of Her goals and make the difference She was put on this earth to make, She needed to move on.

TAWNIA

Jesus Christ.

*(TAWNIA rolls her eyes and goes to rummage through the liquor cabinet. BELINDA is desperate for answers.)*

BELINDA

Was that it?!? Did She say anything else?!?

JOAN

She said that, um...now is the time to...reflect on all of the lessons She has taught us and use them to our own advantage.

TAWNIA

Sure, that's *very* helpful.

BELINDA

Oh my God, She is so wise! I knew journalling after every episode would pay off one day—

(TAWNIA gasps! She holds up a plastic bag with several joints in it.)

TAWNIA

Jackpot! (*laughing*) Who woulda thunk that the woman who put up all those “Drugs Ruin Lives” posters around the school would keep her own stash under the sink?

BELINDA

Is that...(*whispering*) pot????

TAWNIA

What the fuck are you whispering for?

JOAN

God dammit, Tawnia, put that back! Don't go through my things.

TAWNIA

You told me I could get something from your liquor cabinet, babe. I had permission!

JOAN

Jesus — just take one if it'll shut you up.

TAWNIA

Don't mind if I do! Where'd you even get this from?

(TAWNIA lights a joint and begins smoking it.)

JOAN

Charlie bought it from Sandra's husband, okay?! Just drop it! (*to BELINDA*) So nosy.

TAWNIA

Heard that!

BELINDA

Oprah said something about the health benefits of marijuana but, after today... (*starting to cry*) I don't know how I can trust Her.

JOAN

Aw, honey. (*motioning for TAWNIA to come sit with them*) Hey, you know what, I think maybe we should talk about our favorite episodes. You know, as a sort of celebration, er, in memoriam of Her show?

BELINDA/TAWNIA

Yes. Please. / Sure. Fine.

(JOAN glares at TAWNIA as if to say “you’d better fucking behave.”)

BELINDA

Oh gosh. Well, the episode where they watched the OJ Simpson verdict was so fascinating to me. I mean, sure, the case itself was kinda interesting, I guess, but the varied reactions in Her audience were really the highlight for me.

TAWNIA

(*snickering*)

You *guess* the OJ case was *interesting*?

JOAN

(*moving on!*)

I really liked the one where Celine Dion announced her retirement from music. Definitely sad to see her go, but I thought she was very gracious about the whole thing.

BELINDA

Oh my God, she’s such a gifted musician—

TAWNIA

I fucking hate Celine Dion.

JOAN

Why’s that?

TAWNIA

That corny *Titanic* song was playing on my old record player when I walked in on David and that mousey whore.

BELINDA

*(shifting uncomfortably)*

Oh...

JOAN

“My Heart Will Go On?”

TAWNIA

Whatever the hell it’s called, yeah.

JOAN

Oh, how funny — Belinda, didn’t you say that was *your* lovemaking song of choice?

BELINDA

No. What? No.

TAWNIA

That’s gross.

JOAN

Really? I could have sworn you told me—

BELINDA

No. I didn’t tell you anything. I’ve never made love to “My Heart Will Go On.” Hey, do you remember the episode where She wheeled out that wagon filled with meat after She lost all that weight?! That was a good one.

JOAN

You said you once did a *Titanic* role play, didn’t you?

TAWNIA

Wait—

BELINDA

No, Joan, I never said that. Oprah looked so happy when She wheeled out all that meat, just so darn proud... don’t you think?

JOAN

Huh—

TAWNIA

*(it clicks)*

Oh my God.

JOAN

What is it?

TAWNIA

When I walked in on David...the woman he was with kept calling him Jack.

*(Aaaah! Beat.)*

BELINDA

What are you—pffft. Tawnia, no! No no no—

JOAN

HA! Now that is *rich* — how funny would it be if Belinda had been the woman that...you...that David...ha...

*(JOAN's laughter dies down. Silence.)*

JOAN

Oh.

BELINDA

Tawnia, I—

TAWNIA

Shhhhhh.

BELINDA

But I'm—

TAWNIA

SHHHH.

JOAN

Oh God.

(TAWNIA gets rid of her joint and approaches a trembling BELINDA, too close for comfort.)

TAWNIA

Belinda. Simple yes or no. Did you. Or did you not. Sleep. With. My. Husband.

(Pause.)

BELINDA

Um—

TAWNIA

Yes or no.

JOAN

Why don't we table this discussion for the time being—

TAWNIA

*(ready to explode)*

ANSWER THE QUESTION.

BELINDA

*(stammering)*

Y-y-y-ye—

(TAWNIA tackles her to the ground and lets out a primal, blood-curdling scream.)

JOAN

Holy shit—

TAWNIA

What the fuck is wrong with you!?!

BELINDA

It was a mistake! It was an accident!

TAWNIA

You *accidentally* got into *my* bed with *my* husband and *FUCKED HIM?!?!*

JOAN

Girls.

TAWNIA

Do you know how much this fucking divorce cost me, Belinda?! Hmm?  
THIRTY THOUSAND DOLLARS!

BELINDA

I'm sorry I'm sorry I'm sorry I'm sorry—

(JOAN starts to physically pry TAWNIA off BELINDA and tries to restrain her.)

TAWNIA

Do you have thirty fucking thousand dollars just lying around? Huh?!

BELINDA

N-n-no.

TAWNIA

Are you gonna pay for it? Are you gonna pay for this fucking divorce *you* caused?!

JOAN

Girls!

BELINDA

Tawnia—

TAWNIA

I'll fucking kill you, bitch!!!

JOAN

(booming)

GIRLS.

TAWNIA

Jesus Christ, stay out of this, Joan. It's none of your goddamn business.

(Oh shiiiiit. JOAN twists TAWNIA's arm; BELINDA escapes to a new corner of the room.)

TAWNIA

OWWW FUCK!!

JOAN

You're in *my* house, drinking *my* liquor, and scratching up *my* hardwood floors. It is, in fact, very much so my goddamn business.

(Beat. JOAN releases TAWNIA.)

TAWNIA

You're a fucking psychopath, Joan Gellin-Reed.

(TAWNIA goes to her purse and pulls out a prescription bottle. JOAN helps BELINDA up.)

JOAN

Better than a pill addict. What's that one, stool softener?

TAWNIA

*(chasing a couple pills with her drink)*

Valium.

BELINDA

Hey, be careful with that stuff, Tawnia. There was this whole episode where Oprah was talking to a pill addict and—

TAWNIA

Careful?! CAREFUL?! *(letting out a manic laugh)* Bitch, why don't *you* be careful of not fucking someone else's husband? How does that sound?

JOAN

Woah! Someone is really speaking her truth tonight, isn't she?

(TAWNIA grins. Here we fucking go.)

TAWNIA

Alright. You know what. If we're speaking our truths tonight, Joan, I should tell you that Gavin is not at the movies.

JOAN

Oh really?

TAWNIA

"Julie & Julia" came out months ago, Joan! For Christ's sake, it isn't even in theaters anymore.

BELINDA

*(quietly)*

You could probably get it on DVD from the Netflix by now.

TAWNIA

Shut up.

JOAN

Where is he then, pray tell?

TAWNIA

As a matter of fact, he's at my house.

JOAN

*(laughing)*

Oh, poor thing! And what on earth would he be doing there?

TAWNIA

Him and Garrett are having sex in my basement.

*(Big fucking beat.)*

JOAN

Excuse me?

TAWNIA

Gavin and Garrett. You know...our sons. Our boys. I took the liberty of buying them condoms.

JOAN

...that's not funny.

TAWNIA

Why would it be? It isn't a joke.

JOAN

Quit it.

BELINDA

Oh, come on, Joanie. Don't you remember when Oprah played Ellen's therapist in that big coming out episode? There's nothing wrong with it. I mean, don't you think Oprah and Gayle ever got curious?

TAWNIA

*(to BELINDA)*

You shut your filthy whore mouth.

JOAN

You bought my son condoms.

TAWNIA

Yes, but honey please don't worry about paying me back. Really, it's my treat. Better safe than sorry, right!

JOAN

My son is not gay.

*(TAWNIA and BELINDA erupt into uncontrollable laughter.)*

BELINDA

I'm sorry—

TAWNIA

Joan! His classmates call him "Doubles" because Annie saw him blowing two boys behind the tennis court.

JOAN

You are absolutely perverse.

TAWNIA

And you're absolutely close-minded, Joanie.

JOAN

I most certainly am not! I voted for Barack Obama!

BELINDA

For Christ's sake, Joan — just because you voted for Obama doesn't mean you're some kind of trailblazer for the gay rights movement, okay?!

TAWNIA

Jesus, little miss Harvey Milk over here.

BELINDA

Oprah endorsed Obama! What else were we supposed to do? Vote for John McCain?!?

JOAN

Alright, let's get one thing straight here—

BELINDA

What, that Gavin isn't?

(BELINDA and TAWNIA double over laughing. The conflict they dealt with before is seemingly forgotten, as TAWNIA hasn't laughed so hard in years.)

TAWNIA

Don't worry, Joan! We can get matching "I Love My Gay Son" bumper stickers!

(BELINDA is losing her shit. Her and TAWNIA are crying laughing at this point, and JOAN is *livid*. She goes to the kitchen and rummages through drawers, eventually finding and fishing out a Ziploc of cocaine.)

TAWNIA

Wait till the rest of the PTA hears that their president keeps an assortment of drugs in plastic baggies throughout her kitchen.

BELINDA

No need to worry about Gavin doing coke in the dorms at Juilliard next year — he's probably been doing it with his mother for ages!

(Beat. JOAN ignores them as she rubs coke in her gums. Maybe she rips a page out of *O Magazine* and rolls it up to snort it. She is absolutely fucking unhinged.)

TAWNIA

Jesus, Joan—

JOAN

Okay. You listen here, you fucking clowns. I did *not* invite you into my house to hear you mock my son, to inform me of his wild gay sexcapades, and how you fucking bought him Trojans. That is not how I wanted this night to go. I wanted a quiet girls' night in: drink some wine, eat some cheese, maybe play some cards. You know, being a full time mom is just fucking exhausting; I need that time with my gals to wind down.

TAWNIA

Oh, wah wah wah. What the fuck do you have to wind down from? You just sit at home making casseroles and watching Oprah and, you know, apparently doing coke all day—

JOAN

When's the last time you were home to cook dinner for your family, bitch?  
Hm?

TAWNIA

Now, don't start with me.

BELINDA

Hey—

JOAN

I'm not gonna take this shit from you. You're not a real mom, you know, your kids can barely call you their mother—

TAWNIA

You'd better watch yourself, bitch.

BELINDA

Alright, girls. Enough.

JOAN

You know, at all of our PTA meetings, people ask me “Where’s Tawnia?” or “When are we gonna see Tawnia again?” and it breaks my heart to say it, but I always have to tell them—

BELINDA

Joan, don’t say it—

JOAN

“People like Tawnia are too concerned with their corporations to show up to meetings about their kids.”

TAWNIA

What the fuck?!

BELINDA

Please stop, you guys.

TAWNIA

*(ignoring BELINDA)*

Are you out of your fucking mind?

JOAN

I might be, but at least I show up to everything my kid does.

BELINDA

Guys, let’s cut it out, okay—

TAWNIA

I am one of the top corporate lawyers in New York, asshole.

JOAN

And that’s great, but when’s the last time you volunteered to help at the school?

TAWNIA

You wanna know what I volunteered to do, bitch?

BELINDA

Stop!!

JOAN

DYING to know!

TAWNIA

I *volunteered* to buy condoms for Gavin so he could get busy with my son without spreading fuckin' chlamydia.

JOAN

You fucking—

(BELINDA has reached her screaming capacity. She takes a big swig from whatever bottle of liquor is on the counter and comes between JOAN and TAWNIA, then spit-takes the alcohol all over the fighting women.)

TAWNIA

What the hell, Belinda?! This is a brand new blazer.

BELINDA

You wouldn't stop shouting. I had to do something.

JOAN

What the fuck was that? It's burning my eyes.

BELINDA

I'm s-s-sorry—

TAWNIA

*(attempting to wipe up her blazer)*

This is the night from hell, I swear to God.

(Beat. JOAN snaps.)

JOAN

You know whose fault this whole fucking night is?

(Silence.)

JOAN

*(hissing)*

*Oprah's.*

BELINDA

TAKE THAT BACK.

JOAN

If Oprah hadn't cancelled Her show, none of this would have happened. We could have eaten the last of my Girl Scout cookies and watched Gavin play the best fucking Sweeney Todd that Westchester has ever seen. But She had to go and ruin it for all of us, didn't She?

BELINDA

I'm warning you.

TAWNIA

Be careful, Joan.

JOAN

You know what, maybe it was Oprah's Will this whole time. She projects Herself to be this philanthropist but what if none of it was intended for us?

BELINDA

JOAN.

JOAN

What if Oprah was never even on our side?

BELINDA

NO!

(BELINDA throws JOAN to the ground. She's lost her goddamn mind.)

TAWNIA

Aaah!

JOAN

OW!

BELINDA

HOW DARE YOU!

JOAN

What is wrong with you?!

TAWNIA

Belinda, get off of her!

BELINDA

OPRAH WILL ALWAYS BE ON OUR SIDE! SHE IS THE MOTHER I NEVER HAD—

JOAN

What the fuck are you doing!?

BELINDA

SHE IS THE SISTER EVERYBODY WOULD WANT!

TAWNIA

Stop it!!

BELINDA

SHE IS THE FRIEND THAT EVERYONE DESERVES!

JOAN

Aaaaah!

BELINDA

DIE, BITCH!

TAWNIA

Belinda, NO!

(BELINDA grabs the cheese spreading knife from the cheeseboard and plunges it into JOAN's stomach. Beat. The world stops spinning for a split second.)

BELINDA

Oh my God—

JOAN

BeLiNdA!!!

BELINDA

I-I-I'm sorry, Joan!! I didn't mean to—

JOAN

HeLp Me!

TAWNIA

What have you done!

BELINDA

Nononono.

JOAN

YoU fUcKiNg PsYcHo—

BELINDA

Joan I'm sorry!!!

(JOAN convulses, gasping for air.)

JOAN

GeT tHe VoDkA.

TAWNIA

You heard the woman! Go, go, go.

(BELINDA gets the vodka and pours some into JOAN's stab wound. JOAN hollers in pain.)

TAWNIA

What the fuck are you doing?!

BELINDA

I got her the vodka—

TAWNIA

Yeah, to *drink*, not to put into a fucking stab wound, you dumb fuck!

JOAN

AAAAAHHHHHHH stop stop stop!!!

TAWNIA

Belinda!

BELINDA

VODKA HAS RESTORATIVE PROPERTIES.

(JOAN eventually stops moving and goes limp. She's dead.)

TAWNIA

Holy shit.

BELINDA

Nonono.

TAWNIA

You *killed* her.

BELINDA

(*shaking JOAN's body*)

Come on, Joan. Wake up.

TAWNIA

I'm gonna call an ambulance.

BELINDA

Joanie! JOAN!

(Suddenly, JOAN opens her eyes and rises. The voice that comes out of her mouth is no longer hers but rather Oprah Winfrey's, delivering Her 2018 Cecile B. DeMille Lifetime Achievement Award acceptance speech. JOAN has been possessed by Oprah of the Future.)

OPRAH

In my career, what I've always tried my best to do, whether on television or through film...

BELINDA

What the fuck?!

TAWNIA

Joan?

OPRAH

...is to say something about how men and women really behave...

TAWNIA

Oh my God.

BELINDA

It's Oprah.

OPRAH

...to say how we experience shame, how we love and how we rage, how we fail, how we retreat, persevere, and how we overcome.

BELINDA

And you've done that, Oprah. You've given us so much.

OPRAH

And I've interviewed and portrayed people who've withstood some of the ugliest things life can throw at you...

TAWNIA

Yes, you've empowered them to live better and more honest lives!

OPRAH

...but the one quality all of them seem to share is an ability to maintain hope for a brighter morning – even during our darkest nights.

(JOAN/OPRAH closes her eyes and hits the floor once again.)

BELINDA

No. NO! Come on, Oprah, come back! That can't be all!

TAWNIA

We have to call an ambulance, Belinda.

BELINDA

We have to get Oprah back! She was trying to tell us something.

TAWNIA

What about Joan?! We have to get her to a hospital.

BELINDA

B-bu-but Oprah wa—

TAWNIA

Forget about Oprah, Belinda! She's not—

(BELINDA grabs TAWNIA by the collar of her blouse.)

BELINDA

DON'T YOU FUCKING DARE TELL ME TO FORGET ABOUT OPRAH. GAIL. WINFREY.

(She proceeds to choke TAWNIA.)

TAWNIA

*(gasping for breath)*

Belinda! Stop! This is *not* what Oprah would have wanted!

(TAWNIA falls to the ground, dead.)

BELINDA

You're right! She also would have wanted me to chop off your husband's ugly little micro dick. *(pause)* Shit.

(Beat. BELINDA lingers for a moment then goes to the kitchen. She fixes herself another drink and pulls a diary decoupage with various photos of Oprah out of her purse, as well as a pack of cigarettes. She lights one and alternates between drinking and smoking as she confesses:)

BELINDA

Forgive me, Oprah, for I have sinned. *(opens diary and reads from it)* I stole a can of Chef Boyardee from the food drive because I didn't feel like cooking that night. I made peanut butter cookies for Serena's fourth grade class because I knew the kid that called her a brat had an allergy... but to be fair, that was *years* ago and I had just quit smoking. *(takes a drag of her cigarette and sighs)* Well. I took some of the money we raised for the Children's Hospital at the church sale so I could buy an elliptical. I had an affair. With my best friend's husband. Then killed her. And the other one. Oops.

(She drinks.)

BELINDA

But I did what I needed to do. I'm living my goddamn truth. And if anyone would support me in that, it's you, O Oprah.

(A cell phone rings, one of those classic old Verizon ringtones. BELINDA fishes her BlackBerry out of her bag and answers.)

BELINDA

Hello? Hi honey. — Yes, I'm at Joan's. — Yes, I saw the news. It's...devastating — you're *where?! —* Serena Gayle DeMarco, this is why you need to be careful about drinking. *(sips drink)* I don't give a damn what Annie was doing, if Annie was jumping off a cliff would you follow her? — Don't you take that tone with me. You know what, I have had a long day and have to take your brother to his golf lesson at 6:45 tomorrow morning. You're gonna have to figure this out for yourself — Serena, listen to me...this is your a-ha moment. You can make this an a-ha moment. Okay, sweetie. I love you too. Alright, bye bye.

(She hangs up and starts to collect her things and head for the door. She pauses, turns around, takes a bottle of Cristal Rosé from the kitchen, the weed from the cabinet, and the

bag of cocaine from the drawer, and puts them all in her own bag. As she does this, a glow rises from the spread of *O* magazines on the coffee table. Curious, BELINDA goes to them and opens up one of the magazines. A note falls from the pages.)

BELINDA

The fuck...

(She picks it up and her eyes bulge out of her face.)

BELINDA

F-F-F-FROM THE DESK OF O-O-OPRAH W-W-W-WINFREY.

(She's gobsmacked.)

BELINDA

*(reading aloud)*

Dear Belinda, thank you for your unconditional love and devotion. Without your support, the show would have ended fifteen years ago. I will come back for you later, but in the meantime, many wonderful things lie ahead. Love, *(quivering)* Oprah.

(BELINDA holds the letter to her heart.)

BELINDA

She's coming back for me.

(Lights out. A projection of Oprah's final show paints the living room in the darkness.)

OPRAH

"Well, I say, all sweet, no bitter. And here's why. Many of us have been together for 25 years. We have hooted and hollered together, had our a-ha moments, we ugly-cried together and we did our gratitude journals. So I thank you all for your support and your trust in me. I thank you for sharing this yellow brick road of blessings. I thank you for tuning in everyday along with your mothers, and your sisters, and your daughters, your partners, gay or otherwise, your friends, and all the husbands that got coaxed into watching *Oprah*. I thank you for being as much of a sweet inspiration for me as I've tried to be for you. I won't say goodbye. I'll just say, until we meet again."

(Lights up. Purgatory. A tropical Hawaiian flower garden. JOAN and TAWNIA sit in beach chairs, cocktails in hand, mid conversation:)

JOAN

And then, after this forty-five minute facial, I went up to the desk to pay and this scrawny kid had the nerve to tell me my Groupon had expired three months ago.

TAWNIA

What? Since when do Groupons have expiration dates?! That's a bucket of horse shit.

JOAN

That's what I'm saying!

(BELINDA enters with a clipboard. Maybe she wears an Oprah lanyard with a name tag, like a doctor.)

BELINDA

Okay, next up we've got...oh! Gellin-Reed and Eriksen. Hi girls!

JOAN

Belinda?!?

TAWNIA

Good God, what is this bitch doing here?

BELINDA

You're *not* gonna believe this. But just a few days after that night at Joanie's place—

TAWNIA

Oh, you mean the night you fucking murdered us? The night you stabbed Joan with the cheese spreader and then choked me to death? Oh, yeah, I remember it well.

BELINDA

Yes, right after that! (*she giggles*) Well, Oprah Herself scooped me up off of the Earth and enlisted me to be Her new secretary for this new project she'd been working on: Purgatory. Isn't that exciting?

JOAN

Wait, what?

BELINDA

Yeah, well, I did a lot of thinking after that night and I decided I needed to find something that would fulfill me in order to, er, move past what happened.

TAWNIA

So instead of fucking your friend's husband, you took a receptionist job for Oprah?

BELINDA

Secretary, not receptionist, but yes.

JOAN

You know what, Belinda? Good for you. I think this is a terrific career move for you.

BELINDA

Thanks, Joanie! It's nice to finally be bringing in some money. We had to donate however much we made at the church sale.

TAWNIA

What the hell—

BELINDA

Anyway, Her Majesty will see you now.

JOAN

Wait, so this is like...Her waiting room?

TAWNIA

And Oprah decides if we make it to heaven or hell?

BELINDA

Yeah, purgatory is just Her Hawaiian flower garden and heaven is Her ski house in Telluride.

(Beat. After a moment, JOAN and TAWNIA shrug and collect their things.)

TAWNIA/JOAN

Okay. / Sure.

(BELINDA begins to lead them off to their judgement day. Right before they exit:)

JOAN

Maybe we'll get to meet Gayle.

(Lights down.)

**END OF PLAY**