

Act One - Scene 1

*This play takes place in the kitchen of BEA's house.*

*There is a large kitchen table with four chairs in the middle of the room.*

*There are three doors. One centre stage, one stage left and one stage right.*

*The centre stage door leads to the backyard, the door on stage left leads to a storage closet, and the door on stage right leads to the basement. The audience does not see what is behind any of these doors.*

*The door to the back yard has a large window.*

*On either side of the wall with the back door are cupboards and counter space. There is a phone on the counter or on the wall.*

*Entrances and exits not done via the doors are made stage left to the living room, which leads to the front door. The living room and front door are not seen by the audience.*

*When the lights come up, we see BEA reading a tabloid at the table.*

**BEA**

Well how about that. (*reads*) Descendent of Black Beard the Pirate claims to have a map of buried treasure. Alex Blackentroff says he found the map while planting petunias in his back yard. "It was in an old coffee tin," Blackentroff stated. "There was a big, black x right in the middle, so I knew it was genuine," (*stops reading*) Lucky fellow. I wish I could find some buried treasure in my back yard.

*There is a knock at the back door.*

*BEA leaves the paper opened on the table, gets up and opens the door.*

*RUDY is standing just outside the door. He is wearing a hat, sunglasses, a golf shirt and shorts.*

**RUDY** Telegram for Mrs. Beatrice Taylor.

**BEA** That's me, but I'm not expecting...do they still send telegrams?

*Enter RUDY.*

*He looks around the room.*

**RUDY** Is the coast clear?

**BEA** Pardon?

**RUDY** I just saw Elizabeth leave. Is there anyone else here?

**BEA** Who are you?

**RUDY** It's me. Rudy. *(he takes off his hat and sunglasses)*

**BEA** Rudy?

**RUDY** You've got to help me, Bea.

**BEA** Rudy?

**RUDY** Yes, it's me.

**BEA** But, but you're supposed to be in prison.

**RUDY** I escaped.

**BEA** You escaped?

**RUDY** Yes.

**BEA** You escaped prison?

**RUDY** Yes.

**BEA** You're not supposed to escape. That's bad.

**RUDY** I had to, Bea. I couldn't take it anymore.

**BEA** No. You have to go back.

**RUDY** I can't. Please. You've got to help me. I need a place to hide out until it gets dark.

**BEA** How did you manage to escape anyway?

**RUDY** I hopped the fence during a golf game.

**BEA** You can't stay here. This is the first place the police will look. At least that's what they say in all the movies.

**RUDY** Don't worry. They don't do bed checks on the weekend, so they won't know I'm gone until Monday.

**BEA** Wouldn't that make me a felon, you know, helping out another felon?

**RUDY** We don't say felon in Canada.

**BEA** What do we say?

**RUDY** Criminal.

**BEA** Okay. Wouldn't that make me a criminal, you know, helping out another criminal?

**RUDY** It's just a couple of hours.

**BEA** You have to go back.

**RUDY** I can't, Bea.

**BEA** But you were doing so well with your counseling.

**RUDY** That's just it. I'm a changed man now and no one believes me. They want me to finish my sentence.

**BEA** But isn't that what you are supposed to do?

**RUDY** I can't stay there any longer. The place is full of criminals. And I'm not a criminal. I've reformed. Please, Bea. I just need some time to...get organized and then I'm heading south.

**BEA** To Mexico?

**RUDY** No. Sarnia. I have a buddy there who can help get me a new identity. You have got to help me, Bea. You're my only hope.

**BEA** But you told me you were going to get a job and pay back the money you stole.

**RUDY** I did?

**BEA** Yes, on the phone the other day.

**RUDY** That's right, I did say that, but now, I'm, ummm, I've decided to do something better.

**BEA** What's that?

**RUDY** Yes...something better...much better...

*RUDY sees the tabloid on the table and picks it up.*

**RUDY** Well, you see, I'm...I'm going to Africa and... help dig wells.

**BEA** Really?

**RUDY** Yes. *(indicates to the tabloid)* I'm going to join Professor Thedavid, on his expedition to the Sahara Desert.

**BEA** I was just reading about that. They say he can smell underground water. But you don't know anything about digging wells.

**RUDY** My ... roommate...Gary...was a... hydro engineer. He was supposed to be part of Thedavid's team but had a dispute with Revenue Canada and ended up on the farm. He was devastated. This project was his life's work. So...So...he planned to escape, but then he...he...discovered he had cancer and only a few months to live. So, he begged me to go in his place.

**BEA** Oh, that poor man.

**RUDY** Yes. He taught me all about digging wells. We spent hours in the library, pouring over the internet. It was then I discovered, this is what I was meant to do with my life.

**BEA** Now Ruby, you're not pulling my leg, are you?

**RUDY** No. No.

**BEA** But what about all the money you stole?

**RUDY** What's more important? Giving back money to a bunch of rich stiffis or saving the lives of millions of people.

**BEA** I suppose, but --

**RUDY** -- I really feel this is my calling, Bea.

**BEA** Digging wells in Africa?

**RUDY** I want to make amends for the wrongs I have done. I want to do something to make the world a better place. But most of all, I want to do this, for Gary.

**BEA** But --

**RUDY** -- I made him a promise on his death cot, Bea.

*Pause.*

*BEA is thinking.*

Tears streamed down his eyes as I held his hand, and I said I would carry on, where he couldn't. And then, with a smile on his face, he left this world. I have to do this, Bea.

*Pause.*

**BEA** (*tearfully*) How noble of you Rudy. That poor man. Of course, you can stay

**RUDY** Oh thank you, Bea. You are the best.

**BEA** But we need to tell Elizabeth.

**RUDY** No! She'll turn me in, in a second.

**BEA** No, she won't. We'll tell her about your plans for Africa. How you've changed.

**RUDY** I'm afraid she's not as understanding as you.

**BEA** I don't like keeping secrets.

**RUDY** Of course, but sometimes, one has to think of the greater good. Do this for Gary.

**BEA** Okay. You can stay in the storage room under the basement stairs. But you have to be gone by the morning.

**RUDY** No problem. Say, what happened to that lovely red rose bush in your back yard?

**BEA** Red rose bush?

**RUDY** Yeah. It's gone. There's a Buddha statue in its place.

*Sound of the front door opening and closing.*

**BEA** That must be Elizabeth. Quick, into the basement.

**RUDY** Okay, but could you bring me something to eat? I'm starving.

**BEA** How about a tuna sandwich?

**RUDY** Tuna? I was thinking maybe smoked meat on rye. With a bit of mustard and a dill pickle. You know how much I love dill pickles. And a beer. Not a domestic, I --

**BEA** -- Tuna is all we have. And you'll have to settle for a ginger ale. Now get downstairs.

**RUDY** But --

**BEA** -- Now.

*BEA rushes RUDY to the basement door and practically pushes him downstairs.*

*RUDY exits just as ELIZABETH enters.*