

## YOU CALL THAT LOVE.

### ACTORS

Shirley – (Gran) late 70's, early 80's

Elizabeth – (Nan) late 50's, early 60's

Xanthe – late 30's, early 40's

Yolanda – late teens, early 20's dresses radically

### SET

A lounge room, comfortable but not lavish. Kitchen is not seen but is Right Stage, Front door Left Stage

Shirley comes onto the stage, says her script then stays. Then Elizabeth, then Xanthe, then Yolanda. They form a line across the front of the stage.

Shirley: This is not a comedy but you may find some parts funny.

Elizabeth: This is not truth. But some parts are very believable.

Xanthe: This is a series of ideas set in a story.

Yolanda: You decide what fits or what does not.

Shirley: I'm Shirley and I'm her mum (points to Elizabeth)

Elizabeth: I'm Elizabeth and I'm her mum (points to Xanthe)

Xanthe: I'm Xanthe and I'm her mum (points to Yolanda)

Yolanda: I'm Yolanda and I'm no one's mum and never want to be a mum!

They exit the stage except for Shirley and Elizabeth. Shirley sits in the armchair and Elizabeth (Beth) fusses about a bit.

- Elizabeth: It's lovely that you are able to stay with me for a few days Mum. I'm so lucky to have such a close knit family. We've always been there for one another, haven't we. *Looking at the family photo on the coffee table next to her chair. Reflective pause.* I know you enjoy Summerset but I can't remember the last time we had a few days together. Just you and me. I suggested to Xanthe that she and YoYo come around also. They shouldn't be far away. YoYo's home from University for a wee while. You won't recognise her. She's not the sweet little thing she was.
- Shirley: Why's that love?
- Elizabeth: Oh, she's still great but you know what they're like when they're at Uni? Question everything! Right the injustices. Save the world. All that sort of stuff.
- Shirley: Oh yes, I remember when Xanthe went to Teachers College. You never knew what coloured hair she's come home with but look at her now. Principal of the school, on the local Council. Shame about her and Jason though. He seemed like such a nice boy.
- Elizabeth: Hmmm, its a bit of worry these days. Every second marriage seems to fail and half of them don't even get married. At least Geoff and I were happily married for all those years. I still miss him like crazy. One moment I'm fine the next I find I'm crying in the car because a stupid song comes on.
- Shirley: Well I'm glad I'm here dear. I know when your Dad died I was so lucky to have Kathy and Marge just up the road. The nights were harder but your aunties practically lived at my place for the first few months and then of course when Kathy's Ivan passed away, we all decided to get units at Summerset, ... it was like going back to when we were just teenagers. Gossiping about everyone and oggling up the boys then having a great ol' laugh about it together.
- Elizabeth: *Grinning* Do you still oggle the boys Mum?
- Shirley: Don't be silly dear. A few of the old blokes are a bit flirty but its all just fun.
- Elizabeth: Isn't it funny. I've known you all my life and yet not once have I ever thought of you and Dad, you know, .... "doing it" or even having a sex life. I guess as kids we just thought you were sooo old! *Laughs* You could have been rabbits for all I know. *Laughs again.*
- Shirley: We were not rabbits. By the time Dad came in from the shed he was exhausted. A beer, a bath, bit of dinner then bed. I'm not saying we didn't have a healthy interest but nothing like what TV portrays today. They only have to look at one another and they're all over each other!
- Elizabeth: What sort of TV are you watching Mum?
- Shirley: It doesn't matter what program it is, ... and as for those reality shows. *Looks horrified.* I don't know what to make of it. But what do I know? I was born last century.
- Elizabeth: So was I and I agree about those reality TV shows. They are gross! What happened to getting to know one another first. I know when I first met Geoff he hardly said a

word to me but had such sparkly eyes. He just kind of kept on turning up out of the blue. Remember when he showed up at our place one Saturday afternoon and said he'd been fishing and thought Dad might like fish. Of course, Dad invited him to stay for a BBQ. I don't know who liked him more at the time, Dad or me.

Shirley: *Laughs. Hesitantly adds.* When I met your dad I was only 18 and although I thought I was totally grown up I didn't have a clue about boys. *(reflective pause)* I remember one time, after the local dance, this is before I met your father, Ronny Smithson, asked if he could walk me home. Well, your Aunty Kathy was already dating Ivan and I always felt like the gooseberry when we all had to walk home together, so I agreed. Then, *(hesitates as if embarrassed)* when we got to the gate he kissed me and *put his tongue in my mouth. (almost whispers as if she's too embarrassed to say the words out loud)* I was so horrified I slapped him on the face and ran inside. Honestly, if it wasn't for Kathy explaining that French kissing wouldn't get you pregnant, I don't know what I would have done. I still cried most of that night.

Elizabeth: Oh, Mum, that's awful.

Shirley: *Makes a gesture if as if she is shaking of the memory.* Do you fancy a cuppa? I'll make us one.

Elizabeth: Thanks Mum. That'd be great.

*Shirley disappears off stage. A couple of moments pass and Xanthe is heard talking to her daughter off stage.*

Xanthe: Well, I'm going in to see your Nan. Granny is here also. Don't be too long on that damn phone will you.

Yolanda: *Muffled* Whatever!

*Xanthe enters living room. She looks tired.*

Xanthe: Hi Mum, *Looks around for Shirley* I thought Gran was here.

Elizabeth: She is, she's in the kitchen making a cuppa.

Xanthe: Shall I give her a hand?

Elizabeth: No I think Gran likes to still feel useful. How are you darling? Things settling down? You look tired. *Hesitates.* Are you still seeing that guy from the Law Office?

Xanthe: That was just a bit of a fling. He was OK but he had so much baggage. It's hard enough sorting your own stuff out without someone else's stuff lumped into the mix as well. And as for dating sites. Oh my God, don't get me started. Counselling was really helpful though.

Elizabeth: How's YoYo?

Xanthe: She's here. She'll be in shortly.

Elizabeth: Do you need to warn me about anything first?

Xanthe: Mum, she is who she is. I have to keep reminding myself that she is an adult and how she chooses to see the world and herself is her choice. I tell you, I don't know

what's harder. Accepting a failed marriage or understanding what's going on in our childrens' minds. You'd think being a Principal I'd have a pretty good idea about child pyschology, but truthfully, I just bungle through most of the time. I feel as if I don't have a clue really.

Elizabeth: Join the club. I think most parents realise that. We just have to make it up as we go along and hope that we make more good decisions than bad ones.

*Off stage Yolanda is obviously still on the phone finishing up her conversation*

Yolanda *Enters the room with her earphones in and stuffs the phone into her pocket.* Yeah, yeah, catch ya later Reb.

Elizabeth: Hello YoYo.

Yolanda: Beth do you mind. That is so disrespectful.

*Elizabeth looks confused then realises it the term of endearment that Yolanda is referring to.*

Elizabeth: But I've always called you YoYo darling.

Yolanda: When I was a child. I'm not a child now, am I.

Elizabeth: Sorry, darling. What would you like me to call you?

Yolanda: Y

Elizabeth: Well, I'd like to call you by a name you're happy to respond to.

Yolanda: No! *Rolling her eyes or a similar gesture* Call me Y, as in the beginning of my name, Yolanda. *Glaring at Xanthe* Who would name their child Yolanda anyway. It's like something out of a Jane Austen novel. What were you thinking?

*Xanthe is about to say something but Shirley comes in from the kitchen with a pot of tea, cups, milk and plate with some cake on it.*

Shirley: Oh, you've arrived. Would you like a cup of tea?

Xanthe: Oh thanks Gran. *Pours tea and hands them to Elizabeth and Xanthe. Everyone seems a little on edge and Shirley is unsure as to why. Xanthe takes the tea but leaves the chair for Shirley to sit down.*

Shirley: Did I interrupt something?

Elizabeth: No, Mum. We were just discussing ...

Xanthe: Nothing that's important. *Xanthe glares at Yolanda as if to say "behave and be polite" and Yolanda stares back confrontationally.*

Yolanda: Actually Gran we were discussing why anyone would call their daughter Yolanda. What a ridiculous name in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. But as Xan pointed out, "It's not important." *Glaring at Xanthe. Everyone is a bit startled at Yolanda's prickly attitude.* So, now that we've moved on from me what were you and Gran talking about when we arrived? *Everyone looks a bit worried that Yolanda may make everyone uncomfortable by her direct questions.*

- Elizabeth: Actually, Y we were talking about sex and relationships.
- Yolanda: What's the big deal. Sex – it's like a game of tennis. Find the partner you want to play with, make sure you both know the rules and go for it. And relationships! So straight forward, I don't know why people stuff them up so often.
- Xanthe: If only it were that easy Y. I appreciate your opinion but I think there's a bit more to it than that.
- Shirley: What about love?
- Yolanda: Love. What about it! There's no such thing except in ridiculous books that fill people's heads with false expectations, like a Jane Austen novel.
- Shirley: *Looks shocked and indignantly says.* I know about love! I loved your Great Granddad more than you will ever know. We went through all sorts of ups and downs and there were plenty of times when it was only love that kept us together.
- Elizabeth: That's right Y. Your Granny and Pop worked really hard to make sure we never missed out on things. As kids I don't think we quite appreciated how hard they worked to make sure there was food on the table let alone all the other sacrifices they made.
- Xanthe: And Nan and Granddad always set such a good example of how to be a happy family. I know our divorce hurt you Y, but there was a time when Dad and I really did love one another.
- Yolanda: *Upset and angry.* Sure. Dad had a funny way to show his love ... by running out on his family. I suppose he also "loved" the woman at the Squash club and "loved" that woman in Coromandel. And don't think I haven't heard the story about Auntie Jude and Dad? I suppose he "loved" her too!
- Xanthe: *Stands up suddenly and the tea falls to the floor Y! Shouting* That's enough! *On the brink of tears. Elizabeth gathers around Xanthe to protect her from the harsh words as Shirley fusses about the broken tea. They all look at Y in sadness. Silence*
- Yolanda: *Recognises she's gone too far and changes tack.* Don't get me wrong, you guys are pretty awesome but this is what I'm hearing. *Seriously* Work hard for what you believe in. ... Respect one another and find gratitude. ... Have integrity and honesty. ... Communication makes the difference apparently .... If you have love but don't have these other things then you may as well be in a Jane Austen movie.
- Shirley, Elizabeth & Xanthe: Wow!
- Elizabeth: Where did you learn all this?
- Yolanda: Diary of a CEO podcast. Anyway, Reb and I are catching up soon. Good to see you Gran, *hugs her* Nan *hugs her*. Xan I'm going to stay at Reb's flat tonight. *Starts to leave. When she gets to the exit says, Bye. Love you!*

**The end**