

Whoa There, Grandma

By Eric Craft

Name: Eric Craft

Where are you from: Bernardsville, NJ

Bio: Eric Craft is a playwright/director/actor based in North and Central Jersey with a BA in Theatre Studies from Montclair State University. His works range from musicals to short plays to full length plays. His musical *The Blank Page* was self-produced in 2017 at Luna Stage. He has written and directed multiple plays for children, including titles such as *Finding the Root*, *The Struggle Bus*, *The Alive Poets Society*, and an adaptation of *The Little Prince*. He is so excited to be participating in Summit Playhouse's Bake-Off!

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What's keeping you positive? I'm staying afloat and optimistic thanks to my boyfriend, my family, Animal Crossing, and especially my cat.

Yes, please feel free to publish this!

Cast of Characters

AVA. About fifty. New England mom and widow. Working actively to keep it together.

MARTY. Ava's sixteen year old son. Can't be bothered. Really into his art.

ROBIN. Ava's twelve year old daughter. A band geek and theatre kid. Quiet and soft spoken.

KEATON. Fifties. Ava's older brother. An independently wealthy, single uncle. Gives great gifts.

Time

A rainy summer afternoon. 2019.

Place

The porch of an old colonial in Simsbury, Connecticut.

Ava and Keaton's mother has recently passed away, and the family is starting the arduous process of sorting through her decades' worth of belongings.

A long, covered, old fashioned porch. An weathered wicker set of furniture, including a rocking chair, sits beside a deep red front door. A flash of lighting and crash of thunder, and then rain begins to deluge. AVA, MARTY, and ROBIN run into the shelter of the front porch.

AVA

So I guess we're not going to be able to pull out as much as we thought.

MARTY

I thought it wasn't supposed to rain.

AVA

It wasn't.

MARTY

So what are we going to do? We drove three hours.

AVA

Well we'll wait for Keaton and reimagine our plans. We can't pull out boxes and furniture into this rain.

ROBIN

When's Uncle Keaton getting here?

AVA

He's on his way now.

ROBIN

Should we put our stuff inside?

AVA

There's no room.

MARTY

Wow, Grandma really was a hoarder?

AVA

When was the last time you were in her house?

MARTY

Grandpa's funeral.

AVA

It's twice as much now.

MARTY

Incredible. I'm going in.

MARTY exits into the house. ROBIN walks over and hugs her mother.

AVA

How are you feeling, my little bird?

ROBIN

I'm okay. I miss Dad.

AVA

There's a lot in the house he would have loved to lay claim to.

ROBIN

Like what?

AVA

A lot of woodworking tools. Antique furniture to restore. Sheet music.

ROBIN

What kind of sheet music?

AVA

It's in the living room on top of the piano.

ROBIN

Which piano?

AVA

The older, bigger one.

ROBIN

Can I go look?

AVA

Go for it.

ROBIN exits into the house. AVA takes a deep breath, looks out at the street she grew up on. She begins to wave as a car pulls up.

AVA

Hi Keat!

KEATON enters with a large bag.

KEATON

Where are the kids? I brought breakfast.

AVA

They went inside.

KEATON

Perfect. I got us all orange juice, but I also got us those little champagne bottles for mimosas.

He hands her two small bottles, then pulls out two individual bottles of OJ, pours a bit out of each, and mixes the champagne in. They toast.

AVA

To mom.

KEATON

To mom.

They sip. Then chug. KEATON goes about setting up a bagel spread on the table.

KEATON

So whattaya wanna do with the rain?

AVA

I figured we could sift through her stuff and make a list for what to donate, if there's anything we want to claim.

KEATON

What are we going to do about the trumpets?

AVA

We can each take ten.

KEATON

Does Robin want one?

AVA

I figure she would. She might already be sizing them up in there.

KEATON

Will Marty take all the weird shit?

AVA

I think he'll end up taking most of the yarn and fabric.

KEATON

Do you want mom's dish set?

AVA

Which one?

KEATON

I know I want the cut glass, so you can take the fine china if you want.

AVA

That china?!

KEATON

It's still in its packaging from 1974.

AVA

Maybe I'll actually use it.

KEATON

Mom would have a cow.

AVA

Good thing she's not here to see it.

KEATON

Yeah...

AVA

How was she at the end? I wish I could have been there.

KEATON

She was praying a lot. She loved God.

AVA

That's for sure.

KEATON

Talked a lot about dad. How they waited til marriage to have sex.

AVA

She told you that?

KEATON

She was going fast. She told me to abstain until marriage. Me, the fifty-five year old bachelor apparently has to be a fifty-five year old virgin too.

AVA

She died how she lived. Pious, chaste, modest. I still can't believe she barely had any money left.

KEATON

She never liked to talk about money though.

ROBIN enters with a trumpet.

ROBIN

Um, mom. Hi Uncle Keaton.

AVA

What's up?

ROBIN

I found something kind of huge. I was going through the trumpets and seeing if they worked and most of them all sounded really weird and muffled so I looked inside, I thought a mouse or something crawled in there to die but instead I found this...

She pulls a wad of bills out of a trumpet.

And I think Grandma was hiding money.

KEATON

This was in most of the trumpets?

ROBIN

I didn't get to check them all, but yeah...

KEATON

I'll be right back.

KEATON runs inside. AVA takes the money.

AVA

This is at least a couple thousand dollars. Mom wasn't broke at all.

ROBIN

Grandma was broke?

AVA

We thought it was odd how little was left in her bank account.

ROBIN

Is that because of the depression?

AVA

She was a little young for the depression, but I guess she did pick up that habit of storing cash.

ROBIN

Cash is king.

MARTY (*offstage*)

OH MY GOD!!!

AVA

Marty?!

MARTY runs down with an album.

MARTY

Okay so this is a lot but I was going through grandma's room to see if she had any clothes I'd want or want to alter—

AVA

You'd want to wear Grandma's clothes?

MARTY

She had incredible taste and gender is a construct. God, Mom...anyway. I was going through her closet when I found a box labeled "Do Not Open". So I opened it. And inside were...you might want to sit down for this. Robin cover your ears.

ROBIN

No.

MARTY

Fine, there video tapes. And one was labeled "dance for daddy" and I thought maybe it would be a video of you or something when you were young so I popped in the ancient TV in her room with the VCR built in and it was Grandma in leather dancing like this:

MARTY demonstrates a sexy dance move. And then another. And then a third.

AVA

I get the picture.

MARTY

So I turned it off and kept digging in the box and there were sex toys and this!

He opens the album.

AVA

Ahh, close that!

MARTY

It's pornographic pictures of grandma and grandpa from their swinger parties! Grandma was a freak and we had no idea!

AVA

Marty, stop. I didn't know any of that.

MARTY

Grandma was keeping mad secrets. And honestly she and grandpa could get it.

ROBIN

Ew!

MARTY

What, I'm proud to carry those genes!

AVA

Wait until your Uncle Keaton sees this...

ROBIN

Is there stuff about you that we don't know, Mom?

MARTY

Don't tell us your job as an Avon rep is actually a front for your actual job selling vibrators.

AVA

No, nothing like that. You two know I was president of my sorority?

ROBIN

You were?

MARTY

I knew that. That's how you met Dad.

AVA

No, I met your Dad at work. I met my first fiancé at a fraternity and sorority mixer.

ROBIN

You were engaged before you met dad?!

AVA

Your father was actually the reason Robert and I broke up.

MARTY

Mom, you absolute minx.

ROBIN

Well, I'm glad you were a bit of a floozy.

AVA

Me too, my little bird.

KEATON enters, shaken.

MARTY

Hey Uncle Keaton, did you know your mom was kinky as hell?

KEATON

What?

AVA

Apparently our parents were swingers and we had no idea.

KEATON

...wow.

AVA

Was there a lot of money in the trumpets?

KEATON

Right, the trumpets. Mom had about twenty thousand dollars stuffed into all of her trumpets.

AVA

Oh my god!

KEATON

That's not all. Um. I went into the basement to see if maybe she stored more money down there in the other piano, and I realized there was a whole door hidden behind all of the crap down there. So I went in...and well. I think Mom, our super religious mother, was a Satanist.

AVA

What?

KEATON

Behind the hidden door was a straight up altar to the devil.

MARTY

Oh god...grandma was cool this whole time?! Oh right, bagels.

MARTY goes to eat a bagel, sitting in the rocking chair.

ROBIN

What are we going to do?

AVA

I don't know what there is to do.

KEATON

Do you want to split up the money?

AVA

Did you bring any more booze?

ROBIN

We're at the right hoarder's house, right?

AVA

There was so much about mom we didn't know. We learned all of this from one morning of looking through stuff. What else is waiting for us in that house?

MARTY

It could just be more cash.

The rain lets up. Birds are heard chirping.

KEATON

Well, the rain has cleared up. Do we want to start pulling stuff out of there?

AVA
Not really.

MARTY
I want to go back in.

MARTY gets up to go in.

AVA
Wait. Um, Keaton I know you just bought bagels but do you want to go to the diner? Take a minute away from the house to...

KEATON
Yeah, let's my take my car. Come on kiddos.

ROBIN
I'll just put the trumpet back inside.

She goes in.

MARTY
I'm bring the album.

AVA
No you're...fine.

KEATON, AVA, and MARTY exit. ROBIN reenters.

ROBIN
Grandma, when my dad died I thought about how there was so much I'd never get to do with him or learn about him, and now you're gone and apparently there's a lot I never learned about you. I'm sorry. I guess I'll have to learn more about you through your house, and through my mom and my uncle, and even my brother. And maybe I'll learn about you through myself, too. So in that way, you and my dad will always be a part of my life. Even when you feel so far away. I miss you. I don't know if this is helping.

A car horn.

Coming!

She runs off. The birds chirp and as we hear the car drive off, the rocking slowly but suddenly rocks back and forth.

BLACKOUT.