

THE SETTING

The entire play takes place in Maggie's living room and a small closet off of her living room.

THE CHARACTERS

PHYLLIS, ninety-one, just had hip replacement surgery and is staying with her daughter-in-law until she heals; independent and mentally competent, her bones are paper thin.

MAGGIE, sixty-two, widowed for 3 years, always wanted to be a professional singer but life got in the way; she now cares for her mother (Trudy) full time and also just took in her mother-in-law who just had hip replacement surgery.

TRUDY, ninety-three, suffers from severe dementia, lives full time with her daughter, Maggie. Trudy has the sweetness of a quintessential 1950s housewife.

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE.

Maggie's living room, which has been converted into a recovery bedroom space. The room is fairly spacious and has two hospital beds, one recliner, two walkers, one wheelchair, and a small love seat with table. The characters watch a TV that is imaginatively placed between the audience and the actors. Despite the recovery room conversion, the room is clean and decorated, including matching quilts on the hospital beds.

Trudy, dressed in a nightgown, sits in her bed joyfully watching the news as if it were a funny cartoon.

Maggie, sitting on the love seat, folds laundry while watching the news and humming a tune. Her voice is beautiful.

With a look of great determination, Phyllis stands holding onto her walker, lifts one leg up, knee bent and holds it. She repeats "5300 Bluebird Lane" with each exercise repetition.

VOICE ON TELEVISION (O.S.)
Westbrook went nuts in the first half,
going off for 27 points in less than 12
minutes, finishing with 41 points on 28
shots.

PHYLLIS
5300 Bluebird Lane. 5300 Bluebird Lane.
5300 Bluebird Lane.

Phyllis puts her leg down, takes a few breaths and then repeats the exercise.

VOICE ON TELEVISION (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Westbrook was a speed demon, and was
clearly gunning for the MVP. It was an
explosive performance and a great
showcase of what the NBA's Mad Max
can do.

PHYLLIS (CONT'D)
5300 Bluebird Lane. 5300 Bluebird Lane.
5300 Bluebird Lane.

TRUDY
Oh my, NBA's Mad Max.

Maggie hums louder.

Phyllis puts her leg down, looking tired now. She takes a couple deep breaths and begins again.

VOICE ON TELEVISION (O.S.)
Jeff Teague showed some razzle dazzle,
and Paul Millsap missed a dunk but came
back with a sweet behind the back pass to
Horford for a dunk, and Horford hit a
buzzer-beater alley-oop.

PHYLLIS
5300 Bluebird Lane. 5300 Bluebird Lane.
5300 Bluebird Lane.

TRUDY
(giggling)
Oh my, a buzzer-beater alley-oop.

Phyllis puts her leg down, clearly exhausted.

Maggie, finished folding the clothes, puts down the basket and stands up.

MAGGIE

(very upbeat)

Okay, Mom, time to get moving...

TRUDY

(still looking at the TV)

Oh, no.

Maggie grabs the remote and turns the TV off.

TRUDY (CONT'D)

Now why'd you go and do that?

Phyllis begins a new exercise, taking one leg out to the side and holding it.

MAGGIE

Okay, Mom. Today is July 20th, 2015.

PHYLLIS

5300 Bluebird Lane. 5300 Bluebird Lane.

TRUDIE

Oh, it is?

PHYLLIS (CONT'D)

5300 Bluebird Lane.

Trudy's focus moves as she leans forward trying to see something.

TRUDY

Is that a Mimosa tree out there?

Phyllis chuckles. Maggie growls under her breath.

MAGGIE

No, Mom, that's a Crepe Myrtle.

TRUDY

Oh, a Crepe Myrtle. Well, it sure looks like a Mimosa.

PHYLLIS

Yes, it certainly does, dear.

MAGGIE

Okay, Mom? You are in Greenville, North Carolina..

TRUDY

Well, how did that happen?

MAGGIE

You've been here for 2 years and 5 months.

(to herself)

But who's counting?

PHYLLIS

5300 Bluebird Lane. 5300 Bluebird Lane.

Phyllis chuckles.

TRUDIE

Oh, you're pulling my leg.

PHYLLIS (CONT'D)

5300 Bluebird Lane.

Phyllis leans against her walker catching her breath.

TRUDY

(to Phyllis)

5300 Bluebird Lane?

PHYLLIS

That's the goal. 5300 Bluebird Lane. Going home.

Phyllis, using walker, heads over to the recliner and VERY SLOWLY sits down..

Maggie pulls Trudy's covers aside

MAGGIE

Bathroom time.

TRUDY

Well, I don't need to use the bathroom.

MAGGIE

Not optional.

Maggie wheels over the wheelchair and struggles to get Trudy out of bed. Trudy becomes hostile and angry.

Phyllis takes an iPad out of a colorful flowered handmade bag on her walker and turns it on.

TRUDY

Stop it, Maggie. Ow!

MAGGIE

(frustrated)

Mom. This would be so much easier if you would just cooperate.

Maggie gently holds onto Trudy's upper arm to shift her to the end of the bed.

TRUDY

Don't pull on my arm! Ow! You're hurting my leg!

MAGGIE

Mom, I am not even touching your leg!

TRUDY

Well...

MAGGIE

Okay, let's get you right to the edge here.

Maggie expertly swings Trudy's legs around so they are now hanging off the bed and then hoists her off the bed.

TRUDY

Ow! Ow! Stop it, Maggie!

Maggie finally gets Trudy into the wheelchair and both Maggie and Trudy look worn out.

TRUDY (CONT'D)

Now where did I put my pocket book?

MAGGIE

Don't need your pocket book, Mom. Just going to the bathroom.

TRUDY

Oh, yes I do.

Maggie scans the room and sees Trudy's pocket book and grabs it and shoves it in her lap.

MAGGIE

Fine. Here it is.

TRUDY

Oh, well, that's more like it.

Phyllis, now completely engrossed in something she is doing on her iPad,, peeks up at Maggie and smiles.

Maggie wheels Trudy out of the room singing “Anchors Away!”

Trudy lights up.

TRUDY (CONT'D)

Well, that's a nice song.

Maggie smiles and winks at Phyllis before completely exiting the room.

TRUDY (OFF STAGE) (CONT'D)

Gotta go to the bathroom. Oops, too late.

MAGGIE (OFF STAGE)

Really, Mom, we were almost there.

Phyllis smiles as she stares at her iPad.

Phyllis types with one finger and then sighs in frustration.

PHYLLIS

172 Arnold Madisons out there.

Phyllis starts swiping through a list of names on her iPad.

PHYLLIS (CONT'D)

Arnold Madison of Kansas City, MO. 73 years old. Too young. Reno, Nevada. 64. Nope.

From the bathroom, we hear Maggie singing and Trudy complaining.

TRUDY

Ow! Stop it, Maggie! Stop pulling my leg!

Phyllis still stares at her iPad.

PHYLLIS

Oh, come on now. Not getting any younger here.

MAGGIE (OFF STAGE)

Mom, you need to wash your hands.

TRUDY (OFF STAGE)

Well, there's nothing on them. No, Maggie, stop pulling on them.

PHYLLIS

Damnit, Arnold, where are you?

MAGGIE

There you go! See that wasn't so bad now.

TRUDY

Well, I suppose not.

We hear Trudy now singing and getting closer.

Phyllis puts the iPad down, hiding it under her lap blanket.

TRUDY (CONT'D)

Here we go loopy loop, here we go loopy lie.

Maggie rolls in a now-singing and smiling Trudy.

PHYLLIS

Wow, that was fast.

MAGGIE

World record.

Maggie exits the room.

TRUDY

Here we go loopy loop, all on a Saturday night!

PHYLLIS

That's a nice song, Trudy.

TRUDY

Oh, well, just a little something I pulled out of my hat.

Phyllis laughs.

TRUDY (CONT'D)

Where is my hat?

PHYLLIS

Oh, I'm sure it's around here somewhere.

Maggie returns looking for something.

MAGGIE

Can't find my glasses anywhere. I thought I put them down on the table over there...

Maggie keeps looking and then gives up and leaves.

TRUDY

Can't find her glasses anywhere...

Maggie returns with a two glasses of water and two days of the week pill boxes.

MAGGIE

Okay, let's see here.

Maggie struggles to read the day on the pill box and finally opens one section from the box labeled "TRUDY" and pours six pills into her hand.

TRUDY

Oh, my. That's a lot of pills. Who's taking those?

MAGGIE

You. No battle today, Mom.

TRUDY chuckles.

TRUDY

Oh dear, what battle?

Maggie hands Trudy the pills and a glass of water.

TRUDY (CONT'D)

I can't possibly.

MAGGIE

You can and you will.

PHYLLIS

Now, Trudy, those are your magic pills. They will make you stronger, younger, and more beautiful.

Oh, magic pills.

TRUDY

TRUDY holds up a pill and looks at it closely.

Mom, just take the pills.

MAGGIE

Pills, pills, pills.

TRUDY

Maggie starts to open the pill box marked Phyllis. Phyllis puts her hand out.

My pill box please.

PHYLLIS

I'm supposed to count them out for you.

MAGGIE

Phyllis holds out her hand defiantly.

Maggie holds the pill box far from her face and squints to read the writing in the pill box.

Hmmm...yes, this is yours. Says Pain in the Neck Mother-In-Law.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Very funny.

PHYLLIS

Phyllis holds out her hand and Maggie reluctantly hands her the box. Phyllis takes the box, opens it, and places her pills before her. Maggie watches her like a hawk.

Phyllis looks at Maggie and shrugs her shoulder smiling.

I'm telling you they don't do anything at all. Damn things probably just sugar pills. To shut me up.

PHYLLIS (CONT'D)

Stubborn and paranoid. Just like your son.

MAGGIE

PHYLLIS

Take that as a compliment. When Paul was in grade school, the teacher tried to make him stop playing with his little Indian friend, Sam. But Paul just looked at her, told her that Sam was his friend and --

MAGGIE

-- held onto Sam's hand until the teacher gave up. I know. And the correct term is Native American, Phyllis.

PHYLLIS

I never could get used to that. Always been Indian to me. Boys played cowboys and Indians not cowboys and Native Americans. Besides, I'm 1/4 Indian blood so I figure I can call it what I like.

MAGGIE

And I have no doubt you will.

Phyllis takes Maggie's left hand and studies her wedding rings.

PHYLLIS

Still wearing them, I see.

MAGGIE

Yeah. I guess I haven't been able to let him go...not completely.

PHYLLIS

Paul really was a remarkable boy--

MAGGIE

--he really was. Now, take those pills. Doctor's orders.

PHYLLIS

Doctor's orders. Ridiculous. Stupid man wanted to lock me up in an old people home. Didn't think I could handle hip replacement at 91. I will show him all right. I will take these stupid pills, do my exercises and, before he sees me again, I will be back in my little house on the corner of Bluebird Lane sipping tea in my chair by the window. I will show him.

Maggie shakes her head and laughs to herself.

MAGGIE

I have no doubt. I expect those pills to be gone, Mom.

Pills, pills, pills.

TRUDY

Maggie exits the room.

Phyllis pulls the bag off of her walker and pulls out a plastic bag full of pills. She takes her handful of pills and puts them in the bag.

Trudy watches Phyllis and Phyllis winks at Trudy and makes the shhh gesture. Trudy smiles.

PHYLLIS

Okay, Trudy, take those pills now.

Maggie enters with two breakfast trays and puts one down in front of each mom.

TRUDY

Now, where's Bill? Can't start breakfast without him or he'll be angry with me.

MAGGIE

Dad's on a business trip.

TRUDY

Well that explains why I haven't seen him.

Maggie exits.

TRUDY (CONT'D)

Oh my, I could never eat this much food.

PHYLLIS

(laughing)

I'm sure you will manage just fine, dear.

Trudy enters a state of focus on her food and eats and eats without looking up.

Maggie enters with her own breakfast on a tray. She sits on the loveseat.

MAGGIE

(to Phyllis)

So, did you sort out your phone bill?

PHYLLIS

Who knows! They are all incompetent. I had that telephone man on the phone for two hours!

MAGGIE

(giggling)

Just two hours? Better than three with the electric company.

Phyllis growls.

PHYLLIS

You would not believe these people! I asked him to stop sending the bills in John's name. My name is not John and I will not pay any bill that is not in my name. And the man tells me that John is the name on the account. So I tell the man that John's dead. You are sending bills to a dead man!

TRUDY

(still eating, not looking up)

A dead man?

MAGGIE

(to Trudy)

Yes, Mom.

PHYLLIS

And I tell him my John would try to pay this and every other bill I refuse to pay on time from his grave if he could, but he can't. He's dead.

MAGGIE

Really...I don't think --

TRUDY

(not looking up)

How'd he die?

PHYLLIS

-- and you know what he said to me?

MAGGIE

(to Trudy)

He had cancer.

PHYLLIS

I'm sorry for your loss, Maam. Ha!

TRUDY

(still not looking up)

Why didn't anybody tell me?

PHYLLIS

I laughed. I know I shouldn't laugh. But they've been sending bills to a dead man for nine years and now they are offering condolences!

MAGGIE

Well, I'm sure this is the first he's heard of it.

Trudy finishes every last bite of her food and finally looks up.

TRUDY

(mouth full)

Who?

MAGGIE AND PHYLLIS

The telephone man!

TRUDY

The telephone man died?

MAGGIE

No, Mom.

PHYLLIS

Well, let me tell you, I went round and round with that telephone man.

Trudy lights up.

TRUDY

Oh, my. You went round and round with the telephone man?

MAGGIE

Mom!

PHYLLIS

Not that kind of round and round, Trudie.

TRUDY

Oh, well, that's too bad. I like the telephone man.

Phyllis and Maggie both stop what they are doing and look at Trudy. Trudy innocently smiles at them.

Trudy's focus moves as she leans forward trying to see something.

TRUDY (CONT'D)

Is that a Mimosa tree out there?

Maggie rolls here eyes. Phyllis chuckles.

PHYLLIS

No, dear, that's a Crepe Myrtle.

TRUDY

Oh, a Crepe Myrtle. Well, it sure looks like a Mimosa.

PHYLLIS

It certainly does, dear.

Trudy passes gas loudly and smiles innocently.

MAGGIE

Mom, do you need to go to the bathroom?

TRUDY

The bathroom?

MAGGIE

Yes, Mom. I don't want to clean up any messes.

TRUDY

Oh dear, what messes?

Maggie growls in frustration, grabs her tray and leaves the room.

Trudy make a loud sighing noise and starts to get out of her chair by herself.

TRUDY (CONT'D)

Well, it's time you for me to get going. Where's my pocket book?

PHYLLIS

Where are you going, dear?

TRUDY

Home, of course. Kids will be getting off the bus soon.

Trudy frantically looks around the room.

TRUDY (CONT'D)

Now, where did I put my pocket book?

PHYLLIS

I think you should wait until Maggie gets back. She'll get you up.

Trudy continues trying unsuccessfully to get out of her seat.

PHYLLIS (CONT'D)

Trudy, look at me.

Trudy looks at Phyllis. Phyllis smiles lovingly at Trudy.

PHYLLIS (CONT'D)

It's not time to go yet.

TRUDY

It isn't?

PHYLLIS

Just finished breakfast. Haven't even had lunch.