

Mary characterization -
works hard, easily frustrated
with Mary

Nelly characterization -
elderly & a bit of dementia
going on

A: NELLY, MARY

[Mary is Nelly's elderly mother; they live together. Nelly runs the grain mill, which she inherited from her father.]

MARY: I know, I know, I know, I know, don't hit me; don't hit me, baby.

NELLY: What do you mean telling people a tale like that. You know I bought that mill.

MARY: You bought it, baby; I know you bought it.

NELLY: Well, they said in town, you told I'd killed dad to get it.

MARY: I said he died mysteriously.

NELLY: He died of old age, he was ninety-six for God's sakes.

MARY: He died mysteriously!

NELLY: In his sleep like you will; died of old age like you will. What [redacted] do you mean telling something like that?

MARY: I didn't mean to baby. I don't mean to--

NELLY: --You're as batty as a [redacted] loon.

MARY: They don't like me is what it is. They know I watch them. They don't like me in town, I knew they didn't. I don't say those things. They tell things on me.

NELLY: You're crazy [redacted] is what it is; you're out of your [redacted] mind is what it is.

MARY: Baby, don't talk like that. They tell fibs on me. They say--

NELLY: Showing them bruises and saying I beat you; when [redacted] did I even beat you? You know [redacted] well how you get those bruises. You fall down! You bruise! You run into things! You're old. You bump things. Who [redacted] takes care of you and you telling lies on me like that, mama, what do you mean?

MARY: I don't mean to.

NELLY: They don't listen to you; to say things like that.

MARY: They don't listen to me, Nelly.

NELLY: It doesn't do you any good, they come right in and tell me.

MARY: Don't hurt me.

NELLY: I think you better go on up to your room!

MARY: No, don't lock the door.

NELLY: If I leave the house I'll lock the door or you'll wander out and get hurt. You'll fall down the stairs and tell I beat you.

MARY: I don't want to go up there; the evil town is all around me up there.

NELLY: Go upstairs mama.

MARY: It's painted on the windows--

NELLY: Well, pull the shades if you don't want to see them.

MARY: My skin, my whole body is just flaking away--this evil town!

Eva- a bit dreamy
Robert- in Drivers shadow

B: EVA, ROBERT

[Robert has just graduated from High School; Eva is younger. Driver is Robert's older brother, who died in a race car accident; everyone in town calls Robert "Driver Junior."]

EVA: You decided what you want to be?

ROBERT: I don't have to decide this minute, do I?

EVA: I just wondered.

ROBERT: Do you know? You don't know what you want.

EVA: OF course I know; you know, I told you. So do you know, everybody knows what they want, it's what they think they really can do that they don't know.

ROBERT: Well, I don't have to decide yet.

EVA: When's it gonna be autumn? I love autumn so much I could hug it. I want it to be autumn. That's what I want right now. Now. Autumn. Now.

ROBERT: Good luck; I don't see it.

EVA: Don't you be derisive to me, Driver Junior!

ROBERT: Don't call me that.

EVA: Well, don't you go on, Robert Conklin, or I'll call you anything I like.

ROBERT: You'll be talking to yourself.

EVA: Everybody else calls you that. Don't go away; I won't, I promise. Don't you wish it was autumn? Don't you? Don't you love autumn? And the wind and rime and pumpkins and gourds and corn shocks? I won't again. Don't you love autumn? Don't you Robert? I won't call you that. Everybody else does but I won't.

ROBERT: I haven't thought about it.

EVA: Well, think about it, right now. Think about how it smells.

ROBERT: How does it smell?

EVA: Like dry, windy, cold, frosty rime and chaff and leaf smoke and corn husks.

ROBERT: It does, huh?

EVA: Pretend. Close your eyes. Are your eyes closed? Don't you wish it was here? Like apples and cider. You go.

ROBERT: And rain.

EVA: Sometimes. And potatoes and flower seeds and honey.

ROBERT: And popcorn and butter.

EVA: Yes. Oh, it does not! You're not playing at all. There's hay and clover and alfalfa and all that. *(Slapping him)*

ROBERT: *(Laughing)* Come on, it's different for everybody.

EVA: Well, that's not right; it doesn't at all. Are you making fun?

ROBERT: Come on, don't be rough.

EVA: I will too; you're not the least bit funny, Driver Junior! *(As Robert walks away.)* Come back here, Robert! Robert Conklin. Driver Junior! Little brother. Your brother was a man, anyway. Coward. Robert? Bobby?

C: CORA, WALTER

[Walter has recently become both Cora's ^{boyfriend who helps out at the} ~~_____~~ diner. He is much younger than she is, and a stranger in town.]

WALTER: Where do you want the pie?

CORA: On the rack that says pies.

WALTER: And the coffee in the jar that says coffee and ^{the} ~~_____~~ typed-up menus in the menu covers? I'll catch on.

CORA: You're doing fine.

WALTER: Well, for only a week.

CORA: You'll catch on.

WALTER: And you have to consider that we spend more time ^{together than we do working} ~~_____~~ or I'd know a lot more about ^{the} restaurant business and a lot less about you.

CORA: Now, you just clam up before somebody comes in.

WALTER: Ashamed, are you?

CORA: No, I most certainly am not and you know it, but I don't intend to bother someone else's business with my own.

WALTER: Wonder what they think?

CORA: You do, do you?

WALTER: "No I most certainly do not and you know it." --I like the way you people talk. You're looking good.

CORA: I'm feeling good.

WALTER: What would you think about putting an awning over the door so a fellow doesn't get soaking wet as soon as he steps out the door.

CORA: Hm. What'd I care if he's going out?

WALTER: Oh, it might be that on the way out is when he decides to come back.

CORA: You think, do you?

WALTER: "You think, do you?" It's something to consider.

Note: " " indicates that Walter's repeating Cora's words back to her to tease her.

D: PATSY, MAVIS, JOSH, PECK

[Mavis and Peck are the parents of Josh and Patsy; Patsy is a teenager, Josh 6 years older. Skelly Mannor is the town derelict; Patsy thinks he was looking in her window. The teenage boys in town haze Skelly by "baaaing" like sheep at him (that's what "give him a baa" refers to). Driver Junior was an older friend of Josh's who died a few years ago.]

PATSY: (Patsy screams very loud, running onstage.)

PECK: What in _____ the world...?!

PATSY: Oh god, oh god, oh god, oh god, oh god. In there.

MAVIS: What's wrong, baby?

PATSY: I saw him. I saw him. Oh, _____ he was looking in the window. His face--

PECK: Who was? Answer me.

MAVIS: Skelly?

PATSY: Skelly. Skelly. Skelly was. Oh, god, you should have seen his eyes. And I was only in my pants. You should have seen him.

JOSH: I don't know what he could have seen.

MAVIS: That's enough out of you now.

PECK: Where was he?

PATSY: At my bedroom window; where do you think?

MAVIS: You're imagining things; you're dreaming.

PATSY: I wasn't asleep, I tell you; I was just getting ready for bed.

PECK: It's okay now, I'll go out.

PATSY: No, he's gone now, my god, I screamed and he ran away.

JOSH: Wake the dead, what's he gonna see?

MAVIS: (to Josh) Don't you start. (to Patsy) Go on; it's okay now; he's gone, whoever it was.

PATSY: Well, it was Skelly Mannor, I guess I know who it was, I saw him.

MAVIS: Something ought to be done about him.

JOSH: He hasn't hurt anyone--not yet.

MAVIS: I suppose you call scaring an innocent girl out of her wits doing nothing. And the whole family too. Everyone knows what he does.

JOSH: Well, what could he do but look? He must be over a hundred if he's a day.

MAVIS: Just looking is doing; who knows what he might do?

JOSH: He's eighty years old.

PATSY: He is not. How can you tell how old he is, through all that filth?

PECK: Well, I know when I was a young man like Josh or younger we used to give old Skelly a Baa sometimes--

MAVIS: Peck, now--

PECK: Well, and he looked the same then as he does now, and all the men then said he'd been looking like that for as long as they could remember so he's getting on.

JOSH: He's just a curiosity.

PATSY: Oh, that's very funny. A curiosity. You're just bright as the sun; you ought to hide your head under a barrel.

JOSH: He's not hurt anybody. Except Warren Peabody. He hit Warren in the back of the head with a rock, threw it, I'll bet thirty feet, caught Warren running, knocked him out cold.

PECK: He's got good aim, I can vouch for that.

E: PATSY, LENA

[Patsy and Lena are in high school, best friends. Patsy is getting married

_____ "The trial" is a murder trial currently going on: the big news in town. "Josh" is Patsy's older brother.]

PATSY: It wasn't really sudden. I knew he wanted to, he'd let on, you know, in little ways. He said would I mind not being in school; he'll graduate, of course, 'cause this is his last year--and I said would I *mind*?

LENA: That's just incredible; when's it going to be?

PATSY: We aren't messing around; he said two weeks from this Saturday. He didn't want to have a church wedding at first--you know how he is; and I said, Chuck Melton, if you think I'm going to just run off to a preacher and practically elope, you've got another think coming. So it'll be the First Presberterian of Centreville, but I want it to be just simple. I said I wanted a street length dress--I know, but that's what I want, and I'll have a veil, and probably roses, if it's not too early for roses.

LENA: I'm just so surprised.

PATSY: Well, it wasn't really sudden, I knew he wanted to, he'd let on. I love the First Preberterian. I only hope the trial and all is quieted down. That could just ruin it all.

LENA: Oh, it will be.

PATSY: It's a beautiful church.

LENA: I really love it; it's just beautiful.

PATSY: And my aunt's gonna give the bride's breakfast.

LENA: Aren't you excited?

PATSY: I imagine we'll live in Centreville. You know, 'till we have enough money to get a place or maybe move somewhere. I don't want to live with his folks. I just can't stand them and I don't think they think too much of me either. They're so square and old-fashioned. They really are. They don't even believe in make-up or

anything.

LENA: Chuck is wonderful, he really is. I'm just so surprised. I don't think Josh and me want to get married though 'till I'm out of school.

PATSY: Oh, my god, you don't want to marry Josh. I can't imagine it. You're not serious about him. Lord, he's so childish.

LENA: He isn't. He's six years older than you are. He's worked for two years.

PATSY: Well, I know, but you don't want to marry him. Age doesn't have anything to do with it. He's all right and he's sweet and all, but I mean to go to the show with and hold hands. I don't know how you can bear to rise into town in that garage tow-truck, though.

LENA: I drive it sometimes; it's not bad.

PATSY: Well, I know, but Josh! Lord, Lena, I've got so many things to do yet. You know the thing I think I like most about Chuck is that he's so clean and neat and all. The way he takes care of his Mercury. It's always like spanking new.

F: CORA, EVELYN

Robert has testified that Skelly tried to hurt Eva and that's why Nelly shot him.

[Cora and Evelyn are at the murder trial.]

In response, Eva went hysterical. Cora doesn't think Skelly would do such a thing. Cora's "beer parlour" is the roadside café she runs.]

EVELYN: Oh, god, baby, my baby. See her crippled body. She her broken back; why, why has God crushed me with this burden. I don't complain. I ask why? We love Him. We bless Him. Praise Him. And this monster! I mean Skelly! My daughter is weak; you're trying to kill her. Look at her! Is that what you want? I only ask why? I have a right to know; I'll repent if I've done anything; if I've sinned.

CORA: Eva said to me--Eva you know what you said. Skelly worked for me sometimes; none of you knew him. He was honest.

EVELYN: My daughter has never spoken to you; my daughter has never spoken to a person like you; my daughter has been scarred, permanently scarred by this. She's crippled already. She's weak. She can't stand up.

CORA: If you'd listen to me.

EVELYN: No, no. I won't listen to you; I won't trust the word of a woman like you.

CORA: And what are you?

EVELYN: My daughter is ^a Christian, from a Christian home; a daughter of God and you'd put your word against the word of a virgin. A beer swilling harlot. Everyone knows.

CORA: I talked to her because I knew Skelly would never. Never harm anyone.

EVELYN: Harlot!

In the name of God. I won't let you call my daughter a liar. You're the liar. Before God I call you that.

G: WILMA, MARTHA

WILMA: Well, what I heard isn't fit for talk, but I heard that Mrs. Cora Groves, up on the highway?

MARTHA: Yes.

WILMA: Has taken a boy, she's old enough to be his mother on, and is keeping him up there in her café.

[REDACTED] That woman went crazy when her husband left her.

MARTHA: Oh, I know she did.

WILMA: That woman, I swear, she isn't responsible for her own actions.

MARTHA: I should say she isn't.

WILMA: I hear he does things around the café, whistling around like he belonged there.

MARTHA: Have you ever heard anything like it?

WILMA: I haven't, I swear [REDACTED]. I'll say one thing for her: whatever it is she looks a darn sight better now than she did a year ago. Since I can remember.

MARTHA: That woman isn't responsible for her own actions since her husband left her.

WILMA: It's not for us to judge.

MARTHA: That's all well and good but anyone who deliberately cuts herself off from everybody else in town.

WILMA: I don't judge, but I know who I speak to on the street and who I don't.

H: SKELLY, ROBERT

[Skelly is the town derelict. "Driver" is Robert's older brother, who was a race car driver and local hero, and died a few years ago in a racing accident; everyone in town calls Robert "Driver Junior."]

SKELLY: You! Hey, Robert! Bobby! Hey!

ROBERT: Hay is for sheep.

SKELLY: Yeah, uh, you, uh--Driver is dead.

ROBERT: Well, I guess I know that.

SKELLY: You going around like--

ROBERT: What? What do you want?

SKELLY: He was a [redacted] jerk.

ROBERT: Don't talk like that to me.

SKELLY: You don't talk bad.

ROBERT: I don't, no, because I don't see any need to talk--

SKELLY: Driver was a [redacted] ^{jerk} Walking like some kind of stud horse. He wasn't human.

ROBERT: Who are you to tell if someone is human or--

SKELLY: You don't know. I'll tell you what your [redacted] ^{jerk brother} was like.

ROBERT: You don't know anything.

SKELLY: You hear me talking to people? He was a snot nose kid twelve when you was born. I saw him. And him driving through town like a big shot. With his racing car all green and yellow and rared back there. Lined up after him in cars, trailing after him and honking like a string of geese coming into town. And him telling everybody about it up at the café. I heard the stories and the shouting and the glory.

ROBERT: I don't know what you're talking about.

SKELLY: I saw him with Betty Atkins-- [redacted] and her crying and crying and how he hit her--you didn't know what! And she cried 'cause he got so mad. He like to killed her.

I: SKELLY

[Skelly starts out by talking to his dog, but goes on to talk to himself.]

SKELLY: Hound? Hey, hound. What are you shaking about, huh? I got a roast bone from Cora's for you. Here. There you go. Go to it.

Those guns scare you do they? Those hunters? Eh? You should have seen it with the mines running. With the mines working and the dynamite and what-you-call-it booming around everywhere underground fifty times a day or more. Boom! That'd make you shake. (laughs) Every hound in town kept out of sight from seven in the morning 'till seven at night. Under every bed in town.

Eat it. That's roast bone. You.

(laughs) Oh, yes. They was fancy people; butter wouldn't melt. Old man Reiley bought the Eldritch place up on the hill, wouldn't no other place do for him and carried on with their miners drinking parties and societies if you please. And Glenna Ann sashaying around serving tidbits on a platter; oh, well to do. Blast all day in the mines all day and blast all night at home.

Old Man Reiley called me every name in the book. Fit to be tied. She was a pretty one, too; only eighteen, the both of us; her old man called me every name in the book. Chased me off the place with a crowbar. And we [redacted] sneaks back the very same night [redacted] out in the wood shed there. Everything smelling of hickory and cedar for their fancy fireplaces. Oh, yeah. [redacted] Saying to me, "Oh, I love you. Oh, I love you, oh, really I do, Skelly. [redacted] Sashay around town. Never let on she even knew me. Oh, Glenna Ann. Pretty girl. Oh, yeah. No girl in town so pretty. Then or now. None in between.

J: PREACHER/JUDGE

[The Preacher and Judge are played by the same actor; during this speech, the speaker turns from the Judge summing up at the trial of Nelly for murdering Skelly, into the Preacher addressing the congregation on the same subject. The "two innocents" are Robert and Eva, who were supposedly attacked by Skelly.]

JUDGE: We all have long know Skelly Mannor; we have known of his past--that latent evil in him; _____ and we have long been aware that at any time the bitterness in his soul might again overflow. We let things lie. We took no action to prevent his crime, the pending, at any moment crime; and the burden must be ours. We are all responsible for the shock to these two innocents. We are responsible for our actions, for allowing the heathen into our fold.

(The Judge's oratory slides into the Preacher.)

PREACHER: God, forgive us. In your wisdom, forgive us. And help these two souls, these two innocent souls forget that dark moment. Blind them to that dark moment and set them free, Lord. Dear Lord. Our Savior!