

ACT ONE SCENE 5

Place: A coffee shop \

Time: The next morning

The coffee shop can be represented by a bistro table and two chairs down right in a pool of light. Fred and Marty are sitting at the table with paper coffee cups.

FRED: One word Marty, one word! Last night all you had to say was “no” and everything would have been fine.

MARTY: But I’d already said I wanted you to go with me.

FRED: You could’ve changed your mind! You could have realized that I’m the kind of guy who would definitely saw body parts off and decide you didn’t want that on your conscience.

MARTY: I’m the one who’s likely to saw body parts off, you’re the one who’s likely to pass out from wood fumes.

FRED: Same thing.

MARTY: Not really.

FRED: Is there aspartame in this coffee? I think my face is going numb.

MARTY: Just sugar, I put it in myself.

FRED: That was close. But why drag me into it?

MARTY: You’re your own man, you don’t have to do it if you don’t want to.

FRED: I don’t want to.

MARTY: Then don’t do it.

FRED: I have to.

MARTY: I think you’re right.

FRED: If Gladys starts a Honey Do list, there’ll be no end to it! Gutters cleaned, windows washed, stuff painted. I thought that’s what we had a guy for.

MARTY: You do have a guy for it, as long as you take the course with me.

FRED: The stress is building already. My arteries are tightening up, I can feel it.

MARTY: How would your arteries feel at the top of a twelve foot ladder cleaning out the eavestroughs?

FRED: She's got me between a rock and a hard place, what do I do?

MARTY: Give up. There's one of you and one of her... you're outnumbered.

FRED: I'll be doing it under duress and that can't be good for my immune system.

MARTY: Your immune system won't even notice, it's too busy with everything else. I have to be honest though, it wasn't my first choice either.

FRED: What!?

MARTY: I don't mind the idea, but it's really just to distract Deb from what I really want.

FRED: And what's that?

MARTY: A motorcycle!

FRED: You're going to buy a motorcycle?

MARTY: Eventually.

FRED: And Deb's going to let you?

MARTY: The deal is, I take the woodworking course before I buy it. She thinks it'll distract me and I won't want one anymore, but really I'm just biding my time.

FRED: You can get away with that?

MARTY: I'm working the long game.

FRED: You're a genius! But a motorcycle? Maybe you should start with a scooter.

MARTY: Get real.

FRED: Ok... a motorcycle. Wow. Can I drive it too?

MARTY: No, but after I get my license, I'll give you the odd ride.

FRED: So I'd have to squeeze up behind you and put my arms around you?

MARTY: Maybe you'd better buy one of your own.

FRED: Gladys would kill me if I even thought about buying a motorcycle. In fact she probably knows I'm thinking about one now. She can sense things like that, it's scary. So when are you getting it?

MARTY: It's just a matter of time my friend, I even have one picked out.

FRED: A motorcycle... that is so wild!

Lights down on coffee shop, lights up on Gladys and Deb in the living room. They are having a glass of wine. The switch should be very quick so Gladys's line comes right on the heels of Fred's last line.

GLADYS: A motorcycle? That is so stupid!

DEB: You're telling me!

GLADYS: At his age, is he insane?

DEB: That's what I said too... except for the "at his age" part, he can be kinda sensitive about that.

GLADYS: Well, I hope you knocked that idea out of his head.

DEB: I was going to but he was wearing a helmet. What I *am* doing is subtly guiding him in a different direction. He's going to delay buying it until he finishes the woodworking course.

GLADYS: Just delay? What happens when he actually buys it?

DEB: He *thinks* he wants a motorcycle but what he really wants is something he can get involved with again and a motorcycle is the first thing that popped into his man-brain. He'll forget all about it. Woodworking will eventually fill the void left when he retired.

GLADYS: You're sure this will work?

DEB: I'm working the long game.

GLADYS: You're a genius! So, wanting a motorcycle was just a symptom of what ailed him. Wish I could figure out what ails Fred.

FRED: It's everybody else in here sanding too, it all adds up. I wish I had a dust mask, my sinuses are closing up. I should have brought my Neti Pot.

MARTY: Don't you dare bring that thing, you start with the "nasal irrigation" and you'll get us both kicked out.

FRED: It's a scientific fact that the sinuses collect of all sorts of...

MARTY: Don't start! Just pass me that thing that's you know, slopey on one side and flat on the other.

FRED: You mean the chisel.

MARTY: Right.

Fred hands Marty a chisel

FRED: How could you possibly not know that's called a chisel?

Marty stands with the chisel in his hand, staring at the piece of wood in the WorkMate. Fred stares at Marty.

Do you need instructions?

MARTY: No.

FRED: I thought you wanted to chisel something.

MARTY: So did I, but I doubt if it's going to help. This is about as close to a salad bowl as I'm going to get.

Marty takes his piece of wood out of the workmate and holds it up. It is roughly bowl shaped. Very roughly. The closest it comes to looking like a bowl is a slight indentation.

FRED: Well, as a salad bowl, it makes a good piece of firewood.

MARTY: Let's see yours.

Fred removes his salad bowl and holds it up. There is a large hole in the bottom.

FRED: I think I sanded it too much.

MARTY: Congratulations, you've made a wooden donut.

- FRED: You see, this is what happens when they tell us what we have to make. Our hearts weren't in it.
- MARTY: Do they have to be?
- FRED: If your heart isn't in something, you're bound to screw it up. We need to come up with our own project.
- MARTY: Fine, you think of something. In the meantime, *(holding up his bowl)* What am I supposed to do with this?
- FRED: Never mind that, feel my pulse. It feels like my heart is beating in Morse code.
- MARTY: Let me know when it sends you an email.
- FRED: Bu it could be a symptom.
- MARTY: Of what?
- FRED: I don't know, it could be anything... varnish poisoning.
- MARTY: Why don't you just pass out and get it over with.
- FRED: *(holding up his bowl)* Is this an exotic wood?
- Fred starts to sniffle and scratch*
- MARTY: I don't know, it came from that rack over there. *(looks at his bowl)* How am I supposed to tell Deb I made this thing.
- FRED: I don't feel right. Is it Australian Cypress?
- MARTY: What?
- FRED: I Googled it. If this is Australian Cyprus I could be having some very nasty reactions. Look at my eyelids. Do they look swollen to you?
- MARTY: You're fine Fred, besides I don't care what kind of wood this is.
- FRED: Well I do, because my antihistamine is wearing off and I need to know what to expect.
- MARTY: I don't know... poplar, maybe it's poplar.
- FRED: In that case, blisters, coughing and asthma.

MARTY: Oh come on, that's just the first word I thought of... wait a minute, you *memorized* all those?

FRED: *(he coughs)* My chest feels tight...

MARTY: You were fine a minute ago.

FRED: That was a minute ago, right now I need to lie down.

Fred lies down on his back.

MARTY: Will you get up, everyone is looking! *(to the unseen classmates)* It's ok.. he's ok. Fred, come on, get up.

FRED: My circulation isn't right. If I get up, I'll fall right back down again and probably concuss myself, go into convulsions and swallow my tongue.

MARTY: At least that would shut you up.

FRED: Is that what you want?

MARTY: I want you to stop making a spectacle of yourself, that's what I want.

Fred comes to a sitting position

FRED: I'm having a potential medical emergency here and all you're worried about is "a spectacle"! I could be lying here on the floor dead, how would you feel then?

MARTY: Suspicious.

FRED: You want my exotic wood allergy to choke the life out of me? You want me to die right here? Fine! How's this!

Fred crosses his arms over his chest and lies back on the floor.

(louder, to the whole class) Don't anyone bother calling for help, if my best friend doesn't care, why should you?

MARTY: *(to the unseen classmates)* He's fine, he's fine, don't worry, nothing to see here. Get up... Come on Fred, will you please get up!

FRED: Wait a minute.

MARTY: No!