

## LOST IN YONKERS by Neil Simon

JAY:

I hate coming to Grandma's, don't you? I'd hate coming here if it weren't cool. Pop doesn't even like to come here and it's his own mother...I was afraid of her when I was a kid. She'd come out of that door with a limp and a cane and look like she was going to kill you. When I was five, I drew a picture of her and called it "Frankenstein's Grandma." If she ever saw it you'd be an only child today. Pop said she could swing her cane so fast, she could have been one of the greatest golfers in the world. I hated kissing her. It felt like putting your lips on a wrinkled ice cube. She was the only one at Mom's funeral who didn't cry...

Did you ever notice there's something wrong with everyone on Pop's side of the family? Like Aunt Bella...She's a little... (points to head)...you know...closed for repairs. I didn't say she wasn't nice. But she's got marbles rolling around up there...Mom said she got that way because when she was a kid, Grandma kept hitting her in the head every time she did something stupid...which only made her stupider. She's thirty-five years old, and she can make ice cream soda. They don't give you a high school diploma for getting the cherry on top of the whipped cream. Aunt Bella couldn't count so good, so instead of two scoops of ice cream in a soda, she'd put in three or four. For the same price. And if Grandma saw it, whacko! Another couple of I.Q. points gone.

(He picks up a photo from behind the sofa) Here look at this. Aunt Gert when she was a kid! See how her head is down? Probably ducking. The old cane was coming for her... You don't think Aunt Gert's a little coconuts too? She can't talk right. She says the first half of her sentence breathing out and the second half sucking in. "Oh, hello, Jay, how are you? And how's your father? And—(Then talks as he sucks in breath)—how is your little brother, Arty?" I saw her once try and blow out a candle and halfway there she sucked it back on. Mom says she talks that way because she was so afraid of Grandma. She never allowed her kids to cry.

## DARK OF THE MOON

JOHN (witch boy):

I want to be human. Would you do it, Conjur Woman? I wanna go a-courtin' a gal named Barbara. Barbara Allen. Blue-eyed Barbara Allen with the copper hair. I love her, Conjur Woman. The first time I seed her she were climbing up the mounting-up Hangin Dawg Mounting—and the sun were in her hair. I were on my eagle, and I sailed low fer to see her. She look up kinda skeered like, but then she smiled and waved. I knowed I hadn't oughter, that witchin' is fer night time, but she the purtiest gal I reckon that thar is. I 'low I should know. I kissed her. Not a ward we said atween us, but hit warn't no time fer talkin'. The sun were in her hair. Her hair was golden and shinin' as hit twisted through my fingers, but hit were black against the starlight afore I let her go. You gotta make me human. I'll do anything you ast me.

## RED CROSS by Sam Sheppard

JIM:

Your body stays warm inside. It's just the outside that gets wet. Swimming in the rain's really neat. I mean you can dive under the water and hold your breath. You stay under for about five minutes. You stay down there and there's nothing but the water all around you. Nothing but marine life. You stay down there as long as you can until your lungs start to ache. They feel like they're going to burst open. Then just at the point where you can't stand it anymore, you force yourself to the top. You explode out of the water gasping for air, and all this rain hits you in the face. You ought to try it.

## THE WONDERFUL TOWER OF HUMBERT LA VOIGNET but Lynne Alvarez

MIKE:

You know, this really isn't a great time in my life, I don't know why...I grew two inches this month—that should make me feel good—guess I'm about as tall as you now—probably won't grow much more...School's out—that's okay—not a lot of kids around though, but runners in my bracket don't have time to hang out anyways. I'm up to ten miles a day—they say that's amount as much as you should train... (pause). But I don't know, maybe I could push it. I never trust those experts anyways—one year they tell you ten miles' the limit, the next year they're swearing twelve is better, or two. I hear it all the time on the radio the final ultimate word "Take this drug and save your life." Six months later they're back with emergency bulletins tell you "This drug is a hazard to your health." I don't know what to think, Dad...things are getting to me...even running. I like to be out there all alone, but then sometimes it gets lonely. I miss people, you know? Dad?

## THE HOUSE OF BLUE LEAVES

RONNIE:

I was twelve years old and all the newspapers had headlines on my twelfth birthday that Billy was coming to town. And *Life* was doing stories on him and *Look* and the newsreels because Billy was searching America to find the Ideal American Boy to play Huckleberry Finn. And Billy came to New York and called my father and asked him if he could stay here—Billy needed a hideout. All America wants to meet Billy and he'll be hiding out in your house. I came home—went in there—into my room and packed my bag... I know Billy would see me and take me back to California with him that very day.

The doorbell rang. And then my father calls out, "Ronnie, guess who? Billy, we named him after your father. Ronnie, guess who?"

I pick up my bag and said Goodbye to myself in the mirror. Came out, Billy there. Smiling.

It suddenly dawned on me. You had to do things to get parts. I began dancing. Immediately. Things I have never done in my life—before or since. I stood on my head and skipped and whirled—(he does a cartwheel) spectacular leaps into the air so I could see veins in the ceiling and began laughing and crying soft and loud to show all my emotions. And I heard music and drums that I couldn't keep up with. And then cut off my emotions just like that. Instantly. And took a deep bow like the Dying Swan I saw on Ed Sullivan. I picked up my suitcase and waited by the door.

Billy turned to my parents, whose jaws were down to about there, and Billy said, "You never told me I had an idiot godchild." And I picked up my bag and went into my room and shut the door and never came out the whole time he was here.

My only triumph was he could never find a Huckleberry Finn. Another company made the picture a few years later, but it flopped.

## BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS

EUGENE:

One out, a man on second, bottom of the seventh, two balls, no strikes...Ruffing checks the runner on second, gets the sign from Dickey, Ruffing stretches, Ruffing pitches. (He throws the ball.) ...Caught the inside corner, steerike one! Atta baby! No hitter up there. (He retrieves the ball.) One out, man on second, bottom of the seventh, two balls one strike...Ruffing checks the runner on second, gets the sign from Dickey, Ruffing stretches, Ruffing pitches—(he throws the ball.) Low and outside, ball three. Come on Red! Make him a hitter! No batter up there. In there all the time, Red... (Exasperated.) In a minute, Ma! This is for the World Series! (Back to his game.) One out, man on second, bottom of the seventh, three balls, one strike...Ruffing stretches, Ruffing pitches—(He throws the ball.) Oh, no! High and outside. Jojo Moore walks! First and second and Me! Ott lopes up to the plate...It's the last batter, Mom! Mel Ott is up. It's a critical moment in World Series history...One pitch, Mom? I think I can get him to pop up. I have my stuff today. Alright. Alright! (Slams ball into glove angrily. Then he cups his hand, making a megaphone out of it and announces to the grandstands© ..."Attention, ladies and gentlemen! Today's game will be delayed because of my Aunt Blanche's headache..." I'm coming... (mocking mom) "And wash your hands!" They're clean. I'm wearing a glove.

## YOU'RE A GOOD MAN CHARLIE BROWN

CHARLIE BROWN:

I think lunchtime is about the worst time of the day for me. Always having to sit here alone. Of course, sometimes mornings aren't so pleasing either...waking up and wondering if anyone would really miss me if I never got out of bed. Then there's the night too—lying there and thinking about all the stupid things I've done during the day. And all those hours in between—when I do all those stupid things...Well, lunchtime is among the worst times for me. Well, I guess I'd better see what I got. (He opens the bag, unwraps a sandwich, and looks inside.) Peanut butter. (He bites and chews.) Some psychiatrists say that people who eat peanut butter sandwiches are lonely. I guess they're right. And if you're really right the peanut butter sticks to the roof of your mouth. (He munches quietly, idly fingering the bench.) Boy, the PTA did a good job of painting these benches. (He looks off to one side.) There's that cute little redhead girl eating her lunch over there. I wonder what she'd do if I went over and asked her if I could sit and have lunch with her. She'd probably laugh right in my face. It's hard on a face when it get laughed in. There's an empty place next to her on the bench. There's no reason why I couldn't just go over there and sit down. I'm a coward. I'm so much a coward she wouldn't even think of looking at me. She hardly ever does look at me. In fact, I can't remember her ever looking at me. Why, should she look at me? Is there any reason in the world why she shouldn't look at me? Is she so great and I'm so small that she couldn't spare one little moment just to... (He freezes.) She's looking at me. (In terror he looks one way, then another.) She's looking at me. (His head looks all around frantically trying to find something to notice.)