

FAMILY JEWELS  
a play in one scene (2001)  
by Mark Noonan

Man...70  
Woman...65  
Cathy...7  
Jason...7

An August day. A concrete patio divided into four squares. In the up-left square sits a chaise lounge with a little glass table next to it. On the table a hand mirror, a magnifying glass, a glass of ice tea, and suntan lotion. Down-right square a circular glass table with umbrella through the middle and three yellow rod iron chairs with seat cushions. Up right (along the side perimeter) a glass cart with a bowl of tomatoes and two glass pitchers, one with ice water, one with ice tea, top; on the bottom rack, soft drinks, pill bottles, glasses, a spray bottle. Down-left square a half-finished chalk rainbow with colored chalks in a pile.

Lights up: A Woman lying on the chaise lounge (back halfway down); she lays back sunning with sunglasses on and a one-piece bathing suit. She has long legs, looks like a flamingo. Seated at a chair at the table, a Man. He is in the shade wearing prescription sunglasses, slacks, and a golf shirt. A wooden cane is hooked to his chair. On the table in front of him, an ashtray, glass of ice-water, and a little pouch with his glasses. He smokes a cigar and sits like a giant panda bear; his skin is coarse, nose big. He faces out, back to her. They both look scrubbed clean.

As the lights come up he puffs a cigar looking to the ground in front of him and off right. She smiles. After a few moments she lifts her head up, smiles slightly.

WOMAN

Tell me again...

MAN

*(between puff)*

You're beautiful.

WOMAN

Hooooow beautiful?

MAN

The most beautiful girl in the whole world...

She smiles. She frowns.

WOMAN

Just the world?

MAN

The most beautiful girl in the whole universe...

She smiles, lays her head back.

Silence. He looks down in front of him and off to the right. He sighs.

MAN

They're not as big. This year. Each year they get smaller. Pretty soon we'll have to call 'em grapes.

WOMAN

You're crazy. They're not *that* small.

MAN

*(looking off right)*

Jim's are bigger. Bigger and firmer. Juicier...He probably has to cut 'em with a chainsaw...

WOMAN

*(laughs)*

They're not that big. Plus yours taste better; everybody knows that.

MAN

*(grunt)*

He coughs and hacks up phlegm; he turns his head and spits, over the table way off right. Then goes back to his cigar, stares ahead, down, thinking.

At the same time, she takes a hand mirror from the table next to her, takes off her sunglasses and examines her face: the lines, wrinkles, hair, tan. She takes a magnifying glass from off the table and does an in-depth check using both it and the mirror. This takes a few moments. She gets scared quickly, puts the glass and mirror in her lap, stares ahead. Her gaze moves down to her legs. She looks at them, first without any aid, then with the mirror and magnifying glass to check the hard-to-see spots. A few moments pass. She gets scared, stares straight ahead; she lays back, closes her eyes. She opens them, sits up, looks in the mirror, then looks off to him.

WOMAN

Tell me again...

MAN

You're beautiful.

WOMAN

How beautiful?

MAN

The most beautiful girl in the whole world...

WOMAN

Just the world?

MAN

The most beautiful girl in the whole universe...

She slowly calms down, puts the mirror and magnifying glass back and takes a drink of ice tea. She latches the back of the chaise lounge up a few notches and drinks some ice tea.  
Silence.

WOMAN

The Carey's *really* liked yours. Much more than Jim's.

MAN

(*grunted*)

Hmmm...

WOMAN

Well when I was over there yesterday, Maureen had a bowl on the counter and yours were *on top*!

MAN

It's probly just 'cause they're smaller.

WOMAN

No, I don't think so; I think she liked yours better (*Slight Pause*) In fact!—this completely slipped my mind—Phil was eating a BLT while he watched the game, and he had *yours* on them.

MAN

How could you tell?

WOMAN

Welllll, he said it was the best BLT he's ever had.

MAN

Hmmm...But it could've been Jim's...

WOMAN

It could've. (*Slight Pause*) But no! Why would he say it to me? I mean, when I was there? He wouldn't of said it if they weren't yours. (*Slight Pause*) It was a compliment...to the chef (*Laugh*).

MAN

It's like I been saying alllll along: it doesn't matter how big you grow 'em, it's *the taste* that counts.

WOMAN

Mmm. Hmmm.

He coughs again for a little while, then tries to get up but gives up without even lifting his butt off the chair.

She checks her watch, stands, goes over to the cart, takes a pill out of seven different bottles (all done very routinely), pours a glass of water (making sure no ice goes in the glass). She walks over next to him on the right side, puts the new glass of water on the table in front of him, moves the other glass off to the side. Once his coughing stops, he puts the cigar in the ashtray, takes off his sunglasses, and puts on his normal glasses (thick lenses). He takes the glass and she hands him a pill, one by one. He takes all seven, one by one. By the end of it he is tired and sighs. He looks ahead down and off right. She takes the empty glass and the full one back to the cart. She

refills the empty glass, this time with ice-water and puts it back on the table for him. He leaves the burning cigar in the ashtray and keeps looking ahead and off right; she tidies up at the cart. A few moments pass.

MAN

They need the can...

WOMAN

Okay...

She takes a plastic spray can off the cart and, starting on the right side, sprays off right slowly; he watches intently, giving a few directions:

A little more there...

Get that one good...

Yes, that's good...

Don't be shy with it...

Yes, that's good...

This continues while she makes her way around the perimeter of the downstage right square. She ends up just left of him. (Her spraying should be, as one can tell, like she's spraying a couple rows of tomato plants.) Her height helps, but sometimes she has to stretch out and hang over to get some of the harder-to-reach ones.

As she's finishing, Cathy, a little girl with short blond hair and blue eyes, races in from off left and hides behind her chair. The Woman notices; the Man does not.

WOMAN

Ca-thee, what are you doing back there?

She giggles.

CATHY

Shhhhhhh...

She ducks down. Jason, a little boy with brown bowl cut and a bit pudgy, runs on from off left. He stops at the patio's downstage corner.

WOMAN

Oh, hi Jason...

Jason pays no attention, gives the patio a quick glance over and then, giggling to himself, runs in a big semi-circle (as to avoid the tomatoes) around and exits upstage right, like he is going around the house.

MAN

What's that kid on?

WOMAN

Honey...

MAN

Krissy must have him on something...weird kid...

WOMAN

Cathy, what are you doing back there. Why are you hiding from Jason?

She comes out from behind.

CATHY

'Cause he's a big butt-face—

WOMAN

Cathy!

CATHY

*(grabbing her chest)*

He tried to grab my *boobies*—

WOMAN

CATHY!!

MAN

That's what I'm talking about.

WOMAN

Cathy! No more of that.

She giggles. The Woman ends up at the cart putting away the spray can.

WOMAN

Aren't you ever gonna finish your rainbow?

CATHY

Mmmm, yeeeeaaaaahhhhhh...

WOMAN

Why don't you work on it? It was looking so pretty—and it might rain tonight and then you'll have to start *all over*...

CATHY

Okay...

She plops down and quickly starts work on her unfinished rainbow.

MAN

That Jason's a weird kid.

The Woman gives him a stern look from behind but he is back to his cigar. She goes and sits on the edge of her chair and puts on suntan lotion, starting with her legs.

Jason runs on from left. He stops, sees Cathy and the Woman.

WOMAN

Hi Jason...

He giggles and runs off from the direction he came.

MAN

Weird kid...

WOMAN

Honey!

CATHY

Jason's a big butt-head.

WOMAN

Cathy! Where'd you learn to talk like that?

CATHY

I dunno...

WOMAN

I'm sure your Mother wouldn't like to hear what you call Jason—

CATHY

*(she rises)*

But he started it! I wasn't even talking to him and he just came up—

WOMAN

Cathy...

Cathy goes and wraps her arms around the Woman's neck.

CATHY

Oh, please please please don't tell. I won't do it again. You're my friend.

WOMAN

*(laughing)*

Cathy...

CATHY

Please please please please please...

WOMAN

All right Cathy. Now get down. Go work on your rainbow...

She hops down and immediately goes back to work. The Woman keeps putting on lotion.

WOMAN

Was that enough water?

MAN

Looks fine.

Once she finishes the lotion:

WOMAN

Cathy, do you want something to drink?

CATHY

No thank you. (*Slight Pause*) What'uh you have?

Cathy stands, edging stage center.

WOMAN

There's water or sodas or ...Hawaiian punch...or kool aid...or ice tea...

CATHY

Ice tea please.

WOMAN

You want ice tea?

CATHY

With a lemon...please...

WOMAN

Anything else?

CATHY

No, that's all...please...

WOMAN

Would you like ice?

CATHY

Yes, please...

She pours a glass with lemon, gives it to Cathy who takes it with both hands.

CATHY

Thank you.

She takes a big gulp.

WOMAN

You're welcome...

MAN

Cathy, come here...

She moves downstage to the left of the Man.

MAN  
You wanna get rid of Jason?

CATHY  
Mmm. Hmmm...

The Woman, standing, looks at herself in mirror.

MAN  
The next time he's bothering you, let him get real close and then BAM!—kick him right in the family jewels.

CATHY  
*(she swallows quick; her face lights up, surprised)*  
*The Family Jewels?!*

She stares at him in awe; He nods.

WOMAN  
Honey!

Cathy practices kicks while holding the ice tea.

MAN  
That's it. Just like that.

WOMAN  
*HONEY!!*—Cathy, stop that...Cathy...Cathy...why don't you work on your rainbow...

On a kick, she spins and plops down in front of her rainbow, back to the audience.

The Man laughs to himself.

The Woman is downstage and gives him a stern look; their eyes meet, he laughs a little more.

WOMAN  
That looks good Cathy...

Cathy is absorbed.

The Woman sits back on her chair, looking at herself in the mirror. Slowly, Cathy's eyes make their way up to the Man's; they meet—she mouths “The Family Jewels”—He nods. Then Cathy feels the Woman's eyes on her, she makes eye contact with the Woman and gets back to work. The Woman looks at the Man, he feels her gaze over his shoulder but just looks ahead with a closed-mouth smile.

The Woman sits and looks at herself; Cathy works on the rainbow, it's almost done...



Jason appears upstage right. He walks about ten feet outside the patio perimeter. When he hits the tomatoes, he ducks down on all fours and crawls around to the front. The Man is the first to hear him as he makes his way through the grass.

MAN

Looks like we got a groundhog...

Jason giggles. He crouches at the corner where the tomatoes end...

WOMAN

Jason...

Cathy stands and turns around as Jason, giggling, jumps out.

WOMAN

Cathy...

Cathy runs off back-left; Jason pursues.

WOMAN

Cathy...Jason...

MAN

She'll be okay.

WOMAN

*(sarcastic, stern)*

If she can find the family jewels...

The Man smiles, watches his tomatoes.

She sits, looks at herself in the mirror again with the magnifying glass. She becomes scared.

WOMAN

Tell me again...

MAN

You're beautiful...

WOMAN

How beautiful?

MAN

The most beautiful girl in the whole world...

WOMAN

Just the world?

MAN

The most beautiful girl in the whole universe...

She smiles, puts away the mirror, lays back, sighs.

Silence. A few moments pass.

MAN

I think they need the can again...

WOMAN

Okay...

She gets up, takes the can from the cart and starts spraying. As before, he directs:

A little more there...

Yes, that's good...

Get some on that one...

Yes, that's good...

Slow fade to black.