

OLDER RALPH (pick two monologues)

Oler Ralph: Every neighborhood had them. The lines were clearly drawn- like a kid caste system- you were either a Bully, a Toady, or one of the nameless rabble of Victims. The bully of legend in Hohman, Indiana, was Scut Farkas. Scut Farkas. What a rotten name! What kind of parents would name their kid "Scut"? Still, I have to admit, the name fit him. He was a wiry, malevolent, sneevily, snively bully. His lips curled cruelly over green teeth, and he had yellow eyes. So help me, god, yellow eyes! Every kid I knew was afraid of Scut Farkas. If he acted friendly toward you- so much as said "Hi" to you, you dared to feel safe and warm inside. But mostly, he just hit you in the mouth.

Older Ralph: (softly, but still buoyant). Back in those days, you never asked yourself, "Do my parents love me?" It never crossed your mind. You were there. They took care of you. Their job was to raise you. Your job was to let them. When they said, "Don't run with scissors," or "Button your coat," or ... "You'll shoot your eye out," maybe even they didn't know it but that's what it was ... love ... (A beat.) That night, next to me in the darkness lay my cold, blue, steel beauty-the greatest gift I had ever received. Are you kiddin'? (Attempting to control his emotions.) My old man, my dad, gave it to me. That's why it was the greatest gift I would ever receive. (After a moment, he returns to his usual narrative demeanor.) As the excitement of the day gradually subsided, I finally drifted off to sleep, prancing ducks on the wing and getting off spectacular hip shots.

Older Ralph: Tis the holiday season and Christmas fever is upon us. Windows are garlanded in red and green, yards are alight with plastic reindeer and milling crowds of shoppers fill the streets, stores and malls. I put up my tree last week. Had to assemble it first. Then I threw an artificial yule log on the propane-augmented fire and began to reminisce about Christmases past. The holidays tend to do that. I found myself remembering another Christmas in another time... another place. And there it is. The house on Cleveland Street in Hohman, Indiana, where i spent the festering years of my childhood. This time every year, the wind would come and scream over frozen Lake Michigan, laying down great drifts of snow. The air would crack and sing and power lines would creak under caked ice. Christmas was on its way. Lovely, beautiful, glorious Christmas, around which the entire kid year revolved.

MISS SHIELDS

Miss Shields: Margins! Margins! Margins! Why don't they listen? Why don't they learn? Semicolon, you dolt, not period! Oh, I can't take this anymore. But I must! It is my duty! One more! Just one more! (Takes a theme from the top of a pile and reads:) "Ralph Parker" (Rolls her eyes.) Ha! (Reads silently.) Why... why ... this is... is good. This is...it's wonderful (She clutches it to her bosom as the music swells.) The theme I've been waiting for all my life! It validates my existence! The prose... it.. it sings! "...legendary official Red Ryder 200-Shot Carbine Action Range Model Air Rifle with a compass and this thing which tells time built right into the stock!" Why, this isn't prose! It's poetry! Sheer poetry! I am transported! It out Shakespeares Shakespeare! (She stands and sweeps the stacks of themes from her desk.) These are not worthy to be in such close proximity to this... this ... masterpiece! Let the word go out, past is prologue! The history of theme writing begins here! (She turns and writes on the board, "Ralph Parker A+++++++"- adding plusses until she runs out of blackboard.

THE OLD MAN AND MOTHER (Read monologue and scene)

THE OLD MAN: The turkey! The Bumpus hounds got the turkey! (He carries the roaster out to the yard.) Here, you hounds of hell! Take the pan, too! (He flings the roasting pan over the fence. Now he has momentum go-ing, and races back into the kitchen, grabbing a pan and a covered basket and racing back to the yard.) Why don't you take the sweet potatoes, too?! (He flings the pan over the fence.) And the rolls! (He throws the cover off the basket and begins lobbing dinner rolls, one by one glowing in the darkness. A dim light comes on up the stairs and mother comes down to the landing, then crosses to the door and checks to make sure it is locked. She crosses to the tree.)

THE OLD MAN: (quietly). What are you doing?

MOTHER: Oh, I didn't know you were there. I was going to turn off the tree lights... get ready for bed.

THE OLD MAN: (holds out his arm). Come over here. (She moves to him.) Look. (He points out the window at the falling snow. She sits on the arm of his chair.)

MOTHER: Oh! It's beautiful.

THE OLD MAN: (after a moment). You know ... that lamp...

MOTHER: I'm sorry I broke it.

THE OLD MAN: Well...it was... it was really pretty jazzy.

A little too much for this room.

MOTHER: I thought it was... pretty.

THE OLD MAN: Nah. Too pink. We should get some kind of... 1 dunno.. brass lamp in here.

MOTHER: Maybe you're right. (She snuggles closer.)

You're always right.

THE OLD MAN: You have a good Christmas?

MOTHER: Mm-hm. You?

THE OLD MAN: Mm-hm. (Pause.) 'Specially the duck.

MOTHER: Oh, you! (They laugh together as the music segues to a celesta playing "We Wish You a Merry Christmas)

The Old Man: Omigosh! Do you know what this is? Would you believe it? It's a lamp! Isn't it great? What a great lamp! Hold it. I know just the place for it ... right in the middle of our front room window. Let's see... the radio... the Christmas tree... This goes to (sparks. A puff of smoke rises; a floor lamp in the corner winks out, and the lights on the Christmas tree go off). I meant to do that. Nothin' to worry about. Got it under control. Just a minute...and...there! Oh! Look at that! Will you look at that! Isn't glorious? It's...It's indescribably beautiful! It reminds me of the Fourth of July! I've gotta see what it looks like from the street!

Mother: Ready to tell me where you heard that word? Oh. I see. (she puts the soap back into his mouth and crosses to the wall phone) Hello, Mrs.Schwartz? Yes, I'm fine. Mrs.Schwartz, do you know what word Ralph said this evening? He said,...(cups a hand around the mouthpiece and mumbles) Yes. That. And do you know where he heard it? No, he heard it from your son. (Mother hands up and crosses back to Raphie; she takes the soap from his mouth)All right. That's enough now. Rinse out. Now go on upstairs to bed. No lights and no comic books, you understand? If I see any lights on, I'll come up there.