

# C H E A T

by

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## Scene I:

*It's 1945. A small space off to the side of the work floor at an aircraft repair facility at Hill Field, Utah. It is lunch hour.*

*ROXY, a woman in her 20s, is looking for a place to sit. There's a place on the floor next to REVA, a woman in her 40s. Each has a lunchbox and a thermos.*

*It's been several weeks since they've spoken to each other. They are awkward and uncomfortable. ROXY is eager, perhaps overly eager, to make things go well.*

ROXY

Mind if I sit down here?

REVA

No. *(Pause.)* Go ahead. *(She moves a welder's helmet.)*

ROXY

No place else to sit.

REVA

I guess not.

ROXY

I wouldn't bother you otherwise.

REVA

No bother. *(ROXY sits. Both fidget. Finally REVA, indicating what she's eating.)* Macaroni and cheese.

ROXY

Velveeta ala mode.

REVA

Right.

ROXY

They know what that stuff's made out of now. Did you hear?

REVA

No.

ROXY

Pencil erasers. *(REVA chuckles, then begins to eat. ROXY watches her. Pause.)* There was a whole truckload of meat tipped over on the highway. Just this side of Clearfield. Did you hear about that?

REVA

Yeah, I heard.

ROXY

A truck tips over, dumps out everything. People come rushing out to look, and they are given as much meat as they can carry. Did you hear that?

REVA

I heard it, but I didn't believe it.

ROXY

Oh, I believed it.

REVA

People just make up things like that when they want them too much. I heard the same story; only the truck was full of wedding cakes.

ROXY

*(Pause. ROXY's discomfort rises.)* Wedding cakes, I don't believe there would be a truck loaded with wedding cakes.

REVA

See what I mean.

ROXY

Who could get enough sugar to make a truckload of wedding cakes?

REVA

They'd make them out of Velveeta.

ROXY

Of course. *(She smiles. Long pause.)* You look good.

REVA

Please. I'm getting old.

ROXY

You see age, and I see a million other things.

REVA

Wait till you're my age.

ROXY

I'd love to be your age.

REVA

And I'll be dead two years when you are.

ROXY

Please. Don't even talk like that.

REVA

It's true.

ROXY

You're the only person alive that looks good in those coveralls.

REVA

That's because they're made for telephone poles.

ROXY

You do look good, just the same.

REVA

I'm different now.

ROXY

A bit different.

REVA

A lot different.

ROXY

A lot has happened.

REVA

To all of us.

REVA

A lot has happened to you.

ROXY  
Not really.

REVA  
I wish you every happiness.

ROXY  
Please.

REVA  
“Things change....”

ROXY  
Right. “Things change, people don’t.”

REVA  
Yes. Well, anyway, happy wedded bliss.

ROXY  
(*ROXY nods. Pause.*) How’s Ellis?

REVA  
All right. Considering....

ROXY  
Not going back to work, I hear.

REVA  
Not soon.

ROXY  
Must be hard on him. Man worked as hard as he did all his life.

REVA  
Now he spends all his time worrying.

ROXY  
My dad’s the same way.

REVA  
Worry kills.

ROXY  
Sure as bullets, I know.

REVA

Especially the old guys.

ROXY

*(Short pause.)* I got a couple pairs of scissors need sharpening. He still do that sort of thing?

REVA

Not often. The distance between the back door and his work shed, what is that? Fifteen yards. Most days he doesn't feel up to it.

ROXY

He used to move fast, I remember that.

REVA

When he was young.

ROXY

He could catch any one of us kids, any damn day.

REVA

If he was sober.

ROXY

Remember him and Sonny used to race each other up the foothills east of town. His dad finished a good fifteen yards ahead of Sonny every damn time.

REVA

*(REVA sets down her fork and looks at her food. ROXY watches her. Pause.)* Things have changed.

ROXY

Yes.

REVA

*(Pause.)* My best to D-Dubb.

ROXY

Shhh. *(ROXY tries to think of something else to say. Finally she mentions the subject that's loaded.)* What do you hear from Sonny?

REVA

Very little.

ROXY

I heard he was somewhere in France.

REVA

I don't think so.

ROXY

France is safe. Since the liberation.

REVA

I doubt it.

ROXY

G.I.s drinking champagne all day. Right out of the bottles.

REVA

That's not exactly comforting.

ROXY

He still "a radioman for the signal corps"?

REVA

Of course.

ROXY

He was good at that. Anything electrical.

REVA

Yes.

ROXY

*(Short pause.)* Must be a corporal by now.

REVA

*(Exploding.)* He doesn't want you knowing about him! Not where he is! Not what he's doing! Nothing about him.

ROXY

I still care. Nothing changes that.

REVA

A person either cares or they don't!

ROXY

I guarantee you, not a day goes by I don't think about him, you, Ellis...all of you.

REVA

*(Pause. REVA gets control of herself.)* We don't know where he is.

ROXY

We don't know where any of them are.

REVA

He can't write very regular.

ROXY

No. *(Short pause.)* My brother says they're more careful now. No one wants to get theirself killed on the last day of the war. So they're much more careful.

REVA

He could lose the will to live.

ROXY

Not Sonny.

REVA

He knows too much.

ROXY

He knows nothing.

REVA

Enough.

ROXY

I'd do anything to keep you from worry.

REVA

It's not worry.

ROXY

What is it?

REVA

Regret.

ROXY

Oh, please....

REVA

I just wish I could live that day over again.

ROXY

So do I. But for different reasons. Memorial Day. Isn't that a nice name for it? That means remember.

REVA

I'd much rather forget.

ROXY

Not me.

REVA

And I wish Sonny could forget.

ROXY

He didn't see anything. Besides, he was drunk.

REVA

He thought he saw....

ROXY

He made it up.

REVA

...And what he thought he saw was the truth. *(REVA looks briefly at ROXY then turns her attention to the rest of the room.)*

*Sound of a factory whistle.*

Shift's changing.

ROXY

Yeah.

REVA

Listen, I haven't told him about your...marriage.

ROXY

No.

REVA

I don't think he could take it.

ROXY

I understand.



REVA

I can't stand to tell him anything depressing.

ROXY

Of course not.

REVA

*(REVA struggles to maintain dignity.)* Course, I always think he's weaker than he is. Probably wouldn't affect him at all.

ROXY

Probably not.

REVA

There's lots of things I thought he couldn't stand, but turns out he could, all along.

ROXY

Course.

REVA

Besides, it's not him that's mad at you.

ROXY

No?

REVA

It's me.

ROXY

*(Pause. REVA stands.)* Thank you for letting me sit here.

REVA

Of course. *(REVA attempts to leave. ROXY keeps her there.)*

ROXY

I pray for you everyday.

REVA

Catholic prayers only go half way up.

ROXY

That's why we have to pray twice as long. *(REVA smiles. ROXY touches her hand. REVA notes it, then pulls her hand away, and moves away.)* There's this picture made out of different colors of corn. We got it at the State Fair that year.

Sonny always liked it. Anyways, I got it put away for him when he comes back. But...maybe you'd like to have it now.

REVA

No, I don't think so.

ROXY

Wouldn't be any trouble at all.

REVA

I never liked it.

ROXY

*(Smiling.)* Oh. Well I understand that. *(Pause.)* Sonny will come home well and happy. He'll marry a wonderful girl. You'll have a dozen grandbabies...

*REVA pierces her with a look and exits.*

*Lights change.*

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