

Resolutions

x

Josh Hartwell

Part One Formers

The main living area of a cabin in Vail. It is not rustic. It's not even really a cabin as much as a stunningly designed mountain home with walls made of giant wooden logs. Branching out from the living area are one hallway that leads to the master bedroom suite, more rooms, and a stairway down to the recreation area. Another hallway leads to two more guest rooms.

Upstage of the kitchen and dining area is a glass door that goes out onto the snowy main deck. Beyond that is winter in Vail Mountain and White River National Forrest blanketed in dark mountain sky blue.

For Part One, we can embrace the traditional nature of a "upper middle-class, middle-aged characters talking about first-world problems" play.

Dellen, 40s, is a former dancer. On the surface, she mostly appears overwhelmed and agitated, but she is indeed a strong and resilient woman.

Gregory, also 40s but still youthful, is a neurotic but fun former actor.

Dellen rushes around the kitchen and dining area, straightening, putting out food, setting up a bar. Gregory putters behind her, helping out as best he can and making them both shaken icy cocktails. They're both dressed nicely, but with only thick winter socks on their feet. We've dropped in, mid-action and vibrating conversation.

GREGORY

A couple should never start a theatre company together in the first place.

DELLEN

I wish that had been the only issue. And I didn't start it with him, I--

GREGORY

You helped make it into that nationally recognized artistic destination from early on.

DELLEN

He could've done that himself, one way or another.

GREGORY

All Randall brought to that company was a *sprinkling* of technical genius. And, yeah, his extreme family wealth.

DELLEN

He would've done it all with someone else. There have been like ten other companies that were founded by theatre couples.

GREGORY

Have been. Exactly. How many of those are still hanging on?

DELLEN

Our theatre imploded because our relationship did, not the other way around. Did you finish shoveling and salting?

GREGORY

Like a beast. The fact that the theatre is all caput now must tell you something about how important you were.

DELLEN

No, when Randall cracked up, his family pulled all the funding.

GREGORY

What-what-what? Spill.

(They are briefly in gossip mode--a mode they visit often together under different circumstances)

DELLEN

Shut it down. His mom and dad sold the building for pocket change. Randall threatened the board chair, then ran off to who-knows-where in Europe.

GREGORY

Transylvania, most likely.

DELLEN

And now I'm the one here, falling apart.

GREGORY

Oh, yeah, Dellen. This place is a super shit hole. How will you ever get by?

DELLEN

I can't live in Vail full time.

GREGORY

Why not?

DELLEN

It's too far away from everything.

And I don't even care about skiing anymore, and the people are . . . greedy, self-important, materialistic Barbie-Ken dolls.

I need some diversity in my circle, you know?

And it's snowy and incestuous. And I'd probably end up even more of an alcoholic than I am.

GREGORY

Cheers, speaking of that.

They clink their cocktail glasses.

DELLEN

Happy New Year.

And I couldn't afford living here. And it's too far from everything.

GREGORY

I saw the *outside* of where you're living in Aurora.

DELLEN

That's all you'll ever see.

GREGORY

Not exactly the cosmopolitan epicenter. So . . . does that mean you'll be putting this sweet little mansion on the market? Hint, hint.

DELLEN

How'd you manage to get a good place in Denver?

GREGORY

Realtors get inside scoops. Jerry and I bought before the bubble, then he took the place in Palm Springs, the self-righteous bastard.

I'll click on the tree.

DELLEN

Don't bother. Christmas is dead and over. The twinkly lights will just feel like they're taunting me.

GREGORY

Good god. Drink up, Frosty.

She stops working and addresses him directly for the first time.

DELLEN

Did you ever imagine being single again at your age?

GREGORY

If I had, then I would've been all different sorts of fucked up. If I were straight I'd marry you.

DELLEN

Gross.

GREGORY

I know.

DELLEN

Marriage in general, not you.

GREGORY

I know.

DELLEN

Plus I'm taken again.

GREGORY

(Sort of)

I . . . know.

DELLEN

Why'd you say it like that?

GREGORY

Seriously? You're little guy is . . .

DELLEN

What?

GREGORY

Athletic. And terribly sweet. And gaga over you. But . . .

DELLEN

Probably not long-term material, fine, which is exactly what I need right now. Now all he needs to do is show up. Criminy, what time is it?

She's checking her phone.

GREGORY

No, I was too busy celebrating the fact that I could finally legally get married to realize that I didn't marry the right guy.

DELLEN

He was for a while.

GREGORY

Jerry was anti-gay-marriage, did you even know that?

DELLEN

I always made it a point to not talk politics with your Jerry.

GREGORY

Except for ours. He scarcely approved of us being married, and legitimately against it as a concept.

DELLEN

How self-loathing does a gay republican have to be?

GREGORY

Fetal-position-ugly-crying-in-an-empty-bathtub,
wearing-only-his-socks-and-a-cardigan kind of self-loathing.
I'd prove it, but I deleted the pics from my phone.

DELLEN

That's healthy.

GREGORY

After I sent them to him.

DELLEN

Less healthy.

GREGORY

And his therapist.

DELLEN

There's my Gregory.
At least yours *went* to therapy.

GREGORY

So you got the mountain mansion, what did Randall end up with?

DELLEN

Half the cash from the loft and his car.

GREGORY

That's all?

DELLEN

That's exactly what Randall screamed.

GREGORY

Good thing his family is loaded.

DELLEN

No, Randall is completely cut off. Disowned.

GREGORY

Hence Europe, I suppose. And the . . . just how nervous was his breakdown?

DELLEN

Total emotional collapse.

GREGORY

He'll recover in Europe. That's what Europe's for.

She takes a moment to look around.

DELLEN

Looks so much more presentable.

GREGORY

Dellen, it was immaculate when we started.

DELLEN

No, it looks . . . warm in here.

GREGORY

Then your boyfriend is off the hook?

DELLEN

Thanks, Gregory. I couldn't have gotten it together without you.

She checks her phone again. Nada.

GREGORY

You clearly haven't gotten it together, but the place looks fine. See? We're here.

DELLEN

This ended up being the only place where we got along. At first. We let go of the business, didn't discuss theatre or our nut-job families. I would just deflate. He would build and tinker in the workshop. It's where he would always rediscover his creativity. Designed and built our whole security and entertainment speaker systems.

GREGORY

I know, right? Nancy, play Miles Davis!

DIGITAL NANCY VOICE

Playing | Miles Davis.

(Miles Davis plays softly)

DELLEN

Early Randall was such a proud little nerd about it. Much less of an ass hole. He should've stayed a techie and I should've kept dancing as long as I could. Making a living doing what you love can really make you hate what you love, you know?

GREGORY

You gonna be able to muster up the mood for game-playing or New-Year philosophizing?

DELLEN

Oh god, you're right. What is wrong with me? It was crazy of me to try to put this together again. It's all so raw and fresh and . I'm gonna have a Mary Tyler Moore party.

GREGORY

Smelling salts. It won't be a Mary party. We hardly see each other anymore, so we haven't built up that colleague animosity.

DELLEN

This is meant to be an escape. A reunion. And I won't even be able to smell hot cocoa without wanting to barf in the sink. It's supposed to be--

GREGORY

It will be.
Sheer bliss, trust me.
However.

DELLEN

What however?

GREGORY

Um. In an effort to keep it all blissy . . .

DELLEN

(Dubious)
Yeah?

GREGORY

It has come to my attention that Peter and Mindy . . . are about to lose the lease on their building.
The pot shop.

DELLEN

Come to your attention because you helped perpetuate it?

GREGORY

No, I didn't perpetuate . . . I do not perpetuate . . . I am not a perpetrator.
I didn't fight it, let's just say that.

DELLEN

They'll be crushed.

GREGORY

And that hurts my heart.

DELLEN

It's getting redeveloped?

GREGORY

Hellz, yeah! Bam! Multi-use. High-end condos. That location? I'm surprised they got their
digits on it in the first place.

DELLEN

Shark.

GREGORY

Bitches gotta eat. But don't mention it to them while we're here. Hate to be a buzz-kill for them.

DELLEN

Fantastic. I needed one more thing to suffer about.

GREGORY

Hey, no need to suffer about . . . I'm sure your boytoy has a perfectly good excuse for being all
no-sho. I should go fetch our other bags.

DELLEN

Yes. God. They're probably ice cubes by now.

GREGORY

(Stepping into his boots without tying them)

It's safe to unclench, Pretty Lady. He'll be here.

Gregory throws on his coat and exits out the front door. Dellen grabs her phone from the counter. Checks for texts. Nothing. She taps it twice and listens.

DELLEN

(No answer, right into voicemail)

Trevor, it's Dellen. Um, are you on your way? Are you skiing over right now and can't feel your phone buzz? You should have good service--I just hope you're being careful. Pretty dark out there. Anyway, it's not as pressing anymore. Gregory helped me get the place ready. Now I just want to see you because . . . I want to see you. Fire's going. It's warm. Just get here safely. Call me either way when you get this.

She hangs up. Not as irritated as concerned. We hear Gregory just outside the door.

GREGORY

No, we haven't been here long either.

We hear a louder voice outside the door.

MINDY

We don't wanna share a bathroom with anybody.

GREGORY

(Opening the front door)

You won't have to, we'll only be using three out of five bedrooms.

Mindy, later 40s, enters with him. She has more of an East Coast energy. She talks louder and fills a room with big energy. They both take off their coats and boots.

DELLEN

Hey! Happy New Year and junk.

MINDY

Hey, doll. God, this is a fuck-palace. I always forget how--oh, Peter is still out hot-boxing in my car. It was a freaky treacherous drive, I won't lie, and he gets all panicky on ice. Ok. Who has dibs on which room?

GREGORY

I took the double across from the upstairs suite.

DELLEN

How bad is it out there?

MINDY

Freaky treacherous. Didn't I *just* say that? So you have the suite, even though dick-head is gone?

GREGORY

Wee little Trevor will be here.

MINDY

Of course, it's not a school night. So we can have the room with the deck and the stairs down to the hot tub?

She is already on her way to the room with the deck.

GREGORY

There's a deck right here we can all go out on.

MINDY

But the one off the bedroom has the stairs that go down. To the hot tub. And what if I wanna venture out naked?

GREGORY

Is that a thing for you now?

MINDY

Maybe.

GREGORY

You get some sorta kinky thrill from being nude in the glacial mountain air?

MINDY

Maybe I've discovered something new about myself, Gregory. Maybe it's a New Year's thing, Gregory.

Mindy makes a fart sound and exits.

GREGORY

(To Dellen)

Maybe that's her Reso--

DELLEN

Ah-nananana. Don't even say it.

GREGORY

Don't say Reso--

DELLEN

Ah-nananana! Stop. I want to make a rule. A rule about not saying the word.

MINDY

(Re-entering)

What word?

GREGORY

Resolutions.

DELLEN

Gregory.

GREGORY

Will we not be playing the Resol . . . not doing that thing where we reveal our "New Years Hopes" from the last year?

MINDY

Why wouldn't we?

GREGORY

She hates that word.

MINDY

What's wrong with the word Reso--

DELLEN

Ah-nananana. We can do it. I just don't want to hear the word.

MINDY

That's dumb, it's just a word.

GREGORY

Is it safe to assume that this means you were less than successful at keeping yours?

DELLEN

Shut up.

GREGORY

I don't even remember what mine was.

MINDY

Oh, bullshit. You're just pre-downplaying your failure. Why isn't there a cocktail in my hand? There are cocktails in your hands and not mine.

Dellen swiftly starts making Mindy a drink.

MINDY

Might as well fix Peter one, too.

She adds more booze.

GREGORY

He'll be out cold before midnight.

MINDY

We don't need to do the big reveal yet, though. We're doing Peter's White Elephant thing first.

GREGORY

More like re-gifting.

MINDY

Potato-potahto.

DELLEN

Not really. Typically in a White Elephant, you can steal and trade.

GREGORY

And it's anonymous.

DELLEN

Yeah, this is just us re-gifting the crappy stuff we got for Christmas.

MINDY

Ok, is this gonna be how it is?

DELLEN

What do you mean?

MINDY

This cloud hanging over you. I cruise in here a bundle of positivity and you're all "the crappy stuff we got for Christmas." We all had a rough year, Dellen.

DELLEN

I never said you didn't.

MINDY

But you're the one banning words from the festivities, and I'm just saying that you don't have the monopoly on angst here.

GREGORY

No need to get into it, Mindy. Dellen is just worried about--

DELLEN

No, she's absolutely right. You're right, I don't need to stink up the party.

Peter, young 50s, enters from the cold and blowing snow, and immediately takes off his boots and coat. Peter is not British--he's just theatre-y and a bit pretentious. He's also good-high right now.

PETER

There are all my exquisite beauties on this bracing eve, the last of the year!

He goes around and kisses them all.

GREGORY

Good god, contact high, Spicoli.

PETER

No, sir. I binaca-ed.

He takes out his breath spray and squirts it in his mouth again.

GREGORY

Well, it didn't take.

PETER

It'll dissipate.

GREGORY

Whew! Like Cheech and Chong's coffee table.

DELLEN

Peter, where've you been getting so much sun?

PETER

Uh, it's spray-on.

GREGORY

Looks real.

PETER

It was sunny last week.

GREGORY

Not that sunny.

PETER

Where's this dapper lad I've heard so little about? I finally get to meet the pup.

MINDY

You've mellowed out nicely. Did you crack a window?

PETER

Pookeybear, it's a shaken snow-globe out there.

MINDY

Babydoll, I don't want my car reeking. I have to smell it every day at the dispensary. Can we not have it polluting the vehicle, too?

PETER

It'll ruin the leather seats. And this pollution of which you speak paid for your vehicle.

Dellen slides him his beverage.

PETER

Oh, praise the gods. My mouth is like a bone. Like a desert. Like the Sahara or . . . the Kalahari or, what's another desert?

He starts to drink.

DELLEN

Wait. We should do this for real now. Happy New Year, everyone.

They drink together.

GREGORY

So what is this for you? How many New Years have you guys come up here for?

PETER

Oh, wow, seems like we've always . . . this is, what, seven for me?

MINDY

Six for you. Seven for me.

PETER

Why you more than me?

GREGORY

I win. This is my tenth.

MINDY

You were in line-learning hell for your One-Man adaptation of *Ulysses*.

GREGORY

Oh no.

PETER

Aw, man. That's in my top five. Seriously, top three best roles.

GREGORY

I remember that show.

PETER

You and no army.

GREGORY

Yeah, I missed it. But I remember that it happened.

MINDY

The film version marks the first use of the word, "fuck" in a movie.

PETER

So I took liberties and peppered more fucks throughout the whole thing. Lemme see.

MINDY

No, baby, don't do it.

PETER

No, I think it's still in here . . .

(his head)

Or most of it.

GREGORY

I'm sure it is, but--

PETER

You dissent openly from my view . . . on the importance of dietary and civic self help . . .

MINDY

Please don't do this.

PETER

Ooh. Proper musical accompaniment. Nancy, play The Pogues.

DIGITAL NANCY VOICE

Playing | The Pogues.

(The Pogues play)

PETER

While I dissent tactily from your fuckin' views on the eternal affirmation of the spirit of man in literature.

MINDY

Baby, I beg of you. We're dying.

PETER

(In a decent Irish accent, but he is too theatrical)

I assent covertly to your rectification of the anachronism involved in assigning the date of the conversion of the Irish nation to Christianity from druidism by Patrick, son of Calpornus, son of Potitus, son of Odysus, sent by pope Celestine I in the year 432, in the reign of Leary to the year 260 or thereabouts in the reign of Cormac MacArt--*suffocated* by imperfect fuckin' deglutition of ailment at Sletty!

Everyone thinks it's over.

PETER

I have no idea what any of that meant.

GREGORY

Shouldn't we applaud, or--

PETER

The *collapse* . . . which I ascribe to gastric inanition and certain chemical compounds of varying degrees of adulteration and alcoholic strength, accelerated by mental exertion and the velocity of rapid circular motion in a relaxing atmosphere, *you* attribute to the reappearance of a matutinal cloud . . . no bigger than a fuckin' woman's hand.

Silence. Dellen checks her phone. Nothing.

GREGORY

Wow.

PETER

Yeah.

GREGORY

I'm so surprised it bombed.

PETER

Or maybe it was "woman's fuckin' hand."

GREGORY

Either way.

PETER

Yeah.

GREGORY

What's deglutition?

Dellen grabs her phone and taps at it.

MINDY

The black box was in that configuration where audience had to walk across the stage to get in and out of the theatre. So as they left in disgust while he was performing, they'd walk right by him.

PETER

I made it part of the show. That's what you do.

MINDY

His ad-libs were better than the actual show.

PETER

They just didn't get it.

GREGORY

How could they?

DELLEN

(From the info she's just gleaned from her phone)

The action or process of swallowing. Deglutition.

GREGORY

Good dramaturging, Dellen. Now the whole thing makes sense.

PETER

(Heading over to where his coat is hanging)

I'm about to do some deglutating of my own.

(Pulling a little bottle from his coat pocket)

Voilà!

(Offering)

Mindy?

MINDY

No thanks, babe. I'd rather retain my ability to form sentences.

Peter uses a little dropper in the little bottle, plops half a dropper-full of the liquid into his mouth.

PETER

Blugh! Foul tasting and fast acting!

Peter exits.

MINDY

Ok, so you two, you can't let Peter know this, but I totally got cast in a show.

DELLEN

You're theatre-ing again? I thought--

MINDY

I know, ok? Shh. It's in the works.

DELLEN

What's the show?

GREGORY

Tommy. I'm the Acid Queen .

Gregory cackles.

MINDY

It's dead serious, Gregory.