

MY GRANDMOTHER'S DRESS

Characters

Charlie	Hapless Romeo
Juanita	Charlie's tipsy date.
Brian	Charlie's partially deaf grandfather.
Wendy	Charlie's girlfriend.

Setting

A backyard of a nice house at night time, it is dimly lit. A clothes line hangs across the stage.

Charlie and Juanita sneak into the backyard. They are drunk and flirtatious.

CHARLIE Shush... You have to be quiet.

JUANITA Oh my gosh, you shush! Choo choo Charlie.
(She giggles) Are you sure your housemates are out?

CHARLIE Yeah, yeah they're out. They're working nights at the moment...

JUANITA So why do we have to go through the backyard then? There is washing everywhere. Oh bugger!

She gets tangled in it and falls over.

CHARLIE Be careful! That's my grandmother's dress.

Charlie looks to see that no one is watching them.

Juanita holds the white dress up against herself.

JUANITA Cute! I might keep this for later... For Ron... Later-Ron.. Get it... Later on... I do Ron, Ron, Ron.

She's snort laughs, she's drunk and doesn't make much sense.

She shoves Charlie's grandmothers dress into her bag. Charlie does not notice.

JUANITA So! As I said, I'm happy to sleep on the couch...

CHARLIE Do you think I brought you back here to sleep on the couch?!

He tries to kiss her, she avoids his grasp.

JUANITA Now, now, Mr Choo choo Charlie. We won't be having any of those shenanigans, now will we?

She giggles at herself before turning her gaze aloft over the audience.

JUANITA *(stunned)* Wow! Your house is huge! What did you say you do again? Real estate, Finance? You must be raking it in to live here.

CHARLIE Yeah... I don't want to brag, but I do alright... As I said, I have housemates too. Just a few of us lads in our bachie pad... I mean, I own it of course and they pay me rent.... the lads do... yeah. It's a pretty epic party house.

JUANITA How old did you say you were?

CHARLIE 24

JUANITA 24! You've made this much money at 24? You must be like from a rich family, like old money... Like Parris Hilton or P Diddy or something?

CHARLIE Oh no... I never took a cent from my family. My parents were poor...

Juanita is suddenly attentive and more affectionate, feeling sorry for him.

JUANITA Oh, it's ok, you can tell me. Charlie.

CHARLIE They were orphans actually.

JUANITA Orphans? Oh no... Both of them?

CHARLIE (*Faking sadness*) Yes both of them.

JUANITA That is so sad...

CHARLIE Yeah... Just unlucky, I guess.

JUANITA So you never knew your grandparents?

CHARLIE No... I never had any... And I had moved out of home by the time I was 14... Lived on the streets.

JUANITA Oh my God! No! You poor thing. On the streets?

CHARLIE Yeah... It's a hard life on the streets of uhh-- (*he searches for a place*) -- Croydon. But I fought against it. Worked hard. Made my first mill at 18 and well, the rest is history.

JUANITA Oh Charlie! You are so sweet and sentimental keeping your grandmother's dress even though you never even knew her! I choo choo choose you.

She throws her arms around him. A voice is heard from off stage.

BRIAN (*off stage*) Charlie is that you?

Charlie springs into action, hiding Juanita

CHARLIE Get down!

JUANITA What? Why?

CHARLIE It's my crazy old neighbour. Don't let him see you. He's a lunatic... A mean lunatic. Go over there, where he can't see you. Over there. Further! Now get down!

He frantically gestures, which becomes enthusiastic waving to his grandad as Brian enters. Charlie speaks carefully ensuring that Juanita can't hear him.

CHARLIE Hey grandad.

BRIAN Charlie! What are you doing out here in the backyard? Your grandmother told me to come out because she heard a noise.... I didn't hear a bloody thing. Sleeping like a baby, I was. Can't say I appreciate being hauled out of bed, only to find you in the backyard, doing... (*a beat*) what exactly are you doing out here?

CHARLIE I... umm... well... I...

BRIAN (*annoyed, sulky*) Speak up! I've not got my hearing aid on, as I was rudely dragged out of bed before getting a chance to put it in... And there better be a bloody good reason why I am out of 'said bed'.

Charlie is left with no choice.

CHARLIE Actually there is someone like you to meet...

BRIAN Oh don't worry I've already met her. And she is just perfect for you. She is beautiful, and very easy going. More than happy to sleep on the couch, you know? I don't know why you waited so long to introduce her and bring her home to us. She is absolutely lovely!

Juanita tentatively steps out from her hiding spot. Waving meekly.

JUANITA Thank you. That is so kind.

BRIAN (*shocked*) Who the hell are you?!

JUANITA (*oblivious*) I'm Juanita, Charlie's girlfriend... pleased to meet you. She sticks her hand out for him to shake, he doesn't take it. Instead looks at her with confusion.

BRIAN Yes... I've enjoyed meeting you too... Wendy?

JUANITA No you have it wrong, my name is Juanita. It sounds kinda similar to Wendy, I suppose, but it's actually spelt with a J... But it sounds like a W... Get it? Juanita with a J... not a W. Juanita.

BRIAN But when we met you this afternoon, I'm sure you looked a bit more... more.... (*he searches for the words*) different. I guess it's dark out here.

We hear Wendy calling from off stage.

WENDY (O.S.) Hey Brian! Brian, are you out here?

Charlie gasps and hides both Juanita and Brian, then realising his mistake pushes his granddad out in front of him and hides himself...It's a scramble. When she enters, Wendy only sees Brian.

WENDY Oh Brian... There you are. Rosie asked me to come and make sure that you're ok out here. She was worried when you didn't come back.

He stands there momentarily dumbstruck, not knowing what to say.

BRIAN Juanita?

CHARLIE (*hisses*) Wendy!

BRIAN Juanita.

WENDY Wendy.

BRIAN Wendy?

WENDY Is everything ok, Brian?

Brian is confused.

BRIAN Yes. Yes.... Everything is just fine.

JUANITA Did I hear Charlie out here?

CHARLIE (*hisses from his hiding spot*) No!

BRIAN Yes.

CHARLIE No!

BRIAN No. I mean no.

WENDY Well... Is it yes or no?

BRIAN I really don't know to be honest.

Charlie whispers to Juanita.

CHARLIE Stay there!

JUANITA More crazy neighbours?

CHARLIE More crazy neighbours... and this one is worse than the other one.

JUANITA Jesus....

She slinks back down.

Charlie sheepishly steps out from his hiding spot.

CHARLIE Hey babe...

WENDY Babe? Charlie, what are you doing in the shadows? Come out from there.

CHARLIE *(tries feebly)* Surprise!

WENDY Charlie! It is you.

CHARLIE Hey Babe. My beautiful Wendy, you're here. What's going on?

WENDY *(fuming)* Well I was thinking I would ask you the exact same question. What the hell is going on Charlie? I arrived at 3pm today, as planned, and you weren't here. I had to introduce myself to your grandparents and do you know what? They didn't even know I was coming. In fact, they had never heard of me. I could have been any random showing up in their yard and they wouldn't have known any better. I was supposed to be moving in with you today. You said you'd asked them. I gave up my flat and they didn't have a bloody clue who I was. No offense Brian. It wasn't your fault.

BRIAN No offense taken, Juanita. *(to Charlie)* You should hold onto this one Charlie, she's a keeper!

WENDY *(plows on)* And do you know what I did then, Charlie?... As I was still waiting, oh so patiently for you. I made your grandparents dinner. A lovely dinner --

BRIAN --It was very nice indeed. Spaghetti Bolognese--.

WENDY --I made you dinner too, but you didn't come home for it. But your grandparents and I... Well we all had a wonderful dinner together and then I went to sleep... on the couch. On the couch!

CHARLIE Babe...

WENDY Don't babe me! *(she continues, furious)* And then... finally... finally you get home at-- *(she looks at her watch)* --3:44 am... AM! That's in the morning Charlie. Not three in the afternoon when you were supposed to meet me here, noooo a full 12 hours and 44 minutes later! What could you possibly have been doing until 3:44 in the morning?

Suddenly we hear an almighty crash.

BRIAN That's gotta hurt!

Juanita enters with a flourish wearing Charlie's grandmothers dress.

BRIAN So there *is* two of them!

JUANITA Ta dahh!! Your grandmother's dress. (*does a little pose or two*) I told you I'd look cute in it... (*she stops and thinks*) Wait... You didn't tell me was why your dead grandmothers dress was on your clothes line... Charlie?

As soon as Wendy sees Jacinta, she knows what is going on.

WENDY Who is this girl who is wearing your grandmothers dress, Charlie? Don't you think you had better introduce us?

CHARLIE Um Wendy, this is Juanita, Juanita, this is Wendy... Wendy is my... Is my...

Wendy starts advancing on Charlie and the others join in as he backs away.

WENDY Wendy is my what Charlie? My distant relative? An old school chum? Some strange homeless person sleeping on the couch in your grandparent's house?

JUANITA Crazy neighbour... He said you were his crazy neighbour.

WENDY Oh did he now?

JUANITA. Charlie, what does she mean your grandparent's house? You told me you owned this place.

BRIAN Owns it? Psht! He can't even remember to give us the 50 bucks board per week.

WENDY (*she is disgusted*) Charlie! (*To Brian*) I'm sorry Brian... I'll just go inside and grab my bag... You don't need to have me sleeping on your couch tonight... I'll find somewhere else...

BRIAN Too right you will my love. As a matter of a fact, we've just had our spare room come up as empty and available to rent. Only 50 bucks a week. It's yours if you want it. Rosie and I would love to have you stay.

WENDY Thank you! I would love that. (*she hugs him*)

CHARLIE But Grandad... That's my room.

BRIAN (*ignoring him*) You know, I really should remember my hearing aid... (*he turns to Juanita*) It's very late out love, are you happy on the couch, tonight?

JUANITA Too right!

Jacinta links arms with Brain and Wendy and off all three of them stride into the house leaving Charlie alone in the garden.

CHARLIE (yells) Grandad! Wait. Turn your bloody hearing aid on!... Please, Wendy... I can explain, I'm sorry... (*desperately*) Juanita... I choo choo choose you too... (*calls out*) Grandma... Grandad's locked me out of the house! Grandmaaaa.....

BLACKOUT