

AT HOME WITH TESS AND WANDA

By Joseph Sorrentino

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AT HOME WITH TESS AND WANDA

A Ten Minute Skit-Play

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SYNOPSIS: Tess and Wanda are two sisters who have lived together for just a little shy of forever. They never answer the phone or the door and they never go out, fearing they might bump into someone they don't know. Or, worse, someone they do know and then they might have to do something like talk to them. Nothing much ever happens to them and today seems like it's going to be the same as yesterday until Joey, who claims to be hiding from police, barges in. Joey gets a bit more than he bargained for.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 female, 1 male)

TESS (f) A matronly woman about 50 years old
(67 lines)

WANDA (f) Another matronly woman a couple of
years younger than Tess *(57 lines)*

JOEY (m) A man in his late 20's *(36 lines)*

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Tess and Wanda never do anything, never go anywhere, never see anyone else. They also never drink the tea they pour. They're very comfortable with each other and with their lives and (gently) resent it when Joey enters their apartment and their life. Joey, who thinks he knows the ways of the world, is about to meet his match.

PROPERTY LIST

- Two overstuffed chairs
- Several newspapers, including some tabloids, Wall Street Journal and NY Times
- One kitchen or folding chair
- One small table
- Tea pot with at least three cups and saucers
- Old television with antenna
- Doilies for the table and television
- Knitting needles and wool
- Old-fashioned telephone (optional; ringing can be offstage)

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AT RISE: Tess and Wanda's living room. TESS is reading the paper, WANDA is knitting.

TESS: Oh my. Now that's a shame.

WANDA: What's a shame?

TESS: Europe's gone.

WANDA: Gone? Where's it gone to?

TESS: Been wiped out...giant tidal wave.

WANDA: That is a shame, isn't it?

TESS: I'll say.

WANDA: I always liked Europe.

TESS: Me too. How 'bout a cup of tea?

WANDA pours, TESS picks up second paper, a tabloid.

But don't worry. It'll be all right. *(Pause.)* Uh-oh.

WANDA: More bad news?

TESS: You're tellin' me. Kim Kardashian...putting on the pounds again.

WANDA: I told you she couldn't stick to that diet. Poor cow.

TESS: It's that Kayne. He's the one that ruined her. You shoulda listened to me, Kimmy. I told you he was no good.

WANDA: Better watch that temper, Tess.

TESS: You're right Wanda. But he does get my goat. *(Picks up new paper.)* Gracious, it never stops, does it?

WANDA: What now?

TESS: Nuclear war in Pakistan.

WANDA: Better have some more tea.

Phone rings, they freeze.

TESS: That's the phone.

WANDA: We never answer do we?

TESS: Oh no.

WANDA: Wonder why.

TESS: Why...it could be someone we don't know.

WANDA: Oh. *(Pause.)* What if it's someone we do know?

TESS: That'd be worse then, wouldn't it? Then you'd have to talk to them...say things like 'Hello' and 'How are you?' and 'How's the weather where you are?' and we all know where that would lead, don't we?

WANDA: Where?

TESS: Well, we'd have to invite them over, wouldn't we?

WANDA: I suppose.

TESS: And we wouldn't want to do that, would we?

WANDA: No we wouldn't. *(Pause.)* What'll we do?

TESS: Wait 'til it stops. It always does.

Phone stops.

TESS: Well, it's about time. Here's some good news. *(Reads headline.)* 'Elvis Still Alive.'

WANDA: Good ol' Elvis.

TESS: 'Nixon Still Dead.'

WANDA: Good ol' Tricky Dicky. TV's on the blink again. Want me to fix it?

TESS: That would be nice.

WANDA fiddles with it, no change in reception.

WANDA: How's that?

TESS: *(Not looking.)* Much better.

WANDA sits. There's a knock on the door.

TESS: That's the door.

WANDA: We never answer, do we?

TESS: Oh no.

WANDA: Wonder why.

TESS: Why...it might be someone...

Another knock. THEY pause, look at each other and then become more intent in their activities.

My, my. Japan's sunk. Completely under it went.

WANDA: Explains that tidal wave I suppose.

TESS: Better have some more tea.

From offstage we hear JOEY.

JOEY: Hey yo...anybody home? (*Enters.*) Oh, there you are. Wow, I was really poundin' on that door. Didn't ya hear me knockin'?

TESS: We never answer the door. Might be someone we don't know.

WANDA: Or worse, Tess. It could be someone we do know.

TESS: That's right, Wanda. Then we'd have to let them in and say things like, 'Hello,' and 'How are you?' and...

JOEY: I'm fine, thanks. Look, you don't mind if I pull up a chair, do yas?

TESS: Well...

HE sits. THEY stare at him.

JOEY: I'm your new neighbor. How ya like them apples?

TESS: We like apples just fine, don't we Wanda?

WANDA: Oh yes we do...there's Macintosh, Golden Delicious, Granny Smith...

JOEY: I flew in from Chicago yesterday and boy, I gotta tell ya, are my arms tired.

TESS: Yes I suppose they would be.

WANDA: I'll say.

JOEY: Nah...that's a joke...Ya know...like a play on words, like...Ah...never mind. Yeah, I figured I should get out and meet my neighbors...who else lives around here?

TESS: We don't know. We've never met anyone.

JOEY: How long yas been here?

TESS: We've always been here.

JOEY: And you never met your neighbors?

WANDA: They might be people we don't know.

JOEY: But if you met them, then you'd know them.

TESS: That would be worse. Then we'd have to wave at them and say things like, 'Hello' and 'How are you?' and 'I'm fine.'

JOEY: So everyone just keeps to themselves, huh? This could be a real peachy set-up. Ladies, the name's Joey.

TESS: I'm Tess.

WANDA: And I'm Wanda.

JOEY: Charmed, ladies...just charmed. Ya know, I'm a great judge of characters, if I do say so myself, and you two look like a couple of real stand-up types.

TESS: We are.

WANDA: Of course, we do enjoy sitting as well.

TESS: Of course we do.

JOEY: So I'm gonna give yas the straight story.

WANDA: That's wonderful.

TESS: We love stories.

WANDA: We certainly do.

JOEY: I started out a straight arrow but then I kinda fell in with the wrong crowd, know what I mean?

WANDA: We certainly do.

TESS: I had myself a nasty little fall just last week, didn't I?

WANDA: I'll say.

TESS: Still have a bit of a bump on top.

WANDA: Do you? (*SHE leans over to check it.*) It's healing nicely, though.

JOEY: I hadda leave Chicago quick, see? Let's just say I was catchin' a lotta heat back there.

TESS: It has been warm lately, hasn't it?

WANDA: And how. Think we have enough talcum powder?

TESS: I hope so.

WANDA: Talcum powder always leaves one feeling refreshed, doesn't it?

JOEY: Anyway, I hadda go on the lam.

WANDA: Lamb...that's our favorite, isn't it Tess?

TESS: Certainly is.

WANDA: There's roast lamb with mint sauce, lamb burgers, lamb chops with...

JOEY: No...no...not that kinda lamb. I mean a lam kinda lam...like when ya go on the lam. Like...I hadda go to the mattress.

TESS: Best thing. I always take a nap after a trip.

WANDA: But you never go anywhere.

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