

(DRAFT: 19 Apr 2021)

LOST IN PLACE: TRINA & ADELE

A play in one act
By Craig Houk



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CHARACTERS

TRINA Mid Sixties

ADELE Late Fifties

TIME

Present.

SETTING

A small American town. Summertime. Midday. Trina Patterson's porch and living room.

(AT RISE: TRINA is sitting in a very worn armchair. She appears to be asleep. A basket of dirty laundry sits nearby. Adele approaches the porch. She looks on the porch and around it, searching for something. She crosses to the screen door and taps lightly on the frame.)

ADELE

Trina...? Trina, you home...?

(To herself.)

What the hell am I sayin'? 'Course she's home. She's always home. Dumpy little hermit...

TRINA

...I can hear you, Adele.

ADELE

Aw shit.

TRINA

I'm in my chair.

ADELE

Okay, well it's noon, Trina. And your wash ain't on the porch.

TRINA

I know.

ADELE

It's supposed to be on the porch.

TRINA

I know.

ADELE

So, where the hell is it?

TRINA

It's in here with me. On the floor. Just a few feet from where I'm sittin'.

ADELE

A lotta good that does me. How am I supposed to get your wash done if it's in there with you?

TRINA

(She winces.)

My back went out.

ADELE

What's that?

TRINA

My back. It went out. I was bringin' the basket out to the porch and it just seized up. I barely made it to the chair. And my gout's been flarin' up.

ADELE

Well, that sucks for you, don't it? Guess you'll have to go without clean clothes for another few days then.

TRINA

Guess so. I would've called to let you know, but... Well, I'm stuck in this goddam chair.

ADELE

Hopefully, your back will sort itself out.

TRINA

It usually does.

(A moment.)

ADELE

You know I can't come in there and help you, right?

TRINA

I know. It's fine. I'll be fine. I can't make it to the fridge neither, so I suppose it's really a blessin' in disguise.

ADELE

I hear that. Oh, and by the way... Rhonda and me, we got that vaccine. But apparently it don't work too well. Thought you should know.

TRINA

Yep. Saw that on the news. Sneaky little virus keeps mutatin'. Can't keep up with it.

ADELE

End times for sure.

TRINA

I suppose that's true.

ADELE

I should also probably let you know that I'm gonna start handwashin' your things and hangin' 'em out to dry.

TRINA

Now, why on earth would you do that when you got a perfectly good washer and dryer set at home? I mean the whole reason you offered to do it in the first place was because my set broke down.

ADELE

You're lucky I'm doin' it at all.

TRINA

Exactly my point. You're just makin' more work for yourself.

ADELE

Well, I'm tryin' to do my part, you know. Conservin' water, and savin' the environment, and all that fuckin' nonsense.

TRINA

Okay. Well, it don't matter to me either way. Though I expect my delicates'll be happy to have your gentle touch.

ADELE

Yeah, well don't get me started on your delicates because they're anythin' but.

TRINA

Right. Sorry about that. It's rough bein' an old lady.

ADELE

Anyway, I'm just lettin' you know in case your things come back all stiff and stretched out.

TRINA

Well, there's an easy fix for that, you know. The trick is to shake the clothes out before you put 'em up on the line. And anythin' heavy you just lay out on a rack to dry.

(Beat.)

ADELE

Yeah, so like I said... Don't' be surprised if they come back all stiff and stretched out.

TRINA

Duly noted. Thanks.

ADELE

Happy to help.

(A moment.)

Okay then. I guess I'll just head on home...

TRINA

...Why do you do it, Adele?

ADELE

(Unfittingly defensive.)

All right. Now there's no need to get belligerent, Trina. I steal vegetables from everyone's garden 'round here. And truth is, it's slim pickins' at your place. You don't exactly have a green thumb, now do you?

TRINA

Well, I wasn't talkin' about that. But since you just confessed, may I ask...? What the hell is the matter with you? Stealin' from peoples' yards?

ADELE

Aw shit. Okay, well, let's not get off topic now. I think maybe you was askin' about somethin' else I might be doin' that I'm hopin's a little less criminal in nature?

TRINA

You are somethin' else, Adele.

ADELE

Ain't that the truth.

(Beat.)

TRINA

No, it's just that... Well, I been wonderin'. Why do you come visit? And why're you helpin' me out? You know I don't much like bein' 'round people.

ADELE

Well, that's somethin' you and me have in common then, ain't it? 'Cept whereas you keep to yourself, I generally tell people to their face that I don't like 'em.

TRINA

You haven't answered my question, Adele.

(A moment.)

ADELE

Listen, it ain't no secret that I'm an unpleasant woman. But bein' unpleasant is all I know. Okay? It's all I can muster. There ain't never been real joy for me in my life. Except for Rhonda, I suppose. Other than that, it's just been sorrow mixed with rage. Some days it's like pushin' through quicksand just to get out of bed. And it feels like my skin has fallen away. And like I'm on fire all the time. Always burnin' up with no way to put out the flames.

(Beat.)

TRINA

Well, that sucks for you, don't it? But what's any of that got to do with me.

ADELE

Well, Trina... Bein' 'round you is like if a bird shit on my head. It turns my stomach, but it's considered good luck when it happens.

TRINA

It's hard to take somethin' like that personal when the feelin's mutual.

ADELE

So, have I answered your question?

TRINA

You have.

ADELE

Good. So, can I go now?

TRINA

Not before I clear somethin' up first. For the record, I don't dislike people. There was a time, though, when I didn't like myself. So, I decided that I needed to be alone to sort things out; to maybe find a way to learn to love myself; to get away from it all; to mend; to heal. But then after a while, I realized how peaceful life was bein' alone, so I purposely chose to just settle into it. I'm content now, Adele. And I wouldn't have it any other way.

(Beat.)

ADELE

Well, goody for you, Trina. So, I'm gonna head on home now. Before Rhonda starts to worry.

TRINA

All right.

ADELE

I'll check in on you tomorrow.

TRINA

Sounds good.

(Adele starts off.)

Hey, Adele...

ADELE

What the hell is it now?

TRINA

You ain't actually gonna do it, are you?

(Beat.)

ADELE

Oh, I don't know, Trina. I might.

TRINA

Well, I prefer you didn't. But if you do decide to go through with it, make sure you get my laundry done first.

ADELE

If it's the last thing I do.

(End of play.)