

“Home Win”

A one-act comedy

by

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Characters

Tom	Irascible, independent curmudgeon who is now over the age of sixty. He is quite fit for his age despite having a slight problem with his health.
Graham	Tom's son is twenty two years of age. He has a dry wit.
Jenny	Tom's daughter in law. She is quite caring about Tom's welfare.
Mary	She is the housemother at the sheltered accommodation into which Tom has recently moved. She is jovial but strict with the residents. Probably over sixty.
Glenda	She lives in the next flat to Tom. She has some obvious appeal for her age. Over sixty.
Malcolm	Tom's old friend from way back. Good humoured...probably not too bright...Over sixty.
Nancy	Chatty old dear living on the other side of Tom. Over sixty.
Isobel	Humorously cutting ex-wife of Tom. Both her and Tom are surprised that they are living so close in the same block of flats. She is barely over sixty.

The set is the living room of a simply designed one bedroom flat. The only essential pieces of furniture are a settee and an easy chair with at least one cushion. The only vital props are five highly decorated Easter bonnets.

Synopsis

Tom is an irascible, independent man, just past the sixty mark. Due to recurring alarming incidents involving his state of health, he has been persuaded by his family to relinquish his detached home in the country, and to invest in a sheltered accommodation where his health and welfare can be regularly programmed.

Despite the obvious advantages of this system, Tom is reluctant to easily relinquish his cosy independent life style. Upon entry to the purpose built block, he meets very obvious challenges in his early exchanges with staff and co residents on a scale that he could not possibly have anticipated, particularly so, when one resident turns out to be his ex wife.

- Graham Here we are, dad. This looks like a nice room.
- Jenny It's not bad, Tom...nice and compact...and very comfortable.
- Tom I'm still not sure I'm doing the right thing.
- Graham Well it's too late now to change your mind. From today, it's officially yours ...bought outright. I'm sure you'll be very happy here.
- Jenny It won't take long to get used to it. You'll soon settle in.
- Tom I'll miss my garden.
- Jenny But they've got lovely gardens here...with their own gardener.... You won't have to worry about a thing.
- Tom Yes...I can sit here and slowly rot.
- Graham You know it makes sense, dad...with your diabetes, you'd never know when you might have another blackout.
- Jenny Yes...and living alone in your big detached house, as you were....who'd be there to save you?no-one....but here, you'd have no worries. Someone'll be on hand to see you're all right.

- Tom But I'm really not ready for all that stuff. All my life I've been independent.
- Graham We know that all right.
- Tom And now it feels like I'm in an old people's home.
- Graham The only reason you qualify for this accommodation is because you're over sixty. Other than that, you can do what you like here....there's no restrictions...you can even have a lady friend round to stay.....
- Tom And I fully intend to. I'm not changing my way of life just to appease the thin-skinned sensibilities of any close neighbours.
- Jenny That's right, Tom...nothing's changed... other than your address.
- Graham I expect you'll soon have the residents here converted to your naughty ways anyway.
- Jenny The main thing is, if you start to feel woozy, you've got the alert cord over here to pull...(Jenny reaches for the cord hanging near the door) The housemother will then come immediately.
- Tom Can I hang myself with it?

Jenny It's only there for your protection.

Tom I suppose I've got to accept the situation. It's the last thing I'd've wanted...but I won't be associating with these old perishers around me...I hate these gatherings of semi-geriatric coffin dodgers. When I grow old... eventually....it'll be in my own way.

Graham That's the spirit, dad. The old people here won't realise what a highly charged dynamo they've got in their midst.

Tom Exactly... I ran last year's London Marathon. I still enjoy three competitive sets of tennis each week and only six month's ago, I was involved in a sexual relationship with a forty six year old lady...what could I possibly have in common with these old fogies.

(The door bell rings. The housemother, Mrs. Macauley enters without invitation).

Mrs. Macauley Cooeee can I come in. You remember me don't you Mr Nelhams. I'm Mrs. Macauley, the housemother. You can call me Mary if you like. I saw you briefly when you came to look the place over a couple of months ago. Do you remember?

Tom (barely acknowledges her) Oh...yes, yes.

Jenny He's still coming to terms with being in here. He's not the most gregarious of people...y'know, prefers his own company.

Mrs.. Macauley Oh, he'll soon get used to us all here.

Graham Yes...but you folks here might take a bit longer to get used to dad.

Mrs. Macauley I'm sure he can't be *that* bad.

Jenny I wouldn't bank on it.

Mrs. Macauley Well Mr Nelhams...oh... I know your first name's Tom...do you mind if I call you Tom?

Tom Yes, call me Tom.

Mrs. Macauley All right, Tom....You'll love this place, you really will.

Jenny He's a bit worried about giving up his independence.

Mrs. Macauley Oh that's nonsense...you can come and go here as you please.

Tom I should ruddy well hope so...it's not an institution, is it?

Jenny Don't be rude, Tom.

Mrs. Macauley That's all right. No of course, there's no restrictions here.
You can do whatever you like...you know that.

Tom And I *shall* do...and I like to keep myself to myself.

Mrs.. Macauley We've no problems with that. Each flat is completely
contained...so you won't need to see even your immediate
neighbours if you don't want to.

Tom That's fine.

Jenny Tom won't be interested.... but do you have many
activities here.

Mrs.. Macauley Oh yes...there's bingo on a Wednesday evening in the
communal room...then we have a coffee morning here on
a Thursday. Sometimes, we get in a local
entertainer...and we have a jolly good old sing song ...and
then, of course there's the occasional coach trip....it's
marvellous.

Graham Do you do anything for miserable old so and sos like my
father.

Mrs.. Macauley We cater for all types here at The Pines. There's an
activities notice board up in the main hall as you come in.
If there's anything that catches your eye, you can always
contact me for further details....I'm just down the hall a
bit...at number thirteen.

Jenny And what happens if Tom gets unwell at any time.

Mrs. Macauley Well then he gets the benefit from our 'in house' service.
He needs only to pull that cord over there, and we'll be here as soon as possible. Oh, there's another cord in the bathroom if need be.

Tom Do I have to pull anything to say, 'keep away'.

Graham That's the spirit, dad. (Then to Mrs. Macauley) Mrs. Macauley, would there be anything creative coming up in the way of activities in the near future? Dad can be quite artistic.

Mrs. Macauley Well there's an Easter bonnet competition ...but from what you say, I'm sure that won't appeal to Tomeh Tom?

Tom I'm sorry...but I have an overwhelming revulsion for Easter bonnet competitions.

Graham I guess that's a 'No' then.

Mrs. Macauley Well, that'll be about it....but if anything goes wrong here...gas, electricity, water, whatever....just give me a call at number thirteen...O.K.

Tom (begrudgingly) Thank you Mrs. Macauley.

Mrs. Macauley Don't forget...it's Mary.

Tom Oh yes...thank you...er...Mary.

Mrs. Macauley That's better....See you later Tom.... Bye everybody.

Graham We may see you again.

Jenny Yes...thanks for everything.

(Mrs. Macauley exits)

Jenny She seems a nice lady.

Tom She would drive me crazy. I hate those 'Jolly hockey sticks' types... probably motivated by a fear that if she *didn't* manipulate everybody into mixing together, she'd be left all alone ...completely ignored.

Graham There's nothing wrong with liking people, dad.

Tom To some degree...but there's a horrible Barbara Streisand song that goes..."people who need people are the luckiest people in the world"... Well they're not. They're usually just a pain in the arse.

Jenny (With irony) Sounds like you're all going to get on like a house on fire then.

- Tom Jenny...I don't mean to sound like a tetchy old
- Graham (Suggests final word) Bastard?
- Tom (Giving disapproving look) It's just...I'm resigned to living in so called sheltered accommodation...as I concede I've got a possible health problem... If I keel over and drop dead here, there'll be someone around here to scrape me up and call the authorities...otherwise, back in my old home, I realise it would be up to the milkman to consider why I hadn't collected the milk for three months. He'd then have to arrange for the paramedics to come round to find my partially decomposed corpse floating in the bath beside the plastic ducks.
- Graham A lovely image.... but at least, clean and tidy.
- Jenny You'll be safer here and you know it.
- Tom I'll get used to it...but if dementia sets in, and you find me at a bingo session downstairs, calling out. "two little ducks, quack, quack", then please feel at liberty to drop round and administer me with a lethal injection.
- Jenny Well, Graham and I've got a long trip back to Hyde today....If you feel you're 'settled in' now, we really should be making tracks.

HOME WIN

Tom No need to fuss. I'll manage.

Graham We'll come and see you at Easter, dad.

Tom O.K. you two...now mind how you drive...and give us a
call when you get home.

Jenny We will, Tom...take care.

Graham You're gonna be fine here dad.

Tom I hope so.

Graham Give my love to Mrs. Macauley (does obscene gesture
with arm depicting an erection)...know what I mean.

Tom (considers) I somehow don't think so.

Jenny (exiting) Bye then, Tom.

Graham (also exiting) See you dad.