

---

*“Lip Service”*  
*A one-act play for Big Read – 2020*

---

**By Judi Christy**

## CHARACTERS:

DAD                    Old man (an average Joe)  
                          Dress: Grandpa clothes and Cleveland Indians baseball cap

DAUGHTER        40s Attractive, up-to-date in dress

### SET DESIGN:

Older person's living room. Arm chair (recliner would be great!); TV tray or lamp stand piled with prescription bottles, newspapers, TV Guide, coffee cup "World's Greatest Dad." Channel changer (remote). Secondary chair or couch.

TV (not facing audience) – flickering if possible to show it's ON.

### OPENING SCENE:

Stage IS dark, with the exception of flickering TV, if possible.

TV "SOUNDS" OF AN INDIAN'S BASEBALL GAME PLAYING AT ALMOST DEAFENING PITCH.  
LOUD!

### LIGHTS UP.

On stage ... DAD is watching TV, totally engrossed.

Off stage, sound of someone ringing the doorbell and banging on the door. Persistent ... There may be a dog barking at the sound of the bell or the banging. No reaction, whatsoever from DAD – except to maybe to what's happening on the TV screen that audience cannot see.

On the other side of the door, we hear, fumbling with keys, something drop – possibly break.

### DAUGHTER

Dammit.

DAUGHTER finally gets into the door – which she has used a key to unlock. Upon entry, she is fumbling with grocery bag, maybe an umbrella. Grocery bag should include boxes sticking up (that audience can see) of Fiber One, Raisin Bran, – etc.

DAD remains oblivious to anyone being in the house. DAUGHTER sets groceries down and moves into the room where dad still is watching the blaring TV with Cleveland Indians game.

### DAUGHTER, cheerfully.

Hi Dad.

No reaction from Dad.

DAUGHTER, raising voice.

Hey, Dad. It's me. You know ...  
... Your favorite daughter.

Again, no reaction.

DAUGHTER finally walks over in front of the TV.  
Lifts her eyebrows and waves ecstatically in DAD's direction.  
She takes hold of the remote and MUTES the set.

DAD (surprised!)

Hey. I didn't know you were here.  
Did you let yourself in?

DAUGHTER, smiling

Well, no. Actually, Cha-Chee, that little rat dog you have as a pet, heard my pleas for help and came over with a bobby pin, slid it right under the door and talked me through the steps of how to jimmy a lock.

DAD

Oh that's good. I always liked that Jimmy. Damn shame he had so many freckles. Poor kid.

DAUGHTER

Seriously DAD. I can't believe you didn't hear me knocking. I was banging on the door for over 5 minutes.

DAD, gesturing to TV

Oh don't get me started. The five Indians that they have playing on the field – are worthless. That lousy G.D. team is nothing but a bunch of over-paid cry-babies.

DAUGHTER

I take it Cleveland's losing again. What's the score?

DAD JUST STARES BLANKLY AT HER.

DAUGHTER TRIES AGAIN.

DAUGHTER

The score. Who's winning?

DAD

Aw. The **winter**'s no better either. We got those good for nothing Browns. Another bunch of stinking crybabies... And that Coach. A freak in' idiot. They're all paid too G.D. much for doing nothing ... if you ask me.

DAUGHTER, brightened

Oh ... speaking of pay, Dad ... Larry got a big promotion! Everyone on his team was really rooting for him.

DAD, pointing at the TV set

Gluten, you say. Well, I don't know anything about that. I've always eaten anything that I wanted to eat. Now they come out with this whole *GLUTEN* garbage – what a load of horse manure.

(Pause)

You didn't bring over that Low Fat cottage cheese again, did you? I had to throw out the whole container. So wasteful ... the dog wouldn't even eat it.

DAUGHTER

Of course not, she prefers the taste of her own poop.

DAD

If you want a **pop** – you don't have to ask me for Pete's sake. There's an open can of Pepsi in the fridge. Help yourself.

DAUGHTER, under her breath

If only I could.

A MOMENT PASSES AS THEY WATCH, LISTEN TO TV GAME

DAD

So how's Larry? Is he still working for that same bunch of morons?

DAUGHTER

Well yes, he is Dad. I think I just told you that they just give him big promotion and a big raise.

DAD, looking disgusted  
Well Ray's always been no good. I told your sister not to get mixed up with him. But do you think she ever listened?

DAUGHTER, chuckling

Pretty doubtful -- Listening was never really our thing.

DAD

What?

DAUGHTER, playing

What?

DAD

What?

DAUGHTER, playing

I was saying that we don't listen to each other very well. You know...

DAD just sits quietly and watches the TV ... reacts to TV and basically ignores daughter, who straightens room, put stuff away.

DAD calls to her as if she was talking

No thanks, I'm not ready for dinner ... but if you want something, go help yourself. I think we have some potato sticks, a can or two of split pea soup and maybe an open pack of Little Debbie's in there somewhere.

I'm not hungry. I had me a couple of prunes and a big glass of Ovaltine before the game started, but you go ahead and eat what you want. And don't forget about that Pepsi ... it's been open in there a few days. Someone should drink it before it goes flat.

DAUGHTER

Oh, I'm okay. But, I'm just putting away a few groceries to tide you over.

DAD, gestures to TV

Well, what good would a tie be?

In baseball, it's useless. If they tie the game, then they'd have to just go into extra innings -- and with these guys, we'd never end up on top.

DAUGHTER

Well, speaking of being on top – *in the not ever awkward way that a daughter may use this phrase with her father ...* Larry is now in charge of the whole Packaging Department! He oversees the whole procedure.

DAD, agitated

Now, don't go getting started with me about any dang procedure. My colon is crystal clear and I'm not about to have any GD doctor put his fingers up my GD rectum.

DAUGHTER, amused.

Rectum. Now that's a great word.

DAD

What are you mumbling about?

DAUGHTER

I was just saying that besides your healthy rectum – how have you been feeling? Any more problems with your back?

DAD

Yea, Uncle Mort's due back on Sunday some time. Thank the Lord he didn't make me go down to Florida with him. That wife of his is deafer than a GD door nail—

It's always What? What? What? What?

DAUGHTER, mimicking

What?

DAD

Huh?

DAUGHTER, smiling

Nothing.

BOTH SIT QUIETLY AND WATCH THE GAME FOR A MOMENT. NOT LOOKING AT EACH OTHER.

DAUGHTER

So Uncle Mort's coming back on Sunday, right?

NO RESPONSE. DAD STILL “listening” TO THE GAME.

DAUGHTER, playful

Well, that leaves you only a few more precious days alone. What are you gonna do with yourself?

Maybe you have some big plans with that widow who always flirts with you at ACME. I could give her a **call** if you want.

DAD

Oh, you don't have to **call** me. I hate talking on the phone anyway. People never speak clearly enough. Always mumbling, making no sense. Drives a man crazy.

DAUGHTER – perusing the bottles  
of prescriptions on the lamp stand

Well, speaking of crazy, I might be able to have Ray – your favorite son-in-law, hook you up with some high powered and very **illegal** narcotics – you know to add to your already impressive collection of prescription **medications**. I think you have one of every color here.

DAD

Well, it's not that I'm so concerned about people's color ... but the thing that really frosts my flakes is those **illegal aliens** coming into this country and not bothering to learn the GD English language. It's completely ridiculous.

They need communicate with us not the other way around, I tell you.

DAUGHTER

Good point, Dad.

It's really important for people to speak the same language ... and even more important, at least in my opinion, that they **HEAR** the same language.

Know what I mean?

DAD

Huh?

DAUGHTER

Oh nothing. I wasn't saying anything important.

DAD turns focus back to the TV game.

DAUGHTER after a moment of silence

Well I know you said you're not hungry, but why don't you let me fix you a cup of tea.  
How about it?

DAD,

Totally ignores her, but reacts HAPPILY to baseball game

Did you see that? A double play.

Well, Halleluiah. It's about GD time!

DAUGHTER, looking at clock/her watch

Yes, I believe it is time.

So DAD, you have my number by the phone and Larry's cell phone number in the little book on the table. Please call if you need anything – day or night. I can be here in 30 minutes.

DAD

Oh no. They're *well* past the third inning. This game's almost over.

DAUGHTER, (sigh) resigned, kisses top of DAD's head

I love you, DAD

She walks out the door. At the click ...

DAD (smiling, amused?)

I love you too, Little Girl.

DAD takes hold of the remote so game gets REALLY loud.

Before set fades to black.