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MY AUNT LUCY

by

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CHARACTERS

MITCHELLHigh School Teacher & Vice Principal, age 48

AUNT LUCY Mitchell's mother's sister, age 65

RITA Mitchell's girlfriend, age 42

CAITLIN Mitchell's daughter, age 17

The Youngblood family open living room with dinner table in San Diego County,
California

Time is mid-December 2017

SCENE ONE

(Sunny Monday morning. Early December. Aunt Lucy rolls out her suitcase from off stage)

AUNT LUCY

Was that the doorbell?

(Pause. Confused. She sets her luggage by the living room wall)

I hate Jehovah Witnesses. Are they out here? You know they take hidden pictures of you with spy neckties.

(Pause)

Selling Girl Scout cookies? Samoas?

(Pause)

Mitchell?

(Pause)

It could be FedEx.

(Pause)

Could be UPS.

(Pause)

It could be a subpoena. Did you skip jury duty again?

(Pause)

You do get deliveries to your door in North County?

(Pause)

Mitchell? Are deaf?

(Pause)

You know these wildfires are approaching Mesa College by the 805?

(Pause)

You know you fucking snore, Mitchell.

MITCHELL

No.

AUNT LUCY

Louder than a lumber mill saw.

MITCHELL

I don't snore.

AUNT LUCY

Are you saying that I snore?

MITCHELL

No. Would you please stop using the F bomb?

AUNT LUCY

What are you saying?

MITCHELL

I'm not saying anything. I heard no noise last night.

AUNT LUCY

Are you saying your dog snores?

MITCHELL

I told you. I don't have the dog anymore.

AUNT LUCY

You don't?

MITCHELL

My wife has custody of the dog.

AUNT LUCY

Impossible. That dog slept with you. You loved that Golden Retriever.

MITCHELL

I still love the dog.

AUNT LUCY

What's his name – Fluffy?

MITCHELL

The dog's name is Cezanne. Like the painter.

AUNT LUCY

Isn't that a little pretentious, my darling nephew.

MITCHELL

Barbara named him. I just paid the vet fees.

AUNT LUCY

(Sarcastic)
Oh, I see . . .

MITCHELL

She has a very good lawyer.

AUNT LUCY

And you don't?

MITCHELL

That's right. I hired the junior varsity attorney by mistake, and I got the turtle. The turtle died.

AUNT LUCY

The turtle died?

MITCHELL

I don't know how to feed a turtle.

AUNT LUCY

Why don't you have a good lawyer?

MITCHELL

It's better to have a good priest than a good lawyer.

AUNT LUCY

Why?

MITCHELL

You know.

AUNT LUCY

It's better to have a bad priest than a bad lawyer. You got no fight in you. Or you're too cheap to get the best legal representation. And you're paying Barbara's attorney's fees too?

MITCHELL

Only for the first six months.

AUNT LUCY

You're getting reamed. Mitchell. Mitchell. Mitchell. I'll help you find your alpha male.
(She opens the front door and looks outside quickly)

MITCHELL

Maybe there's a package on the doorstep, Lucy.

AUNT LUCY

(Picks up a small package and closes the door)
And why the hell did you move this far from the coast?

MITCHELL

It's affordable and near the school.
(He takes possession of the package)

AUNT LUCY

But this is like the bible belt with all these Jesus signs.

MITCHELL

Jesus likes north county.

AUNT LUCY

(laughing)

Does Jesus golf? Does he laugh at water hazards?

(Pause)

I mean, your zip code is full of zealots. Your PTA meetings must be a riot of fun.

MITCHELL

My high school still teaches science – if that’s any reassurance.

AUNT LUCY

Twenty-five years ago, your school board ordered discussions of divine creation be included in every classroom.

MITCHELL

It was a close vote, Lucy.

AUNT LUCY

If your Vista community doesn’t believe in science, they all might as well walk on all fours.

MITCHELL

You’re nothing like your sister.

AUNT LUCY

That’s *so true*. Your mother was a saint, an innocent flower, and well educated.

MITCHELL

I wish you were.

AUNT LUCY

Wish I was what? I am well educated.

MITCHELL

I wish you were half a saint.

AUNT LUCY

If wishes were fishes.

MITCHELL

If fishes were wishes.

AUNT LUCY

I'm no sin-free saint, thank God.

MITCHELL

This is our dwindling family, Lucy.

AUNT LUCY

Yes, Mitchell.

MITCHELL

Maybe you can try to be a saint until you make your flight.

AUNT LUCY

I never wore a halo, Mitchell, never wore a G string either. But that doesn't mean I'm thoroughly bad. And you'll never visit me in Ohio. I have to come here to maintain ties.

(Laughs)

Which car are you going to sell?

MITCHELL

The Mercedes. Mom's car.

AUNT LUCY

And keep the Lexus?

(Pause)

Look, I'll book a plane the end of the week. Okay?

MITCHELL

Sure.

AUNT LUCY

Your governor declared a state of emergency in Ventura and L.A. Counties two days ago and today, San Diego County. These wildfires are getting scary. Why the hell doesn't San Diego County have more than two fire helicopters?

MITCHELL

Santa Ana winds are unpredictable, Aunt Lucy. Let's keep vigilant.

AUNT LUCY

I am vigilant, darling boy. I packed my suitcase in case we have to evacuate.

(Pause)

You think I've overstayed my welcome?

MITCHELL

Don't make me answer that.

AUNT LUCY

How rude.

MITCHELL

You used to like hotels.

AUNT LUCY

I never liked hotels, Mitchell. Especially Marriott's – fucking Mormons. They own the corporation and wear magic underwear. How did you convince my sister to move into Assisted Living?

MITCHELL

She needed bed checks and a nurse. Her condition wasn't getting better.

AUNT LUCY

But a Jewish facility?

MITCHELL

She liked Jews. She like playing Mah Jong. I became more religious than she ever was.

AUNT LUCY

Jews play Mah Jong?

(Watching him review papers at the dining room table)
More headaches?

MITCHELL

It's the biggest invoice I received. Burials are more expensive than weddings.

AUNT LUCY

Take your time with each payment.

MITCHELL

Yes.

AUNT LUCY

Catholic mortuaries are notorious for late billing. How are you holding up, nephew?

MITCHELL

Mourning takes time. She's better off now.

AUNT LUCY

You don't believe in heaven.

MITCHELL

Of course not. But Mom did. She thought there would be free WiFi when she arrived.

AUNT LUCY

Did you ever believe in a Jesus? A white Jesus with blue eyes?

MITCHELL

Lucy . . .

AUNT LUCY

Aunt Lucy. Jesus was dark skinned, kinky long hair, irresistibly handsome, highly sexual at large banquets, and a troublemaker with money changers.

(pause)

Everyone knows this but the Vatican and the Republican Party. Jesus lived in the desert and he was good building with his hands. Everyone in Bethlehem and Nazareth was dark skinned. He didn't live in Utah according to most biblical historians.

MITCHELL

When are you going back to Columbus?

AUNT LUCY

It's still snowing in Ohio, Mitch. I don't love snow in Buckeye.

MITCHELL

Who's watching your home?

AUNT LUCY

A neighbor. Frederico. I call him Fred. Fred with the five-inch tumor in his head. Fred Head. Benign tumor but it messes with his hair. I dated him for a year. Mitchell. He's a few years younger than me but he loves my personality and loved giving me oral sex. That's what he said. We went to bed on the first night, Mitchell.

MITCHELL

I don't need details.

AUNT LUCY

Do you think women my age are not erotically active? Fred's keeping my house warm so the pipes don't freeze. He's a pipe guy, Mitchell. Fred bought a diamond ring and proposed. I told him that I don't last in marriage. Told him that I was married four times. And my husbands either die or lose all their money. He didn't care about my past. And he didn't care about dying young or losing money. Fred's the epitome of Ohio. Salt of the earth. I told him that I was a white-collar crook.

MITCHELL

Why do you embellish? Why do you lie to him?

AUNT LUCY

I didn't lie. I was once charged with misappropriations.

MITCHELL

Misappropriations?

AUNT LUCY

No big deal. Sloppy CPA audit. I was acquitted and received a big Christmas bonus for the unnecessary embarrassment. A colossal misunderstanding.

MITCHELL

What?

AUNT LUCY

I was the bookkeeper for a multi-city philanthropy. The organization meant well. We did good work for the public even if the endowment came from killer capitalists. Mitchell, you must know that sometimes a little voice goes off inside our heads late at night.

MITCHELL

What little voice?

AUNT LUCY

“I deserve a gift. I am underpaid. The 1% controls 99% of American wealth.”
You know the story.

MITCHELL

I don't know the story.

AUNT LUCY

Since the funeral, you really are in a state of shock. And you've lost a lot of weight.

MITCHELL

I can afford to lose some pounds. Have you been drinking?

AUNT LUCY

Sweetie, I'm a sophisticate and I drink after 5pm, but you look at me like I'm the paragon of debauchery. No one uses the word paragon anymore, have you noticed?

(She picks up a book off the coffee table)
Are you reading Walker Percy now?

MITCHELL

I like him, yes.

AUNT LUCY

He's too Catholic for me.

MITCHELL

He has other virtues.

AUNT LUCY

I only know *The Moviegoer*.

MITCHELL

Great novel. Glad you read it.

AUNT LUCY

His father committed suicide.

MITCHELL

I know.

AUNT LUCY

Like your father. When you were 13.

MITCHELL

Yes.

AUNT LUCY

If you like these guilt-ridden Catholic novelists, why not stick with top draw Graham Greene?

MITCHELL

Greene's not a Catholic novelist. Strictly speaking.

AUNT LUCY

Well, more than Philip Roth or Cynthia Ozick, for Christsakes. And of the two Jews, I really can't stand Ozick, sweetie. She has no sense of humor whatsoever! At least Roth tells a good, raunchy joke.

MITCHELL

Were you charged with embezzlement?

AUNT LUCY

Oh sweetie. Not exactly charged. I was brought in for questioning. And being charged doesn't mean being indicted. Big distinction. I hired a witty Irish lawyer. The case was dropped. I won a small settlement to boot. I love Irish lawyers with a hint of red hair.

(Laughing)

Vermont has the most embezzlement cases. Followed by D.C. and West Virginia. And it pays to be falsely accused when you can slam back a defamation of character suit.

MITCHELL

I never know when you're joking.

AUNT LUCY

Darling, I'm not joking. Defamation wins are like lottery payoffs.

MITCHELL

You are joking.

AUNT LUCY

You'll know when I'm joking when you see my eyebrows knit and link together like Frida Kahlo. There's a thin line between stealing and daydreaming. A thinner line between joking and truth telling. A thinner line between clean and dirty money. I had trouble with my financial liquidity, but those days are fading.

MITCHELL

Do I need to loan you money again?

AUNT LUCY

Only if it will make you happy, darling. Do I make you happy?

(He frowns)

I paid you back two years ago. With interest. And if you forget a future debt, as many good people do, a loan isn't a loan but paying it forward.

MITCHELL

You know I'm saddled with spousal and child support.

AUNT LUCY

Of course I know. I read body language. Your shoulders stoop like Kung Fu Panda.

MITCHELL

Aunt Lucy, I'm getting crushed.

AUNT LUCY

But in time, Barbara – that sexy heartless succubus from Secaucus - will marry some jackass and be off your fucking back. For a Jersey girl in her early 50s, she's attractive, Mitch, and always at spin class to keep her ass tighter than a drum. She had work done on her eyes and nose. I'm sure she's blowing guys every weekend.

MITCHELL

Don't say that.

AUNT LUCY

Don't say that she's played around or that her ass is tight?

MITCHELL

It's insulting.

AUNT LUCY

Insulting? To her? To your family?

MITCHELL

To everyone.

AUNT LUCY

Marriage isn't a natural state for healthy adults. It's an instrument of torture from the Middle Ages. That's why priests don't wed. They prefer sexual freedom.

(A quick, sweet smile)

You think it's the only way to be legit and have heirs. Soon the GOP will take away the marriage tax deduction, but will remove the death tax. What more is there to think about? We're really randy wildebeests on the plains of the great Serengeti.

(Rita enters with her own key to the house)

AUNT LUCY

Good morning, Rosa.

RITA

Rita.

AUNT LUCY

Good morning, Rita.

RITA

Good morning, Lucy.

AUNT LUCY

Aunt Lucy.

(awkward silence)

What are your thoughts on marriage?

(fixing her bra strap without embarrassment)

You're up early.

RITA

The wildfires are spreading according to my phone. This morning, near Chula Vista, Route 54 and Interstate 805.

(Smiles stiffly)

I'm beyond anxious.

AUNT LUCY

Pop a Xanax. I always carry a few.

RITA

I avoid prescription drugs. That's why I struggle with insomnia.

AUNT LUCY

(Looking at Mitchell)
Whose fault is that?

RITA

Nobody's fault.
(Big fake smile)
We spend several nights apart. It's easier that way.

AUNT LUCY

I won't comment. I might drop an F bomb. But I like what you've done to your hair.

RITA

Color or the cut?

AUNT LUCY

It looks thicker. Color's good. I thought you did a weave or nuanced extension.

RITA

Oh Lucy, you're a laugh riot.

MITCHELL

Yes.

RITA

Nothing like Mitch's mother.

AUNT LUCY

If I can make you laugh that gives me great joy. Do you have children, Rita?

RITA

Yes. They're grown. Out of the house.

AUNT LUCY

Do you miss them?

RITA

No. I see them every other month.

AUNT LUCY

Mitch misses his daughter.

RITA

Yes, I know. And she needs a much better role model.

AUNT LUCY

Don't we all? Phyllis Diller was my North Star.

RITA

Caitlin's mother stopped going to AA three years ago. Poor Mitchell.

AUNT LUCY

Yes, *poor* Mitchell. He's a nurturing male with an extra Y chromosome, and there are only 5% in captivity.

MITCHELL

You're talking as if I'm not in the room.

AUNT LUCY

I see you, darling. We're talking a very slight population base, Rita. That's why he's such a good high school teacher.

RITA

Actually, he's the the vice principal of the school, Lucy.

AUNT LUCY

Really?

MITCHELL

Yes. Two months ago.

RITA

A promotion.

(Her attempt at sugar-coated irony)

He has great rapport with teenagers . . . except for Caitlin.

AUNT LUCY

Climbing up in the world, are you?

MITCHELL

Administration roles pay more. Every nickel counts.

AUNT LUCY

You're going to get a lovely inheritance, Mitchell. You can quit the school and start a bed and breakfast in Carmel near Clint Eastwood's mansion.

RITA

Is that right?

AUNT LUCY

My sister liked to buy high end foreclosures and she had keen sense. And I love Clint.