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The Opposite of Hoarding

A woman asks for a little independence from her husband of nearly twenty years.

Characters

MONA: Taking a leap away from "just a housewife."

BLUE STEW: Mona's husband, a creature happy with routine.

MULCH: Their son, takes after Blue Stew, a lazy dreamer.

(BLUE STEW, 40-ish, watches TV with his teen-aged son MULCH. Enter MONA, wife and mother – and ready for more from life. She kisses her husband who barely notices.)

MONA

(Gently.) Blue Stew, honey, I want a divorce.

BLUE STEW

(Only half-listening.) And I want a glow-in-the-dark Lamborghini that runs on lawn clippings, with a beer-scented air freshener. What's for supper?

MONA

Come on! Please. You don't have to move out. And you can still "fool around" with me - when I'm drunk. I just want my name back.

BLUE STEW

You still have your name. You never lost it. "Desdemona," since the day you were born. Your mom came from a different class of people.

MULCH

Desdemona? Is that your name? It sounds like an angel.

BLUE STEW

Mulch, don't encourage her.

MONA

Except everyone in your father's family calls me Mona. With his last name tacked on, Mona Everhardt sounds like a porno queen. I want a *pretty* name. I want the name I was born with.

BLUE STEW

Well, that name don't exist anymore. It's been taken out of circulation, retired like Wayne Gretzky's number 99. There's no going back. Besides, names aren't nothing. They're just a way to get the right person's attention when you're in a crowded place, when it's just confusing to yell, "Hey, you!"

MONA

I don't believe you.

MULCH

Hey, Dad, can I have a divorce, too?

BLUE STEW

What do *you* want a divorce for?

MULCH

I've seen it on TV. Sometimes you get money, like when the judge finds "in your favor."

BLUE STEW

You want money out of me? Mulch, really? You should pay *me* for the roof over your head.

MULCH

You mean the roof you inherited from Grandma?

BLUE STEW

Does anybody else in this house want a divorce? Somebody find the dog. Ask that old hound dog if he wants a divorce. Maybe we can get a group rate. You got to pay lawyers, you know, to file the paperwork, to put it all down in legalese.

MULCH

What about the lawyer that married you? Is he still around?

BLUE STEW

What lawyer? To get married, you just need a motivating incident, like a father-in-law with a shotgun, or "one in the oven," and God's everlasting blessing. It's like wrinkles and gray hair; it just sort of happens. What on earth makes you want a divorce now, after all these years?

MONA

Cause we're approaching our 20th anniversary. And I don't want to. I don't want to have twenty years, because that sounds like you can't get out of it, when you get to twenty. That's a never-get-out-of-it date.

BLUE STEW

And nineteen was different? How come nineteen wasn't never-get-out-of-it?

MONA

I don't know. There's just something about twenty. Maybe because I was twenty when I married you. Maybe because Lizzie just turned twenty.

BLUE STEW

You been listening to your sister again? If we get divorced, who's going to mother our children?

MONA

I can still mother them without being married to you.

BLUE STEW

Mulch, what do you think about your mom moving out?

MULCH

No more making my bed. No more curfew. Sounds like heaven.

BLUE STEW

Where you going to live, the Howard Johnsons?

MONA

I can find a place. There's a halfway house in town, for unwed mothers.

BLUE STEW

Yeah, but you *are* wed.

MONA

But I'll be unwed when we get divorced.

BLUE STEW

I think they mean mothers who never had a husband. You've *had* a husband.

MONA

At least you're seeing it my way.

BLUE STEW

How's that?

MONA

Had: past tense. It's over.

BLUE STEW

This isn't because Wiley Hitchens is finally between wives, is it?

MONA

What Wiley "Coyote" Hitchens does in the bedroom is *his* business. This isn't about him. This is about opportunities. I want a life with less housecleaning and more dancing.

BLUE STEW

You want me to end up like those hoarders on TV, is that what you want, with clutter piling up everywhere?

MONA

If that's what happens.

BLUE STEW

You'd never be a hoarder, not you, collect everything and not let go.

MONA

My father didn't raise no packrat.

BLUE STEW

Even though you already collected a house and a family and a life.

MONA

I don't want to collect no more husbands.

BLUE STEW

Well, you only got a collection of one.

MONA

In your case, one is one too many.

MULCH

Can you two continue this during a commercial?

MONA

I don't think a commercial is going to be enough time. I just don't.

BLUE STEW

Can we talk about it at bedtime then? "All roads lead to bed," the man said. We're still going to the same place, ain't we?

MONA

I was thinking that we *wouldn't* be going to the same place.

BLUE STEW

Well, where you going to sleep? We only got two bedrooms in the house. And I am *not* sleeping on the couch.

MONA

You were sleeping on it fifteen minutes ago, "watching the news." Seemed pretty comfortable

then.

BLUE STEW

You know I'm a sensitive guy. Sometimes news can be overwhelming. I can hear it, but I can't see it. I can do one or the other. If I hear it *and* I see it, then I have nightmares. So, if I just hear it, then I stay current, but I can still sleep at night.

MULCH

Hey, Mom, I'll divorce you.

MONA

You have to be married to me first, Mulch.

MULCH

Well, I'll marry you, then divorce you.

MONA

It just doesn't work that way, son.

MULCH

You know anyone in town I can marry so I can divorce them? Mom?

MONA

I'm going to bed. Don't wake me.

BLUE STEW

Happy anniversary.

MONA

It's not for three weeks yet.

BLUE STEW

You're not going to want flowers, are you? I hate the way they smell up the house.

MONA

A card will be fine. But. . .

BLUE STEW

But. . .

MONA

I just need to get you an address to send it to – *Because I won't be here!*

(BLACKOUT.)