

LAMERLE

AUBREY

P 13-14

Scene 3

*Moments later, lights up downstage right on Uncle Aubrey's house — a table, chair, and a small trashcan. A purse stuffed with envelopes and documents is open on the table. LaMerle Verdeen Minshew, well-dressed, self-serving, sharp-tongued, hurriedly folds clean laundry. Uncle Aubrey Verdeen, good-natured, oxygen-dependent patriarch of the family, with a nasal cannula attached to his ever-present oxygen tank on wheels, enters from stage right.*

LAMERLE. Well, Uncle Aubrey! Look who's up at the crack of noon! (*Pointedly.*) Must be nice living a life of *sloth* and *leisure*!

AUBREY. What brought you here, LaMerle? And does it have a *reverse*? (*Re: laundry.*) What's your rush? In a hurry to meet your posse down at the biker bar? (*Cackles happily.*)

LAMERLE. (*Glowers, then with fervor.*) I say yea verily, the tongue of evil shall not steer me from the path of salvation! Hallelujah! And you'll be laughing out of the other side of your mouth, Aubrey Verdeen, when I become a deacon down at my new church. Everyone in town will be talking about how I'm full of righteousness!

AUBREY. Everyone already talks about what you're full of, LaMerle, but righteousness ain't got nothin' to do with it! (*Cackles happily.*)

LAMERLE. Very funny, Spawn of Satan, but the last three people elected mayor of this town were all deacons at the Assembly of Sanctified Souls.

AUBREY. Well, if anyone's ever deserved to have the letters A.S.S. beside her name, it's *you*.

LAMERLE. Don't I know it! I've got all the awards and documentation of my civic good works right there in my purse to take to the elders. They choose the new deacon next week. (*A rumble is heard offstage. They react.*) And if my plan works, we won't be forced to listen to *that racket* anymore.

AUBREY. Yeah, ol' Kajur Langley's one happy fracker. He's the King of Gas and with the money he's makin', nobody's gonna stop him.

LAMERLE. We'll just see about that. I refuse to spend the rest of my life straightening my Thomas Kinkades every time the ground shakes from all that pumping. It's my godly duty to save Sweetgum from this destruction.

AUBREY. "Godly duty" my hind foot! I know what you're up to. You want to be mayor so you can get a piece of Kajur Langley's frackin' action!

LAMERLE. My only *ambition* is to raise the Verdeen family name up from the ooze you seem determined to drag it into. So until I'm named deacon, leave the women of Sweetgum alone! No cavorting around like an old fool!

AUBREY. Hey, when you're a stud, it's hard to keep the fillies away.

LAMERLE. (*Gasps. Holds up a pair of boxers printed with sexy graphics.*) What is *this*?! See here?! *Exactly* what I'm talking about. (*Whaps him with boxers.*) Shame and filth! You hear me, Sinner? I shudder to think what disgusting thing you're wearing this minute.

AUBREY. (*Looks down the front of his pants.*) Nothin'. I'm goin' commando! Need proof?

LAMERLE. No! Nobody wants to see that! *God* doesn't even want to see that! (*Throws the boxers in the trash.*) You sullyng the Verdeen name carrying on with old women of easy virtue; and Gaynelle, Peaches, and Jimmie Wyvette behaving like street trash is reprehensible. I'm pulling this family up, come hell or high water! Now, I'm on my way to meet with the elders. Wait! My glasses. (*Turns around and searches. Aubrey pulls the boxers out of the trash and slips them into LaMerle's purse.*) Right here on my head! (*Grabs purse.*) Far be it from me to be vain, but the elders are gonna be some kind of surprised when they see what I've got in here. (*Pats purse and exits stage left.*)

AUBREY. They certainly will! (*Cackles happily and pulls a flask from his pocket.*) But not half as surprised as *you're* gonna be! (*Lifts his flask in a toast, drinks, and cackles again. Blackout.*)