

THE GINGERBREAD LADY

By: Neil Simon

TOBY

Well, good morning.

EVY

That's entirely possible.

TOBY

Do you know what time it is?

EVY

November?

TOBY

Evy! I refuse to talk to your unbrushed hair all morning. Turn around and look at me.
Oh God... your eye.

EVY&

You want to be my friend, Toby, no questions and no sympathy. I'm alright.
Where's Polly?

TOBY

She's been up all night calling everyone. You don't seem to be acting much like a
woman who just got beaten up.

EVY

I didn't get beaten, Toby, just punched. One clean, little punch, I never felt it.

TOBY

Really? Have you seen what you look like?

EVY

Compared to you, what difference does it make? ... I'm alright, I promise you.

TOBY

Sit down, let me put some ice on it.

EVY

I've already had medical attention. A dog licked my face while I was down.

TOBY

Who did it?

EVY

What difference does it make?

TOBY

Because I feel responsible.

EVY

Come on, Toby. I got what I asked for last night because I wasn't getting anything else.
Alright. I'm sitting. Are you happy now?

TOBY

How can I be happy when your face is half smashed in? How many places did you have
to go before you found what you were looking for?

EVY

Just one. If there's one thing I know how to do, it's shop.

TOBY

It was Lou Tanner, wasn't it?

EVY

That's him. The man I love.

TOBY

Jesus, I knew it. There was always something about him that frightened me. You could
see it in his eyes.

EVY

Never mind the eyes, it's the big fist you gotta watch... I wouldn't hate you if you left me
alone now, Toby.

TOBY

Why did you go there, Evy?

EVY

He plays requests, I was lonesome.

TOBY

Why did you start drinking yesterday? Everything was going so good for you. Why,
Evy?

EVY

What did you want, a nice, simple answer? When I was six years old my father didn't
take me to the circus. ...How the hell do I know why I do anything?

TOBY

Didn't you learn anything in ten weeks at the hospital?

EVY

The doctor tried to explain but I was too busy making a pass at him... If I knew, Toby, would it make any difference?

TOBY

It would help.

EVY

If you haven't eaten in three months you don't want a description of food, you want a little hot something in the plate.

TOBY

And did you get your fill last night, Evy? Did you get your little hot something in the plate?

EVY

No, but we negotiated...

TOBY

With someone like that? A deadbeat musician who doesn't give a damn about hitting some drucken woman.

EVY

You just don't get hit like that, you gotta ask for it...I happened to make a bad choice. I broke his guitar. I smashed it against the refrigerator, handed him the pieces and said, "Now you can look for work you're equipped to do." I thought it was cute, the man has no sense of humor.

TOBY

The truth. Evy. When he was beating you, did you enjoy it?

EVY

Well, for a second there I said to myself, it hurts like hell – but it sure beats indifference. Is there anything in the kitchen? I'm always hungry after a fight.

TOBY

What fight? There was no fight. You just stood there and let him beat the crap out of you. The way you let everybody beat the crap out of you.

EVY

Same as you. Only Marty doesn't punch, he just walks out on you. You're no better off than I am.

TOBY

At least my face isn't beaten to a pulp.

EVY

Terrific. You spent forty years being gorgeous and all you've got to show for it is a turned up little nose. We cried for you yesterday, today is my turn.

TOBY

At least I've *tried* to make things work. I've at least made the *effort*.

EVY

The only effort you make is opening your compact. If you powered Marty once in a while instead of your face, you'd be wearing *his* pajamas now instead of yours.

TOBY

Go to hell. I powered my Goddamned face because I was afraid every time Marty looked at me to closely. Afraid he'd see what I was becoming.

EVY

Toby, you know I love you. We're the same kind of broads. We both manage to screw up everything ... The only difference is, you dressed better doing it.

TOBY

Damn you, Evy. Damn you for being so Goddamned honest all the time. Who needs the truth if this is what it gets you?

EVY

Listen, I'm willing to live a lie. As far as I'm concerned, I'm twenty-two with a cute little behind.

TOBY

You're not twenty-two, you're an alcoholic with no sense of mortality or responsibility. You've never had a lasting relationship with anyone who wasn't as weak or as helpless as yourself. So you have friends like Jimmy and me. We all hold each other up because none of us has the strength to do it alone. I know what I am, Evy. I don't like it and I never have. I use little makeup jars, you use quart bottles ... and poor Jimmy uses a little of both... But by some strange miracle, in there – is a girl who is crazy in love with you because she's too young to know any better... The way I see it, you've got two choices: Either get a book on how to be a mature, responsible person... or get her out of here before you destroy her chance to become one... That's the first time in my entire life I ever told anyone off. I think I'm going to be sick. Don't hate me, Evy. Tell me you don't hate me.

EVY

Hate you? I'm having trouble seeing you.

TOBY

Come on, let me put something on your disgusting eye.

EVY

Go on home.

TOBY

I can't. Marty's still there collecting some papers and things.

EVY

You want to take some advice from a drunk? Go home, wash the crap off your face, put on a sloppy housedress and bring him a TV dinner. What the hell could you lose?

TOBY

Nothing... Wouldn't it be funny if you were right?

EVY

Of course I'm right. I'm always right. That's how I got where I am today.

TOBY

Jesus, I suddenly hate my face ... What I'd love to do is get rid of the Goddamned thing.

EVY

No, you don't. You're going to send it to me by messenger. *This* lady is still in trouble.

TOBY

I'm going. I'm scared to death, but I'm going ... Look, Evy. Look at he pretty old lady.

EVY

You'll love it. Little boys'll help you across the street.

TOBY

I'll call you from home later. I have to stop off first and blow up my beauty parlor.