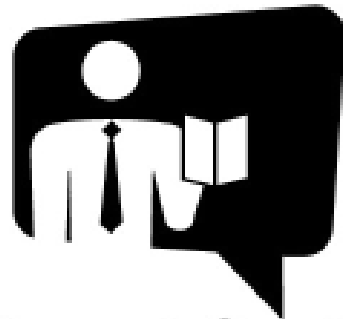


SpeechGeek



Season Seven: Winter 2010



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There's a chill in the air this time of year.

Whether it's at the big football game on Friday night huddled under a blanket with friends, on a hay ride at the local pumpkin patch with jacket and scarf, or barely awake in suit and top-coat on the way to a speech tournament, this is the time of year to keep warmed up.

That's why **SpeechGeek** releases scripts each August, October, and December.

We want to keep you warmed up for competition at the times you need scripts the most. August: when the year is new. October: when you're getting down to business. December: as you consider change, retooling, or picking up an extra event for second semester.

We'll cover the scripts. You cover the hot chocolate and apple cider.

Corey Alderdice
Publisher

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The Only Way I Know How

by Sean Copelan

(Amanda is in her mid-30's. She is a rising professional who finds looking for love difficult due to her responsibilities with work and with her disabled son, Clay. Amanda should speak to the audience, as the audience should serve as Tom, the man that she is meeting for a blind date she set up through an internet dating site.)

(to audience) Hi! You must be Tom! *(unsure of herself)* Is it Tom? Tom. Hi, Tom, I'm Amanda. *(pushes Clay's wheelchair and pushes the parking break on it)*. And this is Clay. Say, hi to Tom, Clay? Can you say 'hi'? Not today? He's a little shy. *(referencing a question Tom asked)* We turned 12 last month, didn't we? *(Laughs a bit nervously. Amanda notices that Tom has a picnic basket and a bottle of wine. No man has ever done anything so nice for her.)* And, oh my God, you brought flowers. Pink roses, my favorite. Well, would you look at that? That is so sweet. That is really sweet, Tom. Well, let's have dinner, I'm hungry. *(Amanda adjusts Clay to the table.)* Oh, you don't have to worry about getting a table; I will just put him beside me. He's a really picky eater — doesn't generally like high end restaurant cuisine. No, no, no... this is fine... totally fine... I'll grab him something on the way home. *(notices Clay has saliva drooling down his mouth)* Oh, we have a little bit of a mess. *(Tom offers to help Amanda.)* Oh, don't worry about it I can do it. Trust me, if you knew how many times I've cleaned up this kid's drool, you'd run out of this restaurant faster than I could say cerebral palsy! *(beat)* I'm used to it. *(finishes cleaning up Clay)* There we go. We're fine. We're fine. *(puts handkerchief back in purse)* Now, Tom... tell me about yourself.

INTRO

You're a writer? *(Amanda is not impressed but hides her disappointment.)* I see. That's certainly an interesting job. *(Tom asks her occupation.)* Oh, me? I'm a lawyer, actually. So, don't get into an argument with me! *(laughs)* Only kidding. I'm a tax attorney, so it's really not that interesting. *(He questions her profession given the state of her son.)* Clay actually helped me study for the bar exam. He didn't realize it, of course — he was only thirteen months old and my ex-husband had recently left, so it was just Clay, the bar, and me. Some mothers sing to their babies, and I went over my essay answers. It's a weird world! But, you know, I knew I was on the right track if he went to sleep before I was finished with my first essay. Just boring enough to pass...

Isn't that right Clay? *(Clay doesn't respond.)* *(back to Tom)* I'm really sorry for not getting a babysitter; it was just that I wasn't sure if you'd show up or not. Sorry... that came out wrong. I didn't want to pay the money to be stood up. *(realizing what she said)* Not that you would stand me up, it's just that my luck with men hasn't been exactly stellar and I'm rambling and I've probably offended you. I'm sorry. Let's start again. Hi, my name's Amanda and I haven't been on a blind date for quite some time. Who am I kidding? I haven't been on any date for quite some time.

(embarrassed pause) I'm divorced. *(beat)* I'm sure you could probably tell given that I have a kid and am on a date with you. *(beat)* I'm sorry... I'm probably scaring you. Anyway, thank you for taking me to this amazing restaurant. Italian is my favorite... but you probably already knew that from my profile. *(opens menu)* Just so that we're clear. I have never done online dating before. Not that we're dating. Not that we're online right now. Okay, you get my point. I haven't been out with a man outside of Clay for a very long time and I get talky.

So, how about you, Tom? What are your life goals? I bet you are the type of man who is really into his career. You've probably written hundreds and hundreds of books, I'm sure. What is your favorite thing to write on? *(pauses)* Kids? *(pauses)* Oh, disabled kids. That's a funny topic. So, is this like a set up or something... am I research? *(pauses)* Okay. Well, I had to ask. I just get crazy when people have ulterior motives. *(pause)* Do you have a disabled kid, Tom? Oh, you do. Well, then you understand. You know what it's like to go through the trauma of living with a child that has special needs. I used to argue with my doctor... I said... you shouldn't call it special needs; you should call it constant needs. And that's why I hired a full-time nanny. I mean there's no way I could continue my law practice with Clay. It would just be impossible. *(pause)* *(looks to Clay)* And we love our Gina, don't we?

(back to Tom) You know I prayed every night for a baby. I said, "Dear God, please give me a baby. I promise I will be the very best mother and person if you will just give me a baby." And then after months and months and months of trying... I was pregnant. I gained 70 pounds when I was pregnant with Clay. Oh, most horrific experience of my life. I remember, and this is after being huge and hurting all over my body, I remember sitting on the couch crying. And I told Marcus, my ex-husband, I said, "Marcus I lied to God. I don't want a baby anymore; look what the monster has already done to my body, look at what it has done to our marriage. I hate this baby and I haven't even met the damn thing." *(laughs unknowingly that she has officially scared Tom)* *(unbelievably)* But no, you're right... children are a blessing. You have every right to want one of your own. I just hope that you don't have to go through some of the same difficulties that I had to with Clay. I mean it has cost me more than a few sleepless nights, a marriage, and a few boyfriends. *(gestures toward Clay)* Oh, it's fine... he doesn't know we're talking about him. You know, I bet you could handle any situation though. You seem like that type of man... *(sizing him up)* A real man's man that can handle anything anywhere. *(flirtatious)* Can't ya, Tom? You can handle it all... spit up and doctor's appointments and late night seizures. *(pause)* Not like Marcus. Marcus couldn't handle an unpaid water bill much less a child with cerebral palsy. Trust me, the second I pushed out Clay... Marcus was headed for the door. Ever since the doctor said that our child would have special needs, Marcus started to stay later at work. He wouldn't talk much when he did come home. But it's fine. You know that's the way my life was supposed to be, I don't regret it. It's fine. It's just fine.

I'm sorry. I'm just talking your ear off aren't I? You know I have always said, "Thank God my child is mute because I simply have too much to say!" Now let's see here

The Rules of the House

by Jason Harbinger

JOHN.

The Mattingale's called me Mister John. That was the formal way you addressed a butler. That's really what the whole town referred to me as – Butler John. People used to have manners back then, and being a Butler for the richest family in all of Dasher, Georgia gave this ole negro something fancy to hold onto. Butler John - that was how they raised their kids to say it; and then their kids called me that, and then so on and you get the idea. Yes, Butler John, they'd say. It sounded so official, like a lost ranking in the military when comin' out of the mouths of some of them rich white folk.

Butler John! Well, Butler John can't read, or write, or even stand up straight now that this arthritis has done and knocked him over. I blame the toilets. I had to clean their toilets every day. Their filth was all over the place. I didn't know relievin' yourself could be that difficult. All of that work for five dollars a week; they were some cheap son-of-a-guns I tell you...but I didn't do it for the money.

I took care of five people, not includin' myself. Let's see there was Father Mattingale – his real name was Marcus, but he had the whole family, including me, call him Father. If I didn't need my five dollars a week so badly, I would've told *Father Mattingale* that he wasn't no daddy of mine. But, I kept the rules of the house and stayed true to what I was there to do. Ok, now Mrs. Mattingale's name was Evelyn. She was a real good lady. She never treated me like a butler, but more like I was just part of the family. She was always so kind and even offered to help me with my daily chores. I always had to say, "Mrs. Mattingale, you're not paying me to sit around. I got a job to do and I need to do it." She was a little on the shy side, but that's what I liked best about her. She never said too much. And then there was the children. Robert, Natalie, and Violet. Each of them were three years a part in age. I used to always joke with some of the boys at the barber shop that the only time Mr. and Mrs. Mattingale got close to each other was to have them kids. They were nice kids. Always polite. You know I never knew a family that had such nice kids. Always please and thank you – never an ill word about anyone. That was like their mother. They didn't much know their father.

Marcus, excuse me, *Father Mattingale*, was so busy with one court case after another. He never came home until nine in the evening at the earliest. I helped put the children to bed at around eight, and so they were lucky to have seen their father throughout the week. On the weekends Marcus played golf at a local green near Dasher. I

could never tell if Mrs. Mattingale got sad by him leaving or relieved. He was an uptight man who always looked at the clock. He was always in a hurry. Always rushing to find his next appointment, never looking after his loving family. Hell, he didn't know how lucky he was to have that family.

The Mattingale house was really something else to clean. My day usually started out in the garden. Mr. Mattingale would leave the house around seven-thirty in the mornin' and I would make every-one breakfast and then he would leave for the day and I would tend to the garden. I remember like it was yesterday, the air was filled with smell of honeysuckle and the sun was shining so bright. It was May and I was hedging the bushes as requested by Mr. Mattingale. As I had just finished the last of the yardwork, Mrs. Mattingale comes out and brings me a glass of lemonade. I know this is hard to believe, but I've never had anyone wait on me before until that day. See, I was always the one to make other people lemonade. She said, "John, you're working yourself too hard. All the kids are at my sister's today, you need to take a break." Now, still to this day I don't like to take breaks for no one or nobody. I'm a worker, that's what I am and that's what I do. But for some reason on that day, I took a break. And me and Mrs. Mattingale went inside and talked for hours. We talked about everything – town politics, music, she even read me some poetry that she had in her journal. And from that day in May for the next two years, Mrs. Mattingale found time to talk at least three times a week. Sometimes we'd say a little and sometimes we'd say nothing at all and just enjoyed each other's presence.

We never talked about our conversations in front of the kids or Mr. Mattingale. They were private conversations just between the two of us. As time progressed, and as our conversations started getting longer – I started to understand Mrs. Mattingale in a whole new way. She was not just my boss's wife, but my friend. I remember she read me one of her poems about how even though she had a house full of people felt alone on the inside. And I knew how she felt...to be lonely. And I knew that day in May, that Mrs. Mattingale and I had more than just a "special friendship", if you know what I mean. It was love. One unlike any other I'd ever had.

Now, before people start giving me the wrath of God, I will tell you that I never wanted to create harm for their family. But, somewhere in-between our talks over lemonade... I started to have true feelings for her the way I felt for no other woman and she no other man. And that made me happy...because all I've ever wanted my whole life is to help people. And if that's how I helped her, then thanks be to God. It was a lot more fun than cleanin' her toilets.

Attempts at Being a Savior

by Rachel Wigginton

At the time, I didn't really think about it. Everyone I knew went out and partied, and most of us got pretty good grades. We were all forward thinking people, ya' know? Eventually, we knew, we would have to start viewing our current habits as childhood follies. My boyfriend and I called it, "pulling up." Each year, somebody or other would get married, or get promoted, or procreate, and then they started the process of pulling up and steering themselves toward that mysterious world of adulthood.

I didn't resent them. In fact, I respected them. It's what I wanted for myself some day. But, just like with a real airplane, you can only get so low; then pulling up just becomes impossible. A nose dive begins. And, because of love or because of the deranged conclusion that I could save her, Sherry called me right before she hit the ground.

I'm the youngest of seven children. When I was little, my brothers told me I was an accident. I'm pretty sure they were right. My oldest sister, Martha, had a little girl only two and a half years after my mother gave birth to me. Sherry and I were raised as sisters, even though she was my niece. I went off to college, Sherry replaced my companionship with Chuck. I found him generally kind, and a pretty good time, but his father was an alcoholic and I thought he drank more than he ought. Sherry had always been the wild child. A girl who drank whiskey straight, fooled around with boys, and napped on railroad tracks. And she was my girl, who, I was sure, knew when enough was enough. I often don't see people I love clearly.

Sherry's phone call came three months after my boyfriend became my fiancé and one month after my 21st birthday. It was summer, and I was in my mother's kitchen drinking coffee. It was early—maybe 7:30 in the morning—and I was reviewing a checklist of the wedding task I had set for that day. I was groggy when I picked up the receiver and a voice I knew stuttered my name through tears.

"Sherry, honey, what's wrong?"

"I'm gonna' kill him."

I knew which "him" she meant instantly. "Honey, where's Chuck?"

"In the bathroom. He's scared of me, of what I might do to him. I'm going to shoot him."

The world went strangely silent, like a television set suddenly on mute. I had to shake my head to regain focus. I might have whispered, but I'm sure she heard me.

"Sherry, darlin', do you have a gun?"

In response I heard pounding on a door and her voice, sounding almost alien, "Come on out of there you fool coward! Don't you want to fight now?"

I was outside and in my car before I knew what was happening.

The door to the small house Sherry and Chuck shared stood slightly ajar. I approached slowly, calling her name, announcing my presence. My first steps inside crunched. I looked down and saw a broken dinner plate under my sandal. I

Things Forgotten

by Rachel Wigginton

SCENE 1 — Small doctor's office. The doctor is an older woman in her 50's. Her patient is a young woman, about 30, who is being ypnotized.

DOCTOR. Rebecca, I need you to sit still and relax. This is called a rapid induction. So, uncross your legs, sit up straight, and look at me right in the eyes. Good. Okay, now, on the count of three, press down on my hand. You've got the idea?

REBECCA. Yes.

DOCTOR. Press harder. One, two, three, sleep! (*she goes limp*) You're going very deep into sleep now, and your entire body is relaxing. Very good. Now Rebecca, can you hear me?

REBECCA. Yes.

DOCTOR. Do you know where you are?

REBECCA. In the psychologist's office.

DOCTOR. I want you to know you are safe here. No one can hurt you. Do you know what you're here to discuss?

REBECCA. John and Kristen.

DOCTOR. Tell me who they are.

REBECCA. John is my husband and Kristen is my daughter.

DOCTOR. Tell me your concerns.

REBECCA. I'm afraid of him. I know he's hurting her.

DOCTOR. Why are you here?

REBECCA. No one will believe me. John made me come.

DOCTOR. That's fine. Stay calm. We're just going to talk about it.

SCENE 2 — The kitchen of John and Rebecca's home. Rebecca is cutting up vegetables at the counter.

REBECCA. I talked to my sister yesterday. I'm taking Kristen and going to stay there.

JOHN. I think you're losing your mind, Rebecca.

REBECCA. Ha, with your habits, are you really willing to discuss my mental health with me.

JOHN. (*with poorly concealed anger*) To which habits are you referring?

REBECCA. Don't pretend. It sickens me.

JOHN. And that's why I say you're losing your mind. And, you'll take my daughter nowhere.

REBECCA. Fine, I'll file for divorce. I'll get a restraining order. I'll call the police and tell them...

JOHN. (*cutting her off*) Tell them what? Tell them that you have some delusional belief that I'm hurting our seven-year-old daughter. But

you've never seen it, never heard it, and she doesn't seem to remember it every happening. Will you tell the police that? Did you tell your sister that?

REBECCA. I... (*She seems terrified but unsure how to proceed.*)

JOHN. Oh, Rebecca. Rebecca I don't want to scare you. (*sinking into himself*) I just don't understand. I don't understand. It's Monday now. If you'll make an appointment with a doctor, if you'll do it now, I'll let you take Kristen to your sister's house. Will you do that?

SCENE 3 — Return to Doctor's office.

DOCTOR. And then what happened?

REBECCA. I told him to give me the number, because I was taking Kristen at 5.

DOCTOR. Then we spoke on the phone, I recall. Is Kristen at your sister's house now?

REBECCA. No. She's with my mother.

DOCTOR. Why did you lie to John?

REBECCA. I didn't lie, I went to Whitney's, but *he* showed up at her house.

DOCTOR. John came to your sister's? Why?

REBECCA. No, not John.

DOCTOR. Tell me about it.

SCENE 4 — The two sisters sit at the kitchen table in Whitney's house. Kristen plays on the floor.

WHITTNEY. Honey, I talked to Kristen for an hour. She just doesn't know what you're upset about. She swore to me everything is fine.

REBECCA. No, Whitney. I know he's hurting her.

WHITTNEY. Sometimes, Rebecca, it's best to just leave things alone. How can you be sure?

REBECCA. How could you say that? I'm just certain of this. (*a knock at the front door*)

KRISTEN. (*instantly distracted from her play*) I'll get it!

WHITTNEY. It's probably Drew, he's coming over today to look at the washing machine.

REBECCA. Drew?

KRISTEN. Uncle Drew!

DREW. Hey you little bug; it's been so long. Look how grown you've gotten. Where's your pretty momma' at?

REBECCA. We were just leaving. I told Mother I'd come with Kristen.

WHITTNEY. I thought you were staying here Rebecca?

DREW. Becca just stay and finish your tea.

REBECCA. We have to go. I'm sorry. Kristen, hurry now. Goodbye.

The Prodigy

by Richard Shelton

I can tell by the way you're looking at me, you've seen my video. Online. Maybe on the local news, a couple of times. They did a full segment on me, "the internet phenomenon in our own backyard." Come to think of it – most kids my age know me from the internet, but most parents know me from local programs. Or sometimes, a friend of their coworker will forward an e-mail with a clip of my video attached. Then they'll send it to their relatives and coworkers and friends and just keeps spreading. Spreading across the grown-up network, I guess.

Or heck, maybe you haven't seen my video, but you've heard "of" me. Maybe you're looking at me trying to figure out what's the big deal. You think, "Huh. He doesn't look like a master cello player. He's probably not even big enough to play the cello." Ugh. You may also be thinking, "Aw, he's a precious tiny little musician." If you are, don't. It's so embarrassing.

It was in music appreciation class that I figured out how to play the cello. But before we get into that, I need to back up a bit. Actually, back up a lot. See, when I was a baby – the doctors said I was born with this weird, whaddya call it, oh, some sorta calcium deficiency. You know, the stuff in milk and cheese that makes your bones strong? Well, my body wasn't producing a lot of it, just enough to get my bones to form. So the doctors told my parents that if they wanted to see me get any bigger – they had to do two things: keep giving me a ton of calcium and absolutely positively NO ROUGH ACTIVITY. That meant no sports, no jumping, no bike riding, no trampolines, no tackling, rough housing or horse play.

Man, what I wouldn't give for some horse play. I've had fantasies about dog piles and piggy back rides. I can't even race someone to the car anymore. One time my brother said, "Last one to the car is a rotten egg" and when I tripped in the parking lot, it shattered my kneecap and I had to go to physical therapy. So yeah, I was the rotten egg alright. Most kids just get scabs and bandages. I know my mom and dad mean well – but they don't let me do anything for fear I may get really hurt. The only outdoor activity they really allow is swimming, but I can only do that during the summer. The rest of the year is spent reading books and playing video games. I guess it's okay, but it's also kinda lonely watching all the other kids play street hockey from your bedroom window. I don't really have a ton of friends. It's hard to make friends when all you can do is watch movies and sit around.

Okay, anyway – back to before: music appreciation class. Everyone in school has to take a music appreciation class. One semester, you listen to tapes of famous classical music. Then the next semester, you learn how to play an instrument. On the first day of the second semester – everyone else in the class was running around looking at the different instruments. Lotsa people wanted the violins, drums, triangles, cymbals and recorders. I stood in the back not wanting to get knocked

over when I saw what looked like a giant violin propped up in the corner of the room. The teacher said, "Go ahead and try it, it's a cello". She helped me prop it up and showed me how to hold the neck with my left hand and how to grip the bow with my right hand. Like this (shows audience). She then helped me move the bow across the strings.

I wish I could describe for you how it felt. The cello made this deep, thick sound that seemed to echo throughout the room. The other kids in class stopped messing with their instruments and just stared at me. It was like the cello had this power that the shrill violins and tinny trumpets. And I could feel it in my body. The way the vibrations from the strings traveled through my fingers and into my blood cells. For the first time in my life I felt something! I didn't have to hide from the cello for fear it would hurt me. I could move the bow back and forth and feel the music fill the air and my body. Then the teacher showed me how, if, I moved my fingers in different places, then it would play different notes. The low notes felt like cows mooing but the higher ones felt like a cotton sheet blowing outside on the line. If I plucked the strings, it sounded like rain hitting puddles. And then – when I learned to play a bunch of different notes, it felt like dancing. When I played, I could close my eyes and just feel invincible.

It didn't take long for the teacher and my parents to realize that learning "Twinkle Twinkle" wasn't going to be enough for me, so I started receiving private tutoring. Since I wasn't distracted by sports, I dedicated every hour outside of school to playing the cello. After going through books and books of classical sheet music – I began to play things I'd hear on the radio. My mom would joke around about how serious and intense I looked when I was playing. She decided to make a video of my playing to put online and send to my grandparents. I don't know how – but the video became a huge hit. People from all over the world kept asking that we post more. So we did. Pretty soon – the videos had been viewed like a million times and that's when the local TV stations contacted my parents.

Most of the folks who watched the video online wrote really nice things like, "Wow, that's amazing" or "It was so beautiful it made me cry". There were also a lot of rude people who kept saying the videos were fake, that I was just dubbing the music on the video and couldn't really play like that. They called me fake, a poser, lame, a loser and a bunch of other names I probably shouldn't repeat. I mean...how else could I prove them wrong? That's a video of me! I'm really playing the cello! I even created new pieces to play and said, "Look guys – you can't find this song anywhere else in the world! How could I be faking this?"

But they didn't care. They kept teasing me and I kept playing the cello. As weird as it sounds, I didn't really care what anybody else had to say about me or my cello. I felt strong and in control of my fingers as they danced across the strings. My arms felt long as they swept the bow back and forth, back and forth. I didn't feel betrayed by my body. I didn't feel like a prisoner to my weak bones. I was happy, the happiest I had ever been. I felt complete.

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