

INT, MARY'S DINING ROOM, DAY

Mary's dining room is modestly decorated for a party. The table has a simple cake placed in the center. The ceiling has a streaming banner that blares "HAPPY FIFTEENTH BIRTHDAY TOMMY". Around the cake are toys, video game CDS and newspapers strewn haphazardly. Mary's purse sits on one of the chairs.

Enter MARY (Stage Right). She has an apron on and her hands are covered in flour. She is carrying a box with plates. She sets the box down on one of the chairs and glances at the wall clock. She jumps when she realizes the time. She begins to clear the table and place the plates.

A knock on the door followed by the door opening. Enter LINDA (Stage Left). She is dressed elegantly in a cocktail gown and wearing subtle jewelry. The women greet and hug jovially.

LINDA  
What can I do?

MARY  
(gesturing towards the  
table)  
Just ... help. I didn't have time  
to put everything away.

They begin to put the plates on the table and the messy items in the box.

MARY  
Hey is Abby doing the driver ed  
course next month?

LINDA  
She didn't want to. But Tommy  
talked her into it I think.

MARY  
Oh that boy. Where is he? I will  
kill him if he's late for his own  
birthday. I've worked my ass off  
for this one.

Linda chuckles as Mary exits the stage calling for Tommy. Linda continues to clean the table. She picks up the purse looking around for where to place it. She looks down at the purse and frowns. She glances in the direction Mary exited and places the purse on the table. She opens it and rummages through its contents. Shocked she pulls her hands out, closes the purse and pushes it away. She pauses, looking down, one hand on her mouth. She breaks the fourth wall and looks at the audience.

(CONTINUED)

LINDA

(Addresses the audience)

I just found a gun in her bag ...  
Does she know what this could do?  
What this is capable of? ... Abby  
spends so much time in this  
house. She's here all the time  
... I don't know how to handle  
this. People are coming in a half  
hour. All these thoughts, these  
questions buzzing in my head  
right now. Please ... I need your  
help. Tell me what to say ...  
Together, we can reason with her.

Enter Mary (Stage Right). Linda and Mary stand on opposite  
ends of the table.

MARY

What's wrong?

LINDA

We need to talk.

MARY

Talk? About what? There's no  
time. Everyone will be here soon.

Linda places the purse on her table.

LINDA

Is that your gun? Why do you have  
a gun?

MARY

Gun? ... You went through my  
purse?!

LINDA

How could you not tell me about  
this? Abby spends so much time in  
this house.

MARY

What's the big deal ... it's a  
gun. Haven't you ever seen one  
before?

LINDA

Why didn't you tell me about  
this?

MARY

There's nothing to tell. It was  
Ken's gun before he died.

(CONTINUED)

LINDA

And you decided to keep it. With a fifteen year old boy in the house.

MARY

Of course I did. It's just me in this house now ... This big empty house, just me and Tom. I need to protect us. So of course I kept it.

LINDA

Mary ... Abby and Tom. They're kids, teenagers. How can you possibly think they'll be safer with this thing in a house.

MARY

Wait ... hold on just a minute. Are you saying that my son is so stupid that he would actually shoot someone with this?

LINDA

It's not about Tom. This is a gun! You don't have to be stupid to hurt someone with it. Sane adults stay away from this ...and with good reason. And you would trust children with this? Children who barely know who they are ...

MARY

Well Tom's not like that. He's responsible.

LINDA

Tom responsible?! Really? Don't get me wrong ... I love Tom, I think he's great. It's just that ... they change so much at this age. It's such a confusing time ... I don't know even know if I should be telling you this. Abby's been really worried about Tom. And she won't tell me why.

MARY

Abby worried about Tom? Is this another paranoid Linda accusation?

LINDA

Are you sure? You don't think he's changed a lot this last year.

(CONTINUED)

MARY

Its nothing. Tom is fine ... It's just ... I don't like these new kids he hangs out with.

LINDA

What do you mean?

MARY

Alright alright ... I was going through his phone once. I know I shouldn't have but I found this video. It was Tom with his friends and ... they had the gun with them. Now before you go crazy, they weren't really doing anything with it. They were just ... you know horsing around with it. Pretending to be policemen.

LINDA

Just horsing around! Have you lost your mind? Was it loaded?

MARY

No of course not. I never leave it loaded.

LINDA

How can you possibly know that?

MARY

You know what, it doesn't matter. This was a minor slip up. It won't happen again. And this isn't about Tom or Abby. I want the gun for me, not them. This is my responsibility. Forget Tom, can you trust me?

LINDA

But can't you see ... this is such a tight rope to be walking. A minor slip up? The damage if something goes wrong ...

MARY

I can handle this. It's like they say, if you take away the guns from us, then we're just sitting ducks right. Don't you get it? Only the good guys with guns can stop the bad guys with guns.

Linda pounds the table with her fist. Mary takes a step backwards.

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LINDA

Listen to yourself. What you're saying, I've heard the same things on NRA protests and billboards. You're all the same, the gun lobbyists, the senseless capitalists. You're all fanatics.

MARY

Calm down.

LINDA

No I won't. Even when it's staring you straight in the face you just won't give up. Your son is not a child any more. He's becoming his own person and that is a transition no parent is ever capable of dealing with. Instead of facing that reality, here we are talking about good guys and bad guys!

MARY

I told you, this isn't about Abby and Tom. This is about me. I want to keep the gun because it makes me feel safe.

LINDA

Yeah this is about you, cause you're this ... this heroic good guy right. I've heard this too many times. Good guys need guns because the bad guys will always have guns no matter what right.

MARY

That's not what I'm saying.

LINDA

Let's just get rid of the gun control because the bad guys will find them anyway. That assumption can be applied to anything, any law. You're suggesting we should all just sit back and wash our hands of the whole thing. Treat good and bad like black and white.

Mary takes a step forward.

MARY

STOP! Will you please just stop! NRA protests and billboards? All you do is talk - talk - talk.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MARY (cont'd)

It's always about you. Your concerns, your thoughts what you think is right. Since we started, all you wanted to talk about is your child's safety. What about me? Don't you care? At all?

A long pause ensues. Linda takes a step forward and sits on a chair in front of the table.

LINDA

I'm sorry. I'm listening.

Mary takes a step forward and sits down on the opposite chair.

MARY

Well ermm ... I've never told anybody this before. It happened a few months after Ken died. There had been a string of break ins recently. One night, we were home Tom and I. I looked up at the window and there was a car parked right in front of our house. And there was a guy just sitting there. It was ... strange. But I went about, you know getting Tom ready for bed. I go back to the window an hour later, and the car is still there. But the car lights are off and the guy is gone.

LINDA

Did you call the police?

MARY

No the landline was registered in Ken's name so we needed to have it changed, and I had left my cell at work.

LINDA

Shit.

MARY

So then, I look out and I see him and he's just standing there in the corner of my yard, looking in our direction right at the house. And ... I got ... I was scared. So I grabbed the gun and went outside the front porch. And as soon as he saw me he started coming towards me. And so I ... I shot it. But it didn't hit him.

(CONTINUED)

LINDA

Wow.

MARY

He took off as soon as that happened ... What else could I do? I was just ... scared.

LINDA

I would have been scared too. I don't even know if I would have trusted myself in a situation like that. I don't really know who I'd protect and who I'd end up hurting.

MARY

I don't know. But ... what else could I have done?

LINDA

I don't know either. I'm not trying to back you into a corner. I understand ... The feeling of safety of ... of power this gives you is real. But that's all it is ... A feeling, an illusion.

MARY

Maybe.

LINDA

(after a long pause)  
I'm glad we talked.

Mary takes the gun out of the bag and places it on the table in between them. She reaches out her hand. Linda takes her hand in hers.

FADE TO BLACK