

### Scene Three

*TONTO, a sock draped over his eyes, wakes up the next morning to the sound of JANICE, in a housecoat, making coffee and a snack for herself. He watches her for a moment.*

JANICE:

I know you're watching me.

*TONTO doesn't say anything.*

JANICE:

Still want to play games, huh?

TONTO:

Since when is watching you a game. It's a free country, almost.

JANICE:

Do you want some coffee?

TONTO:

That would be good.

*TONTO gets up off the couch, dressed only in a T-shirt and underwear.*

TONTO:

Here, try this.

*TONTO tosses her a small package.*

JANICE:

Hey, what's this? Coffee! Where'd you get this?

TONTO:

About six thirty this morning the sun came streaming in through that big window of yours. Hard to sleep when there's a spotlight on you.

JANICE:

I had to pay extra for a southern exposure.

TONTO:

When I worked construction for a year, I had to get up at that godforsaken hour. I swore never again. Except for sunrise ceremonies, of course. But even those are getting harder and harder to get up for. Anyway, I went to make coffee, found that decaf stuff of yours and thought, "The hell with this." So, I went out and got some real, good stuff an hour ago.

JANICE examines the package closely, surprised.

JANICE:

I have travelled the world, shopped most of my life in every type of store possible, and I have never, ever, come across any coffee anywhere labelled "extra-caffeinated." Where did you find this?

TONTO:

I worked in a coffee shop for half a year, so I know a little about coffee. Always remember: where there's a will, there's a way.

JANICE:

Is this the Otter Lake way?

TONTO:

If I wasn't afraid of needles, I'd take it with a syringe. We'll make an Indian of you yet.

JANICE:

Is that all it takes? Strong coffee?

That and a fine appreciation of good lookin' aboriginal men.

JANICE:

Well, I will say, you do have nice legs.

TONTO:

You should see the rest of me.

JANICE:

Thank you, but no. Your coffee will be ready in a few minutes.

TONTO:

I suppose I should get dressed.

JANICE:

Please.

TONTO:

An almost-naked Indian scares you?

JANICE:

Just my reputation.

*She points to the window. TONTO reacts with embarrassment and quickly tries to dress.*

TONTO:

Holy mackerel, three million white people lookin' at me in my undies. Might start a riot.

JANICE:

The city of Toronto scare you, Tonto? Tonto. How'd did you ever get a name like Tonto?

TONTO:

It's a nickname, my real name is Eli Albert. Now, given a choice between Eli Albert and Tonto, which do you think has more character?

JANICE:  
I think Eli Albert is a nice name. But why Tonto?

TONTO:  
My dad used to work steel in the city a lot when I was a kid. He'd always be going off to work for days at a time. When I asked where he was, I was told, "Your dad is in Toronto," only I couldn't say "Toronto"; I kept pronouncing it "Tonto." The name kinda stuck.

JANICE:  
I think that's sweet. Do you have a horse named Scout?

TONTO:  
No, but I have a bronco called the Antichrist.

JANICE:  
You're a funny man.

TONTO:  
How often do you work out?

JANICE:  
Who? Me?

TONTO:  
Yes, you. That shot you gave me yesterday was a professional one, if I ever felt one. And I'm ashamed to say I've felt a few in my younger days. That punch went right through me.

JANICE:  
I took a Wen-Do course at my club. It's a type of self-defence for women. I thought it might come in handy someday.

TONTO:  
You're lucky you didn't break your hand on my kidney stones.

JANICE:  
It wasn't that hard. Was it?

TONTO:  
You could kiss it and make it better.

JANICE:  
I could make it worse.

TONTO:  
I'll settle for breakfast.

JANICE:  
I'd better warn you, you eat at your own risk. I'm not much of a cook.

TONTO:  
Well, what have you got?

JANICE:  
Yogourt, I think ...

TONTO:  
Boy, this is really a fun house. I'll stick with the coffee. Is it ready yet?

JANICE:  
Another few minutes.

*TONTO picks up the bag of decaffeinated coffee.*

TONTO:  
I tried this decaf stuff once. Sort of like kissing a relative. Tastes the same, but no spark.

*He drops it in the garbage.*

JANICE:  
Hey, that's good coffee.

TONTO:  
That's like buying beer with no alcohol.

JANICE:  
Ah, one of those real men who doesn't drink non-alcoholic beer.

TONTO:  
One of those real men who doesn't drink beer, period.

JANICE:  
I thought all Indian men drank.

TONTO:  
I thought all women could cook.

JANICE:  
Touché. Stereotypes everywhere. Sure you don't want the yogurt?

TONTO:  
Pass.

JANICE:  
If you don't mind me asking, why don't you drink?

TONTO:  
My mother died of the stuff. That can sort of turn you off it.

JANICE:  
Oh, I'm so sorry. I shouldn't have asked. Rodney never mentioned anything about that.

TONTO:  
Why should he?

JANICE:  
You're brothers, aren't you?

TONTO:  
I was raised by his family after my mother died. We sort of became brothers, I've lived with his family longer than he has. I was there the day he was born. Looked like a worm with legs.

JANICE:  
You were adopted? Like me?

Yeah, except I stayed on the reserve. Saw my real dad a lot when he was home. He worked in the city all the time and couldn't look after me so the Stones took me in.

JANICE:  
That's Rodney's parents?

TONTO:  
Rufus and Lillian Stone. Good people. Been with them as long as I can remember. Actually, you're one of the reasons I ended up with the Stones. God knows where I'd be if it weren't for you and Anne.

JANICE:  
Anne! What does Anne have to do with this?

TONTO:  
It's too bad you never knew your mother better. From what I heard, she really kicked up a fuss after you were taken, once she stopped being afraid of the authorities. I guess taking your child away can really change that fear to anger. Well, whatever, it worked. She rattled some cages.

JANICE:  
Yes, she told me.

TONTO:  
But did she tell you that because of her fuss, the province decided to try a new program to foster Native kids on the reserve? I was an experiment. I was placed with the Stones at the age of five and *bang*, here I am twenty-seven years later, a fine human being. I hear they do that kind of thing in a lot of places now.

JANICE:  
You got to stay on the reserve, and I was sent away.

TONTO:

Yeah, but my case came eight years after you. A lot changed in that time. And things are still changing. Just think, Miss Wabung, you changed Native history. Not a lot of people can say that. Your mother saved my butt. If it weren't for her, God knows where I'd be now.

JANICE:

Only eight years ... And my name is Wirth.

TONTO:

Wirth, Wabung, whatever. The truth is, we're kinda related. Both being raised by other people. Sort of brother and sister. And whatever Barb may say, you look like you've got a good head on your shoulders. I've seen some doozies out there. Next time you're driving around this city, take a good look at those people sleeping on the sidewalks. Our people. A lot of them are you and me, sister. We were lucky.

JANICE:

And you got to see your father.

TONTO:

Oh yeah, every month or so. It was all cool.

JANICE:

That must have been wonderful.

TONTO:

Ever been hugged by somebody who chews tobacco? I heard your new parents were rich.

JANICE:

Yes.

TONTO:

There you go. Everybody got something.

JANICE:

*(lost in thought)* ... Something.

TONTO:

Rodney's cool for a brother. A little too book smart though. Sometimes you can't make head nor tail of what he's saying. He once spent an hour making a comparison of, get this, the colonization of North America based on the two sci-fi books: *The Martian Chronicles* and *Cat's Cradle*. That guy needs to spend a little more time on this planet. He needs to know tradition.

JANICE:

And you can teach him this tradition?

TONTO:

I listen to the elders. It's all really obvious. The trouble with Rodney is he thinks like a white person. His heart's Native but that brain of his needs a good tan.

JANICE:

Why do you say that?

TONTO:

There! *Boom!* You just said the magic word. The whole difference between Native people and white people can be summed up in that one, single three-letter word. Why? White people are so preoccupied with why everything works. Why was the universe created? Why is the sky blue? Why do dogs drool when you ring a bell? Why is their altar of worship. Their whole civilization is based on finding out why everything does everything.

JANICE:

And Native people are different? What is your answer to why?

TONTO:

Why not? That's it. That's the answer. Why was the universe created? Why not? Why do leopards have spots? Why not? Why do Indians and religious people play bingo? Why not?

You keep asking why you should go home to Otter Lake. Instead of asking yourself why, you should try why not.

JANICE:  
Why should I listen to you?

TONTO:  
Why not? Makes sense, huh?

JANICE:  
I've been in therapy. It's not that easy.

TONTO:  
People always want to make things difficult. The world was made a certain way. Accept it. It's like this whole concept white people have with, oh, what's that term... "finding your inner child." Now why would they want that? I mean children are great and all that, but seriously, would you want to start wetting the bed again?

JANICE:  
I never wet the bed.

TONTO:  
(*uncomfortably*) A lot of kids did. Anyway, moving on. That's the "white, caucasian, let's-go-back-to-the-beginning-and-try-to-get-it-right-again approach." Instead, they should do what Native people do: try to find their inner elder. It's a hell of a better payoff. A kid can only appreciate being young. An elder can appreciate the young and the old, and everything in between. A child would be afraid to go to Otter Lake. An elder would interpret it as a necessary learning experience.

JANICE:  
You make it all sound so easy. Flip a switch and your life is explained.

TONTO:  
I didn't have to come here, you know. You're Barb's luggage and Rodney's, too, I guess, by association.

JANICE:  
Then why are you here?

TONTO:  
Simple. On occasion, life can be a simple math problem. There are more reasons for me to be here, in this apartment than somewhere else. I had more to learn from coming to meet you, than staying at home. I hate Toronto, but sometimes the pain can be worth it. Basically, the positive outweighed the negative.

*This sinks into JANICE for a moment.*

JANICE:  
You have some interesting theories.

TONTO:  
It's more than that. It's practice. I never preach anything I don't practice.

JANICE:  
I'll remember that. You're an interesting fellow. Certainly not what you seem to be. A bit of a closet philosopher, perhaps?

TONTO:  
Nah, as Rodney would say, I came out of the closet years ago. The philosophy closet that is. So are we gonna get breakfast?

JANICE:  
Oh yes, I suppose we should. There's a charming place just down the street.

TONTO:  
Sounds great to me. Let's go.

JANICE:  
I think we should wait for the others. They might want to eat, too.

TONTO:  
Good point. Then let's get them up. Leave it to me.

TONTO marches over to the door and bangs heavily on it.

TONTO:

Okay, you two. Up and at 'em. I'm hungry.

*There is some mumbling and giggling in the other room and RODNEY shouts out.*

RODNEY:

Okay, we'll be out in ... five minutes.

BARB:

No, ten minutes.

RODNEY:

Yeah, yeah, ten minutes.

TONTO:

I'll handle this.

*TONTO opens the door and barges in. There is a scream, then TONTO comes out dragging the blankets.*

TONTO:

If I'm not getting it, nobody is. And I said I'm hungry. Move it. (to JANICE) What are big brothers for?

*RODNEY stumbles out as he does up his jeans. He's angry.*

RODNEY:

Do you mind? We were ... busy.

TONTO:

You've got the rest of your life for that. We only have this morning to eat. It's a long drive back, remember.

JANICE:

Um, Rodney, we're going to breakfast down the street. You better dress for it.

TONTO:

You heard the lady.

RODNEY:

And to think I could have been an only child.

*BARB comes out of the bedroom, also angry, and buttoning up her shirt.*

BARB:

There you are.

TONTO:

You still may become an only child.

*He hides behind JANICE.*

TONTO:

Now, Barb ...

BARB:

Come here, Tonto ...

TONTO:

Barb, I was just a little hungry, that's all. Rodney?

RODNEY:

You're on your own, pal.

TONTO:

Janice?

JANICE:

I don't believe you three. Barb, take it easy. He was just joking around.

BARB:

You're defending him! What did you do to her?

TONTO:

Nothing!

JANICE:

Everybody just calm down and take it easy, okay?

BARB:  
(to TONTO) You're living on borrowed time, buddy.

TONTO:  
Respect your elders, I'm older than you remember.

BARB:  
Then act it.

TONTO:  
I got real coffee.  
*Pause.*

BARB:  
You're forgiven.

RODNEY:  
Ah, coffee has charms to soothe the savage breast.

TONTO:  
Help yourself.  
*RODNEY pours himself a cup of coffee.*

RODNEY:  
I love the smell of Nabob in the morning. Somebody mention something about breakfast?

TONTO:  
Yeah, down the street.

JANICE:  
When you're all ready, we'll grab breakfast before we leave.

BARB:  
What do you mean "we leave"?

JANICE:  
I mean *we*. I changed my mind. I'm going with you.

BARB:  
(to TONTO) What *did* you do to her?

JANICE:

Now if you'll excuse me, I'll get my things.

*JANICE exits the room to get her things.*

BARB:

(repeating the words) She's coming back with us? She's coming back with us?!

*RODNEY and TONTO give each other the thumbs-up signal.*

*Lights go down.*

End of Act I