

THE TREEHOUSE

Written by

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EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

In a respectable working-class neighborhood, one house has a car that leaks oil on cinder blocks.

INT. BARTLEBY RESIDENCE - COMPUTER DESK - DAY

IKE, 37, working-class oaf, enters as SANDRA, 34, voice-of-reason, balances the family's budget on an outdated PC. The walls are dotted with pictures of her and Ike with the kids.

IKE

I've given this a lot of thought,
hun. This family needs a rec room.

SANDRA

I'm not jeopardizing our retirement
so you have a place to get drunk.

IKE

That's what bars are for. I mean a
place for fun and socializing.

SANDRA

Right, sorry. A place for you and
your beer buddies to get drunk.

Ike holds up a real estate comps chart.

IKE

Look. The other houses that added
rec rooms went up ten grand. Gator
assures me we could do it for two.

Sandra yanks the paper out of Ike's hand.

SANDRA

An eight thousand dollar return?
You might have led with that, Ike.

IKE

So? It's a good idea, right?

SANDRA

Okay, but I approve all purchases.

They shake on it.

INT. BARTLEBY RESIDENCE - GARAGE/REC ROOM - DAY

Sandra, daughter JENNY, 16, "drama queen," and sons RON, 12,
and JEREMY, 11, adolescent reprobates, gasp with delight.

IKE
I hereby christen this the Bartleby
family rec room!

RON/JEREMY
Ping-pong!

SANDRA
Oh, Ike, it's wonderful!

They kiss as Ron pelts Jeremy with ping-pong balls.

INT. BARTLEBY RESIDENCE - TV ROOM - NIGHT

Sandra fidgets next to Jenny on the couch.

SANDRA
Sure is quiet in here without your
father. I wonder what he's up to.

JENNY
I'm too afraid to imagine.

INT. BARTLEBY RESIDENCE - REC ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ike sits in his "tighty whities" surrounded by empty beer
cans. The Miss America pageant plays on a black and white TV.

IKE
Nice gazungas, hot-stuff, but less
talky and more walky!

He belches and farts and then passes out. He snores.

INT. BARTLEBY RESIDENCE - REC ROOM - DAY

Ike sits with GATOR, 37, cajun, and REMY, 35, "silent type."

GATOR
Watchin' the game tomorrow?

IKE
Does the pope shit in the woods?

Remy laughs like an imbecile. Gator points to the old TV.

GATOR
I got an extra flat screen and
entertainment system you could use.

IKE
Sweet! We should have everyone over
for a football party!

Ike beams with joy as Gator and Remy nod in agreement.

INT. BARTLEBY RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - NEXT DAY

Sandra hangs up the phone. She screams and Ike's beer flies.

SANDRA
I'm hosting my boss' bookclub this
afternoon in the rec room.

IKE
Whoa, what? I'm already havin' a
football party in there.

SANDRA
That's news to me. Anyway, this is
my big opportunity to land that
promotion. We need the money, Ike.

He rolls his eyes and bites his lip. Sandra kisses his cheek.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
I've got a ton of shopping to do.

Sandra grabs her purse and exits the house.

INT. BARTLEBY RESIDENCE - REC ROOM - LATER

Ike lies motionless on the couch.

GATOR
The whole bar is closin' early for
this, Ike. Ya can't back out now.

IKE
I know, God! I always find some way
to screw things up. Stupid, stupid!

Gator observes as Ike smacks his own forehead.

GATOR
If it was my wife and we set
everything up, she'd be happy.

IKE
Not Sandra. Even if the guests were
already here, she'd change it back.
Or worse. She'd make me do it.

GATOR
Not if she was too embarrassed to
bring them in here.

IKE
I guess so. How would we do that?

GATOR
Just leave everything to me.

INT. BARTLEBY RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ike and Remy set up chairs and a discussion board by the fireplace. Ike winces at a big crucifix on the mantle.

IKE
Lord, please make everything work
out today. Also, don't let Sandra
turn into Lorena Bobbitt.

REMY
Amen.

INT. BARTLEBY RESIDENCE - REC ROOM - DAY

Ike grins like a kid in a candy store at the kegerator, wall posters of naked girls and race cars, and speakers that thunder NFL pregame theme music.

GATOR
How ya like ya new mancave, Ike?

Ike wipes a tear from his eye.

IKE
It's a Christmas miracle.

INT. BARTLEBY RESIDENCE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ike grimaces as Remy decorates for the book club.

IKE
Barnes and Nobles gift baskets?

REMY
Ehh, I had a gift card.

A knock at the door startles them. Remy sneaks away as Ike opens it to reveal a MAN, 55, yacht captain's hat and pipe.

MAN
You must be Ike. Winston P.
Farthington, III.

Ike is speechless. The man removes his pipe.

MAN (CONT'D)
Sandra's boss.

IKE
Duh! Of course. Mr. Farthington.
Sandra's told me so much about you.

MR. FARTHINGTON
Please, call me Winston.

Ike checks his watch.

IKE
Winston it is. Sandra should be
here shortly. Help yourself to some
snacks. Early bird gets the worm.

Ike smiles and walks away as Winston sits on a folding chair
laced with ivy, next to the gift baskets and cheese platter.

WINSTON
My compliments to Sandra on the
tasteful decor.

Ike smiles and exits. There's a knock at the door. Winston
opens it. A GUY, 37, wears work boots and jeans.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
Our first guest for the book club!

The Guy sneers and steps back and looks at the mailbox.

GUY
Is Ike Bartleby here?

Ike runs up to the door and invites the guy in.

IKE
Sorry, Carl. Thanks Winston.

CARL
That guy your butler or somethin'?

IKE
Sandra's boss.

WINSTON
Call me Winston.

Ike ushers Carl to the rec room. Winston tailgates them.

INT. BARTLEBY RESIDENCE - REC ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Carl's face lights up as he beholds the glory of the mancave.

CARL

Holy shit, this place is sweet!

Ike hands Carl a beer and walks over to Remy and Gator.

IKE

Gator, text everyone to come
through the side door by the garage
to avoid Sandra's boss, who by the
way, loves the decor.

Remy snickers. Ike spots Winston and rushes over.

WINSTON

I'm on to you, Ike.

IKE

Ya got me! Seriously, we're settin'
up for a football game in here so--

WINSTON

I know. It's genius!

Winston grins and Ike grimaces. Sandra enters with the book club MEMBERS. She gasps and immediately pushes them back out.

WINSTON (CONT'D)

Sandra, I may have misjudged you.

SANDRA

I can explain--

WINSTON

What's to explain? It's a football
party and bookclub in celebration
of both literature *and* sport.

Ike spits out his beer and Sandra leads Winston to the door.

SANDRA

Well, actually, Mr. Farthington--

WINSTON

Please, call me Winston.

SANDRA

Okay, Winston. I must confess...

She pauses and glances at Ike as he observes in shock.

SANDRA (CONT'D)
... it was all Ike's idea.

Ike scoffs and his cell phone buzzes. A text from Gator reads: "Everyone from the bar is on their way."

IKE
Here's a thought. We're still
settin' up in here, but why don't
you two get things started?

WINSTON
Savor the surprise!

Ike smiles and opens the door. Sandra takes Winston's arm.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
Any other surprises for me, Sandra?

SANDRA
Well, funny you should ask.

Ike shuts the door and panics.

IKE
Beer me.

Gator shakes up a beer and sprays Ike's face.

IKE (CONT'D)
That's the stuff.

Ike reaches for the door lock as Winston tangos in with the cheese platter and 20 of Ike's bar FRIENDS. Ike freezes.

GATOR
Alright folks, it's game time!

WINSTON
Excellent idea! How about charades?

Everyone sneers as Winston smiles. Ike shakes his head. His friend, the BARTENDER, 40s, scoffs to Ike.

BARTENDER
Who the hell is that guy?

IKE
Proof that God has forsaken me.

Ike rushes to the door and exits.

INT. BARTLEBY RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Ike rushes up to Sandra.

IKE
Ya gotta do something about your
weird boss. He's ruining my party.

SANDRA
Yeah? Boo hoo. Serves ya right!

IKE
Fix this or I show him the door!

SANDRA
You wouldn't dare.

WINSTON (O.S.)
That won't be necessary.

Ike and Sandra turn to see Winston in the doorway, red-faced.

SANDRA
Mr. Farthington, let me explain.

WINSTON
My bullheaded machismo strikes
again. It's my cross to bear.

Sandra is speechless as Ike bites his fist.

EXT. BARTLEBY RESIDENCE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Ike and Sandra walk Winston to his car.

WINSTON
Sorry for spoiling your party, Ike.

IKE
It's really all my fault.

SANDRA
Seriously, it really is.

WINSTON
Sandra, you decorated beautifully.

SANDRA
Actually, I--

IKE
Didn't she, though?

WINSTON
Anyway, I had a wonderful time.

SANDRA
Really? What about the book club?

WINSTON
I don't care about book clubs. It's just an excuse to get away from my wife. She's an insufferable snob.

Ike and Sandra wince.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
Ever since she sold her business, she's at home driving me crazy.

Ike and Sandra look away awkwardly.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
Ike's mancave reminded me of the thrill of my boyhood *treehouse*.

SANDRA
Come again?

WINSTON
Where a man can be free to just be a man. No nagging mothers or wives.

Ike forces a smile as Sandra scowls at him.

WINSTON (CONT'D)
But I digress. You two have shown me something that has given me hope. Honesty in a relationship.

Ike whistles and looks away as Sandra frowns.

SANDRA
So glad we could help.

Winston presses his keychain and lights flash on his BMW.

WINSTON
Ya know, Sandra, I truly am impressed by your ideas. I think management would be too.

SANDRA
Are you offering me the promotion?

WINSTON
After what I saw in you today, yes.

SANDRA

Oh my God! Thank you. I accept.

Sandra raises her arms to hug Winston but Ike hugs him.

IKE

Bless you, sir.

Winston smirks. Sandra taps Ike and he lets go.

IKE (CONT'D)

Sorry.

Sandra hugs Winston and they both smile. Ike looks down.

WINSTON

Come by the office tomorrow morning
and we'll make it official. Ciao!

Winston "knuckles" Sandra's chin and she smiles. He gets into his car and drives away. Ike looks down.

IKE

He must really think a lot of you
to give you the promotion after the
way I treated him. I'm such a turd.

SANDRA

You're not a turd, Ike.

IKE

I am. I'm a big, stinky, mushy--

SANDRA

Okay, you're grossing me out.

IKE

Look, I'll return the rec room back
to normal. And I'll try to be more
supportive of your needs.

SANDRA

I appreciate that, honey. I will do
the same. Just promise me we'll
never end up like the Farthingtons.

IKE

I promise... you insufferable snob.

Sandra smiles and they kiss.