

## GRANNY ON THE LAM

By Jonathan Harris

(A woman of about sixty appears SR. She is wearing a traveling suit that could be described as "smart", a matching hat and shoes. She carries a suitcase, make-up case and matching handbag. She places the cases down and sits with a tired: "oof!". She pulls off her right shoe and rubs her foot.)

GRANNY

That's what I get for shopping K-Mart.

(She looks off right - down the highway, stands on her tired feet and with only one shoe on hobbles a few feet left, looking for any sign of life on the empty highway. She reaches into her pocketbook and pulls out her glasses. She puts them on and peers down the road again. First left, then right.)

Where the hell is everybody?

(She pulls a map out of her handbag.)

Where the hell am I?

(She moves to suitcase and sits)

I-75 North...

(She tries to make sense out of her location and the map and, after a moment, stuffs map back into handbag.)

Never could read those damn things...

(She sits and stares, lost in thought)

Tsk. Tsk. Tsk. What are we going to do? What *are* we going to do? Beatrice Roseabelle Samuelson you have put your little old self into a situation that calls for immediate rectification and THAT is the Lord's truth.

This is what one might call a pretty picture, indeed. Tsk. Tsk. Tsk. Out of the frying pan and into the middle of I-75 and that sun is just going down, Lord, Lord, right on schedule...

(She tears up a little)

...and here I sit...wondering...just what the hell...no! No. No. No! Now, Bea, you just stop it. You just stop thinking about that shiftless, worthless, no good man and get on to the business at hand. He wasn't no Robert Preston and that's the fact of the matter and *Lord* get him out of my mind one more time!

(She closes her eyes and concentrates.)

...thank you, Jesus.

(She stands and paces, bouncing unevenly as she still has only one shoe on. After a moment she sings softly to herself in rhythm to her hobble.)

GONNA TAAAKE....A SENTIMENTAL JOURNEEEY...  
GONNA SEEEET....MY HEART AT EEEEEEEASE....  
GONNA TAAAKE...A SENTIMENTAL JOURNEEEY...  
TO RENEW OLD...ME-MO-RIES.....  
OOOOOOH! GOT MY BAAAAAG...

(She stops suddenly and peers off right and then runs back to her suitcases. She tries to squeeze back into her other shoe as the sound of a car is heard approaching.)

Hey! Hey! Hello and hallelujah! There's life out there! Beatrice Roseabelle it looks like you're getting yourself a lift!

(She starts to flag the car)

YIP! YIP! HEY YOU! YAHOO!

(The car honks angrily as it passes her by.)

Well, I'll be...

(She slowly heads back to center)

Hey! You just deserted an old lady in the middle of a highway with the sun barely *hanging* in the sky and I'd like to know just *how that makes you feel!*  
And I so wanted to get to Indianapolis by nightfall...

(With a sneer)

"Indianapolis? You won' t even make it to the Big Wheel, woman..."

(She shouts off right)

Well, I showed you a thing or two mister while-the-cat' s-away-the-mouse-will-play husband of thirty-four years, didn' t I? Yesiree, I taught you a lesson you' re not likely to forget before the end of *this* week anyway. Or any other one I' d venture to guess.

So, I didn' t get to Indianapolis by evening time. I got a lot farther than the city limits and thirty miles outa town to boot. And in *three* rides, Mr. Sammy "Bingo" Samuelson, so, why don' t you put a little crow in that pipe and eat it?

(She notices the sun disappearing in the west)

Yeah...I sure showed you...must be almost seven-thirty by now. Entertainment Tonight' s coming on. And Crystal Gayle was gonna be on tonight, too. Damn, damn, darn it. It' s getting dark and...

(Another car is heard approaching)

Holy Hannah, here comes mannah in the wilderness!

(She stands, lifts her skirt above her knee and sticks out her thumb.)

The Lord is my Witness and I have *always* wanted to do this.

(The car goes by.)

There isn' t a bit of heart left in the heartland and that' s the truth.

(She drops the skirt back over her knee.)

Sammy Bingo, I will never forgive you for putting me in this situation for as long as I live. I have put up with your skirt chasing and beer guzzling for thirty-four years too long now and I have been robbed by you for the last time.

If you had a single bone in your body that was made of honest feeling, then I certainly have not seen it. And what you saw in that bedraggled, old tire I caught you with I will never know! I swear, when I walked in on the two of you both exercising to "Sweating to the Oldies" in the buck raw, back-to-nature I just wanted to wither up and die for shame. "Grace Myers!" You' ll remember I shouted. "Cover yourself this instant, you' ll scare the cat!"

And you, Sammy Bingo! I ain' t seen you standing up at attention like that since you caught me off guard over the apple barrel in the basement of Grandma Simmons' farmhouse that summer of the Bundy County fair. It was a sight to see then and, more

power to you, a rather respectable bundle still. But that still don' t excuse your actions, so don' t think it does for one second.

It' s not like I wasn' t warned, I guess. My cousin Mary Agnes told me long ago about the games the two of you used to play in the attic. "Hide-the-cherry"...and, and "Snake-in-the-grass". I don' t know why you couldn' t find it in your lustful heart to tell me about that for yourself. I wouldn' t have thought bad of you. I mighta thought a little better. I like to think of myself as a free spirit. I swear, Sammy, if you knew some of the solitary goings on behind my bedroom door it' d turn what little hair you have left on you head stark white and you' d drop down dead as a doorstep. A fittin' end, I hasten to add.

You' ll never know now, I guess. I wouldn' t have the nerve to tell you either, I suppose. Not that you ever cared to listen. But...my personal sins of the flesh compose my old rugged cross and that' s a burden I' ll gladly bear all my days. And may I share with you the information that is is a hulluva long road to Calvary. And oh, how I dread the walk. Now that I gotta walk it alone.

(She slowly stands, picks up her bags and starts to walk, slowly, bravely across the stage.)

...ON A HIIIIILL FAAAR AWAAAAY...  
STANDS AN OOOOOLD RUGGEEED CROOOOSSS...

(Just as she is about to exit, a spot of light hits her and the sound of an approaching car is heard. She drops her bags, turns to the light and sticks out her thumb.)

Blessed stranger, guarantee your safe passage into the Kingdom of Heaven and lighten this heavy load of one so feeble as I...HOLY CHRIST! THAT' S OUR DATSUN!

(She dives for her suitcase and makes a vain attempt at hiding behind it. She slowly peeks above it.)

Oh, Lord, if you have that heart of gold as I truly believe you do, you will then allow me to become completely and immediately invisible to the mortal eye, Amen.

(A car door closes.)

May my heart collapse if I look up and see that sorry excuse for a husband walking on the shoulder of I-75...

(She slowly peeks. Then stands.)

If you was a grizzly approaching a trap I' d expect you to keep on walking Sammy Bingo Samuelson, but, since you ain' t no stupid damn animal you got no earthly reason

to keep coming this way since I know you know pain when it' s upon you. Are you listening to me, worthless? I said STOP WHERE YOU ARE!

(He has, evidently, stopped where he was)

Now, I suggest you turn your sorry ass around and high-tail it back toward the county line where your stretch-marked Loni Anderson is a wigglin' and a jigglin' for your safe return.

(He begins to approach)

I' m warning you! If I was a gun I' d shoot ya' !...Don' t you ' Awww, baby' me, Mrs Samuelson. I' ve rotted two teeth on your sweet talk. Did you feed the hound?...Then there ain' t nothing you need me for, I reckon....What' d you leave that car running for? You' re wasting gas. Don' t you know nothin' ?...what time is it?...Well, I' d guessed it to be about that. Where' s that tired piece of trash I saw so much of this morning? Hmmm? Did you leave her at the truck stop?

You know, if it weren' t so pitiful, it' d be funny...

(She smiles)

Ha! I always knew that little foxy doxy wore a girdle. When I think of all the secrets of the dark that are, thanks to Richard Simmons and Maidenform, now out in Heaven' s blessed light I want to laugh till I cry and then some.

(She pulls a hanky out of her bag.)

You done made me cry for the last time, Bingo.

(She looks toward him.)

Jeet chet?

Well, why *not* for pity' s sake? I left a fryer sitting in warm water in the sink to thaw and now it' s probably gone all soggy! Can' t you do nothing but lick your lips?

(She backs away quickly)

Hold it right there, stud! You keep that high-tail of yours in a solitary spot or I' ll make sure you never move it again! I' m calling the shots from this angle, bud, and there ain' t nothing in this or any other world you can do about it and how ' bout that?.....that' s better.

(She sits on her suitcase)

Now. The way I figure it. You didn' t come all the way out here just to tell me I' m pretty...

Well...thank you. But you didn' t come all the way out here just to tell me you can' t live without me...

Well, it' s about time you realized it. And *know* you didn' t come out this far just to show me how much you love me by taking me to the mall tomorrow and letting me run hog-wild through Sears now, did you?

(She cups her hand to her ear and smiles)

*With* the Visa card.

(She nods)

So. Since you didn' t come out here for any of those reasons, I figure you must be thinking about taking me off this cold night highway and dropping me off at the nearest pancake house to fill a different kinda void, yes?

(She looks at him)

Yes. That' s what I figured.

(She slowly stands)

Well. Alright, Mr. Hot-britches. What we' ll do is this: we' ll go on into Indianapolis where my sister is waiting for me and go out to dinner with her and her husband, Luke.

(She looks up sharply)

Do you think I give one lot in hell how you feel about them? I just don' t see how you' re in any position to finagle, mister, do you? That is how it is going to be!

(She picks up suitcases)

Yes, well, I thought you' d see it my way.

(She walks toward him.)

No, I do *not* need your help, useless! I' ve carried these suitcases for a few miles alone and I seem to be doing just fine, thank you. Then...after dinner..you are going to take me to see that new movie starring Al Pacino where you will *not* squirm in your seat for two hours.

(She is near the edge of the stage.)

Then, I figure, we can head on back home so I can get a good night' s sleep for shopping tomorrow. And, if you' re lucky. Really, really lucky, I might just show you a few tricks that Grace Myers don' t know about.

(Lights dim)

Then...after that...when you' re just about to fall asleep...when the cat' s been let out and the hound' s off dreamin' ...when the chicken' s rung out and put away for tomorrow...then Sammy Bingo...then....*then* I' ll cut your pecker off.

**CURTAIN**