

An Unusual Saturday Night

A Short Play

**By
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SCENE 1

GORDON ARNOLD sits in a comfy chair stage left. He is doing a crossword puzzle. PATRICIA ARNOLD sits at small table browsing her lap top. They both are drinking coffee or tea from a mug. Patricia stops what she's doing on the computer and looks up.

PATRICIA

Did you hear that?

GORDON

What?

PATRICIA

I don't know. It sounded like an explosion.

GORDON

Really? Hmm... didn't hear a thing.

PATRICIA

Huh.

She goes back to her lap top.

GORDON

What's the capital of Tibet?

PATRICIA

Capital of Tibet...

She hammers away on the keyboard.

God, this computer is as slow as molasses... Lhasa!
L-H-A-S-A.

GORDON

Oh, yeah. I knew that. That fits perfectly. Lhasa.

He inks it in the crossword puzzle.

PATRICIA

There it is again.

GORDON

There is what again?

PATRICIA

That sound. Like an explosion.

They both freeze and listen for a while.

GORDON

Well? Did you hear it again?

PATRICIA

No.

GORDON

I didn't either.

PATRICIA

Gordon, It didn't happen when we were listening for it. That's why we didn't hear it.

Patricia shakes her head and goes back to the computer.

GORDON

What did I say?

PATRICIA

It's not what you said. It's what you're thinking.

GORDON

Patricia... I know you heard something somewhere. I'm not arguing that. It was probably thunder

PATRICIA

Thunder? Gordon, I think I know what thunder sounds like. And there isn't a cloud in the sky between here and Redding. I've always had better hearing than you.

GORDON

True. And a better imagination.

She glares at him.

GORDON

I'm just saying.

PATRICIA

And what are you “just saying?”

GORDON

Come on. Let’s not --

PATRICIA

No, let’s! What are you saying?

GORDON

Well. You know. You do see a lot more UFO than me. A lot more apparitions. And then last summer at the rest stop in Orick you said you saw that Big Foot.

PATRICIA

I never said I saw a Big Foot. I said... a Big Foot saw me.

GORDON

I don’t even know what that means.

PATRICIA

Like I’ve told you a million times, I felt someone or something looking at me and when I turned around there it was. Staring right at me.

GORDON

I hope he got a photo of you that isn’t blurry because none of his Big Foot friends are going to believe that he saw Patricia Gertz walking into a rest room.

Gordon settles back down into his chair and peruses his crossword.

GORDON

Hmm... Okay. Honey. I need you more than ever now. Three letters. The tallest mountain in the Philippines?

Patricia continues to glare.

GORDON

Aw, come on now, Patty, you know I adore you. If I was a Big Foot I’d be staring at you too. (Chuckles) The tallest mountain in the Philippines? Three letters. Please.

Patricia reluctantly goes back to the lap top.

PATRICIA

Apo. Mount Apo. A-P-O. And I'm getting tired of aiding and abetting your crossword puzzle cheating.

GORDON

I'm not cheating. It would be cheating if I were looking up the answers, but I'm not. I'm doing a cross word puzzle and I'm just casually asking my wife if she happens to know some information.

PATRICIA

Wow. Just wow, Gordon. I don't how you can live with yourself.

GORDON

Now that hurts, Patricia.

PATRICIA

Not enough.

Patricia stands up suddenly.

GORDON

What?

PATRICIA

Didn't you hear that?

GORDON

No but, now I'm starting to believe that you do truly believe that you heard it.

PATRICIA

Thanks for nothing.

GORDON

Okay, hon, describe the sound for me. What exactly did you hear?

PATRICIA

I told you. An explosion. Far far off in the distance. Where most people can't hear.

GORDON

Obviously it's far off in the distance. And I guess I'm like most people because I didn't hear a thing.

PATRICIA

It was like... you know, when you see hear those explosions in an Imax movie theater? That huge sound they make? But it was far away, so... it wasn't that huge.

GORDON

I got the far away part.

PATRICIA

Like a... Ka-boom! Right? Then after the big Ka-Boom!... there were these... shock waves emanating and reverberating from the initial Ka-boom. that just momentarily linger in the air for... a very uncomfortable few seconds.

GORDON

Hmm... you mean like that nuclear explosion in the Terminator 2 movie we saw on our first date?

PATRICIA

Yes, exactly! And that was a terrible choice to see on our first date. What were you thinking?

GORDON

I don't know. Popcorn, nachos, and maybe a little sex later on.

PATRICIA

You did get the pop corn and nachos.

GORDON

Turns out that it was a bad choice though. The movie gave you nightmares for months. You'd jump out of your skin if someone lit off a fire cracker.

PATRICIA

I did, didn't I?

GORDON

Yep. Oh, and by the way, Mount Apo does not work because it totally ruins my down clue which is a five letter word for "in the raccoon family." Which is a skunk. Right?

PATRICIA

Wrong. A skunk is not --

Suddenly: An EXPLOSION happens off in the distance.
Patricia and Gordon freeze. Gordon stands up and runs to the window.

GORDON

I heard that! I heard that! I, I, I, heard that! Holy shit! What is that?!

Patricia goes to the window too.

PATRICIA

I don't know. We know it's not thunder, right?

GORDON

Right. Not thunder. How far away do you think that was?

PATRICIA

I have no idea.

GORDON

A few miles. Right? At least, huh?

PATRICIA

Hopefully.

GORDON

Now you're sure you heard those other --

PATRICIA

Yes! Pretty sure anyway.

GORDON

What do you mean "pretty sure"?

PATRICIA

Almost certain.

GORDON

Almost?

PATRICIA

Well, since you brought up that Terminator 2 movie, it just clouds the situation a little bit.

GORDON

So you're not hundred percent sure.

PATRICIA

Um, no, but I'm like eighty-six percent sure --

GORDON

Eighty-six? That's pretty high I guess. Okay. And if you did hear them. That's three in a row. Right? And that means they're getting closer. It's concerning.

PATRICIA

Welcome aboard.

GORDON

Have you checked Redheaded Black Belt?

PATRICIA

Yes.

GORDON

Any meth labs explode?

PATRICIA

No. Nothing.

Gordon goes back to the window and peers out.

GORDON

Shit. What in hell is going on? We could have a mad bomber on our hands. What are we going to do?

PATRICIA

Gordon , It's not going to do us any good to get all upset about something that... that seriously, could be anything. We don't know for sure. I mean, I don't know for sure.

GORDON

What ever happened to the "lingering emanating reverberating shock waves?"

PATRICIA

I'm going to make some tea. Would you like some?

GORDON

Tea!? At a time like this?

PATRICIA

I need to relax.

GORDON

We just heard a bunch of explosions --

PATRICIA

You heard one explosion. I heard a three. Or...

GORDON

Or what, Patty?

(pause.)

Or what?

PATRICIA

More than just hearing it... I felt those explosions?

GORDON

You must have heard those too, because it was followed by the explosion that we both just heard. It just makes sense.

PATRICIA

Yes. It does, doesn't it?

GORDON

And here we are, stuck in a canyon in the middle of a forest.

You wanted to live next to a creek. I'm going to make that tea. How about you?

GORDON

Okay. As long as it comes with a shot of tequila.

Patricia exits.

GORDON

And how about maybe next time we don't sign that petition against a cell phone tower?

PATRICIA

(Off stage.)

I signed it. You didn't have to.

GORDON

I know. And next time I won't. But what to we do now? We have no idea when the next bomb will drop.

Patricia enters.

PATRICIA

Let's go could go into town?

GORDON

Town. Now? It's twenty to twelve. We get into town after midnight. We'd be lucky to get a room.

PATRICIA

We'll take the Highlander. Fold down the seats --.

GORDON

Fold down the seats?

PATRICIA

Yes. I'll get our pillows and a comforter --

GORDON

No! No comforters. No pillows. No town. Seriously, do you know what goes on at three o'clock in the morning in our little town?

PATRICIA

No. But you don't either. Gordie honey, this way we can make sure we're safe. We could bring the rest of the spaghetti for a mid-night snack, and have breakfast in town in the morning. Come on, it'll be fun.

GORDON

I am not sleeping in a car!

PATRICA

We've done it dozens of times.

GORDON

Yeah. Because we didn't have a house.

Gordon takes her hand.

GORDON

Patty. Honey. Slow down. We're both over-reacting. Can we just get back to normal.

Gordon picks up his crossword puzzle book and heads for the chair.

PATRICIA

I just don't feel good here.

GORDON

Feel schmeel. Honey, this is our home. This is where we're comfortable. Where our heart is. There ain't no bomb big enough to scare us away from our home.

PATRICIA

Yes, You're right. I just thought it would be fun to do something crazy and different.

GORDON

Well it has been different, and pretty crazy too. So we got that going for us.

The tea kettle goes off.

PATRICIA

I'll get it.

GORDON

Two shots. In fact, forget about the tea. Just bring the tequila.

Patricia exits.

PATRICIA

(off stage)

Now you're talking. We deserve it.

Gordon sits and goes back to his crossword.

GORDON

We sure as hell do!

Gordon goes back to his puzzle.

GORDON

Let's see. Ferret? Weasel. Badger. Um... It's just gotta be skunk.

Patrica enters with two shot glasses and a bottle of tequila.
She pours two shots and hands one to Gordon.

PATRICIA

Let's toast peace and tranquility in our home.

GORDON

And no bombs.

PARTRICA

That goes without saying. But I'll say it anyway; no bombs.

They click their glasses and are about to drink when --
Patricia abruptly stands up.

GORDON

What? Honey? Did you hear something?

PATRICIA

No. It's ah... it's okay. Now where were we?

She sits down. They down their shots.

GORDON

Um, that's good. Let's do another.

He pours in another shot for each.

PATRICIA

Wow. It's been quite a night.

GORDON

But we're still alive.

Patricia laughs.

GORDON

What's so funny? That we're still alive?

PATRICIA

Yeah. The whole thing. How we we're just home doing what we always do. You know, our usual Saturday night.

GORDON

Except the crossword is a more challenging than usual.

PATRICIA

And the internet was even slower than usual.

GORDON

Then you, my dear, utilized your super-hero hearing powers and here we are, drinking tequila and considering driving into town and spending the night in our Highlander.

PATRICIA

You are? I mean, we are?

GORDON

Well, weren't you saying it's the safer option? Another shot?

PATRICIA

No. You know two is my limit.

(Pause.)

Gordie. There is something I need to share with you.

GORDON

Oh, yeah?

PATRICIA

Yes. It's about that Big Foot I saw.

GORDON

Yeah? The one in Orick or the one in Cave Junction?

PATRICIA

The one in Orick. Remember how long I took in the rest room and how long you waited for me in the car?

GORDON

Well, yeah, kind of. What are you getting at?

PATRICIA

The reason I took so long was because I went up into the forest... to see that Big Foot.

GORDON

What? Really? You climbed up that mountain in your shorts and flip flops?

PATRICIA

Yes. And it wasn't mountain. It was a steep hill. And that's how I got those scraps. Not from a feral cat hiding in the ladies room.

Gordon pours another shot and downs it.

GORDON

And?

PATRICIA

You understand. I just had to go. I had to make sure. Because that Big Foot was just staring at me. And for so long.

GORDON

I know. You've told me that a number of times. And?

PATRICIA

And so, I marked exactly where Big Foot was standing in my mind, right beside a big madrone, and then headed up there to see for myself... and guess what?

Gordon reaches for the tequila bottle pours a shot but doesn't drink.

GORDON

I'm... at a loss for words.

PATRICIA

Have you ever seen those paintings? You know, the ones where the further away you're standing the clearer the details become?

Gordon downs the shot.

Well, I think, but I'm not sure, that's what this Big Foot may have turned out to be. A piece of art work created by nature itself. And with the help of distance, lighting, perception and whatever atmospheric conditions prevailed that particular day.

GORDON

Don't make me pour another drink. I'm getting pretty ripped here, but I got a feeling I know where you're going with this.

PATRICIA

Gordie, from where I was standing at the rest room. I saw every detail of that Big Foot, even the glint in his round black eyes. His wide flaring nostrils. His yellow very human-like teeth. I swear it was even smiling at me. But when I trudged up that hill -- to that exact spot, next to the big madrone -- There was just a gnarled tree stump where the Big Foot was. A gnarled tree stump! You could imagine how disappointed I was. And when I got back down the hill and stood by the rest room and looked back up, it was getting so dark that I couldn't make out the details in that gnarled stump anymore.

(Pause.)

So. What do you think?

GORDON

I think you're trying to tell me you're not sure you heard those three explosions. Right?

PATRICIA

Kind of.

GORDON

But you know, just idea that you 'felt' them... and then there was that massive explosion that scared the shit out of both of us... I mean, that's pretty cool.

PATRICIA

Yeah. I guess. But what about Big Foot?

GORDON

Well, you either mistook that gnarled stump for Big Foot, or Big Foot saw you coming and high-tailed it out of there. I know I would.

PATRICIA

Very funny. So, Gordie, you think there's a fifty-fifty chance that I saw Big Foot?

GORDON

No. I'd say there's a ninety-nine percent chance it was a stump, but that one percent for you is a pretty strong one percent. Come on, Patty, let's spend the night in our Highlander. I mean, what the hell. Right?

PATRICIA

Right! But I'm driving. Gordie, we're safe here. You do know that?

GORDON

Yep. I do, hon.

PATRICIA

Hurry, I can't wait to find out what goes on at three o'clock in the morning in our little town.

Gordon stands up, hands Patricia the car keys and they exit.

LIGHTS OUT

(Off Stage.)

GORDON

So, you're saying that the five letter word for a raccoon is not a skunk?

PATRICIA

Nope. It's a coati. C-O-A-T-I. Coati.

GORDON

Oh, yeah, coati. What the hell is a coati?!

The car starts and drives off.

An EXPLOSION

CURTAIN

