



FINAL DRAFT  
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# FOREVER FERNWOOD

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EPISODE #453

by

MITCH MARKOWITZ

A  
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CAST OF CHARACTERS

TOM . . . . .	GREG MULLAVEY
LORETTA . . . . .	MARY KAY PLACE
CHARLIE . . . . .	GRAHAM JARVIS
MARTHA . . . . .	DODY GOODMAN
HEATHER . . . . .	CLAUDIA LAMB
PENNY . . . . .	JUDY KAHAN
ELEANOR . . . . .	SHELLEY FABARES
DR. MILES . . . . .	

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ACT ONE

INT. HAGGER'S LIVING ROOM - NEW DAY

LORETTA IS PUTTING SOME FINISHING  
TOUCHES ON A NEW SONG.

LORETTA

(SINGING) OH, I'M SINGING' THIS SONG  
TO A BABY AIN'T YET BORN.  
YOUR DADDY AND I WILL LOVE YOU  
AND FEED YOU GERBER'S CREAMED CORN  
AND BABE YOU'RE GONNA MAKE YOUR MOMMA  
PROUD  
IF YOU TRY NOT TO SCREAM AND CRY A LOT  
REAL LOUD.....

LORETTA PENCILS IN SOME CORRECTIONS

LORETTA (CONT'D)

I wonder if songs about unborn babies  
sell... 'cause now I got about eight  
of 'em.

THERE IS A KNOCK ON THE DOOR  
AND MARTHA ENTERS CARRYING A  
CASSETTE RECORDER OVER HER  
SHOULDER.

MARTHA

Hello, Loretta. Mind if I come in?

LORETTA

You're already in, hon.

MARTHA

Oh, well do you mind if I stay?  
I'd like to talk to you about an  
article I read in Reader's Digest.

LORETTA

They sure got some good writers  
writing for that magazine.

MARTHA

And this article I read is so  
believable. (BEAT) It's about  
teaching unborn children how to  
prepare for the real world.

LORETTA

Great idea! Do y'see how nobody  
ever thought about that before, and  
it's such a simple idea. (BEAT)  
How do they do that?

MARTHA

I couldn't quite figure that part  
out. The article was written by  
this Dr. Adam Moskowitz. He's  
supposed to be a big surgeon in Chicago.

LORETTA

(TAKING LOOK AT BOOK) He's a vet, hon.  
I'd say he was getting just a sliver  
out of his area.

MARTHA

But look here. The Readers Digest people sent me an introductory (READS) Pre-Natal-Baby-Lecture absolutely free and with no obligation. I taped it for you...

LORETTA

Why, aren't you the sweetest thing this side of cherry pie.

MARTHA TAKES THE TAPE OUT AND PUTS IT INTO THE TAPE RECORDER.

MARTHA

And they don't charge you a penny until the unborn baby starts to learn.

LORETTA

But how in Lord's name would they be able to find out whether or not an unborn baby is learning??

MARTHA

Probably a multiple-choice test or something.

LORETTA

Yeah, that makes sense.

MARTHA

Now just lie back, Loretta...

LORETTA LIES DOWN RELUCTANTLY ON THE COUCH. MARTHA PROPS UP THE MACHINE AND PLACES A STRETCHED OUT PAIR OF HEADPHONES ACROSS LORETTA'S SWOLLEN BELLY. SHE TURNS THE MACHINE ON.

MARTHA (V.O.)

Hello, unborn child. Little tyke.

This is Martha Shumway.

LORETTA

And your Mama Loretta is right here  
too.

MARTHA

Shh.

MARTHA (V.O.)

This course is designed to help you  
in your, quote, new world. As you  
grow, of course, you'll find certain  
problems, fears, tragedies,  
disappointments and from first grade  
on you'll find yourself asking "what's  
it all about?" Or maybe even "why  
do I go on?" But first, let's talk  
about what to do during the first  
months after you leave the womb.  
Join me if you will in this little  
guided tour. The following catch  
phrases you will find helpful to  
learn right off. Now, repeat after  
me... (SHE CRIES, THEN, A BEAT) Next  
is how a baby says Mother -- "Ma-Ma."  
(REPEATS "MOTHER - MA-MA" OVER THE  
FOLLOWING BEAT)

CHARLIE, WHO HAS BEEN STANDING  
IN THE DOORWAY FOR THE PAST  
MOMENT IS PUZZLED.

CHARLIE

What in blazes is going on here,  
honey?

LORETTA

(WHISPERS) Quiet, Charlie, our  
little tyke or girl is getting it's  
first free living lesson.

CHARLIE

What??

MARTHA (V.O.)

Of course, as an unborn child you  
may already be asking yourself "where  
do I come from"? The answer is  
(BEAT - WE HEAR PAGES TURNING) Oh --  
monkeys and other forms of low  
life...

CHARLIE

(ANGRY) What the...! Loretta, shut  
that dang blastid thing. I don't  
want people teachin' our kid stuff  
like that before it's even born.

LORETTA

(TO MARTHA) Charlie's right, hon.  
I don't suppose you got one of them  
Sunday morning bible stories on tape ...

(MORE)

LORETTA (CONT'D)

...or even one of them late night  
priest lectures on sin would be  
okay....

MARTHA

No... I don't believe I do...

CHARLIE BEGINS USHERING MARTHA  
OUT THE DOOR.

CHARLIE

We appreciate your help, Martha,  
but first we're gonna try loving  
our baby before we make it listen  
to lectures.

MARTHA

Charlie, you've got to take  
advantage of teaching a child before  
it starts crying and burping... and  
not listening....

BUT CHARLIE HAS ALREADY GOTTEN  
MARTHA OUT. HE CLOSSES THE DOOR.

CHARLIE

I hope our baby didn't hear any of that.

LORETTA SMILES, AND, DROWSY,  
CLOSES HER EYES. CHARLIE TAKES  
ON A SLIGHTLY WORRIED EXPRESSION  
AS HE KNEELS BEFORE LORETTA'S  
SWOLLEN BELLY.

CHARLIE

(TO BELLY) Hello? Baby? This  
is your Papa, Charlie Hagers.

(MORE)

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Hey, I'm sorry about before, worrying whether or not I'd love you because you might be Tom Hartman's baby. And don't worry, I'm gonna see to it that you turn out just fine.

LORETTA WAKENS SLIGHTLY.

LORETTA

(DROWSY) Are you sayin' something?

CHARLIE

(STARTLED SLIGHTLY) Yeah, Loretta. But I'm talkin' to the baby. Just havin' a father-to-unborn-child talk. 'Course, I'm doin' most of the talkin...

LORETTA

(GRATIFIED, DROWSY) You do love the baby after all, don't you, hon?

CHARLIE

Oh yeah. Matter of fact, I'm thinkin' it an' me got a good understanding here already.

LORETTA SMILES, SATISFIED,  
AND GOES BACK TO SLEEP.  
CHARLIE KNEELS AGAIN AND  
TALKS TO THE BELLY AGAIN.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

We really will love you, baby.

(MORE)

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

We'll toilet train ya and everything,  
and you'll go to school and behave  
yourself real well and become a nice  
professional lawyer or dentist or  
T.V. repairman. (BEAT) Just don't  
turn out to be a vicious murderer,  
okay?

CHARLIE PATS LORETTA'S BELLY.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Thanks....

FADE OUT.

ACT TWOMAJOR LIVING ROOM - DAY

ELEANOR IS STARING AT THE MAP ENTITLED "FERNWOOD AND IT'S ENVIRONS" WHICH SIMPLY SHOWS A COLORED MASS IN THE CENTER AS BEING FERNWOOD, AND SURROUNDING ARROWS AND DOTS LABELLED AS "ENVIRONS". SHE SNATCHES IT OFF THE WALL AND TEARS IT ANGRILY TO SHREDS. SHE RUNS TO PHONE, DIALS.

ELEANOR

Damn that Merle! (CHANGES TO CHINESE ACCENT) Herro? Is dis Max Srattely? Nevva mine who is me. No, dis no restaurant. You rook fo' Merle Jeetel? He rousy person, no? Okay, you find him in Bide-A-Wee Motel. He way fo' you to kill him. You can hurt him if you wan', okay? Bye...

ELEANOR SLAMS THE PHONE DOWN.  
SHE WALKS OVER TO HAMSTER CAGE.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Well, Trojan, can you believe it?

(MORE)

## ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Of course, I don't expect a hamster to be fully able to comprehend the subtle intricacies of my awful predicament, but when someone you deeply love like Merle Jeeter hurts you... i.e., stands you up at the marriage altar -- the only true consolation for a sad and sensitive heart is the immediate infliction of pain upon the big jerk that caused it. And then I guess you and me and Penny should return at last to Philadelphia, the city of brotherly love, a place more suitable for people and rodents.

ELEANOR SIGHS AND IS BROUGHT OUT OF HER DEPRESSION BY A SHARP RAP ON THE DOOR. IT'S PENNY. ADLIBBED GREETINGS AND THE TWO EMBRACE.

PENNY

(SAD) I'm sorry I didn't make it to your wedding.

ELEANOR

Oh, I hadn't noticed. So many others missed it, including the groom.

PENNY

(UNCOMFORTABLE) Yes, I heard. That's why I came. I feel terrible for you, Eleanor.

(MORE)

PENNY (CONT'D)

Maybe you deserve some bad things to happen to you, but not this. (THEN) I don't know if that came out right.

ELEANOR

Don't worry about it, Penny, I'm just very happy you and I are finally friends again. (PSEUDO-CHEERY) I mean, hey, sis! Why dwell on the past?

PENNY

I guess because we've got nothing else to talk about.

ELEANOR

(THINKING) Don't we?

PENNY

Yes, you're right -- we do. Or at least I do.

ELEANOR

I guess I do too...

PENNY

(EFFERVESCENT) Okay, you go first!

ELEANOR

No, you'd better. I may need to polish mine up a little.

PENNY

Okay. (BITES HER LIP NOT TO BE TOO JOYOUS) Eleanor, I'm... getting... married!

ELEANOR

(DISAPPOINTED) Really?

PENNY

Yes!

ELEANOR

This would just be a technicality,  
of course, but who did you figure  
would be your groom? Not that silly  
bartender?

PENNY

No! Tom Hartman!

PENNY JUMPS UP AND HUGS  
ELEANOR.

PENNY (CONT'D)

I know this must come as some surprise!

ELEANOR

Yes, a tiny one.

PENNY

Oh, I'm so glad we're friends again!  
I thought it'd be real nice to have  
my relative up there at the altar  
with me! To be my maid of honor!

ELEANOR

Funny, but logging time at the altar  
seems to have lost its appeal.

PENNY

Well you can think it over. Eleanor,  
this wedding, if you had a nice time,  
really could take your mind off things.

PENNY KISSES ELEANOR AND STARTS  
OUT.

PENNY (CONT'D)

(TURNING BACK) Oh, and what was the  
thing you wanted to say? The thing  
you wanted to polish up?

ELEANOR

Oh, Penny, my surprise has yet to  
come. (SMILES) It's more or less  
on it's way.

PENNY

How exciting! (EXITS)

ELEANOR

(TO HERSELF) Yes, my surprise consists  
of lots of little surprises. One for  
every Fernwoodian who has ever hurt me.

FADE OUT.

ACT THREEINT. HARTMAN KITCHEN - NIGHT

TOM COMES INTO THE KITCHEN.  
PENNY SITS AT THE TABLE GOING  
THROUGH LISTS OF NAMES.

TOM

How's the wedding invitations coming  
along?

PENNY

Tom, looking at the list here we have  
thirty-seven of your friends and  
family, nearly forty of Mary's and  
one, single relative of mine.

TOM

Who's that?

PENNY

My sister, Tom. I'd like her to  
be my maid of honor.

TOM

(FLABBERGASTED) Eleanor? You invited  
Eleanor to our wedding?

PENNY

(COOL) I hope I didn't overstep  
my bounds.

TOM

No, that's all right. Gee, Eleanor, a Maid of Honor. I feel kind of funny about that. Y'know, since I was supposed to marry her a few months ago and all.

PENNY

(TAKEN ABACK) Tom, I am surprised at you. Eleanor is so touched by all this. She'll probably even bring all the decorations and cake from her last wedding attempt... She's become very sentimental.

TOM

Well... at least the cake'll be fresh...

HEATHER ENTERS, HAVING HEARD THAT.

HEATHER

Already getting the marriage off to a practical start, I see.

TOM

Could you not interrupt Penny and I.

PENNY

Tom! Let's try to not exclude Heather from things. It's not healthy for her.

TOM

I think what's healthy for her is for neither of us to have a lax attitude in bringing her up.

HEATHER

Hey, Dad, don't expect her to start being mean so soon. She's not even my stepmother yet.

PENNY

Heather, I'd never be mean to you.

HEATHER

That's because I haven't gotten on your nerves yet. Wait till I do some crummy adolescent stuff. Then you'll yell.

PENNY

Heather, I'm marrying your Dad so we can be happy and lead peaceful lives.

HEATHER

Yeah, but what's gonna happen once I get around to experimenting with drugs and getting ready to lose my virginity. That could be coming up in the next year or two.

TOM

Drugs... Virginity....

HEATHER

Sure... What'd you think, it was gonna be a piece of cake bringing up a kid? Happy wedding. (EXITS TO LIVING ROOM)

TOM

(SHOUTING AFTER HEATHER) I want  
you to stay away from all drugs!

(BEAT) And all boys!

HEATHER (O.S.)

(SHOUTING BACK) What about men?!

TOM

(DUMBFOUNDED) Men? (THEN, SHOUTS)  
Stay away from men!!

PENNY

Tom Hartman, consider me truly  
shocked. You are traumatizing that  
little girl. (CROSSES TO BACK DOOR)  
I will not listen to anymore of this.

TOM

It's for her own good.

PENNY

That's what my father said when he  
told me to stay away from men. And  
I almost missed out on them.

TOM

What about drugs?

PENNY

(A TOUCH OF REGRET) I definitely  
missed out on them. (EXITS)

TOM

(LEFT ALONE) Once we get married,  
things'll go a lot smoother....

FADE OUT.

ACT FOURHAGGERS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

LORETTA IS ON THE FLOOR DOING  
CHILDBIRTH EXERCISES READING  
FROM A BOOK ENTITLED CHILDBIRTH  
EXERCISES (FOR WOMEN ONLY). SHE  
IS PULLING HERSELF OUT OF A VERY  
CONTORTED POSITION.

LORETTA

Lord in Heaven, I never realized that  
giving birth to a baby would be such  
a major production. Gettin' pregnant  
was easy compared to this.

AS SHE TRIES TO GET HERSELF OUT  
OF THE POSITION THERE IS A RAP  
ON THE DOOR.

LORETTA (CONT'D)

(CALLING OUT) Just a sec! I'm all  
contorted!

SHE ANSWERS THE DOOR. IT'S  
DR. MILES.

DR. MILES

You the pregnant woman?

LORETTA

Yes, I am. Who are you?

DR. MILES

I'm a physician. That's why I ask  
before jumping to conclusions. I'm  
Dr. Miles. Your father sent me for you.

LORETTA

Well it's a pleasure to meet you,  
I'm sure, but as it turns out I  
already have an obstrectritian,  
Doctor.

DR. MILES

Call me Miles. No extra charge. I'm  
not an obstetrician, Ma'am -- I  
have nothing against them although  
we do pull in quite a bit more.

LORETTA

Who's we?

DR. MILES

Geneticists. Interestingly enough,  
you'll often find, in medicine, the  
smaller the things, like genes, the  
more a doctor tends to pull in per  
year. (THINKS AGAIN) Actually that  
isn't always the case. A gall bladder  
extraction is peanuts compared to a  
valve job... heart valves... Well,  
medicine is full of contradictions!

LORETTA

Can I ask you something! (DIRECT)  
What in the Holy Christian Lord's very  
good name are you doing in my house?

DR. MILES

Fair enough. Your father notified me  
about your pregnancy, Mrs. Hagers. He  
suggested there might be a problem with  
your baby.

LORETTA

A problem with my baby?!

DR. MILES

I don't mean to alarm you, but I  
suspect, from what he said, that  
your baby may have some sort of  
hypoallergenic puncture or a severed  
unregenerate dual genetic spiral.  
Please don't be concerned, however.

LORETTA

I'm about to faint. (BEAT) Or  
scream. I just can't decide which.

DR. MILES

Best bet is not to scream. Your  
baby-to-be has lousy genes. It's  
not the end of the world.

CHARLIE ENTERS. LORETTA RUSHES  
TO HIM AND HUGS HIM.

LORETTA

Oh, Charlie, we got genes troubles!

CHARLIE

What's going on here?!

DR. MILES

Dr. Miles here, physician on the payroll of Uncle Sam: Intelligence Department -- Defoliation, Germ Warfare, Genetic Mutation and Pre-Natal Child Care. But you can just call me Doc. Or Miles.

CHARLIE

What do you want?

MILES

Frankly, I want you to stop futzing around so I can get to work transplanting new DNA into your baby's genes. What do you say...?

LORETTA

Why on earth would we want to do a thing like that??

MILES

Maybe if we don't your kid will wind up to be a weirdo. Maybe a jerk. Probably worse...

LORETTA

(ANGRY) My baby a weirdo?! Is this some kind of a joke?!

CHARLIE

(SAD, TO LORETTA) Uh -- Actually, honey, it's true. Your father never told you this, but there's a gene in your mother's ancestors that skips a generation and makes people dang blastid murderers and social deviants. And I think our kid's got it.

LORETTA

(SLUMPS DOWN IN A CHAIR) My baby a deviant.

DR. MILES

Kind of takes all the joy out of investigating the past, doesn't it? Alex Haley never would've written Roots if this'd happened in his family.

DR. MILES REMOVES A SYRINGE,  
STARTS PREPARING IT.

LORETTA

Charlie, this ain't right tryin' to mess with the Lord's unborn creature what also happens to be our baby child!

CHARLIE

(HESITANT) We gotta do what's best, Loretta.

DR. MILES

Look, this is not that big a deal.  
Instead of all this genetic bull, just  
think of it as a polio shot, only instead  
of polio, we'll be preventing murderous  
fiendishness. (MOVES TOWARD LORETTA)

LORETTA IS SCARED. SUDDENLY:

CHARLIE

Now hold your horses, Doc. Let's  
give this a moment's thought before  
we start usin' my wife as a pin  
cushion.

DR. MILES

Hey, what's wrong with you people?!

CHARLIE

Dr. Miles, did it ever occur to you  
that DNA transplants might be  
unchristian.

DR. MILES

I'm a specialist. Not a Christian.

LORETTA

We're havin' our baby naturally,  
doctor. And it doesn't say anything  
in my natural childbirth book about  
letting people transplant things  
before the baby is born.

DR. MILES

What's the fuss about a little transplant...?

LORETTA

Thanks, but I'll just take my chances with what the Lord has provided me with.

CHARLIE

(USHERING DR. MILES TO DOOR) Right, Doc. No gene transplants for the Haggers family. We'll make do with love.

DR. MILES

This is not a very scientific approach at all.

CHARLIE

We know that.

DR. MILES

(EXITING) What the hell does God have to do with any of this?!

CHARLIE SHUTS DOOR.

LORETTA

(GOING TO HIM) I knew you'd wind up loving our baby, Charlie, even if there were some unforeseen problems.

CHARLIE

Honey, I'd love this baby even if it turned out to be a giant marshmallow from outer space.

LORETTA

Which, of course, with the Lord's help,  
annual check-ups and watching between  
meal treats, he won't be anything  
but our sweet baby....

CHARLIE AND LORETTA EMBRACE,  
AS WE:

FADE OUT.

END OF EPISODE #453

