

The card game

By Rob Kristie

One set / 4 cast members (4 senior women)

A card table with 4 chairs/ recliner or Comfy chair/ end table/deck of cards/ Oxygen bag and nose hose/ misc. items...Picture in frame...bags of snacks...butter knife...roll of toilet paper.

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THE CARD GAME

Writers note- there are two versions of this show a 13 minute ONE-ACT version and a 25-35 minute ONE-ACT version

(25-35 minute version)

Place: Agnes's house...a table for four (two seats facing audience and one at each end)

An easy chair or recliner / a door/ Cards / butter knife / purses and bags /oxygen bag with hoses

We open with three ladies. Two ladies, Joan and Mildred are sitting at the table looking at pictures on their phones and laughing.....and Agnes is coming from the kitchen toward the table

Joan

...and look at this one....

Mildred

Oh MY! He is gorgeous!

Joan

Isn't he?....And look, check out the eyes and hair on this one

(pause)

Mildred

I like that. Mine hardly had any hair

Joan

Oh come on, ...he must have had some...

(They giggle)

Agnes

What the hell are you two looking at that's so funny

Mildred

It's porn Agnes....you remember what that is right?

Joan

Here...Look for yourself (she holds her phone up to show Agnes)

Agnes
(she sits down)

Dogs? You're salivating over dogs? (beat) You ladies are sick!

.... doorbell rings. Joan stares at Agnes who is shuffling cards.... doorbell rings again. Agnes looks up but remains seated.

Joan

(Taps Agnes)

Are you going to answer that or what?....

Agnes

Oh did my phone ring*(she reaches in her apron for her flip phone)*

Joan

No...No....Somebody's at the door Agnes. *(she points at the door)*

(Flustered, Agnes gets up to answer the door, she lets Miranda in)

Agnes

Well Miranda... you're late as usual. What was the matter this time? Too much traffic, sun glare, or did you just forget that today was the day we played cards?

Mildred

(gets up from the table and walks over to look at pictures on another table)

Hi Miranda *(as she walks by)*

Miranda

No, I didn't forget, but did you forget? *(beat)* Remember I said I was going to stop and pick up the cheese and crackers.

Joan

(at table wearing oxygen)

I picked up cheese and crackers. ..*(beat)* Last week you told me to get the cheese and crackers

Agnes

Wait What? What's cracked?

Mildred
(shouts)

Nothings cracked goofy....(loud) **Do you have your hearing aids in Agnes?**

Agnes (flustered)

Grrrr Oh, I think have them too low,give me a minute (she adjust her hearing aid)

Miranda

What good are the damn things if you don't use them Properly? But you didn't miss much.

Miranda and Joan were arguing about the god damn cheese and crackers.

Joan

I'm positive you told me to get the cheese and crackers. And Miranda, please stop taking the Lord's name in vain, thank you!

Agnes

Cheese and crackers? I have cheese and crackers; You know that I always keep them on hand.

Mildred

No, I said I was going to get the cheese and crackers.

Miranda

Oh my god, enough with the cheese and crackers already. Can we just sit down and play cards?

(beat)

Joan

SoI assume that nobody brought cheese puffs either.? (sigh) Well I hope we have at least two different types of Cheese and crackers.

Miranda

(Jumps up yielding a butter knife)

I dare any one of you to say the words “cheese and crackers” again.

Joan

Oh don't make me laugh Miranda. That's a butter knife, it wouldn't cut anything.... Including the cheese and....

Miranda

Go ahead.....say it, And I swear I will cut the hose to your oxygen.

(Silence)

Joan

Well.... if the knife's not serrated, it only good for cutting butter

(Miranda sets the knife down sits back looks up to the heavens and shakes her head in disbelief)

Agnes

Yes crocodile Dundee, put the knife down before someone gets hurt.....
By the way, have you heard from Kari lately?

Miranda

Yes... yes I did..... and I'll remind you, her name is Sakari now. And well, as you'll recall, she went looking for her mother in Arizona. She sent me some pictures and will call me tomorrow. I'll be sure to let all of you know what's going on. I will tell you this....It is gorgeous out there and I wouldn't mind going out that way to visit.

Agnes

Well she's still Kari to me and as far as I'm concerned, YOU are her real mother.

Miranda

Thanks Agnes, but I am Not ...but maybe Mom #2 ? (smiles)

JOAN

I really lost touch with the whole Kari thing. you sent her searching for her real mom in Arizona?... And isn't Arizona all holes and caves?

Miranda

Holes and caves? Really?.....(shakes her head) Anyways....Yes, I raised her, but her real mother was in Sedona Arizona. I hated losing my lil flower but ...it was the right thing to do.

Agnes

Speaking of flowers.... Apparently, none of you took notice to the colorful pansies I planted out front.

Joan

I did Agnes, they are nice

Agnes

Nice? ...nice?....they are beautiful !....nice! Sheesh!

I got them at that roadside stand on maple.... You know where Ralph works. I forgot that miserable bastard worked there.

Joan

Oh yeah. Ralph there's a sore subject.... Can we NOT discuss Ralph for the 100th time.....I hate the bastard and I don't even know him (beat) I just want to double check, we don't have cheese puffs, right? All we have is ...

(hesitate and looks at Miranda)

whatchamacallit and whatchamacallit?

Miranda
(Grits teeth)

Let's play pinochle!

Agnes

Yes, let's play. And no cheese puffs Joan. You always make a mess ...you get orange powder all over the cards. Besides, I thought you gave up snacks for Lent.

Joan

No... I gave up Oreo Cookies for Lent

Agnes

Well that doesn't count,...You don't even like Oreo cookies.

Mildred

(sings)

OH_RE_O_OR E_O...

Miranda

What the hell are you singing?

Mildred

That's what guards sing in the Wizard of oz...isn't it? OH-RE-OH-OR-E-O

Miranda

Mildred,.... you need drugs!

Joan

And I do like Oreos....I like the vanilla double stuffed ones. So THERE!

Agnes

Vanila Oreos? Double stuffed?.....apparently, She's already doing drugs
Miranda..... Whoever heard of vanilla oreos?

Miranda

No, they do make them. I've never tried them, but I've seen them.

Agnes

Oreo's are supposed to be a chocolate cookie with white crème icing...and that's it. Should be the law!

Mildred

But seriously, why do they sing about Oreos in The Wizard of OZ.

(they all just pause and stare at Mildred)

Joan

By the way, I have a great recipe for a cake ...or maybe you would call it a pie...either way, you use graham crackers. It's delicious.

Agnes

Where the hell did that come from? We were talking about Oreo cookies.

Joan

Well graham crackers are like a cookie...

Agnes

graham CRACKERS! Crackers being the key word here.

Mildred

That did come out of nowhere Joan...even I was confused....

Joan

Talking about the cookies made me think of it. (beat) and like I said, I have the recipe if any of you want it.

Agnes

Are we going to play cards or what? (she picks up the deck)

Joan

Yeah let's play before Mildred starts singing SOMEWHERE OREO THE RAINBOW

(they all chuckle except Agnes)

Joan

So Agnes lets jump back to this Ralph guy.... exactly what happened there?

Agnes

He ...hehow do you say it?...he haunted me.

Joan

Haunted you, or hunted?

Miranda

Do you mean he stalked you?

Agnes

No, you know he came by a few times and then ..poof!....disappeared.

Miranda

Oh, he GHOSTED you.

Agnes

Ghostedhauntedwhatever you call it, the bastard just fell off the face of the earth.

Joan

But you said you just saw him at the ROADSIDE stand so obviously he didn't vanish.Did he say anything to you?

Agnes

Yeah....he said hi....and asked how I was doing.

(beat..bewildered)

Miranda

So why do you always talk badly about him? Sounds like a decent guy.

Agnes

Oh yeah? Decent?...last time he was herehe wanted things....wanted to DO things

Joan

Do things like what? Oh wait (beat) I don't think I want to hear this....

Miranda

Well I do...(beat) (*smiles and moves closer to Agnes*) what kind of things Agnes dear?

Agnes

You know....THINGS!

Joan

OK let's change the subject. Ralphs a bastard and that's that. ...(beat) Say did you girls hear about that tribute band that imitates the BEATLES? I hear they are really good.... I think I would like to go see that show...it's at the Shubert. Maybe we can all go?

Miranda

Did I ever tell you that I saw the BEATLES in person.

Agnes

The ones in your backyard don't count.

Miranda

No Really, I actually saw them in person at Steel Pier. Well it was a Steel Pier show but really it was in the Atlantic city convention hall. Great show!

Joan

STEEL PIER...damn I miss that place. What a bargain that was.... Always Some famous celebrity, two current movies, a High Diving Horse, Dancing...wow...all for under \$10.00

Miranda

Less than that..... My parents and I only paid \$5.00 for a ticket to see the Beatles. (beat) I haven't been to Atlantic city for years. Is Steel Pier still there?

Agnes

Hell no! You know that good things like that don't last. It's a pier, but I think it's all rides now.

Mildred

(looking at crossword puzzle in Newspaper)

Special ...special...hmmm 7 across.....is it affects with an “a” or effects with an “e”?

(beat)

Agnes

Are you doing a crossword puzzle?

Mildred

Yes...(beat) .it always takes us an hour to get started playing cards so.... yes I am. I’m making use of my time and keeping my brain sharp.

Agnes

Yeah, your brain is about as sharp as that butter knife Denise was threatening us with a minute ago...

Miranda

Hey, I only threaten Joan...however.... *(picks up knife again)*

Mildred

Well anyhow....I don’t care to see a Beatles tribute band. I’d rather see a Patsy Cline or Sinatra impersonator.

JOAN

Not me...I’m a Beatles fan true and through.

Mildred (looking at newspaper)

Well here’s something interesting....St Teresa’s is having COACH Bingo this weekend. We should all go!

JOAN

Coach?...what in the hell am I or any of us going to do with a coach? Sometimes you say the most ridiculous things Mildred.

Mildred

It's a coach handbag you putz! What is wrong with you?

JOAN

Me? What the hell is a Coach handbang?...What, does it have wheels?

(All the girls laugh)

Miranda

Joan, you are hysterical sometimes....(beat) Coachit's the name of the handbag designer....you know like Michael Kors?

JOAN

Oh now Him I heard of, he's the beer guy right? He designs handbags too?

(Miranda glances at the others and they all chuckle)

Miranda

Yep that's him....he does it all

Agnes

Well If I'm going to play bingo, it will be for cash....I don't need a handbag or beer or anything other than crisp... green.... cash.

Mildred

Oh it doesn't matter, I have to use the bathroom anyway.

(BEAT)

(reaches in her purse and pulls out a roll of toilet paper)

Agnes

What the hell? You brought your own toilet paper? You don't think I have toilet paper?

Mildred

You have that one-ply crap..... that's like wiping your ass with cotton candy.

Agnes

That's what I have to use here because of the sewer systemyou can't use...(beat) .Wait a minute, wipe your ass?.....you're going to take a dump...., here ?

Mildred

Well.....I ...don't know....(beat) I never know what's going to come out of where.

Miranda

Oh for the love of God, are we going to play pinochle or what?

Mildred

Yes....I'll hurry.

(Mildred leaves with her roll of toilet paper)

Joan

Will you please stop bringing God into the conversation.....and Yes, let's play. I don't have all day. I have some errands I have to run and I need to be home. My doctor is supposed to call later this afternoon with my test results and he doesn't have my cell number, he calls my land line phone..

Miranda

You still have a land line?

Joan

Yes...what if my cell loses its charge or I misplace the phone or I.....

Agnes

More tests? For crying out loud Joan, you're such a hypochondriac, you think you have everything. One week it's your sciatica, then your knees...(beat) and each week it's a different damn knee...and you use more COVID test kits than the Center for Disease control.....

Joan

Yeah, yeah and you think you know everything. I try and take care of myself.

I see my doctor regularly, I take my pills, my vitamins, I exercise, and I eat right.

Agnes

Oh yeah, cheese puffs, the quintessential supplement of all food groups. And what exercise do you do?.....

Miranda

Now now girls...lets not....

Joan

(stands)

STOP IT! Just stop it. (beat) Why must you always attempt to humiliate me? Do you hate me, Agnes? Do I bother you that much. (she gets up and walks away from table)

Agnes

Stop your whinnying and get back over here. Such a little baby at times.

Miranda

Really girls, this needs to stop.

(Agnes gets up, looks like she is going to comfort Joan but walks right past her and over to the front door, and opens it)

Hmmm nobody there. I thought I heard someone knocking, did anyone else hear knocking?

Joan

Oh you're hearing things again, but you don't hear me, do you? (beat) What is it about me that irritates you lately? The last couple of months you have badgered me and belittling me. Why do you keep doing this? What did I do to you to cause such animosity between us?

Agnes

Oh shut the hell up, and sit down

Joan

No I won't shut up and I won't sit down. Week after week you get on me about every little thing. Know this Agnes....My knees do hurt!....My back does hurt!.....deal with it ... (beat) and another thing, when I ask for a water, I want a bottled water Not your shitty tab water.

Miranda

ladies Please.... Listen to yourselves. This is not the way friends talk.

Joan

(starts to cry and says)

I need a tissue.

Agnes (waves her off)

You know where I keep 'em

(Joan Walks out of the room and into the kitchen)

Miranda

You really are hard on her Agnes. You need to lighten up You know that she really is sick, yet you keep on her.

Agnes

Yeah? Well I'm sick too I'm sick of her crying and whining all the time. I'm sick of you playing mother Theresa and I'm sickI'm sick of all of you.

Miranda

What's wrong.....What's gotten into you? (beat) I don't get it (beat)

Wait...(beat)..You're scared aren't you?.

Agnes

Scared ? Scared of what?

Miranda

I'm not sure, are you afraid of losing her, are you afraid of losing us....I mean, We're all getting on in our years.....In the last three months alone, We have lost two great friends Michael and Rebecca.

I know it's a scary reminder that time is slipping away, but I don't understand what's going on with you. Why do you push us away? (beat) Are you trying to isolate yourself from us?

Are you trying to prepare yourself for when she's gone, when we're gone?

Agnes

You're ridiculous. Where do you come up with this shit?

(beat)

Was that my doorbell?

Miranda

(in disgust)

I didn't hear anything You're imagining things again. (beat)

I need a cup of tea.....no, what I really need, is a strong whiskey but I guess tea will have to do. Unless....of course.... you have some Jamieson hidden away here someplace?

Agnes

NO!

Miranda

OK, tea it is.

(she leaves the room)

(Agnes wanders over to her seat at the table, no one else is there...she stares down at the table and then her empty hands, then the deck of cards , picks up the deck and yells into the air....)..

Agnes (shouts)

Well, are we playing cards or what? (Long pause as she shuffles)

*(She looks up and realizes she is alone. She looks all around the room, but No one is there. She gets up..... looks in the kitchen, walks over and She opens the front door again and closes it
She then goes to her radio and turns it on ...we hear a commercial, she switches...we hear a segment of a song....she switches again and Its playing TIME IN A BOTTLE by Jim Croce. She goes to her armchair in the room and sits down she picks up a picture of the ladies she plays cards with*

(Again She looks around the room Song fades out...There is no one and it is quiet....

She begins to cry)

{She eventually closes her eyes and nearly cries herself to sleep in the chair.

(Doorbell rings. It startles her..... she waits, thinking she is imagining things, but it rings again

she gets up opens the door and all three ladies enter carrying bags.}

Mildred

Hey Agnes, sorry we're a little late. Joan had to make a stop she just HAD to get some cheese puffs How are you doing sweetie? (smiles)

Miranda

I hope you don't mind; I brought some cheese and crackers; I really like the cheese you had last week but wanted to try this new brand...(excited) Oh and Sakari sent me some pictureswait till you see Sedona.

Joan

(kisses her on the cheek).

Oh Agnes I LOVE the flowers out front....They are so beautiful. I wish I had your green thumb...hell, I kill the silk flowers....(they all laugh) Oh, Can I get a water sweetie. I am parched.

*(Agnes is smiling as she glances around the room at her lady friends. They all proceed to the table, they are chattering but Agnes is not saying a word.....just watching and smiling
They sit down Agnes remains standing)*

Mildred

Agnes.... you ok, (beat) what's wrong?

Miranda

Yeah, what's with the big smile, did you hit the lottery or something?

(Joan stands and walks up to Agnes)

Joan

Are you ok sweetie.?

(Pause)

Agnes

(smiling)

Yes, yes, I'm fine. (beat) I'm just so happy to see all of you. We really are great friends, aren't we? I think we (beat) or at least I know I do, tend to things for granted.... But we need to take some time and reflect on our lives and those we touch daily. I mean, I know we fight sometimes but we do understand and appreciate each other, don't we? I know that I don't always show it(beat) but I do love each and every one of you....(.Starts to cry) I really doYou mean the world to me, and I really do cherish our time together. I wanted all of you to know that.

(Pause...the other three all look at each other)

Mildred and Joan go to Agnes side and hung her....

MIRANDA

(stands ...picks up and pointing the butter knife, (shouts)

Ok Who the hell are you and what have you done with our Agnes?

BLACKOUT The End (25:10- 34:30)