

The Last Holdout

Judd Lear Silverman





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ArtAge Publications
Bonnie L. Vorenberg, President
PO Box 19955
Portland OR 97280
503-246-3000 or 800-858-4998
bonniev@seniortheatre.com
www.seniortheatre.com

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THE LAST HOLDOUT

By Judd Lear Silverman

CAST

IVAN: A gentlemen of advanced years and a regular at the senior center.

DOROTHY: At least 20 years Ivan's junior, an administrator at the senior center.

Place:

A senior citizens center, somewhere in rural upstate New York (or similar location).

Time:

The present, late in the afternoon, preferably on a non-winter day.

Setting: The outdoor porch of a senior center. An elderly man, IVAN, looking exhausted, sits on a bench outside the building. It is hot. A protest placard on a stick rests by his side. After a moment, DOROTHY, a good twenty to thirty years younger than IVAN, comes out. She is dressed in some sort of matching jersey and pants.

DOROTHY: Ivan. *(no response)* Ivan. *(still no response)* It's time to come in, Ivan. It's over.

(pause)

IVAN: It's never over.

DOROTHY: You've all had your say. We heard you. Now it's over. *(pause)* Everyone else has come in. Even your buddies. *(pause)* Sid's taken over the remote.

IVAN: Let him.

DOROTHY: He's watching *Gilligan's Island* again.

IVAN: I don't care.

DOROTHY: It'll be dinner soon. You usually like a catnap before dinner. *(pause)* It's fajitas.

IVAN: *(flatly)* Whooppee.

(pause)

DOROTHY: Ivan. *(pause)* Look, I know you think it's unfair--

IVAN: You're damned right it's unfair. It's worse than unfair. It's downright degrading!

DOROTHY: *This* is what you call "degrading?"

IVAN: It's not the action, it's the lack of consultation, of having no voice--

DOROTHY: You have a voice, Ivan. And you made it loud and clear today, you and your cronies--

IVAN: But only after the fact, when it was too late.

DOROTHY: It was getting out of hand!

IVAN: The lack of respect for the lives of others—

DOROTHY: It says nothing about you or anyone else as a human being—

IVAN: When you take away the right to choose—

DOROTHY: It has nothing to do with the right to choose—

IVAN: You don't trust us to make good decisions!

DOROTHY: It's not about your decisions! There are guidelines, standards. It's about *our* responsibility to offer you the right things to choose from!

IVAN: Like we can't make up our own minds! Like we're uncontrollable infants—

DOROTHY: Well, you're sulking like one right now! *(realizing she's taken a wrong tact)*
It's not like you'll never have them again--

IVAN: Where have we heard THAT before?!

DOROTHY: No one is stopping you from walking downtown and doing whatever you want. You're free to do as you please. That doesn't mean we have to make it readily available here.

(pause)

IVAN: You know, in the 60s, we protested the war. And you know what? They actually heard us! It took a while, but they heard us and we DID get out of Nam!

DOROTHY: Eventually.

IVAN: Eventually. *(pause)* Nowadays, they're all deaf. Nothing embarrasses 'em. They do what they're going to do, damn the consequences.

DOROTHY: It's the consequences we're thinking of, that we're trying to take responsibility for, Ivan. You may not see the bigger picture here.

IVAN: That's always the excuse, serving the bigger picture! Well, you know what, lady? We don't have that much time left. Sometimes the bigger picture should take a hike.

DOROTHY: We need to operate according to some kind of a cohesive plan, Ivan, otherwise it would all collapse into chaos.

IVAN: In other words, shore up a system that makes it easier for you guys, that benefits you.

DOROTHY: That benefits YOU in the long run, Ivan. You and your friends.

IVAN: "You people," you mean.

(pause)

DOROTHY: That was an unfortunate choice of words on his part.

IVAN: Danforth is an idiot!

DOROTHY: He misspoke, that's all.

IVAN: "You people, you don't understand what's good for you as a whole, not like we do. We make these decisions to benefit the whole, and we don't make these decisions lightly." Then he goes home to a nice dinner. And I'll bet he uses lots of salt.

DOROTHY: I wouldn't know. *(pause)* Speaking of dinner...

IVAN: No! I don't care if the rest of 'em caved!

DOROTHY: Ivan...

IVAN: If I can't have a goddamned donut when I want one, then what's the fuckin' point?!

(A pause. DOROTHY goes to move closer when IVAN suddenly raises his picket sign, which reads "Give Us Our Just Desserts!" She stops, gently removes the sign from his weary hand, and sits down next to him on the bench.)

DOROTHY: Ivan, so many of the seniors have diabetes and sugar problems that to leave donuts and danish lying around all day was just too much of a concern--

IVAN: They were donated! Local bakeries donated 'em! They didn't cost you a thing! Even if they went to waste—

DOROTHY: Ivan, the way those donuts were being scarfed down, they were going to waists! Directly. Not to mention all of the leftovers, getting moldy, spoiled —

IVAN: You live to your seventies, your eighties and for what? So a bunch of people half your age can tell you what you can and can't have? What's the point?!

DOROTHY: Right, Ivan. We're just living to get our jollies off of depriving senior citizen sugar addicts.

IVAN: They're carbs, for chrissakes! Not crimes!

DOROTHY: We even checked with other facilities around the county, to see what they're doing!

IVAN: Oh, so if someone *else* says it's okay---

DOROTHY: And we've added bagels!

END OF FREEVIEW

You'll want to read and perform this show!