

---

## Laughing Wild

Christopher Durang

---

Act 1, scene 1. Nondescript 'limbo' setting.

*Woman (30s) is 'dressed fairly normally. She sits in a chair and talks to the audience. She can get up from the chair from time to time if the spirit moves her'. The play opens with this monologue.*

**WOMAN.** Oh, it's all such a mess. Look at this mess. My hair is a mess. My clothes are a mess.

I want to talk to you about life. It's just too difficult to be alive, isn't it, and to try to function? There are all these people to deal with. I tried to buy a can of tuna fish in the supermarket, and there was this *person* standing right in front of where I wanted to reach out to get the tuna fish, and I waited a while, to see if they'd move, and they didn't – they were looking at tuna fish too, but they were taking a real long time on it, reading the ingredients on each can like they were a book, a pretty boring book, if you ask me, but nobody has; so I waited a long while, and they didn't move, and I couldn't get to the tuna fish cans; and I thought about asking them to move, but then they seemed so stupid not to have *sensed* that I needed to get by them that I had this awful fear that it would do no good, no good at all, to ask them, they'd probably say something like, 'We'll move when we're goddam ready, you nagging bitch,' and then what would I do? And so then I started to cry out of frustration, quietly, so as not to disturb anyone, and still, even though I was softly sobbing, this stupid person didn't *grasp* that I needed to get by them to reach the goddam tuna fish, people are so insensitive, I just hate them, and so I reached over with my

fist, and I brought it down real hard on his head and I screamed: 'Would you kindly move, asshole!!!'

And the person fell to the ground, and looked totally startled, and some child nearby started to cry, and I was still crying, and I couldn't imagine making use of the tuna fish now anyway, and so I shouted at the child to stop crying – I mean, it was drawing too much attention to me – and I ran out of the supermarket, and I thought, I'll take a taxi to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, I need to be surrounded with culture right now, not tuna fish.

COMMENTARY: As the play progresses it becomes clear that the Woman is a mental patient. The nature of her mania and obsessions become increasingly apparent in her ranting monologue which forms the first scene of the play. In this excerpt she seems articulate and coherent (though a bit extreme). You must not reveal too much of her madness at this point. She should appear almost sane, it's the other person in her version of events who must appear to be mad. In her warped mind she is always the victim as contemporary urban life conspires against her. Everywhere she goes she feels confronted by barriers and obstructions. She easily feels slighted and is always spoiling for a fight. For her the rest of the world is always to blame.