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LET'S PRETEND–TOM BLOCK

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Becca: A twelve year-old girl, played by a woman.
Amanda: A twelve year-old girl, played by a woman. Amanda was born in China and adopted.
A living room. Becca and Amanda sit on the ground playing with modeling clay.

Becca
Let's pretend this is a toilet.

Amanda
Ohhh! I need a toilet. How much is it?

Becca
It's two hundred dollars.

Amanda
But I thought that you said we only get twenty dollars.

Becca
You can raise taxes

Amanda
How much?

Becca
As much as you need.

Amanda
O.K. I'll take it.
(Becca fashions the toilet meticulously out of the modeling clay.)

Becca
It's a Japanese toilet. That's why it costs so much.

Amanda
Oh. (She places the toilet down in her house, which is drawn on the cardboard.) What do you need?

Becca
Hmmmm. I need a daughter.

Amanda
Yes. You do need a daughter. That will be seventeen thousand dollars.

Becca
Seventeen thousand dollars. That's more expensive than a husband.

Amanda
You didn't ask for a husband. And you have to get in-vitro. It's a test-tube daughter. They're expensive.

Becca
True.

Amanda
Don't look sad. I'm going to make you a beautiful daughter. (She begins to fashion a daughter.) Hey, I just thought of something. If you don't want to raise the taxes on your people so much.

Becca
What?

Amanda
You could adopt a daughter from China. They hate girls and they are cheap.

Becca
That's true.

Amanda
You can have one (Pause while she puts her finger on her lips and thinks real hard). You can get one for eight thousand dollars.

Becca
That is a lot less expensive.

Amanda
Yeah, but she might be damaged.

Becca
How damaged?

Amanda
I don't know. A little bit.

Becca
No. I mean 'in what way' how. Like what's the matter with her.

Amanda
She might be on the spectrum,. But she might not be.

Becca
(Becca scrunches her eyes together.) Will I love it?

Amanda
Oh, you will love it no matter what. She will be your daughter. She will be the light of your life.

Becca
O.K. I'll take her.

Amanda
(Molds the little daughter.) She will know how to use chopsticks.

Becca
That's important.

Becca
I don't want her to be on the spectrum.

Amanda
(Shrugs.)

Becca
What does that mean?

Amanda
Maybe she isn't on the spectrum. Maybe she has brittle bone disease.

Becca
I don't know what that is.

Amanda
Well you will. You will research it and become an expert and start a non profit group to solve the problem. It will be your life's work.

Becca
What do you need?

Amanda
To go with my toilet, you mean?

Becca
Yes. To go with your toilet.

Amanda
(Thinks for a second.) I guess a husband?

Becca
Are you sure? They're expensive. And they're not really worth it.

Amanda
(Pause.) O.K.. How about a living room set? A sofa, two armchairs that recline, a coffee table and TV. And a table.

Becca
O.K.

Amanda
What do you want to go with your Chinese baby with brittle bone disease?

Becca
How bad is she?

Amanda
She'll need a wheelchair. And a special diet. She's kosher, so she'll need two kitchens, really. And protein drinks. For her bones. And lots of milk. For her bones.

Becca
O.K. I'll take a cow.

Amanda
A cow?

Becca
Yes. Fresh milk is best for these kinds of things.

Amanda
Unpasteurized milk? There are all kinds of bacteria in raw milk.

Becca
I think it's best. (She finishes with the sofa with three cushions and begins on the relining chairs.) They're going to be La-Z-Boys.

Amanda
Have you consulted a doctor?

Becca
I don't have to. I'm an expert. Are you going to make my cow or not? I can take my business elsewhere.

Amanda
O.K.

Becca
Make the udders big. She needs lots of milk.

Amanda
Who?

Becca
My adopted Chinese baby. (Pause.) Shoshanna.

Amanda
Shoshanna. Don't you think that will get her bullied at school?

Becca
She won't put up with it. And anyway, there are real Chinese Jews. Jews are everywhere.

Amanda
True. Jews are everywhere.
(Amanda finishes the cow with extra large udders. Becca finishes the La-Z-Boy recliners. They trade the pieces.)

Becca
I need a milking machine, a gas stove and a table and chairs for the eat-in kitchen. The family will spend a lot of time around the kitchen table.

Amanda
I still need my TV and table. Hey! This is getting expensive. How much money do you have? A cow with extra large udders costs three hundred and fifty dollars.

Becca
We raised taxes, remember?

Amanda
Oh yeah. Do we have to raise them again?

Becca
We can if we have to.

Amanda
So we never have to worry about money again?

Becca
That's right.

Amanda
O.K. Then I would like a Tesla. I'll take a Model X Long Range.

Becca
Excellent choice. (Pause.) It's quite expensive.

Amanda
I just raised taxes.

Becca
Very good. Excellent. But still. What if it's not enough?

Amanda
We could float some bonds.

Becca
What's that?

Amanda
I don't know. How much longer do we have?

Becca
I don't know. As long as it takes.

Amanda
This could take awhile.

Becca
This place lets you leave stuff up overnight.

Amanda
It might even take longer than that.

Becca
(Becca finishes with the Tesla.) It's really only for the super rich.

Amanda
So let them raise taxes. (They both laugh.) Hey.

Becca
What?

Amanda
Have you thought about a bullet-proof backpack.

Becca
I hadn't thought about that. When I was a kid, we didn't have those.

Amanda
Well. Times have changed since you were a kid.

Becca
But it will only work if my child gets shot in the back on the way to school.

Amanda
Or coming home from school. You can't be too careful.

Becca
I don't know.

Amanda
How much do you love your child? She's very vulnerable, you know. With her disease and the wheel chair.
(Amanda hands across the wheelchair.)

Becca
You might be right. You can't be too careful these days. How much does a bullet-proof backpack cost?

Amanda
Three hundred and fifty dollars.

Becca
Are you crazy? That's as much as a cow with extra large udders.

Amanda
The price of safety and peace of mind. Don't you love your adopted Chinese baby?

Becca
Of course I do. How could you even?

Amanda
You bought her a cow. You can't buy her a bullet-proof backpack?

Becca
I just don't know how many kids are shot in their back on the way to or from school.

Amanda
It only takes one.

Becca
Fine. I'll take the damned backpack.
(The kitchen table, chairs are handed across, then the TV and table.)

Amanda
I don't know if that's enough.

Becca
If what's enough.

Amanda
The backpack. That will only protect her five percent of the day.

Becca
You just made me buy it!

Amanda
I didn't make you do anything. Don't you believe in free will?
Becca sits for a minute.

Becca
I don't know.

Amanda
Well, I do. And you decided that you wanted the backpack. I did not make you purchase it. You have plenty of money.

Becca
Did I float those bonds?

Amanda
Yes. And you also started a hedge fund.

Becca
Excellent.

Amanda
So, do you want to take that extra step in protecting your brittle-boned adopted Chinese Jewish child Shoshanna.

Becca
I will spare no expense.

Amanda
Excellent.

Becca
What are you making?

Amanda
Your order for safety and security.

Becca
I thought I already had that. With the bullet-proof backpack.

Amanda
That was for only five percent of the time. What kind of safety and security is that?

Becca
So what are you making me? And how much will it cost?

Amanda
You will spare no expense in safeguarding your family.

Becca
True. But what is it?

Amanda
It's a belt-fed rifle, the SFS BFR. It mimics the rapid fire of a machine gun.

Becca
I don't know. It sounds dangerous.

Amanda
It is dangerous. That's the point.

Becca
It sounds expensive.

Amanda
It's six thousand dollars.

Becca
Wow. I don't know if I want one around the house.

Amanda
I think you should consider the safety and security of your family.

Becca
I am.

Amanda
Well then you would obviously want to purchase a belt-fed rifle, the SFS BFR, which mimics the rapid fire of a machine gun. It's the only way to feel absolutely certain that your brittle boned Chinese adopted Jewish girl Shoshanna won't be bullied.

Becca
That's the only way?

Amanda
The only way to be one hundred percent certain.

Becca
(Becca fashions the clay into a heart. Then she breaks the heart up.) I don't know.

Amanda
You really don't really love your little girl, do you? I'll bet if you had that child yourself out of your own body you'd think differently. And maybe it's because she has a brittle bone disease and you need to have a cow and milking machine and wheelchair that you don't want to fully project her.

Becca
I do, I do. Couldn't I get her body armor?

Amanda
(Amanda stands up.) Oh my God. Oh my God.

Becca
(Becca stands up.) Stop it.

Amanda
Oh my God.

Becca
Oooooh! You make me sooo —
(Becca pushes Amanda. Amanda stomps on the milking machine, the cow with large udders and the wheelchair. They flatten. Becca kicks at the living room set. Amanda obliterates the brittle boned Chinese adopted Jewish girl Shoshana. Becca raises her hand to smack Amanda.)

END OF PLAY

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Tom Block is a playwright, author of six books, 20-year visual artist and producer of the International Human Rights Art Festival. His plays have been developed and produced at such venues as the Ensemble Studio Theater, HERE Arts Center, Dixon Place, Theater for the New City, IRT Theater, Theater at the 14th Street Y, Athena Theatre Company, Theater Row, A.R.T.-NY and many others. He was the founding producer of the International Human Rights Art Festival (Dixon Place, NY, 2017), the Amnesty International Human Rights Art Festival (2010) and a Research Fellow at DePaul University (2010). He has spoken about his ideas throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, Turkey and the Middle East. For more information about his work, visit tomblock.com.

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