

## RS#5 Old Man, Jean, Mother, Ralphie

THE OLD MAN. Oh, flibberdygibbit! Muckerucker! Corn doodle doo.

MOTHER. What is it, dear?

THE OLD MAN. Nobody move! We have—a flat!

JEAN. My old man's tires were actually only tires in the academic sense. They were round and made of rubber. But there was so little tread, you could read the want ads of the *Tribune* right through them.

THE OLD MAN (*slightly perturbed, yet confident*). Left front this time. I'll get the jack and change it. Four minutes. Time me.

### (#9a: "Flat Tire")

THE OLD MAN (*cont'd*). Carn fenuckle!

*(He exits the car, opens the trunk and pulls out the spare tire, jack and tire iron.)*

JEAN. Actually, my old man loved it. He always saw himself in the pits at the Indianapolis 500 Motor Speedway.

**Start** → THE OLD MAN. All of you—stay in the car. Don't want it falling on anybody in case the jack fails. Four minutes. Go!  
*(Begins to change the tire.)*

MOTHER. Ralphie, go help your father change the tire.

RALPHIE (*surprised, excited*). Really? Can I?

MOTHER. Yes.

JEAN. It was the first time it had been suggested that I help my father with anything.

*(RALPHIE approaches THE OLD MAN who is fast at work.)*

THE OLD MAN (*noticing RALPHIE, slightly annoyed*).

What are you doing?

RALPHIE. Mom said I should help.

THE OLD MAN (*grumbling*). Oh, yeah? Well, get over here and hold this hubcap.

*(He gives the hubcap to RALPHIE.)*

THE OLD MAN (*cont'd, sternly and forcefully*). No, not like that. Hold it like a man. Now I'm gonna put the lug nuts in it. So, for cripessake, don't move.

*(Sounds of the mimed lug nuts, five in all, are heard hitting the metal hubcap as JEAN speaks.)*

JEAN. So, the old man kept at it, and I held the hubcap in a death grip. When my father said, "Don't move," what he really meant was, "Don't breathe." But I was up to it. I could do it! I would do anything to prove myself worthy.

THE OLD MAN. Consarn it, krick in my knee!

*(After removing the tire, THE OLD MAN lurches to a standing position, knocking the hubcap from RALPHIE's hand.)*

RALPHIE (*in very slow motion, a prolonged cry*). AAAHHH!!!

*(They freeze, except for their heads, which follow the high arc of the hubcap in slow motion and then offstage to the landing of the mimed lug nuts.)*

JEAN (*with exaggerated horror*). The lug nuts went flying through the air, silhouetted against the moonlit night sky. Then they were gone. Suddenly, I lost all sense of where I was or who I was with.

**(9b: “F\*@#!”)**

RALPHIE (*still very slow motion, perhaps an echo effect*).  
Ooooh, fffffffuuuuuuuuuuudddddggggggeeee!

*(Beat.)*

JEAN (*slowly confessing*). Only I didn't say “fudge.” I said the word. The big one, the queen mother of dirty words—the f-dash-dash-dash word. I had broken the verboten rule. I was awfully young to die.

THE OLD MAN (*almost bewildered*). What did you say?

RALPHIE (*petrified*). Uh—uh ...

THE OLD MAN (*gritting his teeth*). That's what I thought you said. Get in the car. Go on!

*(RALPHIE gets into the car as THE OLD MAN, grumbling more faux-swears, quickly mimes rounding up the lug nuts and finishes changing the tire. This time at lightning speed as he seethes with anger.)*

THE OLD MAN (*under his breath*). Get the Oldsmobile, Frank. Get the Oldsmobile. Yeah, from your dead-beat brother. *(He gets into the car.)*

MOTHER (*revealing his time*). Eight minutes.

THE OLD MAN. Do you know what your son just said?

MOTHER (*innocently*). No, what?

THE OLD MAN. Oh, I'll tell you what he said. *(Swatting RANDY away.)* Randy!

**← End**