

THE CHIROPRACTOR'S OFFICE

by

M Rubio

A Play in 5 Acts

Cast of Characters

Al Reynolds: Jake's brother. A statistician. A romantic.

Jake Reynolds: A biology teacher. Much less prone to being romantic.

Gwen Brown: A court stenographer. Likes to shop. On Stephanie's tennis team.

Stephanie Peters: A senior assistant in a bank. Nicer than Gwen.

Ms. Capela: The Opera Singer. Wants to get the star role.

Jane Graham: Long-suffering daughter-in-law of Mother Graham.

Mother Graham: An old woman, generally harmless.

Ms. Phillips: A soon-to-be divorcee who means well.

Katrina McGouth: An 18 year-old with headaches.

Lady Knitting: She's in every Act but doesn't say much.

Nurse: Checks in patients.

Dr. Mathews: The Chiropractor.

SCENE

A chiropractor's waiting room.

TIME

Summer, now, through the fall.

ACT ONE

SETTING:

A chiropractor's waiting room. There are chairs in a U-shape facing the audience. Stage left there is a wall with a window - where the NURSE sits, and patients check in. Stage Right there is a door to outside.

AT RISE:

The KNITTING LADY is sitting on the chair off to the side, knitting. She looks up and smiles at the audience in a dreamy way and keeps on knitting. The door opens, in walks 2 women dressed in summer clothes talking about work. One girl is on crutches, has a leg cast.

STEPHANIE PETERS:

(holding the door open for the other girl)
Oh you know how it is, the boss is gone and everyone wants to play.

GWEN BROWN:

(hobbles into the room on crutches)
It's the best time if you ask me. More vacations are what we all need!

STEPHANIE PETERS:

It's only June and it's already so warm. How is it with that cast? (helps GWEN into a chair)

GWEN BROWN:

You have no idea. I can't do anything with it. I'm hot all the time. I keep it cold in my apartment and it does no good at all. I can't wait until they make it smaller. My social life is like over until they do.

(eases into a chair and pats her hair with long fingernails)

STEPHANIE PETERS:

Do you think this chiropractor can help you?

GWEN BROWN:

My cousin swears by him. My back is killing me from these crutches. Oh hell I forgot to sign in, would you mind doing that for me?

STEPHANIE PETERS:

Sure.

(good naturedly gets up and signs her in, picks up a magazine, goes and sits down on one side of Gwen)

(Meanwhile the door opens and in walks AL REYNOLDS and JAKE REYNOLDS, AL with a cast on his arm)

AL REYNOLDS:

Do you know what we're supposed to do?

JAKE REYNOLDS:

No, I've never been here before. I told you, a guy at work swears by him, that's all I know.

(AL looks around and sees GWEN BROWN with her cast. She smiles at him and he smiles at her)

AL REYNOLDS:

We look like a matched set. Do you know what we're supposed to do here? Do we just wait or what?

GWEN BROWN:

You have to sign in. At the window there.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

I'll do it.

(walks up and signs in)

AL REYNOLDS:

(still talking to GWEN BROWN, raises his arm)
I'm left-handed.

GWEN BROWN:

Isn't that always the way?

AL REYNOLDS:

(pointing to the empty chair next to GWEN)
Mind if I sit here?

GWEN BROWN:

(obviously pleased)

No, of course not. My name is Gwen.

AL REYNOLDS:

I'm Al. How did you break your leg?

GWEN BROWN:

Oh it was so stupid.

(leans forward to tell her story to a new listener)
Here I am playing tennis at the latest match and I win! I win and I start to walk downstairs with the rest of the group and trip on something and fall down on these cement steps, all the way to the bottom.

(being very dramatic)

It was unbelievable. I instantly knew that I'd broken my leg, you know how you just know?

AL REYNOLDS:

(hanging on every word, JAKE comes back and sits next to AL, picks up a magazine and flips through it)
Yes I know.

GWEN BROWN:

So there I am being rushed to the hospital in an ambulance, oh the pain!

AL REYNOLDS:

It was bad??

GWEN BROWN:

Oh it was awful. And now there goes my tennis career!

AL REYNOLDS:

Oh man!

GWEN BROWN:

(sits back)
I'm out for the count. I can't even watch the team comfortably.

AL REYNOLDS:

That's too bad. You know you just don't know what you have until it's gone.

GWEN BROWN:

(shifts in her chair, pats her hair)
Well it got me some time off work. But that's over with now.

AL REYNOLDS:

What do you do?

GWEN BROWN:

I'm a court stenographer. You should see me sitting there with this leg straight out in front of me. Everyone laughs.

AL REYNOLDS:

That must be pretty interesting.

GWEN BROWN:

(confused)
What?

AL REYNOLDS:

Court. I mean do you get murder cases and stuff?

GWEN BROWN:

I'm in traffic court. Lots of tickets and DUI's.

AL REYNOLDS:

But you know all the cops so you don't have to worry about getting a ticket.

GWEN BROWN:

Oh it's not like that at all. Nobody even notices me. I'm like wallpaper.

AL REYNOLDS:

That's not true, I noticed you right away.

GWEN BROWN:

(smiling)

Oh you're too much.

(flaps her fingers to the side of her chair, not even trying to reach her purse)

Stephanie can you get my purse? I can't reach it.

STEPHANIE PETERS:

(rolls her eyes)

Sure.

(she gets the bag, hands it to GWEN, notices JAKE looking at her, leans over GWEN)

Hi, I'm Stephanie.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

(leaning over AL)

Hi. I'm Jake.

AL REYNOLDS:

Jake why don't you move over by Stephanie so you can talk to her without yelling over us?

JAKE REYNOLDS:

Do you mind?

STEPHANIE PETERS:

No, I don't mind.

(The lights fade in the rest of the room and just shine on Stephanie and Jake. Al and Gwen are still talking but we can't hear what they're saying.)

STEPHANIE PETERS:

So Al's your brother?

JAKE REYNOLDS:

It's not my fault.

STEPHANIE PETERS:

(laughing)

It can't be that bad. You came together.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

It was blackmail. My car's in the shop. The only way he'll let me borrow his is if I chauffeur him around.

STEPHANIE PETERS:

Ah, well, it sounds fair.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

Yeah. What about you? You related to, er...
(tilts his head at Gwen)

STEPHANIE PETERS:

Gwen. No, we're on the tennis team together. We've known each other a couple years. We just discovered that we live really close to each other. So when she broke her leg I volunteered to drive her here.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

You're the nice neighbor. Are you nice all the time?

STEPHANIE PETERS:

I guess. I'm a senior assistant at a bank and sometimes I'm not so nice there.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

A bank! All that money!

STEPHANIE PETERS:

It's like chocolate. If you eat too much it makes you sick. I don't even think about the money. It's dirty, it stinks and it has to be grouped. What about you? What do you do?

JAKE REYNOLDS:

I'm a teacher. (pause) Biology. (pause) Lincoln Boy's School.

STEPHANIE PETERS:

You're kidding me!

JAKE REYNOLDS:

Why? Don't I look like teacher material?

STEPHANIE PETERS:

Uh, I don't know, I, uh, can't put my finger on it, but you don't strike me as liking kids.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

I don't. I hate kids.

STEPHANIE PETERS:

So why are you a teacher?

JAKE REYNOLDS:

I love biology.
(acting very dramatically)
I have a - passion - for biology.

STEPHANIE PETERS:

(making face)
Dissecting frogs.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

See? Everyone has at least one story about biology class. Everyone remembers their biology teacher. It's my ticket to immortality.

STEPHANIE PETERS:

Bunsen burners. Chemicals that explode. I don't know, when you think about it, it's kind of creepy.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

I can see that I've made quite the good impression. I don't have a corpse in my basement or anything. I'm not a mad scientist.

STEPHANIE PETERS:

Just a biologist at a boy's school.
(beat)
All boys?

JAKE REYNOLDS:

(beat)
All the time.

STEPHANIE PETERS:

And in your free time?

JAKE REYNOLDS:

I take my car to the shop and drive my brother to the chiropractor.

STEPHANIE PETERS:

(persistently)
And in your other free time?

JAKE REYNOLDS:

In the summer I play baseball and drink a lot of beer.
(pause)
And you play tennis.

STEPHANIE PETERS:

And drink a beer or two.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

I didn't know tennis players drank beer.

STEPHANIE PETERS:

What are they supposed to drink?

JAKE REYNOLDS:

I don't know. I just didn't think it would be beer. Do you play singles or doubles?

STEPHANIE PETERS:

Both. I'm multi-talented.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

Ever blow anything up?

STEPHANIE PETERS:

Only when I try to cook.

(lights dim and we go back to AL REYNOLDS and GWEN BROWN's conversation and can no longer here JAKE and STEPHANIE)

GWEN BROWN:

So he's your brother?

AL REYNOLDS:

Unfortunately.

(nods at STEPHANIE)

She's your sister?

GWEN BROWN:

Oh no! We couldn't be related! We play tennis together. I wonder how long this will take.

AL REYNOLDS:

(smiling at her)

Oh I don't mind waiting at all.

(The lights dim again as the door opens and spotlights a very large woman, the Opera singer)

MS. CAPELA:

(to no one in particular but in a voice that naturally carries)
Oh my it is a very warm day.

(she hums a song, walks toward the window to sign in, stops, adjusts the tune, then goes on to sign in, writes very deliberately. She looks up from signing in and waves to someone off stage)

Halllllooooooo!

(she finishes, turns, and smiles benevolently at everyone, somehow managing to be queen to peasants. She looks at Jake)

Do you mind if I sit here?

(JAKE shakes his head and continues talking to STEPHANIE even though we can't hear what they say. MS. CAPELA pulls out some sheet music, pulls out her reading glasses and reads silently but with her lips moving. The lights dim on the opera singer and spotlight the old lady. The door to the office opens again and in hobbles an old lady. She walks funny, like some old people do. She is about 90 years old. She's using cane. She's going very slowly but she's making her way to an empty chair across the room. She stops and lists, JAKE puts out his arm as if to catch her but she doesn't fall. She hobbles on until she gets to a chair, she sits and sighs.)

MOTHER GRAHAM:

DANG!

(she chortles, looks at the knitting lady)

Didn't think I'd make it eh? But I did! I made it!

(she raises up her cane and shakes it at the knitting lady) I made it!

(The door opens again and in walks a middle-aged woman.)

JANE GRAHAM:

Mother Graham why didn't you wait for me? We made a deal, remember? You're supposed to wait for me.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

I didn't need to wait for you. What did I need you for? I made it didn't I? Yes I did. I made it all by myself! No need to hold your hand.

JANE GRAHAM:

What if you fell?

MOTHER GRAHAM:

It's only a problem if I couldn't get up. Ha ha ha!

(slapping her knee like she's made a very funny joke, grabs her cane, shaking it)

I'm not dying! I don't care what the doctor says, I'm not leaving here anytime soon!

JANE GRAHAM:

No Mother Graham.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

You think you know everything. But you don't! My mother lived to be 93 years old!

JANE GRAHAM:

And you're 92.

(under her breath)

Time's almost up.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

(pointing her cane at JANE GRAHAM)

There are people in China who are 150 years old! I don't see why I can't live that long here.

JANE GRAHAM:

(shaking her head) Fine Mother Graham.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

You think I'm too old to do anything. You think you're so smart.

JANE GRAHAM:

Fine Mother Graham.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

(making face, imitating JANE GRAHAM)

Fine Mother Graham. Don't fine Mother Graham me.

JANE GRAHAM:

Your son married me and we've been together these 20 years. If you don't like Mother Graham I can think of a few other things to call you.

(The lights dim again. The door opens and spotlight a young girl and another middle-aged woman enter the room. The young woman smiles wanly at everyone and goes to sign in. The middle-aged woman waits her turn. Her cell phone rings, she answers it instantly angry.)

MILDRED PHILLIPS:

No I will not. Pick it up yourself. You act like I'm your slave. My back, remember? My back is out. I can barely drive. I'm at the chiropractor's office for God's sake.

(she hangs up and waits for the young girl to finish signing in. As she finishes and walks past)

Are you married?

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

No.

MILDRED PHILLIPS:

Let me tell you how lucky you are.

(she signs in, angrily)

My husband, my husband of 15 years! Fifteen! Can't this one time pick up his own dry cleaning. My back is killing me. I could barely get up this morning. I was practically crawling! I make an emergency appointment to come here and he wants me to pick up his dry cleaning on the way home. You know what I want to tell him to pick up? A divorce! (she puts her hands on her back and hobbles over to a chair)

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

(taken aback by the onslaught)
Uh, I'm sorry to hear that.
(walks over and sits down)

MILDRED PHILLIPS:

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to go on and on but he makes me crazy.
He does things like this all the time. He's practically telling
me he could care less about me. And I've had just about all that
I can take. He's pushed me right to the edge, I mean right to it.
(she pats her hair)

This time he may come home and find no dinner and no me. (she
finally looks at the girl for the first time)
You seem awfully young to have back problems.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

(shrugs, puts a hand behind her head)
It's my neck mostly. I have headaches.

MILDRED PHILLIPS:

And the chiropractor helps you with that does he? You young girls
are so thin these days. Do you eat well?

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

Er, uh, I haven't had much appetite lately.

MILDRED PHILLIPS:

You can't go around not eating. Even if you don't have much
appetite. Young girl like you. If you don't take care of yourself
now, what will you do later? Does your boyfriend look after you?

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

(shyly)
I don't have a boyfriend really. I'm still in school. I'm a
freshman in college.

MILDRED PHILLIPS:

Smart move! Get a career so you don't need a man! I wish that's
what I'd done. Now I'm too old for a career. I have to rely on my
wits to get ahead. I have to rely on my unreliable, stupid
husband.

(she pauses, realizes she's becoming bitterly angry again,
breathes deep)

What are you taking in school?

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

I haven't decided on my major yet. I can't make up my mind. I was
thinking of a nurse or maybe a dental hygienist. I like business
too and I'm good in math. I could be an accountant. Or maybe go
into library science.

(shyly)

I like being in the library I like the smell of new books.
Working in a library must be the best job ever. You get to read

as much as you want. You can talk to other people about books all day long. I think I would like that a lot. I don't ever know what to say to other people. But if they want to talk about books and I worked in a library, I would have so many things to say to them.

KNITTING LADY:

(knitting lady looks up and nods to herself)

MILDRED PHILLIPS:

(she's actually interested)

It sounds to me like you've made up your mind. What's wrong with studying library science?

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

My mother doesn't think it's a good enough career. She's worried I won't be able to support myself.

MILDRED PHILLIPS:

That's what mothers do, they worry. But you should make up your own mind. You have to live your life, not your mother.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

(nods)

I know that. I just get these headaches so much I can't seem to think at all. Isn't that something? A headache so bad I can't think! They didn't used to be this bad. But Dr. Mathews helps me a lot. He makes the pain go away some.

MILDRED PHILLIPS:

Have you been to a regular doctor? It sounds like this might be serious.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

Oh, I've been to doctors! First one gave me pills, second one gave me tests. Third one gave me more pills and more tests. The fourth one changed the pills and the tests. The fifth one hasn't gotten back to us yet. My mom takes me to all these doctors. The only one I want to see is Dr. Mathews. He's nice to me. He listens to me. Don't you think he listens good?

MILDRED PHILLIPS:

(dryly)

As much as any man listens.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

You don't like men? I mean, in general.

MILDRED PHILLIPS:

I like men who are nice to me, who pay attention to me. Men like, like Mr. Stone who owns the jewelry store by my house. He has manners and grace. I like talking to him. I bet he doesn't sit in

his recliner in front of the TV unless he's watching Public Television! He's that kind of man!

(The lights dim and the nurse comes out)

NURSE:

Ms. Brown?

GWEN BROWN:

That's me. Can you help me Stephanie?

STEPHANIE PETERS:

Of course.

AL REYNOLDS:

(pipes up desperately)

Will I see you again next week?

GWEN BROWN:

Probably.

AL REYNOLDS:

Same time same station huh?

GWEN BROWN:

(smiles)

Yes, see you then!

(hobbles out of the room with Stephanie helping her

AL REYNOLDS:

Good luck in there!

(GWEN BROWN waves as she hobbles out)

(AL sighs heavily)

Jake she's so cute!

JAKE REYNOLDS:

(sarcastically)

I thought you were going to say awesome.

AL REYNOLDS:

I could've!

JAKE REYNOLDS:

Geez, she's really keen. Jake, she's the bee's knees! Grow up Al, you'll probably never see her again.

AL REYNOLDS:

What do you mean? I'll see her next week! She might just be the one!

JAKE REYNOLDS:

You thought the girl in the donut shop was the one. You gained 20 pounds going after her. Then the girl in the coffee shop. You never slept, do you remember that? And now this? The chiropractor's office. What're you going to do next? Break more bones?

AL REYNOLDS:

The chiropractor does adjustments Jake. He aligns the spine. It's got nothing to do with broken bones.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

Whatever. So you throw your back out every other day?

AL REYNOLDS:

I'm not going to listen to you. I don't care what you say, I like this girl.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

You like every girl.

AL REYNOLDS:

And you don't?? You were making the moves on Gwen's friend, er, Stephanie! I saw you. I heard you.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

So what're a couple moves? I'm not declaring my dying love for her.

AL REYNOLDS:

If you see her a few more times maybe you will be.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

I wouldn't hold my breath. I'm not a nut job like you. My car won't be in the shop forever. I won't have to drive you all the time. I'll have no reason to come back here.

AL REYNOLDS:

Maybe you'll come back because YOU broke a bone. Or hurt your neck or something like that. Maybe you'll see Stephanie again and suddenly sparks will fly! You'll start thinking how much you enjoy her so you ask her out. She says yes. Next thing you know you're walking down the aisle.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

Who thinks like that? You! Only you! Ok here's a scenario for you. Gwen broke her leg kicking her old boyfriend. She's not a nice girl. She sucks you in by tossing her hair and making eyes at you. Flattering you. She reels you in, dinner by dinner. You're paying for movies and popcorn, nights on the town, weekends away. Then when she has you she starts dressing like a slob. She gains 50 pounds. She ends up kicking YOU with her good leg until that one breaks.

AL REYNOLDS:

She broke her leg playing tennis.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

Says you.

AL REYNOLDS:

Maybe she's the one.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

Maybe she's a bitch!

NURSE:

Mr. Reynolds?

(AL shakes his good fist at JAKE who shakes his head and follows him out of the room)

(lights dim)

(lights on JANE GRAHAM and MS. CAPELA)

JANE GRAHAM:

(turning to the opera singer)

I couldn't help but notice your sheet music. You study music?

MS. CAPELA:

(delighted)

Oh yes! Have you ever been to the opera?

JANE GRAHAM:

Oh many times! I enjoy it!

MS. CAPELA:

I'm going to audition for a part in "La Medusa de la Rouge"!

JANE GRAHAM:

Oh that's wonderful!

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

((listening intently to them talking, blurts out)

Is that a well-known opera?

MS. CAPELA:

Oh yes! One of the most well-known.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

What does the music sound like? I mean is it very serious?

MS. CAPELA:

It's a beautiful romantic love story with a touch of tragedy. One needs a voice to sing it. I have the voice! I have the resonance!
(she rises, dramatically)

I will raise my voice to the rafters!

(begins to hum and breaks into song for a minute as if she were on stage, grand gestures, a grand performance. The old lady covers her ears. MS. CAPELA finishes and the whole room applauds, even the knitting lady. MS. CAPELA bows)

Thank you.

JANE GRAHAM:

(still clapping)

Oh that was marvelous!

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

Awesome!

MS. CAPELA:

Thank you. I've spent my whole life training. An audience can tell that you know. Who has it and who doesn't.

JANE GRAHAM:

Oh I hope you get the part I'm sure you will! You have a lovely voice!

(NURSE comes out)

NURSE:

Mrs. Capela?

MS. CAPELA:

That's me.

JANE GRAHAM:

Good luck!

(MS CAPELA bows and goes off through the door)

(lights go to JANE GRAHAM and MOTHER GRAHAM)

MOTHER GRAHAM:

Why were you talking to that fat woman?

JANE GRAHAM:

(annoyed)

What are you talking about?

MOTHER GRAHAM:

That fat lady who just left.

JANE GRAHAM:

She's a very nice woman and very talented.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

Pah! It's crowded today. I don't want to come back on - what day is it today?

JANE GRAHAM:

(sighing)

Tuesday.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

I don't want to come back on a Tuesday.

JANE GRAHAM:

What difference does it make?

MOTHER GRAHAM:

I don't like waiting.

JANE GRAHAM:

What else do you have to do with your day? There's no place you have to be. What difference does it make if you're here or at the home?

MOTHER GRAHAM:

If I was home I could go to bed and shut you out. I could watch TV. I could play with the cat.

JANE GRAHAM:

You don't have a cat.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

I could get one.

JANE GRAHAM:

No you couldn't.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

Yes I could.

JANE GRAHAM:

You can't even take care of your self. How would you take care of a cat? Who would sell you one?

MOTHER GRAHAM:

(defiantly)

I'd buy one online. You can buy anything on the web.

JANE GRAHAM:

What do you know about the internet?

MOTHER GRAHAM:

They have a computer in the activity room. You didn't know that did you? Well if you ever came for a visit and stayed awhile you might have known that I've been taking classes.

JANE GRAHAM:

Computer classes?

MOTHER GRAHAM:

Internet classes. I can Google with the best of them. I go to all kinds of sites.

JANE GRAHAM:

(disbelieving)

What kind of sites?

MOTHER GRAHAM:

The dating web. I found me a senior in Oklahoma!

JANE GRAHAM:

You did not.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

I did too.

JANE GRAHAM:

What do you talk about?

MOTHER GRAHAM:

We talk dirty!

JANE GRAHAM:

You're making that up.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

I could show you his picture.

JANE GRAHAM:

Let's see it.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

(rummaging around in her handbag mumbling)

Thinks she's so smart. Where is that picture?

(pulls out paper)

Here. No, that's not it. Where's my wallet? Oh hell

(throws everything back in the handbag)

OK I don't have it here. It must be at home.

JANE GRAHAM:

(laughing maliciously)

When we get back there you can show it to me.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

I'm not showing it to you now. You just go ahead and laugh. We'll see who gets the last laugh.

JANE GRAHAM:

I'm guessing that would be me!

(NURSE comes out)

NURSE:

Mrs. Graham?

(MOTHER GRAHAM stands up, shakes off JANE GRAHAM's help, wobbles into the back with JANE GRAHAM following.)

(Lights dim as they leave and fall on MILDRED PHILLIPS)

MILDRED PHILLIPS:

(answering cell phone)

Oh Eleanor. Yes. Yes I am I'm waiting to go in. Oh he called, not to see how I was or anything. He wanted me to pick up his dry cleaning! Can you imagine? I think I've suffered enough. You know I told you about his new secretary. Well motel receipts don't lie Eleanor. And this is just what I know about. Yes mid-life crisis. If it hadn't happened before I would agree with you, but I'm guessing it's not going to go away. What? How did you know? Yes I did see Mr. Stone today. What a good looking man! No, I was in the grocery store, I'd just come from the hairdresser. Good thing because I would've died if he'd seen my hair like it looked before I went. He came right over and chatted. Well he knows I'm married. Oh that would be too bold! I don't think I could

(chuckling)

Oh Eleanor, you're bad. You're very, very bad. I don't think I could! Oh

(tittering)

Oh that's too funny. What a picture! Stop, you're killing me! That's too funny. You should be ashamed of yourself.

(sobers up)

But that's the problem you know? How to get out of this. My back aches all the time. I have headaches. I'm stressed and irritable. I can't help myself. I haven't felt good in years. Years I tell you. Yes you remember. But now I'm tired. I used to be young and pretty Eleanor. But now there's hardly anything left. I feel like a middle-aged woman and I am. And I look it. And I'm starting to act like it. Like I've given up on life. Oh Eleanor I don't want to give up on life. And I don't want life to give up on me. No, I'm all right. It's my back bothering me so much I have these mood swings. No, I'm making plans. I'm going to talk to a lawyer tomorrow. Yes I'm serious. I've given it a great deal of thought. No, no that's OK. You can go. I'm fine, really. OK talk to you tomorrow.

(hangs up still wants to talk, you can tell. She gets up and wanders, picking up magazines here and there.)
You'd think they'd get some new ones.
(no one pays any attention to her. She goes back and sits next to the young girl, waves the magazine in front of her) You'd think they'd get some new ones.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

(noticing her)
Yes, although mine is this month's.

MILDRED PHILLIPS:

What is it?

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

Good Housekeeping.

MILDRED PHILLIPS:

I love *Good Housekeeping*.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

Do you want it?

MILDRED PHILLIPS:

Oh no dear, I couldn't, you had it first.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

I don't mind.

MILDRED PHILLIPS:

No, I have this old one.

(KATRINA goes back to reading and MILDRED PHILLIPS looks over her shoulder)

Is that a recipe for deviled eggs? Isn't that something? No, wait, don't turn the page, I'm not done yet.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

(closing the magazine)

Why don't you give me that one? I don't mind. I only look at the pictures anyway.

MILDRED PHILLIPS:

Well if you insist.

(NURSE comes out)

NURSE:

Ms. McGouth?

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

Oh it's my turn now. Enjoy the magazine.

(She gets up somewhat unsteadily and follows the nurse inside)

MILDRED PHILLIPS:

(leafs through the magazine, her phone rings. She sets her face)
Hello. No I'm in the waiting room. Yes well he was very busy today. I'm sure I'm the last appointment. No I don't know that I do.

(sits up straighter)

Well if it's that important I won't hang up. Yes I did transfer money out of the account. Well it's a joint account they let you do that. No things haven't been very good lately. I don't know, I'm guessing you sleeping with your secretary has set me on edge. Yes. Hard to believe I'm smart enough to figure that out. I don't know what I want to do. What do you want to do? I think we've both given this some thought. Yes fifteen years is a long time. It wasn't all bad, I remember... Oh yes, a little late. Leaving? Oh I see. It's very thoughtful of you to tell me you're running away with your secretary. Why isn't it running? Oh I see because you're not going far. The house? I don't care. Divorce? You've already taken care of that? Well good you have thought of everything. No, no regrets. Yes ending on the cell phone is somehow appropriate. That's where we did most of our talking. I suppose so. Yes, goodbye.

(she closes the phone, the knitting lady still knits, shaking her head.)

(NURSE comes out)

NURSE:

Mrs. Madlridge?

MILDRED PHILLIPS:

(looks up at the nurse, smiling sadly - she gets up to follow and then stops)

Actually my name is Phillips now. I've changed my name back. I'm divorced you see. You might want to make a note of that in the file.

(she follows the nurse out of the room. The knitting lady looks around and keeps on knitting)

(CURTAIN) (END OF ACT 1)

ACT 2

SETTING: One week later.

AT RISE: The KNITTING LADY is sitting on the chair off to the side. AL and JAKE REYNOLDS are in the room, JAKE sitting down.

AL REYNOLDS:

(pacing with his cast still on)

I've been waiting a week for this day. I can't believe it's finally here.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

I can't believe you. Why didn't you just take her phone number last week?

AL REYNOLDS:

I couldn't. You come in this door, you leave out the back door, it's a horribly efficient system. There's no waiting by the back door, there are no seats. There's no reason to sit. You can't loiter. I didn't have the right opportunity to ask her for her number. I thought I'd see how it went today to make sure I wasn't mistaken.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

(sarcastically)

You? Mistaken? About a girl? Not you! You know instantly if she's the "one"

(shakes his head) (beat)

How do you even know she'll show up today?

AL REYNOLDS:

I called.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

I thought you just said you didn't have her number.

AL REYNOLDS:

I didn't call her. I called the office.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

What office?

AL REYNOLDS:

This office.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

(disbelieving)

You called this office? To find out when she was coming back?

AL REYNOLDS:

Well, yeah, how else could I be sure?

JAKE REYNOLDS:

For God's sake Al, that's what stalkers do. I can't believe they told you she'd be here.

AL REYNOLDS:

Well I didn't ask outright. I told them I found something of hers and wanted to return it.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

So you lied.

AL REYNOLDS:

But for a good reason. I'm going to get her number today. I'm going to take her out, cast and all.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

(stops and thinks)

You're going to take her out? Together you look like you were in a car accident. She broke her leg, you broke your arm. That's romantic, the sight of you two hobbling along together. Whatever Al, you do whatever you want.

(The door opens, in walks STEPHANIE PETERS and GWEN BROWN hobble behind her still in a full cast)

AL REYNOLDS:

(jumping up to get the door)

Hi!

STEPHANIE PETERS:

Oh Hi. It's Al, isn't it?

AL REYNOLDS:

Yes, Al, that's right. Hi Gwen! How have you been?

GWEN BROWN:

Oh the same. It's not any better. I wish I could take this cast off and put it in another room, especially when I'm trying to sleep, you know?

AL REYNOLDS:

(laughing too loud)

Oh that's funny. Me too, I'd like to take off my leg, I mean my arm too. Isn't that funny Jake?

(JAKE shrugs, waves to Stephanie who waves back, everyone sits down)

AL REYNOLDS:

I was hoping I'd see you today.

GWEN BROWN:

Yeah? That's nice.

AL REYNOLDS:

Really? You think so?

GWEN BROWN:

Yes.

(beat)

How have you been?

AL REYNOLDS:

Still hurts but I'm getting used to lugging it around. Other than that I'm fine, just fine. Would you like to go to dinner on Saturday?

GWEN BROWN:

(Pause)

Oh! My!

(beat)

Oh I'd love to but I can't.

(glaring at Stephanie)

I'm going to Stephanie's cousin's wedding.

STEPHANIE PETERS:

(groaning)

Oh never mind. If you want to go out to dinner I'll go by myself.

AL REYNOLDS:

I don't want to mess up your plans.

STEPHANIE PETERS:

You don't understand. I don't mind going it's just that when I go by myself everyone asks me why I'm not married and I get offers from my aunts to meet some nice boys that they've heard of. I thought if I brought someone they'd leave me alone.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

Or think you were a lesbian.

(Everyone stares at him)

Sorry.

STEPHANIE PETERS:

Either way I'd be left alone.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

If you don't want to go, why go?

STEPHANIE PETERS:

It's family and I like my cousin and all. I have to go.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

I actually understand that. See, because I'm an understanding person. It's like you were 12 again isn't it? I have the same kind of family guilt as you. I'm surprised we're not related.

AL REYNOLDS:

(suddenly jumping up)

Why don't you go with Stephanie Jake? You're not doing anything on Saturday.

JAKE:

(horrified)

What?

GWEN BROWN:

(smiling)

It would be the chivalrous thing to do. And you're such an understanding person.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

Do I look like I'm riding a white horse?

AL REYNOLDS:

No mostly you're riding my white car. And if you wish to continue to do so, I say be knightly.

(Lights go on STEPHANIE and JAKE)

STEPHANIE PETERS:

(trying not to laugh)

I think he's blackmailing you.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

A taste of how my family truly is. What time is the wedding?

STEPHANIE PETERS:

(sincerely)

You don't have to go. Really, it's not a big deal.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

Now how would I feel knowing that on Saturday you're surrounded by old aunts trying to set you up?

(sighs)

I've been to worse.

(STEPHANIE glares at him)

No, no, sounds like fun. No really.

(looks up at her and says sincerely)

Really. Is there an open bar?

STEPHANIE PETERS:

Actually there probably will be.

(looking at him, seriously)

Do you mean it? You'll go? I'd be ever so grateful.

(Jake raises his eyebrows)

Not that grateful.

(Lights go off STEPHANIE and JAKE and go on GWEN and AL)

GWEN BROWN:

You never told me what you do Al.

AL REYNOLDS:

I'm a statistician I do numbers! All day. Charts and graphs, that's me,

GWEN BROWN:

Ugh, you don't think it's boring?

AL REYNOLDS:

No, I guess not.

GWEN BROWN:

Oh.

AL REYNOLDS:

But I'm kind of strange that way anyway. I love math! Er, what else do you do in your free time besides tennis?

GWEN BROWN:

I like to shop, go to the movies, go to clubs. And now I can't do any of those things. So the only thing left is watching TV.

AL REYNOLDS:

Do you have cable?

GWEN BROWN:

All 200 stations! What I pay every month just for a stupid TV. It's embarrassing. Which do you have? Cable or satellite?

AL REYNOLDS:

Er, uh, well, neither. Right now I have rabbit ears. I have an old TV that I haven't replaced yet.

(Gwen looks at him like he has 2 heads)

I mean it's a color TV just too old for cable.

(pause)

I guess I'm a TV virgin.

GWEN BROWN:

(laughing)

That's funny. I watch a regular channel once in a blue moon.

AL REYNOLDS:

Jeopardy?

(hopefully)

GWEN BROWN:

No. Um, the one where they guess the letters - uh - oh! Wheel of Fortune!

AL REYNOLDS:

Oh, sure, sometimes I watch that.

(Lights include JAKE and STEPHANIE)

JAKE REYNOLDS:

(piping up)
Since when?

STEPHANIE:

(in disbelief)
Regular TV??

AL REYNOLDS:

(glaring)
Sometimes.

GWEN BROWN:

(glaring)
I do you know.

(Lights go off JAKE and STEPHANIE)

GWEN BROWN:

(ignoring JAKE and STEPHANIE)
So we could go out to dinner Saturday night?

AL REYNOLDS:

Yes do you have a favorite restaurant?

GWEN BROWN:

Sacre Bleu is my favorite. Oh the food is heavenly and the desserts to die for. It's French you know.

AL REYNOLDS:

I think I've heard of the place.

GWEN BROWN:

It's really very in. All the in people go there.

AL REYNOLDS:

Really?

GWEN BROWN:

Oh yes, the last time I was there I was with the boss and he was paying and good thing it cost a fortune. Oh. We don't have to go there.

(looking at Al's paling face)
I don't even know if we could get reservations at this late date.

AL REYNOLDS:

I could find out, it's not a big deal. Let's see and then we can go from there.

GWEN BROWN:

Would you? Oh that would be awesome. Oh but I have this stupid old cast on. What could I wear to hide this? Oh anything I wore would look absolutely stupid. Oh never mind Sacre Bleu.

AL REYNOLDS:

(nicely)

How about we go there when the cast comes off? A celebration?

(beat)

And this week we can to go Tanty's Steak House.

GWEN BROWN:

Oh that's a good place. And I wouldn't have to dress up!

AL REYNOLDS:

So it's a date?

GWEN BROWN:

Yes!

(Lights go off GWEN and AL and back on STEPHANIE and JAKE)

JAKE REYNOLDS:

So where's the wedding?

STEPHANIE PETERS:

My cousin's farm. It's out in the country. There'll be a band.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

Polkas?

STEPHANIE PETERS:

Oompahs. More German than Polish. Although I don't know for sure what nationality my cousin is marrying, I'm guessing he's German too.

(Lights go off JAKE and STEPHANIE and back on AL and GWEN)

GWEN BROWN:

Do you like to go to the movies?

AL REYNOLDS:

Sure.

GWEN BROWN:

Have you seen Death by Dying 5? Oh it's supposed to be great!

AL REYNOLDS:

Really? Death by Dying 5? I never saw Death by Dying 4.

GWEN BROWN:

Oh you don't need to. I can tell you all about it. It picks up right where 3 left off. You know, when the guy picks up the cat and -

AL REYNOLDS:
I'd rather go bowling. Do you like to bowl?

GWEN BROWN:
Not really. How about roller skating? You know, at the rink? It's such a riot.

AL REYNOLDS:
Kind of hard with you in a leg cast!

GWEN BROWN:
Oh how stupid am I?

AL REYNOLDS:
You? What about me? Bowling!
(holds up his cast)

GWEN BROWN:
What a pair we are!

AL REYNOLDS:
(dazzled)
Yes what a pair!

(Lights off AL and GWEN and back on JAKE and STEPHANIE)

JAKE REYNOLDS:
What do I wear to this wedding? Overalls?

STEPHANIE PETERS:
A suit will do. I'm wearing a summer evening gown. It's long and kind of fitted through the top and hips and it's the prettiest blue. If you can imagine that.

JAKE REYNOLDS:
(seeing her possibly for the first time)
Actually I can. I can't let you put me to shame. I'll have to get out my summer tux.

STEPHANIE PETERS:
Just like James Bond! You could have as many martinis as you want stirred or shaken.

JAKE REYNOLDS:
Oh so this is a rich cousin's wedding. Which cousin by the way?

STEPHANIE PETERS:
Cousin Elma.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

You've got to be kidding.

STEPHANIE PETERS:

(beat)

No.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

(disbelieving)

Cousin Elma?

STEPHANIE PETERS:

It's a shame, she kind of looks like her name. Her family is extremely pleased about this wedding. I mean, finally.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

Where did she meet the future husband?

STEPHANIE PETERS:

On the farm next door. They grew up together.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

How old are they?

STEPHANIE PETERS:

She's 32 he's 34.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

It took him 32 years to propose??

STEPHANIE PETERS:

He was 28 before he even asked her out. Things are slower on a farm.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

So the reception is at Cousin Elma's family. Is the wedding at - what's his name? The groom?

STEPHANIE PETERS:

Ernest.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

Oh my God. It's like Deliverance.

STEPHANIE PETERS:

Not that bad.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

So the wedding is on whose farm?

STEPHANIE PETERS:

Oh the whole thing's at Cousin Elma's.

JAKE REYNOLDS:
Outside at the farm. In the wheat or with the cows?

STEPHANIE PETERS:
Maybe a couple of chickens but I doubt it. They will probably have the livestock under control for this don't you think?

JAKE REYNOLDS:
I don't know it sounds more like a hootenanny than it does a wedding. And it's formal?

STEPHANIE PETERS:
It's not the Grand Ole Opry - I told you, Oompa no banjos. It's a German farm. A German wedding. The food will be good and the drinks will be plenty.

(Pause)
Do you want to back out?

JAKE REYNOLDS:
I think you've made this whole thing up.

STEPHANIE PETERS:
(laughing)
You don't believe me about the farm?

JAKE REYNOLDS:
Cousin Elma? Marrying Cousin Ernest?

STEPHANIE PETERS:
That's really her name and they're not related yet.

JAKE REYNOLDS:
Cousin Elma marrying the farmboy Ernest from next door.

STEPHANIE PETERS:
I'm not making it up.

JAKE REYNOLDS:
It took them 32 years to get married.

STEPHANIE PETERS:
You get busy on a farm. Sometimes you miss what's right under your nose.

(Lights dim and the door flies open, in walks MOTHER GRAHAM,
lights go onto her)

MOTHER GRAHAM:
Why the hell doesn't somebody fix this door?
(she walks her funny walk to the window)

NURSE:

You don't have to sign in.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

Why the hell not? I'm already half way there! What about that door? When are you going to fix that door? Does it have to bounce back from the wall and knock me down before anybody does anything about it?

JANE GRAHAM:

(walking through the door and closing it)

Why can't you open and close a door like everyone else?

MOTHER GRAHAM:

The damn thing nearly knocked me senseless. And it's my fault. Don't be yapping at me.

JANE GRAHAM:

I'm just saying.

(trying to help her to a seat)

MOTHER GRAHAM:

Get off me!

JANE GRAHAM:

Why are you so hateful?

MOTHER GRAHAM:

I'm old and loving!

JANE GRAHAM:

Your own grandchildren don't even like you!

MOTHER GRAHAM:

Huh! Those kids are brats!

JANE GRAHAM:

You told them you're a witch and they believe you! What grandparent does that to their grandchildren? They expect you to get on your broomstick and fly!

MOTHER GRAHAM:

Wussies. I treated those kids just fine. They were just horrible children. Took after their parents.

JANE GRAHAM:

Your son is one of their parents. The children all look like him and you treat them like they're not related to you!

MOTHER GRAHAM:

Children should be seen and not heard. You can hear those kids for miles! I don't like the noise. I don't like the disrespect. I'm an old woman, the least they could do is respect me.

JANE GRAHAM:

Respect? You cuss at them. You call them names! Did you do that to your son when he was little?

MOTHER GRAHAM:

He's not my son. I never had any children. He was my husband's son! His first wife died and I raised the child. I'm the only mother he ever knew. His stupid father loved him, even more than me, then he up and died and sticks me with this boy, whose not even mine!

(very upset)

I did the best I could. I worked, I couldn't have any fun. I had the boy to look after. And then he got older. When he would be useful to me and what does he do? Marries you! Leaves me to fend for myself!

JANE GRAHAM:

(shaking her head)

All right, all right. Do you want a magazine? I'll get up and get you one.

(gets up and pulls out a ringing cell phone)

Hello? Yes. No, she's on a rant. She's denying your existence again, you and your brother. I'm only too happy to believe that you are not directly related to her. You're sure it's on the birth certificate? She's nuts you know. And she's so mean, she enjoys being mean. She wasn't always this hateful? I find that really, really hard to believe. No, we won't be much longer. Yes you're taking her out to dinner: you said you would! You and your brother, the stepkids. See ya!

(hangs up and gets a couple magazines and brings them back)

MOTHER GRAHAM:

I saw you talking on that stupid cell phone. You can't hide that from me! You think I'm an idiot or an old fool!

JANE GRAHAM:

No, I just think you're mean. I was talking to your stepson to tell him we'd be home in an hour.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

Stepson! What stepson? I have 2 sons, and you're married to one of them! Are you losing your mind?

JANE GRAHAM:

Probably.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

When are you going to get a job?

JANE GRAHAM:

Never. I'm going to lay on the couch and watch TV all day and get fat.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

Humph! You like watching TV?

JANE GRAHAM:

I guess.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

Who is the weatherman on Channel 2?

JANE GRAHAM:

Um, Tom something? Green? Black? I don't remember

MOTHER GRAHAM:

I like him. I wish he was my son.

JANE GRAHAM:

Maybe he is.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

Can't be. I never had any children.

JANE GRAHAM:

Oh.

(Lights go down and onto MILDRED PHILLIPS as she walks into the office, her cell phone to her ear)

MILDRED PHILLIPS

Remember those ugly emerald earrings he gave me? Yes, those.

(walks up to the window and signs in)

Yes, exactly. I turned them in with my wedding ring. That pearl necklace too. Oh what would I wear that with? Anyway I took them in. Mr. Stone was so nice. We talked a long time. Yes well he must feel sorry for me. He gave me \$5000! Said the pearls were worth it! What do I know about pearls? Oh well he'll do anything to get out of paying alimony. Oh, OK, no I'm at the chiropractor's anyway. I'll talk to you later, so long.

(she hangs up, disappointed to no longer have anyone to talk to. She finds a magazine and sits)

(The door opens and Katrina McGouth walks in and signs in)

MILDRED PHILLIPS

Oh hello.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

(smiling)

Hello.

(sits next to her)

MILDRED PHILLIPS

You're back too. How are your headaches?

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

Still there.

MILDRED PHILLIPS

My backaches are too. But they're getting better. How's school?

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

I've made some progress. I told my counselor that I was going to go for library science. Just like we talked about. He was very pleased. I think it will go well for me.

MILDRED PHILLIPS

Isn't that nice? Don't you feel better making a decision?

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

It's silly but yes I do.

MILDRED PHILLIPS

It's not silly. It's a relief. I just got a divorce and I can't tell you how happy I feel. It's a release. Once you make up your mind everything becomes so much clearer.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

Wasn't it sad for you? Getting a divorce I mean.

MILDRED PHILLIPS

No. It was time. Why live a lie?

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

Yes, I see what you mean. Life is so short.

MILDRED PHILLIPS

Not that I'm against relationships though. I think everyone should have a relationship. A good one.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

(shyly)

I have a good one.

MILDRED PHILLIPS

I thought you didn't have a boyfriend.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

Well it wasn't official or anything. I went out last week with Tim. Oh he's so handsome and he's so nice.

MILDRED PHILLIPS

It's not often you get that combination together.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

He's such a gentleman.

MILDRED PHILLIPS

And what does this Tim do?

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

He's a student. I met him in my Sociology class.

MILDRED PHILLIPS

What's his major?

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

He's going into Library Science too.

MILDRED PHILLIPS

Isn't that convenient? That should make any dull classes more interesting right away! Where did you go on your date?

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

We went out to dinner. We went to Jack's. It's a place on campus. It was so nice. It was so romantic.

MILDRED PHILLIPS

That sounds wonderful.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

Today we were in a study group together. I couldn't stop smiling at him and he couldn't stop smiling at me. What a sight we must've been.

MILDRED PHILLIPS

It's so nice to be in love.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

I don't know that it's love.

(seriously)

It's probably infatuation.

MILDRED PHILLIPS

Infatuation counts. Love either takes infatuation and turns it into a long lasting relationship by some kind of magic. Or it lets it go to give something else new space to grow. I think Tim has potential. What do you think?

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

Oh yes I do too. I'm willing to see where it's going to go. For sure.

MILDRED PHILLIPS

Take care not to let too many of your feelings out. Let him get to know you gradually. Be mysterious. Even at my age I try to keep a little mystery. Mr. Stone at the jewelry store is intrigued. Did I tell you about him last time? We started talking. Idle chatter at first but then we started sharing stories. He told me his first wife used to keep canaries. Isn't that odd? He asked me out to dinner after he found out I was divorced. I thought that was so nice of him since he knew I'd be alone. And maybe lonely. It is a big change, divorce. I didn't think it would be so different. My husband was never home anyway. How could I miss someone that was never there? He never talked to me. He was always buried behind the paper. But he was a person in the room. Now there's no one but me.

(pause, brightly)

Now I need something to do.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

You need a hobby. Why don't you go to a community education class? Or a night class at the university? They have swimming or art or a language.

MILDRED PHILLIPS

Swimming! I never learned how to swim.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

Oh that's perfect. They have classes in the sport building. Why don't you give them a call? What do you have to lose?

MILDRED PHILLIPS

Nothing I suppose. Thank you for the idea.

(pause)

I don't even know your name!

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

Katrina.

MILDRED PHILLIPS

Well isn't that a beautiful name.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

Devastating!

MILDRED PHILLIPS

It's beautiful compared to mine, Mildred. Sounds like a school marm.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

It's a nice name. Does Mr. Stone call you Millie?

MILDRED PHILLIPS

Mr. Stone calls me Ms. Phillips. But maybe after our first date we'll be on a first-name basis.

(Lights dim, in walks MS. CAPELA. She smiles at everyone and goes to sign in)

MS. CAPELA:

Hallooooo!

(waves at someone behind the desk, signs in and goes and sits down next to JANE GRAHAM)

JANE GRAHAM:

Hello! How are you?

MS. CAPELA:

Oh I'm fine, how are you?

JANE GRAHAM:

I'm OK. I've been thinking of you. Did you have your audition?

MS. CAPELA:

Oh not yet. These things take time. I'm waiting for them to call me.

JANE GRAHAM:

(voice of doubt)

Oh. Call you. I didn't realize that they did things like that.

MS. CAPELA:

It's all in how you approach it. Opera has its own rules. I've spoken to some people and now I have to wait. It's not so easy but it's how it's done.

JANE GRAHAM:

You must practice a lot.

MS. CAPELA:

Oh, all the time. My whole life. It was my parents' dream that I would be a singer. When I was young and showed talent they made sure that I made the most of it. I used to do exercises for my voice for hours. The other children would be outside and I would be practicing.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

(joining in)

That sounds kind of sad.

MS. CAPELA:

No. I wouldn't be the singer I am today without it. I hold no regrets.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

(shakes her cane at the knitting lady, who shakes a knitting needle back at her)

JANE GRAHAM:
Mother Graham what are you doing?

MOTHER GRAHAM:
(mumbles and shakes her head)

JANE GRAHAM:
(distracted)
Still, it must have been hard as a child.

MS. CAPELA:
I didn't have many friends anyway. I had a vision, a dream at an early age. Most people aren't as lucky.

JANE GRAHAM:
The discipline...

MS. CAPELA:
It's not really work I'm suited to this kind of life.
(pause)
I've seen the opera from all sides. I was part of the audience since I was a child. I met so many talented people. I used to go backstage.
(remembering)
I met a singer once. I had to tell him I thought his voice was wonderful. That I'd never heard such a voice before. And he held my hand and asked me to sing for him! Oh my I was speechless. But somehow I managed. I sang a bit and he promised me one day we'd sing together on the stage.
(smiling)
I was just a child. But that dream has held me. And now I expect it will come true. His son, you see, is in this production. We will share the lead and sing together.

JANE GRAHAM:
(the doubting voice is back - too cheery)
So you haven't auditioned but you think you'll get the part? Oh that's, um, good. I mean, um, when will you find out?

MS. CAPELA:
I expect to hear soon.

JANE GRAHAM:
Should you e-mail him or something?

MS. CAPELA:
E-mail! Oh my no! I have to wait. I would die first!

JANE GRAHAM:

(blurts out)
But what if you don't get the part?

MS. CAPELA:
Not get the part? Of course I'll get the part. I was destined to play this part!

JANE GRAHAM:
(disbelieving)
Oh.

(lights go up and everyone's now included in the conversation)

MS. CAPELA:
(patting JANE GRAHAM's hand)
You just don't understand how it's done. I have contacted the correct people for an audition. They will call me and set up a time. I am convinced this time I will get the part. And I will invite you all to my performance!

KATRINA MCGOUTH:
(defensively)
I'm sure you'll get the part!

MILDRED PHILLIPS:
But surely in this day and age - I mean, you don't want to miss out on your chance. Isn't there more you can do?

MS. CAPELA:
(blankly)
Miss out? I wouldn't miss out. Productions like this are not of this day and age. They have generations behind them. The Opera has history! Everyone in the opera has a history. We all have the same agents. Even if I wasn't any good I wouldn't be left off. I'm on the roster. On the list.

GWEN BROWN:
But how do you know for sure? How can you be so positive somebody's not trying to stab you in the back? You don't seem to be trying very hard.

MS. CAPELA:
(horrified)
I'm practicing everyday. I'm keeping in touch with other singers, other producers. How do you think I knew the production was coming into town? There's a way of finding out and doing proactive things without being bold.

GWEN BROWN:
It's not bold to blow your own horn.

MS. CAPELA:

No dear but it's loud in your own ear.

STEPHANIE PETERS:
You're sure your way is the best?

MS. CAPELA:
Oh yes, I have no doubt.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:
(stubbornly)
I don't either!

JAKE REYNOLDS:
I wish I could be so sure about something.

MS. CAPELA:
Men think differently. Women know the shoes will go on sale. And they are right.

JAKE REYNOLDS:
(blankly)
What does that mean?

STEPHANIE PETERS:
So we're all invited to the show?

MS. CAPELA:
All of you!

AL REYNOLDS:
I've never been to the opera.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:
Me either!

MS. CAPELA:
You'll love it.

(lights off them and onto GWEN, AL, JAKE and STEPHANIE)

(NURSE comes in)

NURSE:
Ms. Brown?
(waits patiently)

GWEN BROWN:
Where were we?

AL REYNOLDS:
I'll pick you up at 7:00.

GWEN BROWN:

Not 7:00. I'll never be ready by 7.

AL REYNOLDS:

7:30?

GWEN BROWN:

Is 8:00 too late to eat?

AL REYNOLDS:

A little.

GWEN BROWN:

OK 7:30.

STEPHANIE PETERS:

That means you'll come at 7:30 but she won't be ready until 8.

GWEN BROWN:

Oh that's not true. I won't make you wait that long.

AL REYNOLDS:

(confused)

Uh, oK. See you at 7:30.

STEPHANIE PETERS:

And leave at 8.

(turns to Jake)

Should I pick you up or do you want to drive?

JAKE REYNOLDS:

Worried I might not show?

STEPHANIE PETERS:

You never know.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

Let's shake on it. A biology teacher never goes back on his word.

STEPHANIE PETERS:

OK you can drive. Better make sure you have a full tank of gas.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

Why?

STEPHANIE PETERS:

Well it's a couple hours to get there.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

A couple hours?

STEPHANIE PETERS:

Give or take an hour or two.
(giggling)
See you Saturday!
(hands him a paper)
Here's my name, number and address. Give me yours.
(hands him a paper and pen)

JAKE REYNOLDS:
I just got railroaded.
(writing)

STEPHANIE PETERS:
Pack a bag and pick me up around noon.

JAKE REYNOLDS:
(confused)
Pack a bag?
(hands her back her pen and paper)
What time does it start?

STEPHANIE PETERS:
Around 4:00. We don't want to be late.
(waves)
Bye, see you later.

(GWEN and STEPHANIE leave)

JAKE REYNOLDS:
I can't believe I let her do that to me. Pack a bag?

AL REYNOLDS:
I like her.

(NURSE comes in)

NURSE:
Ms. Capela?

MS. CAPELA:
Oh that's nice it's my turn. If I don't see you next week just be sure that I'll leave you tickets and information on when I'll be performing.
(leaves with nurse)

JAKE REYNOLDS:
Wonder if she'll really get the part.

JANE GRAHAM:
I don't know. I feel sorry for her. What if she doesn't get it? She'll be heartbroken.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

Why do you think she won't get it?

JANE GRAHAM:

She talks like she lives in a dream world.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

She's befuddled.

(everyone looks at the old lady who shakes a cane at the knitting lady who in turn shakes a knitting needle at her)

MILDRED PHILLIPS:

Well she doesn't seem realistic. I heard her talking.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

But we heard her sing. She was wonderful.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

We've never been to the opera before. How do we know?

MOTHER GRAHAM:

(points at JANE GRAHAM)

She has.

AL REYNOLDS:

Was she up to par?

JANE GRAHAM:

I don't know how can you tell from this space?

MILDRED PHILLIPS:

Well she might be in for a big surprise.

AL REYNOLDS:

Kind of sad.

(NURSE comes in)

NURSE:

Mr. Reynolds?

(Jake and Al go with the nurse)

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

(stubbornly)

Well I think she'll get it.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

(shaking fist at knitting lady)

JANE GRAHAM:

(annoyed)

Mother Graham, what are you doing?

MILDRED PHILLIPS:

Well for her sake I hope you're right.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

Nothing. I'm not doing nothing.

(makes face at knitting lady who makes a face back)

JANE GRAHAM:

(shaking her head)

(NURSE comes in)

NURSE:

Mrs. Graham?

MOTHER GRAHAM:

It's about damn time.

(gets up, JANE GRAHAM follows them out)

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

Why does everyone always have to crush everybody else's dream?

MILDRED PHILLIPS:

What dear?

(NURSE coming in)

NURSE:

Ms. McGouth?

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

Crushed.

(follows nurse out)

MILDRED PHILLIPS:

(answering cellphone)

Hello? Oh Mr. Stone, how nice of you to call. Excuse me? Oh yes? Oh you can't make it tonight? That's fine. Of course I understand. Yes things do come up. Of course some other time. Yes, thanks for calling.

(closes cell phone. Knitting lady looks over at her, pity on her face)

(NURSE coming in)

NURSE:

Ms Phillips?

(CURTAIN) (END OF ACT 2)

ACT 3

SETTING: One week later.

AT RISE: STEPHANIE, GWEN (with a smaller cast), AL, JAKE, MILDRED, MS. CAPELA are already there all talking. The knitting lady is there too, quietly knitting. It's obvious that GWEN and AL are under some strain while STEPHANIE and JAKE seem to be falling in love.

AL REYNOLDS:
I'm sorry if you didn't have a good time. Maybe we can go someplace else for dinner next time.

GWEN BROWN:
It's not like I had a bad time Al, it's just that the waiter was an idiot. I mean really.

AL REYNOLDS:
Oh it wasn't that bad.
(glare from Gwen)
I mean it could've been a lot better.

GWEN BROWN:
And the food wasn't so great. I personally would have walked out if I was by myself.

AL REYNOLDS:
Well my dinner was good, but, I understand you didn't like yours.

JAKE REYNOLDS:
Well you should've been at the wedding with us!

STEPHANIE PETERS:
We had a blast!

AL REYNOLDS:
Yes, we haven't talked since you got back. Was it really on a farm?

JAKE REYNOLDS:
It was, if you could call this a farm! It was more like a castle on some farmland. Thank GOD I know how to dress!

STEPHANIE PETERS:
He impressed the relatives like crazy with the tux.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

It was like some kind of chick flick. Food, drinks, music. They had an orchestra playing, you know, no oooompahs, no polkas. An orchestra! We danced and ate and drank. We spent the night in the east wing, the guest wing. The men were on one side and the women on the other. Like an unbelievable pajama party.

STEPHANIE PETERS:

He thought I was joking when I told him to pack a bag. And not a pair of overalls in sight!

(giving him a look)

JAKE REYNOLDS:

Who knew such a thing existed? Farmers with castles and high bred cows that are worth a fortune. They grow some kind of special feed that costs more a bag than my rent! And relatives everywhere!

STEPHANIE PETERS:

Well everyone knew everyone else, the families live right next door to each other.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

Next door is like 5 miles apart.

STEPHANIE PETERS:

Well you know families. And with Elma and Ernest getting married it was one big party.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

First there was the ceremony. Then we were all drinking champagne. Then we were eating at this buffet that was phenomenal. Then we were drinking whatever we wanted from the bar. If you went inside they had a big screen TV in the movie theatre part of the house. There was a game room. Hot and cold running servants. It was heaven.

STEPHANIE PETERS:

(laughing)

And there was Jake, right in the middle of it.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

(pausing somberly)

I've never gotten the third degree to such a degree in my life. Every relative over twelve wanted my life history.

STEPHANIE PETERS:

But in such a nice way.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

Are you in the will?

STEPHANIE PETERS:

(confused)

What? You mean Aunt Maybel and Uncle Joe's will?

JAKE REYNOLDS:

Yes, you know, as a relative. Just generally being in the will because you're a cousin.

STEPHANIE PETERS:

I don't know. I've never purposefully worked on that before.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

Maybe you should.

STEPHANIE PETERS:

So I can land a rich husband?

JAKE REYNOLDS:

(annoyed)

No, so we can go back there!

STEPHANIE PETERS:

(laughing)

I'm sure we're welcome anytime. Aunt Maybel said so.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

You just gotta love how the other half lives.

(NURSE coming out)

NURSE:

I'm sorry you are all delayed. The doctor had to attend a funeral for one of his patients and he's not returned yet. I expect him back shortly but if you prefer not to wait I'll be glad to reschedule you. Just let me know.

(turns and goes back in the room)

(Everyone gets quiet)

MILDRED PHILLIPS:

Oh that's sad. I bet it was the crabby old woman who used to come here with her daughter.

MS. CAPELA:

I think she was her daughter-in-law. She was an old woman though, I'm sure it was a peaceful death.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

She didn't seem so peaceful when she was here.

(door opens and in walks DR. MATTHEWS)

Dr MATTHEWS:

Hello everyone. I'm sorry for keeping you waiting. I'm sure the nurse told you I had a funeral to attend.

(door opens again and in walks MOTHER GRAHAM and JANE GRAHAM)

MOTHER GRAHAM:

You don't have to yell! And you don't have to shove me along like some old shopping cart!

(noticing the doctor)

Oh! It's you! Why are you standing out here?

Dr MATTHEWS:

(smiles)

Hello Mrs. Graham. I was just apologizing for being so late. I had to attend Katrina McGouth's funeral. She died a few days ago. It was rather sudden but who can predict a brain tumor? Let me just go get my coat off and we'll resume our schedule.

(leaves, stunned silence)

MILDRED PHILLIPS:

Oh my God it was Katrina! Oh she was so young.

(pause)

Still in college.

(looking up at everyone)

She'd just fallen in love.

GWEN BROWN:

Her name was Katrina McGouth? McGouth! Huh. I work with her mother. I didn't realize it was the same girl. You confused me when you said she was in college. She wasn't in school. She barely finished high school. She was always sick. They only just diagnosed the brain tumor a year ago, it was just a matter of time.

MILDRED PHILLIPS:

She didn't go to college?

GWEN BROWN:

No, she couldn't function enough to go to school. Her mother said she just stayed in bed most of the day.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

Humph! Unambitious youth.

MS. CAPELA:

It's so sad. It's so much harder to bear when it's someone young.

MILDRED PHILLIPS:

I didn't realize she was so sick. I didn't realize.

STEPHANIE PETERS:

Did you know her?

MILDRED PHILLIPS:

Only from here. I just would have spoken to her differently had I known.

GWEN BROWN:

Why? You probably wouldn't have spoken to her at all. Nobody knows what to say to somebody who's dying.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

(flapping her hand)

Everybody's going to die. Don't know why you make such a big deal out of it.

JANE GRAHAM:

It's because she's so young. She didn't have a chance to live a very long life.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

How do you know? Maybe her life was done. Maybe she lived it all she could. Young, old, when your life is up it's up.

JANE GRAHAM:

We can still feel sad, expected or not it's still sad.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

You won't be sad when I go. You won't be crying.

JANE GRAHAM:

Probably against my better judgment I will cry. Because death, no matter what, is sad. We're all sad when someone dies.

MILDRED PHILLIPS:

Her parents must be devastated.

MS. CAPELA:

It's always worse for the ones left behind.

STEPHANIE PETERS:

(to GWEN)

You worked with her mom? Did she have a large family?

GWEN BROWN:

I don't know. I knew the daughter was sick. I think there was an older girl and a younger boy. The mother complained a lot about all the bills. She said Katrina didn't have much of a life.

AL REYNOLDS:

Well how could she have much of a life? She had a brain tumor!

GWEN BROWN:

Don't yell at me. I'm just saying.

MILDRED PHILLIPS:

She had terrible headaches. How could you function with a headache all the time?

(NURSE comes out)

NURSE:

Ms. Brown?

JAKE REYNOLDS:

Hey Al, I'm going to take Stephanie to the coffee shop around the corner. Why don't you and Gwen come around when you're done? Meet us there?

AL REYNOLDS:

Sure Jake, sure.

NURSE:

You can come back now Mr. Reynolds if you'd like.

(they follow her while the others pick up magazines and the lights dim. As JAKE and STEPHANIE open the door to leave, in walks KATRINA MCGOUTH as they go out.)

KNITTING LADY:

What brings you here?

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

I'm not sure. I went to my funeral today.

KNITTING LADY:

(nodding)

How was it?

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

Kind of boring. Mostly sad. Everyone was crying. They were saying I died so young.

KNITTING LADY:

(nodding)

They were saying that here too.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

Really? It's like that's all anybody can say.

KNITTING LADY:

People never know what to say. I mean one day you're sitting right over there and the next day you're not. It takes one aback. Today when everybody first heard that someone died they thought it was that mean old lady there, Mrs. Graham.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

Oh.

(looks over)

She's not that mean, I think she's more crazy.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

(picking up her head)

I heard that!

(shakes her fist at the KNITTING LADY)

JANE GRAHAM:

Heard what?

MOTHER GRAHAM:

Never you mind!

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

(whispering)

She can hear us?

KNITTING LADY:

Not really. She gets a feeling we're here and can sometimes tell someone's talking about her. You know that feeling you get? We're more like shadows, something you see maybe out of the corner of your eye.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

She's still sad.

(points to MILDRED PHILLIPS who's wiping away a tear). She's unhappy though anyway. People don't realize how easy it is to be happy. I know, I just realized it now.

KNITTING LADY:

Going to the other side clues you in.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

Yes it does. I don't have to stay here forever do I?

KNITTING LADY:

No, of course not. You chose to visit. You can leave any time you'd like.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

I think I'll stay just a little while.

KNITTING LADY:

You can do that too.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

Is that why you knit? Because things are kind of slow around here?

KNITTING LADY:

I suppose so. I never thought about it before.

(NURSE comes in)

NURSE:

Mrs. Graham?

JANE GRAHAM:

(to MILDRED PHILLIPS)

Don't feel too badly. She wouldn't want you to be sad.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

I really don't.

MILDRED PHILLIPS:

I know. I just can't help to be sad.

JANE GRAHAM:

She's in a better place.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

Actually I'm right here.

MILDRED PHILLIPS:

Thank you. I didn't even really know her. But I felt for her. I liked her. It's just such a shock.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

She's really taking this hard. Why?

KNITTING LADY:

Because she found out you lied about going to college.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

Oh. So she feels sorry for me.

KNITTING LADY:

Yes I suppose so.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

It wasn't a big lie. I mean it was just kind of a so-so lie.

KNITTING LADY:

Well...

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

It seemed important to have a boyfriend at the time. So I made one up. It made her happy. It made me happy. It seemed like it achieved the purpose for which it was intended.

KNITTING LADY:

Still. I mean when you think about it...

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

I know. It's just that things make more sense now. I don't have to lie or make things up. I didn't when I was alive either but none of that matters anymore. She's still carrying it around with her though.

KNITTING LADY:

They can't help it. We couldn't help it either. It's a flaw.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

Oh.

(looking around)

I think I'm already forgetting things.

KNITTING LADY:

You only forget the unimportant things. Everything else falls into perspective.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

How long have you been here like this?

KNITTING LADY:

Oh I don't know.

(puts knitting on her lap while she thinks)

I really can't say.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

Well, your knitting. Don't you ever finish?

KNITTING LADY:

No, it stays just like it was when I left.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

Why did you come here? Was Dr. Mathews your doctor?

(pause)

You didn't die here did you?

KNITTING LADY:

Oh no, nothing like that. I just like to keep up with what's going on. I didn't feel like moving on at the present moment. I just, I well, Dr. Mathews is my son.

(pause)

I met people here. Just like you did. And I wanted to see how things turned out. Just like you did.

(pause)

And I wanted to see how my son fared.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:

How have things turned out so far?

KNITTING LADY:

Sometimes OK. Sometimes not.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:
You don't feel like moving on? Change is good.

KNITTING LADY:
Change is change.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:
When do you have to go?

KNITTING LADY:
I don't know that I ever have to go. I think in a little while
I'll be ready to move on.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:
(pause)
I never saw you but I felt you. Now I know what that was.

KNITTING LADY:
Yes, I'm just a feeling now.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:
Doesn't that bother you?

KNITTING LADY:
No. I don't mind.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:
Well, it was nice talking to you. I think I want to go now. It
was nice meeting you. Good luck.

KNITTING LADY:
Thank you. Good luck to you too, dear.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:
Oh, one more thing. Do you know how things will turn out ahead of
time? Will the singer get the part?

KNITTING LADY:
(shaking her head)
I don't know. I have to wait and see like everyone else. People
are so unpredictable.

KATRINA MCGOUTH:
(walks to the door)
Bye.

KNITTING LADY:
Goodbye dear.

(CURTAIN) (END OF ACT 3)

ACT 4

SETTING: Two weeks later.

AT RISE: AL and JAKE are in the waiting room.
KNITTING LADY is still there knitting.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

It was a unbelievable! We had so much fun. Everything we do is fun! Everywhere we go it's fun! I've never had so much fun in all my life!

AL REYNOLDS:

(holding his head, his arm in a smaller cast so he can) Hmmm.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

I can't believe Fanny. She's the sweetest girl alive!

AL REYNOLDS:

You sound gay.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

I - er - What?

AL REYNOLDS:

You're sickening. You're slobbering. You're using words like sweetest girl alive. It's Hallmark. I'm tired of hearing it. You go on and on and on.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

You went on and on about Gwen.

AL REYNOLDS:

That's different.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

How?

AL REYNOLDS:

I wasn't pretending that I didn't love her. I was in love with her the moment I met her. You were the one all, "Oh Right, sure, right, that'll never happen to me." Like you're John Wayne.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

John Wayne?

AL REYNOLDS:

You know what I mean.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

It's not my fault you and Gwen aren't getting along.

AL REYNOLDS:

It's just a trying time.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

No, Gwen's a bitch.

AL REYNOLDS:

She is not.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

And you're so whipped you don't even know it.

AL REYNOLDS:

What about you? All soppy and puppy-like.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

I'm not all soppy.

AL REYNOLDS:

With that stupid grin on your face.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

You're full of it.

AL REYNOLDS:

No you are.

(door opens, in walks GWEN and STEPHANIE. GWEN scowling, STEPHANIE lighting up when she sees Jake)

STEPHANIE PETERS:

Hi.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

Hi.

(they walk toward each other and hug)

GWEN BROWN:

Barf.

AL REYNOLDS:

Well we can agree on that Gwen.

GWEN BROWN:

I knew if we

(struggling to get out of a jacket that's too tight)
looked hard enough we could find something. Can you help me with
this?

AL REYNOLDS:

If you'd stop moving around I could help you.

GWEN BROWN:

(gets off the jacket and sits down)

(STEPHANIE and JAKE are gazing into each other's eyes)

STEPHANIE PETERS:

How are you?

JAKE REYNOLDS:

Just fine, you?

AL REYNOLDS:

Get a room!

JAKE REYNOLDS:

That sounds like an excellent idea.

STEPHANIE PETERS:

I don't think we have enough time.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

How about coffee instead?

STEPHANIE PETERS:

OK.

GWEN BROWN and AL REYNOLDS:

Ugh.

(door opens and in comes MILDRED PHILLIPS with MS. CABELA;MA2 with MS. CABELA singing some opera song. She finishes and they all applaud)

STEPHANIE PETERS:

You're in a good mood.

MS. CAPELA:

(bowing)

I am. I am in the new production of La Medusa Rouge! I am the star. When it's time for the fat lady to sing, it will be me!

STEPHANIE PETERS:

Oh I'm so glad for you!

AL & JAKE REYNOLDS:

Congratulations!

MILDRED PHILLIPS:

How wonderful! We knew you could do it!

MS. CAPELA:

(reaching into her pocket) Here are vouchers for you all to be my guests.

STEPHANIE PETERS:

Oh that's wonderful!

JAKE REYNOLDS:

I can't wait.

STEPHANIE PETERS:

Me either.

AL REYNOLDS:

Nor me. It should be an experience. We'll try not to embarrass you!

(everyone sits except MS. CABELA. Door opens and in walks MOTHER GRAHAM and JANE GRAHAM)

MOTHER GRAHAM:

What's all the fuss, we could hear you all the way in the parking lot.

MS. CAPELA:

I will be in the new production of La Medusa Rouge!

JANE GRAHAM:

Oh that's marvelous! Just marvelous! I just saw in the paper that they were going to start production in a few weeks! I was telling my husband that we had to get tickets to go!

MS. CAPELA:

Here are 2 vouchers for tickets. My compliments.

JANE GRAHAM:

Oh thank you! Thank you!

MOTHER GRAHAM:

(waving her hand)

Don't be giving me any tickets. I could be dead by then.

JANE GRAHAM:

(ignoring MOTHER GRAHAM as she goes to sit down)

How will the performance be different from Vladiskov's?

MS. CAPELA:

No roads, no inns, none of that. The whole thing will take place at the party!

JANE GRAHAM:

Ingenious! Everyone's story can be told at once!

MS. CAPELA:

It's fabulous you know, the rehearsals just started. It's been astounding.

JANE GRAHAM:

Oh how I wish I could be there to see one!

MS. CAPELA:

You know, Milton loves an adoring fan. I might just be able to get you in.

JANE GRAHAM:

Oh that would be wonderful! I'll give you my number, call me anytime!

(pulls out paper and writes it down, gives it to her)
Is everyone here going?

(Various yeses except for GWEN)

MILDRED PHILLIPS:

We should all go on the same night! We could be your biggest fans!

STEPHANIE PETERS:

That would be fun!

AL REYNOLDS:

We could all sit in a row and watch you so we'll know when to clap and stuff.

JAKE REYNOLDS:

Yes you'll have to be in front so we can follow your lead.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

Oh you're all nuts. Everybody go sit down you're all crowded around here like a mob.

(everyone disburses except GWEN who had been seated the whole time)

AL REYNOLDS:

(to GWEN)

That should be fun.

GWEN BROWN:

I'm sorry I don't want to go. I don't think the opera and I have anything in common.

AL REYNOLDS:

You could at least give it a try.

GWEN BROWN:

I don't want to.

AL REYNOLDS:

Well I think I would like to go.

GWEN BROWN:

So go by yourself.

AL REYNOLDS:

No, I think I'll go with everyone else here.

GWEN BROWN:

Fine.

(turns to everyone)

None of you believed she would get this. And now you're all flocking around. Like fair weather friends I'd say. Well I don't much care. But at least I'm honest about it.

AL REYNOLDS:

No, you're just mean about it. We voiced doubts, it's true. But we're sincerely happy we were mistaken. You don't care because it's not about you.

GWEN BROWN:

Whatever. I wish you all the best opera lady. But I don't want to hear you sing.

(gets up and goes to nurse's window)

Can I reschedule for next week? I don't want to wait anymore.

Good, I'll call you.

(turns to the door)

Goodbye. I doubt I'll see most of you again. Al, this is goodbye.

(she waves and hobbles out the door)

STEPHANIE PETERS:

(kissing Jake)

I have to go I drove her here. See you later, come over when you're done, I'll be home.

(shakes MS. CAPELA's hand)

Congratulations again!

(runs out after Gwen)

AL REYNOLDS:

(walks over to MS. CABELA)

Sorry about Gwen.

MS. CAPELA:

(smiling)

My dear, we're all sorry.

AL REYNOLDS:

(confused)

Oh.

(NURSE comes in)

NURSE:

Mr. Reynolds?

(JAKE and AL follow the nurse out)

MILDRED PHILLIPS:

(phone rings)

Hello? Yes. Oh Mr. Stone! What a surprise! No, I shop at a different store now, I've moved. No, I didn't lose your number I've just been busy with the move. Yes I know you called but I haven't had a chance to call you back I was packing. Oh now I couldn't call you for that, I don't know you well enough to make you pack.

(pause)

That's very nice. Yes, I would like to go out to dinner. (pause) I don't even know your first name. Louis? Louis is a very nice name. Mildred. Yes. Well I don't know, it's short notice.

(beat)

OK! I live in the Cumberstand Apartments on Main. See you tonight around 7. Good bye Mr., er, Louis.

(hangs up and smiles)

(NURSE coming in)

NURSE:

Ms. Capela?

MS. CAPELA:

(to NURSE)

Did you hear my dear? I'm a star!

(she follows the NURSE out of the room)

MILDRED PHILLIPS:

(stands up and goes over to the window)

Could I reschedule? I completely forgot I have to go get my hair done. Thanks!

(races out the door)

JANE GRAHAM:

(reading a magazine)

Oh look it's the Wish people. I think I will do that this year.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

What?

JANE GRAHAM:

Give money for a child with a fatal disease so they can have a wish.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

Humph. They have wishes for children with fatal disease. What about adults that don't want to die? We don't get wishes because we're supposed to be able to get everything ourselves? What if we can't? Does that seem fair to you? Just because we're older doesn't mean we're ready to cash it in. I want a wish! I want a shopping spree! I want to go to Disney World. Because you know I never got to go. I worked hard my whole life and I never left this town. We never went on vacation because we couldn't afford it. We never bought anything on credit. If we needed something we saved for it. We never went hungry. Others in the neighborhood did. Do you know what's it's like to be hungry? To see your children hungry?

(rises out of her chair on her cane)

I would've liked to have something to show for this life. And I don't. Everybody wants a wish I say.

(shakes her cane)

I want a wish!

(CURTAIN) (END OF ACT 4)

ACT 5

SETTING: One week later.

AT RISE: Just the knitting lady is in the room. The door opens, in walks the old lady, no longer hobbling. But still old.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

(walking into the room and spotting the Knitting Lady)
You! What the hell is this?

KNITTING LADY:

Good afternoon.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

Don't good afternoon me.

KNITTING LADY:

I was just being polite.

MOTHER GRAHAM;

Ugh.

(sits down)

Death is a waiting room. Figures.

(looks over at KNITTING LADY)

I'm dead you know. I died a few days ago. I heard them all talking about it. About me. Like I wasn't even there!

(pause)

OK I wasn't there I was dead but what a bunch of insensitive bastards! I couldn't stand it anymore so I left.

(pause)

I went through my neighborhood. I went to my house.

(getting angry again)

And ended up here! Dead! That really pisses me off! I had just convinced them to take me on a vacation. I could be sitting around in the sun with one of them fancy drinks right now goddamn it.

(looks at KNITTING LADY)

What the hell are you making? If you're going to hell you don't need a scarf. If you're going to heaven they'll probably adjust the temperature for you.

KNITTING LADY:

I just like to have something to do with my hands. I've knitted all my life. Now that life is over I just continue while I'm here.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

Why are you here?

KNITTING LADY:

Why are you?

MOTHER GRAHAM:

How the hell do I know? I'm dead.

(pauses, thinking)

How come I don't have all the answers? Aren't you supposed to get the answers when you die? I mean you wait your whole life for the damn answers. And I got nothing. No answers. No youth even! Why am I still old? I want to be young again. Isn't there somebody who can fix that? Where the hell is God?

KNITTING LADY:

I'm sure he's around here somewhere.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

Well he's taking his own time about getting to me isn't he?

(annoyed)

Just my luck.

(pause)

I don't want to stay here.

KNITTING LADY:

You don't have to.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

(doesn't go, slumps in her seat)

What happens to my sons? Do they ever make anything out of themselves?

KNITTING LADY:

I don't know.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

What about my pain in the ass daughter-in-law?

KNITTING LADY:

I don't know.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

What about my grandkids?

KNITTING LADY:

I don't know.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

(exasperated)

You've been here awhile now, you'd think you'd know something.

KNITTING LADY:

I only know about my son. I stayed here to be close to him. I see he's doing very well. He has friends and his marriage is going well. My grandchildren are doing well.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

I don't give a damn about your son. I was asking about mine. Even here it's every old lady for herself. It doesn't seem right. Where are the others?

KNITTING LADY:

Others?

MOTHER GRAHAM:

We're not the only 2 dead people are we? Where are all the other dead people?

KNITTING LADY:

What other dead people?

MOTHER GRAHAM:

Am I the only one paying attention? We're not the only dead people in the whole world. Don't hundreds of people die every day?? We're just a couple of them. So where are the rest?

KNITTING LADY:

Somewhere else.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

(disgusted)

If you weren't dead already...

KNITTING LADY:

Well I am.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

(rolls her eyes)

I get it. You're not here to solve any mysteries. Fine with me. I won't ask anymore questions.

(pause)

I want to go to my funeral. Can I? It's today and I don't know how I know that.

KNITTING LADY:

You don't need my permission. Do whatever you want.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

Well do I catch a cab? Float over there?

KNITTING LADY:

I don't know. I've never left here.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

Why not?

KNITTING LADY:

I only wanted to see my son. Where else would I go? Out to dinner?

MOTHER GRAHAM:

You don't know crap.

(walks toward the door)

I'll let you know how it goes. Or maybe not.

(walks out the door)

(one hour later)

KNITTING LADY:

(looks up, MOTHER GRAHAM walks in the door)

MOTHER GRAHAM:

I can't find the funeral. Bastards are having it without me! I can't find my own funeral! How pathetic is that?

KNITTING LADY:

(sincerely)

I'm sorry.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

Thwarted! Even in death!

KNITTING LADY:

(thinking)

Wait! My son always goes to his patients' funerals. You can get a ride with him!

MOTHER GRAHAM:

(suddenly hesitating)

I don't know, do you think he'd mind? What's wrong with me?

(hangs her head)

I don't want to go by myself.

KNITTING LADY:

(kindly)

It's a little unnerving, you know, being dead.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

It shouldn't be any more unnerving than being alive.

KNITTING LADY:

(gets up and pats her shoulder)

I'd help you if I could. I've thought about leaving but I don't really know how.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

I'm dead and I'm getting sentimental. Who would've thought?

(sits up suddenly)

Where's your son? Do you think he left already?

KNITTING LADY:

Oh

(sits back down)

I don't know.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

Well the funeral - the graveyard should have a lot of dead people hanging around. Surely one of them would know how to get out of here.

KNITTING LADEY:

You know, you're probably right. They could help us!

(putting aside her knitting)

How about I go with you? We'll find him together.

(Door opens, NURSE coming in through the door suddenly
chiropractor comes in right behind her)

NURSE:

(to chiropractor)

I thought you were going to Mrs. Graham's funeral?

DR MATTHEWS:

I forgot the directions

(running inside and back out)

See you in a bit!

MOTHER GRAHAM and KNITTING LADY look at each other.

MOTHER GRAHAM:

Wait!

(takes off after him)

Wait for me!

(opens door)

KNITTING LADY:

Us! Wait for us!

(opens door so she can get out too)

NURSE:

(confused)

What the?

(closes door)

Well let's hope that's the end of that!

THE END