



Art Shulman

Norman Maine Publishing

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Tallevast, FL 34270

SEX IS GOOD FOR YOU

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SEX IS GOOD FOR YOU was first produced in 2005 at the Secret Rose Theatre, North Hollywood, CA: Mike Rademaekers, director; Michael Vaccaro, set design; Kaz Matamura and Grace Harrell, costume design; John Grant, lighting design; and Yasuyo "Pea" Chiba, sound design.

AL GOLDEN: Patrick M.J. Finerty

SHEILA GOLDEN: Kate Linder

CRAIG GOLDEN: Matthew Dente

MIKE KERNER: Steve Howard

DEBBIE: Rachael Lyerla

SEX IS GOOD FOR YOU!

COMEDY. Al is terrified to have sex with his wife, Sheila, because he's afraid he'll have another heart attack. Even though Sheila assures Al that sex is good for him, Al is determined to avoid his wife's advances at all cost. But when the couple's 27th wedding anniversary arrives, Sheila pulls out all the stops to entice Al into bed.

Performance Time: Approximately 75-90 minutes.

CHARACTERS

(3 M, 2 F)

AL GOLDEN: 50-55, dry wit.

SHEILA GOLDEN: Al's attractive and slightly younger wife.

CRAIG GOLDEN: 20s, Al and Sheila's son.

MIKE KERNER: 35-45, Al's lecherous boss.

DEBBIE: 20s, Craig's girlfriend; sexy nurse.

SETTING

The present. Al and Sheila's upper middle-class living room or family room. It contains a couch and chair, at least one bookcase, and other miscellaneous furniture. There is a front door and an entrance to a hallway, which leads to the other rooms.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I

Scene 1: Al's living room, late afternoon.

Scene 2: Late afternoon, a few days later.

Scene 3: Evening.

ACT II

Scene 1: The next morning.

Scene 2: That evening.

PROPS

"Funeral Plan & Documents" booklet or pamphlet	Latex gloves, for Debbie
Mirror	Box of Preparation H suppositories
Telephone	Colorful boxer shorts, for Al
Laundry basket full of dirty clothes	Briefcase, for Sheila
Bouquet of flowers	Photos
Carrot	Coffee cup
Rice cake	Funeral folder
Sexy lingerie, for Sheila	Feather duster
Angel doll	Small bowl filled with a thick white edible creamy substance
Thermometer	Recipe card
Purse, for Debbie	Plate of raw vegetables

SOUND EFFECTS

Telephone ringing
Doorbell

"I'm impotent out of strength,
not weakness."

—AI

ACT I
SCENE I

(AT RISE: Late afternoon. Al reads from a booklet, "Funeral Plan & Documents." Sheila enters, returning from work. She checks her appearance in a mirror and approaches Al.)

SHEILA: Happy anniversary, Al. You didn't forget today's our anniversary, did you?

AL: (Realizing he did forget, but not wanting to admit it.) Of course not. Why would I forget our anniversary?

SHEILA: You didn't say anything this morning.

AL: Sheila, I was sleeping when you took off for work. Otherwise I would have said something.

SHEILA: I can't wait to see what you got me.

AL: I bought you the same as what I bought you last year.

SHEILA: You didn't buy me anything last year.

AL: That's why I said I bought you the same as last year. (Pause.) I would have gone shopping this year, but I had no energy in my old age.

SHEILA: Twenty-seven years we've been together.

AL: It seems like a lifetime. (Sheila reacts.) A short happy lifetime.

SHEILA: We'll be together forever, won't we, Al?

AL: I don't know about forever. Maybe a few weeks. If I'm lucky, a few months.

SHEILA: Al, the bypass surgery took care of everything. Your heart's fine. The doctor says you can live a normal lifespan if you take care of yourself. (Indicating booklet.) What's that?

AL: A booklet sent by the Shady Oaks Funeral Home. It came in the mail today.

SHEILA: I never heard of Shady Oaks. Do they take our denomination?

AL: Funeral homes take all denominations—fifties, hundreds, most of the time thousands.

SHEILA: Why did they send it to us?

AL: They probably got my name from a list of people likely to die soon.

SHEILA: Where would they get a list like that?

AL: Maybe from the hospital I was in. Hospitals sometimes sell the names of people likely to die soon.

SHEILA: Hospitals don't do that. It's unethical.

AL: You think that holds them back? It's ethical to charge three dollars for an aspirin? Or five dollars for a Band-Aid?

SHEILA: Let me see that. *(Takes the booklet and looks at it.)* It says, "The Golden family."

AL: Who do you think they meant to send it to in our family? You? The parakeet? They sent it to the one likely to die the soonest. Me! The booklet asks you to write in specific information so when someone dies the family will know what to do.

SHEILA: *(Inspecting the booklet.)* Interesting.

AL: At the time of your deep grief over my departure from this world, you won't have to figure it out. I'll write it all down in this book. My funeral wishes, a list of important documents and where they are, and a keepsake of my fondest memories to speak to future generations.

SHEILA: What fondest memories would you like to pass on?

AL: What happened on our wedding night, for example. I went to the page and it's already recorded in the book what happened that night.

(Al turns to the page.)

SHEILA: That's sacred between the two of us.

AL: I think it would be selfish to keep it between the two of us. Our son should know, our friendly neighbors, your tai chi group... *(He does a tai chi motion, then points to the page.)* There.

SHEILA: There's nothing on the page.

AL: That's because nothing happened on our wedding night.

(Pause.) You had a headache the whole honeymoon.

SHEILA: I'm not like that anymore.

AL: I know. Once you got the hang of it there was no stopping you. That's why you're "Boom-Boom."

SHEILA: That's only between us, "Pistol."

(Al points his finger like a gun. Flirtatiously, Sheila starts to put Al's finger in her mouth. He notices what she's doing and pulls away.)

AL: I was going to put "Boom-Boom" in the book, in the space for spouse's nickname.

SHEILA: Don't you dare.

AL: Now all you think of is sex. *(Pause.)* I think I'll check my voice mail at the office.

(Al dials the phone.)

SHEILA: I don't think only of sex. It's just that we should have it sometimes. Especially on our anniversary.

(Al briefly listens to the phone, then hangs up.)

AL: No messages.

SHEILA: Al, sex is good for you. The exercise helps you stay fit.

AL: If I want exercise, I'll help dust the house. That way, if I start to get too exerted I can just stop and rest.

SHEILA: If you have a problem when we're making love, you can also just stop and rest.

AL: I just can't stop in the middle of sex, when I'm all excited. At the end of the sex there's an explosion. It's either a climax or my heart blowing out. I don't want to take any chances.

SHEILA: The angel of death will not arrive when we're screwing.

AL: Don't talk about angels that way. *(Pause.)* I just can't get it up. The turtle won't come out of the shell. *(Pause.)* The flag's at half mast and the bugler's asleep.

SHEILA: Al...

AL: I'm not Moses. I can't turn a snake into a rod.

SHEILA: You didn't have any problems getting it up for that young nurse, Debbie, who gave you such special attention.

AL: So I got a stiffy! But only when she gave me a sponge bath. It was a reflex that couldn't be helped.

SHEILA: And the two of you constantly yapping about angels?

AL: What's wrong with that?

SHEILA: Given your state of mind, I don't like the association.

AL: What association?

SHEILA: People only get to be angels after they pass away.

AL: Angels are sweet and helpful. So what if they're dead people!

SHEILA: Al, do you know why they call it "heaven"? Because angels screw whenever they want.

AL: Stop picking on Debbie.

SHEILA: How about when she took your temperature?

AL: I asked her to take the measurement in my bottom.

SHEILA: An ear thermometer is so much quicker.

AL: When I was a little boy my mother took my temperature in my bottom. Now, deep down emotionally, I think it's more accurate there.

SHEILA: Al, have you ever heard of scientific advances?

(Craig enters, carrying a basket of laundry and flowers.)

CRAIG: Hi, Mom! Hi, Dad! I just stopped by to wish you guys happy anniversary!

SHEILA: Come here, my darling executive.

(Sheila hugs Craig and takes the laundry and flowers.)

CRAIG: I don't know how good an executive I am.

SHEILA: What beautiful flowers! Aren't they, Al?

AL: Very beautiful.

SHEILA: I'll get a vase.

(Sheila exits to the kitchen with the laundry and flowers.)

CRAIG: I separated the whites and coloreds this time, Mom.

(To Al.) Hey, Dad, why aren't you watching the basketball game. The number one team is on TV.

AL: I don't want to be reminded of my former life. It depresses me that others are playing while I'm practically an invalid.

CRAIG: Why can't you play?

AL: I'm just aware that strenuous exercise is very dangerous for me. *(Pause.)* We have any chocolate in the house?

(Sheila enters with the flowers in a vase.)

SHEILA: No, but it's a shame because chocolate is an aphrodisiac...

AL: Oh! *(Pause.)* We have any jellybeans in the house?

SHEILA: No! You're afraid strenuous exercise is dangerous, but you don't care about what you eat.

AL: I got my heart attack while I was strenuously exercising. Not while I was eating.

SHEILA: Now, that makes a lot of sense.

(Sheila exits to the kitchen.)

CRAIG: Dad, there's something that came up, and I wanted to get your opinion.

AL: My opinion? Sure.

CRAIG: I got a raise.

AL: Congratulations.

CRAIG: It was only five percent.

AL: Five percent? That's nothing in relation to what you do there.

CRAIG: I thought you could talk to Mike.

AL: You're afraid to do it yourself.

CRAIG: It's not really like I'm afraid...

AL: If you want to be Mr. Executive you can't be afraid to confront people.

CRAIG: I'm a computer engineer, not an executive.

AL: You're both, if you ever want to succeed in business.

CRAIG: Confronting people isn't my strong suit.

AL: If somebody says or does something that bothers you, tell them what you think. Head on.

CRAIG: Head on?

AL: Head on.

CRAIG: I just wish you'd say something to him.

AL: I'm just not confident in my health right now to argue with Mike.

CRAIG: How are you feeling today?

(Sheila enters with a carrot and hands it to Al.)

SHEILA: He's fine. *(To Al.)* Here, nibble on a carrot before dinner.

AL: Sheila, I know dinner's going to be great. Like usual. But I hate carrots. I hate anything having to do with carrots. Even bunny rabbits. *(Pause.)* I don't like peas because sometimes they come in a can with their friends, the carrots. I can't get anything good to eat around here. For lunch, a green salad and tuna fish, no mayonnaise. No dessert.

SHEILA: You should attend my class next week on the day I teach my third-graders about the food groups. It'll be good for you to get out.

AL: I already know about food groups. I'm dying for a tasty nibble from the vegetable group.

SHEILA: What from the vegetable group would you like?

AL: Potato chips.

SHEILA: No junk food!

(Sheila exits to the kitchen.)

AL: Any food that doesn't taste good to me is junk food. Useless. *(Al picks up a rice cake and takes a nibble.)* Ugh! Styrofoam! Bring me any mail from the office? *(Craig gives Al junk mail, which Al examines.)* Besides junk mail.

CRAIG: No mail. Sorry.

AL: The agency is Golden, Kerner & Associates. But I'm not even worth as much as an associate. I have nothing to contribute.

CRAIG: Sure you do.

AL: I don't know a Pentium processor from a food processor. What do I contribute?

CRAIG: Well...knowledge and opinions...and your stature, and the history of the firm.

AL: That's really something! I contribute the history of the firm. The firm I founded created advertising. Now, 90 percent of the business is creating Web sites. Maybe I should retire.

SHEILA: *(Offstage.)* People who retire often find themselves dead a short time later. Their wives kill them because they're always around driving them crazy.

AL: Craig, I want to ask you a question.

CRAIG: Sure.

AL: Did you come around just now because you really can't deal with Mike yourself, or because you want me to feel more important by giving me a problem to handle?

CRAIG: That's very perceptive, Dad, and that's why we need you at the office. A man who can see through the bullshit.

(Sheila enters.)

AL: I can see through bullshit, can't I?

SHEILA: Only when it's not yours.

CRAIG: Of course I can deal with Mike myself...I guess I'll leave you two lovebirds together. Mike gave me a deadline—I've got to evaluate some new software by tomorrow morning.

SHEILA: Instead of software, find yourself a girlfriend. Sure you won't stay for dinner?

CRAIG: No thanks.

SHEILA: I'm trying a new recipe.

CRAIG: I'll pass this time, Mom.

SHEILA: Then eat with us some time later this week.

CRAIG: (*Unenthusiastically.*) Great! When?

SHEILA: How about Thursday?

CRAIG: Thursday it is. Happy anniversary again. (*Craig exits.*)

AL: I can't believe we have a kid like Craig. Remember when he was born.

SHEILA: No hair.

AL: He hardly ever cried. You were such a good mother.

SHEILA: We had a lot of fun raising him, didn't we?

AL: Sure did.

SHEILA: He always wanted to be like you.

AL: I'm glad we made him.

SHEILA: Al, remember how we made him?

AL: I haven't forgotten how.

SHEILA: Al, let's have the red wine I bought for our anniversary.

AL: Don't you have a lesson plan to prepare? Almost every night you do a lesson plan, or grade exams.

SHEILA: But tonight's a special occasion. So, I'll skip it. Besides, red wine is good for your heart. We'll relax, then have a nice romantic dinner. Be right back. (*Sheila exits.*)

AL: (*Aside.*) A romantic dinner is fine. But not a romantic dinner that ends up with us being naked. For that you'll have to wait until I recover. (*Al works on the folder.*) Maiden name. (*He thinks.*) Al Golden. (*Pause.*) Music you'd like played at your funeral. (*Thinks, then sings.*) "For he was a

jolly good fellow. For he was a jolly good fellow. For he was a jolly good fellow..."

(Sheila returns, wearing sexy lingerie. She poses for Al.)

SHEILA: Hi.

AL: Hi. *(Al calls into the kitchen.)* Sheila! Come here. We have a stranger in the house. A model for Frederick's of Hollywood.

SHEILA: I've been wearing this underneath all day. Just for you! Like it?

AL: What's not to like? Decided what's for dinner?

SHEILA: I know what you can have for dessert...

(The telephone rings. Al rushes to answer the phone.)

AL: Hello! Yes, I am the male head of household. *(Sheila seductively approaches Al. He moves to avoid her.)* Yes, between the ages of 25 and 64. *(Pause.)* Sure I make decisions on mouthwash brands. How long will this survey take? *(Pause.)* Only 20 minutes. Sure I got time.

SHEILA: Pistol, we're having romantic hour.

AL: *(Into phone.)* Morning breath? These days I'm lucky I have any breath at all.

SHEILA: Hang up, please!

AL: *(As Sheila takes the phone and hangs up.)* My wife says she needs me. Call back tomorrow. Any time. Ask for Al.

SHEILA: *(Into phone.)* Goodbye. *(To Al.)* Al, for our first time back, we can start out real slow.

AL: We always start out real slow. Before very long, we're panting and going a mile a minute. And besides, I still have staples in my chest.

SHEILA: So, I'll go on top, and we won't damage the staples.

AL: You on top? But you like it best when I'm the missionary and you're the nun.

SHEILA: Me, a nun?

AL: Who do you think the missionaries fool around with—the native girls?

SHEILA: Al, we used to do it at least every other day. Now, we haven't done it in eight weeks.

AL: I've been listening to my body, which is telling me, "Al, don't push it."

SHEILA: And I'm telling you, "Al, push it." Sex is a normal biological function. *(Pause.)* I'm still pretty, aren't I?

AL: Of course.

SHEILA: You sure?

AL: Why would I lie?

SHEILA: Come to bed. *(Al doesn't respond.)* Al, is it anything I'm doing or saying? I'm willing to hear I'm at fault.

AL: It's not you, Sheila.

SHEILA: Is it things at the office?

AL: I've been depressed about business before. What always cured me was the knowledge that of all the people in the world, I was the one making love to you. But stuff at the office isn't the problem now. The reason I can't get a stiffy is I know it's realistic I might not survive making love. It's very healthy for me to be realistic in this way. So, I'm impotent out of strength, not weakness. Don't you know how much I'd like to do it? Why can't you understand?

SHEILA: We've got a big problem here, don't we? *(Al exits to the kitchen.)* Al, I need you. *(To herself.)* I need somebody who wants me.

(Lights fade to black.)

SCENE 2

(AT RISE: Late afternoon, a few days later. Mike is on stage.)

MIKE: *(Shouts.)* Come on, Al, it's a good deal.

AL: *(Offstage.)* What's a good deal?

MIKE: Didn't you read the papers I sent over?

AL: *(Offstage.)* I haven't had the time.

MIKE: What have you been doing?

AL: *(Offstage.)* Recuperating.

(Al enters.)

MIKE: Most people would say I'm doing you a favor. A hundred bucks a share for your stock, plus three-quarters of what you're owed on what's left on your contract. You don't even have to come into the office.

AL: I won't have an office. You've always wanted my office. Mike Kerner wants a nicer office.

MIKE: My office is the same size as yours.

AL: But the sun comes in too strong in your office. You have to shut the blinds in the afternoon.

MIKE: You shut the blinds in your office too.

AL: Only from noon to one. So I won't have to look in the window across the street in case that babe is making it with the guy who comes around with hero sandwiches. They should shut their blinds. It's painful having to look at that.

MIKE: She's not good-looking enough for you?

AL: She's too good-looking.

MIKE: It wouldn't bother me.

AL: I bet.

MIKE: I admire sexual risk-takers. The idea you might get caught adds to the thrill.

AL: Sex is overrated.

MIKE: Overrated? You once told me you shut the blinds because the babe reminded you of Sheila and you couldn't concentrate the whole afternoon when you saw them making it, knowing you'd have to wait hours to uh, see Sheila.

AL: The babe reminds me of Sheila when Sheila was her age. But Sheila would never go with a guy who sells hero sandwiches.

MIKE: Sheila is a very good-looking woman.

AL: But too old for you. Isn't any woman over the age of 25 too old for you?

MIKE: I don't know. Some of the older babes really know what they're doing.

AL: How old was that "friend" you took to the convention in Las Vegas? Nineteen?

MIKE: We didn't discuss her age.

AL: Know what you mean. She didn't seem the conversationalist type.

MIKE: And she wasn't exactly a friend. She was an independent contractor. *(Pause.)* She got a 1099 from us, the end of the year. Worth every cent.

AL: The company paid her?

MIKE: Making her a corporate tax deduction. Hey, it's my money. I own the company.

AL: You own 90 percent of the stock. I still own the other ten.

MIKE: Until you sell it to me.

AL: Listen, if you want my office, say so. I'll trade, no problem.

MIKE: Okay, I do want your office. But not for myself. I've been talking to a guy from another agency who can bring over a lot of business.

AL: So, you're trimming the dead wood to free up space for a hotshot business producer.

MIKE: When I bought you out four years ago it was an advertising agency with lots of clients. There are only two of those clients left. People come to us now to develop Web

sites, not create ads. And look at the staff. Do you honestly feel you fit in?

(Craig enters. He is extremely flustered in the presence of Mike.)

AL: Hey, Craig.

CRAIG: Hi, Dad. Oh, hello, Mr. Kerner.

MIKE: Hi there, Craig. Playing hooky from the office?

AL: If he is, so are you.

CRAIG: I'll be working at home tonight.

AL: Like he usually does.

CRAIG: Mom called this morning. Said she wanted me to take a look at a monitor she was bringing home from school. They were having trouble with it. She home?

AL: She'll be here any minute.

CRAIG: What are you guys doing?

MIKE: Plotting devious business strategies. Care to join us? We can use a young person's take.

CRAIG: I'm no strategist. Except when it comes to video games. I reached the tenth level on Terror Island last weekend.

MIKE: How many levels are there?

CRAIG: Ten.

MIKE: Well then, congratulations.

CRAIG: It wasn't just my strategy. My reaction time's pretty good too. *(He makes game-playing motions and noises. Then he realizes he's not acting very mature and stops.)* Tell Mom I'll be back later.

AL: That's silly...

CRAIG: It's okay. I'll just come back later. See you, Dad. Mr. Kerner.

(Craig exits.)

MIKE: Mr. Kerner? To everybody else I'm Mike.

AL: The kid's polite.

MIKE: The kid's a kid.

AL: So, was giving Craig only a five percent raise part of a strategy to get rid of me?

MIKE: He only got five percent because that's all he deserves.

AL: He deserves more. He sits in his office all day—

MIKE: Exactly! He sits in that office and never says a word. Last week Marsha gave Craig incorrect instructions on some changes the client asked for. It was obvious the instructions didn't make sense, but Craig went ahead anyway. Know why he said nothing? Because he was afraid to open his mouth to Marsha.

AL: Marsha's a dragon lady.

MIKE: Not when she's with me. But if Craig doesn't open his mouth, he's no asset...

AL: He is an asset.

MIKE: ...no matter how good he is with computers.

AL: He is an asset!

MIKE: Al, calm down! A person who's just had a heart attack doesn't need the stresses we have in our business.

AL: You're not creating stress for me now, telling me I'm obsolete?

MIKE: I'm sorry, Al. I should have waited. But getting it decided now makes sense tax wise and so we can plan the agency's future. And you can plan yours. You're still young. You don't have to retire.

AL: Right, I can become a consultant. Work out of my home. No commute.

MIKE: Think on it. No one's rushing you. Too much. *(Sheila enters. There seems to be slight flirtation between Mike and Sheila.)* Hello, Sheila.

SHEILA: Mike. How are you?

MIKE: Fine. Came to see how Al was doing.

AL: He saw I'm doing fine.

MIKE: *(To Sheila.)* You look great.

SHEILA: You say that every time you see me.

MIKE: I suppose that's because you look great every time I see you.

SHEILA: Thanks. How's Lisa?

MIKE: Lisa was two girlfriends ago. I guess you and I haven't seen each other in a while.

SHEILA: She was very nice.

MIKE: Yes, she was. But you know about me grazing from the same pasture for too long. Hey, maybe we can get together soon...you and me... *(Pause.)* ...I mean you and Al, and me and a date.

SHEILA: Sure. Call me. We'll make plans.

AL: Perhaps we can go to a health food restaurant on our double date!

MIKE: *(To Al.)* I'll hear from you soon?

AL/SHEILA: Soon.

SHEILA: He'll be back at the office in no time.

MIKE: In a couple of days, then. Take care.... You have sensational hair, Sheila. *(Mike exits.)*

SHEILA: It's hard to peg that guy. He's classy but mischievous... Bad boys are intriguing, don't you think?

AL: It's not something I think about. *(Pause.)* What's for dinner?

SHEILA: I'll make something for you. I'm not that hungry. After class, I had a huge hero sandwich.

AL: *(To himself.)* A huge hero sandwich? *(To Sheila.)* Sheila?

SHEILA: What?

AL: Why don't you and I go into the bedroom?

SHEILA: Why? Did you make the bed?

AL: No, I just thought we might try to fool around, Boom-Boom.

SHEILA: You mean it?

AL: Would I make something up like that?

SHEILA: Let's go, Pistol. *(Al and Sheila slowly drift off toward the bedroom.)* Would you like me to take off my clothes myself, or would you like to do it?

AL: You can do it.

SHEILA: First, I'll undo you. I'll be very careful. You're such a man.

AL: You're such a woman.

SHEILA: When all our clothes are off, we'll touch each other.

(Suddenly, he pulls away. Pause.)

AL: Ah-uh-uh. I don't know, Sheila.

(Sheila drags Al toward the bedroom. They exit into the bedroom.)

SHEILA: *(Offstage.)* I'm just unzipping your fly...

AL: *(Offstage.)* Sheila, no...

SHEILA: *(Offstage.)* Al...

(Al enters from bedroom.)

AL: *(Shouts toward bedroom.)* I can't! I'm sorry, Sheila, I just can't. I imagine doing it, and...I just can't.

(Sheila enters from bedroom.)

SHEILA: It's okay. It's okay. At least you tried, even if you didn't try very hard.

AL: I tried hard to get hard. *(Pause.)* But I just couldn't do it. You almost got me that time! The jealousy angle. Intriguing bad boy Mike, then a huge hero sandwich.

SHEILA: You were jealous of a sandwich?

AL: It's a long story. You mad at me?

SHEILA: Why should I be mad? Just because you raise my hopes one minute, then dash them the next?

AL: Sorry...I think I'll work on the folder. *(Al returns to the folder.)* This is very confusing.

SHEILA: What's confusing?

AL: They ask for your last words. Who knows what my last words are going to be until I say them?

SHEILA: How about, "Sheila, I love you"?

AL: Of course I love you. But my last words should be noble, lofty, meaningful. (*Hamming it up.*) "It's a far, far better place I go to, so I bid a fond adieu." (*Pause.*) That sounds pretty good. Don't let me move my lips after I say those words. That way, they'll be my last words.

SHEILA: Sure, I'll stuff a gag in your mouth on your deathbed. Why don't you leave the space blank, and I'll write in your last words after you croak.

AL: No way! Your spelling stinks. Then everybody who looks at the book will think I'm the one who couldn't spell.

SHEILA: I spell better than you do.

AL: You can spell short words okay. But suppose my last words are long.

SHEILA: Like what?

AL: Onomatopoeia, for example.

SHEILA: Why would you say onomatopoeia as one of your last words?

AL: Dying is very poetic, Sheila. Maybe instead, I should use alliteration. "Death is doom, dammit!"

SHEILA: Al.

AL: This is serious, Sheila. I don't want my last words to be something stupid. Like... (*Feigning dying.*) ..."My underpants itch." (*Feigning collapse into death pose.*)

SHEILA: I can't listen to this anymore. I'm going to the store. We're out of the aspirin I need for the headache you're giving me. (*Sheila exits the house.*)

AL: It's very hard to talk with you sometimes. I just couldn't go through with it. Sorry. (*Al picks up the folder.*) My preference for how my body should be disposed of when I pass on. They give five choices: burial in the ground, burial at sea, mausoleum, cremation, and other. "Other"? (*He thinks.*) Taxidermy! (*Pause.*) Stuff me with soft feathers and place me on the couch. Then Sheila can cuddle up to me when she gets lonely. (*Pause.*) Nah! I don't think she'll get that lonely. (*Pause.*) Passage from literature I'd like read at

my funeral. *(He thinks.)* 'Twas brillig and the slithy toves
did gyre and gimble in the wabe." *(The doorbell rings.)* Life's
nonsense. Coming!

(Al opens the door. Debbie enters.)

DEBBIE: Hi-dee-doo!

AL: Hi-dee-doo to you too, Debbie! Come in.

DEBBIE: Al! You look terrific!

AL: Thanks. You look great yourself.

(Debbie hands Al an angel doll made by a child.)

DEBBIE: Here, a little present for you...I looked up your
address from Records.

AL: My angel. Alfie.

DEBBIE: I thought you might want him back.

AL: I do.

DEBBIE: If I mailed him, he could've gotten ruined.

AL: Crushed to death.

DEBBIE: We wouldn't want that to happen. He's so cute.
You and Mr. Alfie Angel belong together.

AL: Sheila thought I didn't have to take him home. She's not
here now. She just left to do shopping. And I feel a little
warm.

DEBBIE: Warm? Oh.

(Debbie removes a thermometer from her purse.)

AL: I didn't mean that kind of warm. I meant I'm a little
nervous—you here alone with me.

(At some point Debbie puts the thermometer back.)

DEBBIE: I guess I should have called first.

AL: Probably. Sheila is suspicious that you and I had a special kind of relationship.

DEBBIE: There's no reason for her to be suspicious.

AL: Yes, there is.

DEBBIE: Why?

AL: She knows about our intimate discussions.

DEBBIE: I didn't know our discussions were that intimate.

AL: To me they were. Especially our talks about what lies beyond. I can't have them with Sheila. I start talking about dying, she tells me it's nonsense, I'm not dying. You're much more understanding than she is.

DEBBIE: Nurses naturally nurture. Normally.

AL: And your view of heaven is so cheerful—smiling angels listening to twangy harp music. Alfie, my angel, who had such a hard time learning how to fly because he was very chubby. When Sheila talks about angels, who does she bring up? The angel of death.

DEBBIE: I'm sure Mrs. Golden believes in friendly angels too.

AL: Yeah, friendly. Like the other day she talked about angels screwing. Angels don't have sex, do they?

DEBBIE: I wouldn't know. All the angels I know are in children's stories.

(Sheila enters.)

SHEILA: Ah! Debbie. Hi-dee-doo!

DEBBIE: Hi-dee-doo.

SHEILA: I forgot my purse.

AL: Sheila! Look who dropped in.

DEBBIE: I was just in the neighborhood. And I thought I'd see how Al was doing.

AL: She likes to visit her patients after they leave the hospital.

DEBBIE: Only a special few. At the cardiac ward a lot of patients are crabby. Al was fun to be around. He's a real pistol.

(On hearing "pistol," Sheila does a slow take at Al. Then she notices the angel.)

SHEILA: Oh, you brought Al's angel doll that we forgot to bring home.

AL: It's not a doll. Men don't play with dolls.

SHEILA: What is it then?

AL: It's an action-figure. He fights evil. The devil. For my birthday you can buy me a devil action-figure so I can have pretend battles. Isn't he cute?

SHEILA: Real cute.

DEBBIE: He's special. He was made by a 9-year-old patient of mine when I was on the pediatric ward. We worked on him together.

(Sheila hands Debbie the angel.)

SHEILA: *(To Debbie.)* Then this angel is very meaningful to you.

AL: Debbie, would you like something to eat? It wouldn't take Sheila long to whip up some angel hair pasta.

SHEILA: And for dessert, angel food cake.

DEBBIE: No thanks. Mrs. Golden, Al's told me that you have some qualms about my relationship with him at the hospital, and I can reassure you, my only concern was for his health.

(Sheila has an idea.)

SHEILA: You'd do almost anything to keep Al healthy, wouldn't you?

DEBBIE: As a nurse, sure. But I think it's time for me to go.

SHEILA: I'm glad you came, Debbie. In fact, it's fortuitous. I know nothing serious is going on between you two. You've just been a conscientious nurse.

DEBBIE: Thank you.

AL: *(To Sheila.)* Thank you from me too. *(Al places an arm around Debbie.)* We both thank you. *(Al realizes his arm is around Debbie. He quickly withdraws it.)* Individually. Not as a couple... Listen, I'm sort of tired. It's time for my beauty nap. See you later, Debbie. I mean, in the indefinite future type of later. Not later today. Or tomorrow even.

(Al exits to the bedroom.)

SHEILA: Debbie, can you sit for a minute? *(Debbie sits.)* Al seems to confide in you in a way that he doesn't confide in me. Your conversations about angels, for example.

DEBBIE: I know that's strange, but when I was a nurse on the pediatric ward I got into the habit of talking about angels to patients.

SHEILA: Debbie, I have a philosophy that on the whole it's better for a person to be alive than to be an angel. I mean, heaven is great, but you're an angel for eternity, while we only have a short time on earth.

DEBBIE: I agree totally.

SHEILA: Now that we totally agree on the value of being alive, let's talk about Al, who eats fattening food behind my back and gets almost no exercise.

DEBBIE: That's terrible.

SHEILA: You know it's healthy for cardiac patients to resume a normal sex life.

DEBBIE: It's good exercise, and releases tension.

SHEILA: Al doesn't want sex. He's afraid he'll overexert himself and have another heart attack.

DEBBIE: That's understandable. Give him some time.

SHEILA: I've already given him time.

DEBBIE: Two months isn't long enough.

SHEILA: Time won't change his mind. It'll just make me look older. *(Pause.)* Debbie, I have a fantasy.

DEBBIE: If people didn't dream, where would we be today? What is it?

SHEILA: My fantasy is that one day you come here when I'm away, and give Al a jump start.

DEBBIE: A jump start?

SHEILA: Except instead of juicing his car battery, you make his turtle come out of its shell.

DEBBIE: Turtle?

SHEILA: You become like a bugler, so Al's flag isn't at half mast.

DEBBIE: Bugler?

SHEILA: You give him an erection! *(Pause.)* Like you did at the hospital when you gave him a sponge bath. I fantasize that you prove to him that not only can he have an orgasm, but survive one.

DEBBIE: That's a pretty unusual fantasy.

SHEILA: I'm an unusual woman, Debbie. *(Pause.)* When Al got his heart attack we were in bed, making love.

DEBBIE: My goodness.

SHEILA: So now he associates me with having a heart attack. Maybe with another woman like you, he wouldn't have a problem.

DEBBIE: That's really stretching it, Mrs. Golden.

SHEILA: You're young and pretty...

DEBBIE: You're still pretty too. When you visited Al, you were the most attractive woman in the whole hospital. In your age group.

SHEILA: I'm still pretty? Every day I notice new creases and areas where my skin sags. Something that won't happen to you for years. That's why you can make him feel so much more like a man that he couldn't help himself. Debbie, it's not just a fantasy. I'd like you to actually do it.

DEBBIE: Go to bed with Al? That's ridiculous.

SHEILA: You think I go around asking every attractive woman I meet to have sex with my husband? I've tried everything and none of it's worked. I'm willing to make the tradeoff—marital fidelity for survival.

DEBBIE: But Al wouldn't want to do it. Even if I was willing, which I'm not, as soon as I started, he'd probably just laugh. Friends like Al and me don't have sex with each other. And even if we did it, he'd be ashamed afterward.

SHEILA: He'd also know he didn't die from sex. I suppose I could hire a prostitute for Al. You don't have any friends who are prostitutes, do you?

DEBBIE: Not that I know of.

SHEILA: Me neither. Listen Debbie, I know I'm asking a lot.

DEBBIE: You sure are. Contrary to what you may think of me, I don't go sleeping around with men. I rarely even go out. Though there is somebody I have my eye on. Someone who probably doesn't even know I'm interested.

(Sheila notices Debbie looking at a photo of Craig.)

SHEILA: I understand, completely. Craig and I will just have to cope with Al's strange behavior.

DEBBIE: That Craig's picture?

SHEILA: A few years ago.

DEBBIE: He's so cute. At least he was the few times I saw him at the hospital. He doesn't live here, or anything?

SHEILA: He has his own place.

DEBBIE: Oh. Well, I've got to be going. Tell Al goodbye for me.

SHEILA: By the way, how'd you like to come to dinner in a few days? Al listens to you. Maybe you can convince him to take better care of himself.

DEBBIE: Oh, I don't think I'd better.

(Debbie opens the door.)

SHEILA: Maybe I'll ask Craig to join us...

(Debbie shuts the door.)

DEBBIE: What day were you thinking of?

SHEILA: Why don't you come around six on Thursday?

DEBBIE: Sure! Nice to see you again, Mrs. Golden.

SHEILA: Nice to see you. *(Debbie exits. The phone rings. Sheila answers. Her tone suggests that she is interested in Mike, who is calling.)* Hello...Oh, hello, Mike...No, he's sleeping...What about Al?...Okay, I'll meet with you. When and where?...*(Sheila writes down the information Mike gives her. Al enters.)* Okay...No, I won't say anything...Bye. *(Sheila hangs up.)*

AL: Who was that?

SHEILA: Mike, calling from his car. He wanted to speak with you. I told him you were taking a nap.

AL: I'll call him later. I wasn't that tired. I slept too much before. Debbie gone?

SHEILA: Yup.

AL: Nice lady.

SHEILA: A gorgeous woman. Al, I can't believe what I told her.

AL: That she's a tramp and she should stay away from me?

SHEILA: I told her you've had a problem recently in performing.

AL: Performing what?

SHEILA: What are you, an actor? Performing in the bedroom. I also told her about a fantasy I had—that to help you get over your problem, I wouldn't mind if she came over when I wasn't around and seduced you.

AL: Seduced me? What are you, nuts?

SHEILA: Why am I nuts? Because I want you to resume normal physical activity so you won't die?

AL: Then why didn't you ask her to play basketball with me?

SHEILA: Because basketball isn't important to me. Having a sexual relationship with you is important to me.

AL: But it's with another woman.

SHEILA: Who is young enough to be your daughter, but not a person to whom you're going to commit to emotionally. It's a chance I'm willing to take.

AL: You think it's okay to have sex outside of marriage?
SHEILA: Under certain unique circumstances.
AL: Under certain unique circumstances, would you?
SHEILA: Most likely not.
AL: Most likely not?
SHEILA: Most likely not.
AL: Just maybe I'll take you up on this permission you're giving me. See how you feel then.
SHEILA: Fine.
AL: What did Debbie have to say about this fantasy of yours?
SHEILA: She was reluctant.
AL: Too bad.
SHEILA: I invited her Thursday for dinner. I have my reasons.
AL: Okay, the world is turning upside down anyway. *(Pause.)* Sheila, Mike wants to buy out the rest of my stock. He also says he's not going to renew my contract.
SHEILA: You still have a year to go, don't you?
AL: He wants to pay me off now, but for three-quarters the amount. I also get to keep the life insurance policy the company has on me. So when I die, you'll be a rich woman.
SHEILA: I'm even a richer woman with you alive. You could open another agency.
AL: My contract has a clause that I can't go into the agency business for another five years. And how successful would I be? I haven't found any new clients in two years... That Mike is a real pain in the ass. Speaking of which... Sheila, I have an irritation in my bottom.
SHEILA: It's not surprising. You sit on it all day long. Exercise, and it'll disappear.
AL: Oh, I almost forgot. Craig came by to see the monitor you were bringing home.
SHEILA: Someone at school fixed it. I already told Craig. I saw him outside when I parked.

(Sheila exits to the bedroom. Al scratches his butt, crosses, and notices her note.)

AL: *(Reads.)* "Mike. Windsor Hotel. Forty-four."

(Lights fade.)

SCENE 3

(AT RISE: Evening. AL is working on the folder.)

AL: "Information to send the newspaper upon my death."...Cancel my subscription...Nah, Sheila probably wants to continue getting the paper. So she can read my obituary. *(The phone rings. Al, scratching his backside, crosses to answer it.)* Hello...Sheila, where are you?...How come?...So do your lesson plan at home...You sound different. You feeling okay?...When she comes, I'll just tell her you were detained at work and we'll invite her another day...Okay, see you in a few hours. *(Suspicious, Al hangs up and then dials 411.)* The number for the Windsor Hotel, please. *(Al hangs up, then dials the number.)* Room 44, please...Mike, I'd like to speak with Sheila...Oh, you sounded a little like Mike...Sorry to get you out of the bathtub. Any chance Sheila's in the bathtub with you?...Yeah! If you're so smart, why did you answer the phone if it was the wrong number? *(Al hangs up.)* Tough guy!

(The doorbell rings. Al opens the door. Debbie enters.)

DEBBIE: Hi-dee-doo.

AL: Hi-dee-doo, Debbie. Come in. You're early. But we have to cancel dinner, since Sheila just called. She's stuck at work.

DEBBIE: That's okay. Sit down, Al. There's something important I wanted to talk to you about before everybody else arrived.

(Al sits.)

AL: What about?

DEBBIE: Mrs. Golden wanted me to discuss some things with you.

AL: Yes...

DEBBIE: She said... (*Finding it hard to get out the words.*)

...you're eating unhealthy food.

AL: Okay, I won't eat unhealthy anymore.

DEBBIE: She also said...you're not getting enough of a particular form of exercise.

AL: Tummy crunches?

DEBBIE: She also said... you've had performance problems.

AL: Oh?

DEBBIE: She said it might help if I seduced you.

AL: I should let you seduce me? What kind of a man do you think I am? (*He approaches her in a macho manner.*) If anybody's going to do any seducing around here, it'll be me seducing you. (*She cringes as he approaches.*) But there's no reason. I don't need sex.

DEBBIE: Yes, you do!

AL: I do?

DEBBIE: Because Mrs. Golden thinks you do. Al, you don't want to touch her, so she doesn't feel attractive.

AL: You feel attractive right now, don't you?

DEBBIE: I guess.

AL: And you're not having sex with me. So, it's possible for a woman to be with me and feel attractive without the woman having sex with me.

DEBBIE: I suppose so. But Al, you need to get back on the horse.

AL: Don't call Sheila a horse. (*Pause.*) Sex is too strenuous for my heart. Period. And I wouldn't have sex with anyone besides Sheila because it would break my wedding vows and break my heart. I've never been unfaithful. There are some people who can't say that.

DEBBIE: I just wanted to let you know how Mrs. Golden feels.

AL: Did she tell you she's ready to dump me?

DEBBIE: I'm sure Mrs. Golden has no intentions of dumping you.

AL: You don't think her scheming to get the two of us together is part of some plan to dump me?

DEBBIE: No.

AL: Thanks, but you don't see the whole picture. Debbie, you know anything about hemorrhoids?

DEBBIE: A little.

AL: I think I might be getting one.

DEBBIE: Oh, sorry. What does the doctor say?

AL: I haven't gone yet. But the next doctor I'll see is my cardiologist. He examines the inside of my chest, not the inside of my butt.

DEBBIE: Would you like me to take a look?

AL: I don't think that's a good idea.

DEBBIE: I don't mind.

(Debbie removes latex examination gloves from her purse and puts them on.)

AL: Nah!

DEBBIE: Al, I am a nurse.

AL: You really feel strongly about that, don't you?

DEBBIE: Nifty nurses are naturally no-nonsense.

AL: Okay.

DEBBIE: Okay. Drop your drawers.

AL: Right here in the living room?

DEBBIE: Sure.

(Al lowers his pants to his ankles. He is wearing his colorful boxer shorts. Unbeknownst to Al and Debbie, Craig enters with a box of Preparation H suppositories.)

CRAIG: Hi!

DEBBIE: Craig! Hi. I'm Debbie. Remember me?

CRAIG: Nurse from the hospital, right?

DEBBIE: Right.

CRAIG: Nice to see you again.

DEBBIE: Nice to see you.

AL: Debbie was just about to take a look at my tush.

CRAIG: Like old times. Mom home?

AL: No, she called. Said she'll be home late.

CRAIG: You rascal!

DEBBIE: He's not a rascal. He thinks he has hemorrhoids and asked me to check it out.

CRAIG: Sorry. I was just kidding.

AL: You can look too, if you want.

CRAIG: There are some details that a son shouldn't know about his father. Here's your Preparation H.

AL: Would you put it in the bathroom for me?

CRAIG: Sure. You owe me ten bucks.

AL: Speak with Mike yet?

CRAIG: Not yet. I will.

AL: Don't you think it's about time?

CRAIG: There's no rush.

(Craig exits to the bathroom.)

AL: Okay. Take a look. Don't I have nice underwear? You should see my shiny lime green boxer shorts. They're really hot.

(Sheila enters, unbeknownst to Al and Debbie.)

DEBBIE: Spread 'em and smile!

AL: Is this going to hurt or make me feel good?

SHEILA: I'm home, Al.

AL: You said a few hours.

SHEILA: I changed my mind. Right after I called you.

AL: Sheila, I know what you're thinking. You're thinking, "Where's the thermometer?" But for what we're doing, we don't need a thermometer.

(Craig enters. He is amused by the situation.)

CRAIG: Hi, Mom.

SHEILA: Craig, Debbie, I'm afraid we won't be having dinner as planned. I need to talk to my husband.

CRAIG: Sure, Mom. I understand.

(Craig starts to cross to exit.)

DEBBIE: *(Blurts out.)* I'm hungry! *(Craig stops.)* Oh, Craig, you wouldn't want to go together for something to eat, would you?

CRAIG: You want to eat with me?

DEBBIE: Food tastes better when you're eating with another person.

CRAIG: It does?

DEBBIE: Sometimes.

CRAIG: You very hungry?

DEBBIE: Nurses need nourishment, no?

CRAIG: Can I pick the restaurant? There's one nearby I think you'll really like.

DEBBIE: How do you know?

CRAIG: They serve rump roast.

DEBBIE: Well, okay. But I'm ordering something else.

(Their eyes connect.)

CRAIG: Nurses know nutrition nowadays.

AL: Bye, you guys.

DEBBIE: Bye, Mrs. Golden, Al.

CRAIG: Bye, Mrs. Golden, Al.

SHEILA: Have fun.

(Debbie and Craig exit.)

AL: Honey, it's not what it seems. We weren't acting out your fantasy. We were doing our own thing. I mean, Debbie was just checking me for hemorrhoids.

SHEILA: I'm sorry if you have hemorrhoids.

AL: Would you like to see them?

SHEILA: Maybe later.

AL: Just ask. You said you were staying late at school.

SHEILA: I changed my mind. I'm too excited.

AL: Excited? You met with Mike.

SHEILA: I don't want to discuss that now. *(She reaches into her briefcase and hands him pictures.)* Al, I want you to look at some pictures. Look at these.

AL: Who is it? Do I know her?

SHEILA: I believe so. It's me, Al.

AL: That's not you. She doesn't have any wrinkles. And your nose is bigger. *(Al looks at another picture.)* That's your face, but you don't have bazooms like that!

SHEILA: No, but I could have. Just like I could have fewer wrinkles and skin that doesn't droop.

AL: What are you getting at?

SHEILA: I went to see a cosmetic surgeon. He generated these computer images of what I'll look like once he does the procedures on me.

AL: You won't look like you.

SHEILA: Exactly! I'll look better. I've decided to go in to revitalize myself. The works. Face lift, tummy tuck, breast firming.

AL: A boob job?

SHEILA: That'll be the first thing I'll have. I want to be how I used to be. Firm, not sagging.

AL: You're not sagging.

SHEILA: How do you know? You haven't touched me in months. You won't even look at me without my clothes.

AL: You're talking surgery, Sheila.

SHEILA: It's not really surgery. They do "procedures."

AL: Why have surgery unless it's absolutely necessary? Things can happen. The anesthesia goes wrong and you sleep forever. Or, they forget about some instrument before

they sew you up and your insides are cluttered up with crap.

SHEILA: They won't work on my insides. All my procedures will be on the outside.

AL: Instead of resorting to surgery, try something else.

SHEILA: Like what?

AL: Like...buy falsies.

SHEILA: Falsies aren't real.

AL: That's why they're falsies.

SHEILA: Besides, there are no such things as falsies anymore.

Today's women wear "enhancers."

AL: So, you can enhance yourself by working out at the gym.

SHEILA: I'm not interested in building muscles. I'm interested in looking younger.

AL: That kind of surgery is for vain rich people.

SHEILA: I have the money my uncle left me.

AL: That's for our old age.

SHEILA: He was my uncle. *(Pause.)* I don't want to wait around for old age. I'm doing defensive aging, Al. Average people do it nowadays.

AL: You're not "average people." You're Sheila.

SHEILA: You sure know how to burst a bubble.

AL: What do you mean?

SHEILA: I come home all excited about doing something to improve my life, and yours, and you just shoot it down.

AL: A lousy idea deserves to be shot down.

SHEILA: You don't understand me at all, do you?

AL: Of course I understand you.

SHEILA: No, you don't.

AL: Okay, I don't. I don't understand why a perfectly normal woman wants to make herself into something she's not.

SHEILA: What's wrong with improving yourself?

AL: That's not a legitimate way to improve yourself. You want to improve yourself, learn to speak Chinese. Or, take cooking lessons.

SHEILA: I don't cook well enough for you?

AL: You cook great.

SHEILA: Why does my wanting to improve my appearance threaten you so?

AL: I don't get threatened by silly things.

SHEILA: Silly?

AL: Yeah, silly! I'm threatened by my heart being likely to give out. That's what scares me. Why should I be threatened by what you're doing, anyway?

SHEILA: Because when I look younger, maybe I'll be too young for you. You already are too old for me with your old attitudes and approach to life.

AL: Being sensible is not the same as being old. Going in for surgery just to make yourself look a little younger is so shallow.

SHEILA: It's not shallow!

AL: Yes, it is shallow!

SHEILA: Wanting to feel good about yourself is not shallow. Don't you want to feel good about yourself?

AL: I do feel good about myself.

SHEILA: Do you? *(Pause.)* There's nothing wrong with wanting to look younger. Nothing, nothing, nothing! I thought you might be happy about being seen with a youthful-looking woman.

AL: I'm not interested in trophies.

SHEILA: I just want to look more attractive. I guess you don't want that. For your own crazy reasons you want me to look old. It's all becoming very clear.

AL: What's becoming clear?

SHEILA: Figure it out! *(Sheila storms out.)*

AL: Women are nuts!

(Blackout.)

ACT II
SCENE I

(AT RISE: The next morning. Sheila, dressed for work, sips coffee. Al enters, carrying the funeral folder. They ignore each other. Finally, he speaks.)

AL: You look great this morning, Sheila. Vibrant, youthful, not sagging.

SHEILA: I don't want to talk about it.

AL: Sheila, I want to ask a favor.

SHEILA: Go ahead.

AL: After I'm declared dead, would you keep me around, as I am, until we're absolutely sure, without any question, that my heart won't start beating again? Keep me in the bedroom, the living room, whatever's convenient.

SHEILA: How long would you like me to keep you around?

AL: A year?

SHEILA: Don't you think the house would start to stink?

AL: Not if we take advantage of modern technology. I have an idea...we have room in the garage. We can buy an extra freezer, big enough for me to fit in. You can hide my body in there.

SHEILA: It'll be very cold inside there.

AL: I promise not to complain. And you won't be embarrassed, unless one of your guests opens the freezer to get some ice cubes.

SHEILA: Can I put groceries in your freezer?

AL: Sure. Listen, if medical science advances enough, maybe they'll defrost me and fix my heart. Bring me back to life. When I come back, I'll be the same age as when I died.

SHEILA: You'll have to rely on me to call on medical science to bring you back to life.

AL: I know I can rely on you.

SHEILA: Not necessarily.

AL: What do you mean, "not necessarily"?

SHEILA: I'm not sure if I want you to be the same age while I'm years older. Besides, suppose I start to fool around when you're gone. Find a boyfriend.

AL: Fool with another man?

SHEILA: (*Sarcastic.*) No, with another corpse!

AL: I'd understand. After all, if you went first, I'd fool around. Women galore. Two at a time.

SHEILA: Why do you want two at the same time?

AL: Because, Boom-Boom, it would take two women to replace you.

SHEILA: But now you're not even interested in one woman.

AL: Okay, let's forget about freezing me. (*Referring to the funeral folder.*) It asks here for which cemetery I'd like to be buried in.

SHEILA: So, which one are you picking?

AL: It doesn't make a difference. A cemetery is a cemetery.

SHEILA: You have to pick one.

AL: Okay, Mount Olive.

SHEILA: You can't be buried there.

AL: Why not?

SHEILA: Because I don't want to be buried there. I want to be buried at Harbor Lawn. Where my parents are buried.

AL: No way I'm going to be buried anywhere near your parents. They hated me.

SHEILA: They didn't hate you.

AL: They didn't?

SHEILA: They just didn't respect you.

AL: I'm not going to be buried in any place where I'm not respected.

SHEILA: My parents bought a plot for me at Harbor Lawn.

AL: So, sell the plot. It must be worth more than they paid for it.

SHEILA: And have a total stranger move in with my parents?!

AL: They'll never know. (*Pause.*) It'll be like an apartment house where you never know your neighbor...I'm going to

Mount Olive. Where I'm buried is a decision I'll have to live with forever. *(Al realizes what he's just said somehow doesn't make sense.)*

SHEILA: I thought we were going to be with each other forever.

AL: Not if you're going one place and I'm going to another!

SHEILA: I want to be buried at Harbor Lawn.

AL: It's obvious we weren't meant for each other. Two people meant for each other would want to be together for eternity. *(After a few beats Al, seemingly apologetic, turns to Sheila.)* Sheila, I've been wanting to...

SHEILA: *(Expecting Al's apology.)* Yes?

AL: Ask you what I should do about Mike?

SHEILA: Is that all you can ask?

AL: No. What's for breakfast? *(Sheila storms out.)* Sheila...have a good day at school. *(Al returns to the funeral folder.)* Family tree... *(He thinks.)* ...eucalyptus. Types of flowers I'd like at my funeral... *(He thinks.)* ...bouquets. Special arrangements for my funeral services... *(He thinks.)* ...validated parking.

(Al exits to the bathroom. Craig and Debbie enter.)

CRAIG: Dad? Dad?

AL: *(Offstage.)* Craig! Why did you buy me the Preparation H suppository rather than the cream?

CRAIG: Dad, Debbie's here with me.

AL: *(Offstage.)* Oh. Sorry.

DEBBIE: *(To Al.)* Craig bought the suppository rather than the cream? Oh, Craig!

CRAIG: I didn't know there was a difference.

AL: *(Offstage.)* Make yourselves comfortable.

CRAIG: Comfortable? Okay.

(Craig and Debbie kiss.)

DEBBIE: Craig, I think we'd better stop.

CRAIG: Easier said than done. You're the most distinctive woman I've ever known.

DEBBIE: You're the most understanding man I've ever known.

(Al enters.)

AL: *(To Craig.)* Hi! *(To Debbie.)* Hi-dee-doo!

CRAIG: Hi, Dad.

DEBBIE: Hi-dee-do!

AL: Those Preparation H directions are pretty confusing.

CRAIG: What's confusing?

AL: For one thing, it says, "Store in a cool place." *(Pause.)* If they want you to store it in a cool place, why do they say to put it where the temperature is 98 point 6? *(Pause.)* They also say avoid contact with your eyes. Now, why would I put a Preparation H suppository in my eye?

DEBBIE: Al, what they really mean is that if you get it on your hands—

(Craig stops her with a gesture. Al turns the pages of the funeral folder.)

AL: What brings you two here this morning?

CRAIG: I came to pick up my laundry. *(To Al, indicates folder.)* What's that?

AL: A booklet from a funeral home I'm filling out so you and your mother will know what to do when I pass on to the next world.

CRAIG: A funeral home? You have a lot of years left.

AL: You never know. Decisions, decisions. How to dispose of my dead body. I don't know if I could stand being cooped up in a box underground. Under all that dirt, I wouldn't be able to breathe.

CRAIG: Then be buried at sea.

AL: I can't swim.

CRAIG: So, do the dead man's float.

DEBBIE: He's just kidding. Aren't you, Craig?

CRAIG: Of course. When you're buried at sea, they put you in a weighted box. You'll sink to the bottom.

AL: But suppose there's a miracle and I come back to life, open the box, and float up. Before I ever reach the air, I'll die of the bends. What's the point?

CRAIG: So, dispose of yourself another way.

AL: How? Being cremated would make me feel like I was going to hell instead of heaven. And if I'm a clump of ashes, as I ascend to heaven through the atmosphere and stratosphere and ionosphere and mesosphere, I'll be blown away, scattered in every direction before I ever reach heaven.

DEBBIE: You'll get to heaven, Al. You're destined to be an angel.

CRAIG: I think you should have this discussion of how to dispose of yourself with Mom. Speaking of whom, when we drove up, she was tearing out the driveway. Is anything wrong?

AL: Nah!

CRAIG: Is anything wrong?

AL: I...uh...

CRAIG: Dad, tell me what's going on. You guys argue?

AL: It's personal.

DEBBIE: You guys need to talk. Besides, I'd better move my car. It's on the wrong side.

(Debbie exits.)

CRAIG: So?

AL: I've got some news. Your mother wants to go in for cosmetic surgery...including a boob job.

CRAIG: A boob job?

AL: Yeah, and she's mad at me just because I'm not 100 percent behind her "procedures." She's being so ridiculous.

CRAIG: Why is she ridiculous?

AL: You don't think she's ridiculous?

CRAIG: No.

AL: What kind of son are you? How could a son not think that his mother getting a boob job is ridiculous?

CRAIG: I don't.

AL: You shouldn't even be thinking about her getting a boob job. She's your mother, for God sakes.

CRAIG: You brought it up.

AL: So what? *(Pause.)* A woman her age doesn't need something like that. Boob job, facelift, other crap.

CRAIG: Lots of women her age go in for that sort of thing—to feel younger.

AL: That's the problem with today's world—everyone worshipping youth.

CRAIG: Should we worship growing old?

AL: Not worship, but respect it. Growing old means experience, wisdom, drooping skin. So what? It's an unfortunate situation when a person like your mother—

CRAIG: It's not someone like my mother. It is my mother. You guys can afford it, can't you?

AL: That's not the point.

CRAIG: Why are you so annoyed?

AL: I'm not annoyed. Why should I be annoyed?

CRAIG: Because for weeks you've gotten used to getting all the attention for being sick, and now she'll become the center of attention rather than you.

AL: I don't need attention like that.

CRAIG: The hell you don't. Why did you just spend all this time going over how your body will be disposed of if you didn't want my attention and me to feel sorry for you?

AL: I'm filling out the book to make things easier for you.

CRAIG: Bullshit! You are being so amazingly self-centered. Don't you love her?

AL: She knows I love her.

CRAIG: If I were her, I wouldn't be so sure.

AL: You wouldn't?

CRAIG: Not at all.

AL: Who are you to talk like this to me? This is my house, and I will have respect from you.

CRAIG: Then change your attitude. This is your wife. She thinks she has a problem, and you toss it off like it means nothing. You're so incredibly insensitive...it's...incredible.

AL: Don't you tell me I'm insensitive!

CRAIG: You're so incredibly insensitive. It's...incredible. You should be ashamed of yourself!

AL: Yeah?

CRAIG: Yeah!

AL: You're not my son! *(Craig is startled and starts walking out of the house. He stops when Al continues.)* My son, Craig, is a wishy-washy kid, not a standup man who tells off his father when he knows his father is way off base.

CRAIG: I'm just following your advice about dealing head on with problems.

AL: I am a problem, aren't I? Why are you so smart about all this, anyway?

CRAIG: I just am, Dad. I just am. I'm sorry I got carried away.

AL: Don't apologize. I'm proud you're such a good son to your mother. And to me.

(Al slaps the side of Craig's arm. Pause. Craig slaps the side of Al's arm. Pause. Al slaps the side of Craig's arm. Finally, they hug.)

CRAIG: Should I call Mom at school and talk to her?

AL: It's probably better if you come later when she gets home and you talk in person. *(Al picks up a feather duster and dusts.)*

CRAIG: What are you doing?

AL: Dusting.

CRAIG: I thought you were avoiding exercise.

AL: It's time I resumed life. *(Pause.)* You're here with Debbie first thing in the morning.

CRAIG: So?

AL: You left this house with her yesterday evening. Were you with her all this time?

CRAIG: Yes.

AL: You made it with Debbie last night?

CRAIG: *(Embarrassed.)* Dad!

AL: One date!

CRAIG: Dad, we didn't—

AL: It took me one whole month to make it with your mother.

CRAIG: That's not so long.

AL: That's one month after our wedding night. *(Pause.)* Two weeks after we returned from our honeymoon. What honeymoon? She always had an excuse.

CRAIG: Like what?

AL: On our wedding night, she says she's self-conscious about taking off her clothes. She says, *(Imitating Sheila's voice as necessary through the remainder of the scene.)* "You take off your clothes first." So I strip down to my boxer shorts. Then she looks at me and says, "Shut off all the lights." Do you know how embarrassing that is—a woman takes a look at you almost naked and then asks you to shut off all the lights? At least she didn't ask me to put a bag over my head. So I shut off the lights and feel my way to the bed. Meanwhile, she toddles off into the bathroom. Okay, she's taking off her clothes, I think. So I wait. Five minutes. Ten minutes. Then I call out, "Sheila, honey, when are you coming out?" She says, "A half hour." *(Al.)* "A half-hour?" *(In Sheila's voice.)* "I'm painting my toenails." I say, "How many toenails you got?" *(In Sheila's voice.)* "Ten." I say, "Can't you do just five?" *(In Sheila's voice.)* "Then I'll be unbalanced." I'm thinking, "Obviously you're unbalanced." But I don't say anything. Then she says, "Just relax. Watch TV, read. Do whatever men do when they're alone and lonely." I tell her, "If I do what men do who are alone and

lonely, I won't need you!" *(After starting to laugh, Craig reconsiders and groans loudly in disgust.)* By the time she finally came out—who knows how much later—I was asleep. The rest of the honeymoon she wasn't so creative. She just copped out with headaches.

CRAIG: Dad, I don't know if I want to hear all of this.

AL: Aren't you interested in your mother? *(Pause.)* Finally, one night I got fed up. I said, "Screw you. I'm going to screw you."

CRAIG: You actually said that to my mother?

(Al sits on the couch.)

AL: Sometimes bossy people secretly want to be bossed around.

CRAIG: And it worked?

AL: I gave her an education in lovemaking that she'll never forget. From that night on, she became a whirligig under the sheets. *(He twists his body.)* Thrashing around like a crazed weasel. Breathing heavy. *(He pants heavily. Then, as he resumes twisting his body.)* Twisting and turning her body in all sorts of hot monkey-love positions...

CRAIG: Dad, it makes me uncomfortable hearing such details about my mother.

AL: What details? Am I telling you about the brown pointy mole on her ass?

CRAIG: Dad! Enough! How could Mom ever have fallen for... an old fart like you?

AL: She admired my maturity.

(Lights fade to black.)

[END OF FREEVIEW]