

The Marley Show

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Act I

Scene 1:

The play opens in the living room of MOE MARLEY'S house. SLIM, MOE'S bitter, sarcastic friend, is sitting on the couch reading a newspaper. MOE calls from offstage.

MOE

Hey, Slim! Have you seen my tie?

SLIM notices the tie sticking out from under the cushion. He pulls the tie out, holds it up, then throws the tie on the ground.

SLIM

No.

MOE walks in from stage left.

MOE

Frustrated:

Well, that's just great. This is a special ceremony and I'm missing my only black tie!

SLIM pulls out a yellow tie and a large black marker.

SLIM

Sarcastically:

Color your heart out.

MOE

Shaking his head, annoyed:

Slimmmmm!

SLIM

It's your funeral.

MOE

No, actually it's my Aunt Edna's wake.

SLIM

Raises an eyebrow:

And you're taking....Rachel with you?

MOE

Slaps on aftershave:

Yes. I think this is it. The big night. The night I ask Rachel to be my wife.

SLIM

Sarcastically:

And what better place to propose than a relative's wake.

MOE gives SLIM an irritated look.

MOE

Granted it's not the most appropriate of places, but it's the only time this week that I'll be free, and I feel I should strike while the iron's hot.

MOE turns his back to the audience looking for his tie revealing a large iron burn on the back of his shirt.

SLIM

Sarcastically:

I see you're good at that.

MOE

Turning back around:

Besides, if you think about it, it's kind of romantic, a wedding proposal at a wake, the irony, it's just like that movie.

SLIM

Four Weddings and a Funeral?

MOE

No, Pet Cemetery.

They pause and look at each other, puzzled.

SLIM

Of course.

As MOE says:

MOE

That can't be right.

They look at each other puzzled once more.

At any rate, Aunt Edna's wake is a perfect place to propose. It's all part of the plan.

SLIM

And what the hell might that be, Mr. Savoir faire, if you'll pardon my French.

MOE

Well, it just so happens that I'm going to propose with the very same ring that my Aunt Edna received forty years ago. It'll be tradition.

SLIM

It'll be creepy.

MOE

I sent Bill over to Aunt Edna's place to find it. And once I get that ring I'll have this proposal in the bag.

SLIM

Whoopee.

MOE

And Slim, I assumed that you've made reservations at Chez Chez

"Shay-chezz"

for Rachel and myself this evening?

SLIM

Amused:

You assumed that?

SLIM begin chuckling and MOE, hoping this is a positive sign, begins chuckling also.

MOE

Yup.

SLIM laughs harder, and MOE seems kind of sure where this is headed.

SLIM

Laughing:

You really assumed that?

MOE

MOE's laughter—and hope—dies out.

Well, you know me...

SLIM

Laughing:

Yeah...

He stops laughing and returns to his gruff state.

And you assumed wrong.

MOE

Frustrated:

Slimmmm! It's just one simple phone call. Besides, you spent half the eighties dialing up "867-5309"...

SLIM simply stares at him. MOE sighs.

I hope Rachel likes drive-through...

MOE gives up his appeals and resumes looking for his tie. SLIM picks up the paper and begins to read. MOE turns back to SLIM.

Oh, by the way, Slim, the bank called.

SLIM

Not looking up from paper:

They would.

MOE

They said you were writing bad checks again.

SLIM

Looking up:

Bad checks, huh? Well, they can take their bad checks and stick them up their...

Doorbell rings, interrupting SLIM. MOE walks over to the front door and opens it. Enter RACHEL, MOE's girlfriend. SLIM continues reading the paper, ignoring her.

MOE

Happily:

Rachel!

RACHEL

Happily:

Moe!

They hug.

I've missed you these past few days.

MOE

Me, too.

SLIM

From behind paper:

I haven't.

MOE gives SLIM an evil stare, exposing his iron burn to RACHEL.

RACHEL

Oh, no, dearest, you have a horrible iron burn on the back of your shirt.

MOE attempts to see the burn, turning in circles like a dog chasing its tail.

MOE

I do?

RACHEL stops his spinning.

Oh, great!

He thinks, then holds up his hand and says:

Not to worry, I'll be wearing my jacket over my shirt...

He trails off as he picks up the jacket, exposing yet another iron burn.

SLIM

Sarcastically:

You have quite the talent.

MOE

Annoyed:

That is the last time I let Bill iron.

Sighs:

I guess I'll have to find another jacket.

SLIM

Sarcastically:

How 'bout the one with the ruffles and sequins?

MOE

Sarcastically:

I'll look for it. Why don't the two of you get better acquainted while I go change?

MOE exits stage left. RACHEL sits on the recliner next to SLIM. SLIM throws down his newspaper as a coo-coo clock begins to tick. There is a long pause; both just stare at each other.

SLIM

So, you date Moe.

RACHEL

Yes, I've been dating him for over a year now.

SLIM

Bored:

Oh.

There is another pause and both just sit there. Clock continues to tick.

RACHEL

It's strange, Moe never really mentioned you before.

SLIM

That's because he's an egotistical narcissist.

RACHEL

A what?

SLIM

Look it up.

An uncomfortable silence follows. The clock continues to tick.

SLIM (cont.)

What do you do?

RACHEL

Well, I can juggle plates while singing "It's a Long Way to Tipperary."

RACHEL chuckles at her own joke. SLIM just stares. RACHEL stops.

SLIM

I was asking what your job was.

RACHEL

Uncomfortably:

I know I just...it was a joke.

SLIM

Oh.

RACHEL

Apprehensively:

Anyway, I've just signed on with Chemical.

SLIM

Suspiciously:

You're a drug dealer?

RACHEL

Quickly:

No! Chemical Bank!

SLIM

I hate banks!

Coo-coo clock strikes.

RACHEL

Incredulously:

You hate what?

SLIM

Banks. The service stinks, the lines are too long and they always have interest in your accounts.

Pause.

RACHEL

Nervously, she gets up:

OK. If you don't mind, I'm going to go to the kitchen...

SLIM

At least one of us can.

RACHEL

Stopping:

What do you mean?

SLIM

He motions to his legs, pretending to be invalid.

You know what I mean. I guess you're one of those sickos that take pleasure in deriding the physically handicapped.

RACHEL

Going over to him:

Oh! I'm sorry!

As she nears SLIM, he somersaults off the couch, gets up, and does a dance step.

SLIM

Looking at his legs in mock surprise:

It's a miracle!

RACHEL

Horrified by the display:

You're a monster!

Beat:

SLIM

Are you wearing that to the wake?

RACHEL

Defensively:

What's wrong with it?

SLIM

It's old. My grandmother wouldn't wear that.

RACHEL

Becoming annoyed:

I think it calls up memories of a... a simpler time.

SLIM

Yeah, the Civil War. Moe won't be able to tell which one's the corpse.

RACHEL rises.

RACHEL

Furious:

How dare you! I can't take this abuse any longer! Tell Moe I'll meet him at the funeral home!

RACHEL storms out the front door, slamming it behind her.

SLIM

Talk about a short fuse.

SLIM picks up a dictionary and begins reading. MOE enters from stage left.

MOE

Where's Rachel?

SLIM

Not looking up:

She left.

MOE

Without me? Are you serious?!

SLIM

In sarcastic reference to RACHEL's absence:

No, I'm joking.

MOE

Why would she do that?!

SLIM

You can't trust those bank people.

MOE

Exasperated:

Were you talking about your loathing of banks again?

SLIM

Among other things.

MOE

Slimmmmm!

MOE looks at the ground and sighs. He spots something.

There's my tie.

He sighs again.

I guess I'll have to go to the wake alone now.

MOE turns around and begins putting on his tie revealing another iron burn on the back of his new jacket. SLIM shakes his head. Still putting on the tie, MOE opens the front door, begins to walk out, stops, and walks back in.

Bill's still not back yet?

SLIM

You know how the roads can be.

There is the sound of screeching tires and a crash. SLIM and MOE run towards the front door as BILL bursts in.

BILL

Hysterically:

I can't believe it! I just can't believe it! How could I be so stupid?! I'm so unreliable!!

He begins pounding his head on the table.

Duh! Duh! Duh!

MOE

Concerned:

What happened?

BILL looks up from table.

BILL

Hysterically:

What happened?! What happened?! You wanna know what happened?! That stupid cat from next door happened to saunter across the road just as I was driving past. I crashed trying to let it cross to the other side!!

SLIM

That reminds me of a little joke.

He begins to chuckle to himself. MOE and BILL stare. SLIM suddenly stops and returns to normal.

You were saying?

BILL

Trying to contain himself:

What kind of people let their cats roam around the streets just begging to be made road pizza?

Doorbell rings. MOE answers the front door. Enter EVA ORKANSCHARKERFICKENKRAUT, the German temptress.

EVA

Venomously:

Where is de dummkopf who tried to kill my cat?!

BILL

Furious:

Kill your cat?! Kill your cat?! I think you got your story mixed up there, Mrs. Orkan Skunkin Sauerkraut!

EVA

Equally furious:

Zat's Orkanscharkerfickenkraut you dimvit!

Calmer:

Eva Orkanscharkerfickenkraut.

MOE

Timidly:

Hey, about my car...

BILL

Interrupting angrily:

I was driving the car like any other human being when your el gato jumped out in front of it and now the car is totaled!

MOE

It's totaled?!

BILL

Well, there's no chance anyone could drive it now. Unless you want to take the telephone pole in its side with you around town.

MOE

Exasperated:

How could you total my car?!

BILL

Angry:

You're blaming me? You're blaming me?! Blame her!

He points at EVA.

Her and that little rat of a feline who decided to hinder my locomotion!

SLIM

Sarcastically:

You're just a regular Funk n' Wagnall.

MOE

Watch your language!

SLIM holds up his Funk and Wagnall dictionary.

SLIM

I was.

EVA

Cooling down:

De damage done to my little Heidrich may not be as physical as de damage done to de car, but de damage is plain on de inside.

SLIM

Sarcastically:

Let's rip her open and find out.

MOE

Ignoring SLIM:

I'm sorry, but I still have no car to get to the wake.

EVA walks up to MOE, looking him over.

EVA

Seductively:

I could give you a ride.

MOE

That's really a nice offer, but I couldn't impose.

EVA moves closer. MOE says, reluctantly:

Well, OK...

MOE begins to move away.

Let me get my tie on.

EVA

Seductively:

Let me help.

She begins to move towards MOE. He runs offstage with EVA in pursuit. After both have left, BILL suddenly grabs SLIM by both shoulders and shakes him.

BILL

Hysterically:

I couldn't find it! I looked everywhere! The jewelry box, the attic, the garage, even in the damn trash compactor.

SLIM pries BILL's hands off of his shoulders.

It just wasn't there! Moe needs that ring! Where could it be?!

SLIM hands the dictionary to BILL.

SLIM

Sarcastically:

This always answers all my questions.

BILL hurriedly rips through the pages. He turns the book around and reads the title.

BILL

Exasperated:

Wait a minute, this is absolutely pointless!

He tosses book over his shoulder.

SLIM

Sarcastically:

Must be the abridged version.

BILL

Panic stricken:

What am I going to do?! I've got to find that ring! Slim! If you were a dead woman, what would you do with your jewelry?

SLIM

Wear it?

BILL

Don't be ridiculous, why would she...

He realized what SLIM has implied and yells:

That's it!

BILL runs out the door. He yells "Taxi!" from offstage. Tires screech. MOE runs in adjusting his belt with EVA close behind. His tie is still not tied.

MOE

Thanks Eva, but I'm sure my belt is buckled just fine.

EVA

I just wanted to make sure. Are ve ready to leave?

MOE

I'm ready to depart for the departed.

He chuckles and stops when EVA and SLIM give him an icy stare.

Let's just go.

Exit MOE and EVA. SLIM sits down on the sofa. The phone rings and he picks it up.

SLIM

What?

PHONE VOICE

Mr. Slim Pickett?

SLIM

Yeah?

PHONE VOICE

This is the bank.

SLIM

Oh, crap.

Blackout.

End of Scene 1.

Scene 2

Scene opens in a funeral home. There is a coffin off to one side. RACHEL and KATHERINE chat on the other side of the stage.

RACHEL

I'm sorry to hear about...uh...her death. It must have come as a shock.

KATHERINE

After a half a year on life support?

BILL rushes in from stage right, through the front door, and sees the sign in book. He rushes over to it, looks at it, then walks over to the ladies. He addresses KATHERINE.

BILL

Nervously:

Am I supposed to sign in?

KATHERINE

If you'd like.

BILL goes back to the book, signs it, then reads it. He drops the pen.

BILL

Screaming:

Oh, my God! Rachel's already here!

RACHEL looks.

RACHEL

What?

BILL

Fumbling for words:

Oh, I'm sorry. What I meant was...

BILL falls on his knees, looking reverently towards the ceiling.

"Oh, my God."

He then stands up and says brightly.

"Rachel's... already here"!

RACHEL

Do I know you?

BILL walks towards the women.

BILL

Yes. I'm one of Moe's friends.

RACHEL

Under her breath:

Oh, my Lord.

BILL

What was that?

RACHEL

I was just saying:

Reverently:

"Oh! My Lord!"

Changing the subject:

Is Moe with you?

BILL

Nervously:

Nope. Moe's...running a little late. He caught a ride with Eva.

RACHEL

Suspiciously:

Eva? Who's Eva?

BILL

Eva's his next door neighbor.

RACHEL

Oh, that Eva. The one who sent me those nasty letters in the mail and wrote REDRUM on my rearview mirror.

BILL

That sounds like Eva.

RACHEL

And those rude phone calls. It seems like the phone never stops ringing.

BILL

To himself:

I was supposed to remember something...

RACHEL

Ringing...

She walks away, back to KATHERINE.

KATHERINE

Checks her watch:

This is insane! Mel should have been here 20 minutes ago! When he gets here I'll wring his neck.

BILL

...It was something important...

MEL enters through the front door. MEL O'MALLEY comes very close to being the stereotypical Irishman. He is boorish, loud, and comes in without much obvious respect for the dead, which happens to be his wife.

MEL

Katherine! Well, boil me in oil! I figured you'd still be at the phones, ringin' for me at my house! It was insane!

BILL

To himself:

...But what? What do I need?!

MEL

To irk KATHERINE:

Ring! Ring! Ring! Ring!

He continues.

BILL

Interrupting MEL:

Will you pipe down! I can't remember what I'm here for with all that noise!

MEL

Ignoring BILL, but stopping, he turns to KATHERINE.

You're a crazy old bag, ain't ya?

BILL

With zeal:

That's it! The old bag's ring!

*Everyone stops and looks at BILL, who retreats into the corner.
MEL looks around the room.*

MEL

Sarcastically:

Well, look at the huge turnout for my dear departed wife. You'd figure the queen died!

KATHERINE

Now Mel, I don't want you raising a fuss over this. I tried as hard as I could to get the rest of the family here.

MEL

Well, who the hell in the family is here?! Ya got you, me, and them two strangers. Probably lawyers or the like.

RACHEL

Oh, no. We're—

BILL

Interrupting RACHEL:

But you're with the bank, aren't you?

MEL

The bank?! The bank, is it?! Well, let me tell you somethin', bank lass, we made every last payment for this funeral, and if you think you can squeeze another bloody drop out of us, you've got another thing comin'!

RACHEL

Stammering:

Uh, well, he's a lawyer!

BILL

Shocked:

No, I'm—

MEL

Oh, so we've got a whole bloody flock of vultures swoopin' down at my wife, eh? Well, I'll have you know that our will was signed in the presence of a witness with sound mind and body! There wasn't nothin' dishonest about it, even if we did bet the will in a poker game!

BILL

Confused:

OK...

KATHERINE

Back to the argument:

And just for the record, I did make an attempt to get people here. I called Cousin Gerry!

MEL

Cousin Gerry? We haven't seen him since he became one of them goddamn born-again Christians!

KATHERINE

I think I really made progress with him. I almost got him to come off the compound.

She notices BILL and RACHEL's confused reactions.

Don't tell me your family isn't like this, lawyerboy!

BILL

But I'm not a—

MEL

Interrupting:

And did you call the rest of the barrel of monkeys, as well? How about your Uncle Marvin? Him and his slush fund fiasco. And then there's his wife—excuse me—exwife. I guess we'll see her in 10 to 20 years, eh?

KATHERINE

With time off for good behavior!

MEL

Angrily:

For Christ's sake, woman...

Everyone inhales sharply.

...that's my bloody point! This whole family's been shot to hell, and you know it! The only people with any decency left are Edna, who's dead now, and, Moe.

Thinking:

Where the hell is Moe, anyway?

BILL

He's with Eva!

MEL AND KATHERINE

In unison:

Eva? Who's Eva?

RACHEL

She's a psychopath!

MEL

To KATHERINE:

There goes another family member.

He sighs.

Well, I guess we'll just start without him.

They all walk to the closed coffin, MEL in the lead.

Ladies and....gentleman, we are gathered here today to pay tribute to...

BILL nervously raises his hand, interrupting MEL.

What the hell are you raising your hand for?!

BILL

Hesitantly:

Well, it's just that...uh...well...shouldn't the coffin be open?

MEL

And what's the bloody point of that?

BILL

Nervously:

It's just that....uh...Aunt Edna...it might be better if we see Aunt Edna.

MEL

If you don't be shuttin' your mouth you'll be seein' her real soon. Now, as I was sayin', we are gathered here today to pay tribute to my dearly beloved Edna. In honor of her untimely demise I have written a heartfelt limerick.

MEL takes out a piece of paper and clears his throat noisily.

There once was a woman named Edna,
Who got an idea in her head-na,
She knew I adored her,
But felt that I bored her,
So, I never could take her to bed-na.

He is greeted with silence. The two women look at each other incredulously.

Yes, Edna was a great person, and...

BILL once again interrupts with his hand.

For Christ's sake!

There is a sharp intake of breath from all.

What do you want now?!

BILL

Meekly:

Could...could I go to the bathroom?

MEL

Fed up:

Yes! Yes! Go to the goddamn pisser! I don't give a feathered fig!

BILL runs off stage left.

KATHERINE

Feathered fig?

MEL

Yeah, a kinda bass akwards way of saying somethin' else...not so appropriate.

KATHERINE

Mutters:

Since when did that stop you?

MEL shoots KATHERINE an evil look.

RACHEL

Did you say bass...akwards?

MEL

Annoyed:

Listen, I'd tell ya what that means but I'd end up getting myself in a mell of a hess and I...

RACHEL

Mell of a...?

MEL

Fed up:

Forget it, forget it! Let's just get back to Edna, OK?

Calmly:

Now. Edna. What does that name bring to mind? Her loving smile, her calm nature, her unselfishness.

As MEL continues, BILL sneaks back onstage and behind the coffin on his knees, unnoticed by the others. He attempts to inch open the coffin.

The long walks down the forest path in the woods together, the nights when we would sit out on the porch watching the moon. This woman...

MEL slams the coffin lid, preventing BILL from opening it.

MEL (cont.)

...was an absolute treasure.

When MEL removes his hand, BILL resumes inching open the coffin lid.

A woman who strove to succeed. The word failure was a word unknown to her. This woman...

MEL again raps the coffin lid stops BILL from opening the lid.

...wanted to face the world, to make a difference! For hours she labored in the community, the church, trying to make this world we live in a better place. If there's one person here who can relate to this it is I. My wife helped me through one of the most trying times in my life. Truly, if there was one woman we could call a saint it was Edna O'Malley.

BILL has managed to get the coffin open enough so he can reach his hand in. As MEL says Edna's name, he again raps his knuckles against the coffin, pinning BILL's hand. BILL jumps up with a yell holding his hurt hand. Everyone looks at him, there is a pause.

BILL

Suddenly full of falsified grief:

OH, EDNA! I loved you so much!

BILL falls upon the coffin pretending to cry.

MEL

That guy's a loony.

BILL

Back to normal:

Who's a loony?

MEL

Annoyed:

Listen, ya loony lawyerboy, would you please just shut your mug for two more seconds so I can finish this damn Albany?!

KATHERINE

That's eulogy.

MEL

Annoyed:

Oh, I'm sorry Miss Grammar.

MEL continues with his eulogy.

I know that each of us will always have Edna in our hearts and Edna, if you're looking over us today...hi.

Pause.

Would anyone else like to say a few words?

BILL

Yes, I would.

MEL groans.

MEL

Terrific, the lawyerboy wants to read his goddamn opening statement.

BILL

First off, I'm not a lawyer!

MEL

Mutters sarcastically:

Right, and I'm Pekinese.

BILL

Anyway, Mel's stirring speech brings up a few good points. Mel says himself that Edna wanted to face the world.

MEL

And what the point?

BILL

The point is that Edna should be facing the world one last time before she is put to rest!

MEL

So, you want me to open the coffin.

BILL

Well...yes.

KATHERINE

The lawyer does have a point.

RACHEL

It would be what she'd want.

MEL

Fed up:

Oh, for the love of God, OK! We'll open up the coffin.

With help from BILL, MEL opens up the coffin lid. They all gather around and are visibly disturbed by what they see.

RACHEL

Oh, my God!

KATHERINE

I thought she died when they took her off the respirator.

MEL

Now who told ya that blarney? She died at the hands of her plastic surgeon.

BILL

What went wrong?

MEL

Ya know, I often wonder the same thing. I mean that guy was a professional. Said he even did Michael Jackson's surgery.

BILL

Mutters:

Well that explains that.

In normal tone:

Exactly what was it she was having surgery done on anyway?

MEL whispers something in BILL's ear and BILL screams, then faints dead away.

Blackout.

End Scene 2.

Scene 3

The scene is back at MOE's house. SLIM is sitting on the couch, finishing reading his Funk & Wagnall dictionary.

SLIM

Reading aloud:

"Zymosis: any form of fermentation. Zymurgy: the branch of chemistry devoted to zymosis. The End."

Putting the book down, he snuffles.

That was deep. Ah, let's see; what's next on my "to do" list?

SLIM turns around and picks up a large piece of paper which boldly proclaims, "CALL CHEZ CHEZ". SLIM stares at it for a moment, then puts it down and shouts:

Chez Chez!

There is no response. SLIM sighs in satisfaction, then says:

I love my work...

The doorbell rings once, then numerous times.

But, back to my own personal hell...

He slowly gets up to open the door, letting SARAH HAYES in the house. She obviously knows SLIM, and is not surprised when he, rather than saying anything to her, goes back to the couch.

SARAH

You're always quite the gentleman, aren't you?

SLIM

I try to be.

SARAH

She opens her briefcase and takes out documents, which she throws at SLIM.

Here. I suppose you still know how to read, Mr. Pickett?

SLIM

Sarcastically, as he reads the documents:

Why, does that qualify me for bank employment?

SARAH

If you happen to notice the total on the bottom right, you might see that you owe our bank 150 dollars.

SLIM

One-hundred and fifty dollars. Oh, my God. I don't see how your bank could survive without my contribution.

SARAH

Now, wait—

SLIM

Increasingly sarcastic:

How could I be so callous as to ignore the basic needs of the bank? I see how you could let maybe fifty dollars slide, but one-hundred and fifty?

Putting his hand on SARAH's shoulder.

I understand where you're coming from.

SARAH

Unperturbed by SLIM's speech:

So you're going to pay your bill?

SLIM

Scoffs:

Fat chance.

SARAH

So that leaves us right back where we started.

SLIM

I believe we started in a small, crowded cafeteria on a dusky Autumn afternoon. I took the bronze. You took the silver. I took your science fair project. That started something you would never forgive yourself for.

SARAH

Marrying you?

SLIM

Before that!

SARAH

Oh...

With a devilish smile:

You mean with Mr. Bobbins?

SLIM

Yes. Mr. Bobbins. I still don't think you understand just how important he was to me.

SARAH

Smugly:

Oh, really? I believe I was one of the first people to notice his...certain charms.

SLIM

You only noticed enough to cause all that trouble at the science fair. What you did to him there was completely unforgivable. Mr. Bobbins was more of a man than you thought he was.

SARAH

Man or not, I just couldn't bear to be around him.

SLIM

For the first time, SLIM shows true emotion— annoyance.

See, there you go again, playing on words, making light of a serious situation!

SARAH

Slightly amused:

What are you talking about?!

SLIM

Oh, you know exactly what I'm talking about! Don't even pretend that you don't know what I'm talking about. It's the same thing you did with that whole "Pickin's" thing. You know, that "Slim Pickin's" thing.

SARAH

"Slim Pickin's". How could I forget that? I've been calling you that since the fifth grade! That's hilarious!

SLIM

That's hurtful. I would have preferred any name to that. "Slim Jim." "Pickett's Charge". But, no, you had to christen me "Slim Pickin's."

SARAH

More quietly:

It's the reason I married you.

SLIM

And it's the reason I divorced you. Or haven't you figured that out?

SARAH

What? The divorce? I think I know what I've signed.

SLIM

Sarcastically:

Oh, I'm sure you know about the divorce. I'm sure you wouldn't let one minor detail pass out of your sight. I bet you can even remember the judge's name.

SARAH

The Honorable Bryant Hall.

SLIM

Names and faces, that's all they are. I bet you—I bet you don't even know the reason why I filed for divorce.

SARAH

Sarcastically:

Ooohh, there's a tough one.

Turning to face SLIM, almost as if she were staring him down.

How many guesses do I get?

SLIM

I'll give you a sporting chance. Three.

SARAH

Confidently teasing:

Let's see, wanted to go back to the bachelor's life? No... I've got it; fear of commitment. No? Well, I've only got one guess left, better make it count. Hmm...

SARAH drops the act and confronts SLIM with total seriousness.

You were jealous of your professional woman.

In response to this, SLIM stares at SARAH, cracks a smile, then burst into gleefully evil laughter.

SLIM

Jealous?! Of you?! I'm sorry, but that's the farthest explanation from what I've had in mind. I guess you haven't been paying attention since the fifth grade.

SARAH

Oh, really? Since the moment I started working, you did nothing but criticize the bank and its business. And you sat at home everyday reading from those damn dictionaries of yours. Meanwhile, I've become a branch manager.

She stops and looks at SLIM.

And what have you been doing, Slim?

SLIM

Evasive:

Ah, well, I've dabbled a bit in zymurgy... you know...

SARAH

The study of fermentation? That's typical of you, Slim. Always looking for a way out through alcohol.

She picks up the dictionary.

SARAH (cont.)

...And I see other habits also die hard.

She flips to the back page of the dictionary.

"Zymurgy", what a surprise. Zipped through the latest edition, did you, Mr. Pickin's?

SLIM

Angry, but still in control of his temper:

You see, Sarah? You see how this is a perfect example of why you and I are not together?! Do you?!

SARAH

Calmly:

No, I don't.

SLIM

You don't see that most basic premise of your personality? Well, then I guess I'll have to explain that to you as well. Let me give you an example.

SLIM picks up the newspaper with one hand and the dictionary with the other.

Now, let's say that this newspaper represents me, and that this dictionary represents you.

SARAH

Why doesn't the dictionary represent you?

SLIM

It just doesn't. Now, every time—

SARAH

I certainly don't weigh more than you.

SLIM

Use your imagination. Every time we were—

SARAH

And I am definitely the less literary minded.

SLIM

Every time we would spend time together, you would do something to belittle and abuse me.

He plays with the paper and dictionary as if they were dolls and begins speaking in a childish falsetto voice for both objects.

“Hey, there, Slim Pickin’s!” “No, go away!” “I’m gonna ruin your life!”

He begins hitting the newspaper with the dictionary.

“Nooooo!”

He stops and speaks normally.

Understand?

SARAH

I understand that you need to get out of the house more often.

SLIM

You never stopped treating me like dirt. Even after we got married, you continued to make me feel miserable. That’s why I divorced you. It wasn’t romance, it was routine!

SARAH begins to respond, but is interrupted by the phone ringing. SLIM answers it.

What?

He listens for a second then says, “Aha”! He turns to SARAH.

Come here and listen to this.

SARAH takes the phone and listens.

SARAH

What is this?

SLIM

One of those prerecorded bank messages.

SARAH

It sounds like you.

SLIM

Ignoring SARAH:

That thing has as much personality as a snowpea. It just tonelessly says,

In a mechanical voice.

"Hello...

He talks in a feminine voice.

Slim Pickett,

in a mechanical voice.

Please be advised that you owe our banking service...

in a feminine voice.

150 dollars—fine for three bounced checks." I don't even have a checking account.

SARAH

You're just mad because you can't yell obscenities at it and get it upset. I know that's what you live for.

SLIM

You are such a comedian. I'm mad because your machine never calls with real complaints.

SARAH

No, real complaints, huh? Then you'd love this one. The machine just informed me that you missed a Christmas club payment.

SLIM

Ho, ho, ho. You have that damn thing calling me five times a day.

SARAH

So? I bet it's the only companionship you have right now.

SLIM

While I won't discuss any further the companionship I get over the phone... These interruptions prevent me from completing my sacred duty of making reservations at Chez Chez.

SARAH

Chez Chez? The French place?

SLIM

Oui oui. Moe Marley wishes to take his girlfriend to a romantic dinner of dead snails and scalding hot cheese, and he's entrusting me to secure a table. Now, if you'll excuse me...

SLIM picks up the phone, but SARAH grabs it and puts it down.

SARAH

Nice try, Pickin's, but you are hardly the person who gets along with restaurant staff. Don't you remember when we dined at that Chinese place?

SLIM

Yeah. I told them what they can do with their fortune cookies.

SARAH

Yeah, I bet Confucius never saw that one coming. And I'm sure he never expected your obnoxious comments about the "Yellow Pages" either.

SLIM

Yes, but consider my alternatives, I could talk to restaurateurs, or I could talk to you. God forbid that I ignore you. I almost forgot that this visit had nothing to do with money. This was about your lonely life!

SARAH

Incredulous:

What?!

SLIM

This is simply a guess, but I don't think that you've had someone in your life for quite a while.

SARAH

And why do you say that?

SLIM

Oh, it might be a wild prognostication, but I can't see any other reason why you'd pester your ex-husband.

SARAH

You think I came here to spend time with you?!

SLIM

Well, it ain't for the guided tour.

SARAH

And the fact that you owe the bank 150 dollars is irrelevant?

SLIM

You need a man. A woman. Anything, so that I won't have to deal with you. What happened to that teller Eduardo you were dating?

SARAH

Eduardo? Oh, things didn't work out between us.

SLIM

Ah, had too much in common; the same place of employment, that's tough. Let's see, who has a job that isn't the least bit related to yours? How about a park ranger?

SARAH reaches for her briefcase.

SARAH

You want me to date Smokey the Bear?

SLIM

No, just someone who'll watch the forest, trim the trees, tend to the animals, all that nature crap you love.

SARAH puts the briefcase down.

SARAH

I'd have thought by now you would know that I am not a nature fan. Don't you remember when I flushed your turtle?

SLIM

You would have loved to have been here before. Bill almost hit Eva's cat.

SARAH

Eva? Who's Eva?

SLIM

Sarcastically:

Eva's my square dance partner. Yee Haw.

SARAH

Ignoring SLIM's remark:

At any rate, I would never date a man who has an interest in fauna. I can put up with many things, but I draw the line at any animals.

SLIM

I guess that eliminates every man. You'll have to die an old maid.

SARAH

Mischievously:

Well, there is one man in my life.

SARAH opens her briefcase.

SLIM

I'm not a man!

SARAH

What?

SLIM

Correcting himself:

I'm not your man.

SARAH

You think I'm talking about you, Mr. Slim Pickin's? No, I prefer a man with a little more hair on his chest.

SLIM

Sarcastically:

I could hang a Chia Pet around my neck...

SARAH

The only thing I need from you is your reaction.

SLIM

I can't bear the suspense.

SARAH

An interesting choice of words...

With a flourish, she pulls out a small teddy bear from her briefcase and holds it high. SLIM is shocked.

SLIM

Yelling:

MR. BOBBINS?! NOOOOO!!!!

Blackout.

End of Scene 3.

Scene 4

The scene opens in EVA's car. EVA is driving and MOE is in the passenger's seat. The car should simply be the front and back seats of a normal car. A screen projector or moving lights could possibly be added to simulate driving. EVA should mime motions of driving the entire time.

EVA

It is always sad when a loved one passes away.

MOE

That's true.

Pause:

Ah, Orkansh... Orkanshark... Eva. That's an interesting name. Where are you from?

EVA

East Brunswick.

MOE

Puzzled:

Originally?

EVA

Oh, no. I lived the first nine years of my life in Bunterheim, Germany.

MOE

Ah, what side of the road do they drive on in Germany?

EVA

De right, vhy?

MOE

Nervously:

It's the same here.

EVA

Oh.

EVA mimes turning the wheel.

Forgive me. I find it zo hard to drive vith zo many...

She glances seductively at MOE.

...distractions.

MOE

Visibly uncomfortable:

It's very nice of you to drive me, Eva.

EVA

No problem. I'm sure this vake means alot to you.

MOE

Yeah, and thanks to Bill totaling my car, I'm going to be late.

EVA

How long did you know her?

MOE

Well, the car's about two years old...

EVA

Interrupting:

No, I meant Aunt Edna.

MOE

Oh, Edna? I never saw her much, only on holidays and family gatherings. I really don't know much about her except what I heard from my mother. It seems that the only people that knew her were my mother, Uncle Mel: Edna's husband, and Katherine, whose relation to Edna or myself I never quite understood. Regardless, I know my mother wouldn't want me to miss this.

EVA

I'm sure.

There is a pause.

It must be hard dealing with a spastic catkiller and an overly sarcastic dictionary reader.

MOE

Naa, it works. We've been buddies since college—part of the same fraternity.

EVA

Hopefully:

Phi Beta Kappa?

MOE

Embarrassed:

No, I Felta Thigh.

EVA

Appropriate name.

EVA inches her hand over, attempting to feel MOE's thigh. MOE turns and peers out the side window trying to look behind.

MOE

Did that sign just say Canadian border, ten miles?

EVA

Nervously:

Uh...ve are taking de shortcut.

MOE accepts this. There is a meow from the back seat. MOE turns and looks into the back seat.

MOE

Oh, I see you brought your cat along.

EVA

Ja. My Heidrich is a sensitive animal. Loneliness comes quickly to him, zo I bring him vith me ver ever I go.

MOE reaches to the unseen cat.

MOE

Hello, kitty.

There is a loud screech and a hiss, MOE jerks his hand out from behind the seat and holds it like it is injured.

Owww! That cat bit me!

EVA

He is nervous around strangers, especially...men.

MOE looks at his injured hand.

MOE

Gee, this is bleeding a little bit. Do you have a Band-Aid?

EVA

Try de first aid kit under de seat.

MOE pulls the first aid kit from under the seat and opens it.

MOE

OK, let's see here...

He pulls out pepper spray.

Pepper spray?

EVA glances over.

EVA

Yes, I keep it there to protect myself from any unvanted attacks. So far, I haven't had any.

MOE

That's good, no attacks.

EVA

No, I said, no "unvanted" attacks.

MOE puts the pepper spray to the side and continues looking through the first aid kit. He pulls out a piece of lingerie and raises his eyebrows. EVA glances over.

Oh, that's for...special occasions.

He pulls out another piece.

Office parties.

He pulls out another.

New Year's.

He pulls out another.

Bar Mitzvahs.

He pulls out another.

EVA (cont.)

Presidential elections.

He pulls out another.

Flash floods.

MOE pulls out a pair of conservative cotton panties. EVA is embarrassed.

Vell, I don't know how they got in there.

MOE searches a bit more.

MOE

Gee, Eva, is there anything in here used for first aid?

MOE continues to search through first aid kit. He pulls out a bottle of wine. EVA glances over.

EVA

Zhat is to numb de pain.

MOE pulls out two wine glasses. EVA makes another move.

Would you like a spritzer?

MOE

Spritz who? Oh, the wine. No, thanks.

EVA

Vell, I vould like one.

MOE

Worriedly:

Aren't there laws about drinking and...driving?

EVA

Sternly:

Spritz me!

MOE hastily complies and hands the glass over to EVA.

I don't like to drive when I'm tense.

EVA takes a sip, drives a bit, then takes another sip and giggles. MOE nervously looks from the glass to EVA to the oncoming traffic. A truck horn blows past as MOE watches increasingly panicked.

MOE

Eva, I think you've had enough.

EVA

But, de glass is still full.

MOE grabs the glass out of EVA's hand and downs the contents.

MOE

No, it's not.

MOE's face slowly contorts into pain. He holds his temples and moans.

I'm gonna regret that.

He looks at his hand.

And my hand's still bleeding.

MOE resumes searching in the first aid kit. He pulls out a chocolate bar and holds it up questionably.

EVA

Glancing over:

They say chocolate is an “aphrodisiac”.

MOE

Nervously:

Well, I don’t know how that applies to me. I don’t have an Afro.

MOE chuckles nervously. Aside:

Oh, my God.

To EVA.

There doesn’t seem to be a Band-Aid. Do you have a handkerchief or something?

EVA

Of course.

EVA seductively pulls a handkerchief from her brassiere and hands it to MOE. He fumbles with it, trying to quell the bleeding.

No, no, you must apply pressure.

EVA grabs MOE’s hand with the handkerchief and holds tightly.

MOE

Nervously trying to change the subject:

Y-You certainly have a nice car, Eva.

EVA

It is a piece of American crap. I long for a car with German craftsmanship—Volkswagen, Mercedes Benz.

Sadly remembering the past:

EVA (cont.)

Oh, those ver the days - skiing trips to de Alps, boat trips on de Rhine, car trips to de Bodensee. Ach, vhat a vonderful life. Und de Fussball, oh, how I remember zhat.

MOE manages to get out of EVA's grip.

MOE

Foose?

EVA

Soccer.

MOE

You played soccer?

EVA

In my prepubescent years, I vas a star Fussball player, then came zhat last big game, de National Youth Fussball Championship. We vere tied—one to one, I vas de goalie. De opposing team had a breakaway. Down the field they came, number 34 had de ball, she lines up, she shoots...

EVA pauses and stares into space.

MOE

You caught it?

EVA

Depressed:

I froze. The ball flew right by.

She sighs.

De other team left vith trophies, ve got rings vith two karats of cubic Zirconium. I could no longer play, I was an outcast, a failure...I still am.

MOE

Resting a hand on Eva's shoulder:

You shouldn't say that, Eva.

EVA turns to him seductively.

EVA

I shouldn't?

MOE

Nervously:

No, you're nice and compassionate and...nice.

EVA puts her arm around MOE.

EVA

Seductively:

Zhat vas de sweetest zhing anyone ever said to me.

MOE looks extremely uncomfortable.

MOE

Nervously trying to change the subject:

Uh, the road, Eva?

EVA grabs the wheel with one hand, but pulls MOE closer with the other.

It's really getting hot in here.

EVA

Why don't you...take off your coat?

MOE tries to take his coat off but EVA's arm is in the way. After making this obvious, EVA reluctantly removes her arm. MOE takes off his coat and throws it into the back seat. There is a loud screech of a cat.

EVA (cont.)

My Heidrich!!

She lets go of the wheel and turns around to help her cat. Horns start blowing and cars screech on their brakes. MOE, terrified, leans over and grabs the wheel. EVA attempts to sit down and sits on MOE. She jumps back up as MOE gets out of the way and she sits back down and resumes driving, breathlessly. The horns and screeching tires stop.

Oh, Moe, you saved me, my car, my cat. What ever can I do to repay you?

MOE

Oh, I think you've done enough...

MOE looks at EVA, still recovering from the near fatal experience.

EVA

Whispering seductively:

I have a confession to make, Moe Marley.

MOE has moved close to his side of the car.

MOE

Extremely nervous:

Y-Yes, Eva?

EVA

I love you! I've always loved you!!

MOE is now crammed against his door and looks extremely nervous.

MOE

Desperately trying to change the subject:

That's great, Eva. Anyway...

EVA

I want you, Moe!

EVA lets go of the wheel and lunges at MOE who tries to cram himself farther away from EVA. Car horns begin blaring and tires screeching. The car door suddenly opens and MOE tumbles out. He screams which fades away as the lights go down.

Blackout.

End of Scene 4.

Scene 5

The scene reopens in the funeral home. BILL is passed out, slumped against the coffin, as RACHEL and KATHERINE sit by him. MEL is standing upstage, and appears pensive. The coffin is now closed. RACHEL is lightly slapping BILL's face, trying to revive him.

RACHEL

Bill? Bill?

She slaps his cheek again. She sighs, and without turning to her, MEL says:

MEL

Sweetly impatient:

Do you want me to try?

KATHERINE scowls at him, as BILL returns to consciousness.

RACHEL

Bill!

BILL

Disoriented:

Oh! Oh, I was having such a strange dream... I dreamed I was being beaten to death by butterflies...

RACHEL looks at her hand.

Butterflies... with really bad breath...

RACHEL looks indignant.

KATHERINE

Yes, well we're just glad that you're all right and we didn't have two tragedies to deal with this evening.

BILL gets up, and looks MEL over.

BILL

Aw, he doesn't look that bad...

MEL slowly and deliberately turns to face BILL.

MEL

Controlled:

She was referring to my dear wife, Edna.

BILL

Edna?

He whirls around to face the coffin.

That's right!

He recalls the opening of the coffin.

That was so weird; that Michael Jackson doctor thing. I really don't understand. Why would she want to have plastic surgery done there?

MEL

It was somethin' important to her. Somethin' many people looked at.

BILL

Her....her gums?

MEL

Annoyed:

Listen, she had a bout with gingivitis—she lost. Now, what is so goddamn unusual?

BILL

It...it was...nevermind.

EVA rushes in.

EVA

Mein Gott! De traffic is atrocious! I am zo sorry I am late.

MEL

Ah, you must be the Eva I've heard so much about.

EVA suddenly looks interested in MEL.

EVA

Seductively:

All good, I hope.

MEL is visibly uncomfortable.

MEL

Uh....well...

BILL, seeing MEL struggling, jumps in.

BILL

So, where's Moe?

EVA is staring at MEL and doesn't appear to have heard BILL. She turns to BILL.

EVA

Who? Oh, Moe. He's...vell...he fell out of de car on de vay here actually.

ALL

Incredulously, in unison:

HE WHAT?!

EVA

He fell out of de car.

RACHEL

Horried:

And you didn't stop?!

EVA

Listen honey, zhat goon boyfriend of yours hurt my poor Heidrich. When it comes down to my darling pussycat or Moe Marley, de cat takes priority.

RACHEL

Becoming increasingly hysterical:

I don't believe this, this is horrible, poor Moe, out in the middle of nowhere, maybe even unconscious, totally helpless, without food or water, wild animals stalking his crumpled body, lying in a ditch, bleeding...

KATHERINE

Interrupting:

Now, Rachel, you're overreacting.

RACHEL

Totally hysterical:

I'M NOT OVERREACTING!!!

RACHEL bursts into tears, punctuated by loud sobs.

MEL

Let's all just calm down, there's no use crying over spilled milk.

BILL

Or blood.

RACHEL, who's crying had started to subside, erupts into another crying fit.

MEL

Katherine, you stay here with Rachel. I'm going to go find Moe. Eva, do ya remember where it happened?

EVA

Annoyed:

What, do you think I know all und see all... It was somewhere on Route 45, I think.

BILL

Well, that should be easy, there's nothing out there but a bunch of farmland, not a soul for miles.

RACHEL erupts into another crying fit and runs out the front door.

BILL

Sheepishly:

Oops.

EVA walks up to MEL.

EVA

Seductively:

Zo, exactly how close of a relative are you to Moe?

MEL looks uncomfortable.

MEL

He's my nephew.

EVA

Seductively:

I see a strong family resemblance.

In normal voice:

You look tense.

MEL

Puzzled:

W-What?

EVA

Tense. Why don't you sit down and I will tell you a story.

MEL

Well, I...

EVA points to a chair.

EVA

Sternly:

Sitzen!

MEL promptly obeys and EVA walks behind him and begins massaging his shoulders.

I was never considered a normal girl, not by East Brunswick standards anyway.

MEL turns and looks quizzically at EVA, she ignores him.

EVA (cont.)

I had no friends, everyone thought I was evil. It was a rough life. Even I had my first crush, unfortunately, he died.

To herself.

I really wish someone would have told me that you cannot trap someone in a closed refrigerator for such a long period of time.

MEL jumps up, visibly disturbed.

MEL

Thank-Thank you, Eva, I-I'm relaxed.

RACHEL enters from stage right, not crying. EVA turns to her.

EVA

Coldly:

Feeling better, Rachel?

RACHEL

Coldly:

Quite, Eva.

There is an uncomfortable pause.

BILL

Don't you think you should go find Moe before he starts decomposing?

RACHEL erupts into another crying fit and is consoled by KATHERINE who shoots BILL an evil look. BILL looks embarrassed.

MEL

I'd better go before it gets dark.

EVA

I will go, too.

MEL

You don't have to...

EVA

Interrupting:

I am the one who knows where Moe was last.

MEL

Annoyed:

All right.

Addressing the group:

We'll be back as soon as we can.

EVA

Or later.

EVA pulls the protesting MEL offstage. KATHERINE continues comforting a sniffing RACHEL. BILL watches MEL and EVA leave, looks over at the two women, then looks at the coffin. He walks over to the coffin and, keeping an eye on the women, slowly inches the coffin across stage. BILL then attempts to open the lid of the coffin but as it opens it emits a loud screech. BILL quickly closes the lid and looks over to the women who haven't noticed. He visibly thinks and gets an idea. He walks over to the women.

BILL

Uh...excuse me, do...do either of you have a screwdriver?

RACHEL

Sniffling:

Sure.

RACHEL pulls out a screwdriver and hands it to BILL who looks at it puzzled, then at RACHEL.

BILL

Thanks...

RACHEL begins sniffling to both BILL and KATHERINE.

RACHEL

Oh, I don't want this to happen! All I want is for Moe to be all right!

BILL

I know, I know Rachel, but it's like that age-old saying: You can't always get what you want... You can't always get what you want...

RACHEL looks up at BILL, still believing that he might not be quoting a Rolling Stones song.

You can't always get...

BILL notices RACHEL's puzzlement and explains.

I've always had a thing for Shakespeare...

RACHEL, now convinced that BILL is completely insane, turns her back to him and goes to KATHERINE for sympathy. BILL sighs, waits for both women to be preoccupied then sneaks back over to the coffin. He then begins to unscrew the coffin hinges, keeping an eye on the preoccupied women. When finished, he slides the coffin lid off.

EVA

Offstage:

I don't know how I could have a flat tire.

BILL hastily tries to fix the coffin as MEL and EVA enter. They stop and stare. Attracted by the commotion, RACHEL and KATHERINE also turn and stare. All of this is unbeknownst to BILL who flings the screwdriver and moves the coffin back to its original position. Only afterwards does he realize he's being watched. He spins around and is visibly trying to find an excuse. BILL knocks on the coffin.

BILL

Strong oak.

MEL shakes his head.

MEL

Disgustedly:

Don't even try to explain.

EVA

Unfazed by BILL's craziness:

I don't believe this bad luck! I made it here with out any problem.

MEL

That was a large tear. If I didn't know better, I'd say someone slashed it with a screwdriver or somethin'.

BILL turns to RACHEL accusingly. RACHEL assumes an innocent expression. MEL sighs.

I guess that means we can't go look for Moe.

BILL

Why don't you use your car?

MEL

Annoyed:

Why don't you shut your can?

KATHERINE

Shouldn't we be getting back to Edna?

MEL

Annoyed:

Who? Oh, Edna. Where the hell were we?

BILL

You wanted each of us to speak...

MEL

Interrupting angrily:

Shut up! What's after that?

KATHERINE

The circle of prayer, I believe.

MEL

Circle of prayer? Sounds satanic.

KATHERINE

Annoyed:

Mel, would you cut your yapping for one minute so we can do this?

MEL grumbles an incoherent response.

OK, I would like everyone to make a circle and join hands.

They comply.

MEL

I feel like I'm in bloody Sunday School.

KATHERINE

Ignoring MEL:

Great. Now, I want each of you to say something you would like to pray for. Just blurt them out as you think of them. We'll start now.

Beat.

Pray for the beautiful earth that God has given us.

BILL

Or Buddha.

MEL

Angrily:

What are you, a goddamn Buddhist?!

BILL

Sheepishly:

Well...no. I just wanted to add some diversity.

MEL

Sarcastically:

Oh, great, he's a Tibetan monk slash necrophiliatic lawyer!

Short pause:

KATHERINE

Well, technically, Bill, Buddha isn't a god. Although there are some sects of Buddhism that—

MEL

The last straw:

For the love of God, Katherine! Just drop it, already!

The tension dies down, and silence returns.

EVA

Pray for men.

Everyone looks at Eva incredulously.

What?

There is another silence.

MEL

Pray for my darling wife. May she rest in peace.

Pause:

BILL

Pray for my '78 Dodge Cornet.

ALL

In unison:

What?!

BILL

It's coming out of the shop tomorrow.

There is another pause. RACHEL looks around expectantly, then exclaims herself:

RACHEL

Pray for Moe!

RACHEL begins to cry. The circle falls apart.

MEL

Listen, everybody! There's a good chance that Moe survived the fall from the car. Now, until we hear otherwise, let's try to be cheerful!

RACHEL blows her nose loudly.

BILL

Eva, why don't you tell us a little more about what you were talking about before?

EVA

Oh, yes, Moe is dead.

RACHEL starts crying again.

MEL

Sarcastically:

Another good move by the lawyerboy.

BILL

Fed up:

Can't you get it through your head?! I'm not a lawyer, I've never been a lawyer, and I never will be a lawyer! In fact, I've only been in court once!

He gets an idea.

Let me throw the lid off of that case...

He slides the lid off the coffin and continues in a dramatic fashion.

I was a defendant in that Fortensky versus Fruit of the Loom case. I thought I had a sure win, but no...

He continues looking directly at MEL and the others, but feels around the coffin for Edna's ring, the frustration and creepiness of this coming out in his impassioned speech. Everyone else stares, dumbfounded.

Oh, I dug hard for my information. I was determined to grab the attention of the judge. But I had no luck with the jewelry!

BILL then pulls out Edna's hand and pulls the ring off. He hastily corrects himself.

Jury!

MEL

Objection!

BILL

Roars:

Sustained!

MEL

Incredulous:

What are ya doin' with the hands of my wife?!

BILL

Covering up:

Showing you the mannerisms of the man of my downfall, the plaintiff. Oh, he was Mr. Congeniality, or, should I say Mr. Kiss-up. He didn't have an intelligent bone in his body, but boy, he could sure shake hands...

BILL goes to each person and shakes their hands, taking their rings as he does.

He ran around shaking everybody's hands. "Hi, how ya doin'?" "Are you feeling all right?" "How are the kids?" "Lock this guy up, OK?"

BILL looks at the five rings from the four people and one corpse. As he searches for Edna's, he throws all the rings but one onto the floor. Everyone stares at this strange display. As BILL finds the ring he needs, he runs out the front door, yelling "Taxi". Everybody looks at RACHEL.

RACHEL

Don't look at me. I didn't bring him.

Blackout.

End of scene 5.

Scene 6

The scene opens in the living room. SARAH is holding "Mr. Bobbins" in the air as SLIM looks on in horror.

SLIM

Mr. Bobbins?! Nooooo!!!!

SARAH

You just said that...

SLIM begins breathing erratically.

...seven times.

SLIM

Mr. Bobbins...

He stops and takes a breath.

You're right. I've got to regain my composure.

SLIM makes a violent motion with his neck, then returns to the same rigid SLIM as before.

That's better. You are a very sick woman, Sarah Hayes.

SARAH

Surprised:

I don't believe it.

SLIM

Psychos never do.

SARAH

Slim, that's the first time since our divorce since you called me by my full name.

SLIM

"Sarah"? I haven't said "Sarah" in that long? Well, Sarah, your fanatic...obsession of me is whittling me down, and he...

SLIM points to Mr. Bobbins.

...is the final cut that saws me in two.

SARAH

Sarcastically:

I find your comparison of yourself to a block of wood quite appropriate.

SLIM

Where was he?

SARAH

Mr. Bobbins or the block of wood?

SLIM

I thought he was destroyed in the science fair fire.

SARAH

Did you think I would forget to save the focal point of my project? I rescued Mr. Bobbins from the flames and stitched him up.

SLIM

Sarcastically:

You're a regular Florence Nightingale.

SARAH

I'd think you'd be thankful, considering you were the one who started the fire.

SLIM

Excuse me?

SARAH

I was able to pick up all the clues.

SLIM

It wasn't me. I always assumed that you started the fire.

SARAH

Me?

SLIM

Why not? You're an obsessive gal. Any woman who would steal my bear and hide it for half her life might be a closet pyro.

SARAH

I assumed that since I beat you out for the silver, you would want to destroy my work.

SLIM

Oh, so I was jealous again?

SARAH

Essentially, yes.

SLIM

Sarcastically:

Oh, wow, I sure am jealous of the second place winner. What was it? The effects of tranquilizers on mammals. Man, if only I had done better on my volcano, I could have been branch manager of a local bank! I could have been a professional! I'm so green with envy, I'm gonna start puking up Munchkins in the merry old land of Oz.

SARAH

Well, if you're not jealous and I'm not a pyromaniac, then I guess we'll never know how that fire started.

SLIM

I guess not.

Pause.

SARAH

By the way, who won first place over us?

SLIM

I don't know, some kid who did experiments with spontaneous combustion.

Pause.

Why didn't we have any of these types of conversations when we were married?

SARAH

Because I hated you.

This emits a chuckle from both of them which rises into full blown laughter.

SLIM

Laughing:

You hated me! I hated you, too!

SARAH

Laughing:

And I still hate you.

The laughter quickly diminishes.

SLIM

I hated you because I felt like I was being used. I felt less like the doting husband and more like the catch of the day.

SARAH

Or in your case, the pickled herring.

SLIM

I don't enjoy being reeled in...

SARAH

Interrupting:

I could have thrown you back.

SLIM shrugs.

SLIM

There are other fish in the sea.

SARAH

Aren't you the big fish in a small pond!

SLIM

Go to smelt!

SARAH

Stick it up your bass!

SLIM

You always have to get the last word in, don't you?

SARAH

That's usually the point of a shouting match.

SLIM

Angrily:

You're so damn competitive! I don't see why you continually fight for control...

He pauses.

...unless that's it...

To SARAH.

You, Miss Hayes, are a control freak. A lonely, obsessive control freak.

SARAH

And you're a lonely, bitter cynic. What's your point?

SLIM

You know my point! I am overwhelmed and exhausted from being one of your little obsessions! I want it to end now!

He angrily grabs a newspaper and begins writing on the corner of one of the pages. He rips it out.

Here, take this.

SARAH

Taking the paper and reading it:

What is this?

SLIM

It's written permission to let you do anything you want to my bank account. Once all my debts are paid, I want it closed.

SARAH sighs, crumples up the piece of paper and throws it back to SLIM.

SARAH

Forget it. You don't really owe us anything.

SLIM

So, I was right. Your visit here was nothing but a cheap excuse to torture your ex-husband.

SARAH

Without remorse:

Guilty as charged.

SLIM

Well, I hate to disappoint you, but I'm not going to let you ruin my life for a third time. I would greatly appreciate if you leave. I've got phone calls...

SARAH, seeing that she has lost the battle, begins packing up her briefcase.

SARAH

Dejected:

All right. Can't control everything, I guess.

SARAH picks up "Mr. Bobbins".

SLIM

Just...leave Mr. Bobbins.

SARAH smiles evilly.

The bear stays here.

SARAH turns to face SLIM.

SARAH

No.

SLIM

Listen, Mr. Bobbins is my frien...my stuffed toy, so I don't think you'll be taking him with you.

SARAH

With false sweetness:

Au contraire, Monfrere.

SLIM

Fine, then I'll sue for custody. I'm sure the lawyer I used for the divorce would be more than happy...

SARAH

Interrupting:

You mean the one serving two years for assaulting the prosecutor with the judge's gavel?

Pause.

SLIM

Then I'll just take him.

SLIM takes a step towards SARAH and she stands, ready to rip the bear's head off.

SARAH

Don't take one more step, Slim Pickin's or you'll get an up close and personal look at the insides of Mr. Bobbins.

SLIM

Horrified:

You wouldn't.

He takes a step towards SARAH, then stops.

SARAH

Don't try me! Just sit back down, Slim, unless you want to pick up fluff after I leave.

SLIM looks indecisive for a moment, then sits down, admitting defeat.

SLIM

Frustrated:

Forget it. Take the bear. Just go!

SLIM buries his face in his hands. SARAH, dissatisfied with his reaction, rips the head off "Mr. Bobbins" anyway. SLIM slowly looks up and upon seeing the decapitated bear, inhales sharply. He looks at SARAH and struggles to say something to her. Calmly.

Excuse me.

SLIM walks out the front door and screams.

NOOOOOO!

Crying:

FOR THE LOVE OF GOD, NO!!

SLIM continues screaming. SARAH calmly sits down in SLIM's seat, whistling to herself. SLIM comes back in, now calm.

You disgust me.

SARAH

I do my best...

SLIM

You are one of the worst, Sarah. It isn't enough to control with you. You have to destroy as well! What made you this way? What made you into a force of destruction?

SARAH

Sarcastically:

Probably a bowl of popcorn and a Godzilla movie marathon.

SLIM

Unnerved because of his own sarcastic style being used against him:

And...why Mr. Bobbins?

SARAH

Well, your neck is too thick.

SLIM

Angrily:

You destroyed Mr. Bobbins, my only link to my childhood.

SARAH

Besides me.

SLIM

Besides you, but that's irrelevant. When you killed that bear, you killed something inside of me, too.

SARAH scoffs.

SARAH

Gee, a few minutes ago, you didn't even know he still existed.

SLIM

I'd rather remember his death in the fire than this! You really are a monster!

SARAH

Maybe, but I'm also the only remnant left of your distant past.

She stands up.

Remember when you were more than just a bitter shell of a man?

SLIM

Are you implying that I should look to you for nostalgia?

SARAH

Why not?

SLIM

Bitterly:

Because you ruined me.

SLIM is on the verge of tears.

I was kinder to you than I have ever been to anyone else! I reached out to you and you destroyed my life. How am I supposed to be able to reach out to anyone else again?

SARAH

Sarcastically:

With your hands!

She begins poking SLIM in the chest, but he pushes her away.

SLIM

Bitterly:

Ex-wife or not, symbol of my childhood or not, you are an evil woman!

He steps towards SARAH. Loudly, with all the venom he can muster.

I hate you!!

SARAH

Stepping forward:

I hate you!

They suddenly embrace and kiss passionately, falling back onto the couch.

Blackout.

End of Scene 6.

END OF ACT I.

Act II
Scene 1

The scene opens with MOE lying unconscious on a bed. The lights are soft, but colorful to suggest a dream-like setting. MOE begins to stir and suddenly snaps his head up, scanning the surroundings.

MOE

This is a change.

He sits up slowly.

How did I get here?

Heavy footsteps approach from stage left. MOE looks on nervously, and is shocked as EVA enters, dressed only in a button down shirt.

EVA

Slyly:

Vas it good for you, Moe?

MOE

Horrified:

We didn't.

EVA

Walking to MOE:

Ve did.

MOE

Gets up:

Eva, I'm practically a married man! If you think that I would ever...

As he gets out of bed, it can be seen that MOE does not have any pants on. MOE stares at his boxers and screams. EVA reaches him, puts her arms around him, and falls down with him behind the bed. MOE continues screaming as the lights fade out, and the normal lights come up. MOE wakes up, and looks up from behind the bed as footsteps approach again. MOE gets up, wearing pants now, expecting a recurrence of his dream. DEL LACUSO, a farmer with a heavy Brooklyn accent, runs in from stage left and, seeing that MOE is all right, gives him a puzzled stare.

DEL

You're awake.

MOE

Hesitantly:

You're not Eva.

DEL

Puzzled:

Eva? Who's Eva?

MOE

Uh, nevermind. I just had a very strange dream about an insane German-accented nymphomaniac.

MOE checks his pants and zips his fly shut. DEL stares at MOE, puzzled.

DEL

Were you like this before I found you on the side of the road?

MOE chuckles nervously, but, seeing that DEL is serious, He stops.

MOE

No.

MOE shakes his head.

I'm sorry, I've had a rough day. Falling out of a car was the least of my worries.

DEL

How did you fall out of a car?

MOE

Ask the German nymphomaniac.

DEL

Changing the subject:

Are you all right?

MOE

Luckily, I feel fine. I just need to get my bearings and I'm ready to go back in the fire.

MOE scratches his back, drawing notice to the large iron burn on his shirt. DEL notices it and gives MOE a puzzled stare. MOE turns around.

I'm really thankful for what you've done. I owe you my life.

MOE extends his hand and DEL shakes it.

I'm Moe Marley.

DEL

Del Lacuso. You're on my farm.

MOE

Farmer Del?

DEL

Short for Delano. Ya know, like "Franklin Delano Roosevelt".

MOE

I always thought it was "Delanor".

DEL

No, his wife's name was "Eleanor", his middle name was "Delano".

MOE

Her name wasn't Eleano?

DEL

No. Nor was it "Delanor".

MOE

Nor was it?

DEL

"No" was it.

MOE

Oh?

DEL

"Or"!

MOE

Ah.

DEL

Why all the fuss over my name, anyway?

MOE

Oh, no reason.

MOE begins whistling "The Farmer in the Dell".

DEL

Annoyed:

Now, don't you start with that stupid song! I can't stand it!

MOE

Embarrassed:

I'm sorry...I thought it would be funny.

DEL

Sarcastically:

Yeah, funny as hell.

MOE

Really! I'm sorry.

MOE pauses.

I guess I should have more respect for farming. After all, it's in my blood. My ancestors on my mother's side were all farmers, at least until the famine hit. Then, from my great-grandfather on, the O'Malley family had to find their way in America. I still remember, every night my mother would sit down and tell me something different about the hardships my predecessors faced. And...

MOE breaks down, crying.

...those were the most beautiful stories I've ever heard!

MOE turns to DEL for a response, but he has fallen asleep. With a grunt, he awakes.

DEL

I'm sorry, what?

MOE sighs.

MOE

Things just haven't gone right today. My girlfriend got upset with my best friend, my next door neighbor made a pass at me, and I still haven't gotten to my dead aunt's wake.

DEL

I know exactly what you're feeling.

MOE

You do? How?

DEL

Think about it. What do all three of your problems have in common?

MOE

Pet Cemetery?

DEL

I hope not.

MOE

What, then?

DEL

Women!

MOE

Women?

DEL

Your girlfriend, your neighbor, your aunt: They're the causes of your problems, you said so yourself.

MOE

Well, yeah, I guess, but I wasn't trying to blame anybody...

DEL

There's no need to blame. Trust me, I've done a lot of research on this. I sat through two whole seasons of "Laverne and Shirley". I know what women are really like.

MOE appears puzzled.

You don't believe me?

MOE

No, I'm just trying to think how much you can learn from Lenny and Squiggy. It certainly can't be enough for me to break up with my girlfriend over.

DEL

Don't be too sure about that. I had a girlfriend once, but when I told her I wanted to be a farmer, she just laughed in my face. Even though I loved her, I didn't back down, I kept at my dream. Once she realized she couldn't break me, she left me.

MOE

Left you?

DEL

I wanted farming and she wanted something easier.

MOE

You wanted fresh air, she wanted Times Square?

DEL

Yeah.

MOE

You didn't mind the chores, but she would miss the stores!

DEL

Exactly! But do you know what she hated most?

MOE

Your pig, Wilbur?

DEL

Puzzled:

No. Where would you get an idea like that?

MOE

Nowhere...

MOE begins whistling the "Green Acres" theme song. DEL gives MOE an annoyed stare.

DEL

Look, stop with the stupid Green Acres stuff, this is serious! You've gotta be strong to get rid of a controlling girlfriend like mine.

MOE

B-But, I love Rachel!

DEL

Oh, love is fine, and if you have a good thing going with Rachel, then I hope everything works out great, but if she wants to change who you are and who your friends are, then that ain't love. That's slavery!

MOE

I never thought about it like that. I was going to propose to Rachel today, but now it seems that I've got a lot of thinking to do.

DEL

I thought you would.

MOE

You know, if those three hadn't have caused me all that grief, I never would have been in this whole mess! The aunt I never knew, who wants me at her funeral...

DEL

Yeah!

MOE

The neighbor who invades my life for her own desires...

DEL

Yeah!

MOE

...and Rachel...

MOE softens.

Rachel...

DEL

Hey! Don't be getting soft on me now! You've got to look at who you're really in love with, here. What do you love about Rachel?

MOE

Well, she's got a great personality, for one thing. And she's the only one who understands me.

DEL

Interrupting:

Understands you?

He scoffs.

Is this the same woman who won't tolerate your friends?

MOE

But...

DEL

Interrupting:

And if all she's got is a great personality, then I'd say you haven't been too specific about who you fall in love with. There are plenty of girls out there like that! Moe Marley, before you can truly know what a woman is, you have to know what you should be as a man.

MOE

I should be a farmer?

DEL

Whatever works, but you should specifically know what a man deserves.

DEL checks his watch.

Well, it's getting late. Why don't we find some place to eat? A man's place. We'll talk more there.

MOE

Convinced of DEL's argument:

That sounds good...

DEL

Egging MOE on:

Are you sure Aunt Edna won't miss you?

MOE

Oh, I'm sure. And if the dead woman does, she'll just have to wait for the man to come back. The Manly Moely Marley!

They exit stage right.

Blackout.

End of Scene 1.

Scene 2

Scene opens in MOE's living room. SLIM and SARAH are curled up on the couch kissing. BILL enters from the front door hurriedly and rushes across the stage oblivious of them.

BILL

Slim?! Slim?!

BILL exits through the kitchen and, realizing SLIM is on the couch with a woman, reenters slowly.

Slim!

SLIM

What?

BILL

Bewildered:

That's...That's...

SLIM

Annoyed:

What?

BILL

A woman!!

SLIM

Sarcastically:

You're quite the Rhodes scholar.

BILL

Bewildered:

But, it's...it's...

SARAH

Slim's ex-wife Sarah.

Extending a hand:

Nice to see you, too, Bill.

Seriously:

There is a perfectly logical explanation...

BILL

Interrupting:

There's no time for that now! Haven't you heard what happened to Moe?!

SLIM

Ah yes, Moe. I went through a lot of trouble getting his reservation at Chez Chez. They tell me he has a secluded table by the window with a beautiful view of the bay.

BILL

The bay? Isn't Chez Chez on the Interstate? That's miles from the bay!

SLIM

Yes, but apparently they give you binoculars. I'd think Moe would be pleased.

BILL

Stymied:

Slim, since when did you do anybody a favor?

SLIM

Hugging SARAH:

Love can do funny things to people...

BILL

Extremely spooked out:

When did the pod people start landing?. In any case, you'd better show some of that love for Moe.

SLIM

Why?

BILL

Moe fell out of Eva's car. He could be dead!

SLIM

That'll put a dent in his wedding plans.

BILL

Exasperated:

Aren't you just the least bit worried?! Moe is somewhere in the middle of nowhere, out there!

SARAH

Where?

BILL

Yes!

SARAH

He's got a point, honey.

SLIM

Irritably:

I wish I knew what the hell it was.

BILL

Extremely exasperated:

Slimmm!! Aren't you just the tiniest bit concerned?!

SLIM

Listen, this isn't the first time Moe has been thrown from a moving vehicle.

BILL AND SARAH

In unison:

What?

SLIM

Sure. Back in our college days we used to follow a rock band around the country. We were making a trip from Maine to Wisconsin and he was getting a little bit crazy...

The lights dim and the car from Act One, Scene 4 is wheeled onto the left side of the stage. The car is spotlighted. MOE is sitting in the passenger's seat and SLIM is driving. Both have wigs modeling 1970's hairstyles to enhance the flashback setting.

MOE

Singing cheerfully:

"Do the Hustle! Doot doot doot doo doot-doot doo doot doot doot doot doot doo doot-doot doo doot doot doot doot doot doo doot-doot doo doot doot doot doot doot doo dootdoot doo doot doot."

SLIM glances over at MOE, extremely irritated.

MOE (cont.)

"Doot deet doot dee doot-doot dee doot deet doot deet doot dee doot-doot dee..."

Without taking his eyes off the road, SLIM shoves MOE out the passenger side door. The spot is turned off and the lights go back up. SLIM, minus wig, returns to the living room scene as the car is wheeled off.

SLIM

Later, Moe said that the fall didn't hurt him at all. It was the bus that hit him from behind that put him in traction for two months.

SARAH

That sounds awful.

SLIM

Fondly remembering the event:

Yup, Moe missed a great concert.

BILL

Well even so, he's still lost! Look, I'm gonna call up a few people I know in farm country.

SLIM

With a smirk:

Like that chick Prunella Bovine from the personal ads?

BILL

Annoyed:

Would you shut up?! She was a very nice girl, things just didn't work out.

SLIM

Grinning evilly:

Bill spooked the chickens.

SLIM and SARAH chuckle.

BILL

Angrily:

Shut up! Shut up! If you'll excuse me, I have important phone calls to make.

BILL storms through the kitchen.

SLIM

Turning to SARAH:

Alone at last.

BILL

From offstage:

But Prunella, I love you!

There is a pause.

No, don't hang up...duhhh!!

SLIM

If not quiet.

SLIM and SARAH resume kissing on the couch. The doorbell rings and the couple ignores it. It rings again and BILL, a juice box in his hand, rushes out and opens the front door, admitting RACHEL.

BILL

Rachel!

RACHEL

Bill, have they found Moe yet?

BILL

Taking RACHEL's hands:

No word yet. It's just too soon. It really is just too soon. It honestly...truly is just too...

BILL is interrupted by the phone ringing.

Hold that thought. It might be Prunella.

He runs into the kitchen.

RACHEL

To herself:

Prunella?

RACHEL sits down on the couch, oblivious of SLIM and SARAH sitting next to her. SLIM looks up.

SLIM

To SARAH:

Did you ever feel like you're being watched?

RACHEL looks up, surprised, then, seeing who it is, gets up and screams.

RACHEL

It's...it's...

SARAH

Annoyed:

Didn't we just go through this? Yes, Sarah Hayes, Slim's ex-wife. Nice to see you again, too.

SLIM

I see introductions are not needed.

RACHEL

Yes, I mean, no. She's the boss.

SLIM

Bruce Springsteen?

RACHEL

Miss Hayes, what are you doing here?

SARAH

Customer relations.

SARAH points to RACHEL.

You're Rachel, right? The new one...

RACHEL

Cautiously:

Yeah...

SARAH

Then, I guess the question should be, what are you doing here?

RACHEL

I'm dating the guy who lives here.

SARAH

You mean Moe Marley? The dead guy?

RACHEL

No! He's not...

BILL enters from the kitchen.

BILL

Matter-of-factly:

Moe's dead.

RACHEL

Very perturbed:

What?!!

SLIM

Dibs on his stuff.

BILL

Nobody in farm country has seen him...

Ominously:

...and it's coyote season...

There is a howl of a wolf.

RACHEL

Oh, no!

There is another howl.

SLIM

Annoyed:

Would somebody call the guy across the street and tell him to shut his dog up?!

SARAH

Listen, before we all start jumping to conclusions, let's all calm down, sit down and think rationally.

SLIM

Sarcastically:

There goes our negative square roots.

SARAH shoots SLIM an irritated glare as everyone sits down and an uncomfortable silence follows punctuated by a ticking coo-coo clock. BILL takes a drink from his juice box which emits a loud empty sound.

Hey Hoover, would you shut up?

BILL stops. The clock continues to tick as an uncomfortable silence follows. RACHEL clears her throat nervously.

What?

RACHEL

Nervously:

Oh, nothing...nothing.

An uncomfortable silence follows. The clock continues ticking.

BILL

So, anyone know how to play rummy?

SLIM

Annoyed:

No.

BILL

OK...

Uncomfortable silence. Clock ticks.

SLIM

So, Rachel, what do you do at this bank?

RACHEL looks warily at SARAH.

RACHEL

Well, I work with the customers...

SLIM

Stupid.

RACHEL

...cash the checks...

SLIM

Stupid.

RACHEL

Increasingly agitated:

...introduce clients...

SLIM

Stupid.

RACHEL

More agitated:

...handle loans...

SLIM

Stupid.

RACHEL

More agitated:

...supervise the drive-through...

SLIM

Stupid.

RACHEL

Standing up, extremely agitated:

...and anything else that needs to be done!

SLIM

Sounds like a real crappy job!

The coo-coo clock sounds.

RACHEL

Angrily:

At least I have a job, you lunatic! What do you think of that?!

RACHEL and SLIM glare at each other. BILL breaks the silence.

BILL

Say, how about some Mario Brothers?

Silence:

Tough crowd...

He goes to the television set and begins playing video games.

RACHEL

Referring to SLIM:

I really don't believe this! Even with his best friend possibly dead, he still finds time to be a supercilious sarcastic scoundrel.

SARAH

Hey, he's my supercilious sarcastic scoundrel.

RACHEL

How can you just sit here when Moe could be out there lying in a ditch somewhere? Show a little compassion!

SLIM

I'll show you passion.

SLIM and SARAH resume kissing.

RACHEL

Furious:

That's it! I'm leaving!

RACHEL strides toward the front door. SLIM looks up.

SLIM

Rachel?

RACHEL turns, expecting an apology. SLIM reaches into his pocket and pulls out a pair of keys which he throws to her.

In the future, use the back door. We do our lovin' right here.

With a "HMMPH", RACHEL storms to the front door. SLIM and SARAH resume kissing. Upon reaching the door, RACHEL stops, and turns around.

RACHEL

If Moe comes back...

Everyone ignores her. Bitterly:

...oh, nevermind!

RACHEL storms out the front door, slamming it behind her.

Blackout.

End of Scene 2.

Scene 3

The scene takes place in a bar. The only scenery is a bar counter stage left, at an angle so that the characters can face the audience. The BARTENDER, a woman roughly the same age as MOE, is cleaning glasses. MOE, and DEL walk in from stage right, their arms around each other's shoulders like "manly men", and take seats at the bar.

MOE

With smug confidence:

Good evening.

BARTENDER

Eyeing the pair curiously:

Hello...Why are you two so chipper?

MOE

Well, we're just celebrating our realization that we don't need women in our lives.

DEL grunts an affirmative.

BARTENDER

I think you boys are looking for a different kind of bar.

The BARTENDER resumes polishing glasses as MOE and DEL look at each other then look away and quickly remove their arms from each other's shoulders. They try to avoid any homosexual presentation. MOE tentatively turns back to the BARTENDER.

MOE

What I meant to say was that we're on to the games that women play and won't be sucked into their traps again.

BARTENDER

Changing the subject:

Oh. How 'bout a drink?

MOE

Yeah!

DEL

Sounds good. What do ya have on tap?

BARTENDER

Bluntly:

Beer.

MOE

What kinds do you have?

BARTENDER

Beer.

DEL

Puzzled:

OK, I'll have...beer.

BARTENDER

What kind?

MOE and DEL scoff.

MOE

Are you doing that on purpose?

BARTENDER

Doing what?

MOE sighs.

MOE

Nevermind, we'll just have water.

DEL

Make it two.

BARTENDER

Suit yourself.

She fills two glasses with water and slides them over to the two men.

Sooo, you boys have been having problems with the fairer sex?

DEL

Well, in a matter of speaking, yes. Obviously, we aren't out to attack anybody; we're just sick of being treated like dirt.

BARTENDER

Honey, from what I've seen, some women treat men good, some women treat men bad. There isn't any partiality either way.

DEL

That's not how I've seen it.

DEL begins eating beer nuts from a bowl on the bar.

BARTENDER

Then you must know a lot of good men. Most have to deal with the same amount of bad people from both genders. Only yesterday a guy walked in here and, for no reason, spits right in the beer nuts.

DEL, who is still eating the nuts, begins choking and spitting.

BARTENDER (cont.)

Just like that...

MOE

Returning to the argument:

I'm not trying to disagree with you...

BARTENDER

Cutting in:

But you are.

MOE

What?

BARTENDER

You are going to disagree with me; I can already tell.

MOE

Taking a breath:

All right, I'm not trying to argue...no...I'm not trying to offend...uh...

Frustrated, MoE looks at his glass of water.

I could really use a beer.

BARTENDER

What kind?

MOE

Frustrated:

Look, I'm not trying to listen to you, but my experiences with annoying men and women has been much different than you've explained. I should know, I have to put up with two of the world's most difficult men everyday. But these two guys never fail to back me up, no matter what else they do. It's different with women.

BARTENDER

How so?

MOE

Take my dead Aunt Edna, for example. She never spoke much with any of the family, even on holidays. She never gave me a chance to find out who she is. Then she dies and I'm supposed to go to her funeral. The only time she ever gave to me was after she couldn't say anything to me anymore!

BARTENDER

Sarcastically:

That's horrible! I can't believe your aunt would be so thoughtless as to die.

DEL

Exactly!

He pauses.

Oh, you're being sarcastic.

BARTENDER

Maybe you fellas can suspend your own deaths, but the rest of us can't. A death is a loss, not only for the deceased, but also for everyone around them! I don't blame you for being angry, but be angry with the circumstances, not your aunt.

DEL

Well, that's fine. I see the truth in that, but what about Eva?

BARTENDER

Eva? Who's Eva?

MOE

Eva's my next door neighbor and she's insane! Lately, I've noticed that she's been coming on to me.

BARTENDER

I'd think you would be flattered.

MOE

Not exactly. Eva is obsessive, fanatical, and dangerous. She almost got me killed today!

BARTENDER

Sarcastically:

Sounds like a typical woman.

DEL

Yeah!

DEL thinks for a moment.

Was that sarcasm again?

BARTENDER

To MOE:

I think that it only takes a little bit of common sense to figure out that not all women are psychopaths.

MOE

Excluding all those living near me.

BARTENDER

And I suppose all the men you know are sane?

MOE

Certainly!

MOE then notices DEL, who is entertaining himself by sucking water into a straw, pinching the top, trapping the water in it, lifting it up, then letting the water pour back into his glass, chuckling to himself.

Well...not like Eva is!

BARTENDER

Becoming disinterested:

I see...

The BARTENDER goes back to polishing glasses. MOE turns to her.

MOE

I've noticed something. You've been lumping the people I have problems with into broad categories, like "neighbors" and "dead people", but how about Rachel, the woman I was going to marry? You don't marry more than one person do you?

DEL and the BARTENDER look at each other thoughtfully.

More than one person at a time?

DEL and the BARTENDER continue to look thoughtful.

Legally?

DEL and the BARTENDER shake their heads in negation.

MOE (cont.)

My girlfriend isn't just a neighbor or a friend, she's the woman I would have married! That's all off now; she didn't know how to deal with my friends. And there lies my main problem with women: they overreact! Whether it's a reclusive aunt, a temptress neighbor, or an unforgiving wife, they take things to the extreme, and I'm not going to let them take me with them!

DEL places a hand on MOE's shoulder.

DEL

Sniffling:

That was beautiful.

DEL bursts into tears. After a few seconds, he gains control of himself and takes a deep breath.

I really think we had a moment here. Oh no, I'm gonna cry again. Excuse me.

DEL hurriedly exits, stage left. MOE and the BARTENDER look after him.

BARTENDER

To MOE:

I'm guessing his problems with women are...unique.

MOE

Yeah.

There is silence as the BARTENDER resumes polishing the glasses. MOE plays with his water and begins doing the same thing DEL was doing with his water. The BARTENDER stops polishing and looks at him. MOE realizes what he is doing and drops the straw.

Oh, my God!

MOE quickly pushes the glass away. MEL, exhausted, enters from stage right and sits down next to MOE on the opposite side DEL was on. MOE continues to look at his glass of water, deep in thought. The BARTENDER comes up to MEL.

BARTENDER

What'll it be?

MEL

How 'bouta beer?

BARTENDER

Sure thing.

The BARTENDER pours a beer and puts it in front of MEL.

You look pretty shook up. You OK?

MEL sighs.

MEL

As good as any man could possibly be after having his wife die then find out his nephew fell out of a movin' vehicle and was killed.

MOE turns.

MOE

Geez, that's a real coincidence...

Both recognize each other at the same time.

MEL

Moe?!

In unison:

MOE

Uncle Mel?!

MEL

Where in the bloody hell have you been?! I've searched half the goddamn highway lookin' for you!

MOE

I was found unconscious on the side of the road by a kindly farmer who nursed me back to health and made me realize I hate women. By the way, how was the wake?

MEL

Tentatively:

As good as I expected, until some crazy kraut named Eva waltzes in and calmly announces that you fell out of a movin' car. Christ, we all thought you were dead!

MEL pulls the beer towards himself.

MOE

Uncle Mel, I didn't think you drank. You've been dry ever since Aunt Edna made you give it up. Yes, Aunt Edna...

MOE's eyes widen as he comes to a realization. MEL and the BARTENDER freeze: MEL looking at his glass, the BARTENDER at MOE. The lights dim and MOE is spotlighted.

Aunt Edna changed your life...

MOE stands and looks out towards the audience.

Oh, Aunt Edna may have only been doing work with her church, but her personal temperance movement made my uncle feel better. It wasn't easy though. If I remember anything about my reclusive aunt, it was that Christmas when she kicked Mel's friend Jack Daniels out of the house. She also didn't allow any alcohol.

As MOE speaks, DEL comes in from stage left and walks back to his seat, despite the freeze, and sits down. He looks at his water, picks up the straw, but has second thoughts and throws it away. He then looks up and notices MOE speaking. DEL gets up, looks at MOE, then squints and looks out into the audience, as if to see who MOE is talking to, then looks back at MOE, puzzled. As DEL returns to his seat, the monologue should be ending.

MOE (cont.)

When it was all over, though, Mel was a happier and healthier person. He was still the same frantic guy, but the bitterness and the cynicism melted away with the beer steins and shot glasses.

MOE turns to MEL who is staring at his drink.

Has this all ended now? Have all the things that Edna gave you died with her?

MOE looks back at the audience.

I guess women are more important than I thought. If one woman had the conviction to love, to turn her husband's life around, then I have no right to be upset with them.

MOE sits down and the bar comes back to life. DEL watches this transformation and looks at MOE, puzzled.

DEL

Are you feelin' all right?

MOE

Yeah. Why?

DEL stares at MOE then turns back to his drink. MOE then turns to MEL.

Uncle Mel, I can't let you do this!

MEL

Calmly:

Do what?

MOE

I can't let you ruin your life with a drink!

MEL

Moe, what does it look like I'm doin'?

MOE

Exasperated:

You're boozing it up!

MEL

I haven't touched a drop of alcohol for 15 years, Moe.

MEL reaches for the glass, picks it up and reflects.

And I'm not gonna start now.

MEL pushes the glass away.

MOE

What?

MEL

With all of the fuss over the wake and the lawyers and the funeral, I never have had the time to truly reflect on your aunt's demise.

MEL motions to the beer.

I just wanted to see if I could still make it without her.

He sighs.

MEL (cont.)

She was quite a woman.

MOE

Yes, she was.

MOE turns to DEL.

I'm sorry, Del, but your philosophy just doesn't appeal much to me anymore.

DEL

Confused:

I don't remember telling you my alien infiltration of the Vatican theory...

MOE gives DEL a puzzled look.

MOE

In any case, I found out just how important women are to me. That's why I'm going to marry Rachel!

DEL

Hey! I thought we went over this. You're Manly Moely Marley! You're not going to let women take over your life!

MOE gets up.

MOE

Del, I'm not going to have anyone take over anything. I'm not fighting a battle, I'm in love!

MOE turns to the audience.

I'm in love with the girl I love!

MEL gets up.

MEL

Yes, well, you might want to propose to the girl you love with this.

MEL pulls out a ring and hands it to MOE.

MOE

Aunt Edna's ring!

He thinks for a second.

I sent Bill over to your house to get this.

MEL

Well, he never showed up there. Showed up at the wake, though, and I wasn't about to give it to a lawyer.

Confidentially:

Listen, Moe, I hope you don't pick your women like you pick your friends.

MOE

Uh..no, my taste is a little better.

MEL

Well, there's another load off my mind. Oh, one thing, the girl ya love thinks you're dead.

MOE

You're right! Well, in that case, let's get moving before she marries someone else!

DEL and MEL look at MOE.

Or...or at least so she won't worry about me any more.

DEL and MEL nod in agreement and the three of them exit out the front door.

BARTENDER

I suppose I'd be happier for them if they had paid for their drinks.

Blackout.

End of Scene 3.

Scene 4

The scene opens in MOE's living room. SLIM and SARAH are sitting on the floor, playing a board game. BILL is playing a video game on the television. SLIM rolls the dice and looks at the result.

SLIM

Six. All right, I have this game in the bag.

He pulls a flap on the game board.

There's my man! I'm going to the prom with Derek!

SARAH

Let me see that! That's not Derek!

SLIM

Sure it is.

Evasive:

He's just wearing taped glasses... and a pocket protector.

SARAH

That's Danny, the chess club president.

SLIM

Look closer. It's just Derek incognito.

SARAH

Don't be ridiculous. It's Danny!

SLIM

It's Derek!

BILL

Facing SLIM and SARAH, annoyed:

Mr. and Mrs. Bickerson, would you kindly shut up?! I've got one more life in this damn game and I don't need to hear you two arguing over which member of the same sex Slim's gonna date.

BILL goes back to his game.

SARAH

Why don't you just roll again?

SLIM

Good idea.

He rolls and they look at the results.

Six.

SARAH groans.

BILL

To himself while playing the video game:

Level four...lives one...Here's the jump...

BILL throws down the controller and jumps up, enraged.

Dammit! Why does he always fall in the little pit?! Why can't you make the jump?! I mean, I mean you're supposed to be able to do these type of things; when you need to jump, you jump!!! God, are you a stupid excuse for entertainment!! I don't believe I bought such a piece of garbage!

He notices the game board and calms down quickly.

"Mystery Date"? It's sort of weird that Moe would have that game in his room.

SLIM

What's so weird about that?

BILL

Well, he's not a preadolescent female...

SLIM

Oh, Moe was into that stuff.

SARAH and BILL look at each other, concerned.

SARAH

To SLIM:

Pre-teen girls?

SLIM

No, board games. Classic board games. They don't make them like "Mystery Date" anymore. Now, it's all that "Mall Madness" and "Dream Phone" crap. No, only a few games could stand the test of time, and Moe knew that.

There is a pause as everyone looks deep in thought.

BILL

Yeah, he did.

BILL sighs.

You know, I still haven't considered the fact that Moe is gone.

SLIM

He could be fine...

BILL

Interrupting:

But what if he isn't?! I don't think either of us are prepared for his death. I know he wasn't. Moe Marley was in the prime of his life. He was about to propose, for crying out loud!

Muttering:

BILL (cont.)

Getting killed before proposing at a wake. The same thing happened in Pet Cemetery...

SLIM and SARAH give BILL a puzzled look as he continues in a normal tone and beginning to break down.

The point is, Moe deserved better than that! Moe deserved life! It's just not fair!

He puts his head in his hands and cries. BILL, at this point, should be near the front door. MEL enters from the front door and stops at the sight of BILL. BILL, sensing someone is near, puts his arm around MEL and weeps on his shoulder.

MEL

Practicin' your crocodile tears for your kangaroo court, lawyerboy?

Upon seeing who he is crying on, BILL screams and jumps back.

BILL

Mel O'Malley! What are you doing here?

MEL

Raisin' the deceased.

He looks towards the front door and MOE enters and comes to center stage.

MOE

Great news, everybody! The reports of my death were greatly exaggerated!

Everyone, except MEL, is happily surprised.

SLIM

To SARAH:

He's breathing, pay up.

SARAH sighs and takes money out of her purse and gives it to SLIM.

BILL

Moe, are you all right?

MOE

I feel great, as anyone would after taking stock of one's life...

SLIM

Sarcastically:

Treat thy body as a warehouse.

MOE

Ignoring SLIM:

...and I was able to shut the door on things from my past.

He notices SARAH.

Oh, it's Sarah...

He then notices "Mystery Date".

...and "Mystery Date".

SARAH

Moe, are you sure you're all right? Do you need anything?

MOE

Well, I guess I could use a beer.

SARAH

What kind?

MOE sighs.

MOE

Coffee would be fine.

SARAH

I'll get that.

SLIM

I'll help.

SLIM nudges MOE, winks and accompanies SARAH off stage left.

MOE

Wow, I've never seen Slim that happy. In fact, I don't think Slim's seen himself that happy. Anyway, it's great to be back.

He looks around.

Where's Rachel?

BILL

Nervously:

Rachel? Uh, Rachel's...

There is the sound of a car crash.

Saved by disaster!

BILL runs out the front door. MOE and MEL look at each other in wonderment. BILL shouts from offstage.

Oh, my God!!

KATHERINE

Offstage:

It's the lawyer!

DEL

Offstage:

He's gonna need one!

BILL, KATHERINE, and DEL enter from stage left, arguing.

BILL

Angrily:

I don't believe this!!

He grabs SLIM's newspaper from off the side table and tears it up, throwing pieces of paper everywhere.

I just don't believe this could happen to me!!!

MOE

What happened this time?

DEL

Pointing to KATHERINE:

This woman stopped short, right in front of my car!

KATHERINE

Angrily:

Don't go blaming this on me! I swerved to avoid somebody's wrecked car, but as I passed, a telephone pole fell on my hood. Why would someone leave a wrecked car in the middle of the road?!

BILL

Venomously:

Well, it just might be a little hard to drive it to the Jiffy Lube, don't you think!

DEL

Angrily:

I'll Jiffy Lube you!

BILL, KATHERINE, and DEL begin arguing loudly.

MEL

Yelling:

Shut the hell up!!!

Everyone stops and stares at MEL who continues in a normal tone.

Now, as important as your automobiles may be to ya, you might show a little kindness and acknowledge my nephew, Moe. He's alive, ya know.

BILL and KATHERINE give a begrudging, "hello". DEL adds, "I already knew that".

MOE

Hi. Uh, I'd like to thank everybody for helping me out, even at the cost of life and...car. Let me introduce everyone.

MOE points to DEL.

This is Del Lacuso, a misogynous farmer.

DEL

Confused:

I grow vegetables...

MOE points to MEL and KATHERINE.

MOE

And this is my uncle, Mel, and his wife's best friend, Katherine.

KATHERINE

No...

MOE

No?

KATHERINE

I was Edna's urologist.

MOE

Oh...that's what I was going to say: Aunt Edna's best...urologist...

BILL

Why would you go to your patient's funeral?

KATHERINE

Well, Edna was upset with her test results, and, well, we sort of ended up at odds with each other.

MOE

What did you do, tell her to piss off?

MOE begins laughing hysterically. Everyone stares at him, disgusted. He stops, embarrassed.

Uh, anyway, I'm sorry about your cars. Will you be able to drive them home?

KATHERINE

Hesitantly:

Maybe...

MOE

What's wrong with them?

KATHERINE

Evasive:

Uhh...my headlight is out...

DEL

Equally evasive:

Yeah...and I'm out of window washer fluid.

MOE sighs.

MOE

OK, in that case we had better take pictures for our respective insurance companies. Bill, get the camera.

MOE exits out the front door.

BILL

Uh, Mel, would you get the camera?

BILL exits out the front door.

MEL

Del, get the camera.

MEL exits out the front door.

DEL

Uh, Europe-ologist, get the camera.

KATHERINE

Annoyed:

That's "Urologist" to you, hick-boy.

KATHERINE exits out the front door.

DEL

Uh, Moe, get the...

DEL glances around and sees that no one is left, so he begins to look for the camera. SARAH enters from the kitchen, carrying coffee on a tray. She stops.

SARAH

The farmer!

DEL

Eyes widening in recognition:

The banker!

SLIM enters from the kitchen.

SLIM

And the candlestick maker!

DEL and SARAH just stare at each other. SLIM picks up a cup of coffee and sips it.

Hmmm...needs more NutraSweet.

SLIM exits stage left. SARAH puts the coffee tray on the television and DEL crosses over to her.

DEL

Sarah, baby, I haven't seen you since we broke up!

SARAH

Inching away from him:

Don't you touch me with those hands!

DEL

What?

SARAH

I don't want you to touch me with the same hands you use to pluck chickens!

DEL

What?

SARAH

You knew when we were going out that I hated animals! I even made you throw out those sea monkeys!

DEL

Sarah...

He picks up SLIM's cup of coffee and sips it.

...I don't raise any animals. I have a vegetable farm.

SARAH

No animals?

DEL

I don't even own a cat.

SARAH

Oh.

SARAH'S attitude changes toward DEL and she moves closer to him.

Then, I guess I've been wrong about you for a long time.

DEL

I guess.

He puts his coffee cup down. SARAH moves closer, backing DEL into the couch.

SARAH

You know, I really wonder why we ever broke up.

DEL

Yeah, well, I have this new philosophy on women... and the Vatican, and...

SARAH grabs DEL and throws him down on the couch, kissing him. SLIM enters from stage left and scans the room. He sees SARAH and DEL.

SLIM

Shocked:

What the hell?!

SARAH and DEL sit up and look guiltily at each other and at SLIM. SLIM runs over to the coffee tray.

Who's been drinking my coffee?!

SARAH and DEL stand up.

SARAH

Nervously:

Slim, uh, this is...Del, a friend.

SLIM

Yes, I guessed that. You two seemed friendly enough.

SARAH

Slim, let me explain...

SLIM

Interrupting:

No need.

He takes SARAH's hands.

I know you're just trying to make me jealous.

DEL

Monotone:

Yes. That's it. We wanted to make you jealous...

SARAH

Cutting in:

Slim, Del is my old boyfriend, and I was wrong about him before. I love him!

SLIM

You love me!

SARAH

I love to hate you.

SLIM

Same thing.

SARAH

Come on, Del. Show me your fruited plains aplenty!

DEL

I think that's moving a bit too fast.

They walk towards the front door.

SLIM

Wait! You can't expect to just take my love and then throw it back!

SARAH takes "Mr. Bobbins's" head and body out of her suitcase and throws it to SLIM who doesn't catch it. MOE, BILL, MEL, and KATHERINE enter through the front door as SARAH and DEL leave.

MOE

To the exiting DEL:

Del, your windshield washer fluid is all filled, and...

The couple slams the door.

...you're welcome.

BILL

Picking up "Mr. Bobbins":

Slim, what's this?

SLIM

Staring at the front door, distant:

The fluff that dreams are made of.

MOE

OK. Well, all the cars are fine...

BILL

Cutting in:

Except yours.

MOE winces.

MOE

...and if you all don't mind, I'm going to turn in for the night.

MEL

Aren't ya just a little bit worried about Rachel?

MOE

Rachel! I completely forgot! I figured she would come back over here after the wake.

BILL and SLIM look at each other.

BILL

Uh...Rachel did...kinda come back over.

MOE

She did? Then where is she?

SLIM

Rachel and...

SLIM winces.

...my ex-wife, didn't exactly see eye to eye on some bank business.

BILL

Then, Slim and Sarah started making out and she left.

MOE

Dismayed:

What?! How could you do that to her?!

MEL

Sensing a sensitive situation:

Uh, we really should be leavin'.

MEL looks at KATHERINE.

KATHERINE

What? But I want to see Moe get angry!

MEL grabs KATHERINE and begins to exit.

MEL

Thank ya for your hospitality. Toodle-oo!

MEL and KATHERINE exit out the front door. When they have gone, MOE faces BILL and SLIM and sighs.

MOE

Exasperated:

I don't know what it is about the two of you that makes people run out of the room, but it's making me sick! You know, over the course of this evening, I've managed to raise some interesting questions about my life. Who am I? Where am I going?

BILL

Concerned:

Moe, you didn't tell us you had amnesia!

MOE

Ignoring BILL:

Only one thing was certain. Tonight was the night that I had to make sense of the mess I call my life. That's right; a mess! Tonight was just the culmination of all the weird events that have happened to me. Do you know –do you know the only time I feel normal?

SLIM

Sarcastically:

After a tall glass of prune juice?

MOE

Ignoring SLIM:

When I'm with Rachel! Rachel wasn't a psychotic, or a corpse, or a farmer. She made my life worth living, and it took the temptation of both women and philosophy to help me realize how much she really means to me!

MOE points to the front door.

Now, she'll never walk through that door again!

RACHEL walks in from the kitchen, behind MOE. BILL coughs and points to RACHEL. MOE spins around, overjoyed.

Rachel!

RACHEL

Equally overjoyed:

Moe!

They run towards each other, hug and begin to walk off stage left.

MOE

Rachel, I have something to ask you...

They exit.

SLIM

Well, at least someone gets to propose.

BILL

Propose! That's right!

BILL pulls out the ring he stole at the wake.

I was supposed to give Moe this ring!

SLIM

Lemme see that.

SLIM grabs the ring from BILL and examines it.

"National Fussball Championship". Are you sure this is Edna's?

BILL

I guess. Who else could it belong to?

There is a heavy knocking on the front door.

EVA

Furiously from offstage:

I know you are in there!! Now, give me back my ring!!

BILL and SLIM look at each other in fright.

Blackout.

End of Scene 4.

CURTAIN CALLS.

THE END