

COMEDY LATTE

by

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COMEDY LATTE

SYNOPSIS

The play is a series of vignettes. Each is an example of the casualties men and women inflict on each other...or themselves...in the war between the sexes.

AT THE END OF THE SCRIPT, YOU WILL FIND

**A Key to the Vignettes**

**A List of Furniture, Properties and Costumes**

**A List of Sound and Lighting Effects**

**COMEDY LATTE**

Scene

The ante-room of a church, in or near Washington, D.C.

Time

The present.

SETTING:

The room is simply furnished. Much of the action in the play revolves around a sofa. It is a plus if the sofa converts to a bed.

AT RISE:

It is late afternoon. NATHAN and GAIL are pacing up and down; checking watches; ignoring each other. After a few seconds of this to set the mood, the PASTOR enters.

COMEDY LATTE

**Cast of Characters**

PASTOR: Man or woman; apologetic; deferential.  
NATHAN: Best man; assertive; capable (25-45)  
GALE: Sister of bride; maid of honor; acerbic (25-40)  
PENNY: Young woman; plays many roles (18-30)  
ROBIN: Older woman; plays many roles (25-40)  
MARK: Young man; plays many roles (18-30)  
BILL: Older man; plays many roles (25-40)

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Note 1: If the pool of actors is small, the cast can be made up of four actors in the roles of NATHAN and GALE plus a woman to play PENNY and ROBIN and a man who plays MARK and BILL. The dialogue isn't expressly age specific. The PASTOR can be played by either the man or woman.  
Note 2: If the pool of actors is large, many can be cast.

PASTOR

Ah---excuse me. I don't want to intrude but...

NATHAN

Yes; it's OK. Do you have any news?

PASTOR

Well, as you have guessed, there has been a delay. Yes; a small delay in the wedding plans....

GALE

Pastor; what's the problem? Spit it out, man. I'm the maid of honor. Where's Janet? Where's Jim?

PASTOR

An-h-h---we're not quite certain....

GALE

What does that mean? I'd like to know where the hell my sister is.

PASTOR

I'm sorry; I know how troubling this must be for you. For both of you. But the fact is that we got a phone call---my vicar got a phone call---saying there was some difficulty.

GALE

Difficulty? What difficulty?

NATHAN

A phone call, you say? Who called?

PASTOR

Well, that's part of the difficulty. We're not quite sure who called. The vicar is very old; his hearing, frankly, isn't all that it might be.

NATHAN

But he heard something, right?

GALE

Of course he heard something or we wouldn't be having this conversation. Now, who called?

PASTOR

As I said, the vicar's hearing isn't very good. He couldn't even tell if a man or woman was calling. All he could make out was to tell you that the ceremony would be delayed. I'm sorry; as soon as we hear anything more, I'll let you know.

(PASTOR leaves)

NATHAN

ARRRGGH! Isn't that just like your sister? Just leaves a message with some dumb old guy. Not even asks to talk to one of us.

GALE

Just a second, buster. First off, how do you know it was Janet? Second, even if it was my sister, she could have tried to get thru to us and the old vicar didn't know where we were. Besides, it sounds like something Jim would do. Maybe he got lost? Seems to me he spends half the time with his head in the clouds, anyway. Or maybe he wanted to tweak that software he's been working on---for the last six months.

NATHAN

Oh, yeah. That could be it! Why didn't I think of that? Or maybe your sister is still on the tread-mill, trying to work off that last half pound.

GALE

Hey, hey, hey....

NATHAN

OK; sorry. That was a cheap shot. I apologize. We don't have any idea who called, do we? So we can't know which of us is wrong or right.

GALE

Correct. But, I bet it's Jim's fault. Without mentioning any names---

(GALE gives NATHAN an "I mean you" look.)

I'd say it's just like a man. Or some men, anyway. The stories I've heard from my girl-friends---some of the lowest, creepiest....

NATHAN

Hey, listen; we won't know until we get another phone call---but, for stories, I can match you one ~~to~~ one, all night long. Guys being stood up; guys being lied to; guys spending time and money and effort, trying to make something work. Then the woman just stops answering the phone---

(NATHAN gives GALE the look.)

doesn't return calls; won't answer emails. Women!

GALE

Yeah? Men can be bastards, too. Let me tell you what happened to my friend, Irene.

(**NOTE:** in each vignette, GALE and NATHAN will refer to people whom they have known. In the action which follows

these introductory remarks, specific actors will be called upon to play the roles of these people. For example, in the vignette immediately following, the woman GALE has referred to---Irene---will be played by ROBIN.)

Irene had been going with this cretin, Bernie, for several months....

(GALE'S voice fades. She has walked to a tall stool, SR. NATHAN has gone to a similar stool, SL. They both sit. Lighting fades on them and has come up on ROBIN and BILL who enter SL and walk DS.)

ROBIN  
Don't you just love the Metro? So clean; nobody eating stuff.  
Or drinking.

BILL  
Well, I could use a cigarette; but, yeah, I got to admit that it's pretty nice. Train comes swooshing in; doors open; people get on; doors close; and---swoosh, they're gone.

(ROBIN gives BILL a puzzled look; not sure what he's talking about.)

ROBIN  
Well; yeah; that's how a subway works.

BILL  
Yep "swoosh" and they're gone.

ROBIN  
OK; dinner was nice. What do you want to do now? See a movie? Or maybe just go home and cuddle? We could go to my place. It's only three stops, you know.

(we hear the sound of a train approaching.)

BILL  
Listen, Irene, we been going out a long time....

ROBIN  
Oh? What's it been, six months? That doesn't seem very long to me.

(Train stops. The operator says "This is the Red line to Shady Grove; next stop is Van Ness-UDC.)

BILL  
Irene; you're a great kid. I really mean that.

(Operator's voice : "Please stand clear of the doors.")



So, six months may not seem like a long time to you. But it does to me....

(BILL pushes ROBIN US---into the Metro car--and walks SL to exit.)

ROBIN

(ROBIN Mimes holding on to over-head hand-grip as she sways with the motion of the car. She speaks to herself.)

That son of a bitch...

(ROBIN then shouts after BILL)

Well, screw you, you micro-dick bug fucker!

(Lighting fades on ROBIN and comes up on GALE and NATHAN.)

**NOTE:** This pattern will prevail throughout the play, with the lighting fading and coming up as the dialogue demands.)

NATHAN

And that's what happened? The train pulls in; the door opens; he pushes her on board; the doors close; and he walks away?

GALE

As the man said---"swoosh." Some piece of dreck, right?

NATHAN

I've got to agree with you there. That's was really bad; rotten thing to do to another human being. But let me tell you about a different kind of dreck. Female dreck.

GALE

Well, in the abstract, I'm prepared to admit that some of my sisters can be a bit sordid. You have a concrete example?

NATHAN

Solid concrete. This happened at a dinner theatre.

GALE

Oh, good. I love theatrical stories---I mean, stories about the theatre.

NATHAN

Right. So, this dinner theatre was owned by a married couple. The man was a lawyer and ran the business end of things---part time. The wife was the artistic director, so she was in pretty close contact with the actors.

GALE

I bet I see what's coming.

NATHAN

If I wanted to take your money, I'd bet you don't. Anyway, there was a young, pretty good-looking guy in a small role. Nobody much home upstairs but a great body.

GALE

Good abs?

NATHAN

Of course, good abs.

GALE

Ah.

NATHAN

That's just what the wife said. To herself, anyway. The point is, she just flipped for this guy.

(Lights adjust. PENNY is studying a script as ROBIN enters SL)

ROBIN

Hi, Sally. How's it going? Are you off book yet?

PENNY

Almost. I will be by tomorrow for sure. And, Mrs. Miller, I wanted to thank you for casting me.

ROBIN

Hey, don't thank me. You were far and away the best actor at auditions. That is---the best woman. But, that Jamie. Is he eye candy or what?

PENNY

Oh, yeah; he's a good looking dude, all right. Got a great bod on him.

ROBIN

Hasn't he just? I saw him doing some sit-ups yesterday. He's got a six pack to die for. Do you, uh, know where he is right now?

PENNY

I saw him just a few minutes ago. He's working on his lines in the green room.

ROBIN

Um-m-m, Sally. Let me ask you something. A favor, really. You're married, right? Been married for a while, haven't you?

PENNY

Why---yes. Why do you ask?

ROBIN

And you don't want any kids---at least, not yet. I mean, you are such a good actor. You wouldn't want to be tied down....

PENNY

Pardon?

ROBIN

Oh, I'm sorry. I'm rambling. The fact is, Sally, I need you to do me a favor---a really, really big favor.

PENNY

Well, if I can.... What kind of favor?

ROBIN

What I need....

(ROBIN leans over and whispers in PENNY'S ear.)

PENNY

What? You want---you want to borrow my....

ROBIN

Yes! Please, Sally; I know this is wrong of me but...

PENNY

(PENNY says nothing; she reaches into her purse and pulls out two items and hands them to ROBIN.)

ROBIN

Now, this is just between us, right?

PENNY

Sure, Mrs. Miller. Whatever you say.

ROBIN

You say that Jamie is in the green room?

PENNY

He was a few minutes ago.

(ROBIN exits; PENNY calls after her.)

Good luck! Or break a leg. Or something.

(PENNY exits. Lights adjust)

GALE

What? What did she borrow from Sally?

NATHAN

Hey; a couple of minutes ago, you were willing to bet you knew what was coming.

GALE  
Well, I can't! Now---what did she *Borrow*?

NATHAN  
Oh, just a small tube of jelly. And her diaphragm.

GALE  
Her diaphragm? She borrowed another woman's diaphragm? Didn't she know, this Mrs. Miller, that those have to be fitted? I mean, one-size-fits all just isn't in it.

NATHAN  
To bastardize Falstaff, "Thus do great abs make adulterers of us all."

GALE  
Oh, that's awful. I mean, your mangling of the Bard. And that Mrs. Miller. But, didn't she know that actors are the worst gossips in the world?

NATHAN  
Hey; how do you think I heard about it?

GALE  
Well, I've got to agree. That was one no-class dame, all right. No class, but kind of funny.

NATHAN  
Well, funny if you weren't Mr. Miller.

GALE  
Let's hope that he was playing around, too. And, speaking of that, let me tell you about a guy who was.

NATHAN  
Was playing around?

GALE  
Yep.

NATHAN  
Tell me about it. Must have been pretty outrageous if it can compete with Mrs. Miller. And her second hand diaphragm.

GALE  
I'll tell you what happened; you tell me if it was outrageous.

NATHAN  
Shoot.

GALE  
This happened at a winter resort I worked at when I was in my 20's. I was the night auditor. This was a big operation--- maybe 50 employees. And there was a pretty rigid line between the workers. White collar people ate in one dining

room; blue collar in another. "White collar" is a little misleading. It included office workers, but also the valet and the masseur. And the cowboys.

NATHAN

Ah, ha. I bet it one of those cow pokes was playing around.

GALE

You have a good ear, my friend. Yes; the number two wrangler was the bad boy. He and the manager's secretary were engaged in a hot romance. We were way out in the desert; a self-contained community, really. So, everyone knew what everyone else was doing.

NATHAN

Well, cowboy and secretary. Doesn't sound like such a big deal to me. Unless one of them was married....

GALE

Bingo. The cowboy was married. To Lucy--- a young, unsophisticated girl, who also worked at the resort.

NATHAN

And she worked as?

GALE

A waitress. For the white collar group.

NATHAN

Which included the secretary.

GALE

And her husband.

(Lights adjust. BILL is seated at a table, reading a newspaper, smoking a cigarette. PENNY is putting down plates, silverware, etc. ROBIN enters; she is hung-over.)

ROBIN

Oh, hi, Lucy. When you get a chance, I'd just like some coffee. Black.

PENNY

(Grinds her teeth.)

Right.

(PENNY exits)

ROBIN

Well, how are you today?

BILL

(BILL keeps eyes on paper; leaves cigarette in mouth.)

I'm OK.

(ROBIN stares at her finger-nails. Nothing more is said. The booze has worn off; the lust has gone; the lights fade.)

NATHAN

So the guy sits there, ignoring his wife and the woman he was in bed with six hours earlier. And poor Lucy had to serve her philandering husband and his sweetheart....

GALE

Three meals a day.

NATHAN

It's a wonder she didn't poison them both.

GALE

It would have served them right. After the season was over, I lost touch with them. So, maybe she did, the next time he played around.

NATHAN

Here's one in a lighter vein. My friend Scott was in bed with a woman. It was the first time they'd made love and Scott was particularly attentive. And active.

(Lights adjust. Discover ROBIN and BILL in bed. OK; they are under a cover. BILL is on top, thrusting, going all out.)

BILL

Come on, baby! Work with me; give it to me! Come on, come on! Push that lovely bush!!

ROBIN

(Calmly.)

This is so great; this is wonderful; this is---this is so---relaxing.

(Lights adjust.)

GALE

That's terrific. He's going all out; giving it everything he's got. He's screwing his head off....

NATHAN

And she calls it "relaxing."

GALE  
Well, it's clear that Mr. Studly didn't really turn her on.

NATHAN  
Or maybe there was nothing to turn on. Sad but true; some women just lie there. Or maybe she was turned on and didn't want to admit it?

GALE  
As if.....

NATHAN  
Oh, you do valley girl now?

GALE  
Old pal, I do a lot of things now. You just haven't noticed.

NATHAN  
Maybe you're right. Anyway, back to Scott and Ms. Botox-in-the-bush.

GALE  
Oh, I wish you hadn't said that.

NATHAN  
You're right; I'm sorry. It was a bit harsh. And, as a guess, the poor woman would rather have been excited. Anyway, that's what happened to Scott and the woman we've always called The Relaxer. Isn't it a wonder that anybody finds anybody who is really compatible? But, as long as we're telling stories about bed, let me tell you about what happened to me.

GALE  
Oh, to you this time? Not your friend or uncle or....

NATHAN  
Yes, to me! And it's a particularly vivid memory. If things had gone just a bit differently, I wouldn't be here today.

GALE  
Tell, tell.

NATHAN  
I was going to school...to college...down south. And I fell in love....

GALE  
Or lust.

NATHAN  
Let's say AND lust. With Vickie. Now Vickie was gorgeous....

GALE

Truly?

NATHAN

After she left school, she was a model for Nieman-Marcus. And Marshall Field. And she was a Maid of Cotton.

GALE

Oh, Maid of Cotton.... I've heard that's a big deal in the South. OK; she was gorgeous.

NATHAN

Gorgeous and poor. So, she and her sister were living with a family. The girls had cots on a back porch. This family, really just a man and his wife, sort of thought of the girls as surrogate daughters.

GALE

Rather protective, I gather?

NATHAN

Very protective. And the man was a deputy sheriff.

GALE

Oh, oh.

NATHAN

Oh, oh indeed.

(Lights adjust. Discover PENNY and MARK lying in bed. It's clear that they have just made exhausting love.)

MARK

God; that was just great. I just love making love with you. But, maybe we'd better get up now. I'd really hate for Mr. Jones to come home and find us in ~~his~~ bed.

PENNY

Well, silly, we've got lots of time. They said they'd be back for supper and it's only four o'clock. And their bed is so much bigger and nicer than my little cot.

MARK

Honey, Mr. Jones would probably kill me if he found us together on your bed. God knows what he'd do to me if he found us on his. Come on; come on. We've got to get up.

(They get out of bed and smooth the sheets. They get dressed.)



MARK

Heck, he doesn't like me as it is. I heard him say something to his wife about "that damn Yankee." It ~~sure~~ would be nice if one of us had a place. Instead of me being in the dorm; and you here with the Joneses.

PENNY

I know, sugar. We're just lucky they go away every now and then.

(There is a noise off stage.)  
Listen; did you hear a car door slam?

MARK

Yes. Geez; I'll go out the back way. See you in class.

(: MARK exits SL. PENNY exits SR. BILL enters from US.)

BILL

Hi everybody. Anybody home?

PENNY

(PENNY calls from off-stage.)

Yes, sir. I've been home, a-studying all afternoon.

BILL

That's a good girl.

(Lights adjust.)

GALE

That was close.

NATHAN

Yeah. Hell, I was 21 and Vickie was 18 but we were treated like a couple of little kids.

GALE

It was the sheriff's house so it he got to make the rules.

NATHAN

I know; anyway, we didn't get caught. And, even though we were treated as kids, we weren't, actually. What's tough is when real kids get involved.

GALE

Oh; I can agree with that. Something happen to somebody you know?

NATHAN

Yes, when I was living in Georgetown. You know, part of Washington. Upscale; full of over-achievers. And their kids. Our next door neighbors were typical. Father had a lobbying job for a Fortune 500 company; mother was a psychologist.

GALE

And the kids?

NATHAN

Two cute teenage girls.

GALE

So what happened?

(Lights adjust. MARK walks on stage, looks around furtively. He takes a swig from a can of beer. Looks around again. He shouts toward SR.)

MARK

SUZY QUIGLY SUCKS COCKS!

(MARK throws beer can off-stage right and runs off SL. ROBIN enters SR.)

Who are you? What is your name? Who are you? Come back here!

(Lights adjust; ROBIN exits.)

GALE

Oh, lord. What a nasty, brutish thing to say. To do. Boys can be so cruel.

NATHAN

It's a generalization, but yeah, they can. Especially athletes---those in contact sports are the worst. Of course, in the grand scheme of things---a little fellatio between friends? What's the harm?

GALE

Sure; remember the Sienfeld episode---"not that there's anything wrong with that"? But, in the context....

NATHAN

Precisely. For the wretched boy to call it out---in public---knowing the girl....

GALE

And her mother....

NATHAN

And her mother would hear him. Disgusting.

GALE

Did you ever learn who he was? Why he did it?

NATHAN

Not a thing. I couldn't bring it up to the mother. We both simply had to pretend that nothing had happened. Poor woman.

GALE

Poor woman, indeed. As Balzac said, and I paraphrase, "A person with a family has given hostages to fortune." But, now that we're on the topic of kids, my great-uncle Ted had a house at a summer resort near Lake Michigan. My uncle, Ted Jr.---we called him Teddy---was about 14. He was a shy, skinny boy---totally ill at ease around girls.

NATHAN

Being skinny will do that.

GALE

Yeah; little did he know that he'd like being thin, when he grew up. But, back to when he was 14.... There was a drug store at the resort and, in the store, there was a clerk---Sylvia.

NATHAN

Oh, oh. I love the way you say that: Syl-vee-ah.

GALE

Right. Now, Sylvia was twice Teddy's age.

NATHAN

Which makes her 28. Not exactly ancient.

GALE

Oh no and she was good looking. And really built, as they say. Good shape; great boobs. And a bit of tease. All the kids spent the day in their swim suits. So, Teddy would walk into the drug store for a Coke and Sylvia would be there.

(Lights adjust. PENNY is smoking and wiping off a table top. MARK enters; he is wearing a swim suit.)

PENNY

Hi, Teddy. Working on your tan?

MARK

Uh, yeah....

PENNY

You know, you're getting quite grown up. And pretty cute.

(PENNY walks to MARK and tweaks his nipple.)

Jack Frost is going to get those.

(Lights adjust; PENNY and MARK freeze in place.)

NATHAN

She didn't! The boy was 14; and she was 28?

GALE

Yes, 28. And married.

NATHAN

And she tweaked the nipple of a 14 year old boy. So, what finally happened?

GALE

It took Teddy all summer to get up his nerve but he did. He went into the store and Sylvia did it again.

(Lights adjust; PENNY tweaks MARK's nipple.)

PENNY

Jack Frost is going to get those.

MARK

Wha- Wha- What would you do if I did that to you?

PENNY

(PENNY takes a drag on her cigarette.)

I guess I'd just have to stand there and take it.

(MARK bolts; PENNY walks off. Lights adjust.)

NATHAN

God; what an opening! What an invitation! And Teddy just ran away?

GALE

Exactly, just what almost all shy, skinny 14 year olds would have done back then. He turned and ran.

NATHAN

Oh, too bad. What a wonderful way to learn about life. And sex. An "older woman" who was funny and sexy. Damn it, Teddy, you blew it!

GALE

Maybe Teddy had better sense than you're showing.

NATHAN

That wasn't the end of the story?

GALE

Not quite. A few nights later, Teddy was down at the beach where he saw Sylvia. And Vern.

NATHAN

Vern? The husband?

GALE

The husband. Did I mention that he was the chef at the resort? He was.

(Lights adjust. PENNY enters; she runs across stage and exits. A drunken BILL staggers in after her, waving a huge carving knife.)

BILL

Damn you, you bitch. Who've you been screwin'? I know it's somebody. Come back here, you bitch; tell me who he is! I'll cut his balls off!

(BILL follows PENNY off stage. Lights adjust.)

NATHAN

Oh, boy. Bummer.

GALE

It was. Lucky for Sylvia, Vern was too drunk to catch her. And Teddy never found out who she'd been cheating with.

NATHAN

But it wasn't Teddy. But if he had accepted Sylvia's invitation, Vern could have been after him. With his big knife.

GALE

Exactly; so Teddy just might have saved his life when he turned and ran when Sylvia said "I'd just have to stand there and take it."

NATHAN

Speaking of 28 year old women, reminds me of a time when I lived in a group house. One of the women---Pat---just turned 28 so we were having a little party for her.

(Lights adjust. Discover ROBIN, MARK and BILL with a gift wrapped box.)

MARK

So, where is the birthday girl?

ROBIN

Oh, Steve came over. They're up in Pat's room now.

BILL

So, do you think we should wait?

MARK

Wait for what? We've got the gift; now we need the birthday girl.

(Calls off-stage.)

Hey, Pat. Come down and get your present!

PENNY

(Calls from off-stage.)

I'm (pause) getting one (pause) now.

(Lights adjust.)

GALE

Oh, right! Steve was in the bedroom with her....

NATHAN

Right. And giving her a very special, personal birthday gift.

GALE

Speaking of gifts....

NATHAN

Yes? Reminds you of something?

GALE

Of somebody, actually. I knew this boy, Dale, from high school. He joined the army. And one time, he got a three day pass...

NATHAN

Which leads us to the gift, right? Who gave? Who got?

GALE

Now, the thing to keep in mind is that Dale was straight.

NATHAN

You mean, sexually?

GALE

Right. Total, 100% hetero. Never even had a thought about having anything to do with a man.

NATHAN

But, something changed his mind? A gift? Must have been huge---a car, a lot of money, something like that?

GALE

Oh, no. If he'd been approached to have sex---with a man---who offered him money, he'd have hit the guy in the mouth.

NATHAN

So---what did happen?

(Lights adjust. MARK is standing at a bar, having a beer. BILL and PENNY enter; she holds his arm. She is in a revealing, sexy outfit.)

BILL

Hi, soldier. Mind if my niece and I join you?

MARK

Heck, no. Mighty glad to have your company, sir.

BILL

Oh, please, call me Bruce. And this lovely lady is my---niece. Her name is Stormy.

(During the following, PENNY pays no attention to what is being said. She can examine her nails; check her cell phone; etc.)

MARK

Pleased to meet you both. My name's Dale. I got to tell you, sir....

BILL

Bruce!

MARK

Sorry; right. I got to tell you, Bruce, that your niece is nice.

BILL

Ah, been a while since you've had a date? Been with a lovely lady?

MARK <sup>TV</sup>  
 You got that right. Too darn long. And <sup>she</sup> never gone out  
 with somebody as pretty as Stormy.

BILL  
 To tell you the truth, I figured as much. We've been sitting  
 over there and I said to Stormy "You know, I bet that boy  
 would really like to go out with you."

MARK  
 You did? You really did?

BILL  
 I did. And you know what she said?

MARK  
 What?

BILL  
 She said, "He's kid of cute. I like him. Do you like him?"

MARK  
 Uh, Bruce, sir, you kind of lost me on that last bit. Could  
 you run that by me again?

BILL  
 Dale, you're a young man but I sense that you are fairly  
 sophisticated, am I right?

MARK  
 Yeah, I guess so....

BILL  
 Well, I'm taking a chance here, but let me put my cards on  
 the table. Stormy isn't really my niece.

MARK  
 I don't understand.

BILL  
 Stormy isn't really my niece. She is a very nice young lady  
 who is happy to trade her favors for a certain number of dead  
 presidents. She performs, ah, various and sundry activities  
 that men usually find quite pleasant. We have a room  
 upstairs, in this delightful hotel. Do I make myself clear?

MARK  
 You mean she's a hook....

BILL  
 Now, Dale, no reason to use pejorative terms, is there?

MARK  
 No, sir, I guess not. So---you---and she....



BILL

Oh, no; you misunderstand me. I, myself, really don't care for the companionship of women.

MARK

You mean you're a quee---you're gay?

BILL

Precisely. And you're a very good looking boy.

MARK

Listen, mister---I don't bend that way. Never have; never will. Now just fuck off and let me finish my beer in peace.

BILL

(Not at all irritated or offended.)

Well, of course, both Stormy and I will do that if that's what you wish. But, let me make a suggestion, first.

MARK

You an suggest all you want; I'm not interested in any kind of sex with a man.

BILL

I understand. But, if the reward were really tempting....

MARK

Stick your money up your ass; I'm just *ABOW* out of here.

BILL

Very well; I see that I must cut to the chase. If you will come to our room, with Stormy and me, I promise to be quick. One BJ *By* me---and you get Stormy for the rest of the night.

(Lights adjust.)

NATHAN

So, he did it? Dale went to the room with them?

GALE

Wouldn't be much of a story if he hadn't. He thought it over for about 30 seconds and said "yes."

NATHAN

So, he wouldn't have let Bruce touch him for cash. But, for the promise of the night with Stormy, he did.

GALE

Right; funny, isn't it? If Bruce had offered Dale \$500, Dale would have decked him. But, he pays Stormy the money; Stormy stays with Dale; and all three are happy.

NATHAN

That Bruce must have had an MBA in marketing.

GALE

Right; it was win-win-win. Capitalism at its very best.

NATHAN

As contrasted with socialism. Or, I should say, social-izing.

GALE

As in too much socializing?

NATHAN

Right. My friend, Leslie, was the victim.

(Lights adjust. ROBIN is seated. BILL enters, wearing a white coat; he has a stethoscope around his neck.)

ROBIN

Well, here I am. You said to come in. You're gotten the results back? From the tests....

BILL

Yes, my dear. And I'm afraid I have some rather bad news for you. Tell me---do you have a new lover?

ROBIN

Why, no.

BILL

Then, I'm sorry to tell you that your lover has a new lover.

(Lights adjust.)

NATHAN

Ouch. Well, the old song goes "You always hurt the one you love...."and it sure happened to Leslie.

GALE

Thank God for antibiotics.

NATHAN

Yes, thank God. Or Alexander Flemming.

GALE

Or both.

NATHAN

Well, Leslie got out with some bruised feelings. And some medical bills. Not too bad a trade to find out she was dating a snake. But, speaking of people-with-partners, my brother gave a party---a costume party---one Halloween.

GALE

Fun!

NATHAN

An old flame of his---Sherry---came to the party. She was dressed like a circus ring-master. Top hat, tuxedo jacket, long black stockings, high heels. Very sexy. Now Sherry had been dating a guy named Robert. They came to the party together. But, when she'd had a few drinks, Sherry was hell on wheels. Or heels.

(Lights adjust.)

PENNY

Hey, macho man, how ya doin'?

(She rubs up against MARK.)

MARK

Sherry, I'm doin' just fine. How you doin'?

PENNY

Oh, I've done better---sometimes---remember?

(PENNY is making overt moves on MARK.)

MARK

Honey, sugar-baby, I remember all too well. And you're as sexy as you ever were....

PENNY

Do you think so? Do you really think so, macho man?

MARK

Yes, I do. And if you rub me like that one more time, I'm going to take you upstairs and fuck you 'til your teeth rattle.

(Lights adjust.)

GALE

And I have no doubt that she did and he did. Am I right?

NATHAN

You know they did or I wouldn't be telling you about it.

GALE

So, there's more to the story?

NATHAN

Oh, yes; the best part.

(Lights adjust. We find PENNY and MARK in bed. It is morning.)

PENNY

Oh, Jesus. What did we do? What did I do? Where's my damn phone?

(PENNY digs phone out of purse; dials frantically; shouts into phone.)

Robert? Where are you? What happened? You're supposed to take care of me! Now, come and get me right away.

(Lights adjust.)

GALE

Beautiful! Smart woman. That "what happened" was inspired. She comes on to your brother; goes to bed with him; and blames her date!

NATHAN

Yeah; poor Robert. He really deserved better

GALE

Speaking of deserving better, let me tell you about Fran.

NATHAN

Don't think you mentioned her.

GALE

No; we don't hang out much. She's not pretty and, really, not very bright. She's just someone I knew from the old neighborhood. And we didn't see each other for years. Then I bumped into her last week and she told me about meeting this guy in a bar.

(Lights adjust; music plays. ROBIN is dressed badly; ; maybe buck teeth.)

ROBIN

Uh, hi---my name's Fran. Do you come here often?

BILL

(Looks at ROBIN and belches.)

ROBIN

You can buy me a drink---if you want. What's your sign?

BILL

Genitalia rising, sweetheart.

ROBIN

Wow; I never heard of that one. When were you born?

BILL

On the 12th of Never.

ROBIN

Oh, you're just teasing me, aren't you? Do you come here often? Oh, I said that already, didn't I?

BILL

Yeah, you did. But only once so that hardly counts in the intellectual cross-fire we've got going here.

ROBIN

Gee; you know some really big words.

BILL

(Looks at his watch.)

Say, it's about closing time. Know anywhere we can get a late drink?

ROBIN

Well---we could go to my place---but you have to promise to be good.

BILL

(Grabs ROBIN'S butt.)

For you, gorgeous, I'll be better than good.

(Lights adjust; actors stay on stage.)

NATHAN

As you said, she wasn't very bright.

GALE

Wait; the worst is yet to come.

(Lights adjust; we are in ROBIN'S apartment. ROBIN is sitting on bed/sofa. BILL is standing; he is down to his shorts.

BILL

Say, OK if I use your bathroom?

ROBIN

Sure, honey. It's right thru there.

(BILL exits. ROBIN undresses. She takes one contact lens out and looks around for a Left-Right place to put it and its companion---not wanting them to get mixed up. She picks BILL'S loafers up and puts left in left; right in right. Lights adjust.)

NATHAN

Oh, Lordy. I think I can see what's coming.

GALE

Right. The guy comes back from the 'loo; they make the beast

with two backs. The guy had no control. "Slam bam, thank you ma'm. This won't hurt---did it?" Fran gets up to take a pee. And when she comes back, the guy is gone.

NATHAN

With the loafers....

GALE

And the lenses.

NATHAN

That shouldn't happen to anyone, even if Fran does have the IQ of plankton. How did you ever find out about this? I'd think it would be high on the list of things one keeps to oneself.

GALE

Oh, Fran told me. She was mad at the guy; didn't see where any of the fault was hers.

NATHAN

Thus adding to my high regard for her basic intelligence.

GALE

Can't argue with that, amigo.

NATHAN

But let me tell you about someone almost as dumb. This happened to my friend, Herb.

GALE

I notice that almost all of these things happen to friends. Or relatives. None of them seem to have happened to you. Or did they?

NATHAN

(NATHAN gives a small smile.)

As I was saying, this happened to my friend Herb. He'd put an ad in the WASHINGTONIAN and got a lot of replies. But one really stood out: it was from a woman named Judy. She described herself as 27 years old; 5'4" tall; 120 pounds; blonde with blue eyes; and an MBA in accounting. Now, she lived in Richmond and he lives in Bethesda. But, they talked on the phone and he decided it was worth the trip. He arrives at the house and knocks on the front door.

(Lights adjust. The door opens and there stands the woman described above.)

PENNY

Yes? May I help you?

MARK

Judy?

PENNY

Just a minute.

(PENNY turns and calls over her shoulder.)

Judy! It's for you!

(And "Judy" walks in. She must fit much of the description ((height; hair color)) from the preceding page. Or, in the alternative, that description can be adjusted to describe the actor playing the role. Ideally, she will be dressed in black leather. HOWEVER, and this is key, she must weigh---or look as though she weighs---185 pounds. Padded clothing will help. We assume ROBIN plays the role. Lights adjust.)

GALE

Wow; that could be Roseanne. Or the Michelin woman! What happened then?

NATHAN

Herb's a nice guy. He just swallowed hard and took her to a Denny's for dinner. Where she ordered two entrees and three desserts. But the best is yet to come.

(Lights adjust. Herb and Judy are at her front door. She puts her hand on his thigh.)

ROBIN

Gee, Herb. That was great. I hope you can come in for a while. You know, I'm not allergic to latex.

(Lights adjust.)

GALE

And what did "Herb" do?

NATHAN

Oh, he just make some flimsy excuse and left. And laughed at himself, all the way back to Bethesda.

GALE

Why did she do it? No one is going to ignore an extra 60 pounds.

NATHAN

Who knows? Terminal loneliness? Maybe she just wanted a free meal.

GALE

There's a rule of thumb about those personals ads: the men lie about their height and the women lie about their weight. But, I must admit, 60 extra pounds is a whopper.

NATHAN

That's right; she had too many Whoppers. But, speaking of weight, let me tell you about something that did happen to me. It was at a party. I was chatting with Abby, a young woman I knew slightly. Now, Abby was a big girl, close to six feet tall. And, she weighed nearly 195 pounds. So, even at six feet, she was a BIG girl.

GALE

Can't argue with that.

NATHAN

Right. So, I'm standing there thinking, "Should I tell her how much better she'd look if she lost some weight?" Then, I thought, "No; she knows that."

GALE

It's a clever man who knows when to say nothing.

NATHAN

That's not the half of it. Before I could say anything at all, Abby blurted, "You know, I've lost a lot of weight recently." So, I said to myself, "Thank you God" and to her "Really?" "Yes," she said, "I've lost 200 pounds."

GALE

Two HUNDRED pounds?

NATHAN

Yes; and it was then that I learned The Rest of the Story. Or aren't you a Paul Harvey fan? Anyway, I digress; sorry. Yes, Abby had been a 400 pound topless go-go dancer in San Fran. At some Turkish club. To get on stage, a woman had to weigh at least 250 pounds. And Abby, all 400 pounds of her, had been the star.

GALE

Star? She was an entire galaxy! Wonderful, isn't it, how many sizes and shapes we come in? Some fat; some really thin. Let me tell you about what happened to my friend....

NATHAN

AH, HA!

GALE

Yes; it's about my friend---not me. You'll see that in a minute. Naomi lived in Manhattan....

NATHAN

Manhattan, Kansas?

(Notice that NATHAN and GALE are gradually warming toward each other.)



GALE

Cute. Listen to the story and then you tell me. Naomi and I met in grad school and kept in touch. She was always a thin woman---almost too thin, really. I mean, you could see her bones. But, she had a great personality and it wasn't any surprise when I got an invitation to her wedding?

NATHAN

And you went?

GALE

Of course. It was the first time I'd met the groom and he didn't do anything for me. But, hey, I wasn't marrying the guy.

NATHAN

Anything in particular that you didn't like?

GALE

Well, he was from one of those Slavic counties. Very old world; stern; deep voice. Anyway, even so, I wasn't prepared for what happened the next day.

NATHAN

And that was....

GALE

Naomi phoned; laughing and crying at the same time.

NATHAN

Why? Something serious must have happened.

GALE

Yes; serious and funny. Did I mention that the groom was an undertaker?

NATHAN

No; no you didn't. And this is germane?

GALE

Gigantically germane. But, of course, we don't call them undertakers any more, do we. OK, he was a mortician. Hey, he made a good living. A good living---from the dead. Anyway, somebody's got to do it, right? So, that's who she married. He wasn't my cup of tea, as I said, but I wasn't marrying him. He seemed a bit---remote---even for an undertaker. Mortician!

NATHAN

But, what happened? Why did she phone?

GALE

First off, she said she was getting an annulment.

NATHAN

An annulment? Kee-rist, that was fast. What did the guy do?

GALE

OK; the happy couple checks into a nice suite at the Waldorf-Astoria. Now, they were both pretty religious and so they both were virgins. Don't laugh! They were! So, everything was a bit tense. But, Naomi was bright and figured that was par for the course. She wasn't prepared for what came next.

NATHAN

And what was that?

GALE

Did I mention that the guy was very old world? Well, he was. Still is, of course. Sorry; I'm rambling. Still find it hard to believe.

NATHAN

Come on! Believe what?

GALE

All right. Mr. Ice says to her, "Naomi, go take cold shower. Verrrry cold shower. Come to bed. Lie very still."

NATHAN

Holy mackerel. What a wedding night. No wonder the poor kid wanted an annulment. Well, the French say that there are no frigid women, only clumsy men. But there was a guy who wanted a frigid woman---a really frigid woman.

GALE

Yeah; as in rigor mortis.

NATHAN

You said that this was a story about Manhattan. We can assume that it wasn't Manhattan, Kansas.

GALE

We can.

NATHAN

But, hey, you think that's bad---just joking---it was bad. Lots of half-crazies out there.

GALE

Yeah. I read somewhere that almost everyone seems normal. Until you get to know them.

NATHAN

Which reminds me of Jewel.

GALE

Beautiful name.

NATHAN

And a beautiful woman.

GALE

Really? Really beautiful? Just how beautiful?

NATHAN

If I told you she was in PLAYBOY magazine would it help to make the point?

GALE

I hate the damn thing but, yes, it does make your point. Pajama Man doesn't like 'em ugly. OK; we can stipulate that she was beautiful. But, by the by, I bet she named herself.

NATHAN

Score one for Gale. You got that right. Her mother had named her Marfa or something like that. But, I've got to tell you that, physically, she was a jewel.

GALE

Where did you meet her?

NATHAN

The PLAYBOY photographer---an Asian guy, I forget his name---came to town. He'd gotten a big write-up in the Post. Dozens---hundreds---of women showed up for the shoot. He picked ten. Including Jewel. The ten were given a reception. One way or another, I wrangled an invitation.

GALE

Way to go, Nathan. So, what happened?

NATHAN

To use Woody Allen's trenchant phrase, I mingled. Chatted. And along about midnight, I peeled Jewel off from the party and we headed for my place.

(Lights adjust. Using two chairs or a sofa, mimic the front seat of a car. NATHAN steps into the scene, as it is his tory. He is driving; PENNY sits next to him.)

Nice party. And congratulations on being one of the Women of Washington.

PENNY

Thanks. Well, I've won a couple of contests, so it wasn't much of a surprise to get picked.

NATHAN

No, I guess not. By the way, do you like the Porsche?

PENNY

Oh, yeah. Nice car.

NATHAN

Have to be careful, though. Cops love to stop a sports car.

PENNY

You know---you haven't thanked me.

NATHAN

True enough. But, why should I thank you?

GALE

You haven't thanked me for turning all the lights green.

(Lights adjust. NATHAN steps out of the scene.)

GALE

Whoa! SHE was turning the lights green? So you wouldn't have to stop?

NATHAN

Right. Super-natural powers; witchcraft; all that stuff.

GALE

Totally goofy, right?

NATHAN

Totally.

GALE

So, did you, you know....?

NATHAN

No, we didn't. That witchcraft stuff kind of puts a wilt in the stilt. But, imagine, if we had and she'd gotten pregnant. My life would have been an absolute, living hell.

GALE

So, really, you were lucky that she "turned the lights green" for you. Showed you what her thought process was?

NATHAN

Or wasn't. So, you're completely right. Thank you, Jewel, wherever you are.

GALE

Speaking of cars reminds me of a story my grandfather used to tell. When he was a kid....

NATHAN

That takes us back to, what, the 1940's?

GALE

No, before that, even. The '30's. And some of the cars were from the '20's.

NATHAN

Been lots of them---

GAIL

Right. Anyway, she was at the guy's apartment one night---

(Lights adjust)

YM

(YM gets up from sofa)

Hang loose, baby. I've got to shake a drop off the old lily.

YW

(YW grits teeth)

You are SO sophisticated.

(YM exits. YW fidgets; puts hand down between sofa cushions; comes up with pair of panties. Registers shock, surprise, indignation, resolve. Puts panties back. Lights adjust)

NATHAN

Wait a minute. She found some other woman's panties and she didn't say anything to the guy.

GAIL

That's right; not our Sandy.

NATHAN

So, what happened? She just let it pass?

GAIL

Oh, no. Not our Sandy. The jock called a few nights later.

Ouch. Talk about a vote of no confidence in your partner. But, I guess it didn't traumatized your grandfather completely.

GALE

No, or I wouldn't be here, would I? But, speaking of confidence in a partner, let me tell you about Suzzon. She was a blithe spirit, a girl I knew from collage. Like most of us back then, after she knew a guy for a reasonable amount of time, she'd take him to bed.

NATHAN

That sounds reasonable.

GALE

Oh, Suzzon was reasonable. And prepared. She had a little tape player by her bed.

(Lights adjust. PENNY and MARK are in bed.)

MARK

Wow; Sozzon; that was wonderful.

PENNY

Yes; in fact....

(PENNY hits the Play button on the tape player. We hear, for 3 or 4 seconds, thunderous applause. Lights adjust.)

NATHAN

Damn; that's super. She had the tape cued and, if the guy was really good, he got the applause.

GALE

And, if he wasn't, he didn't. Of course, he didn't know about the tape. I heard that she was considering a fireworks display but got talked out of it.

NATHAN

So, she does everything but give the man a standing ovation.

GALE

Standing ovation? No, Suzzon was interested in something else standing....

NATHAN

Standing again, you mean?

GALE

Right. So, she gives a boost to the man's ego---which gives a boost to his....

NATHAN

Right! Some build you up; some tear you down. People sure come in different flavors.

GALE

And you're thinking of....

NATHAN

Jessica.

GALE

And she was....

NATHAN

A housemate of my brother, Paul. They'd known each other for a long time, but kept their lives separate. Then, one night, the house gave a huge party; full moon; lots of champagne. Along about 2AM, Jessica and Paul were the last ones up.

(Lights adjust. PENNY and MARK are on the sofa, kissing, etc.)

MARK

Oh, Jess---I've wanted you since the first day you moved in.

PENNY

Is it OK if I pretend to be surprised by that?

MARK

Come on, Jess. Let's go up to my room.

PENNY

All right. But, first, I've got to tell you something. I like you. But, I haven't been with a man in two years. Really, I'm a lesbian.

(Lights adjust. PENNY and MARK leave.)

GALE

Hoo, boy; not what Paul wanted to hear. What did he say?

NATHAN

He held her very close and said, "Then I'll have to be very gentle, won't I?"

GALE

Good move. So long as he meant it.

NATHAN

Oh, he meant it, all right. Our daddy didn't raise any idiots.

GALE

So then what happened?

NATHAN

Let Paul tell it.

(Lights adjust. MARK speaks to audience.)

Jessica and I dated for several weeks after that. She was a good lover; we had lots of great, good fun. And, then, one evening, I got a surprise.

(PENNY and ROBIN enter.)

PENNY

Hi, Paul. This is Elliot. I know it's kind of chicken to tell you like this, so suddenly, but I've given it a lot of thought. And I'm going back to Elliot.

MARK

Oh, hell. Damn and hell. But, listen Jess, I wish you all the best. And, Elliot, take care of our girl, hear?

(Lights adjust. Actors leave.)

GALE

Well, I must say that was very civilized. And Paul wasn't all bent out of shape?

NATHAN

Oh, no. He felt that Jessica had been up front with him from the git-go. He'd given it his best shot and it wasn't enough. Jessica simply liked women.

GALE

Do I sense that something else happened?

NATHAN

I've said it before; you're good. Yes; Paul called a few months later and he was really pissed.

GALE

Why? Maybe Elliot had ditched Jessica?

NATHAN

Worse; much worse. Jessica had married a guy.

GALE

She was a lesbian---and she married a gay?

NATHAN

No, no; I said she married a guy---g-u-y. But now you raise the point, it's interesting how a tiny tweak can make all the difference: g-a-y; g-u-y, g-o-y---one little vowel changes the entire meaning. And then there are homonyms.



GALE

Right; the email I get is full of blunders. C-i-t-e when they mean s-i-t-e. And don't forget s-i-g-h-t. But, why mention homonyms?

NATHAN

I was thinking of Jim. And his first date with Vickie. She was great looking; seemed bright; a real find. They were having that "just-getting-to-know-you" conversation. Then, out of the blue, she got all huffy. Jim never did learn what set her off.

GALE

But what did she say?

NATHAN

First, here's another example. You can have r-i-t-e; add a "w" in front, it's still pronounced the same way.

GALE

Right. And that's r-i-g-h-t. But what did Vickie say?

(Lights adjust. Discover PENNY and BILL.)

PENNY

That's just like a man. You're only interested in one part of me!

JIM

That's not true. I think of you as a whole.

(Lights adjust. Actors leave.)

GALE

Oh, yes. That "w" makes a, drum-roll, whole lot of difference. He thought of her as entire person. What happened?

NATHAN

If she'd had any sense of humor at all, she'd have laughed out loud. But, she didn't. So, what happened was nothing. Nada. Zip.

GALE

I had a date with a "nothing, nada, zip" guy one time. He was tall, attractive, educated, successful. A blond Viking kind of guy. I really had high hopes for this one.

NATHAN

And?

GALE

And we go out to dinner. One of the best places in town. He orders a very good Merlot. We toast each other; we sip. We order dinner; we sip and chat. Dinner comes. The Viking---I can still see this---takes a forkful of salmon and raises it.

To his nose.

To his nose?

NATHAN

His nose. He smelled the food.

GALE

Well, that's a bit odd but not enough to chill and kill. Is it?

NATHAN

I agree. A sniff? No problem. But the Viking did it with every bite.

GALE

Every *BITE* ? All through dinner?

NATHAN

Each and every bite.

GALE

Gotta agree. That is a bit much.

NATHAN

Ever have an odd dinner companion?

GALE

Not personally. But my cousin did. In spades. Roger had a blind date with a woman named Tina. They went to a nice restaurant---one that had booths, so they could sit side by side.

NATHAN

(NOTE: At the director's option, BILL and ROBIN can mime the action which NATHAN describes.)

Tina was friendly. Very friendly. She sat really close to Roger and clearly as in a sexy mood. While Roger ate, he put his hand on Tina's knee. And, as a man will, he gradually slipped his hand up her thigh. And up. And up. Until there was No Further Place to go. If you catch my drift.

He didn't! She didn't!

GALE

Oh, he did. But, you're right in one way---she didn't. Didn't wear panties.

NATHAN

And this was their first date? I don't know which one was more brazen.

GALE

NATHAN

Rog and I were in high school together. We had two rules: if a girl said "stop", we stopped. And if she didn't, we didn't. Anyway, Roger and Tina drive back to her place. They jump into bed and give each other great pleasure.

(Lights adjust. BILL and ROBIN are in bed; their feet are DS. ROBIN'S face is turned away from BILL.)

BILL

God, Tina, that was great. Wonderful. You are great. I sure hope it was good for you.

ROBIN

Umhmmmm-mdmdmd.

ROGER

Sorry, honey. I didn't get that. What was it you said?

ROBIN

Mummmhhhandn,

BILL

Uh, Tina? Is something wrong? Why don't you look at me? Do I have bad breath or something?

ROBIN

No; it's not that. It's just that mmmmmhmmh.

BILL

What? What's that, honey? I didn't hear that last part. Why don't you look at me?

ROBIN

I said---it's because I'm shy!

(Lights adjust. Actors leave.)

GALE

Shy? She was about as shy as Janet Jackson. Or a Redskins cheerleader. Which reminds me of Sandy.

NATHAN

She was a cheerleader?

GALE

No, no. She was a teacher. But she was going out with one of those over-paid, under-performing third-string quarterbacks the 'Skins are famous for.

NATHAN

Been lots of them....

GALE

Right. Anyway, she was at the guy's apartment one night.

(Lights adjust. PENNY and MARK are on the sofa.)

MARK

Hang loose, baby. I've got to shake a drop off the old lily.

PENNY

(PENNY grits her teeth.)

You are SO sophisticated.

(MARK leaves. PENNY fidgets; puts hand down between cushions; finds a pair of panties. Registers surprise, indignation, resolve. Puts panties back. MARK returns.)

MARK

Glad to see you didn't start without me. How about we do a quarterback sneak into the bedroom; see if we can put some points on the board?

PENNY

(Gets up.)

Maybe next time, sugar. I'm just not feeling so good tonight. See you.

(PENNY leaves. Lights adjust. MARK leaves.)

NATHAN

Wait a minute. She found some other woman's underwear in the guy's sofa. And she doesn't say anything? She calls him "Sugar" and says "See you"?

GALE

That's right; that's what our Sandy did.

NATHAN

So, what happened? She just let it pass?

GALE

Oh, no; not our Sandy. The jock called a few nights later.

(Lights adjust. PENNY is alone in her apartment. Phone rings. She answers and we hear MARK on speakers.)

MARK

Hi, Gorgeous. This is your favorite 'Skin. How about I swing by and pick you up. We could maybe poke a little fun at each other, get me?

PENNY

No, sorry. That doesn't work for me. To tell the truth, I've been thinking and I just don't want to see you any more. I've met a really nice guy. So, buh-by, Mr. Third Stringer.

(Lights adjust.)

NATHAN

Wow; that's terrific. She never let's the guy know that she caught him cheating. She just dropped the chop and let him think that breaking up was her idea. Brilliant!

GALE

As we all know, revenge is a dish best eaten cold.

NATHAN

Ah, yes. The Italians---or Russians---or Greeks are fond of saying that. Which reminds me....

GALE

Of another proverb?

NATHAN

Proverb; maxim; aphorism---one of those babies. Can't tell them apart, actually. I was thinking of "Life is where you get the test first and the lesson after."

GALE

Too true. And I'm sure you have an example. Or three.

NATHAN

Maybe more. I was in the locker room at the health club. Two guys were comparing notes.

GALE

About life?

(Lights adjust. MARK and BILL are in gym clothes, in a locker room. They are trading stories.)

MARK

Oh, that was good! But listen to this: My friend, Art, was in the hospital. He'd had a stroke. His lady friend stopped by and gave him a BJ. Question: was she doing him a favor or trying to kill him?

BILL

With some women, you never know. Never. I had a roommate in collage. He was boinking a girl in his econ class. She was OK with the screwing but wouldn't let him touch her boobs. Guess why.

MARK

No idea. Why?

BILL

Because she was saving them for her husband---when she got married.

MARK

Funny. I used to go with a woman whose husband was in prison. For pig rustling.

BILL  
 Hey, that's country-western: "I Like My Women, A Little on the Trashy Side."

MARK  
 Yeah; sometimes. Anyway, she had one breast that was sensitive to the touch. And the other one, wasn't. She figured the numb one---the one on the right---got that way from guys grabbing it when they parked the car.

BILL  
 At least she thought it out. What was the worst date you ever had?

MARK  
 Humm-m-m. Well, if not the worst, here's a pretty bad one. We'd had dinner; a few drinks; we got to her apartment door. And she passed out.

BILL  
 Not good.

MARK  
 That was just the start of it. Don't know how or why but she lost control of her, uh, sphincter.

BILL  
 Not her an----

MARK  
 Yeah; that one. I carried her inside and ALMOST didn't step in anything.

BILL  
 Ugg-g-g-g.

MARK  
 Totally agree. I put her in the tub. Bathed her. Put her to bed. Cleaned the floor. And called her the next day.

BILL  
 Bet she was frosty.

MARK  
 Exactly. She was so embarrassed by the entire thing that she never wanted to see me again.

BILL  
 Yet again, no good deed going unpunished. Here's a situation that was almost as bad. This was back in the days of the Big Band; maybe 15 guys in each. One band, which shall remain nameless, came to town. One of the groupies---Veronica---decided to please all of the guys.

MARK

All 15?

BILL

All 15. She could, as the saying goes, suck the chrome off a trailer hitch. Then, after the 15th BJ, as a special favor, she got in bed with the leader of the band. And threw up on him. The guys never forgot the girl they called Golden Tongue Veronica.

MARK

I suppose women have some weird stories about men.

BILL

Probably. But, hey, men are expected to be a bit nuts when it comes to sex. Not women. Thought many are. I worked on a cruise ship for a while. On one cruise, a good looking waiter was being hit on by a customer. After every meal, she was the last to leave. Finally, he said to her, "Madam, either you must go or meet me under the table." And under they went.

MARK

Horny is as horny does.

BILL

What the hell does that mean?

MARK

Beats me; something my dad used to say about a woman who had round heels. Who would put out. Who was the town pump.

BILL

God; do I hear voices from the past with those comments! But I am reminded of someone I met a few years ago. A woman. She looked like a young Grace Kelly.

MARK

Ah, blonde; fragile; almost ethereal beauty?

BILL

Precisely. I met her at an art gallery; she was there with her parents, for God's sake. We went to my place---where absolutely nothing happened.

MARK

Too ethereal?.

BILL

No; just the opposite. She had been a hooker in Hanoi for heroin.

MARK

Damn; love that alliteration. But---had she really?

BILL

Yep; she'd ball the right guys to get the H. By the time I met her, she was off the smack. Said it wasn't all that hard to stop; more or less like a bad cold. But, she couldn't quit smoking cigarettes.

MARK

A memorable evening. You can meet some interesting people at those openings.

BILL

Sounds like you did?

MARK

Yes; she was a red-headed dance instructor for Arthur Murray. Magnificent body. And only 23. Twenty-three....

BILL

Yes; and?

MARK

And she'd had a colonoscopy.

BILL

Really! What was that like?

MARK

Well, I got to tell you---it's a different thing to be in bed with a sexy, young woman who has a little bag hanging from a tube. Gotta say, though, she carried it off like trouper. Not a smidge of embarrassment.

BILL

Well, good for her. Nice, strong sex drive, that one. What's the most overtly crazy thing you've ever done for sex?

MARK

That, I won't tell you. But, my great-uncle was in the army. He knew a guy was in charge of the stockade. Women were on one side of this chain-link fence; guys on the other. And one of the guys got it on with one of the gals, right thru the fence.

BILL

Oh, ow, ouch! That hurts, just to hear about. Speaking of horny, I knew a guy who said he'd screw a snake, if it would stand still.

MARK

I knew a guy who said he'd screw a woodpile if he thought there was a snake in it!

BILL

I knew a guy who got an erection if he saw a woodpile!!



MARK

I knew a guy who got an erection if he saw an ax!!!

(They dissolve into laughter.)

Hey; we're supposed to met Abby and Jamie at six.

(Lights adjust to ROBIN and PENNY in their locker room. They are laughing.)

PENNY

That's a good one; you know how to tell a story, all right. You're really funny. Did your first husband think your were funny?

ROBIN

He wasn't laughing when he left. But, speaking of funny, my sister is going with this guy, Carl, who likes a little phone sex. He'll call her and tell her all the great things they're going to do when he sees her.

PENNY

And she likes that?

ROBIN

Oh, yes; it gives her a bit of a turn on. Anyway, last night, she gets a call from some weird-o. Just some random nut who called to try to freak her out.

PENNY

I know the type. They get their rocks when they think they've shocked the woman.

ROBIN

Right. Well, sis was half asleep and she thought it was Carl on the line. So, the guy would say something outrageous and she'd say, "Yes; honey; that's nice". This pervert is saying all kinds of crazy things and she's saying "Yes, honey; that's nice."

PENNY

What finally happened?

ROBIN

The pervert got mad and hung up.

PENNY

Beautiful; serves him right. But, speaking of phones, I was working in a law office a while back. The building was built round an atrium so we could see into the windows on the other side.

ROBIN

So it was easy to do a little innocent peeking?

PENNY

Exactly. Well, one afternoon, we looked out and saw a couple---a doctor and his receptionist---going at it on his examining table.

ROBIN

Love in the afternoon!

PENNY

Right; "afternoon delight." Anyway, we knew the doc's name and we looked him up in the book. My boss calls; the receptionist grabs the phone and says, "Dr. Smith's office." And my boss says, "This is God; aren't you ashamed?"

ROBIN

That's funny. The boss had a good sense of humor. Did he ever make a move on you?

PENNY

He gave it a half-way try, but no---he wasn't for me. It's superficial to even say it, but he was one of those guys who was about \$5,000 away from being good looking.

ROBIN

Schnoze?

PENNY

No, his nose was OK. But he just didn't have a chin. Five K; that's all it would have taken for a good implant. But I never could tell him.

ROBIN

'Course not. So, it's superficial but looks do matter. I knew a totally good-looking guy one time, tho, and they didn't help him.

PENNY

Oh?

ROBIN

Yeah; John wasn't only good looking; he was a great guy. Men and women both liked him. He was just darn good company.

PENNY

And what happened to him?

ROBIN

John liked a beer. Or six. Never got sloppy; got a glow on many nights. He was a regular at this bar in Manhattan Beach.

PENNY

Outside of L A?

ROBIN

That's the one. So, the bar tender was a young woman---ten, fifteen years younger than John---who just flat out fell for our boy. Couldn't take her eyes off him; hung on his every word; totally ga-ga.

PENNY

And what did John feel for her?

ROBIN

Not much; oh, she was attractive but he was a little uneasy about the hero-worship stuff.

PENNY

I know that situation. If you can total up the affection between two people like that, it's about 90-10. So, what happened?

ROBIN

Almost out of sympathy, John asked her---her name was Jen---out a few times. And gradually got to like her. Like her to the extent that they eventually moved in together.

PENNY

So, happily ever after, huh?

ROBIN

Not really. The 90-10 became 80-20. And then 60-40.

PENNY

And then 5-50?

ROBIN

Oh, I guess it may have been in equilibrium for maybe half an hour at some point.

PENNY

But didn't stay there?

ROBIN

Nope; shot right past it to 20-80 and then 10-90.

PENNY

Total reversal? He was head-over-heels and she was just la-de-dah?

ROBIN

That's just what happened. Jen moved out and John was devastated.

PENNY

Any idea why?

ROBIN

Just guessing but I think Jen was one of those poor souls who have such a low opinion of themselves that they can't respect anyone who really likes them.

PENNY

Now, that is sad. Oh, look at the time; the guys will be waiting for us.

ROBIN

Let 'em wait. You mentioned "sad" and that reminded me of the saddest guy I ever met. You'd think he would be happy; he had it all.

PENNY

All?

ROBIN

Well, nobody actually has it "all" but he was close. He was a handsome bachelor; early 40's; and rich. As in RICH.

PENNY

Multi?

ROBIN

Multi-multi. Had at least two airplanes. A dozen cars. Two chauffeurs; half a dozen other servants. He'd spend a weekend with a woman and give her a new Cadillac.

PENNY

Humm-m-m---yes, I think we can stipulate he was RICH! What happened to him.

ROBIN

He did have one problem. His teeth were bad and he hated dentists. But, his secretary had made a dental appointment for him and he went. He was a hundred miles from the office so he had one driver take him to his plane. The pilot flew him to the city; another driver takes him to town. He gets out of the car; takes the elevator to the 7th floor; walks to the end of the hall; and jumps out the window.

PENNY

Whoa; I didn't see that one coming. He really hated dentists, didn't he? And I can see why you say he was sad

ROBIN

OK; we've kept the guys waiting long enough.

(Lights adjust. Actors leave.)

GALE

As you said, we get the test first and the lesson after.  
But, you were about to say something about an Italian woman?

NATHAN

Yes; the most beautiful woman I've ever known.

GALE

Really? You've talked about a model for Nieman-Marcus. You mentioned a woman who was in Playboy. And this Italian was more beautiful?

NATHAN

Yes; truly.

GALE

Well, that's saying a lot. How did you meet her?

NATHAN

It was at a typical Washington party. Lots of upwardly mobile singles. I was talking with a little post-doc who was coming on to me.

(Lights adjust. NATHAN steps into the scene and plays himself. ROBIN is chatting with him.)

ROBIN

So---how do you know our host?

NATHAN

He and I were at USC together.

ROBIN

Oh, what was your major?

(ROBIN mimes speaking to NATHAN as he speaks to the audience.)

NATHAN

And then, SHE walked into the room.

(PENNY enters.)

Think Cindy Crawford---think Catherine Zeta-Jones---think beautiful and suave and sexy. The little post-doc kept nattering away about something or other but I didn't hear a word she said. All I could do was stare. And barely keep from drooling. Michele---I learned later that was her name---got a drink and then stood looking out the window. I knew two things right away. One, this woman was a light year out of my league. And two, if I didn't make some effort to talk to her, I'd regret it for the rest of my life. So I said to the little post-doc....

(NATHAN is back in the scene; he speaks to ROBIN.)

Excuse me; someone just arrived---an old friend---catch you later.

(ROBIN drifts away. NATHAN speaks to audience.)

Kit Carson said, "The cowards don't start and the weak die along the trail."

(NATHAN looks sky-ward.)

OK: Kit, baby; let's go for the gold!

(NATHAN walks to PENNY.)

Hi, I'm Nathan.

(PENNY shakes his hand; she mimes chatting to him while clearly enjoying herself. NATHAN speaks to the audience.)

We talked. After those first three words---God, how lame can you be?---I couldn't tell you what I said. Twenty minutes just zipped by. I was in the zone! I was charming, funny and totally relaxed. Then, I took a chance and said....

NATHAN

Would you like to see my house?

PENNY

Sure; that sounds like fun.

NATHAN

(NATHAN speaks to audience.)

We drove to my place. I put the top down on the Benz and we sang along with the radio. It was the most perfect night of my life. And we were heading for my house! Kit Carson would have been proud of me. We pulled into the garage; got out of the car; I led her into the living room. I lit a fire. We sat in front of the fireplace; toasted a couple of marshmallows. Drank some wine. We snuggled and kissed. Then, doing what seemed the most natural thing in the world, I carried her into my bedroom.

(NATHAN picks PENNY up and carries her to bed/sofa/futon. He continues to speak to audience.)

I reached for her but she got up and said....

PENNY

No; let me. For you. Just sit. And watch.

NATHAN

(NATHAN continues to speak to audience.)

So, slowly, she started to undress. I was aroused; I was ready. But I knew I had to let her do it her way. So, I sat. And watched.

(As NATHAN speaks, PENNY disrobes. At the least (most?), she should get down to bra and panties. If possible, depending upon the actor and local mores, she can get totally undressed.. Suitable music ("Cherish"?) plays.)

And there she was, this goddess. She was aroused, too. And ready. Ready for me! And then---

(NATHAN sobs.)

she said the word. She smiled at me and cupped her breasts in her hands and she said THE WORD.

(Lights adjust. PENNY leaves.)

GALE

Word? What word? How could one word ruin everything?

NATHAN

(NATHAN whispers.)

She said---"enjoy."

GALE

So? So she said, "Enjoy." Isn't that what you wanted to do?

NATHAN

(NATHAN speaks with increasing intensity.)

You don't understand. How could she say "enjoy"? That was my mother's word! She would put blintzes on the table and say "Bubbie---enjoy." With chicken soup, she'd say "Enjoy." For 18 years, never a day went by without my mother saying "Enjoy."

(NATHAN calms himself.)

Well, you've guessed the rest. In 20 seconds, I went from hero to zero. From Sampson to Simpson. Goodbye erection; goodbye Michele.

GALE

This is so---so---sad.

NATHAN

I know how Icarus felt.

GALE

Yes; flying too close to the sun.

NATHAN

Yeah, well... That was six weeks ago. I felt empty, hollow, neutered. I'm doing fine now. One more evaluation and my shrink says I can stop the medication.

GALE

Back at the party? You should have stuck with that little post-doc.

NATHAN

Maybe I would have, if it hadn't been for that damn Kit Carson.

GALE

Good for you; you can laugh about it now.

NATHAN

Actually, I did look her up. And, to tell the truth, it didn't ease the pain very much.

GALE

How did that work out?

NATHAN

Not so well. But, at least, it wasn't my fault.

GALE

Poor baby; tell me about it.

NATHAN

The post-doc---her name was Pamela---and I dated for several months. Then, one evening, she said we should break up. So, I said, "What's bothering you? I can't read your mind." And she said, "You're supposed to."

GALE

Oh, I know what she was thinking. I hate to admit it, but some women do this.

NATHAN

What? What was she thinking?

GALE

"If you loved me enough, you would know what I was feeling."

NATHAN

Hey; I'm a man, not Superman.

GALE

Oh, I know. But, wouldn't it be wonderful if you could tell what Pamela was feeling?

NATHAN

Maybe not. Think about it. If I could read your mind---really knew what you were thinking at all times---would you like that?



GALE

Ah-h-h---I never really thought about it that way.

NATHAN

Don't worry. I promise I'll never know what any woman is thinking.

GALE

Good! But maybe after all we've learned about Tina and Sandy and Jessica...

NATHAN

And Bernie and Herb and Jim....

GALE

Maybe we can be a little more tolerant of each other.

(PASTOR enters.)

**PASTOR**

I've got some great news!

(Off-stage, we hear The Wedding March.)

GALE and NATHAN

Oh, my God!

(PASTOR leaves.)

NATHAN

Well, hell; we waited for them. They can wait for us. You know---listening to your stories---I have a better idea of what women go through.

GALE

Same to you, my friend. Let's declare a truce in the war between the sexes.

NATHAN

Deal. And I'd like to apologize for those comments I made earlier about your sister.

GALE

And I'm sorry about what I said about your brother. You know, I'm giving them a Welcome Home party---when they get back from the honeymoon. Think you might like to come?

NATHAN

No, I don't think I'd like to come. I know I'd like to come. And I have season tickets to the Redskins. Would you like to come to a game?

GALE

I'd love to come to a game.

(NOTE: the play can end here, with GALE and NATHAN holding hands and leaving. Or, if the audience is mature enough, they can proceed with the following.)

NATHAN

There'll be lots of toasts at the reception but I'd like to give one now in memory of Tina and Jessica..

GALE

And the other lovely ladies you've told me about?

NATHAN

Right. I've got to warn you, it's a little bawdy....

GALE

I think I can handle bawdy.

NATHAN

Here's to the girl in the fancy shoes;  
She smokes my butts and drinks my booze.  
She's got no cherry, but that's no sin,  
'Cause she's got the box that the cherry came in.

GALE

OK; I've got one for all the guys we've mentioned.

NATHAN

Shoot.

GALE

Friends may come and friends may go  
And friends may peter out.  
But we'll be friends until the end,  
Peter in or peter out.

(GALE and NATHAN leave.)

END OF PLAY

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Much of the action revolves around sofas and beds. Ideally, the theatre will have a sofa bed so proper adjustment can be made. If not, a regular sofa can be used with a piece of plywood which can be stored under the sofa. This plywood "shelf" can be pulled out when the sofa is being used as a bed. Sheets or blankets can be used to cover this contraption.

COMEDY LATTE

## KEY TO THE SCRIPT

(As you know by now, the play consists of vignettes. The following key might prove helpful. After the number of the page on which the vignette starts, each is identified by the name of the characters portrayed and/or a significant word.)

- 1 Pastor
- 3 Irene/Metro
- 5 Mrs. Miller/Sally
- 8 Cowboy/Secretary
- 9 Scott/Relaxer
- 11 Vickie/Sheriff
- 13 Suzy Quigly
- 14 Sylvia/"Jack Frost"
- 17 Birthday Present
- 18 Soldier/Hooker
- 21 Leslie/Doctor
- 22 Sheri/Robert
- 23 Fran/Lenses
- 25 Herb/Judy
- 27 400 Pounds
- 28 Naomi/Mr. Ice
- 30 Jewel/Porsche
- 32 Grandfather/Gas tank
- 33 Suzzon/Tape
- 34 Jessica/Bill

- 36 Jim/Homonyms
- 37 Viking/Sniff
- 38 Roger/Tina
- 39 Sandy/Redskin
- 40 Men in Locker Room
- 44 Women in Locker Room
- 48 Michele/Enjoy
- 51 Post-doc/Pamela
- 52 Pastor
- 53 Toasts

COMEDY LATTEFURNITURE, PROPERTY AND COSTUME LISTS

(NOTE: there are few costumes; they are listed in **bold**.)

- 1 Ministerial collar
- 3 Two tall stools
- 5 Purse; diaphragm case; medicinal tube
- 8 Table; two chairs; plates, etc.; newspaper; cigarette
- 9 Bed; blanket
- 11 Bed; sheets
- 13 Beer can
- 14 Table; **swim suit; chef's hat;** cigarette; big knife
- 17 Gift wrapped box
- 18 Bottle of beer; cell phone; bar; **army uniform; slinky dress**
- 21 Stethoscope; **white doctor's coat**
- 22 Purse; cell phone; **top hat; mesh stockings; tuxedo jacket; high heels**
- 23 Watch; **loafers;** buck teeth...optional
- 25 **Leather jump suit; padding**
- 30 **Party dress**
- 33 Bed; tape player
- 34 Sofa
- 38 Bed
- 39 Sofa; phone; **panties**
- 48 Sofa/bed; wine bottle; three glasses
- 50 Ministerial collar
- 53 Two glasses...optional

COMEDY LATTESPECIAL EFFECTS LISTSound:

- 3 Conductor's voice, off stage; warning bell
- 23 Background music for bar scene
- 33 Audio tape of hands clapping
- 48 Romantic background music; "Cherish", for example
- 52 The Wedding March

Lighting:

(In many of the vignettes, GALE and NATHAN will mention some specific action. At that point, the script will say "Lights adjust" and this will be the cue to take the narrators to ghost and bring full lighting up on the actors who are speaking. Once the actors stop speaking, the cue is, again, "Lights adjust" and full lighting is brought up on GALE and NATHAN. These cues relate to the vignettes found on the following pages.)

3	30
5	
8	33
9	34
11	38
13	39
14	40
17	44
18	48
21	51
22	
23	
25	