

Mr. Fix It was nominated for a Betty Mitchell Theatre Award for Outstanding New Play.

Second Chance, First Love was nominated for a Calgary Theatre Critics Award for Outstanding New Script.

“The script is the star of this show, with effortless undulating rhythms that keep the play snappy and entertaining. Russell-King wrote the piece as homage to Pulitzer Prize winning playwright Neil Simon and it’s not hard to imagine that Simon would be pleased by the honour.”

~ Drew Anderson, *Fast Forward Magazine*

“... a gem of a romantic comedy ... the jokes come fast and furious but so do Russell-King’s insights into what makes a marriage fun, maddening, impossible and salvageable... . This is one little diversion you won’t want to miss – 4 stars.”

~ Louis B. Hobson, *Calgary Sun*

“Written as an homage to Neil Simon, and it certainly does feel like something Neil Simon might have written. Russell-King keeps the tempo tuned up and the quips flying.”

~ Stephen Hunt, *Calgary Herald*

“I laughed. I sniffed. I cheered. I gasped in wondrous disbelief and I lost my glasses when I took them off to wipe the tears of joy from my eyes watching Caroline Russell-King’s new comedy. Like Neil Simon, she knows how to set up a joke but she also knows there is laughter in pain and merriment Do yourself a favor, check into The Palliser Suite – 5 stars.”

~ Louis B. Hobson, *Calgary Sun* and 103 FM

“Caroline Russell-King’s pitch-perfect rom-com ... beautifully hits the comedy suite spot. *Second Chance, First Love* is the perfect romantic comedy. – 4 stars.”

~ Stephen Hunt, *Calgary Herald*

“A sweet but intelligent story of former lovers reuniting for a possible return to romance. Like Simon, Russell-King’s script tackles the issues and concerns of regular people through a dialogue-rich mix of humour and bittersweet seriousness ... You will laugh all the way through. SEE IT ... you will enjoy a fabulously fun, not overly formulaic hour in the theatre.”

~ Jessica Goldman, CBC Theatre Reviewer.

Palliser Suite

Caroline Russell-King

 **Frontenac House**
Calgary, Alberta

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Playwright Notes

When I was starting out, I worked in dinner theatre as a script assistant. I worked on 70 shows over nine years. Over the three-week rehearsal periods and eight-week runs and subsequent tours I studied those comedies. I absorbed the words like a dry sponge, I analyzed them, and I ate them for breakfast. Ten of those 70 plays I studied were Neil Simon's. I wrote my plays as an homage to him. Even though he is a Tony Award, Golden Globe, and Pulitzer Prize winner, I have often heard him dismissed in academic circles as formulaic. Also, he writes comedies (which always takes a back seat to "real" drama). I think he's brilliant. Neil Simon will always be my first real playwriting teacher, (even though I've never met him). He is 82 at the writing of this draft. I hope he still has many more plays in him to continue my education and entertain the theatre audience. *Palliser Suite* is an attempt to echo the rhythms of his *Suite* plays with a little bit of *Prisoner* thrown in for luck. Enjoy.

CR-K

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And special thanks to artistic directors who program new Canadian work, in this case the lovely Pamela Halstead.

I am indebted to three incredible directors who worked on the trilogy of one acts: Kevin McKendrick, Gail Hanrahan and Kate Newby; and the fine casts, designers and stage managers. I was very, very lucky.

Bunkie, you hold a special place in my heart. I learned a lot from you.

Neil Simon, for your genius, your inspiration and the laughter.

And as always, I could not do what I do without the support of Gerald and Emma. I love them more than theatre.

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Production History

Mr. Fix It premiered at Lunchbox Theatre in Calgary, Canada in February 2010.

MEL	Brian Jensen
EDNA	Barbara Gates Wilson
Artistic Director	Pamela Halstead
Director	Kevin McKendrick
Assistant Director	Kathryn Waters
Set Design	Shauna Breslawski
Lighting Design	Amy Paterson
Costume Design	Andrea Shanks-Sutherland
Stage Manager	Alec McCauley

Second Chance, First Love workshopped at Lunchbox Theatre in June 2011 through Petro-Canada Stage One. The play premiered at Lunchbox Theatre, in October 2012.

JASON	Adam Beauchesne
ZELDA	Valerie Ann Pearson
STANLEY	Wes Tritter
Artistic Director	Pamela Halstead
Director	Gail Hanrahan
Assistant Director	Valmi Goggin
Costume & Set Design	Julia Asilewski
Sound Design	Jason Hellawell
Lighting Design	Sandi Somers
Stage Manager	Michael Howard

Funeral Fore! was commissioned by Lunchbox Theatre and workshopped in March 2013.

MAX	Duval Lang
BELLA	Kathryn Kerbes
ALEX	Scott Shpeley
RUBY	Justine Westby
MICHAEL	Mathieu Bourassa
Artistic Director	Glenda Stirling
Director	Kate Newby
Assistant Director	Valmi Goggin
Stage Manager	Graham Kingsley

Act I:
Mr. Fix It

*For my dad, Mr. Fix It;
& for Terrance Michael King*

Palliser Suite

Characters

MEL, a 50-something man

EDNA, an attractive woman in her mid-40s

Setting

The Palliser Hotel, Calgary. The suite is large and tastefully decorated. The set is divided in two. There is a full-length mirror and wet bar by some large-scale chairs with a large writing desk. On the desk are a dozen or so hotel water glasses each filled with screws, nuts and bolts. On the desk there is also a coffee pot and the workings of a coffee machine laid out on a hotel towel. Everything is clean and organized. Beside the table is a champagne bucket on a silver stand. In it is a bouquet of tools – screwdrivers, hammers, etc. The bedroom has a king-size bed. The bathroom is off left and the entryway is up centre.

The room has a few clothes on the floor.

Time

It is early in the morning.

Act I: Mr. Fix It

There is a knock at the door and a lump groans under the covers. Then another, more insistent, knock. The covers are flung back to reveal MEL.

MEL Maria! How many times do we have to go over this! No housekeeping before nine.
[Knock at the door] There had better be a fire. I don't hear no fire alarm! *[A louder knock; Mel gets slowly out of bed and pulls on a hotel robe, calling out.]* Maria, that had better not be you. *[He stubs his toe in the half light.]*
Goddamn it!

[He turns on the light, goes to the door, and sees EDNA. Unlike Mel, she has fought the battle of time more successfully. She is slim, and her face is soft. They look at each other for a moment.]

EDNA Hi, Mel.

MEL Edna, Jesus.

EDNA Who's Maria?

MEL This gorgeous dancer I met last night – don't tell my wife.

EDNA More like housekeeping.

MEL What do you care?

EDNA Are you going to invite me in?

MEL If I'd have known you were coming I'd have shaved.

EDNA I might not have recognized you.

MEL You drove all the way across town to insult me?

EDNA I'm sorry; I'll try to be nice if you do. Three minutes, we can do that, can't we Mel?

MEL I'd set the timer but I don't think we're going to make it.

Palliser Suite

EDNA I could use some coffee; you on the other
 hand are going to need something much
 stronger.

MEL The kids?

EDNA Are fine.

MEL My grandson?

EDNA Also fine.

MEL Who died?

EDNA Nobody died, Mel.

MEL It was Gordie, wasn't it. I haven't seen Gordie
 since I don't remember when.

EDNA Your friend Gordie? Moved to Florida. We
 got that postcard from him.

MEL [*Giggles*] Yeah, *that* postcard.

EDNA I threw it out.

MEL Well, what you don't know is that I took it
 out of the trash.

EDNA And then you hid it in the bathroom.

MEL How did you know that?

EDNA Mel, you never cleaned a toilet in your life.

MEL I should have put it in my suitcase.

EDNA With your baseball cards and your Playboy.

MEL What?

EDNA A wife knows.

MEL So it wasn't Gordie. Charlie?

EDNA Mel, no one died.

MEL So what's the bad news?

EDNA Did I say it was bad news?

Act I: Mr. Fix It

MEL You don't wake someone up this early to tell them good news, you don't like me that much.

EDNA Of course I like you, Mel.

MEL Like me so much that you're now with some schmuck called Darren.

EDNA His name is Donald.

MEL How is old Dirk, anyway?

EDNA *Donald* is fine, thank you.

MEL Maria is fine too.

EDNA Give it up, Mel.

MEL So, do I have to guess?

EDNA I just need to build up to it a little more.

MEL We were never good at small talk, Edna.

EDNA *[Pause]* Donald and I are getting married.

MEL *[Beat]* You're here to invite me to the wedding, sorry, I think I'm busy that day.

EDNA I'm not here to invite you to the wedding.

MEL You're *not* going to invite me to the wedding?

EDNA Mel, I don't know how to tell you this, I haven't slept Yesterday at three when I went to apply for the papers, I got the news.

MEL What already?

EDNA They say I'm still married to you.

MEL What are you saying here, Edna?

EDNA We're not divorced.

MEL What?

EDNA We are not divorced.

Palliser Suite

MEL What!

EDNA What do you mean “what?” What part don’t you understand here? Legally, we are still married!

MEL You’re still my wife?

EDNA Yes, Mel, technically, I’m still your wife.

MEL *[Beat]* What’s for supper?

EDNA MEL!

MEL Joking! I was joking!

EDNA Sure, I divorce you and now you get a sense of humour.

MEL We ain’t divorced.

EDNA Don’t remind me.

MEL What happened?

EDNA There was a glitch in the paperwork.

MEL A glitch? Spelling your name wrong is a glitch. Saying you’re still married is a major foul-up.

EDNA I was upset too, Mel.

MEL Did you go back to the lawyer’s office?

EDNA Of course I went back to the lawyer’s office. He ain’t there no more.

MEL He didn’t leave a forwarding address?

EDNA I went to the forwarding address, it’s a barbershop.

MEL Maybe he owns two businesses – did you check in the back?

EDNA No, I didn’t check in the back. There was no lawyer there.

Act I: Mr. Fix It

MEL Did you ask?

EDNA What do you take me for? Of course, I asked.

MEL What did he say?

EDNA I can't give you a lawyer, lady – I can give you a short, back and sides, but no lawyer.

MEL You should have got him to take more off the back.

EDNA We have to get re-divorced.

MEL Shouldn't we get re-married first?

EDNA It didn't work the first time, Mel.

MEL I told you to use Frankie.

EDNA Yeah, I'm gonna use your lawyer. I wanted to find my own.

MEL Good job.

EDNA He had a sign in the door and a diploma hanging on the wall, he had a desk, he wore a suit, how was I to know?

MEL You got took. Wait a minute, I paid for half of that. Nine hundred bucks.

EDNA I'm sorry.

MEL What did I get for my nine hundred bucks?

EDNA This piece of paper. You want your half? [*She rips the paper in two.*]

MEL I'll have my accountant look up the cancelled cheque; we'll have his signature as a place to start.

EDNA There was no cheque – he asked for cash.

MEL And that didn't sound suspicious to you? A lawyer who asked for cash?

EDNA Sorry, Mel, it was my first divorce.

Palliser Suite

MEL You walked the streets with nine hundred dollars cash on you?

EDNA Eighteen hundred – I paid my half in cash too.

MEL Are you crazy, carrying that amount of cash on you?

EDNA I didn't have it all in one place, I put some in my gloves, some down my bra --

MEL Oh sure, a mugger's delight, a human piñata.

EDNA I didn't get mugged, Mel.

MEL What do you call what happened to you?

EDNA I don't know what to do. I think we should report it.

MEL I'll mention it to Fred next time I see him.

EDNA A formal report, not a casual remark next time you run into your policeman friend.

MEL I'm seeing him Sunday, bowling.

EDNA I'd do it myself, but

MEL What?

EDNA I don't remember his name. It's not on the document and his signature is hard to make out.

MEL I don't believe this.

EDNA You saw him too.

MEL For two minutes – I signed my name, Melvin Stiers. If I had a longer name I might have seen more of him. You had better hope Dominic has a longer name and you won't have any trouble divorcing him.

EDNA I'm not going to divorce Donald.

Act I: Mr. Fix It

MEL: No, cause you're still married to me.

EDNA Oh, God.

MEL Melvin Augustus Stephen David Benjamin Stiers and I might have gotten a better look.

EDNA But you saw him?

MEL Briefly.

EDNA What did he look like?

MEL You don't remember what he looked like?

EDNA My eyes were kind of blurry at the time.

MEL *[Pleased]* They were?

EDNA I don't remember much, he was white --

MEL Well, that certainly narrows down the APB.

EDNA Wasn't his hair blond?

MEL I thought he was white-haired.

EDNA I thought he was in his twenties.

MEL You should have taken a photo.

EDNA A photo? I should have taken a photo?

MEL Yeah.

EDNA And how many people do you do business with that you have their photo?

MEL Lots.

EDNA Name one.

MEL My accountant, Harry Rosenbloom.

EDNA Harry is your best friend. That doesn't count.

MEL Photos.

EDNA Well, I won't be so upset when we do it again.

MEL We?

Palliser Suite

EDNA You're not going to be awkward about this,
 are you Mel?

MEL *[Beat]* You know what they call this, Edna?

EDNA A bad situation.

MEL Nope.

EDNA An even worse than that situation?

MEL This is fate, Edna.

EDNA *[Softly]* Oh, no Mel.

MEL Fate, Edna. I'm telling you.

EDNA Not fate, Mel.

MEL Fate.

EDNA You say "fate" one more time --

MEL Fate. Fate. Fate. Fate. Fate.

EDNA I'm warning you, Mel!

MEL Fate.

EDNA Glitch!

MEL Faaaate!

EDNA Glitch, a minor, glitch, an inconvenience.
[Pause] Mel, I want a divorce.

MEL I gave you one the first time – look what you
 did with it.

EDNA I'm not joking.

MEL I want my 900 dollars back.

EDNA I'll write you a cheque.

MEL I don't want *your* money, I want *my* money.
 The money from the crook who shafted us.

EDNA You don't need the money.

MEL How do you know?

Act I: Mr. Fix It

EDNA You just opened the 37th Mr. Fix It store.
 You live in a suite at The Palliser Hotel.
 You're rich as Rockefeller.

MEL It's the principle of the thing.

EDNA Fine, get dressed, we'll go to the police station
 and report it.

MEL I ain't shaved.

EDNA I'll wait.

MEL My razor broke.

EDNA Go stubbly.

MEL You don't want to be seen with a man who
 hasn't shaved.

EDNA MEL! You're driving me crazy.

MEL *[Smiles]* Just like old times.

EDNA Why do you think I wanted the divorce!

MEL I didn't think it had anything to do with me.

EDNA No?

MEL I thought our problem was your masseuse.

EDNA Massage Therapist.

MEL Does he have a diploma hanging on the wall
 too?

EDNA Yes, a big one. Jesus, Mel, I can't believe I just
 said that. Two minutes in the same room
 with you and look what you do to me.

MEL I used to make you nervous.

EDNA Are you flirting with me?

MEL You used to get all giggly when we were
 dating.

EDNA You are!

Palliser Suite

MEL Fate threw us together – I think it would displease god if we were to fight it, Edna.

EDNA Mel, what the hell are you talking about?

MEL Don't you miss me?

EDNA I have Darren --

MEL Hah!

EDNA Donald. Jesus!

MEL I won't bring up his name if you don't.

EDNA Darren! I think that was the name of the lawyer!

MEL Now we're getting somewhere.

EDNA I remember when I was signing the papers, I was taking my time – you know, I was looking at the pen and then he started getting kind of twitchy.

MEL Kind of twitchy?

EDNA Yeah. His name was engraved on the pen. I remember now. And he said that it was out of ink and he gave me another one.

MEL What was the name on *that* one – Bic?

EDNA I'm serious. If only I could remember the second name on that pen.

MEL You may be on to something. Think – for 1800 dollars, Darren was this lawyer's first name.

EDNA Thank you Alex Trebek.

MEL So now what?

EDNA I thought you'd know.

MEL You have the address for the barber? I could become a detective.

Act I: Mr. Fix It

EDNA You always did watch too much TV in the little time you spent at home.

MEL Some flaw! At least I was home with you.

EDNA In the same house but not with me.

MEL You're talking crazy again, Edna. I started off with nothing. Nothing. Then I got the repair shop. Your father didn't think I could even make a success of that and now our son oversees a chain of Mr. Fix It shops.

EDNA It was the "Reduce, Reuse," it really hit at the right time. You did good, Melvin Steirs.

MEL I did good, but --

EDNA You were never around.

MEL I was building up the business. For you.

EDNA I didn't want a business, I wanted a husband.

MEL I stayed home in the beginning, when I could take enough money out of the store. Or I brought work home: the odd toaster, waffle iron.

EDNA Our living room was wall to wall parts at one point – things haven't changed much, have they? [*She looks at the detritus spread around the desk.*] When you weren't fixing TV's you were watching them.

MEL I worked hard, didn't I deserve to relax?

EDNA We never lived a life.

MEL What'd you mean? We lived our life.

EDNA We never took a vacation, we never did anything together.

MEL So you found someone else who rubbed you the right way.

Palliser Suite

EDNA Don't go there, Mel.

MEL Edna, listen to me. I've been by myself for a while, I've saved up things to say to you.

EDNA *[Pause, softly]* What do you want to say, Mel?

MEL You want to take a vacation together?

EDNA *[Beat]* I am engaged to another man.

MEL He's what? Twenty-six?

EDNA Thirty-seven.

MEL A baby.

EDNA Hardly.

MEL How do you know he isn't marrying you for my money?

EDNA That is a low blow, Mel. Even for you. Why are you doing this? Why do you want to hurt me, Mel?

MEL The last thing in the world that I would ever want to do is hurt you, Edna.

EDNA What did I ever do that I should end up with this life?

MEL Is it so bad? Was it so bad? Why are you here now?

EDNA Have you listened to anything I've said this morning? *[Beat]* Donald took me to Spokane.

MEL The height of romance.

EDNA He was at a conference We'll do a beach another time

MEL What a guy!

EDNA He is!

MEL *[Pause]* Have you wondered why I'm in *this* hotel?

Act I: Mr. Fix It

EDNA Because you're a man, a rich man and you can afford it. Because you need someone to clean up after you, you need room service, you've never cooked a meal in your life or ironed a shirt. *[She starts walking through to the bedroom and picking up his clothes and folding them almost automatically.]* I did all that for you. Is this what you do? You replace me with a hotel? Is this all I was to you? That I can be replaced, with a hotel? You have a TV, I'm surprised you even noticed I was gone! You have more money now than you know what to do with. Do you make a nice home for yourself? You could have whatever you wanted. You live here, doesn't that tell you anything?

MEL I lived in a house, you were my home.

EDNA *[Looks at the pile of clothes she has folded.]*
What am I doing?

MEL A good job, by the looks of it.

EDNA See how quickly I fall back into old patterns when I'm with you?

MEL Do you fold stuff for Derrick?

EDNA *Donald* does his own laundry.

MEL You didn't answer the question.

EDNA Yes I did.

MEL You took care of me. You did good.

EDNA I needed to do more with my life than be the kids' mother and Mel's wife.

MEL What did you want to do?

EDNA I don't know, but *something*. That's why I went to university.

Palliser Suite

MEL I never said you couldn't do whatever you wanted to do.

EDNA *[Beat]* That's not the point.

MEL Then what is the point? You tell me. You tell me, Edna. Do you know why I'm here in this room and not in my own home with my own massage "therapist"? I'll tell you, because this isn't my life. This is just temporary.

EDNA You've been here two years!

MEL Here. Why here? Think, Edna, why *here*?

EDNA It's the best hotel in town and you're the kind of man who'd starve if he couldn't order food from a menu.

MEL Think back 26 years ago.

EDNA I don't want to play.

MEL Twenty-six years ago we were married, and do you know where we went on our wedding night?

EDNA We went to that little Inn on Macleod.

MEL And do you know what you said?

EDNA Mel, it was a long time ago.

MEL You said you wished we could afford to go to somewhere nice.

EDNA I did?

MEL Yes.

EDNA I didn't mean nothing by it, Mel. I liked the Inn, really. Besides, it was our honeymoon – who cared if the tap dripped all night.

MEL And the door didn't lock --

EDNA And we ordered breakfast in bed and the toast was burnt --

Act I: Mr. Fix It

MEL The coffee was cold --

EDNA And they forgot the sugar --

MEL And you were so shy you got dressed in the closet in the morning.

EDNA I didn't know the door was going to get stuck.

MEL You got locked in by accident.

EDNA And you had to rescue me.

MEL It was the first thing I fixed for you.

EDNA Yes.

MEL And we wondered if all that would have happened at The Palliser.

EDNA We did.

MEL Want to step into the closet and see if it sticks? We could order toast and coffee.

EDNA Oh, Mel.

MEL Do you know how much I wished I could have afforded to take you to the best place in town? The best for you, Edna, I only wanted what was best for you. And now it is 26 years later and we're both here.

EDNA You've been waiting for me here?

MEL I didn't know I was waiting until you showed up.

EDNA And now it's too late.

MEL No.

EDNA I've been proposed to. We have a place booked.

MEL I'll cover the cancellation of the hall, the whole thing.

EDNA Hall?

Palliser Suite

MEL Synagogue? Church? *Mosque*?

EDNA Yoga studio.

MEL Excuse me.

EDNA The place where he works – natural light,
wooden floor, it's pretty.

MEL The bride wore spandex?

EDNA Ha ha, I take yoga now and I wear lulu
lem -- never mind! I'm getting married in
organic cott -- plans! Plans have been made.

MEL Invitations have gone out?

EDNA It's a green wedding, there's a website instead
of invites – a smaller carbon footprint.

MEL So, no invites.

EDNA *Virtual* invites will go out.

MEL You're not wearing a ring.

EDNA He, we, *we* don't believe in the whole
blood-diamond --

MEL You mean he's cheap.

EDNA He's not cheap!

MEL Cheap, cheap, cheap, cheap, cheap!

EDNA You sound like a deranged chicken.

MEL Cheap.

EDNA Well, I am marrying a man, not a chicken!

MEL You're not marrying this massaging, yoga,
tattoo-wearing --

EDNA You know about his tattoos?

MEL I do now.

EDNA Well, they're tasteful.

Act I: Mr. Fix It

MEL Uh huh. Gecko or yin yang?

EDNA Ha ha! Neither! Tribal.

MEL What's his tribe? The Maori of Mount Royal?

EDNA Stop insulting him!

MEL *[Pause]* Do you remember the first time we were in this room?

EDNA I try to forget.

MEL Our wedding, we had our meal downstairs, just the two of us. We came up here just to sneak a look – and they were cleaning this one – the door was open – we snuck in ...

EDNA If Housekeeping hadn't come back in ...

MEL I always felt bad that I couldn't afford this room for you. We had to leave it for the, what the hell was that?

EDNA Bide-a-wee Inn.

MEL Bide a wee? Sounds nasty.

EDNA I thought it was French: Bide, Ah, Oui!

MEL You know what I miss about you, Edna?

EDNA Yes, and you can't have it.

MEL The banter.

EDNA *[Beat]* You left me for a banterless saleswoman.

MEL A mistake.

EDNA You say that now, back then you said she was ... agreeable ... with a flat stomach.

MEL But she couldn't banter.

EDNA You're supposed to say, "Her stomach wasn't *that* flat."

Palliser Suite

MEL Yes it was. Sometimes I'd bounce right back off like a trampoline.

EDNA She never had your kids.

MEL It would have wrecked the flatness of her stomach. If she had been interested in kids she would have rented a womb somewhere.

EDNA You have a rented woom.

MEL Banter you're good at, puns not so much.

EDNA You should hear my onomatopoeias.

MEL Nice to see night school is paying off.

EDNA I'm getting my degree!

MEL Congratulations. In what?

EDNA General studies.

MEL So you'll be generally smarter? What are you going to do?

EDNA I haven't decided. But now I got options. Donald is going to be opening his own business, a chain of clinics. I'll help him out.

MEL Wait a minute!

EDNA What?

MEL Wait a minute! You go to school to learn all those new things and you end up doing the books for the massage boy?

EDNA He's not a boy.

MEL *[Sarcastically]* Good comeback.

EDNA And he's not a massage boy, he's a therapist, he could be a doctor.

MEL Coulda woulda shoulda

EDNA Don't you coulda woulda shoulda me.

Act I: Mr. Fix It

MEL I'll coulda woulda shoulda whoever I like!

EDNA I'm just saying he's got dreams, he's going somewhere.

MEL Hello!

EDNA Don't you 'Hello' me. It is not the same thing.

MEL At least I'm not repeating *my* mistakes

EDNA Cheap shot.

MEL Sorry.

EDNA Look at you. You're back to square one. Alone, pulling things apart.

MEL They know me here. I'm friends with all the staff, sometimes I help out Jason with the maintenance of the appliances. This I know. I know the difference between a Braun food processor blender 7002-514, which has thicker gaskets than the 7002-515 gaskets, it's the seal. It's all in the seal. I know the tricks with the old Melita coffee pots. And I know the Krups replacement parts 053 and 052 look alike but both are different than the 515CO1's, the parts are easy to get and in a pinch you can adapt the ... never mind, you never did care

EDNA I was always impressed with how you could look at a bit of metal or a piece of plastic and name the make and model number. I never knew a man who worked so hard to pull things apart.

MEL And then put them back together? Anyone can pull things apart, the money is in the putting them back together.

[Long pause; they look at each other.]

Palliser Suite

If I'd have had the money in the beginning of our marriage do you think it would have changed anything?

EDNA Mel. *I* rented this room for us on our 20th anniversary. *You* didn't want to come. You were so busy setting up the stores ... you

MEL Let's skip that bit

EDNA Oh no, Mel, you want to reminisce, you get it all. I sat right here. You were late. I was in that movie star boudoir outfit.

MEL With the feathers --

EDNA It wasn't feathers, it was a floaty down trim --

MEL And you even had tufts on them, on the high heel slippers. Who has high heel slippers with tufts on them? Show me the man that thinks that's attractive?

EDNA They were black satin slippers with white *accessories* that went with the outfit -- it was a look.

MEL It was a look, all right.

EDNA I was wearing them to appeal to you, to seduce you. I thought I'd get glammed up, pour the champagne, just like in the black and white movies. But nooooo.

MEL Let's not go there.

EDNA Oh we're going there, Mel.

MEL Edna --

EDNA You paced around the room, didn't even sit on the bed. You drank back two, three scotches and you told me you had to go back to the office. Some shipment was coming in. You said you didn't have time, had to meet with Harry early in the morning in

Act I: Mr. Fix It

Edmonton, you might get a flight out in the night and stay at the Best Western so you'd be fresh in the morning. I knew then. The problem was, Mel, you're a good man deep down. And good men feel guilty when they fool around on two women at the same time. And you couldn't bring yourself to – so you stopped sleeping with me. Technically, in your mind it worked. That was some twisted sense of male logic and morality. I knew right then. If you wouldn't sleep with me on our anniversary you were having an affair.

MEL Alright! What are you bringing all this up for?

EDNA Because – just because – I may have ended it with the divorce but I wanted you to remember who started it! *You* started it, Mel.

MEL I started the affair but you started the reason for the affair.

EDNA There is no reason to have an affair!

MEL You never supported me. You nagged at me to be home with the kids more. I was building the business.

EDNA For what? For a family you never saw. You were never there. Not one recital, not one game.

MEL I was paying for the recitals, I was paying for the uniforms.

EDNA You paid for those uniforms so you could write them off under marketing. Making those children run onto the pitch with that stupid screwdriver logo. Your uniforms were torture for those kids. "Jimmy, you really *screwed up*. Jimmy, you're such a *tool*" Nice, very nice.

MEL I never thought of that.

Palliser Suite

EDNA You were never there! How would you know!
I was there, the good, the bad, the ugly. The
time the police picked up Jimmy when he got
drunk on vodka and Orange Tang, he said he
was throwing up screwdrivers.

MEL Yeah, well now he's running the business. So
he didn't turn out too bad.

EDNA Julie thought you didn't hang around with
her because she was a --

MEL You know that never bothered me. I didn't
care!

EDNA But she thought you did because you were
absent. Kids blame themselves.

MEL For the 4 millionth time – *I was working.*

EDNA *Not all the time!*

MEL When I was home it seemed like we just
yelled at each other, it got easier to stay away.

EDNA And then you found someone who
appreciated you. Marcie, with the big eyes
and boobs and flat stomach.

MEL And nice legs, don't forget the legs. [*Edna
picks up a pillow and belts him.*] Hey, *she*
never hit me!

EDNA [*Hitting him again.*] No, she listened to you
when your wife didn't understand you. She
nodded dumbly, shaking her head like a
bobble head doll – dumb and pretty and
nodding and spending your money.

MEL Well --

EDNA I did your books! I went to school long
enough to know those expenditures weren't
business-related.

Act I: Mr. Fix It

MEL She never spent money on slippers with feather puffs!

EDNA Again with the slippers!

MEL I couldn't take my eyes off them. It looked like you had scotch-taped little white chicks to your feet. I kept expecting them to start peeping. I kept thinking any minute now there's going to be a knock on the door and it'll be the Humane Society.

EDNA [*Laughs despite herself.*] Alright, the shoes weren't such a good idea, but I got this room, this very room for you. We never slept in it on our honeymoon, yes we couldn't afford it then, but five years in we could --

MEL You want room service? They make great French toast here.

EDNA No, I didn't come for French toast. I came for a divorce.

MEL I don't think that's on the menu.

EDNA It's a high end hotel, check with the concierge.

MEL I miss the banter.

EDNA Give me the divorce and I'll have some delivered to you with flowers.

MEL You want to talk about the last time we were in this room?

EDNA No.

MEL I rented the room to make it up to you. I ended it with Mar -- her. And I wanted to make it up to you. I got you over here on that accounting pretext. I filled the room with flowers, I got champagne. I'd gotten you a ring --

Palliser Suite

EDNA There was a ring? I don't remember a ring.

MEL We never got to that part – it was in my pocket. The first one I got was nice but I knew you only picked it out cause you knew it was the only one I could afford. I knew you always liked the one your friend had.

EDNA Rita?

MEL Alexis.

EDNA Hers was very nice too.

MEL But I never got to give it to you. Because you started the fight --

EDNA I started the fight?

MEL You were supposed to appreciate the grand gesture, the remorse --

EDNA It was too little, too late.

MEL Too little! I spent 500 dollars on those flowers!

EDNA I'm sorry, Mel.

MEL And the ring --

EDNA What did it look like?

MEL Birks, Royal Asscher, reference number 300003985.

EDNA Describe it as a ring, not a parts number.

MEL Square cut, platinum, 2.3.

EDNA *[Impressed]* Mel!

MEL I took it back. You know, you'd think they'd be really mad to lose a sale but when you take it back they treat you real nice.

EDNA I'm glad. *[Pause]* And you're been here ever since.

Act I: Mr. Fix It

MEL Ever since. I needed a place to stay after she kicked me out. I could afford it. Made sense.

EDNA She kicked you out, you didn't leave her?

MEL What do you care?

EDNA Why'd she kick you out?

MEL I wouldn't marry her. I think she was just in it for my money.

EDNA [*Sarcastically*] No, really? I'm shocked.

MEL [*Quietly*] I wanted someone who'd love me without all the money.

EDNA [*Hits him more gently.*] You had that.

MEL How do you know Derwood isn't marrying you for my money?

EDNA I know.

MEL You like what he does for a living, massaging all those other women?

EDNA When he owns his own chain of clinics he won't have time to actually do the front line work.

MEL So you supporting him means he's not going to be touching other women?

EDNA He's a professional, I trust him.

MEL How did you meet him?

EDNA My therapist recommended self-care. I needed someone to unknot all the stress I had in my body from the divor -- separation.

MEL That's how these men prey on women -- high end salons, looking for sugar mommas.

EDNA He didn't know I had money. He saw me as a middle-aged woman with a lot of knots.

Palliser Suite

Living with the stress of you I had more knots than Quasimodo. You turned me into the hunchback of Mount Royal.

MEL All that renovating you did when I left. When you built the back wing you should've had them put in a bell tower.

EDNA I wanted to change the house that we shared for all those years. Paint those memories right off the walls.

MEL Why didn't you move?

EDNA It's my *home*.

MEL *[Pause; goes to the phone.]* Mark, yes. I'll have two orders of French toast ... yes, I guess I *am* very hungry today ... *[Covering the phone.]* See, he's not used to me ordering for two ... *[Back on the phone.]* And I'll have coffee and a bottle of scotch. No, that's right, it *is* unusual *[Covers the phone.]* He's not used to me drinking in the morning. *[Back on]* And stop by the lobby – bring me a plant or something No, I don't want a potted plant, I want flowers, cut flowers All of them. *[Hangs up]*

Nice boy but not too bright. He's just getting off night shift, he's tired. He should sleep during the days but he's dating Fiona, the girl on the desk, and she works nights --

EDNA You keep up with your own kids like this?

MEL I have a meeting with James at 3:00 – he's looking into an expansion plan for the States. And I wasn't the one who was late at Julie and Shauna's wedding!

EDNA I was stuck at the airport --

MEL And you were late arriving for Samuel's birth!

Act I: Mr. Fix It

EDNA I got there just after but I was avoiding you. You didn't see me but I saw you. You were holding this little pink bundle in a blue blanket and I thought --

MEL What a great Zadie he'll be --

EDNA -- I don't remember him holding his *own* babies.

MEL I know I wasn't there when they were little. I discussed it with them; they say they understand. Besides, they're rich, it softens the blow. [*He sits next to her on the bed.*]

EDNA Mel, no offence, you have morning breath.

MEL Of course I have morning breath, it's morning.

EDNA You have to be told to brush?

MEL I brush – everyday, twice a day, Edna. And I floss, oh I floss. Don't you come in here and tell me I don't know my dental hygiene.

EDNA So why didn't you go to the bathroom to brush?

MEL I could have gone into the bathroom to brush but I didn't cause I was worried if I left you to brush, you wouldn't be here when I got back.

EDNA [*Softly*] Oh Mel.

MEL And for your information, I've had to pee for the last 37 minutes.

EDNA Oh Mel!

MEL Don't you "Oh Mel" me. You screwed this up, Edna.

EDNA Again with the phony lawyer.

MEL I'm not talkin' phony lawyer. I'm talkin' this is not how it was supposed to be.

Palliser Suite

EDNA You're telling me.

MEL No, not that. I haven't brushed or showered or shaved. This is not how it was supposed to be! It's our grandson's bris tomorrow – I had it all planned. Me with a new haircut, a new suit --

EDNA *You* got a new suit?

MEL [*Pleased with himself*] Yeah. I went to Harry --

EDNA You borrowed a suit from Harry Rosenbloom your accountant --

MEL No, I bought a suit from Harry Rosen, period.

EDNA Harry Rosenperiod – is that an outlet store?

MEL Banter, it's like flirting only better.

EDNA What'd you get?

MEL 44 tall style number 52377.

EDNA Always with the numbers!
What - did - you - get?

MEL Oh. Hugo Boss. Black.

EDNA Wow.

MEL I had it fitted. It's hanging up in the closet, you wanna see?

EDNA No. Sounds like you did good, though.

MEL What is Dumchucks wearing? Robes? Tie dye? Sprouts?

EDNA He ... he ain't coming.

MEL You didn't want him there? Cause of me? I can be civil.

EDNA No ... he ... err

MEL What?

Act I: Mr. Fix It

EDNA *[Deep breath]* He doesn't agree with the whole thing

MEL The whole thing?

EDNA Circumcision.

MEL I'd like to have had ringside seats for that fight!

EDNA Donald and I don't fight.

MEL You agreed with him!

EDNA No, I don't agree with him – I'm just saying we don't fight. He's a very calm man.

MEL Boring.

EDNA Calm!

MEL Borrring.

EDNA CALM!

MEL What do you mean you don't fight?

EDNA We discuss things calmly, we negotiate when things get stressful, we

MEL What? What'd you do?

EDNA *[Pause]* He makes me take deep cleansing breaths. I breathe, alright? Sometimes I visualize.

MEL You visualize. What – not being in the same room as him?

EDNA No! I like him! I just had a lot of stress when I first met him. He helped me to get rid of it. He lights sandalwood incense. When things get bad he puts on a CD --

MEL This is how he fixes your tension – with a CD? What's on the CD?

EDNA Stuff.

Palliser Suite

MEL Stuff?

EDNA Sounds. The waves at the beach, the flowing river with pan flute, the rainforest jungle – I don't like that one so much – the macaws – that squawking can be very irritating.

MEL So. He's not coming tomorrow. It's just you and me.

EDNA And 50 other guests, so don't get any ideas. This is Samuel's day, don't wreck it.

MEL Poor little bubka. I'm going to hold him today and explain the whole thing to him, man to man.

EDNA You're seeing him today?

MEL Later, when I've brushed! I get to be the first one to babysit. It's only a 20 minute overlap in their schedules. With the rain, they didn't want to take him out of the house. Julie's got meetings with the Mohel and caterer, her wife has a doctor's appointment.

EDNA *You* get to be the first to babysit?

MEL They know you are busy with school and yoga and *breathing*. They didn't want to bother you.

EDNA Bother me? It would be a pleasure

MEL So yeah, I get 20 minutes alone with James's son. Our grandson! I'm still not used to saying that --

EDNA Julie's son, not James. Senile ol' man, James doesn't have kids yet.

MEL [*Beat*] Ummm.

EDNA What? Ummm? James is having a baby? I'm confused here.

Act I: Mr. Fix It

MEL I thought you knew. Julie didn't tell you?

EDNA What?

MEL Shauna wanted Julie's DNA. James was the donor.

EDNA *[Sits down.]* I didn't know.

MEL *[Sees that she is upset.]* Just the donor, they didn't --

EDNA No, Mel! Of course not!

MEL I'm just clarifying, Edna.

EDNA *[Stunned]* My daughter and son didn't tell me.

MEL It's not public knowledge.

EDNA I'm not the public, I'm their mother!

MEL You are.

EDNA Don't you gloat.

MEL Gloat? Me gloat? Who's gloating? Gloating is such a funny word.

EDNA How did things change? I was always the connected one – you were the satellite parent, I was the helicopter.

MEL Satellite? Helicopter?

EDNA You were distant! I hovered! Now it's changed! I've changed!

MEL The hair, the activities, but you're still the same woman, the same lovely woman.

EDNA I've changed!

MEL Same!

EDNA I've made over my life.

MEL No, it's still the same, you're just busy.

Palliser Suite

EDNA Donald's been starting his own business, I've been helping. I was thinking I was busy looking at clinic locations, swatches, and setting up the books but *[It suddenly dawns on her.]* I'm doing the same thing. Over and over again, the *same thing*.

MEL Where're you going to live?

EDNA He's selling his condo.

MEL He's moving into our house?

EDNA *My house!* And there's lots of room now that your stuff is all cleaned out. I still find bits of you now and again – this screw was in the downstairs hall closet under my rain boots. *[She takes it out of her pocket and hands it to him.]*

MEL 5/8th flat head, plated steel, 846-035.

EDNA The savant of screws. *[Edna's phone rings; she looks at it.]* It's him. *[Into the phone]* Hi, Donny!

MEL *[Mel tugs on her sleeve to get her attention.]* Is he a little bit rock and roll?

EDNA *[She smacks him away, then speaks into the phone.]* You called to see how I'm feeling. How nice of you ... No, I'm fine ... *Fine: freaked out, insecure, neurotic and emotional.*

MEL He's worried about you being in a hotel room with me.

EDNA *[To Mel]* No he isn't. *[Into phone]* No, he took the news well ... very Zen and the Art of Melita Coffeepot Maintenance ... no ... I'm still here ... *[To Mel]* Donald says "Hello."

MEL Namaste.

Act I: Mr. Fix It

EDNA *[Back into the phone]* But I talked to the caterers ... no, it has to be Kosher because my parents will be there

MEL No, they won't.

EDNA *[To Mel]* They will!

MEL Max hates flying and it's too far to drive

EDNA *[Into the phone]* ... and while we're on it, they can't all sit on the silk cushions at the studio ... because my mother is 83 she needs a chair, she's never done a downward dog in her life!

MEL It's true. Ester is allergic to dogs.

EDNA *[Into the phone]* No, I'm not tense Yes, I'm breathing. *[She takes in a deep breath and exhales.]* Yes, I got it all out Three? I'm on the phone here! *[She takes three deep breaths in and out.]*

MEL Usually, heavy breathing turns me on but you sound little asthmatic.

EDNA *[She swats at him, speaks into the phone.]* I'll just be a few more minutes. *[Quickly]* I love you too. *[She hangs up.]* He phoned to ask me how I'm feeling. Wasn't that sweet? You never asked me how I was feeling.

MEL Didn't have to. I can read you like a book.

EDNA How do I feel now? *[She exaggerates a scowl.]*

MEL I don't know, come here, let me feel you.

EDNA *[Suppressing a smile]* I'm angry, Mel.

MEL I love you when you're angry. So we have a date tomorrow?

EDNA What? No, no date. I have a fiancé! Mel, don't do this to me.

Palliser Suite

MEL Darwin has his hands on some other woman's body right now and I'm here.

EDNA He's downstairs.

MEL He's downstairs!

EDNA He's waiting for me.

MEL Then he must really be worried.

EDNA He's not worried, Mel. He trusts me. He drove me here to be nice.

MEL Is he?

EDNA Here? Yes, really.

MEL Is he nice?

EDNA Yes. I only marry nice men.

MEL Thank you.

EDNA *[Beat]* I should be going.

MEL Edna

EDNA Yes, Mel?

MEL *[Beat]* Best wishes on your engagement.

EDNA You mean it?

MEL Have a great life, you deserve it, really. I mean it.

EDNA Thank you, Mel. *[She goes to the door, pauses and turns around.]* You'll sign the new papers?

MEL *[Not looking at her, he nods.]* Umm.
[Edna opens the door and exits.]
[Mel is frozen at first. Then he slowly thaws, going to the table with the parts on it. He picks up a screwdriver.]
You really screwed up, Melvin.

Act I: Mr. Fix It

[He looks around surveying the room and notices a sweater on the floor. He picks it up and slowly begins to fold it. He carefully puts it on the back of the chair and sits down. There is a knock at the door.]

Maria, it's okay.

[Knock on the door, he goes to it. Edna is standing there.]

- EDNA If the housekeeper's name isn't Maria, I'm really gonna be upset.
- MEL You talked to Donald? What did you tell him?
- EDNA I phoned him from the hall. I told him not to wait.
- MEL Because?
- EDNA I don't know.
- MEL You know.
- EDNA What? *[She comes into the room.]* What do I know, Mel? I go to school to get smarter ... but obviously I haven't learnt anything.
- MEL You didn't need to go to school. You were already the smart one. Not with the nuts and bolts, or the part ordering, or the helping out in the store --
- EDNA Thanks.
- MEL But the books and investing and portfolios and stuff -- you turned us into rich people. I just kept opening stores.
- MEL/EDNA *[There is a knocking at the door.]* That's Donald/breakfast -- *[They look at each other.]* I'll get it.
- EDNA I'll talk to him. You say nothing. NOTHING.

Palliser Suite

[They look at each other.]

MEL I'll look through the peep hole.

[They look at each other.]

EDNA I'll get it!

MEL *[He moves toward the door.]* I'll get it!

[Edna picks up the pillow and starts to hit him. Mel makes it to the peep hole and then opens the door. A breakfast cart has been left outside. It has two silver domes on it, two coffees, a bottle of scotch, a bouquet of flowers, and a toaster with a Post-it note stuck on it. He wheels it in.]

French toast?

EDNA You make me doubt myself. How do you do that? I knew who I was and what I wanted before I came through that door and you make me doubt everything about myself. Why do I let you do this to me? You're the only man who makes me this way. I am a normal woman to the rest of the world. I am a smart, highly functioning woman and 20 minutes with you, I'm a raving, pillow hitting, lunatic. You - make - me - crazy.

MEL *[Handing her a coffee.]* It's because you still love me.

EDNA Says who?

MEL Me. You know what they say the opposite of love is?

EDNA Hate.

MEL The opposite of love is indifference.

EDNA *[Conversationally]* So help me God I'm going to bludgeon you with a hammer. I'm going to take that logo screwdriver and I'm going to

Act I: Mr. Fix It

stick it in your heart. Then I'm going to saw off my own head.

MEL I only have a hand saw – that would be messy and difficult.

EDNA I'm tenacious. *[She takes the coffee.]*

MEL Besides, the housekeepers are very nice here, think of the clean-up.

EDNA They sent you a toaster?

MEL *[He reads the Post-it note.]* Dominic in the kitchen – the dial must be sticking again. That's what I do, Edna. I'm very good at it. I fix things, I take what's old and broke and I make it work again.

EDNA You exhaust me. *[She puts down the coffee on the repair table and sits down in the chair on top of his folded clothes.]*

You hear me? You exhaust me – it's 9:30 in the morning and I'm exhausted.

[Uncomfortable, she flings the clothes onto the floor and slouches down into the chair.]

[Mel goes up behind her and gently reaches out to her neck. Slowly but awkwardly he starts to massage her, getting a little more confident after not being rebuffed. He moves to her shoulders, the lights start to go down. Mel makes soft water and macaw sounds; Edna can't help herself, she smiles.]

Lights down

Act II:
Second Chance, First Love

For Zelda Dean and Mark Richards, with thanks and love

Palliser Suite

Characters

JASON, Guest Care Specialist, 19

ZELDA, socialite, 60s

STANLEY, entertainer, 60s

Setting

The same suite; everything is pristine and tidy.

Time

Mid-morning

Act II: Second Chance, First Love

The door opens and we see an eager-to-please JASON, who admits a well-dressed, uptight ZELDA. They enter; he hands her the pass key.

JASON I'm your Guest Care Specialist, Jason.

ZELDA Not a bellhop?

JASON We prefer Guest Care Specialists.

ZELDA I see.

JASON Does madam have luggage arriving later?

ZELDA No, I don't have any luggage. This room is booked for Mr. Stanley Stillman.

JASON Will Mr. Stillman have luggage?

ZELDA He's arriving from Florida for two months; I expect so.

JASON Can I show you the features of the room? Is there anything else I can assist you with?

ZELDA *[Beat]* Do you know who Stanley Stillman is?

JASON *[Pause, carefully]* A guest?

ZELDA You don't know, do you? How old are you?

JASON Nineteen.

ZELDA He's a television star, a comedian, and he's come here to headline in a show at Stage West Dinner Theatre.

JASON Yes, ma'am.

ZELDA Did you ever see *Barney and Stillman*? It was a variety show.

JASON What's a variety show?

ZELDA *[Looks at him.]* It's a show ... *[beat]* with variety.

JASON Yes, ma'am.

Palliser Suite

ZELDA It was on from '76 to '79.

JASON I was born in '93.

ZELDA I have purses older than you.

JASON Will that be all, ma'am?

ZELDA I ordered flowers for the room. I don't see them.

JASON I'll check with the Guest Care Specialist Manager. *[She looks at him sharply.]* Concierge. To see if they've arrived.

ZELDA I'm going to need an ashtray. *[She takes out a cigarette and lighter and flicks it.]*

JASON This is a non-smoking room, ma'am.

ZELDA I understand this room is the best in the hotel. I expect a lot of important and famous people have stayed here.

JASON Yes, ma'am.

ZELDA Who among them?

JASON Bill Clinton --

ZELDA When Bill Clinton wanted to light his cigar, did you tell the former President of the United States that you couldn't find him an ashtray?

JASON No, ma'am.

ZELDA Maybe that's what he should have said in his defense – he stayed at The Palliser and couldn't get a humidior.

JASON *[Confused]* Ma'am?

ZELDA Who else has stayed here?

JASON *[Shrugs.]* Mick Jagger --

ZELDA I bet Mick Jagger didn't even *use* an ashtray.

Act II: Second Chance, First Love

JASON *[Unhappily]* Yes, ma'am.

ZELDA In taking care of your guests, surely this isn't
the most unusual request you've had?

JASON I was once asked to score some coke.

ZELDA My needs are so much simpler. Also, please
order me a decanted bottle of something high
end and red.

JASON That I can do.

ZELDA *[Beat]* Have you ever been to Stage West?

JASON Yes, I dated a bus girl.

ZELDA Not a Dishes and Cutlery Removal Specialist?

JASON No.

ZELDA Did you ever see a show there?

JASON One, after Christmas, I forget what it was
called – it had music from the 60s.

ZELDA *Hair.*
*[Jason adjusts his Beiber bob; Zelda shakes her
head.]*
The name of the musical. *Hair.*

JASON Oh. I thought you were talking about my --

ZELDA Mop top? You do look like a Beatle.

JASON An insect?

ZELDA *[Correcting him.]* Beatle. Singer.

JASON *[Correcting her pronunciation.]* Beiber, singer.
*[Zelda just looks at him; Jason, trying to get
back to safer ground, continues.]*
So, Mr. Stillman was in this show *Hair*?

ZELDA No, but he's going to be in a British sex

Palliser Suite

farce – *Foreign Affairs*. I'm sure they're writing in his catch phrase as we speak. [*British accent*] "Yeah, no, that will never happen."

JASON What will never happen?

ZELDA That's his catch phrase.

JASON [*Confused, unhappy*] I don't know what a catch phrase is.

ZELDA It's a phrase – that catches.

JASON I'll go and place your wine order with the Food and Beverage Delivery Spe --

[*Zelda looks at him sharply.*]

-- Room Service.

[*She hands him a large tip; he brightens and exits.*]

ZELDA [*Goes to her purse and takes out a brand new pack of cigarettes and takes off the cello in anticipation.*]

This day has relapse written all over it.

[*She rolls up her sleeve and rips off the nicotine patch, throwing it into the wastebasket. Catching her reflection in the mirror she looks at herself. She takes her fingertips and pulls the skin up towards her hairline.*]

You couldn't come after the facelift, no!

[*A more vulnerable Zelda checks her hair, teeth and make up and looks at herself sideways. Then she untucks her blouse, changes her mind and tucks it back in. She picks up her phone.*]

Silvia, I ordered the hydrangea arrangement for The Palliser. Did you send it to the house by mistake ... ? It must be downstairs. Thanks. [*She hangs up, then exits.*]

Act II: Second Chance, First Love

[A few beats later STANLEY enters. He is wearing a ski suit and carries his own luggage and a pair of skis. He throws everything onto the bed and pulls out his cell phone.]

STANLEY

Artie, I'm risking extraordinarily high roaming charges to tell you, you are an Asshole. An Asshole, Artie! It may be Canada but it doesn't snow the second you hit the border. I'm schvitzing here! I hope you've had a good laugh. Yeah, they all laughed, customs, the taxi driver from the airport, the bell hop. I told him I'll carry my own goddamned luggage It's 83 degrees here. If I get heatstroke and end up in a Canadian hospital, if they put me in an igloo and treat me with tree bark, you're paying for it, Artie I don't care You called The Blackfoot Inn? I'm not at The Blackfoot Inn. I'm at the Palliser Hotel. I'm not staying *there*, I'm *here*. Who wants to stay in a hotel called The Blackfoot? Can you imagine the state the carpets are in Native, schmative, I'm kidding! No, an old friend is putting me up in this hotel Yeah, she's a fan. I still have a few of those left, you know! You are the worst agent in the world, why do I let you represent me? Don't you start with me You *know* I could do better. You couldn't get me a gig as some psychopathic murderer on the CSI franchise, that too hard for you, Artie? What did I ever do to I had that Doritos spot that played the Super Bowl. Doritos! I did 47 takes and gained 20 pounds! But that was your plan. "Be seen by millions," you said. "Let them remember the old Stanley Stillman, the bookings will come flooding in," you said. "It worked for Betty White," you said. Did I get a TV show? No! You send me to do dinner theatre in some cowtown!

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There are more Stetsons here than Texas. And my demographic is not Texas ...

[He turns on the TV; we hear the familiar Doink Doink from Law and Order.]
Oh gawd!

[He turns off the TV, grabs his heart.] I'm having a heart attack! I just turned on the TV and who did I see? WHO DID I SEE, ARTIE? You know full well who – BARNEY! On *Law and Order*. Joe Barney gets *Law and Order* and I get this? Well, the joke's on you, this is theatre, and theatre only gets you TEN PERCENT.

[He bangs down the phone. He is sweaty and agitated; he rips off the snow suit, then starts to take off his shirt.]

[Zelda enters carrying a large bouquet, clearly expecting the room to be as she left it.]

How friendly.

ZELDA Stanley! *[She drops the vase; water and flowers spill everywhere.]*

STANLEY *[Puts his hand in his pocket.]* Sorry, I only have American dollars for a tip. *[Double take]*
Zelda?

ZELDA I brought you flowers.

STANLEY *[Looking down.]* Nice arrangement.

ZELDA I'll call housekeeping. *[She crosses nervously to the phone to avoid seeing him half naked.]* I didn't know you'd got in already – I would have knocked – Hi.

STANLEY Hi. You look great!

ZELDA You too, Stanley. *[They hug; after a moment, Zelda crosses the room and speaks into the*

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phone.] We're going to need Housekeeping in Mr. Stillman's room ... okay, we're going to need a Room Care Specialist in Mr. Stillman's room --

STANLEY *[Takes the phone.]* No, it's okay. *[He hangs up.]* I got it. *[He throws a towel where the water was.]* I didn't change my American money for tips yet and I don't have any beaver pelts --

ZELDA -- blankets or beads.

STANLEY It's really nice of you to do this. Put me up here. Nice digs.

ZELDA It's my pleasure. My husband's company gets a corporate rate and he can write it off.

STANLEY Talking about your husband so soon, I'll put my shirt on. *[He unzips his luggage and pulls out a piece of paper.]* The Department of Homeland Security went through my luggage. *[He looks into the suitcase and smacks the clothes; a cloud of white powder comes out.]* Can they recap the foot powder after they assess it isn't cocaine? *[Realizes he's getting upset and defaults.]* I haven't seen this much white powder since I shared a dressing room with Charlie Sheen.

ZELDA You brought skis?

STANLEY My agent's idea of a joke.

ZELDA So you found out it doesn't snow the second you hit the border.

STANLEY *[Beat]* How many years has it been?

ZELDA I took the girls to New York. You were in that play. I brought them backstage -- they were very excited

STANLEY 1982, *The Girl in the Pink Bikini*.

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ZELDA Yes.

STANLEY It was a terrible play.

ZELDA Yes. You were great --

STANLEY I was. *[He goes to his other suitcase and pulls out a shirt.]*

ZELDA How do you like the British sex farce?

STANLEY It did okay on the West End.

ZELDA I read it.

STANLEY You did?

ZELDA Yes.

STANLEY You miss performing?

ZELDA It's been decades.

STANLEY I didn't ask how long. I asked if you missed it?

ZELDA It wasn't really an option if I wanted to marry into the Lawson family. As a dilettante I could dabble but as a wife and mother ...

STANLEY How are the girls?

ZELDA Abby is in France studying art and Amanda got her MBA and is in Toronto starting her own business. *[She starts to pick up the flowers and put them back in the vase.]*

STANLEY That's the socialite answer. How are the girls?

ZELDA Oh, we're being real? Abby fled with her girlfriend after her dad found out about her "lifestyle". I talk to her once a week. Amanda decided to stay with her husband even though he left re-hab early – alcoholism. How's Griffin?

STANLEY He was diagnosed with depression five years ago. His wife left him and he moved back

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home. His meds seem to keep him stable.
He's helping with some renovations to the house.

ZELDA I'd read about his diagnosis – I'm so sorry.
I wanted to call How are you doing with
all of this?

STANLEY And by "all this" you mean *all* this. *[Beat]*
I probably didn't thank you for the wreath,
did I?

ZELDA I never expect acknowledgement for
bereavement arrangements.

STANLEY It was a rough funeral.

ZELDA It's only been a couple of months, it takes
time.

STANLEY You know, I felt so guilty. It didn't seem an
equal trade off – I had affairs, she had cancer.

ZELDA I'm sure she knew you loved her.

STANLEY I was always touring. I never missed a show
in 40 years. I was away a lot. I got lonely
I cheated but when she got diagnosed I
stopped. Cold. Maybe she knew that was the
only thing that would change me. Do you
know what was hard?

ZELDA I'm sure it all was.

STANLEY Her funeral.

ZELDA Well, of course.

STANLEY I met *him*.

ZELDA Who?

STANLEY The one guy that *she'd* been having an affair
with.

ZELDA Oh.

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STANLEY For 20 years.

ZELDA Oh.

STANLEY His name was Robby.

ZELDA He introduced himself?

STANLEY He didn't have too. I knew. Griffin knew. He was the interior designer she hired. The only straight designer in the USA, and he works in Florida!

ZELDA I'm so sorry.

STANLEY Now I know why those renovations took so long. I fooled around, sure, leading ladies, show to show, but she had a *relationship*.

ZELDA I'm sure she loved you. You were the father of her child, she never divorced you. [*She crosses to the phone.*] I sent down for some wine I can direct-dial my Guest Care Specialist Jason! It's Mrs. Lawson in Mr. Stillman's suite. I'm still waiting for my wine ... and Jason, in this room is an antique Canadian Pacific Queen Anne chair. If you don't come back soon I'm going to snap its legs off and start rubbing them together. [*She hangs up.*]

STANLEY So, you still smoke?

ZELDA No, I'm on the patch. [*She goes to the garbage can and tries to reapply the patch.*]

STANLEY I tried sticking women's panties to my arm, it didn't take.

ZELDA I'm so glad we didn't get married. [*The patch isn't reapplying.*]

STANLEY Here, I have moustache tape in my make-up kit.

ZELDA You travel to Canada with no Canadian currency but you have a fake moustache?

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STANLEY That's comedy. [*Gluing carefully around her patch.*] Some people wear the comedy pants, I wear the comedy moustache. I can't wear this out in public, people confuse me with George Clooney.

ZELDA Or a Mario brother.

STANLEY You do the set-ups. I'll do the punch.

ZELDA Oh, I can punch!

STANLEY Steady girl, it's almost back on. [*Beat*]
You seem tense. How's Bill?

ZELDA Fine.

STANLEY I get "fine". I told you my wife had a lover for 20 years and I get "fine". [*He starts to unpack, realizes everything is covered in powder and finds a laundry bag, and dumps the entire suitcase into it.*]

ZELDA Bill doesn't know Abby is taking hormones and wants to be called Brett. He's worried about Amanda, because he can't hand the business over to her with the alcoholic husband. He works too much. [*Beat*] I wish he would have an affair.

STANLEY Better. How do *you* feel about things?

ZELDA I feel guilty about not finding out about Abby sooner and all the fights we had over wearing dresses. I'm terrified that Amanda is going to procreate with the alcoholic and --

STANLEY Yeah?

ZELDA I don't mind that my husband works all the time.

STANLEY I see.

ZELDA You just unpacked your dirty laundry. I just unpacked mine.

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STANLEY What do you do with your time? Now that the girls -- er, kids -- are grown, can you go back to being a dilettante and performing?

ZELDA Bill and I have the Lawson Alzheimer's Foundation. I'm on various boards. We do the big charity circuit. I get to see my husband while he networks.

STANLEY Sounds peachy.

ZELDA We built a research wing at the University's Medical School.

STANLEY That's a good legacy. I have video tapes of the *Barney and Stillman* show and a stick-on moustache.

ZELDA Video?

STANLEY I don't think there's enough market demand for the high-def blue ray 3D collection.

ZELDA There are excerpts on YouTube.

STANLEY You must have been one of the 200 people who've watched.

ZELDA The sad news is I watched it a 199 times.

STANLEY Funny.

ZELDA Listen, you've had a fabulous career.

STANLEY *Had?*

ZELDA You're having.

STANLEY Yeah, we all can't work at Stage West.
[There is a knock at the door.]

JASON *[Offstage]* It's Jason.

STANLEY I hope that's the wine and not a guy in a mask. *[He goes to the door and Jason enters with a silver tray, decanter and two glasses.]*

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ZELDA You had a successful variety show for three years. You were on Broadway! You made a name for yourself.

JASON Hey! Weren't you the guy in the Doritos commercial?

ZELDA I don't see matches.

JASON Sorry, I couldn't find any.

STANLEY Here's 20 dollars, go the gift shop in the lobby.

JASON [*Miserable*] We don't have a gift shop in the lobby.

STANLEY You don't have a gift store in the lobby of the best hotel in Calgary? What is there, a trading post?

ZELDA We are two blocks from crack corner –
score me some matches.

 [*Jason exits.*]

STANLEY It's hard to get good help.

ZELDA I picked a bad week to give up smoking.

STANLEY Think of your lungs.

ZELDA I don't care about my lungs – it's the little lines around my lips.

STANLEY You have lovely lips.

ZELDA Thank Dr. Greenblat.

STANLEY You have them injected?

ZELDA Monday hair, Tuesday mani pedi, Wednesday waxing or laser, Thursday facials or dermabrasion, Friday botox, Saturdays I shop.

STANLEY Isn't it crowded shopping on a Saturday?

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ZELDA Not where I shop.

STANLEY Sunday rest?

ZELDA Aquasize.

STANLEY I thought you had aquaphobia. Are you in the kiddy pool?

ZELDA It's less crowded there.

STANLEY Well, you're in shape, beautiful, and you're keeping the economy running.

ZELDA Wine?

STANLEY When Shirley got diagnosed – I gave it up.

ZELDA No! What do you drink now?

STANLEY I juice.

ZELDA When did juice become a verb? [*Starts to pour a glass, takes a swig.*] Wow, that's sweet.

STANLEY It's probably made with maple syrup. Have you eaten?

ZELDA Food? I haven't eaten food in 20 years.

STANLEY Vitamins and breath mints?

ZELDA I take bites at social occasions, the rest of the time I eat Jenny Craig.

STANLEY Sounds dirty.

ZELDA It's like army rations but less tasty.

STANLEY You don't cook?

ZELDA No, I heat.

STANLEY You don't have meals with Bill?

ZELDA If I get up with him at breakfast, we may coffee together.

STANLEY Juice isn't a verb but coffee is?

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ZELDA So, that's my life, how's yours?

STANLEY Mondays, I think about my career. Tuesdays, I think about phoning my agent. Wednesdays, I actually phone my agent, who tells me there's no work. Thursdays, I decide to quit the business and become a carpenter. Fridays, I decide carpentry will be hard and there may be slivers. Saturdays, I may do a set at a standup club. Sundays, I sleep because I stayed too long at the club. Mondays, I think about my career

ZELDA At least you're still performing. I miss the New York Comedy Playhouse.

STANLEY We could have been the next Lucy and Desi.

ZELDA You know, the first thing people look at on a DVD is the outtakes. We invented that!

STANLEY *Deleted Scenes from History*. Shows twice nightly.

ZELDA *[Breathy]* Mr. President?

STANLEY Yes, Marilyn?

ZELDA Do you think the world will ever find out about our affair?

STANLEY Yeah, no, that'll never happen.

ZELDA *[Faux German]* Adolph, do zuh dishes.

STANLEY Eva, I don't do dishes, I'm conquering zer wworld!

ZELDA *[Sing-song]* You wear the apron, I'll wear the leather lederhosen.

STANLEY Eva!

ZELDA Dophy, you zink for five minutes you won't be ruler of zer wworld?

STANLEY Yeah, no, zat vill never happen.

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ZELDA Teacher, I've finished my homework.

STANLEY Mary Shelly! What is this monstrous writing?

ZELDA I do so want to be a published one day. Do
 you think I could?

STANLEY Yeah.

ZELDA *[Waiting for the rest of the phrase.]* Yes?

STANLEY No, that will never happen. *[Beat]* We were
 something. How could you walk away?

ZELDA Mum got sick. I had to come back to Canada
 and you started hanging out with Joe Barney.

STANLEY I never tried to shtup Joe Barney.

ZELDA You guys took the job in the Village. You
 were a success. I knew there was no point in
 me coming back.

STANLEY Zelda, I'm sorry. I had a chance at a gig. I had
 to find a replacement for you. I asked you to
 marry me before you left.

ZELDA You didn't really want to marry me. You just
 wanted me to stay in New York.

STANLEY And you started dating the rich Bill Lawson.

ZELDA To make you jealous to come here

STANLEY You didn't have to marry him!

ZELDA You married Shirley Shipley!

STANLEY With the lateral lisp. How unfortunate is
 that? *[He demonstrates.]* Shirley Shipley.

ZELDA *[She copies the lisp.]* And became Stanley and
 Shirley Stillman.

STANLEY *[Still lisping.]* Swell.

ZELDA Why her?

STANLEY I don't know. I was young, I had a big ego,

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she was a fan.

ZELDA She fed your ego.

STANLEY You didn't even cook!

ZELDA There were no microwaves back then –
I didn't even heat.

STANLEY Shirley treated me like a *[lispng again]* star.

ZELDA And I?

STANLEY Like an equal.

ZELDA Wow. Twenty minutes and we get right to it,
don't we?

STANLEY Small talk was never your thing.

ZELDA How was your plane ride?

STANLEY Still isn't.

ZELDA You'd be amazed at how good at it I've
become. "Dr. Mayle, thank you for coming
out to the foundation launch, how is Mitzy?
Susan, how many horses are you showing at
Spruce Meadows this year? Mrs. Portman,
did you ever find a reliable pool boy?"

STANLEY So, still doing improv, I see.

ZELDA Shows twice nightly.

STANLEY Do you get applause at the end of the night?

ZELDA No, but the costumes are better.

STANLEY And the pay?

[She shows him her jewellery.]

Very nice.

ZELDA I raise a lot of money for the foundation.

STANLEY It's very noble. Maybe they'll find a cure.

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ZELDA One can hope. Failing that, decent treatment
and care.

STANLEY So daughters don't have to leave New York to
take care of their mothers.

ZELDA It was a bigger cost to her than to me.

STANLEY Did she know what you did for her?

ZELDA Try to poison her or drown her in the
bathtub?

STANLEY Not funny.

ZELDA We had our moments.

STANLEY She was lucky to have had you.

ZELDA And Shirley was lucky to have had you.

STANLEY I wasn't perfect. I used to hide her prosthetic
breast all over the house – in the fridge, in the
toaster She didn't think that was funny.
She'd always be yelling "What have you done
with Tat?"

ZELDA Tat?

STANLEY The name of the falsie.

ZELDA *[Getting it.]* Tit for tat.

STANLEY Ba dum bum.

ZELDA Why leave New York?

STANLEY The winters were bad.

ZELDA No, *really*?

STANLEY Broadway was really over for me. There are a
lot of dinner theatres in Florida.

ZELDA Now answer the big question.

STANLEY Are you staying the night?

ZELDA *[Deflecting.]* How's Joe?

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STANLEY I haven't talked to Joe in years.

ZELDA Couldn't you make more money by staying together as a comedy duo, and set your differences aside?

STANLEY Funny thing is, he was the straight man – I was the comedy, I was the punch. I thought if someone had to hire one of us they'd hire the comedy guy.

ZELDA So you haven't seen him lately?

STANLEY Here. *[Switches on the TV; we hear the Doink Doink again.]*

ZELDA *[Looking at the TV.]* What's he in court for?

STANLEY Stealing my career. *[He turns off the TV.]*

ZELDA He always looked shifty to me.

STANLEY After all those years! He gets a star – forget it.

ZELDA On the walk of fame – that was the fight?

STANLEY He wanted me to come to the unveiling. I could always act but I didn't think I could act that happy for him. He'd see that I was jealous. So, I didn't go and he got mad and I said things and he said things

ZELDA That's what broke the two of you up? Jealousy? You spent all those years together, on the road. Phone him up, tell him you're sorry!

STANLEY I'd say it was water under the bridge but you're the aquaphobe.

ZELDA *[Picks up the phone.]* Jason, did you know that they had something here called the Winter Olympics? And did you know they managed to get an Olympic flame all the way from Greece to Calgary. Yes, a runner held it in his

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hand as he ran across all 10 provinces and one territory without it going out. I'm not asking for that. I just want a MATCH! *[Beat; looks at Stanley.]* And carrot juice. *[She hangs up.]*

STANLEY So, the kids grew up and moved away. Your husband is a workaholic and after you've botoxed and foundationed each day, what do you do for fun?

ZELDA I go to the theatre.

STANLEY And that's fun?

ZELDA I look to see my name in the program.

STANLEY Under Funders, Angels and Contributors.

ZELDA Yes.

STANLEY But you wish it was under "Cast"?

ZELDA *[Beat]* I signed up for some classes once.

STANLEY Yeah?

ZELDA A private acting school.

STANLEY Because a public one would be too ... public?

ZELDA The door was open and people were standing around in the studio and I stood at the doorway and looked in. All these lovely fresh faces – eager, nervous *[beat]* ... 20.

STANLEY You didn't go in.

ZELDA I went to Holt Renfrew and bought another Louis V.

STANLEY And this is my fault for not leaving New York?

ZELDA No.

STANLEY Your mother's fault for getting sick?

ZELDA No.

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STANLEY Bill for making you give it up?

ZELDA Stanley, STOP!

STANLEY *[Pause]* So, when I get you tickets to opening night at Stage West, will you come?

ZELDA Absolutely.

STANLEY And clap at the end with a big smile on your face.

ZELDA Yes.

STANLEY So you *can* act!

ZELDA What? No!

STANLEY Yeah, you'd be acting all happy for me. All the time thinking, "I wish I was up there." And you give me a hard time about Joe Barney! About not being happy for Joe.

ZELDA It's not the same!

STANLEY It's exactly the same.

ZELDA *[Hits him with a hydrangea.]* That is an awful thing to say, take it back!

STANLEY Listen, you can beat me until I'm black and blue, it still wouldn't change the truth – you were scared.

ZELDA I hate you.

STANLEY No you don't.

ZELDA You're the most aggravating person I've ever met.

STANLEY Put down the hydrangea.

ZELDA Why?

STANLEY Because I'm going to kiss you and I don't want to get hit.

[Pause; there is a knock at the door.]

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JASON *[Offstage]* It's Jason!

STANLEY After he leaves I'm going to put the
"Do Not Disturb" sign on the door.

ZELDA Stanley

[Stanley goes to the door. Jason enters with a glass of carrot juice on ice and an extra saucer. Zelda and Stanley don't pay any attention to him.]

JASON Here's the juice, and I brought an extra saucer from the kitchen – you can use it as an ashtray. And here -- *[He triumphantly pulls a lighter out of his pocket.]* -- I got this from the sous chef in the kitchen. Don't forget to open the windows and exhale outside so that you don't trigger the smoke detectors. They just put in all these new ones and they are very sensitive. I hope this makes you happy, even though it's against the rules. And I hope you'll write nice comments about me when you fill out the Guest Check-Out Survey. If you mention me by name I get put in a draw for best Guest Care Specialist of the Month. This month is a Ticket Master gift certificate and I really want to win it so that I can see Slash. People think because I have hair like this, I like Justin Beiber, but it's not true, I like the old rockers. Slash.

STANLEY Here's 200 dollars, go and buy the tickets and don't come back today.

JASON *[Half beat]* If I brought you a bag of Doritos would you sign it?

STANLEY No.

JASON Okay. Thanks. Bye. *[He exits.]*

[Long pause; Stanley looks at her; she looks away and then crosses to the window and tries to open it.]

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ZELDA Why won't the goddamned window open?

STANLEY *[He helps her; traffic noises become audible.]*
Here.

ZELDA *[She looks at the cigarettes and the Bic, then to Stanley.]* I really need to break old habits. *[She throws them out the window.]*

STANLEY You just hit the doorman!

ZELDA They wear top hats, I'm sure he's okay. *[Beat]*
I should go.

STANLEY No. You should stay.

ZELDA No, I should go and you should finish
unpacking. Then you need to focus on
rehearsals. You have a whole script to learn.
It's a sex farce – there are a lot of entrances
and exits, accents, mistaken identities and
laughs to get. I have ... things to do. Bill and
I will come on opening night. I'll send more
flowers. You'll meet us in the house after. I'll
tell you how bad the shrimp was and how
much we enjoyed the show. You and Bill will
shake hands. And we will go home and you
will come back here to Jason, who will take
care of your guest needs. And that will be
that.

STANLEY Or you could stay.

ZELDA I don't really want to be added to your roster
of on the road conquests.

STANLEY It wouldn't be like that.

ZELDA Then how would it be?

STANLEY With you it would be different.

ZELDA The difference is that you remember this
body when I was 20. It may look put-
together on the outside but I've had two

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babies. It looks a whole lot different on the inside.

STANLEY Where the bones are? I'm not interested in that. But I am interested in you. In all of you. Naked.

ZELDA Stanley!

STANLEY I shouldn't have broken up the team back then. I'm sorry.

ZELDA No, it's fine, it's fine.

STANLEY Let's see if we can get our old rhythms back.

ZELDA *[Beat]* I've never cheated on Bill.

STANLEY Your call. You can stay here with me whenever you like. I'll be here for two months. He'll never *ever* know. Or, you go home and pack up all your Louis Vuitton bags and leave. You can do that. We can start over. And when the show is over you can come down to Florida with me. It's truly beautiful there. I've got regular work there. I know the dinner theatres, I can get you some work, not good roles at first but ... we could work up some stand-up routines like we used to And you don't have to move into mine and Shirley's house. Besides, I don't like the way it's decorated. We'll get a little condo somewhere, with a beautiful view of the ocean. I'll board up the windows so you don't have to look at it.

[She smiles in spite of herself.]

We'll eat *all* of our meals together. I'll cook, you'll heat.

ZELDA This is because your wife died and you miss her. I can't replace her.

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STANLEY No. Don't you see – you and I have a relationship. You're my relationship.

ZELDA Stanley, it's all too much. It's all too soon.

STANLEY What are we waiting for? We're not getting younger. If anything we should be moving faster, because we know how fleeting it all is.

ZELDA You want to romance me by telling me how old we're getting?

STANLEY Or you can go back to botoxing and buying purses.

ZELDA *[Quietly]* I don't want to do that.

STANLEY What did you say?

ZELDA I don't want to do that.

STANLEY *[Long pause]* Take off your rings and put them on the bedside table.

[Slowly Zelda takes off her rings and puts them on the table, then covers them with a napkin from the juice tray.]

 Now the watch.

[She does.]

 Now the bracelet.

[She does.]

ZELDA I hope this is a seduction and not a robbery.

STANLEY Now the shoes.

[She does.]

[He draws the drapes.]

 Now the blouse.

[She takes a deep breath and slowly unbuttons the blouse; Stanley takes off his shirt.]

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[They look at each other.]

STANLEY Now the skirt.

ZELDA No. If I take off the skirt you'll see the Spanx.

STANLEY The what?

ZELDA The Spanx. It's not an undergarment found
in the Victoria's Secret catalogue.

STANLEY I don't care.

ZELDA It's more of a ... how shall I put it ...
restraining corrective – when you take it off,
things just kind of jelly out.

STANLEY I don't care.

ZELDA I care.

STANLEY So we've reached an impasse? Should I turn
around?

ZELDA Yes!

*[Zelda struggles under her skirt and with much
difficulty pulls off the Spanx and hides it in her
purse.]*

STANLEY Can I turn around now?

ZELDA Sure.

STANLEY You look the same.

ZELDA I'm holding in my stomach now. Things are
going to be more difficult.

STANLEY Oh.

ZELDA Maybe we should wait until it's dark.

STANLEY What time does it get dark here?

ZELDA It's July, about 11 o'clock.

STANLEY I don't want to wait that long. I mean I will if
it's the only option. Willingly. But I have a

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script to go over and rehearsal is at 10. I have to get up at seven.

ZELDA Okay!

STANLEY Okay?

ZELDA Okay.

STANLEY So the Spanx are off, how about the pantyhose?

ZELDA Stanley, I have --

STANLEY A prosthetic I don't know about?

ZELDA Funny.

STANLEY So?

ZELDA I have -- oh god this is embarrassing -- I was going to get them done next week, I'm booked

STANLEY What already?

ZELDA Behind my right knee, I have spider veins.

STANLEY That wasn't a particular area I was going to spend a lot of time on.

ZELDA Oh. Okay. Maybe turn around again. *[She pulls off her pantyhose.]* Okay, I'm good.

STANLEY I'm going to take my socks and shoes off. In the interest of full disclosure I have a corn on my left baby toe.

ZELDA Okay. You know, while you're in town, I know a good podiatrist.

STANLEY Okay.

ZELDA He has a wait list, but I could get you in.

STANLEY *[Gently]* How are you feeling about the skirt?

ZELDA What do you mean how do I feel about it?

STANLEY Do you want to take it off?

Palliser Suite

ZELDA Honestly?

STANLEY How about you take off the skirt?

ZELDA Okay, but before I do I need to talk with you
a second.

STANLEY Of course you do.

ZELDA Do you remember when we were going out
in New York what kind of underwear I wore?

STANLEY Vividly.

ZELDA Oh.

STANLEY What do you mean “oh”?

ZELDA I was hoping you’d forgotten.

STANLEY Why?

ZELDA Because it doesn’t look like that anymore.

STANLEY I don’t care.

ZELDA I care.

STANLEY You used to wear those skimpy bikini ones in
rainbow colours, sometimes with the strings
at the side and I’d pull on the strings and
things would just all --

ZELDA Be revealed.

STANLEY Yeah! Listen, whatever they look like, it’s
okay.

ZELDA I just don’t want to get your hopes up.

STANLEY It’s okay, really.

ZELDA They’re more practical – some would say
matronly. But really, they’re not the bikini
kind.

STANLEY [*Reassuring her.*] I’ve seen them before. Shirley
had those kind.

Act II: Second Chance, First Love

ZELDA *Really?* You're going to bring up Shirley *now*?

STANLEY I'm sorry. No. Where were we?

ZELDA I was going to take off the skirt. But then I will be in a bra and panties. I haven't been in a bra and panties in front of a man in a long time.

STANLEY Except Bill.

ZELDA WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU?

STANLEY I DON'T KNOW!

ZELDA I'm just saying I feel very vulnerable right now. I'm going to be in a bra and panties, matronly panties. Which cover, well, while we're at it, the c-section scars, you may as well know. They're faded but you can still see them and a few stretch marks. Those *never* go away. I guess I could have gotten them lasered but I thought ... never mind.

STANLEY I don't care about any of that.

ZELDA I just wanted to prepare you. That's all. Just so there's no like ... like ... shock in the middle when things are going on. I didn't want you to get all distracted.

STANLEY Would you rather get under the covers?

ZELDA Yes! Of course. That would be better. [*She gets into bed and wriggles out of the skirt.*] I am now in a bra and panties.

STANLEY Do you have a preference of boxers over briefs?

ZELDA No.

STANLEY Cause now *I'm* getting self-conscious. I used to wear the briefs but as I've gotten older the boys seem to like the boxers better.

Palliser Suite

ZELDA Boys! Yes. How are the boys?

STANLEY They can't wait to see you.

ZELDA Oh!

STANLEY Are we still good? Can I get into bed with you?

ZELDA Stanley, there's one thing --

STANLEY Yeah?

ZELDA You didn't take off your wedding band.

STANLEY I would if I could. I have arthritis in that knuckle, the joint swells.

ZELDA Really?

[Stanley picks up the phone.]

 Who are you calling?

STANLEY I'm calling down for some butter.

ZELDA You are not, Brando. Hang up the phone.

STANLEY That's the only thing going to grease it off. Two or three pats.

ZELDA We are not ordering butter pats up to this room!

STANLEY We could order some rolls so it won't seem kinky.

ZELDA I have some Crabtree in my purse.

STANLEY *[Hangs up.]* Shrubbery?

ZELDA Hand cream!

STANLEY Oh.

ZELDA Crabtree and Evelyn.

STANLEY It won't work, I've tried baby oil, and ice – nothing works. I'm going to get it cut off while I'm here.

Act II: Second Chance, First Love

ZELDA It's okay. I know people.

STANLEY I'm going to have a lot of appointments while I'm here.

ZELDA I just wanted to get everything on the table.

STANLEY Let's try on the bed first.

ZELDA *[Smiles.]* I just didn't want you to have any surprises.

STANLEY There will be none.

ZELDA Will there be any for me?

STANLEY Let me think ... no tattoos or piercings. Well, there is a little scar on my left buttock.

ZELDA Did you fall?

STANLEY No. Joe Barney threw his broken racket at me and the wood cut through the skin. Like a knife through butter. Oy the blood --

ZELDA Stanley.

STANLEY Yeah?

ZELDA Not helping with the mood.

STANLEY I'm just saying it bled --

ZELDA You want me to tell you about c- sections?

STANLEY No!

ZELDA Why are we doing this?

STANLEY Because we've both wanted to from the moment we saw each other. We wanted to when you came to New York but you were using the girls like a shield.

ZELDA I was.

STANLEY Because we were good together.

ZELDA We were.

Palliser Suite

STANLEY In an envelope in my office I've kept every one of your goofy Christmas cards – and I'm Jewish.

ZELDA Every one?

STANLEY Every one.

ZELDA Even the ones from the 80s with the appliqué sweaters?

STANLEY And the reindeer antlers.

ZELDA I forgot about that one.

STANLEY I'm going to get under the covers now.

ZELDA Okay.

[Stanley gets into bed. It is sweet and awkward and tender. They kiss.]

I'm going to take off the panties and bra.

[Keeping the sheet under her chin she takes off the bra and panties and hides them under the bed. He smiles at her and pulls off the boxers.]

STANLEY I'm going to -- *[His phone rings.]* -- turn off my phone after I answer it.

ZELDA After you answer it!

STANLEY Only two people have this ring tone. *[He reaches for his pants and gets the phone.]* Why are you calling? No. He didn't When? He asked for me? You're going to get me out of Stage West? Which hospital? Yeah, the next available flight. *[He hangs up and starts to put on the boxers.]*

ZELDA Griffin? His depression? What happened?

STANLEY That was Artie, my agent.

ZELDA What?

Act II: Second Chance, First Love

STANLEY Joe had a stroke, he's at Mount Sinai. He's asking to see me.

ZELDA *[Flatly]* Oh. *Joe.*

STANLEY I'm sorry.

ZELDA How did this happen?

STANLEY Apparently, he'd had TIAs for some time. But now he's had a bigger stroke. And he's asking for me. Either that or it's just the stroke and he wants a glass of water.

ZELDA You're making jokes?

STANLEY It's what I do. *[He continues to get dressed.]*

ZELDA When I asked "how did this happen" I was wondering how did this happen to *me*.

STANLEY It's not about you.

ZELDA I'm naked and you're leaving me for Joe Barney – again.

STANLEY No, no, you mustn't say it like that! It's not like that.

ZELDA How is it?

STANLEY The man is dying and he wants to see me.

ZELDA Yes.

STANLEY Come with me.

ZELDA No.

STANLEY Okay, I'm not going!

ZELDA Fine.

STANLEY *[Beat]* To hell I'm not! The man is dying.

ZELDA So go.

STANLEY He's at Mount Sinai, New York! We can see shows. Go back to the Comedy Playhouse.

Palliser Suite

Broadway. We'll get Jenny Craig to make you a cannoli.

ZELDA *[Beat]* You'll go see Joe. Make up. There may be a funeral. It's not the time for romance.

STANLEY You want romance?

ZELDA Yes, I want romance! What woman doesn't want romance? Do I get it? No. And I'm not happy. My husband isn't happy because he's a human *doing*, not a human *being*. One daughter just wants the white picket fence and the happy marriage but she's married to a Betty Ford dropout. And my other dear sweet daughter tells me she is now my son. How did I miss that? How is it that none of us in the Lawson family has what they want? How is this possible? Is anyone doing what they want? All those people walking around down there – do *they* have what they want? Are the drivers on 9th Avenue driving to places that they want to go? AND how is it possible that I thought *you* had it all?

STANLEY Me?

ZELDA Yes.

STANLEY Not even close. But I at least acknowledge *what* I want. You're just dying to be on the stage. And you can't say it out loud because something might have to change. I doubt your Book of the Month Club chose to read *Foreign Affairs*. And yet *you* did. *[Pointed pause]* Did you hope the female lead would get sick and I'd ask you to step in at Stage West?

ZELDA *[Insincerely]* No!

STANLEY Yes.

Act II: Second Chance, First Love

ZELDA You don't know what I'm thinking!

STANLEY Yes I do. You don't do sketch comedy with someone and not know what they are thinking.

ZELDA ALL RIGHT! I want ... I want it all now. After all these years. Seeing you. I want it all. OKAY. I wish I had kept it up. Is that what you want me to say? We were great in the Comedy Playhouse together.

STANLEY [*Gentle accent*] And you could have been a contender, but you got scared. You couldn't do it without me. You found Bill and it wasn't his money that made him the perfect catch – no, it was the fact he suggested you give it all up for designer purses. You couldn't cut it.

ZELDA I *could* cut it!

STANLEY THEN WHY DID YOU QUIT? Why did you give up on it all? Why did you give up on yourself?

ZELDA Because I missed you, you bastard. No, it wasn't just you I missed. I missed the Act. I was part of a team. We did sketch comedy *together!* I knew you! You went left, I went right. You went up, I went down. I dried, you saved me. You corpsed, I brought you back. We were a team. You and me. We got that gig in the Village. Then I had to leave and you brought in Joe Barney to replace me. And you wouldn't break up you and Joe to get back together with me because *you* were the scared one. You didn't know if it would work. But it was working and it would have worked again. You got scared. You screwed it up. [*She is crying.*] I screwed up.

STANLEY [*Gently*] You could have found your own Joe. [*He hands her a Kleenex.*]

Palliser Suite

ZELDA And now I'm 64.

STANLEY *[Sings softly]* Will you still need me?

ZELDA *[Limply goes to hit him.]* I loved you, then I hated you, then I became indifferent.

STANLEY But you followed my career. You knew Griff has depression, Shirley got cancer, you saw me on YouTube. That's not indifferent. You sent Christmas cards. Albeit ones of you and Bill and the girls in ugly Christmas sweaters. And come to think of it, Abby never looked happy in the skirts.

ZELDA Nice. Bring that up.

STANLEY And when you found out I was coming to do *Foreign Affairs* you put me up here. That's not indifferent.

ZELDA I was just being polite. I'm an amazing hostess.

STANLEY It's a role you play well.
[There is a pause; he checks his watch.]
Look, I have to go. Artie's booked me on the next flight and I need to find a taxi or covered wagon or dog sled team to get me back to the airport. I am going to stay at the Marriott on Times Square. Meet me there. No! You want romance. Next Wednesday meet me at the top of the Empire State Building.

ZELDA I'm not playing the Empire State Building game – not that old cliché.

STANLEY *[He hands her a card.]* But ours is an *Affair to Remember*.
[He has finished re-packing. Pause. He kisses her. He leaves.]

Act II: Second Chance, First Love

ZELDA *[She drapes herself in the sheet and heads to the window.] Was an affair to remember.*

[Pause; there is a knock on the door. She opens it expectantly, still draped in the sheet; she is surprised when Jason enters with the cigarettes and lighter.]

 What do you want, Jason?

JASON I know how important this was to you. I figure you dropped them when you opened the window. They fell on Connor's head. He's the Guest Greeter and Car Parking Specialist. I thought you'd want them right away.

ZELDA What do you want?

JASON To give exceptional guest care in the hospitality service industry?

ZELDA Last time, Jason. What do YOU want?

JASON To play guitar like Slash. *[He puts the cigarettes and lighter on the table.]*

ZELDA Then what are you doing here? Why aren't you in some slummy band in the Village?

JASON Cochrane?

ZELDA Why haven't you run away to New York?

JASON I dunno.

ZELDA Isn't that what youth are supposed to do? Sixty-four-year-old women can't do that.

JASON Why not?

ZELDA How did you suddenly get so smart?

JASON I saw Mr. Stillman checking out with his luggage but he left his skis.

ZELDA Mmmm

Palliser Suite

JASON I guess we'll ship them to him.

ZELDA He'll be at the top of the Empire State Building next Wednesday.

JASON Will you be seeing him?

[She looks at him and then catches sight of herself in the full length mirror, sheet wrapped around her. She takes up the Bic like a torch and grabs her bag like a tablet. She turns back to Jason.]

ZELDA Jason, where am I going?

JASON I don't know.

ZELDA Guess! It's like sketch comedy. There are no wrong answers.

JASON Er ...

ZELDA *[Change of tactic]* Okay, who am I?

JASON *[Confident]* Mrs. Lawson.

ZELDA Look closer. I was a gift from France to the United States. *[She sticks her fingers up behind her head to represent the head piece.]*

JASON Okay.

ZELDA *[She helps him out with a clue, advancing towards him.]* I'm taking liberties ...

JASON *[Scared now]* Oh dear.

ZELDA There are no wrong answers. Don't think, just answer. What am I?

JASON Crazy?

ZELDA I've got the comedy moustache.

[She puts on the moustache.]

[Jason becomes increasingly worried.]

That's it! I know what I want.

Act II: Second Chance, First Love

JASON *[Ready to take an order.]* Okay.

ZELDA *[Triumphant]* A club!

JASON Club sandwich?

ZELDA No.

JASON Club soda!

ZELDA No!

JASON *[Guessing wildly]* Golf club?

ZELDA No! A comedy club!

JASON *[Still thinking of the room services and menu, sadly.]* I don't know what that is.

ZELDA It's a club, with comedy.

[Jason tries to quietly back away to the exit.]

 Jason, what's one thing you know for sure?

JASON Don't smoke anything stronger than tobacco.

ZELDA *[More to herself]* If I can open a hospital wing
I can do this. The one thing I know, the one
thing I first loved

*[She stops and looks at him. She claps her hands
in delight as Jason beats a hasty retreat. She
strikes a pose, lights the lighter and the smoke
detector goes off]*

Lights down

Act III:
Funeral Fore!

*For Deborah Miller and Rose Scollard,
what would I do without you?*

Palliser Suite

Characters

MAX, successful businessman, 50s

BELLA, his wife, 50s

RUBY, Guest Care Specialist, 30s

MICHAEL, Max's younger brother, a doctor, 40s

ALEX, Michael's partner, 40s

Setting

The same suite.

Time

Late morning

Act III: Funeral Fore!

BELLA and MAX open the door to the hotel suite. She has a huge suitcase and a makeup/cosmetics case and a garment bag, he has one small case and some golf cubs. Max kicks off his shoes.

BELLA Max, put your shoes back on.

MAX Oh for god's sakes Bella, I told you, I paid them extra to shampoo the carpet.

BELLA Who knows how many feet have walked on this carpet, or what other adventures may have occurred.

MAX It's a hotel room, not an operating room.

BELLA Well, if you get a fungal infection

MAX Bella! This is the finest hotel in the city. Just stop already. It's only for one night. I know you don't like leaving the house but there wasn't time to get it re-papered and carpeted!

BELLA Max, I'm sorry. I know we should have stayed two days instead of taking the red-eye

MAX We should have taken the jet!

BELLA Don't start.

MAX One day before the AGM. Everyone's in Washington. I have to be there tomorrow!

BELLA You will be. Don't worry.

MAX If you hadn't made us miss the first plane and if the second plane hadn't been delayed
Now we have an hour before tee off.

BELLA I'll never get everything done in time.

MAX Michael and Alex will be here soon. I should order some breakfast. Do you think they will have eaten? Should I order for them too?

BELLA I brought stuff. *[She opens her overly large case and pulls out a picnic basket. She spreads a tablecloth on the table and puts out some little colour-coordinated Tupperware.]*

Palliser Suite

MAX Really?

BELLA Bagels, lox. The lox have been in the cooler, it's all good. I have oranges – I can freshly squeeze you some juice.

MAX Squeeze me some
[Bella pulls out a juicer.]
No, I feel like eggs
[Bella pulls out a bag of hard boiled eggs.]
I feel like an omelet and so help me if you pull out a frying pan, so help me, I'm having you committed.

BELLA Suit yourself. I don't have time to eat just yet, I have work to do. *[She takes out a high end cosmetic case. She pulls out a towel and places it on the side table and unpacks several pretty little bottles and a little stack of pressed linen cloths with a ribbon around them.]*

MAX Why aren't you unpacking your stuff in the bathroom?

BELLA These aren't cosmetics.

MAX Oh dear god
[Bella unfolds an immaculately pressed apron and puts it on.]

BELLA I decanted them so it wouldn't seem so strange.

MAX You decanted

BELLA Exactly! *[She holds up each glass container and spray bottle.]* It's just me and the boys: Mr. Fabreze. Mr. Windex. Mr. Pledge, Mr. Clean, Mr. Muscle.

MAX My wife's entourage.

Act III: Funeral Fore!

BELLA *[She holds up an atomizer.]* Why they don't make travel sizes of these, I'll never know ...

MAX Because people don't clean on vacation! Nobody! Nobody says I'm going to Palm Springs – what kind of oven cleaner will I need?

BELLA It's hot in the desert, I'd probably not want a leave-on or bake-in, probably a little scrub with an S.O.S pad and it'd buff right up. *[She starts spraying the mirror above the table and selects a cloth and begins to clean. From the time Bella starts to clean she doesn't stop until stage directions say otherwise.]*

[Max shakes his head and heads to the bathroom.]

Where are you going, mister?

[Max points to the bathroom door.]

You're not going in there until I've cleaned.

MAX I just need a glass. *[He exits to the bathroom and returns with a glass.]*

BELLA I trust you won't be drinking from this? *[She just looks at him.]*

MAX *[Max puts the glass on the floor and sets up a golf shot. As his fingers squeeze around the club]* Bella!

BELLA Uh huh?

MAX This leather handle is damp.

BELLA Is it, dear?

MAX What did you do to my golf clubs?

BELLA I --

MAX Yes?

Palliser Suite

BELLA I put them in the dishwasher.

MAX You *what*?

BELLA They were dirty!

MAX Bella!

BELLA Usually you leave them in the garage and I wash them there --

MAX You normally wash them in the garage?

BELLA You think some magic caddy comes and washes them ?

MAX I use the service at the course Oh god, not the woods!

BELLA No, I'm not stupid, just the irons.

MAX They fit in the dishwasher?

BELLA Of course not, dear, I had them run through the dishwasher at the restaurant.

MAX Restaurant?

BELLA That Italian one we don't go to anymore. I just show up early in the morning with stuff and they run it through in the back. They get really good tips, I get stuff cleaned.

MAX That one with the good clam linguini in Manhattan?

BELLA I told you when they changed the napkins from white to cream --

MAX This is --

BELLA You want I should take things through the car wash?

MAX This is because I didn't buy you that pressure hose you wanted for your birthday.

BELLA The diamond ring was lovely. But what I wanted was a pressure hose.

Act III: Funeral Fore!

MAX Could I get that in writing? The boys at the club don't believe me.

BELLA The heart wants what the heart wants.

MAX [*Takes a putt and misses.*] I don't like the lie of this carpet.

BELLA It's probably all the little microbes conspiring against you.

MAX Maybe it's you moving around in your cleaning whirl, you're creating a breeze. Just sit down.

BELLA Look, I know that this day is about Sam's memory and you have us on a schedule but I have things to do. Now, if I'm going to sleep here – and I mean actually *sleep* here, tonight, after the reception – I have to clean now. You don't want me trying to clean while you're trying to sleep do you? Do we want a repeat of our honeymoon?

MAX I thought you were unpacking sex toys! Turns they were portable vacuum cleaners.

BELLA Nice. Bring that up. You know I can't vacuum here.

MAX I told you not to bring it!

BELLA I'm claiming that vacuum back from customs when we get home. It's one of my favourites. I can't believe they wouldn't let me take it as carry on. It fit in the holder.

MAX It you hadn't set off the x-ray alarm at security, we wouldn't have missed that first plane.

BELLA It's no wonder people think Americans are stupid, if Homeland Security can't tell the difference between an Uzi and a Dyson.

Palliser Suite

MAX Why you had to take it in the first place? I told you I paid extra to have the carpets steam cleaned before we got here.

BELLA *[Touched by his gesture.]* Really?

MAX Really.

BELLA *[Takes off her shoes.]* But I've now tracked in dirt from my shoes

MAX Oh dear god

BELLA I'm going to luminal the bathroom.

MAX Hundred dollars says you won't find anything.

BELLA You're on. *[She takes the kit and goes into the bathroom. We hear her spraying off stage. She calls out to Max.]* Don't unpack until I put in the drawer liners.

MAX *[Unzips his luggage.]* I'm not using the drawer liners. The last time we were in a hotel you used scented drawer liners and all my golf shirts smelled like vanilla extract. I started to sweat on the golf course and everyone thought I was baking cookies in my armpits.

BELLA I brought the unscented ones for you this time. *[She appears in the doorway.]*

MAX Did you find anything?

BELLA *[Sadly]* No.

MAX Which means?

BELLA The light isn't working very well?

MAX Or?

BELLA The luminal spray isn't the right concentration?

MAX No. No! It means the bathroom is spotless!

Act III: Funeral Fore!

BELLA I still have to go over it, just so that I feel comfortable.

MAX Of course you do, but can it wait until I've eaten breakfast? I don't like to eat eggs with the smell of bleach.

BELLA But you haven't ordered yet!

MAX *[Goes to the phone.]* Room Service ... Mr. Hubly's suite An egg-white omelet, gluten-free rye toast, a pot of decaf coffee and a half-dozen cherry Danishes. *[He hangs up.]*

God, remember the 80s when we ate yolks and gluten and drank caffeine. I miss those days. I got pastries. Full fat, full sugar, in honour of Dad. We can offer Michael and Alex something before we leave, although Michael of course will be late. And Alex won't be able to get through the funeral without sniffing all the flowers.

BELLA He works at a perfume counter, it's an occupational hazard. I for one appreciate a nose that recognizes a fine fragrance.

MAX Alex will sniff all the guests, which will distract them from the fact that Michael is late.

BELLA He won't be late to his own father's funeral.

MAX He'll be late. The man is completely irresponsible. Did you know when I first phoned the hotel he hadn't even booked the ballroom yet?

BELLA Yes dear, and you got the ballroom, even if it meant going through the other people and getting them to relinquish their booking.

MAX One cheque to the Shriners, it's a tax write off. Win, win.

Palliser Suite

- BELLA Yes, dear. Don't sit on that chair until I have a towel under you.
- MAX *[Pulls out half a ripped-up old-fashioned address book.]* I had the A to M's to invite, he had the N to Z's. This isn't something you can delegate, Bella. That meant I had the Bawtinhiemners, the Heartwells and the Matthew hyphen Bonds – dad's oldest and dearest friends.
- BELLA And you wanted to impress them so the Rimrock wouldn't do, you needed the Crystal Ballroom.
- MAX Nothing but the best for him.
- BELLA *[Gently]* Sam isn't here. Funerals are about the living. And you can't keep calling them the Matthew hyphen Bonds. One day I'm going to say it to their face. People don't like it when you make fun of their names.
- MAX It's all so pretentious. David Matthew-Bond, Joshua Matthew-Bond, and brother Billy Matthew-Bond. Good thing they didn't name one of them James.
- BELLA *[Unpacks her clothes by hanging them up on a hook and taking off the protective plastic.]* Yes, dear, I'm sure they've never heard that joke before. *[Beat]* I gotta say, it's a bit strange being in pastels for a funeral. I know we're going to change later but it just feels wrong.
- MAX How many times do we have to go over this? They won't let you wear your little black dress and stiletto heels on the golf course. You'll make holes in the turf. I'm a wealthy man, I can pay for any damages my lovely wife can incur, but you have to respect the greens and the game.

Act III: Funeral Fore!

BELLA I could just sit in the golf cart. I'm not the one sprinkling the ashes. You and Michael will do that. Alex and I can just stay in the cart.

MAX You still have to golf.

BELLA But why?

MAX Because we're a foursome and Dad wanted his ashes spread on that course during a family game.

BELLA You and Michael have to play because you're competitive. You want to win, so that every time it comes up in conversation, you can murmur, "You remember when we spread father's ashes on the course and I won."

MAX Yes.

BELLA *[Patting him.]* Your father knew that.

MAX Where are they? Why aren't they here already?

BELLA He told me on that the phone that he'd booked off the hospital today. He's not even on call. I'm sure he'll be here any moment.

MAX No he won't. There will be some excuse. He's always late, rushing in like the rest of us aren't important, mopping his brow, going on about how he had to save someone's life from elephantitis.

BELLA Yes, dear. *[She is balanced precariously dusting the art frames.]*

MAX Bella, put down that cleaning cloth!

BELLA I can't stop cleaning because I can't take my OCD meds and I can't take my OCD meds because they make me sleepy and I can't drink when I'm on them because I get all loopy.

Palliser Suite

MAX Alright, nobody wants that. But they should be here, goddamit! We have tee off at 10:30 and play until 2:30, and the reception is at 3:00. And you promised, no cleaning at the reception.

BELLA Why don't I call him? Or better yet, why don't *you* talk to him. You're gonna have to talk to him sometime. It might as well be before the golf game or the reception.

MAX Why can't he call me?

BELLA You be the bigger man.

MAX You call him.

BELLA Fine, but I don't want to do that stupid intermediary thing.

MAX Just call him.

[Bella pulls out her cell and calls.]

BELLA Michael, darling? Where are you? *[To Max]* He's still at your Dad's house --

MAX What!

BELLA Uh huh, uh huh, one moment ... *[To Max]* He was staying at your Dad's house and he went to leave but the garage door broke and got stuck in the up position and he's afraid to leave the house

MAX Such a weakling, why couldn't he just heave on it?

BELLA Have you tried just *[To Max]* He tried everything ... I see

MAX What?

BELLA *[To Max]* Apparently your Dad kept all his good wines in the garage to keep them cool.

Act III: Funeral Fore!

MAX He couldn't get a wine cooler or a wine cellar?
Can't Michael take the wine back into the
house?

BELLA Can you drag the wine boxes back into
the house ... oh, that many Oh I see.
[*To Max*] There are a lot and the lock from
the garage to the house is dodgy. [*Back to
Michael*] Yes, that would be a great invitation
to a thief – here, get loaded, then rob

MAX Typical Michael – in a mess, that somebody
else has to take care of. Tell him to leave the
wine, if it's teenage kids they'll discover it and
be found passed out in their own puke.

BELLA I'm not saying *that* --

MAX The man's a gastroenterologist, he's heard of
the word *puke* before, and vomit and spew
and --

BELLA MAX!

MAX Why didn't he have a wine cellar!?

BELLA [*To Michael*] Why didn't he have a wine
cellar? Uh huh. [*To Max*] This is Canada, it's
pretty cold in the garage. [*To Michael*] Of
course they would just get stolen, you can see
the garage from the road ... okay, I'll call you
back. Good luck. [*She hangs up.*]

MAX Why is he at Dad's anyway?

BELLA I don't know. He says he's sent your dad's urn
here to the hotel in a taxi. And he's made
arrangements with the concierge to get our
Guest Care Specialist to bring him up ASAP.
He's called a garage door repair person, but if
he doesn't get here on time, he will meet us
on the golf course on whatever hole we are
on

Palliser Suite

MAX Un - be - *liev* - able.

BELLA It's not his fault.

MAX Why is he even there? Is he making an inventory? We have an executer for that. Is he after some of Dad's stuff?

BELLA What stuff?

MAX He has one of the nicest houses in Bel Air.

BELLA Yes, but all his furniture came from The Brick. His bookcases came from Ikea. He had art from Wal-Mart!

MAX He was cheap because he kept all of his money in the business and the bank. Those things never mattered to him.

BELLA Your poor mother, that's all I can say.

MAX He did like his food and liquor, though. The man put on a great spread.

BELLA The food was great but the plates didn't match. The man used coupons! Who uses coupons? He was a millionaire. He stole sugar packets from restaurants. And when we ate out I always left an extra tip under my plate so I wouldn't be embarrassed. I loved him but the man was cheap.

MAX But I'm not. You always get the best.

BELLA That I do. It makes sense why Michael can't leave the only real things of value, his wine stores --

MAX Wait a minute – he's sending dad in a taxi, by himself? Why isn't Alex bringing him?

[Door knock, Max goes to the door.
 ALEX enters. Max and Alex hug.]

MAX Alex.

Act III: Funeral Fore!

ALEX I'm so sorry.

ALEX *[Alex goes to hug Bella.]* It's a clean suit, I took it out of the wrapper 20 minutes ago. *[Alex and Bella hug.]*

BELLA Alex!

ALEX *[Sniffs.]* New fragrance?

BELLA What do I smell like?

ALEX Coco Fabreze.

BELLA You're good.

[Behind Alex's back Max makes a gestures like "What did I tell you?" Bella gives him the stink eye, Alex turns around, and Max recovers.]

MAX Thanks for being here, Alex.

BELLA Why didn't you bring Sam?

ALEX Sam?

BELLA Michael said he was putting your dad's ashes in a cab and sending them to the hotel.

ALEX Oh

[He starts to cry; Max and Bella look at each other, a little perplexed.] I'm sorry.

BELLA We're all sad about Sam. It's natural you should grieve your father-in-law.

ALEX *[Sniffs and pulls it together.]* It's not Sam, it's Michael.

BELLA What?

ALEX Well, I didn't want to tell you over the phone, not with everything happening. But we're separated. I think we're going to get a divorce.

MAX Well that's kind of ironic considering how much the two of you fought to get married.

Palliser Suite

[Bella kicks him.]

MAX Well, we're glad you're here today for Sam.

ALEX He moved out. He's staying at your dad's place until we figure out what to do.

BELLA Oh, I'm so sorry. It must be dusty, though – does he need me to give it a quick once- over?

[Max gently kicks her back.]

You're going to golf in your tux?

ALEX What?

BELLA Didn't he tell you? We four are going to the golf course to play a round and spread his ashes surreptitiously over the course. Then we're coming back here to the reception.

ALEX Oh, I didn't know. I thought we were just going to the club

BELLA Maybe we can stay in the cart.

ALEX I'm not dressed! That's why you're in pastels! Look, I'm just going to run down to the mall and pick up something more appropriate. I'll be right back.

[He runs out as RUBY comes in with a trolley with a silver-domed plate and a coffee carafe.]

RUBY Hi, I'm Ruby, your Guest Care Specialist. Do you want me to set the table?

BELLA If you want a tip you won't mess with any of my supplies.

RUBY Oh, okay.

BELLA *[Exiting.]* I have to wash my hands.

MAX Listen, you can tell Housekeeping to take a vacation. This room will be cleaner after we leave than when we got here.

Act III: Funeral Fore!

[Max signs the bill and deals with the tip.]

[Ruby looks dubious.]

You don't believe me? I'm serious. I'm going to have to hold her down not to launder the towels and sheets.

RUBY Yes, sir.

MAX You sound dubious.

RUBY Permission to speak off record.

MAX Granted.

RUBY I've worked here for four years. I've never seen a room cleaner when it was left. And the expensive suite rooms are always the worst. The people who stay in the best suites in the city all think they have problems but they don't, and whatever problems they think they have they end up causing more mess. And it's OK because there will always be people like me who take care of things and clean them up. The rooms on this floor are always the worst. The richer the guest the bigger the mess. Rock stars trash them, politicians leave everything from shredded paper to condom wrappers, newly-weds leave hardened candle wax everywhere, Royals have Corgi poop ... nothing surprises me any more.

MAX You don't know my wife. See me at check-out. I'll give you a thousand dollars if I'm wrong.

RUBY Oh sir, that reminds me, I just spoke to Housekeeping, it seems there was a little mix-up and we can steam the carpets while you are out, or we can move you to another room

BELLA *[Off stage.]* WHAT was that?

Palliser Suite

MAX Oh god. Go. Get out of here. [*Pushes Ruby out the door.*]

BELLA The carpets *weren't* steam cleaned? I thought you said this was the best hotel I have been walking on [*She is now on tip toes.*]

MAX It will be fine.

BELLA It won't be fine, I'll have to take a shower, but I haven't scrubbed the tub yet, there isn't time ... oh god.

MAX BELLA – get a grip, take a pill.

BELLA Okay! So I won't have any champagne. [*Goes to her bag on tip toes, takes out a pill organizer, lifts the hatch and takes a couple of pills.*]

MAX Here's some bottled water.

BELLA This funeral isn't going Martha Stewart smoothly. That's because she never puts out magazines on funerals, it's always living and weddings. That's her first mistake.

MAX That wasn't her *first* mistake. [*Beat*] Look, everything is going to be fine. The golf course is booked, the caterers are taking care of the reception. I've gone over everything with them down to the last detail. They are the best in the business. Alex is buying golf attire as we speak, Michael is waiting for the garage repairman and the deceased is arriving by taxi.

BELLA You and Michael aren't speaking. Alex and Michael aren't speaking

MAX Well, it may throw him off his game a little

BELLA Max! Is that all you care about, winning the stupid game?

Act III: Funeral Fore!

MAX One, no it's not; and two, don't you ever call golf a stupid game.

BELLA I'm sorry.

MAX I don't make fun of *your* crazy, don't you disparage mine.

BELLA *[Gets a towel out of her suitcase and some wipes.]* I'm not crazy. Now if you'll excuse me I have to sterilize my toes. *[She sits on the towel and begins to meticulously clean her feet, powder them and put on fresh socks. Max starts to eat his breakfast. Silence. There is a knock at the door.]*

MAX Would you get that, dear? I'm eating.
[Bella hops on her toes to the door. Ruby enters with a large tacky-looking cookie jar.]

RUBY The concierge said I was to bring this right up.

MAX Oh.

BELLA Max, do I tip the same as for a bag?

MAX The man isn't luggage!

BELLA I tip on the scale of a room service bill?

MAX You're gonna tip 20 percent of his net worth? I'm thinking a fifty will do it.

BELLA Is that ... ?

MAX The old cookie jar from his kitchen? Uh huh.

BELLA He was a big man – it's amazing they fit all his ashes in.

RUBY I just delivered the cremations of a person?

MAX Thank you.

RUBY This is one for the record books

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[Max hands her the money and Ruby exits.]

- BELLA Are you thinking what I'm thinking? I'm glad we won't have to put this on display at the reception. What would the snobby Matthew hyphen Bonds think?
- MAX Your Ativan's kicking in, I see.
- BELLA Sorry, Sam.
- MAX Come on, Dad, join me for one last breakfast.
- BELLA I don't think it's sanitary to have him on the table with your food.
- MAX Sanitary? Are you calling my father unsanitary?
- BELLA No, I --
- MAX If I want to have a last breakfast with my father, I will have a last breakfast with my father. If I want to pour him a cup a coffee I will. *[He does.]* If I want to slip him a Danish I will. *[He lifts the lid and puts in a pastry.]* Dad always loved a cherry Danish. I'll leave it with him on the course. He would like that. He always had a snack on the 18th hole.
- BELLA Whatever you say, Max. Would you like a wet wipe along with your napkin?
- MAX Don't you need them to remove microbes from your toes?
- [Bella realizes she is barefoot on the carpet and then hops around. She takes another pill. The door knocks again.]*
- [Max gets the door and in comes MICHAEL, sweating.]*
- MICHAEL I'm not late! You can't say I'm late!
- MAX You missed breakfast.

Act III: Funeral Fore!

MICHAEL But I'm not late to leave for the golf course!

BELLA Michael, I'm so happy to see you. Though not under these circumstances, of course.

MICHAEL Bella, how are you doing? *[Michael and Bella hug.]* You look well. How's the old OCD?

MAX That's right, go right into that mode. Remind us you're a doctor and then jump right into patient care. Don't say hello to your brother.

MICHAEL Hi, brother.

MAX I hear you're getting divorced.

BELLA Max!

MICHAEL News travels --

MAX Poor Alex -- what did you do to him?

MICHAEL I don't know why I hurried to get over here when I could have just met you at the course. But I guess I just needed to be in your lovely company. Do you know I made the door mechanic drive me over here? I don't care if the house gets robbed. It's not cases of fine wine -- it's cheap wine. Nine ninety-nine paint thinner wine that he always decanted and hoped we never noticed. Cheap until the end. So I left it unattended. Here!

[He hands over a bottle of screw cap wine to Max, who shakes his head.]

But I'm here. I wanted to be on time. For you, Max. I sat in the front of a truck with a labradoodle --

BELLA You have dog hair on you from a labradoodle?

MICHAEL No, I have dog hair on me from the terrier and slobber from the pit bull -- the man is a walking canine unit. We left the pit bull tied

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up in the garage. So I think the wine is going to be fine until he gets back.

BELLA Do you need to change? Should I sponge bathe your pants? Where is your change of clothes? Your tux?

MICHAEL I left them it at the hall at the golf club.

BELLA Why the hall?

MICHAEL So I can grab them before the reception, of course.

MAX YOU WHAT?

MICHAEL My clothes are with the head caterer at the banquet hall --

MAX DO NOT TELL ME --

MICHAEL You said book the banquet hall and take care of the reception. I did.

MAX I said the banquet hall at the hotel.

MICHAEL No you didn't.

MAX Yes I did.

MICHAEL No - you - didn't.

MAX We meet at the hotel, play golf, we sprinkle Dad, and then come back for the reception.

BELLA All the A to M's are going to be here downstairs at the Crystal Ballroom.

MICHAEL Oh my god, all the N to Z's are going to the Log Cabin Clubhouse.

MAX NOOOO!

MICHAEL YESSSS!

[A moment where the men glare at each other.]

BELLA Maybe we can call them. Who had the shortest list? We can re direct them.

Act III: Funeral Fore!

MAX Re-direct 200 people?

MICHAEL Max, why would you do this?

MAX Why would *I* – why would *you*? When I found out you hadn't booked the hall, *I* booked it. Dad would have wanted the Crystal Ballroom.

MICHAEL Dad didn't give a ---- about the Crystal Ballroom. *You* care about the Crystal Ballroom. Dad would have been happy with McDonald's.

MAX Not true, he loved good food.

BELLA Boys! Boys!

MAX Maybe we can bus them from the golf course to the hotel --

MICHAEL -- from the *hotel* to the *golf course*.

BELLA Oh this is going to be fun, I can see guests waving as they pass each other on Deerfoot Trail.

MAX This is crazy. *[Beat]* What are you serving?

MICHAEL Lamb.

MAX Same. Appies?

MICHAEL Haggis, stuffed mushrooms and yam.

MAX Same.

MICHAEL Did not see that coming.

MAX Me neither.

BELLA It means you both knew him really well and both loved him very much.

MICHAEL *[To Bella]* No time, no time ... *[To Max]* Dessert?

MAX *[Confidently]* Fruitcake with stilton.

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MICHAEL That was his second favourite.

MAX What did you pick?

MICHAEL Peach pie with warm custard.

MAX No way, it was the fruitcake.

MICHAEL Peach pie.

[Pounding at the door. Bella flies tip-toeing to the door like a demented ballerina. Alex rushes in, all sweaty with a Bay bag.]

ALEX I just need to change! *[Sees Michael.]* Oh god.

MAX Fruitcake!

ALEX Okay, that's just mean.

MAX No. I meant ... oh god, what are we going to do?

MICHAEL Alex.

ALEX Why do you have to see me all sweaty? Why aren't you at the course? *[Sniffs.]* Dogs? *[Sniffs again, like an excited terrier.]* Wet Dachshund? *[One final sniff]* And WD 40?

MICHAEL *[Pushing him off.]* Sit!

BELLA Look, there is time. We all grab a phone and get hold of the 200 people. We don't golf later, we just put Sam in the fountain on the 18th hole.

MAX What do you mean, dump him in the fountain by the 18th hole?

BELLA Dump? Did I say "dump?"

MAX This was *not* his wish.

BELLA Fine then, we're going to be late and speed around the golf course like maniacs, trailing ashes?

Act III: Funeral Fore!

MAX We are going to play a civilized game of golf.

MICHAEL Maybe we shouldn't dum -- put his ashes in the actual green -- it would upset the pH balance and there would be marks --

MAX Michael, I know about these things. I actually own a golf course, you merely save people's lives.

BELLA What about sand traps?

MAX We are not putting my father in a sand trap!

BELLA Ashes to ashes, dust to sand --

MAX No!

BELLA What do you think of the plan?

MAX/MICHAEL No!

BELLA Then the Crystal Ball room will be half empty with the A to M's and the banquet hall will be half empty with the N to Z's.

MAX Thank god we didn't have a formal service, I'd be at the Saint Marks and you'd be at B'nai Tikvah. Do you have flowers?

MICHAEL Alex took care of that, they're beautiful.

BELLA *[Aside]* Max, you can't compete with Alex's flowers --

MAX I have a PowerPoint slide show --

MICHAEL I got the old VCR tapes dumped on to a thumb drive --

MAX Fine! I'm calling -- *[He freezes, his hand holding his cell phone; his face contorted, he runs into the bathroom.]*

ALEX What just happened?

MICHAEL He was going to call Dad.

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ALEX Oh.

BELLA *[Goes over to the closed door, calls out softly.]*
Max, I know you're upset. But if you're going to sit down, sit on the tub, not the toilet.
[There is an uncomfortable silence. No one knows just what to do.]

ALEX So, Michael . . .

MICHAEL Alex.

BELLA *[To the door]* Can I come in, Max?

ALEX So, do you still have the interns following you on your rounds at the hospital?

MICHAEL Yes.

ALEX Even that cute little one, what was his name?

MICHAEL Don't start, Alex.

ALEX I'm just making conversation.

BELLA Max, please let me in . . .

ALEX Are you still giving all that special one-on-one advice?

MICHAEL Now isn't the time or place.

ALEX It's never the time, you're always rushing off, on call, working at the hospital or too tired to talk when you get home.

BELLA MAX HUMBLY you OPEN this door!

MICHAEL I think we're making Bella uncomfortable.

BELLA I haven't been comfortable since I left my home in New York. Don't mind me, you two go right ahead . . . *[She cracks the screw-cap bottle of cheap wine that Michael brought and drinks deeply.]*

MICHAEL Bella, just go about doing whatever you need to do.

Act III: Funeral Fore!

BELLA I NEED to CLEAN right now. I NEED a CLEAN CLOTH!

MICHAEL Give her your tie.

ALEX I like this tie!

MICHAEL Give her the tie.

ALEX It's a Hugo Boss!

[Bella drinks again and bangs on the bathroom door.]

BELLA Max, it's time to sprinkle your father.

ALEX I need to know what's going on, Michael!

MICHAEL Yes, I thought he was cute, yes I guess I gave him special attention, yes I met him late at night in the cafeteria, but that was it!

ALEX You work 120 hours a week and you get 20 minutes down time I expect you to spend those 20 minutes with me!

MICHAEL I'll get a stop watch.

ALEX If nothing was going on, why did you leave?

MICHAEL I wanted to go to my Dad's house, I wanted to just be with him and sit in the chair he always sat in. Alright?

BELLA That really ugly one from Sears?

MICHAEL The really ugly one from Sears.

BELLA *[Bella drinks more from the bottle.]* We bought him a Drexel Heritage recliner last Hanukah. He never used it.

ALEX *[To Bella]* Nice! The Wilshire?

BELLA No. Too puffy. I went with the Brandon, more structured.

MICHAEL He *liked* his La-Z-Boy. When you two are finished This isn't about recliners.

Palliser Suite

ALEX No, it's about you not coming home, mister.

MICHAEL It's about Sam. No – it's about me and Max.
Mr. Money said he wanted to pay to have
Dad go to Mount Sinai but he was already
too sick by then. And all I could think of was
“What's the good of being a doctor if I can't
heal my own family?” Max blames me, I
blame me, I just needed a time out. Alright,
Alex?

ALEX Look, Michael, I still don't buy it! If nothing
is going on, why did you come home
smelling like Ralph Lauren and Calvin Klein?

[The bathroom door flies open.]

MAX What's going on?

BELLA Michael came home smelling like Ralph
Klein.

MAX Do I have to fix everything around here? I
just arranged transport *from* the golf course *to*
the Crystal Ballroom. I couldn't get a bus so I
have booked 47 taxis. God forbid somebody
wants to go somewhere else in this city
tonight. This isn't New York where you can
hail a taxi any god damn time you want!
Where you can just step on to the curb and
raise your arm! This is Calgary – you have to
book them! I'm just lucky we didn't have to
resort to rodeo carts.

MICHAEL Yes, you're a hero – you booked a few taxis.

MAX Forty-seven.

MICHAEL Big deal!

MAX Twenty-one Yellow cabs, 18 Co-op,
17 Associated, with one HandiBus!

*[The phone rings. Bella answers it without
actually having it touch her head.]*

Act III: Funeral Fore!

BELLA Hello? *[Holds out the phone to Max.]* It's James hyphen Bond.

MAX *[Takes, the phone, using his "company's coming" voice.]* Hello? *[Pause]* Yes I see No, I understand completely. You take care now. *[Hangs up, back to his regular voice.]* None of the Matthew-Bonds are coming – James is in hospital with Norwalk.

MICHAEL Everyone thinks they have Norwalk – it's probably just the flu.

MAX Oh, now you can just diagnose random people over the phone, over the air waves. Like some psychic doctor! You really should cut out your hospital rotations and invest in a 1-800 phone line! Get a show on A&E. You could give that blond with fake nails a run for her money!

MICHAEL You're not upset with me, Max, you're upset because our father --

MAX No, Michael, I'm upset with you. Don't try to shrinky psycho babble this with me. I'm upset with YOU.

ALEX Me too!

MICHAEL Alex!

BELLA *[Takes another swig.]* I like you.
[They ignore her.]

MICHAEL Max, you're deflecting, and Alex, you're insecure. You think every second I'm not with you I'm off with somebody else. Every time I get home I feel like you surreptitiously sniff me. I don't have to even tell you about my day – you're like SNIFF, you had the spaghetti bolognaise for lunch in the cafeteria, SNIFF, you walked past the

Palliser Suite

smokers, SNIFF, you sat next to a man who wore Old Spice. It's like living with a blood hound! You should develop your secret powers for the good of the world. Why don't you cultivate an exacting nasal test for TNT and then you could get hired by the airport. You could sit at the takeoff area and replace all the expensive tech equipment. Sir, this one is a terrorist, this one just ate a chili cheese dog.

[Bella slips quietly to the floor.]

MAX Bella!

MICHAEL *[Runs over to her.]* Help me get her up onto the bed.

[The three men ad lib as they awkwardly lift Bella onto the bed.]

Is she still on the benzodiazepine?

MAX No, she takes Ativan.

[Michael rolls his eyes.]

ALEX *[Sniffs.]* It's white wine. *[Sniffs.]* German. *[Sniffs.]* Gewürztraminer.

MICHAEL Why aren't you a sommelier!

MAX *[Goes to her cosmetics bag and upends it, rummaging through for her pop-up meds case.]* Looks like most of the bottle.

MICHAEL That's a lot but she shouldn't have passed out.

MAX She didn't sleep last night, and we took the red-eye this morning ...

[Michael goes into the bathroom and returns with a glass of water.]

MAX She won't drink out of that glass.

MICHAEL She's not going to drink it – I'm going to throw it on her.

Act III: Funeral Fore!

MAX YOU ARE NOT GOING TO THROW
 WATER OVER MY WIFE!

[The two brothers wrestle as if the glass were a shot gun. They ad lib: "Give me that!" "Oh no you don't!" The water goes all over Alex. Alex falls backwards onto Bella, who suddenly wakes up and, seeing the strewn contents of the case everywhere, begins to clean up.]

MICHAEL See – she's fine!

MAX Oh, good lord, look at the time!

MICHAEL You can't take her with us ! We'd have to tie her onto the golf cart.

MAX We are going!

MICHAEL Are you crazy?

MAX You're the doctor, you tell me. Alex, are you golfing in your tux?

ALEX I'll just go into the bathroom to change.

BELLA No! Not the bathroom, I haven't cleaned in there yet.

MAX And she's back!

ALEX Fine! Am I changing or am I not changing?

BELLA *[Slurring.]* You're changing, because you're sweaty, but not in the bathroom – it hasn't been cleaned.

ALEX Has it been used?

BELLA No, but --

ALEX Fine. *[Starts changing from his tux into his new clothes.]* Oh my god!

BELLA What?

ALEX These pants don't even FIT!

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MAX Right now that's not even on the list of what's important.

ALEX I used to be a 36 waist but with the stress in my life [*He looks pointedly at Michael.*] I've gone down a whole pant size. I'm swimming in these.

MICHAEL Yes, Alex, that is what everyone in the room is going to be focused on.

ALEX Oh, I feel woozy.

MICHAEL It's just your blood sugar dropping.

MAX Yes we get it, Michael, *you're a doctor.*

MICHAEL [*Pointedly*] And you're a CFU.

MAX CFO! - O! - O! Chief Financial *Officer*. I'm the Controller!

MICHAEL Oh, we know you're a controller!
[*Alex slumps into a chair by the food.*]

MICHAEL Did you skip breakfast again?

BELLA Eat a pastry, we ordered enough for four.
[*Alex opens the cookie jar, takes out the Danish and takes a big bite.*]

Bella/MAX NOOOOO!

ALEX [*Mouth full*] You said to take a pastry!
[*Max grabs the pastry and starts scraping the grey ashes off it.*]

ALEX What?

BELLA Oh god no --

MICHAEL [*Looks into the jar and assesses the situation.*]
You put a Danish in with Dad?

ALEX What!

MAX Cherry. They were his favourite.

Act III: Funeral Fore!

[This dawns on Alex slowly as he looks at his tongue and then begins to gag. He reaches for a cleaning cloth from Bella.]

BELLA No, it isn't clean!

[Alex spits the Danish into the cloth and begins to scrape his tongue. He sees the bottle of blue liquid on the table and takes a big mouthful.]

BELLA NOOOO!!

[Alex swishes, then freezes, then sprays the three of them.]

ALEX What the hell was that? That wasn't mouthwash!

MAX Eeeeuw!

MICHAEL Alex!

BELLA Windex!

MICHAEL Did you swallow any?

MAX Drink some water.

MICHAEL I'm the doctor! *[Beat]* Drink some water.

ALEX *[Goes to grab the bottle that Max pulled out for Bella.]* Wait, is this really water or is anyone collecting very clear urine samples?

MAX *[Growls.]* It's water.
[Alex drinks.]

MICHAEL How do you feel? Let me see your tongue.

ALEX *[Sticks out his tongue.]* How is it, doc?

MICHAEL Streak free. You better stick it back in your mouth before birds fly into it.

ALEX Very funny.

[An awkward moment between Alex and Michael. But they are back to some sort of status]

Palliser Suite

quo where Michael's doctoring makes Alex feel cared for.]

MAX We've missed the tee off!

MICHAEL I'm in surgery tomorrow.

MAX Oh, so you can't take another day off because
you have lives to save --

MICHAEL As a matter of fact, yes

MAX Well, we have a 7:10 flight. I have my AGM
in Washington tomorrow. I'm taking Dad
back with me.

MICHAEL You can't -- that's not what he wanted.

MAX He was always too cheap to come visit me in
New York. After Washington, I'm gonna take
him there --

ALEX He'll never know.

MAX I can show him the sights there, I know a
Michelin three star that sits on a park. He'll
be very happy there

MICHAEL Well, now we don't have to golf --

MAX Oh. We. Have. To. Golf!

MICHAEL This is so --

MAX We have to golf because I have to beat you.

MICHAEL I'm a doctor, I minored in golf.
[Bella is crawling about on the floor.]

MAX Bella, what are you doing?!

*[Max, Michael and Alex look at the mess in
stunned disbelief.]*

BELLA Look, I've set up a little putting course. Six
holes. *[She indicates glasses she has positioned
around the room.]* Here's where the water
spilled, call that the water hazard. *[She throws*

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her suitcase on the floor.] Look, a bunker! *[She dumps out some Ajax on the floor.]* Here's a sand trap.

MAX There are no hazards on a putting green!

MICHAEL *That's* your only problem with this?

MAX As long as she doesn't sprinkle Dad on the carpet as we play, I'm fine with it.

MICHAEL What's your handicap?

MAX Bella.

BELLA *[Picks up a wood.]* I'm fine, I'm fine!

ALEX Bella dear, that's a wood.

[There is a knock on the door; Alex opens the door to Ruby, who brings in flowers. Bella is on the floor sticking coloured golf tees into pieces of rye toast to make them stand up. Ruby surveys the damage and looks meaningfully at Max. Max peels off 10 \$100 bills and resignedly hands them over to Ruby, who smiles and exits.]

[Alex takes the bouquet and sniffs the blooms individually. He then reads the card on the flowers.] It's from the Matthew Bonds via an illiterate florist: "Sorry to have messed the cream action."

[Max starts swinging his arm. Michael starts doing squats. It is warm-up competition.]

MICHAEL Bring it!

MAX Let's tee off!

BELLA Danish flip to see who goes first! Bottoms down it's you. Custard side up it's us!

[The men all grab putters.]

[Bella flips the Danish into the air as the lights go down.]

Curtain

Caroline Russell-King



A five star commercial comedy playwright, Caroline Russell-King delivers theatre gold. Her plays have been produced all across Canada. *Mr. Fix It* was nominated for a Betty Mitchell Theatre Award for Outstanding New Play, and *Second Chance, First Love* was nominated for a Calgary Theatre Critics Award for Outstanding New Script. She has written over 30 plays and has been published by Playwrights Canada Press. She has contributed to five anthologies published in the USA and Canada, and is co-author with Rose Scollard of *Strategies: the Business of Being a Playwright in Canada*.

For over three decades Caroline has taught playwriting workshops. She is also a professional dramaturg and runs her own company, Dramaturgy on Demand.

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