

The Dangers of VD (Valentine's Day)

by Chris McKerracher

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Cast:

Gramps (George Dyck): Acerbic, witty 70-ish

Gran (Mildred Dyck): Sweet, dithery, 70-ish

Henry Dyck: Unromantic, practical, frugal 45-ish

Paulette Dyck: Yearns for romance 45-ish.

Jean Witherspoon: Paulette's sister, trampy divorcee. 40-ish

Jacqui Dyck: College student, looking for Mr. Right. 25-ish.

Setting:

The living room of the Dyck house, modern era. Gramps and Gran are in front of the TV. It is 5 PM on Valentine's Day.

Act 1, Scene 1

Gramps: You know, I am getting so sick of watching these Corner Gas reruns. Surely there must be something funnier on. Maybe flip it over to Coronation Street.

Gran: Coronation Street isn't funny, at least, not the kind of funny where you laugh.

Gramps: Neither is Brent Butt after umpteenth retelling of the same jokes. He even admits he's where we got the term "Butt Ugly" from. Anyway, use the dooflickus and find something better.

Gran: I've been trying the dooflickus all afternoon and it hasn't worked. I think the batteries are dead in it. No wonder with that stupid joy-buzzer feature. It made me drop it about twelve times. (*As she speaks the word "dooflickus", she holds up a cell phone and points it at the TV.*)

Gramps: Never mind I will do it the old fashioned way. (*Leans over slowly reaching for the TV with a long drawn out CREEEEAAAK! The TV, however, is 2 inches too far out of his reach. He straightens.*) I have an idea, let's just watch Corner Gas.

Gran: I hope that creaking was the chair and not your back! I've heard better sounding outhouse hinges.

(Act I, Scene 2)

(Enter Jacqui UL in a tizzy searching madly.)

Gramps: Maybe I should have an extra dose of my shark cartilage after supper.

Gran: It didn't seem to help the shark much.

Gramps: *(to Jacqui)* If you're searching for drugs, your grandmother and I gave that up years ago... at least the ones not covered by Blue Cross.

Jacqui: Oh, Gramps, have you seen my cell phone? I've tried to call it a million times but it's on "vibrate" and I can't hear it. I NEED that thing! It's my life!

Gramps: Cell-phones come with a life? Maybe I should get one.

Gran: Of course you have a life. It's the thing I make miserable.

Jacqui: What would you use a cell phone for, Gramps? I hardly think you need to be texting the old fuds down at the barbershop. What are you going to say? "Another nice buzz-cut, Cliff." Or, "Has the "Guns and Ammo" magazine arrived yet?"

Gramps: If it's anything like the drivel your friends post on your Facebook page, maybe you have a point. They make the news on Entertainment Tonight seem downright important. *(In fake girlie voice)* I'm going to take a shower now... Oh I just had a shower... whatever will I do with my hair?

Jacqui: Gramps! Have you been going at my Facebook again? OOOHHHH! Last time I accidentally left my page up, you posted that I was sorry I couldn't come to a party because I had uncontrollable diarrhoea. It took me weeks to live it down!

Gran: Well you DID have uncontrollable diarrhoea. Young ladies didn't do that sort of thing in my day.

Gramps: I knew we should have taped it so we could show you how you sounded. It was

hilarious!

Gran: I laughed so hard I thanked the good Lord I'd remembered to put my Depends on.

Jacqui: Ohhh you guys! Hey, wait! That's my cell phone you're holding! What are you doing with it? I've been tearing the house apart for it!

Gran: Is that your phone? I thought it was the TV dooflickus. No wonder it so lousy for changing channels.

Jacqui: Oh Gran, here's the TV remote. (*Hands Gran a remote that was on top of the TV, then scans her phone for messages.*) You uhhh.... you didn't go through my pictures did you?

Gramps: No, we have too much integrity for that, although I will say, I really liked the one of you in your bikini.

Jacqui: Gramps! (*Turns back on the pair and fiddles with the phone*)

Gramps: Ha! Just a lucky guess! For five bucks I won't tell your father he should check out your collection.

Gran: Now George, stop torturing the poor girl. We should rent you out to the CSIS to interrogate terrorists but your badgering might be considered cruel and unusual punishment.

Gramps: Sort of like watching hours and hours of Corner Gas.

Jacqui: There are 304 pictures of the TV and about 32 of Gran's eyeball on my phone. Argghh you guys drive me crazy!

(Act I, Scene 3)

(Jacqui Exits DR)

Gramps: What's with her? She produces more drama in a 24 hour period than the CBC, but usually not this much. Probably some kind of women's plumbing thing.

Gran: Now, George, you can't chalk up every emotional outburst to women's plumbing. I've had so much of mine removed I'm darned near hollow down there. I even echo when I pee. Still

you accuse me of plumbing issues every time I get mad when you've done something stupid. Jacqui's problem is that it's Valentine's Day today. Remember? Those phones are the only way young people know how to communicate. It's pretty hard to wait by a phone for a fellow to call to ask you out on Valentines when you can't find your phone.

Gramps: Well you were the one using it as a dooflickus. Wait 'til I tell your bridge club!

Gran: Go ahead. Make me a laughingstock. But if you do, I may tell them how you wandered off the other night in your sleep and peed in the closet.

Gramps: All right. All right. You win. Although, none of them biddies would have remembered by the time they got home anyway.

Gran: You do have a point there. So, speaking of Valentines, what did you get me?

Gramps: Well, as always, my dear, I don't wait for a special day to show you I love you in ways great and small. I believe buying into Valentine's Day would diminish that.

Gran: Oh Henry, you're so sweet, although I will say that's one huge load of pony pucks.

Gramps: Well... I do have one special gift I plan to give you later... wink wink... nudge... nudge

Gran: You call that a gift? It's more like a handicap.

Gramps: A handicap? So can I park my car wherever I want? (*Flowers... long pause...*) So... uhhh... So what did you get me for Valentines?

Gran: The same thing as last year.

Gramps: Nothing, eh?

Gran: Well, Valentines is just not the same as it once was. Remember how romantic it used to be... before the kids... Valentines really meant something to us back then. Whatever happened to that old fire?

Gramps: Ever since I got that... er trouble at the South Pole.

Gran: It's okay to call it erectile dysfunction, George. That's what the doctors on TV

commercials call “droopy wedding tackle”.

(Act I, Scene 4)

(Enter Paulette)

Paulette: Happy Valentine's Day, Gramps, Gran... Mwah! Mwah!

Gramps: *(in panicky whisper.)* SHHH!!! She might hear you! You mustn't let on what we were talking about!

Paulette: What were you saying?

Gran: Oh! Uh... we... uhh...well, we weren't talking about erectile dysfunction, that's for sure!

Paulette: *(Making a face of disgust.)* Well, Gramps, I'm sorry to hear about your problems downstairs but I have to tell you it's WAY more information than I needed. Thanks for the visual. I'm sure I'll be fine after years of therapy.

Gramps: Is there something else... ANYTHING else you wanted to talk about?

Paulette: Oh, yes, I was wondering if either of you had been talking to Henry about... well... about Valentines. I don't want to spend a whole bunch of money on him like I did previous years if he's going to cheap out on me again. I know he's a practical sort but it would be nice for him to show his romantic side.

Gran: He has a romantic side?

Paulette: Well sure! I remember when we were dating. He was so sweet. He'd invite me over on some pretence and then surprise me with his “hidden agenda”.

Gramps: I didn't need to know what you guys called it.

Paulette: No, Gramps, I mean he'd ask me over to watch a Valentines date movie and when I got there, he would change the plans and we'd do something completely different.

Gramps: He'd do your toenails? *(Winking broadly at Gran.)*

Paulette: Well, no, he'd do my taxes. It became an annual event, but now, he doesn't even do that. He gets one of his junior accountants to fill in all the stupid little boxes.

Gran: Frankly, doing your taxes for you sounds like as much fun as a poke in the eye. I suppose it beats dating an insurance salesman and having to listen to him pitch whole life policies.

Paulette: But you don't understand. At the time, I needed my taxes done far more than I needed my toenails tarted up. He was such a great provider... well... of most things....

Gran: So you married an accountant who would do your taxes when he got you alone and you're surprised he isn't romantic after 25 years of marriage?

Paulette: I thought I could change him.

Gramps: Good gravy, young lady, haven't you ever heard the old saw that "Women marry men hoping we will change... but we never do".

Gran: And "men marry women hoping we will NEVER change. But, we always do".

Gramps: It's the law of the universe.

Paulette: So you're saying I should have married someone who was already thoughtful, sensual, and romantic?

Gramps: Sorry to disappoint you, but they were already dating other men.

(Act I, Scene 5)

(Enter Henry from exterior door)

Henry: Hello everyone.

Paulette: Henry! We were just discussing... er...

Henry: I doubt very much your prattling would concern me. So... onto more important things... Pauly, what did you make for dinner?

Paulette: The same thing I've made for dinner every Valentine's Day, Dear. I made reservations

at a fancy restaurant.

Henry: What? Do you think I'm made of money?

Paulette: Oh Henry take a pill, would you? It's once a year, for heaven's sake. We can easily afford it. Besides, you'll probably just talk about work anyway, so you can call it a tax write-off.

Henry: Good thinking. Well, if I have to go, I better get ready. I must look my best for tonight's dinner meeting. (*Winks broadly... exits.*)

(Act I, Scene 6)

Paulette: Be still my racing heart... say... Gran, may I talk to you privately?

Gran: Of course, Paulette. Excuse us, George... (*Long pause while Gramps looks around innocently.*) Now be a dear and hand 'em over.

Gramps: Huh?

Gran: Come on... let's have them...

Gramps: Well! I haven't witnessed anything so rude since someone farted in the refrigerator.

Gran: That was the deviled eggs for the luncheon last week, now take out your hearing aids or I'll blow the dog whistle. (*Gramps begrudgingly complies but bites the bottom off a Styrofoam cup and slowly brings it to his ear during...*)

Gran: Now what seems to be the problem? Are you starting to get hot flashes, honey?

Paulette: No! Nothing like that! I was just wondering if... well... when Gramps had his... er.... little issue...

Gran: Erectile Dysfunction?

Paulette: Yes... that.... umm... did you try and treat it with any... I don't know... medication?

Gran: Well, we did try some Viagra but only once. It was kind of nice, really.... woman to woman... it had been a long time... but then George's heart was racing so bad he thought he

was having a heart attack and we called an ambulance. By the time it got here, his heart rate had slowed and the only thing out of the ordinary they found was the little pup tent in his lap.

Paulette: Yes, well... uh... I get the picture (*shudders*) but... um... do you have any left? I'm thinking of adding a little spice to Henry's after-work martini.

Gran: Paulette! That's sneaky! I'm shocked!

Paulette: Shocked that I can be sneaky?

Gran: No, shocked that it took you this long to ask.

Paulette: So you'll help me?

Gran: Of course! I've been known to be sneaky too. The pills are in our en suite in the medicine cabinet on the top shelf.

Paulette: Thanks Gran. If there's anything I can do for you...

Gran: Well, if you don't mind, on the way to restaurant, if you could pick up George's vitamins...

Paulette: You do realize when people say "If there's anything I can do", they're hoping there's nothing they can do.

Gran: Of course I do, dear. But do you want the Viagra or not?

Paulette: Fine. I'll pick them up. You can tell Gramps he can put his hearing aids back in.

Gramps: I can? Thanks! (*Takes them from Gran and puts them back in. Gran makes a face and uses hand sanitizer.*)

Paulette: Hey! You heard that without your ear pieces in!

Gramps: Eh? What was that? Sorry,... Wait a minute... (*adjusts hearing aids*) You were saying?

Paulette: Oh, never mind. Thanks for the chat Gran. I'll talk to you later.

(*Paulette exits*)

(Act I, Scene 7)

Gramps: I think that bee in her bonnet is an S O Bee.

Gran: Now George. it takes a long time to come to terms with some of our choices we made when we were young. Heaven knows, let me tell you... (*Eyeing Gramps*)

Gramps: Like buying that stupid Edsel?

Gran: I was thinking of a different broken down old wreck but sure, that's a great example.

Gramps: Now see here, Mildred, I...

(Act I, Scene 8)

(Enter Jacqui)

Jacqui: (*In a tizzy*) Gran! Gran! Guess what? He finally got hold of me! I'm so excited!

Gran: Did he send you a beautiful poem he wrote by himself where he is pouring out his heart for your love?

Jacqui: Well...no... he texted me!

Gramps: He texted you? That sounds naughty.

Jacqui: Gramps, everything sounds naughty to you. Anyway, Gran, a text is just a little written message on my phone. This one was from Robert.

Gran: He's a boy you like, I take it.

Gramps: Nothing gets by you, does it?

Gran: Now, George, you know I am only saying this out of love when I say "Stick a sock in it or we'll confiscate your hearing aids again."

Gramps: Fine. This is me, shutting the hell up.

Gran: Pay no mind to Gramps, my dear, so tell me all about your beau and what he said to make you so excited.

Jacqui: His name is Robert and he's a really cute maintenance guy down at the plant. Some of the other girls in the office sabotage stuff so he'll come up and fix it in his tight tee-shirt that can hardly contain his bulging muscles... and you should see his... form-fitting... coveralls..
(Jacqui and Gran in unison stare off in the distance and lick their lips.) Uh... uh... anyway, he said... "Got plans 2 night?" with a little happy face icon!

Gramps: He must be sincere if he used a happy face icon.

Gran: George...

Gramps: This is me shutting up again.

Jacqui: But, Gran, now I'm not sure. Maybe he's just asking so we can double-date with some tramp. He didn't exactly ask me out.

Gran: So what did you answer him?

Jacqui: I sent him a text saying I'd lost my phone and I'd answer him as soon as I found it.

Gramps: But how could you have sent him the text if you'd lost your.... *(He sees the women glaring pointedly.)* Shutting up... shutting up... shutting up...

Jacqui: I think I'll just tell him I already have plans. I'd hate for him to think I was the type of girl who didn't already have a date on Valentines. He might think I was... I was...

Gran: Available? Of course... I understand. He can't find out you're as popular as a second-hand nose-hair trimmer.

Jacqui: Gran!

Gran: Oh I'm just funning dear. I know you never date because... because of your high standards! So here's what you do... Tell him you have plans but you MIGHT break them to spend time with him, depending on what he'd doing. Don't capitulate; negotiate!

Gramps: Yep, nothing like starting a relationship with a lie.

Gran: Don't be so high and mighty, George. Seems to me the first thing you told me was you were rich.

Gramps: Well, you told me you liked smooching so I guess we're even.

Jacqui: I don't think I need to hear this. I'll be in my room texting Robert.

(Jacqui exits as Jean enters from exterior entrance.)

(Act I, Scene 9)

Jean: Hello Mildred, George, and how are all the assorted Dycks? *(George rolls his eyes.)*

Gran: You never tire of that joke, do you?

Jean: There are just so many Dyck jokes. I can only resist for so long.

Gramps: So speaking of Dycks, do you have any dates for tonight? Or will it be another National Geographic special on "a lone cougar at the watering hole"?

Jean: Oh, George, another of your never-ending string of limp jokes. You appear to be an expert on limp.

Gramps: Mildred! Have you been talking?

Gran: Don't be silly, George. At your age, it wasn't that amazing a guess. It's like predicting you'll have a nap tomorrow afternoon or that you're receiving Old Age Security.

Gramps: Old Age Security. Bah! How secure can one be on \$510 a month?

Jean: Yes, George. I can see you're withering way to nothing.

Gramps: Sounds like your social calendar. Not busy on Valentines? Isn't there some kind of deep psychological scarring happening right now? Why don't you call one of your ex-husbands? With the vast ocean of talent like that, surely one of them is free tonight.

Gran: Now, George, calm down or your teeth are going to shoot out of your mouth and end up on the carpet again.

Jean: That's okay, Mildred. In the battle of wits, George isn't exactly a super-power. In the sack either, apparently. Anyway, where is my sister? We have something to discuss besides George's various shortcomings.

Gran: I think she's in the kitchen, dear. Why not check there?

Jean: Thanks. (*Heads to kitchen but is interrupted when Jacqui enters*)

(Act I Scene 10)

Jacqui: Auntie Jean! How nice to see you! (*They hug.*) I'm so excited!

Jean: Let me guess... something about a boy?

Jacqui: Uh huh!

Jean: Cute?

Jacqui: Uh huh!

Jean: Buff?

Jacqui: Uh huh!

Jean: Sweet?

Jacqui: Uh huh!

Jean and Jacqui: (*Hugging again.*) Oooooooooohhhhh!!!!!!

Gramps: Hoo boy, I think I'm going to be sick.

Jean: Is he rich?

Jacqui: Well... he still lives at home, like me, although he does have a vehicle.

Jean: If he's buff and has a vehicle, who cares if he's rich! Is he smart?

Jacqui: Robert can fix anything! He's smart in those sorts of things but... other than that, not so much.

Jean: Perfect! Well good for you, dear, don't forget to reel him in slowly. You don't want him to break the line. And for heaven's sake, use the right bait. (*Jean unbuttons the top three buttons on Jacqui's shirt.*)

Jacqui: Auntie Jean! (*She quickly does them up again.*)

Jean: Okay, honey, have it your way. Try and attract them with your mind. I'm just saying you'd do better catching them with what you don't mind. (*Jean exits to kitchen.*)

(Act I, Scene 11)

Jacqui: Gran, I was wondering if I could talk to you privately.

Gramps: Oh for heaven sakes, what am I; chopped liver?

Gran: Of course you're not chopped liver, George. More like pate du foie gras.

Gramps: Pate du what the puff?

Jacqui: Gran? Please?

Gramps: Hold onto your thong, girlie, I have to go to the bathroom, anyway. It will give me a chance to practise with my new motorized walker. (*Gramps struggles to his feet and unfolds his walker which has been "souped up" He dons a bicycle helmet. The walker comically "drags" him to the exit*)

Gran: Okay, dear what seems to be the problem. You're not pregnant, are you?

Jacqui: Of course not! I don't even date! I was just wondering if you could lend me some money for tonight.

Gran: In my day, the boy paid for everything.

Jacqui: Depending on what you look like, it happens in my day, too. However, the last date I had, the jerk I was with claimed he lost his wallet and I had to pay for our supper. I just want to make sure I have a few extra bucks for a cab ride home, too, just in case.

Gran: Smart thinking, dear. Would fifty be enough?

Jacqui: Well, if you have three twenties, that would be great.

Gran: Come to my room and I'll get it from my secret hiding place.

Jacqui: You mean in the music box?

Gran: (walking towards the exit) I see your grandfather isn't the only nosy Dyck in the family.
(They exit to bedroom.)

(Act I Scene 13)

(Enter Jean and Paulette who talk as they go to the dining room table C and sit.)

Paulette: ...and I don't know what's up with him lately. He's become so focussed on money, he has even less time for me than he used to which was already pretty meager. He spends far more time with his calculator than me... turning it on... running his fingers all over it... massaging figures... It's gotten so bad, I'm jealous of his office equipment. Anyway, I don't know what his problem is.

Jean: Are you sure it's his problem?

Paulette: What do you mean?

Jean: Maybe it's not him. Maybe it's you. Maybe you're sending him the wrong signals.

Paulette. What do you mean by the wrong signals? I've bought slinky negligees, I've prettied myself up for him and put on my special cologne with natural pheromones and a subtle scent... it's called "Submissive Aggression". No wait... "Aggressive Submission"... anyway all men are supposed to go crazy for and all I get for my efforts is a peck on the cheek and a "You might want to wash that crap off before it gets all over your pillow".

Jean: Didn't I warn you this would happen?

Paulette: Thanks. I need an "I told you so" like I need a third boob.

Jean: You already have a third boob, honey. He's having a shower getting ready for your big date.

Paulette: Yes, well, I can tell you it is not my fault he's a cold fish. I push and push and push and get nowhere.

Jean: Maybe that's the problem! If you push too hard, maybe he feels a bit emasculated. Maybe he believes it's his job to initiate the horizontal hula and when you take over, he is repulsed by your pushiness.

Paulette: Must you use the word repulsed? If I waited for him to initiate a night of connubial bliss, I might as well take an oath of chastity.

Jean: Not if you still work on him in more subtle ways. Build him up without making it too obvious. Find reasons to praise his masculinity. Act like the helpless female. I'm sure that wouldn't be all that much of a stretch.

Paulette: Do you really think that would work?

Jean: You bet. Guaranteed. Unless he's gay, of course.

Paulette: GAY? (*She blurts the first word but then speaks sotto voce*) Gay? There's no way. He doesn't even like parades! Besides, we've been married for decades! I mean... there's nothing wrong with being gay, of course, but I'd prefer my husband not be! What does that say about my attractiveness? I've been trying to stay on top of my moustache... maybe I shouldn't have!

Jean: Calm down, Sis. I didn't say he was gay, I just said it's possible. It might be why he immerses himself in his work. It's a way of sublimating his sexual impulses.

Paulette: If his pulse was as infrequent as his impulses, I could have him declared legally dead. SHHH!!! It's Gramps!

(Gramps comes out of the bathroom with his motorized walker dragging him around the stage.)

Jean: Where are you going, George?

Gramps: I'm trying to get to the kitchen... woooahhhh! *(It drags him to a corner where it bumps against the wall over and over like a stuck toy. The women run over to pull him off the wall and point him in the direction of the kitchen.)*

Paulette: Just remember, Gramps, the left one is the brake and the right one is the power. You don't have to push the power one all the way. Just nice and easy.... That's the way...

Gramps: It will take me all afternoon to get to the kitchen at this rate.

Jean: Here, George, you just need to turn this a little bit...

(Jean grabs Gramps hand and the three of them get dragged across the stage toward the kitchen. Gramps goes through the door while Paulette and Jean hit the wall on each side of the door.)

Paulette: That man will be the death of me. I better get Henry's martini ready. *(She pours a martini from a pitcher on the bar, knocks it back then pours another and brings it back to the table.)*

Jean: If he is typical of what it's like to be old, it certainly takes the fear out of dying young.

Paulette: The sad part is, as revolting as it sounds, he and Gran probably have more sex than Henry and me.

Jean: Come now, you did have a child together.

Paulette: Only because it was the night he won Accountant of the Year for the entire Tri-County area. He got so drunk, he thought he was Don Juan and literally swept me off my feet before taking me to our bed.

Jean: Where you made mad, passionate love?

Paulette: No where he passed out cold.

Jean: So how did you...

Paulette: Well, he passed out on his back...

Jean: Enough! Thanks, but that's a little too much information, even for me. Haven't you tried getting him liquored up since then? Just to see if Don Juan shows up again.

Paulette: He'll have a martini or two but he hasn't drank to excess since... afraid of the consequences, I guess. I did get this Viagra pill, though. I am going to crush it up and put it in his after-work martini. Maybe that might help along with a nice romantic supper. (*Puts the pill in the drink and then places the drink on the china cupboard.*)

Jean: You realize, of course, that won't help you find out what you want to know. You're trying to establish if a) he doesn't like sex, b) he doesn't like sex with women, or c) he just doesn't like sex with you. Getting his lower half interested has nothing to do with getting his upper half involved.

Paulette: You're right. It was a stupid idea. I'll just throw it out. I just thought... Wait! I've got it! Why don't you go out with Harry instead of me tonight? If you play men the way you claim, you should be able to get a rise out of him without any pharmacological help whatsoever. If you can't, then he must obviously have no interest in women at all.

Jean: What if he rises to the bait?

Paulette: Don't worry. He won't, I'm absolutely sure of it. There isn't a romantic bone in that man's body.

Jean: Ha! You said romantic b... ahhh... never mind. Look, sis, that's a crazy idea and is quite unfair to both Henry and to me. Even the police aren't supposed to engage in entrapment. What do I get out of the deal? Also how can you truly be sure he won't respond to my irresistible charms? What if you're wrong? Then what do I do?

Paulette: If he reacts to you, then it's me, and not women he has a problem with and I won't care what you do with him. Actually, if the two of you had a fling on the way home, it might even be the best thing to happen to me. There'd be a tearful confession from Harry...like he would ever cry... you and I would have to pretend to be on the outs... but only for a couple weeks... then I'd get half of everything Henry's got which would certainly make me attractive on the open market.

Jean: Are you out of your mind? Do you know what you're contemplating?

Paulette: I need to know this, Jean. I have to know if it's me he abhors! If you don't want to do the nasty with Henry, I can certainly understand. But you've been around long enough to know how to fire up a guy to get what you want, then manage to get him off the boil. Isn't that how you got that mink?

Jean: Well, actually, I gave in that time.

Paulette: What about when you got those diamond earrings from old Mr. Henderson?

Jean: (*Weak laughter and a shrug*) I.. uh... gave in that time too.

Paulette: EEEWWWW!!! Old Mr. Henderson? Look, Jean, if Henry comes on too strong, that will tell me everything I need to know. Just tell him you have a headache. Apparently, that's what other women do when their husbands are always after them. I can only dream of needing a headache.

Jean: If I agree to this, how are you going to get Henry to agree to take me to dinner in your place?

Paulette: Don't worry about that. The restaurant has a \$5.00 reservation cancellation fee. Henry would never give up that kind of dough.

Jean: Okay, I will try romancing the stone but you have to promise me one thing. No matter what happens, you can't be angry with me, disappointed in me or think any less of me.

Paulette: I couldn't possibly... Be angry, I mean. I know you're only doing this for me.

(A crash is heard from the kitchen with howls by Gramps. The women exit at a run. Henry comes into the living-room with a towel around him, a shower cap and fuzzy slippers. He spots the martini and drinks half in one swallow and makes a face. Putting it down, pours a fresh one and goes to the exit to the bedroom.) Curtain.

(Act II, Scene 1)

(Enter Gramps testing out his walker... going controlled faster and slower...)

Gramps: (*singing*) I love to go a-wandering along the mountain track... Cuz when I go a-wandering, my wife stays off my back.. Valderie... Valdera Valder.... (*Spies the ½ martini*)

Hey... what this? Ahh... walker lubricant! I really shouldn't with my meds but it is, Valentines, after all. You should do something special for the one you love most. Care for a drink, George? Don't mind if I do! Happy Valentine's Day! (*Just as he is about to drink it, Jacqui enters. Gramps tries to hide the glass with his body as he puts it on the table.*)

Jacqui: Hey Gramps. Getting the hang of that walker? Say, have you seen Aunt Jean? I got another text from Robert and I need advice on what to say!

Gramps: You're taking relationship advice from a woman who has been divorced five times?

Jacqui: Well, she also managed to get married five times so she knows how to catch them. She just doesn't know how to keep them.

Gramps: Well. She certainly does know how to catch them but so does a bear trap. Still, I doubt your mother would let you run through the streets naked yelling "I'm available, I'm available".

Jacqui: Oh, Gramps, Auntie Jean would never do that.

Gramps: Well, perhaps she is a bit more subtle... barely. Anyway, last I heard she was in the kitchen plotting something with your mother.

Jacqui: Thanks, Gramps, and I won't tell them what you said about Auntie Jean.

Gramps: I appreciate that, dear. I do get a little carried away sometimes.

Jacqui: (*as she is exiting*): Hey Auntie Jean, you'll never guess what Gramps said!

(Act II, Scene 2)

(Gramps looks over at the door then sits behind the table and grabs the glass again. He puts it back down when Jean and Jacqui enter from kitchen. As they engage in the girl talk, he slowly lowers himself behind the table.)

Jacqui: So Robert just texted me again!

Jean: What did he say? Did he like you on Facebook?

Jacqui: So far he's only liked power tools and UFC cage matches, but I'm still hoping. He asked if

I want to go to The Brewhouse; that bar that features the city's biggest celebrity hamburgers. He says if you can eat a whole Rita McNeil burger, it's on the house.

Jean: How charming. What time is the wet tee shirt contest?

Jacqui: Oh, that's not til eleven or so. You should still be able to make it after whatever dinner plans you have.

Jean: I'm sure. At my age you have to tantalize them with what they think you have and that it's still in all the places it used to be. That takes a lot of engineering. I wouldn't be caught dead in a wet tee shirt contest now. Not like the old days.

Jacqui: Oh my, you mean you have? I can't imagine! I would die of embarrassment!

Jean: Embarrassment? Are you kidding me? For that moment in time, you are the sexiest woman on earth for hundreds of red-blooded men that have already seen thousands of wet-shirts on the Internet. What's to be embarrassed about? If you've got it, flaunt it... right in their panting pathetic faces.

Jacqui: But other women look down on women who do that.

Jean: Who cares? Are you looking to marry any of these women who might look down on you? They are your competitors, honey. If you can catch the attention of some young, exciting hunk with a bit of cleavage and a well-timed wink, what business is it of theirs?

Jacqui: I could never see me doing the things as you do, Auntie. You've got more kahunas than most men I know.

Jean: So what are you going to tell Robert? He still left it open-ended enough you don't know the score. Why don't you just phone him and talk to him?

Jacqui: Phone him? Are you nuts? That's so last Thursday.

Jean: Then maybe text him back and just ask who all will be there... and what time he'll be picking you up. If he's with another girl, I have some pointers on how to cut her legs out from under her.

Jacqui: Can you come to my bedroom? I need you to help me pick out what I should wear.

Jean: Okay, but you have to trust me. (*They exit to Jacqui's room. Gramps immediately pops up and grabs the glass. He is about to enjoy it with great relish but puts it down again as Henry comes into the room in a suit.*)

(Act II, Scene 3)

Henry: Oh, Dad, have you seen Pauly?

Gramps: She was in the kitchen last time I heard. Maybe fit her with a tracking device.

Henry: That's not a bad idea... If only I had a tranquilizer gun so I could bring her down safely to put it on her. Say, try that martini there... it seemed a bit off to me.

Gramps: Really? (*He eagerly swallows it in one gulp*) Hmmmm....

Henry: Well?

Gramps: Uhhh... It's hard to tell without something to compare it to...

Henry: Hmph. Well, there's probably some left in the pitcher. You know you're not supposed to have too much alcohol with your heart medicine.

Gramps: Yes. It would be a shame if I didn't live to be 70. Oh yeah. I AM 70! I'm safe!

Henry: Point well taken. (*Henry pours him a drink which Gramps downs immediately.*) Well?

Gramps: Beats me, my taste buds haven't worked in three years.

Henry: I wonder what's keeping Pauly. We have a dinner date and I hate being kept waiting. Perhaps I should inventory my wallet while I wait. (*Takes out his wallet and begins taking notes.*)

Gramps. Well... have fun with that. Don't get too crazy. I'm off to the biffy again. I forgot the old saying "Drink a pint, pee a quart."

Henry: A lovely image. Thank you.

Gramps: Valdereeee Valdera! My knapsack on my (HIC!) back... *(He exits to bathroom. Henry continues the careful inventory and then looks alarmed as Paulette and Jean walk in from the kitchen.)*

(Act II, Scene 4)

Henry: Good heavens! This is unbelievable!

Paulette: Is there a problem, dear?

Jean: He probably just figured out his Mastercard number is a square root of a positive integer.

Henry: Actually, Jean, it's close. Only three decimal places away. This is much more serious. In comparing my billfold contents with my previous inventory, I am carrying over 25% more material in my wallet since last year and 43% more since the year before. At this rate, I will need a suitcase to lug the contents of my wallet in less than a decade.

Jean: I'll alert the media. *(In a hoarse whisper to Paulette)* Maybe this isn't such a good idea, Paulette. It would take Dr. Frankenstein and a bolt of lightning to put some life in this stiff.

Paulette: Please, Jean. You can't let me down.

Henry: What seems to be the problem?

Paulette: Well, you see, darling, it seems I've... developed a headache and will be unable to go to dinner with you. Jean has kindly agreed to take my place so we don't lose the deposit on the reservation.

Henry: Good thinking... Wait a minute... I'm supposed to have a Valentine's Day dinner with your sister? That seems rather inappropriate, don't you think?

Jean: Oh, come on, Henry. It might be fun! I always get giggly at the thought of spreadsheets.

Henry: Well good heavens, what would people think? This is a small city! People talk! You two don't even look that much alike. People will think we're... we're...

Paulette: They will think you're having dinner with a relative or a client or a none of your damn business. Don't worry so much about what people think, Henry. It's what I think that counts.

Jean: Besides, Henry, it's not like we're sneaking around. We are going to the most expensive, exclusive restaurant in town. Take it from an expert. When you're on a peccadillo, you go to the most expensive restaurant at least two cities away.

Henry: Maybe I should just rent your "How to Have a Peccadillo" video.

Paulette: Now, Henry, that is extremely unkind given that she has agreed to give up her Valentines plans for me. I consider it a favour for her to take my place. I would hate for us to break our Valentine tradition.

Henry: Yes, and there's always the issue of the reservation cancellation fee. I can't help but notice, however, that her Valentines plans appeared to consist of coming to our house and irritating me. Still, five dollars is five dollars.

Jean: Exactly. Come on, Henry, let's go eat some dinner and maybe have a few laughs in spite of ourselves.

Henry: All right. (*Heavy sigh.*) The things I do for you, Paulette. I will go get my coat from the bedroom and meet you in my car.

Jean: Actually, I thought I'd drive.

Henry: But my Prius gets 22.5% better gas mileage than your BMW. That would be a frivolous waste of resources.

Jean: True, but it's my gas and I don't give a rat's rectum about your 22.5% better mileage. Plus, I'll even pay for the parking.

Henry: Done. I'll get that coat. (*Exits to bedroom.*)

(Act II, Scene 5)

Paulette: Thank you, Sis. This means a lot to me.

Jean: It's the only reason I'm doing it. I'm going to prove to you, once and for all, that Henry is a dud and you could do so much better.

Paulette: Well, perhaps... but the best case scenario is that he is just a workaholic. If you get nowhere with him, at least it's not just me that doesn't excite his nether regions. I think I could live with that. As long as he isn't gay.

Jean: What would be the difference?

Paulette: Hope.

Jean: Fair enough. I'll tell you everything that happened when we get back. I'm sure there won't be much to tell.

Gran: (*Offstage after horrible grinding noise S/FX*) Paulette! Can you please come into the kitchen? I've got my apron stuck in the garberator again.

Paulette: Coming! Okay, well... have fun...

Jean: That's unlikely but thanks. (*Paulette exits to kitchen.*) Hmm... so... if I can get a rise out of Old Faithful, I can finally free my sister of that organic calculator. Interesting.... (*She exits... there's a slight pause then Henry appears with his coat on.*)

Henry: Good heavens! We only have 22.8 minutes to get to the restaurant or forfeit the deposit! (*He runs to the exterior exit. As soon as he exits....*)

(Act II, Scene 6)

(*Gramps comes out of the bathroom guiding his walker slowly. Gran enters from the kitchen, her apron in tatters.*)

Gramps: Remember to put prunes on the grocery list.

Gran: Bunged up again? I told you not to eat all that cheese in the omelet at breakfast.

Gramps: Don't drink this, don't eat that. I feel like I'm in prison, except they get bigger TV's.

Gran: Speaking of which, supper will still be a few minutes. We can probably catch a show until then. Can you make it there without smashing into something?

Gramps: No problem. I'm getting a handle on it. I just keep mixing up the gas and the brake.

Gran: That will come with time

Gramps: So will my bowel movement. It's hard to say which will come first.

Gran: Hopefully, they won't occur simultaneously.

(Gran and Gramps settle on their chairs and fire up the TV with the remote.)

TV: Stay tuned for Hee-Haw...

Gramps: Change it quick!

Gran: To what?

Gramps: Anything!

TV: Welcome to Dancing With the Stars!

Gramps: You really hate me, don't you?

Gran: I was just pulling your leg. Here... find whatever you want... *(She hands him the remote. He tries it but holds it backwards. It makes him twitch comedically.)*

Gramps: Here... you better have it back... every time I press the button my pacemaker goes kerflooey.

Gran: No wonder, you had it backwards. My heavens! I know... on account of it being Valentines, here's my gift to you.

TV: On the runway we have creations from Pierre Poutine with his see through collection...

Gran: It's Fashion Television. You really shouldn't watch it, but it is Valentine's.

Gramps: Ohhh! Look at that outfit! Dang! There goes my heart again! Zap me with that remote, would you?

(Act II, Scene 7)

(Enter Paulette)

Paulette: Jacqui! Can you please give me a hand with supper?

Jacqui: I'll be right out, Mom! (*Jacqui comes out in revealing looking clothing*)

Paulette: And where do you think you're going? Job interview at the Chicken Ranch?

Jacqui: Er... Uh... Aunty Jean suggested I wear this.

Gramps: I bet she thought you were still over-dressed.

Gran: George, button it or I'll hide your teeth.

Paulette: Although your aunt has impeccable taste in sisters, as far as clothing for young ladies, you're better off with fashion tips from Charo.

Jacqui: Who?

Gramps: Oh yeah... Charo! Gootchy Gootchy!

Paulette: Never mind. Gramps is dating himself since no one else will. The point is that you are not going anywhere until you tone your outfit down, Missy. As long as...

Jacqui: Hang on... I recorded your last "as long as you're living under my roof" speech on my smart phone. I can just play it, if you like. It was a really good one. (*Ringtone S/FX*) Oh wait! I'm getting a text from Robert!

Paulette: Listen here, young lady. I'm talking to you and nothing is more important than...

Jacqui: Here's his picture... (*She puts the phone to Paulette's face.*)

Paulette: Oh my.... So what did say?? What did he say?

Jacqui: He said: Will pick you up in 30 minutes! Omigawd Omigawd Omigawd!

Gramps: It sounds like she's hopped up on Red Bull.

Paulette: Tell him to make it 45. You don't want to seem too eager.

Gran: I think 30 minutes makes sense. You don't want to start a date on a bad note.

Jacqui: There. I texted him back.

Paulette: What did you tell him?

Jacqui: I respect both your opinions so I split the difference. I told him to be here in 37 ½ minutes.

Gramps: At least he won't think you're a control freak.

Paulette: Listen, Sweetie, trust me. Dressing like you're all ready for a walk of shame in the morning is no way to impress a man on a first date. You go change and I'll go bring supper out.

Jacqui: Aunty Jean said this would happen.

(Act II, Scene 8)

(Stage goes dark. Actors leave stage and Henry and Jean enter, go DC and face each other. Two people in white shirts and black pants bring out two chairs with casters, placing them behind the actors. They then fetch a table, checkered tablecloth, an electric candle in a fancy glass container, ice bucket with wine bottle, two menus, water glasses and wine glasses and a violin. Waiter gestures to play violin.)

Henry: If the violining is extra, we'll pass. (Waiter leaves in a huff.)

Jean: How much money would it have to be for you to think it was worth it?

Henry: I've heard that waiter play. They'd probably have to pay me twenty bucks per hour. Maybe thirty. And throw in a couple shrimp cocktails.

Jean: Money seems so important to you.

Henry: That's rather amusing coming from you. At least I work for mine and don't live off the

avails of failed marriages.

Jean: Now, Henry, we're supposed to be having fun. I want to make this a special night. We should bury the hatchet and maybe find out things we can admire about one another. For example, I am really impressed with your facility with numbers. You are so smart with them. I have a hard time keeping my chequing account straight.

Henry: Good accounting principles are based on rigid rules that must be followed at all times to protect the integrity of the financial workings of the nation. Whether balancing your own accounts or those of a multinational corporation, following the rules will ensure everything is in perfect order.

Jean: You like perfect order, don't you Henry? You like that feeling of control you have over numbers. They never let you down. They are understandable... predictable.

Henry: Exactly! No matter how many times you do math the answer isn't different depending on the time of year, the time of day or someone's time of the month. Numbers are easy to understand. They never change their mind because of something they heard on Doctor Phil.

Jean: If only women were as easy to understand as numbers, eh, Henry? Life would be so much easier.

Henry: I'll say. Take Paulette. I could have got the paint for the entire house 14.2% cheaper if she had just stuck to one colour. But no. She wanted a different colour in every single room!

Jean: Unbelievable! (*Rolls her eyes.*)

Henry: However, in the end I paid the extra money for all the different colours. I like to give into Paulette on such matters. It seems so important to her. You know what they say, "Happy wife; happy life".

Jean: Do you think she's happy, Henry? And would you say you have a happy life?

Henry: Of course she's happy! What a silly question. She wants for nothing. As far as my own happiness goes, that is irrelevant. Paulette's happiness is paramount.

Jean: What if I told you that she wasn't happy?

Henry: What? Has she said something to you? Why would she confide in you? Our personal matters are not intended to be grist for the gossip mill.

Jean: Relax, Henry. No need to get upset. Sisters do talk, you know. It's healthy to vent.

Henry: And what was so awful in Paulette's life she felt compelled to vent about it to you?

Jean: Well, to be honest, she has concerns in the bedroom.

Henry: She's not sleeping well?

Jean: No... no...not that... ummm... Look there's no sense beating around the bush, Henry. It's about sex.

Henry: SEX!? (*Henry sits upright at the word and then shrinks when he realizes his outburst has attracted attention. He forces a smile as he waves at an invisible patron.*) Yes, hello, Mrs. Wiggins... (*His smile instantly disappears as he holds up his menu U as if to shield his face from Mrs. Wiggins.*) Oh my heavens, Jean! That is the wife of one of my partners! I'm doomed!

Jean: Doomed? I think you will be okay. The Fabio impersonator she's sitting with doesn't look much like her husband. I think our secret is safe.

Henry: We don't have any secrets! We're just having dinner!

Jean: Well, we could change all that if you like... (*Her voice gets sultry*) let's talk some more about sex.

Henry: Now listen here.... (*A look of shock and surprise runs across Henry's face as looks down at his lap in horror as the Viagra kicks in. He becomes extremely rattled.*) Oh dear! Oh my!

Jean: What's the matter?

Henry: Matter? Why... nothing! Nothing at all! I just... I... I...

Jean: You look like you've seen a ghost! Here... have some wine.

Henry: What? Wine? No... nononono... awful idea... horrible idea... wait... alcohol is a depressant... that just might help! Yes... some wine would be great! (*He dumps his water glass*

in the ice bucket and fills it with wine then takes a huge drink.)

Jean: Slow down, there, Henry. Are you okay? Maybe we better go.

Henry: Yes... definitely we should go! *(He starts to get up... looks down at his lap area and sits down again.)* No let's stay! More wine? *(Pours more into his glass and takes another big drink.)*

Jean: What's going on, Henry? I just mention the words 'sex' and you go to pieces?

Henry: *(Starting to sound a little tipsy.)* Will you please stop saying that word? My heavens woman!

Jean: I bet I know what the problem is... You're getting excited! Sex sex sex sex...

Henry: Jean! For heaven's sakes control yourself! *(He looks over to "Mrs. Wiggins".)* Oh no, Mrs. Wiggins, I was encouraging her to stifle a sneeze.

Jean: I'm not surprised. I knew I still have it.

Henry: Have what? One of those sex diseases? You have an STP? *(Takes another drink.)*

Jean: I have sex appeal Henry. Admit it. I have caught you leering at my cleavage at many a family meal. *(Does a little shimmy.)*

Henry: I catalogically deny that aggelation... lagatation... allegation!

Jean: Oh, wait. You're right. That's Gramps that does that.

Henry: Conboobial relations are between a man and a woman... and only when absolutely necesseassary. Paulette is too sweet and gentle to go for that...hic... stuff. God knows how hard... I mean difficult, she makes it sometimes with her sexy outfits and arousing scents... Oh those arousing scents! It gets so bad, sometimes I have to ask her to wash it off so I can get some sleep and not think about...

Jean: Sex?

Henry: Will you stop saying that? *(He takes another big drink.)*

Jean: What is so bad about s....`

Henry: Uh uh uh...

Jean: Fine. If it makes you uncomfortable... ao... tell me... what is so bad about... that word?

Henry: Well it's just so... so... dirty!

Jean: It is? I always thought it was kind of fun!

Henry: Yes... we had names for women like you.

Jean: Words like 'beautiful', 'sexy' and 'rich'? Look Henry, I don't know where you got such screwy ideas about s... er... intimacy... but the fact is, Paulette yearns for you to do it. She actually likes it.

Henry: Are you calling my floozie a wife? (*He takes another drink.*)

Jean: Of course not. Henry, you have got to understand that no matter what you thought, there is nothing wrong with sex. It's the new millennium, Henry. It's okay for women to admit that sex is pleasurable.

Henry: That is impossible! I can't imagine what it must be like for a woman! It would be all so disgusting! (*He stares off into space then makes a disgusted face.*) Omigawd. I need more depressant! (*He drinks more.*)

Jean: Look Henry, I think you might want to slow down on the wine. You seem to be getting a little tipsy.

Henry: Me? Titsy? I'm not titsy... HIC! Am... I am... I am Don Juan! The greatest lover hisssory has ever seen! I have class! I have style! I have stamina! I have... (*He passes out with his forehead on the table.*)

Jean: Just a hard day at the office, Mrs. Wiggins. Waiter... Check please. (*Lights dim,*)

(ACT III, Scene 1)

(Gramps and Gran are seated at the TV. Jacqui is in her room. Paulette is collecting dishes when Jean and a very drunk Henry enter.)

Henry: The greatest Latin lover in all of hissory... hitsory... whatever... has... HIC... arrived! It is I, Tony Banderass!

Gramps: Tony who?

Henry: No wait... it sounds better in Spanish... Antonio Banderas... yeah.. yeah.. Antonio Banderas...No wait... I mean Don Juan...

Jean: That's great, Don but I feel like I'm doing the fireman's lift on a sumo wrestler. Can someone give me a hand here? *(Paulette drops the dishes on the table and rushes over to help.)*

Henry: I don't wanna hear about your (HIC!) sordid escapades, you strombone... I mean... strumpet.

Jean: That's it, Henry. I've had enough of your insults. *(Jean drops Henry just as Paulette arrives to help.)*

Paulette: Be careful! He might hurt himself.

Jean: He'll have to wait in line. I got dibs.

Paulette: What happened?

Jean: Can we talk about this in private. I doubt very much that you'd want everyone to hear this.

Gran: I was just about to go finish up in the kitchen. *(Gran gets the dishes Paulette dropped and goes into the kitchen.)*

Gramps: And I will be in the throne room. Paulette's cabbage and bean casserole doesn't really stick to the ribs but just whips right on through. At least I won't need the prunes.

Jean: Please George, spare me the details.

Gramps: Did you want to borrow my motorized walker to get him to the bedroom?

Paulette: It's okay, Gramps, you go to the bathroom. I know how much you always look forward to your bodily functions.

Gramps: Suit yourself. I'll leave the door unlocked in case you change your mind.

(Gramps exits)

(Act III, Scene 2)

Jean: You'd be amazed how often I've heard those words. (*She tries to lift Henry.*) Actually, maybe using George's walker isn't a bad idea.

Paulette: We would probably end up smashing Henry's head against the wall.

Jean: What's the down-side?

Paulette: I want him awake and sober when I kill him. Come on, Jean. Give me a hand.

(They struggle to get Henry standing again... slowly proceed toward bedroom door and make it US of the table.)

Henry: Feliz Navidad... Feliz Navidad...

Paulette: Shut up, Henry. For crying out loud, Jean, I can't believe you plied him with liquor to soften him up.

Jean: Plied him with liquor? Are you kidding me? He was sucking it back like there was no tomorrow. I've never seen anyone drink wine like that, other than that hobo I... well... never mind.

Henry: (*Drunk singing to "La Bamba".*) Para bailar La Bamba... Para bailar La Bamba Se necesita una poca de gracia.

Paulette: Are you telling me the truth? He did this to himself on purpose? And when did he learn Spanish?

Jean: I swear, Paulette, on the Victoria's Secret catalogue. I didn't do this to him, it's entirely

self-inflicted. (*Paulette drops Henry.*)

Paulette: Then it's true! It's only me he isn't interested in. He was rip-roaring to get his Don Juan on with you but I can't get him to touch me inappropriately, even when it's appropriate.

Jean: Look, Paulette, honey, there's something you should know.

Paulette: I think I've heard and seen enough!

(Act III, Scene 3)

(*Jacqui enters, still dressed provocatively, yet somewhat more conservatively.*)

Jacqui: What is going on? What's wrong with Daddy?

Paulette: Your father has a case of Spanish flu but should be better in the morning with just severe headache and vomiting. (*Aside.*) If I let him live.

Jacqui: We can't just leave him like this. We need to help him up and get him to bed.

Paulette: It's nice that you're concerned for your father.

Jacqui: What? Oh, yeah, that, too. I'm also worried that Robert is going to be here any second. Daddy passed out in the living-room may be hard to explain. I really need him out of here!

Jean: Help yourself. My back is ready to give out. I had to haul his sorry drunken butt up the drive.

Jacqui: Daddy was drinking?

Jean: More like guzzling.

Paulette: Grab his arm, sweetie and we will get him into the bedroom. (*They struggle to get him standing.*)

Henry: When the moon hits your eye like a big pizza pie that annoying...

Paulette: That's not Spanish.

Henry: I can't remember the words to Oyo Como Va.

Jacqui: I'm here for you, Daddy. You can lean on me. (*Sound of car braking S/FX.*) It's Robert!
(*Jacqui drops Henry.*)

Jean: How touching.

Jacqui: Omigawd! He's here! What are we going to do? He can't see Daddy like this!

Jean: You go get the door; we'll roll him under the table. God, this takes me back!

Paulette: Move these chairs and we'll push him under...

Jean: Watch out for his head... Oh dear... that will leave a nasty bruise.

Paulette: Souvenirs of a special night are important.

Jacqui: (*Looking out door.*) Wait! It's not Robert. It was just some jerk-face turning around in our driveway. Quick! Let's get Daddy to bed before Robert shows up. (*She returns UC*)

Paulette: Okay, you... come quietly or you're going to get hurt again.

Henry: Help! Help! I'm being kidnapped!

Paulette: Like you would ever pay a ransom.

Jean: I still say the walker is the way to go, unless maybe you have a fridge dolly in the garage.

Jacqui: Come on, Daddy... up we go!

Henry: Jacqui! Are you being kidnapped too?

Jacqui: Of course not, Daddy. Neither are you. We're just trying to get you in bed.

Henry: I think your auntie was trying to do that earlier. All she'd talk about is sex sex sex (Hic!) sex. Just ask Mrs. Wiggins.

Paulette: Oh really?

Jean: We really have to talk and this is definitely not the time.

Paulette: Fair enough. Okay, Jacqui... on three... One... two... Three! (*They get him up from under the table banging his head on it in the process.*)

Henry: Ow! Ow! I'll talk!

Paulette: I think it would be a better idea for you to shut up right now.

Jacqui: Jeepers, Mom, that's kind of harsh. Daddy looks like he was having fun.

Jean: That's not quite how I would describe the experience.

Paulette: I can't wait for the description.

Jacqui: Do I get to hear it too?

Paulette and Jean: NO!

Jacqui: Dang. It must be some pretty juicy stuff! How much fun did you have with Daddy, anyway?

Paulette: Mind your own business, young lady and focus on getting your father into the bedroom.

Henry: There is a rose in Spanish Harlem La de do de Spanish Harlem....

Jean: I see Don Juan lives. Let me go get the door, at least. (*Opens door.*)

Henry: Did I mention Jean called you afloo... afloo... HIC... a floozie?

Paulette: I can take it from here, Jacqui. Shut the door after me, please. (*Pause then sound of muffled crash. S/FX*)

Jacqui: Go easy on him, Mom. He has to drive me to work tomorrow.

(Act III, Scene 4)

Gramps: *(Emerging from the bathroom.)* What the heck was that crash? Paulette got Henry up on the hoist to give him a tune up?

Jean: It was nothing George. Go back to your bodily functions. I would like to have a little chat with Jacqui if you don't mind.

Gramps: Well you just go right ahead. *(He beams at Jean without making a move.)*

Jean: Privately.

Gramps: Gol darn it woman! This is MY house and I am getting sick and tired of being told what I can and can't do in it! Why I have a mind to...

Jean: *(With purring voice, she sidles up to Gramps and strokes his hair.)* Now, George, you know we love you... it's just that we have to do some girl-talk, you know? You don't want to listen in to our girl-talk, do you?

Gramps: Cut it out, Jean, you're making me all discombobulated! Why I... Oh my gosh!

Jacqui: What's the matter, Gramps? Are you okay?

Gramps: *(Beaming)* Okay? Okay? I feel wonderful! I mean... that's nothing for a young lady to be interested in!

Jacqui: Huh?

Gramps: Never mind. I have to find your grandmother... fast! *(He takes off to the kitchen at a gallop.)* Mildred! Mildred! Your present has arrived!

(Act II, Scene 5)

Jean: What the heck was that all about?

Jacqui: I've given up trying to figure out Gramps.

Jean: Don't bother trying to figure men out, Jacqui. It's men's job to figure us out. Don't you

forget it.

Jacqui: I'll try; Auntie Jean, but you make it sounds so easy. Did you notice Mom didn't say anything about my outfit? I did just as you said and wore that really slutty one first. After that, she was ready to accept almost anything!

Jean: See? You're learning!

Jacqui: Maybe, but I'm sure worried about what happened to Robert. I told him to be here (*looks at her phone*) two minutes and forty-five seconds ago. Where is he?

Jean: Calm down, dear, he'll be here.

Jacqui: What if he stands me up? I'll just die! I'll be the laughingstock of the office girls!

Jean: That's no way to think! There are hordes of men out there, Jacqui. They are all looking for the same thing.

Jacqui: Tickets to the monster truck show?

Jean: No, not that. It is something they crave more than money or power or even sex.

Jacqui: What could they want more than sex? I'm surprised there is something else coming from you!

Jean: The fact is, Jacqui, what men crave is attention; to laugh at their stupid jokes, to listen to their stupid problems and to tell them how sexy they are, even when they look like old Mr. Henderson.

Jacqui: But I want all those things too. I don't want to just be like a blow up doll with artificial intelligence and a nice set of conversation algorithms. I want him to laugh at my jokes and listen to my problems, too.

Jean: But don't you see, Jacqui? By using their need for attention against them, you can control men completely and get anything you want.

Jacqui: What if I just want it to be an equal relationship where nobody is boss of anybody and we can just live in happiness and tranquility through our whole lives?

Jean: Good luck with that, honey. In every relationship there is a boss and a flunky. It all depends on which one you want to be. If you don't want to be a flunky, you have to take control early.

Jean: I don't want to control anyone and I do not want anyone to control me. In fact, (*Her voice rises as if issuing a proclamation.*) I will not be controlled! (*Pause.*) Hang on my phone's vibrating. I have to answer it!

Jean: What control!

Jacqui: It's a text. It says "Sorry, been in car crash... on way to hospital..." Oh, my gosh!

Jean: That sounds like a pile of horse radish if ever I heard one. What a lame, trite excuse.

Jacqui: Here's a picture of him he took in the ambulance. (*She thrusts her phone in Jean's face.*)

Jean: I suppose it is somewhat convincing, although, surely you've heard of photo-shop.

Jacqui: Seriously, Jean, I don't think Robert has neither the smarts nor the motivation to go to that length to fool me. I would be kind of flattered if he did. I have no doubt in my mind he suffered a horrible accident.

Jean: Then I say, thanks heavens! I mean... that you weren't stood up on purpose.

Jacqui: I don't care about that. I'm worried for Robert. He's got to be okay. He's got to take me away from all of this! I have it all worked out! We're going to get married... have children. I have eggs with his name on them!

Jean: Jacqui, dear, don't put all your eggs in one basket. What happens if it doesn't work out? Your relationship appears pretty tenuous. I mean, you haven't even had your first date!

Jacqui: I just have a really good feeling about him, Jean. I really think he might be the one. When I'm around him my knees go all weak and I kind of have trouble talking.

Jean: I get that from tequila.

Jacqui: And although other girls get him to come to our office, I'm the one he always gets to

sign the internal work order. Any of the other girls would be more than happy to, but he picks me.

Jean: I stand corrected. It sounds like true love.

Jacqui: I'll show you. You'll see. I won't be a Dyck forever. Do you know what hell is? It's going through junior high with the last name of Dyck. They all said with a name like that, making fun of me was too easy, so I got the nickname Too Easy. It was awful, especially since I wasn't easy. So far, I've been impossible. I will be so happy to lose the name Dyck when I get married.

Jean: What's Robert's last name?

Jacqui: Lipschitz

Jean: There's an improvement.

(ACT III, Scene 6)

(Paulette enters from bedroom looking rumpled.)

Paulette: You're still here, Jacqui? Oh dear. What happened to your date with Robert?

Jacqui: He had a car accident on the way here.

Paulette: That's a creative excuse.

Jacqui: This is him waving from the ambulance. *(Shows her the phone.)*

Paulette: Oh my, he does have big muscles. Anyway, Jacqui, can you give Jean and me a few minutes of privacy. We need to have a little chat.

Jacqui: Awww, Mom! I'm old enough to be a part of these conversations now. I'm an adult and can deal with adult situations.

Paulette: Okay, you can stay, but it's about sex between me and your father.

Jacqui: *(Making a face)* Ewww! I'll be in my room. *(Exits to hallway to bedrooms.)*

(Act III, Scene 7)

Paulette: So what the hell happened in the restaurant? I thought the deal was that you weren't supposed to use artificial means to get him excited.

Jean: Sorry, Sis, but I had nothing to do with his being plastered. When he got to the restaurant, he seemed really nervous. Then, suddenly, he was primed to party. Then, when the conversation turned to sex, which, I'll remind you was the whole point of the exercise, he seemed to go completely off his nut. You'll be happy to know I did get him in the backseat though.

Paulette: So it's me he doesn't yearn for... who he doesn't desire. It could probably have been any woman with him in the back seat. (*She puts her hands to her face and sobs.*) Oh, Jean. This isn't what I wanted. I love Henry. I was such a fool. I could have gone the rest of my life wondering but at least I'd have had hope. Now I have nothing.

Jean: Well, you have half the house and all he's worth...

Paulette: I don't care about that! I just want Henry. I don't even care that you got him into the back seat of your car.

Jean: Look, Sis, the only reason he ended up in the backseat is that it was the only way to cart his drunken butt home after he passed out while staggering to the car. Nothing happened between us, thank God. Listen, Paulette... I have a confession to make. I don't know what made Henry decide to get plastered tonight but it certainly wasn't me. He seemed extremely agitated for some reason and apparently thought a gallon of wine might help.

Paulette: Really? So... what could have made him so excitable? He didn't accidentally over-tip the maître de, did he?

Jean: I don't think so. Henry wouldn't even tip the violinist. The point is, Sis, is that Henry really loves you very much. He worships you.

Paulette: He does? How do you know? Why didn't you tell me sooner?

Jean: I didn't tell you sooner because... because for a while there, I was hoping you and Henry would split up.

Paulette: Really? Why?

Jean: Because the spectre of your twenty-five year marriage was like a beacon of success to me. I couldn't help but feel my own relationship beacon was broadcasting LOSER LOSER LOSER.

Paulette: Oh, Jean... how could you? You would break up my marriage just because you failed at your own?

Jean: It's not just that, Paulette. Until tonight, I didn't really believe Henry loved you. I didn't want you to settle. You are much too good a person for that.

Paulette: So how do you know he loves me? He sure never shows it in the bedroom!

Jean: That's because... (*snicker*) because... (*snicker snicker*) it's because he thinks sex is dirty! He doesn't want to sully his precious wife with his carnal thoughts! He thinks ladies don't like that sort of thing!

Paulette: You're kidding me.

Jean: I'm not! The only reason he asks you to wash the perfume off is that it makes him so excited, he can hardly stand it. You turn him on all the time but he can't show it because he thinks you'd be insulted.

Paulette: You're serious...

Jean. Yep. (*They stare at each other for a moment and then burst into laughter.*) I think it was Woody Allen who said "Sex is only dirty if you're doing it right." (*They laugh again.*)

Paulette: Now why on earth would Henry get such an outlandish idea that sex is dirty? You know, I'll bet you I can guess...

Jean and Paulette: Gramps!

Jean: It must be Henry's way of rebelling against his father. You know what a creeper Gramps is. No wonder Henry thinks sex is dirty. The way Gramps talks about it, it is.

Paulette: I think it's time Henry and I had a little chat. (*She goes to bedroom door as Jean speaks then exits.*)

Jean: Go easy on him. He's had a hard night already.

(Act III, Scene 8)

Jacqui: *(Poking head into the room.)* Are you guys finished talking about geriatric sex yet?

Jean: Yes we are, dear. The threat of psychological damage has passed. *(Jacqui enters dressed in jeans and a t-shirt.)*

Jacqui: Thank heavens. Where's Mom?

Jean: She's... um... talking some sense into your father.

Jacqui: I don't think that will work in his state. I am so worried for them. Mom seems so unhappy lately. It might even have had something to do with Valentine's Day. I didn't know old people cared about such things.

Jean: They pretend they don't but they do... especially the women. *(She pauses with sad look on her face.)* Anyway, don't worry, dear. Everything will work out with your folks. *(She guides Jacqui to the table.)*

Jacqui: How can you be so sure?

Jean: Because if there's one thing I learned tonight for sure is that your father loves your mother very much and that your mother loves your father very much, too. They just happen to be telling each other in different languages.

Jacqui: Oh, I know they love each other.

Jean: How do you know for sure?

Jacqui: Because Dad put the company, the house... everything in Mom's name. You know what he's like. And I know Mom loves him because she hasn't had him killed for the company... the house... everything...

Jean: *(chuckling)* Makes sense, I guess. So what happened to your other outfit? You didn't want Robert's heart rate to skyrocket in his weakened condition?

Jacqui: No, Jean, I've been doing a lot of thinking...

Jean: It's good to try new things, dear.

Jacqui: And I don't want to catch a man the way you do. Not even Robert.

Jean: Oh?

Jacqui: I think if I cheapen my image with revealing clothing, I may be expected to live up to the image.

Jean: And the downside?

Jacqui: I'm sorry, Jean, it's just not for me. Oh I know lots of girls do it. Some aren't even looking for men. They just like to dress that way. When I tell them that men ogle them because of how they dress, they don't really care. "Let them eat their hearts out," they say.

Jean: Exactly! I dress the way I dress to feel good about myself and let the rest of the world deal with it. If they don't like it, that's their problem.

Jacqui: But if they like it too much, it might become your problem.

Jean: You can't be stupid about it. I mean, I didn't take those self-defense courses for nothing. I haven't needed them yet, mind you. I usually don't mount much of a defense.

Jacqui: Yes, I'm sure "mount" is the operative word, there. But there are so many more important things to a relationship, Jean. Even if we have sex every day, that's only an hour a day...

Jean: Dreamer.

Jacqui: We need to be able to connect during the other 23 hours or what's the point?

(Act III, Scene 7)

(Gran rushes into the room with Gramps in hot pursuit in boxers with hearts adorning them. Gran stops, does a head fake, then tears off into the bathroom. George crashes his walker into

the table and then follows her out the bathroom exit during...)

Gran: George! George! Tee hee hee! What's gotten into you?

Gramps: You can run but you can't hide!

(Act III, Scene 8)

(Jean and Jacqui look at each other as if stunned.)

Jean: I'm... I'm sorry, dear, you were saying?

Jacqui: I just don't see why so much attention is placed on the sex part of a relationship when it's not the most important part.

Jean: It's not the most important part. You're right. But it is a very, very important part. How your sex life is with a partner is a good indicator how your relationship is. I'm sure there are couples who do quite well with mutually agreed upon celibacy but it's not the norm.

Jacqui: Well, Mom and Dad seem to have a fairly stable marriage and I don't ever hear them doing it. Frankly, I couldn't swear in court that they've had sex since I came along, that I could tell.

(Act III, Scene 11)

(Henry crawls out of the bedroom... just flashy boxer shorts on... gets almost out when Paulette grabs his ankle and pulls him back in during...)

Henry: Help! Help! She's turned into a sex maniac!

Paulette: Get back here, Henry, I'm not done with you.

(Act III, Scene 12)

Jacqui: D... d...did you see that?

Jean: *(Looking innocent.)* Did I see what, dear?

Jacqui: Mom and Dad were... were just.... EWWWWW!!!!!!

Jean: No, that's the thing. When your parents are all gross and lovey-dovey, it's actually a good thing for everyone. It means they're happy together.

(Act III, Scene 13)

(Gramps chases Gran out of the bathroom and out through the bedroom exit)

Gran: George, no more Geritol for you!

Gramps: Slow down before my pacemaker pops a gear!

(Act III, Scene 14)

Jacqui: Now that was just disgusting.

Jean: Maybe to us, but not to them. And I suspect they don't really care about our opinions one way or another. Frankly, I hope when I'm seventy, there's still a man chasing me.

Jacqui: I just hope it's Robert chasing me. Jean, would you please give me a lift over to the hospital? I want to visit him.

Jean: Why of course, dear, I'll be happy to. I'll even come up to his room with you.

Jacqui: No that's okay, I am sure I won't need your help, other than getting me to the hospital. I will take a cab home. I still have the money Gran lent me.

Jean: If you're sure, dear. I would be more than happy to help you nurse him back to health.

Jacqui: I'm sure you would, Jean but I think it would be better if I do this on my own.

Jean: You don't trust me?

Jacqui: Of course not. You've taught me well. You're a competitor, remember?

Jean: You are learning, dear. *(They exit.)*

(Paulette crawls out of the bedroom only to be hauled back in by her ankle.)

Paulette: Oh, Henry!

CURTAIN