

Falling in love at seventy

FALLING IN LOVE AT SEVENTY

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3 Acts sentimental-comic

by Giancarlo Migliorini

Ive written this play versus hypocrisies of sentimental and sex life of elderly.

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Cast of Characters

THOMAS (Maestro)	Old theatre actor
THERESA	2nd carer
ROSE	1st Thomas daughter
MICHELLE	2nd Thomas daughter
LINETTE	Caretaker
JOHN	Lisettes husband
LOUISE	Neighbour
DOCTOR	The doctor
JULIA	1st carer
MARY	Thomas defunct wife

All the actors are middle-aged, but THOMAS and THERESA that are around 70.

JULIA and MARY are 30/35.

3 M and 7 F MARY may be doubled by the younger daughter,

DOCTOR may be doubled by JOHN. In this case it needs just 8 actors. A daughter may have a brother instead of a daughter.

Running time: 2 hours with 2 intermissions.

Intended audience: Middle aged.

Race: As you like.

Scene

One Set. The THOMAS living room.

Time

The present.

I-1-1

Act I

Scene 1

Setting:

The scene takes place in THOMAS living room, the house is comfortable and denotes good taste. Here and there on the walls, are old comedy posters. The apartment is placed in a residential area.

At Rise:

We see THOMAS daughters ROSE and MICHELLE walking nervously up and down the room. At a certain point, the DOCTOR enters from a side door with his bag in hand he, walks towards the table.

(Enter DOCTOR.)

ROSE

(Goes towards him.)

Well, DOCTOR?

DOCTOR

(Points to the chair.)

Do you mind?

MICHELLE

Of course.

(Moving the chair and letting him sit down.)

DOCTOR

(Searches for his prescription pad in his bag while talking.)

We just pulled him out by the skin of his teeth.

(He pulls out a white bra from his bag - has a moment of embarrassment - then talking to himself.)

Mrs. Charlotte...

(After a nostalgic sigh pulls out the prescription pad and starts to write.)

Can light a candle in church, even more than one. But he is a strong man and will recover soon, if he scrupulously follows this new American medicine. It's a bit of a pain because he has to have an injection every six hours, day and night. But it is miraculous. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of absolute rest and a light diet.

ROSE

When are you coming to see him again DOCTOR?

DOCTOR

(Going to the exit.)

Very soon. Thats the advantage of having a DOCTOR who lives in the same block as you.

(Exit DOCTOR.)

MICHELLE

(At the door.)

Goodbye, DOCTOR and thank you for everything.

Scene 2

ROSE

He has been very lucky this time. But he must take the medicine and look after himself if he wants to get well. And above all he needs to get it into in his head that hes not a young boy any more. He goes running in Italy Promenade! And look what happens he gets pneumonia.

MICHELLE

What's wrong with trying to keep yourself in shape?

ROSE

Nothing, except that he runs after anything in a skirt that moves.

MICHELLE

I know. But he still thinks hes a teenager. Hes still just like he was when he was traveling with his theater company.

ROSE

Maybe but Hes nearly seventy!

MICHELLE

Shhh ... Now dont get so agitated about it, he might hear you.

ROSE

Let me see the prescription, "Six boxes of tonic Riposil, one injection every six hours, round the clock."

MICHELLE

(looks miserable.)

ROSE

And whos going to give him the injections?

MICHELLE

But dont you know how to do them?

I-2(3)-3

ROSE

But Ive got a family to look after like you. We certainly didnt need this!

MICHELLE

Well have to find a nurse.

ROSE

A nurse is not enough. We need someone who can stay here 24 hours a day. An injection every six hours, round the clock" do you understand? And then, whos going to do the cooking? And Cleaning? Whos going to keep the house in order?

MICHELLE

Well after all he is our father. We should have a little more consideration for him.

ROSE

Exactly, well said: "Our father."What you do for him? Nothing!

MICHELLE

But with all my commitments, how can I look after him? Plus the fact that I don't even know how to give an injection.

Scene 3

THOMAS

(Enters. wearing a track suit, a bit shakey on his legs.)

I hope you two don't think you're going to practice on my ass!

(MICHELLE and ROSE they rush towards THOMAS to support him but it irritates him so he pushes them away. Probably he heard ... the daughters are a little embarrassed.)

But how caring you are!

(Daughters want help him.)

Thanks very much, I can do it alone.

(Sitting in the chair.)

I'm sorry to give you all this hassle right now that you are ready to go on vacation.

MICHELLE

What do you mean, you're our father.

THOMAS

(With irony.)

Oh so are you still here?

I-3(4)-4

ROSE

Well you know, actually ... we have already booked...

MICHELLE

We have already put down a deposit.

ROSE

But do not worry, we've thought of everything. We'll find a "someone" who will look after you day and night.

THOMAS

A what?

MICHELLE

A carer. A lady who'll cook for you, clean the house; give you your injections. Someone who'll keep an eye on you.

THOMAS

And who will keep an eye on the helper, making sure she doesn't "swipe" the silver?

ROSE

We'll get references from her before we take her on.

(Looking and talking to MICHELLE.)

In fact, I think it's better if I go now to put an advertisement in the newspaper. I can do some shopping as well while I'm at it.

Scene 4

(enter JOHN with a cake in hand.)

(MICHELLE and ROSE while leaving, greet JOHN each other.)

ROSE

(Addressing her father.)

Here's Mr. JOHN, the Caretaker, father.

JOHN

Good morning, Maestro, how are you?

THOMAS

Not bad. Slowly, very slowly I'm getting better. Of course I had a very bad experience. But now I'm on the mend.

JOHN

My wife sends you this cake, that she made just for you.

I-4-5

THOMAS

Ohh! ... How kind of her... but you know, I have a bit of diabetes...

JOHN

Oh! Don't worry, a slice of cake every now and then won't harm you. And to think that when I married her she didn't even know how to boil an egg. But since I gave her "An ancient cookbook

she is always glued to the kitchen stove experimenting.

THOMAS

When did you give to her?

JOHN

The other day, for her birthday.

THOMAS

Ah!

(He changes expression. now look at the cake with very suspicious and laying the plate on the table as it was poison.)

JOHN

Maestro... to be honest , what I really came to say was.. ... well ... I dont know where to start...

THOMAS

What is it, has your wife already poisoned someone?

JOHN

No, no! God forbid!

THOMAS

What then?

JOHN

(Trying to summon up the courage.)

I wanted to tell you that I ... I ... I'm a poet! There I finally got it out.

THOMAS

So?' what's wrong with that? We all have a poetic vein that makes our hearts beat faster. It should never be suffocated. Indeed, we must leave it free to express itself as best it can.

JOHN

(JOHN watches THOMAS with intent.)

You are right, Maestro but to express oneself one needs at least another person that listens to you...

I-4-6

THOMAS

(Understanding what JOHN wants.)

And have you have tried with your wife?

JOHN

Well you know how it is , shes just a caretakers wife... she wouldnt understand me. Whereas you, Maestro are an artist, one of the best actors in our theater, a sensitive soul, a man who has travelled the world, a man who has lived, that

THOMAS

(Interrupt him.)

Okay, okay. I understand If I have to. And whats the poem that you would like to read for me called?

JOHN

"For a moment"

(Poetry of love for a woman - intentionally rhymed. THOMAS will appear to be pleasantly surprised).

"For a moment"

BEAUTIFUL, BUSTY, ETHEREAL,

MADE OF RISING SUN

IRON ENCHANTRESS

DISTURBER OF MY PUN.

OH DELIRIOUS NIGHTS

DREAMING OF YOUR LIPS,

BUT IN THE EFFULGENCE OF THE EYES

I SAW CONTEMPT AND ZIPS.

GELID YOUR HEART IS

WRAPPED IN MYSTERY

REFUSES THE ARDOR

FOR A MAN WHO LOVES HISTORY

PROSTRATE BEFORE YOU
MY PRIDE HAS NOW WANED
I AM HERE, BEATING MY CHEST
FOR YOUR LOVE I AM PAINED!

THOMAS

Thank you, Mr. JOHN, that was really lovely. However, if youll allow me a small observation, it should have less emphasis, and more "feeling".

JOHN

What do you mean more "feeling"? ...

I-4(5)-7

JOHN (Cont.)

(Hesitant, but at the end.)

Would you mind reading it for me, Maestro, please?

THOMAS

Give it to me "For a moment"

(He reads magisterially.)

BEAUTIFUL, BUSTY, ETHEREAL,
MADE OF RISING SUN
IRON ENCHANTRESS
DISTURBER OF MY PUN.
OH DELIRIOUS NIGHTS
DREAMING OF YOUR LIPS,
BUT IN THE EFFULGENCE OF THE EYES

I SAW CONTEMPT AND ZIPS.
GELID YOUR HEART IS
WRAPPED IN MYSTERY
REFUSES THE ARDOR
FOR A MAN WHO LOVES HISTORY
PROSTRATE BEFORE YOU
MY PRIDE HAS NOW WANED
I AM HERE, BEATING MY CHEST
FOR YOUR LOVE I AM PAINED!

JOHN

(Appears dazed. it seemed like another poem.)

But its not possible. It's so, beautiful. But did I write this? Maestro, you have given me the greatest gift in the world. Now I understand: I am a true poet!

(Looking into his pockets.)

Can you read me another one?

THOMAS

Another time. Now, if youll excuse me, I am a little tired.

JOHN

Of course Of course. Sorry I disturbed you Maestro.

(THOMAS accompanies him to the door.)

And to think that my wife says Im not even capable of sharpening a pencil.

(Exit JOHN.)

Scene 6

(THOMAS is left alone. he wanders around the room for a bit until he stops in front of a photo on the dresser the photo of his dead wife. He picks up

I-5-8

the photo walking with it and, goes to sit at the table in the dining room. He looks at the photo tenderly and. a tear drops, he dries it with a handkerchief. He then puts the picture down on the table, pulls two letters out of his jacket pocket and silently reads them .. we then hear the voice of the wife echo through the room.)

THOMAS

(He reads)

My darling, I miss you! I miss your smile; your eyes filled with love, your gentle caresses...

Our girls are becoming women now under my very eyes and this worries me a little. Last night I surprised Michelle shaking her new beaus hand with such great passion.

Please dont buy any newspapers; Leave it to me to cut out the critics of all your successes. As soon as you come back we can stick them in your album together.

Tomorrow I have a doctor's appointment; I hope its nothing serious. Its just a slight fever that Ive had for days.

Now I must leave you, I feel a bit tired.

Not s a day goes by that I dont think of you.

I miss you! I miss you! I miss you!

Yours forever, Mary

(THOMAS takes the second letter, its his reply, reading aloud.)

Sweet love of mine,

I miss you too, terribly. The only time, I confess, you're out of my mind is when

I'm on stage. But as soon as the theater curtain is down, you return to my thoughts.

Soon I'll be home, just in time to celebrate our anniversary. I have an idea: to relive that night in Portofino exactly as it happened twenty years ago. Dinner in the same restaurant, to stroll hand in hand along the pier and ... Well, then you know how it ended...

Reading your last lines worried me a bit , but as you say, I'm sure it's just a little bout of flu.

I think of you, I love you and I want you like the first day...

I-5(6)-9

Yours forever,

Thomas

(At the end of reading THOMAS takes the photo holding it close to himself and sobs softly. the door bell ringing brings him back to reality. He goes to open the door.)

Scene 6

(JOHN and his wife LISETTE, enter.)

JOHN

Sorry to disturb you Maestro, but I need to talk to you about a very important matter.

THOMAS

Good morning Mrs. LISETTE.

LISETTE

Good morning, Maestro.

THOMAS

Thank you for your kind thought. (Cake.)

LISETTE

You're welcome, Maestro. Did you like it?

THOMAS

Actually, I havent tasted it yet. Im saving it for tea time, so I can enjoy it better...
But, what was it you wanted to tell me Mr.JOHN?

JOHN

My wife doesnt believe that I was complimented for my poetry.

THOMAS

Of course. I found it charming.

JOHN

(To LISETTE.)

Did you hear that? Charming!

LISETTE

Maestro, have you taken your temperature today?

THOMAS

Not yet.

I-6-10

LISETTE

Ah Well I think you should take it, because although sometimes we think we feel
fine, in reality

Where do you keep the thermometer?

THOMAS

There, in that drawer.

LISETTE

Come and sit here and make yourself comfortable. Leave it to me to check your temperature.

(Addressed to the husband.)

So you're convinced that you are a poet... well... then I'll put you to the test, while were waiting for the thermometer.

JOHN

Test? How?

LISETTE

If you are a true poet you should be good at making rhymes. Isnt that so Maestro?

THOMAS

(Playing the game.)

Of course!

LISETTE

So Ill give you three words that you have to rhyme.

JOHN

Come on, I'm waiting.

LISETTE

So, let's see... "Flower, moon and Rebecca"

JOHN

Flower and moon, it should be, but what does Rebecca?

LISETTE

Rebecca! Rebecca!

JOHN

Okay. So, let...

OH INFINITE LOVE
YOU ARE MY MOON ,
SEIZING THIS FLOWER
I WILL MAKE MY FORTUNE.
HONEST, LOVE,
MY HEART DOES NOT SIN
I'M LIKE A DOVE

I-6-11

JOHN (Cont.)
OR SOMETHING AKIN.
LISETTE
FORGET THE MOON
BUTTON UP THE REBECCA
ILL BE THERE SOON
WE CAN NOW GO THE MECCA.

JOHN

(Is taken by surprise.)

Once again.

LISETTE

"Perfume, flowers, fields

THOMAS

FROM FLOWER TO FLOWER,

I FOLLOW YOUR PERFUME

IN THE NAME OF LOVE,

DONT MAKE ME FACE DOOM.

LISETTE

IM YOUR COVETED VICTIM

IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FIELD

CAREFUL OF A BOLD MOVE

OR YOUR FATE WILL BE SEALED.

You see. I am more of a poet than you.

LISETTE

(To THOMAS.)

Ok should be there. Let me see the thermometer, Maestro.

THOMAS

(Hands it to her.)

LISETTE

(Expressing worry.)

Oh my god! What did I tell you? 39 point five. Delirium Fever.

(Says while winking at THOMAS, as hes playing along.)

With this fever one doesnt know what ones saying. You have to go straight to bed,
Maestro.

THOMAS

(He has an understanding with LISETTE.)

As a matter of fact I dont feel great...

I-6(7)-12

JOHN

(Is confused, he does not know what to think.. his certainty of being a poet starts to vanish.)

LISETTE

(To JOHN)

Come on, "Virgilio" off you go to your colleague Dante, at the delicatessen shop, to buy a quarter of a pound of gorgonzola. March!

(To THOMAS)

I've destroyed him.

(Exit JOHN.)

Scene 7

LISETTE (Cont.)

Your daughter, ROSE, told me that you are looking for a carer that can also give injections. If its alright with you Ill send you my niece. She is a registered nurse, currently unemployed. Shell come to present herself later.

THOMAS

Well.

(He looks hard into LISETTE eyes.)

LISETTE, I want to do it again!

LISETTE

But, Maestro, you are convalescing, you are still weak, it could harm you.

THOMAS

I dont care. Love is stronger than danger!

LISETTE

If your daughters found out. I dont think that they would be very happy.

THOMAS

Id do anything to relive those moments, I want to take the risk.

LISETTE

(Squeezes THOMAS hand, firmly, with complicity, looking him straight in the eye.)

All right.

(LISETTE grabs THOMAS and drags him into his bedroom. You hear excited voices from outside. You can misunderstand what is going on, maybe something sexual

I-7-13

Both return.

LISETTE carrying a chandelier

with a white candle, which she puts on the table. THOMAS takes the photo of his late wife and places it on the table next to the candlestick. then they both sit down at the table.)

LISETTE

The candle must be red.

THOMAS

Weve used all the red last time.

LISETTE

You cant do with the white candle.

THOMAS

Please LISETTE, try just the same.

LISETTE

But I wont guarantee anything.

THOMAS

Okay, let's start.

(LISETTE lights the candle. Simultaneously the light on stage lowers.
She puts her hands on the table and they make the chain.)

LISETTE

Good Spirits who wander in the darkness, I turn to you. Please, please put
THOMAS Parodi in contact with the holy soul of his beloved MARY. When you are
ready give us a sign

(Absolute silence looking towards THOMAS.)

I told you we have to use a red candle!

THOMAS

Try again, please. Try!

LISETTE

At least help me. Repeat after me. Good souls in Heaven...

THOMAS

Good souls in Heaven...

LISETTE

Please, put us in contact with MARY Parodi.

THOMAS

Please, put us in contact with my beloved MARY.

I-7-14

LISETTE

Give us a sign.

(Shortly after the table moves.)

THOMAS

Its moving! Its moving!

LISETTE

MARY Parodi, if its really you knock once.

(A strong bang is heard, so violent it makes them both jump.)

LISETTE

Ahhhhh! If you want to speak with your THOMAS, enter me.

(LISETTE begins muttering and panting violently.

Then suddenly becomes calm. The tone of her voice completely changes: it is the voice of MARY that comes from the afterlife...
[behind the scenes].)

MARY\LISETTE

THOMAS ... THOMAS ... You were my first and only love ... You will always be in my heart for eternity...

THOMAS

MARY, my love I also think of you always. I want to be with you.

MARY\LISETTE

It's still too early for you. There is still so much love waiting for you there, on Earth.

THOMAS

Thats impossible! I only love you.

MARY\LISETTE

You need a new woman who will love you as you deserve.

Trust in me. trust...

LISETTE

(Shaking herself she gets up, and going back to speaking with her normal voice.)

What happened? I dont remember anything. Why shot candle is lit? Was there a power cut?

THOMAS

(Gets up, grabs LISETTEs shoulders and shakes her violently while calling her.)

MARY! MARY!

I-7(8)-15

LISETTE

I'm LISETTE! I'm not your wife. I'm LISETTE, the caretakers wife...

(Speaking to the public.)

every time its the same old story. Every time she shakes me as if Im an apple tree. He's losing his mind...

(LISETTE exits grumbling.)

Scene 8

THOMAS

(Dazed, falls down onto the couch, deep in thought. The sound of the door bell brings him back to reality. He goes to open the door. LOUISE, a neighbour enters, she is also a widow, and in love with THOMAS.)

Good morning Mrs. LOUISE, please sit down.

LOUISE

(Looking like a little squirrel in love, and she looks and dresses garish like a teenager, wearing a funny hat and glasses, half blind. She is holding a small parcel.)

Good morning, Mr. THOMAS, good morning.

THOMAS

Good morning, Mrs. LOUISE.

LOUISE

Oh! Come on now, I have told you so many times to call me Louise...

THOMAS

(Between himself and the public.)

Louise, as fast as a flash!

LOUISE

Sorry, what did you say?

THOMAS

(Ironic.)

I was saying that today is a perfect day. Ho! What a beautiful little dress you're wearing today. It's so sober...

LOUISE

It is true. It reflects my mood today: I'm sad.

THOMAS

Thank God...

I-8-16

LOUISE

What did you say?

THOMAS

No I mean, luckily you came to see me so I can help cheer you up. What is it that upset you?

LOUISE

(Deep breath.)

Dont pretend you dont know. You know that youre the thorn in my heart.

THOMAS

Ah, well then you need to call the cardiologist.

LOUISE

(Fatal)

You are my medicine. Its just you do not want to cure me, you naughty boy!

THOMAS

Mrs. Louisette, I havent used that medicine for a long time...

LOUISE

But isnt it like riding a bike? Once you learn you never forget it for the rest of your life.

THOMAS

My bike has flat tires and Ive been going on foot for a long time now.

LOUISE

I'm sure that I could do...

THOMAS

(Interrupts her and goes towards the table where LOUISE has left the package.)

I wonder what my dear neighbour has brought me?

LOUISE

Oh, nothing, just a small cake I made with my little hands, specially for you.

THOMAS

(Talking to himself.)

And thats two, and I have diabetes!

(Towards her.)

Oh, how nice, how thoughtful of you.

I-8-17

LOUISE

(Embarrassed silence... doesnt know what to say. Looks at him with intent.)

Look, it's already five o clock tea time...

THOMAS

(Forced to offer it.)

I was just about to make some. Would you like a cup?

LOUISE

If you insist. But I definitely cannot allow you to make it, you are tired.

(She takes THOMAS by the hand and makes him sit on the couch.)

You should rest. Let me do everything. I will make the tea.

(Extended her arms towards the sky and launches a deep breath.)

Ahh... I feel so at home here... its as if it was my own home!

(Goes towards the kitchen.)

THOMAS

(Her last phrase makes him jolt speaking to her.)

There's a kettle on the stove, and the water should be hot.

LOUISE

(From outside.)

Ive seen it. Oh! What a lovely porcelain tea set. Where did you buy it?

THOMAS - At Capodimonte, while on tour.

(Between himself.)

MARY really loved it.

LOUISE

Can I serve in here?

THOMAS

(gets up)

Actually...

(He doesnt have time to finish the sentence when the sound of broken crockery comes from the kitchen. THOMAS is annihilated and let

himself collapse onto the couch theres a lot of bustle and after some time Louisette appears with her crooked hat very embarrassed but she feigns indifference - she has a tray with two plastic cups and 2 packets of sugar.)

I-8-18

LOUISE

(Flaunting the maximum indifference - lays the tray on the table and sits next to THOMAS who is already sitting down while she talk to herself.)

I really must get round to changing these glasses.

(To THOMAS.)

Sugar?

THOMAS

(Look at LOUISE, as if he wants to electrocute her with his eyes.)

No, thanks. I prefer it without.

LOUISE

(Ice age silence.They are drinking the tea.)

What happened to you today THOMAS? Did someone make you angry? You are so quiet...

THOMAS

Ive suddenly got a headache. It s probably my neck.

LOUISE

Oh, thats not a problem. I've got the remedy.

(She rises, goes behind THOMAS, and start massaging the base of the neck. He is immediately reluctant but now and then he start to relax

as the massage starts to take effect.)

THOMAS

(Irritated at the beginning.)

But what are you doing? What are you doing?

(Do moans of pleasure.)

Mmmm... ahhhh... What are you doing?

(THOMAS now is vulnerable and LOUISE can go to the attack).

LOUISE

THOMAS...

THOMAS

Yeeees?

LOUISE

You know, for some time now Ive been feeling a bit strange I feel this stir, these butterflies all inside...

THOMAS

It must be something you ate last night...

I-8-19

LOUISE

Dont you understand? It's spring! Nature awakes ... birds chirping ... the flowers bloom ... the sunlight warms up your heart ... and makes you want to sing, to kip with...

(While speaking she grows fervent to this point that the gentle massage on the neck has become a violent shaking. THOMAS, manages to freeing himself, and get away from her.)

Dont you want to skip as well?

THOMAS

Ive lost the desire now, lost it...

(Turns the look to the sky.)

MARY, dont worry, I'm fine by myself...

LOUISE

(Get near him.)

Well, then perhaps we could go for a nice walk in Nervi and breathe some fresh air, as thats just what you need.

(She pinches THOMAS cheek, shaking it energetically.)

you have such a little face so gaunt and pale... Oh, I know what you need.

THOMAS

What?

LOUISE

A beautiful treatment, to regenerate you.

THOMAS

Youre too late. The DOCTORS already prescribed it for me: it's called Riposil.

LOUISE

I know one that is much more effective.

THOMAS

Oh yes? What is it called?

LOUISE

(Attacking.)

Louisette!

THOMAS

(To the public.)

Shes really like a flash!

LOUISE

And you dont even need to have your ass punctured.

I-8(9)-20

THOMAS

Well, that wouldnt be bad. But your cure has terrible side effects. The first and most serious of all: the loss of freedom.

LOUISE

But it would be for a good cause... love...

THOMAS

Theres something wrong here. Usually behind a good cause is the conquest of freedom. I've never heard of a people struggling to obtain life in prison. The only worthwhile reason is to love your other half more than your freedom and, you know, that feeling is not a commodity that you can buy at the supermarket. Either its there or it isnt

LOUISE - And with me is it there?

THOMAS

Hemmm... That's... really...

(driinnn!! the door bell avoids THOMAS embarrassment.)

Oh, the door...

(Goes to open - its JULIA the carer the niece of LISETTE the caretaker.)

Scene 9

JULIA

(Enter. Is a very provocative girl)

Hello, I am the carer, LISETTE's niece. Is Mr. THOMAS at home?

THOMAS

(Shyly.) I am indeed.

LOUISE

(Launches a glare at the new arrival)

Well, I'd better go. You have to talk about work. Mr. THOMAS, I very much hope that, when you are better, you'll accompany me to look for a supermarket, so we can find together that so rare commodity.

THOMAS

Of course, Mrs. Lui ...

(He is near to say: LOUISE but she launches a significant look and he corrects himself immediately)

...sette.

(She has a smile of satisfaction and exits while THOMAS looks at the carer.)

Please have a seat.

I-9-21

JULIA

(Sits.)

THOMAS

(While she sits, he turns he glances towards the sky, and to MARY,

with a hopeful smirk, pointing to the carer, saying.)

Is she the one?

JULIA

I know a supermarket where you can buy anything.

THOMAS

Even feelings?

JULIA

If they opened one that sold feelings, I think that would make billions.

(She acts the scene.)

<<Excuse me, I want a kilo of passion, a pound of romance, fine cut, I recommend a pound of sweetness and a hint of madness.>>

THOMAS

(Playing the game.)

<<I'm sorry, madam, but the romance has sold out. I can offer you, two ounces of good mood instead? Its currently on special offer.>>

(They laugh with enjoyment.)

Ha, ha, ha!

THOMAS

How nice it would be to be able to buy happiness at the supermarket. The psychoanalysts ought to change jobs.

JULIA

Now I think about it, they already exist.

THOMAS

Where are they?

JULIA

Chemists of course, isnt that so?

(She acts out the scene.)

DOCTOR, I feel so sad; can you give me a pill to cheer me up.

(She changes voice.)

"DOCTOR, I feel tense, can you give me a pill to relax a bit.

(She changes voice.)

DOCTOR, I cant sleep, can you give me a pill to sleep.

I-9-22

JULIA (Cont.)

(Changes voice.)

DOCTOR, I keep falling asleep, can you give me a pill to keep me awake.

THOMAS

(Laughing.)

Ha Ha Ha! Well, well, thats not bad to start with. It made me laugh and its been a long time since I laughed so much. Much better than any tonic. But tell me about yourself.

JULIA

My name is JULIA, I'm a registered nurse and Im unemployed at the moment.

THOMAS

(Laughing.)

And why is that? Is your client dead?

JULIA

Yes!

THOMAS

(Becomes serious.)

Ah! And how did it happen?

JULIA

Heart attack. One moment he was alive and a moment later he was gone. He was very nice person. So kind, caring, always very caring towards me. You could almost say he was the one who took care of me. And how much we used to laugh together! He always wanted to play. And to think that I was employed to look after him because he had fallen into a depression and had no desire to do anything. Ah, but I made him go I...

THOMAS

And how old he was?

JULIA

Seventy.

THOMAS

Ah... and you used to play together...

JULIA

Of course!

THOMAS

And what did you play? If you do not mind me asking...

I-9-23

JULIA

A lot of games. But he especially liked to play Doctors and nurses and leapfrog. But I think he probably preferred the first one. My previous client, however, used to like to play "Tarzan and Jane". I, of course, I was Jane and he used to chase me through the jungle... yes, well, all over the house... as long as or until I didnt let him catch me... Once, however, I ran more than usual and...

THOMAS

(He makes the sign of the cross in the air.)

Him too...

JULIA

Yes him too, heart attack. But at least he died happy!

THOMAS

(To the public.)

Never two without a third...

JULIA

And what do you like playing?

THOMAS

Cards.

JULIA

(Disappointed.)

Oh...

(Suddenly interested.)

Poker?

THOMAS

Solitaire!

JULIA

Life is so short that we shouldn't waste even a second of it. We should live it to the full until the last day that the Lord gives us and try to make those around us happy...

THOMAS

But it seems to me you rather exaggerated with those two gentlemen?

JULIA

But I did nothing more than apply the smile therapy, now so fashionable.

THOMAS

So we can say that they died laughing! Those games that you were talking about before ... "Doctors and nurses I can

I-9(10)-24

THOMAS (Cont.)

imagine, but that other one... "Leapfrog"...

JULIA

Oh yes, it so much fun! Come here, I'll show you how to do it.

(Takes the hand and leads him to the middle of the stage and makes him get down on his knees. she puts THOMAS on that she finds somewhere, climbs onto his back following and starts singing a song Op! Op! Trotta Cavallino is an old Italian song - which has already started in the background.)

HOP! HOP! TROT LITTLE HORSE. HOP! HOP! TROT MY LITTLE MORELLO, PERHAPS ON THE GATE OF A MAGNIFICENT GARDEN THERE IS LOVE. HOP! HOP! TROG LITTLE HORSE. HOP! HOP! TROT MY LITTLE MORELLO, BRINGS MY DESTINY TOWARDS A DREAM SO BEAUTIFUL TO MY HEART.

COME ON, COME ON, SING WITH ME!

THOMAS

(Sings)

HOP! HOP! TROT LITTLE HORSE. HOP! HOP! TROT MY LITTLE MORELLO, PERHAPS ON THE GATE OF A MAGNIFICENT GARDEN WHERE THERE IS LOVE. HOP! HOP! TROT LITTLE HORSE. HOP! HOP! TROT MY LITTLE MORELLO, BRINGS MY DESTINY TOWARDS A DREAM SO BEAUTIFUL TO MY HEART.

Scene 10

(At that moment time ROSE, MICHELLE, LISETTE and JOHN arrive JOHN carrying a box - and LISETTE carrying some shopping bags. On seeing the scene all of them scream and drop everything onto the floor.)

MICHELLE/LISETTE/JOHN/JULIA

(They all cry out and make indignant, improvising cues.)

ROSE

But can we know what you're doing?

THOMAS

A new restorative care: the Smile Therapy!

HOP! HOP! TROT LITTLE HORSE. HOP! HOP! TROT MY LITTLE MORELLO, PERHAPS ON THE GATE OF A MAGNIFICENT GARDEN THERE IS LOVE. HOP! HOP! TROT HORSE. HOP! HOP! TROT MY LITTLE MORELLO, BRINGS MY DESTINY TOWARDS A DREAM SO BEAUTIFUL TO MY HEART .

CURTAIN

End of 1st Act

2nd Act

Scene 1

(The same scene of act 1)

ROSE/MICHELLE

ROSE

But can you believe it?! Trot little horse, trot my little morello! His hairs completely grey, I dont know about morello! And look at how he enjoyed being ridden by that... valkyria, to say the least... We need to keep him under control like a small child.

(To MICHELLE.)

And havent you got anything to say? Oh of course youre his little favorite arent you?

MICHELLE

Even if I can understand him, I dont approve. It certainly wasnt a pretty sight.

ROSE

As soon they realize that he is alone and vulnerable, they literally put down and climb on top of him. And now who has the courage to let another woman into the house with him?

MICHELLE

Depends on who shows up. Of course, if theyre anything like LISETTEs niece, its out of the question. Ideally, a woman of about fifty...

ROSE

(ROSE gestures using her hands up in the air as if to say more.)

MICHELLE

Sixty?

ROSE

(ROSE gestures using her hands up in the air as if to say more.)

MICHELLE

Seventy?

ROSE

(ROSE gestures using her hands up in the air as if to say more.)

MICHELLE

Then, we can go directly to the hospice to look for one.

There'll be plenty of choice there. It would probably end up

II-1(2)-26

MICHELLE (Cont.)

with be our father giving the tonic injections to the carer!

ROSE

From what I've seen up till now, it's good to trust, but not to trust is better! He's at a dangerous age and at risk of falling into senile love. He might lose his head for the first easy girl that presents herself who'll gobble up all his money.

ROSE

(The door bell sounds driinnnn. ROSE goes to open the door.)

Scene 2

THERESA

(She enters, she is about seventy, simply dressed but not messy, clean and tidy. she inspires confidence.)

Good morning, I'm here about the ad in the newspaper.

MICHELLE

Good morning.

ROSE

Please sit down.

(ROSE is happy.)

Well, well... then, do you have any experience of caring for the elderly?

THERESA

Young children and elderly. As they are more or less the same thing, dont you think? You could say that I havent done anything else in the last forty years. Since my husband died. First in India, after that in Africa and always as a volunteer. It helped give a purpose in life since Ive been on my own. I only came back to Genoa recently.

MICHELLE

Do you have any children?

THERESA

Unfortunately not. This has always been my cross. But Ive always found so much comfort in other peoples children. And then, after all, arent we all Gods children? Helping others gives me great serenity.

ROSE- It's nice to be able to do in life what you like best.

II-2(3)-27

THERESA

Now this will make you laugh. To be honest, my dream has always been something completely different.

ROSE

Oh yes? And what did you really want to do?

THERESA

To be an actress on the stage. I did a bit of acting when I was young, you know amateur dramatics, in school, but then, lifes events drew me away.

(These last words have a bitter tone.)

(MICHELLE and ROSE exchange a look of agreement.)

MICHELLE

So youll be pleased to know that our father was a famous actor. So youll have plenty to talk about during the day.

THERESA

Really? Thats great!

ROSE

His names THOMAS Parodi.

THERESA

Youll have to excuse me but Ive been away from Italy too long to know the names of famous people. But, if I understand you correctly, then I can consider myself accepted?

ROSE

Can you give injections?

THERESA

Ive given millions.

ROSE

A lot less well be fine for us Well, perhaps we should call the person concerned.

(She goes to THOMAS room and knocks.)

Daddy, can you come?

Scene 3

THOMAS

(Opens the door. ROSE starts to make introductions.)

ROSE

Let me introduce the lady... Oh! How Silly of me, I didnt even ask her name.

II-3(4)-28

THERESA

THERESA Traverso, pleased to meet you.

(THERESA shakes hands with THOMAS. they look at each other with a moment of hesitation but then return to normality)

ROSE

This lady will take care of you. She has a lot of experience and we are sure that we could not find a more qualified person. True, MICHELLE?

MICHELLE

Very true.

ROSE

Good.

(To THERESA.)

Ok, come with me and Ill show you around the house and also we can talk about the necessary arrangements while were about it.

(ROSE and THERESA exit.)

Scene 4

MICHELLE

You as well though. Letting us find you in that situation.

THOMAS

You had no right to interfere "during the exercise of a therapeutic application carried out by a professional", just when I was beginning to feel better and without any injection on my ass!

MICHELLE

We are your daughters and we think we have every right and duty to think about your health.

THOMAS

Look health isnt just physical, but theres also spiritual health and, until proven otherwise, I'm still a man and I feel lonely!

MICHELLE

But if ROSE and I, are always here to take care that you do not miss anything. Every day we bring you nice warm soft bread, the newspaper, slices of veal and on Sundays a "cream cake"!

II-4-29

THOMAS

Its Not enough, not enough! I need to feel alive! I need more

and I have the right! And more than you do!

(MICHELLE watches THOMAS stunned.)

I am sure, because I have a less time to be happy and I cannot afford to throw it away! You, on the other hand, still have the best years ahead of you.

MICHELLE

But were here and we love you. You have two grandchildren who adore you, you have money, what else do you need whats missing?

THOMAS

I miss that feeling that melts your heart and that you do not feel when you think about the children or grandchildren and not even when you think about the "cream cake." That feeling that gives you the joy of waking up to a new day to live another day, and the happiness of going to bed with her every night.

MICHELE

But you're talking about love...

THOMAS

Hooray, you got it at last!

MICHELLE

But you're seventy and you still think about those things! You should be ashamed of yourself!

THOMAS

Dont swear, you dont know what youre talking about! Tomorrow you may find yourself in the same situation as me. Time waits for no one always remember that. What you cant understand today, tomorrow may be the most important thing in the world for you.

MICHELLE

Daddy, I know how you loved our dear mummy and I can assure you that if she had seen you the other day, she wouldnt have been very happy.

THOMAS

But it was her who told me to

MICHELLE

What are you talking about?

THOMAS

Nothing... nothing...

II-5(6)-30

Scene 5

THERESA/ROSE

(Return.)

ROSE

Well, well... Then we agree on everything. Now we have to go, Dad, but we're leaving you in good hands.

(ROSE and MICHELLE exit, greetings to subject. THOMAS and THERESA are now alone. There is a palpable embarrassment in the air.)

Scene 6

THERESA/THOMAS

(Talk together.)

So youre convalescing... So you're the carer...

THOMAS

Oh, sorry please...

THERESA

I'm sorry, please you first...

THOMAS

No please, after you...

THERESA

No, no! You first...

THERESA/THOMAS

(Talk together.)

So youre convalescing... So you're the carer...

(They both burst out laughing. the initial embarrassment has vanished.)

THOMAS

OH! Yes, Im recovering from a nasty pneumonia that left me exhausted and now, slowly, slowly, Im trying to pick myself up. The Doctor gave me this new American cure, it seems, portentous. The only drawback is that I have to have an injection every six hours, day and night.

THERESA

Well put the alarm clock on...

THOMAS

I hope you have a light touch. I wouldnt like to find my ass reduced to a sieve.

II-6-31

THERESA

(Smiles.)

Dont worry, I'm used to the pink bottoms of little children and those I think are a bit more delicate than yours.

THOMAS

Now, I dont want to give you the impression of wanting to write a treaty on my "backside", but I can assure you that I have very delicate skin.

THERESA

That means Ill have to use my velvet gloves.

(Checking the clock.)

Oh! I think it's time.

THOMAS

(He is also watching the clock.)

Seems early to eat.

THERESA

Time for the injection. I'll go and get the stuff.

(Exit.)

THOMAS

(He is visibly nervous. He paces up and down the scene the room.)

THERESA

(Enters with the first aid box, that she puts on the table and starts preparing the injection. THOMAS feigns indifference, but in reality doesn't miss a move or gesture that THERESA makes. She notices him and try to cover up her smile.)

THERESA

(Goes to the center of stage and squirts some of liquid into the air from the syringe and then... adjudged.)

I'm ready, how would you like to do it, lying on the bed or standing or some other position?

THOMAS

On the bed for a simple injection? I prefer standing!

THERESA

How brave, congratulations. Well, come here then.

(THERESA is sitting on a chair in front of the public. THOMAS is standing in front of THERESA arching his back.)

Can you unbutton your trousers please THOMAS?

II-6-32

(THOMAS obeys. THERESA start to move the small part of clothes that interfere with the skin at the top of his right buttock "touches" with her finger.)

But dont hold your leg so rigid, relax!

(She cleans the part with the cotton wool and makes the gesture of sticking the needle in but THOMAS staggers.)

Whats happening?

THOMAS

A dizzy moment, but it will go in a moment.

THERESA

You cant do it standing up, you risk falling on the floor. At least lean on the table.

THOMAS

How?

THERESA

Come here.

(She moves THOMAS to behind the table, where she spreads his arms and trunk arms out wide on the table with his face to the public and his backside naked. THERESA resumes to rub him with the cotton wool but when she starts to make contact with THOMAS thigh and stick the needle in, he lets out a grunt)

THOMAS

AAAAHHHHH!!!

THERESA

Whats wrong?

THOMAS

Im suffocating... I cant breathe, I cant breathe in this position.

THERESA

(Helps him up.)

THOMAS

I have to compliment you, you have a very light hand, I didnt feel a thing!

THERESA

I believe you, I havent done it yet.

THOMAS

Huh? Whats that? You mean its not all over?

II-6(7)-33

THERESA

It will all be over when I can stick this needle into the soft flesh of your holy ass.
Come on, come with me.

(She takes him by hand and makes him lie on the sofa on his stomach.
Pulls down his trousers and begins again to rub the area with the
cotton wool.)

Is it better like this?

THOMAS

(Is not responding.)

THERESA

(Slaps THOMAS gently on the face.)

Mr. THOMAS, Mr. THOMAS... Oh, good heavens, dont tell me he has died before the treatment!

(THERESA goes to the table where she has left the first aid box and takes the bottle of salts that she makes him sniff. THOMAS jumps to his feet immediately like a spring, walks around the stage a bit like a zombie as if hes in a coma with his trousers down, his underwear designed with colored flowers in view and finally faints collapsing onto the table, with his bottom in the air towards the public and on all fours limb, meanwhile THERESA takes advantage of the moment she poises the needle and)

Hit!

(The door bell rings: Driiinnn! THERESA tries to move THOMAS into a better position as best she can but doesnt succeed. She goes to open the door.)

Scene 7

LOUISE

(Enters - the neighbour from the flat above - with a package in her hand.)

(She has curlers in her hair covered with a headscarf wearing her usual thick lensed glasses.)

Mr. THOMAS, I brought the Tiramis I made myself this morning.

(This sentence in italian, comes out in rhymes and sounds the same for those who follow she notices THOMAS in that strange position.)

Ohhh! Mr. THOMAS, what are you doing on the table?

THERESA

Look, he cant hear anything. He fainted.

LOUISE

In that position?

II-7-34

THERESA

I suppose Mr. THOMAS felt that was the most comfortable position at the time... I was just about to give him his injection when...

(She mimes THOMAS fainting.)

Help me lift him up.

(Sit THOMAS on the kitchen chair.)

THOMAS

(Recovers.)

Where am I?

(He looks around and finds himself face to face with LOUISE. He launches another scream and passes out again.)

Aaahhh!

LOUISE

(With a deep sigh of satisfaction.)

Hes so glad to see me that he cant contain his joy!

THERESA

(Launches an unconvinced look at her.)

I hope you dont want to make him faint with joy every time he recovers. Do me a favor, sit down on the couch and let him see you a bit at a time...

(LOUISE doesnt understand that THERESA is taking the micky out of her.)

THERESA

(Slapping THOMAS gently on the face.)

Mr. THOMAS, Mr. THOMAS...

THOMAS

(Wakes up and is about to turn round towards LOUISE.)

THERESA

Dont turn round, look at me.

THOMAS

Where am I?

THERESA

Dont worry, youre safe at home.

THOMAS

And whats that monster doing in my home?

II-7-35

THERESA

But thats not a monster. It's the lady from upstairs who brought you some Tiramis that she made this morning.

THOMAS

(Almost crying.)

But I have diabetes!

(He turns to look LOUISE and sends her a forced smile and she responds with a shy smile.)

(To THERESA.)

When are we going to do this injection then!

THERESA

Already done!

THOMAS

Already done?! But I didnt feel anything! Dont forget to make sure the others are as painless as this one!

THERESA

If you faint every time, no problem.

LOUISE

What? You made my Thomas faint from the pain?! Miss. ROSE told me that youre been to Africa. Maybe you gave the elephants injections? But didnt you know that my THOMAS bottom is like a babys bottom?

THERESA

How do you know? Have you touched it?

LOUISE

Of course not! How dare you! I just thought that, well knowing what a delicate soul he is, even his bottom must be... Yeah, well... I just wanted to say that...

(Awkwardly, yes, well, she doesnt know what more to say).

THOMAS

When you have finished discussing my backside, could I have a glass of water, please?

LOUISE

I'll get it.

THOMAS

(Remembering of the previous chaos she has already caused in the kitchen, start to yell.)

No! No! Why you dont you stay here and keep me company?

II-7-36

LOUISE

(All proud to be chosen.)

Oh! My dear! You prefer me to stay here, close to you?

THOMAS

I prefer to keep an eye on you...

(To THERESA.)

Do you mind?

(THERESA goes into the kitchen to get the water.)

LOUISE

You could have told me that you needed an injection, before allowing a stranger into the house. After all that I did for your late wife, Ive had so much experience that I could give an injection with my eyes closed. And also, who knows where she comes from. How can you be sure that she has travelled the world, to do good deeds or, really had to flee for life for a crime she committed when she was young? I think shes hiding something. She cant be as perfect a woman as she says!

THOMAS

Why not?

LOUISE

Why... why... why not! Sssccc, here she comes...

(She takes the glass from THERESAS hand.)

Give it to me.

(And passes it to THOMAS.)

I hope at least she washed the glass first!

THERESA

Of course.

LOUISE

Well, dear Tommasino, drink up this lovely glass of fresh waterino.

THOMAS

(Drinking - aimed at LOUISE.)

I noticed that sometimes you are talk in rhymes.

LOUISE

I dont doing on purpose. They come to me spontaneously... since they discovered that I have a poetic soul... Well, now I want to go and prepare you a cake, a recipe that I found in an old German cookbook: Tyrolean strudel with candied fruit, chocolate and cream.

THOMAS

Look, mrs Lui setta, I really ...

II-7(8)-37

LOUISE

No, no, dont stand on ceremony. I know that you really like cakes. You little piggy!

(To THERESA.)

As for you, make sure you look after my Tommy, the man of my destiny! I told you, they just come to me! Good day, good day

(Exit.)

Scene 8

(THOMAS is bewildered.)

THERESA

You are very lucky to have such a caring lady who thinks about you... My dear THOMAS here... my dear... THOMAS over there, the homemade Tiramis wrapped in paper from the Panarello shop (One of the most well known genoese pastry shops.) The Tyrolean strudel, very light dessert, actually beautiful and very light... candied fruit, chocolate, cream and also eggs that are inside. What do you think, I think maybe it would be better if today when I go out, I buy two bottles of Amaro Giuliani (Stomach syrup.) that medicine will look after your intestine?

THOMAS

Dont worry about that. I dont eat cakes anyway.

THERESA

I dont like them much either but it's a shame to waste such delicious things.

THOMAS

Dont worry nothing will go to waste.

(He takes the package which LOUISE brought, unwraps it, opens the window and calls...)

Alifax! Alifax!

ALIFAX

(The bark of a big dog from the yard.)

Woof Woof!!

THOMAS

(Throws the package directly to the dog...)

Tomorrow is Tyrolean strudel chocolate and cream.

ALIFAX

Woof Woof!

THOMAS

He said that he likes...

II-8-38

THERESA

(Laughs.)

If Mrs. Louisette ever found out...

THOMAS

Call her LOUISE, no need for formalities. All that simpering, all that attention, I made them with my own little hands." Ugly old liar! Its really true that it is better not to trust women.

THERESA

Not all of them....

THOMAS

Excluding those present, of course ...

(Suspicious.)

And so you have traveled the world to help others ... India ... Africa ... And whys that, with all the poor people who need help here, why did you have to go so far? What were you running away from?

THERESA

(Bitter and saddened.)

You are an intelligent man. You understood everything about me in a glance. that I am hiding something... that all my life Ive been running away... and if I run then who knows, what serious sins I have committed. And furthermore you concluded by saying that you cant trust a woman with similar crimes on her conscience in

your home.

THOMAS

Then you admit you have had problems!

THERESA

Yes, I admit it. On the other hand, everyone at some point in life has problems.

THOMAS

No my, dear lady, not at all . Not me

THERESA

Well then youve been very lucky. Does that mean that you do not know the suffering or the feeling, when your only true love closes his eyes for the last time and he digs his nails into your flesh, like an ice pick into ice, to avoid slipping into the abyss.

THOMAS

(THOMAS is annihilated by those words, it revived in him the painful times immediately after the loss of his wife.)

II-8-39

THERESA

We were in India when he began to feel ill. He was fascinated by that country, for those poor kids, all skin and bones, with those big black eyes that seem even bigger inside those skinny little faces... But with a great will they had to laugh and play as if they knew they had to... they had to do it soon because who knows if tomorrow they would have the strength to stand up... a human being cannot remain indifferent to so much suffering and so we built a school, a small hospital...and the first customer was just my husband... not even the time to realize what was happening, and he was gone. There, that was the only real big problem I've had in my life.

THOMAS

(Now hes really interested.)

And after what did you do?

THERESA

The night he died I realized what I would do for the rest of my days... help those poor people as much as I could. I only came back just to see my sister before she went away... now I'm really alone in the world...

THOMAS

(Offering her a small glass of Marsala [sweet liqueur].)

I'm sorry if I doubted you. I was referring to another kind of problem... more silly. Dont think, I dont know what it means to be torn suddenly from the most intense joy, to be hurled into the most atrocious suffering.

THERESA

But youre not alone.

THOMAS

I have two daughters, but now they are grown up. They have their own families, and their plans for the future... and I'm not included in those projects. It is strange how, sons are always the most important part in the projects of the parents, but the sons projects never involve the parents. Perhaps because at our age we no longer have the right to think about future happiness. As if there was a guarantee that expired like a guarantee on a washing machine, and ours, by now, expired a long time ago.

THERESA

My life no! it will expire with me when I close my eyes for the last time, not before! Excuse me, if Im being foward but since we're talking like two old friends, to talk like this is like living as if youre dead already! And I want to arrive at death, alive in body and spirit!

THOMAS

And is feeling alive for you, just going around the houses jabbing backsides?

(Bursts out laughing downplaying the situation.)

It's not that I gave up on life, but it's so hard to meet a person who is really in tune with you, heart and soul.

(They looks each other and note a new light in their eyes. the door bell ringing interrupts that warm moment, driiinnn! driiinnn twice!)

THERESA

(Goes to open door.)

Scene 9

LISETTE

(Enters with a small package.)

Hello madam, Good day Maestro. I brought you a chocolate cake, to repay...

THOMAS

To repay me? And for what?

LISETTE

For what Im going to ask you.

THERESA

(Realizes, they want to be left alone.)

I'm just going to the kitchen to prepare something to eat.

THOMAS

While youre there, please, prepare the chocolate cake, that Miss. LISETTE kindly brought, for that visitor that you know as well.

(He indicates the window with his head so THERESA understand he means the dog.

THERESA

(Goes to the kitchen with the cake.)

THOMAS

So, Mrs. LISETTE, what can I do for you?

LISETTE

Well, Maestro, I do not know if I...

THOMAS

Go on, go on, dont worry...

II-9-41

LISETTE

I wanted to ask you for advice, because I think youre best person since were talking about poetry...

THOMAS

Ahh! Again!

LISETTE

(Taking a parcel of sheets out of her pocket.)

You see? They are all my husbands poems!

THOMAS

And what's wrong with that? You know very well that he is a poet.

LISETTE

But love poetry!

THOMAS

Even better.

LISETTE

Yes but they are all dedicated to a woman!

THOMAS

Ah! Whats her name?

LISETTE

My husband may be a blockhead, but not to the point of writing the full name. He just uses the letter L.

THOMAS

L as in LISETTE...

LISETTE

Dont make me laugh, please. He never even wrote me a postcard when he was young, and now hes old hes writing me love poems! And then there's another thing ...more serious he looks for me!!!!

THOMAS

Are you playing hide and seek?

LISETTE

Dont pretend you dont understand!

THOMAS

And you complain, I'm sorry. I wonder how many women would like to have your problem...

II-9-42

LISETTE

But it is not normal, you know? After twenty years that we are like brother and sister now, all of a sudden, he is in love with me again? He scares me!

THOMAS

Rekindling the flame.

LISETTE

What? If he's not careful hell burn himself ... mmmm better shut up.

THOMAS

But I, how can I help you?

LISETTE

Make him talk, Maestro. Between men, perhaps, he will be more open.

THOMAS

But Mrs. LISETTE, do you want me to spy on your husband?

LISETTE

Oh, no! Not that never! Let's just say that I expect you to be an intermediary (go between) as I am with your late wife.

THOMAS

But this is called...

LISETTE

(She stops him.)

Reciprocating a favour.

THOMAS

I'm sorry if I'm intruding into your affairs, but since you were the one to bring it up, assuming but not (but not granted), that your husband likes someone else, well what's wrong with that since it's all over between you two.

LISETTE

But hes my husband! And after so many years I think I have rights!

THOMAS

On paper... but between the sheets? I think you said that...

LISETTE

Marriage isnt just that. Is it possible that you men dont think of anything else?

II-9(10)-43

THOMAS

Why, you women, on the other hand, do you just do it to do us a favour?

LISETTE

Well, Im not saying that, but...

THOMAS

But it is unseemly, and important that its not common knowledge that youre happy as well...

LISETTE

Are you giving me a sermon now?

THOMAS

Im just saying that yours rather than love, seems to me A property right. This is my husband and you cant touch. I ve got the documents to prove it as well. But do you really believe that a signature is enough to secure your partners love forever?

LISETTE

Whats wrong with you today, have you been bitten by a tarantula? Ive never seen you so irritable.

THOMAS

Its just that Im tired of compromise. I want to call a spade a spade

LISETTE

Then perhaps youd better start playing cards. Goodbye Mr. Thomas. Goodbye...
(Exit.)

Scene 10

THOMAS

(To himself.)

Now I understand, my dear Mrs. LISETTE, ready to blackmail in the name of love... or as you call it...

THERESA

(Enters.)

Are you speaking to yourself?

THOMAS

(Doesnt answer, hes nervous.)

THERESA

I saw that there was some pesto sauce in the fridge so I put on some spaghetti.

(THERESA doesnt get any answer.)

II-10-44

I breaded two cutlets...

THOMAS

(Silent.)

THERESA

And then I made a nice apricot tart.

(They are looking at each other, and break out laughing.)

THOMAS

You have the power to make me laugh when I need it most and thats not to be underestimated.

THERESA

When I'm nervous, to calm myself, I read old scripts of when I was acting many years ago.

THOMAS

But what, you acted? Were you an actress?

THERESA

Oh, actress! Thats an exaggeration.. I enjoyed doing theater in an amateur dramatics school company... I was sixteen.

THOMAS

I too started like that. Like everyone else, for that matter, in those days.

THERESA

Only you became famous... I, on the other hand...

THOMAS

If you liked it so much, why didnt you continue?

THERESA

My boyfriend used to act with me. He was so passionate but unfortunately he didnt make it, poor man. The director, one day, decided to stage Romeo and Juliet. We were a new group of young people but we liked acting and doing great classics. I played the part of Juliet. Not to brag but I was quite pretty, at that age, and my boyfriend was Romeo... well... he wanted to do it, because he didnt make it unfortunately. The director, after some interviews, took his part away and gave it to a teenager who had just arrived, and seemed to be born for the part. My

boyfriend was so jealous that at the end of the performance, he took me away from the drama society and didnt want me to act again. Things were different then.

THOMAS

And was he right to be jealous?

II-10-45

THERESA

Well he wasnt completely wrong...

THOMAS

Romeo and Juliet... I did it in amateur dramatics as well. I still have that old script here, somewhere.

(Rummages in a drawer and it takes out an old script - browses through some pages.)

Do you remember the balcony scene?

THERESA

My favorite...

THOMAS

ROMEO - OH, RISE BRIGHT SUN, AND KILL THE ENVIOUS MOON
WHO IS ALREADY SICK AND PALE WITH RAGE, BECAUSE THOU,
HER MAID, HER MOST 'RE SO BEAUTIFUL .

SEE HOW SHE LEANS HER CHEEK ON HIS HAND, I COULD BE THE
GLOVE ON THAT HAND, AND BE ABLE TO TOUCH THAT CHEEK!

THERESA

JULIET - OH ROMEO, ROMEO, WHEREFORE ART THOU ROMEO?
DENY THY FATHER AND REFUSE THY NAME, OR IF THOU WILT
NOT, SWEAR THAT YOU'RE MINE AND ILL SNO LONGER BE A

CAPULET.

WHAT'S IN A NAME? THAT WHICH WE CALL A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME WOULD SMELL AS SWEET. ROMEO THROW AWAY YOUR NAME, AND IN ITS PLACE, TAKE MINE.

THOMAS

ROMEO - I TAKE YOUR WORD. CALL ME BUT LOVE AND IT WILL BE MY NEW BAPTISM HERE, MY NAME WILL NO LONGER BE ROMEO.

(From the script a withered flower falls from the yellowed pages that show, Thomas many years of collecting. Attached was a note.)

THOMAS

(Sniffs.)

It had lost the scent and color, but not the good memories that came from the past...

(He reads the small piece.)

You are my Romeo in the play and in my life Signed...

THERESA

Your baby little Terry...

THOMAS

So it was you!

II-10-46

THERESA

You got it, finally...

End of the 2nd Act

III-1-47

3rd Act

Scene 1

(Same scene as previous acts - after a couple of months - the curtain opens while the song "Trot little pony" is played.)

THERESA

(Enters dressed, more cheekily but always with good taste. She sings in time to the music she spreads a table cloth on the table and goes into the kitchen.)

THOMAS

(After a while enters the main door with a bunch of flowers, dressed in a beautiful if rather flamboyant blazer and bow tie, singing the song to the music in the background he puts the flowers in a vase, glances around his house and goes into his bedroom.)

THERESA

(Enters again always singing, carrying two dishes, cutlery and glasses - she glances at the bunch of flowers, stops singing, gets nearer to the flowers and smells the perfume, she then launches an inquisitive look towards THOMAS bedroom.

The background music fades.)

THOMAS

(Enters, THERESA feigns indifference and continues to lay the table.)

THERESA

Good morning.

THOMAS

(With enthusiasm.)

Good morning, good morning!

THERESA

Why are you so cheerful? good news?

THOMAS

Why, havent you noticed?

THERESA

What?

THOMAS

(He takes THERESA by the hand and leads her to the window.
Opening it inviting her to look out...)

III-1-48

Here is the news!

THERESA

(She looks out of the window.)

I cant see anything special.

THOMAS

Nothing?! But at least you can hear what I can hear?

THERESA

(Tries leaning forward with her ears.)

Traffic, honks, sirens, nothing new, in fact...

THOMAS

But cant you hear the sun screaming at everyone to get out of the house to enjoy these warm rays that dry out the moisture in your heart left by the long, sad, cold winter... Cant you hear the excited cries of the boys playing football mingled with the cries of swallows that are setting off for their first flight... Cant you smell the

scent of spring roses in the air telling us that the summer is arrived...

THERESA

(She leans out the window, breathes in deeply, then pulls herself back, now coughing.)

I can only smell smog!

THOMAS

But you dont just "feel" with your nose, and not even with your ears but with your heart...

THERESA

It seems to me that the tonic did you good.

THOMAS

That looked after my body but you on the other hand.

THERESA

(A strong attraction has been building up between the two but she prefers to ignore it.)

Today I made some gnocchi which will go with the pesto sauce, you like so much and as main course, theres a nice grilled sea bream, the one that your daughter brought yesterday.

THOMAS

And what about the apricot jam tart? Did you make that for me as well?

THERESA

(She bursts out laughing.)

III-1-49

THERESA (Cont.)

Dont worry, for dessert I think your girlfriend will have already made you something.

(She points to the flowers.)

What beautiful flowers, are they for a special occasion?

THOMAS

Nothing special, today is a beautiful day and I wanted to bring a little bit of it, home with me.

THERESA

I'm glad to see that you have recovered completely... now we are at the end of your treatment and it is a relief for me to leave you in such perfect health.

THOMAS

It's a relief to leave me? I didnt think that you were unhappy here with me. I thought quite the opposite...

THERESA

I'm not just happy here... I'm more than happy. Unfortunately my job now, is over and in a few days I'll have to put my old rags together and look for another backside to jab.

THOMAS

But where you will go when you leave here? You are alone in the world.

THERESA

Ill manage somehow

THOMAS

(Changes mood.)

THERESA

Well! Now why are you looking so sad? You were so happy, a moment ago, that

you even succeeded in putting me in a good mood as well.

THOMAS

Its because I've got used to you. Your laughter fills this house which is so big and empty. Everything will go back to how it was before... Everyday just the same with no strength or will to get out of bed in the morning and face the day.

THERESA

Dont you think thats just the same for me? My laughter that you like so much I only found again, after many years, here with you.

III-1(2)-50

THERESA (Cont.)

And the pleasure of feeling the warmth of a home and discovering that I still have feelings that I believed were dead.

THOMAS

I wasnt wrong... you too feel the same!

THERESA

(Shouting.)

Yes! Yes! But were not sixteen anymore! We are seventy! I feel confused; ridiculous... It doesnt seem right to have these feelings at our age!

THOMAS

It's not right to lose the last opportunity that life offers us. That yes would be sin, indeed, a extremely serious offence to love and we do not want to offend love... right..?

THERESA

No...

THOMAS

(Tightening his arms around THERESA, their faces are getting closer their lips almost touch. The main door bell rings. Driinn!

They both distance themselves from each other.)

THERESA

(Goes to open the door.)

THOMAS

(Goes into his bedroom, as soon as recognizes his daughters voices greeting THERESA.)

Scene 2

(ROSE and MICHELLE entering the house, followed by THERESA.)

ROSE

Were you eating?

THERESA

I was just laying the table. Why you dont you stay to dinner with us? Your father will love that.

ROSE

No, thanks you. We only passed to settle up with you. The treatment is over...

III-2-51

THERESA

Yes, the care is over...

ROSE

And how is our patient?

THERESA

Good.

THOMAS

(Enters, his confident appearance disappears, he looks ill, emaciated and shabbily dressed.)

THERESA

(She smiles to herself.)

But perhaps it would be best to do another course of injections.

MICHELLE

Daddy, are you, okay?

THOMAS

(He staggers MICHELLE goes towards him to give support him.)

Yes not too bad not too bad.

(She helps him sit on the chair.)

ROSE

I do not understand, last week he seemed to be so full of life and now hes more dead than alive!

MICHELLE

(Launches a very bad look, to ROSE.)

ROSE, what do you say. Could it be the sudden change in temperature.. the first warm days of spring!

ROSE

But shouldnt have that the opposite effect?

THERESA

To be honest, his blood pressure was a bit low this morning.

ROSE

(To her sister.)

And we're in a bad situation if after two months of injections hes reduced to this state... And add the cost of the carer...

THOMAS

What are you complaining about! And even if I need another course of injections? The bum and ass and money are mine, arent they!?

III-2-52

MICHELLE

You didnt get what she meant Dad! ROSE didnt express herself properly, shes worried about you...

THOMAS

(Rubbing thumb and index finger meaning money.)

Myself and my ass, we understand, and we thank you very much.

ROSE

I'm sorry, Dad, if I gave you that impression, but it is a bad time for me at the moment Im in a bit of a mess.

THOMAS

Something wrong?

MICHELLE

Wrong? Yes! Everythings going to hell!

THOMAS

Explain yourself better.

THERESA

(Understanding shes one too many in this situation.)

Maestro, I'm going to the kitchen to finish preparing the lunch.

(Goes towards the kitchen.)

THOMAS

So?

ROSE

The situation is bit complicated... I do not know where to start...

THOMAS

Try from the beginning.

ROSE

(Determined.)

Well... you know... sometimes things do not go as one would like them to go... and then you find yourself...

MICHELLE

(Pushing on.)

In the shit!

(Looking at ROSE.)

What happened to all your courage, your swagger, eh? Babbling like a little girl! Tell him! Tell him that we are ruined and that it was you that dragged me into this situation!

(Sobs.)

ROSE

It seemed like a bargain, so safe...

THOMAS

Are you going to tell me what happened?

MICHELLE

Work in the shop has been slowing down for some time. The suppliers would not give us anymore credit. We were getting fewer and fewer customers every day.

ROSE

In our industry, the competition is very strong and, to survive, we have to invest, innovate continuously but there wasnt much money left. So one day I met an old school friend on the street. He was getting out of a Mercedes that costs at least 80 thousand (Currency you want.) He told me that he had made his money on the stock market and had secure information about certain securities, which were a bargain without risks. Etc... Etc... In short, I also involved MICHELLE and we both gave him all our savings to try to save our shop.

THOMAS

There is no need to continue. I'm sure your dear friend has disappeared with the money.

MICHELLE

See? Even he has got it!

THOMAS

Look, MICHELLE, the fact that I am seventy, does not mean that I am a "dick head! [SENILE]

MICHELLE

But of course not! Dont be silly... What did you understand...

THOMAS

Okay, okay. Give it a rest! So, now, you're in "deep shit."

Then again it is not the first time that I've bailed you out.

ROSE

Last time it was a MICHELLE's fault!

THOMAS

And you, for not wanting to be outdone...

ROSE

Look, we're not here to ask you for anything. It was you who asked.

III-2(3)-54

THOMAS

And you didn't wait for me to beg you too much before you came out with it all as quick as you could.

ROSE

MICHELLE, I think we need to call the Doctor. I think he needs a good visit. Bye-Bye!

MICHELLE

Bye-Bye!

(ROSE and MICHELLE exit.)

Scene 3

THERESA

(Re-enters from the kitchen, bringing a container with the gnocchi with pesto inside.)

Have they gone? Come on, sit down and eat. The gnocchi are lovely and hot.

THOMAS

I've lost my appetite, I'll eat later. And I do not want you to call me "Maestro or Mr. Thomas either in front of others, not even in front of my daughters! I'm sick of this comedy. I want everyone to know that I love you!

THERESA

You say you love me and you can't remember what day it is today.

(THOMAS gets a card out of his pocket and hands to THERESA which she reads.)

THERESA

" My sweet love, these flowers are to wish you today like times before, happy birthday, and now as then I would love to savor the sweetness of our first kiss again."

THOMAS

I was going to wait to give it to you after having a few glasses of wine, I thought I might have found the courage...

(They look at each other sweetly, softly and embracing strongly.)

THERESA

(First accepted but then retracts.)

But what are we doing. You're making me lose my mind.

THOMAS

The worst thing that can happen to us is not losing the mind, but finding it...

III-3-55

THERESA

Enough, enough! But what are you doing to me ?

THOMAS

Why, dont you want to feel the blood flowing through your veins again? Dont you like feeling your heart race and the thrill that runs down your back, like just now?

THERESA

Stop it! You are kidding me and I do not want to suffer! At my age, a disappointment in love, could be fatal for me!

THOMAS

THERESA, life is like a doughnut, two bites and it's already over... This last bite, is still hot; do you want to bite with me?

THERESA

Yeah Oh! THOMAS I love you so much.

(Embracing together.)

But are you sure we're doing the right thing? People will laugh behind our backs? And your daughters, how will they take the news?

THOMAS

Dont you think that we are old enough and ugly enough, to be able to do what we like?

THERESA

Thats precisely the problem, we are too old!

THOMAS

This is absurd. The older you get , the more you have to fight to make a good impression on your family and in exchange you have less rights for yourself. Is it possible that everything we do is for others? That we cant think about ourselves a bit, about our own happiness?

THERESA

But you, what exactly do you want from me?

THOMAS

Havent you understood yet? I want to marry you.

THERESA

Marry? Cant we just live together without complicating our lives?

THOMAS

THERESA, I'm an old-fashioned man. I dont like cohabitation without the Lords blessing . And also let's be honest. if I

III-3(4)-56

THOMAS (Cont.)

had to leave this world first, before I do, dont think my daughters would worry too much about you, and this would not make me feel comfortable. Marriage would give you a secure a roof over your head and not only that...

THERESA

(She is very hesitant.)

Okay, I'll marry you, but only on one condition: your daughters must agree. I dont want to join your family by force.

THOMAS

As you wish, Ill talk to them. Now lets eat; Ive suddenly got an appetite... Come on, let's sit down.

(THERESA uncovers the container the bell door start ringing driinnn!)

And who will this breaking the...

THERESA

I'll get it.

(Goes to open.)

Scene 4

(LISETTE and LOUISE enter, each with a cake.)

LOUISE

Oh, Tommy dear, please excuse us for the inconvenient hour, but we need to resolve an important issue with Mrs. LISETTE as soon as possible and the only one who can give us a honest and impartial judgment is you.

LISETTE

Thats right Mr. THOMAS, youre a great admirer of our cakes and there is no more experienced person to make a judgment.

(Presenting and holding in front of THOMAS their two cakes.)

Please eat a slice of each and tell us which one is the best and tastiest cake.

LOUISE

Just imagine... Ms. LISETTE dares to say that I bought my cakes in a shop, so just to show her that I dont need to go to the bakery we each made a cake in my house. Its obvious that mine is the best but Ms. LISETTE doesnt want to admit it.

III-4-57

LISETTE

I wont admit it because it is not true! Your cake, dear Mrs. LOUISE, has a taste that not even Alifax, my dog who died of indigestion poor thing, would have eaten; he loved cakes...

(Talking to herself.)

And if I find out who gave them to him...

(THOMAS knows hes guilty.)

LOUISE

And yours dear Mrs. LISETTE, is so soft that it seems as if it has been mixed in a

cement mixer!

(Towards THOMAS, handing the cake to him.)

Taste it Mr. THOMAS, just a little bit...

LISETTE

(Handing the cake to THOMAS.)

And this mine, which is made by LISETTE, go on eat, even a big slice if you like...

THOMAS

(Has found himself sitting on the couch, hunted by the impetuosity of the two women and governing a cake in each hand he doesnt know what to do...)

THERESA

Mr. Thomas will be happy to accommodate you but only after the gnocchi with pesto. Isnt that right Mr. Thomas?

THOMAS

Yes thats right

LOUISE

Oh! But havent you had your lunch yet...?

LISETTE

Oh! How rude we are.

LOUISE

Sorry we hadnt noticed.

THOMAS

(Gestures to give back the cakes.)

LISETTE

No, no. Keep them. Well come back later.

(This almost sounds like a threat.)

LOUISE

So taste them calmly. And remember, Mr. Thomas, mine is this one with the curl.
(Goes out greeting.)

III-4-58

LISETTE

And mine needs to be enjoyed slowly because remember that it is the LISETTE...

(Goes out greeting.)

THERESA

The gnocchi are getting cold, I'm going to warm them up.

(Takes the container to the kitchen.)

THOMAS

(Looks dejectedly at the two cakes and review.)

Whos going to help me now poor Alifax isnt here anymore? They are right when they say that a dog is a man's best friend! Poor thing, he sacrificed himself for me. That must be what they mean when they talk about sweet death.

THERESA

(Enters.)

You see I was right? The dessert arrived, and this time twice. However, Alifax poor beast, he became so fat that he couldnt get into the kennel.

THOMAS

Why do you think Mrs. LOUISE is so determined to bring to me cakes

continuously?

THERESA

Come on, you know very well, you just like to hear it said... Shes in love with you.

THOMAS

Mmmm... I think she just wants to ensnare a man, the first one she can find. It's horrible to be alone.

THERESA

Better alone than in bad company.

(Goes to the kitchen.)

THOMAS

That's for sure.

(Takes his place at the table.)

THERESA

(Enters with the gnocchi starts to serve. meanwhile at the main door the bell rings. drrriinnn!)

Oh no! Theyre doing it on purpose!

(Goes to open.)

III-5-59

Scene 5

DOCTOR

(Enters with THERESA)

DOCTOR

Can I come in?

THOMAS

(With gritted teeth.)

Of course DOCTOR, please come in and sit down.

DOCTOR

Sorry about the inconvenient time but I had a hellish morning. I came right away as soon as I read the note that your daughters left me on the door... Oh, but you're eating?

THERESA

(Bringing the gnocchi back to the kitchen.)

Do not worry, DOCTOR, we're just rehearsing...

DOCTOR

(Not understanding.)

So, Mr. THOMAS, what's wrong? Your daughters are very concerned.

THOMAS

(Alluding to their financial problems.)

Oh, I do not doubt that. Well, I do not know. I am feeling a bit rough, I cannot sleep...

DOCTOR

(This scene that will be pleasurably enhanced by lots of gags.)

Lets have a look at your blood pressure.

(He takes out, the apparatus from his case and measures bp.)

The blood pressure is fine.

(Listens to his the back.)

Say 99.

THOMAS

99 99 99 99 99

DOCTOR

Poke your tongue out and say aaaaaaaaaa...

THOMAS

Aaaaaaaaaaaaaa...

III-5-60

DOCTOR

I think that's all right...

(Rummages in his bag.)

Ill leave you these sleeping pills. I recommend these, you must take just one, one is more than enough. As far as the rest, is concerned you still have another course of injections just to be on the safe side, even though it seems to me that you dont really need them.

(Writes the prescription.)

THOMAS

DOCTOR, since youre here I would like to take this opportunity to ask you a favour for a close friend of mine.

DOCTOR

Of course... if I can help.

THOMAS

Its a rather delicate question actually... You know... A male thing...

DOCTOR

Speak up speak up, I'm a doctor and I hear all sorts of things ... Nothing surprises me.

THOMAS

This friend of mine is quite old but in his mind hes still a young boy and like all young men... with the first hot sunny day he falls in love.

DOCTOR

Lucky him, that hasnt happened to me since high school. And how old is your friend?

THOMAS

He has passed his Eventies some time ago.

DOCTOR

And why doesnt he speak directly to his doctor himself?

THOMAS

Hes embarrassed. As I was saying to you, hes at a certain age and he doesnt find it easy to talk about these things.

DOCTOR

Ah... Maybe, I am beginning to understand now... Does your friend need those little Blue pills with miraculous properties?

THOMAS

But how did you understand so quickly, doctor?

III-5(6)-61

DOCTOR

I told you that I'm used to hearing of all colors of problems and lately blue, has become very fashionable.

(He has understood everything checks his bag and pulling out a red

bra, he gives Thomas a wink... sign of complicity.)

Mrs. Anne...

(He puts the bra in his pocket and finally takes a bottle of tablets out of his bag.)

your friend is very lucky. I just happen to have a bottle with me.... you never know... anyway take it...

THOMAS

(Interrupts the doctor.)

Its not for me, doctor!

DOCTOR

Of course, of course. Tell your dear friend to take only half a tablet, the first time, and see the effect it has and then let me know how your dear friend finds them... Well, I'm glad to hear that, your dear friend hasnt got any serious problems after all...

(Goes to the table where he left the prescription.)

In retrospect, its probably better if you take two lots of the tonic injections. Two boxes...

(He wink as sign of complicity goes to the door.)

Goodbye, Mr. THOMAS and tell your dear friend go easy on those tablets... Ah, l'amour, l'amour, 'est toujours l'amour!

(Exit.)

THOMAS

(At the main door.)

Thank you, doctor. I'll tell him. Ill tell my friend, I will tell him... I'm afraid he guessed that the Blue pills are for me...

(Goes to the table and pours a glass of water, takes the two bottles in his hands, but in his confusion, instead of opening the Viagra bottle he opens the one with the sleeping tablets. Swallows a tablet and then to be more confident of effect, takes a second one hears THERESA coming from the kitchen puts the two bottles of tablets on the cabinet.)

Scene 6

THERESA

(Comes back with the gnocchi.)

Has that pain in the arse gone?

III-6-62

THOMAS

Why do you say that, He is a very conscientious doctor who understands patients problems immediately, and has a clinical eye....

THERESA

Come on, sit down and lets hope well be lucky this time.

THOMAS

Forget the gnocchi, the moments passed now for lunch.

(Takes her hand.)

Come on, lets sit near each other here

(On the settee.)

and let's talk about our future. Now that you're here I'd love to make some changes in the house, you know... put up new curtains, buy some new furniture just to renovate the place a bit. Well now, what do you think about buying a new bedroom suite?

THERESA

Your words have a certain effect on me.

THOMAS

Me as well but it will soon be a reality.

THERESA

Dont run so fast.. I've told you before that you have to discuss this with your daughters.

THOMAS

Okay, okay... but what's the problem? They will certainly agree. So tell me which side do you sleep on? On the left or the right...?

THERESA

I cant even remember anymore... Im so used to sleeping alone. Its such a long time since I slept with a man...

THOMAS

Of course we will buy all new bed linen. I thought those modern sheets with beautiful colorful flowers with matching pillowcases...

(He runs his fingers through his hair - She acts coy.)

And in the drawers of the dresser we can put some lavender bags that delicate fragrance, which I love so much... it's so nice to slip between the sheets that smell good... intimate... and, sorry if I'm a little curious, on the other hand, we must begin to know each other better... you... how do you sleep?

(He cuddles her.)

III-6-63

THERESA

(Teasing him.)

With my eyes closed...

THOMAS

Come on. You know exactly what I mean. I mean do you sleep with flannel pyjamas... or just nothing at all?

(He hugs her.)

THERESA

(Becomes defensive.)

How cheeky and nosey you are. I guess you'll just have to wait for the first night, to enjoy the show...

THOMAS

(His advances becoming more bold.)

And couldn't you just allow a little private preview for a special viewer like me?

(Yawns!)

THERESA

(Pretending to be shocked but in reality is happy about his advances.)

Do you really think this is a proposal to make to a lady?

THOMAS

TERRY, I'm impatient like a little kid in front of a gift box wrapped with a beautiful red bow... I can't wait to see what's inside.

(Yawns noisily.)

Sorry...

THERESA

Impatient kids, very often lose their sweets.

THOMAS

So. I cant eat sweets.

(He starts kissing THERESA on the neck and laying his head on her shoulder.)

THERESA

(Lets out a little scream.)

Ahhh! Getting hot already! You havent changed a bit. Youre just the same as you always were... Perhaps a little cheeky, but an adorable rogue. You know, unlike you, I recognized you right away when I saw you, I felt my heart leaping into my throat. I could not even speak, with emotion. What a moment that was! It was if our story which never really ended replayed before my eyes.

And now, fifty years later, I'm back in your arms that are even stronger and make my heart beat fast just like before.

III-6-64

THERESA (Cont.)

Nothing has changed. You're right, it is foolish to wait... Thomas, did you hear what I said? I'm ready...

THOMAS

(Since hes stopped moving and is making strange noises, first she calls him softly and then shakes him violently without response.)

THERESA

Thomas... Thomas!

THOMAS

(THOMAS sleeping blissfully - THERESA gets up, without Theresas support his limp body ends up lying on the sofa with his backside in the air.)

THERESA

(She is very angry.)

But then you never used to sleep, eh?

(She starts to go into the kitchen and sees on the window cabinet, the two bottles, she picks them up and looks at them - launches a look to Thomas and smiles.)

And poor Thomas, you got the wrong bottle, right?

(Goes into the kitchen.)

THOMAS

(THOMAS mutters nonsensical phrases rambling and squirming frantically in the most strange positions ending up with his backside in the air towards the public.)

THERESA

(Joins Thomas with a cup of espresso coffee.)

Come on sleeping beauty, have a sip of coffee, it will wake you up.

THOMAS

(Half asleep, starts to drink the coffee and slowly wakes up.)

What happened?

THERESA

(Adjusts her hair and says dreamily...)

What happened? Now dont be modest, you know what happened... My handsome Romeo...

THOMAS

Ah! Then everything went well...

THERESA

You brought me to the land of dreams and how well you slept...

(Carry on joking.)

I mean, you couldnt have behaved any better than that.

THOMAS

(Proudly.)

Ah! And to think that the first time there is always a bit of embarrassment... yes, well, I mean theres room for improvement.

THERESA

I sincerely hope so!

(Notes the surprise on Thomass face and promptly adds with touch of shyness.)

that is... I hope we can try again soon.

THOMAS

And then I must have fallen asleep...

THERESA

Thats only natural after that explosion of passion...

THOMAS

(To himself.)

The miracles of modern science! But these pills have a drawback though... they make one lose ones memory!

Scene 7

(The door bell ringing, driinnn - THERESA goes to open the door and comes in with LISETTE.)

LISETTE

Maestro, I'm sorry I'm here again but I couldn't resist it... I'd like to know what you have decided.

THERESA

(Brings the dirty dishes and silverware into the kitchen.)

THOMAS

To be honest, Mrs. LISETTE, I have been busy with more important matters.

LISETTE

Forget the cake, I have one more important thing... Do you remember when a long time ago, I asked you to talk to my husband to find out who his poems were dedicated to?

III-7-66

THOMAS

Mrs. LISETTE, I did try but I couldn't find anything. These are delicate things you know, it takes a little tact and patience. I have to wait for the right moment to make him talk without making him suspicious.

LISETTE

I'm here to tell you to forget about it, it's not important anymore. Now I know who they were dedicated to! I just found this poem in the pocket of his work trousers.

(Takes a paper from her apron pocket.)

THOMAS

You went through his pockets?!

LISETTE

Well, I have to check he hasn't forgotten anything before I stuff his clothes in the washing machine!

THOMAS

(To himself.)

Good excuse.

(To her.)

And excuse my curiosity, can I know who the poem is dedicated to?

LISETTE

(Becomes shy.)

To me...

THOMAS

Huh? To you?!

LISETTE

Thats right, just me! It is entitled:

DEDICATED TO LOUISETTE"

AS MY LIFE GOES BY

AS THE DAYS START TO CLOSE

I WILL LOVE YOU TILL I DIE

AS LONG AS MY BLOOD IN MY VEIN FLOWS

I'm just ungrateful. He writes love poems and does not have the courage to give them to me because Im always teasing him.

I tell him that he is an useless poet and instead listen to what feeling there is in these words:

III-7(8)-67

AS MY LIFE GOES BY

AS THE DAYS START TO CLOSE

I WILL LOVE YOU TILL I DIE

AS LONG AS MY BLOOD IN MY VEIN FLOWS

Can you ever forgive me? (Sobs.)

THOMAS

(Has listened carefully but isnt convinced.)

Can I see it?

LISETTE

(Gives the poem to him.)

LISETTE

So when he was looking for me, he was sincere, he loves me so much! And I've always rejected him! How he must have suffered, poor man.

(She blows her nose violently.)

And what should I do now? I cant just tell him that I found his poetry while I was "emptying" his trouser pocket! What do you suggest, Mr. Maestro?

THOMAS

Dont tell him anything. It would only make him feel embarrassed. Just change your behavior towards him. Now that you know hes still deeply in love with you. Show him with facts and above all, make him understand that for you as well your love for him is not finished.

LISETTE

Yeah, Yeah. Youre right. Ill do that .Thank you, Mr. Maestro, thank you, and sorry again for bothering you.

THOMAS

What about the cake then, arent you interested in my opinion anymore?

LISETTE

Tell Mrs. Louise that her cake, is the best. Poor woman, she is entitled to some satisfaction. I ... I already have love!

(As she try to get out and as open the door...)

Scene 8

JOHN

(Enters.)

Oh, here you are? I was looking for you. Good morning, Maestro.

III-8-68

LISETTE

Were you looking for me Batty?

JOHN

Its Mrs. Louise who was looking for you.

(Thinking.)

What did you say?

LISETTE

I asked if you were looking for me.

JOHN

No, later...

LISETTE

Batty...

JOHN

You havent called me that since the time we went cherry picking in the country

with the Vespa...

LISETTE

Now that the weather is nice we could do it again, a trip like old times...

JOHN

You and I in the country with the Vespa...? LISETTE, come on, off you go now Mrs. LISETTE is outside waiting for you. I need to speak with Mr. Maestro a moment.

LISETTE

Ill run now, but first tell me what delicious meal you want me to prepare for you tonight. Two cod fritters, I know that you love them? And then for sweet do you fancy fried sweet milk?

JOHN

But you've never been able to stand the smell of cod... and youve always prepared dinner without ever asking me anything!

LISETTE

From today I will be another woman. From now on, in the evening I will write a list of what you want for the next day... And this is just the beginning. Hurry, Batty, I have a surprise for you my handsome Batty...

(Exit.)

JOHN

(Is appalled.)

What has she been drinking?

III-8-69

THOMAS

She hasnt drunk anything at all. Shes just happy because she found your poem

Dedicated to Louise"...

(JOHN rummages in all his pockets.)

(Take a dictionary.)

Too late, it's already past the infallible Inspector LISETTE. What exactly is your wife called, Mr. JOHN?

JOHN - Elisabeth.

THOMAS - Elisabeth, what a beautiful name. Let's see what are the diminutives for Elisabeth: Lisette, Lizbeth, Liza, Lizzy, Elisa etc... Strange, its not Louise" at all.

Let's look under Louise". Here is Luisa. Hey, how strange. Thats just like the name of the upstairs neighbor, the widow that gives me so many cakes... I always say that we need to know own roots to know who we are... your wife, fortunately for you, is a bit confused. She is convinced that LISETTE and LOUISETTE are the same thing and, instead, as we have just discovered thats not so at all... Isnt that so Mr. JOHN?

(JOHN it is very ashamed.)

But you must explain this curiosity to me. Since your interest is in the upstairs widow, as evidenced by the dictionary, why are you looking for your wife?

JOHN

Maestro, you are a man of the world, you know how these things go...

THOMAS

Perhaps... but you can explain it better to me.

JOHN

It was a woman who wrote: "Marriage is the tomb of love." She probably meant that the monotony of living together kills off desire and sometimes all thats needed is something new to turn it on, even at home...

THOMAS

I was lucky then. Since I was always travelling around, I did not have time to get bored of my wife.

JOHN

Maestro, are you going to tell her?

THOMAS

Your wife? No! And miss seeing those bambi eyes of full love!? Oh no! Never!

III-8(9)-70

JOHN

Thank you, Maestro.

(The main door bell rings - Driiinnn!)

THOMAS

(Goes to open.)

Scene 9

LOUISE

(Enter.)

(Between her and JOHN is showed a strong embarrassment.)

JOHN

Well, now I have to go.

(Greetings to each other - JOHN goes out.)

LOUISE

I'm here to thank you so much, Mr. THOMAS. Ms. LISETTE told me that you chose my cake and this fills me with joy! How can I show you my gratitude?

(Moving forward provocatively.)

THOMAS

Actually I am the one that has to give you a prize...

LOUISE

A prize? Oh, how nice! And what is it?

THOMAS

Since I know that you have a poetic soul, I wrote a poem just for you... Please, have a seat

(Pointing to the sofa.)

THOMAS

(Takes LISETTE's poem and begins to read the JOHN's poem)

"DEDICATED TO LOUISETTE"

As my life goes by

As the days start to close

I will love you till I die

As long as my blood in my vein flows

LOUISE

(Is visibly embarrassed, puzzled and then suddenly, starts yelling.)

Its burning Its burning! I forgot the cake in the oven! Its burning.

III-9(10)-71

THOMAS

But, Mrs. LOUISETTE. Don't you want to hear the end?

LOUISE

I have to go! Its burning Its burning!

(Goes toward the exit.)

THOMAS

LOUISETTE, go go, you're faster than a lightning bolt.

Scene 10

ROSE/MICHELLE

(Enter.)

(LOUISE going out bumps into ROSE and MICHELLE carrying a cream cake.)

ROSE

Hey, whats happening! Is the house on fire?

THOMAS

No, her conscience.

MICHELLE

Its Sunday and weve brought your usual cream cake.

THOMAS

(Holds the package in hand with a lot of doubts.)

Dear daughters, now is the time to make an important confession, sit down: I hate cream cakes! Just as I hate all sweets

ROSE

Oh, Lord, what a fright you gave me! I was very worried about it. Well, I have to confess one thing: it was pretty boring taking you a cream cake every Sunday.

THOMAS

See? Sometimes we are slaves of conventions isnt it better to speak clearly and try to understand each other instead of playing a role?

MICHELLE

How right are you, Daddy! And, since we're on the subject of confessions, we also have something really important to tell you.

THOMAS

Me too, me too.

III-10-72

ROSE

So you first.

THOMAS

No, no. After you...

MICHELLE

God forbid, you are our father!

THOMAS

Women and children first!

ROSE/MICHELLE)

(Embarrassed.)

ROSE

Yeah, well... We wanted to tell you that... That...

MICHELLE

Were bankrupt we are ruined!

(Cries.)

THOMAS

As bad as that?

ROSE

They have already taken away all the furniture and soon theyll repossess our home

(Cries.)

MICHELLE

We'll have to go and live in a rented council flat, if they will give us one... What are we going to tell our children? What a disgrace! What a disgrace!

THOMAS

How much is the debt?

ROSE

About a million...

THOMAS

Have you tried asking the banks for help.

MICHELLE

The banks, its the banks that made us bankrupt!

THOMAS

Of course, they are the real culprit. I'm sure you've already figured a way out to get out of this situation...

III-10-73

ROSE

Well, we thought that, since youre getting on a bit, and the more time passes the more youll need someone to look after you, the more youll need someone to take care of you.

MICHELLE

And I we would be happier if we could keep an eye on you, so we thought that you could come and stay with us, a bit with one and a bit with the other...

THOMAS

(Shakes his head from side to side.)

Like a tennis ball... But if you are going to stay in those small council apartments, there wont be any room for me.

MICHELLE

Well that wouldnt be necessary if we could keep our homes...

THOMAS

And the creditors, how are you going to pay them?

ROSE

But try and be rational! Whats the point in your living on your own in an apartment as big as this? With the money you spend you can...

THOMAS

Come back to earth!... Apart from the fact that all the most cherished memories are with your mother are here, I have to tell you something really important... I want to get married again!

ROSE/MICHELLE

Ehhh?? What did you say??

THOMAS

And I have no intention of moving out of my house!

ROSE

So that's why you bought the computer, surf the internet and poke your nose, or rather your eyes, in those sites for dirty old men! And did where meet her, in some lonely hearts chat?

THOMAS

No, I met her here in my house.

MICHELLE

Of course, JULIA, the caretakers niece! That loose one came back here in secret, and cheated you with her arguments

(Shaking her breasts.)

But she's too young for you!

III-10(11)-74

THOMAS

Its not her..

ROSE

But here at home the only one around is..

MICHELLE/ROSE

THERESA?!?!?!?

THOMAS

Now you cannot tell me, that she is too young!

ROSE

But THERESA is... is...

MICHELLE

You are right ROSE. THERESA is... is...

THOMAS

A good woman and I love her. I had two months to get to know her, indeed, it would be more correct to say fifty years and two months and I do not want to wait

any longer!

ROSE

(Very angry.)

Hooo! You are a real egoist! You only think of yourself. You dont care if your daughters are close to gassing themselves! Youve always put your own interests before everyone else. You were always running around the world, partying with your starlets, while our mother was upset and angry, like a white widow. How many times we used to heard her crying in her bedroom!

THOMAS

I wont allow you to judge my feelings that bound me to your mother. You cannot even imagine the love that we shared. And now, excuse me, I feel a little tired, I need to rest.

MICHELLE/ROSE

(Leave with a cold greeting.)

Scene 11

THERESA

(Enters. She is dressed ready to go out. A dark coat covers her dress with the spring colors. Has a black bag in arm. She is very serious.)

I am going out, but Ill come back as soon as possible.

THOMAS

Where are you going? If you not mind me asking...

III-11(12)-75

THERESA

Searching for a home.

THOMAS

You heard our discussion didnt you?

THERESA

Without wanting to, all screaming like lunatics...

THOMAS

Then you've also heard what I said! Why do you want to go?

THERESA

You forget what I told you. I do not want to become part of your family by force.

THOMAS

You are now my family!

THERESA

And to know that this is the cause of a breakup with your daughters? I would not be happy with that. And now they really need your help and this apartment, for them, it means salvation.

THOMAS

Why, isnt it for us?

THERESA

They have their whole life ahead, we at this point... I thought Id go and see if there was a place in that old peoples home in Europe Avenue. LISETTE the cartekar, told me that she put her parents there. She told me as well that they are very, very happy there... They even have a beautiful double room all to themselves. Well, now I'm going. Bye.

(THERESA exit.)

Scene 12

THOMAS

(His morale is very low. He wanders around the room and after take

the portrait of MARY and place on the table. Sits and talks to the photo.)

So you locked yourself in your room crying. You never told me that. And you suffered because of me. You thought that in the midst of all those starlets, like Rose, told me I was not faithful...

MARY

(Arrives not view by THOMAS stay near his shoulders and make the gesture of stroking her head.)

III-12-76

MARY (Cont.)

No, I never thought of that.

THOMAS

(Has a jump but not surprising that much.)

Now there is no need even for the red candle to hear you.

MARY

It is not thanks to the candles that the two of us can speak, but thanks only to the feeling that unites us. Not even death managed to snatch that fine but very strong bond. And since this is the last time that we will hear each other, now you can see me as well.

THOMAS

(This time jumps up looking scared and looking around.)

MARY, oh, MARY... how beautiful you are... just like those days... But how this time... I was going to say in flesh and blood, I'm sorry, its the emotion.

MARY

The timing is important. I'm here to help you make the right choice. I love you too much and I want your happiness.

THOMAS

But cant you see how hard is it, to be happy! When you think to have secured her safely inside the bag, happiness runs away like water from all sides and disappears into the ground.

MARY

Instead of putting it inside the bag, try to put it into your heart. You can be sure that there is no more appropriate place to preserve our most loved and cherished feelings.

THOMAS

I dont understand...

MARY

I mean, you cant pretend to trap or harness happiness and tame it. It is she who chooses her home. She just needs to find a large and generous heart.

THOMAS

A large and generous heart... perhaps I am beginning to understand now... So, if you werent crying because you were jealous, what was the reason?

III-12(13)-77

MARY

Because I felt too much. I was missing you too and I was suffering and desperate, up to the point of being sick...

THOMAS

Oh, MARY, why did you never say? Why did you never tell me that you suffered so?

MARY - I saw you too happy with your successes and that made me proud of you.

THOMAS

Before you said that is the last time that we can talk, why?

MARY

Because soon you will no longer need me, I'm sure. There will be another person who will take my place in your generous big heart.

THOMAS

Yes, it is true, there is one person, but...

MARY

I'm sure you know to make the right choice.

THOMAS

If we can no longer speak at least can I embrace you for the last time?

MARY

Yes...

(Slowly they unite in a long, soft embrace.)

Now I have to go. Now I really have to go. And remember, up there we are all cheering for you, even the Boss...

(Backs up to disappear.)

Scene 13

THOMAS

(wanders around in the room and then goes to his room.)

THERESA

(Enters, looking around, she see the flowers that THOMAS had brought. She takes one and she hides when...)

THOMAS

(Enters.)

Here already? That was quick.

III-13-78

THERESA

I met Mrs. LISETTE, the caretakers wife, she did everything by phone. They are waiting for me tonight.

THOMAS

So you've decided...

THERESA

Yes, I think it's the right thing to do. Well, I'll go and get my suitcase.

(She goes to her bedroom.)

THOMAS

(Also goes to his room.)

THERESA

(After a while returns with a suitcase thats lying in the middle of the scene and waiting for THOMAS to greet him.)

THOMAS

(Immediately enters into the scene with a suitcase in hand.)

THERESA

And, where are you going with that suitcase?

THOMAS

Didnt you say that in that place they have beautiful double rooms? Do you think theyll have one for us?

THERESA

Oh, THOMAS, I love you so much!

THOMAS

Me, too, my little Terry, me too...

(Hand in hand each with their suitcases and slowly towards the exit door as a gentle music is heard and gently the curtain closes...)

End of comedy