

# OLD LOVE

By Norm Foster

May, 2008  
Final draft



Old Love was first produced at The Lighthouse Festival Theatre in Port Dover, Ontario from May 20 – June 11, 2008 with the following cast.

Bud Mitchell, Arthur Graham & Arthur Junior.....Jerry Franken

Molly Graham, Kitty Mitchell, Kendra, Shirley, Sandra, Delores & Claire.....Brenda Bazinet

Directed by Chris McHarge

Stage Managed by Bill Brillinger

Set design by Eileen Earnshaw-Borghesan

Lighting design by Renee Brode

Costumes by Jasmine Aitcheson

## CHARACTERS

Bud Mitchell

Molly Graham

Kitty Mitchell

Arthur Graham

Arthur Junior

Kendra

Shirley, Sandra, Delores & Claire

\*The play can be done with only **two** actors, one male and one female, playing all of the parts, or it can be done with **four** actors, two male and two female.

### With four actors:

Actor #1	Bud in the present.
Actor #2	Molly in the present, Shirley, Sandra, Delores, Claire.
Actor #3	Younger Bud in the flashbacks, Arthur, Arthur Junior.
Actor #4	Younger Molly in the flashbacks, Kitty, Kendra.

ACT ONE

Time: The present.

*(The stage is bare except for a couch and a kitchen table with two chairs and a park bench. These objects represent different settings throughout the play. The play can also be done with raised levels representing the furniture.)*

*Lights up to reveal a spot-lit area onstage. Bud Mitchell steps into the spotlight and speaks to the audience.*

Bud: This is the story of my pursuit of a good woman. And I don't mean just any good woman, because I know there are millions of good women out there. I'm sure there are some here right now. But, I have a particular woman in mind. Her name is Molly. I first met Molly twenty-five years ago. We met only three times, very briefly, over the course of the next three years. We were both married back then. Me to my wife Kitty, and Molly to Arthur Graham, the owner of the company I worked for. Eventually Arthur Graham sold the company and I didn't see Molly again, but, she would always come back to me. Sometimes in a dream. Sometimes while I was just sitting at home going over the monthly bills. Or sometimes when I was driving over a long distance. Her face would suddenly pop into my mind at these times and I would wonder how she was doing. Now, I didn't really know Molly all that well, so it's hard to explain my infatuation with her. I do know that the few times we did meet and talk, she left quite an impression on me. And after my wife and I got divorced, I would think about Molly more and more. Oh, I tried dating other women, but nothing ever came of that. They just weren't what I was looking for. I always found something wrong with them. That's when I started to wonder, 'Am I being too picky? Am I hard to please?' Well, you be the judge. First of all there was Sandra.

*(Lights up on Sandra.)*

Sandra: What do you mean I'm needy? I'm not needy. What do I need? I just need you. That's all I need. And if you leave me, I'll kill myself. I swear to God. You don't think I will? Just try me. Needy. I'm not needy. Who in the hell are you calling needy?! Oh God, don't leave me!!! I'm begging you!!

Bud: *(To the audience.)* That was our first date. And then there was Delores.

*(Lights up on Delores.)*

Delores: You think three Margaritas is too much? Honey, that's breakfast.

Bud: And finally, Claire.

*(Lights up on Claire.)*

Claire: There will be no kissing until the fourth date and we will always make love in complete darkness. You will never ever see me naked, so you can get that sick thought out of your head right now, mister.

Bud: So, as you can see.....*(He speaks to Claire.)* Never?

Claire: Never.

*(Lights out on Claire.)*

Bud: So, as you can see, this whole dating concept just wasn't working out for me. But then something miraculous happened. I was in my office one morning a few months ago when an interoffice memo came across my desk.

*(Shirley the secretary enters carrying a memo. She walks with a limp.)*

Shirley: Memo, Bud. *(She hands the memo to Bud.)*

Bud: Thanks, Shirley.

*(Shirley turns to leave.)*

Uh, Shirley. Do you think it's appropriate that you call me Bud? I mean, I'm the boss now. Maybe you should call me Mr. Mitchell.

Shirley: Okay. Sure. And you can call me 'I'm taking a three hour lunch because the new boss is getting uppity on my ass.'

Bud: .....Bud's good.

*(Shirley exits. Bud speaks to the audience.)*

So, I got this interoffice memo one morning and here's what it said. 'Former CEO Arthur Graham has died.' Well, it said more than that. I just skipped right to the good part. Now, as you recall, Arthur Graham is Molly's husband. Molly is the woman I've been infatuated with all these years. The memo said the funeral would be held on the Wednesday of that week.

*(Molly Graham enters. She carries a rose. She looks to the ground. She is looking at her husband's grave.)*

Molly: Good-bye my love. My life. *(Molly throws the rose on the ground.)*

*(Bud moves to Molly.)*

Bud: Spartacus.

Molly: Excuse me?

Bud: That's a line from Spartacus, when Jean Simmons is leaving Rome and she sees her man, Spartacus, hanging from a cross at the side of the road, she says 'Good-bye my love. My life.'

Molly: It was my husband's favourite movie. I thought he should hear those words out of my mouth at least once.

Bud: Think he heard it under all that dirt?

Molly: Well, it's the thought that counts. And you are?

Bud: Bud Mitchell.

*(Bud shakes Molly's hand.)*

Molly: Molly Graham. How do you do?

Bud: Hello. It's a good location.

Molly: What is?

Bud: Your husband's plot. Up here on a hill like this. It's got good drainage. He won't be getting damp. Those poor buggers at the bottom of the hill will be soaked, but your husband will be dry as a bone.

Molly: Uh-huh.

Bud: ....Nice day, isn't it? I mean the weather is nice. I don't mean it's nice because your husband is being interred. I just mean the weather.

Molly: Yes. I know what you mean.

Bud: Funerals are awkward, aren't they? I mean, for conversation. I never know what to say. You can't be too cheerful for obvious reasons, but by the same token you don't want to be too miserable, otherwise you bring everybody down. I mean, they're already down, but my God, you don't want it to be like a funeral. Well, it is a funeral, isn't it? You see? I just never know what to say. *(Pause.)* .....Would you like to have dinner with me sometime?

Molly: ....I just buried my husband.

Bud: Well, that's why I figured you'd be free for dinner.

Molly: No, thank you.

Bud: You don't remember me, do you?

Molly: I'm afraid not, no.

Bud: I worked for your husband about twenty-five years ago. At Executive Decisions? We used to see each other at the company Christmas parties.

Molly: Twenty-five years ago? At a company Christmas party? God, I can't imagine why it's slipped my mind.

Bud: Yeah, I guess you wouldn't remember. I mean, your husband was the founder, owner and CEO of the company and I was just an employee. You probably chatted with all of the employees at those functions. I guess I didn't stand out.

Molly: I'm sorry. I didn't mean to make you feel insignificant.

Bud: No, that's all right. Back then I was insignificant. They used to call us the road warriors because we were on the road all the time.

Molly: Yes, I remember that.

Bud: Well, that was me. I was one of the road warriors.

*(Molly turns and begins to walk away.)*

Yes, we were quite the team. *(He notices Molly leaving.)*  
Are you leaving?

Molly: I'm sorry?

Bud: I said, are you leaving?

Molly: Well, my back was turned and I was walking away so by all appearances, yes, I am leaving.

Bud: Oh.

Molly: Putting one foot in front of the other in a leaving motion.  
Yep. It's official. Here I go.

*(Molly exits.)*

Bud: *(He speaks to the audience.)* The first time I met Molly, I had only been with the company for a week. Executive Decisions was a company that acclimatized professionals on the move to their new surroundings. If someone was transferred from Toronto to Calgary, we would be hired to set them up in their new location. Look after all the details for them. There was a lot of traveling involved but it was an interesting job and I felt fortunate to have landed it. So, the first time I met Molly was at that first Christmas party. I was with my wife, Kitty, and we were both very excited.

*(Kitty enters with two glasses of champagne.)*

Kitty: Here you go. *(She hands a glass to Bud.)*

Bud: Thanks. Cheers, Kitty.

Kitty: Cheers.

*(They toast their glasses.)*

Kitty: Bud, straighten your tie.

Bud: What?

Kitty: Your tie. It's all...here let me.

*(Kitty begins straightening Bud's tie.)*

Bud: What's wrong with it?

Kitty: It's crooked.

Bud: Kitty, please. People are watching. They'll think I can't dress myself.

Kitty: Well, you can't. You're like a child. Honestly.

Bud: All right. That's enough. The tie is fine.

Kitty: Is your fly done up?

Bud: What?

Kitty: Your fly. Is it up?

*(Kitty lifts up Bud's jacket to look at his fly.)*

Bud: It's up. It's fine.

Kitty: Well, you know how you always leave it down.

Bud: I don't always leave it down. *Leaving it down* implies I intentionally don't do it up. Sometimes I *forget* to do it up. I don't *leave it down*.

Kitty: So, which one is the boss?

Bud: Right over there. Gray suit.

Kitty: We should go over and talk to him.

Bud: No, that's too forward.

Kitty: Well, we want to make an impression, don't we?

Bud: As what? Pests?

Kitty: No. We want him to see you with your wife. We want him to see that you're a family man.

Bud: We don't have a family yet.

Kitty: Well, we will. I've got it all planned. We'll have a ranch-style house, two kids and a condo in the Caribbean.

Bud: Is that what we really want?

Kitty: Well, I know kids can get underfoot but I think it's a good for appearances.

Bud: I was talking about the condo in the Caribbean.

Kitty: You know, that Mr. Graham isn't much older than you, is he? And he's started his own company. That's very commendable.

Bud: Yeah, he's done all right.

Kitty: Oh, he's done more than all right. And he's about your age too.

Bud: You said that.

Kitty: You could be where he is right now, if you applied yourself.

Bud: What do you mean, if I applied myself? I think I've worked very hard.

Kitty: I'm not saying you haven't worked hard. Of course you have. I just think that sometimes hard work isn't enough. You have to go that extra mile. Get people to notice you. Talk your way into the inner circle.

Bud: Well, I've always thought that hard work is the key to success.

Kitty: Uh-huh. Well, you've learned otherwise, haven't you? Which one is the wife?

Bud: (*Pointing.*) That one there.

Kitty: What, the short, dumpy one?

Bud: No.

Kitty: The trampy one?

Bud: No, that one.

Kitty: The one with one leg shorter than the other?

Bud: No.

Kitty: The concave chest?

Bud: The one in the black dress.

Kitty: That's the trampy one.

Bud: She's not trampy. She looks very elegant.

Kitty: Oh, Bud. You just have no idea, do you? Come on. Let's go over and talk to him.

Bud: No, Kitty, please.

Kitty: And introduce yourself as Lionel.

Bud: What?

Kitty: Well, Bud doesn't have that ring of success to it. It's childish.

Bud: Your name is Kitty.

Kitty: Yes, but it's different for a woman. For a woman to have a cutesy name is quite acceptable.

Bud: But, I never use Lionel. I haven't used Lionel since I was ten.

Kitty: Well, now's a good time to start. Come on.

Bud: No. I am not going over to talk to him.

Kitty: Well, I am. You can talk to the wife. Divide and conquer.

Bud: Kitty, no.

Kitty: Mr. Graham? Hi.

*(Kitty exits.)*

Bud: *(To the audience.)* I didn't have the nerve to approach Molly. And being new to the company, I didn't really have anyone else to talk to either. I stood alone for about two minutes. A very long two minutes. It's funny how when you're standing alone at a social gathering you think that all eyes are on you. You feel as though everyone else is wondering who the loser is who has no one to talk to, when in fact they probably don't notice you at all. I think loneliness somehow makes you invisible to others. They don't want to see you in that situation. It's uncomfortable for them, so they make you disappear. But, still I couldn't shake that feeling that everyone was staring at me. So, I sat down. *(He sits on the couch.)* A lower profile, I thought, would diminish my loser-like appearance. Now, instead of looking out of place, I looked indifferent. Nonchalant. And then Molly approached me.

*(Molly enters.)*

Molly: Where did you get that?

Bud: *(Bud stands.)* I'm sorry?

Molly: The champagne. Where did you get it?

Bud: Oh, God. Did I do something wrong? Is the champagne not for the employees, because I could give it back.

Molly: No, no, no. I just want to know where you got it.

Bud: Oh. My wife got it for me. I think there's a guy walking around with a tray of it.

Molly: Well, I could sure use one right now. I detest these office gatherings. I'm supposed to stand around and smile graciously while all of my husband's employees take turns kissing his ass. How bout' you? Have you had your turn yet?

Bud: Uh..no. My wife is standing in for me. *(He points off in the direction of his wife.)*

Molly: Oh. Which one is she?

Bud: *(Pointing.)* That one right there.

Molly: The short, dumpy one?

Bud: No.

Molly: The one with the limp?

Bud: No. The one in the black dress.

Molly: Oh. Pretty. I'm Molly, by the way.

Bud: Lionel.

Molly: How do you do, Lionel?

Bud: Pleased to meet you.

Molly: Go ahead. Sit. You don't have to stand on my account.

Bud: All right. Will you join me?

Molly: Sure, I could take a load off.

*(Bud and Molly sit.)*

Molly: So, how long have you been with the company, Lionel?

Bud: One week.

Molly: Oh, so you've barely had time to get your feet wet.

Bud: Right.

Molly: Well, I think you'll like it. The staff is friendly enough. My husband's hardly ever around. And they have good dental. Do you have kids?

Bud: Not yet. But we're going to have two. And a ranch-style house.

- Molly: Well, good for you. You've got a plan. I used to have a plan.
- Bud: And how did it work out?
- Molly: Not exactly how I had hoped.
- Bud: Well, you're still young. Make another plan.
- Molly: You're an optimist.
- Bud: I guess I am, yes.
- Molly: I hate optimists.
- Bud: Yeah, I guess we can be a little irritating sometimes. Always seeing the glass as half full. Always looking on the bright side. Smiling on occasion.
- Molly: Are you implying that I never smile?
- Bud: No, not at all. I just met you. I'm sure you've smiled at some point in your life. And I'm sure it's a lovely smile.
- Molly: You're pretty brazen for a new employee, Lionel.
- Bud: No, I'm not brazen. I'm just nervous.
- Molly: Nervous about what?
- Bud: Well, I've only been here a week. I don't know anybody. And I'm sitting here talking to a woman who...who is the boss's wife.
- Molly: Well, there's no need to be nervous. I won't bite. (*Looking off in the direction of Kitty.*) Your wife doesn't seem all that nervous.
- Bud: Hmm? Oh, no. Kitty's very good in social situations.
- Molly: I'll say she is. She pushed that limping girl right out of the picture. Set her back on her heels. Well, one heel and one toe. How long have you two been married?
- Bud: Oh, let's see, uh...I'll have to add it up. Uh.....three years. What about you and Mr. Graham?

Molly: Seven.

Bud: Any children?

Molly: One. A boy. Ten months old.

Bud: Oh, that's nice.

Molly: You think so? This is the only outfit I own that doesn't have baby vomit on it. I've been peed on so many times that I've taken to wearing a slicker around the house. And the only time I get any sleep is when I'm driving. Where the hell is that champagne guy?

Bud: Here, take mine.

Molly: Have you taken a drink from it?

Bud: Just a little sippy sip.

Molly: No thanks. I used to be a nurse. I know what goes on in a mouth. I take a drink from that glass and in two days I'm hooked up to a breathing apparatus in the intensive care ward and I'm staring up at a priest. Which reminds me, stay away from the chicken on a skewer.

Bud: Why's that?

Molly: Well, I know the caterer. Pacific rim? Could be chicken or it could be a stray. I'm just sayin'. So, you've been married for three years, huh?

Bud: Yep.

Molly: *(Looking off towards Arthur and Kitty.)* Does your wife work?

Bud: No. Not at the moment.

Molly: No? It looks like she's working pretty hard to me.

Bud: What? *(He looks off towards Kitty.)* Oh, well, she wants to make a good impression, that's all.

Molly: Well, *I'm* impressed. And it looks like Arthur is too. Good for her. So, I take it you're not the ambitious one in the family.

Bud: Oh, I'm ambitious all right. Yes ma'am. I just have a different approach. I do my talking through my hard work.

Molly: Uh-huh. Well, let's hope someone hears you. Okay, I'm gonna go find that champagne guy. It was nice meeting you, Lionel.

*(Molly stands and starts to exit. Bud stands.)*

Bud: Why are you unhappy?

*(Molly stops. Bud speaks to the audience.)*

I don't know why I said that. Why are you unhappy? Who says that to a person they've just met? I didn't even know if she was unhappy. The only thing I knew about her was that she was thirsty. No, I thought I should take that back.

Molly: I beg your pardon.

Bud: I said why are you unhappy. *(To the audience.)* In for a penny, in for a pound.

Molly: Now, tell me something, Lionel. What makes you think you have the right to ask me a question like that? We just met. The only reason I came over to talk to you in the first place was because you were standing here all alone. Everyone was staring at you wondering who the loser was who had no one to talk to.

Bud: I'm sorry.

Molly: Don't be. You're the only person who has said anything of interest to me the whole night.

Bud: Let me find the champagne guy for you.

*(Pause. Molly says nothing.)*

No, really. I will.

Molly: Did you hear me say no?

Bud: Right.

*(Bud exits. Molly speaks to the audience.)*

Molly: This is the story of a messed up life. And I don't mean just any messed up life, because I know there are millions of messed up lives out there. I'm sure there are some here right now. No, this is the story of my messed up life. Let me start at the end. My husband's end. He passed away last summer. Arthur and I were married for thirty-four years. We have one child. Arthur Junior. Arthur Junior is married to a lovely, if slightly domineering young woman named Kendra. They are both professionals leading upwardly mobile lives out on the west coast, where apparently there is no telephone service except for every other Sunday evening when I'm in the bathtub. So, as I was saying, my husband died recently. It was a long and painful death. And it wasn't terribly pleasant for him either. Yes, I was at his side through all of it, as I had been for the previous thirty-four years. At his side. *(She thinks for a moment.)* That's a shitty way to spend a life, isn't it? Languishing at someone's side? And I don't blame anyone but myself. I made the decision to set my dreams aside and follow Arthur's. And I raised Arthur Junior while Arthur Senior was traveling here and there for his business dealings. Now, don't get me wrong. I don't resent Arthur Junior for being fastened to my hip for all those years. I just wish he would call more often to show his appreciation. Then again, maybe his leash doesn't reach as far as the phone. He came back for his father's funeral though. I guess that's something. A funny thing happened at that funeral. I don't mean funny hah hah. It was a funeral after all. But a strange thing happened.

*(Bud enters. He is carrying a rose.)*

Bud: I'm sorry.

Molly: What?

Bud: About asking you out to dinner while you were standing over your husband's grave. That was probably inappropriate. And I hope you will accept this as my way of apologizing for my actions. *(He holds the rose out to Molly.)*

Molly: What's this?

Bud: It's a rose.

Molly: Yes, I know it's a rose. Where did you get it?

Bud: Well..

Molly: Is that the rose I just placed on my husband's grave?

Bud: ....Yes it is, yes.

Molly: You picked up the rose that I placed on my husband's grave?

Bud: Well, I needed something to give to you and it was right there. That was probably inappropriate too.

*(Molly just stares at him.)*

It was inappropriate.

Molly: There you go.

*(Molly starts to leave.)*

Bud: Wait. Please. I really am sorry. I guess I just let my emotions get the best of me. Please accept my apology.

Molly: Well...it's understandable I suppose. Funerals do funny things to people.

Bud: No, it wasn't the funeral. That didn't affect me at all. In fact, I was a little late, so I didn't even see most of it. How was it?

Molly: Oh, top notch. Yes. There was only one glitch. One of the pallbearers is seventy-two years old and he got winded as they were carrying Arthur out of the chapel, so they had to set the casket down in the driveway for a few minutes and let him rest.

Bud: Is he all right?

Molly: Oh yeah. Although I didn't think his resting on the casket was suitable, but, any port in a storm I guess.

Bud: It's doing it to you too.

Molly: Doing what?

- Bud: What you said about funerals doing funny things to people. It's doing it to you right now. You're masking your pain by making light of the situation.
- Molly: My pain? Well, if you say so.
- Bud: Listen, I'll be going back to the reception with everyone else. Maybe we could sit and have a little chat for a bit.
- Molly: No. I'm going to be too busy being the grieving widow and the perfect hostess handing out those little cocktail wieners and those flaky pastries that leave crumbs all over the rug, and if I leave them there people will step on them and they'll get ground in so I'll have to vacuum the damn stuff up and I'll be telling the mourners to lift their feet so I can get under them and I mean what's the point?
- Bud: ....Some other time then? I mean, when you're not mourning or housecleaning?
- Molly: That's hard to say.
- Bud: I see. Well, I guess I'll be off then. Have a nice day.
- Molly: Have a nice day?
- Bud: Oh, right. I suppose that ship has sailed, hasn't it?
- Molly: It has indeed.
- Bud: Well then just slog through it as best you can. Good-bye.  
*(Bud turns to leave but stops when Molly speaks.)*
- Molly: You never said you were sorry for my loss.
- Bud: I what?
- Molly: Well, it's a funeral. Everyone else has come up to me and told me how sorry they are about Arthur's passing. Everyone but you.
- Bud: Oh. Well, I am sorry if your husband's passing has caused you grief.

Molly: ...Thank you.

*(Bud turns to leave.)*

Molly: After a suitable period of mourning, I might be open to a little chat if you like.

Bud: Really?

Molly: Maybe.

Bud: Wonderful. And what would be a suitable period of mourning?

Molly: That's a good question. Married thirty-four years.

Bud: That's a long time.

Molly: Tell me about it.

Bud: I've heard of widows who become so despondent, they mourn their husbands for decades.

Molly: Call me in a month.

Bud: Done.

Molly: Now, could you put this back please? *(She holds out the rose.)*

Bud: Oh. Certainly. *(Bud takes the rose.)*

Molly: Thank you.

Bud: Should I say anything?

Molly: I beg your pardon?

Bud: You know, as I lay the rose on the grave. Is there a sentiment you would like me to express?

Molly: Sentiment? No. I already expressed the sentiment. The whole 'good-bye my love my life' thing.

Bud: Right.

Molly: I just want the rose put back.

Bud: And put back it shall be.

Molly: Thank you.

Bud: With no sentiment whatsoever.

Molly: And don't put it near any white flowers. Red flowers and white flowers together mean bad luck.

Bud: Okay, but how much worse could it get, right? *(Bud laughs at his joke. Molly does not. Bud's laugh is short-lived.)* I'll put this back now.

*(Bud exits. Molly speaks to the audience.)*

Molly: See what I mean? Strange. Well, sure enough, one month later, Mr. Mitchell called me and asked me out. I still wasn't ready for a full blown date at this point. You know, the kind where you get all nervous and try to make a good impression on the fellow and you have to wear those anti-perspirant deodorant pads under the armpits of your dress because you're so nervous, and you're afraid to gesture when you talk for fear of one them shooting out your sleeve and landing in the bouillabaisse? No, I wasn't ready for that kind of date. Quite frankly, I wasn't really interested in dating at all. At my age, I was set in my ways and I didn't want to adjust my life to accommodate another man. I'd already done that once and believe me, once was enough. So, instead of a dinner and a movie date, I agreed to meet Mr. Mitchell at a coffee shop one afternoon.

*(Molly sits at the table. Bud enters carrying two coffees. One in a mug and one to go.)*

Bud: Here we go. Double cream for you and black for me.

Molly: Thank you.

Bud: You sure you don't want that in a mug?

Molly: No. There's a chance that our meeting will end before my coffee is gone and I wouldn't want to waste it.

Bud: You don't think you'll enjoy my company?

Molly: I don't know. I mean, you seem like a very nice man even though you came on to me while my husband was being lowered to his final resting place, but that aside, you do seem nice. It's just that at my age, I don't really...

Bud: And what age is that?

Molly: I'm sorry?

Bud: How old are you?

Molly: You see? Now, this is exactly why I got the coffee to go.

Bud: You don't want me to know how old you are?

Molly: Well, can't you tell? My God, look at me. The wrinkles on the neck, the lines on the face, you must know that I'm somewhere between...forty and sixty.

Bud: I love those lines.

Molly: You do?

Bud: I love a woman who is comfortable with aging. Too many women would have had surgery. They'd have that neck smoothed over, the lines botoxed out, the crow's feet around the eyes removed.

Molly: What crow's feet? I didn't say anything about crow's feet.

Bud: If you had them, I'd love them.

Molly: You're very brazen, Mr. Mitchell. You know that?

Bud: You said that to me once before.

Molly: I did? When?

Bud: The first time we met.

Molly: Well, I guess you haven't changed much then, have you?

Bud: Actually I think I've changed quite a bit.

Molly: Really? How so?

Bud: Well, that first time we met, at that Christmas party?

Molly: I don't remember it, but continue.

Bud: Well, I wasn't as self-assured as I am now. I was new to the company and you were the boss's wife and I was very nervous.

Molly: And now?

Bud: Well, let's just say that wealth breeds confidence.

Molly: Oh, you're wealthy, are you?

Bud: Not as wealthy as you perhaps. I mean, your husband sold the company for what, nine million twenty-three years ago?

Molly: About that.

Bud: And I'm sure that with investments and the two other companies he owned, I'm sure that nine million has at least doubled by now, if not tripled.

Molly: Are you after my money, Mr. Mitchell?

Bud: Oh, good heavens no. That's why I mentioned that I'm wealthy. I knew that would be the first conclusion you would jump to. No, I'm not after anyone's money, I assure you.

Molly: So, you worked for my husband's company.

Bud: I still do. I'm the boss there now.

Molly: And that's made you wealthy?

Bud: Well, not exactly. You see, I was taught that hard work is the key to success, and so I've always worked as hard as I could at every job I've ever had. And after your husband sold Executive Decisions, I stayed on and worked just as diligently as I could for the new owners.

Molly: So your work ethic made you wealthy.

Bud: No, my work ethic made me successful.

Molly: Well, what made you wealthy?

Bud: Last year I bought a lottery ticket and won twelve million dollars.

Molly: You're a strange duck, Mr. Mitchell.

Bud: Please, call me Bud.

Molly: Bud?

Bud: It was my father's nickname for me and it just stuck.

Molly: Oh. All right, Bud, so tell me about your family.

Bud: I'm divorced. Twenty-two years now. And I have a son, Tom. He's twenty-three. He's in his last year of pre-med.

Molly: Oh, a doctor, huh? Good for him.

Bud: Yeah, I'm really proud of that kid. He's a fine young man.

Molly: I can see it in your eyes.

Bud: Pardon me?

Molly: Talking about your son. It lights up your eyes, so he must be a good kid.

Bud: He is. He really is. And what about your son?

Molly: How did you know I have a son?

Bud: You told me.

Molly: When?

Bud: At that Christmas party twenty-five years ago? The first time we met?

Molly: Sounds like I was pretty chatty at this party.

Bud: We only spoke for a couple of minutes, but I remember it vividly.

Molly: Uh-huh. Well, Arthur Junior lives in Vancouver with his wife Kendra. He works for a marketing firm out there and she's a research analyst.

Bud: Any grandchildren?

Molly: Oh, God no.

Bud: You don't want grandchildren?

Molly: Well, I don't mind the grandchildren idea. I just don't want to be a grandmother. Grandmother's have to look a certain way. You know, loose-fitting clothes. Sensible shoes. Glasses on a chain. And they have to act a certain way too. Like they've got a dried up vagina.

*(Bud chokes a bit on his coffee.)*

What's wrong?

Bud: Nothing. I just...I spilled a bit here.

Molly: Did I shock you?

Bud: No, I'm fine. But I think the ladies at the next table just ordered a defibrillator to go.

Molly: Well, it's true. Society doesn't think anyone our age should be sexually active. My daughter-in-law calls it old love.

Bud: What?

Molly: Old love. She says old people should not engage in anything resembling sexual activity. She says the thought of it is repulsive. There should be no open mouth kissing and certainly no tongues. And no groping or rubbing of body parts.

Bud: And what do you think?

Molly: Well, for a third party observing it I suppose it could be damned unsettling, but if you're in the middle of it, then I say go to town.

- Bud: Old love, huh?
- Molly: That's right.
- Bud: Well, I must admit that at my age I would be reluctant to...present myself to a woman. You know, I've got hair now where there never used to be hair, and a few things have started to sag and bulge disproportionately, giving me the appearance of a rather furry pear.
- Molly: You sure know how to sweet-talk a girl.
- Bud: But, if there came a time when I was extremely attracted to a woman and where it appeared that she felt the same way about me...
- Molly: If you were hot for each other.
- Bud: Yes. If we were in that state, then I suppose I might 'go to town' as you say.
- Molly: Well, good for you. We shouldn't be ashamed of our sexual needs just because we're older. Now, mind you, I've only been with one man for the past thirty-four years, and if there ever comes a time when I might want to...*present* myself to a new man, well, I'm not sure I would be all that brave about it either.
- Bud: You don't think you look good?
- Molly: Well, I'm not a furry pear, but I'm not as tightly bound as I once was. My body has developed a general looseness. Certain things have slackened.
- Bud: I think you look wonderful.
- Molly: Yes, but you're looking at the packaging. You should see the parcel when it's unwrapped.
- Bud: I like your sense of humour. I've liked it since the first time we met.
- Molly: Well, Bud, a sense of humour is the only way to get through this life.
- Bud: You've had some tough times, huh?

Molly: No more than anyone else. We all have to crawl through some barbed wire to get to where we're going, right? *(She takes a sip of her coffee.)*

Bud: Yes, I guess we do.

Molly: Oh, my coffee's cold.

Bud: Would you like another one?

Molly: Ummm...*(She looks at her watch.)* Well...

Bud: Do you have to be somewhere?

Molly: No. Not really.

Bud: Then why are you looking at your watch?

Molly: It's a stall tactic. I'm trying to decide if I want this meeting to continue.

Bud: Do you?

Molly: Do you?

Bud: Yes, very much.

Molly: ...All right. What the hell? I suppose I've got time for one more coffee.

Bud: Good. I'll be right back.

*(Bud gets up to leave.)*

Molly: Bud? Put it in a mug this time. It might...you know...it might not cool off as fast.

*(Bud exits. Molly speaks to the audience.)*

Okay, so he was a pretty nice man. But, I'm not here to tell a sweet little love story. If you recall, I said this was a story of a messed up life. So, I would like to continue in that vein. They say it's therapeutic to talk about your problems, so indulge me. Now, I began at the end. My husband's end.

So, now let's go back about thirty years. Arthur and I had been married for four years at this time. He had just started his business, Executive Decisions, and I was working as a nurse at a very good hospital. We were the couple who had it all. Well, we didn't have it all yet, but the future was very bright.

*(Arthur enters and sits at the table.)*

Arthur: If I can show this Pulaski fellow that Executive Decisions can do the job efficiently, then I'll be able to lock in his entire company. And then he'll tell someone from another company and so on and so on and before you know it, I've got businesses coming to me instead of me having to schlep around to them with my hat in my hand.

Molly: So, what time did you finally get home? I didn't hear you come in.

Arthur: God, I don't even know. Two maybe. Two-thirty?

Molly: And you were with this Pulaski person the whole time?

Arthur: The whole time. I was working him like nobody's business. Playin' him like a violin. And how was your evening?

Molly: Oh, fine. I got home from work at about six and just made some supper and read for a while. I went to bed around ten.

Arthur: God, I wish I could have done that.

Molly: I called you last night to say goodnight but you weren't in your office.

Arthur: No, we broke for dinner at about seven and just decided to stay out instead of going back.

Molly: Where did you have dinner?

Arthur: Greenhorns.

Molly: And you stayed there until two? They don't stay open that late, do they?

Arthur: No, we wandered down to a bar--I forget which one--just down the street from Greenhorn's. We spent the rest of the evening there steeped in conversation. I tell you Molly, I think he's going to be very good for the company.

Molly: Well, I'm happy for you, Arthur.

Arthur: You know, pretty soon I'm going to need someone in the office to handle the secretarial duties when I'm not around. I mean, the more business we get, the more traveling I'm going to have to do.

Molly: So, hire a secretary.

Arthur: Hire a secretary? Why should I hire a secretary when I've got you?

Molly: Me?

Arthur: Yes.

Molly: You want me to be your secretary?

Arthur: I think it's a brilliant idea.

Molly: Arthur, I have a job already. I'm a nurse.

Arthur: Yes, but you don't expect to make a career of that, do you?

Molly: Actually, that's exactly what I expect. That's why I went to nursing school.

Arthur: Molly, trust me. This business is going to be so profitable for us that you won't need a career.

Molly: What if I want one anyway?

Arthur: No, Molly, you're not getting it. You would be MY secretary. Think about it.

Molly: I am.

Arthur: And?

Molly: I think I'd rather be a nurse.

- Arthur: But what happens when we want to start a family? You're going to have to leave the nursing field anyway.
- Molly: Not forever.
- Arthur: Well, for quite a while. But if you were working with me, that wouldn't be necessary. The child could be at the office with you. No, I think it makes perfect sense. Don't you think it makes perfect sense?
- Molly: I don't know, Arthur. Why can't you just hire someone? Someone more qualified.
- Arthur: All right, look, obviously this is a topic that we should discuss at a later time when you're feeling a little more level-headed.
- Molly: I'm feeling level-headed right now.
- Arthur: Well, I have to get to the office right now. There will be plenty of time to talk later. Have a good day. *(Arthur gives Molly a kiss on the cheek.)* Good-bye love.
- (Arthur exits. Molly speaks to the audience.)*
- Molly: My first mistake. I agreed to handle the secretarial duties for Arthur. I wouldn't see the inside of a hospital again until Arthur Junior was born.
- (Molly exits. Bud enters and speaks to the audience.)*
- Bud: The second time I spoke with Molly was at that second Christmas party. I had been with the company for a year at this point and I felt as if I was doing a very good job. I was one of five road warriors on staff--The ones who would travel the country making sure the clients were set up comfortably in their new environments. Mr. Graham didn't travel much himself anymore. Only for the most important of clients.
- (Kitty enters with two glasses of champagne.)*
- Kitty: Here you go. *(She hands a glass to Bud.)*
- Bud: Thank you, Kitty. Cheers.
- Kitty: Cheers.

*(They toast their glasses and drink.)*

I don't like that tie.

Bud: What's wrong with it?

Kitty: It's hideous. Where did you get it?

Bud: I bought it in Winnipeg.

Kitty: Well, don't do that again.

Bud: Why not?

Kitty: If you're going to buy a tie, you buy it in Toronto or Vancouver. You don't buy a tie in Winnipeg. You buy a toque in Winnipeg. Oh, there's Arthur. Hi, Arthur! *(She waves.)*

Bud: Arthur?

Kitty: What?

Bud: You call him Arthur?

Kitty: Well, that's his name, isn't it?

Bud: No, his name is Mr. Graham. At least, that's what I call him.

Kitty: Well, I call him Arthur.

Bud: Since when?

Kitty: Since that wives dinner a couple of months ago. He asked all the wives to call him Arthur.

Bud: What wives dinner?

Kitty: Oh, right. You were in Halifax.

Bud: ....Well?

Kitty: Well, what?

Bud: Well, tell me about this wives dinner.

Kitty: It was nothing. Arthur invited the wives to have dinner with him one night as a way of showing his appreciation. It was very sweet.

Bud: His appreciation for what?

Kitty: Because he sends the husbands on the road all the time and we spend so much time alone.

Bud: Why didn't you tell me about this?

Kitty: I didn't think it was important. He's looking for a new secretary you know.

Bud: What?

Kitty: A new secretary. The one he's got right now...what's her name?

Bud: Shirley.

Kitty: Shirley, right. She's going in for an operation on her leg next month.

Bud: Yes, she's going to have one of them shortened. Or one lengthened, I'm not sure.

Kitty: Well, she'll be off for two months and Arthur is looking for a replacement for her. I was thinking of taking it.

Bud: What do you mean? Did he offer it to you?

Kitty: Well, not in so many words, but I'm sure I can have it if I want it. And it would get me into the inner circle.

Bud: You?

Kitty: Oh, all right, us.

Bud: Did this come up at that wives dinner? When did this come up?

Kitty: I'm going to go over and say hi.

Bud: You're what?

Kitty: Just for a second. It would be rude of me not to.

Bud: Fine. I'll come too.

Kitty: No, you stay here.

Bud: Why?

Kitty: Well, what would you have to say to him?

Bud: I work for the man. We'd have lots to talk about.

Kitty: Oh, he doesn't want to talk about work here. It's a Christmas party. Plus there's the whole tie thing too.

Bud: My tie is fine.

Kitty: Just stay here. Arthur! Darling!

*(Kitty exits.)*

Bud: *(To the audience.)* And so, like last year's Christmas party, I was once again standing alone. This time it was different though because I had been working there for a year and I knew the rest of the staff. I wouldn't be standing alone for long. One of my fellow road warriors would almost certainly come over to trade road stories with me. *(He stands for a moment looking around, waiting.)* Or one of the clerical staff. Lucy. Todd. Morag. We always had good laughs together. *(Stands again, waiting.)* Or the night watchman. I didn't know his name but he seemed like a friendly fellow. But, well, no he couldn't get his walker turned around in my direction. Ah, the hell with it. *(He sits on the couch.)* I took the low profile approach again and struck my indifferent, nonchalant pose. I didn't even see Molly coming.

*(Molly enters from behind Bud. She carries a glass of champagne. She is slightly tipsy.)*

Molly: Hi!

Bud: *(Startled.)* Shit!

Molly: I'm sorry. Did I startle you?

Bud: No, no. I was just about to scream 'shit' anyway.

Molly: Is this seat taken?

Bud: Hmm? Oh, no. No.

Molly: Good. I have got to get off of my feet. (*Molly sits.*) Oh yeah, that's better. God. My dogs are barkin'. I'm Molly, by the way.

Bud: Bud.

Molly: Hiya, Bud. Yeah, I've been going all day. Getting the mistletoe. The holly. The goddamned lights. And then decorating the place.

Bud: Well, it looks very nice.

Molly: Thank you. Twenty-four hours ago it was the site of a Russian wedding. Hard to believe, huh? It took me an hour just to get the smell of kielbasa out of here. (*She holds up her glass in a toast.*) Nostrovia.

Bud: Mazoltov.

Molly: I'm the boss's wife, in case you didn't already know.

Bud: Yes, I knew.

Molly: Yeah, I guess everybody knows. Everybody knows the boss's wife. And how long have you worked here?

Bud: A little over a year.

Molly: Really? It's funny that we've never met before this.

Bud: Yes.

Molly: I wonder why that is.

Bud: Well, I'm on the road a lot.

Molly: Oh, you're one of the road warriors huh?

Bud: That's right.

Molly: Well, you gents are the backbone of the company, Brad.

Bud: Bud.

Molly: What?

Bud: It's Bud.

Molly: What did I say?

Bud: Brad.

Molly: Oh. Sorry. I really should be better with names. I used to be Arthur's secretary. I used have all the clients names and numbers right up here in my head. Every one of them. Now, I can't remember shit. It's having a baby that does that to a woman. Your brain turns to mush.

Bud: Really?

Molly: Oh, hell yeah. When you push that little guy out from between your legs, you push out every ounce of intellect with it.

Bud: How long ago was that, that you were his secretary?

Molly: Oh, about three years ago. I quit after I had the baby. Do you have any children?

Bud: No, not yet.

Molly: Are you married?

Bud: Uh-huh.

Molly: Is she here?

Bud: Yes, actually she's talking to your..

Molly: Oh, look at that one. *(Molly is looking off in the direction of Kitty.)*

Bud: I beg your pardon?

Molly: That one. Talking to my husband. Every Christmas party it's the same thing. Some harpy tries to sidle up to Arthur and make nice with him. Either to advance herself or her

husband. Watch, she'll touch him on the arm and laugh. Yeah, there she goes. Throwing the head back. The fake laugh. Perfect form.

Bud: How do you know it's fake? Maybe it's genuine.

Molly: No. Arthur never says anything funny. Oh, look, she's toasting him. That's a nice touch. Yes, she's good. She's very good. So, where's your wife?

Bud: She's in the washroom I think.

Molly: She's not sick, is she?

Bud: No.

Molly: That's a relief. The caterer's got a few notches on his spatula if you get my drift. (*Looks at Bud's tie.*) I like that tie.

Bud: Thank you.

Molly: Yes, very snazzy. You don't see ties like very often.

Bud: Well, you have to know where to shop.

Molly: So, tell me about yourself, Bud.

Bud: Pardon me?

Molly: Well, I've got a couple of minutes. So, spill.

Bud: Oh. All right. Let's see. Um...I've got a degree in business...

Molly: No, no. Not that stuff. That's boring. Tell me about the inner Bud. What are your hopes? Your dreams? Your darkest secrets?

Bud: I don't have any dark secrets.

Molly: Really?

Bud: No.

Molly: Well, that's unfortunate.

Bud: Yes, it is.

Molly: You don't have any skeletons in your closet?

Bud: No.

Molly: No big lies you've told?

Bud: No.

Molly: No secret love?

Bud: Secret love? No. No.

Molly: Hmm. I have a secret love.

Bud: Really?

Molly: Yep.

Bud: ....Well?

Molly: Well what?

Bud: Aren't you going to tell me who the secret love is?

Molly: It's a secret.

Bud: Oh. Of course.

Molly: All right, I'll tell you but you're the only one. Shhhhhhh. My secret love is...the circus.

Bud: The what? The circus?

Molly: The circus. More specifically the trapeze artist. I remember when I was a little girl—it was my eighth birthday—and I saw this lady on the trapeze at the circus. She was so beautiful and so graceful. And so free, you know? Like a bird. I wanted to be her. I wanted to wear that shiny costume. To have all eyes on me. Of course it never happened. It was just the childish dream of a silly little girl I suppose. But I've loved the circus ever since. I've always wanted to go back, but I never have.

Bud: Why not?

Molly: Oh, I don't know. Grown-up life got in the way I guess. You know. Real life. *(Molly feels something beneath her.)* What the hell is that? *(Molly reaches under her behind and starts feeling around.)*

Bud: What are you doing there?

Molly: Oh, God.

Bud: Is there something wrong? Are you in distress? Should I get someone?

*(Molly pulls a piece of mistletoe from between the cushions of the couch.)*

Molly: So, that's where that went. I knew I had three mistletoes when I got here and when I was hanging them up I could only find two. Hmm. Well, it's a shame to let it go to waste.

*(Molly holds the mistletoe over her head.)*

Merry Christmas, Bud.

Bud: What?

Molly: Plant one on me.

Bud: I'm sorry?

Molly: The mistletoe?

Bud: Oh, you mean...you mean me?

Molly: Yes, you.

Bud: No, I shouldn't.

Molly: You have to. To refuse a kiss under the mistletoe is bad luck.

Bud: But, you're the boss's wife.

Molly: Don't leave me hangin', Bud.

Bud: Uh..all right. Do I have to make a wish first?

Molly: It's not a birthday cake. It's mistletoe.

Bud: Right. So, it's just...it's just a kiss then.

Molly: Right.

Bud: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

Molly: I'm getting a cramp here, Bud.

Bud: Right. Okay, uh...

*(Bud kisses Molly on the cheek.)*

Molly: Well, aren't you the gentleman? A peck on the cheek. A more insecure woman might be insulted. She might think she had lost her appeal.

Bud: Oh, you haven't, no.

Molly: You don't think so?

Bud: No, not at all. You're very appealing.

Molly: Prove it then.

Bud: Pardon me?

Molly: Give me a real kiss. Right here. Right on the lips.

Bud: Ah, no I don't think that would be a good idea.

Molly: Come on. You said I was appealing, right?

Bud: Yes, but..

*(Molly moves into Bud.)*

Molly: Well, prove it then. I need you to prove it to me.

Bud: *(Pushing Molly away gently.)* Mrs. Graham, please. Please!

*(Molly backs away.)*

I'm sorry.

Molly: No. No, I'm the one who should apologize. I guess I've had too much to drink. One of those days, you know?

Bud: Yes.

Molly: I'm sorry.

Bud: No, it's quite all right. Really.

Molly: I'm afraid I've embarrassed myself.

Bud: No. Don't be embarrassed. Please. Champagne does that to me too. I get out of control.

Molly: You don't seem out of control.

Bud: Well, I am. I'm gone!!

Molly: You're very kind, Bud. Thank you. But, I don't think it was the champagne. I think it was the three vodkas before the champagne. Now, if you'll excuse me, I really should go and remove that woman's talons from my husband's shoulder. It was nice talking to you.

*(Molly starts to leave.)*

Bud: And you too. Yes. Very nice. My pleasure indeed. Charmed.

Molly: Are you finished?

Bud: All done, yes.

*(Molly exits. Bud speaks to the audience.)*

That was our second meeting. The one that put Molly in my head for good.

*(Bud exits. Molly enters and speaks to the audience.)*

Molly: After Arthur Junior was born I didn't stay on as Arthur's secretary anymore. By this time his business was doing very well and he decided he could afford to hire a real secretary. Truth be told, I don't think he liked having me at the office. I think he felt that it cramped his style. I thought

of going back into nursing, but I had been away from it for so long that I had lost confidence in my ability to do the job anymore. So, I told myself that staying home and raising my son was more important. It was easier that way. And Arthur Senior was busy with the company, so I didn't see much of him during that time. And so, I became an environmentalist. I began recycling vodka bottles. Yes, I hit it pretty hard for about a year. I'm not sure if this was when Arthur began to stray, or if he had been doing it all along, and I just refused to see it.

*(Arthur enters. He carries a two glasses of vodka. Molly is getting ready for the party. She is looking in a mirror. Fixing her earrings, her hair, her dress.)*

Arthur: Here you go.

Molly: Oh, no Arthur. I don't need a drink. I actually think I should cut back on the drinking.

Arthur: Cut back?

Molly: Yes.

Arthur: But it's the Christmas season. You can cut back after Christmas.

Molly: No, I think the drinking is starting to affect my parenting. I lost Arthur Junior's hat in the supermarket yesterday.

Arthur: So? Any parent can lose a child's hat.

Molly: His head was still in it.

Arthur: All right. *(Arthur sets the drink down on the table.)* How much longer do you think you'll be?

Molly: Not long. Ten minutes maybe.

Arthur: Good. How did the decorating of the hall go today?

Molly: Well, I got it done. It's just the basics, you know, mistletoe, holly, some lights.

Arthur: I'm sure it will be wonderful. Listen, uh...bit of bad news. I'm going to have to go to Quebec City tomorrow I'm afraid.

Molly: Tomorrow?

Arthur: Yes. A last minute thing.

Molly: When did you find this out?

Arthur: About an hour ago. Just as I was leaving the office.

Molly: But, I thought you weren't going to go on the road anymore.

Arthur: No, now that's not what I said.

Molly: Yes, it is.

Arthur: No, Molly, now what I said was, I would only be going on the road for the A list clients. These people don't want just anyone looking after them. They want the boss.

Molly: And which client is this?

Arthur: McCormick and Ferris.

Molly: I should have known.

Arthur: What?

Molly: Oh, Arthur please. I used to be your secretary, remember? Meredith McCormick? God. The number of times she called you, I doubt if it was all business related.

Arthur: Of course it was.

Molly: And is she going to Quebec City too?

Arthur: I honestly don't know.

Molly: Which means she is.

Arthur: I said I don't know. She might want to tag along to see what's available for her new offices, but nothing has been confirmed.

Molly: She's going.

Arthur: I said nothing has been confirmed.

Molly: Arthur please. Don't treat me like a fool. Somewhere inside here there remains a pretty smart woman, even though I've let that woman be relegated to your nanny and housekeeper. So, don't treat me like I haven't got a fucking brain. I can still put two and two together.

Arthur: My God, Molly. Where did this suspicious streak come from all of a sudden?

Molly: Gee, I don't know, Arthur. The smell of someone else's perfume in the car. The endless stream of late nights with so-called clients. The fact that you never make love to me anymore. Pick one.

Arthur: I assumed you were too tired to make love. You complain about having to look after our son all day, so I just assumed you were too tired.

Molly: Well, don't assume. Ask. Besides, how wide awake do I have to be for what passes for sex in this relationship?

Arthur: .....I'll be downstairs when you're ready. Take your time. No rush.

*(Arthur exits.)*

Molly: *(To herself.)* God. I've become such a bitch.

*(Molly picks up the glass of vodka and drinks it. She exits. Bud enters. He speaks to the audience.)*

Bud: After our coffee shop date, I didn't see Molly for another three months. She went out west to spend some time with her son and daughter-in-law. When she returned, I called her several times and left messages but she never returned my calls. Then, in November of that year, about four months after Arthur Graham had passed away, the city held a ceremony to commemorate his contribution to the community. It turns out he was quite the philanthropist and had contributed heavily to several local charities. So, to show their appreciation the city planted a tree in his honour and presented Molly with a plaque. I attended the ceremony, not so much because I wanted to honour the man to whom I owed so much, but because I wanted to hit on his widow one more time.

*(Molly enters. She carries a plaque. She sits on a bench. Bud moves to her.)*

Hello.

Molly: Hmm? Oh, Mr. Mitchell. Hello.

Bud: How are you?

Molly: Oh, I'm fine I suppose.

Bud: It's been a long time.

Molly: Yes, it has.

Bud: Three months.

Molly: Yes. Well, I've been out west.

Bud: I know. For three weeks.

Molly: Right.

Bud: It was a lovely ceremony.

Molly: Yes, very nice.

Bud: Well-attended too.

Molly: Well, so many people owe a huge debt of gratitude to Arthur. That's why you came I assume.

Bud: Why else? It's a beautiful tree they planted. And it's the only tree in the square. That's quite an honour.

Molly: Yes. It's nice to finally have a permanent fixture upon which the local canine population can relieve themselves. I'm sure that's what Arthur worked so hard for all those years.

Bud: .....You haven't returned my calls.

Molly: That's right. I haven't.

Bud: No, I wasn't looking for confirmation of that fact. I was just wondering why.

- Molly: Well, I've been busy.
- Bud: Busy. Of course. Do you mind if I sit?
- Molly: Actually, I was just about to leave.
- Bud: Oh. *(Pause.)* You're still sitting.
- Molly: Pardon me?
- Bud: Well, when someone's about to leave they usually stand and begin to put one foot in front of the other in a leaving motion. You're not doing that.
- Molly: At my age, I have to work up to standing. And please don't ask me what that age is.
- Bud: I think I'll sit. At least until I do happen to notice some movement on your part.
- (Bud sits beside Molly.)*
- You know, I thought we had quite an enjoyable time at the coffee shop that day.
- Molly: Yes, it was nice.
- Bud: And yet you haven't returned my phone calls. I mean, I was hoping that we could go out again. You know, have a real date.
- Molly: Look, Mr. Mitchell...
- Bud: Bud.
- Molly: Right. It's nothing against you.
- Bud: Well, it certainly appears that way. I mean, what did I do? Did I approach you too soon after your husband's death?
- Molly: You mean at his gravesite? During his funeral?
- Bud: Untimely was it?

- Molly: No, it wasn't that. I actually found that rather enterprising on your part.
- Bud: So, what is it?
- Molly: Look, you are a charming, if somewhat off-kilter man, and there is a good chance that I would enjoy your company immensely. It's just that I'm out of practice where relationships go. Even when I was in one, I wasn't very good at it. I stayed with a man for thirty-four years that I probably should have left after ten. Why? Was it loyalty? Maybe. But, I doubt it. You have to earn someone's loyalty and Arthur never did. And then along you come. You sneak up on me in a graveyard like one of the evil dead and you want to start dating. Dating? What the hell is that? Do you want to take me to the malt shop and then make out in your car down on Lover's Lane with my poodle skirt hiked up over my head?
- Bud: It crossed my mind.
- Molly: Well, I'm too old for that. And why did you pick me anyway? Look at me. I'm a miserable, bitter, cranky, pissed off broad who would rather lock herself away in her over-sized house and feel sorry for herself, which is exactly where I'm headed right now. (*Molly stands.*)
- Bud: I think you're beautiful.
- Molly: Thank you. But, beauty is a young woman's currency. What the hell is beauty going to get me at my age?
- Bud: A date with a charming, slightly off-kilter man who can't get you out of his mind.
- Molly: Mr. Mitchell, forget about me. I don't know what I did to impress you all those years ago. I really don't.
- Bud: I don't know either.
- Molly: What?
- Bud: Well, look at you. You're miserable, bitter, cranky...what was the other one?
- Molly: Pissed off.

Bud: Pissed off. Right. I don't know what I see in you. And I don't want to think about it. When I was married to Kitty, I thought about the relationship all the time. Why was I acting this way? Why was she acting that way? I don't want that. I want to be in a relationship and not have to think about it. I want it to just happen. Don't you think that's how a relationship should be? It shouldn't be a lot of hard work. It should just happen. And that's what I'm doing with us. I'm letting it just happen.

Molly: We're not in a relationship.

Bud: Not yet.

Molly: We're never going to be.

Bud: Not with that attitude we're not.

Molly: I have to go. *(Molly turns away.)*

Bud: Molly, please. Don't walk away. I mean, it's a lovely view, you walking away, but I would much rather see you walking towards me. I long to see that.

Molly: ...You're a very nice man, Mr. Mitchell. A very nice man. Please make us both happy and find someone who deserves you.

Bud: It's too late. I've already found her.

*(Molly looks at Bud for a moment, then exits. End Act One.)*

ACT TWO

Time: The present.

*(Bud enters and speaks to the audience.)*

Bud: I only saw Molly one more time after that second Christmas party. Mr. Graham sold the company suddenly in October of the following year. It was a surprise to everyone that he sold the company he had worked so hard to establish, but he was a shrewd businessman so I'm sure he had a good reason. So, the third time I saw Molly was not at a company function at all. It was the summer after that second Christmas party and it was at the opening of an art gallery that her husband had an interest in. Mr. Graham had donated a large sum of money to the gallery and he had invited a few of his favourite employees to the opening. I didn't get invited. Kitty did. She was Mr. Graham's secretary now, filling in for Shirley who was recovering from the leg surgery. The surgery didn't take so now, along with the limp, Shirley also had a mean streak. And Kitty had gotten what she wanted. She had become a member of the inner circle.

*(Kitty enters. She is carrying one glass of champagne. She gives it to Bud.)*

Kitty: Here you go.

Bud: Thank you. Aren't you having one?

Kitty: No, I don't feel well.

Bud: What's wrong?

Kitty: Nothing. Upset stomach. I don't know.

Bud: Oh. I'm sorry to hear that. Well...cheers. *(He holds up his glass to Kitty.)*

Kitty: Yeah, yeah.

*(Bud drinks.)*

Bud: How's my tie?

Kitty: Your what?

Bud: My tie. How is it?

Kitty: It's fine.

Bud: Is it straight?

Kitty: Yes, it's straight. It's fine. Who cares about your tie?

Bud: Well, I thought you would.

Kitty: It's a tie. Why would I care about a tie?

Bud: I just thought you would.

Kitty: Well, I don't.

Bud: So, what do you think of this?

Kitty: What?

Bud: This painting. What do you think?

Kitty: I don't know. Do you think I came here to look at paintings?

Bud: It's an art gallery.

Kitty: *(Looking at the painting.)* It's fine. What is it?

Bud: I think it's a horse. Or a very big woman.

Kitty: *(Looking off.)* Who's that talking to Arthur?

Bud: Hmm?

Kitty: There. That woman. Who is that?

Bud: Oh, that's the gallery owner. Diana Kelsey.

Kitty: Oh so that's her.

Bud: Yep.

Kitty: She calls him at the office all the time. And she keeps him on the phone forever.

Bud: Uh-huh.

Kitty: Well, don't you find that odd?

Bud: Why should I find that odd?

Kitty: Well, there's no need for it. You should be able to say everything you need to say in a two or three minute phone call. Look. Look at that. See?

Bud: What's wrong?

Kitty: Well, she's being overly-friendly, don't you think?

Bud: Well, I think they're friends. After all, he donated half a million dollars to this gallery.

Kitty: She's very touchy.

Bud: A half a million dollars will do that.

Kitty: Oh God. *(She grabs her stomach.)*

Bud: What's wrong?

Kitty: I think I'm going to be sick.

Bud: Why? Because she's touching him?

Kitty: No! My stomach is...Oh Shit! I *am* going to be sick. Where's the washroom?

Bud: Uh...over there. *(He points.)*

*(Kitty begins to move in the direction of the washroom.)*

No wait!

Kitty: What?!

Bud: That's not a washroom. That's a painting of a washroom. Uh...Over there! There it is. *(He points in the other direction.)*

Kitty: Oh God!

*(Kitty exits.)*

Bud: *(To the audience.)* And so once again, I found myself standing alone at a social gathering. Unfortunately, there were no couches in this room so I could not lower my profile as I had during my previous uncomfortable moments. I did however, have a painting I could stare at, and I figured the longer and the harder I stared at it, the more intelligent I might seem. People would think that I was an art aficionado. That I understood the meaning and depth in every brush stroke.

*(Molly enters and stands beside Bud. She looks at the painting.)*

Molly: You can't figure it out either, huh?

Bud: Hmm? Oh, hi there.

Molly: I think it's a camel.

Bud: Really? I don't see that.

Molly: Well, it's a got a hump.

Bud: No, I think that's a breast.

Molly: You think so?

Bud: Looks like.

Molly: Then where's the other one?

Bud: I have no idea.

Molly: Hmm. I'm Molly, by the way.

Bud: Bud.

Molly: Hi Bud. Nice to meet you.

Bud: Actually we've met before.

Molly: Really? When?

Bud: At the Executive Decisions Christmas party last year.

Molly: Oh. Well, I don't remember much about that party. I had a snootful that night.

Bud: Really? I didn't notice.

Molly: Oh yeah. I was very well irrigated. That was back in my drinking days.

Bud: You don't drink anymore?

Molly: Not to excess. No, when you wake up in the neighbour's gazebo covered in a thin December frost it opens your eyes.

Bud: I imagine it would, yes.

Molly: So, you work for Executive Decisions?

Bud: Yes, I'm one of the road warriors.

Molly: Oh, you're one of those, huh?

Bud: They call us the backbone of the company.

Molly: Who does?

Bud: Lots of people. Some people. No one really.

Molly: Well, I hope you're not married, Bud. Being apart all the time can be hard on a marriage.

Bud: Actually, I am married.

Molly: Well, take my advice and be careful. Is your wife here?

Bud: She's in the washroom throwing up.

Molly: Oh. Bulimic?

Bud: Upset stomach.

Molly: Yeah, I know the caterer. Well, I hope she's an understanding woman.

Bud: Understanding about what?

Molly: About your job.

Bud: Oh, yes. She understands quite a bit.

Molly: Well, that was evasive.

Bud: Kitty is fully aware of what it takes to be successful, and if that means my being on the road a lot, then she understands that.

Molly: Kitty? My husband's new secretary is named Kitty.

Bud: Yes, that's my Kitty. She's been his secretary for a few months now.

Molly: Oh. Yes, I've spoken to her on the phone. A little on the abrasive side I thought.

Bud: Oh?

Molly: That's what I thought.

Bud: Do you always say what you think?

Molly: Oh, yes. I've got some wonderful thoughts, Bud. It would be a shame to keep them to myself. So, what do you think of this whole 'art' idea?

Bud: What do you mean?

Molly: Well, it's a scam, isn't it?

Bud: A scam?

Molly: Yes, I mean who painted this?

Bud: Uh...Raoul Tudwell.

Molly: Exactly. Who the hell is he? And he's asking two thousand dollars for this thing. I mean, how much paint is on here anyway? Is there two thousand dollars worth?

Bud: I don't think it's the quantity of paint applied to the canvas. I think it's the vision. The technique. The significance of the work.

Molly: I was being facetious.

Bud: Oh.

Molly: I actually know quite a bit about art.

Bud: Do you?

Molly: Enough to know that this is a piece of crap.

Bud: That's very funny.

Molly: There, you see? And I almost kept that thought to myself.

Bud: Well, I'm glad you shared it.

Molly: So, are you having a good time?

Bud: As a matter of fact I am having a good time. I'm quite enjoying myself.

Molly: *(Looking off towards Diana and Arthur.)* Good. And I see you're not the only one. *(She waves.)* Hi Diana.

Bud: Diana Kelsey.

Molly: Yes.

Bud: Have you known her long?

Molly: Long enough.

*(Bud waves to Diana.)*

Bud: Hi Diana!

Molly: You know her too?

Bud: Never met her.

Molly: No sign of your wife yet. How long has she been gone?

Bud: Oh, I don't know. Ten minutes.

Molly: She must be pretty sick.

Bud: Yes, very. That's a lovely bracelet.

Molly: Thank you.

Bud: Quite stunning. And it works so well with the outfit.

Molly: Maybe someone should go and check on her.

Bud: Hmm?

Molly: Your wife. Maybe someone should check to see how she's doing.

Bud: Naw, let's give her a few more minutes.

Molly: Are you sure?

Bud: Oh yeah. So, how's your summer going?

Molly: Fine, thank you. I've spent most of it by the pool.

Bud: That's nice. Well, it's been a hot one, that's for sure.

Molly: Hot? I'll say it's hot. I saw a dog chasing a cat yesterday and they were both walking.

Bud: You've got a sparkling wit, you know that?

Molly: Well, a sparkling wit means nothing unless you've got someone to bounce it off of.

Bud: That's very true. You really do need someone to bounce it off of.

Molly: Would you like me to go and check on her?

Bud: Who?

Molly: Your wife.

Bud: Naw, she'll manage. So, you haven't taken any trips this summer?

Molly: No. You know what? I think I'm going to go and check on her.

Bud: Why?

Molly: Well, if I was sick I'd want someone to check on me.

Bud: I'd check on you.

Molly: Really?

Bud: Definitely. It would be my pleasure.

Molly: So, what about your wife?

Bud: Well, I don't know if she'd check on you but I sure would.

Molly: No, I meant maybe you should check on her.

Bud: Oh. All right then, sure. I'll stick my head in the door and give her a shout.

Molly: Thank you.

*(Bud doesn't move.)*

Well?

Bud: What? Oh, you mean now??

Molly: Yes.

Bud: Right. Okay. Uh..will you still be here when I get back?

Molly: Oh, I'll be around.

Bud; But you won't be right here.

Molly: Here? In front of this painting? No. You stand in front of a painting for too long and people think you're trying to look intelligent. Like you know what the painting means or something.

Bud: That is so pretentious. I hate that.

Molly: So, I'll be mingling. That's what I do. I mingle.

Bud: Well, it was nice talking to you...again.

Molly: You too.

Bud: Good-bye.

*(Bud exits. Molly speaks to the audience.)*

Molly: I didn't know who she was. She wouldn't give me her name. She called the house one night while Arthur was working late. She told me she was carrying Arthur's child. It wasn't a long conversation. Two, maybe three minutes. And I didn't get mad. And I didn't cry. I simply listened to what she had to say, thanked her for calling, and hung up the phone. And when Arthur came home that night, I confronted him. Not angrily, but in a very collected manner.

*(Arthur enters.)*

Arthur: And she called you out of the blue? Just like that?

Molly: Just like that.

Arthur: Well, she must be deranged. That's the only explanation. The woman is deranged.

Molly: Well, that's one explanation.

Arthur: Unbelievable. So, what does she want? Did she say?

Molly: Yes, in fact, she did say. She wants you, Arthur. She wants me to give you up.

Arthur: She what?

Molly: That's what she said.

Arthur: Well of all the..she wants you to give me up?

Molly: That's right.

Arthur: Madness. Absolute madness. Did she give her name?

Molly: No.

Arthur: She didn't give her name?

Molly: No name.

Arthur: Well, this is an outrage. There is simply no need for those kinds of lies.

Molly: Oh, Arthur please, stop it.

Arthur: Stop what?

Molly: The charade. The innocent act. The woman described your naked body right down to the size and shape of your birthmark. She described your lovemaking technique, and by the way, I'm a little upset at a couple of the things she's getting that I never got. So, I know she's not lying. I know she's slept with you. So, you can dispense with the false indignation.

Arthur: I see. Well.

Molly: Yeah. Well.

Arthur: This is...uh...this is extremely awkward, isn't it?

Molly: Awkward? Yes, Arthur, it is awkward. At the very *least*, it's awkward.

Arthur: And she didn't give her name?

Molly: No. Why? Is there more than one? Could there be someone else out there carrying your child?

Arthur: No, of course not. Was it a long distance call?

Molly: No, it wasn't a long distance call. Does that narrow it down for you?

Arthur: Molly, I ended it a month ago. It was very brief and it meant nothing. She's calling now because...I don't know...maybe she sees me as a meal ticket. Maybe she thinks she can get something out of me.

Molly: So, you admit it. You admit you had an affair.

Arthur: Yes. Isn't that what you want?

- Molly: Actually, Arthur, what I want is for you *not* to have affairs. For you to be faithful. For you to feel that I'm all you need. That's what I want, you son of a bitch!!....All right, I got that out. Now, let's talk about what we're going to do.
- Arthur: What do you mean?
- Molly: Well, we can't go on like this, can we?
- Arthur: No, we most certainly can't. (*Beat*) Like what?
- Molly: Oh, God. All right, here's what I think. I think you should sell the company.
- Arthur: Sell the company? Sell Executive Decisions?
- Molly: Yes.
- Arthur: And how is that going to change anything?
- Molly: Our marriage hasn't been the same since you started that company, Arthur. I think it's bad luck for us.
- Arthur: Bad luck? You want me to sell a profitable enterprise because you think it's bad luck?
- Molly: Yes.
- Arthur: Molly, that's ridiculous. What's next? Voodoo dolls? Incantations?
- Molly: I want you to sell the company. You can start another company if you like. I don't care. Just get rid of this one. And then you will give this woman a large sum of money.
- Arthur: What for?
- Molly: To care for your child. There's no reason why the offspring should suffer just because the parents are fools.
- Arthur: And how do we know she's really pregnant? Maybe she's lying. And if she is pregnant, how do we know the baby is mine?
- Molly: Well, you'll have to find out, won't you? There are tests you can take. Call her and set it up.

Arthur: And how much money am I supposed to give her?

Molly: I don't know. I mean really Arthur, can you put a monetary value on something like that?

Arthur: Of course you can. You can put a monetary value on anything.

Molly: Fine then. Half a million dollars.

Arthur: Half a million?! I don't have that kind of money lying around.

Molly: You will when you sell the company.

Arthur: You want me to give this woman a half a million dollars?

Molly: You gave half a million to Diana Kelsey and her art gallery. You don't think a child is worth a half a million dollars too?

Arthur: And what if she won't take money? You said she wanted me.

Molly: You were her number one choice. Second on the list was money. And that was just ahead of a condo in the Caribbean.

Arthur: My God, is she still going on about that bloody condo?

Molly: What?

Arthur: Nothing. Half a million dollars. I should give it to her in gold bars. See how she likes lugging that around.

Molly: Just give it to her.

Arthur: I don't know about this, Molly. I really don't.

Molly: Arthur, I could very well just take our son and leave you and get a multi-million dollar settlement. In fact, that's what any normal, sensible, vindictive person would do. But, I've invested too much in this relationship. And I'm not a quitter. And I want Arthur Junior to have a home where both parents reside. Now, if you want to make this work, you'll do what I suggest.

Arthur: You haven't asked me who this woman is.

Molly: What?

Arthur: The other woman. You haven't asked me who it is.

Molly: I don't care who it is. The fact that you were with someone else is more than enough information, thank you. Oh, and one more thing. I want you to end the affair you are currently having with Diana Kelsey.

Arthur: What?

Molly: You heard me.

Arthur: Diana Kelsey? What makes you think that Diana Kelsey and I are...

Molly: Arthur!

Arthur: I'll call her right now.

*(Arthur exits. Molly speaks to the audience.)*

Molly: The Diana Kelsey thing was just a guess. Shortly after Arthur passed away, I went out west to visit my son and his wife for three weeks. I thought it might be a nice change for me, but I found that I was bored, looking for ways to occupy myself while they were off earning their livings. I stayed in their 'granny suite'. Arthur Junior had the room built when we learned that his father was terminal. He assumed that I would be unable to care for myself without a husband and would thus have to be shunted onto them within hours of his passing. You know what a granny suite is, right? It's where mothers go to die. Lying in bed at night I could feel the pall of death hovering in the stagnant granny suite air. And every morning when I awoke, I fully expected to find the coroner pulling the bed sheet over my head. The granny suite was attached to the kitchen, I'm assuming the reasoning there was to lessen the number of steps I would have to take to get my morning cup of green tea, thereby affording me as little exercise as possible, and hastening the atrophying of my muscles and of my will to live. As it turned out, the proximity of the suite to the kitchen had an effect on my mental health as well. I could hear their conversations every morning, as I lay there waiting for the coroner.

*(Arthur Junior enters. Molly moves up to the kitchen table. She is now Kendra, Arthur Junior's wife.)*

Junior: What time did you get in last night, Kendra? I didn't hear you.

Kendra: Oh, it was after midnight. It took me forever to finish that report.

Junior: Couldn't you have done it here? You've written up reports at home before.

Kendra: No, all the research material was at the office. I would have had to drag all that home with me, so I just decided to finish it there.

Junior: Oh. I called your office last night but there was no answer.

Kendra: I wasn't in my office. I was working in the boardroom. There's more space in there. And how was your evening?

Junior: Quiet. Mom and I talked until about eleven and then we both turned in.

Kendra: God, I wish I could have done that.

Junior: You know she's met a man.

Kendra: What?

Junior: Yes, she told me last night.

Kendra: What do mean a man? You mean a romantic interest?

Junior: Well, she didn't say that. She just said that he's been pursuing her and they had coffee together last week.

Kendra: Pursuing *her* or her money?

Junior: No, she says the fellow's very well off himself.

Kendra: Well, did you tell her how you felt about such a thing?

Junior: No, I didn't. How do I feel about it?

Kendra: You don't approve of it.

Junior: I don't?

Kendra: Certainly not.

Junior: Oh. Why?

Kendra: Because people her age don't fall in love.

Junior: I didn't say she was falling in love. And why don't they fall in love?

Kendra: Because they have poor judgment. When people get older their eyes go, their hearing goes, and their judgment goes.

Junior: It does?

Kendra: It goes right to hell. Besides, your father hasn't even been dead for two months. No, this is completely wrong.

Junior: I think it's kind of cute.

Kendra: Cute? It is not cute. God, Arthur, next thing you know they'll be going for walks in the park, holding hands, kissing in public. She'll make a complete fool of herself.

Junior: Well, I don't know if it'll reach that extreme.

Kendra: It will. Trust me. And what if they want to have sex?

Junior: Oh, please, Kendra. We're talking about my mother here.

Kendra: Exactly. A woman her age. It's distasteful. No, she should end this relationship immediately.

Junior: I don't know that it is a relationship yet. They've only been out once and just for coffee.

Kendra: Well, then she should end it before it goes any further. I mean, I love your mother, Arthur, I truly do, but what man is going to want to engage in intimate relations with a woman of her advanced years? Men her age want younger women. They want women my age.

Junior: They do?

Kendra: They clamor for women my age. No, I think this man is after her money. Mark my words. And if he gets his hands on it then you never will.

Junior: What?

Kendra: You heard me.

Junior: I don't care about my mother's money.

Kendra: Well, you should. Your father worked hard for that money. You should care about it out of respect for him. And you should get every penny of it after Molly is gone because that's how your father would have wanted it. He wouldn't want it falling into the hands of some fly-by-night Casanova. Besides, we built that granny suite. Don't you think we should get some compensation for that somewhere down the road? And how is that going to happen if your mother's elderly Gigolo is spending your inheritance on the French Riviera? All right, I have to go. *(She kisses Arthur goodbye.)*

Junior: Will, you be working late again tonight?

Kendra: Hard to say. Love you.

*(Kendra exits. Bud speaks to the audience.)*

Bud: I waited for two months after the meeting with Molly at the tree-planting ceremony before I contacted her again. She obviously needed some space, so I decided to back off for a short while. But, again, she was always on my mind. Sometimes at the forefront, and sometimes just lurking in the back somewhere. But always there. Finally, I couldn't wait any longer. I was sitting at home alone one Friday night watching the Bulls Lakers game. And I hate basketball. I mean, I really hate it. Suddenly, the absurdity of the situation landed on me like one of those freak of nature power forwards slam dunking the ball through the helpless hoop. I phoned Molly but there was no answer, so I got in my car and drove to her house. The lights were off, but I knew she was inside somewhere. Don't ask me how I knew. I just knew.

*(Molly enters. She is at a second story window now looking down on Bud below.)*

- Molly: Who's down there? Is someone down there?
- Bud: It's me. Bud Mitchell.
- Molly: Bud Mitchell?
- Bud: Good evening. Nice to see you again.
- Molly: What are you doing down there? Are you throwing pebbles at my window?
- Bud: Stones.
- Molly: What?
- Bud: I'm throwing stones. It's dark out here. I couldn't find any pebbles.
- Molly: And how did you even know this was my window?
- Bud: I didn't. I broke three other windows before I got to this one.
- Molly: You what?
- Bud: It's okay. I'll pay for them.
- Molly: Why didn't you ring the doorbell?
- Bud: Would you have answered it?
- Molly: This late at night? Certainly not.
- Bud: That's what I figured. So, I went straight for the windows.
- Molly: Well, what do you want?
- Bud: I want to tell you something. Can I come in for a moment?
- Molly: It's after midnight.
- Bud: That's all right.
- Molly: I'm in my bathrobe.

Bud: That's all right too.

Molly: I haven't got any make-up on.

Bud: I'll tell you from here. I just wanted to say that I'm not giving up on you, Molly. I was sitting at home tonight all alone, and I wondered if you were doing the same thing. You were, weren't you?

Molly: Yes, I was.

Bud: Yes, now that's a waste of an evening, don't you think? Sitting all alone doing nothing.

Molly: I was watching a basketball game.

Bud: Hey, I love basketball! We could have been watching it together. I called to ask you out but you're still not answering your phone. That's why I had to come over.

Molly: Maybe I enjoy being alone.

Bud: No, you don't.

Molly: What?

Bud: You don't enjoy being alone. You need someone to bounce that sparkling wit off of. You need someone to tell your wonderful thoughts to.

Molly: What are you talking about?

Bud: I know you, Molly. I know you better than you think I do. And I want you to give me a chance to woo you.

Molly: Woo me?

Bud: Woo you. Will you?

Molly: I don't want to be wooed. I want to be weft awone.

Bud: Ah! You see? There's that sparkling wit. And if I wasn't here, it would have been wasted. No, you need me here.

Molly: Mr. Mitchell, you have got to stop telling me what I need.

Bud: Bud.

Molly: What?

Bud: Call me Bud.

Molly: God, you are one of the most persistent men I know.

Bud: I am, aren't I?

Molly: I didn't say that was in your favour.

Bud: I just want you to go out with me again. I want you to give us a chance. You haven't given us a chance.

Molly: I believe I told you during our last meeting that there was no us.

Bud: That's because you keep fighting it. And if you keep fighting it, I swear sooner or later I'm going to have to walk away. I mean, a man's pride can only take so much rejection. Eventually, I'm going to give up.

Molly: And when will that eventuality occur?

Bud: Oh, not for a long while yet.

Molly: Wonderful.

Bud: So, how about that date?

Molly: You're not going to give up at all, are you?

Bud: No.

Molly: No matter how many times I turn you down, you're going to keep asking me out.

Bud: Hard to believe, isn't it?

Molly: Mr. Mitchell, please...

Bud: Bud! It's Bud. We've known each other for twenty-five years. Call me Bud. Please.

Molly: All right. Bud.

Bud: Finally. Now, we're getting somewhere. Molly, listen to me. I don't know how this happened exactly. I was a reasonably contented man back when we first met. A contented, *married* man. That's why I didn't chase you then, because I'm pretty high up there on the morals chain and quite frankly it would have been morally beneath me to come after you then. But, here we are twenty-five years later—dead marriage, dead husband—and I'm standing on your lawn getting damp feet, which at my age could lead to a case of pneumonia or at the very least a nasty foot fungus, but here I stand anyway, and I'm asking you for a chance. You're inside of me, Molly. You've been there for years. Since the first time we met. And I'm not going to let this feeling—this infatuation. Whatever you want to call it—I'm not going to let it die before I've given it every possible chance at life.

Molly: ...Wait there. I'm coming down. (*Molly exits.*)

Bud: (*To the audience.*) Oh my God. This was it. I had finally gotten through to her. I don't know where that 'every chance at life' speech came from. It just burst forth from somewhere deep inside. It was good though, huh? Yeah. And now she was coming down. She would open her front door, throw herself into my arms, and we would be together at last.

(*Molly enters.*)

Molly: Mr. Mitchell, I've called the police.

Bud: What?

Molly: They'll be here in ten minutes.

Bud: Ten minutes? That's not a very quick response time.

Molly: I told them not to rush. I wanted you to have a head start. I don't think you're a danger to me but you are becoming a nuisance.

Bud: A nuisance?

Molly: Yes.

Bud: But, I just want...

Molly: I know what you want. You want us to start dating. You want us to begin a relationship. You want that relationship to blossom. You want me to fall in love with you. You want us to have intimate relations. To be together. To do the crossword puzzle in bed on a Sunday morning. To go for walks in the park. Hold hands. Kiss in public.

Bud: Yes, that's exactly what I...

Molly: Don't speak. Just listen. Six months ago I buried a man I had been married to for thirty-four years. A man I had a child with and dedicated most of my adult life to. When he was in the hospital, I was visiting him one night, holding his hand, and he asked me to help him end his suffering. Oh, I knew it was coming and it wasn't an unusual request given his prognosis, and I was certainly the one to ask. Being his wife, I would want to see his suffering come to an end, and being a former nurse, I would certainly know how to do it efficiently. He suffered through another three months before he died. And each time I would visit, he would ask me to help him. But I couldn't. I couldn't do it.

Bud: Well, that's understandable, Molly. That's a lot to ask of a person. You're asking someone to question their beliefs, to cross a moral line they might have adhered to their entire life.

Molly: No. That wasn't it. I couldn't do it because, after all those years, I just didn't love him enough.

Bud: I'm sorry. I had no idea.

Molly: Of course you didn't. How could you?

Bud: Well, if you're looking for someone you'd be willing to kill, then I'm your man.

Molly: You do have a certain peculiar charm about you. I'll give you that.

Bud: I knew you'd come around. So, how about that date?

Molly: You've got about seven minutes before the police arrive, Mr. Mitchell. Goodnight.

*(Molly exits. Bud speaks to the audience.)*

Bud: I think I knew how Molly felt. About not loving her husband enough. In fact, I knew exactly how she felt. One year after our son Tom was born, Kitty walked out on us. Now, knowing Kitty, I didn't really blame her and I suppose I knew it was coming. She had high expectations. She wanted me to be successful very quickly, but mine was a more measured approach. It just wasn't happening fast enough for her. And so, one evening, after Tom had been put to bed for the night, Kitty walked out on the marriage.

*(Kitty enters, pulling a suitcase on wheels.)*

Kitty: The cab was supposed to be here at nine. God, I'd better not miss my flight.

Bud: I don't understand. Why Vancouver, Kitty? Why so far away?

Kitty: There are only two places to live in this country, Bud. Toronto and Vancouver, and I've lived in Toronto.

Bud: How are you going to get by out there? What are you going to do for money?

Kitty: Money won't be a problem.

Bud: But, you'll be so far away from Tommy out there. God, Kitty. You won't ever see him.

Kitty: I'll see him. I'll come back to visit.

Bud: What? Two or three times a year?

Kitty: As often as I can.

Bud: Once every couple of months then? Is that how often you're going to see your son?

Kitty: All right, Bud. I get it. I'm a lousy mother. I get it.

Bud: I didn't say that.

Kitty: Well, I'm saying it. I'm a lousy mother and I was a lousy wife. Okay?

Bud: It takes two to make a relationship work, Kitty. I have to shoulder some of the blame too.

Kitty: No. No you don't. You're a good man. Probably too good for me.

Bud: Oh, don't be ridiculous.

Kitty: Bud...God, you just have no idea.

Bud: I know. You always told me that.

Kitty: Well, it's true. You're a....

Bud: I'm a what?

Kitty: ...Nothing. Never mind.

Bud: You think I'm a clown, don't you? A joke. A nothing little man who will never amount to anything.

Kitty: Bud, let's not do this now.

Bud: Did you ever really love me, Kitty? You know, in the true romantic sense of the word? Love that knows no bounds? Like that?

Kitty: Did you ever really love *me* that way?

Bud: I wanted to.

Kitty: But you didn't.

Bud: ....No, I guess I never did.

Kitty: Then this shouldn't surprise either one of us, should it?

Bud: Even so, it's never an easy thing.

Kitty: I'm not a very nice person, Bud. You're better off without me. Does that make it easier for you?

Bud: I'm not thinking of me, Kitty. I'm thinking of Tommy. You're his mother. You shouldn't be going so far away.

- Kitty: On the contrary, I have to get as far away from Tommy as I can.
- Bud: What?
- Kitty: Now, I'll send for the rest of my things once I get settled out there.
- Bud: Why would you say that?
- Kitty: It might be a couple of weeks. Maybe longer.
- Bud: Kitty?
- Kitty: Bud, I have to get as far away from Tommy as I can, so I won't ever have to look him in the eyes. Oh, God. Where the hell is that cab? If the cab was on time I would have been gone by now. Shit!
- Bud: Kitty, calm down.
- Kitty: Calm down. Yeah. Easy for you to say. *(She paces a bit.)* Stop staring at me.
- Bud: I'm not staring at you.
- Kitty: You are. I can feel you.
- Bud: Why are you so jumpy?
- Kitty: I'm not jumpy. I'm just...All right, look Bud, I thought I could do it. You know, stay with you and Tommy. Be the mother. Be the wife. I thought I could see it through. I really did. But as each month passed--the more Tommy could see me, smile at me, reach his little hand out to me—the more I realized I couldn't stay. I just can't look into those eyes of his without feeling guilty. Without feeling ashamed....Bud, there's something I have to tell you. I wasn't going to tell you. I was just going to run away and not ever tell you. But the cab's late and I'm standing here and you're so pathetic and...God.
- Bud: It's okay, Kitty. I already know.
- Kitty: What?

Bud: I know.

Kitty: You know what? What do you know?

Bud: What you were just going to tell me. I know.

Kitty: You do?

Bud: Yes.

Kitty: But, how? How do you know?

Bud: Kitty, the boy was conceived while I was on the road. I had been away for three weeks. You don't think I could've figured that out? Can you not even give me that much credit.

Kitty: So, you know? You've known all along?

Bud: Yes.

Kitty: And do you know who his real..

Bud: No. Not for certain. And I don't want to know. One day, you can sit down with Tommy and tell him. I'm sure he'll want the answer one day. But, me? It's just not important to me. Unless you're running away with the fellow. But you're not, are you?

Kitty: No.

Bud: Of course you're not. I mean, if you were, then you'd be taking Tommy with you. But, he doesn't want anything to do with Tommy, does he?

Kitty: No.

Bud: Well, that's his loss.

Kitty: But, why aren't you....why aren't you *making* me take Tommy with me? Why aren't you just throwing us both out?

Bud: Because he's my boy. Because I love him. And I would die without him.

*(We hear a car horn honk OFF.)*

Kitty: That's my cab. Oh, God. Why did it have to come now? I've got so much to say now. Bud, I know that sorry doesn't cover it, but I really am so sorry about this. About everything. I really am.

Bud: Just take care of yourself, Kitty. I don't want anything happening to Tommy's mother.

Kitty: I will. And you take care of Tommy, ya hear?

Bud: I will.

Kitty: Promise? I mean, he's just a baby.

Bud: You've got nothing to worry about.

Kitty: You promise me.

Bud: He'll be fine.

Kitty: Promise me!

Bud: I promise, Kitty. He'll be fine. He will.

Kitty: I know he will. I know.

Bud: Okay, give me a hug then.

*(Kitty and Bud hug.)*

Bud: Goodbye, Kitty.

Kitty: Goodbye, Bud. God, I must look awful.

Bud: You look fine. Now, let's get you out to that cab.

*(Bud moves to the suitcase.)*

Kitty: Oh, no, Bud, I'll take that.

Bud: No, it's all right.

Kitty: No, really, Bud. I'll do it.

Bud: Kitty, it's all right. I've got it.

Kitty: Okay. Okay. Thank you.

*(Bud picks up the suitcase.)*

Bud: Wow!! This thing's heavy.

Kitty: It is?

Bud: I'll say it is. Whatcha got in here? Gold bars?

Kitty: *(Laughs hard.)* Gold bars? Hah! That's good. Gold bars.

*(Bud takes the suitcase and exits.)*

Careful with that. Gently.

Molly: *(To the audience.)* A few days ago, I was leaving my house to go for a walk. It was a cold February afternoon. I always enjoy walking in the cold. The cold seems to pump life into me. It wakes up whatever is lying dormant inside, if only for a short period. So, I was leaving my house when a car roared into the driveway and screeched to a halt just inches from my rhododendron, which is a euphemism for my ass.

*(Bud enters. He is wearing his coat.)*

Bud: Molly. Good afternoon.

Molly: Mr. Mitchell. Do you always drive so recklessly?

Bud: It's all right. Your neighbour jumped out of the way in plenty of time. Molly, I'm here on an urgent matter.

Molly: Again? What now?

Bud: I want you to come with me.

Molly: Come with you? Come with you where?

Bud: It's a surprise, now grab your coat and come.

Molly: I'm wearing my coat.

Bud: Ah! Kismet! Let's go then.

Molly: Mr. Mitchell, we have been over this. Remember? Your last visit a month ago? The stone throwing incident?

Bud: Yes, I remember.

Molly: I thought I made it clear that I did not want to pursue a relationship with you.

Bud: You did. You made it very clear.

Molly: And yet, here you are.

Bud: It really is incredible, isn't it?

Molly: Well, I guess it's time to call the police again.

Bud: Molly, look, I promise you, if you come with me right now, right this minute, I will never ever bother you again. Ever.

Molly: ...Really?

Bud: Really.

Molly: Can I have that in writing?

Bud: You don't need it in writing. My word is my bond.

*(Molly stares at Bud.)*

I've got a pen and some paper in the car. Now, let's go.

Molly: But where? Where are we going?

Bud: It's a surprise. *(Beat as Molly hesitates.)* Please?

Molly: And you'll never bother me again?

Bud: Never.

Molly: Oh, all right, fine.

Bud: Thank you.

Molly: I must be out of my mind.

Bud: That's a nice rhododendron you've got there.

Molly: I beg your pardon?

Bud: Your rhododendron. It's nice and big.

*(Bud speaks to the audience.)*

Bud: I was taking Molly to a location on the edge of the city about fifteen minutes from her home. The parking lot was crowded when we arrived. It was going to be sold out by all appearances. We stood in line for about twenty minutes, inching along. We talked about many things in that line.

Molly: So, the three windows came to three hundred and twenty-seven dollars. I've got the bill at home. I mean what kind of idiot would throw stones at a person's window?

Bud: *(To the audience.)* It seemed to me as if we were finally starting to bond the way I hoped we always would.

Molly: You're standing too close.

Bud: I'm trying to keep warm.

Molly: What am I, a Bunsen burner? Stand back.

Bud: Could I borrow your gloves?

Molly: No. You'll stretch them out.

Bud: But my hands are cold.

Molly: Then you should have brought your own gloves.

Bud: Well, I didn't know we'd have to stand in line for so long.

Molly: Well, that's your tough luck, isn't it?

Bud: *(To the audience.)* Yes, it was going extremely well. And then we were inside. Pushing through the crowd, we made our way to our seats. They were in the very back row. I'm sure we must have gotten the last two tickets.

*(Molly and Bud sit.)*

Molly: So, why here?

Bud: I beg your pardon?

Molly: Why did you bring me here?

Bud: I thought you might enjoy it.

Molly: But you said it was urgent. You made it sound like it was life or death.

Bud: It is.

Molly: The circus is life or death?

Bud: For me? At this very moment? Yes, it is. So are you enjoying it?

Molly: We just got here. And there's something sticky under my feet. (*Looking down.*) God, I hope that's a soda. A thick, lumpy, brown soda.

Bud: I love the circus. The spectacle of it. The Gypsy kind of life these people lead. There's something romantic about it all, don't you think?

Molly: Romantic? I wonder if the old man down there with the shovel thinks it's romantic.

Bud: No, this is wonderful. It's an escape to an entirely different world. I'm sure that's what the appeal is. Would you like some popcorn?

Molly: No thank you.

Bud: Candy apple?

Molly: No.

Bud: How bout' a corndog?

Molly: I'm fine. Really.

Bud: I haven't had a corndog in...God, it must be thirty years. I used to love corndogs.

Molly: I couldn't stand the smell of them. Made me nauseous.

- Bud: Well, I don't really need one. It's probably just an urge to feel young again. To eat something that's not good for me for a change. To do something risky.
- Molly: Yeah, eating a corndog is on the edge all right. You know, I don't know what would ever prompt you to bring me to a circus. I haven't been to the circus since I was a child.
- Bud: Your eighth birthday.
- Molly: What?
- Bud: Your eighth birthday. That's the last time you were at the circus.
- Molly: That's right. My eighth birthday. How did you know that?
- Bud: Molly, did you ever want something so much that it tied you up inside and you couldn't think of anything else?
- Molly: Look, if you want a corndog, go ahead.
- Bud: I'm not talking about corndogs. I'm talking about wanting something for so very long, and then finally having it within your grasp, and being scared to death that it's going to slip away from you.
- Molly: I try not to want things that badly. That's how people get hurt.
- Bud: Are you afraid of getting hurt?
- Molly: I'm afraid of wanting. I'd rather live free of any wants that might cause me to spin out of control.
- Bud: I don't know, Molly. Sometimes I think spinning out of control is part of what living is all about. You know, letting yourself go? Taking chances? (*Pointing up.*) Look, Molly. Look.
- Molly: What? (*Molly looks up.*)
- Bud: The trapeze artist. Look at that. Oh, isn't she beautiful?
- Molly: Yes. Very.

Bud: Remarkable. Look. Look at how she carries herself. Did you ever see such graceful poise?

Molly: And she's smiling. How can someone smile when they're up there doing that? Maybe no one told her there's no net. Someone should tell her that.

Bud: No, that doesn't matter to her, because she knows how good she is. She's living in the moment. This is her time. Look at her. She knows that all eyes are on her and she revels in that. She feeds off of it. Dazzling. Absolutely dazzling.

Molly: She really is, isn't she?

Bud: She's like...

Molly: Like a bird.

Bud: Yes. Just like a bird. And she has such confidence. Such courage.

Molly: She's wonderful.

*(Molly wipes a tear from her eye.)*

Bud: Molly? What's wrong? What is it?

Molly: *(Looking up at the trapeze artist.)* I used to be brave like that. When I was a little girl, I was fearless.

Bud: I think we all were at some point.

Molly: I wonder whatever happened to that little girl. God how I miss her.

Bud: She's still there, Molly. I see her every time I look into your eyes.

Molly: You do?

Bud: I'm looking at her right now. And she's grown into the bravest, most marvelous woman I know.

Molly: So, you brought me to the circus. Who would have thought?

Bud: Yeah, it was one of my better ideas.

Molly: ....Bud?

Bud: Yes?

Molly: I'm going to kiss you.

Bud: No, don't mention it. The tickets were dirt cheap.

Molly: No. I'm going to kiss you. Right here. Right now. In front of everybody.

Bud: You're going to kiss me?

Molly: Yes. I wanted to kiss you at that commemoration ceremony that day but I was afraid of how it would look. I mean, they're planting a tree in my husband's name and I'm making out with a strange man. I couldn't do that. So, I just left. Left you standing there. And then I wanted to kiss you that night that you broke my windows, but I was afraid that I might get swept away by you and we'd become lovers and I mean, how would that look at our age? Would people laugh at us? Would I look like an old fool in the eyes of those closest to me? So instead of kissing you I just..

Bud: You called the police.

Molly: I called the police.

Bud: They didn't catch me.

Molly: I'm glad.

Bud: So, why do you want to kiss me now?

Molly: Because this is *my* time. It's my life. And I'm not afraid anymore. I'm not afraid of where it will lead. I'm not afraid of what people will think. I'm not afraid of having feelings that any other human being would be overjoyed to have. And most of all, I don't give a damn how it looks.

Bud: So, you're really going to kiss me?

Molly: Yes. And I'm going to kiss you hard.

Bud: Hard? In front of all of these innocent bystanders?

Molly: Yes. I want everyone to see this. I want them to see two mature adults who genuinely care for one another, showing affection, which will then spill over into passion.

Bud: Passion?

Molly: Yes. Mothers will cover their children's eyes. Teenagers will look away in horror.

Bud: ...You really care for me?

Molly: I must, because I'm going to kiss you hard. Are you ready?

Bud: I've been ready for years.

*(Molly and Bud kiss. Lights down. End.)*