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LOSING THINGS

A romantic comedy in two acts

By Ellen West

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LOSING THINGS

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

CAROLYN; *A woman of 72*

CARRIE; *Carolyn's inner self, aged 20*

ROY; *An eager security guard, almost 30*

MARSHA; *A friend of Carolyn's, in her 70s*

JIM; *Marsha's husband, also in his 70s*

SETTING

The living room/dining area of a high rise urban condo. Scattered about the room are partially packed boxes ready for a move. Curtained double doors leading to a balcony are located Upstage Center.

TIME

May; the present

Losing Things
by Ellen West

ACT I: SCENE ONE

(AT RISE: The living/dining area of an urban condo. Although it was once decorated by an interior designer, it has been neglected recently and no one has removed used coffee cups, TV dinners, newspapers, discarded shoes, sweaters, etc. On the upstage wall is a balcony but the sliding glass doors are closed and a curtain is drawn over them. On another wall is an entertainment center with a television, speakers, etc. A pass-through to the kitchen is located Left; the front door visible Stage Right. A hall leading to the bedroom is located off the entranceway. It is early afternoon. CAROLYN and MARSHA have just entered the condo.)

CAROLYN

Well, that's over.

(CAROLYN begins looking for something as MARSHA, using her cane, pokes nosily and somewhat contemptuously through the boxes as she talks; and she does talk more than she listens.)

MARSHA

That's no way to talk about your doctor, Carolyn, if I needed to talk to a psychiatrist I wouldn't say, "It's over" like that, I'd be glad someone was there for me, have you lost your prescription already—

CAROLYN

No, Jim has it.

MARSHA

(Overriding) I think Jim took it to get it filled, don't worry about it, sit down, he'll be here in a minute—

CAROLYN

I know, I said—

MARSHA

(Overriding; opening the curtains with her cane) If I had someone to talk over my problems with I'd be so happy I'd never say "It's over" like I'd just—

CAROLYN

Please don't open those curtains.

MARSHA

(Ignoring this) —been through the worst—

CAROLYN

Marsha...

MARSHA

(Ignoring this also) —been through the worst thing—

CAROLYN

Marsha...

MARSHA

—the worst disaster since, I don't know—

CAROLYN

MARSHA!

MARSHA

What! You don't have to shout.

CAROLYN

Please leave the curtains alone.

MARSHA

Oh, Carolyn, I'm so sorry, it completely slipped my mind, you've seemed better recently—

CAROLYN

I am better, I'm not seeing Dr. Haag anymore—

MARSHA

—but these things take time, no one expects you to get over this tragedy at a moment's notice,

CAROLYN

(Resuming her search) It wasn't a tragedy. Old people die—

MARSHA

I've said to Jim I don't know how many times, I've said, Carolyn has this magnificent view, but what good does it do her—

CAROLYN

(Now to herself) I don't know what I've done with them—

MARSHA

—now that Ed’s gone, thank the good Lord we don’t have her affection. I love—

CAROLYN

(Correcting Marsha’s misnomer) Affliction—

MARSHA

—our balcony, it’s the only reason for living here, I would never have downgraded to this size if it hadn’t been for the view! Carolyn, hon, do sit down before you fall again.

CAROLYN

What did I do with my keys?

MARSHA

You lost them. Don’t you remember?

CAROLYN

(Impatiently) I remember! That’s why I’m looking for them, Marsha!

MARSHA

Sit down, honey. I have a question.

CAROLYN

(Giving up the search) Okay.

MARSHA

Are your sessions with Dr. Haag so painful for you?

CAROLYN

Not particularly.

MARSHA

Then why do you say “It’s over” like you’re so relieved, like you’ve been in a someplace awful someplace—

CAROLYN

I meant the therapy’s over. I’m not seeing Dr. Haag anymore—

MARSHA

Of course you are. Did you forget? You have an appointment next Wednesday. If you still haven’t found your keys—

CAROLYN

Marsha—

MARSHA
—Jim and I will take you.

CAROLYN
MARSHA! I don't need a psychiatrist any longer.

MARSHA
Who says?

CAROLYN
I do.

MARSHA
I think we should talk this over with Jim before you do anything so foolish.

CAROLYN
I'll be at Valley View—

MARSHA
Valley View's a good place, I couldn't agree more. Remember I'm the one who pushed you into—

CAROLYN
I won't be alone—

MARSHA
—going there, you thought you'd get over Ed's death, but you're still sick—

CAROLYN
I won't need therapy any more. I'll feel safe at Valley View! Safe.

MARSHA
But will you be well?

(There is a knock on the door. CAROLYN answers. ROY, the eager-to-please young security guard with the Condo Association enters and offers a billfold to CAROLYN.)

ROY
Hi, Mrs. Nash, Mrs. Burton. *(Nod to Marsha, then to Carolyn)* Found your billfold.

MARSHA
You lost your billfold?

CAROLYN

Thank you, Ray.

ROY

Roy.

CAROLYN

Roy. I know it's Roy.

MARSHA

How much money was in it?

CAROLYN

About three hundred dollars.

MARSHA

Is it still there?

ROY

I didn't look inside. Found it by the elevators and brought it right up.

CAROLYN

(Counting the money) Thank you, Roy. I'm so distracted these days—

MARSHA

You should lie down, Carolyn.

ROY

You're really moving?

CAROLYN

Yes. You didn't find a set of keys did you?

ROY

No, ma'am. Have you lost your keys, too?

MARSHA

(Pushing ROY out) Mrs. Nash is not well right now.

ROY

I'll look around for the keys.

MARSHA

Mrs. Nash needs her rest! *(Closes door on ROY)* You're too familiar with that boy.

CAROLYN

I like him.

(A key is heard in the door and JIM enters with a paper bag from the pharmacy.)

MARSHA

Well, you can bet your bottom quarter he doesn't like you. Jim, tell Carolyn what happened to that woman on the TV; this woman who married a man half her age only to find herself stuffed into a dumpster half a year later—

CAROLYN

What on earth are you talking about?

MARSHA

—the moral of the story being that oil and water don't mix. Jim, give Carolyn her medicine *(JIM hands the bag to CAROLYN who removes the bottle of pills and reads the label.)* and we'll be on our way, I have a hair appointment, and weren't you doing something this afternoon, Jim— did you hear me, don't you have something this afternoon?

JIM

Yes, but, Carolyn? Don't you have an appointment at Valley View?

MARSHA

(Taking the bottle from Carolyn) What does it say? Maybe we should wait while you take your pill—

CAROLYN

These pills make me so sleepy.

MARSHA

(Showing the bottle to Jim) —you know how oddly you can behave. Jim, what does it say, help Carolyn out, does he want her to take them twice a day or—

JIM

(Looking at bottle) As needed. *(To Carolyn)* What do you think? Are you feeling anxious right now?

CAROLYN

No. Not really.

MARSHA

Are you sure? You just told the bell boy you were distraught—

CAROLYN

Security guard.

MARSHA

Jim, give Carolyn her pill, here, Carolyn, you sit down and I'll get a glass of water, (*Exiting off to kitchen*) where do you keep your glasses? (*From Off*) if I had been through what you've been through—

CAROLYN

(*Mainly to Jim*) Ed was an old man. Old people die.

MARSHA, *Off*

—I'd certainly need something, is this the filtered water?

JIM

Carolyn's all right.

CAROLYN

I'm tired. Just tired.

JIM

I'll drive you to Valley View.

CAROLYN

But you're busy.

(*MARSHA enters with the glass and the pill and overhears.*)

JIM

I can cancel.

MARSHA

Cancel, are you talking about canceling your golf game, I'm sure Carolyn wouldn't want you to do that just to get her to Valley View, what is the appointment about, haven't you given them your money, what is it they want from you now?

CAROLYN

More documents to sign, that's all. I'll take a taxi.

JIM

I wouldn't hear of it—

MARSHA

Of course not, what time is your appointment, I'll cancel my hair appointment if I have to—

CAROLYN

At three-thirty.

MARSHA

—don't worry, Jim and I will see that you get to your appointment, won't we, Jim, now, Carolyn, down the hatch as my father used to say.

CAROLYN

No.

MARSHA

No what?

CAROLYN

I don't need to take a pill.

MARSHA

You certainly do if I'm any judge.

CAROLYN

I'm all right, Marsha.

MARSHA

What are you talking about? First you want to quit seeing your doctor, now you want to quit taking the pills, Jim, talk to her, tell her she's flirting with fire going against the doctor's orders—

CAROLYN

What orders? (*Pointing to the bottle*) Take as needed. That's what he said. AND I DON'T NEED!

MARSHA

Well, you don't have to shout, you seem to think I'm deaf.

JIM

She's fine, Marsha.

MARSHA

Suit yourself, we'll let you get some rest, what time is your appointment, you never did say.

JIM

Three-thirty.

MARSHA

(Looking at her wrist watch) Oh, good, I can still make it to the hair dresser, and Jim, I'll drive Carolyn to Valley View, you don't have to miss your golf game, let's go, let's go, Carolyn, honey, get some rest, and I'll come by about three, won't that be enough time, I think that will be plenty of time to get to Valley View. Come on, Jim.

(JIM and MARSHA exit.)

CAROLYN

(Looking at the pills) Time to get to Valley View.

(From offstage comes the sound of a youthful voice singing, but mainly "dum-dee-dumming" the song, "Younger Than Springtime".)

CARRIE, *Off*

(Singing) "YOUNGER THAN SPRINGTIME AM I, DUM DEE DEE DUM DUM AM I."

CAROLYN

(Dreamily joining in for a moment) "GAYER THAN LAUGHTER AM I..." *(Catching herself)* Stop!

(A moment of silence follows.)

CARRIE, *Off*

Hey! Carolyn! Where the hell am I?

CAROLYN

Who's that?

CARRIE, *Off*

You know who. It's me! Carrie.

CAROLYN

No. No, no, no.

CARRIE, *Off*

Yes. Yes, yes, yes.

CAROLYN

Where are you?

CARRIE, *Off*

(Puzzled) Huh. Beneath me quite a ways is a city street. Up above me quite a ways is a blue sky with a few clouds.

CAROLYN

You're on the balcony.

CARRIE, *Off*

Whose balcony? What's going on, Carolyn?

CAROLYN

I didn't mean to wake you up. I've been so distracted.

CARRIE, *Off*

You mean miserable? I can fix that.

CAROLYN

Everyone thinks I'm crazy as it is. Go away, Carrie. I'm sorry, but goodbye.

(CAROLYN chants the spell that makes CARRIE disappear.)

CAROLYN, *Continued*

*"Now I lay her down to sleep,
I pray you, God, that girl to keep,
Take her, though young and full of charm,
Before she brings my life to—"*

(CAROLYN is interrupted by a knock on the door which SHE answers. It is ROY again)

ROY

I'm still looking for your keys.

CAROLYN

Did you find them?

ROY

Not yet, but if they're anywhere on the property, I'll find them.

CAROLYN

Thank you, Roy.

ROY

Do you know this one? "Where is the life we have lost in living? Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?"

CAROLYN

No. Who wrote that?

ROY

A guy named Eliot.

CAROLYN

You're reading T.S. Eliot?

ROY

No. I found it on line. I was looking for something that would you know, say I'll miss you.

CAROLYN

That's very nice. Very sweet.

ROY

Anything I can do to help?

CAROLYN

Oh, what a question!

ROY

How come?

CAROLYN

It's impossible to answer. Somewhere I made a long list of things I can't do alone. I've lost it, though.

ROY

At least your foot's better.

CAROLYN

My foot's fine.

ROY

That's good to hear.

CAROLYN

I think you mean my tailbone.

ROY

Did you hurt that, too?

CAROLYN

Yes. I mean, no. My tail bone's the only thing I ever hurt.

ROY

I thought it was your foot.

CAROLYN

No, my foot's fine. So far. (*Hints that she's closing door*) Thank you for asking.

ROY

Did you pick up the free newspaper in the mail room? Or the Tower Times Newsletter? Did you get the Newsletter yet?

CAROLYN

Roy.

ROY

I'm sorry. I know you're busy.

CAROLYN

What's worrying you?

ROY

Nothing.

CAROLYN

That's not true.

ROY

My uncle wouldn't co-sign the loan.

CAROLYN

I'm so sorry. Maybe he'll change his mind. If he really wants you to go to the community college, he will.

ROY

He thinks it's a waste of money. He says I don't have a goal.

CAROLYN

You have a goal, Roy.

ROY

I do?

CAROLYN

Of course you do.

ROY

What is it?

CAROLYN

I don't know. But deep down you know what you really truly desire.

ROY

Is that a goal?

CAROLYN

It certainly is.

ROY

(Doubtfully) Okay.

CAROLYN

(Positively) Okay!

ROY

Okay. Okay! Right now I know my goal: to find your keys.

CAROLYN

Good for you!

(ROY exits and CAROLYN shuts the door.)

CARRIE, *Off*

(Singing) "YOUNGER THAN SPRINGTIME AM I, DUM DEE DEE DUM DUM..."

CAROLYN

Stop that! I put you to sleep.

CARRIE, *Off*

You didn't finish the spell.

CAROLYN

I am going to finish it. Right now.

*"...though young and full of charm,
Before she brings my life to harm."*

CARRIE, *Off*

You have to say the whole thing.

Do you know where it is?
CAROLYN

It's right there in your head.
CARRIE, *Off*

I already looked under the pillow, and it's not there.
CAROLYN

I'll give you a hint...
CARRIE, *Off*

Well?
CAROLYN

When you let me in. Come on, Carolyn. We belong together!
CARRIE, *Off*

You think so, do you?
CAROLYN

I'm the best part of you.
CARRIE, *Off*

Are you?
CAROLYN

You know it. *(Singing)* "YOUNGER THAN SPRINGTIME AM I, DUM DEE DEE DUM DUM, AM I..."
CARRIE, *Off*

(CAROLYN gingerly reaches through the curtains to unlock the door and backs away as CARRIE waltzes in, singing joyfully, if off key. CARRIE is twenty, wearing sweater and skirt set, a string of pearls, bobby sox and loafers. At first SHE doesn't notice Carolyn)

(Singing) "HEAVEN AND EARTH AM I WITH YOU!"
CARRIE, *Continued*

(CARRIE encounters CAROLYN crouching in her chair; stops, screams. Also, CARRIE is suddenly aware of all Carolyn's aches and pains.)

Aaaa! Owwww!. . . My tailbone! My knee! . . . Who the hell are you?
CARRIE, *Continued*

CAROLYN

Carrie!

CARRIE

(Clutching her fluttering heart) Stop! Stop this!

CAROLYN

You're so young!

CARRIE

My heart!

CAROLYN

I'd forgotten.

CARRIE

It's out of control.

CAROLYN

So lovely!

CARRIE

I'm dying.

CAROLYN

No, you're not. I'm just excited.

CARRIE

(Staring) You're Carolyn? YOU'RE CAROLYN? You're me? I'm you? Forget it!

CAROLYN

Some things have changed.

CARRIE

CHANGED? This is upheaval. This is extermination of a species. This is the millennium.

CAROLYN

Actually, past the millennium.

CARRIE

WHAT DID YOU SAY?

CAROLYN

Keep calm. We're in the twenty-first century.

Shit! How long have I been asleep? CARRIE

Awhile. CAROLYN

How long awhile? CARRIE

Will you keep calm? CAROLYN

HOW LONG? CARRIE

I guess about thirty years. CAROLYN

(*Counting on her fingers*) Thirteen? That would make you fifty...no, wait... CARRIE

I said thirty. CAROLYN

WHAT? CARRIE

Thirty. CAROLYN

THIRTY! That's three decades! That's more than my whole lifetime! You're, you're, you're SEVENTY-TWO YEARS OLD? This is a nightmare! Why did you do that to me? CARRIE

(*CARRIE wails and flings herself to the floor.*)

Ouch! CAROLYN

I'm the one who's hurt. CARRIE

CAROLYN

I couldn't help aging.

CARRIE

If you'd kept me awake, I would've prevented this!

CAROLYN

Aging? I don't think so.

CARRIE

Thirty years gone by. Did you forget you even had a young self?

CAROLYN

Of course I didn't forget you. I didn't need you.

CARRIE

Will you ever stop lying to yourself?

CAROLYN

If I'm a liar, you're a thief!

CARRIE

I never took anything that wasn't mine!

CAROLYN

You stole oysters when you were on the Indian reservation.

CARRIE

I didn't know I was on an Indian reservation!

CAROLYN

You didn't want to know! You were only thinking of yourself!

CARRIE

Well, I'm not on an Indian reservation now. Let's get down to business...Look at this junk heap! What the hell's going on?

CAROLYN

Nothing that swearing will fix!

CARRIE

What happened to my beautiful house?

CAROLYN

When Ed started failing, we downsized—

CARRIE

Failing? Ed's failing? Where is the son of a bitch anyway? (*Calling*) Eddie?...Come out, come out, wherever—.Is he with a "client" as he used to call his hussies. Is he at work? What day is it anyhow?

CAROLYN

It's Wednesday.

CARRIE

(*Beginning to feel Carolyn's turmoil*) Carolyn. What is it? Where is Ed?

CAROLYN

Ed died the day before Valentine's, three months ago.

(*CARRIE can scarcely breathe.*)

CARRIE

What is this feeling? I hate it!

CAROLYN

It's grief.

CARRIE

For Ed? For the Don Juan of the West Hills neighborhood?

CAROLYN

You never understood Ed. You never took the time.

CARRIE

Well, apparently you did. A lifetime wasted understanding that cheat.

CAROLYN

He didn't have other women.

CARRIE

The hell he didn't.

CAROLYN

He was a workaholic. He admitted as much in therapy.

CARRIE

In therapy! Does that make it true? What about...you know.

CAROLYN

I don't know.

CARRIE

You do know. JIM! JIMMY! (*Doing a rumba and singing*) "SOUSE OF ZE BORDER—"

CAROLYN

If you think you woke up to sing that old song again—

(*CARRIE flings open the curtains; dancing and singing.*)

CARRIE

"SOUSE OF ZEE BORDER, DOWN MEHICO WAY—"

CAROLYN

CLOSE THOSE CURTAINS!

(*Both CARRIE and CAROLYN are felled by a panic attack. CARRIE hits a chair hard.*)

CARRIE

Aaaa! Ohhhhh! Ouch! I can't breathe!

(*CAROLYN sits to calm down.*)

CAROLYN

It will pass.

CARRIE

What is it?

CAROLYN

A panic attack.

CARRIE

You're afraid of heights? No. You were never afraid of heights.

CAROLYN

I am now.

CARRIE

That's what you get for shutting me away for three decades. Ouch! My back hurts.

CAROLYN

I know.

CARRIE
How long have you had a bad back?

CAROLYN
Oh, a year.

CARRIE
I think you need a different doctor.

CAROLYN
A different doctor just means a different pill.

CARRIE
You know something? I don't remember Mexico. Why don't I remember Mexico, Carolyn?

CAROLYN
I don't know.

CARRIE
That's when you put me to sleep for thirty years. Isn't it? Isn't it, Carolyn?

CAROLYN
Let's change the subject.

CARRIE
You didn't go, did you? You sent poor Jimmy packing for the second time.

CAROLYN
If Jim and I were out of the question when I was twenty-two, we were certainly out of the question when I was forty-two and we were both married.

(A key in the door and MARSHA and JIM enter.)

CARRIE
Where is Jimmy now?

CAROLYN
Speak of the devil.

(JIM and MARSHA do not hear Carrie.)

MARSHA

The devil, my stars and stripes, Carolyn, who are you talking to, or should I say whom, there's no one here—

CAROLYN

What do you want, Marsha?

CARRIE

—MARSHA? The same Marsha?

(CARRIE gets right in Marsha's face, but MARSHA does not see Carrie.)

CARRIE, *Continued*

Yep, the same squirrel-face, but who's the old turnip with her?—

MARSHA

—I said to Jim I said, I'd forget my arm if it wasn't screwed on,

CARRIE

She called him Jim!

MARSHA

—we promised to take Ed's things to the thrift store—

CARRIE

Tell me there are two Jims...

MARSHA

Which of these boxes do you want to go?

CAROLYN

(To Carrie) There's just one.

MARSHA

I know, hon, that's what you said, just one box to go, the rest to Eddie and to Cupcake for her boy—

CARRIE

(In Jim's face now) THIS ISN'T JIMMY! YOU ARE NOTHING BUT A DRIED UP OLD MUMMY!

CAROLYN

(To Carrie) Whether you like it or not, THIS IS JIM!

(There is a stunned silence.)

MARSHA

Of course it is, hon, Jim, where's Carolyn's pills—

CAROLYN

Oh, I'm sorry, I wasn't talking to you, I was, I was—

MARSHA

—Jim, don't just stand there, do something, Carolyn, honey, never mind about Ed's things right now, we'll do that later, *(As SHE pokes around SHE sees the open curtains)* oh, look here, now who did that to you, /who opened these curtains—

(MARSHA uses her cane to close the curtains.)

CARRIE

LEAVE THOSE CURTAINS ALONE!

MARSHA

—don't they know how frightened you are, no wonder you're upset—

CARRIE

I WANT THE GODDAM CURTAINS OPEN!

(CARRIE pushes CAROLYN who collides with MARSHA. They bump heads and MARSHA drops her cane. BOTH hold their heads. JIM comes to Marsha's rescue while CAROLYN apologizes.)

CAROLYN

Oh, Marsha, I'm so sorry...

CARRIE

I'm not!

JIM

(To Marsha) You all right?

MARSHA

(Speechless at last) I don't know.

CAROLYN

Let me get some aspirin.

(CAROLYN, followed by CARRIE, exits to her bedroom.)

MARSHA

Jim, take me home.

JIM

She didn't do it on purpose.

MARSHA

She meant to push me.

JIM

Don't be silly.

MARSHA

Stop apologizing for her. She's flapped out. Take me home. Now.

JIM

Right. *(Starting to call to Carolyn)* Carolyn, we're—

MARSHA

NOW I SAID!

JIM

(To no one in particular) Leaving.

(JIM and MARSHA exit. CAROLYN and CARRIE enter and realize that JIM and MARSHA have gone. CAROLYN carries an aspirin and a wash cloth.)

CAROLYN

(Putting the cloth to her own head) You drove them away.

CARRIE

Good riddance. Ow.

CAROLYN

Serves you right.

CARRIE

Serves her right. When did you start letting the Marsh-Rat run your life?

CAROLYN

You could've killed her—

CARRIE
Oh, come on. What happened to Jimmy?

CAROLYN
I don't know what you mean.

CARRIE
That wasn't Jimmy. That was some kind of impostor. How can you, Carolyn?

CAROLYN
How can I what?

CARRIE
You know what.

CAROLYN
I don't know what.

CARRIE
How can you still be in love with that rotten old potato?

CAROLYN
I'm not.

CARRIE
Stop lying.

CAROLYN
We're friends.

CARRIE
Friends! Jimmy and I set the world on fire!

CAROLYN
Fires burn out.

CARRIE
It was hot enough to last forever!

CAROLYN
I don't want to relive all that.

CARRIE
You let him go *twice*! And look what happened to him.

He got old.

CAROLYN

And look at you!

CARRIE

We all get old. Except you, of course.

CAROLYN

Shit! WHY?

CARRIE

That's life.

CAROLYN

I won't accept life.

CARRIE

What are you going to do about it?

CAROLYN

Can't you see? He's a...a jerk. Jimmy was a poet. That guy can barely grunt.

CARRIE

Jim Burton was never for one moment in his life a poet.

CAROLYN

He was when he was with me.

CARRIE

(Remembering) Oh! The game of beautiful words.

CAROLYN

No.

CARRIE

No what?

CAROLYN

No, I'm not going on a quest for the Jimmy buried in that old goat.

CARRIE

CAROLYN

I wasn't thinking that.

CARRIE

Oh, Carolyn, Carolyn! This is your self you're talking to. That's exactly what you're thinking and I won't do it!

(There is a knock on the door.)

CARRIE, *Continued*

Oh, god, there he is again! I can't look.

CAROLYN

It's not Jim. He has a key.

CARRIE

He does?

CAROLYN

They live three floors up.

(CAROLYN opens the door. ROY peeks in. CARRIE is very interested.)

CARRIE

Who's this?

ROY

It's me again. Roy.

CARRIE

Wow! He's attractive!

ROY

(Embarrassed, muttering) Uh, thanks

CAROLYN

What's that in your hand? Are those my car keys?

ROY

Oh, yeah. I found them in the garbage room.

(CAROLYN takes keys from ROY.)

CAROLYN

The garbage room! Imagine that.

CARRIE

Oh, wonderful! Car keys! I haven't driven a car in years.

ROY

If you want company, I'd be glad to like go with you—

CARRIE

Really? How would you like to go to Mexico?

CAROLYN

(To Carrie) Mexico!

ROY

What?

CAROLYN

Did I say Mexico? I mean Valley View.

ROY

Is that your retirement home?

CAROLYN

Yes.

CARRIE

RETIREMENT HOME?

ROY

That's not what you really truly desire, is it?

CARRIE

No, absolutely not.

ROY

That isn't your goal.

CARRIE

I don't want to live with a bunch of old folks.

CAROLYN

Valley View's the best in town.

CARRIE
So what?

CAROLYN
I need a place where I can get help if I fall again.

CARRIE
Going there is like throwing a fresh flower on the garbage heap.

CAROLYN
But I'm not a fresh flower. Look at me.

ROY
You look like a fresh flower to me, Mrs. Nash.

CARRIE
Which...

CAROLYN
...flower do I look like?

ROY
Maybe one of those, I don't know the name for them, they look like lots of little pink and white faces and they smell like expensive perfume.

CARRIE
"C is for charm."

ROY
Excuse me?

CAROLYN
I didn't say anything.

ROY
I thought you were quoting something.

CAROLYN
I was thinking of a game I made up called the game of beautiful words. I used to play it with my husband.

CARRIE
Liar.

CAROLYN

I mean, a friend. We'd go through the alphabet thinking of the most beautiful words we knew.

ROY

Like "F is for friend"?

CARRIE

"M is for Mexico."

CAROLYN

That is not a beautiful word!

ROY

Isn't that the way you play the game?

CAROLYN

No. Oh, I mean, yes. I meant Mexico.

ROY

Are you talking about, like, Mexico, the country?

CARRIE

Yes, Mexico, you know: (*Singing*) "SOUSE OF ZE BORDER, DUM DEE DUM DUM..."

CAROLYN

(*To Carrie*) Why in the world would Roy be interested in Mexico?

ROY

As a matter of fact, I'm very interested in Mexico. I even hablo a little Español.

CAROLYN

(*To Carrie*) You better not be thinking what I think you're thinking.

ROY

All I'm thinking is like I'd like to help you out any way I can.

CAROLYN

(*To Carrie*) Look at me. I'm an old woman.

ROY

I don't think of you as an old woman.

CARRIE
Do you know how old I really am?

CAROLYN
You don't?

ROY
No, ma'am.

CARRIE
Don't call me ma'am. Only old ladies are ma'ams.

ROY
I think you're...oh, somewhere between my age and like the speed limit.

CARRIE
Thirty-five?

CAROLYN
I think he means the freeway speed limit.

ROY
It doesn't matter anyway. Youth is overrated in our culture.

CARRIE
What makes you say that?

CAROLYN
You've been finding things on the internet again.

ROY
No, ma'am. I thought of this myself. It's that, you know, being young isn't the only age there is. There are more people who aren't young than who are.

CAROLYN
(*Honest*) That's profound for a boy your age.

ROY
I'm not exactly a boy. I'm almost thirty.

CARRIE
Really? That's old!

ROY

So have you ever like been to Mexico?

CARRIE

No. I never got there.

CAROLYN

And I never will.

ROY

What's stopping you?

CARRIE

Nothing.

CAROLYN

I'm moving to Valley View. That's what's stopping me.

ROY

I can tell Mexico means a lot to you, huh?

CAROLYN

It's an old dream.

CARRIE

Mexico's where no one cares if my hair's in pigtails or cut like a boy's.

ROY

Yeah.

CAROLYN

No one judges me...

CARRIE

...for making mistakes in geometry.

ROY

Yeah.

CAROLYN

I can make friends with anyone I want...

CARRIE

...whether they're the right people or not.

ROY

Yeah. I see.

You do see, don't you?

CARRIE

Listen, Mrs. Nash—

ROY

Carrie.

CARRIE

That's your goal, isn't it?

ROY

It's not prac—

CAROLYN

YES!!

CARRIE

If it means so much to you, well, then, you should do it. And if there's any way I can help you get there like you know just ask me.

ROY

Oh, I wish I could believe you mean that.

CAROLYN

I do believe you mean that.

CARRIE

You should because I mean it. I hate seeing you unhappy like this.

ROY

I'm not unhappy—

CAROLYN

The word is comatose. Here in this crammed-up apartment I'm a half-dead old lady who's afraid to go out on her own balcony—

CARRIE

It was all right when Ed needed me—

CAROLYN

But now I'm free—

CARRIE

CAROLYN

And I'd like to use the time that's left me wisely—

CARRIE

Joyfully!

CAROLYN

Although I get confused as to how to accomplish that—

CARRIE

You're only confused because you're thinking, so don't think, just go to

ROY
Mexico!

CARRIE
Mexico!

ROY

Well, I say do it.

CARRIE

You're right.

CAROLYN

Just go?

ROY

GO FOR IT!

CAROLYN

Alone?

ROY

Nah, you don't have to do that—

CAROLYN

Maybe you'd consider—

CARRIE

Driving me.

ROY

Driving? I thought you'd never ask!

(CARRIE takes Carolyn's hand and hands the keys to Roy.)

CAROLYN

Wait. Not so fast.

CARRIE

Here. Take the keys and do whatever you need to do for a long trip.

ROY

When do you want to start? Because I have to ask for time off—

CAROLYN

Let me think—

CARRIE

Nothing to think about. I have to make this trip.

CAROLYN

It's madness.

ROY

Tell you what. I'll get your car in shape. You're going to need a car in shape whatever you do.

CAROLYN

That's true.

CARRIE

(Forcing CAROLYN to take all the money from the billfold) And here's some money.

ROY

What's that for? I don't need money.

CARRIE

Yes, you do.

CAROLYN

For the car.

ROY

Oh, yeah. Good. Great. I'll be back! I'll take care of it soon's I'm off work. Good. Great.

(ROY exits. CARRIE seizes CAROLYN and THEY rumba until Carolyn's back gives out.)

CARRIE

“SOUSE OF ZEE BORDER...”

CAROLYN

“DUM DEE DUM DUM DEE...”

CARRIE

Oww! Can't you even move without getting a crick?

CAROLYN

It's not a crick, it's reality setting in. Mexico! With Roy!

CARRIE

He's special.

CAROLYN

He's sweet. He's always kind and thoughtful.

CARRIE

And very attractive.

CAROLYN

I'm not attracted to him.

CARRIE

Yes, you are. You handed him the car keys.

CAROLYN

You did that. I couldn't stop you. I'm losing control.

CARRIE

That's good.

CAROLYN

No, it isn't. What's happening?

CARRIE

You're getting what you really want out of life.

CAROLYN

My life has come to this? All I want is a trip to Mexico with the security guard?

CARRIE

He's different. He could hear me.

CAROLYN

Don't be ridiculous. No one hears you.

CARRIE

Maybe he even sees me.

CAROLYN

You're a figment of my imagination.

CARRIE

When I said he's attractive, he thanked me.

CAROLYN

You imagined it.

CARRIE

Something good walks into your life and you say it isn't real.

CAROLYN

See what you're doing? You're calling this situation good when it's, it's, it's not good.

CARRIE

You were actually enthusiastic for thirty seconds.

CAROLYN

I'll be homeless.

CARRIE

How so?

CAROLYN

I've sold this condo and I'll lose my deposit on Valley View!

CARRIE

Tell them you want your money back.

(CAROLYN looks at her empty wrist as a key turns in the lock and JIM enters, alone for a change. HE has recently had a shot or two of alcohol.)

CAROLYN

Oh, what time is it? You said you'd tell me where my watch is.

JIM

Carolyn?

CAROLYN

Jim!

What's he want?
CARRIE

Is someone here?
JIM

No. Who would be here?
CAROLYN

I thought...Marsha dropped her cane when...
JIM

How is she?
CAROLYN

As if we care.
CARRIE

She's got a bad headache. (*Seeing the cane*) There it is. How are you?
JIM

I don't want to chat.
CARRIE

But I do.
CAROLYN

He's not there, Carolyn.
CARRIE

You do what?
JIM

I didn't say anything.
CAROLYN

Yes, you did. You said, I do.
JIM

I do, I do need to find my watch. I have no idea what time it is.
CAROLYN

(*JIM checks his watch.*)

It's inside the pillow case.

CARRIE

It's almost three.

JIM

Oh, inside!

CAROLYN

It's three outside, too, I guess. Are you all right?

JIM

I'm so distracted.

CAROLYN

Is this move more than you can handle?

JIM

I'll be right back.

CAROLYN

(CAROLYN exits, but CARRIE does not follow. JIM picks up the cane and waits for Carolyn to return.)

Seeing you like this makes me want to go out on that balcony and jump. What did you do with Jimmy?

CARRIE

(CAROLYN enters, putting on the watch, and hears CARRIE.)

He was so alive when he asked me to marry him, and he was still alive thirty years ago, in spite of everything Mother did to get rid of him. Who killed him? Was it Marsha? Was it Carolyn? Was it, Carolyn?

CARRIE, *Continued*

Do you remember when I called you Jimmy?

CAROLYN

What?

JIM

Nothing.

CAROLYN

CARRIE

Go on, Carolyn. You started it, finish it.

JIM

Whatever made you think of that?

CAROLYN

I don't know. I'd lost my watch, but I did find it. It was right where she said, inside the pillow case.

JIM

Well, good. I'm glad you found it. Marsha needs her cane.

CARRIE

Like hell she does.

CAROLYN

I'm surprised at you.

JIM

What?

CAROLYN

You're a doctor. You know Marsha doesn't need a cane. She just uses it so people will wait on her.

JIM

I have to admit my wife knows how to get what she wants.

CARRIE

And if she can't get it fairly, she lies.

CAROLYN

And she wanted you enough to lie.

JIM

What's bringing all this up? Because Ed's gone?

CAROLYN

Partly.

JIM

Losing Ed and then this move?

And something else. CAROLYN

What? JIM

Keep going. CARRIE

I'm distracted. CAROLYN

(Disgusted) Oh, Carolyn! You're alone with him at last! CARRIE

It's stress. It's a stressful time. JIM

Well, yes, but, no. It's— CAROLYN

It's me. Carrie. CARRIE

It's Carrie. CAROLYN

Carrie? JIM

Do you remember Carrie? CAROLYN

I remember...I called you Carrie. JIM

She's still here. CAROLYN

How do you mean? JIM

CAROLYN

Inside, she's me, me at twenty.

JIM

I see.

CAROLYN

I'm not talking about a multiple personality.

CARRIE

I'm the real self.

CAROLYN

I'm talking about a part of me that feels real sometimes.

CARRIE

The best part.

CAROLYN

I thought I'd put her to sleep forever, but—

CARRIE

Here I am!

CAROLYN

Here she is! Looking for...

CARRIE

Jimmy.

JIM

For what?

CARRIE

But that's a dead end.

CAROLYN

I don't know what she wants.

(CARRIE moves away making a disgusted sound.)

CAROLYN, *Continued*

Another chance!

JIM

We all would like to redo the past. At least I would.

CAROLYN

Would you?

JIM

If I could.

CARRIE

What's he saying? Ask him what he's saying.

CAROLYN

Well.

JIM

Well.

CAROLYN

(Looking at her watch) Oh, my goodness! I'll be late for Valley View.

CARRIE

I refuse to go near that place!

CAROLYN

Now, where did I put my keys?

CARRIE

Roy has them, hah, hah, hah!

JIM

Still missing?

CAROLYN

Yes. I mean, no, not exactly. The, uh, the car's being fixed.

JIM

Do you want me to drive you?

CAROLYN

Marsha said she would.

JIM

She's not feeling well.

CAROLYN
You have a golf game.

JIM
It's not important.

CAROLYN
You'd drive me instead of playing golf? Now, that is flattering.

JIM
My pleasure...Carrie.

CARRIE
Carrie?

JIM
I'll take Marsha's cane. I'll be right back.

CAROLYN
I'll be here.
(JIM exits.)

CARRIE
What do you think you're doing?

CAROLYN
Didn't you hear?

CARRIE
What?

CAROLYN
Jimmy. *(Singing)* "SOUSE OF ZE BORDER, DUM DUM DEE DUM—"

CARRIE
(Dismayed) No, Carolyn! No!
(BLACKOUT. END ACT I; SCENE ONE.)

ACT I; SCENE TWO

(AT RISE: Carolyn's condo; an hour and a half later. JIM unlocks the door and HE and CAROLYN enter, followed by CARRIE who is holding her nose.)

CAROLYN

Thanks, Jim. I forgot Roy, I mean, I forgot my condo key is with my car key.

JIM

You told me that.

CAROLYN

Oh. Yes.

CARRIE

Garbage, garbage, garbage.

CAROLYN

(To Carrie) You can stop that. We're home now.

JIM

What was I doing?

CAROLYN

Nothing. Talking to myself again.

JIM

To the girl inside?

CAROLYN

Something like that. She doesn't like Valley View.

JIM

She? Do you mean you?

CAROLYN

It's a nice place, but. . . .

JIM

It's too late to change your mind. Isn't it?

CAROLYN

I'm not going to change my mind.

CARRIE

(Going to balcony) It's that place or me!

JIM

I'm sure they'd be reasonable if you wanted to wait another month or so.

CARRIE

I'll jump.

CAROLYN

Where would I live?

CARRIE

Don't be an idiot, Carolyn. He is NOT Jimmy.

JIM

Can you stay on in the condo? Rent it back, maybe?

CAROLYN

Oh. No. They want it the end of the month.

JIM

That's only two and a half weeks away.

CAROLYN

Two and a half weeks.

JIM

Then you have no choice.

CARRIE

For your information, King Tut, we always have a choice.

CAROLYN

Mexico's cheap.

CARRIE

MEXICO?

JIM

Did you say Mexico?

CAROLYN

Well, just for—

CARRIE

EVER! Now you're talking!

JIM

Would that make you happy?

CAROLYN

I don't know.

CARRIE

Are you kidding? (*Rumba-ing and singing*) SOUSE OF ZE BORDER, DUM DUM DEE DUM...

JIM

What are you doing for dinner?

CARRIE

WHAT?

CAROLYN

I'm, not, nothing.

JIM

If Marsha still has her headache, I thought I could bring you a pizza.

CARRIE

There's nothing romantic about a pizza, you old goat.

JIM

We could talk it over.

CARRIE

IT?

CAROLYN

Talk over what?

JIM

Your plans.

CARRIE

Don't listen. He stood you up thirty years ago.

CAROLYN

(*To Carrie*) No, I did that.

Did what?
JIM

It's water under the bridge.
CAROLYN

It's not water under my bridge!
CARRIE

What did you do?
JIM

NOTHING!
CAROLYN

Are you talking about Mexico?
JIM

You backed out, Carolyn?
CARRIE

I couldn't wreck four lives. Eight, counting all the children.
CAROLYN

They were already wrecked.
JIM

That's not entirely true.
CAROLYN

That's your own word. Wrecked. Did Ed ever tell you I called all day? And half the night!
JIM

No. What did you say to him?
CAROLYN

I told him I thought you were with my wife.
JIM

He believed that?
CAROLYN

It seemed to me he didn't care where you were. I'm the one who cared.
JIM

Where were you?
CARRIE

I went to San Francisco to see my sister.
CAROLYN

You should have gone with me.
JIM

You should have come after me.
CAROLYN

You didn't want me to.
JIM

How do you know?
CAROLYN

You said so.
JIM

When?
CAROLYN

You told my nurse: tell the doctor his cure isn't working.
JIM

Well, it's water under the bridge.
CAROLYN

Is it?
JIM

Yes, you old fart! Leave us alone.
CARRIE

(To Jim) Isn't it?
CAROLYN

If you had gone with me, our lives would have been so different.
JIM

CAROLYN

Maybe.

JIM

I don't think I would ever have come back to Marsha.

CAROLYN

I guess we'll never know what might have been.

JIM

One time I did leave Marsha.

CARRIE

You did?

CAROLYN

I never knew that. When?

JIM

When you and I decided to go to Mexico together. That day by the reservoir. That's when I left Marsha.

CARRIE

Oh, drivel!

CAROLYN

(To Carrie) Why?

CARRIE

BECAUSE HE'S STILL MARRIED TO MARSHA!

CAROLYN

But you never left her, did you?

JIM

I might have... If you had been at the airport that day.

CAROLYN

Well, the fact is—

JIM

The fact is, it should have been us, Carolyn. It should always have been us.

CARRIE

It should have been me and Jimmy! Not you and this—

CAROLYN
(*To Carrie*) Stop!

JIM
All right. You're right. I'm making fools of both of us.

CAROLYN
I don't feel foolish.

JIM
What do you feel?

CAROLYN
Regret.

CARRIE
Oh, Carolyn, let it go!

CAROLYN
We should have had our...whatever you call it...when we had the chance.

CARRIE
Romance.

CAROLYN
Affair.

JIM
Love.

CAROLYN
You're right. This is foolish. We don't love each other.

JIM
Speak for yourself.

CAROLYN
We're too o—

JIM
Don't say it. When I think of you, I think of a girl sitting beside me in my dad's truck.

CAROLYN
Only twenty.

What was that game of ours? JIM

The game of— CAROLYN

CARRIE Beautiful words. JIM Beautiful words.

You CAROLYN

...remember that? CARRIE

A is for— JIM

CARRIE Adore! JIM Adore.

B is for beautiful. JIM

No! It was— CARRIE

(Beginning to smile) Bountiful! CAROLYN

Bountiful? Are you sure? JIM

C is for— CAROLYN

Caring. JIM

No. CAROLYN

JIM

What was it?

(BOTH are laughing while CARRIE is confused by this turn of events.)

CAROLYN

L is for losing your memory!

JIM

No. Never. I've never forgotten. I've never given up hope.

CAROLYN

Hope?...

JIM

That someday I'd ask you and finally you'd say yes.

CAROLYN

Is that what you want?

JIM

Is that what you want?

CARRIE

Why doesn't anybody ask me what I want?

JIM

Would you?

CAROLYN

Oh, Jim. Are you sure?

JIM

Aren't you?

(JIM and CAROLYN begin to embrace.)

CAROLYN

Y is for—

CARRIE

YOU! You're an idiot! He's a phony!

(CAROLYN pulls back and looks at JIM for a moment.)

CAROLYN

Are you real?

JIM

The valve in my heart comes from a pig, but the rest of it is real me.
(*CAROLYN and JIM kiss. CARRIE dances around in anguish.*)

CARRIE

Wait! Carolyn! What about Roy?

(*BLACKOUT: END ACT I.*)

ACT II; SCENE ONE

(*AT RISE: In Carolyn's condo, later that night. The room is dark and empty, lit only by city lights from the balcony. An empty pizza box visible on the end table. CARRIE lies on the couch, her hands over her face. JIM enters from bedroom, buttoning up his shirt. CAROLYN follows pulling on a robe and giggling.*)

JIM

What's so funny?

CARRIE

(*Giggling*) You are, you caricature.

JIM

Wait until I say something humorous, can't you?

CAROLYN

I can't stop laughing. I never knew I could laugh like this again.

CARRIE

You never laughed like this, period. You're senile.

JIM

Does this mean you're sure?

CAROLYN

I think so, but I don't believe it.

CARRIE

Me, either. You call that sex?

JIM

I don't want you to say yes...

CARRIE

He's right, say no!

JIM

...until you're sure.

CARRIE

I want Roy!

CAROLYN

(To Carrie) That's not what I want!

JIM

You don't?

CAROLYN

(To Jim) What are you talking about?

JIM

What are you talking about?

CAROLYN

The future.

JIM

That's what I'm talking about.

CARRIE

What about the Marsh Rat?

CAROLYN

I don't want to sneak.

JIM

We don't have to sneak.

CAROLYN

You'll tell Marsha?

JIM

Telling her is one thing. Making her believe I mean it is another.

CARRIE

He won't tell her.

CAROLYN

Make me believe it, Jim.

JIM

You'll see.

(A final hug and JIM exits.)

CARRIE

Tell me you're momentarily insane.

CAROLYN

I love Jim.

CARRIE

This is someone else.

CAROLYN

He remembered the game of beautiful words.

CARRIE

Jimmy would've gone to any lengths to be with me. This geezer can't even spend the night.

CAROLYN

You must be reasonable—

CARRIE

Absolutely not.

CAROLYN

Or I'll have to put you to sleep.

CARRIE

Okay. All right. Do it. Then you won't ever get to Mexico, because it's me Roy wants to go with and this old sot'll never get free of Marsha!

(CARRIE storms to the balcony, but CAROLYN calls her back.)

CAROLYN

No! Wait. Just wait and see.

(CARRIE pauses. BLACKOUT. End ACT II: SCENE ONE.)

ACT II; SCENE TWO

(AT RISE: The next morning; a large bouquet of flowers on the table. CAROLYN is in decidedly brighter clothes, singing. CARRIE attempts to reason as CAROLYN sings.)

CAROLYN

(Singing) YOUNGER THAN SPRINGTIME AM I... *(Humming, admiring flowers)* Hmmm
hmmm hmmm AM I...

CARRIE

(Over Carolyn's singing) If this was really Jimmy, I'd compromise. I'd close my eyes and go.

(CAROLYN opens doors to balcony while CARRIE watches in astonishment.)

CARRIE, *Continued*

Hey!

CAROLYN

Ah! A glorious spring d...

(The panic seizes them again.)

CARRIE

Shit.

CAROLYN

Give me time. I'll do it.

CARRIE

Yeah, yeah.

CAROLYN

Can't you be happy for me?

CARRIE

Carolyn, you're kidding yourself. He isn't there. He just isn't.

CAROLYN

He's sent me flowers.

CARRIE

You haven't even looked at the card. What if he's saying 'Sorry, can't leave the Marsh Rat, she might have a stroke if I do'?

CAROLYN

He'll be here.

CARRIE

What are you going to say to Roy?

CAROLYN

Where is he? And the three hundred dollars you gave him?

CARRIE

Answer me.

CAROLYN

Just be quiet a moment.

CARRIE

Why?

CAROLYN

I need to think. I need to make lists. I need to get organized. (*Key in the lock*) There's Jim.

(*MARSHA enters.*)

MARSHA

Carolyn, we've been friends for a long time, please believe me when I say Jim and I both only have your own best interests at heart, and I know that's what he meant to convey to you last night, but it's obvious to us—

CARRIE

He told her.

MARSHA

—you are in over your neck right now, my stars and stripes, Carolyn, look at you, you look like a, a, a I don't know the word, a painted lady in the circus, I said to Jim, I said, Jim, you're a doctor, shame on you for taking advantage of poor Carolyn when she's grieving for Ed—

CAROLYN

Jim didn't take advantage of me—

MARSHA

—oh, I know, I know, the two of you, you were sweethearts, long before I came along, I'd laugh if it wasn't so sad, the two of you, thinking you can reverse the wheel of time—

CAROLYN

Marsha, let me explain—

MARSHA

—you've never pulled the blanket over my eyes, not for one moment—

CAROLYN

I never meant to hurt you—

MARSHA

—I've noticed, I've said to Jim, just ask him, I've said to Jim I don't know how many times, I've said, you're still burning a candle for her, especially when you've had too much to drink, I've noticed your flirts, I said to Jim, I said, I saw you with Mattie Boatwright that time at the club, not to mention Penny Hornblatt, what a ridiculous name anyway—

CAROLYN

Jim? And Penny Hornblatt?

MARSHA

Of course Penny Hornblatt. Everyone else knew, I'm surprised you didn't. It wasn't serious, any more than your little adventure was that time, I saw those tickets to Mexico, he threw them in the trash right in the bedroom, do you think I'm blind, no, Jim knows I've got eyes in the top of my head, he knew I knew, he wanted me to know, he wanted me to know he was tempted, what man isn't, but he remained faithful, in the end, he remained faithful. To me.

CARRIE

(Feeling scoured out, like Carolyn) Oh, ow! Stop her! Kill her!

CAROLYN

Nothing happened last night.

CARRIE

It did too!

MARSHA

Well, of course it didn't, that's what I'm here to say, my lips are sealed, it's all forgotten, what are your plans today?

Plans?
CAROLYN

He didn't tell her about Mexico.
CARRIE

Do you need a ride, what can Jim and I do for you, did you ever find your keys?
MARSHA

Keys?
CAROLYN

He didn't tell her anything. She's guessing!
CARRIE

You lost them, remember?
MARSHA

Oh, yes.
CAROLYN

Do you need a ride today?
MARSHA

Thanks.
CAROLYN

THANKS? What for? Tell her the truth.
CARRIE

Marsha—
CAROLYN

Don't thank me, Carolyn, we've been friends too long, after all what are friends for—
MARSHA

Marsha, I have to say—
CAROLYN

I know what you've been through, it was worse for you because rumor has it that Ed was serious about leaving you—
MARSHA

CARRIE

Now, that is an outright lie!

MARSHA

Whereas that thought never crossed Jim's mind and never will—

CAROLYN

Marsha, MARSHA!

MARSHA

What? You don't have to shout.

CAROLYN

I don't mean to hurt you, but...

CARRIE

Go on. "Maybe it wasn't sex, but..."

CAROLYN

A lot did happen last night.

MARSHA

I'm sure you thought so and still think so, but please don't be concerned about my feelings, that's sweet of you, but you and I both know that bricks and bats can break my bones but words can never hurt me, and it was all just words, now I have an appointment with the eye doctor, you just rest assured that Jim and I are here for you in your hour of need.

(MARSHA exits.)

CARRIE

It's not true.

CAROLYN

Which part?

CARRIE

Ed would never have left me.

CAROLYN

And Jim will never leave Marsha.

CARRIE

Cheer up, Carolyn. I can't stand feeling this way.

CAROLYN

(Going to flowers) I suppose the flowers are an apology for letting me down. *(Reading card)*
Oh.

CARRIE

(Excited) They're from Roy! What does it say?

CAROLYN

"So many worlds, so much to do, so little done, such things to be."

CARRIE

So beautiful!

CAROLYN

So little done. He hasn't got the car fixed.

CARRIE

When will he be here?

CAROLYN

I don't know.

CARRIE

You don't want me to know!

CARRIE, *Continued*

(Snatching the card) Between two and three.

CAROLYN

If he hasn't absconded with my car.

CARRIE

He won't let me down.

CAROLYN

I can't go to Mexico with him!

CARRIE

You asked me to wait and see. Well I waited and saw. Jim's not serious and Roy is!

CAROLYN

I never realized you were so completely superficial. All you care about is...excitement!

CARRIE

All you care about is what people think. That's really superficial.

(There is a knock on the door.)

CARRIE, *Continued*

There's Mexico!

(CARRIE pushes CAROLYN to answer the door. ROY is there with the keys and maps, etc.)

ROY

Hi, Mrs. Nash—

CARRIE

Carrie.

ROY

(Returning keys) Here you are, ready to go. Didn't need much. You've taken good care of that car.

(CAROLYN puts keys on the table.)

CARRIE

Thanks.

CAROLYN

Thank you.

ROY

Thank you for giving me this chance to go to Mexico.

CARRIE

That's a lovely quotation.

CAROLYN

You didn't have to send flowers.

ROY

It's really about the quotation.

CARRIE

"Such things to be."

ROY

It's Tennyson.

CAROLYN

Is it?

ROY

It says what I was thinking.

CARRIE

When do we leave?

ROY

I need to talk to you before we make any more plans.

CARRIE

Why?

CAROLYN

You've run into a problem.

ROY

Oh, I haven't changed my mind, it's not like that. I want to drive you, I really do, I've always wanted to go to Mexico, it was like a miracle dropped in my lap, but it would be a long drive, like three thousand miles from here to Mexico City, if that's where you're headed, or Puerto Vallarta, or San Miguel, or any of those places people like to go, and I was thinking, I couldn't take off work for that long, I just couldn't afford to—

CARRIE

I know that.

CAROLYN

I'd consider paying your expenses and your time.

ROY

Oh, good, thanks, we never actually talked about costs or anything like that, and I was also wondering, if you don't mind, if you wouldn't care, since it is so far, if I could bring someone else to help with the drive?

CAROLYN

Someone

CARRIE

else?

ROY

Oh, don't worry. I wouldn't expect you to like pay her expenses, too.

Her?
CAROLYN

Her name's Adrienne.
ROY

Who is she?
CARRIE

My girl friend.
ROY

(CARRIE, too stunned to speak, turns to CAROLYN, who smiles and shrugs. During the following CARRIE is smoldering.)

ROY, *Continued*
She could help me drive. You'd like her. She's very quiet but smart, you know, and she's used to older people, I mean, to being around senior citizens, too, she grew up with her grandmother, like me. You'd like her.

CAROLYN
(To Carrie) Now who's the fool?

CARRIE
You think you can use me to have a vacation with your girl friend?

(CARRIE seizes Carolyn's hand and directs it toward a flower. CAROLYN resists.)

ROY
I'm sorry?

CAROLYN
(Struggling with Carrie) Stop that!

ROY
She doesn't have to go. It was just an idea—
(CARRIE succeeds in getting CAROLYN to throw the flower at Roy.)

CARRIE
Senior citizen, am I!

CAROLYN
(Picking up the thrown flower) Oh, Roy, I'm so sorry, I didn't mean to do that.

ROY

Are you all right? Do you want me to call someone?

CAROLYN

I'm fine. I have a little, something wrong with— a tic. (*Urging Roy out*) I'm used to it, don't worry about me, I have to run now, goodbye, Roy. Goodbye.

(*ROY exits. CAROLYN shuts the door and turns to CARRIE.*)

CAROLYN

YOU'RE GOING TO GET ME LOCKED UP!

CARRIE

I'M NOT A TIC!

CAROLYN

Let's think this through.

CARRIE

He wants to bring his girl friend!

CAROLYN

Welcome to reality.

CARRIE

(*Throwing a flower at Carolyn*) You can take your reality and stuff it down your throat! If you didn't act like an old crone he wouldn't want to bring his girl friend!

CAROLYN

(*Picking up the flower*) He sees me as an old crone BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT I AM!

CARRIE

I'm just as much you as you are AND I'M YOUNG! You've ruined my life.

CAROLYN

May I remind you he did not return my three hundred dollars!

CARRIE

Oh, you and Mother and money! The two of you have deprived me of every chance for happiness I've ever had.

CAROLYN

(*Throwing the flower at Carrie*) I've had enough of your irrational behavior!

(CARRIE throws a flower back.)

CARRIE

I'm tired of being disappointed!

(A flower "war" ensues between CAROLYN and CARRIE.)

CAROLYN

You're completely self-centered!

CARRIE

Where else should I be centered?

CAROLYN

Once in a while you might think of someone else's feelings!

CARRIE

Once in a while you might stop lying to your self!

CAROLYN

Talk about lying! When in the history of the human race has a man of thirty ever fallen for a woman of seventy-two!

CARRIE

He liked me! Me, Carrie! He did!

CAROLYN

He liked his grandma! We remind him of his grandma!

(The truth of this stops CARRIE. SHE ends the flower war.)

CARRIE

I don't want to be loved like a grandma.

CAROLYN

Too bad. That's all you're going to get.

CARRIE

I want more.

CAROLYN

You know perfectly well Jim—as he is—is the best we can do.

Then maybe you should join me. CARRIE

Where are you going? CAROLYN

Oh, I think I'll take a little stroll on the balcony. CARRIE

I don't want you to go. CAROLYN

Why not, Carolyn? You don't want me. CARRIE

You help me. CAROLYN

To do what? Screw around with desiccated vegetables? CARRIE

To feel our life. CAROLYN

To feel our life? CARRIE

Even when it's painful. CAROLYN

I don't like feeling painful. CARRIE

Typical Carrie. Only thinking of yourself. CAROLYN

Do you like the way you're feeling? CARRIE

Not much. CAROLYN

Then follow me. CARRIE

(CARRIE goes out on the balcony. CAROLYN hangs on to something so she can keep her balance.)

CAROLYN

I can't do this.

CARRIE

Then put me to sleep. I don't want to live in a world where you're penalized for being a young person in an old body. Go on, Carolyn. Make the spell.

(CARRIE straddles the railing.)

CAROLYN

"Now I lay her down to sleep, I pray you, God, that girl to keep..." You know I don't mean a word of this.

CARRIE

So what?

CAROLYN

So it won't work.

CARRIE

It will if I want to go. Finish it.

CAROLYN

"Take her, though young and full of charm..."

CARRIE

(Singing) OFF WE GO INTO THE WILD
BLUE YONDER...

CAROLYN

...before she brings

CARRIE

(Singing fading as SHE falls off the balcony) OFF WE GO INTO THE SUN. SPOUTING
OUR FLAME FROM UNDER, AT 'EM BOYS, GIVE 'ER THE GUUUUN...

(There is the sound of a key in the lock and JIM enters.)

CAROLYN

"...my life to harm."

(CARRIE has vanished.)

CAROLYN, *Continued*

(Rushing after Carrie) Carrie, no!

(CAROLYN staggers under a panic attack.)

JIM

Carolyn! Stop!

(JIM drags CAROLYN back inside.)

CAROLYN

What?

JIM

What do you think you're doing?

CAROLYN

(Sitting) I have to sit.

JIM

I don't know about you. If Marsha can get to you like that...

CAROLYN

What did she say to you?

JIM

The point is, what did she say to you to make you...

(JIM nods towards the balcony.)

CAROLYN

That had nothing to do with Marsha. I was just trying to...

JIM

What?

CAROLYN

Stop her.

JIM

You're wasting your time stopping Marsha. She juggernauts on regardless of other people.

CAROLYN

I don't mean Marsha.

Oh. Who then?

JIM

That part of me. Carrie.

CAROLYN

What are you talking about?

JIM

Don't you remember yesterday?

CAROLYN

My apologies for that. I can't hold my liquor the way I used to.

JIM

Are you claiming you were drunk?

CAROLYN

No, not drunk, just a little out of control. I'm sorry if it led to a Marsha attack.

JIM

I'm sorry, too.

CAROLYN

She cares about you. So do I. We're both disturbed.

JIM

About what?

CAROLYN

About the way you've been feeling.

JIM

How do you know how I've been feeling?

CAROLYN

I'm trained to notice signs. You've been depressed, that goes without saying. You lose things.

JIM

Doesn't everybody?

CAROLYN

JIM

What about this inner child thing?

CAROLYN

Well, not to worry. I told you, she's gone. I'm just a normal depressed old lady again.

JIM

What about Roy?

CAROLYN

Roy? The security guard?

JIM

Is it true you asked him to drive you to Mexico?

CAROLYN

Is it true you asked me to go to Mexico last night?

JIM

Yes, I did.

CAROLYN

And I said yes.

JIM

That was Carrie talking.

CAROLYN

And Jim Beam was speaking for you?

JIM

I wanted to. I still want to—

CAROLYN

So do I. What's stopping us?

JIM

Marsha saw that kid driving your car.

CAROLYN

Oh. Marsha.

JIM

What was he doing with your car? I assume he didn't steal it.

CAROLYN

No. He was having it tuned up.

JIM

That isn't what he told Marsha.

CAROLYN

So it is Marsha.

JIM

He said you asked him to drive you to Mexico.

CAROLYN

So?

JIM

Don't you see?

CAROLYN

What? Are you jealous?

JIM

How inappropriate that is?

CAROLYN

You think it's inappropriate?

JIM

How well do you know him?

CAROLYN

He's a very nice young man.

JIM

Maybe so. Maybe you know all about him. But, at best, can you see how this looks?

CAROLYN

Looks to whom?

JIM

To me. To anyone. To this kid, for that matter.

CAROLYN
I won't be going to Mexico with him.

JIM
That's good.

CAROLYN
I'm moving to Valley View, as planned.

JIM
Good. Do you want me to call Doctor Haag?

CAROLYN
Doctor Haag?

JIM
I think you need to go back to see him.

CAROLYN
Why?

JIM
I think he can help you feel better.

CAROLYN
I'll be all right at Valley View.

JIM
Carolyn, you were trying to jump off the balcony!

CAROLYN
No, I was... Okay. But I'll call him myself.

JIM
Right now?

CAROLYN
Yes, right now.

JIM
I'll wait.

CAROLYN
I'd rather be alone. Please. You make me feel like a child.

JIM

All right. I'll check later. If you haven't made an appointment, I'll do it.

CAROLYN

I'll do it.

(CAROLYN sees JIM out, then exits to the bathroom and returns with a pill and a glass of water. SHE sits down and pours out a handful. But before SHE takes them, SHE puts them down and attempts to walk out on the balcony but pauses on the threshold.)

CAROLYN, *Continued*

Carrie?

(Receiving no answer, SHE goes back to her chair. There is a knock on the door. CAROLYN doesn't answer which prompts more knocking.)

ROY, *Off*

Mrs. Nash? Are you all right?

CAROLYN

What do you want?

ROY, *Off*

I found something of yours.

CAROLYN

Leave it outside the door.

ROY, *Off*

I don't think you'd like that. Somebody might steal them.

(CAROLYN opens the door slightly.)

CAROLYN

Did you say "them"?

(ROY more or less barges in.)

ROY

Are you all right?

CAROLYN

I'm fine.

ROY

No, you're not. You're upset with me, and that upsets me because I don't like it when you're upset with me.

CAROLYN

I'm not upset any more. But I was just going to lie down. What did you find of mine?

ROY

(Pulling the pearls Carrie was wearing from his pocket) Your pearls.

CAROLYN

What?

ROY

These are yours, aren't they?

CAROLYN

(Refusing to take them) No! I haven't worn those pearls since I was...twenty.

ROY

Then somebody else dropped them I guess.

CAROLYN

What makes you think they're mine?

ROY

I thought I saw you wearing them just now. When I was here. Before.

CAROLYN

You did?

ROY

I thought so.

CAROLYN

You saw me wearing these pearls.

ROY

You were wearing them, weren't you? I don't think I imagined it.

CAROLYN

Maybe I was.

ROY

I thought so! And when I saw those pearls laying on the ground like you'd decided to throw them away, something so valuable, I had to come back, even if you're mad at me.

CAROLYN

Thank you, Roy. *(Extends her hand)* For returning...

(CARRIE'S VOICE is an echo slightly out of synch which CAROLYN notes with wonder but which no one else hears.)

CAROLYN
my pearls.

CARRIE'S VOICE
my pearls.

ROY

(Shaking Carolyn's hand) I was right, wasn't I?

CAROLYN

About so many things. Which do you mean?

ROY

You didn't just want like a driver to take you to Mexico, you wanted—

CAROLYN

It was a ridiculous idea from start to finish, completely ridiculous—

ROY

Don't say that! You wanted to go to Mexico and you wanted me to go with you, you wanted me, not just some driver, and I spoiled it for you. I know there's a big difference in our ages and I know there are other differences, like we have different lifestyles, but I think we also have a lot in common. I think we both know a friend when we see one.

CAROLYN

That's profound for

CAROLYN
a boy your age.

CARRIE'S VOICE
a boy your age.

ROY

Oh, I'm a long way off profound. So— when do you want to start?

CAROLYN

Let me think it over. Give me some time.

ROY

Sure. I'll do that. I'll check back with you later.

(ROY exits. CAROLYN eagerly goes to the balcony, completely on the balcony, with no panic, looking for Carrie.)

CAROLYN

Carrie?

CARRIE, *Off*

I was right! Right, right, right! Roy sees me!

CAROLYN

So he does. But I don't. Why are you hiding?

CARRIE, *Off*

I'm not hiding.

CAROLYN

I can't see you!

CARRIE, *Off*

That's funny. I can't see you, either.

CAROLYN

Where are you?

CARRIE, *Off*

Well, below me quite a ways is a city street. Up above me quite a ways is a blue sky with a few clouds.

CAROLYN

That's what I'm seeing!

CARRIE, *Off*

Where are you?

CAROLYN

Why, I'm on the balcony!

CARRIE, *Off*

Look at us. Fearless Carolyn!

CAROLYN

I wonder if this is a permanent arrangement?

CARRIE, *Off*

Oh, oh. You mean, if you go, I go, too?

CAROLYN

Oh, my.

CARRIE, *Off*

Separate us, Carolyn. Do it quick!

CAROLYN

No.

CARRIE, *Off*

What do you mean, no? We're two different people.

CAROLYN

We're the same person.

(Once again, there is the sound of a key in the lock.)

CARRIE, *Off*

But I'm young!

CAROLYN

I know. So am I.

(MARSHA and JIM enter.)

MARSHA

Carolyn, hon, Jim and I have come to take you to Doctor Haag, now don't you protest—

CAROLYN

I don't want to go see Doctor Haag—

JIM

We think you should.

(CAROLYN, sometimes using CARRIE'S VOICE, sometimes her own, begins to overlap with Marsha and eventually wins.)

MARSHA

If I needed to talk to a psychiatrist, I certainly would take advantage of the opportunity—

(CAROLYN's lips move but it is CARRIE'S VOICE we hear.)

CARRIE'S VOICE IN CAROLYN

Jim, you really didn't need to bring your bodyguard—

MARSHA

(Going to spilled pills) Look at this, Jim, Carolyn, were you going to take all these pills—

CAROLYN

As a matter of fact, I was going to take all those pills—

MARSHA

So, Jim, it's up to us to do something, do something, Jim—

CAROLYN

But I changed my mind—

JIM

I've already called Doctor Haag.

CARRIE'S VOICE IN CAROLYN

Then I'll have to tell your golf partners we spent the night together—

MARSHA

But you didn't, Carolyn, that was a pure figtree of your—

CARRIE'S VOICE IN CAROLYN

And they'll tell their wives, and how will you deal with that, Marsh?

MARSHA

Who would believe you, such a ridiculous—

CAROLYN

Oh, Jim's golf partners will believe it. The same ones who also slept with Penny Hornblatt.

MARSHA

That was so long ago no one even remembers.

CAROLYN

You do.

MARSHA

Jim, tell Doctor Haag we're on our way.

CAROLYN

I'm not sick, Marsha, just because you say so.

CARRIE'S VOICE IN CAROLYN

Just because it's more convenient for you to see me as lacking.

CAROLYN

Lacking a husband, for one thing, but I don't want yours, not permanently.

CARRIE'S VOICE IN CAROLYN

I'll always want Jimmy, but for the time being, for old time's sake, I'll take you, Jim, how about it? Mexico?

(CAROLYN rumbas to Jim.)

CAROLYN

A fling? What do you say?

(JIM rebuffs CAROLYN who rumbas out on the balcony.)

JIM

Carolyn! Don't!

MARSHA

Oh, leave her alone!

JIM

She's crazy!

CAROLYN

(Returning) Dancing on the balcony is a sign of insanity?

CARRIE'S VOICE IN CAROLYN

C wasn't for caring, Jim. It was for courage.

MARSHA

Oh, who knows what you're talking about, I hope you enjoy wherever it is you end up, Carolyn, I really do, but you're not going to drag us into your quandrangles, I'm going. All these years I've tried to be a good friend to you. You haven't made it easy.

CAROLYN

Then why do you keep on trying?

MARSHA

I wash my hands of this whole situation. Jim, let's go.

(MARSHA exits. JIM hesitates.)

JIM

Oh. Which is the box of Ed's things?

CAROLYN

(Indicating box) I'd forgotten all about it. Thank you, Jim.

JIM

(Picking up the box) Will you be all right?

CAROLYN

Of course.

(JIM exits.)

CARRIE, *Off*

That was hard. I thought he loved me, no matter what.

CAROLYN

He did once. It will have to be enough that he remembers that. The question now is: do we drag Roy into our quadrangle, or do we journey on alone?

CARRIE, *Off*

What's the point? Oh, well. Maybe someday we'll meet someone...

CAROLYN

More appropriate.

CARRIE

I was going to say 'unattached'.

(And once again there is a knock on the door.)

CAROLYN

Now what have I lost.

CARRIE, *Off*

Or what have we found?

ROY, *Off*

Mrs. Nash?

(CAROLYN opens door. ROY hands her change from the three hundred dollars.)

This is Not the End of the Play
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes