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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.
(Ignoring this) —been through the worst—

Marsha…

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

Marsha…

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

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.

ROY

Roy. I know it’s Roy.

CAROLYN

How much money was in it?

MARSHA

About three hundred dollars.

CAROLYN

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.

No.

CAROLYN

No what?

MARSHA

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.)

Hey! Carolyn! Where the hell am I?

Who’s that?

You know who. It’s me! Carrie.

No. No, no, no.

Yes. Yes, yes, yes.

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.
I thought it was your foot.

ROY

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

CAROLYN

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

ROY

Roy.

CAROLYN

I’m sorry. I know you’re busy.

ROY

What’s worrying you?

CAROLYN

Nothing.

ROY

That’s not true.

CAROLYN

My uncle wouldn’t co-sign the loan.

ROY

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

CAROLYN

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

ROY

You have a goal, Roy.

CAROLYN

I do?

ROY

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.
CAROLYN

All right. “Now I lay her down—”

CARRIE, Off

It won’t work anyway. You really want me to stay.

CAROLYN

I’m pretty sure I don’t.

CARRIE, Off

While you make up your mind, let me inside. (Trying the door) Would you explain why you’ve locked a door halfway up a very tall building? Who’s going to break in? Superman?

CAROLYN

It makes me feel safe.

CARRIE, Off

Safe! What’s so good about safe?

CAROLYN

You’ll only complicate my life. I have a three-thirty appointment and it’s (Looking at her empty wrist)—Shit!

CARRIE, Off

Why, Carolyn! You said that word.

CAROLYN

I don’t care. Now I’ve lost my watch.

CARRIE, Off

I know where your watch is.

CAROLYN

Where?

CARRIE, Off

First, let me in.

CAROLYN

Tell me where the watch is.

CARRIE, Off

Before you let me in? Are you crazy?
CAROLYN

Do you know where it is?

CARRIE, Off

It’s right there in your head.

CAROLYN

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

CARRIE, Off

I’ll give you a hint…

CAROLYN

Well?

CARRIE, Off

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

CAROLYN

You think so, do you?

CARRIE, Off

I’m the best part of you.

CAROLYN

Are you?

CARRIE, Off

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

(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)

CARRIE, Continued

(Singing) “HEAVEN AND EARTH AM I WITH YOU!”

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

CARRIE, Continued

Aaaa! Owww! . . . My tailbone! My knee! . . . Who the hell are you?

CAROLYN
Carrie!

(CARRIE) Stop! Stop this!

You’re so young!

My heart!

I’d forgotten.

It’s out of control.

So lovely!

I’m dying.

No, you’re not. I’m just excited.

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

Some things have changed.

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

Actually, past the millennium.

WHAT DID YOU SAY?

Keep calm. We’re in the twenty-first century.
Shit! How long have I been asleep?

Awhile.

How long awhile?

Will you keep calm?

HOW LONG?

I guess about thirty years.

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

I said thirty.

WHAT?

Thirty.

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 wails and flings herself to the floor.)

Ouch!

I’m the one who’s hurt.
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!

(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.

Good riddance. Ow.

CARRIE
Serves you right.

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

CARRIE
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.

And look at you!

We all get old. Except you, of course.

Shit! WHY?

That’s life.

I won’t accept life.

What are you going to do about it?

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

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

He was when he was with me.

(Remembering) Oh! The game of beautiful words.

No.

No what?

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

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.

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.

“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.

Thirty-five?

CARRIE

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?

Listen, Mrs. Nash—

Carrie.

That’s your goal, isn’t it?

It’s not prac—

YES!!

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.

Oh, I wish I could believe you mean that.

I do believe you mean that.

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

I’m not unhappy—

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—

It was all right when Ed needed me—

But now I’m free—
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...”
CAROLYN
It’s not a crick, it’s reality setting in. Mexico! With Roy!

CAROLYN
He’s special.

CAROLYN
He’s sweet. He’s always kind and thoughtful.

CAROLYN
And very attractive.

CAROLYN
I’m not attracted to him.

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

CAROLYN
That’s good.

CAROLYN
No, it isn’t. What’s happening?

CAROLYN
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?

CAROLYN
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!

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!
CARRIE

What’s he want?

JIM

Is someone here?

CAROLYN

No. Who would be here?

JIM

I thought…Marsha dropped her cane when…

CAROLYN

How is she?

CARRIE

As if we care.

JIM

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

CARRIE

I don’t want to chat.

CAROLYN

But I do.

CARRIE

He’s not there, Carolyn.

JIM

You do what?

CAROLYN

I didn’t say anything.

JIM

Yes, you did. You said, I do.

CAROLYN

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

*(JIM checks his watch.)*
CARRIE

It’s inside the pillow case.

JIM

It’s almost three.

CAROLYN

Oh, inside!

JIM

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

CAROLYN

I’m so distracted.

JIM

Is this move more than you can handle?

CAROLYN

I’ll be right back.

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

CARRIE

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

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

CARRIE, Continued

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?

CAROLYN

Do you remember when I called you Jimmy?

JIM

What?

CAROLYN

Nothing.
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.

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.

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.

What?

Keep going.

I’m distracted.

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

It’s stress. It’s a stressful time.

Well, yes, but, no. It’s—

It’s me. Carrie.

It’s Carrie.

Carrie?

Do you remember Carrie?

I remember…I called you Carrie.

She’s still here.

How do you mean?
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—

Here I am!

CARRIE

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.
You have a golf game.

It’s not important.

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

My pleasure…Carrie.

Carrie?

I’ll take Marsha’s cane. I’ll be right back.

I’ll be here.

(JIM exits.)

What do you think you’re doing?

Didn’t you hear?

What?

Jimmy. (Singing) “SOUSE OF ZE BORDER, DUM DUM DEE DUM—”

(Dismayed) No, Carolyn! No!

(BLACKOUT. END ACT I; SCENE ONE.)
(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?

CARRIE
I’m, not, nothing.

CAROLYN
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

I’m the one who cared.
CARRIE

Where were you?

CAROLYN

I went to San Francisco to see my sister.

JIM

You should have gone with me.

CAROLYN

You should have come after me.

JIM

You didn’t want me to.

CAROLYN

How do you know?

JIM

You said so.

CAROLYN

When?

JIM

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

CAROLYN

Well, it’s water under the bridge.

JIM

Is it?

CARRIE

Yes, you old fart! Leave us alone.

CAROLYN

(To Jim) Isn’t it?

JIM

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

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—
(To Carrie) Stop!

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

I don’t feel foolish.

What do you feel?

Regret.

Oh, Carolyn, let it go!

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

Romance.

Affair.

Love.

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

Speak for yourself.

We’re too o—

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

Only twenty.
What was that game of ours?

The game of—

Beautiful words.

You

...remember that?

A is for—

Adore!

B is for beautiful.

No! It was—

*Beginning to smile* Bountiful!

Bountiful? Are you sure?

C is for—

Caring.

No.
What was it?

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

CAROLYN

L is for losing your memory!

JIM


CAROLYN

Hope?...

JIM

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

Is that what you want?

CAROLYN

Is that what you want?

JIM

Is that what you want?

CARRIE

Why doesn’t anybody ask me what I want?

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?

I don’t want you to say yes…

He’s right, say no!

…until you’re sure.

I want Roy!

(To Carrie) That’s not what I want!

You don’t?

(To Jim) What are you talking about?

What are you talking about?

The future.

That’s what I’m talking about.

What about the Marsh Rat?

I don’t want to sneak.

We don’t have to sneak.

You’ll tell Marsha?
JIM
Telling her is one thing. Making her believe I mean it is another.

He won’t tell her.

CARRIE

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.

He’s sent me flowers.

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’?

He’ll be here.

What are you going to say to Roy?

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

Answer me.

Just be quiet a moment.

Why?

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

(MARSHA enters.)

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—

He told her.

— 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—
Jim didn’t take advantage of me—

—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—

Marsha, let me explain—

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

I never meant to hurt you—

—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—

Jim? And Penny Hornblatt?

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.

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

Nothing happened last night.

It did too!

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?

He didn’t tell her about Mexico.

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

Keys?

He didn’t tell her anything. She’s guessing!

You lost them, remember?

Oh, yes.

Do you need a ride today?

Thanks.

THANKS? What for? Tell her the truth.

Marsha—

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

Marsha, I have to say—

I know what you’ve been through, it was worse for you because rumor has it that Ed was serious about leaving you—
Now, that is an outright lie!

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

Marsha, MARSHA!

What? You don’t have to shout.

I don’t mean to hurt you, but…

Go on. “Maybe it wasn’t sex, but…”

A lot did happen last night.

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.)

It’s not true.

Which part?

Ed would never have left me.

And Jim will never leave Marsha.

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

When will he be here?

CARRIE

I don’t know.

CAROLYN

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.)

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

ROY

My girl friend.

(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.

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

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

I don’t want you to go.

WHY NOT, CAROLYN? YOU DON’T WANT ME.

YOU HELP ME.

TO DO WHAT? SCREW AROUND WITH DESICCATED VEGETABLES?

TO FEEL OUR LIFE.

TO FEEL OUR LIFE?

EVEN WHEN IT’S PAINFUL.

I DON’T LIKE FEELING PAINFUL.

TYPICAL CARRIE. ONLY THINKING OF YOURSELF.

DO YOU LIKE THE WAY YOU’RE FEELING?

NOT MUCH.

THEN FOLLOW ME.
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

“So what?”

CARRIE

So it won’t work.

CAROLYN

“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. SPUTTING OUR FLAME FROM UNDER, AT ‘EM BOYS, GIVE ‘ER THE GUUUUUUN…

(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.
JIM
Oh. Who then?

CAROLYN
That part of me. Carrie.

JIM
What are you talking about?

CAROLYN
Don’t you remember yesterday?

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

CAROLYN
Are you claiming you were drunk?

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

CAROLYN
I’m sorry, too.

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

CAROLYN
About what?

JIM
About the way you’ve been feeling.

CAROLYN
How do you know how I’ve been feeling?

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

CAROLYN
Doesn’t everybody?
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.

No. He was having it tuned up.

That isn’t what he told Marsha.

So it is Marsha.

He said you asked him to drive you to Mexico.

So?

Don’t you see?

What? Are you jealous?

How inappropriate that is?

You think it’s inappropriate?

How well do you know him?

He’s a very nice young man.

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

Looks to whom?

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.

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?

I’m not hiding.

I can’t see you!

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

Where are you?

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

That’s what I’m seeing!

Where are you?

Why, I’m on the balcony!

Look at us. Fearless Carolyn!
I wonder if this is a permanent arrangement?

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

Oh, my.

Separate us, Carolyn. Do it quick!

No.

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

We’re the same person.

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

But I’m young!

I know. So am I.

(MARSHA and JIM enter.)

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

I don’t want to go see Doctor Haag—

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