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Older Than Dead

A Comedy about Life and Death as Deadheads

by

Lynn Snyder

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Older Than Dead

by Lynn Snyder

CHARACTERS:

DORIANNE; romantic, seductive, feisty, sixty-something. She plays lead guitar.

KATE; realistic, smart, sixty-something. She plays drums.

SAUL; Kate's partner, pessimistic, late 60's. He plays bass guitar.

ANDY; Dorianne's partner, late 60's to early 70's. Like the others, he appears in excellent physical condition for his age. The upbeat Andy is a pianist and the only professional musician in the band.

MICHAEL; 65, a determined police officer with a guilty conscience.

SETTING:

The Living room, dining room and kitchen of a Victorian home in San Francisco. The house is furnished haphazardly in nineteen sixties commune style. In addition to the usual sofa, chairs and coffee table, there is a life-size cardboard replica of the Grateful Dead, as well as sophisticated stereo equipment and exercise equipment such as a treadmill, a lifecycle, a set of weights and a large exercise ball. In an alcove, there are two guitars, a set of drums and a piano. Over the alcove is a sign, reading, OLDER THAN DEAD. During Act II, there is a minimal representational set for a brief scene in a nursing home

TIME:

The action takes place between New Year's 1995, and later that summer.

ETC:

DORIANNE, KATE, SAUL and ANDY are Deadheads and dress accordingly. ANDY's costume should include a plaid shirt and a French beret. Except for ANDY, they are not musicians. They air-play the instruments and try to synchronize "performing" with Grateful Dead tapes.

Older Than Dead

by Lynn Snyder

ACT I; Scene 1

(AT RISE: New Year's Eve, 1994/95. A video of The Grateful Dead's 1978 Winterland New Year's Eve concert is playing; the volume turned up high. KATE, DORIANNE, SAUL and ANDY, on drums, lead guitar, bass and piano, respectively, synchronize with the tape.)

ANDY

Midnight!

DORIANNE, SAUL, ANDY

Happy New Year!

(DORIANNE, SAUL and ANDY stop playing, kiss, hug each other, and dance to the music. KATE continues to play drums, in an obsessed frenzy. SAUL opens a bottle of champagne and pours a glass for each.)

SAUL

Come on, Kate! It's 1995!

DORIANNE

Once she gets started.

ANDY

Don't stop her! She's into it!

DORIANNE

We aren't The Grateful Dead, Kate! You're not Mickey Hart!

ANDY

A few minor strokes of fate and she might have been. Go, Kate, go!

KATE

Don't do the toast without me!

SAUL

Then, come on.

(THEY raise their glasses. KATE hurries over to join them.)

ALL

To The Grateful Dead!

(THEY drink.)

ALL

To Older Than Dead!

(THEY drink.)

KATE

To the best of all possible worlds!

(THEY drink. ANDY rolls a joint, passes it around.)

ANDY

Who said that about ‘the best of all possible worlds’? Someone famous, wasn’t it?

KATE

“This is the best of all possible worlds”? I forget. Voltaire used it in *Candide*, but he didn’t say it, first.

SAUL

Henry VIII.

KATE

No.

SAUL

He did.

DORIANNE

Duke Ellington.

KATE

No! It was some philosopher.

DORIANNE

The Duke’s a philosopher.

KATE

I mean the kind who writes books. The man who said it first was a German philosopher.

DORIANNE

It wasn't any German. It was The Duke.

SAUL

No. It wasn’t Henry VIII or Duke Ellington. It was Jerry Garcia!

(SOUND: The doorbell rings. THEY give each other wary looks. ANDY looks through the peephole.)

ANDY

(Whispers) The police!

(DORIANNE exits with the joint. SAUL brings air freshener from the kitchen; sprays. KATE opens windows and fans the air. SOUND: The doorbell rings again.)

ANDY, *Continued*

(Shouts) Be right there!

(When SAUL has finished spraying and DORIANNE enters, ANDY opens the door. MICHAEL, a policeman, enters.)

MICHAEL

You'll have to turn down that music.

DORIANNE

Turn it down?

SAUL

On New Year's Eve?

KATE

Don't you know who used to live here?

MICHAEL

It doesn't matter who used to live here. The music is too loud.

KATE

The Grateful Dead.

MICHAEL

Huh?

KATE

The Dead used to live in this house.

MICHAEL

Yeah, sure.

KATE

They did!

MICHAEL

This house?

KATE

That's why we bought it.

MICHAEL

Well, I guess they could have. I knew they lived around here, somewhere.

ANDY

This is it. This is the house.

MICHAEL

(Impressed) The Dead! Here! What do you know? It doesn't matter. People still have to sleep.

ANDY

(Turns down volume.) Okay. But no one on this street sleeps through New Year's Eve, Officer.

MICHAEL

No. They clean house. *(Sniffing)* With air freshener.

ANDY

Pine. Nice, huh? Like living in a pine forest, with all the comforts of home.

MICHAEL

Pine is the air freshener of choice among illegal substance users. They flush the joint down the toilet and then spray like hell with pine.

ANDY

Some routine.

MICHAEL

You think so, huh?

ANDY

You've got to admit, they have good taste. At least, they don't use bug spray or cheap perfume.

MICHAEL

Just keep the volume down, okay? *(Turns to leave; sees video)* Wait a minute! Is that...? That's Winterland! The Dead's 1978 New Year's Eve concert at Winterland!

ANDY

We play it every New Year's Eve.

MICHAEL

What a concert.

ANDY

You weren't there?!

MICHAEL

The last concert at Winterland! Where else would I be?

ANDY

You're a Deadhead!

MICHAEL

I am not a Deadhead.

ANDY

He's a Deadhead!

MICHAEL

Look at me. Short hair. Clean teeth. I wash with soap, launder my clothes, drive a 1992 *American* car. I have car insurance, life insurance, house insurance, and I don't fuck. I make love. Do I look like a Deadhead?

KATE

It's nothing to be ashamed of. Queen Elizabeth is a deadhead. So was Freud and every American president since the Civil War.

ANDY

Have a glass of champagne, Officer.

MICHAEL

I'm on duty, which wouldn't matter to Deadheads, but I take my responsibilities seriously.

KATE

You shouldn't have to work on New Year's Eve.

MICHAEL

I didn't have to. I volunteered so the young guy on this beat could go out with his new girlfriend.

KATE

Just the kind of sweet, generous thing a Deadhead would do. I bet you were at the Dead's Winterland New Year's Eve concert in 1977, too.

MICHAEL

So what?

KATE

And '72

MICHAEL

I took my daughter.

SAUL

You went every year!

MICHAEL

They didn't play Winterland every year. Nineteen sixty-six they were at the Fillmore. Sixty-seven and sixty-nine, they were in Boston. *Sixty-eight*, they were at Winterland.

SAUL

And you were there.

MICHAEL

My daughter couldn't miss it. She was nuts about these guys, and where did it get her? I never see her anymore.

ANDY

That's probably your fault, not hers.

MICHAEL

How the fuck...how the hell would you know?

ANDY

I hear it in your voice and I see it in your eyes. She took off in a direction you didn't plan for her and don't like.

MICHAEL

Took off in the *wrong* direction.

ANDY

Who says?

MICHAEL

I say!

ANDY

You sure you know what's right for her?

MICHAEL

I'm her *father!*

ANDY

And she's herself, so maybe she knows better than you who she's supposed to be.

MICHAEL

Who do you think you are, telling me—

ANDY

Hey, man. No offense intended. I bet you're an A-number one dad.

MICHAEL

No, I'm not.

ANDY

Well, you're close.

MICHAEL

I'm a rotten father. I almost put her in jail!

KATE

Your own daughter!

MICHAEL

You don't know what she did. No one's above the law, including my daughter.

SAUL

Unload. Tell us about it.

DORIANNE

Sit down, Officer. Have a New Year's drink with us. Nineteen ninety-five is the Dead's 30th birthday.

MICHAEL

Not until November. November, 12, 1965 is when they changed their name from The Warlocks to The Grateful Dead.

KATE

Only a Deadhead would know that.

MICHAEL

My daughter.

ANDY

And you took it all in.

MICHAEL

Tell you the truth, I enjoyed those concerts, the music and the whole...I don't know. All those kids? They didn't care how old I was. Once we all got into it, no one cared how old anyone was.

ANDY

There's no age at a Dead concert. There's no anything except what's happening.

DORIANNE

If November 12th is their birthday, November 12th should be a national holiday.

ANDY

No one goes to work that day. Anyone who works should be fined.

SAUL

The Dead should be invited to the White House.

DORIANNE

They should be *living* in the White House, running the country. No more wars.

SAUL

Straighten out the economy, too. Consumer confidence just needs love and music.

ANDY

We'd have national health care.

DORIANNE

And clean air.

KATE

Jerry Garcia for president!

DORIANNE

And that sexy Bob Weir for vice president.

ANDY

He's not so sexy.

DORIANNE

Not like you, Baby, but give him forty years.

MICHAEL

(Starts to exit) Wait a minute! Are they playing *Casey Jones*? *(Turns up volume.)* It's *Casey Jones*!

KATE

C'mon, everyone. The first *Casey Jones* of 1995.

(THEY sing with the tape.)

KATE, SAUL, DORIANNE & ANDY

(Singing)

*Driving that train, high on cocaine,
Casey Jones, you'd better watch your speed.
Trouble ahead, trouble behind,
And you know that notion just crossed my mind.*

ANDY

You, too, Officer.

MICHAEL

I can't sing.

DORIANNE

Your whole body's singing, Honey. Just open your mouth.

(MICHAEL sings, hesitantly at first, then with increased vigor and volume.)

ALL

(Singing)

*This old engine makes it on time,
Leaves Central Station 'bout a quarter to nine.
Hits River Junction at seventeen to;
At a quarter to ten—you know it's trav'lin again.*

*Driving that train, high on cocaine
Casey Jones you better watch your speed.
Trouble ahead; trouble behind,
And you know that notion just crossed your mind.*

(THEY continue to the end of the piece, then shout and applaud as though at a Dead concert.)

ANDY

Happy New Year, everyone!

ALL

Happy New Year!

(THEY hug and kiss, pulling MICHAEL into the scene. ANDY pours a glass of champagne for MICHAEL.)

ANDY

Here you go, Officer.

MICHAEL

Well, just one.

ALL

Happy New Year!

SAUL

You're a Deadhead, Man, whether you like it or not.

DORIANNE

He loves it!

MICHAEL
I gotta admit...their music—

ANDY
We know, Man! *We know!*

KATE
Drink up, everyone. Refills coming!

MICHAEL
No! I've got to get moving.

SAUL
Come on. Just one more.

MICHAEL
Honestly, I'd like to but I better not.

DORIANNE
Come back for New Year's Day brunch, tomorrow. We're having my special oatmeal pancakes with blueberry syrup.

MICHAEL
Wow! That sounds good!

ANDY
Bring the whole family.

MICHAEL
I don't...exactly have a family, anymore.

ANDY
You've got one now.

MICHAEL
You really want me to come back?

DORIANNE
We don't say anything we don't mean, Baby. Once you start really hearing The Dead – I mean deep, like it takes over and you're one with the music – once that happens, you don't ever say anything you don't mean.

MICHAEL
Okay. I'll come for brunch. What time?

DORIANNE
Whenever we're all ready to eat.

MICHAEL
I mean, what *time*?

DORIANNE
You'll know.

MICHAEL
How will I know when—

SAUL
Whenever you get here is the time to be here. You start getting hung up on clock time, you can't tell when you really want to be somewhere.

MICHAEL
What if you're not up, yet.

SAUL
Come in and hang out. Listen to The Dead tapes. Smoke some pot. Help yourself to whatever's in the fridge. Someone will be up soon. Meanwhile, just hang loose, man.

MICHAEL
Okay. Okay, I will. Hey! They're playing *Friend of the Devil!* One of my favorites. Turn it up. Turn it way up.

(ANDY turns up the volume. THEY all dance and sing to the music, until ANDY suddenly collapses.)

DORIANNE
Andyyyyyyy!

END OF SCENE

ACT I: Scene 2

(AT RISE: August, 1995. SAUL sits in the living room, ready to take ANDY, who is now paralyzed by a stroke, to a nursing home. KATE tucks a blanket around ANDY, who sits in a wheelchair; a packed suitcase stands at the door.)

KATE
He's ready.

SAUL
We can't go until Dorianne gets back.

KATE
He has his coat on and everything.

We have to wait for Dorianne.

SAUL

She's not coming back.

KATE

Sure, she's coming back.

SAUL

I don't think so. She's gone for good, Saul.

KATE

She wouldn't just take off like that.

SAUL

It's exactly what Dorianne *would* do.

KATE

Where would she go?

SAUL

Denver.

KATE

Denver?

SAUL

Or New Orleans. Or Nairobi, for all we know.

KATE

She said she was going for a short bike ride and we should wait for her.

SAUL

She can't face sending Andy to that home.

KATE

Neither can we.

SAUL

But we're doing what has to be done.

KATE

We can't go without her.

SAUL

We might have to.

KATE

SAUL

She wouldn't walk out on Andy like that.

KATE

She does anything she wants.

SAUL

Not that. She wouldn't do that.

KATE

You don't know her.

SAUL

I've lived in the same house with her for as long as you have.

KATE

She gets an idea in her head, she just takes off with it.

SAUL

That bugs you, doesn't it?

KATE

Doesn't care how it might affect anyone else. Don't tell me that doesn't bug you, too.

SAUL

No. It's okay with me. Wherever she is, it's got more going for it than taking Andy to a nursing home.

KATE

None of us wants him to go. We talked about it. We agreed.

SAUL

Anyway, Dorianne loves Andy too much to walk out on him. She wouldn't do it.

KATE

She would tell herself it's okay because she can't stand to see him go. Dorianne doesn't have any trouble talking herself into doing whatever she decides to do.

SAUL

We'll give her another half hour.

KATE

I'm not going to call the nursing home again to tell them we'll be late.

SAUL

We don't have to call. They know we're coming.

KATE

I don't want to get off on the wrong foot with them.

SAUL

I'd rather be on the wrong foot with them than with Dorianne.

(DORIANNE enters in cycling gear, complete with helmet and walkman.)

DORIANNE

Unpack that suitcase! The Dead are coming!

SAUL

The Dead? Coming here? When?

DORIANNE

(Kisses ANDY) Jerry Garcia and the Dead are coming, baby! You don't have to go anywhere.

SAUL

They're coming here?

KATE

Like you and I are going to Mars.

DORIANNE

(To ANDY) Turns you on, doesn't it, lover man?

SAUL

When, Dorianne? When are they coming? Who told you?

DORIANNE

Look! Andy's smiling!

KATE

He is not smiling.

DORIANNE

Look at him!

KATE

He doesn't understand a word.

DORIANNE

You can see it in his eyes.

SAUL

Dorianne! Who said the Dead are coming?

KATE

His eyes haven't changed since the stroke.

DORIANNE

Take a good look.

KATE

(Looks) They're the same.

DORIANNE

(More insistent) Look, Saul.

SAUL

(Looks) There might be something going on, but then again, there might not. Dorianne! Are The Dead really—

KATE

Do you know who I am, Andy? Wiggle one finger if you know who I am. Or smile. Or frown! Anything!

DORIANNE

You can't trigger any reaction from him, Kate. There's nothing surprising about you.

KATE

We're already an hour late for our appointment.

DORIANNE

Call the nursing home. Andy's not going.

SAUL

When, Dorianne? When will they be here?

DORIANNE

Listen to this. I'm on my bike, riding down to the ocean, okay? And I'll tell you now, I had decided I wasn't ever coming back. Once I got there, I was going to walk into the ocean and keep going. That's what. So, I'm on my bike, listening to the radio, when I hear about this woman in Fresno. She's paralyzed by a stroke. Couldn't move anything, not one finger! The daughter she hasn't seen in twenty years walks into the room. The woman gets up out of her wheelchair, lifts her arms that are supposed to be paralyzed and hugs her daughter.

(DORIANNE stares at KATE and SAUL.)

KATE

Andy's children have been here! They could be lamps or tables or corn flakes, for all he knows.

DORIANNE

You don't get it! His kids are in and out of here all the time! The Dead aren't! Put the Dead together with the paralyzed woman and see what you get.

KATE

What I get is that Andy has to go to a nursing home, and we are late for his registration and orientation, and they're going to call and tell us to find another home for him.

DORIANNE

Put them together, Saul.

SAUL

The paralyzed woman and the...?

DORIANNE

Andy's sitting there, just like he is now, not expecting anything but his applesauce, when who walks in that door? Jerry Garcia and the Dead. Wham! Just like that woman, he gets a jolt, like you jump-start a car.

KATE

You think that's what happens when someone has a stroke, their brain starts working like a car battery?

DORIANNE

That woman was paralyzed by a stroke. She got a shock. She moved. Facts! On the news!

KATE

We've done everything we can, Dorianne. Four of the best specialists in town say he can't recover.

DORIANNE

All these big specialists we've had for Andy don't know what would happen if the band that turned Andy's life around suddenly walks in the door and starts playing the music that changed his life. Andy would have sold insurance all his life if a Dead concert hadn't inspired him to go back to the piano where he knew he belonged. We're going to make a big 30th birthday party, invite the whole neighborhood, and it's going to jolt Andy right out of that stupid stroke.

KATE

Oh, forgodsake, Dorianne. The most famous band in the world isn't coming here to celebrate its birthday.

DORIANNE

Cleveland, 1971! That's the Dead concert where we met, which makes us the oldest Deadheads on earth. And we live in the house they were in when they started on the road to fame. Where else would they want to celebrate their 30th birthday?

KATE

Madison Square Garden. The London Palladium. The Coliseum. It's not as though The Grateful Dead doesn't have a choice.

DORIANNE

Those places don't mean anything to them. They're just famous public places. We're *family!* This whole neighborhood is Grateful Dead *family*. I'll make a big pot of jambalaya and a huge double-fudge chocolate cake.

KATE

Okay, Dorianne. Call The Dead. You have their home number, of course?

DORIANNE

Saul's going to invite them.

SAUL

Me?

DORIANNE

Well, sure. You're the one who knows Jerry Garcia.

SAUL

No! I don't—

DORIANNE

Met him at a party. You told me.

SAUL

Well, yeah, but that was—

KATE

You met Jerry Garcia at a party? What party?

SAUL

A long time ago.

KATE

Where was I?

SAUL

I don't know. Somewhere else, I suppose.

KATE

You never told me you met Jerry.

SAUL

He wouldn't remember me.

DORIANNE

If Jerry met you, he remembers. You make an impression, Saul.

SAUL

Yeah. Well. That guy meets a lot of people.

KATE

Where was I when you met Jerry?

SAUL

We aren't together every minute of every day, Kate.

DORIANNE

You make a deep impression, Honey.

KATE

When was this party?

DORIANNE

You've got a way about you that people don't forget, Saul.

SAUL

Jerry and I did share a joint.

DORIANNE

There!

SAUL

He was leaning up against the wall, smoking Columbian, and he asked me if I wanted a toke.

DORIANNE

He invited you, singled you out.

SAUL

Not exactly. I just happened to be passing by.

DORIANNE

So were lots of other people, I bet.

SAUL

Well, yeah.

DORIANNE

He didn't ask them.

SAUL

We passed the joint back and forth and had a long talk.

DORIANNE

What did I tell you?

KATE

I want to know where I was when you—

SAUL

We finished one, and he lit up another, and we went right on talking.

DORIANNE

He liked you.

KATE

All these years, Saul, you never said a word about meeting Jerry.

SAUL

He said his feet hurt. I told him it was those boots he wears, with pointed toes. I said he should wear sandals or shoes with a round toe. Pointed toes will kill your feet, I said. Some nerve, huh, telling Jerry Garcia what kind of shoes to wear. But you know? He hugged me.

DORIANNE

Well, sure he did.

SAUL

A big bear hug.

DORIANNE

You saved his feet!

KATE

Jerry hugged you?

DORIANNE

He's a very warm person.

SAUL

I hugged him back, too.

DORIANNE

He'd be crippled without you!

KATE

Why wasn't I at the party, Saul?

DORIANNE

Jerry blesses you every day of his life.

SAUL

Of course, this was a long time ago.

DORIANNE

In the back of his mind, you're right there, every time he puts on his shoes. Call him, Saul.

SAUL

You really think he remembers?

DORIANNE

No one forgets you, Honey.

KATE

Saul, you're not falling for this—

SAUL

I can't just...pick up the phone and call Jerry.

DORIANNE

He owes you, baby.

KATE

Oh, come *on*.

SAUL

Well...he might remember me.

DORIANNE

Just tell him you're the guy who saved his feet.

KATE

Yeah. Right. Just tell him—

SAUL

He might consider doing me a little favor.

DORIANNE

He would be grateful for the opportunity.

SAUL

Of course, this kind of thing, you don't do one, two, three. It's got to be worked out with someone close to him, someone who can get me invited to a party or backstage after a concert.

DORIANNE

You know someone who could do that, all the friends you have.

SAUL

I have made a few contacts over the years.

DORIANNE

Sure, you have. People like you.

KATE

He doesn't need you to—

SAUL

I've made quite a few contacts, now that I think of it.

DORIANNE

People gravitate to you, like they do to Jerry. You and Jerry Garcia are a lot alike.

SAUL

Yeah?

DORIANNE

Whole room full of people, and he picks you to share his grass.

KATE

Saul, she's just trying to—

SAUL

There *were* a lot of people.

DORIANNE

He could have asked any ten of them, but he picked you.

SAUL

He did. Jerry picked me.

DORIANNE

Do it, Saul. If we can bump Andy back to the living, we have to do it.

SAUL

It's all contacts. You have the right contacts, you can get whatever you want in this world.

KATE

Where are you going?

SAUL

To invite Jerry and the band.

KATE

It took us two months to get Andy into the best nursing home in the city, and you're going to—

DORIANNE

He doesn't need a nursing home.

KATE

Three specialists—

SAUL

Doctors! Ten years ago, doctors told my brother he had six months to live. Where is he now? In England! On a walking tour! *(Exits)*

DORIANNE

(Rolls ANDY to the piano) No nursing home for you, lover man. You're going to play that piano right into the twenty-first century.

END OF SCENE

ACT I; Scene 3

(AT RISE: The same, early the next morning. Multicolored balloons cover the ceiling; KATE, alone, plays drums to a tape of The Grateful Dead's "Turn on Your Love Light." SHE stops, takes a poker from the fireplace, and begins bursting the balloons with the poker. DORIANNE enters from kitchen with a big chocolate cake.)

DORIANNE

Here's the cake! What the...? Stop!

KATE

The Dead aren't coming! *(Pops a balloon)*

DORIANNE

Give me that...!

KATE

(Pops another balloon) There isn't going to be a party!

DORIANNE

Cut that out!

KATE

And Saul isn't coming back. *(Pops yet another)*

DORIANNE

Sure, he's coming back.

KATE

He's gone for good.

DORIANNE

Who says?

KATE

He's been gone all night!

DORIANNE

Inviting the Dead to a birthday party takes all night and then some. You've got to mosey around, hang out with people. STOP busting my balloons!

KATE

You were at that party with Saul.

DORIANNE

Me?

KATE

The one with Jerry.

DORIANNE

Is that why you're busting my balloons?

KATE

It was you, wasn't it?

DORIANNE

No.

KATE

It was you.

DORIANNE

I did not go to a party with Saul. I have my own man.

KATE

You don't mind having someone else's man, too. (*Pops a balloon*)

DORIANNE

Cut that out!

KATE

The Dead are going to celebrate their birthday at The Arc de Triumph. Or on top of an Egyptian pyramid. They're not coming here! (*Pops balloon*)

DORIANNE

Yes, they *are!* I wouldn't melt twenty bars of genuine Belgian chocolate to make a double-fudge birthday cake if they weren't coming.

(KATE pops a balloon. DORIANNE tries to take the poker. KATE dodges her, popping balloons.)

KATE

You flattered Saul into thinking he could get them here to perform some kind of miracle, when what Andy needs is professional care, not day dreams.

DORIANNE

Professional *care* is just what Andy doesn't need. *(To ANDY)* Makes you sick to even think about it, doesn't it, Baby? People feeding you and washing you and helping you *potty!* I *know* you don't want to live that way, Honey. And don't you worry. I'm not going to let you. The Dead are coming, Sweetie. *(To KATE)* Give me that poker!

(DORIANNE catches KATE. THEY struggle for the poker, fall, stunned but unhurt.)

KATE

Dorianne? Dorianne, are you okay? Don't move if anything hurts.

DORIANNE

I hurt in all the places Andy used to touch me.

KATE

If Andy could talk, he would tell us to let him go.

DORIANNE

He does talk. To me. *(To ANDY)* You want as good a chance as that woman in Fresno, right, Darling?

KATE

Was she cured, permanently? Did she move her arms again, after that one time? Was her stroke the same kind as Andy's? Where is she now? You don't know anything about her. You don't know if what you heard on the radio has a grain of truth in it.

DORIANNE

People aren't going to lie about something like that.

KATE

People lie about anything if it makes them feel better.

DORIANNE

Believe in good things, Kate, or they'll go and happen somewhere else.

KATE

I believe what my brain and five senses tell me.

DORIANNE

That's less than half of what goes on in the world. What if we could save Andy and we didn't do it? What I've got here is a war. That stroke is pulling Andy one way, I'm pulling him the other. I've got to win, Kate. I need Andy like I need air.

KATE

You could put that in a song.

DORIANNE

Next to being born, Andy's the best thing that ever happened to me.

KATE

Line two.

DORIANNE

I can't write songs.

KATE

Keep talking.

DORIANNE

Without Andy, my dreams are black trees, stretched thin as ropes, and I forget to smell the morning air.

(KATE goes to the drums and strokes them softly to accompany DORIANNE'S narrative.)

KATE

Keep talking. Don't stop.

DORIANNE

A hot September Wednesday night in Denver. Andy comes into the restaurant for a quick sandwich and a beer, gets a whiff of my jambalaya, orders it up, says he isn't leaving until he meets the cook. Out I come, my dress all stained with food, my hair a mess. He says he thought I'd look like a cook, not a wildflower. I say there's nothing bad about looking like a cook, and he says he's used to one good thing at a time and doesn't know if he can survive the best jambalaya he's ever tasted plus a wildflower woman.

KATE

That's the name of the song. *Wildflower Woman*.

DORIANNE

You really think I've written a song?

KATE

A beauty of a song, Dorianne.

DORIANNE

Wildflower Woman is what Andy used to call me, when we made love.

KATE

We'll make a record of that song, dedicate it to Andy.

DORIANNE

Kate, if we try to save Andy, and it doesn't work, I'll give up. But if we don't try at all, we're just losers.

KATE

I'm already a loser, if Saul never comes back.

DORIANNE

He wouldn't leave you.

KATE

I don't know.

DORIANNE

He's crazy about you.

KATE

I'm crazy about him. I don't think he would notice if I weren't here.

DORIANNE

Saul would fall apart without you.

KATE

What makes you think so?

DORIANNE

He's so careful not to let you know.

(DORIANNE takes a bright red balloon from the ceiling and bops it to KATE.)

DORIANNE

Here! This one's for you!

KATE

What am I supposed to...?

DORIANNE

Keep it in the air!

KATE

I can't...!

(But SHE does and bops it back. THEY volley the balloon.)

Don't let it fall!

DORIANNE

It's going to fall!

KATE

Not if we keep it up.

DORIANNE

We can't!

KATE

We're doing it.

DORIANNE

It's going to...! I'm going to miss it!

KATE

Bet you a hundred dollars you won't!

DORIANNE

You don't have a hundred dollars.

KATE

Don't need it!

DORIANNE

I did read once that stroke victims sometimes do recover, even after this long.

KATE

Keep it in the air!

DORIANNE

It's rare, but it does happen.

KATE

Don't let it drop! Now that we've got it going, we can keep it up forever!

DORIANNE

(THEY are volleying the balloon as SAUL enters singing The Grateful Dead's "Uncle John's Band".)

DORIANNE

They're coming! I can see it on your face!

SAUL

I'm going to see Jerry tonight. Pete Rhodes said he remembers me.

DORIANNE

I told you! Andy! You hear that, baby? They're coming!

SAUL

I don't know for sure, Dorianne.

DORIANNE

You're going to see Jerry!

SAUL

Tonight. Pete's setting it up.

KATE

Pete doesn't know Jerry.

SAUL

But he has contacts who do.

KATE

Pete's contacts are in drugs.

SAUL

That gives him access to a wide range of people.

KATE

Jerry Garcia told Pete he remembers you?

SAUL

No. Jerry told Frank and Frank told Pete.

KATE

Frank who?

SAUL

I didn't get his last name.

KATE

So, Pete didn't talk to Jerry.

SAUL

Not directly.

KATE

This Frank somebody or other is...what? Pete's contact?

SAUL

Indirectly.

KATE

Pete doesn't know Frank?

SAUL

Not directly. He knows Lori, whose brother does business with Frank, who is one of Jerry's main suppliers.

KATE

Wait a minute.

DORIANNE

I knew it! If I put up the balloons and made the cake, they'd have to come. *(To ANDY)*
 Didn't I tell you, Honey?

(DORIANNE puts on a tape of The Grateful Dead's "Uncle John's Band". DORIANNE and SAUL sing with the tape.)

DORIANNE & SAUL

(Singing)

*Well, the first days are the hardest days;
 Don't you worry anymore.*

KATE

Lori who?

DORIANNE & SAUL

*Cause when life looks like Easy Street,
 There is danger at your door.*

KATE

Which Lori?

DORIANNE & SAUL

*It's a buck dancer's choice my friend;
 Better take—*

KATE

(Turns off tape) Saul!

SAUL

What?

KATE

Which Lori?

SAUL

The one who used to be active in Gray Panthers.

KATE

Do you know why she isn't active in Gray Panthers anymore?

SAUL

I suppose, she got tired of the in-fighting.

KATE

She died.

SAUL

Lori...?

KATE

We all went to her funeral.

SAUL

Lori...?

KATE

Scattered her ashes at sea.

SAUL

When—

KATE

Couple years ago.

SAUL

Couple—

DORIANNE

Slipped your mind. Happens to the best.

SAUL

Omigod! Lori! Now, I remember!

DORIANNE

More like about four years ago.

SAUL

We all went out on the boat to scatter her ashes. We played a tape of the Grateful Dead's "*One More Saturday Night*".

KATE

We played "*St. Stephen*".

SAUL

I have not forgotten every single detail.

KATE

“*St. Stephen*”, because Lori was Catholic.

DORIANNE

Lapsed Catholic. We played “*One More Saturday Night*”.

KATE

The funeral was on a Saturday. *Afternoon!* We played “*St. Stephen*”. I'm the one who wants “*One More Saturday Night*” when my ashes are scattered.

DORIANNE

I'd want “*Sugar Magnolia*” if I was ever going to die.

KATE

“*Sugar Magnolia*” it is, Dorianne. I promise.

DORIANNE

What's going to happen to me is, I'm going to metamorphose into the biggest, most blossomest magnolia tree in the world and get my picture in National Geographic with a whole color page to myself.

SAUL

I've got Alzheimer's.

DORIANNE

You do not.

SAUL

I forgot! God is punishing me.

KATE

You don't believe in God.

SAUL

Sometimes, yes and sometimes, no.

KATE

If there were a God, no one would have Alzheimer's.

SAUL

God made Alzheimer's to punish people like me for walking out on my family at age forty-four to become a middle-aged hippie. Following the Dead all these years, I forgot I was becoming an old man.

DORIANNE

You're not old where it counts, Saul.

KATE

How do you know?

SAUL

Getting on a motorcycle and roaring across the country to a new life. Who did we think we were?

KATE

In love.

SAUL

Try to erase the past, it sneaks up behind you and waits, with a sly grin.

DORIANNE

You don't have Alzheimer's, Saul.

KATE

How does she know you aren't old "where it counts"?

SAUL

A man doesn't get away with stealing his brother's wife.

KATE

You didn't steal me. I decided to leave. We were in love.

SAUL

We had no right to be in love.

KATE

Ask Jerry Garcia who has the right to be in love. *(To DORIANNE)* How do you know where he isn't old?

SAUL

Oh, what the hell, Kate. It was a long time ago.

KATE

What was?

SAUL

Nothing.

KATE

(To DORIANNE) What was a long time ago?

DORIANNE

At our ages, almost everything. I'm going out to buy a new dress for the party. *(Throws helmet to KATE)* Get your bike and come with me, Kate. You need a new dress.

KATE

(Throws helmet back) I do not.

DORIANNE

Come on! A sexy black dress for you and a red one for me. *(Puts on helmet)* I'll be at the Clothes Exchange if you want to meet me. *(Exits)*

KATE

You and Dorianne? In our bed!

SAUL

There was no bed.

KATE

Standing up? You never did it with me standing up.

SAUL

Not standing. On the beach.

KATE

What beach?

SAUL

Some beach. What's the...

KATE

Not our cove!

SAUL

It's still ours.

KATE

Our cove?

SAUL

It wasn't the same sand as ours, Kate. Wind! Tides! Sand changes. Our sand will always be ours.

KATE

You went with Dorianne to that party where you met Jerry.

SAUL

No.

Tell me the truth. KATE

I did not go to the party with Dorianne. SAUL

Then who? KATE

Lori. SAUL

Lori? KATE

I went with Lori. SAUL

You asked Lori to...? KATE

I don't think I actually *invited* her. She seemed to turn up. SAUL

Out of the blue. KATE

That's the way it seemed. She turned up out of the blue. SAUL

You were on your way to this party where Jerry Garcia would be, and Lori floated around a corner and fell into step with you, took up your stride, ended up where you were going. You had nothing to do with it. KATE

She seemed to be there with me, and no one thought anything about it. No one made a fuss in those days, Katie. SAUL

I supported Lori for Gray Panther president. I helped her get elected! KATE

She was a good president. SAUL

I wrote her speeches. KATE

SAUL
It was just what happened at the moment, Kate.

KATE
It hurts.

SAUL
I'm sorry.

KATE
Betrayal hurts, Saul. Even this far from the fact.

SAUL
I didn't mean to hurt you.

KATE
Do you love me, Saul?

SAUL
Sure.

KATE
I mean, really?

SAUL
Yeah. Really.

KATE
You're not sorry we left home?

SAUL
No, but to go off like that? With my brother's wife!

KATE
I didn't love him anymore. You didn't love Betty. Our children were in college or married.

SAUL
Broke up two families.

KATE
You don't have regrets.

SAUL
What's done is done.

KATE
But you love me.

I gave up everything for you.

SAUL

I gave up everything for you, too.

KATE

Are you sorry?

SAUL

No. Never.

KATE

I'm not, either. I would have sold groceries for the rest of my life and rotted like an old cabbage. We were each other's destiny, Kate.

SAUL

I looked up *love* in the dictionary the other day.

KATE

You know words I never heard of, and you look up a word every child knows?

SAUL

The dictionary says a person who's loved arouses delight, admiration and tenderness. Do I delight you, Saul? Do you light up when you see me?

KATE

I see you all the time.

SAUL

When I'm out alone, are you delighted to see me when I come back?

KATE

I don't think I...light up.

SAUL

But you're happy?

KATE

Sure.

SAUL

You delight me, Saul.

KATE

I think it's something else for me. What were those other things?

SAUL

Admiration. Tenderness.

KATE

Yeah.

SAUL

Admiration and tenderness, but not delight?

KATE

Two out of three is better than most people do in life. (*Tenderly*) Hey, Kate.

SAUL

What.

KATE

You still turn me on, Sweetie.

SAUL

I do?

KATE

You always have. Not just because you're sexy but because you're *you* – smart, honest, loyal.

(*DORIANNE enters.*)

Jerry...!

DORIANNE

Is he here?

SAUL

Jerry's...gone!

DORIANNE

Gone!

SAUL

He...Jerry died!

DORIANNE

No!

SAUL

That's impossible! Jerry couldn't—

KATE

DORIANNE

He died in his sleep, early this morning. The streets are full of people.

KATE

No! No! NO!

SAUL

Jerry...!

DORIANNE

Andy! Honey! What's going to happen now?

END ACT I

ACT II: Scene 1

(AT RISE: The same; some months later; ANDY now in the nursing home.)

SAUL

No! No! You can't do that!

DORIANNE

It's what he wants.

SAUL

No!

DORIANNE

It is, Saul.

SAUL

Andy can't tell anyone what he wants.

DORIANNE

He's begging us!

SAUL

He can't talk!

DORIANNE

I see it in his eyes, when we visit him. He's mad as a trapped tiger. He wants me to get him out of that nursing home.

SAUL

He doesn't look mad to me.

KATE

Dorianne's right, Saul.

SAUL

Andy's eyes aren't talking to you, too?!

KATE

We know Andy. He doesn't want to live that way.

DORIANNE

He can't play the piano, can't hold me in his arms. He can't go to coffee houses and hang out with his friends. He can't feed himself or even take himself to the bathroom. He used to be a *man*, Saul. Everything called, life, is gone. He wants it to end.

SAUL

Looks to me as though he sits there not wanting anything.

DORIANNE

He wants everything and then some, like the rest of us.

KATE

Like Jerry Garcia. You don't think Jerry would sit around vegetating for who knows how many years. Live it up or turn it off. That's what Jerry would say. What if you couldn't make love or listen to music or lift weights or buy exotic cheeses to sell in your store? You wouldn't want to go on.

SAUL

I don't know if I would or not. And you don't know if Andy does or doesn't. Andy's the only one who can tell us what's on his mind.

DORIANNE

Remember when Marty Newton found out he was dying of cancer? Who do you think got him the stuff that took him out?

SAUL

Not Andy.

DORIANNE

Andy.

SAUL

Andy? Gave Marty that stuff?

DORIANNE

Left it in a place he could get to it. Andy said if anything like that happened to him, that's what he wants.

SAUL

Marty had cancer, *pain* that was getting *worse!* And he could say so. Andy isn't in pain.

KATE

He's in worse than physical pain, the worst kind of psychological frustration. He can't say what he wants and he knows we *know* what he wants

DORIANNE

My man is telling me what to do and I'm going to do it.

SAUL

How? Kidnap him from the nursing home?

DORIANNE

No. Do it there. He's on the ground floor, so it's easy to climb in a window in the middle of the night.

SAUL

You're going to climb in his window in the dead of night with a needle full of smack!

DORIANNE

Something along those lines.

SAUL

Something along...! Okay, old Deadhead hippies aren't supposed to be mainstream pillars of society, but sneaking in a window and giving someone a lethal dose of smack is way off the deep end.

KATE

How would you suggest we do it?

SAUL

We don't do it! We can't! We love him! The whole neighborhood loves him. He goes into a coffeehouse, he's a celebrity. Walks down the street, people call out their windows.

DORIANNE

Where have you been, Saul? He can't do that anymore!

SAUL

Maybe he'll get better.

DORIANNE

I wouldn't talk about helping him get out if there were any chance he would get better. Nothing's changed since the stroke, and every specialist we've called in says it's hopeless.

SAUL

But we can see him, hug him, talk to him. They let us feed him.

KATE

He hates being fed, and if he knows what we're talking about, he can't stand not being able to say a word.

SAUL

Give him another few months.

DORIANNE

He doesn't want more time and he doesn't want us coming in there, hugging and kissing him, talking to the man he was.

SAUL

We'd never see him again, Dorianne.

DORIANNE

I'm Andy, and Andy's me. As long as I'm here, Andy's here.

SAUL

Remember when we decided we were going to live until the youngest of us got to a hundred?

KATE

At which point, we were going to decide whether we want to keep going or go out together on an overdose of smack.

SAUL

But we would have decided, together. We go in there and give him an overdose...that's us, murdering him!

DORIANNE

An overdose that puts him to rest in sweet bliss is saving him, not killing him.

SAUL

Try to convince a jury of that.

KATE

There won't be a trial. We're not going to get caught. We'll plan it down to the last detail.

SAUL

Jails are full of people who planned to the last detail.

KATE

We find out when the nurses make their rounds at night and go in between the rounds. That nursing home is a tight ship, everything right on schedule.

SAUL

If we go in a window and give Andy an overdose, they're going to know who did it.

KATE

They'll think they know.

SAUL

Who else would it be?

KATE

That's for them to figure out. The three of us were here the whole night. We're going to agree on exactly what we were doing so we all say the same thing.

SAUL

They'll take us to the police station, interrogate us separately.

KATE

Yes. That's why our stories have to match right down to the smallest detail. We had dinner at seven, did the dishes, I read a book, Saul watched TV, Dorianne made a pie. I'll pick a specific book, you'll watch a specific TV program, and it'll be a certain kind of pie.

DORIANNE

Peach is Andy's favorite.

KATE

Okay, peach. Just so we all say the same thing.

SAUL

They'll take us to the police station, into separate rooms, ask us questions, and we'll tell these specific lies?

KATE

That's right.

SAUL

It's called *perjury*.

KATE

That's why we have to remember all the details and practice saying it as though we did it. We have to convince ourselves that we did it. That way, it will sound true.

SAUL

You think like a criminal!

KATE

Good! Because we're going to commit a crime!

END OF SCENE

ACT II: Scene 2

(AT RISE: 2:00 AM inside ANDY'S room at the nursing home; ANDY is in bed, asleep. KATE's head and shoulders appear outside the window to his room. Slowly SHE raises the window and climbs into the room, followed by DORIANNE, who wears a small backpack. THEY go to the bed. DORIANNE bends close to ANDY, is about to kiss him, when KATE pulls her back. THEY speak in whispers.)

KATE

No! You'll wake him!

DORIANNE

Look at him.

KATE

Shhhh.

DORIANNE

Look at him, Kate.

KATE

We need to concentrate, follow the plan and get out.

DORIANNE

He's beautiful, isn't he, Kate?

KATE

Yes, Dorianne. He's beautiful.

DORIANNE

Look at him.

KATE

Come on, Dorianne.

DORIANNE

I can't do it.

(KATE draws DORIANNE away from the bed.)

KATE

He wants you to.

DORIANNE

I can't.

KATE

Then, I will.

I'll never see him again.

DORIANNE

As long as you're here, so is he.

KATE

I love him so much.

DORIANNE

That's why you're here.

KATE

Maybe he still loves me.

DORIANNE

Sure, he does.

KATE

But, if he still loves me, he feels something. He's still...here.

DORIANNE

We don't know.

KATE

You just said.

DORIANNE

If he feels anything, he loves you, and he wants you to do this.

KATE

You don't know, for sure, Kate.

DORIANNE

We've been through all this.

KATE

He looks so helpless, like a baby.

DORIANNE

He is helpless. That's what he can't stand.

KATE

You're right. That's what he can't stand.

DORIANNE

(DORIANNE takes out a syringe and other paraphernalia. THEY move toward the bed.)

What if he wakes up?
DORIANNE

If he does, he won't be up for long.
KATE

Don't say that.
DORIANNE

That's why we're doing it.
KATE

But the way you say it.
DORIANNE

What way?
KATE

Like you want to get rid of him.
DORIANNE

Oh, forgodsake!
KATE

He won't be up for long.
DORIANNE

I didn't mean...!
KATE

Shoot him up with smack and he's gone! You're heartless!
DORIANNE

This was your idea!
KATE

Just don't say, he won't be up for long.
DORIANNE

Okay.
KATE

Not like that.
DORIANNE

Okay.
KATE

DORIANNE

Look at him.

KATE

Any, you're wise and fun, honest and caring. My life is richer because of you.

DORIANNE

You're a good friend, Kate.

KATE

So are you.

DORIANNE

I betrayed you, and you stick by me, anyway. I don't know. Nothing makes sense, anymore.

KATE

What makes sense is the home you and Saul and Andy and I made for ourselves, deciding how we wanted to live and doing it.

(THEY freeze at the sound of footsteps in the corridor. KATE pulls DORIANNE into a closet. The footsteps move past the door. A moment later, SAUL appears at the window, climbs into the room.)

SAUL

What the...? Where...?

(SAUL crosses to ANDY, peers at him, listens to his breathing, moves away from him, and then speaks in loud whisper.)

SAUL, *Continued*

Kate! Dorianne!

(DORIANNE and KATE enter from closet.)

SAUL

What are you...?

KATE

Shhhhh!

SAUL

You were supposed to be out by now. I have the motor running, ready to go.

DORIANNE

Say goodbye to him, Saul.

SAUL

(Kisses ANDY) Rest in peace, my friend.

(DORIANNE administers the dose.)

KATE

(Kisses ANDY) In our hearts forever, Andy.

(KATE and SAUL exit out the window.)

DORIANNE

(Hugs and kisses ANDY) I'm your wildflower woman forever, Sweetheart. Forever and ever.

(DORIANNE exits out the window.)

END OF SCENE

ACT II: Scene 3

(AT RISE: a week later; at the house. There is a knock on the door. It is repeated several times. The door opens. MICHAEL enters.)

MICHAEL

Hello! Anyone here? *(Calls up the stairs)* Is anyone home?

(MICHAEL studies the room for a few moments, then searches a few drawers from one of which he removes a small packet, opens it, smells it, puts it back in the drawer, continues searching, until DORIANNE enters through the kitchen door, carrying an armful of vegetables from the garden.)

MICHAEL, *Continued*

Hi. Remember me? Michael Taylor, San Francisco Police Department. I was here when Andy...

DORIANNE

(Drops vegetables) We already talked to the police.

MICHAEL

(Starts to pick up the vegetables) Here, let me help you...

DORIANNE

I don't need help! We were at the police station practically the whole day Wednesday. All three of us. They took down everything we said.

MICHAEL

I read the reports. We're still working on the case.

DORIANNE

Kate and Saul aren't here.

MICHAEL
I'll talk to them, later. Can we sit down?

DORIANNE
Why? You tired?

MICHAEL
To talk.

DORIANNE
I've said everything I have to say.

MICHAEL
You're Andy's wife...widow. Right?

DORIANNE
More than.

MICHAEL
Excuse me?

DORIANNE
I was more than his wife.

MICHAEL
In what way?

DORIANNE
That's not police business.

MICHAEL
In a homicide, everything is police business.

DORIANNE
We already answered all the police questions.

MICHAEL
I've never been on a case in which all the questions were answered, and I've been a policeman more than forty years.

DORIANNE
In forty years, you must have found out a policeman can't walk into someone's house without a search warrant.

MICHAEL
I knocked several times. Then, I tried the door and found it unlocked. It's not a good idea to leave your door unlocked.

DORIANNE

It isn't an idea. It's a way of life. We don't lock doors in this neighborhood.

MICHAEL

Back in the sixties, you thought you could turn the world into a place where people didn't have to fight and scramble to survive, so no one had to lock anyone out. But you did not change the world. It's worse than it was then. People have to fight harder and scramble more viciously than ever, so I would advise you to lock your door at night *and* in the daytime. If you don't mind, I would like to sit down.

DORIANNE

Don't get too comfortable, because I don't know any more than I told them on Wednesday.

MICHAEL

You and Andy were together a long time.

DORIANNE

An awfully short time.

MICHAEL

About twenty-five years.

DORIANNE

Went like the wind. Know what I mean?

MICHAEL

Not exactly.

DORIANNE

If you don't know, you've got no business asking questions about love. You ever loved anyone, officer?

MICHAEL

Of course, I...everyone loves someone.

DORIANNE

Not that kind. The kind that goes like the wind, the kind that keeps you falling in love over and over.

MICHAEL

I have a wife. I have a daughter. I know about love.

DORIANNE

I have a daughter, too. She's nothing like me. She's ashamed of me. How about yours?

MICHAEL

Diane?

DORIANNE

Is she ashamed of you, Officer Taylor?

MICHAEL

She doesn't have the right to judge me.

DORIANNE

Bet that doesn't stop her.

MICHAEL

I'm a better father than she deserves. Let's get on with the business at hand.

DORIANNE

We're on it. You and Diane don't get along.

MICHAEL

She's none of your business. You say you were more than a wife. I never heard of that. What's it supposed to mean?

DORIANNE

He was more than a husband, too.

MICHAEL

But you never got married.

DORIANNE

When you have more, why sign a contract for less? A contract is just words, made up by someone Andy and I never met. The kind of love we had can't be written in a contract or spoken at a ceremony and doesn't need to be signed for.

MICHAEL

I see.

DORIANNE

No, you don't.

MICHAEL

Right. I don't get it.

DORIANNE

You have a contract with your wife?

MICHAEL

We're divorced. Which is not germane to the subject at hand.

DORIANNE

Everything's connected. You go deep enough into things, you find out they're connected to things you didn't know had anything to do with them. Like losing Diane.

MICHAEL

I didn't say she's lost.

DORIANNE

Lost to you.

MICHAEL

Your more-than-husband, Andy, was given a fatal overdose of heroin, and I'm going to stay focused on finding out who did it.

DORIANNE

I suppose your wife blames you for what happened to Diane.

MICHAEL

I am not to blame!

DORIANNE

It's too complicated to blame anyone.

MICHAEL

You don't know the first thing—

DORIANNE

Except that you think you're a better father than she deserves.

MICHAEL

I'm going to find out who killed Andy, and I won't be thrown off course.

DORIANNE

Call me Dorianne, and I'll call you Michael.

MICHAEL

I don't think so.

DORIANNE

Law and order won't break down if we call each other by our first names. We're connected. You called the ambulance for Andy.

MICHAEL

It's better if we abide by the formalities.

DORIANNE

You've been abiding by the formalities and the result is that you warn us to keep ourselves under lock and key, day and night, because things are worse than ever. So tell me what the formalities have got going for you or me or anyone else in this worse-than-ever world?

MICHAEL

Let's get back to Andy.

DORIANNE

We're talking about Andy. I don't talk about anything else, these days. Everything I do and say is about him. Please help me pick up these vegetables, Officer Taylor. I need to get them washed and steamed for my vegetable lentil soup.

(THEY pick up the vegetables. DORIANNE washes a carrot and hands it to MICHAEL.)

DORIANNE

Try one of these and tell me if it isn't the sweetest carrot you've ever tasted.

MICHAEL

No, thank you.

DORIANNE

Not that you would do anything to harm Diane if you could help it, but—

MICHAEL

I didn't harm her!

DORIANNE

(Offers carrot again) Organic. We grow them right out there, and if you don't think they taste different from commercial store bought...

MICHAEL

I think you're trying to dodge the issue, and you're not going to get away with it.

(DORIANNE continues to wash vegetables and prepare the soup.)

DORIANNE

Andy's not an issue. He's my man and he's gone, and the world has emptied out. He loved me and he played the piano and he got sick and now he's gone and I can't sing anymore. I can't even listen to The Grateful Dead.

MICHAEL

I'm sorry, but I have a job to do here. What time are you expecting your housemates?

DORIANNE

We never know when to expect each other. Unlike the police, we don't go in much for procedure. We come and go pretty much at will. Look at that spinach. Some worm got to it. What do you think, snails, slugs, worms?

MICHAEL

I'm going to solve this crime, whether you like it or not.

DORIANNE

Forty years. You must have caught a lot of bad people in forty years.

MICHAEL

Not everyone who commits a crime is bad. Some of them might even commit a crime thinking they are doing good.

DORIANNE

Takes all kinds.

MICHAEL

Someone might have given Andy an overdose because they thought he wanted to die.

DORIANNE

You think so?

MICHAEL

Someone he knew.

DORIANNE

Everyone who knew Andy loved him. No one would want to hurt him.

MICHAEL

Unless they thought they were doing him a favor.

DORIANNE

By taking him out? Doesn't make sense.

MICHAEL

Unless they thought he didn't want to live.

DORIANNE

Maybe he didn't.

MICHAEL

You think he didn't?

DORIANNE

I don't know.

MICHAEL

You and Andy never discussed it.

DORIANNE

We figured on living until at least a hundred.

MICHAEL

If you weren't paralyzed in a wheelchair.

DORIANNE

We didn't talk about that.

MICHAEL

You know anyone Andy might have talked to about that?

DORIANNE

No.

MICHAEL

If you think of anyone, give me a call.

DORIANNE

Yeah. Okay.

MICHAEL

If you thought he would rather not live, would it be all right to kill him?

DORIANNE

It is never all right to kill.

MICHAEL

No, it isn't.

DORIANNE

Once people start taking the law into their hands, where are we?

MICHAEL

You tell me.

DORIANNE

In a jungle. We'd be living in a jungle. Wars. Riots in the streets. Random shootings. Payoffs. Kickbacks. Corruption. Cheating. Government lying to people every which way. That's what we would have if everyone went around doing what they want. Not to mention police, coming into a person's house with the excuse the door was unlocked. You need a search warrant even if the door was unlocked, Officer Taylor, unless you think you're above the law.

MICHAEL

I have a warrant. I even did a little searching before you came in, found some marijuana.

DORIANNE

Okay. Arrest me.

MICHAEL

No. I didn't take it, and I won't even report it.

DORIANNE

Want to try some? Humboldt Red, best stuff on the market.

MICHAEL
Humboldt Red isn't the best. Ever try Alaskan Thunder?

DORIANNE
No. Is that your favorite?

MICHAEL
Don't tell anyone.

DORIANNE
You trust *me* to keep your secret.

MICHAEL
I've got something on you. You've got something on me.

DORIANNE
The start of a beautiful friendship.

MICHAEL
The profile of you from the police report doesn't do you justice.

DORIANNE
I suppose it said I'm a demented sixty-something hippie.

MICHAEL
Not quite, but it missed a lot of who you are.

DORIANNE
Who's that?

MICHAEL
A woman any man would be lucky to have.

DORIANNE
Go ahead. Try one of these carrots.

MICHAEL
(*Bites into carrot*) It's good. You're right. It's delicious.

DORIANNE
Wait 'til you taste the soup. Stay and have supper with us.

MICHAEL
I wish I could, but I'm on duty.

DORIANNE
Come back when you're off.

MICHAEL

Scientists are working on a way to reverse the effects of strokes. I suppose you read about it.

DORIANNE

Do what? Reverse...?

MICHAEL

New technology that can reverse paralysis.

DORIANNE

Un-paralyze a person?

MICHAEL

It's in the early stages of development, but it looks very promising.

DORIANNE

You mean, they start talking again?

MICHAEL

Science is working miracles, these days. Cures are being found for some of the most crippling diseases.

DORIANNE

Wait a minute. They can talk? And walk?

MICHAEL

Early experiments indicate that they can do everything they did before, live normal lives.

DORIANNE

Play the piano?

MICHAEL

Amazing things are happening in medical science, Dorianne. I'll leave my card, in case you think of anything that might help us in our investigation. *(Exits)*

END OF SCENE

ACT II: Scene 4

(AT RISE: The next morning. SAUL is preparing breakfast; KATE enters in bathrobe.)

KATE

Where's Dorianne?

SAUL

Still asleep, I guess.

KATE

No. Her door was open. She isn't in her room. Looks like she hasn't slept in her bed.

SAUL

Hasn't...are you sure?

KATE

Her door is wide open, and the bed is still made.

SAUL

Where the...when we left the coffeehouse, she said she would be back later. Didn't she?

KATE

Yes. Frank and Sally were going to walk her home. I'll call them.

(KATE exits. SAUL continues breakfast preparations. KATE enters.)

KATE, *Continued*

Yes. They walked her home around midnight. Sally said she was pretty stoned, so they came in with her and said they would hang out if she wanted them to. But Dorianne said she was all right and was going to bed.

SAUL

We better call the police, Kate.

KATE

I don't know if we want to do that, given our somewhat precarious position with them right now.

SAUL

We can't worry about that. Something's happened to her. She didn't sound like herself last night.

KATE

It will be a long time before Dorianne sounds like herself again. I bet she just got up early and went out for a long bike ride, which is the best thing she could do right now.

SAUL

I don't know. I'm worried.

KATE

Don't worry about Dorianne. She always lands on her feet.

SAUL

We ought to go out and look for her.

KATE

Where are we going to look?

SAUL

The coffeehouses, Ocean Beach, anywhere she might be.

KATE

That's a wild goose chase, Saul. We could be out looking for her while she's on her way home. If anything had happened to her, someone would have called us.

SAUL

She feels guilty. So do I. Even if they never find evidence against us, we'll be suspects all our lives.

KATE

That was the chance we took.

SAUL

I wish life were as easy for me as it is for you. When we left our families and practically all our worldly goods, you just got up on my motorcycle, put yours arms around my waist and never looked back. Now, we take the law into our hands, and you go right on playing drums. No doubts. No bad dreams.

KATE

I didn't do anything wrong. Then or now.

SAUL

I know, but you're always so sure of yourself.

KATE

Neither decision was easy, Saul. I wrestle with myself. I wrestle hard, but once it comes clear, that's it. I just do it. Twenty-five years ago, I knew I couldn't live without you, so I didn't have a choice. This time, I knew just as clearly that I couldn't live with myself if I let Andy down.

SAUL

You keep surprising me, Kate.

KATE

But not delighting you.

SAUL

I didn't say that.

KATE

I *do* delight you!

SAUL

Well—

KATE

I do! You just can't say it!

SAUL

Sometimes, I think I don't know a thing in the world about you.

KATE

I'm going for a swim. Come with me, get to know me better.

SAUL

What about Dorianne?

KATE

We'll leave a note, tell her to meet us at the pool. As a matter of fact, she might be there.

SAUL

Tell you what, I'll wait for her, and we'll both meet you there.

KATE

You really do love me, Saul?

SAUL

So much that I've wasted an awful lot of time wishing I didn't.

KATE

I'll let that romantic thought warm my lonely laps.

(THEY kiss. KATE exits with swimming gear. SAUL is taking food from the grocery bags when the doorbell rings. HE opens the door. MICHAEL stands in the doorway wearing rumpled jeans and a t-shirt.)

MICHAEL

Hi. Remember me? I was here when Andy had his stroke. I called the ambulance.

SAUL

The cop!

MICHAEL

Right. I'm off duty, now.

SAUL

We already talked to the police.

MICHAEL

I know.

SAUL

We talked to the police almost a whole day.

Is Dorianne here?
MICHAEL

What do you want with her?
SAUL

I just want to know how she is.
MICHAEL

How she is?
SAUL

She's had a terrible shock.
MICHAEL

We all have.
SAUL

Yeah. *(Beat)* I...uh...if you want to smoke some grass, feel free.
MICHAEL

If I...do *you* want to smoke some grass, officer?
SAUL

Well, I...I was here, yesterday. Did Dorianne tell you?
MICHAEL

No.
SAUL

Yesterday afternoon.
MICHAEL

You...were here?
SAUL

Around four or five in the afternoon. Dorianne was...making soup.
MICHAEL

Yeah?
SAUL

Vegetable, lentil soup.
MICHAEL

Uh-huh.
SAUL

MICHAEL

I've been up all night.

SAUL

You look a little done in.

MICHAEL

Thinking. Couldn't sleep. Do you know when Dorianne will be back?

SAUL

No.

MICHAEL

Where can I reach her?

SAUL

I don't know.

MICHAEL

But you saw her last night.

SAUL

Sure, we saw her. We all live here.

MICHAEL

And she was okay?

SAUL

None of us is okay. We've lost part of our lives.

MICHAEL

I want to wait for Dorianne. That okay with you, Saul? I've been up all night.

SAUL

You already told me.

MICHAEL

I'm not the kind of guy who stays up nights, thinking. I do my thinking during the day. Comes time to go to sleep, I sleep.

SAUL

You didn't come here to tell me about your sleeping disorders.

MICHAEL

"No free government can survive that is not based on the supremacy of law." You know where I read that?

The Constitution?

SAUL

MICHAEL
It's written on the building that houses the United States Attorney General's office in Washington. And, Saul, I believe that. I believe in the supremacy of law.

SAUL

So do I.

MICHAEL

You do?

SAUL

The supremacy of law? Sure.

MICHAEL

Unequivocally.

SAUL

You either believe it or you don't.

MICHAEL

Nothing is as simple as you think it is. Yesterday, my life and the laws I uphold made sense. Today, I'm not sure of anything.

SAUL

That's enough to keep you awake, all right.

MICHAEL

I've never looked at police work as just a job. The way I see it, if we don't enforce the law, we don't have free government.

SAUL

I agree one hundred percent.

MICHAEL

Yeah?

SAUL

Who could disagree?

MICHAEL

Whether to enforce the law is not an open question. It doesn't matter if it's your own child or anyone else.

SAUL

Right.

MICHAEL

It isn't as easy as that.

SAUL

You're the one who can't sleep.

MICHAEL

What if the law doesn't make sense? What if there's a set of peculiar circumstances, some glitch that makes it necessary to break the law?

SAUL

You didn't come to arrest Dorianne?

MICHAEL

No! *No!* I told you! I'm off duty!

SAUL

What did you and she talk about last night? Why do you want to see her?

MICHAEL

She's a remarkable woman. Don't worry. She didn't spill the beans.

SAUL

We're not hiding anything.

MICHAEL

Saul, please. I haven't slept in twenty-four hours. I need a cup of coffee.

SAUL

You want to smoke some pot?

MICHAEL

I'm a law enforcement officer. You could report me if I did.

SAUL

Me? Report you? You've got to be kidding.

MICHAEL

But you could. And you might want to, because I can't walk away from this and say, Okay, they can get away with murder under these unusual circumstances.

SAUL

No one's trying to get away with anything.

MICHAEL

I'm talking about an innocent, helpless man, asleep in his bed, given a fatal dose of heroin. If I let that pass, I spit at the law which is like spitting in the eye of free government.

SAUL

I don't know.

MICHAEL

If one person can get away with murder, everybody else can, too.

SAUL

Yeah. Okay.

MICHAEL

I can't do that. You see that I can't walk away.

SAUL

You've got to do what you've got to do, Man.

MICHAEL

You can't walk away, either. You either believe in the rule of law or you don't.

SAUL

I believe in it.

MICHAEL

We live in a democratic republic! If we don't respect the rule of law, what do we have? What, Saul? Tell me!

SAUL

Hitler.

MICHAEL

Yes!

SAUL

Stalin.

MICHAEL

Yes!

SAUL

Kate and Dorianne didn't do anything! I did it!

MICHAEL

What...?

I did it.

SAUL

You gave Andy the overdose of heroin.

MICHAEL

Yes.

SAUL

You did it?

MICHAEL

I just said so.

SAUL

You're confessing?

MICHAEL

Who did I think I was, running away on a motorcycle to become a Deadhead at forty-four years of age? I had a family, a circle of friends, a partner in a thriving grocery store. All of a sudden, I'm in love with my brother's wife, and Jerry Garcia is my hero.

SAUL

You're confessing, Saul?

MICHAEL

No one has the right to decide whether a man lives or dies.

SAUL

Wait a minute. Just a—

MICHAEL

Kate and Dorianne are innocent. They didn't know anything about it.

SAUL

Wait. Wait.

MICHAEL

I'm trying to tell you.

SAUL

Stop! Don't tell me.

MICHAEL

We took the law into our hands.

SAUL

We.

MICHAEL

No. I. I did it.

SAUL

You said, "we".

MICHAEL

I meant, I. They had nothing to do with it.

SAUL

You gave Andy an overdose of heroin?

MICHAEL

How many times do I have to tell you?

SAUL

You? Alone?

MICHAEL

Am I going to be executed?

SAUL

No.

MICHAEL

Life in prison without possibility of parole?

SAUL

I think there are extenuating circumstances here.

MICHAEL

What circumstances? I'm confessing.

SAUL

I don't want your confession.

MICHAEL

What the fuck! You're a policeman!

SAUL

I can't arrest anyone, with my head full of questions.

MICHAEL

I said, I did it. I had no right to take Andy's life into my hands. On the other hand, I owed it to him.

SAUL

MICHAEL

That doesn't make sense.

SAUL

If the law doesn't make sense, and I'm not above the law, that means I don't have to make sense, right?

MICHAEL

You're the definition of logic, Saul.

SAUL

What I did for Andy was right. I loved the man. He needed me to help him, and I couldn't let him down. Go tell that to your rule of law. And I might add that I'd make the same choice today as I did then.

MICHAEL

Help me, Saul. What am I supposed to do?

SAUL

I confessed. That's as much help as you get from me.

MICHAEL

Coffee. I need a cup of coffee.

SAUL

We don't have coffee. We have herbal tea. Organic apple juice. Organic pear juice—

MICHAEL

Something that will give me a buzz. How about a carrot?

SAUL

A...carrot?

MICHAEL

An organic carrot from your garden.

(SAUL exits to kitchen, enters with a carrot, which MICHAEL eats voraciously.)

MICHAEL

The thing is, Saul....the thing is this: you did not want Andy to die.

SAUL

Of course not! I'm in the worst grief of my life! I can't listen to music. It reminds me of Andy. I can hardly go into a coffee house where he...or walk on the streets where he...this was a friend like no other. More than a friend.

MICHAEL

More than a friend.

SAUL

Yes.

MICHAEL

More than a friend. More than a wife. More than a husband. This carrot is delicious.

SAUL

Thank you. My specialty.

MICHAEL

You grow the carrots?

SAUL

It turned out, over the years, that when I planted the seeds and tended to the carrots, they came out better than when Dorianne or Kate did it. None of us understands it.

MICHAEL

This carrot is more than a carrot, Saul.

SAUL

You want another one?

MICHAEL

Yes and some of the soup Dorianne made yesterday, if you have any left.

SAUL

I'll warm some up for you.

(SAUL exits to kitchen and moments later enter with another carrot.)

SAUL, *Continued*

The thing about Dorianne—

MICHAEL

If a man won't let his daughter get away with committing a crime, is he more than a father or less?

SAUL

Whose daughter?

MICHAEL

Less. I suppose you would say he's less than a father.

SAUL

Not your daughter?

MICHAEL

I would have let her go to jail.

SAUL
Your *daughter*?

MICHAEL
Which makes me less of a father.

SAUL
Your daughter is...in *jail*?

MICHAEL
She was in love with a guy who was wanted for questioning in a theft. She helped him get across the border into Mexico and she was arrested. I refused to pull strings to get her off, so she was charged and released on bail. My wife sold our stocks, put up the bail money and took Diane to Mexico.

SAUL
Good for her.

MICHAEL
I did what was right, and I'm less than a father and less than a husband.

SAUL
Your own *daughter*!

MICHAEL
The man was wanted for questioning. She—

SAUL
But you can't let your daughter—

MICHAEL
So, she's above the law, because she's my daughter?

SAUL
You knew that the day she was born.

MICHAEL
That she was above the law?

SAUL
Didn't you?

MICHAEL
I didn't think about it.

SAUL
Powerful love like that, Man!

MICHAEL

It was...something, all right. I guess I—

SAUL

You knew!

MICHAEL

Yeah. Yeah, Saul. I didn't exactly know what to call it but I guess I...I have twin grandchildren.

SAUL

Twins!

MICHAEL

They look like *me!* You want to see a picture?

SAUL

Sure.

(MICHAEL takes photo from his wallet, shows it to SAUL.)

SAUL, *Continued*

They do look like you! Almost as cute as you, Michael.

MICHAEL

Cut it out, huh.

SAUL

Hey, Man.

MICHAEL

My fugitive daughter and her husband are cinematographers, making movies in Mexico. My wife is living with some American ex-patriot. That's how cute *I* am.

SAUL

You must be lonely.

MICHAEL

Made my own fucking bed, Saul.

SAUL

I'll get the soup.

(SAUL exits once again and returns moments later with a bowl of soup. MICHAEL eats gratefully.)

MICHAEL

Andy—

SAUL

Don't eat too fast. Chew the carrot. Don't swallow big chunks. Respect your stomach.

MICHAEL

Respect my—

SAUL

Finish chewing. Then, talk.

MICHAEL

This is the best soup I've ever eaten.

SAUL

In the best of all possible worlds.

MICHAEL

Did Andy tell you he didn't want to live?

SAUL

He had been a man, for gods sake! Suddenly, he was a vegetable – bathed, fed, humiliated, helpless.

(KATE enters.)

SAUL

Don't say a word, Kate! I confessed. You and Dorianne had nothing to do with it.

KATE

You did what?

MICHAEL

No one confessed to anything.

SAUL

He's the policeman from last New Year's Eve. And the one that called the ambulance when Andy had his stroke. I told him I did it alone. You and Dorianne didn't know anything about it.

KATE

Did what?

SAUL

It's too late for that. I told him that I gave Andy an overdose.

KATE

You—

MICHAEL

He didn't tell me anything. I came over to return your pot and...and have a bowl of Dorianne's lentil soup. If you want to smoke some grass, go ahead. It's okay.

(DORIANNE enters, wearing ANDY'S shirt and beret.)

DORIANNE

(To MICHAEL) What are you...? I was at the police station, looking for you. Arrest me. Go ahead.

SAUL

You didn't do anything. I already confessed.

DORIANNE

(To MICHAEL) Don't listen to him. He didn't do it. I did.

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