

# Last of the Red Hot Lovers — Synopsis

## Overview

*Last of the Red Hot Lovers* is a comedy by Neil Simon, first produced on Broadway in 1969. Like many of Simon's works, it blends sharp humor with genuine human insight, exploring the anxieties and contradictions of middle-class life in America — in this case, during the changing sexual mores of the late 1960s. **Main Character**

The story centers on Barney Cashman, a middle-aged, married restaurant owner in his late 40s. He's a mild, gentle, and thoroughly decent man who's suddenly overcome with the feeling that life — and particularly the excitement of the sexual revolution — is passing him by.

## The Plot

Determined to have an extramarital affair before it's too late, Barney borrows his mother's Manhattan apartment for a few afternoons, hoping to experience a bit of adventure. The play unfolds in three acts, each featuring a different woman: **Elaine Navazio** — a brash, cynical woman who smokes, drinks, and takes control of the situation. Their encounter is awkward and abortive. **Bobbi Michele** — a young, free-spirited, and somewhat unhinged aspiring actress. Their meeting is chaotic and surreal. **Jeanette Fisher** — a friend of Barney's wife, also married, but depressed and guilt-ridden. Their conversation turns unexpectedly tender and confessional. Through these encounters, Barney comes face to face with his own decency, insecurity, and loneliness — realizing that infidelity isn't the path to meaning or joy he imagined. **Themes and Tone**

Despite being a comedy, the play is tinged with melancholy. It examines: The generation gap of the 1960s The tension between morality and desire The search for connection and purpose in midlife The absurdities of human behavior under pressure Neil Simon's trademark wit keeps the tone light and funny, but beneath the laughs is a moving portrait of an ordinary man struggling to find warmth in a cold, changing world.

## In Short

It's a funny, bittersweet look at middle-aged yearning and self-discovery, showing how even a "red hot lover" might really just be a kind-hearted man looking for love in all the wrong places.