

The Horizon

A comedy in two acts

By Tim A. Pullen

Cast in order of appearance (5women 4 men)

Curtis Evans: Thirty two, Average height, weight, and intelligence yet sees himself as slightly below average. Forever in a dress shirt and sweater vest.

Kathryn (Kate) Ann Rexton: Twenty nine, Beautiful young woman with a true need to be needed, she is very happy helping everyone but herself -thusly destroying most of her relationships.

Wilma Peters: Eighty-two year old cranky conservative old coot. Retired retail store owner.

Claire Julia St. Claire: Eighty-three year old retired art teacher, eccentric, romantic and acquaintance to them all.

Thelma Baker: Eighty- eight. Wilma's friend for the past six years, professional Grandma for the past twenty.

Barnaby York: Eighty-Six. Pipe smoker that refuses to quit. A man of few words, and lover of chess.

Dawn Milton: Twenty-eight, beautiful and very aggressive -one of the most genuinely artificial people on earth.

Vernon Michaels: Seventy eight years old. Retired Navy diver & treasure hunter (marine arcelogist)

Maxwell Davidson: Thirty- four Visitor, presenting Vernon with an honor for his work on behalf of the Crestview Historical Society (cameo appearance)

Act One Scene One

Wednesday July 6th 2016

(As the lights come up on stage we are in "waiting room" at Milton Meadows Retirement Community. The room is decorated tastefully as a sitting room, a couch, one or two arm chairs, some bookshelves, a game table with two chairs and a chess board set up, one wall almost completely covered in portraits of older people. There is an entrance to the foyer and an entrance to a hall. As the scene opens Thelma, Barnaby, Claire and Wilma enter the room from the foyer. Curtis follows with a portrait of Elsie. Kate follows him carrying a hammer, nails and a bible. All are dressed in black or dark colors and remain solemn except Wilma whom instantly sits in her chair and takes off her heels. Claire is crying into her hankie as Curtis places the nail to hang the picture of the woman on the wall of other pictures.

Curtis: That was a nice little service.

Kate: Yes, very nice.

Wilma: And very little. Funeral procession was only four cars and the nursing home van.

Curtis: She didn't have a big family.

Wilma: Sure she did, she just out lived them all.

Claire: The size of a funeral procession doesn't matter.

Wilma: Yes, I suppose you're right. I'm expecting huge parade with a chorus of "ding dong the witch is dead" for mine.

Curtis: Please Ms. Peters, let's try to stay somber.

Wilma: At least she wasn't Catholic, that was nice.

Kate: Why would that make any difference?

Wilma: You've never been to a Catholic funeral have you? Its all stand up, sit down, kneel then stand up, sit down, kneel. Its alot like jazzercizing to latin chants.

Curtis: Ms. Peters.

Claire: You know I was baptized Catholic.

Wilma: Then I sincerely hope you out live me.

Claire: I don't know if I'd want a Catholic funeral, I haven't really been practicing.

Thelma: I loved the Iriss. Did you know a purple iris was my favorite flower?

Kate: Yes Thelma.

Wilma: You've said it three times the past hour.

Thelma: You think they were fake? What kind of flower?

Claire: I've always been partial to primroses myself.

Thelma: I hope they have them at my funeral.

Wilma: Evans, make a note of that.

Curtis: I'll make sure they have purple irises, Thelma.

Claire: Primroses for mine.

Curtis: I-um- Okay, Claire. Primroses. There will be counseling available for anyone that needs to talk for the rest of the afternoon. To help get us through the shock of our loss.

Thelma: What? How much does it cost?

Kate: Loss, he said the shock of our loss.

Wilma: She was ninety-eight, it would've been shocking if she lived much longer.

Claire: Life is such a fragile state of existence.

Thelma: I'm going to miss Elise. She was always so agreeable.

Wilma: She wasn't agreeing with you, that was the Parkinsons'.
(shaking her head to illustrate)

Thelma: You're horrible.

Claire: How will you speak of me when I'm gone?

Wilma: Can't say, find out when it happens.

Claire: I have to watch you from heaven to find out how you really feel about me?

Wilma: If you're in heaven worrying about what I think, then heaven ain't all it's cracked up to be.

Thelma: What's free?

Wilma: Nothing in this world.

Curtis: Ladies, please. Just a few more moments of silence. I'm hanging her picture now.

Wilma: You're going to run out of wall one day.

Curtis: I don't want to watch everyone I care for pass away.

Wilma: Maybe you should re-think your career choice.

Claire: Wilma, stop, please- you know he's sensitive.

Curtis: Ms. Peters, this is a somber time.(He places the picture on the wall) Kate, if you would please do the honors. Nurse Rexton will now lead us in prayer. (They all bow their heads, except Wilma. Thelma then proceeds to fall asleep.)

Kate: God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of dawn. Amen.

All (except for Wilma who seems afraid of the word and Thelma who has fallen asleep): Amen.

Curtis: That's such a beautiful passage when you read it.

Claire: The meaning is much deeper than it appears on the surface.

Kate: I suppose so. It was what Elsie requested.

Curtis: I was never a big bible guy, but in your voice it sounds so inspirational.

Kate: Thank you.

Claire: The voice of an angel.

Curtis: (To himself) With the eyes to match.-

Kate: Pardon?

Curtis: Nothing, I was just agreeing - you have a lovely reading voice.

Wilma: You should have her read at your funeral.

Claire: I do hope you will.

Kate: I'd be delighted -no -not delighted of course, I mean, yes- I will if you wish. It would be an honor.

Curtis: Another picture upon the wall of honor.

Wilma: Wall of honor. You should honor those of us that still breathe without assistance; at least we're doing something.

Curtis: You don't need to be so cynical Ms. Peters.

Wilma: Me, cynical? I'm not the one decorating the walls with dead people.

Curtis: This is to help us remember those most important to us.

Wilma: I bet you'll get a laugh out of this conversation when you're hanging my portrait up there.

Curtis: I would never laugh at a death. (Thelma begins to snore -since she's fallen asleep)

Wilma: That's a shame Evans, there's nothing more relabel.

Claire: I would however like to request a more somber casket. Elsie's was a bit too gaudy for me.

Wilma: That was a five thousand dollar coffin. I'm pretty sure it had a false bottom and they just pulled a lever and dumped her in the hole, after we left.

Kate: They wouldn't - I don't think they could do that.

Wilma: Why else do they ask everyone to leave?

Curtis: The family could stay, if they wanted to. Couldn't they? I've got to look that up.

Claire: Just make sure my casket isn't that ornate.

Wilma: You need to put those things in a will Claire. Curtis and Kate can't tell your family what to do.

Claire: Well, you all can.

Wilma: You're relying on the memories of a bunch of old coots, just make a will.

Claire: I've never been able to sit down and think about my own death like that. Do you have a will?

Wilma: Absolutely, I even have the urn. My son has no balance to worry about, when I check out the balance has been paid for.

Kate: That urn in your room?

Wilma: Yeah, don't you like it?

Kate: I always thought it was some close relation.

Wilma: No, no, its empty. I got it at whole sale when I owned the gift store.

Claire: It's on your dresser. You look at your own urn every night?

Wilma: Why not? I think it's pretty. I'm going to have to get used to the thing anyway, I'll be spending a lot of time in it.

Claire: I couldn't stand the thought of being cremated.

Wilma: I don't like the idea of rotting slow either.

Curtis: I hate to admit it, but Ms. Peters is right. You should have a will to make sure your family knows your wishes.

Wilma: You should probably pick out your coffin too, if you don't want a tacky one.

Claire: I wasn't calling Elsie's tacky, and please it is a casket, not a coffin.

Wilma: A rose by any other name is still an overpriced weed. It's just a damn box to keep the wild animals from digging you up.

Curtis: Please, Wilma. I appreciate your honesty, but can't you just let some things stay sacred?

Wilma: I never say a word against your sweater vests.

Curtis: And I - is there something wrong with my sweater vest?

Claire: Nothing at all. Your fashion sense is on point.

Curtis: What do you mean by that? Don't you like the way I dress?

(Dawn Milton walks in carrying a briefcase, dressed in a sharp business woman suit.)

Wilma: We can't discuss this now, you have a visitor. She looks a little young to be checking in.

Curtis: What?

Dawn: Hello? Are you perhaps Mr. Evans?

Curtis: Yes? Please, call me Curtis. You must be the consoler, Miss Parnell, is it?

Dawn: No. My name is Dawn, Dawn Milton, I'm sure you were expecting me.

Curtis: I wasn't. Milton? As in related to Paul Milton? The owner of Milton meadows?

Dawn: As in his niece, however I'm here as an employee not as a family member. I've been sent here to investigate the activities director, and

take over functioning as the activities director until the investigation is concluded.

Curtis: But- I - I'm the activity's director. I don't know anything about this.

Dawn: Yes, I can tell. Perhaps you missed a voice mail or an email. Excuse me for interrupting your...festivities Mr. Evans (Handing him paperwork) the home office has recieved complaints from a number of residence on the third floor.

Curtis: Third floor? What complaints?

Dawn: I'm certain you don't wish your residence to be privy to -

Curtis: We keep no secrets here miss Milton, our residence know everything we do.

(Thelma begins to snore.)

Dawn: Yes, of course. A good deal more no doubt. Apparently men with guns march up and down the halls, bright lights wake them at all hours, and violent chases occur frequently.

Curtis: I've heard these complaints, but not in months. I've submitted them to the head office, but I assure you they have already been investigated.

Kate: I'm sure there's some mistake -

Dawn: There's no mistake. I understand the confusion, it does take some time for the home office to process this type of paper work, but no worries Mr. Evans, there is no need to feel threatened. I'm just here to help you out, while you go before the board and work out this investigation. Unless of course a more permanent replacement becomes nescicary.

Curtis: Threatened? Why would I feel threatened? I've got nothing to hide Ms. Milton.

Kate: The third floor is a specialized wing. There are nurses on staff around the clock. Over half of the residents on that floor are suffering from dementia or other mental illnesses.

Dawn: I just need to interview those nurses and confirm you are indeed taking these complaints seriously.

Wilma: I hear aliens visit every Tuesday night, you should look into that one. Wake up Thelma.(She smacks Thelma awake.)

Claire: Wilma!

Thelma: What? What'd I miss?

Dawn: Every residents care is our utmost concern, we are bound by ethics to take every precaution and each complaint seriously, no matter the mental condition of the resident.

Curtis: Of course you should, and we did look into each of these complaints at the time they happened, but that's been so-

Dawn: Good, then there won't be any problems. Now if I may review your current files?

Curtis: Yes, yes -of course. Just let me pack up these tools. Kate, could you verify this for me? (He hands Kate the paperwork Dawn had handed him)

Kate: Sure.

Curtis: I am fairly certain aliens do not visit on Tuesday evenings, we have had security cameras installed on the roof top to disprove that rumor.

Thelma: What a very nice dress.

Dawn: Why, thank you. Your dress is lovely too. How are you today?
My name is Dawn.

Thelma: Me? Yes I yawned, we were up early this morning for the funeral services. Did you know Elise? Who is this?

Claire: No dear, her name, Dawn. What a lovely name, like the rising sun, the new beginning, the awakening day.

Thelma: I wasn't up that early.

Wilma: That's her name. Dawn! Like the dishsoap.

Thelma: Oh.

Claire: So poetic.

Wilma: Sometimes it's nice to be Shakespeare, and sometimes it's better to be understood. (To Dawn) She can't hear straight today. I think the batteries dead on her hearing aids.

Thelma: I'd love some lemonade.

Wilma: See what I mean?

Dawn: Thank you for informing me of her hearing problem. It's a pleasure meeting you, what is your name?

Wilma: Don't be too sweet to me; I've got type two diabetes.

Dawn: Did I offend you? Please allow me to apologize. Would you care for a mint?

Wilma: A mint? What is this a petting zoo?

Dawn: I was simply trying to be polite.

Wilma: No, you're just being condescending.

Dawn: You don't have to be so disagreeable.

Claire: Yes, she does, I'm afraid she's always been like that, you can't ask a tiger change her stripes.

Kate: Now, now Wilma, you don't need to give this woman grief. Miss Milton will be a part of our staff here for a little while, so let's try to play nice.

Dawn: You don't find that condescending?

Wilma: That's just Kate. That smile is permanent; I know she can't help it.

Dawn: She's aloud to be condescending?

Wilma: Kate is dating the maintenance guy Joe. We've all seen Joe shirtless, so we know she has to talk through that wide smile all the time.

Claire: Yes, Joe- Michael Angelo could not have chiseled a better chest.

Kate: Please ladies - don't embarrass me.

Dawn: You allow intermingling of personal relationships in the professional setting?

Kate: We don't go on dates here -not in this building.

Curtis: Kate was dating Joe before we hired him. That's how he heard about the opening. Perhaps we should go take a look at this paper work Miss Milton.

Dawn: Unless you were in the middle of a guided activity.

Curtis: No, no. We were just getting settled from an outing. Kate was about to distribute the morning medications, we're a little behind

schedule. I can take you to the office to look over these files right now if you'd like.

Dawn: Please. These people should have name tags or something, how can you keep track of who's who?

Curtis: Its easy once you get to know them, right this way please miss Milton. (He exits, Dawn follows)

Wilma: That woman is a bitch.

Kate: You shouldn't be so quick to judge.

Barnaby: Takes one to know one.

Claire: Barnaby!

Wilma: Oh, leave him be- he's right - I was a business woman for fifty eight years. I can see that woman's some kind of vampire -and she's thirsty.

Kate: I hope youre wrong. This is pretty clear, she can take Curtis job right out from under him if she wants to.

Wilma: Then she'll probably raise the damn rent.

Kate: It's good to know your priorities are in order. He's right. I better go get your morning meds, it's later then I thought. (She exits.)

Wilma: (She watches to make sure they have gone) Alright then, down to business. (She take a book out of her purse-checks the book and pulls out an envelope with cash) Damn, looks like Barnaby won the pool. Good call Barnaby. (She holds the cash out for Barnaby.)

Claire: Oh that pool- you are pure evil.
(Barnaby stands up from the chess board and takes his money.)

Wilma: Now my bet for the next one of us to go is...going to have to be Barnaby. (He looks back at her offended) What? You really don't look healthy this morning. Who are you betting on?

Thelma: You already told me her name was Dawn.

Wilma: Who are you betting on?

Thelma: Better what?

Wilma: Bet! The pool!

Thelma: Oh, that. No one, Claire is right this is a crule, sick game you're playing. I'm sorry I was ever involved.

Wilma: This would be a national pastime if I had the right sponsors. The ultimate survivor, I should trademark that, I can see it now. We need to call up some funeral homes, doctor's offices- we could probably get studios in Florida. Hey this isn't a bad idea.
(Barnaby nods his head agreeing.)

Claire: Barnaby feels terrible about taking that money, don't you Barnaby?

Barnaby: Yep. (As he carefully counts his cash.)

Claire: That's death money.

Wilma: Don't think of it like that. Think of it as taking a sad moment and cutting a profit on it. Sure the glass maybe half empty but now he can afford a refill. I'm sure Barnaby's winnings are going to help him ease the pain.

(Barnaby goes of to Wilma and puts his hand out. She then gives him the remaining cash.)

Thelma: All you ever think of is financial gain.

Wilma: Ease the pain! It will ease his pain.

Thelma: Money can't take away pain.

Wilma: Sure it can.

Claire: Is that true Barnaby?

Barnaby: (Nods his head) New doughnut cushion. Five on Mrs. Waide in room 307. (He hands her back a 5)

Claire: You two void are of morals.

Thelma: It just doesn't seem right. It's like you're wishing people dead.

Wilma: We're not wishing, just guessing who- Well, well, well, would you look at that.

Thelma: Did you call me fat?

Wilma: (Holding the book to Thelma) Elsie had her money on you.

Thelma: That bobble headed hussy. I'm not even in a support room yet. Put me down for twenty.

Wilma: Who you betting on?

Thelma: Can I bet on myself?

Wilma: No, you could cheat.

Thelma: What's wrong with my feet?

Wilma: Cheat.

Thelma: How could I cheat?

Wilma: You could forget a pill.

Claire: If you killed yourself, you wouldn't get the money.

Wilma: Serves you right for cheating.

Thelma: Well why on earth would I want to throw that bet?

Wilma: To prove me wrong.

Thelma: Fine then, Elizabeth Humphrey in two sixteen.

Wilma: I won't take it personal, if you wanna bet on me.

Thelma: Two sixteen not three.

Wilma: Me (With charade type sign.) Don't you want to bet on me? I'm no pillar of health.

Thelma: I wouldn't bet on you. They say only the good die young, and if that's true, you're not dying.

Wilma: (Laughing) You know me well Thelma, you do know me well.

Thelma: I don't smell anything.

Wilma: What is wrong with your ears this morning? Do you have your aids on at all?

Thelma: Right one. Can't find the left one.

Wilma: (Switching her seat to face the hearing ear.) We should've met each other back when we were still among the living.

Thelma: I consider myself among the living.

Wilma: Living? This?

Thelma: I enjoy myself, without all the worries I had in my youth. With no responsibilities except to our own happiness.

Claire: Whatever passion tickles our fancy, we are free to tickle back.

Wilma: Sure, while you're off tickling your passions I'm rotting away with nothing to do in this depository for the nearly departed.

Claire: You're always so negative.

Thelma: If I remember correctly your daughter-in-law practically begged you to go back to living with them.

Wilma: Ah, she was just trying to be nice so she can show her face at church on Sunday morning. Muriel has always been such a good girl. But we both know neither one of us were happy with me living there. Only one woman should control a man at a time. Mother and a wife under the same roof just isn't natural.

Thelma: You're not happy living with you. I think you enjoy misery.

Wilma: You know, I'm beginning to think the same thing. I've been horribly depressed since I moved into this place, and I've never been happier in my life. Well, maybe when I was married, but that was pretty miserable too. I think it's because I simply don't like people, and I don't like being lonely either. Doesn't make sense, does it?

Claire: Oh Wilma, that is so beautiful. Sharing that vulnerability with us is so touching.

Wilma: Don't go touching me Claire. I'm not that vulnerable, I can still swing my cane.

Claire: I knew you had feelings after all.

Wilma: Tell anyone and I'm betting on you next.

Thelma: When did you help her up from a fall?

Wilma: What?

(Kate enters pushing the cart of medications and drinks.)

Kate: Okay Ladies and gent, let's get our morning medications over with.

Wilma: Can I take mine with a bloody Mary?

Kate: Not the morning meds, you've got a possible reaction there. Maybe for dinner I can see What I can arrange. You can have it with a V8

(Kate hands out everyone's medications.)

Wilma: You obviously don't know the important part of a bloody Mary.

Kate: Oh, dear. I'm missing a few medications here. I'm out of a few on the cart.

Wilma: You brought the coffee and my heart pill, I'll be fine for a while.

Thelma: Did they play any music at that funeral?

Claire: They did, the organist was exceptional.

Thelma: What?

Claire: The organist was-

Wilma: No, they didn't have any music. (She shakes her head in front of Thelma)

Thelma: Oh, what a shame. Probably couldn't afford it after the extravagant coffin.

Claire: That's not at all true.

Wilma: What's the point in telling her she missed great music? Just let her think they forgot it.

Thelma: I thought at one point I heard the Doors playing.

Wilma: Come on baby light my fire is only if you're cremated.

Thelma: What about an axe? Did I ask it?

Wilma: Oh damn, I can't figure that one out. Take your meds.

Kate: I'm going to help you go through your room and look for that hearing aid Thelma.

Thelma: You wish who would've stayed?
(Kate takes a notepad from the cart and writes, then has Thelma read it.)

Kate: I'm going to leave this notepad in here so you all can communicate with Thelma until we find that missing hearing aid.

Barnaby: Papers?

Kate: I did remember your papers, but there was only one Post left by the time we got back from the funeral. I was hoping you all could share. I'm pretty sure Wilma only wants the business section with her stock reports.

Wilma: All the rest is wasted trees.

Kate: And you only like the art section, is that right Claire?

Claire: You know us well Kate.

Kate: Barnaby I only ever see you look at the sports section.

Barnaby: And the obituaries.

Kate: Okay.

Claire: He likes to keep track of how many of his friends are still alive.

Kate: Thelma I've never seen you read anything but the comics. The funnies I think you call them.

Thelma: Oh, good. My funnies.

Claire: I'll borrow those later for the horoscopes.

Wilma: You know there is a reason that's in the comic section. It's so they can laugh at the people that believe in that crap.

Thelma: Did you want me to read you the horoscopes Claire?

Wilma: You can hear, you're faking deaf.

Thelma: What?

Claire: She just knows me and she's a thoughtful person. Yes dear, I would love that.

Thelma: I don't have a hat on. Do I? (Claire writes down the intended message) Oh, good lord I do need to find that hearing aid. Okay so what are you?

Wilma: Look under the sign of Twit. In the house of moron under the moon of ninny.

Kate: Wilma, please play nice. I've got to go help Curtis find some paperwork for this woman. I'll be right back with the missing medications and I'll help Thelma find her lost ear. (She exits)

Claire: January, I'm an Aquarius.

Thelma: A ferret? I don't think they have that, I think that's the Chinese zodiac.

Claire: Aquarius.

Thelma: Of course yes, Aquarius. (She reads aloud, very a Loud) Your light hearted spirit and artistic flair will be inspired today. You will want to avoid confrontation, and be pressed for life changing decisions. Be

reflective and consider, do not allow peer pressure to make up your mind for you. Remember that sometimes the best teachers need to let the students make their own mistakes.

Wilma: What a load.

Claire: See, how did they know I was a teacher?

Wilma: Those things are so vague anyone can hear anything they want to in them.

Thelma: Wilma, do you want to hear yours?

Wilma: No.

Thelma: What's your sign?

Wilma: Stop.

Thelma: I think Taurus right? You're bull headed. I'm sure your birthday is in late April. Where can I- Here it is: You've been lonely long enough, you may have had your heart locked up for safe keeping a little too long, but today you will meet the person that holds the key to opening it.

Wilma: Great, that probably means the battery on my pacemaker is wearing out and the cardiologist is going to have to change it.

Thelma: What are you Barney?

Wilma: He's sick of hearing this.

Claire: He is not Wilma, you're projecting your desires onto him.

Wilma: Did you talk like that to your students Claire?

Claire: When they were confentational.

Wilma: I thought you taught high school.

Claire: I did.

Wilma: And they didn't beat you up?

Thelma: I think you're a Virgo if I'm not mistaken-

(Curtis enters with Vernon Michaels and two fairly large suit cases.)

Curtis: Excuse me everyone, can I have your attention a moment?

Thelma: isn't your birthday?-

Curtis: (Places his hand on her shoulder to get her attention) Sorry Thelma. Pardon my interruption. I would like to introduce all of you to Mr. Vernon Michaels. He's our newest guest and I'd like you all to make him feel welcome.

All: Welcome. (Wilma doesn't even look up from her paper.)

Thelma: I didn't catch that name-

Claire: Vernon

Wilma: Business must be good Curtis. They haven't even tossed the dirt on Elsie and you've filled her vacant room.

Curtis: Wilma, I might end up with the dirt tossed on me before Elsie is buried- can you help me out here?

Wilma: Of course, if anything happens to you and they could raise my rent.

Curtis: These lovely people will show you around, I would normally give you the tour myself, but I'm afraid I'm a bit preoccupied at this moment. Thelma could you give the grand tour?

Thelma: What? Soup de jour?

Curtis: The tour, could you show mister Micheals around?

Wilma: She's gone van goh on us, working with one ear today.

Claire: I'm surprised you know who Van Goh is. We'll take care of him don't you worry Curtis.

Curtis: They will take care of you- I'm sure -I'll check up on you in just a few moments-

Wilma: Head office shows up and you don't have time to do your job.

Curtis: This woman is insaine. I'm defending my choice of sweater vest.

Wilma: Considering it's July, that is tough to defend. Why are you so cold all the time?

Curtis: I'm not -I just -I -well, if you must know I'm not comfortable with my body. We can't all be built like strippers (he exits)

Wilma: Tell me about it.

Claire: Welcome!

Thelma: Welcome to Milton meadows. I didn't catch your name.

Vernon: Vernon Micheals, please just call me Vern.

Thelma: What did you earn?

Wilma: Vern! Call him Vern. (Wilma actually looks at him for the first time) Hello. He is quite handsome now that my glasses are on. I'm Wilma Peters, welcome to the first day of the end of your life.

Claire: You'll have to excuse her unpleasant mood, that's just her personality.

Wilma: Hey, they refuse to pay my fee.

Thelma: Go to the bathroom if you have to pee.

Wilma: Turn your good ear this way. (She does) my fee, they refuse to pay my fee.

Thelma: No one is going pay you to be polite to the other residents.

Wilma: The staff gets paid to be nice to old coots, why shouldn't we?

Thelma: I'm Thelma Baker, and this gentleman is Barnaby York.

Vernon: Hello, it's a pleasure.

Claire: Claire St.Claire, delighted, I'm sure.

Barnaby: Apartment 105?

Vernon: Excuse me?

Claire: He's asking if you'll be staying in apartment one, zero, five.

Vernon: I'm not sure, let me check my key, yeah-looks like it, apartment 105.

Thelma: Yes, yes, we're still alive.

Wilma: That's debatable. Apartment 105!

Thelma: That's the room across the hall from Barnaby.

Barnaby: You snore?

Vernon: Do I snore? I think so, Sorry if that's an issue, my late wife always complained of it.

Barnaby: Good. (He exits)

Vernon: I was hoping the room would be sound proof or something.

Wilma: Sound proof a retirement home? What a waste of money- half of us are deaf anyway.

Vernon: Why did you? He's gone. Why did he ask that?

Claire: It's been months since Mrs. Cleavland passed away. She snored so loud he could hear her clear across the hall.

Thelma: Who's having a ball?

Wilma: No one I know. She snored like a drunken lumberjack, that's how we knew she died, the snoring stopped.

Claire: I dont think the poor dear has had a good night's sleep since.

Vernon: He likes the sound of snoring?

Thelma: This place isn't too boring.

Wilma: That depends on your standards for excitment -but he said snoring, snoring! Yes, Barnaby likes snoring.

Thelma: Oh yes, his late wife snored.

Claire: After fifty years of snoring, he grew to need it. We do grow acustomed to certain things.

Barnaby: (Returning with chess timer) Chess?

Vernon: That looks like the gear for it.

Claire: He wants to know if you'd like to play a game with him. Do you play chess Mr. Micheals?

Vernon: Not in a very long time, but I used to. I'm sure I could play you a game or two.

Thelma: A kangaroo- where?

Vernon: I could play a game or two.

Thelma: Of chess? Oh that's wonderful, now Barnaby doesn't have to play with himself anymore.

Wilma: He just agreed to chess Thelma, this isn't prison. Don't get your depends in a knot Barney -let the man unpack before you stick a rook in his knight.

(Barnaby shakes his head and sets the timer aside)

Vernon: Don't say much, do you? A man of few words.

Claire: Every time he talks Wilma has something nasty to say - come to think of it every time anyone talks Wilma has something nasty to say.

Wilma: Some one has to counteract your fresh baked granny goodness. If you all went unchecked, every denture in the place would be riddled with cavities. His silence has nothing to do with me. Good ole Barney was married for fifty some years-

Barnaby: Fifty six.

Wilma: You know the only way to make a marriage last fifty six years is if the man knows how to keep his mouth shut.

Barnaby: True.

Vernon: Yeah, I was married for forty-two myself. They would've been much easier if I knew when to keep my mouth shut. This place ain't so bad, I kinda expected to be forced into a game of shuffle board.

Wilma: No, that's only on Saturday nights -and by night I mean five - thirty.

Vernon: I've got to admit you ladies are interesting.

Wilma: We're the last ones standing, without walkers anyway -, but don't worry, we won't make you choose. I'm sure we can work out a rotation.

Claire: Wilma, how indecent of you. She's got something wrong up there you know. (Making crazy sign)

Wilma: My mind is fine, it's my body that's shot.

Thelma: Who needs a cot?

Claire: This building has many residence Mr. Michaels, there are just a few of us that will sit in the same room as Wilma.

Thelma: Aren't we supposed to show Vernon around?

Wilma: Oh, fine -This is the waiting room. We sit in here most of the day, they bring us breakfast in here, serve our lunch in here, and serve dinner in the dinning hall, they like to let us think we have such busy schedules.

Claire: And on Fridays we paint! Don't forget that.

Wilma: Can't, I've tried.

Vernon: You don't seem like you belong in a place like this.

Wilma: How can you tell? Does the pulse give it away?

(Barnaby trys to light his pipe)

Claire: You've got to watch her Mr. Micheals.

Vernon: Please, call me Vern. I plan to keep my eye on this one. Now why do you call this the waiting room?

Wilma: It's where we wait.

Vernon: For what?

Claire: Our visitors, our medicines, our -

Wilma: Inevitable demise.

Thelma: What? Who's wise?

Claire: That's so morbid. There are ten rooms like this, two on each floor of the building. I think its official name is a common room. We sit here and talk, I paint frequently, dabble in sculpture, Thelma likes to knit, Barnaby plays chess-mostly with himself because no one else knows how, Wilma complains, and insults -you get the idea, we do what we want until one by one, we're either taken to the advanced care wing-

Wilma: We call that the vegetable garden.

Claire: She calls it that, no one else. Perhaps the dementia floor up on three-

Wilma: The cocoos nest-

Claire: Wilma, please. Until that day we join the ranks of our predecessors on the memory wall.

Wilma: Don't know why this ones on the memory wall, she didn't have any memory left.

Thelma: In this room? I guess were just waiting for something to happen, something to talk about -something to do.

Wilma: The dirt nap, the great beyond, feeding the worms-

Claire: To face those uncharted valleys of the undiscovered country? To shuffle off this mortal coil, to sleep- to sleep perchance to dream (she begins to cry) aye, there's the rub. For in that sleep of death what dreams may come? (She begins sobbing and leaves the room.)

Vernon: Is she going to be all right?

Wilma: Oh, she does this sometimes.

Thehma: You did it again Wilma.

Vernon: Is she emotionally unstable? Does she have dementia or something?

Wilma: She taught art for most of her life. Do you know how to tell the difference between an art major and a mental handicap?

Vernon: No.

Wilma: Well neither do I. So what are your interests Mr. -Vern?

Vernon: Well, I don't really know - I used to snorkel, but my lungs can't handle that, used to swim, but my knees are so bad now-come to think about it -I can't do anything I used to enjoy anymore.

Wilma: Then you have come to the right place. That should be our motto "When you can no longer do what you want" I'll talk to Curtis about getting t-shirts made up.

(Kate enters, with a tray of medicines and drinks in paper cups.)

Kate: Hello there, you must be Vernon Micheals, its very nice to meet you Mr. Micheals. I'm Kate Rexton, I'm one of the nurses here at Milton Meadows.

Vernon: Nice to meet you.

Wilma: She's our neighborhood dealer. Did you bring us back some good drugs?

Kate: Barnaby's antacid, Claire's mood stabalizers -

Wilma: Little late on that one.

Kate: -Then your pain meds with stool softener.

Wilma: (Taking her pills)As I get older it really is harder to give a -

Kate: I'm sorry Mr. Micheals, I don't have your medications on file yet, we did put a call into your doctor's office.

Vernon: Please, call me Vern, and I don't take any medications.

Kate: That's a pleasant surprise, but it makes my job even easier. Wilma, I suppose you sent Claire to her room sobbing again.

Wilma: At least she's predictable.

Kate: I'll take these to her.

Wilma: Why the hell are you here?

Vernon: I was living with my daughter and her husband for a while, then they had the twins two months ago. Don't get me wrong, I love my grandchildren, but I wanted to sleep through the night. I came here to get away from the screaming, and the diapers.

Wilma: Then steer clear of the third floor and fourth floors.

Kate: Alright everyone, lunch time in ten minutes. We will be serving lunch in the dinning hall, thanks to miss Milton's visit, so lets start heading down while I go fetch Mrs. St.Claire. Can I help you get these bags to your room?

Vernon: It's fine, they're on wheels.

Kate: If you do need anything please let me know. Thelma, I haven't forgotten your hearing aid, I'll peek while I'm down the hall (She exits down the hall)

Wilma: One zero five is right down here.

Thelma: Really? You found a place with beer?

Wilma: Here! Here! What you can't seem to do anymore -hear!

(They exit. Barnaby finally makes a move at his chess board, lights out.)

Act one Scene two

(Later that evening. Thelma is knitting with a tea cup near by, as she looks out the window humming, Wilma is reading the business section of a paper, and Barnaby is playing chess in a corner with himself. Claire is standing in a smock, in front of a canvas)

Thelma: Hey now, come on you two share and share alike.

Wilma: Thelma, they're birds quit yelling at them.

Thelma: What?

Wilma: Stop yelling at the birds.

Thelma: They're fighting over the bird seed.

Wilma: Then stick your head out the window and tweet at them.

Thelma: I'll look crazy if I do that.

Wilma: You look just as crazy talking to birds from in here.

Thelma: What?

Wilma: Nothing! I'm just as crazy trying to yell at a deaf woman. You need to find those hearing aids.

Thelma: Something about police raids?

Wilma: Hearing aid, hearing aid.

Thelma: Yes, I've got to find my missing hearing aid.

Wilma: Yes you do. Why don't you take my seat until you do.

Thelma: Your seat? Why would I want to sit in your seat?

Wilma: So you can aim your good ear at me. Your lost hearing aid is hurting my throat.

Thelma: Your chair doesn't rock.

Wilma: I've never been a rocker.

(Vernon enters the room.)

Vernon: Hello ladies, Barnaby.

Wilma: Did you like your walk?

Vernon: Yeah, I guess. This place is a lot to get used to.

Claire: Don't you think the grounds are beautiful?

Vernon: I've got to admit that garden is kind of a maze, I lost my bearings for a moment.

Wilma: It's set up like that incase any one escapes the cuckoo's nest. It's bad business for a nursing home to lose track of it's inmates.

Claire: We are not inmates.

Thelma: What was that? What did he say?

Wilma: He got lost in the labyrinth. You have to talk to her left if you want her to hear you right.

Vernon: Understood. Thank you all for being so welcoming. This isn't as bad as I thought it would be.

Wilma: Soon enough you'll forget life on the outside-and this will be nice, at least that's what I'm banking on.

Claire: No, you get used to it quickly- as soon as you get past Wilma's snide comments and bitterness it's quite pleasant here.

Vernon: I rather enjoy Wilma, her humor is refreshing.

Wilma: It isn't humor. I'm just honest.

Claire: A sad reflection of the world we live in when honesty strikes us as absurd.(She says this line off into space, then pauses in thought)

Vernon: Ah, yeah -I guess so.

Wilma: Told ya, she was an art major.

Vernon: I think I'm ready for a game of chess Mister York. If you're - (Barnaby looks up excited and resets his game then goes off for his timer) Did I offend him?

Claire: I believe he's gone to fetch his timer.

Wilma: Or his exlax kicked in.

Claire: I'm fairly sure it was the timer. He has an odd limp when it's the exlax.

Vernon: I'll watch for that. Are you all right Claire? I saw at lunch-

Wilma: She overreacts like that every time they serve Cornish game hen or fried chicken. Kept pigeons as a child, or some such stupid thing.

Claire: It was not a stupid thing.

Wilma: Whining over dead birds?

(Barnaby re enters with his timer and sets up the board.)

Claire: It's not whining, my memories of my poor little Pablo haunt me every time I see those naked roasted bodies.

Wilma: Sounds like a bad experience I had at pebble beach.

Thelma: What's in reach?

Wilma: Just forget it.

Claire: My father and I raised homing pigeons when I was a girl-

Wilma: We didn't want the story.

Claire: But my father was a horrible alcoholic,

Wilma: We're going to get the story-

Claire: He worked at a steel mill, just about every one there was an alcoholic. They had drinking contests at the bowling alley and didn't even waste the money pretending they were bowling. One Sunday afternoon momma and I came home from church- (she starts to cry)

Wilma: And the water works.

Claire: He was trying to fix us a chicken dinner, really he was -but he was too drunk to realize - Pablo was my favorite pigeon - I raised him from an egg.- My lips have not touched foul since that day.

Wilma: Why did you and your alcoholic father raise pigeons anyway?

Claire: To send messages to my uncle Hank, he was my daddy's brother. Serving time for man slaughter in Alcatraz -until they shut it down.

Wilma: There is so much about you I have no interest in knowing.

Thelma: Where are you going?

(Barnaby dings the bell as he sits down.)

Wilma: Nowhere, fast.

Vernon: On my way Mr. York.

Barnaby: Barney.

Vernon: Okay- Barney. (he sits at the table and begins to play) Claire, I didn't know prisoners in Alcatraz could keep pigeons.

Wilma: Damn it, I thought she was done.

Claire: They couldn't. One of the guards raised homing pigeons as a hobby at home. My Father became friends with him and just used this method to get cheap messages to his brother.

Vernon: So Claire was your uncle really guilty of manslaughter? Or was he wrongly accused?

Claire: No, no he did it. He was a horrible abusive person. Used to smack my aunt around, when they were kids he would always beat up on my father. That's why my dad sent him a message once a week. Just to rub it in that he was free and Hank was going to rot in jail until a place in hell opened up. My father just didn't want to waste the stamp.

Thelma: What was that?

Wilma: I'm writing it down for her, you don't have to repeat it. (She scribbles some version of the story down for Thelma) I didn't need it the first time.

Vernon: Are you interested in the stock market Wilma?

Wilma: Not as much as I used to be, but a few of my holdings still hold a little interest. Why do you ask?

Vernon: You seem to treasure that business section.

Wilma: I do, I doubt anyone else puts any stock in it.

Vernon: You do have a great sense of humor. Well played sir. (To Barney) What are you knitting Thelma?

Thelma: What?

Wilma: What are you knitting? He wants to know what you're knitting. Looks like either the world's smallest scarf, or a condom for Eskimos.

Thelma: A doggy sweater for my daughter's Chihuahua.

Vernon: How nice, you have a grand dog.

Wilma: She's got the two legged grandchildren too. Don't get her started or we'll be here a week with the slide show.

Claire: What should I paint?

Wilma: You art people can never make up your minds. How long have you been stairing at a blank canvas?

Claire: I just have to wait for inspiration. The horoscope did say-

Wilma: Bha-blah-blah.

Claire: There were a few cardinals and fencches out by the feeder a few moments ago. (She goes to the window and looks.) No. I don't think they'll do. (She stairs facing Wilma and the entrance to the foyer.) I have to see what strikes my eye.

Wilma: If you stand there stairing at me, I'll strike your eye.

Claire: A ship! A handsome young man on a ship!

Wilma: Huh? Where'd you -oh. (She looks out the hallway.)

Thelma: We have french dip?

Wilma: No, but that's a thought for later.

(Dawn and Curtis enter with Maxwell Davidson.)

Curtis: Right over here Mister Davidson.

Maxwell: Thank you.

(Maxwell Davidson enters with modle Carrak, check and certificate.)

Dawn: Watch please Mr. Evans, I'll demonstrate. Vernon Micheals?

Curtis: This is Mister Micheals.

Vernon: Can I help you?

Curtis: This is -

Dawn: Dawn Milton, welcome to Milton Meads. I'm the lead management staff. We would just like you to know you have a visitor. Are you feeling up for a visitor sir?

Vernon: Yes.

Dawn: Very well then, this is Mister Micheals, Mr. Davidson (She then walks out) Are you coming Evans? (Curtis follows.) Now you see why the Protocol works? You don't want to interrupt an elderly person without confirming the appointment is a welcomed one - (they exit)

Maxwell: Hello sir.

Vernon: Who are you, and what are you selling?

Wilma: That's exactly how I answer the phone.

Maxwell: Maxwell Davidson, you can trust me this isn't a sales kind of thing. I'm with the Crestview historical society. (Shaking his hand) It's an honor to meet you Mister Micheals.

Vernon: Why?

Maxwell: Your work of course. The discovery of the Reveler, and the lost treasure map.

Wilma: Treasure?

Vernon: Yes, I made my living in marien archeology. I went looking for sunken ships. Mr. Davidson, maybe you haven't heard, that old map I found was a dud.

Maxwell: Not exactly Mister Micheals. It just needed a key. It just so happens, my family crest contained the longitude and latitude your map needed. Three hundred and ninty some years can change the terrain of an island and throw off your landmarks a little bit.

Vernon: You must be a Hampton descendant! Am I right?

Maxwell: Yes sir.

Vernon: Hot damn! I knew it! And did you find it? Did you find the lost jewels?

Maxwell: Worth well over forty million by today's standards.

Wilma: Forty million?

Claire: The love of money is the root to all evil Wilma.

Wilma: No, that's the lack of money. Forty -million - I bet Vernon won't get a dime.

Maxwell: As a matter of fact I have the cashiers checks and papers right here.

Vernon: I knew that was it, I knew - (Max hands the check to Vernon, who tears it open and reads) Ten million dollars? Oh my God, My treasure hunting finally paid off. I only wish my wife was alive to see this. I knew it was there.

Maxwell: Yes sir. The treasure was right where you thought, once the coordinates were corrected.

Vernon: I wish I could've been there.

Wilma: Oh let me see that Vern - look at all those zeros.

Vernon: I don't believe this.

Maxwell: We also want to invite you to be our guest of honor down at Harbor Crest dock Saturday afternoon. The society is christening the newly completed replica of the Reveler at two pm. Since you were the man that found the wreckage of the actual ship, it would be fitting if you would smash the champagne bottle across the bow of her namesake.

Vernon: You finally finished building her?

Maxwell: Thanks to you, they found the funding.

Vernon: I'd be honored.

Maxwell: We also wanted you to have this, as a small token of our appreciation. (He hands Vernon the model.)

Wilma: Ten million dollars and a toy boat. Pretty nice haul.

Vernon: This is a scale model of the Reveler. The ship that brought the founders of this town to the new world. Thank you. (They pass the boat around)

Wilma: So that's what a mariene archaeologist does. That's the ugliest mermaid I've ever seen.

Vernon: That's not a mermaid, its called a sea ram. Some cross between a ram and a mermaid. They have a road down town named for it.

Wilma: What'd ya know. I always thought it was just a road with a stupid name.

Max: All of your friends are welcome to join you for the christining. There will be a free lunch buffet served.

Wilma: Free lunch? I'm in.

Thelma: What's your hunch? Did he win a sweepstakes?

Wilma: I'll explain later.

Vernon: Can you have this money made out to my daughter? Would that be asking too much? Can you just put it in her name?

Maxwell: That can easily be arranged Mr. Micheals, but are you-

Wilma: I'd like to introduce myself, Wilma Peters -I'm his daughter. (Maxwell and Vernon just look at Wilma, Vernon is amused by this. Max thinks she's crazy.) What? It was worth a shot.

Veron: Sorry Wilma, you're friendship has been invaluable to me the past few hours -but I really think my daughter and grandchildren could use it.

Wilma: Just as well, I'd just blow it all on hip replacements and chip and dale dancers.

(Thelma and Wilma can go on with their next three lines. While the other characters continue on.)

***Thelma:** Chances of what?

***Wilma:** Let me fill you in later.

***Thelma:** An Alligator?

Maxwell: I can have the sum divided, you can keep part-

Vernon: At my age? I wouldn't have time to spend all that anyway. I have what I need to stay here.

Maxwell: Okay, if that's what you want. I can have the check remade by Saturday.

Vernon: That would be great. Alison Jefferies. If you could just deliver it to this address.

Maxwell: I can do this of course, but are you sure? This is a quite a large gift, are you sure you wouldn't want to give it to her yourself?

Vernon: I don't want her knowing where I am, she'll beg me to come back and live with her.

Maxwell: You're daughter doesn't know where you are?

Vernon: I called and told her I was alive, she's just so damned persistent. I had to sneak out of her apartment in the middle of the night.

Wilma: You did that?

Vernon: Technically it was around ten, but everyone was sleeping. They have twins.

Maxwell: It's not my place to say, but if I were your daughter- I'd want to know.

Vernon: If you were my daughter, I'd rather not know.

Maxwell: Okay, I'll make sure she gets the money. This is your press pass, which will get you and as many guests as you like in the vip stands. Try to keep the guests under twenty.

Wilma: Under twenty hell, we're all over eighty.

Maxwell: Quantity, theres no age restrictions, just room on the dock. If you need transportation just call this number. Have a good evening Mr. Michaels, I'll see you Saturday afternoon.

Vernon: Thank you. I'll see you then. (Max exits) I'll be damned.

Wilma: You too?

Vernon: My whole marriage she kept telling me I was nuts -she said it would never pay off. When it does, she's gone.

Wilma: It's for the best. For a woman death is better than knowing your husband was right.

Vernon: You know, I do think she'd agree with that.

Barnaby: Your move.

Vernon: I'm so sorry! I almost forgot the game.

Wilma: Ten million dollars. You can hire someone to play him. Why'd you give up all that money like that?

Vernon: It's only money.

(Wilma clutches her heart and falls to a seat.)

Wilma: Watch your mouth! There are ladies present.

Claire: Money can't buy happiness.

Wilma: Spoken like a true poor person.

Claire: I was a well respected school teacher.

Wilma: That's what I said.

Claire: I would love to use that model ship for inspiring my painting, if I may-.

Vernon: Of course you can use it. Of course.

Claire: I'll be very careful with it.

Wilma: That check could inspire me.

Kate: (Enters with the medicine tray. She's obviously upset.) Good evening everyone- Time for your evening meds.

Thelma: What's the matter dear?

Kate: Nothing, nothing at all- why do you ask? (She tries to fain a smile.)

Wilma: You're usually so damn happy I have to smile. You're mascras running down your neck- You haven't been taking Claire's meds have you?

Kate: No, no nothing like that.

Claire: Perhaps you should try, you're welcome to.

Kate: No thank-you. (smile fades)

Wilma: What is it? You're upset.

Kate: Joe and I broke up. (She begins to tear up) he dumped me.

Thelma: Who bumped what? What happened?

Wilma: Joe dumped her, shut up Thelma read this .(she scribbles it on a piece of paper.)

Claire: You poor thing.

Vernon: No man in his right mind would want to lose a pretty little girl like you, something must be wrong with the boy.

Kate: Yeah, a Norwegian bikini modle gave him her number.

Claire: A mistake he'll soon regret, I'm sure.

Wilma: Damn forieners, take our jobs then go after the few hot straight guys we've got.

Thelma: You want to go play the slots?

Wilma: Vern, can you buy her new ears?

Kate: You know we were supposed to go to that - (Dawn enters the room)

Dawn: Good evening everyone, Kate -I do hope you're not upsetting the residence with your personal drama.

Wilma: Not at all, she's entertaining us with it.

Thelma: What dear? You're looking for your momma?

Dawn: If you are too emotionally distraught to perform your duties I can arrange for a personal leave of absence.

Kate: No thank you miss Milton, I'll pull myself together.

Dawn: Good. Carry on then.

Kate: Wilma, your Linsinopril 20mg. Your-

Wilma: Hold it a minute there Kate. my blood pressure pill and my sugar pills right?

Kate: Yes, that is what -

Dawn: The pharmaceutical name of the drug is what should be announced, and Nurse Rexton I might point out you did neglect to read the dispensing label as written. Alphabetically ordered would be preferred.

Kate: By drug or manufacturer?

Dawn: You know, I'm not certain. I didn't bring the manual with me.

Kate: I have a copy in the nurses office. Third drawer down under the inbox. While I dispense these medications. If you would. Unless of course you would like to-

Dawn: No, no. I am far more familiar with researching protocol than inacting it. Allow me, you can carry on. (She exits)

Vernon: You were just getting rid of her, weren't you?

Kate: Me? Never. That drawer has been locked for six months now, maybe she'll find the key for me.

Wilma: Kate, I am so proud of you.

Thelma: She seems angry.

Vernon: That woman doesn't seem to know how to smile. Is she new here?

Wilma: She walked in and commandeered moments before you got here. I don't blame her for not smiling she has to look at that condescending artificial face every morning in the mirror – I'd be bitchy too. (This makes Kate laugh)

Thelma: You are bitchy.

Wilma: Now you hear me.

Kate: Thank you -all of you- you're very supporting. Let's get these meds done before Dawn of the damned returns shall we? (She begins to pass them out) Now Vern, you told me a little fib. Your doctor called with quite a list of prescriptions for you. You told me you were in good health.

Vernon: Good health? I never said that. And I didn't say the doctor didn't prescribe medicines, I just said I wasn't taking them.

Kate: Mr. Michaels, you're supposed to listen to what the doctor says.

Vernon: If I listened to those quacks I should've been dead two months ago.

Thelma: That tiny boat to row?

Wilma: Hush Thelma.

Kate: Are you serious?

Wilma: That would make a lousy joke.

Kate: I'm sorry of course you are, that's a stupid reaction.

Vernon: Fourteen months ago I was given a year to live. They got the Cancer out of my prostate, but it had already metastasized to the bone. Nothing they could do, it's just a matter of time.

Wilma: No wonder you wanted that money given to your daughter. That's why you said it's only -it's only -oh hell.

Claire: It's only money.

Wilma: I just can't bring myself to put those words together in that order.

Veron: Wilma, no amount of money can buy you more time.

Kate: I'm so sorry, I feel so silly for crying over a man- please excuse me. I respect your decisions, if you ever need to talk or change your mind about even pain meds, feel free to come to me.

Vernon: Don't think a thing of it, you're young. You're going to find out all of life's tragedies seem like too much to bear until you have to go through it three or four times. Thanks for the offer.

Wilma: Lets cut all the small talk. We have less time than I thought. You look like you were a military man.

Vernon: Fifteen years as a navy diver.

Wilma: Close enough, you've got a uniform right?

Vernon: Yes -

Wilma: Interested in sex?

Vernon: Isn't everyman?

Wilma: Then we'll start a new tour in your room.

Vernon: But I -well we've barley spoken to eachother.

Wilma: You have a pulse, a brain, and a uniform. Those are high comodeties in my book. I've got Thelma if I wanted to talk -I haven't had any action in decades and you're looking pretty good to me. No offense Barney, you're just not my type. (Barnaby shrugs) I was gonna wait for you to make the first move, but if your expiration date is overdue I don't wanna waste time being coy.

Vernon: You're not concerned with my illness?

Wilma: Concerned? Cancer isn't an STD, now come on I want my shot at you before the reaper.

Vernon: Wilma, I- well I'm not quite sure how to take this. I think I'm going to like it here. You will take a rain check on this game I hope. (Barnaby shakes his head)

Wilma: Vernon, lets get a move on. I'm moving faster than you with my cane.

Claire: Wilma! Even men don't like being treated like some taudry sex toys.

Vernon: That's not true at all, I'm actually really okay with it.

Thelma: What? I'm a twit?

Vernon: We're okay with it.

Wilma: And you're a twit, come on Vern, lets break in your new room.
(Wilma and Vernon exit.)

Kate: Okay- I, um - I've got to go do something else. If any one asks, I don't know anything about that. I didn't hear any of that at all. (She exits.)

Thelma: What does that have to do with fish and chips?

Claire: Can you believe them? Off to have sex!

Thelma: Sex? I must've heard that wrong.

Claire: Apparently all men are soulless peices of meat. Wrapped in lust and dirty deeds. Can you believe them? Perverts.

Thelma: What? Can you write this down? I'm not hearing everything and I don't believe what I am hearing. (Claire begins to write while Thelma reads)

She really asked that? He did? Oh, my. Oh dear, he is? He doesn't have a lot of time then does he? You can't really blame them then.

Claire: Isn't it just a trevestdy?

Thelma: Is it true Barnaby? Can a woman treat a man like some piece of meat?

(Barnaby shakes his head yes)

Thelma: Are you all that shallow? (He shakes his head again) Have you ever seen my room? (Shakes his head no) would you like to?

(Shakes his head yes -with a smile, the exit hand in hand. Claire picks up her paint brush shrugs the whole thing off and begins painting.)

Claire: I can't believe you all, oh well, I have peace and quite to paint. Something is missing on the hillside by the waves. I suppose it could use just a touch of lavender.

(Lights fade out on stage while she paints.)

Act one Scene Three

(The next afternoon. Thelma sits knitting and humming a very up beat song-probably popular in the nineteen forty's -she's obviously in a very good mood. Wilma and Vern enter arm in arm.)

Wilma: (laughing) What did you do?

Vernon: What could we do? Nine navy men trying to get this duck on land and this tree in our way. We had no axe, no chainsaw, what we did have was twenty pounds of T.N.T.

Wilma: You didn't.

Vernon: We did. And as we were watching this hundred foot pine fly up to the clouds like a rocket , well I swear you've never seen nine morons scatter so fast. We flew off in different directions and that damn tree fell onto that duck and flattened it. (They both laugh)

Wilma: Howd you get back?

Vernon: Had to radio for a P.T. to pick us up the next day.

Thelma: Glad to see you two are getting on so well.

Wilma: Don't read too much into it. Salty and bitter go well together. We're like coffee and bacon. You're looking content yourself old girl. I heard from Claire this morning you and Barnaby have been hitting it off?

Thelma: You know, I have to admit I've admired him for a while now. He looked so dapper at his wife's funeral.

Vernon: Where is Barney?

Thelma: At the hospital.

Wilma: Sweet ghost of Franklin, what happened?

Thelma: Nothing serious, I'm sure. We just took a page from the dirty book you two were reading and had a little, what do the young people call it? Whoopie?

Wilma: I don't believe it. You? And you sent him to the hospital?

Thelma: It was the first time he's been intament in fifteen years, his blood pressure was just a little off.

Wilma: Wait a second, you can hear me.

Thelma: Yes, I can.

Wilma: Sex cures deafness? Where did you stick it?

Thelma: Oh, don't be silly -we remembered how. While he was on the floor he found my missing hearing aid- it had fallen under my bed.

Wilma: You dog. (Thelma barks playfully at her, the three of them laugh. Dawn enters the room followed by Kate pushing Barnaby in a wheel chair. While he is in a hospital gown, he is wearing a very big grin.)

Dawn: I hate to interupt happy hour.

Wilma: No Dawn, we were play barking, not calling for you.

Dawn: If any of you are interested Mr. York is well, and has returned from his emergency room visit.

Wilma: Welcome back Barney. (He smiles, and now waves proudly.)

Vernon: Good to see you're recovering.

Dawn: (She is smiling with a very forced smile) Due to the embarrassing and sensitive nature of his visit I won't go into details, but I assure you steps will be taken to make certain nothing like this ever

happens again. (Barnabys smile quickly fades and he glares at the back of Dawns head.) The lights will go off in the common room at eight o'clock. You are all to be in bed no later than eight thirty.

Wilma: That shouldn't be a problem.

Dawn: In your own beds. Mr. Evans and Nurse Rexton will come round and make certain all is well no later than eight forty five.

Wilma: Will we be getting bedtime stories?

Dawn: I assure you Ms. Peters we will get along much better if you begin to act your age.

Wilma: Oh, well in that case. (She lies on the couch and folds her arms pretending to be dead) sorry, I don't have any flowers handy.

Dawn: Ms.Peters, I do expect a certain degree of maturity from our residents.

Thelma: She's eighty two! You can't get much more mature.

Dawn: You're a reasonable woman, you must understand, these rules are for your own saftey and health.

Thelma: I suppose.

Wilma: We pay the rent here. Our saftey and health is our own concern.

Dawn: Knowingly endangering yourself or any other resident will by state regulation require us to restrict your freedoms to the advance care wing.

Wilma: You gotta be kidding me.

Kate: She's not. We do have to provide an environment free of health risks.

Claire: Fascism at it's finest.

Wilma: I pay your salary, doesn't that mean you work for me?

Dawn: It means I am paid to make certain you are kept safe and comfortable.

Wilma: Comfortable? What about pleasure? Does that count for anything?

Dawn: There are pleasures in this world other than -well -immature and dangerous pleasures.

Vernon: Well, sure but those are the best kind.

Wilma: Maybe she's never tried. That would explain-

Dawn: Don't fret. It won't be all bad. We will have many more activities for you all to take part in, it is very apparent that the lack of structure in your daily routines has left you with far too much idle time on your hands. Idle hands are the devils tools.- I assure you, I will not fail you as Mr. Evans has. (She exits.)

Wilma: That's a relief.

Kate: A relief she won't fail you?

Wilma: Hell no, a relief she left. How much longer do we have to put up with her?

Thelma: She did try to smile that time.

Vernon: That wasn't a smile, that looked like a botched face lift.

Kate: I think she wants Curtiss job.

Wilma: Well she just can't have it. I'll just go to another retirement home if she stays.

Claire: We can organize! There is strength in numbers, you all will sign the petition won't you? We can Pickett!

Thelma: Of course, bullying poor Curtis out of his job like that. I think I'll write someone a nasty letter.

Wilma: Better make it a long one, in case their out of toilet paper at the home office -no one reads letters any more Thelma. You have to type up a yip something or Face Snap or something like that.

Thelma: How do we do that?

Wilma: I don't know, I should've taken that computer course at the senior center. It doesn't matter anyway. This little bitch is related to the owner, they'll bury us all before we can help Curtis. How is the poor sap handling all this?

Kate: You know him. He's as gentle as a kitten -he won't say a mean word to anyone.

Wilma: I sure as hell can. -

Kate: No, Wilma. Listen to me. All of you please, she knows every regulation and legal loophole -she may have you deemed unstable, mentally.

Thelma: That shouldn't be hard, she is.

Kate: Oh, good Ms. Baker -you found that hearing aid.

Thelma: Barney found it when -

Kate: Please don't tell me.

Wilma: If I wasn't in my right mind I wouldn't be so miserable playing school in this adult day care. I'll just stop writing checks. That's what I'll do! I'll get my son in on this, he's got a good lawyer.

Kate: Just make sure your family can back you up. I'll testify for you, but choose your battles. She's tricky. This may work out alright. The evaluation is next Tuesday, if Curtis passes everything goes back to normal. (She begins handing out meds.)

Thelma: What's this?

Kate: I have to color code your medications and drinking cups for now.

Wilma: I'll be glad to get rid of this woman. I hate pink.

Kate: I told her your favorite color was green. Don't worry, I'll switch it when she's gone.

Wilma: Gold is my favorite color, but of the options -I'll take green.

Kate: Miss Milton does have your best interest in mind.

Wilma: Do you really buy that?

Kate: I- well. I think. I'm sure Barnaby's heart -um -issue frightened her. He gave us all a little scare.

Claire: I should say so.

Thelma: Are you okay Barnaby?

Barnaby: Been decades since I was this okay.

Claire: But you could have died. That would've been awful.

Barnaby: For who?

Wilma: For Milton Meadows -they just had to fill one vacancy. You have to remember, when we croak they stop getting the rent.

Kate: That's not it at all, you know I care deeply for Barnaby-for each one of you.

Wilma: You're on hourly wages, I wasn't claiming those were your motives. This Dawn broad doesn't know Barney at all, she couldn't have said more than two words to him.

Vernon: He rarely says more than two words.

Barnaby: He's right.

Kate: You don't want to die, do you Barnaby?

Barnaby: Can't be stopped. I wouldn't mind, that way.

Vernon: Damn right, I'd want my corpse with a big grin on it too.

Claire: That would traumatize poor Thelma!

Wilma: Rigamortis and viagra have very similar effects on a man's body.

Claire: I suppose they would wouldn't they?

Kate: Wilma! Claire- I -well -I- I mean Ms St.Claire, Ms. Peters.

Wilma: You're allowed to use our first names Kate. Don't forget us elderly people, we are still people. We have the same wants, desires and thoughts as regular people.

Thelma: Sure, we don't look like we did in our twenties, our bodies can't do what they did in our forties, but we are still in them, we are still us -just wrinkled.

Vernon: And saggy.

Wilma: Watch it buddy, I didn't hear any complaints.

Kate: You're right. I'm sorry. I don't know how I'll feel about this when I'm your age.

Thelma: You don't feel any different at all. I still remember sneaking out of my bedroom window to meet boys, and I'd do it today if I thought my knees could make the trip.

Kate: You?

Thelma: Of course me.

Kate: Grandma always said she was the same on the inside she ever remembered being.

Wilma: You have to realize grandma was a mother before she was grandma.

Kate: Of course.

Wilma: And the only way to make a woman a mother is sex, but the last thing you want to think about is Grandma having sex. Do you know how I know you don't want to think about that?

Kate: Because I cringed a little when you said that.

Wilma: Not at all. I know because I didn't want to think about that either when I was your age, but mothers start off as women- I know that's a shocker -I had a mother. She met my father on the arc.

Kate: I want to be a mother. One day, then I can be a grandmother too.

Claire: Well dear, your desires won't change -just your ability to fulfill them.

Kate: Oh God.

Thelma: I couldn't wait to be a mother, then of course a grandmother.

Wilma: Hell, I never wanted a family at all. The handholding, the messes to clean up, the whining -that's why I got a divorce, so my kid and I didn't have to deal with his crap.

Vernon: I never really appreciated all my wife did for me.

Wilma: You and every man.

Kate: I turn twenty-nine next month. I thought, I thought Joe was -you know -the one.

Thelma: Oh honey, Joe was a selfish mindless ape.

Kate: I thought you all liked Joe.

Claire: To look at, he was gorgeous, we did enjoy watching him mow in August. You don't think Mary Kent in two o nine did all that gardening for the sake of the flowers do you?

Wilma: And that time we had him move the bookshelf to four different walls till he took his shirt off, remember? The bookshelf ended up right back where it started before he was done.

Thelma: Of course, you had the heat cranked up to eighty. That was such fun.

Kate: That was on purpose?

Wilma: Men like that- Those men are for fun, but they're never the one.

Claire: I always pictured you ending up with Curtis.

Kate: Me and Curtis? I -but -why would you think that?

Thelma: Oh, honey. He adores you.

Kate: He? No, you think so?

Wilma: You think he's ugly?

Kate: No, not at all he's very attractive but we're friends. He's my boss. He hired me you know.

Vernon: I haven't known you very long Kate, but being friends with a man shouldn't knock him off the list of possibilities.

Kate: He's never mentioned anything that would-

Wilma: Kate, come on and think this through. You've been dating an underwear model for six months -did he think he had a shot?

Kate: I've known Curtis for two years he -no -he did bring me dinner a few times -and we went out for coffee. Still, he never made a move for anything beyond friends.

Claire: He's a shy boy.

Wilma: Stop referring to grown men as boys, that just shows how old you are.

Thelma: It does not, Curtis is a relatively young man.

Wilma: And television is a relatively new invention. It's all relative.

Kate: I always thought, maybe he was you know, not interested in girls.

Claire: Why?

Kate: He's had lots of opportunity to ask me out, I've been single so often-

Thelma: Every time you start dating a guy it's always some pretty boy with a tight tush.

Kate: So?

Wilma: Curtis thinks you're out of his league.

Kate: He is kind, and funny, and always smiling.

Barnaby: She doesn't know.

Kate: Barnaby? What don't I know?

Claire: He's not always smiling dear. He just always smiles when he's looking at you.

Kate: Really? Maybe I just haven't noticed.

(A ragged and tired looking Curtis enters with a mop and bucket, walking through to the hall but sees Kate and attempts to hide the mop and bucket behind his back. It should be very obvious the sight of Kate cheers him up a bit.)

Curtis: Kate! You're still here? I thought you were leaving at six tonight.

Wilma: There he is-

Kate: I was just chatting with Wilma and the gang.

Thelma: Why can't you say Thelma and the gang?

Claire: I always saw myself as the main protagonist.

Wilma: Sorry ladies, I've always been the alpha.

Curtis: Are you talking about me?

Claire: Of course, how she never noticed-

Kate: What a driving force you were around here. You really can tell a difference with Dawn interfering with your duties.

Curtis: Speaking of which, doody calls. I am so sorry to hear about you and Joe, I really am, I've got to take over a few of his responsibilities now that he's gone, but at least I'll have a job, right?

Kate: You fired him for breaking up with me?

Curtis: No, I can't fire anyone. Dawn is acting manager. For right now I'm the maintenance man. Joe quit on his own -moving to Norway or some such place.

Kate: Oh.

Curtis: He obviously didn't know how lucky he was.

Kate: Thank you. That's what you said about the last two guys.

Curtis: One day you'll find that cute guy that isn't blind, when he can see what he has -he'll never let go of you.

Kate: Really?

Curtis: Of course. I'd never -I -I've got to go clean up at the nurses station on the second floor.- Mr. Dawson is refusing to wear his depends again. - (he exits.)

Vernon: Nurse Kate?

Kate: Yes Mr. Michaels? -Vern?

Veron: I'm no romantic myself, but I think they're right.

Kate: Me too. How could I have been so blind?

Claire: Sometimes it's most difficult to see what's right under our nose.

Thelma: No, it's the sweater vests.

Wilma: They make him look gay.

Intermission

Act Two Scene one

(The next morning. Lights up as Dawn prepares a table in the center of the waiting room. Everyone is being escorted into the room by either Kate or Curtis, as Dawn directs them where to sit. Once most are assembled Kate exits to bring in the medicine cart with Coffee ready to serve on it.)

Dawn: Welcome everyone.

Vern: Is this some type of hazing for the new guy? The twins never had me up this early.

Wilma: We've never done this crap before.

(Kate passes out coffees)

Kate: I'm sorry.

Dawn: It's nearly eight in the morning, the day is practically over, have a seat and I will explain. You see Mr. Evans enjoyed a very easy time managing this facility. He did not schedule any events or crafts to occupy your time.

Curtis: I did, I simply didn't make them manitory.

Dawn: Isn't today trash day Mr. Evans? Perhaps you should begin work on that project. I thought while I was managing I could take this opportunity to show Mr. Evans how it could be run a bit more effectively. Providing the seniors in our care with a structured schedule of activities. Beginning of course with a wake up time of 7:30 am, then breakfast by 9:30- Excuse me.- What are you doing?

Kate: Serving coffee.

Dawn: That should wait to be served with breakfast. I can see the steam coming off of that cup. That is not safe.

Wilma: It's not safe to drag me out of bed at seven am and serve me cold coffee.

Dawn: I trust it's decaffeinated.

Kate: I - why? No one likes decaffeinated.

Dawn: The caffeine at their age-

Kate: Wilma spat it out on me when I accidentally gave her decaf.

Wilma: That wasn't really at you Kate, you just happened to be standing where I was spitting that swill out of my mouth.

Dawn: You should be addressing Ms. Peters with the proper amount of respect Nurse Rexton.

Kate: Yes, Miss Milton, I do apologize. Ms. Peters spat the coffee out.

Claire: You know studies prove that caffeine in moderation helps improve cognitive abilities in the elderly.

Dawn: We will need doctors notes for such things on file, per the manual I'm afraid. Let's just let it go this time until I research the subject.

Wilma: Are you telling me she's not allowed to call me by my name any more?

Dawn: Not by your first name Ms. Peters, it is very unprofessional for the staff to address our residence in such an informal way. Shall we move on to our activities? This morning We are going to try a friendly game of cards before breakfast. We're going to play a game called bridge.

Wilma: I hate bridge. My daughter in law tried to get me into it with her mother's group of old fogies. How about a game of strip poker?

Thelma: It's too cold for strip poker.

Wilma: It's always too cold for you.

Claire: I would love a game of poker, we don't have to strip. Or maybe gin rummy.

Vern: I like that one.

Barnaby: Could we drink real gin?

Dawn: The deck of cards I have is for bridge.

Wilma: It's the same deck of cards you use for poker. Have you ever played cards?

Dawn: No, not personally. If you don't like bridge I have a memory game here.

Thelma: It says three and up on the pack.

Wilma: Guess we're the up.

Vern: I'm voting for rummy.

Dawn: Who said you get to vote?

Wilma: The constitution.

Thelma: The eldest of us should hold the vote.

Wilma: Which one of us is the oldest?

Claire: I'm not disclosing my age, that's not lady like.

Wilma: The fact that you think that proves you're pretty damn old, but lets compromise. Who can remember what historical event like it was yesterday. I remember when they came out with the Polio vaccine like it was yesterday.

Vern: I remember the Kennedy assassination like it was yesterday.

Claire: I remember watching Pablo Picasso paint.

Thelma: I remember the invention of television like it was yesterday.

Barnaby: I can't remember yesterday.

Wilma: He wins.

Dawn: He doesn't win anything, there is no voting. Look, you have the materials to play bridge. You are supposed to enjoy bridge. You only have -

Claire: Rummy is much like bridge, except it's fun. may I see those?
(Claire takes the cards and starts shuffling. A bell rings from the office area)

Dawn: Nurse Rexton, could you see what that's about.

Kate: Of course, excuse me. (She exits)

Dawn: Please give me those cards you are getting them all out of order.

Claire: It's called shuffling.

Vernon: Shuffling the deck needs to be done at the beginning of all card games.

Barnaby: Unless you're cheating.

Dawn: I suppose the rules do say that. Then you need to pick a partner.

Wilma: Claire How did you get so good at that?

Claire: I worked my way through college as a magician's assistant. I learned shuffling cards and sleight of hand with coins.

Thelma: Could you pull a rabbit out of a hat? That was always my favorite.

Claire: No, but I had a bouquet of flowers that exploded into a dove. (She becomes very somber) Oh, poor Pablo I do miss him so.

Dawn: Once you have picked your partner we need to deal 13- (Claire Bursts into tears and then runs out of the room) What has gotten into her?

Wilma: The story reminded her of her pigeon. Every now and then she gets a little bird brained on us.

Vernon: It's a foul memory.

(Kate re-enters the room)

Kate: I'm very sorry to interrupt. Barnaby- I'm sorry- I mean Mr. York. Doctor Colbleck is here to see you, he would like to speak with you. Would you accept a visit?

Barnaby: Doctor?

Kate: He's the doctor that examined you at the emergency room the other day.

(Barnaby shakes his head then stands and exits with Kate) I'm sorry Miss Milton, I should return him to you momentarily.

Dawn: I will not interfere with doctor's orders.

Wilma: What if my doctor says I need to sleep until nine-thirty or ten?

Dawn: Perhaps you won't be up so late getting into mischief if you have awoken at a proper time.

Wilma: Perhaps I'll be getting into mischief a bit earlier in the day.

Dawn: Is that some sort of threat Ms. Peters?

Vern: I don't think Wilma is trying to threaten you Ms. Milton. A lot of us, though. We simply aren't the rise and shine types. I spent most of my career getting up at the break of dawn, I was sort of counting on stopping that in my golden years.

Wilma: Break of Dawn, that sounds good.

Dawn: Now that I might take as a threat.

Wilma: I'm sure a young strong willed woman like yourself could never feel threatened by some old has been like me.

Dawn: No, but you should know I'll have my eye on you. There aren't enough of us left to organize a game of anything at the moment. Go back to bed if you wish, I'll be preparing the breakfast with the cook this morning. It will be served in one and a half hours from now. Be there by 9:30 or you'll have to eat a cold bowl of shredded wheat.
(Dawn begins to exit.)

Wilma: You heard the woman, she said go back to bed if you wish
(Wilma and Vernon smile to each other as Dawn screams from the hall)

Dawn: Your own beds!!!

(Wilma's and Vernon's smiles fade then the lights fade out too.)

Act Two Scene Two

(After breakfast that same morning. Thelma sits knitting what is now almost a complete doggy sweater. Thelma barely hums a few bars of anything before Kate enters)

Kate: Thelma- I'm sorry, Ms, Baker, your daughter is on line one for you.

I'm supposed to ask if you're able to, or desire to take this call.

Thelma: Of course. I prefer if you'd call me Thelma.

Kate: I know, I'm sorry. (Thelma picks up the remote control. And talks into the back of it.)

Thelma: Hello? Hello? Kate dear, how do I pick up line one?

Kate: You have to put down the t.v. remote first.

Thelma: They look alike you know. (And they should look similar)

Kate: I know, please- allow me. (She seems irritated, and slightly less patient.)

Thelma: Thank -you dear. Why do you look so flustered?

Kate: Just trying to help curtis. Dawn has him cleaning out the bathrooms, and changing light bulbs on the sixth floor.

Thelma: Oh dear. He's too sensitive for that sort of thing.

Kate: I'm sure we can handle it. (Dawn approaches from the foyer.)

Dawn: Did you ask?-

Kate: Yes, she wants the call. -talk to your daughter. (She exits)

Thelma: Thank you. And good luck. Hello Susan, this is an unexpected call. -- no, not at all, its always good to hear from you. Nothings wrong I hope. Really? A new job? Why on earth would he want a new job? Oh, well then that's lucky I guess. Moving where? Why there? Dear, don't. Please stop that crying. I know you. Please don't worry a thing over me. No, no I've got no business in California. I know, but still I'd rather stay here. To be close to your father dear. I know that, I haven't gone daft yet dear but I visit the grave every other Sunday. They have a bus from the home that goes there too. Yes, okay you do that. How about I'll say we'll see? Of course not, I know - Susan! You get off the phone with me and get those children fed. Yes dear, I love you too, I'll see you Sunday. (She puts the phone down and goes to stair out the window.

Wilma: What the hell is next? (Wilma enters, takes her seat and looks for the business section of the paper. Mostly speaking to herself.) I had to sneak the damn business section of the post! If that bitch takes over our food is going to be prechewed. I have never in my life felt so confined. Did you see they're istalling cameras in the halls? "In case we fall" they say. My ass, you know as well as I do it's - (she takes notice of Thelma) Thelma?
(There is a pause.)

Wilma: Can you hear me?

Themla: Yes, I can hear just fine today.

Wilma: Thelma, what's wrong?

Thelma: What would make you think there was anything the matter?

Wilma: I asked what was wrong, not what's the matter.

Thelma: Really those are just two ways of asking the same question - that's a ridiculous difference to point out.

Wilma: You're not humming, or yelling at birds and you let me rant a full sentence without some inspirational quote.

Thelma: I don't always hum.

Wilma: Thelma?

Thelma: Just mind your business- section.

Wilma: All right. I'll set the arts paper aside for Claire. You want the comics?

Thelma: I do wish you'd just quit pestering me. (She begins to cry)

Wilma: If you say so. (She stands behind her and waits.)

Thelma: Oh Wilma! (She bursts into sobbs and hugs Wilma -Wilma cringes at the affection yet still attempts to hug back) They're leaving me! They're leaving town, moving to California -California! Why California? Fifty states in the union and they pick the one on the fault line. Tommy took his family to Louisville and how often do I see them?

Wilma: Who's Tommy?

Thelma: My son! You see? That's how often I see them, you didn't even know I had a son!

Wilma: Maybe I just wasn't paying attention. I'm a fairly lousey friend.

Thelma: Now Susan is leaving me too.

Wilma: Why don't you just go along with them?

Thelma: Susan asked me to, but I couldn't -I couldn't leave behind everything I know, and all my friends.

Wilma: All your friends are dead honey.

Thelma: What about you?

Wilma: Close enough. Besides I'm just the contrary old bitty that insults your sensability.

Thelma: What about Barnaby? I couldn't leave him behind. Not, now.

Wilma: He'll understand. Fuagh Dawn mine furoer doesn't let you see him unattended anyway. You need to see your grandchildren once a week, he knows that, we all do, its like an addiction with you. If you don't you'll go into withdraw.

Thelma: Leo starts high school in the fall.

Wilma: You've told me at least a dozen times.

Thelma: Demi is driving. They barley have time for old grandma anymore. I'm sure Susan threatens them to get them to visit now. They won't have the time.

Wilma: They'll make time. You've got a nice will to entice them.

Thelma: So long as I die before I spend it all on doctor bills-and this place. Can you imagine how expensive a nursing home will be in California? All those elderly movie stars.

Wilma: There can't be that many nursing homes in California. All the big stars die of overdoses before they turn 60 Thelma.

Thelma: I can't afford a move like that, and I can't put that burden on Susan and her family.

Wilma: Yeah, that's been on my mind too.

Thelma: You think I'm going to out live the money?

Wilma: I could care less, I'm worried about out living mine. You know that's all I ever wanted, I thought with enough money I could do whatever I wanted to do.

Thelma: There's never enough.

Wilma: (She reaches in her purse and pulls out her book) I've kept this ledger by my side for most of my life. Or one like it. Ever since Harry made me a partner at the old hardware store. Every day I'd keep track of what I was worth, making sure I'd never be asked to work on an assembly line at a damn factory again. Add up all these numbers, compound all my interest, and what am I worth. By the time you have the money to do whatever the hell you want, you end up too damn old to do anything you wanted to do with it. It's enough to make you wonder why you even tried.

(Claire enters while looking for something, at first moving cushions and looking under blankets, then stopping to listen to Thelma and Wilma)

Thelma: You've done so much for your son, you gave him a business to make a living with, you have three wonderful grandsons, a great grandchild on the way.

Wilma: Yeah, and I guess Mathew is pretty damned smart, even if he's a bit weird.

Claire: Intelligence is often associated with strange social behavior.

Wilma: Then you must be a genius. I do mean that in the nicest possible way.

Claire: It's fine however you mean it. I am smart enough to know I don't care how you meant it. You can't focus on your accomplishments. People cannot wake up in the morning to look at what they have done, we have to wake up to see what we can do today, to dream about what we can accomplish tomorrow. Just learn from the past, don't live in it. Live in the present and dream for the future. Sorry, I didn't mean to jump into your conversation. I came in here looking for something.

Wilma: That's damn inspirational Claire. What are you looking for?

Claire: I can't remember. Don't worry, it will come to me. (She exits)

Thelma: What am I gonna do? (Barnaby enters -pipe in mouth, unlit. His sits at the chess game but doesn't look at it.)

Wilma: Sit here and rock in this chair and knit some scarf or something and cry until you get over it, then you start humming again.

Thelma: How will that help?

Wilma: I doubt it will, but that's what you do every time something upsets you.

Thelma: It is, isn't it?

Wilma: We're creatures of habit, its not hard to figure out. Oh great, what's wrong with you?

Thelma: Oh, dear Barnaby. Did you over hear me? I'm so sorry, I was going to tell you. Don't worry, I'm not leaving.

(Barnaby hands Thelma the xray he's stairing at)

Wilma: What? Are you pregnant?

Barnaby: My lungs.

Thelma: Your lungs - oh, God Barnaby, this doesn't look good.

Wilma: Would you know attractive lungs if you saw them? (Looking at the xray.) That's not so bad, that weird little blip isn't even a quarter of that one lung.

Barnaby: That's the healthy part.

Wilma: Oh...(she pauses a moment to digest this) Oh.

Thelma: Could they do a transplant?

Wilma: Sure, the eighty some year old pipe smoker is going to be high on that list. (They both look at her) What? Am I lying?

(Barnaby shakes his head. Claire re-enters the room.)

Claire: That ship! Has anyone seen that ship? I seem to have misplaced Vernon's model ship.

Wilma: Don't worry about it, he found the original at the bottom of the ocean I'm sure he can find his toy.

Claire: You may not realize how importa-

Wilma: (Handing Claire the xray) Barnaby just got dealt some bad news Claire, the ship needs to wait.

Claire: Oh, I'm sorry- what am I looking at?

Wilma: Barney's lungs.

Claire: Yes, yes, I see. That doesn't seem-(Smiles as she understands)

Wilma: (pointing) The healthy part.

Claire: Oh, dear. (Smile disappears quickly)

Thelma: How long do you have?

Barnaby: Two months.

Wilma: Let's look on the bright side here. Thelma you dont have to worry about leaving Barnaby if you move to California, and this makes me the winner in the pool.- you have to admit I saw that coming before the doctors.

Claire: Now is not the time.

Barnaby: She's fine.

Wilma: Don't worry I won't collect till after the funeral.

(Vernon enters whistling and carrying his toy boat.)

Vernon: Sorry if I worried you Claire, I just had Curtis help me take a picture of this to e- mail my daughter. You can have it back now. Did I do something wrong? Why the long faces?

Claire: Barnaby is dying.

Vernon: Aren't we all?

Wilma: He's going faster than the rest of us. (Shows him xray) well, maybe not you -since you're already past your expiration date.

Vernon: That doesnt look too ba-

Wilma: (pointing) Healthy part.

Vernon: Oh. How long?

Thelma: Two months.

Vernon: Welcome to the tick tock club. They were wrong about my year. Look, I know its a shocker at first old man-then once it sinks in you want go out live your life to it's fullest, chase your dreams-

Claire: Is that what you did?

Vernon: No, I came here. Originally I started a few good adventures but by seven thirty -eight o'clock I got tired and came home- really adventuring is made for the young.

Wilma: Vernon you traveled the world. You had the chance to find treasures and uncover ships lost for hundreds of years.

Vernon: I never had the chance to defeat a bad guy and sail off into the sunset with the girl like Errol Flynn, heading for that horizon, into the unknown.

Claire: Ah, the horizon, limitless possibilities, where the earth and sky meet.

Barnaby: I been to Canada once, and Florida a few times. That was it. What do I still wanna do before I die? Well? Anybody got any ideas?

Wilma: Cash every penny you ever earned and swim naked through piles of money? No? No one? Guess that's just me.

Claire: I've always wanted an adventure, a quest, a tale to write about that someone might want to read some day.

Vernon: I always wanted to be a pirate, a buccaneer. How do you think I got into my line of work? Everything starts from some stupid dream.

Claire: Dreams are never stupid. Dreams are just wishes your heart makes.

Wilma: Thank you Walt freaking Disney. Is it too late?

Thelma: Too late for what?

Vernon: In the day? I don't think so, it's not quite five. I haven't seen Dawn Milton in a few hours, we may have a curfew now.

Wilma: Whatever happened to that guy that said its never too late?

Vernon: You mean original quote?

Barnaby: I think he's dead.

Wilma: It ain't over till it's over.

Barnaby: Yogi Beara.

Vernon: I know he's dead.

Wilma: Like Claire says, let's do something today. Let's not worry about anything we've already done. I've got an idea.

Thelma: That's never good. I better take out my hearing aids.

Wilma: Hold on, leave your ears in just a minute longer.

Thelma: You're going to suggest we do something stupid. Stealing the nursing home van and heading to Miami.

Wilma: That is stupid, we can't flee to Florida that's the first place they'll look for retirement home escapees. What about that historical thing? The christening of that ship they invited you to tomorrow.

Vernon: The replica of the Reveler?

Wilma: That's a pirate ship, isn't it? You could sail that off into the horizon. We all could.

Vernon: I was asked to be a guest, I don't think they'd let me sail it.

Wilma: Let you? What are you talking about? Would Errol Flynn ask permission? Did people let them steal and plunder? They just took their ships and seize their moments, damn the consequences and damn the torpedoes!

Vernon: They actually didn't have torpedoes back -

Wilma: Go with it Vern, these are the nautical phrases I know. We can take Barnaby off to some tropical paradise. I'll help you sail her into to sunset. So you have your beautiful girl.

Claire: He didnt specify beautiful.

Wilma: What are you taking notes or something?

Thelma: You want us to hijack a pirate ship?

Wilma: I'd bet we could. Who would suspect us?

Barnaby: I'm in.

Thelma: You've got to be kidding.

Barnaby: It sounds like fun.

Thelma: It sounds dangerous, reckless and irresponsible is how it sounds.

Barnaby: That's what I said.

Wilma: Vernon is an old sea dog, I bet we could make it to Jamaca before Dawn could break out the canasta board.

Vernon: You don't want Jamaca, I know Islands that aren't on the charts.

Claire: Suicide? Is that what you want? Is that what you're discussing here? Just be patient.

Barnaby: Just wait? Let the grim reaper come for me? Here? Listening to Dawn Milton bully me around? Why not sail off into a sunset? Even if we all end up getting eaten alive by sharks- that's at least something I've never done before. I'd rather go out with scurvy starving on a wooden deck then in hospice care, doped up on drugs, spending my time staring at a chess board and you people. No offense.

Wilma: None taken.

Vernon: Completely understand. That's the longest sentence I've heard you say.

Wilma: I think that was a speech by his standards.

Thelma: Really, it's not a bad idea. I always wanted to go on a cruise but Mr. Baker had such a temper mental tummy.

Wilma: I've known you six years, and I've never heard you refer to your late husband by his first name. Did he have one?

Thelma: Of course. It was Melvis, Melvis Richly Baker. I sware his mother hated him for something -

Wilma: My guess would be rough labor.

Thelma: He hated his stupid name too, always signed everything M period, R period, Baker, so I always called him Mr. Baker.

Barnaby: Could we handle the rigging on a vessle like that?

Vernon: Most of your replica tall ships are desal powered. I doubt we could out run anything modern for long, then again we would have the element of surprise.

Claire: I suppose it would be kind of romantic.

Wilma: What else do we have to look forward to, tapioca?

Thelma: Is there a chance we'll survive?

Vernon: What will happen is we'll get caught and go to jail, but that couldn't be much worse then life with Dawn Milton. Maybe we could use it to highlight a story of what a bitch she is.

Barnaby: I've never been to jail before either.

Wilma: Maybe we could make it to some deserted island and re populate it. We could call it geriatric park.

Thelma: You know I think we could defeat a bad guy too.

Vernon: What bad guy?

(Dawn enters with Kate, and Curtis. Kate is bringing in the evening meds now in different colorful containers.)

Dawn: You see? Now there will be no chance of confusion over the pills.

Curtis: She's never been confused.

Dawn: Are you questioning proven protocols again?

Curtis: No mamm, but you seem to be doubting her abilities. I have complete faith.

Dawn: The health of our residents should not depend on faith.

Kate: Please Curtis, she's right. I could have been confused, one day. This will ensure that doesn't happen.

Dawn: Mr. Evans, Do you think you could take the vacuum up to the fourth floor common area? I'll stay and help Nurse Rexton dispense these medications.

Curtis: Yes, I can do that (He exits)

Wilma: Dawn.

Dawn: Yes Ms. Peters? How may I help you?

Wilma: It just Dawned on me. I know you've been racking your pretty little brain over activities for us, so I thought we could help you out.

Dawn: Is that so? Something that suits your maturity level I hope.

Wilma: It turns out that old Vernon here was once a treasure hunter. Did you know that?

Dawn: I was aware he received funds from the museum, and I know the historical society wishes to honor him tomorrow afternoon.

Thelma: We were just talking about how lovely it would be to watch the ceremony.

Dawn: To christen a replica of a sixtieth century ship?

Claire: The fresh sea air would do us good.

Dawn: It's a river.

Wilma: Might remind us of the boats we came over on.

Dawn: I know you're being sarcastic, but thank you all for the input. That is a wonderful idea. I'll check the weather forecast and see if something can be arranged.

Wilma: That would be so appreciated. Kate my dear, you don't have my laxatives in this one.

Kate: That was in your morning meds, you usually don't -

Wilma: Oh I know, but I'm unusually backed up. If you know what I mean. You know what those pain meds can do. Could you please grab me an extra?

Kate: Of course I can. I'll be right back Ms. Milton.

Dawn: Do hurry, medications should only take ten to twelve minutes to dispense. I was meaning to ask you Ms Peters. Why so many pain medications? I'm not doubting your doctor, but surely there are alternatives.

Wilma: I've got arthritis all over, but one spot in my foot is particularly bad from an old gun shot wound.

Vernon: Someone actually shot you?

Thelma: I was surprised it only happened once.

Wilma: I'll have to tell you the story one day. Can I run an idea by you Milton?

Dawn: Yes, Ms.Peters.

Wilma: We may need your help to pull off our plans for tomorrow.

Dawn: I've already stated, I will look into the weather forecast.

Thelma: You need to stay on track. Curtis or Kate will be back and they'll want to be involved.

Vernon: The less people involved the better.

Wilma: Then shut the hell up and let me enlist our help.

Dawn: Are you suggesting you want me involved in something and not nurse Rexton or Mr. Evans?

Wilma: You barely have to do a thing. You see Vernon here knows where to find a ruby on that ship.

Dawn: That's why you want to attend the ceremony?

Vernon: I have the schematics right here. Original papers from 1619.

Dawn: Isn't this a replica ship?

Vernon: Sure, but made with the actual parts. Remember the Tiswell diamond was hidden in the woodwork of a four post bed for nearly eighty years.

Dawn: Really?

Wilma: We can prove it if you can distract guards and keep Curtis and Kate on the bus.

Dawn: I doubt there would be many gaurds. What kind of Ruby are you speaking of? A valuable one?

Wilma: Very.

Vernon: Maybe worth millions.

Dawn: They gave you ten million already, and you bequeathed it to your daughter.

Vernon: Because once I get this ruby I won't need it. Ten million will look like spare change.

Dawn: Is that so? Keeping nurse Rexton and Mr. Evans on the bus shouldn't be any problem, they do what I say -if I'm in for a cut. Why wouldn't you want them involved? I thought you liked them?

Wilma: As people sure, we love them. They just aren't as shrewed business people we might need.

Claire: They would probably get all righteous on and inform the owners of the ship.

Wilma: We need the help of someone with a bigger brain and smaller conscious.

Dawn: I can see why you would come to me. We keep this to ourselves and we're splitting six ways? I'm in for one sixth?

Wilma: Oh, yes. You'll get yours, don't worry about that.

Dawn: I could stage a fainting spell, I was prone to those frequently as a child.

Claire: It is probably going to be a hot day, that always brings them on for me.

Kate: (re enters with medicine) Here you are Wilma.

Wilma: Thank you so much Kate.

Dawn: Im going to head down and check Saturday's forecast. So we can get this little outing arranged for you lovely folks.

Wilma: Thank you so much Miss Milton.
(Dawn exits)

Kate: What are you up to Wilma?

Wilma: Up to? Me? Why would you think that?

Kate: You hated that woman last night, now tonight you're being nice to her.

Wilma: People can have a change of heart, can't they Kate?

Kate: People can, sure. It just worries me when you do it.

Wilma: Then feel lucky I like you, and move along dear. Time for those meds.

Kate: Okay, I hope you know what you're doing. (She hands out the meds.)

Barnaby: Don't we all. (he toasts as he downs his medication)

(Lights out)

Act Two Scene Three

Friday September 9th 2016

(Claire, Kate and Curtis enter, dressed in black and carrying pictures of Wilma, Barnaby and Thelma)

Claire: Those were beautiful purple iriss.

Kate: Yes, yes they were.

Claire: You know, even with that beautiful memorial service, we don't really know that they're dead.

Curtis: The coast guard can't find any sign of the ship, they've called off the search.

Kate: It's almost two months to the day, they either made it to their island or the bottom of the sea.

Curtis: I'm so sorry Claire, you know I tried to stop this, don't you?

Claire: Don't do that to yourself Curtis. I knew what they were planning. I tried to talk them out of it too, and I could have told you. I really could have stopped them.

Curtis: You knew? Then why didn't you-

Claire: Because it really was what they wanted. They wanted adventure, they wanted out of the situations they were in, and they wanted to get Dawn fired so you could do your job again.

Curtis: You mean they did that for me?

Claire: Dear, please don't beat yourself up over it. I don't think any of them are sorry for what happened.

Curtis: They'll all die out there, if they aren't already.

Claire: They were doing that right here. But they won't do that here
(She holds her chest)

Curtis: Yes, they'll live on in your heart.

Claire: Well, yes, but I wasn't being that cheesy. I meant in their own hearts. Inside themselves, they didn't die in the way of giving up on their dreams or resigning to their own physical decline.

Curtis: But here, it was peaceful, calm, and safe.

Kate: I think I'd rather sail after death than wait for it to come, wouldn't you?

Curtis: I don't know, I never thought about it that way. If I was in that situation maybe, I'd have to think about it.

Kate: If you were in what situation?

Curtis: Where death was inevitable.

Claire: I'm not sure how to break this to you, but you should start thinking.

Curtis: I - oh, yes -I- I guess you're right. If you agreed with them so much why didn't you go with them?

(Dawn walks in the room un-noticed with a box of her office belongings.)

Claire: I didn't want to be a fifth wheel. Also I get horribly sea-sick. For another I rather enjoy this waiting room, I still have to finish this painting you know. I think that I'm going to spend some time writing the adventures of their trip down in a book.

Curtis: You have a way of contacting them?

Claire: Just my imagination. Besides all that. I really wanted to see the look on Dawns face when they canned her.

Dawn: For your information I wasn't canned.

Kate: Dawn, we didn't see you there.

Dawn: I had to clear out my office. I had the suspicion that was all an elaborate plot to get me fired. I knew I shouldn't have trusted that Peters woman. They were out to get me from the start.

Kate: Dawn.

Curtis: You locked us on the bus.

Kate: You helped them hijack a ship.

Dawn: I didn't know they were Hijacking the boat.

Claire: Commandeering, I think is the correct term.

Dawn: They tricked me. I was lead to believe my actions were for monetary recompense.

Curtis: You realize that's not a defense.

Dawn: They told me I could have a share of-

Claire: They never said that, it was merely implied. I believe Wilma said "You'll get yours"

Dawn: I can see the irony of her statement clearly now in retrospect, but at the time I took it to mean a part of the treasure.

Kate: That's still not an excuse for anything you did.

Dawn: Was there even a ruby?

Claire: As far as I know they made that up on the spot.

Curtis: You trapped us in the bus.

Dawn: It was the company bus. It was a comfortable bus.

Kate: Without any ac.

Curtis: Ninty eight degrees that day.

Dawn: Quit whining, I did let you out.

Kate: After they had control of the ship.

Curtis: Only because you needed our help to try to stop them.

Dawn: They moved faster than most elderly I've dealt with. I really didn't expect that.

Curtis: I'm surprised you weren't found guilty of criminal neglect, the only reason they didn't fire you is because your last name is Milton.

Kate: Did they punish you at all?

Dawn: I have been reassigned. I am being sent to Hawaii to oversee a brand new Milton resort that is being built next year. So that shows you what damage they can do to me.

Kate: That one that was just purchased from that family that doesn't want to give it up? The one that no workers or employees want to be assigned to? I heard they had three architects turn down the chance to build it, and they were offing a lot of money to do it too. That resort?

Dawn: I don't know where you get your information.

Kate: The one that made an article in Forbes about insane decisions made my millionaires?

Dawn: I haven't read-

Kate: If I recall correctly it's three miles away and on the wrong side of a newly active volcano? Geologists advised the land to be condemned.

Dawn: Not all- geologists. Scientists don't know everything. It wasn't condemned.

Kate: According to the article only because the Milton cooperation poured in enough bribe money to-

Dawn: Stop, just- there is no point in this conversation. I am going to go and enjoy my island paradise, and tropical climate. Those people probably sailed to their deaths to punish me in some fashion, and what did it get them? Nothing. Good day to you all.
(She exits)

Claire: So she's literally going to burn in hell?

Kate: I've got the magazine, I'll let you read the article yourself. It's too bad we never had a picture of Vernon, and none with them all together.

Claire: When I'm done with this one you're welcome to hang it. That is what we last saw of them.

Curtis: That really is shaping up into a beautiful painting.

Kate: What do you imagine they're sailing towards?

Claire: The horizon.

Curtis: That's it? No destination? No paradise Island?

Claire: The horizon is a wonderful destination. You'll never reach it but you can set your sights on it, and always go towards it. The destination doesn't really matter at all. We're all heading towards it really, no matter what we do. The horizon, that undiscovered country.

Curtis: You're scaring me a little bit.

Claire: No reason to worry, I've got friends there. So do you. Did you know Wilma gave me her urn?

Kate: I thought you hated the idea of being cremated.

Claire: I do, she gave it to me to keep my brushes in.

Curtis: Hey Kate?

Kate: Yes?

Curtis: Could I take you to dinner? Just as friends of course.

Kate: (she smiles) I'd like that. But lets not make any promises on just being friends okay?

Curtis: I, um okay.

Kate: I might want a kiss or something by the end of the night.

Curtis: Okay.

Claire: Ahoy mateys. (Kate takes Curtis by his arm.)

Curtis: What's that mean?

Kate: That's just how you're supposed to start a new adventure.

Curtis: Where should we go?

Kate: Let's head for the horizon.

Curtis: I mean to eat.

Kate: I don't know, we'll stop somewhere along the way. Good night Claire, we'll see you in the morning.

Claire: You kids have fun. (They exit) That's what makes it all worth it Pablo, that's what makes it something nice.

(Lights out End)

This show is dedicated to Mary Benington, Andrew Nelson, Elizabeth (Betty) Cleavland, Rusty Clause, and Eddy Renloyds. All of whom have taught me, over and over again. You are only as young as you let yourself be.

(Life is not over, until you stop living it.)