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SF PERUSALS

Sex Please We're Sixty

AN AMERICAN FARCE

by Michael Parker
and Susan Parker

A Samuel French Acting Edition



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SEX PLEASE WE'RE SIXTY was first produced by Play With Your Food Productions in Hemet, California on October 17, 2008.

Cast:

BUD DAVIS . . . . . Murray Robitaille

MRS. STANCLIFFE . . . . . Corinne Williams

HENRY MITCHELL. . . . . Richard Gordon

VICTORIA AMBROSE . . . . . Janet Fulton

HILLARY HUDSON. . . . . Marion Hair

CHARMAINE BEAUREGARD . . . . . Judi Phares

Directed by Laura A. Robitaille
Designed by Kristina Lindholm, Murray Robiaille and Laura Robitaille

TIME

The Present

PLACE

Rose Cottage Bed & Breakfast…somewhere in New England

ACT I: Mid-summer afternoon
ACT II: Same time the next day

CHARACTERS

BUD DAVIS (Age 70 plus): The next-door neighbor to Mrs. Stancliffe's Rose Cottage Bed & Breakfast. He is weak, frail looking (*the frailer the better),* and appears at first glance to have "One foot in the grave." However, over the years, he has become renowned among the female guests as "Bud the Stud." He claims responsibility for the success of the bed & breakfast, believing all the females return year after year to see him. He enchants all of them with his silver tongue and sexual prowess. *(Very elderly, somewhat infirm, chauvinistic, brazen, but likeable.)*

MRS. STANCLIFFE (Age 60 plus): The owner of Rose Cottage Bed & Breakfast. She is a severe woman both in dress and manner. Precise in speech and punctuality, she gives the impression of efficiency and competence. She is intolerant of Bud's "Hanky-Panky", with her guests, but reluctantly has to agree he is good for business. Pursued by her next-door neighbor Henry, she refuses to let him into her life, until surprising events finally bring them together. *(Sensible, practical, punctual, business like, menopausal, finally radiant and sensuous.)*

HENRY MITCHELL (Age 60 plus): A retired chemist and Mrs. Stancliffe's "Gentleman Caller." He is a mild mannered man who has proposed to Mrs. Stancliffe every afternoon for twenty years. He is always the perfect gentleman, and shows a great deal of respect for all the women around him. He has developed Venusia, a pill to increase the libido in menopausal women, but refuses to test it on moral grounds. Bud calls him, "A stick in the mud.", and he probably is, but eventually comes out of his shell. *(Gentle, caring, thoughtful, loveable.)*

VICTORIA AMBROSE (Age 50 plus): Victoria is a renowned author who writes steamy romantic novels. She pines for romance in her personal life, but finds none. Flattered at first by Bud's attentions, she later sees him as the shallow, insincere Casanova that he really is and readily joins the plot to turn "Bud the Stud" into "Bud the Dud." *(Pretty, serious, intelligent, menopausal.)*

HILLARY HUDSON (Age 50 plus): Hillary is beautiful, well educated, articulate and sophisticated in both manner and dress. She is an old friend and co-worker of Henry's, who agrees to test the Venusia pills. Initially skeptical of Bud's attentions, she gradually warms towards him, but is it the Venusia or Bud's charms? *(Elegant, charming, best described as "A touch of class", intelligent and menopausal.)*

CHARMAINE BEAUREGARD (Age 50 plus): Charmaine is the quintessential southern belle. She is definitely here at Rose Cottage for "Bud the Stud." Of all people, she does not need Venusia, as her entire life seems to be run by her overactive libido. However, she is a proud woman who will not be two-timed by Bud, and becomes the leading light in the plot to tame him. *(Voluptuous, out-going, gushing, demonstrative, menopausal.)*

ACT 1

It is a mid-summer afternoon at Rose Cottage, somewhere in New England. The time is 4:37 PM. The curtain rises on an empty set. It is the living room and breakfast nook of Mrs. Stancliffe's Rose Cottage Bed & Breakfast. D.R. is a set of French doors leading to the garden. The doors are slightly open. Above them is the door to bedroom one, and above that, a small built in counter, which serves as the reception desk for the bed and breakfast. On the counter is the reservations computer notebook, a call bell, a telephone and an empty vase with water. Behind the counter is an open archway leading to Mrs. Stancliffe's office. U.C. is an opening containing a large potted plant, which leads off right to the front door. The whole U.L. area is the breakfast nook. It is on a platform raised one or two steps, with railings R. and D.L. The nook has a round table, 3 chairs and a small buffet, with a jug of iced tea and glasses on it. On the U.S. wall of the nook is another set of French doors, which open onto a flower garden. U.L. is an open archway leading to the kitchen. Below the nook on the left wall, is the door to bedroom two, and below that, the door to bedroom three. C.S. is a sofa and a low back easy chair, with a small table between them.

The décor is bright and cheerful. Sunlight streams in through the French doors.

There are country cottage paintings, flowered drapes and valances. There is a vase of fresh flowers on the center stage table. After a moment or two, **BUD DAVIS** *appears in the D.R. French doors.* **BUD** *is a slight, frail looking man, age perhaps 70 – 80. Despite his appearance, his successful amorous pursuits of Mrs. Stancliffe's female guests have created an image of himself as "Bud the*

Stud." Bud only ever has one thing on his mind…his next conquest. He is wearing a short sleeve plaid shirt and khaki pants, which are pulled up high on his waist, a sweater vest, and a golf cap. He looks around, and, seeing no one, moves towards the reservation desk and begins to search through the computer.

Enter **MRS. STANCLIFFE** *from the nook French doors, with a basket of fresh cut flowers from the garden and a pair of scissors.* **MRS. STANCLIFFE** *is in her sixties. She is a plain looking woman, with her hair, worn either in a French bun, or similar severe manner. She wears no make-up or jewelry, except for a watch. She is wearing a long, dull colored plain dress, ankle boots, and garden gloves.* **MRS. STANCLIFFE** *has a penchant for punctuality, uses precise, articulate speech, and has a no-nonsense approach to life in general.*

MRS. STANCLIFFE. *(Quickly crosses R.)* Mr. Bud Davis, just exactly what do you think you are doing?

BUD. What does it look like I'm doing? It's what I do every afternoon checking the reservations to see if any of my "chicks" are arriving today.

MRS. STANCLIFFE. *(Now at the counter, closes the computer, almost on Bud's fingers.)* Mr. Davis, I run a respectable bed & breakfast. There are no "chicks", as you so crudely call them.

BUD. Oh, come on Mrs. Stancliffe, you know the only reason your bed & breakfast is so popular is because of "Bud the Stud." Why else do you think they come back year after year?

MRS. STANCLIFFE. I know of no such thing, and I wish you to refrain from using that vile phrase. The only thing we ever have in common is our mutual hobby, gardening. I have accepted your presence at my establishment for these past 20 years because you are my next-door neighbor, and were a friend of my late husband. For heaven's sake Bud, why can't you just be friends with my guests?

BUD. What?

MRS. STANCLIFFE. What do you call people you meet socially, and don't try to get into bed?

BUD. Men?

MRS. STANCLIFFE. You are impossible. You know I do not approve of any form of hanky-panky with my guests.

BUD. *(To himself)* Maybe if you'd participate you'd be a little less uptight?

MRS. STANCLIFFE. What's that?

BUD. I said, "I'd like to date a guest tonight."

MRS. STANCLIFFE. You are incorrigible. However, I must reluctantly admit, that many of my guests, for some extraordinary reason, do seem to find you irresistible.

BUD. So, you admit I'm good for business. Can I get at the booking page now?

MRS. STANCLIFFE: Certainly not! I do, however, have a message for you. At precisely 7:47 post meridian, yesterday, one of your former paramours left you a message. She will be arriving today, and wishes to re-acquaint herself with you.

BUD: See, I told you, they all come back to "Bud the Stud". Now, what's her name?

MRS. STANCLIFFE. I am not your booking agent. Suffice it to say, I have delivered the message.

BUD. How am suppose to re-acquaint myself with her if I don't know who she is.

MRS. STANCLIFFE. I refuse to make your appointments for you, but I will tell you that the lady in question referred to you as *(Rolls her eyes)* "Studly Budly Do-right."

BUD. Well, that doesn't help me at all, they all call me that.

MRS. STANCLIFFE. How you can have a romantic liaison with someone, and not remember her name, is completely beyond my comprehension.

BUD. What's sex got to do with remembering their names? I can't even remember what I had for breakfast.

MRS. STANCLIFFE. Really Mr. Davis. Do you ever have a thought that originates above the waist? Have you nothing better to do with your time than stand here waiting to look at my reservations?

BUD. Have I ever told you-

MRS. STANCLIFFE. No, and don't start now.

BUD. *(Smiling.)* Right Mrs. S. Well, if there's at least one chick coming in today, I'd better go replenish my stock of condoms. *(He pronounces this word with the emphasis on the second syllable.)*

MRS. STANCLIFFE. That is quite enough, and for heaven's sake stop smiling. You look like the Mona Lisa on valium. Mr. Davis, I am terminating this conversation at precisely *(Looks at her watch)* 4:41 post meridian.

BUD. Well, with at least one chick coming in, it looks like it is going to be a good day. *(Heads towards the DR French doors.)*

MRS. STANCLIFFE. Before you leave, I would like to talk with you about your hobby.

BUD. *(Now almost out of the doors, and not heard by* **MRS. STANCLIFFE**.*)* My hobby is sex. *(Turns.)* You want to talk about my hobby?

MRS. STANCLIFFE. Yes, I do.

BUD. You're not embarrassed to talk about this with me?

MRS. STANCLIFFE. *(Comes D. to the couch L. side.)* Not at all. I accept the fact that you have been doing it longer than me, and are more knowledgeable and experienced than I am. Please, sit for a moment. *(***BUD** *sits in the chair.)* Much as I love it, I know I'm not very good at it.

BUD. You do? You're not?

MRS. STANCLIFFE. Well, I have a little success every now and again, but I have noticed that you seem to have a certain touch.

BUD. It all comes with experience Mrs. S.

MRS. STANCLIFFE. That's it exactly. I realize I need to learn from you in order to improve my skills.

BUD. You want to improve your skills?

MRS. STANCLIFFE. Why not, you're never too old to learn, and I'm sure you're a great teacher.

BUD. You want me to teach you?

MRS. STANCLIFFE. Yes, I have exactly 4 and ¾ minutes, if you have the time, we could do it now.

BUD. Do it? Now? In 4 and ¾ minutes?

MRS. STANCLIFFE. Yes, why don't we go out to the garden and you can show me a thing or two?

BUD. *(Stands.)* Show you a thing or two? In the garden? I don't think so Mrs. S. I am terminating this conversation, now. *(Runs out the DR French doors.)*

MRS. STANCLIFFE. *(Moves U.S. to the counter.)* What in heaven's name got into him?

(Enter **HENRY** *from the U.L. French doors. Henry, now in his sixties, is a retired chemist. He is an attractive man, with a gentle personality. He wears a polo shirt with khaki pants. Henry has persistently and patiently, courted and proposed to Mrs. Stancliffe, every day for the past twenty years. He arrives daily with a different flower for each day of the week. To-day they are carnations.)*

HENRY. *(Crossing R. to the counter.)* My dear Mrs. Stancliffe, you look as radiant as a rosebud this afternoon. Will you do me the honor of becoming my wife?

MRS. STANCLIFFE. Henry, you've asked me that same question every day for the past twenty years. *(Looks at her watch.)* Though you are precisely one and three-quarter minutes later than usual today.

HENRY. I do so humbly apologize. I seem to be moving a little slowly today.

MRS. STANCLIFFE. Henry, my answer will be the same as it was yesterday. I am over forty you know, and at our time of life we should not rush into things. While I continue to grow extremely fond of you, I need time to consider your proposal.

HENRY. *(Hands her the flowers.)* Very well my dear.

MRS. STANCLIFFE. Ah, carnations, it must be Friday. *(Puts the flowers into the empty vase)*

HENRY. I understand my dear that if you need time, you need time but, in the mean time, you're not getting any younger.

MRS. STANCLIFFE. Really? And who do you think you are, Peter Pan?

HENRY. You are, of course, right my dear, but I must admit, besides our long term friendship, I do have a strong physical attraction for you.

MRS. STANCLIFFE. Me?

HENRY. Yes, you my dear. *(Pats her hand.)* I hope I didn't shock you, but I remember a conversation we had quite a while ago, when you told me that after your husband died, you too, on occasion, had felt the need for more than…how shall I put this…just friendship. He's been dead for over twenty-five years now, don't you think….

MRS. STANCLIFFE. *(Quickly withdraws her hand.)* No, and I don't think you should either. I have absolutely no recollection of any such conversation. However, while we're on the subject, Bud is getting out of hand. He seems to think he's a one man geriatric sexual revolution. He is soliciting my guests on a daily basis. You are a retired chemist. Isn't there some pill you can give him to control his over active libido?

HENRY. *(Laughing.)* I'm afraid not my dear, except perhaps taking a cold shower, and heaven knows, I've had plenty of those. As a matter of fact, I have been doing research in the exact opposite direction. I have been working on a pill that will increase the libido in….

MRS. STANCLIFFE. I find this an entirely inappropriate conversation, and am terminating it at precisely *(Looks at her watch.)* 4:44 post-meridian. There is your usual iced-tea on the buffet. If you'll excuse me for a moment, I need to attend to these flowers, and take care of one other small matter. I shall return in precisely three

and one half minutes for our usual afternoon iced-tea together. *(Exits to office, with the basket of flowers and the scissors.)*

*(***HENRY** *crosses L. to nook, pours himself an iced-tea, and sits in the U.S. chair, as* **BUD** *enters from the D.R. French doors and heads to the counter.)*

BUD. Hi Henry, how you doing?

HENRY. Good afternoon Bud. I'm fine, thank you. What are you doing?

BUD. *(At the computer.)* Checking the reservation page to see which one of my chicks is checking in today.

HENRY. You'd better watch out, Mrs. Stancliffe's on the warpath, she seems hormonally challenged today. You'd better not get caught.

BUD. You mean she didn't take her cranky pill? Still, with her how can you tell? Anyway, I'm not worried, she knows I do this. She doesn't even have a password to keep me out. She knows that "Bud the Stud" is what keeps this place going. *(Checking computer.)* Any luck with your proposal today? Has the iceberg thawed out?

HENRY. No, I'm afraid nothing has changed. It's the same old story. For twenty years, I propose, she says she needs more time and in the meantime, we're running out of time. By the time she says yes, we'll be so old, we'll need separate honeymoons. To be honest, I've been thinking about taking a desperate measure.

BUD. *(Frowning at the computer.)* There are three check-ins today, and I know at least one of them is a chick of mine, but I don't remember any of the names. Oh well, as long as everything is working, except my memory, I'm still hot to trot. *(Crossing L. to the buffet, pours himself an iced-tea and sits L. chair.)* So, what's this about desperate measures?

HENRY. Well last year, as you know, I went on vacation to the South of Italy.

BUD. Yes.

HENRY. Well, I saw some peppers advertised as a natural Viagra for menopausal women who have lost their sex drive. It occurred to me, that this was a huge opportunity to create a pill to help boost a woman's libido. So, I bought a whole bunch of them, brought them back with me, and extracted the enzymes in my lab. I've now got them into a concentrated formula contained in this small blue pill, and I have been wondering if I should ask Mrs. Stancliffe to take one. *(Takes a bottle out of his pocket, shows them to Bud, and puts them on the table.)*

BUD. Oh, they look just like my…. *(Pauses.)*

HENRY. Your what?

BUD. Never mind.

HENRY. I've patented the formula, and registered the name. It's called Venusia.

BUD. Venusia?

HENRY. Yes, Venusia, named after Venus the goddess of love.

BUD. Well, does it work?

HENRY. I don't know, I haven't had a chance to test them out yet. How would you like to test them out on some of your female friends.

BUD. They don't need anything like that, they've got "Bud the Stud." Why don't you try it out on the iceberg? Just slip it in a drink and don't tell her? What have you got to lose?

HENRY. Oh no, I couldn't do that. She'd have to know about it. Without her consent it would be unethical and immoral.

BUD. We're talking about sex. What do ethics and morality have to do with it?

HENRY. Well to be honest, the thought did cross my mind, but it would be wrong.

BUD. Then do it in the name of science. It won't be a fair test if the person trying it knows. It might alter the results.

HENRY. You've got a point Bud, I'll give it some thought.

BUD. Oh, Henry, you're such a stick in the mud.

HENRY. What do you mean?

BUD. You follow the exact same routine every single day of your life, you won't try the Venusia on Mrs. S., you don't seem to understand that the secret to getting chicks is to sweep them off their feet. Take the plunge, for heaven's sake, do something different.

HENRY. I don't want chicks, just Mrs. Stancliffe.

BUD. Then do something different.

HENRY. Well, I guess it couldn't hurt. As a matter of fact, I have been mulling over doing something quite daring and different. I'll be back in a jiffy. *(Exits U.S. French doors, leaving the pill bottle on the table.)*

*(***BUD** *watches him leave, opens the pill bottle, slips a few into his pocket, then hastily puts the cap back on the bottle as* **HENRY** *re-enters from the French doors.)*

HENRY. *(Seeing the pill bottle in* **BUD***'s hand.)* I think I'd better have those Bud. *(Takes the pill bottle and exits French doors.)*

BUD. *(Watches Henry leave, takes one of the Venusia pills out of his pocket, moves to the buffet, pours a glass of tea, drops the Venusia pill in it, stirs frantically, and turns R. with the glass in his hand.)* Oh, Mrs. Stancliffe.

(Enter **VICTORIA** *through the front door. A mature woman 50 plus, wearing a modest summer dress, carrying a computer bag and small suitcase. Her prim and proper appearance and manner belie the fact that she is, in fact, a romance novelist.* **BUD** *sees her, puts the glass down on the buffet, and rushes over to greet her.)*

BUD. Here, let me help you with that. *(Takes her luggage from her.)* You look familiar, have we met before?

VICTORIA. You don't remember me?

BUD. Er… er…of course I do. How could I forget you?

VICTORIA. Well, the time we spent together last year was fairly brief.

BUD. I know, but how could I ever forget such a vision of loveliness, such beauty, such charm. I have dreamed about you many times in the past year, but the face in my dreams was never as beautiful as the one I see before me today.

VICTORIA. Oh really?

BUD. I would very much like to renew our acquaintance this evening. *(He starts to bow)* Perhaps over a glass of champagne, with a little caviar, in the moonlight?

*(***BUD** *raises his right hand above his head, takes one step back with his right foot, makes a sweeping gesture with the right hand while bending his right knee. His right hand sweeps down to his right foot in a bowing gesture. Immediately he grabs his back with his left hand and stays in this bent position. There is a long pause.)*

VICTORIA. That is an impressive bow Mr. Davis.

BUD. *(Still in the position.)* Thank you.

VICTORIA. It's alright if you'd like to stand up now.

BUD. Well, that's a problem. I seem to be having some difficulty with my back.

VICTORIA. *(She bends down to talk to him, so her head is about an inch from his.)* May I help you?

BUD. You could try to straighten me up.

*(***VICTORIA** *comes behind him and puts her head and shoulders underneath his right armpit and attempts to raise him up. They struggle and she slowly succeeds. However, as his right side rises, his left side gets lower and lower. The net result is that he ends up in the exact same position, only the left side is down and the right side is up. She stands back and looks at him.)*

VICTORIA. I have an idea, let's get you over to the couch.

*(***VICTORIA** *comes behind him again, this time going under his left arm and together they shuffle down to the front of the couch.* **BUD** *manages to get his left hand on the cushion of the couch, supporting some of his weight.* **VICTORIA** *goes behind him and tries to pull his shoulder*

up, but it doesn't work. She then slides beneath him on her back on the couch, then, with her feet on his chest, attempts to push him straight up. His back straightens up, but **BUD** *collapses on top of her as* **MRS. STANCLIFFE** *enters from the office. She comes D. behind the couch, and with arms folded, gives them a disapproving glare.)*

BUD. Hi there Mrs. S. *(***MRS. STANCLIFFE** *continues to glare.)* Lovely afternoon, isn't it? *(***MRS. STANCLIFFE** *rolls her eyes.)*

VICTORIA. *(Pushes* **BUD** *off her, and he falls on the floor as she gets up.)* I'm so sorry Mrs. Stancliffe. *(***MRS. STANCLIFFE** *nods.)* I was simply trying to help him with his back. I don't know if you remember me, I'm Victoria Ambrose. I have a reservation.

MRS. STANCLIFFE. Welcome back to Rose Cottage.

BUD. Roses, that's it roses, champagne, caviar. *(Kisses Victoria's hand from the floor and stands up.)* Au Revoir ma cherie. *(Exits jauntily out the French doors R.)*

MRS. STANCLIFFE. I apologize for Mr. Davis. I do hope he wasn't bothering you.

VICTORIA. Not exactly, I met him briefly when I was here last year. I remember him being quite a character. Apparently he hasn't changed, instead of growing old gracefully, he's decided to grow old disgracefully.

MRS. STANCLIFFE. He is definitely a unique individual, I will say that. Now, Ms. Ambrose, shall we get you checked in? *(***VICTORIA** *nods as* **MRS. STANCLIFFE** *hands her a card.)* Victoria Ambrose…I hope I am not being too forward, I know you've been a guest here before, but your name does seem very familiar.

VICTORIA. Perhaps you recognize my name from one of my novels.

MRS. STANCLIFFE. That's it. *(Looks around.)* I must admit, I do, on occasion, indulge in a romance novel or two. I have read several of yours…very racy I might add. Are you working on anything new?

VICTORIA. As a matter of fact that's why I'm here. I have a deadline to meet from my publisher, and I'm struggling a little to get my newest one completed. I'm hoping that a few days of peace and quiet here will allow me to finish it.

MRS. STANCLIFFE. It must be hard to find the right words all the time.

VICTORIA. Well, sometimes yes, but in this case, it's not so much the words, as much as I need to find a way to bring the lovers together after three hundred pages of misunderstandings have kept them apart. What I really need to come up with is a new and original idea that rings true to life.

MRS. STANCLIFFE. I'm sure you'll find it in the peace and quiet of Rose Cottage.

VICTORIA. Let's hope so.

MRS. STANCLIFFE If it's not too bold, may I take a peek at this latest one sometime?

VICTORIA. Not at all. *(Opening up her computer bag)* Most of it is still on the computer, but I have printed out the first few pages that I can let you look at. *(Hands papers to Mrs. Stancliffe, who sets them on the counter.)*

MRS.STANCLIFFE. Thank you, I will look forward to reading them. So, shall we finish getting you checked in. I just need you to sign this form. *(***VICTORIA** *signs it and hands it to* **MRS. STANCLIFFE**.*)* You will be in the Cajun Sunrise Rose room. *(Puts the card under the desk, and hands her a key.)* I was just about to have a glass of iced-tea with my gentleman caller, *(Looks at her watch.)* who appears to be late. Would you care to join me before you go to your room?

(Picks up the novel pages and crosses L. to the nook.)

VICTORIA. Thank you that would be nice. *(Follows her left and sits in the R. chair.)* So, a gentleman caller? Sounds exciting.

MRS. STANCLIFFE. *(She sets the papers on the table, turns to the buffet, sees the glass that* **BUD** *poured, and with her back*

to the audience, pours another glass.) Henry, exciting? Those are not the words I would use to describe him. Although I am extremely fond of him, we seem to be lacking the passion that your characters exhibit in their relationships. I must admit, that for the past few years, since the onset of "the change", I've not really felt much passion at all. I guess it is to be expected at my time of life. *(She then turns R. to* **VICTORIA***, with a glass in each hand. The audience must not see which glass is which.)* Here you are. *(Hands her a glass, sits in the L. chair and sips her tea as she picks up the pages and begins reading.)*

VICTORIA. I know exactly what you mean.

MRS. STANCLIFFE. *(Begins to fan herself.)* Oh dear, here I go again. One minute I'm just fine and the next, I feel like a roasting marshmallow.

VICTORIA. *(Laughing.)* Been there, done that. I was hoping it was what you were reading that made you hot under the collar. For me, it's the night-time hot flashes that are the worst. What I wouldn't give for one good night's sleep without waking up drenched. You know, I've often wondered, if men had hot flashes instead of women, what it would do to their libido? I mean, it just doesn't seem fair.

MRS. STANCLIFFE. I know….*(Who has been looking at the manuscript on and off.)* Oh my goodness, how do you manage to write such words?

VICTORIA. *(Sipping the tea.)* What are you talking about?

MRS. STANCLIFFE. *(Reading aloud.)* "He placed his hand upon her silken thigh and sent tremors through her heaving bosom."

VICTORIA. It does sound a bit much, doesn't it?

MRS. STANCLIFFE. *(Laughing.)* Oh no, I love it! *(Reading aloud.)* "Her dark brown eyes glistened in the moonlight and her ruby red lips trembled as his manhood pressed against her."

VICTORIA. I'm glad you're enjoying it.

MRS. STANCLIFFE. I see here you've used your own name, Victoria, for one of your characters.

VICTORIA. Yes. This is the first time I've ever done that in one of my novels. I must admit though, the character is nothing at all like me. *(Yawns.)* Please excuse me, I guess I'm feeling a little tired after my long drive here.

MRS. STANCLIFFE. Why don't you go lie down for a while. Here, let me help you. *(She picks up the suitcase, crosses R. to the door of bedroom 1 and opens the door.)* It's a lovely room, I'm sure you'll be quite comfortable in here.

VICTORIA. *(Carrying her glass of tea, she follows her R. and takes the suitcase.)* You can return the manuscript pages when you're finished reading them. *(Exits to bedroom 1, closing the door.)*

*(***MRS. STANCLIFFE** *hurries back to the table and eagerly grabs the papers, sits in the R. chair and begins to read the manuscript. Enter* **HILLARY** *through the front entrance way. Age fifty plus, she is an attractive woman with a classic style. She is wearing a designer summer suit, accessories and shoes to match. She is carrying a purse and a small suitcase. She pauses and watches as* **MRS. STANCLIFFE** *continues to read.)*

MRS. STANCLIFFE. *(Reading.)* "Oh my goodness……. Oh my……. Oh no,…..He did what?,……He put his hand where?…..Oh my…. Well I never knew that was possible……Ooooh!

(Eventually **HILLARY** *moves R. and rings the call bell.* **MRS. STANCLIFFE**, *startled, jumps up, leaving the manuscript on the table.)*

MRS. STANCLIFFE. *(Crosses R.)* I am so sorry, I didn't hear you come in.

HILLARY. I'm not surprised, you were obviously reading something that had you totally engrossed.

MRS. STANCLIFFE. Ah, yes, well, welcome to Rose Cottage. *(Shakes hands with Hillary.)* I am Mrs. Stancliffe, the proprietress.

HILLARY. Hello, I'm Hillary Hudson. I have a reservation.

*(***MRS. STANCLIFFE** *moves behind the counter, as* **BUD** *is about to enter the D.R. French doors. He has a bottle of champagne in one hand and roses in the other. He stops dead in his tracks. He should be visible to the audience, but not to* **MRS. STANCLIFFE** *and* **HILLARY**. *He listens intently.)*

MRS. STANCLIFFE. *(Hands* **HILLARY** *a reservation card.)* If you wouldn't mind just filling in this form. Is this the first time you've stayed at Rose Cottage?

HILLARY. Yes it is. A friend of mine told me about this place, and said it was wonderfully romantic. *(Bud reacts.)*

MRS. STANCLIFFE. I am pleased to hear that. I think!

HILLARY. You see, I've been widowed for a few years now, and haven't really had much of a social life. My friend suggested that it was time I started to get out and meet people again. So, here I am. *(Bud reacts.)*

MRS. STANCLIFFE. I hope that we can live up to your expectations. *(Bud reacts.)*

HILLARY. At my age, the only expectation I have is to not have expectations.

MRS. STANCLIFFE. I know exactly what you mean my dear. However, I do have an expectation of a gentleman caller every afternoon at precisely 4:42 post meridian.

HILLARY. Mmmm, a gentleman caller. Well, this place certainly sounds romantic. Maybe I will meet someone here.

BUD. *(Moves U.S. towards* **HILLARY** *with wine and roses.)* My dear Mrs. Stancliffe, I beg of you, introduce me to this vision of loveliness. *(Turns to* **HILLARY**.*)* Never in my dreams have I seen such beauty, such charm. But the face in my dreams was never as beautiful as the one I see before me now.

MRS. STANCLIFFE. *(Rolling her eyes.)* Mrs. Hudson, may I introduce you to Mr. Bud Davis.

HILLARY. Hello *(Holds out her hand to shake hands with* **BUD**.*)*

BUD. *(With some difficulty drops down to one knee and kisses her hand.)* Bonjour, Ma Cherie.

HILLARY. Oh my! *(To* **MRS. STANCLIFFE**.*)* Do you welcome all of your guests this way?

BUD. *(Getting to his feet with some difficulty.)* Only those whose radiance outshines the sun.

MRS. STANCLIFFE. Oh for heaven's sake Bud.

BUD. *(Hands* **HILLARY** *the roses and wine.)* Red roses and wine for you my dear. Please accept them and enjoy their beauty, as I am enjoying yours. And perhaps I might drop by later and share a glass with you?

HILLARY. Oh my!

MRS. STANCLIFFE. Oh Bud, do behave yourself. *(To* **HILLARY**.*)* I must apologize for my neighbor. He does get a little carried away.

BUD. *(To Hillary.)* I am only carried away by the starlight I see in your eyes.

HILLARY. Oh my!

MRS. STANCLIFFE. Bud, why don't you make yourself useful and carry Mrs. Hudson's luggage to her room. *(To* **HILLARY**.*)* You will be in the Cherokee Rose room. If you need anything, please let me know. And Bud, I expect you to be on your best behavior.

BUD. When have I ever not been on my best behavior? *(***MRS. STANCLIFFE** *opens her mouth about to answer.)* Don't answer that.

*(***MRS. STANCLIFFE** *exits with the reservation form into the office, as* **BUD** *attempts to pick up* **HILLARY***'s suitcase. He manages to get it about one inch in the air, before it falls back down again. He tries again, unsuccessfully.)*

HILLARY. Really, that's not necessary.

BUD. It's not that it's heavy, I just need to conserve my energy for later. *(He now begins to push it L. to bedroom 2, with great difficulty.)*

HILLARY. That's really very kind, but I can do it.

BUD. No, no, I've got it. *(Now about half-way to the door.)* Just give me half a minute. *(He stops and sits on the suitcase, huffing and puffing.)*

HILLARY. You really are quite the gentleman, aren't you Mr. Davis?

BUD. *(Stands and begins to pull the luggage.)* Anything to stay close to someone more beautiful than Venus, the goddess of love.

HILLARY. Oh my!

BUD. *(Now with the luggage outside the door to bedroom 2.)* I will be counting the moments until I see you again. Au Revoir, ma petite chou. *(Pronounced "shoe")*

(He raises his right arm above his head and moves his right leg back, beginning the bow routine again, but this time his back goes out while he is in the upright position, with his arm locked over his head and his face turned upward. There is a long pause while he remains motionless in this position.)

HILLARY. *(Looks up trying to see what* **BUD** *is looking at. She looks at him quizzically, then moves very close to him, turning so that her back is next to his chest, and looks upwards.)* What are you looking at?

BUD. Looking at?…Oh..oh the figure I see before me, the smile, the grace, the unparalleled beauty of a woman……

HILLARY. *(Turns to face* **BUD** *and in doing so knocks him in the stomach with her elbow. He places his left hand on his stomach, his right arm still up in the air.)* Oh, I'm sorry, are you all right?

BUD. *(Turns his left palm up and out a little in front of his stomach.)* I'm….I'm fine, just practicing my Shakespeare. "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? Thou art more lovely and more temperate."

HILLARY. Really Mr. Davis, I don't think I've ever met anyone quite like you.

BUD. OOOH, OOOH *(Screams out as he unsuccessfully attempts to move his arm down.)* I seem to be having a little difficulty with my back.

HILLARY. *(Moves towards him, puts the wine on the floor and the roses on the suitcase.)* Mr. Davis, you should have told me right away. My late husband had back problems, and I was always able to help him. Now, we just need to get you on the couch.

BUD. Sounds good to me, but wouldn't a bed work better?

HILLARY. Mr. Davis, we are talking about your back. Not some weird, erotic fantasy you may have about me.

BUD. OK, the couch it is.

*(***HILLARY** *guides him as he shuffles backwards, still in a totally rigid position, to the front center of the couch. He is facing D.R. She then goes behind him and takes his shoulders. He manages to bend his left leg, and she lowers him onto the couch, with his right arm still in the air, and his right leg rigid. She then grabs his shoulders and rolls him D.S. To prevent him falling off the couch, she grabs the waistband of his pants. As she lowers him to the floor, the pants slide down revealing boxer shorts with bright red hearts all over them. His right arm remains above his head and his right leg remains rigid. As he reaches the floor,* **HILLARY** *stumbles and falls on top of him.)*

HILLARY. Ohhh….Ohhhh…. Ohhhh no. *(She manages to sit up on top of Bud, straddling his behind.)*

MRS. STANCLIFFE. *(Hearing* **HILLARY***, she rushes in from the office, comes D. behind the couch and pauses for a moment.* **BUD** *and* **HILLARY** *look up and smile,* **BUD** *gives a little finger wave as* **MRS. STANCLIFFE** *rolls her eyes.)* Mr. Davis, this was not what I meant when I asked you to make yourself useful. I shall return in precisely 2 minutes, at which time I expect proper decorum to be re-established in my living room. *(She tosses her head and quickly returns to the office.)*

HILLARY. OK Mr. Davis, let's get this done. Please take a deep breath and try to relax. *(She pushes down firmly with both hands on his upper back.* **BUD** *yells and* **HILLARY** *stands up.)*

BUD. *(Quickly stands up, rubbing his back.)* My goodness, that was amazing, how did you do that?

HILLARY. Oh it's nothing, I've had lots of practice.

BUD. Well, thank you. Maybe you'd like to meet up later for some more practice?

HILLARY. I don't think so Mr. Davis. Good evening. *(Easily picks up the luggage, takes the wine and roses with her, and exits bedroom 2, closing the door.)*

BUD. *(Moves U.S. towards the buffet, when he notices the manuscript pages on the table. He picks them up and starts to read.)* "THE SUMMER COTTAGE, MY JOURNEY OF LOVE", by Victoria Ambrose. *(Reads silently for a moment.)* "What we shared a year ago, compelled me to return to this simple cottage of love, and the man of my dreams." *(***BUD***, looks at door to bedroom 1.)* It has to be her. I knew it, they all come back to Bud the Stud. *(Continues reading.)* "In the throes of passion he cried out my name, Oh Victoria, Victoria". Well, at least I got the name right. *(Continues to read.)* "I have counted the weeks, the days, the minutes until I would be back in the strong arms of the man I adore." *(***BUD** *flexes his arms and does a muscle pose.)* I always knew I was good, but they're even writing about me now! *(Continues reading.)*

(Enter **HENRY** *through the nook French doors, carrying a bouquet of pansies.)*

HENRY. So Bud, what do you think?

BUD. *(Continues to read without looking up.)* About what?

HENRY. *(Holds out bouquet to Bud.)* About these?

BUD. *(Looks up.)* Thanks, but no thanks. *(Continues reading.)*

HENRY. No, not for you, for Mrs. Stancliffe. They're tomorrow's flowers today. That should take her by surprise, sweep her off her feet.

BUD. *(Looks up.)* You've really gone all out Henry. You know what your problem is?

HENRY. I only have one?

BUD. Henry, you're about as romantic as a frozen fish. *(Waves the paper in* **HENRY***'s face, then throws it on the table, and stands.)* Take lessons from a master my boy. While you play with your pansies, I've got a really hot chick who's been writing about me. *(Moves D.R.)* And now it looks like I might have two chicks, so I'd better go check on the condom reserves, and I'll definitely need some roses and champagne for Victoria. See Henry, if you're going to do it, do it with panache. *(Exits French doors R.)*

HENRY. Pansies are panache. *(Sits L. chair, and starts to read the paper on the table.)*

(Enter **VICTORIA** *from bedroom1, a pencil stuck in her hair and carrying an empty glass.)*

VICTORIA. *(Sees* **HENRY***.)* Hello.

HENRY. *(Stands.)* Hello, I'm Henry Mitchell. May I pour you a glass of iced-tea?

VICTORIA. *(Crosses R. to the nook and hands glass to* **HENRY** *then sits on the R. chair.)* Yes, thank you. I'm Victoria Ambrose. Oh goodness, Mrs. Stancliffe left my manuscript on the table. You must be her gentleman caller.

HENRY. You're a writer?

VICTORIA. Yes, romance novels. I don't think the term gentleman caller has been used since the 1800's.

HENRY. *(Laughing, pours a glass of tea and hands it to* **VICTORIA***.)* You're probably right. I'd like to be called her husband, but I'm afraid that gentleman caller is all I'm ever going to be.

VICTORIA. What makes you say that?

HENRY. I've been courting her for twenty years. I propose to her every day, and I get precisely nowhere. Did you say Mrs. Stancliffe was reading this?

VICTORIA. Yes, why?

HENRY. Well, she doesn't seem very interested in romance, at least not with me. Maybe I don't use the right words.

VICTORIA. Well, she was certainly enjoying what she was reading. Maybe I can help you with the words. I am a

writer after all. Now tell me, what do you say when you propose?

HENRY. The same thing I say every day. "Mrs. Stancliffe, would you do me the honor of becoming my wife?"

VICTORIA. Oh dear.

HENRY. Oh dear?

VICTORIA. Oh dear. First of all, does she have a first name?

HENRY. Of course, it's Buttercup.

VICTORIA. Buttercup?

HENRY. Buttercup.

VICTORIA. OK., let's go with that. Now, do you think you could manage something like this? Oh my beautiful Buttercup, when you look at me my heart skips a beat, and my passion knows no bounds. Whenever I see you I stop breathing.

HENRY. Hold on a second, let me write this down. *(Takes the pencil from Victoria's hair, and starts frantically writing on the back of one of the sheets.)*

VICTORIA. I cannot stand the thought of us being apart one more moment. I must taste those ruby lips, feel the softness of your tender touch, I cannot live another moment without knowing you will be mine forever. Please, make me the happiest of men and say you will be my wife.

HENRY. *(Pauses.)* Women like that kind of stuff?

VICTORIA. Well, I think so, I've sold over a million books. So, what have you got to lose? The next time you propose, give it a try. Oh, and getting down on one knee wouldn't hurt either.

HENRY. You must lead such an exciting and romantic life.

VICTORIA. Not at all. The novels are full of passion and romance, but my personal life is most definitely not.

HENRY. But Bud said that you,…that he, …that you and Bud were….um you know…um

VICTORIA. Ahh! Absolutely not. As a matter of fact, I found him rather transparent in a harmless sort of way.

HENRY. *(Laughing.)* I must admit his brain is called Mr. Zipper. I do apologize. I hope I haven't offended you.

VICTORIA. Not at all. *(Touches* **HENRY***'s arm and quickly pulls away.)* Good heavens, I'm feeling a little flustered… oh goodness, I haven't felt this way in years. I'm not sure what's come over me. Excuse me, I think I need to get a little air. *(Exits through nook French doors.)*

(Enter **MRS. STANCLIFFE** *from the office, she pauses in the doorway, visible to the audience, but unnoticed by* **HENRY**.*)*

HENRY. *(Pauses for a moment, picks up the manuscript page on which he has written Victoria's lines, holding that in his left hand, and the pansies held high in his right, faces down stage and drops to his right knee, to practice the speech and tries the following lines with the emphasis different each time.)* OH, my beautiful Buttercup…no, no, that's not right. Oh, my BEAUTIFUL Buttercup… no, no, no…OH MY BEAUTIFUL BUTTERCUP.

MRS. STANCLIFFE. *(Crosses L. towards* **HENRY**.*)* Good heavens Henry, what are you doing?

HENRY. *(Shuffles R. on his knees towards her and begins reading the paper.)* Oh, my beautiful Buttercup, when you look at me my heart skips a beat, and my passion knows no bounds. Whenever I see you I stop breathing. *(Pauses.)* Well, obviously I start again or I'd be dead. *(Reads from the paper again.)* I cannot stand the thought of us being apart one more moment. I must taste those ruby lips, feel the softness of your tender touch, I cannot live another moment without knowing you will be mine forever. *(Pauses, frowns, then turns the page over.)* Please, make me the happiest of men and say you will be my wife. *(Shoves the pansies at her.)*

MRS. STANCLIFFE. Taste my ruby red lips? *(Takes the pansies.)* Oh Henry… I don't know what to say. I don't understand….pansies….but it's not 5.05 on Saturday, *(Looks at her watch.)* it's 5.12 on Friday. *(Touches his forehead.)* Are you feeling ill my dear?

HENRY. *(Takes* **MRS. STANCLIFFE***'s hand and kisses it.)* I'm feeling wonderful…."My dear?" Would you mind if I got up?

MRS. STANCLIFFE. Here, let me help you. *(Assists Henry up.)*

HENRY. Well?

MRS. STANCLIFFE. Well what?

HENRY. About my proposal…

MRS. STANCLIFFE. My dear Henry, I really feel quite moved. I've never seen this side of you before. As a matter of fact, I've been feeling a little different myself since you left earlier this afternoon.

HENRY. Does this mean-?

MRS. STANCLIFFE. Perhaps.

HENRY. *(He grabs* **MRS. STANCLIFFE***'s hand and kisses it.)* This is exciting news my dear. *(Continues to kiss her hand.)*

(Enter **HILLARY** *from bedroom 2)*

MRS. STANCLIFFE. *(Quite flustered, now sees* **HILLARY** *and immediately withdraws her hand.)* Mr. Mitchell, I…um….I have a bed and breakfast to run and cannot stand here dilly dallying around. In precisely six minutes and forty-five seconds I must serve afternoon refreshments for my guests. Please excuse me. *(Exits to the kitchen.)*

HILLARY. *(Crosses R. to L. side of the couch.)* Hello Henry, it's good to see you again.

HENRY. *(Moves D. towards Hillary and gives her hug.)* It's good to see you too Hillary. Thanks for coming. Please, sit down.

HILLARY. *(Sits L. end of couch.)* I hope I wasn't interrupting anything.

HENRY. *(Sits in the chair.)* That's quite all right. As a matter of fact Mrs. Stancliffe is the reason I invited you here.

HILLARY. Now I'm really intrigued. We haven't worked together or seen each other since you retired several years ago. Then, all of a sudden, out of the blue, I get this phone call from you asking me to help you conduct a field test on a pill that you say could change the

lives of millions of women. You've told me all about this Venusia pill, and that I should make up a story about why I am here, but what does it have to do with Mrs. Stancliffe, and exactly how am I supposed to help you?

HENRY. For the past twenty years, I've been going nowhere fast with Mrs. Stancliffe. I adore her, and I want her to marry me, but she seems to have no romantic interest at all. If this pill works, maybe it will help arouse her romantic side again. I don't feel right about asking her to take the pill, until I've had at least one other test.

HILLARY. *(Pauses.)* You want me to be the guinea pig?

HENRY. Well, yes. But you do understand this is a totally natural product. It was made from a vegetable, and is absolutely safe for human consumption. I'd take it myself, but I'm not exactly right for the test.

HILLARY. And what makes you think I am?

HENRY. I thought of you because you are in the right age bracket, have an impartial scientific mind, and you're single.

HILLARY. Thanks Henry, you really know how to sweep a girl off her feet.

HENRY. Did I say something wrong?

HILLARY. No wonder Mrs. Stancliffe isn't succumbing to your charms. Henry, are you assuming I'm menopausal?

HENRY. You're not? Really? At your age?

HILLARY. Henry, be careful. Menopausal women have been known to eat their young. *(Laughs.)* However today you're safe, I took my crabby pill this morning.

HENRY. *(Laughs)* So, will you do it?

HILLARY. Why not, it might even be fun…if it works.

HENRY. All I ask is that you keep written notes on how you feel emotionally and physically. I'm not sure about the dosage. Why don't you try one now, and if nothing happens, take another in a couple of hours. *(Takes out the bottle of pills and hands them to her, then moves U.L. to the nook to pour her an iced tea.)*

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