

# PINECREST REST HAVEN

by

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Thornton Wilder said “Love has no need for memory.” In the Pinecrest Rest Haven Mr. and Mrs. P no longer remember they’re married and they fall in love (and hate) again and again. Pinecrest has all the feelings of grand opera. Its residents have all the greed, betrayal lust they ever had when young! The play *PINECREST REST HAVEN* was inspired by Cavalieri’s book of poems by that same name: (PineCrest Rest Haven, c1998, the Word Works Press.)

## **Pinecrest Rest Haven**

Staged Readings:

Clemente del Sole, NYC 1998

The Ice House, Berkeley Springs, WV 1998

The Writer’s Center of Washington DC, Bethesda, MD 1998

Full Stage Production:

The Common Basis Theatre, NYC 2001

Audio Production: Tape available from Forest Woods Media Productions, Inc

**Published as formatted by the author in the October 2010 issue of *SCENE4 Magazine* (www.scene4.com) and provided as a free PDF download.**

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*Grace Cavalieri has had 23 plays produced on American stages and 15 books and chapbooks of poems published. Her forthcoming play is "Anna Nicole; Blonde Ambition." "Quilting the Sun" (previously published in this magazine) will have another production in S.C. ,Nov. 2011. She has won the Allen Ginsberg Poetry Award; the Bordighera Poetry Award, Pen best books List, Columbia Award, Paterson Prize finalist , several playwriting production awards, plus others.*

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## **PINECREST REST HAVEN**

### **Characters**

Mr. P	elderly character
Mrs. P	elderly character
Young Mr. P	30 years old, garb from the 40's
Young Mrs. P	20-30 years old. 1940's clothing
Coco	elderly woman
Muriel	elderly woman
Kristal	young nurse
Doctor	young woman
Chuck	elderly man

Scene opens in the Pinecrest Rest Haven Sunroom.

Mrs. P is center stage

Mrs. P

I'm here looking for Mr. P. Have you seen him? He's about this high and goes all the way to the floor. He left home one day to go to the store. Of course he went every day where the pretty girl sold fish. He would buy one oyster each day and when I complained, he changed to shrimp. Then he didn't come back at all. They invited me in to stay here. I need to find him, to take him home.

(Enter Mr. P to opposite side of stage)

Mr.P

She was the cutest thing you'd ever see, hair like a halo, or a sunrise. To be next to her was to be the right temperature like your blood was the same as the air outside. A perfect day is what she was. A perfect day.

Mrs.P

Once I said, aren't you ever going to kiss me and he put his hand under my chin and lifted it up just a little and placed his face near mine. We were on a small bridge over some water. The water moved on and on and brought me here. Love was like a slipcover all over me then.

(Sunroom dark. In front of scrim is a park bench. Young Mr. P is hiding behind tree. Young Mrs. P walks nervously on, looks about, sits on bench. Young Mr. saunters out casually.) (Wears WWII uniform)

YoungMr. P

Oh hello there

(YMrsP looks away)

(YMrP sits beside her. She gets up)

Young Mrs P:  
I don't believe we've met.

(Curtain up. Bench becomes part of dayroom décor with pillow added.  
Young Mr. and Mrs P go to either side of stage.)  
(All characters are onstage milling about. Coco and Muriel walk through  
center, Muriel carrying her stuffed dog)

Coco:  
Did Room 7b die or was he faking again

Muriel  
He did. Even rich people die.

Coco:  
But he was cheap. He only died because it's free.

Muriel:  
You're just mad because dead people don't listen to you anymore.

Coco:  
Stop kissing that damn animal. Do you know where its mouth has  
been!?

Muriel  
I'll put him down then.

Coco

Not there for God Sake. Someone messed on the seat

(Mr. and Mrs. P cross from opposite sides of stage, pass each other- stop-  
look back at each other quizzically. Turn back and continue walking. They  
stop briefly)

Mr. P:  
Hello

Mrs. P:  
Hello

Mr. P:  
How are you

Mrs. P:  
How are you

(Young Mr. and Mrs. P trail them like angels, mime greeting with identical moves, as Old Mr. and Mrs. P- go to either side of stage or off)

Coco:  
They said he had a fit and died right here, screaming and moaning and holding his sides, foaming at the mouth.

Muriel:  
(blasé) I hate that

(Characters clear center where focus is on Kristal and MD. Coco and Muriel drift off. Mr. and Mrs. take chairs at opposite sides)

MD:  
(hands Kristal file folder) we must discharge a patient

Kristal:  
What do you mean, discharge a patient

MD  
: We have too much dead meat and not enough beds

Kristal:  
Well we can scarcely

MD:  
I am the doctor and I'll make the diagnosis

Kristal:  
Who did you have in mind? Not Mr. P over there (Mr. P is settled in his chair falling asleep)

MD:  
Oh Heavens no, he'd never find his way to the lobby

Kristal:  
(indicating Mrs. ) Not Mrs. He'd die without her

(walk off, Kristal following MD)

MD:

Not enough beds, too many bodies

(Coco and Muriel drift off)

(Mr. and Mrs. P are seated in opposite sides of the room Young Mr. and Mrs. P are seated behind them. Mr. P crosses to Mrs. Mrs. Crosses to meet Mr. in center)

Mr. P:

Are you new here

Mrs.P:

I think so

Mr.P:

What're you in for

Mrs.P:

I think I'm trying to improve myself

Mr. P:

Do you feel things sometimes

Mrs.P:

Oh yes. I feel so many things, they have to take turns

Mr.P:

What are they?

Mrs.P:

Oh I can't remember

Mr. P:

(delighted) Me either!

Mrs. Mrs. P:  
I have a picture of two people (brings it to him)

Mr.P:  
In a husband and wife costume! She's pretty

Mrs.P:  
I think it used to be me

Mr.P:  
Nice man with her

Mrs.P:  
I'm not real sure, but I think that used to be you

Mr. P:  
We can ask the postman about that card

Mrs.P:  
I wish there'd be stewed tomatoes for supper, don't you? I used to know how to make them. My mother taught me when we lived in Vermont, on a yellow tablecloth, You went to the country and turned left. That's where Vermont is

Mr. P:  
(still puzzling over wedding picture) I have a postcard just like that in my room

Mrs.P:  
We must have been to the same place

Mr.P:  
Once

Mrs. P:  
But that was then

Mr. P:  
Will you be my beloved wife?

Mrs. P:  
(demure) I don't talk to strangers



(Chuck wanders through)

Chuck:  
Where did everyone go? Where is everyone?  
Where does everyone always go (wanders off)

Mrs. P:  
(to Chuck) Oh please don't feel anything. It'll just make it worse  
(Mrs. P takes out her knitting out of side basket, making a mess)

(Mr. P settles down to sleep) (snores)  
(Mr. P is snoozing in his chair by the window. Mrs. P is on the other side of the room, knitting confusedly. Coco reenters center door, followed by Muriel)

Coco:  
Do you see him?

Muriel:  
Who?

Coco:  
The only him here

Muriel:  
Oh him

Coco:  
Look how innocent he's acting

Muriel:  
He's asleep

Coco:  
That's what he'd like you to believe

Muriel:  
He is snoring (powdering her nose, looking in her mirror)

Coco:  
You don't need to try to get his attention

Muriel:  
I don't need you to tell me what to do

Coco:

This is how he fools everyone

Muriel:  
Why does he want to, Coco

Coco:  
Because, Muriel, he's stalking me. No matter what room I'm in, there he is. I'm about to report him

Muriel:  
For sleeping?

Coco:  
For stalking, Stupid.. Everyone has his individual style. He is especially crafty at it, as you can see

Muriel:  
And what of her (indicating Mrs. P)

Coco:  
Mrs. P? Ha. He doesn't even remember he's married to her. Besides, she's not worth stalking. She's easy with him, I hear

Muriel  
We have only three rooms we can be in this time of day, sunroom, dining room, craft room. So Mr. P is bound to be in one of them

Coco:  
Ha! He's drawn you in too, has he? Isn't he clever now

(Coco walks over and sprays perfume on herself, close to him. He coughs from it, shifts, returns to sleep)

Coco:  
See? Quite the pretender, isn't he (Coco storms out with Muriel following)

(Mrs. P moves across the room, coughs. Mr. P opens his eyes)

Mrs. P:  
Hello

Mrs. P:  
How are you

Mr. P:  
Never better. Never better

Mrs. P:  
Everyone wants my boyfriend but Mr. P just wants me. (to him)  
Don't you. When we leave here we're going to every Shoney's in  
the USA. Every one. And we'll leave a tip.

(scene:circle)

Chuck:  
I raised my children. I went to a job everyday for 43 years

Coco:  
I once was an editor for a newsletter. It went to 600 people

Mrs. P:  
Everything I say he says the opposite. I say the sun *glimpsed* in the  
window. He said No. It *peeked*

Coco:  
Peeked is my word (turns to Muriel) Didn't you hear me say it  
before, Muriel. Peeked is my word

Muriel:  
(To Mr. P) My friend likes you

Chuck:  
I sent money home every week to my wife without fail

Muriel:  
I had a white satin coat I wore on Times Square at midnight New  
Years Eve

Coco:  
I had a red roadster. The top came down

Chuck:  
Once I rode across the country on boxcars to find a job. I was  
younger then

Coco  
I had three cats in one window

Mrs. P:

I had a green plant in my window

Mr. P:  
It was on the counter

Mrs. P:  
See? Always contrary

Chuck:  
I saw a boat once filled with snow in Wisconsin

Muriel  
(fading) I had

Mrs. P:  
It was in the window

Mr. P:  
I'm afraid to die

Mrs. P:  
I'm afraid I won't die. We'll just go on here forever

MD:  
Why are you sad. You have everything you want here

Chuck:  
I have dreams of galloping horses

MD  
Just eat and sleep whenever you want

Mr. P:  
I WANT TO DIFFER

MD:  
Nothing human is wrong

Mrs. P:  
If he drops the paper I pick it up. he pushes me away and says he doesn't need help. If he drops the paper and I don't pick it up, he says why doesn't anyone ever help me

MD:  
We're going to have to move you to a different sunroom

Mrs. P:

Something's gone wrong with us, but I can't leave

MD:

It's time to try something new

Scene freezes. Or Group leaves. Mr. P remains at one side of room. Mrs. P at other. Half light.

(Young Mr. P enters ( WW2 uniform) Young Mrs. P enters. They move to center bench. She sits first. He joins her.)

Young Mr. P:

Hello

Young Mrs.:

Hello

Young Mr.:

You were here yesterday

Young Mrs.

I'm waiting for someone. He said 5pm. I wonder if I have the wrong day

Young Mr.:

Candy bar?

Young Mrs.

Why thank you, I'll share

Young Mr.:

No need. (shows a 2<sup>nd</sup> bar)(eat in silence) I'm not taking the bus

Young Mrs.:

You're not?

Young Mr.:

I passed here twice this week and saw you sitting. I'm not here for a bus

Young Mrs. P:

And you said here's a chippie. Well you can just move on and fast talk someone else (gets up)

Young Mr. P:  
No, I swear

Young Mrs;  
I'm calling the law

Young Mr.:  
(laughing) I like a high tempered gal. But I'm innocent except for thinking-- she's a beauty. I'll move on now.

Young Mrs.;  
(walks away)

Young Mr.:  
I saw no one came for you

Young Mrs.:  
That is not your business. Who does or does not get off the bus or who I'm waiting for or not waiting for

Young Mr.:  
He's not coming. Not today. Or not tomorrow

Young Mrs.:  
(exiting) Police

Young Mr.:  
(Calling after) I meant no harm. I saw you. I know you work at Woolworth's I didn't want to get your goat, honest... (fading) I thought 'she is a real looker, that one'

Young Mrs.:  
Fresh!

(Lights fade: I'm in love with you honey - (music)

(Sunroom .Mrs. P moves closer)

Mrs. P:  
Do you happen to have the time

Mr. P:  
(looks at watch) It's 1932

Mrs.:  
That was nice then

Mr.:  
Yes, sun on the streets then. Leaves in the fall stacked up on the sidewalk

Mrs.:  
That was pretty yes. There was a house with a yellow tablecloth inside

Mr.:  
I'm on to you. You get me to agree and then you start crying. No. Not today, old lady. You won't get me that way-oh no-not today

Mrs.:  
I was only remembering

Mr.:  
No such thing, remembering. You get there or you get here. Two places to be. One makes you cry

Mrs.:  
What time is it then. What time could it be

Mr.:  
It's the same time it always was

Mr.:  
Hungry time, sad time. It's the same time it always was, sleeptime, no time, less time, more time, lost time, new time

Mrs.:  
You never hold a proper conversation with me anymore. You fill me with sorrow

Mr.:  
Sorrow. That's the color of your damn tablecloth, and you can't trick me into talking about it either

(Activity Director bounces in center door with huge beach ball)

Kristal:  
Kristal here. Healthy minds, healthy bodies. (Bounces it to Mr. P. he lets it drop without attempting to get it) (Ball bounced to Mrs.. She

covers her face in protection and lets it hit her) Better! Better!  
You're getting it. Now we're going to go to Step two. (Pulls chair  
over. Seats Mrs. opposite Mr.) I'm going to give you the letter and  
you give me the state. "M." (Bounces ball to Mrs.) Maine. See how  
it'll go? Now your turn (ball to Mrs. again) "P."

Mrs.:  
(flustered) potato. Portland. Pie

(Coco and Muriel entering, start giggling. Mrs. spins around)

Mrs.:  
They confused me

(Voice heard over speaker. *Love Alert. Love Alert. Kristal needed in cafeteria,  
egg fight table 17. Kristal* (Kristal runs out) (Muriel and Coco circle Mrs. P  
menacingly)

Coco:  
I see you have your padded bra on today, Mrs. P. Don't you look  
fine. You must be expecting a big day

Muriel:  
All dressed up. Going somewhere? Your granddaughter visiting?

Coco:  
I think it's her great great great granddaughter by now, if in fact  
there's one at all

Mrs. P:  
What do you want

Coco:  
I have a little bone to pick with you

Mrs. P:  
Out of my way, you...you fireplug

Muriel:  
(blocks door) This is the only way out

Coco:  
(holds up pocketbook) What is this? A pocketbook? Yes?

Mrs. P:  
Everybody knows what that is



Coco:

You stole my word for it. I call it a purse and now I hear YOU calling it a purse

Muriel:

That's plagiarism. I know because I used to live in New York. My husband owned the Barbizon Plaza

Coco:

Shut up, you idiot

Muriel:

Well he did...

Coco:

. We don't need your resume

Mrs.:

If you don't get out of my way, I'll use my purse where it'll do the most good (raises it to hit her)

(Not knowing what to do, Mr. P has been removing his clothes in the background. He stands and dramatically drops his pants. All scream but Mrs. P who goes over. Mr. P raises his hands to both sides victoriously, dropping pants. All scramble.)

Mrs. P:

(whispers) You always were my hero. You'll get chilly (She pulls his pants up to his waist)

Coco:

(to Muriel) See? He's always trying to show me "something"

Muriel:

I had a good husband once in New York City. Manhattan it was called then.

Coco:

(to Mrs. P) I'm not finished with you. (holds up purse) PURSE. That's my word. Yours was POCKETBOOK. I distinctly heard you say that outloud. Then all of a sudden you started calling it a *purse*. I've reported you and you probably will be put out on the street.

(Mrs. P rips Coco's purse from her. opens it and dumps contents on the floor. Mrs. smells the empty purse inside)

Mrs. P:

Smells like adultery in there. Stay away from Mr. P, while you're at it. (Drops purse over side of stage) There are some things worse to lose than your life, you know. For instance, your PURSE.

(She sails out. Looks back as if she's forgotten something. Goes back to Mr. P He's still holding on to his pants. She puts her arm in his free arm and walks him out with great dignity. Muriel is putting on lipstick. Coco takes pencil out from behind her ear puts a pencil in her mouth like a cigarette, striking a pose, as if she doesn't care)

Coco:

(runs to look down for purse) (hisses after Mrs. P) Potato isn't a state, Stupid

(Mrs. P turns back to confront Coco -glares. Coco begins to arrange flowers in the vase innocently)

Staff carry on chairs, center, semi-circle facing the audience, "Group Time". Staff calls out each door. Mrs. P puts lipstick on, straightens skirt. VO: "**Come Alive Section Five. It's your Group Therapy. Meeting Time**". Mr. P has to be helped physically against his will to the "group." He is muttering that he has an important conference call. Coco and Muriel sashay to seats on either side of Mr. P. Light on Mrs. P.

Mrs. P:

I don't know why I'm here. I know there is something I miss.  
Someone I used to know who's gone. I think it's me.  
(Weeping)

Kristal:

We have some new members joining us today

Mr. P:

We don't want any

Kristal.:

Let's all tell one thing about ourselves. This is Chuck

(Chuck is slouched down in chair with hat and dark glasses)

Kristal:

Chuck was in the entertainment business

Chuck:

I was the lead guitarist in Kate Smith's band.

Kristal:  
That's good. That's good

Chuck  
Well, actually I was his cousin

Kristal  
That's close. Close is good. And what do you feel about being here

Chuck:  
Hungry

Kristal:  
That's not an emotion, Chuck  
  
(Chuck looks confused)

Coco:  
I knew you were famous.

Chuck:  
I have to wear these sunglasses at all times

Coco:  
You had a roast named after you, didn't you? I used to buy it at FoodLand.

Muriel:  
I've heard of that . Chuck roast. Yes, named after him?

(Group gets excited. Start chanting *Chuck, Chuck, Chuck*)

Kristal.:  
Let's get back to our feelings about being here

Mr. P:  
Shitty

Mrs. P:  
Tired

Coco:  
Chuck Chuck Chuck (stands up, pointing)(Others start standing and chanting: CHUCK CHUCK CHUCK- approaching him)

(Chuck pulls his hat down in front of his eyes. Then stands. By this time the group is all standing and pointing at him. He turns and flies from the room.)

Kristal:

Let's all be seated (shouting above the din) Or I'll have to bring out the games.

Mr. P:

No. No crafts. Please. We'll be quiet (thinks of play)  
(stands) I used to be an important man. I had a secretary, a Dictaphone, a nameplate on my desk, a secretary who didn't wear underpants but that's another story. Once I was nominated the most important man in the Chamber of Commerce.

Mrs. P:

He nominated himself

Mr. P:

But I was nominated. That's the important thing.

Mrs. P:

Somebody is trying to confuse us

Coco:

I'm only here temporarily. The cruise line was booked

Muriel

That's not why you're here

(noise subsides)

Kristal:

Now then. Chuck. How do you feel about being here (silence)(Face in his hands)

All:

Oh. He likes it (murmurs of agreement and approval)

Kristal:

But he's crying. Does that mean he likes it? Are we sure that's what we're feeling?(All register looks of confusion) (Changes mood) Well now, What is today? Anyone.

Coco:  
Now

Mrs. P  
(stands) That's not fair. She remembered that answer from before

Coco:  
It's always now

Kristal:  
That is right, Any questions? (freeze scene)

(Lights down.) Mrs. P walks to another space where the doctor is seated at her desk)

Mrs. P:  
I wanted to talk to you

Dr.:  
Yes yes indeed

Mrs. P:  
I wanted to talk to you about

Dr.:  
Yes?

Mrs. P:  
About the past. No one will talk to me about (voice breaking) the past

Dr.:  
The past

Mrs. P:  
yes

Dr.:  
The past does not exist

Mrs. P:  
But I remember things

Dr.:

There is only now

Mrs. P:  
Well, can we talk about the now that used to be?

Dr.:  
(shakes head no)

Mrs. P:  
About the now that's going to be

Dr.:  
No. If you will not be quiet about this, you'll go to the opportunity room. Do you need to go...

Mrs. P:  
No

Dr:  
Let us start again. It is always the present. Time is now. It doesn't matter what happened before you got here. We're one big happy family right now

Mrs. P:  
You mean this is all there is?

Dr.:  
This is all there is. Now

Mrs. P:  
There was more before I got to this place. (subdued)I'm afraid of the now that is. Nurse, be nice. Let me talk to the Doctor

Dr.:  
I am the Doctor

Mrs. P  
But you're a girl. There must be someone in charge

Dr:  
Mrs. P, Don't you want to keep learning. Don't you want to grow?

Mrs. P:  
Oh I got you there, nursie, you don't grow anymore after you reach 60. I'm as tall as I'm going to get.

(Bell rings, lunch announced over intercom) (VO: (announcement in sing-song voice: *Today we're having try-outs for a play. Don't be afraid. Don't think about the past. Don't be afraid to fail. Pick a person you'd like to be and come to the costume room in the back of the craft gallery and go through the trunk and see who you'd like to be*)

### Scene

(Young Mr. and Mrs. P he's in a uniform at marriage ceremony. She's in pleated skirt, jacket, hat of the 40's, corsage)

Minister:  
(VO: Till death Us Do Part)

Young Mrs. P:  
That's a very long time

Young Mr. P:  
Now's no time to argue, darling

Minister:  
(VO: Do you or don't you)

Young Mrs:  
I do

Young Mr:  
I do

(Scene moves to table and chairs. Mr's jacket hung over chair. He sits, shirt unbuttoned, head in his arms. On table, a bottle)

Young Mrs:  
It's a two day pass and you've slept it away

(She takes his jacket, tidies up. Photo falls out. She looks, tears it up, pours it over him like confetti. She puts on her jacket to leave. He shakes himself to wake, realizes, sees pieces, laughing)

Young Mr.:  
No NO. This is my sister Camille, my only sister (pulls Mrs. On his lap) Poor little Chickie. You're always so scared the bus won't come or always afraid I've made someone else happy. (Takes her arm) Come'on. Let's dance.

YMrs.P:  
Not this time

YMr.P:  
It's the dance we do. Nobody's here but me and you.

YMrs.P:  
How do you think I can forget things in a moment

YMr.P:  
But now is now. Whatever happened yesterday is gone. This is all  
we have

YMrs.P  
When I'm hurt I'm hurt. I can't forget this quick

YMr.P:  
Yes you can. Try (takes her, swirls her, she reluctantly joins in the  
dance.)

Scene (Coco and Muriel are rummaging through the trunk. Coco  
brings out a Spanish shawl)

Coco:  
What are you going to be in the play

Muriel:  
Myself

Coco:  
You are supposed to play a part

Muriel:  
What part am I not playing?

Coco:  
You have to pretend you're someone else

Muriel:  
I'm not who you think, Coco. I used to be wealthy



Coco:  
I know. Filthy rich. Emphasis on Filthy

Muriel:  
What a naughty thing to say

Coco:  
Who am I? (Picks a stuffed doll from trunk, Boo hoos into it)

Muriel:  
Raggedy Ann's mother?

Coco:  
No, silly. you know who I am acting like this (cradles and rocks the doll)" If you see a baby..."

(Mrs. P appears at door)

Mrs. P:  
My baby is all grown up now, thank you and she's coming to visit, soon

C and M:  
(Snicker) Yes yes. Like the last time you sat by the door all Sunday

Mrs. P:  
She has a big job across the country but now she is coming and she'll take me out for breakfast or lunch or dinner or a walk and a talk

Coco:  
(sings) I've believed it when I see it

Mrs. P:  
She'll be here soon

(Coco and Muriel exit)  
(Kristal walks through)

Mrs. P:  
Excuse me

Kristal:  
Yes

Mrs. P:  
We're going to put on a play

Kristal:  
Wonderful. But I'm in a hurry now. Pill time

Mrs. P:  
I need you to be in it

Kristal:  
I don't really have the time.

Mrs. P:  
I need you to be in my play

Kristal:  
You're serious, Mrs. P

Mrs. P:  
(Mrs. P grabs her arm) Please. I'll pay you. I'll give you my dessert.  
I'll save it off the table. A new fresh sweet dessert

Kristal:  
(touched) What part did you want me to play

Mrs. P:  
(K walks off) I need you to be my daughter

Mrs. P  
(alone on-stage) Today I pretended to get up, eat breakfast. That was the truth. Sewed a quilt, made cranberry jelly, saw an angel in the window, wrote a letter, This is not true. took a nap, that part is true too, fed the cats, covered the couch with the quilt, let the cat sit there on the couch, ate the cranberry jelly, went for a walk, no I didn't, saw a neighbor, talked to her, told her who I am, who I used to be. She said she used to know me. You see? I am a person. I think this is true

(MD enters. Seats Mrs. P.)

Dr.:  
What season is this

Mrs. P:

There's snow outside so I'm sure it's winter. If it were summer, you see, the sun would--

Dr.:

Yes. Yes. Who is President of the United States?

Mrs. P:

(silence) now?

Dr.:

Now (writes) (silence)

Dr.:

People basically good or bad

Mrs. P:

Good. I'm sure they are. When I was small there was...

Dr.:

yes, yes. Now, Are people mostly happy or sad

Mrs. P:

I'm afraid they're sad. No? That was the wrong answer? well of course some days they could be happy

Dr.:

Is it better to be young or old.

Mrs. P:

Oh young, I remember that answer

Dr.:

You may go now

Mrs. P:

Did I pass the test today

Dr.:

I'm afraid not

Mrs. P:

Not again?

Dr.:

I'm afraid not  
(Mrs. P runs from the room)

Kristal:  
(enters) what has her so upset

Dr.  
She thinks people are good and she does not acknowledge her well being. This lady cannot be released from her old ward

Kristal:  
But that's how it seems to her

Dr.:  
We don't feed fantasies here, Kristal. We get people into reality. We don't crawl in their dementia with them. Some of us have to remain outside (Kristal storms out)

(Chuck stops Kristal)

Chuck:  
Excuse me

Kristal:  
Yes Chuck

Chuck:  
Sit down, sit down

Kristal:  
I'm on my rounds Chuck. I just have a minute

Chuck:  
I like your dress

Kristal:  
It's just a uniform

Chuck:  
But it's pretty. I like white, all shades of white

Kristal:

Thank you

Chuck:  
Especially over the top

Kristal:  
(Self-consciously) Is there something you wanted to discuss

Chuck:  
Well I thought there might be something you wanted to say. This is your chance

Kristal:  
I think I will have to continue this later

Chuck:  
Don't go. I've noticed how you look at me. I realize this is a delicate situation. That's why I pulled you over here near the garbage where it's quiet

Kristal:  
Chuck, I don't think

Chuck:  
Don't deny it. Your eyes follow my every move. You know even famous people need love. What I'm proposing is that you try not to think of me as anyone special. Just a guy offering his heart to a girl. Two lonely people in the midst of a crowd

Kristal:  
A heart is a special gift. I don't take it lightly, Chuck

Chuck:  
You know I'm not all that old

Kristal:  
Of course you're not

Chuck:  
I still wake up with an erection

Kristal:  
Good for you.

Chuck:

Well a partial one

Kristal  
That's still good. Partial's good.

Chuck  
I like to be perfectly honest

Kristal  
A fine quality in a man.

Chuck  
Do you think we could go out sometime? If you want to, that is. I'm not all that old. I'm only here because I'm not what I used to be

Kristal  
Well, no one is, Chuck

Chuck  
No one is what I used to be?

Kristal  
I'm really honored, honestly I am, but rules are rules. We are not allowed to fraternize with the residents

Chuck  
We don't have to fraternize. Just go out

Kristal  
We'll see. I have to be going

Chuck  
I'm going to leave this place soon and I'm going to take you with me

Kristal  
O.k. Bye. We'll talk later

Chuck  
(calls after) I like your dress. The top. I never thought I'd be the man I am. I'm not who you think I am. I'm better. I'm younger than I look. I'll get out of here. You'll see. I'm leaving this place one way or

another. With or without you. I'm not staying here. I'm not wasting a partial erection. (Chuck off)

Sunroom:

Mr. P is fiddling with a flower, examining it petal by petal. Mrs. Picks a flower out of the vase to sing into it like a mic. She dances around Mr. P to get his attention. She peeks over her shoulder at him coquettishly and sings)

Mrs. P:

I'm in love with you Honey/Say you love me too, Honey? No one else will do, honey/It's funny but it's true/ Loved you from the start, honey/ Bless your little heart, Honey/ (he joins her) Everyday will be so sunny, honey, with you.

Mrs. P:

You know that song?

Mr. P:

All three verses

Mrs.P:

It's a miracle. To meet someone in this day and age who knows the same song

Mr. P:

You know what

Mrs. P:

What old man

Mr. P:

You know what?

Mrs. P:

What

Mr.P:

I really really miss Bing Crosby

Mrs. P:

I know. I know

Mr.:

But

Mrs:  
Yes?

Mr.:  
I can't think of the name for things (holds up flower) like this  
microphone.

Mrs.:  
(beaming) It's a flower

Mr.:  
(happy then) What kind

Mrs.  
Yellow

Mr.:  
(Delighted) We make a good team, you and me. Together we can  
find out the names of things we lost (unbuttons shirt) Look (points  
at chest) I'm a person. See? I'm still a man, aren't I?

(Young Mr. and Mrs. P are behind them in pantomime)

Mrs. P:  
Oh yes, and a very handsome one at that (Goes behind his chair  
and brings out plastic bag and dumps content at his feet) I brought  
everything out of my top drawer to show you. (Holds up photo)

Mr.:  
I have that same picture!

Mrs.  
I know. I Know (hands him items, he fondles with confusion)

(Kristal comes in with unplugged telephone)

Kristal  
Here's the phone you ordered, Mr. P. For your business deals  
(exits)Mr. looks around for a plug and finally decides on the vase of  
flowers.)

Mrs:



Why do you need a phone. we don't know anyone anymore

(sly Young Mr. P whispers an answer into his ear)

Mr.:

I used to have a business and still have things to do. I have to call a temp

(angry Young Mrs. P whispers into her ear)

Mrs.:

A temp?

Mr.:

A secretary temp, not one you have to keep around and feed or anything. A teenager-blonde- green eyes, if they still have them

(angry Young Mrs. P whispers into her ear)

(Mrs. stuffs belongings back in bag and storms away)

Mr.:

(Mr. looks at dial.) Why do they tear the numbers off. I'll put my own on. Looks in pocket for pen. Scribbles on center of phone)

Mrs:

(Calls back) Teenagers do not have pictures of you in their top drawers. Teenagers do not know all the words to "I'm in love with you Honey."

(Chuck comes in, trying to be incognito, sits) (Mrs. rushes to him, flashing haughty look at Mr. P. Pulls chair over to Chuck)

Mrs:

Do you phone temporary secretaries?

Chuck:

(perplexed)

Mrs.P:

Good. Can I sit? (pulls chair closer) Would you like me to be interesting? (she thinks of how)

Chuck:

(perplexed)

Mrs:

(Rummaging in handbag) Let's see. Would you like to look at the picture? Here are some old postcards. This one says SeeLookout Mountain Tennessee. Why do you think they want us to see that?

Chuck:

(confused) (shakes head)

Mrs. P:

And this. Do you like this? It has a picture. Don't mess with Texas. See? there's the state. Don't Mess With Texas. How could I do that? A big state like that. A little person like me

(Mr. P comes over with phone, quizzically) (Young Mr. P whispers into his ear as if feeding idea)

Mr P.:

(To Mrs. P)(Roars) Remember me?

MrsP.

(freezes him out) (turns to Chuck who has fallen asleep or his pulled down his hat) Excuse the interruption. He is so rude

Mr P.:

(sings) I'm in love with you, Honey

(Young Mrs. P whispers into Mrs. P's ear, feeding idea)

Mrs P:

(To Mr. P) I don't know what you're talking about. Call up your friend and sing it to her (exits)

Mr P.( to telephone)

Hello? Is anyone out there

Chuck

Is anyone out there?

(Enter from center Young Mr. and Mrs. P. Each go to their older counterparts)

(Nurse walks through)

(Older is blowing kiss to someone. Mouth forming "I LOVE YOU" to Kristal)

Young Mrs.  
You are not trustworthy

Young Mr.:  
I am so. This is what trustworthy looks like

Young Mrs.:  
I heard you tell the nurse you loved her

Young Mr. P  
If you weren't eavesdropping, you wouldn't have heard anything wrong.

Young Mrs.:  
You put your hand in the cookie jar and I caught you. I saw you

Young Mr. P:  
If you weren't watching you wouldn't see it, so it wouldn't have happened

(Young Mr. P delivers a box to Mr. P)

Mr.P:  
(PICKS UP BOX, DUMPS IT OF PAPERS) Mrs. You see this box. I'm going to fill it with a song you like and put it under your grave when you die so when anyone steps on it, it'll play I'm in love with you Honey. (He gets up to dance with the box)

Mrs. P:  
(leaving) I'd rather you be faithful when I'm alive

Mr.P:  
That is not future thinking. And stop chasing me across the room

Mrs. P:  
I'd leave you in a minute but I have no place else to go

Mr.P:  
Then go there anyway. I have places I can go. (Indicates different chairs) here or there

(She moves to exit) (Young Mr. P eggs him on- gesturing: Go on. Go on. Go after her)

Mr. P:  
Girlie. Don't go. I love you

(Muriel runs in to Mr. P, breathless)

Muriel:  
Coco likes you (she sits abruptly pretending to read magazine)

(Kristal walks in)

Kristal:  
Hello Muriel. Hello Mrs. P. Oh your daughter called. She'll try to get  
in touch-uh-Sunday

Mrs. P:  
My daughter.? Oh, my daughter. Thank you. OH Thank You!

Muriel:  
(Rushes out) Coco! Coco!

(Mrs. P approaches the snoozing Mr P.) (The Young Mrs. approaches him also)

Young Mrs. P:  
(To Mrs. P) Even if you can stop him flirting in this room, there are  
too many rooms in this house

Old Mrs. P:  
(To Mr. P) You're mine because we have the same memories.

Young Mrs:  
  
(To Young Mr.) So why do you have to make everyone else so  
happy except for her

(Young Mr. and Young Mrs. P exit)

(Mr. P awakes abruptly.)

Mr. P:  
Mrs. Mrs. Where are you

(Mrs. P rushes to him)

Mrs:  
What is it old man

Mr.:  
I need to hold you. I'm frightened

Mrs.:  
What are you frightened of

Mr. P:  
I need to hold you, so you won't fall down. Because you woke up  
scared

Mrs.:  
I see. I see (She helps him to chair) Today we're going on the  
balcony couch to sit. Do you hear? No more arguments. When you  
move to a different room, a lot of different things can happen. This  
chair is getting you down. Everybody needs a change.

Mr. P:  
(turns resentful) Always bossing me around. You get out of here,  
Old Lady. I have things to do (she exits)

SCENE (time: the past)

YoungMr.P:  
Hello

Young Mrs. P  
Hello

YMr  
How are you

YMrs  
Fine. How are you

YMr.  
Top of my form. Top drawer. Never better

YMrs.  
I'm busy working right now

YMr.

Oh I can see that alright, yes indeed I see that. Folding.

YMrs.

I can't talk until after five. You know that.

YMr.

I was wondering if you could come outside for just a minute. I have something to show you

YMrs.

To show me. Oh I couldn't I just couldn't

YMr.

Sure you could. I'll get someone to watch these house dresses for a minute

YMrs

You'll get me fired

YMr.

Then you'll marry me and have someone to take care of you

YMrs.

(flattered) Oh go away now

YMr.

Okay if you won't come out I'll have to bring it in

( Mrs. busies herself folding)

YMR (signals at door, in comes string quartet, playing *I'm in Love with you, honey*)

Scene:

(Scene opens onto a room with a dais. Standing on platform are Mr. and Mrs. P as in a tableau. Mrs. P has a torn wedding veil on. Mr. has a cape around his shoulders. Chuck is dancing around, directing the show.)

Chuck:

Don't move Mr. P. This is a tableau. I got a piece of history here. You move to the right and put your arm around her. Now. look stern. Remember, you are Goebels and this here is Eva Braun. This is World War 2, so look stern

Mr.P:

I don't want to be Goebels anymore

Mrs. P:

Hush. It'll soon be teatime. Then you can rest. This is art. Isn't it, Chuck? Isn't this art?

Chuck:

With a capital R. Yessireebob.. We'll get this little program together and then we need some explosives. Just a few. Nothing ostentatious. Then we'll bring World War 2 to a close.

Mr. P:

Will there be music? I like music

Chuck:

Was the war to any particular tune you can think of?

Mr. P:

Over there. (sings) Over there

Chuck:

(sings) And the caissons go rolling along

Mr.

This robe itches

Chuck

It's the only one we could find.

Mrs. P:

What are my lines again

Chuck:

I told you 100 times. Do I have to write your lines down or something

Mrs.:

Well, some days I wake up and everything's fine. Then other days it all goes blank like you've pushed the button on the TV. off. You know like the pictures are all there somewhere but they're not on the screen at all. Down below the box somewhere and if I could just push another button and bring them up-- but there's no other button and

Chuck:  
yeah yeah yeah . I'll write them down next time. You say "Hitler. I love you"

Mrs. P:  
I love you? Are you sure that's what I'm supposed to say?

Chuck:  
I wrote the play didn't I?

Mrs.P:  
What am I doing with him, then, if I love Hitler

Chuck:  
Oh he's going to play both parts. Double up. Saves on money

Mrs. P:  
Can I keep the veil after the show is over?

Chuck:  
We'll see. You know it came out of the costume box and the nurse said we should share

Mrs. P:  
It does look nice on me

Mr. P:  
Very nice. Very very nice . I'm done (shuffles off)

Chuck:  
Actors can't leave until directors say they can. That's why actors are actors and directors are directors

Mr. P:  
I'm hungry (exits)

Chuck:  
You're fired

Mrs. P  
Who do I marry now

Chuck:  
O shut up. We were almost ready to take this to the other hall



(Young Mr. P comes on stage)

(Enter Young Mrs. P, takes his arm)

Mrs. P:  
But you're just my memory. So go away. You don't belong here.  
This is no place for you. You're not allowed

YMrs. P:  
And yet we stay

YMr.P:  
We can't go away

Mrs. P:  
Why? It's so confusing here. What is real. The now they talk about  
won't stay

Mrs. P:  
I want to change the past. I've disappointed someone. Who could it  
be (Turns to ask them but they're gone)

(Coco and Muriel walking through )

Muriel:  
I saw her. I saw her

Coco:  
Who did you see. Did you see cook steal my Dodge Dart? It's  
nowhere to be seen. Did you see her

Muriel:  
Mrs. P

Coco:  
Mrs. P stole my Dodge Dart?

Muriel:  
No no- her daughter. I saw Mrs. P's daughter

Coco  
She just made that up

Muriel  
Walking with Mrs. P chatting as nicely as you please

Coco:  
And what did she look like then

Muriel:  
Well she was tall

Coco:  
Yes

Muriel:  
Taller than I thought

Muriel  
And

Coco:  
Yes? What

Muriel:  
She had on Kristal's shoes

Coco  
Are you sure

Muriel  
I'm positive. I see them everyday, don't I, sticking out in front of her.  
When we are in our circle

Coco;  
Kristal's shoes. So she's a thief just like her mother

Muriel:  
Could be she stole your Dodge Dart too

(Young Mrs. and Mr. P enter stage, drift through)

(Young Mrs. P turns to old Mrs. P)

Young Mrs.:

He must have thought me poor company because it turns out he'd flirt with a chair if it had a skirt on it

(Young Mr. turns to Old Mr.)

Young Mr.:

The one she really loved never got off that bus. I learned that fast enough. She took my given name though, but did she ever love me

(Young Mr. and Mrs. Drift off)

Old Mr. P:

(wakes) NO

(Lights up. Mrs. P rushes over.)

Kristal:

You just upset him, Mrs. P. It's time to go now. We'll be taking you on a nice walk to the east room, the one with the flowers on the wall  
(leads Mrs. reluctantly away)

## SCENE

Mrs. P talking to MD.

Mrs. P:

Doctor That Mr. P over there – He held my hand yesterday. I mean he held my hand (hastily adding) When now was yesterday

MD:

That's called affection for you Mrs. P

Mrs.P:

I wanted you to know something else

MD:

(impatient) Yes? Yes?

Mrs.P:

I like him so much but I'm afraid

MD:  
Out with it, afraid?

Mrs. P  
I think he's losing his mind

MD:  
You all are so you might as well shut up about it

Mrs. P:  
Oh I see. Old Timer's Disease?

MD:  
Perhaps. Alzheimers yes

Mrs.  
Well we are old timers, that's true

MD:  
Now's the time we hear your complaints, your questions. And what time is that?

Mrs. P:  
Now

MD:  
Yes, now

(Chuck enters, moves through office)

Chuck:  
(to MD) I'm here to say I don't give a damn what day it is. The reason no one knows is because of you always telling us different days. It must be someone giving out bad dope. No two people in here have the same damn information. Something is wrong with the system. (exits)

SCENE

(Muriel approaches Chuck)

Muriel:  
I like your shirt, Chuck

Chuck  
it's an artist's shirt,

Muriel;  
Is it pure silk?

Chuck  
It used to be before I got in this place

Muriel:  
Could I touch it? Rub my hands down your pocket? Fold your collar? Um I love this shirt

Chuck  
Take it. I have another one

Muriel:  
You really mean it?

(Chuck strips to waist. Hands it over. Muriel puts it on top of her dress)

Coco:  
(Storms in) What is going on here. You are half naked!

Muriel:  
Chuck took the shirt right off his back to give to me. It still smells like him

Coco:  
And where is mine?

Chuck:  
I only wore one today

Coco:  
It's not very polite, Chuck to play favorites.

Chuck:  
I always wear one shirt at a time

Coco:  
Never mind. I'll go get your hairbrush. As a momento. I saw it in your room

Muriel:  
You were in his room?

Chuck:  
You were in my room?

Coco:  
Only helping to straighten up the picture. I saw it was crooked on the wall.

Chuck:  
You go in my room? That picture's of the 6<sup>th</sup> fleet. Not for women

Coco;  
I'll just go up and get my souvenir. It looks like a silver hairbrush too. Thank you Chuck

Muriel (Stroking self)  
Thank you Chuck

(Chuck left standing, looking after)

SCENE: Kristal with Mr. P

Mr. P:  
No

Kristal:  
yes (holds up flash cards) Monday

Mr.P:  
Monday

Kristal:  
Tuesday

Mr.P:  
No

Kristal:  
Tuesday

Mr. P:  
Tuesday

Kristal:  
Wednesday

Mr. P:  
No

Kristal:  
Now we have Monday Tuesday, Wednesday

Mr. P:  
No Monday, No Tuesday, No Wednesday

Kristal  
Good

Mr. P:  
(agitated at hearing Mrs. P's name) Where is Mrs. P. I've got to get her. I have something for her?

Kristal:  
We have Thursday and Friday left to read

Mr P.:  
The hell with them. Those days all smell the same around here. Soap and soup (goes to empty chair) Mrs. P used to sit right over there. She had purple hair and the sun came in and sat on it sometimes and lit it up. She liked it here, crying the way she did. She must've liked it here to cry so much

Kristal:  
She's in the new sun room. Just for the morning. We're trying it out

Mr.P  
No. She's the one with the days of the week and I'm not doing Thursday without her. Go get her. She dances with me. I think she'd taken a fancy to me

Kristal:  
Don't get excited. I'll call the doctor (exits)

Mr. P:  
NO . Get the purple lady back NOW (Throws cards)

SCENE: (Mrs. P is in her room/separate space, sorting photos)

Mr. P:  
(enters) Hello. Hello. How are you

Mrs. P:  
Fine. How are you

Mr.:  
I heard you were in a new place with flowers on the wall. The damn  
Ivy on the wall here follows my every move

Mrs.P:  
Well I'm sure you're up to your old tricks and now you don't have to  
watch out for me watching you all the time

Mr.:  
O applesauce

Mrs.:  
What do you want

Mr.:  
I -I was lonely

Mrs. P:  
Call a temp

Mr.:  
No, really lonely

Mrs.;  
What are you looking at

Mr.:  
These pictures

Mrs.;  
Our daughter



Mr.:  
I don't have a daughter

Mrs.;  
Well I do

Mr.:  
Hey Mrs.

Mrs.;  
What old man

Mr.;  
I miss Bing Crosby. Don't you? I really really miss the way he'd  
sing, don't you? Would you dance with me

(Mrs. hesitates. puts down photos. Goes to him)

(Coco and Muriel poke heads in door)

Coco:  
Yoo hoo

Muriel:  
Mr. P, Coco likes you a lot (all freeze)

(Enter Kristal. Pulls CoCo and Muriel aside)

Kristal

Mr. and Mrs. P are trying to be alone, Ladies. Come with me.

Muriel  
Oh Kristal, we were just talking about you. Well, not me of course,  
but some of the others in the craft room.

Coco  
I'll do it  
Muriel

I never get to

Coco

If you are

Muriel

(blurts) If you are a virgin

Kristal

Why Coco, That's a personal question. Why do you ask such a thing

Muriel

Being a nurse and all

Coco

Quiet Muriel

Muriel

I told them that remark "dirty nurse" wan't funny, even though I know you have to wash other people's - uh...feet.

SCENE: (simultaneous with one above?)

(Young Mrs. P packing her suit case when Mr. P arrives.)

Young Mr.:  
Where are you going

YoungMrs:  
Away

YMr:  
For good

YMrs;  
You and your floozies

YMr.

You going to him?

YMrs  
It's just a place to go

YMr.  
Not this time. One more chance (tries to hug her) I brought you a present (runs to door ,brings in phonograph) No one dances like us. We're what we have. What else is there? (Scrambling) We're the ones who say Do You Want Donuts Or Toast In The Morning

YMrs:  
Hold the toast or have it with Camille I can't break you of it

(back to present) (Young Mrs. P leads Mrs. P goes to corner of room)

(Young Mr. P leads Mr. P to Mrs P.)

Mr.P  
(sidles up) I'm in the mood for spooning

VO loudspeaker:  
All attendants to nurse's station

(enter Muriel) Muriel  
Somebody's dead. I saw the doctor carry him out. It was wing 300.  
Chuck

Mrs. P:  
Chuck!?

Muriel  
Let me go back for a minute and check. Somebody can get his fedora if they're quick. There's a fedora in his room. I saw it. I think it was a hat, anyway

Coco:  
He was always poor company anyway

Muriel:  
Who

Coco:  
Whoever it was who died

Mrs.P:  
They let people die here?

Mr.:  
That's just scare talk. Get out of here. Both of you. (Turns to Mrs.)  
Now this is to make you perk up a little, You've been so mopy of  
late. (Mrs. P softening)(Mr. dumps photos on floor and takes shoe  
box) This here box plays a tune and when you die, I'm going to bury  
it in the ground on your grave so when anybody steps on it, it plays  
our song and you think of me and no one else. (Mrs. P takes box  
gently) Do you like it?

Mrs. P:  
I do. I like it alot. (places lid on top. Lifts lid up and down) Where's  
the music

Mr.:  
You ain't dead yet!

Mrs.P:  
You're a cut up. I like that in a man

Mr:P  
Come here. Look at the sun on the venetian blinds this time of day  
(Mrs. goes over)(He grabs a kiss) You make a body feel different.  
real different. Will you tell them to let you back in my day room. I  
won't yell anymore. I promise.

SCENE: Light up (Young Mrs. sitting up sleeping with bandages around wrists.  
Young Mr. enters. Kisses her. Put coat around her. )

Young Mr P:  
I'm taking you home. I won't yell anymore. I promise

YoungMrs. P  
I want to go home too

Mrs.P:  
When I woke up all my clothes were ruined on the floor with the  
water. The cat had no food. I had to open an old sandwich to find a  
piece of meat. The baby had been living without a taste of fruit. The  
counters on my sink were dirty. The people were having a meeting  
in my house. I couldn't get inside to clean it. Who's taking care of  
my kitchen now?

End of Act 1

ACT 2

Mr. P is in sunroom deconstructing window area. Enter Coco and Muriel (excitedly) (Mr. P is tearing up window shade, writing on wall with crayon) He crams paper in his pocket

Coco:

You must believe me (to Muriel) Muriel, the new doctor is after me. I swear before the gods in the heavens, he wants my body. He says he wants to (lowers voice) examine me. I think I know where

Muriel:

He seems like a nice young man to me

Coco:

Watch out. They're the ones who'll fool you. He probably wants to violate me

Muriel:

Oh dear. Should we report him?

Coco:

Who to? They're all in cahoots

Muriel

What did he say, dear. The new doctor

Coco:

(shouting) He says I want to examine you

Muriel

What?

Coco:  
Examine--- here (looks around for paper) I'll write it (grabs paper sticking out of Mr. P's pocket)(grabs crayon) (Scribbles) (aloud)

Muriel  
You want to examine me?

Coco:  
No, I'm trying to tell you what the man said to me. He wants to violate me

Muriel  
(gasps) No. Mr. P?

Mr. P:  
(comes over. Grabs paper from Muriel) This is mine! Get your own paper

Coco  
But I'm trying to tell Muriel something

Muriel  
She wants to violate me?

Mrs. P:  
(enters)Why is Muriel crying, Coco. What have you done now.I'm calling the doctor

Coco:  
No. Don't do that (Coco rushes out with Muriel following) Not him

Mr. P:  
(Mr. P storms over to Mrs. P) They took my paper (shows her. Stuffs back in pocket)

Mrs. P:  
Turn it over. What is it

Mr. P:  
It's mine

Mrs. P:  
Give it here. Give it now! (Mr. P reluctantly hands it over)

Mrs. P:  
(reads) I want to examine you. Coco gave you this?

Mr. P:  
It was my paper

Mrs. P:  
Coco again...I knew it ! Kristal! Nurse!

(Mr. P goes back to crayon the wall)(Mrs. P leads Mr. down to chair, takes his crayons)

Mr.:  
I'm glad to see you, Lady, Where have you been. I have something for you. (He pulls out a piece of squashes cake swapped in a napkin from his pocket) For you

Mrs:  
For me?

Mr.:  
Yep. I saved my extra dessert for you I did and pulled it right off the table- for you

Mrs.;;  
I don't know what to say. Well Thank you

Mr.:  
I've taken a leaning to you

Mrs.;;  
A leaning?

Mr.:  
Yes. I realized - - when you left to go to that other room-- the one with the leaves and pictures on the wall - that I'd taken a shine to you

Mrs.;;  
That pleases me

Mr.:

That's why (indicates cake)

Mrs.;  
Thank you

Mr.:  
I'd like to say something and I've been practicing it. So here  
it  
goes. I don't want you in the other sunroom anymore and that's  
why (gets down on one knee) I'd like to ask you to be my holy  
wedded wife

Mrs. P:  
(startled) Oh

Mr.:  
Don't you want to

Mrs.:  
Well you take my breath away. I don't know  
what to say. I just came in to do these flashcards  
(Shows him) Thursday, Friday, Saturday was for  
today and I'm -I'm quite taken aback

Mr.:  
Well you don't have to answer right away. You  
could tell me after supper

Mrs.:  
Early seating?

Mr.:  
Or late. I'm not rushing you

Mrs.:  
I see

Mr.:  
We could walk around the patio together  
everyday and in this way we could get along

Mrs.:  
That's true. We could



Mr.:

It's just you and me and nobody needs to know if you want to keep a secret

Mrs.:

Well, what would I wear

Mr.:

We'll think of that later. A nightgown?

Mrs.:

Oh no we know each other much too well for that

Mr.:

I like the way your hair looks when you sit by the window. I like to make you stay by the window awhile more so I got this idea. To be mine forever more

Mrs.:

That's a long time

Mr.:

It's just the amount of time you got left. That's all it is and always has been. You're not spoke for are you?

Mrs.:

(huffy) why of course not. What kind of a woman do you think I am

Mr.:

Now calm yourself. I know you don't go from room to room. You're not that kind of woman. I can tell

Mrs.:

Well what would we do if we were married

Mr.:

That's not the point I'm making. We'd be together all the time and they couldn't separate us when we were working up to a good fight and you'd do my day cards and not that stupid nurse. Say yes, please and we'll have a celebration

(Chuck enters, bustling)

Chuck:

Hello folks. Today we're all going to get up on the stage and do a tableau. We're going to say something about this place we live in and when we get it down pat we'll call in the bigwigs that own the place and sell it to them. And then they'll pay us. I used to be in PR and this is exactly the way to do it

Mr.:

Excuse me but the Mrs. and I were having a personal conversation

Chuck

Save it for later, Bud. This is a money making proposition and I know the deal (calls all: Come in. Come in (In Coco and Muriel) Sit down. Sit down. We're doing a little blue-skying. We're going to do a little publicity for the docs and try to bring in a little business for ourselves. Sit. Sit. I've run these sessions before so I'll just sit you all here and you tell me the first thing that pops out of your mind. And I'll try to get it on tape. (Picks up vase) Speak right up. This is just a little jocular levity. It's not a loudspeaker. We'll make a mint. wouldn't you all like a few extra smackers?

Muriel

Chuck's dead. I saw them take him out of wing 300

Chuck  
I'm Chuck

Muriel

Then it must have been wing 400.

Chuck:

Well that was a lousy thing to do to mess up our session (silence) We need to think up some slogans and get some respect around here- get more attention. Better food. More nurses

Muriel:

These maids are nurses?

Coco:

These are not maids, Muriel. This is not the Plaza

Chuck:

Well take it up later. Now lie a little and make this place sound good. Get it on the billboards and then we'll get more field trips like we used to

Mrs.; P :

The ice skating rink. We went there to a show, I always wanted to be a figure skater

Coco:

(snickering) You have to have a figure first. Not just padding

Chuck:

Shut up you Ladies. I'll go first. "Pinecrest Rest Haven" ..later we could add some music to it..is..(looks out window) (to Mr. P dozing) Wake up, Bud.. "Pinecrest is well situated." See? Like that. How do you like it

Mrs.:

Well I don't know. What does it mean..Pinecrest is well situated

Chuck:

It sits well. like here on a hill

Muriel:

No skyscrapers?

Chuck:

Of course there's no skyscrapers in Florida

Mrs.P:

This is Florida?

Chuck:

I give up. You can't do this simple thing. I'll go somewhere else. (Gets up to leave)

Mr. P:

The chairs are nice (settles back to sleep)

Chuck:

(turns back) I like that. Pinecrest Rest Haven. the chairs are nice. I like that

(Mrs. P is beaming ) freeze scene

(Scene. Young Mr. and Mrs. P. Young Mrs. in apron. Mr. comes home.)

YMr:  
Where's my kitty kat

YMrs.  
(pretending) Who is it

YMr:  
Me. Bumberchuck

YMrs:  
Bumberchuck who

YMr:  
I brought you something (Mr. goes to door and hauls in basket  
With champagne, flowers, candles (unpacking them)

YMr:  
It happened

YMr:  
It happened with a bang. First Vice President in charge of sale  
for the central mountain region of the US of A

YMrs:  
I can't believe it finally happened

YMr:  
Why not (he sweeps her up and dances her across the room  
in  
an old fashioned cheek to cheek. Twirls her around)

YMRS.

(makes telephone ringing sound with her lips)  
brrrrnng.brrrrnng. (YMr. falls into the game) the telephone It's  
for you. (YM drops to his knees. She leans over. His ear is  
pressed against her breast) It's for you!

YMR

Hello? Hello? Who is this please?

YMRS

It's me

YMR

I can't talk now. I got places to be, people to see

YMRS

It's me

YMR

Hello? I can't hear you. Hello in there? Hello? Speak up please

YMRS

(jumps up) It's time. It's time. (She runs to a box. Opens it. Puts  
mirror on table) It must be a terrible thing to have a poor  
memory

YMR

Yes Baby, You said it

YMRS

To not have any celebrations, none! (Puts on lipstick)

YMR

(Combs hair before mirror) To have days without dancing and  
without end...like some people...like the guys I work with, for  
instance

YMRS

It's a terrible thing to have a marriage without dancing

YMR

Well we can't mourn for others

YMRS

(Puts on skirt, beads) Maybe the others would want to dance but they just have a poor memory

YMR

Maybe

YMRS

(Lets her hair down) Maybe love is having a good memory. Remembering all the steps

YMR

And the twirls. Don't forget what I told you last night. The left foot. Up. It can never be too high

YMRS

(Puts on her shoes) I know. I know. You are right. I saw that. Never high enough

YMR

(Brushes shoulders with clothes brush) One should not be afraid of a routine

YMRS

Or lift a leg high enough. I remember everything you say, We'll be great tonight

YMR

Nobody would ever be able to do it with me like you. That's for sure (Shines shoes ) When the lights go on in that contest —well we'd better start practicing our bow

YMRS

(Applying makeup) You'd never be able to start again, would you. Once you get a partner with a good routine and she knows how to lift together with you—to rise and lower and never fall—that is a very important thing. I feel sorry. Some people don't have it at all

YMR

Some people don't have the gift of dance, a song, or taps on their shoes...much less a beautiful partner

YMRS

Who lifts her leg up in the air real well in the back. Right? Like you want me to. For You

YMR.

They're ready Honey. Don't make us fail. They'll pay good money to see this famous team (escorts her on arm around the stage in a promenade) (To Mrs.) This gentleman in the front says he sent you a fan letter. Did you ever receive such a thing in the mail?

YMRS.

Is the gentleman a count from Italy? Did he fall in love with me because of my last film?

YMR.

Right. See Sir? Never be of little faith with the great or near great

(They twirl and spin and dip)

YMR

(He gets a glass off the table. Gives one to her. Clicks glass Makes a toast) to imaginary audience) Ladies and Gentlemen. You may have thought we were just two losers but it's not the end of the race until you are number one. And tonight we celebrate. It's what you do with what you have left. When the other guy drops back.

YMRS

And we are out in front. Mister First Vice President and his Wife (makes a bow).

YMR

You have to know when to hold, and know when to fold

(Phone rings)(Magic stops)

YMR

(answers) Hello? Hello? I can't hear you. Who is there? Yes, that's my name. Yes, We have a daughter. Fran...Yes. No no NO (drops glass) (Mrs. rushes over)(Mr. drops phone) It's our Fran.(picks phone up) An accident.

(Back to present scene at Pinecrest)

Echo: It's what you do with what you have left.

Mr.:

( Sleeping.) Starts abruptly) NO! (group has gone. Mrs. rushes to him)What do we do now (Mr., head in hands)

Mrs.:

We have tea unless we've missed it already. Unless the tearoom is empty (she tidies up, takes off her scarf dusting, humming, fluffing pillows)

Mr.:

I was dreaming of Fran

Mrs.:

(stops) I don't know Fran

Mr.:

I thought so. I thought we both did together

Mrs.:

Fran became an angel. Suddenly, she became an angel and that's that. (She stops keeping house and sinks in chair, numb and dazed)

(scene: Coco sees Chuck and goes to him with a present wrapped in newspaper)

Chuck:

What's this

Coco:

An offering

Chuck:



What's an offering

Coco:

An offering of love from me to you. A token. If I liked you and I'm not saying that I do, but if I did, I'd give you something as a token but I'm not sure what you would think if I did

Chuck. (opens).  
It's a goddamn picture

Coco:  
Yes

Of who  
Chuck:

Of me  
Coco:

Of you  
Chuck:

Coco:  
When I was young. For you to remember me by

Chuck:  
Why the hell would I want to do that

Muriel:  
So here you are

Coco:  
Can't I have a moment's peace without you

Muriel:  
But you are my girlfriend

(Kristal walks through with Chuck following her)

Kristal

No, I can't. I already told you.

Chuck

But it's a different machine this time. This one has two plugs, one for each person, guaranteed to make them fall in love. I'm unveiling it Thursd---

Kristal

NO! I said NO!. oh I'm sorry. I'm so sorry, no, I mean I can't. I. sorry

(Scene: MD, and Mrs. P)

MD:

This record says you and Mr. P are married 54 years.

Mrs.:

Well I have. He hasn't always been

MD:

And that your only child is dead

Mrs.:

No she's not dead. She's just not alive

MD:

And it says here you won't admit it

Mrs.:

She's coming on Sunday

MD:

And Mr. P?

Mrs.:

Who

MD

The old man you take care of

Mrs.:

Oh him

MD:

You love him

MrsP:

No I hate him but when I meet him again I love him

MD:

Why

Mrs.

Oh he isn't trustworthy. He has never been worthy of my trust.

MD:

How

Mrs.;

He cheats and lies and spends all my money and pretends we're not married

MD:

But yet you stay in the same recreation room when you could be happier in another place. We offered you a new facility with new friends

Mrs.:

Oh I couldn't do that. And leave my new friend Mr. P, the old man. He seems to like me and I like him. I'm all he has. I am his past. If I remember something and I left him I'd have to take it with me then what would he do without it

MD:

He'd have the present. Which is right now. That's all. Good food, good rest, friends, recreation, but right now

Mrs.

Oh I couldn't take his memories away and I'm the only one who owns them. I'm what he has left. That wouldn't be fair. I love him.

MD:

Get yourself together. Right now! Do you hear me?

(Chuck still following Kristal. Chuck turns away at the sight of the MD. Kristal enters observing. Mrs. P puts her head on her arms on the desk)

MD.

I guess you should get another profession, Kristal. This one isn't working out for anybody.

Kristal

I'll be leaving at the end of the month. I've made my mind up once and for all.

MD.

You say that every month, kristal. For God's sake leave, before they take your blood with them when they do. It's all too hard. Save something Kristal, like yourself. Just leave.

Kristal

(goes to Mrs. P) And what of Mrs. P?

MD

She's faking, you know.

Kristal

(helps Mrs P to her feet. Looks into her face)  
Only on a good day...a very good day (leads Mrs. P out)

(Scene: Mrs. P., Coco and Muriel in Sitting Room)

Coco:

I'm just here for awhile. Just to do research. I've always wanted to find the truth in a situation such as this--to reach into the soul of any environment. Those people in their chairs.

Mrs. P:

Some days I wake up so lonely I ask them for a pill- I want my mother or my baby. I want something I can't name. I feel everything has died and I'm the only thing left. Please don't think I'm not grateful. I'm not on the streets like some old ladies. There's enough to eat here, and all the toilet paper you can use.

Coco:

I am a good investigating reporter. For instance when someone soiled the couch over there- It was the middle pillow – well everyone was happy to avoid the stain - or turn the the cushion.

Everyone pretended no one had shit on the couch

Muriel:

The commissary is only opened two hours a day and there's nothing in it. If I could spend one hour shopping the way I used to, I'd never pass the time of day with the likes of these people again.

Coco:

About that stain on the couch—I said “Coco. Pretend this is a top story to go to the late edition” and I followed my nose to the laundry room. I finally found who did it. But then he died. My whole day wasted.

Muriel:

What I wouldn't give for an intelligent conversation about necklaces- with a thoughtful person who could talk about fashions

Coco:

However the fabric has been replaced. Now it's apple green as you can see. Colors! Now that would make a wonderful memoir.

Mrs. P:

I want my own plant in the window again- and to lay my own

table with yellow dishes .Sometimes I close my eyes and imagine my old house. It always smelled like sausage or dust in the attic-where do those smells go? Or are they still there in someone else's house.

(Enter Chuck with a ukulele)

Chuck:

Okay girls, get up. I've got three umbrellas and a chair and routine that kept me up all night.No ordinaries today. We can get this show on the road in one hour flat. Coco- you're short

Coco:

petite

Chuck:

You be in front. Mrs. P next and Muriel in the back. It's going to be called "A day in Pinecrest" us arriving all in a row. They'll love it. Get UP. Do you want to sleep away your life till you're in a dirt sleep?

(The women stay slumped in their chairs. Reluctantly take umbrellas from Chuck and line up. He pulls out a folding chair to show how he'd like them to pivot the chair while holding an umbrella, then sits in it "There")

Chuck:  
Any questions, girls?

Mrs.P:  
Chuck, I have a question.

Chuck:  
Yes yes

Mrs. P:  
How do I make Mr. P not lonely

Chuck:  
Bad doesn't get better, Dolly. Now get back in line and show a bit of leg, won't you? The audience paid to see a little privilege. Hope and energy, girls, that's what we give them (No one moves)

Coco:  
I'm not playing. I am an intellectual. I don't dance

## SCENE

(Lights flashing. Sirens. VO Loudspeaker : ALERT 4<sup>th</sup> FLOOR. Mr. P is lying on the floor with all around him. Mrs. P enters center door) Two attendants are Young Mr. And Young Mrs. P

(The following lines are slow as Mrs. P moves in. From bravado to breaking)

Mrs. P:  
Let me through. He's just trying to get my attention again. I know him like a book. (They stretcher him) Let me go. He's just doing this to get on my good side. (Exit stretcher) That man will do anything to be in the center. It's just an April fool joke.

Chuck:  
Are you crying because he was mean to you

Mrs.P:  
No, because he was nice to me

Chuck:  
You can sit by me for lunch

Mrs. P:  
No, he must just be having a bad day

Chuck:  
Here's my card. I throw a good funeral. (hands her his card. Shrugs.)

MD:  
Mrs. P. Where are you

Mrs. P:  
(numbly) Here

MD:

Where is here

Mrs. P:  
With you

MD:  
And what month is it, Mrs. P

Mrs.:  
April. April 20

MD:  
Yes. That's right!

Mrs.P  
(Alarmed that she gave right answer) Oh no. I think Christmas  
time is near. I feel that. It's close to the  
holidays, maybe Thanksgiving

MD  
I think you were right the first time, Mrs. P and I  
think you know it and I know it and I think I know  
why. You're afraid we'll send you to another home.  
That we'll send you elsewhere

Mrs.P:  
Where is elsewhere

YMrs. P:  
(to MrsP.) If you don't want to leave Mr. P  
alone, you'd better be more alert next time

Mrs. P:  
(To YMrs.) P) I know. I know. I was just so very  
tired for a moment

MD:  
Excuse me?

YMrs:  
You'll never get more in here from him than you got  
out there

Mrs. P:  
(To YMrs.) Can you stay with me? If Mr. P leaves



MD:  
A little while. I could stay a little while

YMrsP:  
Not for long. You know that. My time here is short

MD:  
I haven't much time you know

Mrs.P:  
I know that

(Young Mr. P approaches)  
(Young Mrs. P. takes his arm)

Mrs. P:  
But you're just my memory. So go away. You don't belong here.  
This is no place for you. You're not allowed

YMrs. P:  
And yet we stay

YMr.P:  
We can't go away

Mrs. P:  
Why? It's so confusing here. What is real? The  
now they talk about won't stay

YMr. P:  
The past becomes now

Mrs. P:  
I wanted to change the past but it all went away before I  
could get to it

(All file in, joining Mrs. P, to form a "group")

MD:  
(To Muriel) Where is Coco?

Muriel:  
It's a surprise

MD:  
She's late

Muriel:  
She's not coming but I'm sworn to secrecy

MD:  
Is she ill?

Muriel:  
Oh no, never better

(Coco appears at center door, wearing a hat, gloves, suitcase)

Coco:  
Here I am

MD:  
So you are

Muriel

Somebody's dead

MD:  
Quiet Muriel

Mrs.:  
Is he still dead?

Muriel  
Oh yes, quite. They took him out

Coco:  
Shut up Muriel. This is my moment

Coco:  
You all may have noticed my traveling garb

Mrs. P:  
Yes. It doesn't match at all. A green scarf would pick it  
up

Coco:  
Will you close your trap for five minutes or I'll  
hit you with my pocketbook

Mrs P:  
Purse. Purse. Yours is a purse.

Muriel:  
Go ahead, Coco, tell them why you have your coat on

Coco:  
I'm leaving

MD:  
You're leaving? Where are you going?

Coco:  
My son is coming for me and I'll be living with him  
from now on

MD:  
Is that so

Coco:  
Yes, I'll be doing a major American newsletter-  
research, writing, folding

Muriel:  
mailing

Coco:  
(hisses) quiet. This is mine

Mrs. P:  
Bye Coco

Chuck:  
Good-bye Coco I don't need you in my routine  
anyway

Mrs. P  
People who leave die

Muriel:  
Let's see what's in your suitcase

Coco:  
Excuse me, There's my cab

(MD hurries out after her)

Muriel  
There's nothing in her suitcase. I looked in the hallway

Mrs. P:  
(Calls out after her) You forgot your *purse*. It's here on the chair.  
(Throws it out after her)

**VO: Pill time**

All milling around stage talking -Characters seat themselves (Mrs. P is not present)

Light up on Mr. P snoozing centerbench –front stage in front of curtain- with oxygen tank at his side, tubes in nose.

(YMr. and YMrs. move from opposite sides to greet each other)

YMrs:  
Hello

YMr:  
Hello

YMrs:  
How are you

YMr:  
Never better. And you?

YMrs:  
Fine. Fine

Mrs.P:

( Enters. She is wearing slippers and robe, disheveled)) YMr. And YMrs. Lead her to Mr. P's bench. She sits. They stand behind)

Mrs. P:  
Hello

Mr.P:  
Hello

Mrs. P:  
They are still serving tea

Mr. P:  
With honey? (Mrs. nods) And hot milk? I'd like that

Mrs. P:  
With me?

Mr.P:  
You're the one I want for tea time

Mrs P:  
So you're my date. Now you're mine?

Mr.P  
I was already yours. Are you new here? I like your hair. I love red hair. I've seen you here before.

Mrs P:  
I didn't know you noticed me

Mr. P:  
How could I not notice you. Your heart is in my chest with your name on it

Mrs. P:  
What does it say

Mr.P:  
Oh.... Ah...you know (points to his chest) your name

Mrs. P:  
Mr., It's all gone now. This is what we got

Mr. P:  
What does that mean

Mrs. P:  
Now or then. It's all the same to me

Mr.P:  
What does *now* look like

Mrs P:  
Oh it's real pretty. Like real fancy wallpaper with roses

Mr.P  
I always think heaven may be behind those roses on  
the wall

YMrs:  
(To Mr P) : It's time to go

Mrs.P:  
  
Wait wait. I got us matching Pinecrest hats from the commissary.  
(He does not take the hat)

(Mr.P stands. Mrs. P starts to stand) (YMrs P and YMr.P lead him  
gently off, YMrs. P's arm is linked to Mr.P. His apparatus, left behind on  
floor. Light on his empty place on bench widens to include Mrs. P on  
bench. (She rises as if to follow them. YMr.P turns back, returns to Mrs.  
P. Sits by Mrs. P, as YMrsP leads Mr. P off.

YMr.P:  
(To Mrs. P) It's time to stay. (YMr.P sits by her,  
takes her hand. She leans her head on his shoulder.)  
(YMR stands, takes her hand - *they dance to  
HONEY*)

end