

Memorial Day

a play in two acts

by

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Cast of Characters

Nate Goldman – 54 and 28. Joe’s lover in 1992.

George Harris – 44. A physician tired of being in demand.

Martin Kiernan – 44. George’s lover.

Joe Morrissey – 44. An old friend.

Terrence “Evelyn” O’Brien – 24, eternally. George’s first lover.

Monica Kaufman Rosenbaum Harris McIntyre – 43. George’s ex-wife.

Setting

A beach house.

Rehoboth Beach, Delaware.

Memorial Day weekend, 2018 and 1992.

Act One

Scene 1 – Friday evening, 2018

Scene 2 – Friday night, 1992

Scene 3 – Saturday morning, 1992

Scene 4 – Ninety minutes later, 1992

Act Two

Scene 1 – An hour later, 1992

Scene 2 – Saturday night, 1992

Scene 3 – Monday morning, 1992

Synopsis

Memorial Day explores the disorientation and despair of the early days of the AIDS crisis through the experience of a physician struggling with feelings of helplessness and inadequacy in the face of the relentless virus and celebrates the resilience of its survivors.

For Nalty

With love,
And with awe.

Memorial Day

Act One.

Scene 1

Setting: A bungalow in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware. Memorial Day weekend. 2018.

At rise: Friday. Early evening.

NATE GOLDMAN, 54, approaches the bungalow and stops a good distance away.

NATE

Well ... Oh my. It looks ... it looks eerily similar. I didn't know if it would even still be standing. Something that could also be said of me.

I met my husband here. Twenty-six years ago. At a time when the idea that he could ever become my husband was unimaginable. As was the idea that I would still be around 26 years later. I had been diagnosed with AIDS over a year before ... I shouldn't have had another year left. But somehow and inexplicably I have lived with AIDS for nearly 28 years. Lived well. Lived fully. But fact that I am alive at all stuns me. Daily. Better men, smarter men, men who took better care ... I have stopped trying to understand. Men who could have contributed so much more... I guess I should say I still struggle to stop trying to understand. And I am grateful to have had these years.

Martin died last December. He did not have AIDS. We started as strangers stranded on the same desert isle. We became business partners. He was a realtor in a bad market and I was a miserable architect, but a hell of a carpenter. We started flipping houses. That clicked first. And then we couldn't not ... we had to accept ... we just really enjoyed ... we could work together all day and still look forward to hanging out after ... It was weird at first, but once we started ... all our efforts to take things slow were doomed. We didn't just last, we thrived. We were as unlikely and miraculous as my survival.

When Martin turned 50, we had known each other for almost six years and been together for over five. I was 34. He had never been weird about the age difference ... but something about hitting 50 made it an issue. I don't know exactly how he got fixated on ice skating ... but that became his fountain of youth. He took classes and we took classes and he became surprisingly adept. Not much of one for jumps and triple axels and the like, but he could move quickly and with real grace. And he loved it. What he loved most as he got older, was coming out on a rink where no one knew him and getting these bemused and condescending glances. He was fit and fine, but he looked every day of his age. And he'd feign shakiness ... and then all of a sudden, he'd be zooming and turning and spinning and jaws would drop, and he would be incandescent with glee.

We were skating at the rink on the Mall just after Christmas ... Who am I kidding? It was December 28 at 7:42 p.m. We'd been on the ice for about thirty minutes. He was chasing me

and I turned to let him catch me ... and his head did an odd little jerk and ... it was like a switch was thrown and the lights just went out. His eyes went blank and instead of whooshing into my arms. He collapsed at my feet. An aneurysm.

And the blur started. I know there was screaming. Not mine. And children crying. And police and EMTs and a ride in an ambulance ... and knowing for sure before we'd gone a block.

I watched one man I loved ... and many others ... die a very different sort of death. So, I know how lucky he was ... and I understand how lucky I'm supposed to feel. On Monday he will have been gone five months and I am still living in a blur.

It's not that I don't know how to function without him, it's that I don't know why ...

We never even considered coming back here. I'm not sure what I thought it would do for me now. Ground me, maybe. Somehow. Honor the journey by coming back to where it started?

Or maybe I'm just an idiot.

I can't get over how ... the same ... it looks.

Or maybe this isn't about a sentimental journey at all. Maybe I'm here to remember a time when things were so much worse. Because that's going to make it easier to get through this? Or some such bullshit.

NATE stares at the bungalow for several beats but does not move toward it.

NATE

We met here. But we sure didn't meet cute.

Lights fade on NATE.

End Act One, Scene 1.

Memorial Day

Act One

Scene 2.

Setting: The bungalow. Visible are two segments of a wrap-around porch along the D and L perimeters of the set. A screen door C leads into the living room. There are doors to two bedrooms with a single shared bathroom along the US wall. There is a kitchen area R. There is an unseen exterior shower behind the bungalow.

At rise: Friday night. Late. The bungalow interior is dark. The porch is bathed in moonlight.

GEORGE HARRIS strides on from L as briskly as the cast on his right leg will allow. He's carrying more bundles and packages than many men without a recently broken ankle might. He stops at the front door with great impatience.

MARTIN KEIRNAN saunters on after him, carrying only a large gym bag and a paper bag containing a few bottles of wine.

MARTIN

Are you planning to huff and puff and blow it down?

GEORGE continues staring at the door without responding.

MARTIN

Maybe this is a bad idea. But there's no decent way to get out of it.

GEORGE does not respond.

MARTIN

I guess we could leave a note on the door. "Sorry to cancel on short notice. Key is under the cushion on the porch swing. George requires further medical attention. Returning to Washington to see a proctologist. Say a prayer his head can be extracted. Enjoy the bungalow!"

GEORGE

Just open the door.

MARTIN unlocks the front door and holds it open for GEORGE, who enters without speaking.

MARTIN

You're welcome.

MARTIN sets down his bags and begins turning on lamps in the living room as GEORGE proceeds directly to the kitchen with his haul.

MARTIN takes his gym bag to the UR bedroom and returns quickly. HE looks toward the kitchen, where GEORGE is unpacking his load, with a mix of anxiety and exasperation and then heads in with the wine.

MARTIN

I think I have the only thing we really need.

GEORGE does not respond.

MARTIN

That wasn't a jibe. (no response) George, please ... please can we try to make the best of this.

GEORGE

I was trying.

MARTIN

How?

GEORGE

I bring all these gadgets and cooking supplies and all the stuff you think is so ridiculous ... because it lets me feel like I'm entertaining ... with some kind of style ... like I can actually ... get something right ... have some kind of ... to bring pleasure ...

MARTIN

We rode in stony silence for three and a half hours because I laughed at you for bringing a cappuccino maker to the beach?

GEORGE

I can't find the right level of consolation in "this weekend is going to be hell, but you're stuck with it." I need a break. A break, Martin. And this weekend isn't going to be one.

MARTIN

You are not going to make me feel guilty for laughing at that cappuccino thing. Your stigmata may be bigger and bloodier, but mine's enough for me.

GEORGE (after a beat)

What's your point?

MARTIN

I don't know. That I'm tired and sick of it, too. That we're all tired and it's not stopping ... it makes me sick and scared to hear myself and realize that what little I have left to give isn't going to you.

GEORGE

Sucks, doesn't it?

MARTIN

Which part?

GEORGE

That neither one of us can stand the thought of an entire weekend with Joe. Oh, we're good friends so we're gonna do it, by gum! But no one is saying, "Wheee, can't wait to share a few more sobs with the widder."

MARTIN

We got through Christmas.

UNISON

"Two months to the day."

MARTIN

This may not be as a bad ...

GEORGE

Talk to me, baby. It doesn't even have to be true. Just credible.

MARTIN

He's bringing a date.

GEORGE (sound of a game-show loser's buzzer)

Sorry, time for our next contestant.

MARTIN

He is!

GEORGE

That's not going to help.

MARTIN

How do you know?

GEORGE

Where did they meet?

MARTIN shrugs.

GEORGE

His bereavement support group.

MARTIN

Oh yeah.

GEORGE

Not promising. Not promising in the right ways. It suggests an exponential increase in lugubriousness.

MARTIN

Don't be so narrow-minded. You, of all people!

GEORGE

Don't be so pompous. You, of all people! I can hear their theme song now, "Double your mourning, double your grief." They'll probably show up in matching hats with little black veils. Did you pack our black speedos?

MARTIN

As long as they don't bring a pasta machine.

JOE MORRISEY, a contemporary of GEORGE and MARTIN's, hurtles on from L, races across the porch, and bursts through the front door with a whoop of triumph. GEORGE and MARTIN are startled. JOE turns to the door to receive a twenty-eight-year-old NATE GOLDMAN, who has been heard shouting after him.

NATE (from off)

No fair! No fair!! Cheating scumdog! You knew the way.

When NATE reaches JOE, they fall into a giggling embrace.

MARTIN

His veil must have slipped off coming up the walk.

JOE (breaking from the embrace)

Sorry. Sorry.

GEORGE

Please, don't be.

JOE (gesturing)
Martin, George ... Nate. Nate ... Martin and George.

GEORGE
Welcome.

NATE
Thanks for having me.

MARTIN
Truly our pleasure. (embracing JOE) And you look great ... you look great ...

JOE
Careful. One more of those and I'll get a swelled head.

GEORGE
You do.

JOE
What about you, doctor? You look scrumptious as always, but what's with the new accessory.

GEORGE
It's an empathy building exercise.

JOE
Un-hunh.

GEORGE
I felt it was time to learn what it's like to wear a walking cast. No step too great to make myself a more compassionate caregiver.

JOE (to MARTIN)
Any point in asking you?

MARTIN
None.

JOE
That sounds juicy. (to NATE) We've got our work cut out for us, Frank.

GEORGE
I thought it was Nate.

JOE
You have to at least try to keep up.

GEORGE

What did I do?

JOE

If I'm Joe and he's Frank, then this is "The Mystery of the Dim-witted Club Foot."

NATE

I've always been more the Nancy Drew type.

MARTIN

I wonder what my childhood would have been like if you two had been The Hardy Boys.

GEORGE & JOE (together)

About the same.

JOE

You guys up for a late dinner. We didn't stop on the way down.

MARTIN

We didn't stop on the way up, either.

JOE

And maybe hit the Renegade for a while after we eat?

MARTIN

You? You want to go out dancing on a Friday ... after midnight? (to NATE) You're descended from Annie Sullivan, aren't you?

NATE

Nah., he could say "wah-wah" when I met him.

MARTIN

You're a miracle worker of some sort. It was all we could do to drag him on Saturday. Once a week was his limit!

JOE

Give it a rest.

MARTIN

I wouldn't miss this trip to the Renegade for anything! (to GEORGE) You up to it?

GEORGE

My Electric Slide may be a little off, but otherwise I'm your man.

MARTIN

Honey, through the worst of it you're my man.

GEORGE is thrown by this uncharacteristically sentimental remark from MARTIN and doesn't respond beyond taking his hand.

NATE

I hate to make a bad first impression, but I kinda need to get some dinner soon.

MARTIN

Can we finish unloading the cars so we're not at it at four a.m.?

NATE

Sure. We've got a good half hour before I start ripping limbs off passersby.

MARTIN (to GEORGE)

There are enough of us, why don't you get off your foot for a few minutes?

GEORGE

I'm fine.

MARTIN

You don't have to push yourself.

GEORGE

Why don't I have a seat and wait here?

MARTIN

Thank you. (to the others) Shall we?

JOE begins to whistle "The Song of the Volga Boatmen" as he and NATE follow MARTIN out. NATE and MARTIN join in as they recognize the melody.

As they trudge across the porch a second melody is heard from the UR bedroom. It is a long orchestral vamp into Cole Porter's "The Laziest Gal in Town." GEORGE begins to hum along. He moves from startled, as a sultry male voice begins to sing, "It's not cause I wouldn't, it's not cause I shouldn't ..." to panicked as he recognizes the voice.

TERRENCE "EVELYN" O'BRIEN, eternally 24, bursts through the bedroom door in circa 1971 show-girl drag.

EVELYN

“... And, lord knows, it’s not cause I couldn’t. It’s simply because I’m the Laziest Gal in Town!”

EVELYN holds her “big finish” pose, impervious to the absence of applause.

GEORGE (after a long beat)

Terrence?

EVELYN

It sure ain’t Princess Margaret! And, for the 10,000th time, it’s Evelyn in a dress.

GEORGE

What are ... you can’t ...

EVELYN

Tell me how much you’ve missed me!

GEORGE

I mean ... you’re not ... am I ...

EVELYN

Tell me you’ve ached for me with every fiber of your being since the last time we were together.

GEORGE

You’re not ... you can’t be ...

EVELYN

I don’t care if it’s true or not, I want to hear it. Just because a girl’s been dead awhile doesn’t mean she doesn’t still need a little reassurance.

GEORGE looks anxiously toward the front door.

EVELYN

What’s up with your leg. (Crossing toward him) Give you a nice vulnerable quality. Oooh, you got any handcuffs?

GEORGE

NO!

EVELYN

Fine. Then how about an encore?

GEORGE

Please, no ...

EVELYN

You used to like it when I'd do a private show for you.

GEORGE

I've never had a psychotic episode ...

EVELYN

Y'know, I'm starting to get the idea that you're not happy to see me.

GEORGE

But I'm having a conversation with a delusion.

EVELYN

You are damn lucky I loved you as much as I did. I wouldn't take that from many people, y'know.

GEORGE

Don't say that.

EVELYN

What?

GEORGE

Don't say you loved me.

EVELYN

Look Fuckhead, May I call you Fuckhead? You believe whatever you can or whatever you want or whatever you need, but don't you dare tell me that I didn't feel what I felt when I was on your side of things.

GEORGE

Stop. Just stop. I won't have a memory that is sacred to me turned into a freak show. Not even in my own head.

EVELYN (softening)

That's nice. No one's ever called me sacred. A few guys were heard to murmur "Sweet Jesus." And I got my fair share of "Oh my god. Oh my god. Oh-oh-oh my god. Oh my GOD!" But none of that was sacred like you say it.

GEORGE (standing)

I can't. No point in just sitting here.

EVELYN

Whatever you do is fine. Perfect. It's wonderful ... (singing) "S'marvelous, that you should care for me ..."

MARTIN, JOE and NATE enter with luggage and supplies. Although they give no indication of seeing or hearing EVELYN, GEORGE is wild with panic.

MARTIN

You haven't moved since we left? (with real concern) Are you okay?

GEORGE

I ... yeah ... of course.

MARTIN

Your room is on the right. As Joe knows there's a bathroom in between. (with a wink to Joe) with both doors closed you can hardly hear a thing.

JOE sticks out his tongue. NATE forces a smile as they take their things to the room.

EVELYN (giving MARTIN a once over)

This one yours? Looks to be in nice shape for his age.

MARTIN (to GEORGE)

What is it? You look terrible.

GEORGE

I guess Nate isn't the only one who has gone too long without eating.

EVELYN

When did your taste swing to older men?

GEORGE

When I became one.

MARTIN

What?

GEORGE

Thinking out loud. Sorry. ... I was thinking my taste didn't run to older men until I became one.

MARTIN

I am going to assume that you meant that as some kind of oddly backhanded compliment.

NATE (returning from the bedroom)

Joe will be right out. Can I give you a hand with anything?

EVELYN

And what have we here? Someone's nephew?

MARTIN

Everything but the duffel goes into the kitchen. Thanks.

EVELYN

Or are they calling them secretaries this year?

NATE (from the kitchen)

Wow!

MARTIN

What's up?

NATE

Is this a cappuccino machine?

MARTIN

Ridiculous, isn't it?

NATE

I think it's kind of neat. I love cappuccino. I didn't expect to be able to get it at a beach house.

MARTIN

Well ... no ... normally ... one wouldn't expect ... at the beach ...

GEORGE

Some older people, people stuck in their ways, people who can't imagine taking anything to the beach that wouldn't have been taken by a heterosexual couple during the Truman administration couldn't imagine ...

NATE (to MARTIN)

Does that make you Bess or Margaret?

EVELYN

I bet he wasn't eight years old when I died.

GEORGE is not completely successful at suppressing a gasp.

MARTIN

I know you're the doctor and I'm not ...

GEORGE

A little air, a meal ... I'll be fine.

JOE returns from the bedroom.

Sup-sup-suppertime?
JOE

EVELYN (a take from JOE to NATE and back)
Hmpf. Maybe the term is nurse/companion?

Shall we?
GEORGE

ALL FIVE start for the door.

EVELYN
This is going to be such fun. I haven't been dancing since I was alive.

GEORGE holds back and allows MARTIN, JOE, and
NATE to cross out onto the porch.

You are not coming with us.
GEORGE

EVELYN
Don't be silly. I wouldn't miss this for the world.

NO.
GEORGE

EVELYN
I can sit in your lap in the car. No one will even know I'm there. If you would just relax, I'd be
no trouble at all.

MARTIN returns.

MARTIN (trying to mask the depth of his concern)
George?

GEORGE
I'm sorry. I'm really sorry.

MARTIN
Can I get you ...

GEORGE
You're right. I need to take care ... I need to rest. Give my regrets to ...

MARTIN

Maybe I should stay.

GEORGE

No. I'm going to crash right away. I promise. I'd be terrible company. Go have dinner.

MARTIN

I thought you were hungry ...

GEORGE (gently)

You know there's plenty here. I can throw together a snack. Go ahead.

MARTIN (dubious)

Okay.

GEORGE

Even try to have a good time.

MARTIN

I want to find you asleep when I get back.

GEORGE

I promise.

MARTIN (not moving)

Okay.

GEORGE (a gentle peck on his cheek)

Don't keep Joe and Nate waiting.

MARTIN (exiting reluctantly)

Get some rest.

GEORGE (nodding)

I'll grab a shower ...

EVELYN

Can I scrub your back?

GEORGE (maintaining his composure with great effort)

... and be asleep before you guys even get a table.

MARTIN nods and exits.

EVELYN (advancing)
I thought he'd never leave.

GEORGE
Get away from me.

EVELYN
I remember a time when your reaction to me on a moonlit night was very different.

GEORGE
You weren't dead then.

EVELYN
Don't niggle over details.

GEORGE
If that's even what you are.

EVELYN
You were there. It seemed to matter at the time.

GEORGE
It mattered more than anything ... before or since.

EVELYN
I know. When you're only loved once it makes an impression

GEORGE
What do you want from me now?

EVELYN
To be needed. To be missed.

GEORGE
I do miss you.

EVELYN
It's not obvious.

GEORGE
It's very strange. Seeing someone who's dead. Talking ... There's a real cognitive dissonance.

EVELYN
Now there's no need for that kind of talk. I know you've had college, but that kind of talk is never necessary.

GEORGE

Where did you come from?

EVELYN

Connecticut. How many times have we been through that. I always told people Newport, but it was really Groton.

GEORGE

I'll wait.

EVELYN

The other side.

GEORGE waits.

EVELYN

I can't tell you more.

GEORGE waits.

EVELYN

We don't have ... words ... for ... it.

GEORGE

When are you going back?

EVELYN

When we're done.

GEORGE

With what?

EVELYN

You got a nice fella now?

GEORGE

Yeah. I do.

EVELYN

Good. You deserve it. You were good to me.

GEORGE

It wasn't complicated. I loved you. I did what needed to be done.

EVELYN

You know what's nice? I knew then. In that damp, itchy bed. With plastic tubes in every hole, I'd flop out of my haze and there you'd be, chinos pressed and at the ready. And I would think, "This neat and deliberate boy loves me. Loves me. In the way that people talk about. Go figure." And then I'd drift back to sleep. And then I stopped being able to flop out of it.

GEORGE

I am glad you knew. To this day, I have never wanted anything as intensely as I wanted you not to die. I wanted to have you home ... where we could talk ... and touch. Where I wouldn't have to be careful not to betray too much feeling.

EVELYN (kissing him lightly and impulsively)

Aren't you dear!

GEORGE

OH MY GOD!

EVELYN

What's wrong?

GEORGE

I felt that.

EVELYN

You were supposed to. I'm the one that's dead!

GEORGE

This is not right. It's just not. You claim to love me?

EVELYN

Yes.

GEORGE

Then back off. Give me time to ... figure this out.

EVELYN

Honey, if there's one thing I've got, it's time.

GEORGE

Swear to me you will stay out of the bedroom.

EVELYN pouts without responding.

GEORGE

Swear it.

I'm not hearing any options for fun.

EVELYN

I'm not offering any.

GEORGE

I can wait.

EVELYN

Please don't.

GEORGE

I won't lose, but I'll wait.

EVELYN

You will wait out here then.

GEORGE (backing toward the bedroom)

Not even a kiss goodnight?

EVELYN

No.

GEORGE

Or a quickie on the coffee table for old time's sake?

EVELYN

Good night.

GEORGE (smiling despite himself)

Good night.

EVELYN

See ya in the morning.

GEORGE exits into the bedroom and closes the door firmly.

EVELYN

Lights fade to black.

End Act One, scene 2.

Memorial Day

Act One

Scene 3

Setting: The bungalow. Saturday morning.

At rise: Both bedroom doors are shut. NATE is on the porch doing warm-up stretching in a pair of nylon running shorts and a pair of Adidas.

EVELYN stands around the corner to the left watching him and appreciating the view. EVELYN is dressed in a vaguely Caribbean resort wear ensemble.

GEORGE enters tentatively from the UR bedroom. He looks around the living room warily. He is relieved to find it empty. He crosses to the kitchen and is surprised to find a pot of coffee brewed. He pours a cup and crosses out onto the porch. He, too, has a moment of appreciating the view.

Good morning. NATE

Good morning. GEORGE

Feeling better? NATE

Much, thanks. I can't believe how well I slept. GEORGE

Me, too. Sometimes it helps to be somewhere other than home. NATE

This coffee is great. You ... GEORGE

NATE nods.

Not our usual ... GEORGE

NATE

Balducci's house blend. I wanted to bring something

GEORGE

You can't do better than coffee for us.

NATE

Joe said that. ... I appreciate ...

GEORGE

It's truly a pleasure to have you.

EVELYN (stepping into GEORGE's view)

It would be, wouldn't it?

GEORGE is momentarily startled but catches himself before he reveals his utter dismay to NATE.

GEORGE

Is this your first time in Rehoboth?

NATE

Sure is. My parents always took us to Lake George, and Casey and I went to the Pines.

EVELYN

Have you noticed how absolutely taut this child's abdomen is?

GEORGE

How was the Renegade?

NATE

Can I be honest?

GEORGE

Please.

NATE

I wish I could convince Joe that I don't need to be entertained ... constantly.

GEORGE

The Renegade is part of the ritual ...

NATE

I mean the music was fine and I like to dance and there were a surprising number of healthy people ... clubs in New York ... y'know ... and not as many here with the look.

GEORGE

I think Joe spent so much time at home last year that it's hard for him.

NATE

Me, too.

GEORGE

I'm sorry.

NATE

Thanks. But I wish we didn't have to be in motion like that all the time. Although ...

GEORGE

Yes?

NATE

Is Martin up?

GEORGE

He was stirring.

NATE

He mentioned last night that he wanted to come with me this morning. We said 8:30 and it's almost nine I don't want to leave without him, but I'm stretched...

GEORGE

We usually run together when we're here.

NATE

That's what he said last night.

GEORGE

Let me get him.

EVELYN

Are you serious? You're going to send him chasing this boy down the beach while you're out of commission?

MARTIN comes plodding out of the bedroom in a t-shirt, a more substantial pair of shorts, and similar Adidas.

MARTIN

Sorry to be so late.

NATE

No problem.

MARTIN

I'll be stretched out in no time.

GEORGE

Stretch carefully.

MARTIN shoots him a look.

GEORGE

One gimp in the family is already one too many. (a beat) How was the Renegade?

MARTIN

Not bad, actually. Nate even got me to dance.

EVELYN

Bet that took a handgun.

GEORGE

Where was Joe?

MARTIN

Q-street Michael's date left with an ex. Joe was comforting him.

GEORGE

After the first half-hour Q-street Michael's dates would leave with Quasimodo given the chance.

MARTIN

That's why I was happy to let Joe console him.

GEORGE

How did Joe get stuck with him?

MARTIN

Joe's sister is married to a cousin of Michael's. They tricked at the wedding. Years ago.

EVELYN (To NATE)

Before you were in kindergarten.

MARTIN

Jeez. I snap, crackle, and pop more than a bowl of cereal.

NATE

Everyone does first thing in the morning.

GEORGE

How far are you planning to go?

EVELYN

Well put.

NATE

I usually do eight. Martin said you guys do about five. So, we compromised on six.

EVELYN

Three out. A quickie somewhere. Three back.

GEORGE

Looks like you couldn't have a more perfect morning for it

EVELYN

What are the bushes like here?

NATE buckles on a fanny pack and starts off the porch.

GEORGE

Have a good run.

NATE

Thanks.

GEORGE (touching his arm)

I'm sorry I can't come with you.

MARTIN

Me, too.

EVELYN

Liar.

GEORGE

Have a good one.

GEORGE pulls MARTIN into a full and prolonged kiss. This hasn't happened in quite some time and MARTIN is taken aback.

GEORGE

Hurry back.

MARTIN

Sure.

MARTIN follows NATE off.

EVELYN

That was a bit much before breakfast, don't you think?

GEORGE takes his coffee mug back to the kitchen.

EVELYN follows.

GEORGE tops off his coffee and returns to the living room without acknowledging EVELYN. He sets his coffee on a coaster on a table and exits to his bedroom.

EVELYN moves about the room, testing locations and sultry poses. Finding a spot that can't be missed from GEORGE's chair and a pose that offers the right amount of hip, EVELYN holds.

GEORGE returns quickly with briefcase. He sits and takes out a medical journal which he attempts to read.

EVELYN

I know you're not going to ignore me.

GEORGE (without looking up)

Wanna bet?

EVELYN

Your attitude is hurtful and disappointing, but I intend to rise above.

GEORGE

Rise away. Far away.

EVELYN

Please! I am not some parlor-trick poltergeist. I won't be floating around the room causing lamps to flicker or paperweights to float to the amazement of your guests.

GEORGE

Instead you'll just be keeping me on edge.

EVELYN

There must be something I can do to help you.

GEORGE

Martin is right. I need to see someone. I knew it was bad ... but this ... you ...

EVELYN

What?

GEORGE

Words I never thought I'd say.

EVELYN

Yes?

GEORGE

I can't do it alone.

The sound of a toilet flushing is heard.

EVELYN

God damn it!

The UL bedroom door opens and a bleary-eyed JOE stumbles out in a ratty pair of sweatpants and an equally disreputable t-shirt.

JOE

Jesus. Is everyone up?

GEORGE

Looks like it.

EVELYN

If I could do haunted house shtick, you'd be looking at a pile of ash.

JOE

What's with you guys? This is a vacation. People in prison don't get up this early.

GEORGE

Can I get you some coffee?

JOE

I'll get it. You want a refill?

GEORGE

No thanks. This is already my second cup.

JOE

I don't mean to push, man, but your color is bad, your breathing is off, are you sure you shouldn't see a doctor?

GEORGE

I see a doctor every time I pass a mirror, it never seems to help.

JOE

You are a true asshole, George.

GEORGE

I appreciate the salute from a peer, Joe.

JOE (coming out of the kitchen with his coffee)

Can we sit outside?

GEORGE

Lead the way.

JOE stumbles out onto the porch and collapses into a chair. GEORGE clomps out a bit more steadily. EVELYN follows moodily.

GEORGE

And you're worried about me?

JOE

I have never felt like such a geriatric case in my life. Ya don't like to think ... y'know ... that 16 years is such a big difference.

GEORGE

It doesn't seem like it's an issue for Nate.

JOE

He's amazing. And inexhaustible. He's a sweet, good natured kid. And he can get it up 37 times a day.

GEORGE

It's nice to see you happy.

JOE

I'm grateful. And amazed. I mean, he would have been out of my league when I was the right age!

GEORGE

That's just silly.

It's like another cosmic joke.

JOE

Oh, no.

GEORGE

It's a relief not to be alone.

JOE

But ...

GEORGE

But I'm not ready.

JOE

GEORGE nods.

I haven't begun to get over Ray.

JOE

You never do. That's not the goal.

GEORGE

The apartment is still like a haunted house. Specters pop from the strangest places at the strangest times.

JOE

GEORGE (a nod to EVELYN)

Amen to that.

JOE

And I hate when it happens with Nate there. It doesn't happen as much when we're out.

GEORGE

I'm only going to say this because I know you wouldn't hit an invalid.

JOE

What's that?

GEORGE

Give it time.

JOE

Ha. Ha. I mean, it's great to be having sex again ... but I had a life with Ray.

GEORGE

It's a step forward.

JOE

Christmas was pretty awful, wasn't it?

GEORGE

It was horrendous. It had only been two months. We were all missing him.

JOE

It wasn't me?

GEORGE

Well, Joe, the proof that you're an asshole is that you mourn like an asshole.

JOE (laughing)

And your bedside manner is a sight to behold. (a beat) Y'know what I do like about it?

EVELYN

There's a mystery?

JOE

He makes sex feel young again. Not me. Sex. Sex that's just sex. Like before, only with condoms.

EVELYN

Condoms? What kind of daddy kink is that?

JOE

And part of me doesn't like it at all. Part of me wants to be able to offer more than numb from the neck up and overdrive from the waist down.

GEORGE

And you will, in time.

JOE

I'm glad I'm with a kid who's going to be able to go with the flow. Who's too young to want another big commitment thing.

EVELYN

I know two people younger than him who were capable of a big commitment thing.

GEORGE

He seems pretty grounded. Maybe you'll end up with a real friendship in the end.

JOE

Are you getting optimistic in your old age?

GEORGE

That's not the consensus view.

JOE

Not surprising with what you face every day ...

GEORGE (hand up)

Not here. We don't have those conversations here.

JOE

Right. Sorry. (a beat) I'll be more alert after a shower.

GEORGE

I have an article I should finish back in the house ...

JOE

I brought a couple of manuscripts to review ...

GEORGE

We're good. At least until the boys get back.

JOE

Let's get to it.

JOE crosses up to his bedroom. GEORGE takes both coffee mugs into the kitchen and rinses them in the sink. A somewhat deflated EVELYN follows him in.

EVELYN starts toward the kitchen, then stops and watches dejectedly as GEORGE putters through a familiar domestic routine in a familiar environment.

EVELYN turns and drops dejectedly into a chair. After a moment, GEORGE notices.

GEORGE (from the kitchen)

What?

EVELYN

Nothing.

GEORGE

Oh, god, what?

Nothing.

EVELYN

Here.

GEORGE entering with a 10" Chef's knife.

What?

EVELYN

Just run this through my heart now. It will be quicker and less painful than dealing with "nothing."

Your wit has not aged well.

EVELYN (after a beat)

It's in good company.

GEORGE (setting the knife on an end table and sitting)

GEORGE sits and picks up his medical journal.

EVELYN watches him for a moment, then begins to fidget, finally letting out an ostentatious sigh. GEORGE lowers his journal, glares, and returns to reading.

EVELYN deflates for a moment, then rises and crosses to stand behind GEORGE's chair.

What'cha readin'?

EVELYN

Journal article.

GEORGE

Is it good?

EVELYN

Want to hear some?

GEORGE

Sure.

EVELYN

GEORGE (reading from the journal)

"The data presented in this study show that HIV-infected homosexual men suffering from AIDS, even though maintaining a measured food intake (energy and protein) similar to control subjects have reduced lean body mass, extrapolated from MAMC. The loss of MAMC is not surprisingly

GEORGE (cont.)

paralleled by reduced grip strength. However, this study also showed that the HIV-infected subject group did not have TSF thickness significantly different from the control group which suggests depletion of protein stores rather than fat stores.”

EVELYN’s face crumples and she returns to her chair.

EVELYN

Now you’re just being mean.

GEORGE

No, I’m not. I have to get this read before Martin gets back.

EVELYN

Fine. (A more sincere and despairing sigh.)

GEORGE

If he finds me reading a medical journal here his head will explode. And brain matter is really hard to get out this awning stripe fabric.

EVELYN

I feel so lost. Your life has gone on without me ...

GEORGE

Well ...

EVELYN

And it should have. But this doctor stuff is beyond me. And you have Martin and all these friends ... I don’t fit in.

GEORGE

No. I’m sorry. But no.

EVELYN is near tears.

GEORGE

You’re always a part of me. You’re always in my heart. But you don’t belong here ... like this.

EVELYN

Yet here I am ...

GEORGE

And if you’re still around when I get back to DC, I will see a neurologist ... I will see a psychiatrist...

EVELYN

Do you honestly think there's a pill that can get rid of me?

GEORGE

I live in hope.

EVELYN

Do you?

GEORGE (quietly, after a moment of absolute stillness)

Touché.

EVELYN

No. I didn't mean ...

GEORGE

But you're right. I don't have a spec of hope.

EVELYN

Wait. I'm supposed to be returning the favor, right?

GEORGE

What?

EVELYN

I thought ... I have to be here to do something ... comfort ... you.

GEORGE

It's not about comfort. Or hope. Or any of that. It's about head down and charge forward. Trudge through it. And what I need to do now is trudge through this article before Martin gets back. Because my life is full of men of who are wasting away and I have to figure out ... if it's nutrition or side effects ... or what. Somehow, I have to find some way to do something that helps someone. And I have to find it soon or this crack up is only going to get worse. (holding up the journal) So, you'll excuse me?

EVELYN nods.

GEORGE resumes reading as lights fade to black.

End Act One, scene 3.

Memorial Day

Act One.

Scene 4.

Setting: The bungalow. About ninety minutes later.

At rise: In the living room, JOE, with reading glasses and pencil, is intently reviewing a manuscript.

EVELYN is on the porch moodily smoking a cigarette.

GEORGE, freshly showered and changed, enters from the UR bedroom carrying a paperback.

JOE looks up at him.

GEORGE

It's been three weeks and I'm still not used to how long it takes to shower with the cast.

JOE

How much long ...

GEORGE

Another three weeks. It's a simple lateral malleolus fracture.

JOE

Is that your own diagnosis or did you actually see an orthopedist?

GEORGE

Do you come up with your material on your own or does Martin coach you?

JOE

Nice evasion.

GEORGE

I wasn't given a choice. I'll let you get back to work.

GEORGE steps toward the front door and sees EVELYN. HE looks disapprovingly at the cigarette.

EVELYN (waving the cigarette)

Best part of being dead.

GEORGE turns back to JOE.

GEORGE

Will it disturb you if I read in here?

JOE

Depends on how loudly you turn pages.

GEORGE moves an ottoman so he can elevate his ankle, sits, and begins to read his novel. JOE returns to work and is immediately absorbed.

EVELYN enters the living room. GEORGE is aware but tries to focus on his book.

EVELYN

I've learned my lesson. I'm not going to ask you to read to me.

MARTIN and NATE come in from L., finishing up a conversation as they come onto the porch and into the house.

MARTIN

It turns out that someone had put drywall over both sets of bookends in the fifties. So, for 35 years and at least four owners, no one had a clue they were there.

NATE

Ouch.

MARTIN

Ouch is what they did to some of the molding putting up the drywall.

NATE

It protruded so they just sanded it down?

MARTIN

Bingo.

NATE and MARTIN enter the living room.

NATE

Savages.

MARTIN

I don't know if I approve of this sort of thing here. I want frivolity and indulgence.

JOE (embracing NATE)

Well, now that you've returned my muse of frivolity and indulgence.

It's a novel!

GEORGE (holding up his book)

JOE sees that it is Alexandra Ripley's *Scarlett*.

That's debatable.

JOE

Do not discourage him!

MARTIN (swatting at JOE)

Is that my *Scarlett*?

EVELYN

And bonus points for having your leg up!

MARTIN

NATE's fanny pack begins to beep. NATE removes a small plastic pill case and shuts off the alarm.

NATE

Jeez. Eleven o'clock already? We were gone longer than I thought.

GEORGE and MARTIN exchange a look as NATE crosses to the kitchen. HE returns with a glass of water and takes his pills.

EVELYN

Vigilant about his vitamins, isn't he?

JOE (returning the manuscript to his briefcase)

Is there still a branch of Lambda Rising over on Baltimore Avenue?

MARTIN

Oh yes.

JOE

Anyone up for a little shopping?

GEORGE

You don't see enough books day in and day out?

JOE

I want to see how many of our titles are out and how they're displayed.

NATE

Some might say a busman's holiday is no holiday at all.

JOE blows him a raspberry.

MARTIN

I'll go with you. The post office is open 'til noon. I can grab the mail they're holding.

GEORGE

I'm going to stay here and see if this ever gets any better.

JOE

You want me to save you some tsuris?

MARTIN

It's going to keep him still with his leg up, it's the best book ever written.

JOE

Compromise? I'll bring something better back from the bookstore.

MARTIN

Fine. Meanwhile, you keep reading!

JOE takes his briefcase back to the bedroom.

NATE

I think I'll stay here. Grab a shower.

EVELYN

And you can scrub HIS back!

NATE

If that's okay.

EVELYN

That will even be worth getting your cast wet!

GEORGE

Sure. The book's not that absorbing.

NATE

I made it about 50 pages.

GEORGE

Life's too short to go much further?

NATE, MARTIN and GEORGE all freeze. This should be a moment of extreme discomfort for all three.

EVELYN (after a beat)

Did someone fart?

GEORGE is able to suppress a laugh but can't quite hold back a snort.

MARTIN turns to glare at him.

GEORGE sneezes ostentatiously.

GEORGE

Sorry. Allergies, I guess.

MARTIN rolls his eyes and turns away. NATE laughs.

NATE

Well that was a terrible save.

MARTIN relaxes a little.

GEORGE

And you would think with the number of stupid things I say every day, I'd be better at recovery.

MARTIN kisses the top of GEORGE's head and walks away shaking his own.

JOE emerges from the bedroom in deck shoes and polo shirt.

MARTIN

I didn't realize this was a dress occasion.

JOE

It's just a clean shirt.

MARTIN

Mmmhmmm.

JOE

And this "fresh from a run look" is any less deliberate? You play to your crowd, I'll play to mine.

GEORGE

Nate and I are right here.

\

JOE (laughing)

And he's no more threatened than you are.

GEORGE

Are you going to bring back lunch or should I start something here?

EVELYN

I know how I'd vote!

MARTIN

We'll bring something back. I don't want you up if it's not necessary.

GEORGE

Cooking relaxes me!

MARTIN

Please, please stay off your ankle while you can. Promise you'll sit with your foot up 'til we get back. (to NATE) Please promise me you'll knock him down if he tries to stand up.

GEORGE

I won't budge.

JOE

Shall we? (to Nate) Anything I can bring back for you?

NATE

I'm good.

EVELYN

That would be my first guess.

MARTIN (to GEORGE)

Do you need something for indigestion?

GEORGE

Go. I'm fine.

MARTIN and JOE exit. NATE crosses to the door to watch them head off the porch and away from the house.

GEORGE

So, is this your dream vacation? Babysitting ole gramps?

NATE

Just making sure they're gone. Want me to get your walker so we can go out on the porch?

GEORGE (rising)

Lead the way, wise guy.

NATE grabs two bottles of water from the fridge and starts out. GEORGE and EVELYN follow.

GEORGE

Since I've already stepped in it ...

NATE (a take to his cast)

As it were.

GEORGE

How long have you been taking communion from Burroughs Wellcome?

NATE

fifteen months. Maybe sixteen by now.

GEORGE nods.

NATE

And, to save you the trouble:

354

Pneumonia

Not yet, but I know I have to soon.

GEORGE

354 isn't bad. I suppose the question isn't much of a conversation starter.

NATE

Better than "Do you know who you got it from?"

EVELYN's demeanor changes. SHE crosses to NATE and touches him gently. NATE does not feel her touch.

EVELYN (to GEORGE)

Maybe I'm not here for you after all.

GEORGE

It's a horrible question.

NATE

I want to ask you a favor.

GEORGE

Professional or personal?

Personal. NATE

Okay. GEORGE

Joe really thinks the world of you ... NATE (after a beat)

I doubt that. Parts of Eastern Europe, maybe ... GEORGE

He thinks that Ray would still be alive today if you had been his doctor. NATE

Then he is entirely delusional. GEORGE

Probably. But that's how much he thinks of you. NATE

And why does that matter? GEORGE

I need this to work. NATE

You don't need my endorsement ... GEORGE

You can tell him that he's not betraying Ray by being with me. NATE

You're serious about Joe? GEORGE

And you are ... NATE nods.

I am? GEORGE

I am? NATE

GEORGE

Are you usually drawn to older men?

EVELYN

Smooth!

NATE

Oh. (a beat) I am 28. (a beat) Casey was 39 when he died. He was 33 and I was 21 when we met.

GEORGE

So there's a pattern ...

NATE

We can come with our good right hands. Doesn't involving someone else always include other needs? I've never pretend that something like a father wasn't one of mine.

GEORGE

What does Joe have to offer beside sufficient mileage?

NATE

I saw him with Ray.

GEORGE

I thought you met in a bereavement group.

NATE

We're in the group, but Casey and I knew them before. We were part of the same share at Cherry Grove for two summers. We saw them in the city for dinner once in a while. They visited Casey before he died and I saw Ray at home a couple of times ... I don't want to sound mercenary, I do love Joe and we have some laughs, but I want someone around when my decline starts ... I've seen Joe. I know I can trust him.

GEORGE

Things aren't as grim as they were, you know. We're nowhere near where we should be and for that we can thank every single Reagan voter personally. But things are starting to move. We're developing more effective treatments. We're coming to understand co-factors and complementary courses of treatment.

NATE

Is this the it's not a fatal disease anymore, it's a chronic manageable illness speech?

GEORGE

I think that's becoming the case.

EVELYN

You are still the world's worst liar.

NATE

No, you don't. You think it gives people hope to say you do.

GEORGE

And hope is a bad thing?

NATE

When it's not reality based, it's lying isn't it?

GEORGE

I'm not just saying it ...

NATE

Doctor, if you look at the actuarial tables, I believe you'll find a significant discrepancy between the life expectancies of twenty-eight-year olds with and without this particular chronic manageable illness.

GEORGE

It's not imminent, not for you.

NATE

I think Christmas is looking doable, but I'll never be a Communist.

GEORGE

What?

NATE

I can't commit to a Five-Year Plan.

GEORGE

I don't think you have to rush into finding a caretaker.

NATE

You're a good friend and you don't want him stuck with another ...

GEORGE

No!

NATE

No?

GEORGE

But you may be overestimating his capacity ...

NATE

Has he said something?

GEORGE

Only how much he enjoys being with you.

NATE

Sure.

GEORGE

I'm not going to repeat the entire conversation, but that was truly the drift.

NATE

Can I ask a different favor, then?

GEORGE nods.

NATE

Don't tell him about this conversation.

GEORGE

Of course not.

NATE

Thank you. (a beat) I'm going to grab a shower. Do you want me to bring your book out?

GEORGE (standing)

No. Martin will be happier to find me in the same chair. I'll go back inside.

NATE begins to exit around the bungalow as GEORGE crosses to the door.

GEORGE

Nate ...

NATE stops.

GEORGE

Believe me, I would never do or say anything ... to discourage Joe from being what you need.

NATE

That will have to do, won't it?

GEORGE

I get your frustration.

NATE

Oh? What are you dying of?

GEORGE

I was in a meeting at the clinic three weeks ago. A budget meeting. And one of the senior administrators said that it was regrettable that some people slipped through the safety net, but that if we didn't draw lines and enforce them we wouldn't be able to afford to provide the service we do to the people we do. And I had one of those out of body experiences where I watched myself stand up and scream, "Listen you stupid, heartless, bean-counting fuck, your lines are drawn in blood." When someone else asked me to calm down, I picked up my chair and smashed it on the table. Unfortunately, our facilities budget has been cut to nothing and I didn't see the piece of carpet sticking up as I stormed out of the room, so my big exit was reduced to a flying tumble that ended in a broken ankle. Even more unfortunately, we are so short staffed, and our patient load is so urgent that my tantrum had no consequences, as well as no effect, and they were waiting for me to be back for my regular clinic hours two days later.

NATE

Did you go?

GEORGE

What else would I do?

NATE (after a beat)

That helps.

GEORGE

What does?

NATE

Knowing that you really don't have any more hope than I do.

NATE crosses behind the bungalow and off.

GEORGE looks toward EVELYN.

GEORGE

Well?

EVELYN

What?

GEORGE

No smarmy jokes about following him to the shower?

EVELYN

Is what he has contagious?

GEORGE (starting into the bungalow)
Yes.

EVELYN (following him)
Why would I want that for you? Why would you want that for Joe?

GEORGE
That's what the condoms are for.

EVELYN
Do they work?

GEORGE
Yes.

EVELYN shoots him a look.

GEORGE
They're better than nothing and they're all that we've got.

EVELYN
There's still something missing.

GEORGE
What does that mean?

EVELYN
Something that would tell me why I'm here and what I'm supposed to do.

GEORGE
If you're not just a delusion, I can't believe you don't know.

EVELYN
I don't suppose you'd like to know what life would be like for the people of Bedford Falls if you had never been born?

GEORGE glares.

EVELYN
Just a thought. (a beat) You're holding onto something. Something big

GEORGE
You honestly don't know?

EVELYN

How could I?

GEORGE

If you were a product of my mind you'd know everything in my mind, right?

EVELYN

I got nothin' between the day I died and last night. I swear.

GEORGE

After you died I had no one to talk to ... about any of it. Caring for you. Missing you. The ache was my little secret. I left the city after a few months, made up with my father, and went to Johns Hopkins. Met a woman and decided she was the answer. At least with a woman everything wasn't shameful and secret, and the aches didn't have to be sealed away. I tried not to hurt her, and it didn't work at all. Then came three wild years. And for the last eight there's been Martin.

EVELYN

Until?

GEORGE

What?

EVELYN

Something changed.

GEORGE

I broke my ankle.

EVELYN

I'm not here for orthopedics. What broke your spirit?

GEORGE

That young man is very sick and will soon be dying. That's all I see, every day, by the dozen. And you ask what broke my spirit?

EVELYN

You don't have to tell me. But you have to tell someone. And I know you remember just how well I can badger. You have people to talk to now and you are choosing not to talk to them.

GEORGE sinks back in the chair, overwhelmed.

GEORGE

You have no idea. You have no fucking idea.

EVELYN

And I won't until you tell me. Or someone.

GEORGE

I wasn't raised Catholic, but you're still not what I'd look for in a confessor.

EVELYN

I'm sure I can rustle up a nun's habit ...

GEORGE (shaking his head)

No, thanks.

EVELYN

Then you owe it to Martin.

GEORGE

Yes. You're right. I do. (a beat) You better hope ... I have to trust he's up to it.

EVELYN

I hate suspense.

GEORGE

Sorry.

EVELYN

Mind if I smoke?

GEORGE

On the porch.

EVELYN starts toward the door.

EVELYN (at the door)

You want one?

GEORGE

More than you will ever know.

EVELYN exits onto the porch.

GEORGE sits staring anxiously ahead, unopened book in his lap as lights fade to black.

End of Act One.

Memorial Day

Act Two

Scene 1

Setting: The bungalow. Saturday. About an hour later.

At rise: *Scarlett* has tumbled to the floor as GEORGE has fallen asleep in his chair.

EVELYN is on the porch in rehearsal clothes (something like tights and an oversized man's dress shirt), working out steps and delivery for a new number, speaking and executing the choreography.

EVELYN

“Down with Love (hands on hips), let's liquidate all its friends (sweep the arms)
Like moon (hip left), June (hip right), roses (hip left), and rainbow's ends (hip. hip.)
(arms up) Down with Love.”

Let's give that a shot.

“Down with Love, let's liquidate all its friends
Like moon, June, roses, and rainbow's ends ...”
Down with Love ...” Bah-dah-dah-dum.

Hmm. Both arms up? Too Diana Ross? Maybe with right wig?

MARTIN and JOE approach the bungalow. JOE is carrying two bags of books and a stack of mail. MARTIN is carrying two large Grotto pizzas.

JOE (referring to the pizza)

You won't be sorry keeping it simple.

MARTIN

Don't oversell.

EVELYN sees the pizza boxes as they pass and shakes her head. JOE and MARTIN, of course, do not see her.

EVELYN

Shouldn't you break out the bong before a pizza run?

MARTIN and JOE enter the bungalow and see that GEORGE is asleep. They exchange a nod. MARTIN takes the pizza toward the kitchen. JOE sets one bag of books and the mail on the kitchen counter and proceeds UL to his bedroom with the other bag of books.

JOE stops at the bedroom door then turns back to MARTIN.

JOE

Um ... I may be awhile.

MARTIN smiles

MARTIN

Nate's not sleeping?

JOE shakes his head.

MARTIN

The pizza will get cold.

JOE

Pity. (and he closes the door behind him.)

MARTIN stands at a momentary loss, wanting to let GEORGE sleep and yet feeling suddenly lonely and isolated.

MARTIN turns back to the kitchen, grabs a bottle of wine and a corkscrew.

MARTIN

Might as well play it to the hilt.

MARTIN has a little more difficulty than he was expecting opening the wine and when he finally does the cork dislodges with a distinct pop.

GEORGE stirs.

MARTIN

Shit.

MARTIN takes down two glasses and pours both.

GEORGE shakes himself awake.

Hey.

GEORGE

Sorry ... wanted to let you sleep.

MARTIN

It's okay. Do I smell pizza?

GEORGE

MARTIN nods.

That's a surprise.

GEORGE

Joe insisted.

MARTIN

Who else would come from Manhattan to Delaware for pizza?

GEORGE

EVELYN enters the bungalow.

MARTIN crosses to hand GEORGE a glass of wine.

Not just yet. (sees Evelyn and stands) Strike that. (takes the wine from Martin)

GEORGE

That's the spirit. (they clink glasses)

MARTIN

Leave me out of it.

EVELYN

GEORGE doesn't quite conceal his response. MARTIN notices. GEORGE notices MARTIN noticing.

Was there much mail?

GEORGE

More than I expected since I was only here two weeks ago.

MARTIN

Start of the season.

GEORGE

MARTIN goes to the kitchen counter and sorts through the mail.

MARTIN

Let's see. Eighteen restaurant flyers. Nine ... no ten ... realtor solicitations. Only four churches ... word must be out. And a stack of invitations. ... fundraiser for the volunteer fire department. (looking at return addresses) Memorial for Rudy Carson, memorial for Jim Pfaltsgraff, memorial for ... do we know an Edward Fowler?

GEORGE

That's Sylvia.

MARTIN

Didn't she die last November?

GEORGE

Gotta celebrate her life here, too.

MARTIN

I guess. (holding up an envelope) Wow.

GEORGE

What?

MARTIN

I didn't know Mark Howell was sick. Didn't we just have dinner with them?

GEORGE

Right before *Trinidad Sisters* at Arena.

MARTIN

Was he discreet or did he go fast?

GEORGE

Heart attack.

MARTIN

That almost seems in poor taste. (holding up a more brightly colored envelope) And a birthday party!

GEORGE

Thank god for lesbians! (a beat) So, pizza?

MARTIN

Yeah. Might as well grab some before it gets cold.

GEORGE

Where's ...

MARTIN tilts his head toward the UL bedroom door.

GEORGE

Oh. (a beat. then smiling) Remember those days?

MARTIN (not smiling)

Yes. I do.

EVELEYN

Should be serving white wine if it's gonna be that cold.

MARTIN

Baker's choice or plain cheese?

GEORGE

Feast or famine?

MARTIN (looking to the UL bedroom)

So it would seem.

GEORGE (after a beat)

I haven't been fair to you ...

MARTIN waits.

GEORGE

I should have said something before this.

MARTIN waits

GEORGE

Long before this.

EVELYN

So spit it out already.

GEORGE

I guess I needed to slow down enough to get my thoughts together. It's hard ... I didn't know how to ...

MARTIN

I'm going to grab a slice of pizza while you're wrapping up the overture. You want one?

GEORGE (shaking his head)

Would you like to sit down?

MARTIN

You go ahead if you need to. I'm good right here.

GEORGE looks to the UL bedroom door.

MARTIN

I imagine you have plenty of time.

EVELYN

And I imagine he's going to take it.

GEORGE

Did I ever mention Larry Abernathy?

MARTIN (icily)

Not that I recall.

GEORGE

One of my long-term patients. Nineteen, maybe twenty months.

MARTIN

And ...

GEORGE

Several months ago, maybe four or five ... Larry started dropping hints about not wanting to go on.

MARTIN waits.

GEORGE

Since I didn't kick him out or run screaming from my office, he kept circling closer and closer to the real subject ...

MARTIN

Would you help him?

GEORGE nods.

EVELYN

Well of course not.

MARTIN

Did you?

GEORGE

I was torn. I didn't want to be censorious. I wanted to let him talk it out. But I thought there was no possible way.

EVELYN

Of course not.

GEORGE

The more he talked about it, the more he declined ... the more rational it seemed.

MARTIN nods.

GEORGE

I kept putting him off. He finally said, "What's it gonna take. I can't work or fuck or even read anymore. I hurt all the time. And I'm incontinent so I'm already past the point of dying with dignity. The only question left is how much more of this do you need to watch me go through?"

MARTIN

This was before (gestures toward GEORGE's ankle)

GEORGE (nodding)

Almost a month ago.

MARTIN (stung)

And you're just telling me now?

GEORGE

I'm sorry. I know I should have. I'm sorry. I didn't want to burden you with ...

MARTIN

Finish telling me now.

GEORGE

I put him off for two more weeks. I wanted to be sure he was sure.

EVELYN

No matter how sure he was ... it was wrong.

GEORGE

He was getting home infusions so the mechanism was in place. The Wednesday before, it took the nurse five attempts and over 45 minutes to get a fresh heparin lock in without collapsing a vein. I was afraid that we'd have to go to an ankle the next time. He said. "This is it. It has to be. I can't go through that again."

MARTIN

How?

EVELYN

You didn't

GEORGE

I went over that Saturday afternoon for tea. I had scones. He had a piece of dry toast and two Benadryl. I put on *The Magic Flute* like we'd agreed.

MARTIN

The Klemperer?

GEORGE

Sadly no, the Levine with Kathleen Battle.

MARTIN

Really?

GEORGE

For some reason, he was a big Kathleen Battle fan.

MARTIN

You're sure it wasn't dementia?

EVELYN

Y'know there's a time and place for the opera queen bullshit! Well, actually there isn't.

GEORGE

I prepared a syringe with 50 milligrams of diazepam. Reflexively, I started to be sure I'd pushed out all the air out. When he said, "Don't." I thought he'd changed his mind. Which was a relief. But he only meant don't clear out the air. "Insurance," he said.

I set the needle on the table next to the sofa. He waited for the overture to conclude. Then as the serpent chased Tamino to the temple of the Queen of the Night he lifted it. Unfortunately, he was already so weak and so blind that he had trouble aligning the needle with the tiny hole in the lock. After several misses, he teared up. He held out the needle and said "please." I shook my head.

EVELYN

Damn right. End of story.

GEORGE

He sighed and looked away. Finally, I held his forearm steady with one hand and guided the hand holding the needle with the other. He was able to make entry and to press the liquid in himself. He placed the syringe back on the table, sighed, smiled and said, "thank you."

The peace came over him almost immediately. Before the sleep and before the end. I held his hand until he nodded off. Tamino and the boys had just arrived at Sarastro's temple. He was gone by the time the Queen of the Night rescued Pamina. I sat with him for quite a while, then put the needle in a Tupperware bowl, sealed it, and carried it out with me as Tamino and Pamina finished their walk through the flames and the flood.

MARTIN

And you've kept that bottled up ... you haven't told anyone ...

GEORGE shakes his head.

MARTIN (hugging him)

It's okay, baby. I wish you'd said something sooner ...

GEORGE

I didn't want you implicated.

MARTIN

You did the right thing.

GEORGE

Really?

EVELYN

No. You all but murdered that man.

MARTIN (nods)

And I don't want you feeling you have to go through this shit alone.

EVELYN

I guess you shouldn't have to bear the terrible guilt alone.

GEORGE

I don't feel any guilt.

MARTIN

Good. You shouldn't.

GEORGE

I did the right thing. It's a surprise that it's the right thing.

EVELYN

Except it's not.

GEORGE

I'm sorry it's the right thing. Very sorry. But it is.

EVELYN

You're a doctor. You're not supposed to kill people.

GEORGE

I'm a doctor, my first call is to do no harm. Prolonging suffering does harm, alleviating it does not. I am sorry that this is the first effective method I've found.

MARTIN

I'm with you. You don't have to justify it to me.

EVELYN

You make it sound like the best thing you could have done for me was put a pillow over my head.

GEORGE

Could I have another splash of wine?

MARTIN

I'll gladly join you.

MARTIN takes the two glasses to the kitchen.

GEORGE (quickly and sotto voce to EVELYN)

There's an enormous difference.

EVELYN

What? You didn't love him?

GEORGE

No. You didn't ask me to.

GEORGE crosses to join MARTIN at the kitchen counter, leaving behind a stunned EVELYN.

MARTIN

I almost wish you'd been having the affair I'd imagined.

GEORGE

No chance of that.

MARTIN

Would have been easier for you, too.

GEORGE

It has been a bit of a weight.

MARTIN

And I could just tell you to stop that.

GEORGE

It's not like I intend to become the Sweeney Todd of internal medicine.

MARTIN

No. But when it's the only compassionate response. And you're asked. Of course, you'd never suggest it. I can see where that would be crossing an ethical line.

EVELYN

And another murder wouldn't?

GEORGE

Well. I'm afraid the ethical and legal lines have pretty much been obliterated. I worry about becoming too comfortable with it. With it becoming another reflexive response. "We can try switching you to DDI, but if that doesn't help we might want to look at disabling the regulator on your morphine drip."

MARTIN

You know that's how Ron Poliakof ...

GEORGE

No, it's not.

MARTIN

Yeah ...

GEORGE

No. It is not. It absolutely is not. You are mistaken.

MARTIN

Really?

GEORGE

Elizabeth Bastedo is a dear friend and long-time colleague. It is inconceivable that she would do anything to shorten a patient's life or allow herself to be ethically compromised in any way. (a beat) And I must be able to say that for her, clearly and without hesitation if there is ever an ethics or legal complaint. And she must be able to do the same for me. And that's why, if I do

GEORGE (con't.)

provide other compassionate assistance, I will not tell you the details. There is no legal reason you can't be compelled to testify against me.

EVELYN

And we wouldn't want an accomplice to murder committing perjury.

MARTIN

I'm a better liar than you think.

GEORGE

Oh, that's a comfort!

MARTIN smiles.

GEORGE smiles back.

GEORGE sets down his wine.

GEORGE

C'mere.

MARTIN

Who? Me?

GEORGE

Yeah. You.

MARTIN

I don't know, mister. You got a funny look in your eye.

GEORGE

Yeah?

MARTIN

My mother warned me about guys like you.

GEORGE (crossing to MARTIN)

Smart woman, your mother.

EVELYN

Is this what foreplay has sunk to?

GEORGE, unfazed for once, takes MARTIN's glass from his hand and pulls him into an embrace. This is something they haven't done in a while and they are quite awkward.

GEORGE breaks from their uncomfortable kissing but continues holding MARTIN's arms. MARTIN is uncertain where this is headed and trying not to seem disappointed.

GEORGE takes the hem of MARTIN's t-shirt. Their eyes meet. MARTIN nods. GEORGE lifts MARTIN's shirt above his head and off. GEORGE begins to delicately kiss MARTIN's chest.

EVELYN (really alarmed)

Are you nuts? People can see you from the street!

MARTIN shivers. HE wants desperately to find this arousing.

GEORGE begins to kiss his way down MARTIN's chest. The cast on his ankle makes his effort to kneel difficult, but he persists. HE puts his hands on the waist of MARTIN's shorts. Again, their eyes meet. Again, MARTIN nods.

Before GEORGE can move, they are interrupted by an unearthly howl from the UL bedroom.

JOE comes hurtling from the bedroom wrapped only in a top sheet. His eyes are wild with fear.

JOE

Oh my god. Oh my god. Oh my god. Oh my god. Oh my god.

Seeing GEORGE and MARTIN, he collapses to the ground with another howl.

NATE, who has pulled on a pair of shorts quickly follows him out.

JOE (looking at NATE, with rising horror)

Oh my god. Oh my god ...

NATE begins interjecting frantic "I'm sorry's" between another five or six more of Joe's "Oh my god's." When NATE puts his hand on JOE's shoulder, JOE falls silent, glares at him, and slides across the floor away from him.

NATE is stung and near tears.

MARTIN and GEORGE can't keep themselves from staring at JOE.

JOE

It broke. Oh my god. Oh my god! It broke. The fucking condom broke. It fucking broke ...

GEORGE and MARTIN are both stunned.

EVELYN

Well, that's going to be one butt-ugly baby.

NATE is softly keening "I'm sorry" over and over to no one in particular.

MARTIN helps GEORGE to his feet. GEORGE hands MARTIN his shirt. They are both done in and both know they have no choice but to rally.

GEORGE crosses toward JOE, while MARTIN moves to NATE.

JOE

No. Don't. There's nothing you can say ... I'm a dead man.

GEORGE and MARTIN exchange a glance. It hadn't occurred to them that NATE would be topping JOE.

JOE sees the look.

JOE

Yeah. You think you know a guy, right?

GEORGE

That's not ...

JOE

Shut up.

MARTIN (to NATE)

Did you ...

NATE looks at him uncomprehendingly.

MARTIN

Come before it broke?

NATE shakes his head.

GEORGE

Well that's ...

JOE

I said shut up!

NATE

I drool a lot of pre-cum so there was leakage.

JOE

What can we do? An enema! I want an enema. Do you guys have ...

MARTIN

No.

JOE

Well aren't there drugstores? Can't one of you go get one?

NATE

On my way.

MARTIN

You might want to take a wallet.

GEORGE

Don't go.

JOE

What?!?

GEORGE

It won't do any good.

JOE

How do you know?

GEORGE

By the time Nate got back ...

JOE

Yeah.

GEORGE

Well ... if ... hear me "if" ... I am saying if ... you were exposed ... the virus would already be in your bloodstream ... an enema wouldn't carry it away ... and it might damage ...

JOE

Is a word of that true?

GEORGE

Excuse me?

JOE

Since you're not capable of healing, isn't your whole job now to comfort and reassure?

MARTIN

Watch it.

JOE

Sort of a glorified undertaker's assistant.

GEORGE

You know you are overreacting, don't you?

JOE

Excuse ME?

GEORGE

You may not be infected. If everyone who was ever exposed became infected the world would have been depopulated ... probably centuries ago.

JOE

Listen. Five minutes ago, my chance of being infected went up a whole lot more than yours or (pointing to MARTIN) yours. So, I understand why it's easy for you to stay calm and why it would be a whole lot easier for you if I stayed calm. But I'm not feeling calm. I'm feeling fucking terrified!

GEORGE

And not knowing for weeks is going to be hard.

JOE

Ya think? (a beat) And there's nothing you can do for me? Nothing at all?

GEORGE (shakes his head)

I wish with all my heart ...

JOE

Thanks. (crossing to the UL bedroom) I gotta get out of here. And I can't go like this.

Joe ...

NATE (taking a step toward him)

JOE glares at him for a beat then continues off.

NATE's eyes are brimming with tears.

MARTIN (after a long beat)

I have never wanted to punch someone so much in my entire life.

Come, sit down.

GEORGE (crossing to NATE)

NATE lets GEORGE lead him to a chair.

GEORGE

How about a glass of wine?

NATE nods.

GEORGE sits near NATE.

GEORGE

I want you to listen to me.

NATE

Okay.

GEORGE

Really listen.

NATE nods.

GEORGE

When Joe came out here he was not wearing handcuffs.

NATE (not following)

No...

GEORGE

When you followed him out you were not carrying a knife.

NATE is not following GEORGE at all.

GEORGE

You did not force him to do anything against his will.

NATE

No.

GEORGE

He was a willing ... I would even guess enthusiastic ... participant in the sex you were having.

NATE nods.

GEORGE

Here's the part where you really need to listen ... You are not responsible for what happened.

NATE

Maybe not the condom breaking.

GEORGE

You are not listening, and you really must ... You will not be responsible if anything ... bad ... happens in the future.

NATE

I hate to sound like him, but that's easy to say.

MARTIN (handing NATE a glass of wine)

But he's right.

NATE

Thanks,

All three hold their wine glasses in a moment of awkward silence.

EVELYN

Can't wait to hear this toast!

MARTIN

There's pizza if you're hungry.

GEORGE and NATE shake their heads.

GEORGE (looking to the kitchen)

Or I could whip up a frothy batch of cappuccinos!

MARTIN

Oh my god!

GEORGE and MARTIN's eyes meet and they both begin to laugh. NATE is startled. GEORGE and MARTIN clink glasses and take big sips and begin to laugh again.

GEORGE

Oh my god! Do you remember what a big deal I made...?

MARTIN

Oh yes, I do!

GEORGE

Ah for the simple joys of yesterday.

MARTIN

Literally.

And the laughter continues.

NATE (starting to laugh)

Y'know coffee enemas are getting popular ...

All three are now laughing.

GEORGE (laughing)

Dear god, the last thing we need is to get him that caffeinated!

NATE (laughing)

Make it with decaf?

MARTIN (laughing)

Because the point of a coffee enema is how it tastes?

GEORGE (laughing)

Would you like cream and sugar for your enema?

MARTIN (laughing)

Sweet and Low, I'm watching my figure.

The UL bedroom door opens, and JOE enters carrying his overnight bag. HE has dressed and packed hurriedly.

The laughter fades.

MARTIN

For god's sake, what are you doing?

I can't stay here.

JOE

Joe, please.

GEORGE

What?

JOE

We've been friends a long time ...

MARTIN

You have every right to your anger. To your fear.

GEORGE

Not that I need your permission.

JOE

No. But I'll think you'll feel better in the long run if you stay here and ride out this first wave of fear. Justified as it is. And give us a chance to get beyond ... the first wave of emotion ... you're not going to feel better tomorrow morning alone in New York.

GEORGE

I'm willing to chance it. (to NATE) Pack quickly if you want a ride back to the city.

JOE

I ...

NATE

What?

JOE

I can't be trapped in a car with you for four hours. (Looks to GEORGE and MARTIN) May I ...

NATE

Of course. You can come back to DC with us on Monday and catch a train back to the city.

MARTIN

Thanks.

NATE

And there you have it. My "old friend" taking sides!

JOE

GEORGE

There are no sides here!

JOE

Oh, but there are. The sick and the well ... and I changed sides less than half an hour ago.

GEORGE

You don't know that!

JOE

And you don't know that I didn't.

GEORGE gestures his concession of the point.

MARTIN

And you don't want to waste the drama, just in case?

JOE and MARTIN lock eyes. A beat. Another beat. Then JOE picks up his bag and walks out without another word.

A beat.

MARTIN

Well fuck me running.

GEORGE

You never know when someone's going to take it hard. Or what they're going to take hard. You can't expect people ... even your friends ... not to be afraid.

MARTIN

I know.

GEORGE

And some days I can't shake the feeling that there's no point in practicing medicine if I can't keep people from suffering the way they do. Days when I think that I'm no better than an overpriced flight attendant, just smiling and saying, "Thanks for being here. Hope you had a nice life. There's not much of it left and not a damn thing I can do."

MARTIN

No.

NATE

Wow.

GEORGE

The only thing I can do is suit up and show up and offer the little we have and hope someday I'll have more to offer and 'til then let them rage and weep and say whatever they need to say to me. They truly have every right. Even Joe.

MARTIN

I don't know about that.

GEORGE

My not giving up is just the flip side of Joe's drama queen reaction.

NATE

Stop.

GEORGE

It's less rational. But it's what I have to do.

EVELYN

Well I hope you and Joe patch things up so you can be around to snuff him when he needs it.

GEORGE (raising his wine glass to NATE and MARTIN)

Gentlemen, I propose we keep drinking until there isn't a drop left.

MARTIN (lifting his glass)

"And one for Mahler."

NATE (lifting his glass)

L'chaim.

Lights fade to black.

End of Act 2, scene 1.

Memorial Day

Act Two

Scene 2

Setting: The bungalow. Saturday night. Late.

At rise: There is a Monopoly game open on the coffee table. NATE is sound asleep on the floor. MARTIN sleeps on a chair or sofa.

GEORGE is playing a surprisingly animated game of solitaire Monopoly. He rolls the dice and moves a piece as the lights come up.

GEORGE

Illinois Avenue. There's a surprise. Well, Nate, with two houses it looks like you owe Martin \$200.

GEORGE takes \$200 from "Nate's" cash and moves it to "Martin's."

GEORGE

The market here is treating you a whole lot better than the market at home, sweetie.

TERRENCE appears at the UL of the porch in a white beach robe. He should be lit carefully so as to seem iridescent and emerging from the surrounding darkness. There has been nothing ethereal about TERRENCE/EVELYN to this point, but the effect of this entrance should be distinctly unworldly.

GEORGE acknowledges TERRENCE's approach with a shift in posture and a slight tensing, but he does not look toward TERRENCE as he enters.

GEORGE (picking up the dice)

Your roll, Martin. ... No, I can't, I'm still in jail. ... Yes, it's been a while. (Thinking)
Something like 134 turns. But it's soothing and I'm not ready to come out.

TERRENCE

Monopoly?

GEORGE rolls the dice.

TERRENCE

Is that really the best you could do?

GEORGE

The Ouija board seemed redundant.

GEORGE moves "Martin's" piece.

GEORGE

Ah. Broadway. Is this the nineteenth or twentieth time I'm saying, "where the lights are bright"? (to TERRENCE, still without looking) Did you know that it's not supposed to be called MARTIN Gardens? One of the world's most enduring typos.

TERRENCE

George ...

GEORGE stiffens but doesn't respond.

TERRENCE

Look at me. Please.

GEORGE turns. Seeing TERRENCE instead of EVELYN affects him more than he wants it to.

GEORGE

Wow. You're really pulling out the stops.

TERRENCE

This is who you loved. Who you came home to.

GEORGE nods.

TERRENCE

Who you stood by. (a beat) I was wrong to judge you.

GEORGE

Yes. You were.

TERRENCE

You never turned away from me. How could I not stand by you? Evelyn's not much good at comfort, but I can be.

GEORGE

Do you have a cure? Short of a cure there's not much comfort to be had.

TERRENCE

I can't comfort the world. Only you.

GEORGE

I really wish you didn't look quite so much like ...

TERRENCE

You don't really want to go back, do you?

GEORGE

Back?

TERRENCE

To your practice. To the city of Nates. Nates who are sick and Nates who are dying. Nates who have just been diagnosed. Which you know can only mean one thing.

GEORGE

No. I don't.

TERRENCE

Nates you can really only do one thing for.

GEORGE glares.

TERRENCE

Not a judgment. A fact. (a beat) Right?

GEORGE nods.

TERRENCE

What will it be like having to decide ... over and over again ... When? When is it time? What's really sick enough? How many times will they have to ask for you to be sure?

GEORGE

It will be different for each one. There are no rules.

TERRENCE

Do you really want to have to go through making that call again and again and again ...

GEORGE

What else can I do?

TERRENCE

Let me help you.

How?
GEORGE (wanting it to be possible)

Let's go for a swim.
TERRENCE

I don't know about a swim.
GEORGE (indicating his ankle)

TERRENCE slips out of his robe. He is wearing simple swim trunks from the late 60's. TERRENCE is a slight and lithe young man. Without the layers of EVELYN frou-frou, he is boyishly appealing, bordering on wholesome looking.

TERRENCE
Come swimming with me. In the moonlight. We can swim and swim until our arms are throbbing, then let the tide carry us along.

I don't know.
GEORGE

TERRENCE
By the time we drift back to shore, everything will be different. I promise.

I don't know.
GEORGE

TERRENCE
I do. This is my chance to take care of you, as you cared for me. To truly and wholly return the favor. Don't deny me that.

I can't.
GEORGE (looking at MARTIN)

TERRENCE
He can't ease your burden. He can only take you back to more of the same.

GEORGE closes his eyes.

TERRENCE
This business of getting it out is overrated, isn't it? You told him. How much of the burden lifted?

GEORGE shakes his head.

TERRENCE (crossing toward GEORGE)

I'm not saying he doesn't love you. I'm saying his love isn't enough. Mine can be. If you let it.

TERRENCE kisses GEORGE, gently, slowly, and very deliberately.

GEORGE steps away and touches his lips.

TERRENCE (holding out a hand)

Let that promise be fulfilled.

GEORGE hesitates.

TERRENCE takes a few steps toward the door and stops.

TERRENCE

Walk with me to the beach, at least. You can change your mind any time you want.

TERRENCE picks up his robe and holds out his hand again

TERRENCE (smiling)

Didn't I always take you to the terrifying places you really wanted to be?

GEORGE smiles back after a beat. HE takes TERRENCE's hand and they exit the bungalow, cross the porch and walk into the moonlight UL.

Lights fade to black.

End of Act II, scene 2.

Memorial Day

Act Two

Scene 3

Setting: The bungalow. Late Monday morning.

At rise: NATE's packed bag sits by the UL bedroom door.

MARTIN is vacuuming in the living room.

NATE comes out the kitchen carrying clean linens he has just pulled from the clothes dryer.

MARTIN shuts off the vacuum. NATE waits.

MARTIN

Do you think ...

NATE waits.

MARTIN

It's been more than 24 hours ... I could file a missing person's report ...

NATE

Do you want me to come with you?

MARTIN hesitates.

NATE

Or, I could stay here and finish up ...

MARTIN

He didn't even take his wallet ... He's never ...

NATE

Filing the report would be a step ... I don't know ... it's doing something. Don't you feel like you need to do something?

MARTIN

I just want him to walk back in.

NATE

Meanwhile ...

MARTIN

And when they say “relationship?” and I have to answer ... what?,,, roommate?

NATE

I'll come with you.

MARTIN

Yeah. Go ahead and make the bed. Then we'll go.

NATE nods and exits UL with the sheets.

MARTIN winds the vacuum cord and returns the vacuum in the direction the kitchen.

MONICA KAUFMAN ROSENBAUM HARRIS
MCINTYRE enters from L, crosses slowly up onto the porch and knocks at the front door.

MARTIN is startled by the knock and crosses hesitantly to the door.

MARTIN

Monica. Hi. Come in.

MONICA

Hello, Martin. Thanks.

MARTIN

I'm afraid George isn't here.

MONICA can't respond.

MARTIN (after a long expectant beat)

Would you like something? A cup of coffee?

MONICA shakes her head.

MARTIN

Orange Juice? Water? A screwdriver ... we haven't touched the vodka this weekend!

MONICA

Could we sit?

MARTIN

Please.

I know George isn't here.

MONICA

Have you seen him?

MARTIN

MONICA nods.

Really?

MARTIN

MONICA nods.

Where? Is he okay?

MARTIN

MONICA

Martin. I came because I wanted ... you to hear ... to tell you as gently as possible ...

MARTIN waits.

MONICA

But there's no gentle way ... to say ... to hear ... I am so sorry, Martin.

MARTIN

Where is he?

MONICA

He drowned, Martin.

MARTIN

That's ridiculous. We never even got to the beach this weekend!

MONICA

They found him just at the edge of Cape Henlopen State Park. There were jurisdictional issues ...

MARTIN

When did they find him?

MONICA

Yesterday morning.

MARTIN

Excuse me?

MONICA

I'm sorry, Martin. He didn't have any I.D. They didn't know right away who ...

MARTIN

He's dead? You're telling me he's dead?

MONICA

I'm sorry, Martin.

MARTIN

How does that help?

MONICA

It doesn't. I know.

MARTIN

Dead? Like gone ... oh my god I will really never see him again ... Dead? Just like that?

MONICA

I can't imagine what a shock ... I've had some time ...

MARTIN

Oh?

MONICA

They called me to identify the body last night.

MARTIN

You?

MONICA

It's a small town, Martin. Someone in the coroner's office remembered we had been married.

NATE (entering from UL)

That's done. Shall we ... go?

There is a long, long uncomfortable silence.

MARTIN (finally)

Nate ... Oh my god. This is where I have to say it out loud.

NATE

Is this about George?

MONICA nods.

Is he ... have you ...

NATE

Yes ...

MONICA

Why?

NATE

I was married to George. A long time ago.

MONICA

Oh.

NATE

Monica popped in to let me know that George has drowned.

MARTIN

What?

NATE

They found his body yesterday.

MARTIN

No.

NATE

Yeah.

MARTIN

Oh Martin ...

NATE

We all know there's nothing to say. Especially since it doesn't feel a bit real. Maybe once I've seen him ...

MARTIN

You don't want to ...

MONICA

Yes. Yes, I do.

MARTIN

I didn't want to have to say this ...

MONICA

Say what? NATE

It has been expressly forbidden. MONICA

By whom? NATE

Oh my god. MARTIN

They wouldn't let me come here until they notified his next of kin. MONICA

Oh holy fucking hell! MARTIN

Wouldn't that be you? NATE

Not since the divorce. MONICA (shakes her head)

Not ... MARTIN

Who else? MONICA

Fucking Scooter. MARTIN

Fucking Scooter. MONICA

NATE is confused.

MARTIN

The Harrises are an old southern family. They've been in North Carolina since before the Revolution. And, in the way of old southern families, all adults are known by ridiculous nicknames. Scooter Harris. Senator Scooter Harris, if you please. Currently in his sixth term, I believe, in the state senate?

MONICA

He was already Senator Harris at our wedding.

MARTIN

Scooter Harris is George's father. Scooter Harris doesn't much cotton to women in pants, colored who don't know their place, and homosexuals.

MONICA

We weren't close, either.

MARTIN

So Fucking Scooter has been contacted.

MONICA nods.

MARTIN

And he said keep the queer boyfriend away from the corpse. It's mine now. All mine!

MONICA

Those were pretty much his exact words.

NATE

You're saying Martin can't see ... can't say goodbye?

MONICA nods.

NATE

You can't sneak him in somehow? It's a small town, you seem pretty well-connected.

MARTIN

Please.

MONICA

There are guys on the force who feel the same as Scooter. They'd like nothing more than to be able to arrest you trying to get in.

NATE

Jesus.

MONICA

I hate to make this worse...

MARTIN

Is that even possible.

Fucking Scooter.

MONICA

What?

MARTIN

Did George have a will?

MONICA

We always meant to ...

MARTIN (shaking his head)

Why does that matter right now?

NATE

Did George put you on the title for the house?

MONICA

No ... this house is his and the apartment in town is mine. Oh. My. God.

MARTIN

I am so sorry.

MONICA

What?

NATE

We're standing in Fucking Scooter's bungalow, Nate. No will. Next of kin. Clear path for Fucking Scooter. Which he has already realized?

MARTIN

Oh yes. He would have let you leave and come back to find the locks changed.

MONICA

Oh my god, this is just wrong.

NATE

Happens all the time. I bet it even happens in the city.

MARTIN

Not as much.

NATE

Families want nothing to do with us until we're dead, then they sweep in to claim the corpse and the worldly goods. Come on! Is there a more familiar tale?

NATE

Yeah. ... I guess. It's probably what my mom would have done to Casey if I had gone first.

MARTIN

At least Fucking Scooter doesn't have to tell people he died of "cancer." A nice clean swimming accident sits so much better with the constituents.

NATE

The ex-wife identifies the body.

MARTIN

An ex-wife is better than no wife at all. And for Fucking Scooter the last eight years never happened at all.

MONICA

But you know. And I know. You don't need to see a horrible, bloated corpse to know what's true.

NATE

Wow.

MARTIN

Monica, I do know how much you've done for me today. And I do appreciate it. But I may be able to appreciate it better after a little time has passed.

MONICA

I understand. I really do.

MARTIN

I honestly hope you don't. But for now, I need ... I don't know ... I know shooting the messenger is wrong, but it's also tempting.

MONICA

Please take everything you want from the house before you leave, today. Fucking Scooter will have the locks changed soon.

MARTIN

Thank you.

MONICA starts for the door.

MARTIN

Are you going to North Carolina?

MONICA

I am not. I had no use for Fucking Scooter before all this shabbiness. I would be betraying George, not honoring him, if I joined Fucking Scooter's charade.

MARTIN

Thank you. Really. Thank you. That helps.

MONICA

I can't imagine why ... but if you ever want to come back to Rehoboth, I have a guest room and I would be honored to have you stay.

THEY embrace. Dry-eyed, but sincerely.

MONICA

Take care.

MARTIN

You, too.

MONICA and NATE exchange wary nods and MONICA crosses out of the bungalow, across the porch, and off L.

MARTIN glances around the bungalow.

MARTIN

So this is what it's like to see a place for the last time. Maybe it's better not to know.

NATE

Maybe you should be the last one to see it.

MARTIN

Nate?

NATE

A lot of this stuff looks pretty flammable. A faulty cord on a cappuccino machine and whoosh ... Fucking Scooter is inheriting a pile of ash.

MARTIN

Tempting. But no. (a beat) That's really all he's getting anyway.

NATE

Your call. You're going to have enough ...

MARTIN

What ...

NATE

It's harder than you think.

MARTIN

Is that possible?

NATE

Discovering all the ways you're alone now. (a beat) I'm sorry. The last thing you need is me dumping my shit on you.

MARTIN

It's okay, Nate. (crossing to the kitchen) Do things. Do things. Do things. I hear keeping busy is the way to go.

NATE

Don't underestimate the value of moaning in a fetal ball.

MARTIN

Don't need a damn thing in here. (looking on the kitchen counter) And the Monopoly game definitely stays. (picking up the bag of books JOE left) Oh god.

NATE

What's that?

MARTIN

The books Joe brought to keep George from finishing *Scarlett*.

NATE comes over to look as MARTIN open the bag.

MARTIN

We're keeping these.

NATE

Really?

MARTIN

Gives me a way to reach out to Joe.

NATE nods.

MARTIN

The fewer of us there are, the more we need each other.

NATE

I really hope ...

MARTIN

So do I.

NATE (after a beat)

So, what else are we taking?

MARTIN

My clothes. Any pictures you see, photos I mean. Nothing else.

NATE

Okay. Should we get some packing supplies?

MARTIN

You should get some grocery sacks from the kitchen and throw photos in them while I grab my clothes. The walls are closing in. I have to get out of here soon.

NATE

Right.

NATE starts for the kitchen. MARTIN starts for the UR bedroom and stops suddenly.

MARTIN

Maybe ...

NATE

Yes?

MARTIN

Maybe you could grab the clothes for me.

NATE

Sure thing.

MARTIN

I can't go in the bedroom.

NATE

No. You don't have to.

MARTIN sits.

MARTIN

Nate...

Yes?
NATE (standing behind him)

MARTIN
You don't think ... Does it seem strange ... It had to be an accident, right? Didn't it?

NATE
Of course.

MARTIN
You don't think ...

NATE
No. We'd all been drinking. He wandered off and stumbled into the water.

MARTIN
Do you really believe that?

NATE
Yes. Yes, I do. (a beat) Don't you?

MARTIN
I have to. I really, really have to.

NATE squeezes MARTIN's shoulder. MARTIN puts a hand over one of NATE's.

NATE
Well? Shall we go?

MARTIN
Yes, let's go.

They do not move.

Lights fade to black.

Curtain.

End of *Memorial Day*.