

DIAMONDBACKS AND DIAMONDS IN THE SKY

By Jill Pertler

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DIAMONDBACKS AND DIAMONDS IN THE SKY

A Full Length Dramatic Comedy

By Jill Pertler

SYNOPSIS: What do you get when you combine a wedding with the end of the world? The Carter family is about to find out. Daughter, Janie, is set to marry Parisian, Michael Dubois, while Janie's father, Bob, seems more intent on preparing for an apocolypse. Add to the mix a lost ring, feuding decorator and caterer, recluse grandma who never steps outside the house, rattlesnake hunting brothers, ghostly mother-in-law, runaway bride, best man and maid of honor who haven't met – but are already in love and all the wonderful, wacky emotions and mayhem that ensue when two families prepare to unite. What starts as a simple tale of a wedding grows into a story about the complexities of love, with a dash and a half of humor thrown in on the side. And... just when you think things couldn't get any worse, the asteroid hits. Is it the end of the world, or just the beginning?

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(8 female, 8 male, 8-11 either, 0-9 extras; gender flexible doubling possible)

BOB CARTER (m).....Father of the bride, astronomy professor and doomsday prepper. *(176 lines)*

CAROL CARTER (f).....Mother of the bride and local news anchor. *(196 lines)*

JANIE CARTER (f).....Bride with a slight case of wedding jitters. *(169 lines)*

SHIRLEY CAVANAUGH (f).....Grandmother. Past Broadway star, but is now a recluse who refuses to leave the house. *(103 lines)*

LEO/LEAH CARTER (m/f).....Janie's younger brother/sister, 15. *(23 lines)*

ALBERT/ALLIE CARTER (m/f)...Janie's younger brother/sister, 14. *(21 lines)*

MICHAEL DUBOIS (m).....Groom. Originally from France. *(104 lines)*

ISAAC CARTER (m).....Bride's older brother returning home for the wedding. *(64 lines)*

DURATION: 90 minutes

SETTING: Present day Arizona. A small town called Black Canyon City, situated outside of Phoenix. The scene is of a two-story nicely appointed home, the residence of the Carter family: Bob, Carol, Leo and Albert. Janie is visiting, due to her upcoming wedding. An older brother, Isaac, is married and living on his own. Also living with the Carters is Carol's mother, Shirley.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Visible to the audience is something akin to a great room, outfitted with chairs, a couch and pillows and also a dining-type table with chairs. There is a fireplace with mantle where framed family photos are displayed. Alternately, photos could be displayed on the livingroom wall. There is a large window in the room and the table and chairs sit near it so that someone sitting at the table can look out the window.

The entry door leading to the house is on one side of stage. Another door, leading to the kitchen, is on the opposite side of the stage, but the audience cannot see the actual kitchen. At the back of the stage is a doorway that actors can walk through to access the basement stairs (not visible to the audience) and the stairs leading to the second floor bedrooms. The stairs leading upward may be visible to the audience, but it isn't necessary to have a full flight, a few stairs with a small landing will suffice.

The Bar and Grill – Rattler's, can be situated to the far side of the stage. All that is needed is a table or two. If tables are the taller variety, actors can simply stand around them. Chairs are optional. The name of the Bar and Grill, "Rattler's" could be posted as a sign on the wall over the table.

SCENES

ACT ONE:

SCENE 1 – The Carter house, Tuesday, four days before the wedding

SCENE 2 – Later that night, Bob and Carol reminisce

SCENE 3 – The next morning, Wednesday

SCENE 4 – Later that evening, the guests arrive

SCENE 5 – Later that night

SCENE 6 – The next evening, Thursday the bachelor and bachelorette parties

ACT TWO:

SCENE 1 – Friday morning, the day before the wedding

SCENE 2 – That evening, the rehearsal dinner

SCENE 3 – Later in the evening

SCENE 4 – Saturday morning, the day of the wedding

SCENE 5 – Later that same day

SCENE 6 – 5:00 p.m. on Saturday

PROPERTY LIST

ACT ONE:

SCENE 1

- Clipboard – FINNIGAN
- Fabric samples, tape measure – ROSSI
- Gallon containers of water, camera – BOB
- 2 Clipboard – CONSTRUCTION WORKER 2/ GARDENER 1
- Doormat outside of front door – MICHAEL

SCENE 2

- Photo album – BOB

SCENE 3

- Pot of coffee, 2 coffee cups – SHIRLEY/JANIE
- Ring box – ALBERT

SCENE 4

- Flashlight headband, life vest, magazine – BOB
- Bottle of wine – PHILLIPP
- Framed photo on coffee table – EMILIE/CAROL
- Class ring on a chain – TINA
- Photo from Sno Ball – ISSAC
- Bottle of dandelion wine – OASIS/CAROL

DIAMONDBACKS AND DIAMONDS IN THE SKY

SCENE 5

- Glasses of wine – JANIE/DIANE
- Purse, cell phone, ring box – JANIE

SCENE 6

- Spa night equipment for bachelorette party – FEMALES
- Tray of appetizers, champagne or wine glasses, a bottle of champagne
- Glasses for beverages at restaurant – MALES

ACT TWO:

SCENE 1

- Towels to wrap hair – OASIS/CACTUS/ TUMBLEWEED
- Pot of coffee – SAGUARO
- Wallet with money – BOB
- Suitcase – BERNARD

SCENE 2

- Photo from Sno Ball and class ring – ISSAC/TINA

SCENE 4

- Note from Janie – CAROL

SCENE 5

- Coffee pot, Powerball ticket – SAGUARO
- Baseball bat and rubber snake – PHILIPPE
- Cell phones – ALL
- Video camera – CAMERA PERSON
- Clapperboard – DIRECTOR
- Microphone – CAROL

SOUND EFFECTS

- Cell phone ringing
- Toilet flushing
- Background music
- Asteroid shower (rocks) hitting the house

COSTUME SUGGESTIONS

The play is set in the present day, so in general, characters should dress as someone of their age and occupation would dress. Of note:

CAROL - Dresses professionally.

BOB - Dresses professor-like, until Act two , Scene 4 when he wears French attire, including a beret.

VITO ROSSI - Attention to detail in his clothing. He looks tailored and perhaps colorful.

WILHELMINA FINNIGAN - Dresses conservatively.

SHIRLEY - Flamboyant in her clothing with lots of colors and patterns.

PHILIPPE - Dresses more European/French, tailored black pants and sportcoat, perhaps with an ascot and/or beret, but switches to cowboy attire in Act Two, Scene 4.

EMILIE - Wears a flowing gown of white or gray with matching tights and shoes. Her make-up should match the gown, to make her appear ghostly.

BERNARD - A man's man wears a wool or corduroy sport coat with khaki pants.

SAGUARO/OASIS/TUMBLEWEED/CACTUS - Less refined than the others and would appear more casual and a bit dissheveled.

JANIE/MICHAEL/ISAAC/TINA/LEO/ALBERT - Dress casual-nice.

JACK/DIANE - A little more country. Jack is a cowboy with boots and cowboy hat.

PASTOR - Wears black with a pastor's collar, if possible.

WAITER/WAITRESS - Could wear an apron, work attire.

CAMERA PERSON/DIRECTOR/GARDENERS/CONSTRUCTION WORKERS - Dress as they would for work.

ACT ONE, SCENE 1

AT RISE: *Curtain opens to the interior of the Carter house. CAROL and JANIE enter from the kitchen.*

CAROL: I just wish the decorator and caterer would get here.

They're 15 minutes late! I don't like it when people are late!

Especially when they are working for me!

JANIE: Patience mom. It's a virtue!

CAROL: I know. I know. I'd learn to be patient if the decorator and caterer would hurry up and get here! I have to meet my deadlines, so should they!

JANIE: Oh, mom, I've missed your spirit and energy! It's so nice to be home.

CAROL: It's nice to have you here. Even if it is just for a few busy days.

JANIE: Yes, just think...on Saturday, I'll be Mrs. Michael Dubois!

CAROL: It does have a nice ring to it, doesn't it?

JANIE: I just wish I wasn't so nervous!

CAROL: Nervous about what, dear? What's there to be nervous about?

JANIE: Everything! What if the food goes wrong? What if Michael's family doesn't like us? What if it rains?

CAROL: Rain? At this time of year? In the desert? Everything will be fine.

JANIE: You don't know that for sure.

CAROL: Of course I do...we've got everything under control. What could go wrong?

JANIE: What if I forget my vows?

CAROL: The pastor will say repeat after me. You just repeat.

JANIE: That's easy for you to say. You're Carol Carter.

CAROL: *(Puts her arm around JANIE.)* Oh Janie...try not to worry!

JANIE: I'll try!

Doorbell rings.

CAROL: *(Walking to the door. Fluffs her hair.)* I hope this is the caterer! *(Opens door.)* Hello! Miss Finnigan? Are you the caterer?

FINNIGAN: *(Enters. Perturbed, with an attitude, carrying a clip board.)* Yes. Finnigan! Who else would I be?!

CAROL: It's just...we've got so much to do!

FINNIGAN: *(Taking a good look at CAROL.)* Say...aren't you...

CAROL: *(Putting her hand out to shake with FINNIGAN.)* Carol Carter...Kare 11...News at Nine! Up to the minute and on the spot! *(Flashes a smile out to the audience as if looking into a camera.)*

FINNIGAN: I thought you were her.

CAROL: Yes...I get that a lot. *(Motions to JANIE, who is standing beside her.)* This is my daughter, Janie. She's the bride.

FINNIGAN: *(Shaking hands.)* Very good. Very good. I am Wilhelmenia Finnigan. You can call me...Finnigan. *(Looking and motioning to clipboard.)* I have the menu we discussed on the phone. I'll just need your final approval.

CAROL: *(Distressed.)* Oh...the menu! I've been thinking about that...I'm not sure we've included enough variety.

JANIE: We don't want the guests to go away hungry.

CAROL: Yes, some of them are coming all the way from FRANCE!

FINNIGAN: France? Well...we could add an appetizer of escargot.

CAROL: That sounds French.

JANIE: Yes, very French!

FINNIGAN: Or perhaps a simple canapé would do.

JANIE: That sounds good, too.

CAROL: And French. Oh, I don't know which to pick! Janie?

Doorbell rings.

CAROL: Oh, dear! *(Calling toward the kitchen.)* Bob! Can you get the door?

Silence. Doorbell rings again.

Bob! Are you here? *(To FINNIGAN and JANIE.)* It must be the decorator. Excuse me. You two review the menu. I'll get the door.

CAROL Walks to the door and opens it. MR. ROSSI, the decorator, walks in, carrying samples of fabric. BOB enters, loudly from the back door/kitchen. He is carrying four gallon jugs of water. He sets them down. The GROUP ignores him. He leaves out back door huffing and puffing.

CAROL: You must be the decorator!

ROSSI: *(Holding out his hand.)* Vito Rossi, at your service, Madam! And may I say, what a beautiful bride you will be!

CAROL: *(Pleased.)* Oh, I'm not the bride. I'm the mother of the bride!

ROSSI: Well, you could've fooled me...say...aren't you that lady on TV?

CAROL: *(Goes into her anchor woman mode.)* Carol Carter. Kare 11. News at Nine! *(She flashes a smile out to the audience as if looking into a camera.)*

ROSSI: No...that couldn't be it...I don't watch the news...too violent! I thought you were the one from the pet food commercials.

CAROL: Pet food? No!

ROSSI: Well, I thought for sure you were her...*(Glances at FINNIGAN, and says with disdain.)* Oh, it's you!

FINNIGAN: We meet again...*(With disdain.)* Mr. Rossi.

ROSSI: Indeed we do. Indeed we do. *(Turning to CAROL, with his back to FINNIGAN.)* I am sure, Mrs. Carter, you will allow me full leeway in planning for our event. In these matters, I am sure you are aware that the decorator is fully in charge of decision-making and arrangement of the overall design of the environment. I have grand ideas! Very grand thoughts for the décor!

CAROL: *(A little perplexed.)* Why...sure.

FINNIGAN: *(Stepping between CAROL and ROSSI.)* Grand is so overdone these days. I think small makes a much bigger impression! Small finger sandwiches. Teeny, tiny petit fours. petite filets! What do you know anyway, Mr. Rossi?

ROSSI: Why I...I am a professional! I will not be second guessed by a...by a mere cook! (*Turns to CAROL.*) Mrs. News at Six....you can have complete trust in me!

CAROL: (*A little perplexed.*) It's News at Nine...maybe we should ask the bride. Mr. Rossi, this is my daughter, Janie.

ROSSI takes JANIE'S hand and kisses it.

ROSSI: We will have a beautiful wedding in four days for this lovely bride! I could steal you away myself! You will put me in charge, no? Perhaps we could throw some food together ourselves and get rid of this person who calls herself...a cook!

FINNIGAN: (*Turning to ROSSI.*) You will not be up to your old tricks, Vito! The work of a caterer is much more complex than mere decorations! Next to the bride, the food is the centerpiece of the occasion. I am in control!

ROSSI: Bah! Décor is key to any successful wedding! (*Turns to JANIE.*) Which of us is in charge?! Her...or me?!

JANIE: Oh, I don't know!

CAROL: We need both food and decorations! I am hoping you two can find a way to work together.

FINNIGAN: (*Sharing at ROSSI.*) I would rather die alone in the desert and have my eyeballs pecked out by hungry vultures!

ROSSI: I should only be so lucky!

CAROL: That's enough, you two. We have work to do. (*To FINNIGAN.*) Let me see that menu again.

ROSSI: (*To JANIE.*) Perhaps we can start with fabric samples for the tablecloths. Your color scheme is using shades of the blues, no?

JANIE: Cerulean blues. Yes.

ROSSI: (*Disapproving.*) Oh, the Cerulean! Well...I'll get you some sort of blue.

JANIE: But I was so counting on Cerulean. It's my favorite color. It reminds me of the desert sky!

ROSSI: (*To himself.*) Why do I always get prima donnas!?

ROSSI begins looking through fabric swatches. BOB enters from kitchen with more water.

FINNIGAN: (To JANIE.) Have we decided between escargot or the canapés?

JANIE: (Looking at CAROL.) I don't know. Have we?

CAROL: What do you think?

JANIE: Canapes? Or maybe it should be escargot? Oh, I don't know! (Looks distraught, like she can't make one more decision.)

BOB: (From the doorway of the kitchen.) Hey, can a guy get a little help here? I've got 20 gallons of water outside. It isn't going to move itself.

FINNIGAN: Water? But we'd planned on champagne!

BOB: (Walking over toward FINNIGAN.) Champagne? Oh...for the wedding you mean! Yes! Champagne and lots of it! I'm sparing no expense!

FINNIGAN: Very good, sir!

BOB: And none of that domestic stuff. We want French champagne! The groom is from France. I don't want them thinking we're a bunch of unsophisticated cowpokes! I've even been practicing my Par Lay Vous!

FINNIGAN: French champagne it will be!

ROSSI: What do you need with all the water?

CAROL: It's not for the wedding!

BOB: It's for the bunker! Downstairs.

ROSSI: Bunker? Like a bed?

JANIE and CAROL exchange a look.

BOB: Bunker. As in shelter from disaster. Haven't you been watching the skies? A huge asteroid is set to hit the earth in just about four days and the Carter family is practicing emergency preparedness!

CAROL: (Trying to explain to FINNIGAN and ROSSI.) He built this house with a basement so we could have a shelter...he's an astronomy professor at the community college—

BOB: Darn right I am. I know about these things.

JANIE: He believes the sky is....falling.

BOB: Not the sky itself. A giant asteroid. Set to hit the desert in just days...hours after the wedding as a matter of fact. That's why I'm storing all the water in the basement. Carol, Janie, can you give me a hand?

JANIE: Sure Dad.

CAROL: If you'll excuse us for a moment.

BOB exits through the kitchen toward the back door. CAROL and JANIE follow him.

ROSSI: *(To FINNIGAN.)* Glory be. What have we gotten ourselves into?

FINNIGAN: I don't know, but if they're so interested in their water, maybe there'll be some champagne left for me!

ROSSI: Oh there you go again, always thinking about yourself! Lush!

FINNIGAN: I'm no lush! Why I never—

ROSSI Begins draping fabric and measuring things. FINNIGAN makes herself busy with her clipboard. SHIRLEY, walking very properly and elegantly— like a movie star, enters the living room from upstairs and stands in the middle of the room, waiting to be noticed.

SHIRLEY: *(Clears throat.)* Ahem...excuse me...I don't believe we've met.

ROSSI and FINNIGAN stop what they are doing and walk toward her.

SHIRLEY: I am Shirley Cavanaugh...perhaps you recognize me.

ROSSI: Are you the one from the dog food commercials?

SHIRLEY: Dog food? No! I am Shirley Cavanaugh of theatre fame. You may remember me from my starring roles on Broadway. My Fair Lady...Anything Goes...The King and I. *(Looks at ROSSI and FINNIGAN expectantly.)*

ROSSI: Doesn't ring a bell.

SHIRLEY: I suppose not. That was ages ago! Back before the...incident.

FINNIGAN: *(To ROSSI.)* Incident? What is she talking about?

ROSSI shrugs, as if to say 'I don't know'. Then, when SHIRLEY isn't looking makes a 'crazy' gesture with his index finger, twirling it by his temple.

SHIRLEY: I don't suppose word of my fame and notoriety has trickled this far into the desert. That's to be expected...but there's nothing wrong with my mind, you know.

ROSSI: *(Reacts. Thinks she saw him make the gesture.)* No...of course not.

SHIRLEY: Oh, I know what people say. How they talk. The beautiful and talented Shirley Cavanaugh...afraid to leave her own house because one night on Broadway during an encore performance...it was Guys and Dolls, I believe...when she fell off the stage and into the...orchestra pit! *(Looks at ROSSI and FINNIGAN for their reaction.)*

ROSSI: Sounds traumatic!

FINNIGAN: And dramatic!

SHIRLEY: Oh...it was. I landed on the trombone player.

FINNIGAN: My!

SHIRLEY: I hit him right in the mouthpiece! His lips were swollen for weeks! And the trombone was bent beyond repair! *(Motions the breaking of the trombone with her hands.)*

ROSSI: That's quite a story, lady.

SHIRLEY: Brings a whole new meaning to the phrase, "break a leg!"

I left the theatre that day, but I've remained on stage, at least in my mind. Ever since that day, I've felt like people were watching me play out my own life story! *(Turns toward audience, speaks to them.)* It's as though there is a mysterious, unseen audience out there. Watching. Listening. Laughing when I make a joke.

ROSSI: *(Under his breath.)* And I thought the guy with the 20 gallons of water was a cuckoo,

SHIRLEY: Crying with me when I'm in tears. *(Directly to audience.)*

Like a ghost. Audience....are you there? I know you are. Clap so I can hear you. Applause is music to my ears!

She claps her hands in front of her. Then, turns to ROSSI and FINNIGAN. Two younger brothers LEO and ALBERT enter from outside through the front door, running, out of breath.

LEO: Grandma! Have you seen dad?

ALBERT: We just saw a live one outside! For real!

SHIRLEY: A live one?

ALBERT: And we're gonna capture him!

CAROL, BOB and JANIE enter from kitchen carrying jugs of water.

LEO: Dad! You gotta come with us. Fast!

ALBERT: We spotted a live one—

LEO: It's a diamondback!

At the word diamondback, ROSSI dives behind FINNIGAN, like he is using her as a shield for protection. She is perturbed.

BOB: *(Excited.)* Where'd you see him?

LEO: Just past our old play fort, at the edge of the dried up creek.

ALBERT: We gotta get him! Where's the camera?

BOB: It's down in the bunker. Why don't you grab it and we'll head out?

LEO: He was huge, dad!

ALBERT: And ugly! Probably four feet...maybe five!

LEO and ALBERT leave toward the basement stairs.

BOB: Five feet! That's a big rattler!

ROSSI: Rattlesnakes! One more reason to hate the desert!

FINNIGAN: Oh, Rossi, you are such namby pamby scaredy cat!

ROSSI: Oh, you think you're so tough! I'd like to see you face to face with a rattlesnake!

CAROL: Would you two please get back to work?

ROSSI and FINNIGAN go back to their respective tasks. Doorbell rings. CAROL and BOB look at each other and go to answer it. JANIE follows behind them. At the door are two CONSTRUCTION WORKERS.

CONSTRUCTION WORKER 1: Hello. We're here from Desert Sand Construction. Looking for...Bob.

BOB: Finally! You're over an hour late.

CONSTRUCTION WORKER 2: We got stuck in traffic outside of Phoenix.

CONSTRUCTION WORKER 1: So where's it gonna go?

CAROL: Where's what going to go?

CONSTRUCTION WORKER 2: *(Looking at clip board.)* Let's see here, we've got an order for a 12-foot gazebo.

CAROL: Gazebo?

BOB: Out back. In the backyard. Did you get the add-on for the benches?

CONSTRUCTION WORKER 2: Yeah...two exterior benches.

CONSTRUCTION WORKER 1: We can start unpacking our gear.

BOB: I'll come out in just a minute to show you where we want it built.

CONSTRUCTION WORKER 1: Sounds good.

CONSTRUCTION WORKERS exit.

JANIE: Gazebo?...I don't remember anything about a gazebo!

BOB: I thought it would be a good idea...in case of rain.

CAROL: Rain...at this time of year...in Arizona?

BOB: You can't be too sure!

A knock at the door.

I'll get it. I'm expecting someone else. *(Opens door. At the door are two GARDENERS.)*

CAROL: Someone else?!

GARDENER 1: Hello and happy green day from Green Day gardens.

We have an order here placed by...Bob.

BOB: That's me!

GARDENER 2: We're here to install your lovely new gardens!

CAROL: Gardens?

JANIE: What gardens?

GARDENER 1: Let's see...*(Checks clipboard.)* I have an order for 50 rosebushes, in cherry red. 32 Cornflowers in bachelor's blue. And...100 French marigolds in honeycomb gold!

GARDENER 2: And then there's the Bougainvilleas!

CAROL: Bougainvilleas?!

GARDENER 2: They're bushes, ma'am. Beautiful when in bloom.

GARDENER 1: We brought a backhoe and can start digging right away. It shouldn't be too noisy.

CAROL: Backhoe?!...But we didn't order...*(Turns to BOB.)* Bob??

JANIE: Dad! What are you doing?

BOB: The backyard needs a little color! Who's heard of a wedding without flowers?

CAROL: We're going to have flowers!

BOB: And we'll have brand new gardens as well!

GARDENER 2: Excuse me. I don't mean to interrupt this interesting family discussion, but you'll have to show me where you want the water feature.

CAROL: Water feature?!

BOB: A small pond. With fish.

GARDENER 1: Koi. In assorted colors. 50 of them.

CAROL: Oh Bob!

BOB: It's going to look great! Those guys from France will see how we Americans do things! Go big or go home!

JANIE: But dad, this is the middle of the desert. All these plants will die in a week!

BOB: We only need them to last through the wedding! *(To the GARDENERS.)* I'll show you the backyard. *(Turns to leave. Pauses and then turns back to CAROL.)* Oh, and if the guy with the sound system shows up, send him out back. I'll show him where we want things set up.

CAROL: Sound system? Bob, you really are going over the top with this. Next thing you'll tell us you booked some professional entertainer...like Michael Buble!

BOB: I don't know for sure about that yet. His people haven't returned my calls.

CAROL: Oh, Bob!

BOB leaves out front door with the GARDENERS. SHIRLEY walks over to CAROL and JANIE.

CAROL: Mother, I didn't see you with all the commotion.

SHIRLEY: I thought I'd come down and check on things. I've been sharing my story with this nice young couple. Are they dating?

SHIRLEY points to ROSSI and FINNIGAN, who react negatively at being called a couple.

FINNIGAN: A couple? No way! I won't have anything to do with him!

ROSSI: Nor I with her! Couple! I'll say!

FINNIGAN: *(Turns to ROSSI.)* Now that's most bizarre thing I've heard so far.

ROSSI: And there's been no shortage of bizarre in this house!

SHIRLEY steps between ROSSI and FINNIGAN and hugs them close to her.

SHIRLEY: Oh, you'd make such a handsome couple! Why don't you give it a go?

CAROL: *(Steps forward and breaks up the threesome.)* Now mother, enough matchmaking. Why don't we let Mr. Rossi and Miss Finnigan do their work?

ROSSI: Yes! I am a professional!

FINNIGAN: *(Talking to CAROL.)* I believe I've taken care of everything that needs to get done today. The 75 chairs for the meal and service will be delivered tomorrow. I will be back the day after to prepare the rehearsal dinner.

CAROL: 75 chairs? But we ordered 125!

FINNIGAN: *(Checking her notes.)* No...my notes clearly show 75.

JANIE: Oh, no! What can we do?

ROSSI: Isn't that obvious? Miss Finnigan needs to find 50 additional chairs.

FINNIGAN: That's easy for you to say.

ROSSI: Perhaps I can assist you...Willhelmena...I have a secret source for emergency chair rental. If we leave here and make a few phone calls, we should have the problem solved.

FINNIGAN: That certainly is gallant Mr. Rossi...er...Vito. I didn't know you had it in you!

ROSSI: Neither did I. But...think nothing of it. I am a professional!

FINNIGAN: *(Swooning.)* A professional! *(To CAROL and JANIE.)* I'll call you when we find the chairs.

CAROL: Thank you! I hope you find them soon!

ROSSI: We'll be in touch. See you Friday.

SHIRLEY: I still think you two should try dating!

CAROL: Don't mind her!

ROSSI and FINNIGAN: Don't worry. We won't! *(They leave out the front door.)*

CAROL: *(Sudden panic.)* Oh no!

SHIRLEY: What now?

CAROL: I can't remember if we decided on escargot or canapes!

JANIE: Me neither!

CAROL: I left my notes in the kitchen. Let's go check to see if I wrote it down.

SHIRLEY: Good idea!

CAROL, JANIE and SHIRLEY exit to the kitchen. MICHAEL enters and approaches the front door of the Carter house. He is patting his pockets, obviously looking for something. He bends down and examines the front step, perhaps lifts a doormat, as though looking for something. As he is bent over, looking, BOB, ALBERT and LEO come from behind him and find him on his hands and knees. BOB is carrying a camera.

BOB: Mikey, old boy! What are you doing down there?

MICHAEL: *(Standing up quickly.)* Oh...nothing! I was...just...looking for...for my Powerball ticket!

ALBERT and LEO snicker.

BOB: Powerball? I heard on the news that the mega millions winner was sold right here in Arizona. And no one's claimed the prize yet. That wasn't your ticket, was it?

MICHAEL: *(Confused.)* Mega millions? No, I don't think so...

BOB: Never mind that! We've got important things to do.

MICHAEL: *(Thinks BOB is talking about the wedding.)* I'll say!

BOB: And you're just in time to come with us! If you're lucky, you can get your first diamondback!

MICHAEL: Get my diamond back?! How do you know I've lost it?!

BOB: *(Confused.)* Lost what? A rattlesnake?

ALBERT and LEO continue to snicker.

MICHAEL: What's a rattlesnake have to do with getting my diamond back?

ALBERT: It's a kind of rattler. Called a diamondback!

LEO: And we're gonna shoot one!

MICHAEL: *(Taken aback.)* Shoot? Isn't that a little violent?

BOB: Not with a gun! We're shooting with the camera! The boys saw a rattler out back!

MICHAEL: A rattler? Oh! You mean a...snake! *(Shudders.)*

BOB: Why don't you come with us?

MICHAEL: I don't have much experience with...snakes.

ALBERT: C'mon. This is Arizona.

MICHAEL: I'm not from Arizona. I'm from France, remember?

LEO: *(Unimpressed.)* Oh, yeah. France.

MICHAEL: I'm afraid I don't like snakes. Besides, I'm supposed to meet Janie here.

BOB: Okay, we'll let you off the hook this time. But if you're going to join the Carter family, you're going to have to learn all about hunting for diamondbacks!

MICHAEL: *(Trying to be chipper.)* You bet. Hunting for snakes! I'll get right on it!

BOB, LEO and ALBERT leave to hunt. MICHAEL enters the house.

MICHAEL: *(To himself.)* Whew! That was a close one...I don't have time to hunt for diamondbacks. I've got to get the diamond back! *(Patting pockets again.)* Where did I put that ring?

SHIRLEY comes from behind a bookcase, or just inside the kitchen. MICHAEL hadn't realized she was so near.

SHIRLEY: Put what dear? Did you say you lost something?

MICHAEL: *(Surprised.)* Mrs. Cavanaugh! I didn't see you there!

SHIRLEY: I thought I heard you say you lost your...thing was it? Can I help you find it?

MICHAEL: *(Looking under pillows, doilies, etc.)* No, I'm fine, thanks. I'm supposed to meet Janie. Is she here?

SHIRLEY: I think she's in the kitchen. I'll go get her. Janie!

MICHAEL continues looking for the ring. He bends down to look under the couch just as JANIE enters from the kitchen.

JANIE: Michael, what are you doing down there?

MICHAEL: *(Flustered. Jumps up.)* Oh! I dropped my...my...Powerball ticket...I was looking for it.

JANIE: I thought you were going to quit buying those things. We don't really have time for that now.

MICHAEL: I...uh...guess not. *(He continues trying to look for the ring without JANIE noticing.)*

SHIRLEY: *(Enters from kitchen.)* Oh good. You found each other. Did you find your thing, Michael? *(To JANIE.)* I heard him say he lost his thing. I thought we could help him find it. *(To Audience.)* Maybe the audience knows about this thing. Have any of you out there seen whatever it is he lost? His thing?

MICHAEL: *(Trying to get rid of her.)* Maybe I left it in the kitchen. Why don't you go and look there?

SHIRLEY: The kitchen? Oh, you two want to be alone! I get it! I'll go look in the kitchen. Sure I will! *(Exits to the kitchen.)*

JANIE: *(Grabs MICHAEL by the arm.)* Oh, Michael! It's been a terrible day! The wedding! I don't know if we can pull it off!

MICHAEL: What do you mean?

JANIE: Everything! Nothing! There are just certain things you need for a wedding. What if we don't find them in time?

MICHAEL: *(Nervous. Thinks she's referring to the lost ring.)* Don't worry! I'll find it! I've been looking everywhere!

JANIE: Find what? I'm not talking about your Powerball ticket! It's the caterer...and the decorator!

MICHAEL: They know about the ring?

JANIE: The ring? This has nothing to do with the ring!

MICHAEL: *(Relieved.)* Oh, of course not! Good!

JANIE: Not good! The decorator doesn't even know if he can get us cerulean!

MICHAEL: Cerulean?

JANIE: And we have to decide between escargot and canapes and I can't even remember which one we picked!

MICHAEL: I'm sure either will be fine.

JANIE: And then there's my dad!

MICHAEL: What's wrong with your dad?

JANIE: Nothing. Unless you count his bunker and the fact that he's outfitting the backyard like it was the Taj Majal. He's doing it to impress your family!

MICHAEL: There's no need to impress anyone. My family is going to love your dad!

JANIE: *(Exasperated.)* You don't understand! This is our wedding! It's supposed to be perfect and there are so many things that could go wrong!

MICHAEL: *(Puts his arm around her.)* We could always elope.

JANIE: My mom would be crushed! And Grandma is so excited about watching it all from the window. We can't disappoint them. But what if we can't find the Cerulean?

MICHAEL: I'm not even sure what that is, but I know I love you—Cerulean or not!

JANIE: It's just that...Cerulean is the color of the sky. And for every girl and her wedding, the sky's the limit...you know?

MICHAEL: *(Comforting her while still turning over pillows, etc. looking for the ring.)* I know, Janie. I know...

Lights go down.

ACT ONE, SCENE 2

AT RISE: *Later that same night. BOB is sitting on the couch looking at a photo album. His back is to the big window. CAROL enters from outside front door. She has just finished doing the news and is returning home. The room is semi dark, lit only with one lamp.*

BOB: You're back! How was work?

CAROL: *(Sits down next to BOB.)* Oh you know. News at nine. Up to the minute and on the spot! Did you watch?

BOB: Sure. You did great. I noticed they didn't have any stories on the asteroid.

CAROL: *(Chuckles, like she thinks he's joking.)* No, Bob. Nothing about the asteroid...are the boys upstairs?

BOB: Yep. I think they were tired from chasing after rattlesnakes. I tried to get Mikey to go hunting with us, but I don't think he liked the idea.

CAROL: He goes by Michael, dear, not Mikey. And you can't expect him to be an expert on snakes. He's from France, remember?

BOB: Oh, yeah. France! *Vou Lay You* and all that jazz!

CAROL: Now, Bob. Don't let that intimidate you. France is just a country.

BOB: Just a country? It's more than that! It's an attitude. They talk with their French accents and drink French wine and eat fancy French food! They even wear those goofy French berets. What if we can't live up to their standards?

CAROL: *(Laughing.)* Oh Bob! Now I know where Janie gets it from. You worry about the strangest things. Honestly...a beret! You've been watching too much TV.

BOB: You never know. We could have a real culture clash. Compare Paris with the likes of my brother. There's a match worth lighting. KaBoom! Can you imagine Steve in a beret?

CAROL: Or speaking French? *(Laughs.)* No, Steve is definitely not the beret wearing type. More like tie dye. *(Laughs.)*

BOB: Yeah...tie dye...what if he and Trixie show up for the wedding?

CAROL: *(Shudders.)* Oh! You don't think they will, do you?

BOB: You never know. Steve definitely enjoys a good party.

CAROL: And your brother's never been one to pass up a free meal.

BOB: Now Carol, Steve is a free-spirit...but he's family.

CAROL: And a freeloader! I just wish you didn't let him walk all over you.

BOB: We're brothers. That's what brothers do.

CAROL: I know. You don't think they'll show up, do you?

BOB: It's doubtful. Last time he emailed they were out east somewhere. Our little wedding probably isn't even on his radar.

CAROL: I hope not. I'm not sure this wedding can take a dose of Steve. We'd probably find him fishing in the Koi pond.

BOB: In a beret! Now that would be a sight, wouldn't it?

CAROL laughs. Pause.

Big day tomorrow, with our company coming.

CAROL: Yeah. The caterer called and she found enough chairs, thank goodness. But we still have to make a decision between escargot and a canapes.

BOB: Why not get 'em both?

CAROL: What about the cost? This wedding is going to bankrupt us!

BOB: Who cares about cost? We've only got one little girl and she deserves the best. Besides, if I've my telescope is correct, we've got an asteroid headed our way! When it hits three days from now, we won't have to worry about chairs or anything else. We'll be living in the comfort of our very own bunker.

CAROL: Oh Bob! You're not serious about that, are you?

BOB: Serious as a natural disaster! I watch the Discovery Channel! There are a number of natural disasters that could cause and end to modern society as we know it. Volcanic eruption! Earthquakes! Even a tsunami!

CAROL: A tsunami? Bob, we're in Arizona!

BOB: Okay so we don't have to worry about a tsunami! At least we're prepared!

CAROL: Perhaps it's time we prepare for bed. It's getting late and there's a lot to do tomorrow before our company arrives.

BOB: You go on up. I'll be there in a minute. I have a few more pages here.

CAROL: Is that Janie's baby album?

BOB: Yeah. Where did the time go? (*Sigh.*) Seems like just yesterday we were bringing her home from the hospital.

CAROL: We had her dressed all in pink. Remember how she hated getting buckled into her car seat?

BOB: She screamed all the way home...you sat in the back with her so she wouldn't be alone.

CAROL: You used to call her your little Sweet Pea...

BOB: Remember when she first started talking and couldn't say the word, grapes?

CAROL: She called them...beeps...and her favorite movie?

BOB: Cinderella!

CAROL: We watched it over and over and over...

BOB: We'd just get done watching it and she'd say 'One more time, Daddy. One more time.' It all went by so quickly. Sometimes I wish we could do it all over again...one more time.

CAROL: (*Standing behind him. Puts her hand on his shoulder.*) I know. Me too. (*Kisses him on the head.*) Don't be long. We've got a big day tomorrow.

BOB: I won't. I'll be up shortly. Just going to check my telescope one more time.

Lights go down.

ACT ONE, SCENE 3

AT RISE: *The next morning. Grandma SHIRLEY is seated at the kitchen table, next to the window, looking outside. She is wearing a robe, drinking coffee. She is alone. JANIE, also in a robe, comes down the stairs and joins her.*

JANIE: Morning, Grandma. You're up early.

SHIRLEY: Couldn't sleep. Want some coffee?

JANIE: Love some. Thanks.

SHIRLEY pours coffee into a cup for JANIE.

SHIRLEY: You're up early yourself.

JANIE: I know. There's so much to think about! My mind is racing...how did you feel, right before marrying grandpa?

SHIRLEY: Nervous. But excited. And so very much in love!

JANIE: Yeah. That's how I feel, too. Did you worry that something would go wrong with the wedding?

SHIRLEY: I suppose so. And I suppose it did.

JANIE: It did? What did you do?

SHIRLEY: I got married. I was in love. The day went on.

Sometimes you can't let things get to you.

JANIE: But I want the day to be perfect.

SHIRLEY: Nothing is ever perfect, my dear Janie. Even my marriage to your grandpa. We had our ups and downs. What two people don't?

JANIE: But you loved him?

SHIRLEY: Of course. Always. But it isn't always easy to love a person. Remember that. There are times when you don't want to love someone. And there are times when they don't want to love you.

JANIE: What do you do then?

SHIRLEY: You love anyway. For better, for worse. Those words are real.

JANIE: How many years were you and grandpa married?

SHIRLEY: 42. He's been gone 9 now. I miss him every day.

JANIE: He used to take you out for rides in the car?

SHIRLEY: *(Smiling.)* Yes. He was the only one who could get me to leave this house.

JANIE: I could take you for a ride sometime.

SHIRLEY: I don't think so dear.

JANIE: Why Grandma? Is it because you're afraid?

SHIRLEY: *(Pause.)* No. I don't think so. I used to be afraid, but I'm not anymore...it's more...that I don't have any place I really want to go.

JANIE: *(Puts her hand over SHIRLEY'S.)* Love you, Grandma.

SHIRLEY: Love you, too, dear. *(Pause. Then back to her 'on stage' persona.)* Now, I best go and get dressed and put on my make-up. All the world's a stage you know. The audience out there is watching and I always like to make sure I'm ready for my close-up!

JANIE: Okay, Grandma!

JANIE and SHIRLEY head upstairs. As soon as they get upstairs and out of sight, LEO and ALBERT enter, coming down the stairs.

LEO: Hey, Let me see it again!

ALBERT opens his palm, where he's holding a small box. He opens it. LEO looks at something, but the audience can't see what it is. Then ALBERT puts the object in his pocket.

ALBERT: Found it right on the driveway where Michael usually parks his car. Must have slipped out of his pocket.

LEO: That's one shiny diamond! What would Michael say if he knew you had it?

ALBERT: I don't know...should we tell him?

LEO: Nah. Not yet. Let's make him sweat a little. Did you see how he freaked out yesterday?

ALBERT: Yeah! And he got all confused about the diamondback!

LEO: No kidding! I could have died laughing right there. Michael's gotta be frantic thinking he lost the wedding ring!

ALBERT: Yeah! Isn't it great?

LEO: What are we gonna do with it?

ALBERT: It's gotta be a good one...

LEO and ALBERT pause, thinking.

LEO: I know...maybe we should slip it into his pocket when he's not looking.

ALBERT: Nah...I've got a better idea! Let's put it in Janie's purse. She'll think he put it there, but he won't know it.

LEO: That's awesome!

ALBERT: C'mon let's find Janie's purse!

LEO and ALBERT go upstairs. Lights go down.

ACT ONE, SCENE 4

AT RISE: *Same day. Late afternoon/early evening. CAROL enters from kitchen with JANIE.*

CAROL: Our guests should be arriving soon!

JANIE: So many people coming together! I hope everyone gets along!

CAROL: They will! No need to worry.

BOB enters from the basement, wearing a helmet that has a flashlight attached to it. He is carrying a life jacket.

BOB: I'm securing the last round of supplies for the bunker!

CAROL: Is that a life jacket?

BOB: In case of a flood! I have inflatable rowboats downstairs.

CAROL: *(Under her breath.)* Rowboats? In the desert?

JANIE: How about the flashlight on your head? What's that for?

BOB: Power outage! The electricity will be the first thing to go. I also got us each a crank flashlight. No batteries needed, you just turn the crank to light it up! Equipped with a radio as well!

CAROL: The wonders of modern technology!

BOB: You bet!

CAROL: Say, Bob, we're having this little thing here in a couple of days. It's called a wedding. We're going to need your help getting ready.

BOB: Sure! In fact...I was just thinking...maybe we should rent a chocolate fountain! Those French guys love their chocolate. And I hear there's a place in Phoenix that makes gold plated confetti!

JANIE: I think we have enough with the gazebo and gardens...I just want you to be around when Michael and his dad and grand-pere get here.

CAROL: And Isaac and Tina are on their way. How long has it been since we've seen our eldest son?

BOB: A couple of months, at least. It's going to be one big party here, isn't it?...I wonder if we have enough room in the bunker...I should've got a couple more cots.

CAROL: Bob Carter, you challenge my patience.

BOB: You'll both thank me when the asteroid hits.

JANIE: If it hits, won't we all be gone with it?

BOB: (*Heading for basement.*) The asteroid will destroy civilization eventually, but not us! We'll be living just fine! Down in our bunker! Where are the boys? I need them to help me move the generator. Leo, Albert...where are you? (*BOB exits to basement.*)

JANIE: Honestly, mom. Sometimes I think you are a saint.

CAROL: He's a good man, and a good father, honey. He just gets caught up sometimes.

Doorbell rings.

CAROL: (*Going to the door.*) That must be our guests!

She opens the door. MICHAEL steps in with BERNARD, PHILIPPE and EMILIE. No one except PHILIPPE can see EMILIE. She follows him closely, sometimes whispering in his ear, etc. PHILIPPE holds a bottle of wine. MICHAEL continues to act fidgety. He is still trying to find the lost ring.

CAROL: Welcome! You must be Michael's father and grandfather.

She begins shaking hands, etc. BOB enters from the basement. He is still wearing the flashlight on his head.

BOB: Ah! Our guests have arrived!

JANIE: Yes. It's Michael's family!

MICHAEL: Bob, Carol, I'd like you to meet my father, Philippe Dubois, and my grandfather, Bernard Dubois.

EMILIE: (*Speaks to the audience, French accent, but no one on stage hears her.*) And Michael's mother, the ghost. I am Emilie. Hello everyone!

PHILIPPE: (*Speaking as if English isn't his first language.*) We are pleased to be invited to your beautiful home. And to finally meet you! (*Hands bottle wine to CAROL and kisses her hand.*) A small gesture from France as our two families become one!

CAROL: Thank you! How thoughtful!

*PHILIPPE shakes hands with BOB and kisses JANIE'S hand.
CAROL motions for BOB to take the flashlight off his head.*

BERNARD: Nice place you've got here! A desert hideaway! Must be at least 20 acres, huh?

BOB: 23 acres of desert beauty!

BERNARD: You can say that again! Ever see any rattlesnakes?

BOB: We saw one yesterday!

BERNARD: I've also heard the stargazing is magnificent in this area!

BOB: Superb! The stars are beautiful this time of year...like diamonds in the sky! I have my telescope set up outside. If you'd like, tonight I can show you my asteroid!

BERNARD: Magnificent! I would love to see it! I'm excited about the rattler, too! I'm an avid sportsman! I've hunted lions in Africa. Crocodiles in Australia. King cobra in India. Tigers in Nepal. And now. Finally. Rattlesnake in Arizona!

MICHAEL: You've got to excuse my grand-pere. He's very interested in hunting.

BOB: Yes, funny none of it rubbed off on you Mikey, old boy.

JANIE: Oh, Dad!

CAROL exits to the kitchen to get appetizers and beverages.

BOB: They even did a magazine story on us awhile back...about the number of different species of rattlesnakes in Arizona. There are more than 15!

PHILIPPE: My! That's impressive!

BOB: *(Grabbing a magazine from a coffee table.)* Here it is! They were here with their cameras and crew last summer. *(Hands the magazine to PHILIPPE.)*

PHILIPPE: I'm afraid I can't read a thing without my glasses. I am very...how you say...to not see small things that are near...farsighted!

BOB: Oh, sorry to hear that!

PHILIPPE: My glasses are in my suitcase. I would be very interested to read the story later.

CAROL: (*Entering from kitchen holding a tray.*) Would anyone like some hors d'oeuvres? Perhaps a glass of wine? Or water?

BERNARD: Don't mind if I do. I'm starving. It was a long flight over the Atlantic!

SHIRLEY: (*SHIRLEY descends the stairs, in dramatic fashion.*) I thought I heard the door. We have guests?

JANIE: Grandma! Come meet Michael's family! This is his father, Philippe. My Grandma, Shirley.

PHILIPPE kisses her hand. EMILIE is standing near him, right next to SHIRLEY. EMILIE gently toughes SHIRLEY'S cheek.

SHIRLEY: Pleased to meet you, Philippe. Oh! I suddenly felt a cool breeze brush across my cheek! Did you feel that?

PHILIPPE: Must be a...how you say it?...A desert breeze.

PHILIPPE shakes his finger as if scolding to EMILIE. JANIE leads SHIRLEY over to BERNARD.

PHILIPPE: (*To EMILIE, pointing to SHIRLEY.*) Must be careful, my dear. She is a perceptive one.

EMILIE: Bah! I can take care of myself! (*Kisses PHILIPPE on the cheek.*)

JANIE: And this is Michael's grand-pere, Bernard.

BERNARD: (*BERNARD is obviously struck with SHIRLEY'S beauty. He kisses her hand.*) My, my. What a radiance! I haven't seen such beauty in decades! Why, not since admiring a starlet on the Broadway stage during a performance of Guys and Dolls more than 50 years ago!

SHIRLEY: (*Stunned.*) Guys and Dolls? That was me!

BERNARD: I knew it! Your performance was stunning!

SHIRLEY: Why...thank you!

BERNARD: (*Taking her hand.*) I want to hear all about your life on the stage!

SHIRLEY: There isn't much to tell. Guys and Dolls was my last role. I took...an early retirement after that. (*Motions to the audience.*) All those people out there. The audience. I'm afraid they got the best of me.

BERNARD: *(Leading her to a corner of the room.)* What a shame! I can't imagine why! You must tell me everything!

SHIRLEY: Well...all right!

They begin a private conversation off to the side.

MICHAEL: *(Looking for an excuse to leave so he can look for the ring. Acts nervous.)* I...I'm going to get another glass of water. I'm going to go look for it in the kitchen.

JANIE: Look for water?

MICHAEL: I mean the...Powerball!

JANIE: I thought you were done with that!

MICHAEL: No...I am...I mean...I'm just going to get some more water! *(He leaves for the kitchen.)*

CAROL: Philippe, you aren't eating anything. Can I get you something else?

PHILIPPE: Oh, no, the food here is lovely. I do not want to appear rude, but I fear I have the...what do you call it? The jet legs. I have the ache of the head from my travels. Perhaps if I lie down for a moment it will clear.

EMILIE: *(Fussing over PHILIPPE.)* Yes, you do that Mon cherie.

JANIE: I can get you some aspirin if you'd like.

PHILIPPE: No. Just a glass of water and a few moments to clear the fog storm from my brain, I think.

CAROL: Of course. If you do decide you'd like some aspirin, they're in the bathroom upstairs in the medicine cabinet above the sink. Help yourself.

PHILIPPE: You are too kind. Now, where shall I rest this tired body?

BOB: Upstairs. Take the first room on the left.

CAROL: Isn't that our room?

BOB: Sure is. Philippe can sleep there. We're sleeping down in the bunker.

CAROL: We are?

BOB: Here, Philippe, I'll show you the room.

BOB heads toward the stairs. PHILIPPE and EMILIE follow. EMILIE passes by a framed photo that is sitting on the table and knocks it over accidentally.

JANIE: Did you see that? The picture, it just fell over!

CAROL: (*Picking up the framed photo.*) It's your engagement photo, Janie. You and Michael!

EMILIE: But I did not mean it! It was my accident!

SHIRLEY: What a curious omen!

JANIE: An omen! They're never good!

EMILIE: (*Hugging JANIE.*) I did not mean anything by it! Forgive me! I was clumsy in life and now in death!

JANIE: (*Shudders.*) I felt a sudden chill! Michael! Come quick!

EMILIE: I am so sorry! Ghosts! We are so misunderstood!

EMILIE floats upstairs, following PHILIPPE and BOB. MICHAEL enters from kitchen and hugs JANIE, comforting her.

BERNARD: I'm sure a breeze just knocked it over.

SHIRLEY: Yes, I'm sure that's it.

ISAAC and TINA enter from side stage and approach the front door.

ISAAC: Let's just get through the weekend without fighting, okay?

TINA: (*Cold, as if angry.*) Sure thing. I still don't understand why you wanted me to come in the first place.

ISAAC: I told you...I don't want to ruin Janie's wedding.

TINA: And you think our upcoming divorce would probably throw a damper on your sister's wedding!

ISAAC: Oh Tina, don't be so dramatic! (*Turns to open the front door.*)

TINA: Our marriage is ending and you're calling me dramatic!

ISAAC: Can we just go in there? And do our best with this situation?

TINA: (*To herself.*) I'll give them an Oscar worthy performance!

ISAAC: (*ISAAC opens the door.*) Mom, Dad! We're here!

TINA enters behind him.

CAROL: Isaac! Tina! It's so good to have you home!

BOB enters, coming from upstairs. EVERYONE hugs.

JANIE: (*Hugging TINA.*) I can't wait to have a girl-to-girl chat. You can tell me everything I need to do to have a happy marriage like yours.

TINA: (*Uncomfortable.*) Uh..sure.

JANIE: (*Turning to ISAAC.*) You two amaze me! How long have you guys been married? Five years? (*To TINA.*) You've made it work! It couldn't have been easy. I want to know all your secrets!

ISAAC and TINA exchange a glance; oh boy, if she only knew our secret.

CAROL: You can bring your bags up to your old room, Isaac. We've got Michael's family situated elsewhere.

ISAAC: Sounds good. They're out in the car. I'll run and get them. (*He leaves out front door.*)

BOB: If you'll all excuse me, I've got a little more work to do in the bunker.

JANIE: C'mon, dad!

BOB: I'll only be a minute. What do you say, Bernard, want to take a look at my bunker?

BERNARD: I'd love to.

MICHAEL: I'll go with you!

BOB: That's great Mikey! Good to see you finally taking an interest!

BOB, MICHAEL and BERNARD leave toward basement.

CAROL: Tina, do you want to freshen up, or are you ready to have a glass of wine and help us with supper?

TINA: Just give me a minute and I'll meet you in the kitchen.

CAROL: Sounds good. Mom, Janie...you want to give me a hand with the roast beef?

JANIE and SHIRLEY exit with CAROL to the kitchen. TINA , now alone in the room, pauses by the photos on the fireplace mantle, looking at one. EMILIE comes down the stairs and observes TINA. TINA takes something out of her pocket. It is a class ring on a chain. She looks at it longingly. ISAAC returns with the luggage, when TINA hears ISAAC coming she quickly puts the ring into her pocket. She turns to face ISAAC. EMILIE is nearby.

ISAAC: Hey, thanks for coming. Really. I know this is uncomfortable for you. I can sleep on the couch, if you want.

TINA: What would your parents think? Isn't that the whole point of me being here? To put up family pretenses and not let them know our marriage is breaking up?

ISAAC: If that's what you call making Janie happy. I'm just trying to do the right thing.

TINA: Oh yeah. Janie happy...never mind me.

ISAAC: That's not what I meant.

TINA: I guess it doesn't matter anymore...what you mean...what I mean...we aren't connecting...I guess...we lost that.

ISAAC: (*Exasperated. He doesn't want to have this conversation.*) Can we just get through the weekend? I'm tired of arguing all the time.

TINA: Yeah...I'm tired too...I'll be in the kitchen. Putting on pretenses. (*Turns to go into the kitchen.*)

As TINA enters the kitchen, ISAAC looks at the mantle at one photograph in particular. Then he pulls another photo from a pocket of his luggage or from his pants pocket. He stares at it intently and then quickly puts it back. He then starts walking up the stairs. EMILIE follows.

EMILIE: These two need my help! Oh my, what am I going to do?

There is a knock at the front door.

JANIE: (*Coming from the kitchen.*) That must be Diane!

Opens the door. DIANE enters. She and JANIE hug. CAROL, SHIRLEY and TINA also enter from kitchen.

JANIE: How was your trip?

DIANE: A little bit of traffic, but nothing serious.

CAROL: Come in, and make yourself at home. It's so good to see you again!

CAROL and DIANE hug.

DIANE: It's good to be here. I love the desert! The city was beginning to get me down. *(Turns to TINA.)* Hey Tina! Good to see you. *(To SHIRLEY.)* And you, Grandma, Shirley!...Is it lady's night, or what? Where are the guys?

CAROL: They're around. Well, except for Jack, the best man. He had to work. You won't get to meet him until the rehearsal dinner.

PHILIPPE descends the stairs.

JANIE: Here's Michael's dad, now!

CAROL: Did you have a good rest, Philippe?

PHILIPPE: Indeed, I did. My ache of the head did not go away on its own, so I did take you up on the aspirin. I found them in the cabinet in the bathroom, just as you instructed.

CAROL: Oh, good! I hope they helped!

PHILIPPE: I think so...I must say...that we do not have such...how you say...luxuries in France!

CAROL: Luxuries? The aspirin?

PHILIPPE: Yes! Aspirin to taste like the finest chocolat! And chewy! Much better than the white pills. Thanks so much for your kind care of this poor Parisian gentleman!

PHILIPPE turns away and introduces himself to TINA and DIANE as CAROL and JANIE talk.

CAROL: *(Confused, to JANIE.)* But...we don't have chocolate aspirin...do we Janie?

JANIE: I don't think so...the only chocolate flavored medicine in the cabinet is...oh, no!

CAROL: Oh, what?

JANIE: It isn't aspirin. It's...it's...chocolate flavored...oh, no!

CAROL: *(Gulp, half whispering.)* Lax...A...Tive?

JANIE: He must not have had his glasses! He couldn't read the label. What do we do?

CAROL: Nothing! Maybe it won't affect him...in that...way.

BOB and BERNARD come up from the basement. BOB has his arm around BERNARD.

BOB: I can show my map of the galaxy later, if you'd be interested.

BERNARD: It's fascinating business, Bob. I'd love to see it.

JANIE: Where is Michael? I thought he was downstairs with you.

BOB: *(Looking back toward the basement.)* I thought he was coming up. He was awfully preoccupied. He's lost his Powerball ticket and practically turned the bunker upside down looking for it.

JANIE: That stupid ticket! I told him to forget about it.

BOB: Seemed intent on finding it. Must be pretty important. Maybe it's the big winner! *(Laughs.)*

JANIE: *(Goes to the top of the basement stairs.)* Michael! Are you coming up?

MICHAEL: Right there! In a minute!

He comes to the top of the stairs, where JANIE is waiting.

JANIE: Will you please focus on the wedding?

MICHAEL: Sure thing, hon. I'm sorry, I've been a bit distracted.

JANIE: Gee, I hadn't noticed.

They walk over and join the group. There is a loud knock on the door. Before anyone can answer, STEVE "SAGUARO" bursts through with OASIS, CACTUS and TUMBLEWEED.

SAGUARO: *(Booming voice.)* The party has officially begun!

Where's that brother of mine? Baby brother Bobby!

BOB: Steve! Um....glad to see you could make it!

SAGUARO: Who's Steve? (*Laughs good-naturedly.*) I go by Saguaro now. We had our own family re-naming ceremony last year. Wanted to live in complete harmony with the desert. I am the great cactus. The Saguaro! (*Holds his arms out like a saguaro cactus, then puts his arm around TRIXIE "OASIS".*) And this is my beautiful desert Oasis!

OASIS: Hi ya, everyone. An oasis is a little bit of paradise right in the desert. Get it?

CAROL: Beautiful choice...Oasis.

SAGUARO: And our two lovely daughters, Cactus and Tumbleweed.

CACTUS and TUMBLEWEED wave.

OASIS: Oh, I almost forgot. We brought you a present!

Hands a bottle to CAROL.

SAGUARO: It's a bottle of dandelion wine! Oasis makes it herself, right in our camper.

BOB: Dandelion wine? How unique.

OASIS: Some folks think dandelions are just weeds, but we know better, don't we girls?

CACTUS and TUMBLEWEED: We sure do!

TUMBLEWEED: Weeds can be good things. Look at me!

CACTUS: And Mama has her own secret ingredient!

TUMBLEWEED: Fresh ginger!

SAGUARO: That's right. You'd be surprised how often a nice Chinese restaurant will throw out perfectly good ginger. Right in the trash can!

CAROL: You use ginger? From the trash can?

OASIS: Oh, I wash it good before I use it. And I cut off all the bad spots.

SAGUARO: It takes a mighty smart woman to make something from nothing!

OASIS: Oh, Saguaro!

CAROL: Well...thank you for the...unique gift.

BOB: It sure is a surprise to see you!

CAROL: Yes...a big surprise.

SAGUARO: We wouldn't miss Janie's wedding! We figured it would be a heck of a party, didn't we Oasis?

OASIS: Saguaro loves parties!

CAROL: Oh, we know that, don't we Bob? (*Elbows BOB.*)

SAGUARO: We don't want to inconvenience you. I'm sure you have lots of things to get done. Bobby, if I can set up our tent in the backyard, we'll be set for the night.

CAROL: Backyard? You can't sleep there! That's where we're having the wedding.

BOB: It's all dug up at the moment. We're putting in a koi pond.

CAROL: And gazebo.

OASIS: Sounds fancy!

SAGUARO: I can plant us in the front yard then. Just gotta grab the tent from the camper.

CAROL: Not the front yard! We'll be setting up tables and chairs there! Bob, tell him!

BOB: I know...you can sleep down in the bunker...with Carol and me.

SAGUARO: Now, Bobby, you know me. I need my toes in the open air. No offense to your bunker, of course.

OASIS: That's Saguaro! Likes to sleep under the stars...in the buff!

SAGUARO: Say...maybe I can set up on your acreage behind the back yard. In the desert.

BOB: But...there are rattlers out there. It could be dangerous.

CAROL: Can't you be like everyone else and sleep inside?

SAGUARO: Never mind them rattlers! We're used to 'em! I'll set us up way out back as soon as we're done with supper...we are getting some supper soon...aren't we Bobby Boy?

BOB: Dinner is just about ready! Carol made us her famous beef roast and twice baked potatoes.

SAGUARO: Beef! Now there's a word after my own heart!

OASIS: We don't get much fancy food like that!

CACTUS: Twice baked potatoes...did you hear that?

TUMBLEWEED: If they're baked two times, I bet they're twice as good!

BOB: Smells wonderful, dear!

BERNARD: Yes, I'm famished!

PHILIPPE: Me, too. Extraordinarily so! And so suddenly comes the hunger!

CAROL: Let's eat then. Everyone to the kitchen!

EVERYONE files into the kitchen. Lights go down.

ACT ONE, SCENE 5

AT RISE: *A few hours later. Most of the GUESTS and FAMILY have gone to bed. Through the window we can see it is dark outside. JANIE stands at the front door waving goodbye to MICHAEL. She then returns to the living room. DIANE is seated on the couch, holding a glass of wine. JANIE'S purse is somewhere nearby. JANIE sits down on the couch next to DIANE.*

JANIE: Finally! A quiet moment! I'm so glad you could make the trip!

DIANE: Wouldn't miss your wedding for the world! You're the sister I never had!

JANIE: Best friends forever!

DIANE and JANIE: And sisters even longer than that!

DIANE: Besides...I've been dying to spend some time in the country! I hope you don't mind, but I brought my hunting gear. I thought...after the wedding...I'd spend a couple extra days here, if that's okay. I left my stuff out in the back of my pick up.

JANIE: Mom and dad would love to have you stay! You still are a cowgirl at heart.

DIANE: Yeah, I guess you could say that...

JANIE: Did you get a chance to talk to Michael at dinner? Did he seem...a little...distracted to you?

DIANE: Maybe...a little. But isn't that pretty normal for a guy who's getting married?

JANIE: I don't know. He's been worried about a lost Powerball ticket for two days. I'm concerned about him. Maybe he's got a...gambling problem!

DIANE: Oh...I'd chalk it up to wedding jitters. Because...well...let's face it...getting married...having your families meet for the first time...it's a big deal and there's maybe just a *little* stress involved?

JANIE: You could be right.

DIANE: I usually am.

JANIE: I suppose it could be worse...Michael could be chasing after rattlesnakes and predicting the end of the world!

DIANE: (*Laughing.*) There you go. You're getting your sense of humor back. I think that's a good sign.

JANIE: How about you...where's your perfect man?

DIANE: You're going to laugh...I ran into him yesterday at a convenience store.

JANIE: Now who's got the sense of humor?

DIANE: Seriously. I literally bumped into Mr. Right at the gas station. Or maybe he bumped into me. Either way, I spilled my purse and looked like a real klutz. I was so embarrassed I got the heck out of there as fast as I could.

JANIE: You didn't get a name or cell number or anything?

DIANE: Can't even tell you what kind of vehicle he drives. All I know is the guy looks good in a cowboy hat and jeans.

JANIE: A real cowboy, huh?

DIANE: You can say that again.

There is a noise, from a cell phone. JANIE has received a text message.

DIANE: What's that?

JANIE: (*Gets up and grabs her purse.*) That's probably Michael. I told him to text me when he got home. (*Digs through her purse. Takes out phone and checks it.*) Yep. He's home. (*Opens her purse to return the phone, but sees something that catches her attention.*) What's this doing in here?

DIANE: What is it?

JANIE: (*Taking a small box from her purse.*) It's the wedding ring! I thought Michael had it.

DIANE: Maybe he put it in your purse for safe keeping.

JANIE: Yeah, that's probably what he did. With all the excitement today he just forgot to tell me.

DIANE: At least it's in a safe place. Not lost...like his Powerball ticket!

JANIE: You've got a point...well...I suppose we should call it a night. You're probably tired from traveling.

DIANE: I suppose....just a little...and tomorrow is a big day.

JANIE: Yeah.

They laugh and walk up the stairs together. When they are halfway up, BERNARD comes and begins walking down.

BERNARD: Hello ladies! I couldn't sleep. Going to get me a nice warm cup of milk. It does a body good, it does!

JANIE: Sounds good. There's plenty of milk in the fridge.

BERNARD: Thank you Janie. Sleep well, ladies!

DIANE: You, too, Bernard.

JANIE and DIANE ascend the stairs and exit the stage. BERNARD enters the kitchen. Just as BERNARD enters the kitchen, SHIRLEY descends the stairs. She goes to the table by the window and sits, looking out. She sees something outside.

SHIRLEY: Oh my!

BERNARD: *(Enters from the kitchen.)* Shirley? What's that? Is something the matter?

SHIRLEY: Bernard! Look! Out the window!

BERNARD: What was it?

SHIRLEY: The sky! It's lit up with...with...falling stars!

BERNARD: *(Goes to the window and looks out.)* There must be hundreds of them!

SHIRLEY: They're sparkling and brilliant! Just beautiful!

BERNARD: I've seen many a meteor shower in my day, but this tops them all!

SHIRLEY: I've never seen anything like it! Like falling diamonds!

BERNARD: Let's go outside. I'll grab my camera and see if I can capture this on film!

SHIRLEY: I...I don't think so. I haven't left this house in over nine years. I don't think I can do it.

BERNARD: But...it's only a few steps...won't you at least try? For me?

SHIRLEY: Oh, Bernard...I don't think I have any try left inside of me. I'm afraid if I try, I might fall. And I don't ever want to fall again.

BERNARD: I'm sorry to hear that. It's a shame, Shirley. Life is supposed to be about living, no matter what your age.

SHIRLEY: I know it is...but I can't change the way I feel...I'm sorry...I'm tired. I think I'll head back up to bed.

BERNARD: I'm going to stay down here for a bit. I'd like to try to get the right camera angle on these falling meteors. *(Goes to the door to go out.)*

SHIRLEY: *(Heading up the stairs.)* Good night then.

BERNARD: If you change your mind I'll be out here for another half hour at least.

SHIRLEY: Thanks, but I don't think so...I'm sorry.

BERNARD: *(Saddened.)* Yeah, I know...suit yourself then.

SHIRLEY ascends the stair. BERNARD looks up at the stairs before going outside.

BERNARD: I'd never let you fall Shirley. I'd never let you fall.

He exits out the door. Lights out.

ACT ONE, SCENE 6

AT RISE: *The next evening. The GIRLS are setting up for the bachelorette party. They are having a spa night, to do their fingernails, facials, etc. They are sipping champagne. The GUYS, except for BOB and PHILIPPE are to one side of the stage. They are seated/standing near a tall bar-type table. They are frozen at the beginning of the scene. Lights go up on the men's side of stage or the women's alternating. When the lights are up on the MEN, the WOMEN freeze and vice versa. When lights are up on the men's side there is country music playing in the background. When lights are up on women's side, a pop tune is playing in the background. The music does not overpower the scene and actors can easily be heard over it. SHIRLEY is sitting at the table by the window. CAROL and JANIE enter. They are carrying champagne and glasses. They set their stuff down on the table and coffee table. Spa supplies – nail polish, etc are sitting on the table as well.*

CAROL: Any sign of the guys?

SHIRLEY: Not so far.

JANIE: They've been gone all day. I hope Michael is all right...he's not much for horses and he's never hunted rattlesnakes before.

SHIRLEY: The group was so gung ho! He didn't have much of a choice, did he?

PHILIPPE comes down the stairs. EMILIE follows him.

PHILIPPE: I see champagne! It is a like a party!

CAROL: Yes, we decided to have our bachelorette party right here.

JANIE: So Grandma can join us!

EMILIE: And me, too!

SHIRLEY: *(To PHILIPPE.)* Are you feeling any better?

PHILIPPE: I believe maybe so...I took a nap.

EMILIE hovers around him. Puts her arm around him, etc.

JANIE: Would you like a snack or something to eat?

PHILIPPE: I think not yet. My stomach is still not settled from the travels. I must have got a bad bag of peanuts on the plane.

CAROL: How unfortunate.

JANIE: I hope you'll be feeling well enough to join the guys at the bachelor party tonight.

PHILIPPE: We shall see. *(Holds stomach and groans.)* Oh! *(Runs toward the stairs.)* I think I must find the bathroom...AGAIN!
(Disappears upstairs.)

EMILIE: Poor, poor Philippe! *(She follows him upstairs.)*

SHIRLEY: Oh dear! I do hope he is okay!

CAROL: I'm not sure what more we could do for him.

SHIRLEY: Maybe we should look in the medicine cabinet.

JANIE: But that's where the problem started!

SHIRLEY: I thought it started with a bad bag of peanuts.

CAROL: *(Talking to SHIRLEY, referring to JANIE.)* Don't mind her. She's just got the wedding jitters.

TINA and DIANE enter from the kitchen carrying a tray of appetizers.

DIANE: Let there be food!

TINA: And let the party begin!

BOB: *(Comes in the front door.)* Hey ladies!

CAROL: You're back! Did you have any luck?

BOB: Naw...we didn't even get a glimpse of one snake!

TINA: And you were out there all day!

BOB: Did get in some good horseback riding, though.

JANIE: How did Michael do?

BOB: He's not much of a horseman is he? I guess he did pretty good to put up with us cowboys! The rest of the guys all went on ahead to the Rattler Restaurant for some burgers and to start the party. I stopped back here to pick up Philippe. How's he doing?

SHIRLEY: Not so good. I suppose we could check and see if he feels like going with you.

The toilet flushes upstairs.

CAROL: Oh, it doesn't sound good. Maybe you should go on to the Rattler. Philippe isn't going to want to eat a greasy burger anytime soon. We can give you a call if he wants to come over later.

BOB: Sure. One of us can come get him...and don't worry about us. I'll have the gang back before dawn!

CAROL: Oh Bob!

DIANE: Have fun!

TINA: Yes, have fun!

BOB exits. DIANE pours champagne.

DIANE: Now it's our turn!

TINA: *(Holding up her glass.)* To Janie and Michael! Cheers!

ALL: Cheers!

Lights dim on LADIES and they freeze in place. Bar table and chairs are set up on one side of stage. MICHAEL, BERNARD, JACK, ISAAC, ALBERT, LEO and SAGUARO sit around the table. Lights go up on them. {Optional} A WAITER/WAITRESS could be present at the restaurant, carrying drinks on a tray, etc.

ISAAC: Dad should be here soon. He just texted. Phillippe is still sick and can't make it.

BERNARD: It's a shame he missed out on all the fun today.

MICHAEL: Riding horses? If you call that fun.

JACK: I'd take horses over the porcelain throne any day!

ALL laugh.

JACK: Your poor dad.

MICHAEL: Yeah, I hope he recovers by the wedding.

ISAAC: If not, it won't be a pretty sight!

ALL laugh.

BERNARD: Now boys, we shouldn't joke.

ISAAC: Sorry, I suppose it's not polite.

BERNARD: I'm sure he'll feel better tomorrow.

LEO: Maybe he'll want to go hunting rattlers with us.

SAGUARO: If he doesn't, I will.

MICHAEL: You guys and your snakes...ewww.

JACK: Don't be such a wuss!

ALL laugh.

SAGUARO: Really, Mikey...they're some good eating.

LEO: Tastes like chicken!

ALL laugh. BOB enters.

BOB: Hey, everybody!

ISAAC: Belly up, dad. I'll pour you a brew. *(Pours BOB a glass.)*

SAGUARO: While you're at it, fill me up again! Bob's treating and the price is right!

ALL laugh.

BOB: Time for a toast! Here's to the women in our lives!

JACK: Long live the women! Even when they don't exist.

ALL laugh.

BERNARD: What do you mean, Jack? I thought for sure a cowboy like you would have a pretty girl by his side.

JACK: Nah...I'm unlucky in love.

MICHAEL: Unlucky? How about UNREALISTIC?

JACK: I'm holding out for the perfect girl. So shoot me!

ALL laugh.

BERNARD: Actually...I'm not sure the perfect woman exists.

MICHAEL: She does...in Jack's mind.

Laughter.

JACK: To tell the truth, I think I may have already met her.

MICHAEL: You have? Where? Who is she?

JACK: I don't know her name. Or where she lives.

ALBERT: She sounds like a figment.

LEO: Yeah, of your imagination!

Laughter.

BOB: She sounds mysterious!

SAGUARO: I love a good mystery! Tell us more!

MICHAEL: Does this mystery woman actually exist?

JACK: In the flesh. I ran into her—literally ran into her, at the gas station yesterday...It was love at first sight!

LEO: Love at first sight...yeah...right!

Laughter.

JACK: You can laugh! But there was some sort of...chemistry there.

BERNARD: So you met Miss Right at the gas station.

BOB: Then what happened?

JACK: She left.

ISAAC: She left?

JACK: Yeah. She walked out of the store and I paid my bill. End of story...lame, huh?

ALBERT: Lame as a dame.

LEO: And he didn't get her name!

Laughter.

MICHAEL: Hey...have you ever seen her before?

JACK: Nah...I'm guessing she isn't from around here. Probably from the city...a guy might consider moving away from the country for a girl like that.

SAGUARO: That would have to be a pretty special girl.

BERNARD: This one obviously made quite an impression on Jack!

JACK: She did! She's...everything a guy could want in a woman!

She drives a pick-up and she even had shot gun shells in her purse!

ALL: Wow! Shot gun shells?

ALBERT: I wish I knew a girl like that!

LEO: No kidding...

ISAAC: She sounds perfect.

BOB: Either that or she's a mass murderer!

Laughter.

ISAAC: Hey...how'd you find all this out...so quick?

JACK: It all happened so fast. She spilled her purse and I helped her pick up the mess.

MICHAEL: Seriously though...all that, and you didn't think to get her number.

JACK: Like I said...unlucky in love.

ISAAC: Or just stupid.

Laughter. Lights go down on MEN. PHILIPPE joins the group of WOMEN and the lights go up on that side of stage. PHILIPPE is doing French manicures for the WOMEN. He is currently working on OASIS'S nails. EMILIE is floating around during the scene. She looks over PHILIPPE'S shoulder as he works on OASIS'S nails.

OASIS: Oh Philippe! I've never had a French manicure before!

CACTUS: Mama! Your hands look so clean!

PHILIPPE: It is my pleasure, Madame Oasis!

TUMBLEWEED: You're so talented! Can you do mine next?

EMILIE: I taught him everything he knows!

PHILIPPE: It comes from years of practice. If we have time later, I will do your toes! A pedicure!

CAROL: I'm so glad you're feeling better, Philippe!

SHIRLEY: Are you sure you don't want us to call Bob and you can go and join the guys at the burger place?

PHILIPPE: Burger? Bah!...Perhaps at times I have the wish that I was more of a...how you say...cow of a boy. A man who wears the big hat and rides the horses and catches the snakes with the rattles...sometimes I think that would be good...but not so good for me...I only hope to not intrude as a man with too many of these beautiful women!

EMILIE: You will make me jealous, my dear Philippe!

PHILIPPE: (To EMILIE.) Ah! But none as beautiful as my dear, departed wife, Emilie!

EMILIE: That is better! (Kisses PHILIPPE on the cheek.)

PHILIPPE: Besides...I dare not travel too far from the...(Points upstairs.) Salle de bain—the bathroom! And you...Madame Oasis...are fini!

OASIS: (Hugging PHILIPPE.) Thank you, Philippe!

PHILIPPE: Who is next for the MANICURE?

TUMBLEWEED and CACTUS: Pick me! Pick me!

PHILIPPE takes a sip of his champagne and cringes.

Oh no! Still I have a bit of...the...problem! If you ladies will excuse me for a moment, I will be right back!

He runs up the stairs. Lights down on WOMEN. They freeze. Up on MEN. Two people enter the restaurant and sit at a table behind the MEN. They are the GARDENER and CONSTRUCTION WORKER.

BOB: (Noticing the GARDNER and CONSTRUCTION WORKER.)

Say...aren't those the two working on our backyard? Seems love is in the air. How about you Bernard...ever walked down the old wedding aisle yourself?

BERNARD: Once upon a time. Long ago. We were married for 32 lovely years. My Maggie passed away nearly 15 years ago. Still miss her...

BOB: Ahhh...true love!

BERNARD: Indeed!

JACK: How do you do it? Find a woman? Stay in love?

BERNARD: It isn't just about love, really. Only about 50 percent...with another 50 percent hard work...another 50 percent magic...

BOB: And 50 percent luck!

JACK: That's a lot of numbers!

Laughter.

JACK: (*Turns to ISAAC.*) You've been at it, what, five years Isaac? Seriously. How do you do it?

ISAAC: I'm probably not the guy to ask.

JACK: Hey, you're five years ahead of me. You must know some tricks.

ISAAC: Not really...some days...lots of days...I feel like I married a stranger!

BOB: Exactly! That's the point!

JACK, ISAAC and MICHAEL: What's the point?

BOB: We're men! We aren't SUPPOSED to understand women! The mystery is part of the allure! It's part of what keeps the attraction going.

ISAAC: Or the frustration brewing...

BERNARD: Women are women. They can be frustrating, demanding, self-centered, jealous and hot-tempered!

BOB: They can fight dirty and hold a grudge...all before breakfast!

ISAAC: My point exactly!

BOB: But men are far from perfect. Women on the other hand...(*Tenderly.*) they can be tender...caring-

BERNARD: Selfless...understanding...giving-

SAGUARO: And adventuresome...and true...and willing to sleep in the desert with the rattlers...or change their name...all in the name of love.

BOB: A good marriage is hard work. It can be tougher than you ever thought possible, but in the end...it is more valuable than anything you thought you'd ever possess.

BERNARD: Well said. Well said!

ISAAC: I wish I could believe that.

BOB: You've only been on the job five years! Give it a few more.

ISAAC: (*Under his breath.*) Not sure I'll have the chance.

Lights down on MEN. They freeze. Lights up on WOMEN.

DIANE: I don't know if I'll ever find Mr. Right.

CAROL: Oh you will.

OASIS: Stay chipper there, girl. There's a guy out there for each of us!

DIANE: But how do you know...how do you know a particular man is the one you're supposed to marry?

CAROL: That's a good question!

EMILIE: (*Floating about.*) Yes, a very good question!

SHIRLEY: I'm not sure you can know.

DIANE: Then how does anyone get married? If you can't know?

SHIRLEY: There are no rulebooks. It's so much more complicated than that. (*Pause.*) It's a delicate dance—love is. It's not so much knowing as trusting in it.

CAROL: Trust! Exactly! You trust that the love you have is real. That it will last. You trust in tomorrow. And the day after that.

SHIRLEY: And the day after that.

EMILIE: (*Next to SHIRLEY.*) Until you become a ghost and your days are no more!

SHIRLEY shivers as if cold.

DIANE: You all make it sound so easy.

CAROL: Oh...It's far from easy! The commitment of marriage is...wonderful...but it's not always easy.

OASIS: I tell you...Saguaro and I have had our fair share of adventures in the desert. Not many of them easy.

SHIRLEY: Loving someone can be hard work. (*Turns to JANIE.*) It was hard work sometimes...loving your grandpa...but it was the best work I ever did. And I didn't always make it easy for him to love ME, either! He used to call me his diva! (*SHIRLEY laughs as though this is a fond memory.*)

EMILIE: I could be a diva! (*EMILIE does a little twirl.*)

JANIE: I'm sure you were wonderful together!

TINA: But...what if the other person loses interest? And stops paying attention to you?

JANIE: Or gets distracted? Doesn't that happen sometimes?

SHIRLEY: I'm sure it does. Quite often, in fact.

DIANE: So what do you do?

SHIRLEY: There is no easy answer.

TINA: But...you can't make the other person care...if they've stopped caring.

JANIE: Or looking for Powerball tickets when they're supposed to be planning a wedding!

OASIS: I think Saguario bought himself a Powerball ticket last week.

CAROL: Problems are going to come up in any marriage. But I think it's important to talk. To talk to the other person.

SHIRLEY: Yes! Talk the problems out!

CAROL: And go back to your trust. Any problems you have can be worked out.

PHILIPPE: (*Descends the stairs.*) I am back...like the Terminator you Americans are so fond of! Now...who is next for the manicure?

EMILIE: (*Floats over to him, holding out her hands.*) Pick me, my dear Philippe! Pick me!

PHILIPPE: (*To EMILIE.*) You always had the most beautiful hands, my darling!

Lights down on both MEN and WOMEN. ISAAC and TINA each steps forward from their group and walk toward the center of the stage. Two spotlights illuminate them. They stand apart by 5 – 6 feet. They face outward to the audience and seem unaware of one another.

ISAAC: Somehow I think I blew my chance...without knowing what I did.

TINA: You can't go back to trusting someone if they don't trust you enough to tell you how they feel.

ISAAC: I thought she loved me...like I love her.

TINA: I thought I could love him the way he wanted me to.

ISAAC: But everything I say...everything I do.

TINA: It all comes out...wrong!

ISAAC: We've somehow lost our way.

TINA: We've lost each other.

ISAAC and TINA: We lost us.

ISAAC: I wish I could find a way to tell her I still love her.

TINA: I wish he understood how much I still love him.

ISAAC: She framed a picture from our first date and gave it to me as a present.

TINA: I wore his class ring all through high school.

ISAAC: If only we could go back to the day we first met.

TINA: To take all the hurtful words back.

ISAAC: And start over. To forget the problems.

TINA: All the arguments. The misunderstandings.

ISAAC: And just go back.

TINA: And just go back.

ISAAC: To the way we were.

TINA: To the way we were.

ISAAC: When times were simple.

TINA: When he loved me.

ISAAC: When she loved me.

ISAAC and TINA: When we loved each other.

ISAAC: *(With sadness.)* And we were happy.

TINA: *(With sadness.)* When we were so very, very happy.

Lights go down.

INTERMISSION

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