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The Fun in Funeral

© 2024 by Steve Lyons

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THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION MUST APPEAR ON ALL PAPER AND DIGITAL PROGRAMS, PRINTING, AND ADVERTISING:

1. The full title: The Fun in Funeral
2. Writing credit: By Steve Lyons
3. In addition to the above, the program must include: “Produced by special arrangement with Evergreen Plays, Bellingham, WA”

Characters:

Simone: Mid twenties. Flaming heterosexual.
Jenny: Mid twenties, more conservative in dress and manner. Simone's roommate
Don: Mid twenties. Jenny's boyfriend.
Doug: Early thirties. Simone's boyfriend.
Morris: Early thirties. Flaming homosexual.

Set and Prop Requirements:

Minimal single set of living room and dining room. A front door, a closet and maybe a bedroom door are required. Props include four bouquets of flowers, an empty box of condoms and a telephone answering machine. Optional props include a TV (not operational), a telephone (not operational), an answering machine and a CD player (not operational) .

Running Time:

90 minutes. Three scenes. One intermission.

SETTING: Living room of Jenny and Simone's apartment.

ON RISE: On rise, Jenny onstage, alone, working on her taxes.

JENNY: (*talking to the form she is working on*) Add line 34 and line 5. If the result is greater than...

What line 34? Where? There is no line 34. Idiots. This has got to be a typo. Show me, just show me line 34.

(*to audience*) Taxes. I'm doing my taxes.

(*sighs, returns to forms, stares at forms*) Oh. That line 34. Okay. Add line 34 to line 5. Add? No subtract, right? They gotta mean subtract. Please God don't make me add line 34 to line 5.

(*to audience*) The three certainties. Death, taxes... and roommates.

Roommates. Can be great. Can be tedious. Roommates. I have had pretty good luck myself. Like Simone, my current roommate. I like Simone. I mean, we are very different people, like, you know, she's horrible and I'm not. But I like her.

However, I'm ready to leave this lifestyle behind. I'm ready to lead a life without all this tension around things like... the phone bill. And I am. Don and I are getting married. Don isn't exactly what I had envisioned, like when I was thirteen. But he is right for me. He is simply a good, honest person. Doesn't seem like much does it? A good, honest person. Until you look around.

DON: (OS) When do you expect her back?

JENNY: What?!

DON: (*Entering w/ two drinks*) When do you think Simone will be back home?

JENNY: A couple of days ago she went to a poetry festival or something. I haven't seen her since.

DON: I don't want to be around when you ask her about me staying here.

JENNY: Oh it will be fine.

DON: I just want her to feel comfortable about saying no.

JENNY: She won't say no, for heaven's sake. It's just for a few days. And anyway, she has brought home her share of temporary roommates.

DON: I guess...

JENNY: Don, it's not a big deal. She's had a guy staying here for weeks and I didn't even know his name. She can't possibly object to you. You're like family.

DON: I know, I know. I still don't want to be here when you ask her.

JENNY: Don, first of all, it's only for a couple of days. Second of all, Simone is not very aware of other human beings anyway.

(sound of Simone outside the door)

Speak of the devil.

DON: Oh crap.

(**DON:** runs and hides in the closet)

JENNY: Don! Don, don't be ridiculous.

(**SIMONE** enters, carrying grocery bags)

SIMONE: Hi Jen. I thought I heard you talking with someone.

JENNY: I'm talking to Don. He's hiding in the closet.

(During the following, SIMONE is bustling around, high octane. Exiting and entering. Putting away groceries, straightening up the house etc.)

SIMONE: Great. Listen, I'm really in a rush. Could you help me.

JENNY: Say, Simone, would you mind if--

SIMONE: I can't wait to tell you what has happened to me. Remember that poetry festival I went to a couple days ago?

JENNY: Yes. I haven't seen you since.

SIMONE: By the way, I passed by Don's building. It's all covered over with a huge tarp.

JENNY: Yes they're fumigating his building, so he has to move out for a few days.

SIMONE: Oh, is that all. I was hoping it was a Cristo installation.

JENNY: No, just a cockroach infestation. So that's what I wanted to talk to you a--

SIMONE: So anyway, you haven't asked me what's happened.

JENNY: (*giving up*) So what's happened?

SIMONE: think I've met someone.

JENNY: Really.

SIMONE: You know how I've always said I'm an answer looking for the right question.

JENNY: Yeah...

SIMONE: Guess what?

JENNY: You found the right question.

SIMONE: I think so! Aren't you excited?!?

JENNY: Yeah... I guess. I mean, I could get more excited if you wouldn't switch questions every two weeks.

SIMONE: I really think this one's different. I really do. I've never felt like this before.

JENNY: Okay - so who is it this time?

SIMONE: That's not a very nice attitude.

JENNY: Sorry. So okay. Who is it?

SIMONE: Well, he read some of his stuff at the poetry festival. He was just so... intense. After the festival a bunch of us went out to Blake's Bar and he was there. So I get to talking to him and told him how I really liked his stuff. And he goes "I really like your stuff," you know, even though I hadn't read anything. And it's real sexy and we're like totally oozing chemistry all over the place. It was like... covalent bonding.

JENNY: Whoa. Great! So about Don--

SIMONE: We were in bed together within two hours. It was beyond covalent bonding, it was like... exothermic.

JENNY: Wow! So, anyway would you mind if for the next few days, Don--

SIMONE: You won't believe what he does for a living.

(JENNY sighs)

He's a performance artist.

JENNY: A performance artist! Really - wow. That reminds me, Don needs --

SIMONE: Wanna know his name?

JENNY: In a moment, but first can we just--

SIMONE: He just has one name. He changed his name to be just one name. It's all legal. It's like on his driver's license and everything.

JENNY: Whoa - that's so cool. So for the next few days Don needs--

SIMONE: Wanna know what he changed his name to?

JENNY: (sighs)

SIMONE: (dramatic pause) Doug.

JENNY: (long pause, disbelief) Doug?

SIMONE: It's on his checking account and everything. Have you heard of him?

JENNY: Well... I... I have heard of people named Doug.

SIMONE: Well, that's him.

JENNY: Is he really making a living off of performing?

SIMONE: No, he's working part time in a funeral home.

JENNY: This guy sounds, umm....

SIMONE: Oh yeah, he really is.

You know like after about the first day together we were like sharing with each other our hopes and dreams for the future.

So he told me his dream is to open up his own funeral home one day. I really think he could revolutionize the whole industry. He wants to combine performance art and funerals. He'd like to open up a whole chain of performance art funeral homes.

JENNY: Really?

SIMONE: Yeah - he's already picked out a slogan

(indicating the marquee
with her hand)

"We Put the Fun Back in Funeral."

JENNY: Wow.

SIMONE: I think it could work.

JENNY: Yeah, so anyway, how about if Don--

SIMONE: And it just keeps totally blowing us away how many things we have in common. Like just last night we discovered that neither of us flushes for number one.

JENNY: (*struggling*) So... you...

(*gets it*) both share a deep concern for the environment and are committed to taking personal responsibility for your actions.

SIMONE: Exactly.

(DON raps on closet door.)

Just a minute.

(SIMONE goes to front door.)

JENNY: So as I was mentioning,

(SIMONE opens door and
finds no one there)

Don is having this work done to his house and--

SIMONE: Oh Jenny, I really think this is the big one. We just have some practicalities to work out. You know, like he lives in Seattle, I live here.

JENNY: Well, these things can be worked out.

SIMONE: He is just down for the poetry conference.

JENNY: The important thing is that you care about one another.

SIMONE: And he has to get a divorce.

JENNY: Simone!

SIMONE: Well, they've apparently been having some troubles lately and --

JENNY: I can't believe this. This married guy goes to some festival, you have an affair with him for two days and now he's getting a divorce?

SIMONE: Well...

JENNY: This is incredible.

SIMONE: Oh I think so too.

He said he'd always dreamed of having his marriage destroyed by someone like me. Isn't that the sweetest thing?

JENNY: NO! It's not the sweetest thing! I can't believe this. You ought to be ashamed --

SIMONE: Look - you are totally happy with Don, that's fine. I could never be happy with someone like him. Nice and stable and dependable. Forget it. That's not me.

JENNY: Simone! Don is in the closet!

SIMONE: Oh come on. Don doesn't have the balls to be gay.

JENNY: No, I mean--

SIMONE: But do I say you should be ashamed because you're attracted to someone like Don? No. So I lead a wilder life than you. We're different. So what?

JENNY: The... the "so what" is that you're breaking up a marriage after... after being together for two days.

SIMONE: You know what I think. I think you're envious.

JENNY: (*dismissive*) Ohmf.

SIMONE: You enjoy probing into my love life because you don't have the guts to do the same.

JENNY: Oh come on...

SIMONE: You try to pawn off your gutlessness as some morally superior position. Well, I don't buy it.

You're involved with some nice dependable guy who rotates his tires every 10,000 miles and you're too scared to try something racier.

(JENNY becomes flustered)

(*more tenderly*) Jenny...

JENNY: (*hurt*) Don and I have a very deep relationship.

SIMONE: And that's fine for you. For me, I need passion. If I want depth... I'll read a book.

(SIMONE puts her arm around JENNY)

Look, both of us know we are very different. That's what I like about our relationship. None of my other friends are like you. Let's not let this get in the way of our friendship.

(JENNY shakes her head 'yes.')

OK then...

It's just like Sting says in his song *King of Pain*:

"There's a butterfly trapped in a spider's web
That's my soul up there"

(pause)

I think that's like so true for all of us...

Listen, I need to get ready. I've invited Doug over for *hors d'oeuvres*. He wants to see where I live and meet you and everything. Oh, I am so happy.

JENNY: I can't wait to meet the new mystery man.

SIMONE: Good. Can you help me get ready?

(SIMONE exits)

I want everything to be perfect for Doug.

JENNY: Sure. Simone, listen, about Don--

SIMONE: (OS) You know, since Don's place is being fumigated, maybe he should stay here for a few days.

JENNY: Simone! That's very thoughtful of you. That would be very nice.

(SIMONE enters with box of condoms.)

SIMONE: Before I forget, I want to give you my leftover supply of condoms.

JENNY: Well... ah... gee, thank you, but don't you want them?

SIMONE: (exiting)

I thought you could give them to Don. They're, like, way too small for Doug.

(JENNY stands there a moment, holding condoms. SIMONE enters again.)

Do we still have your mom's silverware somewhere?

(SIMONE opens closet. There stands DON. SIMONE screams hands to the side of her face.)

JENNY: I've been trying to tell you—

SIMONE: *(turns, hands still to the side of her face.)*

I left my keys in the car!

(SIMONE exits. Pause.)

DON: Well.

JENNY: Well.

DON: That wasn't so hard after all.

JENNY: No.

DON: That was nice of her to give me her old condoms.

(JENNY puts condoms
behind her back)

So, I guess we should help her get ready.

JENNY: Guess so.

DON: Whatever happened to Peter?

JENNY: Peter?

DON: Remember? Simone's friend that spent Christmas with us here.

JENNY: Peter. Hmmm. I can't even remember that one.

DON: Peter was a nice person.

JENNY: You think everyone's a nice person.

DON: Remember, we used to hear "Oh Peter... Peter... PETER!"

JENNY: Ah yes. That guy who used to scream his own name during sex.

He was about five or six boyfriends in the past.

DON: Five or six? Gee, poor Simone. That must be hard on her.

JENNY: Well, it's how she chooses to live her life.

DON: But, I mean, don't you think it takes a toll on her emotionally? Changing dance partners so often?

JENNY: For Simone, love isn't like dancing. Love, for Simone, is more like... tag-team wrestling.

DON: Well. I just wonder if we shouldn't be a bit more concerned about her.

JENNY: She can take care of herself.

(SIMONE enters)

SIMONE: What a hassle. Oh, hi Don.

DON: I hope me being here is not an intrusion.

SIMONE: Oh no, it's fine.

DON: You won't even notice I'm here.

SIMONE: That's probably true.

(SIMONE springs into
action)

Okay, to work everyone, Doug will be here any minute. The kitchen sink is a mess.

JENNY: Those are your dishes from--

SIMONE: Don, could you be a doll and get down the silverware? Jenny, in the bags are some things from the deli. Could you put those out? And use the white plates. Do we have an empty paper bag?

JENNY: The bags are where they've always--

(SIMONE gets paper bag,
everyone is all hustle bustle)

SIMONE: Jenny, where is that book of Indian folklore, with those great photos?

JENNY: You lent that to--

SIMONE: Oh that's right. The bastard.

(SIMONE sweeps everything
off the coffee table into the
paper bag.)

We don't have anything really tacky on the refrigerator door do we?

JENNY: What are you doing!?!

SIMONE: Like, you know, Far Side cartoons or anything.

JENNY: I was working on my taxes there.

SIMONE: Oh well, (*holding up bag*) it's all right here. Do we have any, like, art book or some nice big interesting book?

JENNY: Well, we had that book of Indian folklore.

SIMONE: We don't have any really fabulous coffee table book?

JENNY: We have a dictionary.

SIMONE: No. No. Something that makes a statement about who we are. Something engaging. Something interesting.

DON: You could open the dictionary to an interesting word.

SIMONE: (*Pause*) Don. That is like... totally... stupid.

(*Pause*) Like what word?

Oh, Jenny Jenny Jenny NO! The white cups that match the plates. Don, after you've done that, could you move the television into the closet?

JENNY: What!

SIMONE: You don't want Doug to think we watch TV do you?

JENNY: Well, frankly I really don't--

SIMONE: Oh I forgot the music.

(SIMONE dashes over to the CD player)

Do you have any requests?

JENNY: How about something classical.

SIMONE: Here we go. Sting.

DON: So, Simone, I assume you're going to the Sting reunion concert.

SIMONE: What! Sting's having a reunion concert! When! Where!

JENNY: Wait. How can a single person –

DON: I just saw it in the Sunday paper.

SIMONE: Oh my god. Oh my god. Oh my god.

DON: So I guess you didn't–

SIMONE: Do we still have the Sunday paper!?!?

JENNY: I think I recycled it.

SIMONE: Oh my god. Oh, it's probably sold out.

JENNY: Well, actually I doubt that–

SIMONE: Oh my god. Oh my god. Oh my god.

DON: Do you want me to run down and see if it's in today's paper?

JENNY: I think we're all needed to help get ready.

SIMONE: Oh my god.

DON: Tell you what. After Doug gets here I'll run down and get the paper.

SIMONE: Oh Don. That would be great. Oh thank you. Thank you.

JENNY: Focus everyone. Focus.

SIMONE: My god, I haven't changed my clothes yet.

(Doorbell rings. Everyone whips around to look at the door. Tableau. Doorbell rings again. SIMONE breaks, and heads for door. She opens door. There stands DOUG)

(*breathy*) Oh Doug.

(They kiss, probably with inappropriate passion.)

Won't you come in.

I'd like you to meet my roommate Jenny.

DOUG: Jenny.

JENNY: I'm so happy to meet you.

SIMONE: And her boyfriend, Don.

DOUG: Don.

(DOUG shakes DON's hand, with an excessively firm grip.)

DON: We've heard so much about you, we've really been looking forward to meeting you and...

(DOUG's grip debilitates DON)

DOUG: Simone, I brought you a little something.

(DOUG gives envelope to Simone.)

SIMONE: Oh Doug. Whatever could this be--

(Simone opens it)

Oh my GOD!

DOUG: Two tickets to the Sting reunion concert.

SIMONE: Oh my God, DOUG!

(SIMONE hugs DOUG)

How did you know?

DOUG: My female intuition.

JENNY: I still don't get why it's called--

SIMONE: Oh Doug, thank you.

DON: Well, let's all sit down shall we?

SIMONE: So Don's our new roommate.

DON: Just for a couple of days while my place is fumigated.

DOUG: Fumigated? You're really fumigating?

DON: Yes.

DOUG: And you condone the callous slaughter of innocent insects.

DON: Oh no never. They aren't innocent insects. They're cockroaches.

DOUG: Cockroaches! Cockroaches are nature's little quarterbacks.

DON: Yeah. I had the entire NFL right there in my kitchen. And I'm not killing them myself. The owner of the building had this extermination company come out and--

DOUG: SILENCE! A moment of silence for our brothers and sisters in the insect kingdom. More victims of our human arrogance and stupidity.

DON: Gee. I never really thought about it like that. Now I feel horrible.

DOUG: You feel horrible? You feel horrible? No. No. You ARE horrible.

We... all... are... horrible!

JENNY: *(pause)* Drinks anyone?

(JENNY exits.)

(DOUG puts his arm around DON)

DOUG: Don't feel bad. I used to be like you. I used to... fumigate.

DON: Really?

DOUG: Years ago. Had ants. Thousands of ants. Millions of ants. Kitchen. Bathroom. Living room. Ants.

DON: And you fumigated?

DOUG: I did. And afterward, I felt horrible, just like you.

DON: A million ants though. That's a lot of ants.

DOUG: But you know, I missed them. I could watch them for hours as they formed these beautiful patterns on the wall. All these ants. It was like living inside a Salvador Dali painting.

Then suddenly... gone. Where are my little friends? Gone. Why? Because I had them killed. Now, the world will never know what they had to offer... given the opportunity.

SIMONE: Doug feels things very, very deeply.

DOUG: You think I'm an asshole, don't you Don?

DON: Oh no Doug, I like you an awful lot.

(JENNY enters)

JENNY: So Doug, Simone tells us you're a performance artist.

DOUG: Well, my essence is the essence of a poet. Performance art is an extension of that essence. For me, performance art is how I free the words from the page and give them a three dimensional life.

DON: That sounds nice.

JENNY: And now you work in a funeral home?

DOUG: Well, yeah. There was this period where I was, you know, sort of in between poetry jobs and answered this ad in the paper for a funeral home and suddenly, I found myself. THIS is why I was put in the world. I am intensely spiritual, and I have so much to offer people as they deliver a loved one from this world to the next.

SIMONE: Tell them about one of your funeral performances.

DOUG: You want to hear?

DON: Oh yeah!

DOUG: Well, I can describe the last one I did. Everyone assembles in the church. The lights go off. They sit in darkness for about a minute. Suddenly, a flash of light reveals the dearly departed, which I had stuffed by a taxidermist friend of mine. A baby's cry is heard, then a deafening crack of thunder. A sunrise is projected on the rear of the

chapel, a sunset on the front. And that's the end.
The entire service lasts about two minutes.

JENNY: Wow!

DON: So, yeah. Very powerful. The dead person followed
by the baby's cry --

DOUG: The cycle of life.

DON: Exactly. Then sunrise -- sunset, sunrise -- sunset.

DOUG: You got it.

DON: And the thunder. Wow.

DOUG: You... you get the thunder, right?

DON: The unseen hand of God in all things.

DOUG: Bingo, amigo.

DON: And the sunrise projected at the rear, so as the
congregation exits they are walking into the
sunrise. Very, very positive.

DOUG: I'm no cynic. But, you know it's hard to tell the
difference between a sunset and a sunrise.

DON: But that's just it. Are we all walking toward a sunset
or a sunrise? It depends on your outlook on life.

DOUG: You know, that's what I like about performance
art. As you reflect on a performance you discover
riches you didn't even know were there.

DON: I like it. But you know, there's something missing.
Like, some sense of the deceased.

DOUG: You know, I've been troubled by that too.

DON: Perhaps, instead of just having the flash of
lightening on the deceased, you could place the
dearly departed at the entrance, greeting people
as they arrive.

DOUG: That could be very moving.

DON: Prior to dying, the deceased could record a message, that would be playing next to the stuffed corpse, greeting mourners as they arrive.

DOUG: That could lend a nice, personal touch.

DON: Something like "Thank you for taking time from your busy day to attend my funeral."

SIMONE: STOP IT!!

DOUG: Are you sensitive about this sort of thing sweetheart?

SIMONE: I'm not, but that is... disgusting.

DOUG: Sorry, my love.

DON: Sinking barge.

DOUG: What?

DON: Hold the entire funeral on a sinking barge. Make it very real that each and every one of us has limited time on this earth.

(DOUG bangs the table with his fist, jumps out of his seat, points a finger at Don. It seems as though he is upset.)

DOUG: YOU... I... LIKE!

DON: Do you really think it's a good idea?

DOUG: Who is this man?

JENNY: That's Don, remember, my boy--

DOUG: No, I mean who IS... this... man? What is he made of?

DON: Well, um, I'm a computer programmer.

DOUG: Computer programmer. You give life to computers.

DON: Well, I've never thought of it like that but--

DOUG: Have you ever considered revolutionizing the entire funeral industry?

DON: You mean, like, recently?

DOUG: I just met you, but I know you, Don. You are sensitive. You are intuitive. You are... DON!

DON: Wow...

(DOUG begins to rub Don's shoulders)

DOUG: Don, tell me, what is your biggest fear?

DON: Well, um, public speaking. But I'm in Toastmasters and working on my fears and--

DOUG: What is your second biggest fear?

DON: Well, death I guess.

DOUG: Death.

DON: Yeah, I suppose so. I mean, isn't that rather normal?

DOUG: Yes. Yes Don, that is normal. And why do you fear death?

DON: Well, because I don't know what it is.

DOUG: You don't know what it is.

DON: Well, no. I mean, I've never even seen a dead person.

DOUG: Never seen a dead person. Never seen a dead person. Half the people who have ever walked upon the face of earth are now dead. The current population of the world is huge, wouldn't you agree?

DON: Got me there.

DOUG: And for every living human being, there is a dead human being. Now that's a lot of dead people. But you have not seen one of them? Does that strike you as... unnatural?

DON: I suppose so.

DOUG: OF COURSE IT'S UNNATURAL!!! Don, do you think that animals hold a similar fear of death?

DON: No. And they're probably comfortable with public speaking.

DOUG: Jenny, do you enjoy walking in the forest?

JENNY: I love the great outdoors.

DOUG: And what do you love about the great outdoors?

JENNY: I love the green, the fresh air. I love being surrounded by all that wild-

DOUG: And as you walk through the forest, do you ever come across dead animals?

JENNY: No,... none that I can remember.

DOUG: Does that strike you as... unnatural?

JENNY: Well, no. I mean it's in the great outdoors, so it must be natural, right?

DOUG: EXACTLY. So here we have it. Dead animals are hidden from view, and yet animals probably do not fear death. Dead people are hidden from view, and we fear death. So what is the difference?

DON: Don't know.

DOUG: The *necrophorus mortuorum* beetle. More popularly known as the sexton beetle. While the cockroach is nature's quarterback, the sexton beetle is nature's undertaker. Using its spade-shaped antennae, this industrious insect excavates around the corpse of say, a dead mouse, until, by a process of gradual undermining, the mouse sinks into its grave. The female *necrophorus mortuorum* beetle lays her eggs in the corpse, which is then carefully buried beneath dirt.

For larger animals that meet their maker, the insects work together with their friends in the higher phylum, such as jackals and vultures, to swiftly deal with the dearly departed.

So, the animals work together as a community to send the dead on their final journey. Its part of being an animal. Animals accept death as a part of life.

What would entice us, the human species, to accept death as a part of life?

JENNY: Putting the fun back in funeral?

DOUG: EXACTLY!

We do not dispose of our dead as nature intended. We do not leave Grandma's earthly remains in the back yard to be tenderly cared for by the sexton beetle. And I intend to change that. I am not talking here about mere funerals. That is child's play. What I intend to do is alter Western Civilization's approach to death.

DON/JENNY/SIMONE (*in awe*) Wow.

DOUG: And I want you to help me.

DON: Gee, I don't know.

DOUG: Don, where will you be when the death revolution sweeps the country? Sitting on the sidelines? Or will you join me, in the heart of the fray, standing hand in hand with the *necrophorus mortuorum* beetles?

DON: You know, it's funny, but I did have an idea about this once.

DOUG: Do tell.

DON: I thought, someone should create a service on the Internet where families can have memorial web sites created for loved ones.

DOUG: Go on.

DON: The site could include pictures of deceased. Favorite quotes. An online discussion forum where people could share stories and feelings. This would give friends and relatives from far away who can't make it to the funeral an opportunity to connect to the community of people who loved the person who died.

For people who know they are going to die soon, they could even leave a message on the web site for the people left behind.

Perhaps you could keep the site online for three months or so, and then give it to the family and it becomes something they can cherish forever.

(long pause)

Well, okay, maybe it's a dumb idea.

DOUG: Kill me. All right? Just kill me right now. You know why? Because I want one of these funerals.

Genius. That's what you are. Pure Genius.

Can you create these sites?

DON: Sure. Piece of cake.

DOUG: Good. Create a site that we can show to clients. Now, how much should we charge clients for this?

JENNY: We charge?

DON: Hmmm. How about if we just include it in the package.

DOUG: Everyone who uses us automatically gets a complimentary commemorative web site.

DON: Or why limit it to our company?

JENNY: Our company?

DON: This could be a service sold to funeral homes throughout the nation. Everyone would know to check... death.com when a loved one died.

DOUG: Where have you been all my life?

DON: And it's always so awkward after someone dies to then find out when and where the funeral will be held. Now you just go to death.com. Perhaps the family wants donations to a favorite charity in lieu of flowers. All this could be on the web site, and save the family the hassle of giving the same information over and over to people, during their time of sorrow.

DOUG: We could sell advertising to florists, estate planners--

DON: Death and taxes. We got you covered.

DOUG: sympathy cards, travel agencies--

DON: For those out of state funerals.

Caterers--

DOUG: for the wake...

DON: And what about support services--

DOUG: Hospice care--

DON: Grief counseling.

DOUG: Death and dying books.

You realize what we got here?

DON: This is above and beyond simple funeral services.

DOUG: This is a --

DOUG/DON: Death Emporium!

DOUG: Yes!

Okay, while I'm staying here, I'll work on our business plan. Try to figure out how the whole thing fits together.

JENNY: Staying here?

SIMONE: Oh, yeah. Umm, would you mind? Just for a couple of days.

JENNY: Well--

DON: Sure! Oh this will be fun.

JENNY: Don?

DON: We can have a bar-b-que every night and everything.

JENNY: DON!!

DON: What?!

JENNY: I need some help in the kitchen.

DON: Gee, everything is right here, why do we need to--

(JENNY's glare stops him)

Right. Kitchen.

JENNY: Excuse us a moment.

(DON and JENNY go to
separate area of stage.)

JENNY: What are you doing?

DON: Did I do something wrong?

JENNY: You just met this guy. Now you're going into business together?

DON: We're just talking about it.

JENNY: I have never heard you say that your life-long dream was to get into the death industry.

DON: It isn't but--

JENNY: But suddenly you're throwing your entire career out the window and going into business with a nut case.

DON: Doug isn't a nut case. I think he's --

DON/JENNY: a nice guy.

JENNY: Right. A nice guy who's role model is a beetle.

DON: I think it is rather endearing to--

JENNY: You scare me sometimes Don. You really do. You completely lack the ability to judge character.

DON: Doug is a little eccentric perhaps but--

JENNY: I don't trust him. He's sleazy.

DON: Jenny! I really think you are over reacting.

JENNY: Really. Okay. Maybe so. Shall we return?

DON: That's it? Argument over?

JENNY: Argument over.

(returning to living room)

DON: Who won?

(follows Jenny.)

JENNY: We're back.

SIMONE: Is everything okay?

JENNY: Fine. Fine.

DOUG: I hope I haven't upset anything.

JENNY: No. No. Fine. Fine. Everything's fine.

So Doug, Simone tells us you're married.

(awkward pause)

DOUG: Yes. Yes I am. My wife lives up in Seattle.

JENNY: Big wedding ceremony?

DOUG: Huge! The reception lasted until the next morning.
We had people--

JENNY: Wrote your own marriage vows I bet.

DOUG: Writing marriage vows is every poet's dream. It was beautiful. By the time the ceremony was over there was not a dry eye in the house.

JENNY: Oh I can just imagine it was beautiful. Then to think, just a few short years later you would be down here making a complete mockery of the entire service.

SIMONE: JENNY!

DOUG: My wife and I have a very special understanding. We aren't hung up on traditional models of relating.

JENNY: So you have told your wife you are down here having an affair?

SIMONE: Jenny! That is really none of your--

DOUG: I don't think I put it exactly like that but--

JENNY: I'm just curious how you did put it then?

SIMONE: I am not going to sit here and--

JENNY: Oh come on Simone. We all know men deceive their wives all the time. I mean, is that news to anyone in this room?

Some do it by omitting little details, others do it by concocting elaborate lies, others do it by sneaking around and never mentioning anything. All I'm asking Doug is "what form of deception do you prefer?"

SIMONE: I think we should just drop this entire--

JENNY: It's an innocent enough question, don't you think so Doug?

DOUG: As I say, all my relationships fall outside conventional paradigms.

JENNY: So you told her?

SIMONE: EXCUSE ME!

(SIMONE pulls JENNY aside)

SIMONE: *(stage whisper to Jenny)* What are you doing?

JENNY: I think we're having an interesting conversation.

SIMONE: You are humiliating me.

JENNY: Am I? I'm so sorry. I'll drop the subject.

SIMONE: And apologize to Doug.

JENNY: Certainly.

(SIMONE and JENNY return)

SIMONE: Everyone, Jenny has something she would like to say. Jenny?

JENNY: I really must apologize to you Doug. Here I've been droning on and on about your wife. I haven't asked you a thing about yourself.

DOUG: You are inquisitive. Nothing to apologize for.

JENNY: Like your name.

DOUG: Ah yes.

JENNY: Like many people would be too embarrassed to change their name to just be one name. I mean, most people would find that rather pretentious, but I guess you don't.

DON: Jenny!

SIMONE: THAT DOES IT!

DOUG: Please. (*then, to Jenny*)

I think that depends on what you change your name to. If I had changed it to something like, Sinbad, well, that would be pretentious. But no, I wanted to celebrate the little people, exalt a lowly name. Doug. Just plain Doug. I have taken this common name and put it on a pedestal. I challenge you to name one person named Doug who was ever a success ex-

JENNY: (*overlapping*) Douglas MacArthur.

DOUG: EXCEPT FOR... you didn't let me finish. Rushing, rushing. Always rushing. But where to?

Except for... Douglas MacArthur.

JENNY: Douglas Fairbanks Jr. Douglas Adams. Mike Douglas. McDonald-Douglas. Kirk Douglas.

DON: Sir Douglas Quintet.

JENNY: Snoop Dougy Doug.

SIMONE: Okay. Look. I think it is very sweet that Doug is named Doug.

DON: Why don't we talk about our new business idea?

JENNY: Good. For example--

SIMONE: Wait. Not you.

DOUG: We should hear from all parties concerned.

JENNY: Well, I'm curious how many people will pay to have a performance art funeral?

DOUG: This is life's last ceremony. People pay to have funerals. Why not performance art funerals?

JENNY: I don't know. Just trying to make money off of something that has the word "art" in it... .

DOUG: Sad state of affairs, is it not? Such an important calling, to be an artist. Yet society gives such little compensation for such a sacred duty. Look around us. Look at this silverware. A thing of beauty. An honor to even hold in your hand. Took someone days to create. Yet it probably is not worth more than... \$200?

JENNY: Excuse me but that set is my mom's and it appraised for over seven thousand dollars.

(DOORBELL rings)

SIMONE: I'll get it.

(SIMONE opens door. It's MORRIS)

MORRIS: Oh, sorry, I must have the wrong--

DOUG: Morris, Morris come in.

MORRIS: Oh, Doug you are here.

DOUG: Morris is my new partner in the funeral business.
Morris, this is Simone.

MORRIS: *Enchante'*.

DOUG: And Don and Jenny

DON/JENNY: Hello Morris.

DOUG: Morris has a most holy position in the organization. He prepares the body of the deceased for passage to the after life.

MORRIS: I'm a beautician for dead people.

DOUG: Morris is an artist. His tools are simple. A hair brush, some mascara, a touch of rouge. His canvas, the human body. And his calling is to prepare the body for the greatest journey of them all.

MORRIS: By the time I'm done with 'em they wish they'd died years ago.

SIMONE: This sounds like a disturbing profession.

MORRIS: Oh, not at all. Here.

(MORRIS produces some
snap shots)

I always carry around a few samples of my work. Here we go. Before and after. Guess. Just guess in which photo the person is dead.

(SIMONE declines the offer)

JENNY: Here, let me take a look. Wow, that is remarkable.

MORRIS: Hard to believe. One is pre and one is post Morris. Go ahead guess in which photo she's dead.

JENNY: My guess is the photo where her eyes are closed.

MORRIS: Oh rats. That's a dead give away.

(MORRIS laughs at his unintended joke)

MORRIS: Let's see if I can find the photo of the guy who requested lime-green embalming fluid. You'll die.

(MORRIS laughs again at joke)

DON: My cousin is a homosexual.

(long, awkward pause)

MORRIS: Really? I probably know him.

DON: I was wondering.

SIMONE: Oh, Don.

DON: What? He is. Jenny, you've met my cousin Leonard. I mean, it's not as obvious as, um, you know, some...

JENNY: So Morris, you just met Doug?

MORRIS: About two weeks ago.

DOUG: Morris, I think Don has some good ideas for our business.

MORRIS: Really?

DON: Well, I don't know.

DOUG: Don's a visionary. He's going to handle the Internet arm of our business.

DON: Well, I—

MORRIS: You do that sort of thing?

DON: I'm a computer programmer.

MORRIS: Don, this is very spiritual work that Doug and I are engaged in. Now if we are going to be partners I need to know a bit more about you.

DON: Certainly.

MORRIS: I'd like to ask you about your beliefs. Your deeply held beliefs.

DON: You mean, like, believing that the right office product can transform your life? That sort of thing?

MORRIS: Yes.

DON: I firmly believe that people should be nicer to one another.

MORRIS: I'm with you there.

DON: And that object-oriented programming beats structured programming hands down.

MORRIS: I'll give you that one.

DON: And I'm sick to death of sports utility vehicles. Is that a belief?

MORRIS: Certainly, if you feel it very deeply. But what about beliefs regarding love, life, death?

DON: Well, gee I guess I believe in all those things.

MORRIS: Let's take love for example. I am guessing that you and Jenny are sweethearts?

DON: Yes.

MORRIS: So you love Jenny?

DON: With all my heart.

MORRIS: What do you believe about love?

DON: I believe we all walk around with our own Venn Diagrams defining who we are. The secret to love is to find intersecting Venn Diagrams. I feel so lucky having met Jenny. You know, I go to parties and meet women who are only one or two standard deviations away from Jenny. But there is no way I would ever want to spend my life with them like I want to spend my life with Jenny. And I think to myself "There, but for a standard deviation, go I."

JENNY: Don, that is so sweet.

MORRIS: I think I can say without reservation, that I would be honored to have you as a business partner.

DON: Great!

SIMONE: So you work on dead people, only? What about live people?

MORRIS: The dead ones keep me busy. But I see people all the time that I would just love to get my hands on. You, for example.

SIMONE: Really! Do you think you could do something about this here. (indicating hair) It's always in my eyes, but when I get it cut, I look horrible.

MORRIS: The problem is the way your hair is parted, the length is fine.

SIMONE: Wow. You might be right.

MORRIS: I could fix you up in a jiffy. Let me just go back to the car and get a few things.

DOUG: A rare treat to experience Morris in action.

MORRIS: Be right back.

(MORRIS exits)

SIMONE: Oh, this is exciting!

DON: He's one of a kind, that Morris.

SIMONE: Don, can I say something... helpful... about your personality?

DON: Aw Oh. Do you have, what you people call, "an issue?"

SIMONE: Yes. Yes Don.

I think

I have

an

issue

with

you.

DON: One must always be willing to hear feedback about their personality.

SIMONE: When meeting someone who is different from you, let's say someone who is obviously gay, one personality might be the type to quietly note that this person is different and then perhaps join in the conversation without making a big deal about it. A second type of personality might be the type to say "My cousin is a homosexual."

The first type of personality... IS BETTER.

DON: Do you think I offended him?

(MORRIS returns)

MORRIS: Okay my little bud. Morris is here to help you blossom.

SIMONE: I'm yours Morris.

DON: I hope I didn't offend you by mentioning my cousin.

MORRIS: (to Simone) Here my pet.

(to Don) One must be strong and brave when one is Morris.

DON: Leonard, my cousin. He's in advertising.

MORRIS: (fussing with Simone's hair) Really?

DON: You've seen that billboard that has a picture of some guy with a bare, bronzed torso, glistening with sweat, rippling with muscle, being clutched from behind by what looks like these leopard paws?

SIMONE: You mean that feminine hygiene ad?

DON: Yes.

(MORRIS can't seem to get comfortable with Simone's hair)

MORRIS: He created that ad campaign?

DON: No, I don't think so.

MORRIS: Oh.

DON: But that's his torso.

MORRIS: What did you say his name was?

DON: Leonard. You two really should meet--

SIMONE: Is something the matter?

MORRIS: It's just... here, would you mind lying on the table?

(He clears an area on the table. SIMONE hesitates but obliges)

It's just... you know... most of my clients are not sitting up. There we go.

And yes... just relax.

(MORRIS crosses SIMONE's arms across her chest like a corpse)

Comme ca'.

That's nice.

(MORRIS is obviously still struggling with something)

Now...

SIMONE: What's wrong?

MORRIS: I'm sorry darling it's just... would you mind closing your eyes?

(SIMONE springs up, disgusted)

SIMONE: That's it!

MORRIS: I'm sorry, it just sort of gives me the heebie-jeebies.

SIMONE: No thanks.

MORRIS: Now I have offended.

DON: It's okay Morris. Simone is strong and brave, just like you.

MORRIS: Well, anyway, I probably should be going. I just popped in for a quick howdy-do.

JENNY: Well Morris, it was a pleasure. I guess we will be seeing more of you.

MORRIS: The pleasure was mine. Don, Simone.

DON/SIMONE: Bye.

DOUG: I think we have assembled quite a team here, wouldn't you agree Morris?

MORRIS: This is going to be as big as the Egg McMuffin.

(MORRIS exits)

SIMONE: Look, Don and I will clean up in the kitchen.

(JENNY stands up)

JENNY: Nonsense, Don and I can --

SIMONE: You and Doug got off to a rocky start. Why not get to know each other a little better.

JENNY: That's thoughtful, I just --

SIMONE: Don?

DON: I'm right behind you.

(SIMONE and DON exit.)

(awkward pause)

DOUG: You and I have met before.

JENNY: What?

DOUG: You must recognize me. You go by the name "The Butterfly." I just saw you last month.

JENNY: What are you talking about?

DOUG: At the Ultra Lounge.

JENNY: The Ultra Lounge!?! That strip club?

DOUG: No one can lap dance like "The Butterfly."

JENNY: That is absolutely offensive.

DOUG: I am so sorry. I did not mean to offend. Just a case of mistaken identity. So it wasn't you?

JENNY: Absolutely not.

DOUG: Please accept my apologies.

JENNY: It's okay. It really is.

DOUG: It's just the resemblance is --

JENNY: Those erotic dancing places are so pathetic. I can't believe anyone would admit to going there.

DOUG: Or working there.

(DOUG approaches JENNY)

DOUG: The Butterfly has a tattoo. A very special butterfly, tattooed right ...

(DOUG reaches around Jenny, to the small of her back)

here.

JENNY: I do NOT...

(JENNY grabs his wrist forcefully and pulls it from behind her.)

have... a tattoo.

(SIMONE enters)

SIMONE: Ah, now that's better. I just knew you two needed some time to get acquainted.

(DON enters)

Look, how about we all go out dancing at Blake's Bar, where Doug and I met. Jenny, what do you say?

JENNY: I'm gonna bow out, need to get Don settled in here.

DON: We could do that latter, I really don't have that much st -

(JENNY's look stops him cold.)

On the other hand, we still have some clean up to do and --

DOUG: Well, if you change your mind you know where to find us.

SIMONE: Don't wait up.

DON: You kids have fun.

(DOUG and SIMONE exit.)

(Awkward moment between DON and JENNY)

DON: Should I wash the china by hand?

JENNY: Yes.

(JENNY begins stomping on cans.)

DON: Recycling?

JENNY: Recycling.

DON: You're upset.

(JENNY stomps a can)

I really get the sense that you are upset.

(Stomp)

Did we really drink that many sodas?

(Stomp)

You're upset about this business plan?

JENNY: No.

DON: Well, what then?

JENNY: I'm upset by your choice of business partners.

DON: You don't like Morris?

JENNY: Morris is fine.

DON: You don't like Doug.

JENNY: Do you?

DON: I think Doug is a nice per-

JENNY: (Stops DON with a look)

DON: And anyway, we're just talking about an idea.

JENNY: And I really think it's a good idea. I think your death web site is a great idea. That's not the issue.

The issue is you are being bamboozled into a business relationship with an unsavory character.

DON: Well, you were acting a little unsavory yourself tonight.

JENNY: I'm sorry. It's just, if we get married, he will be like this third party in bed with us. That's what it's like when you start up a company with someone. They become this constant presence in your life.

DON: You said "if we get married."

JENNY: I mean, when we get married.

DON: Have you told Simone yet?

JENNY: We've only decided to get married a few weeks ago.

DON: You haven't told Simone.

JENNY: (*shakes her head "no"*)

DON: I would think you would be excited to tell your roommate.

Are you having doubts?

(*no response*)

Jenny?

JENNY: The way you were tonight, Don... sometimes you seem to lack, well, common sense.

(*DON is hurt by this.*)

You don't seem to recognize that Doug is shifty.

DON: Shifty?

JENNY: Yeah, you know...

(*JENNY mimes being shifty*)

DON: I'm sorry Jenny, he just doesn't seem...

(*DON mimics Jenny*)

to me.

JENNY: His story doesn't add up. He's been here two weeks.

DON: No he hasn't.

JENNY: He said he met Morris two weeks ago. Did he meet Morris here? In Seattle? Where has he been staying the past two weeks? Why is he moving in with us now? If he lives in Seattle, why is he getting business partners here? Is he moving down here?

(DON carries stuff out to the kitchen. DON is in and out during this conversation.)

What about his family and friends in Seattle? And why did he change his name?

DON: I'm sure there is an explanation for all of that.

(JENNY stomps on a wayward can)

DON: *(pause)* Okay, how about this. I'll talk to some venture capitalists about death.com. If I don't get funding, then we just drop the whole thing. If I do get funding, then we can worry about Doug.

(DON carries more stuff out to the kitchen.)

JENNY: *(pause)* Well, I guess.

(a moment)

Don?

(DON sticks his head in from the kitchen)

DON: Yes.

JENNY: *(pause)* Umm... Thanks.

SCENE 2

SETTING: Four days later.

ON RISE: Jenny alone, down stage, not in the living room.

JENNY: So, fine. It's four days later. We moved Don back to his cockroach-free home this morning. Doug is still here and I'm breaking the fourth wall.

I... how do I say this without sounding... I don't know, I'll just say it. I honestly believe that we should all nurture and care for one another at all times. With that as background, I hate Doug with all my heart. In the past few days he has pretty much established himself as the Alpha male around here. I just find him... what is the word?... oppressively... secure. I mean, I've met other secure people before. Sure they are obnoxious but I usually don't react like this. It's like, with Doug, I would like to take this fourth wall and break it over his head.

And that's not right.

Don called with the news. I should be working on my thesis, but I can't concentrate. This is all happening so fast.

(Doorbell rings.)

That must be him. We have so much to decide.

(JENNY opens door. Don enters.)

DON: Jenny - Can you believe it. It's just--

(JENNY stops him with a huge kiss)

JENNY: My hero.

DON: Gee. Really?

JENNY: You did a very courageous thing.

DON: Well, I just kept saying to myself it's just like Toast Masters. There's nothing to worry about. I guess I did okay.

JENNY: Did okay? Don! This is just incredible!

DON: They said they had never made a funding decision so quickly.

JENNY: I am so proud of you.

DON: I mean I presented the proposal this morning, and by noon they had committed five million dollars to the project.

JENNY: I'm still in shock.

DON: Well, they think that the death website is a good idea.

JENNY: Yes, but a good idea isn't good enough. They wouldn't give you five million dollars if they didn't have confidence that you could pull it off.

DON: Well, remember they are investing in the business, not just giving me

JENNY/DON: five million dollars!

DON: And this doesn't come free you know. They will own seventy-five percent of the business. Doug and Morris and I will own the rest.

JENNY: Doug?

DON: Well yes, Doug and I are--

JENNY: I thought we were going to discuss what to do about Doug.

DON: Um, well, Doug is part of this and --

JENNY: So, it's a done deal. What I think doesn't matter.

DON: No, honey, it's just...

JENNY: *(stops him with a look)*

DON: Okay, what exactly would you like to discuss?

JENNY: I don't believe you should go into business with Doug. I don't trust him.

DON: Well, okay...

JENNY: Did you tell Doug what happened?

DON: He wasn't around. I left a message on the machine.

JENNY: Our machine?

DON: That's the only way I know to get in touch with him.

JENNY: How about Simone? Have you told her?

DON: No. Jenny, what are you driving at?

JENNY: We just need some time.

DON: He knows I had the appointment this morning. He's going to ask.

JENNY: Did you tell the investors about Doug?

DON: Of course. I mean, his name is on all the paper work, as is Morris' name. The funders want to meet both of them of course and--

JENNY: But they gave the money to you, due to your presentation.

DON: JENNY! I have an agreement with Doug.

JENNY: You don't have anything in writing.

DON: What are you suggesting?

JENNY: Do you really want Doug as a business partner? I mean, what exactly does he bring to the table, except a well-hung ego?

DON: Look, I know Doug is, well, Doug is ... overbearing ... is one way of putting it.

JENNY: Doug is an asshole, is another way of putting it.

DON: Okay, what do you want me to do?

JENNY: Doug is getting a free ride on your idea.

DON: This was Doug's idea.

JENNY: You suggested the death website. Isn't that what the funders are funding?

DON: Well, yes but--

JENNY: So, it was your idea. How is Doug involved?

DON: It was an idea I had years ago.

JENNY: That's worse. He's stealing an idea you've been thinking about for years.

DON: I thought about it years ago, then put it aside. I would not have pursued creating a death website at all if not for Doug's inspiration.

JENNY: Okay, I know what to do. Give Doug four hundred dollars for his inspiration. That's about what you pay for one of those inspirational mountain retreats.

DON: That is not my agreement with Doug.

JENNY: And what about your agreement with me?

DON: We agreed to discuss this. So, we're discussing.

JENNY: *(no reply)*

DON: I've never seen you hungry for money before.

JENNY: Well, it's never been on the menu before.

DON: Are you making enough at the senior center?

JENNY: Trying to finish my degree while working is exhausting. But yes, I am making enough money. And besides, this is not about money. You know that. This is about Doug.

DON: So what about Doug?

JENNY: He's dishonest. You place such importance on honesty.

DON: Why do you think he's dishonest?

JENNY: He's cheating on his wife and who knows what else. What do you know about this guy? The only person who knows him is Morris, and he's only known him for a few weeks.

DON: And what about Morris, do you want me to cheat him out of this as well?

JENNY: (*miffed*)

DON: Look, I'm sorry. I know you would never want me to cheat anybody.

JENNY: Doug is just passing through, Don. He and Simone are having a fling. They won't last forever. You watch. The sex will wear off, and when it does, they're through. Five million dollars is a serious amount of money. This business deserves better than Simone's latest affair.

DON: Okay, I've got it. I know what to do. I'll give Doug the contacts with the investors.

JENNY: What!

DON: He and Morris can find someone else to do the website, and I won't have anything to do with it. Problem solved.

JENNY: Don! And just throw away all the hard work you put into this?

DON: I've put about twenty hours into this. It's not that bad.

JENNY: Don, if you did that you would resent me forever.

DON: Resent you? Of course not. You don't feel good about Doug and you can't help that. I want you to be happy.

JENNY: But five million dollars...

DON: Jenny, it's okay. Last week we didn't have five million dollars. I'll just forget about this online funeral service, so next week we won't have five million dollars. What's the difference?

(DON freezes)

JENNY: *(to audience)* Look, I should be able to just deal with this without dragging you into it, but I need to pass this by somebody.

Don is right of course. There was no five million last week. If there isn't five million next week, why should it matter? And anyway, as Don said, they're giving the money to a company, not to Don and me.

You know what? I agree with Don. It really doesn't make a difference.

(JENNY turns to speak to Don. Hesitates. Turns back to audience.)

Damn-it. It does make a difference. I mean look, I will soon have a Masters degree in social work. But when I was born I didn't have a Masters degree. So... so according to Don's reasoning, if I had now exactly what I had when I was born, that would be okay. If every week is the same as the previous week, that is just fine.

This five million dollars, you want to know what it is? It's big, bold, new, exciting. It's one of those events by which you dog-ear the pages of your life. A reference point. Without reference points, your life is just an endless desert, nothing telling you where you've been, where you're going.

Yes. That's it.

This has helped, it really has. Thank you.

(to Don, who goes out of freeze.)

You want to know what the difference is? I'll tell you. It's the difference between life and death. This money isn't about a funeral venture. It's about embracing opportunities. It's about experiencing life, not simply watching it go by your window.

DON: Well, I suppose.

(JENNY sighs)

You know what it is? I guess that creating a funeral web site is really not that important to me.

JENNY: *(Yells)* Well, what is important to you Don? Is anything important to you?

DON: *(pause)* You are.

(Pause. JENNY approaches Don.)

JENNY: Every so often...

(JENNY hugs DON.)

you say precisely the correct thing.

How about this. Don't tell anyone about this for now. Let's just think about it this afternoon. Let it simmer. Maybe we'll come up with something. Then tonight, I'll take everyone out for a nice dinner and you can announce what happened with the investors.

DON: Well, okay. But I need to tell them if I am going to be in on it or not.

JENNY: We'll come up with something. Don't worry.

DON: I don't want this to come between us.

JENNY: It won't.

DON: I should get back to work. I've hardly been at the office the past week.

JENNY: Okay. Let's talk again before our big dinner.

(THEY hug. DON exits..
JENNY goes to message
machine. Hesitates, then
erases the messages.)

(Lights fade)

INTERMISSION

SCENE 3**SETTING:** Evening of the same day.**ON RISE:** Living room.

(SIMONE enters through front door carrying flowers.)

SIMONE: Jenny?

(*pause, louder*) Jenny!?

JENNY: (OS) In here.**SIMONE:** So you are really treating us all to dinner?!?

(JENNY entering living room area)

JENNY: It's been a big day. Much to talk about.**SIMONE:** So how did Don's presentation go this morning?**JENNY:** Well, I can't tell you. I want Don to tell everyone at dinner.**SIMONE:** Oh come on. Please.**JENNY:** Let's just say that the venture capitalists seem to like the idea.**SIMONE:** Really! So they're investing?**JENNY:** (*indicates her lips are sealed*)**SIMONE:** Oh, they are investing! Who would have thought! I mean, performance art funerals is not the type of thing you would think would interest them.**JENNY:** They are not investing in performance art funerals. They're investing in Don's web site idea.

SIMONE: He got the money!

JENNY: (*indicates her lips are sealed, again.*)

SIMONE: Incidentally, it was Doug's web site idea.

JENNY: No. Don't you remember. Don told Doug he had been thinking that a death web site would be very-

SIMONE: Yes, yes. Well, certainly Don would not have pursued the idea if not for Doug.

JENNY: Okay. Look, let's not argue about it.

SIMONE: You're right. Tonight we celebrate. So what did Doug say?

JENNY: Don hasn't been able to get in touch with Doug all day.

SIMONE: Oh that's great! I can tell him when he gets here.

JENNY: No, Don will tell--

SIMONE: Oh I can't wait.

(SIMONE exits)

(O.S.) So, you planning a big night on the town for us?

JENNY: Definitely.

(*pause*) So, we got Don all moved back into his place today.

(*pause*) So... when do you think Doug is going to move out?

SIMONE: (OS) Wa?

JENNY: I said... (*louder*) Doug, he must need to get back up to Seattle.

(SIMONE enters, brushing her teeth)

SIMONE: Ow, o ush. Ye ink he onna-

JENNY: Oh yuck. You know it that grosses me out.

SIMONE: Oh. Orry.

(SIMONE exits)

JENNY: Don't you think he has obligations in Seattle to get back to?

SIMONE: (OS) Doe noe.

JENNY: What?

(SIMONE enters)

SIMONE: I don't ask him much about Seattle. I don't want to remind him that there's somewhere else he's supposed to be.

Anyway, we're talking about all that tonight. You know, like what's the next step.

Oh Jenny, Doug makes me feel so alive. He's living his dreams. He's living his art. And let me tell you, he makes me remember why everyone makes such a big deal about sex. With Doug I feel so... so... heterosexual. He meets just about every item on my check list.

JENNY: You know, I used to have a check list too, but it just made it seem so mechanical. I mean, looking for love is not like shopping for a great deal on a new sofa.

(SIMONE gives a look.)

(*pause*) Well, okay, it's a little like shopping for a great deal on a new sofa, but you know what I mean.

(SIMONE sits. Begins to breathe in a rhythmic, noticeable way, perhaps tightening her buttocks rhythmically so she moves up and down slightly.)

Simone, I have something to tell you, and I'm not sure how you're going to take this.

SIMONE: Go ahead.

JENNY: I want you to be nonjudgmental of what I am about to say.

SIMONE: You have my word.

JENNY: I need support.

SIMONE: You know me.

JENNY: Don and I are getting married.

(Pause. SIMONE continues the rhythmic breathing)

What are you doing?

SIMONE: My Kegel exercises.

(SIMONE continues with rhythmic breathing and slight bouncing movement)

JENNY: Can you say something?

SIMONE: I'm trying to think of something supportive to say.

JENNY: How about "Oh Jenny, that's wonderful."

(SIMONE continues with rhythmic breathing and slight bouncing movement)

JENNY: WOULD YOU STOP THAT!

(SIMONE stops Kegel exercises)

SIMONE: It's just the thought of vowing to have sex with the same person, month after month, year after year, until death do you part.

JENNY: Yeah, so...

SIMONE: So do you realize that all that "til death do we part" stuff was invented back when the people died by the age of thirty-five?

JENNY: I just don't get your obsession with sex. What about meaningful conversation, shared values, common interests?

SIMONE: Look, if I have a lover, and we don't have meaningful conversation, what do I do? I get that from other people. But if I have a lover and we don't have great sex? Do I get that from other people? I think I've got my priorities straight.

JENNY: So who says that Don and I don't have a great sex?

SIMONE: Don?

JENNY: You're impossible.

SIMONE: Anyway, Jenny, I'm sure you know what you're doing. I'm very happy for you.

JENNY: Thanks.

(SIMONE jumps up)

SIMONE: A TOAST!

JENNY: Sure.

(SIMONE exits)

I'll want you to be one of my bride's maids.

SIMONE: (OS) Jenny, I would be delighted. Oh, this is exciting, even if it is Don.

(SIMONE enters with two glasses and a wine bottle.)

So this means you're moving out.

JENNY: Afraid so.

(SIMONE pours wine)

SIMONE: So, big changes for everyone!

To... life... ever changing and friendship everlasting!

JENNY: To friendship!

SIMONE: A wedding. It sounds so... grown-up.

JENNY: So we have a lot of planning to do. We'll have to figure out how to divide up all this stuff you and I have collected over the years.

SIMONE: Can I keep the TV?

JENNY: Sure.

SIMONE: Where is the TV?

JENNY: You hid it away so Doug wouldn't see it, remember?

SIMONE: I meant to, but I didn't.

JENNY: (*pause*) So, where is it?

(*looking around*) And what happened to our stereo?

(SIMONE jumps up)

SIMONE: My god, we've been robbed!

(JENNY jumps up. During the following, JENNY and SIMONE are scouring the room,)

JENNY: This is weird. Is anything else missing?

SIMONE: Does the door look like it had been tampered with?

JENNY: Are any windows broken?

SIMONE: When did you get home?

JENNY: This afternoon.

SIMONE: And no one has been here since then?

JENNY: No.

SIMONE: What about Don? He's always fixing stuff. Maybe he sent the TV out for repair.

JENNY: It wasn't broken.

(SIMONE exits to her bedroom)

SIMONE: That wouldn't stop Don.

Look, it must be here. Have you checked your room?

(Offstage, SIMONE screams.)

JENNY: Simone!

(SIMONE comes running on stage.)

SIMONE: They stole all Doug's clothes. His suitcase, everything is gone.

JENNY: Okay, let's just calm down. Okay, just stop for a second.

SIMONE: Okay, okay.

JENNY: Breathe.

SIMONE: Breathing.

JENNY: Okay, now. We moved Don moved out this morning--

SIMONE: And Don took Doug's clothes by mistake!

(pause, JENNY shakes her head "no")

My god, you think he did it on purpose!?

(JENNY sighs)

JENNY: Now. This morning was the stereo still here?

SIMONE: Uhhhhhhh...

JENNY: YES! Yes, we listened to the news on the radio this morning over breakfast.

SIMONE: That's right. That's right.

JENNY: Okay. Don and I leave. Now you and Doug are left here.

SIMONE: We had breakfast, then... I left for work.

JENNY: And what about Doug?

SIMONE: He stayed here.

(JENNY stares)

You know, he had stuff to work on.

He must have left the door unlocked. I can't see that anyone broke in.

JENNY: Ah huh.

(awkward pause)

MY MOM'S SILVER!

(JENNY dashes into the closet)

SIMONE: What!?!

(JENNY comes slowly out of the closet, despondent)

Is it there?

(It is obvious from JENNY's attitude that the answer is "no")

How could they know about your mom's silver?

(JENNY sits, puts her head in her hands)

JENNY: "This silver set appraised for over seven thousand dollars."

(JENNY shakes her head in disgust)

SIMONE: Do we have insurance?

Oh, how will we tell Doug?

(JENNY begins to laugh/cry)

Are you crying?

JENNY: Yes.

SIMONE: It sounds like you're laughing.

JENNY: I am.

SIMONE: I feel just horrible, having Doug move in and then his stuff gets stolen.

JENNY: WAKE UP SIMONE! DOUG ROBBED US BLIND!!

(JENNY returns to laughing/crying. SIMONE is shocked)

SIMONE: Doug?

JENNY: He's an artist all right. A CON ARTIST!

SIMONE: Doug?

JENNY: (*mimicking*) Doug?

SIMONE: No. Doug loves me. He's not a robber, for heaven's sake.

JENNY: And just what do you know about this "Doug."

SIMONE: Now wait a minute--

JENNY: You said his driver's license showed his name was "Doug." So, you saw his driver's license?

SIMONE: Well, no, of course not. I don't say "hey buddy, you wanna screw me, I gotta see some ID."

(JENNY puts her head in her hands, returns to laughing/crying)

For god's sake, what's the matter with you?

JENNY: I AM HAVING AN EMOTION!

(*pause*)

"We put the fun in funeral." Brother.

We got to be able to locate this guy.

SIMONE: Well, he's coming back this evening. He'll straighten this all out.

JENNY: We're never gonna see Doug again, unless it's in court.

SIMONE: No! That's not true.

Look, he wouldn't have bought us tickets to see Sting if he was planning on just robbing us and leaving.

JENNY: Unless he has the same feelings about Sting that I have.

SIMONE: What do you mean?

JENNY: I... HATE... Sting.

(SIMONE is shocked)

God it feels good to finally say that.

(DOORBELL rings)

SIMONE: Here's Doug now, he'll explain everything.

(JENNY opens door. It's DON carrying a bouquet of flowers.)

JENNY: Sweetheart!

DON: Jenny!

SIMONE: What lovely flowers.

DON: These are for Doug.

JENNY: The man of the hour.

DON: So where are we going out to dinner?

SIMONE: Have you talked to Doug today?

DON: I tried him here all day. I just got the answering machine.

JENNY: Listen, darling, something has come up.

SIMONE: I'm sure there is a logical explanation.

JENNY: We have been robbed.

DON: Robbed?

SIMONE: You don't happen to know where our television and stereo went to?

JENNY: And my mom's silver set?

DON: All of that stuff is missing?

JENNY: Along with Doug's clothes.

DON: Maybe Doug knows what happened to it.

JENNY: We think he does.

SIMONE: You think he does.

DON: We should call the police.

SIMONE: NO!

JENNY: Don, no one broke into the house. Whoever did it had a key. Doug was the last one to leave this morning. It seems as though Doug was the one who robbed us.

(doorbell rings)

DON: That's ridiculous. Doug isn't a robber.

SIMONE: Here's Doug now.

(SIMONE opens door. It's MORRIS carrying a bouquet of flowers.)

Morris!

MORRIS: Simone! Hi!

SIMONE: Have you seen Doug?

JENNY: Morris. Come in.

MORRIS: Oh hi Jenny. Thanks. So, Doug's not here?

DON: Morris!! Congratulations! Leonard called me!

MORRIS: We owe it all to you.

JENNY: Can I get you something to drink?

MORRIS: Oh thank you. Yeah. I could use a drink. I'm so nervous. So where is Doug? I tried to reach him here all day.

JENNY: Doug may be gone for a while.

SIMONE: We expect him anytime though.

MORRIS: I thought maybe he had moved back to his place.

SIMONE: Moved back to Seattle?

MORRIS: Seattle? No. He lives here in town. You know that.

(JENNY hands drink to
MORRIS)

Thanks.

JENNY: Sure we do.

MORRIS: It sure has been nice of you all to let him stay here while his place is fumigated.

SIMONE: Oh! You mean Don!

MORRIS: No! Doug. He told me he had a terrible cockroach infestation. You too Don?

DON: Now wait a minute--

JENNY: Yeah. Whole town apparently.

SIMONE: This doesn't make any--

MORRIS: I guess when you've been friends since grade school... .

SIMONE: Who's been friends since grade school?

MORRIS: You, Doug, Jenny ...

SIMONE: Well that's not exactly--

JENNY: What else did Doug tell you?

SIMONE: Jenny, could you get me a little something?

JENNY: I'd be delighted.

SIMONE: What lovely flowers.

MORRIS: These are for Doug.

SIMONE: That's nice.

JENNY: That's very nice.

(handing SIMONE her drink)

Here you go.

MORRIS: So, anyway, I came to tell Doug about Lenny.

SIMONE: Lenny?

DON: You know, Leonard, my cousin. Mr. Torso.

MORRIS: If it hadn't been for Don, we never would have met.

DON: Leonard said it was Jenny who introduced the two of you.

MORRIS: So we hit it off.

DON: From talking to Leonard today, it sounds like "hit it off" is an understatement.

JENNY: Morris! That's wonderful.

MORRIS: We are just so right for each other. I really feel like I have found my soul mate.

SIMONE: Boy, that was fast.

MORRIS: Don, you were sweet to tell me about Leonard.

DON: And Jenny was sweet to introduce you.

MORRIS: Leonard and I want to have you and Jenny over to celebrate. You too Simone.

SIMONE: So why the flowers for Doug?

MORRIS: Well, as you know, Doug and I have been lovers for the past couple of weeks.

(SIMONE spews her drink)

JENNY: Simone!

MORRIS: Anyway, I am putting the wild life behind me.

I really am ready to make a commitment to Leonard. I know these flowers won't make it up to Doug, but I hope he understands.

JENNY: I'm sure he'll be very happy for you.

MORRIS: Simone, Doug had given me a ticket to the Sting reunion concert. Maybe you and he should go instead.

JENNY: That's very thoughtful of you Morris. Simone, isn't that thoughtful?

SIMONE: This... this is... too much.

JENNY: Morris, I assume you know that Simone and Doug have also been lovers the past week or so.

(MORRIS's reaction says he did not know)

DON: I'm confused.

(DOORBELL rings)

JENNY: Whoever could that be?

(DOUG enters)

DOUG: Honey, I'm home!

(Doug gets pelted with flower bouquets. DOUG catches one of the bouquets.)

Caught the bridal bouquet.

(DOUG approaches Simone)

You know what that means.

SIMONE: It means you should go back to your wife, wherever it is he or she may be.

JENNY: I want my mom's silver back.

MORRIS: Your wife?

DON: I am calling the police.

DOUG: What are you talking about? What's going on? Did something bad happen?

JENNY: I can't believe this. You have a lot of gall to come in here and—

SIMONE: If I could throw your stuff out on the street I would. But you've already taken care of that I see.

DON: I demand that you return Jenny's silver set.

DOUG: Have you all gone nuts? What is this with the silver set?

JENNY: That's what we would like to know.

(SIMONE is beginning to sob)

SIMONE: You are a despicable, conniving, two timing, mix and match... con man--

DOUG: Mix and match?

SIMONE: (*indicating herself and Morris*) Mix and match!

DOUG: What is going on?

JENNY: You stole our TV and stereo. Who knows what you've done with my mom's silver. You lied about your relationship with Morris. You pretended to be our friend when in fact you were just using us.

DOUG: Stole your TV set? I... no... what are you talking about?

(Imploringly to MORRIS)

Morris... what... why?

MORRIS: I ...

DOUG: Simone--

SIMONE: And I think...I think... a performance art funeral is... is the most stupid idea I ever heard.

DOUG: Simone, please.

SIMONE: Oh save it.

(SIMONE runs to door)

Tell it to your next... victim.

(SIMONE starts to exit)

DOUG: Simone, if I stole your stuff, why would I come back?

SIMONE: You came back because... because... Why did you come back?

DOUG: I came back because... because this is where I am staying. I didn't steal anything - what do you think I am?

JENNY: She thinks you're a con artist, which you are.

DOUG: A con artist?

SIMONE: Yes, a con artist. You were using me and Morris for your sexual con game.

DOUG: Morris? Morris, what is she talking about?

MORRIS: Ahh-

DOUG: (to Jenny) You ... you are behind this.

DON: Now wait a minute.

(DOUG approaches Jenny)

DOUG: Don, call the police. Maybe they can catch the real robber.

DON: Right.

(DON begins to dial)

JENNY: NO WAIT!

(Pause. EVERYONE looks at Jenny)

Umm...

DOUG: I know your little secret. You want to get rid of me.

DON: Your secret?

DOUG: Go ahead, you can be honest, for once.

DON: What secret?

JENNY: I don't have a secret.

DOUG: You are my Butterfly.

JENNY: I am not your anything.

DOUG: Really? Then how could I know about this.

(DOUG grabs JENNY, swiftly parting cloths to reveal her lower back/upper buttocks.)

DON/MORRIS/SIMONE: DOUG!

(There is no tattoo. A moment.)

(JENNY pulls away from DOUG, glares at him.)

DOUG: Where is it!

DON: Where is what?

JENNY: Get out.

DOUG: You have a butterfly. I know it is you.

(to Don) Did you know Jenny is a stripper?

DON: A stripper?

JENNY: Get out.

SIMONE: She's a stripper!?!

(SIMONE laughs)

DON: Jenny isn't a stripper.

DOUG: And she wants me out of here so no one knows her sordid profession.

MORRIS: It isn't because of the money?

(Pause. EVERYONE looks at Morris)

Oops.

DOUG: What money?

SIMONE: What isn't because of the money?

DOUG: What money?

SIMONE: You and Don and Morris got funding.

DOUG: Don? The investors?

DON: *(Beams, shakes his head "yes")*

DOUG: DON! Congratulations! How much?

DON: *(DON holds up five fingers)*

DOUG: Five thousand?

DON: *(indicates to go up)*

DOUG: Five MILLION!?

DON: YES!

DOUG: DON!

SIMONE: Morris, you were saying?

MORRIS: Nothing.

JENNY: Morris thought that Doug maybe stole our money too. Check your purse Simone, he may have taken something and I better check--

SIMONE: MORRIS? .

MORRIS: *(pause)* Jenny, I'm sorry, I can't do this.

I... I... I am so ashamed!

(MORRIS breaks down crying hysterically)

SIMONE: What are you ashamed of Morris?

(MORRIS stops sobbing, raises his head. Looks around at everyone. Begins to speak. Puts his head

back down and returns to
crying hysterically)

JENNY: He's ashamed he let Doug manipulate him in his con game.

MORRIS: (*leaping up*) Oh STOP IT. You are bad. Bad Bad Bad Bad BAD! This is not what you said we were doing.

SIMONE: Jenny.

JENNY: Okay, I was conned by Doug as well, but --

SIMONE: (*to Doug*) Were you and Morris lovers?

DOUG: Lovers? With Morris? No offense Morris... but yuck.

SIMONE: Morris, were you and Doug lovers?

JENNY: He already told us he and --

SIMONE: Morris?

MORRIS: (*Shakes his head "no."*)

SIMONE: Morris, why?

MORRIS: Jenny was so sweet to get me and Leonard together. So this afternoon when Jenny asked me for one small favor--

SIMONE: And what was the one small favor?

MORRIS: She said she wanted to play a practical joke on Doug.

But this! This is no practical joke. This is... EVIL.

Doug, forgive me!

Simone, forgive me!

Don, forgive me!

(MORRIS grabs his flowers
and goes for the door)

Jenny... .

(Shakes his head and exits)

(ALL eyes on Jenny)

DON: Jenny?

JENNY: (defeated) Well...

SIMONE: Let me ask a simple question. Did you rob our house?

JENNY: (no reply)

SIMONE: Jenny?

JENNY: Well, I'm not sure it's called robbery when it's your own stuff.

SIMONE: Oh, I can't believe this. I cannot believe this. Why? Why would you do such a thing?

JENNY: Oh, because, you know, this and that...

SIMONE: Jenny.

JENNY: Because of five million dollars. Because I didn't want Doug to be part of this business.

SIMONE: Why not? Doug has every right to be part of the business.

JENNY: I know. I know. I didn't want Doug to be business partners with Don.

I... I just didn't trust Doug. I did not think he was honest.

DON: I feel I should point out a small contradiction in logic. I mean, here you—

JENNY: DON! I GET IT!

Doug. Simone. I'm... so... sorry.

Don, I was wrong to do what I did.

SIMONE: I am shocked that someone I trusted should do something so... so . .

JENNY: Conniving and despicable?

(MORRIS enters, carrying stereo. Sets it down. With each entrance of Morris in the following, he probably makes increasingly disdainful looks at Jenny.

Exit MORRIS)

JENNY: (sigh) I really didn't think this thing out completely.

DOUG: Why didn't you tell me you were so upset about me? You need to feel good about Don's business partners. You didn't have to do this.

JENNY: But--

(MORRIS enters, carrying silverware. Sets it down.

Exit MORRIS)

DOUG: (to Simone) Do you really think that all this funeral stuff is stupid?

SIMONE: Well, yes. I'm sorry darling. I mean, why do you want to alter Western Civilization's approach to death? Who cares about death? Why don't you alter Western Civilization's approach to life instead?

DOUG: (*pause*) Alter their approach to life? Alter their approach to life?

(*pause*) YES! BRILLIANT!

But Simone, how do we do it? Where to even begin?

(MORRIS enters, carrying TV. Sets it down. One last dismissive glance at Jenny. Exit MORRIS)

SIMONE: Why don't we go into the bedroom and I'll try to explain.

I think Don and The Butterfly have some things to talk about.

(Exit SIMONE and DOUG)

(long pause)

(DON picks up the stereo, begins to hook it back up.)

Don, I... I thought I was doing the right thing. For you, for Simone, and certainly Morris is happy with Leonard. Are you mad at me?

DON: I'm not sure how I feel.

JENNY: You should be mad at me.

DON: Jenny, you are finishing up your masters degree in social work, right?

JENNY: Yes.

DON: And you are working at a senior center, right?

JENNY: Well... it is kind of like a senior center.

DON: It isn't a senior center?

JENNY: (*sighs*) Not exactly.

DON: Jenny, you lied to me.

JENNY: Yes. And Doug knew I was lying to you.

DON: Jenny, why would you lie to me?

JENNY: When we first met, I told you I worked at a senior center. And then, it just became more and more awkward to tell you the truth.

But, I mean, a third of the women in the Masters program are dancing at the Ultra Lounge. On slow nights we have study sessions in the back room.

DON: Stripping is fine, if that's what you need to do.

JENNY: Really? Really? It's okay then?

DON: NO! It's not okay to lie to me.

JENNY: I know. I'm sorry. I am so sorry. I knew I should tell you. I knew I shouldn't lie. But every time I decided "tonight I tell him," somehow it never happened.

DON: What about...

JENNY: It's a body decal. A butterfly decal. I was always afraid of getting a real tattoo. Afraid of the... commitment.

DON: (*pause*) You're a stripper.

JENNY: (*makes a "what can I say" gesture.*)

DON: Isn't it humiliating?

JENNY: Not as humiliating as the Office of Financial Aid. And it's more reliable. Actually, as jobs go, it's not bad.

DON: Stripping. It's kinda... sexy.

JENNY: I guess that's the point, yes.

DON: I'm still getting use to this. Don's fiancé is a stripper. No one at my high school reunion will believe it.

JENNY: You really don't have to tell them.

DON: Jenny, if you want to stop that job, I'm sure we'll have enough money to get you through college on just my salary.

JENNY: You mean, you still want to marry me?

DON: Of course.

JENNY: I don't deserve you.

DON: Ah, but then, who does?

JENNY: (*approaches Don*) Don, you never cease to astound me.

Let's get engaged.

DON: We are engaged.

JENNY: No, really engaged.

DON: But--

JENNY: Here.

(JENNY gets down on one knee)

DON: Jenny!

JENNY: You are the Venn diagram of my dreams. You are my soul mate. I love you forever and for always. As unworthy of you as I am, will you marry me?

DON: (*gently hugs her*) I would be honored.

JENNY: I have something to show you.

DON: Really.

JENNY: In the bedroom.

DON: Oh.

(DON and JENNY head to bedroom. Just as they are about to exit)

JENNY: Just a second.

(DON waits. JENNY runs over to the CD player. Quickly searches through CDs and grabs one. Puts it on. Turns up the volume. It is Sting, matching whatever song opened up the show. JENNY glances at Simone's bedroom.

JENNY dashes back over to Don. Slipping her hand through his arm, DON and JENNY exit as Sting plays.)

END OF PLAY