

When Love is  
Not Enough



Gordon Blitz

**Cast:**

**Elle** - Overweight sixty-year-old female nurse

**Patrick** - Seventy-year-old male, husband of Elle, attorney turned author

**Corey** - Thin sixty-year-old gay male, married to Noah

**Noah** - Seventy-year-old gay male with a beard and moustache, an audiologist

**Brian** - Medium build thirty-year-old male Certified Dementia Practitioner

**Jackson** - Muscular twenty-year-old male straight college student

**Play summary:**

*When Love Is Not Enough* follows the lives of two married couples -- Elle and Patrick (straight) and Corey and Noah (gay). Patrick and Noah have dementia and are at the same Memory Care facility. During their stay, Patrick and Noah form a sexual relationship even though Patrick is straight. Both no longer recognize their spouses. The play explores the impact on Elle and Corey as they confront the impact of Alzheimer's on their marriages; the way their roles have changed. Elle and Corey are forced to form a bond with each other as a coping mechanism. Elle ponders whether her husband has been a closeted gay man during their marriage. Music is used as a backdrop because we appreciate and understand music before anything else. The auditory system of the brain is fully functional at sixteen weeks, and with dementia, music is the last brain function to die. In other words, first in and last out.

SCENE 1

*A garden with a bench in a memory care facility. A frustrated ELLE is wandering around in search of her husband, PATRICK. When she spots a forlorn looking man, COREY, she addresses him.*

ELLE

Have you seen my husband, Patrick? I never go to his room. We usually meet at the exact spot where you're standing. His attendant, Felice, always brings him out here at ten, my appointed time. Are you new here?

COREY

I don't work here, and I don't know where your husband is.

ELLE

What are you doing here?

*COREY ignores ELLE and sits on the bench.*

ELLE (CONT'D)

I haven't seen you here before. Are you visiting your wife?

COREY

It's my husband. I transferred him from the Culver City Senior Care a year ago. It was January, 2010. The beginning of a new decade. His dementia had gotten worse, and they suggested this place. I think it was just an excuse because they couldn't or didn't want to handle him.

ELLE

Oh, sorry. My mistake.

COREY

That's okay. I'm used to it. This marriage thing is still new to some people. Hard to believe it's only been temporarily legal for the last three years. God, it's hard for me to believe it's 2011 already. We thought it was a big deal becoming parents in 1995, but

COREY

getting married seemed to change our relationship. My name is Corey.

ELLE

I'm Elle.

COREY

Anyway, that place in Culver City was as bad as a snake pit. Thank goodness I found this facility. You're making me nervous standing over there.

*ELLE sits beside COREY on the bench.*

COREY (CONT'D)

Thank goodness I found this place. Although isn't it crazy having it named Sunrise? As if this place is a new beginning. When I went to his room, the attendant stopped me and said they were cleaning him up and to wait here. I think there were some changes because of the holiday and a different staff.

ELLE

It's beautiful out here.

*ELLE's mobile phone rings, and she gets up from the bench, not even saying 'excuse me' to COREY. He looks disgusted by her rudeness. She begins talking on her phone as if it was a private conversation.*

ELLE (CONT'D)

I know. That nurse is new. Just try to understand. Really? I don't believe that.

*As she finishes, she sits down by COREY.*

ELLE (CONT'D)

It's a shitty disease, isn't it? I wonder if Patrick will ever recognize me. He thinks I'm some strange woman when I visit him.

COREY

Same with Noah.

ELLE

You know, if I had Alzheimer's, maybe this wouldn't be a bad place to live. Anyway, it's better for Patrick. At least he has a community around him of other people stricken with the same illness. At home, he was having a difficult time. He was retired and just sat in front of the television all day. No other human contact except for me.

COREY

I haven't seen you here before. It's usually pretty quiet here in the morning. Noah doesn't talk much, and sometimes I just enjoy the peace and quiet.

ELLE

I work. I just changed my schedule so I can visit in the mornings. I would go crazy if I didn't have my nursing job. I retired when Patrick got sick, and I took care of him, but now that he's a resident here, I went back to the hospital. I had Patrick admitted here in 2009. I needed an escape.

COREY

I know. Noah was the breadwinner. He had a successful hearing aid practice, so I didn't need to work. I'm still kinda surprised we haven't met before since Noah's been here since 2010.

*The sound of a dog barking. ELLE pantomimes petting the dog*

ELLE

This guy reminds me of our dog, Guppy. According to Patrick's doctor, Guppy was the first to identify Patrick's dementia. Every time Patrick

ELLIE

urinated, Guppy would bark. Apparently, they can 'sniff out' Alzheimer's disease by smelling the odor changes in urine caused by the illness.

COREY

We had a cat. I think they are so stuck up. But I will admit our cat, Candy, was a life saver at keeping Noah company when I was out doing errands and needing a break. When I came home, Candy would be on Noah's lap. You know, before Noah got sick, he wouldn't allow us to have any pets. He was a real germaphobe, but with dementia, it's like he forgot to be afraid of germs.

ELLE

I know what you mean about a pet as a godsend. I would watch Patrick, and it looked like he and Guppy were communicating. That it was easier for Patrick to talk to Guppy rather than struggling to find the right words for *our* conversations. Unfortunately, Guppy died of old age. He was thirteen years old. After Guppy was gone, Patrick went further downhill.

COREY

I get it. I sometimes would bring Candy here, and Noah's whole attitude would change. The people who run this place said usually pets weren't allowed, but they made an exception for Candy. At first, Candy really helped Noah adjust to this place, but recently Noah no longer connected with her, so I stopped bringing her here.

*COREY stops and holds his stomach. ELLE ignores COREY's distress. Her phone rings again. ELLE looks angry as she answers.*

ELLE

I can't really talk right now. I'm visiting Patrick. No, no. I understand. What if we just go over this during your break later today when my shift starts? I'm not being rude. I do want to listen to your complaints. I'll set aside an hour for you. Goodbye.

*Dog barks.*

COREY

But it seems like this little fellow is a community dog. He's got a big responsibility taking care of all the residents. Look, he's running off as though it was his cue to go on a rescue mission to save one of the patients.

ELLE

What kind of work do you do?

COREY

Oh, I did lots of volunteering, especially in the 80s when AIDS was decimating my community. I ran rap groups at the Gay and Lesbian Center for guys who were HIV-positive. Then in the 90s, I got involved with the city of West Hollywood. So, I kept busy. Of course, now Noah consumes all of my time.

ELLE

But since Noah is staying at Sunrise, isn't that another transition for you? That you don't have to take care of Noah.

COREY

You're right. Maybe that's why I've been feeling aimless. Like I don't have a purpose. I guess you're lucky that you were able to go back to work.

*ELLE stops to check her sugars by pricking her finger. When COREY sees that, he shows concern.*

COREY (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

ELLE

I'm diabetic, and I felt like my sugars were crashing. I guess I didn't eat before I came here. I had no idea I would be waiting this long.

COREY

That's probably why my stomach is acting up. My doctor said I need to eat every two hours. I had colon cancer years ago.

*Indecipherable music plays in the background. It distracts both COREY and ELLE.*

COREY (CONT'D)

Oh, that song brings back memories. I couldn't believe that it was banned from being played after 9/11. As if the line about leaving on a jet plane and not knowing when you were coming back would be so insensitive to the survivors of 9/11.

ELLE

Yes. Mary Travers' voice is so rich. I just found out that a very young John Denver wrote the song before he became famous. Music has been a big part of our lives. Patrick used to write music reviews.

COREY

Something about the song really bothered Noah. If it ever came on the radio, he insisted we change to another station.

ELLE

Patrick loved their music; we used their 'Wedding Song' (*There is Love*) when we got married. We've been married forty years.



COREY

Same for us. I like to say we were illegal for thirty-eight, and two years legal. We got married in 2008 during those few months when it was legal before Prop. 8 put a halt to same-sex weddings. I couldn't believe how quickly things got worse after Noah's diagnosis.

ELLE

With Patrick, his descent was crazy fast. I just hadn't seen the signs of Alzheimer's when he started struggling with words. He'd be in the middle of a sentence, and then just stop talking. And he'd get so angry when he lost things and forgot their names. But the doctor said even if he'd gotten diagnosed earlier, there wasn't any effective treatment. It wouldn't have made any difference.

*A smiling Patrick and Noah enter, holding hands and looking lovingly into each other's eyes. They kiss. ELLE gasps.*

ELLE (CONT'D)

Patrick!

*ELLE runs offstage distraught. COREY remains immobilized on the bench looking horrified.*

COREY

Noah?

*Lights dim.*

SCENE 2

*Lights come up hazy blue. PATRICK is sitting at a breakfast table as the (CDP) Certified Dementia Practitioner, Brian, enters the stage with NOAH by his side.*

BRIAN

Hey, everybody, we have a new resident today. His name is Noah. Let's welcome him. And we should welcome the new year 2010 and a new decade!

*BRIAN leads NOAH to the table where PATRICK is sitting.*

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Noah, this is Patrick. Since Patrick has been here for over a year, he can show you around. Why don't you sit with him.

*PATRICK smiles as NOAH tentatively sits at the same table.*

PATRICK

Hi.

NOAH

Hi.

*Music begins playing in the background. PATRICK begins to talk-sing.*

PATRICK

I am.

NOAH

I said.

PATRICK

I am.

NOAH

I cried.

BRIAN

Oh, hey! You guys both know the lyrics to the Neal Diamond song! Patrick here is a real expert in music. And Noah, I heard you're a real opera

BRIAN

buff. We're starting a choir group this afternoon. I want both of you to join. But right now we're going to do our morning exercises. Everybody stand up.

*BRIAN finds a ball on the floor and he gently hits it so that it hits PATRICK's leg,*

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Now Patrick, hit the ball toward Noah.

*When the ball hits NOAH, he screams with delight. They continue hitting the ball between the three of them.*

NOAH

This is so much fun. Like, oh, what's that game?

PATRICK

I don't know, but I like it. Do you know another song?

NOAH

Wouldn't it be nice?

PATRICK

Oh, you know the Beach Boys!

NOAH

Yes. Fun! Fun! Fun!

PATRICK

Good vibrations!

NOAH

I want to dance.

*After they stop playing with the ball, BRIAN goes over to a boom box and puts on the Beach Boys' song, I Get Around. NOAH and PATRICK start jumping up and down and dancing on their own. They twirl around the room bumping into BRIAN and giggling. BRIAN joins in with their dancing. All three are exhausted as the song comes to an end.*

BRIAN

Okay, guys. Why don't you sit down. There is a new game that I want to share with you. I'm going to say a word, and I want you to think of a word that connects with that word. For example, if I say *breakfast*, you might say *cereal*. And if Noah says *cereal*, then Patrick should say a word that connects to *cereal*. We'll keep going around. Okay? Let's start. *Laugh*

NOAH

*Happy*

PATRICK

*Smile*

BRIAN

Good. You guys've got it. Sometimes I'll use longer words, so just do the best you can. *Music*

NOAH

*Songs*

PATRICK

*Sing*

BRIAN

*Memory*

NOAH

*Sad*

PATRICK

*Cry*

BRIAN

*Tissue*

NOAH

*Love*

*After hearing the word love, PATRICK starts to cry, followed by NOAH crying. PATRICK gets up from the table and pushes it toward NOAH. BRIAN tries to stop the table from hitting NOAH, but it is too late. When NOAH feels the table hit his chest, he screams.*

NOAH (CONT'D)

Hurts. Don't hurt me.

PATRICK

Not hurting you. Like you. Want to  
dance. Don't want to talk.

BRIAN

Okay. I'll put another song on so you  
can dance.

*BRIAN puts on the song "Ain't We Got Fun" as PATRICK and NOAH  
begin dancing.*

*Lights dim.*

### SCENE 3

*Lights come up. ELLE and BRIAN are in the garden area of the memory care facility. BRIAN is sitting on the bench while ELLE stands.*

BRIAN

I prefer meeting people here rather than in my office. Surprisingly it is more private and quieter; no interruptions. And of course the atmosphere is . . .

ELLE

Enough with the chit chat. I'm livid! Do you know what it was like to find my husband Patrick holding hands with another resident and *kissing* him? How did this happen? And for those few seconds I saw Patrick's eyes. It was like this man was his lover. Patrick is *straight*. I feel like taking him out of this place right now. Damn you!

BRIAN

And I don't want to say I know what you are going through. I don't know if you realize that hypersexuality and inappropriate sexual behavior can be one of the first symptoms of dementia. The disease is complicated. Look, we have to count our blessings that Patrick isn't suffering from delusions or paranoia.

ELLE

Are you kidding? Patrick doesn't even know who I am; never shows any affection and then he dares to shove this in my face! It's as if our marriage didn't exist. I've become invisible!

BRIAN

We normally frown upon any kind of relations between the residents, but

BRIAN

there is only so much we can do to prevent this from happening. I know you are upset. And if we try to separate them, I don't think that's going to work. Apparently, they have become very fond of one another. In fact, both seem happy. That's a good thing. Having a positive outlook can work wonders with Alzheimer's. Haven't you noticed an improvement in Patrick's mental state?

ELLE

So what?

BRIAN

I'm glad we are having this discussion because according to the front desk, Patrick hasn't been having any visitors. You were seeing him at least five days a week.

ELLE

I can't bear to look at him after what I saw. I want to speak to your boss or whoever runs this place. And keep Patrick separate from that other man. I can't even say his name.

BRIAN

It's Noah. I just found out that he is married to Corey.

ELLE

You're running some sort of sick soap opera! You know, when I admitted Patrick two years ago, I thought he would get better care that I could give him at home. That it would help our relationship. I would no longer be a caretaker or treat him like a child. That was going to be *your* job. I could return to being intimate with him. Enjoy our relationship. Like what we had for the last forty years. This is

ELLE

what I hoped for. Now he's slapped me in the face!

BRIAN

He doesn't know what he's doing. You can't blame him.

ELLE

You know, he was a writer, and when he had the early signs of the dementia, he started writing music reviews. It gave him a purpose, and, somehow, that part of his brain was functioning. He would write about the atmosphere, the tone and the overall experience of the music.

BRIAN

Music is the first sense we learn and the last that leaves us.

ELLE

Funny; here I am, this fat old woman feeling so small. Patrick has sucked the life out of me. I had been mourning the loss of my husband, and in some ways, he's already dead. At least the Patrick I married no longer exists. And just when I thought I could move on, not wallow in grief, *this* happens. The grief has turned to anger!

BRIAN

You're a nurse. You should understand the disease. Give Patrick a break.

ELLE

That's your advice? Fuck you! Right now, I'm going home and eat a whole carton of ice cream. I don't care if I go into diabetic shock!



*As ELLE turns and walks out of the garden, she collapses. BRIAN immediately calls 911. While they wait, Elle revives and begins mumbling.*

ELLE (CONT'D)

Where is Joni Mitchell? She's the person who brought us together. Patrick used to tell me that he could drink a whole case of me, just like Joni's song. I'm *so* thirsty. But if I drank a whole case of Patrick, it would quench my thirst with *poison*! But Patrick was so romantic and my savior, too.

*Lights dim.*

SCENE 4

*Lights come up hazy blue. Breakfast room where NOAH and PATRICK eat their cereal. After a few bites, NOAH starts hiccupping, PATRICK laughs.*

NOAH

Not funny. I . . .

*NOAH can't complete the sentence because of his hiccups.*

PATRICK

Pull your tongue. No, that's wrong.  
Hold your breath.

NOAH

Scare me.

PATRICK

Why?

*NOAH continues to hiccup until PATRICK gets up from his seat and screams.*

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Boo!

*Hiccups continue, so an angry PATRICK puts a glass of water up to NOAH's lips and helps NOAH drink. PATRICK holds NOAH's face as NOAH drinks. The hiccups stop. NOAH kisses PATRICK on the cheek. Both are startled by the sign of affection and move away from one another.*

NOAH

No more hiccups.

*The music from La Boheme is heard -- Musetta's Waltz. NOAH looks mesmerized by the melody and hums along.*

PATRICK

Did Della Reese sing this?

NOAH

No it's Maria Callas. Opera.

PATRICK

No, it's the song, 'Don't You Know.'

NOAH

Can we dance?

PATRICK

No, it's too slow.

NOAH

Come on.

*NOAH takes PATRICK in his arms and they slow dance. NOAH keeps humming while PATRICK keeps repeating, 'Don't you know.'*

*Lights dim.*

SCENE 5

*Lights come up hazy blue. NOAH is in bed and PATRICK is on the floor with a pillow and blanket. BRIAN enters.*

BRIAN

What are you guys doing? Patrick, you can't be in Noah's room. You have your own room.

PATRICK

But I want to stay here.

NOAH

Yes. I like having him here. I keep seeing these children at the foot of my bed, and Patrick protects me from them. And I don't even mind that he doesn't like opera.

PATRICK

Please, let me.

BRIAN

But there are rules. Patrick, aren't you uncomfortable on the floor?

PATRICK

No, I don't mind.

BRIAN

I guess it's okay for one night. I'm going to turn off the light.

PATRICK

No, leave it on. We're not ready to go to sleep yet.

BRIAN

You are impossible! I'll give you a half hour, then I'm coming back here, and if you aren't asleep, I'm going to take Noah back to his own room.

*Once BRIAN leaves, PATRICK gets up from the floor and jumps on the bed with NOAH. He starts tickling NOAH.*

NOAH

Stop it.

PATRICK

Make me.

*NOAH throws his pillow at PATRICK, and a pillow fight ensues. After that, they both start yawning. PATRICK feels NOAH's beard and holds his hand.*

PATRICK (CONT'D)

You feel just like me, but with hairy face, not smooth. And no long fingers.

NOAH

I don't know what you mean.

PATRICK

Like the long fingers of that strange woman who visits me and says she's my *wife*. She's always touching me. I don't have a wife.

NOAH

I don't have a wife either. You have nice ears.

PATRICK

I do?

NOAH

I bet you can hear very well. I can test you.

*NOAH kisses PATRICK's right ear. PATRICK giggles and then moans.*

PATRICK

That feels good. Can I kiss your ear?

*NOAH doesn't respond. Instead he takes PATRICK's hand and puts it on his ear. Both snuggle and fall asleep. BRIAN enters the room and sees them sleeping in the same bed. He walks toward the bed and is about to separate them, but they are locked in each other's arms. He backs away and turns off the light and closes the door.*

BRIAN

Good night, fellas.

*Lights dim.*

SCENE 6

*Lights come up hazy blue. BRIAN is standing by the door of NOAH's room.*

BRIAN

Noah, it's bedtime.

*BRIAN becomes aware that PATRICK and NOAH are in the same bed.*

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Listen, I made an exception last night. You're not supposed to be sleeping in the same room, and now you're in the same bed. I'm sorry, I can't allow that.

NOAH

Please. We won't make any noise.

BRIAN

I give up with you guys. Okay, just *one* more night, then you have to stay in your own room. Have we got a deal?

PATRICK AND COREY

Yes!

*Lights dim.*

*It's now early morning and there is a loud noise. BRIAN runs into the room and turns the light on finding that PATRICK has fallen off the bed.*

PATRICK

Ow!

NOAH

Help! He's hurt.

PATRICK

Ow! Ow! Ow!

*BRIAN goes over to PATRICK to assess the damage.*

BRIAN

C'mon, guys, I thought we had a deal that I'd let you sleep together in the

BRIAN

same bed as long as you didn't cause any trouble. What happened here?

NOAH

He hit his head.

*BRIAN sees a bump forming on the back of PATRICK's head. BRIAN notices that the end table by the bed has been moved. PATRICK is quiet and has trouble talking.*

BRIAN

Patrick, it looks like you hit the end table. I'm sorry. I should have moved it further away. You must have had a nightmare and were acting out.

NOAH

He woke me up. Almost hit me, but I scooted away. I tried to hold him so he wouldn't get hurt. Sorry, sorry!

BRIAN

It's not your fault, Noah. This happens with Patrick. His dreams are very real to him. That's why I'm always concerned when you two guys sleep together.

NOAH

He's going to be okay?

BRIAN

Oh, yes; don't worry, but I need to have a nurse look at his head.

*BRIAN begins lifting PATRICK from the floor and NOAH helps.*

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Thanks, Noah. It's early, but why don't you go to the breakfast room, and I'll bring Patrick there soon.

NOAH

No, I want to go with Patrick.

*NOAH stands in front of the bedroom door blocking BRIAN and PATRICK.*

BRIAN

Come on, Noah. It's better that I just take Patrick to the nurse alone. I promise we won't be long, and I'll bring Patrick so he can sit with you when he eats breakfast.

NOAH

I don't want to go to breakfast alone. I always go with Patrick.

BRIAN

Please, Noah, move away from the door.

NOAH

I won't!

*BRIAN grunts in exasperation.*

BRIAN

Okay! Okay! You can come with us.

*Lights dim.*



SCENE 7

*Lights come up hazy blue. NOAH and PATRICK are in bed kissing. It is early morning.*

PATRICK

I like you, especially the scratchy part over there.

*PATRICK points to the area above NOAH's mouth.*

NOAH

Yes. I like you, too. Do you want to play a game?

PATRICK

Yes.

NOAH

Close your eyes and guess what you're touching.

PATRICK

I used to play this. Helped me write and describe things.

*NOAH takes PATRICK's hand and puts it on his own chest.*

NOAH

Feels like?

PATRICK

I don't know. Am I touching myself?  
That's what my front feels like. You're so hairy.

*NOAH giggles; then he takes PATRICK's hand and puts it on his own genitals.*

NOAH

Mmm, that feels good.

PATRICK

What is that?

*NOAH puts his hands on PATRICK's genitals, and PATRICK moans.*

NOAH

See? Good feeling.

PATRICK

So strange. New and different. Who are you?

NOAH

I'm your friend, Noah.

PATRICK

Hold me.

NOAH

No, you hold *me*.

*After holding each other, they begin playing and wrestling like children until a knocking on the door interrupts them. BRIAN shouts through the door.*

BRIAN

You have visitors who are waiting for you in the garden. I would take you there, but my shift is ending, and I have an appointment to get to. I'm trusting you guys to clean up and go out to the garden. See you guys tomorrow.

*PATRICK and NOAH get up out of bed, get dressed, and leave the bedroom and walk hand in hand toward the garden. A smiling PATRICK and NOAH enter holding hands and looking lovingly into each other's eyes. They kiss. ELLE gasps.*

ELLE

Patrick!

*ELLE runs offstage distraught. And COREY remains immobilized on the bench looking horrified.*

COREY

Noah?

*Lights dim*

SCENE 8

*Lights come up hazy blue. ELLE and PATRICK are sitting on a bench at home switching between holding hands and putting their arms around each other.*

ELLE

Well, *that* was an unforgettable birthday. First getting the singing waiter to do "*Both Sides Now*", and then you getting on your knee and singing "*A Case of You*". It was like you proposing marriage to me all over again. I thought I would be upset turning forty, but you make me want to celebrate every day.

PATRICK

You're not going to leave out the best part, are you?

ELLE

Oh, god, you mean when those guys starting calling me *fatso* and you scared them? Not only did you tell them off, but you were so brave. Going right up to those guys and threatening them that you would hurt them. Talk about standing up for me!

PATRICK

You deserve it. You're a saint! My goodness, allowing me to quit my job as an attorney and start writing. Something I was always passionate about. You saved me! You're my Superwoman!

ELLE

Yeah, tell that to my parents. I don't know which is worse in their heads -- the fact that I support us, not giving them grandchildren or me being fat? But look, I was happy to help you. You had that big settlement, and with my promotion at work, why not do it if that was your dream?

PATRICK

Now I just need to complete that novel and get it published.

ELLE

And you're so good about submitting your short stories. Getting your name out there. What are you up to in total submissions?

PATRICK

I just reached 500. Of course, most of them are rejects.

ELLE

It doesn't matter. All you need is *one* publisher who believes in you.

PATRICK

You know, there is one other part of your birthday present that I haven't given you yet.

*PATRICK winks, stands up and starts removing his clothes.*

ELLE

Oh, my god! I can't believe you're going to strip for me.

PATRICK

I love you, Eleanor. I think you're swell just like the song by the Beatles.

ELLE

That's 'Eleanor Rigby.' It's The Turtles that had the hit, "Elenore."

PATRICK

No, you're wrong! *I'm* the music maven!

ELLE

Okay. Whatever you say.

*ELLE gets up from the bench and grabs PATRICK around the waist and starts to kiss him only to be stopped by PATRICK who pushes her away causing her to stumble.*

PATRICK

Don't say that. You *know* I'm right about this!

ELLE

What's wrong with you, Patrick?

*PATRICK stares at her; his eyes look vacant.*

PATRICK

I don't know.

*Lights dim.*

*Lights come up hazy blue. ELLE is alone on stage cleaning up and organizing papers on PATRICK's desk. Stacking envelopes. PATRICK enters onstage home from a run. He has a towel draped around his neck, sweating and out of breath, but smiling as if his run has rejuvenated him. When he sees ELLE holding unopened letters, his face and demeanor change.*

PATRICK (CONT'D)

What the fuck are you doing? I told you not to touch anything of mine. Get out of here.

ELLE

Please Patrick, let's not fight. I was just trying to help out. You keep telling me you can't find anything, and you get distracted from your writing.

PATRICK

But now I *absolutely* won't be able to find anything. And what have you done to my . . .

*PATRICK gets frustrated unable to complete his sentence.*

ELLE

What are you looking for?

PATRICK

You know . . . that *thing*. Oh shit! I don't know what it is!

ELLE

Don't worry. You'll think of it later. But I do want to ask you about all of these unopened envelopes. I noticed that they're from publishers. Shouldn't you open them? Maybe they're about your submissions.

PATRICK

They're probably all rejection letters. I am so tired of this. I don't even care anymore.

ELLE

Please, Patrick. We should at least open them. Maybe they have advice. They could be helpful. And if you're lucky, they would want to publish your novel. Why don't you take a shower, and then we can go through these letters. We'll make this a project for the two of us.

PATRICK

Stop telling me what to do! And don't treat me like a child! Who do you think you are?

ELLE

It's *me*, Patrick. Your wife, Elle.

PATRICK

I'm sorry. I don't know what's going on. And this thing with the writing. I've been *so* frustrated. In the middle of writing a sentence, I'll draw a blank. Not realize what I'm doing. And I can't think of the word I want to use. Thank goodness there's a thesaurus. Whatever is wrong with me keeps getting worse.

ELLE

Do you want me to help you?

PATRICK

No! That will just mean that I'm no longer capable of writing. And recently, I've been trying to get down with my short stories. I think to myself, 'I need to finish this because who knows what's going on with my brain and what will happen in the future. I want to leave a legacy. You know, something that I can leave behind after I die, or if I get really sick and can't work anymore.'

*Lights dim.*

SCENE 9

*Lights come up. COREY is sitting on the bench in the garden of the memory care facility with BRIAN.*

COREY

I'm in shock. I don't know what to do. This was supposed to be a safe place for Noah and then *this* happened. And to add to my anxiety, I just found out that our son, Franklin, is missing in action in Afghanistan.

BRIAN

I'm sorry and I understand about you being in shock.

COREY

I just feel like the universe is shitting on me. No matter what I do, Noah has no idea who I am. He doesn't even know we have a son. It's like he's become this totally different person. I feel lost. Can you explain to me how he got involved with this other man? I need some clarity, or I'm just going to spiral.

BRIAN

The disease is just taking its course. And remember how agitated Noah was? Well, remember we cut down on the dosage of his medication, and he's doing really well. I think it has to do with him making friends with Patrick.

COREY

Friends? But they were kissing each other! And this wasn't just a regular kiss. They were really going at each other. What was *that* all about?

BRIAN

Have you thought about a support group?



COREY

Oh, god, like when I ran rap groups at the Center for guys living with AIDS? I got *so* burnt out doing that. I don't think I could take going to a group. And after I got diagnosed with colon cancer, my doctor wanted me to try a support group. I went to one session and never went back.

BRIAN

I still think you should try again. Maybe it just wasn't the right one.

COREY

You know, Noah took care of me. He doesn't even remember that. And me taking care of him these last few years before I admitted him. The man is clueless! Hard to believe that we survived AIDS and me with cancer, and it's going to be Alzheimer's that destroys us. It's already decimated our marriage.

BRIAN

I know it's very difficult for the loved ones. Sometimes I think it's harder for them. At least Noah has gotten to the point where he doesn't get angry about losing his mental abilities. He's become more accepting. And I hate to say it, but I think this relationship has something to do with his improvement.

COREY

I wish I could see it that way. You know, I don't think of myself as being an angry person. But this incident has caused me such rage! I want to rip the scene of Patrick and Noah kissing from my brain. I've even imagined beating up Patrick. Maybe beating up Noah, too. That maybe I would feel better if I got this out of my system. This is crazy-making!

BRIAN

Is there anything else I can do? I want to help.

COREY

Just turn back time. That's the only thing that I want. When we met and made love for the first time.

*Lights dim.*

SCENE 10

*Lights come up hazy blue. At COREY's apartment, NOAH is looking at the sparse furnishings. COREY is sitting on his bed. NOAH looks askance at the bean bag realizing that this is the only place to sit.*

COREY

I know this place is really small, but it only costs \$100 a month. Why don't you try sitting on the beanbag?

*As NOAH tries to get comfortable, COREY tries holding back his laughter. Finally NOAH finds a semi-comfortable position. NOAH glances around the room.*

COREY (CONT'D)

I'm so surprised that you called me. I meet lots of guys at the record store, and they all say, 'I'll call you.' And then never do. I know you like opera, but you made it seem like you might be open to expanding your musical taste.

*NOAH nervously taps his foot.*

COREY (CONT'D)

I see you staring at the cover of the Led Zeppelin record. You must have heard "Whole Lotta Love" It's a bitchin' song. Give it a chance.

*COREY plays the album until NOAH frowns.*

COREY (CONT'D)

Okay, I can see that doesn't work for you. Let's see. What about "Bridge Over Troubled Water" or, wait a minute, how about "To Love Somebody" by the Bee Gees. I see you as a romantic, especially since you like opera. And this song is all about not knowing what it's like to love somebody like you.

*NOAH remains stone-faced until COREY turns off the record player.*

NOAH

I didn't realize that a rock singer could have a lilting and soaring tenor range. They are using their instruments to go through the emotions of anger and passion and everything in between.

COREY

So does that mean you like it?

NOAH

It wasn't bad. I wouldn't say it was the greatest thing I've ever heard, but I will say I had a few goose bumps which I rarely get, even at the opera.

COREY

Why don't you smile? You look so uncomfortable. Why don't you sit on the bed beside me? I'm not going to bite.

*NOAH remains stationary on the bean bag until COREY comes towards him, bends down and kisses him. COREY uses his strength to pull NOAH up and is surprised at how pliable he has become. They proceed to make love.*

*Lights dim. When they come up hazy blue, it is years later, and NOAH and COREY are in bed.*

NOAH

Wow! Thank you for putting together the surprise birthday party for me. And the opera theme was great! Having my friend, Oliver, dress up in drag as Joan Sutherland was hysterical!

COREY

The hardest part was who to invite. I wasn't sure if you wanted your patients from your Hearing Clinic to be there. But I figured that since you won that award for Best Audiologist, your patients would want to celebrate your accomplishment.

NOAH

There were so many people. I didn't know all of them.

*COREY looks confused by NOAH's comment.*

COREY

Pretty overwhelming getting all that feedback. I was even thinking of having some of the children you fitted hearing aids for in South Central. Your OCD medication is really working. I remember when you hated giving hearing tests to children. You worried so much about germs.

NOAH

I guess so. I'm sorry I was a bit of a party pooper.

COREY

That's okay. I know you didn't sleep much last night.

NOAH

I'm kinda' tired. I felt like I was on display having to entertain all those people.

COREY

What are you talking about? What do you mean by, 'all those people'?

NOAH

The guests. You know, I'm *not* going to do any more testing. Let the support staff handle it.

COREY

But I thought you loved it. That even though the practice has grown, you still wanted to be part of the day-to-day stuff.

NOAH

It's too much for me.

COREY

Did something happen at work?

NOAH

Well, yes. I was afraid to tell you. It's been bothering me so much, and I thought that if I didn't tell you, maybe it didn't happen. But I've been having nightmares about it.

COREY

I can understand, but I think it's better that you do tell me. Especially if it's affecting your sleep.

NOAH

You know how the manager at the hearing clinic took vacation, and I offered to do the hearing tests for people who couldn't wait for him to return?

COREY

Yes, and you seemed excited; getting back to where you started when you began your career.

NOAH

Right. So there I was testing this guy. We went through the usual stuff -- using his finger to let me know if he heard the various sounds in each ear, and the clarity test where he couldn't see my lips and had to repeat the words he heard.

COREY

Amazing how with all this new technology that hearing tests haven't changed much.

NOAH

Well, after I was done, I looked at the sheet where I recorded the results from the tests at each decibel. It was blank! I thought to myself that I *must* have written it out, but where was it? I

NOAH

looked around the office and couldn't find anything. The patient was getting perturbed since I kept him in that cubicle for so long. I got so upset. I grumbled to myself, 'What the fuck happened?' Finally, I realized that I must not have written anything on the sheet. I wasn't paying attention. It scared me. And when I told the patient that we needed to do the test again, he said, 'Forget it. I'll wait until your manager comes back. Just let me out of this booth. I'm getting claustrophobic.'

COREY

Were you nervous? Maybe this is something to do with you not getting enough sleep.

NOAH

I hope you're right.

COREY

And it hasn't happened again?

*NOAH doesn't answer. He has fallen asleep. COREY frowns as he tries to fall asleep, too.*

*Lights dim.*

SCENE 11

*Lights come up. COREY and ELLE are sitting on a bench on the patio of a museum.*

COREY

It's lovely here today with the poinsettias and snapdragons in full bloom. It almost makes me feel better. At first, I thought seeing you might just bring back what happened between our respective partners. I wanted to blame you for what your husband did. Noah and I had a monogamous relationship for forty years. I trusted him. I've been so distraught. Then I realized I had no one who would understand what was going on.

ELLE

Maybe this was a bad idea. And I blamed *you* for this mess. That you knew what was going on the whole time.

COREY

That is such bullshit! Can't we at least talk about this?

ELLE

Actually, I really *don't* want to talk about it. I just don't see how this is going to help. I feel like I really have no options; that I just have to accept it. I can't! I haven't been back to Sunrise. I don't know how to face Patrick. I don't trust myself or my temper.

COREY

Me, too. After you left that time, I stayed for a while, but it just became so painful to look at him. I wanted to ask you about when you knew something was wrong with his mind. Did you have any warning?



ELLE

By the time I knew there was a problem, it was too late. I think the neurologist we went to was just protecting himself, not wanting us to sue for malpractice. Even though they diagnosed him with MCI -- mild cognitive impairment -- I believe it was already full-blown Alzheimer's because of how quickly his condition worsened.

Patrick had found a way to hide his short-term memory loss. But when I saw these sheets of paper on his desk with his name and address written over and over again, I just knew something was wrong. I normally wouldn't have even looked at his desk. You know, Patrick was a writer and very protective of his work. He would get angry if he found me snooping around trying to read what he'd written unless he showed it to me himself. But these notes were very different. And he used to have beautiful handwriting, and these notes were sloppy; a combination of script and printing, almost illegible.

*Guitar strumming is heard and interrupts ELLE.*

COREY

Did you want to move?

ELLE

No, I like this song and the singer, too. It's so different from Dusty Springfield's version. I love Dusty with her blue-eyed soul, but this girl has a lilting voice. Reminds me of Eva Cassidy. I'd like to stay and listen unless you're in a rush.

COREY

No, I don't have any plans. Did you know that Dusty Springfield was a lesbian?

ELLE

Yes, I knew. Just like Leslie Gore. I used to sing in a choir, so I have a huge stock of music trivia. And of course, Patrick used to test my music knowledge all the time.

COREY

How rare to find another music aficionado. Because of Noah, I can identify Dusty as being a mezzo-soprano!

*The music ends.*

ELLE

Did you have trouble getting Noah to admit something was wrong? I had so much trouble with Patrick. Getting him to go to a neurologist was such a challenge. He kept telling me, 'Nothing is wrong; I'm just getting old and having senior moments.' I should have suspected. I'm in the medical profession, after all. The one blessing was that he had long-term medical insurance. It was reasonable because he'd taken out a policy when he was in his early thirties.

COREY

Yes, it's costing a fortune, but at least we've had savings that we invested conservatively. We weren't too badly impacted by the 2008 crash. And with Noah, we went to the doctor right away and decided that we would fight the disease and not let it get the better of him. But it didn't seem to matter. When we got the MCI diagnosis, we foolishly thought maybe it wouldn't be a precursor to Alzheimer's. And

COREY

because it was a slow decline, we thought we had beaten it. But then one day, it was like Noah had vanished; that's why he was at Culver City, and now at Sunrise. It was just too much for me to handle on my own.

ELLE

And you guys adopted a child?

COREY

Yes, and now he's missing in action. Just another thing for me to worry about.

ELLE

You're lucky you adopted. I wish that I had had a child with Patrick.

COREY

Can I ask why you didn't?

ELLE

I guess our careers got the best of us. And I was working with children at the hospital. It broke my heart seeing young children dying of cancer, and you can't believe how some parents handled the diagnosis. I felt like I had to be a substitute to them. How did the parenting go with your son?

COREY

Well, he was ten when we adopted him, so we didn't have to go through the learning curve of having an infant. We were lucky. Franklin, that's our son's name, was a dream teenager. So mature. We never had to worry about him. And so well adjusted. The only issue we had was related to this damn war. Noah was a lot more conservative politically than I was. Somehow Franklin inherited that characteristic.

COREY

We were devastated when Franklin enlisted.

ELLE

Oh no! I guess you never know with kids.

COREY

I tried to blame Noah, but Noah was just as upset as I was. Who would ever have thought that we would have a son enlisting in the army!

ELLE

I am so sorry that your son is missing in action.

COREY

It's horrible not knowing what's happening. And I have so many regrets. The last time Franklin was on leave, and we saw him, I never said anything about Noah's condition. Of course, Noah wasn't that bad off at the time. And because of that, I never gave Franklin the chance to say goodbye to his father. And it's like the universe is getting back at me that *I* didn't say goodbye to Franklin. It's been months since he's been reported missing. I didn't even tell him that I loved him when I dropped him off at the airport. We had had a bit of a fight.

ELLE

I keep beating myself up about not telling Patrick how much I loved him before he lost his mind.

COREY

Our fight was so stupid! I can't even remember what it was about. You know I'm just now realizing that I'm dealing with two losses -- my son *and* my husband.

ELLE

Oh, god! Talk about regrets! I have so many! Why didn't we travel more when Patrick had all his faculties?

COREY

Yes, we should have traveled more. We never even went on a honeymoon.

ELLE

Because of Noah's job?

COREY

Yes. We had our wedding in West Hollywood Park. We said our vows, and this was when Noah had his full faculties. Such a beautiful wedding outdoors with almost a hundred of our friends and customers from the hearing clinic attending. Franklin wanted to be there, but he couldn't get his leave approved. I had no idea that when Noah looked at me and said 'I love you,' that there would come a time in the future when he would no longer recognize me.

*COREY's face contorts, and he holds his stomach.*

ELLE

What's wrong?

COREY

It's my stomach acting up. You know I went to management to complain about Noah and Patrick fondling each other, but it was a useless conversation. I don't know what I expected them to do. I thought about finding another nursing home. Have you considered moving your husband someplace else?

ELLE

God, I don't know what to do. And you know what the worst part about this whole thing? It's the first time I

ELLE

saw Patrick happy in ages. I wanted to wipe that grin off his face when he saw me looking at him while he was kissing your husband.

COREY

Do you ever think about the fact that Patrick was not involved with another woman? Almost like a blessing that your rival wasn't a woman; that it was a man. You know, that's one of the things that gets me angry. I think it would be easier for *me* to accept if it was a woman Noah was kissing. The cheating wouldn't be so bad because I wouldn't be competing with another man. Am I making any sense?

ELLE

No, you aren't making any sense at all! It *wasn't* a fucking blessing! I'm done!

*ELLE gets up from the bench and walks away.*

COREY

Come on. Don't do that. I have no one else to talk to. No one is going to understand what's going on.

ELLE

*(turning toward Corey)*

This talking doesn't make it any easier for me. It's *so* hard to rationalize this. And how do I get to not think that Patrick wasn't closeted? Are you able to compartmentalize? When people tell me that it's the disease, and that Patrick does not know what he's doing, I have *so* much trouble buying that.

COREY

I think I had learned to accept Noah not recognizing me, but I'm struggling with this new development. You know since I was a counselor back in the

COREY

1990s, you'd think I would know better.

ELLE

I'm getting a headache. I think we better call it a day. I've enjoyed the music and getting to know you a little bit, I guess. You could say that we're in this together. But I'm still not sure I want to do a meeting again.

COREY

But it's been really helpful. Just having someone to talk to. Now that we have each other's phone numbers, maybe we *should* plan another playdate.

*ELLE looks at COREY in disgust.*

ELLE

You've got to be kidding! Are you suggesting Patrick and Noah are our children, and that we should have a playdate? What kind of sick humor is that?

COREY

I was just trying to lighten things up. I'm sorry. I can't do anything right.

*ELLE leaves without saying goodbye and COREY starts to cry.*

*Lights dim.*

SCENE 12

*Lights come up. ELLE is sitting in a chair in her bedroom with a younger man, JACKSON, sitting on the bed.*

ELLE

This is very new for me. I'm not sure what to do . . . *And*, I feel . . . like we're on the clock, and that makes me nervous.

*JACKSON is uncomfortable.*

JACKSON

Believe it or not . . . it's scary for me too. You're . . . one of my first clients.

*JACKSON looks down at his watch.*

JACKSON (CONT'D)

And don't worry about the time. I think I'm flexible . . . If we go over the allotted four hours, that's okay. My goal is to make you happy. Whatever you want to do. No pressure.

ELLE

I'm not even sure why I'm doing this. My friend, Greg, said it would help me feel better about myself . . . and help me cope with what's happening with my husband (*pause*) . . . Am I making sense?

JACKSON

I have to be honest with you. I feel so guilty doing this . . . especially if my parents ever found out. They're really strict Catholics, and they would kill me if they knew I was having sex . . . let alone getting paid for it.

ELLE

I feel guilty, too.

*ELLE nervously laughs.*



ELLE (CONT'D)

I guess we're in the same situation,  
sort of.

JACKSON

Why don't you come sit by me on the  
bed?

*ELLE tentatively sits by JACKSON. He puts his arm around her.*

JACKSON (CONT'D)

Would it be okay if I kiss you?

*ELLE tries to let JACKSON kiss her, but she stops. She stands up.*

ELLE

I can't do this.

JACKSON

You know, I can see you're in pain,  
and I want to help you, but I don't  
know what to do. *(pause)* . . . And you  
know, in some ways you're helping  
*me*, especially when I see other  
clients. Because I need this money for  
school, I want to learn how to pleasure  
a woman.

*JACKSON stands and starts to take off his clothes, but ELLE stops him.*

ELLE

What are you doing?

JACKSON

I'm grasping at straws here . . . I don't  
know . . . I thought . . . if I took off my  
clothes . . .

ELLE

That what? I would feel better? Oh,  
god *(pause)* . . . Just do it!

*JACKSON continues stripping. After he is naked, he turns to ELLE.*

JACKSON

Do you want me to help you take off  
your dress?

*ELLE doesn't respond. She lets JACKSON take off her dress, but when he tries to remove her bra, she pushes his hands away.*

ELLE

I'm not ready . . . But thank you for this evening . . . Having a man interested in me means a lot . . . I know I haven't used my whole four hours, but it doesn't matter . . . Let's just call it a night.

*JACKSON looks disappointed, but his demeanor changes when ELLE smiles.*

JACKSON

You are a very lovely woman and a good soul.

*JACKSON puts his clothes back on.*

ELLE

Why don't you stay. I don't want to be alone. Just knowing you're here is a comfort. I have a futon for you to sleep on. But we aren't going to be having sex. My goodness, I'm old enough to be your mother.

*ELLE brings out the futon. JACKSON helps her, and they place it by her bed. Before she goes to lie down on her bed, JACKSON kisses her on the forehead.*

JACKSON

Are you sure you're going to be okay?

ELLE

Yes, but I think I'm going to have trouble going to sleep. I was so worked up about tonight. Can we talk a little bit? Oh, before I forget, here is the money I owe you.

*ELLE hands an envelope to JACKSON.*

JACKSON

Thank you, even though I feel like I don't deserve this since we didn't do

anything. But it's going to come in handy for my books.

*ELLE sits on her bed.*

ELLE

You're welcome. But really . . . let's talk.

JACKSON

Sure. I really don't know anything about you. Tell me about your husband. Do you have children? What's your profession?

ELLE

Married, but my husband doesn't recognize me after forty years of marriage, and he fell in love with a man. I'm childless, overweight and diabetic. Oh, and I'm a nurse.

JACKSON

If your husband has a boyfriend, does that mean he's gay?

ELLE

Who knows? I'm been racking my brain. Thinking if there were any signs of him being some kind of closeted gay man.

JACKSON

Now, don't be offended, but did you have a good sex life with him?

ELLE

Most of the marriage. It was only when the dementia kicked in that we stopped having sex. I think it just became too difficult for Patrick. You know, I was looking for something, like a sign.

*ELLE starts laughing.*

JACKSON

What's so funny?

ELLE

I think Patrick had a thing for fat women. Now, I'm wondering if I was a *fag hag*. I know that's a politically incorrect term.

JACKSON

Is that something like a BFF between a straight woman and gay man?

*ELLE starts laughing again.*

ELLE

I just remembered that we went to a nude beach near Barcelona, and I wouldn't go in the water; not with this blubber. The beach was gay, and Patrick stayed in the water for hours. Playing water polo with other naked men.

JACKSON

That actually sounds pretty innocent to me.

ELLE

I know. I'm desperate to figure out how Patrick could have been attracted to a *man*. He was so straight! I swear, he had no fashion sense. His hair was always messy. Definitely not gay.

JACKSON

You're thinking about stereotypes.

ELLE

Are you telling me that just because Patrick was the furthest thing from having gay characteristics, that he really *could* be gay?

JACKSON

I didn't say that.

ELLE

I think it's time for bed before you say something to upset me. Good night, Jackson.

*ELLE gets up from the bed and kisses JACKSON on the lips. Lights dim, and when they come up it is the next morning. ELLE wakes up, alone in bed.*

ELLE (CONT'D)

Jackson, where are you?

*ELLE gets out of bed and finds a note on the futon. She reads it out loud.*

ELLE (CONT'D)

Dear Elle. Thank you for last night. I hope I brought a little joy into your life. I'm sorry that I didn't stay to wake up with you and say goodbye. You looked so peaceful that I didn't want to wake you. I have a class I needed to get to, anyway. Bless you.

*ELLE smiles after reading the note. She sits on a chair in front of her makeup table and stares at the audience and begins brushing her hair and putting on makeup as if in front of a mirror. Her smile turns to anger as she talks to her reflection in the mirror.*

ELLE (CONT'D)

You really thought having sex with someone other than your husband would help you? That you would feel better about yourself? A man that you paid for? Did he make you love your body and not feel ashamed? Well, did he?

*Lights dim.*

### SCENE 13

*Lights come up. COREY makes his bed, then walks toward the audience and begins combing his hair as if in front of a mirror. When he's done, he pulls out a letter and begins reading.*

COREY

I know I should be saying this to you in person, Noah. Giving you a letter is a chicken shit way of telling you how I feel. But, dear Noah, I couldn't think of any other way to express what has been going on since the last time I visited.

You know that for the last forty years I have been faithful. I don't think we ever needed to talk about it. And to put it in musical perspective, since that somehow does a better job of communicating, the song by the Bee Gees, "*To Love Somebody*", is how I've felt. That the way I love you can't be explained. Maybe incomprehensible. So, when I saw you holding another man, the lyrics to "*To Love Somebody*" took on a different meaning.

You wouldn't understand how I felt when you were kissing Patrick and holding him. I couldn't keep track of my feelings -- anger, jealousy, abhorrence and devastation were all fighting with one another. I've been afraid that I was going to bleed out my emotions. You have gored me like a bull. And the saddest part of all this is that you don't know who I am or what we've been through. And our son, Franklin, is missing and may be dead, and I can't share that agony with you.

*When COREY is finished, he leaves his bedroom, and the lights dim. When the lights come up, COREY walks in and finds NOAH hovering around the bench in the garden of Sunrise.*

COREY (CONT'D)

Hi Noah, why don't you sit down? I want to talk to you. My god, we haven't seen each other in so long! This is the longest time we've ever been apart.

*NOAH sits on the bench with COREY and stares into space.*

COREY (CONT'D)

Come on, Noah. Look at me. I love you. Just look at my eyes. You don't have to say anything. Just let me know that you understand. I am your husband and your lover.

*Music begins playing. COREY begins humming "Bridge Over Troubled Waters". When NOAH recognizes the song, he begins humming.*

COREY (CONT'D)

Why don't we dance?

*NOAH obeys COREY, and COREY puts his arm around NOAH's waist and they begin dancing. As they twirl around the stage, they start from simple dance steps and progress to Rumba, Cha Cha, Foxtrot, and Swing. Periodically they stop to kiss, tickle and hug one another followed by more dancing. After working up a sweat and getting out of breath, they sit down on the bench.*

COREY (CONT'D)

Whew! I'm exhausted! My goodness, where did you learn how to dance like that?

NOAH

Here.

COREY

Oh, that's right. The brochure for this place said there was a dance instructor. I can't remember the last time we went out dancing. Didn't we use to do country line dancing at Oil Can Harry's?

NOAH

The incense burns! Brilliant sacred  
torches, shining all around; here is the  
minister; give me your right hand.

*NOAH reaches out and holds COREY's hand.*

COREY

Those are the words from the Mad  
Scene in the opera, *Lucia di  
Lammermoor*, where she stabs her  
husband to death on their wedding  
night.

*NOAH sings a few verses in Italian.*

NOAH

I love you.

*COREY squeezes NOAH's hand.*

COREY

Oh my love. I love you so much.

*NOAH kisses COREY.*

NOAH

Patrick, my friend, Patrick. Kiss me.  
Hold me, Patrick.

COREY jumps away from NOAH, keels over and holds his stomach.

COREY

*(screaming in anguish)*

No!

*Lights dim.*



SCENE 14

*Lights come up. ELLE is sitting in the garden at Sunrise, when BRIAN enters.*

BRIAN

I am happy that you're visiting Patrick. Recently he's been asking about the woman who comes to see him every morning and what happened to her. This is an important milestone. The fact that he remembers you; that's a good thing. I've seen some of residents have periods of lucidity. It could last a minute or it could last hours.

ELLE

I don't want to get my hopes up. Honestly, I don't miss coming here. It's been nice to have a break. Maybe I'll have a better attitude about this mess.

BRIAN

Okay. I'm going to get Patrick and bring him out there.

*After Brian exits, ELLE checks her sugars, and is satisfied by the reading. She hears music and starts repeating the lyrics.*

ELLE

A time to weep and a time to laugh; A time to mourn and a time to dance. A time to cast away stones,

*PATRICK enters the garden. PATRICK walks around the garden as he speaks.*

PATRICK

And a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing.

ELLE

Patrick! You remember "Turn, Turn, Turn" by The Byrds. We saw them

ELLE

perform at the club, Whisky A Go Go,  
on our first date.

PATRICK

Going to a Go-Go.

ELLE

Yes, you were so excited about going  
to The Whisky because one of your  
favorite songs was “*Going to a Go-  
Go*”. I think you were disappointed  
that The Miracles weren't the  
performers.

PATRICK

Smokey Robinson and the Miracles.

ELLE

You look good. I'm sorry I haven't  
been visiting. I've been busy at work.  
You know how it is in nursing. There  
is always a crisis. And I hate when my  
boss calls me Eleanor even after I've  
told her a million times that I only go  
by Elle.

PATRICK

I know Eleanor.

*ELLE sheds happy tears.*

ELLE

Yes, Patrick. That's me. Eleanor, your  
wife! You can call me whatever you  
want just as long as you remember  
me!

PATRICK

You're my pride. You're my joy.

*ELLE gets up from the bench and walks over to PATRICK and snuggles  
with him.*

ELLE

It's so nice.

*ELLE cranes her neck and begins kissing PATRICK. Both are passionately embracing one another and kissing and then ELLE starts wailing. She backs away from PATRICK. Blood is trickling from her mouth. She screams.*

ELLE (CONT'D)

Ow! Ow! You bit me!

PATRICK

Stop screaming!

*Elle continues screaming and calls out.*

ELLE

Brian!

*BRIAN rushes into the garden.*

ELLE (CONT'D)

He bit me so hard! It feels like my tongue is on fire! He's like an animal!

*PATRICK comes toward ELLE.*

ELLE (CONT'D)

Get him away from me.

BRIAN

Okay. I'll take him back to his room. But what about you? Do you want me to take you to the Emergency Room?

ELLE

No, I think I'll be able to stop the bleeding once I get home. But I feel a little shaky now. I better sit down and wait awhile. You go ahead. I'll be fine.

*BRIAN leads PATRICK out of the garden.*

BRIAN

Look, once I get Patrick settled, I'll come back to see if you need any help.

*ELLE pulls a handkerchief out of her purse and presses it against her tongue. She begins shivering. BRIAN reenters the garden.*

ELLE

I can't believe this happened. I thought he was doing so well. We were actually having a conversation. He knew who I was. Then he attacked me! I'm surprised he didn't bite my tongue off! God, it's throbbing!

BRIAN

Let me take a look. Unfortunately I have some experience with this.

*BRIAN has ELLE stick out her tongue.*

BRIAN (CONT'D)

I can see the wound. But at least the bleeding seems to have stopped. Gargling when you get home is going to help. But if it doesn't get better, you need to get it taken care of.

ELLE

Thank you, but this was a mistake coming here. And you said he was doing better since he's been with his so-called friend. I'm done with him! I've tried! I can't take these swings in emotion. I love him, I hate him. I miss him. I can't win!

*ELLE gets up from the bench and rushes away.*

*Lights dim.*

SCENE 15

*Lights come up. The breakfast room at Sunrise. NOAH and PATRICK sitting at their table, just about to begin eating their cereal.*

NOAH

Good morning. Can you name all the morning songs?

PATRICK

*Angel of the Morning, Morning has Broken, Chelsea Morning.*

NOAH

*Touch Me in the Morning; Good Morning, Good Morning.*

PATRICK

The Beatles, from Sgt. Peppers.

NOAH

I'm hungry.

PATRICK

Look at my hand.

*PATRICK gets up from his chair and puts his hand up to NOAH's face.*

NOAH

What should I see?

PATRICK

It's got these lines. I don't know what they mean.

NOAH

Long life?

*PATRICK uses his hands to cover NOAH's eyes.*

NOAH (CONT'D)

I can't see anything.

PATRICK

But after I kiss you, you can see.

NOAH

You're crazy, but I like you anyway.  
Now I'm going to eat.

PATRICK

Do you know Eleanor?

NOAH

No, who is that?

PATRICK

I don't know, but she says she knows  
me. She looks hurt but what can I do?  
She's not like you.

NOAH

Like this thin man who visits me. He  
says he's "Corey". But who is this  
Corey?

PATRICK

And she pointed at this finger. This  
ring.

NOAH

Oh. I have the same thing on my  
finger.

PATRICK

We are alike then. I'm hungry. Want to  
eat?

*PATRICK sits back in his chair as NOAH begins quickly eating his cereal.  
He suddenly and starts choking. PATRICK jumps up from his seat and  
pulls on NOAH but unable to help him. He begins shouting.*

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Brian! Something is wrong with my  
friend.

*BRIAN rushes into the breakfast room.*

BRIAN

What happened to Noah?

PATRICK

He was eating and then he put his  
hands around his throat.

*BRIAN sees how NOAH is choking and tries various maneuvers to unlock the trapped food. PATRICK is hovering around NOAH and shouts.*

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Help! Help! Help!

*BRIAN continues trying to save NOAH but after a minute realizes it is futile. He calls 911.*

*Lights dim.*

SCENE 16

*Lights come up. COREY is in his bedroom listening to music through headphones unable to hear the phone ringing until he removes the headphones and answers the phone. BRIAN is on the other side of the stage.*

COREY

Hi Brian, what do you want?

BRIAN

Noah had an accident this morning when he was having breakfast. The oatmeal went down the wrong pipe. We did everything we could. Unfortunately, he couldn't breathe. Corey, Noah died this morning. I am *so* sorry. We tried calling you multiple times today but you never answered. Since we couldn't reach you, we notified Noah's doctor and the funeral home that you listed when Noah was admitted. So that's where Noah's body is right now. Not sure you can go to the funeral parlor to see Noah at this hour. It might be too late. Unfortunately, you'll have to wait until morning

COREY

Why do I have to see Noah's body? He's dead. It's not him. It's not like I'm identifying his body like in an episode of *Law and Order*.

BRIAN

Sometimes people need closure; saying goodbye even if it's just to the dead body. I think it can help with the grieving process. It helps the bereaved test the reality that the death has occurred.

COREY

I don't want to see him! Goodbye.



*After finishing the phone call, NOAH goes back to listening to music on his headphones. But within seconds, he throws the headphones off and faces the audience.*

COREY (CONT'D)

Fuck you, Noah! You want to see me cry, don't you? Should I be thinking, maybe this is a relief? You won't be suffering anymore. And now that you're dead, I guess the fact that you had an affair doesn't matter. Who knows, maybe this Patrick is more your type than me. Did you think I wanted you to die so I wouldn't have to watch your mind disintegrate? Damn you! I can't even cry!

*COREY goes to bed but after tossing and turning, gets up.*

COREY (CONT'D)

You won't even let me sleep. You know, if something happens to our son, Franklin, you won't be around to comfort me. And don't expect a celebration of life. I'm not doing it. Let one of your friends arrange a funeral, too.

*Lights dim and as they come up BRIAN is in his office on the phone.*

BRIAN

Thank you for taking the time for this therapy appointment over the phone. I know we should be meeting in person, but something has come up, and I need help to process it.

I've mentioned to you about Noah and Patrick, the two married men who fell in love here at Sunrise? I've been struggling with the reaction from their spouses. I thought I was making some headway so that they could understand that it wasn't promoted by Sunrise and that we made mistakes. At the time that Noah and Patrick were sleeping

BRIAN

in the same room, I was aware that Patrick was married to Elle and Noah was married to Corey. And there isn't a real policy that forbids people sleeping together.

Unfortunately, while Noah was having oatmeal this morning, he began choking. I did everything I could until the paramedics got here, but it was too late. This has left me emotionally drained. I am so guilt ridden. And you can imagine the reaction when I told their spouses. The woman married to Patrick almost hung up on me. She couldn't understand why I was telling her about Noah's death. Apparently she has no sympathy for her husband and that he lost this romantic entanglement. It's hard for me to understand her thinking. Then when I told Noah's husband, Corey, that Noah had died, he ranted about how he didn't care and that we should take care of the body.

But here's the kicker. During this whole time when I saw Noah and Patrick develop this relationship, I began thinking about myself. I've considered myself non-sexual or asexual. But seeing these two men who are in the throes of Alzheimer's not recognize their spouses and yet fall in love, something I've never experienced, makes me really want this now. Well, thanks for listening. I know there are no answers, but me just saying it out loud is a big help.

*BRIAN hangs up the phone and begins to cry.*

*Lights dim.*

SCENE 17

*Lights come up. ELLE is in bed and the phone rings. BRIAN is on the other side of the stage*

ELLE

What do you want, Brian? I told you I don't care that Noah died. At least, I won't have to see them together. His death eliminates that problem. But since you told me, I'm relieved. Call me heartless, but at least I don't have to deal with Noah's husband, Corey. I think he blames Patrick for the affair. I swear to god, it was *Noah* who made Patrick gay!

BRIAN

I wasn't sure I should call you back, but I'm worried about Patrick. He doesn't really know what has happened. I mean, he was upset about the commotion before the EMTs arrived. We had all the residents go back to their rooms before Noah was pronounced dead and carried away. I was concerned about Patrick because Noah had been sharing his bed with him for the last six months. We decided to give him Seroquel to ensure that he gets a good night's sleep. It helps with insomnia, and it's a quick tranquilizer. They're planning a memorial service. It is not only for the residents but also for the staff at Sunrise. Anyway, I thought you should know.

ELLE

After that incident with Patrick biting me, can you expect me to visit him again? This is part of your job. That's why I'm paying for your services so that I don't have to deal with him. I'm sorry. There is nothing I can do to help. Goodbye!

*After ELLE hangs up the phone, lights dim and only BRIAN's side of the stage is lit. After ELLE's call, the phone rings again.*

BRIAN

Yes, Margaret. I know administration is concerned about what happened. I racked my brain about this. Why did it take so long for the EMTs to arrive? Do we need better training? But right now, I can't believe Noah is gone. You know, I wonder if we haven't been treating the residents with enough empathy. We go through the protocols, but something is lacking. And I think that's why I'm feeling devastated by his death.

*BRIAN starts crying.*

BRIAN (CONT'D)

We have the issue with how Patrick will handle the loss. And there is the contemptuous atmosphere created for Noah and Patrick by how they impacted their respective spouses. And, of course, I've tried to explain this to Patrick, but he is confused. And Margaret, no matter how many times I try to tell myself it's not my fault, I still want to take the blame.

*PATRICK's screaming echoes.*

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Margaret, I've got to go. Something is going on with Patrick.

*BRIAN runs off stage. Lights dim. Lights go up on ELLE in her bedroom. The phone is ringing. BRIAN is on the other side of the stage.*

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Please come to Sunrise. Something is going on with your husband. We thought he was doing so well. We're trying to sedate him because he has gotten violent. He keeps asking about Noah. During the sing-along after

lunch, the music director wanted to acknowledge Noah and said, 'I know we've lost one of our best singers. In honor of Noah, we are going to sing one of his favorite songs, "*Your Song*" by Elton John. He would sing it with Patrick.' Hearing the lyrics set Patrick off. We tried to take him back to his room, but he wouldn't go, and he kept hitting the attendant.

I knew he had slept in Noah's room last night, and I figured that's where he wanted to be. He won't stop screaming and crying. It's gotten so bad that he's lost his voice. I don't know if there is anything you can do. Maybe just seeing your face might calm him down.

ELLE

I've told you before. Handle it yourself!

*A crashing sound interrupts the call. BRIAN goes offstage. ELLE hears him.*

BRIAN

Oh no! It looks like Patrick is trying to hurt himself!

*Lights dim. When they come up, on one side of the stage PATRICK is in bed in NOAH's room. BRIAN is trying to calm PATRICK. On the other side of the stage, COREY is sitting on the garden bench. ELLE enters.*

ELLE

Where's Patrick?

COREY

I've killed Noah! It's my fault! I should have been here for him. I should have been taking care of him at home. This would never have happened. And he's been dead for twenty-four hours, but I've only been thinking about myself. That he abandoned me!

*COREY pauses and sobs. ELLE moves toward him trying to show empathy but as she gets closer, backs away from him.*

COREY (CONT'D)

My friends kept telling me that Noah didn't realize what he was doing. That I shouldn't blame him. I never listened to them, and now it's too late! It was only when I saw his room that I realized how much I'm going to miss him. That I never got to say goodbye. My pride, jealousy, and anger; all those fucked up emotions destroyed our forty years together. I've been so stupid to obsess about what happened between him and Patrick. And when I tried to pick up Noah's belongings, your husband stopped me. I was afraid he was going to hit me when I tried to take our wedding picture. And when I went into the closet to get Noah's slippers, Patrick screamed at me. I loved those slippers. His feet were so large; it was impossible to find anything in his size. And he would wear them even though they were old and shredded. I would put baking soda in them to get rid of the odor.

*ELLE breaks down into tears and holds COREY. BRIAN comes onto the stage.*

BRIAN

Elle, please come with me. We need your help with Patrick. We're trying to get the room ready for a new resident, but Patrick won't move. He urinated on the floor just like a dog marking his territory.

*ELLE separates from COREY.*

ELLE

Corey, once I get him to leave the room, you'll have a chance to get Noah's things. And we'll talk later. I

ELLE  
don't want to say I understand what  
you're going through, but the best I  
can do is listen.

COREY  
Thank you.

*ELLE and BRIAN run toward NOAH's room.*

ELLE  
Am I going to be safe with Patrick?

BRIAN  
I will be there with you the whole  
time, and I'll have one of my staff  
outside the door. Nothing is going to  
happen. I just need you to convince  
him to leave the room. And I don't  
want to have him admitted to some  
kind of locked ward. That isn't going  
to do him any good.

*BRIAN and ELLE enter the room.*

ELLE  
Hi, Patrick. It's Elle. I wanted to see  
you. I know you're hurting. I think I  
can help if you let me.

*PATRICK is sitting on the bed, leaning against the headboard hugging a  
pillow.*

PATRICK  
Do I know you?

ELLE  
Yes, I'm Elle. I'm your wife.

PATRICK  
I didn't know I was married. But Elle,  
can you help me find Noah? I always  
come to his bed every night. I am  
waiting for him. They told me he  
wasn't coming back. I don't believe  
them. Can you wait with me?

ELLE

Yes. I'll wait with you. Can I lay next to you in bed while we wait for Noah?

BRIAN

I think this bed is a little small. You know, I have a larger suite where you guys will be much more comfortable. Patrick, why don't you go with Elle?

PATRICK

No, I want Noah! If we go to another room, how will he find us? I'm staying!

*PATRICK grips the bed linens.*

ELLE

I have an idea, Patrick. Brian will wait here, and when Noah shows up, he'll bring him to us.

*BRIAN tries to help PATRICK off the bed, but he refuses to let go of the sheets.*

ELLE (CONT'D)

Let's check out this other room. If we don't like it, we can come back. And maybe you'll like being in bed with *me*. I know it's different from Noah, but it will be fun. And we can sing as we walk. You'd like that, wouldn't you?

PATRICK

Wouldn't It, Wouldn't It?

ELLE

Yes, just like the song by The Beach Boys, "*Wouldn't it Be Nice?*"

*As though PATRICK had been hypnotized by her words, he lets ELLE move him off the bed. As they hold hands and walk out of the room, both smile. ELLE sings a few lines from "Both Sides Now," with PATRICK speaking his responses.*

ELLE (CONT'D)

Tears and fears and feeling proud.



PATRICK

Tears and fears and feeling proud.

ELLE

To say I love you right out loud.

PATRICK

To say I love you right out loud.

*Lights dim.*

THE END