

# MEMORIES ARE MADE OF THIS

Written By Alan Lowe, 2023

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## CAST:

June, wife, retired, age 75, creative thinker

George, husband, retired, age 77, somewhat grumpy

## **SCENE 4: SHE**

### CAST:

Irene, a single retired woman in her early seventies, caring person

Cindy, a single retired woman in her early seventies, in need of finding  
and keeping a man

Donna, a single retired woman in her early seventies and a friend of both  
Irene and Cindy, a bit man crazy

## **SCENE 6: AUTUMN LEAVES**

### CAST

Debbie, wife, retired, age 74, wants to enjoy life and go places

Marty, husband, retired, age 76, stay at home type, hard to motivate to get  
out of the house, stubborn

## **SCENE 8: GOLDBLOCKS AND THE THREE BARES**

### CAST

Jared, husband, retired, age 64, somewhat ornery, and questions who has  
responsibility for the dog

Cassie, wife, retired, age 62, frustrated with Jared

## **SCENE 10: JUST ANSWER MY QUESTION**

### CAST:

Narrator, Male or Female

Max, husband, retired, age 76, confused and looking for answers

Martha, wife, retired, age 75, not aware of how to respond to Max

## SCENE 1: OPENING

**MF:** *"MEMORIES ARE MADE OF THIS,"* BY DEAN MARTIN -  
THEN FADES OUT

**JUNE:** (NARRATES) I stared out the living room window and watched the beautiful trees blowing in the gentle fall breeze. This is the place I always wanted to be and the only way I was leaving was in a box.

George and I moved to our retirement haven in Linden, CA, outside Sacramento, fifteen years ago. The community, called Sunset Ridge, sits on an attractive hillside covered with evergreen shrubs and trees. Its slogan, "An Active Adult Community, The Place to Realize Your Dreams and Fulfill Your Promises," appears right below its name on the large stone pillar at each of its six entrances. It has everything we could ever have dreamed of—restaurants, shows, dances, clubs, and gyms. It's our "cruise ship" on land.

**George:** Hey, June.

**JUNE:** (STARTLED) Huh, what?

**GEORGE:** We're you asleep.

**JUNE:** No. Just engrossed in thought.

**GEORGE:** About what?

**JUNE:** Memories. Wonderful memories.

**GEORGE:** You know, dear, I can remember lots of stuff, but at the same time, many things elude me. When I enter a room, sometimes I wonder where I am and what I came in for. (PAUSE) By the way, where am I?

**JUNE:** (A BIT ANNOYED) Oh, George, cut it out.

**GEORGE:** (SARCASTIC) Yes, dear. If you say so. (PAUSE) What caused you to start thinking about the past?

**JUNE:** I didn't just start thinking about it. I've been thinking about it for months.

**GEORGE:** And you didn't tell me?

**JUNE:** No. I wasn't ready.

**GEORGE:** (EMPHATIC) Ready for what?

**JUNE:** You'll find out when I tell you.

**GEORGE:** Well, are you ready now?

**JUNE:** Yeah, I think I so. (PAUSE) I've taken a job.

**GEORGE:** (SURPRISED) A job? You're 75 years old. You've been retired for 15 years. You've gone back to work?

**JUNE:** Well, not exactly. (PAUSE) I'm not getting paid for it.

**GEORGE:** (CONFUSED) Not getting paid for it? Why would you want to do that?

**JUNE:** Okay, I'll tell you. But don't interrupt me.

**GEORGE:** But . . .

**JUNE:** I said, (EMPHATIC) "No interruptions."

**GEORGE:** All right.

**JUNE:** At my Writers Club meeting in April, we had a guest speaker. She's the editor of the *Sunset Ridge News*, the paper we get in the mail every month. Each month it features a couple or person on the front page. You've seen it—an article about who they are, where they came from, and what their lives are all about. She told me she was tired of doing this. Said she needed a change and asked me if I'd make it happen. I was overwhelmed by her offer. I said, "Why me?"

**GEORGE:** Okay, why you?

**JUNE:** I told you, "No interruptions." And I mean it. (SLIGHT PAUSE) Seems she follows me on my blog—reads my short stories and poetry. I've talked about our Writers Club on the blog, so she arranged to speak at a club meeting she assumed I'd be attending. And I was there. After the meeting, we spent over two hours talking about how I'd make her new front-page feature come alive. I've written five articles for her consideration, so far.

**GEORGE:** May I speak now?

**JUNE:** I'll have think about it. I'll get back to you.

**GEORGE:** (EMPHATIC) You can't do that!

**JUNE:** I can, but I won't. (SLIGHT PAUSE) Let me continue. Each article is about people we know who've agreed to share memories about their lives. But these memories are not about high school graduations, weddings, or family get-togethers, unless these events were where the unexpected occurred. And since I'm your loving wife, I'll share all of them with you, except the first—the October edition—before they appear in print.

**GEORGE:** Why not the first?

**JUNE:** Because it arrived in our mailbox this morning, and it's about . . . us.

**GEORGE:** (SURPRISED) Us?

**JUNE:** Yes, and I called it, "EXPIRATION DATE."

## **SCENE 2: EXPIRATION DATE**

**MFX:** "*BEGIN THE BEGUINE*," BY FRANK SINATRA - THEN FADES OUT

**GEORGE:** (NARRATES) I entered the kitchen of our sprawling ranch house. June sat at the table engrossed in preparing a grocery list. I ignored her and walked over to the large, white GE refrigerator and opened the door. Grabbing a bag of salad from the vegetable tray, I flipped it over and then back again. Looking somewhat confused, I turned and stared at June and . . . (SPEAKS) Hey, June. What's the expiration date on this Asian salad mix you bought last week?

**SFX:** CRINKLING SOUND OF PLASTIC BAG

**JUNE:** Just look on the bag.

**GEORGE:** I did, but I can't find it.

**JUNE:** George, can't you do anything for yourself?

**GEORGE:** Come on! I'm just asking you to help me find the date. I'm not requesting you cook a meal for me.

**JUNE:** Oh, about that. What do you want for dinner?

**GEORGE:** Dinner? All I want is a salad for lunch. Dinner's six hours away.

**JUNE:** Well, I'm going to the store and if you want something, you've got to tell me."

**GEORGE:** First, you tell me where the expiration date is on this salad bag so I know I won't die if I eat it.

**JUNE:** (CONDESCENDING) George, George, my sweet, dear George. Nobody ever died from eating an expired bag of salad.

**GEORGE:** There, you said it. It's expired.

**JUNE:** No, I didn't. You did.

**GEORGE:** You wouldn't care if I died, would you?

**JUNE:** Just don't do it now. I've got to go to the store to get the things I need to make dinner.

**GEORGE:** That's all you care about . . . dinner, dinner, dinner. What if I walk to the mailbox this afternoon and get run over by a car and die?

**JUNE:** That's not going to happen.

**GEORGE:** How do you know? We live in a senior community. Those crotchety old folks can't see or hear. They don't even slow down at stop signs. My demise could be at any time.

**JUNE:** Is your insurance policy paid up? And, more important, am I the beneficiary?

**GEORGE:** Oh, don't be cute, June. You're making me angry.

**JUNE:** Then, maybe you'll just have a heart attack from the stress and drop dead in front of me. Then I won't have to worry about your dinner. I'll just open a can of soup for me.

**GEORGE:** There you go again. Just thinking about yourself. I don't matter. Do I?

**JUNE:** Well, you did. But keep going on like this and you won't.

**GEORGE:** Are you threatening me again?

**JUNE:** Again? When have I ever threatened you?

**GEORGE:** At the Wertheimer's party two weeks ago.

**JUNE:** What do you mean? I don't remember threatening you.

**GEORGE:** When it's convenient, you just forget.

**JUNE:** Right now, I want to forget you.

**GEORGE:** See, another threat.

**JUNE:** That's not a threat. That's a comment.

**GEORGE:** Threat, comment . . . whatever. You want me to die so you won't have to be bothered by me ever again.

**JUNE:** Now that's a thought. What is the value of your American Life policy?

**GEORGE:** What?

**JUNE:** If I'm going to get rid of you, I need to know if it's worth the effort.

**GEORGE:** So get rid of me. I'm going to starve to death anyway.

**JUNE:** (SARCASTIC) George, you're thirty pounds overweight. It'll take years before you starve to death.

**GEORGE:** I can't handle this anymore. I'm going to McDonalds for a burger and fries.

**JUNE:** Well, that'll certainly kill you. What happened to the healthy salad you were going to eat for lunch?

**GEORGE:** It expired.

**JUNE:** So you found the expiration date on the package?

**GEORGE:** Huh, no. That's why I asked for your help in the first place.

**JUNE:** I've had it. I'm going to the store. Do you want anything?

**GEORGE:** Yeah, a new bag of salad. And make sure it has an expiration date I can find.

**JUNE:** My, oh my. You certainly are a prize, George. (TO HERSELF) Let's see, I've got my shopping list. Now where are my car keys? (TO GEORGE) George, have you seen my car keys?

**GEORGE:** They're just where you left them. On the third hook from the right on the cabinet by the door to the garage. Do I have to remember everything for you? And you can't even help me find the expiration date on a bag of salad.

**JUNE:** You don't know when to quit, George. Do you? (NARRATES) I shook my head in dismay, grabbed the keys from the hook and reached for the doorknob of the door to the garage. Grasping the knob, I looked back at George and . . . (STATES EMPHATICALLY) Go check our marriage license.

**GEORGE:** (CONFUSED) "Huh. What for?"

**JUNE:** (FLIPPANT MANNER) The expiration date.

SFX: SOUND OF THE DOOR CLOSED BEHIND HER

MFX: "*BEGIN THE BEGUINE*," BY FRANK SINATRA - THEN FADES OUT



### SCENE 3: FIRST INTERLUDE

**GEORGE:** (SURPRISED) That's not what happened, June! How could you write something like that?

**JUNE:** You remember what you want to remember, my dear. However, it did happen. I don't lie. (PAUSE) And we still have three years until our marriage license expires, so I guess I'm stuck with you.

**GEORGE:** How'd you come up with that?

**JUNE:** If you don't know, I won't tell.

**GEORGE:** Yeah, yeah. So what's the next story?

**JUNE:** You recall my single friend, Irene? I've told you a couple of stories about her.

**GEORGE:** Yeah, I know who you're talking about. But those stories weren't very interesting.

**JUNE:** No, not from what I've told you in the past. But the story about her that will appear in the November edition of the paper will blow you away.

**GEORGE:** (ANXIOUS) All right, let me have it. Come on!

**JUNE:** Just relax, George. (PAUSE) When I contacted Irene to see if she had a story to share, she jumped at the opportunity. Apparently, about six months ago, on a Monday morning, she'd just finished breakfast and busied herself straightening up the kitchen. With Johnny Mathis' "Misty" playing softly in the background, the doorbell rang. And you'll see, after I share it with you, why I titled it, "SHE."

## SCENE 4: SHE

**MX:** "MISTY," BY JOHNNY MATHIS - THEN FADES OUT AFTER DOORBELL RINGS

**SFX:** DOORBELL RINGS TWICE

**IRENE:** (THINKING ALOUD) Not quite nine o'clock. Who could it be at this hour? I better get the door.

**SFX:** FOOTSTEPS WALKING TO DOOR, THEN SOUND OF DOOR OPENING, THEN SLIGHT PAUSE, THEN CLOSING

**IRENE:** (CONCERNED) Cindy, you look like you lost your best friend. What's wrong?

**CINDY:** (SOBBING) It's worse than that. (BREATHING VERY HARD) I . . . I . . . I can't breathe.

**IRENE:** Cindy, you're scaring me. Calm down and tell me what's bothering you.

**CINDY:** (SILENCE, THEN GASPING, AND WORDS COME POURING OUT OF HER MOUTH) . . . Irene, Frank left me. He's gone. Disappeared. Didn't leave a message.

**IRENE:** How long has he been gone?

**CINDY:** (WHEEZING AND SPUTTERING) Two days. Two whole days.

**IRENE:** Two days? Just two days? Aren't you overreacting a bit?

**CINDY:** (SADLY) But he's never done this before. He's always told me when he's going to be away. I'm beside myself. I thought we had a strong relationship. Could he be dating someone else? . . . Irene, I don't know what to do.

**IRENE:** Take a deep breath. Get a hold of yourself.

**CINDY:** (SOFTLY) Okay, I'll try. I'm sorry for my outburst. But he means so much to me."

**IRENE:** Cindy, I know you care about him. He seemed like a nice guy when we met him at the singles dance in April. But that was just eight weeks ago. I didn't know you guys had agreed not to date others.

**CINDY:** Well, no. We never discussed it.

**IRENE:** And you don't live together. Maybe he's been busy.

**CINDY:** But he would have called. Wouldn't he?

**IRENE:** How should I know? I only saw the man that one time. I think you may be blowing this whole thing out of proportion.

**CINDY:** I don't know. We have such a great time when we're together. We seem to have so much in common. He's close to my age. In the past, the only guys who have shown an interest in me have been over eighty.

**IRENE:** You don't know that he's left you. Don't jump to conclusions.

**CINDY:** (WHIMPERING) But maybe he's found someone else.

**IRENE:** In two days? Cindy . . . Frank, you, and I are all in our early seventies. We don't move that fast.

**CINDY:** But he's a man. In our senior community, he's in demand. He can have any woman he wants.

**IRENE:** Yeah, that might be true. But men take forever just trying to decide what they want for dinner. How could two days be long enough for him to find and make a decision about another woman? So don't get so upset about this. He'll call.

**CINDY:** (RESIGNED) Oh well. I guess you're right.

**IRENE:** (NARRATE) Cindy seemed to relax a bit. I caught a hint of a smile on her face. She turned to leave. As she placed her hand on the doorknob, she looked back at me.

**CINDY:** (IN A MURMUR) I feel like such an idiot. I've been so lonely since Jack died. It's been a hard two years. I need someone in my life and I thought Frank was the one.

**IRENE:** He might be, Cindy. But you can't rush into a serious relationship. Take your time.

**CINDY:** All right. I'll try.

**IRENE:** It's the right thing to do. You'll see.

**CINDY:** I know. But it's hard. Goodbye, Irene.

SFX: DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES

MFX: "*MISTY*," BY JOHNNY MATHIS - THEN FADES OUT

**IRENE:** (NARRATE) Two days passed. That afternoon, Donna and I went to our Mystery Novel meeting up at the clubhouse. Eleven women and one man, Gordon, attended the session. He seemed to be trying to make points with the ladies by monopolizing the conversation. I thought Zelda was about to throw something at him to shut him up. She had a rolled up wad of paper in her hand and had begun to move it into a throwing position when our group leader, Maryann, adjourned the meeting.

**DONNA:** Come on, Irene. Let's get out of here. Maybe get a bite to eat.

**IRENE:** Sounds good, Donna. That meeting drained me. I could use a good drink.

**DONNA:** Me too. What'd you think about Gordon?

**IRENE:** Just a typical man—a know-it-all who wants to be in control.

**DONNA:** Yeah, but he's good looking. I wouldn't mind if he controlled me.

**IRENE:** You're nuts.

**DONNA:** (RESPONDS, THEN QUICKLY CHANGES THE SUBJECT) Not me. I think the word you're looking for is realistic. So, what's the latest scoop on Cindy and her man? Has he contacted her?

**IRENE:** I don't know. I haven't heard a word from her since she left my house on Monday.

**DONNA:** Everything must be fine then. I wish I had a man in my life. You know, tall, dark, and handsome. Maybe about thirty-five, with bulging muscles.

**IRENE:** Keep dreaming, lady. The only way that's going to happen is to cut a seventy year old in half.

**DONNA:** All right. If you'll hold him down, I'll do the cutting (BOTH DONNA AND IRENE GIGGLE LIKE TEENAGE GIRLS AT A SLUMBER PARTY).

**IRENE:** (IN DISBELIEF) Oh, my God! Look at that.

**DONNA:** At what?

**IRENE:** Over there. By the lodge's main entrance.

**DONNA:** Okay. I see some people in a group. So what?

**IRENE:** Yeah. One man surrounded by four women.

**DONNA:** So?

**IRENE:** (ANGRY) The man is Frank. Cindy's Frank. I guess Cindy was right to be concerned about his not calling. What a creep. What a son of a . . .

**DONNA:** Control yourself, Irene.

**IRENE:** (FRANTIC) What am I going to tell Cindy? How am I going to break the news to her? This will destroy her.

**DONNA:** (THE VOICE OF REASON) Shouldn't you find out what's going on before thinking the worst?

**IRENE:** (STILL SOMEWHAT IRRATIONAL) Well, isn't it obvious? He's a womanizer. A creep. A son of a . . .

**DONNA:** Not that again. Let's walk over and say hello and see how he reacts. Do a little detective work.

**IRENE:** But I'm no Angela Lansbury on *Murder She Wrote*. I'll make a fool of myself.

**DONNA:** Do you want to help Cindy, or don't you?

**IRENE:** (CONTEMPLATES) Okay, but how should I do this? . . . Or maybe I shouldn't. There could be a legitimate reason for him being with the women—like working together on a project or something . . . I wish I could see their faces. I know those who are the real man chasers in the singles group.

**DONNA:** Then you're going to have to march yourself right up to that gathering, get the women to turn around, and snap a picture with your iPhone. Then you'll have the evidence you'll need to prove to Cindy what a heel Frank is.

**IRENE:** But he knows me. Why don't you do it, Donna?

**DONNA:** (INCREDULOUS) Me? This isn't my problem. It's yours.

**IRENE:** But I'm totally confused. If I do it, it could be the most awkward thing I've ever done in my life. And if I don't, I could be letting down a very good friend, who needs my help and support. (SOFTLY) *Oh my, what do I do?*

**DONNA:** Well you'd better make a decision quickly.

**IRENE:** Huh? Why?

**DONNA:** Because you're not going to believe what's happening. Get your chin up off your chest and look over there.

**IRENE:** (FEELING OVERWHELMED) Oh, my God! Frank's kissing one of the women. Really kissing her. The others are applauding. What's going on? (GROANING) Oh, that woman, who is she?

**DONNA:** Don't ask me. I don't know.

**IRENE:** (BEGINS TO SOB) This is awful. I've let Cindy down. I'm a failure as a friend.

**DONNA:** No you're not, Irene. Pull yourself together.

**IRENE:** (NARRATE) What happened devastated me. Then I felt a hand on my shoulder. I jumped and spun around. In total shock, I found myself staring into Cindy's bright eyes, illuminated by her smiling face.

**CINDY:** Hi Irene, you look like you've seen a ghost. I didn't mean to frighten you.

**IRENE:** (SURPRISED) It's you.

**CINDY:** Yes, it's me.

**IRENE:** (SLOWLY) Cindy, I need to tell you something, but you better sit down first.

**CINDY:** Oh, don't worry about me. I'm so happy, I can handle anything you have to say.

**IRENE:** I don't think so. Not this.

**CINDY:** Come on, Irene. Let's get it over with. Just give it to me straight.

**DONNA:** Yeah, Irene, tell her already.

**CINDY:** (CHEERFULLY) Oh, hello, Donna.

**DONNA:** Hi, Cindy. (FORCEFULLY) Now tell her, Irene.

**IRENE:** (MUTTERS) I hate to do this to you, Cindy, but . . .

**CINDY:** But what?

**IRENE:** (NARRATES) I placed my hands on her shoulders and pointed her in the direction of the group of four women and one man. (SPEAKS WITH EMPHASIS) Look at the woman in the middle of the group. She's the one.

**CINDY:** (BEWILDERED) She's the one what?

**IRENE:** Try to hold yourself together, my friend. She . . . she's the one who just kissed Frank, your Frank, in a very passionate way.

**CINDY:** (BURSTS OUT LAUGHING) But that's not Frank.

**IRENE:** (GASPS) Huh? What?

**CINDY:** That's his identical twin brother, Floyd. And the "she" you're talking about is his wife.



**IRENE:** (CONFUSED) You're kidding? Aren't you?

**CINDY:** No. That's why Frank disappeared from my life for two days. Floyd and Margie eloped to Reno and Frank went with them . . . as their best man. He didn't tell me because they left at midnight on Friday, the night I last saw him. He called me Monday afternoon when they returned from Reno.

**IRENE:** Well, when you found out what happened, why didn't you tell me?

**CINDY:** I tried to. But when I called Monday afternoon to let you know I'd made a big deal out of nothing, you weren't home. So I attempted to leave a message, but your answering machine said, "Memory full." Then I got caught up in the whole marriage celebration thing and didn't get back to you. I'm sorry . . . Oh, by the way, will you be my maid of honor at my wedding?

**IRENE:** Will it take place before or after I wring your neck for what you put me through?

**CINDY:** (CONTRITE) Before, I hope.

**MPX:** "*MISTY*," BY JOHNNY MATHIS - THEN FADES OUT

## **SCENE 5: SECOND INTERLUDE**

**GEORGE:** Quite a story, June. Is it real, or did Irene just make it up?

**JUNE:** George, George, George. Give me some credit, darling. Do you think I'd publish a story that wasn't true?

**GEORGE:** (SOFTLY) I guess not.

**JUNE:** You just guess? What am I going to do with you, George?

**GEORGE:** (SARCASTIC) Expedite the “expiration date” on our marriage license?

**JUNE:** Keep this up, and I will.

**GEORGE:** (IGNORES JUNE, PAUSES) How’s Cindy doing now? Is there more to the story?

**JUNE:** You really want to know?

**GEORGE:** Would I have asked, if I didn’t?

**JUNE:** With you, who knows? (PAUSE) Okay, the rest of the story. She and Frank got married four months later.

**GEORGE:** Was Irene the maid of honor?

**JUNE:** Well, that was the plan. But things don’t always go the way you expect them to.

**GEORGE:** What went wrong?

**JUNE:** Nothing went wrong. In fact, everything went right. And that was the problem.

**GEORGE:** If everything went right, how could there be a problem? What am I missing?

**JUNE:** Well, it seems Frank and Floyd had another brother.

**GEORGE:** Wow! Triplets.

**JUNE:** No, not triplets. His name is Fred and he’s two years younger than the twins. He and Irene took one look at each other and it was love at first sight. The two couples eloped to Reno and had a double wedding, with Floyd as the best man and Margie as the maid of honor. And Donna went along for the ride.

**GEORGE:** Why didn't you put this part in the story?

**JUNE:** I didn't find this out until after I submitted it.

**GEORGE:** Okay, that's the second article. What's next?

**JUNE:** I heard an interesting story at Bunco a while back, about a couple, Debbie and Marty. They live in Village 39. I tried to tell you when I came home, but you were on the phone, and then I just forgot about it.

**GEORGE:** If you forgot about it, it couldn't have been that important.

**JUNE:** Not at the time. But after I got the offer from the *News*, it seemed like the right fit for my assignment, so I called and spoke to Debbie.

**GEORGE:** Right fit? Why?

**JUNE:** Well, it seems Debbie wanted to go on the annual fall bus trip to Reno. It was advertised in our monthly *Sunset Ridge Magazine*. So she asked Marty if he'd like to go. You know, enjoy the autumn leaves on the bus trip up and back and see a show in Reno. The scenario, which I named, "AUTUMN LEAVES," plays out in an unexpected way, as you will see.

## SCENE 6: AUTUMN LEAVES

**MF:** “*AUTUMN LEAVES*,” BY ROGER WILLIAMS - THEN FADES OUT

**DEBBIE:** (NARRATES) Living in our senior community is usually a blessing. However, sometimes things get a bit complicated. Let me give you an example. As I perused our community’s monthly *Sunset Ridge Magazine*, I turned toward Marty, who sat in our plush, beige recliner reading the *Linden Gazette* and . . . (SPEAKS WITH ENTHUSIASM) Hey, Marty, how about going on the annual fall bus trip to Reno?

**MARTY:** I can’t. It’s not for me.

**DEBBIE:** Why not, it’ll be fun.

**MARTY:** Fun? You call traveling with a bunch of old people fun?

**DEBBIE:** Well, we’re old, too. And they’re our neighbors and friends.

**MARTY:** (ARROGANT) Stuffed in a box with those old codgers for a three-hour drive to Reno isn’t my idea of a good time. I’d hate it, Debbie.

**DEBBIE:** (SOMEWHAT FRUSTRATED) But you’ve never done it before. And it’s not a box, Marty. It’s a modern, comfortable tour bus.

**MARTY:** All the same, it’s just a box with frills.

**DEBBIE:** (MORE FRUSTRATED) Oh, Marty, you’re being unreasonable. I’ve heard the association’s trip coordinator is a whiz at putting these excursions together. She’ll provide us with everything we need—bottles of water, fruit, a beautiful room for the night, and tickets to the “Cirque du Soleil” show at the Eldorado.

**MARTY:** I don’t care about some circus salad show.

**DEBBIE:** It's not a circus salad show. I've heard it's sophisticated, funny, and has extraordinary acrobatics. The physical stunts are unbelievable. Margaret told me that when she saw it, two women bent their bodies so they were so small they could both fit into a tiny box. It was awesome.

**MARTY:** We bend our bodies every night so we can fit into our bed with our two German Shepherds. Maybe we should go on stage.

**DEBBIE:** (STILL FRUSTRATED) Marty, you're impossible. What am I going to do with you?

**MARTY:** (SARCASTIC) Almost anything you want to. Just don't make me go on the bus trip.

**DEBBIE:** Well, think about it. You don't have to make your decision now. We have two days until the tickets go on sale. But they do sell out fast, so we'll have to purchase them on Monday.

**MARTY:** (SARCASTIC) Whatever you say, dear. I've got to go to the john.

**DEBBIE:** (NARRATES) Marty got up from the recliner and, without looking back at me, shuffled out of the living room. Frustrated, I stared out the large picture window and watched the leaves on our maple tree plummet to the ground.

Monday arrived faster than I expected. Marty sat at the kitchen table, his face buried in the *Gazette*. I tried to get up the courage to bring up the trip again. Part of me wanted to let it slide. However, Margaret made it sound so exciting, I had to go. And I wasn't going alone. I married Marty for better or . . . and it seemed the or always got the best of me. But I made up my mind, it wouldn't happen this time. (SPEAKS SOFTLY) Marty. Marty, darling, can I talk to you?

**MARTY:** Yeah, but make it quick. I'm reading a really good article on how to win at high stakes poker and I want to get back to it.

**DEBBIE:** But you don't even play poker.

**MARTY:** Hey, we got a casino just over the railroad track. Maybe I'll give it a try. Now what do you want to talk to me about?

**DEBBIE:** (COY) The trip to Reno.

**MARTY:** (ANNOYED) Not that again, Debbie. I thought we had ended that conversation.

**DEBBIE:** But I asked you to think about it.

**MARTY:** And I did. I thought it best not to think about it.

**DEBBIE:** Now come on, be reasonable. I heard Bob and Alice might be going. You like Bob.

**MARTY:** Yeah. So what? But I don't like Alice. She's a nag. Just like you're becoming.

**DEBBIE:** (AGGRAVATED) I've had it with you, Marty. You never want to try anything new. And this could be fun. It's only an overnight trip. Do something for me for once. Won't you?

**MARTY:** (UPSET) Are you saying, I don't do things for you? Don't you remember I went with you to the outdoor "Neil Diamond Tribute Show" three weeks ago?

**DEBBIE:** I thought you wanted to go.

**MARTY:** (RAISES VOICE) I hate Neil Diamond. And the show was so bad we left early. That impersonator didn't sound like Neil Diamond and he had no idea how to interact with the audience.

**DEBBIE:** (CONTRITE) Yes, I agree with you. He was bad, but . . .

**MARTY:** (ANNOYED) But what? And the mosquitos bit me on my arm and neck. I always suffer for you. I've had enough of this. I'm going to the john.

**DEBBIE:** (ANGRY) Marty, that's all you ever do—take a trip to the john. Well, bon voyage, my loving husband. Maybe you'll get some of the crap you've been giving me out of your system.

**MARTY:** (EXASPERATED) Oh, boy. You don't know when to quit, do you?

**DEBBIE:** (NARRATES) Marty dragged himself and his newspaper up from the table and trudged off on his journey to the john. I shook my head in dismay. I walked to the kitchen slider and gazed out upon the beautiful autumn leaves that covered the backyard. The wind whisked them around, like travelers running through a busy airport. Yes, travelers—something I wanted to be. I pictured myself flying with them to a land of dreams. Oh well, back to reality.

**SFX:** PHONE RINGING

**DEBBIE:** Hello.

**SFX:** RECORDED MESSAGE: You have been selected to take a 30-second telephone survey and receive a free cruise to the Bahamas.

**SFX:** SOUND OF BUTTON BEING PRESSED TO DISCONNECT CALL

**DEBBIE:** (NARRATES) I want to get away from it all, but I know when I'm being scammed. I looked at my watch. It's been an hour and no Marty. That's a long time on the potty—even for him. I better go check.

**SFX:** FOOTSTEPS WALKING DOWN HALL TO BATHROOM

**DEBBIE:** (CONCERNED) My God! The doors locked. Marty, Marty. Are you all right in there?

**SFX:** SNORING

**DEBBIE:** Are you asleep on the pot? Answer me, Marty.

**SFX:** BANGING ON THE BATHROOM DOOR

**DEBBIE:** Marty! Marty, wake up!

**MARTY:** Huh? What's all the racket? Can't a guy take a nap in private?

**DEBBIE:** If you've got to sleep, do it in bed. You scared me.

**MARTY:** Well, I didn't mean to. I came in here to think.

**DEBBIE:** About what?

**MARTY:** The trip on the bus.

**DEBBIE:** You needed to do that in the bathroom?

**MARTY:** No, but I had to call Louie.

**DEBBIE:** You did what? You were talking on the toilet?

**MARTY:** Yeah, why are you so surprised? People do it all the time up at the lodge. Sometimes I listen in. It's fascinating.

**DEBBIE:** You do. That's not right.

**MARTY:** Why not? Sometimes I get bored just sitting there. It keeps me awake.

**DEBBIE:** I guess you fell asleep on our pot because you didn't have a conversation to eavesdrop on.

**MARTY:** Hmm, something like that.



**DEBBIE:** (IRRITATED) Something like what? Why do I have to drag everything out of you?

**MARTY:** Huh? . . . Well, after Louie and I talked, I made my decision about the trip. Having resolved the issue relaxed me. My eyes began to droop and I . . .

**DEBBIE:** (JUMPS IN) Aren't you going to tell me how you resolved the issue?

**MARTY:** All right. It seems Louie took the same trip last year. He didn't want to go, but Angie pushed him into it. Told him if he didn't, he'd live to regret it. Since Louie's a bit of a wuss, he went.

**DEBBIE:** So, are you telling me you're also a coward at heart? And we're going to go on the trip?

**MARTY:** Well, no and yes.

**DEBBIE:** No what and yes what? You're confusing me

**MARTY:** No, I'm not a coward, and yes, I'll go on the trip with you.

**DEBBIE:** That's great. But how did Louie change your mind?

**MARTY:** He told me about "Autumn Leaves."

**DEBBIE:** (ENTHUSIASTIC) Oh, I get it. The timing of our trip—the seasonal splendor of the colorful leaves we can see from the bus as we go through Truckee on our way to Reno.

**MARTY:** Not exactly.

**DEBBIE:** Then what? (NARRATES) Marty went silent from behind the bathroom door. I waited and was about to speak when . . .

**MARTY:** Autumn Leaves—the gorgeous stripper in the lounge show after the ‘circus salad show’ ends. She had the biggest boobs he’d ever seen. And when they bounced . . .

**DEBBIE:** (FED UP) Marty, you’re incredible. And that’s not a compliment. Why don’t you stay in the john? Maybe I’ll let you out for dinner. Get a good day’s rest, darling.

**MARTY:** What? I don’t want to stay in here. I have to go up to the clubhouse and purchase the trip tickets.

**DEBBIE:** No you don’t. Autumn Leaves’ assets are no longer falling. And our trip’s been cancelled.

**MF:** “AUTUMN LEAVES,” BY ROGER WILLIAMS - THEN FADES OUT

### **SCENE 7: THIRD INTERLUDE**

**GEORGE:** Well, June, do you know how long Debbie kept Marty locked away in the john?

**JUNE:** Yes, I do. Kathy lives next door to Marty and Debbie. She and Debbie are good friends. I played mahjong with her the week after I found out about this at Bunco. Kathy told me Debbie was so angry, she thought about keeping him in there until dinner. However, she gave in after about a half hour. She got tired of holding the door handle.

**GEORGE:** Did they ever go to Reno?

**JUNE:** Believe it or not, they did. And apparently, Marty loved the “circus salad” show, but never did get to see “Autumn Leaves.”

**GEORGE:** He must’ve felt he had to be nice to Debbie and stay away from the lounge show.

**JUNE:** No way. Kathy told me that's not Marty's style.

**GEORGE:** Then what made him stay away from the strip show?

**JUNE:** Not what, who.

**GEORGE:** Okay, who?

**JUNE:** "Autumn Leaves."

**GEORGE:** Why would she do that? She didn't even know Marty.

**JUNE:** It had nothing to do with Marty. The night before Debbie and Marty arrived on the bus, Autumn eloped with the lounge manager and the Eldorado cancelled the show.

**GEORGE:** Well, that's amazing. I guess things do work out for the best. Okay, what's next? So far, I think you made the right decision by taking the job.

**JUNE:** Well thank you, dear. You're so sweet.

**GEORGE:** Don't get carried away. That's only three of the five and the first one, about us, was fabricated.

**JUNE:** You really don't know when to stop. Do you, George?  
(PAUSE) Don't answer that. (PAUSE) The next story is cute, with an unpredictable ending. A friend of mine from the Writers Club, Audrey, told me about it. It's about her neighbors, Jared and Cassie, and their dog, Goldi. And she's involved . . . sort of.

**GEORGE:** What do you mean, sort of?

**JUNE:** You'll see in the piece I've titled, "Goldilocks And The Three Bares"—that's (EMPHASIZE) B A R E S.

## SCENE 8: GOLDBLOCKS AND THE THREE BARES

**MF:** *"HOW MUCH IS THAT DOGGIE IN THE WINDOW,"* BY PATTI PAGE - THEN FADES OUT

**JARED:** (NARRATES) It was 9:00 pm and I was bushed. I'd worked in the yard for six long hours. I couldn't see straight. I wanted to crawl into bed, close my eyes, and disappear into a world of dreams. But it was too early. So I sat in the huge brown recliner in the living room and drifted off. My eyes drooped and . . .

**CASSIE:** Jared, why is the dog barking?

**JARED:** Huh, I don't know.

**CASSIE:** (GIVES AN ORDER) Well, go find out.

**JARED:** (ANNOYED, YAWNING) Why don't you go? I was almost asleep.

**CASSIE:** (EMPHATIC) If you're going to sleep, go to bed.

**JARED:** (GROANS) It's too early. If I go to bed now, I'll wake up in the middle of the night and lay there staring at the ceiling.

**CASSIE:** Well, you're up now. So go check on the dog.

**JARED:** But I don't hear anymore barking.

**CASSIE:** Guess she stopped. Make sure she's in the house. You know how the neighbors get when she's out in the yard barking.

**JARED:** (ANNOYED) Why is that my job? She's your dog.

**CASSIE:** (EMPHATIC) My dog? She's our dog.

**JARED:** But you're the one who wanted a huge goldendoodle, not me.

**CASSIE:** (SOFT) You love her, don't you?

**JARED:** Yeah, I guess.

**CASSIE:** So make sure she's in the house.

**JARED:** Okay, you win, Cassie. (NARRATES) I brought the chair to an upright position, slid out of it, and plodded to the back door. I opened it and . . . (YELLS) Goldilocks, get your tail in the house. Now!" (NARRATES) I didn't hear her barking. And she has a doggie door. *So I'll just let her come in that way*, I thought. As I began to close the door, she came charging into the house, jumped up, put her paws on my shoulders, and began slobbering all over my face. (YELLS) Down, girl!

**CASSIE:** (SHOUTS) What are you screaming about?

**JARED:** Your dog attacked me.

**CASSIE:** Our dog would never do that. She loves you.

**JARED:** (NARRATES) I decided not to push the issue. It was now past ten and I figured it would be best to close up the house and go to bed. Cassie must have felt the same way, because she joined me in the bedroom. We washed up and got into bed—Cassie on the right side, me on the left, and Goldilocks in the middle. If I wanted to get intimate with a female, it would have to be the dog. I put the pillow around my head and, within seconds, fell asleep. Then my body was being nudged.

**CASSIE:** (CONCERNED) Wake up, Jared. Something's splashing around in the pool.

**JARED:** What? I was fast asleep.

**CASSIE:** You need to check and make sure nothing's wrong.

**JARED:** I'll do it in the morning. It's probably a squirrel or some other creature taking a bath. Just go back to bed.

**CASSIE:** (CONCERNED) But Goldi's not here.

**JARED:** She's probably out in the backyard playing with them.

**CASSIE:** Well, go get her. If she starts barking, she'll wake the neighbors.

**JARED:** Is that all you care about—the neighbors? What about me? I'm bushed.

**CASSIE:** Does everything have to be about you? Can't you ever just do something for me?

**JARED:** (NARRATES) Before I could respond, Goldilocks came barreling into the bedroom and jumped over me onto the bed. (MURMUR) She's back.

**CASSIE:** (SARCASTIC) Don't you think I know that. (EMPHATIC) Good night!

**JARED:** (NARRATES) The next morning, the sun shined through the bedroom window. I rolled over and stared into the warmest eyes I'd ever seen . . . and Goldi gave me a passionate kiss.

**CASSIE:** Don't you have a doctor's appointment this morning, Jared?

**JARED:** Don't you?

**CASSIE:** I asked you first, so answer me.

**JARED:** It's a phone appointment. The doctor's going to call me about eleven. And you?"

**CASSIE:** I don't have to be at mine until noon.

**JARED:** (NARRATES) After my phone conversation with my doctor, I played on my computer. Time seemed to fly by. There were no interruptions. And Goldilocks slept in her bed across from my desk and got up to go pee in the backyard a couple of times. Nothing much to brag about. At 5:15 pm, Cassie entered the house from the garage.

**CASSIE:** (MOANS) What a day I had. Nothing went right.

**JARED:** (ANXIOUS) The doctor's appointment? Did you get bad news? Do I have to notify the kids? Tell me what happened.

**CASSIE:** Don't get all bent out of shape. The doctor's appointment went fine. I stopped at some other places and . . . I've got to get undressed. We'll talk later.

**JARED:** (NARRATES) I started to straighten my desk and file some papers, when Cassie came back into the room. She seemed to be holding something behind her back and had a scowl on her face. (SPEAKS) You don't look good.

**CASSIE:** (ANGRY) Ohhhh, you're so right.

**JARED:** What's wrong? (NARRATES) She stared at me, with daggers in her eyes, and . . .

**CASSIE:** (SCREAMS) You're cheating on me, aren't you!

**JARED:** Cheating on you? Why would I do that?

**CASSIE:** I found this sticking out from under the bed on my side. And it's not mine. So, "Mr. I'm Not Cheating," what do you have to say?

**JARED:** (NARRATES) She held a bra in her hand, waving it back and forth. (SPEAKS) Uh, I've never seen that before.

**CASSIE:** Come on, own up to it, or I'm leaving. I've had it with you.

**JARED:** Cassie, it's not mine. It's too small.

**CASSIE:** That's not funny. Everything's a joke with you. This is our marriage I'm talking about.

**JARED:** I know. But I don't know anything about the bra. (PAUSE, SOFTLY) And I love you.

**CASSIE:** (IGNORING MY REMARK) Then where did it come from?

**JARED:** I have no idea, but we'll figure it out—together. (NARRATES) After dinner, I followed Goldi outside twice. She sniffed and smelled and pooped, nothing more. So I figured, it would be a calm and quiet night. Cassie and I watched TV. Then she headed to the bedroom and I went into the den to check my email. I was about to shut down my computer for the evening, when I heard . . .

**SFX:** DOG BARKS TWICE, THEN LARGE SPLASH OF POOL WATER

**JARED:** (NARRATES) That's weird. I headed toward the back door. Goldilocks, standing by the dog door, inside the house, shook, spewing water throughout the laundry room. Everything was dripping. (SPEAKS) Goldi, calm down! (NARRATES) But she continued to shake. (SPEAKS) Come on, girl, stop! (NARRATES) To my surprise, she held something in her mouth. But, when I started to reach for it, she ran away. To her, it was playtime. I chased her into the living room and she came toward me and dropped it at my feet, expecting me to take it and throw it. I picked it up and almost choked on my saliva. It was a pair of women's panties. Clutching them, I headed to the bedroom, with Goldi following me. Cassie was sitting in bed reading. She looked at me and . . .

**CASSIE:** What are you holding?



**JARED:** (WHISPERS) My girlfriend's panties.

**CASSIE:** (SURPRISED) Your what?

**JARED:** You heard me. (NARRATES) I twirled them around with my index finger.

**CASSIE:** Where did they come from?

**JARED:** The backyard, I guess. I think Goldi jumped in the pool to get them.

**CASSIE:** How did they get into the pool? We haven't used it in months. And they're not mine.

**JARED:** Damned if I know, but I'm going to find out. (NARRATES) I made sure all the doors in the house were locked. I shut off the outside lights, grabbed my supersized flashlight, exited through the garage to the side of the house, and moved down the pathway to the pool, with Goldi following close behind. Then, without warning, Goldilocks bolted ahead of me toward the hot tub. With my flashlight pointed at the tub, I froze. There, to my amazement, sat three naked young women, with Goldi standing outside the tub licking their faces.

**SFX:** (PRERECORDED—CHANTING IN UNISON) "Hi, Mr. Alby, remember us. We're visiting our grandparents next door."

**JARED:** (NARRATES) I gasped, covered my eyes, and hustled toward the house to tell Cassie the true story of "Goldilocks and the Three Bares." But before I could, I saw her standing in front of the back door slider. . .

**CASSIE:** Oh, my God! (LAUGHING) You have three girlfriends.

**MFx:** "HOW MUCH IS THAT DOGGIE IN THE WINDOW," BY PATTI PAGE - THEN FADES OUT

## SCENE 9: FOURTH INTERLUDE

**GEORGE:** You're right. I had no clue how that story was going to end. But I liked it. And I presume the three naked girls were Audrey's granddaughters.

**JUNE:** Yes, they were. (PAUSE) And you liked it? You have no negative comments? Are you feeling all right?

**GEORGE:** Just keep it up June. You really don't know when to stop.

**JUNE:** My God! You're becoming me, George. That's what I say all the time about you.

**GEORGE:** Becoming you? I certainly hope not. So what's the last story about?

**JUNE:** A couple of weeks ago, I was waiting in line at Safeway and I started talking to the woman in front of me. She doesn't live too far from us. I guess she felt comfortable with me and needed to vent to somebody. So after we checked out and put our groceries in our cars, we sat in her car, and she told me a very personal story, which she said I could use. And it's called, "Just Answer My Question."

## SCENE 10: Just Answer My Question

**MFJ:** *“RAINDROPS KEEP FALLING ON MY HEAD,”* BY B.J. THOMAS - THEN FADES OUT

**NARRATOR:** Some questions go unanswered. Although frustrating, even sad, this seems to be part of life, and in particular, love. We get caught up in the daily grind and lose sight of what should be our central focus. Such is the case in the lives of Max and Martha Sleppe.

It had been a long, fall day. With clouds overhead and rain threatening, Max swept the garage floor, gathered up the trash, and dragged a half empty garbage can out to the curb for collection the next day. He then washed his ten-year old Ford Taurus, soapy water flowing down the driveway, although he knew his efforts might be wasted with the possibility of rain on the horizon. He hosed down the mess he created and trudged into the house, dragging his tired, aging body toward the master bedroom.

**MAX:** (MUTTERING TO HIMSELF) I’m so confused. Got this question that’s been hanging around in this tired brain of mine. I’ve got to confront Martha. I have no choice. Oh, there she is.

**NARRATOR:** Martha had just finished making the bed after a day of what seemed like endless household chores and sat motionless, head bent to her chest, on the still ruffled bedspread she had not finished straightening out.

**MARTHA:** (WONDERING ALOUD) Why did I put this bedspread on in the first place? We’ll be going to bed soon.

**NARRATOR:** She heard a rustling noise in the bedroom doorway. With a tired look in her eyes, she lifted her head and gazed at Max, who just stood there in silence.

**MARTHA:** Max, you look like your lost.

**MAX:** (MOANING, HIS BREATHING LABORED) Maybe I am.

**MARTHA:** You're scaring me. What's wrong?

**MAX:** I don't know. Just bothered by the reality of life and my impending death.

**MARTHA:** Death? You're not dying. You just had your annual physical. You're in great shape for a seventy-six year old man.

**MAX:** Well, yeah, but—

**MARTHA:** But what?

**MAX:** Do you love me?

**MARTHA:** How can you ask such a question?

**MAX:** Because, I'm old and I need to know."

**MARTHA:** I'm old too. So what?"

**MAX:** But do you love me?

**MARTHA:** We've been married fifty-six years. Doesn't that mean something? We've raised four wonderful children. John's a doctor. Maura's a lawyer. Chip built a marvelous catering business from the ground up. And Sammy . . . maybe someday he'll realize his dream. But enough about him."

**MAX:** Okay, we have three wonderful children.

**MARTHA:** Three? Don't you mean four?

**MAX:** Guess so—if Sammy ever finds himself.

**MARTHA:** See, we have a great life.

**MAX:** But you haven't answered my question.

**MARTHA:** What question, Max?

**MAX:** Do . . . you . . . love . . . me?

**MARTHA:** We have a beautiful house, where we raised the kids—so many good memories. You have your man cave, where you can have your space. I have my kitchen, where I can putz around all day. We have it so good.

**MAX:** But am I the man you still want to be married to?

**MARTHA:** We're a couple. We watch TV together. We walk the dogs, Sven and Oogie, together. We shop together. Oh, by the way we need to pick up some groceries tomorrow. The grandchildren are coming on Saturday.

**MAX:** Groceries? What does that have to do with the question I asked?

**MARTHA:** Everything. We all have to eat good to stay well. I want to make sure you stay healthy so you can have a long life and take care of me if, heaven forbid, I can't take care of myself. I am seventy-five, you know.

**MAX:** So you just want a caregiver? Is that all I am to you?

**MARTHA:** No, No. You're much more.

**SFX:** BUZZER FROM CLOTHES DRYER

**MAX:** Okay, tell me then. Do you love me?"

**MARTHA:** Did you hear the buzzer on the clothes dryer?

**MAX:** What?

**MARTHA:** The clothes dryer. Did the buzzer go off?

**MAX:** But I asked you a question.

**MARTHA:** And I asked you one.

**MAX:** Is the clothes dryer so important you can't answer my question?"

**MARTHA:** You don't want wrinkled clothes? Do you?

**MAX:** I really don't care. I just want an answer to my question. It's not hard. If you love me, just say it.

**MARTHA:** I will, but first I have to get the clothes out of the dryer.

**MAX:** Answer my question and then you can do whatever you want to do.

**MARTHA:** It's always what you want. I have to drop everything just to please you.

**MAX:** Oh my, how have I put up with you for fifty-six years? Fifty-six exasperating years.

**MARTHA:** Because you love me. Right?

**MAX:** How should I know? I can't even get a simple answer to my question.

**MARTHA:** Well, do you love me?

**MAX:** Huh? I don't know anymore. You drive me to distraction . . . make me crazy. I'm not even sure why I came in here. I'm going to the kitchen to get a coke. I need a good dose of caffeine.

**MARTHA:** But . . . I love you, Max.

**MAX:** Not now Martha, I can't handle this.

**MARTHA:** Do you love me?

**NARRATOR:** Max didn't respond. He turned and trudged down the hallway, leaving Martha sitting on the bed staring off into space confused.

**MARTHA:** (CONFUSED/DISTRAUGHT) What just happened? I want to run after him . . . put my hands around his neck and strangle him. He started this whole thing—not me. . . . (START TO SOB) He does love me. Doesn't he?

**NARRATOR:** At that moment, Max appeared in the doorway. Their eyes met, and he muttered . . .

**MAX:** Yes.

**MF:** *"RAINDROPS KEEP FALLING ON MY HEAD,"* BY B.J. THOMAS - THEN FADES OUT

### **SCENE 11: CLOSING**

**GEORGE:** Wow! I liked that one. (PAUSE, THEN SOFT AND SWEET) By the way, June, "Do you love me?"

**JUNE:** (SARCASTIC) As long as our license hasn't expired, I'm yours, dear.

**GEORGE:** You know, I heard it's one of those forever licenses—follows you into the great beyond.

**JUNE:** George, I don't know if I can handle that. Life license, maybe? Afterlife license, that's a long shot. We'll have to wait until we get there. Let's enjoy our memories while we can and make many more as we grow older. (PAUSE, EMPHATIC) And George, I do love you, with all my heart.

**MF:** *"MEMORIES ARE MADE OF THIS"* BY DEAN MARTIN - THEN FADES OUT