

# **THE BROTHERS LIPSCHITZ**

An Original Play by  
**PAUL-DAVID HALEM**

COPYRIGHTED - SEPT 2010  
CASE # 495738921

## Cast of Characters

JACK: Male age 52. He is bald with a Van Dyke beard and mustache

AL: Male age 50. Looks a lot like Jack

JOY: Attractive woman in her mid 40s

ELAINE: Very attractive woman in her early 40s

**BROTHERS LIPSCHITZ IS PERFORMED WITHOUT INTERMISSION**

**ACT I SCENE I**

*(Lights up on a suburban living room. There is a hallway entrance SR that leads to the bedrooms. A front door is UC. A dining area is set with a small table and four chairs SR with a buffet and a sofa with coffee table and one club chair is SC (Jack in a white dress shirt enters from the hallway SR. He goes to the sofa and begins to look under the pillows. He finds his wrinkled necktie and holds it up to the light).*

JACK

Unfrigginbelievable! *(Shouts down the hallway)* Al if you're going to wear my good silk ties you could at least hang them up!

*(Al enters from the hallway. For the first time we see they are both bald with beards. Al is wearing jeans and a white tee shirt.*

AL

*(Looking at the tie)* Oh that doesn't look too good. You might want to wear something else. I personally prefer a more casual look.

JACK

If you like the casual look, why were you wearing my tie?

AL

I didn't wear it as a tie. I used it as a belt. I thought it gave me a daring devil-may-care look. You should try it.

JACK

*(He puts the tie around Al neck)* Enjoy. You know when I agreed to buy this place with you it didn't occur to me that you're still 15 years old. Do me a favor and leave my stuff alone. Okay?

AL

*(Collapses on sofa)* No prob bro.

4.

JACK

No prob bro? Who are you? Al you've got a Ph D in 19<sup>th</sup> Century History, and you sound like a bad sitcom from the 80's.

AL

Actually all the sitcoms from the 80's were bad. The good ones were in the 70's. All in the Family, Mary Tyler Moore, Barney Miller. Now those were funny. They had a edginess you just didn't get in the 80s.

JACK

You got a point there bro. Okay so what's the plan for today? Are you going to get some writing done? *(He walks to the buffet and begins to pour cereal into a bowls while he talks)*. You've been sitting around here for months without getting anything done. You've got to snap out of it and start working. *(Jack returns from the kitchen holding two bowls of cereal. He hands one to Al as he sits down in the club chair)*. Have some fiber. Maybe that will get your creative juices flowing.

AL

*(Taking the offered bowl)* Should get something flowing.

JACK

Please I'm eating here. Eat your assorted nuts and grains.

*(They both are looking directly out at the audience as they chew their cereal in unison)*. This must be healthy. It taste like straw.

AL

Actually it tastes like something you wouldn't want described while you're eating it. *(Rises and takes both bowls back to the buffet)* How about I go out and get us some jelly donuts or even better chocolate croissants? Now that's the breakfast of champions. At least French Champions.

JACK

As good as that sounds, I am really trying to get my cholesterol down.

AL

*(Shaking the cereal box)* What's the point? With our genetics, we're good for another 30 years. I'd rather eat chocolate croissants and only make it another 29.

5.

JACK

You might have a point. What if I got hit by a bus and this crap was the last thing I ate? Al, there's something I want to talk to you about.

AL

This sounds serious. What did I mess up now? Before you get mad, I'm really sorry about jamming your electric razor.

JACK

What about my electric razor?

AL

*(His head bobs up and down)* Did I say razor? I meant to say...

JACK

Al forget about it. You are the world's worst liar. Your head begins to bob up and down every time you lie.

AL

*(Head still bobbing)* I don't know what you're talking..*(realizes he is bobbing his head and touches the top of it to stop)* Is this why you always win when we play poker?

JACK

*(Bobbing his head)* You think? Now lets stop screwing around I have something important I want to discuss.

AL

I'm all ears. Isn't that a strange expression. I mean when you want to smell something, you don't say I'm all nose. *(He grabs a pad and pencil from the side table and begins to make a note)* I really must look up the derivation of that expression.

JACK

Are you done yet?

AL

*(Looking up from his pad)* Sure go ahead. You have both my ears.

6.

JACK

Thank you. Al, I love you. After all, you're my brother. Maybe because you're my brother I'm willing to overlook certain things you do. But lately you have pushed the envelope. *(Al begins to make a note)* Stop with the notes. I'm talking here. That's what I'm trying to say. You have no attention span at all. I can't get you to focus on anything.

AL

Did you remember to buy more ice cream?

JACK

*(Jack stands up and walks behind sofa)*

Bingo! Just what I'm trying to talk to you about. I'm trying to discuss an important problem in our relationship and you're thinking about ice cream.

AL

You're right. I'll get the ice cream when I pick up the chocolate croissants.

JACK

WILL YOU PLEASE STOP WITH THE CHOCOLATE CROISSANTS!

AL

Oh I'm sorry. I thought you liked them.

JACK

I do like them. That's not the point. How can someone with a 175 I.Q. be so scattered?

AL

I'm sorry Jack. I just get bored easily.

JACK

Great. Now I'm boring? *(Jack sits next to Al on sofa)*

AL

*(Bobbing his head)* You're not boring.

JACK

Okay Al, here's what I've been trying to bore you with. You have to do something with your life. You have to meet people. Interact. You've been holed up in this house for eight months. You haven't gotten any writing done. You lay on this sofa all day. It's not healthy. I'm worried about you. I hope this isn't boring you too much!

7.

AL

No Jack. It doesn't bore me. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to imply that you bore me all the time. Just occasionally. Most of the time you're quite interesting. *(He realizes he's about to bob his head and holds it still)*

JACK

Wonderful. So this is what I suggest. We are going to have a date.

AL

You want to date me?

JACK

Not me. I've arranged for two ladies to come here tomorrow night for dinner. Joy is a librarian I've been getting friendly with the past few months. She has a sister Elaine. I haven't met her, but Joy tells me she is very attractive. And here is the great part. She teaches ninth grade history.

AL

You didn't tell her I have a Pulitzer did you?

JACK

Of course not. This is a date. Not a book signing. I just want you to interact with someone besides me. Just promise me that you'll make an effort to listen to them. Women really don't like it when you don't focus on them. They're funny that way.

AL

Relax, Jack. I can be charming. Hell, I've been married three times. Just ask all of my wives how charming I am.

JACK

You might not want to offer your exes as references.

AL

They all send me birthday cards, don't they? They wouldn't do that if they didn't like me. I'm very likeable.

JACK

Then how come you've been married three times?

AL

Four seemed excessive?

8.

JACK

Okay...moving on. Do you think the Lipschitz brothers can have a normal evening with two nice women?

AL

Sure. I like women and I like food. Do you want me to cook? I could make my special *coq au vin*? And for dessert we could have..

JACK

*(Bad French accent)* But of course. Chocolate croissants.

**FADE OUT**

## ACT I SCENE II

*(Most of the stage is blacked out for the scene change. Joy and Elaine are talking to each other on the phone. Joy is DR and Elaine is DL)*

JOY

Hi Elaine it's Joy.

ELAINE

Hi Joy. What are you up to?

JOY

We've got a date for tomorrow night. We're going for dinner at Jack Lipschitz's house with his brother. I think his name is Al

ELAINE

I don't know Joy if I'm ready for this. Who are these guys?

JOY

Jack is a fellow I met at work. He seems very nice. I haven't met his brother. Come on Elaine what's the difference. You've got to get back onto the horse sometime.

ELAINE

I just don't know if I'm ready yet.

JOY

It's been two years. You got dumped. Snap out of it already!



9.

ELAINE

I know. I know. It's just hard being vulnerable.

JOY

Don't worry about being vulnerable. I've got a little game for us to play. This time we're in control. I promise. Come on Elaine you owe me. I can't do this by myself.

ELAINE

*(Take a deep breath)* Okay. I'm in. Pick me up on the way there.

JOY

I'll see you at 6:30. Be ready for the ride of your life.

### ACT I SCENE III

*(The next evening. The table is nicely set with china and wine glasses.)*

AL

*(Al enters from the bedroom hallway SR. He is wearing a loud Hawaiian shirt).* Jack I'm going to open the wine and let it breathe a bit. What time are they supposed to get here? *(He opens the wine on the table)*

JACK

*(Enters from the hallway SR wearing an even louder Hawaiian shirt).* I told them to come around seven

AL

What time is it now?

JACK

6:42 and 35 seconds

AL

Nice shirt..

JACK

You think? It's not too much, is it?

AL

No, not at all. I think we look rather festive. You want some of this wine?

10.

JACK

Sure. Why not? Maybe it will get my nerves under control. I don't know why women always make me so nervous. They're just people like us.

AL

Believe me when I tell you, they are nothing like us. Take it from an expert. Women are a lot tougher than they look. If I had the choice of going one on one with a charging rogue elephant or a pissed off woman, I'd choose Dumbo on steroids every time.

JACK

Then why do you keep marrying them?

AL

Short term memory loss. I just never seem to remember the problems. The fact is women can make your life so great and so miserable. Usually not at the same time. It's like going to a horror movie. You're scared to death, but you can't stop watching.

JACK

*(Taking a large drink of wine)* So that's why I never married. I'm sure some people have marriages where they don't fight and are always happy to be with each other?

AL

"Father Knows Best" with Robert Young or "Leave It To Beaver".

JACK

I don't mean old TV shows.

AL

Actually, you do. *(Door bell rings)*.

*(Jack goes to the door to greet the women. The two women enter and come into the living room. They are both very attractive and nicely dressed. They both hand Jack their coats which he hands on the rack by the front door).*

JACK

Right on time. I guess my directions were okay.

JOY

Actually my car has a GPS so your directions were totally useless. Jack, this is my sister Elaine.

11.

JACK

Oh, how nice to meet you. And this is my brother Al.

AL

*(Comes towards them)* It is really nice to meet both of you. Come on in and have a glass of wine. *(They take a seat on the sofa and Al pours them each a glass of wine.)*

ELAINE

Did we miss the memo on the dress code?

JACK

Oh no there's no dress code. We just felt that a little Hawaiian atmosphere would get you loosened up. I mean..

AL

*(Quickly interrupts Jack)* A toast. ALOHA!

JOY

Doesn't that mean goodbye?

JACK

*(Jack tries to sit between them on the sofa, but Al beats him to it. He then sits on the club chair)*

Actually, it means both hello and goodbye.

AL

It's kind of like Shalom in Hawaiian.

ELAINE

Are you two boys Jews?

AL

What gave us away?

ELAINE

I don't know. You just seemed so cultured.

AL

It must be the shirts. So Elaine, Jack tells me you teach history. What is your favorite period?

12.

ELAINE

The 19<sup>th</sup> Century has always interested me the most.

JACK

No kidding. You know Al...

AL

Prefers to contemplate the present rather than get tied down in the past. And Joy, I understand you met Jack at the Library. Was he talking too loud and you had to reprimand him?

JOY

You are a real card Al. No Jack is always very well behaved. Although I have the feeling you are a bad boy.

AL

Want to spank me? *(They all laugh just a little)*

JOY

*(Seriously)* Yes I would like to do that very much. *(She rises and her sister rises too and sweetly says)* Where is your powder room?

JACK

Just down the hallway. Third door on the left. *(They both exit)* What's going on? I told you I'm with Joy and you're with Elaine.

AL

Sorry I wasn't trying to cut in. I was just trying to be friendly. Jack, do they seem a little off?

JACK

We're both standing here in Hawaiian shirts in February, and you think they're off.

AL

I just get the feeling that Joy could be a dominatrix. You know a woman who likes to dominate men.

13.

JACK

I have no idea what you are talking about. Would you please just pull it together and pay attention to Elaine. Just for once, I need you to focus. *(The women re enter and Jack notices them)* Ladies there you are. You know dinner is ready why don't we take our seats. *(Jack pulls out Elaine's chair and sits next to her. Joy pulls out Al's chair and stands behind it until he nervously sits. She then sits next to Al)* So ladies you're in for a treat. My brother is an excellent chef. *(He removes the top of the casserole dish)* Voila! Coq Vin a la Al.

ELAINE

That's chicken isn't it?

AL

Why, yes. It is, in fact, very drunken chicken.

JOY

Oh, I'm terribly sorry. I thought you knew Jack. We're vegans.

JACK

Vegans? That's like a vegetarian.

ELAINE

Very strict vegetarians. We don't eat anything with a face.

AL

Well, I assure you this chicken no longer has a face.

JOY

Nonetheless, we are very strict in our belief not to eat any food that came from a living being.

AL

*(Puts the cover back onto the casserole)* You know what they say. Always save room for dessert and eat it first. *(He removes the casserole to the kitchen and returns with a plate of chocolate croissants)*. Here we go. Fortunately, I didn't bake gingerbread men.

JOY

*(They all take a croissant and begin to eat)* I'm really sorry you went to so much trouble to cook for us. I thought I had mentioned we're vegans.

14.

JACK

Don't worry about it. I just hope you won't be hungry. We could order a plain pizza if you like.

ELAINE

*(Holding up her croissant)* Oh these will be just fine. I would like a little more of this really nice wine.

AL

*(In a French accent)* But of course, mademoiselle. *(He pours more wine)*  
So Elaine how long have you been a teacher?

ELAINE

This is my 11<sup>th</sup> year. It seems longer though. The kids can really wear you down. Sometimes I would like to put them in irons.

AL

*(Looking at Jack)* Like in the inquisition?

ELAINE

I suppose so. Not that I would actually torture a student. Just a little day dreaming.

AL

And Joy you work at the main library. I was in there last year and I was surprised all the card catalogs were gone. I had to get someone to help me find a book on a computer. I know it's probably old fashioned of me, but I kind of miss the old index cards. I just don't completely trust computers.

JOY

If you have trust issues Al, I can recommend a really good book. It shows you how to put yourself in someone else's control and still manage to relax.

JACK

Actually, Al sometimes can be too trusting. I on the other hand am a bit of a skeptic. That's why I'm so good at what I do. *(Looks at the sofa area)* You know since we're just have desert why don't we be a bit more comfortable. *(They all rise and cross to the living room area.)*

JOY

You know I don't think you've ever told me exactly what it is you do. In fact, I don't know much about you at all.

15.

JACK

I do counseling. *(He beats Al to the sofa and sits between the women).* Mostly I specialize in Couples Counseling.

JOY

But you're not married. Are you divorced?

JACK

No. In fact I've never been married.

ELAINE

But how could you be a Couples Counselor if you've never been a couple?

JACK

You're not the first person to ask me that question. Let me put it this way I've never driven a race car in the Indy 500, but I can drive a car.

ELAINE

Is that really the same thing? Relationships can be very painful. Don't you think you should experience some real pain?

AL

*(Nervously)* Actually Jack is very good at helping couples deal with their problems. I've found him to be very helpful.

ELAINE

You're married?

AL

Not at the moment.

ELAINE

How long were you married.

AL

Which time?

ELAINE

Which time? How many times have you been married?

AL

Three. But that's not Jack's fault. His counseling was outstanding.

16.

JOY

You've been married three times and Jack was your Marriage Counselor?

AL

Actually he was only involved in the last two.

ELAINE

This is really very interesting. I've never met anyone who's been married three times. Don't you have any sense of history? What do you do?

AL

Actually I'm what you might call an Historian.

ELAINE

You're Alan Lipschitz the historian?

AL

Guilty.

ELAINE

I read your book. It was fascinating. You drew these wonderful comparisons showing how history kept repeating itself.

AL

Ironic isn't it?

JACK

Actually all of Al's wives still like him. In fact, they all still send him birthday cards.

JOY

That's really very...unusual. How do you explain that all of these women obviously still care about you? What's your secret for such success?

AL

Well you know what they say - clothes make the man.

JOY

No, Al. I'm serious. I broke up with a long term relationship, and when it was over I wanted him to die. Not just die. I wanted him to painfully disintegrate. I wanted his hands and feet and nose to just fall off onto the floor.



17.

AL

You wanted him to get leprosy? That's.... different.

JACK

Would anyone like some more dessert?

ELAINE

No, I think we're fine. So Jack do you ever counsel people who have gone through a bad breakup?

JACK

Sometimes. I try to specialize in keeping people together, but some relationships are just doomed from the start.

JOY

Really? How can you tell if a relationship is doomed at the beginning.

JACK

Well you know every case is different..

JOY

I'm serious! I really want to know what you've found could doom a relationship.

ELAINE

Me too. This could be very helpful. Al, wouldn't you like to know if your marriages were doomed from the start? Look at all the sorrow you could have avoided.

AL

The fact is even if I had known it was doomed, I would still have done it.

JOY

You're a romantic. Come on admit it.

AL

Hopeless, in fact.

ELAINE

Come on Jack. Give it to us straight. We're women and we want to know what would doom a relationship from the very start?

18.

JACK

Okay. The biggest one I hear all the time is that they got together because opposites attract.

JOY

Don't they?

JACK

When opposites attract they have absolutely nothing to talk about. Opposites attracting is the mantra of the truly clueless.

JOY

Oh, I don't agree. I've been attracted to men that were completely opposite from me.

JACK

I assume that is the future Leprosy patient

JOY

Point taken.

ELAINE

Are you boys up for a game?

JACK

I like games. I think we have Monopoly or Clue.

ELAINE

NO. I've got a different kind of game in mind. Have you ever played Lie and Die?

JACK

I don't think I've got that one. Al, do we have Lie and Die?

ELAINE

You don't need a game board. I'll tell you the rules. Just be aware that the rules are very strict. You really don't want to break the rules.

AL

*(Somewhat nervous)* I've never been much for rules. I've always been more of a fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants kind of guy.

JACK

Actually, I like rules. The stricter the better!

19.

ELAINE

I could tell you were a straight arrow kind of guy. You'll probably beat us all bloody. So here is how the game is played. We'll all get to ask each of us a question. If we can prove that you are lying, then I get to punish you.

JACK

What if you lie?

ELAINE

Then you get to punish me. Is that fair?

AL

*(Uncomfortable)* What kind of punishment?

JOY

*(Takes a gun out of her bag and points it at his head)* You die.

**BLACK OUT**

#### ACT I SCENE IV

*(Lights up on the very disheveled living room. Al is sprawled face down on the floor. Jack is awkwardly lying on the sofa. At first we are not sure if they are dead or asleep.)*

JACK

*(Slowly begins to move and manages to sit up. He then notices Al on the floor. He runs to Al).*

My God! Al are you okay? *(He turns him over onto his back)* Al wake up! What have I done?

AL

*(Begins to stir and then rises up on one elbow).* How did I get on the floor?

JACK

Oh thank God you're alive.

AL

*(He sits up)* It would appear so. The girls did leave didn't they?

JACK

I don't know. I just woke up on the sofa and found you on the floor. I don't really remember too much about last night.

20.

AL

*(Sits in club chair)* You don't remember that I lied?

JACK

You lied! How could you? They had a gun. They said they would shoot you if you lied.

AL

You know me and rules. Just couldn't resist seeing if they really meant it.

JACK

*(Crosses around sofa and stands by arm)*  
Well since your alive, I guess they didn't.

AL

No. They meant it alright. Joy pointed the gun right at my head. Then something truly extraordinary happened. You threw yourself between me and the gun-toting librarian. She pulled the trigger and you fainted on the spot. We were really all impressed with your selfless heroism. You were ready to die for me. I was amazed. I've never been so proud of you.

JACK

*(Dazed as he remembers)*  
But she pulled the trigger. Didn't she?

AL

She pulled it alright. Fortunately, the gun jammed. They were really disappointed. I then suggested it might be good to call it an evening. Elaine gave me her phone number and said she was looking forward to another "game night". After they left I put you on the sofa. I then proceeded to polish off two bottles of a really good Cabernet which would explain how I wound up on the floor.

JACK

*(Sits on sofa)*  
It's coming back now.

AL

Are you okay? You still look a little pale.

JACK

I could have died. I'm starving. I need a chocolate croissant! *(He grabs a croissant from the tray on the coffee table)*

21.

AL

Don't you want some cholesterol- lowering cereal?

JACK

I will never eat that crap again. From now on its high fat and high cholesterol all the way. I am never going to do anything I don't want to do. From now on I will never wear a tie again!

AL

Never wear a tie. Now don't get all crazy on me.

JACK

*(Crosses to Al)* I'm not kidding around Al. I've had an epiphany. Today is the first day of a new life. I've always been the reliable one. From now on you can be the responsible brother. I quit! *(He takes a bite of of he croissant and exits).*

AL

*(He goes around the room picking things up).* Jack are you alright? Listen I'm sorry if I upset you. I didn't mean too. I really appreciate you saving my life..or at least trying to. *(He goes UR and calls down the hallway).* Jack are you alright? Okay I'll leave you alone. *(He goes to the sofa and plops down)*

JACK

*(Enters wearing his shirt out and a tie wrapped around his waiste).* I'm off.

AL

*(Looking at him somewhat incredulously).* Off to work I see. Nice look. Were you trying for homeless beach bum or Pirates of the Caribbean?

JACK

Just for once you could be supportive of me. I've always backed you up. Even when others thought you were a bit odd.

AL

Well, thank you. But that wasn't really necessary. I am a bit odd. That's who I am. You on the other hand have never been even the tiniest bit odd. You are the most un-odd person I know.

22.

JACK

Why is that? Why do I have to be so normal? You get the woman. You get the accolades. You always seem to have fun. I want to have fun too. Damn it. I want to be odd! Just for once I don't want to be the older reliable brother. I want you to worry about me for a change. Can you do that?

AL

I can do that. I think I'll get some writing done today. You have a good day at work.

*(Jack exits and Al picks up his pad and pencil and starts to write. The door suddenly opens and Jack enters).*

That was fast. Did you forget something?

JACK

I wanted to clear something up. I wanted to tell you I'm sorry.

AL

For what?

JACK

I was pretty hard on you. Its not your fault that I'm a..

AL

Square peg?

JACK

Not quite. I was thinking more of a..

AL

Up tight anal retentive.

JACK

That's probably closer. The point I'm trying to make is we're brothers no matter what our make up happens to be. I've just never been comfortable in my own skin. You always seem right at home. I just wish I could be like you. That's all.

AL

Jack I don't want you to be like me. I like you the way you are. Granted you can be a little..

23.

JACK

Tight assed?

AL

Yes. But not in bad way. I know you care about me. When you jumped between me and the psycho librarian I was amazed. You didn't think twice. You just did it. When she pointed that gun I just froze. I couldn't move. It was as if every limb on my body weighed a thousand pounds.

JACK

I can't believe she pulled the trigger. What's this world coming to when a librarian and a school teacher are..

AL

Psycho killer bitches.

JACK

No. I was thinking more like..

AL

Homicidal heroines.

JACK

Not exactly. But good alliteration. They really were strange. I half expected them to come out of the bathroom dressed in black leather.

AL

Now that would have been interesting. You know I've been thinking. Other than the fact they tried to kill us we did have an interesting evening.

JACK

Are you ready for round two? How about another date?

AL

Yes. But on our terms.

JACK

No Hawaiian shirts.

AL

Definitely. And no food with faces.

24.  
JACK

What exactly do vegans eat?

AL

Dust. I'll figure something out. Now go put on a tie and go to work.  
I have to plan a night to remember.

**Fade Out**

**ACT I SCENE V**

*(The setting is Jack's counseling office. There is a sofa and club chair. A screen behind the sofa has his diploma and certificates)  
Lighting is blacked out in all areas except the actual office. Jack is sitting in the chair and writing in a pad when there is a knock on his door. He looks at his pad).*

JACK

Come in Ms Davidson.

*(Elaine enters and Jack looks up from his pad. He is surprised and scared as he rises).* Elaine what are you doing here?

ELAINE

*(Smiling)* Didn't your Service tell you they scheduled a new client? *(She looks around and sits on the sofa).* Your office is a little small. Is that by plan? Do you want people to think they can't escape?

JACK

*(Reading a note from his pad)* I have a Ms Davidson at 11 o'clock.

ELAINE

*(She raises her hand)* Present.

JACK

You tried to shoot me, and now you want to be my client?

ELAINE

I obviously have some issues to work out.

JACK

Are you nuts?

ELAINE

*(Pleasantly)* You tell me.



25.

JACK

This is very inappropriate. I can't treat you. We've had a personal relationship. Albeit a short lived personal relationship. None the less, it is not ethical for me to treat you. I'm going to have to ask you to leave.

ELAINE

That's not really accurate. You had a personal relationship with my sister Joy. You only had chocolate croissants with me. The fact is I find you really interesting. I've been unable to stop thinking about you. You're a counselor and I obviously need counsel. Why don't we just give it a shot.

JACK

We are not giving anything a shot. *(He begins to write)* I'll be happy to give you a referral, but you'll have to leave now

ELAINE

*(Takes the pistol out of her bag)* I thought you'd like to know I had it fixed. Don't you hate it when a gun jams. It's just so unsatisfying. *(She waves the gun at Jack and motions for him to sit down on the sofa).*

JACK

*(Taking a seat on the sofa)* Are you holding me hostage?

ELAINE

Hostage is such a nasty word. It implies you want to get some kind of ransom for someone. I assure you I have no interest in money. So you're not my hostage. Let's just say you are my unexpected guest. *(She smiles and walks around the back of the sofa. She then rubs the top of his bald head)* I've never touched a bald head before. It's so smooth. You really have a nicely shaped head.

JACK

*(Nervous)* Okay. What now? Are you going to shoot me?

ELAINE

Shoot you? Why would I do that? *(She sits on Jack's desk chair and faces him on the sofa).* Unless you lie to me. You know I really hate it when men lie.

JACK

I'll keep that in mind. Have you actually shot anyone?

26.

ELAINE

Is this conversation privileged? Are you allowed to tell anyone else what I've said?

JACK

I am not allowed to divulge anything you tell me about the past. However, I am required to tell the authorities if I think you are about to do something violent or dangerous to yourself or others. Are you planning to hurt anyone?

ELAINE

*(She talks while waving the gun around)* I guess that would depend.

JACK

Depend on what?

ELAINE

Depend on your definition of hurt. Some people might consider being left at the altar on your wedding day as being hurt. Others might consider being shot in the head as being hurt. *(She mimes shooting the gun)*  
The fact is a shot to the brain is instantaneous. Whereas to be humiliated before all of your friends and family is a pain that could last for a very long time. Don't you agree? *(She sits next to him on the sofa)*

JACK

Well yes there is a difference between physical and emotional pain. I never really thought about that way, but I suppose you have a point.  
A somewhat warped point, but still valid. *(He grabs the gun away from her and then points it at her)*. Put your hands up!

ELAINE

Oh my. Are you going to shoot me?

JACK

I'll do whatever I have to. Now don't move.

ELAINE

*(She looks into his eyes)*.  
You know if you want to shoot someone you really should take the safety off. *(He looks down at the gun and she grabs it back. She then points it at him)*  
It's this little doohickie here. *(She takes the safety off)*. Now be a good boy  
Isn't this comfy? So Jack why don't you tell me about you and your gay brother?

JACK

Al's not gay. Hell he's been married three times!

27.

ELAINE

Well some people might consider that a form of over compensation. Maybe he keeps marrying women so he doesn't have to face who he really is.

JACK

Where did you get your Doctorate in Psychology? Wikipedia?

ELAINE

*(Goes behind the sofa)*

Oooh.. You are a little testy about the subject. Are you gay too?

JACK

What makes you think we're gay?

ELAINE

Matching Hawaiian shirts was a bit of tip off.

JACK

They weren't matching. Al's had a Tuscan yellow background and mine was more soft yellow tones.

ELAINE

Soft yellow and Tuscan yellow tones. You don't think knowing those different hues isn't just a little gay?

JACK

No, I don't. And, quite frankly, our sexual orientation is not any of your business.

ELAINE

*(Leans over the sofa. She rubs the gun against his face. She then gives him a passionate kiss)* Now tell me. Did you enjoy that?

JACK

Elaine, you are a very attractive woman, but I've been dating your sister.

ELAINE

Actually you only had the one date. And I was there too. I wouldn't really consider that a relationship. Anyway Joy seems to like Al.

JACK

Even though you think he's gay?

28.

ELAINE

Well, I think she intends to get him to switch sides.

JACK

Switch sides? This isn't a sporting event. You don't choose to be gay. You are or you aren't.

ELAINE

So you boys are going to stay gay?

JACK

Let me put this in simple words that you can understand. Just because we wore festive shirts and know the difference between soft yellow tones and Tuscan yellow doesn't make us gay.

ELAINE

Okay. Don't get your panties in bunch. I was just curious. That's all. *(She kisses him again)* You really are a good kisser. Is it true that bald men have more testosterone? I like passionate men.

JACK

*(Pulling away from her and rises)* I don't think this is appropriate at all. You said you wanted help. This kind of behavior is just unprofessional.

ELAINE

You're absolutely right. I've been horrid. Please sit in your chair and I'll just get comfy on this lovely sofa. *(Jack sits down on his desk chair and Elaine lounges on the sofa)*. Isn't this better. So much more professional. So Jack. Should I call you Jack or should I call you Doctor Lipschitz?

JACK

Dr Lipschitz would be better. Now Elaine you mentioned something about being left at the alter. Was that about you?

ELAINE

Quite possibly. Maybe that's why I get so mad when men aren't truthful.

JACK

That could be true. Did you have closure with your fiancé?

ELAINE

Closure?

29.

JACK

Did you ever talk? Find out why he backed out at the last minute. Surely you must have been curious.

ELAINE

Curious? No curiosity never enter my mind. I do remember being really pissed off. I can't say I was ever curious.

JACK

Did you ever talk to your former fiancé about your feelings? Did you tell him he had hurt you, and that you were really angry? That's what closure is. You find out why things have happened so you can put them behind you, and get on with your life.

ELAINE

You gay guys are so civilized. I don't want closure. I don't want to put anything behind me and continue on with my life. I enjoy being pissed. I wallow in being pissed. Being really pissed off is my reason to get up in the morning. It gives my life purpose.

JACK

Your purpose in life is to be pissed.? I mean really angry.

ELAINE

And I'm very good at it. How do you feel about angry passionate woman?

JACK

Constantly flirting with your therapist is a form of narcissism. You are using it as way to deflect answering any real questions. So I ask you once and for all why did your fiance dump you?

ELAINE

You're much more dynamic then I imagined. You come across as a quiet straight arrow, and then all of sudden this tiger appears.

JACK

You're doing it again. Focus on my questions. I can't help you if you don't respond honestly. *(Stands up and shouts)* STOP BULL SHITTING ME AND TELL ME THE DAMN TRUTH!

ELAINE

*(She begins to sob)* You don't have to be so mean. I was just playing. *(She puts the gun away)* I didn't even put bullets in it. I just wanted to see you again. I thought it might be fun to be femme fatal.

30.

JACK

So who are you?

ELAINE

I'm a boring 9<sup>th</sup> grade history teacher. My whole life is teacher conferences and preparing lesson plans. *(She gets up)* I didn't mean to upset you. I just wanted you to think I'm interesting. Joy has always been so cool. I just wanted to be not so normal for a change. Can you understand that?

JACK

*(He crosses to her, and holds her)* I think I've got a pretty good idea. We both have dominant siblings that have always had the spot light. Maybe it's time we get our 15 minutes of fame.

ELAINE

How do we do that?

JACK

We're going to play a new game. It's called... Guess Whose Coming to Dinner.

ELAINE

Sounds like fun. How do I play?

JACK

First of all the point of the game. I've been doing all the heavy lifting our entire lives. Al has gotten by on his intellectual gifts. He doesn't do anything, because he knows if he doesn't do it, I'll do it. Does this sound like your relationship with joy?

ELAINE

I guess.

JACK

I would suggest that the two of us team up to give them a real lesson. Are you hungry?

ELAINE

I'm starved!

JACK

How about we discuss this over some lunch. Just one technicality. Would you be so kind as to fire me as your therapist.

31.

ELAINE

You are so fired. (She kisses him)

**FADE OUT**

**ACT I SCENE VI**

*(The living room. Al is lounging on the sofa eating chips when Jack comes through the front door).*

AL

Hi Bro. Have a good day?

JACK

*(Acting really upset).*

A good day? I don't know about good, but definitely different. I had a new patient today. Now normally I wouldn't tell you who that is, but since she tried to kill us, I feel the situation is unique.

AL

*(Quickly sitting up)* You're kidding! Joy?

JACK

No. Elaine.

AL

What happened?

JACK

At first I was very firm with her. I told her it would be unprofessional of me to be her therapist.

AL

Oh boy. How did she take that?

JACK

She took the gun out and informed me she'd had it repaired.

AL

Holy shit!

JACK

Exactly my reaction. She then told me they think you're gay.

32.

AL

Gay? Me? They do know I've been married three times?

JACK

They know. They feel you keep getting married to overcompensate. That it's your way of not dealing with your sexual orientation.

AL

So I guess this means Joy is not interested in me.

JACK

Oh no, quite the contrary. According to Elaine, she thinks she can make a man out of you.

AL

Really? This could be fun. How about we let her try.

JACK

I thought you might be interested in picking up the gauntlet.

AL

So what else happened?

JACK

She pointed the newly repaired gun at me and she..

AL

She what?

JACK

She a..She a... (*Emotionally teary*) She had her way with me.

AL

You're shittin' me! You mean she forced you to..

JACK

She said it was a test of my manhood. I've never been so scared in my life. What if I couldn't perform? Would she just shoot me?

AL

Did you..perform?



33.

JACK

*(He checks over his own body)* No bullet wounds apparently. I will, however, have to get the sofa cleaned.

AL

WOW! Did I get them wrong. I thought Joy was the sexy one.

JACK

Do you think being forced into having to perform by gunpoint is sexy? I was terrified.

AL

Did you call the Police?

JACK

And tell them what? This beautiful woman forced herself on me. They would probably lock me up. No I'm not telling anyone. I am, however, going to get even.

AL

*(Imagining)* At gunpoint?

JACK

Focus, Al.

AL

Oh. I'm sorry. I just can't seem to get the picture out of my mind.

JACK

Al, this isn't funny. I'm serious. No one takes advantage of me and gets away with it. She's going to pay for what she did to me! I'm not some boy toy she can use and then toss away!

AL

I'm sorry Jack. I didn't mean to be insensitive.

JACK

So here's the deal. I've invited the two homophobic, gun-toting psychopaths to dinner tomorrow night.*(He stands)* Are you ready for round two?

AL

*(Big Smile as he rises too)* Ready, willing, and able. This time, they'll see you don't mess with the Lipschitz Brothers. *(They stare with a look of determination as the lights fade).*

**FADE OUT**

34.  
ACT I SCENE VII

*(The next evening. The living room has been decorated with various S and M paraphernalia. A red cloth has been placed over the lamp shade next to the sofa. The dining table is set for dinner. The brothers will be attired in black. The music in the background is "Wild Thing")*

AL

*(Enters from the kitchen UC and carries a casserole dish to the table. Calls to Jack who is offstage).*

Jack I've got the food ready to go. I'm going to let the wine breathe a little. *(He whistles while he opens the wine)* Are you almost ready? They're going to be here anytime now.

JACK

*(Enters wearing black jeans and a black Harley Davidson Tee Shirt)*  
Well what do ya think? Do I have an air of danger about me?

AL

You know they're going to think that's more gay than the Hawaiian shirts.

JACK

What are you talking about? I think I look like a hard ass.

AL

Well, you're half right.

JACK

*(He walks around sofa and sits)*

Very nice way to talk. We'll see what the ladies think. They won't be expecting my new persona.

AL

Persona? Boy, you better watch it with that rough talk.

JACK

Okay, Al. I know you're the cool one, and I'm the straight arrow. Just for tonight I want you back my play. I need this.

AL

Don't worry. Tonight I'm your wing man. So what's the plan? You haven't told me anything. How can I back you if I don't know what you're going to do.

35.

JACK

Al, we've talked about this. Every time you lie, your head bobbles like a dashboard hula dancer. It's better if you don't know. That way you can't blow it.

AL

Can you give me a hint?

JACK

No hints. Just keep on your toes, and follow my lead.

*(Door bell rings. Jack goes to the door. Show time. (He opens the door. The women enter. They are dressed in evening attire).*

JOY

*(Looking at Al and Jack) Oh my. When you said black, I assumed black tie. I hope we're not over dressed. (She throws her coat at Jack and he hangs up both their coats).*

AL

You both look lovely. Come on in and we'll have some wine and cheese. *(They all go to the sitting area and Al serves them wine. Cheese and crackers are already on the table).* We're so glad you decided to come. I know the last time was a bit... different.

ELAINE

We wouldn't miss an evening with the Lipschitz Brothers. Jack..I mean Dr. Lipschitz it's so nice to see you again.

JACK

No formality here. Just call me Jack. *(Raises his glass) A toast. (They all raise their glasses ).* May you live in interesting times.

JOY

Isn't that an old Chinese curse?

JACK

Son of a gun. You can't pull anything on a librarian. You are absolutely correct! *(They all start to take a sip as Elaine nervously looks back and forth between Jack and Joy. She then gulps her wine down in one swallow.*

ELAINE

*(Choking a bit)* I think I need a refill.

36.

AL

Why of course. *(He refills hers wine glass).*

JACK

So ladies have you done anything interesting since we saw you last?

JOY

Like what?

JACK

Shoot anyone lately?

ELAINE

Oh don't be silly. We don't just go and shoot anyone. We have standards.

JACK

Standards? Joy what exactly are your standard?

JOY

My standards are very exacting. I reward good behavior and I punish bad behavior. I never leave any doubts as to my feeling about anything. People know if they act badly they will be treated harshly. Very harshly. Good for good and bad for bad. Do you think you can live up to my standards?

AL

Well, to be frank, you're being a bit vague.

JOY

In what way?

AL

It depends I suppose on what you consider to be good behavior and bad behavior. After all, one man's good might be another man's bad. It's all rather subjective. Have you written down rules?

JOY

Not exactly.

AL

I can remember some time back there was a book two single women wrote about dating rules. Men had to meet a certain standard for them to date them. I must admit I'm somewhat confused as to what women are really are looking for in a man.

37.

JACK

You know Joy that seems like a fair question. What exactly are you looking for in a man? What are your expectations?

JOY

*(A little confused by the question).*

Well, I suppose, he would have to be loyal and trustworthy. Always there to comfort me.

JACK

Kind of like a big St Bernard.

ELAINE

Well that's kind of mean. You know what she means. I think every woman expects a certain amount of kindness and attentiveness.

JACK

Or else you shoot them.

JOY

You make it sound like we shoot men all the time.

JACK

Do you?

ELAINE

Of course we don't. That would be really excessive behavior..

AL

Most people would think even shooting one person to be excessive. How many do you consider to be over the top?

JOY

I'll think on it and give you an answer later. *(Rising up)* May we use your powder room?

JACK

Sure. You know where it is. *(They exit down the hallway).*

AL

I'm really confused. Are you trying to pick a fight with Joy? Is that your plan?

38.

JACK

Of course not. I would never pick a fight just for the heck of it. I'm just trying to narrow her options a bit.

AL

Narrow her options. What options?

JACK

To shoot us or not shoot us. I thought that was pretty obvious.

AL

Are you nuts! They fixed the gun. You said so yourself. If they shoot you this time it won't jam!

JACK

Hmmm. I hadn't thought about that.

AL

Well don't you think it might be a good idea to think about that before you narrow her options?

JACK

You make a good point. Oh well. *Que sera sera.*

AL

Listen Doris Day, you better cool it. I don't want to get shot. Now tell me what's your plan? (*The women reenter from the hallway*)

JOY

Plan? You have a plan?

JACK

No, not a plan. Al just wanted to know when I planned on serving dinner. And that would be right now. Come on ladies let's all take our seats. (*They all go to the dining table and sit. This time Joy holds Jack's chair and he smiles at her as he takes his seat. Jack removes the casserole dish cover*) Here we go ladies ratatouille - a vegan's delight. Bon Appetito.

ELAINE

Mmmm. Smells delicious.

AL

Jack has been busy in the kitchen all afternoon. I must say it does smell good.

39.

JOY

I hope so. I could eat a horse or its vegetable equivalent.

JACK

Well, we have plenty. Be sure to leave some room for dessert. Al has been baking.

JOY

You bake Al? Most men can't cook at all. You both seem so accomplished in the kitchen.

JACK

Well you know most of the world's great chefs are men. We're not chefs, but we're pretty good cooks. Both our parents worked so we learned to fend for ourselves. One of the advantages of being latch key kids.

ELAINE

Did you have a good childhood?

AL

I had a great childhood. Jack, on the other hand, was always worried about something.

JACK

That's true. Al did what ever he wanted to do and I worried how to tell my parents how something he did almost burned down the house.

AL

Guilty as charged. Jack has always been the responsible older brother. In some ways, I took an almost perverse pleasure in watching him deal with each new catastrophe.

ELAINE

You know this is really interesting. My sister and I were home alone a lot too. Even though she was the older sister I was the one who usually got blamed for things.

JOY

You know Al some of us are just more adept at side stepping life's problems. This is really very good ratatouille.

JACK

*(Standing up)* ENOUGH IS ENOUGH! *(He grabs Joy's bag from the floor next to her and pulls out the gun).* You two think it's so cute the way you tortured us our whole lives. Well it's time to pay the piper.

40.

ELAINE

*(Gets up and comes to Jack's side)* What are we going to do?

JACK

I would think that's obvious. We're going to shoot these selfish bastards!

## **BLACK OUT**

### **ACT I SCENE VIII**

*(Al and Joy lying on the sofa. At first we are not sure if they are asleep or dead. Several empty bottles of wine and wine glasses are on the coffee table.)*

ELAINE

*(Enters from Hallway wearing Jack's Hawaiian shirt as a night shirt)*  
*(In a very good mood)* Rise and shine sleepy heads!

AL

*(Al and Joy begin to come awake and stiffly move)* Please tell me I'm dead.

JOY

*(Moving painfully)* Only if this is Hell.

ELAINE

I'm starving. How about I make pancakes?

JOY

*(With an obvious bad taste in her mouth)* I don't think I'm up for that.  
*(She rises and heads for the hallway bathroom).*

AL

*(Looking at Elaine for the first time)* You look very... festive. Where's Jack?

ELAINE

Oh that sleepy head is still dead to the world. So would you like a nice big breakfast?

AL

No. I think I don't think I'm up for that. So you and Jack...?



41.

ELAINE

Jack is the sweetest man. I can't begin to tell you how wonderful he is. He's just so sexy!

AL

Sexy? Jack?  
How much did you drink last night?

ELAINE

Actually you and Joy did the bulk of the drinking. I don't think I ever saw Joy that wasted.

AL

It seems whenever we have dinner with you two I wake up the next day with an awful hangover. You have a painful effect on me. The fact is I'm a little foggy on what happened last night. I remember we were all having dinner. Then for some weird reason Jack lost it and pulled a gun on me.

ELAINE

And Joy too. He pulled the gun on you and Joy. He was very macho.

AL

Sexy and macho. Two words I've never used in the same sentence with my brother.

ELAINE

Maybe you're just too close to see how charismatic Jack really is.

AL

Sexy, macho, and charismatic. The list keeps growing.

ELAINE

Oh, don't be silly. Surely you must know you have a truly remarkable brother.

AL

Jack is a good guy. He can be a little stiff and insecure, but he's never threatened to shoot me. Why did he do that?

ELAINE

It was a test. We both wanted to see how you and Joy would react if we did something that wasn't normal. Just for once, we wanted to be the ones that did whatever we wanted without concern for the consequences. We wanted to be free for the first time in our lives.

42.

AL

Threatening to shoot Joy and me made you both free?

ELAINE

And sexy, macho, and charismatic.

AL

Shit. I don't know what to say to that. I am honestly at a loss for words.

JOY

*(Re enters from the hallway. She looks a bit better)* Okay, Elaine. Why don't you find your clothes and I'll drop you off. I've got to get ready for work.

ELAINE

*(Resigned and almost childlike)* Okay. I guess. *(She goes down the hallway).*

AL

I've just had the strangest conversation with your sister. Is she all there?

JOY

Elaine has always been a little different. Last night was very different. I've never seen her like that before. Your brother, on the other hand, is a raving lunatic!

AL

Hold on a second! My brother is not a lunatic. He is sexy, macho, and charismatic.

JOY

Who the hell are you talking about? I've been talking to Jack at the library for three months and he never struck me as being anything other than a shy and insecure little man. That's why I chose him.

AL

You chose him? For what?

JOY

I thought it would be fun to mess with someone. Let them think that their life was out of control. See if I could shake them up a bit. I didn't think he would turn into a complete nut case, and take my little sister along with him.

AL

Well maybe you just underestimated the Lipschitz Brothers!

JOY

*(She goes over to him and gives him a passionate kiss)* Maybe I did.

43.

ELAINE

*(Re-enters from the hallway)* Okay. Are you ready to go?

JOY

Just saying goodbye. *(She bends over to get her shoes and Al admires her rear. When she stands up she notices he is oggling her and she pushed him down on the sofa)* It's been an interesting night. We must do it again.

AL

*(Struggles to stand up)* Yes. Sometime soon. *(The women exit and he excitedly paces around the room)*

*(To himself)* Holy shit! What have we gotten ourselves into?

JACK

*(Entering from the hallway. He is dressed for work.)* Are you going to say the Oliver Hardy Line?

AL

What line?

JACK

“This is another fine kettle of fish you've gotten us into”.

AL

*(Sits on sofa)*

O yeah. Laurel and Hardy. I haven't thought about them in years. God they were funny. Hardy running the show and Laurel always at fault.

JACK

*(Sit on chair)* Has a familiar ring to it.

AL

Are you saying that last night was my fault? I didn't even know what your plan was. You wouldn't tell me.

JACK

No. You didn't do anything wrong. In fact, you were perfect. You played your part better than I could have dreamed. When I pulled the gun on you two and said I was going to shoot you I thought you would wet your pants.

AL

That wasn't acting.

44.

JACK

I know. That's why I didn't tell you the plan. Your reactions couldn't have been planned. Al you gave an Academy Award performance. I was mesmerized by your total fear.

AL

I wasn't acting. You scared the hell out of me!

JACK

Thank you. I'll take that as a compliment.

AL

What compliment? Maybe Joy is right.

JACK

Joy? What did she say?

AL

She said you're a lunatic. I defended you, but maybe she's right. I think you stepped through the looking glass.

JACK

Thank you Al. This gets better and better. If I was able to get a reaction out of Joy like that, I was even more successful than I had imagined. *(He looks at Al and shakes his head)* You don't look very good. *(He rises and goes to the buffet picks up a bottle of wine)* How about a bit hair of the dog that bit you?

AL

I have a really bad headache. I'm going to cut out drinking wine. From now on it's fruit juice.

JACK

Wine is fruit juice.

AL

You've got a point there. You know what just happened? Joy just gave me a lip smacking kiss.

JACK

Really? Did you like it?

AL

*(Smiling)* Yeah. It was a damn good kiss. She's a little scary, but I must say she's pretty sexy.

45

JACK

So do you want to see them again?

AL

I don't know. She's sexy, but there's something not right about her. She just told me she chose you to mess with your mind.

JACK

Interesting?

AL

Interesting? Not the word I would have chosen. I think she could be dangerous.

JACK

You know, Al. You are a genius when it comes to 19<sup>th</sup> Century History. I am, however, really good at messing with people's minds. Hell, I do it for a living.

AL

You're a couples counselor. How is that messing with people's minds?

JACK

Convincing some of the couples I deal with that they should give it another try takes a lot of messing. Let's just say I know how to turn the tables. So what do you say? Do you want to play another game? Are you ready for Round Three?

AL

Absolutely not! I am tired of playing games. Especially when I don't know what the hell is going on, and you won't tell me!

JACK

I promise in the next round you will be in on it from the beginning.

AL

In on what?

JACK

‘THE REVENGE OF THE LIPSCHITZ BROTHERS’

AL

God help us.

**FADE OUT**

**ACT I SCENE IX**

*(Set is dark except in the middle. Two chairs are set side by side. Elaine and June are sitting on them simulating riding in a car. Joy is driving).*

JOY

*(Upset)* I can't believe you slept with him!

ELAINE

*(Smiling)* We didn't really sleep.

JOY

That's disgusting. Your second date and you put out. I am simply amazed.

ELAINE

*(Still smiling)* Me too. Last night was the best night of my life. I've never been so happy. We fit perfectly. It's as if we had been together for years.

JOY

Well now you have to get unfit. I told you Jack is mine!

ELAINE

*(Upset)* Why? I thought you liked Al.

JOY

Like has nothing to do with it. I have a score to settle with Jack, and I'm going to hurt him. That son of bitch didn't even recognize me. Can you believe that?

ELAINE

What are you talking about?

JOY

When he walked into the library three months ago. He didn't recognize me. He just came right up to my reference desk and asked how he could find a book on dealing with grief. At first I thought he knew me. Then I realized he didn't have a clue that he had been my marriage counselor.

ELAINE

Your marriage counselor? You haven't been married in over ten years. Any way you had a happy marriage. Didn't you?

47.

JOY

I had a great marriage. Ten years ago things weren't so great. We were ready to call it a day. As a last resort, we decided to go to a marriage counselor.

ELAINE

You went to Jack?

JOY

You really are a little slow on the uptake. Yes we went to Dr. Jack Lipschitz. *(Honking horn)* GET OFF THE ROAD YOU IDIOT!

ELAINE

YEAH WHAT SHE SAID. Didn't he do a good job?

JOY

He did a great job. That's the whole point. He brought us back together. We fell in love all over again. Then eight months later Eric died of a heart attack.

ELAINE

So you're mad at Jack for doing a good job.

JOY

That's right. I am mad at Dr. Jack Lipschitz for doing such a good job. We were ready to move on with our lives. Seeing him was supposed to be a good faith effort to prove we had done our best. Then he started to ask us questions. He pried into our minds. Made us face the fact that we really still loved each other. We fought him. Believe me when I say we both fought him. But that son of bitch wouldn't give up. He kept pushing us and prodding us until he won.

ELAINE

Well that sounds good. At least to me.

JOY

You know the old saying be careful for what you wish for? Well good old Dr. Jack had a wish for us. He wished we would fall in love all over again. That we would find that spark we had lost.

ELAINE

Well that sounds like a nice wish.

JOY

You would think so wouldn't you? So eight months later when Eric dropped dead instead of being a somewhat sad former wife I became a hopelessly depressed widow. He messed with my life and I will never forgive him for that.

48.

ELAINE

Has anyone ever told you that you have a strange way of looking at things?

JOY

Never. Now you will do what I tell you to do. You agreed to pretend to be my little sister. You owe me and now it's time to pay. I've stood by you and helped you deal with your messed up life for five years. Now its your turn to back me up. Are you going to stand up and be counted?

ELAINE

I don't like it, but I gave you my word and I'll keep it.

JOY

*(Honking Horn)* LEARN TO DRIVE YOU JERK!

**FADE OUT**

**ACT I SCENE X**

*(The living room later that day. Al is sitting at the dining table working on his laptop. He has numerous books spread on the table. The door bell rings).*

AL

*(Gets up and goes to the door).* I'm coming.

ELAINE

*(Enters through the door)* Hi Al. I hope you don't mind me dropping by without calling first.

AL

*(Surprised)* Elaine what are doing here? I mean I don't mind at all. Come in?

ELAINE

*(Comes in and begins to pace D.C.)* I really am sorry for barging in like this. You must think I'm some kind of a nut case. Believe me when I tell you I am a good person. I never meant to hurt anyone. Do you believe me?

AL

*(Moving to her).* I don't think you're nut case. Come in. Sit down and we'll talk. I've reached an impasse in my writing anyway.

ELAINE

*(Looks at his papers on the table)* Oh I'm sorry. I didn't mean to interrupt your work. I'll come back another time.  
*(He leads her to the sofa).*



49.

AL

Don't be silly. Now you are obviously upset about something. What's the problem?

ELAINE

I'm afraid that Joy is going to hurt Jack.

AL

What makes you think that?

ELAINE

She said she was going to hurt him.

AL

Why would she hurt him? Jack didn't do anything to her.

ELAINE

Unfortunately he did. It seems Jack about ten years ago was Joy's marriage counselor.

AL

He was? He never mentioned it. But then again he is very careful about patient confidentiality.

ELAINE

It's not that. Jack doesn't remember she was a patient.

AL

I find that hard to imagine. Your sister is pretty unforgettable.

ELAINE

That's another thing. Joy's not really my actual sister. She asked me to pretend to be her sister. I met her about five years ago at a Womens' Book Reading Club she started at the library. We hit it off, and she kind of became like a big sister. She's been there for me through some hard times, and I owe her for standing by me. But we're not actual sisters.

AL

"Curiouser and Curiouser". Sooo Elaine Let me get this straight. Your sister, who is not your sister, plans to hurt my brother who, by the way, is my brother. Do I have that right?

ELAINE

I know it sounds bizarre. But I had no idea things would get so crazy.

50.

AL

Bizarre? Yeah, that's a good word for it. Why exactly does she have it in for Jack? Did he screw up her marriage? Take it from someone whose been through the process. By the time you get to a marriage counselor, it's usually a done deal. A counselor can only do just so much.

ELAINE

Actually, Jack did a really good job. That's the problem. He saved their marriage. Unfortunately, eight months later her husband died of a heart attack.

AL

She blames Jack for her husband dying of a heart attack?

ELAINE

No, not that. She blames him for making them fall in love again only for her husband to die and leave her a desolate widow.

AL

Well that doesn't seem very rational.

ELAINE

Exactly! That's why I'm here. I think Joy has stepped off the deep end of the pool. I am really scared she is going to actually hurt Jack. I don't want that to happen. I like Jack. (*Earnestly*) I like Jack a lot.

AL

I know. He's sexy, macho, and charismatic.

ELAINE

Exactly! I came here today because I don't know what to do. I thought about telling Jack, but I was afraid he would think I was exaggerating.

AL

Actually the big problem is that Joy was a patient. Jack is real strict about things like that. He would never take advantage of his position in her current condition. He would think it was unprofessional. If you told him, he would probably refuse to protect himself.

ELAINE

I was afraid you would say that. So what do we do?

AL

What did Joy tell you to do next?

51.

ELAINE

She said I had to drop Jack, and make a play for you.

AL

*(Smiling)* Interesting. I think we can work with that. That is - if you're game.

ELAINE

I'll do whatever I have to. What do you want me to do?

AL

Good question. We'll think of something.

**FADE OUT**

### ACT I SCENE XI

*(Outside street. Jack in his overcoat is pacing impatiently)*

JACK

Good, you're here. I've been on pins and needles. *(Joy enters)* Come on in.

JOY

*(Gives him an affectionate rub on his cheek)* How are you today Dr. Jack?

JACK

*(He kisses her on the cheek).* I'm in a remarkably good mood. How is everything going? *(She sits on sofa and he sits on his chair)*

JOY

Everything is going as planned. I gave Elaine her marching orders. I dropped her off at her apartment, and then waited for her to leave. Then I followed her.

JACK

I assume she went running to Al.

JOY

Damn, Jack you take all the fun out of everything! Yeah, she went running to Al. I told her that hokey story that you were my marriage counselor and that you saved my marriage only for my husband to die on me eight months later. Where did you come up with that one?

JACK

I think it was on Days of our Lives.

52.

JOY

Well, she bought it hook line and sinker.

JACK

And you acted irrationally?

JOY

Just like you taught me.

JACK

Good. You show a real talent for being a paranoid sociopath.

JOY

Thank you dear.

JACK

I assume Elaine was sufficiently freaked that you planned on hurting me. I just hope that Al buys it.

JOY

I hope he does too. What do we do now? What's your plan?

JACK

Plan? I've never really had a real plan. I'm just going with the flow.

JOY

How can you do that? You must have an idea what to do next.

JACK

Not really. I'll just see what Al has in mind. He'll assume that since he thinks you were a former patient I wouldn't help. That means I am flying blind. Seeing what he does next should be great fun. Listen, we both agreed that Al needed to get his life moving and start writing again and that Elaine had to finally let go of the past and start dating again. So far I think we're doing a great job. When I left for work today, he was already up and working on his next book. As for Elaine, you can believe me that she seems to really enjoy dating.

JOY

I had no idea you could be so sneaky. Kind of sexy.

JACK

Why thank you Joy. At any rate, things should start get interesting real fast. Are you ready for the next evening at the Lipschitz Brothers?

53.

JOY

I can't wait, do I still have to be a vegan? God I'd have killed for that *coq au vin*. It smelled so good it broke my heart to tell Al I couldn't eat it. Why did I have to do that anyway?

JACK

Just keeping Al a little off balance. He's so used to having things go smoothly it's nice to put an occasional bump in the road. I promise when this is all over I will buy you the thickest Filet Mignons in town.

JOY

You really know how to make a girl's mouth water.

**FADE OUT**

## ACT I SCENE XII

*(The living room early evening. Al is stretched out on the sofa when Jack enters through the front door).*

JACK

I'M HOME HONEY.

AL

*(Rising up)* Very funny. Could you keep it down. My head hasn't quite recovered yet. I must have fallen asleep. What time is it?

JACK

Let's see. Six thirty five. What's for dinner?

AL

Whatever you're cooking.

JACK

Is it so hard to ask that after a hard day at the office you have a hot meal on the table?

AL

*(Getting up)* I'm sorry. Did I sleep through our wedding ceremony.

JACK

What did you do all day?

54.

ELAINE

*(Enters from the Bedroom hallway. She is now wearing Al's Hawaiian shirt)*  
Oh, hi Jack. Did you have a good day? *(Before he can answer she goes up to Al and kisses him)*. We've had the most interesting discussion about the Industrial Revolution. Did you know that the first car was actually invented in France?

JACK

*(Looks back and forth between the two of them)* Un-be-lievable..

ELAINE

No it's true. Al why don't you tell Jack all about it.

JACK

*(A little pissed)* Yeah Al. Why don't you tell Jack all about it.

AL

You know my head is feeling better. How about I get us all a glass of wine?

JACK

No that's alright. I'm cutting back. I think I'll just change into something more..*(looking at Elaine)* comfortable. *(He exits down the Hallway)*.

AL

*(Goes to the Hallway to make sure Jack is out of ear shot)* Okay. That went well. Do you think he bought it?

ELAINE

You mean about us messing around or that we talked all afternoon about the Industrial Revolution?

AL

My brother is a little pissed. I think he'll stay out of our way for the time being. Did you get a hold of Joy?

ELAINE

I sure did. I told her we were spending another fun filled evening with the Lipschitz Brothers and she couldn't **wait** to get here. I hope she doesn't bring the gun.

AL

She still has it?

ELAINE

She usually does. That doesn't change your plans does it?

55.

AL

I don't know. I'll have to think this one through a little. Have you actually seen her shoot anyone?

ELAINE

Not yet. Of course, now it has been repaired...

AL

Nice to know. Why don't you change out of my Hawaiian shirt?

ELAINE

*(She smiles and begins to unbutton the shirt)* Okay.

AL

*(He runs to her and stops the unbuttoning)*. Not here! Go into my bedroom and get dressed. Do you think you can do that?

ELAINE

Don't be silly. Of course I can do that. *(She gives him a kiss on the cheek and exits up the Hallway)*.

AL

*(To Himself)* And they wonder why school scores are declining. *(The door bell rings and Al goes to open it. Joy rushes in)*. Hi Joy. You made fast time.

JOY

*(Rushed and excited)* I came directly from work. I didn't want to miss a moment of this evening.

AL

*(Reaching for her purse)* I can put that away for you.

JOY

*(Pulling it back)* No thank you. I like to keep it near. You never know when you'll need something. *(Looking around)* Where's Elaine?

AL

She's just freshening up. May I get you a glass of wine?

JOY

Sounds good. Do you have any white. Red wine seems to give me a headache.

AL

*(Crossing to the dining table he pours her some wine)* Coming right up. So Joy I don't know a lot about you. Have you ever been married?

56.

JOY

Yes a long time ago. It didn't last.

AL

Well as you heard I know how that goes. (*Pointing to himself*) Three time loser.

JOY

(*Sitting down on the sofa*) I'm surprised Jack couldn't be more helpful. He looks very competent.

AL

Jack is great. Believe me he did everything he could. Sometimes things aren't meant to be. You just have to move on with your life.

JOY

Provided you can do that. Sometimes you have to deal with things in order to move on.

AL

Things? What kind of things?

JOY

Unresolved things. (*Sipping the wine*) Hmm. This is a really good wine.

AL

Glad you like it. Jack joined a wine club. They send us two new bottles each month.

JOY

They just send them? You don't get to choose?

AL

No they just send them. Every month is a new surprise.

JOY

I've never liked surprises.

JACK

(*Enters from the Hallway*) Hello Joy. Such a nice surprise to see you again so soon.  
(*Walks up to the sofa*) Shoot anyone today?

JOY

(*Seriously*) Not yet.



57.

JACK

Not to worry. The evening is still young.

JOY

*(Rising up)* I think I'll freshen up too. I came right from work. *(She exits down the Hallway).*

AL

*(Whispering)* Are you nuts? Why do you keep taunting her like that? Do you want her to shoot you?

JACK

Of course not. Sometimes, however, it is smart to acknowledge the elephant in the room.

AL

What are you talking about?

JACK

I assume that Joy has a gun in her purse. I've just let her know I am very much aware of it. Now she knows she can't shock me if she pulls it out.

AL

That's true. She can't shock you. She can, however, shoot you.

JACK

True. But at least I won't be surprised.

AL

Good I'm so happy for you. I wouldn't want you to die of surprise. What's with you? Are you completely nuts? I just don't understand why you keep baiting her. She obviously is..

JACK

a little light in her loafers.

AL

Close enough. A little light in the loafers. I would appreciate it if you would take it down a notch. Let's not push her. If, however, she makes any sudden moves for her purse...jump her!

58.

JACK

Al you've got to calm down. And talking about calming down. What are you doing with Elaine? I thought you were going for Joy. If she shoots anyone it should be you. Why would she shoot me?

ELAINE

*(Entering from the Hallway)* Because she's nuts! *(She goes up to him)*. Listen we don't have much time. I told Al the truth that I'm not really Joy's sister. I also told him that you were her marriage counselor ten years ago. You saved her marriage, and then a short time later her husband dropped dead. She blames you for her depression. She says because of you she fell back in love with her husband and then he died on her.

JACK

You're not her sister?

AL

Focus Jack. She wants you dead. She told me she needed to take care of things before she could move on. You're the thing!

JACK

This is all really amazing. I don't even remember having a patient dying of a heart attack. I do remember about ten years ago a husband dying in a hunting accident. It was a very sad situation. His wife accidentally shot him.

JOY

*(Enters from the Hallway holding her gun)*. Hunting can be very dangerous.

ELAINE

Oh my goodness!

JOY

Goodness has nothing to do with it. Gentlemen do you happen to have any rope? *(She walks up to Jack and fondles his tie)* This will do. Use this and tie up my little sister.

JACK

*(Removes his tie and binds June's hands behind her back)* Is this really necessary? Surely we can talk this out. After all we're all civilized people.

59.

JOY

Being civilized is terribly overrated. Now you two let's take a walk down the hallway.

AL

I'm not going anywhere with you. Go ahead and shoot me. There's two of us, and you can't shoot us both at the same time. One of us will get you.

JOY

That's true. So I'll just shoot Jack first.

AL

*(He jumps between Jack and Joy holding the gun).* Shoot me. Don't hurt Jack.

JACK

That's very nice of you bro. I'm really touched.

AL

Well you did it for me so I figure I'd..

JOY

How about this. If you both don't walk down the hallway I simply shoot Elaine instead. Are you ready to sacrifice her? *(Al and Jack look at each other as though they are considering it)*

AL

Well what do you think?

JACK

She's kind of nice but..

*(Elaine begins to cry)*

*(Al and Jack look at each other and shake their heads with resignation).* You win. Let's get this over with now. *(Al and Jack walk down the hallway with Joy following them pointing the gun).*

ELAINE

*(Crying)* Please Joy don't hurt them.

*(Two gunshots are heard from the Hallway)*

JOY

*(Re enters from the Hallway in a great mood).* I'm so hungry I could eat a horse. How about I buy you a big dinner?

60.

ELAINE

*(As Joy unties her)* Aren't you going to shoot me too?

JOY

Why would I do that? You've done a great job! You said your life was boring and you wanted excitement. Are you still bored?

ELAINE

No. In fact I've never felt so alive. Is that terrible? I should feel horrible for those two nice men. I liked them both, and now there.

JOY

Not alive. Yes I know. You have a little survivor's guilt. You'll get over it. The important thing is you'll have a completely new outlook on life. How about we get a nice juicy steak? There's nothing like a bloody steak to make your life feel like it is worth living!

ELAINE

I thought you were a Vegan.

JOY

Of course you did! *(They get up and exit out the front door).*

*(After a few moments Jack and Al re enter from the Hallway and cautiously look around the place to see if they are alone).*

AL

Looks like the coast is clear. Boy that Joy is really a cool one. She had me convinced she was going to actually shoot us. You could have told me what was going on. I know you think I can't keep a secret, but you scared the hell out of me!

JACK

Feel like your creative juices are ready to flow? Are you ready to get off of this damn sofa and start writing again?

AL

Actually I do. I think I'm ready to passionately delve into Grover Cleveland's first administration.

61.  
JACK

*(Jack sits on the sofa)*

Well that's a start. If anyone can get passionate about Grover Cleveland it's you.

Boy I'm really hungry. Is there anything to eat in this place? *(Al holds up the cereal*

*box)* You've got to be kidding. *(Al then holds up a bottle of wine)* Sure why not?

*(Jack stands and moves completely DC and looks straight forward as if he is looking out of the front window).* Looks like it's going to snow. Any plans for the weekend.

AL

*(Al hands Jack a glass of wine)*

Thought it might be fun if we invited a couple of women over for dinner. I could make my famous coq vin, and for dessert...

AL and JACK

But, of course, chocolate croissants.

*They clink their wine glasses as the lights fade.*

**BLACK OUT**

**The End**

### **SUGGESTED MUSIC**

Intro to Act I/Scene 1	1. He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother, by the Hollies
Intro to Act I/Scene 2	2. Girls Just Wanna Have Fun, By Cyndi Lauper
Intro to Act I/ Scene 3	3. Live and Let Die, by Paul McCartney and Wings
Intro to Act I/ Scene 4	4. Smoke on the Water, by Deep Purple
Intro To Act I/ Scene 5	5. Jumpin Jack Flash, by The Rolling Stones
Intro to Act I/ Scene 6	6. I Can't Get No Satisfaction, by The Rolling Stones
Intro To Act I/Scene 7	7. Wild Thing by the Troggs
Lead in the intermission	8. Hey Joe, by Jimi Hendrx
Intro Act II/Scene I	9. You Were On My Mind, by We Five
Intro Act II/ Scene 2	10. Crazy for You, by Heart.
Intro Act II/Scene 3	11. Frankenstein/ by The Edgar Winter Group
Intro Act II/ Scene 4	12. Walk This Way, by Arrowsmith
Intro Act II/ Scene 5	13. Innagadavida, by The Iron Butterfly
Curtain Call	13. He Ain't Heavy, by the Hollies



