

since her last pregnancy she's had a problem." Then I offered to pay for the cleaning of the carpet.

DORIS. Did that help?

GEORGE. They said it wasn't necessary. They had a maid. You think this is funny?

DORIS. I've been meaning to tell you for a long time—I just love Helen.

GEORGE. Would she come off any worse if I told you I lost the account?

DORIS. George, when did you get so *stuffy*?

GEORGE. Stuffy? Am I stuffy is I don't like my wife to urinate on my client's carpets?

DORIS. I didn't mean just that but—well—look at you. I mean—you scream Establishment.

GEORGE. I am not a faddist!

DORIS. What do you mean?

GEORGE. I'm not going to be like those middle aged idiots with bell bottom trousers and Prince Valiant haircuts who go around yelling "Ciao!"

DORIS. I wasn't just talking about *fashion*. I was talking about your attitudes.

GEORGE. My attitudes are the same as they always were. I haven't changed.

DORIS. Yes, you have. You used to be green and insecure and a terrible liar and—human. Now you seem so sure of yourself.

GEORGE. That's the last thing I am.

DORIS. Oh?

GEORGE. I picked up one of Helen's magazines the other day and there was this article telling women what quality of orgasms they should have. It was called "The Big O." You know what really got to me? This was a magazine my mother used to buy for its fruit cake recipes.

DORIS. The times they are a changing, darling.

GEORGE. Too fast, too fast. Twenty, thirty years ago we had standards—maybe they were black and white but they were standards. Today—it's so confusing.



DORIS. Are you serious?

GEORGE. Yes, I'm serious. Wipe the sons of bitches off the face of the earth!

DORIS. I don't know anything about you. What kind of a man are you?

GEORGE. Right now—very frustrated.

DORIS. All this time I thought I was going to bed with a Liberal Democrat. You told me you worked for Stevenson.

GEORGE. That was years ago.

DORIS. What changed you? What happened to you?

GEORGE. I grew up.

DORIS. Yeah, well as far as I'm concerned you didn't turn out too well.

GEORGE. Let's forget it, huh?

DORIS. Forget it? How can I forget it? I mean being stuffy and—and old fashioned is one thing but being a Fascist is another.

GEORGE. I am not a Fascist!

DORIS. You're advocating mass murder!

GEORGE. Doris—drop it, okay! Just—drop it!

DORIS. You stand for everything I'm against!

GEORGE. Then maybe you're against the wrong things!

DORIS. You used to believe in the same things I do.

GEORGE. I changed!

DORIS. Why?

GEORGE. Because Michael was killed!

DORIS. Oh, my God. How?

GEORGE. He was trying to get a wounded man onto a Red Cross helicopter and a sniper killed him.

DORIS. When?

GEORGE. We heard at a July 4th party. Helen went completely to pieces. I didn't feel a thing. I thought I was in shock and it would hit me later. It never did. The only thing I've been able to feel is blind anger. I didn't shed a tear. Isn't that something? He was my son, I loved him but—for the life of me—I can't seem to cry over him. Doris, I'm sorry about—everything.



Lately I've been a bit on edge and— It just seems to be one—damn thing—after . . . (He starts to sob and they embrace as.)

## THE CURTAIN FALLS

## END ACT TWO, SCENE 1

## ACT TWO

## SCENE 2

THE TIME: A day in February, 1970.

THE PLACE: The Same.

AT RISE: DORIS and GEORGE are sitting up in bed. She is doing a cross-word puzzle. He is reading the sports section of a newspaper. After a few moments, they put down their papers and look at each other.

DORIS. It's amazing how good it can be after twenty years, isn't it?

GEORGE. Honey, if you add up all the times we've actually made it together we're still on our honeymoon.

DORIS. Did I tell you I'm a grandmother?

GEORGE. No but I think you picked a weird time to announce it. Anyway, you're the youngest looking grandmother I've ever had a peak experience with.

DORIS. (She crosses to dressing table.) My mother thanks you, my father thanks you, my hairdresser thanks you and my plastic surgeon thanks you. (She sits at dresser, peers into mirror, starts to brush hair and apply make-up.) When Harry says "You're not the girl I married" he doesn't know how right he is.

GEORGE. Didn't Harry like your old nose?



ACT II

DORIS. Oh, it's not such a bad state. The word's been given a bad reputation by the young. (*She looks around.*) Where's your luggage? Still in the car?

GEORGE. I didn't bring any. I can't stay, Doris.

DORIS. Why?

GEORGE. Look, I have so much to say and a short time to say it, so I'd better start. First of all, Helen's known about us for ten years.

DORIS. When did you find that out?

GEORGE. Two months ago.

DORIS. She never confronted you with it before?

GEORGE. No.

DORIS. What made her tell you now?

GEORGE. She didn't. We have a very close friend, Connie—have I mentioned her before? Connie told me. Ten years and she never even hinted that she knew. That may be the nicest story I've ever told about her.

DORIS. Your wife's an amazing woman.

GEORGE. She passed away, Doris. I lost her six months ago. It was all—very fast. I'm sorry to blurt it out like that. I just couldn't think of a—a graceful way to tell you. You okay, honey?

DORIS. It's so strange. I never met Helen and I feel as if I've just lost my best friend. It's—crazy. Are the kids okay?

GEORGE. They'll survive. I don't think I could have gotten through the whole thing without them.

DORIS. I just wish you'd tried to reach me.

GEORGE. I did. That's when I found out you'd sold the stores. I called and they gave me your home number. I let the phone ring four times, then I hung up. But it made me feel better knowing you were there if I needed you.

DORIS. I wish you'd spoken to me.

GEORGE. I didn't want to intrude. I didn't feel I had the right.

DORIS. My God, that's terrible. We should have been together.

GEORGE. I've been thinking about us a lot lately.