
OH, BROTHER!!

A comedy in two acts

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OH, BROTHER!!

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FIVE ACTORS REQUIRED:

2 male 35-45, 2 female 25-30, 1 female 40-45

CHARACTER NAME	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	AGE	GENDER
CHARLIE	Mark's introverted brother on his 40th birthday without girlfriend	35-55	Male
ROSE	Birthday cake singer	25-30	Female
MARK	Charlie's extrovert, womanizing brother	43	Male
JANICE	Mark's wife	40	Female
LINDA	One of Mark's girlfriends	30	Female
MAY	A plastic sex doll	1	Female
MATILDA	A plastic sex doll	1	Female
SEAN	Charlie's friend (V.O. phone, Mark does voice with Texas accent)		
CHARLIE'S MOM	(V.O. phone, Linda does Mom's voice)		

FIVE ACTORS REQUIRED:

2 male 35-45, 2 female 25-30, 1 female 40-45

Sean talks with Texan accent. Sean and Mark can be same actor. Linda and Mom can be one actor.

SETTING – A living room.

Act One, Scene One

Place: Charlie's living room

Time: Morning

D.R. is the front entrance door with a window and coat hall tree.

D.C. is a sofa with throw cushions and end tables, one with a phone.

On the U.C. wall is a doorway into the kitchen and one into the bedroom. A bar with a radio is on the U.C. wall.

D.L. is a parrot in a cage by the name of JANEIE.

The living room is partially decorated with birthday decorations. There is a box of balloons on the floor.

CHARLIE (40) staggers out from the bedroom, half asleep and in nerdy pajamas, collapses on the sofa.

JANEIE *(loud, shrill parrot voice)* Janeie wants a cracker.

Charlie struggles up, pulls the remnants of a cracker from his pajama pocket, eats half and gives the rest to Janie.

CHARLIE Charlie is a cracker.

Charlie staggers to the sofa and collapses.

The phone RINGS three times. The answering machine answers it in Charlie's voice.

(V.O. the phone) I'm either out, not inclined to answer, or, thank God, dead. A message would be a waste of breath.

A short dial tone sound then the answering machine clicks off.

CHARLIE Janeie my love, my only love, smart people don't leave messages for the dead. Peace! We've finally got a little peace.

JANEIE *(loud, shrill parrot voice)* A little peace! A little peace! A little peace! A little peace!

CHARLIE Ahaaaa!

Charlie covers his ears with cushions.

The phone RINGS three times. He removes cushions.

The answering machine answers in Charlie's voice.

CHARLIE *(V.O. the phone)* I'm either out, not inclined to answer, or, thank God, dead. A message would be a waste of breath.

MOM *(V.O. the phone)* Charlie, it's Mom. Son, I think you might be depressed. Listen. I want you to come over for supper tonight. You need to forget about Miranda.

Charlie goes to the phone.

Jennifer, you remember Jennifer from Kenny's wedding six maybe eight years ago.

Charlie is about to pick it up, stops.

Well, Jennifer has a wonderful daughter I want you to meet. She's been through a tough divorce. I thought you two might hit it off.

A woeful head throwback from Charlie.

She's got a good job in a lawyer's office. So, Charlie, call me back.

Charlie moves to the sofa and plops board-like onto it.

I need to know how many ribs to get out of the freezer. I know ribs are your favorite.

Charlie panics, falls off sofa, speed walks on his knees to the phone, picks it up.

CHARLIE Hi Mom. *(pause)* Yes, I know. *(pause)* Mom! Okay. *(pause)* I'm sure *(pause)* I'm sure Jennifer's daughter is a nice girl, and your intentions are good but . . . I can't come to dinner. *(pause)* No, I'm not sick, don't have a doctor's appointment. I'm putting up decorations for tomorrow night. *(pause)* Good. Okay Mom, I understand. Bye.

Charlie hangs up the phone, knee walks back to the sofa and plops onto it. The phone RINGS three times. The answering machine answers it in Charlie's voice.

CHARLIE *(V.O. the phone)* I'm either out, not inclined to answer, or, thank God, dead. A message would be a waste of breath.

SEAN *(V.O. phone, Texan accent)* So, Chuckie, you're dead?

Charlie moves to the phone, pushes the speaker button on the phone.

CHARLIE Dead inside. Hi Sean. I thought you'd forgotten me. It's been quite a while.

Charlie climbs the ladder and strings decorations, possibly balloons.

SEAN *(V.O.)* I'm on the other side of the world.

CHARLIE Sean, it's not a good time. I'm living with a bad case of insomnia, need to audit a set of books and am required to put up my own party decorations.

SEAN *(V.O.)* Chuck, I'm callin' from South Africa to wish you an early happy birthday.

CHARLIE I've always wanted to see Africa.

SEAN *(V.O.)* Quick tour. Lethal jungle. Lethal animals. Lethal heat.

CHARLIE That's a lot of lethal. Why go there?

SEAN *(V.O.)* Women! Dangerous women.

CHARLIE Bad drivers?

SEAN *(V.O.)* No, too hot to handle. I've had my heart broken twice in three weeks.

CHARLIE I've been vaccinated for that. Got a giant shot of reality.

SEAN (V.O.) So, Chuckie buddy, how are you enjoying married life?

CHARLIE It didn't take.

SEAN (V.O.) A month ago you were in your tuxedo, on your way to the church to marry Miranda. You said it was the happiest day of your life.

CHARLIE I'm still a bachelor.

SEAN (V.O.) You said never happier, remember?

CHARLIE That was then!

SEAN (V.O.) Okay. Okay. What happened?

CHARLIE Sean, I don't think . . .

SEAN (V.O.) Chuck, you're my best friend. I need to know.

Charlie stops decorating.

CHARLIE Okay. Well, I'm standing at the front of the church with brother Mark, my semi-best man, waiting for Miranda to waltz down the aisle and the music is playing and . . .

Charlie's voice breaks, pauses, emotional.

SEAN (V.O.) And?

CHARLIE I turned, saw Miranda, all white and red roses, inching her way down the aisle with a couple of bridesmaids behind. I smiled. She smiled. Then it happened.

SEAN (V.O.) Earthquake? Tornado? Tsunami? What?

CHARLIE I, I, I sneezed.

SEAN (V.O.) Your big sneeze?

CHARLIE Biggest ever. Then, right after, a half dozen aftershocks.

SEAN (V.O.) So?

CHARLIE She turned, mowed down both bridesmaids, and ran screaming out of the church.

SEAN (V.O.) Could be Mysophobia, the fear of germs. Afraid you'll infect her.

CHARLIE No. It was a message from God!

SEAN (V.O.) God's talking to you?

CHARLIE Not me! Her! Miranda's message! Afterward she called, said she wasn't sure about marriage, so asked God for a sign. My sneeze was God telling her not to marry me.

SEAN (V.O.) You're not going to spend your birthday alone?

CHARLIE No, the family's coming over to celebrate my wasted years living alone.

SEAN (V.O.) There's a lot of 'em.

CHARLIE Forty long, wasted years.

SEAN (V.O.) No. Your family.

CHARLIE Oh, that. Two brothers and two sisters. All fully married, turning out both brands of kids.

SEAN (V.O.) Right. You're the smart one.

CHARLIE How's that?

SEAN (V.O.) You're not settling for second best.

CHARLIE Who woulda thought she'd have a sneeze thing? If we could'a discussed it. I'd have been okay with therapy.

SEAN Sneeze therapy?

CHARLIE She wouldn't have to attend. No, I'd be there for both of us, like husbands who attend AA meetings for their wives.

SEAN (V.O.) Sneeze-aholics Anonymous?

CHARLIE That would have worked. I know it.

SEAN (V.O.) I can't talk longer, or it'll cost me another arm and leg. Look at it this way -- finding Miss Wrong

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brings you a step closer to finding Miss Right. Maybe your sneeze was God telling you not to marry her. Take care Chuckie pal. See you in a month or two.

CHARLIE Okay Sean. See you then.

Charlie goes to the phone, hangs it up.

LIGHTS OUT.

End of Act One, Scene One.

Act One, Scene Two

Place: Same living room

Time: Night

Janie the parrot and cage are gone.

THE BACKGROUND SOUND OF A BUS DRIVING ON THE STREET FOR AS LONG AS THE SPOTLIGHT IS ON.

A SPOTLIGHT D.L. ON:

ROSE (23-25), attractive, in low cut white blouse and short white skirt (could be a cheer leader) sits on the chair, acts as though she's being jostled on a bus.

Her cell phone rings. She answers it.

ROSE *(loud over bus noise)* Ron, I'm on the bus, on my way there. *(pause)* What this time? *(pause)* Another teen party? *(pause)* A 40-year-old's birthday? I'm singing to a senior citizen! I can't sink any lower. *(pause)* No, I didn't see the message. I'll sing what I always . . . *(pause)* His brother wrote the message? *(pause)* Okay send it. *(pause)* Look Ron, the bus is crowded *(pause)* Okay. I should have it. Hang on.

Rose hits buttons on the phone, is horrified by what she reads. She hits a few more buttons, talks into phone.

I can't pop out of his birthday cake and sing that. It's rude, obscene. *(pause)* Alright, alright, alright! I'll slip in the side door and wait for the cake to arrive. *(pause)* Okay, okay. Listen! I'll give you a call after. *(pockets the phone)* I've bottomed out!

SPOTLIGHT OUT:

THE BACKGROUND SOUND OF A BUS DRIVING ON THE STREET ENDS.

Rose and the chair leave the stage.

LIGHTS UP ON:

Party garbage is scattered around. An open garbage pail with bag inside sits at the end of one of the end tables.

A blown-up female sex doll stands behind the sofa facing DS wearing a low-cut white blouse and short white skirt. (a Velcroed strap could be used to keep the doll in place.)

Charlie, disheveled, one shirttail out, passed out hugging a gin bottle on the sofa.

Inebriated, Mark and wife JANICE dance to slow music. Both wear party hats. Janice has a party whistle.

The music ends.

Mark sneaks the gin bottle from Charlie's hand, takes a swig then pours some on Charlie's head. (water)

Charlie is groggy as Mark replaces the bottle into his hand.

Charlie sits up.

CHARLIE What happened?

MARK Brother, you drank too much, passed out.

CHARLIE Me?

MARK You've got a lot to learn about holding your booze.

Charlie squints DL.

CHARLIE Where's Janeie?

MARK You're dreamin'. You don't have a girlfriend, remember?

CHARLIE No. Janeie, my parrot.

MARK Oh, that.

CHARLIE *(desperate)* Yes, Janeie!

JANICE Mom took the bird.

CHARLIE Mom?

MARK When you were on your knees, embracing the toilet bowl, making gut wrenching sounds.

CHARLIE My own mother kidnapped the only living thing I've become attached to?

JANICE She said a bachelor pad is no place for a pretty bird.

MARK Ask nicely and she'll give you visitation rights.

CHARLIE I shoulda got a dog.

Charlie stands, is shaky.

Mark takes the blown-up sex doll from behind the sofa and pushes it under Charlie's arm.

MARK Bedtime for you and your new best friend.

Charlie has the gin bottle in one hand and the sex doll is under the other arm.

CHARLIE It was a perfectly regrettable party. Thanks (*holds up sex doll, sarcastic*) for my birthday present. You've made my birthday truly forgettable.

Charlie herds them toward the D.R. door.

Janice stops, toots her whistle to get their attention.

JANICE She'll give you hours and hours of lasting enjoyment.

Janice and Mark laugh through the next dialogue.

MARK She'll be all a man could ever wish for.

JANICE We call her May.

MARK Her first name is You.

JANICE You May.

Janice laughs, blows her whistle.

CHARLIE She looks like April, last year's birthday present.

MARK They're related.

JANICE Identical twins.

MARK In every way.

JANICE Whatever happened to April?

MARK Did April wear thin?

Janice and Mark laugh.

CHARLIE We weren't compatible.

Charlie ushers them out the door.

MARK So, what happened to her?

CHARLIE She had a fatal run-in with my Swiss Army knife!

Mark and Janice EXIT.

Charlie slams the door and throws the sex doll away.

The sound of screeching tires and a car driving off.

Charlie picks up the doll, stands it behind the sofa where it was before, talks to it.

So, I'm a little drunk. Kept me from dyin' of embarrassment. *(pause)* You think my life's depressing? A long fart and you're gone with the wind.

Charlie takes a guzzle from the gin bottle.

It's a fact of, of, plastic. *(chuckles, hugs the doll)* My God, I'm forty and gettin' familiar with a nanimate object. Two firsts.

Charlie stands the sex doll behind the sofa facing the audience, takes another guzzle from a booze bottle.

(MORE)

Absolutely pathetic. I should clean up the mess.

Charlie takes the garbage bag from the garbage pail, moves DC with it and begins putting garbage into it.

His back is toward the sex doll.

May, you gonna help? (pause) Help me this once, and I promise you a life span longer than a day. (pause) Okay. You've scheduled an appointment with my Swiss Army knife.

Charlie moves back to the sofa, drops the garbage bag, slumps onto the sofa, looks up.

God, why do my brothers get smart girls and I get stuck with wackos? It's not fair. You remember them. The banker who had the wandering eye for any guy who made big bucks, the French girl who I tried to keep up with, but she'd drink me under the table almost every night. A whole whack of them, . . . Oh, lest we forget Miranda with her sneeze phobia. Why?!!

Charlie goes down on one knee, bows.

God, I've never asked for anything before, but I'm asking now. I'm forty, going on . . . I can't think about it. Please send me a smart girl. Someone who's not a complete air head. A little air'd be okay ...

Charlie passes out on the sofa end.

LIGHTS DIM FOR THREE SECONDS THEN COME UP

The sound of a car pulling up. A car door slams.

Janice ENTERS.

JANICE Charlie. Hello Charlie. I'm sorry. It was a cruel joke. I hope you . . .

Janice sees Charlie sleeping, tip toes in, takes the sex doll and EXITS with it.

(O.C.) You'll stay in the trunk.

The sound of a car trunk opening, closing, car door opening, closing, and the car starting and driving away.

The sound of the car wakes Charlie. He stands, moves DC with the garbage bag, puts garbage into it, facing DS.

Rose ENTERS from the UC kitchen doorway, rubs her eyes, half asleep, stands behind the sofa where the doll stood.

Rose is dressed similar to the doll, has a small purse over a shoulder, holds an invoice, looks toward Charlie.

ROSE Hi.

Charlie startles, freezes, turns slowly to her.

CHARLIE My God, you speak. You're alive!!!

Charlie drops the bag, moves toward the sofa.

ROSE What?

LIGHTS OUT.

End of Act One, Scene Two.

Act One, Scene Three

Place: Same living room

Time: Night

LIGHTS UP ON:

Charlie and Rose stare at each other. Charlie tucks in his shirttail that hangs out.

ROSE What?

CHARLIE I said you're alive!

ROSE I just woke up.

CHARLIE Did you ever. *(to the bottle)* You've got me
halucinatin'.

Charlie takes another slug from the bottle.

Good halucinatin'.

*Charlie puts the bottle down, slowly reaches,
touches Rose's arm.*

Real skin!

Rose threatens him with her fist.

ROSE You want a real black eye?

CHARLIE Sorry. I've had a couple drinks.

Charlie staggers a little.

ROSE You're okay?

CHARLIE One of us isn't.

*Charlie turns away, pinches forearm, pain,
turns to her, startled to see her.*

You're still here.

ROSE Unfortunately.

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CHARLIE Please have a seat.

Charlie ushers her to the sofa and she sits.

Charlie moves beside the sofa, drops to a knee, looks up.

This is taking miracles to a whole new level!

ROSE *(to the side away from Charlie)* I'm still sinking! *(to Charlie)* Is there a Charles Adams here?

CHARLIE *(faces her)* Uh hu, yes, there is.

ROSE *(disbelief)* Could there be another Charles Adams?

Charlie big smile and nod.

Charles Adams is a common name.

CHARLIE I'm the only Charles Adams here.

ROSE *(hesitant)* Then, I'm here . . . for you.

CHARLIE *(brightens)* I know.

Rose holds out the invoice.

What's that?

ROSE The invoice.

CHARLIE Invoice?

ROSE Yes. The *(pronounces slow like for a child)* i-n-v-o-i-c-e. Someone is supposed to sign to acknowledge receipt, but I don't see a cake so, I don't . . .

CHARLIE You want me to sign that?

ROSE Yes.

CHARLIE *(sobers up)* I'm tempted to.

ROSE *(to the side)* Oh God.

(MORE)

Rose takes a pen from her bag and offers it to Charlie.

You can make an X.

CHARLIE And sign away my eternal soul?

ROSE Okay, I'm outa here.

Rose moves toward the door. Charlie moves with her.

CHARLIE *(speaks quickly)* Although, there is no proof the soul exists. Decisions. De . . .

Charlie snatches the invoice and pen, signs, hands both to her.

ROSE Where's the cake?

CHARLIE You do it with cake?

ROSE Of course.

CHARLIE Cake?

ROSE *(looking around)* I'd like to get started, so . . .

CHARLIE First I need to know where you're from.

Rose looks at the invoice.

ROSE The name William Adams is on the invoice.

CHARLIE Brother Billy. A great kid, but naive. So, your boss, is he a devil?

ROSE What's my boss got to do with anything?!!

CHARLIE I need to know what your boss is like!

ROSE My God! . . . He's nice!

CHARLIE *(looks up)* Her god is nice.

ROSE *(looking around)* Isn't there a birthday party?

CHARLIE There was.

ROSE I'm a little late.

CHARLIE Ten or twenty years. No problem. You're good. Uhm. Did you travel far to get here?

ROSE Fifty minutes by bus. The saying "it's the journey, not the destination" wasn't written in a bus. By car it's ten minutes. Less transit time would have given me more quality time.

CHARLIE I've had work time, family time, sleeping time, decorating time and now party time. None of it quality time.

ROSE *(normal, looking around)* There has to be a cake.

CHARLIE You're the answer to my prayer.

ROSE *(nervous to the side)* I should have worn my Nikes.

CHARLIE You make me feel young.

Rose doesn't hear him, desperately glances around.

ROSE I don't see a . . . where's the cake!?

CHARLIE *(looks up)* A cake nut? *(to her)* Sorry, no cake. Name it! Whatever you want, other than cake, it's yours!

ROSE *(backs away)* That's crazy! Look, I know I missed the party. I'm sorry, but . . .

CHARLIE I don't like parties. I've a whack of brothers and sisters who like to celebrate my birthday. Makes them feel superior because they've got so much. All I've got is this. *(motions to the room)*

ROSE Most places I go to are worse. You can imagine.

CHARLIE *(happily)* I have been. So, you're here for me?

ROSE Yes. I'm fully paid for.

CHARLIE *(looks up)* Seems shallow.

ROSE Shallow?

CHARLIE Did I say that?

ROSE You did.

CHARLIE Somehow shallow fell out of my mouth.

ROSE You're not shallow.

CHARLIE You, you're telling me I'm not shallow?

ROSE A shallow person wouldn't question the possibility of being shallow.

CHARLIE You're saying I can't be shallow because I think I could be shallow?

ROSE *(confused)* Deep? CHARLIE *(confused)* Deep?

CHARLIE You're here for me. That's it?

ROSE This is part time. I'm a checkout person at the Metro.

CHARLIE Really?

ROSE I also act in community theatre. Have you ever acted?

CHARLIE Uh, yes, a while ago, quite a while ago, in high school, I played Marcus in a goofy play a few of us wrote and acted out. "NERDBA THE GEEK".

ROSE You, you wrote and acted in a comedy?

CHARLIE Kid stuff. We had fun with it.

ROSE Last season I played Lorrie in "BAREFOOT IN THE DARK".

CHARLIE In a theatre?

ROSE Yeah. This young couple are on their wedding night when the power goes out, and . . . Anyway, it was hilarious.

CHARLIE You're an actor?

ROSE This season I've got the lead in a new play called "THE BABE". I play Shirley.

*Rose walks to the other side of the room,
turns to Charlie, appraises him, then . . .*

I can get a free ticket if you are interested.

Charlie is taken by surprise.

CHARLIE Me?

ROSE Why not? You've got theatre in your past.

CHARLIE I do. No need for a bus. I have a car so I can drive both of us to the play.

ROSE We'd cut transit time in two, double our quality time.

CHARLIE I've been stuck in regular time too long. Bring on quality time.

ROSE I can help with the mess.

CHARLIE No, I'll deal with it.

Charlie takes a pen from his pocket, writes on a bit of wrapping paper, rips the strip from the wrapping paper and hands it to Rose.

My number. Call. I'll be ready whenever.

LIGHTS OUT.

End of Act One, Scene Three.

Act One, Scene Four

Place: Charlie's living room

Time: Morning

Charlie brings a stepladder in from the bedroom area, stands on it and takes down the streamer decorations.

The doorbell rings. Charlie answers it and Mark ENTERS.

MARK It's been over a week since the party. You should have had the decorations down by now.

CHARLIE I've been busy.

MARK Janice said you were babbling on the phone, something about a miracle.

CHARLIE After everyone left the party I prayed for a miracle, and it happened!

MARK You had a lot to drink. A person can imagine a lot with what you put away.

CHARLIE Mark, as God is my witness, a miracle happened. God provided me with the woman of my dreams.

Mark goes to the bar.

She's the love of my life!

MARK It's about time.

CHARLIE Thanks to Billy and God!

Mark pours a shot of whiskey.

MARK What's Billy got to do with anything?

CHARLIE He paid for her. First, she was plastic, then, pouf, like magic, she was there with me in the flesh!

MARK *(sprays the drink out)* The sex doll?!!

CHARLIE At the start, sure, but then she changed.

MARK Charlie, a sex doll isn't supposed to . . .

Charlie's enchanted, oblivious to Mark's comment.

CHARLIE She's perfect for me!

MARK What have we done?

CHARLIE She's everything I've wished for.

MARK I see where you're coming from, but Charlie, it was a joke present. Not meant to be, you know, a girlfriend. It's made of plastic and air. I told Billy it was over the top, but would he listen?

CHARLIE She loves me!

Mark grabs the sofa arm.

MARK It's a plastic monster!! I need to sit.

Mark is shaken, sits on the sofa.

CHARLIE I went to a play she acted in, then we came back here. Can she ever fool around.

MARK She's made for fooling around?!!! Charlie, there was no miracle.

CHARLIE No miracle?

MARK You've had a mental breakdown.

CHARLIE She acted in a play. (*enthralled*) She was fabulous.

MARK The only acting she'll do will be in bed!

CHARLIE She wasn't acting in bed. It was real! I'm sure of it.

MARK What have we done!

CHARLIE I've never been happier.

MARK . . . said the fruitcake.

CHARLIE It's odd you should mention cake. Cake is one of her passions, other than me of course.

Mark jumps up, rushes into the bedroom, rushes out again.

MARK Where do you keep her?

CHARLIE Rose went home. She's going to teach me how to act and I'll get involved in behind-the-scenes theatre work. I need a hobby. Too much accounting makes Charlie a dull boy.

MARK *(thinks)* May is now Rose?

CHARLIE Rose is her real name. I guess she was using May as an alias. I don't want to ask her about that.

MARK *(to the ceiling)* Why?

CHARLIE It could spoil what we have.

MARK It's transference! You've needed a girlfriend so bad and for so long you think May the sex doll is real, or worse, you have an imaginary girlfriend!!

CHARLIE What are you saying?

MARK You've got a screw loose!

CHARLIE No, it's more, a lot more.

MARK Charlie, listen! Having a plastic or an imaginary girlfriend isn't good for you!

CHARLIE It wasn't transference. It was a transformation. God performed a miracle. She's my perfect soul mate.

MARK Oh boy. What am I going to tell Janice? She warned us not to do it. Okay. What if you sneeze?

CHARLIE I've been dreading letting loose with a dam buster.

MARK The sooner you sneeze the sooner you'll return to reality.

CHARLIE Maybe it won't matter to her.

MARK You were fine with Miranda until, you know.

CHARLIE It won't matter to Rose, I'm sure of it.

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MARK Remember how devastated Miranda was?

CHARLIE Miranda? What about my devastation?

MARK You were the sneezer, or is it sneezie?

CHARLIE Miranda dumped me because of her inability to cope with a mere sneeze! It wasn't me! It was her!

MARK I know. I know. You were fine with Miranda until, you know, the sneeze thing happened. She loved everything about you but . . . I'm sure it'll affect Rose the same.

CHARLIE No! It won't! I don't use pepper, open a newspaper or book. I wear dark sunglasses outside, so I don't get the sunlight sneeze. I've removed the things that cause me to sneeze.

MARK What about catching a cold?

CHARLIE I'm taking a whack of Vitamin C and Echinacea.

MARK We could go for a beer? Kelsey's is still open.

CHARLIE I'd like a beer, but . . .

Charlie brings a small white breathing mask from his pocket, shows it to Mark.

MARK *(shrugs)* I don't mind.

CHARLIE Good. Just like we were before . . .

MARK Before what?

CHARLIE Before life got complicated.

MARK Puberty.

Charlie and Mark EXIT the apartment.

LIGHTS OUT.

End of Act One, Scene Four.

Act One, Scene Five

Place: Charlie's living room

Time: Night

LIGHTS DIM

The sound of a car pulling up, shuts off, car door opening, closing.

The sound of a key in the door.

Janice ENTERS, tip toes in with the sex doll.

Janice has dressed the doll in a negligée.

It now has make-up on, including prominent red lipstick and a wide brimmed black hat.

It's quite the hot sex doll now.

JANICE Charlie. It's me, Janice. My hair's a mess, and I don't have my make up on, so don't come out. Mark said you have an imaginary girlfriend, like children have imaginary friends. I hope I didn't make a mistake by taking your doll away.

Janice stands the sex doll behind the sofa facing DS.

I know May is just plastic, but she's real plastic, and she is here for you. I've made her up special, given her one of my best negligees. She looks very . . . respectable, sort of, not that she wasn't respectable before. We're aaahhh . . . looking forward to having you both over for, for, for something. Dinner? Maybe drinks? Ahuuuu!

Janice backs out of the door. The sound of a car door closing, car starting and screeches away.

LIGHTS OUT FOR THREE SECONDS THEN COME UP DIM.

The sound of a car pulling up, car door opening, closing, the door opens.

Charlie ENTERS, turns on the lights, hangs up his coat without looking into the room.

LIGHTS UP.

Charlie has a massive SNEEZE with six aftershocks.

CHARLIE Wow, that was bad. Oh, well as long as . . .

Charlie sees the sex doll, freezes still.

No!

Charlie rushes to the sex doll, embraces it.

It was an accidental sneeze. Rose, please come back to me. You're in there I know you are.

Charlie sits the sex doll on the sofa. Stands back, looks at it.

You're giving me the cold shoulder . . . and the silent treatment. After a sneeze like that I deserve it. How about tea? A nice cup of tea will make everything right again. (*listens*) Tea? One sugar and (*listens*) one milk. A sip of perfect heart-warming tea could change you back.

Charlie EXITS into the kitchen.

The sound of a key in the lock on the door.

Mark ENTERS, sees the sex doll.

MARK He's dressing her up to look hot. He's completely nuts.

Mark wicked-smiles, moves to the doll, picks it up, holds it against himself, kisses it.

Charlie ENTERS with two cups of tea on a tray, is surprised, drops the tray, tackles Mark. They roll around on the floor.

What are you doing?!!

CHARLIE You were trying to seduce my girlfriend!

They stop rolling around, stand.

Charlie snatches up the sex doll, holds it away from Mark.

MARK Charlie, it's a sex doll! It's made for sex!

Charlie sits on the sofa with the doll.

CHARLIE *(almost crying)* Inside it's Rose. She's been turned to plastic because I sneezed. It's not supposed to happen.

MARK You can say that again.

CHARLIE She's living with me now.

MARK Living?!!! She's plastic! Although it's better than an imagined girlfriend.

CHARLIE This is temporary. God will change her back.

MARK *(not hearing him)* Slip her in the closet, bring her out when . . .

CHARLIE Rose is perfect for me.

MARK She'll put out without complaining or having to spend a whack of money on. I see where you're coming from.

CHARLIE We're talking marriage.

MARK *(jumps up)* Marriage?!!! Down the aisle marriage?!!

CHARLIE Yes, the works.

MARK Would we have to go?

CHARLIE Of course! You'll be my best man.

Mark grabs the sofa arm for support, sits beside Charlie.

MARK Charlie, I want you to listen carefully to what I am about to say. Can you do that?

CHARLIE I'm listening.

MARK *(speaks slowly, deliberately)* You have suffered a severe nervous mental meltdown. You need professional help. I can get you an appointment with a very good psychiatrist.

CHARLIE How do you know he's good?

MARK I consulted with him when I was going through my birthday transition a few years ago. Remember?

CHARLIE I remember more than I'd care to about that.

MARK What's that supposed to mean?

CHARLIE Let's talk about you turning forty.

MARK My forty is well behind me. In the rearview mirror. A forgotten chapter.

Charlie stares at Mark.

Okay, so I didn't transition gracefully.

CHARLIE You acquired a tattoo, motorcycle, a Rolex watch and a hot blonde number. An expensive transition.

MARK Hot blonde number?

CHARLIE I was with a customer in the Golden Harvest Restaurant, discussing his shabby accounting practices, when I saw you drooling over the waitress. You recall the Mary Jane affair?

MARK You know her name?!

CHARLIE I employed surveillance skills.

MARK You hired a detective?! Pictures??? You've got pictures of . . . It was a harmless . . .

CHARLIE Name tag on uniform.

MARK *(relieved)* You didn't tell Janice!

CHARLIE No, but she knows.

MARK She knows?

CHARLIE You remember your state-of-the art golf clubs?

MARK My clubs, covers, cart, gloves, tees, balls, the works, disappeared. I'm pretty sure I lost them at the insurance tournament. I had a few drinks and got careless.

CHARLIE *(sarcastic)* Wrong. While you were making merry with Mary at the Boston dealership conference about a year ago, Janice had a yard sale. Much of it was your stuff.

MARK She loves that sort of thing.

CHARLIE I saw your clubs purchased.

MARK Janice sold my clubs?!

CHARLIE She had a ten dollar tag on the bag and clubs but was happy to settle for five.

Mark reacts.

One of your suits went for two fifty.

MARK Two hundred and fifty dollars?

CHARLIE Two dollars and fifty cents.

MARK Ahuuuuu! I can't believe she'd do that.

CHARLIE I suspect it had the familiar scent of ode du la affair. Fireside pokers? A dollar.

MARK No! You let her sell my suit and my clubs?

CHARLIE I did!

MARK How could you?

CHARLIE I wanted to help you.

MARK Help me?

CHARLIE I thought it might be instructive.

MARK I've learned, oh how I've learned.

CHARLIE Good.

MARK I've learned my wife is an absolute looney and my brother, who I thought I could trust, is her accomplice!

CHARLIE Mark, that's not it.

MARK You wait till now to tell me about her fire sale of everything I cherish?

CHARLIE I was waiting for the right moment.

MARK Charlie! It's been almost three years since my birthday!

CHARLIE A lot of wrong moments.

MARK My Rolex went missing around that time! I had it for a week, looked everywhere! Did you let her sell my twenty-eight thousand, one-hundred, and thirty-nine-dollar watch?! Please tell me she didn't sell my Rolex. I loved that watch.

CHARLIE She could have tossed it in with the rest of the yard sale items. Mostly men's stuff -- ties, shirts, belts. You know, standard yard sale fare.

MARK But my Rolex?!

CHARLIE I'm not your yard sale police!

MARK *(almost crying)* I didn't take it to the convention because I don't trust room service. I should have taken it. Damn!

CHARLIE Janice is telling you there's a price to pay for philandering. It's non-verbal communication.

MARK I understand the clubs, suit, even the Rolex, but why the fireside pokers?

CHARLIE I'd say it was to keep her from killing you with them.

MARK It was just a bit on the side. Nothing really. I thought I could trust you. What do you say about that?

CHARLIE Advice. If Janice buys a set of fireside pokers move out of the house.

MARK I stopped going to the Golden Harvest.

CHARLIE I wonder why?

MARK The Honey was going through my pockets. I've had it with the Honeys.

CHARLIE Good.

MARK Mary Jane was my last Honey.

CHARLIE You're sure?

MARK Very sure.

CHARLIE Excellent.

MARK It's odd she didn't try to track me down.

CHARLIE You didn't give her your unlisted phone number?

MARK Yeah, right.

CHARLIE She called all the Adams in the book looking for you.

MARK How do you know?

CHARLIE I was the only one who admitted to knowing you.

MARK No!

CHARLIE Yes!

MARK What did you tell her?

CHARLIE I said, you, my beloved brother, had died.

MARK You killed me?!!

CHARLIE It was a pleasure.

MARK Extreme, but permanent . . . which is good.

CHARLIE Nothing drawn out or gruesome.

MARK Sudden?

CHARLIE Very.

MARK Thoughtful. How sudden?

CHARLIE Golfing.

MARK You killed me on a golf course?

CHARLIE An errant drive to the temple on the eighteenth fairway.

MARK Ouch.

Mark makes a face, rubs temples.

CHARLIE Then I had you cremated.

MARK I'm dust?

CHARLIE I had you spread over the golf course.

MARK I'm fertilizer?!

Charlie shrugs.

No, that's terrific. Thanks.

CHARLIE Looking out for my much older, misguided brother.

MARK A tad older and significantly wiser.

CHARLIE *(sarcastic)* Yeah, right. It occurred to me you'd suffered enough with the clubs, suit and pokers gone.

MARK And my Rolex.

CHARLIE Forgot the Rolex. Thus ended your quality time.

MARK *(angry)* Thanks to you! *(calmer)* I've put it behind me.

CHARLIE Rolex and Honeys under the bridge?

MARK Both gone. Satisfied?!

Charlie smiles.

Charlie, listen. You have really cracked up, need professional help! I'm here to help you, but I can only do so much! How about I make an appointment with Doctor Cousins.

CHARLIE I'll need to discuss it with Rose.

Charlie turns on the radio. A dance song plays. Charlie picks up the doll and dances with the doll.

(to the doll) This time I'll lead.

MARK Ahhaaaaa!

CHARLIE It's Rose's birthday in a couple days. We're having a party. The whole family is invited.

OH, BROTHER!!

By Robert J. Wheeler

MARK Ahhaaaaa!

Mark jumps up, RUNS OUT of the apartment.

The sound of a car door slamming, driving away.

Charlie stands the sex doll behind the sofa, EXITS after Mark.

The sound of a second car door slamming, screeches away.

LIGHTS OUT.

End of Act One, Scene Five

Act One, Scene Six

Place: Charlie's living room

Time: Morning

LIGHTS UP:

Rose ENTERS with a bag of groceries, is startled when she sees the sex doll.

Rose EXITS into the kitchen with the groceries then ENTERS the living room, tentatively touches the sex doll.

ROSE My birthday present. Charlie left my present on a manikin. Charlie, you're so creative.

Rose takes the doll into the bedroom. The sound of a car driving up, car door slam, key in the front door.

Charlie ENTERS, looks for sex doll, sees it's gone, is mortified, looks throughout the room.

The PHONE RINGS. Charlie picks up the phone, pushes a button on the phone, continues to look around the room.

CHARLIE Hi Mark. You're on speaker. You left suddenly. I tried to catch you.

MARK (V.O.) I'm sorry. I've had a lot on my mind. Thanks for picking up.

CHARLIE Everything fine now?

MARK (V.O.) Sorta fine-ish. Charlie, not so fine. I've got this problem you can help me with.

CHARLIE That's what brothers are for, right Mark?

MARK (V.O.) You got it pal.

CHARLIE A numbers problem? Books won't balance at the office?

MARK (V.O.) It's at home. Nothing's balancing there.

CHARLIE Why would that be?

MARK (V.O.) There's this Honey, Linda, thinks I owe her the rest of my life. I'm trying to give her the brush off.

CHARLIE You said never again. Twice you said it!

MARK (V.O.) Get serious! I said it to shut you up! I need you to kill me off again.

CHARLIE For real this time?

MARK (V.O.) Over the phone. I'm sure Linda will call all the Adams in the area, same as Mary Jane. The family are going to tell her they've never heard of me. You're to invent a fantastic way to kill me off. Don't do the drive to the head again. It's turned me off golf. Make it something she'll believe. She's a clinger.

CHARLIE So, I'm your accomplice?

MARK (V.O.) You make it sound like it's a crime. It's just a favor. Brothers do brothers favors.

CHARLIE Okay, I'll do you a favor. Bye.

Charlie hangs up the phone then starts to sneeze, tries to hold it off.

It's the d-d-d-dust . . .

Charlie has a massive sneeze with half a dozen aftershocks.

He staggers around.

Rose ENTERS from the bedroom dressed in the negligee the doll was wearing including the hat, stands where he left the sex doll.

Charlie turns, sees her.

CHARLIE There you are, exactly where I left you.

ROSE (sensual) Hi, big boy.

Charlie PASSES OUT.

Rose goes to Charlie, gets him on the sofa, sits on the sofa, gently slaps his face. Charlie comes regains consciousness.

CHARLIE You're back?

ROSE Of course.

CHARLIE Where did you go? How did you . . .

ROSE I got groceries. Do you have a medical condition?

CHARLIE Yes! I'm a mean sneezer.

ROSE I haven't heard you sneeze yet.

CHARLIE I just sneezed. The trauma caused you to block it from your conscious mind.

ROSE That bad?

CHARLIE I could go up against the world sneeze champion and win.

ROSE Sneeze all you want. It won't matter. *(motions to her attire)* You're very generous.

Charlie misses the point entirely. He holds her hand.

CHARLIE You're really here with me again.

ROSE Yes, I am.

CHARLIE I don't want to let you go.

ROSE I feel the same about you. Isn't love wonderful?

CHARLIE I literally don't want to let go of you.

Rose pulls her hand away, steps back from Charlie.

Sometimes I feel you're not fully here.

ROSE Charlie you're sweet, but no one holds me down.

CHARLIE You're right. It's foolish for me to try. Love makes me want to.

The phone RINGS. Charlie answers it.

Charlie Adams. *(pause)* Oh, Linda. *(pause)* Do I know Mark Adams? Yes, Mark is my brother. *(pause)* Yes, I know

where he is. *(pause)* I have his phone number. *(pause)* I have his email address. *(pause)* You might feel queasy about contacting him though. *(pause)* He's being held in a top-secret psychiatric facility. *(pause)* I know, you are very fond of him, and you'd really like to help him. I get that. *(pause)* He's being investigated concerning some serial ripper killings.

Rose stands, moving cautiously toward the door.

Yes, women. About six so far, but if you want to visit him, I'm sure he would be happy to see . . .

Rose is horrified. Charlie smiles to Rose, takes the phone from his ear and hangs it up.

ROSE Your brother's a serial killer!

CHARLIE No, he's not. I made it up.

ROSE Why would you?

CHARLIE He wanted me to kill him, but I thought as long as he's still alive he can be rehabilitated.

ROSE From being a serial killer?!!!

CHARLIE I made that up.

ROSE He wants you to kill him?

CHARLIE I made that up.

ROSE The part about him killing women or him wanting you to kill him?

CHARLIE Both.

ROSE That's crazy.

CHARLIE Mark's involved with a woman, and he wants to break it off because he's pretty sure his wife would object.

Rose joins Charlie at the sofa.

He wanted me to tell the woman he's dead. Instead, I told her he's a serial killer living in an institution. I want to let her down gently.

ROSE Serial killer should do it. There was a TV documentary on philandering. Some believe it to be an obsessive-compulsive disorder.

CHARLIE I don't think his marriage will take another affair.

ROSE That's unfortunate.

CHARLIE I'm pretty sure his wife is on to his shenanigans.

ROSE Is there anything we can do to save his marriage?

CHARLIE I've got an idea.

Charlie runs into the bedroom, runs out again with a photo album.

(goes through the album) I need to leave but want you to be here when I come back. Can you stay with me tonight?

ROSE Sure. I think I'll take a nap.

Rose EXITS into the bedroom.

Charlie removes a photo from the album and EXITS the apartment with it.

LIGHTS DIM FOR THREE SECONDS THEN COME UP

Rose ENTERS from the bedroom with the sex doll dressed in outrageous men's clothes -- loud shorts, revealing sweatshirt, argyle socks and baseball hat.

So, Manikin Charlie, it's just you and me for the evening. Any good ideas?

They sit on the sofa.

Does Manikin Charlie find me attractive? *(imitating Charlie)* You're the best thing to ever walk into my life. *(as herself)* Best thing? You mean the best person, right? *(imitating Charlie)* Uh, right. The best person, very best. I don't know what I'd do without you. *(as herself)* Oh, Charlie.

Rose grabs the doll, hugs it.

Come on Manikin Charlie. We'll get comfortable.

Rose turns off the lights and EXITS into the bedroom with the sex doll.

LIGHTS DIM FOR THREE SECONDS.

The house door flings open. Charlie RUSHES IN, turns on the lights.

LIGHTS UP.

Charlie has a half dozen poster size pages and a large stapler. He lays the stapler and pages on a chair.

CHARLIE Rose! I had posters made and put them up all over town.
 Rose! Are you here? Please be here.

Charlie takes the top poster and fastens it to a wall with tacks. The poster reads.

 "WOMEN BEWARE
 A SHAMELESS WOMANIZER
 IS ON THE LOOSE
 (a picture of Mark)
 PHONE 519-555-4321
 TO GIVE HIM
 A PIECE OF
 YOUR MIND."

(Loud) Once a dozen or so women berate Mark for victimizing members of their sex he'll back off of his affairs. Rose!!!

Rose ENTERS dazed from the bedroom. Her hat is on a tilt, the lingerie is torn, her hair a mess.

Charlie rushes to her, hugs her.

Thank God, you're here.

Charlie stands back, looks at her.

Are you alright?

ROSE I might not be.

Charlie jumps back.

OH, BROTHER!!

By Robert J. Wheeler

CHARLIE You're sick? A cold?

ROSE I had a sleep and . . .

CHARLIE Not a cold! Colds are bad, very bad.

ROSE *(crying)* No, it's not a cold.

CHARLIE What?

ROSE *(crying)* I think, I think.

CHARLIE You think what?

ROSE *(crying)* I dreamt that I was a, a, a . . .

CHARLIE A what?

ROSE *(crying)* Lesbian!

CHARLIE Lesbian. I can't catch . . . Lesbian?

ROSE I'm confused.

CHARLIE You're confused.

ROSE I still love you.

Charlie puts an arm around Rose, leads her toward the bedroom. They EXIT into the bedroom.

LIGHTS OUT.

End of Act One Scene Six

Act One, Scene Seven

Place: Charlie's living room

Time: Morning

Charlie is on a stepladder, puts up streamer decorations. Rose blows up balloons.

CHARLIE Rose!

ROSE Yes, Charlie.

CHARLIE Was there an interloper in your dream?

ROSE Well, yes, sort of.

CHARLIE Do I know this person?

ROSE It was you.

Charlie gives a look.

I dressed the manikin in your clothes, and I fell asleep with it.

CHARLIE Manikin?

ROSE Yes.

CHARLIE So, the experience was more than a dream. Manikin? What manikin?

ROSE You left my negligee and hat birthday presents on it.

CHARLIE Really?

They sit on the sofa.

ROSE It was sweet of you to dress it with my birthday present.

CHARLIE Where is this manikin?

ROSE In the back of the bedroom closet.

Charlie goes into the bedroom and comes out with the sex doll dressed in Charlie's wild clothes that Rose dressed it with.

Charlie sits the doll beside Rose.

CHARLIE This doll looks much like you.

ROSE Me?

CHARLIEW Rose, it's not a manikin. It's a sex doll.

ROSE *(jumps up)* Sex doll?! *(through tears)* It seduced me!

CHARLIE You dressed it to look like me, so you were thinking of me, so . . .

ROSE *(through tears)* It attracts me.

CHARLIE Her name is May. Do you remember my birthday party when we met?

ROSE The night my cake was cancelled was my lucky night.

CHARLIE You mean my lucky night. I hardly ever get that kind of luck. Your cake was cancelled?

ROSE I was exhausted, but right away I could see you were special. Well . . . almost right away.

CHARLIE What cake?

ROSE I was hired to jump out of a birthday cake and sing you a birthday wish, but the cake fell off the truck and broke, so it was cancelled. I fell asleep in your kitchen waiting for the cake.

CHARLIE I thought a miracle happened and, well, I've been in Heaven ever since.

ROSE What miracle?

CHARLIE I thought God changed May the sex doll into you.

Charlie collapses on the sofa.

I thought God sent you to me.

ROSE I thought God sent you to me.

They hug.

CHARLIE What were you to sing to me?

Rose looks into her cell phone.

ROSE It's not nice.

CHARLIE I don't care. I want to hear it.

ROSE *(looks into her phone)* It's been . . . No, I've got to dance to the message.

Rose does a cake message dance as she sings.

It's been forty bachelor years for our Chuck, and it'll be forty long more before Chuck gets to duck. I changed a letter.

Rose stops her dance.

I told you it wasn't nice.

CHARLIE *(seethes)* I feel like such a fool! Foolishness must be killed!

Charlie jumps up, takes and opens his Swiss Army knife, looks crazily at Rose.

Time to kill!

Rose fearfully edges toward the door.

Not you!

Rose stops, looks up.

ROSE Thank you God

Charlie takes the doll, throws it down behind the sofa.

Charlie stands over the doll, knife ready to stab, pulls his knife hand back, about to pounce on the sex doll.

You'd make a fantastic Brutus.

Charlie pounces out of sight on the sex doll behind the sofa. The knife hand comes up above the sofa.

(MORE)

Or Hamlet.

Charlie's knife hand in the air above the sofa back, about to stab at the sex doll.

STOP! (*knife hand stops*) You don't like looking foolish, I understand, but Charlie, see the big picture. May introduced us. She's special.

Charlie stands, closes the knife, and pockets it.

CHARLIE You're right. I've grown fond of May, although not as much as you have.

Rose shrugs a guilty look.

It's Mark I'm angry with. He's implicated. Very implicated. I realized a sex doll, living or plastic, wasn't what I needed. I need a warm, loving woman.

ROSE I need a warm, loving man. You're my man of action with a sense for drama. You belong in theatre with me.

They sit on the sofa with May the sex doll.

CHARLIE All this time I thought . . . well that's over now.

They hug then continue to put up party decorations.

The PHONE RINGS. Charlie answers it.

Charlie Adams. (*pause*) Oh, Mark it's you.

Charlie moves to the window, looks out, then moves back.

(*to Rose*) Mark's outside. Hide in the bedroom with May and dress her with the hat and negligee. I have vengeance to inflict.

Rose takes May into the bedroom. Charlie opens the door.

Hi Mark, come in.

Mark ENTERS.

MARK Decorating?

CHARLIE For Rose's first birthday party. You and Janice are invited. Rose and I hope you'll come.

MARK If you insist.

CHARLIE Rose consults with me, even helps with decorating. You don't mind?

Charlie goes to the ladder, puts up decorations.

MARK Why should I mind? It's not like Rose would care or even hear what I'll say.

CHARLIE She's very opinionated. I don't think she approves of your lifestyle.

MARK My lifestyle! Charlie! She's a sex doll! Don't you get it!

Charlie EXITS into the bedroom, returns with the sex doll dressed in the negligee and hat. Charlie hugs, kisses it.

CHARLIE Rose means everything to me.

MARK I don't believe it. I just . . .

Charlie sits May on the sofa, moves to the ladder, continues decorating.

CHARLIE What did you want?

MARK Am I dead yet?

Charlie gives Mark a disapproving look.

Linda?

CHARLIE Oh, right, your, what would you call her, your sex doll?

MARK Ex-girlfriend?

CHARLIE Still girlfriend!

MARK Still girlfriend?!!

CHARLIE Linda called, but I didn't kill you.

MARK I'm not dead?!

CHARLIE I saved you.

MARK Being dead is so perfect. A permanent severing of the relationship. Why couldn't you have killed me off?

CHARLIE I want you to rehabilitate.

MARK Charlie! I am what I am! You are what you are! We're different. Differences are good in a family. I'm not trying to change you, why would you . . .

CHARLIE Because you're an obsessive compulsive! It's a disease.

MARK Me? What about the fact you sneeze your way out of relationships?!

CHARLIE Rose doesn't mind my sneeze.

MARK For you, some insane reason, it's sex dolls. I prefer women.

CHARLIE Your Honeys will get you a divorce!

MARK I've got everything under control. I can handle it!

CHARLIE Rose told me she wants you and Janice to attend her birthday party tomorrow night.

MARK You're going through with a party for it?

CHARLIE Of course. We love each other.

MARK How old is she?

CHARLIE Rose says she's oneish, but you know women, always pretending they're younger than they actually are.

MARK Underage. That's not good. Maybe you should break it off. I mean, send her back to her creator, uh . . . maker?

CHARLIE She told me in doll years a month is equal to a human year.

MARK That makes her twelve.

OH, BROTHER!!

By Robert J. Wheeler

CHARLIE She's lying big time. You can see she's at least twenty-one.

MARK Can I bring Dr. Cousins? He'd enjoy talking with you.

CHARLIE He'd want to speak with Rose, wouldn't he?

A blank look and shrug from Mark.

No, she's way too sensitive for that. Anyway, we wouldn't invite a stranger to a family birthday party. We're a family. We've always celebrated birthdays as a family. It's who we are, right?

MARK Unfortunately.

CHARLIE Mark.

MARK Yeah?

CHARLIE I have a surprise for you.

MARK *(weary)* What? You've knocked her up?

CHARLIE I'm having Rose's birthday party catered.

MARK I'll make a point of eating.

LIGHTS OUT.

End of Act One - END OF SAMPLE