
The Two Timers

A comedy in two acts

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THE TWO TIMERS

By Robert J. Wheeler

FOUR ACTORS REQUIRED

2 males: 30-50 -- 2 females: 30-50

CHARACTER NAME	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	AGE	GENDER
BRIAN	Dentist, husband of Bev <i>(can have English or Irish accent)</i>	30-65	Male
BEV	Artist, wife of Brian <i>(accent same as Brian)</i>	30-65	Female
ALLAN	Teacher, husband of Anne	30-65	Male
ANNE	Massage therapist, wife of Allan	30-65	Female
O.S. VOICE OR MASTER OF CEREMONIES	Performs pre-show announcement	Any	Either

SETTING

Three living rooms.

HOUSE LIGHTS DIM:

A light on base of stage or curtain. An O.S. voice or master of ceremonies takes the stage DS of curtain, moves into light.

VOICE OR M.C. Welcome everyone to (*name of theatre*) and our production of “The Two Timers”. Thank you for coming. We have a short announcement. So everyone can enjoy the play equally, we ask that you refrain from revealing the identity of the interloper appearing in the last scene after leaving the theatre. Thank you.

The master of ceremonies leaves, the curtain rises.

ACT ONE, SCENE ONE

Time: Morning

Place: Brian and Bev’s House Livingroom

LIGHTS UP:

A few bars of “OH WHAT A BEAUTIFUL MORNING” plays.

Living room walls are off white, with a solid-colored sofa and matching chair (sofa is DC, sofa chair is DL of sofa), both are covered in matching colorful throws.

There’s an end table on either end of the sofa. On the SL end table is a CD player, CD holder with CDs. On the SL end table is a phone that sits vertical on it’s base (V’Tech).

A floor lamp sits SL of the sofa chair. The colorful shade sits unfastened on the lamp.

In front and far SL of the sofa is an easel with an approximately two-foot square canvass positioned diagonal on stage, it’s back faces audience.

There is a 20” x 16” photo of a large flower on a wall. (playwright has the art)

Under the sofa is a 20” x 16” blown-up photo of an ant and a traditional print. (playwright has the art)

DR is a door into house/apartment with a small porch on the outside of the door.

UC are door openings into bedrooms and kitchen areas.

Bev stands behind a 20” x 16” canvass, in an artists’ smock. She holds her brush and palette with confidence as she paints in broad strokes, then other strokes are done with precision.

Brian ENTERS through the DR door dressed in running attire a little out of breath.

BEV (*absent minded, glances back*) Good run?

BRIAN (*heavy breathing*) Bev, my love, it’s a fantastic Saturday morning.

Brian does cool down exercises behind Bev, cringes as he looks at her painting. Does cool down exercise.

BEV *(steps back while looking at the painting)* What do you think?

Brian stops exercising, looks to her painting, gives a pained expression like he's stubbed a toe, but she doesn't see him.

Bev looks back to Brian. Brian instantly changes his expression from pained to pleased when he sees she's looking at him. Brian looks away, doesn't want to comment.

BRIAN About what?

Bev motions to the painting.

BEV My abstract.

BRIAN Love, I'm a dentist, not an art critique.

BEV *(glances back)* As my husband, I'd like your unbiased opinion. Be honest. It's a quality I love about you.

Bev moves back, stands beside Brian, puts an arm around him as they both observe the painting.

How does it make you feel?

BRIAN It makes me feel . . . uhhhhh . . . I don't know.

Brian moves away.

BEV The viewer should feel its presence.

BRIAN *(determined)* Okay. Let's see.

Brian looks critically at the painting.

BEV It'll be a different experience for every viewer. *(pause)* I paint what I see.

BRIAN *(wrinkles face)* You're having a stroke?!

BEV *(aghast)* What I feel and see abstractly!

BRIAN Abstractly. Humm. *(thinks)* Like a stroke but

Brian moves, looks at the painting from across the room.

Bev, I'm beginning to sense it. A definite presence. It's coming through. Hold on, coming in . . . I'm starting to . . . yes, I feel it!!!

BEV *(a disappointed, sarcastic shout)* Like hemorrhoids?!!

BRIAN *(sarcastic shout back)* Not entirely!!

(MORE)

Bev reacts. Brian gets a new idea while staring at the painting.

It's got me feeling, feeling . . . that's it . . . hungry!! Breakfast?!!

BEV It's either food or sex with you. Typical man.

BRIAN *(southern accent)* Mam, I'm a civilized, cultured individual.

BEV Are you at all impressed with my abstract?

BRIAN It's made me feel . . . uh . . .

BEV Joyous? Happy to be alive? *(frustrated)* What?

BRIAN Visually impaired!

Bev steps away from Brian, seethes internally.

Is there a demand for blurred art?

Bev gasps.

BEV What am I thinking?!!

Brian moves to a different position, views the art.

BRIAN I'm reimagining it! Coming through strong this time! Definitely getting it.

Bev's happy to see her painting is having an impact. Bev moves beside Brian.

Yes! It's a nude female stepping into her bathtub!

Brian reaches to give Bev a hug.

She steps away.

He hugs thin air.

She gives him a questioning look.

She's stepping out?

BEV An assortment of colorful, curved, diagonal, vertical and horizontal lines?! If I painted a nipple, you'd see an orgy.

BRIAN I'm calling her Hildie.

BEV Hildie?

BRIAN For her hills.

BEV Food or sex again! Nothing else enters man's tiny brain.

BRIAN Wrong.

BEV What?

BRIAN Sports. Green Bay Packers.

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BEV How's your picture taking coming along?

BRIAN I'm a photographer. It's my art form. Photography.

Bev moves to the photograph of the flower on the wall.

BEV More big flowers?

Brian joins Bev.

BRIAN Flowers were last month.

BEV And this month?

BRIAN I've got a fabulous shot of one of my ants.

BEV Aunt Emily or Aunt Mable?

Brian takes down photo of the flower, slides it under the sofa, takes the photo of a HUGE ANT from under the sofa and hangs it where the flower was.

BRIAN I call him Fred.

Bev reels back in disgust.

BEV *(steps back)* Creepy.

BRIAN He's a perfect specimen. Nicely defined.

BEV What does it say to the viewer?

BRIAN Fred's a handsome fellow?

BEV Or monster ants are coming, run for your life!

BRIAN Insects are on the decline because of global warming. I'm going to take a pic . . . photograph of every insect species for posterity.

BEV Or corner the entomologist calendar market.

BRIAN Which is . . . *(bright idea look)* . . . a simpler option.

BEV How many pho-to-graphs have you taken so far?

BRIAN A few. Fred's my favorite.

BEV Nice you're getting them in alphabetical order. I expect you'll immortalize bees next.

BRIAN Just one bee.

BEV Have you been around the deck lately?

BRIAN I cut the grass by the deck yesterday.

BEV I've noticed bees entering and exiting between the deck boards. I'm pretty sure bees have nested under it. You could schedule a sitting for the queen bee then deal with them.

BRIAN Perfect. I'll get my photograph then eliminate the hive.

BEV We should have professionals take care of it.

BRIAN Nonsense. I've eliminated beehives many times before. Not a problem.

BEV There's not a lot of head room under the deck.

BRIAN Stop worrying. Bees like me. I like bees. Once I send out the right vibrations, they'll leave me alone. When people get fearful, that's when they strike. Like tiny sharks, they sense fear, then swarm and go in for the kill!

BEV Will you do it today, tomorrow, next week or year?

BRIAN Today! I'm going to the mall for gloves and a can, bee removal stuff.

Brian moves toward the DR door.

BEV Anne is coming by to wash their car in our laneway, so park on the street when you get back. She can't wash it at the apartment.

BRIAN Sure. Invite Anne in for tea after the car washing. Introduce her to Hildie.

Brian moves further toward the DR door. Bev jumps up.

BEV *(frustrated)* Hildie exists in your imagination!

BRIAN You put her there.

Bev moves to the painting on the easel, looks critically at it while speaking.

BEV I could paint a turnip and you'd see a stripper!

BRIAN Quite the talent.

BEV *(waves him away)* I've got work to do.

Brian moves closer to the DR door.

BRIAN Get Anne to use the basement bathroom to freshen up.

BEV Your workshop bathroom?

Brian shrugs.

It's filthy, isn't it?!!

Bev gives Brian and condemning look.

BRIAN She loves to clean, so . . .

BEV *(interrupting)* She has a cleaning fetish.

BRIAN Think little fish cleaning big fish . . . with a sort of bathroom twist. Symbiosis!

BEV Anne is not a fish! We'll have tea in the kitchen, away from your dirty bathroom and hideous insect art.

Bev talks while painting till the end of the scene.

Go ahead, smoke the bees out.

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BRIAN Smoke not required. My system is foolproof.

BEV I've heard smoke is affective on bees.

BRIAN Bev, Love, trust me. I've done it many times before.

BEV *(looking at painting)* I could add a bee, maybe two.

BRIAN Buzzing above Hildie?

BEV *(not hearing him, talking to self)* A bee would create tension.

BRIAN A swarm of bees would have Hildie diving into her tub.

BEV Brian!

BRIAN *(pleading)* Don't have Hildi being attacked by a swarm of . . . uh . . . tiny flying lemon-like bees.

BEV Stop it! Come back in good time. After you've eliminated the bees we're going to Annie and Allan's for dinner and drinks.

BRIAN Okay.

Brian EXITS out the DR door. Bev looks critically at painting.

BEV *(scratches her head)* Hildie?

LIGHTS OUT

End of Act One, Scene One

ACT ONE, SCENE TWO

Time: Morning

Place: Allan and Anne's Apartment Livingroom

A few bars of "OH WHAT A BEAUTIFUL MORNING" plays.

LIGHTS UP:

The colourful covers are off the sofa and sofa chair, both are a solid color.

The floor lamp shade by the sofa chair is a solid color.

A traditional print replaces the photo on the wall.

The easel is gone.

Allan reads from the newspaper on the sofa chair.

Anne ENTERS through the DR door wearing yellow rubber gloves and holding a plastic pail. Allan reads the newspaper disinterested during the following dialogue.

ANNE I washed the car.

Anne takes the pail into the kitchen and returns without the gloves but with a Swifer-type mop and mops the floor.

ALLAN Good.

Allan shows the newspaper to Anne.

ALLAN It says here taxes are going up. Three point two per cent a year for the next three years. I'm glad we don't live in a house.

ANNE All taxes?

Allan puts down the newspaper.

ALLAN Everything.

Anne leans the mop on a wall, joins Allan on the sofa.

ANNE Then our rent will be going up.

ALLAN We don't need to live in a three bedroom penthouse apartment.

ANNE I like being on the twenty-third floor. High above the traffic noise.

ALLAN I could go back to tutoring?

ANNE You teach for ten months a year. We can afford the increase without us moving or you having to tutor.

Allan puts the newspaper down, stands.

ALLAN I remember; they can't raise it more than one percent a year because of the lease.

ANNE Good. You up for a massage?

Anne moves behind Allan, massages the back of his neck.

I'm still the best massage therapist in town.

Allan makes a terrified face, casually stands, hedges away from Anne.

She moves with him, massaging. He hedges away.

ALLAN Uh. *(stalling)* Annie, I was thinking of going *(thinking fast)* of of going . . . to the . . . what was it . . . right . . . the library.

Anne stops massaging.

ANNE Library?

ALLAN *(holds up newspaper)* I read.

ANNE I've been feeling restless since selling the massage clinic. I thought I could practice on you, relax your tired, tight muscles.

ALLAN I had a massage a couple days ago.

ANNE *(stops pursuing Allan)* Where did you get it?!

ALLAN Here! You gave me the full body treatment! I'm the most relaxed man on the planet.

ANNE You're tense! I know you need it.

ALLAN If my muscles relax any more, they'll dissolve!

ANNE Come on, Allan.

ALLAN I've got bruises.

ANNE Where?

ALLAN The invisible kind.

ANNE I'm especially gentle with you.

ALLAN Annie, listen, I need a monthly massage quota?

ANNE Four?

ALLAN Two!

ANNE Three!

ALLAN *(speaks quickly and loud)* Two and a half. Done!

Allan steps away, happy to change the subject.

How about having Brian and Bev experience your massage talent?

ANNE They don't have a massage table.

ALLAN *(wanting to share the pain)* Too bad.

ANNE It's obvious they both need help.

Allan enjoys the thought of other massage victims.

ALLAN Christmas! We'll get them a massage table for Christmas!

ANNE I've been thinking.

ALLAN (*eager*) About Brian and Bev's massage table?

ANNE No! The library! You're after a hot librarian!

ALLAN (*makes a weird face*) Library sex?

ANNE The allure of a cultured women!

ALLAN I am a charming reader.

ANNE You're forgetting an important charm!

ALLAN What's that?

ANNE Me!!!

Allan mimics being torn between two women.

ALLAN After a tremendous struggle, the spectacled, frumpy librarian was no match for the magnetic allure of the wifie Annie. (*hugs her*) What are your plans for today?

ANNE I've cleaned everything in the apartment! I'll need the car. You can walk to the library.

ALLAN It's supposed to be hot later.

ANNE I'll pick you up, so it'll just be one way.

ALLAN (*shrugs*) Shopping again?

ANNE As you might recall, Bev and I go to mahjong every Wednesday night. This Wednesday I'm driving everyone, so I need it clean. It's filthy.

ALLAN Didn't you sanitize the car this morning?

ANNE Not the interior.

ALLAN You cleaned the interior two weeks ago.

ANNE The interior accumulates a month of dirt in two weeks.

ALLAN Annie, listen carefully. You're a glass is half empty person.

ANNE No.

ALLAN You think your glass is half full?

ANNE My glass is clean and in the cupboard. Bev and Brian are coming for dinner, expected at six. And no dentist jokes. Brian's very sensitive. Bev told me Brian's got an insect problem he needs to deal with, so they might be a couple minutes late.

End of Act One, Scene Two

LIGHTS OUT

ACT ONE, SCENE THREE

Time: Evening

Place: Anne and Allan's Apartment Livingroom

*A few bars of Restaurant Ambience Music – Cozy
Restaurant BGM, Lounge Music, Dinner Music –
Instrumental Jazz (on YouTube)*

LIGHTS UP:

ALLAN (O.S.) We could retire to more comfortable seating.

ANNE (O.S.) Absolutely. Sitting on dining room chairs can be uncomfortable.

*Allan and Anne ENTER from the dining room area holding
full wine glasses. They sip wine.*

BEV (O.S.) It was a wonderful meal.

ANNE Unfortunate Brian felt he had to stand the whole time.

Brian has difficulty speaking over the next few dialogues.

BRIAN (O.S.) (*painful, stilted talking*) Meal was good. What I managed to eat was de . . . good.

ALLAN I wouldn't have thought a few bees could affect anyone's appetite.

ANNE Brian was very brave.

ALLAN Or stupid.

ANNE Allan!

*Brian and Bev ENTER from the dining room area, each
carry wine glasses with wine.*

*Brian has ten red dots over his face, his cheeks are puffed
out, possibly cotton batten or paper towel.*

All but Brian sit on the sofa.

BEV I got the stingers out. Ten bites on the face alone, more elsewhere.

BRIAN There's a grand total?

BEV Face ten, back . . .

BRIAN They don't need to know where, just total!

BEV Forty-seven.

Pained look from Brian and everyone.

BRIAN Hard to chew, (*motions to face*) Cancelled office appointments for week. Secretary and hygienist got holiday. It cost me a weeks' work!

ALLAN I'll take care of it tomorrow with my never-fail beehive elimination system.

BEV Brian had his bee system. Look at him. Those bees aren't normal. They're demon sharky bees. They were on to him from the start, read his mind.

Brian starts to sit on the sofa chair, stops, tries again, and stops.

ALLAN *(to Brian)* Have a seat. After the day you've had, you deserve to relax.

BEV *(to Brian)* Go ahead, Hon, it should be okay.

Brian, slowly, painfully, gingerly, sits on the sofa chair.

I got most of the stingers out.

Brian gives Bev a droll, unbelieving painful look.

BRIAN *(sarcastic)* Thanks.

ALLAN *(to Brian, feeling his pain)* Got yu.

Allan and Brian do fist bumps.

Was it your plan to knock the hive into a garbage then slide the lid on?

BRIAN It always worked before. Hit nest with hockey stick; wouldn't fall; more I hit more came after me; gave up, crawled out; they didn't give up; *(voice breaking)* followed me out; stinging and stinging!

BEV You must have given off the wrong vibrations.

ALLAN Vibrations?

BEV Brian says . . . what was it, Love? Something about if you like bees, bees will like you . . . about sending them happy vibrations? Wasn't that it?

Brian returns a pained look to Bev.

They sensed your fear, so they attacked like little sharks. Isn't that right, Love?

Brian returns another pained look to Bev, then looks to Allan.

BRIAN *(to Allan)* What's your system?

ALLAN You gotta use a metal garbage can with a metal lid, with gas in the can. Put it under the beehive, cut the nest down with my long-handled pruning snips, right into the can, then pop the lid on top. Fumes take care of them. I've got the can and snips in the storage area. We can get them out for the onslaught.

Brian and Allan EXIT through the kitchen entrance.

BEV Do you think Allan can send out the right vibrations, manage the garbage can, the lid, gas, and everything else?

ANNE Allan doesn't believe in vibrations.

BEV Allan's a teacher.

ANNE So?

BEV He's good at instructing. What about doing?

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ANNE Allan can be a mister-know-it-all at times.

BEV Not a mister-do-it-all?

ANNE (*shrugs*) He golfs.

BEV After seeing what happened to Brian, I'd be afraid. Why isn't Allan afraid?

ANNE (*gleeful*) Allan's never been stung.

BEV He doesn't know what he's missing.

ANNE (*gleeful*) I've never taken stingers out before, but it sounds like fun.

LIGHTS OUT

End of Act One, Scene Three

ACT ONE, SCENE FOUR

Time: Evening

Place: Allan and Anne's Apartment Livingroom

The song "HURTS SO BAD" plays. (starts to play from the words "Hurts so bad . . .")

LIGHTS UP:

Four pieces of large luggage sit at the front door.

Brian still has ten bee stings on his face, sits on the sofa chair, drinks a beer from a bottle.

BRIAN *(placid, but loud)* I usually drink lager. I find your ale refreshing.

ALLAN *(O.S.)* You're not furious?

BRIAN *(placid, loud)* Not particularly.

ALLAN *(O.S.)* How come?

BRIAN *(placid, loud)* I have an unusual knack.

ALLAN *(O.S.)* What's that?

BRIAN *(placid, loud)* I've learned to see the big picture, the entertaining big picture.

ALLAN *(O.S.)* The nasty big picture!

Bev and Anne ENTER from the DR door.

BEV *(on seeing Brian)* Wha's going on?

BRIAN *(placid, stares off into space)* Nothing.

Bev takes Anne to the side.

BEV When he's overstressed, he mellows out. He sounds placid, but he's screaming inside.

Bev turns to Brian, pronouncing words slowly.

Why did Allan telephone to tell us to meet here?

BRIAN *(placid)* Did he?

BEV What's our luggage doing here?!

BRIAN *(placid)* Luggage?

BEV *(to Anne)* See.
(to Brian, points to luggage) That!

Brian twigs to the luggage, snaps out of placidity.

BRIAN Allan should be the one to impart that tidbit of information with the not so glad tidings. Allan!

Allan ENTERS from the kitchen area. He holds tweezers and staggers.

There are seventeen red marks (bee stings) on Allan's face, puffy cheeks and his hair and clothes are sooty.

The women jump back.

ALLAN The bee, uh . . .

BRIAN . . . fiasco.

ALLAN . . . plan! It didn't go . . . well.

ANNE The onslaught became a unslaught.

Anne moves to Allan, takes the tweezers from Allan shaking hand.

She tries to take stingers out of Allan's face, but he waves her off.

ANNE They swarmed you?!

ALLAN A swarm of little sharks, biting and biting.

BRIAN I've heard bees sting, don't bite.

Allan gives Brian a condemning look.

ANNE Hon, you're a mess.

Allan gives her a knowing look.

Anne looks closely at his face.

It was a feeding frenzy.

ALLAN *(waves her off)* It was . . . *(in pain)* nothing.

Brian, Bev and Anne stare at Allan.

BRIAN Looks like something to me.

ALLAN Next to nothing.

Allan is in pain as he tries to sit in the sofa chair.

BRIAN Go ahead. *(smiles)* I know the feeling.

Allan gives a twisted smile as rear hits the sofa.

The ladies sit on the sofa with Brian.

BRIAN I was the hero of the day, wasn't I Allan?

ALLAN Brian pulled me out . . .

BRIAN . . . by the ankles, with no concern for my own safety.

ALLAN . . . after it went off.

BEV Went off?

ANNE What went off?

BRIAN (*stands*) The garbage can went whoooosh (*gestures*) practically exploded.

ALLAN Sorry about the deck.

BEV (*jumps up distressed*) Our deck? Our new deck?! Our only deck?!!

BRIAN Blew up. Burned up. One or the other. Maybe both. You know . . . gasoline?

ALLAN (*motions that it's hard to talk*) Hit the nest with my long pruning sheers; nest was cemented between joists; didn't fall in can; they stung and stung me, then . . .

BRIAN . . . the pruning sheers dropped on the metal garbage can, I emphasize the word metal; then came the whoooosh, probably due to a spark; flames shot up from the gas in the can like a massive blow torch into the bottom of the deck.

BEV (*distressed*) My deck?

Anne stands beside Bev, puts an arm around her.

BRIAN Gone.

BEV (*distressed*) House?

BRIAN Saved.

BEV (*happy, relieved*) Saved.

BRIAN Water damage.

BEV (*distressed*) Water?

BRIAN Fire department.

BEV (*distressed*) My abstract?

BRIAN Saved.

BEV (*happy, relieved*) Saved.

ALLAN Mostly.

BEV Mostly?!

BRIAN It has more of an abstract bent.

ALLAN Yeah, bent. The ultimate abstract. An abstract abstract.

BEV No!!!

BRIAN You remember Hildie, my favorite nude?

BEV I'd like to forget her.

BRIAN (*sad*) Her hills are gone.

BEV Ahhhhhhh!

BRIAN (*sad*) Hildie's now . . .

BEV What?

BRIAN (*sad*) Harry!

BRIAN One of the firemen offered a hundred for it.

ALLAN Brian said he's gay.

Bev and Anne look horrified at Brian.

ANNE Brian?

BEV Brian! So, you're gay?!!

ANNE (*big smile*) Brian's . . .

ALLAN (*laughs*) Not Brian. The fireman!

BEV (*to Brian*) Hon, you're sure about . . .

BRIAN Yes, Hon.!!!! I haven't changed! I'm still your straight husband!!

BEV Did you sell my abstract to the fireman?

BRIAN No! It's still your . . . (*shrugs looks to Allan*)

ALLAN . . . visually challenged painting.

BEV (*distressed*) Ahhhhhhh!

BRIAN My ant Fred is dead!

ALLAN I killed your aunt?!!

BRIAN My ant Fred!

ANNE A family member has died?

BRIAN (*near tears*) I'll miss ant Fred. Couldn't take the heat. Cremated. Terrible.

Anne moves behind the chair Allan is sitting on, both horrified.

ALLAN We should notify the authorities.

BRIAN (*resigned*) Ant Fred was as close to perfect any ant can get. I'll try to forget.

ALLAN Your Aunt Fred lived, died, cremated, remembered, and . . . forgotten, all in the space of an hour!!

ANNE This is a tragedy!

BRIAN Bees are gone, so it wasn't a complete waste.

Anne and Allan are aghast, mouths agape.

BEV What'll we do?

BRIAN I called the insurance company.

ALLAN You insured your aunt?

BRIAN Unfortunately, priceless ant Fred was not insured. The house.

ALLAN
AND
ANNE *(fearful)* And?

BRIAN Said they'd cover everything but our accommodations for three months, the time needed to repair the damage.

ALLAN You're staying with us!

ANNE *(to Allan)* In our apartment?

ALLAN Certainly! We have three bedrooms, lots of room.

BRIAN Rent free?

ALLAN Of course.

BRIAN Beer free?

ALLAN Sure.

BEV Like camping out.

BRIAN Penthouse living with beer benefits.

Anne leans into Allan, huddle away from Brian and Bev.

ANNE If Brian has an Aunt Fred, he'll have an Uncle Alice.

ALLAN What are you saying?

ANNE He's nuts! We can't have crazy people move in with us.

ALLAN We've known them for years.

ANNE Does anyone ever really know anyone else?

ALLAN *(reels back)* Yes, they do! It's the strain of the ordeal!

ANNE What about my night-time democratic rights?

ALLAN *(reels back)* What rights?

ANNE My freedom of expression . . . at night.

ALLAN I'm mostly responsible for this disaster, so they'll expect us to pay for them to stay in a hotel for three months, and I wouldn't blame them.

ANNE Good point.

Allan turns to Brian.

ALLAN Brian.

BRIAN Yes, Allan.

ALLAN The building comes with a workshop for guys who like to tinker. Interested?
(*shrugs*) It'll take our minds off our discomfort.

Brian shrugs, stands. Brian and Allan EXIT out the DR door.

Anne and Bev sit on the sofa.

ANNE You and Brian certainly have unusual family members.

BEV There's black sheep in every family. We've got our share.

ANNE Would Brian be considered a black sheep or possibly . . . mentally unstable?

BEV Brian's the whitest sheep in his family. Brian's brother is a saxophone player. I could tell you stories.

ANNE Oh?

BEV Brian's a dentist! Dentists are normal people.

ANNE Do you recall the recent death of a family member?

BEV No, I don't.

ANNE What about Fred?

BEV Fred?

ANNE Tell me about . . . Aunt Fred.

BEV Getting rid of ant Fred was the only positive thing to come out of this disaster. Brian's ant was creepy! I'm happy to see that creep burn!

Aghast, Anne passes out.

LIGHTS OUT

End of Act One, Scene Four

ACT ONE, SCENE FIVE

Time: Morning

Place: Allan and Anne's Apartment Livingroom

*A few bars of Restaurant Ambience Music – Cozy
Restaurant BGM, Lounge Music, Dinner Music –
Instrumental Jazz (on YouTube)*

LIGHTS UP:

*Allan reads from a novel on the sofa chair. Brian reclines
on the sofa sipping a can or bottle of beer. The red bites
and effects from the fire are gone. They are in casual attire.*

BRIAN Wives who love to shop gives us a chance to buddy bond.

ALLAN *(silently reads)* Don't buddy bond -- read. So, how much longer until your house is repaired.

BRIAN And deck.

ALLAN Right.

BRIAN I hope having us living here for the last month hasn't been too much of an inconvenience? The insurance adjuster said it would be another two months before everything is finished. Is it still okay with you, having us here?

ALLAN You're fine, perfectly fine. You're both welcome to stay as long as it takes.

BRIAN Good, since we're here because of your inability to corral a bunch of bees.

ALLAN I was helping you.

BRIAN You destroyed our house!!!

ALLAN Okay, my system was flawed. Satisfied? You're still planning on having a renovation homecoming party?

BRIAN Once everything has been repaired to our satisfaction and we're moved back, we're having the biggest home-coming party ever.

ALLAN It's all Annie talks about.

BRIAN The same with Bev. They love shopping together for clothes, curtains, appliances, furniture for the opening. It goes on and on.

The phone RINGS, Brian, being closest to it, answers it.

(into phone) Bri and Al's joint, Bri. speakin'. *(pause, eyebrows go up)* Yes Monique, he's here. Just a moment.

Allan snatches the phone, returns to his chair. Speaks into it.

ALLAN Hi Monique. Yes, it's me. *(pause)* Just a friend.

(MORE)

Allan turns away, tries to muffle his conversation.

Of course, I'll be there.

Brian moves to Allan trying to hear who he's talking to on the phone.

Looking forward to our next meeting. *(pause)* Goodbye Monique.

Brian swiftly returns to his previous position.

Allan hangs up the phone, sits in the sofa chair and reads from his novel.

A silence between them.

BRIAN Girlfriend?

ALLAN Associate.

BRIAN Nice voice.

ALLAN Somewhat.

BRIAN Young?

ALLAN Fairly.

BRIAN Quite young?

Allan shrugs.

Sounded pretty . . . and friendly.

ALLAN *(looks into the book)* Quite.

BRIAN I like friendly, could stand some pretty. It would help since I've no house, deck or Fred thanks to . . .

Allan slams down his book, weary.

ALLAN *(interrupting)* This is personal, highly personal.

Brian slumps to his knees, begs.

BRIAN Please please please level with me. I'm dying for some pretty and friendly.

ALLAN *(reluctant)* It's a surprise for Annie.

BRIAN *(lusty look, stands)* Monique sounds like the type of woman who'd surprise a wife.

ALLAN Not girlfriend!

BRIAN *(stands)* Oh, what then?

ALLAN Annie likes to dance.

BRIAN Anne and Bev are both good dancers.

ALLAN Right. You're aware I'm a terrible dancer?

BRIAN I won't pick on your dancing. I'm as bad, probably worse. I shuffle to the left, to the right then back to the table as fast as possible.

ALLAN Same.

BRIAN So?

ALLAN (*hesitates*) I've enrolled in a dance class, dance lessons, so once your house grand opening eventually blossoms, I'll surprise Annie with my dancing expertise. They hold the lessons in the basement at the library.

BRIAN You'll glide to the music with Anne and I, the host, will stumble around with Bev like always. Embarrassing. I wish I could afford dancing lessons.

ALLAN (*hesitates*) If you'll let up about me burning your bee infested house and deck, I'll pay for your dancing lessons.

BRIAN Expensive?

ALLAN Five hundred. Ten lessons. Waltz, Salsa, Polka, Tango, Cha-cha, Foxtrot, Hip-Hop, even some of the new dances.

BRIAN We'll surprise our wives.

Allan stands, shakes Brian's hand.

ALLAN So we'll have no more whining about your burned-up house, deck, or Fred. I'll get you signed up. It's Wednesday nights.

BRIAN Our wives go to mahjong Wednesdays. So the apartment will be vacant.

ALLAN What are you getting at?

BRIAN I'm self-conscious about my inability to dance, don't want others to see . . . you know . . .

ALLAN So?

BRIAN Maybe the class could be here, just for us. Private lessons?

ALLAN Here?

BRIAN Yes. We could move the furniture back.

ALLAN It will cost more.

BRIAN I'll help with the extra cost.

ALLAN We're both dance deficient, so . . . yes, I'll call them and see if they can come here after they finish the regular class.

BRIAN Monique sounded attractive. Could there be a second, young, hot instructor?

ALLAN Monique and Isabella conduct the class together. Both are very attractive.

BRIAN (*big smile*) It's possible they could teach us more than dance. I've heard young women like older men.

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ALLAN (*smiles*) The possibilities are endless.

LIGHTS OUT

End of Act One, Scene Five

ACT ONE, SCENE SIX

Time: Afternoon

Place: Allan and Anne's Livingroom

A few bars of "LOVE WILL KEEP US TOGETHER" plays.

LIGHTS UP:

Bev sits on the sofa. Bev has a clipboard with papers and pen, looks at the clipboard as she speaks.

Anne ENTERS from the bedroom area, is puzzled looks at the sofa chair.

ANNE This chair has been moved. Lately I've noticed our furniture seems to be sliding around.

Anne moves the sofa chair closer to the sofa and joins Bev on the sofa.

BEV It's a long list. So far, we've ordered the curtains and dining room suite. *(looks up from clipboard)* We need everything else.

ANNE You're lucky to be getting so much new.

BEV I wish I knew more about appliances.

ANNE I love appliance shopping. If you like, we can shop for them together.

BEV Thanks Annie.

ANNE We should get moving. Price matching appliances will take time.

Brian ENTERS from the bedroom doorway dressed in casual attire that includes a bright shirt.

BEV What's the occasion?

BRIAN I ran around the building a six times, came in, showered, feel great, so wanted to look great.

ANNE I wish I could get Allan to run.

BEV Annie's helping me select appliances and furnishings for the house.

Bev and Anne move toward the door.

BRIAN Better Anne than me. I hate shopping.

BEV *(to Anne)* That's what I told Annie you'd say.

Bev and Anne EXIT the apartment but leave the clipboard behind.

Brian looks through the book Allan has been reading, shakes his head, puts it down, then goes to the stereo, takes a CD from a holder, puts it in the player.

(The CD player doesn't need to be plugged in as Brian shows the CD to the audience, stands in front of the player, slides the CD on top of the player. Audience will assume it's in the player.)

The sound of a salsa song. Brian stiff dances around the room with an imaginary partner.

The DR door opens, and Allan ENTERS. He is in casual attire.

BRIAN *(continues dancing)* Greetings to the charmer of the mysterious Monique.

ALLAN Me? You've been laughing it up dancing with the lovely Lucille.

BRIAN *(continues dancing)* I've had a run and have energy to spare. Lucille and the dancing class have me feel ten years younger. I'm looking forward to our second class. They were good to agree to have the class here. I'll show Lucille my technique.

ALLAN You're not doing it right.

Bev and Anne move onto the DR porch from O.S., hear unfamiliar music, cautiously approach the door.

You need more flexibility, here . . . I'll show you. Think of me as lovely Lucille.

Allan salsa with Brian.

If you move to the music, you'll get it. More flexing.

Anne quietly pushes the door open.

Both women see the men dancing together for about ten seconds, but don't hear them. The women show shock.

ANNE I don't believe my eyes.

BEV Our husbands are dancing?

ANNE Together! Allan dances like a drunken sailor with me, but he's going at it like a Latin lover with your husband.

BEV Brian's a bad dancer; never wants to dance with me, but . . .

ANNE *(interrupting)* They hate dancing with us, but look at them breezing around like pros. It makes no sense.

BEV Yes it does!

ANNE How?

BEV Our husbands are . . .

ANNE *(interrupting)* What?!

BEV What else can it be?!

ANNE They like each other?

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BEV Yes!

ANNE How much?

BEV Too much!!!

The ladies react. The men don't hear Anne and Bev's comments.

ANNE We don't need that clipboard. How about we take a coffee break?

Anne pulls the door closed. Anne and Bev turn and EXIT.

The men do not see the women.

ALLAN Now you've got it.

The men stop dancing. Allan turns off the music.

Allan sits on the sofa and Brian on the towel on the sofa chair.

You'll impress Lucille if you dance like that, although you'll need to lead.

BRIAN Lucille's quite the looker. I think she likes me.

Allan shrugs.

ALLAN I know Monique likes me, but it's probably only the dancing they are interested in.

BRIAN *(a twisted face)* You could be right, but on the other hand, you might not be.

Allan checks his watch.

ALLAN Let's move the furniture pushed back. They'll be here in a few minutes.

BRIAN Right.

The guys start to move the furniture toward US.

LIGHTS OUT

End of Act One, Scene Six

ACT ONE, SCENE SEVEN

Time: Afternoon

Place: Allan and Anne's Apartment Livingroom

The song "CHAIN OF FOOLS" plays.

LIGHTS UP:

Bev and Anne rush into the apartment, sit stunned on the sofa. Bev picks up the clipboard that holds her list.

The song ends.

ANNE If we hadn't returned for the clipboard, we would never have caught them.

Bev throws the clipboard.

BEV True.

ANNE I wish we hadn't.

BEV What are we going to do?

ANNE Allan and Brian are so different.

BEV They say opposites attract.

ANNE Yeah!

BEV Your Allan pushed Brian into it! Allan's responsible.

ANNE Not Allan!

BEV Who?

Anne shrugs.

The fireman?!!!

ANNE Impossible!

BEV Right. (*thinks*) Two guys live together in the same apartment, what can you expect?

ANNE I don't know.

BEV What else can it be?

ANNE Hard to fathom.

BEV Allan and Brian? It blows my mind.

ANNE Mine too. (*gestures -- exploding mind*)

BEV Our husbands are are . . .

ANNE What?

BEV Don't say it!

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ANNE Ho, Ho . . .

BEV *(interrupting)* No!

ANNE What?

BEV I don't know . . . uh . . . let's call it ambiguous sexual preferences!!

Bev and Anne jump up, look at each other then DS.

BEV
AND
ANNIE

Ahhhhhhha!

BEV What are we going to do?

Bev starts to cry.

ANNE How about a gin and tonic?

BEV To dull the pain.

Anne moves towards the kitchen.

ANNE Double?

BEV More!

LIGHTS OUT THEN COMES UP AGAIN (INDICATES TIME PASSING)

Anne and Bev are on the sofa.

Anne pours gin into water glasses for her and Bev. She puts a couple ounces in the bottom of each glass. They drink.

If Brian and I never moved in with you and Allan we would have gone on as always, now . . .

Bev throws arms up. Anne ignores Bev's comment.

ANNE *(wailing to the ceiling)* Men are impossible to understand.

BEV *(wailing to the ceiling)* Why?!!

LIGHTS OUT THEN COMES UP AGAIN (INDICATES TIME PASSING)

Anne and Bev are slumped down on the sofa. Anne half fills their glasses with gin. They slur their words.

ANNE It's Brian's fault!

BEV Not Brian!

ANNE I know for sure it's not Allan!

LIGHTS OUT THEN COMES UP AGAIN (INDICATES TIME PASSING)

Anne and Bev have slid off the sofa, both drunk on the floor at the foot of the sofa. Anne drinks from the bottle.

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Anne jumps up.

ANNE The queen bee!

Bev jumps up.

BEV Right! It's the queen bee's fault!!

ANNE High five!

The ladies wind up for a massive high five, their hands miss, momentum taking them to the floor. Both look at their "high five" hands, wondering what happened.

ANNE If that queen bee didn't move in under your deck our husbands would still love us.

BEV We should declare war on all the queen bees everywhere.

ANNE Buy a dozen cans of bug spray and let 'em have it. Kill 'em all!

LIGHTS OUT THEN COMES UP AGAIN (INDICATES TIME PASSING)

The ladies are passed out in awkward positions on the floor in front of the sofa.

Bev jumps up.

BEV It's not the queen bee's fault!

ANNE Feels so right.

BEV You've got your need to clean! I've got my need to paint!

Anne jumps up.

ANNE Are you saying we, us, we're responsible?!!

BEV It was my painting!

ANNE And my cleaning!

BEV I might be obsessed!

ANNE Our obsessions turned them away from us . . .

BEV *(interrupting)* . . . toward each other! It was us!

ANNE How could we not see it?!!!!

BEV *(eager)* Maybe it's not too late. We can encourage our guys back!

ANNE How?

BEV We turn up our bedtime feminine charms!

ANNE Yeah. Allan and I've been stuck in low gear, but we're not stalled!

BEV It's been a while since . . . you know . . . there was a lot of hot passion with us.

ANNE Hear ya. Remote control. We could shop for some, some, uh, flattering fashions.

BEV Absolutely.

ANNE We'll reinvent ourselves, become hot hot hot.

BEV Acquire suggestive fashions. Do you ever get tired of shopping?

ANNE Never.

BEV Never get tired of shopping.

ANNE It's our DNA molecules. We got the "love to shop" molecules.

BEV Brian's got the "hate to shop" molecules.

ANNE Same with Allan.

BEV They've got other molecules.

ANNE The "constant need for sex" molecules!

BEV That's the ones.

ANNE Let's toast shopping. (*grabs gin bottle*) To shopping.

Anne takes a slug from the bottle, passes it to Bev. She drinks from the bottle.

BEV To intense bedtime attention!

Bev takes a slug from the bottle, passes it to Anne. She drinks from the bottle.

ANNE Night heat for our guys!

They pass out onto the sofa.

LIGHTS OUT

End of Act One, Scene Seven

ACT ONE, SCENE EIGHT

Time: Morning

Place: Allan and Anne's Apartment Livingroom

The song "LOVE HURTS" plays.

LIGHTS UP:

Allan, looking dishevelled, in pain, pale and walking like he's been kicked in the testicles, ENTERS from the bedroom dressed in pyjamas, sits in the sofa chair, picks up a book, tries to read, drops the book, curls up to sleep.

Brian staggers in from the bedroom in his robe, walking the same way. The song ends.

Allan notices Brian.

ALLAN What happened to you?

Brian is almost to the sofa, stops.

BRIAN *(in pain)* Pulled something.

ALLAN Something?

BRIAN A muscle. *(loud)* Big one!

Brian collapses on the sofa.

ALLAN *(finger to lips)* Shuuuuuush.

BRIAN *(softer)* Right.

ALLAN *(desperate under his breath)* Don't wake them.

BRIAN You look like shit.

ALLAN So do you.

BRIAN I woke up . . . exhausted.

ALLAN Insomnia?

BRIAN Something else. What's your excuse?

ALLAN *(whining)* I don't sleep, so tired . . . no energy.

BRIAN Tennis players eat bananas for energy.

ALLAN There's a bunch in the kitchen.

BRIAN It's your kitchen. A banana might get me through the remains of my day.

(MORE)

Allan struggles up, EXITS into the kitchen walking like before, ENTERS with two bananas, throws one at Brian. Brian tries to catch it with one hand. It hits him on the head.

Pulled muscle?

ALLAN It could be . . . It seems that . . . uh. I'm pretty sure . . .

BRIAN What?

ALLAN We've pulled the same muscle.

They simultaneously half peel the bananas.

They start to put it in their mouths, stop, pull it back, look at each other for three seconds, break pieces of the banana off and eat it that way.

Neither wants to give the impression they could be gay.

BRIAN I got thirty minutes sleep. A long night.

ALLAN Forty-five here.

BRIAN Mahjong has to be an aphrodisiac.

ALLAN It's an ancient dice and tile game! Doesn't encourage sex! Not aphrodisiac.

BRIAN Usually we have sex once or twice a week, occasionally we skip a week, depending, but now . . .

ALLAN More?

ALLAN A lot more. My Anne's become a sex machine.

BRIAN For the last five nights Bev's turned into a hot hooker.

ALLAN My Anne wants it all night!

BRIAN Shusssssh.

ALLAN Three times a night for the last five nights. There's a limit.

BRIAN Lucky you?

ALLAN Why?

BRIAN Three and . . . uh . . . for me.

ALLAN And a what?

BRIAN A half.

ALLAN A half?

BRIAN Went unconscious.

ALLAN Every night for five nights!

BRIAN That's when it started with us!

ALLAN Weird.

BRIAN Could be the moon.

ALLAN Not the moon.

BRIAN A virus?

ALLAN *(shakes head)* If it were a virus, we'd have caught it by now.

BRIAN Right. No moon, no virus, no cause.

ALLAN But a definite effect.

BRIAN Big effect.

ALLAN I've never said no to sex.

BRIAN Too much is never enough.

ALLAN That's been my motto until . . .

BRIAN Now?

ALLAN Yeah.

BRIAN Ditto.

ALLAN Yeah.

BRIAN What'll we do?

ALLAN We're not equipped to deal with sharkie bees or sexually deranged wives.

BRIAN We're missing the "say no to sex" molecule.

ALLAN It's our DNA's fault.

BRIAN Therapy?

ALLAN A therapist would laugh and toss us out on our ears.

BRIAN Right.

ALLAN It's Kafkaesque.

BRIAN Kafka what?

ALLAN Kafka wrote about weird stuff happening.

BRIAN We've got weird.

ALLAN In his *Metamorphosis* a man awakes one morning to find he's been turned into a six-foot bug.

BRIAN *(jumps up, frozen in fear)* An ant?!!

ALLAN Beatle, I think.

BRIAN How did it end.

ALLAN Not good.

BRIAN For the bug or man?

ALLAN Both.

Terrified, Brian looks at his hands, arms.

BRIAN My stomach is churning. I'm feeling more and more . . . ant-like!

ALLAN You're not turning into an ant!

Allan grabs Brian.

Get a grip, man!

BRIAN *(sits)* Thanks. Between Bev and that damn hound at the other end of the building howling on and on, it's left me utterly exhausted.

ALLAN That wasn't a hound.

BRIAN Wind? We're on the twenty-third floor. Wind can distort sound.

ALLAN Annie enjoys her night-time freedom of expression.

BRIAN Democratic sex?

ALLAN Keeps me interested and awake.

BRIAN I'm living in a silent sex movie.

ALLAN Annie's got her night-time dramatic bent.

BRIAN Is it genuine?

ALLAN Don't know. Ever since that eighty's movie with Meg Ryan, Billy Crystal, guys don't know.

BRIAN What about the neighbors?

ALLAN I've been telling them it's the hound at the other end of the building.

BRIAN What'll we do?

ALLAN About?

BRIAN Our bedtime . . . challenges!

ALLAN We could find something to do to get us out of range.

BRIAN Good idea.

ALLAN Do you golf?

BRIAN No.

ALLAN But you'll do it?

BRIAN *(desperate)* Anything!

ALLAN Tomorrow night?

BRIAN Night golfing?

ALLAN I wish. Afternoons.

BRIAN How's that supposed to help?

ALLAN If we've played thirty-six holes, we can say we're too tired. They'll take mercy on us.

BRIAN *(happy)* A night off would be appreciated.

ALLAN We'll have to think up other activities.

BRIAN I'll give it some thought. How about another banana?

ALLAN You get them. I've gone numb from the waist down.

Brian struggles up, takes both banana skins, moves toward the kitchen opening. "LOVE HURTS" plays.

LIGHTS OUT

End of Act One – End of Sample