

# Four-Hour Casanova

*A pharmaceutical comedy in three acts*

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*Cast of characters in order of appearance*

RUBEN ZUCKERMAN	A film producer in his late fifties, early sixties
EMILIO	A young bellhop at five-star hotel in the theater district in London
INDIA	Ex-wife, 20 years his junior
RAIN FAIRWEATHER	A young doctor at the hotel
ELIZABETH MCCORMICK	An old flame – (Ruben thinks she’s the one that got away)
NORMA DESMOND	A young and upcoming actress on the London theater scene

## ACT I.

*The Curtain goes up on the living-room area of a penthouse suite in a five-star hotel in the Strand area - the theatre district in London. The Big Ben strikes one.*

*The door opens and EMILIO – the hotel bellhop, a handsome, dark haired, well-built Latin male, in a smartly fitted uniform, enters carrying two oversized, Louis Vuitton, cases. Emilio holds the door open for RUBEN. Ruben is a man in his late fifties or early sixties. He is desperately fighting aging. He is dressed as a young man, his hair is long, and the grey is skillfully concealed under a dark brown wig. He displays an out-of-season tan. His sunglasses are Ray-Ban, his three-piece suit is by Armani, his shirt by Perry Ellis, and his shoes are Gucci. A pen in his pocket tells us that it is an Omas; his shiny wristwatch is a bold, golden Breitling Bentley. He needs bifocals but refuses to wear glasses. He reminds us of Woody Allen trying to pass for Alec Baldwin. He looks around the room looking for something to criticize. Not finding anything, he walks to the window, looks out, and turns to Emilio.)*

RUBEN: Would it have killed them to put a fruit basket in the room?

*(Emilio picks up a fruit basket from a table that Ruben had not noticed.)*

EMILIO: Here, sir. Would you care for some?

RUBEN: Never mind that. *(pause)* Does it ever stop raining in this town?

EMILIO: This is unusual for this time of the year.

RUBEN: So you say.

EMILIO: Shall I put these in the bedroom, sir?

RUBEN: (*walks to the door leading to the bedroom*) Yes, move the ammunition to the battlefield. This is not a king-size bed!

EMILIO: This is the biggest size bed we have, sir.

RUBEN: You'd never get away with that cot as a king-size bed in America.

EMILIO: I'm sorry, sir.

RUBEN: I imagine there are advantages to a small size bed.

EMILIO: (*getting past Ruben with the suitcases*) Excuse me, sir. (*returning from the bed minus the luggage*) Will there be anything else sir?

RUBEN: Your accent... are you from Mexico?

EMILIO: I'm from Spain.

RUBEN: They speak Mexican there?

EMILIO: They speak Spanish, but I understand the language that passes for Spanish in Mexico.... Habla Español, señor?

RUBEN: *Oui, comrade, ich habla espnaiol*, you bet your ass.

EMILIO: Will there be anything else, sir?

RUBEN: No, that will be all for now.... *Amigo*. Say, do you know if my assistant, Leo has checked in yet?

EMILIO: (*taking out an envelope from his pocket*) Yes, sir, Mr. Leo Marcus arrived two hours ago. He is in room 310. Two floors below. He instructed me to give you this.

RUBEN: He instructed you! Why the hell is he not here?

EMILIO: He has stepped out to get you your favorite brand of Scotch.

RUBEN: What, this dump does not have green-label Johnny Walker!

EMILIO: We used to have it, but lately, there hasn't been much demand for it, or for the black-label?

RUBEN: The Brits are not drinking anymore?

EMILIO: You'd be pleased to hear that people here have developed a fondness for Kentucky whiskey.

RUBEN: There's no accounting for public taste in liquor or leaders.

EMILIO: Did Winston Churchill say that?

RUBEN: No, Groucho Marx did, I think. *(opening the envelop and reading from a small note)*  
Humm, good, good. *(consulting his watch)* Two PM, and then four PM. Norma at five,  
and premiere at six-thirty.

EMILIO: Good luck with the premiere of your picture, Mr. Zuckerman.

RUBEN: Thank you. Here *(hands him a 10 Euro bill)*.

EMILIO: *(pocketing the money without showing his disappointment)* Have a pleasant stay,  
sir. If there's anything at all that you desire, I am at your disposal.

RUBEN: *(as Emilio is about to close the front door behind himself)* Tell Leo to come up at  
once.

EMILIO: I will tell Mr. Marcus soon as he returns.

*(Emilio exits)*

*(Ruben goes into the bathroom; a moment later, a toilet is flushed. He appears at the door wiping his hands on a hotel towel. He picks up the phone and pushes a button for the front desk.)*

RUBEN: Yes, room service, this is Ruben Zuckerman in suite .... Yes, that's right. Could you send up Emilio? Thanks.

*(Continues to wipe his hands. He picks up the small note pad and writes something on it.)*

*(Emilio enters.)*

EMILIO: You called for me, Sir, how may I be of service?

RUBEN: Well, it's a kind of delicate matter.... I only have a couple of days here, and with my busy schedule, I do not have the time to... to....

EMILIO: I fully understand, Sir.

RUBEN: You do?

EMILIO: Perfectly, Sir, we Europeans are very understanding and accommodating of such delicate matters.

RUBEN: You are? That's good to know.

EMILIO: If you'd care to tell me what your preference would be, and at what time, and how many....

RUBEN: What are you talking about?

EMILIO: Girls.

RUBEN: Girls!

EMILIO: Or if you'd prefer....

RUBEN: Hold it, right there. You got it all wrong. I am a movie producer, I've got girls coming out of my ears, and I don't need you or anyone else to get me any girls. I could set you up with four right now, this minute.

EMILIO: I'm a happily married man.

RUBEN: There's no such thing.

EMILIO: I'm sorry, Sir, I perhaps misunderstood.

RUBEN: You damn well did.

EMILIO: My apologies, Sir. How may I be of assistance?

RUBEN: *(extending a small piece of paper to him)* Normally, I don't need anything like this, but with all the pressure of the premiere and traveling, and the jet lag, I just don't want to disappoint anyone...you understand...

EMILIO: Of course... *(looking at the paper)* Viagra! No problem.

RUBEN: Shush...not so loud, keep it down; I don't want the entire European Union to hear about this.

EMILIO: Of course not, Sir.

RUBEN: You see, I haven't seen Mrs. Zuckerman, that's my wife, (*pause*) err in five years.

EMILIO: That is a long time.

RUBEN: Yes, well, a little later, another old friend of mine is going to drop by. Now promise that you won't utter a word of this to anyone...

EMILIO: My lips are sealed.

RUBEN: They'd better be tightly sealed. Because the other lady is Beth McCormick.

EMILIO: Do you mean Dame Beth McCormick, the movie actress?

RUBEN: What do you mean by calling her a dame?

EMILIO: That's her title, sir. She was knighted.

RUBEN: Night-ed? What does that mean?

EMILIO: She was given the title by Her Majesty the Queen.

RUBEN: Beth McCormick is a Sir?

EMILIO: Dame. (*count three*) And she's coming to see you? Beth McCormick, the movie star?

RUBEN: Who else? Beth McCormick, a daredevil pilot! (*pause*) But not a word to anyone.

EMILIO: You can count on me.... Do you think that I could meet her...Shake hands with her? I am a big fan. Her autograph...? Be introduced to her?

RUBEN: You mean, as a person?

EMILIO: It would mean so much to me.

RUBEN: I may be able to arrange that for you. And don't forget that later in the evening, I have to take a talented stage actress, Norma ... something, to the premiere.

EMILIO: You have a busy afternoon.

RUBEN: You can say that again.

EMILIO: You have a busy afternoon.

RUBEN: What I'm driving at is this. Can you get me what might be needed? And can you keep it under your hat?

EMILIO: I don't think that keeping it under the hat would help any.

RUBEN: Never mind the hat. Can you keep it a secret?

EMILIO: I can get you the very best stuff.

RUBEN: *(pushing some bills into his hand)* And on the way up, see if Leo's gotten the scotch. If he has, you bring it and tell Leo not to disturb me until six PM.

*(Emilio starts for the door. The phone rings. Emilio and Ruben exchange a glance.)*

EMILIO: Should I?

RUBEN: Of course, I never answer my own phone.

*(Emilio picks up the phone.)*

EMILIO: Mr. Zuckerman's suite.... May I ask who's calling? No, this is not Leo.... Very good, Madame. *(turning to Ruben)* Someone says it's, India!

RUBEN:*(taking the receiver from Emilio)* Hello dear, how are you. No, I have not fired Leo. That was Emilio, the boy would make a fine producer someday. *(Ruben signals Emilio to leave. Emilio exits.)* Where are you calling from? When will you be here? Wonderful. Don't talk like that! Of course, the coast is clear. I mean, I am looking forward to seeing you again. Hurry up dear.

*(Ruben hangs up the phone and goes into the bedroom. He comes out carrying a bucket with a champagne bottle and two glasses. He places the tray at the coffee table. He reconsiders his strategy; he pours champagne in the two glasses and takes the bottle back to the bedroom. As he re-enters, the front door opens, and Emilio comes in carrying a bottle of Green Label Johnny Walker whiskey.)*

RUBEN: Got everything?

EMILIO: Everything. The whiskey, and two pills of Via...

RUBEN: *(interrupting)* Don't say it, don't say it. The walls have ears. *(Ruben takes both pills from the small envelop, picks a champagne glass and with is back to Emilio, takes the two pills then turns back to Emilio)* And have you told Leo not to bother me?

EMILIO: Yes, I informed Mr. Leo that you wished not to be disturbed.

*(As Emilio is leaving, Ruben mutters to no one in particular)*

RUBEN: You'd make a great movie producer.

Lights out.

End of Scene 1.

Scene 2. (*The Big Ben strikes two.*)

(*A loud yell is heard from the bedroom*)

RUBEN: (*offstage*) Emilio! Now! This minute. (*A telephone is slammed down hard. A moment later, Ruben appears in a dress shirt, a bow tie, black socks, and a silk bathrobe. He seems to be experiencing equal doses of pain and rage. The door opens, and Emilio enters.*)

EMILIO: Yes, Mr. Ruben?

RUBEN: Emilio, what did you get me? What was in those pills.

EMILIO: Viagra from Colombia, the best kind. One pill and you're set for the night.

RUBEN: One pill! I took them both.

EMILIO: You only needed to take one, but ...

RUBEN: Only one! Why didn't you say so in the first place?

EMILIO: But two won't hurt any.

RUBEN: Hurt is exactly what I'm talking about.

EMILIO: I don't understand. Is there a problem?

RUBEN: I say. Here, look at this! (*with his back to the audience, Ruben opens his robe to show the "problem"*) I say, there's a problem.

(*Emilio stares at the "problem". At first, he is bewildered and then he seems genuinely impressed by what he sees.*)

EMILIO: Pardon me, Mr. Zuckerman, I would be proud to have such a ... problem.

RUBEN: I am in pain. I can't put my pants on. I can't even put my shorts on.

EMILIO: Oh, just a mild side effect. I'll bring you bags of ice. Lots of ice. Ice-cold water should subdue the... the... issue. You may have to sit in the bathtub with ice water.

RUBEN: Ice? Get me a doctor!

EMILIO: I'll get the hotel doctor. *(picking up the phone and dials a single digit)* Front desk? Yes, we need the doctor in suite 310, for Mr. Zuckerman. Yes, it is an emergency. A big emergency. *(to Ruben)* The doctor will be here shortly.

RUBEN: Don't just stand there, Emilio, get me some ice, in the meantime.

*(Emilio exits. A moment later Emilio rushes in. Ruben covers himself as best as he can and stands behind the sofa from where only the upper half of his body is visible to the audience. He plays the rest of the scene standing behind the sofa and other furniture.)*

*(Emilio is followed by an elegant looking woman in her forties. She is stylishly dressed. It is obvious that a professional makeup artist has spent many hours on her face. Her hairclip, her overcoat, her handbag, her shoes, and other accessories scream high-priced designers. It is obvious that she has had work done on her face and other parts that are susceptible to gravity and time. She is a 45-year-old woman trying to pass for a 25-year-old. This is INDIA. She notices the bottle of whiskey, two glasses with champagne, Ruben in a state of half-undress, and Emilio at the door. She walks to Ruben and kisses him on the cheek.)*

INDIA: Hello, darling, am I early?

RUBEN: No, no. You're not early. What time is it?

INDIA: (*looking at her diamond-studded Cartier. She needs glasses but is too vain to wear them*) I have no idea.

RUBEN: It's good to see you. You look terrific.

INDIA: Really? You think so? You're sweet, thanks.

EMILIO: I'll be back with ice.

RUBEN: Good. Please hurry.

(*Emilio exits.*)

INDIA: Ice? Since when do you add ice to your Scotch?

RUBEN: It's not for the whiskey. It's for ... for, the champagne. It's warm.

(*India picks up a glass from the table and sips it.*)

INDIA: Seems cold enough to me. Here, try some. (*she hands him the other glass.*)

(*She notices Ruben in his robe who is trying not to offer her his frontal view.*)

INDIA: I still prefer scotch. Is that the green label?

RUBEN: Yes, dear, I brought it for you, all the way from New York.

INDIA: That was thoughtful of you.

RUBEN: (*picking up the bottle of champagne*) But, India, dear, this is 1961. That was an excellent year for the grapes in Bordeaux...

INDIA: Says who?

RUBEN: Says, Sean Connery.

INDIA: That worthless lush. Bordeaux is known for red wines; it's in the southwest of France. Champagne region is northeast. (*pause*) I see that you didn't want to waste any time. Something you picked from Sean Connery's James Bond persona?

RUBEN: Oh, no dear, I was going to do yoga.

INDIA: You what? I didn't know you were into yoga. What brought that on?

RUBEN: It helps me relax. You should try it. It beats analysis and it's a hell of a lot cheaper.

INDIA: (*somewhat alarmed*) Are you not in analysis anymore?

RUBEN: I am, but I have cut it down to twice a week.

INDIA: Tell me about the movie. Tell me about your schedule. How long will you stay in London? Or, more directly, how much time do we have?

RUBEN: I leave for Athens tomorrow, then Madrid and Lisbon, the next day. Next week it's Berlin and Warsaw. Then I must go to Singapore, Hong Kong, and Beijing. On to Australia and back to L.A. If the movie picks up some momentum, we may come back and do Stockholm, Copenhagen, and Helsinki. But the Scandinavians don't like anything American unless it's by Woody Allen.... And how much time do we have? Just this afternoon, not even the whole afternoon. Just a couple of hours.... I have to leave for Greece tomorrow afternoon.

INDIA: That's so *unkind*, Ruben. I was hoping we would spend the night together. You'd *take* me ... dancing.

RUBEN: You and I are past our dancing days.

INDIA: Speak for yourself.... We have not seen each other in ... what... four years?

RUBEN: Try seven.

INDIA: My goodness. Where does time go? Seven years. (*moving closer to him*) Let me tell you Ruben, this girl still has a candle burning for you.

RUBEN: (*backing away from her*) Remember, India darling, we are divorced.

INDIA: Remember, Ruben darling, we were married, once. And divorce is just a piece of paper. It means nothing. Nobody takes divorce seriously. Divorce is a dead institution.

RUBEN: And that make it wrong for us to ... you know... fool around.

INDIA: Are you turning me down? From what I remember, you never turned anything down when we were married.

RUBEN: Hollywood gossip.

INDIA: I heard it from the most reliable sources; people with first-hand experience, some of them were my best friends.

RUBEN: Are we going to quarrel about my infidelity? (*moving away from her*) About my past behavior?

INDIA: No, I think we are quarrelling about your present behavior.

RUBEN: I think it's immoral for two divorced people to ... to ... to form a carnal association.

INDIA: I can't believe my ears! Ruben Zuckerman has used "carnal association" and "immoral" in the same sentence and declined both.

RUBEN: (*walking away from her and to the bottle*) I am not the same man you used to know.

INDIA: Apparently not. (*pause*) But in case you change your mind, I'm still the same girl. And girls like to be played with, and rumped a little too, sometimes.

RUBEN: What was that?

INDIA: It's a line from an old play, *She Stoops to Conquer*.

RUBEN: Sounds dirty, and promising.

INDIA: I was hoping, but it's wasted here. How's the movie? *Amelia Earhart: An Extraordinary Woman*. I heard that the premiere in Rome went well.

RUBEN: (*correcting her*) *Amelia Earhart: An Amazing Woman*. I bought the reviews in Rome and Milan. It's easy to do that in Italy. That's why we held the first premiere there. I hope that we picked up some momentum there. The movie...is a disaster. I'm sure you saw the New York reviews - it's a turkey. We should have opened it at Thanksgiving.

INDIA: And you think that they would be kinder here in London?

RUBEN: I'm relying on two things. I hope they've read the reviews from Rome and Milan, and each press kit includes a Rolex watch and a Mont Blanc pen. The English really go for crap that like.

INDIA: Bribe the press!

RUBEN: It's called "Cost of Doing Business". All tax deductible, all legal.

INDIA: What did the Italians get?

RUBEN: Minks and Versace bags. Don't look so noble dear. What can I tell you? The movie is a one-hundred and ten-million-dollar disaster. It bombed in New York.

INDIA: I'm sorry. If it isn't any good, why spend time and money on twenty premieres and go around the world?

RUBEN: If we don't promote it, we'll lose \$110 million. And a good portion of it is my personal money. (*India seems shocked by this bit of information*) Every premiere is costing around \$200,000. But every premiere results in five to seven million in revenue. So, this theatrics of grand openings and premieres is really a way of *cutting* the losses. In six to eight months, it may break even, and by the time the DVD comes out, we may even make a small profit.

INDIA: Frankly dear, I never understood this business.

RUBEN: Nobody in the business understands this business. It's a poker game. You have no control over the cards, all you can rely on is your ability to bluff. And that's exactly what a premiere is - a bluff. Bigger the hoopla, worse the picture.

INDIA: No wonder everybody in Hollywood was so neurotic.

RUBEN: Everybody is still neurotic in Hollywood. (*pause*) The best thing that you did was to leave that town and move with the children to London. How are the children?

INDIA: Children? They are 21 and 24.

RUBEN: I know, dear, but they're still children.

INDIA: Alexia, our daughter has decided that she hates men. She's experimenting with the idea of lesbianism.

RUBEN: Good God! India, what happened? I thought she had a boyfriend. The last I remember she was pregnant.

INDIA: She was. She's had an abortion and her boyfriend dumped her.

RUBEN: I had no idea. You should set her up with some dates. Some hot-blooded Mediterranean young men. That's what she needs, a few good men. I bet a thorough lube-job will straighten her out. Work on that, India, will you?

INDIA: Don't be ridiculous. Why do men think that sex is the solution for every problem? Why do men think that all a lesbian needs to see the light is an erect penis? That's not how it works, Ruben.

RUBEN: And you know how it works? Living with you, both our children have turned gay.

INDIA: Are you blaming me?

RUBEN: You can't blame me! You've raised them.

INDIA: Alone. Thank you very much.

RUBEN: Separation was your idea. Divorce was your idea and moving them away from Hollywood was your idea.

INDIA: You just said that was the best thing that I did!

RUBEN: I said that? I take it back. I wish I could set Alexia up with some guy. But it's not right for a father to do that for his daughter.

INDIA: Give up, Ruben. It's not going to work.

RUBEN: What does work? Another woman? Some battery-operated device? What?

INDIA: Let it go, Rube. She's fine. She's happy. Let her be. Let's not interfere with her life like you did with our son.

RUBEN: Interfere? I got him a \$500 hooker for his sixteenth birthday, and what did he do? He read her poetry all night long. With \$500, I can fill a movie theater for a sneak preview. Reading poetry to a hooker, for Pete's sake!

INDIA: The boy is a poet.

RUBEN: A poet! The boy got thrown out of college because he was caught playing with himself in a pottery lab. How poetic is that?

INDIA: In the end, he turned out okay. And from what I heard, you got your money's worth from that \$500 hooker. (*pours herself some more whiskey*)

RUBEN: All that's water under the bridge. At least the kids are successful - both working - and you say that they are happy... I'd say we've had a good marriage.

INDIA: No dear, we had a good, brief, courtship, we had a rotten marriage, and we had a civilized divorce and .... We stopped being friend when we moved from being lovers to being husband and wife...

RUBEN: Don't hold back anything, please. I aged twenty years in ten years of our marriage.

INDIA: I only aged three years in those ten years.... What I was going to say was that we've had a much better relationship after our divorce.

RUBEN: That restores my faith in the institution of divorce. We wasted too much time. We should have gotten divorced sooner. Where is our flaming son, Samuel? Is he coming to the premiere?

INDIA: No dear, Sam's in Madrid with his ... significant other. He has promised that he will attend the premiere in Madrid.

RUBEN: Sam. Samuel. I thought I was giving the boy a strong, masculine name. I could have just as well named him Samantha. *(pause)* How about Alexia?

INDIA: I'm afraid she won't be there either. She's already read the New York reviews.

RUBEN: I'm not hurt. It really is a terrible movie.

INDIA: How could that happen? I read the script. It was a wonderful script. A great cast, a big-name director, what went wrong?

RUBEN: Too many inflated egos. The director wanted to rewrite the script; the actors wanted to direct. It was awful. Grown-ups making millions of dollars and acting as spoiled children.

INDIA: You should have stuck to making low budget, art movies.

RUBEN: That's unsound business. It takes two years to make an art movie; it takes two years to make a big-budget picture. Both have an equal chance of success or failure. If your art movie is a hit, you may make \$20 million. With a big movie, you could make

\$200 million. What would you rather do? Work for \$10 million a year, or, \$100 million a year?

INDIA: I'm happy running my little art gallery here in London. Sold a piece by Yoko Ono this month.

RUBEN: Do people still buy her stuff?

INDIA: (*glancing at her wristwatch*) She's bigger than ever.

RUBEN: As I've always said, there is no accounting the public taste.

INDIA: Is that why nobody is doing art movies?

RUBEN: Yes, every year the films are becoming bigger and costlier. We are all after the big jackpot.

INDIA: Greed. That's what this business amounts to.

RUBEN: That's what all businesses amount to. I caught you glancing at your watch. Do you need to be somewhere?

INDIA: I've been here an hour and you haven't even made a pass at me. Are we going to do something? I do have a hair appointment this afternoon.

RUBEN: India, you've become very European in your ways.

INDIA: This is Europe, in case you failed to read your map.

RUBEN: Hold that thought. (*He turns around and goes into the bedroom. Another door closes. We hear some water running and a low cry of pain. A moment later, a toilet is flushed.*)

Ruben returns. Cold-water treatment has not done anything to solve his problem or ease his pain.)

INDIA: Is something wrong?

RUBEN: Wrong? No, nothing is wrong. Why should anything be wrong?

INDIA: You could never keep your hands off me before we were married.

RUBEN: We were in our twenties then.

INDIA: And after we got married, you could never keep your hands off every other woman in town.

RUBEN: I was still in my twenties or early thirties, and all that Hollywood gossip was just that. Gossip. Rumors.

INDIA: You slept with my best friends, my sister, my gynecologist. Those were not rumors. Those were facts.

RUBEN: As I said, all water under the bridge. Why open old wounds? You know that I've never been able to be true to anyone. Why would you want to start again?

INDIA: I thought that you'd change? Mature? No? .... I think you've made your point. For once in your life, you're being honest. (*pause*) Are you not feeling well? Or is there a special woman in your life? Is Elizabeth McCormick back in your life? She's living here in London, you know.

RUBEN: Yes, I know.

INDIA: I know you loved her once. I remember how you used to look at her. You never looked at me that way. I know you wanted to marry her. But she was only using you.

RUBEN: I think that I was using her.

INDIA: She slept with you because she thought it would advance her career. She would have never married you. And when sleeping with you did not help her career, she moved on. She was a very confused woman. Do you know what happened after her husband divorced her?

RUBEN: No. What happened?

INDIA: He moved in with the mother-in-law. It was the scandal of the year! She was neurotic.

RUBEN: You didn't know her, India.

INDIA: Oh yes, I know all about her and her affairs and her marriages. That woman uses her sex to advance her career without any shame.

RUBEN: She's had quite a career, both here in Europe and in the States.

INDIA: It's not because of her acting. Or, perhaps it is her acting - but not on a movie set.

RUBEN: You never liked her.

INDIA: That's true, and if I had not intervened, you would have married her and ruined your life. I saved you from her. Are you still thinking about her? She's married again, you know. I think for the seventh time. Talk about retakes.

RUBEN: No, I'm not thinking about her, or any other special woman. You need not worry, there isn't any threat to your alimony check.

INDIA: (*putting a hand on her chest as if holding her heart. Pretending to be hurt at first and then*) That's an extra point for you. But just for the record, anytime you're in town, look me up, sailor. I hope that you'll be over your moral trance or whatever it is that you're going through. Maybe yoga isn't good for everyone. Have you tried pot?

RUBEN: Very funny, India.

INDIA: We were in love once.

RUBEN: Why do you always bring up love and spoil things. We were never really in love. We were in lust, we were in the grip of passion and hormonal calls, not love.

INDIA: That's not quite true. I did love you once. Not when we first met, but there was a brief period just before we got married that I was in love with you. At least I thought I was in love with you. But it didn't last long.

RUBEN: Thank God for that.

INDIA: Do you want to know what killed it for me?

RUBEN: Not particularly. But I have a feeling that I'm going to find out.

INDIA: It wasn't when you slept with my hair stylist or my best friends. It wasn't even when you slept with my sister. It was when I found out that you slept with that banker woman from Chase.

RUBEN: She loaned us three million dollars for a movie!

INDIA: Exactly. You prostituted yourself. When I found that out, I said to myself, I can't love this man. This man is immoral.

RUBEN: I wouldn't bring morals into this. Do I need to remind you why you went to bed with me the first time?

INDIA: I told you all that a long time ago. I'm not proud of what I did, but I had no choice. I was sixteen years old and I thought I was pregnant with that writer's child. He was married, had two children, he was never going to leave his family.

RUBEN: So, he introduced you to me, so you could pin the pregnancy on me.

INDIA: He was your friend.

RUBEN: He was a writer and let me tell you something; writers are nobody's friends.

INDIA: Ruben, I could not have gone back to Montana. My father would have killed me. As it turned out, I wasn't pregnant after all. (*pause*) Is that why you've never loved me, Ruben?

RUBEN: That deception was always in the back of my mind, but I was very fond of you. I did want to take care of you. Have I not done that?

INDIA: Yes, you've taken care of me as you would have if you had found an abandoned puppy.

RUBEN: You've meant more than that. After all, we've had two wonderful children. Well, perhaps, not as wonderful as I would have liked, but...

INDIA: I have been naïve all my life. I was the dumb-blond that slept with a writer! How much more stupid can you be? And to think that I could trick you into believing you were the father of my child. You should have thrown me out on the street, Ruben.

RUBEN: I was horny, remember?

INDIA: We should not have gotten married. I tied you down. We should not have had children.

RUBEN: What are you saying?

INDIA: I did not want to have any children. I had them to keep you. But I'm not sorry that I had them.

RUBEN: At this stage, what else can one say?

INDIA: Now you know the truth.

RUBEN: What I have never understood is why you put up with me for so long. You knew I was fooling around all over the place. Why did you never say anything?

INDIA: My complaining about your carrying on would not have stopped you. It would have only ended our marriage. I wanted the children to grow up with both parents. At least until they were old enough to understand. I had accepted the fact that I was no longer attractive to you. (*lifting the glass to him*) See what this truth serum does?

RUBEN: The truth is, India, living in Europe looks good on you. You are looking better than ever. Have you had some work done?

INDIA: I have not.

RUBEN: Come on! Not even a few nips and tucks? You seem to be defying gravity pretty well.

INDIA: You know me too well. *(pause)* Does it show? Be honest. Be brutally frank.

RUBEN: Nothing shows, dear. Honestly, you've never looked better. I bet you're continuously fighting off men.

INDIA: I wish. Englishmen are cold as fish. I think the indigenous population here is going to become extinct in the next fifty years. Only the immigrants, Pakistanis and the Latinos have any children. You should see the school buses here.

RUBEN: How about brunch tomorrow. My plane for Athens isn't until late in the evening.

INDIA: Why? What would be different tomorrow?

RUBEN: It's another day. One of us may have a change of heart.

INDIA: Call me tomorrow morning. And good luck with the premiere.

RUBEN: Thanks. I'll call you.

*(India walks to the door. Ruben walks three steps behind her. She turns back at the door and notices Ruben's condition.)*

INDIA: Are you sure, you don't want me to stay?

RUBEN: I'm doing my best to be a respectable man.

INDIA: No respectable man is that respectable.

*(Emilio enters.)*

RUBEN: Yes, Emilio, my good man, will you see to it that Mrs. Zuckerman gets a taxicab.

EMILIO: Most certainly, sir. *(to India)* Shall I carry this for you?

*(India hands him her top coat.)*

INDIA: My, what a firm arm! You must work out regularly.

EMILIO: Yes, madam, I do. How perceptive of you. I hope you approve.

INDIA: Mmm, yes. Very much.

RUBEN: Stay vertical.

INDIA: I can. All night. The question is, *(pointing to Emilio)* can he?

*(India and Emilio exit.)*

*(Ruben stands with his back to the audience as he sadly inspects his unfortunate condition.)*

CURTAIN

End of **ACT I**

## ACT II

*(The Big Ben strikes four.)*

*(Ruben inspects the whiskey glasses, selects one, and pours a drink. He debates over adding ice to the whiskey, decides against it, and takes a sip. Nods his head approvingly. He has his back to the door when, a young woman in a white jacket and stethoscope around her neck enters pushing a small table with an ECG machine. This is the hotel doctor, RAIN FAIRWEATHER)*

RUBEN:*(rearranging his robe as the doctor enters)* What can I do for you?

RAIN: Nothing. It's more of what I can do for you. What's the trouble?

RUBEN: What's it to you?

RAIN: I'm doctor, Rain Fairweather. I understand that you called for me.

RUBEN: Rain ... Fairweather? That sounds like a character on *Saturday Night Live*.

You're a doctor? I was not expecting a woman ... a female doctor ... I'm afraid it's not something that I can discuss with you. ... It has to be a man. A male doctor. ... Besides, you look awfully young to be a doctor.

RAIN: I can presume that that was not a compliment. Emilio, sort of hinted to me what the problem might be. Remember, I am a doctor, so why don't you lie down and do exactly what I tell you to do.

RUBEN: If you insist.

RAIN: I'm afraid, I must. What induced the problem, the condition?

RUBEN: I took Viagra.

RAIN: I see.

RUBEN: The Colombian kind.

RAIN: That was brave.

RUBEN: Two of them.

RAIN: And ambitious, aren't we? (*pause*) I'm going to take your blood pressure first. Do you feel any chest pain? Any pain, anywhere?

RUBEN: No.

RAIN: Are you on any medication?

RUBEN: No. None.

RAIN: At your age, you should be taking a small aspirin for your heart-health.

RUBEN: Now, I believe that you *are* a doctor. Pushing medication, pills, on people! That's how you doctor's get kickbacks from the pharmaceutical companies.

RAIN: Two hundred pills of aspirin cost less than a pound. How much money can anyone make on that? But, I must say that it's good preventive medication. It won't hurt you.... Good news is that your blood pressure is normal, and so is your pulse.

RUBEN: Can I get dressed now?

RAIN: I thought that was the problem. You couldn't get dressed. Just to be on the safer side, I'd like to do an E. C. G.

(*While Rain hooks up the wires*)

RUBEN: I know what you're doing. Run another test. Sure, go ahead. Why not! Don't you want to take some X-rays as well?

RAIN: This only takes a couple of minutes. (*tears out a piece of paper from the machine and nods.*) Everything's fine.

RUBEN: What does that mean? Can I get up now?

RAIN: Yes. It means, that there's nothing wrong with you. You're fine.

RUBEN: But I'm not fine. I have this problem. What can you do about that?

RAIN: There's nothing to be done about that. You'll just have to wait.

RUBEN: How long?

RAIN: About four hours.

RUBEN: Damn! For once, those TV ads tell the truth!... What do you mean that there's nothing to be done? You're a doctor, do something. Give me something to make this ... go away.

RAIN: Mr. Zuckerman, there is nothing I can give you to make it go away. You'll just have to wait.

RUBEN: You mean to tell me that there's no medication?

RAIN: No.... You could have another drink. Alcohol will numb your senses, you'll feel less pain.

RUBEN: Are you recommending that I drink? That's your prescription!

RAIN: Yes.

RUBEN: And how much is this visit of yours and your precious *medical* advice going to cost me? All these tests ... how much? Two thousand dollars? Five? More? How much?

RAIN: Nothing. It's going to cost you nothing. I'm paid by the hotel. You're a guest here. I do whatever is necessary; give you the medication or treatment that you may need. No more, no less. It does not cost you anything. I understand that you do not have socialized medicine for everyone in your country.

RUBEN: (*taking some bills from his pocket and offering them to Rain*) Here, here's a little something ...

RAIN: I'm sorry, I can't accept that. But, thank you.

RUBEN: I'm sorry. I didn't mean to insult you. Sorry.

RAIN: You could offer me a drink?

RUBEN: Can you drink on duty? While you're working?

RAIN: I'm a doctor, not a bloody cop. And you, you, are not old enough to be taking Viagra.

RUBEN: I have a feeling that wasn't a compliment either. (*pointing to the bottle*) Help yourself. Better still, allow me. (*proceeds to make a drink for her*) Now I can understand how your lot lost the Empire. It's this damned socialism.

RAIN: I rushed up here because I was told it was an emergency. But I should have known. ...You Americans tend to exaggerate and magnify every little affair. (*pause*) Although I must say, that, that there, is no small affair.

RUBEN: I'm not sure if I am supposed to thank you, or make a pass at you?

RAIN: Neither. It wasn't a compliment either. But do you see, you turn every little incident into a global emergency.

RUBEN: Are you referring to the Iraq war?

RAIN: I'm referring to all the wars the United States has created. Vietnam, Korea, Afghanistan, Iraq ....

RUBEN: We are fighting for democracy. For the world.

RAIN: That's nice, when do you think you'll have that in America?

RUBEN: We have democracy in America!

RAIN: No, you don't. Did you vote in the last presidential elections?

RUBEN: No, I was shooting a picture in Spain.

RAIN: The one before the last?

RUBEN: I was in script development for a project here in England. But I made a generous campaign contribution.

RAIN: How many people vote in a national election in the US?

RUBEN: I don't know.

RAIN: Everyone?

RUBEN: No.

RAIN: Seventy percent? Less? Fifty percent?

RUBEN: Less, I think.

RAIN: If a majority does not participate, if more than fifty percent of the people do not vote, it's not a democracy, is it?

RUBEN: You can say what you like but ...

RAIN: *(packing her stuff and getting ready to leave)* You're going to believe what you're going to believe.

RUBEN: I was going to say that for a doctor, you've got a great pair of legs. And that is a compliment.

RAIN: *(at the door)* For a film producer, you've got great legs. And that is a .... You're in trouble. You've got female company!

*(Rain exit. Ruben hurriedly replaces the Johnny Walker bottle with a Maker's Mark whiskey bottle and just then, ELIZABETH MCCORMICK, a shapely woman in her forties enters. It is as if she has just stepped out of a beauty salon. She is elegantly dressed. She is an accomplished actor; yet there is nothing flashy about her. She stands at the door looking at Ruben lovingly. It is easy to see that he still has strong feelings for her. Elizabeth wants to rush into his arms and he wants to hold her. She takes a step towards him, notices his state of undress and stops. He takes a step towards her, remembers his "problem" and stops. There's an awkward moment.)*

RUBEN: How nice to see you, Beth.

ELIZABETH: Nice to see you, Ruby. Am I early? Were you getting dressed, or undressed?

RUBEN: I haven't made up my mind yet.

ELIZABETH: Good.... I think. Which way are you leaning?

RUBEN: You don't want to know.

ELIZABETH: Does that mean you can go either way?

RUBEN: Yes, or didn't you know I was ambidextrous.

ELIZABETH: Yes, I remember. One of your special talents. Two right hands.

RUBEN: Come, sit down here, let's have a drink. Or, would you like something to eat? I hear they have great room service. How about some champagne?

ELIZABETH: I'll settle for a drink. It that Maker's Mark?

RUBEN: Sure is. I carried it all the way from New York, just for you. I know what you like.

ELIZABETH: You always did.

*(Ruben makes a drink for her. Hands it to her and waits for her to taste it. She nods her approval. Pleased, he refreshes his own. Makes a move to sit next to her then backs off and sits in a chair away from her. Elizabeth seems disappointed.)*

RUBEN: How's London treating you?

ELIZABETH: Better than you're treating me. Why are you sitting in a different zip code?

RUBEN: You know what would happen if I got any closer.

ELIZABETH: Yes. We'll make violent love.

RUBEN: That's why, and let me remind you, violent delights have violent ends.

ELIZABETH: Shakespeare, no less. I'm impressed (*walks to him*). "Within the circuits of this ivory pale, I shall be a park, and thou shalt be my deer. Feed where thou wilt, on mountain or in dale. Graze on my lips; and if those hills be dry, stray lower, where the pleasant fountains lie." (*He gets up and walks behind the chair.*) Something wrong? This is not like my old Ruben.

RUBEN: It is your old Ruben, only older.

ELIZABETH: Really! Something *is* the matter. You would have never admitted to getting old.

RUBEN: I'm trying to get used to the idea.... (*pours himself more scotch and sits across the room from her*)

ELIZABETH: When I was younger, I used to say: give me a bottle, a couple of hours in a hotel room, and I can seduce any man. I guess I'm not young anymore. Times have changed.

RUBEN: Time doesn't seem to have affected you at all.

ELIZABETH: That's generous.... It is easier to get old in Europe. People here are more accepting of older folks. Especially in our business.

RUBEN: Really? How so?

ELIZABETH: Look at all the older actresses in England, still working, still playing main roles in the movies, and on stage.

RUBEN: This country has had the good fortune of having people like Julie Christie, the Redgrave sisters, Maggie Smith and Judi Dench....

ELIZABETH: This country has *cultivated* these actors over the years. In the States, for women, over thirty is over the hill.

RUBEN: True. You've got a point there, in the States we do think of the elderly as a burden. But enough with this depressing talk about the elderly. And what's this I hear, you have a title? What should I call you? Lady Elizabeth? Dame McCormick? Your ladyship? What?

ELIZABETH: Never mind the titles, I'll always be your old dame.

RUBEN: You! Old, never. To me, you'll always be that 20-year old girl I met a few years ago. No one can take that memory away from me. You know why? Because you still look the same.

ELIZABETH: Keep talking, as they say, flattery will get you everywhere. In every bedroom.

RUBEN: I wasn't trying to get you anywhere like that. Tell me about yourself. Are things going well for you, professionally?

ELIZABETH: Very well. I have been busy. I have done some good work on stage, some important films. Substantial work, but just as all the other actors, I am hoping that my chance to do something meaningful is just around the corner. I may do something great yet.

RUBEN: Just remember there are three types of people in our business. Those that talk about doing great things; those that actually do great things; and there's the third kind

that finds faults in the great works of others. We call them, critics. Beth, I know you'll do great things. It's just a matter of time.

ELIZABETH: I wish I had more time.

RUBEN: We all wish we had more time. But the secret is to stay away from the talkers and the critics. Surround yourself with doers.

ELIZABETH: That's always been your motto: Don't discuss it, do it.

RUBEN: Of course. If you can be guilty by association, why can't you be great by association?

ELIZABETH: I have only one regret, I should have moved here much sooner.

RUBEN: Why didn't you? What kept you in Hollywood?

ELIZABETH: You did. Or, have you forgotten?

RUBEN: No, Beth, I haven't, not anything. I remember everything. I'm still not over you. We should have gotten married.

ELIZABETH: I couldn't have married you, Ruben.

RUBEN: Why not?

ELIZABETH: For one, it would have been unfair to so many other women.

RUBEN: I would have been faithful to you. I never looked at another woman while we were together.

ELIZABETH: While we were together... we were both married, to other people. And you would have never left your wife and your children. She'd have never divorced you.

RUBEN: My marriage to India was a farce. It was an open secret in Hollywood.... But she never asked for a divorce.

ELIZABETH: She wasn't going to let you go. You were her meal ticket. When did she finally agree to a divorce?

RUBEN: When the children were old enough ... to understand and deal with the separation.

ELIZABETH: I think she had the children just to keep you. I, on the other hand, was in love with you. For me it was love at first night.

RUBEN: You mean love at first sight ...

ELIZABETH: No, dear, I was in love with you long before I ever laid eyes on you. I was fascinated with the idea of this successful producer, Ruben Zuckerman. You could have had any girl in town.... As it turned out, you did.

RUBEN: That sounds as if you had a schoolgirl crush.

ELIZABETH: I have made a career of crushes and loves-at-first-sight.... I was okay with being your mistress. I didn't need more. I didn't even need your money. I was working.

RUBEN: I wanted to make an honest woman out of you.

ELIZABETH: Come on, Ruben, move out of the Victorian Age. Nobody expected us to get married. Why was an affair not enough? You're being married to India didn't bother me. I'm not a jealous woman. Never was.

RUBEN: I was in love with you.

ELIZABETH: Love! Why spoil it with marriage? Don't tell me that you felt guilty! Most men are incapable of that emotion.

RUBEN: I don't know if you remember, but when we met, you were thinking about leaving your husband, Oliver. Your first husband. And we were going to move in together after your divorce.

ELIZABETH: I remember. Those were wonderful moments. Stolen away from my husband, stolen away from your wife. That was love at its best.

RUBEN: But when you did get your divorce, you distanced yourself from me.

ELIZABETH: I distanced myself from every man. Emotionally, that is.

RUBEN: Because of what he did?

ELIZABETH: That was part of it. It was hard to accept that my ex-husband was sleeping with my mother. Later, years later, when my mother was dying, you know she had cancer, and she knew that it was going to take her, she told me that she and Oliver had been lovers long before I married him. He married me to be close to mother. It was a terrible shock.

RUBEN: Did your father know about any of this?

ELIZABETH: As long as I can remember, my mother and father had lived in separate portions of the house. They hardly spoke to one another. It was a marriage silenced by adultery and inability to forgive. Years ago, father had had an affair with one of his

colleagues, and mother had found out about it. She neither forgave him nor divorced him. She was Catholic, he was Jewish.

RUBEN: So much for mixed marriages. They never work.