

MARRIAGES

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

By LEE DORSEY

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MARRIAGES

CAST DESCRIPTIONS

Matt Matthews: A man in his late twenties, handsome with the voice of a radio announcer. He ages in the second act by 8 years and by 15 years in the third act.

Debra: Young attractive woman in her early twenties. She also ages in the third act by 15 years.

Ann: Ann is a woman about 33 years old. She is very educated and a professional woman. She is divorced and very liberated. She is tall, very pretty with dark hair and eyes. She could be of Italian extraction. She is very determined and dominant.

Sheila: A young woman about 19 years in age. She is blond, pretty and well proportioned.

Douglas: A wiry man in his thirties. He also ages by 8 years in the second act and 15 years in the third act.

MARRIAGES

SET REQUIREMENTS

All the action takes place in the one setting honeymoon suite in the Poconos, Pennsylvania. This is an area known for honeymoon lodges where the rooms are decorated with vibrant colors, heart shaped Jacuzzi's and mirrors over the heart shaped beds.

Very decadent!

ACT I

SCENE: A Honeymoon suite in the Poconos.

Music emits from the stereo while the house lights are up, and the stage lights are down. The music is any song from the top forty, fifteen years ago. As the song ends, the house lights slowly go down. In the darkness a radio announcer's voice is heard.

MATT

Well, that's about it for today folks. You've been listening to the Matt Matthews Show. I'm going to be away for the next two weeks on my honeymoon. That's right! You got it! I'm taking the big step! But don't worry fans, Tom Toledo will be sitting in for yours truly, so be sure to tune in on Monday at the same time. Stay tuned now for five minutes of latest news, sports and weather. This is WHPA Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. *(The lights come up on stage).*

The time is 10:00 P.M. on a summer evening fifteen years ago. After a moment the door opens upstage right and Matt Matthews, a man in his late twenties, dressed in a tux and carrying Debra, a young woman in her early twenties. She is dressed in a traditional wedding gown, enters through the door. Matt hums the Wedding March as he carries Debra to the center of the stage. Carrying the luggage, and stepping just inside the door, is Douglas (the Bell Boy) a man in his early thirties. Matt suddenly lets out a moan and releases Debra's legs. With his free hand he holds his back.

MATT

Oh God! What a time for this to happen.

DEBRA

What's the matter?

MATT

I think I pulled my back out again.

DEBRA

You never told me that you had a bad back. Is there anything I can do?

MATT

No, no. I'll be all right.

DEBRA

This won't ruin our honeymoon, will it?

MATT

What do you mean?

DEBRA

Well, you know. *(Aware of Douglas)* Keep us from having a good time.

MATT

I'll be as good as new in no time. I just need a moment to rest, that's all.

DOUGLAS

Where would you like me to put the bags?

MATT

Put them in the bedroom. *(Douglas crosses to the bedroom and Debra follows)*

DOUGLAS

You folks sure made the right decision for accommodations. Over sixty percent of our clientele come back a second time. *(Turns on bedroom light)*

DEBRA

Oh honey, this is very nice. Come see.

MATT

I will. I just want to stand here for a minute.

DOUGLAS

(Returns to the center of the stage) It's a little stuffy in here. I'll get the air conditioning on for you.

MATT

Thank you. That would be nice. *(Debra takes a small suitcase and exits into the bathroom. Douglas goes to the thermostat and begins to adjust it. Slight pause)* You do know who I am, don't you?

DOUGLAS

Sir, are you talking to me?

MATT

Yes. I was just asking if you know who I am.

DOUGLAS

Sure. You're Mr. Matthews. It says so on your reservation.

MATT

No. I don't mean that. I mean, do you really know who I am? What I do for a living?

DOUGLAS

No sir, I don't think that I do.

MATT

I'm Matt Matthews from WHPA radio.

DOUGLAS

Really! You're really that Matt Matthews?

MATT

(Doing his radio voice) We'll be back with more music on the "Matt Matthews Show," right after the latest news and weather.

DOUGLAS

Well, I'll be. Matt Matthews, right here in our hotel. *(He moves to Matt)* Let me shake your hand. I listen to you every morning. Wait until I tell the rest of the staff.

MATT

No. I don't want you to do that. I want to be left alone for the next few weeks and enjoy my honeymoon.

DOUGLAS

Of course, Mr. Matthews, I understand. I won't breathe a word of this to anyone. It will be our little secret.

MATT

Good. *(Pause)* What did you say your name is?

DOUGLAS

It's Douglas, Mr. Matthews.

MATT

Douglas! How does one make a phone call from here?

DOUGLAS

Just pick up the phone, dial nine, and then dial the number that you want to call.

MATT

I see. Thank you. *(He moves to the phone and begins to dial. Douglas begins to trace the air conditioning line that leads into the bedroom)* Hello Tom. This is Matt. *(Pause)* Yes, I'm on my honeymoon. We got here a few minutes ago. How's everything back at the station? *(Pause)* That's great! Did I get any calls? *(He looks back toward the bedroom and speaking in a stage whisper)* You know calls! *(Pause)* All right, do you want me to say it. *(Looking back toward the bedroom again)* Did Kathy call? *(Pause)* Look Tom, it's the business we're in. Just because I'm married doesn't mean that I shouldn't communicate with other women. They're my fans. I have to talk to them and see them. Yes, I have to see them too! So what are you trying to say? Now that I'm married, I should become incommunicado. Look Tom, if she calls, tell her I'll be back two weeks from Monday. *(Pause)* I'm not asking you to get involved in anything. I'm just asking you to pass along a message, that's all. *(Pause)* I know that you don't want to see me do anything that I'll be sorry for. Don't worry; I can take care of myself. *(Douglas has now traced the air conditioning line into the bedroom and up to the bathroom door. He opens the door and enters. A scream is heard from the bathroom, and Douglas comes running out followed by Debra)*

DEBRA

What do you mean by coming into the bathroom while I'm changing?

DOUGLAS

I'm very sorry. I was trying to trace the air conditioning line. I forgot that you were in there.

MATT

Tom, I have to go. Debra's going crazy on me. I'll see you in a couple of weeks. Good-bye. *(Turning to the bedroom as Douglas crosses to center stage)*

DOUGLAS

Mr. Matthews, I'm terribly sorry. I forgot that she was in there. I was just tracing the line. The reset button is in there.

MATT

For God sake, Debra! The man is just trying to do his job.

DEBRA

Well he doesn't have to do it while I'm changing my clothes.

MATT

Go find the reset button, Douglas. I'll take care of her. *(Douglas moves to the bathroom)*

DEBRA

(She crosses down stage and is now dressed in a very fashionable bathrobe) How long is he going to be here?

MATT

He shouldn't be more than a few minutes.

DOUGLAS

(Re-enters) Well, that's it, Mr. Matthews. I got it running. It'll be great in here in no time.

MATT

(Reaching into his pocket) Here you go Douglas. I'd say you've earned it. *(He hands him a bill)*

DOUGLAS

(Taking the bill) Thanks a lot, Mr. Matthews. Is there anything else that I can do for you?

MATT

Is there room service?

DOUGLAS

Yes sir. Just dial operator.

MATT

Good! Well, I can't think of anything else.

DOUGLAS

If you do, just give me a call.

MATT

Thank you, Douglas. I will. (*Douglas exits*)

DEBRA

I don't like him.

MATT

Oh, come on, Debra. Don't be that way, it's our honeymoon.

DEBRA

(*Pause*) I'm sorry. I'm just tired, that's all.

MATT

Not to tired, I hope.

DEBRA

It's just that I've been looking forward to this night for so long, and I want it to be perfect.

MATT

It will be. But we can't let every little thing upset us.

DEBRA

I suppose you're right. (*Pause*) How's the back?

MATT

It's all right. I have to be more careful.

DEBRA

Under the circumstances, you didn't have to carry me in here.

MATT

I wanted to. I don't get married every day, and I wanted to do all the right things.

DEBRA

(Talking baby talk) I wuv you.

MATT

(Talking baby talk too) And I wuv you. *(Normal voice)* Now what do you say we get this show on the road. I'll change into something a bit more comfortable. We'll call room service and have something to eat before we turn in.

DEBRA

It sounds great to me. *(Matt begins to move to the bedroom)* Oh, before you go. How do I use the phone?

MATT

Dial nine and then the number.

DEBRA

I want to call my mother and tell her we got here all right.

MATT

Tell her that I said hello. *(He moves into the bedroom and gets a small suitcase, and then exits into the bathroom)*

DEBRA

(She picks up the phone and dials) Hello Ma, this is Debra. We got here a little while ago, and everything is just fine. *(Pause)* Matt is in the bathroom getting changed. *(Pause)* Mama, please don't start that again. Matt's a wonderful person. We're married now, and everything is going to be just perfect. *(Pause)* I know that he doesn't talk to you very much, but he doesn't think that you like him. *(Pause)* You think that he's very perceptive. *(Pause)* No, we haven't talked about a family yet. We've only been married a few hours, give us a chance. *(Pause)* Mama, look, I just called to tell you that we got here okay. I didn't call to argue with you. *(Pause)* I haven't talked to him about that yet, so I don't know how he feels about giving up his radio career and coming into daddy's janitorial business. *(Pause)* I know that's the sensible thing to do, and I will talk to him about it. *(Pause)* I will, Mama, I will! Now, I think that I had better hang up. This call must be costing a fortune. *(Pause)* I'll call you tomorrow. *(Pause)* I don't know what time. *(Pause)* All right, I'll call you at seven tomorrow evening. *(Pause)* You won't be home at seven. Then suppose you give me a time. *(Pause)* It's tomorrow at nine then. I'll talk to you then. Okay. Good-bye. *(She hangs up the phone, moves to the sofa and sits. Matt enters from bathroom dressed in pajamas with music notes all over them)*

MATT

(Moving to center stage) Ta-Da! Well, what do you think?

DEBRA

Don't tell me, you're the music man, right?

MATT

Very funny! These were given to me by the station manager for getting the highest ratings in the morning slot last month.

DEBRA

(Getting serious) Matt, sit down next to me for a moment.

MATT

Sure. You look awful serious. Is something the matter?

DEBRA

I just talked to my mother before you came out of the bathroom.

MATT

Yes, I know. She affects me the same way.

DEBRA

Be serious for a minute. She made a few suggestions that make a lot of sense, and I wanted to see how you feel about them.

MATT

What kind of suggestions?

DEBRA

I want you to know that mother is just thinking about us.

MATT

What kind of suggestions?

DEBRA

Well, mother suggested that maybe it would be a good idea if you would give serious consideration to coming into daddy's business.

MATT

Are you kidding? He cleans office buildings or something, doesn't he?

DEBRA

Yes.

MATT

She wants me to become a cleaning man?

DEBRA

You wouldn't do the actual cleaning. You would be a supervisor. You would be a partner in the business.

MATT

And how do you feel about this?

DEBRA

Well, it makes a lot of sense. I mean, you can't play around with this radio announcing for the rest of your life. It's a young man's business. You said that many times.

MATT

Wait a minute. Is that what you think I'm doing? You think I'm playing around?

DEBRA

Matt, it isn't like a real job. You can't do this for the rest of your life.

MATT

Why not?

DEBRA

Because you can't! You have responsibilities now. You have to begin to think about more than just yourself.

MATT

(He rises) I can't believe that you're saying this to me. I have a promising career. And you want me to give all that up to become a cleaning man?

DEBRA

Not a cleaning man! A business man! I want you to become a business man. A man with some roots; A man who is going to live in one place for more than a couple of years; A man who knows that he'll have a job tomorrow.

MATT

I can't argue with everything that you just said, but that's what I do for a living. You knew that when you married me. *(Pause)* Why didn't you say something about this before?

DEBRA

I didn't want to upset you!

MATT

You didn't want to upset me! This is my life we're talking about here, lady. And now that we're married, you feel perfectly comfortable in suggesting that I change it! Just like that!

DEBRA

If you love me as much as you tell me, you would at least consider what I just said.

MATT

I've been a radio announcer for five years. I will be a radio announcer until I become a television announcer. That's what I do. That's what I am. I'm sorry.

DEBRA

Then you won't even consider what I said?

MATT

(Pause) Would you like something to eat?

DEBRA

Damn you!

MATT

What the hell's the matter with you? This is our honeymoon. We're sitting here talking about changing my whole life; about taking away from me my whole reason for existing. As far as I'm concerned, the subject is closed.

DEBRA

I should have known that you would have a closed mind when it came to this.

MATT

(He puts his arm around her) Let's go to bed.

DEBRA

(Coldly) I'm hungry.

MATT

(He removes his arm) So am I. Shall I call room service?

DEBRA

Yes.

MATT

What would you like?

DEBRA

I would like something light; A sandwich maybe.

MATT

(He goes to the phone) A sandwich it will be. *(Picks up phone)* Hello, room service. What kind of sandwiches do you have? *(Pause)* Ham and roast beef. *(Turning to Debra)* Ham or roast beef?

DEBRA

Roast beef.

MATT

Let me have one of each, and send a bottle of your best champagne. How long will that be? *(Pause)* That will be fine. *(He hangs up)* Can I get you something else?

DEBRA

No.

MATT

You're mad, aren't you?

DEBRA

Yes.

MATT

Is there something that I can do to make it better?

DEBRA

No.

MATT

(Pause) Do you realize that this is our first argument?

DEBRA

I realize that we have a big problem.

MATT

I don't understand, what's the problem? I have a job, a good job. I have a promising career. I'll support you with that career. And when I don't, then we'll talk about my changing that career.

DEBRA

Matt, I don't like you're doing that kind of work. I don't want to be married to a celebrity. I want to be married to an average guy, with average ideas, who isn't chased after by half the female population of Harrisburg.

MATT

(Half smiling) Is that what you think? You think that I'm chased after by a lot of women because I'm on the radio?

DEBRA

Yes.

MATT

I don't believe it. Do you think that I would be unfaithful to you? I don't want another woman.

DEBRA

(Pause) Do you really mean that?

MATT

I do.

DEBRA

If it came down to making a choice between your marriage and your career, what would you choose?

MATT

If it came down to that, I would choose you.

DEBRA

(They embrace) Oh Matt, I do love you.

MATT

I mean, after all you did save yourself for me all these years, didn't you?

DEBRA

(Pause) I have something to tell you Matt.....I know that you'll understand.

MATT

Tell me something?

DEBRA

(Pause) I'm not a

MATT

Virgin!?

DEBRA

Yes.

MATT

But why did you tell me....Why you leaded me to believe....

DEBRA

I wanted to be what you wanted me to be. You told me that it was important to you. I wanted you, so I decided to keep my other affairs from you.

MATT

Other affairs? You mean that there was more than one?

DEBRA

I am twenty-three years old. I've been dating since high school. Of course, I've had other affairs.

MATT

But why did you always stop my advances? If you love me, how could you stop me?

DEBRA

I knew that if you wanted me badly enough you would marry me. I knew that you would probably be up upset when you found out, but I decided to take that chance. A couple of days ago, I ran into a boy that I dated in high school. *(She smiles)* His name is Carlos.

DEBRA

Well anyway, I was telling Carlos that I was going to get married. He asked me if you knew that I wasn't a virgin. I said that I was pretty sure that you didn't. And he said, *(She uses a Latin accent)* "Don't tell him. He probably won't marry you if he finds out." *(She smiles as she remembers Carlos)* Carlos was my first lover. Carlos always knew a lot about people.

MATT

Were there more than two lovers?

DEBRA

Yes. There were six if you count Tom.

MATT

Tom? My best friend Tom? You had an affair with Tom Toledo?

DEBRA

Not an affair! It was more like a one night stand! *(Pause)* I was out with some of my girlfriends one night, a couple of weeks ago, and I accidentally ran into him. We had a couple of drinks, and before I knew it I was in his apartment having a night cap. One thing led to another, and I spent the night. We were both sorry for what had happened, and I promised him that I would never tell you. So you must never breathe a word of this to him. He would be terribly embarrassed.

MATT

My best friend has an affair with my future wife and I can't say anything to him because he might be embarrassed? *(Pause)* Why are you telling me all of this?

DEBRA

I want to be honest with you. I thought about hiding it from you. I thought about letting you think that I was a virgin. I could have played it so that you would have never known. I wouldn't have been the first woman to play that game.

MATT

Well, at least you're honest.

DEBRA

You're not angry with me, are you?

MATT

No, not angry. I'm somewhat disappointed though. *(Pause)* Since we're having true confession time, I have something that I have to tell you.

DEBRA

What is it?

MATT

(Pause) I am a virgin. I have never, in my whole life, had a woman.

DEBRA

But you're twenty-eight years old...I've always assumed that you....

MATT

Well, you were wrong! (*Pause*) Of course there were several opportunities, but I never did. In a couple of situations, I couldn't.

DEBRA

I'm sorry.

MATT

There were times when I thought there was something wrong with me. I mean, everybody I knew had. Of course, I never admitted to anyone that I didn't. It wasn't the macho thing to do. So I let everyone believe that I was the biggest lover in town.

DEBRA

I think that this is very exciting. I don't think that I ever had a virgin before.

MATT

You'll never tell anyone about this, will you?

DEBRA

I think that it's good that we're telling each other everything. There won't be any skeletons in the closet to come back and haunt us later.

MATT

Do you think that it's possible to forget the past and to live the rest of our lives like none of it had ever happened?

DEBRA

I think that we should, that is if we really love one another. Otherwise, I don't think that our marriage will make it.

MATT

Let's do it then. Let's promise each other that we will never mention anything that we discussed here this evening ever again.

DEBRA

I'm willing, if you are.

MATT

It's a deal. Shall we kiss on it? *(She moves closer to him and they kiss. Pause)* I'll bet Tom never kissed you like that?

DEBRA

(She gets upset and moves away from him. Slight pause) Is that what you meant by never mentioning it ever again?

MATT

I can't help it. I keep getting visions of you and Tom together!

DEBRA

Do you want me to give you a play by play?

MATT

(Pause) I'm sorry. It bothers me.

DEBRA

What happened between Tom and me was just sex. There wasn't any emotion, there wasn't any love. That's what makes it different. When two people have love and emotion, having sex is beautiful.

MATT

Do you think that our first experience will be beautiful?

DEBRA

(She moves to him) We're married. We're going to have children, a family. That will make us about as close as two people can get.

MATT

Yes, but we're not going to have children right away. I can't afford children right away.

DEBRA

If we wait until we can afford them, we'll never have them. No, I think that we should have children right away.

MATT

Debra, I know that we have never discussed this before, but don't you think that we should wait at least a couple of years, so we can get established first.

DEBRA

One of the reasons I decided to get married was to begin a family. I'm twenty-three years old, and this is the perfect time to start. It's in all the books.

MATT

I don't care what's in the books! We have to do what's right for us. And I think that waiting a couple of years is what we should do.

DEBRA

This is very important to me, Matt. There are other things that I'll be willing to compromise, but this is not one of them. I want two children, a boy and a girl.

MATT

And what happens if you don't get a boy and a girl?

DEBRA

Then we have a big problem.

MATT

Let me get this straight! You would break up our marriage over my not wanting children right away?

DEBRA

The only thing that would break it up faster would be if I caught you cheating.

MATT

May I ask you a question? Why didn't you tell me all of this before?

DEBRA

I thought we both wanted the same things. I asked you once if you wanted children, and you said that you did. So I don't see why, now that we're married, you suddenly decide that we should wait, God knows how many years, before we start our family.

MATT

People shouldn't rush into these things? There are a lot of things that people should know before they begin having children.

DEBRA

I know that. I'll learn to cook, you'll see.

MATT

(Pause) You don't know how to cook?

DEBRA

Did I ever say that I did?

MATT

No. But I thought that every woman knew how to cook. It's genetic!

DEBRA

Didn't you ever wonder why I never cooked you dinner?

MATT

(Reflecting) When we ate in we always ate at my place, and I always did the cooking.

DEBRA

That's right. And I never offered to cook once, did I?

MATT

You always helped with the dishes.

DEBRA

It's not the same thing.

MATT

I suppose you're right. But I just assumed....

DEBRA

You should never assume anything with me. If in doubt, ask.

MATT

I'm learning! I'm learning! *(Pause)* There isn't anything else that I should know, is there?

DEBRA

Well, let me think. *(Pause)* Yes, there is something else. I don't like doing house work, and having sex is a low priority.

MATT

In that order?

DEBRA

I'm allergic to dust. So the house work will be your responsibility.

MATT

What do you mean that sex is a low priority?

DEBRA

I just never enjoyed it all that much. I've always done it, more or less, for the gratification of the guy I was involved with at the time.

MATT

And where does that leave me, a virgin?

DEBRA

I would say that you have your work cut out for you.

MATT

This is like a bad dream. *(He heads to the bathroom)* Maybe if I throw some water in my face, I'll wake up. *(He exits into the bathroom)*

DEBRA

(A knock comes at the door. Debra crosses to door and opens it. Douglas enters with food and champagne. She gives Douglas a dirty look.) You can put that down over there.

DOUGLAS

Yes ma'am. *(He moves to table and begins to set it.)*

DEBRA

(Calling) Matt! Do you have any money? Room service is here.

MATT

(Enters wiping his face) I'm not asleep.

DEBRA

(Moving to the bathroom) I'm going to freshen up. *(She exits)*

MATT

Hey, this looks very nice. *(Picks up bottle of champagne)* And it's a vintage year.

DOUGLAS

Yes sir. It's the best we have.

MATT

(Replaces the bottle) Douglas, are you married?

DOUGLAS

Not anymore.

MATT

Oh, I'm sorry.

DOUGLAS

No, don't be sorry. I'm glad it's over, it was terrible.

MATT

Terrible?!

DOUGLAS

All she did was bitch at me all the time! *(Slight pause)* We were married very young. I only knew her for a couple of months, and one night I went out drinking with some friends of mine. After they left, I got to thinking about her, so I called her at four o'clock in the morning and ask

her to marry me. Before I knew it, the invitations were out, and I was standing at the altar. The marriage lasted a year. But here's the straw that broke the camel's back. She couldn't even cook! I married a woman who couldn't cook. (*Shaking his head*) Believe me, there's nowhere to go from there.

MATT

(*Looking in the direction of the bathroom*) Yeah, I know what you mean. (*Pause*) How long have you been single now?

DOUGLAS

Seven years! But, are you ready? I'm going to do it again. She's a maid here at the hotel. We understand each other. And she cooks like a gourmet. (*Confidently*) I'm doing the right thing this time, I know it. (*Slight pause*) And if I'm not, I'll get rid of her. It's a lot easier the second time around.

MATT

Was it hard the first time?

DOUGLAS

It was agonizing. I just couldn't make myself come to the realization that I had made a mistake. I was always taught that once you got married, that was it for life. But one day, after one of our big fights, I knew that I couldn't continue to live like that anymore. So I packed my clothes, told her that I was leaving, and headed for the door. (*Pause*) She cried a lot, and so did I, but I left anyway. I knew that if I didn't leave, I probably would have succumbed to malnutrition.

MATT

What's your first wife doing now?

DOUGLAS

She married again. She's a nice person. She just wasn't the right one for me.

MATT

Douglas, I'm glad we had this little talk. I see things a lot more clearly now.

DOUGLAS

I'm glad that I could help, Mr. Matthews.

MATT

How much do I owe you?

DOUGLAS

This one is on the house. (*Crossing to the door*) And I hope that you have a very happy marriage.

MATT

I'm sure that I will, and thanks again, Douglas. (*Douglas exits. Matt calls off*) Sweetheart, dinner is served.

DEBRA

(*Entering from the bathroom*) Oh, it looks wonderful very romantic.

MATT

(*Pouring the champagne*) Shall we make a toast?

DEBRA

(*Holding her glass up to toast*) May we stay married forever?

MATT

(*Holding his glass up to toast*) And if we don't, may we continue to remain friends.

DEBRA

That's not a very positive attitude.

MATT

No. But it's realistic. Half the people that get married, get divorced. I would like to remain friends if our marriage doesn't work out.

DEBRA

I'm not sure that's possible.

MATT

It's the mature thing to do. Besides, just because we might not be married someday doesn't mean we shouldn't keep in touch.

DEBRA

(Pause) May I ask you a question without your getting upset with me?

MATT

If I'm not upset with you by now, there's a good chance I won't get upset with you.

DEBRA

You're mad that I was honest with you, aren't you?

MATT

Debra, there is honesty, and there is discretion. I don't think that you have displayed the latter.

DEBRA

Would you have rather I kept everything to myself?

MATT

Most of it, yes.

DEBRA

My mother told me never to be honest with my husband. She said that she has deceived my father all of their married life, and that they have been married, happily, for twenty-five years. She advised me to do the same. But nooo! I was going to be different. I was going to be honest and tell my husband everything. My husband would understand, I thought. He would love me more for it. I can see now that I was wrong. At least I was wrong in judging you!

MATT

I realize that I've only known you for six months. But I thought that I knew you pretty well. I can't believe that you're unloading all of this on me the first night we're married.

MATT

When did you want me to tell you, on our golden anniversary?

MATT

I may have preferred, never!

DEBRA

(Pause) I was warned about you.

MATT

Oh really, by whom?

DEBRA

Several people!

MATT

For example?!

DEBRA

Well, to begin with there's your friend Tom. He told me that your ego would never withstand the truth.

MATT

You discussed all of this with Tom?

DEBRA

Yes. He advised me against telling you anything. He said that you would never want to hear the truth, that you weren't comfortable with honesty, and especially if the honesty would destroy any illusion that you have devised for yourself.

MATT

Tom told you that?

DEBRA

That isn't all that he told me.

MATT

Oh?

DEBRA

He also told me about Kathy.

MATT

Kathy?

DEBRA

Don't act surprised. I did some checking around on my own, and I found out all about her. So don't try to deny her.

MATT

(Slight pause) Do you want me to tell you about her?

DEBRA

If you want to, but I am a little disappointed. After all, I had to bring her up first. I was hoping that since we were being honest with each other, you would have told me.

MATT

I didn't think that is was necessary. I married you, not her. I thought that spoke for my intentions. But I see now that you want all the cards on the table.

DEBRA

I think that would be the fair thing to do.

MATT

All right. *(Slight pause)* I met Kathy a few months ago, and I took her out a few times. We had a good time, but I told her about you and our plans to get married. I told her that I couldn't see her anymore. She understood, and that's the last time I saw Kathy.

DEBRA

You don't intend to see her again?

MATT

Of course not!

DEBRA

Then we shall not discuss Kathy again.

MATT

Good.

DEBRA

(Pause) There's nothing else that I should know, is there?

MATT

Nothing!

DEBRA

We should tell each other everything, no matter how painful we might think it's going to be for the other. It's always more painful when we find things out from some other source. *(Pause)* That's why I want you to know that I quit my job.

MATT

(Incredulously) You quit your job?!

DEBRA

Yes.

MATT

Debra, how could you! You knew that we had counted on that money to make ends meet!

DEBRA

I didn't discuss it with you because I knew that you would never agree. So I took on myself to make the decision. *(Slight pause)* But, I wanted you to know.

MATT

Well at least you wanted me to know! How could you have done such a thing! What are we going to do? You know that I don't make enough working at the station to support both of us.

DEBRA

There's always the job with my father.

MATT

I will not work with your father! And I'll not discuss it again! Debra, how could you?

DEBRA

(Pouting) We're married now. I want to stay home and take care of the house and start a family. That's why I got married. Not to continue to do what I was doing before.

MATT

I think I need a drink. *(He pours another glass of champagne)*

DEBRA

You're not angry, are you?

MATT

(Facetiously) No. Why should I be angry! It doesn't matter whether or not we can pay our bills.

DEBRA

You are angry.

MATT

Very perceptive! Of course, I'm angry! Suppose I had quit my job and not have told you. Would you have been angry?

DEBRA

That's different.

MATT

What's different about it? You should have discussed it with me first. *(Pause)* I knew my first gut feeling was right.

DEBRA

What gut feeling?

MATT

We should have lived together first. Then I would have known what I was getting into.

DEBRA

You're having regrets just because we're having a few problems?

MATT

If this is a preview of coming attractions, we're in big trouble. We haven't done anything but disagree since we got here.

DEBRA

(Getting emotional) If you want to call the marriage off, I'll understand. We can always get an annulment.

MATT

Debra, listen. I love you, and that's why I married you. I don't want an annulment. I'm just upset that you didn't consider all of the consequences before you quit your job. Of course, some of the other things that you told me haven't exactly put me in the best of moods.

DEBRA

Honey, look! Everything is going to be all right. As soon as we get home, I'll get a part time job and pay off my credit cards.

MATT

(Mild shock) Credit cards!?

DEBRA

You knew that I had credit cards. I bought the furniture with them. You were standing right there.

MATT

How much do we owe on your, I mean our credit cards?

DEBRA

It's about ten thousand dollars if you give or take a few cents.

MATT

(Takes another drink) Ten thousand dollars! What else did you buy? The furniture was only fifteen hundred.

DEBRA

I don't remember. I've been using them for several years now.

MATT

Oh, what the hell. It's only money.

DEBRA

That's the way I look at it.

MATT

Obviously! *(Pause)* Look, I don't want to think about any of this. It's my honeymoon, damn it, and I'm going to enjoy it. *(Pours her another glass of champagne)* Have another glass.

DEBRA

I don't mind if I do. *(She takes a sip of the champagne)* You look awfully sexy sitting there in those pajamas. Why don't we finish this, go into the bedroom, and see what happens.

MATT

(To himself) I can't believe that we're finally getting around to what we came here for.

DEBRA

When you first met me, did you think that we would wind up like this?

MATT

No, I can't say that I did. I mean, after all, it wasn't exactly a romantic situation. You sitting behind the wheel of your car with the front of it buried in the back of mine. And the first thing that you said to me was, *(Attempting to imitate her voice)* "I don't have any insurance". *(Slight pause)* No! I wouldn't say that it was love at first sight.

DEBRA

Why did you keep calling me then?

MATT

Because I wanted to get paid for my car, that's why.

DEBRA

And I paid you!

MATT

I know that you did. And I appreciated it, too. I took you to dinner as a token of my appreciation.

DEBRA

(Reminiscing) And that's when it all began. I knew I was falling in love with you that night at dinner. At first, I thought that maybe it was the alcohol. I don't ever remember drinking so much.

MATT

That was my fault. I was trying to get you drunk. I thought that if I got your inhibitions down I could get you to come back to my place.

DEBRA

And then I got sick in the car.

MATT

That's right, and all over the dash board. The guy at the service station, where I cleaned you up, must have thought he had seen everything.

DEBRA

I had a wonderful time that evening though. *(Pause)* I think!

MATT

That's what you told me when I walked you up onto the porch. You said, "I had a wonderful evening," and then you grabbed me and slipped me the tongue. Oh God, I thought that I would never get that taste out of my mouth. You had lasagna that night didn't you?

DEBRA

I can't remember.

MATT

Anyway, the next day, when I still wanted to see you again, I knew that it must be more than infatuation. And here we are!

DEBRA

I'm very happy!

MATT

So am I. Let's go to bed. *(He finishes his champagne)*

DEBRA

Let's. (She finishes her champagne. They make their way to the bedroom. She takes off the bathrobe and reveals a sexy nightgown. He takes off the top of his pajamas. . They turn out the lights. The stage goes into darkness with the exception of a very dim blue light in the bedroom.)

MATT

Where are you?

DEBRA

I'm here.

MATT

Oh yeah. *(Pause)* Well, here we are.

DEBRA

(Pause) Well?

MATT

I'm just resting a moment.

DEBRA

(Pause) Is something wrong?

MATT

I was just thinking.

DEBRA

About what?!

MATT

(Pause) About Tom making love to you!

DEBRA

I'm sorry I told you!

MATT

No. I'm glad that you told me. You had to. It's important that we get these things out into the open.

DEBRA

Do you have to think about it now?

MATT

I can't help it. I keep thinking of him touching you, and it really bothers me.

DEBRA

(Pause) Would it make you feel any better if I told you that I made the whole thing up? Tom and I never made love.

MATT

You're just saying that to make me feel better.

DEBRA

No, I'm not! It never happened! We had a few drinks just like I said, but I never left with him. *(Slightly smiling)* I fantasized about it happening a lot. I often wondered what it would have been like.

MATT

Then why did you tell me that you did?

DEBRA

(Pause) I wanted to make you jealous. I wanted to see if you cared enough about me to get upset.

MATT

(Pause) I don't know what to believe now! *(Getting out of bed)* I know what I'll do!

DEBRA

Where are you going?

MATT

(Putting on his pajama top) I'm going to call Tom and ask him.

DEBRA

(Getting out of bed and putting on her bathrobe) Matt, don't!

MATT

(Turning on the lights) I have to know, and there's only one way to find out. *(He picks up phone and begins to dial)*

DEBRA

Please believe me! Tom won't know what you're talking about! The whole thing will be very embarrassing!

MATT

You should have thought of that before you told me. Hello...Tom, this is Matt. Tom, I have something to ask you, and I want a straight answer. I don't care which way it goes, but if you're my friend, I want you to tell me the truth. *(Pause)* Yes, I know what time it is, and I'm sorry to have to call at this hour, but this is important. Tom, did you make love to my wife? *(Pause)* My wife, Debra! *(Pause)* No, I haven't been drinking. *(Pause)* I'm not talking about now, I'm talking about before, a couple of weeks ago. *(Pause)* Well, she told me that the two of you spent the night together a few weeks ago and I'm just trying to find out what happened. *(Pause)* On your mother's grave, you didn't. *(Pause)* Yeah Tom, that's good enough for me. Tom, I'm sorry I bothered you at this hour. I know that you have to get up early tomorrow, and I'm sorry. *(Pause)* Sure. Thanks a lot. See you. *(He hangs up. Pause)* He says that he didn't even get a chance to kiss you after the wedding.

DEBRA

I told you! Why don't you listen to me! Why don't you believe me!

MATT

It was important to me. I had to know.

DEBRA

(Going to him) Oh, Matt. This proves that you really do care! I was beginning to think that maybe you didn't.

MATT

(Pours last of the champagne into glass) I think that I'll get another bottle of this. *(Crosses to the phone and dials room service)* Hello room service! *(Pause)* Oh, hello Douglas! This is Matt

Matthews in room 111. Douglas, I'd like to have another bottle of that champagne. *(Pause)*
Thanks. *(He hangs up. Looking at her)* Will you always going to look this beautiful?

DEBRA

Yes, if I stick to my diet. I have a tendency to put on weight.

MATT

I didn't know that you had weight problems?

DEBRA

Oh sure. If I weren't careful, I could get as big as a house.

MATT

You will be careful, won't you? Somehow I don't see myself married to a house.

DEBRA

I promise. Now, let go to bed.

MATT

(He crosses to her and they kiss. A knock is heard at the door) Who is it?

DOUGLAS

(Off) Room service!

MATT

Be right there! Honey, why don't you go to bed? I'll be there in a minute.

DEBRA

(Crosses to bedroom) Don't be too long. *(She takes off her bathrobe and gets into bed)*

MATT

(Opens door) Douglas, my man! What have you got there?

DOUGLAS

(Enters) It's your champagne, Mr. Matthews.

MATT

Just put it down over there. *(Douglas crosses to the table)*

DOUGLAS

Do you want me to open it?

MATT

Yes. That would be nice. *(Douglas begins to open the bottle)* May I ask you a question, Douglas?

DOUGLAS

Sure, Mr. Matthews, what is it?

MATT

The question is a little personal. So I'll understand if you don't want to answer.

DOUGLAS

My life is an open book, Mr. Matthews.

MATT

(Pause) At what point in time did you know that your marriage wasn't going to make it.

DOUGLAS

Almost right away. Everything seemed to change almost immediately. For a long time I couldn't figure it out. Then one day it suddenly became very clear. It's the chase!

MATT

The chase!?

DOUGLAS

The chase! It's over when you get married if it's not right. I mean, when two people who should have never gotten married in the first place get married, there's no place to go but down hill. It's like those guys who chase fox. They really don't want the fox; they just want to chase it. And when they finally catch the fox, and the chase is over, they throw the fox away. Sometimes, they let the fox go so they can chase it again another day. *(He looks right at Matt)* Sometimes women are like the fox. After we catch her, we don't want her anymore.

MATT

I hate to think about it, but I think that you may be right. *(He looks toward the bedroom)* Well, thank you, Douglas. That was very enlightening.

DOUGLAS

Sure, Mr. Matthews. Anytime!

MATT

And Douglas, best of luck on the second time around.

DOUGLAS

(Crosses to the door) And good luck to you too, Mr. Matthews. Almost everybody needs it the first time. *(He exits)*

MATT

(He pours two glasses of champagne and crosses to bedroom) You're not asleep, are you honey?

DEBRA

What took you so long?

MATT

I just had a little talk with Douglas while he uncorked the champagne. Here you are. *(He hands her a glass of champagne)* Would you like to toast something?

DEBRA

(She holds her glass high) To Virginitv!

MATT

(He toasts, puts down his glass, and turns out the lights. A moment of silence) Please be gentle with me. *(They both laugh. Lights fade to black)*

End of Act One

ACT II

The scene is the same as Act I. However, it is eight years later. Music emits from the stereo while the house lights are up, and the stage lights are down. The music is any song from the top forty, seven years ago. As the song ends the house lights slowly go down. A radio announcer's voice is heard.

MATT

Hey, it's that time again. I'm going to be moving out of here, but don't forget that the Matt Matthews show will be coming your way again on Monday morning at six o'clock to start your day and week. Of course, for the next two weeks, Tom Toledo will be sitting in for yours truly. I'll be vacationing in the lovely Poconos. Stay tuned now for five minutes of the latest news and weather. This is WPPA, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

(The lights come up on the stage. The door to the suite opens and Matt and Ann enter. Ann is a woman about 33 years old. She is very educated and a professional woman. She is divorced and very liberated. She is tall, very pretty with dark hair and eyes. She could be of Italian extraction. She is very determined and dominant. They cross to the center of the stage and Douglas (now the bell captain) holds in the doorway with the luggage.

MATT

Well, what do you think?

ANN

It's a little mundane for my taste, but it'll do.

DOUGLAS

Where would you like me to put the luggage, Mr. Matthews?

MATT

Just put those in the bedroom if you will, Douglas. *(Douglas crosses to the bedroom)* He's a nice guy. I've been sort of following his career.

ANN

You know him?

MATT

Oh sure. The first time I came here, he was just a bell boy. The second time, he was up for promotion. And now, he's the bell captain.

DOUGLAS

(Enters and crosses to center of stage) Is there anything else that I can get for you, Mr. Matthews?

MATT

No, Douglas. I think that will be all.

DOUGLAS

I'm sure that you'll find the suite just as you left it. We try to keep everything in first class condition.

MATT

Yeah, the old place sure looks the same, all right.

DOUGLAS

Well, if there's nothing else, I had better be on my way. *(He crosses to the door)*

MATT

I'll take care of the air conditioning this time. *(He winks at Douglas)*

DOUGLAS

(Smiling) Yes sir. *(He exits)*

ANN

(Pause) Matthew, am I to understand that we are staying in the same suite that you and Kathy spent your honeymoon?

MATT

I've spent my last two honeymoons here. *(Pause)* Is there something wrong?

ANN

Yes, there's something wrong! I don't want to stay here.

MATT

Don't be silly, honey. This place is booked months in advance. We'll never get another room tonight.

ANN

Then we'll just have to go somewhere else! I will not spend my wedding night in the same bed where you consummated your last two marriages.

MATT

But honey, you knew that I was here on my previous honeymoons. I didn't try to hide anything from you.

ANN

You didn't tell me it was the same suite and the same bed. I think that's going a little too far.

MATT

If it means all that much to you, first thing tomorrow, we'll move on somewhere else. But you have to be reasonable; there isn't anywhere to go tonight.

ANN

Then we'll just sit up all night, and tomorrow we'll move on.

MATT

You can't be serious? I'm exhausted! It's been a very tiring day, and I've been looking forward to a good night's sleep for the past fifty miles.

ANN

Then you go to bed. But I'll not be joining you, and that's final. I won't do it!

MATT

(Putting his arms around her) Honey, I'm sorry. I didn't know you were so sensitive. Do you forgive me?

ANN

I knew that we shouldn't have come here. I mean people our age don't come to the Poconos for a honeymoon. This place is for kids!

MATT

No, honey, you're wrong! There're lots of people our age here. And some of them are a lot older. You'll see tomorrow when we go to breakfast. Over the years, I've even got to know some of them.

ANN

You know some of them? What do you mean that you know some of them?

MATT

I would almost bet money that tomorrow, I'll run into at least two or three people that I've met here before. The last time it was almost like a reunion. We had a great time. We were even kidding one another, and we said that we would get together in three years. And here I am!
(Smiling)

ANN

I'm not amused.

MATT

I'm only kidding, honey. Come on, don't be so serious.

ANN

Matthew, you know how I feel about this marriage. I've leveled with you from the very beginning. I'm not sure that I was ready to get married again. Don and I have only been divorced for a year. You and I moved in with each other almost right away, and it didn't give me much of a chance to get my life back together. But you kept insisting that we get married, and for what reason, I don't know. I was perfectly happy to leave the situation status quo.

MATT

I don't like living together. I don't feel secure.

ANN

If you're insecure, Matthew, marriage isn't going to help.

MATT

It's not that! It's the commitment! I need the commitment!

ANN

You realize that the chances of this working out are very slim. I think that we would be kidding each other if we thought otherwise.

MATT

Don't say that, Ann. I want this marriage to last. It means a lot to me. You mean a lot to me. *(He tries to touch her but she moves away)*

ANN

I never told you that I loved you, because I'm not sure.

MATT

(Pause) I love you.

ANN

I know you do. Or at least, you say you do. Anyway, I'm willing to give us a try and see if things work out. If they don't, then you'll just have to understand.

MATT

What is it with me? I've never loved anyone in my whole life except myself. Then you come along, and I fall hopelessly in love with you, and you're not sure that you love me.

ANN

(Coldly) You're just feeling sorry for yourself.

MATT

Maybe I am. But I can't help it. I need, very desperately, for you to love me.

ANN

And maybe I will, in time. But you have to give me time, and stop pushing me.

MATT

All right, all right! I Promise! I'll never again ask you if you love me. It's all up to you. But I want you to know that I'm not sure how long I can live with a woman who isn't sure that she loves me.

ANN

The problem, Matthew, is that I'm not sure I know what love is. It's nothing personal.

MATT

I could use a drink. Should I order some champagne?

ANN

Yes. I could drink a glass of champagne.

MATT

(He crosses to the phone, picks it up and dials) Hello, room service. *(Pause)* Oh hello, Douglas. I would like a bottle of your best champagne. Yes, the same as before. *(Pause)* Okay, that will be fine. *(He hangs up)* It'll be here in a few minutes.

ANN

(Pause) You know when Don and I were married; we went to Panama on our honeymoon. We had such a good time we stayed there for five years. I've often wondered what would have happened if we had come back here and started a family. That's what he wanted, you know. He wanted children, a house, a simple life. Did I ever tell you how I met him?

MATT

I don't think so.

ANN

(Pause) Don and I met at college. It was a blind date. The only thing my roommate ever talked about was her boyfriend's best friend, Don. He was on the football team, and a big man on the campus. But he was also very shy.

MATT

You wouldn't think a guy like that would be shy.

ANN

He was truly an oxymoron. My roommate insisted that I meet him. She thought that I would be good for him. She knew my personality. Well, anyway, we met, and I thought that he was the most beautiful man that I had ever seen. We became a couple around the campus, and everybody expected to see us together. People began to invite us to parties together rather than individually. It went that way through his whole senior year. That June, he graduated and took a job in California. I still had a year of college left, and it was the longest year of my life. All that time together and we still hadn't made love.

MATT

Not even once?

ANN

Not even once. I made plans to visit him during my spring vacation. But, on the day that I was to leave, a blizzard hit, and the airport closed down for three days. I was so angry; I could have kicked a dog. When I finally arrived, he picked me up at the airport, and we drove right to his place. I was determined to make love to him without delay. I asked him if I could take a shower. When I finished, I called to him and said that I couldn't find a towel. He was trying to explain to me where they were, when I opened the door and there we were. He didn't know where to look. I moved to him, put my arms around him, and began to kiss him. He moved away and said that he wanted me more than anything in his whole life, but he didn't want it to happen this way. He said he thought that maybe we should think about getting married. So, that June I graduated, we had a nice traditional church wedding in my home town, and we were off to Panama for our honeymoon.

MATT

And for the next couple of years you and Don lived happily ever after.

ANN

(Pause and looking right at Matt) Not exactly! He changed after that. He went from being the big star athlete to a devoted husband. The only problem was he didn't want to have sex more than twice a week, usually on the weekends. I didn't find that very romantic.

MATT

I can understand that.

ANN

So after a while, I began to look for romance elsewhere. I didn't actively seek it, but it has a way of finding you if you're ready. I was working at this Air Force base, and I came into contact with a lot of men. I worked with this captain. He was unhappily married, so we had a lot in common. One day he asked me to go to lunch, and that's when everything began to change. After that, we would make excuses to take the afternoons off, and we would go to his house and spend a few hours in bed making love. *(Slight pause)* Then he got transferred to West Point. A short time later, I met another officer, a lieutenant. He was a musician. He had his own apartment, and we would go there after work, get high, and he would play his guitar to me for hours. I thought I was falling in love with him.

MATT

Were you?

ANN

(She looks at Matt and without answering his question she continues) It was about that time my Lieutenant was getting out of the service. Don's contract with the Panamanian firm was up, and he had decided to come back to the states. That was fine with me. I wanted to be near my lieutenant. I also knew that I couldn't stay married to Don much longer. It just wasn't working out. I still remember the morning that I decided to leave Don. I was on my way to work. There was a long bridge across a river that I drove every morning. Somewhere about the middle of that bridge I made up my mind. After that, it was just a matter of when I would do it.

MATT

And when did you do it?

ANN

New Year's Eve! I wanted to get the New Year started right. Don just couldn't believe it. He thought that our marriage was perfect. Anyway, I moved out the next day. It was convenient to do it then for tax purposes. The lieutenant moved to Massachusetts, and he wanted me to come there and support him while he tried to make it as a musician. I thought about it and decided that I didn't want to do that. *(She takes a pause. Looking at Matt with contempt)* Then I met you. I must admit that you caught me in a very confused state.

MATT

I was determined though.

ANN

Yes. You were determined. That's the primary reason that we're here now.

MATT

(Slight pause) Do you ever think about him?

ANN

Who?

MATT

The lieutenant!

ANN

It's over with him. I knew that the last time I saw him.

MATT

When was that?

ANN

Three months ago.

MATT

Three months ago! You were living with me then! You never mentioned.....

ANN

It was that week that you were out of town. He had called a couple of weeks before and said that he wanted to see me. I knew that you were going out of town, so I told him that he could come down that week.

MATT

But why didn't you say something?

ANN

Because I knew that it would upset you. I didn't want to do that.

MATT

You're damn right it would have upset me! It upsets me now! *(Pause)* Did you? *(She doesn't answer. Slight pause)* Did you sleep with him?

ANN

It doesn't matter.

MATT

Yes, it does matter! It matters a lot!

ANN

(Pause and looking right at him) Then I didn't sleep with him.

MATT

(Pause) You're just saying that so I won't be upset. I want to know the truth.

ANN

I told you. I didn't sleep with him.

MATT

(Pause) He stayed there a whole week, and you didn't sleep with him!

ANN

All right! So I slept with him! So what!

MATT

So what! How could you have done such a thing?

ANN

It wasn't that important.

MATT

(Incredulous) Is that what you think? You think that it wasn't important?

ANN

Okay! Let's just call it a farewell screw!

MATT

I can't believe that you're telling me this! You know that I love you! This hurts, this hurts a lot!

ANN

I told you that it was nothing more than a farewell screw! I don't intend to see him again.

MATT

Did you tell him that?

ANN

Yes.

MATT

And what did he say?