**A MARRIAGE OF INCONVENIENCE**

**SYNOPSIS: A MARRIAGE OF INCONVENIENCE**

CAST: 3 FEMALE / 2 MALE / 1 EITHER (OPTIONAL)

1 SET

Ninety year old Agatha Wellington, a wealthy widow, doubts the romantic virtues of men and desperately wants her granddaughter, Molly Drake, to marry a woman. Unfortunately for Agatha, Molly has fallen in love with a male art historian, Luther, who studies the written descriptions of lost surrealist paintings. Agatha is determined to foil this relationship—so determined that she consults a lawyer about having her property set on fire upon her death. As she explains to her attorney: “If my own granddaughter can’t do me this one small favor, she doesn’t see a dime.” Without Agatha’s knowledge, the lawyer then hires a female prostitute, Samantha, to seduce Molly. Meanwhile, Agatha demands that her granddaughter choose between her heterosexuality and her inheritance.

Zachariah, the lawyer, has a problem of his own. He is terrified of dying in his sleep, so much so that he suffers from debilitating insomnia. The tragedy of life, according to Zachariah, is that “even very wealthy people wake up dead.” He consults his psychiatrist—who happens to be Molly Drake. When Agatha’s granddaughter proves unable to cure him, he seeks help from the prostitute, whose motto is: “After sex with Samantha, you’re ready to die.” She cures him *too* well. He loses his fear of death entirely and begins to take unnecessary and “un-lawyerly” risks.

Agatha’s threat to burn her fortune yields unexpected results: It turns out that included in the property she threatens to destroy is the “lost” painting to which Luther has dedicated years of study. The art historian finds himself facing a choice between the painting and his love for Agatha’s granddaughter. His difficulties increase further when—with the help of a lightning strike—the prostitute does manage to seduce Molly. All appears lost for Luther…until Agatha meets Samantha and realizes that the prostitute is not the “decent young woman” she has had in mind for her granddaughter.

*A Marriage of Inconvenience* is a comedy of ideas that grapples with the issues of sexual orientation and property rights. The play is designed to be off-beat, provocative and fun.

**CAST**

2 MALE / 3 FEMALE / (1 EITHER)

**Agatha Wellington** A wealthy widow of ninety years. **(F/90)**

**Dr. Molly Drake** Agatha’s granddaughter, a psychiatrist

in her thirties. **(F/30s)**

**Zachariah Carmichael** Agatha’s attorney. **(M/40s-50s)**

**Luther Gibbons** Heir to a board game fortune. **(M/30s)**

**Samantha** An entrepreneurial prostitute. It would

help if she had a foreign accent.

**(F/20s-30s)**

**An Authoritative Voice** The **Voice** may be played by one actor.

Alternatively, each of the five actors may

take a turn playing the **Voice** for those

scenes in which he or she does not

otherwise appear.

**SET & PROPS**

The set should be as sparse as possible. Every scene in the play can be staged with a door, a small table or desk, a telephone, a chess set, and either three chairs, two chairs, one chair, or no chairs; several scenes in Act Two also require a bed. The only other prop is Bergault’s surrealist painting: *The Resurrection of Dismas and Gestas*. The audience should never see the painted side of the canvas.

**NOTE ON SUBTITLES**

The bold headings preceding each scene (eg. “**Agatha**”; “**Zachariah visits his psychiatrist**”) should be read aloud by the **Voice**, preferably over a microphone.

**ACT ONE**

**1. “Agatha”**

*(Agatha enters. Agatha, to the audience.)*

**AGATHA**

I am ninety years old.

Happy birthday to me.

You are wondering: Am I a young ninety or an old ninety?

Only young people wonder: Are you a young ninety or an old ninety?

You can be a young seventy-five. You can be an old seventy-five.

You *cannot* be a young ninety.

People ask me: What is your secret?

I tell them. A woman needs three qualities to live to be ninety.

Quality number one. Ignorance.

That gets you through the first thirty years.

Quality number two. Flattery.

That’s another three decades.

Quality number three. Spite.

Years sixty through ninety.

After that, I don’t know yet.

**2. “Zachariah”**

*(Zachariah enters. Zachariah, to the audience.)*

**ZACHARIAH**

I’m having difficulty sleeping.

I’m afraid that I might wake up dead.

That is the great irony of life: A man graduates first in his class at the Yale Law School and he *still* might wake up dead.

My work offers little comfort.

I am a wills and trusts attorney. I manage the estates of very wealthy people. Even very wealthy people wake up dead.

Last spring, I attended my law school class reunion. Twenty years. I ran into an old friend, a human rights activist named Jack Stone. He slapped me on the back and asked: “Wills and estates? Profiteering off rich, dead people? How do you sleep at night?”

Jack Stone was in the newspaper yesterday. He woke up dead.

**3. “Agatha visits her lawyer”**

*(Zachariah sits down at his desk. Agatha sits opposite*

*him.)*

**AGATHA**

So I wish to rewrite my will. Change the beneficiary.

**ZACHARIAH**

All right, Mrs. Wellington. We can do that.

**AGATHA**

How quickly?

**ZACHARIAH**

Very quickly.

**AGATHA**

At my age, you understand, every waking moment counts.

**ZACHARIAH**

I understand….Who would you like to be the new beneficiary?

**AGATHA**

Me.

**ZACHARIAH**

You?

**AGATHA**

Me. I desire to be buried with my property. Like the ancient Egyptians.

**ZACHARIAH**

I see, Mrs. Wellington. What about your granddaughter?

**AGATHA**

Why for heaven’s sake would I want to be buried with her?

**ZACHARIAH**

What I meant, Mrs. Wellington, was that you’re disinheriting your granddaughter.

**AGATHA**

Exactly. And why shouldn’t I? She’s been going on dates behind my back. *With men.*

**ZACHARIAH**

I don’t know that it’s any of my business, but your granddaughter must be what? Thirty years old?

**AGATHA**

Thirty-two. An old maid.

**ZACHARIAH**

Don’t you think thirty-two is old enough to go on dates?

**AGATHA**

To go on dates? Most certainly. But not with *men*. I did not raise my granddaughter to date *men*. It’s nothing personal, you understand. Some of my closest friends are *men*. Molly’s grandfather wasa *man.* But *Molly* is going to marry a woman….I’m a grown adult too, Mr. Carmichael, and if my own granddaughter can’t do me this one small favor, she doesn’t see a dime.

**ZACHARIAH**

All right, Mrs. Wellington. I’ll look into what can be done—but I’m afraid this isn’t the easiest matter….Some things are not possible….

**AGATHA**

What do you mean: “Some things are not possible”? You’re a lawyer. Make it possible.

*(Agatha exits.)*

**4. Molly**

*(Molly enters. Molly, to the audience.)*

**MOLLY**

They say a woman over thirty with a doctorate has a higher chance of being struck by lightning than of getting married.

I have *two* doctoral degrees. One in thanatology. One in medicine.

This was not wise romantic strategy.

I am a psychiatrist. I spend all of my time at the hospital.

This is also not wise romantic strategy.

The only people I speak to all day are doctors and patients. I speak to nurses too—but they are like doctors, only not doctors.

I would not want to marry a doctor.

Psychiatrists are not permitted to marry their patients. The rules are very strict about this. They do not make any exceptions—even if the psychiatrist and the patient are in love.

I think they should make an exception if the psychiatrist and the patient are in love.

**5. “Zachariah visits his psychiatrist”**

*(Molly sits down in a chair. Zachariah enters and sits*

*opposite her.)*

**ZACHARIAH**

I don’t think I’m overreacting, Dr. Drake. I think everyone else is *under*-reacting.

**MOLLY**

How so?

**ZACHARIAH**

Most people don’t think about waking up dead.

**MOLLY**

And you do.

**ZACHARIAH**

People are so vulnerable when they’re sleeping. But they don’t realize it. They just lie there counting sheep. I lie there and think about what would happen if the couple in the apartment below mine left their gas range on by mistake….

**MOLLY**

What *would* happen?

**ZACHARIAH**

They say carbon monoxide poisoning is quick and painless. You don’t even know you’re dying—you think you have the flu. I can imagine only one thing worse than dying: Dying without knowing that you’re dying.

**MOLLY**

Have you considered sleeping with a window open?

**ZACHARIAH**

I tried that. I lay there all night worrying that a prowler might climb through the window and strangle me.

*(Zachariah exits.)*

**6. “Luther”**

*(Luther enters. Luther, to the audience.)*

**LUTHER**

My father designs and manufactures board games.

My father is a very powerful board game magnate. I am heir to a board game empire.

Board games are not like real life.

In *Monopoly*, everyone begins with the same amount of money. In real life, everyone *does not* begin with the same amount of money. My father does not believe all people should begin life with the same amount of money. That is the one matter on which most people agree. Democrats and Republicans. Jews and Christians. There is a consensus that some people should begin life with more money than others.

I *do not* manufacture board games. I am an art historian. I study the paintings of the eighteenth century French surrealist Renée Bergault.

I imagine you have never heard of Bergault. His workshop burned during the French Revolution and none of the canvasses survived. All that remains are written descriptions of his paintings.

They are quite beautiful.

**7. “Molly”**

*(Molly, to the audience*.)

**MOLLY**

People *do* get struck by lightning.

Some people get struck by lightning *more than once*.

I read about a woman in Georgia who was struck by a lightning sixteen times.

And she didn’t even have a Ph. D….

Scientists now know that some people are lightning magnets. They are far more likely to be struck by lightning than anybody else. If lightning strikes were distributed randomly, the odds of any one person being struck by lightning sixteen times would be one trillion-billion to one. But lightning strikes are not distributed randomly.

Scientists cannot explain why some people attract lightning.

I think about this a lot.

It is the sort of thing you think about when you are not in love.

**8. “Molly goes on a date”**

*(Luther sits down at a table. Molly sits opposite him.)*

**LUTHER**

I’ve been thinking a lot about walking on water.

It seems obvious to you and to me that we can’t walk on water. That’s why Jesus is such a big deal. But if you were a Martian who’d arrived on earth for the first time, you wouldn’t know that you couldn’t walk on water. Just by looking at the water, you can’t tell that you can’t walk on it. You’d probably see all those boats on the river and you’d assume you *could* walk on water.

**MOLLY**

This is the strangest date I’ve ever been on.

**LUTHER**

Strange in a good way or strange in a bad way?

**MOLLY**

Strange in a *strange* way….But good, I think….

May I ask you a very odd question?

**LUTHER**

Anything.

**MOLLY**

Are you ever afraid of waking up dead?

**LUTHER**

What?

**MOLLY**

I have this patient, a middle-aged lawyer, who’s afraid he’ll die in his sleep. I assured him his fears are irrational—but I’ve hardly slept for three days since.

**LUTHER**

Because you’re afraid?

**MOLLY**

Aren’t you?

**LUTHER**

That raises an interesting theological question. If true Christians believe that the afterlife is preferable to this one, why don’t they hold murderers in higher esteem?

**MOLLY**

Excuse me?

**LUTHER**

I’m sorry. I know one is not supposed to discuss religion on a first date.

**MOLLY**

Is this only our *first* date?

**LUTHER**

I’ve never understood *why* one isn’t supposed to discussion spiritual matters on a first date. Do you believe in the afterlife? I ask that only because there are people all over this country who’ve been married for years and they don’t know whether their spouses believe in the afterlife.

**MOLLY**

Is that a proposal?

**LUTHER**

May I ask you a very odd question?

**MOLLY**

Anything.

**LUTHER**

Do you ever wonder if Martians can swim?

*(Molly and Luther exit.)*

**9. “Agatha”**

*(Agatha enters. Agatha, to the audience.)*

**AGATHA**

If I were a Native American and I wanted my granddaughter to find a husband who shared our heritage, few people would object.

If I were Jewish and I wanted my granddaughter to marry a Jewish person, that would be perfectly acceptable.

Well I’m female, so I’d like my granddaughter to find a nice young woman. Maybe a librarian or a dental hygienist. I don’t understand what the big fuss is.

**10. “Zachariah visits his client”**

*(Agatha opens the door. Zachariah enters.)*

**ZACHARIAH**

It can’t be done, Mrs. Wellington.

**AGATHA**

What’s that?

**ZACHARIAH**

You can’t bury yourself with your belongings.

**AGATHA**

Why in heaven’s name not? They’re *my* belongings, aren’t they?

**ZACHARIAH**

You have to be mentally competent to execute a will in this state, Mrs. Wellington. I’ve spoken with three experts on inheritance law and *all three* agree that expressing a wish to be buried alongside your property would be *prima facie* evidence that you are *not* mentally competent.

**AGATHA**

Then find another expert, Mr. Carmichael. That’s the one thing we’ll never run out of in this country: Experts. Sometimes it amazes me how we can live in a nation with so many experts and so little expertise.

**ZACHARIAH**

It doesn’t work like that, Mrs. Wellington….I think it might be productive for us to explore other options. If you don’t want to leave your money to your granddaughter, how about to a favorite charity?

**AGATHA**

I don’t have a favorite charity. I don’t care for charities. These days, everybody wants to fix something or save something or cure something. Cancer. Hemorrhoids. Well when I was a girl, we hadn’t fixed or cured half of these things. And do you know what? People were happier.

**ZACHARIAH**

And you have no other relatives? Maybe a close friend?

**AGATHA**

I’m ninety years old, Mr. Carmichael. Everybody I’ve ever known is dead.

**ZACHARIAH**

Then I’m not sure what to tell you, Mrs. Wellington. I can’t write you a defective will.

**AGATHA**

What happens if I leave a will without any beneficiary?

**ZACHARIAH**

Your next-of-kin inherits. In your case, that would be your granddaughter.

**AGATHA**

And if I add a clause specifically disinheriting her?

**ZACHARIAH**

Then the property *escheats* to the state.

**AGATHA**

*Escheats*?

**ZACHARIAH**

The state takes everything.

**AGATHA**

That’s mighty convenient for the state, isn’t it?

**ZACHARIAH**

It rarely comes to that.

**AGATHA**

Well there won’t be any *escheating* when I’m gone. I don’t even like the state….Do *you* like the state, Mr. Carmichael?

**ZACHARIAH**

I’m not sure what you mean. Do you mean *this* state? Or the concept of “the state”?

**AGATHA**

Never mind.

**ZACHARIAH**

I have an idea, Mrs. Wellington. Maybe you could spend all of your money before you die.

**AGATHA**

Now *that* is a truly asinine suggestion. You are either overestimating my time or underestimating my wealth. Do you know how much I’m worth, Mr. Carmichael?

**ZACHARIAH**

Yes, I do.

**AGATHA**

Well, I don’t. This is what happens when you’re married to a *man*. He earns a vast fortune and then he dies and then you’re stuck all alone with a vast fortune. I read in the newspaper that I was worth somewhere between six hundred million and eight hundred million dollars. When you read that about a *man*, you think: Good God! That’s an awful lot of money. When you read that about a woman, you think: Between six hundred million and eight hundred million. How can she not know how much money she has?

**ZACHARIAH**

I imagine it would be difficult to spend eight hundred million dollars in a short period of time. Or even six hundred million.

**AGATHA**

And what if I miscalculated and spent too much? I’d die in a debtors prison.

**ZACHARIAH**

I see your point, Mrs. Wellington—though, for the record, there aren’t debtors prisons anymore.

**AGATHA**

Not at the moment. But they’ll come back. That’s the one thing you realize when you’ve lived ninety years. *Everything* comes back….swing music, Richard Nixon, the ivory-billed woodpecker. Also witch hunts, concentration camps, torture chambers. Everything. Only the victims are sometimes different. Do you know what, Mr. Carmichael?

**ZACHARIAH**

No, Mrs. Wellington. What?

**AGATHA**

Next time around, I think we should have *creditors* prisons.

**ZACHARIAH**

Please, Mrs. Wellington. With regard to the matter at hand—

**AGATHA**

Any more asinine ideas?

**ZACHARIAH**

Maybe you could arrange to be sued, Mrs. Wellington. Let someone take you for all you’re worth.

**AGATHA**

And die poor? No, indeed….If the United States is such a communist country that I cannot be buried with my own property, then nobody may have it. I would prefer it be destroyed upon my death. Set on fire. Like one of those Indian widows.

**ZACHARIAH**

You want me to write *that* into your will?

**AGATHA**

That’s my intention, Mr. Carmichael. Oh, and you may be my executor.

**ZACHARIAH**

Let me get this straight. You want me to gather all of your property when you die and set it on fire.

**AGATHA**

Will that be a problem?

**ZACHARIAH**

Again, there’s the issue of *compos mentis*. The experts…

**AGATHA**

A pox on your experts, Mr. Carmichael. They should be horsewhipped.

**ZACHARIAH**

That may well be. Nevertheless, they *are* experts….

**AGATHA**

If you can’t help me, Mr. Carmichael, I’ll have to set the fire *myself*.

**ZACHARIAH**

While you’re still alive?

**AGATHA**

When I’m at death’s door….

There should really be a third condition *between* life and death for dealing with these touchy matters. Revealing family secrets. Establishing paternity. Distributing assets.

That way we wouldn’t need lawyers.

*(Agatha exits.)*

**11. “Luther”**

*(Luther enters. Luther, to the audience.)*

**LUTHER**

My father believes it is *natural* that I should inherit the family board game empire.

There is nothing *natural* about inheritance.

Why should you be able to inherit some things and not others?

Let’s say my father doesn’t put safety guards on the machine that chops up the *Monopoly* money, and one of our employees is diced to pieces. If my old man flees to the far corners of the earth, why shouldn’t the police arrest *me* in his place? After all, I’m the one who’ll inherit the money he saved by skimping.

We don’t allow that in this country. You cannot inherit criminal responsibility.

Inheriting property is no more natural than inheriting a jail sentence.

Sometimes inheriting property *is* inheriting a jail sentence.

*(Luther exits.)*

**12. “Zachariah”**

*(Zachariah, to the audience.)*

**ZACHARIAH**

*Escheat*. Don’t you just love the verb “to escheat”?

From the Latin “cadere.” To fall. This is also the origin of “chance” and “to cheat.”

*Escheat*: A “chance cheating.”

You would be surprised how many people die without wills.

I do not have a will myself. This is not an oversight.

I am a lawyer. I have no friends or family. To whom would I leave my money?

But that doesn’t mean I’m willing to let the state cheat me. I’m going to spend every last nickel while I’m still alive. Let them bury me in Potter’s field.

The problem is timing: Knowing *when* to go insolvent. I could wake up dead tomorrow. I could live another fifty years.

Either I’ll cheat the state or the state will cheat me.

*(Zachariah exits.)*

**13. “Molly visits her grandmother”**

*(Agatha enters and stands at the door.*

*Molly enters through the door.)*

**MOLLY**

Hi, Grandma. How are you?

**AGATHA**

Old.

**MOLLY**

I meant: How are you *acutely*?

**AGATHA**

You speak like a doctor.

**MOLLY**

How are you different now from the last time I saw you?

**AGATHA**

Older.

**MOLLY**

You are becoming one impossible old woman. It’s a good thing I love you. I hope you appreciate that.

**AGATHA.**

Why don’t you ask me how *you* are?

**MOLLY**

How *I* am?

**AGATHA**

Since the last time you saw me.

**MOLLY**

How *am* I?

**AGATHA.**

Disinherited.

**MOLLY**

This again?

**AGATHA**

I spoke to the lawyer this morning.

**MOLLY**

Let me guess. You told him you wanted to be buried with your money.

**AGATHA**

I want all of my property set on fire, actually.

**MOLLY**

I’m sure you do.

**AGATHA**

Don’t look at me like that.

**MOLLY**

How am I looking at you?

**AGATHA**

Like I’m demented. Like I’ve gone soft in the head. Like you’re going to ask me what day of the week it is or who was President during the Spanish-American War or whatever you ask people before you strap them into straightjackets and throw away the keys.

**MOLLY**

Please, Grandma

**AGATHA**

You’re going to have me declared mad and keep my property for yourself. Just like in *King Lear*.

**MOLLY**

Okay, okay. Get it all out of your system.

**AGATHA**

I’ll be wandering the heath with only a fool for a companion…stripped of my worldly possessions…my ancient body bare to the elements…sparrows nesting in my long white beard…..Or you’ll have me locked in the attic like Rochester’s wife in *Jane Eyre*….Guarded twenty-four hours…weighed down by shackles and leg-irons…fed on a meager diet of glass shards and motor oil….

**MOLLY**

Are you done?

**AGATHA**

I’m getting there….

**MOLLY**

Please, Grandma. You know I don’t give a damn about your property. I just want us to have a healthy, loving relationship.

**AGATHA**

When you agree to have a healthy, loving relationship with another woman, then you can have a healthy, loving relationship with me.

**MOLLY**

We’ve been through all this before.

**AGATHA**

And we’ll go through it all again. Do you need me to remind you of all the things I’ve done for you over the years?

**MOLLY**

This isn’t getting us anywhere.

**AGATHA**

Do you remember when you were in third grade and you glued your thumb to your index finger? Who helped unglue you?

**MOLLY**

Thank you. I’m grateful.

**AGATHA**

And when your bunny-rabbit kite got caught in the linden tree and I knocked it loose with a rock.

**MOLLY**

All right. Thank you again. I owe you one.

**AGATHA**

What about the time you were visiting colleges and you laughed so hard at that boy’s joke that you peed in your overalls? Who drove all the way to Vassar with a clean pair of dungarees?

**MOLLY**

I get the point. What do you want? My first born child?

**AGATHA**

You know precisely what I want.

**MOLLY**

That’s not going to happen.

**AGATHA**

Never say never. Elizabeth Taylor got back together with Richard Burton.

**MOLLY**

I’m not Elizabeth Taylor.

**AGATHA**

All the more reason…

**MOLLY**

It’s not going to happen, Grandma. I like *men*.

**AGATHA**

Okay, you like men. Nobody’s arguing with you. But is it always so important to get what you like?

I tell you what: After I’m dead, you get divorced and you marry a man.

**MOLLY**

Try to be reasonable.

**AGATHA**

I *am* being reasonable. It’s not as though I’m ordering you to marry a specific person. If I said to you: Marry the violent, pockmarked hunchback who owns the village mortuary so that I can be buried for free, *that* would be unreasonable.

**MOLLY**

What violent hunchback?

**AGATHA**

I was speaking hypothetically. My point is that I’m not confining your choice to a single person or a small group of people. Half the human beings in the world are women. More than half. That’s four billion women to choose from.

**MOLLY**

There could be four hundred billion and it wouldn’t make a difference....I am not going to fall in love with a woman.

**AGATHA**

How can you be so sure? You meet all four billion of them and *then* you decide.

**MOLLY**

I love you, Grandma. I really do. But this is not the sort of sacrifice grandchildren make for their grandmothers.

**AGATHA**

I don’t see what’s such a sacrifice. It’s not as though you have a specific man in mind that preventing you from marrying. This isn’t an English novel. Need I remind you that you have *two* doctoral degrees, young lady? That doesn’t exactly make you Helen of Troy.

**MOLLY**

I’ve met someone.

**AGATHA**

A *man*?

**MOLLY**

A *man*.

**AGATHA.**

Unbelievable!

What it is that Oedipus says? Count no woman happy until she is dead.

**MOLLY**

I’d like you to meet him.

**AGATHA**

What for? I can dislike him just fine without meeting him.

**MOLLY**

You might *like* him.

**AGATHA**

Only if he goes to Sweden and has his you-know-whats snipped off.

**MOLLY**

I thought I’d bring him over for supper this weekend. He’s an art historian.

**AGATHA**

You mean he’s a homosexual.

**MOLLY**

Why do you have to be this way?

**AGATHA**

Be *what* way? All art historians are homosexuals. It’s a proven fact. You might as well date a woman.

**MOLLY**

Well Luther is *not* a homosexual and he is *not* a woman, but he *is* an art historian. A relatively famous one. I’m sure he’d love to see Grandpa’s collection.

**AGATHA**

Before I set it on fire, you mean.

**MOLLY**

Give him a chance, Grandma. He’s not like any other man I’ve ever met.

**AGATHA**

You mean he’s interested in you.

**MOLLY**

Okay, have your fun. But yes, he’s interested in me. And I want you two to get to know each other. Honestly, Grandma, I cannot imagine spending my entire life with a man who didn’t know you.

**AGATHA**

Fine, bring him to supper. I’ll make something with lots of small bones in it.

*(Molly exits.)*

**14. “Agatha”**

*(Agatha, to the audience.)*

**AGATHA**

*Men.*

The problem with men is that they make you laugh so hard you pee in your pants and then they sit there grinning as though they’ve turned water into wine. If a man can make a woman lose control of anything—even her bladder—he takes credit for a major accomplishment. There you are, soaking wet and embarrassed, and he’s pleased as punch. Proud of himself. Turned on.

Up until you’re a certain age, that is. I’m past that age.

Nobody’s turned on when I lose control of my bladder.

That’s why I’m through with men.

Is a woman going to leave you when you lose urinary control? Is a woman going to run off with some iron-bladdered floozy? Of course not. She’s going to stick with you through continence and incontinence.

That’s what I want for my Molly. A thoughtful girl who’ll change her diapers someday.

**15. “Samantha”**

*(Samantha enters. Samantha, to the audience.)*

**SAMANTHA**

*Men.*

I don’t like the word “prostitute.” I’m partial to “entrepreneur.”

Think about it: A man sells his soul to earn a quick buck and people call him an entrepreneur. But a woman sells her body for the same purpose and she’s a prostitute. Like, what’s that about?

It takes a lot of drive to make it in the sex industry. You can’t just show up on a street corner and flash some thigh. You need to take the initiative, to develop a business plan, establish a niche for yourself.

It doesn’t hurt to have a good slogan.

Do you want to hear mine?

“After sex with Samantha, you’re ready to die.”

Pretty catchy, no? And I thought it up on my own.

Who needs a fancy publicist? It’s all about ingenuity and hard work.

I work harder than your average doctor.

I had my breasts done. I was on the operating table for about three hours.

A few months later, the senior surgeon comes into my place for a screw.

I was on my back for *six* hours.

It took him half as long do my breasts—and there were two of them.

I should start billing extra for difficult procedures. Like Medicare….

People *never* ask me: If you weren’t a prostitute, what would you be doing?

I wish they would.

I think if I weren’t a prostitute, I’d be writing picture books for children.

*(Samantha exits.)*

**16. “Molly and Luther visit Agatha”**

*(Agatha sits at the table and lights matches.*

*Molly and Luther enter.)*

**MOLLY**

It smells of smoke.

**AGATHA**

Just practicing.

**MOLLY**

This is Luther.

*(To Luther.)*

This is my grandmother, Agatha Wellington.

**AGATHA**

Like the Duke of Wellington. Only still alive.

**LUTHER**

From what Molly tells me, you’d have been a match for Napoleon yourself.

**AGATHA**

I know all about you too. The *operative* facts, at least.

**LUTHER**

Then we’re even.

**AGATHA**

On the subject of *operative* facts, Mr. Luther, have you ever considered a trip to Scandinavia? Sweden, maybe?

**MOLLY**

Grandma!

**AGATHA**

I figured I’d cut to the chase. Better than snipping at him all night.

**LUTHER**

My *first* name is Luther, Mrs. Wellington. Luther Gibbons.

**AGATHA**

I prefer *Mr.* Luther, Mr. Luther. It reminds me that you’re not *Miss* Luther.

**MOLLY**

*(To Luther.)*

I told you she’s incorrigible. I apologize.

**LUTHER**

No need. I admire a person who knows what she wants out of life. If your grandmother would like me to be Mr. Luther, I’ll be Mr. Luther.

**AGATHA**

Milquetoast. A *man*—and he doesn’t even act like a man.

**LUTHER**

I kind of like “Mr. Luther.” What do you think Molly? Like Martin Luther. Or Dr. Martin Luther King.

**MOLLY**

It makes you sound like a stuffed animal.

One of those old stuffed animals with the eyes missing.

**AGATHA**

A *male* stuffed animal….

How did you two meet?

**LUTHER**

In a toy store.

**MOLLY**

I was watching other people shopping. The young mothers. When I feel desperate or lonely, I like to watch the young mothers with their children….Their numerous, whining, implacable children. It makes me feel less desperate and lonely.

**AGATHA**

In my day it was the diphtheria wards.

**LUTHER**

I picket outside toy stores on weekends. We live in a society where everybody’s obsessed with sex and violence. On television. In the schools. Nobody ever talks about the influence of board games. *Battleship*. *Risk*. What sort of values are we teaching our children?

**MOLLY**

I’d never thought about it before. Imagine the psychological damage that takes place if you’re playing *Chutes and Ladders* and—after so much hard work and effort—you slide all the way down the big chute to the bottom.

**AGATHA**

How interesting. Do you know how I met *my* husband, Mr. Luther?

**LUTHER**

No.

**AGATHA**

At an auction house, Mr. Luther. I was twenty-four years old. An intern out of Barnard College. Hiram had just bid on an entire lot of Old Masters—the ones he later donated to museums—when I went up on stage to interrupt the auctioneer.

You see: We had heard Orson Wells announce on the radio that Martians had landed in Grover’s Mill, New Jersey.

Do you know what Hiram did? He bid on me.

**MOLLY**

That’s not true, Grandma.

**AGATHA**

No Martians had landed, of course. It was a hoax. But I was stuck with him for another thirty-two years.

**MOLLY**

*(To Luther.)*

She’s making this up.

**LUTHER**

Where do you think your husband is now, Mrs. Wellington?

**AGATHA**

I *know* where he is. Right there on the mantel. Next to the African violet.

**LUTHER**

I meant *his soul*, Mrs. Wellington. Do you believe he’s up in heaven looking down upon us…or reincarnated in the form of an animal…?

**AGATHA**

Hiram didn’t have a soul, Mr. Luther. I can’t speak more generally as to whether or not people have souls. But Molly’s grandfather didn’t.

**LUTHER**

I see.

**AGATHA**

On the day they were handing out souls, he was still on the line for brains.

**MOLLY**

*(To Luther)*

My grandparents were actually quite happily married. This is just a coping mechanism.

**AGATHA**

She has two doctoral degrees, so she thinks she knows everything. Did she mention that she has *two* doctoral degrees?

**LUTHER.**

She did. So do I.

**MOLLY**

In art history and in theology.

**AGATHA**

That’s what I’ve always wanted in a grandson. Practical skills.

**LUTHER**

Molly tells me your husband collected paintings. May I see them?

**AGATHA**

Look around. Nobody’s stopping you.

*(Luther wanders around the room.)*

**LUTHER**

Jesus Christ! Renoir’s “Self Portrait in White.” This disappeared during the bombing of Rotterdam….

**AGATHA**

It didn’t disappear at all. It merely relocated.

**LUTHER**

….John Constable’s “Oxbow at Dawn”…. Pissarro’s “Rue de Village”…. These paintings have been lost for half a century….

**AGATHA**

My husband was well-connected.

**MOLLY**

Grandpa was a character.

**AGATHA**

What she means is: Grandpa did business with Nazis.

**LUTHER**

….Is that one what I think it is?

**AGATHA**

Probably.

**LUTHER**

My God! It’s a Bergault!

**AGATHA**

If you say so. I never took much of an interest.

**LUTHER**

*The Resurrection of Dismas and Gestas.*

**MOLLY**

Is it important?

**LUTHER**

It was his masterpiece. I’ve written a book about it. It was supposed to have been destroyed during the Thermidorian Reaction.

**AGATHA**

Well take a good look. It won’t be around forever.

**MOLLY**

What’s that supposed to mean?

**AGATHA**

I mean I’m going to set it on fire. Before I die.

**LUTHER**

You’re going to *what?!*

**AGATHA**

I’m going to set all of these canvases on fire.

**LUTHER**

You must be mad.

*(To Molly)*

We have to call the authorities.

**AGATHA**

If you don’t like it, sue me. By the time you get to court, I’ll be dead.

*(Agatha lights a match and watches it burn.)*

Or call the police. But if you do, you’d best call the fire department at the same time.

**LUTHER**

Please, Mrs. Wellington. Let’s talk this over….

**AGATHA**

Now it’s “Please, Mrs. Wellington.” A moment ago, I was mad. What happened to admiring people who know what they want out of life?

**LUTHER**

I’m sorry. I was just swept away in the moment….But I admit I’m at a complete loss. Why would you want to destroy something so beautiful?

**AGATHA**

Don’t be so negative….Why not try to see the beauty in ashes?

**LUTHER**

I’m begging you, Mrs. Wellington. If you’re afraid of criminal charges—or publicity—we’ll find a way to take care of it. The art world can be exceedingly discreet….

**AGATHA**

I’m ninety years old. I’m far too old to be discreet.

**LUTHER**

Then what can I do to change your mind? I’ll do anything.

**AGATHA**

I’ll trade you. The painting for my granddaughter.

**MOLLY**

You are joking?!

**AGATHA**

He wants the painting. I want a granddaughter-in-law. What is there to joke about?

**MOLLY**

*(To Luther)*

She’s bluffing, honey. She gets like this.

*(Agatha lights another match.)*

**AGATHA**

I think I may take up smoking….in bed.

**MOLLY**

Please, Grandma. This isn’t funny anymore.

**AGATHA**

I’m dead serious. Go home, Mr. Luther. Think it over.

*(Molly and Luther exit.)*

**17. “Zachariah summons a prostitute”**

*(Zachariah enters. Zachariah, to the audience.)*

**ZACHARIAH**

The practice of law is about rules and facts.

Changing rules is difficult. Changing facts is easy.

It will take years to convince the legislature that prostitution is a form of female entrepreneurship. It is far easier to convince a judge that your client isn’t a prostitute.

When the law is not on your side, a good attorney knows how to alter the facts.

*(Zachariah, into a telephone.)*

I’d like to order a prostitute….

I’m sorry. *An escort.*

No, not by the day….by the month….

That’s all fine. Money is not an issue….

What do you mean: “What kind of escort?” What are my options?

Oh, I see. Definitely a *female* escort….Caucasian is fine….

I’m not sure what those numbers mean….I really don’t know….

Can’t we just say weight proportional to height?

**18. “Luther consults a lawyer”**

*(Luther enters.)*

**ZACHARIAH**

So what can I do for you, Mr. Gibbons?

**LUTHER**

You see: I have this problem.

**ZACHARIAH**

I know.

**LUTHER**

What do you mean, You know?

**ZACHARIAH**

You’ve come to see a lawyer. Nobody goes to see a lawyer unless they have a problem.

**LUTHER**

I never thought of that.

**ZACHARIAH**

That’s why people don’t like lawyers. They associate them with problems. Now tell me: What sort of problem have you to come to see me about?

**LUTHER**

It’s more about a painting than about a problem.

**ZACHARIAH**

You have a painting.

**LUTHER**

No, I don’t have it. *That’s* the problem.

**ZACHARIAH**

What sort of painting is this?

**LUTHER**

A celebrated painting. *The Resurrection of Dismas and Gestas* by an artist named Renée Bergault.

**ZACHARIAH**

Dismas and Gestas?

**LUTHER**

The thieves who were crucified beside Jesus. But the painting is not “The Crucifixion of Dismas and Gestas.” It is *The Resurrection of Dismas and Gestas*. I trust you understand the theological implications of such a painting.

**ZACHARIAH**

I confess I don’t….My parents raised me Unitarian….I don’t understand the theological implications of much of anything….

**LUTHER**

Let me explain. Bergault was questioning why an all merciful and generous God would resurrect *only* his own son. That’s rather selfish, isn’t it? Some would call it flat-out nepotism. Not what you’d expect from a true Christian deity. But to resurrect two convicted thieves—to share your only son’s power with a pair of felons—now that’s the genuine Christian spirit. The paining is also the first modern example of surrealism—more than a century before Dali. It’s a breakthrough in both art and theology. I’ve dedicated my life to studying it.

**ZACHARIAH**

I imagine someone had to.

**LUTHER**

People haven’t always seen it that way, of course. The Archbishop of Munich kidnapped Bergault at the end of the Napoleonic Wars and cut his tongue out.

**ZACHARIAH**

How unfortunate….But I’m not sure how I can be of assistance to you? I’m afraid there’s a statute-of-limitations—even on de-tonguing.

**LUTHER**

For many years, the painting was believed destroyed in a fire. Some said the peasants had burned Bergault’s work out of superstition. Others claimed his wife had set the blaze because she thought he’d modeled one of the thieves after her….

**ZACHARIAH**

A case of arson.

**LUTHER**

No. *Not yet.* It turns out the painting wasn’t destroyed at all….

I’ve stumbled upon it right here in New York.

**ZACHARIAH**

Lucky for you.

**LUTHER**

Not so lucky. The woman who owns it plans to set it on fire.

**ZACHARIAH**

I see. That is a problem.

**LUTHER**

So can you help me?

**ZACHARIAH**

I wish I could. But you say this woman is the rightful owner….

**LUTHER**

She’s in possession of it, at least. But even if she does own it, that doesn’t give her the right to destroy it.

**ZACHARIAH**

I’m afraid it does. The case law is rather clear on this point.

**LUTHER**

You mean to tell me that I could go around buying up famous paintings and using them as firewood.

**ZACHARIAH**

If you could afford to…..

**LUTHER**

But what about the common good? Property rights aren’t absolute.

**ZACHARIAH**

In this case, I’m afraid they are.

Here we have an example of what in law school we called the Charles Dickens principle.

**LUTHER**

The Charles Dickens principle?

**ZACHARIAH**

As Dickens said, the law is an ass.

**LUTHER**

That’s it? That’s all the wisdom you have to offer. “The law is an ass.” We’re talking here about a priceless treasure….

**ZACHARIAH**

My advice to you is to buy the painting yourself.

**LUTHER**

It’s not for sale.

**ZACHARIAH**

*Everything* is for sale, Mr. Gibbons.

Priceless is a peculiar word. It tends to be used by art critics, scholars, intellectuals—the sort of people who can’t actually afford to buy things.

You can put a price on *anything*, Mr. Gibbons. Trust me.

Go out and do some fundraising.

**LUTHER**

If it were only so easy. The problem is the owner. I don’t imagine she’d sell under any circumstances. You have to understand: We’re not dealing with a sane woman here.

**ZACHARIAH**

Why didn’t you say she was crazy? That changes everything.

**LUTHER**

How?

**ZACHARIAH**

We can have her declared mentally incompetent. *Non compos mentis*. If she’s not sane, she shouldn’t be out on the streets. We’ll bind her in a straightjacket and throw away the key.

**LUTHER**

Doesn’t that seem rather drastic?

**ZACHARIAH**

Any other lawyer worth his salt would tell you the same….So does she foam at the mouth?

**LUTHER**

Not that I know of….

**ZACHARIAH**

Is she plotting to assassinate the President?

**LUTHER**

It’s never come up.

**ZACHARIAH**

Does she often attempt to kill herself? Perhaps in a ritualized way like disembowelment?

**LUTHER**

Last night she threatened to set herself on fire….

**ZACHARIAH**

Perfect! Were there other witnesses present?

**LUTHER**

My girlfriend was there.

**ZACHARIAH**

Consider it a done deal. I’ll phone the magistrate this afternoon. We’ll have the old coot in a padded cell by nightfall.

**LUTHER**

Hold on a second. This is all a bit fast…

**ZACHARIAH**

Zealous advocacy. That’s what I’m here for.

**LUTHER**

Can we hold off on this for a few days?

**ZACHARIAH**

Hold off?

**LUTHER**

I want to discuss it with my girlfriend.

**ZACHARIAH**

I see….

Why don’t we have this crazy woman locked up and *then* you can discuss the matter with your girlfriend. If you later reconsider, you can always petition to have the woman released….

**LUTHER**

I need some time. I’m sorry.

**ZACHARIAH**

Suit yourself. It’s not my painting.

*(Luther stands up to leave.)*

**LUTHER**

What about *doctors*?

**ZACHARIAH**

What *about* doctors?

**LUTHER**

People go to doctors when they have problems too. But very few people dislike doctors.

**ZACHARIAH**

That’s where you’re mistaken. People go to doctors when they *think* they have problems.

How many times have you shared your symptoms with your doctor—maybe showed her a minor rash or a discolored mole—and she’s said: “That’s nothing.”

It made you feel pretty grateful, didn’t it?

Even though she hadn’t done a darn thing.

I’ve been practicing law for twenty years. I’ve never heard a lawyer say: That’s nothing.

*(Luther exits.)*

**19. “Zachariah”**

*(Zachariah, to the audience.)*

**ZACHARIAH**

My father died in his sleep.

His father also died in his sleep. A picture frame fell on him during an earthquake.

You’d be shocked to learn what percentage of people die in their sleep.

Alexander the Great. General Douglas MacArthur. John Wayne.

It’s practically pandemic. Even *Napoleon* died in his sleep!

Chew on that for a few minutes. The little corporal, the hero of Austerlitz. He survived all of those Prussian cannon barrages. He visited the plague hospitals of Egypt and kissed the lepers.

And how did he die? With his boots *off*!

*(Zachariah exits.)*

**20. “Molly”**

*(Molly enters. Molly, to the audience.)*

**MOLLY**

To get into medical school, they ask you lots of questions.

Questions like: What would you do if you didn’t become a physician?

I told them I’d want to illustrate children’s books. They liked that answer a lot.

I’m not sure why. Once I was in medical school, nobody ever asked me to illustrate any children’s books…..

In medical school, they teach you about boundaries.

It is important to empathize with your patients. But don’t empathize *too much* with your patients. If a patient dies, it is good to want to go to her funeral. Not wanting to go means you’re a callous, stone-hearted bitch….But it’s unprofessional to actually go to the funeral.

That’s the take-away message from medical school: Doctors are supposed to spend all of their time *wanting* to go to patients’ funerals.

**21. “Molly goes on another date.”**

*(Molly sits at a table. Luther enters and sits beside her.)*

**MOLLY**

I’ve been thinking a lot about us sleeping together.

*(Luther displays enthusiasm.)*

I’m not talking about sex. I’m talking about sleeping.

*(Luther displays disappointment.)*

I’m not sure I know you well enough to sleep with you.

How can I be confident you won’t sleepwalk? I’m afraid that you might sleepwalk over to the oven and turn the gas on by accident.

**LUTHER**

Where did this come from?

**MOLLY**

I saw that patient again. The one who’s afraid of waking up dead.

**LUTHER**

The lawyer?

**MOLLY**

Right. I can’t help thinking that he has a point.

People are so vulnerable when they’re sleeping.

Do you think we could take turns sleeping. Like sentries?

**LUTHER**

We can do anything you want, darling.

But how are we going to handle your grandmother?

**MOLLY**

What do you mean?

**LUTHER**

We can’t let her burn those paintings.

**MOLLY**

I’ll steal the Bergault when she’s not looking.

**LUTHER**

And the others?

**MOLLY**

I don’t know, Luther. I just don’t know.

**LUTHER**

Does your grandmother ever foam at the mouth, darling?

**MOLLY**

No. Why?

**LUTHER**

Is she plotting to assassinate the President?

**MOLLY**

Lord, no. She’s so batty these days, she actually likes the President. She finds it reassuring to have a President she could outwit if she needed to. Say, what’s this all about?

**LUTHER**

I spoke to a lawyer, darling. About your grandmother’s mental status. I think we should have her committed.

**MOLLY**

Excuse me?

**LUTHER**

She’s clearly lost her moorings. We have to do something. Before she self-immolates.

**MOLLY**

Since when are *we* looking after Grandma? She’s my grandmother. Not yours. *We* are not doing anything.

**LUTHER**

I was just saying—

**MOLLY**

Well, don’t.

**LUTHER**

I’m sorry.

**MOLLY**You should be.

**LUTHER**

Well, I am.

**MOLLY**

It’s okay. I know you didn’t mean anything by it. It’s just that I can’t imagine loving anyone who didn’t love Grandma….Can I ask you something? Please don’t be offended.

**LUTHER**

Anything.

**MOLLY**

After we make love, can we sleep in separate bedrooms?

*(Molly and Luther exit.)*

**22. “Samantha at work”**

*(Zachariah enters and sits at his desk. Samantha enters.)*

**SAMANTHA**

You ordered an escort?

**ZACHARIAH**

A Caucasian female, weight proportional to height.

**SAMANTHA**

That’s me.

**ZACHARIAH**

*(Dumbstruck)*

Very proportional.

**SAMANTHA**

So where do you want to start?

**ZACHARIAH**

What do you mean?

**SAMANTHA**

You have a full month. We can cover a lot of ground in a month.

**ZACHARIAH**

Oh, no. This isn’t for me. It’s for a client.

**SAMANTHA**

Sure, whatever. But only one at a time.

**ZACHARIAH**

It’s not like that at all.

**SAMANTHA**

*(Making advances toward Zachariah)*

It’s any way you want it. So where is this client of yours?

**ZACHARIAH**

My client is a ninety year old woman.

**SAMANTHA**

*(Taken aback)*

What the fuck?

*(Pause. Samantha looks around the office.)*

Am I on *Candid Camera*?

**ZACHARIAH**

Please, lady. What I need you to do is to seduce this woman’s granddaughter. To make her fall in love with you.

**SAMANTHA**

Love….And a woman….That’s going to cost a lot extra.

**ZACHARIAH**

Money is no consideration.

I’m trying to spend as much as I can before I die.

**SAMANTHA**

You for real?

**ZACHARIAH**

As real as a lawyer can be.

**SAMANTHA**

Okay, let’s get to it.

**ZACHARIAH**

Her name is Dr. Molly Drake. Here’s her info.

*(He hands Samantha a sheet of stationery.)*

**SAMANTHA**

One month of female love and seduction coming right up.

Is that all?

**ZACHARIAH**

Well…While I have you here, I was thinking….I uhm….

**SAMANTHA**

You want to sample the merchandise?

**ZACHARIAH**

I’ve been having trouble sleeping….

*(Samantha kisses Zachariah—first on the forehead and*

*then directly on the lips.)*

**SAMANTHA**

Trust me. After this, you’ll be ready to die.

*(Samantha jumps on top of Zachariah.)*

**ACT ONE ENDS**

**ACT TWO**

**1. “Zachariah visits his psychiatrist again”**

*(Molly is seated in a chair. Zachariah sits opposite her.)*

**ZACHARIAH**

I’m ready to die.

**MOLLY**

What do you mean?

**ZACHARIAH**

Do you remember how I was afraid of waking up dead? Well, I still think I might wake up dead—but I’m not afraid anymore. You have to help me, Dr. Drake. Please.

**MOLLY**

I’m not sure I understand this. You slept with a prostitute and now you’re no longer afraid of dying?

**ZACHARIAH**

Exactly. It’s as though I’ve already experienced everything I need to experience in life. If I wake up dead—well, I’ve gotten my money’s worth.

**MOLLY**

And you find this upsetting….

**ZACHARIAH**

I find myself taking unnecessary risks. Yesterday, I ran into a burning apartment building and rescued a caged ferret.

**MOLLY**

Some people might consider that heroic.

**ZACHARIAH**

Sheer madness. And this morning, during that thunderstorm, I couldn’t resist flying a kite with a key attached. Do you know what sort of looks you get when you stand on the Brooklyn Promenade flying a kite in a thunderstorm?

**MOLLY**

What sort of looks do you get, Mr. Carmichael?

**ZACHARIAH**

I’m a wills and trusts lawyer, Dr. Drake. I’m not cut out for taking risks.

**MOLLY**

So let’s be clear about this. You want me to help you recover your fear of death.

**ZACHARIAH**

Please, doctor. The only thing I can think of worse than waking up dead is waking up dead and not caring about it.

**MOLLY**

I imagine that would be unpleasant….What I’d like to do now is to clarify a few details, Mr. Carmichael. Do you often sleep with prostitutes?

**ZACHARIAH**

Never. It was a special occasion.

**MOLLY**

A birthday?

**ZACHARIAH**

No.

**MOLLY**

An anniversary?

**ZACHARIAH**

No.

**MOLLY**

A religious observance?

**ZACHARIAH**

Nothing like that. It was for a client. Strictly business.

**MOLLY**

I see. And was there anything remarkable about the…sex act?

**ZACHARIAH**

Other than that I’m no longer afraid of dying? Nothing. It was stunningly mediocre.

*(Zachariah exaggerates the following line as though he is*

*describing great sex—even though it was “mediocre” sex.)*

The most mediocre sex you could imagine.

**MOLLY**

And after you had sex, what did you do?

**ZACHARIAH**

I went to sleep. I slept like a baby.

**MOLLY**

Because you weren’t afraid of dying.

**ZACHARIAH**

The poor girl had to pour a bucket of ice water on me to wake me up….

And do you know what the first thing I said was?

I asked her: “Am I dead?” Just out of curiosity.

And then I bought a newspaper at the store on the corner and checked the obituaries.

**MOLLY**

Very thorough of you.

**ZACHARIAH**

I may be fearless, but I’m still a lawyer.

So can you help me, doctor?

**MOLLY**

I can try….But I can’t make any promises.

Even with the advances of modern medical science, some things still aren’t possible.

**ZACHARIAH**

That’s very wise of you, Dr. Drake. From a legal standpoint, that is. Keep my expectations low, so I don’t sue you if things don’t go my way.

And if you do cure me—well then I’ll think you’re way ahead of the average physician.

That’s what I admire about you doctors. You think like lawyers.

*(Molly dozes off in her chair.)*

Dr. Drake? Are you all right, Dr. Drake?

*(Zachariah shakes her awake.)*

**MOLLY**

I’m so sorry. I haven’t been sleeping well….I’ve been so terrified…. Terrified….

**ZACHARIAH**

*(Comforting her.)*

It’s all right, Dr. Drake. There’s nothing to be afraid of….Absolutely nothing.

*(Molly and Zachariah exit.)*

**2. “Samantha”**

*(Samantha enters. Samantha, to the audience.)*

**SAMANTHA**

As a sex worker, it’s very important to set boundaries.

Not only with the client—but with yourself.

What would happen if I fell in love with each john I slept with? If I got upset that he wouldn’t stay the night…or started worrying that he might leave me for another escort….

Or God forbid I got jealous of a guy’s wife.

That’s no way to run a small business.

You face enough thorny ethical issues in sex work without having to worry about love.

For instance, what do you do if a regular customer has a heart attack in the act?

Do you accompany him to the hospital? In the ambulance? Or in your own car?

And how do you interact with the spouse? Is your relationship with the dying client’s wife a social relationship or a business relationship?

Not to mention the matter of funerals. Should you go? Should you stand at the graveside? Or farther back? But if you stand too far back, you risk drawing attention to yourself….Other mourners might mistake you for a mistress, rather than a paid escort.

I usually avoid client’s funerals.

But that’s not as obvious a choice as it sounds.

I discovered this the hard way.

Last year, one of my regular customers—a state senator—died in the sack.

He was already dead when the emergency workers arrived, so I didn’t bother to ride with him to the hospital. He was a big-name politician. I didn’t need the media attention. I honestly thought I was doing the family a favor.

Two days later, the guy’s wife calls me. Irate.

Do you know what she says?

“You goddamn whore. You fuck my husband all these years—you fuck him to death, goddammit—and you don’t have the decency to come to his funeral.”

She had a point.

There ought to be a code of ethics for sex workers.

If there can be a code of ethics for lawyers, there can be a code of ethics for sex workers.

*(Samantha exits.)*

**3. “The third date”**

*(Molly enters and lies down in the bed. Luther knocks on*

*her door .)*

**MOLLY**

Come in!

**LUTHER**

It’s locked.

**MOLLY**

Sorry. Coming.

*(Molly unlocks the door and returns to bed. Luther enters.)*

**LUTHER**

You look ravishing.

**MOLLY**

That’s because I’ve been ravished. Last night was spectacular.

**LUTHER**

I did my best.

**MOLLY**

Sorry about the door….

**LUTHER**

It’s okay. We all have our hang-ups.

**MOLLY**

Was the sofa okay? I know the springs are a bit sharp.

**LUTHER**

No sharper than serpents’ teeth. They kept me awake for a while, but I’m grateful for it. It gave me time to think.

**MOLLY**

Think about what?

**LUTHER**

The usual things. Love. Death. The relationship between fertility and the democratic process.

**MOLLY**

You didn’t sleep much, did you?

**LUTHER**

Consider this for a moment. We all accept the principle of one person, one vote, without much questioning. Democracy—the received wisdom. But is that really equitable? The problem with democracy is that it favors hyper-fertile people.

**MOLLY**

It favors who?

**LUTHER**

*Hyper-fertile* *people*. Mormons. Orthodox Jews. People without the common sense to use birth control. Or maybe *with* the common sense *not* to use birth control. The way to gain political power in this country isn’t to raise money, it’s to raise children.

Why not one *family*, one vote?

**MOLLY**

I love you.

**LUTHER**

There’s also the question of why only human beings should be able to vote. Maybe certain animals should be enfranchised. Chimpanzees. Orangutans. You might appoint human intermediaries to represent the interests of higher-order mammals.

**MOLLY**

I said: I love you.

**LUTHER**

I imagine there would be nay-sayers at first. But it’s not as though women or African-Americans or even working class white men didn’t have to struggle to get the vote. So why not dolphins and parrots…? Parrots pose a special problem, of course, because they can be easily manipulated….

**MOLLY**

Luther. You are not listening to me.

**LUTHER**

I *am* listening to you. Now what was I saying….?

The real problem arises when you combine the animal rights approach with the principle of one creature, one vote.

By my estimate, in twenty years we’ll all be ruled by a dictatorship of rabbits.

Like George Orwell’s *1984* meets *Watership Down*.

**MOLLY**

Luther, do you love me?

**LUTHER**

I’ve been trying to figure out a way to defend us from these rabbits.

**MOLLY**

*LUTHER!!!* Goddammit! I asked you if you loved me?

**LUTHER**

Do I love you? Of course, I love you. What kind of question is that to ask a man whose trying to rescue you from a regime of totalitarian rabbits?

**MOLLY**

You need to tell me that you love me, honey.

**LUTHER**

I’m telling you.

**MOLLY**

You need to tell me *all the time*.

**LUTHER**

Couldn’t I just write it down for you and that way you wouldn’t forget?

**MOLLY**

Who would ever have imagined I’d fall in love with such a strange man?

**LUTHER**

You could carry the note around your neck. Like a locket. Or a cowbell.

That way other people could see it too and they’d know how much I love you.

It would be a lot cheaper than an engagement ring—and much more direct.

**MOLLY**

I think I’m ready to sleep with you. In the same bed.

**LUTHER**

*(Luther displays enthusiasm.)*

Right now?

**MOLLY**

Yes. Right now.

*(They climb into the bed.)*

Let’s take a nap.

*(Luther displays disappointment.)*

Can I ask you another odd question?

**LUTHER**

Anything.

**MOLLY**

How would you feel if I hired a prostitute to help me conquer my fear of dying in my sleep?

**LUTHER**

I’m glad you asked that.

**MOLLY**

You are?

**LUTHER**

I think it’s very important a couple know each other’s attitudes and social values before they get married. How can I honestly say I love you if I don’t know how you feel about prostitution? Or hydroelectric power? Or the Rockefeller drug laws?

**MOLLY**

So you’d be okay with it if I hired a prostitute?

**LUTHER**

Not in ten million years.

*(Luther exits.)*

**4. “Agatha”**

*(Agatha enters. Agatha, to the audience.)*

**AGATHA**

Ninety years old.

When I was a girl, nobody lived to be ninety years old.

If you did live to be ninety years old, they gave you a proclamation from the president.

Harding or Coolidge or whomever.

Then they blindfolded you and led you into the wilderness.

Sometimes, if they were generous, they left you with a bowl of soup.

If you were fortunate enough to find your way back, they gave you another proclamation.

Sometimes they even gave you a second bowl of soup.

Very few people found their way back.

These days, it seems everybody lives to be ninety.

I read somewhere that ninety is the new eighty.

Personally, I preferred my old eighty to my new ninety.

The most remarkable thing about being ninety is that you lose your sense of urgency.

It’s ironic, isn’t it? At fifty, I was glad to compromise in order to get things done.

Time was of the essence.

But now that I have very little time left, I’m stubborn as a brick….

When I turned eighty-five, I was fool enough to agree to an interview.

With a newspaper reporter. A *woman* newspaper reporter.

I was so pleased they sent a woman. Like Nellie Bly.

What better match for my Molly than a hard-hitting investigative journalist?

But this woman asked the stupidest questions:

She wanted to know: “Did I think about death a lot?”

I was eighty-five years old. Of course, I thought about death a lot.

She wanted to know: “What did I think about death?”

So I told her: Profound, original thoughts.

Paradigm-shifting insights—the sort for which you get tenured at a major university.

Who would have imagined it?

All those poets and philosophers contemplating death for all of those centuries and it falls to me, the daughter of an obscure dilettante descended from a long line of obscure dilettantes, to decipher the meaning of death.

“What did I think about death?”

What sort of stupid question was that?

What the woman should have asked was: “What does death think about me?”

Now that’s a question I’d be curious to have answered.

**5. “Molly visits her grandmother”**

*(Agatha begins reading a book. Molly passes through the*

*door.)*

**AGATHA**

*(Reading)*

“How sharper than a serpent’s tooth it is to have a thankless child.”

**MOLLY**

Grandma!

**AGATHA**

I’m re-reading *King Lear*. As a cautionary tale.

**MOLLY**

Look, Grandma. We need to talk.

**AGATHA**

Talk! If I get tired of listening, I’ll turn my hearing aide off.

**MOLLY**

You don’t wear a hearing aide.

**AGATHA**

It’s a pity. Ninety years old and none of the perks.

It’s a shame people didn’t evolve so they could shut their ears.

**MOLLY**

What happened between you and Luther last night was unacceptable.

**AGATHA**

Nobody told you that you had to bring him here.

Whatever happened to that nice girl you used to go with?

**MOLLY**

What girl?

**AGATHA**

You know who I mean. The pretty black girl with the cornrow braids.

**MOLLY**

Lorraine Charles? That was twenty years ago.

**AGATHA**

Such a nice girl. So respectful. And ambitious.

**MOLLY**

We were *twelve years old*.

**AGATHA**

Well, I bet she made something of herself.

She’s probably a United States Senator by now.

**MOLLY**

I saw her at my class reunion, Grandma.

She’s a librarian. She has a husband and three adorable children.

**AGATHA**

Maybe she’s ready for a change.

**MOLLY**

I can’t believe we’re even discussing this.

Wait! We’re *not* discussing this.

We’re discussing you and Luther.

You need to apologize.

**AGATHA**

For what? For looking out for your best interests?

**MOLLY**

How am I supposed to benefit from having my boyfriend scared off and my inheritance set on fire?

**AGATHA**

It’s a good test for that Mr. Luther of yours.

You don’t want to marry a man who’d give you up for a painting.

**MOLLY**

Luther’s not giving me up.

**AGATHA**

Don’t be so sure about that….

But if he doesn’t, so much the better for you.

**MOLLY**

Why are you doing this?

**AGATHA**

What are you going to do if you’re on a sinking ship and Mr. Luther has to decide between you and the Bergault? You don’t want to be with a man who’d throw you into the icy waters of the North Atlantic to save an obscure oil painting.

**MOLLY**

It’s not obscure.

**AGATHA**

I’m not going to have my granddaughter drown over a work of art. I don’t care if it’s the Venus de Milo.

**MOLLY**

Nobody’s drowning.

**AGATHA**

I’m sure they said the same thing aboard the *Lusitania*.

**MOLLY**

Luther is a wonderful man, Grandma. He’s loving. He plans ahead. I’ve never met anyone who thinks as….as *differently* as he does. If the world were taken over by fascist rabbits, he’d sacrifice himself for me. Not that the world will ever be taken over by fascist rabbits—but it’s the thought that counts. And the fact that Luther can imagine a world of cottontails with swastikas. What more could I ask for?

**AGATHA**

Of course he’d sacrifice *himself* for you. He obviously has no self-esteem. But would he sacrifice the painting for you?

**MOLLY**

I can’t talk to you when you’re this way.

**AGATHA**

Trust me, Molly. A man who throws you overboard to save a painting is never going to stick around to change your diapers.

*(Agatha exits. Molly passes back through the door.)*

**6. “Molly visits a toy store”**

*(Molly, to the audience.)*

**MOLLY**

I hate toy stores.

Megalithic abusers of children—that’s what they are.

I used to think I loved toy stores until I met Luther.

Then I realized that I’d really hated them all of my life.

I just didn’t know that about myself.

Isn’t it amazing how you can fall in love and suddenly recognize that for all of your adult life you’ve despised something so basic as toy stores—and you’ve never realized it before?

Ah, love….

I used to think how romantic it would be to meet my future husband in a toy store.

Now, frankly, it’s embarrassing.

Instead, I tell people we met in an internet chat room.

It makes us sound very hip and modern.

**7. “Samantha visits a toy store”**

*(Samantha enters. Samantha, to the audience.)*

**SAMANTHA**

I love toy stores.

There’s nothing more wholesome and all-American than a toy store.

Red wagons, baseball gloves, Barbie.

I don’t get the problem people have with Barbie.

It seems to me she teaches children all the right lessons in life.

If you want to be a successful woman, be good-looking.

I didn’t make the world that way—but that’s the way the world is.

Why tell funny-looking fat girls that all of their dreams can come true, only to set them up for disappointment? If I were a funny-looking fat girl, I’d want to be told the truth:

“Go on a diet and save up your money for plastic surgery.”

Sure, I’m all for feminism.

But I’m not for mounting the revolution on the backs of ugly little children.

I say you tell them how it is. Brutal honesty.

If you really want to help them, pay for them to become pretty girls.

We talk about a progressive income tax. I think there ought to be a tax on beautiful people so that ugly people can get their faces re-sculpted….

You didn’t think I knew about progressive taxation.

Doesn’t it just amaze you when a working-class person makes a reference to something intellectual like the graduated income tax?

It makes you feel insecure, doesn’t it?

**8. “Samantha seduces Molly”**

*(Samantha intentionally bumps into Molly.)*

**SAMANTHA**

I’m so sorry.

**MOLLY**

Oh, no. It was my fault. Really.

**SAMANTHA**

I guess all of the children distracted me.

I love children and all—but there are so many of them.

Children weren’t meant to travel in packs.

**MOLLY**

Can I tell you a secret?

**SAMANTHA**

Anything.

**MOLLY**

I *hate* children.

I tell people I love them, but I can’t stand them.

**SAMANTHA**

Can I tell *you* a secret?

**MOLLY**

Fire away!

**SAMANTHA**

I lied a second ago. I hate them too.

**MOLLY**

Really?

**SAMANTHA**

I can think of few things in the world I detest as much as I detest children.

Except possibly parents. In their defense, children can’t help being children.

But parents….

**MOLLY**

My boyfriend has a theory about that.

About how fertile people are plotting to take over the world.

**SAMANTHA**

You have a boyfriend….?

**MOLLY**

You sound surprised.

Why *wouldn’t* I have a boyfriend?

**SAMANTHA**

I guess I thought you were…

**MOLLY**

A lesbian. Good God, I should be so lucky!

That would solve everything.

Some people in the world have all the luck.

**SAMANTHA**

If you don’t have luck, you can make luck.

*(Samantha cups her artificial breasts to emphasize her*

*point.)*

So if you hate children, what were you doing in a toy store?

**MOLLY**

Reminding myself—so I don’t lose sight of how much I loathe them.

People do foolish things when they’re in love.

They forget that their own children will turn out like everybody else’s.

Maybe worse—you could end up with particularly ugly, selfish, stupid children.

It’s hard to imagine that I once considered specializing in pediatrics.

**SAMANTHA**

You’re a doctor?

**MOLLY**

I’m a headshrinker.

**SAMANTHA**

*(If Samantha is played with a foreign accent, she may*

*mispronounce the words “psychiatrist” and “psychiatry.”)*

Wow! A psychiatrist. I think psychiatry is so sexy…

**MOLLY**

You’re making fun of me.

**SAMANTHA**

Not at all….Say, if you weren’t a psychiatrist, what would you be?

**MOLLY**

That’s easy. I’d illustrate children’s books.

**SAMANTHA**

You’ve got to be kidding. If I weren’t in the sex industry, I’d be a children’s book author.

**MOLLY**

Excuse me?

**SAMANTHA**

What I meant to say was: I write children’s books.

**MOLLY**

Oh. That’s great. Maybe I could do some illustrating for you....

**SAMANTHA**

*(Seductively.)*

I think I might like that….

*(Looking up at the sky.)*

It looks like the heavens are going to open up. Do you want to duck inside someplace and grab a cup of coffee…?

**MOLLY**

I’d love to…but I can’t...really….

**SAMANTHA**

Are you sure?

**MOLLY**

Unfortunately.

**SAMANTHA**

*(Alarmed)*

Jesus! Watch out!!

*(A bolt of lightning strikes Molly. She falls to the ground.)*

Are you all right?

**MOLLY**

I think so. Was that really a lightning bolt?

**SAMANTHA**

Sure looked like it. Are you positive you’re okay?

**MOLLY**

I feel a bit funny.

**SAMANTHA**

Funny, how?

**MOLLY**

You know. Dizzy. Short of breath….*Gay.*

**SAMANTHA**

Excuse me?

**MOLLY**

I feel like I’m falling in love with you.

**9. “Zachariah”**

*(Zachariah enters. Zachariah, to the audience.)*

**ZACHARIAH**

To the uninitiated outsider, *the law* may appear irrational.

But what is it that Hamlet says?

“It’s madness, but there’s method to it.”

In fact, the fields of psychiatry and jurisprudence are closely related.

The law often insists upon assurances of sanity.

Take, for example, the matter of inheritance.

You cannot write a valid will if you are crazy. But how crazy is crazy?

I’m not afraid of dying. Is that crazy?

Or is it merely peculiar? Eccentric?

Running into a burning building to save a caged house pet is considered heroic.

For the life of me, I cannot imagine why. To me, that’s crazy.

If I ever leave the law, I think I’d like to become a psychiatrist.

*(Zachariah exits.)*

**10. “Molly and Samantha in love – part one”**

*(Samantha and Molly pass back through the door.*

*They sit at a table, writing and illustrating.)*

**MOLLY**

Are you sure about this? It seems a bit racy for kids?

**SAMANTHA**

They said that about “Heather Has Two Mommies.”

**MOLLY**

There’s a big difference between “Heather Has Two Mommies” and “Jackie’s Dad Visits a Bordello.”

**SAMANTHA**

Do you think “bordello” is too difficult? How about “cat house”?

**MOLLY**

I’m not sure how to illustrate the scene on the waterbed….

**SAMANTHA**

I have complete faith in you, my love.

But have you considered drawing the escorts without white coats…?

**MOLLY**

You don’t like them like that?

I thought it made them look more hygienic.

**SAMANTHA**

Whatever makes you happy, my love.

**MOLLY**

When you think about it, there’s absolutely no reason sex workers shouldn’t wear white coats. They’re professionals, in a way.

**SAMANTHA**

You have to approach the question as a businesswoman.

What guy wants to get it on with a hooker dressed like a pork butcher?

**MOLLY**

You know an awful lot about prostitution.

**SAMANTHA**

It’s something of a hobby.

**MOLLY**

Would you mind telling me something personal?

**SAMANTHA**

My life is an open book.

**MOLLY**

Are you ever afraid of waking up dead?

**SAMANTHA**

Almost every night.

That’s why I drink lot’s of coffee—no risk of falling asleep on the job. It’s good to keep a switchblade in your purse, just in case.

And I never turn a trick at my own place.

**MOLLY**

I don’t understand.

**SAMANTHA**

I was joking….

A prostitution joke.

**MOLLY**

I’m terrified of dying in my sleep. This patient put this idea into my head….and now I’m decompensating….

*(Samantha steps forward and kisses Molly.)*

**SAMANTHA**

I promise I can take care of that.

After tonight, you’ll be more than ready to die.

*(Samantha exits.)*

**11. “Molly tells Luther of her love for Samantha”**

*(Luther enters and sits down opposite Molly.)*

**MOLLY**

I’m in love with Samantha.

**LUTHER**

I’m speechless…. Who’s Samantha?

**MOLLY**

She was the woman who was with me when I was struck by lightning.

At first, I thought it was a fluke. A passing craving.

Like olives or chocolate.

But then I had sex with her—and I’m no longer afraid to die.

**LUTHER**

Let me get this straight.

You’re leaving me because you had great sex?

**MOLLY**

*(Molly exaggerates the following line as though he is*

*describing great sex—even though it was “mediocre” sex.)*

Oh, no. The sex was mediocre. The most mediocre sex you could imagine.

But now I feel so liberated.

**LUTHER**

Because you’re not a afraid of dying?

**MOLLY**

I slept fourteen hours last night.

And then I climbed out on the ledge to say hello to the pigeons.

It was a very narrow ledge and a fourteen story drop—but I didn’t care.

Isn’t that wonderful?

**LUTHER**

Wonderful.

**MOLLY**

Why do you have to be so selfish? Why can’t you be happy for me?

**LUTHER**

I am happy. I’m just jealous.

I’m jealous I haven’t also lost my fear of the death, because then I could lie down in front of a freight train.

**MOLLY**

I’m sorry, Luther. It just happened. Like lightning.

**LUTHER**

That batty grandmother of yours had something to do with this.

**MOLLY**

Nothing. I swear.

**LUTHER**

She thinks that just because I’m an art historian, and I let her call me Mr. Luther, and I leave pink roses at Judy Garland’s grave every April, I’m the sort of guy she can push around. Well she is sadly mistaken.

**MOLLY**

You’re not going to do something crazy, are you?

**LUTHER**

It depends what you mean by crazy. I’m going to consult my attorney.

*(Luther exits.)*

**12. “Molly tells Agatha of her love for Samantha”**

*(Agatha enters and sits down opposite Molly.)*

**MOLLY**

I’m in love with Samantha.

**AGATHA**

It’s about time….Who’s Samantha?

**MOLLY**

The woman I was with when I was struck by lightning.

**AGATHA**

She’s a real woman, isn’t she?

**MOLLY**

What?

**AGATHA**

Not merely a cross-dresser? Or one of those in-betweens?

**MOLLY**

You are truly impossible. Why do you always have to be so suspicious?

**AGATHA**

With age comes wisdom. When you’re ninety, you’ll also be suspicious.

**MOLLY**

Anything else you want to know? Should we check to see if she has a criminal record?

**AGATHA**

How does she earn her keep?

**MOLLY**

She writes children’s books.

**AGATHA**

How did you meet her?

**MOLLY**

Outside a toy store.

**AGATHA**

This is getting to be a theme…. Hanging around outside toy stores, picking up men and women…. Hold on a moment, young lady. What sort of toys do they sell in this “toy store” of yours? These aren’t *adult* toys, are they?

**MOLLY**

Please, Grandma. They’re children’s toys.

Blocks and dolls and goddam right-wing board games?

Can’t you be happy for me just this once?

**AGATHA**

Of course, I can, dear.

When do I get to meet the lucky girl?

**MOLLY**

How about supper this weekend?

**AGATHA**

Wonderful. I’ll fillet something.

Unless your girlfriend would like to do the cooking, that is.

Is she that kind of girl?

**MOLLY**

No, Grandma. She doesn’t cook or sew or curtsey or count her change out on her palm.

**AGATHA**

But she’s definitely a woman?

**MOLLY**

Definitely.

**AGATHA**

So that’s a start. We’ve got the material to work with, at least.

*(Molly exits. Luther enters with a chessboard.)*

**13. “Agatha gives Luther a gift”**

*(Agatha enters with a canvas. She passes through*

*the door.)*

**AGATHA**

Your front door is unlocked.

**LUTHER**

What do you want? Haven’t you caused enough trouble?

**AGATHA**

I actually came to bring you a gift.

**LUTHER**

I don’t want it.

*(Agatha sits down opposite Luther.)*

**AGATHA**

Do you play chess?

*(Luther responds by moving a piece.*

*They play chess while they talk.)*

**LUTHER**

It takes some nerve to show up here after you’ve ruined my life.

**AGATHA**

I’ve done nothing of the sort.

Do you know what you’re trouble is, young man?

You’re fighting against the script.

A good-looking young art historian like you should have no trouble finding a nice young man to visit toy stores with. Trust me.

**LUTHER**

I don’t want a nice young man. I want Molly.

**AGATHA**

You only *think* you want Molly.

**LUTHER**

No, Mrs. Wellington. I *want* Molly.

**AGATHA**

You keep believing that, darling.

In another sixty years, you’ll hardly remember her.

**LUTHER**

What if I don’t live another sixty years? Have you ever thought of that?

I’m so upset, you have me playing board games.

**AGATHA**

I enjoy board games, Mr. Luther.

**LUTHER**

Checkmate.

**AGATHA**

But the problem with board games is that they’re nothing like real life.

In board games, people like you have a chance of winning. But not in real life.

In real life, young man, people like me always win.

People like me manufacture board games to trick people like you into thinking you have a chance of winning in real life. Bread and circus, Mr. Luther.

**LUTHER**

You’re going to hear from my lawyer. *Mrs*. Agatha.

**AGATHA**

You have your lawyer call my lawyer.

**LUTHER**

I’ll do that.

**AGATHA**

But just to show you there are no hard feelings on my part, I’m going to leave that hideous painting right here for you.

**LUTHER**

I don’t want it.

**AGATHA**

In that case, I’ll also leave a pack of matches.

*(Agatha exits. Luther retrieves the canvas.*

*Zachariah sits down at the table.)*

**14.** “**Luther consults his lawyer again”**

*(Luther passes through the door with the canvas.)*

**ZACHARIAH**

You’re back, Mr. Gibbons.

I was beginning to fear you’d gotten cold feet….

**LUTHER**

You’ve got to help me. I’m ready for drastic action.

**ZACHARIAH**

I figured you’d see it my way. The painting will be yours in no time.

**LUTHER**

I already have the painting.

**ZACHARIAH**

You have the painting?

**LUTHER**

The old witch gave it to me.

*(Luther shows Zachariah the painting.)*

I’ve been carrying it with me everywhere I go.

I keep thinking that if two Roman thieves and a Jewish carpenter can get themselves resurrected, I might have a chance of winning back Molly.

It’s enough to keep a man from lying down in front of a freight train.

**ZACHARIAH**

It looks like two bottles of wine and a slice of cheese.

**LUTHER**

It’s surrealism. The wine bottles are Dismas and Gestas. The cheese is Jesus.

If you look closely, the wine bottle on the left looks somewhat like Madame Bergault.

**ZACHARIAH**

And what does that say? At the bottom?

**LUTHER**

“*Ceci n’est pas une résurrection*.”

“This is not a resurrection.”

**ZACHARIAH**

But I thought it was a resurrection.

**LUTHER**

Exactly. Isn’t it brilliant?

**ZACHARIAH**

I imagine so….

In any case, if you have the painting, Mr. Gibbons, I don’t see what can I do for you.

**LUTHER**

She gave me the painting. But she stole my girlfriend.

**ZACHARIAH**

Stole? You mean kidnapped?

**LUTHER**

Not exactly. More like brain-washed.

**ZACHARIAH**

I see. That’s a bit trickier.

**LUTHER**

Aren’t there laws against interfering in another couple’s romance?

Maybe some left over statutes from Victorian England?

**ZACHARIAH**

I’m afraid not.

**LUTHER**

Tell me, Mr. Carmichael. How many laws are there out there?

**ZACHARIAH**

Laws? Hundreds of thousands.

**LUTHER**

Hundreds of thousands.

**ZACHARIAH**

And that’s just at the state level….

Then there are federal codes, tax codes, bankruptcy codes…

Treaty obligations, international laws…

**LUTHER**

Close to one million?

**ZACHARIAH**

Close to one million.

**LUTHER**

Amazing! You mean to tell me there are nearly a million laws out there and you don’t have one measly law that can help me?

**ZACHARIAH**

That’s a rather harsh way to put it. But yes, I fear that’s the case.

**LUTHER**

For a lawyer, you know, you’re not very helpful.

**ZACHARIHAH:**

There still is the issue of this woman’s sanity.

We could have her institutionalized.

**LUTHER**

Molly would never forgive me.

**ZACHARIAH**

Molly?

**LUTHER**

Molly Drake. My girlfriend.

**ZACHARIAH**

Your girlfriend?

That means the woman you want to have committed is….Agatha Wellington.

**LUTHER**

You know her?

**ZACHARIAH**

*(Pause while Zachariah thinks.)*

By reputation only.

**LUTHER**

Then you know how wealthy and powerful she is.

Do you think you can help me? Please.

**ZACHARIAH**

I’ll do the best I can under the circumstances, Mr. Gibbons.

Zealous advocacy. That’s the best any attorney can offer.

*(Luther and Zachariah exit.)*

**15. “Molly and Samantha in love – part two”**

*(Samantha and Molly enter. They sit at a table, writing*

*and illustrating.)*

**MOLLY**

This seems so unfair.

You cure me of my fear of death—and how am I repaying you?

By taking you to meet the Wicked Witch of the West.

**SAMANTHA**

I’m sure she’s not as difficult as you’re making her out to be.

**MOLLY**

She’s worse. I love her, but she’s worse.

**SAMANTHA**

I’ll adore her anyway.

**MOLLY**

I hope so.

It will have to go better than it did with Luther.

**SAMANTHA**

She didn’t like Luther?

**MOLLY**

She didn’t want me to marry a man….

It’s a hang-up of hers. Ever since my mother ran off with my father.

But that’s a long, complicated story.

**SAMANTHA**

I’m all ears.

**MOLLY**

My father was a man.

**SAMANTHA**

And….?

**MOLLY**

No, that’s more or less it.

My father was a man and my grandmother hated him.

He was also very handsome. And very poor. He sold ink door to door.

From a little pushcart with a giant squid painted on it.

My mother collected fountain pens….

One thing led to another.

It was just one of those things.

**SAMANTHA**

I admire people who marry up.

He must have been a very enterprising man.

**MOLLY**

I don’t know. He died before I was born.

And my mother died when she had me.

So Grandma’s all I have left.

**SAMANTHA**

Then I’ll love her twice as much.

**MOLLY**

Do you know what the ironic part it?

Grandma thinks she hated my father because he was a man.

But the truth is that she hated him because he was poor.

She just isn’t self-aware enough to see that.

**SAMANTHA**

Have you told her that?

**MOLLY**

Of course not.

It’s important for people to figure these things out for themselves.

**SAMANTHA**

And what if they never do?

**MOLLY**

That’s what’s so wonderful about long-term analysis.

If it doesn’t work, the patient never knows.

**16. “Zachariah”**

*(Zachariah enters. Zachariah, to the audience.)*

**ZACHARIAH**

Conflict of interest. *All* the work lawyers do involves a conflict of interest.

Let’s say I have two clients. One is an accused axe-murderer.

I know he committed the crimes charged, but I defend him none-the-less.

My other client is an elderly widow for whom I’m writing a will.

If I succeed in freeing my axe-murderer, I place the life of my widow in jeopardy.

Maybe not in a lot of jeopardy—my axe murderer has numerous prospective victims to choose from. But it’s a conflict of interest, none-the-less.

The only sure way to avoid conflict of interest entirely is to serve only one client—and that’s obviously not a realistic possibility.

I am reminded of the famous English case of *Shacklesford* vs. *Shacklesford.* Queen’s Bench. 1958. Mr. Shacklesford, a paranoid schizophrenic, sued himself in order to recover a portion of his own inheritance. He hired a lawyer to prosecute his case. He hired another lawyer to defend himself and to counter-sue. Each lawyer took thirty-three percent. One third may seem like a significant cut at first—but it misses the larger point. Mr. Shacklesford won his case. You do see what I’m driving at, don’t you?

Some lawyers would have refused to take Shacklesford’s case—and then he would have won absolutely nothing.

So I try not to worry myself too much about conflicts of interest….I compartmentalize.

One hour, I work for Mrs. Wellington. The next hour, I work for Mr. Gibbons.

What conflict?

*(Zachariah picks up the telephone on his desk and speaks*

*into the receiver*.)

Is this the police? Yes?

I’d like to report a mad woman on the loose.

*(Agatha enters. She begins to cook dinner. Zachariah*

*exits.)*

**17. “Molly introduces Samantha to Agatha”**

*(Molly and Samantha pass through the door.)*

**MOLLY**

That smells wonderful.

**AGATHA**

Fresh fish. I knew you’d like it.

**SAMANTHA**

Hello, Mrs. Wellington. I’m Samantha.

**AGATHA**

*(To Molly)*

She certainly looks female enough.

**SAMANTHA**

I do what I can.

**AGATHA**

*(To Samantha)*

So tell me all about yourself, dear.

**SAMANTHA**

I’m not sure what there is to tell.

I write children’s books. And I hate children. That’s about it.

**AGATHA**

Do you have any hobbies?

**SAMANTHA**

Hobbies?

**AGATHA**

What do you do in your spare time?

**SAMANTHA**

The usual things.

Hunting, watching football, betting on the horse races.

**AGATHA**

Anything else, dear. Maybe knitting? Macramé?

**SAMANTHA**

Oh, definitely not. How tedious.

No—if I have the free time, I’d much rather get under the hood of my mustang.

And I’m not averse to a belching contest now and then…or opening a few beer cans with my eye sockets….

But the truth is that I don’t have much time for hobbies, Mrs. Wellington.

I spend most of my time working.

**AGATHA**

That’s a relief.

**MOLLY**

Samantha’s very ambitious. She’s practically a workaholic.

**SAMANTHA**

You have to be when you start off as poor as I did.

Our family was so poor when I was a kid, my sister and I had to share one pair of shoes.

We took turns going to school on alternate days.

**AGATHA**

*(Disgusted.)*

I see. How quaint.

**SAMANTHA**

But the way I see it is:

If I can make it, anybody can make it.

All it takes is hard work and a good slogan.

**AGATHA**

I’m sure.

**MOLLY**

Shall we sit down to eat?

*(They sit down at the dinner table.)*

**AGATHA**

*(To Samantha)*

How do you feel about diapers, dear?

**SAMANTHA**

Diapers?

**AGATHA**

You know: Urinary incontinence.

**MOLLY**

Please, Grandma. You promised.

**AGATHA**

What are you getting worked up about?

I’m asking a perfectly legitimate question.

I’m just curious to know what your friend would do under certain circumstances.

If she lost bladder control….Or if her partner had to wear diapers….

**SAMANTHA**

I’ve never really thought about it before.

Honestly, it’s one of those things I prefer not to think about until it happens.

Like wrinkles…or getting screwed up the ass by a donkey.

**AGATHA**

I see. I’ve never thought of wrinkles quite that way myself.

**MOLLY**

Can’t we talk about something else, Grandma? Please.

**AGATHA**

As soon as we’ve finished discussing incontinence.

*(To Samantha)*

You would stick by your partner if she lost control, wouldn’t you?

**SAMANTHA**

I’m not so sure, Mrs. Wellington. Truthfully, probably not.

You have to look out for yourself in life.

I know some girls who are into that, of course….but it’s never been my thing.

**AGATHA**

“It’s never been your thing.”

Now all is clear.

Like incontinence was ever *my* thing.

Life isn’t a children’s book, young lady.

There’s something to be said for loyalty.

**MOLLY**

Please, Grandma.

**AGATHA**

Don’t you “Please, Grandma” me.

When I said a decent young woman, this is not what I had in mind.

You might as well have hired a prostitute. A male prostitute.

Better to have Mr. Luther support you on an academic’s salary than this she-man abandoning you in a pool of your own urine.

**MOLLY**

In the first place, nobody’s abandoning me.

And in the second place, Luther is heir to a board game fortune.

You weren’t satisfied with a rich man—so I found myself a poor woman.

**SAMANTHA**

Middleclass.

**MOLLY**

Middleclass.

**AGATHA**

Heir to a board game fortune? Him?

**MOLLY**

He doesn’t flaunt it.

**AGATHA**

I guess he flaunts other things….

Well I liked him better than I realized….

I’ve thought it over, dear.

If you want to marry that homosexual, it’s fine with me.

**MOLLY**

Enough, Grandma. I’m in love with Samantha.

**AGATHA**

Love! What do you know about love?

When you’ve been widowed thirty-five years, young lady, then talk to me about love.

I think I’ve had enough socializing for one evening.

I’m going to sleep—and I’m taking my matchbook with me.

*(Agatha climbs into bed and dozes off.)*

**SAMANTHA**

Was it something I said?

**MOLLY**

She’ll come around.

When she sees how much I love you, she’ll love you too.

*(Molly and Samantha exit.)*

**18. “Agatha”**

*(Agatha, sitting up in bed, to the audience.)*

**AGATHA**

So I was wrong.

What do you want from me?

Anybody can be wrong once in ninety years.

That’s still less often than an orbit of Halley’s comet.

I did the best I could—I even gave that nice young man a painting.

You know, the one with the wine and the cheese….

Can you please stop looking at me like that?

You know how! Accusingly!

As though I’m trying to manage my granddaughter’s life.

I made a mistake. I admit it. Let’s move on.

What are you going to do? Have me arrested?

Lock me up in a psychiatric facility like in the Soviet Union?

Go ahead, I dare you.

**19. “Agatha faces a psychiatric evaluation”**

*(Agatha passes through the door. She paces nervously.)*

**AGATHA**

This is outrageous!

Barging into a woman’s mansion, carrying her off against her will.

I’m going to sue the white coats off you.

I demand to speak to my attorney.

**VOICE**

What day of the week is it?

**AGATHA**

I will not answer your questions. I have fifth amendment rights. Privileges. Immunities. Something like that. In any case, I’m rich.

**VOICE**

What day of the week is it?

**AGATHA**

Tuesday.

**VOICE**

What day of the week is it?

**AGATHA**

Thursday.

**VOICE**

What day of the week is it?

**AGATHA**

Sunday?

**VOICE**

Correct.

**AGATHA**

My attorney will not stand for this.

**VOICE**

Who was president during the Spanish-American War?

**AGATHA**

President of the United States or President of Spain?

**VOICE**

Spain.

**AGATHA**

That’s a trick question. [Práxedes Mateo Sagasta](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pr%E1xedes_Mateo_Sagasta) resigned halfway through the fighting and was replaced by Francisco Silvela Le Vielleuze.

**VOICE**

Correct.

**AGATHA**

I demand to speak to my attorney.

I’m worth six hundred to eight hundred million dollars.

You can’t do this to me.

**VOICE**

Note down that she doesn’t know how much money she has.

**AGATHA**

You’re going to regret this. Whoever you are.

I’ll cut your goddam vocal chords.

I don’t care if it means I have to live another ninety years….

**VOICE**

We are psychiatrists. We cannot be threatened.

*(Agatha exits.)*

**20. “Zachariah visits Luther”**

*(Luther and Zachariah enter.)*

**LUTHER**

You’re looking good these days. Very well-rested.

**ZACHARIAH**

I sleep a lot.

**LUTHER**

Any word on the old woman?

**ZACHARIAH**

I regret to say that she’s sharper than a serpent’s tooth.

**LUTHER**

*(Rubbing his back.)*

Sharper than a bedspring?

**ZACHARIAH**

Sharp.

They wouldn’t keep her.

**LUTHER**

Maybe we could bribe them.

**ZACHARIAH**

She already bribed them. Preemptively.

**LUTHER**

So what’s our next step?

**ZACHARIAH**

Why don’t you offer Molly some money?

**LUTHER**

What is that supposed to mean?

**ZACHARIAH**

Everything has its price, Mr. Gibbons. Everything.

**LUTHER**

I’m not going to stand for this. If the law can’t help me, I’ll—

**ZACHARIAH**

You’ll what, Mr. Gibbons?

**LUTHER**

I’ll pray.

**21. “ Lightning strikes sixteen times”**

*(Agatha enters and falls asleep in the bed.*

*Samantha and Molly enter and sit down at the table.*

*Luther and Zachariah pass through the door.*

*Luther gets down on his knees and prays.)*

**MOLLY**

Mr. Carmichael! Just the man we needed.

**ZACHARIAH**

What can I do for you?

**MOLLY**

They committed my grandmother to the asylum this morning.

Against her wishes. It took me all afternoon to get her out.

**ZACHARIAH**

How dare they! Is Mrs. Wellington all right?

**MOLLY**

Physically, yes. But shaken….She’s resting….

**SAMANTHA**

What’s *he* doing?

**LUTHER**

I’m praying. I’m praying Molly comes to her senses.

**MOLLY**

*(To Samantha)*

That’s my ex. Luther.

**ZACHARIAH**

We’ll have to sue the hospital.

I’m going to make your grandmother a very wealthy woman.

**MOLLY**

My grandmother already is a very wealthy woman.

**ZACHARIAH**

Wealthier, then.

She’ll own a hospital.

At her age, that could be convenient.

**LUTHER**

*(Praying)*

Please, dear God.

You who were generous enough to resurrect two unrepentant thieves, to share the inheritance of your only son with a pair of ignorant ne’er-do-wells, please grant me this one small wish. All I need is a sign. Something to give me hope.

**MOLLY**

Please stop, Luther. I’m in love with Samantha.

I’m not coming back to you.

**LUTHER**

*(To Molly)*

I’m not speaking to you. I’m speaking to God.

**MOLLY**

It won’t help.

**SAMANTHA**

*(Alarmed)*

Watch out!

*(A bolt of lightning strikes Molly. She falls to the ground.*

*Luther and Samantha rush to her side. Zachariah hides*

*under Agatha’s bed.)*

**LUTHER**

Darling?

**SAMANTHA**

Are you okay?

**MOLLY**

I’m fine. Just a little bit woozy….

And madly in love with you.

**SAMANTHA**

With me?

*(Molly looks from Luther to Samantha to Luther.)*

**MOLLY**

No. I’m madly in love with Luther.

*(Another bolt of lightning strikes Molly.)*

Or Samantha. I’m pretty sure I’m in love with Samantha.

*(Another bolt of lightning strikes Molly.)*

No, Luther.

*(Another bolt of lightning strikes Molly.)*

Samantha.

*(Eleven more lightning bolts hit Molly.)*

**LUTHER**

Luther?

**SAMANTHA**

Samantha?

*(Molly stands up. She looks back and forth between them.)*

**MOLLY**

Luther. Definitely Luther.

**22.** “**Agatha wakes up dead”**

*(Zachariah climbs out from under Agatha’s bed.)*

**ZACHARIAH**

Is it safe to come out?

**MOLLY**

I think so.

**ZACHARIAH**

Good God—lightning indoors. I’ve never been so terrified in my life.

*(With realization)*

I’ve never been so terrified in my life!!!

I’m afraid to die. I’m afraid to die! Isn’t this wonderful?

I’ve never been so happy to be alive.

**LUTHER**

Congratulations.

**ZACHARIAH**

Thank you.

**SAMANTHA**

(*To Zachariah*)

When the thrill wears off, you let me know.

*(Molly approaches Agatha’s bed.)*

**MOLLY**

Grandma? Grandma!

**LUTHER**

She doesn’t look like she’s breathing.

**MOLLY**

She’s dead! Grandma’s dead!

**ZACHARIAH**

It sure does seem that way.

She didn’t even have a chance to burn her house down.

**MOLLY**

Please dear God. Don’t let her be dead.

Let her just be sleeping very heavily. Please.

I swear I’ll never fight with her again.

I’ll date men. Women. Violent hunchbacks. Whoever she wants….

*(Agatha sits up and grins.)*

**AGATHA**

I had you fooled there for a second, didn’t I?

*(Agatha stand up and walks forward. Agatha, to the*

*audience.)*

**AGATHA**

That’s the problem with ninety.

Nobody appreciates it when you play a good practical joke.

Everybody’s so worried you might die that it takes all the fun out of living.

Maybe that’s what it takes to live past ninety: Fun.

And a good sense of humor.

But what the hell do I know?

I’m only ninety—and a young ninety at that.

You’ll have to check back in another thirty years.

Until then, sleep well—and don’t think too much.

**ACT TWO ENDS**