

# The Good Years: The Musical

Penny Petersen





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## THE GOOD YEARS

A Love Story with Music in Two Acts

Book & Lyrics  
By Penny Petersen

Music by Ron Petersen and Linda Signer

### Place

*An active retirement country club.*

### Time

*Anywhere, any time.*

*Setting: Empty stage. Scenery consists of a series of small drops which are changed according to location. There are 7 painted drops and 2 drops that are unpainted. Each drop is hung on two posts. Drops indicate where the action takes place. Minimal furniture (bench, 3 chairs, 2 small tables) become different set pieces. (See end for specifics.)*

### Cast

4 Women, 4 Men, 3-6 Mimes (One acts as Narrator, others change scenery and bring props. Could be done with 3 or 4 mimes if stagehands are used to move scenery.)

LIBBI: A widow.

LARRY: A widower.

GRACE: Libbi's daughter.

DON: Libbi's son-in-law.

DOLORES: Larry's daughter.

STEVE: Larry's son-in-law.

ACTRESS: Leading lady in community theatre (Gretchen).

ACTOR: Leading man in community theatre (Harold).

NARRATOR: One of the Mimes. Delivers prologues ACT I & II & Epilogue.

*SUMMARY: The Good Years is a takeoff of the popular musical, The Fantasticks. Two daughters try to match up their widowed parents. Their efforts include a 'chance' meeting, a fake robbery, a clown, and some bowling buddies. All are disastrous. A nightmare scene, an actor in drag, and mimes add to the hilarity. In keeping with the non-realistic style, the mimes represent Fate and influence the action. Finally, with the help of the mimes, forgiveness prevails and all is well.*

NOTE: The Mimes are a theatrical convention that accentuates the non-realistic nature of the presentation. None of the characters are aware of the mimes, but the mimes will often communicate their feelings to the audience. Scene changes and some costume changes are done in full view of the audience. SL, SC and SR must have their own area lighting as well as being used together. Also, a single spot is needed DL, DC & DR. A follow spot is used for the mime changing signs. Although lighting cues are written in, the play can be performed without lights by having actors turn their back when not in the focus. The play can be performed in any venue. Scenes are numbered for rehearsal purposes. Action is continuous. Information about costumes, makeup, properties, etc. is listed in the appendix.

## Musical Selections

## ACT I

<u>Title</u>	<u>Sung by</u>
<i>Parents</i>	Grace & Dolores
<i>Mime Strut</i>	
<i>Feeling Young</i>	Larry
<i>I Never Thought I'd Feel This Way Again</i>	Libbi
<i>Bowling</i>	Don & Steve
<i>Why Did She Dump Me Blues</i>	Larry
<i>A Sizeable Donation</i>	Actors
<i>Foreign Places</i>	Libbi

## ACT II

<i>Parents (Reprise)</i>	Grace & Dolores
<i>Nightmare</i>	
<i>Is It All Right With You?</i>	Libbi
<i>Forgiveness</i>	Libbi & Girls
<i>A Few Good Years</i>	Libbi & Larry
<i>Bowling (Reprise)</i>	Don, Steve, Larry
<i>Lesson of Love</i>	Grace & Dolores
<i>Forever Love (Wedding Music)</i>	
<i>A Few Good Years (Reprise)</i>	Company

ACT I

At Rise: NARRATOR/MIME enters & speaks to audience in spot DC. Center Drop is the show title "The Good Years." SL & SR drops are unpainted fabric. One chair is set DL, another DR.

PROLOGUE – NARRATOR: (spoken as in a Shakespearean play)

Just what is life? Why are we here?  
What part is love? What part is fear?  
What causes smiles? What brings a tear?  
Things are not always as they appear.

Do we control it? Do we create  
The things we crave? The things we hate?  
And when it's time to choose a mate?  
Do we control? Or is it fate?

Humm, we'll see.

We'll try to tell this story true;  
With lights and music, just for you,  
But settings here are mighty few,  
So use your imagination too.

My friends and I will just appear  
With prop or hat or sound to hear.  
In the end, we hope it's clear,  
Even though we're not Shakespeare.

So we begin, the end is true  
The story calls, we bid adieu.

(DC spot out)

Scene 1: Intro & Church

At Rise: LIBBI enters & sits in SR chair reading a travel magazine. LARRY sits in the chair SL silently practicing his saxophone (or other instrument.) Neither sees or hears what's going on around them. Throughout the play, SR is LIBBI's side, SL is LARRY's side. GRACE enters DR. Spot on her. Dolores enters DL. No light on her until she's ready to sing.

SONG: PARENTS (*GRACE & DOLORES*)

GRACE:

*Verse (spot DR on GRACE)*

I have a mother, she's such a trip  
She is attractive, smart as a whip  
She's been a widow for several years  
Tho' she seems happy, one thing is clear

*Chorus*

She needs a companion to share nights and days  
Someone who is caring and has gentle ways  
But she doesn't think so, she's stubborn and bright.  
She's busy with girlfriends, sleeps alone every night. (*spot out on GRACE, up on DOLORES*)

DOLORES:

*Verse*

I have a father, he's really great  
Attractive, caring, he needs a mate  
He's been alone now for several years  
He gets so lonely, one thing is clear.

*Chorus*

He needs a companion, to share in his life  
He'd be a great catch, and he needs a wife.  
But he doesn't think so, ignoring his plight  
He flirts and he dances, sleeps alone every night. (*spot up DC, DL off*)

*Verse (Girls move to DC spot. LARRY & LIBBY exit.)*

If we could only, make them a match (*DOLORES*)  
Get them together, they would attach. (*GRACE*)  
My Dad is handsome, and he's so smart. (*DOLORES*)  
My Mom is pretty, and she has heart. (*GRACE*)

*Chorus (together)*

So what's the big problem? They think they are fine.  
But, they are so stubborn, both yours and mine.  
And we'll keep on trying, there must be a way  
To get them together; we'll find a way.

*(Spot up DR. DOLORES and GRACE move into spot. They have escaped from lunch with LIBBI and are talking in the restroom. They pantomime hand washing. MIMES set Center Stage for church. Title drop down. Church drop up. Table added. Bags of cans on table & boxes.)*

DOLORES: Did you ask her?

GRACE: *(not happy)* Yeah.

DOLORES: Well, what did she say?

GRACE: She said, *(mimicking)* "No way. I'm much too old for birth control."

DOLORES: What?

GRACE: That's her way of saying "No."

DOLORES: If she'd just meet my dad! He's perfect for her.

GRACE: He's perfect period! If I were 20 years older, I'd go for him.

DOLORES: You're just saying that.

GRACE: No. I mean it. We've got to get them together.

DOLORES: But how? *(MIME enters next to DOLORES and snap fingers. No response. Snaps again then backs up, staying onstage.)* I know! We'll trick her into it.

GRACE: Trick her?

DOLORES: We'll make the meeting an accident.

GRACE: *(laughs)* Not bad. But how would we do it? *(MIME walks closer, makes a motion with hand)*

DOLORES: I've got it! I'll volunteer Dad to help pack food baskets after church. You volunteer your mom. You give them something to do together, then...voila! They'll have to talk. They're too polite not to.

GRACE: What if it doesn't work?

DOLORES: What have we lost? A little time!

GRACE: They don't have much time. *(pause)* But her doctor did say, "She could live to be 103."

DOLORES: That would give them a few good years together. *(MIME does the "Cut" sign, exits. GRACE looks around.)*

GRACE: We'd better get back. Mom will wonder why it took so long.

*(Spot down. GRACE & DOLORES exit. Lights come up stage center on a church reception room where there's a lunchroom table.)*

### SCENE 1

MIME places sign: "CHURCH - A Week Later"

At Rise: GRACE moves into church scene. MIME hands her an apron. She puts it on and calls to her mom.

GRACE: Come on, Mom, we've gotta sort these cans before noon.

*(LIBBI enters in a matching apron and they begin sorting cans and putting like kinds in small boxes. A MIME rushes in with a grocery bag of cans when they run out.)*

LIBBI: Wow. We've got lots of corn.

GRACE: It's always that way.

LIBBI: I don't think we have enough boxes for all these cans.

GRACE: I'll go get some more. They keep the extras in the back room. *(she starts to leave, then fakes surprise as LARRY enters)* Good. Oh, here comes Larry. Maybe he can help. *(LIBBI doesn't look up)*

LARRY: You're doing a nice job.

LIBBI: *(doesn't look up)* Thanks.

LARRY: I'm Larry.

LIBBI: *(still not looking up)* Hi.

LARRY: *(coming closer)* I'll gladly help.

LIBBI: I've almost got it. *(still doesn't look up)*

LARRY: Isn't there anything I can do?

*(DOLORES peeks around the drop & watches. She carries boxes.)*

LIBBI: Not right now. My daughter should be here shortly with some more boxes. *(Looking up for the first time, she sees LARRY. There's an immediate attraction. She wipes hands on her apron and reaches to shake his hand.)* Sorry, what did you say your name was?

LARRY: Larry. It's really Laurence, with an au, but everybody calls me Larry. *(he shakes her hand then keeps holding onto it)*

LIBBI: Glad to meet you, Larry. I'm Libbi. It's really Elizabeth, but everyone calls me Libbi.

LARRY: Libbi? That was my grandmother's name. She was Elizabeth too, but she spelled Libbi with an 'i.' *(LIBBI finally pulls her hand away)*

LIBBI: So do I. It was a nickname, so I spelled it with an 'i.' I wanted to be different.

LARRY: Ah, you're spunky.

LIBBI: Here, you can help with these. Fruits, veggies and beans in separate boxes.

*(They sort. She stares at him, and embarrassed, he looks down. She gives him the once over. When he looks up and catches her staring at him, she's embarrassed and looks down. He gives her the once over. Both like what they see, but seem at loss for words. They stare at each other until the spell is broken as DOLORES enters carrying boxes.)*

DOLORES: Sorry it took so long. I had to go help Grace. She couldn't find the boxes.

LARRY: That's OK. Libbi seems to have things under control.

LIBBI: I thought there was a whole crowd coming.

DOLORES: Hold down the fort, I'll see where they are.

*(DOLORES crosses DR. Spot up as GRACE enters. LIBBI & LARRY exit to change for Drive-in. MIMES enter and change drop to Drive-In.)*

DOLORES: You should have seen it! It was as if God Almighty came down and touched their foreheads. They talked politely. Then there was this long stare. Then she blushed. Then he looked at his shoes. Then they both stumbled to make awkward conversation.

GRACE: You're kidding. My mother? My "I don't need anybody" mother? I'll be darned.

DOLORES: My dad's usually got a good line for everything. But he stopped dead in his tracks.

GRACE: But they talked.

DOLORES: Yeah. He found out that she spelled Libbi with an 'I' just like my grandmother. And she started telling him what to do...

GRACE: Ah...a preview of coming attractions...*(mimicks)* "Here, Larry, you can put the dishes in the dishwasher"...and, "Oh, Larry, would you empty the garbage...dear!"

DOLORES: Stop being so negative. It was charming. And chemistry is good.

GRACE: That's true. *(MIME enters and makes shuffling sounds with feet)* Here come the rest of the crew. We'd better get going. *(GRACE and DOLORES exit. Lights out.)*

## SCENE 2

MIME places sign: "DRIVE-IN – Two weeks later"

*At Rise: Music background. Lights up dimly Stage Center. Two MIMES enter. Each pushes a desk chair on wheels. The two chairs represent a car. LARRY sits in the driver's seat and holds a steering wheel. LIBBI sits in the passenger chair. The MIMES push the chairs Down Center. The chairs are about 8 inches apart. They face front as if waiting for a movie to begin. Another MIME enters and hands popcorn to LIBBI. Another takes steering wheel and exits. The MIMES pushing the chairs station themselves to either side of the Drive-In drop for future moves.*

LARRY: A step back in time for our two week anniversary. And it's only 15 minutes until the feature starts.

LIBBI: I didn't even know this was here. There aren't many drive-ins left.

LARRY: Patty and I used to bring the kids here. When was the last time you went to a drive-in?

LIBBI: I only went a few times. I wasn't allowed. My dad said it was where boys got girls in trouble. He called it the 'Passion Pit.'

LARRY: Really? (*evasively*)

LIBBI: Yeah, Right! Like you never heard that before? So why did you go?

LARRY: (*evasively*) Uh... They had the best Milk Duds?

LIBBI: Come on! All the boys went there to make out.

LARRY: Well, I have to admit, I used charm, persuasion, milk duds, begging, but nothing ever worked. Did you and Charlie ever go to the drive in?

LIBBI: After we dated quite a while.

LARRY: And did he try to get you in trouble?

LIBBI: (*nervous*) How can you say that? We were married 49 years. (*getting agitated*) We had our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary all planned. Then, there we were, eating lunch on the porch and 'poof' a second later he was gone.

LARRY: That must have been awful.

LIBBI: It was a shock! But I'm glad he didn't suffer.

LARRY: I wish Patty had gone like that.

LIBBI: What happened?

LARRY: Lung cancer. We didn't know smoking was bad back then.

LIBBI: I'm sorry. (*There's a long pause. Finally, LARRY blurts out:*) How did you meet Charlie?

LIBBI: I worked as a receptionist at my dad's Ford dealership. Charlie came in to buy a Fairlane. Before Dad let me go out with him, he checked with the minister and his former Scoutmaster. Dad even called the librarian to see if Charlie ever checked out dirty books. He hadn't. How about you and Patty?

LARRY: We met at a dance. Oh, what a dancer! Everybody wanted to dance with Patty.

LIBBI: I have two left feet.

LARRY: Nobody has two left feet. I'll teach you. (*MIMES push the chairs closer together*)

LIBBI: Are you sure you could teach me?

LARRY: 100% guaranteed.

LIBBI: Sounds like fun. (*pause*) I could be jealous of Patty.

LARRY: And I could be jealous of Charlie, having you for 49 years. (*MIMES push the chairs until touching*) But now, let's talk about us. Us could be a good thing, you know. (*LARRY puts his arm around LIBBI with help of MIME. He puts his hand on her knee and pats.*) I really like you and... (*LIBBI, startled when he touches her knee, jumps away and spills the popcorn. It goes everywhere.*)

LIBBI: Oh! I'm so sorry! I'm not usually such a klutz! (*she starts picking up the popcorn*)

LARRY: I'm sorry I startled you.

LIBBI: I'll go get some more.

LARRY: Forget the popcorn.

LIBBI: No. No. I spilled it, I'll get some more. Besides, I'd better go to the ladies room before the show begins. (*LIBBI exits*)

LARRY: (*mimics an English accent and throws popcorn in the air*) I think I've got her! Yes! I think I've got her!

**END OF FREEVIEW**

***You'll want to read and perform this show!***