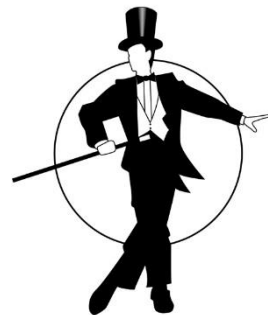


Viagara Falls & the 70 Year Old Virgin

Janet Findlay & Alan Youngson



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VIAGARA FALLS & THE 70-YEAR-OLD VIRGIN

By Janet Findlay and Alan Youngson

CAST

(Characters with accents like Scottish Jock McPherson can be changed to a Texan and re-named as Jake Jackson)

ERIC MEAKIN: Seventy years-old, slightly built, retired entomologist. He is unworldly, nervous, and more at home looking at six-legged creatures under a microscope than in the company of two-legged human beings! Slight stammer when stressed or nervous. About to marry Fran. First marriage (and first relationship).

FRAN FOSTER: Late sixties, easy-going, been around the block. She is now into New Age philosophies especially crystals. Has a heart of gold, married three times before. About to marry Eric.

IAN BELL: Late sixties, jovial, retired minister/pastor who now conducts civil ceremonies. Empathetic, good humored and kind. Belongs to a number of clubs in the Village. He has been married to Kitty for many years.

JOCK MCPHERSON: Early 70's gregarious Scotsman who likes to drink and is a 'loose cannon.' Is Eric's best man. Twice divorced, he still sees himself as a ladies' man but he's having trouble keeping up with girlfriend, Norma.

KITTY BELL: Late sixties. Competent, witty, organizing and outspoken. Married to Ian. Is Fran's Matron of Honor.

JANE PARKER: Sixty plus years, retired science librarian. Unmarried, critical and suspicious. Doesn't get on with neighbor, Kitty, but is good friend of the easy-going Fran. Is going to give Fran away at the wedding.

DR. SADHU: Genial, gentlemanly Indian (or Anglo-Indian) physician attached to Serenity Gardens Retirement Village, who practices hypnotism on the side. Enjoys using it to help others, likes happy endings. Mixture of idealism and pragmatism.

SERGEANT PAM HARDING: Fifties or sixties, strong looking and sounding female, member of Local Terror Prevention Squad.

Place

Serenity Gardens Retirement Village.

Time

The present.

Scene Locations

The Action of the play takes place in:

Act 1 Scene 1 Community Hall, Friday early evening

Act 1 Scene 2 Community Hall, Tuesday late morning

Act 2 Scene 1 Outside Community Hall, Thursday evening

Act 2 Scene 2 Community Hall, Friday early afternoon

Act 2 Scene 3 Community Hall, Friday sunset

Act 2 Scene 4 Community Hall, Saturday mid-morning.

Description for Set Scene

The play can be simply staged with the Community Hall or more elaborately, like using the set design included in the Production Notes which are after the script.

Projection

This is an essential and integral part of the show. A white projection screen or cyclorama or white flats at rear of set can be used to project the voice over Prologue poem with integrated slides, slides at the beginning of each scene with day, time and location to represent the swift progression of days to the wedding. The projection screen can be used for the live silhouetted live sequence of men in caftans, or done as a series of slightly menacing slides.

VIAGARA FALLS & THE 70 YEAR OLD VIRGIN

Pre-Show Slide: Serenity Gardens on before the audience enters the theater. Pre-show music is from *The Beatles*. Other music is used to link scenes with new slide of day and time.

Pre-show slide of Serenity Gardens is faded out as House lights dim.

Play starts with Prologue Poem with slide show of people and settings that depict the mood or items in the poem.

Here at Serenity Gardens
The folk appear so chilled
Days pass without great drama
The hours are happily filled
With bridge, mahjong, Tai Chi and chess
Or ping pong, bowls and mindfulness.

But for some there's a nagging suspicion
That time may be running out
Have they done everything they wanted
And well, what's this life about?

Take one man for example
So long obsessed with bugs
A lifetime spent with microscopes
Is quite devoid of hugs.

He's making up for lost time
By marrying a cheery Gran
Who's never given up her hopes
Of finding The Right Man!
Just like her friend and neighbor did
Who married back in ancient times
She's chalked up nearly 50 years
Since her wedding bells did chime!

Another two – though not a pair
For reasons of their own despair
At ever finding Love again
- perhaps because they're such a pain!

But Time's too swift for those who fear
And as his Wedding Day draws near
The bridegroom fears he'll be no catch
For the feisty Gran – not up to scratch?

Yes, the countdown's on and life hasn't slowed
In Serenity Gardens on Cemetery Road
The calendar pages are flipping so fast
Calling to all "ENJOY WHILE IT LASTS!"

So may this romp about elderly heroes
(Whose scores out of ten can often be 'zeros')
Remind us when we're lamenting our Fate..
To get up and JIVE – for it's never too late!

ACT ONE Scene 1

Slide: Community Hall—Friday, 7PM

FRAN: (*laughing off stage, then enters and calls back*) C'mon Eric! You can do it—only another 10 meters to go!

ERIC: (*enters triumphantly holding up walking stick and wearing moon-boot*) Yay! I did it, Fran! I did it!

FRAN: No more stick? (*puts walking stick on down right side of table*)

ERIC: No more stick! I've walked from my unit to your unit and now to the Community Hall with only the merest twinge in my Achilles tendon!

FRAN: And it's taken us nearly six months to get to this point!

ERIC: Oh, Fran, is it really six months since that blue butterfly landed on my ankle and caused my foot to slip into the rabbit hole while I was studying a stick insect just outside our Village?

FRAN: Yes, and now look! We're about to get married in ten days' time. I told you from the start Eric, that butterflies bring good luck!

ERIC: Ah ha, yes well, it took me a little while to come round to your point of view Frannie, but now that I'm about to get m-married for the first time, at the age of seventy, to a w-wonderful, warm, caring woman—how could I deny that butterflies bring good luck!

FRAN: Oh Eric!

ERIC: Oh Fran! (*they kiss*)

FRAN: Um, how would you like to pop into my unit for a little canoodle, now that your leg's better? I've been waiting quite a while for this moment Eric...

ERIC: (*slightly embarrassed*) Oh no, Fran n-not with my moon-boot still on!

FRAN: (*seductively*) We can work around that silly boot Eric...

ERIC: But I thought you were getting ready for your bridal shower tomorrow night. Aren't Kitty and Jane coming over to your place to help prepare the food?

FRAN: Yes they are, but we've got a good half hour to, um, "play with" before then...

ERIC: Oh Fran, you know how much I want to become more familiar with your... considerable charms, but as I've told you, I'm a bit of a r-romantic and a perfectionist! Plus, I want to be in tip-top shape—as perfect a ph-physical specimen as I can be for my bride on our wedding night!

FRAN: *(sighs)* Yes, Eric...so you've said. Well, I'm a bit more realistic I guess, having been married three times before. I was a romantic too with Clive, my first, but I soon came down to earth with a bump when I realized he was making out with my bridesmaid! Then Gary—my second—seemed sooo sensitive and considerate until I caught him kissing the meter man! What a shock to the system that was!

ERIC: *(earnestly)* Did you blow a fuse?

FRAN: Well, I can tell you, sparks flew! And then, poor Harold. Dear old dependable Harold, who'd weathered so many storms in his life. How could a decorated veteran of two wars lose his life simply by slipping on a bit of bat shit in our backyard...and then, contracting Lyssa virus? I was rather hoping that lovely blue butterfly would bring me a bit of better luck this time... *(she starts to cry)*

ERIC: *(puts his arm around her)* Oh, but it will Frannie—it has already. Look, you don't have to worry about me. I may have been m-married to my work as a worldwide expert on The Brazilian Weevil, but I'm not a Clive. I'm certainly not a G-gary and as a scientist, I would never be silly enough to venture barefoot into the fecal-strewn habitat of a Feral Flying Fox. It'll be all right Fran—you'll see. I'll make a final appointment with Doctor Sahdu and then I can take off this wretched moon-boot for good. And after that...

FRAN: You promise it'll be all right Eric? I'm not just being taken for a ride again?

ERIC: No, Frannie, I promise! *(then daringly)* It'll be the Rrrrrr-ride of your Life!

FRAN: *(giggles)* Oh Eric! You're daring to be a bit naughty! I like it—it suits you. *(they kiss again)*

JANE: *(voice offstage)* Yoo hoo Fran! Are you there Fran?

FRAN: Uh-oh, that's Jane. Now what does she want I wonder? Oh, that's right, she's coming to help me prepare for the bridal shower. I'd better go dearest! (*calls out*) Coming Jane! (*Disengages from him and blows kiss as she's leaving*) No high kicking without your stick now!

ERIC: (*laughing, relieved*) Ha, ha no! No chance of that. (*watches Fran go, then pulls cell phone out of pocket, muttering*) Technically Fran, that blue butterfly was a Celestrina Ladon Echo, popularly known as a Spring Azure...hello? Is that the Cemetery Road 24 Hour Medical Centre? Ah, this is Eric Meakin...I'm wondering if I could have a quick word with Dr. Sahdu...? Oh m-marvelous. (*tries doing high kick with moonboot*)

Ah Dr. Sahdu! Yes...yes, the tendon's healing rather well. As of today, I no longer need the stick...So I'd like to make an-another appointment with you sometime soon... but um...first I need to talk to you about a rather sensitive matter Doctor. (*coughs*) I'm afraid I've misplaced the instructions for those sugar-coated, soluble Viagra pills you prescribed for me last week...yes, those new trial ones...well, I wanted to keep them a secret from my fiancée, so I put them in an artificial sweetener container...yes Doctor, an artificial sweetener container but, in doing so, I've misplaced the accompanying information. Now remind me, how long before, um, sex should I start taking them, and how many should I take at one time...? No, we haven't exactly done that yet..Why not? Well, I'm not overly...experienced...and now I'm suffering from per-per...Yes, yes—that's it. P-performance anxiety!

Anyway, the instructions please.. Yes...mmm...uh huh...normal dose 10 minutes before commencing...what? You're suggesting I DOUBLE THE DOSE for the honeymoon! Really?!

Pardon me? Have I got enough pills? Oh yes, you prescribed enough for an elephant...what's that? Best of luck? Well, maybe with the pills, I won't have to rely on m-mere luck. Thank you, Doctor. And I trust you will respect my confidence...thank you again. Goodbye now. (*fiddles with phone*) Darn it! I forgot to make the final appointment for this ankle! Siri! Remind me...make another appointment with Dr. Sahdu—oh and pick up the new issue of *BUG MONTHLY* that I ordered. I believe the insect life at Niagara Falls is ph-phenomenal. (*Jane enters*) Oh, Jane!

JANE: Hello Eric. Fran said there were some bowls in here somewhere for the nibbles and nuts. (*she looks on the table containing tea cups, etc.*)

ERIC: (*vaguely*) Ah yes, the nibbles and nuts...

JANE: (*finds two bowls*) These'll do! Now, back to work. (*turns back*) I can't trust that Kitty to do a thorough job with cleaning the glassware, you know.

ERIC: Oh, I'm sure she'll do an excellent job—

JANE: No, she won't. She's too haphazard! Oh, by the way Eric, Fran wanted me to tell you that she's borrowed your container of artificial sweeteners for tomorrow night. SWEETEN UP I believe is the brand.

ERIC: WHAT!?! Oh no, not the um... the **Sweeten Up**?

JANE: Yes! Silly name isn't it? All this dependence on sugar and sugar substitutes is beyond me. Surely at our age, we've learned to control cravings for those things that are bad for us. It's a sign of character weakness. Anyway, on with the job! (*she exits*)

ERIC: But Jane...Jane! Oh dear. I'm going to have to get that container back from Fran immediately...(*goes to exit and runs into Ian*) Ian!

IAN: (*enters and knocks into Eric. He's a man with a benign expression, was once a pastor, now a jovial marriage celebrant, maybe originally from England*) Ah ha, Eric! You've lost the stick I see.

ERIC: Yes, not before time either!

IAN: (*heartily*) Well, there'll be no stopping you now Eric! (*puts an arm around Eric's shoulder*) "Watch out Fran" is all I can say. Anyway, I thought I'd drop in to see if there was any male company available while our better halves are otherwise engaged!

ERIC: Ah ha! Yes, jolly good—ah...but look Ian, I just need to pop over to Fran's for a moment...(*Ian above table – stops Eric and ushers him back to sit down in chair at left of table*)

IAN: Oh, I don't think you'd be welcome there right now, old boy (*hand on Eric's shoulder*)—women in the kitchen and all that! (*Eric sits*). By the way, I got your email about redrafting the wedding vows. (*using hands on back of center chair*) I've deleted the bit about the wife obeying her husband—and not for the first time lately I can tell you! (*speaking as if giving one of his sermons, hands on lapels*). That's the marvelous thing about being a civil minister rather than a religious one, there's so much more flexibility with the vows. I definitely prefer it.

ERIC: Oh, good, good and...ah, regarding the adaptation of the Kahlil Gibran extract... the advice 'to eat not from the same loaf'...could that be changed to 'eat not from the same plate'? (*Ian writes notes*) You see, Fran is forever stealing food off my plate whenever we dine out together!

IAN: Very well, I've made a note of that. And I hope it puts a stop to the practice. (*taps Eric's stomach*) You're wasting away Eric!

ERIC: I'm just a little anxious at the moment. What with the Achilles tendon and my impending marriage.

IAN: Just relax old boy. (*hands massaging Eric's shoulders*) Stop worrying. It'll all be all right on the night as they say in show biz... (*sees Kitty approaching*) Well, ding dong dell, it's Pretty Kitty Bell! (*Kitty- wearing an apron - sails in, making a face at him as she does. Ian blows her a kiss*). Kitty my love! I thought you were going to help Fran set up for the party tomorrow? (*stands above center chair at table*)

KITTY: (*sits at table*) Well, I was helping, but I find it impossible to work with Jane. I had to get away from her. (*turns to Eric*) Eric! I hear you're not using the walking stick any more. How wonderful! You'll be getting excited about your big day now.

ERIC: (*makes to answer*) I—

IAN: Just look at him...He's terrified!

KITTY: Ha ha! So, what are you guys up to? (*stands*) A bachelor party for two? Arrgh! (*crosses left to tea urn and cups on small table or trolley*) That Jane Parker! I know it's not very Christian of me to say this Ian, but that woman can be a real pain in the behind sometimes!

ERIC: Look—if you'll both just excuse me for a moment...

KITTY: (*pushes Eric back down in his chair*) Oh, I know she's as sweet as pie with you Eric, but there's another side to her. (*picks up teapot*) Ah! Tea. (*starts pouring tea in to 3 cups*) I need a good strong cuppa. Forget about the Lord providing the strength to carry on Ian, it's Twining's English Breakfast for me every time! Somehow that Jane manages to step on my toes every time we meet. Always some complaint about what we're doing on our side of the wall or on our side of the fence. (*sips tea*) Mmm...that's better. Ian? You're never one to refuse a good brew. What about you Eric? Is it tea for three?

ERIC: Um. I'd love to Kitty, but—

KITTY: (*pushes Eric down in his seat again*) Excellent!

ERIC: But first I really think I must go and see Fran about—

KITTY: (*crosses above table to Ian and takes Eric's sweetener out of her apron pocket. Eric recognizes container and gasps*) Now, Ian - one or two of these? (*Eric watches aghast as Kitty opens the sweetener container*)

IAN: Ah, two my darling, thank you.

KITTY: (*sees Eric looking stricken*) Something the matter Eric?

ERIC: But you can't! You see, they're—

KITTY: Yes, artificial sweeteners. SWEETEN UP they're called. I took them from Fran's place just now because I know there are never any here in the Community Room. (*stirs Ian's tea cup busily*) You both gave them up a while ago didn't you Eric, because of the— what's that stuff called again? Aspara-Asparagus—

ERIC: Aspartame. It's called Aspartame—

KITTY: That's the one! Oh, there's no need to look so alarmed. They can't be that bad. Ian's been having them in his tea for years and it hasn't done him...much harm! In fact, a lot of folk in this Village use them now.

ERIC: No, no that's not the problem! It's not that they're sweeteners with aspartame, it's that they're—

KITTY: (*glances at packet*) Totally natural! That's what it says here, see...Sweeten Up made with 100 % organic fruit extract. (*as Eric starts to lunge at the container, Kitty nonchalantly switches it to downstage hand and crosses to the tea table*)

ERIC: (*quite sharply*) Give them to me Kitty! I'll take them back to Fran now!

KITTY: No! No need for that Eric! You know you're not allowed anywhere near a bridal shower—even the night before! Now stop being so jumpy! I'm going back in there as soon as I'm fortified, and I'll return them to Fran myself. (*notices Ian looking puzzled*) What's wrong Ian?

IAN: Hmmm... these make the tea taste a little different. Not quite sweet enough. (*crosses to Kitty*) Could you pop in another one please darling?

KITTY: (*sighs dramatically*) When will you believe me dearest when I tell you, you're quite sweet enough! (*puts another pill into his cup. Eric's eyes are on stalks. She drains her cup and glances out the window.*) Ooh, Jane's leaving already! What a stroke of luck. I'll get back over there to help Fran. But really, she should know better than to invite us both at the same time. She's only asking for trouble.

ERIC: She just wants you two to get along! After all, Jane's giving her away and you're her matron of honor. (*he watches carefully as she puts lid on Sweeten up container*)

KITTY: (*dismissively*) Hmmph! Actually Ian, (*crosses to Ian*) I'll leave these with you in case you want another cuppa. (*Ian puts container in his lap out of reach of Eric*) I know you can never stop at one. Just drop them back at Fran's on your way home dearest. (*looks out window*). Oh, look Eric! Your best man's heading this way. Trust Jock McPherson to get wind of a bachelor party! Well, at least there's some tea left for him. (*she starts to exit, then returns*) Actually, I might try one of these myself. Some people say I need 'sweetening up' (*looks at Ian & pops a pill*). Mmm, yum. Now guys, don't get up to too much mischief! (*Kitty exits*)

IAN: Highly unlikely! (*Ian stands with container in his hands*) Good old Jock, he's bound to have a bit of whisky on him (*crossing in front of table where Eric sits and tries to grab container, but Ian—like Kitty—switches hands*)—that'll liven up our tea party!

JOCK: (*blusters in. Loud-mouthed, loud-shirted Scotsman, twice-divorced and fancies himself as a ladies' man.*) Hello laddies! (*grabs arms of both Eric and Ian and walks them downstage*)

IAN: Jock old man! To what do we owe this honor?

JOCK: Well, Norma from next door was just over 'visitin' (*finger quote marks one of his mannerisms*)—if ya know what I mean—when Fran phoned and asked if she'd come and help with settin' up the bridal shower. (*sighs with relief as he ushers Eric to sit on left end of sofa*) To tell ya the truth laddies, I was a pretty relieved! Lately, I've been findin' it mighty difficult to "keep up" with Norma—if ya know what I mean! Anyway, (*Ian crosses back to table to get his cup of tea as Jock crosses above sofa to Right end*) when I saw the lights on here, I decided to join the party! (*Ian crosses back to table as Jock says to Eric*) Och, I see ya've lost ya stick...how are you ma wee mon? (*sits next to Eric*) All equipped for the 'big night'? (*friendly punch on Eric's shoulder*) if you know wha' I mean? (*gives him a wink as Ian looks on amused*)

ERIC: Oh yes, I'm very well prepared for my nuptials thank you Jock. Yes, yes, I'm pretty much on top of everything.

JOCK: (*laughingly*) Oh, c'mon now laddie. Thar's only one thing you wanna be sure you're on top of come Saturday, and tha's ya new "lady wife!"

ERIC: (*looks embarrassed*) Well, ah...yes ah...

IAN: Come on Jock. Let's toast Eric's health and vigor with a cup of tea—unless of course, you've got something stronger on you?

JOCK: Nah, I havna got a drop! Norma just downed the last of ma whisky in a glass of coca cola...Now that's what I call a crime! Nah, a big strong cup o' tea'll be just fine for me, thanks Ian.

IAN: How do you take it?

JOCK: No milk and a big lump o' sugar—unless there's any of them artificial sweeteners in here. As you know, I'm tryin' to trim down to fit into ma old suit for ya wedding Eric! Aye, that's the kind o' sacrifice ya best man's making for ya, laddie!

IAN: (*opening sweetener container*) I'm sure Fran wouldn't mind if we used more of these. One Jock? Or two? They're not all that sweet.

ERIC: (*in desperation*) No-ooo!

JOCK: Ah, what the hell! It's a party. I'll live dangerously...give me FOUR! (*Ian puts 4 pills in and then puts bottle in his left pocket of cardigan. Eric watches aghast*). It's not every night at Serenity Gardens that ya find yaself at a bachelor party with two of ya best buddies! (*gets his cup of tea and raises it aloft*) So, let me propose a toast to wee Eric here! May he have a long—

IAN: —and happy married life! Full of affection, domestic bliss and —

JOCK: Seeeeeex – lots of it!

IAN: Let's drink to that! (*both have a long swig of tea*) And may he always stay —

JOCK: Erect!

IAN: To Eric!

JOCK: The Erect!

IAN: The Upstanding! *(both have another long swig of tea)*

ERIC: *(embarrassed)* Oh really ah guys—thank you...but I should be going—

JOCK: Ooh! I have to say that's a really strong cup o' tea. Ooooh! I'm feeling "very lively" all of a sudden. I could do a Highland Fling. Or two! *(does a little dance)* Och, I don't know what's come over me! Oooh. *(picks up the cushion from Right end of sofa/settee and holds it in front of his crotch area)* I think I'm goin' to have to leave you lads to yer revels. *(with cushion in place backs upstage)* I need to go home, slip into somethin' more comfortable like ma kilt, and wait for Norma - "if ya know what I mean." In the meantime, maybe I'll play with mah bagpipe. *(winks at Ian)*

ERIC: *(in all innocence)* Oh Jock, surely not at this hour! Think of the neighbors!

JOCK: You're so right Eric! I'll "toss ma caber instead!" *(tosses cushion in air and exits very awkwardly back to audience)* If ya know wha' I mean! *(guffaws as he exits)*

ERIC: Oh dear! Oh, dear!

IAN: What's up now old boy?

ERIC: Oh, Ian, I have to talk to you. I hope you don't mind. I'm afraid I have a confession to make...

IAN: *(smiling)* Confess away old chap. People do it to me all the time.

ERIC: Er—it's about...it's about... *(he is frozen)*

IAN: *(helpfully)* Is it about your wedding night, by any chance?

ERIC: Yes. Yes, it is. You see, you-you have something that I very much want and I don't know how to get it, without first revealing something very personal and embarrassing about m-m—

IAN: *(reassuring)* It's all right Eric. I know what you're referring to.

ERIC: You do?! How?

IAN: (*taps nose*) Call it intuition, call it pastoral experience. But let's not beat about the bush. I have a certain confidence that comes from years of happily married life and you envy that. You covet my confidence because, well, sorry to tell you this old chap, but because you are so obviously lacking in it yourself!

ERIC: Oh. Oh. That's not quite what I meant...but, does it show?

IAN: 'Fraid so old bean. Nothing to be ashamed of though. Fran clearly finds your naivete endearing – some women are like that, so you're lucky to have found her! You'll be all right Eric. You just need to communicate honestly with Fran. You do that (*suddenly, realizes he is aroused*) and you'll be (*high pitched voice*) sweet! You're chalk and cheese both of you, but I do think you'll create a happy life together. (*grabs cushion and puts in front of crotch*)

ERIC: Well, thank you for that Ian, I appreciate it. But getting back to—

IAN: (*patting the sweeteners in his pocket starts backing upstage with cushion*) Now, if you'll excuse me Eric, I'm also feeling unusually lively—

ERIC: (*panicking, stands in front of Eric, holding his arms out*) Er – um – Ian....man hug?

IAN: (*Ian looks taken aback – does double take between audience and Eric*) Ah...okay old chap. (*looks at him warily*) If that'll make you feel better...

(*They circle slowly around each other and then have an awkward hug where Ian is sticking his bottom out trying to avoid contact. He drops cushion as Eric is trying to reach into Ian's left cardigan pocket for the pills but accidentally pats him on the butt. Ian backs off suddenly and moves quickly to the swivel desk chair which he puts in front of his crotch. He then gives Eric another wary look. Eric blushes and steps back.*)

ERIC: I'm s-sorry. I- I don't know what came over me...

IAN: (*looking serious*) Eric, before you marry you should be sure—otherwise it's not fair to Fran. She's been let down like that before. You, ah, don't like men? I mean, you're not gay, are you? Not that there's anything wrong with that if you were!

ERIC: (*shocked*) Good lord no! No! I just ah—(*lamely*) s-suddenly felt in need of your s-support.

IAN: (*relieved*) Excellent! And you have my support. All of my (*hands together in prayer pose*) moral support. And ah...suddenly, I'm feeling like I should go home. (*starts backing up stage with desk chair held in front of him*) I, er—find myself with an unusually strong um, need to... to be close to my lovely wife. And I hope and I pray (*he starts to exit*) that she won't be too long in assisting Fran with her preparations for the party tomorrow! (*pushes desk chair away and hobbles off as fast as he can, calling hoarsely*) Kitty? Kitty! Here Kittee... Kittee... Kittee!!

ERIC: Oh dear, I'm going to have to act fast. I've got to get those pills back or perhaps get some more... (*looks at cell phone; hits re-dial button and starts to pace and forth behind sofa more agitatedly*)

ERIC: Hello? Cemetery Road 24 hour Medical Centre? This is Eric Meakin again. Is Doctor Sadhu still there? Oh. No...Nobody else will do...(through remainder of speech gets increasingly frustrated and frantic, walking around as if he has ants in his pants) Yes...if I could make an appointment with him at his earliest convenience...what?! Booked out till Friday...Oh, put me on a waiting list for heaven's sake—yes, it IS urgent! No. No. Nobody else will do! Let me know. As soon as possible...goodnight!

(*ends call, leans against front of table, stares bleakly out at audience and sighs despondently*). Ohhhh dear! (*his hand finds walking stick on table, picks it up and considers it, then giving in, he supports himself on stick and hobbles off*)

MUSIC: (*excerpt from chorus of "Walk Like a Man"*)

End of ACT ONE Scene 1

ACT ONE Scene 2

Slide: Community Hall—Tuesday, 11AM

KITTY: (*bustles in, surveys state of room and sets about tidying up*) What a state this room's in! Those messy mahjong people! I thought they played with tiles rather than cushions—(*Fran enters, wearing gym gear*) Fran! You're up early for a Tuesday!

FRAN: Ha ha, yes! I've just given myself a crystal healing and now I need to walk off all the spiritual energy it's given me! (*moves around shaking limbs of excess spiritual energy*) Where's Ian?

KITTY: Ah, he's back at the Unit. Um, some thing's come up...he's been laid a bit low lately.

FRAN: (*bending behind sofa in yoga pose*) Well, as long as he's up and about and feeling his old self by Saturday. He has to conduct our wedding ceremony! (*pops head up suddenly, starting to panic*) It's too late to get anyone else!

KITTY: Oh, he'll be up all right! (*aside*) That's the problem...don't worry Fran. Cup of tea?

FRAN: No thanks Kitty, I've just had one. Besides, too many cups of tea can interfere with the effect of the crystals. (*crosses to center table, starts stretching legs out*)

KITTY: (*laughing*) Oh, I wouldn't know about that, but actually, that's a relief. I've already made so many cups of tea this morning, Well, so many this week in fact! On Sunday, Ian's Bridge mates came over, concerned when he didn't turn up for their usual game.

FRAN: Well, they would be...

KITTY: Monday morning, half of the guys from The Village Men's Shed called in because they missed him at woodwork. By Monday afternoon the word had got around that Ian was out of action, and the entire Serenity Chess club dropped by to cheer him up.

FRAN: That was lovely of them...

KITTY: (*showing her annoyance about being taken advantage of*) Then this morning, all his pals from the local Rotary club invaded the place—expecting me to supply them with tea and cake as well! And I tell you what Fran, there's been a real run on that SWEETEN UP we forgot to return to you. Remind me to replace them dear, because what with all those visitors, there's not a lot of them left!

FRAN: So that's where they've gone! Eric's been asking me about them...he's keen to get them back. Originally, I borrowed them from his place you see, and since the bridal shower, he's been obsessed with locating them. I can't understand it myself, because we both gave up sugar and sugar substitutes as our New Year's resolutions! And we've stuck to it. Proudly!

KITTY: So, why should he want them back so badly now?

FRAN: Well first, he said it was a matter of principle—that they were his property...

KITTY: Mmmmn true, but petty...

FRAN: Then he said he was conducting some experiment with those Brazilian weevils he's been studying for the last 18 months—

KITTY: Oh, those damned weevils! What kind of experiment?

FRAN: Well, he claimed that the sweetener helps him to...now, what was it? Oh, yes, it helps him to "sex the weevils" —

KITTY: "Sex" weevils?

FRAN: Yes, you know, find out which are male and which are female. (*laughing*) I imagine they'd be pretty indistinguishable actually!

KITTY: Surely! But how in God's name could a sweetener tablet help to "sex weevils?"

FRAN: Well! (*rolls eyes*) He said that if you dilute the sweetener and drop it on the weevils, it makes the males go crazy. Apparently, they have the sweeter tooth! Oh, the darling man! Mind you though Kitty, he couldn't look me in the eye when he was saying that. (*they both laugh*)

KITTY: Oh, for goodness sake! Nobody else would have been able to keep a straight face. Fran, your husband-to-be is a good, kind man, but sometimes he's a just little crazy!

FRAN: (*laughs*) Well, I admit he is eccentric, and he has been acting particularly strangely lately. I love him dearly of course, but as for our sex life—well, our “near-sex” life—it's gone completely off the boil. Sometimes I think he'd be more interested in me if I had six legs, instead of two! (*They laugh together again*)

KITTY: (*laugh trailing off*) Actually, to tell you the truth Fran, at the moment, I wish I had your problem...

FRAN: Really? Oh, you can't mean that!

KITTY: I do. You see, ever since that Friday night before the bridal shower, Ian and I have been having something of a second honeymoon...

FRAN: But that's wonderful!

KITTY: Yes of course, it has been marvelous...The only thing is though Fran, it's exhausting us both. Neither of us is twenty-one any more—and well, we just can't seem to stop! It's wearing us out! We've got to the point where I'll say something like, “For heaven's sake darling let's just sit down have a cup of tea instead,” ...and so we do...then, before you know it, this feeling comes over us and we're back in the bedroom again—hard at it!

FRAN: (*giggles*) Oh Kitty!

KITTY: Afterwards, Ian's left feeling as weak as a kitten, but still “interested.” You see, the jolly thing just won't...subside!

FRAN: Not at all?

KITTY: No, that's what I'm saying! This second honeymoon's turning into a nightmare. I'm trying to help by running cold showers day and night. I've tried sedating him with cups of sweet chamomile tea. I've tried reading the phone book to him but that just bored him STIFF, and then in desperation, I tried reading a copy of *The Watchtower* that someone left here once!

FRAN: (*stunned*) Why *The Watchtower*?

KITTY: Well, it was an attempt to bore him SENSELESS, but then I got to the bit about “all the souls rising up again” and we were back to square one! Off to the bedroom!

FRAN: Oh my goodness, that’s unbelievable! Though I can’t say I feel at all sorry for you Kitty—more like green with envy! Hey, can I have what you’re having?

KITTY: *(laughs)* Well, that’s it, Fran. We don’t know what’s causing it. It’s not like I’ve suddenly turned into Jennifer Lopez. Or Ian into a George Clooney, but we’re like irresistible sex magnets for each other! It’s bothersome for me, but it’s totally exhausting for him. He’ll be in there right now, replaying Senate debates on CNN, in the hope that listening to dead-boring members might send his very much alive member to sleep! If that doesn’t work, we’ll just have to press on with cold showers and chamomile tea. *(sighs)* He’ll have to be right by Saturday though.

FRAN: *(sharply)* Saturday? Of course, he’ll have to be right by Saturday! Oh, I couldn’t bear it if my last chance at married happiness were to slip through my fingers! Why don’t you both go and see a doctor? Dr. Sahdu’s coming in here today. I’ve made an appointment with him myself at eleven.

KITTY: Yes, we did ask to be added to his rounds, but you know what happens when he’s here—everyone wants a piece of him.

FRAN: *(desperately seeking solutions)* Well, at the very least, couldn’t you disguise Ian’s problem somehow? Maybe dress him up in his church clergy robe?

KITTY: Oh no, we threw those out years ago! I was trying to find my old muumuu, but I must have given it to a thrift store. Anyway, I have been thinking along those lines Fran. So, I looked on E-bay earlier, and guess what? I found a Caftan job lot there for \$30. I had to buy all twenty of them, but they’re going to be delivered here sometime today. So yes, if the worse comes to the worst, Ian can wear one of those when he marries you both on Saturday.

FRAN: Oh dear. People might think we’ve turned Hindu or—or that we’ve become hippies or something. Not that I’d mind, but poor Eric would hate it! On the other hand though, it could work in well with the Kahlil Gibran readings...Oh! I think I need another crystal healing! Now what did I do with it? *(rummages in bag for crystal and applies it to her chest breathing deeply)* Perhaps you could do with a crystal healing too Kitty? Or maybe a chakra realignment?

KITTY: *(appalled)* Oh no, not me! For heaven’s sake Fran!

JANE: (*drops carton just inside door with a loud thud. Bustles in. She has a severe expression on her face*) Hello Fran!

FRAN: (*hyperventilating*) Oh, hi there, Jane!

JANE: (*coldly*) Oh...Kitty.

KITTY: Hello Jane. How can I help you?

JANE: Well, there are a couple of things you could 'help' me with. First, I'd like to ask you or your husband to stop having so many showers. Water has been running through the pipes in my adjoining wall almost constantly for the last few days. I know it's difficult living in these crowded units, but I would ask you to be as considerate of me, as I always try to be of you.

KITTY: Very well. And the second thing?

JANE: (*glaring*) The second thing is, I would like you to be more specific with your address details to courier companies. Ten minutes ago, I had a parcel delivered to my doorstep at number 37 Serenity Gardens and it was only when I opened it and found a—a clutch of Middle Eastern garments that I looked at the label and saw it was for you! You obviously neglected to put 37'A' on your order.

KITTY: (*Kitty has been circling around back of sofa during this, then suddenly pulls away cushion on Left end of sofa on 37A as Jane starts to sit*) You opened my parcel! But didn't the courier ask you to sign for it? (*glares at Jane*) Did you forge my signature?

JANE: No. He was in a hurry. He accepted my signature and then was off in a flash!

KITTY: Well...would you kindly hand over my parcel now please Jane?

JANE: (*stands threateningly*) I will hand it over, if and when I have your assurance that you will put an end to this water torture once and for all. (*Kitty puts up cushion in front of her chest like a shield as Jane stabs at it wildly.*) Interrogators employ such methods to elicit confessions you know! (*Kitty falls back onto seat of swivel desk chair*)

KITTY: Arghh! I feel like I'm being backed into a corner by a cold-hearted interrogator right now! (*Jane turns away with triumphant smile and sits again left end of sofa*) Fran, help me!

FRAN: *(stands and crosses down to between Jane and Kitty)* Just a minute, I'll consult the crystal... *(takes couple of deep breaths with crystal pressed to forehead and hums 'Om' or low tone)* Okay you two, I'm getting..."Grow up!" Kitty, make the promise. Jane, hand over the parcel!

(Loud noises as Jock – wearing a kilt - trips over parcel inside door, swears, picks it up and walks in carrying the parcel/carton)

JOCK: Can I be of any assistance here ladies? *(places parcel in middle of sofa)* There ya go lassies! Don't get much chance to be a Knight in Shining Armor these days! *(looks around him puzzled)* What's going on here ladies? *(the women ignore him)*

JANE: *(to Kitty)* I will not move an inch unless you first promise to stop the constant showers.

KITTY: *(sighs)* Oh! Oh, if only you knew...*(stands)* but, all right then. I promise. I promise *(crosses to Right end of sofa)* to put an end to the constant showers—especially, now that I have the caftans! *(sits down on other side of parcel and quickly slaps hand firmly on top)*

JANE: That didn't sound at all sincere!

KITTY: Oh really? That's because it wasn't!

JOCK: Ladies, ladies please!

KITTY & JANE: Shut up Jock!

KITTY: *(to Jock)* What are you doing here anyway?

JOCK: Didn't Ian tell you? He got a yen he'd like to start wearing a kilt. So, I brought mine over for him to try on for size!

KITTY: Brilliant! He's back in our unit. Go keep him company. And seeing you're so keen on being a hero, take this parcel with you!

(Jock picks up box of caftans and exits upstage singing, "Heigh ho, heigh ho, it's off to work I go" into Ian and Kitty's unit).

JANE: (*puzzled, stands then crosses downstage and mutters to herself*) Goodness me, what strange goings on! (*turns and starts to bustle upstage*) I'll be off then. Good day. See you later Fran!

FRAN: Yes Jane, see you later! Don't forget you're coming with me to pick up my wedding dress tomorrow!

JANE: (*calling back over her shoulder as she exits*) I won't forget!

FRAN: (*to Kitty*) I think I will have that cup of tea now Kitty!

KITTY: I'll join you! What a day it's been! (*pours cups of tea*) What a week! (*opens sweetener container*) Oh. There's only a couple left. (*leaves container open on trolley, winks at Fran as she takes mugs of tea to table*) Hardly enough to sex a weevil!

(*They both laugh. There's another knock at the door.*)

FRAN: I'll get it. (*sees Eric with jar of weevils in his hand*) Eric darling! Come in!

ERIC: Hello Fran. (*pecks her cheek*) Hello Kitty. I've, er—come to ask you something.

KITTY: Oh, it's all right Eric, Fran's explained about the sweetener.

ERIC: (*brightens*) She has? She's told you about the er—Brazilian weevils? (*holds up jar and puts them on the table*). And how they need the artificial sweetener to—

KITTY: Yes, and tomorrow I'll get you a brand-new bottle from the Health Food Store. We're down to the last two from that container.

ERIC: (*aghast, head in hands*) The last two!!!

KITTY: Yes, they've been very popular.

(*There is a loud shout of laughter as Jock and Ian emerge from the bedroom both wearing caftans. Jock has his kilt sporran dangling on the front of his caftan.*)

JOCK: Och, this caftan is so much cooler than ma kilt!

IAN: (*winks at Kitty*) I think this'll do the trick love, for now!

KITTY: Oh yes Ian, I think that works...

ERIC: (*looking horrified*) Oh dear. Oh my goodness. What have I done?

(*Outside a car door slams. It's Doctor Sadhu*)

SADHU: (*off stage*) Yoo hoo! Helloo? Cooeee! Did somebody require a home visit?

FRAN: Oh yes, Dr Sadhu, that was me! (*she runs out the door*)

ERIC: Don't forget about me, Dr Sadhu! (*he exits hobbling hurriedly*)

KITTY: But Doctor, we need to see you as well...and it's rather more—

IAN: (*gathering up his caftan ready to run*) URGENT!!! (*they both run out the door*)

JOCK: (*looks around in surprise. Sees the mug on the table*) Ah, tea! Just what the doctor ordered! (*goes up to tea table at the same time that Jane appears downstage with binoculars*) I'll drink to that...(*puts hand into his sporran and takes out a hip flask*) a wee dram for the tea (*pours a little into mug*) and a big dram for me (*takes a long swig then sees artificial sweetener container on table*) Aah, artificial sweeteners—ooh, only two left...lucky me! (*he pours them into mug, then sees bottle of weevils*) Oooh chocolate sprinkles—my favorite! (*opens lid and sprinkles some into mug, drinks tea for three seconds when the phone in his sporran rings*)

JOCK: Aye Norma—it's me...ya big mad bagpiper...Yes, I'll be over to visit ya very soon Norma (*sings*) Don't worry. I'm a-coming, I'm a-coming through the rye—ma wee pot o' haggis!

(*closes phone and puts whiskey flask into sporran, takes a long drink of tea then shudders*)
Oooh, I'm Jock "the Hot Scot" and I'm comin' ta "tickle" ya fancy! (*he lurches dangerously towards the door holding the empty pill container and the mug of tea, calling loudly as he exits*) Normaaaaaaa!

(*Jane lowers her binoculars, eyes wide*)

JANE: (*quietly then with growing paranoia*) Whatever is going on in this Village? Where is the serenity in Serenity Gardens? (*getting more upset & louder*) Oh. This is dreadful. Lawless. Unruly. And it can only lead to-to-anarchy!! (*pulls herself together as a realization gradually dawns on her*)

Someone's got to put a stop to all this madness! (*draws in breath, speaks to herself in an increasingly confident tone*) And Jane...I think you're that someone. That someone who still has a shred of common decency. Yes, Jane Parker, it's time to come up with a plan. A plan for...ACTION!! (*picks up pot plant and marches across to Stage Left as stage as lights fade—she places pot plant next to other pot plant as camouflage for next scene, then hides behind and between them*)

MUSIC: *Triumphant exit music.*

End of ACT ONE
OR CAN CONTINUE straight THROUGH with NO INTERMISSION

ACT TWO Scene 1

Slide: Outside Community Hall—Thursday, 10PM

The following can be done with slide silhouette sequence on screen OR LIVE - We see first one male silhouette go up to Ian's door, tiptoe back with parcel, disappear behind bush, then one by one several men repeat the sequence until a line of male silhouettes in caftans file past in front of slide screen and exit. As they exit - or slide sequence finishes – audience hear an audible gasp from Jane as she watches them transfixed with horror, and then shakes herself out of it, picks up her cell phone and dials.

As phone rings on opposite side of (Stage Right) lower stage area—not used yet—lights come up on Sgt Harding's office. Sgt. Harding enters annoyed—as if interrupted from her coffee break—and answers on third or fourth ring).

PAM: RATS Hotline. Sergeant Harding speaking.

JANE: I beg your pardon—RATS?

PAM: Yes. *(spells it out as if everyone should know)* RATS – Report a Terror Suspect. How may I help you?

JANE: Well, Sergeant Harding, *(launching impatiently into her complaint)* I'm concerned about some strange behavior at Serenity Gardens Retirement Village. Recently, there has been a spate of odd—

PAM: Whoa! Back up a little, ma'am *(sits in office chair behind desk or table with pen and notepad)* First, I need your details. Name?

JANE: Jane Eileen Parker, Ms.

PAM: Address?

JANE: I live at 37 Serenity Gardens, Cemetery Rd, Ipswich. *(Can replace with name of nearest town or city where play is being performed)*

PAM: Date of birth?

JANE: *(annoyed)* Really? I don't see how that is relevant?

PAM: Date of birth, please ma'am!

JANE: Oh, very well. It's the twenty ninth of February 1956...

PAM: *(pause, smiles to herself)* Really? A leap year... *(embarrassed cough, then resumes professional tone)* Ahem. Please, go ahead. What kind of behavior have you observed?

JANE: Well, I'm very concerned about some suspicious activity around my neighbors' duplex unit. About a week ago, my neighbors began playing host to groups of older gentlemen, who then emerge from their place behaving very strangely...

PAM: Such as? *(feet up on table)*

JANE: Well, they all seem both excitable and shifty at the same time. They disperse very quickly and then creep off to their respective abodes in a manner I find hard to fathom.

PAM: *(stands)* Ms. Parker, this may seem odd to you, but it hardly seems a matter for the police.

JANE: *(defensively)* I'm just giving you the background Sergeant! The next major development was when a large parcel was delivered to my door —

PAM: *(more alert)* A parcel? Did you open it?

JANE: Well yes, I had to... *(sits)* and this is where I began to get even more suspicious about my neighbors. It was addressed to them you see, and it contained about twenty garments of Middle Eastern style...

PAM: Go on...

JANE: Well, I delivered the garments to their rightful address, my neighbors, but this is where it gets worse...

PAM: Yes?

JANE: Well, ever since, the men who have visited during the day sneak back at night — very surreptitiously — and return with a parcel.

PAM: In a group or individually? *(sits half-perched on side of desk).*

JANE: Individually, but then, the next time I see them they're wearing this Middle Eastern Dress! I've counted at least a dozen of them!

PAM: Rehearsing for a theme party maybe?

JANE: (*stands, annoyed*) No, we don't hold theme parties here. This is usually a quiet and pleasant retirement facility, but now — (*impatiently*) now, it's got an air of secrecy, of suppressed aggression and...and mayhem!

PAM: Mayhem?!

JANE: (*getting more excitable*) Yes! One of the men in particular, a Jock McPherson, has been running rampant with his bagpipes at all hours, marching up and down outside the units of the single women in the Village — myself excluded — where he's been "serenading" them with exotic, erotic harem music like this! Listen...he's at it right now! (*plays phone recording of exotic eastern music for ten to fifteen seconds*) Now, what else am I to conclude but that my neighbor, once an upstanding Episcopalian Pastor, has undergone a radical shift, and is grooming a cell of older dissidents who all appear burdened by some guilty secret!

PAM: (*taking Jane more seriously*) Well, I agree that it does sound a bit strange.

JANE: Yes, it's very strange. Added to that, my neighbors have had water running through their pipes several times a day for a week! I believe it is to disguise all the agitated conversations which I am unable to make out through our adjoining wall — try though I might!

PAM: (*convinced*) Well, you're certainly a vigilant citizen Ms. Parker. Okay. We will conduct a lowkey investigation. (*Becoming more friendly and more interested through to end of the scene*) When might be a good time to drop by?

JANE: Well, there is to be a gathering on Saturday — in two days' time. Most of the Village should be there...

PAM: What sort of gathering?

JANE: It's a wedding. The wedding of my friend Fran to Eric — who's just about the only man left in our village not wearing this Eastern-type dress. (*getting carried away again*) All of which proves that this deviant behavior, this strange phenomenon, this radical indoctrination is spreading like wildfire!

PAM: (*calming her down*) Now, now Ms. Parker you're becoming rather excitable...

JANE: Oh, do forgive me—I'm not usually an excitable kind of person. But please, reassure me Sergeant Harding that you'll look into it?

PAM: Ma'am you have my reassurance that we will investigate this curious behavior. Thank you for your call. It's always better to err on the side of caution than to ignore things that don't add up.

JANE: (*appeased and more interested*) My philosophy precisely Sergeant. Well, it's been a real pleasure speaking to you. What a wonderful job you people do!

PAM: Thank you so much. Do I have your number? Ah yes, I have it here on my phone. Now this is your call log number...7-3-7-5-8...(Jane punches number in phone) and ah, I have to tell you Ms. Parker... that well, on a personal level...I'm a leap year girl myself. 29th of February, 1964!

JANE: (*surprised but happy*) Really? What an extraordinary coincidence!

PAM; Indeed...

JANE: Well, ah then Sergeant, I'll see you on Saturday...and I must say I'm really looking forward to it.

PAM: Yes, ah, thank you for your call Ms. Parker. If any other deviant behavior rears its ugly head, don't hesitate to contact me.

JANE: Oh, I won't—I mean I will! And er—tell me again Sergeant Harding, what was your acronym?

PAM: **RATS! REPORT A TERROR SUSPECT.** Clever isn't it? I made it up myself!

End of FreeRead

You can tell that the show is quite wonderful! Order your copy to read the complete script.