

# Switching Sides

Arthur Keyser





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***We help older performers fulfill their theatrical dreams!***

ArtAge Publications  
Bonnie L. Vorenberg, President  
PO Box 19955  
Portland OR 97280  
503-246-3000 or 800-858-4998  
[bonniev@seniortheatre.com](mailto:bonniev@seniortheatre.com)  
[www.seniortheatre.com](http://www.seniortheatre.com)

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SWITCHING SIDES

By Arthur Keyser

CAST

MARTHA: a widow in her early seventies.

DAVID: Martha's son, early fifties.

JANE: David's wife, early fifties.

Place

The dining room in Martha's home.

Time

Late afternoon on a Sunday in September.

SWITCHING SIDES

*AT RISE: Martha and David are standing in the dining room of Martha's home. Martha is gathering the dinner dishes from the table following an early Sunday dinner.*

DAVID: Let me help you clean up.

MARTHA: Sit. I don't want you to wear yourself out. A mother is expected to do all the work.

DAVID: I thought I could help.

MARTHA: I could never forgive myself if you overworked yourself and developed a fever just before you were getting ready to leave me again.

DAVID: A fever from just collecting dirty dishes? Aren't you exaggerating a little?

MARTHA: You have to save your strength to pack a travel bag small enough for a one night visit.

DAVID: We've been here five days...not one night.

MARTHA: Would any longer be too painful for you? The minute you arrived, it felt like you had one foot out the door.

DAVID: We've just finished dinner and you're starting on me again.

MARTHA: Don't remind me about dinner. You hated everything I cooked.

DAVID: Did you hear me say anything—

MARTHA: You didn't have to. You don't like my cooking anymore. I can still remember when you always asked for seconds. Even thirds, sometimes.

DAVID: That was thirty-five years ago. I was only eighteen. Boys that age can eat a horse. You can't expect me to eat like a teenager.

MARTHA: How should I know what you eat now? One day you were just eighteen and the next day you disappeared?

DAVID: I left for college. I didn't disappear.

MARTHA: It's the same thing.

DAVID: I should have known.

MARTHA: Known what?

DAVID: You're in one of your moods. Every time we get ready to leave—

MARTHA: What do you expect? I should sing a song because you're in such a hurry to go?

DAVID: Our plane leaves early in the morning.

MARTHA: Planes leave every day. You could have scheduled your flight a month or even two months from now from now.

DAVID: And just ignore my job?

MARTHA: Don't remind me. Work is your first priority. Your mother doesn't even make the list.

DAVID: I really don't want to hear this all over again.

MARTHA: Is the truth so painful?

DAVID: Don't try that on me.

MARTHA: You're different since you moved away. You're not the son I raised.

DAVID: I don't know what you want from me.

MARTHA: Just a little compassion. Some sympathy. It's not like I expect you to love me anymore. That would be too much. Just a pat on the shoulder once in a while to remind me what we once had.

DAVID: I hug you all the time when we're here.

MARTHA: But when you're not here—

DAVID: You want a hug from three thousand miles away?

MARTHA: When a son loves a mother, he finds a way.

DAVID: Maybe you need company...like a dog.

MARTHA: You want me to spend my final years slaving over a hot stove to cook for a cocker spaniel?

DAVID: Forget the dog. Anyway, we'll be back for Christmas.

MARTHA: Don't do me any favors.

DAVID: What's that supposed to mean?

MARTHA: It's three months away.

DAVID: That's not a long time.

MARTHA: When you're my age, a week is long. In my condition, I could be dead before Thanksgiving.

DAVID: What condition? I thought your doctor gave you a great report?

MARTHA: What does he know! He never listens to me when I tell him about the pains.

DAVID: What pains?

MARTHA: I shouldn't have said anything. They're not important.

DAVID: You never mentioned pains before.

MARTHA: I didn't want you to worry about me. If I'm lucky, I'll go quickly before I feel worse. I'll try to die when you're planning to visit, so you won't have to make a special trip for my funeral.

**END OF FREEVIEW**

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