

Two Ships Passing

By Dave Carley

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Two Ships Passing

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Synopsis:

Romantic/Political comedy. 2m/1f. 2 acts.

A liberal judge and a progressive cleric should see eye to eye on issues like health care for the terminally ill - except when the judge's right-wing son intervenes.

Two Ships Passing is the sequel - ten years later - to Dave Carley's popular romantic comedy *Midnight Madness*. In the decade since their original encounter, Anna Bregner and Wesley Marshall's lives have changed considerably. Anna has recently been appointed to the Bench and Wesley has become a minister. Anna's son Jason, who was thirteen in *Midnight Madness*, has now graduated from university, a business major. The trio's political views have diverged over the years and are brought into sharp relief when the crisis in health care hits the courts.

One of Wesley's beloved parishioners will die if she does not receive an expensive operation. The government, in an effort to control health care costs, has de-listed certain medical procedures. The wealthy can always jump queues and buy treatment, but Wesley's friend will be wiped out financially. He is seeking an injunction to force the government to treat the woman - and Anna is inclined to agree. And then Jason shows up...

Production history:

Two Ships Passing premiered at Theatre Aquarius, Hamilton, on February 16, 1998. The cast and production crew were as follows:

ANNA Bregner – Gina Wilkinson

WESLEY Marshall – Ric Reid

JASON Bregner – Jason Jazrawy

Director – Christopher McHarge

Set and Costume Design – Dennis Horn

Lighting Designer – Mark Schollenberg

Sound Designer – Michael Stewart

Stage Manager – Barbara Wright

Production Director – Stephen Newman

Two Ships Passing was next presented at the Carnegie Mellon Showcase of New Plays, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in July, 1998. The cast consisted of Angelina Fiordellisi (ANNA); Joe Olivieri (WESLEY); and Matthew Fletcher (JASON). Sally Han directed and Lori J. Weaver was the stage manager

Characters:

Anna Bregner. Age 42
 Jason Bregner. Age 23
 Wesley Marshall. Age 42

Time:

The very near future. June.

Place:

Act One – Anna’s chambers at the courthouse. Friday morning.
 Act Two – Wesley’s office at the church. Sunday noon.

Set:

The set is pretty much the same for both acts, with only cosmetic changes during intermission. In Act One, Anna’s office is messy; the desk covered with loose paper, files, etc. There’s a head-of-state portrait (of the Queen), federal and provincial flags, some diplomas, and a bookcase of legal texts. There are two doors – one to the hall and the other leading to the courtroom. In Act Two, Wesley’s desk is much neater; the flag is gone, the portrait is of something vaguely and non-aggressively spiritual, the bookcase should have religious or sociological texts, and the window might have a bit of colour to it (though not a full traditional stained glass treatment.) Again, there are two doors: one to the hall, the other to a closet. The desk and furnishings in both instances should be fairly impressive. It is also necessary to see some of the hall outside the office door.

Style Notes:

Sentences ending with (bracketed phrases) indicate that that portion of the sentence should be covered by the subsequent speaker. Sometimes these overridden portions are contained within a character’s speech, indicating the character overrides his own speech.

Thanks to:

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Two Ships Passing

Act One

(ANNA barrels into her office, flustered, wearing her street clothes. She begins changing into her judicial wardrobe.)

ANNA: Damn him damn him to hell. Of all the – where’s my goddamn – of all the nerve – the arrogance of him, the supreme supreme the unmitigated the colossal – *(Pulls self up.)* I don’t care. It’s that simple. I don’t care. *(A laugh.)* See, I don’t care. I’m calm. I’m calm. All right I’m calm.

(ANNA slams her purse down. She then begins trying to get her robe on. She’s definitely not calm.)

I’m calm. Calm. I’m the calmest judge in the country. The calmest damn judge in the goddamn calmest land how the living hell do you get into these things!?! *(Stops struggling.)* Rise above this! Rise! RISE woman! He’s just a man. A very low and scabrous blast-from-the-past man and I am

(There is a knock at the door.)

(Suddenly very serious.) I am a judge. I am a modern judge. A thoroughly modern... *(Seems calm now.)* judge.

(Another knock. ANNA rushes to the mirror. Final primp – both for vanity and to ensure the appearance of judgeship. She then perches on her desk. She decides that the pose is unjudicial, so she rushes around to her desk and sits. She gets the bright idea to half turn her chair away from the door and there she poses, reading something important-looking.)

I am a judge. And a good judge, too. *(Deep breath, then:)* Come – in.

(JASON enters, in casual dress. He is holding flowers. ANNA motions “quiet” without looking. For a moment ANNA finishes ‘reading’ her important document, then turns with studied deliberation.)

Oh for God’s sake.

JASON: (What?!)

ANNA: Jesus Murphy. *(Bangs her head.)* Aw damn.

JASON: *(Pause.)* Do you want to take this from the top?

ANNA: NO!

(ANNA grabs JASON, yanks him inside, and checks the hallway.)

I was expecting someone else – from work – a work person

JASON: - You haven't seen me since Christmas and all I get is "Jesus Murphy" and "Aw damn" and *(Bangs head.)*

ANNA: Sorry. You're right. Jason – it is good to see you, welcome, welcome, very good to see you, a nice – surprise – a lovely one –

(JASON thrusts the flowers towards ANNA and she leaps back.)

Get them away from me!

JASON: (What!?)

ANNA: They're stolen!

JASON: (How do you know!)

ANNA: *(Kisses him.)* Welcome home. *(Swats him.)* I'm serious, Jason – if those were government property five minutes ago... They look like they're from the front bed. They look Federal. I'm sorry I didn't come to the bus station to get you.

JASON: That's OK, (you're busy)

ANNA: I've got a sentencing (this morning)

JASON: I took a taxi home.

ANNA: What's wrong with your legs!?

JASON: There's nothing wrong with my legs. I had three suitcases. *(Of her robe:)* Very nice.

ANNA: I look like a tea cozy. You look tired.

JASON: (No)

ANNA: I was worried your finals would wear you out – you seemed pretty wasted at Christmas.

JASON: I did?

ANNA: Though I guess there were mitigating circumstances. I mean, it's not as if you were actually sleeping at night. But I do worry about you getting run-down.

(JASON is looking doubtful.)

I do! Hey – I'm being maternal here, help me.

JASON: Exams were a breeze.

(ANNA takes the flowers.)

ANNA: Women don't fall for the flower thing. But thanks.

(ANNA kisses JASON, then tosses the flowers in her desk drawer.)

JASON: Mom!

ANNA: They're stolen!

JASON: Why do you automatically assume I stole them?!

ANNA: Okay – where'd you buy them?

(JASON hesitates.)

Guilty.

JASON: That's not how the burden of proof works. First you have to tell me why you think I stole them –

ANNA: And then you'll admit you did.

JASON: Okay, but they're not from the courthouse. You have gotten tough.

(ANNA hugs JASON.)

What's that for?

ANNA: I'm really, really proud of you.

JASON: You are?

ANNA: You've worked so hard and all you ever got from me was razzing: "Go into something useful."

JASON: Like Social Work, boy, that's (really useful)

ANNA: And "Don't be a goddamn capitalist" – how many times did you get that?

JASON: (A million)

ANNA: And I have to be perfectly honest, I really didn't think you had the brains for business. Well, your father was no rocket scientist! He was (*Knocks on desk.*) hello hello. And you have to admit your teen years weren't exactly covered in glory. But you did it, you stuck to it, you aced it – did you ace it?

(JASON indicates he did.)

How did your job interviews go? (*Remembers someone's coming; looks at watch.*) You can tell me later. (*Starts pushing JASON out.*) You want the car?

JASON: When do you have to be in court?

ANNA: They'll beep me any second. (*Holds out keys.*) Here.

JASON: Actually, I thought I'd walk back home – I've been on the bus since (seven and)

ANNA: You didn't tell me how your interviews went. Why are you avoiding the subject?

JASON: They went fine!

ANNA: When do you start?

JASON: What do you mean?

ANNA: When-do-you-start-your-job. You did get a job.

JASON: I got offered the position I wanted at the end of my first interview. I start Monday.

ANNA: Aw honey, you should've phoned and told me. Who with?

(ANNA is pushing JASON towards the door.)

But look, why not tell me all this at lunch. Do you want to do lunch? And dinner. You can tell me then, too. You could tell me now, but I'd rather hear it when I'm not court-bound. I want to savour it. We'll celebrate tonight. Will you be home for dinner or do you have a date?

JASON: I've been in town a half hour!

ANNA: What about that noisy thing?

JASON: (Noisy?)

ANNA: The Shrieker.

JASON: (*Pause.*) Naomi?

ANNA: You didn't bring her home with you?

JASON: No.

ANNA: Thank God, I'll get some sleep! Why didn't you bring her – does the poor thing still have exams?

JASON: I dumped her.

ANNA: Pardon me?

JASON: (I dumped her.)

ANNA: I heard you the first time. Jason: I didn't raise you to "dump" people. You didn't say who hired you.

JASON: It's a bank.

ANNA: I didn't raise you to work in a bank, either.

JASON: It's a Swiss bank.

ANNA: Why would you go work for a Swiss bank? What's wrong with our banks?!

JASON: It's a chance to travel.

ANNA: What – we embarrass you? You want to get away from us?

JASON: I'll be based in Toronto. Maybe New York. It's a Swiss bank but I'm working here.

ANNA: Why not a Canadian bank and work there? Those Swiss banks aren't exactly on the up and up. If you're going to launder money, at last do it domestically. Toronto?

JASON: Ninety percent sure.

ANNA: That's so far away.

JASON: No it's not.

ANNA: Well, it's not here.

JASON: You can come every holiday and stay with me.

(WESLEY has arrived at the door to ANNA's chambers. He's dressed in civvies – jeans, a sports jacket, sunglasses perhaps. He has flowers. He adjusts his jacket and is poised to knock when he hears voices from inside.)

ANNA: You'll be too busy dumping people. Okay, so I'll make you a great supper. *(Kisses him.)* And I really am proud. *(At the door.)* I didn't feel I could say this when you were seeing Naomi. But really, honey, a mother should never hear her son's girlfriend having an orgasm.

JASON: Oh God Mom, you're (embarrassing me)

ANNA: How do you think I felt!? Every night, all Christmas holiday, listening to Noisy shriek down the wallpaper. Lying there wondering: how liberal should a sleepless parent be? And even worse: worrying that she's faking.

JASON: I'll make sure my next girlfriend is quieter. She wasn't faking.

ANNA: Oh, I'm sure she wasn't.

(ANNA opens the door; sees WESLEY standing there; slams the door shut in his face and turns back to JASON.)

But – how would you know?

(JASON can't exit.)

JASON: She told me. I'll see you at lunch.

(ANNA doesn't move.)

Mom?

ANNA: Uh – we should talk about this. If Naomi told you she wasn't faking – then she was. And even if she wasn't, and she told you she wasn't, you wouldn't really know if she was, or she wasn't. You have to ask her best friend. And you really mustn't say “dumped”. It reminds me of your father. I'll never understand how you can be so much like him when you barely knew him. It's nature triumphing over nurture.

JASON: Naw, all men are like that. We're dogs. I thought you wanted me to leave.

ANNA: This is far too interesting to cut short. All men are not dogs. That's just a myth spread by the men who are.

JASON: Name two exceptions.

ANNA: That's too easy for words.

(Pause.)

JASON: I'm waiting.

ANNA: What's the name of the Swiss bank? Does it have an actual name or do they keep that a secret, too?

JASON: Two men. Two.

ANNA: Bill.

JASON: Bill?

ANNA: Bill, the court clerk. Mind you, he's seventy. But Bill won't be “dumping” anyone.

JASON: Two.

ANNA: *(Pause.)* Gandhi?

JASON: Young men. Live ones.

ANNA: Wesley Marshall.

JASON: What made you think of him?

ANNA: I have no idea, he just came to (mind and)

JASON: He dumped you!

ANNA: Maybe he's a bad example.

JASON: He's the worst example!

ANNA: He wasn't that bad!

JASON: How can you say that!?! He was even worse than that teacher you went out with.

ANNA: Which (teacher?)

JASON: And the mortician

ANNA: Which (mortician?)

JASON: And don't worry, Mom – I don't use words like "dump" in front of women.

(ANNA indicates herself.)

You know what I mean.

(JASON starts to leave again. ANNA grabs him.)

ANNA: Stay.

JASON: But if we're going to do lunch –

(WESLEY has moved off by now.)

ANNA: Is that how you dumped The Shrieker? Over lunch? Did she cry? God, I bet that one bellowed.

(ANNA hugs JASON.)

I'm really, really proud of you. Masters of Business Administration. Who'd a thunk it? All those years, when you were in high school, and I'd look out night after night and see you barfing on the front lawn. *(Serious.)* I know it wasn't easy for you.

(ANNA looks out the door and sees that WESLEY has gone. She pushes JASON towards it.)

But off you go now.

JASON: Wait. What's this about it not being easy? Because I'm not mentally gifted, is that what you're saying?

ANNA: No no. Because of the part-time jobs you had to take while you were at school. Because your mother was the only lawyer in the country to practise at a deficit. (Now shoo)

JASON: - You're too big-hearted. People take advantage of you. And while we're being sappy – we are being sappy, aren't we?

ANNA: (Yeah)

JASON: - I'm really proud of you, too.

ANNA: (*Pushing him out the door.*) That's nice. That's really nice.

JASON: My mom – a judge. After a lifetime of wearing Birkenstocks and spouting half-baked feminist rhetoric – now you're a judge. That's ironic. That is irony, isn't it?

ANNA: More like divine retribution. But we can (talk about it later)

JASON: Whatever – it's the essence of cool. You are the essence of cool. I only wish Gran could have seen you.

(*This stops ANNA in her tracks.*)

ANNA: Gran? What do you mean?

(*JASON indicates the surroundings.*)

She knew this was in the works.

JASON: She'd have pissed herself if she'd seen this office.

ANNA: Yeah.

JASON: She might even have stopped worrying.

ANNA: She never worried.

JASON: She never stopped.

ANNA: What're you talking about?!

- JASON: She'd get up at night and pace, waiting for me to come home. I wasn't always barfing on the front lawn. A lot of times I'd be sitting with her in the kitchen; me sitting, her smoking and pacing and worrying. "I wish your mother would settle down. I wish she'd get a job with a pension."
- ANNA: Well, I've got the pension now and guess what else – it's indexed. And look – I even have my own parking space. Not that I care. (*Points.*) But see – first spot in.
- JASON: That's not your car.
- ANNA: Oh, I can't actually park there. There was a bomb threat last month – some idiot was going to blow my car sky high. So now we let the defence lawyers use the spot. I knew Gran worried. I'm sorry she subjected you to it. It was a control thing. When somebody tells you they're worrying about you, that's what it is – control.
- JASON: Like you were worrying about me at exams.
- ANNA: I'm your mother!
- JASON: She was yours.
- ANNA: Don't you get legalistic.
- JASON: (*Shrugs.*) So what's on tap for today? I thought I'd watch (this afternoon)
- ANNA: - Dull stuff. Just a sentencing. You wouldn't find it interesting, now shoo, shoo (get lost honey)
- JASON: - No major decisions or anything?
- ANNA: No no, we try to keep Fridays light. It's June, a lawyer's thoughts turn to golf...
- JASON: (*Pulls out a piece of paper.*) Now, don't yell at me.
- ANNA: Would I ever yell at you?
- JASON: You left this on the kitchen table.
- ANNA: (*Snatching it back.*) Dammit! You shouldn't be reading that!
- JASON: It was sitting there (I couldn't miss it)
- ANNA: - It's just in rough!

JASON: (I know but)

ANNA: - I'm still feeling my way through it!

JASON: You're not giving this today?

ANNA: God no. I've got a ton of time still.

JASON: Because I'd like to talk to you about it.

ANNA: Sure. After Monday.

JASON: Why after Monday?

ANNA: Because I deliver my ruling on Monday at ten.

JASON: I want to talk to you before then.

ANNA: Why.

JASON: I just think some of your – uh –

ANNA: Some of my “uh” what.

JASON: Some of your – the way you're approaching it -

ANNA: What about it.

JASON: I'm not second-guessing you – you're the one in the robes, you're the one with the training –

ANNA: Yes I am.

JASON: But your approach –

ANNA: It's not *my* approach, it's the law.

JASON: It sounds a lot like you.

ANNA: Of course it sounds like me, I'm writing it. But it's not like it's an editorial. I'm just sifting what the lawyers said. In this case, the government's lawyer was high-priced and articulate. The lawyer for the woman seeking the injunction was a moron. So maybe the part you think sounds like me is actually just me helping the moron out.

JASON: At least tone down your opening line.

ANNA: Why?

JASON: You sound slightly biased.

ANNA: I don't have a biased bone in my body.

JASON: (*Reading.*) "The Premier is a fascist asshole."?

ANNA: Oh I'm not going to say that – that's my attitude. It's the subtext. I'll be saying one thing, but my whole tone will be that of a judge who is profoundly anti-fascist, anti-premier, anti-asshole.

JASON: I still think we should talk about it.

ANNA: I appreciate your concern, but I really can't allow lobbying.

JASON: I'm your son!

ANNA: And I can just guess what your position is. (*Sighs.*) I wish I'd been handed stronger arguments! It's driving me nuts!

JASON: It's a big case.

ANNA: Too big, too soon. And I didn't get any help from the lawyers.

JASON: Yeah, the woman's lawyer sounds pretty lame. "You can't deny someone surgery whose heart is screwing up before the law was passed, because that's applying the law retroactively to previously existing organs." Phew.

ANNA: Yeah. My subtext that day? "Is there no quality control on lawyers?" Though maybe it doesn't matter at this level – no matter how wisely I rule, the government's going to appeal.

JASON: But Mom: the government won't have to appeal if you rule in its favour.

ANNA: Shut up, I'm ruling against it. And it's not the issues that've got them freaked. The financial ramifications are immense. Oh, this'll go all the way to the Supreme Court. And the media coverage! (*Groans.*)

JASON: If it's so big, why isn't the senior judge doing it?

ANNA: He's on sick leave.

JASON: Not heart problems, I hope.

ANNA: No, thank God – that'd be a little too ironic. I've never shrunk from a challenge, but there's something to be said for them surfacing in their own sweet time. I haven't even been here six months – I'm still learning procedure. Hell, I'm still trying not to trip on my bloody gown. (*Sees time.*) God, look at the time. Listen, you've really got to go. Are you sure you don't want the car?

JASON: I've got three days. I can relax. Hang out with judges. I'll just wait here till they call you.

ANNA: But I should take a minute or two to collect my thoughts.

JASON: You really don't want to talk about this, do you?

ANNA: No.

JASON: The biggest decision of your career.

ANNA: It's just that it's so complex and I'm (distracted and)

JASON: I don't know, Mom. It seems simple enough: an eighty year-old woman needs a quadruple bypass. The government has just passed legislation that removes a number of procedures eligible for Medicare coverage – and that includes fancy heart operations for anyone over 75. Am I right so far?

ANNA: (*Nodding.*) The woman has a name, by the way – Sophie Jamieson.

JASON: But the government isn't actually prohibiting her – Sophie – from having the bypass.

ANNA: No, they just won't pay for it. Which is essentially the same thing.

JASON: But the point is: she could have the operation.

ANNA: She can't afford it.

JASON: She's poor?

ANNA: No. She owns a house.

JASON: Sell the house.

ANNA: That's not the point.

JASON: It's not?

ANNA: No.

JASON: I'll tell you the point: the government is poor. According to the papers, her operation would cost upwards of a hundred thousand and the province has decided it can put that money to better use elsewhere. Like paying down the debt.

ANNA: In what moral universe is paying off a debt a better use of money than saving a life?

JASON: If you pay down the debt you could feed more poor children.

ANNA: Oh, and they're really going to do that. The Premier's going to cut taxes for his golf buddies.

(JASON indicates contempt.)

Don't snort at me. Look, I have to get ready (for court)

JASON: This legislation de-listing expensive surgery is a pragmatic response to our ongoing financial crisis. In the nick of time too – Mom, look at all the operations they can do now! We can just about live forever – but it costs money! And anyway, making a list of procedures not covered by Medicare is more honest.

ANNA: Honest!?

JASON: It's only legislating something that's been going on all along. Do you really think doctors aren't already prioritizing who gets what kind of care? Come on, Mom. Who's a doctor going to operate on first: a forty year-old father of three who needs a bypass – or eighty year-old Sophie? He's going to make a choice – according to *his* personal standards. But aren't those decisions something we should be openly debating?

ANNA: So Sophie Jamieson dies.

JASON: We have to cut back to save the system!

ANNA: Sophie's being cut right out!

(WESLEY has returned. He eavesdrops through the slightly-ajar door, then leaves again.)

(Thinks she gets it.) Ah – I know what you're doing. You're playing Devil's Advocate. That's good. I need that.

JASON: *(Backing off from the fight.)* Sure.

ANNA: Anyway, I've still got all weekend to hone my arguments in whatever direction I end up leaning – against. Right now I've got more pressing concerns. I've got a sentencing. I don't know why they haven't beeped me. Maybe they don't know I'm here yet.

JASON: The receptionist did. She sent me down here.

ANNA: I guess they're just late then.

JASON: So who're you putting away this morning?

ANNA: A shoplifter. An old goat. *(Consults file.)* Grant Foley. He managed to sneak a portable TV right out of a mall on his electric go-kart.

JASON: So what are you going to do?

ANNA: Suspended sentence.

(JASON indicates he's not impressed.)

I can't put him in jail! *(Consults pre-sentence report.)* He's got no family here, his wife died two years ago – he's 82!

JASON: Is he senile?

ANNA: No he's not "senile".

JASON: Maybe something snapped.

ANNA: If it did, it's been snapping a lot. This is his third conviction in a year.

JASON: A three-time shoplifter deserves to have the book thrown at him. Period.

ANNA: I used to shoplift.

JASON: Yes, you did a lot of things, but they aren't relevant (here)

ANNA: - I'd wheel your carriage into the drugstore and stack formula under you.

JASON: You gotta let this go.

ANNA: We'd sail out with the loot while you distracted everything with your gurgling and cooing – which, Jason, kind of makes you an accomplice.

JASON: *(Smiling.)* I'm still proud of you.

ANNA: *(Beat.)* That means a lot.

JASON: And sooner or later I'll have you seeing the light. OK, I'll be back at lunch. My treat.

(JASON flings open the door to the hall and exits. ANNA is very tense – she's not sure if WESLEY is out there or not. When she hears no greetings in the hall, she goes to the door, looks up and down the empty corridor, and then shuts the door with relief. ANNA straightens up her appearance again and picks up the Foley file. She walks about with it, reviewing her sentencing.)

“Mr. Foley, the Court takes a dim view of citizens who shoplift television sets out of stores.” *(Not in her sentence:)* In their government-subsidized go-karts. I rather think that makes accessories of us all – we, the Canadian taxpayer. So next time you're trying the old five-finger discount, use a baby.

(ANNA is near the door. WESLEY returns purposefully and knocks. ANNA freezes, then hurries back to her desk.)

One minute!

(ANNA arranges herself in the “studying an important decision” position, though not facing away from the door this time.)

Come in.

(WESLEY enters, holding flowers.)

WESLEY: Anna?

ANNA: Yes – oh, it's you. Wesley – Marshall. *(Stands, holding out her hand.)*
How very good to see you. *(Sits.)*

WESLEY: You sound like the Queen.

(WESLEY hands ANNA flowers. ANNA stands again.)

I brought you these.

ANNA: Flowers.

WESLEY: I stole them.

ANNA: Not from out front!

WESLEY: They were off a casket.

ANNA: I didn't need to know that.

(Pause.)

WESLEY: It's good to see you. How very good.

ANNA: Ditto.

WESLEY: It's been a while.

ANNA: Ten years. *(Makes a "yikes" sound.)*

WESLEY: *(With her, makes the "yikes" sound.)*

(They both give a short laugh. Then another short laugh at the fact they just did identical short laughs.)

ANNA: I was surprised to get your message today that you wanted an appointment. Unfortunately, you're late and I'm due in court (any second now)

WESLEY: I came earlier but your door was shut.

ANNA: I was in camera. But really, I've got a (sentencing)

WESLEY: That's why I'm here. I need to talk to you about Grant Foley.

ANNA: What possible concern would he be of yours?

WESLEY: He was a friend of my mother's. Not so much Grant, as his wife. Who's dead.

ANNA: I know.

WESLEY: So's my mother. Dead. But this wasn't always the case. They were live friends once, although they are dead now.

ANNA: Yes, but I'm about to sentence a live one (and)

WESLEY: My sister told me about your mother. I'm really sorry. She was a fine woman. Though she was never too keen on me.

ANNA: She was an astute judge of character.

WESLEY: Was it recent?

ANNA: No, she always hated you.

WESLEY: (Her passing)

ANNA: - She died right before Christmas.

WESLEY: I'm sorry.

ANNA: Thank you for being sorry (but now)

WESLEY: Did she know you were being appointed to the bench?

ANNA: Yes. Apparently she was relieved I was going to get a pension. Now, I really must (get in there)

WESLEY: There's something you need to know about Grant Foley.

ANNA: (*Holds up pre-sentence report.*) I know all there is to know.

WESLEY: But this will change things.

ANNA: This is not the place. You must know that. You shouldn't be here if (that's what)

WESLEY: But we're old friends.

ANNA: (*Exasperated.*) No, we're not. We're not old friends. In fact, we're not even friends. People throw the word "friend" around way too lightly. We're two adults who haven't seen each other in ten years. Our last contact occurred when you dumped me. And even that wasn't in person, as I recall.

WESLEY: OK OK. Now, do you want to hear about Grant?

ANNA: Make it quick.

WESLEY: (*Spinning it out.*) Mom always said Grant was a terrible lecher. But he was essentially my godfather. After Dad died, he was sort of *in loco parentis*.

ANNA: This is very touching.

WESLEY: He took me to ball games, that sort of thing. Mom even got him to tell me that facts of life. Which, according to Grant, boiled down to: Don't get caught.

ANNA: There had better be a point to this.

WESLEY: Mom wouldn't let Grant in the house – that's how bad his reputation was with women. She'd make him stand on the front porch because she said morality must not only be done – it must also be seen to be done.

ANNA: It's the same with justice, Wes. Ley. If anyone knew you'd barged in here pitching for Foley...

WESLEY: I made an appointment – that's hardly barging!

ANNA: Mentally you are. You're doing a serious barge.

WESLEY: I don't mean to. And I truly am sorry about your mother.

ANNA: Don't change the subject.

WESLEY: I remember how close you were.

ANNA: We fought like cats and dogs! This is highly improper. The fact you're Foley's friend and you're in my chambers is enough to blow the case out of the water. And me with it. I'm surprised you don't know that. Or maybe you do know and just don't have enough respect for me to care. So I think you should leave. Oh God, I suppose you left your name at reception. Go back and say you lied. God, she probably saw you bringing flowers – she'll think I'm being bribed.

WESLEY: There was no dollar value to them.

ANNA: Out.

WESLEY: Is the reputation of the judiciary so low your staff thinks a bouquet can buy a judgment!?

ANNA: I've done worse for less!

WESLEY: You have?

ANNA: Not judicially, sexually.

(WESLEY stops at this.)

You've got to go. *(Pulling him the other way now.)* Maybe you can cut through the courtroom if no one's there yet – make like you're a repairman.

WESLEY: You've done "worse for less, sexually" – fascinating.

ANNA: Actually, more for less. Listen, it was an unforgettable thrill seeing you again but now you've got to go. Why are you smiling?!

WESLEY: I'm being mean. I've got some good news.

ANNA: Good news, what good news?!

WESLEY: Grant Foley's dead.

ANNA: He's dead.

WESLEY: You don't have to sentence him.

ANNA: I'll kill you.

WESLEY: Those were his flowers.

ANNA: I'm definitely going to kill you. When did he die?

WESLEY: Four days ago.

ANNA: Nobody told me!

WESLEY: We only found him yesterday.

ANNA: Oh, the poor man – he was lying there three days!?

WESLEY: He lived alone. His daughter is in Vancouver and she couldn't get an answer when she phoned, so I went over. I found him in his bed. A stroke, apparently. This heat's so hard on them. The letter from his lawyer with the sentencing date was taped to his fridge. I didn't think his daughter needed to see that, so I took it down. The funeral was this morning.

ANNA: That's fast.

WESLEY: It's summer.

ANNA: You should've told me about it when you came in. You should've walked through that door and said, "Hello, Anna. He's dead." Or even better – phoned the news in. Anonymously.

WESLEY: And miss teasing you?

ANNA: We have really strict guidelines. A judge can't entertain interested parties in her chambers.

WESLEY: I guess the prohibition on entertaining in your chambers doesn't apply to boyfriends.

ANNA: What the hell's that supposed to mean?

WESLEY: When I was asking for you at reception there was a young man on his way here – with flowers.

ANNA: Oh. Him. He's just a toy boy. Boy toy.

WESLEY: Nothing serious, then.

ANNA: Oh no. A spring fling. Thing.

WESLEY: That's good, because he was hitting on the receptionist.

ANNA: It's Jason, you dork!

WESLEY: I wondered if it was. It has been along time. He was just – he must be

ANNA: Twenty-three. Just graduated.

WESLEY: Good for him.

ANNA: *(Knowing this will evoke a response.)* University of Western Ontario.

(WESLEY sucks in his breath.)

I know I know, it's a country club. The tuition covers greens fees.

(They are both enjoying mock horror.)

It gets worse: Masters of Business Administration.

(They make horrified sounds, then laugh. The ice is broken.)

You're absolutely sure Grant Foley's dead.

WESLEY: I delivered the death certificate to the Crown Prosecutor while I was waiting for you to finish with Jason. *(Of the flowers.)* You better put those in water.

ANNA: I was going to let Foley off with community service again.

WESLEY: Yeah, he liked that. His last judge sentenced him to two hundred hours at the food bank – it gave him a real sense of purpose.

(ANNA tosses WESLEY's flowers in the drawer with JASON's.)

ANNA: It's my flower drawer. See.

WESLEY: There's no Scotch in there?

ANNA: You want Scotch?

WESLEY: No, I was just curious. I thought all judges had a little cache.

ANNA: Truth is, we're a pretty sober bunch. But you used to have a little nightcap after closing the store. Bloom's Furniture. You'd have a glass of sherry and cookies. All by your lonesome.

WESLEY: That's really going back. I was solitary then. Still am. Only now I don't see it as a character flaw. But it's not good – because of the business I'm in. Ministering.

ANNA: Because it's so social?

WESLEY: *(Nodding.)* The wedding receptions are the toughest. They feel duty-bound to invite the minister, but they don't really want you there. Clergy has a prophylactic effect on parties. *(Pause.)* You look great.

ANNA: Don't be ridiculous.

WESLEY: No – you look really fine.

ANNA: I have a grown son working for a bank. How can I look fine?

WESLEY: Judging obviously agrees with you.

ANNA: You don't know what horrors lurk beneath this gown.

WESLEY: I'll say. I mean – I wear a gown, too.

- ANNA: Oh, I remember. What's under yours. Of course, you always remember things from your youth being a whole lot bigger. *(Pause.)* But thanks for the compliments. I'd say thanks for the flowers too, if you hadn't ripped them off a corpse.
- WESLEY: I was going to write you a note when you were appointed. My sister – Jude – told me. I gather it was a bit controversial.
- ANNA: There was some grumbling. I was too young, I hadn't been practising long enough, I was being made a judge in the same city I'd worked in as a lawyer... I was getting it because I was a woman. You know the tune. Well, you wouldn't – but there is one. Anyway, here I am – Ontario Court of Justice, General Division. But hey – congratulations yourself. Though I guess you didn't really have a choice – aren't you “called”? Maybe you didn't want to be a minister.
- WESLEY: Oh, I wanted this. And I think I was called. But it wasn't some ringing command from heaven - more like an e-mail with a lot of spelling mistakes. But it's the right thing. You see, I've been afflicted with this notion I can help people (through faith)
- ANNA: - When I ran into your sister – when she was pumping me for info – she said, she did let out well she could hardly expect the dope on my personal life and not give something back, (she told me)
- WESLEY: - Jude told you about Parkdale.
- ANNA: I haven't breathed a word.
- WESLEY: It's public knowledge. They know here – I had to tell them in my interview. What exactly did she say?
- ANNA: You were sowing your seed on holy ground.
- (WESLEY groans.)*
- Well?
- WESLEY: I had a church in downtown Toronto, there was a ruckus, I had to leave. End of story.
- ANNA: That's all you're telling me?
- WESLEY: What people seem to forget about the clergy is that we have the same physical desires as – football players, or – Presidents. And we have nearly as many groupies. Every church has two or three excellent women of

unimpeachable character who regard their preacher as some kind of sexual trophy. At Parkdale it was the organist – she chased me all over that church for two years!

ANNA: Until poor you eventually succumbed and had sex with her.

WESLEY: And her sister. The choir leader.

ANNA: That's terrible!

WESLEY: Sequentially.

ANNA: Oh, okay then.

WESLEY: But the sisters grew disenchanted and it ended badly. I had to leave. And my reputation preceded me here. They've put me on a three month trial – actually, it's up this Sunday. Sort of a no-sex-with-organists thing. But it's also to see how I preach, and how well I relate to everyone –

ANNA: You know, the no-sex rule is probably against the Charter of Rights.

WESLEY: Tell that to the Hiring Committee. I doubt any of them have had sex in forty years.

ANNA: Is celibacy really so tough?

WESLEY: Yes! I think it's because I started so late. I'm like one of those old hot water radiators you forget to drain until halfway through winter. You feel the damn thing about February and think, well this sucker's kind of cold, and suddenly you clue in – it's ready to blow! So you screw off the little bolt and sure enough the thing starts spewing dirty water (all over the floor)

ANNA: - Enough!

WESLEY: Or maybe it's just something about a woman in robes. All that lush material. The way it starts at the neck and kind of billows out. So much guesswork.

(ANNA is trying to conceal the fact she's in a robe herself.)

What's behind curtain number two? Some Sundays – I'm up there preaching on caring or sharing and all I can think about is the organist's draped bosom. And in my mind's eye I'm striding down from the pulpit with an air of authority, like Moses coming down the Mount, but instead

of making commandments I'll be breaking them and – You have a nice view.

ANNA: It's a parking lot.

WESLEY: You're driving a BMW.

ANNA: That's one of the lawyers'.

WESLEY: But the sign says – *(Turns.)* How about lunch?

ANNA: You really have changed.

WESLEY: So?

ANNA: Oh, I don't know.

WESLEY: Just lunch.

ANNA: *(Pause.)* Okay. Just lunch.

WESLEY: But could you wear your robes?

(They laugh.)

I guess I am more confident now.

ANNA: It would have been hard to be less confident. I was chasing you all over the store and all you'd say was, "Falling in love is going to be like a long slow river and I have to go with the flow and it'll be a slow flow." And then it turned out you weren't so slow, so maybe we were more like two ships in the night, doing a brief bit of bumping before we passed.

WESLEY: It wasn't so brief.

(A pause. A thick one. They are remembering the good times. It almost looks like something might happen when they are interrupted by a series of beeps on ANNA's intercom.)

ANNA: That's my cue. Bill the Clerk's waiting outside to escort me into court for the Foley sentencing.

WESLEY: He's dead!

ANNA: The Crown still has to tell me the sad news. And now I have to remember to act surprised.

WESLEY: Lunch then?

ANNA: Sure. *(Looks at watch.)* It's eleven. Come back in an hour. *(Almost exits.)*
Oh Lord, Jason. I said I'd – well – I'll change him. No, that's not right.
We'll have to take a rain check. Aw hell, I'm making Jason dinner, I'll
make him something really special, yeah, I can cancel him. When I get
back. Maybe you could phone him and cancel for me. No, on *(second*
thought)

WESLEY: - I'll wait here for you.

ANNA: Don't you have anything to do?

WESLEY: No.

ANNA: Okay, but don't give your name to anyone. If my secretary comes in, just
act like you're not here. Tell her you're my brother. I'll be right back.

(ANNA exits. WESLEY smiles and watches her leave. As soon as she's out the door he goes to it and makes sure it's securely shut. He beetles over to ANNA's messy desk and begins rooting about it until he finds ANNA's preparatory notes on the Sophie Jamieson case – the paper that JASON had brought in earlier.)

WESLEY: Eureka.

(Just as WESLEY starts reading, JASON walks in. WESLEY has his back to him.)

JASON: Who are you?

WESLEY: *(Shoves judgment in his jacket pocket; turns.)* Jason?

JASON: Yes.

WESLEY: It's been a long time.

JASON: Yes.

(WESLEY and JASON shake hands; polite but cool.)

WESLEY: This is an unexpected pleasure.

JASON: Uh huh.

WESLEY: You've certainly changed since I last saw you.

JASON: You too.

WESLEY: I guess I have.

JASON: Where's Mom?

WESLEY: Sentencing someone to death. She'll be back in a minute. *(Pause.)* I hear you're an MBA now. Congratulations. Got a job lined up?

JASON: Bank.

WESLEY: Right, a bank.

JASON: Banks are bad, aren't they.

WESLEY: No no banks are fine. A bank – that's great. A big bank? I guess they're all big. Which one?

JASON: It's Swiss. *(Pause.)* Why are you here.

WESLEY: I was meeting your mother on a uh sub-judicial matter. We got reminiscing and now we're doing lunch.

JASON: She's doing lunch with me.

WESLEY: I'm afraid you're getting cancelled. She's phoning you when she returns. She thought you'd be at home.

JASON: I want to borrow her car.

WESLEY: Oh.

JASON: So she's double-booked.

WESLEY: Wanna flip?

JASON: We'll let her decide.

(Another pause.)

WESLEY: The MBA – that's pretty useful degree I guess. Your entire class get jobs?

JASON: Pretty much.

WESLEY: I've been back to school myself – since we last – crossed paths. I got a Bachelor of Divinity. I'm a minister. Of a church? I've been ordained. My class all got jobs too. Funny thing, one of them was hired by a bank. As a kind of stress counselor. They've got him down on Bay Street, roaming the towers, praying with the (sharks) bankers. Taking confession. Sorry. I'm sure the Swiss are a lot more ethical. My friend is very popular with the bankers. Believe it or not, there's a study, I think it's from New Zealand, it proves that mutual funds administered by bankers who pray regularly have an average yield 14 per cent higher. Than those who don't. Pray. The image is a bit off – buncha guys down on their knees praying for a bull market. Women, too. Lots of women MBAs now. And look at your Mom – a judge!

JASON: Yeah, she's done well. Despite everything.

WESLEY: (*Mulling.*) Despite (everything). (*Pause.*) Anyway, I'm back here now, at St. Peter's – the new church in the north end. Well, it's not that new, it was built in the 60s. When architects were optimists. Everything was designed like it was from 'The Jetsons'. The cartoon show? No? Lots of glass, arches. Anyway, optimist doesn't age gracefully. It's not a bull market for God these days. At least Organized God. God with dogma. God with pews. Disorganized God – now that's extremely bullish. God with crystals. Big big big. Maybe we should have the bankers praying for us. (*Running down.*) So. So. You're 23. Married yet?

JASON: No.

WESLEY: Dating anyone special?

JASON: No.

WESLEY: Ah. Playing the field. That's good. Get it out of your system before you look foolish getting it out. But be careful. It's dangerous out there. A lotta bad things going around, just keep a condom handy (in case)

JASON: - Excuse me?

WESLEY: Of course, sorry, sorry Jason. I counsel youth, well, any youth I can find. It's not exactly a bull market on youth right now. That's where the condom thing (comes from.)

JASON: - Let's wait for Mom to come back, we'll figure out lunch, then we'll go our separate ways, okay? You can skip the chit-chat – I'm not interested. I wasn't interested before and I'm not interested now. I don't want to put you through the stress of having to relate to me. If you have something to say, why don't you be consistent and shove a note under the door?

WESLEY: (*Beat.*) But how do you really feel? (*Pause.*) I was a bit of a strange duck back then. For that matter, when I was in high school they called me Weirdley, if you can believe it. You can. But age rounds out the rough edges. And if you can survive being an outsider it makes you a better insider.

JASON: I was rude. Sorry.

WESLEY: Rude's okay.

JASON: Put it this way: I was probably the only thirteen year-old in the history of the world who went with his mother and her boyfriend on a picnic to the graveyard.

WESLEY: I never took you to a graveyard!

JASON: Oh yes you did!

WESLEY: I did not!

JASON: We went in your Cadillac!

WESLEY: I never had a Cadillac!

JASON: Okay, that might have been one of the morticians. But you have to admit it sounds like something you'd do. God, the guys Mom dated. But you were the worst.

WESLEY: Why!?

JASON: Because she went out with you the longest.

WESLEY: Eighteen months was the longest?!

JASON: By seventeen months.

WESLEY: I didn't need to know that.

JASON: Yeah, forget I said it.

WESLEY: Because I like your mom and I'm sorry to think she never made it past a month with anyone else.

JASON: I said: forget I said it.

WESLEY: But your “forget it” means “forget I told you she was pathetic” – which she’s not.

JASON: You don’t know what I’m thinking.

WESLEY: Oh, I think I do.

JASON: What am I thinking now?

WESLEY: “Weirdley”.

JASON: You’re good. *(Beat.)* So what were you stuffing in your pocket?

WESLEY: Pardon?

JASON: You heard me.

WESLEY: My pocket. Kleenex. It’s pollen season. June comes, I’m a mess. *(Pulls out a Kleenex.)*

(ANNA returns.)

ANNA: *(Entering.)* Sorry to keep you waiting – I’ll just phone – Jason – you’re back. So you’ve met.

WESLEY: Uh huh.

ANNA: Re-met.

(Pause.)

WESLEY: (So)

JASON: (So)

ANNA: So.

WESLEY: So did you get everything cleared up?

ANNA: I even made a little joke. When the Crown Prosecutor told me Foley had died. I said, “Some people will do anything to stay out of jail.” *(Nervous laugh.)* The Crown’s eyes kind of bugged – I don’t think he appreciates a funny judge. He’s big, eh?

WESLEY: And educated.

ANNA: And handsome. A class-A (heartbreaker.)

JASON: - Are we still on for lunch?

ANNA: Oh right. Lunch. I don't suppose – no, three's a crowd. This sudden popularity – perhaps you could duke it out in the (parking lot)

JASON: I just got home. If you want to have lunch with him fine, but quite frankly Mom I can't believe we're even discussing this.

ANNA: We'll have supper together, honey.

JASON: Can't.

ANNA: Why not?!

JASON: I've got a date.

ANNA: Already! You've only been here an hour and a half! How could you meet someone that fast?!

JASON: She was just down the hall.

ANNA: You leave that poor receptionist alone!

JASON: Not her.

ANNA: Then who?

JASON: I don't know her last name. Mary J someone.

ANNA: Mary Jo – Mary Jo Silcox?! Goddamn it Jason, she's 35! She's old enough to be my – your – his younger sister! SHE'S A LAWYER!

JASON: I did meet her in a courthouse.

ANNA: MY courthouse! You can't date MY lawyers! Does she know whose son you are?!

JASON: Nah. I didn't give my name.

ANNA: She's going out on a date with you and she doesn't even know your name? I can't believe it! I'd never date anyone without getting his name first. (*To WESLEY.*) You give your name to everyone you date, don't you?

WESLEY: I don't need to. It's already on the church programme.

ANNA: *(Back to JASON.)* Where are you going with her?

JASON: I dunno. Maybe the driving range. I'm picking her up at her office; that is, if I can have the car – and then we'll go out the highway and hit a few balls.

ANNA: Mary Jo Silcox goes on a date, to a driving range, with a total stranger who happens to be my little boy. Next time she appears in front of me I'm going to nail her ass to the wall. I hope you've got condoms. Because God knows what you can catch from a lawyer. Okay Jason, you get lunch. *(To WESLEY.)* I'll make you dinner – how's that?

WESLEY: Sounds like a deal to me.

JASON: So I'll come back when?

ANNA: It's eleven-ten – how about an hour?

JASON: Where are the keys?

ANNA: Why do you want the car now?

JASON: I have to clean it up. It's probably a pig sty.

ANNA: You better clear the files out of the back seat. I don't want Mary Jo Silcox reading my judgments during the slow moments.

(ANNA gives JASON the keys.)

See you in an hour.

JASON: Thanks. Okay, so long. "Slow moments." Nice to meet you – Reverend.

(JASON is leaving.)

WESLEY: Ditto.

(JASON is gone.)

Well, now I feel old.

ANNA: Yeah. Who said kids were supposed to keep you young.

WESLEY: He told me about his job.

ANNA: You didn't get smart -

WESLEY: I'd never do that. I mean, I would, but only if he was my son. Of course, if he was my son he wouldn't be working for a bank.

ANNA: So I've failed.

WESLEY: Naw. Kids always become the opposite of what you are. You're a left wing judge – so of course your son will go work for a bank. I'm a liberal clergyman, if I had a son he'd be *(Reaching for something.)*

ANNA: Celibate?

WESLEY: Touché. Anyway, Jason seems very personable

ANNA: Meaning I'm not?

WESLEY: Compared to when he was 13.

ANNA: You really didn't argue?

WESLEY: We were complete adults. And I wouldn't worry about him being such a little neo-con.

ANNA: Did I say I was worried?

WESLEY: Lots of men loosen up as they get older. Look at me. Remember how repressed I was when we met?

ANNA: *(Fondly.)* Repressed barely begins to describe it.

WESLEY: But you cured me.

ANNA: "I'll be a long, slow river." Hah.

WESLEY: I really don't think I said that.

ANNA: Oh, yes you did. You asked me to the closing night party of Bloom's Furniture and, when I said, "And after that?" you said, "We'll just go with the flow and it'll be a slow flow." And then you commenced to flow, for a (year and)

WESLEY: Eighteen wonderful months. *(Pause.)* I really hurt you.

ANNA: It was ten years ago, for God's sake. I've forgotten. I might have been a little hurt at the time.

WESLEY: I just didn't think (it would work)

ANNA: - I know what (you thought.)

WESLEY: - I wasn't (ready.)

ANNA: - It was explained quite nicely in your note. It wasn't anything to do with me; you couldn't be a father to Jason and oh that made me feel a lot better, thank God it was nothing I did, it was all the kid's fault.

WESLEY: He hated me.

ANNA: Actually, he didn't.

WESLEY: I was useless with him.

ANNA: Yes, you were. But a lot of men are useless with their kids, big deal. It isn't usefulness that's required. It's presence. Being there. The important thing for Jason was he finally had a man around the house, which must've been a helluva relief for him after thirteen years of just his grandmother. And me on weekends. The dueling harpies.

WESLEY: (I didn't mean to)

ANNA: - You must've known, you must've! Jesus, Wesley, a week before you left he'd asked you to go with him to that father-son hockey banquet – that's not a kid who's hating someone! That's a kid who's bloody excited that for the first time he can be like every other kid and YOU SAID YES – then a week later you slide a note under our door...

WESLEY: But doesn't that prove what a lousy father I'd have made?

ANNA: You think there's a course in fathering? You just do it. You just hang around and – and grunt. But you do it, you don't shaft the kid. But then, you were getting "called".

WESLEY: That was later.

ANNA: It's water under the bridge now. I scarcely remember any of it. (*Getting mad again.*) I do remember. I remember exactly how I felt when I saw that note sliding under the door, and you're trotting down the walk to freedom. And I remember exactly how Jason reacted when I told him. Once we stopped crying, we burned you in effigy, Jason and I. Out in the backyard. His idea. My matches.

WESLEY: In my defence, I grew up without a father. I just wasn't cut out for it. I couldn't take the chance of failing.

ANNA: That's so gutless.

WESLEY: Not for me, for him! I'd come down for breakfast and he'd be there already, waiting for me – like – like a puppy; every week a little happier to see me, and I was terrified he was going to open his mouth and say, "Good morning, Dad." Which I wasn't. And couldn't be. And I was just desperately trying to cope with being in love, for the first time. *(Beat.)* I was going to phone you. A million times.

ANNA: Just as well you didn't.

WESLEY: Every time I came to town, to visit Jude – I'd detour by your house. I'd almost stop the car and (get out)

ANNA: I'm glad you didn't.

WESLEY: I know, I don't (blame you)

ANNA: - I might have let you in.

WESLEY: You're that stupid?

ANNA: I'm totally that stupid.

(Pause.)

WESLEY: Anna?

ANNA: Uh huh?

WESLEY: Can you forgive me?

ANNA: Yeah. I'm that stupid too. My stupidity knows no bounds.

(Pause. They almost kiss. ANNA pulls back.)

You're a minister.

WESLEY: You're a judge.

ANNA: This is my workplace.

WESLEY: Your point?

ANNA: I judge here. And you're on probation.

(They nearly kiss again. Once again ANNA pulls back.)

I just think we're ten years older and that means we should have developed some self-control. I certainly have. You, on the other hand, will apparently rut on a dime.

WESLEY: Did I miss something? Were we negotiating sex?

ANNA: We were going to kiss. If we kiss we won't be able to stop. Trust me on that. This is where self-control comes in. Right at the get-go. Anyway, we can have sex tonight. Jason'll be out hitting balls with that lawyer. We'll have the place to ourselves. We can do it in the kitchen. I've even got a linoleum floor like you used to have. Remember our special way of polishing it. You'd put floor wax on your bum...

WESLEY: I don't know about the floor; I've developed a back thing.

ANNA: That's okay; my foot freezes up now.

WESLEY: During sex!?

ANNA: Yeah, the minute I get going, it just goes thwonk and I'm pointing at the ceiling with my big toe, like a goddamn ballerina.

WESLEY: I know what to do for that.

ANNA: You do?

WESLEY: The deaconess had the same problem. I snore.

ANNA: When did that start!?

WESLEY: I don't know exactly. Apparently I'm like a leaf blower.

ANNA: And you've been tested?

WESLEY: For snoring?

ANNA: Shut up.

WESLEY: Yes, I've been tested. I had to, for insurance. I'm fine.

ANNA: Me too.

WESLEY: Okay.

ANNA: Okay.

WESLEY: Okay.

ANNA: So hold that thought till tonight.

WESLEY: Okay.

ANNA: Okay. Oh, the lights have to be a lot dimmer. Candles are good.

WESLEY: Okay.

ANNA: So don't kiss me now.

WESLEY: I won't.

ANNA: Because if you kiss me, that's it. We're doing it right here, right now. Right on that – very – large – desk.

WESLEY: We'll wait till tonight.

ANNA: You don't have that much self-control.

WESLEY: For you, I do.

ANNA: You don't find me attractive?

WESLEY: I find you very attractive. I'm just saying I can wait.

ANNA: Well, that's excellent. Because I've got a big judgment coming up and I've got to work on it, and then Jason will be back for lunch and I don't want him barking at me about (what to write.) You're staring. Don't look at me like that. What are you doing?

WESLEY: I'm just holding the thought.

ANNA: Hold it tighter.

WESLEY: Seven?

ANNA: Six. Let me write out the address.

WESLEY: I know where you live.

ANNA: Right.

WESLEY: *(Turning to leave.)* So you're glad I barged in?

ANNA: Yes, of course. Six o'clock.

WESLEY: Six.

ANNA: Five-thirty.

(WESLEY turns to leave again; turns back.)

WESLEY: Maybe you could wear the *(Indicates the robe.)*

ANNA: Get out!

WESLEY: See you tonight.

(WESLEY exits. He closes the door behind him and pauses. ANNA returns to her desk. WESLEY's smile turns to horror as he pulls the rough judgment from his jacket pocket.)

Oh God. Oh God oh God. I'll have to get it (back on her desk)...

(WESLEY shoves the judgment into his jeans back pocket.)

Yeah, I'll slip it on (her desk)

(He opens the door to ANNA's office and strides back in.)

I think (I dropped something.)

ANNA: *(Completely misinterpreting his return.)* – Okay, but Jason'll be back in an hour. That doesn't give us long.

(ANNA pulls WESLEY to her.)

But if I remember correctly, you'll be able to do it four times by then. Or we could stop at three and have time for a smoke.

(ANNA kisses WESLEY; he reciprocates.)

Lock the door.

(ANNA rushes to lock the door to the Courtroom. WESLEY dashes over to the desk to slip the judgment back in the drawer. ANNA turns.)

NO NO! You've gotta lock the door! Bill could walk in!

WESLEY: *(Runs back to the office door.)* Okay okay.

(WESLEY locks the door and runs back to the desk but ANNA has beaten him there. She is struggling with her robe.)

ANNA: Damn damn damn can't get into it can't get out of it

WESLEY: - On the desk?

ANNA: Sure. *(Sweeps the desk clear, lies back on the desk.)* Missionary?

WESLEY: But of course!

ANNA: God I hope those locks hold. We'll have to be quiet. No yelling. I don't want any yelling.

WESLEY: I won't yell.

ANNA: And I'm not going to fake anything. So don't ask me after how it was, because I don't want to have to lie so soon.

WESLEY: Shut up and kiss me.

(WESLEY is kissing ANNA. Slowly her foot rises to the ceiling. WESLEY is oblivious.)

ANNA: Wes. Help Wes. Wes. Wesley, my foot. Please.

(Without looking, WESLEY reaches back and starts rubbing the sole of her foot. It eases and her leg returns.)

Oh, that's excellent. That's a really useful skill you've picked up.

(ANNA's hands move down WESLEY's back and find the wadded judgment in his back pocket. She pulls it out.)

Can we ditch the sermon? I can't have sex with a sermon so close. Or is it Foley's (eulogy or)

(ANNA is about to throw it on the floor, but something catches her eye. It looks familiar. She unravels it a bit; all the while WESLEY is oblivious to this and is madly kissing her.)

Hey. Hey. HEY!

(WESLEY stops kissing her and takes a look; he sees she's got the judgment. He rears back a bit. ANNA winds up and belts him.)

You bastard!

(WESLEY is falling off the desk. Fast black.)

End of Act One

Act Two

(WESLEY stalks into his office after the Sunday service. He's in a foul mood. He throws off his robes and starts changing into his civvies.)

WESLEY: Of all the – of all the – of all the gee-dee Sundays for her – for her to – why the hell she has to – sitting there with that self-righteous look, that pickle up the bum “You’re tanking mister” smirk – well bite me bite me BITE ME! And of course everyone around her is – why the hell do I care – just because she’s there and she’s surrounded by – damn them all for sleeping! Damn them! Damn you damn you – I’m so glad you were all able to catch up on your sleep I’m so GLAD I’m ECSTATIC I’m filled with JOY I am HUMBLLED that you allow me to be your theological Beautyrest. And isn’t it just FINE that you all fall sleep right on cue when I want to impress Miss Smug Revenge Is Mine in pew fifteen!

(ANNA has entered; WESLEY’s back is still turned.)

You snoring whoredogs! You lard-assed overstuffed octogenarian sofaheads! You you you

(ANNA clears her throat. WESLEY turns and sees ANNA; his black eye is now visible.)

ANNA: For someone on probation with an unlocked door you’re awfully candid about The Flock.

WESLEY: Go away.

ANNA: Funny – the last time I went to church the minister shook my hand and invited me to coffee hour.

WESLEY: You must’ve had a good laugh, watching them all nod off. Is that why you’re here – to thank me for a good laugh?

ANNA: No.

WESLEY: Wait: you came to apologize? *(Points to his eye.)*

ANNA: Why would I apologize for something you so richly deserved? But I do want you to know that I know I shouldn’t have decked you. I’ve always been four-square against humans decking other humans. Judges, in particular, are not supposed to deck people. Even the clergy. Even slimeball clergy. I want you to know I’m aware of that.

WESLEY: You're so ethical.

ANNA: Was that sarcasm?

WESLEY: It might have been.

ANNA: Well, watch it. Or you'll get a matching eye. I told you I know it's wrong. So now there's no doubt as to who actually has the ethics around here. Note *my* use of the word 'ethics'. Note its application to *me*, as in wrongs done to *me*. Because I still don't now if you know how – how – how sick, how

WESLEY: (I know)

ANNA: - How incorrect, what a monstrous breach of trust it is to walk into someone's office and take her confidential notes

WESLEY: - I KNOW!

ANNA: Do you?! It's kind of a pattern with you, isn't it. This betrayal thing. I don't know if one lousy black eye is enough to change that. How is it?

WESLEY: As if you care.

ANNA: You're right. I don't.

WESLEY: Then why ask.

ANNA: I'm being polite. It looks awful.

WESLEY: Yes, and everyone was pretty darn curious to know how I'd got it.

ANNA: Before they dozed off.

(Pause, while they both wait for the other to apologize.)

Well.

WESLEY: Well?

ANNA: Well, do we – meaning you – do you have anything to say? Do you, for example, want to apologize and ask me to forgive you? Because if you were to ask, or better yet, beg for forgiveness – I might. Forgive. Now that I've seen your eye and know that you're not blinded or pressing charges, yes, I'm somewhat in the mood (to forgive)

- WESLEY: I'm the victim of violence here! Shouldn't I be forgiving you? Gosh, it never occurred to me to press charges.
- ANNA: They'd never stand up in court. Okay. We'll forgive each other at the same time. On the count of three. One two three. I'm sorry I hit you.
- WESLEY: I'm sorry you did too.
- ANNA: You apologize!
- WESLEY: It wouldn't be honest.
- ANNA: You just said you knew that taking the notes was wrong!
- WESLEY: It was wrong but I was right to do it.
- ANNA: "It's right to do wrong" – is that what you're teaching now? Okay. Tell me one thing. Out of the idlest of curiosity. When you came to my office on Friday – did you come to tell me Grant Foley was dead, and you just happened to see my notes on Sophie Jamieson – or were you really there to try and influence me all along?
- WESLEY: I had to tell you about Grant. I couldn't let you sentence a corpse to community service.
- ANNA: Answer me.
- WESLEY: If Sophie had come up in the conversation I was prepared to speak on her behalf. Why not. Finding the draft judgment on your desk – quite accidentally – was a situation I hadn't expected aw hell Anna. I came to your office because I wanted to see you.
- ANNA: Huh?
- WESLEY: Yes.
- ANNA: Me the judge.
- WESLEY: No. You the you.
- ANNA: Hah. Are you trying to tell me the little "amour" you threw my way was (*A mock catching of throat.*) real?
- WESLEY: Yes.
- ANNA: Hah. Save your breath. I don't believe it.

WESLEY: I mean it.

ANNA: Hah.

(But this has nevertheless stopped ANNA; she probably does believe him. At the very least, she would like to.)

Hah. Why?

(WESLEY shrugs.)

WESLEY: It was how I felt. I've come back to this city where I spent my first thirty years being weird and solitary – but it's also the place where you are, where we'd had something wonderful, briefly. And I hoped we'd meet somewhere, just at random, sometime in the past three months, on the street, or at the liquor store. And I'd say, casually, "Oh hello Anna," and you'd say warmly, or at least non-violently: "Oh hello, Wesley." And we'd be friends, adult-type friends or – or maybe we'd even start dating, adult-type dating. But the city's big and the random thing wasn't happening so I decided to force the issue.

ANNA: There are other single women in this city. I could give you Mary Jo Silcox's phone (number)

WESLEY: - In that thirty years here the only thing that came out in the plus column was you. I'm serious. And when I walked into your office and saw you on Friday, wham, it was like the past ten years had never happened. You look just as fine to me as that first night when you came to my store. I wish I'd told you about my interest in Sophie's case. I should have. Of course I should have. But you have to believe me, the attraction part of it, that was real, that is real, that's why I was trying to call you all weekend.

ANNA: Every bloody half hour.

WESLEY: I had to tell you (that)

ANNA: It was weird!

WESLEY: You never picked up.

ANNA: I've got call display. The first time you phoned it scared the living hell out of me – the display read "St. Peter". Five St. Peters later it began to strike me as being somewhat pathetic. But thinking you're pathetic doesn't stop me from being angry. I can handle two negative emotions simultaneously.

And I sure would like an apology. I think I'm owed one. You crossed the line.

WESLEY: In a good cause.

ANNA: No, you crossed the line. Period. There's no way of rationalizing it. You put my integrity as a judge at risk. And you're not getting out of it by telling me I made your heart go flip-flop. (*Softens; about his eye:*) I really did that?

WESLEY: Uh huh.

ANNA: You didn't punch yourself in some arcane act of mortification?

WESLEY: That's for Catholics.

ANNA: Oh.

WESLEY: We're Presbyterians. If we want to mortify ourselves we go out and have fun. (*Pause.*) I was wrong but I'm not apologizing.

ANNA: You're as stupidly stubborn as ever. (*Sits down.*)

WESLEY: Why'd you sit down?

ANNA: I'm as stupidly patient as ever.

WESLEY: (*Pause.*) You were never patient. (*Pause.*) Okay, while you're waiting stupidly and patiently for me to not apologize, what do you think of my fair domain?

ANNA: All that glass – it's a bit, I don't know –

WESLEY: Optimistic?

ANNA: Yeah. And I'm not sure about your sermon. I'm no expert, I didn't go to theological school. But Wes: a twenty-five minute discourse on Refugee Policies under King Nebuchadnezzar? Isn't that a little esoteric? No wonder they were all asleep. And what's with that, anyway!? I looked around and it was like a hundred people were having this out-of-body experience. At first I thought they were just concentrating but... (*Pause.*) I don't know how to make this clear to you. You can't lobby judges. Can you imagine if your congregation woke up long enough to tell you what to preach?

WESLEY: They do it all the time!

ANNA: Be serious.

WESLEY: The minute I suggest some oh code of conduct as perhaps outlined in the – oh – Bible, they all snap out of their deep sleep and tell me I can't tell them what to do. Then they fall back to sleep until coffee hour. Actually, they've just voted to move coffee hour to before the service. Which is kind of odd. But you get my point: like you, I'm their hostage.

ANNA: A judge is not a hostage of the people. We are servants of the law.

WESLEY: Oh please. Are you telling me you guys haven't become lawmakers? That you aren't (pro-active)

ANNA: - We interpret laws, we can strike bad ones down, we can create remedies but – no, we don't make laws. The politicians would love it if we did – they could slough all their responsibilities off on us. But I can't legislate, and I can't rule in Sophie Jamieson's favour simply because in my heart I want to, or because you're pressuring me.

WESLEY: I did what I had to do and I'd do it again. Sophie's a good woman. She's done a lot of work here. She founded the soup kitchen. Yes, she owns her house in the east end – nothing else. It'd fetch about what her operation will cost. She's got a fifty year-old daughter living at home with her, she's developmentally slow, she's dependent on Sophie. But in order for Sophie to continue taking care of her she needs the heart operation so she can live. And, to pay for that - if Medicare won't – they'll have to sell her house. They'll be destitute! I can't let that happen. I *won't* let that happen.

(ANNA is staring at WESLEY.)

What.

ANNA: Nothing.

WESLEY: You're staring.

ANNA: You really like it here.

WESLEY: Here.

ANNA: This.

WESLEY: Yes.

ANNA: Snorers and all.

WESLEY: Yeah. I hope they let me stay. Today's the big day. The Hiring (Committee's) You're staring again. Plus you're smiling.

ANNA: Am I?

WESLEY: I like your smile.

ANNA: Do you.

WESLEY: Does the smile mean I'm forgiven?

ANNA: This is progress. You admit there's something that needs forgiving? Okay yes, I'm leaning that way.

WESLEY: Good. You're smiling again.

ANNA: Am I?

WESLEY: No wait. That's more like a leer.

ANNA: The Bible says that forgiving can be very exciting.

WESLEY: It does not use the word "exciting".

ANNA: But that's what I'm feeling so it must be. Exciting.

WESLEY: This is making me nervous.

ANNA: How nervous?

WESLEY: I never liked that smile. No Anna. Not here.

ANNA: I don't understand. What was fine in my office isn't fine in yours?

WESLEY: This is a very different situation.

ANNA: All the better to try out your situational ethics. Just a kiss.

WESLEY: You know very well we can't kiss; we'll have sex.

ANNA: No we won't. I have self-control.

WESLEY: No you don't. Neither of us do. But especially not you.

ANNA: *(Trying the door.)* Doesn't your door lock? No? What – did they remove the locks as part of your probation? Kiss me.

WESLEY: I'm not allowed to.

ANNA: On Friday you were. You came bounding back into my office –

WESLEY: I was just going to sneak the judgment back on your desk.

ANNA: So when you started kissing me – what was that all about?

WESLEY: I was distracting you. I was prepared to do just about (anything)

(ANNA is looking vaguely violent again.)

It was all tied together: Sophie, you, the robe –

ANNA: You're way too honest, Wes. You shouldn't have told me that. If I was a less forgiving person it might have pissed me off.

WESLEY: But it's all mushed together. We're humans Anna. We blend things. Helping Sophie, liking you. Selfishness and altruism. Without selfishness the altruism is a non-starter. And there's nothing uglier than self-interest without altruism. Thank God, you've stopped smiling.

ANNA: I'm thinking about the altruism stuff. *(Starts smiling again.)*

WESLEY: Where are you going?

(ANNA has gone to WESLEY's coat rack and is getting his robe off the hanger.)

ANNA: Funny how ten years later we're both wearing gowns. I quite like these stripey flaps you have. Is it like the army – do you get these for courage under fire?

WESLEY: It's decoration.

(ANNA is putting the gown on.)

Now what're you doing?

ANNA: Relax.

WESLEY: I can't relax. Someone might walk in.

ANNA: I'm just trying it on.

WESLEY: I'm still on probation.

ANNA: For what, five more minutes?

WESLEY: Well, all right. I guess if the alternative is sex...

ANNA: Who says we're not having sex, too? You like women in gowns. I like being a woman in one. That's divine synchronicity.

WESLEY: Do you want to go somewhere nice – for lunch?

ANNA: Yeah.

WESLEY: Great.

ANNA: After.

WESLEY: There's a really smart café down the street. Let's go there and reminisce.

ANNA: I'd rather stay here and "reminisce". Remember our first time?

WESLEY: It was over too fast to remember. I was lousy. I haven't improved.

ANNA: You were sitting on that unsold waterbed with your little bottle of sherry, wondering how the hell you could weasel out of the date you'd just made with me. You were going to weasel, weren't you.

WESLEY: Yeah.

(WESLEY has been edging towards the door, but ANNA heads him off.)

ANNA: I forget what I was shouting when I ran back into the store.

WESLEY: "Take off your clothes!"

ANNA: Something like that.

WESLEY: I know why you're doing this. You're teaching me a lesson. Okay, I've learned it.

(ANNA smiles.)

What!? Now what.

ANNA: I was remembering how – when you were talking about Sophie, I just remembered – well, that you have that side, that supportive, nurturing side. And you had it long before it was trendy for men. There’s something about a nurturing man that excites me. It’s like forgiveness in that respect.

(ANNA drops an article of clothing, her skirt, from under the robe.)

WESLEY: What’s that?

ANNA: What’s what?

WESLEY: That there.

ANNA: That?

WESLEY: You just dropped it.

ANNA: I did?

WESLEY: It fell out.

ANNA: My robes don’t breathe like this. Yours are positively airy. Interesting that yours should be so less constricting. But then I guess religion has more room to manoeuvre than the law. At least the way you practise it.

(Something else drops out - her blouse.)

WESLEY: This is neither the time nor the place.

ANNA: And my office was?

WESLEY: What if the Hiring Committee walks in? They’re meeting right now.

ANNA: Where.

WESLEY: I think they’re in the park and that’s just across the road and they’re going to come back here anytime, they’ll buzz me from the Session room (or come right here)

ANNA: - Buzz you?

WESLEY: Yeah, it’s like picking a pope. You know – when the Cardinals vote they do that smoke thing? Well, we’re Protestant, so we use technology. They’ll buzz and I’ll go see if they’re giving me the thumbs up.

(ANNA hands out her brassiere from under the robe.)

Aw no (please)

ANNA: I read a scientific survey once about sex on Sundays. It said a woman is twice as likely to have an orgasm on a Sunday as any other day.

WESLEY: I never believe surveys.

ANNA: This one was by a university in New Zealand. God bless New Zealand. It must be wonderful to live in a country where they have the time to do studies on that sort of thing. Imagine being a volunteer.

WESLEY: What was the second best day?

ANNA: Thursday.

WESLEY: Let's wait till Thursday.

ANNA: Let's not. And actually, it wasn't Sunday as in all-day Sunday, it was Sunday afternoon. Before people get worrying about what they have to do on Monday. We can't let this opportunity pass.

(ANNA's panties drop.)

WESLEY: They're just across the road!

ANNA: I don't care. I want to do it now. I've forgiven you. I've seen your nurturing side. I'm very, very excited.

(ANNA kisses WESLEY long and hard.)

WESLEY: Forgive me Father.

(WESLEY, with his free arm, sweeps his desk clear and lies back on it. ANNA climbs on top of him.)

ANNA: You really don't have any self-control.

WESLEY: Shut up and kiss me.

ANNA: You're not even going to lock (the door)? Right it doesn't (lock). D'you need to pretend I'm an organist?

WESLEY: No.

ANNA: But I should keep the gown on, right?

WESLEY: No.

ANNA: I could take it off and put in back on a few times – you probably call that foreplay.

(WESLEY pulls ANNA to him and they begin kissing passionately. Eventually, however, she pushes him away.)

Hey. Hey.

(ANNA is sitting up.)

Dang.

WESLEY: What!!

ANNA: I can't do it. Damn. Damn. I just can't. I can't put your career in jeopardy.

WESLEY: That's okay (don't worry)

ANNA: No, this is too important to you.

WESLEY: No one will know.

ANNA: We'll know.

(ANNA is getting off WESLEY.)

On Friday I was all set to do it on my desk, but just two days later, on a Sunday afternoon, with all the odds favouring orgasm – I can't. I could have if you hadn't gotten all serious on me but there's too much at stake here.

(WESLEY sits up. Pause.)

WESLEY: I think I can apologize now.

ANNA: It won't make a difference. I just can't do it here.

WESLEY: No – I mean, I just had one of those blinding flashes on the road to Damascus type things.

ANNA: When?

WESLEY: When you were climbing off me.

ANNA: Really.

WESLEY: It was sort of like a petit mal ethics seizure. I understand. About Friday. You were right. No equivocation. I was wrong. I'm sorry.

(ANNA kisses WESLEY. She is interrupted by:)

JASON: *(Outside door.)* Hello?

ANNA: *(Sotto.)* Who's that?

JASON: *(Knocking.)* Hello?

ANNA: It's Jason!

WESLEY: *(Calling.)* Just a minute!

ANNA: Get rid of him!

WESLEY: *(Calling.)* Go away!

JASON: What?!

WESLEY: Come back later.

JASON: I'd like to see you now.

WESLEY: *(Points to the closet.)* In there! *(Calling.)* Later is better.

JASON: It won't take long.

WESLEY: OK, hold on.

(ANNA is in the closet; JASON enters.)

WESLEY: Jason.

JASON: I guess you're surprised to see me.

WESLEY: A little.

JASON: I want to talk to you.

WESLEY: Here?

JASON: I didn't know where else to find you.

WESLEY: You want to talk right now?

JASON: Why not.

WESLEY: Wouldn't you rather make an appointment for tomorrow?

JASON: I'm flying to Toronto tonight so it (has to be now)

WESLEY: But I just had a service (and I'm)

JASON: I know. It's Sunday. (*Beat.*) What were you doing just now?

WESLEY: Praying?

JASON: It sounded like you were talking to someone.

WESLEY: Uh, I was praying in tongues.

JASON: I don't know what that means.

WESLEY: I was channeling God, how's that.

JASON: No wonder you get along with mom. She still sleeps under a pyramid.

WESLEY: I really don't like people barging in on me.

JASON: This won't take long.

WESLEY: How long is not long?

JASON: Three minutes.

WESLEY: Okay, you've got three minutes. Have a seat. Better yet, let's go down the street and have a coffee.

JASON: I don't want to interrupt your day any more than I have to. Sundays are your big day, I guess.

WESLEY: Yeah, there's the preaching ting and then the hospital-visiting thing and if I get it all done the treat myself to a movie thing. (*Suddenly the thought strikes him.*) Gosh – I'm sorry. You've come to me with something and

I'm being flippant. Is there something I can help you with, are you in trouble?

JASON: I wanted to apologize.

WESLEY: Yes, that's today's theme.

JASON: Huh?

WESLEY: Never mind.

JASON: I was rude to you on Friday. I thought about it all weekend. Well, some of the weekend.

WESLEY: That's right – you had a date.

JASON: My first with a lawyer. It gave me insight into what it must've been like for the guys dating Mom. Lawyers are really neurotic.

WESLEY: Your mother isn't the slightest bit neurotic!

JASON: Excuse me? She's like the textbook for it.

WESLEY: She's a very grounded person.

JASON: You haven't seen her in ten years.

WESLEY: What's your point?

(JASON pulls the judgment out of his pocket.)

JASON: This case she's ruling on.

WESLEY: Is that what I think it is?

JASON: It's her final notes.

WESLEY: Her notes. *(For ANNA's benefit; outside the closet door:)* Let the record show, Jason has just produced a bootleg copy of the Sophie Jamieson decision.

JASON: Tomorrow she is going into court and she's going to grant an injunction forcing the government to give that woman heart surgery.

WESLEY: Really?

JASON: Yes.

WESLEY: She's doing it.

JASON: This is hardly a surprise to you.

WESLEY: I knew her leanings but she hadn't got the (case law yet)

JASON: - Two days ago she hadn't made up her mind. At least, not like this. This is like an editorial for a student newspaper, it's lefter than left. She's going to make a complete ass of herself. As well as an incorrect decision. Which is going to put a cloud over her career. Now – how could this happen? Two plus two – you just showed up.

WESLEY: Oh for God's sake – what do you take me for – some kind of cult leader?

JASON: I'm just saying (that you)

WESLEY: - Do you really think I can just waltz into your mother's office and ten minutes later have her doing my bidding?! Give her some credit!

JASON: Sophie Jamieson can pay for her operation.

WESLEY: That's irrelevant.

JASON: What a coincidence – that's exactly what Mom says here.

WESLEY: She'd have to unload all her assets. But oh – the church could rush in and fill the gap eh?

JASON: Why not.

WESLEY: We could hold bake sales!

JASON: Community involvement – especially from the faith organizations – isn't that a good thing?

WESLEY: We'd have to have a bake sale every day of the year. And in case you didn't notice the signs on your way in, we're already running a soup kitchen. You listen to me. I was visiting Sophie yesterday, I was at the hospital; they're all set to discharge her because this new law denies her the operation she needs. Now. Her daughter was there, her disabled daughter, and you can call me a bleeding heart, you can call me anything you want, but I'm not going to sit at Sophie's bedside and pray for miracles and think for a moment that that is discharging my duty. Brace yourself, you little brat, I'm going to quote some Bible. "What does it

profit you that you should have faith, if you have not works. I will show you my faith by my works.” I will get Sophie her operation. By just about any means necessary. Because we have a responsibility to take care of all citizens, without regard to some bottom line decreed by you bastards in bankland who can’t even goddamn pray for yourselves.

JASON: Must be nice to hide behind a Bible.

(WESLEY looks as if he wants to belt JASON. He struggles to get himself under control.)

WESLEY: My Bible has a lot of answers for me. And the law has a lot of answers for your mother. Where are you finding your answers? And why the hell do you think they’re better than hers?

JASON: *(Starting over:)* I tend to be a little overprotective of her. It’s an only-child thing. I worry. Okay? She’s kind of a flake.

(WESLEY begins to protest.)

Okay okay she’s not, she’s not, but she acts like one – it’s this big defence thing with her.

WESLEY: *(Partly for ANNA’s benefit:)* So far you’ve called her a flake, neurotic and on Friday you told me all her relationships were disasters!

JASON: I can’t help it! She’s my mother! She’s under a lot of pressure! She’s really worried she’ll screw up, she’s worried about this judgment, she even worries about tripping on her robes. And of course that’s all irrational, because look how well she’s done, especially considering she was a single mother at nineteen.

WESLEY: Shoplifting baby formula.

JASON: I wish she wouldn’t tell people that. It’s like it’s some badge of honour. But you know what I mean. She put herself through university, then law school, and I stayed here with Gran and I didn’t mind, not that much, because I understood she was doing it for me.

WESLEY: She might just have been doing it for herself. Oh, the egotism of youth. I’ve got a meeting in a few minutes. Get to your point.

JASON: My point? I love her. A lot. I don’t have any other family. I don’t know if she told you, but Gran died just before Christmas, so it’s just Mom and me. And I know it’s “sexist” to be protective of her but I don’t care. That’s

how I am with her. And she's good at some things, like the law, but when it comes to men, she's hopeless. You haven't seen the guys Mom's dated.

WESLEY: There you go again!

JASON: She doesn't know what slime-buckets men are. She's still in that hippie time warp, you know, when you guys all sat around playing recorders and body-painting and doing macramé.

WESLEY: We never did macramé!

JASON: My dad did. When Mom met him he was teaching macramé at the Y.

(WESLEY shrugs.)

On a government grant!

WESLEY: Jason, we did a whole lot of dumb things on grants in those days – macramé was the least of it. Do you really believe there are no decent men out there?

JASON: If there are, she hasn't met them.

WESLEY: Are you decent?

JASON: Not always.

WESLEY: Well, I'm pretty decent.

JASON: Is that what they think at your old church?

WESLEY: *(Kicking the closet door.)* How'd you know that?

JASON: Mom told me, yesterday. And by the way – nice eye. You get that from an organist's husband?

WESLEY: Your mother has a big mouth.

JASON: She also told me that you came to her office pretending to be interested in her – but you were actually there to check out her take on the Jamieson case.

WESLEY: Anna and I have (resolved that)

JASON: - You're no good for her! You weren't last time and you aren't now. When you took off (last time)

WESLEY: - IT WAS TEN GODDAMN YEARS AGO! GET A LIFE!

JASON: YOU GET A LIFE! AND STAY OUT OF HERS!

WESLEY: How long are you going to carry this (around with you)

JASON: - When you took off that was the only time I ever saw her cry, ever. It was the only time I ever saw her actually fall apart, always she'd pretended to be this tough cookie, protecting me and Gran. And then you slide a note under the door, a shitty little note because you're too gutless to come around and talk to us – which would have been the “decent” thing to do. So there she is, completely unhinged and – do you know how scary that is?

WESLEY: It's ancient history.

JASON: Yeah, it was ten years ago. And I know: I'm an idiot, a sexist idiot to even think about it. I guess I'm an idiot to care enough about her to try and stop it happening again. I'd even started calling you “Dad” you know.

WESLEY: You never did. (That's a lie.)

JASON: - Not to your face. I wasn't that brave. But at school. Stupid eh. I didn't realize yet that people came into your lives and then stuck a note under your door and that was it. Stay away from her.

WESLEY: Get the hell out of here.

JASON: You're ordering me out.

WESLEY: Damn right I am.

JASON: This is a change. Usually you're the one who leaves.

WESLEY: Goodbye you little cretin. You're a disgrace. You know something? I'm glad I walked out on you ten years ago. If I'd had to spend time watching you grow up like – that – I think I might've murdered you sometime along the way. You're a disgrace! You're a disgrace to our education system, to our community – you're a disgrace to your mother!

(ANNA bursts out of the closet.)

ANNA: No he's not!

JASON: Where the hell did you come from?!

ANNA: He's not a disgrace!

WESLEY: Oh yes he is!

JASON: Mom!

ANNA: I'm proud of him! Really proud!

WESLEY: Of that!?

JASON: MOM!!!

ANNA: He's worked hard (and he's done well)

WESLEY: - He's a little Nazi.

ANNA: Don't you ever call him that! He's just young and really certain about things but he'll loosen up, you said that (yourself)

JASON: - Don't patronize me.

WESLEY: I can't believe you're defending him!

ANNA: He's my son!

WESLEY: He's also an adult. *(To JASON.)* And you're values suck.

ANNA: Leave him alone!

JASON: Do you want to tell me what the hell you're doing here?!

ANNA: After you, my beloved son.

JASON: I asked your first.

ANNA: Youth before "flakes".

JASON: Where'd you come from!? *(Looking.)* It's a closet!

ANNA: *(Goes over and looks.)* Good Lord, you're right.

JASON: You were in there.

ANNA: Yes.

JASON: The whole time.

ANNA: Yes.

JASON: So – you guys playing hide and seek?

WESLEY: I realize this is not the most dignified situation.

JASON: Oh, don't let that stop you, Your Holiness.

WESLEY: Don't you get sarcastic with me.

ANNA: Jason, none of this is any of your business. I was conferring with Wesley and I wish I hadn't hidden when you came, because maybe then I wouldn't have overheard you saying all those stupid things.

WESLEY: See, you're not proud of him!

ANNA: I'm proud he's got opinions. Now stay out of this! *(To JASON again.)* To deal with the minor points: I've gone out with many decent men in my time. And, as far as dating slime-buckets, yes, I've done that too, but you don't need to spread that around. Nor do I like you coming to my friend's office and telling him I'm neurotic. *(Beat.)* Am I?

JASON: Well yes, you are.

ANNA: THAT WAS A JOKE DAMMIT! I'm not neurotic; I'm too paranoid to be neurotic!

WESLEY: You're not paranoid!

ANNA: That was another joke! I'm trying to lighten things up!

WESLEY: I knew that. *(To JASON.)* She's completely grounded.

ANNA: I told you to stay out of this!

WESLEY: It's my office!

ANNA: Well you shut the hell up or I'll do your other eye!

WESLEY: Okay okay I'll leave.

ANNA: STAY – it's your office!

JASON: You gave him that black eye?!

ANNA: Yes.

JASON: (*Lunging at WESLEY.*) What the hell were you doing to her!?

ANNA: (*Getting in between them*) JASON! GROW UP!

JASON: What did he do to you!?

WESLEY: I wasn't doing anything to her. And if you lay one hand on me I'll haul you both up for on assault.

(JASON and ANNA stand together. Momentarily united. Long pause.)

JASON: Mom.

ANNA: What.

JASON: Do you want to explain to me why you're wearing his gown?

ANNA: No.

JASON: Are you going to tell me why you were hiding in his closet?

ANNA: No.

JASON: (*Points to panties on the floor.*) Are those yours?

ANNA: Of course not. Don't be ridiculous. Those are some woman's panties. They could be anyone's. You know his reputation. He's a slut!

WESLEY: (*Pokes at panties with his foot.*) They're definitely not your mother's. They're wayyy too small. With her hips?

ANNA: ALL RIGHT, THEY'RE MINE!!!

JASON: It's kind of hard to take either of you seriously when I come in here and you're in there and that's lying there and you're wearing that and he's (covering up and)

WESLEY: - It wasn't like you think.

ANNA: It was exactly like you think. But what you don't know is that I was using the promise of sexual intercourse to make a legitimate point with him about the independence of the judiciary in this country.

(They all stop and ponder this.)

WESLEY: You were?

ANNA: Shut up.

WESLEY: No! Are you telling me that all along you were planning to get me up on that desk!?

ANNA: DO YOU MIND!?

WESLEY: YES I MIND!

ANNA: At the time of my mounting the desk, and you, I had no ulterior motives.

WESLEY: Well that's good because I don't like being used.

JASON: WHAT DO YOU SEE IN HIM!?

ANNA: Don't yell dear. We're in a church.

WESLEY: You want to know what she sees in me, I'll tell (you what she sees)

ANNA: SHUT UP!!

WESLEY: Okay, that does it. Either I get to talk – or I leave.

ANNA: You have to stay. You're getting buzzed.

(JASON registers "buzzed".)

Jason, I'm a grown woman. I can see whoever I want, whenever I want.

JASON: So you're "seeing" him now.

WESLEY: (We are?)

ANNA: We were about to see. What we could see. Or maybe we were going to see a bit now and a whole lot later, and maybe not actually here but yes, there was a good chance something very magical was going to happen today between two people for whom there has been precious little magic.

WESLEY: I wouldn't say I've had "precious little" (magic.)

(ANNA motions him into silence.)

JASON: He's just using you.

ANNA: You know something? I want to be used. I would love to be used. I haven't been used in so goddamn long I wouldn't know the difference between a naked man and a lumpy shag rug with mildew.

(Everyone pauses to visualize that, and not happily.)

Anyway, even if he is using me for sex – isn't that exactly what you told me all men do?

JASON: It isn't just sex he wants. He's making you change your decision.

ANNA: I haven't changed a thing. I know where he stands, he knows where I stand. *(Snatches judgment back.)* Restricting access to medical care is illegal.

WESLEY: And immoral.

JASON: Even if it preserves the health care system itself.

ANNA: The minute you lop someone out of it, there is no "system".

JASON: *(One more time, as if to morons.)* If we want basic medical care for everyone, then we've got to restrict specialized care to some. It's really not a difficult concept.

ANNA: But why is it so difficult for you to grasp that if it's possible to save a life, then we must. Because the law requires us to treat everyone equally and that includes (the elderly)

WESLEY: Or because applying "cost-benefit analysis" to human lives is defeatist and selfish – and immoral.

ANNA: *(To WESLEY.)* Shut up. *(To JASON.)* Where are you going?

JASON: *(Leaving.)* Forget it.

ANNA: Don't just walk out!

JASON: You guys don't get it.

WESLEY: We "don't get it".

JASON: I'm selfish. I'm immoral. Gee, I wish I could've been in your generation. You're all such saints and we're scuzzbags. So here you guys are: a judge who hides in closets and you, a Man of God, who bedhops and gets buzzed.

(WESLEY and ANNA look perplexed, then laugh.)

What's so funny.

(WESLEY and ANNA continue laughing, and speak over each other.)

WESLEY: You were thinking.

ANNA: He's not getting "buzzed" as buzzed – drunk.

WESLEY: It's buzzed as in called to a meeting

ANNA: His hiring committee

WESLEY: They're meeting in the park

ANNA: To approve him

WESLEY: Hopefully approve me, and then they'll come back here

ANNA: And (buzz him)

WESLEY: Buzz me.

JAISON: May I continue? Do you want to giggle some more?

ANNA: Sorry.

JASON: *(Resuming.)* You always lectured me on being an adult...

(JASON pauses, waiting for ANNA and WESLEY to settle down.)

You said being an adult meant making difficult choices and gradually I've come to see that, yes, it's true. If it's easy, it's likely wrong – or maybe right for some but wrong for others. But the minute you have to face a reality that is inconvenient or hurtful or actually involves making a hard choice – you run and hide behind whatever "principles" or "ideals" you've managed to trump up to suit the situation. So hey – let's bankrupt ourselves with a million heart operations because God knows we're too gutless to consider the alternative. And then – just when you're cornered –

just when someone is forcing you to actually consider the fact that we can't give children proper school lunches because Sophie Jamieson won't sell her house to pay for her new arteries – well, somehow, through some miracle of middle-aged baby boom logic, it's me who's greedy, me who's selfish, me who can't face reality.

WESLEY: So all the cutbacks we've endured over the past decade aren't enough.

JASON: No!

ANNA: Or the fact we've licked the deficit?

JASON: We've barely touched the debt! Nor for that matter have we dealt with your indexed pension!

WESLEY: Nor are we properly taxing your corporations!

JASON: And how much tax does this place pay? Aw Jesus, what's the use. *(To ANNA.)* I wish you'd stop sometime and really take a look at me, really look, and while you're doing that, try thinking about what the world looks like through my eyes. All my life I've wished for that, that you'd stop for one minute and entertain the idea that the road you're traveling might have parallel lines, or ones going this way or that way and maybe they're okay, too, and maybe the girls I date aren't all sluts – or fakers – and maybe the job I landed after working so goddamn hard isn't just an excuse for lame jokes. Maybe I'm SCARED about the job. Maybe I'm SCARED SHITLESS I'm going to screw up. Maybe I'd like some support from you, Mom, NOT MONEY, SUPPORT and I'm sorry it's a bank BUT IT'S A BANK! *(Holds his hands out one above the other, indicating they've been on separate planes.)* We've spent our whole lives going like this. We've never connected unless I made the effort. God Mom, didn't you ever notice it was Gran I told everything to?

ANNA: Of course I noticed.

JASON: Well, she's dead now, Mom. And I don't have anyone who listens.

(JASON exits. Long pause.)

ANNA: Oh.

WESLEY: I uh.

ANNA: He is

WESLEY: Anna, I think

ANNA: Um that's

WESLEY: I think

ANNA: He's like that.

WESLEY: Go after him.

ANNA: What?

WESLEY: (*More certain.*) Go.

ANNA: Oh, there's no (use)

WESLEY: Go!

ANNA: I'd rather stay.

WESLEY: He needs you.

ANNA: That wasn't "need" talking.

WESLEY: Yes it was – go!

ANNA: I'll let him calm down.

WESLEY: Please.

ANNA: No.

WESLEY: Yeah. You can wait till he comes back and apologizes.

ANNA: DID YOU HEAR WHAT HE SAID!?

WESLEY: Didn't you? Go Anna.

ANNA: Don't you bloody presume to tell me what I should or shouldn't be doing with my son.

WESLEY: Great. You're standing there in my robes with nothing on underneath, but you've got too much pride to go after your only child. If he was my (son I'd)

- ANNA: - WELL HE'S NOT! And he just said some astonishing, cruel things, okay? So forgive me but I just don't think I'm going to chase after him and grovel.
- WESLEY: He didn't mean to be cruel.
- ANNA: He meant every last word. He's been throwing that at me for years.
- WESLEY: Throwing (what)
- ANNA: The Gran stuff. The fact that he was closer to her, it's his weapon of choice, it has been since he was a little boy. "Gran lets me do this." "Gran wouldn't say that." "Gran listens to me."
- WESLEY: So?
- ANNA: It was true. So what.
- WESLEY: (So what?)
- ANNA: - And you know, sometimes, a lot of times, he didn't even feel like my child. She was doing the raising. He was like a – a kid brother. I don't know, I didn't have much choice and I don't talk with him, ever, like she did. They were thick as thieves those two and I was the odd one out, always. Even after her stroke – I'd sit at her bedside, every night I was there – and she could move her eyes, that was about all, and she was always looking past me, over my shoulder to her bedside table – at his picture.
- WESLEY: Anna.
- ANNA: What.
- WESLEY: He's flying out tonight. You've got to go to him now. Do I have to throw you out of here?
- ANNA: Why are you being so noble all of a sudden? It's not like you're Mr. Family – he doesn't even like you!
- WESLEY: He hates me. And don't you get it? I wish I was Mr. Family. I wish I had a family. What have I got? A hundred people I put to sleep every Sunday. You have to go! He can't be far – just go out there and – just go and at least talk to him, okay?

(ANNA is hesitating.)

Please. Just go.

ANNA: Okay. Okay. I don't know what I'm going to say but – (*Going to the door.*) Wait. (*Stops; returns and goes to her purse.*)

WESLEY: What're you doing!?! Go!

(ANNA has fished the judgment out of her purse.)

ANNA: Here. You may as well read it. Everyone else has.

(ANNA hurries out. WESLEY slumps back on his desk, tidies it a bit, piles up Anna's clothing, then picks up the judgment and sits down to read it.)

WESLEY: “The premier is a fascist asshole.”

(WESLEY bursts into laughter, then starts reading on. ANNA bursts back into his office.)

Why're you back!?!

ANNA: Why'd you send me out in this!?!

WESLEY: Where's Jason?

ANNA: LOOK AT WHAT I'M WEARING!

WESLEY: You look fine to me – where is he?

ANNA: No listen, listen. Wes, you don't understand. I got outside and there was a group of people sitting in the park across the road. How many are there on your probation committee?

WESLEY: It's actually a Hiring Committee.

ANNA: How many?!?

WESLEY: Four.

ANNA: How many of them are really fat?

WESLEY: Four.

ANNA: How many have grey hair?

WESLEY: Four. So it was them. *(Not worried.)* They saw you run out of the church with robes on. Were they even awake?

ANNA: Oh, they were awake and when I tell you what happened next, you won't be smiling.

WESLEY: Why?

ANNA: There was a breeze.

WESLEY: Oh.

ANNA: It was the Devil. Blowing some hot air down the street and under these nice, light, airy robes of yours.

WESLEY: Ahh.

ANNA: Yeah. I'm standing there across from your probation officers and that breeze sent everything up.

WESLEY: How far up?

ANNA: Over my face up.

(WESLEY begins to laugh.)

How can you laugh!

WESLEY: *(Picking up ANNA's panties.)* I'm enjoying the image.

(WESLEY is laughing, but ANNA is not. She starts getting dressed under the gown.)

I'm sorry, it's just (funny)

ANNA: - They hold your future in their hands!

WESLEY: Maybe they didn't see.

ANNA: They must've.

WESLEY: There's still no connection to me.

ANNA is not sharing in his laughter.)

What.

ANNA: There's something else.

WESLEY: What.

ANNA: Jason was with them.

WESLEY: Oh.

ANNA: Yeah.

WESLEY: Oh.

ANNA: I'm sorry. I'm truly, truly sorry.

(WESLEY shrugs.)

How can you be so calm!

WESLEY: There's nothing much I can do, is there. I've had three wonderful months here. I've come to love these people. I think they respect me. If they change their minds because of something Jason is telling them, well, then I guess I'm better off leaving. *(Holds up judgment.)* And I'll have this to cheer me. This is very brave, Anna. I don't know about the first line, though.

ANNA: That's just my motivation.

WESLEY: When do you deliver it?

ANNA: Ten, tomorrow.

WESLEY: I'll be there. I'll be there with Sophie's daughter. Hell, I'll bring the whole congregation – unless I've been banished. You're going to get your first standing ovation. Thank you. Thank you, Anna. But now you've got to go. You've still got to make it up with Jason.

ANNA: I know. I'll just get dressed.

(There's a buzz. WESLEY and ANNA look at the intercom. There's another buzz.)

WESLEY: That's them. *(Goes to intercom.)* Hello? Hello!

(There's static.)

Right. It never works. Okay. Okay. It's showtime.

ANNA: I'm so sorry about Jason.

WESLEY: It's okay.

ANNA: I could come and explain (to them)

WESLEY: No. It's okay. *(At door.)* Do you pray?

ANNA: I have crystals. Come back here a sec. Let me fix your collar.

(WESLEY returns. ANNA fixes his tie and then kisses him.)

Good luck.

(WESLEY turns and leaves. ANNA starts to finish dressing. She tries to lock the door and remembers she can't. She looks around and goes into the closet to finish. After a second, WESLEY bursts back in – perhaps for another kiss or perhaps to chuck it all and not face the Hiring Committee after all. He sees that ANNA has gone, so he leaves again. ANNA comes out of the closet just as JASON walks in. He is holding some flowers.)

JASON: I stole them.

ANNA: Not from the church.

JASON: From the park. Where's Wesley? *(Indicates closet.)*

ANNA: No, he's upstairs with his Hiring Committee. We have to talk. Everything you said was right, I mean, about me not listening. We should talk (about that) oh God Jason, how could you! How could you go over there and talk to them! His career is hanging in the balance, you (have no right)

JASON: - Mom Mom (Mom calm down)

ANNA: - I don't care (if you hate him)

JASON: - What were you just saying about listening to me?

ANNA: I was (saying that)

JASON: - Start listening!

ANNA: Yeah (but Jason)

JASON: - Right now! Okay? When I left here, I ran out and I was cutting across the park and I saw them sitting there and I remembered who they were. So I was going to go and talk to them, I was going to say something about Wesley. I was. And I would've been justified. But well, they'd seen me come out of the church and they saw I was upset and they smiled at me, kind of like Gran. I mean, they all looked like Gran. Even the old man looked like Gran. They asked if I'd been getting counseling from Wesley. And then before I could answer, they started telling me how much they love him. You should've heard them. They said it's the first time they feel someone really cares about them. Apparently he's a pathetic preacher, he makes them all fall asleep. He's so bad they had to move the coffee hour to before the service! But they said that until Wesley came they felt abandoned – being old – and I remembered that that was what Gran said, she used to say she felt completely alone.

ANNA: She said that?

JASON: All the time.

ANNA: She never said that to me.

(Pause.)

JASON: And then you came running out of the church. And then your robes blew up. Mom: there's some things a son should never see.

ANNA: Or Hiring Committees. I must've blown it for Wes.

JASON: No – no! We got lucky! They never saw! The women were all facing away from the church.

ANNA: But the old guy?

JASON: He turned to me and asked me if I'd seen anything unusual just then. And I said, "No Sir." Like I'm going to say, "Yeah Gramps, we just got flashed by my mother." And he said it was too bad I hadn't seen what he had – because he'd just seen absolute proof there's a God. So I think Wesley's okay. I know he is. *(Pause.)* I'm still not saying he's right for you.

ANNA: Fine.

JASON: And I'm not apologizing for anything I believe.

ANNA: Neither am I.

JASON: Okay.

ANNA: Fine.

JASON: Fine. I stand by everything I said.

ANNA: Me too. I stand by the judgment I'm giving tomorrow.

JASON: Sure. Even though it's wrong.

ANNA: Yeah yeah, even though it's wrong.

JASON: Fine. And I am proud of you.

ANNA: Ditto.

JASON: So we're being sappy, right?

ANNA: Yeah.

JASON: Good. Hold the mood.

ANNA: You want to do lunch?

JASON: Just us?

ANNA: Just us.

JASON: OK. You're on.

(ANNA takes the flowers. She turns, as if to leave, and then turns back and puts the flowers on WESLEY's desk. JASON rolls his eyes. And then ANNA takes Jason's hand, and they leave. Black.)

The End.

