

REVERSIBLE: A LOVE STORY IN TWO ACTS

CHARACTERS:

OLD SAM
OLD PAT

SARAH WEIS-ROSEN
SAUL ROSEN
DANIEL ROSEN
SAM ROSEN-THOMAS

PAT ROSEN-THOMAS
MARY THOMAS
JOHN THOMAS

WAYNE
BOB THE CLOWN
WOMAN RABBI
MAN NURSE

ACT I

***SCENE ONE:** Funeral Home, the parquet slants down to upstage and the actors are in a viewing line in the order in which they speak, not speaking to one another but looking dead ahead, each one in black mourning clothes. As the actors advance one by one towards backstage left and then off, the coffin is lowered by invisible rope (at its tilt) toward the proscenium and toward the audience. It is an open casket but the deceased cannot be seen until the end of the scene. The officiator, a Rabbi, stands at a podium behind the coffin and receives each mourner with a handshake and/or hug as they finish their speech and silently sob into his black robe. Smell of flowers.*

RABBI: That concludes the Prayers and saying of Kaddish and all that we have to do now to bid Sam farewell is the viewing. Please step bravely up and commend Sam briefly on, allowing the next person in line to follow you after a brief pause in respect of your privacy. I will await you here after and then you may retire to freshen up for the reception at the house later today. Sam awaits. Please step bravely up.

SARAH: Oh, Sam. What can I say? I wish your father could see you. He would be so proud, bless his soul. Course he would not be able to stop going on about the expense, the fuss! Still, I should deny my last wishes as a mother on this earth? Then he would be farting too, always in public, loud, so embarrassing. Who eats cabbage for breakfast, I ask you? Listen to me, I should be remembering you. You look great! Who did your hair? Your father would be proud. You got a good showing, turn out I mean. What can I say? I am speechless. You should be so lucky. Okay, Rabbi said to be brief: did she look at me when she said that? Can you see? I barely spoke to the woman since I met

her, she judges already. She's right, but! So I should let your beloved come up, pining in my back already. You know the one about the Jewish mother: how many it takes to screw in a lightbulb? Don't be vulgar! The punch line is: "No, it's okay. I'll sit in the dark." So I am not going to guilt you just this once just because you made your old mother survive you, with your living the way you did, now dead. Sam, my baby, my baby, I love you! *(sobs off to Rabbi then off stage)*

OLD PAT: *(in bathrobe, approaches trepidatiously, peeks in then starts giggling, then guffawing, then snorting hilariously, hysterically to Rabbi who looks to approach)* It's okay, Rabbi. I'm alright. Sam, honey, my life, my one and only, forever, I will never marry again, I swear. I tried to prepare myself. Honest to God, I did. Sorry, should I say God here? Anyway, how can you prepare? Tell me that! You always have an answer for everything. And I bought it: hook, line, and sinker. What does that mean anyway? Am I fishing? I mean I know the real McCoy was a black inventor, but what is a sinker anyway? Look at you. You're so adorable. You left me here with your family without your buffer. You swore to never do that. How am I to hold up? I need milk. *(starts laughing again, runs out)*

DANIEL: Man, you always had to go first! Could never wait your turn. You are so impatient, Jeez! Just had to have the kingdom, eh? How's it look? Wall to wall, I bet. Well, we're okay down here. You know I am your older brother still, as Elton John sings it, and I am first, okay. Get a load of the sunglasses ma wore today, knew she'd be crying her eyes out. How dare you go die on me! I'm supposed to look after you. I'm the older brother. We were friends first and last, though, yeah? I was bossy I know and you kept your secrets. I wanted to help, not to pry. Whatever! Water under the bridge. We'll burn that bridge when we get to it, you said to me once. You burned it now, boy! Whatever... *(walks slowly and sedately to Rabbi, shakes hands, and off)*

WAYNE *(fat and Black)*: We swore to be friends to the bitter end, Sam. Is this the bitter end? Or can we still be best friends until I die? Somehow this does not seem bitter to me. Can I have a crack at Pat now? Just kidding! Kind of. Well, you know the score there. I'd give anything to have you back though. Gotta look at the lining. What is this they got in there with you anyway: shag? Mother-fucking tinsel, pardon my French? Are you gonna have mardi gras down six feet under? Some faux velveteen stuff, lookin' like Elvis exploded a jumpsuit. You got PB&J polka dots on? You know I am gonna use this in my routine, right? You know I can't resist. I know you'd approve, even if I knock on ol Pat (Someone's got to see to Pat, god help if it's your family- or Pats'!) Anyway, thank you. I just wanted to say thanks. You always approved of...of... *(crying)* all I did or did not do, or my fuck ups or whatever, all night bad jokes, you approved it all like a damn bodddhisatva Avalokiteshvara mother-fucker. You were too damn good- had to die just so we can romanticize your ass as more believable! You still my best friend always! *(Rabbi holds Wayne visibly uncomfortably as Wayne cries and cries)*

MARY: *(goes up and sinks to her knees and stays there staring at floor, until finally)*

JOHN: *(picks her up)* Come on now, Mary.

MARY: Oh John.

JOHN: Don't be so melodramatic. You're making a scene worse than when they married. This isn't about you! Sam, sorry for this. We're out of you hair at last. Listen we'll try to do better by Pat, Lord knows we weren't always the best parents to poor Pat but who could keep up with your family production, right? Anyway, we'll look after Pat for you, as best we can, so set your mind at ease on that at least? Happy Trails!
(all but drags MARY out, RABBI follows)

OLD SAM: *(sits up in coffin, now front and left of center Boo! SAM wears a clown's unitard, a big orange wig, garish face paint, red nose, the works)* Sorry to scare you. Couldn't resist. Alas, poor me. I knew me but poorly. Now me ear is shucked! What can I tell you? This is not at all how this happened! How did we get here? I'll tell you all that as we go. Don't worry, I'll go along, but like the middle ghost, I think it was, the jolly one anyway- you know: "I like life!" he sings. I know I'm Jewish, but Dickens was a Brit, and a prol, so, lo-so, you know! None of this "Avenge me" crap from me. Avenge yourself if anything, while there's still time. Why should you fuss over me? You're stuck with me, I guess, and I with you, your eyes on me, naked as a worm, was it, Sartre said, and the door to hell open all that time. Take it! Flee! Go out now! No? Well, on with it then, to scene two I guess which should take place, let's see... *(skimming the script from inside his coffin)* Narrator, narrator... Wait, here's another character!

BOB THE CLOWN: *(all dressed up as well)* Am I too late to pay respects? Damn, I came straight from work! Now I will have to go to the reception. I hate parties!

OLD SAM: That's not funny.

SCENE TWO: *Halloween Party at the Rosen home. Décor is webs, orange streamers, carved pumpkins. David is dressed as Adam in a fig leaf, eating a pumpkin pie out of his lap, sitting on a beanbag. He is very fat. Front door left, kitchen right.*

OLD SAM: Ah, a Halloween scene. This should be good. Our best holiday!

SARAH: *(enters dressed as Eve with strategically placed leaves half-covering her ample curves and apples in her hands)* This is how you help me, stuffing yourself with pie? I told you to fill the tub with water.

SAUL: I spiked the cider already! And the eggnog...

SARAH: Ach, God bless little fools. Who told you about booze? I need the tub for bobbing for these. *(she holds the apples up)*

SAUL: Those... *(laboriously pulls himself up from beanbag)* ...those are bobbing up on their own. *(grabs her bosom)*

OLD SAM: I should not be hearing this! Who wants to hear his father talk this way to his mother, maybe Sigmund, or Jean Paul? Ecco Ego, I dad myself, sui generis.

*There once was a clown called Saul
Who picked apples before the Fall,
Full of old seeds who trod the boards
Of palaces and other august halls,
Saul bit the worm and played malls.*

SARAH: (*hits him with apples*) Knock it off, applesauce brain! You'll kill yourself with your always eating all the pie like that. Do you want our guest bobbing their heads for apples in the toilet, or banging their heads in an empty bath? Go. Fill!

SAUL: Okay, okay, not code red alarm! I'll do it... You said you were doing caramel apples this year.

SARAH: We can't have both?

SAUL: Baby, you can have it all. (*exit through kitchen*)

SARAH: From you all I get is hot air, husband! Here comes the first guest.

DANIEL: (*walks right in dressed as a lobster*) Maaaaa! The stuffed zombie out front is pretty ratty at last. It's more scary now. You wanted it funny, right? Looking like the last Republican president, may he rot? Can I have some cider? In the kitchen? (*crosses stage right*)

SARAH: Not even a kiss, on this our favorite holiday!

DANIEL: I can't kiss you like that! It's indecent. What's our theme this year? I don't get it.

SARAH: Neither do I? What the hell are you?

DANIEL: Lobster. You? Salad? Hail Caesar! Cleopatra? Pumpkin Patcha?

SARAH: Salad he says! Do you buy that side order story? A short stack of rib, a mere clod of earth? Apostate! Please. Is that a way to talk to your still beautiful mother and the first woman, Eve!

DANIEL: How does a lobster fit?

SAUL: (*returns*) You should NOT have been a pair of ragged claws scuttling across the bed of endless seas! We scrapped the poetry theme. You're a snake now.

DANIEL: Oops, I thought it was a crab anyway.

SARAH: Two ignorant armies clashing by night here!

SAUL: 'Neath caverns measureless to man.

DANIEL: I have heard your crowing each to each. I do not wish that you would screech for me!

SARAH: Boil, toil! Go get your cider. Get me one too! Before the other family gets here.

SAUL: Be nice. (*exit DANIEL kitchen*)

SARAH: Well, a mother hates her rivals. Sam's my baby. I was just getting over liking Pat, now I have to deal with the family!

SAUL: We have to meet sometime. They're married now, there's nothing more we can say about it. We weren't invited. Maybe they never wanted us to meet, so be grateful I found their number in his shirt and they accepted the invite.

SARAH: (*with a twinkle*) Won't the lovely couple be surprised! Our revenge.

DANIEL: (*reenters with drinks*) I'm surprised they accepted the invitation. I understood from Sam that Pat's people are as born again as Catholics can be and barely like to celebrate anything, let alone smile.

SARAH: Great! A taboo to boot! And us as Adam, Eve, and the Lobster! Well, they can have us for Easter to get us back, we can stone a messiah for them if they make messiah piñatas or something. The last supper was a Seder.

SAUL: Pass over! And pass the punch, kid! (*takes Daniel's drink*)

(*DOORBELL*)

SAUL: Pray it's the progeny, not the parents! (*opens door*)

SAM and PAT: (*enter in leggings, huge ruffle white collars, ripped big shirts, white face paint, black eyes, make up scars, together:*) Trick or Treat!

SARAH: What have we here, me lovelies? (*hugs*)

PAT: Something fishy in the state of Denmark: Rozenkrantz and Guildenstern Undead! At your service.

DANIEL: Bravo! (*hugs*)

SAUL: What are you ringing at your own house? Walk in. You're family! (*hugs*)

SARAH: And have we got a surprise for you!

DANIEL: I'll get drinks. (*exits*)

SAUL: Don't get excited now.

SARAH: Special guests.

SAM: Uh-oh.

SARAH: Now, Samuel, we have to meet them! What's so wrong with us you don't want us seen?

SAM: By whom?

(*doorbell*)

SAUL: Pat's Parents. (*opens door*)

(*enter JOHN and MARY dressed as robot and maid respectively, uncomfortable*)

MARY: We brought candy.

JOHN: That's quite a dummy on the porch there.

DANIEL: (*back with more drinks*) Did you see Sam coming in?

SAM: Very funny!

JOHN: I, no, well, huh?

SAUL: Welcome, John, Mary. My wife Sarah.

SARAH: Pleased as pumpkin pie to meet y'all at last! And how!

PAT: Mom, Dad! You didn't tell me...

MARY: Surprise, dear. I'm sure we won't shame you.

SARAH: On the contrary, it's us they're ashamed of.

DANIEL: I'm Daniel, the older. So I hear you folks don't celebrate all saints, or is it all souls, or what?

JOHN: Sorry?

SAM: So am I. My brother likes to instigate.

MARY: You have a lovely home.

SARAH: Well, it's a witch to keep up. *(whisks one of the fake cobwebs up with a witch's broom, no one laughs)*

SAUL: Well, come in and sit down. Daniel, get drinks. *(exit DANIEL)*

PAT: My parents don't drink, sorry.

JOHN: Don't be silly. Tonight we do!

MARY: Are we overdressed? We don't often go out in costume. Not sure of the etiquette.

SARAH: Just make yourself comfortable. *(seats them on sofa center)*

SAUL: Excuse our risqué outfits here. We were going Tarzan and Jane but couldn't quite get into the old suits. Don't even ask about junior the lobster over there!

JOHN: And you two are vampires of something? *(meaning PAT and SAM)*

SAM: Zombies, yes. Something.

PAT: Undead, right. Like you, mom, dad. What a surprise!

JOHN: So what is it you do, Saul? Pat never will say much.

SARAH: We're all clowns like Sam, for generations, the Rosen clowns!

JOHN: Pat, you said Sam was a broker.

PAT: A laugh broker! And a lot broker now he has two of us to support!

MARY: It's a sin to lie, Pat, don't make light.

JOHN: To lie to your parents is a double sin.

SAM: Is that like a double negative- it makes a positive?

MARY: I'm disappointed in you, honey.

SAM: Let's give them a minute, please, mom, dad, Dan. I've got a riddle to tell you in the kitchen anyway.

(exeunt SAM, DANIEL, SAUL, SARAH in an amoebic mass huddle)

PAT: You guys are embarrassing me! As always. Leave it at least for tonight, will you?!

JOHN: We would have accepted him no matter his job. Your elopement left us no choice on that score. Why lie? But still, a clown? Is that even a job? Can you claim that? Does he file schedule E on taxes as self-employed, or are they incorporated or non-profit or what?

MARY: What are you going to do about health insurance? I'm sure he has no benefits!

PAT: Let me tell you the biggest benefit there is- laughter. Sam makes me laugh and as long as he does that I'm never sick. My soul is well. You wouldn't understand.

JOHN: So now we don't have souls. We're worried about yours! You stopped church, you married a Jew; what will the kids be?

OLD SAM: This is what they talked about? How depressing! And in our kitchen we plotted the ill-fated Halloween games supposed to put them at ease.

*There once was a guy named John.
In his life he felt like a pawn.
His wife was his queen,
Until Pat came between.
Poor John was much put upon.*

PAT: Sam!!!! Get in here now!

SAM: *(enters)* Yes, my little dumpling. Shall I tell them about the clowning biz at last?

PAT: Anything but.

DANIEL: *(enters)* You guys wanna hear a riddle?

SAUL: Stop with riddles. Get them drinks already.

SARAH: *(enters with a pie)* Pumpkin pie anyone.? Please sit. Don't let's all be so mishugenah.

SAUL: My wife makes the best pie.

SARAH: My husband would eat plutonium you put it in a pie crust.

SAUL: I'd eat you in a pie crust. Sorry, they say avoid sex, politics, and religion as topics with strangers, eh? But we aren't strangers now I guess, we're family! Anyway the taboo makes for more interest, eh, and bigger laughs! Tell me a weather joke if you know any! Small talk, ugh.

SARAH: He babbles when nervous.

SAUL: Who's nervous? I'm excited. New blood at last! So what work do you do?

JOHN: I'm in textiles.

SAUL: I can see you're not seran-wrapped, but seriously, mate, what line are you in-fisherman?

JOHN: I sell cloth, wholesale, import-export, Chinese silk, that sort of thing.

SAUL: Oh.

SARAH: You, Mary, in furs maybe?

MARY: I help out at the church a lot, just volunteer of course. Pat used to help a lot too. We hope she will get back into it soon.

SAUL: God willing.

SARAH: It's a mitzvah.

JOHN: So.

MARY: So.

(long pause)

SARAH: Pie! Pie! Everyone eat pie. *(DANIEL returns with drinks)*

JOHN: What kind of materials are your costumes, if I may ask?

SAUL: Well, that's a bit personal, trade secret recipe actually.

JOHN: Oh, so, sorry.

SAUL: No, I'm larking. They're like polyester or somewhat I imagine, but we get good use, double wear- see, they're reversible! Clowing is sweaty work but we can turn the thing inside out and wear it again without washing, long as they don't serve the kids ice cream!

MARY: Is it the same design on the inside as the outside? Are they all different?

SARAH: It's like humans, darling, turn us inside out and we seem completely different but in the end it's all the same really, a few misplaced polka dots, a cell here or there out of place, makes all the difference in the world if anyone notices but few do.

SAUL: You've heard of Harlequin perhaps, the plays, the paintings, or the romance novels maybe?

DANIEL: Dad hasn't told them the rich history of our caste yet?

SAUL: I'm sure I don't want to bore his lord and ladyship.

PAT: Please, bore away.

SAUL: No, it's nothing. I mean it's a long proud history of course. Ours is a small part. My grandfather they say was to be shot in the revolution. This was back in the old country and he had claimed to be a philosopher when asked by the soldiers. He was always quixotic. The judge ordered him shot as an idler and intellectual. On the morn of his execution he was reputed to have uttered the last words: "*Well, this week's beginning nicely!*" The judge found it so funny he pardoned him and recognized him as an old jester, which of course is what he really was. But there is not so much difference after all..."

SARAH: Booring....

SAM: Time to tell funny ghost stories! Our family tradition. *(they all freeze)*

OLD SAM: Enough! We joked, we pressured, we shouldn't've, the Thomases cried. Our baby had miscarried, but the parents hadn't known, it just blurted out, which is why we rushed the wedding, I mean elopement of course, but now we cannot ever again, but we're happy we married anyway. I mean they couldn't have known. After all John never tells jokes, so he just had to repeat one from the office, or internet or something, after Mary passed twice, he felt he had to. I guess dead baby jokes go over well with the civilians at the office. Let's go forward shall we?

DANIEL: I'll get more drinks! *(slips in flood from kitchen with apples floating out)*

SAUL: Shit! I forgot the tub!

(doorbell)

(SARAH runs to kitchen, slips and falls also. SAM helping her up falls.)

JOHN: Perhaps we should be going.

PAT (*runs and jumps on SAM*) Is slip and slide a Rosen Halloween tradition?

(*doorbell*)

MARY: It's been a lovely evening.

SAUL: (*trying to get door and shake JOHN's hand also*)

DANIEL: Shazam! (*runs and slides into SAM and PAT*)

KIDS AT DOOR IN COSTUME: Trick or Treat! (*exeunt JOHN and MARY*)

SCENE THREE: *in a hospital room, SAM is in bed in a white gown while PAT in jeans and flannel charades various complicated things throughout the guessing*

SAM: General Custer?!

Custard!

Thichinosis?

Inflation?

A wet balloon?

Time?

Time machine?

Alarm clock?

Moon?

Month?

Menses?

Mensa?

Men at work?

Year?

New Year?

PAT: Happy New Year, Baby? (*hands SAM a jewelry box*)

SAM: What's this, my tonsils?

PAT: Your surgery is elective. My tonsils were serious!

SAM: Well I didn't elect New Years for the surgery, that's for sure.

PAT: None the less, the social worker tells me we can do it here.

SAM: Do what? The nasty? I'm afraid. The lumbungo lambada?

PAT: It's your ring you gave me.

SAM: You gave me!

PAT: Anyway, let's do it.

SAM: Get married? Here? Now?

PAT: Why not? All we need is to sign the form and there's a notary public here on shift who will make it official. It's all cleared. They even said they'd scare us up a cake. They see lots of death and birth but few weddings apparently.

SAM: I'm game. Is this because you want to do it before I'm... changed.

PAT: We'll both be changed. We're always changing anyway. I think it's romantic, on New Years.

SAM: Well, the something white will be no problem here!

PAT: What do you say?

SAM: Sure! Can I get an epidural?

PAT: I'll take that as an I do, and I do too, til death do we part. Pronounce us!

SAM: Kiss me, you fool.

(they kiss a long time and PAT climbs half into the hospital bed)

WAYNE: *(from behind a curtain)* Congratulations! You all like to heal my heart better than the doctors do!

PAT: Signal the nurse for champagne.

SAM: Whatchya in for, stranger?

WAYNE: Name's Wayne, friend. I got hurt steppin' out I guess you could say.

SAM: What like slipped.

WAYNE: Slipped into a marriage in high school and slipped out of my mind with the vows many a time 'til it caught up to me. My wife gave me a bit of a snip. They say they can reattach it though.

SAM: Damn! You're in good spirits for your predicament.

WAYNE: Well, what ya gonna do, eh? Anyway, you all put this big smile on me!

SAM: Glad to be of service.

WAYNE: Much obliged.

OLD SAM: That's how I met my best man at my own wedding!

*There once was a wayward man,
Found his piece in a garbage can.
He went astray, she threw it away,
Now it's coolin' on a hospital tray-
That's freakin' cold, playa, damn!*

DANIEL: *(enters, sees PAT jumping for joy)* What did I miss?

SAM: I told you don't come!

DANIEL: I promise not to tell mom or dad. Now tell me!

PAT: We're married!

DANIEL: Mozoltov! Mozoltov! Tov meyod, at last! Congratulations, Pat. *(hugs PAT)*

SAM: We were planning an elaborate elopement but we eloped on it.

DANIEL: You! Always beat me to the punch! *(hugs SAM)*

SAM: This is Wayne. Wayne, my brother, Dan.

WAYNE: Sorry if I'm intruding.

PAT: On the contrary. Are we disturbing you? Do you need to sleep?

WAYNE: Only thing is I can't see y'all.

DANIEL: *(pulls curtain aside, shakes hands with WAYNE)* What are you gonna do, eh?

WAYNE: Not much anymore maybe, unless the surgeon's nimble.

DANIEL: Sorry for that.

WAYNE: Well, look at the lovely couple.

SAM: Dan, will you say a blessing over us. You were always more devout.

DANIEL: I only know the blessing for bread: baroch ata adonai, eluhainu, all that jazz.

SAM: So make one up, you're the writer!

DANIEL: Out of love I will improvise. But wait for the stroke of midnight. I'll go get a bad machine coffee to inspire me! Wayne, want anything? Pat, my new sibling? Sorry, Sam, they say you're not allowed.

OLD SAM: Good old Daniel, always there. Wait until you see the surprise he brings.

*There was one bestest brother in the world,
A knight errant with banner unfurled:
That reads: peace, hope, and love,
Faith all around and above, and
Tilting at the Lion's paw...*

PAT: I'd kill for some chocolate.

WAYNE: I'm good, thanks.

NURSE: *(enters with plastic stemware)* It's not mimosa I'm afraid. Against hospital regulations. Only one of my colleagues at the night shift station brought a flask if you need it for your ceremony, don't tell. Okay, just a few minutes until midnight. *(hands round the cups of orange juice)*

PAT: I hope Danny makes it back. This is the happiest night of my life.

WAYNE: Man am I glad you cats are here with me. This was gonna be a sad night but y'all makin' a stay in the hospital a party! I'd do every New Years with you.

SAM: That's a deal. It'll be our anniversary.

DANIEL: *(enters with multilayer cake made of jello and two toy dolls on top)* Powers, grant bountiful blessings to these two who are more than the sum, oh Lords of Love, and let them be a beacon to the lonely that all may take hope in their love and comfort in their home, and let them see one another always, and laugh at travails together, and abound in love to light the universe entire, and to conclude will the couple please pronounce in the eyes of this fine witness Wayne, each in unison at the count of three: "I Will Thou Love" while staring into each others eyes.

PAT and SAM: *(position themselves face to face as offstage begins countdown from 10 to 1 and on one in unison:)* I Will Thou Love. *(strains of old lang sein in background)*

WAYNE: Hot damn!

DANIEL: *(helping SAM sit up in bed, drains his 'glass')* Now you both stomp this! But I ain't carrying this whole hospital bed around with you two in it for the dance! Glochaem!

(SAM and PAT step on glass.)

OLD SAM: And scene. *(darkness)* It all takes me back to our first date.

SCENE FOUR: *at the Rosen's front door, streamers and balloons and chairs set up in the front yard along with juggling pins set up like bowling and a plank leaning on bricks*

PAT *(in overalls and a cap approaches the front door nervously finally knocks)*

OLD SAM: Boy is she in for the surprise of her life!

SAM *(answers in full clown outfit)* Pat? Welcome! I'm Sam. *(shakes hands)* I'd invite you in but we were just coming out... *(offers her a flower, PAT recoils)* It won't bite, Cleopatra! It's just an innocent flower.

PAT: It's just, I thought... I thought it might squirt me.

SAM: Ah, good one! That's old school. Sit down. *(sits on porch step, PAT also)*

PAT: So you're a clown.

SAM: Bob didn't tell you?

PAT: He said expect surprises. On a blind date I always do.

SAM: Do you go on many?

PAT: Not is I can help it.

SAM: Thanks, and what are you, a farmer?

PAT: No, what? Oh, the overalls, well, it gets the physical types out of the way quick.

SAM: Hee-ha! Good one again. Same with the clowning I guess, except I honestly hope you'll enjoy it. If not you can make your escape while I'm on. I'm trying out a new act and invited friends and family to watch, helps, indeed necessary, an audience, for a clown, nothings set, all improvised, off crowd, you know, like dating! Well, not a crowd perhaps- unless you swing!

PAT: Me?

SAM: No, I didn't mean... I just meant everyone wants to meet you. I don't date much at all. Perhaps I'm too serious about my art.

OLD SAM: Pat, Pat, wonderful, amazing Pat, just the best from the first, to the last- I guess I can finally say that now I'm dead. How can Pat go on? How can I? How am I anyway? It's a mystery! Deus ex machine. Anyway, Pat:

*There once was the love of my life,
That Cockneys claim with wonder rife,
Pat the funny, Pat the clever,
Pat the brave, Pat forever,
Oh wonder of wonders my life!*

PAT: How did Bob get you to take me out?

SAM: He didn't. That is, we aren't going out, unless you want, after. I'll be tired, but we can. I'd need to change.

PAT: Fess up, lost a bet?

SAM: So, let's see what I know about you so far. You're a farmer and a comic and curious which means you're smart. Smart, funny, and tough. Just what I'm looking for.

PAT: Don't get any illusions. On the other hand I am intrigued by your show. This will at least make a great story to the gang at work.

SAM: Gang? Let's see. Geese gaggle, and whales are in prides, right? So who gangs? Fish, no they school? Duckbilled platapi? Minxes? Are you a minx farmer then?

PAT: Very funny. For all you know I'm a blood or a crip. Watch out!

SAM: You watch! Excuse me. *(opens door and calls in)* Show's up!

(enter SAUL, SARAH, DANIEL, BOB THE CLOWN from front door)

BOB THE CLOWN: Hey, Pat. Told you to expect surprises, eh? Don't blame me though. This was Sam's idea all the way. Try to hang with it.

PAT: I'll try.

SARAH: Sit down dear, I'll introduce you round after the show.

OLD SAM and SAM: Ladies and Gentlemen, the show will now begin. *(curtain)*

[In the entreact, or before or after it, can be actual clown shows proscenium or in the aisles, by bathrooms, concessions, etc. Décor also of balloons, streamers, etc.]

ACT II

SCENE ONE: same scene, enter OLD PAT

OLD PAT: That's not how it happened at all! I couldn't stay out of this any longer. Hiya, honey.

OLD SAM: Are you dead?

OLD PAT: Yeah, that's a small thing. So this scene. All wrong. Can't trust a clown. Great for the comedy but forget all the serious stuff. Here's how it really went...

SAM: Just a minute. I forgot my most important prop! This is why we practice. I'm not normally nervous. *(runs into house)*

(long pause)

(all smiling)

SAUL: Well...

SARAH: So

DANIEL: Anyhoo,

BOB THE CLOWN: What's new?

SAM: *(comes out with laundry basket on his head and a broom in hand like lance)*
Ta-da!

PAT: This is too weird.

SAM: *(dancing with broom, singing Je ne regrette rien...)* No, nothing, no nothing, it's paid, oublitaded, swept away, who gives a F- for the ...

PAT: I gotta go. *(runs off through audience)*

SAM: *(chases her out)* Stay! I already like you...!

(long pause)

OLD SAM: Piaf?! What is this meloromance?

OLD PAT: You pee off!

OLD SAM: You think I sang Edith Rice Pilaf!

OLD PAT: This is how it went down!

OLD SAM: Thanks to you we had to dine in that fancy hotel restaurant in make up and overalls. I'm surprised they let us in! And I never opened my new act.

OLD PAT: That's a mercy! I sat through many more acts of yours, official and personal.

OLD SAM: Well, I remember the next bit anyway.

SAM: *(runs in through audience up to the front door fumbling with keys)*

PAT: *(runs in chasing)* Wait!

SAM: Get away from me! I'm scared.

PAT: It was just a kiss. You said you like me.

SAM: I do. I did. I don't know.

PAT: Do you like me?

SAM: Yes.

PAT: I like you too. See? It's okay.

SAM: O.K.

PAT: You don't want to kiss?

SAM: I do. I just wasn't ready.

PAT: Haven't you ever kissed before?

SAM: Maybe. I'm not telling.

PAT: Well, a good night kiss on the doorstep is very traditional. You don't have to be afraid. Can I kiss you, or would you like to kiss me, or just shake hands again.

SAM: I'll kiss you.

PAT: Tongue or no tongue? I don't want to scare you. Touching or no touching?

SAM: Just close your eyes.

PAT: *(closes eyes, long wait)* Alright, I'm ready.

SAM: I can't.

OLD SAM: This did not happen!

SAM: *(attack kisses the side of the forehead, then opens door so fast it knocks them both down the stairs on their asses)*

OLD SAM: I protest.

OLD PAT: So did I!

PAT: Ow! That was quite a kiss!

SAM: Sorry. *(lays back, eyes closed)*

PAT: Let me. *(leans in super slow and kisses longly)*

SAM: I gotta go. Good night. *(runs in open door and slams it)*

PAT: I'll call you! Ha ha! Whoopy! At last!!! *(runs off)*

OLD PAT:

*There once was a mighty Sam
Who kissed me with a Ka-blam!
Knocked me write on my heart
Gave my whole life a start...
Now never more will we part.*

SCENE TWO: *In a cramped apartment decorated eclectically in a hippie world folk art style, cluttered with beer bottles and beer cans.*

PAT: *(in a dress)* Shut up! You don't have to use your damn megaphone voice! Wayne's asleep still.

OLD SAM: Not this scene. Spare us!

WAYNE: *(from under the couch)* uuugh.

SAM: *(in a dress)* Okay, okay, I'm sorry but I'm hung over too and you are always so disappointed in me these day.

PAT: Because I come home from work on our anniversary to find you drunk beyond comprehension!

SAM: It was New Years too, you know? It's not all about you. Anyone else stay over?

PAT: No, the one you want left while you were out of it!

SAM: Wait! Now I remember. You had some big news for me. How many years has it been now, sweetness?

PAT: We aren't married!

SAM: What are you talking about?!

PAT: Again with the megaphone. I'm right here.

OLD PAT: This is painful to watch.

SAM: You want a divorce? What did I do now?

PAT: We never were married. They arrested the county clerk who registered our marriage and they are suing the judge who upheld it. Can't you read the papers? Our marriage is null and void.

SAM: Nothing! Is that all? I was worried. Of course we're married. I love you forever.

PAT: That's not the point. What about our civil rights? We have to fight.

SAM: Now I remember the fight. Who do we need to give us rights? We give them to ourselves. I am here. What more do you need?

PAT: I need a spouse who can stand up for me, and for all of us, for yourself too, for what is right, who is not afraid, a coward.

SAM: Okay, the name calling. Meanwhile this is just about daddy and mommy and you want to assure them our bourgy little IRAs and whatnot are all in a line. Rights, my ass!

PAT: I'll kick your fucking ass!!! Don't you love me?! (*jumps on SAM on couch*)

WAYNE: Ugh.

SAM: No!!!! The state says I can't. I'm out of here.

PAT: Again? Where do you go?

SAM: Cowardland. Give me the keys!

PAT: Come and take them, coward. Clown! (*dangles them*)

SAM: I warned you to never call me that again. I paid the damn car now give me my keys! Now! (*lunges*)

(PAT and SAM wrestle spastically at first, then an accidental hard blow lands, now harder and harder they fight viciously; WAYNE finally manages to break them up)

PAT and SAM: *(in unison, mid-melée)* I want a divorce!

WAYNE: Red corner! Blue corner!

SAM: I'm walking. *(storms out bleeding)*

PAT: I'm driving. *(walks out forlornly, with black eye)*

WAYNE: Every damn New Years. Some poster children they make, God love 'em, yet they deserve it...

OLD SAM: I'm sorry, baby. I didn't mean it. I'd never leave you.

OLD PAT: You're an ass. Shut up and listen for once. It's not about you, or me, or us, or even the families. It's about love.

WAYNE: *(digs in the couch, fishes out a strap-on)* They won't be needing this then, will they? Ha ha! *(exit)*

SCENE THREE: *the Thomas residence, very all American with ceramic knick-knacks and lots of glossy posed family photos, Easter ham on the dining room table with a side of motzah. No alcoholic drinks, just Evian, Perrier, and Orangina. JOHN and MARY sit on one side of the table opposite SAUL and SARAH with PAT at the head and DANIEL at the butt of the table. SAM is absent. JOHN, SAUL, DANIEL and PAT in bad suits, MARY in a dress and SARAH in a bright pancho and Indian skirt.*

MARY: *(humming to herself while setting the table as JOHN sits there sipping coffee with the paper clearly in the way)*

OLD PAT:

*There once was a mother Mary martyr
Who hail married an old our farter!
He gave her great grief,
Except between the sheets,
Where he proved a Red Sea-parter.*

JOHN: My Sarah, what a colorful outfit.

SARAH: You like? *(takes off the poncho to reveal a very revealing spaghetti string toplette)*

OLD PAT:

*Then there was Sarah the clown,
Classy to the shoes up or downtown.
She was a real self starter,
Insisting we all play our parts, or
She's turn our vertical smiles inside out!*

MARY: You can talk, John. Yeah, he likes!

JOHN: For the last time. I have nothing to be ashamed of. I found a support group.

MARY: It's support pantyhose you need, you, you... fruitcake!

SAUL: Have we come at a bad time?

PAT: Ma, what's all this about?

JOHN: I will have you know that most transvestites are in fact heterosexual. It's a simple fetish like latex, balls, gags, dogpoo... You can see it all on the internet.

DANIEL: I can see it all in my parents' bathroom! Knock first, trust me!

MARY: I'm sorry to tell you, pumpkin (*addressing PAT*) but I woke up unexpectedly to find your father in one of my outfits.

JOHN: If you call it an outfit!

MARY: It would fit if you weren't so fat.

JOHN: Believe you me I need my own wardrobe for more reasons than size.

MARY: What's that supposed to mean?

JOHN: It's not exactly adventurous, or feminine.

MARY: Gray is your favorite color!

JOHN: My taste in my woman's identity is more freeing.

MARY: This is just narcissism, your own self-love in full form.

SARAH: I had no idea you guys had such depth!

DANIEL: I had no idea we were gonna get cabaret tonight with the ham!

MARY: I am so sorry. John, we have guests. Let me serve everyone before it gets cold.

DANIEL: Where's Sam?

SARAH: Shhh, I told you.

SAUL: Shut up, son!

PAT: He was invited. I never heard back. We had a bad fight.

DANIEL: I saw. But that was ages ago. You mean you haven't spoken since then??

PAT: You know the answer to that, Danny. Why are you meddling?

DANIEL: Because I only know his side. I love you too.

SARAH: We all do, darling. Saul also, and Sam. He'll come round.

(doorbell)

JOHN: Excuse me.

(enter SAM with WAYNE supporting him, visibly drunk)

WAYNE: Happy Easter. I am sorry to invite myself, you all. And sorry for our state. I had to get him drunk enough to let me bring him. He usually does this on his own but never quite follows through. We've been to your front door many a late night. By the way, did you know you have a peeping Tom, or Tina?

SAM: Drinks, everyone. *(he has a case of beer, gives one to each person except PAT)*

PAT: None for me, honey?

SAM: Your cup runneth over already. Not a moving violation, as Woody Allen put it. And surely goodness and mercy shall follow you all the days of your hourglass...

PAT: *(grabs a beer)* Ass! Why'd you come then?

SAM: Not for ass! Well, the pig's maybe.

PAT: Quit clowning. *(SAUL, SARAH, and DANIEL look shocked)* You don't even eat pork.

SAM: You seem to know a lot about it suddenly.

PAT: Since when so suddenly? We're husband and wife, or wife and wife, or husband and husband, anyway- we're bonded, bound and determined!

SAM: Not according to you.

PAT: No, officially. I won our suit even with you in absentia. I think the stress it caused us helped the cause in fact, or maybe the thought of you running around single just gave everyone the heebie-jeebies.

SAM: I've never been single. There was just waiting for you time and then now since the found you time.

PAT: Sit down! (*WAYNE helps SAM into JOHN's seat and MARY gets SAM a chair*)

JOHN: (*enter in drag, a complete queen with playboy nylons and bunny ears*) Happy Easter everyone! Hippity-hoppity! I use millet- birdseed- to fill the bra, gives the breasts solidity as well as fluidity- that's the secret. I have outfits I can pass in too, you'd never know from this one I got special for my coming out. (*they all applaud so enthusiastically that even MARY has to eventually join in! MARY and JOHN embrace, SAM and PAT embrace, SAUL and SARAH embrace, DANIEL and WAYNE embrace*)

OLD SAM and OLD PAT (*embrace*) To everything there is a season, a time for coming out and a time a going out. It is time for us to go out now, for good, we hope! (*singing*) Send out the clowns. There ought to be clowns... in heaven. People take it all too seriously, even perfection! We love parties! (*exeunt*)

Finis.

POSTSCRIPT: It was the author's wish to make no issue of the main characters' gender or lack thereof until a superpower started acting threatened by gays' marrying and trying to deny the most basic pursuit of happiness there is. Then it became an issue that needed addressing out loud. We apologize for this serious note in our little comedy.

