

Another Piece of Cake

By

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Cast of Characters

Note: The actresses that play Clara, Maggie, Terry and Ann can be any age between thirty and sixty.

Diane: Twenties. Attractive and fit. Also plays *Lily*

Clara: Diane's great aunt. Eighties. Smart, kind and funny. Also plays *Doctor #1, Nurse, Sister # 2, Woman #1* and *Secretary*

Tandy: Forties. Pretty and stylish. Diane's mother, Clara's niece. Also plays *Doctor #2, Franny*

Maggie: Eighties. Uses a wheelchair. Liberal, brash, blue collar, a bit wild. Terry's best friend. Also plays *Joan, Sister #3* and *Alice*

Terry: Eighties. Conservative, steady, upper class. Maggie's best friend. Also plays *Carmen* and *Woman #2*

Ann: Eighties. Flighty. Rambles a bit. Sweet to a fault. Also plays *Teacher* and *Sister #1*

Edward: Twenties. FedEx guy. Blue collar. Charming. Attractive. Also plays *Frank, Graham, Michael* and *Emergency Worker*

Setting

An upscale retirement home

Time

The present and the past

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

ACT ONE

Three old women sit in a group of folding chairs in a semi-circle facing away from the audience, a fourth woman is in a wheelchair. A large, professional arrangement of flowers rests upstage center. A few balloons are scattered around the stage and the woman in the wheelchair grabs one. CLARA, who's chair is turned slightly away from the others, looks at DIANE, who is cross legged on the floor.

CLARA

Well, frankly sweetheart, I just didn't find you all that interesting.

Diane turns and faces the audience.

DIANE

And that's what started it, really. I mean, before she was just sort of, well, an old lady.

Clara shrugs. Diane speaks to both Clara and the audience.

I mean, Clara's an old lady name.

CLARA

Hey, I was running a business and getting laid before your mother was out of diapers.

DIANE

See? See, that. That stuff. Not old lady stuff. And then I read this article in, um, what was it, Aunt Clara?

CLARA

Again, you look to me for...what?

DIANE

More Magazine. Or maybe it was Glamour? No. I forget. Anyway, it said, ask a woman what she thinks. Listen to what she says. Then ask what she really thinks. You know, it was all about how we're unconnected to our inner truth. Our honesty. As a sex.

CLARA

Don't get me started on sex.

Clara turns her chair back to face the direction of the other women.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

DIANE

So, we're going to the retirement place for Aunt Clara's birthday party. They have this thing, once a month, where all the people...well, it's one big party for anybody in the place that had a birthday that month. You know, family comes and if somebody doesn't have a family, there's still a crowd.

CLARA

(over her shoulder)

It's very *Tuesdays With Morrie*.

DIANE

(to Clara)

Don't start on *Tuesdays With Morrie*.

CLARA

Saccharine crap.

DIANE

This is not what I had come to expect from old ladies.

*Diane pulls out a folding chair, flips it open and sits.
TANDY, Diane's mother, Clara's niece, enters.*

TANDY

Diane honey, it's really nice of you to come out for Aunt Clara's birthday. It's important to be there for each other, especially since Uncle Graham passed. And you've been away for awhile. You've grown.

DIANE

Mom, people don't grow from twenty-four to twenty-six.

TANDY

My god, there are no men here.

DIANE

Well, I mean, grow up. I'm not taller. My ass is a little bigger.

TANDY

Sweetheart, you're beautiful. Look in the mirror.

Tandy pulls out a compact and checks her face.

DIANE

I can't. My fat ass is blocking the view.

Tandy runs a hand over her forehead and her neck.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

TANDY

Very funny. I'd kill the Pope for your body. Not to mention your skin.

Tandy snaps the compact shut and exits.

DIANE

Here I am, thinking about how I feel absolutely huge in my jeans. These low-rise ones.

Tandy returns with a cake with lit candles. As everyone warbles Happy Birthday, the old woman in the wheelchair, MAGGIE, balloon in hand, reaches behind the woman next to her, TERRY, and starts periodically tapping her on the head with it.

They're cutting into my ass and it's just killing me...when I see this old lady whacking her friend on the head with this balloon.

Maggie grins an evil grin at Diane.

And I have this flash-

CLARA

Epiphany is a better word.

DIANE

Excuse me.

CLARA

Sorry.

Pause.

But it is.

DIANE

I had this flashing epiphany. *(To Clara)* Happy?

CLARA

Better. You gotta admit, epiphany is a better-

DIANE

Stop.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

CLARA

Sorry.

DIANE

That these women, all these old women...weren't old once. I mean, yes, yes, I know, I knew, intellectually, that they were young once. But to see that moment, that old lady riding her friend, it just felt...very true. Like, I do that with my best friend. And I got a wave of this room filled with people that had lived through...years, decades of life. Of passion and work and deaths and careers. Sex and affairs and marriages and divorces.

Clara blows out the candles.

MAGGIE

What is she? Eighty-what?

TERRY

She's five years younger than me. I'm eighty-seven. That must be the grand-niece. Okay, gals, worst birthday.

MAGGIE

Easy. Thirty-seven. I flipped my motorcycle. Leg broken in three places. Plus knew I was gonna be dumped by my lover soon. Not to mention that little drug problem.

ANN

You had a drug problem?!

MAGGIE

I've told you this over a hundred times.

ANN

No, you haven't. I knew about the leg but-

TERRY

(to Maggie)

You told me. *(To Ann)* She told me. Maybe she forgot to tell you.

MAGGIE

I told her! Christ, Ann, you are so self-involved.

ANN

What drug?

MAGGIE

Heroin.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

ANN
(Pause)

You're right. You have told me.

MAGGIE

See!

ANN
When people say drug problem, I think prescription drugs. Ever since my youngest Evan, with that Vicodin.

DIANE
(To Tandy)

Mom, you know, someday this is gonna be us.

TANDY

Oh god. Must you remind me?

CLARA

Gals. This is you. We are you. You are us.

Terry takes off her white wig and shakes out her hair.

TERRY
(To Diane and audience)

Five jobs. One very successful business. Four men. One marriage. Three children. Two still alive. One...not. Two life-threatening illnesses. Six apartments, four houses. 149 movies seen. Ten cars. Three car crashes. Well, one was a fender-bender. Two thousand books read.

Maggie takes her wig off. As she speaks, she spins it around on her finger.

MAGGIE
Twenty-two jobs. Five careers. One kid. One husband. One divorce. Probably about thirty sexual partners, some men, after Clancy...all women. Three religious experiences. Two motorcycles. Seventeen cars. Maybe six, seven hundred books read. Two life-threatening medical things. That motorcycle crash and a botched hysterectomy.

Tandy hands her a piece of cake.

Ann.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

ANN

I've got to use the little girl's room. Clara, you go.

By now, Clara has a plate of cake. Mouth full, looking up to Ann, she shakes her head.

CLARA

(mumbling)

Cake.

Ann crosses stage left and faces out to the audience.

ANN

It was so nice of you to come. You know, this all shouldn't make you feel bad about your mother or grandmother that you never see. Or maybe it should? I don't know. Maybe that's part of your journey, as they say. Well, goodness. They brought some kids in from the elementary school the other day. The children sang a few songs. Then we all had treats. Meant I missed part of the game but Jeannie helped me record it. People always gush on about how old people and children are so good for each other. And it's true. But not for the reasons everybody thinks. Well, I think that it's not for the reasons everybody thinks. How do I put this? I mean, goodness, I don't want to offend any of you. People don't worry about that much any more. Offending each other.

She pauses. She takes off her wig.

Truth be told, they never did. Oh yeah, men didn't cuss and all in front of women, but goodness, they made up for it by being real jackasses. The eight thousand ways a person, well, my husband, could find to call me worthless without being offensive...honestly, I think I would have preferred a "stupid bitch" once in awhile. My turn, I suppose. The self-revelation thing. Goodness, where was I... oh yes! Sorry. That's why I like children. They certainly don't want to know where I got all my money. Why I'm here instead of somewhere else. Who I was married too. What my politics are. What schools my kids went to. But you do. You want to know. Thanks for coming out by the way. It's so nice to see some new faces. I embezzled it. Oh gosh. I'm so sorry. I just realized you're probably waiting for my little thing. My marriage, children, affairs, books read thing. But, heck, let's just go for the gold, as they say. My money. MY money. I embezzled it.

Tandy walks up to Ann with a piece of cake.

Goodness, why thank you, dear.

Ann hands her wig to Tandy and begins nibbling at the cake.

(To audience) Frank was... *(she giggles)*...not frank. You see, he was a member of a family, an East Coast, sort of Kennedy wanna-bes. But not really. Goodness. In all

ANN (CONT'D)

honesty, they looked down on the Kennedys. New money, you know. The Kennedys. Not Old Money. Goodness, this cake is yummy. Clara, this niece of yours is a sweetheart. And Diane, so pretty.

Tandy is still holding Ann's wig. She goes to hand it back to Ann but Ann gestures that her hands are full with the fork and plate. Somewhat reluctantly, Tandy shoves the wig into a pocket.

EDWARD, the delivery man, enters carrying a large box.

EDWARD

Hello, ladies, Jeannie signed for it. Said it's for the birthday girl, Clara. Which one of you gorgeous ladies is Clara?

CLARA

I'm Clara.

Light change. Clara removes her wig, hands it to Tandy as well and walks up to Edward. After a moment, she smiles and unbuttoning his shirt, takes it off, revealing a white T-shirt. Throughout the ensuing monologue, Edward calmly watches Clara, not the least unsettled.

Graham had a lovely body. I knew every inch of it.

She touches Edward's clavicle.

As he was on top of me, at the end of lovemaking, before he came, I would touch this part of him. Run my fingers along this strong, this line. The edge of the cliff that began the chest. See, right now you're all thinking about sex.

Clara crosses to a sewing bag by Terry's chair and removes a small pair of scissors.

I'm talking about something much deeper and wider and richer than sex.

Clara cuts Edward's T-shirt off with one movement up the center of the shirt.

This landscape-

She splays her hands across his chest.

CLARA (CONT'D)

-this was mine. Ours. Now gone. But men make me recall that musky, easy, complex, vulnerable strength of Graham. My god, I miss him.

She turns Edward around.

See here, Edward's back is wider than Graham's. Graham had a little scar here. Our second date, we went to the beach. I wanted him the entire time. I mean, hot, you know? I was...wet. God, I was so naive. Not like kids today. They told us nothing. I didn't know sexual parts had specific names until I was well over twenty. Anyway, and then he took off his shirt to go in the water and-

DIANE

Aunt Clara, this is so freaking me out. You're an old woman. I mean, like, old. How can you be horny for this delivery guy? *(To Edward)* Sorry. You're cute but she's over eighty and she's my aunt.

CLARA

Have you not been listening? I'm not hot for HIM. You see, this is why young people are boring. You reduce it all to sex. Like sex is the point. Life goes so beyond sex.

EDWARD

Can I put my shirt back on now?

MAGGIE

No. See, Clara, and you too, Diane. This never really did it for me. Sorry, Eddie, yes, you're adorable but too hairy. Why do I still worry about protecting the male ego? Jesus Christ. Anyway, the curves are wrong. The male body never really did it for me. I mean, I made do. Always liked sex.

Edward warily eyes Maggie.

Oh please, get over yourself. I'm not gonna take Terry's scissors and snip it off.

ANN

Oh Maggie. Stop. You're scaring him. He makes me think of...who does he remind me of? Frank, I suppose. But Frank would certainly never work for FedEx.

MAGGIE

Terry, what does our Eddie inspire in you?

TERRY

Well, about seventy years ago I was raped by a guy who looked a little like him so he unsettles me. Now we know him. It's alright. Mostly. Sometimes when he comes in and I

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

TERRY (CONT'D)

just catch a glimpse of him out of the corner of my eye, I feel that flash again. Rigid, acid bile instantly floods my throat.

Terry takes the scissors from Clara.

That's why I started knitting. So I could always have scissors with me.

Terry stares at Edward for a moment, the scissors resting lightly in her opened palm.

(To Edward) I always have my scissors with me.

ANN

Oh dear, they're scared.

TERRY

(To Edward)

Good.

ANN

No, Terry. THEM. The audience. They're confused. And scared *(To audience)* It's alright. We'll get back to the regular play thing. Don't worry.

Ann takes the scissors and hands them back to Clara.

Clara, open the box!

Light change, returning to normal. Tandy hands Edward his shirt, which he puts back on as the women gather around the box.

TANDY

Who's it from, Aunt Clara?

CLARA

Can't read a damn thing. Diane?

DIANE

Um...let's see. Oh, it's from Ohio. Uncle Jim. Mom, your brother Jim-

CLARA

Jimmy's getting creative. Must be the new girlfriend.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

DIANE

Aunt Clara, you don't even know what's inside.

Clara shoots Diane a look.

(To audience) When did this happen? When did my Aunt Clara get a personality? Has it always been there and I just didn't see it or has this been a recent development? What? And why didn't Mom tell me?

TANDY

(To audience)

I did. I told her. *(To Diane)* I told you.

DIANE

You didn't tell me.

TANDY

Tell you what?

CLARA

That Aunt Clara was...sort of-

TANDY

-What?

DIANE

Not boring. That she was old but not old acting.

CLARA

Oh please, Diane. It was you!

The other old women nod.

Honey, it was. Too damn busy getting a life going. Now don't get all guilty. We all did it. After about age ten, it's all black and white for about twenty, thirty years.

TERRY

It really is.

MAGGIE

It still is for you, Terry.

TERRY

Like you don't have strong opinions too.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

ANN

Girls, come on. This is Diane's epiphany. We all had it. We don't want to mess up Diane's turn.

DIANE

So this is how it started. With an old woman in a wheelchair bonking another on the head with a balloon.

CLARA

Terry, hand me those scissors.

She does.

EDWARD

Well, happy birthday, Clara.

All the women look at Edward for a moment. The lights change for a brief moment and then resume.

CLARA

(scissors in hand)

Thank you, Graham...I mean Edward. Stay for some cake.

Clara eyes the box.

Well, at least it's not an Omaha Steaks box. Jimmy's finally beginning to think outside the box.

DIANE

(whispering to Clara)

Don't hold back, Aunt Clara. Tell us what you really think.

CLARA

(not whispering)

You want to know what I really think?

DIANE

Yeah.

CLARA

Really?

DIANE

Yes.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

Ann hands Edward a piece of cake. With Terry's scissors, Clara opens the box.

CLARA

Okay. I think your Uncle Jimmy's been so busy worrying about doing the right thing he's never had the joy of doing the wrong thing. I think Tandy never had a chance to knock her mother, my sister, off the Mommy pedestal before Franny died and it's really screwed Tandy up. She's terrified of getting old; terrified of being...oh, me, I suppose. She could clearly use some therapy. I think you need to get your ass to New York City, or Chicago, or wherever, don't marry, only have affairs until you make your mark, 'cuz you won't be truly happy in love until you are happy in work and you won't be truly happy in work until you have wonderful, loving people to share it all with, and yes, it's a contradiction and it's all hard and messy. Oh, and don't ever think that anybody else is impervious nerves and fears and insecurities. You are as smart as everybody else in the room. And work your butt off. At what you love. That's the only advantage under your control that you've got. Oh, don't gossip. It'll always come around to bite you in the ass. And I think your Uncle Graham had just as good an ass as that nice young delivery guy.

She looks inside the box.

Oh geez. Somebody gave Jimmy a Harry & David catalogue.

She lifts out an elaborate gift basket. Diane has sat back on the floor.

TERRY

Any chocolate?

CLARA

No, it's the cheeses, fruits and nuts one.

ANN

How lovely.

MAGGIE

Is it the forty-nine ninety-five one or the eighty-nine ninety-five one?

CLARA

Eighty-nine. Love those nuts. Graham was a big fan of pistachios. The cheese dip is crappy though.

Tandy hands Diane a piece of cake.

TANDY

For the record, Aunt Clara, I'm not afraid of getting old.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

CLARA

What? Oh, damn it, I forgot. You'll still...

Clara's voice trails off. She wiggles her hand inside the basket, trying to get at the nuts.

TANDY

Still what?

CLARA

Still there.

TANDY

Where?

CLARA

There.

TANDY

Where there?

CLARA

There there.

TANDY

WHERE IS THERE?

CLARA

Have you had any cake, Tandy?

TANDY

No.

CLARA

You should.

DIANE

Aunt Clara, why haven't you...um...I've never heard you really talk like this before.

CLARA

You've never asked me what I really thought before. And, quite frankly sweetheart, I just didn't think you could understand. You couldn't see beyond the old lady mask. Until now. Now, you're starting to get good.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

DIANE

Okay. Thanks.

CLARA

Oh, I know. You're young and beautiful and hot. All the commercials are about you. All you young people. And the assumption is that we all just find you fascinating and want to be you again. Sweetheart, I just don't.

DIANE

Really?

CLARA

No. I'm lying. Damn. I do but I don't. Honey, I'm gonna die soon.

DIANE

Aunt Clara, don't say-

CLARA

Shut up. Just shut up. Don't tell me what to say or not say. That's our problem. We don't SAY.

DIANE

Say what?

CLARA

Truth. I'm gonna die. You're gonna die. We're all gonna die. What's the big deal? Dammit, where was I? See, that's the cost of trying to shut somebody up. I just completely lost my train of-

TANDY

That you want to be young again. Or don't. Which one was it?

CLARA

That was it. Diane, it's a stupid question. It's similar to those questions...like...well, oh! If you could change any body part, what would it be?

TANDY

My neck.

DIANE

My ass.

TANDY

My forehead.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

ANN

My stomach.

MAGGIE

This flappy skin part right here.

TANDY

These lines.

TERRY

(Rubbing her chin)

I've got hair places I never had hair before.

DIANE

What lines?

CLARA

Stop it. It's a stupid question.

DIANE

Don't people say there are no stupid questions?

CLARA

Oh, come on! Of course there're stupid questions.

ANN

Excuse me, but we need a conflict.

MAGGIE

What?

ANN

The world. The world wants a conflict. Doesn't it? Maybe I'm wrong. Am I wrong?

CLARA

The world can read the paper.

ANN

No. I'm right. To make us interesting. Worthy of a play and all. Beginning, middle and end. You just can't do the end. The end is boring.

CLARA

Is it? Is the end boring?

They all think for a moment.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

TANDY

Well...

Tandy hesitates.

TERRY

What?

CLARA

Yeah. Spit it out.

TANDY

I will, Aunt Clara. Give me a second, okay?!

Tandy pauses and collects herself.

No one's ever really gotten here before. People always died much sooner, right? Life expectancy and all that.

MAGGIE

Dying in childbirth.

TERRY

Typhoid. Scarlet fever. Polio. Pneumonia.

CLARA

Plus, the ones that got here...the women-

MAGGIE

Were either too busy taking care of other people or just plain too tuckered out to speak up.

CLARA

No. We spoke. Who listened?

MAGGIE

Men's stories. They got out.

Maggie glares at Edward, who is oblivious, happily munching away on a second piece of cake.

TERRY

Those dreadful old buddy, let's-pull-one-last-heist movies.

ANN

Westerns.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

MAGGIE

Gangsters as gods.

CLARA

War movies.

TANDY

Churchill, presidents, world leader bio-pics-

ANN

-Harry Potter. Oh, gals, look at them.

Ann gestures to audience.

See. They're worried. They don't want to be lectured too. Feminism, you know. We sound like those feminists.

MAGGIE

What's wrong with those feminists? I'm a feminist!

TERRY

Please don't get started on that Democrat feminist horse manure.

ANN

Of course, I didn't mean you, Maggie.

MAGGIE

Yes, you did! And it's not horse shit and yes, you did mean me. 'Fess up.

ANN

Well, goodness, maybe I did. Maybe a little!

She giggles.

But, you see, I'm not Churchill. I didn't do all that interesting stuff. World War II, for goodness sake. I didn't do all that.

MAGGIE

So, nothing interesting, eh? No conflict?

CLARA

Maybe Ann's conflict was different. Less let's-win-this-battle type of fight. Something more-

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

-subtle.
TERRY

Less obvious?
DIANE

This is good. Edward, you be Frank.
CLARA

Terry takes his cake, which Edward relinquishes somewhat reluctantly.

What are we doing?
DIANE

Flashback!
ANN
(excited)

Clara grabs one of the wigs from Tandy's pocket and hands it to Ann, who places it under her blouse to simulate a pregnancy. Maggie hands Frank a crisp white dress shirt, the other women clear the plates, silverware and Diane hands Ann some coupons. Terry gives Ann her scissors and Ann begins cutting out coupons.

Frank is getting ready for work.

Does it feel like a boy?
FRANK

Oh goodness, Frank, I don't know what a boy would feel like.
ANN

I've got Trevor working on the trust.
FRANK

Frank is putting on his cuff links.

Do you need me to sign anything?
ANN

What?
FRANK

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

ANN

For the trust. You need me to sign anything?

FRANK

Oh no, of course not. Just have to keep the money in the family. We have the club Friday. And Walter's thing on Saturday.

ANN

I got your tux back.

Frank checks his appearance in the mirror.

FRANK

Get a new dress. I'll put extra in your account this week.

ANN

Can't I just wear the pink? It's comfortable and going shopping right now just-

FRANK

No. Of course not. Get a dress. Go to Elizabeth's boutique. Want Mother to come with you and help?

ANN

Oh no! I'll be fine.

Frank turns back to the mirror.

FRANK

I'll tell Alice to call Elizabeth to have her lay a few things aside.

ANN

Oh goodness, Frank, I can pick out a dress by myself.

FRANK

Some for now and some for after the baby. Elizabeth will know. What are you doing?

ANN

Cutting coupons.

Frank smooths his hair.

FRANK

(facing her)

Annie dear. We can't use coupons. I've told you.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

ANN

Yes, we can. I mean, I like to help. Help protect...I know you have money but every little bit helps. My mother and I always used to-

FRANK

-Annie, sweetie, it looks bad. For us to use coupons at the market. You are just the sweetest thing for wanting to help but don't you see? It makes the family look bad. It reflects poorly on us if you use coupons. It is so sweet and wonderful of you to want to help but don't do this anymore, okay? I'll put extra in your account this month. And make sure you get to Elizabeth's. I'll have Mother call you and you can go together.

Terry walks on with Frank's tie, snaps it once like a weapon and then hands it to him.

ANN

Don't call your mother. I'll go but you don't have to call your mother.

Frank ties his tie.

FRANK

Alice has me booked solid with meetings from eight o'clock on. I've got to remember to have her get that gift for the Mansfields on her lunch hour. Remember, drinks at the club at six. Did you get the florist all straight for Saturday? You called Jensen's, right?

ANN

Of course I called Jensen's.

FRANK

Well, remember that time when you called that other-

ANN

Frank, that was two years ago. Once. One time, I tried somebody different. Once.

FRANK

I'm just saying, I like us to use Jensen's. I didn't like what those others did. It didn't look-

ANN

Elegant. I know.

FRANK

It's easier to just go with Jensen's.

ANN

Frank. I called Jensen's. We always use Jensen's. One time, I didn't use Jensen's. One mistake. One time. I apologized. We've used Jensen's ever since. I know now. Everyone

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

ANN (CONT'D)

uses Jensen's. Your mother uses Jensen's, everyone we know uses Jensen's so, of course, we use Jensen's.

FRANK

They're just more elegant.

The tie is finished. Frank kisses Ann.

I'll have Mother call you about getting you over to Elizabeth's.

Terry hands Frank a briefcase. Frank exits.

TERRY

Was he really that bad?

ANN

Actually, I think he was probably worse. Worse than that. That that just happened. I think I don't want to remember how whipped I was.

CLARA

How did you get out?

Ann smiles and picks up her coupons and begins cutting. Ann suddenly screams, startling everyone.

ANN

Oh! Oh my! I forgot.

MAGGIE

What?

ANN

My turn. I left everyone just hanging there.

To the audience.

I'm so sorry. Just like me to ruin everything. Let's see. One marriage. Two children. Three jobs.

The others groan, realizing that this was what her scream was about.

Sexual partners...do I really have to do this part? They don't really care about how many men I've been to bed with.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

CLARA

So what? Who cares what anybody thinks?

ANN

Fourteen. *(to audience)* Oh, don't look so surprised. Seven thousand books. I just love to read. One automobile accident. Not my fault. Frank's but he blamed me.

MAGGIE

Son of a bitch.

TERRY

Maggie, do you really have to subject everyone to that mouth of yours?

MAGGIE

Yes, Terry, I do. I'm showing solidarity with Ann.

TERRY

There are more graceful ways to express oneself.

ANN

No, actually, I think Maggie's about right. Frank was a son of a bitch. Thank you, Maggie.

MAGGIE

You're welcome. Go on.

ANN

I've never been real sick. I got a hysterectomy but pretty much everyone I know has gotten one of those.

CLARA

I didn't. Butchers. Doctors. All of 'em. Would cut up kittens just for the billing hours. What else, Ann?

ANN

I think that's it. Has everybody gone?

MAGGIE

Nope. Terry's still gotta go.

TERRY

I went already.

MAGGIE

But you haven't really revealed much.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

TERRY

Neither have you.

MAGGIE

Come on. Do it. It'll be fun.

TERRY

Oh please. No. No! This is not going to be one of those "every character takes their turn spilling their life story" things.

MAGGIE

Terry! Of course it is. And you should completely buy into it.

TERRY

Meaning?

MAGGIE

You're a Republican.

TERRY

Meaning?

MAGGIE

You're a Republican!

TERRY

Meaning, what? I've got rotten taste in art, dramatic structure and absolutely no appreciation for the creative?

MAGGIE

(Pause)

Yes. It's true! Your kind likes...*Leave It To Beaver*. Celine Dion. Wholesome sit-coms. All those crappy legal TV shows.

TERRY

You are frighteningly closed-minded.

MAGGIE

I am not!

TERRY

Yes, you are. To you, every Republican is a boring, fascist, rigid stick-in-the-mud and every liberal is a free-and-easy, loving, superior good guy.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

MAGGIE

You said it, sweetheart, not me.

TERRY

I'm not doing it.

MAGGIE

Come on!

CLARA

Why not? 'Cuz they'll be bored?

Clara gestures to the audience.

TERRY

No. Because remembering isn't always neat. Organized. Safe.

Light change. Terry takes her wig off and sinks to the floor. Maggie gets out of her wheelchair. She flops on the floor, along with Clara and Ann. They are now Terry's sisters, encircling her and comforting her.

TERRY
(crying)

He...hurt me.

SISTER #1 (ANN)

How? How did he hurt you?

TERRY

It was just...it was my fault. It was. I was flirting. I was so stupid. I acted like some stupid slut. Some stupid, stupid slutty girl.

SISTER #2 (CLARA)

Terry, come on. What happened?

TERRY

He made me. That guy. The...cute one. Carl.

SISTER #3 (MAGGIE)

Made you do what?

TERRY

We were necking. And then I wanted to stop. He called me a tease. And then he made me.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

SISTER #2

Do it?

TERRY

Oh god. Don't tell. Don't tell anybody.

Lights change back. Maggie returns to the wheelchair and the others resume their positions.

So I'm not taking a turn. *(To audience)* You got to meet Ann's Frank. You don't get to meet the men in my life.

ANN

Just one? It might be fun.

MAGGIE

Ann's right. Come on.

TERRY

I said no and I mean no. It's a word Republicans are capable of uttering and actually sticking to. I don't think Democrats are familiar with it. Would you care for a tutorial?

MAGGIE

(softly)

You want me to kill him for you?

TERRY

Who?

MAGGIE

You know who. I can get it done, you know. I know people.

TERRY

I should have known you seventy years ago.

MAGGIE

You would have hated me seventy years ago.

TERRY

(beginning to laugh)

Maybe. But then, I hate you right now.

MAGGIE

You know you're beautiful when you're angry?

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

TERRY
(laughing)

Stop it.

MAGGIE

Never. No. See! I can say no!

Terry continues to laugh, throwing her head back and running her fingers through her long hair. Terry becomes Carmen. She looks up at Maggie and smiles an intimate, gentle smile. Maggie lounges back in her wheelchair.

MAGGIE

Carmen.

CARMEN
(Spanish accent)

I've got to get back to work.

MAGGIE

No, you don't.

CARMEN

Yes, I do. I can't believe you somehow make me do this every time.

MAGGIE

No, I don't make you do anything.

CARMEN

I've never met a woman who loved my beans and rice so much.

MAGGIE

I just love to watch you cook your beans and rice.

CARMEN

You just hate to cook.

MAGGIE

No.

CARMEN

Then why don't you ever cook?

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

No. I cook. MAGGIE

When? For Clancy? CARMEN

No. For you. MAGGIE

I have to get back. CARMEN

No, you don't. MAGGIE

You have to get back too. CARMEN

No, I don't. MAGGIE

You're trying to make me lose my mind, aren't you? CARMEN

No. MAGGIE

You...you are trouble. CARMEN

No. MAGGIE

Yes! CARMEN

No! Don't you have to get back? MAGGIE

Eat your beans. You're too thin, you know. CARMEN

No. I'm not too thin. MAGGIE

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

CARMEN

Eat. I have to go.

MAGGIE

Me too.

CARMEN

It's raining. Why do you have to ride that awful motorcycle?

MAGGIE

It's not awful. It's freeing.

CARMEN

It's a deathtrap. God never intended for men to ride those things.

MAGGIE

I'm not a man.

Maggie rolls her chair over to Carmen and pulls her down onto her lap.

CARMEN

You'll meet your end on those wheels.

MAGGIE

But I'll be thinking of you.

Terry stands.

TERRY

No, you won't. You're too old. You'll never learn how to say no and mean it.

MAGGIE

If you start with that "line in the sand" garbage, I might have to die right now.

CLARA

Will you two ever stop bickering?

MAGGIE AND TERRY

(in unison)

No.

ANN

So what are we about? Tonight? Old ladies dying? That's a little...depressing, isn't it? I wouldn't want to watch that.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

DIANE

So is this the final frontier? Being old?

CLARA

The place everyone hopes to get to, but nobody wants to get to.

TANDY

No kidding.

MAGGIE

That last great adventure. The last moments. Making 'em good. Making peace.

TERRY

Making peace?

MAGGIE

Oh, don't worry, Terry. We'll never make peace.

CLARA

Cutting through the bullshit! Sorry, Terry. But that's it. Cutting through the knee-jerk dishonesty and second guessing we call caring. God, I'm brilliant.

DIANE

Yes, you are. But you forgot one thing.

CLARA

What?

DIANE

It's your turn.

TANDY

She's right. The thing.

DIANE

How many jobs? How many books? How many-

DIANE AND TANDY

(in unison)

-men?

Everyone laughs.

CLARA

They you go, going on about sex again.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

MAGGIE

Come on, Clara. Spit it out.

TERRY

Truly. If I have to indulge in all this New Age, self-revelatory silliness, so do you.

ANN

It is your turn.

CLARA

Alright! Alright! I'm just getting my thoughts in order. Prioritizing.

TERRY

Stalling.

Edward strolls on as GRAHAM.

ANN

(to audience)

Edward's Graham now. Clara's dead husband. He's in Clara's mind but you can see him too. Neat, isn't it? We should do this every party!

All of Graham's next lines are directed to Clara.

CLARA

One husband. One man. A few careers. Franny's and my business. Two degrees.

TANDY

Really?

CLARA

Hush! It's my turn. Two children. 473 movies. Four thousand, three hundred books, give or take a hundred. Ran for office twice.

GRAHAM

You won that second time.

CLARA

Won once. Almost killed by a house fire. Hit by a car. Fell of a roof. *(Proudly)* Twice!

GRAHAM

The retirement years. Asia. Europe.

CLARA

Yes! I almost forgot. Traveled to fourteen different countries.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

MAGGIE

Shit. I forgot to say my different countries. Can I add to mine?

CLARA

Later.

ANN

It's Clara's turn.

MAGGIE

I know it's Clara's turn.

TERRY

Shut up, Maggie.

MAGGIE

You shut up.

CLARA

You both shut up.

GRAHAM

Don't forget the nuclear demonstrations.

CLARA

Arrested twice.

MAGGIE

Me too!

ANN

Really?!

TERRY

Me too. Once.

TANDY

Wow.

DIANE

Cool.

MAGGIE

(to Terry)

You? What for? Not wearing panty-hose to the Women's League?

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

DIANE

Aunt Clara, were you done?

CLARA

Am I done?

Clara looks at Graham.

GRAHAM

I think I am, Clara honey.

The lights suddenly go out on Graham and he exits.

MAGGIE

So gals. Are we done?

Silence. They all think.

ANN

You know...um...well...

TERRY

What?

ANN

The way people look at us...or don't look at us...it's like we should be done. Sort of, "Move over, lady. It's my turn." But I think it's still my turn too.

Pause.

I don't think I'm done yet.

MAGGIE

I'm not done. Not even close.

TERRY

I think I'm getting close to done.

MAGGIE

(kindly, interested)

Really?

TERRY

Yeah. I feel it. I feel about three, four more years in my bones.

DIANE

Is it scary?

Terry shrugs.

MAGGIE

Tell.

TERRY

It has grown...different. I believe in Jesus Christ, our Lord. I believe deeply in God. But I am beginning to think that I don't know what to feel about this dying. And it's intended that way. God requires us to always be open to him. To his message. And dying is the final moment of belief. To walk into the moment with expectations of...whatever...seems to say I'm as smart as God. But I confess my smallness.

DIANE

Is that okay? Does it feel...okay?

TERRY

I don't know. I can't believe that I won't be here. The fragrance of a flower will drift across this room, but I won't be here to smell it. My body. Me. All of it will be completely and utterly not here. How can I feel so alive now and, in a few years, or months or whenever, not be at all? When I exhale, expire, the instant I am gone, every single moment and memory of my life is wiped away. Because they only exist in my head anyway.

DIANE

But you will live on in other people.

Terry, Ann, Clara and Maggie groan.

CLARA

Diane honey, that's not what we are talking about. We're talking about us, not other people.

ANN

And dear, you really don't have to try to make us feel better. We know we're going to die.

CLARA

Am I the only one who...um...has forgotten half of her life? Really. I see a photograph and an entire year comes back to me. A year I had clean forgotten. I forgot a house we owned for five years. I look through old address books and half the people I don't even remember. But I remember that eight-year-old girl that kicked me every day at school for a year. God, I hope she's dead.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

TERRY

I do sometimes wonder what happened to the really shitty people.

MAGGIE

Terry!

ANN

Me too!

TANDY

Well, you probably outlived them.

CLARA

Nah. There are some really nasty folks in that hallway on the second floor.

MAGGIE

Eileen. What a lowlife gossip! And stupid too. But she makes herself sound smart with that got-lots-of-money attitude.

TERRY

Who's the gossip now?

MAGGIE

Twenty years younger and I'd kick her ass.

CLARA

Tandy.

TANDY

What, Aunt Clara?

CLARA

You go.

TANDY

Where?

CLARA

You go! Your turn.

TANDY

But this isn't about me.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

CLARA

Isn't it? You're on the stage. You're getting older, minute by minute. Second by second. Every second that beautiful daughter of yours matures, so do you.

TANDY

Thanks, Aunt Clara.

TERRY

So that's what we're doing? Maturing?

CLARA

Hush. *(To Tandy)* So?

TANDY

No. I mean, I'm still-

MAGGIE

-What?

TANDY

Nothing.

TERRY

You were going to say you're still young. Right?

TANDY

No!

CLARA

Really?

TANDY

I wasn't going to say that!

ANN

Really?

TANDY

Yes. Yes! Okay. I'm sorry but I'm not...

CLARA

What? Say it. It's okay. We've all been there.

TANDY

I'm not...you. I'm not gray. Wrinkled. I'm not a wrinkled old woman. Not yet.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

CLARA

You're still in Diane's camp?

TANDY

Yes!

Light change. All the women except Tandy are now in shadow.

You always think the dying part's going to happen to the other guy. It's never going to be you. You're the one who's supportive for everyone else. I still don't understand. How do you live when you know you may...when you know you may die?

Edward brings Clara a white doctor's coat which he helps her on with. Maggie gets out of her wheelchair and rolls it over to place it near to Tandy. Everyone but Tandy and Clara exit. Clara is now the DOCTOR.

DOCTOR

So, considering the size of your breast and the size of the tumor, there's very little to consider in regard to surgery. We'll have to remove the breast and if there is any lymph node involvement we'll-

The doctor continues to talk but no words come out of her mouth.

TANDY
(to doctor)

Okay.

(she nods)

Okay.

(she nods)

Okay.

(she nods)

How long?

(she nods)

TANDY (CONT'D)

Okay.

(she nods)

Could you say that again? What was that second part?

(she listens and then nods)

Okay.

(to audience)

In retrospect, you probably heard about as much as I did. After “cancerous” and “immediate surgery” you think you’re listening. And you are. Listening harder than you ever have to anybody in your life. But you’re listening as you fall down a mountain, trying to grasp at anything to stop your descent but you’re only picking up speed. It’s like the moment on a warm spring night, a night that feels like anything can happen, and you go to a party and something does. You see that man that you know you want to be with, his easy strength just pouring out of his body. And he smiles at you while he leans against the kitchen counter. And in that moment...your life is different. Or when you’re just driving down the street and then you’re out of control. Seeing the other car flashing towards you from the corner of your eye. your entire body twists trying to steer towards a safe place. Then...impact. The crunch and pop of metal. A hiss. Quiet. Broken glass drops, hitting the pavement with a pretty ping. Or the day you arrive at college. Your parents drive off and you can do anything. Take any class. Eat. Drink. Become...another person. Just this time you might be one of those people that “die young”. Diane might be a woman who loses her mother before...she sees her mother like this.

Tandy looks at Clara and sits in the wheelchair.

Oh my god. They’re going to cut my breast off.

She pulls out the scissors from the side pocket of the wheelchair and looks up at the doctor.

Okay.

She hands the scissors to the doctor. Tandy becomes aware of something in her back pocket. She reaches back and yanks out one of the gray wigs she was handed earlier. She stares at it. The women return. Tandy leaps out of the wheelchair and swings it around for Maggie.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

DIANE
(to Terry)

But you were talking about how you felt about...you know...

TERRY

Death.

DIANE

Well, yeah.

ANN

Shouldn't we save that for the second act? That is sort of second act stuff, isn't it? Not that I would know. Never went to the theatre much. Frank liked the symphony. I think. Maybe it was just because his parents liked it. I mean Diane, I really don't know. But sometimes the second act...well, to be organized...most movies and plays-

CLARA

Ann, what in god's name are you talking about?

TERRY

Death. I think. Right, Ann?

DIANE

No. Where to put death. Should we wait for it.

CLARA

The big finish, eh?

ANN

Well, I think it is supposed to be at the end! So there. Let's make the end of the play about death.

Everyone groans.

ANN

What? What?

CLARA

It's just so predictable, Ann.

ANN

Yeah! Because it's *death*.

TERRY

She makes a good point.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

TANDY

But then no one is exactly is going to want to stick around after intermission.

CLARA

Ho, ho, ho, I beg to differ.

Clara addresses the audience.

You all might think one of us got some insider information. Something that will make those last moments a little less uncomfortable to think about. You know, when you find that lump. Or you take that left turn you shouldn't have. Read an obit for someone a generation younger than you.

To the women.

They'll wait.

TANDY

Do you?

CLARA

What?

TANDY

Have insider information?

CLARA
(pause)

Yes.

TANDY

So?

CLARA

So?

TANDY

What is it?

CLARA
(to other old women)

Should I tell her?

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

DIANE

Yes.

TERRY

I don't know. Can she handle it?

CLARA

She did give birth. She's earned some stripes.

MAGGIE

I hate those macho, military metaphors. Almost as bad as football, go team, first-and-ten crap.

CLARA

Ann, should I tell her?

ANN

Um...sure.

MAGGIE

Terry?

TERRY

She might as well know.

All the old women nod. Terry, Maggie and Ann gently take Tandy and lead her downstage. They indicate for her to sit on the floor as the lights change, a single, soft spot coming up on Clara.

DIANE

Can I listen?

CLARA

Of course. But no telling.

DIANE

My lips are sealed.

Tandy and Diane sit together at Clara's feet.

CLARA

(softly)

Ann's right. *(Loudly)* We should wait for the second act.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

*Clara bursts out laughing. Lights return to normal.
The old women are laughing too.*

DIANE

Aunt Clara! That was shitty!

CLARA

Oh, come on. You two were asking for it. You both are smarter than to fall for that meaning of life, “I know what’s behind the veil of death” crap. One answer? Very linear. Way too easy.

ANN

Then what’s the second act going to be about? If it’s not about death, what’s it going to be about?

She gestures to audience.

They need to know.

CLARA
(smiling)

No, they don’t.

END OF ACT ONE

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

ACT TWO

Ann enters.

ANN
(to audience)

Did we lose anybody?

She looks out to the audience.

Goodness, I can't really tell. Oh well. The end of the act was pretty good, wasn't it? That Clara is so smart. I didn't see that coming.

Ann begins cutting up some cake and distributing it on to paper plates.

If you want, when it's all over, you can have some cake. Sort of a reward for sticking around. Kind of an optimistic...metaphor. Or is it a symbol? I don't know. Anyway, I bet you don't get any cake at the end of...um...

Ann calls out.

Maggie. Maggie.

Maggie rolls on stage.

MAGGIE

What?

Maggie sees the audience.

Oh. We're back.

ANN

Who's that guy I'm thinking of?

MAGGIE

What?

ANN

Who's that guy playwright I'm supposed to hate?

MAGGIE

What?

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

ANN

You know.

MAGGIE

No. Oh. Mamet.

ANN

(to audience)

I bet you don't get any cake at the end of a Mamet play.

MAGGIE

Ann, have you ever seen a Mamet play?

ANN

Oh, I don't know but do they give you cake afterwards?

MAGGIE

(calling)

Terry. Terry. Ann's making sense again and I'm scared.

Terry enters.

TERRY

Is it five?

Diane and Tandy follow, rolling a small cabinet on wheels. A few framed pictures rest on the top of it. Clara enters, with Edward behind her carrying some folding chairs.

No. I am not spending my entire second act in some rotten folding chair.

All the women look at Edward. He exits, dragging the folding chairs with him.

DIANE

He is very nice. Is he ever gonna get a chance to say anything?

CLARA

You mean, his own monologue? As Edward?

DIANE

I guess. Yeah. I mean, he is helping out alot.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

CLARA

So we should reward him for showing up by giving him a monologue?

Edward enters, pulling two upholstered chairs with him. They all look at him.

MAGGIE

I suppose we could think about it.

Edward exits offstage and returns with a third chair.

CLARA

If we don't, we'll get dismissed. Undeveloped character and all.

MAGGIE

He's a guy. Of course he's got an undeveloped character.

Everyone laughs.

EDWARD

(kindly but firmly)

Hey, I don't need your permission to speak.

Edward crosses downstage center and begins an impassioned monologue, which comes out completely silent.

MAGGIE

Yeah, you do. You always did but I just never realized it until I hit sixty or so.

DIANE

I'm confused.

CLARA

Don't worry. Just go with it. As you get to the end, things become more free form.

DIANE

That's just it! This entire thing is feeling kind of random. Could we...um...you know...

TERRY

What?

MAGGIE

Make it easier?

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

CLARA

More organized?

ANN

Neater?

DIANE

Yes!

TANDY

I'm feeling a little lost too.

DIANE

(gesturing to Edward)

Could someone tell him to stop!

At this point, Edward is tearing up. Ann crosses to Edward.

ANN

That was lovely, Edward. Now could you bring in two more chairs for Tandy and Diane? You're so sweet.

Edward very intently and dramatically exits. Clara, Ann and Terry sit. Terry looks at Maggie's wristwatch.

TERRY

Yup, it's five.

Terry gets up, crosses to the cabinet, pulls out some small glasses and a bottle of bourbon. She begins pouring.

TANDY

We're doing shots?

DIANE

Cool!

TERRY

No, we're having a drink.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

CLARA

It's getting dark.

ANN

It gets dark so quickly in winter.

Terry passes out the drinks to everyone.

MAGGIE

Okay. Where were we?

TANDY

The mystery of the second act.

MAGGIE

Oh yeah. The second act. The beginning of the end. Oooh.

All the women toast and take a sip, except Diane and Tandy.

DIANE

Okay. Hold on. What's going on?

CLARA

What do you mean, Diane?

DIANE

Mom?

TANDY

I think Diane's concerned because there really should be more structure to all this.

TERRY

Structure is nice. She's probably right.

CLARA

Alright. Structure. What do you suggest?

DIANE

Well, we had the birthday party...now it's-

CLARA

Cocktail hour?

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

ANN

Oh no. I never liked cocktail hour.

MAGGIE

Why? Oh. Frank. The son of a bitch. Right.

ANN

Frank's family had cocktail hour before dinner (*She shudders*) Oh! How about Happy Hour? Happy Hour is fun. Let's do Happy Hour.

CLARA
(*to Diane*)

Happy?

DIANE

Yeah. Happy Hour at the Old Folks...I mean retirement-

CLARA

-oh please, Diane. Old Folks Home. Let's get on with it. Happy Hour at the Old Folks Home.

Everyone sips including Diane and Tandy.

TERRY

A glass of really good bourbon will do more for you than any of those pain killers they hand out.

Maggie carefully places her glass on the floor by her wheelchair and then flies from her wheelchair in a violent jolt and lands twisted on stage. She lies there for a moment, gasping. Light change. Single light on Maggie.

MAGGIE
(*gasping in pain*)

Carmen.

The following voices float out from the darkness.

WOMAN #1 (CLARA)

What's that?

WOMAN #2 (TERRY)

Is it a log?

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

WOMAN #1 (CLARA)

No. I don't think. Get it off the road and then...oh my god. Oh my god.

Flashing emergency light.

RESCUE WORKER (EDWARD)

Miss. Miss, hold on. This is going to hurt. What's your name?

MAGGIE

(gasping)

Maggie.

RESCUE WORKER

Maggie, you've got a pretty bad break here. I'm going to have to set it before we move you, okay? I'm going to give you a shot to kill some of the pain.

MAGGIE

Okay.

Maggie begins to cry.

Oh god.

Terry, Clara, Ann, Tandy and Diane now rise and lift Maggie off the floor and replace her in her wheelchair. Clara assumes the role of the NURSE.

NURSE

Drink this, Miss. It'll help with the pain.

Clara places the drink to Maggie's mouth. Maggie swallows.

NURSE

Does that help?

MAGGIE

No. Not yet.

NURSE

It might take awhile.

The lights change. Clara, Ann and Terry return to their seats.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

TERRY

How's the leg, Maggie?

MAGGIE

Hurts. Always hurts.

To audience.

The pain never ends. No respite. Ever. No one tells you that.

The lights begin to change.

That what you do when you're young comes back. Comes back to get you. At first you get operations. They're so smart. They cut you. All those doctors. Specialty clinics. Physical therapy. But in the end, it's either life or genetics that's gonna get you. And nobody's exempt. You think you are! *(To an audience member)* You do. And you. I can tell. Anybody young. I did. But you're not. "Oh, who cares when I'm old. I wanna live now!" That's what I thought too. But then, one day-

CLARA

You're them. The Old.

MAGGIE

Why do you think old people complain about their bodies? Because stuff hurts. It really hurts. And it's scary too. When twenty-year-olds are scared and hurt, you think they don't talk about it? They call their mommy, stay home from school, or pour out their hearts to their friends in a bar. I'm really, really angry. My body, my leg and hip hurt all the time. I ache. I'm slow and awkward and I'm not slow and awkward. This is somebody else's body. This isn't Maggie. This belongs to some withered old lady. And I want to talk about it! Would it kill you to sit and listen to me for five minutes while I howl at the skies about it? I swear, if somebody would just listen, hard, I think I would get sick of saying it. My kids feign compassion and hearing it but they are someplace else after about 30 seconds. I birthed you, you little stinkers, the least you could do is listen to my pain and my rage for a couple of minutes once a week. Hear me. But don't do it from-

She struggles to find the perfect words.

Don't owe me. Know me. Like a friend. Like a person. This is my experience. If you want to know me, this is part of the deal.

Lights change. They dim and fracture so some odd parts of the stage are illuminated, others dark. A part of Diane's face is clear, the rest in shadow. Same for the others except Clara. She rests in the chair, spot on her.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

CLARA

I lost the genetics deal. Sight like shattered tinted glass run through a food processor. Vision cut to shreds. Light, dark, shape and mass. I get slivers of glimpsing from the corners of my eyes. Nothing to grab on to. I can perceive a mountain-

A faint mountain gobo is projected on the back wall.

-but I can't tell the difference between Tandy and Diane until they speak.

Tandy takes Diane's place in the shaft of light.

No pain, just distance from inches away. Reading nothing. Expression from voice, attitude, the gesture of a hand, the lilt of a laugh. The vision in my memory is crystal sharp but today? It gets old, this kinda-sorta blind thing. "Where do I sign? Can you show me? What are the specials? I can't quite see them. What's on TV? Can't read the TV Guide. Chicken or bologna. Can't quite tell. Ouch! Didn't see that sliding glass door." I move gracefully, pain-free, in the dark. I'm not sure how to feel about this deal.

Lights resume to full.

TANDY

So, how are your eyes these days?

CLARA
(*pause*)

Fine.

DIANE

How do I prepare for this? Or avoid this. Sorry but, you know, this sounds-

MAGGIE

You don't.

ANN

Well now Maggie, she could die. I mean, right now. (*pause*) But that really isn't a good solution. That was stupid. Sorry.

CLARA

No, Ann, you're about right.

MAGGIE

Yup, that's pretty much the only way outta this outcome.

TERRY

Eat clean and fresh and move your body. If you want to grow old, you have to grow up. Don't mess with Mother Nature unless she's messing with you. Don't be too fat. Don't

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

TERRY (CONT'D)

be too thin. My goodness, it's obvious. All these ridiculous ideas people keep coming up with, like they're smarter than the Almighty. Pills and injections and treatments. Bunch of pompous bozos. Vain, indulgent. Everybody thinks they're special. "Oh, I won't get hurt. I'm special." Grow up.

MAGGIE

Spoken like a true Republican.

TERRY

Hey, who's in the wheelchair and who's walking around?

MAGGIE

You've got a point.

TERRY

I know I do.

CLARA

So nothing hurts you, Terry?

Light change. Ann rises as Teacher.

TEACHER

As you know, Mrs. Kellogg, she's severely handicapped. At the facility, they'll probably be able to get her to a certain level of functionality with a great deal of work. And with two normal children at home, it would be best for everyone.

Tandy rises as DOCTOR.

DOCTOR

I'm sorry, Mrs. Kellogg, but there was nothing we could do. All the arteries to his heart were clogged. It's quite amazing he made it to forty-three. Didn't he show any symptoms?

Clara rises as SECRETARY.

SECRETARY

Mrs. Kellogg, I know things have been slow but the Christmas party. And the bonuses. You need to cut those checks. And Mr. Clark called from Mutual of Omaha. Something about the group plan rates. And we've got Suzanne going out to have her baby. You said to keep her on payroll?

Terry nods.

SECRETARY (CONT'D)

Okay. What else? Oh, the accountant, Miss Davidson, called from your daughter's...um...school. She needs to talk to you whenever you can call her.

Diane rises, becoming LILY.

LILY

Mommy. I'm dumb. I'm dumb. I'm not like the other kids. I'm not like Joan or Mikey. I wish I was dead. I'm so stupid. Stupid, stupid, stupid.

Maggie rises, becoming JOAN.

JOAN

Mom! We're getting married. Why are you on me all the time to finish college? Larry and I are going to do this. We love each other.

Edward enters, becoming MICHAEL.

MICHAEL

(fighting tears)

Mom. Cathy went into labor early. There were problems. The twins, oh god, Mom, the doctors say...the baby boy. He's not doing so good.

He breaks down.

Oh god, Mom. What am I gonna do?

JOAN

Mom. He left us. So, yes, you were right, okay? Happy? He left.

MICHAEL

Mom, thanks for the help with Mark's school.

LILY

I'm okay, Mommy. I'm just sad. Do you ever get sad?

JOAN

I can get my own job, Mom, thank you very much.

MICHAEL

Mom, Cathy's been a little depressed. For awhile. I'm not sure what to do. What do you do with that?

DOCTOR

Mrs. Kellogg? It's your daughter. Lily. I have some bad news.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

JOAN

You're always criticizing me! Everything I do. It's all you've ever done. You were either at work or on me. Nothing I did was ever good enough for the great Mrs. Kellogg. How could I possibly measure up to your standards? I never want to talk to you again.

MICHAEL

Cathy. Cathy tried to kill herself. God, Mom. She tried to kill herself.

JOAN

I can't live around here anymore. I'm taking the kids and moving to California. I've got a job there. I don't know. Maybe I'll bring the kids back at Christmas. I don't know.

MICHAEL

Mark's...well he's doing okay. He got this job at the market. He's a bagger. But Mary. Mom, she's got this thing. Anorexia. It's like an illness. Geez, Mom. Having kids is so hard.

Light change.

TERRY

No, Clara. Nothing hurts.

MAGGIE

(gently)

Bullshit.

TERRY

Don't you have to take a pill?

MAGGIE

Oh yes! Thanks.

Maggie pulls out a pill bottle from her wheelchair pocket, Ann, Terry and Clara all cross to the cabinet, take out pill bottles and, with varying degrees of difficulty, everyone opens her bottle. Each takes a pill and returns to her chair.

CLARA

Tandy?

Tandy pours small glasses of water for everyone and Diane passes them around.

Thank you, girls.

CLARA (CONT'D)

(To audience)

Yeah, this has gotten a little dark. All this pain and blindness and... pain. Oh well, if we can take it, you can. We're just a bunch of old ladies! Face it. A lot of us live for decades in old folk ghettos only to get killed off by some fire caused by an old geezer who couldn't give up the Marlboros.

DIANE

Mom and I would never let that happen to you!

Clara shoots Diane a look.

CLARA

Really? How much money do you have? Got a whole lot extra to cover my expenses?

DIANE

No. But Mom and I-

TANDY

We would never let you live in a place like that, Aunt Clara. You know that.

TERRY

But you don't. You don't know.

ANN

Not when you're getting older.

CLARA

People have got their own lives. They start going away. Going into debt. Buying houses and cars.

ANN

They don't want to pour the tuition or second BMW into a nice apartment for their mother.

TERRY

Maybe your kids are counting on you instead of you being able to count on your kids.

CLARA

You know what killed my best friend-

TERRY

My secretary, dozens of old employees-

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

ANN

My mother-

MAGGIE

My sister, lots of my friends and both my cousins?

CLARA

NO MONEY. Not heart disease. Not cancer. Not strokes.

ANN

No money.

DIANE

That's crazy. I mean-

MAGGIE

How much do you think my heart medicine costs?

CLARA

The heat wave last year. How much was your mother's air-conditioning, electric bill? Tandy? Tandy?

Tandy is staring at the old women.

TANDY

Oh my god.

CLARA

Tandy?

TANDY

Oh my god. This is all me. Everything you've been talking about. The fear. The no money. The body breaking. The randomness of life. It's been bubbling under the surface, just out of reach, for...how long? God damn it! When did I stop being Diane and become you? When did I stop being the young one? But it's happened. I've crossed over. Damn it. When did this happen?

Subtle light change. Tandy remembers.

TANDY

I left the doctor's office. After. The nurse pointed me to the bathroom.

Ann as Nurse points Tandy towards the bottom of the stage. Diane faces Tandy with an empty picture frame. Tandy and Diane look at each other through it. They mirror each other for a moment and then

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

Tandy peers closer. Diane suddenly reacts, pulling away. Clara takes Diane's place holding the mirror.

TANDY (CONT'D)

The light. That shrill, glaring fluorescent pounds down on me and I see the gray. The roots are the root of the problem. They're gray. Not my hair anymore but old hair. And my face, young but not. Wrinkles. No. Not yet. Not wrinkles yet. More like remnants of a bad night that hasn't gone away by four in the afternoon. You know, when you sleep on your pillow all wrong. Have I been walking around all day like this? The doctor said I was young but I look like-

MAGGIE

-that faded woman in the waiting room.

TERRY

The old gal who looks so silly working behind the counter at the Starbucks.

ANN

Those women who let themselves "go."

CLARA

Mom.

TANDY

Old. Mom, if she had gotten old.

CLARA

Diane, get your ass back here.

Diane somewhat reluctantly returns to the mirror. Tandy stares at Clara and Tandy standing side by side on the other side of the frame.

TANDY

Shit. Who am I?

CLARA

This isn't my face.

DIANE

It's so old.

CLARA

And if I want to get any older-

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

TANDY

-they're going to have to cut off my breast.

Tandy turns away from the mirror. Ann hands her a lipstick.

Thanks.

Hand shaking, Tandy applies it. Diane takes the mirror offstage and returns.

ANN

It's a good color for you.

TANDY

Thanks.

ANN

(to audience)

All the symbolism there. It's a bit too fancy for me too. But at least it's symbolism you can sort of understand. I hate when a show is so fancy, it makes you feel stupid.

She glances out the window.

Goodness! Look how dark it is already.

MAGGIE

Night comes fast, especially in winter.

CLARA

Whoa. Be careful there. Don't want to get too symbolic. Ann might break out in hives.

ANN

Clara! That's mean.

CLARA

Oh, pshaw. Get over it.

TERRY

Pshaw! Now there's a swear word I can get behind. I miss pshaw. I miss crimany. I miss commercials that don't look like porn. I miss young people that are innocent and naive.

MAGGIE

Oh god. She's going Republican again. Somebody hose her down.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

TERRY

So you like what you see on TV? You're completely alright with how people behave and dress and what your grandchildren see?

MAGGIE

No! Of course not, Terry. I just don't...

TERRY

What?

MAGGIE

Stop it.

TERRY

What!?

MAGGIE

I don't want to be one of those old folks that complain about those young folks' crazy music and silly get-ups. I don't want to be my mother. She hated me. Hated that I was different. I don't want that. I don't want to be left behind.

TERRY

But...

MAGGIE

I don't know.

TERRY

Come on. Spit it out.

ANN

Come on, Maggie.

MAGGIE

Is the ass hanging out of the back of your pants liberation?

Diane yanks her pants up.

ANN

I know! I saw a music video the other day...I was looking for the game. I hate all these channels. A million channels, all trying to sell you stuff, nothing good on and you can't ever find the game. It used to always be on the same station. Same time. Same sponsors.

CLARA

Have Jeannie record it for you.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

ANN

I like to watch them live. Later, it's just not the same.

TANDY

Ann. The music video?

ANN

Oh. The girls on it all looked...well...

TERRY

Say it.

ANN

Their movements. They kept thrusting everything out real hard and the guys...well...they certainly should have been enjoying it but they all looked mad as all get out. And the outfits on these girls...

TERRY

Say it, Ann.

MAGGIE

They look like sluts. It's like a man's version of liberation. Freedom to sleep around and wear underwear that hurts but makes you look like a stripper. And what is the reason in heaven for those goddamn thong things?

DIANE

They get rid of panty line.

MAGGIE

What the hell's wrong with panty line?

DIANE

Hey. You wore girdles.

MAGGIE

I never wore a girdle in my life.

TERRY

I kinda miss girdles.

MAGGIE

You would.

DIANE

We, as women, are allowed to embrace our sexuality. That's what it's about.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

TERRY

Really?

DIANE

Yes! A woman is a complete person. We can be in control of business and in control of our own pleasure as well. Neither one or the other. Both. Full, complete, satisfied individuals. In partnership. Free to define ourselves through every aspect of the life experience. We aren't defined by societal dictates. Hell, we do exactly what we want. Want to be a corporate hotshot, we do it. Have a child, we do it. Travel, invest, run a business, buy a house, we do it.

Diane pours herself a shot and knocks it back.

TANDY

So did we.

CLARA

Actually, so did we!

TERRY

We did! Yes, we did! I mean, I didn't want to. I didn't think I wanted to. But when I had to...I did it.

MAGGIE

And you liked it too, didn't you?

Terry nods.

TERRY

And I was good at it. Good at business. Not so great at motherhood but good at business.

MAGGIE

You did okay. You did what you had to do.

CLARA

(to Diane)

So no hoping to find the love of your life and get married?

DIANE

Of course, that too. But no feeling guilty about also having a career. Equal partnership.

MAGGIE

God, I hope it works for you all. I really do.

To other older women.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Maybe they'll get it.

To Tandy.

Did you get it?

TANDY

Tried. But no guilt? No fear? Not even close.

Everyone falls silent for a moment.

DIANE

What the hell is pshaw?

CLARA

Google it.

MAGGIE

I'm hungry.

TERRY

Me too.

Terry checks Maggie's watch.

They're serving. Come on. It's Mexican tonight.

MAGGIE

I love Mexican.

TERRY

How you tolerate those beans, I'll never know.

CLARA

I live across the hall from her. She doesn't.

MAGGIE

Clara. You stinker!

CLARA

No, Maggie, tomorrow, you'll be the stinker.

Everyone exits except Ann.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

ANN

(to audience)

Still waiting for me? How can such a sweet gal be an embezzler? But by now, you must have figured out we aren't exactly what we appear. Roomful of old ladies. Ha! You did figure out that Maggie's a lesbian, right? And she and Terry are best friends although nobody can figure out why, 'cuz Terry certainly isn't! A lesbian, I mean. Clara's smart as heck and just lovely but she misses her Graham something fierce. I think she's so...I don't know...open because she's not afraid. She sort of wants to die just a little tiny bit because she knows that the missing Graham ache just won't ever go away. She's so lucky to have her kids and Tandy and Diane.

Edward as Frank enters. He hands Ann her wig.

Oh, yes. My money.

Ann puts her wig under her shirt to simulate pregnancy. Diane enters as the boutique owner ELIZABETH, carrying a long, conservative evening gown. She displays it across her arms to Ann. Elizabeth and Frank catch eyes and freeze. Light change.

You know when you just know something? Suddenly. Epiphany. I had one! Right then. Right in Elizabeth's. It was rather exciting, my epiphany. Frank was going to get his heir and a spare outta me and then he was going to leave me. For her. After an appropriate amount of time, of course. Elizabeth fit in. I didn't. I was a mistake. A correctable mistake. I knew. There was no way I could win on their terms.

Ann takes the dress.

So I made up my own.

Elizabeth exits. Ann turns to Frank, dress displayed in front of her.

FRANK

That will do.

ANN

Frank. I was thinking. With my accounting degree, after the baby, I could come in and work, just part time of course, helping out at the office.

FRANK

What? No.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

ANN

But everyone in the family does it. Teddy's wife Patricia plans all the events, the Christmas party.

FRANK

Don't be silly.

ANN

Your mother did it. After you were born.

At the mention of his mother, Frank freezes. Ann smiles to the audience. Frank exits. Maggie as Frank's secretary, ALICE, rolls out two desks.

(To audience) Alice. Frank's secretary. Although he always called her "his girl."

Ann and Alice sit behind them. Ann opens an envelope and pulls out a check. Ann stands and crosses to Alice.

Alice.

Alice is startled.

ALICE

Oh. Sorry Mrs. Johnson. It's my lunch break. I usually work through it but on Wednesdays the coupons come out.

She shoves some scissors and a sheaf of coupons into a drawer.

ANN

Oh goodness, Alice, that's okay! Here, I got your paycheck by mistake. I'm sorry. I thought it was...

Ann takes a closer look at the amount.

ALICE

That's okay, Mrs. Johnson.

Ann replaces the check in the envelope and hands it to Alice.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

Alice? ANN

Humm? ALICE

How long have you worked here? Worked for the Johnsons. ANN

Going on thirty-nine years now. ALICE

And this is all they're paying you? ANN

Alice looks up at Ann.

Uh huh. ALICE

After thirty-nine years? ANN

Uh huh. ALICE

But there's a company pension, retirement thing, right? ANN

For who? ALICE

For you. ANN

Nope. ALICE

*Alice and Ann stare at each other for a moment.
Ann goes to her desk, pulls out her chair and swings
it over to Alice's desk. She sits. The lights fade on
Alice.*

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

ANN

(to audience)

Alice retired eight months later and I divorced Frank the following year. Alice went to Canada. She had always wanted to go to Canada. Her mother's people were from there. She got herself a beautiful small little cabin on a lake. Had a nice sum of money put aside for all those grandkids, so they could go to college, you know. We kept in touch. Sweetest gal. She passed about three years ago. I got a letter from her lawyer and a package with three things she had left me. Her family bible. Alice was a real religious gal. Stuck inside it was a photo of her fishing on her lake, smiling the biggest smile, and a page torn out of a copy of a Poor Richard's Almanac that had a quote underlined. A Ben Franklin quote. "God helps them who help themselves." Sweetest gal, Alice. And smart too.

Ann pauses.

I'm hungry. Are you hungry? Oh, yes, you're getting cake later.

Everyone except Edward enters.

MAGGIE

It's not real Tex-Mex but it'll do. I had a friend, Carmen, now she could cook Tex-Mex like nobody's business.

Diane stretches out on the floor, groaning.

DIANE

Oh god, I'm stuffed. I shouldn't have had that third tortilla. I feel my ass growing by the minute.

TANDY

Maybe if you actually wore jeans that didn't bisect your butt in three places-

DIANE

Mom!

ANN

Did I miss everything? It only felt like a second.

CLARA

They're still serving.

ANN

Oh good. Oh, but I don't want to miss anything good like the meaning of life or anything.

Ann looks around at everyone.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

ANN (CONT'D)

Oh well!

Ann shrugs and exits.

TERRY

I've come to truly appreciate those that have their priorities straight.

CLARA

Oh, Terry, be nice. She's got a heart of gold.

MAGGIE
(muttering)

And a head full of rocks.

Terry and Maggie giggle. Clara smiles.

CLARA

Behave!

MAGGIE

Why?

TERRY

She's right. We're being mean.

CLARA

Yes. We don't know. Underneath that mild mannered exterior might lie a criminal mastermind.

Silence. Everyone breaks out in laughter.

TERRY
(gasping)

We are so mean!

CLARA

You are!

MAGGIE

Hey, you're laughing too!

The laughter subsides. A comfortable, easy silence.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

DIANE

Is there any cake left?

TERRY

What?!

DIANE

I'm just curious. For later.

CLARA

(to audience)

Graham used to always like desert right after dinner too.

*Edward enters as Graham, piece of cake in hand.
She watches him. He smiles at her as he eats.*

Funny how people come back to you. God, I'm getting tired of missing him. And I've gotten to this point...I mean, please! I'm not going to write the Great American Novel, win a gold medal at the Olympics, start a Fortune 500 hundred company. At this point what I've done, I've done. I was a heck of a business woman. Raised some great kids. Had a terrific marriage. And that's pretty darn good. It is. Really, it is. Life is big and grand and lovely. And heinous and polluted and violent. I know. But by the time the ozone kicks the bucket, I'm going to be long gone. Some things I've decided I just have to stop worrying about. Oh, I still check the expiration date on the milk but I don't buy any twenty year warrantees anymore.

DIANE

But what if you're reincarnated?

TERRY

Oh please! I hate that load of horse manure.

MAGGIE

You are very close-minded, Terry. Once I was at this séance-

TERRY

-Maggie, don't start!

MAGGIE

You're just afraid you're going to come back as the poor and indigent. With no health care! And Terry, what if it's God's plan to have you reincarnated? Huh? Ever think about that?

TERRY

It's not in the bible.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

MAGGIE

Neither are dinosaurs, but don't you fancy they might have been around?

TERRY

You're a dinosaur.

MAGGIE

Yeah, but if I am so are you.

TANDY

Aunt Clara, what do you believe?

CLARA

About what?

DIANE

Reincarnation.

TANDY

Death.

DIANE

The afterlife.

MAGGIE

The cosmic order of things.

TERRY

Yeah. Spit it out, Clara.

CLARA

Same thing. Humm. I believe...what do I believe? I believe in destiny. I believe in chance. I believe that your destiny is what you do with what chance throws in your path. I believe that some people we are intended to encounter-

She smiles at Graham.

-but what we do once we met them it is up to us. I think God is big enough to encompass random and fate. We just aren't big enough to see the whole picture (*to Graham*) Are you done, Graham?

GRAHAM

Yes.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

Graham puts his plate down. He walks over to Clara, draws her into his arms and caresses her face. He then crosses downstage left and watches.

MAGGIE

What about you, Tandy?

TANDY

Me and death?

MAGGIE

Yup.

TANDY

Still working on it. You all have got a lot of good ideas though.

DIANE

(to audience)

That's when I got it. It's been right in front of my face the whole time. There's something wrong with Mom. And she's not old.

Diane pauses. Everyone watches her. Diane crosses to Tandy. Tandy pulls out one of the gray wigs and hands it to Diane. Diane takes it and crosses center stage. The lights fade, leaving a single spot on Diane, alone. She looks at the gray hair in her hands.

It's right front of me. This is Mom. And so...this is me. Love and work and sex and...death. I am the Old. If I am watching Mom get old, she's watching me get old too. Not "grow up." Get old. And why does that sound so fucking terrible?! *(To audience)* Right? It sounds just dreadful. Old. OLD. I want to pull back from it. Like standing next to somebody with the flu that's coming in to kiss you. But Mom isn't an old lady. She's Mom. And she's gonna die. Maybe soon. Maybe not. And so am I.

Tandy enters Diane's spot.

TANDY

I say we try to keep to a reasonable schedule. First Clara, then me, then you.

After taking a deep breath, Tandy takes the wig from Diane's hands. Over her shoulder to Clara

Sound good, Clara?

Clara enters the light.

CLARA

That sounds fair. I'm rooting for about ten more for myself. You'll get about forty. Diane, sixty and change. Can you live with that deal, Tandy?

Tandy nods. Light change and Ann enters.

ANN

Oh shoot. I did miss stuff. What did I miss?

TERRY

Reincarnation. Cake. And we laughed at you a little bit.

ANN

Oh. Okay! Well that's not too bad.

All the lights fade on the women, who continue to quietly talk. A spot comes up on Edward putting on his deliveryman shirt.

EDWARD

Done. Heading home. Beer. Only break I had was cake with the old ladies. Sweet old gals. Wrinkled. And no guys. Man, when I hit the retirement home, I'm golden for dates. But can't imagine dating old women. Lucky old guys can still land younger chicks. But I'll probably be married. Married. Carrie. Is she the one? Is it time? Is she the one I'm meant to marry? Hell, do I want to marry? Kids. I do want kids. I do want that. Money. Man, this job sucks. Should I go back to school first?

He suddenly looks to the left.

What?!

He stands motionless.

This is so strange. The other car flashing towards me. My body is twisting, trying to steer towards a safe place. Impact. Crunch and pop of metal. Hiss. Quiet. Broken glass dropping, hitting the pavement with a pretty ping. This is so weird. That glass sounds so pretty. Like music. That band I was in. That song I wrote. What was the name of it? I can't remember.

Spot goes out. Edward exits. The lights come up on the women.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

CLARA

Jeanie was driving home from her shift and saw it. She stopped and talked to the officers. It was over in seconds, they said.

TERRY

You never think it's going to be you. Look at all of us. Would you have guessed Edward?

ANN

Oh, my goodness. His poor family.

TERRY

His mother.

DIANE

This is so...weird.

CLARA

Yes. And it never stops being weird, Diane.

MAGGIE

It doesn't. It never stops feeling strange and awful.

TANDY

I wonder what he thought. At the second it happened. What do you think right before? Are you ready?

DIANE

No way he was ready.

TANDY

I'm not ready.

Clara glances at Tandy.

CLARA

Good.

Clara crosses to Tandy and embraces her.

It sure is scary sometimes, isn't it?

TANDY

Yes.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

CLARA

Well, don't worry. *(To audience)* You either. *(To Diane)* You either. Get her breast whacked off and move on. Unhappy endings stink.

ANN

But Clara, this is very, very sad! The Edward part. I'm very sad for Edward. About Edward.

CLARA

Come on. You knew one of us had to buy the farm. That's how things work. And making it one of us would have been way too predictable. Boring, wrinkled old ladies dying.

ANN

It feels heartless to just...

MAGGIE

What?

ANN

I don't know...

TERRY

What?

ANN

Oh, I don't know. To still be alive, I guess. I mean, look at us. We're all really old. *(To Diane)* Well, except for you and your mother. And he's the one that dies?

MAGGIE

What about all that stuff in the first act about it still being your turn and how you aren't finished yet?

ANN

Oh. Well, that too but...it just doesn't feel fair. To Edward.

TERRY

I wonder if his mother is still alive.

MAGGIE

Probably. He was pretty young.

Silence.

ANN

Um...

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

CLARA

What?

ANN

How heartless would it be to move on?

She gestures to the audience.

I mean, they'll want to get home soon. Right?

TERRY

Can we just take a moment to say a prayer for Edward and his mother and his family before we resume our existential yammering about life and death?

All the women bow their heads. The women lift their heads.

TERRY

(to audience)

Don't worry. We'll go to the funeral.

The other women nod.

We'll be those old ladies in the middle row. But we know how to do this. The older you get, the better you get.

DIANE

I feel like I should feel really bad. And I do. I mean he was right here.

CLARA

And now he's not. I think you should have some cake, Diane.

Diane crosses to the table, takes a piece and sits on the floor to eat it. She then grabs a helium filled balloon that is attached to the corner of the table. As Diane eats, she begins tapping it on the floor.

MAGGIE

I used to be able to eat anything. Day or night and not gain an ounce.

DIANE

If I keep this up, they're going have to take a pair of scissors to cut these pants off of me.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

TANDY

Good. Terry, can I borrow yours?

TERRY

To have at those ridiculous jeans? Any time.

DIANE

Hey! I look good in these!

CLARA

Yeah. But do you like them? Are you comfortable in your own skin while you're wearing 'em?

DIANE

Yes!

MAGGIE

Really?

DIANE

Yes.

TERRY

Really?

DIANE

No.

ANN

But you do look adorable. Well, until you turn around. Then you look, well-

DIANE

What?

ANN

Oh. Cute.

DIANE

Really?

ANN

Yes.

TANDY

Really?

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

ANN

Diane honey, I don't want to hurt your feelings.

DIANE

So you're saying I look silly.

Ann shrugs.

CLARA

Yes. That's exactly what we're saying.

DIANE

(to audience)

Are these women not a total blast? The time really flew by.

TANDY

It tends to do that.

Diane whacks Tandy on the head with her balloon.

TANDY

Hey.

DIANE

(innocently)

What?

TANDY

Stop that.

DIANE

Stop what?

TERRY

I should head back to my room. Get some sleep.

Diane whacks Tandy's head again.

CLARA

You sleep? How many hours?

Tandy turns around and, feigning irritation, glares at Diane.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

TERRY

Four, maybe five.

DIANE
(to Tandy)

What?

MAGGIE

All at once? In a row?

TERRY

Hardly. It stinks. I used to rack up eight hours straight, no problem.

Diane whacks her again.

TANDY

You are becoming quite troublesome, young lady.

DIANE

Good.

Tandy gets up and crosses to Terry. She fishes in Terry's sewing bag and pulls out the scissors.

MAGGIE

Uh oh!

CLARA

Now this is getting interesting.

TANDY
(grinning)

It is, isn't it?

DIANE

Mom! What are you going to do? Don't pop my balloon!

TANDY

Baby, I would never pop your balloon.

Tandy reaches over and snips the string, causing the balloon to release and drift up to the ceiling. Everyone watches it drift up.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

ANN

I don't get it.

CLARA

What?

ANN

Well, this is the end, right? So Tandy cutting the string is a big...symbol. Well, I don't get it. I'm sorry.

MAGGIE

Just go with it, Ann.

ANN

And I thought we were going to get to death. In the second act.

TERRY

We did.

ANN

I don't remember. Did I miss it?

MAGGIE

You were right here!

ANN

Are you sure?

TANDY

Wait. She did miss some of it.

ANN

See!

The balloon pops.

CLARA

That's as good ending as any.

Clara looks at the audience.

Well, onward everybody.

Maggie and Terry exit, Terry pushing Maggie's wheelchair.

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

MAGGIE

It's the mall tomorrow, right?

TERRY

Don't be late when I come by. The bus leaves at ten.

MAGGIE

I'm never late. Last time, I was waiting for you.

They exit. Ann surreptitiously takes another piece of cake and scoots off, waving to the audience as she does.

ANN

(to audience)

There's lots left. Don't worry.

Ann exits.

CLARA

(to audience)

After curtain call, have some cake. But clean up after yourselves. *(To Tandy and Diane)*
Come on, gals. Time to go.

Clara, Tandy and Diane exit.

THE END

Props Plot

ACT I

Large sheet cake
Birthday candles
Paper plates (enough for cast and entire audience)
Plastic forks (enough for cast and entire audience)
Paper napkins
Balloons
Four gray wigs
Wheelchair, functional
Large cardboard shipping box
Harry & David gift basket
Scissors
Sewing bag
Necktie
Coupons
Cuff links
Briefcase

ACT II

Wristwatch
Bottle of good bourbon
Six highball glasses
Four water glasses
Small pitcher with water
Four pill bottles with pills
Large empty picture frame
Lipstick
Long elegant evening gown
Coupons
Scissors
Envelope
Long paycheck-style check
Balloon on string, filled with helium

Another Piece of Cake/Sergel

Set Pieces and Set Dressing Plot

ACT I

Large professional floral arrangement
Table large enough to hold and serve sheet cake
Five folding chairs

ACT II

Small cabinet on wheels
Framed photos
Five upholstered chairs
Two desks on wheels
Two desk chairs

Costume Plot

Diane:

Low rise jeans, shirt

Clara:

Blouse

Pants or skirt

Doctor's white coat

Tandy:

Blouse

Pants or skirt

Terry:

Well made, conservative outfit

Maggie:

Comfortable, colorful outfit, wheelchair functional

Edward:

Delivery person uniform

White men's t-shirt, one for each performance

Men's shirt with French cuffs