

PAS DE TROIS:
3 ROMANTIC COMEDIES

By

Pat Montley

Crossing Borders: an Evolutionary Tail

A Ten-Minute Play

by Pat Montley

:



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Crossing Borders: an Evolutionary Tail

Synopsis

An intrepid, hopeful bookstore mouse tries to persuade timid parsonage mouse to move in with him and enjoy the perks of culture hanging out at Borders, but she resists leaving the parson and embracing a high-risk lifestyle.

Cast of Characters

Izzy an endearing, self-made young bookstore mouse with big plans and high hopes

Mitzi a sweet, young, timid, innocent parsonage mouse

Scene

Borders Bookstore: an open area between two bookshelves
Now...but maybe not forever

Script History

Crossing Borders was produced as part of the Estrogenius Festival at the Manhattan Theatre Source, NYC, in 2010, where it was voted “Best-of-Show.” In both Adult and Youth versions, it was produced as part of the Summer Shorties Program by Turtle Shell Productions, NYC, in 2011 and 2012. It was published by CreateSpace in the anthology: *EstroGenius 2010: a Celebration of Female Voices*.



Crossing Borders: an Evolutionary Tail

SETTING: Borders Bookstore: an open area between two bookshelves.

Pre-curtain music: “Mighty Mouse” theme song.

AT RISE: IZZY and MITZI poke their heads out, cautiously enter and explore the area, then look towards the fourth wall.

IZZY

So? How about it, Mitzi? Whadda ya see, Babe? Whadda ya think?

MITZI

It’s scary.

IZZY

Why?

MITZI

All those people.

IZZY

Hey—they don’t notice us. They’re swilling their cappuccinos, checking their e-mail, reading books they’re too cheap to buy, talking about best sellers to impress their dates.

MITZI

Dates? At Borders?

IZZY

The economy.

MITZI

It’s just that...well, I’m not used to crowds.

IZZY

What crowds? It’s
(Silently counts, pointing.)
 nine people. Nine preoccupied people.

MITZI

That’s eight more than I’m used to.

IZZY

That’s what I’ve been telling you, Mitzi. Your situation is too...circumscribed. You don’t want to spend the rest of your life as a country mouse.

MITZI

I'm not a country mouse. I'm a parsonage mouse.

IZZY

Same diff.

MITZI

The parsonage is not in the country. It's in the suburbs. Same as this mall.

IZZY

But light years away. You live with some crotchety old coot who talks to himself and dribbles oatmeal down his dickey.

MITZI

I live with an elderly Parson who practices his sermons out loud and feeds me quite generously.

IZZY

Humph.

MITZI

I think you're jealous, Izzy.

IZZY

Don't be sil—

(Spots a crumb that has been dropped.)

Whoa! Hold on a sec.

(Runs to edge of stage, retrieves crumb, brings it to Mitzi.)

Here you go, Honey.

MITZI

(Nibbling, disapproving.)

It's awfully sweet. What is it?

IZZY

Well, they've already sold out of the pecan pie and the caramel mouse cake. So it's either the double fudge brownie, the chocolate chocolate chip cookie, the tiramisu special, or the creamy cheesecake.

MITZI

This is your regular diet?

IZZY

Great, isn't it?

MITZI

Not very healthy.

IZZY

Enjoy it. Our life expectancy is two, three years tops.

MITZI

No!

IZZY

Afraid so.

MITZI

How do you know that?

IZZY

I read it in Homemaker's Guide to Getting Rid of Rodents.

MITZI

You can read?!

IZZY

Yes. And someday...soon...when we have pups, I'll teach them to read. Wouldn't you like that? Oh, you'd be so happy living with me here in the bookstore, Mitzi. What do you say?

MITZI

How did you learn to read?

IZZY

I hung out in the children's section. When parents would read to their kids, I'd hide someplace where I could see the book so I'd hear what sound went with each of those funny little shapes on the page.

MITZI

Where did you hide?

IZZY

Oh, different places...on the back of the chair...in the folds of a scarf...one time in a mother's hair.

MITZI

Oooh!! How brave you are!

IZZY

We have to take risks for education, Mitzi. That's what I'm telling you: it's a great, big world. Bigger than your parsonage.

MITZI

Why didn't I think of that? I could have learned to read too. I could've hidden under papers on the Parson's desk while he was practicing his sermons out loud and—

IZZY

I don't think so. You can't cut your reading teeth on theology. I mean you really have to learn "A' is for apple" before you can take in "E' is for eschatological."

MITZI

(Sighs.)

Too late for me now.

IZZY

No! Don't say that, Mitzi.

"Hope is the thing with feathers/ that perches in the soul,
and sings the tune without the words, / and never stops at all."

MITZI

What?

IZZY

Emily Dickenson. Poetry section. Come on, I'll show you her picture.

(Scurries towards bookcase on other side of stage.)

MITZI

(Calling after him.)

No—wait!

(But IZZY is already there. MITZI points to fourth wall, whispers across the divide.)

What about...them?

IZZY

I told you: they've got other things on their minds. Come on!

(MITZI makes a run for it, arrives safely.)

There. Nothing to it, right?

MITZI

Can you hear my heart pounding?

IZZY

Because of my irresistible pheromones.

(Sniffs and smooches.)

Maybe we should take a little break and—

MITZI

No! There's no privacy here!

IZZY

I've got a nice little nest in Periodicals. Shredded paper. It's just around the next—

MITZI

This is not the time to—

IZZY

Okay, okay. But that's just what I'm telling you. If you lived here, we could do it any time we want. I wouldn't have to scurry up the road to the parsonage and you wouldn't have to—

MITZI

He'd miss me.

IZZY

Come on. That can't be true.

MITZI

It is. He cares about me. Why else would he feed me?

IZZY

He doesn't "feed" you. He's a sloppy old geezer who drops his food all over the floor. He doesn't "care about" you.

MITZI

Then why doesn't he get a cat? Or call the exterminator?

IZZY

Because he doesn't know you're there!

MITZI

(Gasps, cut to the quick, then pulls herself together.)

He needs me to practice his sermons on.

IZZY

Oh yeah. What? You give him, like...feedback? You do the Saturday-night critiquing thing?

MITZI

Sometimes, Izzy, you can be so cruel.

(IZZY walks away, tries to pull himself together, returns.)

IZZY

I'm sorry, Mitzi. Maybe you're right. Maybe I am jealous. I mean I don't get it. After all, he's

IZZY (*Cont.*)

only...

(With controlled disgust.)

human.

MITZI

Maybe that's it. Maybe I feel sorry for him.

IZZY

Why would you...how could you choose him over me. After all, I'm a mouse. Your mouse. I could be your hero if you'd let me. I could be your Mighty Mouse. Oh, Mitzi, there's so much I want to share with you. I have such high hopes for our pups. I'm going to—

(Sound of approaching heavy footsteps.)

MITZI

Look! That clerk with the arm-load of books. She's coming this way!

(They duck behind the bookcase. We hear a loud thwack— of a heavy book falling to the floor. IZZY comes back out.)

IZZY

It's okay. Coast is clear.

MITZI

(Coming back out.)

I can't do this, Izzy. It's too...unnerving. I'm going home.

(Starts off.)

IZZY

Wait! You haven't heard my plan!

MITZI

What plan?

IZZY

Well, um...the University is sponsoring a big exhibit on Charles Darwin. Everybody's celebrating evolution.

MITZI

I'm not sure the Parson is celebr—

IZZY

Okay, okay, almost everybody.

MITZI

What's that got to do with us?

IZZY

The book store is having a giant display of his books. That was one of them we barely escaped. Some actor from the Theatre Department is doing a one-man show here about his life and then they're hoping to sell a gazillion copies of On the Origin of Species.

MITZI

So?

IZZY

So I've been doing some serious research.

MITZI

And?

IZZY

Well, it seems humans and mice had a common ancestor—the therapsid.

MITZI

When was this?

IZZY

About sixty-two million years ago. Or maybe it was two hundred million years ago. Anyway, it's all there on the Tree of Evolution. You'll see a big picture of it when they do the display.

MITZI

And I should care about this because?

IZZY

Because I'm going to figure out where they went wrong.

MITZI

The humans?

IZZY

Yes! I'm going to find out why they branched off in the wrong direction, why they lost their tails and common sense and became carnivores and killers and capitalists, and why we're so much smarter, and kinder, and...cuter.

(Chucks MITZI under the chin.)

MITZI

So what happens then? When you find out why they "branched off in the wrong direction"?

IZZY

I fix 'em.

MITZI

How?

IZZY

I haven't worked out the details, but I'm going to build a time machine and go back to the therapsid era and make the humans branch off with us. Wanna come?

MITZI

Whooa! I'm not cut out for this craziness. Maybe I'm just a coward, but safety and security are important to me. I'm not a risk taker, Izzy. That's you—it's not me.

IZZY

But that's exactly why we're a perfect match. Our offspring will have the best combination of genes.

MITZI

That won't matter if they're crushed to death, will it?

IZZY

I'll protect you, Mitzi. If you could just believe in me...believe in us. We can do it! Yes we can!

MITZI

Can do what?

IZZY

Have a wonderful life together here...read poetry out loud to each other, teach our pups to read, have a life of the mind, make a contribution to Mouse Society.

MITZI

But I already have a life of the mind. The Parson's sermons are very stimulating.

IZZY

He comes here every Monday, you know. Picks up a mystery and reads it in the Café while he eats a double fudge brownie. Crumbs all over the place. You could keep an eye on him. Not like you'd be deserting him.

MITZI

Is that the truth?

IZZY

Would Mighty Mouse lie?

MITZI

I'm sorry, Izzy. There are just too many humans here. They're dangerous. And they don't like us.

IZZY

Humans are still evolving. They haven't yet mastered the art of peaceful coexistence.

MITZI

Exactly.

IZZY

But they're making progress. Starting to think bi-partisan, to cross the aisle, get past speciesism. We just gotta have hope, Mitzi.

MITZI

I got hope. I got hope the Parson will spill half his dinner every night.

IZZY

That's not hope. That's assurance.

MITZI

I like assurance better.

IZZY

Hope isn't a passive thing. It isn't sitting around waiting for someone else to make your life better. It's doing something—risking something—to improve your life and your children's lives.

MITZI

Risk is highly overrated, Izzy, especially for someone who has a litter of seven pups every three months.

IZZY

But if you had them here, Mitzi, I'd be able to help you protect them and take care of them.

MITZI

If I had them here, in a year there'd be thirty of us crossing this aisle, all depending on these stingy, caffeine-addicted sugar-holics for a few pathetic crumbs.

IZZY

What about the life of the mind?

MITZI

You don't need me for that.

IZZY

But I do! What's the point of reading philosophy and writing poetry if there's no one to share it with?

MITZI

You write poems?

(He shrugs a “sort of.”)

MITZI *(Cont.)*

Did you ever...write one for me?

IZZY

(Lying.)

Well...um...sure.

MITZI

Oh! Recite it for me—please! Poetry should be heard not read.

IZZY

Now?

MITZI

Why not?

IZZY

Um...okay...let’s see...here goes. She...uh...

(Gets idea.)

she bolts in beauty like the night
of cloudless climes and starry skies
and all that’s best of dark and bright
are in her tail, her ears, her eyes.

MITZI

Oh, Izzy, I do love you!

*(She throws her arms around IZZY. They rub whiskers.
He emits high-pitched squeaks.)*

IZZY

So, um, you’ll stay here with me then?

MITZI

(Suddenly pulling back.)

Oh! Yummy!

(She darts to other side of stage, sniffing.)

IZZY

What is it? Where are you going?

MITZI

I smell...it must be just over here—I smell...yes, yes, it is! Peanut butter!

(Bolts offstage.)

IZZY

(Running after her.)

No! Wait! Mitzi—don't!

(Blackout.)

End of play

The Competent Heart

A 10-Minute Play

by Pat Montley



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THE COMPETENT HEART

Synopsis

A customer enters a bookstore and—in the hope of pleasing her/his less-than-satisfied Significant Other—asks the proprietor for advice on becoming a competent person. The proprietor (clearly a Trivial Pursuits champion) offers advice and self-help books on medicine, home repairs, and plant care. The customer is awed, but questions the definition of competency with an Emily Dickinson poem. The proprietor’s response provides a revelation.

Note: Neither the sex nor the age of either character is indicated in the script.

Cast of Characters

Terry: the proprietor; any age; a very competent pragmatist

Chris: the customer; any age; a less-than-competent romantic

Setting

An intimate bookstore. The present.

Script History

The Competent Heart was a final finalist in the Actors Theatre of Louisville 10-Minute Play Contest, was given a reading at the Women’s Project in Ft. Lauderdale, FL, and productions at the Women’s Project at Theatre Project in Baltimore and Love Creek Productions in NYC. It is published by Dramatic Publishing in *25 in 10: Twenty-Five Ten-Minute Plays*.

The Competent Heart

SCENE: *Lights up on the back wall of a bookstore. TERRY, the proprietor, is shelving books. CHRIS, the customer, approaches, browses through the books in one bookcase.*

May I help you?
TERRY

I want to be a competent person.
CHRIS

Excuse me?
TERRY

My significant other is tired of being the competent one.
CHRIS

Your significant other?
TERRY

My...partner.
CHRIS

I see.
TERRY

Do you?
CHRIS

So you thought...
(Referring to case where CHRIS has been browsing.)
you'd try poetry.
TERRY

I always go to the poetry section first. That's how I tell if it's a good bookstore.
CHRIS

And...is it?
TERRY

CHRIS

You have the Singleton translation of Dante.

TERRY

Yes.

CHRIS

The Sayers is better.

TERRY

The Singleton is more faithful to the original.

CHRIS

But it isn't even in verse. Anybody can translate. It takes another poet to translate into *terza rima*.

TERRY

Some people don't want to read "another poet." They want to read Dante.

CHRIS

(With disdain.)

In prose?

TERRY

(Conceding.)

The Sayers is out of print.

CHRIS

Ah.

(Beat.)

TERRY

What kind of competence are you looking for?

CHRIS

I'm not sure. Remember it isn't my idea.

TERRY

(Inviting.)

Speculate.

CHRIS

Well...perhaps omniscience...

(Beat.)

though I don't think omnipotence is expected.

TERRY
That must be a relief.

CHRIS
Yes...something short of that.

TERRY
How short?

CHRIS
Somewhere between helpless and all-powerful.

TERRY
Do you want to be...capable, adequate, satisfactory?

CHRIS
At least.

TERRY
Efficient, productive, on top of things?

CHRIS
Probably.

TERRY
Authoritative, imperative, controlling—

CHRIS
Definitely not.

TERRY
Good. Now we've settled on degree. How about field of activity?

CHRIS
That's a hard one. I think the disappointment is pretty...universal.

TERRY
Whose?

CHRIS
My significant other's.

TERRY
Are you sure?

CHRIS
It felt that way to me.

TERRY
I'm sorry.
(Pause.)
So you'd like to...

CHRIS
Become a competent person.

TERRY
Yes. Were any specifics mentioned?

CHRIS
Medicine.

TERRY
Medicine?

CHRIS
I need to know stuff.

TERRY
Like?

CHRIS
Like what kind of food not to eat if you've been throwing up.

TERRY
Hmm...

CHRIS
And what to do if somebody mistakes the mosquito-bite drops for the eye drops, and puts them in.

TERRY
Ouch.

CHRIS
Oh yes—and the difference between aspirin and Tylenol.

TERRY
The hard questions.

CHRIS

Yeah.

TERRY

(Crossing to shelf.)

How about...

(Perusing shelf, locating a book.)

Complete Guide to Symptoms, Illness & Surgery?

CHRIS

(Taking the tome, reading cover.)

“796 symptoms, 520 illnesses, 160 surgeries.”

(Opening to various pages at random.)

“Alzheimer’s...anxiety...hot flashes...impotence...PMS...genital warts...hemorrhoid removal”...all the important stuff.

(Turning to last part.)

“Aspirin” is not in the index.

(Returns book.)

TERRY

(Pulling another book.)

This one has a good medication guide.

(Hands book to CHRIS.)

It’s in the back.

CHRIS

(Checking.)

Aspirin’s not on this list either.

TERRY

Look under “analgesic” or “antipyretic.”

CHRIS

(Looking.)

Wow! Here it is. Just like you said. Now how did you know that? I admire a person who knows things like that.

TERRY

Thank you.

CHRIS

Now see, if I had you at home, I wouldn’t have to buy this book.

(Pause.)

TERRY
 What other?

CHRIS
 Other what?

TERRY
 Areas of desired competence?

CHRIS
(Beat.)
 Domestic engineering.

TERRY
 Like plumbing?

CHRIS
 Yeah, like how to adjust one of those thing-a-ma-jigs in the back of the toilet.

TERRY
 A ball cock assembly?

CHRIS
 That's the thing.

TERRY
(Pulls a book from another bookcase.)
 Try the *Home Repair Handbook*.
(Gives it to CHRIS.)

CHRIS
 Will this say what to do when the pipes freeze?

TERRY
(Shrugs.)
 Warm them with a hair dryer.

CHRIS
 Look, is there a gene for knowing this stuff or what? I mean where did you learn that?

TERRY
 I don't know.

CHRIS
 Come on—did you read that in this book?

TERRY

No. But you can.

CHRIS

You probably even know how to install a dimmer switch.

TERRY

They come in handy, don't they?

CHRIS

So—you're a romantic.

TERRY

(Ignoring this.)
Anything else?

CHRIS

Did I say something wrong?

TERRY

Is there another competence you want to develop?

CHRIS

Yes. I'd like to be better at...looking after...taking care of...living things.

TERRY

What kind of living things?

CHRIS

Well...plants?

TERRY

(Reaching to another shelf.)
You could read *The New York Times Book of House Plants.*
(Hands it to CHRIS.)

CHRIS

(Paging through.)
Pictures. That's good. Oh—here's one we have—with the little pink flowers.

TERRY

(Just glancing at the page upside down, then, looking at CHRIS.)
Cyclamen. Yes, beautiful blooms. Requires a lot of care though: just the right temperature, the right amount of light and water, daily misting, the pebble base. You have to really love it.

CHRIS

Oh, I do. I do. But sometimes it's hard to know...what a living thing needs.

TERRY

Well, the book is pretty specific about—

CHRIS

(Interrupting.)

Yeah, right. So...if I read these books...will that do it?

TERRY

Hmm...assuming you apply what you learn?

CHRIS

I mean—you seem real clear on it—is that all there is to competence?

TERRY

It's a good start.

CHRIS

Tell me, do you believe in talking to plants?

TERRY

Some people do. Do you?

CHRIS

I read to them. I believe all living things need...poetry.

TERRY

But could your cyclamen live on poetry?

CHRIS

Could my cyclamen live without poetry?

(Takes a volume of Emily Dickinson from the poetry shelf, opens to a familiar page, and recites without having to read it, looking at TERRY.)

“It's all I have to bring today—

This, and my heart beside—

This, and my heart, and all the fields—

And all the meadows wide—

Be sure you count—should I forget

Some one the sum could tell—

This, and my heart, and all the Bees

Which in the Clover dwell.”

(CHRIS slowly closes book and replaces it on shelf. Beat.)

TERRY

Chris...

CHRIS

(Takes a credit card from pocket, hands it to TERRY.)

Put the books on my VISA.

(Starts to leave, turns back.)

I'll make your favorite quiche for dinner.

TERRY

But the oven...

CHRIS

Will be fixed by the time you get home.

TERRY

You can't fix a gas stove!

CHRIS

No, but the repair person I called this morning can.

(Beat. TERRY kisses the card and tilts it towards CHRIS, who smiles and exits.)

(Lights.)

(End of play.)

The Unveiling

a comedy in 10-minutes

by

Pat Montley



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THE UNVEILING

SYNOPSIS

In an attempt to get her husband's attention, SHE threatens to enter the convent. HE doesn't take her seriously and ridicules her admiration for the nuns who live across the street and their caring and affection for one another. Seductively, SHE reminds him how physically affectionate he used to be. HE is swept up in their reliving of early romantic moments—until his fear of not being able to deliver “what comes after” the affectionate part gets the better of him. SHE reassures him that that doesn't matter.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

SHE: the wife; elderly, young at heart

HE: the husband; elderly, not so young at heart

SETTING

A room in their home

The present

SCRIPT HISTORY

The Unveiling was given a reading at the Kennedy Center Page-to-Stage Festival. It was produced by the Women's Project at Theatre Project, Baltimore, by Potluck Productions, Kansas City, MO, and by the Lebanon Community Theatre, Lebanon, PA. It won First Place in the Baltimore County Creative Writing Contest for senior citizens and was published by HaveScripts/Blue Moon Plays in 2016 in *ElderPair: Four Senior Courtship Comedies* by Pat Montley.

THE UNVEILING

SCENE:

A table and two chairs. HE sits at table, working on a model airplane. Other models planes are about. SHE enters wearing a robe, drying her hair. SHE lets the robe fall open, revealing a flimsy but tasteful nightgown underneath, crosses slowly in front of the table. HE does not look up. SHE faces the audience, looking into a "mirror," works the towel into a turban, studies her face in the mirror, takes it off, throws it over her shoulder, takes a brush from her robe pocket, brushes her hair, studies him as she does this. HE does not look up. Looking in mirror, SHE arranges the towel on her head like a veil, securing it with a safety pin.

SHE

(Facing the mirror.)

I've decided to become a nun.

(HE does not look up.)

I said I've decided to enter the convent.

HE

(Looking up, but not really hearing.)

What?

SHE

I said I'm going to become a nun.

HE

(Returning to his project.)

You're not even Catholic.

SHE

They don't care any more. Haven't you heard? It's the age of multi-denominationalism.

HE

You're too old.

SHE

Am not. For your information, the average age of nuns is 69.

HE

Exactly. They're looking for people who'll bring the average down.

SHE

Well, what they're looking for and what they'll take are two different things, aren't they?

HE

Humph.

SHE

You really think I'm too old?

HE

Nobody's too old to be a nun. Hell, they all live to a hundred. You're just too old to become one. Anyway, they don't take married women.

SHE

Elizabeth Seton was a married woman—and she founded the Sisters of Charity in America.

HE

What'd her husband say about it?

SHE

Nothing. ... He was dead.

HE

She kill him?

SHE

(Making a face at him.)

No.

HE

Well, don't expect me to be so obliging. Anyway you wouldn't like living in a convent. They're big, drafty places.

SHE

Don't be so medieval! The one across the street's just like our house.

HE

(Moving to "window.")

What? There's a convent across the street?

SHE

(Joining HIM at the window.)

Yes. Near the streetlight. See where the little cross is next to the door.

HE

Old Lady Flannigan's place?

SHE

She left it to the Church.

HE

Damn! There goes the neighborhood.

SHE

There are only three of them. Sister Inez is the youngest—she's 50.

HE

A mere chick.

SHE

She's the breadwinner. A social worker or a lawyer or something—works downtown at the Urban Housing Center.

HE

My tax dollar.

SHE

Then there's Sister Stella Maris. She's my age.

HE

Don't tell me. She's a nuclear physicist.

SHE

She teaches at the parish school. And works at the Shelter on Sundays and runs the Saturday lunch shift at the Soup Kitchen.

HE

So Inez brings home the bacon and Stella gives it away. What about the third one—the octogenarian? I guess she's the Mother Superior?

SHE

They don't have them any more. It's all very democratic.

HE

How nice.

SHE

Sister Redempta is in a wheelchair so she—

HE

—delivers Meals-on-Wheels.

SHE

—is semi-retired. She just has the one job—at the Mother Seton Day Care Center. Sister Inez drops her off and picks her up again on the way home.

HE

(Demonstrating this weight-lifting move.)

With a classic “clean-and-jerk,” Inez hoists wheelchair and rider in an impressive display of spiritual power and agility and then casually chucks them into the back of her trusty pickup!

(Brushes his hands off.)

SHE

(Not amused.)

They have a Honda hatchback.

HE

And what would you do if you joined this Terrifying Trio?

SHE

Well, I guess I’d do the same things I do now. Organize events at the Senior Center. Volunteer at the Craft Plaza.

HE

Then what would be the difference?

SHE

Well, I...I don’t know exactly.

HE

Being a nun brings out the worst in a woman. They’re all so goddamn enterprising. Hell, you could die from it.

SHE

But they don’t. That’s the point. You said so yourself.

HE

So is that why you want to join—because they live forever?

SHE

No. Because they...

HE

What? What?

SHE

Because they pay attention!

HE

Pay attention to what?

SHE

The night I went over to welcome them to the neighborhood, they were still unpacking. But in the midst of all the boxes, Sister Inez was rubbing Sister Redempta's legs with skin lotion. And she was smiling and soothing the old nun with kind words. I mean, you could tell she wasn't just doing it out of duty. She looked like she was fond of her and...and was actually enjoying it.

HE

Goddamn lesbians! You stay away from them.

SHE

What?

HE

You stay clear of that Inez—never mind when she flashes those dykey muscles at you.

SHE

Oh, don't be foolish! They are not lesbians. And who would care if they were? I mean, as long as they're nice to each other and everyone else.

HE

That's what lesbians do, you know. All that touchy-feely stuff.

SHE

How do you know so much about it?

HE

They don't have real sex.

SHE

(Turning away, taking off towel. Softly.)

Who does?

HE

What?

SHE

I said you've been watching the *Playboy* channel too much.

HE

Humph.

SHE

Anyway, it isn't all work. They have fun too. Sometimes they get a video from the library.

HE

"Sister Debbie Does Notre Dame"?

SHE

And sometimes they take a picnic to the free concert in the park.

HE

Great. Maybe if you bat your eyes at Inez, she'll take you with them.

SHE

I'd rather go with you.

(Beat, as HE crosses back to his project.)

I said I'd rather go with you.

HE

I heard you.

(SHE turns back to the mirror. Beat.)

The bathroom lines are too long.

SHE

(Taken aback, facing him.)

Is that why you won't go?

(HE waves a dismissal.)

Why didn't you say so?

HE

(Covering, embarrassed.)

I...I don't like that high-brow stuff anyway.

(Resumes work on his project.)

SHE

(Looks in the mirror, slowly starts brushing her hair.)

Remember how you used to like big-band music? Glen Miller. Tommy Dorsey. When we were first married, you'd put "Moonlight Serenade" on the phonograph and...and brush my hair.

HE

(HE looks up, but not at her.)

It was long and silky then.

SHE

Yes.

HE

And dark as a panther's coat.

SHE

That's what you called me—your Cat-Woman.

HE

Because you used to purr. You purred when I—

SHE

—when you brushed my hair.

(SHE stops brushing, stares in the mirror, remembering. HE looks out, remembering, then looks at HER as if considering some possibility, then suddenly returns to his project. Although SHE has remained facing the mirror, SHE sees all this.)

So. What else do you think they do?

HE

Who?

SHE

The lesbian nuns.

HE

What?

SHE

Besides the skin lotion turn-on?

HE

How do I know?

SHE

You said you knew about these things.

HE

What things?

SHE

The touchy-feely things.

HE

I did?

SHE

Yes.

HE

Well, they have to...compensate for their...lack of equipment.

SHE

And how do they do that?

HE

Oh, a lot of mushy talk and kissie-facing.

SHE

You used to do that.

HE

I did?

SHE

(Coming up behind him.)

You used to come up behind me and rub my neck.

SHE *(Cont.)*

(SHE does this to him.)

And run your fingers ever so lightly around the ridges of my ears.*(SHE does this.)*

And whisper: "I'm crazy for you."

(HE closes his eyes.)

You used to kiss the back of my neck.

(SHE does this.)

Umm...it gave me chills, you know.

HE

(Feeling the chills.)

I know.

SHE

(Doing it.)

Used to move your lips along my cheeks till the fine hairs stood up with electricity.

HE

(Remembering.)

Soft downy cheeks.

SHE

(Doing this, still from behind.)

Used to put your cheek against mine. First one side...and then the other.

HE

Yes.

SHE

You'd pull me up gently...

(SHE pulls HIM up. Soft music comes up: "Moonlight Serenade.")

HE

And we'd dance....

(THEY dance.)

SHE

Ever so slowly...

HE

I'd feel your hand on my neck...

SHE

Your arm around my waist...

HE

Oh, the sweet smell of you...

SHE

Your cheek against my cheek...

HE

Your thighs against my thighs...

SHE

My breath would quicken...

HE

(THEY stop dancing. He leads HER to the chair.)

And then I'd lead you to the bed...

SHE

And sit me down gently...

(HE does this, and kneels looking at her.)

HE

Take off your slippers, kiss your toes...

SHE

I'd lie back...

HE

And I'd lie next to you, up on one elbow...

Warming me with your eyes... SHE

Stroking your arms... HE

Kissing my breasts... SHE

Hmm...I liked doing that. HE

We could still... SHE

HE
(Standing, turning slightly away.)
No. I...I don't think so.

Why not? SHE

Because... HE

You wouldn't like it as much now? SHE

No...it's not that. HE

Then what? SHE

What about...what comes next? HE

SHE
(Standing.)
It doesn't matter.

HE
It matters to me!

Well it doesn't to me. SHE

It doesn't? HE

No. SHE

Really? HE

And truly. SHE

(HE smiles. Slowly THEY embrace. Beat.)

Does this mean we're lesbians? HE

Do we care? SHE

(THEY kiss gently and laugh.)

End of Play