#6

THOSE FUTILE FIGHTS
THEN THE SLEEPLESS NIGHTS

SHOULDN'T I HAVE QUIT 'CAUSE MARRIAGE ENDS?
SHOULDN'T WE HAVE SPLIT LIKE ALL OUR FRIENDS?
SHOULDN'T I PROFESS IT'S TIME TO GO?
SHOULDN'T I BE LESS IN LOVE WITH YOU?
NO

(WIFE looks up from paper.)

WIFE

What?

(He shakes his head—"nothing"—and they go back to their newspapers as the lights fade out. Applause segue into:)

FEMALE

MUSIC 20A: SCENE CHANGE INTO:

SCENE 7: "The Very First Dating Video of Rose Ritz"

(Lights up on Rose, who sits on a stool facing upstage into a video camera. The VIDEO OPERATOR pulls her into focus and we see her face in a close-up on a large video monitor at center stage; music out.)

VIDEO OPERATOR

Okay, just be yourself, don't be nervous and remember to smile.

(VIDEO OPERATOR exits. ROSE speaks into the camera.)

ROSE

Hello, I'm Rose Carboni. No! Ritz! Rose Ritz! That's it. Rose Ritz. Yes. Carboni was my husband's name. But he's dead. Whoops! Actually, he's not really dead, we're divorced. I just prefer to think of him as dead, cheers me right up. Oh my gosh, did I just do that?! Here I am, making my very first dating video—that's right, this is the very first dating video of Rose Ritz!—and I'm already telling all you potential...Mr. Video Men-Of-My-Dreams out there—telling all you Video Men that I'm divorced. Good move, Rosie!

But yes, I'm divorced. I love you forever—not! Divorced, divorced, divorced! But actually, can we not even talk about my divorce? My divorce was like...like open heart surgery without anesthesia. My insides were just ripped out, my guts on the floor, and no one bothered to sedate me!

Well, wasn't that attractive of me to share with you? Okay. I bet my phone is ringing off the hook already. Now about myself. Well, I just had to reenter the workforce as a telemarketer. Basically, I call people up, try to sell them something and they hang up on me. It's very fulfilling. Oh—and I just enrolled in a magic class at the high school adult school. It was either magic or a step aerobics class, and quite frankly, magic seemed less exhausting. And to be even more frank, I thought it'd be a more likely place to meet men. Unfortunately, the class consists entirely of divorced women, all hoping to meet men. Yes, seven divorced women learning how to pull a coin from a child's hear while next door twenty-five single men do step aerobics. Well, at least I'm back in the game!

Oh, I almost forgot—I've got children! Well, isn't that attractive? So Mr. Video Man, I hope you don't hate children. Though I do. Oh, I don't hate my children, of course! I hate the concept of having to raise children all by yourself after your dead husband walks out on your fortieth birthday! Oh my God! I just told you he left me, not vice versa! Damaged goods alert! Why should her dead husband dump her and run off with an older woman? That's right, he had a mid-life crisis and he didn't even have the decency to leave me for someone young and pretty and firm! He left me for a size eighteen with a grandchild and a bad hip! So now you're really wondering what is wrong with Rose Ritz!

Well you know what? I don't care, Mr. Video Man! 'Cause I've stayed up many a late night with nothing to comfort me except my thirty-two inch television and I sent away for all those tapes from all those late night infomercial things—Tony Robbins, Richard Simmons, all those nuts who think they're psychic—and now I believe in myself! Stop the insanity! Deal a meal! I'm okay! And now, after fifteen years of waking up next to the same balding lump of deadwood, Rose Ritz is ready and in control and had to stop the car three times to throw up on the way to this humiliating video dating session just on the thousand-to-one chance that maybe she'll meet a decent guy so she doesn't have to be alone for the rest of her life 'cause her dead husband left her for a limping grandmother!

(A beat.)

No warning. "I love someone more." Then he just left. And then it just stopped. My life. For three days, I laid in bed and just stopped. And somehow, here I am—on the six month anniversary of the collapse of my life—I got myself here—to make the very first dating video of Rose Ritz. So choose me, Mr. Video Man. Please.

END

VIDEO OPERATOR (OFFSTAGE)

Uh...Rose—Rose...uh...we have all that on tape. What do you say we try it again?

ROSE

No. No. That's exactly what I wanted to say.

(Blackout.)

MUSIC 20B: SCENE CHANGE INTO:

SCENE 8: "Funerals are for Dating"

(Music segues directly into:)

MUSIC 20C: FUNERAL MUSIC

(The music is solemn as lights come up on a room in a funeral home. MURIEL, a sober woman of about seventy, enters, pays her respects to the unseen corpse, and sits in one of two chairs. ARTHUR, also in his seventies but much more jovial, enters, glances at the corpse, shrugs his shoulders, and sits in the other chair. ARTHUR notices MURIEL; a short silence, then he remembers; music out.)

ARTHUR

The Markus viewing!