**Two Ships Passing**

By Dave Carley

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**Two Ships Passing**

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Synopsis:

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

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

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

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

Production history:

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

ANNA Bregner – Gina Wilkinson

WESLEY Marshall – Ric Reid

JASON Bregner – Jason Jazrawy

Director – Christopher McHarge

Set and Costume Design – Dennis Horn

Lighting Designer – Mark Schollenberg

Sound Designer – Michael Stewart

Stage Manager – Barbara Wright

Production Director – Stephen Newman

*Two Ships Passing* had its American premiere at the Carnegie Mellon Showcase of New Plays, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in July, 1998. The cast consisted of Angelina Fiordellisi (ANNA); Joe Olivieri (WESLEY); and Matthew Fletcher (JASON). Sally Han directed.

*Two Ships Passing* was extensively revised in 2016, first as a result of a staged reading at Port Stanley Summer Festival (Simon Joynes, director.) It was then produced by Ontario Street Theatre (Sean Carthew, artistic director) in Port Hope Ontario in November 2016. Glenda MacFarlane co-directed and the cast included Drew Carnwath, Scott Kuipers and Anne Page.

Characters:

Anna Bregner. Age 42

Jason Bregner. Age 23

Wesley Marshall. Age 42

Time:

The very near future. June.

Place:

Act One – Anna’s chambers at the courthouse. Friday morning.

Act Two – Wesley’s office at the church. Sunday noon.

Set:

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

Style Notes:

Sentences ending with (bracketed phrases) indicate that that portion of the sentence should be covered by the subsequent speaker.

Thanks to:

Gillian Barber, Jackson Davies, Angelina Fiordellisi, Matthew Fletcher, Frank Gagliano, Peter Grier, Sally Han, Dennis Horn, Frank Janesh, Jason Jazrawy, Andra McIntyre, Mary Jo McLaren, Bill Millerd, Joe Olivieri, Virginia Reh, Rick Reid, Greg Richards, Kris Ryan, David Storch, Brendan Wall, Gina Wilkinson, and Barb Wright. Thanks also to Theatre Aquarius, The Carnegie Mellon Showcase of New Plays, The Canadian Stage Company, Arts Club Theatre and Theatre on the Grand. Very special gratitude to Chris McHarge, for commissioning and directing the premiere production. Additional thanks to Port Stanley Festival Theatre for a September 2016 workshop/reading – Simon Joynes (director) and actors Ryan Bommarito, Anne Page and Stephen Sparks and the cast and crew of the Port Hope production: Drew Carnwath, Sean Carthew, Scott Kuipers, Glenda MacFarlane and Anne Page.

**Two Ships Passing**

Act One

*(ANNA barrels into her office, flustered, wearing her street clothes. She is holding some phone messages; one of which is clearly bothering her. As she rants, she begins changing into her judicial wardrobe.)*

ANNA: Damn him damn that Wesley Marshall. Of all the – where’s my – of all the nerve – the arrogance of him, the supreme the colossal the – *(Pulls self up.)* I don’t care. I don’t care. Do not care. *(A laugh.)* See, I don’t care. I’m calm. I’m calm. I am calm. *(Struggling with robes.)* I’m the calmest judge in the country! The calmest judge in the calmest land how the living hell do you get into these things!? *(Stops* *struggling.)* Rise above this! Rise! RISE above this, woman! He’s just a man.

 *(There is a knock at the door.)*

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

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

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

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

 Oh for God’s sake.

JASON: (What?!)

ANNA: *(Bangs her head.)*

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

ANNA: NO!

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

JASON: You haven’t seen me since Christmas and all I get is “Oh for God’s Sake” and *(Bangs head.)*

ANNA: Sorry. You’re right. Jason – it is good to see you, welcome, welcome, very good to see you, a nice – surprise – a lovely one – I was expecting someone else –

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

 Get those away from me!

JASON: (What!?)

ANNA: They’re stolen!

JASON: (How do you know!)

ANNA: *(Kisses him.)* Welcome home. *(Swats him.)* I’m serious, Jason – if those were government property. From the front bed. They look Federal. I’m sorry I didn’t come to the bus station to get you.

JASON: That’s OK, (you’re busy)

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

JASON: I took a taxi home.

ANNA: What’s wrong with your legs!?

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

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

JASON: (No)

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

JASON: I did?

ANNA: Though it wasn’t as if you were actually sleeping at night. But I do worry about you getting rundown.

 *(JASON is looking doubtful.)*

 Hey – I’m being maternal here, help me.

JASON: Exams were a breeze.

 *(ANNA takes the flowers.)*

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

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

JASON: Mom!

ANNA: They’re stolen goods!

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

ANNA: Where’d you buy them?

 *(JASON hesitates.)*

 Guilty.

JASON: Okay, but they’re not from the courthouse.

 *(ANNA hugs JASON.)*

 What’s that for?

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

JASON: You are?

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

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

ANNA: And “Don’t be a damn capitalist” – how many times did you get that?

JASON: (A million)

ANNA: To be perfectly honest, I didn’t think you had the brains for business. Well, your father was no rocket scientist! He was *(Knocks on desk.)* hello hello. And your teen years weren’t exactly covered in glory. How did your job interviews go? *(Remembers someone’s coming; looks at watch.)* You can tell me later. *(Starts pushing JASON out.)* You want the car?

JASON: When do you have to be in court?

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

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

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

JASON: They went fine!

ANNA: When do you start?

JASON: What do you mean?

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

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

ANNA: Aw honey, you should’ve phoned and told me. Who with? But look, why not tell me all this at lunch. Do you want to do lunch? And dinner. You can tell me then, too. We’ll celebrate tonight. Will you be home for dinner or do you have a date?

JASON: I’ve been in town a half hour!

ANNA: What about that noisy thing?

JASON: (Noisy?)

ANNA: The Screamer.

JASON: *(Pause.)* Naomi?

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

JASON: No.

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

JASON: I dumped her.

ANNA: Pardon me?

JASON: I dumped her.

ANNA: I heard what you said. ‘Pardon me’ meant ‘I didn’t raise you to talk like that.’

JASON: Sorry.

ANNA: You didn’t say who hired you.

JASON: A bank.

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

JASON: A Swiss bank.

ANNA: That’s so far away!

JASON: I’ll be based in Toronto.

ANNA: That’s still far away.

JASON: Two hours.

ANNA: Well, it’s not here. Couldn’t you work for a bank here?

JASON: I’ll be down all the time.

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

ANNA: I’m going to make you a great supper, everything you like. *(Kisses him.)* And I really am proud. *(At the door; realizes JASON is not following her out, so tries another tactic.)* I didn’t feel I could say this when you were seeing poor Naomi. But really, honey, a mother should never hear her son’s girlfriend having an orgasm.

JASON: (Oh Mom Ohhh) *(Starts exiting.)*

ANNA: Every night, all Christmas holiday, listening to her shriek the paper off the walls. Lying there wondering: how liberal should a sleepless parent be? And worrying: is she faking?

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

ANNA: Oh, I’m sure she wasn’t.

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

 But – how would you know?

 *(JASON can’t exit.)*

JASON: Mom!

ANNA: Seriously. How would you know?

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

 *(ANNA doesn’t move.)*

 Mom?

ANNA: If Naomi told you she wasn’t faking – then she was. And even if she wasn’t and she told you she wasn’t you wouldn’t really know if she was or wasn’t. You’d have to ask her best friend. And you must never say “dumped”.

JASON: I’m a man. We’re all dogs. I thought you wanted me to leave.

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

JASON: Name two exceptions.

ANNA: Too easy for words.

 *(Pause.)*

JASON: I’m waiting.

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

JASON: Two men.

ANNA: Bill.

JASON: Bill?

ANNA: The court clerk. Total gentleman. Mind you, he’s seventy.

JASON: Two.

ANNA: *(Pause.)* Gandhi?

JASON: Young men. Live ones.

ANNA: Wesley Marshall.

JASON: What made you think of him?

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

JASON: He ‘dumped’ you!

ANNA: OK, bad example.

JASON: The worst example! He was even worse than that teacher you went out with.

ANNA: Which (teacher?)

JASON: And the mortician.

ANNA: Which (mortician?)

JASON: And don’t worry, Mom – I don’t use words like “dump” in front of women.

 *(ANNA indicates herself.)*

 You know what I mean.

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

ANNA: Stay.

JASON: But if we’re doing lunch –

 *(WESLEY has moved off by now. ANNA hugs JASON.)*

ANNA: I’m really, really proud of you. MBA. All those years, when you were in high school, and I’d look out night after night and see you barfing on the front lawn. *(Serious.)* I know it wasn’t easy for you.

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

 But off you go.

JASON: Wait. What’s this about it not being easy? Because I’m not mentally gifted?

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

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

ANNA: (Yeah)

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

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

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

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

JASON: I only wish Gran could have seen you.

 *(This stops ANNA in her tracks.)*

ANNA: Gran? She knew this was in the works.

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

ANNA: Yeah.

JASON: She might even have stopped worrying.

ANNA: She never worried.

JASON: She never stopped.

ANNA: What’re you talking about?!

JASON: She’d get up at night and pace, waiting for me to come home. I’d sit with her in the kitchen; me sitting, her smoking and pacing and worrying. “I wish your mother would settle down. I wish she’d get a job with a pension.”

ANNA: Well, I’ve got the pension now and guess what else – it’s indexed. And look – I even have my own parking space. Not that I care. *(Points.)* But see – first spot in.

JASON: That’s not your car.

ANNA: Oh, I can’t actually park there. There was a bomb threat last month – some idiot was going to blow my car sky high. So we gave the spot to the defence lawyers. I knew Gran worried. It was a control thing. When somebody tells you they’re worrying about you, that’s what it is – control.

JASON: Like you were worrying about me at exams.

ANNA: I’m your mother!

JASON: So what’s on tap for today? I thought I’d watch (this afternoon)

ANNA: - Dull stuff. A sentencing. You wouldn’t find it interesting, now shoo, shoo

JASON: - No major decisions or anything?

ANNA: We try to keep Friday afternoons light. It’s June, a lawyer’s thoughts turn to golf…

JASON: *(Pulls out a piece of paper.)* Now, don’t yell at me.

ANNA: Would I ever yell at you?

JASON: You left this on the kitchen table.

ANNA: *(Snatching it back.)* Dammit! You shouldn’t be reading that!

JASON: It was sitting there (I couldn’t miss it)

ANNA: - It’s just a rough draft!

JASON: (I know but)

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

JASON: You’re not giving this today?

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

JASON: I’d like to talk to you about it.

ANNA: Sure. Monday afternoon.

JASON: Why then.

ANNA: Because I deliver my ruling Monday morning.

JASON: I want to talk to you before then.

ANNA: Why.

JASON: Some of your – uh –

ANNA: Some of my “uh” what.

JASON: Some of your ruling -

ANNA: What about it.

JASON: I’m not second-guessing you – you’re the one in the robes –

ANNA: Yes I am.

JASON: But your approach –

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

JASON: It sounds a lot like you.

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

JASON: At least tone down your opening line.

ANNA: Why?

JASON: You sound slightly biased.

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

JASON: *(Reading.)* “The Premier is a fascist idiot.”?

ANNA: Oh I’m not going to say that – that’s my attitude. My judicial subtext.

JASON: I still think we should talk about it.

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

JASON: I’m your son!

ANNA; And I can just guess what your position is. *(Sighs.)* I wish I’d been handed stronger arguments! It’s driving me nuts! The government’s going to appeal.

JASON: The government won’t appeal if you rule in its favour.

ANNA: Shut up, I’m ruling against it. And it’s not the issues that’ve got them freaked. The financial ramifications are immense. Oh, this’ll go all the way to the Supreme Court.

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

ANNA: He’s on sick leave. I’ve never shrunk from a challenge, but there’s something to be said for them surfacing in their own sweet time. I haven’t even been here six months – I’m still learning procedure. Hell, I’m still trying not to trip on my gown. *(Sees time.)* Look at the time. Listen, you’ve really got to go.

JASON: I’ll just wait here till they call you.

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

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

ANNA: No.

JASON: The biggest decision of your career.

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

JASON: It seems simple enough: an eighty year-old woman needs a quadruple bypass. The government has just passed legislation that removes a number of procedures eligible for Medicare coverage – and that includes fancy heart operations for anyone over 75. Am I right so far?

ANNA: The woman has a name – Sophie Jamieson.

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

ANNA: They just won’t pay for it. Which is essentially the same thing.

JASON: But she could have the operation.

ANNA: She can’t afford it.

JASON: She’s poor?

ANNA: She owns a house.

JASON: Sell the house.

ANNA: That’s not the point.

JASON: It’s not?

ANNA: No.

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

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

JASON: Pay down the debt – you can feed more poor children.

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

 *(JASON indicates contempt.)*

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

JASON: Mom, this legislation is only recognizing something that already exists. Do you really think doctors don’t prioritize who gets what kind of care? Who’s a doctor going to operate on first: a forty year-old father of three who needs a bypass – or Sophie? He’s going to make a choice – according to *his* personal standards. But aren’t those decisions something we should be openly debating?

ANNA: So Sophie Jamieson dies.

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

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

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

ANNA: Anyway, I’ve still got all weekend to hone my arguments. Right now I’ve got more pressing concerns. A sentencing. I don’t know why they haven’t beeped me. Maybe they don’t know I’m here yet.

JASON: The receptionist did. She sent me down here. So who’re you putting away this morning?

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

JASON: What are you going to give him?

ANNA: Suspended sentence.

 *(JASON indicates he’s not impressed.)*

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

JASON: Is he senile?

ANNA: No he’s not “senile”.

JASON: Maybe something snapped.

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

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

ANNA: I used to shoplift.

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

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

JASON: You gotta let this go.

ANNA: We’d sail out with the loot while you distracted everyone with your gurgling and cooing – which, Jason, actually makes you an accomplice.

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

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

JASON: I’ll be back at lunch. My treat.

 *(JASON flings open the door to the hall and exits. ANNA is very tense – she’s not sure if WESLEY is out there or not. When she hears no greetings in the hall, she goes to the door, looks up and down the empty corridor, and then shuts the door with relief.*

 *ANNA straightens up her appearance again and picks up the Foley file. She walks about with it, reviewing her sentencing.*

*WESLEY returns purposefully and knocks. ANNA freezes, then hurries back to her desk.)*

 One minute!

 *(ANNA arranges herself in the “studying an important decision” position.)*

 Come in.

 *(WESLEY enters, holding flowers.)*

WESLEY: Anna?

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

WESLEY: You sound like the Queen.

 *(WESLEY hands ANNA flowers. ANNA stands again.)*

 I brought you these.

ANNA: Flowers.

WESLEY: I stole them.

ANNA: Not from out front!

WESLEY: They were off a casket. It’s good to see you. How very good. It’s been a while.

ANNA: Ten years.

WESLEY: *(Makes the “yikes” sound.)*

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

WESLEY: I came earlier but your door was shut.

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

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

ANNA: Why would you care about Grant Foley?

WESLEY: There’s something you need to know about him.

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

WESLEY: But this will change things.

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

WESLEY: But we’re old friends.

ANNA: No, we’re not. We’re not old friends. In fact, we’re not even friends. We’re two adults who haven’t seen each other in ten years. Our last contact occurred when you dumped me. And even that wasn’t in person.

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

ANNA: Make it quick.

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

ANNA: This is very touching.

WESLEY: He took me to ball games, that sort of thing. Mom even got him to tell me the facts of life. Which Grant boiled down to: ‘Keep it in your pants.’

ANNA: There really better be a point to this.

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

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

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

ANNA: Mentally you’re doing a serious barge.

WESLEY: I don’t mean to. I was sorry to hear about your mother.

ANNA: She hated you. Back to Grant Foley, please. This is highly improper. The fact you’re Foley’s friend and you’re in my chambers is enough to blow the case out of the water. And me with it. I’m surprised you don’t know that. Or maybe you do know and just don’t have enough respect for me to care.

WESLEY: I’ve got some news.

ANNA: What news?!

WESLEY: Grant Foley’s dead.

ANNA: He’s dead.

WESLEY: You don’t have to sentence him. Those were his flowers.

ANNA: When did he die?

WESLEY: Four days ago.

ANNA: Nobody told me!

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

ANNA: You should’ve told me when you came in. You should’ve walked through that door and said, “Hello, Anna. He’s dead.” Or even better – phoned the news in.

WESLEY: And miss this?

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

WESLEY: I guess the ban on entertaining doesn’t apply to boyfriends.

ANNA: What’s that supposed to mean?

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

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

WESLEY: Nothing serious, then.

ANNA: A spring fling.

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

ANNA: It’s Jason, you dork!

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

ANNA: Twenty-three. Just graduated.

WESLEY: Good for him.

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

 *(WESLEY sucks in his breath.)*

 I know I know, it’s a country club.

WESLEY: The tuition covers greens fees.

ANNA: It gets worse: Masters of Business Administration.

 *(They make horrified sounds. The thick ice is broken, a bit.)*

Not that it matters anymore, but I was going to let Foley off with community service again.

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

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

ANNA: It’s my flower drawer. See.

WESLEY: There’s no Scotch in there?

ANNA: What, you want Scotch?

WESLEY: I thought all judges had a little cache.

ANNA: Such a cliche.

WESLEY: You look really good.

ANNA: I have a grown son working for a Swiss bank. How can I be looking good?

WESLEY: Judging obviously agrees with you.

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

WESLEY: I’ll say. I mean – I wear a gown, too. I was going to write you a note when you were appointed. I gather it was a bit controversial.

ANNA: There was some grumbling. I was too young, I hadn’t been practising long enough, I was being made a judge in the same city I’d worked in as a lawyer. I was getting it because I was a woman. You know the tune. Well, you wouldn’t – but there is one. Anyway, here I am – Ontario Court of Justice, General Division. But hey – congratulations yourself. Though I guess you didn’t really have a choice – aren’t you “called”? Maybe you didn’t want to be a minister.

WESLEY: Oh, I wanted this. And yeah, I think I was called.

ANNA: I heard what happened at your church in Toronto. I haven’t breathed a word.

WESLEY: It’s public knowledge. They know here at my new church – I had to tell them in my interview. What exactly did you hear?

ANNA: You were sowing your seed on holy ground. Really, Wesley?

WESLEY: I had a church in downtown Toronto, there was a ruckus, I had to leave. End of story.

ANNA: That’s all I get?

WESLEY: What people seem to forget about the clergy is that we have the same physical desires as – football players or – Presidents. And nearly as many groupies. Every church has two or three excellent women of unimpeachable character who regard their preacher as some kind of sexual trophy. At Parkdale it was the organist – she chased me all over that church for two years!

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

WESLEY: And her sister. The choir leader.

ANNA: That’s terrible!

WESLEY: Sequentially.

ANNA: Oh, no problem.

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

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

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

For me, it’s something about a woman in robes. All that material. The way it starts at the neck and kind of billows out. So much guesswork.

  *(ANNA begins trying to conceal the fact she’s in a robe herself.)*

What’s behind curtain number two? Some Sundays – I’m up there preaching on caring or sharing or not swearing and I am filled with holy wonder about what is under the organist’s gown… In my mind’s eye I’m striding down from the pulpit with an air of authority, like Moses coming down the Mount, but instead of making commandments I’ll be breaking them and – You have a nice view.

ANNA: It’s a parking lot.

WESLEY: You’re driving a BMW.

ANNA: That’s one of the lawyers’.

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

ANNA: You really have changed.

WESLEY: So?

ANNA: Oh, I don’t know.

WESLEY: Just lunch.

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

WESLEY: Could you wear your robes?

 *(They laugh.)*

 I guess I am more confident now.

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

WESLEY: It wasn’t so brief.

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

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

WESLEY: He’s dead!

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

WESLEY: Lunch then?

ANNA: Sure. *(Looks at watch.)* It’s eleven. Come back in an hour. *(Almost exits.)* Oh Lord, Jason. I said I’d – well – I’ll change him. No, that’s not right. We’ll have to take a rain check. Aw hell, I’m making Jason dinner, I’ll make him something really special, yeah, I’ll cancel him for lunch, he won’t mind

WESLEY: - I’ll wait here for you.

ANNA: Don’t you have anything to do?

WESLEY: Nothing constructive.

ANNA: Okay, I’ll be right back.

*(ANNA exits. WESLEY smiles and watches her leave. He moves about her office, checking things out – and discovers the Sophie Jamieson notes. He starts reading. And seems very pleased.)*

WESLEY: Ho-lee -

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

JASON: Hi, who are you?

WESLEY: *(Shoves judgment in his jacket pocket; turns.)* Jason? This is an unexpected pleasure. It’s been a long time.

JASON: Where’s Mom?

WESLEY: Sentencing a dead man. She’ll be back in a minute. *(Pause.)* Hey,I hear you’re an MBA now. Congratulations. Got a job lined up?

JASON: Bank.

WESLEY: Right, a bank.

JASON: I know, Banks are bad.

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

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

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

JASON: I’m having lunch with her.

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

JASON: I came back to borrow her car.

WESLEY: Oh.

JASON: So she’s double-booked.

WESLEY: Wanna flip?

JASON: We’ll let her decide.

  *(Another pause.)*

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

JASON: Pretty much.

WESLEY: I’ve been back to school myself – since we last – crossed paths. I got a Bachelor of Divinity. I’m a minister. Of a church? I’ve been ordained. My class all got jobs too. Funny thing, one of them was hired by a bank. As a kind of stress counselor. He roams the financial district, praying with the sharks bankers. Taking confession. *(A laugh.)* Sorry. My friend is very popular with the bankers. There’s a study, it’s from New Zealand, apparently mutual funds administered by bankers who pray have an average yield 14 per cent higher. Than those who don’t. Pray. Picture it eh – buncha guys down on their knees praying for a bull market. Women, too. Lots of women MBAs now. And look at your Mom – a judge!

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

WESLEY: *(Mulling.)* Despite (everything). So. You’re 23. Married yet?

JASON: No.

WESLEY: Dating anyone special?

JASON: No.

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

JASON: - Excuse me?

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

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

*(Pause.)*

WESLEY: I deserved that. And yeah, I know I was, well, a bit - strange – in the parenting department, I mean, in high school they called me ‘Weirdley’ and that’s kind of a tip off - ah it wasn’t all bad was it?

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

WESLEY: I never took you to a graveyard!

JASON: Oh yes you did!

WESLEY: I did not!

JASON: We went in your Cadillac!

WESLEY: I never had a Cadillac!

JASON: Okay, that might have been one of the morticians. The guys Mom dated. But you were the worst.

WESLEY: Why!?

JASON: Because she went out with you the longest.

WESLEY: Eighteen months was the longest?!

JASON: By seventeen months.

WESLEY: I didn’t need to know that.

JASON: Yeah, forget I said it.

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

JASON: Forget I said it.

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

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

WESLEY: Oh, I think I do.

JASON: What am I thinking now?

WESLEY: “Weirdley”.

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

WESLEY: Pardon?

JASON: You heard me.

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

 *(ANNA returns.)*

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

 *(Pause.)*

WESLEY: (So)

JASON: (So)

ANNA: So.

WESLEY: So did you get everything cleared up?

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

WESLEY: And educated.

ANNA: And handsome. A real heartbreaker.

JASON: Are we still on for lunch?

ANNA: Oh right. Lunch. I don’t suppose – no, three’s a crowd.

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

ANNA: We’ll have supper together, honey.

JASON: Can’t.

ANNA: Why not?!

JASON: I’ve got a date.

ANNA: Already! You’ve only been here an hour and a half!

JASON: She was just down the hall.

ANNA: You leave that poor receptionist alone!

JASON: Not her.

ANNA: Then who?

JASON: I don’t know her last name. Mary Jo someone.

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

JASON: I did meet her in a courthouse.

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

JASON: Nah. I didn’t give my name.

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

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

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

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

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

WESLEY: Sounds like a deal to me.

JASON: So I’ll come back when?

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

JASON: Where are the keys?

ANNA: Why do you want the car now?

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

ANNA: Clear the files out of the back seat. I don’t want Mary Jo Silcox reading my judgments during the slow moments.

 *(ANNA gives JASON the keys.)*

 See you in an hour.

JASON: Thanks. Okay, so long. Slow moments. Reverend.

 *(JASON is leaving.)*

WESLEY: Jason.

 *(JASON is gone.)*

 Well, now I feel old.

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

WESLEY: He told me about his job.

ANNA: You didn’t get smart -

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

ANNA: I know, I failed, (yeah yeah)

WESLEY: No! Kids always become the opposite of what you are. You’re a left wing judge – so of course your son will go work for a bank. I’m a liberal clergyman, if I had a son he’d be *(Reaching for something.)*

ANNA: Celibate?

WESLEY: Touché. Anyway, Jason seems very personable

ANNA: Meaning I’m not?

WESLEY: Compared to when he was 13.

ANNA: You really didn’t argue?

WESLEY: We were complete adults. And I wouldn’t worry about him being such a conservative.

ANNA: Did I say I was worried?

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

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

WESLEY: But you cured me.

ANNA: “I’ll be a long, slow river.” Hah.

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

ANNA: Oh, yes you did. Closing night party at Bloom’s Furniture. You said, “We’ll just go with the flow and it’ll be a slow flow.” And then you commenced to flow, for a (year and)

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

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

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

ANNA: - I know what (you thought.)

WESLEY: - I wasn’t (ready.)

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

WESLEY: He hated me.

ANNA: Actually, he didn’t.

WESLEY: I was useless with him.

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

WESLEY: (I didn’t mean to)

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

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

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

WESLEY: That was later.

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

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

ANNA: That’s so gutless.

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

ANNA: Just as well you didn’t.

WESLEY: Every time I came to town, to visit my sister – I’d detour by your house. I’d almost stop the car and go knock on your door -

ANNA: I’m glad you didn’t.

WESLEY: I know, I don’t blame you.

 *(Long pause.)*

ANNA: I might have let you in.

WESLEY: You’re that stupid?

ANNA: I’m totally that stupid.

 *(Pause.)*

WESLEY: Anna?

ANNA: Uh huh?

WESLEY: Can you forgive me?

ANNA: My stupidity knows no bounds. Yes.

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

 You’re a minister.

WESLEY: You’re a judge.

ANNA: This is my workplace.

WESLEY: Your point?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

WESLEY: During sex!?

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

WESLEY: I know what to do for that.

ANNA: You do?

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

ANNA: When did that start!?

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

ANNA: I don’t care.

WESLEY: I’m really loud.

ANNA: You’re not coming over to sleep.

WESLEY: Okay.

ANNA: Okay.

WESLEY: Okay.

ANNA: So hold that thought till tonight.

WESLEY: Okay.

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

WESLEY: Okay.

ANNA: So do not kiss me now.

WESLEY: I won’t.

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

WESLEY: We’ll wait till tonight.

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

WESLEY: For you, I do.

ANNA: What, you don’t find me attractive?

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

ANNA: Well, that’s excellent. Because I’ve got a big judgment coming up and I’ve got to work on it, and then Jason will be back for lunch - You’re staring. Don’t look at me like that. What are you doing?

WESLEY: I’m just holding the thought.

ANNA: Hold it tighter.

WESLEY: Seven?

ANNA: Six. Let me write out the address.

WESLEY: I know where you live.

ANNA: Right.

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

ANNA: Yes, of course. Six o’clock.

WESLEY: Six.

ANNA: Six. Five-thirty.

 *(WESLEY turns to leave again; turns back.)*

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

ANNA: Get out!

WESLEY: See you tonight.

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

 Aw no. I’ll have to put it (back on her desk)…

*(WESLEY shoves the judgment into his jeans back pocket. He opens the door to ANNA’s office and strides back in.)*

 I think I left my

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

 *(ANNA pulls WESLEY to her.)*

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

 *(ANNA kisses WESLEY; he reciprocates.)*

 We’ve gotta lock the doors.

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

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

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

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

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

WESLEY: - On the desk?

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

WESLEY: Of course!

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

WESLEY: I won’t yell.

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

WESLEY: Shut up and kiss me.

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

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

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

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

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

 What’s this? Your sermon? Sorry Wes, I can’t have sex with a sermon so close.

 *(ANNA is about to throw it on the floor, but something catches her eye. She unravels it a bit. WESLEY is oblivious to this and is kissing her.)*

 Hey. Hey. HEY!

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

 You bastard!

End of Act One

**Act Two**

 *(WESLEY stalks into his office after the Sunday service. He’s in a foul mood. He throws off his robes and starts changing into his civvies. He has a massive black eye.)*

WESLEY: Of all the – of all the – of all the gee-dee Sundays for her – for her to – why the hell she has to – sitting there with that self-righteous look, that pickle up the bum “You’re tanking mister” smirk – well bite me bite me BITE ME! And of course everyone around her is – snoring. Isn’t it just FINE that you all fall sleep right on cue when I want to impress Miss Smug Revenge Is Mine!

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

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

 *(ANNA clears her throat. WESLEY turns and sees ANNA.)*

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

WESLEY: Go away.

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

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

ANNA: No.

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

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

WESLEY: You’re so ethical.

ANNA: Was that sarcasm?

WESLEY: It might have been.

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

WESLEY: (I know)

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

WESLEY: - I KNOW!

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

WESLEY: As if you care.

ANNA: You’re right. I don’t.

WESLEY: Then why ask.

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

WESLEY: Yes, and my congregation was pretty darn curious to know how I got it.

ANNA: Before they dozed off.

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

 Well.

WESLEY: Well?

ANNA: Do we – meaning you – do you have anything to say? Do you, for example, want to apologize and ask me to forgive you? Because if you were to ask, or better yet, beg for forgiveness – I might. Forgive. Now that I’ve seen your eye and know that you’re not blinded or pressing charges/

WESLEY: I’m the victim of violence here! Shouldn’t I be forgiving you? Gosh, it never occurred to me to press charges.

ANNA: Okay. We’ll forgive each other at the same time. On the count of three. One two three. I’m sorry I hit you.

WESLEY: I’m sorry you did too.

ANNA: You apologize!

WESLEY: It wouldn’t be honest.

ANNA: You just said you knew that taking the notes was wrong!

WESLEY: It was wrong - but I was right to do it.

ANNA: “It’s right to do wrong” – is that what you’re teaching now? Okay. Tell me one thing. Out of the idlest of curiosity. When you came to my office on Friday – did you come to tell me Grant Foley was dead, and you just happened to see my notes on Sophie Jamieson – or were you really there to try and influence me about her case?

WESLEY: I had to tell you about Grant. I couldn’t let you sentence a corpse to community service.

ANNA: Answer me.

WESLEY: If Sophie had come up in the conversation I was prepared to speak on her behalf. Why not. Finding the draft judgment on your desk – quite accidentally – was a situation I hadn’t expected aw hell Anna. I came to your office because I wanted to see you.

ANNA: Hah!

WESLEY: Yes.

ANNA: Me the judge.

WESLEY: No. You the you.

ANNA: Hah. Are you trying to tell me the little “amour” you threw my way was *(A mock catching of throat.)* real?

WESLEY: Yes.

ANNA: Hah. Save your breath. I don’t believe it.

WESLEY: I mean it.

ANNA: Hah.

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

 Hah. Why?

 *(WESLEY shrugs.)*

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

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

WESLEY: When I walked into your office on Friday and saw you, wham, it was like the past ten years had never happened. You looked just as fine to me as that first night when you came to my store. I wish I’d told you about my interest in Sophie’s case. I should have. But you have to believe me, the attraction part of it, that was real, that is real, that’s why I was trying to call you all weekend.

ANNA: Every bloody half hour.

WESLEY: I had to tell you (that)

ANNA: It was weird!

WESLEY: You never picked up.

ANNA: I’ve got call display. The first time you phoned it scared the crap out of me – the display read “St. Peter”. Five St. Peters later it began striking me as pathetic. But that doesn’t stop me from also being angry. I can handle two negative emotions simultaneously. And I sure would like an apology. You crossed the line.

WESLEY: In a good cause.

ANNA: You put my integrity as a judge at risk. And you’re not getting out of it by telling me I made your heart go flip-flop. *(Softens; about his eye:)* I really did that?

WESLEY: Uh huh.

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

WESLEY: That’s for Catholics.

ANNA: Oh.

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

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

WESLEY: Why’d you sit down?

ANNA: I’m as stupidly patient as ever.

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

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

WESLEY: Optimistic?

ANNA: Yeah. And I’m not sure about your sermon. I’m no expert, I didn’t go to theological school. But Wes: twenty-five minutes on Refugee Policies under King Nebuchadnezzar? No wonder they were all asleep. *(Pause.)* I don’t know how to make this clear to you. You can’t lobby judges. Can you imagine if your congregation woke up long enough to tell you what to preach?

WESLEY: They do it all the time!

ANNA: Be serious.

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

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

WESLEY: Oh please. Are you telling me you guys haven’t become lawmakers?

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

WESLEY: Sophie’s a good woman. She founded the soup kitchen. Yes, she owns her house in the east end. It’d fetch about what her operation will cost. She’s got a fifty year-old daughter living at home with her who’s developmentally slow, she’s dependent on Sophie. But for Sophie to continue taking care of her she needs the heart operation. And, to pay for that - if Medicare won’t – they’ll have to sell her house. They’ll be destitute! I can’t let that happen. I *won’t* let that happen.

 *(ANNA is staring at WESLEY.)*

 What.

ANNA: Nothing.

WESLEY: You’re staring.

ANNA: You really like it here.

WESLEY: Here.

ANNA: This.

WESLEY: Yes.

ANNA: Snorers and all?

WESLEY: Yeah. I hope they let me stay. Today’s the big day. The Hiring Committee’s meeting right now. You’re staring again. Plus you’re smiling.

ANNA: Am I?

WESLEY: I like your smile.

ANNA: Do you?

WESLEY: Does the smile mean I’m forgiven?

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

WESLEY: Good. You’re smiling again.

ANNA: Am I?

WESLEY: No wait. That’s more like a leer. Why are you leering?

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

WESLEY: The Bible has never used the word “exciting”.

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

WESLEY: This is making me nervous.

ANNA: How nervous?

WESLEY: No Anna. Not here.

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

WESLEY: This is a very different situation.

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

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

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

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

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

WESLEY: I’m not allowed to.

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

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

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

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

 *(ANNA is looking vaguely violent again.)*

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

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

WESLEY: But it’s all mashed together. We’re humans Anna. Thank God, you stopped leering.

ANNA: I did? *(Starts smiling again.)*

WESLEY: Where are you going?

 *(ANNA has gone to WESLEY’s coat rack and is getting his robe off the hanger. She starts putting it on.)*

ANNA: Funny how ten years later we’re both wearing gowns.

WESLEY: Now what’re you doing?

ANNA: Relax.

WESLEY: Someone might walk in.

ANNA: I’m just trying it on.

WESLEY: I’m still on probation.

ANNA: For what, five more minutes?

WESLEY: Well, all right. If the alternative is sex…

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

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

ANNA: Sure.

WESLEY: Great.

ANNA: After.

WESLEY: (After). There’s a really smart café down the street. Let’s go there and reminisce.

ANNA: I’d rather stay here and “reminisce”. Remember our first time?

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

ANNA: You were sitting on that unsold waterbed with your little bottle of sherry -

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

 *(ANNA smiles.)*

 What!? Now what.

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

What’s that?

ANNA: What’s what?

WESLEY: That there.

ANNA: That?

WESLEY: You just dropped it.

ANNA: I did?

WESLEY: It fell out.

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

 *(Something else drops out - her blouse.)*

WESLEY: This is neither the time nor the place.

ANNA: And my office was?

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

ANNA: Where.

WESLEY: They’re in that park just across the road and they’re going to come back here anytime, they’ll buzz me from the Session room.

ANNA: Buzz you?

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

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

 Aw no (please)

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

WESLEY: I never believe surveys.

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

WESLEY: What was the second best day?

ANNA: Thursday.

WESLEY: Let’s wait till Thursday.

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

 *(ANNA’s panties drop.)*

WESLEY: They’re just across the road!

ANNA: I don’t care. I want to do it now. I’m awash in forgiveness.

 *(ANNA kisses WESLEY long and hard.)*

WESLEY: Forgive me Father.

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

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

WESLEY: Shut up and kiss me.

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

WESLEY: No.

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

WESLEY: No.

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

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

 Hey. Hey.

 *(ANNA is sitting up.)*

 Damn.

WESLEY: What!!

ANNA: I can’t do it. I just can’t.

WESLEY: Why!

ANNA: I can’t put your career in jeopardy.

WESLEY: That’s okay (don’t worry)

ANNA: No, this is too important to you.

WESLEY: No one will know.

ANNA: We’ll know. (G*etting off WESLEY.)* On Friday I was all set to do it on my desk, but just two days later, on a Sunday afternoon, with all the odds favouring orgasm – I can’t.

 *(Pause.)*

WESLEY: I think I can apologize now.

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

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

ANNA: When?

WESLEY: When you were climbing off me.

ANNA: Really.

WESLEY: It was like a petit mal ethics seizure. I understand. About Friday. You were right. I was wrong. I’m sorry.

 *(ANNA kisses WESLEY. She is interrupted by:)*

JASON: *(Outside door.)* Hello?

ANNA: *(Sotto.)* Who’s that?

JASON: *(Knocking.)* Hello?

ANNA: It’s Jason!

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

ANNA: Get rid of him!

WESLEY: *(Calling.)* Go away!

JASON: What?!

WESLEY: Come back later.

JASON: I’d like to see you now.

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

JASON: It won’t take long.

WESLEY: OK, hold on.

 *(ANNA is in the closet; WESLEY opens door and JASON enters.)*

WESLEY: Jason.

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

WESLEY: A little.

JASON: I’d like to talk to you.

WESLEY: Here?

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

WESLEY: You want to talk right now?

JASON: Why not.

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

JASON: I’m heading to Toronto tonight so it (has to be now)

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

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

WESLEY: Praying?

JASON: It sounded like you were talking to someone.

WESLEY: Uh, I was praying in tongues.

JASON: I don’t know what that means.

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

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

WESLEY: Usually people make an appointment.

JASON: This won’t take long.

WESLEY: How long is not long?

JASON: Three minutes.

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

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

WESLEY: Yeah, there’s the preaching thing and then the hospital-visiting thing and *(Suddenly the thought strikes him:)* Gosh – I’m sorry. You’ve come to me with something and I’m being flippant. Is there something I can help you with, are you in trouble?

JASON: I wanted to apologize.

WESLEY: Oh, yes, that’s today’s theme.

JASON: Huh?

WESLEY: Never mind.

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

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

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

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

JASON: She’s like the textbook for it!

WESLEY: She’s a very, very grounded person. What’s your point?

 *(JASON pulls the judgment out of his pocket.)*

JASON: This case she’s ruling on.

WESLEY: Is that what I think it is?

JASON: It’s her final notes.

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

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

WESLEY: Really?

JASON: Yes.

WESLEY: She’s doing it.

JASON: Don’t act surprised.

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

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

WESLEY: What do you take me for – some kind of cult leader?

JASON: I’m just saying (that you)

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

JASON: Sophie Jamieson can pay for her operation.

WESLEY: That’s irrelevant.

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

WESLEY: Sophie would have to unload all her assets. But oh – the church could fill the gap!

JASON: Why not.

WESLEY: We could hold bake sales!

JASON: Community involvement – especially from churches – isn’t that a good thing?

WESLEY: We’d have to have a bake sale every day of the year. And in case you didn’t notice the signs on your way in, we’re already running a soup kitchen. The hospital is discharging Sophie because this new law denies her the operation she needs.

JASON: We can’t afford it. And it’s not your concern anyway.

WESLEY: Brace yourself, I’m going to quote some Bible. “What does it profit you that you should have faith, if you have not works. I will show you my faith by my works.”

JASON: Must be nice to hide behind a Bible.

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

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

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

 *(WESLEY begins to protest.)*

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

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

JASON: She’s under a lot of pressure! She’s really worried she’ll screw up, she’s worried about this judgment, she even worries about tripping on her robes. And of course that’s all irrational, because look how well she’s done, especially considering she was a single mother at nineteen.

WESLEY: Shoplifting baby formula.

JASON: I wish she’d stop telling people that.

WESLEY: I’ve got a meeting in a few minutes. Get to your point.

JASON: My point? I love her. I don’t have any other family. I don’t know if she told you, but Gran died just before Christmas, so it’s just Mom and me. I know it’s “sexist” to be protective of her but that’s how I am with her. And she’s good at some things, like the law, but when it comes to men, she’s hopeless. You haven’t seen the guys Mom’s dated.

WESLEY: There you go again!

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

WESLEY: We never did macramé!

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

 *(WESLEY shrugs.)*

 On a government grant!!!

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

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

WESLEY: Are you decent?

JASON: Not always.

WESLEY: Well, I’m pretty decent.

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

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

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

WESLEY: Your mother has a big mouth.

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

WESLEY: Anna and I have (resolved that)

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

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

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

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

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

WESLEY: Ancient history.

JASON: ‘Ancient history’? From the man who preaches about some guy from 2000 years ago. And yeah, I’m a sexist idiot to even think about it. I guess I’m an idiot to care enough about her to try and stop it happening again. I’d even started calling you “Dad” you know.

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

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

WESLEY: Get the hell out of here.

JASON: You’re ordering me out.

WESLEY: Damn right I am.

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

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

 *(ANNA bursts out of the closet.)*

ANNA: No he’s not!

JASON: Where the hell did you come from?!

ANNA: He’s not a disgrace!

WESLEY: Oh yes he is!

JASON: Mom!

ANNA: I’m proud of him! Really proud!

WESLEY: Of that!?

JASON: MOM!!!

ANNA: He’s just young and really certain about things but he’ll loosen up, you said that (yourself)

JASON: Don’t patronize me!

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

ANNA: He’s my son!

WESLEY: He’s also an adult. *(To JASON.)* And your values suck.

ANNA: Leave him alone!

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

ANNA: After you, my beloved son.

JASON: I asked you first.

ANNA: Youth before “flakes”.

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

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

JASON: You were in there.

ANNA: Yes.

JASON: The whole time.

ANNA: Yes.

JASON: So – you guys playing hide and seek?

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

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

WESLEY: Don’t you get sarcastic with me.

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

WESLEY: See, you’re not proud of him!

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

JASON: Totally.

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

WESLEY: You’re not paranoid!

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

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

ANNA: I told you to stay out of this!

WESLEY: It’s my office!

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

WESLEY: Okay okay I’ll leave.

ANNA: STAY – it’s your office!

JASON: You gave him that black eye?!

ANNA: Yes.

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

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

JASON: What did he do to you!?

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

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

JASON: Mom.

ANNA: What.

JASON: Mom. Do you want to explain why you’re wearing his gown?

ANNA: No.

JASON: Mom.

ANNA: What.

JASON: Mom, are you going to tell me why you were hiding in his closet?

ANNA: No.

JASON: *(Points to panties on the floor.)* Mom!

ANNA: What!

JASON: Mom! Are those yours?

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

WESLEY: *(Pokes at panties with his foot.)* They’re definitely not your mother’s. They’re wayyy too small. Wayyyy wayyyy

ANNA: ALL RIGHT, THEY’RE MINE!!!

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

WESLEY: - It wasn’t like you think.

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

 *(They all stop and ponder this.)*

WESLEY: You were?

ANNA: Shut up.

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

ANNA: DO YOU MIND!?

WESLEY: YES I MIND!

ANNA: I had no ulterior motives at the time of my mounting the desk. And you.

WESLEY: That’s good because I don’t like being used.

JASON: WHAT DO YOU SEE IN HIM!?

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

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

ANNA: SHUT UP!!

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

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

 *(JASON registers “buzzed”.)*

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

JASON: So you’re “seeing” him now.

WESLEY: (We are?)

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

WESLEY: I wouldn’t say I’ve had “precious little” (magic.)

 *(ANNA motions him into silence.)*

JASON: He’s just using you.

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

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

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

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

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

WESLEY: And immoral.

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

JASON: *(Leaving.)* Forget it.

ANNA: Don’t just walk out!

JASON: You guys don’t get it.

WESLEY: We “don’t get it”.

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

 *(WESLEY and ANNA look perplexed, then laugh.)*

 What’s so funny.

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

WESLEY: You were thinking.

ANNA: He’s not getting “buzzed” as buzzed – stoned.

WESLEY: It’s buzzed as in ‘called to a meeting’.

ANNA: His hiring committee.

JASON: Hiring committee.

WESLEY: They’re meeting in the park

ANNA: To approve him.

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

ANNA: And (buzz him).

WESLEY: Buzz me.

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

ANNA: Sorry.

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

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

You said being an adult meant making difficult choices and gradually I’ve come to see that, yes, it’s true. If it’s easy, it’s likely wrong – or maybe right for some but wrong for others. But the minute you have to face a reality that is inconvenient or hurtful or actually involves making a hard choice – you run and hide behind whatever “principles” or “ideals” you’ve managed to cook up to suit the situation. So hey – let’s bankrupt ourselves with a million heart operations because you’re too gutless to consider the alternative. And then – just when you’re cornered – just when someone is forcing you to actually consider the fact that we can’t give children breakfast programs because Sophie Jamieson won’t sell her house to pay for a bunch of new arteries – well, somehow, through some miracle of middle-aged baby loom logic, it’s me who’s greedy, me who’s selfish, me who can’t face reality.

WESLEY: So all the cutbacks we’ve endured over the past decade weren’t enough.

JASON: No!

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

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

WESLEY: Nor are we properly taxing your corporations!

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

ANNA: Of course I noticed.

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

 *(JASON exits. Long pause.)*

ANNA: Oh.

WESLEY: I uh.

ANNA: He is

WESLEY: Anna, I think

ANNA: Um that’s

WESLEY: I think

ANNA: He’s like that.

WESLEY: Go after him.

ANNA: What?

WESLEY: *(More certain.)* Go.

ANNA: Oh, there’s no (use)

WESLEY: Go!

ANNA: I’d rather stay.

WESLEY: He needs you.

ANNA: That wasn’t “need” talking.

WESLEY: Yes it was – go!

ANNA: I’ll let him calm down.

WESLEY: Please.

ANNA: No.

WESLEY: Yeah. Wait here. Wait here till he comes back and apologizes.

ANNA: DID YOU HEAR WHAT HE SAID!?

WESLEY: Didn’t you? Go Anna.

ANNA: Don’t you presume to tell me what I should be doing with my son.

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

ANNA: HE’S NOT YOUR SON! And he just said some astonishing, cruel things, okay? So I just don’t think I’m going to chase after him and grovel.

WESLEY: He didn’t mean to be cruel.

ANNA: He meant every last word. He’s been throwing that at me for years.

WESLEY: Throwing (what)

ANNA: The Gran stuff. The fact that he was closer to her, it’s his weapon of choice, since he was a little boy. “Gran lets me do this.” “Gran wouldn’t say that.” “Gran listens to me.”

WESLEY: So?

ANNA: It was true. So what.

WESLEY: (So what?)

ANNA: - And you know, sometimes, a lot of times, he didn’t even feel like my child. She was doing the raising. He was like a – a kid brother. I don’t know, I didn’t have much choice and I didn’t talk with him, ever, like she did. They were thick as thieves those two and I was the odd one out, always. Even after her stroke – I’d sit at her bedside, every night I was there – and she could still move her eyes, and she was always looking past me, over my shoulder to her bedside table – at his picture.

WESLEY: Anna.

ANNA: What.

WESLEY: He’s leaving tonight. You’ve got to go to him now. Do I have to throw you out of here?

ANNA: Why are you being so noble all of a sudden? It’s not like you’re Mr. Family – he doesn’t even like you!

WESLEY: He hates me. And don’t you get it? I wish I was Mr. Family. I wish I had a family. All I have is a hundred people I put to sleep every Sunday. He can’t be far – just go out there and – just go and at least talk to him, okay?

 *(ANNA is hesitating.)*

 Please.

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

WESLEY: What’re you doing!? Go!

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

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

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

WESLEY: “The premier is a fascist idiot. And moron.”

 *(WESLEY bursts into laughter, then starts reading on, liking what he’s reading.)*

Right on Anna. Yes. OK, good. Well put. (etc)

*( ANNA bursts back into his office.)*

 You’re back!?

ANNA: Why’d you send me out in this!?

WESLEY: Where’s Jason?

ANNA: LOOK AT WHAT I’M WEARING!

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

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

WESLEY: It’s actually a Hiring Committee.

ANNA: How many?!

WESLEY: Four.

ANNA: How many of them are really fat?

WESLEY: Four.

ANNA: How many have grey hair?

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

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

WESLEY: Why?

ANNA: There was a breeze.

WESLEY: Oh.

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

WESLEY: Ahh.

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

WESLEY: How far up?

ANNA: Over my face up.

 *(WESLEY begins to laugh.)*

 How can you laugh!

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

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

 I’m sorry, it’s just (funny)

ANNA: They hold your future in their hands!

WESLEY: Maybe they didn’t see.

ANNA: They must’ve.

WESLEY: There’s still no connection to me. *(Notices ANNA is not sharing in laughter.)*

 What.

ANNA: There’s something else.

WESLEY: What.

ANNA: Jason was with them.

WESLEY: Oh.

ANNA: Yeah.

WESLEY: Oh.

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

 *(WESLEY shrugs.)*

 How can you be so calm!

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

ANNA: That’s just my motivation.

WESLEY: When do you deliver it?

ANNA: Ten, tomorrow.

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

ANNA: I know. I’ll just get dressed.

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

WESLEY: That’s them. Okay. Okay. It’s showtime.

ANNA: I’m so sorry about Jason.

WESLEY: It’s okay.

ANNA: I could come and explain (to them)

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

ANNA: Crystals. Come back here a sec. Let me fix your collar.

*(WESLEY returns. ANNA fixes his tie and then kisses him. And then they kiss a little longer.)*

 Good luck.

 *(WESLEY turns and leaves, passing JASON on his way in.)*WESLEY: Jason.

JASON: Reverend. *(WESLEY leaves. JASON holds flowers out to ANNA.)*

 I stole them.

ANNA: Not from the church.

JASON: The park. Where was Wesley going?

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

JASON: - Mom Mom (Mom calm down)

ANNA: - I know (you hate him)

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

ANNA: I was (saying that)

JASON: - Start listening!

ANNA: Yeah (but Jason)

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

ANNA: She said that?

JASON: All the time.

ANNA: She never said that to me.

 *(Pause.)*

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

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

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

ANNA: What about the old guy?

JASON: He turned to me and asked me if I’d seen anything unusual just then. And I said, “No Sir.” Like I’m going to say, “Yeah Gramps, we just got flashed by my mother.” And he said, “It’s too bad you didn’t see what I saw, because sonny: I just got a sneak preview of paradise.” I think Wesley’s okay. I know he is. *(Pause.)* I’m still not saying he’s right for you.

ANNA: Fine.

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

ANNA: Neither am I.

JASON: Okay.

ANNA: Fine.

JASON: Fine. I stand by everything I said.

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

JASON: Sure. Even though it’s wrong.

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

JASON: Fine. And I am proud of you.

ANNA: Ditto.

JASON: So we’re being sappy, right?

ANNA: Yeah.

JASON: Good. Hold the mood.

ANNA: You want to do lunch?

JASON: Just us?

ANNA: Just us.

JASON: OK. You’re on.

 *(ANNA takes the flowers. She puts her hand out. She and JASON shake.)*

 *(Fast black.)*

**The End.**