

SEX IS GOOD FOR YOU! by Art Shulman

CAST: AL A man 50-55, with a dry wit

 SHEILA His attractive wife. Slightly younger than Al

 CRAIG Their shy son, in his 20's

 MIKE The seemingly likeable owner of the agency Al works at. Age 35-45, and attractive to women.

 DEBBIE A very sexy looking nurse, in her 20's

TIME: The present

SETTING: Al and Sheila's upper middle class living room or family room. It contains a couch and chair, at least one bookcase, plus other furniture

In addition to the front door, there are entrances to hallway leading to the other rooms of the home

ACT 1
SCENE 1

TIME: Late afternoon
AT RISE: AL reads from a "Funeral Plan & Documents" booklet as SHEILA enters, returning from work.

SHEILA

Happy anniversary, Al. You didn't forget today's our anniversary, did you?

AL

(Realizing he did forget, but not wanting to admit it.) Of course not. Why would I forget our anniversary?

SHEILA

You didn't say anything this morning.

AL

Sheila, I was sleeping when you took off for work. Otherwise I would have said something.

SHEILA

I can't wait to see what you got me.

AL

I bought you the same as what I bought you last year.

SHEILA

You didn't buy me anything last year.

AL

That's why I said I bought you the same as last year. I would have gone shopping this year, but I had no energy in my old age.

SHEILA

Twenty seven years, we've been together.

AL

It seems like a lifetime.

(SHEILA reacts)

A short happy lifetime.

SHEILA

We'll be together forever, won't we, Al?

AL

I don't know about forever. Maybe a few weeks. If I'm lucky, a few months.

SHEILA

Al, the bypass surgery took care of everything. Your heart's fine. The doctor says you can live a normal life span if you take care of yourself.

(SHE refers to the booklet)

What's that?

AL

A booklet sent by the Shady Oaks Funeral Home. It came in the mail today.

SHEILA

I never heard of Shady Oaks. Do they take our denomination?

AL

Funeral homes take all denominations -- fifties, hundreds, most of the time thousands.

SHEILA

Why did they send it to us?

AL

They probably got my name from a list of people likely to die soon.

SHEILA

Where would they get a list like that?

AL

Maybe from the hospital I was in. Hospitals sometimes sell the names of people likely to die soon.

SHEILA

Hospitals don't do that. It's unethical.

AL

You think that holds them back? It's ethical to charge three dollars for an aspirin? Or five dollars for a band-aid?

SHEILA

Let me see that. *(Taking and looking at the booklet)* It says the Golden family.

AL

Who do you think they meant to send it to in our family? You? The parakeet? They sent it to the one likely to die the soonest. Me! The booklet asks you to write in specific information so when someone dies the family will know what to do.

SHEILA

(Inspecting the booklet)
Interesting.

AL

At the time of your deep grief over my departure from this world, you won't have to figure it out. I'll write it all down in this book. My funeral wishes, a list of important documents and where they are, and a keepsake of my fondest memories to speak to future generations.

SHEILA

What fondest memories would you like to pass on?

AL

What happened on our wedding night, for example. I went to the page and it's already recorded in the book what happened that night.

SHEILA

(As AL turns to the page)
That's sacred between the two of us.

AL

I think it would be selfish to keep it between the two of us. Our son should know, our friendly neighbors, your tai chi group... *(Pointing to the page)* There.

SHEILA

There's nothing on the page.

AL

That's because nothing happened on our wedding night. You had a headache the whole honeymoon.

SHEILA

I'm not like that anymore.

AL

I know. Once you got the hang of it there was no stopping you. That's why you're "Boom-Boom".

SHEILA

That's only between us, "Pistol".

(AL points his finger like a gun and clicks with his tongue. SHEILA starts to put AL's finger in HER mouth. HE notices what SHE's doing and withdraws HIS finger.)

AL

I was going to put "Boom-Boom" in the book, in the space for "Spouse's nickname".

SHEILA

Don't you dare.

AL

Now all you think of is sex. (Beat) I think I'll check my voice mail at the office.

(AL dials the phone)

SHEILA

I don't think only of sex. It's just that we should have it sometimes. Especially on our anniversary.

(AL briefly listens to the phone, then hangs up.)

AL

No messages.

SHEILA

Al, sex is good for you. The exercise helps you stay fit.

AL

If I want exercise, I'll help dust the house. That way, if I start to get too exerted I can just stop and rest.

SHEILA

If you have a problem when we're making love, you can also just stop and rest.

AL

I just can't stop in the middle of sex, when I'm all excited. At the end of the sex there's an explosion. It's either a climax or my heart blowing out. I don't want to take any chances.

SHEILA

The angel of death will not arrive when we're screwing.

AL

Don't talk about angels that way. *(Beat)* I just can't get it up. The turtle won't come out of the shell.

(SHEILA gives him a look)

The flag's at half mast and the bugler's asleep.

SHEILA

Al...

AL

I'm not Moses. I can't turn a snake into a rod.

SHEILA

You didn't have any problems getting it up for that young nurse, Debbie, who gave you such special attention.

AL

So I got a stiffy! But only when she gave me a sponge bath. It was a reflex that couldn't be helped.

SHEILA

Why didn't you ask me to give you a sponge bath?

AL

I didn't happen to be dirty there when you came in the room.

SHEILA

I was at the hospital every day with you.

AL

A dirty crotch can flare up pretty suddenly.

SHEILA

And the two of you constantly yapping about angels.

AL

What's wrong with that?

SHEILA

Given your state of mind, I don't like the association.

AL

What association?

SHEILA

People only get to be angels after they pass away.

AL

Angels are sweet and helpful. So what if they're dead people!

SHEILA

Al, do you know why they call it heaven? Because angels screw whenever they want.

AL

Stop picking on Debbie.

SHEILA

How about when she took your temperature?

AL

I asked her to take the measurement in my bottom.

SHEILA

An ear thermometer is so much quicker.

AL

When I was a little boy my mother took my temperature on my bottom. Now, deep down emotionally, I think it's more accurate there... Sheila, to me you were the most attractive woman at the hospital.

(SHEILA smiles at the compliment.)

In your age group.

SHEILA

Half the women in my age group were patients with tubes up their noses.

(CRAIG knocks, then enters, carrying a basket of laundry and flowers.)

CRAIG

Hi, Mom! Hi, Dad! I just stopped by to wish you guys happy anniversary!

SHEILA

Come here my darling executive.

(SHEILA hugs CRAIG, and takes the flowers.)

CRAIG

I don't know how good an executive I am.

SHEILA

What beautiful flowers! Aren't they, Al?

AL

Very beautiful.

SHEILA

I'll get a vase.

(SHEILA exits to the kitchen with the laundry and flowers.)

CRAIG

I separated the whites and coloreds this time, Mom. (*To AL*) Hey Dad, why aren't you watching the basketball game. The number one team is on TV.

AL

I don't want to be reminded of my former life. It depresses me that others are playing while I'm practically an invalid.

CRAIG

Why can't you play?

(SHEILA enters with the flowers in a vase.)

AL

I'm just aware that strenuous exercise is very dangerous for me. (*Beat*) We have any chocolate in the house?

SHEILA

No, but it's a shame because chocolate is an aphrodisiac.

AL

Oh! (*Beat*) We have any jellybeans in the house?

SHEILA

No! You're afraid strenuous exercise is dangerous but you don't care about what you eat.

AL

I got my heart attack while I was strenuously exercising. Not while I was eating.

SHEILA

Now, that makes a lot of sense.

(SHEILA exits to the kitchen.)

CRAIG

Dad, there's something that came up, and I wanted to get your opinion.

AL
My opinion? Sure.

CRAIG
I got a raise.

AL
Congratulations.

CRAIG
It was only five percent.

AL
Five percent? That's nothing in relation to what you do there.

CRAIG
I thought you could talk to Mike.

AL
You're afraid to do it yourself.

CRAIG
It's not really like I'm afraid...

AL
If you want to be Mr. Executive you can't be afraid to confront people.

CRAIG
I'm a computer engineer, not an executive.

AL
You're both, if you ever want to succeed in business.

CRAIG
Confronting people isn't my strong suit.

AL
If somebody says or does something that bothers you, tell them what you think. Head on.

CRAIG
Head on?

AL
Head on.

CRAIG
I just wish you'd say something to him.

AL

I'm just not confident in my health right now to argue with Mike.

CRAIG

How are you feeling today?

(SHEILA enters with a carrot.)

SHEILA

He's fine.

(SHEILA rubs his shoulder affectionately, then hands him the carrot.)

Here, nibble on a carrot before dinner.

AL

Sheila, I know dinner's going to be great. Like usual. But I hate carrots. I hate anything having to do with carrots. Even bunny rabbits. I don't like peas because sometimes they come in a can with their friends, the carrots. I can't get anything good to eat around here. For lunch, a green salad and tuna fish, no mayonnaise. No dessert.

SHEILA

You should attend my class next week, on the day I teach my third graders about the food groups. It'll be good for you to get out.

AL

No thanks. I already know about food groups. I'm dying for a tasty nibble from the vegetable group.

SHEILA

What from the vegetable group would you like?

AL

Potato chips.

SHEILA

No junk food!

(SHEILA exits to the kitchen.)

AL

Any food that doesn't taste good to me is junk food. Useless... Bring me any mail from the office?

(CRAIG starts to give AL "junk mail")

Besides junk mail.

(CRAIG puts away the mail)

CRAIG

No mail. Sorry.

AL

The agency is Golden, Kerner & Associates. But I'm not even worth as much as an associate. I have nothing to contribute.

CRAIG

Sure you do.

AL

I don't know a Pentium processor from a food processor. What do I contribute?

CRAIG

Well,... knowledge and opinions... and your stature, and the history of the firm.

AL

That's really something! I contribute the history of the firm. The firm I founded created advertising. Now, ninety percent of the business is creating web sites. Maybe I should retire.

SHEILA (o.s.)

People who retire often find themselves dead a short time later. Their wives kill them because they're always around driving them crazy.

AL

Craig, I want to ask you a question.

CRAIG

Sure.

AL

Did you come around just now because you really can't deal with Mike yourself, or because you want me to feel more important by giving me a problem to handle?

CRAIG

That's very perceptive, Dad, and that's why we need you at the office. A man who can see through the bullshit.

(SHEILA enters)

AL

I can see through bullshit, can't I?

SHEILA

Only when it's not yours.

CRAIG

Of course I can deal with Mike myself... I guess I'll leave you two lovebirds together. Mike gave me a deadline -- I've got to evaluate some new software by tomorrow morning.

SHEILA

Instead of software, find yourself a girlfriend. Sure you won't stay for dinner?

CRAIG

No thanks.

SHEILA

I'm trying a new recipe.

CRAIG

I'll pass this time, Mom.

SHEILA

Then, eat with us some time later this week.

CRAIG

(Not very enthusiastically)
Great! When?

SHEILA

How about Thursday?

CRAIG

Thursday it is. Happy anniversary again.

(CRAIG exits.)

AL

I can't believe we have a kid like Craig. Remember when he was born.

SHEILA

No hair.

AL

He hardly ever cried.

(HE puts his arm around SHEILA's shoulder.)
You were such a good mother.

SHEILA

We had a lot of fun raising him, didn't we?

AL

Sure did.

(AL noticing HIS arm around SHEILA, removes it.)

SHEILA

He always wanted to be like you.

AL

I'm glad we made him.

SHEILA

Al, remember how we made him?

AL

I haven't forgotten how.

SHEILA

Al, let's have the red wine I bought for our anniversary.

AL

Don't you have a lesson plan to prepare? Almost every night you do a lesson plan, or grade exams.

SHEILA

But tonight's a special occasion. So, I'll skip it.

(SHEILA takes out the wine.)

Besides, red wine is good for your heart. We'll relax, then have a nice romantic dinner. Be right back.

(While AL works on the folder, SHEILA strips, exposing provocative undergarments.)

AL

A romantic dinner is fine. But not a romantic dinner that ends up with us being naked. For that you'll have to wait until I recover. *(Beat)* Maiden name. *(HE thinks)* Al Golden.

Music you'd like played at your funeral. *(Thinking, then singing)* "For he was a jolly good fellow. For he was a jolly good fellow. For he was a jolly good fellow..."

(SHEILA poses by the entrance to the room.)

SHEILA

Hi.

AL

Hi.

(AL calls into the kitchen.)

Sheila! Come here. We have a stranger in the house. A model for Frederick's of Hollywood.

SHEILA

I've been wearing this underneath all day. Just for you! Like it?