

# The Year of the Tiger

*Coming of age just took on a whole new meaning...*

# *The Year of the Tiger*

**A Play in Two Acts  
by Robert Joseph Ahola**

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## *Synopsis*

It is New Year's Eve, 1999. Three men — close friends for forty years — have used this occasion for a reunion, only to find that time, individual philosophies, and personality clashes have left them with little in common. They have all gone different directions, have different women in their lives, and have become, perhaps, something less than they expected of themselves.

Most of all, they have all recently had their own close encounter with the dark side of their mortality. (Two of the friends have had brushes with death. And the third, a television star on the downside of his career is secretly considering ending his own life.) All three men, born in the year of the tiger, have also turned the traumatic age of 60 in the last year.

Now, they face the new millennium with an inevitable sense of wonder, an invariable sense of mischief, and in most cases a fragile sense of hope.

Despite their differences, they share another common bond: the recollection of their excellence, the flowering of their youth, and the familiar music of their early dreams, when all the universe was theirs to run as they pleased. Now, each man holds a secret of his own that he is at choice to reveal on this night. The question is will he?

A black tie dinner for six set near midnight of the new millennium will send these men, their wives and young lovers on a new path — toward sunrise and a whole new perspective on life... or not!

A comedy with a bittersweet dramatic heart — and with six highly unforgettable characters — *The Year of the Tiger* will often surprise but never fail to delight its audience.

# Character Profiles

**Tom Devlin.** A “retired” industrialist, Tom Devlin, at 60, is a recent cancer survivor (an encounter which netted him the removal of a lung). A former Rhodes Scholar, master of philosophy, and dedicated futurist, Tom is also a raging sexist, racist, and one of the last bastions of male-chauvinism in the known universe. He is also uncanny in his insight into others and one of the most compassionate men on planet Earth. In another era, Tom’s era, he might have been described as a man’s man. But Tom Devlin, more than anyone gathered at this party, is aware that such times have passed.

**Evelyn Devlin.** A self-made real-estate magnate, she happens, in her other life, to be Mrs. Tom Devlin and the mother of his three college age children. A former Olympic trialist and fashion model, she is, at 50, a strong woman who does not suffer fools gladly. Having overcome dirt poor beginnings, she nurses occasional senses of inferiority that she hides with a show of social flair.

**Conrad Vicar. “Connie.”** Described by others as perhaps the most talented man in the world, Connie Vicar -- a gamesman, superb athlete, and dazzling entrepreneur -- is the one man who, at 60, feels entirely washed up. Having just come off an aneurysm and quadruple bypass, he looks and feels old for his age, and recognizes the fact that he might well be living on borrowed time. And yet there is about him a razor-sharp wit, an irrepressible puckishness and a refusal to grow up that is utterly contagious. A veteran of four broken marriages that have drained his considerable fortune, he is now married to “the worst sober decision I ever made,” a woman who has more money than heart, and a mordant tongue that hides them both.

**Prunella Vicar “Pru.”** An heiress to a technology fortune, she, by her own estimation, has “more money than God’s daddy.” An attractive, if plumpish woman in her 40s, Pru has always gotten everything she ever wanted except a happy relationship. Her marriage to Connie Vicar will do nothing to assuage that sense of lack. In fact it is described by their friends as a “rhythm of mutual torment,” a dance that both of them seem to enjoy. Brilliant and caustically insightful, Prunella is also an alcoholic and the self-appointed “jester” in the kingdom of Devlin.

**Richard Dane.** “The Great Dane.” Having just turned 60, he looks like a man in his early forties, possesses the stamina of a man in his twenties, and yet feels, “older in my soul,” than anyone else alive. Life after 60 is not an anticipation for him; it is a terror: “It’s not growing old that troubles me, it’s the thought of dying by inches.” A Television actor on a long-running nighttime soap that has long since been canceled, Richard has recently seen his

professional cachet diminish and his fan base dry up. Philosophical about the superficial nature of “show business,” he has become highly spiritual in recent years, and a teacher of meditation. And yet nothing can prepare him for the dark future that faces him now; the one he has to keep secret from everyone else, especially his significant other.

**“Genevieve.” Genny Ducazzo.** Born in France but gifted with a perfect command of English, Genny is a *Vogue* cover supermodel, and a media empire of her own. Madly in love with Richard Dane, she has only recently become his paramour. And yet in that brief period of months, she has seen him fall from his positive nature toward a dark passage in his life that both frightens and confuses her. Mature, far beyond her 24 years, Genny comes into this New Year’s Eve a relative stranger to the others. Beholding the celebration of madness that is about to take place, she will certainly not leave one.

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# Synopsis of Scenes.

## **Act One.**

**Scene 1.** Pocket Sets. Three Different Bedrooms.

**Scene 2.** The Devlin's Den/Game Room.

**Scene 3.** The Devlin's Dining Room.

**Scene 4.** A Master Bathroom.

## **Act Two.**

**Scene 1.** The Devlin's Den/Game Room — after midnight.

**Scene 2.** .The Devlin's Den/Game Room — at Sunrise.

# Production Considerations

**The Sets:** There are four sets for this play, though the first montage of sets is comprised of minimal set primarily implied with light, as is the bathroom sequence. That leaves two main areas of activity for the remainder of the play.

1. **The Devlin's Den and Game Room:** This room contains 85% of the play's activity. There is furniture, a bar (important), and a wall of photos that may be either presented or implied. (Scene 2 of Act One and All of Act Two are played in this room.)
2. **The Dining Room.** This set may be presented fully, or played as an adjacent portion of the same single set. Additionally, table and setting may be either minimal or fully represented. Although this room contains less than 10% of the plays total action, it is a crucial staging for what comes next.
3. **Pocket Sets to begin the play.** Upstairs Bathroom. This may be used either as a pocket set or fly space. Opening scenes may be implied by accents and spot props.

**Additional Note:** The Author possesses all produced and timed sound tracks for all the transitional music pieces indicated inside the contest of the production.

# The Year of the Tiger

## Act One

**Scene 1. Three pocket sets.** *The stage is divided into three separate half-lit areas — bites of rooms where three different couples are positioned but not yet animated. At various stages of dressing they are, even in the half-light, apparently getting into formal attire — dinner jackets, cocktail dresses, and jewelry. The area to right and left of stage go dark. The light from the middle area animates to full light to reveal a couple standing in their Den/Game room by a bar. Tom Devlin is trim, handsome, 60 and looks it, yet wears it as well as he wears his tux — with gray hair that has thinned in places. His wife, Evelyn, is statuesque, 50ish, lean and very attractive for any age. He is tying his bow tie while she prepares the room. .*

**TOM**

Are you sure they're coming? Connie's as crazy as a crutch, anyway.

**EVELYN**

They'll come.

**TOM**

I don't care if Connie Vicar comes or not. Little prick!

**EVELYN**

You do too. Besides, you promised you wouldn't be that way. He's your business partner, and godfather to your oldest son. And will you knock off the profanity? Especially that "p" word.

**TOM**

"P" word? Oh. Okay. Connie is something of mine that's cold, hard blue steel and always stays stiff between my legs.

**EVELYN**

Your bicycle? He's a bicycle...

**TOM**

He's a...

**EVELYN**

Don't say it.

**TOM**

Whatever happened to freedom of speech?

**EVELYN**

It went out with freedom of self-destruction. Anyway, Richard's coming for sure.

**TOM**

Richard, I can count on. Richard's got something that resembles a brain. Why isn't he staying with us?

**EVELYN**

It's his new romance. The French super model. What's her name?

**TOM**

It's one of those single names, like Madonna.

**EVELYN**

Genevieve! That's it! Genevieve! Anyway, they're staying at the Ritz Carlton. They didn't want to impose.

**TOM**

The hell, he didn't. He didn't want to share the sweet ooh ahh! And I was looking forward to see her running around in her teddy.

**EVELYN**

Well, you'll just have to fantasize, unless you want to see Prunella in hers.

**TOM**

I suspect she wears a party tent.

**EVELYN**

Connie wanted to stay here. That meant Prunella would have to stay here. I told them we were redecorating.

**TOM**

Spending New Year's Eve with the Medusa is bad enough, much less the week-end. Besides, how could anyone marry a woman named Prunella?!

**EVELYN**

Conrad Vicar could. Provided she has enough money. Which — God knows! — Pru has.

*(finishes tying his bow tie)*

There you are. The genuine item.

**TOM**

I hate pre-tied bow ties. Have to have the real thing. Life is about the "real thing," after all.

*(He brings out a cigar. She notes the cigar, goes over and snatches it out of his hand).*

**EVELYN**

Not on your life! They almost killed you once. They're not getting a second chance!

**TOM**

I was... reminiscing.

**EVELYN**

Reminisce at a distance. Particularly considering...

**TOM**

*(interrupts)*

We agreed, we're not talking about that.

**EVELYN**

We should.

*(notes his resistance.)*

But we won't.

**TOM**

*(studies the cigar, then sets it down as if it were a long lost lover)*

Damn! No women! No cigars! What the hell's left in life?!

*(goes to make a cocktail.)*

**EVELYN**

No drinking either. The doctor said you shouldn't drink.

*(She goes to take the drink to him, but he holds her off.)*

**TOM**

It's New Year's Eve, and I'm having a drink! If I'm going to cope with Connie Vicar's traveling circus, I'm going to have a drink or two.

*(The couple freezes in position, and the area goes dark. The light goes up left of stage to a couple already attired in black tie and cocktail dress. The man, Conrad Vicar, is 60 but looks much older. He flicks a cigarette lighter. The more agitated his movements the more placid the woman seems to become in the application of her mascara and lip rouge. This is Prunella Vicar, an attractive woman, though somewhat on the plumpish side. A hotel television whose screen is not visible to the audience is flicking color onto Connie as he paces, constantly lighting an old Zippo lighter. Pru Vicar, indifferent to the entire process, continues with her applications. and sips a rather large cocktail.)*

**PRU**

Now, Conrad, slow down.

**CONNIE**

Don't call me that. I hate it when people call me that!

**PRU**

Conrad is your name, darling. It's a man's name. When people call you "Connie," it always makes me feel as if I'm shackled up with a coed.

**CONNIE**

Please, hurry, will you? We're going to a party, not painting the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.

**PRU**

Relax, darling. Have another Pepsi.

**CONNIE**

I want a drink.

**PRU**

No drinking, darling. Doctor's orders, remember? After all, we'd like to keep you around a little longer, at any rate.

**CONNIE**

Around for what?! Pabulum and Pepsi, for Christ sake?!

**PRU**

Then again, maybe not. And do stop flicking that lighter.

**CONNIE**

God I wish I had a cigarette.

**PRU**

You do, and I divorce you.

**CONNIE**

Don't tempt me.

**PRU**

Temptation has nothing to do with it, Conrad darling. I know how very much you've grown accustomed to this lifestyle. And I know how much you'd hate to give it up.

**CONNIE**

No wonder I had a heart attack!

**PRU**

It's a wonder you didn't have one sooner?

**CONNIE**

Tom doesn't want me there. I know it.

**PRU**

*(unconcerned, continues putting on her make-up)*

You'll be fine with Tom. It's me they don't want, especially Evelyn.

**CONNIE**

Evelyn doesn't care.

**PRU**

And I don't care what Evelyn thinks. That's the prerogative of having more money than God's daddy. You don't have to care what people think. Besides, I find it difficult to respect anyone who dresses like she runs an escort service. "Evelyn Devlin!" Even her name sounds like a stripper.

*(Pru holds up her cocktail glass, and savors the dregs.  
Connie continues to pace.)*

**CONNIE**

Just promise you'll behave. And please don't try to win the cocktail Olympics.

**PRU**

I never make promises I can't keep.

**CONNIE**

Then, why the hell are we going? I mean, why bother?

**PRU**

It's the new millennium, Conrad dear. It wouldn't be at all fashionable to sit at home while all those little zeros come tumbling into place. Besides, I want to see if that handsome movie star friend of yours shows up.

**CONNIE**

Richard. Oh, Richard will show, all right — with his latest bimbo du jour.

**PRU**

Jealous as ever, I see.

**CONNIE**

Of Richard?! Never! I just don't trust him. Never have. I mean, Tom I can at least deal with. Tom's a bull — comes straight at you. Richard's devious, almost... sociopathic.

**PRU**

He can "soci" up my path, any time.

**CONNIE**

Go for it! That is if you fancy a face full of collagen.

**PRU**

Meow! God, I thought I was bad.

**CONNIE**

The trouble is, the last time the plastic surgeon missed and shot too deep, went through his forehead and hit his pineal gland, or something.

**PRU**

Pineal? Doesn't that enhance your sexual performance?

**CONNIE**

Now, he has a wrinkle free third eye, or something.

**PRU**

Let's hear it for fewer wrinkles.

*(Connie pockets the lighter and picks up the hotel remote control, flicking channels.)*

**CONNIE**

Good God! What happened to the Y2K bug? Even Indonesia looks okay. Indonesia was supposed to shut down like a clam!

**PRU**

It's Indonesia, darling. Who cares if it shuts down?

**CONNIE**

It's not. That's just the point! What's happened to my lovely world calamity?!

**PRU**

Why Conrad, dear, I think you're crushed.

**CONNIE**

What are we going to do with all that freeze dried food?

**PRU**

Well, we could bring it to the Devlin's. It would probably be better than they serve up for dinner, anyway.

*(The couple freezes in position, and the area goes dark. The light right of stage goes up full to reveal a couple in an elegant hotel room. The woman, Genevieve Ducazzo, is young, very attractive, and in a slip. The man, Richard Dane, is seated on the edge of the bed. He is dressed in tux trousers and open tux shirt. He is 60 but looks younger. He is toned, fit, and with only traces of grey hair. Playfully, she tries to pull him back onto bed.)*

**RICHARD**

We just did that.

**GENNY**

You're getting tired of me.

**RICHARD**

You?! Never! Never in a thousand lifetimes.

*(He reaches over to kiss her tenderly when she playfully pulls him back down on the bed, and loops a leg over him.)*

Not again! I mean, yes again. But again later. We've got to go.

**GENNY**

*(laughing)*

No! Now! Now or never!

**RICHARD**

*(pulls himself back up)*

I just love ultimatums.

**GENNY**

You're getting old.

**RICHARD**

Oh, that hurt! It's true, but it hurt.

**GENNY**

Old and tired. I'm just going to have to get another lover.  
Someone young and virile.

**RICHARD**

By all means.

**GENNY**

Richard, I understand. You did just turn 60. So it's true what they say —  
60 and out!

**RICHARD**

*(Jumps up and pulls open his shirt and parodies his own flexing, imitating Arnold Schwarzenegger.)*

Does this look 60? I ask you.

**GENNY** *(laughing, she appraises)*

Hmmm. A seven. Maybe an eight.

**RICHARD**

A nine at least!

**GENNY** *(thinking)*

I've got it! We can get you some Viagra.

**RICHARD**

Now, that's hitting below the belt... as it were.

**GENNY**

That's it! You need Viagra!

**RICHARD**

And you need some of this!

*(He goes to spank her. She fights him off, playfully. They kiss. Suddenly she stops, regards him.)*

**GENNY**

There's a sadness about you, right now.

**RICHARD**

*(pulls away from her and sits upright on the bed.)*

Do you have to see everything about people? I guess you do. That's what makes you Genny.

**GENNY**

It's about your friends isn't it? Every time you mention them, this curtain of melancholy falls over you.

**RICHARD**

We did almost lose them. Both of them.

**GENNY**

All the more reason to see them. And yet, I sense that you don't want to.

**RICHARD**

At this point, they're the only family I've got.

**GENNY**

And like many families, you grow apart. You lose your common ground for being a part of one another.

**RICHARD**

I'm not sure we ever had one — other than the mutual sense of immortality that all young men share.

**GENNY**

Once you've shared your dreams with someone, they never quite leave your life.

**RICHARD**

Perhaps we just shared our illusions.

**GENNY**

Then you get to share them again for an evening.

**RICHARD**

Not if you don't get dressed.

**GENNY** (*gets up to leave, then steps back in the room*)

And what am I to you?

**RICHARD**

You are my heart.

**GENNY**

And you are mine.

*(She blows him a kiss and goes to leave again. As the light of that area goes dark, she freezes into place, A spotlight falls on Richard comes downstage to address the audience.)*

**RICHARD**

How do you tell someone you love that you're going to die? Perhaps you don't. Perhaps you just go ahead and do it — quickly and without requital for what comes after. Life is so full of cheap little ironies. After all, I'm the one presumably conditioned for the long journey ahead. I'm the one who's chased the illusion of youth until I caught it and realized that it too was just as hollow as the masks I've worn all my career. What the hell, there's nothing more pathetic than staying too late at the dance. Still, I love this world so much. It would be a shame to leave it. And yet, there may be no other choice. The walls close in. And only the sky remains.

*(Blackout on Richard. And one keys up left of stage on Connie who animates and comes downstage to the audience.)*

**CONNIE**

Life is always about that choice. I know. I took mine and dodged that dark landlord who came to kick me out. Now, my life is like rented rooms, paid for month to month. But I am a clever tenant. I will see it as a garden. I will mind the flowers. I will breathe the sweet bouquet and keep the buzz alive. God never kills the bee in season. And even though it's my autumn, I will play it like spring — and fly to the music of the day until the wings drop off.

*(The spotlight goes out on Connie, Another keys up center stage on Tom who animates and comes downstage to the audience.)*

**TOM**

*(Holding his drink and unlit cigar, he looks skyward as if to challenge.)*

Come on! Take me out, I dare You! Go ahead! Strike me dead! Take me down. Put me away! Come on! You want a piece of me? Come on!

*(He holds his arms out and tilts his head as if in crucifixion, then glances above and smirks.)*

Hah hah! I knew you wouldn't do it. Gutless! You had your shot and you blew it! And you're not getting another one! Not for a long time!

*(He brings his arms down and addresses the audience almost nonchalantly.)*

Forgive my little evening vespers. I mean, we all have our personal prayers, and this is my favorite. I know some of you will think I'm being blasphemous. But believe me, I have seen inside the shadows, and I can personally attest to the fact that God has a terrific sense of humor. Why else would He allow this pigmy of a creature known as humankind to think itself the center of His universe? Life is a celebration of itself. It notes our arrival and, if we're lucky, the occasion of our departure. Otherwise, we're the ones left to mind the inbetweens. So, we can do it with grave misgivings and tie ourselves into knots — or face each moment with a sense of wonder, and never once forget that we are expendable. There's a lot of comfort in that. It may sound crazy, I know. But in its way that craziness carries with it all that we love the most.

*(He strikes a pose, imitating Zorba the Greek)*

"Madness! A man must have a little madness. Or else he never dares to cut the rope and be free." Zorba the Greek said that. Or Nikos Kazantzakis said it for him. So, I invite you to cut the rope. Join us for New Year's Eve. What the hell, you might even find what you've been looking for...

*(Tom motions to the audience join him, walks out of the spotlight. The set goes dark. As it does, the voice of Anthony Quinn as Zorba the Greek, comes over the speaker system. "They say age kills the fire inside of a man, that he sees Death coming, and he opens the door and says 'Welcome! Come in.' That is a pack of lies! I have enough life left in me to devour the world. And so, I fight!" The Music from the film soundtrack carries then fades as Scene 2 illuminates.)*

*(To be continued...)*

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