

## SEX IN THE MIDDLE AGES

### CHARACTERS

**LARRY**                    A man in his mid- 60's. Sensitive to some things, clueless about others. Not a bad looking man, although he has rather let himself go in his middle years.

**SHEILA**                    Larry's wife, in her late 50's. Plump and friendly, a contented enough housewife.

**SETTING**                    The living room of Larry and Sheila's home.

**TIME**                        Probably the 1980's, some time around then.

LARRY and SHEILA may seem like a generic middle-aged couple, but each of them is one-of-a-kind, unique in the world, just like you and I.

Synopsis: After 30 years of marriage, Larry and Sheila are finally forced to talk about sex.

## SEX IN THE MIDDLE AGES

DARKNESS

SETTING: The living room of LARRY and SHEILA's home. It is comfy and warm, with a braided rug kind of coziness. Your grandparents might have lived here.

TIME: Around 10pm on a Saturday night.

AT RISE: LARRY hurries in, turning on the light as he does so. He is agitated, miserable over something he has just learned. He wears a dingy T-shirt over a big belly and boxer shorts which barely cover his spindly legs. He goes immediately to the liquor cabinet and pours himself a drink.

SHEILA enters a moment later, tying the belt on a hastily donned bathrobe. Her hair is tousled.

SHEILA

But Larry, it makes every woman gag.

LARRY

I don't want to talk about it.

SHEILA

I mean, think about what's going on.

LARRY

I don't want to talk about it.

SHEILA

Well if we don't talk about it, what are we gonna talk about?

LARRY

Nothing. Nothing. Just don't talk.

SHEILA

Pour me one, would you?

(She goes into the kitchen. He pours her a drink and himself another. She returns with crackers.)

It's really not a big deal.

LARRY

Oh my god.

SHEILA  
It's natural.

LARRY  
Can we just not...?

SHEILA  
All right all right.

(After a moment.)

LARRY  
Are we doing it wrong?

SHEILA  
No no, we do it fine.

LARRY  
Do you, you know, every time?

SHEILA  
Yeah, pretty much.

(He groans.)  
Well come on, you would too.

LARRY  
Sheila, please.

SHEILA  
I'm telling you, Larry, it makes *everybody* gag. Don't ask me how I know.

LARRY  
How do you know?

SHEILA  
Women talk. People talk.

LARRY  
You mean people who are not women?

SHEILA  
Yeah, people talk.

LARRY  
About *that*?

SHEILA

About everything. I'm chatty, I'm interested, so people talk.

LARRY

Who are these people who are not women you talk with about – this?

SHEILA

Your cousin Shepard for one.

LARRY

Shep is not... Shep is?

SHEILA

Yes he is but that's not the point. The point is it happens and it's all right.

LARRY

Oh my god. Why didn't you tell me?

SHEILA

Because of this. I knew you'd take it wrong.

LARRY

Why didn't I notice before?

SHEILA

I always wondered.

LARRY

Why did I notice this time?

SHEILA

I don't know, maybe the new hearing aids.

LARRY

This is terrible. This is terrible.

SHEILA

No it's not, it's exactly what it's always been, only now you know.

LARRY

Yes! Now I know! How am I going to be able to enjoy it again if I know you don't like it?

SHEILA

I didn't say I don't like it.

LARRY

How could you like something that makes you...? I couldn't.

SHEILA

No, you couldn't. But I like it because you like it. It kind of turns me on that it turns you on. So, you know, it's something I can do for you that's intimate and, you know, nice for you.

LARRY

So you like it?

SHEILA

Well, I mean, if you're asking would I do it if you didn't want me to, well, I mean, come on, you get in that position for fifteen minutes with a hot dog in your mouth. I'm not young any more and the position is hard on the neck.

LARRY

It is?

SHEILA

Of course it is. Also the jaw. I mean, come on, didn't you ever wonder what it was like on my end?

LARRY

Was I supposed to?

SHEILA

I've certainly wondered what it's like to be a man. Not in general, just for that. It must feel so good.

LARRY

Oh my god.

SHEILA

Well I can't help but wonder. But I like that you like it and that's enough.

LARRY

I wish I didn't know. We can never do it again.

SHEILA

What?

LARRY

I'm telling you right now---

SHEILA

Oh no you don't.

LARRY

I will never again ask you---

SHEILA

No no no, just stop right there.

LARRY

I mean, I couldn't. I mean, how could I?

SHEILA

No. You are not going to take something away from our marriage just because you're embarrassed.

LARRY

It's not just embarrassed. I mean, come on. It makes you gag.

SHEILA

Larry, I been gagging for thirty years. Did you ever once hear me complain? Did I ever once say no?

LARRY

How does that make me feel better?

SHEILA

Because I don't want to not do it any more. That feels like punishment.

LARRY

It sounds like the whole thing has been punishment.

SHEILA

That's not what I said. You're making it sound like I made it sound like it's worse than it is.

LARRY

It sounds plenty bad enough.

SHEILA

I'm telling you, it's not bad. The gagging is just part of it.

LARRY

Oh my god.

SHEILA

Stop saying that. This is not a praying situation. This is the for better or worse part. We run into something, we figure it out.

LARRY

Maybe we should just stop, all of it.

SHEILA

Everything? Why?

LARRY

It's too hard. We're too old. We have to work at it now and it's not so fun any more.

SHEILA

I don't care if it's not a carnival. I'm not ready to give it up.

LARRY

How could you still want to?

SHEILA

Because it's the one time I have all your attention.

LARRY

What do you mean?

SHEILA

I mean most of the time you hardly look at me any more.

LARRY

This is getting worse and worse.

SHEILA

No, it's me too. I can walk by you a hundred times a day and not even see you or think about you except to wonder what you want for dinner. Sometimes I almost forget you exist. It happens. We've been together a long time. But then Saturday comes and I know we're going to be together, just us. It feels good. Even if it's work to get there, it feels good. Can't you forgive me for hurting your feelings and we just go back to doing whatever it takes? You have to believe me when I tell you that it doesn't bother me that it makes me gag. It's part of the experience. It's me giving you pleasure. Can you forget that I was so dumb and told you something I shouldn't have?

LARRY

I just can't believe you would actually want to keep doing it. I always knew it was better for me than for you.

SHEILA

That's all right. If I have to, I take care of myself.

LARRY

Oh god, I don't want to hear about this!

SHEILA

Larry Furness, we are grownups and we are married and we are going to talk about this.

LARRY

I've never seen you like this.

SHEILA

Well the cat is out of the bag so it's time.

LARRY

Time for what?

SHEILA

Time for us to talk to each other straight and plain, even if it's embarrassing.

LARRY

And say what? I don't know what to say.

SHEILA

Okay, maybe start by just saying something sweet, you know, romantic. Say what you like, you know, especially.

LARRY

Do I have to? I don't know how.

SHEILA

Sure you do. You've seen movies. Talk like that.

LARRY

I can't turn into Cary Grant while I'm standing here in my underwear.

SHEILA

Come on, try. One sentence. Tell me something you like about me that turns you on.

LARRY

I don't know.

SHEILA

Like this: Larry, I like the way you kiss my neck, and that growly sound you make when you're almost there. I really like those things. Now you try.

(LARRY gets himself another drink. He eats some crackers. He wanders a bit.)

LARRY

I like... I like... I'm sorry.



SHEILA

It's okay. If you can't you can't. So maybe we should just---

LARRY

When you talk, your voice is so familiar it's like, it's like listening to the sun shining.

(He stops himself.)

Was that stupid? I told you I'm no good at this.

SHEILA

No. That was good. That was very nice. Thank you.

LARRY

I think I let myself get old before it was time.

SHEILA

Hey, we're younger now than we're ever going to be. Right?

LARRY

Yeah, I guess we are.

(They both stand a bit awkwardly, unsure what to do next.)

SHEILA

Maybe that's enough for one night. Fix me another drink, would you? So, how are you liking the hearing aids?

LARRY

They're good. I hear a lot more now. Well, obviously.

SHEILA

Don't worry, you haven't been missing much.

LARRY

I think I've been missing a lot.

SHEILA

What are you looking at me for?

(He pulls her in for a kiss. This is a deep kiss, not full of sex, but definitely full of love. He pulls away.)

LARRY

We should go to bed.

SHEILA

Oh Larry, honey, I don't think I'm in the mood right now.

LARRY

To talk. Let's go to bed and talk. Tell me about your day. You know. Like ow was your morning? What did you have for lunch? What made you smile today?

SHEILA

Well, listen to you. You're better at this than you think.

(They head toward the bedroom.)

I really do like it, you know.

LARRY

Yeah. Me too.

LIGHTS DOWN

THE END

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BARBARA LINDSAY