

(Printed with an unregistered version of Fade In)

Last Chance for Romance.Com

Written by

Marylou Ambrose & Tony Schwartz

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Draft
information

Tonylou Productions
612 Blooming Grove Rd
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Characters:

Tony: Italian restaurant owner, age 65ish

Carmella: Restaurant hostess & bookkeeper, age 65ish

Frankie: Tony's son, the cook, age 30ish

Regina: Gold-digging date #1, age 45ish

Jen: Young woman applying for waitress job; Tony thinks she's date #2; age 25ish

Setting:

The entire play takes place in the dining room of Tony's restaurant, either before it opens in the morning, or at lunchtime on the day it's closed.

ACT 1

Scene 1

The setting is Tony's Tortellini Trattoria, an Italian restaurant. It's in the morning, before opening for lunch. The front door is stage right, the kitchen is stage left, and the bathrooms are reached through an open archway upstage center. A reception desk or counter with a phone is near the front door. Tony works at a table near the desk. Another table is at stage left. The room has various restaurant paraphernalia, such as a small table with utensils, wine glasses, etc.

At lights up, Carmella is at the reception desk, talking on phone. Tony is sitting at the table nearby going over some bills.

CARMELLA

(speaking into the phone)

Yes, Salvatore . . . Sorry, Mr. Mayor. I forgot, you like to be called, Mr. Mayor.

(holds phone away from her ear, looks at Tony and rolls her eyes)

TONY

What a horse's a . . .

Carmella wags her finger at him, stopping him from finishing his sentence.

CARMELLA

(to Tony, cupping the phone so the Mayor can't hear)

Ah, ah, ah . . . what did I tell you about swearing in the restaurant, huh? No wonder your blood pressure is always so high!

TONY

Ahhhhh . . . always lecturing me. You sound just like . . .

CARMELLA

(patting her hair and smiling at him)

A wife?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY

My mother!

CARMELLA

*(waves him off,
annoyed, and speaks
into the phone again)*

Yes, Salva . . . Mr. Mayor. Don't worry. This will be the best surprise birthday party you ever had. It'll be the town's social event of the year. We promise.

TONY

You promise.

CARMELLA

(to Tony)

Shut up! No, not you, Mr. Mayor! I was . . . never mind. Now don't you worry . . . Yes! I've written it all down. Two weeks from tonight, in our private dining room, the best surprise birthday party this town has ever seen. . . Sure, call me when you have the guest list complete. Now, uh, Mr. Mayor, while I have you on the phone, could we talk about this parking ticket I got yesterday? Do you think . . . hello? Hello?

(slams the phone down)

Bastard!

TONY

(laughing)

Looks like you'll have to pay the ticket. How else is that crook going to pay for this surprise birthday party?

CARMELLA

You be quiet!

TONY

Who's he throwing a surprise party for anyway?

CARMELLA

Himself.

TONY

What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARMELLA

Well, based on the conversation, and reading between the lines, who the hell else was going to throw him a surprise 65th birthday party? So, he's making sure he gets one, one way or another.

TONY

How the hell do you throw a "surprise" birthday party for yourself?

CARMELLA

Well, technically, you can't. But as far as the public is concerned, his old high school paesan is throwing him the party.

TONY

Who's that?

CARMELLA

You.

TONY

Me?

CARMELLA

Yeah, you.

TONY

Are you crazy?! I don't even like this guy. I don't like him now, and I didn't like him back in school. He was always playing practical jokes on me and making me look stupid. There's no way I'm going to give him a surprise birthday par . . .

CARMELLA

Relax. Take a chill pill before you pop a blood vessel. Now look, you want to buy the old Mitchell house next door, knock it down, and extend our parking lot, don't you? Maybe even add on to the restaurant, make it bigger, don't you?

TONY

What's that got to do with anything?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARMELLA

It's going to require permits. You want opposition from town hall, or do you want the mayor on your side?

TONY

That's . . . a good point. How do you think of these things?

CARMELLA

Somebody has to.

TONY

You're a pretty good schemer.

CARMELLA

(proudly)

Thank you!

TONY

Maybe *you* should run for mayor.

CARMELLA

I have enough things to run right here.

TONY

Oh, all right, I'll say I threw him the party. But only because I may need those permits.

CARMELLA

And also make a speech and say nice things about him?

TONY

Don't push it.

CARMELLA

You'll do it.

TONY

Wait a minute. Who's paying for this party? I'm not paying for this party!

CARMELLA

No, don't worry. the Mayor's paying for it. You just have to make it look like you did.

TONY

A speech, huh? This should be fun.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARMELLA

Now be nice. You're going to sit down, take your time, and you're going write very nice things about Salvatore.

They stare at each other.

CARMELLA (cont'd)

On second thought, I better write your speech.

Frankie enters, dressed in chef's clothes.

FRANKIE

(wiping his hands on his apron)

Good morning, Carmella. Hey, Pop, what's up?

TONY

We just booked a birthday party.

FRANKIE

Really? Great!

CARMELLA

A really biiiiig birthday party!

FRANKIE

Even better! Who's it for?

CARMELLA

Your father's paesan, the Mayor!

FRANKIE

Paesan? Yeah, right. That'll be the day.

TONY

Yeah, but his money's green. He's throwing himself a surprise party because no one else will.

FRANKIE

Really? How does that work?

TONY

Ask Carmella. She's the brains behind this debacle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANKIE

She usually is. *(to Carmella)* I meant that in the nicest possible way.

CARMELLA

I know what you meant. Look, Frankie, here's the deal. I told the mayor your father would throw him the party. That way we get on his good side when we need those building permits to expand.

FRANKIE

Are we paying for this party?

CARMELLA

No! Of course not. We're just pretending to throw the party so Salvatore gets lots of presents, and all the attention he craves ...

TONY

... while we get on his good side, the horse's ass!

CARMELLA

Hey! What did I tell you?

TONY

Sorry.

CARMELLA

Frankie, babysit your father while I run across the street to the bank.

FRANKIE

Sure. I'll make sure he doesn't offend anyone. Oh, and Carm, let's talk later about the menu for this party.

TONY

I still can't believe I agreed to this.

Carmella exits stage right. Frankie sits at table with Tony.

FRANKIE

Pop, while we're on the subject of menus, can we talk for a minute?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY

*(trying to avoid the
conversation)*

I'm very busy.

FRANKIE

You're always very busy.

TONY

I'm a busy man.

FRANKIE

Hey look, we're all busy. Put down the paperwork and talk to me. Why won't you ever talk business?

TONY

Because I know where you're going with this, and I don't want to go there.

FRANKIE

Look, we need to make some changes around here. The numbers are down.

TONY

The economy is slow. But we still have a loyal following.

FRANKIE

It's more than that and you know it. I'm grateful for the people who've have been coming here for years. But we have very few *new* customers. We need to get with the times.

TONY

Ooooooh . . . Not this again.

FRANKIE

Yeah, this again. We need a new menu, a new look, and . . . a new name!

TONY

Our menu, look, and name have worked just fine for over 30 years! If it ain't broke, don't fix it!

FRANKIE

Okay, it may not be broke . . . yet. But it's time for a face lift.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY

I'm not getting a face lift!

FRANKIE

Not you! The business. Look, you know, and I know, that ever since Angelo's updated their menu and redecorated, half of our customers are going there now. We need to get them back!

TONY

So what do you want me to do, call Restaurant Impossible, that TV show and see if we can get on there?

FRANKIE

The only thing impossible around here is *you*, Pop. This whole area is growing. Pretty soon, it won't be just Angelo's we have to worry about. What are you going to do when they build an Olive Garden next door?

TONY

Pick olives. Make olive oil.

FRANKIE

Knock it off, Pop. You know what I'm talking about. If we don't change with the times, we're going to become obsolete.

TONY

Change with the times... So, what are you suggesting? You want to serve seaweed and raw fish now?

FRANKIE

No! I don't want a sushi bar, but...

TONY

Say . . . maybe gourmet portions. One tortellini on a kale leaf with a slice of meatball. Gone are the days where you get an Italian meal and don't need to eat again for six days. We'll give them what they want, cut back on supplies, no more doggie bags, double the price! Son, you're a genius!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Frankie is holding his head and pacing back and forth, very frustrated.

FRANKIE

Go ahead and make jokes. This always happens. You'll never change.

TONY

Change what? Okay, I'm a reasonable man. So let's start with the name. What's wrong with the name?

FRANKIE

Tony's Tortellini Trattoria?

TONY

Catchy, ain't it?

FRANKIE

Frankly, it's embarrassing.

TONY

Hey, if it was good enough for your mother and me, it ought to be good enough for you.

FRANKIE

I'm sure it worked back in the day. I get the alliteration.

TONY

Oh yeah . . . it's full of alliter... whatever. And all those "t's" in the name are good, too. That was your mother's idea.

FRANKIE

Oh geez, here we go with Ma again. The shrine . . .

TONY

What are you talking about?

FRANKIE

Look, I get it. You and ma started the business 30 years ago. You and Ma ran everything. You were out front, she was in the kitchen. And it worked. But she's gone three years now.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANKIE (cont'd)

I miss her as much as you do, but keeping this place the way it was when she was here is turning it into a shrine -- and putting us out of business.

TONY

A shrine. Is that what you think this is? A shrine? Like Lourdes?

FRANKIE

No one is getting healed eating our tortellini. If anything, their arteries are getting clogged.

TONY

Very funny . . .

FRANKIE

Look, pop, I don't want to change everything. Just offer some new options on the menu. Maybe some low-calorie alternatives. Maybe some gluten-free dishes.

TONY

What the hell is a gluten? You mean no bread? No pasta? What kind of Italian restaurant are you talking about here?

FRANKIE

A modern one, with choices. And not do a Restaurant Impossible makeover, but maybe change the paint, some new curtains, maybe a new carpet. Spruce the place up a bit.

TONY

And the name?

FRANKIE

Can't we ditch the "tortellini" and just call it Tony's Trattoria?

TONY

Actually, that's what I *wanted* to call it, but your mother put in the tortellini. And if you remember. . .

FRANKIE

. . . you don't argue with Ma.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They both laugh and the mood lightens a bit.

TONY

Frankie, maybe you're right. Maybe it *is* time for a change around here. Maybe this place *is* in a rut. Maybe *I'm* in a rut.

FRANKIE

Are you joking around again?

TONY

No, I'm serious. I guess I've realized this for a while, I just didn't want to accept it. But you're right.

FRANKIE

Great! You'll see, pop. Change is good!

TONY

I've been thinking I need some changes in my personal life, too.

FRANKIE

Like I said, change is good, pop!

TONY

Yeah, I've been giving it some thought . . .

FRANKIE

Take a vacation!

TONY

I might . . .

FRANKIE

Maybe get a flat screen TV!

TONY

I might . . .

FRANKIE

Take up yoga!

TONY

Not gonna happen.

FRANKIE

Okay, maybe that was too drastic. But we're on the right track.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANKIE (cont'd)
Change is good. Even at your age,
change is good.

TONY
I've been thinking about dating
again.

FRANKIE
There ya go. Change is . . .
*(He realizes what
Tony just said)*
What?!

TONY
Yeah, your mother is gone three years
now. I need a little female
companionship once in a while.

FRANKIE
You know, pop, come to think of it,
change isn't always so good.

TONY
Look, Frankie, you've given a lot of
thought to the changes needed around
here.
*(He gestures around
the restaurant.)*
Well, I've given a lot of thought to
the changes needed *in here*.
*(He points to his
heart.)*

FRANKIE
But, Pop . . .

TONY
There's just one problem.

FRANKIE
Uuuuuh . . . your age?

TONY
No.

FRANKIE
Then what *is* the problem?

TONY
I'm out of practice.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANKIE

You mean . . . *(looks around to be sure no one else is listening)* sex?

TONY

No! *Dating!* I haven't been on a date with a strange woman in over 40 years.

FRANKIE

A strange woman? You mean you dated strange women before Ma? I thought you were high school sweethearts.

TONY

No, no, I mean *strange* as in "not your mother." Never mind. Look, forget I even brought it up.

Carmella walks in front door, but they don't notice her. She overhears the following conversation.

FRANKIE

Now I can't get it out of my mind. You going on dates, maybe having sex? With someone besides Ma?
(to himself)
Actually, the thought of you having sex with Ma is disturbing enough.

TONY

Don't worry. We only did it twice. Once for you and once for your sister. Geez, you kids today. You think you invented sex? Surprise! People have been having it for years.
(emphasizes next line, leans in to Frankie)
Even your parents.

Carmella clears her throat, and they finally notice her.

CARMELLA

Sorry to interrupt while you were explaining the facts of life to Frankie.

Both men look sheepish. They don't know how much she heard.

TONY

Just a little man-to-man conversation.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANKIE

Yeah, just a little male bonding.

CARMELLA

I'm touched. I hate to break this up, but Tony, did you forget you have a doctor's appointment in 10 minutes? Your blood pressure check?

TONY

Oh yeah, I totally forgot. Thanks for reminding me, Carm.

He gets up and starts out the door. Then he stops and turns back to her.

TONY (cont'd)

What would I do without you keeping track of my schedule?

CARMELLA

(sarcastically)

Yup, I'm just like your mother. Isn't that what you told me before?

TONY

Yeah, but without the wooden spoon for emphasis.

Tony exits front door.

Frankie gets up and starts for the kitchen.

FRANKIE

I better get back to work.

CARMELLA

Wait, Frankie. I want to talk to you for a minute. *(points to chair at table)* Sit.

Frankie obeys her and sits. When Carmella tells the men to do something, they listen.

FRANKIE

What's up?

CARMELLA

Well, it's your father.

FRANKIE

Now what did he do?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARMELLA

No, no, he didn't do anything. But I did overhear. Should he be going on dates with his high blood pressure?

FRANKIE

What's that got to do with it?

CARMELLA

What's that got to do with it? What's that got to do with it? I'll tell you what that's got to do with it. It, uh . . . has absolutely nothing to do with it!

FRANKIE

Then what are you talking about?

CARMELLA

What am I talking about? What am I talking about? I'll tell you what I'm talking about! How do I put this?

FRANKIE

Look, is this important, because I have work to do in the kitchen.

He starts to get up, but she pushes him back in the chair.

CARMELLA

I'm not done. Sit.

FRANKIE

All right, then what's up?

CARMELLA

(a bit embarrassed)

You're as dumb as your father.

FRANKIE

Huh? What you mean? Who's dumb?

CARMELLA

(she absently picks up a wooden spoon and uses it for emphasis)

Shut up and let me talk. Now, I'm going to talk, and you're going to listen. Not interrupt. Just listen.

FRANKIE

I'm listening, I'm listening.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARMELLA

You know your mother and I were best friends since the first grade. We were bridesmaids at each others' weddings. I'm your godmother. And I worked here shoulder to shoulder with her for many years, until . . . you know. And I promised her I would look after your father after she was gone.

FRANKIE

And you have, always. I don't know what he'd do without you, to tell you the truth. You've been a good friend.

CARMELLA

Maybe I've reached a point where I'd like to be more than just a good friend.

FRANKIE

You are. You're like family.

CARMELLA

Maybe I'd like to make that a little more official.

FRANKIE

You want my father to adopt you?

CARMELLA

Aaaaah! You stunad! Like I said, you're as dumb as your father.

FRANKIE

Wait a minute. You mean . . . you, my father . . . you and Pop?

CARMELLA

Now your catching on.

FRANKIE

Does he know about this?

CARMELLA

No! That's the problem. No matter how hard I try, I can't get him to see me as anything more than a friend and employee. Oh, and apparently a mother figure, too.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANKIE

(stunned)

I don't know what to say! I didn't know. I didn't realize. But now that I think about it, it all makes sense. In fact, it's perfect!

CARMELLA

What are you saying? You think your father and I would make a good couple?

FRANKIE

Absolutely! Say, wait a minute. Is it legal for your godmother to be your stepmother?

CARMELLA

Let's not put the cart before the horse. First, I have to get him to notice me.

FRANKIE

Notice you? You see each other every day.

CARMELLA

No wonder you never got married and had kids.

FRANKIE

What?

CARMELLA

I need him to really see me! To think of me as woman, an object of desire, passionate and romantic!

FRANKIE

You're kidding. Good luck with that.

CARMELLA

What? What's so unbelievable about that?

FRANKIE

Okay, okay, I'll put my two cents in, but first, put down the wooden spoon.

She puts down the spoon and sits at the table.

CARMELLA

So, you got any suggestions?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANKIE

If you want my father to see you as desirable, passionate, and romantic, then you gotta look the part.

CARMELLA

What's wrong with the way I look?

FRANKIE

I mean, you could use a makeover. Get with the times a bit.

CARMELLA

I am not wearing spandex!

FRANKIE

No, no, but maybe you could use an update, just like this restaurant could.

CARMELLA

What's wrong with the way I look? I've looked this way for years.

FRANKIE

Right. That's the problem. You probably *do* remind Pop of his mother.

CARMELLA

Now wait a minute . . .

FRANKIE

Look, you asked me for advice, you got it. Take it or leave it. But remember, Pop is getting serious about dating again. So you better move it, or lose it!

CARMELLA

What?

FRANKIE

If you don't move fast, he's going to find someone else.

CARMELLA

Right! You're right! So, where do we start?

FRANKIE

We? What do you mean, *we*?
(*gets up in a panic*)
I have to get back to the kitchen!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARMELLA

Frankie, please, I need your help!

FRANKIE

Cookin' up pasta I can do. Cookin' up romance . . . not so good.

CARMELLA

Look, if you don't help me and your father starts dating someone else, you don't know who he may end up with! Do you want that?

FRANKIE

Oh my God, a wicked stepmother!

CARMELLA

Right! So help me. Where do I start?

FRANKIE

Well, maybe you should . . .

Tony walks in front door, back from the doctor.

TONY

Carmella!

CARMELLA

You're back already?

TONY

Yes. What day is today?

CARMELLA

Tuesday.

TONY

And what day was my appointment for?

CARMELLA

Tuesday.

TONY

Which Tuesday?

CARMELLA

Today. Tuesday.

TONY

No, Tuesday *next* week, Tuesday!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARMELLA

No! Let me check the book. (*she gets up, goes to reception desk and checks book*) See? It's right here! Next. . . shit.

TONY

So, what? You losing it now, Carm?

FRANKIE

Pop, take it easy. It was an honest mistake. You never make mistakes?

TONY

No.

FRANKIE

Yeah? What about the fiasco with the Italian Fortune Cannolis?

TONY

(*upset*) I told you never to mention that again!

CARMELLA

(*relishing this*) There's one for Ripley's Believe It or Not.

TONY

Okay, let's just move on.

FRANKIE

You were so worried about competing with the Chinese Restaurant down the street . . .

CARMELLA

....that you decided what we needed was an Italian fortune cookie!

TONY

In my defense . . .

FRANKIE

So, behind my back, you began stuffing slips of paper with fortunes on them into the cannolis.

TONY

In my defense . . .

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARMELLA

By the time the customers bit into them, the paper was all soggy. and the print was blurred, and people thought it was moldy filling!

TONY

In my defense . . .

CARMELLA

Thank God no one choked on their fortune.

FRANKIE

So, you see? We all make mistakes. So let it go, Pop . . . Pop?

Tony appears deep in thought.

FRANKIE (cont'd)

Pop!

TONY

I've got to figure out how the Chinese do it!

FRANKIE

Oh, forget it. His mind is wandering again.

CARMELLA

Luckily, it doesn't have the strength anymore to wander too far.

TONY

I heard that!

FRANKIE

I have to get back to the kitchen.

Frankie exits. Carmella begins to apologize for the doctor's appointment mistake, but she also tests the waters, starting a conversation about how she really feels about Tony.

CARMELLA

Look, Tony, I'm really sorry about the screw up, but I've, uh, got a lot on my mind.

TONY

If you're going to complain about being overworked, we have an ad for a waitress in the front window now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARMELLA

No, nothing like that.

TONY

A raise is out of the question!

CARMELLA

No, the pay is fine.

He suddenly realizes there's more to this and becomes truly concerned.

TONY

Something really is bothering you.
What's the matter?

CARMELLA

Well, this is hard. I don't know how to say this.

TONY

The best thing is to just spit it out. Now come on, what's the matter.

CARMELLA

Well, I need to change my life.

TONY

Whoa! Change of life? You need to talk to a woman about that!

CARMELLA

No, no, no . . . that's ancient history. Well, maybe not *that* ancient. I need some changes *in* my life. I'm bored. I'm lonely. I need a change. I need a . . .

TONY

Vacation! You have vacation time coming. Take it!

CARMELLA

No, no! I want . . .

TONY

A flat screen TV! I was thinking of getting one myself!

CARMELLA

No! Oh God, I need to try . . .

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY

Yoga?

CARMELLA

That ain't gonna happen.

TONY

Yeah, that's what I said, too.

CARMELLA

Actually . . . I was thinking I need to start dating.

TONY

Get out! You? Dating? You're kidding, right? At your age?

CARMELLA

(pissed off)

I'm the same age as you! If it's okay for you, why shouldn't I do it?

TONY

How did you know I was thinking about dating?

CARMELLA

Never mind how I know, I just know. So, are you serious?

TONY

Of course I'm serious.

CARMELLA

Me, too. So . . .
(fluffing her hair)
What do you think?

TONY

Okay, so we'll start dating.

CARMELLA

You mean it?

TONY

Of course I mean it. You let me know how *you* do, and I'll let you know how *I* do, and we can compare notes!

CARMELLA

(dumbstruck)

What? I thought . . .

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The phone rings.

CARMELLA (cont'd)

(to Tony) Don't get up. I'll get it.

Carmella gets up and answers the phone on the reception desk.

CARMELLA (cont'd)

Tony's Tortellini Trattoria, Carmella speaking . . . Oh, hi, Sal . . . I mean, *Mr. Mayor* . . . No, you're not interrupting anything. I'm just in the middle of a *meaningless* conversation with Tony.

They glare at each other.

CARMELLA (cont'd)

Uh huh . . . really? . . . Really? Be your escort for your birthday party?
(*a bit flustered*)

Well, I'd love to . . .
(*glancing at Tony*)

but I have to play hostess that night . . . What? Let *Tony* play hostess? Well, I suppose . . . let me get back to you on that, okay? Good bye, Mr. Mayor . . . What? Oh . . . goodbye, *Sal*.

She hangs up.

TONY

What the hell was that all about?

Carmella is surprised but pleased.

CARMELLA

Sal just asked me to be his date for his birthday party!

TONY

You said no, I hope. Because you can't. You have to work!

CARMELLA

I know, I know. But all the plans are made in advance. Everything will run smoothly. And maybe I should be with him to make sure he's happy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY

Happy, huh? And what about dating? I thought you were going to play the field a little. You've already given up on that?

CARMELLA

(coyly) No, just keeping all my options open.

TONY

Huh! Options. You looking for a man or buying a car. Options . . .

Tony is a bit flustered over this unexpected development. He changes the conversation back to dating.

TONY *(cont'd)*

So, uh . . . about this dating thing. Have you thought how you're going to go about meeting someone new? Someone besides that horse's ass?

CARMELLA

No. And stop calling him that.

TONY

Because things are different today.

CARMELLA

(looking at him)

Not really. Some things never change.

TONY

(her sarcasm is lost on him) I'll bet there's a patron saint for something like this.

CARMELLA

A patron saint of dating?

TONY

No! But there must be some saint to pray to in a situation like this.

CARMELLA

There sure is -- Saint Jude, the patron saint of lost causes.

TONY

No, not him. But you know, my mother -- God rest her soul -- always prayed to St.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY (cont'd)

Anthony when she couldn't find something. He's my patron saint, you know. So it's only fitting that St. Anthony should help me find a date. Worth a shot.

(He stands up and crosses himself. Carmella just shakes her head in disbelief)

Oh great St. Anthony, patron saint of people looking for something, I am looking for romance. You know, like a date? So, see what you can do. Amen.

Carmella walks behind the counter and puts her head in her hands in total disbelief.

His prayers over, Tony picks up his coffee cup from the table. He looks down at the paper placemat and gasps.

TONY (cont'd)

Ooooooh . . . my . . . God!

He picks up the placemat and stares at it.

CARMELLA

What? What??

TONY

Carm, look at this. *(runs over to her)*

CARMELLA

So what? It's a dirty placemat.

TONY

Yeah, but look at the ring from the coffee cup!

CARMELLA

Yeah, good looking coffee ring. What's your point?

TONY

Not the ring. What the ring circled. Look inside the ring!

CARMELLA

Cake crumbs?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY

NO! Look at the ad! The coffee ring circled an ad.

CARMELLA

(Carmella reads the ad aloud)

"Over 60? Looking for love? Log onto Last Chance for Romance.com." An online dating site?

TONY

Yeah! An online dating site. Last Chance for Romance.com! It's a sign!

He lifts his head and clasps his hands as if giving thanks to St. Anthony. Carmella puts her head in her hands again.

LIGHTS OUT

SCENE 2

The scene is the next morning, before the restaurant opens. Tony walks in front door carrying a laptop computer. He looks around nervously, making sure he's alone, and then sits at his usual table with a laptop. He doesn't notice the large bouquet of flowers on the reception desk.

TONY

(rubbing his hands together as if getting ready to crack a safe)

The kids got me this damn thing for Christmas and I've never used it. The computer on the desk I know how to use. But I've never used a laptop before. How the hell do you open this thing?

He goes through all kinds of motions to try to get the laptop open.

TONY (cont'd)

It must be locked. No one gave me a key to this thing. How the hell am I going to get it open?

(he thinks a moment, then acts as if the light bulb went on)

I got an idea ...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He gets up, goes to a table holding utensils, etc., and grabs a butter knife.

TONY (cont'd)

I'll just jimmy the lock.

He's trying to pry the computer open with the knife when Frankie comes in from kitchen

FRANKIE

Pop! What the hell are you doing?

Tony hides the knife behind him.

TONY

Nothing!

FRANKIE

What's that behind you?

He tosses the knife behind him, then holds up his hands.

TONY

Nothing! See? Nothing.

Frankie walks over, picks up the knife, and hands it to Tony.

FRANKIE

Here's your "nothing" back.

Now, Frankie picks up the laptop, opens it easily, and places it back down on the table.

FRANKIE (cont'd)

There.

TONY

Show off.

FRANKIE

You're finally going to use that thing? You might want to dust it off first.

TONY

(gives computer a quick dust with his elbow)

There. Now, are you gonna be a wiseguy, or do you have a minute to help me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANKIE

Sure. Help you with what?

TONY

Well ...

*(pulls the "sacred"
placemat with the
coffee ring out of
his pocket)*

You see this?

FRANKIE

A dirty placemat?

TONY

No! Inside the coffee ring. Read it!

FRANKIE

"Over 60? Looking for love? Log on to Last Chance for Romance.com." Who the hell gave you this idea?

TONY

St. Anthony!

FRANKIE

What?

TONY

It's a long story. Look, you going to help me, or not?

FRANKIE

You want me to help you with online dating?

TONY

Yeah. I don't have time to go on the hunt again, if you know what I mean. So, I figure, let someone else do the hunting for me!

FRANKIE

But, Pop, you don't know how these things work.

TONY

And you do?

FRANKIE

No, but I know enough to know you could end up meeting some real whack jobs!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY

I'll take my chances. Now, are you going to help me . . .
(he picks up the knife again)
. . . or am I going to have to figure this out myself?

FRANKIE

(taking the knife away from him and sitting down at the table)
Okay, okay . . . I'll help you. But I got a bad feeling about this.

TONY

What could go wrong? Now, what do I do first?

FRANKIE

Well, you're already online. So first, you have to type the web address in the browser. Do you know what that means?

TONY

(insulted) Of course I know what that means.

FRANKIE

Okay, so type it.

TONY

Okay, so . . . the first thing I have to do is use this mouse gadget and click up in this space . . .

Tony does everything in slow motion, driving Frankie crazy already. Tony finally clicks. Then he types with two fingers.

TONY (cont'd)

There. Now, I need to type in the web address. Okay, here we go. Where the hell is the "L"? Here it is. L . . . A . . . S . . . T. Do I make a space or I don't make a space?

FRANKIE

No space!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY

C . . . H . . . A . . . N . . .
oops! I hit the "M" by mistake. How
do I fix it? Where's the fix key?

FRANKIE

Oh for God's sake, I'll be collecting
Social Security by the time you get
it typed. Give me the laptop!

Frankie takes the laptop and finishes typing the address.

FRANKIE (cont'd)

There. There's the site.

TONY

Wow! Look at the babes!

FRANKIE

Pop ...

TONY

What?

FRANKIE

You sure you want to go through with
this? There's a lot of personal
information you have to fill out
here. And it costs money.

TONY

Yes, but the first month is free!
That's all the time I need. I'm sure
I'll find romance in 30 days or less!

FRANKIE

I give up.

TONY

I can handle it from here. Go in the
kitchen. Stir some sauce.

*Frankie throws up his hands in frustration and exits to
kitchen.*

TONY (cont'd)

Okay, first thing is create a
username and password. Hmmmm ...
username. Ahh ...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY (cont'd)
*(he begins to type
with two fingers)*
Italian ... Stallion! Perfect! Now, a
password ... Tortellini! T ... O ...
R ... Are there two t's or or one t?
How the hell do you spell that? I'll
look at the menu. Just as I thought.
One t, two l's. Italian Stallion,
Tortellini. Now, I better write them
down before I forget them. I'll write
them on the place mat.

*He writes the information on the place mat. Then he waits,
excited, looking at the computer screen.*

TONY (cont'd)
Okay! I'm in! Now, it says "create
your profile by answering these
questions." Okay, Number 1: Age ...
65.

*(He types, then he
looks around,
backspaces, and
retypes)*

59!

*(He sits back looking
satisfied. In the
following section,
Tony types all his
answers into the
computer, using two
fingers.)*

Number 2: Height ... 6 feet. I just
won't stand up. Number 3: Body type
... A few extra pounds. Number 4:
Occupation . . . Restaurant owner
(looks proud) Number 5: Marital
Status ... Widowed. Number 6: Sexual
Orientation ... Absolutely! Why can't
I write that? Ooooooh ... Not gay.
Why can't I write that? Oh, wait ...
it says "click here," so I choose
one. *(ticks off list with his finger)*
Who knew there were so many? Okay,
Heterosexual. Finally ... Number 7:
Medical Issues . . . None. My blood
pressure is *my* business. Number 8:
smoking . . . no. Number 9: Drinking
. . . social. Number 10: Interests.
What the hell do I put here? All I do
is come to the restaurant. What
interests do I have? Wait! What
interests do women have?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY (cont'd)

That's what I'll put down! Let's see ... they like manly men, but who are not afraid to show their inner feelings. Okay, that's what they say, but what does that really mean? I have to be into hang gliding while reciting poetry? This is ridiculous. I have to think about this one more. And, I have to find a good picture of myself. Or, take a new one. Maybe wearing an ascot, with a glass of wine, in front of a fireplace, with a couple of hunting dogs, reading poetry.

(He savors the image
and strikes a pose.)

Aaaah, maybe not. I'll think of something. That's enough for now. This alone should have women lining up at the door. I'll just hit "save," and there! I am now a member of Last Chance for Romance.com! Ladies, come and get it!

He looks at his watch.

TONY (cont'd)

I'm running late. I have an appointment with the accountant. I want an expert opinion about spending money on renovations right now before Frankie starts tearing down walls.

He closes the laptop, gets up and starts to exit. In comes Carmella.

CARMELLA

Hey! Don't forget you're meeting with your...

TONY

. . . accountant. Yes, I know. I remembered. Surprise! See you later.

CARMELLA

Yeah, whatever. *(notices flowers)*
Hey, where'd these flowers come from?

TONY

What flowers? Those flowers? I don't know. I didn't even see them there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARMELLA

(reading the card)

They're for me! "Roses are red,
violets are blue, all I want for my
birthday, is a date with you! XXOO,
Sal."

TONY

(looks back at her)

You know what he *really* wants, don't
you?

CARMELLA

How do you know it isn't what I want,
too?

TONY

(angry)

Okay, but just remember, Florence
Spinelli thought he was interested in
her, too, and he left her flat for
someone else.

CARMELLA

Tony, that was 50 years ago! In high
school! What's your point?

TONY

My point is ... oh, never mind!

*(he heads for the
door, then mutters
to himself)*

Horse's ass ...

He exits.

CARMELLA

(to self)

If I didn't know him better, I'd
think he was jealous.

*(thinks about this a
second)*

Eahh! *(waves hand dismissively)*

*Carmella goes behind the reception desk, starts
straightening up things, looking at the reservation book,
etc. Then she spots the mess on the table where Tony was
sitting.*

CARMELLA (cont'd)

Look this mess he left. Empty coffee
cup, half a donut, dirty napkin,
dirty placemat ...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She almost crumples it up and realizes it's the "sacred" placemat.

CARMELLA (cont'd)

Wait! The sacred placemat? He still has it? You mean ... he was serious about that ad he found?

She notices the computer and opens it up.

CARMELLA (cont'd)

Ah ha! It's still warm! What's he up to? HMMMMMM . . . Saint Anthony, where the hell are you when I need you?

She looks at the placemat again and spots the username and password.

CARMELLA (cont'd)

Wait a minute. Username and password. This must be ... Thank you St. Anthony!

She sits down and types.

CARMELLA (cont'd)

Last Chance for Romance.com. Wow, look at those babes. They're over 60?

She looks a little intimidated by the competition.

CARMELLA (cont'd)

(touches her hair) Maybe Frankie's right. Oh, who has the time. Okay, let's see what Tony's done here.

She types in the username and password.

CARMELLA (cont'd)

Username: Italian Stallion? *(laughs)*
He should've gone with "horse's ass."
Password: Tortellini. Very original.
Okay, I'm going in!

She scans the screen a bit.

CARMELLA (cont'd)

Ah ha! Profile.
(she clicks)
Let's see what the stallion said about himself. Age: 59?
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARMELLA (cont'd)
(*she cracks up*)
I guess it sounds better than 65.
(*a light bulb goes off*)
So ... how about we make him 85?
(*She types that in and looks satisfied, smiling, nodding.*)
Okay, height: 6 feet? Who's he kidding? As soon as he stands up ... Here, how about. . .
(*typing*)
Vertically challenged. That's better. Body type: A few extra pounds. Finally, an honest answer. But we can do better. Body type: (*types*) High mileage. No, wait. How about: (*types*) Lots of rust but can still pass inspection. Now, sexual orientation: (*types*) Flexible. Medical Issues: (*types*) See attachment. Smoker? (*types*) Heavy. Drinker? (*types*) Heavy. Interests: Oh hell. (*types*) Hang gliding and poetry.
(*She sits back smiling, satisfied that she's sabotaged Tony's efforts.*)
There! That should get him -- absolutely no dates at all!

Lights out.

SCENE 3

A short while later, Carmella is going through the trash and placing the items back on the table to recreate the way it looked before Tony left. She opens the laptop. Then she sees Frankie coming and quickly closes it.

CARMELLA

(*acting dumb*)
Gee ... I wonder who left this here?

FRANKIE

Oh, that's Pop's. He's finally using it.

CARMELLA

(*casually*)
Oh, for what?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANKIE

You're not going to believe this,
He's signed up for online dating!

CARMELLA

No! Really? He actually went through
with it?

FRANKIE

Yup. He was working on his profile
this morning. God only knows what he
wrote.

CARMELLA

You wouldn't believe it.

FRANKIE

What?

CARMELLA

I mean, you're right. God only knows
...

*The whole time, Carmella has been pacing and wringing her
hands, acting very nervous.*

FRANKIE

What's wrong with you? You look
nervous.

CARMELLA

Me? Nervous? What would I be nervous
about?

FRANKIE

I don't know. You tell me. Around
here it could be anything. It's not
the mayor's party, is it? Is he
driving you crazy?

CARMELLA

No, I know how to handle the mayor.
*(pointing to the
flowers)*

Actually, those flowers are from him.
He wants me to be his date for his
birthday party.

FRANKIE

You're kidding, right?
*(Carmella shakes her
head no.)*

You're not kidding?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANKIE (cont'd)

*(She shakes her head
yes.)*

Does Pop know?

*(She shakes her head
yes again.)*

What did he say?

CARMELLA

What he always says ... "the horse's
ass."

FRANKIE

Maybe you should stick with the
mayor, because my father may be a
lost cause.

CARMELLA

Oh, Frankie, I don't know if I'll be
alive to date either of them!

FRANKIE

What are you talking about?

Carmella sits at the table, head in hands.

CARMELLA

Frankie, I did a bad thing.

FRANKIE

Oh, come on. What? Did you forget to
go to mass this morning?

CARMELLA

No, I went. But the next time I go
there, it could be for my own
funeral.

FRANKIE

Oh, come on. Why?

CARMELLA

Because your father is going to kill
me!

FRANKIE

Oh oh. You better start explaining.

CARMELLA

Well, I found the laptop, and I found
the website, and I found your
father's username and password on the
sacred place mat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She holds up the place mat.

FRANKIE

And ...

CARMELLA

Well, I went into his profile and looked around a bit.

FRANKIE

And ...

CARMELLA

I, uh -- did some editing.

FRANKIE

So, you fixed his spelling. What else is new? He doesn't have to know. It can be our little secret.

CARMELLA

Oh, he's going to know all right. I, uh, made some changes.

FRANKIE

Uh oh. What kind of changes?

CARMELLA

Oh, just a few things. (*rattle them off*) Age, height, medical issues, sexual orientation, interests -- that sort of thing.

FRANKIE

How bad?

CARMELLA

(*hesitant*)

Well, now . . . he's a short, overweight octogenarian who smokes, drinks, is sexually flexible, and who probably only has hours to live. But on the bright side, he enjoys hang gliding and poetry!

Frankie stares. Then he slowly sinks into the chair opposite Carmella, with a look of disbelief.

CARMELLA (cont'd)

Frankie, you all right?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANKIE

(still stunned)

All I want to do, is just come here in the morning, make the sauce, boil the pasta, and throw some dough around. But instead, I have to deal with the Italian soap opera, "As the Tortellini Turns," starring you and my father.

*(making the sign of
the cross)*

God help me ...

CARMELLA

Okay, okay, calm down. It's not too late. I can go back in and fix it.

Suddenly Frankie gets that lightbulb look. As Carmella reaches for the laptop, he stops her.

FRANKIE

Wait a minute ... If we leave it the way it is, no one will respond. Isn't that what we both want?

CARMELLA

Well, yeah, but ...

FRANKIE

But what?

CARMELLA

It still doesn't get your father to notice me.

FRANKIE

Okay, so -- how about you create your own profile?

CARMELLA

My profile? He doesn't notice me in person. What would make him notice me online?

FRANKIE

Maybe it's not exactly "your" profile. You embellish a bit.

CARMELLA

A bit?

FRANKIE

Okay, maybe a lot.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARMELLA

(the light dawns)

Ooooooh . . . I get it! Do just the opposite of what I did with your father!

FRANKIE

Exactly!

CARMELLA

Still, there's no guarantee he's going to find my profile and contact me.

FRANKIE

So, you contact him. What's the big deal?

CARMELLA

Do you think he'll respond?

FRANKIE

All depends on your embellishment!

CARMELLA

(smiling)

Okay, let's get started!

FRANKIE

Whoa, wait a minute. Don't drag me into this.

CARMELLA

It was your idea. And you're the one who said I need a makeover. So, make me over.

FRANKIE

All I want to do, is just come here in the morning, make the sauce, boil the pasta, and throw some dough around. But instead, I have to deal with the Italian soap opera, "As the Tortellini Turns," starring you and my father.

(making the sign of the cross)

God help me ...

Carmella spins the laptop around facing Frankie.

CARMELLA

Shut up and type!

LIGHTS OUT.

ACT 2

SCENE 1

It's the next morning. Carmella is pacing nervously. The laptop is still on the table. Frankie enters from kitchen.

FRANKIE

What's with the pacing?

CARMELLA

I'm nervous! This was a mistake! What if your father finds out what I did to his profile? He'll kill me! Or worse yet, he'll fire me!

FRANKIE

Getting fired is worse than getting killed?

CARMELLA

If I'm dead, I won't need a job!

FRANKIE

*(putting his hands on
her shoulders)*

Calm down, calm down. He's not going to fire you.

CARMELLA

He won't?

FRANKIE

No, but murder might still be an option.

She goes to run, but he stops her.

FRANKIE (cont'd)

I'm kidding, I'm kidding! He's not going to find out.

CARMELLA

Where is he, anyway? I want to talk about this some more before he gets here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANKIE

What's to talk about? You just come in and be the woman you created online!

CARMELLA

Easy for you to say. You're asking for an extreme makeover. Rome wasn't build in a day, you know.

FRANKIE

Look, I've helped this far, but the makeover, you're going to have to handle on your own. Now, come on, you can do this.

CARMELLA

How?

FRANKIE

I don't know. Google it. There has to be a YouTube video somewhere.

CARMELLA

But . . .

FRANKIE

Look, this should be a piece of cake. After what you did to his profile, nobody is going to respond, except maybe an undertaker. You're going to be the life of the party!

CARMELLA

You're right. What could go wrong?

The door opens, and in comes Tony.

CARMELLA (cont'd)

We're about to find out ...

FRANKIE

(to Carmella) Quiet!

TONY

Is this all you two have to do all day?

(to Frankie)

Standing around doing nothing?

(to Carmella)

Wasting time smelling roses?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANKIE

I just came in to make sure Carm is setting the tables for lunch.

(to Carm)

Carm, get busy. Set the tables!

CARMELLA

Right. I'm on it.

Frankie and Carmella act busy while watching Tony out of the corner of their eyes. Tony goes right to the laptop. He opens it and does the usual hunt and peck to login.

TONY

(to self)

I can't wait to see how many babes have responded to my profile. There should be dozens!

FRANKIE

(goes to Tony)

Now Pop, don't be disappointed if there's only a few ... or just one.

Frankie and Carmella exchange knowing looks.

TONY

Yeah, right. Let's see ...

FRANKIE

Just as I suspected, only one?

TONY

Two!

FRANKIE & CARMELLA

Two?

They both rush to look over Tony's shoulder. They look at the screen, then at each other, then back at the screen. Then they both slap their heads and look away in shock.

TONY

Okay, let's have a look at bachelorette number 1. Reginaaaaaaa!
I like the way that sounds. Rolls right off the tongue. Reginaaaaa.
Wow! She's a looker.

Frankie and Carmella look over Tony's shoulder again, this time more closely. Then they look at each and at the screen again. Carmella looks discouraged.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY (cont'd)

Uh -- do you two mind? A little privacy here, huh?

The two back up a little, but Tony waves them further away.

TONY (cont'd)

Okay, Reginaaaaaaaa ... Let's see what Regina's profile says.

The other two are straining to see and hear. Tony's aware of this, so he reads out loud for them to hear.

TONY (cont'd)

Age: 45. She's off to a good start already! Occupation: Former showgirl. Yes! No! That means she's tall! I'll stay seated until she falls in love with me.

The other two look stunned.

TONY (cont'd)

Sexual orientation: Adventurous.

CARMELLA

(to herself)

Oh God ...

TONY

I wonder what that means? Wait a minute, it says she enjoys poetry and skydiving. I'm not having sex jumping out of an airplane! On the other hand, it also says she's caring and nurturing. Great. If I get hurt when we hit the ground, she can take care of me.

Carmella is speechless. Frankie goes over to Tony.

FRANKIE

Pop, you sure this is a good idea?

TONY

Sure I'm sure. This is the one!

FRANKIE

But what about the other message you got? You didn't even look at that one.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY

No need. Regina sounds perfect.

CARMELLA

But what about the other woman?

TONY

What about her?

CARMELLA

She might be better than the first one!

TONY

Impossible.

FRANKIE

I think you ought to check anyway.
Give the poor thing a chance.

Carmella kicks him.

FRANKIE (cont'd)

Ouch! Come on, Pop. Check her out.
What do you have to lose?

TONY

Oh, all right. But what could be better than a nurturing, caring, sexually adventurous, sky diving former showgirl?

FRANKIE

Don't forget young and beautiful!

Carmella kicks him again.

FRANKIE (cont'd)

Ouch!

TONY

What the hell is wrong with you?

FRANKIE

Just a pain. A *big* pain!

He glares at Carmella.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY

*(attention back to
the laptop)*

Okay, bachelorette Number 2:
Sophiaaaaaaa. She says she's Italian.
HmMMM ... Age: 59.
(to Frankie)
Much older than Reginaaaaa.

TONY (cont'd)

(reading Sophia's profile)
Measurements: 42-24-36. Wow! She
sounds ...

CARMELLA

Voluptuous.

TONY

... top heavy.

FRANKIE

*(stage whisper to
Carmella)*

I told you!

CARMELLA

(stage whisper)

Shut up!

TONY

(continues reading) Interests:
Cooking, loves Italian food, likes
her men as spicy as her food!

FRANKIE

See, Pop? That one sounds nice.

CARMELLA

Yeah, much nicer than that Regina.
You have much more in common with
Sophia.

FRANKIE

See? I think you know what you need
to do.

TONY

Yup! I'm going to meet both of them!

FRANKIE & CARMELLA

Both of them?!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY

Yes, it's the fair thing to do.

FRANKIE

When?

TONY

Tomorrow. Here at the restaurant.

FRANKIE

But it's Monday. We're closed.

TONY

I know. I'll have the whole dining room to myself. And you're going to come in and cook for my dates.

FRANKIE

Me? It's my day off. I have things to do.

TONY

Yes, you do. You're going to cook for me. Besides, I might need a little moral support.

FRANKIE

But ...

TONY

No buts, it's settled. You're coming in to cook for me and my dates tomorrow.

CARMELLA

(panicked) But that doesn't give me much time!

TONY

I didn't say you had to come in.

CARMELLA

That's okay. I'll come in and give Frankie a hand.

TONY

Are you sure you can tear yourself away from Mr. Mayor?

CARMELLA

Mr. Who? Oh . . .uh, I have to go. I don't have much time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY

Time for what?

CARMELLA

Never mind. I'm outa here!

She starts for the door.

FRANKIE

Where are you going?

CARMELLA

I have a million things to do! I need stuff! Goodbye!

She rushes out.

TONY

What the hell does she need?

FRANKIE

A miracle.

TONY

Tell her to pray to St. Anthony. Look what he's done for me!

SCENE 2

Lunchtime the next day. Lights up on Tony. He's dressed up in a jacket and tie. He's pacing nervously, occasionally glancing out the window. Frankie enters.

FRANKIE

Well, Romeo, is it time?

TONY

She should be here any minute. I'm going outside to see if she's in the parking lot.

Tony exits front door. Carmella enters from the kitchen.

CARMELLA

Where is he?

FRANKIE

He went outside to see if his date is in the parking lot.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARMELLA

(nervously) When she gets here, she's expecting to find an 85-year-old who smokes, drinks like a fish, and is near death.

FRANKIE

I know. Why would anyone be interested in that awful profile you created for him?

CARMELLA

It's obvious. She's a gold digger! I thought if I made him sound terrible, no one would respond. I wasn't prepared for this!

FRANKIE

Neither was I. Now what do we do?

CARMELLA

We have to get rid of her.

FRANKIE

How?

CARMELLA

I don't know. I'll think of something!

Frankie looks out the window.

FRANKIE

He's coming back in!

CARMELLA

With her?

FRANKIE

No, alone.

CARMELLA

I have to think. I'll be in the kitchen.

Carmella exits. Tony enters.

TONY

No sign of her yet. I hope she's going to show up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANKIE

(looking at watch)

Pop, you sure you know what you're doing?

TONY

Of course I know what I'm doing. I got it all figured out. Right down to the minute.

FRANKIE

Oh God. So, what's the plan?

TONY

Well, Bachelorette number 1, Reginaaaaaa, should arrive in a few minutes.

FRANKIE

Fine. I have the pasta carbonara all ready to go. Our house specialty.

TONY

And don't forget to bring out the good wine.

FRANKIE

It's already uncorked. Okay, so number 1 arrives in a few minutes. When is number 2 supposed to arrive?

TONY

In an hour.

FRANKIE

Geez, Pop, that's cutting it kind of close, don't you think?

TONY

It'll be fine. I'll know within 10 minutes whether or not we're hitting it off.

FRANKIE

Yeah, but suppose she's a slow eater?

TONY

Give her a doggie bag.

FRANKIE

Have you really thought this through? Oh, forget it. I have to check on the pasta. *(He exits to kitchen.)*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Regina enters through front door. Tony has his back to door and doesn't see her. Regina looks around as if casing the joint. She spots Tony.

REGINA

Excuse me, is your father here?

TONY

(surprised, whirling around) My father? Wait ... are you Regina?

REGINA

(chewing gum; not the brightest bulb in the chandelier)

Yeah ... You know, you look really good for your age!

TONY

I do?

(thinks for a second, then gets cocky)

Yeah, well, I work out.

REGINA

You don't say? And in your condition. That's very brave!

TONY

My condition?

REGINA

Let's not talk about it right now. Here, let me help you to the table.

TONY

No, no, no -- I should be showing *you* to the table.

REGINA

No, no, this is no time to be gallant. *(pronounces it guh-lahnt)* Here, take my arm.

TONY

No, let me take your arm!

REGINA

Now, now ... you're getting yourself all worked up. Calm down. Remember, your blood pressure.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY

Blood pressure? I thought I left that out.

REGINA

This is no time for pride. Now here, let me help you!

She forcibly pushes him into the chair.

REGINA (cont'd)

There. See? Isn't that better now?

TONY

Compared to what?

REGINA

As you can see, I'm a very caring and nurturing person.

TONY

(cautiously)

Yes, so your profile said.

REGINA

(sits across from him)

And I remember *your* profile, too. I brought you a little something I know you'll like.

(She hands him a gift bag.)

Enjoy, while you still have time!

Tony looks into the bag, then looks up, confused. He reaches in, pulls out a pack of cigarettes, and places it on the table. He reaches in again and pulls a second pack and places it on the table. Finally, he looks in the bag a third time and then dumps a pile of the cigarette packs on the table.

REGINA (cont'd)

I didn't know what brand you smoked, so I got a few of each.

Tony looks at her, shocked.

REGINA (cont'd)

I know, you're speechless. It's okay. No need to thank me. It's just the kind of person I am.

Carmella enters from the kitchen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARMELLA

Oh, excuse me. I didn't know you had a guest.

(Extending her hand to Regina)

How do you do. I'm Carmella. Tony's ...

REGINA

Nurse?

CARMELLA

(quickly putting two and two together)

Uh . . . yes!

(notices cigarettes, and says to Tony)

You know you're not supposed to smoke!

(to Regina)

Did you bring him these? Are you trying to kill him?

REGINA

What difference does it make now?

TONY

(totally confused) I have no idea what's going on here.

Carmella looks at Regina and twirls her finger next to her head to signal that Tony is senile. Regina nods, understanding.

REGINA

(speaking as if to child, miming as she talks)

It's okay, baby. How about a nice glass of wine.

Tony looks more and more confused.

TONY

Uh . . . yeah, sure. Wine.
(to Carmella)

Go get the wine.

CARMELLA

Wine? It's a little early in the day for wine, isn't it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY

It's never too early for a glass of fine wine.

REGINA

That's my boy! Bottoms up!
(to Carmella)
Hurry up with that wine, Missy!

CARMELLA

Hey, who do you think you're ...

TONY

You heard her. Get the wine ...
Missy! And send Frankie in with the calamari appetizer. Now!

Carmella glares, then stomps off to kitchen.

TONY (cont'd)

So, Reginaaaaaa ... do you like Italian food?

REGINA

No.

TONY

No?

REGINA

No.
(trying to sound sophisticated)
I'm more into the French cruzeen.

TONY

Croissant?

REGINA

No,no,not croissant. Not like at Dunkin' Donuts. Like at a fancy French restaurant. You never heard of the word, cruzeen?

TONY

Oh! I see.
(trying to be polite)
In Italian, it's pronounced *cuisine*.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REGINA

(rolling her eyes)

Sure, honey, whatever makes you happy
...

TONY

*(moving in closer
across the table)*

So, tell me, what kind of French
dishes do you enjoy?

REGINA

Oh, I have several. Let's see . . .
French toast, French fries, French
dressing,

*(leans into him,
almost nose to nose)*

and of course, French kissing!

TONY

(backs away quickly)

Hey, we're moving kind of fast here,
aren't we?

REGINA

You don't have much time, honey. Why
waste it?

TONY

(looking at his watch)

You're right. It's getting late.

(yells to kitchen)

Frankie!

Frankie runs in with the wine.

FRANKIE

Sorry, Pop. Here's the wine!

(He sees Regina.)

Oh, hello. I'm Frankie, Tony's son.

REGINA

*(barely looking at
him)*

Yeah, pleased to meet ya.

Tony pours the wine.

TONY

Frankie, it's getting late. Skip the
appetizer. Just bring the pasta.

Regina realizes a son in the picture could ruin everything.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REGINA

*(to Tony, stage
whisper)*

Say, if ... God forbid ... something
should happen to you, does Frankie
inherit everything?

TONY

Of course.

REGINA

*(to Frankie, batting
her eyes and
extending her hand
for him to kiss it)*

Veeeeeeery pleased to meet you!

*Frankie realizes what she's up to. He panics and runs for
the kitchen.*

FRANKIE

The pasta's boiling over!

Frankie exits.

TONY

You know, Regina ... these are
awfully big questions you're asking
here. In my day, we started with
small talk. You know, like, uh,
what's your sign?

REGINA

Stradivarius. what's yours?

TONY

What? Look, this isn't really going
like I thought it would. Is this how
it's done nowadays? Because if it is,
I think maybe I'm too old for this.

Regina starts to panic a bit.

REGINA

You're never too old. In fact, I find
you to be a fascinating gentleman. I
only have one more question for you.

TONY

And that is?

REGINA

Will you marry me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY

(leaps to his feet)
Check please! Wait a minute, I own
the place!

Frankie comes running out with two plates of pasta!

FRANKIE

Here it is, Pop!

REGINA

Great! I'm starved!

*She digs right in. She rolls a huge wad of spaghetti on her
fork, puts most of it in her mouth, and sucks in the
remaining strands.*

TONY

*(Gets up and follows
Frankie. In a stage
whisper)*
Frankie, get me out of this!

FRANKIE

(stage whisper back)
You got yourself into this. You get
yourself out.

TONY

But I'm running late. Bachelorette
number 2 will be here any minute!

FRANKIE

Yeah, well, good luck. I have sauce
to stir.

Frankie exits. Tony reluctantly sits back down.

TONY

(looking at his watch)
Look, Regina, I think we should talk.

REGINA

*(her mouth is full of
pasta)*
I never talk with my mouth full!

The front door opens, and Jen enters.

JEN

Excuse me. The door was unlocked.

Tony leaps to his feet. He thinks she's date number 2.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY

No, no, no... it's okay. Come on in!

(to Regina)

Excuse me a moment.

(back to Jen)

Here, please sit down over here.

He sits her at a table on the other side of the stage.

JEN

Thank you. I'm here for ...

TONY

Oh, I know why you're here. Pleased to meet you!

He shakes her hand. Jen notices Regina at other table.

JEN

I haven't come at a bad time, have I?

TONY

No, your timing is perfect!

JEN

Have I interrupted your lunch?

TONY

No, I'm just about ready to wrap that one up. So just relax, and we'll be bringing your lunch out in a minute. In the meantime, would you like a glass of wine?

JEN

Wow! Do you treat all your applicants this way?

TONY

(leaning in)

I don't like to think of them as "applicants." More like ... "hopefuls."

JEN

Well, here's hoping I'm what you're looking for!

TONY

Well, so far, so good! You're very ... youthful looking.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEN

Is that a bad thing?

TONY

No, not at all. But your profile ...

JEN

*(Misunderstanding
him, she turns to
one side, showing
her profile.)*

You're right. This is my best side.

TONY

*(confused at first,
then laughs)*

You know, I like you. You got a good sense of humor.

JEN

Thanks! It comes in handy in my line of work.

Before Tony gets a chance to ask what she means, Regina calls him over.

REGINA

Oh, Toooooony, I'm getting lonesome over here.

TONY

(to Jen)

Excuse me, I'll be right back.

JEN

No problem. I need to use the ladies' room anyway.

TONY

(pointing)

Right through there.

Tony runs back to Regina's table. Jen exits to doorway at center stage.

TONY (cont'd)

Yes? Are you finished? Would you like a doggie bag?

REGINA

No, I'm not finished. We've hardly talked. And you haven't even touched your food. Sit down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tony reluctantly sits.

REGINA (cont'd)

Go ahead, dig in!

Tony takes a bite and makes a lot of fuss over it.

TONY

Mmmmmmmmm ... delicious! That hit the spot. Well, I'm full!

He starts to get up again.

REGINA

Sit!

He sits back down on command.

REGINA (cont'd)

What's for dessert?

TONY

Well ...

REGINA

(seductively) You know, **I** could be your dessert.

TONY

(in a panic)

Carmella! Bring out the dessert tray!

Frankie runs out.

FRANKIE

Carmella's busy. I'll get the dessert in a minute.

Frankie tries to leave, but Tony grabs his arm.

TONY

Wait! I need some help here!

FRANKIE

What's the matter, Romeo? You can't handle one woman?

TONY

No, they're both here now!

FRANKIE

(looking around)

What? Where?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY

She's in the bathroom!

FRANKIE

(to self)

How did she get past me?

TONY

What?

FRANKIE

(backpedaling)

Never mind! I'll get the dessert.
Should I bring out the lunch for
Carmel . . ., I mean, Sophia?

TONY

Yes, bring out her lunch. But how do
I get rid of the first one? I like
the second one better!

FRANKIE

I thought you would.

TONY

So what do I do?

FRANKIE

(lightbulb goes off)

I have an idea about how to get rid
of this one ... I think I can whip up
something with a few leftovers.

TONY

Leftovers -- great! It won't even
cost anything.

FRANKIE

Ooooh, no, it's going to cost a
fortune!

TONY

What?

FRANKIE

Never mind. Trust me.

TONY

All right. But this better be good.

*Frankie runs back to the kitchen. Jen comes back and sits at
table again.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY (cont'd)

(to Regina)

Your dessert's coming right out. Now, if you'll excuse me, I'll be right back.

He starts for Jen's table. Halfway there, he turns around, runs back to Regina's table, grabs the bottle of wine, takes to it Jen's table, and then sits down.

TONY (cont'd)

(pouring the wine)

Now, where were we?

JEN

I saw you over there. You didn't choose her, did you?

TONY

No, no, I haven't made any decision yet. You're still in the running.

JEN

Great! Because I have experience. I know I look young, but I've been around.

TONY

You don't say ...

JEN

Oh yes, I've been in a lot of different positions.

TONY

Positions? We're getting a little ahead of ourselves here. What happened to small talk?

JEN

Well, I believe in putting it all out there. Getting right down to business. I mean, if I'm competing against her ...

(pointing to Regina)

Why beat around the bush?

TONY

(in a panic)

Frankie! Get in here!

Frankie hurries in with Jen's lunch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANKIE

Here it is, Pop!

Frankie places the dish in front of Jen and does a double take.

FRANKIE (cont'd)

Wait, you're not Carmel I mean, Sophia.

JEN

No, I'm Jen.

FRANKIE & TONY

Who's Jen?

TONY

You're not Sophia? Bachelorette number 2?

JEN

Bachelorette number 2? No, I'm waitress applicant number 2!

FRANKIE & TONY

What?

JEN

Look, I saw the sign in the window. "Waitress wanted, apply within." The door was open, so I applied within!

TONY

Oh my God, I thought you were ...

FRANKIE

(fearing the worst, like a lawsuit)
If he has said anything to offend, I apologize.

TONY

Yes! It was a case of mistaken identity.

JEN

Well, it was a pretty bizarre conversation.

TONY

I'll say.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANKIE

(to Jen) Look, I'll make it up to you. If you still want the job, you got it. No questions asked. Fair enough?

JEN

Well ... what about her? (*points to Regina*)

TONY

Her who? Forget about her.

JEN

Well, I really need this job. When do I start?

FRANKIE

Right now. Come on back in the kitchen, and you can serve the dessert.

Frankie and Jen exit. Jen looks confused and pleased at the same time. Tony has a dazed look at this point.

REGINA

Oh Tooony, did you forget my dessert?

TONY

(*running over to her
but remains standing*)

No, no, no ...

(*looking at his watch*)

Coming right up. Want it to go?

REGINA

No, silly. I want you to sit down and talk to me. You've hardly paid any attention to me since I got here.

TONY

(*looking nervous,
checking watch*)

Sorry. Look, something's come up.

REGINA

(*glancing at his
crotch*)

Well ... it's about time.

She nudges his leg with her toe.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REGINA (cont'd)

I was beginning to think I lost my touch.

TONY

*(covering his crotch
with his hands and
backing away from
her foot)*

No, that didn't come up! Although, it can. I mean, there's nothing wrong with it!

*(flustered, fumbling
for words)*

I mean ... it works just fine ... when it has to ... I mean, when it's called into action ... Oh, never mind!

REGINA

Now we're getting down to business. That's the most interesting thing you've said so far!

TONY

Look, there's obviously been a misunderstanding here. I don't think I'm cut out for the dating scene.

REGINA

Perfect! Let's skip the dating and just get married!

TONY

(in a panic)

Dessert! Where the hell is that dessert?!

Frankie and Jen come out together. Jen is carrying an Italian Fortune Cannoli on a dessert dish.

JEN

This is the house dessert specialty. A homemade Italian Fortune Cannoli!

With a flourish, she puts it down in front of Regina.

REGINA

You mean, like a Chinese fortune cookie?

FRANKIE

Yeah, only better! Mangia!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANKIE (cont'd)

TONY

*(to Frankie, stage
whisper)*

Are you crazy?

FRANKIE

Relax! It's all part of the plan!
Just watch!

(to Regina)

Go ahead, enjoy!

The three lean in to watch Regina open the cannoli.

REGINA

Oh, this is fun! What a good idea.

TONY

Yeah, that's what I thought.

Regina breaks open the cannoli and pulls out the slip of paper. She licks her fingers before reading the fortune.

Frankie looks at Tony and gives the thumbs up sign. Tony's expression says, "What are you doing?"

Jen shrugs and gives the thumbs up sign, too, although she has no idea what's really going on.

Regina holds up the slip of paper and reads it silently, moving her mouth with each word. Suddenly, she does a double take and looks looks shocked.

REGINA

Oh ... my ... God!

The front door opens and Carmella walks in dressed as Sophia. She has on a fur coat, a long wig, dramatic makeup, and Jackie-O sunglasses.

Regina sees her and looks terrified. Carmella stops and reaches into her purse. Seeing this, Regina screams and runs out the door, right past Carmella. She's in such a hurry, she forgets her purse.

JEN

*(totally confused,
says to Frankie)*

I want a raise. *(She stalks off to kitchen.)*

Carmella finally pulls keys from her purse.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

(pulling out car keys)

There they are. I thought I left them in the car. Was that woman okay? She left in an awful hurry.

Tony and Frankie's attention turns to Carmella. Frankie is shocked. He goes right up to her and looks her up and down in amazement.

FRANKIE

(stage whisper)

Carmella?

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

(stage whisper)

Shut up! You'll blow it!

She kicks him the shin. He starts hopping around.

TONY

Frankie! What's wrong with you? Where are your manners?

FRANKIE

(glaring at Carmella)

It's just that *big* pain again.

Tony shoves Frankie aside.

TONY

(extends his hand to Carmella)

Ignore him. I'm Tony, and you must be Sophiaaaaa, from Last Chance for Romance.com.

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

(shaking his hand)

Pleased to meet you. Quite a manly grip you have there.

TONY

Yeah, well, I work out a lot.

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

Oh? You didn't mention that in your profile.

TONY

Well ... I don't like to brag ...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY (cont'd)
(*striking a bit of a
pose*)
... but I do walk to the restaurant
every day.

SOPHIA/CARMELLA
Well, it shows. Uh . . . do you think
we could sit down?

Tony steers her to the table where Regina was sitting.

TONY
(*pulling out her
chair*)
Absolutely. Please. Sit.

Tony notices the table isn't cleared.

TONY (cont'd)
Frankie, what's wrong with you? Clean
up this mess!

FRANKIE
Right, Pop.
(*shouting to kitchen*)
Jen! Get out here and clean up table
number 2!

TONY
(*shaking his head*)
It's hard to get good help these
days.

*Jen runs out and clears the table. This is the first time
Carmella has really seen Jen. She breaks character for a
moment.*

SOPHIA/CARMELLA
(*as Carmella*)
Who the hell is she?
(*as Sophia*)
I mean ... she's cute. Is that your
daughter?

TONY
No, she's the new waitress we just
hired.

SOPHIA/CARMELLA
(*as Carmella*)
New waitress? I turn my back for one
minute ...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY

What?

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

(as Sophia) Nothing. How about a glass of wine while we get to know each other?

TONY

Absolutely, coming right up.

(calling to Frankie)

Frankie, how about some wine for our guest!

Frankie, still limping and totally frustrated, goes to empty table and picks up the two glasses that were there for Tony and Jen. He brings them over and plunks them down in front of Tony and Sophia, glaring.

FRANKIE

Our finest.

He hobbles away to kitchen.

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

You're right. You can't get good help.

TONY

I do have one woman who works here
...

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

Oh? Is she the exception?

TONY

No. All of sudden she's never around when you need her! Probably out to lunch with the mayor.

Tony gets up, takes the bottle of wine from the other table and gets two clean glasses from the side table. He sets them down at the cleared table and begins to pour.

TONY (cont'd)

(He sits. They both pick up their wine glasses and toast.)

There now, lets start over. I'd like to propose a toast.

Sophia/Carmella lifts her glass and leans in expectantly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

Yes?

TONY

Here's to the beginning of a beautiful relationship.

(to self)

I hope ...

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

Well, it certainly sounds from your profile that we have a lot in common. I'm Italian. You're Italian. I like Italian food. You *cook* Italian food.

TONY

Well, actually, Frankie does the cooking.

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

(forgetting who she is for a second)
Not all of it. Sometimes I ... I mean, he must have help when it gets busy.

TONY

Well, there's Carmella.

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

Who's Carmella?

TONY

(looking around to make sure Carmella isn't around to hear)

Well, she's just the hostess. Oh ... and she's also the bookkeeper. And that's it. But she also fills in in the kitchen when we're busy. But that's it. Except when she runs to the bank for me, and when she plans the banquets, like the mayor's birthday party . . . and that's about it.

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

Wow. It sounds like she does a lot. So ... what do you do?

TONY

Me? Well, I uh . . . and of course I uh . . . and sometimes I uh . . . and so on and so forth.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

So, it sounds like this Carmella is a valuable employee.

TONY

Oh yeah, she is, she is. She's more than that,
(*light bulb goes off*)
she really is ...

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

(*thinks he's finally coming around*)

Really?

TONY

Yeah, but I can't say it too loud or she'll want a raise.

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

Sounds to me like she deserves one. I'd like to meet her sometime.

TONY

Oh, you two would have nothing common. I mean you're ... well...
(*He's gesturing like Sophia is shapely and attractive*)
... and she's ... well ... more the motherly type.

Sophia/Carmella gets mad and downs her whole glass of wine.

TONY (cont'd)

(*picking up the bottle*)

Oh, more wine?

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

Please ...

TONY

(*pouring*)

You know, Sophiaaaaaa ... I keep thinking I've seen you someplace before.

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

(*evasive*)

Oh, I don't think so.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY

Are you sure? Because you look familiar. Take off your sunglasses.

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

No!

TONY

Why not?

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

(backpedaling)

I uh . . . just had . . . Lasik surgery . . . yeah, that's it . . . and I have to avoid bright lights.

TONY

Oh, really? And has it improved your vision?

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

(sarcastically) Oh yeah . . . I'm starting to see things a lot clearer now.

TONY

Good for you! Still, I don't know, there's something about you . . .

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

Really?

(She throws back her coat, revealing her heavily padded chest, then leans into table towards him.)

What?

TONY

(eyes popping)

Oh boy!

He picks up his glass of wine and downs it. Jen comes out holding two lunch dishes.

JEN

Are you ready for your lunch?

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

What are we having?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEN

The house specialty, pasta carbonara.

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

(forgets who she is again) Since when? That's not the house specialty. It's ... I mean ...

TONY

Have you been here before?

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

Uh, no. Yes! A long time ago. And that wasn't the house specialty.

TONY

Really? What was the house specialty?

During all this, Jen continues holding the plates, but her arms are getting tired and beginning to lower, and pain is starting to show on her face.

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

I don't remember exactly, but it was a tortellini dish. It was delicious. The dessert, however, was not.

TONY

Really? What was it?

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

Italian Fortune Cannolis.

TONY

Oh my God, you were here that night?

Pours himself another glass of wine.

Jen finds the strength to straighten up again and smile through her pain.

JEN

So, can I serve the pasta carbonara now?

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

(enjoying this)
Actually, I would like some bread first.

Jen returns to the kitchen, still carrying the dishes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY

So, you enjoy some bread with your dinner?

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

(seductively)

Actually, I'd be happy if we just skipped right to dessert!

Tony downs his wine.

TONY

Everybody wants dessert first today!

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

Am I making you nervous?

TONY

No, not at all. It's just, uh, well .

. . .

*(trying to act suave,
but the wine is
beginning to take
effect)*

It's been a while since I've
*(goes to rest his
elbow on table and
misses)*

... been into the dating scene.

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

Really? I would never have guessed. I mean, you seem so relaxed.

TONY

Getting more relaxed by the minute.

He pours another glass of wine for himself.

TONY (cont'd)

Would you care for some?

He's obviously tipsy. Sophia/Carmella realizes it and sees it as an opportunity.

Jen comes out with the bread.

JEN

*(puts bread and
butter on table)*

Here's your bread. And I brought some butter, too.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

Don't you have some olive oil to dip
it in?

Jen rolls her eyes and trots back to the kitchen.

SOPHIA/CARMELLA (cont'd)

Soooo ... tell me more about this
Carmella.

TONY

Carmella?

The phone rings.

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

Shouldn't you get that?

TONY

Carmella will get it.

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

Oh no she won't.

TONY

What?

(yelling to kitchen)
Carmella!

FRANKIE

(from backstage)
She stepped out!

TONY

(yelling to Frankie)
Then you answer it!

FRANKIE

I can't! My hands kneading dough!

TONY

Oh hell ...
(gets up)
Excuse me.

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

Certainly.

Tony answers the phone at the reception desk.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY

*(trying to say name
of restaurant while
tipsy)*

Hello, Tony's Tortellini Emporium.
No, that's not it. Tony's Tort Knox.
No, that's not it ...

(to self)

I gotta change the name of this
place!

(back into phone)

Tony's Italian Restaurant . . . Oh,
it's you, Sal . . . Oh geez ... Mr.
Mayor. *(to Sophia/Carmella)* . . .
a real horse's ass.

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

Shhhhh ...

TONY

That's the same thing Carmella says
to me.

(back into phone)

Now, look, Mayor, the party is all
taken care of. Nothing to worry
about. I'll have Carm call you ...
Oh, you want to talk to her now?
Well, she's not here. . . Where is
she?

(to Sophia)

Have you seen Carmella?

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

Not for a while. But I'm sure she'll
be back soon.

(to self)

She better be, or we're in trouble.

TONY

(into phone) What do you want her
for? ... What do you mean, "none of
my business?" I'm her boss. That
makes it my business.

(to Sophia/Carmella)

Do you believe this guy? A real
horse's ... I know... *(puts finger to
lips)* Shhhhhhh...

(back into phone)

What? . . . No, I haven't been
drinking! It's the middle of the day!

*(winks at Sophia/
Carmella)*

Shhhhhhh ...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY (cont'd)
(back into phone)
Now you listen, Bucko, I know your type. Trying to put the moves on my ... um . . . Carmella.
(to Sophia/Carmella)
Do you believe this guy?
(back into phone)
All right, all right, I'll give her a message. What's the message? ...
Wait! I'm not ready yet.

Tony looks around the counter and table but finds nothing to write on. Finally, he searches his pockets and pulls out the sacred placemat.

TONY (cont'd)
The Sacred Placemat. What the hell.

Now he searches for a pen but can't find one. Sophia/Carmella starts digging in her purse for one.

TONY (cont'd)
(to Sophia/Carmella) Excuse me, would you happen to have ...
(She hands him a pen with the restaurant name on it. He reads the side of the pen out loud.)
"Tony's Tortelli Trattoria." I oughta try this place!
(back into phone)
Okay, Mayor, shoot! . . . You want her to what? . . . You mean like a date? A whole weekend? Las Vegas?!
Are you crazy?

Sophia/Carmella sits up straight, very interested.

TONY (cont'd)
Now see here, she can't go away for a weekend with you!

SOPHIA/CARMELLA
Why not?

TONY
(to her) Because . . . wait, you stay out this!

Sophia/Carmella is smiling, enjoying the moment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY (cont'd)

She can't go with you. We're very busy. She can't have off work ... Why? Because . . . she's going away for the weekend with me!

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

I am?

TONY

Not you! Carmella!

(back into phone)

Never mind where I'm taking her. Just drop the whole idea. Remember, I'm writing a speech about you. Going to read in front of all your guests. So don't piss me off!

He slams the phone down.

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

So, you invited me here, and all the while you have a weekend planned with this Carmella woman? Where are you taking her?

TONY

(sitting down at table)

(suddenly much more sober) How the hell do I know? I haven't given it any thought until now.

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

Yes, but you just said ...

TONY

I know what I just said. Look, I'm afraid this date isn't going to work out.

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

Oh? Why?

TONY

Because I went online looking for something I thought was missing in my life.

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

And ...

Jen runs in with the olive oil.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEN

Here's the olive oil.

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

*(to Jen, stage
whisper)*

Not now!

JEN

(confused) But you said ...

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

(stage whisper)

I said not now!!

JEN

(to Tony)

I want that raise.

Still holding the olive oil, Jen storms back to kitchen.

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

So, you were saying, you went online looking for something you thought was missing in your life?

TONY

Yes.

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

And ...

TONY

It turns out I already had it, right there in front me the whole time.

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

You mean . . . Carmella?

TONY

Yeah. Look, I'm sorry, but this isn't going to work out between you and me.

SOPHIA/CARMELLA

(feigning disappointment) Should I go?

TONY

Yeah, there's things I need to tell Carmella. Things I should have said a long time ago. So, please, leave. I have to find her. *(trying to be nice)* Would you like a doggie bag?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARMELLA

Tony, are you blind?

She stands up, pulls out the falsies and throws them at him.

Tony picks up the falsies and looks shocked.

TONY

(standing up)

Sophia, you falsified your measurements?

Carmella now pulls off the wig and throws that at him, too. She's wearing a skull cap underneath.

TONY (cont'd)

My God, is any of you real?

CARMELLA

What are you, an idiot?

Carmella takes off the sunglasses, pulls off the skull cap, and fluffs her hair.

TONY

Carmella?

CARMELLA

(sinking into the chair)

Yeah, Carmella ...

TONY

What the hell is going on?

CARMELLA

What do you think is going on? Go ahead, take a crack at it!

TONY

(pacing back and forth, Jackie Gleason style)

What's going on? What's going on? I'll tell you what's going on! You really want to know? You want me to tell you? You really want me to tell you?

CARMELLA

(looking at her watch)

Can you speed this up, because we're not getting any younger here ...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY

Wait a minute! Why am I explaining anything? You're the one with the explaining to do. And you can start with the disguise!

CARMELLA

I have explaining to do?

TONY

(sits, arms folded)

Go ahead, we're not getting any younger here.

CARMELLA

(gets up and paces, a bit nervous)

Well, isn't it obvious?

TONY

No.

CARMELLA

Why am I not surprised? I should have known better. Look, you big dope, for a long time now. I've been trying to get you to notice me.

TONY

I notice you every day.

CARMELLA

Not notice me as an employee. Notice me as a *woman*.

TONY

(looking at the falsies)

I've noticed parts of you.

CARMELLA

(ignores his last remark) So, when I found out you were going to try online dating, I resorted to extreme measures. I decided to be one of your dates.

TONY

But I found Sophia online.

CARMELLA

No, Sophia found *you* -- and hit on you.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARMELLA (cont'd)

I went on Last Chance for Romance.com, created a phony profile called "Sophia," and sent you a message.

TONY

(finally starting to get it)

And I invited you here.

CARMELLA

No, you invited *Sophia*. I've been here all along. I'm sorry. I was just trying to get your attention. Please don't be mad.

TONY

(impressed!)

Mad? I'm not mad. It was clever. Very clever. And ... it worked.

CARMELLA

What do you mean?

TONY

You know what I mean. I was about to tell "Sophia" *(makes quotation marks with fingers)* she needed to leave, remember? Because I said I needed to go find you. *(thinks about these next lines before saying them)* This whole day has been a real eye opener. I discovered I don't need online dating. I have everything I need right here.

He gets up and takes Carmella in his arms.

TONY (cont'd)

After all these years, this feels a little awkward.

CARMELLA

(flirtatiously) Does this mean we're dating?

They both laugh.

TONY

Well, I don't know. What about this thing between you and the Mayor?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARMELLA

I hear he was about to offer me a weekend in Vegas. What are you offering?

TONY

(romantically) Whatever you want.

Jen runs in with the main course.

JEN

Are you finally ready for your lunch?

TONY

(giving Carmella a sexy look)

I think we'll skip lunch and go right to dessert!

They start to kiss, when Regina suddenly bursts through the front door.

REGINA

(panicked)

Look, I don't want any trouble! Keep back, all of you! I just want my purse!

She grabs her purse from the back of the chair and runs out. As she's leaving, Frankie comes in.

FRANKIE

Was that bachelorette number one? Reginaaaaaa?

TONY

Yeah. What happened? She opened her Italian Fortune Cannoli, read the message, and left like a bat out of hell. Now she comes back for her purse, and she's even more terrified. What the hell was in that fortune?

FRANKIE

(laughing)

Well, you said you wanted to get rid of her. So, I wrote, "His wife is on the way and she has a gun."

CARMELLA

Oh ... and when I came in, she thought I was . . .

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY

My wife.

CARMELLA

Your wife?

They all have a good laugh, except Jen, who never gets past confused.

CARMELLA (cont'd)

(playfully)

Your wife ... that has a nice ring to it!

She looks at Frankie and gives him a big wink, encouraging him to play along. He does.

TONY

(panicky)

Wife? What wife? Hey, wait a minute! We're moving a little fast here, aren't we? Who said anything about marriage?

FRANKIE

(tongue in cheek)

Gee Pop, at your age -- 85 -- and being such a heavy smoker and drinker, time isn't exactly on your side.

CARMELLA

Yeah, we better act fast before it's too late!

TONY

Too late? Who the hell is 85? I don't smoke! I don't ... okay, a little wine now and then, but . . . what the hell are you two talking about?

Frankie and Carmella are trying hard not to laugh. Poor Jen is still standing there with a plate in each hand. During the following conversation, Frankie and Carmella are still kidding Tony, although he thinks they're serious.

FRANKIE

Remember what we talked about, Pop. Change is good! Marriage would be a nice change for you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARMELLA

Yeah, Frankie's right. Change is good! And we can get your paesan, the Mayor, to perform the ceremony!

TONY

Now just a minute ...!

CARMELLA

We can start making those changes here at the restaurant, too. Start redecorating for the wedding.

TONY

What wedding?! Who said anything about a wedding? We can't afford it!

CARMELLA

I'm the bookkeeper, remember? We *can* afford it. Rip out that wall over there, tear out the carpets . . .

Tony acts ready to have a nervous breakdown.

TONY

But, but, but ...

Frankie and Carmella get serious below, talking about the name change.

FRANKIE

She's right, pop. We can afford it. Change is good. And the first thing we should change is the name! How about Frankie's Pasta Palace?

CARMELLA

(turning serious)

No, no, no ... *Carmella's* Pasta Palace!

TONY

(shouting)

Whoa, whoa, whoa ... I cracked the door open and you moved right in! You're taking over!

FRANKIE

(getting annoyed with Carmella)

Uh . . . I think we both know it should be Frankie's Pasta Palace!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CARMELLA

*(getting annoyed with
Frankie)*

I think Carmella's Pasta Palace
sounds much better! Your mother
would've liked that more.

TONY

Hey, hey, hey!

FRANKIE

(shouting at Carmella)

Leave Ma out of it. It should be
Frankie's Pasta Palace!

CARMELLA

(shouting at Frankie)

Carmella's Pasta Palace!

TONY

Hey!

CARMELLA & FRANKIE

(shouting at Tony)

Shut up!

TONY

(shouting back)

Don't I have a say in anything
anymore?

CARMELLA & FRANKIE

(shouting)

No!

TONY

(shouting) If the name is going to
change to anything, it'll be Tony's
Pasta Palace! End of discussion!

JEN

*(finally joins the
shouting match)*

Hey! Shut up all of you! *(shocked,
they shut up)* If you change the name
to anything, it should be the Pasta
Funny Farm! This place is a nut
house!

TONY

(to Jen)

Hey! Watch it! You want to get fired
the same day you got hired?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JEN

You can't fire me, because . . .
(shoves plates into
Tony's hands)
. . .I quit!

FRANKIE

What?

JEN

You heard me. I quit! Listen to
yourselves! You're all crazy!

*Jen picks up wine bottle from the table, takes a big swig,
and rushes for the door.*

*The three others stand in shock, feeling embarrassed. Then
Frankie chases after Jen.*

FRANKIE

Wait!, wait . . . don't quit. I'll
give you a raise ... I'll...

*Jen just keeps running. Tony and Carmella face the audience,
looking down at the floor sheepishly, as if this is their
fault.*

FRANKIE (cont'd)

(worried Jen will badmouth the
restaurant) I hope she doesn't go
over to Antonio's now looking for a
job. Or worse yet, the Chinese place!

TONY

(missing the point)
Yeah, they do nothing but scream over
there. Poor kid.

FRANKIE

(Looks at Tony in
disbelief for a
second, then starts
pacing. As he talks
it builds to a
shout.)

All I want to do, is just come here
in the morning, make the sauce, boil
the pasta, and throw some dough
around. But instead, I gotta deal
with the Italian soap opera, "As the
Tortellini Turns," starring you two!!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Frankie then comes between Tony and Carmella, and puts an arm around each of their shoulders.

FRANKIE (cont'd)
(suddenly calm,
smiling at both of
them, affectionately)
And I wouldn't have it any other way.

The three smile at each other, and Tony & Carmella put their arms around Frankie, too. They look toward the audience, grinning happily.

Lights out.

THE END