

TOILETTE OF THE GODS

A 10-minute play

by Philip Heckman

Characters

AL -- male, 40s-50s, out of shape but used to power

MEG -- female, 40s-50s, past her prime but used to privilege

ATTENDANT -- female, 20s, attractive but nondescript

Time

Any

Place

An upscale bedroom, with a bed upstage and a vanity and chair downstage. The vanity's surface is covered with cosmetics and accessories, its mirror removed so that the audience can see through its frame. A wardrobe, table, and/or clothes rack as needed for costumes and props.

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TOILETTE OF THE GODS

AL and MEG are getting dressed in elegant formal wear. MEG sits at the vanity, facing the audience, applying makeup while AL paces behind her.

A simply clad ATTENDANT waits unobtrusively on the couple. She quietly anticipates every cosmetic and article of clothing they require. Although constantly dutiful, she does nothing to draw attention to herself until needed.

AL

...outrageous. You have to give me more notice.

MEG

Of dinner? Don't be silly. It's every day at this time.

AL

Meg, you know what I mean -- how I detest dress up.

MEG

You? With a mirror on the ceiling of your closet...

AL

You know what I mean. These infernal social events.

MEG

They're your family, Al. Your personal friends.

AL

You know what I mean. I had plans.

MEG

To do what?

AL

All you need to know is that I had them. Plans.

MEG

Don't expect me to accommodate your schedule if I'm not on it.

AL

All I'm saying is I deserve a little consideration. Don't spring these things on me without warning.

MEG

Whom should I spring them on if not you?

AL

Damn it, Meg! You know what I mean.

MEG

Anyway, I'd think you'd be eager to dine with your brothers. You haven't seen Randy since last fall.

AL

Randy be damned. Most guests steal the silverware. The last time Randy was here he packed half my kitchen staff into his limo.

MEG

And Roger will be there, too. He steals from Randy and you steal from him. So it all evens out, doesn't it?

(Beat)

Lighten up. You'll enjoy yourself. You always do.

AL

We could've done this another time.

MEG

But when the stars are aligned, one must act.

AL

What's so special about tonight that couldn't wait?

MEG

Really, you don't think I'd stop with Randy and Roger, do you? I know how to put a guest list together.

AL

So who?

MEG

(Beat, for effect)

Crazy Lennie.

AL

What!?

MEG

Crazy Humvee Lennie. You know, the car dealer.

AL

That faker, that officious windbag, that pretentious poseur.

MEG

If you felt that way, why'd you buy your new H1 from him?

AL

I didn't know he was going to drive the very same model to the club and try to pass himself off as me.

MEG

Relax, nobody thought it was you.

AL

Of course not, but the ridicule was equally distributed.

MEG

You're just upset he put the most expensive audio/video system with voice command in his Hummer and not yours.

AL

He painted flames on the sides and drove up to the clubhouse blowing his horn and yelling, "All hail Big Al!"

(Beat)

I know your brother's spreading the tale everywhere. When I get my hands on him...

MEG

Well, my brother's not invited tonight. You'll have to content yourself with Lennie.

AL

Oh, I'll content myself all right. I agree, this little dinner party couldn't have come at a better time.

MEG

I knew you'd see it my way.

AL

Crazy Lennie. I intend to make him eat his own organs one by one. Too bad the little toad doesn't have one of those self-regenerating livers...

MEG

Don't make too big a mess. I just had the carpet cleaned.

AL

...with a sorbet between courses perhaps, to cleanse his palette.

MEG

And you insist you hate ceremony.

AL

I never said ceremony, I said dress up.

MEG

Still, I don't see you appearing in public naked.

AL

Perhaps I should -- that'd discourage would-be imposters.

MEG
Yes, that would be discouraging.

(Beat)
Hmmm, dear...

AL
Yes?

MEG
Have you chosen something for your lapel?

AL
I don't know -- whatever they give me. What difference does it make?

MEG
I'd like you to wear a white feather tonight.

AL
Huh?

MEG
(Watching his reaction in the mirror)
In your lapel -- the feather of a swan.

AL
A feather? What for?

MEG
Come, come, it'll be perfect. Don't tell me you don't remember the swan suit you wore to the costume ball.

AL
Out with it, you old harpy. What are you driving at?

MEG
I just thought you'd take pleasure in seeing some old friends.

AL
Who?

MEG
You remember lovely Rita, don't you? The ornithologist. You danced with her that night. Rita has those adorable toddlers -- they have your eyes.

AL
I did not have sex with that woman!

MEG
Birds do it, bees do it, even educated sleaze do it.