

THOSE GOLDEN YEARS  
by Daniel Curzon

CHARACTERS: (2)

LOIS, a woman in her sixties  
LLOYD, a man in his nineties, with a hearing aid  
(They can both be played by younger actors without makeup.)

SETTING: A table in a nice restaurant.

LIGHTS UP as they are finishing breakfast.

LOIS: How was yours?

LLOYD: What's that?

LOIS: I said, How was that? (Points at his food.)

LLOYD: Oh, the food? . . . Terrible.

LOIS: You ate every bit of it.

LLOYD: Did I? I think you ate most of it.

LOIS: I had one bite of yours.

LLOYD: Two bites. I counted.

LOIS: It doesn't matter.

LLOYD: Sure, it matters. I was hungry.

LOIS: Do you eat regularly?

LLOYD: I don't know.

LOIS: I worry about you, living alone.

LLOYD: I'm fine. Those Visiting Angels take care of me.

LOIS: Is that the name of the care agency?

LLOYD: No, real angels visit me and change my diaper.

LOIS: I don't know what to say to that.

LLOYD: It was a joke. I can still make a joke.

LOIS: I know you can. I'm not trying to . . .

LLOYD: Half my mind and my legs and hearing may be gone. But I can still make a joke.

LOIS: Well, good for you.

LLOYD: You should joke more.

LOIS: I should?

LLOYD: You're pretty solemn.

LOIS: It's just that I worry about you.

LLOYD: I wonder if I should order some more food.

LOIS: Are you still hungry? You're sure you're eating right, every day, right?

LLOYD: (to unseen waitress) Hey! (Snaps his fingers, close to his chest.)

LOIS: You shouldn't snap your fingers at the server.

LLOYD: Why not? They won't wait on you otherwise.

LOIS: You can simply raise your arm.

LLOYD: I can't raise mine anymore. Only up to my chest. (Demonstrates)

LOIS: Can you feed yourself?

LLOYD: Barely.

LOIS: You just managed to eat a whole meal.

LLOYD: I made a special effort for you.

LOIS: Well, thank you!

LLOYD: That waitress doesn't like me.

LOIS: Of course she does.

LLOYD: No, she doesn't. It's because I won't flirt with her.

LOIS: She doesn't want you to flirt with her.

LLOYD: You don't know. Yes, she does! I come here more than you do. The Visiting Angels bring me.

LOIS: Why would she care if you flirt with her or not?

LLOYD: She thinks she'll get a bigger tip if we flirt. I see her do it with all the men around here. But I'm on to her.

LOIS: She's just doing her job.

LLOYD: She hasn't come over, has she? Not since she dumped the plates in front of us and ran off.

LOIS: They're busy.

LLOYD: No, they're not. (Gestures at the room.)

LOIS: (sighs)

LLOYD: Hard to talk to me, right?

LOIS: Not at all. Not at all.

LLOYD: I'm still hungry. You ate most of mine.

LOIS: Let me try. (Waves for the waitress) Server!

LLOYD: "Server"? That's worse than "waitress." It makes her sound like a slave. (Snaps his fingers again.) Hey, where's our slave!

LOIS: Are you positive you're hungry?

LLOYD: (hard of hearing) What's that?

LOIS: (louder) Are you positive you're hungry?

LLOYD: I'm not hungry. Who said I was hungry? I just like to get that waitress's goat.

LOIS: Well, I don't think she's coming over here. I can go ask for some more food. (Gets up.)

LLOYD: Never mind. Sit down. I'll have some salt.

LOIS: (still standing) Salt?

LLOYD: (grabbing the salt shaker) I love salt, all by itself. (Pour some into his hand.)

LOIS: You probably shouldn't eat that. It's not good for you.

LLOYD: I'm ninety. Who cares?

LOIS: (sitting again) You're ninety-three, and I care.

LLOYD: (tastes the salt with his tongue) Yummy.

LOIS: Sometimes I think you're not so much forgetful as you are . . .

LLOYD: Mean?

LOIS: Of course not.

LLOYD: But I am mean. I've always been mean. I like being mean. Want some salt? (Offers her some.)

LOIS: No, thanks. There was plenty in the hash browns.

LLOYD: Why do we come to this place? The food is rotten and the service is worse.

LOIS: Maybe it's the view. The golf course. (Points out as if through a window.)

LLOYD: I tried to walk over to that lake once. Some guy stopped me. Two of them. "You can't walk on the course!" they screamed at me.

LOIS: I doubt they screamed.

LLOYD: They pushed me down and jumped up and down on my back.

LOIS: They did? . . . They did not.

LLOYD: That's why I can't lift my arms above here. (Lifts his arms to his chest.)

LOIS: I think you're telling fibs.

LLOYD: I'm telling lies. Little boys tell fibs. Grown men tell lies.

LOIS: It's still a nice view.

LLOYD: Just don't walk on the course.

LOIS: If you're playing golf, you can walk on the course. They didn't want you to get hit by a golf ball.

LLOYD: Because I'd sue them? They're right. I'd sue the fucking pants off them!

LOIS: Language.

LLOYD: (mocking her) "Language." What am I, five?

LOIS: It's been a lovely breakfast. I'm glad we did this.

LLOYD: No, you're not. I can tell you're sorry you came on this date.

LOIS: It isn't a date.

LLOYD: It isn't a date? It feel likes a date. I always hated dating.

LOIS: We're not on a date.

LLOYD: You are kinda pretty, especially for an older woman.

LOIS: Thank you. But we're not on a date.

LLOYD: How old are you?

LOIS: You know how old I am.

LLOYD: I do? Where's that waitress? Why is this salt on my hand? (Knocks it off.)

LOIS: Do you want a napkin? Here, let me get that. (Takes a napkin and wipes the salt off his hand.)

LLOYD: Thank you. You take good care of yourself. Do I look ninety-three?

LOIS: You look very good for your age!

LLOYD: Huh?

LOIS: (louder) You look very good for your age!

LLOYD: Is this our third date? You can have sex on the third date.

LOIS: Dad! I'm your daughter!

LLOYD: You're my daughter? Then why are we on a date?

LOIS: I'm telling you: we're not on a date. We're having breakfast together at your club.

LLOYD: I own a club?

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LOIS: You're a member.

LLOYD: Do I play golf?

LOIS: You used to. You were very good.

LLOYD: Stupid game! Hitting little balls into little holes. What a waste of time. And now I don't have any left!

LOIS: It was good exercise. And you enjoyed it. Well, sort of enjoyed it.

LLOYD: As much as I ever enjoyed anything, right?

LOIS: I think so.

LLOYD: I never enjoyed much of anything in life.

LOIS: Don't say that. You enjoyed lots of things.

LLOYD: Who are you to say? No, I *didn't*!

LOIS: Well, then you pretended well.

LLOYD: You use “well” a lot. Did you know that?

LOIS: Now I do!

LLOYD: People are annoying. Have you noticed? They natter on. They don't take care of their teeth. They don't use their turn signals. I hate them.

LOIS: No, you don't!

LLOYD: I tell you I do! And you're one of them!

LOIS: Nice. I'm so glad we get together like this.

LLOYD: Are you paying?

LOIS: Do you want me to pay?

LLOYD: Yeah! I'm fucking tired of paying for other people. All my life I've paid. I know – “language”!

LOIS: Swear all you like!

LLOYD: I will. It's one of the few pleasures I have left. Fuck!

LOIS: Classy.

LLOYD: Maybe they'll throw us out of here. That could be fun.

LOIS: Maybe it's time we left.

LLOYD: I'm not tipping that waitress.

LOIS: We have to tip.

LLOYD: Unless it's tipping her *over*. I'd do that! . . . Get it?

LOIS: You're becoming impossible.

LLOYD: You're a very nice-looking woman. We should go on a date.

LOIS: This date we're on is more than enough.

LLOYD: See, I knew we were on a date. Haven't lost all my marbles just yet. What's your favorite sexual position?

LOIS: Dad! Geez!

LLOYD: I like blow jobs. Nothing better on God's green earth. Do you like to give blow jobs?

LOIS: I'm not answering that.

LLOYD: But no teeth. I hate that!

LOIS: You needn't worry about it.

LLOYD: What's *your* favorite sexual position?

LOIS: If you ask my husband, he'd say it's me praying for it to be over. So I guess "praying" is the answer. . . . Why am I doing this?!

LLOYD: You look familiar. Are you a Visiting Angel?

LOIS: Hardly.

LLOYD: I don't like my Visiting Angel. She doesn't give blow jobs. I asked. I asked n nicely, too.

LOIS: You're ninety-three.

LLOYD: I still like blow jobs. That's the only thing in life left to look forward to.

LOIS: You're making it hard to feel sorry for you.

LLOYD: I don't want you to feel sorry for me. Why would I want that?

LOIS: I'm just trying to . . .

LLOYD: It's bad enough putting up with all your endless "patience" with me. "Patience" that I can't hear, "patience" that I forget everything, "patience" that I'm a mean old cuss that doesn't like anybody or anything. And never have and never will.

LOIS: That's because I love you.

LLOYD: You love me? Why would you love me?

LOIS: I just do.

LLOYD: Not true. I'm totally unlovable. I know that much about myself.

LOIS: Don't say that. It's not true.

LLOYD: It is true. I'm a shit. I've always been a shit. Now I'm just an old shit. I like being an old shit.

LOIS: Stop saying that!

LLOYD: I know – "language"! Old shits should never say they are. It spoils the goodbye tears.

LOIS: The goodbye tears?

LLOYD: You know very well what I mean. I don't have much time left, and we're supposed to bond and forgive and cry in each other's beer, and then I go to my grave and you feel that you did your daughterly duty. Amen.

LOIS: You don't have to make it sound any harsher than it is.

LLOYD: Sure I do. That's *what* I do!

LOIS: But I'm not going to let you.

LLOYD: Oh?

LOIS: You're not going to be cynical and hateful. Not this time!

LLOYD: How about bitter and nihilistic?

LOIS: Not at the end.

LLOYD: Do you know something I don't? Oh, I see. You're going to force a happy ending on me, on my life.

LOIS: If I have to.

LLOYD: I want to die as I have lived!

LOIS: You weren't always as mean as you like to think you were.

LLOYD: Was too!

LOIS: Was not! . . . You barked a lot, but your heart was good.

LLOYD: Are we talking about me or somebody else?

LOIS: I think you were hurt early in life, and it made you defend yourself.

LLOYD: Oh, please! Who isn't hurt early in life? And late in life?! And in the middle too!

LOIS: You were a good man. You were!

LLOYD: I was not. Life made me pay attention. I never had one completely happy moment in my entire life. And now that I am about to die, apparently, I'm not going to get all mushy and say I did. Just so *you'll* feel good.

LOIS: I love you, Dad.

LLOYD: Where's that fucking "server"? (Looks around.)

LOIS: I love you, Dad.

(Pause.)

LLOYD: I'm not going to say it.

LOIS: You don't have to say anything. I know how you feel.

LLOYD: I'm not going to say it. I'm not!

LOIS: I was always your favorite.

LLOYD: You were?

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LOIS: I could tell.

LLOYD: Then you knew more than I did. That's for sure!

LOIS: I love you, Dad.

(Pause.)

LLOYD: Thanks.

LOIS: I love you, Dad.

LLOYD: I never loved anybody more than I loved you. Happy now?

LOIS: That's not as clear as it might seem.

LLOYD: You got that right.

LOIS: I love you, Dad.

(Pause.)

LLOYD: I never loved anybody. Anybody! Is that clear enough?

LOIS: (with a big sigh) Okay, I tried. We'd better go. Let me help you up.

(She helps him up, with difficulty.)

LLOYD: Wait! Want some salt? I think there's some around her. (Swipes at the table, holds his hand out a little.) For your wounds?

(After hesitating, LOIS takes some of the salt.)

LLOYD: For God's sake can we go now? I don't feel that well. I think I need a nap. A long, long nap.

(She helps him walk off as the lights dim.)

LLOYD: She didn't make me say it. She didn't make me say it. Thank God Almighty, she didn't make me say it!

LIGHTS FADE

THE END