

## **Last of the Red Hot Lovers**

Play by Neil Simon

B My God, you really come right to the point, don't you?

E Look, did you ask me to come up here with the intentions of having an affair or not?

B Well, in a manner of speaking –

E Yes or no?

B (A pause) Yes.

E And that we've got to be out by five?

B I don't think I put it that bluntly.

E What time do we have to be out?

B (Shrugs) Five.

E (Has made her point) Alright?

B Look, I don't deny my intentions were of a romantic nature.

E Romantic? In your mother's clean apartment with two glasses from Bloomingdale's and your rubbers dripping on the newspaper?

B It was my belief that romance is inspired by the participants and not the accouterments.

E That's beautifully worded. You ought to use it on the Cherrystone Clams. What's the matter, is "having an affair" a dirty expression?

B Certainly not. "Having an affair." What's wrong with that?

E I mean people talk that way today, you know. Maybe not Buick drivers, but a lot of people I know.

B I admitted I was a creature of habit, not a prude.

E The hell you're not. I bet I could say three words right now that would turn your blue suit into a glen plaid.

B Look, Elaine, this is really silly . . .

E I'm gonna say it. I'm going to say a word now. You want to put your hands over your ears?

B Hey, come on, Elaine, I don't think this is funny . . .

E I'm saying it . . . Screw!

B (Looks at her) Asshole! I can do it too. I don't understand the point of this.

E The point is we've got a time problem and you're reading me fish poetry.

B I realize we have a time problem but there's also the business of human communication. Of talking to someone, getting to know someone . . . I'm sorry, maybe my whole approach to you is a little too old fashioned.

E (Throws up her hands) Okay. All right. I'm flexible. I'll try things your way . . . What did you want to see me about, Mr. Cashman?

B Ohh, Elaine, don't be like that.

E Well, maybe I just don't understand you. I've got a two-hundred-and-ten pound husband who'd break my arms and legs if he caught me up here and you're telling me about your sweet succulent childhood in Sheepshead Bay.

B I just thought you might be interested in knowing a little bit more about me. I mean until you walked in here ten minutes ago—

E Twenty minutes ago—

B Twenty minutes ago, I was just a restaurant owner who admired your fingers and you were an attractive woman who has a craving for fish.

E Look, you were the one who wrote down an address and apartment number on the back of a dollar-eighty check. Then I come here and find out we've got an hour and fifty minutes before your social-working mother with the high squeaky voice comes home to examine the puffed pillows. Now if we had two weeks in Nassau I'd gladly look at color pictures of your tonsils—

B I explained that. I thought a motel was a little sordid . . . And I would gladly have picked up your check but my cashier's very nosey and if she saw me paying for some woman—

E Forget it. You got a lot of courage. I was surprised you took a chance giving me an extra shrimp in the shrimp cocktail. (She finishes her drink)

B I don't know how we got started on this—

E It's cigarette nerves, pay no attention. (Indicating the Scotch) Is that bottle just going to sit up there or are you going to turn it into a lamp?

B You finished the other one already?

E I didn't finish it, it evaporated.

B Elaine . . . Can I ask you a very honest question?

E Yes, I've done this before.

B (Looks at her) That wasn't what I was going to ask.

E Alright, you got one for free. What were you going to ask?

B I'm still not over that answer. You mean you have—on other occasions--?

E I have on other occasions—in other places—with other men—done the unthinkable. If it'll help your vanity any, you are the first owner of a fish restaurant I've ever been with. In that respect, I'm still a virgin.

B I gather then you're not very happy with Mr. Navazio?

E What the hell kind of question is that, am I happy with Mr. Navazio?

B I'm sorry. It's none of my business.

E I didn't come up here to get reformed. It's bad enough you got me to quit smoking; leave my sex life alone.

B I drop the subject.

E What was your question?

B What question? Oh, before . . . Well, I was just wondering. I mean, I told you I thought you were attractive . . . I know why I asked you to come here. Did you come because . . .er . . . Isn't it funny? I find it hard to just come out and say it.

E Would you like me to wait in the kitchen?

B Am I appealing to you?

E Yes.

B I am?

E Now you appeal to me.

B What do you mean, now? Do you mean possibly not tomorrow?

E I mean possibly not in fifteen minutes. I have a short span of concentration.

B You mean with you it can change from day to day?

E By tonight I may hate filet of sole

B I'm not talking about seafood. I'm talking about people.

E Yes, with me it can change from day to day.

B Oh. Well, I find that disturbing.

E (An edge of sarcasm) Do you really?

B Yes, I do. I find it disturbing, and a little sad, that your attitude towards people is so detached.

E You'll get over it. Can I ask you a question?

B Yes?

E Are you writing some kind of research book? Is that really why you got me up here? Sexual Secrets of Seafood Sufferers? You got a little tape recorder going on in the candy dish?

(She leans over and lifts the top of the candy dish)

B I'm sorry, it's very hard keeping up with you. One minute we're having a nice conversation, and the next minute you turn on me.