

FARCE THING IN THE MORNING

a bed & breakfast sex comedy  
in one uninterrupted act

by

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## FARCE THING IN THE MORNING

Characters

**Annette:** Thirty-five. She has a pleasant, easy-going personality and a healthy sexual appetite.

**Ted:** Annette's husband, thirty-seven. He is kind but a little stuffy, and sexy when he's in the mood. He is prone to a slight nervousness.

**Melanie:** Mid-twenties. She is a gorgeous and hard-working bed & breakfast proprietor, who can be either brusque or charismatic -- depending on how things are going in the kitchen. She is obsessed with her establishment's complicated breakfast routine.

**Gerry:** Annette's brother, thirtyish. He is good-natured and worldly, if a little dense and obvious. He is a clunky but sometimes-successful "ladies' man".

Time: The Present

Place: A bed & breakfast in a small vacation town.

(The central first-floor room in a small "bed & breakfast" establishment, which also serves as the guests' breakfast room. At center is a table with chairs, set for breakfast. Upstage is a staircase leading to the bedrooms, and three other exits lead respectively to the kitchen, an inner parlor, and the outside. A small desk nests under the stairs.

(We discover Annette seated at the breakfast table, scrutinizing a sheet of paper. Ted bounds down the stairs, tying his necktie. They share a brief but heartfelt "good morning" kiss before he sits down next to her.)

TED

Good morning, sweetie.

ANNETTE

Good morning, darling.

TED

Did you check our voicemail?

ANNETTE

Yep.

TED

Did Bob call?

ANNETTE

No.

TED

How about Belinda?

ANNETTE

No. Nobody whose name begins with a B called.

TED

Good, good. That keeps it simple.

(He looks around.)

Any sign of Melanie the innkeeper?

ANNETTE

I saw her heading this way carrying some oranges -- but then she peeled off in another direction.

(She points to a plate of biscuits.)

These biscuits were on the table when I got here, but I think they must be from yesterday -- they're hard as rock.

TED

Hard as rock? From yesterday? That's impressive. In nature, rock formation takes millions of years.

ANNETTE

I did get a fax from the office. Melanie must have left it here before I came down.

(She holds up the mysterious document and looks at it again.)

It doesn't make any sense, though. Something about a "Robinson project". I'm not involved in any "Robinson Project". Why, none of my projects are the slightest *bit* Robinson.

TED

(He takes the fax from her.)

The reason it doesn't make sense to you is that it's for *me*, from *my* office.

(He smiles.)

Didn't you read the "Attention" line?

ANNETTE

(Airily)

Oh, I never pay any attention to the "Attention" line.

TED

(He puts down the fax and glances around again.)

I don't mind telling you, I'm a little bit nervous about this.

ANNETTE

There's no reason to be, darling.

TED

(Blushing, fidgeting with his necktie)

Yes there is. I've never done this before.

ANNETTE

Neither have I. And you don't see *me* twisting my necktie into an extra knot.

TED

You're not *wearing* a necktie.

ANNETTE

(Patiently)

That's not the point.

TED

Well, what is the point?

ANNETTE

The point is that *I'm* not wearing a necktie.

TED

Huh?

ANNETTE

(She laughs.)

Oh, dear. You see – your nervousness is contagious. What I meant to say was that the point is not to be afraid of new experiences.

TED

Of course. Only . . . .

ANNETTE

Only what?

TED

Only . . . there are experiences, and then there are *experiences*.

ANNETTE

(She smiles.)

You mean like last night?

TED

(He returns her smile and puts his hand over hers.)

Yes, that was really something, wasn't it?

ANNETTE

(Lusciously)

Um hmm.

TED

(With enthusiasm)

I mean, from the very first moment, all the way through.

ANNETTE

Oh, *yes*.

TED

*That's* the kind of experience I'd like to have more of.

ANNETTE

Oh, me too!

TED

Soon.

ANNETTE

Just say the word.

TED

Though it was certainly an expensive restaurant, so maybe we shouldn't go back there right away.

(Annette is surprised and deflated by the realization that Ted is talking about last night's dinner and not their after-dinner activities. Ted does not notice her reaction.)

TED

But *this*, now. This just seems like a bad idea.

ANNETTE

(Bored)

How so?

TED

Well, I like *hotels*. You give them some money, they loan you a key, and it's as simple as that.

ANNETTE

(Her characteristically-cheerful mood has returned.)

But, Ted, this is just like a hotel. A small *hotel*.

TED

Oh no, Annette. *This*  
(He looks around suspiciously)  
is a *bed & breakfast*.

ANNETTE

So what makes that frightening?

TED

The ampersand. Now, I'm good with the bed part . . . .

ANNETTE

(To the audience)

I'll say!

TED

But it's this "& breakfast" thing that I'm wary of.

ANNETTE

But *why*?

TED

Look, Annette – you weren't there when I checked us in last night.

ANNETTE

Right. I was waiting with the car.

TED

Exactly. So you didn't hear the way our host, Melanie -- who is otherwise, I admit, a distinctly attractive young woman -- went on and on about the breakfast. She seemed positively *obsessed* with it.

ANNETTE

Come now. You must be exaggerating.

TED

I stepped inside, and the first thing she did was hand me a form to fill out.

ANNETTE

The registration form. It's standard.

TED

Yes, the registration form is standard. Only this wasn't a registration form, nor was it what I would describe as "standard". *This* was a two-page document, with four carbons, on which I was required to supply:

- 1) The precise time at which I would like my breakfast on each of the three mornings of our stay.
- 2) The precise time (if different) at which *you* would like *your* breakfast on each of the three mornings of our stay.
- 3) Check marks beside not more than 4 of the 35 options of things we could have for these breakfasts . . . .

ANNETTE

I think it's nice of them to give us some options.

TED

. . . . That was from Column A. Then I was requested to place check marks beside not more than 2 of the 12 options of additional breakfast items we could select from Column B.

ANNETTE

But –

TED

I was given two different-colored pens to distinguish your selections (where different) from my own.

ANNETTE

Okay. I admit that's a little silly, but –

TED

You bet it's silly! Those colored pens will be *indistinguishable* on the carbons. Anyway, that was Page One.

ANNETTE

Goodness! What was on Page Two?

TED

The essay questions. I think I did pretty well on those, actually. By the way, here is your copy of the document,

(He hands it to her)

which I would advise you to keep close at hand for reference. As you will note, you get the blue copy. I have the goldenrod.

ANNETTE

(Lewdly)

You certainly do.

(She looks at the form.)

It's quite a breakfast menu! Look -- you can even get shrimp salad on a bed of shredded lettuce.

TED

Never mind the shred of bedded lettuce. I'm terrified that I'm going to fail this multiple-choice breakfast test somehow, and that our host will laugh us out of town.

ANNETTE

But we *are* out of town.

TED

(He wags a finger didactically.)

Only with respect to where we came from. From *Melanie's* point of view, we're *in* town -- and thus perfectly eligible for being laughed back out.

ANNETTE

I still think you're making a big deal out of nothing. Perhaps Melanie's breakfast paperwork is a little bureaucratic, and maybe she's a bit overenthusiastic . . . .

TED

The word is "*obsessive*".

ANNETTE

(She is looking again at the form.)

Oooh! It says you can even have your breakfast in bed, if you arrange it in advance. Maybe tomorrow we could --

TED

Ha! No thank you.

ANNETTE

(She is a little disappointed.)

Don't you like that idea?

TED

I'm sorry, but I cannot have breakfast in bed at a bed & breakfast.

ANNETTE

But the owner says right here on her form that you *can*.

TED

What does she know!

ANNETTE

But it's *her* bed & breakfast.

TED

It may be her bed, from a property-ownership standpoint; but I think I'm justified in saying that it's *my* breakfast. And I'm not having it in bed.

ANNETTE

I think it would be fun.

(She runs her hand sensuously down his arm.)

*Anything* can happen when you have breakfast in bed.

TED

That's exactly what I'm afraid of.

ANNETTE

(She is surprised and baffled by Ted's comment.)

*What?*

TED

Melanie's breakfast is already out of control, and I don't want it taking control of our bedroom. Why, you could go to plunk your head down on the pillow, and instead you might find yourself plunking Melanie's pancakes!

ANNETTE

(Patiently)

Ted, darling, you're not making any sense.

TED

Speaking for myself, I did not come all this way just to plunk pancakes. If my goal for this vacation had been to plunk someone's pancakes, then we could have just stayed at home, as far as I'm concerned.

ANNETTE

Now you tell me.

(Melanie enters from the parlor, carrying a bowl of oranges.)

ANNETTE

(Pleasantly)

Good morning!

TED

(Warily)

G'morning.

MELANIE

(She approaches the table and puts down the bowl of oranges.)

Forms, please.

(They turn in their forms. Melanie looks them over.)

MELANIE

Oh, dear.

TED

(Nervously)

What's the matter?

MELANIE

(Annoyed)

I've given you the old form.

(She tears them up, as Ted makes an indignant noise and looks helplessly at Annette.)

MELANIE

I thought I'd thrown all of those away. I'll have to bring you new ones.

(She picks up the oranges and exits to the kitchen.)

TED

*Now* do you see what I mean?

ANNETTE

Really, darling, you can't expect her to use the *old* forms.

(Melanie re-enters, sans oranges, and hands them the new breakfast forms.)

MELANIE

Remember, I'll need the name of your server at the top.

TED  
(He looks around.)

Our server?

MELANIE  
Me! Melanie. That's "M" as in Mary, "E" as in --

ANNETTE  
(Politely)  
That's okay. I think we've got it.

MELANIE  
Oh, and we're out of marmalade.

TED  
That's fine with me. I've never liked marmalade. I always hope it will taste like apricot preserves, and, with remarkable consistency, it never does.

MELANIE  
(She is unmoved by his wit.)  
Yeah, yeah.  
(Indicating the forms, she addresses Ted in particular.)  
Get to it, will you? The oatmeal is going to start burning.

TED  
I have an idea. Why don't you just bring us some oatmeal. Two nice, carbonless bowls of oatmeal. We're real oatmeal people, you know.

MELANIE  
(Unimpressed)  
Is that form filled out yet?

TED  
(Persisting, he assumes a forced jollity.)  
Back home, our friends call us "The Nutty Oats".

ANNETTE  
(To Ted)  
Who calls us "The Nutty Oats"?

MELANIE  
I have to stir the oatmeal. You work on those forms.

TED  
Okay, okay. Just don't start "M-as-in-Marying" again, or I'm going to leave.  
(Melanie gives a little pout, then exits to the kitchen.)

TED

I can't believe your brother brought us here. He raves about this place!

ANNETTE

Gerry raves about *everything* in any town in which he scores.

TED

What?

ANNETTE

Sure. When he's on vacation, if he gets "lucky", then all we hear about is how charming the area is, how lovely the people are, how special the hotel is . . . . And last time he was in these parts, it seems he had a particularly nice one-night stand with one of the local women. And so here we are.

TED

I see. Why didn't you tell me that before?

ANNETTE

Well, just because Gerry got laid in this locale -- and consequently raves about it -- doesn't mean this *isn't* a nice hotel.

TED

Bed & breakfast.

ANNETTE

Just as it doesn't mean this isn't a very nice town -- which it obviously is.

TED

True. It just means that the local women have no taste.

ANNETTE

Gerry is considered a very alluring guy.

TED

By women with no taste.

ANNETTE

(Conceding the point)

Women with no taste have needs, too, you know.

TED

Yes, I imagine they do. How convenient that so much of contemporary culture is devoted specifically to meeting the needs of people with no taste.

ANNETTE

(She laughs indulgently.)

You're awfully pompous first thing in the morning. You usually save that stuff for after lunch.

TED

(He shrugs.)

I guess there's something about filling out multi-page breakfast forms that brings out the George Bernard Shaw in me.

ANNETTE

Oh! The forms.

(They get busy.)

TED

(Putting down his pencil)

Look. I've done this once already. How about if you fill them out this time? After all, you know what I like.

ANNETTE

(Provocatively)

Oh, baby.

TED

(He rises.)

I'll go get a newspaper, and by the time I return, all these horrible carbons will be gone.

(He closes his eyes briefly, then exits to the outside.)

(Annette applies herself to the forms. Gerry comes down the stairs.)

GERRY

Hey there, Sis!

(He walks over to the table but remains standing.)

I'm surprised to see you up so early. Last night you guys said you'd be *late* for breakfast.

ANNETTE

Ted and I always try to be early for being late. No sense leaving one's lateness for the last minute, if you can get a head start on it.

GERRY

Well, I was even earlier. I've already been out for a run. By the way, you'll never guess who else is staying here.

ANNETTE

Who?

GERRY

That old friend of yours and Ted's, Jenny Mills. I saw her out there on the porch when I came back from my two-miler. She said she was on her way to see the Town Square.

(Confidentially)

It's really just a rhombus, but they like to call it the Town Square.

ANNETTE

Jenny Mills! She's staying *here*? But that's terrible.

GERRY

Why?

(He looks at their surroundings.)

Don't you think this is a nice inn?

ANNETTE

Bed & breakfast.

(She gestures to a vacant chair.)

Gerry, sit down.

GERRY

Okay.

(He sits.)

ANNETTE

You know that Ted and I have been together for ten years, right?

GERRY

Sure.

ANNETTE

And you know how much we love each other, right?

GERRY

Of course we do. You're my only sister, after all.

ANNETTE

Not *us*. Ted and I.

GERRY

Oh. Right. Of course. Ted and you.

ANNETTE

I'm going to tell you something that almost nobody knows.

GERRY

Why?

ANNETTE

Because I want you to understand.

GERRY

I understand, I understand.

ANNETTE

But I haven't even told you yet.

GERRY

That's okay. I understand anyway. I'm a very understanding guy. Listen, I've got to go. I – uh – need to have a word with that hot chick Melanie, if you know what I mean.

ANNETTE

Of course I know what you mean. A three-year-old would know what you mean. But that can wait. She's busy with breakfast, anyhow.

GERRY

All right, all right. So what did you want to tell me?

ANNETTE

(With a sense of drama)

Jenny Mills is the only other person that Ted has slept with since he and I have been together.

GERRY

What?

ANNETTE

Ted and Jenny had a pretty intense relationship back in college, before he and I met.

GERRY

(He is surprised.)

Really? I had no idea.

ANNETTE

And though they split up, for a lot of mutually-agreed good reasons, they still have a sexual chemistry that neither of them can seem to resist. Since we've been married, Ted has run into her exactly three times, and he's slept with her exactly three times.

GERRY

The same three times?

ANNETTE

(She ignores Gerry's stupid question.)

Actually, it was four times, if you count their double-header last summer.

GERRY

Double-header? Is that like what the French call a --

ANNETTE

I came home and found them in the kitchen, of all places. Ted had his pants off, and Jenny was completely naked, except for a bay leaf. What do you think of that?

GERRY

Well, I think a little bit of oregano gives pretty much the same effect, and it's a lot cheaper.

ANNETTE

(She is trying to remain patient with him.)

I didn't mean what do you think of bay leaves. I meant what do you think of the whole story I just told you?

GERRY

It's . . .

(He is unsure what to say, and his eyes wander to the biscuits.)

. . . inedible.

ANNETTE

What?

GERRY

Er – *incredible*. It's incredible.

ANNETTE

(Contemplatively)

I've always felt that part of why Ted is so attracted to Jenny is that she looks like a Muppet.

GERRY

(Unconvinced)

She does?

ANNETTE

Come, come. Don't think that just because I'm your older sister and I've been married for almost a decade, that I can't recognize when a woman looks like a Muppet.

GERRY

I wouldn't dream of thinking that.

(Awkwardly)

Here, have a biscuit.

ANNETTE

(Disregarding the biscuit)

To Ted's credit, he's never made any attempt to conceal from me what's happened. He doesn't seek her out, but he acknowledges that whenever they intersect – well, they *intersect*.

GERRY

"Intersect", nothing -- it sounds like they go right into gridlock.

ANNETTE

We have a very strong relationship . . .

GERRY

(He hugs her.)

We sure do, Sis.

ANNETTE

(Breaking free of his embrace)

I was *talking* about me and Ted. Like I was saying, we have a very strong relationship, and a relationship like that can weather this sort of thing. But, nevertheless, I consider it my job to try to make sure, whenever possible, that Ted and Jenny Mills do *not* intersect. Especially during a romantic getaway that I've been planning for months.

GERRY

Naturally. After all, you wouldn't want your getaway to -- uh -- *get away* from you.

(Something suddenly occurs to him.)

Hey -- if this was supposed to be a "romantic getaway", then why the heck did you invite *me* along?

ANNETTE

For contrast.

(Gerry is not sure whether to take this as a compliment.)

ANNETTE

With Ted and Jenny under the same roof, I've got quite a challenge here. And it's not clear to me what to do.

GERRY

It's perfectly clear to *me*. You just need to keep him from running into her.

ANNETTE

Of course. That part is clear enough. But I don't see *how*. This is a very small hotel --

GERRY

Bed & breakfast.

ANNETTE

And I'm not clear on what exactly I can do to prevent their meeting. *That's* what's not clear. Are you clear now on what's unclear?

GERRY

Yes. But try to look on the bright side. You know what they say: "An optimist can't see the forest for the trees." No, wait, that's not right. "A pessimist leaves no stone unturned"? Sorry, I always get these things mixed up. Let's see . . . uh . . . something about a glass of water, maybe? Or is that for ventriloquism?

ANNETTE

(Ignoring Gerry's ramblings)

What to do . . . . It's a toughie.

GERRY

(With sudden inspiration)

Maybe, maybe not.

ANNETTE

What do you mean?

GERRY

Well, I was just thinking . . . how old is Ted these days?

ANNETTE

Which days?

GERRY

Any of them.

ANNETTE

Ted is the same age seven days a week. He's very consistent that way.

GERRY

And that age is . . . ?

ANNETTE

37.

GERRY

Yeah, that's about right.

ANNETTE

Right? For what?

GERRY

Right for . . . moderation.

ANNETTE

What do you mean?

GERRY

Most of the guys I know who are in their late thirties are getting to the point where they don't necessarily have the – ahem – stamina they did when they were 22.

ANNETTE

(She sighs.)

Yes, I know. Men are so different from women, aren't they?

GERRY

Yeah, it's like they're two different genders.

ANNETTE

But I don't see what that has to do with Ted and Jenny and me.

GERRY

That's just it. Think of Ted and Jenny. Think of Ted and you. That's a lot of activity. Maybe too much activity for old Ted, you know?

ANNETTE

Oh!

GERRY

Let's say, for instance, that Ted is in bed with Jenny.

ANNETTE

No, let's not say that. I don't like the sound of that.

GERRY

Well then, let's say that Ted is in bed with you.

ANNETTE

Now you're talking.

GERRY

After you're finished with him, he may not have what it takes to get it on with anyone else. Guys his age have a limited supply. And when it's "offer only good while supplies last," then we all know it's –

ANNETTE

First come, first served!

(They laugh.)

GERRY

Okay, I'm gonna get going -- if we're done, that is.

ANNETTE

Yes, yes. You've been very helpful, Gerry. See you later.

(Gerry exits to the outside.)

ANNETTE

Gerry hit the nail on the head. If I can just get Ted into bed with me as soon as possible, I can wear him out before he ever sets eyes on Jenny. It's a tough assignment, but I'm going to love every minute of it.

(She giggles.)

Now, I need a strategy . . . .

(Melanie enters.)

ANNETTE

(To the audience)

Of course! *Breakfast*. Breakfast in *bed*. What a simple, perfect way to get Ted right back under the covers where I want him. I know he said he didn't like the idea, but *I'll* soon show him how much fun breakfast in bed can be -- with or without the breakfast.

MELANIE

(She gestures at the forms on the table.)

Aren't you done yet, sweetie?

ANNETTE

How did you know my name was Sweetie?

MELANIE

My oatmeal won't wait forever, you know.

ANNETTE

I have a question.

MELANIE

How nice. I have a rare postage stamp that my uncle gave me.

ANNETTE

I know it's short notice, but would you be able to serve us our breakfast in bed this morning?

MELANIE

Which breakfast?

ANNETTE

Any breakfast.

MELANIE

Look, sweetie -- if you want me to answer your question, I'm going to need to visualize a *specific* breakfast.

ANNETTE

All right, then . . . .

(She consults the form.)

Could you serve us toast, coffee, oatmeal and waffles in bed?

MELANIE

Waffles?

ANNETTE

Yes.

MELANIE

With syrup?

ANNETTE

Yes.

MELANIE

In bed?

ANNETTE

Exactly.

MELANIE

I don't serve syrup in bed.

(Beat.)

You can bring your own if you want. That's what some of the couples do.

ANNETTE

I'll tell you what. Forget the waffles.

MELANIE

If you like, I can make a substitution. We have Flemish sandcakes.

ANNETTE

What are "Flemish sandcakes"?

MELANIE

We're not sure.

ANNETTE

That's all right. Never mind the waffles, and never mind the -- er -- Flemish sandcakes. Do you think you could serve the *rest* of what you're visualizing in bed?

MELANIE

I'll try.

ANNETTE

Fine. We'll be waiting.

(Annette rises from the table and exits up the stairs, as Melanie exits to the kitchen with the breakfast forms.)

(Ted enters from outside, carrying a newspaper.)

TED

Annette?

(He looks around, then deposits the newspaper on the table, just as Melanie re-enters. Ted jumps nervously when he turns and suddenly sees her.)

TED

Oh. Hello.

MELANIE

(To the audience)

Whoo! Things are finally under control in the kitchen. Now I feel much more relaxed.

(To Ted, with a smile)

I'll be up in your bedroom in just a few minutes.

(Ted looks her over with a mixture of relish and surprise, then gives a deadpan look to the audience before he addresses her.)

TED

(To Melanie)

My bedroom?

MELANIE

(With a laugh)

Well, obviously. If you want to get it in bed, that's where I need to go, isn't it?

TED

(Fumbling with his necktie, he stammers deliriously.)

Get it . . . in . . . b-bed?

MELANIE

(She is becoming a little impatient with him.)

I hope you're not going to ask me to change things again.

TED

Change?

(He looks over her outfit.)

Er . . . no, what you've got on is fine. Only . . . .

MELANIE

(She naturally thinks he's referring to the breakfast she is cooking, not to her clothing. She smiles again.)

Good. I'll see you up there.

TED

But . . . that is . . . my wife . . . .

MELANIE

It's what your wife *wants*. She told me just five minutes ago.

(She wags a forefinger at him, playfully.)

You people need to get your signals straight.

(She gives a short laugh as she exits to the kitchen.)

TED

What my wife wants? All right . . . . I guess it's okay then . . . . *Melanie's* certainly all in favor of it.

(A bit agitated, he begins to pace the room. Then he stops and faces the audience.)

I wonder if there's a form I need to fill out for *this*.

(Annette enters from upstairs.)

ANNETTE

Oh, good. You're back. Did you find a newspaper?

(Ted points to the paper that he has left on the table.)

ANNETTE

(She attempts to appear casual as she asks the question that's on her mind.)

Run into anyone you know?

TED

Here? No. Of course not.

ANNETTE

(She is relieved.)

Excellent.

TED

Why is that excellent?

ANNETTE

Er . . . I just meant what's the point of going away, if you're going to see all the same people you see at home.

TED

You may recall that I made the same argument when you suggested we take this vacation with your brother.

(Annette makes a face.)

TED

(Torn between elation and confusion, he's still not sure he can believe what he's heard from Melanie. He clears his throat.)

Ahem . . . Melanie was just here.

(Gingerly)

She says she'll be upstairs in a few minutes.

ANNETTE

Perfect. You don't mind?

TED

(He begins to relax and really warm to the prospect.)

Mind? Heh heh. No, I think I can safely say that I don't mind.

(Tenderly)

But -- darling . . . are you sure this is what *you* want?

ANNETTE

Absolutely.

TED

(His nervousness has now given way entirely to enthusiasm.)

It's a very generous thing for you to do for me!

ANNETTE

I'm so glad you feel that way. I *hoped* you might like the idea, once you got used to it.

TED

(Modestly)

Well, you know, I try to be agreeable.

ANNETTE

But I have to confess. It's really on my own account that I asked her to come up there.

TED

*Your* account?

ANNETTE

Yes. It's the kind of experience I've always wanted to try.

TED

You mean --

ANNETTE

Goodness! We'd better get up there. No point in Melanie delivering what she has to offer to an empty room, is there?

TED

No, of course not.

(Delicately, his head swimming from the quickly-changing scenarios)

But -- if it's on your own account, then . . . are you sure you want *me* to be there?

ANNETTE

(She laughs cheerfully.)

What a question! I never would have planned this for me to do by myself. Come on now, let's go.

(She goes upstairs, believing Ted to be right behind her.)

TED

(To the audience)

Wow -- the three of us! If that's what she wants, I'm certainly game. I only wish she'd told me about this fantasy a little sooner. I mean, Melanie's pretty sexy, but the desk clerk at our hotel in Cape May last summer -- now she was *really* hot. But maybe that one turned Annette down.

(Melanie enters.)

MELANIE

(With the edge back in her voice.)

I hope you folks aren't getting impatient.

TED

(Suavely)

No, no. Eager, of course -- but not impatient.

MELANIE

I'm afraid you're going to have to wait another ten or fifteen minutes for me. The oatmeal burned.

TED

Oh, I see. And you probably have to deal with that before joining us upstairs, I imagine.

MELANIE

Well, duh.

TED

(To the audience)

I get it. It's business before pleasure when you run a b&b.

(To Melanie)

Okay. Fine. So we shouldn't start without you, eh?

(He laughs suggestively.)

MELANIE

(She gives him a funny look.)

Start without me?

(She shrugs.)

Hey, if you have something else you can nibble on in the meantime, go ahead.

(She exits to the kitchen.)

(Annette comes down the stairs.)

ANNETTE

Hey, babe, what's holding you up?

TED

Oh -- it's Melanie.

ANNETTE

Melanie's holding you? Up?

TED

She's not quite ready. But she said we could start without her if we wanted.

ANNETTE

(Confused)

Start without her? That's silly, darling.

(To the audience)

Wait a second -- the sooner he's safely in bed, the better.

(To Ted)

Actually, that's a great idea. Why don't you go up and get into bed right now, and start to get in the mood . . . for breakfast.

TED

Breakfast? You weren't still planning to *eat*, were you?

ANNETTE

Huh? Of course I was.

TED

Okay. If you're hungry, go ahead. Speaking for myself, now that there's another gorgeous woman heading into our bedroom to get undressed,

(He nudges her salaciously with his elbow)

my mind is definitely not on food.

ANNETTE

(To the audience.)

Oh no! He's seen Jenny Mills here, and they've already arranged a rendezvous in our bedroom! Wow, my Ted works fast when he's motivated. And always so honest. I guess *I'll* just have to work faster -- and keep him *out* of our room, since Jenny's obviously on her way there right now.

TED

You get your breakfast then. I'll be upstairs.

(He turns toward the stairs.)

ANNETTE

(She grabs him by the elbow.)

No!

TED

Huh?

ANNETTE

Not upstairs. Stay here. Please. I need you to . . . I need you to -- uh -- watch me eat my breakfast.

TED

Watch you . . . eat . . . your breakfast?

ANNETTE

Yes. You see . . . you were right, after all. All those forms and carbons, and Melanie's *obsession* with her breakfast. It *is* unnerving, isn't it! I had a delayed reaction, but it's hitting me very strongly now. I was so wrong to laugh it off before. I owe you an apology.

TED

Oh, that's all right. But --

ANNETTE

(She imitates Ted's demeanor from earlier.)

I'm so nervous! She's going to bring the breakfast out any minute, and I -- I'm not sure I can eat it correctly. What if she serves Flemish sandcakes? What if she *hovers over me*? Please stay. If *you're* watching, I'm sure I can manage to do it right.

TED

(He is surprised by Annette's sudden jitters but is eager to take care of her.)

Of course, darling.

ANNETTE

(She looks around the room with feigned trepidation.)  
 And this room. So *public*. I don't think I can undertake this intimidating breakfast in such a public place. Let's . . . let's see if there's another little room down here where we can be alone.

TED

Another room?

ANNETTE

Just a quiet little room with a breakfast bed -- er, breakfast *table* we can use. Even just a small room, where you and I might have to squish together . . . .

(She grabs him and guides him through the door to the parlor. As she is about to follow him in, she sees Gerry enter from outside.)

ANNETTE

(To Gerry)

Psst! I've no time to lose! I've just found out that Jenny will be waiting for him in our bedroom any minute now!

(Gerry nods sagely. Annette disappears into the parlor.)

(Melanie enters, with a full breakfast for two on a tray. Gerry is obviously delighted to see her. Melanie does not notice him and is about to head up the stairs.)

GERRY

Excuse me.

MELANIE

(She sighs impatiently, sets down her tray, and answers him brusquely.)

Yes?

GERRY

(Suavely)

I've been looking all over for you.

MELANIE

You didn't look in the kitchen.

GERRY

I didn't want to intrude.

MELANIE

Good.

(She picks up the tray and starts upstairs again.)

GERRY

But now that I've found you . . . .

MELANIE

(She puts the tray down and gives a sigh of resignation.)

Yes?

GERRY

I was hoping I could see you tonight.

MELANIE

(To the audience.)

Here we go again. Being gorgeous is a full-time job.

(To Gerry)

You're seeing me now. That will have to suffice.

GERRY

(To the audience)

That sounds like a brush-off. Oh well, I guess maybe this town isn't going to get good ratings this time around.

MELANIE

(To the audience)

Did he say something about "ratings"? Oh! He must be from one of the big travel guides! I thought he was trying to hit on me, but now I understand. He's scouting my b&b for the travel guide he's writing, and *that's* why he's made this return visit. And, obviously, the reason he wants to see me tonight is so that he can interview me for his write-up. This is the break I've been waiting for!

(To Gerry, with effusive charm and cordiality)

I'm sorry . . . did you say *tonight*?

GERRY

Yeah, but that's okay, if you don't . . . .

MELANIE

I had my days mixed up. Tonight would be *perfect*.

GERRY

It *would*?

(Melanie nods encouragingly.)

GERRY

Hey, that's swell! Where should we go?

MELANIE

Go? We'll do it right here at my place, of course. I'll give you everything you need tonight, and in the morning I'll give you a *special* breakfast.

GERRY

(To the audience)

Whoo-hoo!

(To Melanie)

Great! My breath is bated.

MELANIE

Well, you did have the onion turnovers this morning. You'll find some mints in that little desk.

(She points to the desk under the stairs.)

See you later!

(She winks at him and exits up the stairs with her tray.)

(Ted emerges, disheveled, from the parlor, blowing kisses to Annette, who remains out of sight in the off-stage room. He sees Gerry and approaches him in a conspiratorial manner.)

TED

Gerry, I've got a problem. Can I speak to you confidentially?

GERRY

Sure. Sit down?

(He gestures to one of the chairs.)

TED

I'd better. I'm tired. *Very* tired.

(They sit at the table.)

GERRY

Why so tired first thing in the morning?

TED

You see, Annette and I were alone in that parlor just now, and -- uh -- she was feeling kind of -- well, you know -- and we sort of ended up . . .

GERRY

I get the picture.

(To the audience, with a wink and a self-satisfied air)

Sis obviously took my advice.

(To Ted)

And so now you're *tired*, eh?

TED

*Very* tired.

GERRY

(Knowingly)

Better take it easy the rest of the day.

TED

That's the problem. You see -- don't tell Annette I told you -- but she's arranged for a little *threesome* upstairs . . .

GERRY

(Incredulous)

She has?

TED

. . . with the two of us and Melanie. In just a few minutes.

GERRY

(This intrigues him.)

Melanie!

(With pleasure, to the audience)

Wow -- she *is* hot stuff.

TED

And, frankly, I'm not sure I'm up to it.

(He sighs.)

Annette's got her heart set on this . . .

GERRY

(He is still having a little trouble assimilating this.)

She does?

TED

. . . and I don't want to disappoint her. And I *won't* disappoint her. I'm looking forward to it too, naturally. But I need a little more time. So I was hoping that you could do something to stall Melanie. You know, give her some kind of routine emergency that will keep her occupied for a couple of hours.

(Showing off his recently-acquired knowledge)

It's business before pleasure for these bed & breakfast people.

GERRY

Okay. But what should I tell her?

TED

Anything. Tell her your toilet is clogged.

GERRY

A clogged toilet won't delay her for a couple of hours. Especially if it isn't really clogged.

TED

Then tell her your toilet is *missing*. Use your imagination.

(Annette enters, disheveled and content.)

TED

(To Gerry, sotto voce)

I know I can count on you.

(He rises and addresses Annette.)

So . . . uh . . . still no breakfast, eh?

ANNETTE

No, but that's okay. Now I'm ready to go back to bed.

TED

(With a nervous chuckle)

Yes, I know darling, but you may have to be patient. I have the feeling that *Melanie*

(He gives Gerry a meaningful look)

may be occupied at the moment.

ANNETTE

That's what I mean. While we're waiting for her, I thought I'd take a little nap.

TED

(He is relieved.)

A nap? Oh, that's fine then. We'll go upstairs.

ANNETTE

(Coming to life)

No! We can't!

TED

Of course we can. *Melanie* can find us there just as easily as here.

ANNETTE

(Fumbling for an excuse)

No . . . let's . . . go upstairs later. That way we can -- we can -- go up later. As opposed to going up now. Which would mean we'd have to . . . go up now.

TED

But why don't you want to go up now?

ANNETTE

Because . . .

(Desperately)

Because breakfast will get cold! Look, we can nap in the parlor.

TED

(He shrugs.)

Why not. We've done just about everything else in there.

(Annette pulls him back into the parlor.)

(Melanie returns from upstairs, with the full breakfast still on her tray.)

MELANIE

(To herself)

How strange. There was no one up there. What do they think I'm running here, an egg and spoon race?

GERRY

(Rising from the table)

Excuse me.

MELANIE

(Solicitously)

Yes?

GERRY

I'm sorry to bother you, but there's -- er -- a slight -- uh -- problem in my room.

MELANIE

(To the audience.)

Oh no! I forgot -- I never finished fixing the radiator in that room! The room was unoccupied, the weather turned warm, I got busy . . . and I guess I just forgot all about it. Shit! Now the nights have been a little chilly again, and I've gone and put someone in that room. And not just anyone -- a travel guide writer!

(To Gerry)

I am *so* sorry. I'll put you in a different room right away.

GERRY

(Eager to avoid causing too much trouble)

No no -- I don't want another room. I like the one I have, it's just that -- uh --

MELANIE

Then of course you can stay where you are. I want to do whatever makes you happy.

(Gerry smiles at the audience.)

MELANIE

Rest assured that I will personally see to it that your bedroom is warm tonight.  
(She exits to the kitchen.)

GERRY

(To the audience)

Whoo-hoo!

(Ted strides in briskly from the parlor. He nods to Gerry and heads for the stairs. Annette runs in after him.)

ANNETTE

Please! Gerry! Stop him! Don't let him go upstairs!

TED

(He stops and turns around.)

But why shouldn't I go upstairs, darling? I was just going to get a book to read while you were napping.

ANNETTE

Yes . . . but . . . um . . . now I'm awake, you see. So you don't need your book, do you.

(She giggles idiotically.)

TED

But I *want* my book.

ANNETTE

Then Gerry can get you your book.

(To Gerry)

Gerry, would you please go upstairs and get Ted's book?

GERRY

Sure, no problem.

(Annette approaches Gerry and hands him her room key.)

ANNETTE

(To Ted)

You see?

(She gestures proudly toward her little brother.)

*Gerry's* going to get you your book. And to think, you didn't want to vacation with him.

(Gerry is a little miffed by this, and he lets the audience see it.)

TED

But I'm not even sure exactly where the book is. He'd have to go pawing through three suitcases.

ANNETTE

(Blurting -- she is not angry, just frantic)

Better *he* be up there with his paws all over our baggage than *you* be up there with your paws all over Jenny Mills' baggage.

TED

Jenny Mills? What's Jenny Mills got to do with it?

ANNETTE

(She is now resigned to putting her cards on the table.)  
Everything. If she weren't staying at this hotel --

GERRY

Bed & breakfast.

ANNETTE

-- then I wouldn't be acting like such an idiot.

TED

(Tenderly)

Actually, I thought the way you were acting was sort of cute. Weird, but cute. But I still don't understand.

(He looks around.)

Jenny Mills is *here*?

GERRY

(He suddenly realizes that he made a slight error.)

Oh, did I say "Jenny Mills"? Sorry -- not Jenny Mills. Jenny *Wells*.

ANNETTE

Jenny *Wells*?

TED

That annoying lady with the pigtails who used to live next door to us before we were married? Sheesh! I was so glad when she finally moved away.

(Laughing)

Annette, remember how she used to knock on the door at 8:00 on Sunday mornings to ask if she could borrow the funnies?

ANNETTE

(She joins in his laughter and touches his arm affectionately.)

Ugh -- yes! And the paper wasn't even *delivered* until 9.

GERRY

(Earnestly)

Yeah, that's the one. The lady with the pigtails. I'd forgotten she was your neighbor -- I just remembered meeting her at your house one time. Fortunately, I have an excellent memory for names.

(Annette glares at him.)

GERRY

(Sheepishly)

Sometimes.

TED

Well, we'll certainly do our best to avoid ol' Jenny while we're here.

GERRY

(Helpfully, holding up the key)

Do you want me to go up and see if she's in your bedroom?

ANNETTE

Thanks, Gerry, but I don't think that's necessary.

GERRY

(Seriously)

Well, then I'll go up and make sure she isn't in *my* bedroom. I'm not done with the funnies yet.

(He exits up the stairs.)

TED

(With another little chuckle and a hint of self-consciousness)

But too bad it *wasn't* Jenny Mills. I wouldn't mind seeing her again sometime, heh heh.

ANNETTE

(Ironically)

Yeah, too bad. Heh heh.

(She yanks him by the arm and starts to lead him purposefully up the stairs.)

(They come to a halt as Ted has a thought.)

TED

Oh! Let's not forget the arrangements we've made with Melanie.

(Cheerfully, with a glance at his watch)

I think she'll probably be coming up to our room in an hour or so.

ANNETTE

(With a casual, dismissive gesture)

Oh, let's forget about that. It's nearly lunchtime.

(Ted nods but looks puzzled -- and a little disappointed.)

ANNETTE

Maybe tomorrow.

(Ted's eyes brighten as he looks significantly at the audience for a moment. Then Annette yanks him up the stairs.)

(The End)