

GIRLFRIENDS

CHARACTERS: SADIE and Bess, both about 80

SETTING: An assisted living facility.

SADIE: Thank you all so much for coming and goodnight. That's what he said, just like that. Not even a peck on the cheek.

BESS: Men!

SADIE: I don't understand why he said *all*—thank you *all* so much for coming. Like we were *all* there – me and you and Rose and even old Madeline. There, on our date. Funny.

BESS: Maybe he needs his glasses adjusted.

SADIE: Thank you all so much for coming and goodnight. Who does he think he is? Milton Berle?

BESS: No goodnight kiss? He must not have liked you. I heard he favors Kate, in 3B.

SADIE: Thank you all so much for coming—what could it mean?

BESS: Agh, he's old! You expect him to make sense? Forget it! There's plenty more fish in the sea.

SADIE: I want to make love again.

BESS: You didn't even get a kiss.

SADIE: Never mind him. I want someone handsome, debonair, romantic. To hold me in his arms, dance me across the floor –

BESS: No wheelchair, no walker? That eliminates most of 'em in this place.

SADIE: You know, Bess. Like before.

BESS: We were young then. I'm not sure I could dance anymore, with my arthritis.

SADIE (*stands, holds her arms open*): Try me. Come on. Stand up. What can it hurt? Listen for the music. (*They hold each other, formally at first, and begin to waltz. Music comes up, and they relax into it.*) There, that's nice, isn't it?

BESS: Feels good.

SADIE: Yes.

BESS: What is love, anyway? A peck on the cheek and you're doin' their laundry.

SADIE: I loved my husband very much, God rest his soul.

BESS: At our age, who needs it?

SADIE: Dancing with you feels like love.

(*Music stops. Sadie and Bess let go of one another but still stand close.*)

BESS: When I was a girl, the headmistress of my school was a nun, and all the girls made fun of her because she had a mustache. I prayed before bed each night that I wouldn't get old and become a spinster with a mustache like her. Now, I wish I had said a different prayer.

SADIE: I went with Sam to feel less alone. But it didn't help.

BESS: He didn't even kiss you goodnight. Rotten fella!

SADIE: I heard from Rose that the new one downstairs -- Ira -- is a good kisser.

BESS: Oh, my! She said that?

SADIE: During canasta. Now all the girls know.

BESS: Well... he has no teeth.

SADIE: Bess, would you mind dancing with me again? If it's not too hard on your knees. (*Sadie and Bess embrace formally, ready to dance. In silence, they slowly begin.*)

BESS: I can't hear. Is there music?

SADIE: Yes, Bess. Yes, there is.

LIGHTS FADE TO BLACKOUT.