



The Last Romance
By Joe DiPietro
Audition Side
Ralph Callback Side

CAROL

Ralph, you don't have to tell me anything.

He looks away.

Did you hear me? You don't have to tell me ...

RALPH

I don't know what happened on October 25th, okay? That's the truth.

CAROL

That's fine, Ralph. Don't say anything else.

RALPH

I was home watching Judge Judy and next thing I know I'm in an ambulance. I guess I had wandered out of the house and into the park and I collapsed. Everything went black. And I got no memory of none of it. Rose saw I was gone and she went looking for me.

CAROL

What did the doctor say happened?

RALPH

Doctors! What the hell do they know? Maybe it was stress, maybe it was -- early Alzheimer's or-or something ... maybe, maybe, maybe.

A beat.

So -that's what you'd be in for with me, all right? You know when you said you were worried I might die soon? Well, I'm worried about the opposite-that I'll live too long -- when I can't take care of myself no more.

A beat.

CAROL

I took care of my husband, you know. He had a stroke and ...

RALPH

It must've been very hard.

CAROL

It was.

RALPH

Rose was right. I shoulda told ya.

A beat.

You can leave now if you want.

CAROL

Ralph, you know what you do when people get sick. You take care of them. That's what life is, isn't it? People get sick, people die. And you deal with it, and you get through it. So what I'm saying is - yes, I did get us the tickets to the opera. But I would very much like it if you didn't come as my unattractive friend. I would very much like it if you came as my extremely handsome date.

RALPH

Even after what I just told you?

CAROL

Oh Ralph, how many more chances will I have? After all -- I'm 79 years old. The name of the opera is "Pagliacci .. " Is that a good one?

RALPH

That's the one I auditioned for!

CAROL

Now before you get too excited, I have to tell you-I couldn't figure out if we should just go to the high school or if I should get us tickets to a fancier opera.

RALPH

Don't tell me! You got us tickets for The Met?

CAROL

Oh no, I'm sorry, I didn't think of that.

RALPH

That's okay, the high school's fine. Hell, anywhere's fine.

CAROL

Good, I'm glad you feel that way. Because I got us tickets to La Scala.

A beat.

He looks at her.

We fly to Milan on Friday. I've got us two seats in business class. Oh goodness, I can't believe I'm getting back on a plane. I even asked my friend what it's like to be on an airplane nowadays, and she said you're not allowed to bring make-up on board or they think you're a terrorist. Apparently, terrorists are wearing make-up now. Oh, and I've got us adjoining hotel rooms. I figure we should stay till at least Tuesday ...

RALPH is overcome.

Ralph, are you okay?

RALPH

When I turned fifty, Anna bought us a surprise trip to Mexico. And it was so wonderful but - but I couldn't help but think -- why couldn't she have picked Italy? We could've gone to La Scala. I never thought I'd see it before I died - never in a million years ...

CAROL

We'll dress up. We'll hold hands all during it. And you can explain to me what the hell they're singing about.