

Saginaw Valley State University

Doris

From *Same Time, Next Year*

By: Bernard Slade

Minny Mouse

Theatre 137 B! Acting and Analysis

Professor Tommy Wedge

April 22, 2015

Dear Father John,

I believe it may be time for a confession. I often think back to the first time I met George. My **given circumstances** were that I was married already. It was February 3, 1951 when I first laid eyes on him in the dining room of the quaint country inn in Mendocino, California. I was in my early twenties and such a young, naïve wife and mom of three. I was supposed to be on my annual retreat with the nuns, but I sinned that first time I met George. I went to his cottage at the inn and stayed overnight. That was the first time I had an affair. I couldn't help it and I couldn't stay away from him for the 25 years we met up at the same time and same place every year.

When I first met George, I was in good **physical condition**, at least that's what he believed. He said I was luminous and I turned him on. I blame it on my California sun-kissed skin. Normally I wore my hair all gussied up and curled, but I was able to relax it around George just as I happily felt relaxed around him. I was of normal stature and dressed how a mom in the early 1950's was expected to appear, although I would've appreciated getting out of a dress now and then. My only complaint would've been my chubby thighs. God blessed me with those upon birth.

I'm not truly sure what drew me to George that first night. My **emotional condition** was satisfactory with my life, or so I thought at the time. I think it was just the excitement of the spontaneous rendezvous. When he bought me that steak dinner, I swooned. No one had ever bought me a steak dinner before. I was impressed! I did love my Harry so I wasn't looking for anyone else. However, deep down I was bored and needed to feel attracted to someone. I needed to feel desired in more of a capacity than a baby factory.

When I spent time with George in those early years, my **language** gave away my naivety and my lack of guilt. Sorry, Father, but I didn't even know what a "Trojan" was at the time! That's just laughable now, Father! Maybe not appropriate, but laughable. I often spoke in short responses since I was uneducated. I had not yet graduated high school and was ignorant to worldly things outside of making a home for my family. George repeatedly expressed his guilt about our night together, but I just didn't have the same guilt as he did. I think I just was living in the moment until I had no choice but go back to reality.

Sometimes living in the moment can be short lived. As time went on, I had to be vigilant to keep my **secret**. What I thought was going to be one night with a stranger turned into 25 yearly weekends with a lover and friend. The decades could hardly have been better to us as my **biggest fear** was never known. I never wanted Harry to find out about the truth of my yearly retreats in February. Guilt crept in through the years, but it didn't keep me away from George. Harry came close to finding out one time, but George answered the phone that weekend and expressed to Harry how much I loved him and was appreciative of him as a husband. I was thankful to George for that sacrifice on his part. If he hadn't have done that, Harry and I would've probably been divorced. That was not what I desired.

During our first weekend, my mind, heart, and body only had one **objective** and that was to get George to seize a great opportunity without the pressure of the guilt. I just wanted to live in the moment. I wanted him to stay there with me a little longer before we parted ways. It wasn't easy.

George presented **obstacles** for me to maneuver around so I could enjoy our time together. He repeatedly brought up his wife with concern that she would find out. Boy that was a

wet blanket! My **tactic** was to regroup every time with challenging him in how in the world she would even find out. She lived clear across the country in New Jersey and never flew on a plane! He had ensnared me in a web of glorious sin that weekend, but I had to seduce him to stay in the moment without our spouses as a topic of conversation. I put my arm through his and leaned on his shoulder, casually savoring the moment while attempting to coax him to dismiss his worries. Another **obstacle** I had was that George desired to actually articulate about the sex and how good it was! I was too embarrassed and naïve to rehash the night in detail. Despite praising him for his ability in bed, it made me uncomfortable, so my **tactic** was to try and switch topics. Thankfully my **expectations** were met, and I was able to get George to forget his wife for a time and completely focus on me; we shared a glorious afternoon together and went out to lunch. That led to my next objective, which was to secure a pledge from him to meet at the same time and place next year.

You could definitely tell from my **subtext** that I was uncomfortable, but not caving in to guilt. It was one thing to have an affair, but a totally different matter to keep verbalizing in detail. I just wanted to relish in the enjoyment of the experience. He felt scolded when I inquired if all men like to talk about it afterwards, but it was a reasonable question since I had only ever been with one man and he didn't lambast me with questions after sex. How was I supposed to know? I know George finally understood that when he moved on to the topics of what I wanted to talk about. I demonstrated that I didn't possess much guilt since I was slow to worry about getting dressed and dismissed George's concern about being found out. It was not fretting.

Father, in case you hadn't already deduced, this tryst with George was just the beginning of my **arc** in that it was the first time we had met. This scene was the start of our relationship, a relationship that would continue for many, many years to come. This affair in this hotel room is

the beginning of our story, but sets up the major conflict for both of us in that we love each other deeply, but not enough to abandon our respective spouses so George and I could be together. This event also sparked in me a desire for even more worldly exposure. Not only did I finally graduate high school, but I even attended college! I learned more of politics, society and life outside of being a mother and wife. I became a new me over these 25 years, but unapologetically remained devoted to two men.

My **function** was most often George's counterpart, with both of us being protagonists in this play. When he was low, I helped him see the good. When he was frustrated with the war after his son was killed in it, I tried to be his friend. We may not have always agreed, but we always had a confidant in each other and dreamily lusted for each other. He was ready to marry me after his wife died, but I needed to remain true to Harry until death, as ironic as that sounds. George and I will continue to be friends and lovers as long as time allows.

Father, I honestly don't know how to be truly remorseful when we've been so good together. This is as close to a confession as I can get.

~Doris

My similarities to Doris are slim. I am **like** her in that I married young and had children young, although not quite as young as her. I found joy in motherhood and being a wife as she did.

I am very **unlike** Doris though in her adultery. Not only would I never have an affair or too close a friendship with a man outside of my husband, but I would definitely have enough guilt about it to stop it before it started, let alone let it go for 25 years. I just couldn't fathom that relationship outside of my marriage and living with the secret; knowing that at any time he could

know and my family would be destroyed. If for no other reason, I would not embark on that journey for the sake of my children.