

FOR A MAN YOUR AGE

A Ten-Minute Two-Hander

by

Donald E. Baker

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CHARACTERS (2M)

MICHAEL

Older gay male, any race/ethnicity, fighting the aging process

WILL

Even older gay male, any race/ethnicity, happy with who he is

SETTING

An oceanfront condo in a high-rise building.

TIME

The present.

SYNOPSIS

Married couple Will and Michael are growing older, Will gracefully, Michael not so much. With their elevator not working, they find themselves trapped in their high-rise condo, discussing aging, flirtatious baristas, and the *National Geographic*.

SETTING: Saturday morning. An oceanfront condo in a high-rise building. Doors are implied to the outside and to the bedroom.

AT RISE: WILL, an older gay man, perhaps a bit over 70, sits dressed in Saturday clothes, reading an old issue of the *National Geographic* magazine. His husband MICHAEL, somewhat younger, say pushing sixty but trying to look and act younger, enters from the bedroom and crosses toward the outside door.

MICHAEL

Morning, sunshine.

WILL

Morning. Where do you think you're going?

MICHAEL

Down to the Pump & Grind for coffee. Like I do every Saturday morning. You want to come?

WILL

Didn't you read last week's email from the homeowners' association?

MICHAEL

I value my sanity too much to read emails from the HOA. What're they griping about now? Dog poop on the sidewalk again?

WILL

They were warning everybody the elevator will be off in the whole building this morning. Time for the annual inspection.

MICHAEL

What the hell? On a Saturday?? For how long?

WILL

For however long it takes.

MICHAEL

How am I expected to function without my coffee?

WILL

You could always make it yourself. You just like to go to the Pump & Grind because Myron the barista's young and cute and he flirts outrageously for extra tips.

MICHAEL

Just because we're married doesn't mean I don't appreciate a nice smile and a little attention from a younger man. But that's sweet. After all this time you still get jealous.

WILL

Not really. After thirty years together, I'm pretty sure you're not really planning to dump me for a boy young enough to be your son.

MICHAEL

He's not *that* young.

WILL

Yeah. He is. And despite all the mythology to the contrary, there are very few good-looking young guys who want to spend the best years of their lives playing nursemaid to an old man.

MICHAEL

Watch who you're calling old, buster. If the elevator's out I can just use the stairs. I haven't got much exercise lately.

WILL

You never get much exercise. You're really so desperate for coffee and a smile you're willing to attempt going down and back up fourteen flights of stairs? They'd probably find you dead from a heart attack long about the fifth floor, if you even make it that far.

MICHAEL

Hell! If I'd known this was going to happen, I'd have insisted on a condo on the first floor.

WILL

Oh, no. You were the one who wanted a de-luxe apartment in the sky-yi-yi. Good thing the penthouse wasn't available. We'd be another six flights up.

MICHAEL

Maybe the Pump and Grind would deliver.

WILL

In your dreams. And even if your college boy cutey pie *were* willing to schlep it up Mt. Everest for a huge tip, the coffee would be cold by the time it got here. Why don't you do something to distract yourself until the elevator's back? Maybe read something for a change.

MICHAEL

I read.

WILL

Menus don't count.

MICHAEL

And your dusty old magazines do. How far have you gotten with your retirement hobby—working through that box full of ancient *National Geographics* in the back of the guestroom closet—the box you've been carrying around since before we moved in together?

WILL

I consider that box part of my dowry.

MICHAEL

Most guys would bring a carton of gay porn. *Big Boys of Brazil* or *The Prince and the Pool Boy*. But no. My husband brings *National Geographic*. No thanks. Some kid brought a *National Geographic* to school in the sixth grade. He'd discovered an article about lost tribes of New Guinea and couldn't wait to share it. First time I ever saw a picture of a naked woman. And the last. I've been afraid to open another *National Geographic* since.

WILL

National Geographic-a-phobia. A syndrome previously unknown to medical science. Which reminds me. I need to re-fill the pill boxes.

MICHAEL

What're we doing taking all those pills? Somehow they've multiplied like cockroaches. We used to get by with aspirin and a multivitamin. Now we've got morning pills, including *senior* multivitamins. Plus lunch pills. Dinner pills. Bedtime pills. It takes six boxes to hold all of them in those little daily compartments.

WILL

Which I have to fill every week because you can't keep track of who gets which when.

MICHAEL

They all sound alike. And some of them use the real name and some use the generic. And even when we take the same med it's different doses. It's just too much for me to have to deal with.

WILL

I swear. I never thought I'd say this but you'd better go before I do. Without me you'd be lost as an Easter egg in tall grass.

MICHAEL

I'm more competent than you think I am.

WILL

You mean you're more competent than you let on.

MICHAEL

And you love it. You like taking care of me just as much as I like being taken care of. I don't even want to think about one of us leaving the other behind.

WILL

Don't tell me you don't look at our circle of friends and wonder which one might be an adequate replacement if worse came to worse. (*Silence.*) You *do*! Which one have you settled on? Stephen? No. He's even older than I am. Bobby? Yeah. It must be Bobby.

MICHAEL

You think I'd hook up with an aging drag queen. Put your hands together for Miss Onna Dare! There wouldn't be enough space in the closet for all her costumes or enough room in storage for all the duct tape.

WILL

Someone a little less high maintenance then. But that pretty much eliminates everybody we know.

MICHAEL

Then I guess I'll just have to go down to the Pump & Grind and throw myself at Myron's feet.

WILL

You're still fantasizing about that barista? Come back down to earth. Besides. He has a tattoo on his right forearm. You hate tattoos.

MICHAEL

But the rest of that gorgeous café au lait skin is flawless.

WILL

And he makes sure you can see as much of it as possible. He never buttons his top three shirt buttons.

MICHAEL

Aha! So you've been secretly ogling him, too!

WILL

Myron is decorative. I'll give you that.

WILL gives him a look. MICHAEL gives him one back.

WILL

You know I love you to death/

MICHAEL

I thought I told you never to use that word in my presence.

WILL

But you need to get over your futile quest for eternal youth. It's not healthy.

MICHAEL

I don't have to act my age if I don't want to and you can't make me.

WILL

"Grow old along with me! The best is yet to be, the last of life, for which the first was made."

MICHAEL

You're trotting out Robert Browning. Really?

WILL

You married an English professor. Poetry comes with the territory.

MICHAEL

Well, then, how about a little reconstructed Dylan Thomas. No. I will not go gentle into my sixties.

WILL

Into your sixties?

MICHAEL

I will rage against every grey hair and age spot as long as I have breath.

WILL

The only reason you have breath is because you keep your asthma inhaler handy. Another reason you'd never make it up the stairs. I honestly don't know what you're so afraid of. You look terrific for a man your/

MICHAEL

Don't you go there. That's how you know you're on the downward slope. People start giving you backhanded compliments ending with "for a man your age." Like when the doctor sticks his finger up your ass and says, "Your prostate feels like it's in pretty good shape for a man your age." I don't want to look terrific "for a man my age." I just want to look terrific. Period.

WILL

Oh, honey, you know you'll always look terrific to/

WILL's cell phone emits a "new message" signal. He looks at it.

WILL

Message from the HOA. The elevator's already back in service.

MICHAEL

Thank God! *(He grabs his cell phone and begins punching in numbers.)*

WILL

Who're you calling?

MICHAEL

Who do you think? (...) Hello, Pump and Grind Coffee Shop? (...) *(Suddenly coy.)* Oh, hi, Myron! How are you? (...) That's very nice to hear. (...) Yes, I want to place an order. (...) I need an extra large macchiato with soy milk, extra caramel, three packets of Splenda, not too much foam, and six pumps of espresso. (...) That's what I said. Six. Pumps. Of espresso. It's been that kind of morning. I'll be there in ten minutes. (...)

From here on, MICHAEL gets more and more deflated as his illusions dissipate.

Oh, I thought for sure you'd recognize my voice. (...) It's Michael. (...) Michael from the high-rise. (...) *(Stricken.)* Yeah. That's me. One of the *old* guys.

WILL pats MICHAEL's shoulder sympathetically.

END OF PLAY