GETTING BACK IN THE GAME

By Michael Licwinko

CAST

RICHIE: Between 60-65, but young looking and a few pounds overweight. He’s retired.

RENEE: A year younger than Richie. Attractive, fit and also retired.

Place

Richie’s apartment

Time

The present.
ACT ONE Scene 1

Setting: A sofa, an arm chair, a couple of end tables, shelving with a few books and a CD player. Two big floor pillows. There’s a 1970’s era tapestry hanging on a wall.

At Rise: Richie plays some popular music from the 60’s or 70’s. He checks his hair in the face of his cell phone (anything but a mirror). He plumps the floor pillows, lights the incense and other last minute touch ups.

There is a knock on the door. Richie prims one last time, walks to the door and opens it.

RICHIE: Hey.

Richie walks to the sofa and sits.

RENEE: Really?

RICHIE: What?

RENEE: You don’t know?

Richie walks to the door.

RICHIE: (waving his arm) Have a seat. Come on.

Renee enters and stands at the door. Richie walks back to the sofa a sits.

RENEE: I’m wearing a coat.

RICHIE: Yeah, looks great on you. Is it new?

RENEE: Dick.

RICHIE: I’m Richie now. Sounds younger, don’t you think?

RENEE: Oh, brother. Well, okay, Ri-chie, get over here and take my coat.

RICHIE: For her I would, but for you…it’s not like we don’t know each other.


Renee walks out the door.

RICHIE: Renee, you’re not serious.
Renee closes the door.

RICHIE (cont’d): You are. *(Loudly)* Ok, ok, knock again. I’ll do the coat thing. *(5 second wait)* So, knock already.

No knock. Richie hurries to the door and opens it.

RICHIE (cont’d): *(talking down the hall)* Renee. Stop. Come back. Please

Renee enters.

RENEE: Last chance, buster. Let’s start over.

RICHIE: Ah, you do still love me.

RENEE: Still the jokester.

RICHIE: My best characteristic. So nice to see you, Renee. You look lovely. May I take your coat?

RENEE: Yes.

*Ritchie tosses it on a chair. Renee sighs.*

RICHIE: Wanna drink? Beer? Shot of tequila?

RENEE: Wine?

RICHIE: Uh…

RENEE: Women like wine.

RICHIE: I don’t think this one does. She’s a little on the wild side.

RENEE: I’ll take a beer and then you can tell me about her.

*Ritchie takes a beer from a cooler on the floor next to the sofa and hands it to Renee.*

RENEE: A cooler?

RICHIE: Saves walking to the kitchen.
RENEE: Yeah, those ten feet could be fatal. And the can, classy.

RICHIE: Won’t break if dropped.

RENEE: You plan on getting that wasted?

RICHIE: No, of course not. But in the throes of passion, a flailing arm might…never mind.

RENEE: Why did you call me? I mean, you could have called a boatload of women. Why me?

RICHIE: From what I’ve seen, you’re pretty active in the dating arena.

RENEE: And you know that how?

RICHIE: Facebook.

RENEE: I unfriended you years ago.

RICHIE: Yeah, I know.

RENEE: So, you don’t know what I’ve been up to.

RICHIE: Not exactly true. I’m still friends with your sister and she gave me her password.

RENEE: I’ll kill the witch.

RICHIE: You should be honored that I chose you. I respect your expertise in all things love.

RENEE: So, tell me more about this lady who’ll launch you into the throes of passion.

RICHIE: It’s not important. This is supposed to be a practice date so I can sharpen my skills.

RENEE: I need to know so I can decide if you’re making the right decisions. I need to be her, Dick.
RICHIE: That’s my job. I know, bad joke. Listen, Renee, I called you because I want, need your help. In the ten years we’ve been divorced, I haven’t been on a single date. I might be a tad rusty and getting back in the game is scary, frankly. Damn scary. So, help me with technique, what to say and all that, but who I’m dating is my business. I don’t ask about your personal life.

RENEE: You don’t ask about anything. The last time you called me was seven years ago. And that was to get my sister’s number so you could date her.

RICHIE: Explore the possibility only. I didn’t follow through.

RENEE: Only because the boyfriend you didn’t know she had, threatened to kick your ass.

RICHIE: (throwing a couple of air punches) So not true. Anyway, maybe I didn’t call because I respected your privacy.

RENEE: I could’ve moved to Jamaica for all you knew.

RICHIE: No way. You hate the beach.

RENEE: Whatever, but the way I see it, you need me more than I need you, In fact, I’ve shown that I don’t need you at all. So, if you want my advice we play by my rules. Capiche?

RICHIE: Damn you. Ok.

RENEE: Wow, she must be something for you to give in so quickly. What is she, young or loaded?

RICHIE: Not rich.

RENEE: How young?

RICHIE: Young-ish.

RENEE: Forty?

RICHIE: Someday.

RENEE: Thirty?

RICHIE: Age is just a number.
RENEE: Under thirty? Do you have a death wish?

RICHIE: What?

RENEE: Let’s see. Two heart attacks, a double bypass and a pacemaker. And that was before we divorced.

RICHIE: I’m aware of that, but I figure it means I’ve had a complete overhaul, and since I’ve been stress free and dateless for ten years, I’m still as good as new. (beat) Gonna help me or not?

RENEE: God knows you need it.

RICHIE: Coolio. Where should we start?

RENEE: How about your attire?

RICHIE: Groovy, right? A real American outfit. I’m trying to show her some of our culture. She hasn’t been here very long.

RENEE: Tie-dyed t-shirt, flares; along with the tapestry and incense, all you’re missing is the Grateful Dead music.

RICHIE: It’s the next CD.

RENEE: What, no 8-track?

RICHIE: Well, actually, it is the next 8-track.

RENEE: She won’t have a clue what you’re trying to do.

RICHIE: I’ll explain it. Besides, I don’t have a clue about today’s music or art. And you know the 70’s was the best decade of the 20th Century in so many ways.

RENEE: That it was. We reaped all the benefits of the sexual revolution and no AIDS to worry about.

RICHIE: Ah, to go back, if only for a while. Whatya say we get comfortable?

RENEE: That’s not why I’m here.

RICHIE: I meant sit down.

RENEE: Oh.
Richie sits on a pillow on the floor. He motions for Renee to join him.

RENEE (cont’d): Will you be able to get up?

RICHIE: I’ll have you know I can lift myself up without grabbing on to anything.

RENEE: That I would love to see.

Richie tries to rise without assistance. Failing he tries again.

RICHIE: Just a little out of practice. This time I’ll get it for sure.

One more attempt fails. Renee sits on a pillow.

RENEE: That’s ok, gramps. I’ll help you up if you need it. (beat) This room makes me feel like 1974 all over again, except for my wrinkles, saggy boobs and arthritis.

RICHIE: Nonsense. You look great. You haven’t changed at all in ten years.

RENEE: That redeems you for throwing my coat on the chair. Remember the party we had the day we got back from winter break senior year?

RICHIE: Do I? Best impromptu party ever. Randy brought a bottle of Seagram’s 7 back with him; I had a quart of Smirnoff. And within twenty minutes of calling you and Amy, our apartment was bursting at the seams.

RENEE: Amy got so drunk she spent half the party topless.

RICHIE: Randy was so mad. Every time he tried to put her shirt on, she threatened to go buck naked.

RENEE: She was very proud of her boobs.

RICHIE: I’ll bet today they’re somewhere south of her bellybutton. She had 5 kids, right?

RENEE: Six. And she never wore a bra.

RICHIE: Thankfully, you never had to worry about that. Did I tell you how great you look?

Richie tries to put his arm around Renee, but she pushes him back.

RENEE: I’m here to help you move forward, not rekindle the past.
RICHIE: You’re right. Sorry.

*Ritch takes another beer from the cooler.*

RENEE: Ahem.

*Ritch gives one to Renee.*

RENEE: So, what did you cook? Chef Boyardee?

RICHIE: More Americana.

RENEE: Hot dogs?

RICHIE: I thought about them, but went with a real classic. TV dinners. Wanna guess dessert?

RENEE: Chocolate pudding?

RICHIE: Good guess, but I wanted to class it up a bit.

RENEE: Hmmm. Let me think a minute. Ah, got it. Cheesecake.

RICHIE: *(singing)* Nobody doesn’t like Sara Lee. *(speaking)* Hope you’re hungry. I’ll go preheat the oven.

RENEE: Really, Dick, er, Richie, don’t go to any bother.

RICHIE: You don’t know what you’re missing. Ok, hang on.

*Ritch exits and returns with a plate of Ritz crackers and Cheese Whiz.*

RICHIE (cont’d): Apps. Nice, right?

RENEE: Do you really think this will impress your date? Does she have a name?

RICHIE: Mai. M-A-I. It’s different, you have to admit that.

RENEE: Yes, Mai is not a common name.

RICHIE: I meant the food.

RENEE: True, but different isn’t always effective.
RICHIE: It'll be fine. I’m sure of it.

RENEE: How do you know?

*Ritchie opens a small decorative box that sits on an end table and takes out a joint.*

RENEE (cont’d): You’re kidding.

RICHIE: It’s what snagged you.

RENEE: Did not.

RICHIE: Liar, liar, pants on fire.

RENEE: Ok, yes, I was a big pot head, but it’s not why you “snagged me.”

RICHIE: No? What was it, then?

RENEE: Let’s stay on topic. You said she hasn’t been here long. You mean in Milwaukee?

RICHIE: Uh, right, new to town.

RENEE: Where’s she from?

RICHIE: Out east.

RENEE: New England?

RICHIE: A little further east than that.

RENEE: Oh, lord, don’t tell me. Thailand?

RICHIE: No way. Cambodia.

RENEE: So, you’re one of them, now? You’ve really reached rock bottom, Richie.

RICHIE: Have not. First of all, I didn’t move to or vacation in Cambodia with the expressed reason of finding a young girlfriend or bride. Second, I may be old enough to do that, but not desperate enough. And third, I was looking for a volunteer opportunity, so I teach IT at the community center down the block. That’s where we met. Satisfied?

RENEE: Impressed, actually. You were always more hedonist than philanthropist.
RICHIE: People evolve.

RENEE: Sounds like it.

RICHIE: It’s a lot of fun. You should come with me. You could tutor high school kids in math.

RENEE: I’m really not in the market for a boyfriend, Richie, and I prefer them to be over eighteen.

RICHIE: How do you spend your time? (beat) If you don’t mind me asking.

RENEE: I keep busy. Relatively.

RICHIE: Ooh, sounds exciting. I also deliver meals on wheels, and read to residents of St. Ann’s. Some of them can’t see so good to read or hear audio books.

RENEE: Ok, who are you and where’s Dick?

RICHIE: I know. I ask that myself every so often. I’ve totally morphed into a caregiver. When I retired a few years ago, I had no plan. Just wanted to enjoy myself. I was never a big traveler, as you know, and I think golf and fishing are boring, so I was hanging out at bars. Problem was, the happy hours were starting earlier and my waistline was creeping perilously close to forty. I knew I wouldn’t see seventy unless changes were made. That’s when I began volunteering. And working out.

RENEE: You look like a thirty-four.

RICHIE: Thanks, but it’s thirty-six. Don’t want to get too thin. Gotta give the ladies a little something to hold on to.

RENEE: Well, you definitely have a little something.

RICHIE: Are you talking about—ok, time for you to leave.

RENEE: You don’t know what I was talking about.

*Ritchie jumps up, pulls Renee up, too, and pushes her towards the door.*

RENEE: What the hell are you doing, Dick?

RICHIE: Good-bye. Thanks for your advice. Have a good life.

RENEE: Are you—
Richie forces Renee out of the apartment and closes the door.

RENEE (cont’d): (from the hall) – serious?

Renee dials her cell phone. Richie’s phone rings.

RICHIE: Hello?

RENEE: Open the door.

RICHIE: Apologize.

RENEE: For what?

RICHIE: For the shot you just gave me

RENEE: That wasn’t a shot.

RICHIE: Definitely a shot.

RENEE: You want a shot? A real shot? I’ll give you a real shot.

RICHIE: You’re the queen of shots. No more shots. Just an apology.

RENEE: (Softly) Oh, brother. The male ego. (normal voice) You were always more than I could handle, you porn dude.

RICHIE: A little sincerity would be nice.

RENEE: Take it or leave it.

RICHIE: I’ll take it.

RENEE: Then open the damn door.

Richie opens the door and Renee enters.

RENEE (cont’d): You are such a baby. You may be emotionally younger than that child you want to date.

RICHIE: I simply have a sensitive nature.

RENEE: Do you think she’ll be able to put up with your quirky, overly sensitive nature?
RICHIE: In time.

RENEE: You’re no spring chicken.

*Richie sits on the floor and lights a joint. Renee sits on the sofa.*

RICHIE: Join me? *(beat) One for old-time’s sake?*

RENEE: Let’s stay on topic. Do you have any more questions about your prom date?

RICHIE: This is really good stuff (shit, if allowed).

RENEE: I know what you’re up to.

RICHIE: You do.

RENEE: Yes, I do. You know what used to happen every time I got high.

RICHIE: I remember very clearly. *(tapping the pillow next to him) So, have a seat, Rennie, and see if we can recreate some of that magic.*

RENEE: I’ll smoke, but no magic.

*Ritchie hands her the joint and she takes a hit. Then another. Riche uses the remote to find a 70’s song on the stereo. Something by “Yes.”*

RICHIE: Better slow down. This ain’t 1975 weed.

RENEE: No lie. This is killer. Turkey.

RICHIE: What about it.

RENEE: Her TV dinner. With mashed potatoes, gravy and peas. And apple turnover in the corner.

RICHIE: Bingo.

RENEE: And for Mister Meat-eater, Salisbury steak.

RICHIE: One hundred percent pure beef.

RENEE: And sawdust shavings. Do they even make Salisbury steak anymore?

RICHIE: I have no idea.
RENEE: That’s what I thought. I’ll bet there isn’t even a girl.

RICHIE: You think not?

RENEE: I not think. I mean, I think not.

RICHIE: It’s possible.

*They each hit the joint again.*

RENEE: Do you want to know?

RICHIE: Know what?

RENEE: How you snagged me?

RICHIE: You want to tell me after all these years?

RENEE: Yup. Chicken.

RICHIE: Chicken.

RENEE: Burnt chicken.

RICHIE: Oh my god. Really?

RENEE: You were cooking me dinner, but the music, the wine, the timing…

RICHIE: Our first time.

RENEE: And even when you smelled the chicken burning, you didn’t stop. I had a feeling then that we had something special going.

RICHIE: Magic.

*Renee moves to the pillow and sits close to Richie. Richie clicks off the stereo and plays a song on his phone. It’s “Do you Believe (in Magic)” by The Lovin’ Spoonful.*

RENEE: There’s no other girl.

*They sing the song. Lights down.*

**THE END**