Italian American Reconciliation
"Aldo & Janice"

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ACT II

Scene I

*Menacing music from "Turandot" plays as the lights come up.**

The rear of Janice's house; it's night. A lone cricket chirps. A couple of stars twinkle high over head.

Janice is discovered on her balcony. She is an angular, patrician Roman with strawberry blond hair and austere good looks. She's wearing a soft white nightgown which makes her look like a young girl. In her arms she cradles six fat roses. She looks at the sky, full of emotion. Then she tosses the flowers to the ground below. She looks down at the flowers, and bleakly says, "What for?" Then she goes back inside.

Aldo, in a sharp jacket and tie, appears at the garden gate. He tries to open it, fails, and climbs over. He sees the flowers lying on the ground. He calls up in a loud whisper.

Start 2

ALDO. Janice. Janice. Janice. (*Janice reemerges. She's tying a black velvet robe with padded shoulders. The effect is striking, but more adult and severe.*)
JANICE. Who's that?
ALDO. It's Aldo. Scalicki.
JANICE. What are you doing in my backyard?
ALDO. I rang the bell about fifty times, but nobody answered.
JANICE. It's broken.
ALDO. You should have it fixed.
JANICE. Why?
ALDO. So it rings.
JANICE. What do I care if it rings? I don't see anybody.
ALDO. Well, you still might get a delivery or something.

*See Special Note on copyright page.

Flowers or something. Somebody send you flowers?
JANICE. Yes.
ALDO. Very nice.
JANICE. They're from Huey.
ALDO. How you know that?
JANICE. I know.
ALDO. Well, then, you shouldn't be so confident. You're wrong. I sent the flowers.
JANICE. You? Why would you send me flowers?
ALDO. I sent them for Huey.
JANICE. Can't even manage to send his own flowers.
ALDO. What d'you mean?
JANICE. He's hapless. He's a buffoon.
ALDO. He's my best friend.
JANICE. That's your problem.
ALDO. Anyway, it's a shame you destroyed them like this.
JANICE. They were dead anyway.
ALDO. Maybe they were dead, but they were expensive. (*He starts to gather them.*) They're not really destroyed. (*He lays them on the table.*)
JANICE. Why are you here?
ALDO. Beautiful night.
JANICE. I wish it would rain.
ALDO. Beautiful stars.
JANICE. Stars make me think of death.
ALDO. I can smell the greenness of the leaves.
JANICE. It smells like a cemetery. What are you doing here?
ALDO. Huey asked me to come.
JANICE. Why?
ALDO. He wants to patch it up with you.
JANICE. Patch up what?
ALDO. What d'you think? The marriage. (*Janice chuckles dryly.*) What's so funny?
JANICE. Think about it.
ALDO. You wanna come down?
JANICE. No. (*A pause.*)
ALDO. Janice, Janice, Janice.
JANICE. What?
ALDO. We've seen some stuff, huh?
JANICE. What are you talking about?

ALDO. Member when we were kids? I'd play Julius Caesar and you'd stab me with the rubber knife and yell Die! Die!
JANICE. I remember.
ALDO. You were some nutty little girl.
JANICE. You were a jerk.
ALDO. I was very innocent.
JANICE. You were a jerk.
ALDO. I was a little kid. I was supposed to be a jerk.
JANICE. You did it perfectly. (*A pause.*)
ALDO. Janice, Janice, Janice.
JANICE. Why do you keep saying that?
ALDO. We've been around the block a few times.
JANICE. Aldo. You are still the same hammerheaded clown you always were. Are you trying to be smooth? You come here outta no place. You send flowers. You say, Janice, Janice, Janice. Am I supposed to be getting the idea? How 'bout just spitting it out?
ALDO. Huey wants to make it up with you.
JANICE. Why are you saying this? Where's Huey?
ALDO. He sent me first.
JANICE. Oh, I get it. He always was a coward.
ALDO. Huey is not a coward.
JANICE. Huey always was a coward, and you always were a stooge. If he wasn't a coward he'd be standing here in his own shoes speaking his own words. If you weren't a stooge, you wouldn't be a standin in somebody else's love scene. Ain't you got no girl of your own?
ALDO. I got girls comin out my ears.
JANICE. What a picture.
ALDO. I didn't come here to talk about me.
JANICE. That's cause you're a stooge.
ALDO. Stop callin me that! You can be a very difficult woman to talk to, Janice.
JANICE. Really?
ALDO. Yes. I mean, if I was here on my own . . . I mean, if I was the specific guy who was tryin to romance you, I gotta tell you I wouldn't even know where to begin. You are so . . . nasty.
JANICE. I am?
ALDO. Yeah, you're like a fiend. Your eyes look like vampire vulture monster fiend eyes.

JANICE. They do?
ALDO. Yes, they do. And you always smile only for the wrong, the most horriblest reason. Sometimes when you smile I expect to see like fangs fall down over your lower lip. I've had the experience when you smile where I wanted to run away down the street cause I was afraid you were gonna bite me.
JANICE. Really?
ALDO. You're not angry?
JANICE. Why would I be?
ALDO. I thought cause I was telling you the truth that I might be insulting.
JANICE. I'm not insulted.
ALDO. Well, good. Cause it feels much more relaxing for me to tell the truth. I expected to have to do a lot of lying tonight.
JANICE. Why?
ALDO. You know.
JANICE. No, I don't.
ALDO. You know. Romance. Lies.
JANICE. I like the truth.
ALDO. So do I. You know, sometimes when I catch sight a you unexpected, my balls jump up in a bunch like I dropped 'em inna glass a ice water. (*Janice laughs heartily.*) You think that's funny?
JANICE. Yeah. Don't you?
ALDO. Yeah, but I thought you'd be like the last person in the world to get the joke.
JANICE. You don't know me, Aldo.
ALDO. I guess not.
JANICE. You always amazed me. Why'd you let me stab you and bury you and treat you like a dog?
ALDO. I don't know.
JANICE. You oughta think about these things.
ALDO. I have thought about 'em, and I still don't know.
JANICE. I did all that stuff to you to see how much you'd take. I thought, Maybe if I kick him one more time, he'll stand up and take my shoes away.
ALDO. Take your shoes? Why would I take your shoes?
JANICE. To take charge of me like a man.
ALDO. What are you saying?

JANICE. You still don't get it, do you? I was flirting with you.
ALDO. That was flirting?
JANICE. Sure.
ALDO. No, that wasn't flirting. You may have felt flirting, but you weren't doing flirting. You were treating me like I was the snake in the apple tree.
JANICE. You just didn't get it.
ALDO. I woulda gotten it if you did it right.
JANICE. You would have gotten it if you weren't so stupid.
ALDO. Alright. Anyway, thanks.
JANICE. For what?
ALDO. I don't know. For feeling like flirting with me, even if I didn't get it. Listen, I wanna apologize for what I said before. I don't think you're nasty.
JANICE. I am, though.
ALDO. No. It's like this, what we were just talking about. I've just misunderstood you, so I was afraid of you.
JANICE. You've understood me well enough. I've never asked to be understood any better.
ALDO. But you're not this monster I made you out. You don't have evil eyes. You don't have big teeth and you're not gonna bite me.
JANICE. I might.
ALDO. Listen, Janice, I think you're okay. You've had your problems just like the rest of us and who am I to pass judgement on you? No matter what I said, you an I go back to the beginning and under everything I'm always gonna have a warm spot for you. The final ultimate drift is I know you're a nice person and I'm gonna make a real effort to remember that from now on.
JANICE. Don't bother on my account.
ALDO. I am, though. I'll tell you something. I'm very titillated that you was flirting with me, even in those ancient days. Have you ever . . . felt like that . . . since?
JANICE. Never.
ALDO. You must have your romantic fantasies here, livin by yourself. Like you're that princess trapped in that castle surrounded by thorny bushes. Waiting for Prince Valiant to happen by. You must have thoughts like that. On occasion.

JANICE. Never.
ALDO. The thought of you has crossed my mind from time to time. In an unterrifying way. I have a fantasy life, you know.
JANICE. Do you?
ALDO. Oh yes. I have a very full and real fantasy life, and from time to time, you appear there.
JANICE. Aldo, are you hitting on me?
ALDO. Maybe I am.
JANICE. This is too delicious.
ALDO. What d'you mean?
JANICE. You're supposed to be here for Huey.
ALDO. So. Maybe I'm not the stooge you thought. Maybe I got my own agenda of feelings. Janice, I'm gonna be out there with you. I've been thinking about you. The thought of your face and your figure has been eating me up lately. How 'bout it?
JANICE. How 'bout what?
ALDO. How 'bout I come up stairs and we rip up the bed a little bit?
JANICE. Just like that.
ALDO. That's right. Impulsive.
JANICE. Alright. What the hell.
ALDO. Really?
JANICE. I'll come down an open the door. (*Janice goes in.*)
ALDO. (*To the audience.*) That was easy. (*Janice comes back on the terrace with a zip gun. Aldo has his back to her.*)
JANICE. Aldo. (*Aldo turns around and sees the gun.*)
ALDO. Holy Moly! (*Janice fires. The gun, defective, blows up. It burns her fingers. She drops it. Aldo, meanwhile, dives under the table.*)
JANICE. You dunce! You oaf! You slimey sewer rat. Damn it. Look at that. I burned my finger. What do you take me for, you comical boob? Am I not supposed to see through you? You're like cellophane! Let's rip up the bed a little bit. God!
ALDO. Don't shoot me!
JANICE. I can't. My gun broke.
ALDO. (*Comes out from under the table.*) You shot a gun at me.
JANICE. Don't be obvious.