



SUNSHINE QUEST

A Play in Two Acts by
William Ivor Fowkes

WORLD PREMIERE – *Fresh Fruit Festival* at the Wild Project, New York, July 2014

FESTIVAL WINNER – Best Performance by a Supporting Actress

Copyright © 2015 by William Fowkes. All Rights Reserved.

SUNSHINE QUEST

A Play in Two Acts by William Ivor Fowkes

SETTING

The Sunshine Quest Club, a social club for senior gay men in Fort Lauderdale, Florida

TIME

December 1999

CAST BREAKDOWN

A Cast of 5

Al Getz	Male	Age – 60s	Handsome, successful realtor. Former movie star, Todd Hammond. Lived a private gay life for many years. Came out publicly five years ago. A gentleman.	13 scenes
Brad Hall	Male	Age – 30	Assistant manager of Sunshine Quest. From North Carolina. Apparently straight. Lusted after by many members of the club. Attractive and polite, but a bit mercurial. A Christian. Southern accent.	12 scenes
Robby Smirnoff	Male	Age – 70s	Retired agent. Jewish. Flamboyant and funny. Sharp-tongued, but sweet. Likes much younger men.	10 scenes
John Strathmore	Male	Age – 60s	Retired company man. Straight-laced and conservative in appearance. Openly gay all his life, but recently widowed from a woman to whom he was married for ten years. Distracted by his mourning.	10 scenes
Mary King	Female	Age – 50s	Ballroom dance instructor. A Southern woman who prefers the company of gay men. Funny, sexy, and warm-hearted. Southern accent.	7 scenes

A voice with a southern accent and a lot of personality makes several announcements throughout the play. These announcements should be pre-recorded by one of the cast members or by another actor.

ACT ONE

SCENE 1: Late one afternoon, December 1999.

The stage is in blackout.

Projection or voiceover: “Fort Lauderdale, Florida in the year of our Lord 1999.”

Massage music starts to play.

After a few moments, the lights come up to reveal Al Getz lying on his back partly covered by a towel. Al has just received a massage. Brad, the masseur, is packing things up. Brad turns off the music.

AL

(purring and sighing)

Mmmm...! Mmmm...! I’ve never felt so good! ... I could lie here like this...
(dramatically)
forever!

Brad clears his throat.

BRAD HALL

I’m afraid I’ve gotta go set up the tables for bingo night.

AL

Oh...sorry.

Al gets up and starts to get dressed.

BRAD

I didn’t mean...

(trying to control his excitement)

I’m a big fan, by the way. I’ve seen all your movies.

AL

You’re confusing me with someone else.

BRAD

C'mon! I recognize you. You're Todd Hammond.

AL

My name is Albert Getz.

BRAD

You put out a book! You were on all the talk shows!

AL

That was five years ago. No one read it. And I haven't acted in fifteen years.

BRAD

But everyone around here knows who you are.

AL

Big deal. Five minutes of telling me how much they love *Moon Over Miami* and then we're back to real estate—that's my passion now.

BRAD

My mother loved all your movies.

AL

Like that new condo on Los Olas—what a beaut!

BRAD

She still watches them whenever they're on TV.

AL

Hey, are you in the market?

BRAD

I can't afford a condo!

AL

How about your mother?

BRAD

She lives in North Carolina.

AL

Any siblings down here?

BRAD

I'm an only child.

AL

(forcing his business card on Brad)

I could help you get a mortgage.

BRAD

Do you have any idea what the Spaulding Brothers pay us?

AL

Oh, well. Just a thought.

(gingerly)

By the way, do you do that for all your clients? That little something extra—that unexpected “release.”

BRAD

(flustered and embarrassed)

Oh...yeah...about that. I...uh...I’ve never done that before.

AL

And at a respectable place like the Sunshine Quest Club.

BRAD

(urgently)

Please don’t tell anyone! I don’t know why I did it. I’m so sorry. I swear it won’t ever happen again!

AL

No, no—I’m not complaining. I was just a little surprised, that’s all.

AL

Okay. It can be our little secret.

Brad wipes down the massage table as Al continues getting dressed.

BRAD

You see, the thing is—I guess I feel safe with you, because I know you—from all your movies.

AL

If you’re expecting me to be Todd Hammond, you’re in for a big disappointment.

BRAD

I don’t understand.

AL

People put on facades—or in my case, let others do it for them. Maybe you do the same thing—maybe we know nothing about the real Brad Hall.

BRAD

(laughing nervously)

Me? No—what you see is what you get.

AL

So, you're just a masseur?

BRAD

Well, no. I'm not a masseur.

AL

Oh, that's right—you're called massage therapists now.

BRAD

No, I mean givin' massages isn't all I do.

AL

(dryly)

Well, I think we've established that!

BRAD

(sharply)

Please don't make fun of me!

AL

Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to.

BRAD

It's okay. I'm a little too sensitive sometimes. I guess it's 'cause I was teased a lot when I was a kid.

Brad starts to fold up the massage table.

AL

You know, you remind me of someone...someone I was in love with for many years.

BRAD

I remind you of a woman?

AL

No, a man—a young man. I miss him.

BRAD

I'm not that way, Mr. Getz.

AL

If you say so. I hope I didn't offend you. And I hope you don't think I was hitting on you. I bet a lot of the guys around here do that.

BRAD

I can handle myself.

AL

You mind my asking how you ended up working at a gay men's club?

BRAD

This isn't so bad. I'll say one thing for you guys—you're very generous with the tips.

Al quickly pulls out his wallet and hands
Brad some money.

AL

We appreciate people who understand our special needs.

BRAD

Well...I better start working on those Bingo tables before the Spaulding Brothers unleash their dogs on me. The last time I fell behind, they docked my pay.

AL

Let me go talk to them, Brad; I'll get them to back off.

BRAD

You don't have to do that.

AL

But I want to help.

BRAD

Please don't. They're very touchy. I think they're havin' financial problems.
(pointing to his watch)

And you really have to go now.

AL

Oh, sure. Hey, can you book me for Friday—same time?

BRAD

No problem. Oh, and Mr. Getz!

AL

Al.

BRAD

Thanks for tryin' to help me out, Al.

Al and Brad exit. The lights dim.

VOICE #1

N as in “Nelly”...37.

(pause)

B as in “Big Biceps”...14.

(pause)

O as in “Orgasm”...75.

VOICE #2

(joyfully)

Bingo!!

SCENE 2: The next evening.

Sound: A bell dings.

Disco music starts to play. Disco lights flood the stage. Al is on stage watching the dancers out on the dance floor. Robby Smirnoff enters with two drinks. Robby wears a flashy shirt, a big wristwatch, and lots of gold jewelry. Robby approaches Al and hands him a drink. The music fades.

ROBBY SMIRNOFF

Here you go, sir. Payment in full, as promised.

AL

After the way I pulverized you on the tennis court, you should have to buy me drinks for a year.

ROBBY

The deal was ONE drink. I always stick to the deal.

AL

And I bet there are bodies scattered all over New York and L.A. as a result of your deals!

ROBBY

I was one of the best agents in the business, Mr. Hammond.

AL

Mr. Getz, please. My name is Al Getz.

ROBBY

Come off it, buddy boy! We both know who you really are.

AL

(annoyed)

How many times do I have to keep asking you?

ROBBY

O.K.! O.K.! But I've always been a big Todd Hammond fan.

AL

That name was forced on me by the studio. There's a lot more to me than a few movies—and one unfortunate appearance on Broadway.

ROBBY

But that's my world! I don't care about anything else!

AL

Then why did you ever move down here?

ROBBY

(suddenly perky)

Oh, that's an entirely different matter—I moved down here for the boys!

AL

We're a bunch of old men.

ROBBY

Speak for yourself. And I can assure you I've had no problem attracting the attention of the boys. Besides, you can't grow old in New York or L.A. Have you ever seen anyone our age at the Abbey or Splash?

AL

I never went to places like that.

ROBBY

(sarcastically)

Oh, that's right—Todd Hammond had to keep his real life secret. Then what are you doing living in Fort Lauderdale? Isn't that like putting up a billboard screaming, "I'm here, and I'm queer"?

AL

Haven't you read my book?

ROBBY

I'm waiting for the movie.

AL

Well, if you had, you'd know I came out when I realized my acting days were long behind me so there was no need to pretend anymore.

ROBBY

I'm sure I could still find you some acting work.

AL

I'm much better at real estate.

ROBBY

But you don't need the money. You should be having fun!

AL

That's why I come to Sunshine Quest! Boy, when we celebrate the new millennium next month, I'll be celebrating this club. How lucky are we to have a place like this just for men like us right in the neighborhood? Even our own beach across the road. It really is a whole new world.

ROBBY

You don't have to sell me on it, Mac! I joined the moment I moved down here.

AL

I just hope it survives.

ROBBY

Oh, these places are always having money problems. I never let that prevent me from having fun.

AL

What's your idea of fun?

ROBBY

I told you—it's boys! Some tennis. A bit of bingo. Maybe a tea dance or two. But most of all—boys, boys, boys!

Brad enters.

ROBBY
(indicating Brad)

See—like flies to honey!

(beat)

Someone told me he's started giving massages on the side.

AL

Yes, Brad's a very talented massage therapist.

[Robby gives Al a startled look.]

ROBBY
(calling out)

Brad! May I speak to you?

Brad comes over.

BRAD
Yes, Mr. Smirnoff?

ROBBY
Call me Robby, please!

BRAD
What can I do for you, “Robby”?

ROBBY
(dramatically—flirtatiously)

Where do I begin?

(beat)
Is it true you give massages now? How’d you like another client?

BRAD
I’m afraid I’ve already got a pretty full plate, but I’ll let you know if my schedule opens up. Hang in there!

Brad exits.

ROBBY
I didn’t realize he was such a stuck-up little thing. What does he mean—“hang in there”? Is he expecting me to drop dead any minute now?

AL
I just think he’s a little uncomfortable around us sometimes.

ROBBY
Nonsense! He’s always undressing me with his eyes. I know the type. Sniffing around older men hoping to find a sugar daddy.

AL
He’s not like that.

ROBBY
Mind you, I’m perfectly willing to be someone’s sugar daddy—as long as he gives me

some sugar.

AL
(deadpanning)

And we wonder where the expression “dirty old man” comes from.

ROBBY

There’s nothing dirty about it. Why shouldn’t I share my wisdom, charm, and money with the right young man?

AL

Just watch out for people waiting to take advantage of you.

ROBBY

Hey, I’ve been around the racetrack a few times, Pally-Wally. I’m not like Chuck Battista, for God’s sake!

AL

Who?

ROBBY

Chuck Battista—the one who’s always coming on to everyone like a Pekingese lion-dog in heat.

AL

You mean the guy who wears a harness?

ROBBY

Someone should tell him that leather and wrinkles don’t go together.

AL

He grabbed my derriere the first time I met him.

ROBBY
(slyly checking Al’s butt)

See—I’m not like that! Chuck Battista only just came out of the closet. At 69, he shouldn’t have bothered!

AL

Maybe he had to wait until the kids were fully grown.

ROBBY

Nothing as honorable as that. Back in New York he’d show up at parties with women he insisted were his girlfriends, but then drool over all the guys and carry on like the gayest bird in the nest.

AL

I've known plenty of men like that.

ROBBY

What a putz! One night he got plastered and finally told me he knew he was really gay—COMPLETELY gay—but couldn't admit it because it would kill his mother. I mean, I loved my mother and all, but can you imagine?

AL

Mothers always know.

ROBBY

Well, let's hope Mama Battista up in heaven enjoys watching her fey little leather boy running after every other fey little boy in the sunshine state!

(looking out at the dance floor)

Hey, look at those guys making out in the middle of the dance floor!

(calling out)

Someone's gonna get lucky tonight!

AL

That's Bobby and Stefan.

ROBBY

(calling out)

Go get him, Bobby!

(to Al—excitedly)

Oh, this night is looking very promising. Soon the younger crowd will arrive and my heart will overflow!

AL

Remember my warning.

ROBBY

Don't be a killjoy!

(looking out at the dance floor)

Wow—they're still going at it! I just love first dates!

AL

Bobby and Stefan have been partners for thirty years.

ROBBY

(with disbelief)

But they seem so happy!

AL

And they're not the only ones.

(pointing)

There's Paul and Eric...Jorge and Reinhold...the two Davids. The place is filled with them.

ROBBY

What is this—a social club or a shelter for old married farts?

The disco music resumes.

ROBBY

(checking his watch)

Ooh, I've got to fly! I'm late for a mahjong!

Al and Robby start to exit, but Al goes on alone as Robby stops to look at something out on the floor.

ROBBY

(looking out at the dance floor)

Well, look at that—a leather vest and nipple clamps tonight?

(to himself)

I think that's much more becoming than the harness.

ROBBY

(calling out)

Nice outfit, Chuck!

Robby exits quickly. The lights dim. The music stops.

[END OF EXCERPT]