

ACT TWO: THE MUDDLE IN THE MIDDLE OF
THE NIGHT

2.0 My Wife

Late that night the Professor and Babs are drinking. He's in some pain, maybe in his joints or his body overall. It is hard for him to get comfortable...

PROFESSOR. My wife. My third wife...

BABS. Yes...

PROFESSOR. This *fascinating...this captivating...this* insanely alluring creature...

BABS. ...yes?

PROFESSOR. *Hates me.*

BABS. Oh?

PROFESSOR. *And loves me...*

BABS. Of course...

PROFESSOR. I mean, she must love me a little, or she wouldn't have married me, right?

BABS. Absolutely.

PROFESSOR. I don't know what she was thinking. I mean, look at me...

BABS. Ummm...

PROFESSOR. No, seriously, look at me. This is what I look like. Exactly this. This is *me*.

BABS. Yes it is.

PROFESSOR. And, if you'll recall, I didn't look much better when we met, in case you were wondering...or *excusing...or judging...*

BABS. I wasn't...

PROFESSOR. No, maybe not. Maybe that's why I can talk to you. You don't judge, do you?

BABS. Not much, no.

PROFESSOR. Why is that?

BABS. Oh...

PROFESSOR. No, seriously, why?

BABS. Oh, my twenties, I guess. After a certain quantity of unnecessarily stupid choices and thoughtless acts—some with real consequences—I decided one probably ought to relinquish the right to judge others for anything...

PROFESSOR. I see.

Quick beat.

Were these...indiscretions of—?

BABS. Oh shhhh. No stories. Besides, you're asking for the wrong reasons. Anyway, you were saying? About you and your wife and how you look...?

PROFESSOR. Oh. Oh, yes... Well, here's the thing. Here's the odd little lacuna of my life...

BABS. Lacuna?

PROFESSOR. Umm...unfilled, unknown space. Puzzle. Gap...

BABS. Gotchya.

PROFESSOR. Ready?

BABS. Astound me.

PROFESSOR. I don't look like this in my mind.

BABS. No?

PROFESSOR. Not even close.

BABS. Really?

PROFESSOR. Absolutely.

BABS. So...what do you look like in your mind?

PROFESSOR. Better. Much better. My self-image is...amazingly better than the reality.

Even as I speak to you, at this precise moment, when I picture in my mind what you're looking at, though I know for a fact that you are seeing...*this (Gestures to himself.)* ...what I imagine is something much closer to... *oh, Sean Connery circa *The Untouchables*, maybe...or Alan Rickman in *Sense and Sensibility*...rather than...a slightly bloated, badly aging Bill Maher.*