

the beginning of

BRAZILIAN WAX ELOQUENT (from **FOREIGN AFFAIRS**)

a short comedy by Rich Orloff

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Time: The present

Place: A hotel room in Rio

Characters: JOEL and CAROL, in their fifties, more or less

As the play begins, JOEL and CAROL enter their hotel room in Rio. It's a stylish room overlooking the beach of Ipanema. They bring in their luggage (or, if possible, a bellhop carries it in, gets a tip, and exits).

CAROL

Wow.

JOEL

Rio. We're actually in Rio.

CAROL

And our luggage made it, too.

JOEL

(walking to the window:)

The beach of Ipanema... Isn't that the most gorgeous beach you've ever seen?

CAROL

Sure looks nicer than any of the beaches in Kansas City.

JOEL

"Cidade Mavilhosa" – the Marvelous City. My tongue is getting aroused just saying it.

CAROL

I think I packed too much.

JOEL

Unpacking can wait. Let's see Rio.

CAROL

How'd you like to take a walk through Old Town? It's supposed to be magnificent.

JOEL

I know. Let's go to the beach.

CAROL

How about going to the Museu de Arte
Moderne? It's supposed to be fantastic.

JOEL

Let's go to the beach.

CAROL

How about if we hike up Sugar Loaf Mountain?
The view's supposed to be amazing.

JOEL

Let's hike across the beach.

CAROL

Joel, I...

JOEL

What?

CAROL

I heard you on the phone last night with Seth.

JOEL

Oh, that was, that was just guy talk.

CAROL

You told Seth the main reason you wanted
to come to Rio was to gawk at "bodacious
babes in abbreviated bikinis".

JOEL

It's nothing. I like alliteration.

CAROL

I heard you go on and on.

JOEL

What were you doing –

CAROL

You need to talk softer when
you use your cell phone.

JOEL

You know, I'm sure you'll see a lot of
beefsteak on the beach, or bifteka,
or whatever the guys here are called.

CAROL

Look, if you want to go on the beach
and gawk, go ahead. I'll start unpacking.
With luck I'll be done by the end of the trip.

JOEL

Honey, I –

CAROL

Go. Enjoy the –
(struggling to alliterate:)
bountiful bevy of buxom bagels—I have
no idea what I'm saying.

JOEL

Carol, I won't be happy knowing you're here
being miserable. I'd like you with me –

CAROL

Pretending to be happy.

JOEL

You do that so well.

CAROL

Great.

JOEL

I mean it. When the kids were little,
I can't tell you how much I admired
how excited you got by those stupid
drawings they did. I couldn't fake it.

CAROL

I love art.

JOEL

Me, too. It's one of the things we share.

CAROL

Oh, sure. When I was overwhelmed in Florence
last year looking at Michelangelo's David,
you kept going on and on about, "Why isn't
he circumcised? He's Jewish, isn't he?"

JOEL

I had a great time in Florence. And I loved
making one of your dreams come true.

CAROL

Then enjoy the beach. I'll see you later.

JOEL

Honey, my desire to look at those women does not detract from my love for you in any way.

CAROL

It doesn't?

JOEL

Not at all. I don't want to *be* with them; I want to be with *you*.

CAROL

Gawking at them.

JOEL

Enjoying their aesthetic beauty.

CAROL

Preferably with a hard-on.

JOEL

I think increased blood flow is a good thing.

CAROL

Look, honey, I think it's great that you're in touch with your inner pervert, but, but I'm just, I'm just not in the mood.

A beat.

JOEL

Was it something I said?

CAROL

No.

A beat.

JOEL

Was it something I did?

CAROL

No.

A beat.

JOEL

Was it something I didn't say or didn't do and should've said or done?

CAROL

No.

JOEL

This is the point where I'm supposed to ask what's really bothering you, isn't it?

CAROL

Whatever you'd like.

JOEL

What's really bothering you?

CAROL

Nothing.

A beat.

JOEL

Great. Can we go to the beach now?

CAROL

(resigned)

Okay. Okay. If that's what you want, let's go to the beach.

JOEL

Great. Let's put on our swimsuits –

CAROL

Swimsuits?

JOEL

It's the beach.

CAROL

Of course.

Carol takes out a one-piece swimsuit.

JOEL

Hey, you want to go downstairs and I'll buy you a bikini?

CAROL

No thank you.

JOEL

Why not?

CAROL

Because of something that happened
22 years ago.

JOEL

What?

CAROL

The twins.

JOEL

It's not like they're still inside you.

CAROL

No, but they left their marks on the way out.

JOEL

You know, older –
(off Carol's look:)
middle-aged women in Rio wear bikinis,
and they have stretch marks.

CAROL

No, they don't. They rub on some magic
cocoa butter, and it erases stretch marks,
increases estrogen, and removes cellulite.

JOEL

How, how about if we go downstairs to one
of the shops, and I buy you a skimpy bikini,
and we just say to hell with everyone.

CAROL

You really want me to walk around
in a bikini and be stared at by every
leech and degenerate on the beach?

JOEL

Fine by me.

CAROL

I could've sworn I phrased my question
to guarantee a No answer.