

The Gold Standard

George Freek



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THE GOLD STANDARD

by

George Freek

CAST

LEONARD: A retired insurance agent; late 60's to early 70's

MAX: A retired high school teacher; about the same age

Place

A Senior Center.

Time

The Present.

SCENE 1

Setting: *The recreation room of a Senior Center.*

At Rise: *MAX and LEONARD sit at a table playing checkers. There is a pause.*

LEONARD: It's your move.

MAX: Oh, yes. Sorry.

LEONARD: Something wrong?

MAX: No.

LEONARD: All right, then move.

MAX: Nothing's wrong...except I couldn't pee last night.

LEONARD: No?

MAX: Had to get up four, maybe five times, and nothing but a dribble.

LEONARD: That's not good.

MAX: Tell me about it!

LEONARD: Well, what did your doctor tell you?

MAX: Which doctor?

LEONARD: Which one did you talk to?

MAX: I didn't.

LEONARD: You better. You got to pee, you know.

MAX: Doctors! You know what I say about doctors?

LEONARD: I do know, because I probably say the same thing.

MAX: My son is a doctor.

LEONARD: Of course it's nothing personal.

MAX: It is to me!

LEONARD: All right. He's your son.

MAX: Let me tell you about my son. I get a birthday card from him every year. It comes from I don't know where because he doesn't even put a return address on it! Out east somewhere, I guess, maybe Baltimore.

LEONARD: So you do know from where.

MAX: Yes, that is if I can read the small print on the stamp cancellation, and that is what I get for my effort, one little birthday card, every year.

LEONARD: Well, we only have one birthday a year, thank God!

MAX: You don't get it. It's always the same card, and it doesn't even come on my birthday.

LEONARD: You can't trust the mail.

MAX: The wrong month?

LEONARD: *(pause)* What kind of doctor is he?

MAX: Urologist. Wouldn't you say that was ironic?

MAX: *(He moves a checker)* It's your move.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 2

(Lights come up on LEONARD at the checkerboard alone. MAX enters from the washroom.)

MAX: Boy, that felt good.

LEONARD: You saw the doctor?

MAX: He gave me some pills.

LEONARD: That's what doctors are for.

MAX: Don't even ask me what they cost!

LEONARD: I don't have to! Doctors and drug companies, they're crooks, every one of them!

MAX: Did I ever tell you about my son?

LEONARD: You did. Yes.

MAX: We never got along.

LEONARD: Well, people our age...that is not uncommon. There was the war in VietNam, race riots, drugs, many, many things. It was a generation gap.

MAX: No. The problem is that he is a rotten, selfish human being!

LEONARD: Was he born that way?

MAX: At this point, what's the difference?

LEONARD: I'm glad I never had any kids.

MAX: I also have a daughter. What does that mean?

LEONARD: That means I'm happy you are a great procreator.

MAX: I hope you're not trying to be sarcastic.

LEONARD: No, I'm not, because let me tell you something. When I want to be sarcastic, I don't have to TRY!

MAX: And let me tell you something. My daughter is a beautiful person!

LEONARD: Fine. It's your move.

MAX: All right. You don't want to hear it.

LEONARD: Look, I'm sorry.

MAX: No, I understand. It's boring to other people.

LEONARD: Maybe so, but I was rude. I'm happy you get along with your daughter.

MAX: Anybody would get along with that girl. But what am I saying 'girl!' She's a grown woman of forty. She has her own kids, who are wonderful, intelligent, considerate human beings like their mother.

LEONARD: So, she's married.

MAX: Divorced.

LEONARD: *(sighs)* Aren't we all?

MAX: Don't remind me of that bastard she married! The way he treated her! Never home at night, drugs, alcohol, women on the side. I'd rather just not think of the son-of-a-bitch!

LEONARD: Then don't.

MAX: You're absolutely right.

LEONARD: By the way, it's your move.

MAX: Okay, just give me a couple of minutes. (*LEONARD looks at him*) I got to pee again. Sorry. (*MAX rises and exits. LEONARD looks a bit annoyed*)

BLACKOUT

SCENE 3

(*Lights come up on the checkerboard table. MAX looks around the room. He appears a bit perplexed.*)

LEONARD: I'm not waiting all day.

MAX: It just seems like somebody's missing today.

LEONARD: You don't mean Richardson?

MAX: No. (*He looks around*) Isn't he here?

LEONARD: You see him?

MAX: Not offhand.

LEONARD: He hasn't been here in over a week.

MAX: He has a problem?

LEONARD: Yes, a big problem! He had a stroke.

MAX: No!

LEONARD: It happens.

MAX: A bad stroke?

LEONARD: Is there a good one? Let me tell you. It makes you think.

MAX: No. Don't tell me. I'd rather not think about that. I have other things to think about today, so whatever that makes you think about, keep it to yourself, okay?

LEONARD: Hey! You asked me!

MAX: You're right, I did. I'm sorry.

LEONARD: You don't want to hear, don't ask! It's your move.

MAX: *(pause)* Anyway, one thing we have to be thankful for.

LEONARD: What is that?

MAX: Living in this age, this era, this country. Every year or so, even every month, they come up with new drugs, drugs which only a few years ago would have been considered miracles. They're performing medical wonders.

LEONARD: If you can afford them!

MAX: Insurance. Medicare. What are a few bucks when we're talking about life?

LEONARD: I'll have to think about that one...while you're making your move.

MAX: So...where is Richardson?

LEONARD: He's at River Bluff.

MAX: The Nursing Home!

LEONARD: That's the place.

MAX: Oh my God! Once you're in there...

LEONARD: You don't have to tell me. They put my aunt in there.

MAX: They put many aunts in there.

LEONARD: And the rules, the regulations. It's like a god damn penitentiary!

MAX: They treat you like you're a moron, always giving you that eerie smile.

LEONARD: They're the ones who are the morons!

MAX: They treat you like a moron, and they also steal you blind!

LEONARD: Assuming you have anything left worth stealing.

MAX: My God!

LEONARD: So don't tell me about medical wonders! Please!

MAX: Thank goodness I have my own apartment.

LEONARD: You and me both, my friend.

MAX: A kitchen, a bedroom, a pot to pee in...

LEONARD: That's all a man needs.

MAX: And I come and go when I want, have a glass of wine when I feel like it, eat whatever I like when I feel like eating it.

LEONARD: Freedom! That is truly something to be thankful for!

MAX: Oh, that reminds me. Can you give me a ride home? My car is in the shop.

LEONARD: No, I'm sorry. I can't. I took the bus.

MAX: Why'd you do that?

LEONARD: (*slightly embarrassed*) My license has been restricted. I can't drive after dark any longer. I'm sorry.

BLACKOUT

SCENE 4

(Lights come up. The two again are sitting at the checkerboard. Now MAX is looking impatient.)

MAX: You do know it is your move?

LEONARD: I'm thinking.

MAX: What's to think about? It's your first move.

LEONARD: Tell me. Do you know Lucille Watson?

MAX: Should I know her?

LEONARD: No, probably not. She was a friend of my third wife. In spite of that, she's a very nice woman, rather pretty, for her age of course, a warm personality, still has a bit of a figure.

MAX: I guess we all still have a bit of a figure.

LEONARD: You know what I mean.

MAX: Now wait a minute! Do you mean? Are you thinking about—?

LEONARD: Asking her to go out.

MAX: You are?

LEONARD: No, you're right. It's an idiotic idea!

MAX: Hold on! I never said that!

LEONARD: All right. You're letting me say it. Fine, I'll say it! It's an idiotic idea!

MAX: No! I say go for it!

LEONARD: That's what you say? Honestly!

MAX: You've got nothing to lose, have you?

LEONARD: Oh no, nothing...except my dignity, my self-esteem, my self-respect—

MAX: Listen, nothing ventured, nothing gained.

LEONARD: That's a wonderful cliché, but what do I gain?

MAX: Well...that depends on what you go after.

LEONARD: All right, look. Suppose for the sake of supposing I ask her on a date. What do we do? Where do we go?

MAX: How about going to a movie?

LEONARD: A movie! Oh, that's a fine idea!

MAX: *(mildly insulted)* Why not?

LEONARD: Oh, yes, a fine idea! Except that I hate movies! They are all made for teen-agers...for stupid teenagers! Now you tell me. Would you like to sit for two hours with a mature adult in a room full of noisy, silly teenagers, staring at a movie screen filled with noisy, silly teenagers?

MAX: Well...suppose you take her to some nice restaurant for dinner?

LEONARD: I'd be constantly worried about my dentures.

MAX: She probably would be, too.

LEONARD: That's even worse!

MAX: Maybe you're right. *(beat)* It's your move.

LEONARD: I know that! *(He moves a checker)* Tell me. Did you love your wife?

MAX: Yes, of course I did. Didn't you love your wife?

LEONARD: Oh, I'm sure I loved them all...at the time I married them.

MAX: That makes sense.

LEONARD: So, look...How about sex?

MAX: *(looks at him curiously)* What the hell do you mean by that?

LEONARD: I mean do you miss having sex? I mean with a woman!

MAX: Sex! My God! When I think about all that. The nervousness beforehand, the sweating and grunting, trying to get comfortable. And later the anxiety that you weren't, you know, up to snuff. And you ask me if I miss having sex.

LEONARD: Well, do you?

MAX: Absolutely!

LEONARD: Do you know what I miss?

MAX: *(almost afraid to ask)* What?

LEONARD: I miss...missing having sex.

MAX: You are in a bad way!

LEONARD: Tell me about it!

MAX: I just did.

(A pause)

LEONARD: So did you have your prostate examination?

MAX: Boy, that is not fun.

LEONARD: You think I don't know that?

END OF FREEVIEW

You'll want to read and perform this show!