

OUR VOICES: SENIOR SELFIES





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We help older performers fulfill their theatrical dreams!

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OUR VOICES: SENIOR SELFIES

BACKGROUND NOTE

Our Voices gives seniors a way to share their knowledge, skills, and experiences through theatre.

The *Our Voices* creation group of twelve ranged in age from 63 to 94, and met weekly to talk about what it's like to be a senior today. Early on, one group member said she couldn't believe their "ramblings" could be turned into a play, so I drafted a scene from one of their stories about a doctor's visit, which the group read and revised the following week. This sparked the creative approach for the entire play, and it encouraged the group to appreciate and treasure their stories.

At the start of *Our Voices*, most participants flatly refused to consider going on stage as actors. But as the group read and revised the scenes, a sense of ownership grew. To my amazement, when it came time to start rehearsals, every *Our Voices* member decided to act in the play, which we called *Our Voices: Senior Selfies*.

Our Voices: Senior Selfies was performed on October 18 and 19, 2014, in a script-in-hand fully mounted production, to sold-out houses and standing ovations at the 120-seat Eden Mills Community Hall. A professional production team supported the production. The play touched audience members of all ages and sparked animated discussion among the many people who stayed for talk-back sessions after the shows.

For a more detailed overview of the *Our Voices* process, please see the six-minute *Our Voices: Senior Selfies* video on YouTube.

I was very honored to have worked with the *Our Voices* group to develop a play from their humorous, dramatic, and stereotype-busting stories, and I hope you enjoy them!

Catherine Frid, Playwright

OUR VOICES: SENIOR SELFIES

SCENE ORDER

| | Title | Page # | Suggested Cast |
|-----|---|--------|-----------------------|
| 1.1 | Speaking My Mind (two version) | 4 | Ensemble (7f, 2m +) |
| 1.2 | Doctor's Visit | 7 | 2f (or 1f, 1m) |
| 1.3 | So You Think You Can Help? Game Show | 9 | 4f, 1m (or 3,2) |
| 1.4 | Crones I | 14 | 2f, 1m |
| 1.5 | Second Lease on Life | 16 | 1f, 1m, Ensemble |
| 1.6 | Old Woman's Secret | 21 | 1f |
| 1.7 | Crones II | 22 | 7f, 1m |
| 1.8 | Elephant in the Room | 25 | 4f |
| 1.9 | People's Choice Awards – Part I | 28 | 6f (or 5f, 1m) |
| | INTERMISSION | | |
| 2.1 | Generation Gap | 31 | 1f, 1 m or f as child |
| 2.2 | The Sunset of Dawn and Don | 35 | 2f, 1m |
| 2.3 | Smart Alec Car Sales | 41 | 1f, 1m |
| 2.4 | Daughter's Revelation | 44 | 2f |
| 2.5 | Driving | 49 | 8, f or m |
| 2.6 | Crones III | 51 | 9f (3 act as men) |
| 2.7 | Quickie | 54 | Ensemble |
| 2.8 | People's Choice Awards – Part II | 55 | 6f (or 5f, 1m) |
| 2.9 | Finale Song: Our Voices | 56 | Ensemble |

Notes:

- Though some roles are for younger people, all characters are meant to be played by senior actors.
- The script may be amended to 'localize' the names of places.

Scene 1.1 – Version One
SPEAKING MY MIND

Setting: A large projection screen is on stage.

At Rise: The Ensemble stands and sits on stage.

WOMAN 1: Our generation was told, if you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all.

WOMAN 2: Not like young people, expressing their feelings all the time.

WOMAN 3: We were taught to button it up.

MAN 1: Never cry in public.

WOMAN 4: What will the neighbors think?

WOMAN 5: Don't show off!

MAN 2: Stiff upper lip.

WOMAN 6: When I turned 80, I decided to say what I was thinking.

WOMAN 7: I'm not going to wait until I'm 80.

ALL: Welcome to *Our Voices: Senior Selfies!*

(They each pull out a cell phone, pose and snap a selfie. A montage of the selfies of each actor is projected onto the screen. They turn to inspect the photographs, with dismay.)

WOMAN 1: Who's that old lady?

WOMAN 2: There's something wrong with this camera.

WOMAN 3: I don't look like that!

MAN 1: Is that what people see when they look at me?

WOMAN 5: Let's try it again.

WOMAN 6: Three, two, one...Go!

(They each take another selfie. This time the images projected on the screen are coming-of-age photos of each of them, from their teens or early 20s.)

MAN 2: That's more like it.

WOMAN 7: I still feel the same as when I looked like that!

ALL: Welcome to *Our Voices: Senior Selfies!*

END OF SCENE

Scene 1.1—Version Two
SPEAKING MY MIND
(Alternate Version, Without Projections)

At Rise: *The Ensemble stands and sits on an empty stage.*

WOMAN 1: Our generation was told, if you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all.

WOMAN 2: Not like young people, expressing their feelings all the time.

WOMAN 3: We were taught to button it up.

MAN 1: Never cry in public.

WOMAN 4: What will the neighbors think?

WOMAN 5: Don't show off!

MAN 2: Stiff upper lip.

WOMAN 6: When I turned 80, I decided to say what I was thinking.

WOMAN 7: I'm not going to wait until I'm 80.

ALL: Welcome to *Our Voices: Senior Selfies!*

WOMAN 5: *(to the others)* Ready?

(They each pull out a cell phone, pose and snap a selfie. They inspect their cell phones, with dismay.)

WOMAN 1: Who's that old lady?

WOMAN 2: There's something wrong with this camera.

WOMAN 3: I don't look like that!

MAN 1: Is that what people see when they look at me?

WOMAN 7: I still feel the same as I did when I was 25!

ALL: Welcome to *Our Voices: Senior Selfies!*

END OF SCENE

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Scene 1.2
DOCTOR'S VISIT

CAST

FELICITY: A patient, a senior woman

DOCTOR KNOWSITALL: Man or woman, 30's or 40's

Setting: A doctor's office. Certificates of achievement hang on the back wall.

At Rise: FELICITY sits in the office. The DOCTOR barges into the room wearing a white lab coat, with clipboard and pen and a stethoscope.

FELICITY: Hello, Doctor Knowsital.

DOCTOR: Hello, Felicity, what brings you here today?

FELICITY: I've had a sore throat for six weeks, I just can't shake it. I can't even talk comfortably, and--

DOCTOR: All right then, let me take a look.

(DOCTOR looks down her throat with a tongue depressor, then feels the lymph nodes in FELICITY's neck. A cell phone rings and DOCTOR fumbles it out of a pocket.)

DOCTOR: Doctor Knowsital. *(pause)* Yes. *(pause)* How old is he? *(pause)* That procedure's not routine at his age. Did he ask for it specially? *(pause)* I can't see him for six weeks.

(The DOCTOR's conversation continues in the background. FELICITY stands up and looks at DOCTOR's certificates.)

FELICITY: *(to audience)* Have you ever noticed how certificates in the doctor's office say the doctor is 'practicing'? I don't want somebody 'practicing' on me, I prefer somebody who already knows what they're doing.

DOCTOR: *(to phone)* I'll have my nurse call you. Good-bye.

(DOCTOR ends the call and looks into FELICITY's ears.)

DOCTOR: (*mumbling*) How's your...(incomprehensible words)

FELICITY: Pardon me?

DOCTOR: (*louder*) How's your hearing?

FELICITY: It's fine when you speak up.

DOCTOR: So your hearing is going.

FELICITY: That's not what I said.

DOCTOR: (*puts the stethoscope on FELICITY's back*) Quick breath in and then out. (*moves the stethoscope to her chest*) Quick breath in and out. (*beat*) Why are you here, again?

FELICITY: I've had a sore throat. For six weeks.

DOCTOR: Your throat is a bit inflamed. Suck on a Halls.

(*DOCTOR makes a note and continues talking in a mumble that FELICITY can't quite hear.*)

FELICITY: I'm also having shoulder pain.

DOCTOR: Well, at your age, not everything's going to work perfectly.

FELICITY: (*to audience*) Doctors have been telling me that since I was 30.

DOCTOR: I'll give you a prescription for Tylenol 3.

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Now buy the entire show—such fun!