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san-guine *adj.* 1. cheerful, hopeful, or confident: *a sanguine disposition; sanguine expectations.* 2. reddish; ruddy: *a sanguine complexion.* 3. (*in old physiology*) having blood as the predominating humor and consequently being ruddy-faced, cheerful, etc. 4. bloody, sanguinary. 5. blood-red, red. —Syn 1. enthusiastic, buoyant, animated, lively, spirited.

Cast of Characters

ANGIE, a fashionable, fully empowered sales associate working in the service economy; the same age as Arnie

ARNIE, thirties, a valued team member in the-only-constant-is-change world of high-tech-solution-sales

WILLIE, works with Arnie; married to Marie

MARIE, a friend of Angie's; blond

Setting

Angie and Arnie's place. We can see at least a piece of the living room, which is oriented toward the TV. We also see the dining area, the kitchen behind a half wall, and the front door, on the outside of which is a brass mailbox.

ANGIE AND ARNIE SANGUINE

A FUGUE

by **Larry Loebell**

(At rise, we hear a car come to a stop, shut off its engine. Two doors open and shut. ANGIE and ARNIE enter, coming from work. Each carries a briefcase. Additionally, she carries a pocketbook, he a gym bag. They unlock their front door, disarm their security system, which is beeping, set their burdens down and set about their routines. She fixes herself a drink. He begins shedding his clothes, leaving them strewn about. She stays dressed.)

ARNIE. What a day.

ANGIE. Home at last.

ARNIE. It takes longer and longer.

ANGIE. I didn't stop for a minute.

ARNIE. Even with the bypass.

ANGIE. From the moment I got there.

ARNIE. And the car-pool lane.

ANGIE. There were mountains on my desk.

ARNIE. And the goddamn bus lane.

ANGIE. And everyone screaming...

ARNIE. They're all maniacs.

ANGIE. "Now! I need it, *now*."

ARNIE. Everyone driving at warp speed, totally wiped, totally buzzed...

ANGIE. Like that wasn't normal, or we weren't already going...

ARNIE. Including me, we're all going...

ANGIE. As fast as we can.

ARNIE. Which is what makes it...

ANGIE. Diverting.

ARNIE. Dangerous.

ANGIE. Exciting.

ARNIE. Exhausting.

ANGIE. It's good to be home.

ARNIE. How was your day?

ANGIE. We signed off on Greenstein.

ARNIE. Nice work. Bonus potential in that?

ANGIE. Could be. Yours?

ARNIE. The DeForest deal nearly tanked.

ANGIE. I thought it was in the bag.

ARNIE. Yeah, well...

ANGIE. We hardballed the Gordons. They folded.

ARNIE. Seidel chewed my ass. Like I was the only one involved.

ANGIE. Well, another day.

ARNIE. Forget that. Another night.

ANGIE. Could be your lucky one.

ARNIE. That a promise?

ANGIE. You wanna little something?

ARNIE. You know I do.

ANGIE. Pick me up?

ARNIE. I'm sure it will. But right now I want...

ANGIE. Energy snack?

ARNIE. A few minutes...

ANGIE. Caffeine?

ARNIE. Pure relaxation.

ANGIE. Comfort food?

ARNIE. Just to kick back, take off my... *(He struggles with his shirt.)* and not have anyone say...

ANGIE. Anything?

ARNIE. You're god damn right. Not a god damn thing, thank you very much.

(ARNIE continues to shed clothes through the following, eventually getting to his underwear, white jockey shorts and a crew-style tee, which is how he is dressed through the rest of the play.)

ANGIE. You're in luck.

ARNIE. How so?

ANGIE. That's about what we've got.

ARNIE. What?

ANGIE. Not a goddamn thing.

ARNIE. Why is that lucky?

ANGIE. Simplifies things.

ARNIE. What does?

ANGIE. You know, I could get really angry at you.

ARNIE. At me? What for?

ANGIE. For not paying attention.

ARNIE. Maybe I *would* like something. Maybe something...

ANGIE. But I don't. Because it's healthier to stay...

ARNIE. Spicy.

ANGIE. Cool. Who needs to expend all that negative energy, right?

ARNIE. Does spicy appeal to you?

ANGIE. When by this time of day I only have so much.

ARNIE. I know it's a little selfish, but I really think that's what I'm in the mood for.

ANGIE. Anyway, you know what they say. Positive energy brings positive results.

ARNIE. And not just empty carbs, either. Like no pepper nacho chips. I need protein.

ANGIE. Besides which, I love you and therefore forgive you. Let me see.

(ANGIE picks up ARNIE's shoes, hands them to him on her way to the fridge. He puts them down again, obviously not taking her hint to get them out of the way. She looks over the possibilities.)

ANGIE. Spicy protein. Spicy protein. We have sardines. I could mash them with cayenne.

ARNIE. No.

ANGIE. Croquettes, with garlic and chives.

ARNIE. Forget it.

ANGIE. Pan-fried with Jamaican Jerk spices.

ARNIE. Angie...

ANGIE. *(Taking out a jar filled with a red liquid:)* What about in salsa.

ARNIE. Isn't there anything?

ANGIE. *(Sniffing the contents:)* Oh, never mind. I just used this jar...

ARNIE. Fresh?

ANGIE. For leftovers. Yogurt and beet salad. I think...

(She offers it. He shudders.)

ARNIE. That's really it?

ANGIE. There's pasta. But that's just "empty carbs"...

ARNIE. No. That's complex carbs. Penne with pesto?

ANGIE. Macaroni with cheese. *(Sniffs it:)* On the edge.

ARNIE. I'll chance it.

ANGIE. 30 seconds— *(Sniffs again:)* 50 seconds then please eat it over the sideboard. On high.

(He gets it from her, puts it in the microwave and sets the timer.)

ARNIE. I want to sit down.

ANGIE. Arnie.

ARNIE. I won't spill.

ANGIE. I'm sick of cleaning up everywhere...

ARNIE. Don't worry.

(The microwave dings.)

ARNIE. You want some?

ANGIE. That wasn't 50 seconds.

(ARNIE takes it out and goes to the chair, sits and eats. After a moment, he puts his plate down and reaches for the TV remote. He aims it, but glances at ANGIE who is glowering at him, thinks better of it and puts it down. As soon as he does, ANGIE goes to the front door. She opens it, places her hand on the mailbox, and is about to open it, when she turns and comes back in. She closes the front door and leans against it, closes her eyes and chants the following little mantra.)

ANGIE. Ed McMahon and Edward Teller.

I know you both are happy fellers.

I love to see you on TV.

Giving dough to folks like me.

So in my box I hope you'll drop
the winning sweepstakes en-vel-lop.

ARNIE. Envelope. En-vel-lope. I tell you every time, it sounds ludicrous when you...

ANGIE. Shhh. I have to say the rest.

ARNIE. Please don't.

ANGIE. Shhh. In my box I hope will slumber
The winning millionaire sweepstakes number.

Then everything will be just fine
and my life will grow san-guine.

ARNIE. It's sanguine. Rhymes with penguin.

ANGIE. You could be a little supportive.

ARNIE. I'm just telling you, the right way to pronounce...

ANGIE. And I'm just telling you to hold your pronouncements until I open the box at least. It might make a difference.

ARNIE. Oh, yeah.

ANGIE. Well, it might. Besides, this doesn't have to be perfect English. These are incantations. This is shamanism. This is magical summoning.

ARNIE. Oho.

ANGIE. OK, but if it's not there, it's your fault.

ARNIE. It's my fault.

ANGIE. Yes. It's your fault.

ARNIE. I just said it's my fault.

ANGIE. What is?

ARNIE. That it's not there.

ANGIE. How do you know that it's not there?

ARNIE. You just said it wasn't.

ANGIE. That's only *if* it's not there.

ARNIE. Trust me. It's not there. It can't be there.

ANGIE. Of course it can. It's possible.

ARNIE. How can it?

ANGIE. There's a probability. It's printed on the entry. Someone has to win. It could be anyone. I may already be a winner.

ARNIE. That's ridiculous.

ANGIE. Why?

ARNIE. Because it's rigged.

ANGIE. Oh, really.

ARNIE. Really.

ANGIE. And you know this for a fact.

ARNIE. You really think they give away... *(Searching for the amount)*

ANGIE. How could they say they give away...

ARNIE and ANGIE. Up to ten million dollars!

ANGIE. And not do it? Don't you think somebody would...

ARNIE. What, notice?

ANGIE. Make them.

ARNIE. Maybe they pay them off.

ANGIE. Now you're being ridiculous.

ARNIE. Am I? If they pre-choose the number and no one mails it in... Figure that in your probability.

ANGIE. Everyone mails them in.

ARNIE. That's the reason.

ANGIE. The reason for what?

ARNIE. The reason you can't win.

ANGIE. What is?

ARNIE. I didn't mail it in.

ANGIE. What?

ARNIE. That's how I know you aren't going to win. I didn't mail it.

ANGIE. You didn't mail it.

ARNIE. You gave it to me to mail. I put it in my inside jacket pocket. The herringbone. Then it got warm. I carried the jacket all day instead of wearing it. I forgot I had it.

ANGIE. What about after that. When you remembered.

ARNIE. It was weeks later, during that cold snap. I had already moved it to the back of my closet. I had to pull it out...

ANGIE. You could have mailed it then. I might have missed the early bird, but you could have still, I might have still...

ARNIE. Waste of a stamp.

ANGIE. My stamp, Arnie.

ARNIE. Our stamp. (*A beat.*) I just meant it was too late. The deadline had passed.

ARNIE. What'd you do with it?

(He goes to the closet, takes out his jacket, takes out the envelope, and hands it to her. Referring to the macaroni and cheese:)

Is there any more of this?

ANGIE. I need to sit down. I need to process. I need to release my anger, not bottle it. I need to get beyond the disappointment. There is a silver lining here. This is not the end of the world. I'm going to be fine with this. We're going to be fine. Everything's really fine.

ARNIE. Even cold it tastes like...

ANGIE. Shit, Arnie.

ARNIE. Full bodied cheddar.

ANGIE. I think you owe me...

ARNIE. Up to ten million?

ANGIE. An apology.

ARNIE. For forgetting?

ANGIE. No. For...

ARNIE. Not believing?

ANGIE. No. For...

ARNIE. Not thinking winning the damn sweepstakes will make all our problems suddenly disappear?

ANGIE. Let me finish. You keep butting...

ARNIE. In? I'm sorry.

ANGIE. You're sorry?

ARNIE. Yes. I'm sorry.

ANGIE. For what?

ARNIE. For what you wanted an apology for.

ANGIE. Not for butting in.

ARNIE. No. Of course not.

ANGIE. OK. For the other.

ARNIE. Yes.

ANGIE. Then I accept.

ARNIE. So is there?

ANGIE. Is there what?

ARNIE. Any more of this.

ANGIE. No.

ARNIE. I'm still hungry.

ANGIE. I'm sorry.

ARNIE. Not your fault.

ANGIE. Yes it is.

ARNIE. Why?

ANGIE. I forgot to shop.

ARNIE. You forgot?

ANGIE. Because of...you know.

ARNIE. No. I. Do Not. Know.

ANGIE. Because of what we agreed not to even remind ourselves of because we were spending so much time doing...

ARNIE. Watching the news? You didn't shop because of CNN? We haven't had it on in weeks.

ANGIE. I went out, the other day, remember?

ARNIE. Tuesday.

ANGIE. Wednesday.

ARNIE. Whatever.

ANGIE. And I got to the store safe and sound.

ARNIE. Safeway?

ANGIE. Price Chopper. I didn't even play the radio in the car. I was very focused.

ARNIE. A safe approach.

ANGIE. But it was on at the store. Not just on. On every TV. On a whole wall of TVs. Big screen, small screen, projection models. In the first aisle. Before you even get to the food. It was a gauntlet. I was weak. I couldn't get through.

ARNIE. So you watched for a minute.

ANGIE. A minute. Exactly. I promised myself. I can do this. Watch a minute, walk away. But it's like a black hole. It pulls in everything that comes near. I was helpless.

ARNIE. Feather in a blizzard.

ANGIE. More like water down a drain.

ARNIE. Really?

ANGIE. I think so. Or dust into a vacuum.

ARNIE. I get your drift.

ANGIE. I was sucked in totally.

ARNIE. Oh baby. (*A beat.*) So what's happening. Global hot spots? Trials of the century? Economic turmoil? Political scandals? No. Don't tell me.

ANGIE. Damaging revelations. Smart bombs. Glock-toting teens. Wiretapped bimbos. Megalomaniacal tyrants.

ARNIE. Enough! I said don't.

ANGIE. I saw Marie there.

ARNIE. Marie? Your friend Marie? Willie's wife Marie? Willie who I work with? Marie who hasn't been six feet from her TV for more than ten minutes since the Gulf War at least? Since the low-speed chase for certain? That Marie? Out? Dressed?

ANGIE. Amazing, isn't it? Her first time in ages, she said.

ARNIE. She's fanatical.

ANGIE. I invited her to drop by.

ARNIE. You didn't.

ANGIE. She won't come. She can't tear herself away.

ARNIE. She was away when you saw her.

ANGIE. That was different.

ARNIE. How?

ANGIE. There was a lull.

ARNIE. A lull?

ANGIE. A temporary time of no absolute excitement.

ARNIE. There are no lulls. Those guys are professionals. They make sure.

ANGIE. She was out of food. Like us.

ARNIE. Did she get any?

ANGIE. No. That's the whole point. We both got hooked on the first aisle and we watched until the security guards kicked us out when the store was closing.

ARNIE. Turn it on.

ANGIE. What, now?

ARNIE. Just for a minute.

ANGIE. I can't. You know what happens. We vowed. We swore. No matter what.

ARNIE. I'll help you. You'll help me. We need a fix. To forget there's no food here. To catch up. To get back in the loop. You wanna know the real reason I nearly lost the DeForest deal? No small talk. DeForest is into it. I just couldn't cut it. But there was Willie, mister man on the spot, with details, details, details. He's got info. He's got sources. He's got theories. I need to get back into the loop.

ANGIE. We really don't want to do this.

ARNIE. We have to.

ANGIE. Why do we have to?

ARNIE. To see if anything sensational is going on. If it is, we're safe.

ANGIE. Safe from what?

ARNIE. From *who*.

ANGIE. What?

ARNIE. From Willie and Marie. If anything is, they'll be home watching.

ANGIE. What problems did you mean when you said we had problems before?

ARNIE. Before when?

ANGIE. Before when you said it wouldn't solve all our problems.

ARNIE. Not watching?

ANGIE. The sweepstakes.

ARNIE. I don't know. The ones everyone has. Communication. Sex.

ANGIE. We have sex problems?

ARNIE. I don't know. I thought you thought we did.

ANGIE. I never said that.

ARNIE. What about when you say I'm too...

ANGIE. Well, that. But it's not really a problem.

ARNIE. Or when you think I'm over eager to...

ANGIE. All men are. I just sometimes feel we're out of...

ARNIE. Or when I look at younger...

ANGIE. OK. I admit I don't like that. But it's only certain people. Certain blondes, actually. It's not everyone. It's not every glance on the street.

ARNIE. I was just saying that the sweepstakes won't really solve...

ANGIE. OK. It's Marie. When you look at...

ARNIE. Marie?

ANGIE. Yes.

ARNIE. Angie, the last person on earth you have to concern yourself with my looking at is...

ANGIE. You like her, don't you?

ARNIE. She's your friend.

ANGIE. Aside from that.

ARNIE. Well, she's all right, I guess. It's him I don't like.

ANGIE. Really? I thought you two were like peas in a...

ARNIE. It's a work relationship.

ANGIE. You used to say he gave your team depth.

ARNIE. When I really got to know him...

ANGIE. You didn't like his style?

ARNIE. It wasn't his style.

ANGIE. You didn't like his views.

ARNIE. It wasn't his views.

ANGIE. You didn't like his values.

ARNIE. It wasn't his values.

ANGIE. Marie. Willie. What a pleasant surprise.

(MARIE and WILLIE enter. They move as if they are in a hurry.)

MARIE. Your back door was opened. (*Reacting to Arnie's state of undress:*) Oh, you're...

ANGIE. We were just about to...

WILLIE. We have incredible news. Unbelievable news!

MARIE. I can't believe you're not watching.

ARNIE. Watching what?

ANGIE. What incredible news?

MARIE. The crisis.

ANGIE. We made an agreement.

ARNIE. We were getting just a little bit too caught up...

WILLIE. Wait until everyone at work hears this.

ARNIE. You wouldn't.

(WILLIE smiles and shrugs. ARNIE grabs the remote, aims and fires. It comes on.)

MARIE. (*Immediately drawn in:*) Are they still...?

WILLIE. Analyzing. We haven't missed anything.

ARNIE. You look very nice, Marie.

ANGIE. (*To ARNIE:*) You see?

ARNIE. Tell us your news?

WILLIE. It's incredible. You tell them, Marie.

MARIE. OK. OK. OK. OK. It's unbelievable.

WILLIE. Tell them. Tell them.

MARIE. I can't. I can't. I can't. I can't. It's so great. You tell them.

WILLIE. All right! All right! All right! Angie, Arnie. You won't believe this. We won the you-may-already-be-a-winner-sweepstakes. It was us. We already were.

ARNIE. You're kidding.

MARIE. Can you believe it? Isn't it fabulous?

ARNIE. Terrific.

ANGIE. Terrific?

ARNIE. Yes, dear. You can see that Marie and Willie have had some great luck...

ANGIE. It's mine.

MARIE. What?

ANGIE. Mine. I mean, it should be mine. If Arnie hadn't forgotten to mail it, there would have been one more entry in the drum when they did the drawing, and it wouldn't have been you. It would have been a totally different dynamic in there. It would have been me, or someone else. Damn it, Arnie. I'm sorry, but it should have been me.

WILLIE. What are you talking about? Arnie what is she talking about?

ARNIE. I think it's like when the butterfly beats its wings in Brazil.

WILLIE. You know, I often find conversation with you two totally disorienting. What does that mean?

ARNIE. It means that any little thing can change the outcome of...

MARIE. Look there's a special report.

(WILLIE and MARIE glom the chairs. But ANGIE moves to block the set.)

ANGIE. No. Out. You may not watch. This is my house and you cannot just drop in...

MARIE. But you invited me over...

ANGIE. Announce something like this and just expect us to be...

MARIE. And we told the roving rewarders to come and videotape us here.

ANGIE. Gracious.

ARNIE. Here?

MARIE. Yes. Watching together. Actually, Willie suggested **it**. He thought if Seidel saw you on TV...

WILLIE. You know how they show up with that big phony cardboard check and everyone looks surprised. Only in reality they call first to make sure someone is going to be there to be surprised.

MARIE. They want lots of neighbors and friends around to witness the giveaway. Lots of smiles and hugs. Makes good TV. Of course, we immediately thought of you.

ARNIE. To be on TV with you?

WILLIE. Yes.

ARNIE. That's the darndest thing...

ANGIE. No.

MARIE. No?

ANGIE. No. It's my prize. It's my TV. It's my house. No. No. No.

ARNIE. What's gotten into you? I apologize for my wife. She hasn't been herself since she found out I didn't mail... Please, sit. Watch.

(ARNIE pulls ANGIE away from the set. WILLIE and MARIE settle in. ANGIE resists.)

ARNIE. Listen. Here's my idea. I'll get a steak knife. I'll hack them to death. I mean, we can't stand them anyhow. I know it's wrong, but I'll do it. I love you. I'll do anything to restore your spirits. Then we'll go over to their house and hit star 69 on their telephone. That'll return the call to the Sweepstakes. We'll tell them we changed our mind, that we want to get the loot at home. Call us sentimental. Then when they show up to give the ten million to Willie and Marie, we'll be there. We'll be in their house; we'll have their IDs. Who'll know? Then we'll sail to Bora Bora. If they ever catch us, we'll have enough money for a legal defense dream team that can get us off.

ANGIE. *(Heading for the kitchen knife rack:)* OK. Let's do it.

ARNIE. *(Holding her back:)* I was kidding.

ANGIE. It's a good plan.

ARNIE. Well, here's something better.

ANGIE. What.

ARNIE. They didn't win.

ANGIE. What?

ARNIE. It was a joke. A few of the guys at work cooked it up. To pay him back. To pay him back for being such a know it all smart-ass.

ANGIE. You're torturing me.

ARNIE. Nope.

ANGIE. I *thought* the roving rewarders showed up unannounced.

ARNIE. We've gotten pretty darn tired of him and his theories and his analysis and his better-informed-than-thought attitude. We thought we'd bring him down a peg.

ANGIE. You're right.

ARNIE. I am?

ANGIE. It's better.

(Behind them, WILLIE and MARIE, watching TV, are getting more and more excited.)

WILLIE. It's over.

(WILLIE and MARIE hug each other and dance around.)

ARNIE. What's going on.

MARIE. Willie just won a thousand smackers.

ANGIE. How? Just sitting here? I didn't hear the phone ring. Hey, that was my thousand dollars.

WILLIE. Not on the phone. From the office pool.

ANGIE. The office pool?

WILLIE. Sure. Didn't Arnie tell you? On the exact time the latest crisis ends. Victor, vanquished, settled score or lopsided. It doesn't matter. Just the time. Oh, man, I'm getting good at this. I've gotten where I can sense the rhythm.

ANGIE. I didn't hear about...

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