

THE GOLDBLOCKS EXIT

A Monologue

By Gail Mangham

1608 St Andrews Way

Prescott, AZ 86301

928 771 2554

gailmangham@gmail.com

Cast: One woman, 60's to 70's, dressed in nice but casual clothing, light makeup. She grew up in Texas, but lost much of her accent. She drinks 3 martinis in the course of the monologue, but her inebriation is quite subtle exhibiting only in a benign expansiveness and flair for the dramatic. From time to time she may lose her standard American speech or affect a more posh accent for effect. There should be no caricature unless intentional on her part.

She is experiencing the subtlest symptoms of dementia. The kind when you can't recall vocabulary you've used your whole life, names, places visited or when you rush through a story, your mind sprinting ahead of the words, making sure the synapses are providing the needed information or when you fall into a silence waiting for the right word, concept, date, determined to will it into being. The actor may search for such opportunities, but use them oh so subtly, so that the audience is not quite sure whether there is a problem or not.

Set: The following can be scaled down as required. Bar with martini set up. Three servings of martinis are pre made. One serving is already in glass with lemon twist, remaining two in shaker. One dish of olives on toothpicks and one dish of lemon twists. Easy chair (wing back style but not so much that sight lines are obscured), side table, floor lamp, picture in frame of her youngest aunt.

(In the opening Blackout, the woman speaks the following line...)

Lights up.

(Lights come up suddenly and she blinks, and holds up her martini.)

I'd offer you one, but...I don't share my martinis.

Especially when I'm creating. I'm writing this monologue. I mean *this* monologue right now, this instant. It's a competition. *Swimming with Giants*—that's the theme. I'm a wannabe writer. Of course I can *write*.

Emails—I'm very good with emails! My emails are the BEST, the BEST words, the Best thoughts! (mimics Trump gesture and voice on the word 'best'). Draw the line at tweeting;

tweeting is for twits. My postings on Facebook? They shape the world! And research papers. OK my last paper was my dissertation—a lifetime ago. It’s actually sitting on a shelf (spoken with mock grandeur/affectation) in a library of Gothic style and proportion. I’m an author; I’m published! (self-deprecating laughter.) Last time I looked, no one has ever checked it out.

(*Sips martini and sits in chair.*)

To be a writer, a fantasy I suppose--like galloping across a mountain meadow bareback--clothing optional-- but long hair required, dancing a Viennese waltz with a tall, dark and yes! handsome guy in (searches mind for the word) uh those things on the shoulders, tip of my tongue,--YES epaulettes, no corset please, oh yes and having a big reunion with my family, all my sons in the kitchen cooking...and singing.

But to see my name on the cover of a book and know that people are reading it.
Big fantasy. Egad--it would be like someone watching me have sex.
Well, in any case...intimate.

So --*Swimming with Giants*. (*Sips drink.*) Very average swimmer and don’t know any giants.
I’m in deep shit here. I know, I know-- theme, metaphor, action.
Write what you know about. That would be me I guess.
I know me pretty well, 70+ years.

Nutshell-- born, grew up, married, had children, grandchildren, lived abroad, trod the boards of many a stage, and now Act III is upon me. Possibly a short Act III. It should be short I suppose...actually ideally it should be the perfect length with a perfect exit. Leave too soon and the audience is left wanting more--and maybe me as well; stay too long and you might get the hook. “Aye there’s the rub.” The rub?
A metaphor. But for what?

Still no swimming-- or giants for that matter. Sheesh I’m lost here; almost had it.
My brain is so fuc...sorry...terribly fuzzy.

Now is the time when I would normally take a walk, drive across country or drift off to sleep. That’s when the ideas come, really come. Time for Martini # 2.
There are three in this monologue I’ve decided.

(*Gets up to make martini.*)

Some people have great Act III’s. Acts Three?? (*Pause as she grapples with this for a moment.*) They find new love, new careers, solve humanity’s problems, figure out the meaning of life, die peacefully with their loved ones around them.
“Aye there’s the rub.” The exit.

(*Distracted by choice of martini garnish.*)

Olive or Twist...Twist or Olive. Why not both?

(Pops olive in mouth and drops a twist in martini.)

Oh dear lost 'me' train of thought. *(Done in a faux British accent.)*

Oh right! Exit. Finding the Goldilocks moment to move on to 'the last, great adventure'--
too soon, too late—just right

(These last two words are spoken as she finishes pouring in glass. She sips, approves.)

Seven, ten, thirteen, respectively-- years that is. Years that my three aunts lived with...Alz--
(stops herself and drops voice to a stage whisper) Maybe I won't say it. Some people believe
that if you name something you make it real, manifest it.

*(The following interruption in her musings has a completely different rhythm and tone than
the foregoing. It's quick and lively as she discovers details of the memory and experiences
growing satisfaction at her accomplishment.)*

Oh my God! Swimming! Giants! I just remembered. OK! Got this! I was sixteen working at a
summer job. No money one day, so I decided to walk home rather than take the bus. It's
blazing hot, summertime in Houston. A mile into the walk I suddenly come to a point where I
have to either cross a very busy 6 lane highway or I could, *could* swim across Buffalo Bayou
running under the road. I take off my shoes, stuff them in my purse, hold it over my head and
wade in. Can't see the damn bottom! Mud oozes through my toes. It feels great; the water's
cool. Soon the bottom disappears and I'm doing a very graceful, OK, graceless, one arm dog
paddle, i.e. SWIMMING *(Maybe sings this and toasts herself)*. About halfway across I hear a
splash. I look back and there is a, note, GIANT, alligator gliding toward me. I don't panic. I
am sixteen. I am invincible. I will live forever. But I feel him behind me; silent. *(All very
dramatic as she enjoys telling the story.)* I get to the other side, dripping wet, scramble up the
bank, look back; no alligator. *(Pause)*

But I felt him coming, you know?

*(The line above is a break in the tone and alacrity of story. At some level she knows something
is tracking her. Then back to previous tone and pace below.)*

Anyway I cross the service road, apartment in sight, a bus pulls up to let off passengers. I
recognize the driver, smile and wave. True story...honest to God, well maybe the alligator
wasn't a giant, but definitely big enough to scare me into some Olympic level swimming--
uh dog paddling.

(Mock toast with Martini #2, finishing it off.)

There hit the theme right on the nail head!

Yeah, OK... Should've used the computer. Not sure this approach is working. I need another drink. This will be the last one I promise. Three is my limit.

(Makes Martini # 3 and continues thinking aloud.)

Let's see...Act III, Exits, Rubs.

(Searches mind for a thread to hang onto, sees photograph.)

A few years before my youngest aunt died of *(Starts to name it; stops herself.)* the disease-that- shall-not-be-named, I was asking her about my grandfather. He was killed in a gunfight over Louisiana politics. There was a detail I'd always wondered about; but when I brought it up, she just gave me a blank look. She had told that story a million times over the years, yet now she had no memory of it, at all. Not of my grandfather, not of the shootout. I was stunned. Just like her sisters she finally knew no one, not even herself. Nothing.

Now *there* was a giant in my life—*(Picks up photo.)* my second mother, a member of the greatest generation and she had a good, very good Act III. *(Sips drink.)*

But the timing of the Exit...perhaps...I don't know...I just don't know.

(Sits in chair.)

Sheesh! This, this...piece is going nowhere...and I wanted to be a writer?!

(Scoffs at self, sips drink.)

I do know what I don't want. I don't want to live a decade losing myself day by day. I don't want my children or grandchildren to see me disappear. I don't want to be a burden on family and society. The indignity...*(Voice trails off.)*

A friend of mine said to me, "But sweetie you won't know; so it won't matter; it's all good."
But I do know; I know now-- in this moment; and—I--choose—
the 'just right' exit.

(Swallows the last of martini and holds up glass.)

The End

(Realizes she is still in the light.)

Oh Shit! I forgot. Blackout!

(Blackout and End of Play)