

REVIEW

Music by Jeremy Beck

BY PATRICIA MARX

—Is everyone here?
—What about Mrs. Kimball?
—She's still in the hospital.
—I thought they pulled the plug.
—She's having a *chin implant!*
—Let's begin, then. Anyone?
—Well, basically I liked it, but it definitely dragged.
—What doesn't? Everything is twenty minutes too long.
—He's right. Even when I really like a movie, I think, This is great! When will it be over?
—The only reason to do anything is to talk about it afterward.
—Isn't that why we're here?
—People, can we return to the comment that everything is too long?
—Sex isn't too long.
—Yeah? You should meet my husband.
—I felt the end was uninspired. I mean, death is a cliché.
—The whole thing didn't make sense. For instance, what was with the concept of weather? Room temperature wasn't good enough? It was always too cold or damp or—
—Are we still talking about sex with her husband?
—You know what I *did* like? The food. Aside from that silly drizzle thing restaurants started to put on dessert plates in the, what, seventies? Still, looking back, I had a lot of good stuff to eat.
—Oh, God, remember the seventies? Why did they have to end? That was such a great decade!

—Except for the part that Rod McKuen wrecked.

—See, it's not that it was too long; it's that it was too long in the wrong places. They should have let you freeze some of your time and tack it onto the end—the way the Wyn-dale Health & Racquet Club lets you freeze your membership for up to three months.

—Another perk for the rich! Everything was always geared to them.

—Not nature. What about nature?

—I felt there could have been more colors. Not hues—*primary* colors. They could have come up with a fourth one, something sort of . . . bright drab.

—Oh, they were too busy developing the quote-unquote perfect sunset.

—You've got to admit, though, the idea of putting Chicago on a lake was excellent. They should have done more of that.

—You know what I could have come up with? The wheel.

—Sure, anyone could've. Once you have *round*, which they did, you're pretty much there.

—But in a million years you'd never think of luggage on wheels.

—I enjoyed errands; did anyone else? And I got most of them done.

—Could we discuss the guests? How did so many jerks get invited?

—I know. There were, like, billions of people. I would have preferred a smaller guest list.

—Who says you would have made the cut?

—I say if they're going to have that many people they should make them wear nametags.

—I just wish that it had been a true meritocracy.

—No, no, absolutely no! I wish they'd based everything on alphabetical order, and I'm not just saying that because—well, yeah, I am.

—I hate to be catty, but did anyone ever meet that guy? He was from Philadelphia?

—Did he have a mustache?

—You're thinking of someone else. This guy was born in the early fifties. He was married to . . . oh, you know, what's her name, whose family was in that business?

—I met him. He bugged me.

—I didn't like his taste in shoes.

—I always wondered if he was latently gay.

—Or latently Jewish.

—Or dormant Mormon. I love saying that.

—Excuse me. I'm not comfortable talking about people who aren't, uh, with us yet.

—Jeez, I can't think of any category of people better to talk about.

—Yes, at last we can speak ill of the living.

—Hello. Is this Banquet Room B?

—It is. And you are . . . ?

—Mrs. Kimball. Surgical-gauze accident.

—Eew!

—Pull up a chair, Mrs. Kimball.

—I have some questions. I wrote them down. Is there a God? Are human beings born good, bad, or neither? Does a low-carb diet really work? How did Mia Farrow get so many good husbands? Are psychiatrists crazier than non-psychiatrists, or is it just ironic that they are equally crazy? Was it my mother's or my father's fault that I developed bursi-

tis? What really happened that night with Larry?

—I'm sorry, Mrs. Kimball, we're not about Truth with a big "T." All right, now, who thinks that Shelly Oughten was cheating on Eric in the early nineties? You in the striped shirt. ♦

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