

Female 40s

AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY, by Tracy Letts.

Karen, 40, talking to her sister on the day of a family funeral about having found a good husband.

KAREN. The present. Today, here and now. I think I spent so much of my early life thinking about what's to come, y'know, who would I marry, would he be a lawyer or a football player, would he be dark-haired and good-looking and broad-shouldered. I spent a lot of time pretending I had a husband and I'd ask him about his day at work and what was happening at the office, and did he like the dinner that I made for him and where were we going to vacation that winter and he'd surprise me with tickets to Belize . . . Then real life takes over because it always does – and things work out differently than you'd planned. I created a better husband than any man I'd ever met. And you punish yourself, tell yourself it's your fault you can't find a good one. I don't know how well you remember Andrew . . . Here's a guy I loved so intensely, and all the things he did wrong were just opportunities to make things right. So if he cheated on me I'd think to myself, "No, you love him, you love him forever, and here's an opportunity for you to make an adjustment in the way you view the world." And I can't say when the precise moment was that I looked in the mirror and said, "OK, moron," and walked out, but it kicked off this whole period of reflection. How had I screwed it up, where'd I go wrong, and before you know it you can't move forward, you're just suspended there, you can't move forward because you can't stop thinking backward, I mean, you know . . . years! Years of punishment, self-loathing. And finally, one day I just said, "No, it's *me*, it's just *me*, here and now, with my music on the stereo and my glass of wine and my cat, and I don't need anything else, I can live my life with myself." And that's when I met Steve. That's how it happens, of course, you only really find it when you're not looking for it, suddenly you turn around and there it is. Here he is, you know, a good man and he's good to me and he's good *for* me. The best thing about him is that now what I think about is *now*. My focus, my life, my world is *now*. I don't care about the past anymore, the mistakes I made, the way I *thought*, I won't go back there. And you know what the kicker is? We're going to Belize on our honeymoon.