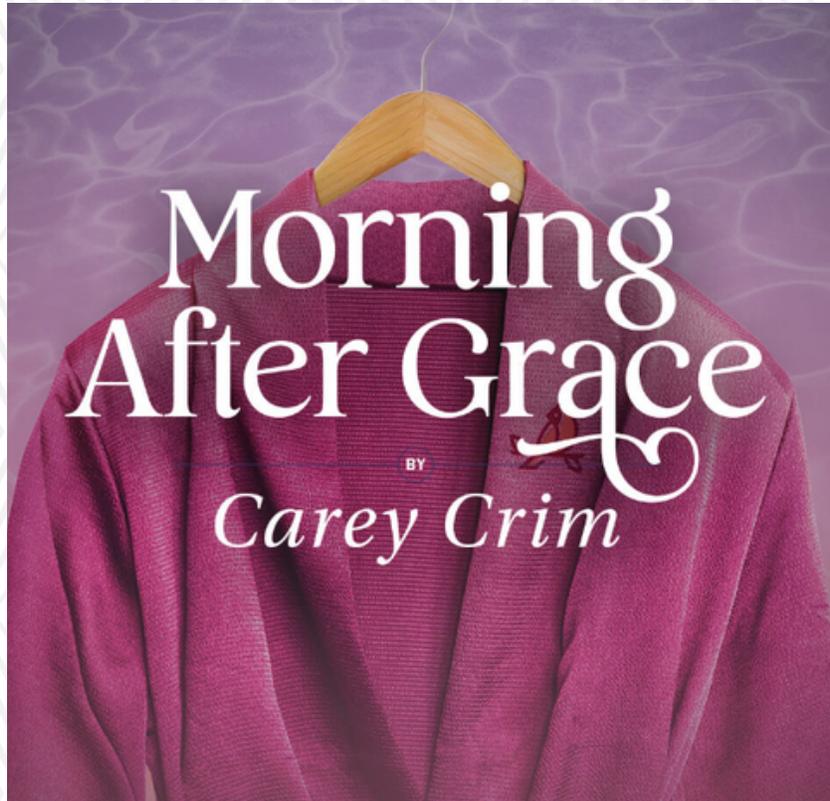




# GULFSHORE PLAYHOUSE

*Kristen Coury, CEO & Producing Artistic Director*

## PERFORMANCE GUIDE TO



### WITH

MAUREEN SILLIMAN

BILL PARRY

RAY ANTHONY THOMAS

### Scenic Designer

KRISTEN MARTINO

### Sound Designer

CHRIS COLUCCI

### Costume Designer

TRACY DORMAN

### Fight Choreographer

KODY JONES

### Lighting Designer

DALTON HAMILTON

### Casting

MICHAEL CASSARA, CSA

### Assistant Stage Manager

JAMIE NORRIS

### Production Stage Manager

KELLI KAREN

### Director of Production

RAY INKEL

### COO & Managing Director

JOEL MARKUS

### CEO & Producing Artistic Director

KRISTEN COURY

### Directed by

KRISTEN COURY

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**Performance Guide Materials Assembled by**  
MEREDITH SINGLETON & JOHN PERINE, Education Associates  
and AUDREY ZIELENBACH, Literary Manager

# About Morning After Grace

Set in a nearby Florida retirement community, this touching and big-hearted comedy takes us on an unexpected journey toward a new lease on life. After meeting at a funeral, Angus and Abigail find themselves waking up the next morning wrapped in sheets on Angus' sofa. Strangers just the day before, Abigail thinks she may finally be ready to take another chance on love, but Angus has a few issues to work through first. Enter neighbor Ollie, formerly a Major League Baseball player who now enjoys golf and yoga. Nothing is as it seems with this trio and every disclosure reveals a new perspective.

## For Your Consideration

*Morning After Grace* touches on a number of potentially sensitive topics in a thought-provoking and respectful way. The topics of death, grief, and homophobia are discussed at length in this show.

# About The Director

Kristen Coury is the CEO and Producing Artistic Director of Gulfshore Playhouse. She founded the Playhouse in 2004, after moving to Naples from New York City. Kristen's career began in London, where she worked for the English Shakespeare Company in the Press and Marketing department. Once she transitioned to New York City, she worked for Walt Disney Theatrical Productions on international productions of *Beauty and the Beast* and for Andrew Lloyd Webber's company, The Really Useful Group, working on *Sunset Boulevard* and *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. She has directed nearly 50 Playhouse productions to date, including *My Fair Lady*, *Steel Magnolias*, and *The Merchant of Venice*. Kristen is a proud member of the Greater Naples Chamber Board of Commerce. She was named one of the Top 100 Most Influential Business Leaders in Collier County in 2022 and 2023. Additionally, she was named a "Leading Lady" by *Naples Illustrated* in 2018, one of the Men and Women of the Year by *Gulfshore Life* in 2013, and a "Star in the Arts" by the United Arts Council of Collier County in 2011.

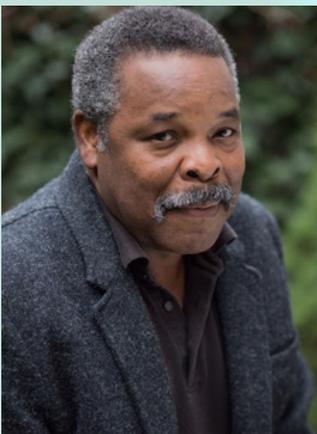
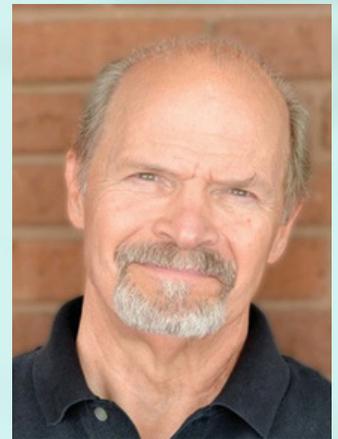


# About the Cast



**Maureen Silliman** (Abigail) is excited to be returning to Gulfshore Playhouse having previously appeared in *Love Letters*, *Native Gardens*, *My Fair Lady*, *Vanya and Sonya* and *Masha and Spike*, *Miss Keller Has No Second Book* and many New Works Festivals. She was on Broadway in *Shenandoah*, *I Remember Mama* (with Liv Ullman) and *Is There Life After High School?*, and Off-Broadway in *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* (NY Shakespeare Festival), *Marathon Dancing*, *Reckless*, *Blue Window* (Drama Critics Award) and *Three Postcards*. Maureen toured with *Fiddler on the Roof*, *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds* (NJ Drama Critics Award) and *The Gingerbread Lady*. Her regional credits include *Falsettos* (Pittsburgh Public) *The Belle of Amherst*, *The Real Thing*, *Uncle Vanya*, *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* (Two River Theater), *Zhivago* (La Jolla Playhouse), *The Cocktail Hour*, *A Shayne Maidel* (Delaware Theater Company) *Company* (Huntington Theater), *The Rothschilds*, *Rags* (Coconut Grove Playhouse), *The Goat* (Southern Rep) and *Pure Confidence* (Cincinnati Playhouse - Acclaim Award). Maureen was in the films *Blue Window* (PBS), *Reckless* and *Childhood's End*, and on TV in *Law & Order*, *Feds*, *Dixie: Changing Habits*, *Sanctuary of Fear* as well as two years as Pam Chandler on *Guiding Light*. Most recently, she had a recurring role on the new Apple TV series *Hello Tomorrow*.

**William Parry** (Angus) is happy to return to Gulfshore Playhouse and the pleasure of working with Kristen Coury again, having appeared here as Joe Keller in *All My Sons*, Col. Pickering in *My Fair Lady*, as well as several New Works Festivals. William's first show in NYC was the original *Jesus Christ Superstar*. He also originated roles in the Broadway productions of the rock musicals, *Sg. Peppers...* and *Rockabye Hamlet*, as well as *Into the Light*, *The Leaf People*, and *Agamemnon* at Lincoln Center. Also on Broadway: James Lapine and Stephen Sondheim's *Sunday in the Park with George* and *Passion* (both filmed for PBS), *Camelot* (HBO) as understudy to Richard Burton and Richard Harris. *Gypsy*, directed by Sam Mendes and starring Bernadette Peters, and *Groundhog Day*. His off-Broadway credits include John Weidman and Sondheim's *Assassins* at Playwrights Horizons, and their *Road Show* at the Public. Also at the New York Shakespeare Festival: *The Knife*, *Cymbeline*, *Dispatches*, and *Wonderland in Concert* (with Meryl Streep). Bill has also performed in the National Tours of *A Few Good Men*, *The King and I*, and *Titanic*. Favorite regional productions include *All My Sons*, *All The Way*, *Saint Joan*, *The Rainmaker*, *The American Clock*, *Biloxi Blues*, and *Blanco!* at Goodspeed, where he and Maureen Silliman first met. Film and Television credits include "In & Out," "Domestic Disturbance," "Spencer for Hire," "One Life to Live," and several episodes of "Law & Order" and "The Pretender". For radio listeners, two seasons on Garrison Keillor's *A Prairie Home Companion*.



**Ray Anthony Thomas** (Ollie) recent credits: Broadway— *American Buffalo*; *Trouble In Mind*; *Jitney*; *The Crucible*; *Race*. Off-Broadway— *The Trees*; *Moscow, Moscow, Moscow, Moscow, Moscow*; *Volunteer Man* (Obie Award). Television—"Law & Order"; "Flatbush Misdemeanours"; "New Amsterdam"; "Social Distance"; "High Maintenance". Film: *The Untitled Novelist Project*; *The Rest of Us*; *Isn't It Romantic*; *Harbinger*; *Shutter Island*; *Trouble with the Curve*.

# About the Playwright



**Carey Crim** is an East Coast based playwright and resident artist at the Purple Rose Theatre Company. Her play *Never Not Once* was the winner of the 2017 Jane Chambers award and a finalist for the O'Neill National Playwrights Conference. It opened to critical acclaim at The Purple Rose Theater and went on to Theatre Aquarius in Ontario, The Rubicon Theatre in Los Angeles and then on to The Park Theatre in London. *Conviction* premiered at Bay Street Theatre starring Sarah Paulson, Garret Dillahunt and Elizabeth Reaser. It then opened at The Rubicon in a co-production where it was nominated for an Ovation award for best new play. Her earlier works, *Growing Pretty*, *Wake* and

*Some Couples May* all received world premieres at The Purple Rose Theatre Company. *Wake* received a West Coast Premiere at the SeaGlass Theatre in Los Angeles where it was a critic's pick. Carey adapted it for the screen and the feature film, starring Jo Koy, James Denton and Myndy Crist, has won numerous festival awards and was released October 8th. It is currently available on Amazon Prime. Her play *Morning After Grace* ran to sold out houses at The Purple Rose Theatre Company starring Randolph (Randy) Mantooth. It went on to Asolo Repertory Theatre, The Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre, Shakespeare and Company, The Barter Theatre, Indiana Repertory Theatre and is slated for many more. *The Last Broadcast* was recently seen in Urbanite Theatre's Modern Works Festival in Sarasota, Florida. She is a three-time finalist for Miami City Theater's short play competition and won the competition in 2011. She has been a finalist for The Heideman award and a three- time finalist in the Samuel French OOB festival. Carey is a graduate of Northwestern University.

# A Conversation with Carey Crim

adapted from an interview conducted by Audrey Zielenbach, Literary Manager

**Tell us about your journey in theatre. How did you become interested in playwriting? How does your experience as an actor inform your writing?**

I grew up in a local children's theater in Michigan. It was my second home. Then I went to Northwestern University where I continued to study acting and theater. After graduation, I worked in London for six months and spent a short stint in LA. When I returned home, I got my equity card doing *Arcadia*. I continued doing regional theater and commercials. Soon after moving to New York, I started writing my own audition monologues. I made up the name of a playwright and play because I didn't want people to know I had written my own. But I started getting better feedback on the monologues themselves than the auditions.

One night, after what I thought was a particularly good audition, a director called. I hadn't booked the job, but he liked the monologue so much that he had sent his assistant out to Drama Bookshop to find it. But she was unable to find my non-existent play written by a phantom playwright. It was raining and I felt guilty he had this poor assistant out looking for it so I fessed up. He told me if I ever did write that play, he'd like to read it.

Unfortunately, by the time I did write that play, I had lost the director's name and contact information. I thank him, wherever he is. So, I mounted a production in New York with my theater group at the time (Write Club) and got my first agent from that production. The following season, it was produced at The Purple Rose Theater.

I've been told I write characters actors want to play and I'm sure that comes from being on the other side of things for so long. I know a lot of playwrights who started out as actors that began writing in order to write great roles for themselves. I realized pretty early on that wasn't my goal. I'm happiest in my "role" as playwright. But I love actors. I love writing for actors. First reads are one of my favorite parts of the whole messy process.

**Can you tell us a little bit about the inspiration behind *Morning After Grace*? Where did the "seed" of the idea come from?**

The inspiration came from a number of places. The play was a commission by the Purple Rose to write for two specific actors: Randy Mantooth and Michelle Mountain. Lynch Travis then came in as Ollie. Randy had been on the TV show *Emergency* in the Seventies and, though he had just turned seventy himself and battled cancer, he was still very much the same guy that girls had posters of on their walls and boys on their lunch boxes. I wanted to write a story for him that let him be all those things while still navigating grief and aging and love. The same went for Abigail and Ollie. They were characters of a certain age and, though that informed them, it did not define them. Abigail's life might seem ordinary at first but is anything but. Ollie's journey with his father came to me a little later in the writing process but became one of my favorite parts of the story.

# A Conversation with Carey Crim

adapted from an interview conducted by Audrey Zielenbach, Literary Manager

Around the time the commission came in, my dad and stepmom had moved into a retirement community. So I paid a lot of attention to that world whenever I went to visit and had many interesting and often hilarious conversations. Many of them ended up in the script. Also, I am just a generation behind the Boomers so I thought of my own life and how I hope to move through it as I age. Also there are so many incredible talents out there that are over sixty. It's a privilege to write for them.

**How did the play evolve as you developed it? Are there any big differences between the original draft and the published version? What were the biggest challenges or surprises you had writing the script?**

It took some time to figure out my three people (before I started writing) but once I had them clearly and put them all together, the rest flowed. There were more changes between the first and final draft of the first production than the first production and published version. Those were mostly about deepening the characters' needs and fine tuning the relationships. I had a good sense of who they were apart but once I put them in a room together, they really began to reveal themselves so much more.

**Your work spans a wide range of genre and thematic content. Are there any common threads between them, certain questions that you find yourself revisiting? How is *Morning After Grace* similar or different from your other work?**

I lost my mom when I was seventeen so I write about grief a lot. Not always as obviously as *Morning After Grace* but it's usually in there somewhere. Grief and second chances and what it takes to come back from something that seems impossible to come back from. And I tend to tackle forgiveness a lot because I think it is such a powerful thing but there is a cost. A cost of forgiveness, of letting go, as well as a cost to holding on. I have a new play called *The Islanders* that is about two lost lonely people who have been thrown away by mainstream society just trying to connect and how difficult and terrifying that can be, So connection is also a big one for me. And laughter is such a connecting force.

**What are some things you hope the audience will reflect upon as they watch the show?**

That, yes it is a play about coming to terms with growing older but really it's about how we choose to live. This unlikely trio comes together, heals one another and each one is better because of it.

# Age in the Media

The three characters featured in *Morning After Grace* are all older Americans, each of them being over the age of 60. As discussed in the interview above, playwright Carey Crim used conversations with older actors she had worked with, as well as with residents at a retirement home where her parents stayed, in order to craft very real characters and dialogue in *Morning After Grace*. Abigail, Angus, and Ollie are tackling real issues that older Americans specifically are facing, and they are fully fleshed out characters. However, this isn't always the case with portrayals of older people in the media.

**Ageism** refers to the negative depictions of older people and their bodies that are shown in media. It is a form of prejudice and severely impacts the way the general public sees older people. In some movies, TV shows, commercials, and other forms of media, older people are portrayed as weak, frail, and lesser. Some pieces of media even go so far as to portray older people as idiotic, or even outwardly cruel towards younger people. These negative portrayals are incredibly common in the media, especially in the United States. A study reported by AARP found that older Americans are seven times more likely to be portrayed negatively than those under 50 in online ads alone.

The commercials and TV sketches below all feature older characters. As you watch them, consider how the older characters are being depicted. **Are they being depicted sympathetically or stereotypically?**

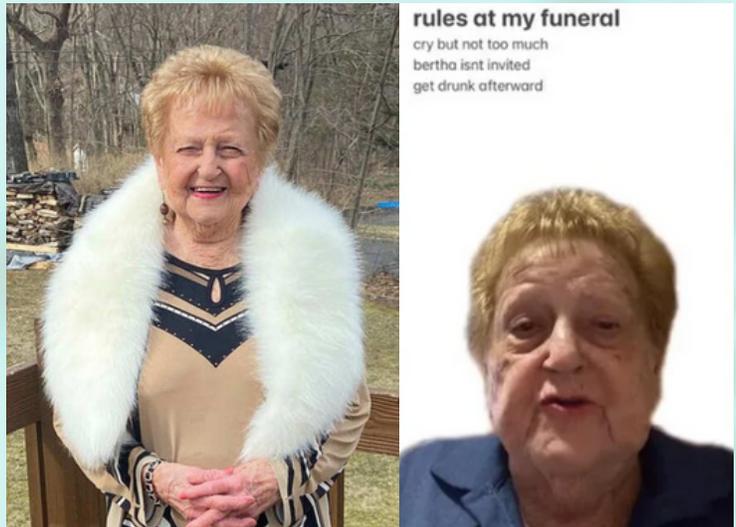


# Celebrity Grandma

## How We View Death

**Lillian Droniak** (@grandma\_droniak on TikTok) is 93-years old and a self-proclaimed “celebrity grandma”. She is incredibly popular on the social media platform TikTok with over 8 million followers.

The general theme of most of her videos is life advice from an older person. She is immensely popular for her dating advice as well as tips for how to live a long and happy life. Her videos tend to have a lot of youthful energy, where she celebrates the moments in her life that one would typically expect to happen to a younger person, such as when her exes are unhappy, when bad dates finally stop texting her, and when her mailman winks at her. She is known for her contagious self-confidence and her love for life.



In April of 2022, she went viral for posting a video entitled “[Rules At My Funeral](#).” She has also posted make-up tutorials and fashion videos all in preparation for her funeral, such as “Get Ready With Me (GRWM): Casket Makeup” and “Choosing My Burial Outfit.” In an interview with *Insider*, Droniak stated that she started making her TikToks to change people’s perceptions about death and dying: “It doesn’t need to be scary or taboo. It helps you live life better if you’re not afraid ... I joke about death because it will happen to all of us, as scary as that is ... [we] might as well laugh about it.” She views her death not as something frightening or outright tragic, but as something that is inevitable.

**“I don’t know why I’m living so long. I did not plan it. But I’m so thankful to be alive”** (@grandma\_droniak responding to a commenter, 4/6/22)

This is not to say that she never acknowledges how tragic life can be. In several of her videos, she talks about how she has outlived not only her husband, but many of her friends as well as her parents and siblings. She acknowledges her loss, and expresses how much she misses those that have passed away. But she uses it as a way to think back on moments she had with them that made her smile.

**“You should be happy that you have friends. A lot of my friends passed away... Be good to your friends, be nice to your friends. You’ll never know when you’re gonna lose them. Have fun with them as you can”**  
(@grandma\_droniak responding to a commenter, 6/1/22)

# The Process of Grief

In *Morning After Grace*, Angus, Abigail, and Ollie face unique forms of grief, whether it is a response to the passing of a loved one, the end of a relationship, or a disappointing truth coming to light.

**How do Angus, Abigail, and Ollie work through their grief? How can we support those in our lives processing losses of their own?**

## The Kübler-Ross Model

The five stages of grief, or the Kübler-Ross model, describes the emotions of people who have experienced some form of loss. It was originally developed by psychologist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross and was originally created to explain the feelings of people who were dying, not people who had experienced loss; Kübler-Ross worked with terminal cancer patients and used her experiences to create her model.

Denial	Anger	Bargaining	Depression	Acceptance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• avoidance</li> <li>• shock</li> <li>• numbness</li> <li>• forgetting</li> <li>• confusion</li> <li>• shutting down</li> <li>• mindless behaviors</li> <li>• keeping busy all the time</li> <li>• saying, "I'm fine" or "it's fine"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pessimism</li> <li>• frustration</li> <li>• cynicism</li> <li>• impatience</li> <li>• sarcasm</li> <li>• resentment</li> <li>• irritability</li> <li>• rage</li> <li>• getting into arguments or physical fights</li> <li>• feeling out of control</li> <li>• increased alcohol or drug use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• guilt</li> <li>• shame</li> <li>• comparing self to others</li> <li>• placing blame</li> <li>• assuming the worst</li> <li>• anxiety</li> <li>• insecurity</li> <li>• thinking "I should have..." or "if only..."</li> <li>• judgment toward self and/or others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sleep and appetite changes</li> <li>• sadness</li> <li>• reduced energy</li> <li>• despair</li> <li>• reduced social interest</li> <li>• reduced motivation</li> <li>• hopelessness</li> <li>• crying</li> <li>• increased alcohol or drug use</li> <li>• feeling overwhelmed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• engaging with reality as it is</li> <li>• having courage</li> <li>• "this is how it is right now"</li> <li>• validation</li> <li>• being present in the moment</li> <li>• self-compassion</li> <li>• honest communication</li> <li>• wisdom</li> <li>• adapting and coping</li> </ul>

# The Process of Grief

Over time, the Kübler-Ross model has received some criticism. It is thought by some experts to be overly simplistic. Many experts view the grieving process as less linear than Kübler-Ross made it out to be. One of these experts was George Bonnano, a psychologist who observed four common trends in patients who were experiencing grief. These were four different responses he observed his patients having towards grief and trauma. These trends are known as **Bonnano's Four Trajectories**.

Resilience	Recovery	Chronic Dysfunction	Delayed Grief or Trauma
Business as usual. Bouncing back to a "normal" life very quickly after a tragedy occurs	Symptoms of depression and/or PTSD start to appear after a traumatic event. These can last several months. Then gradually, the individual starts to return to their pre-event life	Prolonged dysfunction and grief over the course of several years after a traumatic event. The individual is unable to function	The individual seems to function normally at first, but then experiences distress and common grief symptoms later on.

Bonnano was one of the first scientists in his field to argue that grief can be studied quantifiably and that grief can be measured. His hope was that by studying patients who were grieving, he could find measurable similarities between them, which would ultimately help doctors treat their grieving patients.

In addition to developing the four trajectories, Bonnano also coined the term "**coping ugly**," which refers to the idea that sometimes people turn to negative behaviors to cope with trauma and grief. These behaviors can be harmful in the long run, but may make the individual feel better in the moment.

**In *Morning After Grace*, what do Abigail, Ollie, and Angus turn to to cope with their trauma? Are all of these behaviors healthy and helpful in the long run?**

# About Glenn Burke

Glenn Burke was a Major League Baseball player from 1976 - 1979. He played for the LA Dodgers and the Oakland Athletics. He came out as gay in 1982 after retiring from professional sports. During his career, Burke endured harsh rumors and mistreatment due to his sexuality even though he did not publicly come out until after leaving professional sports. On both of his teams, Burke faced homophobia from not only the public, but his teammates and managers as well. A memoir on Burke written by David Maraniss claims that Burke was forcibly traded to the A's after declining a bribe made by the Dodgers' manager in exchange for his marriage to a woman (though this claim is somewhat speculative). After leaving the Dodgers, several of his new teammates on the A's refused to shower with him and gossiped behind his back. His new manager hurled homophobic slurs at him and refused to work with him. Burke later told *The New York Times*, "**Prejudice drove me out of baseball sooner than I should have. But I wasn't changing.**"

When Burke came out publicly in 1982, he hoped it would change the way the public saw gay men, not just in the world of professional sports, but generally. The early 80s saw the beginnings of the AIDS Crisis in America, and gay men were being demonized by the media as well as by the Reagan Administration. Burke hoped that by coming out, he would change the way the public saw him and other gay men.

After retiring, Burke continued to play amateur baseball and competed in the Gay Games, as well as other events. Throughout his career, Burke had a history of drug use, which only got worse after retiring. In 1987, Burke was hit by a car, severely damaging his leg and foot and his drug abuse continued to worsen. He was homeless and had no support from his family. In 1995, he passed away from AIDS complications at the age of 42. His former teams voiced their support after Burke's diagnosis became public, and offered him some financial support.

**"They can't ever say now that a gay man can't play in the majors, because I'm a gay man and I made it."**

*Burke in one of his final public interview in 1995, with the Philadelphia Inquirer*

As of April 1st, 2023, there have been three Major League Baseball players that have come out as gay, all coming out after retirement. These players are TJ House, who came out in 2022, Billy Bean who came out in 1999, and Glenn Burke, who came out in 1982.



*Glenn Burke in 1993. Photograph by Mark Hundley*

# Themes in Morning After Grace

## Prejudice

As Abigail, Angus, and Ollie learn more about each other over the course of the play, they must adjust their preconceived notions of one another in order to process each other's behaviors and see each other as they truly are. Additionally, the trio face their own prejudices from the outside world, from misogyny to ageism to homophobia.

*Where do our unconscious biases and prejudices come from? How can we actively work to dismantle those perceptions? How do we protect ourselves from the judgements we face each day?*

## Loss

Abigail, Angus, and Ollie have all experienced loss in their lives. They have lost parents, spouses, and friends. Loss can take many forms, and it does not necessarily involve someone passing away. Going through a messy divorce or having to cut someone out of your life are also forms of loss. These events impact the characters emotionally, mentally, and even physically.

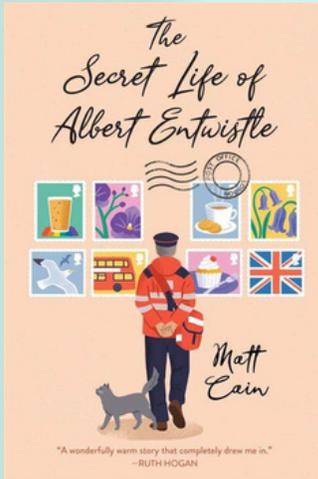
*What forms of loss do our characters experience? How do these characters cope with their loss?*

## Forgiveness

While Angus, Abigail, and Ollie interact with each other and with the other characters in the show, the relationships between them become muddled and more complicated. Some of these relationships are heavily damaged by things like a violation of trust or by strong prejudice. As Abigail, Angus, and Ollie process their relationships and the impact they have had on their personal lives, they struggle to forgive the people who have hurt them.

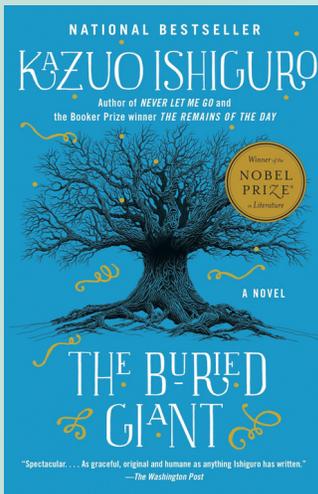
*Is forgiveness always mandatory? Should we always "forgive and forget" past wrongs? How can one wrong action poison an entire relationship?*

# Further Reading



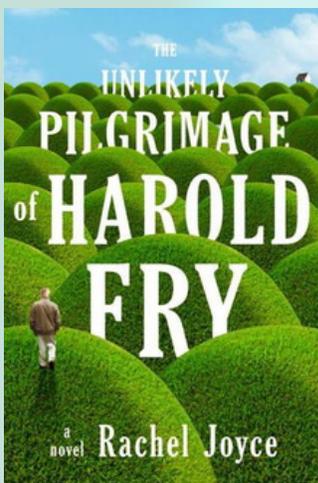
## **The Secret Life of Albert Entwistle** by Matt Cain

Albert Entwistle is a private man with a quiet, simple life as a postman. At least he was a postman until, three months before his sixty-fifth birthday, he receives a letter from the Royal Mail stating he is being forced into retirement. Rather than continue his lonely existence, Albert forms a brave plan to start truly living. Albert finds unlikely allies, new friends, and proves it's never too late to live, to hope, and to love.



## **The Buried Giant** by Kazuo Ishiguro

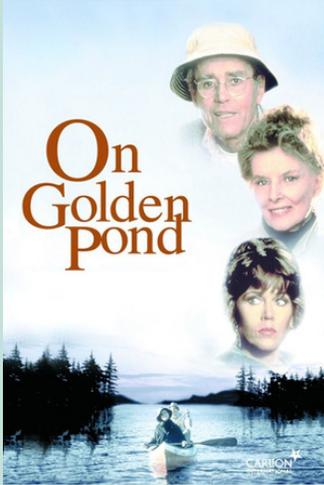
An elderly couple live in a small village in England in the years after the death of King Arthur. In this world, no one is able hold on to their long term memories, and the couple struggle to recall their early years together. They distantly remember having a son years earlier and leave on a quest to find him.



## **The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry** by Rachel Joyce

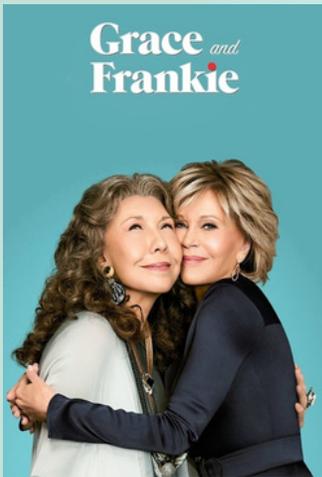
A man named Harold receives a letter from a woman he hasn't heard from in years while she is dying in hospice care. Instead of mailing his response, Harold sets out on foot to deliver the message, across six hundred miles.

# Further Viewing



## ***On Golden Pond***

Norman (Henry Fonda) is a curmudgeon with an estranged relationship with his daughter Chelsea (Jane Fonda). At Golden Pond, he and his wife, Ethel (Katharine Hepburn), nevertheless agree to care for Billy, the son of Chelsea's new boyfriend, and a most unexpected relationship blooms.



## ***Grace and Frankie***

In this Netflix series, sharp-tongued retired cosmetics mogul Grace (Jane Fonda) and quirky artist Frankie (Lily Tomlin) become unlikely roommates when their respective husbands leave them - for each other. The two women must navigate family drama, medical scares, business ventures, and romantic turmoil.



## ***The Farewell***

A headstrong Chinese-American woman, Billi (Awkwafina), returns to China when her beloved grandmother is diagnosed with terminal cancer. Billi struggles with her family's decision to keep grandma in the dark about her own illness as they all stage an impromptu wedding to see grandma one last time.