

GOING SOLO

A stage play by

Drew Keil and Robert Gately

Robert Gately  
2545 Black River Road  
Bethlehem, PA 18015  
610-866-7965  
gately@verizon.net  
www.rgately.com

Drew Keil  
241 Forest Ave.  
Lynbrook, NY 11563  
516-596-0970  
SKIBUM241@aol.com

CAST for: GOING SOLO

DEBBIE HAMMEL, 50-60's, owner of Triple H Realty, mother of Wendy.

PATRICIA O'NEIL, 50-60's, realty office manager, Debbie's best friend and a single-parent mother of Trevor.

KATHERINE DEVINE, 50-60's realty office worker, caretaker of 17 cats.

DAN TARENTINO, 50-60's, a florist and flower delivery, and Katherine's secret admirer.

WENDY HAMMEL, 20's, daughter of Debbie and ex-fiancé of Trevor. Wendy plays the cello.

TREVOR O'NEIL, 20's, son of Pat and ex-fiancé of Wendy. Trevor is a high school drama teacher.

JOEY, 50-60's, a long-ago lover of Patricia. Joey is a wounded veteran of the Grenada engagement.

BAG LADY, 40s-60s,

GOING SOLO

ACT I

Scene 1

SETTING:

REALTY OFFICE: a converted living room; SR is an exterior porch and bench; SL are two large desks, a poster bearing the Triple-H logo "Hammel's Happy Homes" with "Buy One-Get One Free" underneath that.

There are upstage doors that provide entry to an unseen kitchen, bedroom, the outside and an area of stage marked 'church' where there is a confessional. Fake windows give a view to the street.

A film screen hangs on the upstage wall which will show images in Debbie's mind when she has agoraphobic episodes. At present it has the definition of AGORAPHOBIA.

AT RISE:

LIGHTS UP: A SELF-HELP TAPE is playing.

TAPE VOICE (V.O.)

The deep breathing exercises you learned in Part One help counteract the irrational thoughts that sometimes provoke feelings of panic and helplessness in our daily lives. Relaxation is a source of personal stability. Relax ... breath ... there's nothing in this world that is more important than your mental health...

(DEBBIE HAMMEL, late-50s, enters from the Up Stage door in a robe and sweats, and places a mug of coffee on a desk. She activates a computer and listens for a moment. The phone rings and --)

TELEPHONE MESSAGE (V.O.)

Debbie, the two-family on Front Street went to contract. We gotta talk. Call me ASAP.

DEBBIE (O.S.)

You can't afford it, Jeremy. Don't waste my time.

(Debbie is at her desk as DAN TARENTINO, 50s, in an ill-fitting uniform, enters SR with a bouquet of roses. He makes enough noise to attract Debbie's attention. He puts the bouquet on a bench, straightens his tie, takes off his cap, and combs his hair with his fingers. He produces a floral aerosol can and sprays the flowers with two quick hits, and then sprays both his underarms with a quick spurt. He looks in the window, then at his watch.

Debbie cautiously moves through the vestibule, peers through the front door peep hole, and hides on the floor.

Dan knocks on the door. Debbie whimpers. Dan pulls out a cell phone. The office phone rings. A recording, than a beep. Dan is leaving a message--)

DAN'S MESSAGE (V.O.)

Dan's Flowers calling. We left an early morning delivery for Katherine Devine on the front porch. Enjoy the flowers.

(After Dan exits, she opens the door, takes the flowers, puts them on Pat's desk, and turns the SELF-HELP TAPE on.

SCREEN: two camels humping in the background, which changes to flowers swaying to the gentle morning breeze.)

## TAPE VOICE (V.O.)

Exposition of any kind is supposed to be a synonym for serenity. A famous writer once said if you ever write exposition, there better be two camels humping in the background for distraction. So, to avoid confusion, and to keep your mind at peace, we flip the scenery to flowers blowing in the breeze. Serenity! Think of the warm morning sunrise while the fresh dawn breezes usher in the promise of a stress-free workday made possible by your personal resolve to be the master of your mental environment. No negative projection today. Only camels humping in the background.

(During this Soliloquy Debbie goes to the kitchen and returns with a vase of water and she arranges the flowers.)

The phone rings. She stops the tape and listens to who it is.)

## TELEPHONE MESSAGE (V.O.)

Hi mom. It's me, Wendy.

(Debbie gasps)

It's been a while I know. I'm sorry. I'm coming home today. There should be a letter from me in today's mail. Actually, it's just a photo. I didn't know what to say, so I just said I'm coming home on back of the photo. I know you're upset with my absence. We'll have something to talk about at least. That's better than not talking at all. See you soon.

(Taking deep breaths, Debbie crosses to the window and looks out. A light illuminates a free-standing mailbox. She moves to a wall mirror, bracing her hands firmly against the wall. She stares resolutely at her reflection and talks to it.)

DEBBIE

No dizziness. No nausea. No panic. Thirty steps up... Thirty steps back. Eezy, peezy. No one's watching. No one cares. You're the epitome of strength and courage.

(While Debbie moves outside, a kaleidoscope of colors appear on THE SCREEN.

She places a large rain hat on her head and pulls the neck strap tight. She moves onto the porch, hugs a railing, lowers herself to the porch stairs, and freezes.)

DEBBIE

They shoot horses, don't they?

(As she descends the steps--)

NO FEARS! NO TEARS!

(A distant thunder SOUND cackles and a streak of light appears on THE SCREEN causing Debbie to hold her head as if it's falling off.

PAT O'NEIL, 50's, enters from the upstage door, holding a briefcase and newspaper.)

PAT

Tenure in two years, Trevor. Two more freakin' years.

(Yelling)

Debbie. I'm here.

(TREVOR O'NEIL. 20's, wearing a T-shirt with a bald eagle emblem, follows Pat in. He is carrying a large file box, which he deposits on a desk.)

PAT

You'd throw all that teaching time away on this half-assed idea that one more man with a gun is going to make a difference in this world? I know I raised you with more smarts than that. Damn, look at the time. All this arguing has made me late to work.

TREVOR

Hard to be late when you live next door, Mom. Chill! And it's just an interview I'm going to. I'm not enlisting. So ...

(sarcastically)

... Have a good day.

(Trevor exits while Debbie steps slowly to the mailbox.)

Pat doesn't see her, but enters the office and stares at the roses and--)

PAT

Get those smelly weeds off my desk. Oh, my God! Debbie, what the hell is this?

(Pat tosses the flowers inside a closet and closes the door and exits to the kitchen.)

The phone RINGS. Another message plays as KATE DEVINE, 50's, wearing a loose fitting blouse, pants with sneakers, enters from the upstage door. She checks the office clock, sits at her desk, and pulls a pair of heels from a bottom drawer and slips them on.)

TELEPHONE MESSAGE (V.O.)

Hello. I'm calling for Pat O'Neil. We met at the VFW cake sale last week. I'm selling my house so maybe we should talk.  
(MORE)

TELEPHONE MESSAGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I need to know one thing right off: are you Republican? I only do business with conservatives. I'll call back later.

PAT

(re-enters and--)

Nice of you to show up, Katherine.

KATE

Oh, what a morning. You wouldn't believe it. Samantha was in labor and I had to...

PAT

It's always something with you or those damn cats. I don't want to hear it, Kate.

(Pat pushes the broom into Kate's hands and points at the floor.)

PAT

Get Cracking. And why don't you get rid of those damn cats.

KATE

(as she sweeps)

I most certainly will not. Those cats are all soul mates from a previous life, and they stay with me for a reason.

PAT

I'm sure they do and if you had a life, you wouldn't need those cats.

KATE

Dear Dorothy, give me patience.

(As she sweeps, she sniffs--)

Do you smell roses?

PAT

That's my new hand cream. When you're finished, the files in that box need updating. And play back the phone messages.

(Kate plays the tape recorder.)

TAPE VOICE (V.O.)

(Soothing) Ultimately, your thoughts give birth to the events of your life. Care needs to be taken to purposely avoid self-deprecating images and negative projections. You can change how and what you think. Don't allow feelings of anxiety, hostility, rejection, or confusion to cripple...

PAT

Shut that crap off! I said phone messages.

KATE

Sorry. Wrong machine. Didn't know you were so uptight and needed ... Soothing.

PAT

That's not mine. It's Debbie's. And where the hell is she, anyway. DEBBIE? DEBBIE? I get a little nervous when she doesn't respond.

KATE

She's outside. I think I saw her on my way in.

PAT

Why don't you start on those files.

KATE

If I could leave a little early today...? The new kittens need a warming pad, and I...

PAT

Are you kidding me? Do not presume I share your maternal concern for those mewling, crawling and helpless fur balls that have infested your overrun animal house, Katherine.

KATE

Cats are people, too, you know.

PAT

Unless they buy a house or pay rent, they are not an item of interest in this office. Now ... Let's go. Chop, chop.

KATE

Fine!

(pulls a file and reads--)

Oh, this one called yesterday. Weirdest thing. Said Debbie owes him for a counseling session she skipped two years ago. He called Debbie a chronic... something-or-other. Said she wouldn't leave her house if the place was on fire.

PAT

Skip it. It's none of your business, anyway.

(Debbie falls and whimpers as she labors to the mailbox, which is within arm's reach. The upstage SCREEN shows a menacing blast of light and thunder, unnerving her. She squeals.

Pat and Kate hear her cries and rush out onto the porch. Debbie doesn't see them.)

DEBBIE

This is so unfair! I don't deserve this. It's all your fault, Wendy. No! I don't mean that. Forgive me. So sorry, Harry

KATE

Who's Harry? Her dead husband?

PAT

Great! Now you two have something in common. You both talk to dead people.

KATE

You're getting on my nerves. I do NOT talk to the dead.

PAT

(While steering Kate back into the office--)

But you sense their presence. Same thing.

KATE

What is Debbie doing out there?

PAT

Looks like she's getting the mail. She's doing just fine.

KATE

What do you mean she's doing fine. She's on her knees?

(Kate tries to move back to the porch but Pat blocks her.)

PAT

You want to play nurse, go coddle your cats. Let Debbie be.

KATE

Ow! Oh, help me Dorothy. What is it with you?

PAT

Leave it alone, Kate. I'll take care of Debbie.

KATE

What the hell is going on? Two weeks I've been here, I've never once seen Debbie leave the house. This guy calls and says she's a sicko because she'd rather die than leave the house, and now she's outside crawling around in the dirt. And this is OK with you?

PAT

Debbie doesn't talk about her problem, so neither do I.

(blocks Kate again)

Why the hell I ever hire you is beyond me.

KATE

Debbie gave me this job, not you. So get out of my way.

(Kate finally powers past Pat.)

PAT

Dammit, Kate. Wait! The last thing Debbie wants is for you to see her this way. Don't embarrass her by going out there. You couldn't help anyway.

(With her hands on her hips Kate waits for more.)

PAT

I've tried for years. I'm still trying. She never leaves the house except for getting the mail, because she's agoraphobic. Home is the only place she feels safe. You absolutely cannot tell her I told you this. She'll be very upset with me if she knew I told you. She'll tell you in her own time. For now, it's important that she try to handle this in her own way.

(hands Kate the newspaper)

Now check the paper for new listings. Business as usual.

KATE

Okay. Was that hard? (Beat) Don't forget, you have that go-see at eleven.

PAT

He cancelled. His dog died.

KATE

Oh, that's the worst. When Celine passed on ... Oh!

PAT

Enough with the cats, already! No one keeps 17 felines like you do. I cannot imagine the smell inside your house.

KATE

(reading)

Pat! Look at this! Wendy's playing at Carnegie Hall.

PAT

(rushes to her, looks over her shoulder and reads.)

She's coming to town with the Boston Philharmonic this weekend?

KATE

Carnegie Hall! Imagine! I've never been. Do you think I'll be invited? I'll need something formal to wear.

PAT

Do a seance. Summon Vera Wang. She'll help you find a dress.

KATE

Psychics don't do seances. Why are you being so difficult this morning?

PAT

Look, it's going to take a while before I get used to someone else in the office. It's been just Debbie and me forever. And there's a lot you don't understand about her.

KATE

OK. I get that. That doesn't explain why you're so ...

PAT

I've had to basically do all the appointments and appraisals myself. All the outside leg work. But I never considered a new hire till Debbie started getting skittish about opening the door or meeting new clients. Things have gotten ... Difficult. So don't make it any more ... Difficult.

(THE SCREEN displays a bolt of lighting and blast of thunder.)

DEBBIE

PATRICIA!

PAT

Now I help her.

(Pat takes the paper and starts to cross to the porch. The phone rings. As Kate reaches for it--)

KATE

It's just a Telemarketer.

PAT

DON'T. Don't start with that psychic crap! Please.

(Pat crosses out to the porch as  
Kate picks up the phone and--)

KATE

Hammel's Happy Homes. Buy one, get one free...

(While Pat helps Debbie up, she  
overreacts to a small blast of  
thunder.)

PAT

It's just a tiny storm twenty miles down the road. OK,  
breathe and release... Breathe and release... Good. Good.

DEBBIE

I thought I could do it. I can't. Take me back to the porch.  
Please.

PAT

Look how close you are. Come on. Reach over and get the mail.

DEBBIE

I can't. Help me to the porch before someone sees me. Please.  
I need to sit.

(Pat grabs the mail, then leads  
Debbie to the porch, but before  
they get there Debbie stops  
abruptly. Pat looks up hearing a  
modest level of a plane's engine.

THE SCREEN shows a plane zooming  
40 feet above them creating a  
boisterous sound, then it ZOOMS  
above them at 300 feet overhead.

Debbie collapses on the steps.)

PAT

Are you OK out here? You don't look good.

DEBBIE

With you here? Yes. Sit with me a minute, until I calm down.

PAT

Why is this mail so important today?

(Debbie grabs the mail from Pat, searches and finds Wendy's letter and hands it to Pat.)

DEBBIE

That's why. Here. Open it.

(Pat tears it open and pulls out a photo. They look at the photo together.)

PAT

No letter. Just a photo. Wendy looks good. Got a Yankee hat on, I see. Looks like she lost some weight.

DEBBIE

Looks like it. Maybe. She doesn't tell me anything.

PAT

(hands Debbie the newspaper)

She sure as hell didn't tell you about this, either.

DEBBIE

(reading)

I don't believe it. She called this morning and left a message. She could've told me then that she's playing a solo in the city. I have to find out my daughter's playing a solo at Carnegie Hall tomorrow from a newspaper article. How sad is that? Do you know how many times I've seen her since she joined the Boston Philharmonic? None! Zero! Goose egg!

PAT

There's no question she should have called before today. It's been a long time.

(They stare at the photo.)

What's with the Yankee Baseball hat?

DEBBIE

Whenever I missed one of her softball games, which was all of them, she'd parade around the house in her uniform the whole next day with a Yankee cap on.

(Pause)

That was her way of punishing me, I guess. What do I say if she asks me if I'm going to see her play at Carnegie?

PAT

She'll understand if you can't be there. Come on. Let's go.

(There's an unobtrusive lighting bolt with a small distant sound of thunder followed by what Debbie hears, which is displayed on THE SCREEN, and which is a blistering lightening bold, and a roaring sound of thunder.)

DEBBIE

(Shivers)

No, she won't understand! She's never forgiven me for all the MIA's at the PTA's and her recitals. She's angry I missed so much of her growing up. I'm scared I'm losing her for good.

PAT

I won't let that happen. I'll talk to her.

DEBBIE

What could you possibly say?

PAT

That you love her, for starters.

DEBBIE

She thinks I blame her for my condition. Why else would she stay away so long?

(Kate enters with a cup of tea.)

KATE

Why don't you just move the mailbox to the porch?

PAT

Yeah. Very funny, Kate.

DEBBIE

(takes the cup of tea)

Oh, thank you. This is just what I need right now.

KATE

Wonderful news about your daughter. You must be proud.

DEBBIE

Yeah. She's always a surprise.

KATE

Ooo! May I?

(Debbie hands her the photo)

Pretty lady. Like her mom. Can't wait to meet her.

DEBBIE

Me too. So, I hope you like it here, Kate? I know it gets busy around here sometimes. But if you have any questions...

KATE

I do like it here. And I do have one question.

DEBBIE

Shoot!

KATE

How did you become agoraphobic?

PAT

Oh, for the love of Pete. Dammit, Kate. I told you...

KATE

Well, I don't understand all the secrecy about your condition. It's not a big deal. You have agoraphobia. I have claustrophobia, and Pat has cat-a-phobia ...

PAT

And you're about to develop a nasty case of fist-a-phobia if you don't clam up.

(Responding to Debbie's look)

She saw you out here, struggling. What was I supposed to say? You're harvesting grubs for breakfast?

KATE

Don't be upset with Pat. It's Wendy you're angry with.

DEBBIE

My God! I don't want my personal history the topic of conversation in this office?

PAT

Debbie, I swear, I never mentioned Wendy, ever.

KATE

She's friends with your son, though?

PAT

Now how do you know that? Did Wendy called here and say something about Trevor? What am I missing?

DEBBIE

Why would Wendy talk to Kate and not to me.

KATE

She didn't.

(waving the photo)

We just met.

PAT

Oh! I get it now. It's that psychic thing she has. I told you about that, Debbie. She guesses a lot.

DEBBIE

What do you know about my daughter, Kate?

KATE

Only that she wants to reconnect. I look at this photo and feel Wendy's frustration. She's lost and ... she misses your son, Pat, and that's not a guess. And your son misses her. And that's not a guess either.

PAT

Yeah, well how do you know all that?

KATE

Partially from overhearing a conversation between you and Debbie about Trevor and Wendy as to why Wendy has not called or texted Trevor, and partially because of that photo of you and Trevor that sits on your desk? I asked you where he got those beautiful blue eyes. Remember?

PAT

Yes. OK. So what?

KATE

You said, from his father, who passed away. Now why would you say that when he's alive and well.?

(Silence. Pat covers her face.)

DEBBIE

Pat?

PAT

We agreed. A long time ago, we agreed, Deb. Not to ask questions. Not to go places the other wanted off limits.

DEBBIE

Yes. Okay.

PAT

So, the topic of Joey was off limits for Trevor's sake. And your "condition" was off the table for Wendy's sake. Now, if all that's gonna change, because of her ...

(points to Kate)

... then this conversation takes place in private. It's none of her business.

KATE

OK. I'll leave, but you two have to talk.

(Kate starts back to the office.)

DEBBIE

Thanks for the tea, Katherine.

KATE

I couldn't find the sugar.

(looking at Pat)

We're short on anything sweet around here.

DEBBIE

How did you like the roses this morning?

PAT

Oh, good grief! Not the flowers! Please!

KATE

I knew I smelled flowers somewhere.

(Kate crosses to the office as the lights dim on Pat and Debbie and stays up on Kate. She sniffs, and like a clairvoyant detective, she follows the scent to the cabinet. She takes the flowers out and deposits them on Pat's desk. The phone rings, and Kate answers it.)

Lights dim on Kate and up on Pat and Debbie.)

DEBBIE

Why are you so tough on her?

PAT

Between the kitty litter smell on her clothes, and the smell of the flowers, I feel like I'm working in a pet cemetery.

DEBBIE

You never told her Wendy and Trevor were engaged, or that Joey's alive? Why didn't you ever tell Trevor that?

PAT

The condition Joey was in? Never. Besides, Trevor was in love with Wendy. He went crazy after Wendy split and lost contact. And now he wants to go into the Army. I can't help but think that it's all her fault. She never returned any of his phone calls or e-mails. I can't get a straight answer from Trevor or you, for that matter.

DEBBIE

Wendy and I stopped talking after her graduation.

PAT

You missed her life, Debbie. Or most of it. Sorry, but it's the truth. I know it wasn't easy for you running the business after Harry died.

DEBBIE

Couldn't have done it without you, Sweetie. We became friends, didn't we? Single parents, no men around. But what I don't understand is what happened to Joey and why have you been keeping him a secret all this time? Not only from Trevor, but from me as well.

PAT

It's time we both come clean. You first, Deb. I had to walk you up to the porch like a puppy dog. So, what's going on.

DEBBIE

I get frightened just thinking about it. I'm still shaking from my trip down the driveway.

(Pat takes Debbie's hand and they stand.)

I have to get past this. If Wendy wants me to go see her...

PAT

Let's take a little walk.

DEBBIE

I was always a nervous-nelly. Even as a kid. Wendy's birth made everything worse.

(As they walk from the porch, a rumble of thunder is followed by soft cello music.)

DEBBIE

I don't do well with blood. It was running down my leg when the labor pains started. The weather was crazy bad. I had never been in such a storm. Harry had to carry me to the car. He drove like a lunatic till we got trapped in traffic from all the fallen trees. Twice he rode the sidewalk to bypass accidents. We hit garbage cans. It was the bumpiest ride I ever took. I knew from the pain I hadn't much time.

(THE SCREEN shows two camels humping in the background.

Debbie stumbles.)

DEBBIE

We couldn't get close to the emergency entrance; all the ambulances were lined up, so I walked a long way in the wind and rain. Inside was pandemonium. I was light-headed...

(A roaring thunder causes Debbie to stumble again.)

PAT

You want to sit?

DEBBIE

No. No. I have to get help. My baby is bleeding.

PAT

You're OK. You're here with me.

DEBBIE

Where's a doctor? All these people, screaming. Someone...  
Help!

PAT

Debbie! Look, it's me, Pat. You're safe with me.

DEBBIE

Please... Someone. Anyone. The lights... Stop the flickering  
... They're stabbing my eyes. God help me, where's my baby...  
Where's my baby?

(Debbie falls to the ground,  
flailing her arms and thrashing  
about. Pat restrains her till  
Debbie relents.

They head back to the porch.)

PAT

You're home. You're fine. No hospital. Open your eyes.

DEBBIE

Why is it so dark?

PAT

Rain's coming. You OK? What happened?

DEBBIE

I thought I was in the hospital again. I'm sorry, Pat. That  
flash of lightning... like when the power went out and the  
lights flickered... so crazy.

PAT

You delivered in the dark?

DEBBIE

Yes. Also, I was afraid someone would steal my baby. And I struggled against the pain, then passed out.

(Pat helps her stand.)

First time I held Wendy was the day I left the hospital. I was delusional for three days and the doctors wouldn't let me have her. The whole ride home, I wasn't sure she was mine.

PAT

Oh Sweetie!

DEBBIE

I mean it started with neon lights at deli's, then supermarkets. Then the crowds, flashing lights, speeding cars... It all comes back. I lose my balance, get nauseous. I'm scared to leave the house now, and lately I don't even open the door. I don't want anyone to see me with so much fear. I go outside and look around as if a mugger is chasing me.

PAT

How much does Wendy know?

DEBBIE

I don't want her thinking I blame her for my condition. So, no, we don't talk about it. Are you going to call me on that?

PAT

I don't have the right.

DEBBIE

What do you mean?

PAT

(Hears the phone ring.)

We need to get back inside. Kate's been alone too long.

ACT I

Scene 2

REALTY OFFICE - lights up as  
Debbie and Pat enter the office

DEBBIE

(holding onto Pat's arm)

Tell me. Come on. I bore my soul to you.

PAT

Trevor and I never talk about Joey. Joey is out there  
somewhere. God knows where.

DEBBIE

Joey's alive! I don't believe it. Why would you keep that  
from Trevor? And me?

PAT

If you saw Joey, you'd understand.

KATE

(screaming into the phone)

NO, a house next to a sump cannot be listed as waterfront  
property. Would you swim in that filth?

(Hangs up and pushes a button  
for another line.)

PAT

We'll talk later.

(Pat crosses to Kate and Debbie  
sits at her desk.)

KATE

(into the phone)

Francine, save the placenta! It's nutrient-rich and great for  
my cactus. Keep the kittens together and put them in the  
empty diaper box that's on the porch. Oh, got another call.  
Hold on.

(MORE)

KATE (CONT'D)

(Pushes another button and--)

Hello! Hammel's Happy Homes. Buy one, get one free.

PAT

Kate!

KATE

(into the phone)

Come in and see what we have. Can you hold? I have another call. Hello, Hammel's Happy-- What did you say-- You better watch your tongue, young man. Leaky pipes are your problem, not ours.

(Pat sees the flowers on her desk and picks them up and walks them over to Kate.)

KATE

(into the phone)

That's disgusting. If I could do that to myself I'd have my own reality show. Good bye!

PAT

KATE!

KATE

(hits another line)

Hey, Fran, I'm sorry, I have to go. I'm being paged.  
(hangs up)

PAT

I believe these are yours.

(Puts the flowers on Kate's desk)

KATE

You had a call from the VA. A guy named Marty wants to know if you'll be there for the basketball game tonight.

KATE

And there was a sub-leaser who wanted to sublet her sublease.  
Can she do that?

PAT

No, she can't.

DEBBIE

I have to get out of my work clothes.  
(exits)

KATE

She looks upset.

PAT

Your powers of observation are most extraordinary.

(Kate leans back and folds her  
arms while taking a read on Pat.)

PAT

These flowers, my dear, they add such a nice fragrance in  
this office, don't you think?

KATE

I certainly do. Since when do you care?

PAT

PAT

Oh, but I do care, and I would care even more if you keep  
your personal business separate from this realty business,  
and I would strongly suggest any information regarding  
Samantha's breeding habits or birthing rituals, or Leroy's  
urination problems, be kept out of the fucking office.

KATE

Oh, that reminds me. I have to be home by four to get  
Samantha neutered.

PAT

(Screaming)

Damn it, Kate. When you go home, see if there are any "for-sale" signs on Hoover Street.

KATE

My job is to answer phones, remember?

PAT

Then work the phones. Find some leads. And get rid of those--  
(pointing to the flowers)

KATE

You're just jealous because I'm getting romantic attention from someone and you're not.

PAT

From some Cyrano nut job with a mania for flowers who can't ask you out because he gets too flustered. No thank you.

KATE

Oh, Cyrano de Bergerac ... That's my favorite play.  
(The doorbell rings.)

PAT

Why didn't you see that coming?

KATE

The doorbell? I don't know.

(Pat crosses to the front door,  
opens it and finds Dan who holds  
a bouquet of flowers.)

PAT

Come on in. She's inside. What's your name, again?

DAN

Dan. Dan Tarentino. Call me Danny.

PAT

Nice to see you, Danny-boy. We were just talking about you. Fourth time this week. You were here this morning, right?

DAN

This morning was roses. Now, it's mums.

(Pat leads Dan into the office.)

KATE

Dan. What a surprise!

PAT

Yes. Isn't this a surprise? Let me give you my oozing-with-joy look.

KATE

Shush, Patricia. What do you have now, Dan?

DAN

Chilean white and Peruvian yellow chrysanthemums in a reusable, lavender-scented, glass-lined holding bowl with matching white and yellow striped curling ribbon and baby's breath throughout. It's a big seller.

KATE

Heavenly. And the card?

DAN

Still signed, "A secret admirer."

KATE

This is driving me nuts, Dan. Who is he?

DAN

I don't know. The order was paid for in cash in an anonymous envelope delivered by FedEx.

PAT

You have no idea, Katherine?

KATE

No. I'm totally blocked.

DAN

It doesn't surprise me that you're getting flowers, Ms. Devine. You're an attractive woman, if I may say so.

KATE

You can say it all day long without interruption.

DAN

You're a very attractive woman--

PAT

That's enough, cowboy. She was being rhetorical when she said 'all day long'.

DAN

Sorry.

KATE

Don't listen to her. She's very crotchety this morning. Can you investigate this for me? It's really important.

DAN

Sure. You certainly deserve to know, but maybe the sender isn't just being coy. Maybe he needs to stay anonymous.

PAT

Is there something you're not telling us, Danny-boy?

DAN

No, no. Nothing. Look, I gotta go. Enjoy the flowers. Bye!

(Dan exits. Pat inspects the flowers.)

PAT

Hey, listen, if I'm the teeniest bit jealous that you have an anonymous admirer, it's not because I don't have my pick of men, you know.

KATE

You mean Marty and his friends at the VA? I've never quite understood that arrangement.

PAT

You can't find men more loyal at the VA and --

KATE

And unavailable! It's not like you'll ever bring one of them home. Why did you start volunteering for the VA anyway? Were you hoping to find Joey?

PAT

That's none of your business. Please stop with that ESP crap. Just leave it alone.

KATE

(pause)

I guess I keep my cats hoping to find a reincarnated lover, so who am I to talk. Truth is, I'm a frustrated spinster whose libido has been crushed because years ago some high school jerk called me thunder thighs.

PAT

(sympathetic)

I'm sorry for being so bitchy. I had a hard morning with Trevor. So, tell me. Why can't you get a psychic reading on this mystery flower guy?

KATE

I don't know. It's rare I'm at a loss like this, but it's happened before. Like when I'm sexually aroused or when I have romantic inclinations, I lose my psychic introspection. It comes back to me after I'm in a relationship for a while, but in the beginning, I'm blocked somehow. And when it comes back I usually screw things up royally because I know things I shouldn't. Like the time my boyfriend cheated on his income tax return and when I called him on it he got scared and ended the relationship. He never called me back.

PAT

Or maybe you were being sexually challenged.

KATE

You know, you're a very hard person to like.

PAT

So I'm told.

(The phone rings. Debbie enters fiddling with her unfastened bracelet.)

KATE

That's your go-see guy.

PAT

Mr. Smolich?

(answering the phone)

Hello. Oh, Mr. Smolich, what a surprise.

DEBBIE

Be a dear and help me with this bracelet, Katherine. I'm a little shaky today.

(Kate helps Debbie.)

How do you know who's on the phone and things like that?

KATE

A gift from my grandmother. She had the same intuition. She thought it was a curse, actually. Oh, this is a beautiful piece. I've never seen it before. Where did you get it?

(WENDY HAMMEL, 20s, wearing a NY Yankee cap, crosses to the porch. She hesitates then slowly climbs the stairs.)

DEBBIE

It was a gift from my Harry. He gave it to me on our twentieth just before he died.

(MORE)

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

It makes me sad, but I'm trying to get over it. Besides, it's a little too luxurious for the office, don't you think?

KATE

What you need is an occasion to show it off. Just like I need a reason to shop for a new outfit.

(Wendy enters. Pat hangs up the phone. She notices Wendy and runs to her for an embrace.)

PAT

So good to see you, Wendy.

(Brings her to Kate.)

This is Kate. A new member of the team. She's a cat-lover and a bit on the clairvoyant side, so watch what you think.

KATE

Nice to meet you, Wendy. I heard so much about you. A Yankee fan who lives in Boston! Isn't that dangerous?

WENDY

Sometimes. But Beantown has been good to me. People are nice, although it is a tough place to be a Yankee fan, especially since they beat the Red Sox last week for the pennant.

(Wendy faces Debbie. Both are reluctant to make the first move.)

DEBBIE

Dear, why didn't you tell me earlier you were coming? I have to read about your concert in the paper?

WENDY

Glad to see you too, Mom! Listen, I'm sorry for calling at the last minute.

DEBBIE

Are you, really?

WENDY

OK. Let's try this.

(Pulls tickets from her  
purse.)

Here. I have some great orchestra tickets for tomorrow night. We have a rehearsal and the taxi's waiting outside, so I don't have much time.

PAT

Oh, you can't visit?

WENDY

I'll be back later on. Early evening, perhaps. I just wanted to drop off the tickets now and later I wanted to explain why I've been incognito for so long.

(Responding to Debbie's  
nonchalant look)

Do you have a problem with that, Mom?

DEBBIE

No. No. I just didn't know that's what you called hiding out three States away. Incognito! That's what you called it?

PAT

Stop it, you two. Listen, Wendy, Trevor will be so happy you're home. You should call him and--

WENDY

Yes. Yes. I know. We haven't talked in a while. I'm looking forward to seeing him. I ...

PAT

Do you need his number?

WENDY

Unless he changed it. I have it, Pat. I'll call.

KATE

Imagine! Carnegie Hall! Isn't this exciting.

PAT

Yes. Exciting.

(A tense pause.)

(Trevor bursts through the upstage door with a box in his hand in a hooded fleece two-piece joggers suit and--)

TREVOR

Mom, I brought over ...

(He stops when he spots Wendy.)

TREVOR

Wendy ...

WENDY

Trevor ...

TREVOR

How are you?

WENDY

Fine.

TREVOR

Did you lose your cellphone?

WENDY

I'm sorry. I have to go. We'll do this later.

(Wendy exits, and then Debbie collapses in a chair.)

PAT

What the hell was that, Trevor? "Did you lose your cellphone?" Really? That's the first thing you want to ask her after not hearing from her all this time?

TREVOR

I didn't know what to say. It just came out. Leave me alone.

DEBBIE

Did you see the way she looked at me?

KATE

I felt it too. Bad vibes all around.

PAT

Shut up. There was no vibes at all.

DEBBIE

Her eyes were judging me. Her voice. Didn't you hear it?

KATE

Most definitely. Her voice was very tense and--

PAT

SHUT UP, KATE!

DEBBIE

I'm going to the porch. I need to think.

(Debbie crosses to the porch.  
LIGHTS FADE on her as she sits on  
the bench.)

PAT

I should go buy a lottery ticket. My luck has got to turn.

(to Trevor)

OK, I promise I won't push you about Wendy. I just need to know if you're OK?

TREVOR

I'm fine.

PAT

Well, this is a surprise. What's in the box?

TREVOR

I wanted to drop this off before I went out for a jog.

(hands the box to Pat)

A peace offering because of this morning. Some for you too, Kate. And Debbie if she wants it. Fresh homemade fudge.

KATE

Men bearing gifts. Cool. Oh, why aren't you at work?

TREVOR

I have an appointment with the Army recruiter, so I called in sick.

PAT

Kate, some tea would go well with this, if you please.

(stares hard at Kate)

The water is already hot on the stove.

KATE

Trevor, this is delicious.

(She exits but stands close to the door to eavesdrop.)

PAT

I know you're upset because of Wendy. But ... Is it so hard to understand I don't want you in the military?

TREVOR

No, it's not, Mom. But I told you it's just an interview. I'm not signing anything. What are you so afraid of?

PAT

I'm afraid of you lying dead in a ditch somewhere in Afghanistan or some other God-forsaken place.

TREVOR

I know there are risks, but why aren't you proud of me? Is patriotism an out-of-date ideal for you?

PAT

My God, if you don't sound just like your father.

TREVOR

Not such a bad thing. You said he signed up on principle. I think he'd appreciate what I'm doing if he were alive.

(Kate steps in.)

PAT

God, this is deja vu all over again.

KATE

Did you want milk and sugar with that, Trevor?

TREVOR

I'm not staying, Kate. Maybe next time.

(starts to exit, then stops)

What did Wendy want?

PAT

She just came by to drop off these tickets for her concert at Carnegie Hall tomorrow.

TREVOR

Carnegie Hall!

(pause)

Is there a ticket in there for me? No! Forget I asked. Don't say anything. Just another reason to keep my appointment.

PAT

Trevor! There's a ticket in here for you. Don't be anal.

TREVOR

(While exiting)

Gotta run. Later.

PAT

(After a long pause)

That went well, don't you think?

(before Kate can respond)

(MORE)

PAT (CONT'D)

Help me find the comparative listings for Smolich. I have to prepare for that go-see.

KATE

You said his dog died.

PAT

He just called. He's feeling much better since he bought a goldfish.

KATE

Ooo! I don't trust animals without eyelids. Creepy.

PAT

Yeah. Creepy. I'll need the plot assessment as well.

(Kate doesn't move and just stares at Pat.)

PAT

Come on. Let's go. Chop, chop. What's the matter?

KATE

I'm not moving until you tell me why you never told Trevor about his father.

PAT

I swear, Kate. Keep your nose out of my business.

KATE

He needs to know his father's alive.

PAT

What gives you the right to tell me what to do? Being a surrogate for a houseful of cats may make you an expert on fur balls, but you know nothing about how to raise a son.

KATE

I agree, but I feel how much you're aching inside to find Joey. And he deserves to know he has a son.

(MORE)

KATE (CONT'D)

And Trevor deserves to know his father is alive. I can help. I'm good at finding people. So talk to me.

PAT

The only man in your life is an anonymous flower freak, so get away from me with that psychic crap.

(Pat sits and buries her face in her hands.)

KATE

You might not believe this, but I was in love once.

(Pat looks up.)

Really. To a part-time dance instructor. We met on a conga-line at an Animal League benefit.

PAT

Joey was a wonderful dancer.

KATE

Really! Tell me more.

(responding to Pat's growl--)

Come on. Loosen up. Talk to me.

PAT

It was a long time ago. I was 23. We met at a church social. I saw how well he moved, so went over and introduced myself. So few men can dance well, you know?

KATE

Tell me about it. Frank and I spent our first night together on a blanket on a beach in Red Hook. It was spectacular!

PAT

How long were you two together?

KATE

For one orgasm.

PAT

That was it? One orgasm!

KATE

Don't start. This conversation is going nicely so far. It's your turn. Did you see any action your first night with Joey?

(responding to the silence)

Come on. Loosen up. It's not like I'm taking your blood.

PAT

Ah, what the heck. That first night led to one long, hot, passionate summer. Right out of a Harlequin novel. We screwed like gerbils. By the end of August we had marriage on our agendas. Then Grenada happened.

KATE

That sounds like a vacation resort. What the hell happened in Granada?

PAT

It was no vacation for him. There were 19 US casualties and 116 more troops were wounded. One of them was Joey.

KATE

Is that how you lost touch?

PAT

This is why I didn't want to start this conversation. Now I have to tell you everything.

KATE

Why is this so hard?

PAT

Because I wanted to get married before he shipped out and we didn't.

(Kate sits back. Waits for more.)

PAT

We argued over it and he left without saying goodbye. If he loved me, he could've given me a ring. Or some kind of hope.

KATE

Why not wait until he got back?

PAT

I just couldn't do that.

KATE

Why the hell not?

PAT

BECAUSE I WAS PREGNANT.

(Takes a single rose from the  
bouquet and snaps it.)

The last thing I told him was marry me or leave. God, Kate,  
if I could take those words back, I would.

KATE

You didn't tell him you were pregnant?

PAT

He was gone before I could.

KATE

That was the last time you saw him?

PAT

A few months later he shows up at the Manhattan VA hospital.

(Pat takes out some pictures from  
her desk and hands them to Kate.)

PAT

Here are some pictures of him before he deployed.

(As Kate reviews them)

There's one hospital picture of him asleep. He was pretty  
banged up. His mind, the man I remembered, wasn't there. On  
my late-night visits to his ward I'd lean in and whisper,  
"Joey, this is Pat." But he always had this glazed look and  
he never spoke. The doctor was hopeful he might eventually  
speak, but he never spoke when I was there.

(MORE)

PAT (CONT'D)

The doctor explained Joey was so irrational and depressed it was pointless to pursue any relationship and I should wait for Joey to contact me when he was ready. But he never did.

KATE

Oh, I'm sorry you went through that.

PAT

Joey was so bad off I thought it best Trevor should think his father was dead. I just don't think Joey wanted to be found.

(Kate returns the photos.)

Anyway, so there you have it. That's enough. No more. Now let me ask you something.

KATE

Ok. What?

PAT

Who's Dorothy?

(Kate picks up the broken rose.  
She tries to piece it together.)

KATE

(a painful moment)

Some things can't be fixed.

(She forces herself past a  
painful memory, then reaches for  
the comparative listings and  
hands the papers to Pat.)

PAT

Thanks. By the way, I won't complain if you want to look for Joey, but this is just between you and me, okay?

(starts to leave but stops)

We had a moment there, Kate, but this hasn't changed the fact that you're still a pain in my ass.

KATE

Naturally.

(LIGHTS DOWN in the office and  
LIGHTS UP on the porch bench  
where Debbie is still sitting.

Pat crosses over to Debbie.)

PAT

Knock, knock.

DEBBIE

Go away.

PAT

(She sits next to Debbie)

Do you feel like talking?

DEBBIE

Was that two-minute, 'Hi-mom-I'm-home-gotta go' visit  
appropriate for a daughter who has hardly spoken to her  
mother in two years?

PAT

She didn't want to confront Trevor. She would've talked to  
you if ...

DEBBIE

Talking to her is like talking to a robot. We're both  
programmed to say the same things over and over.

PAT

Are you okay out here?

DEBBIE

This is the only safe place I can go outside without freaking  
out. Remember that swing set we had out back.

PAT

Of course. How could I forget? Trevor almost broke his neck  
trying to jump onto your roof.

DEBBIE

Well, I'm having a little Deja Vu. Do you know how much time I spent pushing Wendy on that swing? I remember her eighth birthday. We counted each swing. We must have counted to 500. I get so angry because no one remembers the good times.

PAT

Yeah.

DEBBIE

There's a wall between us. She blames me for everything.

PAT

Wendy can't accept your limitations right now.

DEBBIE

She won't accept shit anytime. The world revolves around her. She won't tell me anything.

PAT

Talk to her anyway. She might surprise you.

(A contemplative pause)

Why not come with me on the "go-see"?

DEBBIE

Cars and me don't get along very well, Patricia. I'll get a panic attack. By the way, did I ever tell you the first time that it happened to me? Having a panic attack, I mean?

PAT

Is this going to be long or painful?

DEBBIE

It was for me. I drove through a car wash with my mother. As soon as the machines began sweeping the car, I curled up in a fetal position and cried hysterically. I couldn't breathe. I felt like the car was being crushed. I thought I was dying. That's when I realized something was wrong with me. So, I developed a fail-safe routine anytime I was in a car.

PAT

And what is that?

DEBBIE

I'd distract myself by playing with the radio and windows. Up ... down. On ... off. I'd do it over and over. Drove my mother crazy.

(Laughing)

Why is it that children love to drive their parents crazy.

PAT

I don't know. It's in their DNA, I guess. So ... what do you say? Come with me on the "go-see". It'll be fun.

DEBBIE

Like the time I threw up in your car?

PAT

Oh, yeah. I forgot about that. Come anyway, but don't throw up in my car.

DEBBIE

I'll come if you talk to Trevor about Joey.

PAT

I'll think about it.

DEBBIE

Fair enough.

PAT

So, you're coming?

DEBBIE

I'll need a few things first, like a bottle of Pepto...

PAT

And a quart of tequila. I'll get the listings. You get ready.

(LIGHTS DOWN on the porch and  
LIGHTS UP in the office as they  
enter. Debbie exits the upstage  
door. Pat crosses to Kate.)

PAT

Debbie's going with me on the go-see.

KATE

How did you get her to go?

PAT

I can sell sand in the Sahara. Now you're in charge of  
yourself. No phone calls about your cats, understand?

KATE

Absolutely.

PAT

If Debbie makes this adventure, she just might make it to the  
concert. Who knows?

(Pat exits the upstage door. Kate  
grabs the phone.)

KATE

Francine? You still there? Good. Good. Here's my list of  
names for Samantha's litter. Lorenzo, Samson, Ferdie, and  
Sweetness for the kitten with the different color eyes...

LIGHTS OUT.

ACT I

Scene 3

LIGHTS UP on two folding chairs which become PAT'S CAR. Pat and Debbie are already seated. Debbie has a gym bag on her lap.

DEBBIE

Pat, I'm not sure about this, so, easy on me, all right?

PAT

Have I ever steered you wrong? Trust me? OK. Checklist: bottled water.

DEBBIE

(opens her gym bag and--)

Got it.

PAT

Cold compress? Tissues? Towel?

DEBBIE

Check, check and check.

PAT

How about the blindfolds?

(Debbie takes one from her purse and straps it on her head so that she is ready to cover her eyes.)

DEBBIE

Roger that.

PAT

All right. Now, this guy we're meeting has been to two agencies before us. He's very particular. And very rich.

DEBBIE

Smolich. Why is the name so familiar?

PAT

Plumbing goods. The name's on your toilet bowl.

DEBBIE

That's not a good omen.

PAT

And his dog, Henry, just died.

DEBBIE

What's he looking for?

PAT

A fixer-upper. He'll do a total rehab and decorate outrageously for a shot at an article in "House and Gardens". Then he'll rent it out. Or flip it.

DEBBIE

We could snag a commission on both ends.

PAT

I like the way you think. By the way, don't mention the dead dog. Okay ... We're off to see the wizard.

(An audible hum indicates the car is in motion, and a softer purr when it idles.

Debbie peeks over her blindfold. THE SCREEN conveys what she sees - fast motion as if in a tunnel.)

DEBBIE

Oh, God! Slow down.

PAT

I haven't even pulled out of the driveway yet.

(As Pat drives, THE SCREEN shows her going down the street at a normal speed.)

Debbie peeks over her blindfold and THE SCREEN shows the fast motion in a tunnel again.

Debbie yelps and puts the blindfold back on. The motion on THE SCREEN goes back to normal.)

DEBBIE

I don't think I can do this, Pat.

PAT

You can, and you will. If all goes well, maybe tomorrow...

DEBBIE

First things first. Now slow down for crying out loud.

PAT

Wait. Let me make this traffic light.

DEBBIE

This is so unfair! Why am I being punished like this?

PAT

(Stops the car.)

Look at me, dammit! Look at me, Debbie.

(pulls the blindfold up so  
Debbie can see)

Count to five.

DEBBIE

What? Why?

PAT

Do it. Do it now.

DEBBIE

One. Two. Three.

PAT

Finish!

DEBBIE

Four ... Five.

(Pat slaps Debbie in the face.)

DEBBIE

Oh, sweet mother of God. That hurt.

PAT

Now you have someone to blame for being hurt. Not yourself, not Wendy, not God. Blame me. See if that helps. Now put your blindfold back on. We don't want to be late.

(She slips the blindfold back on as Pat continues driving. Debbie becomes anxious and sings Jingle Bells in a high pitch voice.)

PAT

Debbie, will you please ...

(Debbie turns the radio on and changes the station repeatedly. Polka MUSIC plays. Debbie gyrates in her seat to the melody. A kaleidoscope of colors appear on THE SCREEN as Pat reaches for the radio and turns it off.

Debbie turns the radio back on and finds Country Western MUSIC and she shrieks out the lyrics.

Pat turns it off, and as Debbie reaches for the radio again--)

PAT

I swear if you touch that radio one more time I'll count to five again and beat you silly.

(Debbie reaches for the window controls and flips the window up and down.)

PAT

Stop with the windows!

(Debbie continues flipping the controls, and Pat reaches over to smack her hand and loses control of the car.

IMPACT sounds. Metal, glass. The drama of an accident appears on THE SCREEN.)

LIGHTS OUT.

ACT I

Scene 4

LIGHTS UP on the porch.

Dan stands in front of Kate holding yet another bouquet of flowers.

DAN

Notice the grouping of roses, how the red are shorter-stemmed than the white. The note was very specific about that. I think he - or whoever - is trying to say his feelings for you are nothing compared to the warmth of your smile.

KATE

How do you interpret that from just the grouping, Dan?

DAN

After dealing with this guy for the past few weeks, I'm getting to know him. We think alike. In flower arrangements.

KATE

Well, it's all very flattering, but--

DAN

I believe this person has deep feelings for you. Look at the careful pruning of the rose leaves. Five leaves to a stem - no more, no less.

KATE

What's that mean?

DAN

They represent his five senses, I'm sure, all of which take delight in the person for whom this bouquet is intended. You!

KATE

That poetic sentiment is in the card?

(Dan nods.)

Can I see it? The card.

DAN

Well, ah-- I'm afraid I lost it. None of my business, anyway.

KATE

Keep the next one for me to see, OK? If there is a next time, that is.

DAN

Sure. But this guy has lousy handwriting.

KATE

Sometimes I can get a reading from a person's handwriting.

DAN

OK. By the way--

(He takes a rose from the  
bouquet - hands it to Kate.)

That's a very attractive dress you're wearing.

(The office phone rings.)

LIGHTS OUT on the porch. A few  
beats, gives Kate time to cross--

LIGHTS UP in the office. Wendy  
and Kate are sitting at a desk.)

KATE

(into the phone)

We close at five, usually. No, I just handle the phone and office work ... Well, thank you for that. Your phone voice is sort of Cary Grantish, if I may say so ... Yes, I'm always here ... maybe we will. Thanks for calling.

(hangs up)

WENDY

You're blushing. What did he say?

KATE

He said I had a bedroom voice.

WENDY

You did sound flirtatious.

KATE

Did I?

WENDY

I thought all sales people did that to entice a customer.

KATE

I'm not selling anything. I don't have a license.

WENDY

Well, maybe you should get one. When's my mom due? She hasn't gone out of the house in I don't know how long.

KATE

Any minute is my guess. Are you in a hurry to get back?

WENDY

I promised the harpsichordist I'd return her car by seven.

KATE

That's not much time. Your mother will be disappointed.

WENDY

Well, I do want to say something to her. To be honest, I'm a little nervous.

KATE

Yes. I sense that. Confused might be a better word.

WENDY

I haven't told you what the news is yet.

KATE

I sense it's deep. It's bigger than just apologies.

WENDY

That's scary. You are weird, you know that?

(LIGHTS OUT in the office and UP  
on the porch.)

Pat and Debbie walk to the porch.  
Debbie has a head-bandage.)

DEBBIE

It was your fault. You were driving.

PAT

Really? Yeah, I guess it was all my fault. I wasn't the least  
bit distracted by your imbecilic behavior.

DEBBIE

Oh, now I'm an imbecile.

PAT

It was the first word that came to mind. Look at my car. The  
bumper is knocked off.

DEBBIE

It's in the back seat.

PAT

It doesn't belong there. It belongs on the front of the car.

DEBBIE

Oh, Trevor can put it back on in 5 minutes.

(picking at the bandage)

Ouch. It hurts.

PAT

All right. All right. Straighten yourself out.

(Pat adjusts Debbie's shirt, then smacks Debbie's hand from picking at the bandage.)

PAT

What are we going to do with you?

DEBBIE

My self-help tapes doesn't prepare me for this.

PAT

Why the hell don't you take your meds? Maybe they will help.

DEBBIE

No way. My cousin takes the same meds for vertigo and all it did was give her black teeth and skin blotches.

PAT

OK. OK. Put your big girl panties on and get inside. Let's just try to salvage this day.

(LIGHTS DOWN on the porch and LIGHTS UP in the office as Pat assists Debbie in.)

KATE

Oh, my God. Pat, what happened?

PAT

We had an accident. I sideswiped a huge walnut tree ...

(looking at Debbie)

... while I was trying to deal with this crazy lady who was playing with the radio and windows. You nutcase.

KATE

What's with the bandage?

PAT

Debbie smacked her head on the dash. She's fine.

DEBBIE

Yes. Yes. It's just a little bruise.

KATE

So, you didn't give Smolich my condolences for his dead dog?

PAT

No Kate. We didn't make it to the go-see at all.

KATE

Well then, there's no reason for me to stay. Let me bid everyone a farewell. My furry friends need to be fed.

(Kate exits and an awkward  
silence follows.)

DEBBIE

Hello, Wendy. I'm glad you stopped back.

WENDY

Are you?

DEBBIE

What's that supposed to mean?

WENDY

Nothing. Absolutely nothing. Listen, if the accident becomes an excuse to miss my solo, you'll be pleased to know that PBS will be broadcasting the concert live.

DEBBIE

Why do you have to be so damn ...

(Wendy waits for Debbie to finish  
the sentence, but Debbie can't,  
or doesn't.)

WENDY

Well ... are you going to make it to the city tomorrow?

(no response)

I didn't think so.

(MORE)

## WENDY (CONT'D)

I thought you might be pleasantly surprised that you can hunker down here and watch it on TV with a bowl of popcorn and a box of juicy fruits. Aren't you happy about that?

DEBBIE

(trying not to yell)

Why do you have to be so damn critical of me? Why can't you be a little more ...

WENDY

... Compassionate?

DEBBIE

No. Optimistic.

WENDY

Optimistic!? Hmm. Let's rewind the clock and replay my softball championship where I was very optimistic you'd be there too.

DEBBIE

That's so cruel. You have no idea of the time I spent running this business so you could have a good education.

WENDY

Oh, God. Here we go again. Train to nowhere is leaving the station. Don't start Mother or...

DEBBIE

Or what? Going to leave for another two years? You have no gratitude. This is your senior class recital all over again.

WENDY

You've gotta be kidding me.

DEBBIE

You never told me about that performance either.

PAT

Oh, boy. I think I better go.

WENDY

No. Stay, Pat. My mother may need some emotional support after I'm finished.

PAT

My day just isn't getting any better.

WENDY

(to Debbie)

Let me tell you what it was like in high school with everyone talking behind my back.

DEBBIE

Oh, really? You're gonna go there? You were a musical savant, for chrissakes. If they were talking behind your back it was because twenty colleges were tripping over each other to give you a scholarship and I was trying to figure out which was the best one. Five orchestras were offering you a full time position before you even graduated. 'Oh, poor me, people are talking about me because I'm so wonderful.'

WENDY

Really, Mother. How did you get so enlightened being a recluse? FYI, my cello playing didn't impress my classmates in High School, not as much as your condition. They were always more interested in your trip to the mailbox than what concerto I was going to play that weekend. You never came to a single Parent-Teachers meeting because of your condition. Not one recital in four years because of your condition. Not one ball game because of your condition. Not even graduation.

PAT

Wendy, all this is a bit unfair, don't you think?

WENDY

Is it fair my own mother blames me for her condition?

DEBBIE

I told you your birth was difficult. I didn't blame you--

WENDY

Even two years of therapy hasn't convinced me of that.

DEBBIE

Therapy!?! You've never told me you needed help! Why would my daughter need therapy?

WENDY

Oh, my shrink warned me I might not be ready for this.

DEBBIE

Ready for what? To tell your mother the truth. After all I've done for you ... you spoiled brat.

WENDY

You want the truth, Mother? Let me tell you about one of those many performances you missed. Remember that night at the Centennial Concert when no one showed up to give me a ride home? I figured the walk home was only a mile because I knew which yard to cut through and which dark alleys to avoid. Maybe you remember that night, Mom? The night my blouse was torn and I had black and blues all over my legs.

DEBBIE

You said you hopped a fence and fell.

WENDY

But there were no fences to hop in the route I was taking. I was in a hurry to get home to finish my book report. I cut through Simpson Street, past the Silver Dollar Lounge, and a man from the bar began following me, and I started to run. But he caught up to me, and just as I started to scream, he yanked me to the ground. He had a knotted rope wrapped around his fist and punched me twice in the stomach to shut me up. He punched the wind out of me and those knots were hard, Mom.

(Debbie waves her arms as if she doesn't want to hear anything more. She covers her ears.)

Wendy crosses to Debbie and  
removes her hands from her ears  
so she can hear.)

WENDY

While he was choking me with one hand, he undid his filthy jeans with his other. I knew if I yelled or struggled he'd kill me. So, I laid still while he pushed into me over and over again. His breath had a misty stink of cigarettes and beer. I gagged against the rope that he jammed into my mouth. I tried to scream, but nothing came out, just hard breathing ... again ... and again ... and again, until I realized the breaths were the convulsions of a woman being raped. He finished with a sickly whimper, but lay on top of me for a minute, enjoying his conquest. Then he stood, buckled his pants, and walked away. Whistling. Like it was nothing. Lunch time was over and it was time to go back to work.

(Silence as Wendy backs away)

Nothing to say, Mom?

DEBBIE

I told you never to go on Simpson Street.

WENDY

Really, Mother. That's all you have to say?

DEBBIE

WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO SAY?

(through her tears--)

Why didn't you tell me, Wendy? That's what I want to say. Why didn't you tell me?

WENDY

I was scared that if I breathed a word of it he might come back and do it again. Or something worse.

(No one speaks. Pat stands.)

PAT

Is this the news you wanted to share with us, Wendy?

WENDY

Partly. Yes.

PAT

What else?

WENDY

I was pregnant and the Maestro, instead of firing me, he took me in his home. I got an abortion. It was a boy.

DEBBIE

Oh my God. You killed my grandson? Oh ... This is all my fault.

(Debbie stands, sobbing. She waves her hands as if there's nothing else to say.)

WENDY

What, Mother? Cat got your tongue?

DEBBIE

A boy. Who was the ... Who was ... the ...

WENDY

The father?

(Debbie nods, reluctantly.)

Well, that's a good question. Could've been Trevor's or--  
(in Debbie's face)

The rapist's.

PAT

(Clears her throat.)

Does Trevor know about this?

WENDY

He's always known about the rape, but not about the ...  
Pregnancy. That's why I stayed away for so long. That's why I  
didn't write or call. I was ashamed. I felt guilty. I know I  
should've told Trevor or gotten a DNA test.

PAT

Wendy, I'm very sorry about what happened to you.

(Wendy shrugs, then crosses to the window and peers out.)

WENDY

At night I sometimes dream of a baby boy that's mine and Trevor's. I bring him into bed with me. I stay awake for hours sometimes just staring at a pillow thinking of the baby and every dimple on his face consoles me in my loneliness. In my dream, I ask him who his father is but he can't tell me.

PAT

That explains a lot, Wendy. I could've been a grandmother, I guess. That would've been nice, but ... I think you did the right things under the circumstances.

WENDY

I haven't called because I didn't know what to say. I haven't worked everything out yet, Mom. This was my first step. My doctor assures me one step at a time is the way to go.

(as she starts to leave--)

One thing hasn't changed, Mom. I can still leave the house knowing you won't follow me.

DEBBIE

I love you, Sweetheart. I want us to have a relationship. I do. I want us to be close. I feel so lost without you.

WENDY

Yeah, me too. If I see you sitting in the audience tomorrow night, then I'll know we can have a relationship. Until then-

(exits)

LIGHTS OUT

END OF ACT I

ACT II

SCENE 1

THE FOLLOWING DAY: The basement of Carnegie Hall where Wendy, wearing a Yankee baseball cap, practices on the cello. She starts and stops, having difficulty focusing.

Trevor enters, unnoticed, and quietly waits. Frustrated, Wendy moans and slaps the bow against her lap.

TREVOR

Temper. Temper.

WENDY

Trevor, my God! You scared me.

TREVOR

Hello, Wendy.

(They meet in an awkward embrace.)

WENDY

How did you find me?

TREVOR

A guy at the desk said you were rehearsing down here. I followed the cello music and ... here I am.

WENDY

The maestro wants a tempo change and I'm trying to improvise a little.

TREVOR

Ah, yes. The maestro. I heard he's one hell of a great guy.

WENDY

Don't make this any more difficult than it is.

TREVOR

Wouldn't think of it. Why would I do that? Except for our chance meeting yesterday, I haven't heard a word from you in two years. All my phone calls and emails? Ignored. Birthdays and holidays? Not a peep. No reason to be upset, right? Shit, Wendy, you couldn't let me know you were pregnant.

WENDY

This isn't the time, Trevor.

TREVOR

You're right. Two years ago would've been better.

(Wendy looks away.)

I could've been the father, Wendy.

WENDY

Don't yell at me!

TREVOR

My mother shakes me awake this morning and asks me if I got you pregnant. I'm in the twilight zone wondering what universe I woke up in. So, excuse me if my tone isn't suitable enough for you.

WENDY

You'd better go!

TREVOR

Sorry I bothered you before your big performance. I know that's not right. I just thought we had something important to discuss and I thought I would handle this better.

(He turns to leave.)

WENDY

Wait. Don't go. Not yet.

(Wendy sits and indicates for Trevor to sit beside her.)

**(MORE)**

WENDY (CONT'D)

Trevor, I don't know if you were the father. Is that the only reason you came here? To find out?

(Trevor sits and pulls out a toy figure from his pocket and hands it to Wendy. She takes it, then hands it back.)

TREVOR

No. I wanted to return this.

WENDY

Peter Pan! My prom gift to you?

TREVOR

Yes. That night we talked for hours about having a family with six kids and a pumpkin patch in the back yard. Remember?

WENDY

I don't want that back, Trevor.

TREVOR

Take it. Too many memories for me. You're lucky it's still in one piece. I almost ripped this thing apart more than once, but then I'd think: how childish. Peter Pan never grew up, but I had to. I had to let you go.

WENDY

Better to find someone else.

TREVOR

I gave it a try, actually.

WENDY

That's good. Keep trying.

TREVOR

I gave it a try, actually. Heather was a fashion designer. Loved to window shop. This one evening a dress caught her eye as we passed by. She raved about the cut and the fabric. She was so alive at that moment. I thought she was you.

(MORE)

## TREVOR (CONT'D)

I grabbed her and kissed her right there, and I opened my eyes and I saw she wasn't you. There was nothing in that kiss. No excitement. We sort of just rubbed lips. In fact, she smiled in the middle of it, like I was doing her a favor.

## WENDY

So, when things end badly, you move on.

## TREVOR

It didn't end badly for her. She bought the dress.

(Pause.)

If we didn't bump into each other yesterday, were you going to see me before you went back to Boston?

## WENDY

I had to see my mother and then ... Maybe.

## TREVOR

Maybe? (Beat) Do you feel anything for me at all, Wendy? How did I go from the love of your life to a 'maybe' kind-of guy?

## WENDY

No one in the world would have cared for me the way you did after what happened. I'll never forget that.

## TREVOR

So, I'm just a fond memory?

## WENDY

I'm not the same person, Trevor. You shouldn't expect me to have the same feelings.

## TREVOR

All I expect are some answers.

## WENDY

What will that change? If I had the baby and kept it, were you willing to be a dad regardless if you were his father?

TREVOR

I don't know. What I do know is you had no right to make that decision without my input.

WENDY

What about my rights? You can't understand the darkness that hides in my soul, even now. Sometimes, when I'm in the subway or a crowded elevator, I smell his sweat and my stomach turns. I feel his weight pressing into me and I can't breathe. That horror won't leave. Until it does--

TREVOR

So, the lesson about moving on applies just to me?

WENDY

(Awkward beat)

After the abortion I felt all alone in Boston. And thank God the Maestro took me in. No strings attached. His interest was only in my music. And all I could think about was what if you were the father. How long would we last if that was the case and you decided to stay with me. So, I dealt with it by having the abortion. Later, I felt like I didn't have a life. I had no one. Not even you.

(Trevor snaps a Zippo lighter on and off. He stands and paces.)

TREVOR

But that was your choice. I would've been there for you. Didn't I prove that before you left for college?

WENDY

Yes. You did. But would you have married me if I told you I was pregnant? Out of pity, perhaps? I didn't want to spend thirty years only to find out you harbored resentment. And besides, I was too broken two years ago, Trevor. I didn't have a direction until ... now.

TREVOR

You've worked it all out. I'm happy for you. But I haven't had the time that you've had to dwell on this. And I don't know if I could've been a father to someone else's child.

WENDY

No one's asking you to make a decision on that. I thought you got that point.

(Static on the loudspeaker...)

VOICE (O.S.)

Five minute call. Musicians on stage in five minutes.

WENDY

Rehearsal's starting. I have to go. I'm sorry--

TREVOR

Wendy, don't leave me like this. What do I do?

WENDY

I can't tell you what to do. I don't have the right. Two years of silence saw to that, and I know it's unforgivable and I will apologize properly to you and my mother for that. But not right now. No apologies today!

(Collects her belongings)

I worked too hard to get here to start feeling guilty again. I concentrate on my music and I move forward. I suggest you do what's best for yourself, same as I did.

TREVOR

This isn't fair.

WENDY

Fair? Ha. My rape isn't fair. My mother's agoraphobia isn't fair. My solo isn't fair to the flutist who wants one as well. So it goes.

TREVOR

So that's it? It's over between us?

WENDY

I didn't say that.

TREVOR

Well, don't you worry about me, Wendy. I'll get through this. Being alone is something I've gotten good at. But before I leave, I need to tell you something ...

WENDY

What, Trevor? Make it quick. I have to go.

TREVOR

I didn't tell you. After my mom demanded to know if I was a father to *your* ... baby, she told me my father wasn't dead. Can you believe that? He got messed up in the Granada conflict, but he's alive somewhere and obviously never wanted a son in his life. So, you run back to Boston after your solo and feel sorry for yourself. You're not the only one in this world who rejected a son.

(Trevor places the Peter-Pan figure on a music stand and leaves without looking back.)

Wendy's sobbing leaves her unaware of his exit.)

WENDY

I'm so sorry, Trevor. I never meant to push you away. I was just scared I'd lose you forever if the baby wasn't yours. What if it wasn't yours and I told you. What would have...

(turning to an empty room)

... done?

LIGHTS OUT.

ACT II

SCENE 2

LIGHTS UP in the OFFICE.

Pat sits at her desk. Kate enters with tea; hands the cup to Pat.

KATE

I can't believe Wendy kept the rape a secret all this time. Then to tell Debbie she had an abortion? My God ...

(Looks around)

Where is Debbie?

PAT

Upstairs. I gave her a sleeping pill. She should be up soon. When she comes down, no talk about Wendy. Or the abortion. OK? Let's be upbeat today.

KATE

OK. Let's talk about that gorgeous hunk who came in here last week. Remember? The guy who was looking to rent by Yankee Stadium so he could watch the World Series from his window.

PAT

How could I forget? He was a younger Sean Connery with bushy red hair. You stammered like a school girl. Got all flushed and mumbly.

KATE

At least I wasn't drooling all over myself like a puppy-dog.

PAT

I was not. But did you notice his big hands? And you know what they say about men with big hands?

KATE

What?

PAT

(scoffing)

You never cease to amaze me.

KATE

What are you talking about?

PAT

Your sex life is like you owning a dachshund.

KATE

I don't own a dachshund.

PAT

Exactly.

(Picks up her cup.)

This tea isn't doing it for me. Follow me to the porch.

(LIGHTS DOWN on the office and  
LIGHTS UP on the porch.)

Kate grabs her purse and follows  
Pat who heads for the porch. Pat  
reaches behind the bench and  
pulls out a bottle of booze.)

KATE

How long has that been there?

PAT

Since the Yankees won the pennant. Two years ago. Want some?

KATE

Probably not a good idea. Debbie might freak out.

PAT

Is that a "no"?

KATE

Not exactly.

(Pat pours the booze and Kate takes a sip from the cup, then reaches into her purse and takes out a joint.)

PAT

Well, look at you. Is that what I think it is?

KATE

My next door neighbor grows his own. I don't do this very often.

(lights the joint)

Can I ask you something without you getting upset?

PAT

Go for it.

KATE

How can you stay so attached to a man you've only seen once in thirty years?

PAT

I don't know.

(takes a toke)

The memories make me feel good, I guess.

(moans)

Oh, who am I kidding. I never came to closure with him emotionally. I just haven't allowed myself to feel for a man ever since Joey. I wanted us to marry, Kate. So much.

KATE

If you ask me, he loved you too much to get married. Probably didn't want to make you a widow if he never came back.

(Pat hands the joint to Kate who also takes a toke. They continue to exchange the joint and cup as they converse.)

PAT

I would've taken that risk. I don't know why he couldn't.

KATE

I bet if you had told him you were pregnant, he would've married you to provide for Trevor, especially if something did happen to him in Granada.

PAT

You could be right, Kate. I messed up, didn't I? Screwed it all up. Let's not talk about him. Let's focus on your secret admirer. To Dan-the-Man.

(She raises the cup; takes a swig. Kate looks confused.)

Come on! You must know he likes you. Why don't you just go for it?

KATE

I don't know how to just 'go for it'.

PAT

I think Danny-boy's ready take the next step. With a bit of encouragement he might even be ready for the fourth move.

KATE

What the hell is the fourth move?

PAT

Well, let me see. First move is tongue in the mouth. Second move is take off your bra. Third move is Clinton sex. You know, Cunnilingus.

KATE

Oh! My cousin works for Aer Lingus.

(They both take a swig.)

I'm just not good with men, Pat. Every damn time I feel something, you know, the "twang", it never works out. I can't seem to survive the courtship. At first I lose my power, but when it eventually returns it just seems to get in the way. Like the time I was being courted by Tim, the lawyer. That could've amounted to something.

PAT

A lawyer. Impressive. What happened?

KATE

We dated for a while. Once my estrogen levels were normal again, my psychic abilities returned. He was overcharging a client and when I called him on it he freaked out and split.

PAT

I don't think you'll have to worry about that with Danny-boy.

KATE

What should I do, Pat?

PAT

Just relax. Be yourself. You're a good-looking woman, although you should dress better. Accent your assets.

KATE

Here it comes. The shit-sandwich.

PAT

What's that supposed to mean?

KATE

You compliment me a couple of times and stick shit in the middle.

PAT

Shit? I don't think I've ever heard you use that word. Shit, shit, shit. You're usually very lady-like.

KATE

See what I mean? 'Oh, Kate, you're so good-looking - you dress like crap - you're very lady-like.' Shit sandwich.

PAT

I didn't say you were 'sooo good-looking'. I said you were good looking. If you were 'sooo good-looking' men would be tripping over themselves to get to you.

(MORE)

PAT (CONT'D)

(a noise inside the house)

I hear Debbie coming. Get rid of this stuff.

(Pat rushes to jam the bottle  
back behind the bench Kate tosses  
the roach. Fans the air. They run  
into the office.)

LIGHTS OUT on the porch and  
LIGHTS UP in the office.)

DEBBIE

Good morning, ladies.

PAT AND KATE

Good morning.

DEBBIE

I want you both to know that I've cried half the night, so I  
don't have any more tears left. I'm better this morning. I  
don't want either of you tip-toeing around me. Understood? I  
assume you told Kate everything.

PAT

Yes.

DEBBIE

OK. Good. Now I have something to say.

(pause)

I've decided to go to Carnegie Hall tonight.

PAT

Want to say that again?

DEBBIE

You heard me. I want to see Wendy's performance.

(Pat laughs in disbelief.)

KATE

Yes! You can do it.

DEBBIE

Pat, what do you think?

PAT

The only way I will drive you to Carnegie Hall in my car is if I tie your hands and feet to the arm rest, and put duct tape over your mouth.

DEBBIE

I promise I won't touch anything. I'll just sing and hum. And you can wear earplugs. And I won't puke in your car.

PAT

(sighs)

I can't do another day like yesterday.

DEBBIE

And neither can I.

(Pat flicks her fingers off her temple indicating a bomb is exploding.)

DEBBIE

Good. Nothing left to say then, so let's try and--  
(searches for the right word)

KATE

Make merry.

PAT

Make merry? What are we, in 18th Century England?

DEBBIE

Let's keep things low on the Richter Scale today, OK? Yes, let's make merry. What's that smell? Have you been drinking?

PAT

Maybe. A tiny bit. Just a tiny bit.

(pointing to Kate--)

A lot. AND ... she's been smoking pot.

KATE  
(pointing back--)

So has she.

DEBBIE  
I don't believe this. You're both like little kids. You're both imbibing at ten o'clock in the morning?

PAT  
You should join us.

DEBBIE  
I don't think so. Sober up, both of you, right now. This is a business office, not a Woodstock Concert.

KATE  
I've decided I want to sell houses. I want to get my realty license.

PAT  
You think people are going to buy homes from someone who smells like kitty-poop? I doubt that very much.

KATE  
Don't start, Patricia. We had such a nice talk outside.

PAT  
Then stick to what you do best. Answering phones, poop-head.

DEBBIE  
Ladies, please stop your bickering, and that kind of talk.  
(door bell rings -- pause.)  
Well? Is someone going to get that?

(No one moves. The bell rings again. Pat and Kate just stare at each other.)

PAT  
When you get your license we can discuss who gets the door. Right now, you're the office flunkie, so you answer it.  
(MORE)

PAT (CONT'D)

(with surprise)

Oh! You don't know who it is? That can mean only one thing.

KATE

Shut up.

(The door bell rings a third time.)

DEBBIE

I'm counting to three. If somebody isn't hauling ass to the front door, you'll both lose a day's pay, I swear. One--

PAT

One-and-a-half--

KATE

I'm looking for a day off anyway.

DEBBIE

Two--

PAT

Better get it Kate or I'm crawling through your basement window and sterilizing six of your cats.

KATE

Do that and I'll tell your gynecologist that you're thinking of leaving her because her chin hairs are driving you crazy.

DEBBIE

Three--

KATE

Excuse me. I have to get the door.

(LIGHTS DIM on the office and go UP on the porch as Kate meets Dan at the front door. He carries a magnificent display of flowers. Kate steps onto the porch.)

KATE

Dan. How nice to see you.

DAN

Glad I caught you. These will need water right away.

KATE

Oh, they're heavenly. The colors are dazzling. Is it your arrangement?

DAN

Yes, but the choice of flowers is per your admirer's instructions. He has a fine sense of floral compatibility.

KATE

Tell me who he is, Dan. You must know by now.

DAN

I'm pledged to secrecy.

KATE

Then you'll just have to return the bouquet. I can't keep accepting gifts not knowing who to thank. It's embarrassing.

DAN

No, don't feel that way.

KATE

Is there a card enclosed this time?

DAN

Oh, yes. In my pocket.

KATE

Let's put these down for a sec.

(She sets the flowers on the porch and they both sit on the bench.)

You must be tired, doing deliveries all day long.

DAN

Actually, it's harder than most people think. Some of the cacti I deliver weigh over 20 pounds.

KATE

Cacti?

DAN

Cactus - in the plural.

KATE

Of course. You seem quite intelligent, Dan.

DAN

I do have my degree in botanical science. Ohio U.

KATE

Impressive. What else should I know about you?

DAN

I'm a freelance writer and have been published in 'Mystery Writers of America' magazine.

KATE

Now, that is fascinating. Who's your favorite author?

DAN

Agatha Christie.

KATE

I should have known.

DAN

She's the best at combining intrigue and suspense in a story.

KATE

I agree. Oh, you said you had the card for the flowers?

DAN

Right here. It's a little crumpled.

KATE

Don't you usually attach the card to the wrapping?

DAN

Uh ... It came off when I loaded the van.

KATE

I see. Let me take a look. "Beauty begets beauty. Flowers will fade, but your beauty never could." Signed, "An Ardent Admirer." What a splendid compliment. And the hand writing, quite a flourish! Very unique.

DAN

Ms. Devine, tell me a little something about yourself.

KATE

There isn't much to tell. I work here in the realty office quite a lot. I have a stable of cats. Well, a few more as of yesterday. I like to read plays, dramas and comedies, and I collect autographs from famous literary figures. I have a Thornton Wilder, a John Steinbeck - quite a few.

DAN

What's your favorite play?

KATE

Cyrano de Bergerac! The romance and noble sentiment in that play always give me chills. Now, if I had the autograph of that playwright! Maybe you would oblige me with your signature, now that I know you're an author?

DAN

Me? Oh, I don't know. I haven't published much.

KATE

Don't be modest now. Sign your name right on this card and I'll add it to my collection.

DAN

Well, all right.

(signing the card)

KATE

So, you think I should continue accepting the flowers?

DAN

Indeed, you should.

KATE

You know, I would so very much like to meet the man who fancies me as his Roxanne. I would say to my secret Cyrano - should I ever meet him - that the poetry he bestows on me with his beautiful flowers are fragrant words that deserve to be spoken, face-to-face. How else can a romance blossom unless the lovers-to-be reveal themselves to each other?

DAN

I say, the best mysteries are solved only after the suspense is savored.

KATE

Exactly. But at my age I have a habit of reading the last pages of a book first, so I don't waste time with an ending I don't like. May I have the card back?

(Dan returns the card.)

Thanks. Tell me, Dan. As a mystery writer, has handwriting analysis ever been a technique you've employed in any of your stories to solve a mystery?

DAN

Of course.

KATE

And if I turn this card over and compare the writing of the note and the signature, do you think I might finally solve the mystery of who my admirer might be?

DAN

That depends.

KATE

On what?

DAN

If you could ever imagine me as your Cyrano. Could you care for someone who hides himself in roses and daffodils to conceal his own unattractiveness?

KATE

No mystery there, Cyrano. Anyone who sends such loveliness could never be less than beautiful. Dan-the-Man, tell me what's on your mind?

(Dan leans in and gives Kate a Rhett Butler kind of kiss, then nibbles on Kate's neck.

Kate notices Pat by the door.)

KATE

Dan, stop it.

(to Pat)

He's so romantic, isn't he?

PAT

Romantic my ass. He's gnawing at your neck like it's a hot dog. A little advice, Kate. Better practice safe sex with this guy and, if you're wondering, installing handrails around your bed doesn't constitute safe sex.

(beat)

Where did you hide the reports?

DAN

Well, I better go.

(He gets up and leaves. LIGHTS OUT on the porch steps.)

ACT II

SCENE 3

LIGHTS UP on the OFFICE. Debbie,  
Pat and Kate sit at their desks.

Debbie has rollers in her hair  
and Kate and Pat have dresses on.

Dan appears on the porch with yet  
more flowers. This time the  
flowers are arranged differently.

KATE

Dan should be here any minute. We're going out to get a quick  
bite to eat, then I guess we'll meet you two at Carnegie.

PAT

I think we're going to have to keep a close eye on them. By  
the way. Don't forget to bring Wendy her pocketbook, Debbie.  
That's one thing I never do. Leave my pocketbook unattended.

DEBBIE

(To Pat and Kate)

I know. Me neither.

(pause)

I'm so nervous. Do I look OK?

PAT

Finish dressing and take the rollers out, then ask me.

DEBBIE

Pat, I'm scared.

PAT

I know. We'll do this together. Don't worry.

(The doorbell rings.)

(MORE)

PAT (CONT'D)

Sarcastically--)

Oh, I wonder who that is.

DEBBIE

I gotta go get dressed. I'll get it.

(Debbie gets up and answers the door with Kate.)

Dan hands the bouquet of flowers to Debbie.)

DAN

These are for you.

DEBBIE

Hello, Dan. Really. Why me?

DAN

Well, Kate told me you are being reunited with your daughter tonight. I figured you'd celebrate. They're hand-picked in Peru and flown here express for this special night.

DEBBIE

(Smells the flowers.)

They're beautiful. Hey, Dan. Kate told me absolutely nothing about you. How did you two meet?

(Kate takes the flowers.)

DAN

I guess it was the time when I was shopping the fresh fish selection at Gristede's. I was picking through a pile of red salmon, and there, holding a fist-full of scrod, was this beauty in a yellow taffeta dress, her shapely figure outlined by the display lights of the lobster counter. I tried to stammer a "hello" but floundered.

KATE

Don't mind him. Sweet phrases grace his mind and fresh flowers are his business.

(MORE)

KATE (CONT'D)

(She grabs Dan's arm.)

See you there, Debbie.

(Debbie returns to the office.)

DEBBIE

I'm going upstairs and finish getting dressed. Hey ... How can I ever thank you for everything you've done?

PAT

I'll think of something. Now go. It's getting late.

(As Debbie scampers upstairs the doorbell rings again.)

PAT

THE DOOR'S OPEN. COME ON IN.

(JOEY enters. Pat doesn't look up to see his scarred face.)

PAT

Come in. I'm about done with this lease. Please. Have a seat. Actually, I shouldn't've let you in. I'm getting ready to go to Carnegie Hall in the city.

JOEY

I'm selling my family home. Over on Conklin. I'm selling because my mother recently died.

PAT

Oh, I'm sorry to hear that. So, a single owner?

(Pat looks up and sees Joey's face.)

JOEY

Yup. Free-and-clear.

PAT

(Looks hard at Joey)

I know you, don't I. You have an in-ground pool. Over-sized back yard.

JOEY

Yes. We've had a for-sale sign up for a long time. We thought of selling it by ourselves, but ... you know. We need a realtor. Someone like you. You think you could give me a ballpark figure so I could start to plan-- start to plan-- plan--

(Looks confused - dazed)

Sorry. Sometimes I lose track. In my mind ... Anyway, I haven't lived there in ages. I live in a rooming house in Manhattan. I'm an outpatient at the VA facility in the city.

(pointing to his scars)

As you can see, I've had a hard time. Got the Purple Heart.

PAT

I volunteer at Manhattan VA sometimes. I never saw you there.

JOEY

I'm only in there an hour a week. Maybe two.

PAT

I know you. You're Joey. Look at me. Do you know who I am. I'm Pat O'Neil.

(There's a long, awkward pause as Joey slowly realizes he's talking to Pat O'Neil.)

JOEY

I'm not ready for this. Forget the whole thing. I-- I-- I gotta go.

PAT

Joey! You can't just drop into my life like this and then leave! I have to tell you something. You're a father, Joey. You have a son.

JOEY

No. That's impossible. It's been too long. I can't do this.

(As Debbie enters, Joey quickly exists almost knocking her over.)

DEBBIE

Whatever did you say to that man? He's in a hell of a rush.

PAT

Debbie, that was Joey.

DEBBIE

As in "your" Joey? Trevor's father?

(The SOUND of a car engine sends Debbie into a panic.)

PAT

I have to catch him. He can't just run away ... again.

DEBBIE

Go get him. Jump in your car and go after him.

PAT

But what about you? I'm supposed to take you to the concert.

DEBBIE

Don't worry about me. I'll call Kate on her cell or take a cab.

PAT

This is unbelievable. Are you sure you'll be all right?

DEBBIE

Yes. Now go. Get out of here.

(Pat leaves.)

Debbie runs to her desk, picks up the phone and dials.)

DEBBIE (cont'd)

Hello, I need a taxi. Quick-- World Series, my ass. I can't wait an hour. Never mind.

(She hangs up and reaches over to turn on the tape recorder.)

TAPE VOICE (V.O.)

Disease and illness are preventable afflictions when your primary response to a stressful situation is relaxation, both physically and mentally...

(LIGHTS DIM. Tape FADES OUT and then LIGHTS UP and tape FADES IN suggesting a passage of time.)

She's still at her desk. Wendy appears on the porch and slowly enters the house.)

TAPE VOICE (V.O.)

...Productive workdays, healthy relationships, creative outlets, and strong faith-based beliefs are nurturing elements that provide support and sustenance in everyday life. If any of these components are missing, then steps need to be taken to restore physical health.

(Debbie gets up and paces. She doesn't see Wendy enter.)

DEBBIE

What am I going to tell Wendy? No ... No. I gotta go to Carnegie. I'll take the bus. I'll take the bus.

(Debbie turns quickly and sees Wendy with her hand over her mouth ready to cry.)

DEBBIE

I wanted it to be a surprise.

WENDY

I don't know what to say, Mom. After thirty years ...

DEBBIE

Yes. Yes. Now don't make a big deal of it.

(Wendy spots her pocketbook on  
the desk and grabs it.)

WENDY

I left my pocketbook. That's why I'm here. Come. Come on.  
There's a taxi outside. We'll take the taxi together.

DEBBIE

No. Taxi's too close to the ground. Things speed by too fast.  
The bus is better. Less claustrophobic.

WENDY

I don't have time to argue, Mom. It's late as it is. I'm  
going to miss first call. The taxi's right outside. Let's go.

(Debbie runs into the vestibule  
area and retrieves her SHAWL and  
an UMBRELLA.)

DEBBIE

Just don't stand there. Let's go.

(Debbie walks to the door and  
just as she opens the front door  
a car whizzes by: THE SCREEN  
displays a kaleidoscope of  
images. She slams the door shut,  
then opens the door again and  
walks to the porch.

LIGHTS DOWN on the office.)

ACT II

SCENE 4

LIGHTS UP on the section of stage that dubs as a taxi in waiting.

Engine noises, and THE SCREEN images create the illusion of cars and buses on a busy street.

Wendy follows Debbie to the taxi while Debbie moans all the way.

Debbie slides in the back seat (folding chairs); Wendy slides in next to her and slams the door.

WENDY

(to an imaginary driver)

Please hurry.

THE SCREEN shows Debbie's torment and she moans. The taxi travels a few blocks, then stops at a light. Debbie opens the door and as she runs out--)

DEBBIE

I can't ride in the taxi. Bus ... bus is better.

(She grabs her shawl and umbrella and bolts out of the car and runs to the stage area marked 'The Church'. Once in the church, she ducks into a confessional booth.

Wendy hands the driver money.)

WENDY

Keep the change.

Wendy walks into the empty church  
and looks around. LIGHTS UP on  
the church.

WENDY

Mom! I haven't got time for this. Okay, Mother. You win.  
We'll take the bus.

(Wendy hears sobbing coming from  
the confessional booth. The  
umbrella leans against the booth.)

Wendy turns the knob to the  
center chamber. It's locked, so  
she ducks into one the  
confessionals.)

WENDY (O.S.)

Mom ... stop.

DEBBIE (O.S.)

(through her sobs)

I'm sorry, Sweetheart. I can't help this. I know you don't  
believe me, but I really can't help it.

WENDY (O.S.)

Can we get focused so we can go to the bus stop? Please.

DEBBIE (O.S.)

See. You don't understand or care, do you?

WENDY (O.S.)

I haven't got time for this circular crap, Mother. (Sighs)  
All right. You want me to give you absolution. Okay. I  
absolve you from your sins. Say three Our Fathers and three  
Hail Marys.

DEBBIE (O.S.)

What are you doing?

WENDY (O.S.)

I'm giving you absolution.

DEBBIE (O.S.)

You're not even Catholic.

WENDY (O.S.)

Forgiveness is a human trait, not a religious one.

DEBBIE (O.S.)

Then tell me to drink arsenic. But don't tell me to say the rosary.

WENDY (O.S.)

God help me!

DEBBIE (O.S.)

You don't sound too forgiving.

WENDY (O.S.)

What do you want me to say, Mom?

DEBBIE (O.S.)

Tell me you love me ...

(Debbie starts sobbing again.)

The echo of Wendy's SCREAM is followed by total silence. THE SCREEN backstage shows Christ carrying a cross up the hill to Calvary or Golgotha.)

DEBBIE (O.S.)

Why did you do that?

WENDY (O.S.)

Why? Interesting question. Why is the sky blue, Mommy? Why do birds fly, Mommy? Why is there evil in the world, Mommy? Why does God allow bad things to happen, Mommy? Hmmm? I suppose you wish I were more grateful?

DEBBIE (O.S.)

Yes.

WENDY (O.S.)

(deep sigh) Well, I've tried to get close to you, Mother. And when I try, your issues seem to get in the way. I can't stifle this thing that happens inside me...like someone's stoking coals in my soul. A chemical pumps through my body and I can't look at you without wanting to scream.

DEBBIE (O.S.)

Yeah, well ... I'm sorry you feel that way.

WENDY (O.S.)

And that's all you want to say, some psycho-babble your doctor tells you to say whenever you don't have any soundbites to counter with.

DEBBIE (O.S.)

What do you want from me? You act as if I'm responsible for what someone else did to you. Well, I'm sorry, Wendy. Snap out of it. You're not the only one who has hardships in this world. (pause) Okay. I'm ready.

(Debbie bolts out of the confessional and runs out of the church.)

WENDY (O.S.)

Ug! I bet Norman Bates' mother was never like this.

(Wendy exits the confessional and grabs the umbrella.)

LIGHTS FADE on the church and UP everywhere else.

Debbie stops at the top of the steps (door) and freezes. She turns and sees Wendy.

Debbie runs down the street. THE SCREEN shows what she is going through in her mind. All the movements, all the sounds and lights, hit her at once.

As Wendy approaches her--)

WENDY

Close your eyes.

Debbie closes her eyes. The car passes (SOUND) and the panic subsides. THE SCREEN clears as Wendy holds her mother's arm and--

WENDY

Okay. Car's gone. Now look both ways. Anything coming?

DEBBIE

No.

WENDY

Let's cross the street.

DEBBIE

(looks skyward as they walk)

Dear God, you get me through this and I'll never use another four-letter word.

WENDY

Don't make any promises you can't keep.

DEBBIE

It's getting dark.

WENDY

It's okay. They're just shadows, Mom. The bus stop is only a couple of blocks down the street.

DEBBIE

What am I going to do when the bus moves and things go flying by the window? I'll get dizzy. I'll faint.

WENDY

You'll close your eyes. Take deep breaths is what you'll do.

(Debbie approaches a corner and she hears people talking. THE SCREEN shows the scenery as if it is right out of a Hitchcock thriller.

To Debbie, the voices get stronger, more menacing, just around the corner, maybe. The sounds, incoherent, seem to be coming from everywhere. Maybe they are voices of muggers or thieves in the night. Or worse.

Debbie readies her umbrella, as if it were a weapon.)

DEBBIE

(Whispering)

Wendy.

WENDY

What?

DEBBIE

I hear voices.

WENDY

What are they saying to you?

DEBBIE

They're not in my head. They're real. Don't you hear them?

(The voices get louder as she gets closer to the corner THE SCREEN follows their movement. The voices sound wicked. Vicious. She's at the corner, measuring her breaths. The voices bellow their loudest, right around the corner.)

They get to the corner (partition) and Wendy jumps ahead and looks.)

WENDY

No, I don't hear them. And see? No one is there.

(Nevertheless, Debbie screams, drops her umbrella, throws her shawl over her face and runs across the side street.)

Wendy picks up the umbrella then runs after her mother.

Debbie continues walking with the shawl over her head and yapping nonsense.

Wendy catches up to her and takes the shawl off her head.)

DEBBIE

This is so ... hard.

WENDY

Yes. I understand this is hard. But we have to focus. It's getting late. I don't want to miss my solo.

(Wendy hands the umbrella to Debbie and they continue walking.)

The SOUND portrays someone traveling down the street in a motor scooter.

THE SCREEN shows someone on a scooter approaching. To Debbie, it sounds like a jet engine.

As the scooter passes, Debbie panics. She screams and runs into a BAG LADY. They both go flying.

Debbie quickly gets up and points the umbrella at the Bag Lady, as if it were a sword.)

BAG LADY

Hey, watch where you're walkin'.

DEBBIE

One false move and you're dead.

(THE SCREEN and SOUNDS show cars zooming by. Debbie reacts by throwing the shawl over her head and hugging the Bag Lady who tries to free herself from Debbie's grip.)

DEBBIE

Wendy. Wendy. Where are you?

(Wendy charges up and peels  
Debbie off the Bag Lady and  
stands between them.)

WENDY

Right here, Mom. I know this is difficult, but there's only a  
block to the bus stop. You're almost there.

BAG LADY

Hey. This is my territory. Go find your own street.

(Wendy holds her mother's arm and  
they gingerly continue forward  
with the shawl still over  
Debbie's head. She peeks out to  
see where she is.

The Bag Lady follows them.)

DEBBIE

I can't.

WENDY

You can't what?

DEBBIE

I can't see.

WENDY

That's because you have the shawl over your head.

(removes the shawl)

Stop. People will think you're a fruitcake.

DEBBIE

Too fast. Things ... moving too fast.

WENDY

Then walk slower.

(Debbie walks slower. THE SCREEN shows her vision returning to normal.)

WENDY

We're at the bus stop.

(Debbie hangs on Wendy while the Bag Lady stops a few feet away.)

DEBBIE

We made it!

(Wendy motions her to sit.)

WENDY

You did real good, Mom. I'm proud of you. So, now we wait for the bus.

(Debbie drops her umbrella and the Bag Lady picks it up.)

DEBBIE

Give it to me.

BAG LADY

Finders, keepers.

WENDY

Mom. Let her have it.

BAG LADY

(to Debbie) What's the matter with you.

DEBBIE

I could ask the same thing of you.

(A car zooms by as portrayed by THE SCREEN.)

DEBBIE

Too fast. Things move too fast. Everything's discombobulated.

BAG LADY

Dis-cooom-boob-ulated. Oo! Aren't we the grown-up person using big words that twist the tongue.

DEBBIE

Give me my umbrella back.

BAG LADY

Come and get it.

WENDY

Mom. Knock it off. It's not going to rain tonight. I'll get you another umbrella.

(Debbie sits and throws the shawl over her head.)

BAG LADY

What's her problem?

WENDY

She doesn't get out very often? What's your problem, lady?

(The Bag Lady pokes Debbie in the arm with the umbrella.)

BAG LADY

Hey, dis-cooom-boob-ulated lady?

(She pokes Debbie again.)

You sick in the head, or something?

(She pokes Debbie again. And again. And with each stab--)

What's the matter with you? What's the matter with you...

(Debbie starts pounding her fists into her lap.)

As the Bag Lady goes to poke Debbie again, Wendy intercepts the umbrella, a tug-of-war ensues ending with Wendy yanking the umbrella out of the Bag Lady's hand. Wendy whacks her with it.

Then Debbie tries to get up, the Bag Lady pushes her back down with her foot.

Wendy grabs the Bag Lady by her collar and shouts--)

WENDY

You pipe down, lady. You sit and be a good little girl, or I'll take your eyeballs out with a corkscrew and stuff them up your butt.

(The Bag Lady backs off and sits.

The bus arrives as depicted by THE SCREEN).

LIGHTS DIM

ACT II

SCENE 5

At the BUS DEPOT in NYC Wendy is sitting on a bench in the woman's room in front of a stall.

Debbie is hiding in the stall.

WENDY

Mom, are you going to come out?

DEBBIE (O.S.)

No.

WENDY

Well, I called Kate on her cell. She's going here and will take you to Carnegie.

DEBBIE (O.S.)

Good for her. I hope you make it in time.

(Kate enters the Woman's room.)

WENDY

Thank God you're here.

(Pointing)

She's in there. Gotta go. I don't know you well but, thanks.

KATE

Go. Go! We'll have plenty of time to connect. You'll make the second half if you hurry.

(Wendy exits.)

Kate sits, then fumbles with her jacket and pulls out a flask.)

KATE

You in there.

DEBBIE

(After a beat--)

Yes.

KATE

You want a swig. It's whiskey.

(There's a short pause then  
Debbie slowly comes out.)

Debbie grabs the flask and takes  
a healthy drink. She hands the  
flask back to Kate who also takes  
a healthy swig.)

DEBBIE

Thanks. I can't go. I'm too scared.

KATE

Another mile or two won't matter. We can take a cab.

DEBBIE

Not sober I'm not.

(Debbie drinks again with Kate.  
Kate then closes the stall door.)

DEBBIE

Open doors scare the shit out of me.

KATE

Me too. Let's face our fears together. Join me in a toast to  
our daughters.

DEBBIE

What? You have a daughter?

KATE

And today's her birthday. To Wendy and Dorothy--

(They toast.)

DEBBIE

I'd like to meet her.

KATE

One reunion at a time. Wendy's waiting. Let's go.

DEBBIE

What? You and Dorothy aren't close?

KATE

Very. She's with me all the time in fact.

DEBBIE

I don't understand.

(They take another swig. As they  
slow-step their way out of the  
woman's room to the street--)

KATE

My little girl, Dorothy, she had a sparkle in her eyes that told you she was going to be someone special when she grew up: a writer, a doctor, a philosopher, someone worth knowing. She was so inquisitive, a thousand questions about the simplest things. I saw her once gently pick up an ant between her fingers. She put it real close to her face and said in this gravelly voice--

(using a gravelly voice)

Wow!

(back to her normal voice) )

And she stared at it for minutes on end. When she finally put it down, it scurried away, better off for its encounter. She was that intense sometimes. She'd look into my eyes and see straight into my heart and I'd be forced to go--

(in a gravelly voice)

Wow.

(back to her normal voice)

I would feel worthy by the simple stare that caught me off-guard. I wondered who or what this child was who could see so far into my soul.

(MORE)

## KATE (CONT'D)

A smile from her gave me the confidence that God lived. When she started talking, there was no end to her questions. Her adventure became my adventure. She'd look in wonderment at the birds in the tree branches and demand to know their names. "Wutsdat" ... "Wutsdat", she would always ask. About everything. Sticks, leaves, birds, cement, cars. The wind against her face. She'd wander off after anything that caught her eye. Those precious eyes that saw such a fascinating world we all take for granted. A butterfly. A floating feather.

(slight pause)

One day I was sitting on the couch, exhausted from trying to keep pace with her as she darted from room to room. She was wearing a pair of pink sneakers with pale blue laces. Those sneakers were so worn from all the miles she ran in them. Anyway, unless the laces were firmly tied, Dorothy would put up a fuss and sit on the floor saying, "Pleeeese, Pleeeese" until they were fastened. That day I found myself falling asleep just as she tugged on my sleeve to tie up the lace on her left sneaker that had become undone. The room was barricaded and I was so sleepy ... I tied the lace, watched her turn on the TV, and I fell asleep. But the child-gate was loose. And the kitchen door was unlocked. And the street was ... busy. And my child with her inquisitive mind and voice calling out 'Wutsdat ... Wutsdat' to a slumbering mother, found her way into the unknown. That's the day God died for me.

(slight pause)

For years, I thought about the shoelace I tied and the gate I left loose. Drove myself insane with guilt and blame.

## DEBBIE

Sweet Jesus! I wish I could say the same. My Wendy, she can't forgive me.

## KATE

Forgiveness? Ha! Hardest thing to do in life. I've spent years seeking it. You can't forgive, especially yourself, unless you change something inside.

(MORE)

## KATE (CONT'D)

(pounding her chest) After Dorothy was gone I couldn't move, went nowhere, saw no one. Dorothy's father died in a car accident before she was born, so ... I don't talk about it much. Anyway, one morning after she died an emaciated alley cat crept into my kitchen and wouldn't leave. Poor thing was starving and I had to do something. So I left the house to buy some milk and when I got back the cat had curled up asleep between Dorothy's pink sneakers. And I knew it was time to move on.

## DEBBIE

You think Dorothy forgave you?

## KATE

It's not about forgiveness, Debbie. It's about acceptance. Accept your daughter for who she is and you for who you are. Do that and then you'll have the heart to forgive.

(THE SCREEN depicts them reaching the line of cabs facing north on 8th Avenue.)

## DEBBIE

Wait, you're the psychic. Tell me if I make it in one piece.

## KATE

Yes. You make it in one piece.

They cross out and into a cab  
(folding chairs).

LIGHTS OUT

ACT II

SCENE 6

(LIGHTS UP on Trevor who stands alone outside of Carnegie Hall. Joey meanders slowly towards him, but then Wendy burst on the scene and almost runs Joey over.

Wendy stops as she sees Trevor.)

WENDY

How much have I missed.

TREVOR

It's intermission.

(They hesitate for a brief second then Trevor grabs her hand.)

TREVOR

Go in. We'll talk later.

(Wendy nods then enters Carnegie Hall.

Joey slowly moves up.)

JOEY

Excuse me. How much have I missed?

TREVOR

Intermission just started.

(Joey twirls an unlit cigarette between his fingers.)

JOEY

Good. At least I'm here for the second half. Got a light?

(Trevor lights the cigarette with his Zippo.)

TREVOR

Bad habit you got there.

JOEY

I'm trying to quit. Doctor's orders. Haven't seen an old Zippo like that in a long ... time.

(The definition of TURRETS appears on THE SCREEN.)

TREVOR

It's a keepsake. It used to belong to my father.

JOEY

I had one ... I had one. I know I had ... I'm sorry I get lost ... Sometimes I can't ... My mind gets jumbled...

(pause)

I can't ... Rats. How's the concert going?

TREVOR

Amazing. A friend of mine ... the woman you just saw ... has a solo performance in the second half. Should be outstanding.

JOEY

I'll keep that in mind.

TREVOR

Where are you sitting?

JOEY

I don't actually have a ticket. I know it's a sold out house, but standing room is fine.

TREVOR

Gee, this must be your lucky day. The guy sitting next to me is a doctor and he got called out on an emergency.

JOEY

Well ... Thank you.

(pause)

I have a friend inside as well. We met today after a very long time apart. I didn't handle it very well I'm afraid. She followed me in her car. Caught up with me at a stop light. Motioned for me to pull over, but I didn't. She yelled at me to come here tonight then I sped away. I'm here to apologize and ... and ... change all that if I can ... if I can. She's in the audience somewhere. Somewhere. I thought I'd surprise her by showing up ... Up ... up.

TREVOR

It's that kind of a night. My soloist friend was surprised her mother showed up. Long story. You from around here?

JOEY

Born and raised in Brooklyn. I'm looking to sell the family home, though. My mother recently passed and all I need is an apartment for myself ... myself ...

TREVOR

My mom works in a realty office.

(frisking himself)

I'm sure I have her card on me somewhere.

JOEY

The soloist. She's a close friend?

TREVOR

We were engaged once. I've been trying to get our relationship back on track. I don't mean to be so personal...

JOEY

No, no. That's okay. It's interesting, actually. I came here to settle a piece of the past as well. I let a relationship die a long time ago because I felt ... Unworthy, I guess.

TREVOR

Oh, here's the card.

JOEY

Thanks.

(takes a cursory look at it)

So, what ... what do you do?

TREVOR

I'm a teacher. High school drama.

JOEY

Bet you're good at it. You seem very personable. A friendly guy. Your folks raised you right ... right.

TREVOR

My mom is a single parent. I never knew my dad.

JOEY

Yet you carry his lighter? Interesting! Let me see it.

TREVOR

(Hands Joey the lighter)

What makes you feel 'unworthy', if you don't mind me asking?

(Joey takes a cursory look at the Zippo)

JOEY

Did you ever go somewhere and suddenly realize you don't know where the hell you are or how you got there? Happens a lot to me ... a lot. Doctor ... Doctor ... Doctor says I get lost physically because I feel lost emotionally. Hard to explain, but it makes me keep to myself ... Myself ... Myself.

TREVOR

(thumbing the theater)

So the person you know inside understands this?

JOEY

No, but it's my fault she doesn't. I don't stick around to talk things out.

TREVOR

Just the opposite with me. She's the one who leaves and gets lost. If I told you what I found out yesterday--

JOEY

Tell me. Why not? You got nothing to lose. Tell me.

TREVOR

She might've been pregnant with my child two years ago and got an abortion and never told me ...

JOEY

This is way too weird. I just found out I have a kid. So, you might've been the father, huh? Bummer ... Bummer.

TREVOR

Not sure.

JOEY

I know it's none of my business, but something tells me you'd be a terrific father if you ever got the chance.

(Trevor begins to realize that he is speaking to his father.)

JOEY

This son I've suddenly got is a second chance at being part of something that truly matters - a family. Don't walk away from her.

(Joey begins to realize that he is speaking to his son.

He inspects the lighter.)

TREVOR

Do you feel you're ready to be a father?

JOEY

That's why I came, to tell her just that. Hey, this lighter. The initials on the backside.

(Joey inspects the card in more detail as the lights flash indicating intermission is over)

JOEY

Same as mine. And this card ... It says Pat O'Neil ...

(Pat enters.)

PAT

Trevor. Time to get inside before ... Joey? You came.

LIGHTS OUT

ACT II

SCENE 7

Outside Carnegie Hall. Kate and Debbie show up.

THE SCREEN shows two camels humping in the background during Kat's soliloquy then fades to black.

KATE

I can tell you more stories. Got a slew of them, like why Samantha needs to be neutered and how she only nurses on the yoga mat. And, you'll love this, how my precious Dandelion cornered a squirrel in the laundry room last year and actually backed it into a bucket of bleach. And then there was Missy. She caught a mouse with her back paws. And then there the cutest calico kitten under the driver's seat on the M44 to Astoria and do you know what I did ...

DEBBIE

Oh God, I can't go in. You go. I'll follow soon.

(Kate hesitates, but nods and goes in.

Debbie listens to the music the orchestra is playing - maybe it's The William Tell's overture, or one of Beethoven's master-pieces.

The music stops and there's tapping sounds of the baton against the music stand which indicates an unseen Maestro is bringing the orchestra to attention.

Debbie listens to--)

MAESTRO (O.S.)

Ladies and Gentlemen. Please put your hands together for a wonderful Cellist performing her very first solo. Please welcome Wendy Hammel who will play her rendition of Amazing Grace in G minor.

(Debbie leans against the wall and listens. She gets very emotional, then takes a deep breath and vanishes into the hall.

The entire rendition of Amazing Grace plays out. Exquisite.)

LIGHTS OUT

CURTAIN