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Production Thesis Concerning Direction Of Isn't It Romantic

Monica Rausch
Carroll College, Helena, MT

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PRODUCTION THESIS
CONCERNING DIRECTION OF
ISN'T IT ROMANTIC

BY
MONICA RAUSCH

PRESENTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
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This thesis for honors recognition has been approved for the Department of Fine Arts.

Director
Jim Bartruff

Reader
Dorothy Harper

Reader
Harry Smith

March 30, 1988
Date
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This project would not be successful without the help of some very special people. Because of the dedication of my cast and crew, the show was everything that I hoped it would be.

I would also like to thank Jim Bartruff for all his help in the cumulation of my thesis. I wish to thank my readers, Harry Smith and Dorothy Harper, for the time they invested.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY
INTRODUCTION

The stage lights fade to black while Liza Minnelli sings a final chorus of "New York, New York." The actors file offstage in the dark after their final curtain call with the audience still applauding. The time is 9:30 p.m. The date is February 21, 1988, the final performance of Wendy Wasserstein's Isn't It Romantic in the Carroll College Little Theatre.

Finally, the director can rest. The road to this moment had been a rocky one, providing the director with many sleepless nights; directing a show, there are many tasks to be done.

First, there is the play selection itself. This is a complicated step, for not only does the director want a script that she enjoys, but one that will please an audience as well. Also, the place the play will be held can persuade a director. At the Carroll College Little Theatre, one has to keep in mind the restrictions of set design and backstage space in a theatre so small. The play and the demands of the set have to conform to the unique structure of the theatre.

Two plays were already selected for the 1987-88 season in the Little Theatre. The season opened with The Cherry
Orchard, a classic by Anton Chekhov. The next was The Traveling Lady, a 1950's melodrama by Horton Foote. The season would then close with a musical tentatively, a play about the American game of baseball. A good modern comedy seemed a fitting complement as the fourth play of the season.

Too many modern comedies, by writers such as Woody Allen, David Mamet, and Neil Simon, deal with the strife of the modern man. Their plays provide mostly male roles, with limited parts for the female actors. Other modern comedies by women about women seem to have a strong "Women's Lib" theme behind them.

Then along comes Wendy Wasserstein. A Jewish playwright from Brooklyn, she is hailed by many critics as a female Woody Allen. Her first play, Uncommon Women and Others, her senior thesis for the Yale School of Drama, made it to the New York stage in 1977. Her second major play, in many respects, a spin-off of her first, is Isn't It Romantic.

Isn't It Romantic is not a play screaming out for women's rights. Instead, it deals with the modern woman and her efforts to "have it all." The play poses a number of questions, but the major one seems to be - "can a woman have a successful career, a family, and still be able to read novels, play the piano, have women friends and swim twice a week (See Appendix A)?"

This modern comedy about the plight of the modern woman could relate to the college crowd at Carroll; not only to the women but to the men as well since the plays asks how men
deal with the rise of the new woman. Although the play takes place in many different locations (Central Park, The Four Seasons, two apartments, and an Italian restaurant) the set design could be adapted to the Carroll stage. Isn't It Romantic was the choice.

Having selected a play, the next step is to decide on the style of the production. Since the location of the play is New York, all the properties, clothing, and hair had to have a "city look." Many of the costumes could be pulled from the actor's own closets or borrowed from friends.

With these two major choices made months in advance, the director turns her attention to casting the play. Especially for a director at the college level, it is important to find people to tryout who will be dedicated, sincere, and responsive. The casting decision is a serious one.

The director must make choices that she can work with. At Carroll, it is often difficult to find enough men to attend the audition. For Isn't It Romantic, there was a good turnout of both men and women. The cast that was picked on January 14 would be the same actors at the final curtain call.

Next, the director has to work with the actors in rehearsal. For those never in a play before, the director becomes an acting teacher. For those who are experienced, the director becomes more of a coach. The director must be able to get the most from the actors.

The rehearsal period is a rather stressful time for
the director. At Carroll, the director has to design the set, the lights, and the sound. Not only that, but the director also has responsibilities in publicity which -- for this production -- included a poster design, radio, television, and newspaper spots. The director also has to maintain a healthy and happy attitude about her play so the others around her will want to see the end result. All of these things seem to happen at once providing tension, a hectic schedule, and the many sleepless nights already noted.

But finally, after all this effort, opening night arrives and the director can now place the responsibility of performance upon the shoulders of her cast and crew. But not until that final curtain call can the director finally rest; the hours of hard work finally obsolete.

In the pages that follow, the process of directing Isn't It Romantic will be discussed further. These few pages are only a small preview of the work that took place in order to make the play a success on the Carroll College stage.
The process of finding a play begins months before the start of the 1987-88 season. The long summer months before the beginning of the school year is an excellent time to read as many plays as one can muster to find the one that is suitable to the director and one that will appeal to the audience at Carroll College.

Discovering a play that appeals to the director seems like a relatively easy process. However, this step turned out to be one of the most difficult decisions to make. Especially with the modern comedy, it is almost next to impossible to find a play without strong implications towards drugs, alcohol, strong language, or sex.

The roles for women in most of these modern comedies are small ones. They play the girlfriend, wife, or mistress to the leading man and his supporting actors. Believing that Carroll has more abundant and talented women actors than men, the play needed to cater to the modern woman and her needs.

Upon reading it for the first time, *Isn't It Romantic*, by Wendy Wasserstein seemed like a trivial play about the modern woman. Miss Wasserstein seemed to write the lead woman part of Janie with so many one-liners that she seemed
like a stand-up Jewish comedienne instead of a rising modern woman. As the New York Times stated: "Miss Wasserstein seems a little unsure of what she wants...she veers from character comedy to caricature, interspersed with throwaway jokes and routines." At the first reading, getting beyond these attempts to make this play a comedy were hard to ignore.

Having read over twenty-five plays and with the summer almost over, the director has to make a decision. Maybe she should re-read over some of the plays which may not have made quite an impact the first time over.

Back on the couch reading Isn't It Romantic, the play didn't seem as trivial. Perhaps it was the fact that a decision had to be made on a play. Or perhaps it was the fact that this time, the director had a chance to look beyond the jokes and look for a deeper meaning.

The play is about Janie Blumberg and Harriet Cornwall, two twenty-eight-year-old women who have been friends since childhood. After college, they decide to return to New York to try their luck at career, life, love, and family.

Janie Blumberg is a Jewish girl with "very fat thighs" and a style for wit. She is a touching girl, with sincere feelings for those around her. Her parents, Tasha and Simon, are very stereotypically Jewish. They are perhaps Wasserstein's two biggest caricatures. Tasha is a modern

---

woman with traditional values while Simon just follows Tasha, worrying about his daughter and his business. The two of them want their daughter to be happy, which to them means marriage. They bring over a Russian taxicab driver named Vladimir for her to meet. They constantly shower her with gifts - a mink coat, a coffee table, and a bar to furnish her apartment.

Harriet, on the other hand, is a rich, beautiful woman working for Colgate-Palmolive. She is wonderful at giving out advice, but finds it hard to follow especially when it comes to her own life. Her mother, Lillian, is an executive divorcee who "finds" time in her busy schedule to "do lunch" with her daughter.

Both Janie and Harriet find men to romance. Janie captures Marty Sterling, a kidney doctor and son of a restaurant entrepreneur who sells popovers at shopping malls. He is also Jewish, thirty-two-years-old, and actively in search of a wife, family, and a career. Harriet finds company in Paul Stewart, her vice-president at Colgate. He is a "chauvinistic pig" who lives with another woman, but finds comfort in Harriet's company.

Wendy Wasserstein deals with the two women very differently. Both come from different backgrounds, have different families, different boyfriends, and a different way of dealing with them. Both Janie and Harriet want to be the modern woman, not making any man, job, or family member the ultimate answer in their quest for life's greater meaning.
The story becomes complicated. Janie and Marty develop strong feelings towards one another. Harriet, with Paul coming over only in need for some personal satisfaction, tells Janie that she doesn't have to make Marty the answer for her, that it's all right to be alone. Janie, wanting to be on her own, discontinues her relationship with Marty. Harriet then turns to a man that she has known for only two weeks and decides to marry him. She doesn't want to be alone.

Wendy Wasserstein shows the difference in the two women to show the audience the various ways in dealing with the new opportunities for women. There is more to Janie's jokes; a way of dealing with the new role that women have never had to experience before. As one critic wrote: "Through the leading characters often use irony as an invisible protective shield, the play's title is no joke. Isn't It Romantic is romantic -- also bright, funny, sentimental, and, throughout, inching toward wisdom.²"

Upon a second reading, Isn't It Romantic, made an impact on the director. Although the caricature of some of the characters were extreme, the director could make them more real. Janie could say the jokes as a manner of covering up her real feelings instead of saying them like she was on a stage with a microphone in her hand. Overall, the

²Richard Corliss, "Broadway's Big Endearment," Time, 26 December 1983, p.82.
play had many possibilities and would provide a fresh, modern look for the audience of Carroll College.
After the play is selected, the director can then start to concentrate on the production. However, much of the preparations have to wait until the cast is selected.

One of the major problems at the Carroll College Little Theatre is finding enough people, both men and women, to attend auditions. Since this play was the third play of a four play season, one is able to look at the possible candidates for her own play by watching the actors in the others.

It is difficult not to precast a show that one directs. It is very easy to watch an actor in another play and see them as a character in yours. How then can the director ask people to audition without promising them a part if they do. The director needs to keep her mind open to all the actors who audition for her cast.

The audition date for *Isn't It Romantic* was January 14, at 7:30 p.m. in the Carroll College Little Theatre. The director had only one night to select a cast. The next night was available for call-backs, if necessary. Fortunately, in this case, the cast was selected at the end of the first night.

As feared, the number of men trying out proved to be a problem. For this play, there needed to be four men who
would be acting on stage. Plus, two were needed for telephone messages, which were taped and played during scene changes. There were eight men at the audition and two were there only to sign up for backstage work. However, as the evening wore on, two of the other men trying out decided that the play would be too time consuming for them, and informed the director that they did not want to be a part of the play. This left the director with just four men seriously trying out for the four acting parts.

Usually, at Carroll, the director would be happy that all the male parts could be covered. In this instance, however, one of the actors presented problems. Scott Cifrese, with his long, bleached hair, informed the director that he had no intention of cutting it. Should the director cast him, knowing of his resistance to cut his hair for the character, or cast one of the men who was there for backstage work?

There were eight women at the audition, vying for the four roles. This can delight the director, for she can select from the eight the four that would work best together. Also, none of the women would be left empty-handed; each, whether they were cast of not, would be involved with the show as a telephone messenger or scene shifter.

The audition itself was comprised of improvisations where the actors would speak in their best Jewish accents to that of an "upper crust" elitist. After the improvisations, the auditioners were split into groups to read scenes
from the play (See Appendix B). In the final stage of the audition, the director lined each actor up according to height and body type to get an idea of the physical relationships between the actors. To relieve some tension, the director had everyone tap dance together before they left the stage. This was actually an important part of the audition as the character of Janie ends the play tap dancing alone onstage.

After everyone left, another student, Karl Kaluza, came to audition for the play. The director had to choose between just having the latecomer be involved in the show as a telephone messenger or a scene shifter; or to cast him and explain to the one man who did tryout with everyone else why he didn't get the part. Ultimately, the latecomer was assigned the part of a telephone messenger.

As a student director at Carroll College, it is hard to cast a show without casting friends in the roles. Should the director worry about the feelings of those she doesn't cast? What would the actors do if they felt that she'd given the parts to her friends instead? In the end, the director has to cast the best people for the job, whether they are friends or not.

After a sleepless night, it is not uncommon for a director to have several cast lists in her mind that she must choose from. Finally, before the casting time of noon the next day, the director reaches a decision (See Appendix C).

Why then was this particular cast selected? The director
felt that these people fit the roles and would perform the characters to her satisfaction.

Pam Andersen as Janie would be believable because of her small stature. With the proper costume, she could look overweight to the satisfaction of the director and the script. Her acting experience would enable her to understand the character and with the director's help, a believable Janie would appear. Pam's personal look and attitude was also similar to that of Janie's.

Barbara Allen and Pat McKay as Tasha and Simon made good sense because they looked good together. They also bore enough of a physical resemblance to have a daughter that looked like Pam. Since the director wanted a small hint of a Jewish accent, she needed actors who could handle a dialect. Barb, with experience in other plays, demonstrated a believable Jewish accent in auditions. Pat gave the best attempt at one. Since the mother had to be a dancer, the director needed an actress with the sort of figure that would look good on stage in dancing clothes. On the other hand, Simon needed to look hunched and meek. Barb and Pat physically fit these aspects of the characters.

Todd Jasmin had the look of a Jewish Doctor. His experience in other plays would help him portray the character of an older man. Todd, a junior in college, could relate to the needs of Marty.

The director decided to go with the four original men at the auditions. Scott Cifrese was cast as Vladimir. In
this role, his long, bleached hair could easily be concealed underneath his cab driver's cap. Since Vladimir is the smallest role, the director also made his a scene shifter. He could, thus, double as a waiter at the Four Seasons.

Erin Bishop and Kate Sternhagen were cast as Harriet and Lillian because both were attractive women and could have the look of "upper middle class." Erin had more previous acting experience and was assigned the larger role of Harriet. Kate as Lillian would be a challenge for the director since this was Kate's first major acting role. But the two looked good as mother and daughter and would, hopefully, seem believable to the audience.

John Amoroso as Paul was a big risk for the director. At the audition, John only wanted the part of Vladimir. John argued that since he was a Biology major he needed more time to study. Yet, the director cast him as Paul, hoping that he would accept the challenge. Fortunately, John accepted the part. It was - like Kate - his first acting experience.

All the others who auditioned were assigned parts as telephone messengers and scene shifters. Some were given parts in the technical crew. Those doing set changes were Scott Cifrese, Steve Braden, May Schwartz, and Lisa Hagen. Lisa replaced Karl Kaluza whose hectic schedule prevented him from attending rehearsals. Those doing telephone messages were Elizabeth Engleman, Meg Collins, Karl Kaluza,
Steve Braden, May Schwartz, and Spencer MacDonald. Nicole Holzer replaced Margaret Koenig as the main telephone messenger after Margaret refused the part.

The stage manager was Leah Hale, the prop and house manager was Diane Birmingham, the box office was run by Elizabeth Engleman, and the lights were run by Meg Collins. Brett Linbo-Terhaar replaced Spencer MacDonald as sound man after Spencer came down with hepatitis.

These were the only changes made in the cast. In this production of *Isn't It Romantic*, everyone who auditioned was involved in the play.
CHAPTER THREE
TECHNICAL THEATRE

With the cast selected, the director could concentrate on the technical aspects of the project. Some of these preparations were made before the auditions such as set, lights, and props. However, now that the director knew who would work on the production, she could begin work in the area of costuming and the set itself.

To begin with, the director should start with the set. Since the play takes place in various places in New York City, the director needed to find a way to move the set from apartment, to Central Park, to another apartment, and so forth.

The director's assistants in this part of the project were Jim Bartruff and Todd Jasmin. The director envisioned the set with a New York skyline painted on the back wall of the theatre. To indicate apartments, she thought of having flats moved in with windows cut in them to indicate a closed off area while still being able to view the cityscape. The restaurant and the office scene would be set downstage right and downstage left, with their own pull-out flats to indicate windows, indicating to the audience that they were inside. For the Four Seasons (a fashionable New York restaurant) a table would be set in center stage.
with nothing but the New York skyline behind it. The indication that the restaurant was indoors would be done with lighting.

Because of the director's inability to draw her set, Todd and Jim had different ideas for the set. Jim wanted to set the different areas off with lights, not flats. He even felt the use of levels to differentiate the various scenes would work. Todd thought a moveable wagon with flats bolted onto it could indicate the two different apartments. Todd, however, did have the same concept as the director in terms of the Italian restaurant, the office, and the Four Seasons.

Somehow, the director had to work with her technicians to bring a workable set about. Because of the director's inexperience in this area, the set design did not solidify until halfway through the rehearsal process. Finally, after much debate, a compromise was reached. A scrim was hung before the New York skyline on the back wall. This provided the idea of being inside and outside when needed through the use of lighting. A scrim is a piece of cloth that, when hung, can look like a wall when lighted from the front, and transparent when lighted from the back.

For the apartment scenes, large moveable window frames, constructed from wood, were hung on an upstage pipe for each apartment. The frames were as large as a flat and were hung from large hooks. Both Janie and Harriet had different designs for their windows, and each had two that were hung
for her apartment. During one scene (Act I, Scene VII), which was a split scene with both apartments, one of each window frame was hung for each apartment. Finally, the set started to evolve.

To paint the New York skyline, Lisa Rausch, a graduate student in art from Montana State University, came in. Lisa designed the poster as well, incorporating the same skyline as the essential design element (See Appendix D).

Now it was time to concentrate on costuming. As stated before, the costuming for the play depended mostly on the cast members themselves. Since the drama department at Carroll does not have a store of contemporary fashions needed for this play, the director had to look - literally - into the closets of the cast members and those of their friends.

With the help of costumer Dorothy Harper, the costumes were easy to find. Everyone from the cast had the type of clothing needed for their character. Those who had trouble with finding the right look for their character turned to their friends and borrowed.

Janie and Marty were both dressed in blues, greens, and greys in order to feel casual. Janie had more of a "baggy look" in order to make her look fatter than she actually was. Marty looked casual but successful. The director wanted him to be neat enough to be a doctor, but casual enough to match with Janie, hopefully showing that the two of them were both carefree.
Simon was dressed in browns. He wore the same suit and overcoat throughout the entire play, with little variations to indicate different days. For example, for one scene, he would be without his suitcoat, one day with it, and another day with a sweater.

Tasha wore various colors of aerobic and dance tights. Although the costume tended to make Tasha look younger, the director chose to make her dress that way.

Harriet and Lillian were the hard costumes to find. Many college women do not have expensive and attractive suits or casual dresses with them at school. After some frantic searching, Harriet, dressed in pinks and reds, borrowed mostly from another student. Lillian, dressed in blues and whites, borrowed her outfits from another student and Dorothy Harper.

Paul was able to wear his own suits for his character. Vladimir wore his own jeans and jacket as well. A cab driver hat was borrowed from Grandstreet Theatre. A tuxedo for Scott's appearance as a waiter in the Four Seasons was provided from the Carroll College Drama Department.

The lighting and the sound were both done by the director and Jim Bartruff. Jim set up the lights and focused them. The director was then able to set the lights on the intensity and the area that she wanted. The lights were able to indicate indoors and outdoors through the use of the scrim. A higher intensity was used in front of the scrim for the indoor scenes while the outdoors was indicated
backlighting. Also, to further indicate outdoors during the Central Park scenes, gobos of leaves were cast on the side flats (See Appendix E).

The sound for the play was relatively simple. The sound of phone rings and buzzes were provided by stagehands onstage. The main job for the sound person was to play the various music and telephone messages required between the scenes. But first, the tapes had to be made.

The director selected music from the soundtrack of Hannah and Her Sisters. The music underlined the telephone messages or played by itself when there was no messages in order for the stage movers to change the set. This music was selected because of it's jazzy, New York style. It also had the song, "Isn't It Romantic," on the album. The director also felt that since Wendy Wasserstein is often compared to Woody Allen, the soundtrack from one of his movies would be appropriate.

The telephone messages, to be played over the music, had to be taped separately then fused together with the music. On a Saturday morning, January 30, the people who had telephone messages went to KMTX to record their messages. On February 13, Jim Bartruff and Todd Jasmin went back to KMTX to put these messages with the music selected.

At the beginning of the show and again at the curtain call was a recording of Liza Minnelli singing "New York, New York." The director chose this selection to set the audience in the mood and feel of New York.
The properties needed for the play were found by the director and prop person, Diane Birmingham. The main props needed was a couch for the two apartments. After looking at various furniture stores, the director used two gold-colored couches supplied by Dorothy Harper. For Janie's apartment, the two couches were pushed together, and for Harriet, they were separated by a modern coffee table supplied by Hudson's Furniture. To distinguish the apartments even more, elegant covers were made to cover the couches for Harriet's apartment.

Boxes for Janie's apartment were given to the production from Mayflower Moving and Storage in Helena. To further connect the idea of Janie moving with the scene shifters, the stage movers wore shirts from Mayflower in Seattle with jeans and tennis shoes.

The director felt that since the characters were to eat and drink in the script, that real food and water should be used in the production. These props provided something for the actors to work with and some humorous moments in the play.

Now that the technical aspects of the show had been completed, the director began work on selling the show to the community. Fortunately, the director was able to work with Nancy Robbins in the Development Office at Carroll. Nancy was excited about the show and her excitement enabled the director to promote her play using television, radio, and newspaper.
Each of the cast members had a black and white picture of him/her taken by Harry Obert, another worker in the Development Office. Harry sent these to each cast member's hometown newspaper along with a news release about the play. A small announcement was written about the play; it ran weekly in the What's Happening at Carroll (See Appendix F).

The main part of this publicity was a fact sheet about the play containing specific information about the play (See Appendix G). From this fact sheet, radio and television announcers can ask the director questions when being interviewed. Newspaper writers can write preview articles from the same fact sheet. To promote the play, the director, along with cast members Barb Allen and Pam Andersen, went to KTVH to tape a television spot with local television personality Helen Raptis. This spot was seen during the KTVH morning show on February 8, 1988. With cast members Erin Bishop and Kate Sternhagen, the director went to KBLL to appear live on their morning radio show. The director went by herself to appear live on a morning show for KMTX radio.

Appearing on some sort of media once a week allows much of the community to hear about the play. Public Service Announcements, one for ten seconds and the other for thirty seconds, were sent to area radio and television stations (See Appendix H). A member of the cast, Scott Cifrese, recorded each Public Service Announcement. With the music of "Isn't It Romantic" playing in the background, Scott
performed the Public Service Announcements. They were heard on every radio station in town, both AM and FM.

For the newspaper, the director had an interview with Sherry Jones of the *Independent Record* (See Appendix I). The paper also ran pictures and information about the play the week before and the week during the play in the *Your Time*, the weekly *Independent Record* arts supplement. Sherry Jones also went to opening night and reviewed the play. It appeared in the paper the week of performance (See Appendix J). Steve Braden, who was also a stage mover for the play, ran a review for the play the week after the run in the Carroll paper, *The Prospector* (See Appendix K).

Finally, for publicity, the director appeared with Nancy Robbins on a taped program called "Five from Carroll." This program runs weekly and tells the community what's happening at Carroll that week in a five minute interview. The program is played by each of the town's radio stations.

All aspects of the play have to work together in order for the show to work properly, so the director - simultaneous to publicity demands, set construction, lighting, etc. - must rehearse the actors in anticipation of opening night.
Coaching the actors into their parts is one of the hardest and most exciting parts of directing. As Robert Cohen states: "The director is the actor's coach, and in practice the director is likely to spend the largest share of his time exercising this particular function."

As far as the cast was in terms of experience, only three of the eight actors had never been in a full length play before. However, of the remaining five, only two were theatre majors, and only one had been active in theatre since she was young. Therefore, with these actors, the director needed to do a lot of work on the basics; but still had to help the more experienced actors without making them feel that they were beginners also.

This play easily divides itself into short rehearsal scenes (See Appendix L). This way, the director was able to spend time with each of the actors and their partners without the rest sitting around the rehearsal hall with nothing to do. Given the rehearsal schedule, the use of time spent at rehearsal was intense. Using short scenes one could run

over a scene many times to work out the rough spots.

At the first meeting with the cast, the director had a complete readthrough. All the actors read their own lines with everyone else. At first, the director needs to help the actors understand their characters. At early rehearsals the director knows the play better because of all of the time spent in preparation. The preparation entailed reading the play over and over again. At the early stages in the process, the director does not want to fully explain each character. Instead, a brief characterization provides a good beginning for each actor. They don't just read their parts, but begin to explore the character as the cast reads the play together.

After the initial readthrough, the director rehearses each of the actors within the previously described rehearsal units. The first rehearsals were used to block the scenes. In blocking, the characters begin to understand where they were to go when they said their lines. However, it is important for the director and the actor to remember that these first attempts at blocking are not permanent, but just a starting point for acting.

During the next phase of rehearsal, the director puts a lot of suggestions into the actor's mind. Why is your character here? What is his relation to her? The director wants the character to understand the lines that he says as well as what his fellow actor might say. An important part of acting is reacting, and the earlier that the actors
understand that process, the sooner they can begin to understand not only their character, but their relationship to the other characters.

The sooner that the actors can memorize their lines the better. The director needs to make this fact know and stick to her decision for memorization. For this play, the director set a date for lines on the first of February. At this stage of rehearsal, if the actors forgot their lines, they had to get out of it through improvisation or else they had to start the scene over again. Soon, the actors began to realize that they had to memorize their lines. Lines are the next step to building a character. With the book out of their hands, the actors can then begin to act.

Dress rehearsals started early in this play. Usually, the actors only have a week before the opening night to rehearse with costumes. This time, the director had them in costume early, feeling that costuming was a vital part to characterization.

Rehearsals sound simple when one just talks about the steps. However, each actor takes rehearsals differently, as well as the advice given by the director.

Pam Andersen had a hard time with Janie because the director wanted Janie to act a lot like Pam. With Pam, the director had to help her stop acting and start to become a real character. The director tried to give Pam advice on facial expression and body expression. Since the director knew Pam as a friend, she tried to work with Pam on shared
experiences that she could apply to her character.  

Todd Jasmin struggled with his character until two weeks before the performance. He gave his character a New York accent to help him understand Marty. Todd had a hard time with the director. He felt she was too particular on blocking and gestures and didn't help with character development. Todd was able to find the character of Marty on his own time, practicing with Pam outside of rehearsals. Finally, he started to understand the character of Marty and his goals.

Erin Bishop had a difficult time with her character because she felt as though she couldn't relate to her. How could an nineteen-year-old girl understand the feelings of a twenty-eight-year-old woman? After reading the play several times, and after many post-rehearsal talks with the director, she started to understand. In fact, she found similarities with Harriet and herself that she never knew existed. Erin began to understand the problems that Harriet had becoming the "modern woman" and successfully portrayed them on stage.

Kate Sternhagen was in her first play and the character of Lillian was a challenge. She couldn't understand how Lillian would be a harsh person. Kate felt that Lillian was a nice woman who wouldn't be cruel to anyone. The director had to help Kate understand the fact that Lillian was a brash business woman, a nice woman, but she always received what she wanted. Kate also spoke very softly and very fast.
Kate needed the advice of the director as a sounding board. She worked very hard to overcome her lack of experience.

John Amoroso was a shaky, nervous, quiet person when he came to audition. But through the rehearsal process, John was able to develop the male chauvinist side of Paul. The director told him of people to watch around the campus. Although John is not like Paul, one could see his relish in playing a character so unlike himself.

Barb Allen and Pat McKay worked well together. The two of them learned a lot of each other. Barb, being the most experienced, was able to control a Jewish accent and bring life to the character of Tasha. The director did have to work with Barb on how to relate to her daughter; how to get angry.

Pat, also in his first full length play, depended on the advice from the director more than anyone. He always wanted to be assured that he was doing well. He was able to apply the director's ideas, while thinking of some on his own.

Scott Cifrese came into the production with a history of "hamming" in parts. He takes his character to extremes in order to get laughs. At first, Scott started to do this with Vladimir. The director had to be stern with Scott and have him repeat his scenes until his character settled down. With Vladimir, Scott was able to make this small character an important one. There is no such thing as a small part in a play.
Once rehearsals have ended, the actors are ready to perform. They have to be able to prepare for any obstacles that may occur unexpectantly in performance. After a month of rehearsals, the actors were ready. Feeling good about themselves, the play, and the rest of the cast and crew, they were ready to open on Wednesday, February 17.
CONCLUSION

February 21, 1988, was the final performance of Isn't It Romantic. The long process has ended. The cast, director and crew can now relax at night. The show is over. The director usually uses this time to reflect.

The run of this play went very well. There were no missed cues, no lighting problems, and no major sound glitches. The actors portrayed their characters in a believable way every night.

So what would the director do differently? Perhaps with this play, if the director would have been more organized with her ideas on the set, it would have made the director less stressful in the rehearsal process. She needed to have better communications with Jim and Todd, with all three working together towards her desired goal. Because of the pressure with the set, the director seemed to have a low patience level with her cast.

Patience is an important quality that the director needs to develop. A director needs to forget all of her troubles and be able to help and listen to her cast. If there was a chance to do this play again, this director would make sure that each of her cast members was able to talk with her privately without interruptions. Luckily for this director, the cast was understanding and supportive. They
too were under a stressful time with school and the play. The director needed to work more with the inexperienced actors. For example, Kate needed more help with extra private rehearsals to develop a character with confidence. Kate, being so unsure of her character's attitude, was nervous and shy about portraying Lillian to her fullest potential.

both the actors and director needed to put their social relationships aside when at rehearsal. At times, the actors would think of the director as their "buddy" instead of the rehearsal leader. At rehearsal, the actors need to listen to the director, saving their social attitudes for afterwards. Perhaps if the cast, especially Todd, felt this was a more "professional" project, they would be able to listen to the director more instead of letting the director and their friendship interfere.

With the props, the director needed to have better communication with Diane Birmingham. The director ended up having to do a majority of the prop hunting by herself. She needed to put more responsibility and trust into her prop person so she could concentrate on her rehearsals. The director also needed to allow Dorothy Harper more time to make the couch covers. Dorothy was able to make the covers in two days so they could be used for rehearsal. The problem was that the director procrastinated until a week before the run to decide on the couch covers.

Overall, the director and her cast were able to communicate their goals: to have a successful production. Isn't
It Romantic allowed a cast, crew, and director to work together and gain some valuable experiences and friendships in the process. The play was a success - both in the eyes of the community and the director.
ISN'T IT ROMANTIC

PROLOGUE

Music and sounds of Manhattan fade into a voice on a phone machine. Phone machine segments occur between scenes. There is no action during these prologue messages.

JANIE. Hi, this is Janie Blumberg. I'm not in right now, but if you leave me your name and number I should be able to get back to you sometime today or tomorrow. (She sings.) Isn’t it romantic, merely to be young on such a night as this, isn’t it romantic every something something is like a . . . (The machine cuts off.)

TASHA & SIMON. (Ring, Bep. They sing) "Is this the little girl I carried. Is this the little boy at play. I don't remember growing older, when did they." (Tasha's voice.) This is your darling mother, I wanted to welcome you to your new apartment. Call me sweetheart, your father wants to talk to you. (Hang up.)

HARRIET. (Bep.) Hi Janie, it's Harriet. I can't help you unpack tonight. I have a job interview early tomorrow morning. Can you have breakfast with me afterwards? I'll meet you across the street from Rumpelmeyers at ten. Oh, I ran into Cynthia Peterson on the street, I gave her your number. Please don't hate me. Bye. (Hang up.)

SIMON. (Bep.) Uh, Janie, it's your father. Uh, er, uh, call your mother. (Hang up.)

CYNTHIA PETERSON. (Bep.) Janie, it's Cynthia Peterson. Harriet told me you moved to New York. Why haven't you called me? Everything is awful. I'm getting divorced, I'm looking for a job, there are no men. Call me. Let's have lunch. (Hang up.)

TASHA & SIMON. (They sing) "Sunrise, sunset. Sunrise, sunset. Quickly flow the day . . ." (Dial tone.)

WOMAN'S VOICE. (Operator.) Please hang up. There seems to be a receiver off the hook.

ACT ONE

Scene One

Central Park South. Janie Blumberg, 28, is sitting on a park bench. Her appearance is a little knotty, a little sweet, a little unconfident, all of which some might call creative or even suity. Specifically. We hear "Hi ho, hi ho, it's off to work we go . . ." Harriet enters from L., singing. Harriet could be the cover girl on the best working women's magazine. She is attractive, very bright, charming and easily put together. Harriet spots Janie.

TILL. HARRIET. Hi ho, hi ho, it's off to work we go . . . I think I got the job. (They hug.) Hi Janie.

JANIE. Hi, Harriet.

HARRIET. Thank God you're here.

JANIE. Of course I'm here. I got your message last night.

HARRIET. The man I interviewed with was very impressed I took a year off in Italy to look at pictures. I liked him. He was cold, aloof, distant. Very sexy. Can I have a bit of your Tab?

JANIE. Sure.

HARRIET. I can't stay for breakfast. I told him I could come right back to Colgate for a second interview. Janie, I think our move back home to New York is going to be very successful.

JANIE. It is.

HARRIET. Of course there's absolutely no reason why you should believe me.

JANIE. You have an M.B.A. from Harvard. Of course I believe you.
HARRIET. You sound like your mother.
JANIE. No. Tasha would believe you cause you’re thin. Look at us. You look like a Vermeer and I look like a extra in Potemkin.
HARRIET. Janie, I think someone’s watching us.
JANIE. (Fluffing her hair.) Do I look all right? You know what I resent?
HARRIET. What?
JANIE. Just about everything except you. I resent having to pay the phone bill, be nice to the super, find meaningful work, fall in love, get hurt, all of it I resent deeply.
HARRIET. What’s the alternative?
JANIE. Dependency. I could marry the pervert who’s staring at us. No. That’s not a solution. I guess I could always move back to Brookline. Get another Masters in something useful like “Women’s Pottery”. Do a little freelance writing. Oh God, it’s exhausting.
HARRIET. He’s coming. (Marty Sterling enters over Janie’s mother’s dream come true. A prince and a bit of a card.)
MARTY. Hi.
HARRIET. Hello.
MARTY. You’re Harriet Cornwall. I sat behind you during Twentieth Century Problems. I always thought you were a beautiful girl. (He extends his hand.) Marty Sterling.
HARRIET. (Shaking it) Hi. And this is Janie Blumberg.
MARTY. Sure. I remember you. I saw you and Harriet together in Cambridge all the time. You always looked more attainable. Frightened to death, but attainable. I’m not attracted to cold people anymore. Who needs that kind of trouble?
HARRIET. I don’t know.
MARTY. So what do you do?
JANIE. Oh, I scream here on Central Park South. I’m taking a break now.
HARRIET. Janie and I just moved back to New York together. Well, at the same time. I lived in Italy for a year and Janie was lingering in Brookline, Mass.
MARTY. Good old Brookline. Ever go to Jack and Marian’s restaurant? Unbelievable Kasha Varnishka.
HARRIET. Excuse me.
MARTY. Kasha. Little noodle bow ties with barley. Uh, my father’s in the restaurant business. Are you familiar with Vee Olde Sterling Taverns?
HARRIET. Sure. That’s a national chain.
MARTY. My father’s chain.
HARRIET. (Impressed.) Well!
JANIE. Well.

MARTY. Well.
JANIE. Well.
HARRIET. Well.
MARTY. Well. I’m on call, I’m a doctor. Kidneys.
HARRIET and JANIE. (Very impressed.) Well!
JANIE. Look, maybe you two should sit for a minute, reminisce about Twentieth Century Problems.
MARTY. I wish I could. Good-bye. (D. L.
HARRIET. Good-bye. (Marty starts to exit, stops, turns.)
MARTY. Janie Blumberg. Is your brother Ben Blumberg?
HARRIET. Yup. That’s her brother, Ben.
MARTY. I went to Camp Kibbutz with Ben Blumberg when I was nine.
JANIE. Yup, that’s my brother, Ben.
MARTY. Would you tell your brother Murray Schliinovitz says hello.
JANIE. Who’s Murray Schliinovitz?
MARTY. Me. Before my father owned the Sterling Taverns, he owned The Schliinovitz Kosher Dairy Restaurants in Brook-lyn. But around 15 years ago all the Schliinovitz Restaurants burned down. So for the sake of the family and the business, we changed our names before I entered Harvard. Nice to see you.
HARRIET. What were you doing? "Maybe you two should sit
and reminisce about Twentieth Century Problems?"

JANIE. Marty Sterling could make a girl a nice husband.

HARRIET. Now you really sound like your mother.

JANIE. Hattie, do you know who that man's father is?

HARRIET. Uh-huh. He's an arsonist.

JANIE. No! He's a genius. Mr. Sterling, the little man who
comes on television in a colonial suit and a pilgrim hat to let you
know he's giving away free pop-overs and all the shrimp you
can eat at Yec Okle Sable and Relish Bar, that guy is Mitty
Schlimovitz, Marty Sterling's father.

HARRIET. It's all right. I can make do without Doctor Mur-
ray Marty and his father's pop-overs. I have to get to that inter-
view. My friend, Joe Stine, the headhunter, says they only have
you back if they're going to hire you.

JANIE. Well, if you don't marry Marty Sterling, I'll marry
him. Wait till I tell my parents I ran into him. Tasha Blumberg
will have the caterers on the other extension.

HARRIET. I'm afraid marrying him isn't a solution. Will you
walk me back to Colgate?

JANIE. Sure. If I can get myself up.

HARRIET. Do I look like a successful single woman?

JANIE. Well.

HARRIET. What, well?

JANIE. Hattie, you know the wisdom of Tasha Blumberg?

HARRIET. Which one?

JANIE. Always look nice when you throw out the garbage, you
never know who you might meet. Put on your jacket, sweet-
heart. Always walk with your head up and chest out. Think
"I am."

HARRIET. I am. (Putting on jacket, lifting her hand and chest.)

END SCENE

"I've HEARD THAT SONG BEFORE."

TELEPHONE MACHINE #2

HARRIET. (Ring. Beep.) Janie, I got the job. Sorry I got you
up so early. I love you. Bye. (She sings.) "School bells ring and
children sing, it's back to Robert Hall again." Bye. (Hang up.)

JULIE STERN. (Beep.) Miss Bloomberg. This is Julie Stern at
Woman's Work Magazine. We read your portfolio. Our
readers feel you haven't experienced enough women's pain to
stimulate our market. Thank you. (Hang up.)

CYNTHIA PETERSON. (Beep.) Janie, it's Cynthia. There's a
Lib/Women mixer at the Unitarian Church on Fri-
day. It got a four star rating in Wistlon's Child. My cousin,
Felice, met an anthropologist there and she's in much worse
shape than either of us. Wanna go? (Hang up.)

END SCENE

ACT ONE

Scene Two

Lights up

JANIE on COUCH
C.O.S.
COUCH, BLANKETS, PHONE, T.V.

U.A. TASHA. (Sings and strokes Janie's hair.) "Is this the little girl I car-
ried. Is this the little boy at play? (Louder.) I don't remember
growing older, when did they. . . ." (Janie, waking up, turns and
C. Screams.) Good morning Sweetheart. (She kisses Janie.) Congra-
MATIONS on your new apartment.
JANIE. What?

C.C. TASHA. Your father and I came over to celebrate your new apartment. What kind of place is this? There isn't a doorman. Is this place safe for you?

JANIE. Oh Jesus, what are you doing here?

TASHA. I came to celebrate. You know your mother. I like life-life-life. I came over yesterday and you weren't home so I got worried. I had the super give me the key. I thought something happened with the movers.

JANIE. Nothing happened with the movers. Mother, it's seven o'clock in the morning.

TASHA. Isn't that nice. You can have breakfast with me and your father. (Tasha opens the attache case and turns on an aerobic tape. She starts to warm up.)

JANIE. What are you doing?

TASHA. I'm warming up for my morning dance class. Why don't you get up and do it with me? If you exercised, you'd have the energy to unpack your cases. (Tasha continues to exercise.)

JANIE. Mother, I've only been here two nights. I'll unpack them later.

TASHA. Janie, people who wait, wait. I like go-go. Watch, I'll show you how to do it. (She does.) The girls at dancing school admire me so much. They tell me they wish their mothers had so much energy.

JANIE. Their mothers probably wear clothes.

TASHA. Why are you so modest?

JANIE. I'm your daughter. I shouldn't be seeing you in tie-dyed underwear.

TASHA. You're making fun of me.

JANIE. I'm not making fun of you.

TASHA. (Still dancing) 1,2,3, hip. 1,2,3, hip.

JANIE. Where's Daddy?

TASHA. I sent him to pick up some coffee.

JANIE. Do the girls at dancing think it's strange you order up breakfast from a coffee shop every morning? (Tasha turns off music.)

TASHA. Sweetheart, when you get married, you make breakfast at your house and invite me. Anything you make is fine. You want to make sausages, I'll eat sausages. Do you know what sausages are made of? (Janie lies back on sofa.) Janie, please don't lie there like a body. You have everything to look forward to. When you were in high school, the other mothers would stop me on the street and say, "You must be so proud of Janie. She's such a brilliant child. If only my daughters were like Janie."

JANIE. What are the names of these mothers? I want names. (Doorbell rings.)

C.C. TASHA. There's your father with the coffee. (Tasha opens front door.)

C.C. SIMON. (Simon Humberg, Tasha's partner, a very sweet father though not chatty enters with bag w/coffee & sandwich.) Janie, is this place safe for you? There isn't a doorman. Why don't you put in the lock I bought you in Brookline?

JANIE. I left it there.

C.C. SIMON. You left it in Brookline? That lock cost $50.00.

JANIE. I have it Dad. I have it.

C.C. SIMON. You want to split this egg sandwich with me?

C.C. TASHA. Simon, please, there's a proper way to do this. First we have to toast Janie's new apartment. (Tasha hands out the coffee.) I remember my first apartment in New York. Of course, I was much younger than you and I was married to your father. (She toasts.) To Janie. Congratulations, welcome home, and I hope next year you live in another apartment and your father and I have to bring up four coffees.

JANIE. You want me to have a roommate?

TASHA. I want you to be happy. Talk to her Simon like a father and a daughter. Maybe she wants to tell you her problems.

JANIE. I don't have any problems. How's the business, Dad?

SIMON. Your father always with the business right? You want to see something, Janie? (He pulls out an envelope.) Smell this.
JANIE. (Smells the envelope.) It's nice.
SIMON. I can't make them fast enough. And then those jerks ship me a million envelopes without any perfume. You know what that's going to do to the Valentine season? Your father always with the headaches.
JANIE. It's all right, Dad. I like the envelope. Smells like the state of Maine.
SIMON. You want to come down to the business today and see whether it interests you? Then I'll take you skating after work.
JANIE. I can't Dad. I have to follow up some leads for clients here. Some other time I'd like to. (Janie puts on a multi-colored sweatshirt over her nightgown.)
TASHA. Is that an outfit? Simon, from a man's point of view, is that what you'd call an appetizing outfit?
SIMON. If you were a lawyer like your brother, Ben, then it makes sense to go out on your own. But I don't understand why a girl with your intelligence should be freelance writing when you could take over a business.
TASHA. Christ is thinking of going to Law School when the children get a little older.
JANIE. Who?
TASHA. Your sister-in-law, Christ.
JANIE. Chris, mother, it's Chris. I'll come down and see your place next week, Dad. I promise.
SIMON. Take your time, honey. Whenever you're ready,
TASHA. My two big doers. If not today, tomorrow. I can't sit like you two. (She dances.) 1,2,3, hip. 1,2,3, hip. (She goes over to Janie.)
JANIE. I won't dance. Don't ask me.
TASHA. Look at those thighs. I'm dying. (She continues dancing.)
SIMON. What's his name called our house last night looking for you.
SIT TASHA. (Stops dancing.) Who? Who?
SIMON. The pop-over boy. He called Ben cause they went to summer camp together. And Ben didn't have your new number so he told him to call us.
JANIE. Ben told Marty Sterling to call you?
TASHA. Please, sweetheart, look nice. It's important. Even when you throw out the garbage. I like this Marty Sterling.
JANIE. You don't even know him.
TASHA. He comes from nice people.
JANIE. His father is an arsonist.
SIMON. Believe me. You can have a nice life with him. Sounds like a very nice boy. He said to give you a message to call him at the hospital. He was in the emergency room at Mount Sinai.
TASHA. I told you he was a nice boy.
JANIE. Don't get too excited. He probably wants Harriet's number.
TASHA. What does Harriet have to do with the pop-over boy?
JANIE. He's her friend.
TASHA. Why do you belittle yourself all the time? What kind of attitude is that? (Tasha stands.) Why don't you walk into a room with your head up and your chest out and think, "I am". (She demonstrates.) Am I right, Simon?
SIMON. What is it?
TASHA. Sweetheart, stop thinking about those envelopes and look at your daughter. From a man's point of view, isn't that some beautiful face?
JANIE. I am beautiful. People stop each other on the street to say how beautiful I look when I throw out the garbage. And when Marty Sterling proposes, he'll say, "Janie Jill Blumberg, I want to spend the rest of my life with you because every member of your family calls me the pop-over boy and I want to be near your mother in her tie-dyed underwear."
TASHA. She's making fun of me again.
JANIE. I'm not making fun of you. It's good to be home. (The three kiss.) If I was still in Brookline, what time is it? 7:15. If I was still in Brookline, I'd be sleeping. Here by 7:15, there's a catered meal and a floor show.
TASHA. The girls at dancing say you can always have a good
time with Tasha. Honey, it's wonderful to see you. Thank you
for having us, I loved your cooking, and I'm sure you'd like me
to stay and chat all day but your father isn't the only one who
has to get to work. I'm demonstrating in class today.

SIMON. Have a nice day, Janie. (He kisses Janie and starts to

exit.)

TASHA. Where are you going? Give her some money so she'll
buy a lock.

SIMON. (Giving Janie some bills.) Honey, I'm sorry if I seem
preoccupied. Mother walks me to work every morning now.
Once I walk a few blocks, my mind gets stimulated. You know,
TASHA. Am I getting shorter? I'm getting shorter.

JANIE. You're fine mother. (Janie flops back onto sofa.)

SIMON. Body, please, don't get back into the bed. You have
everything ahead of you. You can have a family, you can have a
career, and you can learn to tap dance.

TASHA. Are you taking tap dancing?

Dr. TASHA. It's part of life. I'll teach you. (She taps quite smoothly,
calling out the steps, "flap, heel, flap, touch," and ends in a "Ta-da"
pose.)

SIMON. (While Tasha dances.) I told your mother she could run
her own dancing school.

TASHA. (Ends dance.) Two lessons.

JANIE. You don't think your mother looks nice? That's a new
attache.

TASHA. I'm an executive mother.

JANIE. It looks very nice.

SIT AND TASHA. You want it?

JANIE. You keep it mother.

SIMON. Let's go dear. (Tasha starts to go.)
Remember. Ripple soles. (He exits. Janie flops back on sofa.)

JANIE. Oy!

SIT LEAVE TASHA. Janie, please, only old ladies sigh. Oy! (She exits.)

END SCENE

"IT COULD HAPPEN TO YOU"

ACT ONE

Scene Three

LILLIAN. Obviously Dick, our only choice is to go national
with this. I don't care what some kid in your department says
about numbers. Hold on a minute, will you. (She pushes a button
on the phone.) Lillian Cornwall. (She yells off stage.) Pauline, no
one's picking up the phone here. (She hits another button.) Dick,
trust me on this one. I'm not being too harsh. No, I didn't think
so. Thank you. (She hits another button.) Lillian Cornwall's office.
(She yells off stage.) Pauline! (Back on the phone.) I'm sorry, Mrs.
Cornwell isn't in, can I take a message? Oh Dick, it's you. Well,
tell the kid in your department I appreciate his confidence.

What can I say? I'm a beautiful, successful, brilliant woman.
Dick, I'm simply not a kid. (Phone buzzer.) Hold a sec, would
you? (She pushes another button.) Yes, Pauline. (She pushes another
button.) Dick, my lovely daughter is here. Gotta go. (She hangs up.
Harriet enters in a stylish business suit. She is carrying a gift box.)

J.R. HARRIET. Hello mother.

LILLIAN. Hello, baby, it's nice to see you. (They kiss.)

IN DESK HARRIET. You're looking well.
LILLIAN. What brings you here? Would you like me to order you a salad or some lunch? I'd call Tom and get us into the Four Seasons, but I have a meeting in a few minutes.
HARRIET. That's all right. I have to get back to the office.
Ummm. (Harrriet takes out three noisemakers and blows them, handing Lillian the present.) Happy Birthday Mother!
LILLIAN. Hmmm.
HARRIET. Happy Birthday. I bought this for you in Italy before I ran out of money.
LILLIAN. Oh God, I bet that meeting is a birthday thing.
Thank you, Harriet, it's very handsome. (She puts gift back in box.) How are things at Colgate?
HARRIET. Fine.
LILLIAN. Don't say fine, Harriet. You're a Harvard M.B.A. I expect an analysis.
HARRIET. We're changing the test market from Sacramento to Syracuse.
LILLIAN. Makes sense. And your personal life?
HARRIET. Mother!
LILLIAN. I don't have much time to catch up. I have a meeting.
HARRIET. My personal life is O.K.
LILLIAN. Is that better or worse than fine?
HARRIET. It's O.K. Janie's back in New York and that's nice.
I see my friend from Harvard, Joe Stine, the headhunter.
LILLIAN. Nice boy.
HARRIET. Nice. A little dull.
LILLIAN. Sweet though. No you're right. A little dull.
HARRIET. And I'm sort of interested in some guy in my office.
LILLIAN. Is that a good idea?
HARRIET. I'm not seeing him. I'm just attracted to him.
LILLIAN. Sounds like a pleasant arrangement. What does he do?
HARRIET. Mother!
LILLIAN. His job, baby, what does he do?
HARRIET. He does all right. He's my boss's boss.
LILLIAN. How old is he?
HARRIET. Around forty.
LILLIAN. Around forty? He should be further along than your boss's boss.
HARRIET. Happy Birthday mother.
LILLIAN. Harriet, you can ask me questions about my life right after I'm finished with yours. You're not making this easy, baby.
HARRIET. Sometimes you're hard to take, mother.
LILLIAN. So they say. (Intercom buzz, Lillian answers.) Bill, I'll be there in a minute. My daughter is with me. Can she be present at this meeting. I thought so. Thanks Bill. (She hangs up.) It is a birthday thing. Harriet, why don't you come with me? You can be my date.
HARRIET. Mother, do you remember when you would take me to Group Sales Meetings in Barbados? And I would appear in Mary Janes as your date at candle lit dinners by the ocean.
LILLIAN. You were a wonderful date. Interesting, attractive, bright. Certainly more suitable than what was available.
HARRIET. Mother, you're so crazy. I hope I'm going to be all right.
LILLIAN. You'll be fine. Don't dwell on it. Your generation is absolutely fascinated with itself. Think about science? Technology is going to change our world significantly. So, do you want to come?
HARRIET. Sure.
LILLIAN. God, I dread going to these kinds of things.
HARRIET. Me too.
LILLIAN. I'm not being too harsh?
HARRIET. No, you're not being too harsh.
LILLIAN. Comb your hair, baby. I like it better off your face.

END SCENE
ACT ONE

Scene Four

Italian Restaurant. Marty and Janie seated.

MARTY. Do you want dessert? Because if you don't like the dessert here, my father is giving away free pop-overs in the Paramus Mall. So what do you think you're going to do now?

JANIE. With my life? At this restaurant? Tonight?

MARTY. Now that you've come home.

JANIE. I don't know. Retire. I sent away for some brochures from Heritage Village.

MARTY. I think about retirement. Not that I don't like being a doctor, but I don't want to get trapped. You know what I mean? First, you get the cuisinart, then the bigger apartment, and then the Mercedes, and the next thing you know, you're charging $250 to Mrs. Feldman, with the rash, to tell her, "Mrs. Feldman, you have a rash".

JANIE. Whenever I get most depressed, I think I should take charge of my life and apply to medical school. Then I remember that I once identified a liver as a heart. Really, I demonstrated the right auricle and the left ventricle on this liver.

MARTY. I left medical school after my first year to do carpentry for a year.

JANIE. Your father must have liked that.

MARTY. He wants me to be happy. I'm very close to my parents.

JANIE. That's nice. (Pause) I'm sorry. I was thinking about my parents.

MARTY. Are you close to them?

JANIE. In a way. She's a dancer and he's very sweet. It's complicated.

MARTY. My father started out in show business. He used to tell jokes at Grossingers. That's why he does the pop-over commercials himself. Now he's the Toastmaster General for the United Jewish Appeal.

JANIE. Have you ever been to Israel?

MARTY. I worked on a Kibbutz the second time I dropped out of medical school. Israel's very important to me. In fact, I have to decide next month if I want to open my practice here in New York or Tel Aviv.

JANIE. Oh.

MARTY. Why, are you anti-Israel?

JANIE. No. Of course not. I preferred the people my parent's age there to the younger ones. The people my age intimidated me. I'd be sleeping and they'd go off to turn deserts into forests. The older ones had more humanity. They rested sometimes.

MARTY. I think Jewish families should have at least three children.

JANIE. Excuse me?

MARTY. It's a dying religion. Intermarriage, Ivy League Colleges, the New York Review of Books. (Pause) So, how's Harriet?

JANIE. She's fine.

MARTY. She's not sweet like you.

JANIE. Harriet is wonderful.

MARTY. She's like those medical school girls. They're nice but they'd bite your balls off. You think Israelis have no sense of humor. Believe me, women medical students are worse. (He takes Janie's hand.) Janie, you're one of the few real people I've ever met in a long time. Most of the women I meet aren't funny.

JANIE. (Quickly) Marty, I think I should tell you I find the fact that you don't like women doctors extremely disturbing and discriminatory. I support the concept of Israel and would probably be a much happier, healthier person if I could go out into the desert and build a forest, but I am far too lazy and self-involved. I have very fat thighs and I want very badly to be someone else without going through the effort of actually changing myself into someone else. I have very little courage but I'm highly critical of others who don't.
MARTY. (Sweetly.) Is that it?
JANIE. And I want you to like me very much.
MARTY. Do you like me?
JANIE. Yes.
MARTY. Sounds tentative. Most women fall in love the minute they hear “Volare.” Maybe this will help. I bought it for you when I was in Rome. (He hands Janie a swizzle stick.)
JANIE. I was wondering why they have swizzle sticks in the wine.
MARTY. (A la the Godfather.) I got connections in the restaurant business. (Marty takes Janie’s hand.) Should I take you home, Monkey?
JANIE. What?
MARTY. Want to go home?
JANIE. No. My interior decorator is there.
MARTY. Want to come to my parents house? They should be out late tonight. After Paramus, there’s a UJA testimonial dinner for my father. It means a lot to him cause he’s been giving away so much shrimp at the salad bar, they almost revoked his job as Toastmaster.
JANIE. It’s weird going to someone’s parent’s house. Shouldn’t we have mortgages and children?

END SCENE

“I YOu MAKE ME LOVE YOU”

ACT ONE

Scene Five

O.S.- C.O.L.
Harriet’s apartment. Harriet and Paul Stuart enter. Paul is about 40. He is very corporate and appealing looking. Harriet takes off her coat and throws it over the chair. She exits into the kitchen. Paul moves to sofa, takes out Binoca, gives himself a hit and sits. Harriet enters pushing a snail. bar. She removes down to a n of sofa, stops and peers. with rain. to call.

PAUL. You remind me a lot of my first wife.
HARRIET. Mr. Stuart, would you like something to drink? I don’t have much. I just moved here.
PAUL. Scotch on the rocks. My first wife hated office Christmas parties. Next.
HARRIET. I’m sorry. Did I make you leave?
PAUL. Definitely not. You’re one of the most amusing people I’ve met at Colgate in a long time. Can I tell you something as a friend? You don’t have to call me Mr. Stuart.
HARRIET. I think it’s funny your name is Paul Stuart. If your name was Brooks Brothers, I’d call you Mr. Brothers. (She hands him napkin with cracker and plate.) Pate?
PAUL. (He takes it.) Where are you from originally? (Paul cracks up.) Have you ever noticed when you try a conversation opener like, “Where are you from originally?”, you always sound like a jerk?
HARRIET. I grew up in New York. My mother still lives on East 69th Street.
PAUL. East 69th Street. You were a rich kid.
HARRIET. No. Upper middle class.
PAUL. Only rich kids know what upper middle class is.
HARRIET. Well, I wasn’t spoiled. Definitely not spoiled.
PAUL. Your father was a lawyer?
HARRIET. No. My mother’s an executive.
PAUL. Is your mother Lillian Cornwall?
HARRIET. Yup.
PAUL. Jesus. I interviewed with your mother once. That women has balls. Do you know what it took for a woman at your time to get as far as she did?
HARRIET. Yup.

PAUL. Poor baby, I bet you do. (Lights her cigarette) Would you like me to spoil you a bit? Relax. For a girl with such a good mind, you get tense too easily. (They both start laughing.) Why are you laughing?

HARRIET. You're amazing. First you tell me how amusing I am, then you want to spoil me and now you tell me what a good mind I have. What are you going to do next? Ask me to come up and see your etchings? (Paul moves away to his drink.) I'm sorry. This is making me a little uncomfortable. Office romance and all that. You're my boss's boss.

PAUL. Harriet, do you know that 40% of the people at McKinsey are having inter office affairs?

HARRIET. How do you know that?

PAUL. Friend of mine did the study. Look, I live with a woman so no one will know. Is that an incentive?

D. E. HARRIET. (Rises.) Cathy? Do you live with Cathy?

PAUL. How do you know Cathy?

HARRIET. She calls the office three times a day.

PAUL. (Rises.) You've been paying attention.

HARRIET. I'm a smart kid.

PAUL. (Grabbing Harriet's arm.) Smart woman.

HARRIET. (Pulling away.) Paul, I generally try not to get involved with unavailable men.

PAUL. You've never been with a married man? How old are you? (Paul chokes.)

HARRIET. Are you all right?

PAUL. Jesus, were there any nuts in that paste? My doctor told me not to eat nuts. I've got this stomach thing. I tell you, when you get older, you really gotta watch it. But you'll take good care of me, right Beauty? (Pause.) Are you excited?

HARRIET. Where are you from originally?

PAUL. You're excited. Don't be embarrassed, Beauty. I'll be wonderful for you Harriet. You'll try to change me, you'll realize you can't and furthermore, I'm not worth it, so you'll marry some nice investment banker and make your mother happy.

HARRIET. I don't think my mother particularly wants me to get married. I don't particularly want me to get married.

PAUL. You'll change your mind. Career girls, when they hit thirty, all change their minds. Look, whatever is happening here, we better do it quickly because Cathy is expecting me home with the laundry at 11:00. I'm very attracted to you, Harriet.

HARRIET. 40% of the people at McKinsey, huh?

PAUL. And those are just the ones crazy enough to fill out the questionnaire.

HARRIET. Get out of here.

PAUL. Ginere, Deal from strength, Harriet. Men really like strong women.

END SCENE

"I'M IN LOVE AGAIN"

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

C.S. JANIE


HARRIET. Congratulations on your new apartment!

JANIE. Harriet, I've been living here three months.

HARRIET. That's why I came to celebrate. I decided this morning it was time for you to unpack. Did I walk in with my right foot first?

JANIE. I don't know.

HARRIET. Then I have to do it again. (She exits. Doorbell rings. Janie opens door and Harriet re-enters.) Congratulations on your new apartment!

JANIE. What are you doing?
HARRIET. I looked all this up very carefully in the Oxford Companion to Jewish life.
JANIE. I'm not familiar with this companion.
HARRIET. You have to walk into a new apartment with your right foot to set you off on the right foot. Here, I also brought you a house warming gift. But you cannot open it til we get you settled in.
JANIE. Harriet, you know I can't postpone, gratification.
HARRIET. Janie, you have to make a home for yourself. Now, what are we going to do with these crates? (Harriet picks up crates.)
JANIE. Harriet, what are you doing? You're flying around the room.
HARRIET. (Exiting with crates.) It's Saturday.
JANIE. The day of rest. Didn't they tell you that in the Oxford Companion?
HARRIET. (Enters empty handed.) It's Paul Stuart's day at home with Cathy. You want me to put the typewriter in the bedroom?
(She picks up typewriter.)
JANIE. (Stops her.) No, I'm working. Marty's father hired an actor to play a popover at the opening of the New Sterling Tavern in the Green Acres Mall and Marty got me a job writing the pop-over's opening remarks. Hattie, don't you mind not seeing Paul on the weekend?
HARRIET. No, it's O.K. As I see it, Paul Stuart is fine until I find the right relationship. It's similar to the case method. And he's great in bed. (Harriet sets down typewriter.)
JANIE. Marty claims he slept with over 100 visiting nurses when he was at Harvard.
HARRIET. (Sit.) Really?!
JANIE. I just told you that so you'd sit down. (Janie sits.)
HARRIET. So, is it something with Marty?
JANIE. He decided to open his practice here next month and he's invited me to his parent's house for Chanukah. Somedays I walk down the street and think if I don't step on any cracks, I'll marry Marty. What ever happened to Janie Blumberg? She did so well, she married Marty the doctor. They're giving away pop-overs in Paramus. (Pause) Hattie, do you think I should marry Marty?
HARRIET. I've always hated women who sit around talking about how there are no men in New York. Or everyone is gay or married.
JANIE. What does this have to do with my marrying Marty?
HARRIET. These women would tell you, "Marry him. He's straight, he'll make a nice living, he'll be a good father." Janie, what women like Cynthia Peterson don't know is, no matter how lonely you get or how many birth announcements you receive, the trick is not to get frightened. There's nothing wrong with being alone.
JANIE. Harriet, do you remember when we would listen to "My Guy" and iron our hair before going to a High School dance?
HARRIET. Oh God, I've blocked all of that.
JANIE. I remember arriving at the dance, looking over the prospects and thinking when I'm 28, I'm going to get married and be very much in love with someone who is poor and fascinating until he's 30 and then fabulously wealthy and very secure after that. And we're going to have children who wear overalls and flannel shirts and are kind and independent with curly blond hair. And we'll have great sex and still hold hands when we travel to China when we're sixty.
HARRIET. I never thought about any of that. Maybe it's cause I'm Lillian's daughter, but I never respected women who didn't learn to live alone and pay their own rent. Imagine spending your life pretending you weren't a person. To compromise at this point would be anti-feminist, well, anti-humanist, well, just not impressive. I'm not being too harsh.
JANIE. No. Just rhetorical. (Doorbell rings.)
HARRIET. Who's that?
JANIE. I don't know. (Janie answers door. Vladimir around 30, a Russian taxi cab driver, very impressed with capitalism is there, holding a box. The box has a safari motif.)
VLADIMIR. Hello hi.

JANIE. Do you have the right apartment?

VLADIMIR. You are Miss Blumberg?

JANIE. Yes.

VLADIMIR. For you, I am Vladimir. I am filmmaker from Moscow. I drive taxi now. (He enters with bar. He sees Harriet.)

Hello. Hi.

SIMON. (Enters with stool.) Janie, do you like this bar? Hello, Harriet. We thought you might need something to entertain at home.

TASHA. (Enters with stool.) Don't force her Simon. Hello darling. (Notices Harriet.) Harriet, you look terrific. Are you seeing anyone?

HARRIET. Sort of.

SIMON. We met Vladimir on the cab ride down here. He came from Moscow six weeks ago.

JANIE. That's nice. Do you like it here?

VLADIMIR. Hello hi.

SIMON. He doesn't speak very much English.

TASHA. That doesn't matter. If you like people you speak every language. I can get along in any country. If you smile, you dance, anyone will understand.

JANIE. My mother identifies with Zorba the Greek.

VLADIMIR. Zorba. Yes. Thank you.

TASHA. Harriet, do you like the bar? I saw another one but I was afraid Janie would say it's too old, it's too new, it's gold.

HARRIET. I like it very much. It's primitive.

SIMON. Vladimir, maybe you want to stay and put the bar together and Mrs. Blumberg and Harriet and I can bring you up some coffee.

VLADIMIR. Coffee. Regular.

TASHA. Sit. Harriet, join us. Harriet's with Colgate Palmolive.

SIMON. (Takes Janie aside.) He's a nice boy. Don't you think he's a nice boy, Janie? Seems intelligent too. I thought maybe if things didn't work out with you and Marty, I'd take him into the business.

JANIE. You're kidding. This man is here six weeks and he gets a wife, a business, and a dancing mother-in-law.

SIMON. What's wrong with giving a guy a break?

JANIE. (Making a sign to get Vladimir out.) Dad... .

SIMON. Vladimir. Thank you. We'll take the taxi uptown to Rockefeller Center.

TASHA. Every Saturday I take Mr. Blumberg skating.

SIMON. My partner keeps me in shape.

TASHA. Harriet, you look terrific. Who is it you're seeing?

JANIE. She's seeing someone who's married.

TASHA. Let's go dear. (Tasha & Simon exit.)

HARRIET & JANIE. Good-bye. Good-bye. Nice to see you.

VLADIMIR. (To Harriet.) Good-bye. (To Janie.) Good-bye.

(He exits.)

JANIE. One of these days, I'm going to write a book, My Mother Herself. I'm sorry, Hattie. That was the only way I could get them out of here.

HARRIET. (Looking at Bar.) Did Tasha go on safari?

JANIE. No, she went hunting at K-Mart. Harriet, they brought over a Russian taxi cab driver for me to marry! Maybe I should move back to Brookline tomorrow.

HARRIET. You can't leave me here with Lillian and Paul Stuart. I brought Lillian a birthday present that I bought with my last lire in Italy. She hardly opened it. She couldn't wait to get back to the intercom to harass Pauline. Janie, sit, it's the day of rest. Now you can open your present. (Harriet brings her the box and they sit on the sofa. Janie puts the box on her hand and takes out a loaf of Challah bread, a box of kosher salt, sugar, matches and a candle.)

JANIE. What kind of diet are you on?

HARRIET. According to the Oxford Companion, this is what your family brings when you move into a new home. Bread—the staple of life. Sugar—something sweet in your life. Salt—a little spice in your life.

JANIE. I have that.
HARRIET. And a candle to light the way. (She lights candle.)

JANIE, you know what I remember more than those mixers?

JANIE. What? (She pats her arm on Harriet's shoulder.)

HARRIET. Remember when you and I would meet for dinner
cause Lil was at a meeting and Tasha only had Brewers Yeast in
the refrigerator. I always thought, well, I do have a family.
JANIE's my family. In fact, that still helps a lot. I always assumed
it was some sort of pact.

JANIE. It is a pact. (Both girls break off a piece of bread from the
loaf) Hattie, thank you for my gift from my family. (She picks
up salt.) Cheers.

HARRIET. (Picks up sugar.) Le Chaim. (They clink the boxes.)

END SCENE

"BACK TO THE
AMBLE"

TELEPHONE MACHINE #3

HART FARRELL. (Bop.) Janie Blumberg. This is Hart Far
rell in the personnel department at Sesame Street. A temp in
our office recognized your name from a part he played in the
Green Acres Mall. I heard your pieces. I'm going to pass them
on to Tajei Kaplan Singleberry. Nice song Luv. (Phone hangs up.)

CYNTHIA PETERSON. (Belp. Crying.) Janie, it's Cynthia.
Thank God you have your machine on. I'm home, I'm broke,
my trainer is on retreat, I've been rejected by every man on the
Upper West Side and I'm about to get drunk. Janie, do you
know a good dry cleaner?

END SCENE

ACT ONE

LIGHTS ON & APT.
SET SCENE
SCENE SEVEN

JANIE'S APARTMENT. L. Sofa and TV on a box. Harriet's living
room/bedroom. R. Foldout bed, ottoman, TV. Paul & Harriet
in bed. Light up on Janie's apartment.

JANIE. (Entering.) I-fucked-up Chanukah.

MARTY. (Entering.) You were sweet.

MARTY. They have a nice baby. Really, Schlomo is very sweet. I'm
sorry I spilled horseradish on your sister-in-law.

MARTY. You worry too much. You're just like my mother.
My mother says you're shy and a little clumsy because you're
very angry with your family. But she says don't worry you'll
grow out of it. I told her your mother was a bit cuckoo.

JANIE. (Entering.) Martin, I'm reflective and eager to please
and my mother is a pioneer in interpretive dance. (She enters
into bedroom)

MARTY. Don't be so defensive, sweetheart.

JANIE. (Offended.) Everything by you is so simple.

MARTY. Everything by you is harder than it has to be. You
think my sister-in-law knew what she was doing when she mar
ried my brother? (JANIE enters.-She has changed from her dress into
something and scowls.) That didn't come out right, did it?

JANIE. That's O.K.

MARTY. You know what I mean. My sister-in-law had even
less direction than you do and she's a bright girl too. But she
met my brother and now she's a wonderful mother, and believe
me, when Schlomo is a little older, she'll go back to work in
something nice—she'll teach or she'll work with the elderly—
and she won't conquer the world, but she'll have a nice
life. (Pause) Monkey, I don't want to be alone. But I think it's
going to be all right with us. I love you. (Pause) I put a deposit
don a new apartment for us in Brooklyn today.

MARTY. What?

MARTY. I figured if I waited for you to make up your mind to
move, we'd never take anything and I need a place to live before
I open my practice. You don't have to pay your half of the de
posit now. I'll wait a month. Is that okay?
JANIE. Sure.

MARTY. I decided we should live in Flatbush or Brighton Beach where people have real values. My father never sees those people anymore, the Alta Kakas in Brooklyn, the old men with the accents who sit in front of Hymie’s Highway Delicatessen. I miss them. My father never goes to Miami anymore. They go to Palm Springs or Martinique with their friends from the Westchester Country Club. My father thought my brother was crazy when he named his son, Schlomo. He kept asking my brother, “So what’s his real name?” And my father will think I’m crazy when we move to Brooklyn.

JANIE. Marty?

MARTY. What is it, Monkey? Are you angry?

JANIE. No. I like the Alta Kakas in Brooklyn, too. I always thought Herman Wouk should write a novel, Young Kaka. I don’t know.

MARTY. What don’t you know? Janie, you’re 28 years old. What I’m saying is either you want to be with me, you don’t have to, you should just want to, and if you don’t want to, then we should just forget it.

JANIE. I want to.

MARTY. So, what’s the problem?

JANIE. No problem.

MARTY. Uh-oh. What time is it? I promised my father we’d watch his new commercial. (Marty turns on the TV. Paul turns on their TV at the same time.)

HARRIET. I know that man.

VOICEOVER. (Captain Milty Sterling.) This is Captain Milty Sterling. I’m here at the beautiful Green Acres Mall with the Pop-Over Boy and my grandson, Schlomo. What are we giving away today, Schlomo?

VOICEOVER: (Schlomo.) We’re giving away shrimp. We’re giving away lobster tails. We’re giving away cole slaw.

VOICEOVER. (Milty.) How do you like that shrimp, Schlomo?

VOICEOVER. (Schlomo.) It’s good grampa.

VOICEOVER. (Announcer.) Sterling Taverns now located in Green Acres, Syosset, Paramus, Albany, Plattsburg, Marine Park, Midwood, Madison, Bethesda, and The Bergen Mall. (Lights fade on Marty & Janie and come up on Paul & Harriet.)

PAUL. Why are you laughing? The man’s a marketing genius. He’s giving away shrimp. He’s giving away cole slaw. I never heard of such an incentive program. How much do you think he can give away and still make a profit? (Paul hugs Harriet.) It’s good grampa. (Paul gets up.)

HARRIET. Where are you going?

PAUL. It’s late.

HARRIET. You could spend the night.

PAUL. Cathy.

HARRIET. Do you love Cathy?

PAUL. She’s devoted to me.

HARRIET. Does Cathy exist?

PAUL. Of course Cathy exists.

HARRIET. I thought maybe Cathy was an answering service you hired to call you three times a day.

PAUL. (Shushing back on-the-seat.) Did I tell you to deal from strength?

HARRIET. Yes.

PAUL. Sometimes I’m a jackass. You’re sweet, Harriet. You know that? You’re a sweet woman. A lot of people never get off in their entire life. Do you think your mother’s had good sex?

HARRIET. My mother likes to watch The Rockford File reruns at 11:00. (Harriet gets out of seat) Paul, I don’t think people spend as much time thinking about sex as you do.

PAUL. (Frowning.) Tell me what you like, Beauty.

HARRIET. The other day I was standing in front of your office with my pert charts and you called your secretary “Beauty”, you called whoever called you on the phone “Beauty”, and I think you called the ninety year old messenger boy from Ogilvy and Mather “Beauty”.
PAUL. I see what's going on here. It's the old, "I'm afraid of turning thirty alone and I'm beginning to think about having a family".

HARRIET. Wanting two nights a week or a sleep over date isn't quite a family.

PAUL. Baby, I'm older than you. I've been through this with a lot of women. You want a man who sees you as a potential mother but also is someone who isn't threatened by your success and is deeply interested in it. And this man should be thought of as "intelligent" by your friends, but when you need him, he should drop whatever it is he's doing and be supportive.

HARRIET. I'm not asking for that. Why are you so bitter?

PAUL. Don't be naive. Everything is a negotiation, Harriet. Everything. When I graduated from Yale, I thought I'd find a nice wife who would cook me dinner, we'd have a few kids and I'd support the family, and a few years up we'd get a house in Madison, Connecticut for the weekends. The girl I married never cooked and she wasn't lucky like you. Girls didn't assume they'd have careers then. My wife was just very bright and very unhappy. And the girls I date now, the ones like you, the M.B.A.'s from Harvard, they want me to be the wife. They want me to be the support system. Well, I can't do that, Harriet, I just wasn't told that's the way it was supposed to be.

HARRIET. Paul, I never knew which way it was supposed to be.

PAUL. What do you mean?

HARRIET. I don't really expect anything from you.

PAUL. You and I are a lot alike, Harriet. We don't want to be alone and we don't want to move forward. So we serve a perfect function blocking each other's lives.

HARRIET. I like you, Paul.

PAUL. My poor baby. (They kiss and get back onto the bed as the lights fade down on them and up on Janie and Marty.)

MARTY. I'm hungry. What do you have to eat, Monkey?

JANIE. We could order up a sandwich. I have the phone number of every coffee shop on the Upper East and West Side — Four Brothers, The Four Brothers On The Acropolis, The Four Brothers On The Parthenon, The Four Brothers ... .

MARTY. I'll go to the supermarket, get some chicken and some lettuce and stuff.

JANIE. No, No, No. We can order up a salad.

MARTY. Monkey, you don't know how to cook a chicken?

JANIE. I do. I do. I do. I can make teflon chicken.

MARTY. You shouldn't put yourself down like that. (Marty gets up to go.)

JANIE. Marty, I love you. We can take the place in Brooklyn, I just want to be with you. (Marty comes back and kisses Janie, crosses to front door and exits triumphantly. Janie goes to phone and dialed. Phone rings in Harriet's apartment. Harriet picks up.)

HARRIET. Hello.

JANIE. Hattie, how do you cook a chicken? Marty's coming back here in five minutes with a chicken.

HARRIET. Do you want Florentine or something nice?

JANIE. Hattie, hurry. I can't tell him I don't know how. Marty took an apartment for us in Brooklyn and I can't tell him we have to order up chicken.

HARRIET. Why Brooklyn?

JANIE. He likes Hymie of Hymie's Highway Delicatessen.

HARRIET. Excuse me?

JANIE. He likes the Alta Kakas. (Janie's doorbell rings.)

JANIE. Marty, just a sec. Hattie, how do you cook a chicken?

PAUL. (Getting up.) Beauty, do you have any Di-gel?

HARRIET. In the cabinet. (Janie crosses to door.) Janie, what are altered Kakas? (Janie opens door. Vladimir is there.)

Vladimir. Hello. Hi. I am in neighborhood. So I drop in. Want to see The Sorrow And The Pity?

JANIE. (Back on phone.) Hattie, I have to go. Vladimir is here. He wants to see The Sorrow And The Pity. When can I see you?

HARRIET. I don't know. I don't have my book here. (Janie's doorbell rings.)
PAUL. What's wrong with this mouthwash?
HARRIET. It's a Colgate product. (Vladimir answers door. Simon enters with coffee table.)

L.F. SIMON. Oh hello, Vladimir. How are you?
VLADIMIR. Fine. Thank-you. How's it going?
SIMON. Janie, I brought over a coffee table.
HARRIET. Me too. The Rockford Files. (Marty enters with a bag of groceries. Paul & Harriet engage in a long kiss.)

L.L. MARTY. Monkey, I got the chicken.
JANIE. Marty, this is my father, Simon Blumberg, and Vladimir.
SIMON. Very nice to meet you. Mrs. Blumberg will be so sorry she missed you.
JANIE. (Into phone.) Harriet!
VLADIMIR. Hello-hi.
SIMON. Vladimir is my friend. Janie doesn't even know him. He's a filmmaker from Moscow. Let's go, Vladimir. (Simon starts pulling Vladimir out the door.) Nice to meet you. My best to your family.

PAUL. (At Harriet's front door.) I think we have a pretty good thing going. Think about it. (Paul exits and Simon & Vladimir exit simultaneously.)

HARRIET. (On phone.) Janie!
MARTY. Who's the filmmaker?
JANIE. Friend of my father's.
MARTY. I'm hungry. Are you sure you can cook a chicken? (Marty hands Janie a chicken wrapped in butcher paper.) I'll go warm up the oven.  
JANIE. I'll get the stapler. (Marty exits into the kitchen. Janie, back on phone.) Hattie!
HARRIET. Janie, you never mentioned an apartment. When did you see it?
JANIE. I haven't seen it. Marty told me about it tonight after I spilled horseradish on baby Schlomo.
HARRIET. Janie, people named Homo and Schlymie. I feel our move back to New York has been very successful. I've met a sadist vice president and you've become involved in a shetel.
MARTY. (Offstage.) Monkey!
JANIE. Be right there, Marty. Hattie, how do you cook a chicken?
HARRIET. You just put it in the broiler.
JANIE. Who told you this? Thank you, Harriet. Bye. (She hangs up.)
HARRIET. Bye, Janie. (She hangs up. Janie unwarps the chicken on the coffee table. She lifts it up by the two wings; over her head. She starts-at-it.)

PAUL. (Enters.) Beauty, Thursday the laundry's open til midnight.

MARTY. (Enters.) Janie, the oven's ready. (Both Janie and Harriet cross up together to Marty & Paul respectively as the lights fade. Janie is branding the chicken-like-a-baby and Harriet is carried off by Paul. Both couples kiss as they exit. We hear a string version of "Isn't It Romantic".)

END OF ACT ONE
ACT TWO

Scene One

Central Park South. Tasha enters wearing earphones connected to a walkman tape recorder in her attache case. She is listening to music that makes her dance as she walks. She sits on bench, opens attache case and wipes her face with a towel. Lillian enters, eating a hot dog, and says Tasha.

Lillian. Mrs. Blumberg. (Tasha doesn’t hear her.) Mrs. Blumberg!
Tasha. (Loudly.) Yes.
Lillian. Lillian Cornwall.
Tasha. (Removing her earphones.) How are you? Please excuse my appearance. I just got out of class. A real workout I had today.

TASHA. You look marvelous. How’s Ben?
TASHA. Ben is doing very well. He’s a lawyer with Korvettes. I mean Cravath.
TASHA. And Simon?
TASHA. Simon is with his business. He would love for Janie to take over but Janie says she’s happy freelance writing.
Lillian. I always liked Janie. She’s such a bright girl.
Tasha. (Right again.) I tell her people stop me on the street to tell me how bright she is, but she doesn’t believe me. Janie tells me Harriet has a nice job.
Lillian. Yes. She’s at Colgate Palmolive.
Tasha. She’s going to be an executive mother like you. Very nice. Do you see the girls much? My daughter, whenever I call her, I get the machine.
Lillian. I reach Harriet’s secretary or rather my secretary reaches Harriet’s secretary.
Tasha. She’s always been a hard worker, your Harriet.
Lillian. Harriet tells me Janie’s been seeing a nice boy.
Tasha. He’s a very nice boy. But so what? Harriet and Janie are very nice girls. They deserve a little “naches”. You know what I mean by “naches”? A little happiness. Well, I don’t want to keep you. I know you’re a busy woman. You probably have appointments.

Lillian. Actually, I thought I’d surprise Harriet and take her to a nice lunch, but her secretary told me she was in a meeting. So I thought I’d treat myself to a frankfurter in the park. I haven’t had a frankfurter in the park since I lived in England, thirty years ago.
Tasha. Can I tell you something? I’m sorry, I forgot your first name.
Lillian. Lillian
Tasha. Lillian, maybe it’s none of my business, but you shouldn’t eat frankfurters. You know what frankfurters are made of? Have some string bonds. (She takes out bag of string bonds from attache case.) All the young girls at dancing school carry plastic bags with string bonds. (Removing earphones. Taking a bean.) Thank you.
Tasha. (Sits down.) Excuse me, I always tell my daughter only old ladies sigh. My husband has an expression, “everything presses itself out”. Believe me, Harriet will find a nice boy, she’ll get married, she’ll work, she’ll have a nice life. I don’t understand why they’re fighting it so hard.
Lillian. I don’t think Harriet thinks about marriage very much.
Tasha. These days they “live together”. That’s the latest. Believe me, it’s the same thing as being married.
Lillian. Harriet told me she doesn’t particularly want to live with anyone. I don’t live with anyone.
Tasha. You can’t listen to your children all the time. My daughter tells me I don’t wear clothing. I’m wearing clothing. My daughter, Janie, thinks I call her in the morning to check up on her. Yesterday she answered the phone and said, “Hello mother. This morning I got married, lost twenty pounds and...
LILLIAN. That's funny.

TASHA. Oh, you can always have a good time with Janie. But you know what's sad? Not sad like a child is ill or something. But a little sad to me. My daughter never thinks I call because I miss her. The girls at dancing school tell me their problems, they tell me about their parents, their boyfriends, what they ate yesterday, what they're going to eat tomorrow. But they're not my children. Sure, I'd like Janie to be married, and if she were a lawyer that'd be nice too, and believe me, if I could take her by the hand and do it for her I would. I'm that sort of mother. I remember when Janie was in high school and she'd slam the door to her room and say, "Mother, what do you want from me?" Lillian, what do I want from her? I just want to know that she's well. And to give her a little push too. But just a little one.

LILLIAN. (Reassuring.) Soon or later you can have everything pressed.

TASHA. It's "everything presses itself out." I'll tell you. Life isn't like those Ivory Snow commercials with the mother and daughter comparing hands. Maybe your life is like that but at seven fifteen in the morning, my Janie and I don't get up to play golf together.

LILLIAN. Harriet and I don't get up to play golf either. (Pause) Do those string beans really fill you up?

TASHA. You're an intelligent woman, Lillian, how could a bag of string beans really fill you up?

LILLIAN. Do you ever go to Rumpelmeyers across the street?

TASHA. I take my granddaughter when she's in the city.

LILLIAN. Rumpelmeyers always sold the nicest stuffed animals. I never liked the Steiff toys at F.A.O. Schwartz.

TASHA. They're made in Germany.

LILLIAN. How many grandchildren do you have?

TASHA. Just one. But I'm looking forward. I'll tell you what's nice about grandchildren. You don't have to worry about them everyday and they don't hog you a chincic. That means they don't bang on your tea kettle.

LILLIAN. Would you join me at Rumpelmeyers for a sundae. I have twenty minutes before I have to go to a meeting. I'm sure you can get an iced coffee and some fruit.

TASHA. Why should I have fruit when they have such nice ice cream? I don't care what restaurant you go to the fresh fruit cup is never fresh.

LILLIAN. I haven't gone for a sundae in the afternoon since I was at Vassar. This is a big day for me. A frankfurter in the park, a sundae at Rumpelmeyers. I'm having a wonderful time.

TASHA. The girls at dancing school always say you can have a good time with Tasha.

TASHA. Do you like James Garner?

TASHA. Who?

LILLIAN. Do you ever watch the Rockford Files?

TASHA. I put the television on sometimes when I'm waiting for Simon to come home after my classes, but I don't really watch it. Just educational broadcasting and the Barbara Walter's Special. Did you see her with Richard Nixon the other week? That man did all right for himself.

LILLIAN. I beg your pardon.

TASHA. Both his daughters married well, he has a nice house, he travels, and what was he before, a Quaker.

LILLIAN. Excuse me.

TASHA. A Quaker. Listen I know you people don't like to get very intimate, but since our daughters are such good friends, I want to tell you I always admired you. You were always on time to all the parent-teacher meetings. Not that you and I both aren't smarter than all those teachers combined. But the other mothers would always come in late with the Louis Vuitton bags, and the manicures, but you, the only one who had something else important to do, you were always on time.

LILLIAN. Thank you.

TASHA. What are you thanking me for? You worked very hard. We both worked very hard. That's why we put out such nice products. (They walk off arm in arm chatting. Tasha, as she ex-
MON. HARRIET. My mother identifies with Jean Harris.
JANIE. I think Jean's mistake was stopping with Dr. Tarnover. On her way to Scarsdale she should have taken care of all of them. Dr. Atkins, Dr. Pritikin, the nut in Beverly Hills who says it's good to live on papaya.
MARTY. Monkey, Jean Harris should stay in jail for life. (Marty's beeper goes off.) I hear you, Mrs. Rosen. I hear you. I was up all night with her. She thinks the dialysis machine is connected to my telephone. Do you have a private one I could use?
HARRIET. In the kitchen. (Marty exits into kitchen. He looks back at Janie.) He's sweet.
JANIE. He's very sweet. Sometimes I look at Marty and think he's such a nice young man, I must be a nice young girl.
HARRIET. You are.
JANIE. I never meant to become one. Last week, when we were driving up from yet another Sterling Tavern opening on the Island, I had my head in his lap and he stroked my hair and called me "Monkey." And at first I thought, Janie Jill Bloomberg, you've been accepted, not even on the waiting list. So he calls you Monkey. You'd prefer what? Angel? Sweetheart?
HARRIET. Beauty?
JANIE. And I thought it's settled, fine, thank God. And I bet I can convince him that Schlomo is not a name for an American child. We were driving along the L.I.E. I was fantasizing if we'd make the Sunday Times wedding announcements, "Daughter of Pioneer in Interpretive Dance marries Pop-Over Boy."
And it was just as we were approaching Syosset that I thought I can't breathe in this car and I promised myself that in a month from now I would not be travelling home from the Island in this car with Marty. And as soon as I thought this and honestly almost pushed open the car door, I found myself kissing his hand and saying, "Marty, I love you." I don't know.
HARRIET. I don't know either. Maybe Lillian is right. Life is much easier without relationships.
JANIE. Hattie, do you think I should live with Marty?
HARRIET. Well, if you live with him, you won't have to wonder who'll hold you at night, what will happen if you don't pay your taxes, or even if you want children who you could possibly get to be the father. You won't read articles in magazines about single women and have to think of the fifty different reasons why you're different than that. You won't begin to notice younger men on the street or think I'm not really hurt- ing a married man's wife if I have an affair with him because if it's not me, it'll be somebody else. But Janie, how could you sleep next to a man as nice as Marty and lie to him and say I love you.
JANIE. I do love him. Maybe I'm just frightened.
HARRIET: I thought we had a pact. There's nothing wrong with being alone. We can wait till it's right. (Marty enters.) How's Mrs. Rosen?
MARTY. She died. Just kidneying. Actually, she's not happy with her donor so I'm driving her home to Rye.
HARRIET. Oh, I'm going up to Rye next week for a planning conference. My friend, Joe Stine, is driving me up there.

(Doorbell Rings.) Maybe we can take Mrs. Rosen with us.
MARTY. Actually, I can't stay for dinner. The hospital wants me back in a half hour. (To Janie.) Who's Joe Stine?
JANIE. Some friend of Harriet's. I've never met him. (Harriet has answered the door. Paul enters. His shoulder is still to his ear.)

PAUL. I think I got whiplash on the cab ride down here.
HARRIET. I'm sorry. Are you all right?
PAUL. There's no way to get around safely in this city. God damn taxi driver went over a pot hole.
JANIE. Do you want Marty to have a look at your neck?
PAUL. It's not my neck. It's my left arm. Oh, my God. Maybe I'm having a heart attack.
MARTY. Really, I don't mind having a look at it.
JANIE. Marty's a resident at Mount Sinai.
PAUL. (To Marty.) Nice to meet you. (Shakes his head.)
MARTY. And this is Janie Blumberg.
PAUL. The only other possibility is my doctor says I've been taking too many amateur massages.

HARRIET. Paul, how about a drink?
PAUL. I better not with this neck thing.
MARTY. I can recommend a Chiropractor.
JANIE. I thought Chiropractors were quacks. My mother says Chiropractors are quacks. She's a dancer.
PAUL. Your mother's a dancer? What company is she with?
JANIE. She's an independent.

HARRIET. Sweet gherkins? Paul, remember the T.V. commercial we saw, well, Marty's father's the one who was giving away the shrimp.
PAUL. Oh, I loved it. I loved it. Is that kid's name really Schlomo?
MARTY. Yes, the UJA is really pissed at my father for making Schlomo eat shrimp on television.
PAUL. I love it. I love it.
HARRIET. More brie, Marty? (To Paul.) How are you feeling?
PAUL. I don't know, Honey. I have this sensation in my foot. Maybe this is a neurological thing.
JANIE. Well, maybe.
MARTY. Doesn't seem to be.
PAUL. What's your specialty?
MARTY. Kidneys.
PAUL. The kid's name is really Schlomo? I love it.
JANIE. You're in marketing, aren't you?
PAUL. Yes, but it's too boring to talk about.
HARRIET. I don't think it's boring. (To Marty.) Have some gherkins? (Pause.)
PAUL. Anyone seen anything good recently?
MARTY. God, I haven't been to a film in ages. If I get any time I try to read.
JANIE. Did you read the article in the Times about artificial insemination? I can imagine myself at 36, driving cross country to inseminate myself with a turkey baster.
PAUL. Turkey baster?
JANIE. Uh-huh. I'm going to give birth to a little oven stuffor roaster. (Janie, Marty, and Harriet crack up.)
PAUL. (Getting up.) Well, I have to be going.
JANIE. Aren't you going to stay for dinner? There's chicken merango.
MARTY. Really, I wouldn't rush off because of the whiplash.
PAUL. Nice meeting both of you. Cathy ... er, Beauty, I'm just a little tired. (He kisses Harriet on the cheek, puts up his coat and starts to leave.)
HARRIET. Paul, I don't think we should see each other anymore. (Paul stops. Janie & Marty slowly turn to Paul.)
PAUL. Excuse me.
HARRIET. I want to stop.
PAUL. (Moves down to Harriet and whispers.) We've been through
this before.
MARTY. Harriet, do you want Janie and I to get dessert?
HARRIET. No.
PAUL. C'mon Harriet, I've got this neck thing. Your friends
are here. We'll talk about it tomorrow. We'll have breakfast.
What's the matter, Beauty, do you have your period?
MARTY. (Standing with Janie.) See you later.
HARRIET. Don't go. (They sit.) Paul's leaving to catch up on
his laundry.
PAUL. You knew what the parameters were. You're a
very appealing woman, Harriet. It's nice meeting both of you.
Thanks for helping me with this neck thing. Beauty, calm
down. You're a good kid. (He snaps his fingers as if to say 'see you
later' and exits.)
MARTY. He's crazy. He didn't have whiplash. Harriet, he's
the least gracious man I ever met. In fact, he's a real douche.
JANIE. Hattie, I'm sorry.
HARRIET. What are you sorry for? (She sits down.)
JANIE. I shouldn't have told him about artificial insemination.
HARRIET. (Frowning.) I'm going for a walk.
JANIE. When are you coming back?
HARRIET. Janie, you sound like Tasha. I don't know when
I'm coming back. (Harriet exits out the front door.)
JANIE. Well, this was a real nice clambake. I'm mighty glad I
came.
MARTY. Why is she seeing that guy?
JANIE. The sadist vice-president at Colgate Palmolive? I don't
know.
MARTY. Monkey.
JANIE. What?
MARTY. My father wants to know if we're coming to dinner
tomorrow. It's my brother's anniversary. The whole family will
be there.
JANIE. I can't. I got a call from Sesame Street. They want to
interview me. I have to stay home and put together some
sketches for the giant bird.
MARTY. So you'll do it next week. What?
JANIE. Nothing.
MARTY. What nothing, Monkey?
JANIE. Nothing. Nothing.
MARTY. You want to interview at Sesame Street, fine. They
do nice work. But don't let it take over your life. And don't let it
take over our life. That's a real trap.
JANIE. Marty, I haven't even interviewed there yet. (He rubs
her back intermittently, tapping as if he's checking her heart.)
MARTY. You're a sweet woman. You don't want a life like
that.
JANIE. Like what?
MARTY. Look, I have plenty of friends who marry women
doctors because they think they'll have something in common.
 Monkey, they never see each other. Their children are brought
up by strangers from the Caribbean.
JANIE. That's a nice way of putting it.
MARTY. I have nothing against your working. I just want to
make sure we have a life.
JANIE. Marty, I like my work. I may have stumbled into
something I actually care about. And right now I don't want to
do it part-time and pretend that it's real when it would actually
be a hobby. But I want a life too. Honey, my mother takes my
father skating every Saturday. Simon and that dancer have
struck up a partnership. I'm their daughter. I want that too.
MARTY. Janie, I made arrangements with the Sterling truck
to move us to Brooklyn next Saturday.
JANIE. We're gonna move with a lot of shrimp and lobster
tails?
MARTY. What are you trying to do, entertain me like you
tried to entertain Paul Stuart?
JANIE. I was just trying . . .
MARTY. You know what, Monkey, you're a little disorganized. I'm a little bit of a nudge. So if I don't make the arrangements, what's going to happen? You'll live alone or maybe you'll meet someone who's even more of a nudge.

JANIE. Marty, if I'm one of the few real people you've met, why do you call me, "Monkey"?

MARTY. Jesus, Janie, I'm just trying to move us foward. I gotta go. I'm on call this week. I'll see you on Saturday. (Marty snaps his fingers as if he's imitating Paul. Marty exits. Janie walks around the sofa, slowly turns and repeats)

END SCENE

"IF I HAD YOU"

TELEPHONE MACHINE #5

VLADIMIR. (Ring. BEEP.) Hello-hi. This is Vladimir. Hello-hi. Uh, I have tickets for Bruce Springsteen. I will return call.
(Hang up.)

CYNTHIA PETERSON. (BEEP.) Janie, it's Cynthia Peterson. I met a man on a plane to Houston. Keep your fingers crossed.
(Hang up.)

END SCENE

ACT TWO

Scene Three

O.C. - TAKE L. Four Seasons Restaurant. Harriet & Lillian seated at a table. They have finished eating their entrees. Harriet is distracted.

LILLIAN. Everything all right with you?

HARRIET. Fine. I guess. I made a presentation to my boss a week ago. He told me my ideas were too theoretical. Then the next day, at a meeting, my friend Joe Stine said my boss presented my ideas as his own and he got them through.

LILLIAN. Good for you.

HARRIET. Mother I work very hard. I don't want that man stealing my ideas.

LILLIAN. You think it would be better to be married and have your husband steal your ideas?

HARRIET. What?

LILLIAN. I was just cheering you up with a depressing alternative. Look at Jean Harris. That guy would have manipulated her for the rest of her life. Do me a favor, baby. Go in tomorrow and tell your boss, whoever he is, Ron, Rick, Dick, I am sorry but you stole my idea and I hold you accountable. (Pause.) Do you want dessert? Have some chocolate velvet cake and I'll take a taste.

HARRIET. Mother, you haven't finished not eating your lunch. You haven't picked all the salad dressing off your salad or removed all the potatoes from your plate.

LILLIAN. Tom, we'll have the chocolate velvet cake.

HARRIET. I remember when you took me here as a little girl. I told everyone in my class we were going to the Four Seasons for lunch cause you told me it was very special. And I always loved coming here and I thought you were very beautiful in your subtle blue suits, calling all those grown men, Tom, Dave. I mean, they never really knew the other women in the room, but they knew my mommy. My mommy was important.

LILLIAN. She is, Harriet you can't blame everyone on me. I wasn't home enough for you to blame everything on me.

HARRIET. Clever.

LILLIAN. I thought so. (Waves to someone.) Hi, Bill.

HARRIET. Are you proud of me?

LILLIAN. Of course I'm proud of you. Are you proud of me?

HARRIET. Yes. Very.

LILLIAN. I didn't cheat you too much.

HARRIET. No.

LILLIAN. Have children, Harriet. It's one of the few things in life that's worthwhile. (She waves at another man.) Hi, Kip.
HARRIET. Mother, when do you stop hoping that there will be some enormous change, some dam breaking and then you'll start living your life? You know what I'm tired of? I'm tired of the whole idea that everything takes work. Relationships take work, personal growth takes work, spiritual development, child rearing, creativity. Well, I would like to do something simply splendidly that took absolutely no real effort at all.

LILLIAN. Harriet, your thinking is all over the place today. What is it? Are you having an affair or something?

HARRIET. My boss's boss. The one you said should be further along. But it's nothing.

LILLIAN. 40% of the people at McKinsey are having affairs.

HARRIET. I know that.

LILLIAN. See how nice it is to have a daughter in your own field. If you want me to, I'd like to meet this guy.

HARRIET. It's over. He once had an interview with you. He said you have balls.

LILLIAN. Don't be offended baby. Your father said the same thing. (She waves again.) Hi, Honey. Where's our cake? I have a meeting at 2:30.

HARRIET. Mother... ?

LILLIAN. What is this, "Youth wants to know"? Honey, I'm an old lady. I don't know all the answers to these things.

HARRIET. I have just one more question. Just one.

LILLIAN. To get to the other side.

HARRIET. What?

LILLIAN. I was giving you the answer.

HARRIET. That's not funny.

LILLIAN. I'm not a funny woman. Ask me, baby, I've got to go. Where is that man? I can't sit around here like this.

HARRIET. Calm down.

LILLIAN. What's your question? Harriet, I'm in a hurry.

HARRIET. Mother, do you think it's possible to be married or living with a man, have a good relationship and children that you share equal responsibility for, and a career, and still read novels, play the piano, have women friends and swim twice a week?

LILLIAN. You mean what the women's magazines call, "Having it all"? Harriet, that's just your generation's fantasy.

HARRIET. Mother, you're being too harsh. Listen to me, what I want to know is if you do have all those things, my generation's fantasy, then what do you want?

LILLIAN. Needlepoint. You desperately want to needlepoint.

(Pause.) Life is a negotiation, Harriet. You think the women who go back to work at 36 are going to have the same career as a woman who has been there since her twenties? You think someone who has a baby and leaves it after two weeks to go back to work is going to have the same relationship with that child as someone who has been there all along? It's impossible. And you show me the wonderful man with whom you're going to have it all. You tell me how he feels when he takes as many business trips as he does. You tell me who has to leave the office when the kid bumps his head on a radiator or slips on a milk carton.

No, I don't think what you asked me is possible.

HARRIET. All right. When you were 29, what was possible for you?

LILLIAN. When I was your age, I realized I had to make some choices. I had a promising career, a child, and a husband; and believe me, if you have all three, and you're very conscientious, you still have to choose your priorities. So I gave some serious thought to what was important to me. And what was important to me was a career I could be proud of and successfully bringing up a child. So the first thing that had to go was pleasing my husband cause he was a grown-up and could take care of himself.

Yes, baby, everything did take work; but it was worthwhile. I never dreamed I'd be this successful. And I have a perfectly lovely daughter. Baby, I have a full, rich life.

HARRIET. Mommy, what full, rich life? You watch Rockford File reruns every night.

LILLIAN. If a man more appealing than James Garner comes into my life, I'll make room for him too. O.K., Baby?
HARRIET. Well, I've made up my mind. I'm going to try to do it. Have it all.
LILLIAN. Good for you. For your sake, I hope you can. (Pause.) What's the matter, Harriet? Did I disillusion you?
HARRIET. No, I'm afraid I'm just like you.
LILLIAN. Don't be afraid. You're younger.
HARRIET. Mother, you're trying my patience.
LILLIAN. You sound just like me, dear.
HARRIET. If you were younger, I'd say something nasty.
LILLIAN. Whisper it late at night. It will give you guilt and anxiety. Your sweet old Mom who worked for years to support you.

LILLIAN. Don't tell that to your boss. Pay the bill, will you.
Comb your hair, baby. I like it better off your face. Call me Sunday. Pretend it's Mother's Day. (To waiter.) This young lady will take the check please. I love you, Harriet. (Lillian kisses her on the cheek.)
HARRIET. I love you, too.
LILLIAN. Sometimes.
HARRIET. Sometimes.

LILLIAN. (As she exits.) Lovely lunch, Tom. Thank you. (Harriet takes out her American Express Gold Card and lays it on the table.)

END SCENE

TELEPHONE MACHINE #6

SIMON. (Ring, BEEP.) Janie, it's Dad. Do you want to meet us at Oscar's for brunch? (Hang up.)
MARTY. Monkey, sweetheart, are you there? Pick it up. Pick it up. I have to do my father a big favor tomorrow in Central Park. You and I will have dinner in Brooklyn. (Hang up.)

END SCENE

FADE TO: CARWASH MARCH

ACT TWO

SCENE FOUR

Central Park. We hear Sousa's, "Washington Post." Marty enters to cheers. He picks up a mike. Camera flashes go off.

MARTY. (Into microphone.) This is Dr. Murray Schlimovitz standing in for my father, Captain Mitty. I'm here at beautiful Central Park to inaugurate the first Annual Sterling Marathon. That's right. He's giving away Spring Water, he's giving away Seltzer, he's giving away Carob Bars. (Janie enters L.) And you know what my father always says. "You should only live and be well." (Marty waves and the crowd cheers. He puts down the mike and moves to Janie.) Janie?

JANIE. Hi, Dr. Murray Schlimovitz.

MARTY. I decided to open my practice in Brooklyn under my real name. What are you doing here?

JANIE. I was in the neighborhood. They accepted my sketches for the giant bird. Does Mount Sinai know you're here?

MARTY. I'm here because it's my responsibility to my family. (Pause.) Oy, I'm such a schmucky nice doctor.

JANIE. You're not such a schmucky nice doctor. What's the matter?

MARTY. I don't understand you. I call you all last night to coordinate the time for the moving truck to arrive at your house today, you don't return my calls, and then you arrive here today ready to crack jokes. Janie, what are you, a home entertainment unit? Honey, go home. The moving truck will be at your house in an hour.

JANIE. Marty, do you ever get the feeling that everything is changing and you don't know when you decided to make the change?

MARTY. Nothing's changing. I'm offering you love, I'm offering you affection, I'm offering you attention. All you have to do
is put your crates that you never unpacked on that truck and get
on the Belt Parkway. You just move forward.
JANIE. I can't just move forward.
MARTY. You know what I think? I think you're frightened to try. You think it's a compromise. You think you're not grown-
up yet. That's bullshit. Maybe you think I'm not special
enough.
JANIE. I think you're very special. But I want us to decide to
move when we decide together. Marty, you took an apartment
and you didn't even tell me about it first. None of it had
anything to do with me. I don't want to sneak around you and
pretend that I'm never angry. I don't want to be afraid of you. I
guess to a man I love I want to feel not just that I can talk, but
that you'll listen.
MARTY. Do you think I don't listen to you?
JANIE. You have all the answers before I ask the questions.
MARTY. You picked a hell of a time to bring this up. You
want to give the answers, fine. You make the decision right
now. Either you move in with me tonight or we stop and I'll
make alternate arrangements.
JANIE. Marty, by you everything is much more simple than it
has to be. You want a wife, you get a wife. You drop out of
Harvard twice, they always take you back. You're just like me.
We're too much the same. I'm so sweet. I never say what I want,
and you're so sweet, you always get what you want.
MARTY. Not necessarily. Why do you think I'm thirty-two
and not married? All I want is a home, a family, something my
father had so easily and I can't seem to get started on. Why? I'm
a nice Jewish doctor. Women want to marry their daughters off
to me all the time. Sure, I want to know where I'll live, who'll
take the children to the nursery, but I wanted something special
too. Just a little. Maybe not as special as you turned out to be,
but just a little. Janie, I do not want to marry anyone like my
sister-in-law.
JANIE. I never liked her. Honey, I wish we could throw a wed-
ding at the Plaza. And your father could be Toastmaster Gen-
eral, and Harriet would select my pattern, and my mother
would dance, and baby Schlomo could carry the ring in one of
my father's gold seal envelopes.
MARTY. (Cuts her off suddenly, quite angry.) Goddammit, Janie,
make a decision! You want to have children with a turkey
baster, that's fine. You want to write sketches for a giant bird at
two o'clock in the morning, that's fine too, you wanna come
home to Cynthia Peterson's phone calls, great. You want to find
out what it's like to take care of yourself, good luck to you. But it
isn't right for me. And I'll tell you something, Janie, it isn't right
for you either.
JANIE. (Softly.) Marty, you're not right for me. I can't move
in with you now. If I did that, I'd always be a monkey, a sweet
little girl.
MARTY. (After a pause.) I have to get back with the starting
cannon. (He starts to go. Janie stops him.)
JANIE. Honey, it's complicated.
MARTY. No. It's simple. You don't love me enough. (Marty
exits.)
JANIE. Marty. . . . (After a pause, we hear Marty on a microphone,
offstage.)
MARTY. This is Dr. Murray Schlimovitz. At the First Annual
Go. (Janie is left alone on stage as lights fade.)

END SCENE

TELEPHONE MACHINE #7

HARRIET. (Ring. Bop.) Janie, I have good news. No, great
news. Can you and Marty come over to dinner Sunday at 6:00?
There's Chicken Merango. Bye. (Hang up.)
HARRIET. (Bop.) Harriet, again. Where are you? If you guys
don't show up tomorrow, I'll hock your china. I miss you . . .
(Hang up.)
OPERATOR. (Dial Tone.) Please hang up. There seems to be a receiver off the hook.

END SCENE

ACT TWO

SCENE FIVE

R.S. on R.S. Harriet's apartment. Lillian and Harriet, with a drink.

HARRIET. I thought you'd tell me I was insane.
LILLIAN. You're not insane. Impetuous, but not insane. Does Janie like Joe?
HARRIET. Janie's never even met Joe.
LILLIAN. You should talk to her about him. It's important to discuss your life choices with your friends.

HARRIET. Mother, you're so full of homespun advice today.
LILLIAN. I got my hair done yesterday. I read a lot of those women's magazines. You and Joe will have to come over next week for some jello. (Doorbell rings. Harriet answers it. Janie is there with a bouquet of flowers.)
JANIE. (Offstage.) Harriet, it's me, Janie.
HARRIET. (Opening door.) Hi. Janie. These are for you. I was afraid you'd say they're too old, they're too new, they're gold.
HARRIET. No, they're perfect. (Harriet points Janie to her mother.)
JANIE. How are you Mrs. Cornwall?
LILLIAN. Janie, I'll know you the rest of my life and you'll still call me, Mrs. Cornwall. Makes me feel good, baby. The kids in my office call me Lillian and pretend we're colleagues. We're not colleagues. I'm a person of moral and intellectual superiority.

HARRIET. (From off, kitchen.) My mother deals from strength.
(She enters with drink for Janie.)
JANIE. Speaking of strength, guess who called me? Paul Stuart. He said to tell you he really likes you very much and he doesn't understand why you won't return his calls. I'm awfully glad he has my number.
LILLIAN. Is this your boss's boss? The one who was so impressed with my potency.

HARRIET. Well, he's my boss now. I was promoted.
HARRIET and JANIE. Yeah!!! (Janie and Harriet hug.)
JANIE. I knew there was good news here. I got the chicken merango message and I said something good was happening. I've been trying to call you but you weren't home and then I was busy sending the letter, "If", to the Bahamas. "Sesame Street" hired me part time!
HARRIET! and JANIE. Yeah!!! (Janie and Harriet hug again.)

LILLIAN. Perhaps, I should feel threatened. I'm surrounded by a generation of achieving younger women.

HARRIET. I don't think Janie's threatening to anyone. That's her gift.
LILLIAN. Well, she's impressive. (Pause.) Where's your nice young man? Harriet said she invited him to dinner tonight. I was looking forward to meeting him.

JANIE. Uh, Marty's busy tonight. There's a testimonial dinner for his father at Szechuan Taste. One day they'll find out which Rabbi he's paying off and close down those places.
LILLIAN. Harriet, maybe Marty's father should cater your wedding? It'll be a first for the Plaza. And we could keep it in the family.

JANIE. (Not hearing what she said.) Excuse me?

HARRIET. Janie, do you remember at my Whiplash Party two weeks ago, I told you I was driving up to a planning conference with Joe? He's the headhunter who got me my job at Colgate. He was a year ahead of me at Harvard. I've been spending a lot of time with him recently. And yesterday, he asked me to marry him.

JANIE. What?
HARRIET. (Harriet stands up and announces with pride.) I'm go-
LILLIAN. He'll be all right for a first husband. I'm just kidding. You know I'm thrilled, baby.

JANIE. Congratulations!

HARRIET. I would have told you earlier, but I didn't even know it was happening. And my time with Joe has been so intense. I wasn't able to call you.

JANIE. That's wonderful!

LILLIAN. Janie, you and I will have to plan the shower together. Well, I'm off to the Ming Dynasty.

HARRIET. What?

LILLIAN. I'm taking an Art History class. Not for credit. Your cave is broadening itself. I'll leave you girls to your dinner. Harriet, for the sake of your marriage, move beyond Chicken Merango. Bye bye girls. (Lillian exits.) B-L.

JANIE. She's in a good mood.

HARRIET. She's been reading Redbook. So, what do you think?

JANIE. It's wonderful. Mazel Tov.

HARRIET. (Exiting to Kitchen.) I didn't mean to surprise you like this. I wanted to have you and Marty to dinner. Are things O.K. with Marty?

JANIE. Yeah, Fine.

HARRIET. You O.K.?

JANIE. Harriet, have you thought about living with Joe first?

Better yet, maybe you should have dinner with Joe first?

HARRIET. I want to marry him. Janie, he's the only person who's ever cared about me in a long time. He listens to me.

( Harriet enters with flowers in a vase.) Tasha's right. You and I deserve a little nachos.

JANIE. Nachos.

HARRIET. Joe makes me feel like I have a family. I never had a family. I had you and Lillian but I never felt I could have what other women just assumed they would get.

JANIE. I want to know one thing. I want to know why when I asked you about my living with Marty, you told me you didn't respect women who didn't learn to live alone and pay their own rent? And then, the first chance you have to change your life, you grasp it.

HARRIET. What? Marrying Joe is just a chance that just came along.

JANIE. I see. You've been waiting for some man to come along and change your life. And all the things you told me about learning to live alone and women and friendship, that was so much social nonsense. I feel like an idiot! I made choices based on an idea that doesn't exist anymore.

HARRIET. What choices?

JANIE. Never mind.

HARRIET. Janie, when I told you that, I didn't know what it would be like when Paul Stuart would leave at 10:00 and go home to Cathy and I would have to pretend I wasn't hurt. I didn't know what it would be like to have lunch with Lillian and think I'm on my way to watching Rockford File reruns. Of course you should learn to live alone and pay your own rent, but I didn't realize what it would feel like for me when I became too good at it. Janie, I know how to come home, put on the news, have a glass of wine, read a book, call you. What I don't know is what to do when there's someone who loves me in the house.

Joe.

JANIE. I could throw this table at you.

HARRIET. Why? Janie, we're too good friends for you to be jealous.

JANIE. I'm not jealous.

HARRIET. Don't blame me for your doubts about Marty.

JANIE. Harriet, I don't blame you for anything. I'm sorry. Right now I just don't like you very much.

HARRIET. Why? Because I'm leaving you? Because I'm getting married?

JANIE. Because our friendship didn't mean very much to you. You buy me the sugar, the bread and the salt and you stand there and tell me you never had a family. Harriet, you never
really listened to me and you never really told me about yourself. And that’s sad.

HARRIET. Janie, I love you. But you want us to stay girls together. I’m not a girl anymore. I’m almost thirty and I’m alone.

JANIE. You lied to me.

HARRIET. I never lied to you. I lied to myself. It doesn’t take any strength to be alone, Janie. It’s much harder to be with someone else. I want to have children and get on with my life.

JANIE. What do you do? Fall in with every current tide pulls in? Women should live alone and find out what they can do, put off marriage, establish a vertical career track, so you do that for a while. Then you almost turn thirty and Time Magazine announces “Guess what girls, it’s time to have it all.”

Jaclyn Smith is married and pregnant and playing Jacqueline Kennedy. Every other person who was analyzing stocks last year is analyzing layettes this year. So you do that. What are you doing, Harriet? Who the hell are you? Can’t you conceive of some plan, some time management scheme that you made up for yourself? Can’t you take a chance? HARRIET. I am taking a chance. I hardly know this man.

JANIE. You don’t have to force yourself into a situation—a marriage because it’s time.

HARRIET. You’re just frightened of being with someone, Janie. You’re just frightened of making a choice and taking responsibility for it.

JANIE. That sounds romantic.

HARRIET. That’s life.

JANIE. Harriet, you’re getting married to someone you’ve been dating for two weeks. I am much more scared of being alone than you are. But I’m not going to turn someone into the answer for me.

HARRIET. Then you’ll be alone.

JANIE. Then I’ll be alone. (Pause.) I better go. I have to get up early with the letter “B.” If they like this, they’ll hire me full time. In charge of consonants.

HARRIET. Give my love to Marty.

JANIE. I can’t. I told him I won’t move with him to Brooklyn.

HARRIET. So you’ll get an apartment in Manhattan.

JANIE. We broke up. I decided not to see him anymore.

HARRIET. Won’t you miss him?

JANIE. I missed him today when I saw someone who looks sweet like him walking down the street and I’ll miss him later tonight.

HARRIET. Maybe you should call him?

JANIE. No.

HARRIET. Life is a negotiation.

JANIE. I don’t believe I have to believe that.

HARRIET. Janie, it’s too painful not to grow up.

JANIE. That’s not how I want to grow up. (Janie kisses Harriet and starts to cry.)

HARRIET. You don’t have to separate from me. I’m not leaving you.

JANIE. (Picking up trash.) Want me to throw this out for you?

HARRIET. Sure.

JANIE. Do you really think anyone has ever met someone throwing out the garbage? (They both shake their head no. Janie exits.)

END SCENE

"Isn’t It Romantic?"

ACT TWO

Scene Six

Janie’s apartment. Janie is alone, sitting in front of her crates, wrapped in her blanket, holding a suitcase stick and crying. We hear a romantic version of the song “Isn’t It Romantic.” The doorbell rings. No answer. Doorbell rings again.
SIMON. (From offstage) Janie, Janie.

JANIE. (Softly) What? (Doorbill rings.)

SIMON. Janie. Janie. It's Dad. Can we come in?

JANIE. Just a second.

TASHA. (Offstage) Janie, the super said he doesn't have the key.

JANIE. (Crossing-to-door) I changed the lock.

TASHA. (Offstage) What?!

JANIE. Mother, you can't come in until you repeat after me.

My daughter is a grown woman.

TASHA. (Offstage) Simon, she's crazy.

JANIE. My daughter is a grown woman.

TASHA. (Offstage) My daughter is a grown woman.

JANIE. This is her apartment.

TASHA. (Offstage) Of course, it's your apartment.

SIMON. (Offstage) For Christ's sake, just tell her... .

TASHA. (Offstage) This is her apartment.

JANIE. I am to call before I arrive here.

TASHA. (Offstage) I always call. I get the machine.

SIMON. (Offstage) Janie, we can leave this with the doorman.

JANIE. There isn't any doorman here.

TASHA. (Offstage) Simon, maybe she wants to be alone.

JANIE. (Opens the door) It's all right, mother. The six truck drivers just left out the back window. (Tasha & Simon enter. He carries a box.)

SIMON. Sorry to bother you. We tried calling, but you don't return our calls.

JANIE. I've been busy, Daddy. I'm going on location with the letter, "C" to Canada. They seem to like me.

TASHA. Of course they like you. You're my daughter.

JANIE. I don't think they know you mother.

TASHA. Simon, give her the package and let's go. (Simon puts down the box.) Your father said Janie will look like a model in this.

SIMON. You don't have to keep it unless you like it. (Janie opens the box. It contains a mink coat.) Do you like it?

TASHA. Give your father a little pleasure. Try it on. (Tasha helps Janie with it, it is very small. She hunches to pull it around her.)

SIMON. I think it's very nice to your face. The girls are wearing the sleeves short now.

TASHA. I see girls your age wearing theirs to walk the baby carriage.

SIMON. Don't say you like it, if you don't like it.

JANIE. I like it. I like it. If I was 36 and married to a doctor and a size three, this would be perfect for me.

TASHA. So why aren't you?

JANIE. Do you really want to know why I don't call you? You expect me to dial the phone and say, "Hello mother, hello father, here I am in my mink coat. I just came home from wearing it to walk the carriage. Everything is settled. Everything has worked out wonderfully. Here are your naches. Congratulations. I appreciate you."

TASHA. Why do you speak so much Yiddish? We never spoke so much Yiddish around the house.

JANIE. Look, I'm sorry. Things didn't work out as you planned. There's nothing wrong with that life, it just isn't mine right now.

SIMON. What are you getting so emotional about? Sit. Relax. Look at me. I never get so emotional. Janie, all we did was give you a coat. You'll wear it when its cold. And if you like, you'll wear it when it's hot like the old ladies in Miami. That's all. No big deal. Are you taking drugs? Your eyes are glossy. Dear, look at her eyes.

TASHA. I don't want to look at her eyes. You know, Janie, I'll never forget as a child when I sent you to Helena Rubenstein Charm School. And you always came late with the hair in the eyes and the hem hanging down. And Mrs. Rubenstein told me you were an ungrateful child.

JANIE. Mrs. Rubenstein never told you I was an ungrateful child.

TASHA. Simon, what did she tell us?
JANIE. The receptionist at Helena Rubenstein told you I was an ungrateful child. Mother, what do you want from me? You give me a mink coat and I know you think any other daughter would appreciate this. Helena Rubenstein knows any other daughter would appreciate this. Georgette Klinger’s daughter would appreciate this. I’m a selfish, spoiled person. Something is the matter with me.

TASHA. (Getting up.) Something is the matter with you. Simon, I have to go dance. I have to work her out of my system.

SIMON. Dear, relax.

JANIE. I don’t see how I can help you understand what I’m doing. Neither of you ever lived alone, you never thought maybe I won’t have children and what will I do with my life if I don’t.

TASHA. All right, you’re the smart one. I’m the stupid one. I haven’t taught you anything.

JANIE. (Furious.) Mother, think about it. Did you teach me to marry a nice Jewish doctor and make chicken for him? You order up breakfast from a Greek coffee shop every morning. Did you teach me to go to Law School and wear grey suits at a job that I sort of like everyday from 9-5? You run out of here in leg warmers and tank tops to dancing school. Did you teach me to compromise and lie to the man I live with and say I love you when I wasn’t sure? You live with your partner, you walk Dad to work every morning.

TASHA. Now I understand. Everything is my fault. I should have been like the other mothers, 40 chickens in the freezer and played Mah-jongg all afternoon. Janie, I couldn’t live like that, God forbid. You think your father would have been happy with one of those women with the blond hair and the diamonds? And I’ll tell you something else, you and Ben wouldn’t have come out as well as you did. I believe a person should have a little originality—a little, you know. Otherwise you just grow old like everybody else. Let’s go Simon. Honey, you don’t have to call us. You don’t even have to let us know how you are. You do what you want. (Tasha starts to go.)

JANIE. Wait a minute.

TASHA. I’m a modern woman too, you know. I have my dancing, I have your father, and my beautiful grandchild, and Ben. I don’t need you to fill up my life. I’m an independent woman—a person in my own right. Am I right, Simon?

SIMON. Janie, as for me, what I want is some Sunday before I come over here with a coffee table or a mink coat, you’d call me and say, “Dad, let’s get together, I’d like to see you”.

TASHA. She doesn’t want to see us.

JANIE. (Dinner, looking at her parents.) I do want to see you. And you don’t have to call every evening to sing, “Sunrise—Sunset,” and you don’t have to bring a mink coat or a coffee table, or even a Russian taxi cab driver for me to marry.

SIMON. What happened to him? He was a nice boy.

JANIE. All you have to do is trust me a little bit. I believe a person should have a little originality, a little you know, otherwise you just grow old like everybody else. And you know Janie, I like life-life-life. Mother, sit, relax, let me figure it out.

TASHA. But, Honey, if I sit, who’s going to dance?

JANIE. Everything presses itself out.

TASHA. Unfortunately, Janie, the clock has a funny habit of keeping on ticking. I want to know who’s going to take care of you when we’re not around anymore.

JANIE. I guess I will. (JANIE TAKES HER MOTHER’S HAND.) Mother, don’t worry. I’m Tasha’s daughter. I know, “I am”.

TASHA. That’s right. I am. (Tasha is crying slightly. Janie touches Tasha’s cheek, then they embrace.)

SIMON. And Janie, from a man’s point of view, the next time someone wants you to make him chicken, you tell him I was at your sister-in-law Christ’s house the other day, and she ordered up lamb chops from the Madison Delicatessen. How hard is it to cook lamb chops? You just stick them in the broiler. If Christ can order up lamb chops, and she’s a girl from Nebraska, you don’t have to make anybody chicken. Believe me, you were born to order up.

JANIE. Sounds like manifest destiny.
SIMON. In fact, I have the number. We could have a family dinner right now.

TASHA: No, Simon, let's go home.

SIMON: (Kisses Janie.) Goodbye, Janie.

JANIE: Goodbye, Daddy.

TASHA: Goodbye honey.

JANIE: Mother, one more thing. Take back your mink. (Janie takes it off and puts it over Tasha's shoulders.)

TASHA: Fits me perfectly.

JANIE: Fits you perfectly.

TASHA: Where's my partner? (Tasha sweeps up to Simon and arm-in-arm, they exit.) Janie is alone for a moment, in silence. She takes a deep breath. She picks up her blanket and folds it neatly, picks up the mink box and sets them on a crate. It's time to finally unpack. She lifts all of the above and starts to exit into the bathroom as the telephone rings. Janie anxious.

CYNTHIA PETERSON. (On phone machine.) Janie, it's Cynthia Peterson. It's my 34th Birthday. I'm alone. Nothing happened with Mr. Houston. I should have married Mark Silverstein in college. Janie, by the time I'm thirty-five, this is what I want.

JANIE. (Flaps her foot.) Flap.

CYNTHIA PETERSON: I want 100,000 dollars a year, a husband, a baby. Janie, are you there? I hear breathing.

JANIE. (Takes another step.) Flap heel.

CYNTHIA PETERSON: I think someone's there. Whoever you are, there's nothing there worth taking.

JANIE. (Moves and taps.) Flap, flap, flap, touch. Flap, flap, flap, touch.

CYNTHIA PETERSON: Janie, I met a man at the deli last night. He asked me if I wanted to have a beer in his apartment at one o'clock in the morning. Do you think I should have gone? (Janie starts to tap with some assurance as the tape continues.) There was an article in the New York Post that there are 1000 men for every 1123 New York hubby hunters. (Music comes in. Flap. Janie crosses up and picks up hat and umbrella.) And there was this picture of an eligible man. He's an actor and he likes painting. I like painting. Should I call him? (The music gets tender. Janie dances as Cynthia fades. A spot picks up Janie dancing beautifully, alone.) I could take him to the Guggenheim with my membership. How many of these 1123 women are going to call him? How many have memberships to the Guggenheim? I don't know if I want to marry an actor. Maybe I should wait for tomorrow's eligible bachelor. (Spot fades on Janie, turning with the hat and umbrella.)

END OF PLAY
APPENDIX B
AUDITION MATERIALS

CUTTINGS

Janie, Harriet, and Marty: Act One, Scene One
Janie, Tasha, and Simon: Act One, Scene Two
Harriet and Lillian: Act One, Scene Three
Janie and Marty: Act One, Scene Four
Harriet and Paul: Act One, Scene Five
Tasha and Lillian: Act Two, Scene One
Janie, Harriet, Marty and Paul: Act Two, Scene Two
Harriet and Lillian: Act Two, Scene Three
Vladimir: Telephone Message #5
Janie, Tasha, Simon, Harriet, Cynthia, and Operator:
    Telephone Message #1

POSSIBLE CHARACTERS:

Janie: Pam, Margaret, Elizabeth, Meg
Harriet: Erin, Kate, Margaret
Tasha: Barb, May
Simon: Pat, Karl, Todd
Marty: Todd, Pat, Karl
Paul: John, Scott
Vladimir: Scott, John
Lillian: Kate, May, Margaret, Barb
APPENDIX C
CAST LIST
ISN'T IT ROMANTIC - By Wendy Wasserstein.

CAST LIST:

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Janie Blumberg......................Pam Andersen
Harriet Cornwall......................Erin Bishop
Marty Sterling......................Todd Jasmin
Tasha Blumberg......................Barb Allen
Simon Blumberg......................Pat McKay
Lillian Cornwall......................Kate Sternhagen
Paul Stuart......................John Amoroso
Vladimir......................Scott Cifrese

TELEPHONE MESSAGES

Cynthia Peterson......................Margaret Koenig
Julie Stern......................Elizabeth Engelman
Tajlei Kaplan Singleberry........May Schwartz
Operator/Schlomo......................Meg Collins
Hart Farrell......................Steve Braden
Milty Sterling......................Karl Kaluza

Set Construction...Todd Jasmin
Lights.............Meg Collins
Props.............Diane Birmingham
Sound.............Spencer MacDonald
Box Office.............Elizabeth Engelman
House Manager.............Diane Birmingham
Set Movers.............Margaret Koenig, May Schwartz, Karl Kaluza, Steve Braden
Stage Manager.............Leah Hale

Thank you all for trying out. Please put your initials after your name. Pick up scripts and copies of the telephone messages in Jim Bartruff's office. ALL ACTORS AND TELEPHONE PEOPLE PLEASE MEET TONIGHT, FRIDAY THE 15th, AT 7:00 p.m. FOR A BRIEF DISCUSSION. Please have read the play. Thank you all again. I will be here at 3:30 p.m. in the Little Theatre, if you have any questions or comments. --Monica Rausch

*Please note the following changes:
Stage Movers: May Schwartz, Lisa Hagen, Steve Braden, and Scott Cifrese
Cynthia Peterson: Nicole Holzer
Sound: Brett Linbo-Terhaar
Isn't it Romantic: a modern comedy

Directed by Monica Rausch

THE LITTLE THEATRE
FEBRUARY 17-21, 1998  7:30 P.M.
APPENDIX F
PROMOTION

CARROLL COLLEGE DEPARTMENT OF FINE ARTS PRESENTS:

Wendy Wasserstein's

Isn't it Romantic
a modern comedy

Directed by Monica Rausch

THE LITTLE THEATRE • FEBRUARY 17-21, 1988 • 7:30 P.M.

ISN'T IT ROMANTIC TO OPEN ON FEBRUARY 17

Isn't It Romantic, a modern comedy by Wendy Wasserstein, is
under the direction of Monica Rausch, who is doing this for her Senior
Thesis. Helping her undertake this project are Dorothy Harper
costumes), Todd Jasmin, Lisa Rausch, Jim Bartruff (set construction
and design), Diane Birmingham (props and house manager), Meg Collins
(lights), and Spencer MacDonald (sound). The cast includes: Pam
Andersen (Janie), Barbara Allen (Tasha), Pat McKay (Simon), Scott
Cifrese (Vladimir), Todd Jasmin (Marty), Erin Bishop (Harriet), Kate
Sternhagen (Lillian), and John Amoroso (Paul). People who will be
doing phone messages during scene changes (done in New York by
Meryl Streep and Kevin Kline, just to name a few) are: Nicole Holzer,
Steve Braden, May Schwartz, Elizabeth Engleman, Karl Kaluza, and Meg
Collins. Stage Manager is Leah Hale.

Isn't It Romantic, will run on the Little Theatre stage from
February 17-21.

Appeared in What's Happening, at Carroll College, January
APPENDIX G - FACT SHEET

Carroll College Little Theatre
Department of Fine Arts
Helena, MT. 59625

FACT SHEET: ISN'T IT ROMANTIC
WHAT: A modern comedy by Wendy Wasserstein
WHEN: February 17-21, 1988 7:30 p.m.
WHERE: Carroll College Little Theatre
PRICE: Tickets at $3 and $2 will be available at the door. All seating is first come—first served. No advance sales, no reserved seating.

ABOUT THE PLAY: Janie Blumberg, is a twenty-eight-year-old Jewish woman who just graduated from college and moved to New York to live on her own. Her best friend from childhood and college is Harriet Cornwall, also 28, single, and living in New York. They start in New York to discover love, a career, and to be with their family. Janie's mother, Tasha, is a traditional Jewish woman with untraditional values. She is into dance and fitness. Both Tasha and her husband, Simon, want Janie to be happy and come to her apartment with gifts for her, including a mink coat, coffee table, and a single Russian taxi driver named Vladimir. Instead, Janie romances a Jewish kidney doctor named Marty Sterling. Harriet's mother, Lillian is a business executive in New York, who's idea of catching up on her daughter's career is lunch at the Four Seasons. Harriet, like her mother, is attractive and is an executive at Colgate-Palmolive, where she meets and romances her boss's boss, Paul Stewart, a boorish man who lives with another woman. After Harriet tells Janie, who is about to get serious with Marty, that it is alright for a woman to be alone, Harriet ends the play about to get married to a man she has known for two weeks. Janie, on the other hand, takes Harriet's advice, as she ends the show on her own again. This play is a funny and charming look at the modern woman today as she tries to "have it all."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Wendy Wasserstein was born in Brooklyn, New York on October 18, 1950. She has a B.A. from Mount Holyoke College, a M.A. from City College of New York, and attended Yale Drama School. She attended Yale Drama School since she was uncertain of a career. She once stated: "My mother told me to go to college and marry a lawyer. Halfway through college, they told me to become one." It was then that she decided on playwriting, to follow the plight of the modern woman. Her thesis at Yale was Uncommon Woman and Others, which later became her first successful play. Today, many critics recognize Wendy Wasserstein as a rising playwright, being compared to a female Woody Allen. Miss Wasserstein is also Jewish and resides in New York City.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION: Isn't It Romantic is under the direction of Monica Rausch, who is doing this for her Senior Thesis. Helping her undertake this project is Dorothy Harper (costumes), Todd Jasmin, Lisa Rausch, Jim Bartruff (set construction and design), Diane Birmingham (props and house manager), Meg Collins (lights), and Spencer MacDonald (sound). The cast includes: Pam Andersen (Janie), Barbara Allen (Tasha), Pat McKay (Simon), Scott Cifresce (Vladimir), Todd Jasmin (Marty), Erin Bishop (Harriet), Kate Sternhagen (Lillian), and John Amoroso (Paul). People who will be doing phone messages during scene changes (done in New York by Meryl Streep and Kevin Kline, just to name a few) are: Nicole Holzer, Steve Braden, May Schwartz, Elizabeth Engleman, Karl Kaluza, and Meg Collins. Stage manager is Leah Hale.
APPENDIX H
PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS

CARROLL DEPARTMENT OF FINE ARTS

ISN'T IT ROMANTIC - February 17-21

10-second format

THE DEPARTMENT OF FINE ARTS AT CARROLL COLLEGE IS PROUD TO PRESENT THE MODERN COMEDY, ISN'T IT ROMANTIC, BY WENDY WASSERSTEIN. ISN'T IT ROMANTIC WILL BE PRESENTED FEBRUARY 17-21 AT 7:30 P.M. IN THE CARROLL COLLEGE LITTLE THEATRE.

30-second format

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU SET TWO 28-YEAR-OLD SINGLE WOMEN IN NEW YORK IN SEARCH OF FAMILY, LOVE, AND THE PURSUIT OF A CAREER? YOU GET THE MODERN COMEDY, ISN'T IT ROMANTIC, BY WENDY WASSERSTEIN. LAUGH AS YOU TRY TO FOLLOW THEIR EFFORTS TO "HAVE IT ALL." UNDER THE DIRECTION OF MONICA RAUSCH, ISN'T IT ROMANTIC CAN BE SEEN FEBRUARY 17-21 AT 7:30 P.M. IN THE CARROLL COLLEGE LITTLE THEATRE. TICKETS WILL BE AVAILABLE AT THE DOOR. MAKE ISN'T IT ROMANTIC A PLAY TO SEE FOR THE VALENTINE SEASON.
Actor tries directing for senior thesis

Wendy Wasserstein of New York, Every-Carroll production since Rausch is
hired by critics as a female novelist, and
wants, the stage, rather than behind the scenes.

"Isn't It Romantic?" - Pam Anderson and Erin Bishop perform in comedy
at the Carroll College Little Theatre Feb. 17-21, 7:30 p.m. See calendar for more
info, and see related articles on page 2.

Appeared in The Independent

JUST AFTER THE curtain drops Saturday on Grandstreet Theatre's "Noises Off," Carroll
College's Little Theater offers
the town a brand new comedy.

"Isn't It Romantic?" - a "yuppie" work by
New Yorker Wendy Wasserstein, opens
Wednesday and runs through Feb. 21.

The play portrays Janie Blumberg (Pam
Anderson), a 28-year-old Jewish woman
looking for love, and her friend Harriet
Cornwall (Erin Bishop), also 28 and single,
whose life is her career. As both women try
to have it all in the hurly-burly New York
City scene, they turn to each other for
understanding and advice.

Carroll senior Monica Rausch, an actress
in several past Little Theater productions,
is directing the play for her senior thesis.
(See the interview with her elsewhere on
this page.)

The play begins at 7:30 each night; tick-
etts at $3 and $2 are available only at the
door. Call 442-3450.
Comedy romance ‘witty, wise’

By SHERRY JONES
IR Staff Writer

From the sugary pink program to the soft piped-in jazz, to the ardent embraces and juicy on-stage smooches, “Isn’t It Romantic?” most definitely is.

In her first full-length directorial effort, Carroll College senior Monica Rausch has given to Helena a delightful Valentine’s Day gift: a witty and wise production that at once tickles the funny bone and tugs the heart.

Set in modern New York, the play is about two modern, single women approaching their 30s and eager to get their professional and personal lives on track. But Janie Blumberg and Harriet Cornwall, though lifetime friends, have very different ideas of what reaching that goal entails.

JANIE IS A LOVABLE freelance writer with a tongue as sharp as her pen and no taste in clothes who longs for the security and companionship of marriage — an attitude passed on by madly-in-love, fawning Jewish parents who live for their daughter’s wedding day.

Career-oriented Harriet, on the other hand, thinks dollar signs — not hearts and flowers — pave the road to happiness. From her mother, a hard-nosed executive, she has learned marriage only interferes with success.

But as the women start to achieve their hearts’ desires, they’re forced to re-examine their priorities. Having a man is not the key to happiness, Janie finds; likewise, Harriet learns moneybags make cold bedfellows. Each puzzles over how to “have it all.”

BECAUSE THE DIALOGUE IS SMART and the acting mischievous, the predictability of the plot is easy to ignore.

Flaws in the set design, however, are not. Especially annoying is the placement in one scene of a portable bar at the very front of the stage; its height blocks the action from some seats in the theater, and its imposing presence is, in the least, distracting.

NOTHING WRONG WITH THE ACTING, though. John Amoroso gives a relaxed, very funny performance as the unctuous philanderer wooing Harriet. Also notable is Barb Allen’s portrayal of an eccentric Jewish mother who gets her kicks from dance classes and life.

Pam Andersen as Janie is sympathetic and likable; Erin Bishop is the perfect cool, well-to-do, well-manicured junior executive. Todd Jasmin’s “nice guy” boyfriend is funny and appealing, as is Pat McKay’s well-meaning Jewish father.

As Lillian, Harriet’s mother, Kate Sternhagen is at once beautiful and cold, a very effective mix. Scott Cifrese is endearing as Vladimir, the Russian taxi driver whom Janie’s parents coax up to meet their woefully single daughter.

APPENDIX J
CRITIQUE

Appeared in The INdependent Record, February 19, 1988

ISN’T IT ROMANTIC. From the dawning of the era of the working woman, fundamental questions remain unresolved: Is any man better than no man at all? Where does work fit in? Is there life after aerobics?

“Isn’t It Romantic?” takes a comic look at that curious species, the yuppie single New Yorker, through this weekend in the Carroll College Little Theater.

Directed by Carroll senior Monica Rausch, the production features Pam Andersen, Barbara Allen, Erin Bishop, Todd Jasmin, Pat McKay, Scott Cifrese, Kate Sternhagen and John Amoroso. It was written by New York playwright Wendy Wasserstein.

The show starts at 7:30 p.m., through Sunday. Tickets are $3 and $2 and are sold at the door only, on a first-come, first-served basis. Call 442-3450.
"Isn't It Romantic?" plays to overflow audiences

The play "Isn't It Romantic?" ran February 17-21 on the Little Theatre stage. Directed by senior Monica Rausch, it proved to be the most popular drama production of the school year, as it entertained overflowing audiences night after night. Its success can be attributed to the actors and actresses who gave credible performances throughout. As "Yuppy" comedies go, however, the script was mischievously funny, but morally lacking.

"Isn't It Romantic" focused on the lives of two single women in New York. Janie Blumberg (Pam Anderson) and Harriet Cornwall (Erin Bishop) keep each other company as they ponder how to "have it all." They share the dilemma of career vs. marriage, and the absence of good, available men in the city leaves them all the more unfilled. Harriet's loneliness leads her into an illicit affair with a cruel business executive named Paul Stewart (John Amoroso). There is no genuine love in their relationship, but the characters fulfill each other's needs, selfish though they are. At the end of the play, after Harriet has told Janie that it is alright for a woman to be alone, Harriet makes plans to marry a man she has known for two weeks.

There is a hint of ethical obligation though, in the character of Janie. She breaks off her involvement with a Jewish doctor (Todd Jasmin) who offers her love and security. Miss Blumberg refuses to turn someone else into the answer for her loneliness.

There is plenty of comic relief throughout the play provided by Janie's loving but sometimes overbearing parents (Pat McKay and Barb Allen); as well as a Russian taxi driver (Scott Cifrese). Harriet's mother (Kate Sternhagen) is a hard-hearted woman whose preoccupation with her career reflects in her daughter's unhappiness.

"Isn't It Romantic?" offered a look at the problems many women face in this age of modernity. Does the search for equality mean we throw out the values of the traditional American family? Harriet has an M.B.A. from Harvard, but in her quest for self-fulfillment, she remains spiritually incomplete. "Isn't It Romantic?" shows that the fallacy of "having it all" is nothing but an empty promise.
APPENDIX I
REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

7:30 p.m.
January 17, 1988: Readthrough 7:30 p.m.
18, 1988: Lillian and Harriet: Act I, Scene 3, Act II, Scene 3
20, 1988: Tasha, Simon, Janie, Marty: Act I, Scene 2, Act I, Scene 4
24, 1988: Week Review
25, 1988: Janie, Marty, Tasha, Lillian: Act II, Scene 4, Act II, Scene 1
26, 1988: Tasha, Simon, Janie, Harriet, Vladimir: Act I, Scene 6, Act II, Scene 6
28, 1988: Week Review

February 1, 1988: Lines for Act I
2, 1988: Lines for Act II
3, 1988: Act I
4, 1988: Act II
7, 1988: Entire play with movers, dress
8, 1988: Entire play with movers, dress
9, 1988: Entire play with movers, dress
10, 1988: Entire play with movers, dress
11, 1988: Entire play with movers, dress

6:30 p.m.
14, 1988: Technical rehearsal and dress
15, 1988: Technical rehearsal and dress
16, 1988: Technical rehearsal and dress

February 17, 1988: Opening Night
HARRIET'S APARTMENT
APPENDIX N - STATISTICS

BOX OFFICE REPORT ON THE RUN OF THE SHOW
CARROLL COLLEGE LITTLE THEATRE

Isn't It Romantic
February 17 - 21, 1988
Monica Rausch, Director
7:30 p.m. Performance Time
100 Capacity

BREAKDOWN OF ADMISSIONS

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TOTAL ADMISSIONS 53 101 134 120 127 535

CASH $35 $92 $123 $171 $113 $534
THE LITTLE TIMES

ISN'T IT ROMANTIC? OPENS FEBRUARY 17

A look at the lifestyles of two women in modern day New York opens in the Carroll College Little Theatre at 7:30 p.m. February 17. Isn't It Romantic? by Wendy Wasserstein runs five nights through February 21. Under the direction of Monica Rausch, a senior in Communications and Theatre, is directing the play as an honors thesis project.

The cast is headed by Pam Anderson as Janie Blumberg. Her best friend, Harriet Cornwall is played by Erin Bishop. John Amoroso plays Harriet's Yuppie-executive boyfriend Paul Stuart and Todd Jasmin portrays Janie's boyfriend, surgeon Marty Sterling. Pat McKay and Barbara Allen, play Janie's parents Tasha and Simon Blumberg. Kate Steinberg is Harriet's mother, Lillian Cornwall and Scott Cifrese plays the Russian cabdriver Vladimir. Many of the play's thirteen scenes are separated by telephone messages left on Janie's answering machine. The voices are provided by May Schwartz, Meg Collins, Elizabeth Engelman, Spencer McDonald, Steve Braden, Karl Kula and a special surprise guest-telephone messenger. The "voices" also appear onstage as movers, waiters and joggers.

The production crew is led by Jim Bartruff who serves the production as Technical Director. Dorothy Harper is Costume Supervisor. The Stage Manager is Leah Hale. Sound is by Brett Limbo-Terhaar, Diane Birmingham is propmaster, Meg Collins runs lights. House managers and box office personnel are provided by the Little Theatre Club.

Tickets for Isn't It Romantic? will be sold at the door each night of production. There is no reserved seating, all seats are first-come, first-served. The Little Theatre Club will be selling ice cream at intermission. The publicity campaign for Isn't It Romantic? was developed and carried out by Nancy Robbins of the school's publicity office. We gratefully acknowledge her assistance in this production.

Little Theatre Club to present CHEKHOV STORIES March 3-4

Under the direction of John Rausch, a graduate of the Theatre program at Carroll, the Little Theatre Club will present a program of one-act plays based upon the writings of Anton Chekhov. Adapted for the stage by Wendy Wasserstein, David Mamet and Neil Simon, the program will be presented under the title "Orchards." Originally produced in New York, these sketches are a unique and exciting blend of Chekhov's unique Russian wit and modern American humor. The plays will be presented free of charge to the Carroll community on Wednesday March 3 at 7:30 p.m. in the Little Theatre. They will be repeated on March 4 for the meeting of the Montana State Theatre Association. Contributions to the Little Theatre Club will be accepted at the Wednesday performance.

AUDITIONS. UPCOMING FOR SPRING MUSICAL

The final production of the current season in the Little Theatre will be a musical revue entitled Ahh...Spring! A Musical Tribute to America's Game--Baseball. Based on material from many sources, the revue was compiled for the stage by Jim Bartruff who will serve as the show's director.

Auditions will be held in the Little Theatre on Wednesday, February 24 beginning at 7:30 p.m. There are parts available for 10 persons: men and women, young and old, student and faculty...everyone is invited to audition. Persons who tryout for the show must prepare a one-minute musical number.

Other events of interest in the upcoming year--

February 17-21 Isn't It Romantic? a modern comedy, directed by Monica Rausch
March 3-5 Montana State Theatre Association Festival at Carroll College
April 13-17 Ah, Spring, a musical revue about baseball, directed by Jim Bartruff
April 25 Little Theatre Awards Banquet
August London Theatre Tour (dates to be announced)

For information on these and other events, call 442-3450, extension 308.
Isn't it Romantic

by Wendy Wasserstein
CARROLL COLLEGE LITTLE THEATRE
presents
Wendy Wasserstein's ISN'T IT ROMANTIC?

JANIE BLUMBERG  Pam Andersen
HARRIET CORNWALL  Erin Bishop
MARTY STIRLING  Todd Jasmin
TASHA BLUMBERG  Barb Allen
SIMON BLUMBERG  Pat McKay
LILLIAN CORNWALL  Kate Sternhagen
PAUL STUART  John Amoroso
VLADIMIR  Scott Cifrese

TELEPHONE MESSAGES
Schlomo..................Meg Collins
Hart Farrell..................Steve Braden
Julie Stern..................Elizabeth Engleman
Tajlei Kaplan Singleberry.....May Schwartz
Operator..................Meg Collins
Cynthia Peterson.............Nicole Holzer
Milty Stirling...............Karl Kaluza
Announcer..................Spencer MacDonald

ISN'T IT ROMANTIC? was commissioned in 1979 by The Phoenix Theatre in New York. It was presented originally in 1981 and again in 1983. The play takes place in 1983 in New York, New York. The action is set in various locations in Manhattan. The play is presented here by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc., 440 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016.
The production is under the direction of MONICA RAUSCH as an honor's thesis project for a degree in Fine Arts: Theatre.
Production Staff

Director, Designer
Technical Director
Set Painter
Stage Manager
Set Crew

Lights
Sound
Props

Costumes

Publicity and Promotion
Photography
House Manager
Box Office

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Hudson's Furniture
Carroll College Maintenance
Lindy Bartruff
KBLU AM-FM
KCAP-KZMT
Mary Kunnary
Les Clark
Pioneer Telephone Service

Monica Rausch
Jim Bartruff
Lisa Rausch
Leah Hale
Todd Jasmin
Monica Rausch

Meg Collins
Brett Linbo-Terhaar
Diane Birmingham

Dorothy Harper
Monica Rausch
The Cast

Nancy Robbins
Harry Obert
Diane Birmingham
Elizabeth Engleman

Leah Hale
Grandstreet Theatre
KTVH TV-12
KMTX AM-FM
Independent Record
Mariani Birmingham
Dorothy Harper
Slim Williams
CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

FEBRUARY

12-17  ISN'T IT ROMANTIC, a new comedy
Directed by Monica Rausch in the Carroll College Little Theatre

24  7:30 p.m. OPEN TRYOUTS for Carroll's spring musical
"AHHH...SPRING" A MUSICAL TRIBUTE TO BASEBALL
Compiled and directed by Jim Bartruff
Everyone welcome to tryout...prepare a one-minute song.
Roles for ten persons. Accompanist provided.

MARCH

3-5 MSTA THEATRE CONFERENCE hosted by Carroll College,
Grandstreet Theatre and Helena Series for the Performing Arts
(See partial schedule below)

5 Helena Series presents KABUKI MACBETH
A production of the Acting Company at Helena Middle School

6 MSTA, Carroll College and Helena Film Society presents
A Renaissance Banquet with stuffed pig, King and Queen,
Madrigal Singers, Jugglers, Musicians and Fools.
Tickets at $12 per person can be reserved at Second Story Cinema.

6 Helena Series presents MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING
A production of the Acting Company at Helena Middle School

MSTA EVENTS:  THURSDAY--Opening and keynote address by Pat
Patton of Oregon Shakespearean Festival. Welcome from Mayor
Russ Ritter and Sister Mary Sarah Fasenmyer. Little Theatre
Production of ORCHARDS under the direction of John Rausch.
FRIDAY--Meetings and workshops, Speech by Governor Ted
Schwinden, Vigilante Players production of VOICES.
SATURDAY--Summer theatre auditions, workshops and sneak
preview of Grandstreet's THREE MUSKETEERS. For additional
information call Jim Bartruff at 442-3450, extension 308.

