Footlight Frenzy
A COMEDY IN TWO ACTS
by Ron House, Diz White, Alan Shearman and Bud Slocomb

BASINGED ON "FLEETING MOMENT"

by Ron House, Diz White, Alan Shearman, Mark Blankfield, Brandis Kemp, and Mitchell Kreindel
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FOOTLIGHT FRENZY was first performed by the LOW MOAN SPECTACULAR in San Francisco at the Marine's Memorial Theatre on 20th Oct. 1980 under the direction of Douglas Johnson and with the following cast:

(In Order of Appearance)

LAURA BECKER .................. Diz White
ALEX MALONE .................. Ron Vernon
DEBBIE TURNER .................. Anna Mathias
TONY LANDON .................. Ron House
BENNY DIBLE .................. Rodger Bumpass
PAUL BECKER .................. Alan Shearman

The action of the play takes place in the auditorium of the Rye School for Unusual Children on a recent Friday evening during a benefit performance of “Tarnished Silver”, Tony Landon’s tear-jerking tragedy in four acts.

TARNISHED SILVER

A Neo-Thirties Tragedy

ACT ONE—Nicky’s Manhattan Penthouse, Winter 1932
ACT TWO—The Penthouse, 18 months later
ACT THREE—The Penthouse, the following day
ACT FOUR—The Hoty Totsy Club, that evening.
CAST LIST

PAUL BECKER—Is a mild mannered school principal in his late thirties and is a devoted but hen-pecked husband. In TARNISHED SILVER, the play within the play, he is NICKY VANDERMORGAN, the hopeful young jazz composer and heir to the family millions.

LAURA BECKER—Paul's wife and mother of two problem children, is the hyperactive president of the P.T.A. In TARNISHED SILVER she plays ADDIE STARR, a downtown nightclub singer who's soon to be heading uptown.

TONY LAMOND—the manicual has-been Broadway director, in his early forties, sees this production of his play TARNISHED SILVER as his last desperate bid to win back fame and fortune. He has cast himself in TARNISHED SILVER as UNCLE JULIAN (and later UNCLE JULIAN'S GHOST), Nicky's cantankerous uncle who controls the Vandermorgan millions.

ALEX MALONE—the school's slightly overweight accountant is a confirmed ladies man, who prefers partying to performing. In TARNISHED SILVER he plays CHAS COUNSENY, a polo playing cad and school chum to Nicky, who is also a confirmed ladies man who prefers partying to polo.

DEBBIE TURNER—is the Rye School's new drama teacher, and aspiring daydreaming Hollywood Starlet. In her early twenties, she is cast in TARNISHED
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ACT ONE

The stage is black. Thunder Rolls. Lightning flashes. A pool of light comes up to reveal LUCY BECKER as "ADDIE STARR," in front of curtain. She wears a dressing gown over a slip. "Addie" is an attractive woman with a husky voice and a nasal twang. She is frightened. She looks about apprehensively as lightning flashes and the thunder rolls again.

CHAS. COURTNEY (played by ALEX MALONE) lurches out from the shadows. He is a good-looking, aggressive charmer, in his late twenties.

CHAS. (ALEX). (Rushing to ADDIE.) Addie! Alone at last!

ADDIE (LAURA). Keep away from me. You're drunk.

CHAS. (ALEX). (Lurking for her and missing her.) You leave me no choice.

ADDIE (LAURA). (Sidestepping his advances again.) You and I can never be.

CHAS. (ALEX). We can! We must! We're like two peas in a pod—you and I.

ADDIE (LAURA). (Gently patting his cheek.) Poor, poor boy. (Turning away.) I'm deeply in love with my husband now.

CHAS. (ALEX). Stop playing games. You know you love it.

(CHAS grabs ADDIE roughly in a desperate embrace.)
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They struggle. LIGHTNING FLASHES. THUNDER ROLLS, covering her screams. GWENDOLYN (played by DEBBIE TURNER) steps out of the shadowy screen. She is 32, in trenchcoat.)

GWEN (DEBBIE). Chas, darling. I'm sorry I'm late, I . . . . (Pulling a revolver from her pocket.) So! She's the one you really want! (Pointing gun at CHAS.) Well, take a good look at what you turned me into! (She drops trenchcoat to reveal tee-shirt and jogging shorts.)

CHAS (ALEX). (Backing up slowly.) Don't be an idiot!

GWEN (DEBBIE). (Closing in on him.) Beg! The way I had to when suddenly I wasn't fun anymore.

CHAS (ALEX). You haven't the guts . . . .

GWEN (DEBBIE). (Deadly cold.) Haven't I? (GWENDOLYN fires several deafening shots. CHAS, dramatically reacts to each shot and finally falls to the floor.) Oh my God! (GWENDOLYN quickly exits. ADDIE is frozen with horror.)

ADDIE (LAURA). (Very dramatically.) Heaven help us! (Looks to the wings, then sits down.) Jarvis! Thank heavens you've come. There's been a terrible accident. (Pause.) A terrible accident!

(Stage lights come up. ADDIE and the "dead" CHAS. look about bewildered. TONY LANGDON enters from the wings. TONY is intense, flamboyant—a dramatic man of forty who kisses, begs, cajoles, cries or shouts depending on his mood of the moment. Right now, he's fuming.)

TONY. (As he enters.) Where is Jarvis?

ADDIE. Oh, no! Not again!

TONY. (Looking about, screaming.) Benny!

(BENNY DIBBLE, the stage manager, enters. He is 23, the school's maintenance man. He wears checked shirt, jeans, sneakers and a tool belt loaded with every imaginable accessory.)

BENNY. I'm here Mr. Langdon.

TONY. Where the hell is Jarvis?

BENNY. Ah . . . et . . . he . . . ah . . .

TONY. Speak up boy, Diction is the first rule of the the-a-tuh!

BENNY. Jarvis just quit . . .

ALL. What?

LAURA. On opening night?

BENNY. He couldn't get a baby-sitter, so his wife made him stay home.

DEBBIE. We won't have a butler?

ALEX. We can't do the show.

BENNY. What are we going to do?

TONY. (Panicking.) Don't panic! We don't need a butler. . . . all a butler does is announce people. He can easily be replaced with a telephone.

DEBBIE. But Tony, how can I have an affair with Jarvis if he's a telephone?

TONY. Improvise, Debbie . . .

DEBBIE. That's brilliant, Tony!

TONY. Now everybody go get ready. Laura, my darling. (All exit except LAURA.)

LAURA. Tony, sweet Tony. I love working with you.

TONY. Laura my darling. I only have one thing to say.

LAURA. Yes, Tony . . . yes?

TONY. You have to get better.

LAURA. (Hysterically.) Better? . . . This is opening
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night... How can I get any better?
Tony. Just pull yourself together! If you fail I fail.
Laura. Tony, this is a school benefit, not a Broadway opening.
Tony. But your timing is off.
Laura. (Suddenly shaking from head to foot.) It
must be the valium. I took two. Do I need more.
Tony. Why?
Laura. Well Tony I haven't slept all night.
Tony. What?
Laura. I've had to make a very big decision. I'm going
to ask Paul if we can have another baby.
Tony. But you already have two children.
Laura. Well frankly...they're not turning out too well, it's causing a lot of tension in our marriage. Paul's
never home.
Tony. Well, he is the school principal. He has to
work late; it's his job. When do you plan to ask him?
Laura. (Confiding.) Tonight during the show.
Tony. But Laura it's opening night.
Laura. But I can't wait. My analyst and I have decided
that I should have another baby. It's driving me
mad.
Tony. But you've got to forget about yourself and
focus on your acting, it's terrible.
Laura. (Down.) Terrible. My acting. Oh my God.
Tony. I didn't mean terrible. I meant terribly good.
Laura. Tony, my nerves can't take this. I'm going
home. Goodbye. (She exits.)
Tony. Good in a terrible way. Laura come back! (He
exits.)

(Debbie and Benny enter from opposite sides.)

Debbie. (Searching.) Did I leave my gun out here?

Benny. Gee, I don't know... (Hesitantly.) ah...
Debbie... can I call you Debbie?
Debbie. Do I look OK? What did you think of the
run-through? Paul's not here.
Benny. (Big eyes.) You look spectacular.
Debbie. I can't talk to you now. Really? I didn't know
school janitors had time to think about girls.
Benny. Maintenance engineers. No, I think about
girls all the time. Even when I'm flushing the boiler.
Gosh, I hope you're a big success tonight.
Debbie. Me too--then maybe I can quit teaching and
become a great actress like Bette Davis or Suzanne
Somers. (She pulls out compact mirror from her pocket
and looks into it admiringly. Suddenly she looks
alarmed.) Oh no, I've lost my left eyelash. I look
hideous. (She exits.) (Tony and Laura rush in through
the house.)

Laura. (Entering dramatically.) Heaven help us!
Tony. Brilliant Laura... I knew I could fix it. (To
Benny.) Benny, is everything ready?
Benny. Yes except--
Laura. Heaven help us!
Tony. (Tony rushes to Laura and grabs both
hands.) Marvelous...you are beautiful.
Benny. Except...er...the only thing is Mr.
Langdon...Mr. Becker isn't here yet.
Tony. (Suddenly turning on Laura.) (Exit Benny.)
Laura, where is your husband? Go find him or we'll
have to cancel.
Laura. Oh my God. (Laura exits as Alex enters.)
Alex. Hey Tony, who is the hot number ushering the
lobby?
Tony. (With sudden horror.) God, if we have to
cancel...that means I won't get paid... (Slyly.) Alex,
you're the treasurer, could I get paid now?
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ALEX. No.
TONY. No? Why not?
ALEX. This is a benefit to save the school. We won't get any money until the performance is over.
TONY. Paul, where is Paul Becker?
ALEX. Don't worry, Tony. He'll be here.
TONY. Alex, you are all amateurs. I am a professional. I depend on this.
ALEX. By the way, Tony, your little cameo role of Uncle Julian has grown into the lead... look, you're on every page...
TONY. God knows I did not want it that way... but the play demanded it.
ALEX. But Tony, you wrote the play!
TONY. Of course, and that is why I know precisely what it needs!
ALEX. Oh. (LAURA enters.)
LAURA. Tony, I can't find Paul anywhere.
TONY. Oh my God. (DEBBIE enters.)
DEBBIE. OK OK OK everybody. Listen, this is serious. Has anyone seen my left eyelash?
ALEX. Oh please.
TONY. Kids, kids. Let's not all get excited. There's plenty of time. Benny, how much time before curtain?
BENNY. (Entering.) Ten minutes everyone. (He exits.)

(Everyone stops for a moment in horrified silence.)

LAURA. Ten minutes—I'm not even in costume.
TONY. Good God!
LAURA. Oh no, we'll never be ready. Hurry!

(The black curtain backdrop opens to reveal the set of "TARNISHED SILVER," the play about to be performed, from a backstage point of view... A stage in the auditorium of the Rye School for Unusual Children. All props face upstage toward a curtained proscenium arch further upstage.)

(We also see the wings on both sides of the proscenium arch—stage r. is the stage manager's control area containing a podium, a control board with lots of dangerous wires, switches, mechanical devices, a small tape recorder, and a winch to raise the curtain. Stage l. includes a pin rail with a few heavy ropes disappearing upward. A metal catwalk can be seen above the top of the proscenium arch. It is hidden from the auditorium side of the stage.)

(The "onstage" set is currently a shambles. BENNY is on a stepladder painting a flat. Smeared drop cloths are underfoot. Rugs, newspapers, tools are everywhere. Furniture for the set—a shelf of a piano, a piano stool, an armless sofa, a liquor table, a chair or two—are scattered about the backstage and stage area.)

(The following section is performed while the set is being cleaned up and set up properly. Actors are constantly in a state of panic as they quickly exit, enter, etc.)

TONY. We've got to get this place cleaned up!
BENNY. Just about finished, Mr. Langdon.
TONY. It's a shambles. You told me you could build the set in a week.
BENNY. Guess I was wrong. Need some help?
TONY. (To himself.) Where is Paul Becker?... Paul Becker!
ALEX. (Peeking through curtain.) It's standing room only out there. I didn't tell anybody I was in this.
FOOTLIGHT FRENZY

LAURA. (To ALEX.) Don't just stand there, do something.

ALEX. (Knocking over a paint can.) Oops. I spilled some paint—where is the mop?

PHONE LIGHT BLINKS.

LAURA. Benny, have you seen Paul?

TONY. Benny, get the phone.

DEBBIE. Benny! Help me with this ladder!

ALEX. Benny! Get me a mop!

(BENNY runs around in circles, trying to help everybody. He grabs the phone and then goes to help DEBBIE with the ladder.)

BENNY. (Calling off.) Mrs. Becker, telephone! (To DEBBIE.) Will you go to Broadway when you quit teaching, Debbie?

DEBBIE. Of course not, dummy. Hollywood. Life in the fast lane where actors are actors and men are men.

BENNY. I'm a man.

DEBBIE. Don't be silly.

LAURA. (Into phone.) Paul, where the hell are you? Home? Do you know what time it is? Leave the dishes to Conchita and get down here. No, I can't talk to Conchita right now. No! Hello Conchita, I can't talk to you right now. The children did what? No! Conchita. No Conchita. (In bad Spanish accent.) Stay in el Casa with los Ninos—No telefona la Policia.

TONY. Laura get off the phone.

LAURA. Do you know what the children did? When Conchita read them Hansel and Gretel, they tried to cram her into the microwave. My God, what else could happen?

ALEX. Watch out, wet paint!

LAURA. Where? (Trips and bangs her head.)

ALEX. Jesus Christ Benny, she's out cold. (Slaps her face.)

BENNY. Six minutes, Mrs. Becker! (TONY enters.)

TONY. How much time, Benny?

BENNY. Six minutes and Mrs. Becker's out cold.

TONY. What?

ALEX. It's all right. Tony, I'll bring her around. Look, here's some of her pills.

LAURA. (Comes in and holds her head.) Oh oh . . .

ALEX. What's this? . . . Thorazine? I thought you said you were on Valium? Isn't this what they give mental patients?

LAURA. (Taking pills away from ALEX.) Nonsense, this is what my analyst prescribes for my nerves.

ALEX. All you need is a little more sex to calm you down.

TONY. Laura, Alex, please!

BENNY. Five minutes everyone!

TONY. Listen! They're getting restless.

(AUDIENCE BABBLE.)

(DEBBIE enters in trenchcoat.)

DEBBIE. Tony I can't find my eyelash. I'm going to the store.

TONY. Fine! . . . No! They'll never notice it's missing. Darling, you look wonderful. Benny, when will the stage be ready? (DEBBIE exits.)

BENNY. Four minutes.

ALEX. (Maneuvering stairs into position and breaking the handrail.) Oh my God, now the stairs are broken. Somebody find me a hammer.

TONY. Somebody find me Paul Becker!!!
FOOTLIGHT FRENZY

(Paul Becker enters from stage r. In his thirties he is pleasant, conservative and very indecisive. He wears a graduation mortar board and gown over a business suit and horn rimmed glasses. He carries a briefcase bulging with papers.)

Paul. Tony! I'm here.
Tony. Paul! There you are. Everyone's been looking for you.
Paul. I'm sorry... Do you have a script?
Tony. What for?
Paul. I have to learn my lines.
Tony. You don't know your lines?
Paul. It's all right, I'll know them all by opening night.
Tony. (Incensed.) Tonight is opening night!!!
Paul. It is? I thought it was dress rehearsal.
Tony. Oh, my god! (Tony exits.)
Paul. Tony, I still don't have a script!
Debbie. (Enters.) Hey Paul, there you are.
Paul. (Snappily.) I'm sorry. I was late.
Debbie. Wow! What is that—anger? You're really letting it out. (She hugs him.)
Paul. (Shyly.) I guess I am.
Debbie. I really liked last night's acting class.
Paul. Well—you certainly taught me a lot. I just hope I remember everything, that's all.
Debbie. Of course you will. It was such a wonderful moment when we broke down our inhibitions and our characters... came together. (Laura enters.) You brought out feelings I never knew I had...
Laura. How very nice for the both of you.
Debbie. Break a leg, guys. (Debbie exits.)
Paul. What?
Benny. (Crossing.) One minute!

LAURA. (She begins to hyperventilate.) So that's it. That's where you were all those late nights. With her. Paul. No.
Laura. But I'm not going to get excited. My analyst warned me that you only took the lead in this play so you could have an affair.
Paul. What?
Benny. (Crossing.) Places, any second.
Paul. Thank you, Benny.
Laura. He said you would deny it. And to think I planned on asking you something very, very important tonight. Something very, very, very, very, very, (Paul shakes Laura to stop her.)
Paul. Please.
Laura. My God. I'm going to fix that little bitch Debbie. (She begins to babble incoherently.)
Paul. Laura! Are you slipping? Come back. This is Paul. Where are your pills? (Paul finds Laura's pills and drops them on the floor. She babbles while he picks them up and tries to get them down her throat.) Open wide. Think of Aladdin's Cave.
Laura. (Coughing.) What are you trying to do? Choke me to death?!! You idiot!
Paul. Sorry. Sorry. Sorry. (Tony enters with a broom.)
Tony. Laura! Paul! Please! (Benny enters with a sign that says: "Special Benefit for the Rye School for Unusual Children—Save Our School!") Benny, this is opening night. Why isn't the sign up?
Benny. The Becker kids tore it down.
Tony. Well get it up! No—we haven't any time; we're going to have to call places.
Benny. We can't wait any longer. Places!
Paul. (To Tony.) Tony! They've arrived!
Tony. Who?
FOOTLIGHT FRENZ

PAUL. The entire board from the Arts Foundation.
TONY. So what?
PAUL. If they like the play, we'll get the funding we need to keep the school open for another year.
TONY. All right—this is it. We're going to have to call places, Benny.

(PHONE LIGHT BLINKS.)

BENNY. This is it! We're going to have to call places! Places!
TONY. Curtain up!

(LIGHT CHANGE to indicate a performance about to start. The now completed set of "TARNISHED SILVER" includes a door on real stage R. and cutaway sections of scenery to form a "set" of the "play." A sofa is set stage R.: A liquor table downstage C., with bottles, glasses, decanter and a photo frame; and the shell of a piano stage L. angled so the imaginary "audience" behind the upstage curtain will think it authentic. Behind the piano is a bookcase.)

(Downstage L. is a short staircase, painted and carpeted on the three bottom steps only, L. of it, and invisible to the imaginary "audience"—is a step ladder for the actors to use when they have entrances down the stairs.)

(Stage lights hang down over the "stage." Lights from the imaginary "auditorium" play on the upstage side of the "stage" curtain.)

BENNY. (Benny answers the phone. The actors enter and exit very quickly—screaming—and in a state of

frantic panic. Then silence.) Hold it! (Everyone rushes back in.)

TONY. What is it?
BENNY. Some guy at the box office is trying to get free seats.
TONY. We can't hold for that. Curtain up! (TONY and CAST start to exit.)
BENNY. His name is David Merrick. (TONY freezes.)
TONY. Hold it! David Merrick!
PALL. Who's David Merrick?
TONY. The most important producer in New York City.
DEBBIE. Oh, please don't tell me that right before I go on stage, please!
TONY. (Consoling DEBBIE.) David Merrick can transport our little play, "Tarnished Silver," directly to Broadway. (Suddenly aware of his shabby cast.) My God! David Merrick cannot see you looking like this. Alex! You look like boiled knackwurst! This is not the Mikado—go powder. Debbie, your makeup is obscene—where is your eyelash?
DEBBIE. I knew this would happen. (She exits.)
TONY. Go to the store and buy one. Paul, your pants are disgusting.
PAUL. It's alright Tony, this isn't my costume.
TONY. Not your costume? One minute to curtain and you're not dressed. Benny, get his costume on.
BENNY. But I can't wear his costume.
TONY. Laura your first scene is atrocious—we have to rehearse it. One minute everyone—one minute!

(BENNY and PAUL are alone on stage. BENNY helps PAUL change.)
FOOTLIGHT FRENZY

BENNY. Here you are, Mr. Becker. I know this isn't the time or place, but do you know anything about women?
P.AUL. What? Well, a little, I suppose.
BENNY. I figured you would. You're married and everything.
P.AUL. Well, you might say I'm an expert, in a limited way, of course.
BENNY. You see, I think I'm in love with Debbie, but she doesn't seem to notice me.
P.AUL. Girl problems—eh? Why don't you send her a nice big bunch of roses.
BENNY. Roses? I was thinking about sending her some grass or coke.
P.AUL. Soft drinks are no good, Benny. Stick with roses . . . and a note.
BENNY. (Gets pen and paper from piano.) A note! That's what I'll do— but I don't know what to say . . .
(P.AUL takes pen and paper.)
P.AUL. Here, I'll help you. Now let's see . . . something original . . . (He scribbles, resting the paper on BENNY's back.) "I love you . . ."
BENNY. Twenty seconds!
P.AUL. And I can't live without you for another . . ."
BENNY. Fifteen seconds!
BENNY. Gee—thanks, Mr. Becker. I'll give her a mystery.

(PHONE LIGHT BLINKS.) (Tony enters.)

TONY. Places everyone! Hurry! For God's sake—Hurry! Curtain up!

FOOTLIGHT FRENZY

(ALL Cross the stage in panic as before. Many ad lib. BENNY answers the phone.) (Silence.)

BENNY. Hold it!

(Everyone rushes on again.)

TONY. What is it now, Benny?
BENNY. I got some bad news, Mr. Langdon. Well—you know Jarvis quit.
TONY. Yes—we replaced him with a telephone.
BENNY. The guy who played the gangster quit, too.
(Ad lib reaction from ALL.) Mr. Langdon—should I put out another telephone on stage?
TONY. (Incensed.) Benny—I have seen stage managers who try to ruin shows but you won't get away with it . . . (Tony leaps on BENNY and strangles him. He suddenly stops and faints on P.AUL.)
ALEX. Don't worry. Just another one of his fits.
TONY. (Recovering.) What happened? Everything went black.
P.AUL. You were trying to kill Benny.
TONY. I love Benny. Why would I want to kill him?
DEBBIE. Because there's no one to play Johnny Chicago, the gangster.
TONY. That's not true. The understudy will play the role . . .
LAURA. Tony, there is no understudy.
TONY. No understudy? No understudy? Benny! (Advancing on him threateningly.) Congratulations! Tonight you will go on in the role of Johnny Chicago—the gangster.
ALEX. He's no actor.
FOOTLIGHT FRENZY

LAURA. He doesn't even know the lines.
BENNY. Sure I do! I saw every rehearsal. I was here—I can do it. Johnny Chicago—gangster. Watch! (He goes into a poor impression of Capney, Bogie, and Robinson.) All right you guys! This is Johnny Chicago talking—see. You'll never take me alive. (Pretends to be shot.) Bang—they got me, padre. (Cough.) Bang—father, are you a rabbit? (Cough.) Bang—this is one bird that don't sing. (Cough.) Bang... Bang... Bang... (He goes down in another hail of bullets and dies. Pause as everybody looks at each other.)

TONY. I wonder if I've made a mistake.
BENNY. (Jumping up.) No, you haven't, Mr. Langdon. You'll see, I'm going out there a nobody, but I'm coming back a somebody. Places everybody! Onstage!

(All ad lib lines while getting ready.) (Paul exits.)

LAURA. Cast... cast... cast. As organizer of this benefit and head of the PTA, I'd like to thank our director, Tony Langdon for giving us his play and helping to save our school.

(Applause from the actors on stage.)

TONY. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. This is the night we've all been waiting for. It's been a long hard road and it's not over yet. Now remember Jarvis the butler has been replaced by a telephone. Now, don't let any of this throw you, but if anything goes wrong, simply improvise your way around it. Now good luck and are there any questions? (All ad lib questions. Tony loses his temper.) Shut up! David Merrick is out there! I can't answer all those stupid questions. You're on your own. Benny, start the show!

ALEX. "You're on your own"? What a great bit of direction that is.

(All exit ad libbing, except Benny. Paul enters without pants on.)

BENNY. Mr. Becker, just a few things before we get started. The legs on the piano bench are wobbly, so watch out for that.

PAUL. Right.
BENNY. The carpet has not been tacked down.
PAUL. Where?
BENNY. The bottles are glued to the table so just use the decanter. I wouldn't drink the water if I were you. The faucet was broken so I had to get it from the toilet. There's no picture in this frame, so keep it facing that way.

PAUL. I have to use that.
BENNY. Watch out for the entire set. And somewhere on the stage is a hammer.

PAUL. What for?
BENNY. I lost it. Oh, there's a piece of scenery missing. Oh— and you don't have any pants on. Have a good show, Mr. Becker, and I'll go when you're ready.

PAUL. Right you are, Benny. (Benny raises the curtain while Paul struggles off stage still trying to get his pants on.) I'm not ready.

(The "Stage" curtain opens to reveal an "audience" of two rows of manequin dummies. The rest of the "audience" is painted on a backdrop is disappearing perspective. "Exit" signs are at the rear.)
FOOTLIGHT FRENZY

MUSIC: OVERTURE

(Paul hurries up the step ladder to the top of the staircase, removes his glasses, straightens his jacket, in preparation for his big entrance. He checks his opening lines from a page of script in his pocket. The overture concludes and he skips down the stairs. To his surprise he is greeted with a round of applause from the dummy audience. He acknowledges them slightly.)

(He is playing Nicky Vandermorgan and we are in Nicky's Manhattan penthouse. He poses in stiff thirties' style by the piano for a moment, then crosses to the liquor table. He forgets which bottle is glued down and panics. Benny helps from the wings—at his podium—and Paul picks up the de-
canter. He pours a drink—drinks a little and reacts to the awful taste. He then crosses to the piano and sits and mimics playing a few notes operated by Benny with a tape deck at the control panel. He scribbles something on a piece of manuscript paper and "plays" a few more notes, evidently com-
posing.)

MUSIC: PIANO

(Uncle Julian—played by Tony Langdon—enters through the door. A cynical, tough old bird, he's seen it all and done it all. A self-made man who amassed the Vandermorgan fortune through sweat and chicanery. He uses a cane and is dressed in full safari kit, complete with pith helmet. He poses in the doorway and acknowledges the dummy "ap-
plause”. His cheeks bulge.)

Uncle Julian (Tony). Nicky! (Mumbles unintel-
ligibly.)

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Nicky (Paul). Why it's my rich millionaire Uncle Julian on an unexpected visit back from Africa. (Julian spits out two ping pong balls.) (Aside.) What are those?

Uncle Julian (Tony). (Aside.) Jowls but they're not working . . . . (In character.) Nicky, you are my only nephew. I have raised you ever since your parents . . .

Nicky (Paul). (Interrupting.) Yes, I know all that . . .

Uncle Julian (Tony). Damn your impertinence, you 21-year-old jazz composer!!!

Nicky (Paul). It's more exciting than being a stick-in-the-mud with goat in his left leg . . . (Tony hops to the other foot.) . . . right leg. (Tony hops back again.)

Uncle Julian (Tony). But you are sole heir to the family fortune.

Nicky (Paul). (In one breath, but gasping for air before reaching the end.) Oh, come, come, Uncle, you wouldn't give up a big game hunt in deepest darkest Africa, to come here, the upper east side of Manhattan on a wintry afternoon in January just to tell me that . . . .! (Paul takes a big breath.)

Uncle Julian (Tony). Nicholas . . . You have to give up this life as a playboy dilettante and get serious!

Nicky (Paul). I am serious, Uncle. This is 1932! The Second World War is seven years away! And I've just met the most wonderful gal!

Uncle Julian (Tony). Do I hear wedding bells?

Nicky (Paul). Never louder, Uncle.

Uncle Julian (Tony). Oh? Who?

Nicky (Paul). Her name is on everyone's lips . . . It's (He blanks.)

Uncle Julian (Tony). (Prompting Paul.) Addie Starr . . . no doubt.

Nicky (Paul). Addie Starr!! (He blanks again.)

Uncle Julian (Tony). And I suppose she sings in a
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26 downtown night-spot called the Hotsy Totsy Club?
Nicky (Paul). Hotsy Totsy Club . . .
Uncle Julian (Tony). Which is run by the biggest racketeer in Manhattan?
Nicky (Paul). And his name is
Uncle Julian (Tony). Johnny Chicago?
Nicky (Paul). . . . Cago!
Uncle Julian (Tony). Well this comes as quite a shock to me, Nicky. And I won't permit it.
Nicky (Paul). (Reads from script in his pocket.) Yes, No! Well give her a chance. Stay and meet her,
Uncle Julian (Tony). Nicky. (Paul.)
(Simultaneously — Paul still reading.)
Even if I stay, I guar - antee I won't change my mind. But I'll stay for you tonight?
Uncle Julian (Tony). Jarvis! Set another place at the table. (Uncle Julian exits.)
Nicky (Paul). (Still reading.) Uncle Julian exits stage left and Nicky sits on the sofa . . . . (Puts script away.) (Nicky crosses to the liquor table and picks up the photo frame.) Addie Starr! The only star in my blue heaven. (He suddenly realizes the frame is empty and swings it away from the dummy "audience").

(Chas. Courtney — Played by Alex — enters the room.
He is a polo playing playboy of the period. Slick, smooth, slippery. He pauses and pones while the dummies applaud. He is unaware that his shirt tail is sticking through his fly.)

Chas. (Alex). Nicky Vandermorgan!
Nicky (Paul). Chas. Courtney! (They throw their arms out toward each other.)

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27 Nicky and Chas. (Singing.) On Saint Martins, On Saint Martins . . . On Against The Foot!!!
Nicky (Paul). (Breaking off, laughing.) The bad penny himself! It's been years. (Paul motions to Alex that his fly is open.)
Chas. (Alex). And you . . . the golden boy. Still playing by society’s rules?
Nicky (Paul). I broke every rule. I gave up debutantes, all-night parties, hangovers. I'm a struggling 21 year old jazz composer now. You?
Chas. (Alex.). The usual circuit. Monte, Palm Beach, the Derby, back to Monte.
Nicky (Paul). (In awe.) You haven't changed a bit, you scoundrel . . . I've got a surprise for you.
Chas. (Alex). Can't it wait? I'm parched.
Nicky (Paul). How deuced inhospitable. Jarvis — fix Chas. a drink, will you.
Chas. (Alex). (Shaking his head — signalling.)
Nicky (Paul). (Catching on.) On second thought, I'll fix it myself. (He crosses to the liquor table and pours Chas. a drink. He hands it to Chas. who gulps it down. He reacts to the taste.)
Chas. (Alex). Thanks that's just what I needed. Now, what's the big surprise? (Benny as the stage manager rings a bell.)
Nicky (Paul). That must be Gwendolyn. I'll tell you both at the same time.
Chas. (Alex). The kid sister? The little tyke in pigtails?
Nicky (Paul). Same silly brat, only older. You won't recognize her. (Nicky opens the door and stands back.) Gwendolyn! You look absolutely stunning!

(Gwen enters, played by Debbie. She wears a thirties' afternoon dress, the perfect society girl of the
Gwen (Debbie). (Showing off the dress.) You like it? Just a rag I picked up at Valentine's.

Nicky (Paul). Guess who's here?

Gwen (Debbie). (Seeing Chas.) It's not... It is! Chas. Courtesy! (Giggles.)

Nicky (Paul). (To Chas.) I told you she'd grown up.

(To Gwen.) He's more handsome than ever, eh, Gwen-dolyn? But watch out. He eats pretty things like you for breakfast. (Nicky gives Gwen a drink.)

Chas (Alex). Only when they beg me to... Gee, Gwen, you turned out pretty swell.

Nicky (Paul). (Trips over leg.) Don't ever play poker with him. He's a shark.

Gwen (Debbie). Not even strip poker? (She notices a bug in her drink. Picks it out the back of sofa with cig. holder and swats it.) It's all the rage now.

Nicky (Paul). Speaking of rages, do you two know Addie Starr?

Gwen (Debbie). The nightclub singer? Who doesn't? She's the talk of the town.

Chas (Alex). (In a mysterious manner.) I met her once. What about her?

Gwen (Debbie). I'm crazy about the Hotsy Totsy Club where she sings. So downtown and declassé. And that man who runs it...

Nicky (Paul). Johnny Chicago?

Gwen (Debbie). (Shivering with excitement.) A stick of dynamite ready to explode. You don't know if he wants to kiss you or beat you. I'd love to meet him.

Nicky (Paul). You will any minute.

Chas (Alex). You mean, the biggest bootlegger in Manhattan is coming here. Is that the big surprise?

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Gwen (Debbie). A surprise? Nicky—tell us! Please... please...

Nicky (Paul). Just you wait! (The "play" grinds to a halt. An intensely embarrassing silence. The cast's eyes dart to one another pleadingly. At the podium, Benny flips through the script. Suddenly he realizes he is supposed to ring the doorbell. He does and exits. The onstage cast sighs in relief at the sound.) Ah! There's Johnny Chicago now. (Crosses to phone and speaks into it.) (Calling.) Jarvis! Let Johnny Chicago in!

Gwen (Debbie). (To Chas.) Finally... a man with character. All I ever get to meet are male butterflies who live with their mothers.

Chas (Alex). (To Gwen.) I'll introduce you to my... the black sheep set of the four hundred. There's not a mother among them!

(Johnny Chicago—played by Benny—sauters through the doorway. He wears a black pinstriped white suit, black shirt, white tie and a large brimmed black hat with white band. He brims with confidence.)

Johnny (Benny). I don't like no bad talk about mothers. A guy's mother is his passport through the pearly gates. And don't ever forget it sweetie-a-a-a... (Benny turns and faces the "audience" and is at once paralyzed with stage fright. He freezes solid. He swings from the "audience" in horror.) A-a-a-a-a-a-a-a ab-ab-ab-ag-ag--bab-b-die--A-a-a-a-a-a-a-a-a-a

Nicky (Paul). (Pretending to understand.) Not recently, no. (Covering.) I'd like you to meet my débutante sister, Gwen-dolyn, and my best friend from prep school, Chas-dold Courney.
JOHNNY (BENNY). How are you, Chas.? (JOHNNY aggressively hits GWEN's hand which recoils into CHAS.' stomach, knocking the drink from his glass.)

GWEN (DEBBIE). Whenever I go slumming, I always stop at the Hotsy Totsy Club, Mister Chicago. It's such a smashing treat to meet you.

NICKY (PAUL). Well, why don't you all make yourselves at home, Johnny, how about a cigarette? (NICKY offers JOHNNY one, but there is no response so he replaces the case on the table.)

JOHNNY (BENNY). (Too late.) No thanks, don't mind if I do.

NICKY (PAUL). (Picking up a cigar.) Well then, how about a cigar?

JOHNNY (BENNY). No thanks, don't mind if I do...

NICKY (PAUL). (He settles the cigar in his clenched fist. CHAS. and GWEN join them at the liquor table, blocking NICKY's path. ALEX secretly sips from his hip flask.)

NICKY (PAUL). They're imported... or... they're imported. (He steps on the sofa to get past them.)... from Havana, you know.

JOHNNY (BENNY). Let's get right to the point. Nicky—I don't know how much you know about me.

NICKY (PAUL). Oh, I've never heard anything.

JOHNNY (BENNY). (Charging at NICKY.) Haahiiyahahyaa. But there's one thing you should know; the reason I ain't married... is the reason I ain't married.

NICKY (PAUL). (Pinned to the couch.) I see... any reason? (NICKY crosses to the piano and takes refuge behind it.)

GWEN (DEBBIE). (Crossing to JOHNNY at the couch.) Mr. Chicago hasn't found the right girl yet.

JOHNNY (BENNY). (Nervously snarling at her and pro-
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NICKY (PAUL). Darling. I'm longing to hear your new song. Please sing it for us. How about it everyone?

ADDIE (LAURA). No, Nicky, no.

GWEN, CHAS, JOHNNY. Oh, yes, yes, please, please.

ADDIE (LAURA). Okey, dokey, Nicky.

UNCLE JULIAN (TONY). This is an outrage!

GWEN (DEBBIE). Oh, don't be so stuffy, Unc. I think she's thrilling, don't you Mr. Chicago?

JOHNNY (HENRY). You said it, sweetheart!

ADDIE (LAURA). He it, Nicky.

(NICKY mimes playing, ADDIE mimes singing.)

(ADDIE sings "Would You Like To Stick A Pin In My Balloon Daddy"—on the second line of the song balloons inflate all over everyone in the room. Shock from CHAS and the family members; approval from NICKY.)

ADDIE (LAURA). (Singing.)

WIN MY HEART—JUST THROW YOUR DART AT MY BALLOON, BABY.

HOW I TRUST THE WAY YOU THRUST AT MY BALLOON, BABY.

I LIKE YOUR AIM AND I'LL NEVER, EVER SAY STOP.

YOU'LL BEAT THE GAME IF YOU MAKE MY BIG BALLOONS POP.

(Benny bursts one of the balloons.)

WIN MY HEART AND THROW YOUR DART AT MY BALLOON, BABY.

I'M YOUR PRIZE IF YOU'RE THE SHARPEST OF THEM ALL,
FOOTLIGHT FRENZY

MY BALLOONS CAN'T WAIT, SO PLEASE DON'T STALL.
IF YOU POP 'EM QUICK, I'LL BE YOUR DOLL . . .
SO SMASH 'EM SWEETIE.
POP 'EM POOPSY,
I'LL BE YOUR CUPIE DOLL!*(Benny bursts all the balloons he can, narrowly missing
stabbing Laura, who runs from him in a panic.) (The
dummy audience ripples with applause.)

JOHNNY (Benny). I never heard you sing better.
(JOHN'T bursts another balloon. ADDIE screams. AD-
DIE exits.)

NICKY (Paul). Darling, why don't you slip into
something even more comfortable.

GWEN (Debbie). What did you think of that Unc?

UNCLE JULIAN (Tony). Fiddlepops . . .

GWEN (Debbie). Yes she sang beautifully.

NICKY (Paul). And now the big surprise. We are go-
ing to be married on the steps of the Hotsy Totsy club.

EVErYONE. (Gasps.)

(DUMMY AUDIENCE GASPS.)

JOHNNY (Benny). I'll invite the biggest swell this side
of Chicago.

UNCLE JULIAN (Tony). Silence, I've heard enough,
I'm leaving. Nicky, mark my words, you'll rue this day.
(He storms out angrily.)

GWEN (Debbie). Never mind Uncle Julian, Nicky and
I think she's just swell.

NICKY (Paul). She's better than swell, she's O.K.

*Courtesy Triplet Music. Words and Music by Alan Shearmur and Anna Mathias.
FOOTLIGHT FRENZY

ADDEE (LAURA). And Johnny Chicago of all people—what are you doing here?
JOHNNY (BENNY). I came here to wish you luck. (He walks over to her too quickly and breaks her cigarette holder.) And you, Nicky, you've got some swell sister there too. Well, I gotta go... see you around, kid. (He turns and sniffs full length into the door. Dazed he heads away from the door to the opposite side of the stage.) Gotta go...
Gwen (DEBBIE). (Taking his arm, leading him right.) Me too, Mr. Chicago. Would you mind giving me a ride in that magnificent car of yours?

(During the following exchange, cast does a series of repetitive moves back and forth as they speak.)

ADDEE (LAURA). You mean his pride and joy?
JOHNNY (BENNY). It's armored you know.
NICKY (PAUL). (To Gwen.) You'll be safe at any rate.
ADDEE (LAURA). I'll say she will.
Gwen (DEBBIE). I hope not.
CHAS (ALEX). Whoa! I fear for you, Johnny!
JOHNNY (BENNY). Haahrhrhrhrry.
Gwen (DEBBIE). Let's go.
ADDEE (LAURA). 'Bye toot!'
CHAS (ALEX). See you.
NICKY (PAUL). Bye, Johnny. Nice to have met you.
(Nicky crosses to Johnny, with outstretched hand.)
JOHNNY (BENNY). Likewise, Nicky. I'm sure.

(In his nervousness, Johnny pulls a gun from his pocket, and instead of shaking hands with Nicky, shoots him at point blank range in the stomach.)
(The Cast freeze in horror at the mistake. Nicky frantically checks himself for blood and an arrested heart, but finds everything O.K. He is panting with shock and gradually recovers.)

BENNY. (Dropping his character.) Sorry, Mr. Becker.
NICKY (PAUL). (Aside.) It's all right, Benny. (In character.) You sure scared me with those blanks in that gun... Ha, ha.

ALL. (Much relief.) HA HA HA HA HA HA!!!

JOHNNY and GwEN move to the door.

Gwen (DEBBIE). Imagine! Being taken home by a real live gangster.

NICKY (PAUL). Look at her Johnny. She's more precious than porcelain.

(CAR LEAVING.)

NICKY (PAUL). Well I have to go freshen up before Uncle Julian arrives. I'll leave you two to get better acquainted. (Nicky exits. Addie and Chas. stare warily at each other until Nicky is out of earshot.)

Chas (Afx). So Nicky Vandermorgan has no idea that you and I were lovers... eh Addie?

(Addie laughs.)

(Lights down "onstage." From stage R. Debbie and Benny edge their way along front of stage which represents a "backstage crossover" passage. Tony edges his way along "crossover" from stage L.)

TONY. (To Debbie.) David Merrick is loving my tragedy. There are tears in his eyes.

DEBBIE. (Taking it as a personal compliment.) Broadway, here we come. (Tony slips past Debbie and Benny)
and exits to the r. Benny carries a bunch of red roses.

BENNY. I think I was a little too subtle out there . . . or . . . What do you think?

DEBBIE. Benny—next time try to hold on to your character—you won't lose your concentration.

BENNY. Sure thing, Debbie. Oh, look, these came for you . . . (He hands her the roses. He desperately wants her to like them.) I don't know who sent them.

DEBBIE. (Embarrassed that she's really pleased.) Flowers? Who'd want to give me flowers? That's so corny!

BENNY. Gosh, they look pretty to me . . .

DEBBIE. Well, it's just that guys usually send me drugs.

BENNY. Here's a note . . .

DEBBIE. (Reads.) "I love you and I can't live without you for another minute and fifteen seconds." It's not signed.

BENNY. Mystery, huh?

DEBBIE. Oh. Well, they'll brighten up my dressing room. Ouch!

BENNY. What is it?

DEBBIE. A thorn.

BENNY. Here! Let me help.

DEBBIE. Ouch. Careful. My costume—you'll rip my costume, forget it . . . (She exits.)

BENNY. I knew I should have given her quaaludes.

(Lights up briefly "onstage").

CHAS (ALEX). (Onstage) So, Addie, you moved uptown to the Vandermorgan millions, heh Addie?

(DEBBIE enters the dressing room area carrying flowers.)

(FOOTLIGHT FRENZY)

DEBBIE. Paul, you've got to help me.

PAUL. Of course, Debbie. What is it?

DEBBIE. I'm desperate. I just can't get a handle on my love scene with Jarvis. To be believable, I need to experience deep but ugly love with a married man.

PAUL. What, with me?

DEBBIE. Yes, and I need it before the third act!

PAUL. Debbie, you don't want me. Hell, I'm not even that attractive. Well, I am sometimes. But not to a young girl like you. (DEBBIE starts to seduce him.)

DEBBIE. Oh Paul Paul Paul. You're very attractive to me right now.

PAUL. Debbie don't do that. You're playing with fire.

DEBBIE. It's working already. I feel cheap and tawdry.

PAUL. Be careful with my costume.

DEBBIE. (Tearing open Paul's shirt.) I love Velcro. Perfect. This won't take long at all.

PAUL. I have to learn my lines.

DEBBIE. Oh O.K., I'll see you in the soiree scene.

PAUL. I'm not in that scene.

DEBBIE. Neither am I.

(Debbie exits leaving flowers behind. Lights crossfade back to the stage area.)

CHAS (ALEX). Why'd you leave me alone in that empty flat?

ADDE (LAURA). Why'd you treat me like raff raff when I was yours?

CHAS (ALEX). Why didn't you answer my calls?

ADDE (LAURA). (Sitting on the sofa.) I told you two years ago I was through with you.

CHAS (ALEX). (Sitting on the sofa.) Why? Because
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I'm a cad. Ha ha. Do you remember those love letters you wrote me?

ADDIE (LAURA). What? (ADDIE rises from the sofa. It tilts backwards sending CHAS. crashing to the floor and leaving ADDIE straddling the seat cushion. She is in acute pain as she writhe around trying to regain her balance. Together they heave the sofa upright, but CHAS. loses his balance again and crashes backwards over it. They quickly regain composure.) You cad. You said you burned them.

CHAS (ALEX). Well I didn't burn them. I have them safe and sound.

ADDIE (LAURA). You wouldn't use them against me, would you?

CHAS (ALEX). Wouldn't I? And don't forget innocent little Gwen is just ripe for picking.

ADDIE (LAURA). You'd ruin Gwen because Nicky stole my heart and threw away the key?

CHAS (ALEX). Jealous?

ADDIE (LAURA). (Rising from the sofa.) Don't be redic!

CHAS (ALEX). You're sensasysh when you're angry.

ADDIE (LAURA). You bore me terrif.

CHAS (ALEX). You'll be dangling on my string again.

ADDIE (LAURA). You're a dreamer, Chas.

CHAS (ALEX). Oh, Addie, you send fire through my veins. (They pose dangerously close to the footlights.)

ADDIE (LAURA). You beast.

CHAS (ALEX). Aren't we all?

(Chas. shifts his pose and puts his foot through a footlight gel. A bulb explodes with a mighty flash and puff of smoke. Chas. is nowhere near Addie but she still delivers her next line.)

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ADDIE (LAURA). Take your filthy hands off me!

(CHAS. touches ADDIE after the line. UNCLE JULIAN enters wearing a dapper double-breasted suit and homburg.)

UNCLE JULIAN (TONY). (Seeing CHAS. and ADDIE in embrace.) That was for my benefit, I suppose.

(BENNY enters by slowly crawling along in front of the "footlights." He carries a huge spare bulb in his mouth. His rear end sticks up.)

ADDIE (LAURA). (Coughing from smoke.) Uncle Julian!

UNCLE JULIAN (TONY). Yes, it's Uncle Julian, Addie Satt.

CHAS (ALEX). Miss Adenoid Satt... and you may remember me, Nicky's friend Chas?

UNCLE JULIAN (TONY). Unfortunately I do, young man. You're the Polo playing cad. (Chas. laughs.) (To Addie.) Well, Miss Satt, I'll come right to the point.

(Tony jabs Benny's rear end with the cane causing Benny to flatten to the floor and also force his head through the gel frame rack.)... How much?

ADDIE (LAURA). I'm not that kind.

(Benny starts to inch his way backwards towards the "wings")

UNCLE JULIAN (TONY). You're downtown, aren't you?

(Benny bumps into UNCLE JULIAN, forcing him to step into the long gel frame rack.)
FOOTLIGHT FRENZY

ADDIE (LAURA). Yes, but I left my heart uptown and I can't get it back.

(Now BENNY has lost all sense of direction and is flailing the set frame rack about the "stage." It is caught around his neck and UNCLE JULIAN's foot simultaneously. The play continues as if this onstage struggle didn't exist.)

UNCLE JULIAN (TONY). I dug in bedrock to come up with the Vandermorgan millions. I won't let the fortune slip away easily through my hands. (BENNY exits.)

ADDIE (LAURA). Nicky and I know how to dig too and we came up with love.

BENNY. (Crossing.) Sorry, sorry, sorry. (He exits.)

UNCLE JULIAN (TONY). (To ADDIE.) And as for you, young lady, let's see if Nicky has changed his mind about you. (Calling up the stairs.) Nicky, come down here!

CHAS (ALEX). (Quietly to ADDIE as he crosses to the door.) I wait you... I won't forget innocent little Gwen.

ADDIE (LAURA). You won't!

UNCLE JULIAN (TONY). Nicky!

CHAS (ALEX). I will unless you come to your senses!

(CHAS exits through door and sees PAUL, studying a script.)

UNCLE JULIAN (TONY). (Calling up the stairs again.) Nicky!!!

ADDIE (LAURA). Nicky!!!

ALEX. Paul—what are you doing here?

PAUL. Learning my lines.

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ALEX. You're supposed to be onstage.

PAUL. My God. Sorry. Here—hold this.

ADDIE (LAURA). Nicky!

ALEX. No, no. No here. The stairs.

(PAUL races across the crossover area. He jumps on the stairs with such force that the entire staircase (which is on casters) careens across the stage. UNCLE JULIAN moves stairs back, then enters down them.)

NICKY (PAUL). Uncle Julian!

UNCLE JULIAN (TONY). Nicky, I was in the library looking for you. Have you changed your mind about her?

NICKY (PAUL). No!

ADDIE (LAURA). (Crossing to piano and posing.) Oh maybe Uncle Julian's right. you're an uptown hi-hat and I'm not good enough for you.

NICKY (PAUL). (Joining ADDIE at the piano and posing.) Stop that, Addie. Don't talk that twaddle.

UNCLE JULIAN (TONY). (Crossing toward BENNY's podium.) Jarvis, my hat. I am leaving.

(BENNY reaches in and places the wrong hat (a military helmet) on his head.)

NICKY (PAUL). No—not until you admit you're wrong! (Shaking his head to signal the mistake.)


UNCLE JULIAN (TONY). Stop provoking me, young woman.

NICKY (PAUL). You're being so shabby.
FOOTLIGHT FRENZY

(Benny places another wrong hat on Uncle Julian. A sailor hat.)

Addie (Laura). Uncle Julian, Nicky . . .
Uncle Julian (Tony). I am a gentle person. (Uncle Julian throws hat down. Benny puts another wrong hat on him. A ladies feathered hat.)

Nicky (Paul). Admit that you're wrong.
Uncle Julian (Tony). I never lose my temper. (Uncle Julian throws hat off. His wig also comes off.)

Nicky (Paul). But you are running away.
Uncle Julian (Tony). My final answer is no. (Benny puts wig on Uncle Julian upside-down.)

Nicky (Paul). No.
Uncle Julian (Tony). No?
Nicky (Paul). No.
Uncle Julian (Tony). No?
Nicky (Paul). No.

(Benny puts a fencing mask on Uncle Julian, forcing the wig down onto his chin and transforming it into a beard.)

Uncle Julian (Tony). (Muffled.) Nicky, I am cutting you off from the Vandermorgan millions. You are a pauper! (He exits and Benny struggles to get the fencing mask off.)

(Nicky crosses to sofa.)

Nicky (Paul). I'm not rich any more . . .
Alex. Poor Nicky . . .
Tony. (In the wings, to Benny.) You idiot! This is a fencing mask!

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Nicky (Paul). Well, darling -- at least I'm free. Uncle Julian has cut us out of the family fortune.

Addie (Laura). On every girl's dreams falls a curtain.

Benny. (In the wings, hearing this.) Curtain? Oh, no!

(He starts to bring it down. Addie and Nicky drop with it to keep in view of the "audience".)

Addie (Laura). But who needs money?
Nicky (Paul). Love will see us through.
Addie (Laura). I can be a pauper.
Nicky (Paul). As long as I have you, I'll sell the Dusenberg. I'll sell the yacht.
Addie (Laura). The Lagorda and the sables too.
Nicky (Paul). I'll cancel Tiffany's, we'll eat at the Savoy.

(The curtain slowly continues down. They begin to speak quicker to fit the lines in.)

Addie (Laura). No more caviar, we'll eat pate de foie.
Nicky (Paul). No more vacations in Capri, no more cruises in the Mediterranean.

(Faster and faster, they finally dive for the curtain.)

Addie (Laura). The curse of the Vandermorgan millions.
Nicky (Paul). Will never turn our love into . . .
Addie and Nicky. Tarnished Silver!

(End of act music and dummy "applause" as the curtain finally touches the ground.)
FOOTLIGHT FRENZY

Paul. It's going rather well, don't you think?
Laura. Paul, your entrance. You were late again.
Paul. I'm sorry, I was busy learning lines.
Laura. The only thing you're busy with is that little tart Debbie.
Paul. That's not true.
Alex. (Into phone.) Hi, it's Alex, Alex Malone. Can you meet me after the show tonight for a drink?
(Paul crosses into the dressing room. Lights crossfade from the "stage" to the dressing area.)

Paul. Laura!
Laura. (Greeting Paul warmly.) Paul, how can you ever forgive me? (Admiring flowers.) They're beautiful. I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry.
Paul. You can stop saying sorry—they're nothing really.
Alex. (Into phone.) Alex Malone . . .
Laura. And this cute little note: "I love you and I can't live without you for another minute and fifteen seconds." And its not even signed. Did you think I wouldn't recognize your handwriting after twelve years?
Paul. Guess I never was much of a poet . . .
Laura. Paul, I love you.
Paul. And I love you too.
Laura. And I don't deserve you.
Paul. Oh yes you do.
Laura. I've something very important to ask you.
Paul. No, no, first let me kiss you. (They kiss.)
(Debbie enters.)
Debbie. (Picking up flowers.) Oh, I just came to get my flowers. (Laura freezes, horror-struck. Quaking with anger.)

LAURA. So! You're sending the little bitch flowers!
PAUL. I did not send her anything.
LAURA. Then who the hell wrote this!!! (She flies the note at him.)
Paul. Well I didn't.
Laura. Oh, so it's a forgery, is it?
Paul. Well, I did . . . but not to her.
Laura. Then who?
Paul. Her. But not from me.
Laura. (Softly.) Get out . . .
Paul. Let me explain.
Laura. (Louder.) Get out . . .
Paul. I love you.
Laura. (Screaming.) Get out!
(Paul bundles up his clothing and leaves the dressing room.)

Alex. (Into phone.) I know a place where you can get served. Bring your homework with you. Bye. (Bumps into Paul who has just entered, then exits.)
Paul. Benny, if you see my wife, would you tell her to stop upstaging me in the next act?
Benny. Sure thing, Er, Mr. Becker . . . the flowers backfired.
Paul. You don't know how much.
Benny. But what about Debbie and me?
Benny. What do you mean?
Paul. Why don't you go straight up to Debbie and give her the facts. I love you! In a romantic way, of course. And as soon as possible.
Benny. No, Mr. Becker, it'll never work. Her mind
keeps jumping to something else.

**Paul.** Don't take no for an answer, Benny. Keep your eyes on the target. Never lose sight of your goal.

**Benny.** You mean assert myself?

**Paul.** Yes.

**Benny.** You mean sweep her off her feet.

**Paul.** Yes.

**Benny.** Like a man? Like a... like a... (*Deep voice.* "Damn the torpedos and full speed ahead!!")

**Paul.** Wonderful Benny!

**Benny.** Like (*Deep voice.*) Debbie Turner, I love you and I'm not gonna take no for an answer. Ha ha ha.

**Paul.** Bravo! Benny.

**Benny.** Why you sure know a lot about women, Mr. Becker. (*Back in a regular voice.*) It'll never work!

**Paul.** Of course it will. You can't miss. Now get out there and sweep her off her feet.

**Benny.** Ok. (*Deep voice.*) Debbie Turner, I want you. Come here baby!

**Debbie.** (*Entering.*) Someone call me?

**Benny.** (*Tongue-tied in her presence, thin voice again.*) Oh... er... places... everybody. (*Paul makes a macho pose for Benny.*)

**Debbie.** Oh... thanks, Benny. (*She sees Paul.*) You macho machine!!

(*Laura enters in costume.*)

**Benny.** Places, Mrs. Becker.

**Laura.** Thank you, Benny.

**Benny.** (*To Laura as Paul tries to stop him.*) Oh, Mrs. Becker... Mr. Becker asked me to tell you not to upstage him in the next act!

**Laura.** So—we're communicating by messenger, eh,

Benny? Well you can tell Mr. Becker the reason I upstage him, is because he's so short!

**Benny.** (*Goes to Paul.*) Sure. Er... due to a height problem, Mr. Beck...

**Paul.** Short am I!!! Well—some women find short men attractive!

**Laura.** Well, why don't you take your short little body and flaunt it at Debbie!

**Paul.** You're getting hysterical!!!

**Laura.** I'm not getting hysterical! (*She continues to yell and hit Paul.*)

**Paul.** I know hysteria. I've been living with it for twelve years! (*They start to fight.*) Don't you dare hit a man!

**Music:** *ACT MUSIC*

(*Benny raises the "stage" curtain while Paul and Laura continue fighting. Suddenly they realize they are in full view of the dummy "audience." They stop abruptly. Paul wipes off his glasses, clips on his Clark Gable Mustahe and assumes the character of Nicky. Laura snags into Addie.*)

**Addie and Nicky.** Darling!

**Nicky.** (*Paul.*) To think, we've been happily married for 18 wonderful months.

**Addie.** (*Laura.*) And there's never been a cross word between us!

**Nicky.** (*Paul.*) And look! Baby Ann is smiling! She makes me so happy! (*He crosses to the sofa and picks up baby Ann, a cheap plastic doll, wrapped in baby blanket. A baby bottle is sticking out of its mouth.*)

**Nicky.** (*Paul.*) (*Crossing to Addie and kneeling at her feet.*) Oh darling!
FOOTLIGHT FRENZY

ADDIE (LAURA). Darling, drink?
NICKY (PAUL). Yes, Martinis.
ADDIE AND NICKY. Very dry!!

ADDIE (LAURA). (Moving to the liquor table.) Oh, darling. I know you'll sell a song soon. Your songs are sensational, so much better than Gershwin. (Sheails at one of the bottles that BENNY has glued to the table. It doesn't budge. She tries another but it is also glued solid.)

NICKY (PAUL). I'll drink to that!
ADDIE (LAURA). I know you'll sell a song soon. After all—(She pulls up a bottle so violently that the section of wood it was glued to tears up from the table also.)

ADDIE AND NICKY. Cheers! (They clink and drink.)

NICKY (PAUL). It is so very hard to imagine that one day beautiful baby Ann will look just like you. She makes me so happy. Oh darling... (He kneels at her feet again, but she accidentally kneels him in the groin.)

LAURA. Drink?
NICKY (PAUL). (His face twisted with pain.)... Yes... Martinis.
ADDIE AND NICKY. Very dry!
ADDIE (LAURA). Nicky—your songs are sensational. So much better than Gershwin. I know you'll sell a song soon.

NICKY (PAUL). (Collapsing on the sofa.) I'll drink to that.

ADDIE AND NICKY. Cheers! (They clink and drink. Now they each have two glasses.)

NICKY (PAUL). (Suddenly the pain is forgotten as he realizes. Aside.) Laura we just did this! (In character.) What's the matter, darling?

ADDIE (LAURA). I'm worried that you'll be rejected by every publisher in town.

(MUSIC CUE)

NICKY (PAUL). (Still miming playing.) What! Nonsense!!! (MUSIC OUT.) (Stopping angrily and leaping up.) That's what everybody says. I can't turn around in this town without somebody calling me Ira or George. Is this Gershwin?

(MUSIC OUT)

ADDIE (LAURA). Oh, good. But what if they reject you? We'll be flat broke.
NICKY (PAUL). (At last finishing the drinks.) Don't worry. Wait 'till they hear "I'm an Uptown Gent, in a Honky Tonk Mood for Love." (Placing glasses on liquor table.) Mmmm. That was a wonderful martinis.
ADDIE (LAURA). Thank you, darling.
NICKY (PAUL). I'll play you my song. Here hold Baby Ann. Listen to this. I think you'll like it. (MUSIC CUE.) (He mimics playing a piece that is a blatant copy of "Rhapsody in Blue"). Well, what do you think?

ADDIE (LAURA). It sounds a bit like Gershwin!
NICKY (PAUL). (Still miming playing.) What! Nonsense!!! (MUSIC OUT.) (Stopping angrily and leaping up.) That's what everybody says. I can't turn around in this town without somebody calling me Ira or George. Is this Gershwin?

ADDIE (LAURA). (PAUL drinks the two martinis at the same time, one spilling into the other.)

NICKY (PAUL). Don't worry. I have an appointment with Apollo Publishing in a few minutes.

(LAURA has also spilled water all over her dress.)

ADDIE (LAURA). Oh, good. But what if they reject you? We'll be flat broke.
NICKY (PAUL). (At last finishing the drinks.) Don't worry. Wait 'till they hear "I'm an Uptown Gent, in a Honky Tonk Mood for Love." (Placing glasses on liquor table.) Mmmm. That was a wonderful martinis.
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FOOTLIGHT FRENZY

Uncle Julian (Tony). That's why I'm here. She needs a good education.

Addie (Laura). I can't. We're broke!

Uncle Julian (Tony). Then give me the child and I'll pay you $10,000! (Shoves wad of money.)

Addie (Laura). No!!

Uncle Julian (Tony). Then at least let me hold her!

Addie (Laura). No!

Uncle Julian (Tony). Yes.

Addie (Laura). No!

Uncle Julian (Tony). Yes.

(BABY CRY.)

(They tug-o-war baby Ann. Suddenly her head snaps off. It dangles from the body. Addie hides it from the "audience" with the baby blankets and tries to jam the head back on the doll by ramming it on the stairs.)

Addie (Laura). Poor baby Ann. What's to become of her? Why is it always the children who suffer?

(Alex enters into the "wings" and makes a phone call.)

Alex. (In the "wings" on the phone.) Hi Honey it's Alex – Alex Malone. (The actor playing Benny imitates the voice on the phone.)

Uncle Julian and Addie. SSSHHHHHHH!

Alex. (Into phone.) Will you keep your voice down – I'm in a play.

Uncle Julian (Tony). (To Addie.) You won't regret it.
ALEX. (Into phone.) Bitch, bitch, bitch, if only you knew how common you sound.

UNCLE JULIAN (Tony). Tell Nicky it’s for the best!

ALEX. (Into phone.) Don’t you dare hang up on me.

ADDIE (Laura). You’d better take Baby Ann before I change my mind. (They swap money and baby. BENNY rings doorbell.)

ALEX. (Into phone.) No if I hang up you first. (ALEX hangs up. Phone light immediately flashes. BENNY answers it.)

UNCLE JULIAN (Tony). I will not stay for tea, I’m leaving. Goodbye . . . . (He exits.)

BENNY. (On phone.) Tarnished silver, backstage.

ADDIE (Laura). Oh no!

BENNY. (Moving past doorway with phone.) Mr. Langdon . . .

TONY. What?

ADDIE (Laura). If only Nicky were here . . . .

PAUL. (Entering.) Addie. (He nearly strangles himself on the phone cord across the doorway.)

ADDIE (Laura). Nicky . . . .

BENNY. It’s some woman . . .

ADDIE (Laura). Did you sell your song?

BENNY. (Offstage.) She wants to talk to Alex.

NICKY (Paul). They said it sounded like Gershwin.

TONY. (Offstage.) No. You tell her to take that phone and shove it!

BENNY. (Into phone.) Take that phone and shove it!!!

NICKY (Paul). (Looking at BENNY.) Sorry. (To ADDIE.) Take that phone and shove it!!!

ADDIE (Laura). What?

BENNY. No. That’s wrong!!

NICKY (Paul). Ha Ha! No, that’s wrong. (To BENNY.) Where the hell are we?
will be utter nonsense! The audience will want their money back! The school will have to close and it's all your fault!!! (Laura starts to bubble incoherently.)

Paul. Sorry. Laura—Laura. Are you slipping?

Laura. Yes.

Paul. Come back! Where are your pills?

Laura. (Pointing.) In... my... dressing... room.

Paul. (Rushing off.) I'll go get them. Stay right where you are. (Paul exits.)

Tony. (Entering in a rage.) To Benny. Where is he?

Where is Paul Becker? (To Laura.) Where is your husband? I'll tear him limb from limb. (To Benny.) Where is he?

Benny. I don't know. I don't know.

Tony. Becker. Paul Becker!

(Tony exits the opposite way from Paul. Paul enters his dressing room and begins frantically searching for Laura's pills. Debbie enters behind him.)

Debbie. Paul— I was watching. You dropped sixty pages. What happened?

(Alex enters stage area and goes to phone.)

Paul. I had a mental blockage. I blanked.

Debbie. Don't you remember what I taught you? Don't be afraid of that mental block. Expose it! Let me show you. It's as easy as this. (She turns to face him and pulls her robe open. His face registers total shock.)

Paul. Debbie, don't do that! (He tries to close her robe but instead pushes her backwards. She falls to the ground and he lands on top of her.)

Laura. (Entering the dressing room.) Paul—where

are my... (She sees Paul on top of Debbie.)

Aaaaaaaaggghhhhhhhhhhhhh!!!!!!!

Paul. (Turning.) Laura! (Turning back.) Debbie!!

(Leaping up.) Laura! (Running out of the dressing room.)

Debbie. Paul! Paul!

Paul. (Running after Laura.) Laura!

Alex. Please, please, please.

Paul. (Catching Laura from falling on "stage"). Laura.

Laura. Oh!!!

Paul. Think of bunny rabbits, think of Christmas!

Tony. (Entering and seeing Paul.) There you are Becker. You have written me out of my own play. You have turned my tragedy into a tragedy.

(Tony tries to hit Paul with a lamp. But hits Benny instead, starting a chain reaction and causing the entire cast to be knocked unconscious. The only action left on stage is the sound of the voice on the telephone.)

(End of Act One)

INTERMISSION
ACT TWO

The same. *Only the liquor table has been removed. The cast is still knocked out on the floor. The sound of the voice on the telephone is heard, followed by a dial tone.*

**ALEX.** (Into phone.) Hello? Oh, not again. (Alex hangs up phone.)

(Benny slowly wakes up.)

**Benny.** Wake up! Wake up everybody!!

**Paul.** (Recovering.) My neck . . .

**Laura.** (Recovering.) My mind . . .

**Tony.** (Jumping up.) My God! My play! (Checking his watch.) The intermission has been going on for forty-five minutes!

**Benny.** How much longer should we hold?

(Sounds of rowdy hand clapping from the "audience".)

**Laura.** (Peeking through the curtains.) They're still there. What shall we do?

**Tony.** Start the show.

**Alex.** We can't. Uncle Julian has been killed. It won't make any sense.

**Debbie.** Paul dropped sixty pages.

**Paul.** I'm sorry about that, everybody.

**Tony.** David Merrick came to see my play and by God, he's going to see it. (All ad lib panic.) Shut up! My genius never sleeps. Benny get your script. (Benny

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**FOOTLIGHT FRENZY**

gets his script from the podium.) The rest of you get ready—I'll rewrite the third act. *(They all exit ad libbing.)*

**Tony.** Benny, take this down: Gwen comes uptown to tell Nicky she's gone low down, but Nicky is down because Addie went up town with Chas, who is low down. Now that all works out if we cut the polo scene. Got it?

**Benny.** Yup.

**Tony.** Good. That covers the rewrites.

**Benny.** But how will everybody learn their lines?

**Tony.** Leave that to me. Now I have to tell Alex the polo scene's been cut. Where is he?

**Benny.** Last I saw him, he was having a drink with the audience.

**Tony.** Benny, get the set ready for curtain.

(Benny exits.) (Alex enters.)

**Alex.** I've got hot news!

**Tony.** Alex, I must tell you . . .

**Alex.** Save it! I managed to get next to the Merrick party. I know why he's here.

**Tony.** *(All ears.)* You did! Why?

**Alex.** He's scouting for a new husband and wife team.

**Tony.** What?! We have exactly what he wants. Paul and Laura Becker in my play. Tarnished Silver.

*(Paul gets into position in front of "curtain.)*

**Alex.** Didn't I tell you it was hot.

**Laura.** *(Entering.)* Paul, I think you should be the first to know; I'm divorcing you.
FOOTLIGHT FRENZY

PAUL. That's fine with me!
ALEX. Tony, you'd better do something! (He exits.)
TONY. Trust me!
LAURA. (Dialing phone.) I'm calling my attorney.
PAUL. He's my attorney too! Tony.
TONY. Yes, Paul?
PAUL. (To Tony.) I'm sorry I have to quit the show.
LAURA. (With phone.) Lew, thank God you're home.
I'm divorcing Paul. I'm tired of him playing around....
TONY. (To Paul Sotto voce.) I agree with you Paul.
PAUL. You do?
TONY. I understand that someone with your unusual
talent can be frustrated by an amateur, like Laura....
PAUL. Unusual talent?
TONY. That's what David told me.
PAUL. Merrick?
TONY. I have it on excellent authority that he wants
you in my production of "Tarnished Silver" on Broadway.
PAUL. There must be some mistake... are you sure?
LAURA. (Into phone.) I want the house, the car, the kids.... I want everything.
PAUL. Oh no you won't get the car. (Grabs phone.)
Listen to me Lew. You're my attorney, too, remember?
(Laura crosses to Tony.)
LAURA. I'm leaving the show Tony. I won't set foot
on stage with him again.
TONY. Laura, I think you're wise. I understand your
frustration with an amateur like Paul.
LAURA. Good. That's why I have to leave this minute.
TONY. Goodbye.
LAURA. Oh....

FOOTLIGHT FRENZY

TONY. What should I tell David?
LAURA. David?
TONY. Merrick.
LAURA. Merrick?
TONY. He wishes you in my production of "Tarnished Silver"
when it goes to Broadway.
LAURA. I must say, Tony, it doesn't come as a surprise.
PAUL. (On phone.) Yes, Lew I suppose fifty-fifty is fair.
LAURA. (Grabs phone from Paul.) Lew, I told you I
wanted everything.
PAUL. Stop it, you're hysterical. (They wrestle for the
phone.)
LAURA. (Screaming.) I'm not hysterical. (Calmly.)
I'm not hysterical. (Into phone.) Lew, I want to take
him for every cent he's got.
(Paul grabs the phone from her.)
TONY. (Between them.) Calm down, everyone.
LAURA. I won't go onstage with him ever again.
PAUL. (Taking phone.) Lew, I....
TONY. (To Laura.) Don't let an amateur like Paul
ruin your chances for Broadway.
PAUL. (Into phone.) No, no. She can have the
children. (Laura grabs the phone from Paul.)
LAURA. What?!! Lew, what's that?....
TONY. (To Paul.) Remember the train to success on
ly stops here once.
LAURA. (Into phone.) Lew, I have witnesses. (To
Tony.) You'll back me up won't you, Tony?
TONY. Of course.
PAUL. (Overhearing.) What?
FOOTLIGHT FRENZY

TONY. (To Paul.) I'm lying.
LAURA. (Overhearing Tony.) You're lying?
TONY. (To Laura.) Yes, I'm lying to Paul. (He winks at Laura and secretly indicates Paul.)
ALEX. (Off.) Tony! (At stairs.) The Merrick party's getting restless.

(Benny enters.)

Benny. Places everybody.
PAUL. Lew, I'll call you later.
ALEX. (To Paul.) Try to remember your lines . . .

MUSIC CUE
(Music start. Benny raises curtain. Paul is caught off guard and looks awkward.)

NICKY (Paul). (Addressing the "audience"). Baby Ann in a foster home, all my songs rejected, and Addie out all last night. I need a drink. (He crosses to liquor table for a drink but there is no longer a table there.)
But I can do without! So this is really rock bottom! (PHONE BELL.) Jarvis, answer the phone, will you? Er . . . (He remembers there is no Jarvis and crosses to answer the telephone himself.) Jarvis, your services are seriously deteriorating. I may have to let you go . . .
What? Uncle Julian's here? Send him up. (He hangs up.)

(Paul catches sight of Tony in the wings with a wad of cue cards. Tony is pointing at the phone but it takes Paul a while to understand.)

(PHONE BELL.)

FOOTLIGHT FRENZY

NICKY (Paul). (Into phone.) Hello! Uncle Julian?
(He starts reading the cards.) Still dead? (He reads.)
Why don't you send Gwendolyn up instead? Already?
TONY. (Shakes head.) Yes.

(DOORBELL.)

Gwen (Debbie). (Off.) Nicky!
NICKY (Paul). Gwendolyn!!! At last. (Into phone.)
Goodbye! (He hangs up.)

(Paul opens door and admits GWEN in a "downtown" outfit. She enters with a "dog" on a leash. BENNY does the dog barks from the wings.)

GWEN (Debbie). Nicky, Nicky, What's eating you?
(Dog noises.)
NICKY (PAUL). I'm down in the dumps, Gwendolyn.
GWEN (DEBBIE). Way up here on the nineteenth floor?
(Dog noises.)
NICKY (PAUL). The Vandermorgan name is in the basement. Thank goodness you and I are birds of a feather.
GWEN (DEBBIE). Nicky, I'm the Park Avenue nightingale now. (Dog noises.)
NICKY (PAUL). I hope you don't mean what I think you mean. (Dog noises.)
GWEN (DEBBIE). Stahy! (To Nicky.) I'm singing at the Hotsy Totsy Club.
NICKY (PAUL). You mean you've gone "lowdown"?
GWEN (DEBBIE). Yes!
NICKY (PAUL). What will Uncle Julian say?
GWEN (DEBBIE). (Reading cue cards.) Oh, . . . after Uncle Julian's un-lim-ly death . . .
NICKY (PAUL). What?
FOOTLIGHT FRENZY

Gwen (Debbie). (Reading.) . . . Chas. Courtney fingered Johnny Chicago on a bum rap and sent him up the river for life. Then he bought the club and turned me into a reeler slave. And . . .
Tony. That's all.
Gwen (Debbie). That's all. (Aside.) That's All?
Tony. Improvise while I catch up. (Tony runs off.)
Gwen (Debbie). Oh, Nicky, do you know what reeler madness is?
Nicky (Paul). If the madness you say I am is the madness that I be then madness surely begets madness (Aside.) I can't improvise . . . (Tony is back scribbling words onto paper.)
Gwen (Debbie). Oh, Nicky, I . . . could sure use . . . a cock . . . tail . . . Want some?
Nicky (Paul). Madness?
Tony. Pssst (Nicky reads scribbles on wall.)
Nicky (Paul). Go . . . back . . . to . . . the . . . old . . .
(Gwen & Nicky mum going back in the script.) (They finally catch up to a place they both recognize.)
Nicky and Gwen. Johnny Chicago is in jail, Chas. Courtney is show business . . . this is too much!
Gwen (Debbie). Oh, Nicky, come on. Maybe my lastest song will cheer you up. Come on, play it for me.
Nicky (Paul). I will not!
Gwen (Debbie). Well, if you won't Jarvis will. (She laughs, then realizes Jarvis is now a phone.)
Nicky (Paul). Yes. He'd be delighted. Wouldn't you, Jarvis? (He places phone on piano bench then places receiver on top of the piano.) You'll see better from here.
Gwen (Debbie). Key of C. Hit it Jarvis. (Music CUE.) (Sings with music.)
I USED TO WEAR WHITE GLOVES AT THE TABLE
EATING CAVIAR AND OYSTERS
I USED TO WALK MY DOG DRINKING VINTAGE CHAMPAGNE
AND THEN I MET A MAN
I KNEW HE HAD NO BREEDING 'CAUSE WE DINED FROM A CAN
OH-OH-OH I SHOULD'A SAID "NO!" WHEN I HEARD . . .
(Stops singing.)
Play it dirty, Jarvis!
Nicky (Paul). No! those are the forbidden chords!
Gwen (Debbie). (Stroking the phone.) I'll make it worth your while. (Music CUE.) (Sings again and starts to strip, but with complications.)
AND THEN THAT NIGHT WE WENT BACK TO MY PLACE
HE PROMISED ME A CONCERT
WHY ELSE WOULD HE HAVE Brought HIS OWN VIOLIN CASE?
I NEVER SAW THAT "STRAD"
BUT THE WAY HE TUNED HIS TOMMY GUN
DROVE ME MAD
BLAM-BLAM-BLAM I FELL FOR THE MAN
WHEN I HEARD
HIS LOWDOWN BEAT
HEIDI HEIDI HO. HEIDI HEIDI HEEF
FROM MY DEBUTANTE HEAD TO MY LOWDOWN FEET
HEIDI HEIDI HEIDI HEIDI HO
DON'T THINK THAT I'M ASHAMED FEELING TAWDRY
MY RABY BLUE Boudoir HAS A WIDE OPEN DOOR
AIN'T SCARED OF JOHNNY'S KNIFE
FOOTLIGHT FRENZY

"CAUSE THEY LOCKED HIM IN THE SLAMMER FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE
AY AY AY
I GOTTA NEW GUY AND WHEN I'M FEELING RIGHT IT'S BIDEE BIDEE BO
WHEN I TURN OUT THE LIGHTS IT'S NIGHTY NIGHTY NO
AND ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT IT'S HEIDI HEIDI HO*
(APPLAUSE DUMMIES.)

Nicky, did that cheer you up?
NICKY (PAUL). Yes, I've made a decision!
Gwen (DEBBIE). What's that?
NICKY (PAUL). I have to kill myself.
Gwen (DEBBIE). You can kill yourself tomorrow.
Tonight come see me at the Hotly Totsy Club.
NICKY (PAUL). The Vandermorgan family name in disgrace and all you think about is yourself. I can't take it anymore. I'm going to end it all now.
Gwen (DEBBIE). Nicky, no!
NICKY (PAUL). (At empty bookcase.) Where is that service revolver?
Gwen (DEBBIE). Nicky, Nicky, Nicky, no, no, no.
(More pleading.) Hurry, I'm running out of anguish,
NICKY (PAUL). It's got to be around here somewhere.
(Gwen continues her anguish. Paul lifts the seat of the piano bench and finds something.) Ah-hah!
Gwen (DEBBIE). Don't shoot yourself with that . . .
(She turns around and for the first time sees him waving)

*Courtesy Triplet Music. Words and Music by Alan Shearsman and Anna Mathias.

FOOTLIGHT FRENZY

a hammer to signal the new prop.) I mean don't hit yourself ... (Aside.) where's the gun?
NICKY (PAUL). (Aside.) It's all I could find. (In character.) Uncle Julian's old dwelling weapon!!
Gwen (DEBBIE). Don't Nicky! That dwelling hammer may go off!!!
NICKY (PAUL). (Making clicking noises as he fakes cocking the "pistol"). Don't try to stop me! (Gwen grabs the hammer from Nicky. He slumps on the sofa, sobbing.)
Gwen (DEBBIE). (Holding the hammer, running about.) I have to get rid of it. I'm going to throw it out the window into the East River. (Gwen frantically runs about in search of the window.) (Aside.) Where's the window?
(Benny slaps his forehead.)
Gwen (DEBBIE). (Suddenly inspiration.) I changed my mind. I'm going to throw it under the couch, into the East River.
(She tosses it under the sofa. We hear Benny's sound effect of a huge watery splash.)
(WATER SPLASH.)
Gwen (DEBBIE). I'm scared for us, Nicky.
NICKY (PAUL). Why? You said Johnny Chicago was in jail.
Gwen (DEBBIE). Yeah, but you know no jail is strong enough to hold Johnny Chicago and when he finds out I left him for Chas. Courtney, it'll be cement ankle bracelets for me.
NICKY (PAUL). You and Chas?!!!
Gwen (DEBBIE). I told. Johnny Chicago is in Sing Sing!
FOOTLIGHT FRENZY

(BENNY does dog barks as GWEN/DEBBIE gets ready to leave. PAUL runs out the door after her. Once in the "wings" DEBBIE swings around angrily and confronts him.)

NICKY (PAUL). Gwendolyn! (Aside.) What was that all about?

DEBBIE. You ruined my big scene!

PAUL. I’m sorry. I couldn’t find the gun . . .

DEBBIE. Blow it out of your shorts. (DEBBIE exits.)

LAURA. (She has been observing all this gleefully.)

Girlfriend problems, Paul? (She has the gun.)

PAUL. She is not my girlfriend. (Sudden realization.)

Wait a minute. You did it. You took the gun on purpose.

LAURA. Take this, Benny. (Gives BENNY the gun.)

PAUL. That does it. (He marches back on "stage" as NICKY and yells at the phone.) Jarvis! I’ll be in the library! (NICKY exits up the stairs. ADDIE enters through the door.)

ADDIE (LAURA). (To herself.) Why did I take that trip to the moon on Gossamer wings with a man like Chas. Courtney? (She turns, expecting to see NICKY.) Oh NICKY . . . I’m—(She crosses to the stairs and gives the cue again.) NICKY, I’m home! (TONY approaches PAUL in the "wings").

TONY. Paul, you’re on!

PAUL. I will not go onstage with a . . . hyperventilator! (He exits.)

LAURA. (Aside to TONY.) Tony, what shall I do?

TONY. Wing it—I’ll get him.

ADDIE (LAURA). (Sees BENNY at his podium. She grasps at the straw of the momentary solution. She has an idea—she will turn BENNY into "NICKY"). (She thinks BENNY is moving toward her "onstage"). Don’t move! Stay out there on the terrace with the moonlight in your hair. (He starts to make mouth motions. She is afraid he’ll speak.) Don’t say a word. I know you must be wondering where I was, out all night, but I’m back now. (Not knowing how to continue the play alone, she frantically searches for another inspiration.) Have you got a cig for a tired girl?

TONY. (From the wings) Laura, I can’t find him!

LAURA. (Aside.) Do something! (In character.) I’ll take that smoke now. (BENNY hands her a cigar.)

Turkish cigarettes are so strong . . . (Hands it back to BENNY.) Why don’t you finish it for me, darling . . . I was out on the Staten Island Ferry all night long. Just me and my dreams of you. (She starts to exit, TONY enters and pushes her back.)

TONY. Stay out there, Laura.

ADDIE (LAURA). Oh, NICKY, you’re telling me you want to be alone. (She panics.) That means I’m alone too—ah ah ah, (PHONE BELL) Oh, oh, The telephone! (She hysterically runs to the phone, close to nervous hyperventilation, but trying to control it. BENNY helps via charades.) Who is it? Oh, Oh NICKY. Calling from the terrace? What a romantic notion! What are you trying to tell me now? That your pockets, what, are small, little, short, expensive. Sounds like, itch, rich. Baseball player? No! Oh! Once you were a poor little rich boy and now you’re a rich little poor boy!

BENNY. (RINGING BELL) Yes!

LAURA. Will somebody get me out of this! (She begins to gasp. TONY, in the "wings," pushes PAUL toward the onstage area.)

TONY. Paul—she’s demolishing my play! Now—get on! (He pushes PAUL onstage with such force that the stair rail comes off in PAUL’s hand.)

ADDIE (LAURA). (Into phone.) NICKY—NICKY—good-
bye! (She hangs up the phone.) Nicky—Nicky, I thought I told you to stay out on the terrace. (Benny removes his hands.) Nicky—I'm home. Paul tries to hide the stair rail in his pants.) Nicky, did you have a nice day?

(Paul sits, ramming the stair rail into his crotch. He leaps up in pain.)

Nicky (Paul). I don't want to talk about it. I just want to play my music.

MUSIC: PIANO CUE
(Debbie and Tony enter the "wings." She wears only a bath towel.)

Tony. Debbie—do you realize you're responsible for that mess out there?

Debbie. Me? What have I got to do with it? You wrote it.

Tony. Look—David Merrick is looking for a new husband and wife team. It could be Paul and Laura Becker, but because of you they're getting a divorce.

Debbie. There's nothing between Paul and me. I was just giving him private acting lessons.

Tony. Good, then tell Laura that—NOW!

Debbie. Now? (Tony rushes Debbie to the stairs.)

Tony. Yes, now! (He pushes her onstage.)

Gwen (Debbie). Hello, Addie.

Addie (Laura). Why Gwen, what an unexpected pleasure, and in your bath towel.

Gwen (Debbie). I have something to tell you.

Nicky (Paul). Why don't I leave you to your girl talk. Gwendolyn, will you finish off this piano music for me? (Gwen takes over playing.)

FOOTLIGHT FRENZY

MUSIC OUT

Nicky (Paul). I have to be going. (Nicky exits with stair rail sticking out of the fly of his pants. He smashes it against the door, then closes the door on it as he leaves.)

Debbie. It's about your husband. (At this moment Chas. rides "onstage" on a polo pony cut-out. HORSE NEIGHS.)

Chas (Alex). Tally-ho everyone! Wonderful day for polo!

Tony. (In the "wings," horrified.) I forgot to tell him!

Chas (Alex). Come on, Addie, I'll take you for a gallop across the morning meadow. (Aside.) What's all this furniture on stage?

Addie (Laura). (Aside.) The polo scene was cut, you idiot!

Chas (Alex). (Aside.) Now they tell me! (To "audience," covering.) I guess I'll ride on off to— the kitchen. (His exit is blocked by all the furniture.) Stable boy! Help me! Tally ho... (Benny grabs a hat and enters, wheels the pony around, revealing the painted side, and tosses him off. The pony rocks to and fro to show the real audience the week special effect. Chas.' exit is accompanied by the sound of hooves as he is being wheeled off.) (Horse HOOVES.) Benny, you jerk, why didn't you tell me the scene was cut?

Benny. It was cut—it was cut—get off! Get off!

(Crash OFFSTAGE)

Alex. (Off.) Tony, don't send me out there again.

Addie (Laura). (To Tony in "wings.") What the hell do we do now?
FOOTLIGHT FRENZY

TONY. Do the love scene. (BENNY enters.)
BENNY. Darling, I love you....
TONY. Not you. (Pulls BENNY offstage.)

Gwen (Debbie). (On stairs.) I'll tell you later, okay?
(She exits. ADDIE and CHAS. try to strike a natural
pose.)

CHAS (ALEX). Line... (Asking BENNY for a prompt.)
BENNY. (From the "wings"). You're my personal
property now, Addie Starr...

CHAS (ALEX). You're my personal property now, Ad-
die Starr...
BENNY. Someday, I want...
CHAS (ALEX). I know... I'm acting.
BENNY. I couldn't tell...

CHAS (ALEX). Someday I want to run barefoot
through your hair.
ADDIE (LAURA). (Touching his hair.) No pole playing
pony is going to run his fingers barefoot through my
hair.

PAUL. (In the "wings," to BENNY.) Look at the way
she flaunts her body in front of him.

BENNY. Yeah—pretty good—huh?
PAUL. She's disgusting. If she wants a divorce, that's
just what she'll get.
BENNY. What do you mean?
PAUL. There's the evidence I need—right there! (PAUL
and BENNY exit.)

CHAS (ALEX). (Onstage.) Come with me or I'll tell
Nicky everything!

ADDIE (LAURA). I have no choice. At least Nicky has
his memories.

CHAS (ALEX). I knew you'd come to your senses. You
and I, Addie. We'll crawl on our hands and knees to the
gates of hell... We'll laugh at the fools who follow the
rules... (In his enthusiasm, he makes an over-
expansive gesture. His riding crop flies out into the
dummy "audience." The "audience" gasps collectively.

TONY, in the "wings," is horrified. He goes berserk, and
reaches onstage to strangle CHAS. BENNY tries to stop
TONY.)

TONY. (Throttling CHAS.) You idiot! You've just hit
David Merrick!

BENNY. Mr. Langdon. Mr. Langdon. Don't do that.
He's an actor! (BENNY pulls TONY off stage.)

(CHAS. struggles loose and staggers toward ADDIE.)

CHAS (ALEX). You sweet little devil... you're a bad,
bad, girl. (Aside.) He's gone mad!

(TONY creeps onstage pushing palm tree in front of him.
He is hiding behind it.)

ADDIE (LAURA). Nicky must never know my shame.
(She sees TONY. Aside.) He's followed you onstage!

(TONY crawls across the stage masked from "audience"
by the small palm.)

CHAS (ALEX). Shame! Ha! (Aside.) Where is he?
ADDIE (LAURA). (Aside.) He's right behind you. (AD-
die and CHAS. both spot TONY behind palm.)

CHAS and ADDIE. AAAAAAAARGGGGGHHHHHHH!!

(TONY finds the hammer under the sofa.)

CHAS (ALEX). And now, I think I should leave. Addie,
this is goodbye.

TONY. (Standing in doorway. Brandishing a
hammer.) You leave and I'll kill you!
FOOTLIGHT FRENZY

ADDIE (LAURA). Hurry!
BENNY. I got ya.
CHAS (ALEX). I can't. It's stuck.
ADDIE (LAURA). Open the door!

(More chaos above on the catwalk as PAUL struggles to climb up. Meanwhile CHAS and ADDIE are fighting to get the door open. Finally the door flies open.)

CHAS (ALEX). There! (CHAS. falls to the floor. ADDIE exits. PAUL falls to the floor.)

NICKY (PAUL). (Unaware that CHAS. is still on stage.) Addie, you've gone! (He stands at the open door, peering into the "distance"). I can see you half a mile away already, across the rooftops... (CHAS. gets up from the sofa and moves to the door.) And CHAS. is with you! (PAUL leaves door open and addresses the "audience" directly.) I'm all alone. (BENNY drops to floor from catwalk and quickly hides behind PAUL. He mimics PAUL's moves.) Addie, you've gone. (BENNY mimics PAUL's gestures. He realizes BENNY is behind him. Talking now in an aside.) Benny, what are you doing?

BENNY. Hiding.

NICKY (PAUL). She left a note. (PAUL lifts note up. BENNY does same. PAUL crosses back to face the "audience" with BENNY still behind.) "My darling Nicky, I have an incurable disease like Camille. I loved you but now I have to leave you." Oh, the tragedy. (Sinks to his knees. BENNY does same. PAUL to BENNY in aside.) Get off!

BENNY. I can't. They'll see me.

NICKY (PAUL). I don't know which way to turn. I'm a shadow of my former self. (They eventually get to the door. BENNY is pressed onto it and holds it.) Benny—where are you? (He sees BENNY hanging on the door.) Benny, get off! (PAUL slams the door with such force that BENNY "flies" offstage in one fell swoop.) Addie! I'll get you back somehow. (BENNY drops the curtain and PAUL exits.)

MUSIC: ACT MUSIC
(ALEX enters and peeks through the curtain. TONY follows.)

TONY. Alex! How is the Merrick party doing?
ALEX. (Peeking through the curtain.) One of them has fallen asleep.

TONY. What?
ALEX. Or died. I can't tell.

(TONY runs around in circles, then grabs ALEX's lapels.)

TONY. My God, Alex! What are we going to do!
ALEX. We've got to grab them.
TONY. I've got it! My play has everything except...
ALEX. Logic?
TONY. No!! Spectacle!! We're going to give Merrick something he'll never forget.

(BENNY enters.)

TONY. (Grabbing BENNY.) Benny! We are going to put the big fight scene back in. Get the walk-ons.
BENNY. Can't
TONY. Why?
BENNY. They walked off.
TONY. When?
FOOTLIGHT FRENZY

ALEX. Yesterday. When you blacked out.
TONY. I don't remember that.
BENNY. They did.
TONY. Well never mind, I will think of something.
Get Laura and start the scene.
BENNY. Can't.
TONY. Why?
BENNY. She's catatonic in the dressing room.
TONY. What? Why?
ALEX. It's Paul's affair with Debbie. She's upset.
BENNY. ALEX.
No. It's the valium. Paul forgot his line.
ALEX. BENNY.
Or concussion from the She had the wrong wig, paint.
BENNY. No! Her children killed the maid.
ALEX. She needs more sex.
TONY. *Who cares!!! Get her uppers.
BENNY. Can't.
TONY. (Menaces.)
BENNY. I don't know where they are.
ALEX. I know where they are. (TONY and ALEX exit.)
BENNY. No! She needs downers! (DEBBIE enters.)
DEBBIE. She needs downers? She can have my career.
BENNY. What do you mean?
DEBBIE. (Distraught.) They laughed at me.
BENNY. I didn't hear anyone laughing.
DEBBIE. Didn't you see my big scene? It was a shambles. I'll never get out of this town. The audience hated me!
BENNY. (In deep voice.) Who could ever look down on such a pinnacle of acting prowess?
DEBBIE. (Surprised and turning quickly.) Who said that?
LAURA, (Entering with her attention offstage looking for TONY.) Tony, are you sure these pills are good for catatonia? (She is emptying pills from a bottle into her hand.) (Suddenly she turns and sees BENNY and DEBBIE kissing.) Benny . . . with Debbie!! (Paul enters and is also shocked to see Benny and Debbie kissing.) I was wrong . . .

PAUL, Benny . . .

LAURA, (Crosses up to PAUL.) Paul, I don’t know what to say except I’m sorry. There’s something I want to tell you. (Ad lib back and forth, interrupting each other.)

Paul, Laura, shut up. I want to ask you if we can have another baby.

Laura, That’s exactly what I want to ask you. (They kiss.)

TONY, (Enters in a hurry.) This isn’t lovers lane, do the scene change.

MUSIC: CUE
(Choreographed set change to Hotsy Totsy Club.)

(Benny removes the curved stairway as Paul wheels on a padded staircase. Tony and Debbie remove the sofa while Laura sets a cocktail table and two chairs. Tony and Alex hang glittered draperies over the door and bookcase. Debbie covers the piano with a “Hotsy Totsy” motif panel.)

Tony, Everybody ready—curtain up!

NICKY (PAUL). (Entering down stairs and speaking in one long breath.) So this is the smoke filled Hotsy Totsy Club in the bowels of the Bowery on the lower East Side at four o’clock in the morning. (He breathes.) And still no Addie. Hey, what’s this? A piano . . . Excuse me Miss.

ADDIE (LAURA), Chas, is that you? Did you bring the dope? Uh? Nicky!

NICKY (PAUL). Addie!

ADDIE (LAURA). Nicky, I don’t want you to see me like this.

Nicky.

ADDIE. Nicky!

Addie!

Nicky!

NICKY (PAUL). What happened to you?

ADDIE (LAURA). Chas, turned me into a reefer slave just like your sister.

NICKY (PAUL). What? I’ll fix him when I find him.

(Nicky exits stage l. Benny appears and makes sound of footsteps signalling Chas’s approach. Enter CHAS.)

CHAS (ALEX). Well Addie—(Crossing to her.) I know what you want. One puff of this reefer and you can kiss your memories goodbye.

ADDIE (LAURA). No no no. I know I shouldn’t but . . .

CHAS (ALEX). Come on Addie. Tonight the first one’s free.

(Addie takes the reefer and takes a drag on it. Suddenly she turns to Chas and speaks as Laura.)

LAURA. Wow, Alex this is the real thing. (As Addie.) You’re crooked, Chas. But by God, you’re fun.

CHAS (ALEX). Fun did you say? I’ll give you fun. There’s a little dance they do in South America, it’s called the Mococh.

ADDIE (LAURA). No, you don’t mean the swing number?
FOOTLIGHT FRENZY

Chas (Alex). That's exactly what I mean, you know the crowds love it. (As he says this Chas holds onto a large swing, decorated with a silver moon, that is part of the Hoity Tooty Club's decoration—he indicates that Addie should get on it.)

Addie (Laura). Not the swing number. How low do you think I've sunk?

Chas (Alex). This low. Don't forget, you're still working for me.

Addie (Laura). I don't work for you. I'm your slave. Your slave to this. (Indicating joint. She takes a puff.) Oh, no . . .

Chas (Alex). Get up on that swing.

Addie (Laura). (Aside.) The joint.

Chas (Alex). (Aside.) Get rid of it. (To Addie.) Get up on that swing, and this time with a South American beat! Caramba! . . .

(Laura throws the joint into the "wings" where Benny is standing. Benny searches around the floor for it but cannot find it.)

MUSIC: CUE

(Addie & Chas. dance 8 bars of a Latin American dance. Laura begins to stagger.)

Laura. (Aside.) Wow, that joint . . .
Paul. (Watching from "wings." ) Benny, what's going on out there?
Benny. I can't find that joint, and it's still lit.
Paul. (Grabbing Benny's arm in horror.) Never mind about that Benny, look at Laura. Her timing is off.

FOOTLIGHT FRENZY

(Benny stops looking for the joint and stares in horror at Laura.)

Benny. Oh boy!
Paul. It's her nerves, she's on thorazine.
Alex. (Dancing over.) She is? I just gave her a real joint!
Paul. You idiot!
Benny. Don't worry Mr. Becker, she seemed so down that I gave her some speed.
Paul. You idiot.
Benny. It should be perking her up just about now.
Look.
Laura. (Laura begins to dance more manically and ad lib.) Whoop. Let's go faster! Wow! (Grooms and stumbles.)
Paul. (To Benny.) I've got to help her. (He chases Laura but bumps into Alex.) This is all your fault.
Alex. My fault?

(Addie jumps on the swing and swings madly across the stage. Narrowly missing Paul and Alex, and kicking over chairs.)

Paul. You gave her marijuana, you irresponsible oaf!
Alex. She's a basket case, it'll relax her.
Paul. In my book marijuana is one step away from grass.

(Great chaos onstage. Tony enters as a ghost.)

Uncle Julian (Tony). Shut up! (Everybody freezes.) (To "audience.") Whhhh Whhhh . . .
FOOTLIGHT FRENZY

NICKY (Paul). Uncle Julian! Am I suppose to see you or what?

UNCLE JULIAN (Tony). Of course, see me.

NICKY (Paul). Great Scott! Uncle Julian's ghost! It's a miracle!

UNCLE JULIAN (Tony). No miracle, boy. I only feigned death. (All gasp.) And now I have but one thing to say. (Aside.) I'm going to break all your necks. (Back to "audience"). And that is Nicholas, the Vandermorgan inheritance is yours.

ALL. Ah!!!

UNCLE JULIAN (Tony). And I have brought Baby Ann back from the foster home.

ALL. Ah!!!

UNCLE JULIAN (Tony). (Aside.) Get me Baby Ann. (In character.) Before I was a ghost, Baby Ann filled my every moment with unutterable joy. (Aside.) Where's the baby?

BENNY. (Entering without baby.) Mr. Langdon, there was a fire.

UNCLE JULIAN (Tony). (Aside.) Never mind, get me the goddamn baby! (To "audience"). Joy unutterable... joyous joy... I enjoy joy...

BENNY. I don't think...

TONY. Get that sucker out there! (BENNY pushes smoking baby carriage onstage.)

ADDEE (Laura). (Sow cross to baby carriage.) Poor Baby Ann. It's three years since I've seen you. Let me hold you, touch you, kiss you. (She looks into baby carriage and does enormous horrible take as smoke pours out of it.) Oh, you look thirsty. (She gets soda siphon.) Here's a drink, darling. (Squirts.) Nicky, come and see how she's grown. (Adde reacts.)

CHAS (Alex). So this is the face you love. (He re acts.)

ADDEE (Laura). Yes I love her and I want all the world to see her. (Holds up baby which is blackened and charred, but covers it from dummy audience.)

UNCLE JULIAN (Tony). Nicky, come with me and change Baby Ann.

PAUL. (Aside.) Look, they're leaving.

TONY. (Aside.) Who? The Merrick party?

PAUL. (Aside.) No, the Arts Foundation people. I've gotta stop them. (To UNCLE JULIAN.) I'll take care of Baby Ann. (Paul exists.)

UNCLE JULIAN (Tony). Well, my job here is done. B E N N Y. Mr. Langdon, the fire's out.

TONY. Quick go and see if the Merrickers are still there.

BENNY. I can't - I have to do the thunder effect.

TONY. I'll do it. (He climbs up to catwalk.)

CHAS (Alex). Adde - alone at last.

ADDEE (Laura). Keep away from me - you're drunk.

CHAS (Alex). You leave me no choice.

ADDEE (Laura). You and I could never be.

CHAS (Alex). We can, we must, we're like two peas in a pod. you and I.

ADDEE (Laura). Poor poor boy. I'm deeply in love with my husband.

CHAS (Alex). Stop playing games. You know you love it.

GWEN (Debbie). (Enters from stairs.) Chas. Darling, I'm sorry I'm late. I... So! She's the one you really want. (Pointing a gun at Chas.) Well, take a good look at what you turn me into!

CHAS (Alex). Backing up slowly.) Don't be an idiot...!

GWEN (Debbie). (Closing in on him.) Beg! The way I had to when suddenly I wasn't fun anymore.

CHAS (Alex). You haven't the guts...

GWEN (Debbie). Haven't I...
FOOTLIGHT FRENZY

CHAS (ALEX). Give me that gun, you fool . . . (GUN CLICKS.) You used a silencer!

(Gwen fires a deafening shot. Chas. reacts. Meanwhile, on the catwalk above.)

BENNY. Mr. Langdon, Mr. Merrick’s party left, but they told me to give you this. (Hands Tony a note. Onstage Gwen shoots Chas. again . . . again . . . and again . . . He reacts dramatically to each shot and falls.)

Gwen (Debbie). Oh . . . my . . . God!

Addie (Laura). Heaven help us!

Tony. Good God!

Laura. What?

Tony. A message from David Merrick. “Dear Mr. Langdon. I think “Tarnished Silver” is a brilliant play.” You see. “I have thought so since 1932 when it was first published under the name “Pockmarked Gold.” I have it under option and will sue you for plagiarism if you continue. Sincerely, David Merrick.”

Debbie. Tony, is that true?

Tony. Only the plot. I changed all the names.

Debbie. How could you?

Tony. I needed a play in a week. I had no choice.

Laura. What’s the point in going on.

Alex. Does that mean we can go?

Tony. This is the final curtain for Tony Langdon. I shall hurl myself upon the stage like a meteor. Down. Down. Down plummets the glistening phoenix. Good night sweet prince.

Laura. He’s going to jump.

Alex. Oh no.

Tony. Don’t try to stop me.

Debbie. Wait—listen to me. We can’t end it like this.

(Audience of dummies gasps.)

Gwen (Debbie). Oh, my God! (She exits.)
FOOTLIGHT FRENZY

NICKY (PAUL). (Looking at CHAS. on the floor.) So that lousy Chas. is dead!
CHAS (ALEX). (Getting up.) Not as dead as you think, Vanderhooge.
NICKY (PAUL). Good because now I’m going to kill you both.
CHAS (ALEX). Why you— I oughta—
NICKY (PAUL). Take that.

(NICKY and CHAS. begin to fight and work their way off stage. NICKY returns with a dummy resembling CHAS. and beats it mercilessly about the stage. He exits with the dummy and CHAS. enters with a dummy of NICKY and repeats the process. He throws the dummy off stage, approaches ADDIE and collapses. NICKY enters.)

NICKY (PAUL). Now Addie it’s your turn. (Cannot find his gun. Aside.) Laura, I’ve forgotten my gun.
ADDIE (LAURA). It’s all right darling, I know you’ll think of something. (PAUL tries to kill ADDIE with cigarette lighter than a tablecloth.)

Gwen (DEBBIE). Drop that gun . . . tablecloth! You may have ruined my life Addie but I won’t let you ruin NICKY’s. NICKY, Vanoose. (NICKEY exits.) (Gwen points gun at NICKY.)

ADDIE (LAURA). No.

Gwen (DEBBIE). (Shoots ADDIE. ADDIE slumps in the chair.) Oh my God. (Gwen exits.) (CHAS. gets up.)

JOHNNY (BENNY). (Entering.) So Chas. Courtney, you stole my club and my girl. You lousy snake in the glass. Too bad you’re dead.

CHAS (ALEX). Not so dead as you think, you chump. Why you . . . (JOHNNY shoots CHAS.)

FOOTLIGHT FRENZY

Gwen (DEBBIE). (Entering.) Chas! Chas! Chas! Johnny you killed him and in this state that adds up to murder.

JOHNNY (BENNY). Oh no, I gotta get out of here. I’ll go to South America. (JOHNNY starts to run up the stairs.)

Gwen (DEBBIE). You ain’t goin’ nowhere. (She shoots him. He slides backwards down the stairs.)

JOHNNY (BENNY). All right, you dirty, rotten, lousy coppers. This is Johnny Chicago talking and you’ll never take me alive, see?

Gwen (DEBBIE). I guess it takes a lot of lead to kill a lug like you! (She shoots him again. Another stair trick stunt.) Johnny’s dead.

JOHNNY (BENNY). They got me, Padre. Are you a Father? I need a priest.

Gwen (DEBBIE). (Shooting him again. Another stair trick stunt.) Johnny’s dead!

JOHNNY (BENNY). I told you you’d never get bracelets on this canary because I just don’t sing.

Gwen (DEBBIE). (Shooting him again. A final stair trick stunt.) Johnny’s dead. Oh, god! (She runs off stage as NICKY enters.)

JOHNNY (BENNY). I’m a goner, Nicky. I can see Street Peter at those pearly gates...

NICKY (PAUL). I hear you, Johnny.

JOHNNY (BENNY). Well, I want to square things with you. Nicky, before I go. Chas. was blackmailing Addie so she’d look like she was a two-timer . . . but Gwen is down to earth . . . she don’t like no Park Avenue swells. That’s why we hit it off right away . . . (He gets carried away. He starts pulling on NICKY’s pants accidentally as he slips down.) But I guess we got our numbers crossed before I could make it up to her. So Nicky, you and Ad-
FOOTLIGHT FRENZY

BENNY. Don’t feel bad, Mr. Becker. Debbie and I will find other jobs. We’ve got each other.
P. CONGRATULATIONS, BUT...

ALEX. Can we get this over with? It’s almost eleven.

P. You don’t understand. The Arts Foundation left to hold a special meeting. They took a vote. We got the funding. The school is saved. (DUMMY AUDIENCE CHEERS.) And Tony, they’ve hired you as permanent artist in residence. (DUMMY AUDIENCE GASPS.)

TONY. I accept. Now give them a final line they’ll never forget.

NICKY (P.). Darling, we’ll never let our love become...

(DIAS. AND JOHNNY SHOOT GWEN.)

GWEN (DEBBIE). Oh... my... God! (She sinks to the steps and dies.)

ADDIE AND NICKY. Tarnished Silver...!!

(BENNY crawls across the stage and lowers the upstage curtain.)

MUSIC CUE

CURTAIN

THE END
FOOTLIGHT FRENZY

Small Props List

* Assorted used paint cans
* Paint brushes
* Ropes
* Tarp
* Used coffee cups
* Used soda cans
* Some cabling
* Old lighting instruments
* Old drop cloths
* Newspaper drop cloths
* Bottle of pills (Placed accessibly on stage for Laura or Alex during fall recovery of Laura after slipping on wet paint.)

* All above items are preset on stage for opening of Act One.

4 hand pistols and numerous blanks
Assorted scripts (Tony, Paul, Benny)
Old telephone (for piano top—Jarvis)
Desk pad holder and paper
Desk pen or pencil (on piano with pad)
Table cigarette lighter
Table cigarette holder
Ashtray
2 4' ladders
Compact (Debbie)
Mop and bucket (Alex)
Briefcase (Paul)
Broom (Tony)

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FOOTLIGHT FRENZY

Lamp with soft base (Tony hits Benny and Paul)
Weist watch (Tony)
Skein of yarn at end of rigid dog leash (Gwen’s poodle)
Hammer (preset in piano stool at intermission)
Old duelling pistol (Laura)
Polo mallet (Chas.)
Riding crop (Chas.)
Crash box (used backstage for sound FX)
Artificial palm in castered pot (Tony)
*Camera with flash
*Raisin in container
*Assorted coins in container

*Above three items are present at top of show on catwalk for use by Paul.

2 full sized dummies (one dressed as Nicky and one as Chas. for fight)
Weighted oversized marijuana joints. (as needed)
Baby carriage
Seltzer bottle with squirter
Paper note (Benny—from Merrick)
Hip flask (Alex—Chas.)
Assorted envelopes

COSTUME LIST

TONY LANGDON—UNCLE JULIAN:
Black shirt with white scarf
Black pants
Black shoes and socks
30’s style costumes for Uncle Julian:
Safari suit—shorts, shirt, tie and belt
Knee high safari socks
Brown boots
Safari hat
Gray wig
Padded stomach
Black Tux tailcoat
Tux pants
White shirt and black bow tie
Black cummerbund
Black shoes and socks
Leg padding (For business with gel frame.)
Gray pin striped suit with suspenders on pants
Pale pink striped shirt and bow tie
Two-tone gray shoes
Socks
Gray fedora hat
White sheet (For ghost costume)

PAUL BUCKER—NICKY VANDERMORGAN:
Striped shirt
Sweater vest
Navy suit (2 piece)
Red tie
Black shoes
Black socks  
Boxer shorts  
Yellow raincoat slicker with hood  
30's style costumes for Nicky Vandermorgian:  
- Tux jacket and pants  
- Tux shirt  
- Bow tie  
- Shoes and socks  
- Breakaway tux pants  
- White dinner jacket

Benny Dibble — Johnny Chicago:  
- Plaid shirt  
- Blue denim overalls  
- Gray baseball hat  
- White running shoes  
- Socks  
30's style costumes for Johnny Chicago:  
- Dark navy shirt  
- White dress shirt  
- Navy pin stripe gangster style suit  
- Black and white wingtip shoes  
- Black socks  
- Dark gangster style fedora hat  
- Black Tux pants  
- Black tux jacket  
- White shirt  
- Black bow tie

Alex Malone — Chas. Courtney:  
- Beige raincoat  
- Brown pants / sports shirt  
- Brown loafers  
- Black socks

Black shoes  
Beige/brown dressing gown with belt  
30's style costumes for Chas. Courtney:  
- Tux shirt  
- Black cummerbund  
- Black tux tailcoat  
- Tux pants  
- Bow tie  
For Polo Scene  
- Jodhpurs — beige cord  
- White short sleeved polo shirt  
- Knee-high white socks  
- Black riding boots  
- Polo helmet

Laura Becker — Addie Starr:  
- Black bra  
- Black teddy  
- Silver satin robe with belt  
- Beige hose / silver shoes  
- Brown wig  
30's style costumes for Addie Starr:  
- Balloon dress (Long) An elegant crepe satin skirt and top (disguised to look like a dress) cut on the bias and in pale pink. All over the top of dress long pink fringe hungs to hide balloons which are on the outside of the dress. They are attached through button holes. There are seven balloons from the waist up on top of the dress. The balloons are attached to tubing sewn to the inside of the top which links up to one tube which goes down the inside of the skirt and offstage to a compressor or air tank. This inflates the balloons at the appropriate time during the scene.
FOOTLIGHT FRENZY

Elegant lavender crepe satin dress (Long) Cut on the bias
White fur stole / long lavender gloves
Elegant silver satin crepe dress (Long)
Red dress (short) gaudy with sequin trim
Red shoes
Black fishnet hose and garter belt
Red dance pants
Long red gloves

DEBBIE—GWENDOLYN VANDERMORGAN:
Red jogging shorts and top
Pink knee-high socks
Beige suede running shoes
Tan raincoat with belt
Beige hose
Turquoise terry cloth robe
Beige teddy
Beige bra
Large pink bath towel with two large safety pins
30's style costume for Gwendolyn Vandermorgan:
Elegant black crepe dress
Elegant black shoes
String of pearls / comb with flowers
Elegant black dress with orange trim
Orange hose / gloves (Long)
Gaudy rhinestone bracelet on ankle / earrings
Black feather boa (Long)
Red dress (Short), ripped with burn marks.
Long red gloves
Red shoes with fishnet hose and garter belt
Red dance pants
SAMUEL FRENCH has:
AMERICA'S
FAVORITE COMEDIES


STEAK NIGHT
Comedy
by Richard Polak

3m. 2f. 1m. This is an amusing yet somewhat chilling look at an American family which is doing something about the so-called decline in family values. The family has a strict set of rules, and if you break one the other family members get to vote on the nature, length and severity of your punishment. The voting always takes place on the night the family has such for dinner – a family tradition, you might say. The most enthusiastic participant in this role is Alan, a somewhat bullying 16-year-old; until now, that is, his transgresses and the family votes on his punishment! Very cleverly, very deviously, Alan swipes the vote in his favor and, in fact, takes over the family! "A dark little comedy with deepening layers... provides a metaphor, both searing and chilling, of the case with which a really determined, clever leader can and does use democracy to overthrow democracy... playwright Polak combines grim Kafkaesque elements with a natural American ambience."—Drama-Logue.

TOTA LLY COOL
Drama
by Jan Butteram

2m., 2f. to play 6m., 2f. Unit set. This terrific new drama depicts the relationship between two seemingly average teenage girls, Connie and Susy, and shows how the two descend into destructive substance abuse. The play dramatizes both the emotional and physical consequences inherent in drug use. Both funny and sad, at times light-hearted and intense, Totally Cool mixes extreme realism and dream-like qualities to create a stirring and thought provoking experience. The dramatic landscape includes a variety of characters who help complete the story of Connie and Susy; two paramedics, a pair of morgue attendants and the local medical examiner and his sidekick.
CENIXVILLE
by Jane Martin
Comedy
Little Theatre

(3m., 94') Int. The comic sensation of the 1991 Humana Festival at the famed Actors Theatre of Louisville, this wildly funny new play by the mysterious author of Talking With and Vital Signs is a brilliant portrayal of America's fascination with fantasy entertainment, "the growth industry of the 90's." We are in a run-down locker room in a seedy sports arena in the Armory of the Universe, "Cemintville, Tennessee," with the scrawniest bunch of professional wrestlers you ever saw. This is decidedly a small-time operation—not the big time you see on TV. The promoter, Bigman, also appears in the show. He and his brother Eddie are the only men, though; for the main attraction(s) are the "ladies." Thar's Tiger, who comes with a big drinking problem and a small dog; Dami, who comes with a large chip on her shoulder against Bigman, who owes all the girls for several weeks' pay; Lese, an ex-Olympic shot putter with delusions that she is actually employed presently in athletics; and Nettie, an overweight older woman who appears in the ring dressed in baggy pajamas, with her hair in curlers, as the character "Pajama Mama." There is the eager-beaver gofer Nola, a teenager who dreams of someday entering the glamorous world of pro wrestling herself. And then, there are the Knockout Sisters, refugees from the Big Time but banned from it for heavy-duty abuse of pharmaceuticals as well as having gotten arrested in Sagmeister delicts with the Mayor of Los Angeles. They have just gotten out of the slammer, but their indigent caretaker manager, Mother Crocker ("Of the Auto Repair Crookers") hopes to get them reinstated, if she can keep them off the white powder. Bigman has hired the Knockout Sisters as tonight's main attraction, and the fur really flies along with the sparks when the other women find out about the Knockout Sisters. Bigman has really got his hands full tonight. He's gotta get the girls to tear each other up in the ring, not the locker room; he's gotta deal with tough-as-nails Mother Crocker; he's gotta keep an arena full of tanked-up rubes from leaning up the joint—and he's gotta solve the mystery of who bit off his brother Eddie's dick last night.

ESTABLISHED PRICE
by Dennis McIntyre

(Little Theatre) Comedy, 94 min. This timely new comedy by the author of Split Second and Megaloan has had two major successful regional productions, and is now available for the first time. It is a comedy of white collar angst in this age of corporate takeovers, focusing on the predicaments of middle-aged managers who suddenly find themselves out of a job—like just about everyone else—when the company for whom they have worked most of their working lives is taken over and dismantled by a corporate raider. True, each is provided with a handsome "golden parachute"—but this is retail nonsense—as well as an inadequate replacement for their jobs, which have become their identity. The central character, Frank Daniels (played in Philadelphia by Kenneth McMillan and at the Long Wharf Theatre by Jason Robards) is the former general counsel for the conglomerated corporation—and he does not intend to go gently into the good night of his forced retirement. He refuses to sign, turns up the office, and tries to get his fellow executives to declare their golden parachutes as a present over what has happened to them. Naturally they think he's crazy, which he may just be—and they certainly do not intend to give back their checks. In the end, even Frank, capitulates, and pockets the check. He may be crazy, he's not stupid. "Take these and I'll be out."—Phil Daily News. "An playwright is supposed to do this for us. They are supposed to bring us the open whatever it is that is eating away at us, as Arthur Miller once did and so few playwrights have done since. Now comes Dennis McIntyre, locating the trouble and filling it with the essential pages of our newspaper to put in the context of our lives. His play about a corporate takeover is a searingly revealing the latest alarming shift of the national energy away from people and toward the bottom line."—Phil. Inquirer. "(A) knowing and extremely timely new play."—N.Y. Times. (1978)

NATIONAL ANTHEMS
by Dennis McIntyre

(Little Theatre) Comic Drama. 2m., 11 Int. Tom Hargre, Kevin Sweeney and Mary McConnell starred in an acclaimed Long Wharf Theatre production of this original, hard-hitting new play by the author of Megaloan, Split Second and Established Price. We see in the snapping houses of art, the wealthy Reed and Mother Reed, who native a party that evening for their neighborhood. It is a cheap, and all the guests have been here, when one final guest arrives, a infamous named Ben Cook, a working man. We all see that the Reeds' social-economic status has increased. Meanwhile, the Reeds play gracious hosts—until, quite, things get nasty, as the stream of guests increases. Eventually, the two men get drunk as skunks and some in a soap in the spirit of old America, a love affair with materialism. "Logical, poetic and funny."—Variety. "Furious, intense and disturbingly funny."—With an autumn's that's as up-to-date as this morning's newspaper headlines."—Boston Times Union. "Exciting rework on traditional American values. Mr. McIntyre demonstrates his keen sense of doomsday as well as his own state-of-the-art awareness of contemporary behavior."—N.Y. Times. (1982)
New Comedies from Samuel French, Inc.

THE LADY IN QUESTION (Little Theatre-Comedy)
by Charles Busch.
5m., 4f. 1 int., 1 cat. Uniset.

This hilarious spoof of every tracity damsel-in-distress vs. the Nazi movie you ever saw packed them in Off-Broadway, where the irresistible Mr. Busch starred as Gertrude Garret, world-renowned concert pianist and world-class hedonist. On tour in Bavaria, Gertrude finds herself charming; until, that is, the unwittingly becomes ensnared in a plot by Prof. Erich Maximus to free his mother, a famous actress who has appeared in an anti-Nazi play, from the clutches of the Fuhrer's fiendish minions. At first, Gertrude is more concerned about the whereabouts of her missing cosmetics bag, but when her best friend and travelling companion Kitty is murdered by the Nazi swine, Gertrude agrees to help Erich by manipulating the Nazi Baron Von Bluster, whose manner becomes the escape route. Of course, Gertrude and Erich fall in love; and, of course, there is a desperate dash (or sit, no least) to the safety of the Swiss border, where Gertrude and Erich find True Love. Mr. Busch's send-up of this film genre is so witty and well-constructed that, as the New York Times pointed out, it would be just as entertaining if the role of Gertrude were played by a woman. "Hilariously entertaining. I couldn't have had a better time, unless perhaps someone had given me popcorn."—N.Y. Post. "Hilarious"—N.Y. Times.

(#1212)

RED SCARE ON SUNSET (Advanced Groups-Comedy)
by Charles Busch.
5m., 3f. Unit set.

This Off-Broadway hit is set in 1950's Hollywood during the blacklist days. This is a hilarious comedy that touches on serious subjects by the author of Vampire Lesbians of Sodom. Mary Dale is a moody, comedic star who discovers to her horror that her husband, her best friend, her director and houseboy are all mixed up in a communist plot to take over the movie industry. Among their goals is the dissolution of the star system! Mary's conversion from Rodeo Drive robot to McCarthian maven who ultimately names names including her husband's maker for outrageous, thought provoking comedy. The climax is a wild dream sequence where Mary imagines she's Lady Godiva, the role in the musical she's currently filming. Both right and left are skewered in this comic melodrama. "You have to champion the ingenuity of Busch's writing which twists twist upon twist and spins into comedy heaven."—Newsday.

(#599982)