

ONE SLIGHT HITCH

BY LEWIS BLACK



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One Slight Hitch was produced by the Williamstown Theatre Festival,
Jenny Gersten, Artistic Director, on July 6, 2011.

Seattle premiere produced by A Contemporary Theatre, Seattle, WA,
Kurt Beattie, Artistic Director; Carlo Scandiuzzi, Executive Director.

Subsequently produced by George Street Playhouse, October 2, 2012,
David Saint, Artistic Director; Norma Kaplan, Managing Director.

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ONE SLIGHT HITCH was produced by the Williamstown Theatre Festival (Jenny Gersten, Artistic Director) in Williamstown, Massachusetts, on July 6, 2011. It was directed by Joe Grifasi; the scenic design was by Robin Vest; the costume design was by Susan Hilferty; the lighting design was by Rui Ruita; the sound design was by Charles Coes; the production manager was Jeremiah Thies; the production stage manager was Libby Unsworth; and the casting was by Calleri Casting. The cast was as follows:

DOC	Mark Linn-Baker
DELIA	Lizbeth Mackay
RYAN	Justin Long
P.B.	Jeanna Phillips
MELANIE	Clea Alsip
COURTNEY	Megan Ketch
HARPER	Ben Cole

ONE SLIGHT HITCH was produced by George Street Playhouse (David Saint, Artistic Director; Norma Kaplan, Managing Director) in New Brunswick, New Jersey, on October 2, 2012. It was directed by Joe Grifasi; the set design was by Bob Dahlstrom; the costume design was by Susan Hilferty; the lighting design was by Rui Ruita; and the sound design was by Christopher J. Bailey. The cast was as follows:

DOC	Mark Linn-Baker
DELIA	Lizbeth Mackay
RYAN	Christopher Tocco
P.B.	Lauren Ashley Carter
MELANIE	Clea Alsip
COURTNEY	Rosie Benton
HARPER	Scott Drummond

CHARACTERS

DOC COLEMAN — The father. A general practitioner. A charming, eccentric conservative. Usually straight-up.

DELIA COLEMAN — The mother. In a constant state of panic.

RYAN — Early thirties. Until seven months ago, he had lived with Courtney for two and a half years.

P.B. — Sixteen-year-old daughter. Loosest in family.

MELANIE — Twenty-something daughter. Nurse. Attractive and psychotic.

COURTNEY — Freelance writer. Has just published her first novel which was almost successful.

HARPER — Early thirties. Logical and wealthy. Engaged to Courtney.

PLACE

The Colemans' home in an upper-class suburb.

TIME

It's 11:00 A.M. on Courtney's wedding day. Summer 1981.

ONE SLIGHT HITCH

ACT ONE

The living room of the Colemans in an upper-class suburb of Cincinnati, Ohio. Contemporary colonial style. Warm and neat with classic moulding and floral wallpaper.

Downstage right is a decorative fireplace with brass andirons and fireplace tools in a stand. Facing the fireplace is a low swivel chair. At the center of the stage right wall is a large door that is the formal main entrance into the house. The door has a peephole in the center. Above this on the upstage wall is a large arch behind which we see part of a formal dining room that presumably leads offstage towards the kitchen and into the yard. Just left of the archway is a staircase which leads to the upper bedrooms. Built into the staircase as it rises is a small door to the basement. To the left of this on the upstage wall is the door to the closet. Just downstage of that on the stage left wall is the door to the bathroom and immediately downstage of that is a small table which serves as a bar with glasses and an ample supply of liquor in bottles and decanters. At the downstage left edge of the stage is a window seat in front of a suggested bay window. There is a sofa in the middle of the room and in front of it a long coffee table. Through the archway we can see part of a long formal dining table that extends offstage. The table and chairs around it are covered with boxes and other materials suggesting some process of packing or unpacking. [Note: When seen in the first act, these objects should not appear too specific to wedding preparations.]

At opening, the entire room is dimly lit in an eerie light. Some of the doors are open, allowing shafts of light in. The dining

room table, swivel chair and bar are covered with sheets. The sofa is also covered with a sheet and under it are piled some "objects." [Note: When the lights go to black these "objects" will be replaced by Doc and Delia who recreate a similar shape under the sheet causing us to believe they are still the aforementioned "objects."]

In the blackout we hear the last few lines of Ronald Reagan's acceptance speech at the Republican Convention [1984 version]. The sound fades away on crowd applause and a spotlight come up slowly on P.B. sitting ownstage on the window seat.

P.B. As I grow older I find I don't see things more clearly, I am just more comfortable with the blur. This is how I looked thirty-odd years ago, in nineteen eighty-one. I was just sixteen and fancy free. I was christened Plante Ballantine Davis Coleman. Plante Ballantine would have been a wonderful name if I was going to be Scarlett O'Hara's best friend and the owner of a large Southern plantation. So I am called P.B. for obvious reasons. Outside of my name, I couldn't ask for a better upbringing. And this is the house I was raised in. Oh, how I miss the simple life of the nineteen-eighties. I yearn for the eighties, the sheer joy of knowing so little. The comfort it gave. Back then there was a normalcy in the air. I'm a Republican, so normal is real important to me. I like rules. I learned being liberated only means you are opening a whole new can of worms. Liberation is just another word for confusion. I need orderliness in my life. I am much happier when things are black and white. Grey doesn't suit me. And I can remember precisely when I began to feel that way. The day my life changed. No, it was not the day I lost my virginity. Besides, I didn't lose it. I gave it away. It was today. A late summer day in 1981. Ronald Reagan was the president and America was getting back on track. You could smell hope in the air. Real Hope. And there were values. Real family values. It was a great time to be alive. The number one TV show was *Dallas*. The number one movie was *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. The number one song that year was "Bette Davis Eyes." (A song like "Bette Davis Eyes" comes up softly and the volume increases as she speaks over it. *) It said nothing at all, but it said it so well. It was sexy but not dirty. Made you want to dance. (P.B. puts her headphones

on and it bumps to full volume. She dances around the chair downstage right and pulls off the sheet. Music volume drops briefly for her line.) This is my favorite chair! (Music up as lights further illuminate stage right. Still dancing, she tosses the sheet out the front door which slowly closes on its own. She dances to the liquor cart and removes the sheet.) This is our bar! (Again lights and music as above as she tosses the sheet out the bathroom door which closes. She continues her dance around the sofa and as she peels off the sheet covering the sofa she says:) And these are my parents! (She reveals Doc and Delia sitting on the sofa staring out. This brings lights up to full onstage as P.B. dances up the stairs, dragging the sheet behind her. Music fades as she exits. Doc is in slippers and an old robe. Delia wears a stylish housedress and holds a clipboard. After a pause, Delia speaks.)

DELIA. We've done a wonderful job, don't you think?

DOC. We certainly did. It'll be beautiful.

DELIA. Really?

DOC. Absolutely.

DELIA. Are you sure?

DOC. I'm certain.

DELIA. You're just saying that.

DOC. No, I'm not.

DELIA. Yes, you are. You always do that. You think it calms me down.

DOC. No, I mean it. Sometimes I don't. But this time I do. I really do.

DELIA. Doc?

DOC. I really really really do.

DELIA. Alright, maybe you do, but your standards are always lower than mine.

DOC. What can I say? You are a perfectionist, my dear. I don't know where I'd be without you. Wallowing away in some sty ...

DELIA. Oh Doc, stop!

DOC. Delia, it's going to be a beautiful wedding.

DELIA. I hope so. (Short pause.) Not like ours.

DOC. No. Not like ours. But we did the best we could.

DELIA. It was our best but it was so sad.

DOC. Well, if the bills that are rolling in are any indication, Courtney's wedding will be epic.

DELIA. She deserves it. Courtney will have the wedding we never had.

* See Special Note on Songs and Recordings on copyright page.

DOC. The weather is perfect. It's all falling into place.
 DELIA. It's going to be a marvelous day.
 DOC. Our Courtney deserves the best.
 DELIA. It's her day, too.
 DOC. She's a lovely bride, the image of you, my dear.
 DELIA. She's a vision in that dress. (*Staring at her clipboard.*) Oh my God, Doc! I almost forgot the bug bombs.
 DOC. For my azaleas. Where is Courtney?
 DELIA. Off somewhere, counting her blessings, I imagine.
 DOC. I don't think her generation counts blessings.
 DELIA. (*With clipboard in hand, she stands and moves away, checking the room to be sure that everything is in order.*) Did the florist call?
 DOC. Not that I know of.
 DELIA. He's really one of the best there is. I can't wait to see what he's done. He did a centerpiece with daisies and Rit dye for the Lancasters that was no less than spectacular. It's all falling into place, Doc. The caterer is even bringing the Civil War punchbowls I wanted. Now does your tux ...
 DOC. It fits, Delia. Just another one of life's little miracles.
 DELIA. I've still got to call the photographers. I can't believe it, Doc, but I just found out ... they are lesbians ... but their work is impeccable.
 DOC. Lesbians! I didn't know. I can't even tell when I meet one. And I'm a doctor!
 DELIA. Well, I am sure it makes them better photographers. (*Back to her clipboard.*) I'll have P.B. tidy up that hall closet, and do the breakfast dishes.
 DOC. You've done a hell of a job, Delia.
 DELIA. It's not over yet. (*She yells up the stairs.*) P.B.!
 DOC. It wasn't easy.
 DELIA. There are rewards. I think she's going to be very happy with Ryan.
 DOC. Harper.
 DELIA. What?
 DOC. You meant Harper.
 DELIA. What did I say?
 DOC. You said Ryan.
 DELIA. I did?
 DOC. Yes.
 DELIA. I have to watch that.

DOC. It wasn't that long ago that they were a couple.
 DELIA. That wasn't a relationship. It was just a phase all women go through.
 DOC. That's all in the past, Delia.
 DELIA. Thank God. Ryan was such a mess.
 DOC. Well, you won't have to think about Ryan again.
 DELIA. Harper.
 DOC. Harper.
 DELIA. Harper. He's such a nice boy. A real gentleman.
 DOC. He's certainly a snappy dresser.
 DELIA. They make a lovely couple. (*Returning to her clipboard again.*) Now. We need at least a magnum of Chianti for Father Capatello and his entourage. I do hope the caterer remembers to bring a few extra tables for the gifts. Oh yes, and some Tab for the diabetic side of your family.
 DOC. Is there anything else I can do, Delia, really, please.
 DELIA. You can relax. (*Beat.*) After you get the bug bombs.
 DOC. You take it easy, too. We're ahead of schedule.
 DELIA. Yes. Just a few more odds and ends and everything will be perfect. (*She starts up the stairs.*)
 DOC. You look beautiful, Delia.
 DELIA. You bring out the best in me, Doc. (*Doc crosses to the bar and makes a drink, Delia shouts upstairs while going off.*) P.B.! The closet's a mess! (*With P.B.'s entrance we hear a song like "Jessie's Girl" blaring as colored lights dance disco-style throughout the song.* She dances downstairs twirling a pink rain slicker and tosses it into the closet. Doc is oblivious to her music and he mouths a few calm words to P.B. which she doesn't hear. She dances back up the stairs and exits as the disco music and lights fade. The doorbell rings loudly. Offstage.*) Doc, the door!
 DOC. P.B.!
 DELIA. (*Offstage.*) Doc! (*The doorbell rings again.*)
 DOC. ALRIGHT! I GOT IT! (*Doc calmly crosses towards the front door as the doorbell rings again.*)
 DOC. I'M COMING!
 DELIA. (*Offstage.*) It's the flowers, Doc. It's got to be the flowers. (*Doc opens the door. He stares for a beat.*)
 RYAN. Hey, Doc. (*Doc closes the door.*)

* See Special Note on Songs and Recordings on copyright page.

DELIA. (*Offstage.*) How do they look?
 DOC. What?
 DELIA. (*Offstage.*) The flowers. How do they look?
 DOC. It wasn't the florist. (*The doorbell rings. Doc opens the door.*)
 RYAN. Doc, it's me.
 DOC. Yes. Yes. I can see that. (*Doc closes the door. Ryan rings the doorbell. Doc considers for a moment and opens the door.*)
 RYAN. Aren't you going to ask me in?
 DOC. (*Calmly.*) No.
 RYAN. You said your door was always open.
 DOC. Did I? Well, there's theory and then there's practice.
 RYAN. I see.
 DOC. Good. Goodbye. (*Doc closes the door as Delia comes downstairs.*)
 DELIA. Who was it?
 DOC. Just another religious fanatic. I think it's a Jehovah's witness.
 DELIA. Where do they get the energy? They were just here last week. I gave them money.
 DOC. What for?
 DELIA. So I wouldn't have to talk to them. (*The doorbell rings. Delia moves towards the door but Doc stops her.*)
 DOC. DELIA! I'll handle this. You have more important things to do. (*Delia exits into the kitchen. Doc yells at the door.*) DON'T RING THE DOORBELL AGAIN. GO AWAY. JUST GO AWAY! IN THE NAME OF GOD, GO AWAY! (*Pause. Delia enters from the kitchen.*)
 DELIA. I'm going next door to the Hendersons' to pick up those ceremonial thingamajigs Suzanne made from pictures of that tribal wedding she found in the *National Geographic*.
 DOC. Delia, they are fertility symbols.
 DELIA. They are not. They're for good luck.
 DOC. We could use a bit of that. (*Before Doc can stop her, Delia hurries out the front door. Doc rushes to the door looking out expectantly as Ryan calmly enters from the kitchen. Doc, seeing the danger has passed, calmly shuts the door.*)
 RYAN. What's up, Doc?
 DOC. Ryan, as much as I may find your cloying charm endearing, I haven't time for it today. So nice to see you. Goodbye. (*He opens the door.*)
 RYAN. Goodbye?
 DOC. As in leave.

RYAN. Leave?
 DOC. As in go.
 RYAN. Go?
 DOC. As in away.
 RYAN. Away?
 DOC. Now.
 RYAN. Now?
 DOC. NOW!
 RYAN. Why?
 DOC. You know why.
 RYAN. I don't.
 DOC. Yes you do.
 RYAN. I really don't.
 DOC. You want me to tell you?
 RYAN. Please.
 DOC. Well ... It's really very simple. Things happen. Relationships end. Time for you to move on.
 RYAN. Gee, Doc.
 DOC. Don't cry. Please don't cry.
 RYAN. I thought you liked me.
 DOC. I did yesterday. I will tomorrow. I can't today.
 RYAN. What's today?
 DOC. What's today? WHAT'S TODAY?!
 RYAN. I guess I should have called.
 DOC. It would have been nice. It's what people do.
 RYAN. I just happened to be in the neighborhood.
 DOC. Really? In the neighborhood. This is Cincinnati, Ohio, son. You live in New York, New York.
 RYAN. Not anymore. (*Ryan moves a little further into the room.*) I call the road my home now.
 DOC. So you've become a hobo, certainly an interesting lifestyle choice.
 RYAN. And that's why I'm writing a new book.
 DOC. And you must regale me about it at some other time.
 RYAN. Doc, remember the '50s, Jack Kerouac and the Beat Generation?
 DOC. They never made it to Ohio. (*Doc looks out the peephole for signs of Delia.*)
 RYAN. This book is my generation's *On the Road*.
 DOC. Send me a copy. (*Opens the door.*)

RYAN. It's the '80s, only my version is pure nonfiction.
 DOC. (*Closes the door.*) Fascinating. I really want to hear all about it. But I don't have the time.
 RYAN. Doc, since Courtney left me, I've become a changed man.
 DOC. You seem the same to me.
 RYAN. I am focused.
 DOC. Not really.
 RYAN. I have a sense of destiny.
 DOC. Funny, I'm sensing delusion.
 RYAN. I was deluded, Doc, but not anymore. My life was a fantasy but now I've found reality. I've awoken from my dreams and now I can finally pursue them.
 DOC. What the hell are you talking about?
 RYAN. I'm not sure. I haven't worked it all out yet, but it sounds right. (*Ryan tosses his backpack onto the stage left side of the sofa.*)
 DOC. Look son, we're in a kind of emergency situation here.
 RYAN. I can help.
 DOC. Don't help.
 RYAN. Look, Doc, just let me use your bathroom.
 DOC. No.
 RYAN. Where am I going to find one?
 DOC. (*Crossing to the door and opening it.*) There's one at the mall, down the road ... in Dayton.
 RYAN. I can't walk that far.
 DOC. Walk? Where's your car?
 RYAN. What car? I still don't have a credit card.
 DOC. That's nothing to be proud of.
 RYAN. I hitchhiked. (*Ryan sits on the sofa.*)
 DOC. And you expect me to believe you hitchhiked to our front door?
 RYAN. I stuck my thumb out at the George Washington bridge and made it all the way to Amish country. Then I spent the next four hours in a carriage with an elder I swear was gay. Then I met a guy named Washburn.
 DOC. Ramsey Washburn?
 RYAN. Yeah. You know him?
 DOC. Certainly, he's in my foursome.
 RYAN. Foursome? ... Well, he picked me up on the Pennsylvania

Turnpike?

DOC. (*Closing the door, intrigued.*) Ramsey Washburn picked up a hitchhiker?!
 RYAN. Nice guy — sells pharmaceuticals — gave me some samples. Dropped me off at his place and I walked here. Did you know he smokes dope?
 DOC. He does?
 RYAN. Well, now he does.
 DOC. You've been in Ohio one day and already you've corrupted an Elk!
 RYAN. (*Ryan bounces on the sofa and lays down.*) Hey, this is new.
 DOC. (*Sits him upright.*) Don't get too comfortable. Say, how about a good night's sleep in a motel. My treat.
 RYAN. I don't need sleep, Doc. I slept through the '70s and now that I've awoken I can see clearly that America is changing. So I'm going out into this great land of ours and grab its ass!
 DOC. (*Crosses stage right and opens the door.*) Yes, get out of here and go grab that ass!
 RYAN. I knew you'd understand.
 DOC. And time's a-wastin'.
 RYAN. I can see your point. I'm in my early thirties and what have I done? I mean, look at Lee Harvey Oswald. He was barely twenty-six and he'd already killed Kennedy. That is, if you believe the Warren Commission. It seems so fantastic, how many ways can a bullet bounce? (*Doc closes the door, crosses to Ryan and sits next to him on the sofa.*)
 DOC. Son, it's obvious you haven't talked to anyone in a while. Don't you have a friend, or a therapist?
 RYAN. That's you, Doc.
 DOC. I'm just a GP son. I'm good with a cough or a swollen tonsil to tug on.
 RYAN. I'm just in a bit of a freefall right now, but I am going to land on my feet. Let's face it, it's not been one of my best years. Courtney walked out on the lease and left me for another guy ...
 DOC. Harper.
 RYAN. Harper!
 DOC. Harper.
 RYAN. What kind of a name is that? She left me for Harper and the country left me for Ronald Reagan.
 DOC. And now it's time for me to leave you.

RYAN. Alone again, Doc.

DOC. Alone. Son, I've spent my adult life living in a house filled with nothing but women. Now that's being alone.

RYAN. So, you have been living in a Jane Austen novel?

DOC. This is no book. This is REAL pain.

RYAN. I know about pain, Doc, cause my bladder is about to explode. *(He gets up.)* Just let me use your bathroom.

DOC. No!

RYAN. I'm begging you, Doc, I'm about to pee in my pants.

DELIA. *(Offstage.)* DOC!

DOC. Alright! *(He hustles Ryan to the bathroom.)* Just shut up and make it quick. If Delia sees you, she'll run right off her rails.

RYAN. *(Entering the bathroom.)* I thought she liked me.

DOC. She never liked you.

RYAN. She seemed to like me.

DOC. She was being nice. *(Doc shoves him in and shuts the door just as Delia enters through the front door carrying two large Polynesian fertility statues. The male statue has a large protruding penis and the female has exaggerated breasts. She crosses up the stairs with the statues.)*
DELIA. IF MRS. BENDERSON CALLS FROM THE CHURCH, TELL HER WE DO NOT WANT AN OUTDOOR CRUCIFIX! *(She exits upstairs.)*

DOC. YES, DEAR! *(He knocks on the bathroom door.)* Time's up.

RYAN. *(Poking his head out from the bathroom. Enthusiastically.)* Listen, Doc, I know it sounds silly but I believe I was brought here by some higher force. Call it God, call it Yahweh, call it what you will. But Doc, this is fate. I've always run from my fate. And for one brief, shining moment, I finally stopped running.

DOC. Run, boy, run like the wind!

RYAN. I've avoided it for years, but I think I'm finally growing up. *(He goes back into the bathroom.)*

DOC. *(Loudly, to the door.)* I don't think we're talking growth. We're talking end of growth, death to be precise, yours to be exact. You asked to use the bathroom, so for God's sake, use it. And if that doesn't satisfy you, then just widdle where you will, claim the turf and be done with us. *(P.B. has entered with a broom from upstairs during Doc's speech. She stops and watches him talk to the bathroom door.)*

P.B. Dad. You're not talking to anyone.

DOC. You clean out that kitchen, young lady, and I mean right now!

P.B. I thought Mom wanted me to clean the closet?

DOC. Fine, but do it in the kitchen! *(P.B. moves to Doc.)*

P.B. Dad, you're not making sense.

DOC. P.B., your mother's had only one dream that's allowed her any real joy and that's when one of you would decide to get married — when she could finally plan a real wedding day like the one she never had.

P.B. Didn't you guys get married?

DOC. Of course we did. But our wedding wasn't like this. Christ, there was a war on. There was no wedding dress. I wore my uniform and your mother never lets me forget that I was the best dressed person there. Instead of a bouquet, her friend did something with a Kleenex.

P.B. Gee, that sounds awful.

DOC. It was a bad start but it turned out fine, didn't it?

P.B. Honestly, Dad, from my perspective ...

DOC. It's a rhetorical question. *(Doc brings P.B. downstage.)* P.B., how can we get rid of him?

P.B. Whom do we have to get rid of, Pop?

DOC. Ryan.

P.B. Ryan?

DOC. He's in there. And your mother's up there, but she's almost here. And so I've got to stop her, because who knows when he'll be coming out of there.

P.B. What's he doing in there?

DOC. Destroying a lifetime of good intentions. Just get rid of him. I've got to go and stop your mother from coming down. Ryan doesn't know a thing about Courtney's wedding, so just do what you can do and get him out of here.

P.B. But what if...?

DOC. There are no if's. *(He turns and heads upstairs.)* Get rid of him.

P.B. I'll do what I can.

DOC. You can do better than that.

P.B. Why do you always say that?

DOC. Because it's what my dad always said to me.

P.B. But Pop ...

DOC. *(Exiting.)* I've got to help your mother! *(P.B. gathers herself, goes to the bathroom, and knocks on the door.)*

P.B. Ryan. *(The bathroom door opens. Ryan is shirtless and brushing his teeth.)*

RYAN. Hey P.B.!

P.B. Ryan, what are you doing here? Is it business, pleasure, or just pure masochism?

RYAN. I was just looking for a friendly face and a bathroom to use.

P.B. Hey Ryan, I'm really sorry things didn't work out for Courtney and you. It's just that you picked a really bad day to just ... show up.

RYAN. *(Reflectively.)* Story of my life, P.B. A story that's begun — *(P.B. slams the bathroom door closed.)*

DELIA. *(Offstage.)* P.B.! *(P.B. steps downstage and addresses the audience.)*

P.B. This is not my problem. It's someone else's problem. It's not my responsibility. *(Her TV-commercial voice.)* This is why the Walkman was invented. It gives life a soundtrack. It raises it above the mundane and makes life easy, simple, and fun ... And cleaning is a breeze. *(P.B. puts on the headphones as the opening of a song like "Holiday" by Madonna begins blaring and disco lights come up.* She dances into the closet with her broom as Ryan comes out of the bathroom in a towel carrying his pants and T-shirt, which he drops on the sofa. Ryan looks in his backpack and pulls out a few items of dirty clothes, which he smells, looking for something to wear that doesn't stink. He deposits them on the sofa. P.B. dances out of the closet and she notices that the bathroom door is open. She sees Ryan at the sofa and takes off her headphones. As the music stops and lights restore, Delia yells from upstairs.)*

DELIA. *(Offstage.)* P.B.! *(P.B. and Ryan stare at each other in horror. Ryan runs into the closet with his empty backpack. Delia comes down the stairs carrying a laundry basket as P.B. hurriedly tries to gather up his loose clothes. She stands there clutching them, confronted by Delia.)* Is that closet clean yet?

P.B. Almost! *(The smell of the clothes hits Delia.)*

DELIA. Omigod! How long have these been in there? These are going right in the washer. *(P.B. robotically drops the clothes into the basket and Delia heads towards the basement.)* Your father has a love affair with plant manure! *(Delia exits into the basement. P.B. figures they got away with it. She runs to the closet, opens it and Ryan runs out heading directly to the bathroom as P.B. goes into the closet. Both doors close simultaneously. A crash is heard, then Doc's voice saying, "Awwww!" He comes downstairs holding the male statue in one hand*

and the severed penis in the other.)

DOC. Delia!

DELIA. *(Entering from basement.)* What was that!

DOC. I've rendered the fertility symbol infertile.

DELIA. Perfect!

DOC. Where's the Krazy Glue? *(Delia takes the body of the statue from Doc. They move to the sofa arguing and sit as Courtney enters through front door.)*

DELIA. You can't leave well enough alone, can you?

DOC. I was just trying to be helpful.

DELIA. DON'T HELP! *(As Courtney shuts the door they turn to see her.)*

DELIA. There's our baby. DOC. Awwwww.

(She stands by the front door looking dazed. She is dressed in cutoff jeans and dirty sneakers and is breathing heavily.)

COURTNEY. Not now. I'm not suitable for hugging.

DELIA. Courtney, what have you been doing?

COURTNEY. *(With difficulty.)* I think they call it ... jogging.

DOC. When did you start jogging?

COURTNEY. Just now.

DELIA. On today of all days.

COURTNEY. It seemed like a good idea at the time. Better late than never.

DELIA. I'm not sure that applies here.

COURTNEY. *(Crossing slowly and collapsing into the window seat.)* Well, I wouldn't call it exactly jogging. Attempted jogging. There's probably another word for it. I just can't think of it. What was I thinking? Jogging? Me? Jogging? Jesus. Why do people do it? After we're married, Harper says he'd like us to do this every morning. Every morning? I'm not even a morning person. He loves to jog. Maybe something's wrong with him. Why would anyone want to feel like this?

DOC. It's supposed to be good for you.

COURTNEY. I could feel the same way if I held my breath for a few minutes. I felt better after my first cigarette.

DELIA. Tell me you're not smoking.

COURTNEY. I'm not smoking, Mom. Although if ever there was a day I'd start up again, today's the day.

DELIA. Don't you even think of it.

COURTNEY. I haven't had a thought in days because I'm ... *(She*

* See Special Note on Songs and Recordings on copyright page.

taste. He's the best. Only the best for our Courtney. He just wants to surprise us.

DELIA. Well, I don't want surprises. I want a clean house. Hurry up and get those bug bombs, Doc! (*Doc goes into the basement.*)

P.B. Bug bombs? But Mom, those are toxic!

DELIA. I know, dear. However, a little poison never hurt anybody. But one bug can destroy an entire garden party. Now get back into that kitchen, young lady. (*P.B. exits to the kitchen.*) Courtney, you come with me. (*She steers Courtney to the stairs.*)

COURTNEY. I told you to keep it simple, Mom.

DELIA. You know nothing around here is ever simple.

COURTNEY. This is all my fault. Harper and I should have eloped.

DELIA. If you had, I would have killed you.

COURTNEY. Just jumped in his car and escaped.

DELIA. Harper loves that car and would never use it for something so terrible. Now go in there and run a bath. I find that a good soaking makes me pleasantly delirious. (*As Delia and Courtney exit upstairs, Doc sneaks out from the basement looking for P.B. but not seeing her.*)

DOC. (*Calling to P.B.*) P.B.

P.B. Yeah, Dad.

DOC. (*Startled.*) Oh! He's got to get out of here. Now!

P.B. Relax, Dad. We're still the only ones who know he's here.

DOC. And what does he know?

P.B. Whatever we tell him.

DOC. Right, I like the way you think. (*Crossing to the bathroom door.*) That expensive education of yours is finally paying off.

P.B. I wouldn't go that far, Pop. You don't always get what you pay for ...

DOC. (*Loud whisper.*) Ryan!

P.B. Dad, did you know that there are girls younger than me who are dating bank execs older than you?

DOC. Ryan, open up!

P.B. And Patty Nelson, my best friend, well, she had her first abortion when she was fourteen. A V.P. from Procter & Gamble aroused the woman in her, then left her alone to deal with it.

DOC. (*To P.B.*) Do you have a hairpin?

P.B. He did give her a year's supply of shampoo, but all Patty remembers of the "incident," as she calls it, is the banana split she

ate afterwards and that her hair is softer and more manageable now. DOC. (*Leading P.B. downstage to the window seat.*) P.B. I can't do it. I tried. I need your help, he likes you. Maybe you can convince him to leave us alone. (*Doc sits on the window seat.*) I realize that I am throwing another responsibility onto your small shoulders and that I am disappointing you as a father. It may be tough on you, but it is honest. When you fall in love, you'll thank me for it. It's easier to deal with men when you realize that most of us were born to fail. (*Pause.*) I'm going to leave you now. (*He stands and moves towards the basement door. Stops.*) I'm going into the basement ... (*Pause.*) ... and watch things go 'round in the Maytag. (*He exits as Delia enters from upstairs.*)

DELIA. Did you do the dishes?

P.B. Uh, no, not yet.

DELIA. Omigod! P.B., do you realize what will happen if you don't get in there this minute, the whole plan will fail ... (*P.B. smiles at us and puts on her headphones, at which time Delia's voice fades out and a song like "Call Me" by Blondie is heard blaring while the lights go into disco land.* P.B. nods her head in time with the music as Delia continues to "speak" and tidy up the living room. P.B. is now bouncing with the beat and Delia realizes what's going on. She grabs the headset off P.B. and the music and lights instantly disappear.*) We're running out of time, P.B.! Is that lobster man finished yet?

P.B. Don't worry, Mom, it's all under control.

DELIA. It never is, my dear, we can only give the illusion that it is.

P.B. Could you put that on a sampler and give it to me for Christmas?

DELIA. Just finish the dishes, Miss Plante Ballantine.

P.B. No sweat, Mom.

DELIA. Without sweat, please. (*P.B. exits into the kitchen and Delia goes off upstairs as Melanie enters through the front door, dressed in a nurse's uniform the length of a mini-skirt. She drops her purse and walks very deliberately to the bar where she pours herself a long drink which she knocks back and savors. Reward after a long night and fortification for an even longer day.*)

MELANIE. I'M HOME! (*P.B. enters from the kitchen wearing brightly colored rubber gloves.*) Hey kid! What's up?

* See Special Note on Songs and Recordings on copyright page.

P.B. Welcome to Wedding Central. *(P.B. crosses to the sofa and sits on the back.)*
 MELANIE. Oh, god! I haven't the energy for it.
 P.B. Mom is insane. Dad's not dealing. Court's totally confused.
 MELANIE. What else is new?
 P.B. Puberty is killing me. And Ryan's here.
 MELANIE. WHAT!?
 P.B. Ryan's here, he's in the bathroom.
 MELANIE. Oh. My. God.
 P.B. And don't you breathe a word to Mom.
 MELANIE. He's really here. How romantic.
 P.B. He just came here to say hi and use our bathroom.
 MELANIE. Oh please!
 P.B. He doesn't know a thing about the wedding.
 MELANIE. And you believed him? *(Delia enters from upstairs.)*
 DELIA. Melanie, I want you to take a shower and get into the swing of things. We're running out of time. Harper will be here soon with the cake.
 MELANIE. *(Pouring another drink.)* Has it got Ken and Barbie on the top?
 DELIA. It happens to be a traditional Hapsburg. I wonder sometimes why I ever sent you all to charm school.
 MELANIE. So we could learn how to smoke.
 DELIA. You're trying my patience, young lady. Where have you been all night?
 MELANIE. I was at a bachelor party.
 DELIA. I didn't know Harper had a bachelor party.
 MELANIE. He didn't.
 DELIA. Whose bachelor party was it?
 MELANIE. I'm not sure; it was so dark inside that cake.
 DELIA. Melanie, why do you get such pleasure out of trying to shock me?
 P.B. Mom, can't you see she's just kidding you?
 DELIA. Can't she see I'm in no mood to be kidded?
 MELANIE. I was at the hospital all night.
 DELIA. What were you doing there?
 MELANIE. Saving lives?
 DELIA. That's no excuse. Where is your father?
 P.B. He's in the basement, Mom.
 DELIA. Well, go get him. He gets lost down there. He could be

down there for weeks. And finish those dishes. *(Delia runs upstairs. P.B. heads towards the basement as Melanie goes to the bathroom.)*
 P.B. Melanie, not a word. I mean it.
 MELANIE. You're no fun.
 P.B. This isn't fun, Mel. It's a wedding. And don't you forget it.
 MELANIE. It's fun, P.B., 'cause it's not ours. *(P.B. shushes Melanie and heads into the kitchen. Melanie goes to the bathroom door and knocks on it.)* Hello.
 RYAN. Melanie. Am I glad to see you.
 MELANIE. I can't believe you're here.
 RYAN. Neither can I.
 MELANIE. It's so romantic.
 RYAN. Nahhh, it's more like stupid. Stuck in a bathroom wearing a towel. I should be out there, in the heart of this country. Searching for its soul.
 MELANIE. Oh c'mon, Ryan, you're searching to find Courtney and rekindle your lost love.
 RYAN. No way. I'm on a quest to discover why America took a right turn and I didn't. I've got to get back on the road before your family wears me out.
 MELANIE. Don't hand me that crap. I know why you're here. You have the heart of a lonely hunter. Makes me swoon.
 RYAN. You're not a swooner, Mel.
 MELANIE. I know. I just like saying the word. It's as close to love as I'll ever get.
 RYAN. Like you've never been in love?
 MELANIE. Are you talking about the mutually satisfying exchange of emotion and intellect, herpes-free? I once loved a turtle but that's because he was hypoallergenic.
 RYAN. There's no guy in your life?
 MELANIE. There are several. But they're all from Ohio. They're buckeyes.
 RYAN. I've always liked Ohio. It always calms me down. It's so placid.
 MELANIE. It's the Valium of the Midwest.
 RYAN. I thought you were going to get out of here.
 MELANIE. It's hard to overcome the gravitational pull that is Ohio. We get stuck. The license plate should read Ohio: The Perfect Place to Die.
 RYAN. I'm as good as dead if your mom sees me.

MELANIE. Yeah, that's because you're too weird. You scare her.
 RYAN. I do? God, I thought she liked me.
 MELANIE. No, she's just super polite. It's why she gets migraines.
 DELIA. (*Offstage.*) Oh, Doc ...
 RYAN. Oh shit. (*Ryan goes into the bathroom. Melanie shuts the door behind him and gets a drink as Delia comes down the stairs, stopping on the landing. Doc comes up from the basement wearing gardening gloves with a gardening tool in one hand and a flower pot in the other.*)
 DELIA. The florist, Doc. Our florist's phone has been disconnected. It doesn't bode well, now, does it? I should have known something was up when I first called him. All he kept saying to me was, "I can't talk right now, I'm being watched." I've got to go over there, Doc. We can't have a wedding without flowers.
 DOC. No need to worry, Delia, a couple of calls and I'll get it all straightened out. (*Doc heads back to the basement.*)
 DELIA. I hope so, Doc. (*Delia exits upstairs and Melanie opens the bathroom door and Ryan comes out.*)
 RYAN. Melanie, I've got to get out of here. My clothes are in the wash. I need them.
 MELANIE. Why? You look good. You've lost weight.
 RYAN. Was I fat?
 MELANIE. You were a little chunky.
 RYAN. I was a chunky starving artist?
 MELANIE. Ryan, stop it. You look good. Really.
 RYAN. Melanie, seriously. I shouldn't be here. I never think things through. Maybe that's the wrong approach. Right? What am I going to do? Help me, please.
 MELANIE. What do you say to a highball?
 RYAN. A drink? That won't help.
 MELANIE. It won't hurt. You need to loosen up, young man, especially if you're going to wander around here half-naked. You know there's no better excuse for irrational behavior than booze.
 RYAN. I've really missed this place. The insanity, the denial, the alcoholism. What fun!
 MELANIE. We've missed you.
 RYAN. I miss my clothes.
 MELANIE. I don't. Do you miss Courtney?
 RYAN. I guess. Of course I do. But I try not to think about it. It hurts. I'm not big on pain. I've got to get over her and get on with my life.

MELANIE. Why didn't you marry her?
 RYAN. Courtney? Marriage? Those words are mutually exclusive. Could you imagine Courtney dressed in white, outdoors in your garden?
 MELANIE. Awash in floral arrangements.
 RYAN. A table laden with useless gifts.
 MELANIE. Wedding vows written the night before.
 RYAN. Caterers carousing with canapés.
 MELANIE. Shrimp boats as far as the eye can see.
 RYAN. And the final touch, a chocolate fountain.
 MELANIE. I love a good chocolate fountain.
 RYAN. Who doesn't.
 MELANIE. Makes me quiver.
 RYAN. Courtney's wedding day. The mind reels at the thought.
 MELANIE. You never know. Every woman has a soft spot. Even me.
 RYAN. Courtney has no soft spot. She's a writer. Can I tell you something? I've never told anyone this. I always thought we'd stumble into marriage. One day we'd wake up, have breakfast, do the laundry, get married. No big deal.
 MELANIE. I bet if she saw you here, that's exactly what would happen. You look yummy.
 RYAN. Easy.
 MELANIE. You're getting yummier by the minute.
 RYAN. Melanie.
 MELANIE. I can help you through the pain. I'm a nurse.
 RYAN. I don't need help. (*Melanie starts stalking Ryan.*)
 MELANIE. I think you do. Why not? You're a free man and I am definitely a free woman.
 RYAN. It feels a bit incestuous.
 MELANIE. We'll get over that hump.
 RYAN. Melanie, stop it! I just want to get out of here.
 MELANIE. No one's stopping you.
 RYAN. Clothes. I want my clothes.
 MELANIE. Clothes, clothes, clothes, all you can talk about is clothes. Don't you believe in love?
 RYAN. All you talk about is sex, sex, sex. Don't you believe in clothes?
 MELANIE. Enough with the clothes already. (*She rips his towel off him. Sees his boxer shorts.*) Un-fucking-believable! That's more horrifying than seeing you naked. No wonder she left you. You can't

maintain a long-term relationship wearing underwear like that.
 RYAN. You can't? (*He sheepishly covers himself with a pillow cushion.*)
 MELANIE. It's the man who has got to look good in the bedroom nowadays.
 RYAN. The towel please.
 MELANIE. You want it come and get it. (*She heads into the bathroom. Ryan doesn't move. Beat.*) I knew it, you still love her. (*She closes the door.*)
 DELIA. (*Offstage.*) P.B.! (*Ryan rushes into the closet as Delia comes to the landing.*)
 DELIA. P.B., where are you ...
 P.B. (*Entering from the kitchen wearing rubber gloves and carrying a skillet.*) I'm doing the dishes.
 DELIA. Well, get a move on, young lady.
 P.B. Poor Cinderella, her work is never done! (*P.B. heads into the kitchen.*)
 DELIA. Don't provoke me with your adolescent charm, save it for the relatives. (*She spots Melanie who comes out to fetch her drink from the coffee table.*) Melanie! Melanie, haven't you taken your shower!?
 MELANIE. I was just preparing.
 DELIA. Preparing? I didn't ask you to baptize yourself.
 MELANIE. Mom!
 DELIA. You need a shower! (*Delia exits upstairs as P.B. reenters still wearing gloves.*)
 MELANIE. How cool is it that Ryan's here!
 P.B. Not very.
 MELANIE. You've got no sense of romance, P.B. This is going to be a wonderful day and I'll drink to that. (*She refills her glass.*)
 P.B. (*P.B. sits on the center of the sofa.*) Do you think that's a good idea?
 MELANIE. It's the best one I got. Till I get another.
 P.B. But you'll be drunk for the wedding.
 MELANIE. Exactly. That's what weddings are for.
 P.B. Why do people always get drunk at weddings?
 COURTNEY. (*Enters from upstairs in a bathrobe carrying the fertility symbols.*) Tribal rites, P.B., you can't avoid them. You just get used to them. Are you wearing that outfit for professional or personal reasons? (*Courtney stashes statues in the dining area.*)
 MELANIE. I had a date with some kidneys. I just couldn't help myself.

COURTNEY. You never could.
 MELANIE. Why does everybody think I was out having fun?
 P.B. You usually are.
 MELANIE. Courtney, you need a drink.
 COURTNEY. (*Comes to the sofa and sits.*) What a splendid idea, Melanie. Pour me a scotch. Make it a double. Let's celebrate!
 P.B. What about me? (*Melanie pours two drinks.*)
 COURTNEY. You keep a clear head about you. You don't want to end up like us.
 P.B. Yes, I do.
 COURTNEY. (*She grabs P.B.*) Oh, P.B., I love you. (*Melanie crosses to the sofa with two drinks. Hands one to Courtney and hugs P.B.*)
 MELANIE. That makes two of us. (*P.B. tries to grab a drink.*)
 P.B. I'd rather have a drink.
 COURTNEY. (*Grabbing drink from P.B.*) That's all Mom needs to see is you drinking.
 P.B. Mom's the reason I want to start. She's driving me crazy! You'd think she was getting married.
 MELANIE. She is ...
 P.B. That's what Dad said. (*Imitating Doc.*) "Your mother's had only one dream. When she could finally plan a real wedding day like she never had."
 MELANIE. Mom's nuts.
 COURTNEY. But she's never wrong.
 MELANIE. What!?!
 COURTNEY. Mothers never are.
 P.B. Why is that?
 COURTNEY. It's a biological fact.
 P.B. You're not making any sense.
 COURTNEY. I don't have to make sense. I'm the bride.
 MELANIE. Marrying Harper certainly doesn't make any sense. Now marrying Ryan ... (*P.B. shoots a look at Melanie.*)
 COURTNEY. Will you forget about him? He doesn't belong in this conversation.
 MELANIE. Yeah, but —
 COURTNEY. It all seemed so romantic at the time. I was his muse, and for a time he was mine.
 MELANIE. Exactly.
 COURTNEY. Then I realized I was the only adult in our relationship.

Two writers living in a filthy city full of bugs and bitchy waiters ...
(She goes to the mantle and opens a book pretending to ignore them.)
 P.B. But you wrote a lot of good stories then.
 COURTNEY. Harper will inspire me to write new ones.
 MELANIE. I can see that. "The Eagle Scout's Passion." Or "The Lover wore Seersucker." *(Melanie and P.B. laugh.)* Stick with Ryan, Court.
 COURTNEY. Impossible. Ryan is incapable of making plans.
 MELANIE. Ahhh. So the perfect husband is one who can plan well.
 COURTNEY. Plans are important.
 MELANIE. Does Harper plan well in the sack? *(P.B. giggles.)*
 COURTNEY. Melanie! Harper and I have goals ...
 MELANIE. That are completely different.
 P.B. But aren't opposites supposed to attract? Like magnets?
 COURTNEY. Precisely.
 MELANIE. That's physics. This is love. How did someone as anal as Harper sweep you, the unsweepable, off your feet?
 COURTNEY. You don't really want to know.
 P.B. I do.
 COURTNEY. You're not going to believe it.
 MELANIE. Try me.
 P.B. Me too!
 COURTNEY. I never thought this could happen to me. *(Romantically, wandering across to the window seat.)* It was like every girl's dream come true. I was in London for my book tour. Harper was there, presenting a paper for some prestigious body or another. We met in a bookstore. We had a drink. And as we parted, he turned to me and said, "I hope you realize that you just met the man you're going to marry."
 P.B. and MELANIE. NO!
 COURTNEY. Yes. *(Both P.B. and Melanie are disgusted.)*
 MELANIE. Nooo!! P.B. Ewww!
 COURTNEY. That's what he said. I couldn't make that up.
 MELANIE. No one says that.
 COURTNEY. He did.
 P.B. Wow. That's like out of a bad movie.
 MELANIE. I could almost gag.
 P.B. I could almost puke.
 COURTNEY. It left me breathless. And he was such a romantic. The flowers. The notes. The attentiveness. It was just so ...

MELANIE. Queer?
 COURTNEY. Romantic.
 MELANIE. That's bullshit. You can't marry him, Court.
 P.B. Why shouldn't she?
 MELANIE. Because he's not right.
 COURTNEY. You don't get it, Melanie. There's more to life than one night stands. More to life than the freedom and independence women are always talking about, but are never able to achieve. Because all that talk boils down to is one lonely pint of yogurt sitting in an empty fridge.
 MELANIE. Then maybe you should buy more when you shop, but you shouldn't get married. Do you really want to be stuck in Ohio?
 P.B. Wait. We're stuck in Ohio.
 MELANIE. Don't remind me. *(Melanie drinks.)*
 COURTNEY. What do you think, P.B.?
 P.B. You should marry Harper?
 MELANIE. Why?
 P.B. 'Cause Mom will kill you. *(Laughter.)*
 MELANIE. I'll drink to that! *(She downs her drink and crosses to the bar for a refill.)*
 COURTNEY. You'll drink to anything.
 MELANIE. Anytime. Anywhere. I don't need an occasion.
 P.B. Then what makes New Year's special?
 MELANIE. I drink with a hat on!
 COURTNEY. Melanie, someday you'll finally get it. Some Christmas Day in the future, when we're all standing around just like we are now. Toasting away. *(Gesturing to the room.)* Only it will be in my living room, in my house ... my home, and standing next to me will be Harper, my handsome and successful husband. And I'll be grinning from ear to ear and you'll all be wondering how did she get to be so content.
 MELANIE. *(Raising her glass.)* "Marriage is an institution designed by losers to make them feel like winners."
 COURTNEY. Sounds like Ryan.
 MELANIE. It was from your short story, the one *The New Yorker* published.
 COURTNEY. That was fiction.
 MELANIE. It's you.
 COURTNEY. I wrote that before I met Harper.

MELANIE. Good thing or you wouldn't have written the story.
P.B. It wasn't so long ago. That you were happy with Ryan.
COURTNEY. I was never "happy" with Ryan.
MELANIE. Yes you were, and you changed your mind. And I'm betting you'll change your mind again in a year or two.
COURTNEY. My plans don't include any more changes.
MELANIE. More plans?
P.B. Marci Meyer's Jewish uncle says, "Man makes plans and God laughs."
COURTNEY. (*Starting to exit up the stairs.*) My plan for today is all about Harper.
MELANIE. Talk to me after the divorce.
COURTNEY. MELANIE! (*She comes back down to the sofa and confronts Mel.*)
MELANIE. COURTNEY! (*P.B. runs to the bar and pours herself a drink.*)
COURTNEY. You're jealous!
MELANIE. You're nuts!
COURTNEY. You're drunk!
MELANIE. BINGO!
P.B. Ladies. Please ... (*P.B. runs between Courtney and Melanie and jumps on the sofa holding a drink.*) A toast. Here's to us. We're the best.
ALL. Screw the rest. (*They laugh. Doc enters from the basement and crosses down left as they throw back their drinks. He has a fishing pole, and is wearing a hat with flies and lures on it.*)
DOC. Ahhhhhhhhhh, a sight like this makes a father very happy. (*Melanie takes P.B.'s drink and the girls sit together on the sofa.*)
COURTNEY. I'd love for you to take me down the aisle in that gear, Pop.
DOC. I'd love to. You on my arm while I cast for loose jewelry.
P.B. (*She comes down to join Doc.*) What about the bug bombs, Dad?
DOC. I can't find them. I did find my favorite rod. My old high school rod.
MELANIE. Does your rod hold special meaning today, Dad?
DOC. I thought it's time to show the old rod to P.B. (*Melanie and Courtney roar with laughter.*) What, I never took her fishing.
COURTNEY. It's a horrible way to spend a day, P.B. Sooo boring.
MELANIE. And if you're lucky enough to catch anything, you get

to watch it die.
COURTNEY. And it always rains.
DOC. I wouldn't have it any other way.
P.B. Doesn't sound like much fun, Dad, couldn't we just go to the mall?
DOC. You might enjoy it, you never know. Give us a chance to talk.
P.B. We can talk at the mall.
DOC. (*Looking out while imagining a river. "Casts out" over the audience.*) Nothing beats the sight of a sunset while standing on the banks of the old Monongahela, P.B.
P.B. According to my life science class there aren't any fish in the Monongahela anymore. It's filled with all sorts of industrial scum and refuse.
DOC. Liberal propaganda. Besides, there's some kind of fish that lives on that kind of stuff. They're ugly and twisted and you can't eat 'em. Can't even hold onto them they smell so bad. But they'll give you a hell of a fight. (*Delia enters from upstairs.*)
DELIA. Am I the only one who knows that there is a wedding that's going to take place in our backyard in less than two hours? (*Doc quickly puts vest and hat on P.B. and hands her the fishing rod and exits upstairs quietly.*)
DOC. That's exactly what I was telling them, dear.
DELIA. (*Collecting glasses.*) I know it may seem hard to believe, girls, but if we don't get our rears in gear, this will not be the beautiful day we've all envisioned but a nightmare from which we will never awaken.
MELANIE. Mom, stop worrying, it's going to be just perfect.
DELIA. You can never be too sure, my dear. P.B., there are a few dishes left in the sink. (*P.B. exits to the kitchen.*) Melanie, you still haven't taken a shower. (*Melanie crawls toward the bathroom and stops at the bar to refill.*) Courtney, you come with me and we'll get started on your hair.
COURTNEY. (*A little tipsy.*) My hair. Oh my god, I forgot my hair. What am I going to do with my hair? My hair has never been good ... it's stringy, flat, lifeless. It has no bounce, no shine. It's my hair.
DELIA. (*Delia guides Courtney up the stairs.*) You have your Grandmother's hair.
COURTNEY. Grandma's dead, Mom. Are you saying I have hair like a dead woman?
DELIA. Oh Courtney, please. (*The phone rings as Courtney exits.*)

P.B. *(Offstage.)* I got it! *(Doc rushes downstairs in a panic almost knocking Delia over.)*
 DOC. My azaleas, dear god, my azaleas! *(P.B. enters from the kitchen.)*
 P.B. Dad, Uncle Jack is on the phone.
 DOC. *(Crossing to the front door.)* Find out what he wants, P.B., I've got to get out there before the caterers destroy my azalea bush. *(Doc exits through the front door.)*
 DELIA. What does Uncle Jack want?
 P.B. He said he needs a bigger room. He's bringing a new girlfriend. They had some kind of extraordinary experience on the bus.
 MELANIE. I hope she's smarter than the last one. *(As she enters the bathroom with a fresh drink.)* It took us three days to get her out of those handcuffs.
 P.B. What do I tell Uncle Jack?
 DELIA. To hell with Uncle Jack!
 P.B. Mom!
 DELIA. If you keep moving, everything will be fine. *(The doorbell rings.)* Now what!? *(Delia opens the door and Doc sweeps into the room, heading for the bar.)*
 DOC. It wasn't easy, but the azalea bush has been saved.
 DELIA. Enough with your azaleas. Now I know why our children find it so hard to uphold tradition. It's exhausting! *(Delia flops on couch.)* I just need a moment of peace. I just need one moment of peace. *(Beat.)*
 DOC. Having fun?
 DELIA. Kiss me before I cry. *(Doc crosses to sofa. They kiss and hug. Courtney comes down slowly.)*
 COURTNEY. Boy, you two have something I'll never have. *(Doc and Delia separate and compose themselves.)*
 DOC. What's that?
 COURTNEY. I don't know, but I'll never have it.
 DELIA. Of course you will.
 COURTNEY. No, I won't.
 DELIA. If you want it, you'll have it.
 COURTNEY. *(Crosses to the center of the sofa.)* How can I have something I can't even begin to describe?
 DOC. You'll have it and more, I promise, darling.
 COURTNEY. *(Sitting on the sofa between Doc and Delia.)* Oh Dad.
 DELIA. Listen to your father. For the first time in thirty some odd years that we've been married he's making sense.

COURTNEY. Oh, Mom.
 DOC. Listen to your mother. You know the way she is. She rarely gives out a compliment.
 COURTNEY. Only on special occasions, I know.
 DOC. And this is the most special of special occasions.
 DELIA. You're doing the right thing, Court. Really, I promise. You have nothing to worry about.
 COURTNEY. Oh, you two. God, I love you. *(She hugs them both.)*
 DOC. If I don't leave now, I'll start crying. *(He exits to the basement.)*
 DELIA. *(Beginning to cry.)* Oh, Courtney, we're so happy! *(She runs upstairs bursting into sobs. Pause. Courtney collapses to the right side of the sofa — lost.)*
 COURTNEY. Shit. *(Ryan, yawning from a nap, emerges from the closet wearing P.B.'s pink rain slicker and clutching a pillow. Staring at the bathroom door, he backs up to the sofa without noticing Courtney. He sits slowly on the stage left side, hugging the pillow, without noticing a distracted Courtney. Long pause. Slowly they both turn until their eyes meet. They leap to their feet on either side of the sofa.)*
 RYAN. JESUS CHRIST! COURTNEY. OH MY GOD!
 No, no, no! I don't believe it!
 RYAN and COURTNEY. SON OF A BITCH!!!
 RYAN. Not you!
 COURTNEY. Not me?!
 RYAN. I don't need this!
 COURTNEY. What do you mean, not me?
 RYAN. I don't have the energy for this.
 COURTNEY. You never had any energy.
 RYAN. Now that you're out of my life, I do.
 COURTNEY. I don't have time for this.
 RYAN. Look around the room. Who's asking for your time?
 COURTNEY. I can't believe I gave you three years of my life.
 RYAN. You took three years of my life.
 COURTNEY. Fuck you!
 RYAN. Fuck moi?
 COURTNEY. What the hell are you doing here?
 RYAN. Me? What the hell are you doing here?
 COURTNEY. Let me count the ways. It's my parent's house. It's my home. I belong here. This is insane. You shouldn't be here.
 RYAN. Hell, if I knew you were going to be here, you think I'd be here?

COURTNEY. Why are you here?
 RYAN. Some unpaid bills. A hasty departure from New York. A long night of hitchhiking.
 COURTNEY. You were hitchhiking? You're an idiot.
 RYAN. No. I'm a romantic. And if I knew you were going to be here, I would have kept right on going. I can get abuse at any truck stop.
 COURTNEY. You expect me to believe that?
 RYAN. I just dropped by to say hello to my almost, maybe, in a weird sort of way, in-laws.
 COURTNEY. Your in-laws? What's the matter with you, Ryan?
 RYAN. I'm sure you've got a list of your own, but let's see, I'd say that I'm a dreamer, and an underachiever, and as you well know, lactose intolerant. That's just for starters.
 COURTNEY. Don't be coy with me.
 RYAN. And I have, as you also know, not a coy bone in my body.
 COURTNEY. I can't believe I used to think you were charming.
 RYAN. Well, I am. I am a different kind of charming. The irritating kind.
 COURTNEY. (*Crossing to Ryan.*) You are such an asshole.
 RYAN. (*Stepping towards Courtney.*) Hard as it might be for your ego to take, I didn't come here to see you. This asshole has places to go. Things that must be done. This asshole started a new book.
 COURTNEY. You always are starting a new book, asshole. You just never finish one.
 RYAN. Well, if I only wrote short stories, like you, I would. I know they are tough to write, but they are short.
 COURTNEY. You're not cut out for short stories. They're too precise for you.
 RYAN. (*Sits on the arm of the sofa.*) I'm serious though, Courtney. I think I am onto something special.
 COURTNEY. What, pray tell? Amuse me.
 RYAN. I am writing an *On the Road* for our time.
 COURTNEY. You moron! It's timeless. Why would you want to rewrite *On The Road*?
 RYAN. Goddamnit, I'm not rewriting it. I'm writing my book about America. I'm the new lost soul in search of my lost country. Only instead of driving through, I'm hitchhiking my way across the country in hopes of finding it.
 COURTNEY. Well, then you should reread *The Odyssey* for

starters and I think a bit of Steinbeck would be a big help.
 RYAN. No. No. No. This is going to be nonfiction. Which by the way is the new fiction.
 COURTNEY. No, it's not. Fiction is fiction. That's like saying nonsense is the new sense.
 RYAN. That works for me. All the nons are now the norm.
 COURTNEY. And where do you go from here?
 RYAN. Wherever the road is going, that's where I am going.
 COURTNEY. (*Standing offstage.*) Well, you shouldn't have come here.
 RYAN. (*Standing.*) Well, that's why I'm going.
 COURTNEY. You mean you were going to leave here without even trying to see me? Not even a hello, nice to see you, and goodbye?
 RYAN. Why would I?
 COURTNEY. Why wouldn't you?
 RYAN. Because you left me ... with a lease I couldn't afford, by the way.
 COURTNEY. (*Guiltily.*) I didn't mean to.
 RYAN. Well, you did.
 COURTNEY. I know. I'm sorry.
 RYAN. Sorry doesn't cut it.
 COURTNEY. What would cut it?
 RYAN. Half the rent would have been nice.
 COURTNEY. (*Angrily.*) Stop feeling sorry for yourself.
 RYAN. You are the one who taught me that one can find total fulfillment in self-pity.
 COURTNEY. You're reminding me why I hate you!
 RYAN. You're reminding me why I love you. (*Beat.*)
 COURTNEY. Maybe it's time for you to go.
 RYAN. It'd be my pleasure, but my clothes are in the wash!
 COURTNEY. Tell me the truth. You really didn't come here to see me?
 RYAN. No, you're the last person I expected to see.
 COURTNEY. Well, where did you expect me to be?
 RYAN. Anywhere but here.
 COURTNEY. Where else would I be on my wedding day? (*Pause.*)
 RYAN. On your WHAT!
 COURTNEY. Does that seem so strange? People do it all the time.
 RYAN. But not you! No, I don't believe it. You've got to be kidding me. Just months ago you said you would rather put your head

in a blender ...

COURTNEY. But then I met Harper.

RYAN. Harper?! What kind of a name is that?

COURTNEY. It's the name of the man I'm going to marry.

RYAN. What did this guy do to you, knock you up!

COURTNEY. Ryan!

RYAN. Well, then did he use some sort of alien mind probe on you?

COURTNEY. I realize it seems sudden. But when you know you've met the man you're going to spend the rest of your life with, you marry him.

RYAN. You DO?! Since when? Since why? You never wanted to get married.

COURTNEY. Well, not to you.

RYAN. That was one of the reasons you liked me. You hated the institution of marriage and with me you knew you could always avoid it.

COURTNEY. I know, but then I met Harper and I fell hard.

RYAN. Onto what? A concrete abutment? I get it. You're brain damaged.

COURTNEY. I knew you wouldn't understand.

RYAN. Boy, this Harper must be something. What's he do for a living? Is he a professional brainwasher?

COURTNEY. (*Emphatically.*) He's a psychologist.

RYAN. Perfect! You two are probably so objective you don't even need to touch.

COURTNEY. He doesn't take me for granted.

RYAN. It takes time. Being taken for granted is one of the cornerstones of a good marriage. (*Melanie enters from the bathroom, leaving the door open. She's wearing only a towel and drying her hair with another towel.*)

MELANIE. Don't you have something to do today, Courtney? (*She moves to Ryan's side.*) Don't worry, I'll take care of Ryan. He's my wedding date.

COURTNEY. Why are you doing this?

MELANIE. Why not? (*She crosses to the stairs.*)

COURTNEY. Common courtesy. Our parents. You're my sister.

MELANIE. She wants you, Ryan.

COURTNEY. Get out of here, Melanie!

MELANIE. I can see it in her eyes. (*Courtney chases a giggling Melanie off upstairs.*)

COURTNEY. (*Sitting on the stairs. Beat.*) Ryan, I know this must

hurt.

RYAN. Not so much. Now that I know you're crazy. This is a big mistake!

COURTNEY. You were a big mistake.

RYAN. Then this is a whopper! Courtney, you can't do this.

COURTNEY. It's a little late for that.

RYAN. No, it isn't.

COURTNEY. If you're really my friend, please, leave me alone. (*Crosses to the front door and holds it open for him.*)

RYAN. I am your friend, and that's why I'm staying. (*He sits on the arm of the sofa.*)

COURTNEY. No, you're not.

RYAN. Yes, I am. (*Courtney crosses to him, leaving the door open.*)

COURTNEY. Kiss me goodbye.

RYAN. I never kissed you hello. (*Beat.*)

COURTNEY. Hello. (*She grabs his collar and pulls him into an abrupt kiss which becomes softer and more passionate. The front door swings open and Harper enters carrying a huge box that is holding the wedding cake and crosses to the kitchen not noticing them while calling upstairs.*)

HARPER. Honey, I'll put the cake in the kitchen! (*He exits toward the kitchen. They slowly un-embrace, staring at each other.*)

COURTNEY. That's goodbye, Ryan. (*Beat. Ryan turns and slowly walks toward the bathroom just as Delia enters at the top of stairs and looks toward the kitchen.*)

DELIA. Harper? (*Delia turns and sees Ryan entering the bathroom. She screams in agony as Ryan slams the door behind him. The lights black out as Delia's scream builds to a recorded, reverberating wail.*)

End of Act One

ACT TWO

A song like the theme music from Raiders of the Lost Ark is heard as the house lights dim. In the blackout, the sound crossfades into the reverberant scream from the end of Act One. As it ends, lights pop up on Delia staring fixedly at the bathroom door. Doc enters from the kitchen humming the "Wedding March" from Mendelssohn with the wedding cake. He's in tux pants and T-shirt. He stops, checks Delia, then begins humming "Here Comes the Bride," crossing down to the sofa and places the cake on the coffee table. Delia does not move. He sits and waits. He looks at the bride and groom figurines on the top of the cake, then starts to ad-lib wedding ceremony dialogue between them using little funny voices eventually lifting them off the cake. Delia slowly reacts, turning to see Doc holding the figurines.*

DELIA. What are you doing?

DOC. I don't really know.

DELIA. You've made a mess here! *(Doc reinserts the wedding figurines back into the cake. They are not quite right.)*

DOC. I don't know why, but I've always wanted to do that.

DELIA. Well, I hope you're happy. You've ruined it!

DOC. It looks fine, hon. Nobody'll notice.

DELIA. What do you mean? That's all people do at weddings is notice. They stand around and take note — of everything.

DOC. Everything's going to be fine, Delia.

DELIA. *(Suspiciously.)* I'm not sure anymore, Doc. I have this sinking feeling that this is all beyond our control now. I've never had a taste for the pagan, but I have a sense that many gods with unimaginable names are wreaking havoc on us, even as we speak.

DOC. Are you talking about Ryan, Delia? *(Delia sits on the couch.)*

DELIA. It's a lot more sinister than that. *(Grabbing Doc's shirt with*

her claws.) It wouldn't hurt if I could feast my eyes on these god-damn floral arrangements. Might just calm me down!

DOC. *(Carefully unhooking her claws.)* I tell you, Delia, when they play that wedding march today, this will all have seemed worth it. *(Harper appears from the kitchen.)*

HARPER. Excuse me.

DELIA. Oh. Yes. Harper.

HARPER. I didn't mean to interrupt.

DOC. *(Crossing to the bar.)* It's alright, Harper, you'll find that life around here is one long interruption.

HARPER. I have news of the wayward florist.

DELIA. Where is he?

HARPER. He's been in an automobile accident.

DELIA. But of course. I should have realized ...

HARPER. He's fine and so are the flowers.

DELIA. So when will he be here?

HARPER. As soon as I can get him the bail money.

DELIA. Bail money?

HARPER. He's in jail.

DOC. In jail?

HARPER. For the drugs.

DOC. The drugs.

HARPER. He's a drug dealer.

DELIA. How perfect. How quaint. And we're going to bail him out.

HARPER. He had one phone call and he called here. It's the only way to get the flowers. The morality is bothersome, I realize, but the need is overriding. We can't have a wedding without flowers.

DELIA. I like you, Harper.

HARPER. *(Sitting next to Delia on the couch.)* I like you, too. Is there anything, anything I can do for you before I go?

DOC. *(Crossing to the chair stage right.)* You're doing quite enough. Do you need any money?

HARPER. We can straighten it out later. *(He looks at the cake.)* It's so beautiful. *(He carefully fixes the figurines, then slides the cake towards Delia.)*

DELIA. Yes. Thank you. Harper.

HARPER. Thank you. You've both made me feel at home.

DOC. We aim to please.

* See Special Note on Songs and Recordings on copyright page.

HARPER. (*Stands and crosses to the front door.*) And you do. There's one more thing.

DELIA. Yes, Harper?

HARPER. My parents may be here soon. Could you help them get to the hotel?

DELIA. It'd be our pleasure.

HARPER. Thank you.

DOC. You're more than welcome.

HARPER. Thank you very much. (*Harper opens the front door, inhales optimistically as birdies chirp outside, and exits.*)

DELIA. Oh Doc, the more I see of him, the more I like him.

DOC. He seems sane enough. This family could use a touch of that.

DELIA. Oh for god's sake, his parents are on their way here, Doc.

DOC. That's usually the case at weddings, Delia.

DELIA. Why won't he come out? He's been in there too long.

DOC. Maybe he's hiding.

DELIA. (*Crossing to the bathroom door.*) It's too quiet in there. I don't like it. What if he's killed himself?

DOC. No such luck.

DELIA. We've got to do something. He's probably out of his mind on some drug. He's no doubt in there, with not a stitch of clothing on, lying in some twisted position, sucking on that antique soap dish Mother gave me.

DOC. Hon, are you sure you wouldn't like something a little stronger? I don't think the Valium is helping you achieve the upper hand.

DELIA. I'm beyond chemicals. That maniac better get out of there soon, or I will no longer be responsible for my actions.

DOC. Well, there's one small blessing. At least he's in there and not wandering around.

DELIA. I don't want small blessings, Doc. I want big ones, Doc, big ones!

DOC. Relax, Delia, relax.

DELIA. Relax? (*She laughs darkly.*) You need time to relax. We're running out of time. They're coming, Doc. People we've never seen, wearing clothes we've never imagined. I feel it. I can hear them coming. All those tires rumbling down the highway, bringing us all those tired voices we love to hear. I can hear the voices. Can you hear the voices? They're all asking the same question, "What's the ex-boyfriend doing here?" He's going to ruin every-

thing, Doc. This isn't going to be a wedding, it's going to be a catered inquisition!

DOC. It would have been much simpler, not to mention less expensive, if she'd just married Ryan in the first place. He's a known commodity like all the brand-name products we buy. I don't know if they really do the job, but they make me feel like they do.

DELIA. She doesn't love Ryan.

DOC. She should have some consideration for us. It took me three years to get used to this clown in our bathroom. Now I've got to get used to a new one.

DELIA. Harper's wonderful. You said yourself that you like the fact that he's sane.

DOC. He's thirty-something and still in school.

DELIA. You were in school when we got married.

DOC. I was in medical school, there's a big difference. He's working on a degree in clinical psychology. He spends his time with monkeys, pigeons, rats ...

DELIA. Someday he'll work with people.

DOC. We don't know that. What's he going to do with a degree like that except eat school lunches for the rest of his life.

DELIA. Harper has a trust fund. Ryan never made a penny.

DOC. I know, but at least I knew what he was up to.

DELIA. She loves Harper. She's going to marry Harper. (*She runs to the bathroom door and bangs on it.*) RYAN! (*Melanie enters in cut-off shorts, drink in hand. She crosses down the stairs.*)

MELANIE. So where are the star-crossed lovers?

DOC. You mean "CROSSED."

MELANIE. TROSSED, Dad. There are tree of dem. (*She sits on the arm of Doc's chair. They share the drink.*)

DELIA. This is the price I pay for having ingenious children. Why can't you be nice and lead lives of quiet desperation, like other kids?

MELANIE. Take it easy, Mom, just think of this as a trial run. You've got two more to go.

DELIA. There won't be any more weddings in this house. Next time I'll skip these simple formalities and go straight to cremation. Ryan!

MELANIE. I never thought Courtney would get married. Why do you think she is? (*She sits on the arm of Doc's chair.*)

DOC. It's that time, Melanie. Now. Women used to have that time at a different time, but times have changed.

MELANIE. I bet she's going to get a divorce in less than a year.

DOC. You don't have to cater a divorce.

DELIA. Doc! *(Delia signals Doc to get Ryan out of the bathroom. He heads to the bathroom door with resolve.)*

DOC. Melanie. *(Doc snaps his fingers and Melanie brings him his drink. He takes a slug, hands her the drink and pounds on the door.)*

RYAN! *(They listen for a moment. Melanie slowly turns and sees Delia sprawled against the front door staring into space. She is not quite right.)*

MELANIE. Mom? *(Pause.)* Mom? *(Pause.)*

DOC. Delia?

DELIA. Yeeess.

MELANIE. Would you like a drink?

DELIA. No. No thank you, Mel. The glass. The liquid. The ice cubes. Too many things to think about. No thank you.

MELANIE. I see.

DELIA. *(Sweetly.)* No you don't, but you will someday. This is why we need gun control, honey. Because if I had one today, I'd use it. I'd destroy my family before it destroyed me.

MELANIE. *(Delivering good news.)* Oh, I almost forgot, the caterers are here with the shrimp boats.

DELIA. They are?

MELANIE. In the garden.

DELIA. *(She looks off toward the kitchen, excitedly.)* Oh my god! Oh, come look, dear, come look outside. They've begun to set up the shrimp boats!

MELANIE. How glorious they look in the hot summer sun.

DELIA. The shrimp boats come last. *(Realizing catastrophe, she screams toward the garden.)* THE SHRIMP BOATS COME LAST! I told them they come last. It's too damn hot out there. They'll wilt. They'll melt. Or whatever it is shrimp do these days.

DOC. They're fine, dear. There's plenty of ice.

DELIA. IT'LL BE SOUP! ICED SHRIMP SOUP! *(She runs out to stop them. Doc motions to Melanie and She follows.)*

DOC. *(Doc goes to the bathroom door and bangs.)* Come out of there, Ryan. I mean it. I'm going to kick this door down. *(Delia runs in from the garden frantically.)*

DELIA. They're coming, Doc! They're coming here, I saw them! Holy Baby Jesus, where are you when I need you!? I hope they didn't see me.

DOC. Who is it?

DELIA. Whatshisname's parents.

DOC. Harper's.

DELIA. Yes, the uh-hh ... whatchamacallits!

DOC. The uh-hh ... whatchamacallits?

DELIA. Yes. Them. They're here! They were just getting out of the cab. They're probably coming toward the door right now. Talk to them, Doc. Make up something. Offer them a shrimp boat. Give 'em a couple of physicals. Beat them senseless. I don't care. I've got to hide. *(She dives behind the sofa. The doorbell rings. Delia jumps up.)* The door! They're at the door! *(She bolts up the stairs and disappears.)* GET THE DOOR, DOC! *(Doc frantically crosses to the bar to fix a drink. The doorbell rings again as he drinks. He goes to the door holding only the bottle. Realizing his mistake, he takes a swig from the bottle and crosses back to the bar. He picks up his glass and crosses to the front door, setting his drink down on the coffee table. He composes himself as he opens the front door and speaks to the unseen couple.)*

DOC. Oh, what ho, hello. Yes. Well. I'd know you anywhere. I would. You're Harper's parents, you are, and I'd let you in but if you'll excuse me it's getting very messy. *(Ryan wanders out from the bathroom searching for a light for his cigarette.)* You can watch them build the shrimp boats in the garden. They're lovely in the sun. *(He notices Ryan.)* Ahh, the assistant caterer. Excuse me. *(Doc calmly closes the front door, turns to Ryan, and screams.)* IF YOU DON'T GET BACK IN THAT BATHROOM I WILL SURGICALLY CUT YOUR BALLS OFF! *(Ryan hesitates.)* Get back in the bathroom! *(Ryan exits. Doc, recomposing, opens the front door.)* Yes. Well. Here I am again. You look great. I mean that and I am a doctor so I ought to know. I would love to invite you in, but you see, it's a bit touchy on the home front at the moment. You know, we're all snapping at the edges, watching our crackers fly. But say, I'll be glad to take your luggage. *(Pulling a golf bag into the house.)* Golf bag, good idea, we'll get in a few rounds. Yes. Yes. *(Taking a small suitcase.)* An overnight bag. Yes. How quaint. *(Ryan once again wanders into the living room smoking a cigarette and observing Doc.)* I'm sure you'll want to get down to the hotel, freshen up, buy some tees, spend those final moments with that big strapping boy of yours. Bright. Real bright kid. Nice talking to you. I've talked now. You'll talk later. It'll be fun. Yes. Well. Ta-ta. *(Doc closes the door.)*

RYAN. Doc, you're not making any sense. *(Doc goes to the chair downstage right and sits.)*

DOC. I don't have to make sense. I'm a doctor. I've been a doctor

for thirty years and I learned I could tell anyone anything and they'd believe me. As long as I was smiling. I smiled at them the whole time. They nodded. It was all quite pleasant.

RYAN. (*Opens the peephole in the door and looks out.*) They're still at the door, Doc.

DOC. (*Long concerned pause.*) Why?

RYAN. Maybe they want their luggage?

DOC. Oh. What are they doing?

RYAN. They're staring at me while I stare at them. They're smiling.

DOC. (*Thinks.*) You smile.

RYAN. I'm smiling. (*Smiles and looks out.*)

DOC. I'm paralyzed. (*Ryan closes the peephole and sits on the arm of the sofa facing Doc.*)

RYAN. You were doing so well.

DOC. Give me that cigarette, would you? (*Ryan gives Doc the cigarette. Doc takes a long pleasure-filled drag.*) Ahhhh! I haven't smoked in twenty-five years. I've talked to people about death, sat with them in their darkest hours as their loved ones died a thousand different ways and yet in all that time I have never craved the companionship of a smoke until now. (*He takes another drag.*) Omigod! Look at me! You're making me insane! Give me that drink. (*Ryan hands Doc the drink from the coffee table. Doc takes a drink and starts to hand the cigarette back to Ryan. He changes his mind and smokes. He starts to hand Ryan the drink and changes his mind again. He puffs and drinks not knowing what to do next. He puts out the cigarette in the glass and dismisses Ryan who exits to the kitchen as Doc slowly crosses to the door. He opens it.*)

Yes. Well. I see you're still here. I guess you want your luggage. (*He starts to hand back their luggage.*) I don't know what I was thinking, I mean you're on your way to the hotel and you're going to need your things. How silly of me. Well, (*Pause.*) I've got to get into the old monkey suit. You know, sometimes I wish it really was a monkey suit, so I could dress up a little, scratch, run amok, if you know what I mean. (*He scratches himself, hoots, and jumps like a chimp. He laughs, notices they don't.*) Don't mind me. Just letting my nerves unravel, keeps the system intact. I don't jog. Yes. Well. I guess you'll have to change unless you're both planning to wear Bermudas to the wedding. I hope you can make it with all that luggage. Say, I'll have P.B. help you. (*Calling gently.*) P.B.! (*Turns back to doorway.*) If you'll excuse me. (*He closes the front door and screams.*) P.B.! (*P.B. rushes down the stairs.*)

P.B. Dad, are you dying? I'm here, Dad! I'm here!

DOC. (*Panicked.*) Help them, P.B., help the uhhhhhhh ... whatchamacallits.

P.B. The Whittingtons?

DOC. Yes. Of course. The Whittingtons. They're here. Right there. Please take them away, P.B. Take them to their hotel. Get them out of my sight. Here. (*Reaching into his pockets, pulls out the keys.*) Here are the keys to the car. (*P.B. crosses to the front door and stops.*)

P.B. I don't know how to drive.

DOC. Go for it!

P.B. Yess! (*P.B. bolts out the door.*)

DOC. (*Crossing to the bar for another drink.*) Where's the emergency call when I really need it? Where's the kneecap wrenched beyond repair? The bloody sponge? The needles? Why don't they call me? Death, where is thy sting? (*Melanie reenters from the kitchen.*)

MELANIE. Dad, you're not talking to anyone.

DOC. What do you care? The shrimp boats are sinking, and I'm alone on the deck. For God's sake, where is Courtney?

MELANIE. She's back.

DOC. She's back? Where was she?

MELANIE. She went with Harper to bail out the florist. (*She crosses to the downstage right chair and sits. Doc crosses to her.*)

DOC. So much for the tradition of not seeing the bride before the wedding.

MELANIE. We're way beyond that superstition.

DOC. Where is she?

MELANIE. She's in the kitchen. They're all in the kitchen.

DOC. (*Crossing to the kitchen to listen.*) They're ALL in the kitchen? Harper and Ryan and Courtney?

MELANIE. Yes. I can't wait to see the frosting hit the fan.

DOC. (*Listening.*) It's quiet. (*Pause.*)

MELANIE. It's too quiet. (*Short pause.*)

DOC. I don't like it. (*Calling upstairs.*) DELIA!

DELIA. (*Offstage. From upstairs.*) YEEEESSSSSS!

DOC. ARE YOU ALRIGHT!

DELIA. (*Offstage.*) OOOH YEAH, I'M FEELING MUUUUCH BETTER! (*She giggles. Beat. They stare at each other.*)

MELANIE. Uh-oh, sounds like Mom got into your medicine bag.

DOC. Great. (*The phone rings.*)

DELIA. (*Offstage.*) Ting-a-ling-a-ling. I'LL GET THAT!

(Courtney enters from the kitchen. She purposefully and calmly goes to the bar and takes a bottle, then crosses downstage right to the fireplace and picks up the fire poker and hefts it.)

DOC. How's it going in there? *(Pause.)* You kids need anything? *(Pause.)* Cookies? Milk? *(Courtney continues upstage and exits to the kitchen. To Melanie.)* You see what you can do in there. I'll figure something out. *(Melanie exits to the kitchen.)* One more drink and it should all be clear. *(Doc heads to the bar as Delia comes downstairs unsteadily.)*

DELIA. That was your mother, Sherman.

DOC. My mother.

DELIA. With another one of her emergencies.

DOC. I would have talked to her.

DELIA. She worships you. She talks to me. My mouth is suddenly very dry.

DOC. Delia, how many pills did you take and what color were they?

DELIA. Just one, dear. *(Dreamily.)* It was white with just a touch of lavender. Like Courtney's wedding dress. Now if you'll excuse me ... *(She floats into the kitchen. P.B. enters through the front door.)*

P.B. Dad!

DOC. What is it?

P.B. What'd you say to Harper's parents?

DOC. I'm not quite sure.

P.B. They thought you were a little strange, but I told them to wait until they meet Mom. *(She tosses the keys to Doc.)*

DOC. Good girl.

DELIA. OH MY GOD! *(She comes out of the kitchen and sits on the chair downstage right. Courtney and Melanie immediately follow her on.)* Courtney, this is too modern for words!

COURTNEY. Mom, things really aren't as bizarre as they seem.

MELANIE. We passed bizarre at noon.

DELIA. You can't leave them alone, Courtney.

COURTNEY. Why not? *(P.B. and Courtney gather around Delia while Melanie and Doc do the same on the other side of the room speaking simultaneously. The lines are meant to tumble over each other simultaneously as everyone tries to share an opinion.)*

DELIA. WHY NOT!?

DOC. Maybe this is the best way to settle this.

DELIA. You're not serious. Doc, it's time for order and discipline.

MELANIE. I'd love to see those big strapping boys go at it. It

makes my mouth water.

P.B. Food makes my mouth water. I'm starving.

DOC. Where is that fire poker?

DELIA. FIRE POKER!

P.B. Is that what they call it?

COURTNEY. I just wanted Ryan to know I meant business.

MELANIE. You could really mess someone up with one of those.

DELIA. Doc, if that's what it takes to restore order, then by God I'm going to use a fire poker. *(Ryan and Harper calmly enter from the kitchen and pause together upstage center. Both are holding a small plate of hors d'oeuvres. Harper has fish balls and Ryan has shrimp. Gradually everyone turns and notices them as the room falls silent. Pause.)*

RYAN. Harper has an important announcement to make. *(Beat.)*

HARPER. The fish balls are excellent.

RYAN. And great shrimp.

HARPER. May I?

RYAN. Certainly. *(Harper delicately tastes a shrimp.)*

HARPER. Mmmm ... Great shrimp, Doc!

RYAN. May I? *(Ryan daintily tastes a fish ball.)*

HARPER. Oh please. *(They politely move down and sit together on the sofa as they speak.)*

RYAN. Is that nutmeg?

HARPER. I think cardamom.

RYAN. Of course.

HARPER. A touch of paprika perhaps? *(They consider this and both cross their legs. Pause.)*

DOC. Yes ... Well ... I see. *(Beat.)* Harper.

HARPER. Sir.

DOC. I met your parents. You just missed them. They're at the hotel.

HARPER. Thanks for taking care of them ... sir. *(Doc looks around.)*

DOC. It was my pleasure.

DELIA. *(Wearily.)* And the flowers? What about the flowers?

HARPER. They should be here soon ... Mother.

DELIA. Mother ... Yesss. *(Pause.)*

P.B. What's going on here?

DELIA. P.B., go get dressed.

P.B. But I don't get it.

MELANIE. Nobody does.

DOC. Please be a good girl and get dressed.

P.B. *(Reluctantly heading towards the stairs.)* But this is the best part.

DELIA. Why don't we all go upstairs now, girls. And I mean now. (*P.B. and Melanie exit up the stairs. Glaring at Ryan.*) Ryan, go away! (*Sweetly.*) Harper, we're very sorry for all the inconvenience, but don't you worry about a thing. Soon we'll be celebrating, I promise. (*Heading up the stairs.*) Now let's get ourselves ready, please, because like it or not, we've got a wedding breathing down our necks! Doc? Courtney? (*Delia exits upstairs.*)

DOC. Yes, Delia, we'll be right up. Good. Well, Harper, I'll be seeing you quite soon with your bride-to-be on my arm. Ryan, we all appreciate your friendship and concern, but enough is enough. Get your clothes and get on with your great adventure. (*He goes upstairs leaving Courtney down right staring at the two men.*)

RYAN. Court, he's fun.

HARPER. Why thank you. And I must say, I'm pleasantly surprised. The way Courtney talked about you, I expected the worst.

RYAN. I was sure you were going to be a real douchebag. Courtney's taste in men can be just awful. Look at me. (*They laugh.*)

COURTNEY. What is going on here?

HARPER. We're ...

HARPER and RYAN. (*Together.*) Bonding. (*They laugh.*)

COURTNEY. I can see that! IT'S NOT RIGHT!

RYAN. What's the matter with you?

HARPER. Would you rather we were at each other's throats?

COURTNEY. It's what one would expect.

HARPER. Expectations are the hobgoblin of the complacent mind.

COURTNEY. WHAT?!

RYAN. Hobgoblin.

COURTNEY. Hobgoblin. (*Beat.*) WHAT THE FUCK DOES THAT MEAN?!

HARPER. It's really quite simple. A hobgoblin ...

RYAN. Let me get this. A hobgoblin is a goblin about yay high. (*Indicates a small person with his hand.*)

COURTNEY. (*Circling the two.*) Ha ha ha ha. What's with you two? This isn't normal. Harper, you were supposed to make my life normal.

HARPER. And I shall. Though I must say my mettle will be sorely tested. With all due respect, this is the least normal house I have ever been in.

RYAN. I always found it too normal.

HARPER. In what way?

RYAN. They always want things to be just right.

HARPER. You can't make things just right, they are what they are and then you have to live with it.

RYAN. Courtney, he's really quite insightful.

COURTNEY. Ryan, do you have to make a mess of everything? Harper, do you have to be so goddamn rational? I'll tell you what's not right. THIS is not right! You two don't need me. Why would you need me? I'm standing in the way of your happiness. You two should get married and grow old together because you are made for each other. You're a perfect circle! (*She storms upstairs.*)

RYAN. She's always had a flair for the dramatic. (*A door slams upstairs.*)

HARPER. It's just one of the many things I love about her. (*Beat.*) Finished?

RYAN. Yes. (*Harper takes Ryan's plate from him and places both on the coffee table. He stands and crosses behind the sofa towards the chair downstage right.*)

HARPER. Honestly now, Ryan, why did you come here?

RYAN. Honestly? I was hitchhiking.

HARPER. Seriously, Ryan, did you come here to get Courtney back?

RYAN. Seriously ... No. I just stopped by to say hi to her folks.

HARPER. Did you come here to stop the wedding?

RYAN. No, because I didn't know there was going to be a wedding. HARPER. Don't you feel a person might find that difficult to believe?

RYAN. You might find it difficult, but imagine how I feel. (*Harper assumes the position of a therapist. He deliberately sits in the downstage right chair, pulls out his pen, and crosses his legs. Then he speaks.*)

HARPER. How do you feel?

RYAN. How do I feel. (*He slowly lays on the couch.*) How do you think I feel? You're the shrink.

HARPER. I don't like that word.

RYAN. What don't you like about the word?

HARPER. It doesn't make any sense. Shrink what?

RYAN. It's an acronym.

HARPER. For?

RYAN. Someone Helping Reduce Insecure Nihilists Knowledgeably.

HARPER. (*Smiles.*) Clever. And what do you mean by an insecure nihilist?

RYAN. Beats me, you're the shrink. *(He laughs.)*
 HARPER. That's funny. You really are a sarcastic prick, aren't you?
 RYAN. It's one of my stronger suits.
 HARPER. It's such a superb defense mechanism.
 RYAN. It's highly overrated, but it works well in the moment.
 HARPER. I always wanted to be sarcastic, but I was never any good at it.
 RYAN. You have other virtues.
 HARPER. Of course I do. Though it seems like it would be a lot more fun just to be sarcastic. I can see why Courtney was attracted to that part of you.
 RYAN. You don't have to be so polite, Harper. *(He sits up.)* Honestly, you just don't seem her type.
 HARPER. Ryan. *(He rises.)* When a woman senses the ticking of her biological clock, tick tock tick tock. She looks for more of a, how can I put this, provider. One who brings a self-confidence to the table so that she can feel a bit more secure about her place in the world. And with that comes a bonding of mutual hopes, dreams and desires, a shelter from the storm, if you will. To put it simply, Ryan, a woman wants a romantic who is also a realist.
 RYAN. Are you saying I am not a grown-up?
 HARPER. *(Sitting back down in his chair.)* I was saying a lot more than that, I think.
 RYAN. You are good. This is all starting to make sense to me. I just don't get the whole wedding thing.
 HARPER. I wouldn't expect you to. You're quite the primitive when it comes to emotional transactions.
 RYAN. You don't think this is a little fast.
 HARPER. Time is meaningless when one is certain of one's feelings.
 RYAN. So one can be certain of one's feelings. Must be nice. The only thing I'm certain of is uncertainty.
 HARPER. Heisenberg ... Interesting, *(Checks his watch.)* well, we will have to continue this some other time and it's my fondest hope that we do. I must be on my way. I have a few things left on my plate that need attending.
 RYAN. Good luck. *(Harper stands and crosses to the staircase.)*
 HARPER. Will I see you later?
 RYAN. If they don't call the cops.
 HARPER. *(Pause. Calling up the stairs.)* Courtney. *(Pause.)* Courtney.

(Pause.) Courtney. I gotta go and get dressed, hon. *(He exits into the kitchen to get his tuxedo as P.B. enters from upstairs. She is in her dress for the wedding and wearing her Walkman.)*
 RYAN. You look great, kid.
 P.B. I'm the maid of honor by default. I'm the only virgin my sister knows. *(P.B. climbs up on the couch next to Ryan and they sit on the back of the sofa.)* So she's really going to go through with it, huh?
 RYAN. I guess so. No one seems to be able to stop her.
 P.B. Does that bother you?
 RYAN. Probably. Yeah. I'm not certain. It'll take a few weeks for me to figure it out. It's why I believe in the afterlife. It's where I'll catch up with this one.
 P.B. You know, Ryan, I was really hoping that you were going to sweep Courtney off her feet and ride off into the sunset.
 RYAN. I thought about it, but she'd shoot me and take the horse. *(As they ponder this, the sound of a dryer buzzer is heard for about five seconds.)*
 P.B. Time's up, Ryan.
 RYAN. *(Wistfully.)* What?
 P.B. Your clothes.
 RYAN. *(Jumps up and heads to the basement.)* Oh, yes. Take care. *(Ryan exits through the basement door. P.B. slaps on the headset and dances upstairs and off to the opening strains of a song like "Hungry Heart" by The Boss. * As she exits, Courtney slowly comes downstairs in her wedding dress. Harper reenters carrying a tuxedo on a hanger and heads toward the front door and sees Courtney on the stairs. And they stop, paralyzed for a moment.)*
 HARPER. *(Finally, in his best leading man voice.)* Once again your beauty steals my breath away.
 COURTNEY. Harper. Harper. Harper.
 HARPER. Yes, my love.
 COURTNEY. *(Slowly descending the stairs.)* It's been a hell of a day.
 HARPER. I guess it's just bad luck to see the psycho-sociopathic ex-lover on the morning of your wedding.
 COURTNEY. He loves the attention.
 HARPER. It's over. The worst is over. *(She moves warily to the front of the sofa.)*
 COURTNEY. No, it isn't.

* See Special Note on Songs and Recordings on copyright page.

HARPER. It isn't?
 COURTNEY. You're going to hate me. *(He lays the tux on the back of the sofa and goes to Courtney.)*
 HARPER. I'd never hate you.
 COURTNEY. Try me.
 HARPER. Courtney, what are you talking about?
 COURTNEY. Us.
 HARPER. Us?
 COURTNEY. This isn't going to be easy. *(She sits on the sofa.)*
 HARPER. Marriages never are.
 COURTNEY. I'm going to hurt you, Harper.
 HARPER. And I'll hurt you, pain is a given in any marriage.
 COURTNEY. Harper, we're not getting married. *(Long pause.)*
 HARPER. *(Stating the obvious.)* Of course we are, puddin'.
 COURTNEY. No. We're not.
 HARPER. You can't be serious. *(Pause.)* You're just upset. *(Pause.)*
 Am I right? *(Pause.)* I am right, aren't I? Courtney? *(Pause.)* It's him.
 He makes you crazy. What if he hadn't shown up?
 COURTNEY. We're lucky he did.
 HARPER. Lucky?
 COURTNEY. We would have made a terrible mistake.
 HARPER. If you walk away from us, that would be a mistake.
 What is going on here? You did say yes, when I asked you to marry me. We did live together. You were happy. You told me over and over how wonderful our life was. How fulfilled you were. How you had never felt this way. And I have the notes and poems from you to prove it. Were you just practicing your writing?
 COURTNEY. No, I honestly felt I was in love with you, but I realize now ... I just love you.
 HARPER. *(Sitting on sofa.)* What did I do wrong?
 COURTNEY. Nothing. It's our chemistry. Something is missing. We're just a few molecules off.
 HARPER. Where can I find those molecules?
 COURTNEY. Harper, you're fine. Your molecules are perfect.
 HARPER. But not for you. Don't give up on us, Courtney. *(He drops to his knees.)* I'll do anything I can to make this happen.
 COURTNEY. Oh Harper, please, don't.
 HARPER. We just need more time.
 COURTNEY. It's not a question of time.
 HARPER. I want you.

COURTNEY. You can't have me. *(She stands and pulls away. Pause.)*
 HARPER. *(Standing.)* So that's it? That's all you've got to say? I knew you were too good to be true. Some shrink I am going to make, I can't even trust my own instincts.
 COURTNEY. This is all my fault.
 HARPER. Aren't you the master of the obvious. So you don't want me. And you don't want him. Hell, Courtney, what do you want?
 COURTNEY. I want me.
 HARPER. What does that mean? That doesn't mean anything. What are you going to do, grow a penis and mate with yourself?
 COURTNEY. Harper!
 HARPER. What? You want me to be nice. You want me to be that guy.
 COURTNEY. You don't have to be mean.
 HARPER. I wasn't. I was trying to be a sarcastic prick, OK. I guess it didn't work.
 COURTNEY. It doesn't suit you. You're a wonderful man, that I will always love, and ...
 HARPER. And you're ... you know ... I won't say it.
 COURTNEY. Say it.
 HARPER. You're being an ... *(Quietly.)* asshole.
 COURTNEY. HARPER.
 I know that. You had every right to say it. I'm sorry. I didn't mean that. It doesn't help.
 HARPER. It doesn't help.
 COURTNEY. Someday, when I can explain all this, I will.
 HARPER. Put it in a short story. Hmmm. I think I understand. Yes, it's pretty clear. You're the new woman of the '80s. She wants everything and ends up with nothing. *(Thoughtful pause. Then, with dawning optimism.)* Well ... I may have lost a bride, but I think I've found my thesis. *(Ryan enters from basement, his clothes neatly folded.)*
 COURTNEY. I'm sorry.
 HARPER. We're all sorry. *(Harper leaves his tuxedo on the couch. He crosses to the door and opens it, taking a large breath of freedom as birds chirp, and exits. Ryan puts his clothes down on the back of the sofa and turns to Courtney.)*
 RYAN. Wow. You look beautiful in that wedding dress.
 COURTNEY. It's why every woman wants to wear one. Is it me?
 RYAN. I don't think so.

COURTNEY. What was I thinking?

RYAN. You weren't. You're an idiot. You'll never love anyone the way you love your writing.

COURTNEY. It's a curse.

RYAN. It's a gift.

COURTNEY. Doesn't feel like one now.

RYAN. (*Noticing the tuxedo on the couch.*) You know we could get married. Shame to see all of this go to waste.

COURTNEY. (*Turning to face him.*) You have to ask me first. (*He hesitates, then crosses slowly, kneels and takes her hand.*)

RYAN. Courtney ...

COURTNEY. (*Firmly.*) No. (*Ryan crosses to get his clothes.*)

RYAN. I gotta get out of here before the proverbial shit hits the proverbial fan. I've got a book to write. And this is going to make a great first chapter. (*Ryan crosses to the front door.*)

COURTNEY. Thank you.

RYAN. For what?

COURTNEY. Never mind. (*He stops and turns back.*) Ryan. Your pants.

RYAN. Got 'em. (*He exits as Delia comes downstairs.*)

DELIA. Are the flowers here yet?

COURTNEY. No.

DELIA. Damnittohell!

COURTNEY. We won't be needing them.

DELIA. Now don't be foolish, Courtney. It's not a wedding without flowers. You need a bouquet to throw.

COURTNEY. I won't be throwing the bouquet.

DELIA. I know it's a silly tradition, but you've got to ...

COURTNEY. There isn't going to be a wedding.

DELIA. You're just in a state of panic, Courtney, that's all. It happens to the best of us.

COURTNEY. I'm very calm, Mom, calmer than I've ever been.

DELIA. (*Completely ignoring this.*) Trauma will do that to you dear. You're just in a state of shock. You really don't know what's going on. It's an extraordinary amount of pressure on you and you're cracking under it.

COURTNEY. Mom.

DELIA. It's all under control now. Everything is going to be alright again. Mom is going to make everything alright. (*Delia sits and hugs Courtney. Melanie and P.B. skip downstairs in brides-*

*maid's dresses singing a song like "Going to the Chapel."** They trail off.)

P.B. What's going on?

DELIA. Nothing. Absolutely nothing. Courtney's a little upset, that's all.

COURTNEY. I'm not upset.

DELIA. Of course you are, it's only natural.

COURTNEY. I'm not getting married, Mom. I'm sorry, but I can't.

MELANIE. Well, well, well.

P.B. You're not?! But I thought ...

DELIA. (*With even more denial.*) Of course she's getting married. Of course she is. She doesn't know what she's saying.

COURTNEY. I know exactly what I'm saying.

MELANIE. Congratulations, that's a first.

DELIA. Now don't you two start up, the guests are arriving and we still have so much to do.

P.B. I don't think you heard Courtney, Mom.

DELIA. (*Ultimate denial.*) I heard her, P.B. I heard her pain, her anguish, and her fear.

COURTNEY. Mom, please, stop it. Please. I can't go on with this. Harper's gone. Ryan's gone. And I am happy.

DELIA. Well, (*Long pause.*) I am not happy. (*Beat.*) Not one bit. I have a cake. (*Beat.*) I have guests. (*Beat.*) I have a seafood spectacular. We've given you the works, young lady, and by God, you're going out there. Like it or not.

COURTNEY. I can't. I know you want me to, but I can't, Mom. I just can't.

DELIA. All you have to say is no and you think this is all going to go away.

COURTNEY. What else can I say? I wanted this. Believe it or not. I wanted this. More than anybody. But I can't have it. You brought me up in a world that doesn't exist.

DELIA. So now it's my fault.

COURTNEY. It's nobody's fault. It was my mistake, Mom, and all I can do is try and live with it.

DELIA. Maybe you can, but can I? I have to go on living here. I have to face my relations and worse than that, I have to face your father's family. The Whittingtons will want an explanation. I could

* See Special Note on Songs and Recordings on copyright page.

tell them what really happened, but they won't want to hear it. They won't want to hear the string of facts that tell the real story. I know those facts. I went to college too. That's where your father and I met. At a tea dance. They don't even have them anymore. Do you know what a tea dance is? See? You don't know. You don't know what fun you missed. Running through the arboretum to get back before curfew. Curfew! (*Delia laughs.*) That's a good one. Most kids don't know how to spell it, much less what it means. Sweaty palms and one good-night kiss, just before the doors of the dormitory are locked for the night. (*She continues on pleasantly distracted, drawn into the past.*) That's where we fell in love, your father and I, right in front of those big oak doors, and the earth moved. Did it ever move. We fell in love and the world went to war. I always thought there was a connection there. He took my breath away, standing there in his uniform, armed with a satchel. And off he went, dashing around the world, making it safe for democracy again. All of those exotic addresses on his love letters. I spent my hours waiting for the mail, biting my nails over coffee with all the other girls who were waiting ...

MELANIE. Are you okay, Mom?

DELIA. ... waiting and wondering if they'd be attending a funeral rather than a wedding, when the war ended. If it ended. Living in limbo, aching for any message. And then it came. The news. The biggest news ever. The best. It's over. Life can go on. Peace and quiet and a shade tree to sit under when a baby makes three. Your father calls from six thousand miles away, wondering if I'm still ready to marry him or if he should just roam around the globe. Yes, yes, of course, I say, yes, I have no fingernails left. I need him. He arrives home to ticker tape and bride-to-be. Everybody's doing it. The whole world is getting married and having babies. In the greatest celebration of life I've ever seen on my own block. We ache for life, hoping to flood the world with innocent children, replacing the smell of death with baby powder.

MELANIE.

COURTNEY.

Oh, Mom.

Mother.

DELIA. The marching bands are slowly transformed back into dance bands and we waltz our way from that too-small apartment in Oak Hill, where the shower never worked, to the suburbs of Lane Park, where a two-bedroom seemed like forever. Then we were five and so, lo and behold, here we are now, the palace we dreamed of, we dreamed of this. All of this. We tried to share that dream with you, our children,

but the smoke had cleared and you couldn't smell it. Our memories couldn't conjure it up for you. Our dream made no sense without the urgency. You couldn't see it. We couldn't share it. We'd run into a life that we were lucky enough to have the energy to embrace. But you kids, my sweet beautiful kids, you've run out of energy and you've run out of time. You wear your tomorrows like a wound and all I can do is smile and hope the florist will arrive. I looked forward to this day from the moment you were born. I had such hopes.

P.B. (*Coming to the sofa.*) Mom, don't.

DELIA. (*Fighting back tears.*) And ... and ...

MELANIE. (*Coming to the sofa.*) Mom, we're so sorry.

DELIA. A wedding. Just a wedding. Was that too much to ask? (*Delia sinks into the sofa as she starts to cry. The girls join her and they all sob in one big heap as Doc comes down the stairs, very slowly. HE is pleasantly lit and singing.*)

DOC.

And it's a long, long, time

From May to December.

September

November.

(*Softly.*)

December.

(*Huge sob from the women and he bows.*) Thank you. (*He pauses.*)

What? What is this? Tears of joy? Yes. No. Maybe. (*Short pause.*)

Look at you. All of you. (*Crossing to the sofa.*) What did I do to deserve all this loveliness? Not a goddamn thing, and that's probably the best explanation. No more tears, my lovely ladies. We've cried enough today. We have no reason to cry now. Here we are. All of us. Together. That's what counts. Let the rest of them think what they will. We will always have each other. Today is ours.

DELIA. Yes. You could say that. In a manner of speaking.

DOC. What?

MELANIE. (*Rises and crosses to the bar.*) Another drink may be just what you need, Dad.

DOC. Why?

P.B. (*Standing.*) You'd better sit down.

DOC. What for?

P.B. I don't know, but that's what they always say at times like this in the movies.

DOC. (*Sitting on the sofa.*) Did I miss a day somewhere? What is

going on here?

MELANIE. (*Handing him a drink.*) To put it simply, there has been a change of plans. (*Doc considers this.*)

DOC. So you're going to marry Ryan. (*This is met with groans.*) It's no problem. What's the difference? Either one. It's fine by me. A wedding is a wedding. Just as long as you're happy.

P.B. I'm too young for this. I'm glad God invented the Walkman. I need a walk. I need a man.

DELIA. P.B.!

P.B. Don't worry, Mom, where am I going to find one? (*P.B. exits to the kitchen.*)

MELANIE. I can help you with that.

DELIA. Melanie!

MELANIE. (*Following P.B.*) I was just going to keep an eye on her.

DELIA. Please, don't tell the guests anything.

MELANIE. (*Exiting to kitchen.*) I wouldn't even try.

DELIA. She's not going to get married, Doc. (*Pause.*) What did we do wrong, Doc?

DOC. Not a goddamn thing. We did what we could. We do what we can. We can't give them the happiness we've known. We can only try and share it and hope for the best.

COURTNEY. I'm sorry.

DOC. I'm sorry for you.

COURTNEY. I'll be alright. I'll pay for all of this. I promise.

DOC. You don't have to. I paid for the sins of my father and I pay for my kids' mistakes, cause that's the kind of guy I am.

COURTNEY. You're not angry?

DOC. (*Reaching for his drink.*) I'll be mad as hell when the hang-over hits, but I couldn't care less right now.

DELIA. What the hell are we going to tell these people?

DOC. I'm a doctor. I'll smile and tell them there was a sudden illness.

DELIA. You can't tell them that.

DOC. I know that, but it sure beats telling the truth.

DELIA. We have to do something soon. We're running out of time.

DOC. I know what we can do. (*Beat.*) You want a wedding. (*Beat.*) They want a wedding. (*Beat.*) Let's give 'em a wedding.

DELIA. Whose?

DOC. Ours.

COURTNEY. Mom and you?

DELIA. For God's sake, we've been married forever.

DOC. Think of it as our anniversary waltz. Think of it as a reaffirmation of our love.

COURTNEY. It's the wedding you've always wanted.

DOC. We have a priest and all the trimmings. We shouldn't let it go to waste. It's not what they're expecting, but it is something. What do you say, Delia? They want a show. We'll give 'em a show. Most of 'em won't notice the difference. They'll probably stand around thinking Courtney put on quite a bit of age while living in New York.

COURTNEY. (*Standing.*) Go for it, Mom. You make a lovely couple. It'll be beautiful.

DOC. C'mon, Delia, be a sport. (*Pause.*)

DELIA. You really want to go through with this?

DOC. I certainly do. (*He staggers down to one knee.*) Delia, will you marry me? (*Pause.*)

DELIA. Well, it certainly would help salvage a bad day.

DOC. Then we could go to one of those sweet little islands we never get to —

DELIA. And try to live it down.

DOC. You may need to help hold me up from time to time. (*Standing with Delia's help.*) I have a tendency to list.

DELIA. I'll be right at your side.

DOC. It's where I always want you. (*P.B. rushes in from the kitchen with Melanie, holding bouquets.*)

P.B. The florist is here!

MELANIE. He's very cute!

P.B. They're putting the centerpieces on the table and these are for the bride.

MELANIE. What are we going to do with them?

DOC. Don't you worry about it. Your mother and I are getting married.

P.B. Really? Right now?

DOC. Right now.

MELANIE. That's terrific.

COURTNEY. What do I do? I didn't rehearse this part. (*Courtney crosses upstage to P.B. and Melanie. They line up upstage right with P.B. the farthest stage right. A string quartet playing a song like "Going to the Chapel" is heard offstage.**)

MELANIE. Just follow us. And don't screw up!

* See Special Note on Songs and Recordings on copyright page.

DOC. You are beautiful. Just like on our wedding day.
 DELIA. I love you. *(P.B. hands Doc the bridal bouquet who then hands it to Delia.)*
 DOC. For you, my dearest. *(Doc offers his arm and they walk upstage to take their positions in the front of the line. They all begin to progress offstage to the music. Suddenly they freeze, except for P.B., who turns downstage as the lights shift and she is picked up in a spot.)*
 P.B. Oh by the way. Both my sisters eventually got married, *(Beat.)* and then they got divorced. I married a Republican. *(She smiles and steps back into the procession.)* We are very happy. *(They resume the wedding procession offstage as the lights fade and music swells to the end of the orchestration.)*

End of Play

PROPERTY LIST

Walkman
 Clipboard, pen
 Drink
 Pink rain slicker
 Backpack with dirty clothes
 2 large Polynesian fertility statues
 Broom
 Toothbrush
 Towel
 Laundry basket
 Purse
 Drinks
 Gardening tool, flower pot
 Skillet
 Book
 Fishing pole
 Pillow
 Towels
 Box with wedding cake and figurines
 Drinks
 Golf bag
 Suitcase
 Cigarette, lighter
 Keys
 Fire poker
 2 plates of hors d'oeuvres
 Pen
 Tuxedo
 Bouquets

SOUND EFFECTS

Reagan's acceptance speech at the 1984 Republican Convention
Crowd applause
Doorbell
Crash
Shower
Phone rings
Scream
Door slams

NEW PLAYS

★ **BENGAL TIGER AT THE BAGHDAD ZOO** by **Rajiv Joseph**. The lives of two American Marines and an Iraqi translator are forever changed by an encounter with a quick-witted tiger who haunts the streets of war-torn Baghdad. "[A] boldly imagined, harrowing and surprisingly funny drama." —*NY Times*. "Tragic yet darkly comic and highly imaginative." —*CurtainUp*. [5M, 2W] ISBN: 978-0-8222-2565-2

★ **THE PITMEN PAINTERS** by **Lee Hall**, inspired by a book by **William Feaver**. Based on the triumphant true story, a group of British miners discover a new way to express themselves and unexpectedly become art-world sensations. "Excitingly ambiguous, in-the-moment theater." —*NY Times*. "Heartfelt, moving and deeply politicized." —*Chicago Tribune*. [5M, 2W] ISBN: 978-0-8222-2507-2

★ **RELATIVELY SPEAKING** by **Ethan Coen, Elaine May and Woody Allen**. In **TALKING CURE**, Ethan Coen uncovers the sort of insanity that can only come from family. Elaine May explores the hilarity of passing in **GEORGE IS DEAD**. In **HONEYMOON MOTEL**, Woody Allen invites you to the sort of wedding day you won't forget. "Firecracker funny." —*NY Times*. "A rollicking good time." —*New Yorker*. [8M, 7W] ISBN: 978-0-8222-2394-8

★ **SONS OF THE PROPHET** by **Stephen Karam**. If to live is to suffer, then Joseph Douaihy is more alive than most. With unexplained chronic pain and the fate of his reeling family on his shoulders, Joseph's health, sanity, and insurance premium are on the line. "Explosively funny." —*NY Times*. "At once deep, deft and beautifully made." —*New Yorker*. [5M, 3W] ISBN: 978-0-8222-2597-3

★ **THE MOUNTAINTOP** by **Katori Hall**. A gripping reimagining of events the night before the assassination of the civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. "An ominous electricity crackles through the opening moments." —*NY Times*. "[A] thrilling, wild, provocative flight of magical realism." —*Associated Press*. "Crackles with theatricality and a humanity more moving than sainthood." —*NY Newsday*. [1M, 1W] ISBN: 978-0-8222-2603-1

★ **ALL NEW PEOPLE** by **Zach Braff**. Charlie is 35, heartbroken, and just wants some time away from the rest of the world. Long Beach Island seems to be the perfect escape until his solitude is interrupted by a motley parade of misfits who show up and change his plans. "Consistently and sometimes sensationally funny." —*NY Times*. "A morbidly funny play about the trendy new existential condition of being young, adorable, and miserable." —*Variety*. [2M, 2W] ISBN: 978-0-8222-2562-1

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NEW PLAYS

★ **CLYBOURNE PARK** by **Bruce Norris**. WINNER OF THE 2011 PULITZER PRIZE AND 2012 TONY AWARD. Act One takes place in 1959 as community leaders try to stop the sale of a home to a black family. Act Two is set in the same house in the present day as the now predominantly African-American neighborhood battles to hold its ground. "Vital, sharp-witted and ferociously smart." —*NY Times*. "A theatrical treasure...Indisputably, uproariously funny." —*Entertainment Weekly*. [4M, 3W] ISBN: 978-0-8222-2697-0

★ **WATER BY THE SPOONFUL** by **Quiara Alegria Hudes**. WINNER OF THE 2012 PULITZER PRIZE. A Puerto Rican veteran is surrounded by the North Philadelphia demons he tried to escape in the service. "This is a very funny, warm, and yes uplifting play." —*Hartford Courant*. "The play is a combination poem, prayer and app on how to cope in an age of uncertainty, speed and chaos." —*Variety*. [4M, 3W] ISBN: 978-0-8222-2716-8

★ **RED** by **John Logan**. WINNER OF THE 2010 TONY AWARD. Mark Rothko has just landed the biggest commission in the history of modern art. But when his young assistant, Ken, gains the confidence to challenge him, Rothko faces the agonizing possibility that his crowning achievement could also become his undoing. "Intense and exciting." —*NY Times*. "Smart, eloquent entertainment." —*New Yorker*. [2M] ISBN: 978-0-8222-2483-9

★ **VENUS IN FUR** by **David Ives**. Thomas, a beleaguered playwright/director, is desperate to find an actress to play Vanda, the female lead in his adaptation of the classic sadomasochistic tale *Venus in Fur*. "Ninety minutes of good, kinky fun." —*NY Times*. "A fast-paced journey into one man's entrapment by a clever, vengeful female." —*Associated Press*. [1M, 1W] ISBN: 978-0-8222-2603-1

★ **OTHER DESERT CITIES** by **Jon Robin Baitz**. Brooke returns home to Palm Springs after a six-year absence and announces that she is about to publish a memoir dredging up a pivotal and tragic event in the family's history—a wound they don't want reopened. "Leaves you feeling both moved and gratifyingly sated." —*NY Times*. "A genuine pleasure." —*NY Post*. [2M, 3W] ISBN: 978-0-8222-2605-5

★ **TRIBES** by **Nina Raine**. Billy was born deaf into a hearing family and adapts brilliantly to his family's unconventional ways, but it's not until he meets Sylvia, a young woman on the brink of deafness, that he finally understands what it means to be understood. "A smart, lively play." —*NY Times*. "[A] bright and boldly provocative drama." —*Associated Press*. [3M, 2W] ISBN: 978-0-8222-2751-9

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by Lewis Black

3M, 4W

It's Courtneys wedding day, and her mom, Delia, is making sure that everything is perfect. The groom is perfect, the dress is perfect, and the decorations (assuming they arrive) will be perfect. Then, like in any good farce the doorbell rings. And all hell breaks loose. So much for perfect.

"There's more than a touch of Neil Simon in the morose Mr. Black."

—The New York Times

"If you think of Lewis Black solely as a curmudgeonly comedian whose default setting is a state of apoplexy at the imbecility of his fellow man, you might be surprised by ONE SLIGHT HITCH. It's not unexpected that HITCH should abound in snappy wisecracks and keen social observation. Those, after all, are hallmarks of Black's stand-up act and his appearances on The Daily Show with Jon Stewart. But what is that we detect on Black's sleeve at the end of his play? Is that his ... heart?"

—The Boston Globe

"If sustained laughter is the best measure of a comedy, ONE SLIGHT HITCH makes the grade."

—Asbury Park Press

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ONE SLIGHT HITCH

by Lewis Black

3M, 4W

It's Courtney's wedding day, and her mom, Delia, is making sure that everything is perfect. The groom is perfect, the dress is perfect, and the decorations (assuming they arrive) will be perfect. Then, like in any good farce the doorbell rings. And all hell breaks loose. So much for perfect.

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ONE SLIGHT HITCH

BY LEWIS BLACK



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