

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Copyright Protection. This play (the “Play”) is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations, whether through bilateral or multilateral treaties or otherwise, and including, but not limited to, all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention, and the Berne Convention.

Reservation of Rights. All rights to this Play are strictly reserved, including, without limitation, professional and amateur stage performance rights; motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video, and sound recording rights; rights to all other forms of mechanical or electronic reproduction now known or yet to be invented, such as CD-ROM, CD-I, DVD, photocopying, and information storage and retrieval systems; and the rights of translation into non-English languages.

Performance Licensing and Royalty Payments. Amateur and stock performance rights to this Play are controlled exclusively by Playscripts, Inc. (“Playscripts”). No amateur or stock production groups or individuals may perform this Play without obtaining advance written permission from Playscripts. Required royalty fees for performing this Play are specified online at the Playscripts website (www.playscripts.com). Such royalty fees may be subject to change without notice. Although this book may have been obtained for a particular licensed performance, such performance rights, if any, are not transferable. Required royalties must be paid every time the Play is performed before any audience, whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. All licensing requests and inquiries concerning amateur and stock performance rights should be addressed to Playscripts (see contact information on opposite page).

Inquiries concerning all other rights should be addressed to Playscripts, as well; such inquiries will be communicated to the author and the author's agent, as applicable.

Restriction of Alterations. There shall be no deletions, alterations, or changes of any kind made to the Play, including the changing of character gender, the cutting of dialogue, or the alteration of objectionable language, unless directly authorized by Playscripts. The title of the Play shall not be altered.

Author Credit. Any individual or group receiving permission to produce this Play is required to give credit to the author as the sole and exclusive author of the Play. This obligation applies to the title page of every program distributed in connection with performances of the Play, and in any instance that the title of the Play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing, or otherwise exploiting the Play and/or a production thereof. The name of the author must appear on a separate line, in which no other name appears, immediately beneath the title and of a font size at least 50% as large as the largest letter used in the title of the Play. No person, firm, or entity may receive credit larger or more prominent than that accorded the author. The name of the author may not be abbreviated or otherwise altered from the form in which it appears in this Play.

Publisher Attribution. All programs, advertisements, and other printed material distributed or published in connection with the amateur or stock production of the Play shall include the following notice:

**Produced by special arrangement with Playscripts, Inc.
(www.playscripts.com)**

Prohibition of Unauthorized Copying. Any unauthorized copying of this book or excerpts from this book is strictly forbidden by law. Except as otherwise permitted by applicable law, no part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means now known or yet to be invented, including, without limitation, photocopying or scanning, without prior permission from Playscripts.

Statement of Non-affiliation. This Play may include references to brand names and trademarks owned by third parties, and may include references to public figures. Playscripts is not necessarily affiliated with these public figures, or with the owners of such trademarks and brand names. Such references are included solely for parody, political comment, or other permitted purposes.

Permissions for Sound Recordings and Musical Works. This Play may contain directions calling for the performance of a portion, or all, of a musical work, or performance of a sound recording of a musical work. Playscripts has not obtained permissions to perform such works. The producer of this Play is advised to obtain such permissions, if required in the context of the production. The producer is directed to the websites of the U.S. Copyright Office (www.copyright.gov), ASCAP (www.ascap.com), BMI (www.bmi.com), and NMPA (www.nmpa.org) for further information on the need to obtain permissions, and on procedures for obtaining such permissions.

The Rules in Brief

- 1) Do NOT perform this Play without obtaining prior permission from Playscripts, and without paying the required royalty.
- 2) Do NOT photocopy, scan, or otherwise duplicate any part of this book.
- 3) Do NOT alter the text of the Play, change a character's gender, delete any dialogue, or alter any objectionable language, unless explicitly authorized by Playscripts.
- 4) DO provide the required credit to the author and the required attribution to Playscripts in all programs and promotional literature associated with any performance of this Play.

For more details on these and other rules, see the opposite page.

Copyright Basics

This Play is protected by United States and international copyright law. These laws ensure that playwrights are rewarded for creating new and vital dramatic work, and protect them against theft and abuse of their work.

A play is a piece of property, fully owned by the playwright, just like a house or car. You must obtain permission to use this property, and must pay a royalty fee for the privilege—*whether or not you charge an admission fee*. Playscripts collects these required payments on behalf of the author.

Anyone who violates an author's copyright is liable as a copyright infringer under United States and international law. Playscripts and the author are entitled to institute legal action for any such infringement, which can subject the infringer to actual damages, statutory damages, and attorneys' fees. A court may impose statutory damages of up to \$150,000 for willful copyright infringements. U.S. copyright law also provides for possible criminal sanctions. Visit the website of the U.S. Copyright Office (www.copyright.gov) for more information.

THE BOTTOM LINE: If you break copyright law, you are robbing a playwright and opening yourself to expensive legal action. Follow the rules, and when in doubt, ask us.

Playscripts, Inc.
325 W. 38th Street, Suite 305
New York, NY 10018

Phone: 1-866-NEW-PLAY (639-7529)
Email: info@playscripts.com
Web: www.playscripts.com

Table of Contents

<i>Aphra Does Antwerp</i> by Liz Duffy Adams	7
<i>The Beauty Inside</i> (one-act version) by Catherine Filloux	19
<i>Doppelganger</i> by Jo Adamson	29
<i>Everything Else</i> by Julian Sheppard.....	39
<i>Going Out</i> by Dan Aibel	49
<i>Invitation to a Funeral</i> by Julie McKee.....	63
<i>Joan of Arkansas</i> by Sheri Wilner.....	79
<i>Letting Billy</i> by Diana Amsterdam	91
<i>Love</i> by Stephen Belber.....	101
<i>Men Suck</i> by J. Holtham.....	117
Author Biographies	122

APHRA DOES ANTWERP
by Liz Duffy Adams

Cast of Characters

APHRA: alias Astrea, Englishwoman, poet and Royalist spy

ROSA: the innkeeper's daughter

WILLIAM: Englishman, a double agent

Setting

1666. An inn in Antwerp, Belgium

“Also he saw...that his two plays already seen and acclaimed yearned toward a third, for in the first he had shown power through conquest, in the second power through knowledge, in the third there would be power through what? Money, he thought, though there could be no tragedy in it, money was no tragic theme.”

—Anthony Burgess, A Dead Man in Deptford

APHRA DOES ANTWERP

A BRIEF RESTORATION COMEDY
IN VERSE

by **Liz Duffy Adams**

(APHRA alone on stage.)

APHRA.

Money! Guilders, sterling, shillings, dough!
Say what you will, God knows I need it so.
The higher things in life I might prefer
To muse upon, profoundly to refer.
I might delight to think upon the joys
Of love, or poetry, the pretty toys
That noble minds do use to pass the time
To season troubled reason with sweet rhyme.
But damn! (to vent vexation with a curse)
For me the base woes of the empty purse.
To costly Antwerp did I wend my way
To serve my King and country as a spy.
And now that I'm ensconced here in this inn
Racking up a bill that spells ruin
The men I trust to keep me here afloat
Have vouchsafed me not yet a single note!
The landlord just this morning dropped a hint;
I think the words he used were "lying bint."
If something can't be done to keep him sweet
I may yet find myself out on the street.
And worst of all, the man I'm here to see
Is so far none so eager to see me.
No one is more suspicious or more shy
Than double agents meeting on the sly.
But if the rogue won't come across and soon
With info worth at least a copper spoon
My spy masters will never yet agree
To pay my bills and passage 'cross the sea
Back to London, my beloved home
Whence, if I'm again, I'll never roam.

Oh, Aphra, use your wits, for what they're worth;
Money's sure as good a spur as mirth.

(Enter the landlord's daughter, ROSA.)

ROSA.

Madam, may I beg a little word?
I must confess I earlier o'erheard
My father dunning you for rent o'er due
And I'm distressed he spoke that way to you.
You're far too fine a lady to be used
To such blunt speech, so vulgar and so rude.
If you'll forgive my forwardness, madam
I'll be your faithful servant, if I can.

APHRA.

Why, my dear Rosa, how can I express
The joy your kind words kindle in my breast?
Just as I here lamented for a friend
You offer honeyed balm, my tears to end.

ROSA. Oh, madam, I'd do anything for you.

APHRA. Call me Astrea, I'll be grateful too.

ROSA. Astrea—no, I can't, you're so above me.

APHRA. Nonsense, I'm humble still to those that love me.

ROSA. Astrea then, both beautiful and kind.

APHRA. Pretty Rosa, sweet in form and mind.

ROSA. You'll make me blush, to speak to me so gently.

APHRA.

Oh never blush, whose charms so evidently
Speak of virtues far beyond your station
Charms that lead me deep into temptation.
I'm tempted, yes, to boldly interfere
For you're too fair to sit and molder here.
A landlord's daughter may be all you are
But I can see a brighter future far.
Forgive me, do, if what I say's presumptuous
But don't you wish for scenery more sumptuous?

ROSA.

Madam—Astrea—what you say is true
And I dare now to bare my soul to you.
A lowly innkeep's daughter I may be
But other, greater scenes appeal to me.
If only I could somehow find a way
I'd fly this wretched toilsome life today!
If some kind friend could free me from this jail—

APHRA. (*Aside:*)

Ah! Now I see which way she trims her sail.
Alas, my dear, if only I were free
I'd beg you now to run away with me.
To London I'd convey you and I swear
You'd soon be feted as a beauty rare.
I'd introduce you to the wits and swells
Where your career would take you, who can tell?
Lords would fight each other for the rights
To keep you in deserved luxurious heights.
Or you might earn a far more glorious wage
Adorning poet's verses on the stage.
But, no, alas, once more I sigh, alas.
I've not the pow'r to bring these scenes to pass.
You know my debt here hangs about my neck.
Till it's discharged I dare not budge a step
Or debtor's prison would be my reward.
Ah me, that life should be so cruel and hard!
That both our lives should be so much the worse
For but the gilded contents of a purse.

ROSA. 'Tis hard indeed. Indeed, it isn't just!

APHRA. Ah well, we can endure it if we must.

ROSA. Do not you look for funds your friends to send?

APHRA.

Alack, my hopes are nearly at an end.
From you, dear friend, I will no secret hide.
My misfortunes to you I'll open wide.
The gentleman who brought me here to wed
Has forsaken his vows, his word, my bed.

Thus I languish poor and nearly friendless.
But for you, my tears would have been endless.

ROSA. Oh! Can it be?

APHRA.

Alas, yes, all too true.
I care for you too much to lie to you.
And so unless some angel should descend
And rescue me from this ignoble end
To debtor's prison I'll go, soon or late
And daughterly enslavement be your fate.

ROSA.

No! No! At this I do at last rebel.
The horror your words raise I cannot tell.
And if I did not fear you'd think me wrong
I'd say how we could both escape 'ere long.

(Knocking without.)

Oh! Pardon me, I must go see who's there.

(Exits.)

APHRA.

A luckless interruption, I do swear.
But where I aim, I've no doubt I will hit;
The future's looking up from where I sit.

(ROSA enters with WILLIAM.)

ROSA. Madam, this gentleman would speak with you.

APHRA. Ah. Yes, come in, and very welcome too.

(Aside to ROSA:)

Leave me a little while now—but hark:
In our conversation leave a mark
And when you're honest, faithful, yes, and true
And brave enough to give friendship its due
Return and open up your mind to me;
That's all I'll say, love's heart must ere be free.

(ROSA exits.)

Well, William, what have you to say to me
Who's come from all the way across the sea
To bring you kingly offers, pardon's hope
Only to be kept waiting like a dope?

WILLIAM.

Is this the icy greeting I deserve?
In Surinam you showed no such reserve.
Have you forgot our intimate embraces?
Has our passion left no tender traces?
However I've offended, do not scold;
You sear my heart with looks and words so cold.

APHRA.

Ah, now I am reminded of your charm
Which soothes away offense when you do harm.
But I am armed against your honeyed tongue
To business then, there's much that must be done.
The King I do believe will pardon all
The treasonous offenses, great and small
That rightfully or not adhere to you
If you'll but make it worth his while to do.
Yield to me whatever you've discovered
What of the Dutch war plans you've yet uncovered.

WILLIAM.

Yes, yes, of that anon, my dearest Aphra;
Will there not yet be time for that hereafter?
For I confess there's nothing in my head
But memories of all the tears I've shed
Wishing you again within my reach
Yield me a little sugar, I beseech.

APHRA.

You vexing rogue, how can you dally thus
When urgent dangerous matters come 'tween us?
You teetering suspected on both sides;
Me broke, depending on your bona fides.
The sooner you deliver up your hoard
The sooner we may both receive reward.

WILLIAM.

Then never will that taunting “sooner” be;
I may as well go drown me in the sea!

APHRA. What wild words! Good lord, what can you mean?

WILLIAM.

I mean that both our luck’s run out, my queen.
The greasy Dutch hold me in scant regard;
If I was followed here it will go hard.
And what intelligence I have to sell
England would sooner damn me straight to hell
Than pay for, it’s so clean against their notion.
I can hear them laughing ’cross the ocean.
“What, Dutch invasion? The rogue’s lost his head!”
If I should venture London, I’d be dead.
In royal mercy I’ve less faith than you;
My father lived just long enough to rue
The princely blandishments that turned apace
To forfeiture of lands, life, and estate.
I’d hoped, for our old love’s sake, truth be told
On your pity or our passion to make bold.
But if you cannot give me means to flee
The jig is up, there’s no more hope for me.
I’m sorry that I’ve brought ruin on you.

APHRA.

Oh, never fear, I’ve still a trick or two.
Listen, dear foolish man, I will confess
I’ve still a tender spot within my breast
For you, that’s right, and I will not stand by
To see you in despair, nor yet to die.
Hap’ly I may yet both our fortunes mend.

(ROSA enters with a thick envelope.)

ROSA. Madam, this letter came. *(Aside to APHRA:)* Did I offend
Where most I long to please—

APHRA.

Oh, no, my dear.
And what you wish to tell I’ll gladly hear.

Do you not trust me yet?

ROSA.

Oh yes, I do.

But yet don't dare to speak this thought to you.

APHRA.

I see. My candor wins me this return.

Witless Astrea, when shall you yet learn?

Ever free and artless with my words

Yet to be rebuffed by still reserve.

You wound me to the heart to so mistrust me;

Now leave me on my own to bear what must be.

ROSA.

Forgive, oh please forgive my craven fear.

I'll keep no secret thought from friendship's ear.

APHRA.

Forgiven just as quickly as you ask it.

My heart relents the moment you do task it.

Now speak, sweet girl, how may we both be free?

ROSA.

A daring wicked thought occurred to me.

My father, though he's base, has loads of cash

And I know where he keeps his secret stash.

It would be days before he'd know it missing

By then we'd be at sea with laughter hissing.

Why should our joy be dangling out of touch

For money owed to he who has so much?

How easy it would be to filch his store

To pay your bill

APHRA. And p'rhaps a little more.

ROSA.

But do you now consider me with horror?

Is not a theft like this beneath your honor?

APHRA.

Perhaps it should be, but the fact is this:

The world will oft conspire against our bliss.

**PAGES HAVE BEEN CUT FROM THIS SCENE.
THE PLAY CONTINUES ON THE NEXT PAGE.**

In order to protect our associated authors against copyright infringement, we cannot currently present full electronic scripts.

To purchase books with the full text, and to apply for performance rights, click ORDER or go back to:

www.playscripts.com

THE BEAUTY INSIDE

(ONE-ACT VERSION)

by Catherine Filloux

Cast of Characters

YALOVA (*Pronounced Yalová*), 14-year-old daughter of Peri

PERI, Yalova's mother, clever

LATIFE (*Pronounced La-tee-fay*), lawyer

Place

Hospital; Southeastern Turkey

Time

Present

Acknowledgements

The Beauty Inside was first produced in HB Playwrights Short Play Festival 2001 "The Hospital Plays" (William Carden, Artistic Director) at HB Playwrights Theatre in New York City (opening night June 5, 2001), with the following cast and staff:

YALOVA Molly Carden
PERI..... Joan Rosenfels
LATIFE..... Larissa Kiel

Director Jean Randich
Fight Director..... Len Trent
Scenic Designer..... Michael Schweikardt
Lighting Designer..... John Lasiter
Costume Designer..... Mary Margaret O'Neill
Sound Designer Jon Kadela
Production Stage Manager..... David Apichell

Special thanks to Melis Bilgin

THE BEAUTY INSIDE

(ONE-ACT VERSION)

by Catherine Filloux

(In shadow, two figures drag a 14-year-old girl [YALOVA] harshly by her hands and feet. These figures are played by PERI and LATIFE, but should be only dark shadows.)

YALOVA. He came at night!

In the thick dark

Black,

I always saw him eyeing me
When I went to get the water,

Bashed me down,
Mud in my mouth.
But something worse.

So much worse!

(The figures hurl YALOVA, who is now in rushing water.)

YALOVA. Down there!

Tumbling
Her inside me
Myself inside
That's all I can imagine

Too small
For this

Still playing games
With sticks

In the dark night

When he comes.

Still playing games at night
Till my mother calls me,
"Yalova, to bed!"
"My little (*Screaming:*) Yalovaaaa."

(Lights up on a hospital room. Yalova's mother, PERI, wearing a head scarf, is trying to drag YALOVA out of the room.)

PERI. Yalovaaaa! My little one. Hurry!

(YALOVA is bandaged, severely hurt.)

YALOVA. Mama, they heard me crying. Down the river. The villagers came on their own. I did not call to them!

PERI. I *myself* will take you to the police.

YALOVA. I didn't tell the doctor, not yet, I promise...

PERI. *Quiet*, you will tell them your brothers had nothing to do with it!

YALOVA. But rocks...I bumped into rocks...Did it hurt her?

PERI. That's enough! What good are you to us now?

(LATIFE, a Westernized woman, rushes into the room.)

LATIFE. What are you doing to her? Get her back into that bed! Are you crazy?

PERI. This is not for you. There are certain things between a mother and daughter that are private.

LATIFE. Put her back in bed or I will get the police. Your sons left her for dead in that canal, Mrs. Bey.

PERI. She dishonored our family.

(LATIFE struggles with PERI to get the girl YALOVA back into bed. LATIFE speaks to YALOVA.)

LATIFE. Your two brothers are in jail. And your father, for ordering your killing.

YALOVA. Jail? No. Mama! I'm so sorry!

(PERI changes tactics, helping YALOVA into the bed.)

PERI. Now, now, hush, let me touch you. Does it hurt?

YALOVA. *(Softly:)* ...does it hurt *her*, mama?

PERI. Shhshh, lie still, little one. *(To LATIFE:)* We must pray now. Would you please leave us alone to pray?

LATIFE. I will be just outside the door.

PERI. May I ask you for a small favor? She needs cold water. Would you bring us some? She is ill and my own throat is parched, I have walked so far in the hot sun, my village is very far away...

LATIFE. I will need to speak to her. Do you understand?

PERI. The water. Please. You are very gracious, we are both unwell, please...

LATIFE. I'll get water.

(LATIFE exits. PERI whispers to YALOVA so Latife won't hear.)

PERI. What have you done? Are you *mad*? *(Shaking her:)* Stupid foolish child!

YALOVA. They are not really in jail, mama?

PERI. You went to the police. To shame us! You must go back now and say it was a story you invented. It is *you* who jumped into the canal to save *yourself*.

YALOVA. ...But he came, the neighbor. In the night. I was playing alone...Mama...

PERI. And what is inside you now? Bad, bad girl!

(PERI starts to hit her.)

YALOVA. Stop, mama. I keep thinking why didn't you call me to bed a little earlier that night... *(Calling like her mother:)* "Yalovaa..."

(PERI yanks YALOVA back out of the bed.)

PERI. On the road we will ask for help...

YALOVA. My head, it is turning...

PERI. I, who fed you, sang to you when you cried...

YALOVA. ...turning...

PERI. What are you worth to us now?

YALOVA. The walls slipping...

PERI. We can get no money for you!

YALOVA. What will you do to me?

(YALOVA slips to the floor.)

Don't kick me, Mama, *(Shielding her stomach:)* be careful...

PERI. I will kill you right here! Then you will see what a curse you have brought on this family. I, all alone, without our men. I SAY GET UP AND WALK.

YALOVA. STOP IT, PLEASE!

(LATIFE re-enters with a pitcher and glass of water.)

LATIFE. *(Furious:)* Get away from her. Move away from her.

PERI. Let go of me.

(PERI starts to hit LATIFE.)

LATIFE. Move away from her, stop it!

PERI. I am her mother.

LATIFE. Mother? Kicking her like that.

PERI. What would you know of it?

LATIFE. Move away. *(Throwing water on PERI:)* Now sit in that chair and stay until I am finished.

PERI. I will stand.

LATIFE. Move away from her.

PERI. I will stand.

LATIFE. Stand at a distance.

PERI. Give me some water.

(LATIFE fills the glass and hands it to her.)

Give her some water.

(LATIFE kneels next to YALOVA.)

LATIFE. Can you hear me?

(PERI starts to approach YALOVA again.)

Don't you come closer, go back to the chair.

PERI. She needs a doctor.

(LATIFE whispers to YALOVA.)

LATIFE. You did well to survive—thrown into an irrigation ditch. You floated at least *a mile* down the canal.

(YALOVA whimpers.)

(Comfortingly:) Shhshh. The villagers that rescued you said your cries were so loud, like an animal's. Like an animal they could not recognize. It was not your fault, you did well to tell the police. Right after they threw you in your brothers shot your neighbor...the man who raped you. Your brothers hoped to kill you too... No mind can wrap itself around such a thought.

PERI. She is with child. *(Motioning to YALOVA's stomach:)* That is what happened.

(LATIFE looks at PERI, then at YALOVA.)

LATIFE. *(To YALOVA:)* Really?

(YALOVA nods.)

PERI. Stupid girl.

LATIFE. Come, let me help you back into the bed, we need to call the doctor.

(YALOVA hallucinates.)

YALOVA. In the rain time there was silver on the canal...

LATIFE. Stand up, now, that's good.

YALOVA. Like a million fish.

LATIFE. One foot in front of the other.

YALOVA. Sun so bright on the silver, like blinding lights...

LATIFE. Almost there, you'll rest...

YALOVA. Don't go in the water, it's dirty, mama told us... How could something so beautiful be so dirty, just put a foot in, a toe...

LATIFE. Let me put the blanket around you. You're not the only one, by far, but when the girl dies the crime disappears. Not with you, Yalova. Not with you.

YALOVA. How could something so beautiful be so dirty?

(PERI gets up from the chair.)

PERI. My water is finished. *(Obsequious:)* I must approach, lady. If it is not asking too much. *(To YALOVA:)* You will go to the police and tell them your brothers and father are not to blame. To restore their honor.

LATIFE. And hers?

PERI. It is not for *her* to have.

LATIFE. Sometimes I ask myself, did I really come from this country?

PERI. *(Disgusted:)* You left.

LATIFE. No, I live here, in Istanbul. I've been here all my life.

PERI. Istanbul!

(LATIFE faces PERI.)

LATIFE. I will protect her now.

PERI. And our family? Will you protect us? Without a husband and sons I will become so poor I will survive on handfuls of dirt. All my village: "There goes the dishonored one."

(She spits on YALOVA.)

PERI. Rotten girl.

YALOVA. *(Faintly:)* Mama...

PERI. Don't call to me now.

YALOVA. If only you'd called...

PERI. Too late, you should have come with me before when I told you to.

YALOVA. If only you'd called me a little earlier to bed that night. *(Imitating her mother, calling:)* "Yalovaaaa!"

PERI. Nonsense! You know what you must do to save us.

(PERI puts her scarf over her head and exits, head bowed against the hot sun ahead. LATIFE stands a moment, then approaches the hospital bed.)

LATIFE. My name's Latife Inan.

(She stands looking at YALOVA, who curls into herself.)

There are other girls. Perhaps in your village you heard rumors... A girl who died because she brought dishonor on her husband, not getting permission to go to the movies. Another's throat cut because a love song was dedicated to her on the radio.

I will return to the city to prepare your case. We'll place you under security protection. We'll send you somewhere where you'll be safe. When you're better you must agree to testify.

Let me get the doctor...

(LATIFE starts to go. YALOVA whimpers. LATIFE sees a little girl, in pain, with a baby inside her.)

When I was a little girl my own mother died. She died in a car crash—if you ever go to Istanbul you'll see that traffic lights are only there for decoration. They say my mother was the type to stop at them. So...I was raised by men. My father, two brothers taught me how to excel, study hard, debate at the dinner table, defend my honor. I went to the best university, was lauded by my teachers, lauded especially by my father and my brothers who always seemed giddy that I, a woman, their creation, succeeded so well, worked out so *right*.

(LATIFE speaks with self-deprecation.)

Now I am a senior lawyer but there is no place to debate at the dinner table about people like you.

**PAGES HAVE BEEN CUT FROM THIS SCENE.
THE PLAY CONTINUES ON THE NEXT PAGE.**

In order to protect our associated authors against copyright infringement, we cannot currently present full electronic scripts.

To purchase books with the full text, and to apply for performance rights, click ORDER or go back to:

www.playscripts.com

DOPPELGANGER
by Jo Adamson

Cast of Characters

MODEL

OLD WOMAN

PHOTOGRAPHER

Doppelganger: n. A ghostly counterpart of a living person.

DOPPELGANGER

by Jo J. Adamson

(Lights up on MODEL, who is standing on deck of cruise ship. Girl holds wide-brimmed straw hat in hand. She's dressed in halter and pants. Girl is next to ship's railing and is looking out to "sea."

OLD WOMAN sits in deck chair. She's dressed in black clothes. A small hat is perched on her head. She has a lap robe over her knees. She is reading.

PHOTOGRAPHER approaches. MODEL holds up her hand in a signal that the photographer is to wait and give her time to freshen up. OLD WOMAN puts down her book.)

Frame I

MODEL. A thousand things go through my head as the photographer checks the light. Is my lipstick glossy? Cheeks luminous?

Figure voluptuous. Eyes bright, teeth pearly? Hair, curly? Will I project the correct image?

Model Vacationing? Young Miss Contemplating? Ingenue Visits Atlanta. Society Deb. on Verandah. Young Beauty Soaks Up Sun. American Miss Visits Venice. Austrian Lass Studies Sunset. Fraulein Heinler Smiles at Photographer. Mademoiselle Cline Boards Luxury Liner.

(PHOTOGRAPHER puts down his equipment. He begins to check it out.)

Focus your lens on my tight skin
I was born for the close-up
The sun is my friend: I open like a flower
Count compliments that blossom in the
summer of my hours

(PHOTOGRAPHER takes light readings, etc.)

Come to me. Come *on*. Photograph the light around my cells. The shadow of my smile. Soft focus me to the edge of eternity. I'm the infinite closing of your iris shot. The particle in your eye that won't wash out.

Feel me to the whorls of your fingers
 Preserve the dream emulsion in your soul
 Embalm the Celluloid daylights out of me and
 I'll look good in tomorrow's photogravure.

(MODEL assumes different poses.)

How do you want me?
 It's a rhetorical question.
 Fetching? perhaps
 Whimsical, capricious, coquettish to be sure
 Here's Pert, Saucy, Bewitching...Alluring
 I give you, Tantalizing, Teasing, Tempting, always.
 I am by instinct.
 Toss of head, angle of chin, curve of neck
 Always right
 up to the orgasmic dissolve

(MODEL addresses photographer.)

We work well together
 Where do you stop and I begin?
 I await your separation
 in safe-light suspension
 O.K., I'm ready
 Click the shutter

(MODEL becomes flustered, unsure.)

I'm all aflutter
 You'd think I'd be used to this
 Each time is like the first virgin thrust
 One more minute,
 My make-up's running, nose shiny...
 No! I'm beauty's perfection
 The stuff dreams are made of

"No sweat" as they say,

Click the shutter while the feeling rises
Take the wave at its crest

Now! fire when ready, Sir
I'm at my best

(MODEL freezes in tableau. Lights up on OLD WOMAN.)

Frame II

(OLD WOMAN pulls lap robe around her waist. She has book in lap.)

OLD WOMAN. The sun is healing.
Its ultraviolet assuages the aches;
I bask in its friendly wake
(Wryly:) A five billion year old deep-heat massage

(OLD WOMAN refers to book.)

I read a good deal.
It's only been in the winter of my life
That fact has been ignored
Books are conversation bridges when the hand
that turns the page
is not speckled with age
(Dryly:) For those of you eaten by curiosity,
It's Walpole I read
Sketches of London, brilliant in detail
Stories of court, Lords and Commons
He suffered agonies from gout
I do as well

“The world,” Walpole writes,
“Is a comedy for those who think,
and a tragedy for those who feel.”

(OLD WOMAN ponders this. Closes book, and reaches under her lap robe for cigarette. Puts it in cigarette holder and lights up.)

I believe I will.
There is much pleasure in the printed word,
I mull over incubated thoughts. Hatch them

at leisure
 A contrast, indeed
 to ship deck talks that assail me daily

(OLD WOMAN touches book.)

These thoughts?
 I don't let them out of my head until I'm good and ready

(She smokes for a moment in silence and then says:)

I'm an old vampire
 Cast no reflection in the dark pupil of the public's eye
 My nourishment is in the hot blood of literary people:
 fallen empires
 They say we're in the last days of Pompeii
 Perhaps we are;
 couldn't care either way
 I die from day to day

Frame III

(PHOTOGRAPHER half-turns to audience. He's dressed in turn-of-the-century "cub" reporter garb. Hat with press card tucked in rim, handheld camera, wrinkled summer suit, etc.)

PHOTOGRAPHER. I'm an old Jimmy
 Cub reporter by definition
 Too old for a *wunderkind*

Superman's been in the sky a long time

Meanwhile, "Back at the Daily Planet"
 I write stories
 Price of Oil Going Up

Shark Attacks Swimmer
 Tremors Felt in Southern Cal
 Husband Beats Wife; Woman Loses Courtroom Battle
 WTO Riots Plague Seattle

(PHOTOGRAPHER turns camera on OLD WOMAN. It must be obvious that prior to turning camera on OLD WOMAN, the audience thinks that the photographer expects to shoot the MODEL.)

Distinguished Visitor Comes To Town

(MODEL notices camera angle, become surprised, irritated: then angry.)

MODEL. So! it's the old woman you want!

Look at her,

Wrinkled skin, pursed mouth

Silly little chapeau perched on head

Of what possible interest could *she* be?

It's Grandma Moses you see

Aphrodite stands before you!

Sprung from the sea's foam

Let the camera select the subject

(The PHOTOGRAPHER takes no interest in the MODEL.)

It's a pity

You've lost your objectivity

PHOTOGRAPHER. I'll *lose* this assignment if I don't shoot the old gal!

She's supposed to be a poet of some kind.

Couldn't prove it by me; don't read the stuff

It's supposed to make you blind

(OLD WOMAN takes no notice of PHOTOGRAPHER. He takes a few more shots, then packs gear.)

PHOTOGRAPHER. See you around, Kid.

(Referring to OLD WOMAN:) Takes all kinds

(PHOTOGRAPHER exits.)

OLD WOMAN and MODEL. *To make a world*

MODEL. *(Turns to old woman.)* Now why do you suppose we did that?

OLD WOMAN. Did what?

MODEL. Spoke as one.

OLD WOMAN. You don't know?

MODEL. I haven't a clue.

OLD WOMAN. We are the same.

MODEL. (*Shivers.*) A breeze has come up. It's getting chilly.

OLD WOMAN. Tomorrow the sun will shine. You're being silly.

MODEL. I want it *now!* My tan is fading.

OLD WOMAN. (*Shrugs.*) Enjoy the disparity.

MODEL. I *loathe* you, you know. I find you ludicrous and pathetic. If it were left to me, I'd kill you by inches. Set you on an ice floe to perish in the winter sun.

OLD WOMAN. *We are one.*

MODEL. Never like you! You're an old woman who wears wrinkled cotton and sits in the sun. You talk of days gone by. Grandchildren who visit, children who don't. You make me want to cry.

OLD WOMAN. (*Smiles:*) I spend my money on travel, books. I've learned to adjust to my sunset years. Save your tears.

(MODEL paces. She's nervous. The OLD WOMAN is a threat to her, but she cannot move away from her. She's drawn to the old woman like a magnet.)

MODEL. I don't know why I'm talking to you... The photographer came over, I thought he wanted to photograph *me*. I'm a model you see. At least I want to be.

Oh, why do I tell you these things? I don't even care that you're here. I wouldn't have noticed you at all, had he but focused on *me*. (*Turns to OLD WOMAN. Plaintively:*) Go away.

OLD WOMAN. I'm here to stay.

**PAGES HAVE BEEN CUT FROM THIS SCENE.
THE PLAY CONTINUES ON THE NEXT PAGE.**

In order to protect our associated authors against copyright infringement, we cannot currently present full electronic scripts.

To purchase books with the full text, and to apply for performance rights, click ORDER or go back to:

www.playscripts.com

EVERYTHING ELSE
by Julian Sheppard

Cast of Characters

PHIL

JANE

Time

The Present.

Place

Anywhere in the U.S.

Note

Occasional / marks indicate overlapping dialogue.

EVERYTHING ELSE

by Julian Sheppard

(A living room. Evening. PHIL is tying his shoes, almost ready to go out for the evening. A coat is next to him on a chair. JANE enters, wearing a nice dress and a purple hat.)

JANE. What do you think?

PHIL. What do I about what?

JANE. The hat, the hat.

PHIL. Oh. It's ok.

JANE. It's only ok?

PHIL. It's ok.

JANE. It's purple.

PHIL. I know it's purple. It's nice.

JANE. Uh-huh.

(She starts to leave.)

PHIL. What?

JANE. You don't like it.

PHIL. I like it alright.

JANE. Do you?

PHIL. Yeah—

JANE. Oh good—

PHIL. It's ok.

JANE. Fine just say you don't like it!

PHIL. Alright. I don't like it / that much.

JANE. / Why not?

PHIL. Jane, we're almost late.

JANE. We're fine. I like the hat.

PHIL. Then you should wear it.

JANE. You think it looks stupid.

PHIL. I didn't say that.

JANE. I got it today.

PHIL. When you went shopping?

JANE. Yeah. I like it.

PHIL. It's really nice.

JANE. No it's not.

PHIL. Honey—

JANE. It's ugly.

PHIL. Honey—

JANE. It's ugly.

PHIL. So don't wear it.

JANE. You know...

PHIL. What?

JANE. Nothing.

PHIL. No, what, you were going to say something.

JANE. No I wasn't. Are you almost ready?

PHIL. Yes, what were you going to say?

JANE. Do you really *hate* the hat?

PHIL. ...I don't *hate* the hat—

JANE. You could've lied, y'know.

PHIL. Why should I lie? You asked me a question.

JANE. I wanted you to tell me I looked good.

PHIL. I know—

JANE. So why—

PHIL. You always look good— I just didn't *love* the hat. Did you want me to lie?

JANE. Maybe.

PHIL. Fine. I'll lie more.

JANE. You don't have to start lying.

PHIL. You want me to.

JANE. No I don't—

PHIL. You just said—

JANE. I know what I— I don't want you to *lie*.

PHIL. Fine.

JANE. Do you?

PHIL. What?

JANE. Lie. To me?

PHIL. Jane.

JANE. Do you?

PHIL. We're now late.

JANE. I'm curious.

PHIL. About whether I lie to you.

JANE. Yes.

PHIL. But if I lie to you I could just lie now.

JANE. You do lie to me?

PHIL. Christ / I didn't—

JANE. / When did you lie to me?

PHIL. I don't *lie* to you, like I, you make it sound like I do this thing where I—

JANE. You could just say, "No, I don't ever lie to you, ever."

PHIL. ...But that would be lying.

JANE. So why are you being honest now?

PHIL. Look. I am not dishonest. You make it sound like—

JANE. Tell me one lie.

PHIL. God.

I've never seen "Ordinary People."

JANE. But you had that whole—

PHIL. I know, I know.

JANE. How'd you—

PHIL. I know enough to...

JANE. What else?

PHIL. Do you lie to me?

JANE. We're not talking about me?

PHIL. Does that mean you do or you don't?

JANE. Of course I do—sometimes—

PHIL. Of course— what does *that* mean?!

JANE. White lies—

PHIL. Like?

JANE. I don't like that tie your mother gave you.

PHIL. Nothing real, ever?

JANE. Phil.

PHIL. Stop being a hypocrite.

JANE. I'm not—you are—

PHIL. We're really late—

JANE. I know one time you lied to me.

PHIL. When?

JANE. Never mind.

PHIL. No, when?

JANE. When you were two hours late—

PHIL. When—?

JANE. End of last month.

PHIL. Two hours?

JANE. After you saw that movie with Dennis.

PHIL. We went for drinks.

JANE. You and Dennis?

PHIL. Uh-huh.

JANE. What kind of drinks did you get?

PHIL. Alcoholic ones.

JANE. How many?

PHIL. Obviously too many or I wouldn't have been so late!

JANE. Couple more maybe you would've been even later.

PHIL. Look, we are not getting into this again.

JANE. What do you mean again?

PHIL. I mean, this silly—

JANE. Yeah but we never got *into it* before.

PHIL. But you wanted to—

JANE. And that made you feel guilty—

PHIL. It did not.

JANE. Here's your opportunity. Did you lie to me then or not?

PHIL. So, what, if I say I was lying then, then everything's ok?

JANE. Yes.

PHIL. I don't believe you.

JANE. I was right. You're lying.

PHIL. Jane, nothing's going on—

JANE. Did I say something was going on?

PHIL. Oh, c'mon.

JANE. No seriously, Phil, is that what you think I'm trying to say, because if it is—

PHIL. Look, you're the one who thinks it's ok you're going to San Diego for two months.

(Beat.)

JANE. Oh.

PHIL. Look. We were supposed to be there...now. So if we leave now, we can still be attractively late. What do you say?

JANE. It's only two months.

PHIL. It was only two hours.

JANE. But I didn't lie.

PHIL. You may as well have.

JANE. It's a new office.

PHIL. Who lives in San Diego?

JANE. A bunch of sailors?

PHIL. Connor.

JANE. Connor lives in Santa Barbara, it's four hours away.

PHIL. Oh really. Three-and-a-half if you drive fast.

JANE. I'm not—

PHIL. You figured out how quick the drive is.

JANE. I don't want to see Connor.

PHIL. No?

JANE. No.

**PAGES HAVE BEEN CUT FROM THIS SCENE.
THE PLAY CONTINUES ON THE NEXT PAGE.**

In order to protect our associated authors against copyright infringement, we cannot currently present full electronic scripts.

To purchase books with the full text, and to apply for performance rights, click ORDER or go back to:

www.playscripts.com

GOING OUT
by Dan Aibel

Cast of Characters

A

B

GOING OUT

by Dan Aibel

(A and B. Men in their mid-twenties.)

(A bar. A and B each hold a nearly-full pint glass.)

A. This tastes ridiculous. Have you tasted this? Taste it. *(Beat.)* Taste this.

B. I don't wanna taste it.

A. *Taste it.*

(Pause.)

(B tastes it.)

(Pause.)

A. What?

B. Tastes fine.

A. *Fine?*

B. That's what it tastes like.

A. This is the worst beer in America.

B. It's cider.

A. What?

B. *Cider.*

A. What's cider?

B. What you ordered.

A. I ordered the special. Special's *cider*? Special's not cider.

B. See where it says special?

A. Yeah?

B. See the tap?

A. Yeah?

B. Apple? Big plastic apple up top?

A. Yeah? *(Beat.)* That's ridiculous.

B. Wanna go?

A. Ya didn't wanna maybe say something?

B. Come on. We'll go.

A. Wait a second: How do you just sit there and let me order piss water? *(Beat.)* Well?

B. I thought you wanted it.

A. You thought I wanted it. Who am I? Your little sister?

B. How do I know what you want?

A. You think I want *cider*? *(Beat.)* You're a disgrace, you know that?

(Pause.)

A. It's actually very pleasant.

B. Oh yeah?

A. It's very light.

B. Really?

A. I like it. Like it very much.

B. How wonderful for you.

A. Wanna try one? Come on. Lemme get you one.

B. Don't.

A. You should try it. I'm telling you. Shit's something else.

B. She's not showing up.

A. Course she'll show up.

B. She's not.

A. Nah. You dunno.

(Pause.)

A. This place has gone to crap, y'know that?

B. It has.

A. No, but honestly. Has this place gone to hell or what?

B. It's not that bad.

A. I met a girl here once.

B. Oh yeah?

A. Gorgeous.

B. Really?

A. Drop-dead. Absolutely.

B. What happened?

A. Now look at them... Place is full-up with chuckleheads. *Look* at them.

B. What?

A. They're animals.

B. They're all right.

A. They're animals!

B. They're just drunk.

A. Well it's wrong. It's not right. I'm sorry. I don't go for that...
(*Beat.*) You wanna go out?

B. What's this?

A. Let's go. We'll go out. Get a drink somewhere. (*Beat.*) We'll go to Luke's.

B. No. No I don't wanna go to Luke's.

A. Come on. Quick beer at Luke's

B. She's not gonna be there.

A. So?

B. She won't.

A. She'll be there.

B. I'm telling you.

A. Bet you a *dollar* she's there.

(Pause.)

A. Come on. Luke's. Whaddaya say?

B. She's staying in tonight.

A. Who cares?

B. Listen to me: She's Staying In.

A. (Beat.) You heard this? Where'd you hear that?

B. (Beat.) She told me.

A. *You?* She *call* you? What'd she do? She didn't *call* you?

B. Wanted to know if you were going out.

A. Yeah?

B. You were going out, she was gonna stay in, apparently.

A. She *said* this? (Beat.) This is what I'm talking about. Ya see? This is the *exact*...

B. And sounded pissed.

A. Really? How pissed?

B. Sounded moderately pissed.

(Pause.)

A. What nads. What *nads*, this chick's accumulated...

(Pause.)

A. What'd you say?

B. What?

A. Told her...?

B. Said we were going out.

A. Goddamn right.

B. Coming here, might swing by Luke's late-night.

A. Nah, she can go to hell.

(Pause.)

B. So I was saying something. What was I saying?

A. Cider...

B. No.

A. Chuckleheads...

B. No. The *phone*.

A. What phone?

B. I found. On the beach.

A. Oh. That's right...

B. So yeah, so I find it. Turn it on. And what I do, I figure, I'll—

A. Got in a fight.

B. Huh?

A. We...this stupid... And y'know what gets me? She calls you—you're not gonna *tell* me? Of course you are. That's *why* she tells you. Y'know? I mean, the whole thing is strictly amateur hour.

B. What was the fight?

A. What? I dunno. (*Beat.*) She doesn't want me doing certain things.

B. Like what?

A. You won't believe it.

B. What?

A. You'd never believe it. (*Beat.*) This.

B. What?

A. This.

B. What? Drinking?

A. All of it.

B. All of what?

A. The whole thing.

B. “Going out”?

A. Basically.

B. She doesn’t want you “going out.”

(Pause.)

B. Well fuck *that*.

A. That’s what I’m saying

B. That’s ridiculous.

A. Of course it is.

B. Does she realize how ridiculous that is?

(Pause.)

B. We go *out*. This is what we do.

A. I know.

B. For years.

A. I know.

B. For *years*.

A. I know.

B. Doesn’t involve her.

A. It doesn’t.

B. How does it involve her? It *pre-dates* her.

(Pause.)

B. Plus, *she* goes out.

A. All the time.

B. Not like she’s... Like she doesn’t go out or something.

A. Well, it's not going out, *per se*, that's...

B. What?

A. That she's...

B. What is it?

(Pause.)

B. What?

A. She thinks you're a bad influence.

B. Yeah, funny.

A. *(Chuckling.)* I'm serious. *(Beat. Earnest:)* I'm serious.

B. I'm a bad influence?

A. Apparently.

B. Me? On *you*?

A. She thinks so.

B. And how is that?

A. Who knows.

B. You dunno?

A. I dunno.

(Pause.)

A. You probably don't realize this: *(Beat.)* In the past. Over the years...

B. Yeah?

A. You've... "done" things.

B. What?

A. Things.

B. Like what?

A. Oh. Who knows.

B. What have I done?

A. (*Beat.*) Remember that time you were drinking, you got drunk, you got so drunk I had to take you to the hospital—which is why I didn't get home till seven in the morning, that one time?

B. No.

A. Well she does.

B. Uh-huh.

A. She remembers that one. (*Beat.*) Happened a couple times, actually.

B. Oh really?

A. She seems to think so.

B. Does she?

A. That's her impression. Yeah.

(Pause.)

B. And how many times did this happen, does she think?

A. A couple.

B. How many?

A. A couple.

B. *Two?*

A. (*Beat.*) Figure a few times, altogether, when you add it all up.

(Pause.)

A. Also, I had to once pick you up at jail.

B. *What?*

A. I know. I'm bad.

B. Jail?

A. I didn't get home till noon.

B. So?

A. So what am I gonna say?

B. I dunno. That you were off humping the hostess at Fud-drucker's?

A. *(Beat.)* See I dunno how that woulda played.

B. Not well.

A. Nah. That wouldn'ta played that well.

(Pause.)

B. So and I was doing what there, supposedly?

A. Huh?

B. What Was I In *Jail* For?

A. Oh.

B. What?

(A chuckles.)

B. What?

A. Solicitation.

B. You're joking.

A. It's terrible, I know.

B. Jesus Christ.

A. It was all I could think of.

(Pause.)

B. She thinks I'm an alcoholic who can't get laid.

A. Oh come on.

B. Well she thinks I'm an asshole.

A. She does not.

B. She must.

A. She doesn't think you're an asshole. Just doesn't want me hanging out with you, that's all. *(Beat.)* Relax: It's just politics. Power is-

sues. She's just looking for leverage. Whole thing—trust me—blows over in a week. *(Beat.)* Hey: I'm here. I showed up. Did I not show up? Huh? *(Beat.)* So The Phone. Tell me.

B. You're a fucker. Y'know that?

A. Come on. Tell me.

B. You're unbelievable. I'm serious.

A. I'm a terrible human being.

B. Pain in my ass. That's all.

A. "You're at the beach. You find the phone." So, what? Whose was it? What? Was it someone we know?

B. You wanna hear it?

A. Course I wanna... Why am I *here*?

B. She's here.

A. What?

B. She's here.

A. Where?

B. Don't look.

A. I told you. Ya see? Did I not...?

B. Don't *look*.

(A turns away.)

(Pause.)

A. How's she look?

B. Fine.

A. But pissed?

B. Hard to say.

A. Alone?

B. Nope.

**PAGES HAVE BEEN CUT FROM THIS SCENE.
THE PLAY CONTINUES ON THE NEXT PAGE.**

In order to protect our associated authors against copyright infringement, we cannot currently present full electronic scripts.

To purchase books with the full text, and to apply for performance rights, click ORDER or go back to:

www.playscripts.com

INVITATION TO A FUNERAL
by Julie McKee

Cast of Characters

SHIRLEY, 30-40s. Housewife, mother, blue collar worker. Working class. Bitter, competitive. Tough as nails. Whatever the departed wants, she wants the opposite. Determined to thwart. Discovers she still has feelings for him.

JOYCE, 30-40s. Housewife, mother, blue collar worker. Working class. Bright, bubbly, a little naïve, looks on the bright side. Afraid to look death in the face. Discovers she wasn't loved.

Production Note

The body in the coffin should not be seen by the audience. It is more fun to leave that to the imagination of the audience.

Acknowledgements

Invitation to a Funeral was first produced by the HB Playwrights Foundation Short Plays Festival in 2000. It was directed by Deborah Hedwall with the following cast:

ShirleyJayne Haynes
JoyceJulie McKee

Set Vickie Davis
Lights Renee Molina
Sound Steve LeSieur
Costumes Christopher Peterson
Tech Director.....Carlo Adinolfi
Production Stage Manager..... David Apichell

It was subsequently produced at the Ensemble Studio Theatre Marathon in 2001, and directed by Deborah Hedwall with the following cast:

Shirley Kathleen Doyle
JoyceSusan Pellegrino

Set Warren Karp
Lights Greg MacPherson
Sound Robert Gould
Costumes Christopher Peterson
Assistant to Lighting Designer.....Moir McDonald
Assistant to Sound Designer.....Kenneth Bowler

All production groups performing this play are required to include the following credits on the title page of every program:

Invitation to a Funeral was presented by The Ensemble Studio Theatre. Curt Dempster, Artistic Director, Jamie Richards, Executive Producer.

INVITATION TO A FUNERAL

by Julie McKee

(Summer. The present. Lights up in the viewing room of a funeral parlour. SHIRLEY (50s) is sitting there alone, in the front row, dressed in black looking grim. She's about to light a cigarette when JOYCE (50s) slips in dressed in bright colours.)

SHIRLEY. *(To herself:)* Oh Christchurch.

JOYCE. *(Loud whisper:)* Is this the viewing room, is it?

SHIRLEY. *(Annoyed:)* Yeah...

(JOYCE sits carefully and quietly in the back row.)

JOYCE. Had a look, have you?

SHIRLEY. Yeah.

JOYCE. Look alright does he?

SHIRLEY. Yeah.

JOYCE. Peaceful?

SHIRLEY. Unfortunately.

JOYCE. *(Hopefully:)* Normal, sort of?

SHIRLEY. *(Sharply:)* He's dead!

JOYCE. Oh yes, yes I know. But. Has he got any clothes on? Because he sent me a memo, you know, saying he was going to go out the same way he came in. So I just sort of...wondered. *(Beat.)* So. So, is he—

SHIRLEY. *(Impatiently:)* Why don't you take a look for yourself?

JOYCE. No, no I think I'll wait. Thank you.

(JOYCE gets out a piece of paper and studies it. SHIRLEY notices.)

SHIRLEY. I got the memo too.

JOYCE. Oh did you?

SHIRLEY. Yeah.

JOYCE. So you were married to him too, were you?

SHIRLEY. Oh yeah.

JOYCE. So was I. Don't know quite what he saw in me to tell you the truth.

SHIRLEY. Yeah well. To each his own.

JOYCE. Yes.

(Pause.)

JOYCE. Chronologically speaking, where are you in the line?

SHIRLEY. I don't know.

JOYCE. Oh. I just wondered 'cause there's quite a few names on the memo.

SHIRLEY. *(Losing her cool:)* Buncha tarts! At first I thought they was in the order of marriage—what did you call that?

JOYCE. Chronological.

SHIRLEY. Right. *(Eyeing her.)* But then I noticed the list was alphabetical!

(Referring to her memo.)

See I'm here, this is me, and I know this one here—see this tart? *(Ominously:)* Bloody bitch of a woman, had a face on her like a run over beer can, hope she don't show up, I'll bloody smack her one. 'Course she was after me *chronologically* speaking. And this one over here, she's before me *alphabetically* speaking, so, so—

JOYCE. You're Shirley!!?

SHIRLEY. Yeah, I'm Shirley. Who are you?

(JOYCE sits down next to SHIRLEY.)

JOYCE. See, see here! This is me. Joyce. The one *before* you. Chronologically speaking. I think I was, if I remember correctly.

SHIRLEY. *(Eyeing her:)* Ohh.

(A pause.)

Hello Joyce.

JOYCE. Hello Shirley. Didn't recognise you. How are you?

SHIRLEY. I've been better.

(A pause.)

Bugger of a man weren't he?

JOYCE. Yes.

SHIRLEY. A real bugger.

JOYCE. Sexy though. I liked having sex with him.

SHIRLEY. Ran off and left me with the kids.

JOYCE. Oh yes, me too!

SHIRLEY. Two sulky, grizzling, bloody kids!

JOYCE. Me too!

SHIRLEY. Two must have been the "I better bugger off now" number. (Beat.) Left you anything in his will?

JOYCE. Shouldn't think so. Never had a pot to pee in, did he?

SHIRLEY. No.

JOYCE. No.

SHIRLEY. Would have been nice for the kids though.

JOYCE. Mine don't care anymore. Better things to do today, they said.

SHIRLEY. Mine care. All hot to trot. Specially the eldest. She remembers him.

JOYCE. Oh that's a shame.

SHIRLEY. Tough, it's tough. Blames *him* for *her* shitty life.

JOYCE. Perhaps he's got some insurance?

SHIRLEY. Life, I should think.

JOYCE. Oh nice. So who's he married to now?

SHIRLEY. Oh some young thing.

JOYCE. Oh no, I don't think so. I don't think she'd be young. Oh no. He liked his women mature. Every time he got married they got older. I mean you are older than me aren't you?

(SHIRLEY gives her a look.)

JOYCE. *(Obliviously:)* So I think the one he's married to now must be old enough to be his mother. I think perhaps that's what he needed all the time, you know, pretty common problem really.

SHIRLEY. Either way she'll get it all.

JOYCE. Stands to reason, yes.

SHIRLEY. Maybe it'll be shared.

JOYCE. He shared everything else, didn't he? Ha, ha, ha.

(SHIRLEY gives her another look.)

SHIRLEY. Are you going to take a look at him? Or what?

JOYCE. No. *(JOYCE notices SHIRLEY's look.)* No, I, I just popped in to, to pay my respects, I probably should be off now.

(But JOYCE doesn't move.)

JOYCE. Did you re-marry?

SHIRLEY. Of course. Someone had to give me a hand with the kids. And then I went and had two more.

JOYCE. Oh nice.

SHIRLEY. Nice? Let me tell you, weren't much better the second time around.

JOYCE. Plusses and minuses.

SHIRLEY. At least this one stuck around. More's the pity. Grouchy touchy bugger.

JOYCE. Mine's an actual idiot. I liked him over there, best.

SHIRLEY. Yeah, well. Me mother couldn't stand his guts.

JOYCE. Full of confidence though, wasn't he? I liked that about him best, 'cause I never had any.

SHIRLEY. Had to slap a writ on the bugger to get me maintenance.

JOYCE. Me too! But he was very clean, wasn't he. You have to give him that.

SHIRLEY. Yeah.

JOYCE. And very, very particular about his hair.

SHIRLEY. Yeah.

JOYCE. Good sense of humour.

SHIRLEY. Only one who could make me laugh. I'm happy I've outlived him though. Gives me some sense of satisfaction.

JOYCE. The living must go on living.

SHIRLEY. I've actually come to dance on his grave.

JOYCE. Oh well. That's not exactly...

SHIRLEY. I know.

JOYCE. But look at him now.

SHIRLEY. I am. And he's dead. Wearing a flipping cowboy hat.

JOYCE. Oh nice!

SHIRLEY. Holding a joint.

JOYCE. Oh heck!

SHIRLEY. Buck naked. And I haven't had a good laugh since you left, you miserable sod. *(Beat.)* Want me to look with you? I'm ready to have another look. Come on.

JOYCE. No. Yeah. Oh no, I can't. I don't—

SHIRLEY. Rest assured the hat is very strategically placed.

JOYCE. Ah ha. Is it a big hat? Ha, ha, ha. Sorry, I'm sorry.

(Loud music suddenly comes over the speakers. They are startled.)

SHIRLEY. What the—?

JOYCE. What is that?

SHIRLEY. Pink Floyd. 1973.

JOYCE. Oh nice.

(SHIRLEY *dances.*)

SHIRLEY. Cool. *Dark Side of the Moon.* Remember it?

JOYCE. No.

(*The music goes off as suddenly as it came on.*)

SHIRLEY. Hey! What happened? What the hell is going on?

JOYCE. Shirley, you know what I think? I think it's for the service! I think he'd *like* for you to be dancing on his grave.

SHIRLEY. (*Immediately alerted:*) What do you mean?

JOYCE. (*Waving the memo:*) He *wants* it to be a party, a big celebration! Look, see, he's having it catered special and everything, lobster sandwiches, an oyster bar, sausage rolls, the lot.

SHIRLEY. (*Defiantly:*) Oh Yeah!? Yeah!? Well! In that case I'll just sit myself down.

(*She does.*)

JOYCE. All my favourites.

SHIRLEY. If he thinks I'm going to enjoy this, he's got another thing bloody coming.

JOYCE. After the cremation we're scheduled to scatter his ashes in the ocean.

SHIRLEY. Can't even let me celebrate his funeral without he's running things.

JOYCE. Shirley? Have you, actually, you know, said "goodbye" to him?

SHIRLEY. No! But that's besides the point. I didn't come to say *goodbye* did I? I came to say *bugger off and good riddance*, and enjoy myself doing it. But if you want to say *goodbye* you better get in now

before those other tarts start lining up, because according to this memo, there's going to be quite a few.

JOYCE. So. Is he really—?

(SHIRLEY nods.)

JOYCE. And the hat is—?

(SHIRLEY nods.)

JOYCE. Oh no, no, no, no!

(Laughs nervously:)

Ohhh, ha, ha, ha.

(Seriously:)

Yeah. All right. You only live once. Okay. Okay. Okay.

(JOYCE doesn't move.)

SHIRLEY. Want me to come with?

(SHIRLEY offers her hand.)

JOYCE. Yeah. In case I faint. I might.

(Hand in hand, they go up to the coffin together.)

JOYCE. *(Glued:)* Ohhh.

SHIRLEY. Yeeeah.

(After a moment or two.)

JOYCE. Weren't no oil painting was he?

(They look for a moment longer before...)

SHIRLEY. I'm going to lift up the hat alright?

JOYCE. *(Horrorified:)* No, no. *(Beat.)* All right.

(SHIRLEY has lifted the hat.)

JOYCE. Oh look, oh. Sweet. Gave me a lot of pleasure that did.

(A respectful silence.)

SHIRLEY. Real carrot top weren't he?

(They are still. Then SHIRLEY puts back the hat. They are stock still for another moment or two. Then suddenly SHIRLEY puts her hand back in the coffin.)

JOYCE. What, what are you—

(SHIRLEY, triumphant, has pulled out a hand rolled joint.)

JOYCE. Put that back! Put that right back—what are you...

(SHIRLEY smells the rolled joint.)

SHIRLEY. Oh yeah, yeah. Best quality. He would have rolled it himself as well.

(Something in the coffin has caught JOYCE's eye.)

JOYCE. Here.

SHIRLEY. The prick.

JOYCE. You notice anything—odd? Look, look here. Something's—not quite right. I can't, I can't quite put my finger on it, but something is definitely—

SHIRLEY. What?

JOYCE. Shirley? Are you shedding a tear?

SHIRLEY. NO!

(She is. SHIRLEY puts back the joint. She tries to cover her tears.)

SHIRLEY. He actually called me up before he, he went, you know, to, to say *goodbye*. I. I hung up on the bugger.

JOYCE. Oh now there, there.

SHIRLEY. *(Fiercely:)* I'm all right. I'm all right! Nothing wrong with me! It's just that now I'll never know what he wanted to say, that's all. Perhaps he wanted to say he was sorry.

JOYCE. I don't think so, no.

SHIRLEY. And what would you know about it?

JOYCE. 'Cause he rung me up too.

SHIRLEY. Son of a—

JOYCE. Said if there's a hereafter, he'd see me there. I said, oh no, I don't think so, because I'm coming back as a dog. Ha, ha, ha, ha.

SHIRLEY. A what?

JOYCE. *(Still laughing.)* I don't know why I said it. Why did I say I was coming back as a dog? *(Beat.)* Cause both my dogs had good lives.

(JOYCE bursts into tears.)

SHIRLEY. Christchurch.

(SHIRLEY gives her a hanky.)

SHIRLEY. Hey! He weren't worth it. He left you with two kids to fend for yourself.

JOYCE. *(Snapping:)* Well what are you doing here then!?

SHIRLEY. *(Flustered:)* I come to, to— So shut yer gob!!

(SHIRLEY is back at the coffin.)

SHIRLEY. Uh-oh. Christchurch! That's it. That's it! I see it. Do you see it?

(JOYCE joins SHIRLEY. She sees it. They look at each other.)

JOYCE. It's parted—

SHIRLEY. —on the wrong side.

(Then back at the coffin. They are transfixed.)

JOYCE. Do you think we should. You know— Fix it?

SHIRLEY. No.

JOYCE. He was so particular—

SHIRLEY. *NO!* No. We'll just sit here, and—

(SHIRLEY sits down.)

SHIRLEY. And observe. Ha, ha, ha. See if any of those other tarts notice.

JOYCE. It's not funny.

**PAGES HAVE BEEN CUT FROM THIS SCENE.
THE PLAY CONTINUES ON THE NEXT PAGE.**

In order to protect our associated authors against copyright infringement, we cannot currently present full electronic scripts.

To purchase books with the full text, and to apply for performance rights, click ORDER or go back to:

www.playscripts.com

JOAN OF ARKANSAS
by Sheri Wilner

Cast of Characters

LAURA: 26–29, a college student

DENNIS: 19–21, a college student

Time

Present day

Place

A reading room in the library of a large university

Production Notes

Throughout the script there are moments in which the audience must realize that time is passing. However, this should not be achieved through the use of blackouts, which should not occur at any point in the play.

JOAN OF ARKANSAS

by Sheri Wilner

(A reading room in a college library. Academic and elegant.)

At rise: LAURA is sitting at a long, wooden table with books and papers piled around her. On the table there are small, antique desk lamps spaced evenly apart.

DENNIS enters carrying a large backpack, which he places on a chair at the other end of the table. He removes a book from his backpack and sets it on the table. He proceeds to take out about 15 books, one by one. The effect should be similar to that of clowns piling out of a tiny car at the circus. He then organizes the books in some specific order. When all of his books are out, he sits down and begins to work. They both write silently. After a beat, they look at each other.)

DENNIS. Finals week. Fun time.

LAURA. Yeah.

DENNIS. I thought I was the only one stuck with a final on the last day.

LAURA. You're not.

(Sound: Clock ticking.)

Ticking stops. It is a half an hour later.

They are absorbed in their papers.

All of a sudden, a strange noise is heard. It is the flurry of wings. LAURA looks up at a bookshelf and sees a small bird perched on top. She is shocked to see a bird in a library. She looks at DENNIS, who has noticed it too. They smile and resume their work.

Sound: Clock ticking.

Ticking stops. It is a half an hour later.

LAURA and DENNIS are sitting in contorted positions, trying to see the bird underneath the table. DENNIS places his cupped hand on the floor. LAURA resumes her work.)

DENNIS. Excuse me?

LAURA. Yes?

DENNIS. Could you just...push it a little? Towards my hand.

LAURA. I'm afraid I'll scare it.

DENNIS. You won't. Just lead it towards me.

(LAURA gently extends her hand. They remain in their positions for several seconds before he finally gives up. DENNIS and LAURA politely smile.)

Sound: Clock ticking.

Ticking stops. It is a half an hour later.

LAURA and DENNIS are looking more tired and stressed. Sounds of the bird can still be heard. They occasionally look up at the bird, now with slight impatience. LAURA looks over her shoulder.)

LAURA. Every desk is free. I should move.

DENNIS. I've written my last three papers at this desk. This is due tomorrow, I can't take any chances... Does that sound crazy?

(LAURA holds up her pen and shows it to DENNIS.)

LAURA. Without this, I'm nothing.

(Sound: Clock ticking.)

Ticking stops. It is a half an hour later.

It is slightly darker in the room. LAURA turns on a desk lamp and looks pleased at the light it casts on the desk. LAURA moves over one seat so that her papers are directly under the light. DENNIS has seen this.)

DENNIS. First time here?

LAURA. How'd you know?

(The bird flies by; they watch it.)

DENNIS. Lucky guess.

(DENNIS turns on the desk lamp nearest him.)

It's the chairs that keep me coming back. Makes me feel like I'm in the Oval Office.

(LAURA smiles and nods politely.)

So...you think you'll come here again? Now that you've discovered this oasis?

LAURA. Yeah. Probably. I probably will.

(They smile at each other.)

The bird flies by.

Beat.

Sound: Clock ticking.

Ticking stops. It is a half an hour later.

LAURA is holding a bagel in her hands. She rips tiny pieces from it and places the crumbs in a row in front of her. Once LAURA has placed a substantial amount of crumbs down, she sits. They wait for the bird to land in front of them. It doesn't.

After a moment, they look at each other, embarrassed. The bird lands on the table. LAURA gasps. As LAURA studies the bird, DENNIS watches her. LAURA slowly extends her cupped hand towards the bird, hoping to catch it. It flies away.)

DENNIS. *(Smitten and entranced:)* What's your major?

LAURA. English. You?

DENNIS. History.

(Beat.)

Nice to meet you, English.

LAURA. Nice to meet you too, History.

(Beat.)

Laura.

DENNIS. Dennis.

LAURA. *(Pointing to her paper:)* Oscar Wilde.

DENNIS. *(Pointing to his paper:)* Joan of Arc.

(LAURA smiles broadly.

Beat.

Sound: Clock ticking.

Ticking stops. It is a half an hour later.

The bird is flying around. LAURA and DENNIS look more tired and haggard. DENNIS crumples a piece of paper with annoyance.)

DENNIS. This is stupid. I'm moving.

(He starts stuffing books into his bag. DENNIS also makes a small stack, which he places under his arm.)

Good luck with Oscar.

LAURA. Good luck with Joan.

(DENNIS exits.

LAURA watches the bird fly around, then walks to the windows and attempts to open them. They are bolted shut. She locates the lock but can't figure out how to unlock it. She moves on to the next window. No success there either. She looks up at the bird, which sits on a perch by the window.)

LAURA. Doesn't make sense, does it? It's just one thin piece of glass that's keeping you out of the sky.

(LAURA stares at the sky through the window. After a few seconds DENNIS enters with all of his books.)

DENNIS. No use. I can't write anywhere else.

(LAURA faces DENNIS. He begins unpacking his books.

Sound: Clock ticking.

Ticking stops. It is a half an hour later.

DENNIS is standing next to the table. He is holding a wastebasket upside down and is poised to bring it down on the bird, which has landed on the floor.)

LAURA. That's a good idea.

(DENNIS approaches the bird, very slowly, when he gets near it, he quickly sets the wastebasket down. DENNIS and LAURA watch the bird fly away.)

LAURA. Well, in theory it was a good idea.

DENNIS. *(Holds up wastebasket:)* It's exactly how they caught Joan.

LAURA. *(Playing along:)* Really?

DENNIS. Yep. She was in a field somewhere listening to her voices when some English soldiers came up behind her with a huge wastebasket and then... "whomp."

LAURA. How weird. They got Oscar Wilde that way too. He was sitting in some fancy restaurant, eating chocolates and drinking champagne, when all of a sudden... "whomp" he's doing time in Reading Gaol.

DENNIS. Eerie coincidence, isn't it?

LAURA. Sure is.

(Desperate to sustain conversation, DENNIS scrambles through his papers then holds up a picture.)

DENNIS. This is where they kept her locked up for a year.

LAURA. In there?

DENNIS. Yeah. Can you believe it?

LAURA. *(Takes the picture and studies it:)* A year. And she was what? Eighteen?

DENNIS. Nineteen.

(The bird flies past. LAURA watches it. DENNIS takes the picture from her.)

Sorry. I didn't mean to depress you.

LAURA. I was already depressed. *(She selects a book, opens to a marked page and reads:)* "Suffering is one long moment. We cannot divide it by seasons. We can only record its moods, and chronicle their return." He wrote that in prison.

DENNIS. “I would rather do penance by dying than bear any longer the agony of imprisonment.” She said that in prison.

LAURA. (*Pointing to the bird:*) I think our friend here would agree with Joan.

DENNIS. (*Impulsively:*) Would you?

LAURA. Would I—?

DENNIS. Rather die than be in prison?

(*Beat.*)

Don't answer. That was a stupid question. I don't—

LAURA. I'd rather die. Wouldn't you?

DENNIS. I—I don't know... I—

LAURA. Haven't you ever been somewhere and thought you'd never get out? And that the air around you was made of brick?

DENNIS. Are you a grad student?

LAURA. (*Shaking her head “no”:*) Senior. Why?

DENNIS. You seem...older.

LAURA. I am. I...waited awhile before starting school.

DENNIS. Oh yeah? What did you do? Travel?

LAURA. No.

(*The bird flies by. LAURA watches the bird.*)

DENNIS. That's what I should have done. The summer before coming here, me and some friends drove cross-country. Actually cross-country isn't the right term. We sort of...did laps. Up and down, up and down, making our way west. We wanted to go to every state.

LAURA. Did you?

DENNIS. We missed some. I should have kept going. I don't know why but...but I'd like to say I've been to every state.

LAURA. Maybe this summer you can.

DENNIS. Which state are you from?

LAURA. One that I'm sure you missed.

DENNIS. I've been to both Dakotas.

LAURA. Arkansas.

DENNIS. You're from Arkansas? People really come from Arkansas?

LAURA. Yes. They do.

DENNIS. Let me guess. You come from "A town called Hope."

LAURA. If they had called my town "Hope," I would have made them rename it.

(LAURA watches the bird fly by.)

How do you think it got in here?

DENNIS. I'm not even sure how *I* got in here.

(LAURA smiles.)

(No longer subtle:) But I'm glad I did.

(They look at each other, noticing the mutual attraction.)

The bird lands near them.

DENNIS retrieves the wastebasket, slowly stalks the bird, and then suddenly brings the basket down over it.)

DENNIS. Got it! Here hold it down.

LAURA. *(Talking to the bird in the wastebasket:)* Sshh. This will all be over soon. Very, very soon—

(DENNIS has retrieved a large stack of books. He places them down on top of the wastebasket.)

LAURA. What are you doing?

DENNIS. We finally caught it. I'm not taking any chances— .

LAURA. You're—you're not going to bring it outside?

DENNIS. Outside? I didn't really think about it.

**PAGES HAVE BEEN CUT FROM THIS SCENE.
THE PLAY CONTINUES ON THE NEXT PAGE.**

In order to protect our associated authors against copyright infringement, we cannot currently present full electronic scripts.

To purchase books with the full text, and to apply for performance rights, click ORDER or go back to:

www.playscripts.com

LETTING BILLY
by Diana Amsterdam

Cast of Characters

BILLY, 18 Beautiful boy, wears beat-up jeans, boots and T-shirt.

FRANNY, 35 Teacher and mother, wears practical cotton pajamas.

Time

Present.

Setting

Bedroom on one side, great big white bed, window with fluid curtains; phone nearby. Country road on other side, old gas station. First light of dawn. Springtime.

Note on overlapping dialogue

There is dialogue side-by-side in this script. One character will go right on talking into the overlap. The other comes in when indicated. The two characters should speak naturally, right on top of each other.

Do not worry about ending the overlap precisely where the script does—just speak naturally. Sometimes, one character will go on talking out of the overlap.

LETTING BILLY

by Diana Amsterdam

(At rise: Old gas station, country road. First light of dawn. Spring-time.)

(Enter BILLY, slightly unsteady from drink, carrying old beat-up guitar in its case. Takes out cell phone. Considers. He dials.)

(LIGHTS UP on FRANNY, fast asleep in her bedroom. Her phone rings.)

FRANNY. *(Half-asleep:)* 'lo?

BILLY. Hey Franny. Hi.

FRANNY. Billy?

BILLY. Yeah, this is, hey Franny.

(Beat of silence. FRANNY is falling back to sleep.)

BILLY. Franny?

FRANNY. I'm just—yeah, hold on. What time is it?

BILLY. It's like, it's dawn, dawn I can see, over, there where it is, the east right? Sun rises east. The sun is rising.

FRANNY. Are you okay?

BILLY. Am I—could we, could we begin, with a question little bit easier?

(She turns on bedside lamp, gives a rosy hue.)

FRANNY. Where are you?

BILLY. Okay. I'm on 107, Pritchard's, the old gas station?

FRANNY.
Everything okay?

BILLY.
Can I come over?

FRANNY. Oh, no honey, I don't think so.

BILLY. I could be there in like, twenty minutes.

FRANNY. It's the middle of the night.

BILLY. It's getting light. Please.

FRANNY. Honey I'm asleep

FRANNY.
I just got to sleep.

I was up all night.

Jane has a cold, she
wouldn't settle down.

BILLY. I won't wake you.

FRANNY. You won't wake me?

BILLY. I won't wake you more, we don't have to fool around or
nothing

FRANNY.
Yes we do
we do have to
fool around.

BILLY.
That's okay—
I won't wake you.

I'll just sleep with you.
I'll just sleep with you.

BILLY.
we could just cuddle
up together—
That'd be fine

BILLY. maybe like, sleep, together.

FRANNY. You know we could never, once we're together we're
going to want to, that's the whole point.

BILLY. It's not

FRANNY.
I'm sorry—
it's not the
whole but.
It's too late. Early.

BILLY.
it's not the whole
point.
I like to
I want to see you.

(She picks up a clock, illuminates the time, reacts with a sound.)

BILLY. Look you go back to sleep and when I get there we'll just
sleep together sleep together okay?

FRANNY. What if one of the kids wakes up?

BILLY. They don't.

FRANNY. Because you get here usually right after bedtime

FRANNY.

now it's almost
their wake-up time

BILLY.

I'll leave like almost
I'll leave right away

FRANNY. They get restless when it gets near morning.

BILLY. If we hear one little peep I promise I'll be out the window before they even know even, start to know. Promise.

FRANNY. There's something else you'd have to promise.

BILLY. Are you saying yes, or you're saying

FRANNY.

If you promise

BILLY.

if I promise

BILLY. Yeah? Yeah?

FRANNY. Billy I'm not sure this is, what we should be doing.

BILLY. Tell me what I have to promise.

FRANNY. Not to wander around.

BILLY. Oh. Okay. I won't. I mean sometimes I just—I like to see how you, how you and your kids, I like to sit in your kitchen that's all.

FRANNY. Last time you wrote Franny & Billy in the cutting board

FRANNY.

you not only wrote it.
You carved it.

BILLY.

Oh well—that was
because—I don't know.

FRANNY. The next morning, Jacob came downstairs and he read it.

BILLY. He reads?

FRANNY. He's ten, and he asked me, Mommy, who's Billy?

BILLY. So why didn't you just tell him?

FRANNY. Tell him? That I'm having, that I'm seeing an ex-student, that wouldn't be very cool and he knows you, from when your band plays at school

FRANNY.

he even mentions
you to me sometimes
like: Billy Bahnson,
he's so fierce, Mom,
he's so crazy for his
music.

BILLY.

So: that's better then.
Isn't it?
Yeah? he does?

He says I'm fierce?
He then he maybe he

BILLY. well it sounds like, maybe he could think it's, I'm okay.

FRANNY. He does think you're okay. But that doesn't mean—I
can't tell him—even if you promise

FRANNY.

that you won't wander
around
that you won't leave little
messages that my kids
can read.

BILLY.

Okay I promise

I do I promise

I won't. I won't.

BILLY. Then. Can I come over? I'll stay in your room, I won't go
out, if we hear one little, you told me you're a light sleeper right?
one peep you wake me and I'm gone. Promise. Okay?

(A long silence. She glances at the clock.)

FRANNY. No.

BILLY. But Franny you, I promised, I fucking promised.

FRANNY.

You promised
that's right
for next time
I'm sorry, I didn't
mean to—
to imply that if
you promised I'd

BILLY.

That ain't fair!
That ain't right!

You know that's not
fair you wouldn't do
that to one of your own
kids!

FRANNY. let you come over—Billy, I can't! We make times and we
see each other and that's a very sweet thing in my life but I can't
just say: Sure! Come on over! I've got to get some sleep. Okay?
Okay?

BILLY. Okay.

FRANNY. Y'okay with that?

BILLY. Okay.

FRANNY. We'll see each other later in the week then.

BILLY. Later in the, later then.

(FRANNY hangs up.)

(BILLY shuts his phone; pockets it, looks up and down the road. Sits on the edge of road.)

(FRANNY turns off bedside lamp, lies back down.)

(BILLY takes out his phone and dials. Her phone rings. She picks up.)

FRANNY. Billy—

BILLY. You said you always said it was, I had to go back to school so I could, talk, right? in words, so I could write my songs and also also, say. What I mean, so, can I tell you?

FRANNY.
Tell me what.

BILLY.
Why. I need to

BILLY. see you so bad. Why I do.

FRANNY. Go on.

BILLY. I saw my mother tonight.

FRANNY. You saw—your mother? Are you sure?

BILLY. Am I sure? Yes I'm sure, she came into the Blue Note, me and the boys we were just finishing the 2nd set and she strolls in like she don't know I'm there, right? and she's wearing this skinny see-through pieca nothin dress, and she sits on this guy's lap, this pig she's with, and she starts like, grinding around on him, and I—just—I stopped. In the middle of a note. I didn't even say nothin I just—got my guitar and got out of there

FRANNY.

That was smart
That was the right thing
to do.

BILLY.

and I just—
I got out on the road
and I—didn't even know

BILLY. where I was going. I'm thinking, I can go home, she can't come near me I got a court order but I'm not going home, I'm walking south on 22, and this truck stops the guy asks me Do I want a lift, I don't know maybe, maybe he liked my ass or maybe just a good guy and I say Yeah, and I'm climbing in and he says

FRANNY.

Ohmygod Billy—
You really shouldn't
get into trucks with strangers

BILLY.

and he says where you heading?
and I say, I don't know
and he says

BILLY. I can't take you where you don't know, making a joke like and I'm like, kay, thanks, I didn't get in. And I'm walking and I'm thinking where am I going? And all of sudden I know I'm going to you. I'm going to you because because I need to.

FRANNY.

Billy—
this is
Oh Christ.
This isn't good.

BILLY.

And that's why I
want to see you.
Cause I know
I need to.
I know
you are

This

FRANNY. Billy! This isn't, no! You can't come over tonight. Okay? I understand, you want to see me

BILLY. I need

FRANNY. You need to but I don't, I can't, need to see you. I need to get some sleep, tomorrow's coming like a freight train. It's gonna slam me in just three no two hours, the kids will need a million things and the house, and I have to catch up on my lesson plans and make lunch for my mother, and I've got to get some sleep! Okay? Can you hear that? Can you get out of your skin long enough to hear that? I can't be everything to you, Billy, I can only be one thing, one thing and that's only when I can. Okay? Now please. Hang up and don't call me any more tonight.

**PAGES HAVE BEEN CUT FROM THIS SCENE.
THE PLAY CONTINUES ON THE NEXT PAGE.**

In order to protect our associated authors against copyright infringement, we cannot currently present full electronic scripts.

To purchase books with the full text, and to apply for performance rights, click ORDER or go back to:

www.playscripts.com

LOVE
by Stephen Belber

Cast of Characters

BILL

RICK

TOM

Production Notes

The play's pace should be abrupt, with the "beats" earned, where appropriate.

LOVE

by Stephen Belber

(The basement of a restaurant, crowded with various supplies and dry food. Cluttered yet spacious enough for the play's action to occur with relative ease.)

(BILL, thirty, wears a well ironed white shirt, thin dark tie, black shoes and pants, a clean apron. His hair is slicked back, his manner restrained. He is monosyllabic, articulate when he needs to be. Suave. He is leaning against a wall staring straight out for much of the first sequence. He is fiddling with a tangled piece of thick twine, or rope.)

(TOM enters from the door that leads upstairs; he is slightly younger, more "ragtag" than BILL, shorter. He is a busboy rather than a waiter, he doesn't wear a tie; perhaps has a ponytail and a look in his eye that could make someone cross to the other side of the street. But beneath it all he is quite lovable.)

(TOM is supposed to be retrieving something from the basement, an idea that obviously bores him.)

TOM. What're you doing?

BILL. Untangling twine.

TOM. Why?

BILL. Why?

TOM. Yeah.

BILL. 'Cause it's full of knots.

TOM. That's not twine, it's rope.

BILL. *(Without looking up:)* Semantics.

TOM. What're you gonna do with it?

BILL. You really want to know, Tom?

TOM. Yeah.

BILL. Really?

TOM. Totally.

BILL. I'm gonna strangle somebody with it.

TOM. (*Excited:*) Yeah?

BILL. And I want it to be untangled when this occurs.

TOM. Who're you gonna strangle?— Rick?

BILL. You.

TOM. Me?

BILL. Rick.

TOM. That's what I thought. Rick's fucked.

BILL. Yeah.

TOM. Rick's a prick. He's a bald fuck.

BILL. He's not bald yet; just losing his hair.

TOM. He's fucked.

BILL. Listen, I might need your help.

TOM. Seriously?

BILL. Seriously.

TOM. He's fucked. I'll kill him, whattayou want me to do?

BILL. When he comes down here to look for us, I want you to hit him.

TOM. Knock him out?

BILL. Yeah.

TOM. K.O.?

BILL. Whatever.

TOM. Annihilation?

BILL. K.O.

TOM. OK.

BILL. Get it?

TOM. Got it.

BILL. Good.

TOM. Excellent. *(Beat.)* Then you're gonna strangle him?.....Bill?

BILL. Right.

TOM. Do you want some help with that rope?

BILL. Nope.

TOM. What happens after we kill him?

BILL. Nothing.

TOM. Nothing?

BILL. What do you *want* to happen?

TOM. I want him to be dead. The guy's a fucking dick!

BILL. He'll be dead.

TOM. We could chop him up. Put him in the storage freezer. Zip-lock the motherfucker!

BILL. Tommy, this isn't a game.

TOM. Sorry.

BILL. Death is serious. We need to show Rick its face.

TOM. Whose face?

BILL. Death's.

TOM. *(Perplexed:)* I've never done that before.

BILL. Me neither, but if he doesn't get the picture, it's over for him.

TOM. *(Pause:)* What picture?

BILL. *(Showing a soft side for the first time:)* The one about how wonderful life can be.

TOM. *(Scoff, aside:)* Yeah, right.

BILL. (*Grabs TOM by the collar, against the wall—his first sudden movement:*) Listen, Tommy: Life *is* wonderful, it's bursting with love. Rick doesn't *get* that, and if he continues not to get it, we're gonna kill him.

TOM. (*Still against the wall:*) You don't gotta tell me life is wonderful, Bill. I know that. I was just kidding.

BILL. I know you know that, Tommy. (*Lets him down.*) That's why I like you.

TOM.That's why I like you too.

BILL. You like me?

TOM. You know what I mean, Bill.

BILL. I know *I* know what you mean, Tommy. I just want to make sure *you* know what you mean.

TOM. I know what I mean. Life is bursting with...

BILL. Love.

TOM. Right.

BILL. (*Hand up:*) Quiet. (*Beat.*) Here he comes.

(They both quickly adopt casual positions. RICK enters, he is about eight years older than BILL, balding, perhaps has a bad moustache and a beer and french fries gut. He stares at the two of them for several beats, utterly incredulous that they are hanging out in the basement.)

RICK. What the hell are you two doing down here!? I been lookin' all over for you! What am I, an asshole?—what am I, an asshole with cream cheese with chives?! I got fifteen tables seated up there, I got parties of eight ordering goddam individual salads, I got deuces wanting Chianti, I got a family of six ordering french fries with goddam milk-cream gravy, that's right, milk-cream, *milk-cream*, I said *milk-cream!!!* And now I got *you* two hanging out down here jackin' each other off! Huh? What're you doin'?— (*Gesticulating*) —a little jerky dance? huh?—you jerkin' each other?! you smokin' dope? what is it? Huh, Bill?—smooth guy, you got an answer for me? You're my best goddam waiter, you're the only one

who's done a taste test on the Dubeouf Beaujolais and you're down here in the basement freakin' out on me! What is it with you?! And *you*, Tommy Kid, pipsqueak, what the hell is this?!— (RICK *pulls a fork from the breast pocket of his shirt.*) You're supposed to *check* the goddam fork prongs before you put 'em in the silver trays! You see this?! what is this?—I'll tell you what this is, it's a goddam piece of hamburger fat from the house meatloaf is what it is!! You're a fucking busboy, kid, you're *this* close from being fired when you're doing the job *perfectly*! You keep screwin' up like this and you'll be out on the welfare line with all them crack mothers before you can say 'Bob's your fuckin' uncle'!!! Now listen, I got ketchup bottles that need reconsolidation, I got bus tubs that need to go to the dish room, candles need to get on the tables by six, I got a goddam floor up there needs more sweepin' than a goddam minefield, an' I got *you* sittin' down here lookin' like you wanna blow the goddam head waiter!! (Beat.) What's the deal with the twine, Bill?

(Beat; TOM *walks over to RICK and punches him in the face. RICK falls to the floor loudly and abruptly.*)

TOM. It's rope.

BILL. Nice work, kid.

TOM. Fuckin' big mouth, I'll show you who's a fuckin' pipsqueak, I'll show you where you can stick your fucking fork prong you fucking fuck! You know what I'm sayin', Bill? 'Cause I ain't a laundry machine, Bill, I ain't no S.O.S. pad! You wanna talk about love, Bill?! I love all kinds of things: people, silverware, napkins, lasagna, dignity, *love*!! I *love* love, and guys like him, they don't know what love is. People like him shouldn't be allowed to talk to people like us, not in that way, at least, it's not human! An' I'll tell you somethin' else, Bill, my fist is a lethal weapon, I should have a fucking license for this thing, they should hire me out for concerts just to have me sit there in the front fucking row and hold my goddam fist up like this!— (His fist is in the air in a rock-solidarity clench) —I love this fist, man, I—

BILL. Shut up, Tommy.

TOM. Right.

BILL. Bring him over here.

TOM. Why?

BILL. 'Cause I'm the head waiter and I said so.

(TOM drags RICK's body to where BILL is still leaning. BILL's twine is finally straightened and he prepares it, wrapping it around both hands. Suddenly RICK pops up, mid-conversation.)

RICK. I got two burgers sittin' for table sixteen, I got a send-back on eight, the sirloin needs more fire, pronto, and *hold* the goddam mashed potatoes, *hold* them for chrissakes, *hold*, *HOLD!!*— what am I, a friggin' one-man show here?! *You* guys are the ones who need the tips, *I* get a paycheck regardless of whether they love their meal or throw it up on the car ride home! *(He suddenly snaps out of it.)* What the hell am I doin' down here?—what're *you* two doin' down here, singin' songs about the goddam heartland!? I got a restaurant needs runnin'! *(He starts to go back upstairs.)*

BILL. Hey Rick.

(RICK stops and TOM approaches him in the same way as earlier; RICK suddenly remembers the scenario and snaps into a defensive, almost kung-fu like position.)

RICK. Ah hah!

TOM. Ah hah!

RICK. Ah hah!

TOM. No shit—ah hah.

RICK. What the hell is goin' on down here, Bill? Tommy Kid here just tried to punch me.

BILL. He *did* punch you.

RICK. OK. *(Beat.)* Why?

TOM. Because you're a motherfuckin' dickbrain fuckin' twathead!

RICK. That's it, you're fired.

TOM. You're dead!

RICK. ...Bill— ?

BILL. Cool it, Tommy.

(TOM stands out of fighting position.)

RICK. What the hell's goin' on here? *(He looks from on to the other.)*
Tommy? Bill? Tommy? Bill?

BILL. Rick?

RICK. Bill?

BILL. Rick?

RICK. *(Beat:)* Why do you have that twine?

BILL. 'Cause I'm gonna kill you.

(Small silence; then RICK forces a chuckle.)

RICK. OK, you guys, joke's over, now let's get back to work. I got tables waitin', I got pepper shakers need re-fillin'. *(To TOM:)* Don't ever hit me again, that hurt, it hurt a lot, but I'm gonna let it go this time 'cause I like camaraderie, locker room stuff, I like my employees to like me. You ever do it again, I'll fire your ass in a Kansas City second. OK, let's go. *(He turns to head upstairs.)*

BILL. Come here, Rick.

RICK. No.

TOM. Go!!

RICK. No!! Why?

BILL. I want to show you something.

RICK. What?

BILL. I want to show you this trick I know.

TOM. Let him show you the fuckin' trick, Rick!

BILL. It's a rope trick.

(Quiet for a long moment as RICK suspiciously eyes the two of them. Then, in a sudden, awkward burst, RICK jumps on TOM and they wrestle violently to the ground; after several moments of this they come to a sullen, seething, truce.)

RICK. (*Out of breath, scared:*) What the hell do you guys want from me?!

BILL. Get up, Rick— (*BILL leaves his heretofore stationary position and approaches RICK.*) I want to show you this rope trick.

RICK. What're you talkin' about a rope trick? I gotta go void Mike's check, he's waitin', can't you hear him, he's callin' me, you hear that?— (*He mimics a deep, overtly masculine voice and tries to throw it as if it's coming from upstairs:*) "Rick, Rick, I need a void-out!"

(*BILL is closing in on RICK.*)

What're you doin', Bill?

BILL. I'm going to kill you, Rick.

RICK. You're crazy, Bill, I'll have you fired..... Bill?!... Who'll Z you out?

BILL. You better hold him for me, Tommy.

RICK. You're both fucking crazy!—I got a restaurant to run—

(*TOM seizes RICK and holds him from behind, RICK is desperate.*)

I gotta fill the mint dish!!

TOM. Fuck the mint dish!!

(*BILL raises the rope, readying to put it around RICK's neck.*)

RICK. Please, Bill, *please*, tell me what the hell this is about, just let me know, can't you at least explain it to me, I'm beggin' you here!!

(*BILL pauses, lowers the rope, thinks, and finally, as if he's been holding the question in for months:*)

BILL. What makes you a man, Rick?

RICK. (*Beat:*) I really gotta go void that check.

BILL. What *makes* you a man?

RICK. ...Ejaculation?

BILL. I don't think so.

RICK. Trans-Am?

BILL. Courage, Rick. Courage.

RICK. Courage?

RICK. Courage and love, Rick. They make the world go 'round. Courage to sweat, to desire; courage to love. What are we if don't have the courage to love, Tommy?

TOM. We're fucked!

BILL. That's right. Say it, Rick.

RICK. We're fucked.

BILL. *When* are we fucked, Rick?

RICK. Umm—

BILL. Tell him, Tommy.

TOM. When we don't have the fucking courage to fucking love!!

BILL. See, Tommy knows, but you don't, Rick. You're not a very loving person, and since this character flaw of yours makes everyone around you hate you, what you're actually doing is depriving the world of love.

TOM. So we're gonna *destroy* you!

(TOM reasserts his hold on RICK, BILL readies the rope again.)

RICK. *(Desperate:)* But wait a minute, guys, *I* love!!

BILL. You don't love, Rick.

RICK. What're you talkin' about?—I love my ass off!

BILL. *(Hesitates with rope:)* What do you love, Rick?

RICK. Cars!

(BILL raises rope.)

Beauty!!

(BILL hesitates.)

BILL. Beauty?

RICK. Beauty! I love it like a goddam son!

TOM. You wouldn't know what beauty was if it got shoved up your nose!

RICK. Whattayou mean?— I *adore* beauty!

BILL. Define it.

RICK. What?— Beauty?

BILL. Yeah.

RICK. That's a tough one, Bill... (*He thinks hard*) ...You know what's beautiful? I'll tell you what's beautiful—that feeling you get right after a big lunch rush and the place clears out and you get a little breathing room, and the waiters all got great tips, and the bus-boys are excited 'cause *they're* gonna get great tips, and people are smilin', and I tell the kitchen guys to cook up a batch of staff hamburgers, on the house, and everyone is happy as a lark. *That's* beauty, Bill. A beautiful goddam feeling.

(All three are momentarily lost in reverie; then BILL snaps out of it.)

BILL. Wait, you've *never* told the kitchen to cook staff hamburgers.

TOM. That's right, and the fucking hamburgers here suck anyway!

BILL. That's true. Get him, Tommy.

RICK. (*As TOM re-seizes him:*) Wait a minute, I got other beautiful things!

BILL. It's all in your head, Rick.

TOM. It's all in your fucking head, you fuck!

RICK. The camaraderie, guys, the camaraderie!— (*He means it, even though it sounds desperate*) —the way I feel for you, the jokes, the give an' take, it's beautiful, I love it, I love that feelin', *that's* what beauty is, *LOVE* is beauty!!

BILL. (*Freezes:*) What did you say?

RICK. (*Stammering:*) Love is beauty.

BILL. (*Slowly lowering rope:*) What does that mean?

RICK. It's what I said about the locker room, the closeness, the love you feel for your co-workers.

BILL. You feel love for your co-workers?

RICK. Immense goddam love!

TOM. You wouldn't know what love was if it ran you over in a fucking Good Humor truck!

RICK. What're you talkin' about?— I love you guys!

BILL. (*Beat:*) Individually?

RICK. What?

BILL. Do you love us individually? Like do you love me, and then do you love Tommy? Or do you just love all "co-workers"?

RICK. Umm...I love you both individually.

BILL. Do you love *me* individually?

RICK. Ah, c'mon, Bill...I mean...

BILL. (*Raising rope:*) Do you?

RICK. Yes! Jesus, I made you head waiter, didn't I?

BILL. Why?

RICK. High sales.

(*BILL threatens with rope.*)

—LOVE!!! I did it cause of *love*!!

BILL. (*Hesitates:*) Really?

RICK. Totally. I did it 'cause I love you, Bill; individually.

BILL. (*Lowering rope:*) Because I love *Tommy* individually, and when I first started working here, I was ready to love *you* individually, too, but you never gave me the chance.

RICK. (*Beat:*) You love Tommy individually?

BILL. Yes, and if I'm not mistaken, *he* loves *me* individually. (*BILL looks to TOM.*)

TOM. I fuckin' love you, Bill.

(BILL waits.)

Individually.

BILL. Do you know *why*, Tommy?

TOM. *(Beat:)* It's hard to put into words.

BILL. Of course it is. Rick, should I tell Tommy why *I* love *him*?

RICK. I guess so.

BILL. Tommy has a quality about him that inspires love. There's a look of joy in his eyes when he picks up somebody's half-eaten apple pie, there's hope on his brow when he takes out the trash, an end-of-the-century solace in his demeanor when he punches out after an eleven-hour shift. He lives life as if he were on an ocean cruise around the world, not a twenty-minute workout on some treadmill.

(The other two are speechless.)

Tommy?

TOM. *(Hesitant, but trying:)* You have a good quality too, Bill. You always dress well. I like the way you wear your hair. You once gave me a catalog from *Today's Man*, and I ended up ordering some boxer shorts from it.

BILL. Were they good?

TOM. Yeah. I'm wearing them now.

BILL. You see, Rick; it makes the world go 'round.

RICK. Well, Bill, *I* just told you that I love you too.

TOM. *(Outburst:)* You don't love him!!

RICK. I *do*!! And I love you, too, Tommy Kid!

TOM. Bullshit!

RICK. I *do*!!

BILL. And how do you feel about Rick, Tommy?

**PAGES HAVE BEEN CUT FROM THIS SCENE.
THE PLAY CONTINUES ON THE NEXT PAGE.**

In order to protect our associated authors against copyright infringement, we cannot currently present full electronic scripts.

To purchase books with the full text, and to apply for performance rights, click ORDER or go back to:

www.playscripts.com

MEN SUCK
by J. Holtham

Cast of Characters

JOHN
MAGGIE

Setting

A bar. Just before last call.

MEN SUCK

by J. Holtham

(A bar. Late. Just after last call. The bar is mostly empty. JOHN and MAGGIE are sitting a couple of seats away from each other. JOHN takes out a cigarette and lights it. He offers one to MAGGIE. She turns away. He looks at her. Takes a drag. Exhales.)

JOHN. Men suck. It's true. We do. We do. Some guys are afraid to say it. But we all know it's true. We do. We do. I mean, it's like all the time, you know. You, a woman, an attractive woman, want to go out. Have a nice time. Have a drink. You think, "How many nights have I sat in this stupid apartment, choking down this take-out dinner, watching this same show that I never found funny? Too many. Tonight, I'm gonna go out. I'm gonna put on a nice shirt and clean jeans and go to a bar and buy myself my favorite drink." A seabreeze, right? Who doesn't love a seabreeze? You go out. You sit there and drink your drink and think your thoughts. And what happens. Some guy who thinks playing high school football made him God comes over to you, smelling of cheap beer and cigars and wants to take you home with him. Thinks that you're melting in the presence of the hot-blooded American MALE. But they never notice the plastic smile, the forced laughter, do they? Them. Huh. There I go, trying to separate myself from them. But I am one. A man. Accident of birth. Smoke?

(MAGGIE takes out her own cigarette. JOHN lights it for her.)

And let's say you get one. One you can stand. Maybe even like. And what happens? You get fucked. I'm just calling it like I see it. He never calls. He calls all the time. He acts like you're invisible. He doesn't let you out of his sight for a minute. It's one thing or the other and no in-between. He vanishes or strangles. He fucks your sister. Whatever. In the end, who winds up miserable? Who winds up at home alone with the bad take-out and the laugh track? You. You. You. That's the thing that puts people in bell towers with high-powered rifles. The injustice of it. The men piss wherever they want and you gotta wash it off and try to get some business done. Have your heart broken and see if you wanna go to work. I look around

me, at this world and these are the thoughts that come to me. I want to live in a world where everyone gets the shaft who deserves it and everyone gets ahead that works for it. I want an upright world. Half the world oppressed? Things don't spin right like that. Right?

(He extends his hand.)

I'm John.

(A pause. She takes his hand and shakes it.)

MAGGIE. Maggie.

JOHN. Nice to meet you.

(MAGGIE smiles.)

Right. See, I got this idea.

(He looks at the seat in between them, and then back at her. She nods slightly. He moves into the seat and speaks in a more confidential voice.)

Here's what you do. Find some guy. Doesn't matter who. Who cares. You find this guy, at some dark bar and you wait until it's just you and him. Bartender out of earshot, maybe...closing up. And you move up on this guy and you give him a look, just a look, and say something stupid and sexy. Like "Look what we have here." And you run your hands along his arms, caress his face a little. And then you kiss him. Light. Right next to his lips. He'll try to say something, but you shut him up, fast. This isn't about talk. It's about revolution. And you take him home. His place, not yours. And you get him naked. It won't be hard. And you climb on top of him. And you screw him until he is a broken heap. Make him scream your name at the top of his lungs. Break that son of a bitch in two. And when he's a sweaty mass of wasted muscle, he's gonna look up at you. With that look. That look that says, "You got me. You broke me. I'm yours and yours alone." That's when you put your clothes on and walk away. And never look back. And when you see him again, you ignore him. Turn the fucking tables. Let him be the one at home alone for a change. Let him wonder what was wrong with him, why didn't you stay. Break the bastard. Fuck him blue. Strike a blow for the sisterhood.

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!

In order to protect our associated authors against copyright infringement, we cannot currently present full electronic scripts.

To purchase books with the full text, and to apply for performance rights, click ORDER or go back to:

www.playscripts.com