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Married Not Buried

by Lew Riley

A Not-Too-Naughty Comedy

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Married Not Buried

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THE CHARACTERS

5W/3M

GEORGE WELLS; *a middle-aged man, trying to scratch his 20-year-itch*

CLAIRE WELLS; *George's conservative, good-natured wife*

FLORENCE FLETCHER; *the Wells' ultra-conservative, inquisitive neighbor*

DARRIN DEVEREAUX; *a cocky, young swinger*

GRETCHEN DEVEREAUX; *Darrin's attractive, ditzy wife*

TODD WELLS; *the Wells' collegiate son*

JOYCE MASON; *Todd's mature girl friend*

JENNY SAWYER; *Todd's former girl friend*

THE TIME

The '90's

THE SCENE

The entire action of the play takes place in George and Claire Wells' living room

ACT I

Scene I – *Sunday morning*

Scene II – *The following Friday evening*

Scene III – *Sunday morning*

ACT II

Scene I – *Next Saturday night*

Scene II – *Later that evening*

Married Not Buried

by Lew Riley

ACT I; SCENE I

AT RISE:

Sunday morning, GEORGE and CLAIRE WELLS' living room. The room is nicely furnished: a sofa, which unfolds into a bed, center and a small table fronting it. Downstage right is an exercise bike. The front door is located upstage right against the back wall and to its left is a closet. A bar with a mirror above is also located on the upstage wall, and to its left is a window and further left, the exit to the kitchen.

A fireplace, center left, provides a warm, cozy feel to the room. There are doors both left and right to bedrooms off. GEORGE, a nice-looking, middle-aged man is seated on the sofa nervously reading a newspaper. He looks at the newspaper, shakes his head, looks back again and thinks for a moment--then reaches for the telephone next to him on the sofa. Looking at the newspaper, he punches some numbers on his phone, then waits for an answer.

GEORGE

(After several moments, anxiously)

Hello—yes, I called a couple of minutes ago—but was cut off.... Yes, I do want to, uh, purchase your services.... My phone number? But you have my credit card number.... Oh, yeah, that's right. 555-6168.... What?.... Uh, George; what's yours? Oh. *(Feeling a tad silly)* Good-bye. Pandora.

GEORGE turns off phone, takes a deep breath, and holding the paper in one hand, lounges back on the sofa. His respite is short-lived, however. Hearing the front door opening, he quickly stands, remembers the paper, looks around, sticks the paper under a sofa cushion – just before the door opens and CLAIRE WELLS enters. CLAIRE is GEORGE'S trim, attractive, pleasant wife.

GEORGE

Claire!?

CLAIRE

(Crossing towards closet)

Who else?... *(Hanging up coat)* Missed my appointment.

GEORGE

But I thought it was for 10 o'clock.

CLAIRE

It was.

GEORGE

(Looks at watch)

But it's only 10:10.

CLAIRE

Correction. 11:10.

GEORGE

What?

CLAIRE

Remember the last thing I said to you last night?

GEORGE

(Pause)

That was great, honey.

CLAIRE

Not in years....What I did say was, don't forget to set the clocks forward tomorrow.

GEORGE

Oh yeah, Daylight Savings Time. I completely forgot.

CLAIRE

Obviously. *(Crosses towards kitchen)*

GEORGE

Hey, you forgot, too.

CLAIRE

(As exits)

But I didn't volunteer to change all the clocks.

As soon as CLAIRE exits, GEORGE hurries to the sofa, picks up the cushion, looks at the paper until he finds the number he wants, then grabs the phone and punches in numbers.

GEORGE

(After a pause)

Hello, Pandora. *(Frowns)* Oh, Jezebel. Look, I need to speak to Pandora – and hurry. *(Pause)*
Hello, Pandora. *(Pause; frowns)* Oh, Cleopatra. Look, I need to speak to Pandora – and hurry.
C'mon, c'mon!

CLAIRE re-enters with a glass of water, and GEORGE, thinking quickly, resets his watch with the phone resting between his ear and shoulder.

GEORGE, *Continued*

The correct time is 11:12 and 40 seconds. *(Hangs up phone)*

GEORGE lays phone aside.

CLAIRE

(Checks her watch, then)

Say, did you do something with the aspirin?

GEORGE

Got a headache?

CLAIRE

Still.

GEORGE

Still?

CLAIRE

Remember, I had a headache last night.

GEORGE

Oh, I thought you were just faking.

CLAIRE

Faking?

GEORGE

You know. To avoid some—

GEORGE hits fist of right hand into palm of his left hand.

CLAIRE

(Smirks)

Yeah, right, George. *(Pause)* I don't remember the last time, we—

CLAIRE hits her fist against the palm of her other hand.

GEORGE

Oh, come on, Claire.

CLAIRE

I'm serious, George. It seems like ages.

GEORGE frowns as CLAIRE sits on the sofa, directly above the spot where he hid his paper. It makes a noise when she sits. CLAIRE stands and removes the paper.

CLAIRE

(Looking at paper)

George, are you buying this filthy thing again?

GEORGE

It's not filthy – it's sexy.

CLAIRE

Sexy, huh? Look at these ads. *(Reads)* Sex doll: 38-24-36. Has everything a real woman has. And she can't talk.... You find that sexy, George?

GEORGE

Not really.

CLAIRE

How about this one? Jill's Massage Parlor.

GEORGE

What's wrong with getting a massage?

CLAIRE

That's the last thing you'd get, I'm sure.

GEORGE

I wouldn't know.

CLAIRE

Sometimes I wonder. *(Shakes head)* How can these places stay in business?

GEORGE

A lot of lonely people out there.

CLAIRE

A lot of perverts, you mean. *(Turns paper over)* What's this?

What? GEORGE

866-X-T-A-C. CLAIRE

How would I know? GEORGE

(*Sounds it out*)
Ecstasy.... Oh, come on, George; this is obviously an ad for phone sex. CLAIRE

No idea. GEORGE

Someone would really have to be sick to pay for an obscene phone call. CLAIRE

SFX: PHONE RINGS; GEORGE looks for the phone, quickly grabs it and seeing who's calling; is relieved.

It's Todd. (*Into phone*) Toddski, what's up?... Oh, really? Terrific. GEORGE

What? CLAIRE

He's coming home next week. GEORGE

Great. (*Frowns*) He didn't flunk out, did he? CLAIRE

No, he didn't flunk out. (*Into phone*) You didn't flunk out, did you?... Oh yeah; that's right. (*To Claire*) It's the end of the quarter. GEORGE

That's right; I forgot. CLAIRE

What's that?... Lemme check with your mother. (*To CLAIRE*) He wants to bring a friend home. GEORGE

Why not. We'd be glad to have him. CLAIRE

GEORGE

HER name is Joyce.

CLAIRE

Oh.... Fine with me. Todd can sleep on the sofa bed.

GEORGE

No problem, son.

CLAIRE

Ask him how his classes went.

GEORGE

Okay, okay. *(Instead, into phone)* Did you see that perfect game on TV last week?... Yeah, first one I've seen.

A frustrated CLAIRE throws up her hands and begins leafing through GEORGE's "paper".

GEORGE, *Continued*

(Into phone; to TODD)

Hey, the Dodgers are in town this weekend. Let's see a game.... Yeah, the four of us.

CLAIRE

Anything but a doubleheader.

GEORGE

What? Oh, that was your mom. She wants to say hi.... What?

CLAIRE reaches out for the phone.

GEORGE

Oh, really?... Yes, I will, promise. G'bye.

GEORGE returns the phone to the table.

CLAIRE

George!

GEORGE

Sorry, honey; his class was starting.

CLAIRE

Oh.

GEORGE

He said he misses you a lot.

CLAIRE

I can't wait to see him. Seems like he's been gone forever.

GEORGE

More like three months, dear.

CLAIRE

I guess that means he and Jenny Sawyer are kaput.

GEORGE

Out of sight, out of mind.... Hey, I thought you liked baseball. (*Crosses to exercise bike, leaving phone on sofa*)

CLAIRE

I do. I don't like doubleheaders.... Bleacher butt for sure.

GEORGE

C'mon, Claire; you can get lots of exercise at a ballgame. I always do.

CLAIRE

Yeah, getting beer. Then getting rid of it.

GEORGE on bike; CLAIRE retrieves the paper.

CLAIRE

George, why did you circle some of these "ads"?

GEORGE pedals swiftly for maybe 20 seconds, then slows down considerably.

GEORGE

I thought you might be interested.

CLAIRE

Oh sure. (*Finds ad*) Attractive, middle-aged couple looking for same. Object: fun and friendship.

GEORGE

You can't have too many friends.

CLAIRE

(Frowns; reads)

Brown Sugar looking for Sugar Daddy.... Nasty black widow wants to make up for lost time with generous gent.

GEORGE

Nice-looking, isn't she.

CLAIRE

I can't believe people actually put their pictures in here.... Look at this one. Beautiful blonde Swedish twosome... *(Turns paper sideways)* ... with large beach estate and ski chalet looking for young, winsome couple to share the good life with.

GEORGE

I wonder if we're young enough.

CLAIRE

Oh, George. You and your fantasies.

GEORGE

I can't help it if you're such a prude.

CLAIRE

Yeah, I'm a prude. Just like 99 percent of the population.

GEORGE

That's not true. Lots of couples are, uh—screwing around.

CLAIRE

Yeah, name one.

GEORGE

The Devereauxs.

CLAIRE

The Devereauxs?

GEORGE

I played tennis with Darrin Devereaux last week at the club. Great guy. Lives just a couple blocks from here. He and his wife are major swingers.

CLAIRE

How do you know?

GEORGE

He told me. Says it does wonders for the marriage. And he should know.

CLAIRE

(Pause)

Does he know about sexually transmitted diseases?

GEORGE

Yes, he knows about sexually transmitted diseases. Always wears a rubber.... And so would I.

CLAIRE

You hate condoms.

GEORGE

No, I don't. *(Pause)* Not since they started making them extra-large.

CLAIRE

(Shaking head)

The fantasy continues. *(Pause)* George, do you love me?

GEORGE

Of course I love you.

CLAIRE

Then why do you want to make love to another woman?

GEORGE

I don't wanna make love to her; I just wanna have sex with her.

CLAIRE

Oh George.

GEORGE

There's a big difference, you know.

CLAIRE

Be serious.

GEORGE

I am serious.... Making love is a deep, romantic, emotional act between two people who really care about each other... You and I make love.

CLAIRE

Yeah, once every lunar eclipse.

GEORGE

(Ignores lament)

Having sex, on the other hand, is nothing more than raw, unbridled lust – just for the hell of it. No strings attached; no commitment. *(Pause)* Understand?

CLAIRE

I'm beginning to understand....

GEORGE

Good.

CLAIRE

That I may have married a sex fiend.

GEORGE

C'mon, Claire—a sex fiend?

CLAIRE

If the shoe fits – er, condom fits –Wear it!

GEORGE

Hey, I like sex. Don't you?

(Pause)

Of course I do, George. So why can't we *(Emphasizes)* "have sex together"? I'd love some of that raw, unbridled lust every once in a while.

Fortunately for GEORGE before he can think of a plausible response, the PHONE RINGS again. Unfortunately, for him, the phone is right next to CLAIRE.

GEORGE

(Hops off bike)

I got it!

By the time GEORGE reaches the sofa, CLAIRE answers the phone. After a moment she looks at GEORGE with a puzzled look on her faith.

CLAIRE

Who's Pandora?

GEORGE

Gimme that!

GEORGE grabs for the phone, but CLAIRE stands and turns her back on him. He reaches around trying to grab the phone but no luck. They begin wrestling for the phone.

CLAIRE

Who's Pandora, George?

GEORGE

She goes by Dora.

CLAIRE

Who is she, George?

GEORGE

A business acquaintance.

CLAIRE

You never mentioned a Pandora—or Dora.

GEORGE

I don't mention everyone I do business with.

CLAIRE

What kind of business?

GEORGE

Uh-h.... Telemarketing.

They fall in a heap on the sofa and, it actually looks as if some spur-of-the-moment romance might occur when GEORGE wraps his arm around CLAIRE, who is aroused enough to nuzzle his neck. Almost seems as if the curtain might have to be dropped for decorum's sake.... But GEORGE spoils the moment, at least for CLAIRE, by grabbing the phone.

GEORGE

(Speaks into phone)

Call you later, Dora.

GEORGE hangs up the phone.

CLAIRE

So Dora is more important than me.

GEORGE

Honey, it's business.

CLAIRE

On a Sunday morning?

GEORGE

She's a major client. *(Looks at watch)* I better go buy the tickets before they're sold out.

CLAIRE

(Pause as she "regroups")

Why don't you buy them on the Internet?

GEORGE

And pay those rip-off "handling fees"? No thank you.

GEORGE crosses to the closet to get a jacket.

CLAIRE

Remember, no doubleheaders.

GEORGE

Do the best I can. *(Kisses her on cheek)* Bye, honey.

CLAIRE

Drive carefully.

GEORGE

(Opens door and turns back)

By the way, I invited the Devereauxs over Friday night.

CLAIRE

The Devereauxs?

GEORGE

You know. *(Hits palm against fist)*

CLAIRE

George!

Before GEORGE can open the door again, there is a knock on the door.

GEORGE

Who is it?

VOICE, *Off*

Flor-ence Fletcher!

GEORGE

Ohmigod, the Whiny Wino!

CLAIRE tries to hide behind a nook or cranny.

CLAIRE

(Whispering)

I'm not here.

Before CLAIRE can disappear, GEORGE opens the door revealing FLORENCE FLETCHER, an unsmiling woman in her fifties—at least.

GEORGE

Florence.

FLORENCE

George. Is Claire home?

GEORGE

Sure is. Right there. *(Points)*

Hi, Florence. Come in.

CLAIRE

Sorry, can't stay. Just leavin'.

GEORGE

GEORGE waves at CLAIRE, then quickly exits past FLORENCE. FLORENCE, a rather stiff, staid woman, enters, wearing her Sunday best including an ungodly hat and carrying a bible.

How was church?

CLAIRE

Wonderful. Mind if I sit down?

FLORENCE

Oh no, please do.

CLAIRE

Thank you. *(Carefully takes seat)*

FLORENCE

How are you today?

CLAIRE

Not too good; not too good at all.

FLORENCE

Oh, really, that's too—

CLAIRE

Did you hear about our cable company?

FLORENCE

No, what?

CLAIRE

They're starting a channel showing nothing but X-rated filth.

FLORENCE

Really? *(Pause)* By the way, the letter X hasn't been used in ages. Now, it's NC-17.

CLAIRE

Well, it oughtta be S-M-U-T.

FLORENCE

CLAIRE

You're obviously upset.

FLORENCE

You're not?

CLAIRE

Well.... I don't see what harm it could do as long as there's parental control—

FLORENCE

Oh, it does major harm, believe me.

CLAIRE

Think so?

FLORENCE

I know so. Pornography is destroying our civilization. Just like it did The Roman Empire.

CLAIRE

Gee, I didn't think Nero had a DVR.

FLORENCE

This is not a laughing matter, Claire.... Just wish I could destroy every X-rated movie ever made.

CLAIRE

That'd be pretty hard to do.

FLORENCE

Maybe so.... But our homeowners' association can sure as heck keep those degenerates from showing porn.

CLAIRE

We can?

FLORENCE

We most certainly can. Remember how successful we were keeping male dancers out of town.

CLAIRE

Yeah, I remember. (*Frowns*) Say, how about some coffee?

FLORENCE

I'd rather have wine—if you have some.

CLAIRE

Wine? In the morning, Florence?

FLORENCE

Wine is the perfect drink anytime, Claire. Especially red. You know it's been proven beneficial for heart health.

CLAIRE

That's what I hear.

CLAIRE crosses towards the bar. As she does, FLORENCE adds—

FLORENCE

Bring the bottle.

CLAIRE reaches the bar and then reaches for a bottle. As she does, FLORENCE looks around and spots GEORGE'S "paper." She reaches over and grabs it.

FLORENCE

Mind if I take a peek at your paper?

CLAIRE

What paper?

CLAIRE looks at FLORENCE and realizes exactly what she is about to read. She thinks for a moment, then yells—

CLAIRE

Florence!!!

Forgetting the wine, CLAIRE hurries to grab the paper out of a frightened FLORENCE'S hand.

FLORENCE

What!?

CLAIRE thinks briefly, then rolls up paper and begins swatting at the sofa behind FLORENCE.

FLORENCE

What's wrong!?

FLORENCE leans away and CLAIRE swats at the sofa a couple more times.

CLAIRE

Got it!

FLORENCE

What?

CLAIRE

(Looks at paper; grimaces)

What a mess.

CLAIRE quickly walks toward the kitchen.

FLORENCE

Claire, what was it?

CLAIRE looks at the rolled-up paper.

CLAIRE

A nasty black widow.

FLORENCE

(Recoils anew)

Oh my goodness!

With an impish grin on her grin, CLAIRE exits into the kitchen as LIGHTS FADE OUT.

ACT I; SCENE II

AT RISE: The Wells' living room five days later, a Friday night. GRETCHEN and DARRIN DEVEREAUX are by themselves in the living room. Tanned and attractive, they are 10 to 15 years younger than the WELLS. DARRIN DEVEREAUX is sitting on the sofa, while his wife, GRETCHEN, brushes her hair in front of a mirror.

DARRIN

Your hair's gonna fall out if you're not careful.

GRETCHEN

I'm just trying to look good, Darrin.

DARRIN

Honey, you look sublime.

GRETCHEN

Is that good or bad?

DARRIN

Gretchen, you should read a book every now and then instead of watching so much brainless TV.

GRETCHEN

Who the hell asked you!

DARRIN

Sublime is not that difficult a vocabulary word, dear.

GRETCHEN

Hey, you coulda married a librarian, you know. You weren't so interested in big words when we were dating.

DARRIN

Hey, I thought you were just playing dumb.

GRETCHEN

What the hell does that mean!?

GEORGE enters from kitchen with drinks.

GEORGE

Is everybody happy?

GRETCHEN

(Forced smile)

Oh yes, we're sublimely happy.

GEORGE

(Unsure how to react)

Oh.... Well, I thought you two might like an after-dinner cocktail.

DARRIN

You're a mind reader, George, ol' boy. *(Grabs a drink)* Thank you.

GEORGE

You're entirely welcome.... Gretchen?

GRETCHEN

Sure, I'd love one.

GEORGE

Your wish is my command.

GEORGE gives her a drink and takes his drink off the tray, leaving one left.

DARRIN

Ah, tasty. Say, George, where's that attractive wife of yours?

GEORGE

I don't know. *(Looks back)* She was right behind me. *(Yells towards kitchen)* Claire!

CLAIRE

Yes!

GEORGE

What are you doing!?

CLAIRE

The dishes!

GEORGE

(Forced smile)

Can't the dishes wait?

CLAIRE

I'm almost done!

GRETCHEN

(Crosses towards kitchen)

I should probably help.

GEORGE

(Quickly stops her)

Wait, Gretchen.... Uh, Claire has her own special way of doing dishes. You'd just be in her way.

GRETCHEN

Oh.... Okay. *(Plops on sofa)*

DARRIN

That was a great dinner, George. I'm full.

GRETCHEN

Me too. I wish I could cook half as good as your wife.

DARRIN

So do I.

GRETCHEN

What!?

GEORGE

(Quickly)

Uh, I'm sure Claire's had a lot more practice.

DARRIN

(Pause)

Say, George, I left something in the car. *(Sets drink down)* Be right back. *(Walks to door)*

GEORGE

Sure.... Take your time. *(Smiles at GRETCHEN)*

DARRIN

Don't do anything I wouldn't do.

As DARRIN exits, GEORGE sits next to GRETCHEN.

GRETCHEN

It's so hot tonight.

GEORGE

(Mops brow)

For sure.

GRETCHEN

Do you have a hot tub?

GEORGE

No. *(Frowns)* But I could dig one; take about an hour.

GRETCHEN

(Pause)

I just love to kick back in a Jacuzzi with a bottle of wine.

GEORGE

Yeah?

GRETCHEN

Yeah; I really get crazy.

GEORGE

There's a pool out back.

GRETCHEN

(Teasingly)

Pools are for swimming, George. *(Rises)* I should help your wife.

Despite GEORGE'S sad look, GRETCHEN exits into the kitchen.

GEORGE

(Peeved)

I knew I shoulda built that hot tub. *(Mimics CLAIRE)* But, George, shouldn't we spend the money on something we really need? Like a new sofa. *(Kicks sofa)* Ouch!

GRETCHEN re-enters in time to see GEORGE kick the sofa.

GRETCHEN

Something wrong, George?

GEORGE

(Forced smile, feels foot)

Oh no; my foot just fell asleep *(Quickly)*. Is Claire done with the dishes?

GRETCHEN

Yeah.

GEORGE

Good.

GRETCHEN

Now she's mopping the floor.

GEORGE

What!?

GRETCHEN

Cleanest kitchen I ever saw.

GEORGE quickly starts to kitchen, but GRETCHEN stops him.

GRETCHEN

Uh, George, I need to freshen up a bit.

GEORGE

Oh sure. *(Points)* Bathroom's straight down the hallway; first door on the left.

GRETCHEN

Thank you.

GEORGE

You're welcome.

GEORGE exits to kitchen and moments later re-enters behind CLAIRE, who's putting on rubber gloves.

Claire!?

GEORGE

But the oven needs cleaning.

CLAIRE

GEORGE

The oven can wait..... What's wrong with you, Claire? We have guests over, and you're spit-shining the kitchen. How rude can you get?

CLAIRE

(Hopefully)

Did they go home?

GEORGE

No, they didn't go home.... Claire, why don't you want to socialize with our guests?

CLAIRE

I don't mind socializing with them.... I just don't want to have an orgy with them.

GEORGE

Oh, come on, Claire. I'm not interested in having an orgy. *(Pause)* Maybe just foolin' around a bit.

CLAIRE

Oh George.

GEORGE

You don't think Darrin's good-looking?

CLAIRE

He's very good-looking.... That doesn't mean I want to fool around with him.

GEORGE

(Pause)

He thinks you're attractive.

CLAIRE

Sure he does. *(Obviously flattered)* How do you know?

GEORGE

He said so.

CLAIRE

He did not.

GEORGE

Yes, he did. *(Pause)* While you were overhauling the kitchen.

CLAIRE

That reminds me. I have to finish the oven. *(Walks toward kitchen)*

GEORGE

Claire!

Despite GEORGE'S protest, CLAIRE exits—just before DARRIN re-enters, holding a liquor bottle and a box of some sort.

DARRIN

Where is everyone?

GEORGE

Gretchen's in the bathroom. *(Pause; frowns)* Claire's in the kitchen.

DARRIN

Still?... You know, George, I get the feeling Claire doesn't like me.

GEORGE

Oh no, that's not true. She likes you a lot.... In fact, she just said you're good-looking.

DARRIN

(Pleased)

Yeah?

GEORGE

Very good-looking, in fact.

DARRIN

(After smiling)

Hey, I brought some of my favorite liquor.

GEORGE

That's nice of you. *(Takes bottle)* Thank you.

DARRIN

Welcome.

GEORGE

(Examining bottle)

I've never tried ouzo.

DARRIN

Tastes great. Why don't we have some?

GEORGE

Why not.

GEORGE grabs some glasses from the bar and prepares to open the bottle.

DARRIN

I also brought our trivia game. Thought you two might like to play.

GEORGE

(As he pours drinks)

To tell the truth, Darrin, I'm terrible at trivia. Got a lousy memory.

GRETCHEN enters; interrupting.

GRETCHEN

You have an awesome house, George.

GEORGE

Yeah. *(Frowning)* Except for no hot tub. *(Quickly)* Say, would you like a drink?

GRETCHEN

Of course.

GEORGE

It's the liquor you and Darrin brought.

GRETCHEN

Ooh, Ow-zo.

GEORGE

No, ouzo.

GRETCHEN

I know, silly. I call it Ow-zo 'cause it's so strong. Don't gimme too much.

DARRIN

It's not that strong, dear. *(As GEORGE pours)* Gretchen thinks any drink without fruit and a plastic umbrella is too strong.

GRETCHEN

(Frowns at DARRIN; smiles at GEORGE, takes drink)

Thank you, George.... Is Claire still in the kitchen?

GEORGE

Still.

DARRIN

George, whaddy say we swap wives for a while.

Really?
GEORGE

I always wanted a clean kitchen.
DARRIN

Keep it up, Darrin!
GRETCHEN

CLAIRE enters with a huge tray of food.

Who's hungry! *(Deafening silence)* Don't all speak at once.
CLAIRE

Honey, we just had a big dinner.
GEORGE

I know. I just thought you might want a little snack.
CLAIRE

A little snack? Looks like you're feeding an army.
GEORGE

(Walks toward CLAIRE)
DARRIN
You know, I'm still a tad hungry.

Try the canapés. They're my specialty.
CLAIRE

(Moves closer)
DARRIN
Which ones?

Here. *(Hands one to DARRIN)*
CLAIRE

Thank you. *(Looks into her eyes)* If they're half as good as your dinner, they're delicious.
DARRIN

Oh. *(A bit uneasy)* Thank you. *(Moves away)* Anyone want coffee?
CLAIRE

No one wants coffee, dear.
GEORGE

How do you know? Gretchen, would you like some coffee?
CLAIRE

GRETCHEN

No, thanks... I never mix my drinks.

CLAIRE

How about you, Darrin?

DARRIN

Oh no. *(Moves closer to CLAIRE)* I'm already stimulated.

CLAIRE

(Steps back)

Maybe I'll have a cup.

GEORGE

You know you'll be up all night if you do.

CLAIRE

You're right. I think I'll fix some decaf. *(Crosses towards kitchen)*

GEORGE

Claire, for heaven's sake! The Devereauxs came by to visit both of us. Not just me.

DARRIN

That's right, Claire. It almost looks like you're trying to avoid us.

CLAIRE

Oh no—not at all.

GEORGE

Then have a seat. And a drink.

CLAIRE

I'm not much of a drinker.

GEORGE

It's some ouzo Darrin brought. At least give it a try.

CLAIRE

Well, maybe one small drink.

GEORGE

That's more like it.

As GEORGE pours a drink for CLAIRE, there's A SLOW FADE TO BLACK. Moments later the LIGHTS RESTORE.

EVERYONE has been drinking and thanks to the ouzo, feeling no pain—even CLAIRE. DARRIN has his shoes off and is standing on the sofa.

DARRIN

Did you hear the one about the rich guy who lost a fortune in the stock market?

GEORGE

No—tell us.

DARRIN

Well, this guy comes home to his mansion and tells his wife, "Honey, I just lost a bundle on Wall Street. We're gonna have to fire the cook, so you better ask her to teach you how to cook."... Right away, the wife says, "Well, I guess we'll have to fire the chauffeur, too, so you better ask him to teach you how to screw."

ALL laugh, particularly CLAIRE—until GEORGE glares at her. There is a pause; then—

DARRIN

Hey, I've got an idea: why don't we play our trivia game.

CLAIRE

Oh no; George hates trivia.

GEORGE

More than anything.

CLAIRE

Except foreplay.

Again, ALL laugh—except George.

GRETCHEN

Why don't you like trivia games, George?

GEORGE

They just test your memory. And mine's not that good.

DARRIN

Have you ever played Strip Trivia?

GEORGE

Strip... Trivia?

DARRIN

Yeah; every time you miss a question, you take off a piece of clothing.

I'm in!

GEORGE

What about Claire?

DARRIN

Naw, she won't play.

GEORGE

Whaddya mean? I'm great at trivia.

CLAIRE

But this is strip trivia.

GEORGE

I know, George. I heard.

CLAIRE

(Grabs bottle)
Gotta get some more of this stuff.

GEORGE

I'll set it up. *(Fetching game)* Let's play the fast version.

DARRIN

The fast version?

GEORGE

Yeah; you keep stripping—till you answer a question right.

DARRIN

Fine with me. What about you, honey?

GEORGE

I'm game—so to speak.

CLAIRE

Hurry up before she changes her mind.

GEORGE

Go ahead, George; you can ask the questions.

DARRIN

Okay.... I'll randomly pick someone to go first.

GEORGE

GEORGE puts one hand over his eyes, then moves the other hand around the room quickly, stopping when it points at GRETCHEN.

GEORGE
(*Uncovers eyes*)
Gretchen goes first.

GRETCHEN
(*Mock anger*)
Real random, George.

GEORGE
(*Looks at first card*)
One of the most misspelled words in English is "millennial." Spell it.

CLAIRE
I can!

GEORGE
(*Firmly*)
It's not your turn, dear.

DARRIN
Gretchen's a terrible speller. She still can't spell "Devereaux."

GRETCHEN
I can spell it. (*Proudly*) I-T.

GEORGE
What?

GRETCHEN
That's how you spell "it," right?

GEORGE pauses; then realizes what's happened.

GEORGE
No, Gretchen; when I said spell "it," I meant you were supposed to spell "millennial."

DARRIN
Nice try, dear.

CLAIRE
I vote for Gretchen.

GRETCHEN
Thanks, Claire.

GEORGE
No way, Gretchen. Spell "millennial"... or pay the, uh, consequences.

I know it starts with an "m." GRETCHEN

Time's running out. GEORGE

(*Frowns*) GRETCHEN
Oh, I give up. I'm a lousy speller.

(*After a pause*) CLAIRE
Millennial. M-I-L-L-E-N-I-A-L. Millennial.

Wrong! GEORGE

No, I'm not. CLAIRE

You left out an "n." GEORGE

What? CLAIRE

(*Quickly shows her*) GEORGE
M-i-l-l-e-n-N-i-a-l. (*Pause*) That extra "n" is probably why it's so misspelled.

Wow. (*Pause*) Well, I can tell you what millennial means. A lot of people don't know. CLAIRE

Nobody cares what millennial means, Claire. (*Pause*) What we care about is Gretchen needing to strip. GEORGE

(*To GRETCHEN*) DARRIN
You owe us a piece of clothing, dear.

I know, I know. GRETCHEN

GRETCHEN stands up, touches her clothing as if she's going to take off her blouse or skirt—but removes a shoe instead.

Two shoes count as one.

DARRIN

Right.

GEORGE
(Disappointedly, then quickly)

Whatever.

GRETCHEN
(Removes other shoe)

Next question. *(Pulls a card)*

GEORGE

Gimme one on “Prince.”

GRETCHEN

Sorry.... Who wrote the Pulitzer Prize-winning play "Death of a Salesman"?

GEORGE

Oh, I know that.

CLAIRE

It's still not your turn, dear.

GEORGE

Oh, I'm not good at murder mysteries.

GRETCHEN

I'll give you a hint.

DARRIN

No, don't!

GEORGE

Don't worry; she'll never get it. *(Starts to sing)* Where have you gone Joe DiMaggio—

DARRIN

Marilyn Monroe?

GRETCHEN

See I told you: she's not the sharpest tool in the drawer.

DARRIN

What!?

GRETCHEN

GEORGE

(Quickly)

Marilyn Monroe was a very sexy actress, Gretchen. Almost as sexy as you.

GRETCHEN

(Smiles)

Thank you, George.

DARRIN

I bet Claire knows who wrote "Death of a Salesman."

CLAIRE

Arthur Miller..... And you were on the right track, Gretchen. Joe DiMaggio married Marilyn Monroe before Arthur Miller did.

GRETCHEN

Really? So there, Darrin.

GEORGE

Okay, Marilyn—er Gretchen. You owe us more clothes.

GEORGE salivates as GRETCHEN appears to have reached "the point of no return." She grabs for the top button of her blouse but instead continues to move her hands up until she reaches her eyes and begins fiddling with one of them.

GEORGE

Whaddya doing?

GRETCHEN

Taking out my contacts.

GEORGE

That's not fair.

GRETCHEN

Sure it is. I wear contact lenses.

DARRIN

She always pulls this. Don't worry, George; she's just prolonging the inevitable.

GEORGE

Two count as one.

GRETCHEN

I know, I know.

CLAIRE

Can you see without your contacts?

DARRIN

She can't see a thing.

CLAIRE

That'll save George some embarrassment if he has to take off his shorts.

GEORGE

(Snarls)

Not funny, Claire.

GRETCHEN

Hard to take 'em out without a mirror... I'm just gonna pretend like I did.

GEORGE

Fine, fine. *(Grabs next card)* Next question. Which American state is the farthest south? *(Turns card over)* Gee, I didn't know that. Betcha none of you know this... Gretchen?

GRETCHEN

Which state is farthest south?

CLAIRE

You understand the question, right, Gretchen? Which of America's 50 states is the farthest south?

GEORGE

No more help, Claire.

DARRIN

Don't worry, George; I'm not sure she knows north from south.

GRETCHEN

Shut up, Darrin! *(Pause)* I have a good guess.

GEORGE

Okay.

GRETCHEN

South Dakota!

The others do their best to muffle laughter.

GEORGE

No—but close.

DARRIN

She was born in South Dakota. That's probably the only state she knows.

GRETCHEN

Oh, yeah—North Dakota! (*to DARRIN*) Wrong, Dumbass!

GEORGE

Kids, kids. It's only a game.... Anyone wanna guess?

DARRIN

Must be Texas.

CLAIRE

That's what I was gonna guess.... Or Florida?

GEORGE

Neither.

DARRIN

Louisiana?

GEORGE

No. And no more guesses. Believe it or not. (*Pause*) Hawaii.

CLAIRE/DARRIN

Hawaii?

CLAIRE

Must be a mistake.

DARRIN

Doesn't matter. According to the rules of this game, an answer is right—even if it's a mistake or misprint.

CLAIRE

Hey, that reminds me of "Seinfeld."

DARRIN

My favorite show ever.

CLAIRE

Mine, too. So funny. (*Pause*) Remember the show about the Bubble Boy.

DARRIN

Of course. And George was playing Trivial Pursuit with the Bubble Boy.

CLAIRE

And they begin to argue about an answer. George claims it's a misprint.

DARRIN

What was the question? I forget.

CLAIRE

So do I. But they start fighting, and the Bubble Boy begins strangling George.

DARRIN

And might have killed him if his bubble hadn't exploded.

*DARRIN and CLAIRE begin laughing—until
GEORGE intercedes.*

GEORGE

Do you guys wanna get a room? There're several upstairs.

CLAIRE

Relax, George. Don't be such a party-poopier.

GEORGE

Hey, I'm just trying to keep the party going. *(Pause)* Gretchen, you know the drill.

GRETCHEN

I know, I know.

*Now down to the "bare essentials," GRETCHEN
unbuttons her blouse and removes it.*

DARRIN

I gave Gretchen that bra on her birthday.

GEORGE

Bet you didn't use much wrapping paper.

DARRIN

Wait'll you see the matching panties.

GEORGE

(Quickly grabs next card)

Next question, Gretchen. *(Gleefully)* Oh, this could be a tough one.

DARRIN

They're all tough for her.

GEORGE

Be nice, Darrin.... Okay, Gretchen—What is the largest organ in the human body?

GRETCHEN

(Smirks)

Well, it's not Darrin's willy.

DARRIN

Not funny, Gretchen. *(Pause)* In truth, my, uh, willy is more than adequate. Much more.

GEORGE

I'm sure it is, Darrin... Okay, Gretchen, what is the largest organ in the human body?

GRETCHEN acts stumped, then proudly.

GRETCHEN

The skin.

DARRIN

The skin isn't a body organ, dear.

GEORGE

(Looking at back of card)

Oh yes it is. *(Unhappily)* The largest one as a matter of fact. *(Reads)* The skin weighs about six pounds, and is nearly twice as large as the brain or the liver.

CLAIRE

Amazing! How did you know that, Gretchen?

GRETCHEN

(Smirking; towards DARRIN)

I saw it on ER.

CLAIRE

Oh, I love Dr. Ross. He's great, isn't he?

GRETCHEN

For sure. He can give me a physical exam anytime.

GEORGE

Can we discuss doctors later? We're playing a game.

DARRIN

My turn.

GRETCHEN

Not for long. Darrin's middle name is trivia.

DARRIN

Oh, I miss a question. Every year or so.

GEORGE

(Picks up a card)

Pretty confident, eh?... Okay, Darrin, according to the famous quote, "Music has charms to soothe the savage" what?...

DARRIN

(Shakes head)

Slam dunk. Beast. Savage beast.

Darrin blows the lay-up!

GEORGE

What?

DARRIN

It's "Music soothes the savage BREAST."

GEORGE

You're kidding?

DARRIN

I kid you not.

GEORGE

GEORGE shows DARRIN the card.

That's ridiculous. Must be a typo. Whoever heard of a savage breast?

DARRIN

Darrin, you tell me I have killer breasts.

GRETCHEN

Touché, Gretchen.

GEORGE

(Frowning at GRETCHEN)
That's got to be a mistake. *(Pause)* Claire, help me out.

DARRIN

I always thought it was "savage beast."

CLAIRE

Remember, Darrin, if the answer's wrong, it's still right in this game.

GEORGE

Okay, okay. *(Starts to unbutton shirt)*

DARRIN

Your shirt first?

GRETCHEN

Hey, I won't miss any more questions.

DARRIN

Besides Darrin wants to show us his savage breasts.

CLAIRE

As he removes his shirt, he smiles at CLAIRE, then tosses it to her.

DARRIN

No, just you.

GEORGE

Okay, Darrin, who is considered to be the father of exis—existen—uh...

DARRIN

Existentialism.... Jean-Paul Sartre.

GEORGE

That's right. How'd you know that?

DARRIN

I was a philosophy major in college.

CLAIRE

So was I.

DARRIN

Really? Free will or determinism?

CLAIRE

Oh, free will, of course.

DARRIN

Me too.

CLAIRE

(Expounds)

I am the master of my ship. I am the captain of my fate.

GEORGE

Say, can we postpone the poetry reading for the time being. We're playing a game.

GRETCHEN

(Hopefully)

Your turn, George.

DARRIN

(Grabs a card)

Okay, George; your question is about cooking.

CLAIRE

He might as well strip right now.

GEORGE

Hey, I can cook.

CLAIRE

Yeah, you should see what he does with hot dogs in the microwave.

CLAIRE makes an exploding sound and gesture, which causes ALL to laugh, save GEORGE.

DARRIN

What is the main ingredient in Welsh rabbit?

CLAIRE

Oh, that's too easy.

GEORGE

Welsh rabbit? Sounds like a trick question.

GEORGE sees GRETCHEN wiggling her fingers above her head like bunny ears.

GEORGE

Rabbit, what else.

DARRIN

Try cheese.

CLAIRE

No wonder your Welsh rabbit tastes so peculiar, dear.

GEORGE frowns at CLAIRE, then begins to remove his shirt.

CLAIRE

Not your shirt.

GEORGE

If it's good enough for Darrin, it's good enough for me.

GEORGE removes his shirt; flexes as best he can.

DARRIN

Next question, George. What's the traditional gift for a married couple's 20th anniversary?

GEORGE

20th anniversary? Hm-m....

CLAIRE

George, you should know this. Our 20th anniversary is this year.

GRETCHEN
You guys have been married 20 years?

GEORGE
(Quickly)
I got married at age 12.

GRETCHEN
How old are you, George?

GEORGE
I forget.

CLAIRE
42.

GRETCHEN
No-o.

GEORGE
(Frowns at CLAIRE)
Thanks a lot, Claire.

GRETCHEN
Don't worry, George, men get better as they get older.

GEORGE
Actually, I'm 43.

DARRIN
Uh, George, you're avoiding the question.

GEORGE
20th anniversary? Um-m.... A noose.

CLAIRE
Oh George! C'mon, it's china.

DARRIN
That's right.

GEORGE
Guess that means I have to strip.

GRETCHEN
Better believe it.

GEORGE starts to remove his pants.

GEORGE

China this, Claire.

GEORGE strips down to comical-looking shorts, decorated with something like hearts or baseball gloves and bats.

DARRIN

Next question, George. What's the only bird that can fly backwards?

GEORGE

(Smug smile)

Sorry, ladies.... The hummingbird.

DARRIN

That's right. I didn't know hummingbirds could fly backwards.

GEORGE

Backwards, forwards, up, down. Claire's got feeders all over the place.

CLAIRE

They're crazy about George's Welsh rabbit.

GEORGE

Loosen up a little, Claire.

DARRIN

Speaking of Claire, it's her turn. *(Removes card)* What do you call a horse that's had his testicles removed?

GEORGE

(Quickly)

Unhappy.

CLAIRE

A gelding.

DARREN

Wrong.

CLAIRE

No way; I grew up on a farm.

DARREN

Yeah, you're right. Unfortunately. *(Pause)* That was obviously too easy for her; she should get another question.

GEORGE

No way. It's Gretchen's turn... *(Pulls card)* And here's your question, my dear.... What's the population of New York City?

GRETCHEN

What?

GEORGE

Within 10 people.

GRETCHEN

That's a tough one.

DARRIN

Honey, he's pulling your leg.

GEORGE

I wish. *(Looks at card)* Okay, Gretchen next question. Ready?

GRETCHEN

How about an easy question for a change?

GEORGE

Hey, you got the one on the largest organ—mine excluded.

CLAIRE

Hardly. So to speak.

GEORGE

Okay, Gretchen, here you go.... Of the world's seven continents, four not only begin with an A but end with an A. Name three of the four—

GRETCHEN

Ew-w, thanks for nothing, George.

GEORGE

Wait, they give you a choice: Or name which one of the four is the world's largest continent.

DARRIN

You do know what a continent is, dear?

GRETCHEN

Yes, I know what a continent is. *(Proudly)* And I think I know the largest continent.

GEORGE

Hope not....What is it, Gretchen?

GRETCHEN

America!!!

DARRIN

America's not a continent, dear.

GEORGE

Hey, she was close. North America is. Good for you, Gretchen.

GRETCHEN

Not good enough.

GEORGE

Can I pour you another drink, Gretchen, while you're deciding your next, uh, "removal"?

GRETCHEN

Please.

As GEORGE rises to pour another drink, GRETCHEN stands and slowly begins removing her skirt.... A distracted GEORGE can't help but miss GRETCHEN's glass.

CLAIRE

George!

GEORGE

Sorry.

CLAIRE quickly wipes up spill with a nearby napkin. Afterward.

GEORGE

Looks like we're getting down to the nitty-gritty.

DARRIN

Gretchen lost the last time we played, too.

GRETCHEN

I haven't lost yet.

GEORGE has traded the bottle for the trivia cards and prepares to read the next card.

GEORGE

Okay, Gretchen....Neil Armstrong was the first man to walk on the moon. Who was the second?... Oh, they even give a hint: His first name has two z's in it.

GRETCHEN

(*Mystified*)
Two z's?...

CLAIRE

Oh, I know.

GEORGE

Claire, why don't you just tell us when you don't know.

GRETCHEN

Well, I only know one word with two z's—but I don't know if it could be a name.

CLAIRE

Might as well try it, Gretchen.... Better than nothing.

GRETCHEN

Okay.... Jizz.

*GEORGE and DARRIN are both mid-sip and spit
out the ouzo.*

GRETCHEN, *Continued*

No idea what his last name is though.

DARRIN

No, Gretchen; not Jizz.

GRETCHEN

I tried.

CLAIRE

And you were close—kinda, Gretchen. It's Buzz.... Aldrin.

GRETCHEN

An astronaut named Buzz? Weird.

CLAIRE

That wasn't easy, Gretchen. Most woulda missed it.

GRETCHEN

Oh, well...

DARRIN

Should have worn your watch, honey.

CLAIRE

Gretchen, you don't have to take off your bra if you don't want.

GEORGE

Yes, she does!

GRETCHEN

Hey, it's okay; I lost fair and square.... You're all about to see all of MY largest organ.
(Stands; tries with little success – perhaps on purpose – to unhook her bra) George, can you give me a hand.

GEORGE

Certainly. Both hands.

GEORGE quickly hops up to help Gretchen.... As he does, DARRIN moves over next to CLAIRE and semi-innocently throws his arm behind her neck. Unfortunately for GEORGE, he is so excited that his hands are shaking, and he's having a tough time undoing the bra.

GRETCHEN

Ouch!

GEORGE

Sorry.

GRETCHEN'S back is to the audience when GEORGE finally manages to finish the job. Just as he does, the front door opens and a young man enters—specifically, the Wells' collegiate-looking son, TODD. Barely visible behind TODD is his guest, JOYCE.

GEORGE
Todd!!!

TODD
Dad!!!

A shocked GEORGE flips the bra in the direction of the visitors.... It's hard to tell who is more stunned, GEORGE or TODD, who, along with JOYCE, is looking at his nearly undressed father face-to-face with a topless woman while his mother sits cozily with another man.... The conclusion to this embarrassing scene is left to the imagination as LIGHTS FADE OUT.

ACT I; SCENE III

AT RISE: *The Wells' house the following Sunday morning. No one is in the living room when SFX: A PHONE RINGS and then GEORGE's voice is heard.*

GEORGE'S VOICE

Not here at the moment. Leave a message.

There's a short pause, then a BEEP followed by a woman's sultry voice.

WOMAN'S VOICE

George, I'd rather moan after the tone. (*Giggles*) This is Pandora, and I'm waiting to tell you how much I'd love to—

A few moments later, GEORGE comes rushing in and picks up the phone before PANDORA can complete her sentence.

GEORGE

Not now, Pandora! I have company. (*Looks nervously toward kitchen*) No, they would not like to listen in.... Look, I don't want your services after all.... That's right. (*Frowns*) What!? You better not bill my credit card.

CLAIRE enters from the kitchen.

GEORGE

Good-bye! (*Clicks off phone*)

CLAIRE

George, who was that?

GEORGE

Huh?... Oh, just a wrong number.

CLAIRE

Well, you certainly weren't very polite.

GEORGE

C'mon, Claire, how hard is it to punch a few numbers right?

CLAIRE

Hey, the kids aren't back, are they?

GEORGE

No, they're not. And Joyce is hardly a kid.

CLAIRE

Her age upsets you, doesn't it?

GEORGE

For crissakes, Claire; she's much older than Todd.

CLAIRE

Just like you're much older than Gretchen Devereaux.

GEORGE

Hey, that's a different story.

CLAIRE

Oh, it is?

GEORGE

Sure it is. Older men and younger women are just naturally attracted to each other.

CLAIRE

Oh, George—stop kidding yourself.

GEORGE

Well, it's true.

GEORGE hops on the bike and pedals furiously, again, for about 20 seconds, then slows down considerably; CLAIRE sits on the sofa.

CLAIRE

(Pause)

Actually, it's much more natural for older women, to, uh, pair up with younger men.

GEORGE

What?

CLAIRE

That's right. According to the experts, a woman reaches her sexual prime in middle age; the male in his late teens—oh, 18, 19, 20....

CLAIRE raises one of her hands in a vertical position, then lets it droop after she says "20."

CLAIRE

Mother Nature obviously intended younger males to mate with older females.

GEORGE is stumped, but only for a moment.

GEORGE

You know we got along much better before you started watching Donahue.

CLAIRE

You should watch him. Just last week he said, “You raise your kids the best you can—then hope for the best.”

GEORGE

Yeah, well, I wonder how Phil Donahue would feel if his 18-year-old son was getting serious with a much older woman—not to mention a yoga teacher.

CLAIRE

What's wrong with teaching yoga?

GEORGE

Aw, c'mon, Claire, how smart do you have to be to teach stretching?

CLAIRE

Joyce is hardly dumb, George. After all, she's one semester short of getting her diploma.

GEORGE

Yeah, a B.A. in nutrition. What kind of Mickey Mouse major is that?... She must be loads of fun at Thanksgiving dinner. (*Mimics*) Nothing that had a face on it, please.

CLAIRE

Speaking of nutrition, I'm gonna make some eggs. Want some?

GEORGE

Yeah please, I'm starving. Over easy.

CLAIRE

Yes, I know dear. I've been making your eggs the same way for 20 years. (*Walks toward kitchen*)

GEORGE

I'm just a creature of habit.

CLAIRE

Yeah. Whether it's eggs— (*Impishly*) or the bedroom.

GEORGE

Hey, wait—

CLAIRE

Yes?

GEORGE

If I'm so boring, why don't you try Darrin Devereaux?

CLAIRE

Why, so you can "try" Gretchen Devereaux?

GEORGE

It's a thought.

CLAIRE

It's an obsession.

CLAIRE exits into the kitchen just before the front door opens and TODD enters holding hands with his new girlfriend, JOYCE. For the first time, JOYCE is completely visible to the audience, and it is clear she is at least 10 years older than TODD. JOYCE is attractive and in great shape—and seems to be quite pleasant and not the least concerned about the age difference.

TODD

Hi, Dad. Good to see you with your pants on.

GEORGE

(Forcing a smile)

Enough with the sarcasm, Son. I told you Mom and I and our friends were about to skinny-dip.

TODD

Whatever you say, Dad.

GEORGE

(Quick to change subject)

What time did you get up this morning?

TODD

Oh, did we wake you?

GEORGE

No problem. I love getting up at 4:30 on a Sunday morning.

JOYCE

We wanted to jog before it got too hot.

GEORGE

Oh, so you were jogging.

TODD

Yeah, we ran 10 miles.

GEORGE

You don't look like you just ran.

TODD

Afterwards, we went to the gym to lift some weights, then we showered.

GEORGE

You're "pumping iron," too?

TODD

Every day. You oughtta try it, Dad. Never felt better.

GEORGE

Nah; heaviest thing I ever lift is a quarter-pounder.

CLAIRE

(Entering)

I thought I heard you two.

TODD

Hi, Mom.

JOYCE

Hello, Claire.

CLAIRE

Good morning.... Who wants breakfast? I was just about to make some eggs.

JOYCE

Uh, Todd and I were gonna have some granola with flaxseed.

GEORGE

Todd, you'd rather have granola—with flaxseed—than Mom's eggs?

TODD

(Unconvincingly)

Yeah.

JOYCE

Eggs are the embryos of chickens, you know.

GEORGE

I don't care what they are. They taste good, and that's all that matters.

JOYCE

If it doesn't bother you that eggs contain cholesterol, which is a major cause of heart attacks.

GEORGE

(Frowns)

Never mind the eggs, Claire.

JOYCE

I didn't mean to spoil your appetite, George.

GEORGE

You didn't! *(Pause, then softer)* No time to eat anyway; we gotta get to the ballpark.

TODD

Oh, I forgot to tell you, Joyce. My dad got us all tickets for a baseball game.

JOYCE

(Trying to sound enthused)

Oh, how exciting.

CLAIRE

(Exiting into kitchen)

Have fun.

TODD

Mom's not going?

GEORGE

Not today.

TODD

But she likes baseball.

GEORGE

She does. She doesn't like doubleheaders.

JOYCE

We're going to see two games?

GEORGE

(Devious smile)

Yeah, we'll be gone 6 or 7 hours. At least.

JOYCE

Oh.

GEORGE

Maybe you'd like to stay here and keep Claire company?

JOYCE

Oh no, I'm game—so to speak. Just give me a second to freshen up. *(Kisses TODD on cheek)*
I'll be right back, guys.

TODD

(After JOYCE exits)

Dad, I need to, uh—uh, ask you a very important question.

GEORGE assumes a horror-stricken expression.

GEORGE

Oh no, Todd; ask me anything but that. Anything.

TODD

What?

GEORGE

Son, use your head; you've only known her a few months—and she's practically old enough to be your mother. Believe me, you need to shop around before you settle down. Don't just marry the first tight butt that comes along.

TODD

Dad!

GEORGE

They'll be plenty more where that—

TODD

Dad!!

GEORGE

What?

TODD

Joyce and I haven't even discussed marriage.

GEORGE

Oh. *(Pause)* I figured that—but your mother was worried sick....I'll let her know.

TODD

What I wanted to know, Dad, is if you were planning to drink much today.

GEORGE

Well, I plan to have a few beers, sure. *(Frowns)* Why?

TODD

Joyce hates alcohol. She always says, "Lips that touch liquor will never touch mine."

A pause as GEORGE curbs the urge to say something he'll regret.

GEORGE

Uh, Todd, whatever happened to Jenny?

TODD

Whaddya mean, what happened to Jenny?

GEORGE

I thought you two were a couple—almost engaged, in fact.

TODD

Yeah, well, college gives you a different perspective on things.

GEORGE

I see. I bet she's really hurt.

TODD

She'll get over it. She's just a kid.

GEORGE

That's right. You are a whole year older, aren't you?

TODD

(Pause)

You don't like Joyce, do you?

GEORGE

Never mind how I feel. The more important question is, do you like Joyce?

TODD

What? Of course I like Joyce.

GEORGE

Coulda fooled me. As far as I can tell, you two have absolutely nothing in common.

TODD

(Not that convincingly)

Hey, Joyce and I have lots in common. *(Pause)* But even if we didn't, I don't have to justify her to you.

GEORGE

You're right, son. *(Pause)* Just answer me one question.

TODD

What?

GEORGE

(Pause)

Are you having sex with her?

TODD

Dad!?...That's none of your business.

GEORGE

Maybe not. But I certainly hope the answer is no. Take it from one who knows: sex is something that's so special, so intimate... so beautiful that it was meant to be shared only within the sacred bounds of marriage.

Holding a bag, CLAIRE enters during the last portion of GEORGE's speech.

CLAIRE

Would you please repeat that, George?

GEORGE

(Caught in the act; frowns)

I don't have time, Claire. *(Pause)* Where's your friend, Todd? We don't wanna miss the first pitch.

CLAIRE

Speaking of which, I thought you folks might like a snack to take to the game—I mean, games.

TODD

Whatcha got, Mom? *(Takes bag)*

CLAIRE

Oh, a little of everything. Ham sandwiches, chips, blueberry cheesecake.

TODD

Super!

GEORGE

Whaddya mean, super? You can't eat that stuff.

TODD

Why not?

GEORGE

Are you kiddin'? It's a nutritional nightmare. Loaded with sugar and salt and, uh—preservatives. Joyce would never approve.

JOYCE re-enters and TODD quickly hands the bag to GEORGE.

TODD

(Nervously)

Hi honey. Ready to go?

JOYCE

(Not emphatically)

Oh, ready and rarin'.

TODD

You sure you don't wanna go, Mom?

CLAIRE

Never so sure of anything in my whole life.

GEORGE

Your mother would much rather have a cup of coffee and some of her prize-winning chocolate chip cookies — (*Smiles at JOYCE*) — while she reads the Sunday paper.

CLAIRE

That's not true, George. I have plenty of chores to do.

GEORGE

On a Sunday?

CLAIRE

Yes, George, on a Sunday. I can get things done much faster when I'm alone.

GEORGE

Whatever. (*To TODD and JOYCE*). Let's hit the road. Might be able to grab an autograph or two.

GEORGE crosses to the closet to get a jacket and pair of binoculars.

CLAIRE

Uh, gee, Joyce; I'm sorry I didn't fix you anything. I wasn't sure what you liked.

JOYCE

That's quite all right. I left some broccoli bars in the fridge. (*Crosses towards kitchen*)

CLAIRE

(*Quickly*) Broccoli bars? I thought they were moldy Snickers—and tossed 'em out.

JOYCE frowns while behind her back TODD pumps his arm in celebration and mouths, "Yeah!" She turns in time to catch the tail-end of his exuberance and frowns again.

GEORGE

No worry, Joyce. I'll buy you a couple foot-long dogs and a brewski or two to wash 'em down.

CLAIRE

Remember, George: no more than one beer every three innings.

GEORGE

Unless there's a home run.

By the HOME team. CLAIRE

Yeah, yeah. GEORGE

Have a good time, guys. CLAIRE

GEORGE, TODD, and JOYCE exit as CLAIRE closes the door, leans against it, smiles, then exits into the kitchen, returning moments later with a cup of coffee, a tray of cookies and part of the Sunday paper—and wearing a devilish smile.

I lied. CLAIRE, *Continued*

CLAIRE sits on the sofa and carefully arranges the paper, cup of coffee and plate of cookies in front of her. Just as she's about to take her first sip, however, there's a loud knock at the door. She frowns and doesn't move, as if debating whether to answer.

Claire! MALE VOICE, *Off*

Puzzled, CLAIRE puts the cup back on the table, throws the paper aside, rises and crosses to the front door.

Who is it!? (Before opening) CLAIRE

Darrin! VOICE

Darrin? (Puzzled) CLAIRE

Darrin Devereaux. VOICE

CLAIRE realizes who her caller is, looks in a nearby mirror, pats at her hair, and finally opens the door to the trivia-playing DARRIN, who is dressed in a sporty tennis outfit.

Hello there.

DARRIN

H-hi.

CLAIRE

Brought you something.

DARRIN

You did? Uhm, how nice.

CLAIRE

He hands her a bag, and she pulls out a Manila envelope or something else that would snugly hold a VHS Cassette.

A copy of “The Bubble Boy.”

DARRIN

What? Really. *(Semi-sincere)* How, uh, thoughtful.

CLAIRE

Wasn’t easy to find. But I wanted to do something special for you.

DARRIN

Oh-h, well, thank you..

CLAIRE

They look at each other for a long moment; it looks like he expects a hug but doesn’t get one—yet.

(Finally)
Can I come in?

DARRIN

Sure. I guess. *(Points)* You can sit on the sofa.

CLAIRE

DARRIN sits on the side closest to where CLAIRE is standing--leaving only enough room for her to sit, and he smiles.

CLAIRE
(*Frowns*)
No, Darrin.

DARRIN
Sure?

CLAIRE
Positive.

DARRIN
Darn. (*Stands, moves to other end of sofa and sits*)

CLAIRE
(*Sits at other end of the sofa; then*)
I'm having coffee. Would you like some?

DARRIN
No thanks.... Just had some.

CLAIRE
How 'bout some chocolate chip cookies? Just out of the oven.

DARRIN
Uh, no thanks. (*Pause*) Maybe later.

Long, uncomfortable pause.

DARRIN, *Continued*
Where's George?

CLAIRE
Uh, well, he's not here right now.

DARRIN
Oh. Will he be back soon?

CLAIRE
No. (*Pause*) He went to a baseball game—er games. (*Pause*) Where's Gretchen?

DARRIN
Right now? (*Looks at watch*) Watching "Cartoon Planet."

CLAIRE
Oh.

DARRIN
Beautiful day.

CLAIRE

Yeah? I haven't been out yet.

DARRIN

I've already played three sets of tennis.... Do you play?

CLAIRE

No, I don't.

DARRIN

You must do some sort of exercising. To keep in such great shape.

CLAIRE

(Slightly uncomfortable)

I go to the gym a lot. Look, uh, Darrin—

DARRIN

Claire, I have to be honest with you. I knew George wouldn't be here.

CLAIRE

You did?

DARRIN

He asked me if I wanted to go to the game with him.

CLAIRE

(Uneasy)

Oh. Don't you like baseball?

DARRIN

Love it....Just wanted to talk to you. Alone.

CLAIRE

About what?

DARRIN

Us?

CLAIRE

Us?

DARRIN

You know you really, uh, titillate *(Smiles)* me.

CLAIRE

Now wait just a second.

DARRIN

Don't worry, Claire. I'd never touch you, I swear. Without your permission, I mean.

CLAIRE

Look, Darrin; I really think you should leave.

DARRIN

Don't I turn you on?

CLAIRE

What? Well, of course not.

DARRIN

You don't have to get mean.

CLAIRE

I'm not mean.... I'm married.

DARRIN

So am I.

CLAIRE

Yeah right.... And does your wife know you here?

DARRIN

No. But she wouldn't mind, believe me.

CLAIRE

Yes, well, George would mind, believe me.

DARRIN

I'm not so sure. I'd be willing to bet your husband would be more than willing to partake in some, uh, mixed doubles.

CLAIRE

And I'd bet you'd lose that bet.... And even if he was interested, I'm certainly not.

DARRIN

Why not?

CLAIRE

I believe in commitment.

DARRIN

And so do I.

CLAIRE

Yeah right! You can't be committed to one woman and make love to other women.

DARRIN

Sure, I can. Gretchen and I are totally committed to each other.

CLAIRE

Yeah, well, you and I must have totally different definitions of commitment.

DARRIN

Look, Claire: I love Gretchen and she loves me. We're totally honest with one another and would never cheat.

CLAIRE

Is that so? Then what are you doing right now—er, trying to do?

DARRIN

I don't cheat, Claire. I never make love behind Gretchen's back. *(Pause)* Usually we're in different rooms.

DARRIN smiles; CLAIRE doesn't.

CLAIRE

(After pause)

If you really loved Gretchen, you wouldn't need to make love to other women.

DARRIN

Not true. Look, Claire, I love marriage—but I also like a little variety; I don't care what you're talking about. Food, sports.... or lovers. The same thing over and over gets boring. No matter how great it is. And Gretchen feels the same way.

CLAIRE

The grass is always greener, isn't it?

DARRIN

Not necessarily. But the grass is different. *(Pause)* Believe it or not, Claire, making love to other women makes me love my wife even more.

CLAIRE

That doesn't make sense.

DARRIN

How would you know for sure? Unless you've tried it?

CLAIRE has no answer.

DARRIN

How long have you two been married? You said 20 years, right?

CLAIRE

Almost.

DARRIN

Twenty years. And unless I miss my guess, George is the only person you've ever made love to.

CLAIRE

That's none of your business.

DARRIN

Aren't you ever the least bit curious what it's like to sleep with another man?

CLAIRE

(Pause)

Not in the least.

DARRIN

If I'd been to bed with only one other person, I'd always be wondering what it would be like with someone else.

CLAIRE

That thought never crossed my mind.

DARRIN

So—George has been the only one.

CLAIRE

That's none of your business.

DARRIN

(Pause) I would have thought a philosophy major would be more open-minded.

CLAIRE

So philosophers are swingers, huh?

DARRIN

Hey, Nietzsche wanted Dionysus to replace Jesus as a cultural icon.

CLAIRE

Yeah, and Nietzsche went insane.

DARREN

(Pause) I get the feeling you and George haven't made love in quite a while.

CLAIRE

That's also none of your business. *(Pause)* You need to leave, Darrin.

DARRIN shakes head, then glumly walks to door, which CLAIRE just opened.

DARRIN

(Facing CLAIRE)

Of all sad words of tongue and pen, the saddest are these:

He holds hand out, as if inviting CLAIRE to finish the verse.

CLAIRE

What?

DARRIN

I figured you could fill in the sad words.

CLAIRE

I have no idea.

DARRIN

I'm surprised..... *(Melodramatically)* Of all sad words of tongue and pen, the saddest are these.... It might have been.

He reaches for the door, but CLAIRE deftly kicks it shut.

CLAIRE

What makes you think that George and I haven't had sex for 10 years?

DARRIN

The odds. Most married couples don't have sex after 10 years.

CLAIRE

Ten years? That's absurd.

DARRIN

I can text you the source. *(Realizes the need to switch tactics)* Okay, Claire, just for the sake of argument, let's suppose neither of us was married. Then would you be interested in making love to me?

CLAIRE

But we both are married. *(Long pause)* Besides, you're younger than me.

DARRIN

Oh, so that's the reason.

CLAIRE

No, it isn't.

DARRIN

The real reason you're turning me down is because I'm younger—not because we're married.

CLAIRE

I didn't say that. You did.

CLAIRE and DARRIN now engage in face-to-face verbal combat, so to speak. When he makes a point, he walks toward her, and she steps back and vice-versa.

DARRIN

You know of course that a man reaches his sexual prime much sooner in life than a woman.

CLAIRE

Yeah.... So?

DARRIN

So.... We'd be perfect in bed.

CLAIRE

You don't give up, do you?

DARRIN

Not if I really want something. Or somebody.

CLAIRE

I don't see why you're so persistent. I'm sure there are plenty of women who'd just love to sleep with you.

DARRIN

Oh, there are, believe me. But it's hard to find someone as attractive, intelligent and sexy as you....Very hard. (*CLAIRE appears to be surrendering*) Claire, I'd really love to take you to bed; I'm sure I'd appreciate you a lot more than George does.

DARRIN moves in for the "kill" gently holding CLAIRE's hands, which she doesn't pull away. A knock at the door, however, interrupts momentarily. CLAIRE musters all her willpower and removes her hands.

CLAIRE

E-excuse me. (*Composes herself; approaches the door*) Who is it?

FLORENCE, *Off*

Flo-rence Fletcher!

CLAIRE opens the door.

CLAIRE

Hi, Florence.

FLORENCE
Morning, Claire. *(Pause)* May I come in?

CLAIRE
What? Oh sure.

FLORENCE enters wearing her Sunday finery and carrying her Bible as before. She immediately sees DARRIN.

FLORENCE
(Disapprovingly)
Oh, I didn't know you had, uh, company.

CLAIRE
Darrin, this is my neighbor—Florence Fletcher.

DARRIN
Glad to meet you, Florence.

FLORENCE
(Unconvincingly)
My pleasure.

CLAIRE
How was church?

FLORENCE
Divine, thank you.

DARRIN
Florence Fletcher? Didn't I see you on TV yesterday?

FLORENCE
I don't know; maybe.

CLAIRE
What happened, Florence?

FLORENCE
It was no big deal.

DARRIN
The cable company accused her of e-mailing bomb threats.

CLAIRE
Oh no.

FLORENCE

Oh yes. (*Scowls*) The swine.

CLAIRE

Oh, Florence, what a mean thing for them to do.

DARRIN

I'm curious why you wouldn't take a lie detector test.

Getting angrier as she responds, FLORENCE walks toward DARRIN, backing him up as she lectures.

FLORENCE

Why should I take a lie detector test? I'm not guilty of anything. They're the guilty ones. Planning to show all those filthy movies to innocent citizens—destroying their minds with those so-called "films" that glorify every possible type of depravity. From homosexuality to group sex. And you want ME to take a lie detector? Surely, you jest.

DARRIN

Sorry I asked.

FLORENCE

As far as I'm concerned, this community would be much better off if that cable company was bombed.

DARRIN

I see.... Well, Claire, I better be going.

CLAIRE

Okay.

As CLAIRE walks DARRIN to the door, FLORENCE moves toward the sofa. Her mood suddenly changes from anger to delight.

FLORENCE

Ooh, cookies. Do you mind?

CLAIRE

Help yourself.

FLORENCE

(As she sits on the sofa and grabs a cookie)

If you insist. Do you have any wine?

CLAIRE

Yes, can you wait a second?

If I have to.

FLORENCE

As FLORENCE contentedly devours the cookie (maybe two), DARRIN talks in whispers to CLAIRE. Though they can't be heard, DARRIN is, obviously, making some headway, as an apparently clueless FLORENCE eats while riffling through the paper. DARRIN's lips move ever closer to CLAIRE, who still is resisting—barely. Though still looking at the paper, FLORENCE suddenly speaks.

The pastor gave a marvelous sermon today.

FLORENCE

R-really?

CLAIRE

Yes, really.

FLORENCE

FLORENCE still does not look back at the couple, but does lift her head slightly and proudly announces the title of the sermon.

"Adultery—One-Way Ticket to Hell."

FLORENCE

The spell broken, CLAIRE quickly slams the door on DARRIN as LIGHTS OUT. END ACT I.

ACT II; SCENE I

AT RISE: *The Wells' living room, the next Saturday night. In his pajamas, TODD lies on the sofa, which has now been converted to a bed. TODD eats from a bag of potato chips, drinks from a giant 2-liter bottle of Coke and is reading "Sports Illustrated." He appears to be thoroughly enjoying himself—until JOYCE calls his name. Quickly, he folds up the bag of potato chips, caps the cola and hides the "stash" under the sofa bed—moments before JOYCE enters, wearing a bathrobe. TODD seems surprised to see her.*

Joyce!

TODD

JOYCE lets her robe open to reveal a suggestive outfit.

Like it?
JOYCE

Wow!
TODD

I got it just for you.
JOYCE

You did?
TODD

Who else, baby? ...I thought you were going to join me in bed.
JOYCE

What if my dad comes home?
TODD

(Moves closer)
What if he does?
JOYCE

We're not supposed to be sleeping in the same room.
TODD

Well, we won't be sleeping in the same room. *(Purrs)* At least I won't be *sleeping*.
JOYCE

JOYCE kisses him passionately for a few moments—then quickly pulls away and starts spitting.

Phew!
JOYCE

What's wrong?
TODD

Your lips are all salty.
JOYCE

Huh? *(Smacks them)* Oh, that must be cuz it's so hot tonight. I'm sweaty all over.
TODD

JOYCE
Better take some salt pills.

TODD
Good idea.

TODD tries to leave, but she pulls him back.

JOYCE
Not now.

TODD
But Joyce—

JOYCE
But what?

TODD
My parents might come home.

JOYCE
Yeah sure! Right now, they're probably in bed doing the same thing we should be doing.

TODD
But they're over at the Devereauxs.

JOYCE
That's right. And the last time we saw the four of them they were about to get kinky. They're probably having an orgy right now.

TODD
Not my parents. *(Thinks a moment)* Not my mother at least.

JOYCE
Talk about a double-standard. They're out swinging but won't let us stay in the same room.

TODD
Hey, we coulda been camping all by ourselves this weekend.

JOYCE hops on the exercise bike. The angrier she gets, the faster she pedals.

JOYCE
Yeah sure, camping by ourselves. If you don't count the spiders and snakes and bears and god-knows-what-all. If you'd only bothered to ask me, you would have found out I hate camping—almost as much as I hate baseball. *(Alights from bike to confront him)* Next time you make plans for us, consult me first. Okay!?

Okay.

TODD

Her angry face now very close to TODD'S, JOYCE instantly changes moods—smiling as she pats him on the face.

JOYCE

Love you. *(Reaches for something)* I picked up something else that goes just perfect with this.

What!?

TODD

Wearing a seductive smile, JOYCE reveals a pair of handcuffs.

Handcuffs?... Why?

TODD

Why not? *(Seductively)*

JOYCE

Joyce, I don't know.

TODD

JOYCE

I do. A little bondage can be a big turn-on. Trust me. Or should I say, TRUSS me. *(Kisses him)* Gimme your hands, Tiger.

TODD

J-Joyce.

JOYCE

Hey, you didn't think you'd like spanking either. *(Spanks him with both hands)* Remember?

TODD semi-smiles, then suddenly SFX: HEAD LIGHTS FLASH AGAINST WINDOW.

TODD

Migod, my parents! Get outta here!

JOYCE

Todd, don't yell at me!

TODD

I'm sorry, honey, but—

A disgusted JOYCE tosses TODD back on the sofa bed then "handcuffs" his ankles.

TODD

Joyce, what are you doing!

JOYCE

(Grabbing robe)

If you want the key, you'll have to hop into my bed. And I do mean HOP.

JOYCE laughs at her own humor as she exits. TODD looks futilely at his "footcuffs" before covering his feet with his blanket.... Moments later, he is surprised by a knock on the door.

TODD

W-who is it!?

TODD is surprised to hear a familiar female voice.

FEMALE VOICE, *Off*

Jenny!

TODD

Jenny? *(Pause)* Just a second!

Forgetting that he is "foot-cuffed," TODD rolls out of bed and falls immediately to the floor.... After recovering from the traumatic header, he manages to stand as JENNY continues to knock.

TODD

I'm coming! I'm coming.

TODD manages to hop to the door, open it and peek outside.

TODD

Jenny, hi.

JENNY is barely visible to the audience.

JENNY

Hi, Todd. *(Pause)* Can I come in?

TODD looks around, then back at JENNY.

TODD

Yeah, sure, but gimme a second. I'm, uh, not dressed.

TODD closes door, then hops as fast as he can back onto the sofa bed and pulls the covers over his legs.

TODD

Okay!

JENNY SAWYER enters, dressed in a cheerleading outfit. She's attractive and a lot younger than JOYCE—an age difference magnified by what she's wearing.

JENNY

Todd?

TODD

Over here.

Seeing TODD, JENNY walks toward the sofa bed with a bag in her hand. She is very pleasant—maybe too pleasant.

TODD

Game tonight, huh?

JENNY

Yeah.

TODD

Who won?

JOYCE

They did—but they were just lucky.

TODD

What was the score?

JENNY

51 to 3.

TODD

Oh.

JENNY

(Awkward pause, then)

You look good.

TODD

Thanks.... So do you. *(Another awkward pause)* Uh, how did you know I was back?

JENNY

On accident. I happened to see you driving around today. *(Pause)* With a, uh, woman.

TODD

Oh....

JENNY

Is she your girlfriend?

TODD

As a matter of fact, yes.

JENNY

She looks older than you.

TODD

Yeah. A couple years.

JENNY

(Looks at bed)

I'm not interrupting anything, am I?

TODD

Oh no. My girlfriend—uh, Joyce—went to bed.

JENNY

Joyce? *(Frowns)* That's my grandma's name. *(Pause)* Are your parents home?

TODD

Uh, no, they're not.

JENNY

(Speaking rapidly)

I always liked your parents. They're about the only happily married couple I know. I always thought we'd end up just like them.... But that's life, huh?

TODD

Yeah, I guess.

JENNY

(Pause)

So how long have you been home?

TODD

About a week.

JENNY

Too busy to call I guess.

TODD

Well—

JENNY

Doesn't matter that we were together two years, seven-and-a-half months.

TODD

That long, huh?

JENNY

Then one day all of a sudden you tell me you got a new girlfriend.

TODD

Well, I didn't want to lead you on—so I told you.

JENNY

So sweetly too. Let's see, how did you put it? (*Paces as she recites*) Dear Jenny, how are you? Guess what? I got a new girlfriend, so I guess you're history.

TODD

That's not what I said.

JENNY

No, you didn't say it; you texted it... Too chicken to call.

TODD

C'mon, Jenny, let's be adults.

JENNY

That would be a first for you. (*Reaches inside her bag*)

TODD

What are you doing?

JENNY

Oh, just returning a few things.

TODD

Like what?

JENNY

Like this.

JENNY pulls out a small object and crosses to him, holding out a ring.

TODD
My promise ring?

JENNY
Yes, your "promise" ring.

TODD
Jenny, I don't want that back.

JENNY
(Reads inscription)
With all my love—forever and ever. Todd. *(Proffers ring)* Here, you can give it to Joyce; she won't *(Sarcastically)* know the difference.

TODD
C'mon, Jenny, I don't want that.

JENNY
Well, I sure don't want it.

JENNY disdainfully tosses ring toward him; he must catch it or at least recover it--and then hold on to it, preferably under the cover.

TODD
Hey, you could sell it.

JENNY
I could sell it. How thoughtful. *(Reaches into bag)* Well, I know you'll want this back.

TODD
What?

JENNY
(Unfolding object)
Your letterman's sweater.

TODD
You don't want it?

JENNY
Not anymore.

TODD
But. I gave that to you.

JENNY
Yeah. *(Mellows)* Remember when?

TODD

(Also mellowing)
Yeah. On the hayride.

JENNY

First night you said you loved me.

TODD

Yeah. It was?

JENNY

I used to think the L stood for love—but now I know what it really stands for. *(Pause, then throws sweater at him)* Liar!

TODD

Jenny....

JENNY

(Reaches into bag)
I have one other thing for you.

TODD

What?

JENNY

Our prom picture. *(Hands photo to him)*

As TODD takes the picture and looks at it, JENNY sits next to him on the sofa bed.

TODD

We were a cool-looking couple, weren't we?

JENNY

That was taken right before you asked me to marry you. Remember?

TODD

(Slightly chagrined)
Oh yeah; I did, didn't I.

JENNY

Yes, you did.... And I said, not before you finish college. *(Looks ready to cry)*

TODD

Yeah.

JENNY

And then you said we'd name our first child Jennifer—

TODD

I did?

JENNY

Whether it was a boy or girl. *(Begins to sob)*

TODD

Oh, Jenny. *(Puts an arm around her)* Please don't cry, Jenny. You know what that does to me. *(She buries her head in his shoulders and continues to cry)* Jenny, please....

After a few bittersweet moments, JOYCE'S VOICE is heard.

JOYCE

(Entering)

Who the hell is that!?

TODD

Huh?... Oh, uh—nobody.

JENNY quickly changes from sad to mad.

JENNY

Nobody!?

TODD

Jenny, I didn't mean it like—

JENNY

If I was your girlfriend for two, nearly three years, and I'm a nobody—what the freak does that make her!?! *(Points at JOYCE)*

TODD

Now come on, Jenny.

JOYCE

(Crossing closer to JENNY)

Oh, this must be the child you told me about.

JENNY turns her anger towards JOYCE.

JENNY

Child!?

JOYCE

That's what I said.

JENNY

Well, if I'm a child, what does that make him? He's only 11 months older than me.

JOYCE

I was referring to your emotional age.

JENNY

Really? You wanna talk child, huh? Does he still watch Saturday morning cartoons?

JOYCE

As a matter of fact, TODD doesn't watch television at all anymore.

JENNY

(Looks at TODD)

What?

TODD

(Frowns out of JOYCE's view)

That's right.

JOYCE

The truth of the matter is, Todd doesn't need to get his thrills vicariously.

JENNY

Can't Todd answer for himself? Or do you get your jollies answering for him—vicariously?

JOYCE

You're right, Todd. She does have a big mouth.

JENNY

What!? *(To TODD)* Oh, so you've been talking behind my back, huh?

TODD

I didn't say you had a big mouth.

JOYCE

No, you said she was a loudmouth.

TODD

(Quickly to JENNY)

Only when you lose your temper.

JOYCE

Which is quite often, I hear.

JENNY

(To TODD)

Is that all you ever talked about? Me?

JOYCE

Oh, heavens no.... There are myriad more interesting subjects to talk about than you.

JENNY

(To TODD)

Do you ever get a word in edgewise with her?

JOYCE

(Getting angry)

Look, honey, you better toddle off before you get arrested for breaking curfew.

JENNY

(Short pause)

At least I won't get arrested for robbing the cradle.

JOYCE

Hey, you better shut your mouth, *(Moves closer)* before I shut it for you.

JENNY

What? Are you serious?

Before JOYCE answers, SFX: LIGHTS FLASH AGAINST THE WINDOW.

TODD

Oh no, my parents! Get outta here!

As JENNY quickly repacks her bag, JOYCE gives TODD a passionate kiss.

JOYCE

(Exiting to bedroom)

See you later.... Tiger.

TODD is obviously under JOYCE'S spell; JENNY is obviously hurt.

JENNY

I'll be in your pool.

JENNY moves quickly to the hallway.

TODD

But you can't swim!

JENNY

(Holding back tears)

I know! *(Exits)*

TODD

Jenny!

TODD looks at JENNY as she exits, then looks in the direction JOYCE exited. He makes a quick decision and hops off after JENNY. A few moments pass before GEORGE, opening the front door for a sexily dressed – and angry – GRETCHEN DEVEREAUX, enters.

GRETCHEN

(Entering from outside)

He thinks he's so smart just 'cause he has a degree. I know a lot of real dumb people who went to college, don't you?

GEORGE

Yeah, lots.

GRETCHEN

Did you go to college, George?

GEORGE

Yes, I did, as a matter of fact.

GRETCHEN

I didn't mean everyone who went to college is dumb.

GEORGE

I know you didn't. Hey, how 'bout a drink?

GRETCHEN and GEORGE are too preoccupied – at least for the moment – to notice the unfolded sofa bed.

GRETCHEN

Thanks. I could use one.... Make it a double.

GEORGE

You bet. *(Crosses towards bar)* A double what?

GRETCHEN

Oh, I don't know. Light beer.

GEORGE

(Keeping a straight face)

Sorry, we're all out of light beer. Let me surprise you.

GRETCHEN

Okay. *(Pause)* I was pretty-much wasted when I left, but that walk kinda sobered me up.

Lucky I saw you walking.

GEORGE

Thanks for following me.

GRETCHEN

It's dangerous for a woman to be walking alone at night. (*Crosses to her with drinks*) Especially an attractive woman.

GEORGE

GEORGE offers GRETCHEN the drink.

Thank you. (*Takes drink*) And thank you.

GRETCHEN

Welcome. (*They sip*) And welcome.

GEORGE

Ooh, what is this?

GRETCHEN

My favorite. A Tequila Sunrise.

GEORGE

It's so strong.

GRETCHEN

That's why they call it Ta-kill-ya.

GEORGE

George.... You're so funny. (*Laughs as she sips*)

GRETCHEN

That's my motto. Make 'em laugh; make 'em breakfast.

GEORGE

Huh?

GRETCHEN

(Quickly)
Do you usually storm out of the house when you get mad at Darrin?

GEORGE

Only when he puts me down.

GRETCHEN

You must not spend much time at home.

GEORGE

What?
GRETCHEN

'Cause he puts you down so much.
GEORGE

Oh yeah. You got that right.
GRETCHEN

(Pause)
It's really none of my business, Gretchen, but I don't like it either when Darrin puts you down. You deserve a lot more respect. (*Takes her wrap, puts it in closet*) If you were my wife, I wouldn't criticize you like that.
GEORGE

Oh, I know you wouldn't, George.
GRETCHEN

Uh, why don't we sit down?
GEORGE

Yeah, my feet could use a rest.
GRETCHEN

GRETCHEN crosses around the sofa and notices it's now a bed.

GRETCHEN, *Continued*
George, did you do this while I wasn't looking?

Do what? (*Sees sofa bed*) Oh no, Todd's using the sofa bed while he's home.
GEORGE

Todd?... He's your son, right?
GRETCHEN

Right. His girl—er, woman—friend is sleeping in his room.
GEORGE

Oh. Are they here right now?
GRETCHEN

No, they just left on a camping trip. So I have no idea why the bed is down. But gimme a hand and we can fold it up.
GEORGE

Instead, GRETCHEN flops on the sofa bed.

GRETCHEN

Why?

GEORGE

(Sits on chair; nervous-excited)

Good question.

GRETCHEN and GEORGE smile at one another and there's an awkward pause – which GEORGE breaks with a toast.

GEORGE

To a very attractive... and intelligent friend.

GRETCHEN

Oh, thank you. *(They drink)* Do you really think I'm intelligent?

GEORGE

Hey, none of the rest of us knew skin was an organ. And we all have college degrees.

GRETCHEN

Yeah—and even though I didn't go to college, I am an instructor.

GEORGE

Really? What do you teach?

GRETCHEN

(Proudly)

Jazzercise.

GEORGE

(Momentarily speechless)

No kidding? Wow, that must, uh, take a lot of, uh, smarts.

GRETCHEN

Tell me about it. It's not easy picking out the right songs for the right routines.

GEORGE

I'll bet... And that's stuff you'd never learn in school.

GRETCHEN

(Duly flattered)

For sure. *(Pause)* My turn to make a toast.

GEORGE

Okay.

GRETCHEN

To a very funny guy... who's also very sexy.

GEORGE

Are you serious?

GRETCHEN

Serious about what?

GEORGE

Serious about me being sexy?

GRETCHEN

Very. I like older men.

GEORGE

(Smiles, then a pause)

Then why did you marry Darrin?

GRETCHEN

(Smiles)

I like younger men, too. *(They both laugh, then after a pause)* Let's screw.

GEORGE

(In middle of sip, nearly chokes; wiping mouth)

Beg pardon?

GRETCHEN

You heard me.... Let's screw.

GEORGE

Uh, can I get you another drink?

GRETCHEN

(Seductively)

I don't need another drink, Georgie.

GEORGE

Oh.

GRETCHEN

Ya wanna?

Now that GEORGE can turn his fantasy into reality, the reality of it all quickly sinks in. Lust has come face-to-face with guilt.

GEORGE

(Unconvincingly)
Are you kidding? (Pause) Sure of course.

GRETCHEN opens her purse, pulls out various paraphernalia: a string of condoms, KY jelly, a little stuffed animal that she puts at the corner of the sofa bed—and even a small flashlight she waves around while checking to see if it works.... After recovering from GRETCHEN's ritual, GEORGE nervously responds.

GEORGE

Uh, maybe we should go upstairs.

GRETCHEN

Oh no, I never do it in the wife's bed. I'm superstitious that way.

GEORGE quickly jumps out of the chair.

GRETCHEN

Where you going?

GEORGE

I'll be right back.

GEORGE checks the closet to make sure no one's inside, makes sure the front door's locked, and then out of view of GRETCHEN, pulls out some breath spray, which he sprays inside his mouth—and then as an afterthought, under his arms. He is now standing near the sofa bed.

GEORGE

What about your husband?

GRETCHEN

What about him?

GEORGE

Would he, uh, mind?

GRETCHEN

Of course not. As long as I tell him.

GEORGE

Oh... You guys are swingers, huh?

GRETCHEN

Hey, you only go 'round once, you know. *(Starts to remove blouse)* What about you and Claire?

GEORGE

What about us?

GRETCHEN

Do you swing?

GEORGE

Oh sure, all the time.... We're married...Not buried.

GRETCHEN

Hey, I like that.

GEORGE sits on the bed, then watches GRETCHEN deftly unhook her skirt and throw it aside.

GEORGE

Are you sure you want to do this?

GRETCHEN

Positive. *(Crawls toward him)* Aren't you?

GEORGE

Y-yeah.

GRETCHEN throws her arms around GEORGE, prior to unbuttoning his shirt.

GRETCHEN

Here, lemme get this for you.

GEORGE

I can get it. *(Starts to unbutton shirt)*

GRETCHEN

Is something wrong?

GEORGE

No, of course not.

GRETCHEN

(Helps take off shirt)

You have such a nice body. I woulda never guessed you were 34.

43. (Quickly) GEORGE

(Cheerfully) GRETCHEN

Whatever. *GRETCHEN begins nuzzling GEORGE who is torn but finds it increasingly hard to resist.*

GRETCHEN
C'mon, Georgie. I can't wait much longer.

GEORGE
Okay, okay.

GRETCHEN
You're married, not buried, remember?

GEORGE
Yeah.

GRETCHEN
My savage breasts need you. *GRETCHEN gently tugs GEORGE over to her side of the sofa bed, then strokes him.*

GRETCHEN
How does that feel?

GEORGE
N-nice. Very nice. *GRETCHEN leans over and kisses GEORGE, who raises his hands briefly, then drops them in surrender.*

GRETCHEN
I was sure you and Claire fooled around—never mind what Darrin said. *This time GEORGE kisses her, but pulls away after several moments.*

GEORGE
What did Darrin say?

GRETCHEN

He said you and your wife didn't mess around.

GEORGE

How would he know?

GRETCHEN

Claire told him.

GEORGE

She did? When?

GRETCHEN

When he came over here last Sunday.

GEORGE

(Sits up; suddenly curious)

Darrin was here last Sunday?

GRETCHEN

Yeah. You were at some game.

GEORGE

Yeah, I was. What'd Darrin want?

GRETCHEN

Your wife.

GEORGE

What!?

GRETCHEN

Darrin is crazy about Claire.

GEORGE

He is?

GRETCHEN

She really turns him on.

GEORGE

She does?

GRETCHEN

Hey, Claire's very sexy, you know.

GEORGE

(Begrudgingly)

Yeah, I know. *(Nervously)* So what happened when Darrin, uh, "visited" Claire?

GRETCHEN

Nothing, I guess. Like I said, she told Darrin you two didn't screw around. *(Rubs his neck)* She was obviously lying.

GEORGE

Yeah. *(Quickly)* You sure your husband and my wife didn't do it?

GRETCHEN

Oh no, not last Sunday. He woulda told me.

GEORGE

(Relieved)

Oh.

GRETCHEN

Tonight's a different story.

GEORGE

What?

GRETCHEN

If I know Darrin, he's got Claire in bed right now.

GEORGE

But we haven't been gone 30 minutes.

GEORGE reaches for the phone.

GRETCHEN

George! What are you doing?

GEORGE

I gotta make a call.

GRETCHEN

This late? To who?

GEORGE

My wife.

GRETCHEN

Gee, George. You're not jealous, are you?

GEORGE

No! *(Not so frantically)* Just curious.

Georgie, c'mere. I want you.

GRETCHEN

No answer!

GEORGE

Darrin could never do two things at once.

GRETCHEN

*GEORGE frowns, then throws phone on the bed.
A moment later, there is a knock at the door.*

That's Claire!

(Brightening)

GEORGE

Knocking?

GRETCHEN

Probably forgot her keys.

GEORGE

GEORGE grabs his shirt, hops over the back of the sofa, and crosses towards the door until an all-too-familiar voice causes GEORGE'S glee to vanish.

It's Flor-ence Fletcher!

FLORENCE, *Off*

Stopping suddenly, GEORGE puts his finger to his mouth to let GRETCHEN know not to say anything.... GEORGE then watches as a key opens the door and FLORENCE enters.

George, didn't you hear me?

FLORENCE

Yes, I heard you, and how did you get a key to my house?

GEORGE

Claire gave me a key the last time you went on vacation.

FLORENCE

She did? Well, I want it back.

GEORGE

I'll give it to Claire as promised. Is she here?

FLORENCE

GEORGE looks back in time to see GRETCHEN wave at FLORENCE.

GEORGE

No, she's not.

FLORENCE

Who's that?

GEORGE

None of your business. Now if you don't mind.

FLORENCE

I came over to borrow some wine.

GEORGE looks toward the bar.

GEORGE

Okay, I'll get you some wine, but don't you move an inch or no wine!

GEORGE scurries toward the bar sideways, so he can keep an eye on FLORENCE. He grabs a bottle of wine and walks quickly towards FLORENCE.

GEORGE

Here you go!

FLORENCE

Is it red?

GEORGE

Yes, it's red. *(Hands her the bottle)*

FLORENCE

(Looking at label)
Shiraz?

GEORGE

I don't know. Take it or leave it. But leave!

FLORENCE takes the bottle quickly, frowns at GRETCHEN then GEORGE and turns to exit.

GEORGE

You're welcome.

FLORENCE looks back disapprovingly before exiting. GEORGE slams the door and crosses quickly to the sofa bed.

GRETCHEN

Who was that?

GEORGE

A holier-than-thou alcoholic neighbor *(Pause)* Who doesn't know the meaning of "borrow.".

GRETCHEN

She looks like a party-hearty gal. You and Claire ever swing with her?

GEORGE

Oh god! Not in this lifetime. *(Pause)* Speaking of which—Gretchen, doesn't it bother you that your husband and my wife are doing it over at your house right now?

GRETCHEN

You're darn right, it bothers me....

GEORGE

If they already haven't finished—

GRETCHEN reaches up and pulls GEORGE onto the bed.

GRETCHEN

(Completing her thought)

...We got some catching up to do.

GRETCHEN pounces on top of GEORGE and begins to rain kisses on him. Legs are flailing in the air as LIGHTS FADE OUT.

ACT II; SCENE II

AT RISE: *The Wells' living room; later that evening. Some time has passed since an amorous GRETCHEN was about to ravage an anxious GEORGE. There is a lump on the sofa bed, covered by the blanket. JOYCE enters, sees the lump, smiles, crawls into the bed, and starts to fondle the "lump," which appears to like the attention. After some sensuous massaging, JOYCE puckers up, pulls back the top of the cover, and very nearly kisses GRETCHEN. JOYCE screams, GRETCHEN screams, and JOYCE screams even louder.*

JOYCE

(Recovering)

Who are you?

GRETCHEN

Gretchen Devereaux. We met last week, remember?

JOYCE

(Frowns)

Oh yeah, the swinger.... Where's Todd?

GRETCHEN

Who's Todd?

JOYCE

He lives here.

GRETCHEN

Oh, George's son.

JOYCE

Yes. And that's his bed.

GRETCHEN

(Looks under the covers; impishly)

Well, he's not here now.

JOYCE

Better not be.

GRETCHEN

Todd's your boyfriend, right?

JOYCE

Ex-boyfriend—if I don't find him real soon. *(Crosses to hallway)*

GRETCHEN

Good luck!

JOYCE

(Looks back)

Wench!

JOYCE exits. After she does, GRETCHEN rises and crosses towards the hallway.

GRETCHEN

George!... Are you okay?

GRETCHEN grabs a bottle from the bar, goes back to bed, opens the bottle, takes a swig, and yells "George!" one more time. A moment or two later, she hears someone coming, smiles, and crawls under the covers. Just after she does, TODD, still in his pajamas with ankles cuffed, enters and hops towards the sofa bed.

TODD

Jenny?

GRETCHEN

No. *(Pulls back cover)* Gretchen. *(Looks at TODD standing several feet away)* Hi Todd.

TODD

H-hi.... Who are you?

GRETCHEN

I'm Gretchen Devereaux. Remember we met last week.... You caught my bra, I think.

TODD

Oh yeah.

GRETCHEN

Huh? Well, I'm waiting for your fa— *(Just in time)* Hey, I thought you went on a camping trip.

TODD

We decided not to go.

GRETCHEN notices that TODD is holding his legs tightly together.

GRETCHEN

Oh.... Say do you need to go to the bathroom?

TODD

Huh? *(Looks down)* No—actually, I, uh, have, uh, handcuffs around my feet.

GRETCHEN

How did that happen?

TODD

Don't ask.

GRETCHEN

C'mere; lemme take a look.

TODD hobbles towards her and crawls on the bed; she looks closer, then laughs heartily.

GRETCHEN

These are supposed to go on your hands.

TODD

Yes, I know.

GRETCHEN

Bingo!

GRETCHEN removes the handcuffs and displays them to TODD.

TODD

How'd you do that? Without a key?

GRETCHEN

You don't need a key with Lustcuffs.

TODD

Lustcuffs?

GRETCHEN

Yeah, you just press this button. *(Shows him)*

TODD

Oh. *(Rubs ankles, then)* Say, have you seen a girl wearing a cheerleaders' uniform?

GRETCHEN

No, but I did see a woman wearing a negligee. And she was looking for you.

TODD

Joyce?

GRETCHEN

I think that's her name.

TODD

She's up?

GRETCHEN

And super-bitchy.

TODD

Which way'd she go?

GRETCHEN

(Points)
That way.

Suddenly, JOYCE'S voice can be heard.

JOYCE, *Off*

Todd!

TODD

Oh god! I'm dead. (*Grabs blanket*) Tell her you haven't seen me.

TODD drops his head onto GRETCHEN'S lap and covers his head with the blanket. There is a moment's quiet before JOYCE's voice is heard again.

JOYCE, *Off*

Todd!

JOYCE enters and walks up to GRETCHEN, who is trying to look pleasant, as if not noticing the lump in her lap.

GRETCHEN

Did you find Todd?

JOYCE

No. (*Suspiciously*) But I think I just heard his voice.

GRETCHEN

Really?

JOYCE

Really. And I think I know where he is... Unless you're pregnant.

GRETCHEN doesn't immediately realize JOYCE is referring to the lump, which she is cradling.

GRETCHEN

Pregnant? (*Looks down*) Oh, that's funny.

JOYCE

(*Unamused*)
Ha-ha. Who's under the covers with you?

GRETCHEN

Huh? Oh, just my husband.

JOYCE

That would be a first, wouldn't it?

GRETCHEN

What!? Now wait just a minute.

JOYCE

No, not even a second.

JOYCE reaches down and rips off the blanket, exposing TODD, holding onto the liquor bottle, curled up in a fetal position.

JOYCE, *Continued*

Todd!

TODD

H-hi, Joyce.

JOYCE

I guess I should take a number.

TODD

I can explain.

JOYCE

Like father, like son.

GRETCHEN

I like 'em both.

TODD

Joyce, please.

JOYCE

I can't believe it. Ruining our relationship—and your liver besides!

JOYCE grabs the bottle, picks it up as if she's going to throw it at TODD, but instead tosses it on the bed and quickly walks toward the hallway.... TODD crawls on his knees across the bed.

TODD

Joyce! This isn't what it looks like. I never touched her, I promise!

In no mood for excuses, JOYCE exits. TODD and GRETCHEN watch after her.

GRETCHEN

She doesn't seem very nice.

TODD

Whaddya expect? She just caught me in bed with another woman.

GRETCHEN

But we weren't doing anything.

TODD

She didn't know that.

GRETCHEN

She coulda at least heard your explanation.

TODD

Yeah, you're absolutely right. *(Takes a swig from the wine bottle)* I trust her. She oughtta trust me. *(Swigs again)*

GRETCHEN

I mean we don't even really know each other. *(Moves closer)* Unfortunately.

TODD

(Uncomfortably) Yeah. *(Quickly)* Speaking of explanations, how come you're in my bed?

GRETCHEN

What? Well, uh—

TODD

I thought my parents went over to your house.

GRETCHEN

They did.

TODD

But you're here—

GRETCHEN

Doesn't make sense, does it. I need a drink.

TODD

Okay.

TODD takes another swig then hands bottle to GRETCHEN.

TODD

You're not, uh— doing it with my dad, are you?

GRETCHEN

Oh no, of course not.... Not right now.

TODD

I mean I can't imagine my dad having an affair. *(Pause)* It's hard enough imagining him making love to my mother.

GRETCHEN

I know what you mean. I wouldn't believe my parents ever did it—if it weren't for me.

TODD

Yeah. *(Pause, then laughs)* Maybe the stork brought us.

GRETCHEN

(Laughs)

Hey, yeah.... You know you're funny. Just like your dad.

TODD

He is funny, isn't he?

They both laugh—until a familiar voice startles them, as GEORGE enters and sees TODD and GRETCHEN together on the sofa bed.

GEORGE

Todd!!

TODD and GRETCHEN look over and see a less-than-jolly GEORGE, dressed in a bathrobe, staring at them.

TODD

Dad!

GEORGE

(Crosses closer)

What are you doing here?

TODD

Where's mom?

GRETCHEN

(Helpfully)

She's over at my house with my husband.

GEORGE

Gretchen, please!

TODD

So my parents *are* kinky!

GEORGE

Now, Todd, wait a second!

TODD

Joyce was right—

TODD crawls over GRETCHEN in an attempt to exit the other side of the sofa bed.

GEORGE

Son, I can explain.

GEORGE reaches over and grabs TODD, who pulls his father onto the bed. GRETCHEN is caught in between.

GRETCHEN

Ouch! Oh no!... Don't move!

GEORGE

What's wrong?

GRETCHEN

My contact lens. I lost it.

GEORGE

Oh great.

GRETCHEN

Be careful. It's gotta be right around here (*Starts to feel around*) Well, don't just sit there. Gimme a hand.

GEORGE and TODD also begin feeling around the bed.

TODD

I don't even know what I'm looking for.

GRETCHEN

It's small and green.

GEORGE

Are you sure it's not still in your eye? That happens to Claire.

Joyce! I can explain.

TODD

(*Seen enough*)
There's no way you can explain this. (*Exits*)

JOYCE

Joyce, wait!

TODD

TODD rolls over, jumps out of bed and runs after JOYCE.

Todd! Don't you dare do something, uh, uh, naughty.

GEORGE

Hah! You should talk.

TODD

TODD exits. GEORGE blusters, but realizes his son has a point.

I can see! I can see!

GRETCHEN

GRETCHEN is ecstatic—until she sees GEORGE frowning at her.

I'm gone 10 minutes and you're seducing my son.

GEORGE

George, why would I try to seduce your son, (*Moves closer; sexily*) when I have you.

GRETCHEN

(*Not in the mood*)
I thought they went camping.

GEORGE

They decided not to go.

GRETCHEN

Great.

GEORGE

Where did you go? I was starting to worry.

GRETCHEN

I was trying to find some aspirin. Unsuccessfully.

GEORGE

GRETCHEN

Aw, George, you got a headache?

GEORGE

I had a headache. *(Touches head)* Now it's a migraine.

GRETCHEN

I'll make it feel better. C'mon, sit down.

GEORGE sits on the bed.

GRETCHEN

I can massage a headache outta anyone. Lay down.

GEORGE

Really?

GRETCHEN

Just lie down and relax.

GEORGE thinks a moment, then shrugs "what the hell" and lies back in bed.

GRETCHEN

First, we start with the piggies.

GRETCHEN is now at the foot of the bed—at GEORGE's feet. She can only massage a couple of times before a voice pierces the air. It belongs to JENNY, who has entered in time to see TODD's dad in what seems to be a compromising position with a strange woman.

JENNY

(Entering)
Mr. Wells!?

GEORGE

Jenny!?

GRETCHEN

What is this? A hotel?

As JENNY moves closer, GRETCHEN, resigned, sits on the chair.

JENNY

Mr. Wells, I never thought you'd cheat on your wife.

GEORGE

Jenny, you've got the wrong idea. She was just massaging me.

JENNY

Where's Mrs. Wells?

GRETCHEN

Oh, she's over at my house with my hus—

GEORGE

Gretchen, never mind! (*Quickly changes topic*) And why are you here, anyway?

JENNY

Well—I came over to see Todd.

GRETCHEN

Your son gets around, doesn't he?

JENNY

Oh, Mr. Wells. I'm so unhappy. (*Starts to cry*)

GEORGE

Jenny.

JENNY

I love Todd so much. And he doesn't care.

GEORGE

Don't cry, Jenny. Please.

An upset JENNY crawls into bed next to GEORGE, who shrugs and put an arm around her.

GEORGE

Everything's gonna be okay, honey. You have your whole life ahead of you.

JENNY

But I want Todd to be part of my life. (*Cries more*)

GRETCHEN is so moved that she even begins to sniffle.... TODD enters from the hallway and can't believe his eyes.

TODD

Dad?

GEORGE

Todd?

TODD crosses closer, surveying the scene.

GRETCHEN

Uh-oh.

TODD

Is that Jenny?

GEORGE

What? Well, of course it's Jenny.

TODD

I can't believe it. My father's not only kinky—he's a dirty old man!

GEORGE

Now, Todd, wait a second. I was only trying to console Jenny. She was crying over you.

JENNY breaks away from GEORGE.

JENNY

(With a straight face)

No, I wasn't.

GEORGE

Jenny!

TODD

Jenny, I want to talk to you.

JENNY

Go ahead—talk.

TODD

Alone.

JENNY

No thank you.

GEORGE

(Grabbing TODD'S hand)

Sit down and talk. Both of you!

TODD tries to resist and GEORGE pulls a little too hard, pulling TODD down right on top of JENNY just as JOYCE enters holding a suitcase.

JOYCE

(Can't believe her eyes)
My god in heaven!

Everyone turns toward JOYCE.

JOYCE

You are the weirdest, kinkiest bunch of sex fiends I've ever seen... Good-bye, Todd.

TODD

Joyce, wait!

JOYCE

What?

TODD

You forgot your Lustcuffs. *(Lifts cuffs up for her to see)*

GEORGE

Lustcuffs!?

TODD

You can't go. You don't have a car.

JOYCE

I called a cab.... You can have little Miss Cheerleader all for yourself.

JENNY

No thank you; I don't want him *(Jumps from bed to confront JOYCE)* after you contaminated him.

JOYCE

You've got a real nasty mouth, you know.

JENNY

You started it.

JOYCE

Yeah, and I'll finish it, too. If you don't shut that big mouth of yours.

GEORGE

C'mon, ladies; let's be adults.

JOYCE

She's not old enough to be an adult.

JENNY

I'm old enough to take care of myself.

(*Moves even closer*)
Oh yeah!?

JOYCE

Yeah!

JENNY

TODD kneels on the bed between the two.

C'mon, you two.

TODD

JOYCE body slams TODD forward on the front of the bed on top of GRETCHEN.

We'll see about that.

JOYCE

JOYCE reaches down and grabs JENNY, trying to pull her up. Instead, JENNY pulls JOYCE onto the bed, and they start rolling around – and over – the bodies of GEORGE, TODD, and GRETCHEN.... The chaos builds—until they are interrupted by someone knocking at the door.

FLORENCE, *Off*
It's Florence Fletcher! Is everyone okay!? Claire!?

GEORGE tells everyone "Quiet!" And, with their help, pulls the cover over all their bodies just a moment before FLORENCE unlocks the door and enters.

I heard people screaming.

FLORENCE

FLORENCE walks toward the bed. Although everyone in bed remains still, it is rather obvious there's a "cover-up" of bodies. As FLORENCE approaches, she becomes more suspicious with each step. After a moment or two of indecision, she rips the cover off the bed and her worst fears are confirmed: Five people in various states of dress – or undress – are tangled up in the sofa bed.

Surprise!

GRETCHEN

FLORENCE

Oh, dear lord! I think I'm gonna faint.

GRETCHEN

There's still a little room.

It takes a moment for FLORENCE to recover.

FLORENCE

Heathens! Sodom and Gomorrah had nothing on you.... Especially you, George Wells.

FLORENCE crosses towards the front door, but makes a detour to the bar. She opens a cabinet and extracts a bottle of wine. She then marches toward the door slamming it behind her as she exits. After a long pause, during which everyone looks at each other, JENNY and JOYCE start clawing at one another—until GEORGE asserts himself.

GEORGE

All right, everybody cool it! Now!.

JOYCE and JENNY break apart, and there is calm on the sofa bed.

GEORGE

Thank you. It's time we all acted like sensible, mature adults.

The calm lasts only for a moment, as SFX: FLASHING LIGHTS AT THE FRONT WINDOW cause the mature GEORGE to react with child-like panic.

GEORGE

Ohmigod, my wife! Everybody hide!

Once again, the rest start to pull the cover over themselves.

GEORGE, *Continued*

Anywhere but in this bed! And hurry!!

As TODD, JOYCE, JENNY and GRETCHEN quickly exit the bed, GEORGE reaches over and turns off the light next to the bed.... There is a moment of quiet in the darkened room before the front door opens.

CLAIRE enters and turns on the light switch next to the door, bathing the room in light.

Pretending to be asleep, GEORGE is lying on the sofa bed, the covers pulled up to his neck. CLAIRE, who doesn't see GEORGE because he's shielded by the back of the sofa bed, looks around a moment then removes her coat and walks to the closet. She opens the closet door and TODD is standing there. She absentmindedly hands him her coat and closes the door. CLAIRE, frowns, then opens the door again—and is shocked to see TODD standing in the closet holding her coat.

Todd! CLAIRE

Hi, Mom. TODD

What on earth are you doing in the closet? CLAIRE

Well, uh, I was, uh, looking for, uh, Joyce. TODD

In the closet? CLAIRE

Yeah....I looked everywhere else. TODD

I thought you two went camping. CLAIRE

We decided not to. TODD

Oh. *(Pause)* Isn't that Jenny Sawyer's car out front? CLAIRE

Oh yeah, I guess it is. TODD

Is she here? CLAIRE

TODD

Gee, I don't know. I was kinda looking for her, too.

There is a pause and then TODD'S saved – sort of – by a commotion emanating from within the closet. It's JENNY and JOYCE yelling at each other, using terms like "Barbie Doll" and "Grandma."

CLAIRE

What in heaven's sake?

TODD

Don't worry, Mom. I'll take care of it.

TODD yells into the closet.

TODD

Cool it right now! Both of you!

The commotion stops, and TODD leads JENNY and JOYCE out of the closet as a surprised CLAIRE looks on.

JENNY

Hi, Mrs. Wells.

CLAIRE

Jenny.... Joyce.

JOYCE

Claire.

TODD

We'll be in the backyard talking.

TODD leads the two females, who continue sniping at one another, toward the hallway. After the trio exits, CLAIRE shrugs, hangs up her coat, and closes the closet door. As she does, SFX: PHONE RINGS. Momentarily startled, she recovers and moves to answer the phone still not noticing GEORGE in the sofa bed.

CLAIRE

Hello?... *(Frowns)* No, this isn't George. Is this Pandora? You really need to talk to George, huh? *(Impishly)* You can probably reach him at *(Thinks a moment)* 555-4371. If he's not there, his friend Florence will be happy to relay your message. No problem. Bye, uh, Dora.

Smiling, CLAIRE hangs up, then redials and waits.

CLAIRE

Oh hi, Darrin.... Just calling to say I made it home safe and sound....What? (*Looks around*) No, I've seen practically everyone but Gretchen....Wait a second....

CLAIRE sets the phone down, walks to the closet, looks in it thoroughly and then walks back and picks up the phone.

CLAIRE

No, she's not here.... Yes, I will.... And thanks again, Darrin. I really enjoyed it.

At the mention of the word "it," GEORGE'S eyes, which have been shut during the chaos, pop open as his head pops up.

CLAIRE

Good-night, Darrin.... What? Oh yes, you too.... (*Smiling*) G'bye.

CLAIRE hangs up, then looks around for a moment until she is startled by GEORGE'S voice.

GEORGE

What did you mean by "it"?

CLAIRE

George!?

CLAIRE looks over to see a frowning GEORGE lying in sofa bed.

CLAIRE, *Continued*

George, I didn't see you there. Were you sleeping?

GEORGE

It's rather hard to sleep during a three-ring circus.

CLAIRE

Yes, what's going on here tonight with Todd and Joyce—and Jenny?

GEORGE

No idea. Now please answer my question.

GEORGE hops out of bed. Ever the perfectionist, CLAIRE begins to make the bed and fluff the pillows as she talks.

CLAIRE

Oh, what did you ask?

GEORGE

I asked what you meant when you told Darrin you really enjoyed "it."

CLAIRE

Oh.... Did you hear that?

GEORGE

Of course I heard that. What did you mean by "it"?

CLAIRE

(Changes subject)

Uh, is Gretchen here? Darrin wants to know.

GEORGE

No, she's not here. Obviously.

CLAIRE

She didn't come home with you?

GEORGE

(Pause)

No, she didn't... Went to a bar instead.... Now, Claire, please—stop changing the subject and answer my question.... When you told Darrin you really enjoyed "it."

(Pause) What did you mean by "it"?

CLAIRE

(After a long pause)

What do you think I meant?

GEORGE

(Aghast)

You made love with Darrin Devereaux?

CLAIRE

No.

GEORGE breathes easier until CLAIRE clarifies her response.

CLAIRE

I had sex with him. *(Pause; smiles)* There is a difference you know.

GEORGE

(Beyond shock)

I don't know what to say.

CLAIRE

I do. I liked IT. A lot!

GEORGE

(Pause; shakes his head)

I can't believe it. My wife went to bed with another man.

CLAIRE

(Short pause)

Actually it was on the kitchen counter.

GEORGE

The kitchen counter!?

CLAIRE

(Remembering)

Yeah. We couldn't wait.

GEORGE

What are you, anyway—a sex addict?

CLAIRE

(Smirks)

I might be from now on.

GEORGE paces, trying to regain some semblance of composure.

GEORGE

Migod, Claire; don't our marriage vows mean anything to you? The wife shall not cover her neighbor—or whatever that is.

CLAIRE pauses, then counterattacks.

CLAIRE

Now wait a second, George. If you'll recall, you encouraged me to sleep with Darrin. Said it would do wonders for our marriage.

GEORGE

Yeah, but—

CLAIRE

And you know, George, you were right. Having Darrin was great, but it just whets my appetite—for you.

CLAIRE moves close to her husband.

GEORGE
No, thank you! (*Moves away*)

CLAIRE
But, George—

GEORGE
I can't make love to you.

CLAIRE
Why not?

GEORGE
After you've been with another man!?

CLAIRE
George Wells! Are you the same man who talked about wife-swapping nearly every night—who begged and pleaded for us to, uh, "get it on with another couple"?

GEORGE
Yeah right.... But I just talked about it.

CLAIRE
Where's that paper of yours? The one with the Swedish couple with the ski chalet? Let's give 'em a call.

GEORGE
Migod. I married a nymphomaniac.

CLAIRE
Oh, c'mon, George. I try one other man—at your suggestion. And I'm a nymphomaniac?

GEORGE
(Disgusted)
I never thought you'd ever really have sex with another man.

CLAIRE
(Pause)
I'll tell you one thing. It's great to be with a man who finds me attractive. (*Smiles as she recalls*)

GEORGE
Dammit, Claire; I find you attractive!

CLAIRE
When's the last time you told me?

GEORGE

I don't know. I don't keep track.

CLAIRE

Well, I do.... And I can't remember when.

GEORGE

For crying out loud, Claire. You know I think you're attractive.

CLAIRE

Prove it.

GEORGE

No. *(Sits on chair)* I'm too tired.

CLAIRE

(Seductively)

You're not really too tired, are you?

GEORGE

Yes, I'm too tired.... To do it AGAIN.

(Frowning, CLAIRE backs off.)

CLAIRE

Again?

GEORGE

That's what I said.

CLAIRE

What did you mean "again"?

GEORGE

(Pause)

What do you think I mean? *(Pause; then smugly)* Me and Gretchen.

CLAIRE

(Incredulous)

No?

GEORGE

Oh yessirree.

GEORGE presents the Lustcuffs which he took off the bed.)

CLAIRE
Handcuffs?

GEORGE
No. *(Proudly)* Lustcuffs.

CLAIRE
(Pause)
But you said Gretchen wasn't here.

GEORGE
I lied.... Of course, Gretchen was here; *(Throws cuffs on bed)* actually, there.

CLAIRE
No?

GEORGE
Oh yeah! And I enjoyed every second of IT.

CLAIRE
Really?

GEORGE
Really. *(CLAIRE moves away)* What's wrong?

CLAIRE
Oh, I don't know.... I just didn't think you'd really sleep with another woman.

GEORGE
Well, I had no intention of doing so.... Until I realized you and Darrin were screwing
(Pause) like a couple of Welsh rabbits!

CLAIRE paces and GEORGE watches her.

CLAIRE
(Finally)
I guess that makes us even.

GEORGE
I guess so.

*The silence becomes increasingly uncomfortable
as the WELLS think about their indiscretions.*

CLAIRE
I'm going to bed. *(Crosses towards bedroom)*

GEORGE
(*Sarcastically*)
By yourself this time?

CLAIRE
You should talk.

GEORGE
Nympho.

CLAIRE
Hypocrite.

GEORGE
(*Gruffly; just before CLAIRE exits*)
Do you know where the aspirin is?

CLAIRE
(*Smugly*)
Try the kitchen counter....

GEORGE looks daggers at an exiting CLAIRE, then exits dejectedly into the kitchen. Moments later, JENNY'S voice can be heard.

JENNY, *Off*
You can have her as far as I'm concerned.

JENNY enters and heads for the front door, as TODD follows. JOYCE is close behind.

TODD
Jenny, wait!

JENNY
(*Turns back*)
What?

TODD
It's late. Let me drive you home.

JENNY
I'm not going home.

TODD
(*Surprised*)
You're not?

JENNY

(Boasting)
I'm going to a party.

TODD

A party? Where?

JOYCE

Todd, I'll give you one more chance.

JENNY

Lexi is having a toga party.

TODD

Really? Can anyone go?

JOYCE

Todd!

JENNY

Do you want to?

TODD looks at JENNY, then JOYCE—who has walked over to the bed and reclined sexily on it.

JOYCE

Which would you prefer, Todd? A girl or a woman?

After some deliberation, TODD crosses towards JOYCE.

JOYCE

(Lovingly)
Tiger.

JOYCE reaches for TODD but he reaches for a sheet instead.

TODD

I'll need a toga.

TODD pulls a sheet off the sofa bed, throwing JOYCE off balance. With sheet in hand, he crosses towards JENNY.

TODD

Jenny, would you wear my ring?

JENNY

Are you serious?

TODD answers by reaching into his pocket, pulling out the ring, and placing it on her finger.

JENNY

Oh Todd.

Hand in hand, TODD and JENNY are about to exit when he turns back.

TODD

Joyce, would you tell my parents I won't be back for awhile.

JOYCE

Don't hold your salty breath.

JENNY

(To JOYCE)

Nice meeting you.

As TODD and JENNY exit, they excitedly make plans.

JENNY

After the party we can go to my house, and Mom'll make breakfast.

TODD

Pancakes and eggs? Lots of eggs.

JENNY

Yeah—and we can watch Roadrunner cartoons.

TODD

And "Scooby-Doo." Oh Jenny.

JENNY

Oh Todd!

JOYCE

Oh God!

After they exit, JOYCE, the self-proclaimed teetotaler, looks around, sees the liquor bottle, shrugs, takes a drink, kind of likes it, and takes another drink. SFX: CAB HORN.

JOYCE

I'm coming, I'm coming!

Bottle in hand, JOYCE walks to the front door. She opens it, to see DARRIN about to knock.

DARRIN

Hey, there's a cab out front.

JOYCE

No shit, Sherlock.

DARRIN

How would you like me to pay off the driver and take you out for a couple of drinks?

JOYCE

How would you like me to kick you in the nuts?

DARRIN quickly shields his groin with his hands and JOYCE exits. He shakes his head and pushes the door closed.

DARRIN

Anyone home!?!... George? Claire (*Almost as an after-thought*) Gretchen?

Getting no immediate response, DARRIN walks to the exercise bike and begins cycling. As he's feeling his neck pulse while looking at his watch, a disheveled GEORGE appears. Seeing DARRIN, he grabs the fireplace poker [if there's a fireplace] or rolling pin from the kitchen [or some other potentially lethal weapon] and carries it behind him as he approaches his "neighbor".

GEORGE

(*Scowling*)

Darrin.

DARRIN

Sorry to bother you, ol' boy. The door was open.

GEORGE

What do you want?

DARRIN

Your wife.

This is Not the End of the Play
Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes

MARRIED NOT BURIED PANTOMIME CURTAIN CALL

The following numbered scenes represent a quick reprise of the entire play. The action in this "curtain call" can be performed to the tune of "Swing Your Partners" or "Turkey in the Straw."

NOTE: Since it would be difficult to turn the sofa bed back into a sofa and then back into a sofa bed again, some liberty must be taken--that is, the sofa bed will remain as is throughout the action, with the actors acting as if it weren't there. Fortunately, most of this curtain call involves action in the last act, when the sofa bed is part of the scenery.

1. GEORGE is on the phone when CLAIRE enters. As she does, he quickly turns off the phone, looks at his watch, and points to it. CLAIRE shakes her head, points at her watch and exits into the kitchen.
2. After CLAIRE exits, GEORGE quickly redials, but hangs up hastily when CLAIRE re-enters, holding her forehead. Not convinced, GEORGE hits one fist into the palm of his other hand. CLAIRE frowns, returns GEORGE'S "fist-into-the-palm" gesture and sinks into chair, looking a bit pale.
3. The phone rings and GEORGE moves quick as a cat to answer--even before CLAIRE can stand. He looks at her and mouths "Todd"; CLAIRE smiles, and then frowns when GEORGE starts to talk baseball. With nothing else to do, she picks up GEORGE'S "paper" and frowns.
4. There's a knock at the door and GEORGE bounds to answer. His enthusiasm dwindles when he opens the door to FLORENCE FLETCHER, who frowns at him as she makes her entrance. GEORGE flashes a fake smile and quickly exits.
5. FLORENCE is sitting on the chair reading GEORGE'S "paper," when CLAIRE rushes toward her, grabs it, thinks quickly, rolls it up, and begins swatting near a startled FLORENCE.
6. GRETCHEN is combing her hair when DARRIN mouths a snide remark. GRETCHEN snaps back--just before GEORGE enters and mouths, "Is everybody happy?"
7. The foursome is playing strip trivia. GRETCHEN is down to the bare essentials, but shocks the rest of the players--particularly GEORGE--by answering a question. GEORGE re-examines the card he is holding to be sure GRETCHEN is correct.
8. DARRIN removes his shirt, GEORGE removes his shirt and pants, and GEORGE asks GRETCHEN another question, which she answers incorrectly. He pops up to help her remove her bra, while DARRIN scoots next to CLAIRE. A moment later, the front door opens, and TODD and JOYCE enter--and it's hard to tell who is more shocked, as GEORGE flips the bra toward TODD.
9. DARRIN is making a major move on CLAIRE at the front door when FLORENCE, sitting on the sofa, looks up and mouths, "Adultery--One-Way Ticket to Hell." CLAIRE quickly snaps back to reality.

10. JOYCE has just patted TODD'S rear when lights flash at the window, causing him to freak. JOYCE scolds TODD before "footcuffing" him then exiting with a taunt.

11. Between JENNY and JOYCE, TODD nervously watches them argue, until lights flash once again. TODD panics again, JOYCE plants a big kiss on him before exiting, and a forlorn JENNY heads toward the pool. TODD looks both ways, then hops in the direction JENNY exited.

12. GRETCHEN and GEORGE are in bed, and she's all over him—until she says something that makes him forget his lust and sit straight up in bed.

13. GEORGE is now standing by the phone, having just dialed a number. He frowns, then smiles when he hears a knock at the door. His smile changes back to a frown when he opens the door to FLORENCE FLETCHER.

14. GEORGE is standing by the bed, frowning at GRETCHEN. She pulls him onto the bed and attacks him.

15. GRETCHEN is sitting on the sofa bed smiling at JOYCE, who rips off the blanket to reveal a sheepish TODD and a liquor bottle. She storms off, as TODD and GRETCHEN watch.

16. GRETCHEN and TODD are now laughing it up on the sofa bed—until GEORGE enters and brings the festivities to a quick halt by mouthing "Todd!"

17. GEORGE, GRETCHEN, and TODD are now in bed. GEORGE is trying to "fix" her contact lens as TODD looks on. Just as he does, JOYCE walks in, registers shocked disbelief and exits.

18. GEORGE is now consoling a distraught JENNY on the sofa bed, as a sympathetic GRETCHEN, liquor bottle in hand, looks on from the chair. TODD enters and registers his own stunned disbelief.

19. Now standing next to the sofa bed, TODD is arguing with JENNY, in the sofa bed, as an exasperated GEORGE looks on. TODD tries to pull JENNY out of bed but instead is pulled onto the bed. Sitting on the sofa, GRETCHEN can't help herself and joins the action.

20. FLORENCE enters to find feet and arms sticking out from beneath the cover of the sofa bed. She removes the blanket—and nearly has a coronary.

21. FLORENCE is gone, and there is peace and quiet on the sofa bed—until lights flash at the window. GEORGE panics and everyone frantically exits.

22. CLAIRE enters, looks around, opens the closet--and is shocked to see TODD. She is even more shocked when she hears noises in the closet and a sheepish JENNY then JOYCE exit.

23. CLAIRE is on the phone, smiling as she talks. When she mouths "it," GEORGE'S eyes open as his head pops up.

24. Sitting on the chair, a morose GEORGE watches CLAIRE show real concern for the first time. Her frown widens when he proudly displays Lustcuffs.

25. DARRIN is wooing CLAIRE, when an enraged GRETCHEN crawls from beneath sofa bed.

26. GRETCHEN angrily dials the phone in front of DARRIN. GEORGE, and CLAIRE.

27. GRETCHEN storms toward door and exits. DARRIN smiles for a moment or two then hurries to try to catch his wife.

28. GEORGE carefully pushes CLAIRE onto the sofa bed, then lies next to her and begins to generate some unbridled lust.

29. FLORENCE, bottle in hand, prepares to dive onto sofa bed.

Traditional Curtain Call following or without Pantomime Curtain Call