

SAFE HANDS

An original musical

(May 2020 version)

by Alara Magritte Slonaker

CAST OF CHARACTERS

LYDIA	<i>Early twenties. Floyd's wife. Clever, a little cynical.</i>
BUNNIE	<i>Mid-twenties. Roy's wife. Charismatic, warm, funny.</i>
MARY	<i>Twenty. Ambitious, clever.</i>
DOLLY	<i>Early fifties. Pragmatic, careful.</i>
IDA	<i>Late forties. Gentle, warm.</i>
FLOYD	<i>Late twenties. Lydia's husband. Sweet, dorky, unassertive.</i>
ROY	<i>Mid-thirties. Bunnie's husband. Moody, insecure.</i>
MATEO	<i>Early twenties. Charming, easygoing, confident.</i>
DR KOCH / COP	<i>Mid-thirties. intimidating.</i>

Setting:

New Jersey, 1956.

Playwright Notes:

For limited casts, the *HOUSEWIVES* are to be played by members of the core cast. Male cast members may be included in this; however, they are women when they are housewives, and should not be directed in a way which implies the audience find humor in this.

HOUSEWIVES should be united, and it should be glaringly clear when an actor is a housewife vs. their character; Housewives are always smiling.

Slashes (/) indicate when a character should be interrupted.

ACT ONE

Act 1, Scene 1 - Another Night.

- I. FRANKIE'S HOUSE. Lights are out in a crowded but tidy rest room attached to a kitchen, and a door leading outside. At the center sits a round wooden dinner table filled with chairs. Outside we hear raccoons running away from faded rubber shoes. The world rests easy. A mid-size radio sits at the head of the table. Blankets are laid over the couches. Light seeps through a crack in the heavily drawn curtains. Creaking of the stairs. *DOLLY* comes down into the room holding a large empty wicker basket and dressed in nice but worn pajamas. She holds the railing coming down.

Like a tide, she slowly finds each crevice of the room and illuminates lamps on each; effectively lighting up the room. She notices the crack in the curtains and pulls them shut. *DOLLY* finds her way to the fridge and pulls out a lemon, cuts a slice off and puts the rest of the lemon back. She puts a pot of water or a kettle onto the stove. And turns the stove on with a match. *DOLLY* fills a teabag, retrieves a cup, and drops the bag into it. As the water begins to boil, *DOLLY* retrieves laundry that is hanging to dry along the room and by the windows. She puts them into a basket she had brought down and sits at the table, folding the clothes; mostly sheets and towels.

She notices something on once as she's folding it, a bloodstain, and gets closer to a lamp to inspect. *DOLLY* gets up and goes to the sink, and uses soap to try to scrub the spot she discovered away but to no avail. *DOLLY* returns to sitting at the table and rips the sheet/towel into thin strips. She then takes out a bag from her trash bin and puts the strips of sheet into the bag, shaking it around then tying it up. *DOLLY* looks back and forth between the kettle, sighs, and ascends the stairs; returning in a robe, scarf over her hair, and slippers. *DOLLY* goes to the front door. Many locks are unlocked. She exits the front door. She returns without the trash. The locks are all locked back up.

Meanwhile: The kettle starts going off.

DOLLY

Yes, yes, I hear you.

DOLLY takes the kettles from the stove and pours herself a cup of tea, squeezing the slice of lemon from earlier into it. She

sits at the table again, and enjoys her tea. Maybe she rubs her leg. Maybe she folds more laundry. Maybe she reads an old newspaper. She turns on a radio, music starts to play. The phone rings across the room.

DOLLY lets it ring. At the last second she answers the phone.

DOLLY

Can I help you?

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Oh! Yes, Hello. I- I, I was wondering if you would perhaps know of- ah, I'm sorry. Is this Frankie's house?

DOLLY

I'm sorry ma'am, there's no Frankie at this residence. It's quite late so if you will excuse me-

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Oh yes, of course. My apologies.

DOLLY

Goodnight.

DOLLY goes back to the table and gets her cup of tea. She pours more hot water over it and cuts another lemon slice, putting it in the cup again. Sipping her tea, DOLLY returns to be near the phone, and hovers by it, drinking her tea. Beat (or two or three or eight).

The phone rings. DOLLY answers.

DOLLY

(sipping tea)

This is Frankie's House. Who referred you?

Act 1, Scene 2 - "Waiting for My Honey to Come Home to Me"

II. SUBURBIA. The music from the radio continues to play, transforming into the (live) lead in music for the number. We are in a cookie-cutter suburban neighborhood, styled to identical perfection, almost like a school play. White picket fences line the stage, little storybook doll-houses behind them. It is night and a paper moon hangs large over the stage. Suddenly: the noise of a car driving by, a woman climbs out of one of the front doors in excitement, wearing a very full skirt and apron. Her hands are caked in flour. Her makeup is immaculate. She sighs as she realizes the sound is not what she hoped for, and she gazes at the big moon.

Three other women exit their "homes" in synchronization, similar to the first woman. Individually they all loiter around, biding time.

WOMEN

SEE THE SPARKLING TWINKLING
DIAMOND CRESTED SKY
DRAPED ABOVE LIKE WINGS
OF A GREAT BLUE BUTTERFLY

ROMANTIC AS HECK, AND STILL YET
I CAN'T ADMIRE EVEN JUST A PIECE
'TIL YOU'RE BACK HERE IN MY ARMS...
I'LL JUST KEEP WAITIN' FOR MY HONEY TO COME HOME TO ME

*The women suddenly perk up and dance
around each other, their skirts like
parachutes. Every action is perfection.*

WOMAN 1

OH YOO HOO!

WOMAN 2

DARLING!

WOMAN 3
COME ON HOME!

WOMAN 1
OH YOO HOO!

WOMAN 2
DARLING!

WOMAN 4
CARRY ON HOME!

WOMAN 1
OH YOO HOO!

WOMAN 2
DARLING!

WOMAN 3 & 4
COME ON HOME!

Each woman performs a repetitive household chore almost like coo-coo clock characters [gardening, washing dishes, mixing a mixing bowl, dusting].

WOMEN
ALREADY
I'VE WATERED THE GARDEN OVER THRICE
DUSTED AND MOPED
OVER A THOUSAND TIMES
STILL, I CAN'T SEEM TO KEEP HIM OFF MY MIND

SO PLEASE LOVE, SPARE ME, 'FORE I WEEP
SEND MY HONEY HOME TO ME

YES I'M JUST WAITIN' FOR MY HONEY TO COME HOME TO ME

WOMAN 1

OH YOO HOO!

WOMAN 2

DARLING!

WOMAN 3

COME ON HOME!

WOMAN 1

OH YOO HOO!

WOMAN 2

DARLING!

WOMAN 4

CARRY ON HOME!

WOMAN 1

OH YOO HOO!

WOMAN 2

DARLING!

WOMAN 3 & 4

COME ON HOME!

WOMEN

SEE

I CAN ONLY ARRANGE THINGS SO MANY WAYS
 EATIN' HERE ALONE JUST DON'T FEEL THE SAME
 I'M COUNTING DOWN THE SECONDS 'TILL HIS HAT WILL HANG
 UP UPON THE COATTRACK AND I CAN FIN'LLY SIGH
 SO HONEY, END THE PAIN, COME HOME TO ME TONIGHT

I'M JUST HERE WAITIN' FOR MY HONEY TO COME HOME TO ME

*Silent male dream partners come out to
 twirl them. They dance in pairs.*

OH YOO HOO!
WOMAN 1

DARLING!
WOMAN 2

COME ON HOME!
WOMAN 3

OH YOO HOO!
WOMAN 1

DARLING!
WOMAN 2

CARRY ON HOME!
WOMAN 4

OH YOO HOO!
WOMAN 1

DARLING!
WOMAN 2

COME ON HOME!
WOMAN 3 & 4

WOMEN

JUST WANT HIM HOME TO
LOOSEN UP THE TIE ON THAT COLLAR
KISS ME SMOOTH LIKE APPLE BUTTER
SAY MY NAME AND SET MY HEART AFLUTTER
OH E'RY SECOND THAT TICKS BY FEELS LIKE AN HOUR
HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO HOLLER

DEAR!-----
WOMAN 4

WOMAN 1
OH YOO HOO!

WOMAN 3
WAITIN' FOR MY HONEY TO COME-

WOMAN 2
DARLING!

WOMAN 3
PATIENT FOR MY HONEY TO COME-

WOMAN 1
COME ON HOME!

WOMAN 1
OH YOO HOO!

WOMAN 3
WAITIN' FOR MY HONEY TO COME-

WOMAN 2
DARLING!

WOMAN 4
CARRY ON-

WOMEN
I'M WAITIN' FOR MY HONEY TO COME-
PATIENT FOR MY HONEY TO COME-
STAYIN' TILL MY HONEY COMES ON
WHERE IS MY HONEY?
BRING HIM HOME TO ME!

UNTIL, I'LL KEEP WAITIN' FOR MY HONEY TO COME HOME

*The sound of four cars screeching into
four driveways. The women turn and rush
inside their houses.*

MAN'S VOICE (o.s)

Honey! I'm home!

The women wink and shut their doors in unison.

SCENE 3 - "Better Than This"

III. LYDIA'S HOME. An empty dining/living area in a spacious house. The floors, tables, countertops have moving boxes strewn across them.

LYDIA opens the front door and almost walks in, but is pulled back outside the door by her husband, FLOYD.

FLOYD

Woah, woah. Hold on up there a minute. I think we're forgetting something.

FLOYD swoops LYDIA off her feet. LYDIA laughs. With garnish (and perhaps some difficulty), FLOYD brings her over the threshold, sets her down and twirls her around, kissing her.

LYDIA

You're a real card, you know that.

FLOYD

Only because you're the queen of hearts.

LYDIA

Just one.

She kisses his cheek and drifts off, starting to unbox one of the large boxes nearby. She unwraps the plates and dishes from the paper they are wrapped in, setting

them on the table. FLOYD stands, taking in the room.

FLOYD

Isn't it something?

LYDIA

Maybe I'm just having a hard time seeing through all the dust.

FLOYD leaps up to demonstrate, snatching what LYDIA is unpacking away from her and setting it down.

FLOYD

We'll put the television set right here. Wait, no, right *here*. A good chair for reading. Bookshelves, lining the walls, floor to ceiling.

LYDIA

Are you planning on buying a lot of books?

FLOYD

Just one.

LYDIA

"A Silly Goose Guide to Lopsided Carpentry and Brussel Sprouts?"

FLOYD

As long as you're the author.

Lydia rolls her eyes.

I'll be sitting right here, feet up on a coffee table, right there. Lydia Loewen's very popular debut publication in my hands. Who knows what can happen Liddy? We did it; this is the land of dreams. Only... Maybe we move the comfy chair a smidgen to the right, get it in line with the dining room table. What do you think?

LYDIA

I think we have a lot of work to do.

LYDIA goes back to unpack, opening a new box. She reaches in, as soon as she does, she is pulled in by FLOYD. FLOYD holds LYDIA close to him and surveys the room. She holds him close.

FLOYD

Just think Lydia; no more cockroaches in the oven, no more stepping out the door and into Mr. Growler's dog's little "gifts" every morning...

LYDIA

No more listening in on Mr. Micknick's midnight soirees stomping around above us.

FLOYD

You mean Mr Micknick's midnight cult meetings.

LYDIA

Thank the Lord we were never invited.

FLOYD

None of that. Just you. And me. And some chairs right here. Maybe a piano. We can put a crib close by and play music.

LYDIA

I think we may need to unpack before we start thinking of new furniture.

FLOYD

Lydia, honey, can't you see it? This is just the beginning.

LYDIA

Floyd...

During the song, LYDIA tries to unpack, but every time she is almost productive, FLOYD sweeps in and/or interrupts it.

FLOYD

ONE DAY RIGHT AFTER ANOTHER
I THINK WE'VE UNCOVERED

FLOYD (cont.)
THE SECRET THAT'S CENTURIES OLD

A LITTLE HOUSE IN THE SUBURBS
AWAY FROM YOUR MOTHER'S
NOW WE'LL LET OUR STORIES UNFOLD

YOU AND I NEED NO FOREWARNING
I SEE IT ALL SO CLEARLY, I KNOW
'CAUSE ISN'T IT DIVINE
TO WAKE UP TO YOUR SMILE
EVERY MORNING?

He grabs her hand and they dance.

'CAUSE NOTHING ON EARTH COULD BE BETTER THAN THIS
GONNA BE PERFECT, LINED UP ON THE HORIZON
WE CAN TAKE ON THE WORLD WITH A *(spin)* AND A *(they kiss)*
'CAUSE HONEY AS LONG AS WE'RE TETHERED, MMHMM
WHAT COULD BE BETTER?

ENSEMBLE (O.S.)

DUM DA DA DA,
DUM DA DA DA,
DUM DA DA DA DA DA,
DAT DA DA DUM

*He breaks away to run around the room,
trying to display his vision of everything.
Again, LYDIA tries to unpack, gets farther.
But his excitement distracts her and she
looks on, smiling.*

FLOYD
WHITE FENCES LIKE IN THE MOVIES
I'LL MOW THE LAWN, YOU'LL BAKE COOKIES
WE'LL LIVE IN OUR OWN SILVER SCREEN

NOW THAT WE'VE LOCKED IN OUR DUTIES

FLOYD (cont.)

WHO WOULD A KNEW THESE
DREAMS COULD BE REALITY?

LYDIA

CANDLELIT DINNERS SIDE BY SIDE
WE COULD PLANT A FIELD A FLOWERS
OUR NEIGHBORS WILL DECLARE
OUR YARD TO BE WHERE
WE'LL GATHER

BOTH

'CAUSE NOTHING ON EARTH COULD BE BETTER THAN THIS

FLOYD

WHEN I'M GOING TO WORK AND YOU'RE HOME WITH A KIDS
WE CAN TAKE ON THE WORLD WITH A SMILE AND A *(dip)*
'CAUSE HONEY, AS LONG AS WE'RE TETHERED, MMHMM

BOTH

WHAT COULD BE BETTER?

ENSEMBLE

DUM DA DA DA,
DUM DA DA DA,
DUM DA DA DA DA DA,
DAT DA DA DUM

FLOYD

WITH JUST THIS HOUSE ON A HILL
AND JUST US, JUST UNTIL
WE ADD ON 'BOUT FIVE OR SIX MORE

LYDIA

Two.

FLOYD

Four!

LYDIA

Three!

FLOYD

Deal!

PANCAKES EVERY SUNDAY
FORGET FLOUR AND BECOME WAY
TOO FAMILIAR WITH THE ROUTE TO THE STORE

I'LL BUILD THEIR CRIBS IN THE YARD
TEACH THEM TO DRIVE THE FAMILY CAR
MAKE SURE NONE OF 'EM GROW UP IN A HURRY

LYDIA

THEY'LL GET YOUR LAUGH AND MY NOSE
ONCE WE'VE UNPACKED, I SUPPOSE
WE'LL START AHEAD ON OUR JOURNEY

He extends a hand. They dance together.

BOTH

'CAUSE NOTHING ON EARTH COULD BE BETTER THAN THIS
AND IT'S GONNA BE PERFECT, LINED UP ON THE HORIZON, BABY
WE'LL TAKE ON THE WORLD WITH A SMILE AND A KISS
'CAUSE HONEY AS LONG AS WE'RE TETHERED MMHMM
WHAT COULD BE BETTER?
MMHMMM
WHAT COULD BE BETTER?
AAAAAAH
NO NOTHING IS BETTER

ENSEMBLE

DUM DA DA DA,
DUM DA DA DA,
DUM DA DA DA DA DA,
DAT DA DA DUM

DUM DA DA DA,

DUM DA DA DA,
 DUM DA DA DA DA DA,
 DAT DA DA DUM

FLOYD kisses the top of LYDIA's head and exits, carrying boxes. She pats his butt on the way out. He winks.

FLOYD

I'll take these to the bedroom.

LYDIA

NO, WHAT COULD BE BETTER?

END OF SONG. **DING DONG.** LYDIA answers the door. Standing there is a smiling BUNNIE, with pristine appearance and pearls. Her right wrist is bandaged. She holds a cake. A stroller is beside her.

LYDIA

Oh- uh, hello!

BUNNIE

Well hello! Hope I didn't startle you. I just thought I'd pop on by, give you this, and welcome you to our beautiful neighborhood.

LYDIA

Oh, come in, come in. Floyd! My husband is just putting some things away. I'm certain he'll be just a minute. I'm Lydia. Have a seat.

There's nowhere to sit. LYDIA, realizing this, drapes a sheet over a moving box for Bunnie to sit.

BUNNIE

Oh, no need. Lydia. That's such a nice name. I'm Bunnie. And this little hot bun is my Craigy. He'll be eighteen next week.

LYDIA

They really do grow up fast. Can hardly tell he's in high school.

BUNNIE

(correcting herself)

Eighteen months. Gosh could you imagine?

LYDIA

You look great for your age.

BUNNIE

I'll have to show you my beauty routine sometime. Would you like to hold him?

*LYDIA clearly wants to. BUNNIE puts
Craig in her hands.*

BUNNIE

He's a little sleepy right now. (to Craig) Aren't you? You have a beautiful home.

LYDIA is goo-goo over the baby.

LYDIA

We're working on it.

BUNNIE

What about you? Any tykes running around?

LYDIA

We're working on that too.

BUNNIE

Oh well, Fallen Oaks is really such a lovely place to live, I think you'll find. (re:cake) Here, is there anywhere I could-?

LYDIA

On the counter if you don't mind.

BUNNIE

Can I get you a slice? It's pineapple upside-down-cake

LYDIA

Only if it's two.

BUNNIE

Oh pineapples make my mouth all tingly, I couldn't. That's why I made this, so I wouldn't take away a bite. This is for you!

Her wrist suddenly gives way. She drops the cake.

Oh shit.

LYDIA rushes to try to find cleaning supplies in the boxes to clean it up. She doesn't, but she does find a pie pan and a basting brush. Meanwhile BUNNIE scoops it back into the pan. The basting brush and pie pan are used as a broom and dustpan.

Guess it's pineapple right-side-up cake now. I'm so sorry, I must've lost my grip, my wrist has been a little finicky since I hurt it playing tennis the other day.

LYDIA

Oh it's alright.

BUNNIE

I owe you a cake. What do you say you and Llyod-

LYDIA

Floyd.

BUNNIE

What do you say you and *Floyd* stop by sometime. Roy and I would love to have you.

LYDIA

That'd be lovely.

*KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK. LYDIA
answers, it's ROY.*

ROY

I'm sorry Ma'am. Have you by any chance happened to see my wife around?

BUNNIE

It was wonderful to meet you.

ROY

There you are.

BUNNIE

I'm sorry honey. I was just leaving. This is Lydia, our new neighbor.

ROY goes for a handshake.

ROY

Roy.

LYDIA

I'm sure Floyd will be back in just a second, I'm sure he'd love to meet you both.

BUNNIE

Oh no, we really must be going. Wouldn't want to keep my hungry men waiting.

Taking Craig back from LYDIA:

Isn't that right Craigy? It was so nice to meet you. Come over soon, okay?

*BUNNIE puts Craig in the stroller and
exits with ROY. LYDIA shuts the door.*

*FLOYD reenters the room, sucking on his
finger like it's injured.*

FLOYD

Bad news. I don't think the bedframe likes me very much.

LYDIA

You have to slide the back in first or it'll pinch you.

She turns around, seeing Floyd and his injury. He starts leafing through a box, facing away from the front door.

LYDIA

You just missed some of our neighbors. They invited us for dinner this week.

FLOYD

That's nice.

LYDIA

Isn't it.

LYDIA hugs FLOYD's waist from behind.

LYDIA

You know... I don't know if I believe you.

FLOYD

Hmm?

She squeezes him suggestively.

LYDIA

If I remember correctly, I think the bedframe likes you a lot.

He turns to face her.

LYDIA

You wanna find out?

LYDIA takes his hand and starts pulling him towards the bedroom. He catches up,

sweeps her off her feet, and carries LYDIA offstage.

ACT 1, SCENE 4 - *Look What You Did Girl*

IV. DINER. Patrons sit scattered across a diner. MARY, dressed in a waitress uniform, is talking on the phone behind the counter. A bell DINGS.

MARY
(on phone)

Ay, casi se me olvidó. ¿Cuándo es la boda de Lola? ... No sé. I have exams that week... sí, sí, estoy trabajando duro.

DING. DINGDINGDING. Clutching the receiver to her chest.

Alright, I'm coming! (back on phone) Lo siento Mami, pero I gotta go, my break is ending...Well, I'll try. Okay, bueno. Dale un abrazo a Papi. Okay. Besitos.

MARY hangs up the phone. She picks up plates of food and goes about the diner, delivering food and checks, taking orders, busing tables, refilling coffee, wiping down tables, seats, counters, collecting bills and coins left at tables.

MARY

I'M SO HUNGRY
BUT I DON'T WANT NO MEAL
I'M SO THIRSTY
AND I CAN TASTE IT, I CAN TASTE IT

BUT EVEN I KNOW
MIRAGES AIN'T TOO REAL
SO I WON'T GO
AROUND CHASING THEM

EV'RY PENNY, EV'RY BILL
 ADDS TO THE STACK
 WON'T QUIT, WON'T END, AIN'T HOLDIN' BACK

IT'S SLOW BUT I CAN TAKE IT
 IT'S ALL ABOUT THE PACIN'
 AND I'M WILLING TO BET ON MYSELF SO

OH, OH, OH YEAH I KNOW IT'S GONNA HAPPEN
 ALL IT TAKE IS NO NO NO (NO NO) DISTRACTIONS

ONE DAY THAT REFLECTION
 WILL SMILE BACK BACK AT ME
 LOOK WHAT YOU DID GIRL
 YOU CAUGHT THAT DREAM

ENSEMBLE

NO DISTRACTIONS
 NO, NO, NO
 NO DISTRACTIONS

As the song continues: MARY finds a moment, returning to behind the counter, and pulling out a medical textbook to study. As she continues to study, DING.

Textbook in the crook of her arm, she goes to collect the food, balancing the tray to deliver the food. Continues doing waitress duties while trying to find moments to study.

During the following verse, a patron, MATEO, starts choking on his food. MARY gives him a strong tap on the back, dislodging it, he spits it out and can breathe again. MARY pays no mind to this and continues with her duties.

MARY

I'M SO READY
 DON'T GOT TIME TO SHARE A SHAKE
 I'M SO BUSY
 BUT I CAN TAKE IT, I CAN TASTE IT

GOT NO SPARE CHANGE
 OR TIME FOR TAKIN' BREAKS
 BUT THAT'S OKAY, I'M NOT MADE FOR THEM

EV'RY WORD AND DIAGRAM, ETCHED INTO MY MIND
 GONNA MEMORIZE EV'RY EXERCISE
 IT'S HARD, BUT I CAN TAKE IT
 PERSPIRATION WORTH THE PAYMENT
 AND I'M WILLING TO BET ON MYSELF SO

OH, OH, OH, YEAH I KNOW IT'S GONNA HAPPEN
 ALL IT TAKES IS NO NO NO DISTRACTIONS

ENSEMBLE/ PATRONS

NO DISTRACTIONS
 NO, NO, NO
 NO DISTRACTIONS

MARY

ONE DAY I'M GONNA LOOK BACK AND SEE
 LOOK WHAT YOU DID GIRL
 YOU CAUGHT THAT DREAM

MARY (& ENSEMBLE)

SAID I'MMA PUSH TILL I GOT
 NO MORE ROCK TO MOVE (NO, NO, NO)
 I'MMA WORK TILL THERE'S
 NO MORE TAPE TO BREAK THROUGH (NO, NO, NO)

MARY

'CAUSE WHEN I'M UP THERE, WITH THAT DEGREE
 ALL THOSE PARTIES THAT I MISSED
 AND THE BOYS I NEVER KISSED

MARY (cont.)

WON'T CAUSE NO BITTERNESS
SO INSIGNIFICANT
'CAUSE IN FRONT OF ME
I'LL HAVE ALL THAT I NEED

SCANNING THROUGH ALL THOSE FACES
THAT ARE LOOKING UP TO STAGE
I'LL FIND HER GAZE AND KNOW BY THE EXPRESSION
EVEN MORE BY THE PHRASE
OH, I CAN'T WAIT TO HEAR HER SAY...

"LOOK WHAT YOU DID GIRL
YOU'RE MAKING THE WORLD YOUR OWN
ALL THOSE CHANGES YOU'VE BEEN CHASING
ALL THOSE NIGHTS YOU SPENT ALONE
IT'S ALL WORTH IT, AND I'M SO PROUD

LOOK WHAT YOU DID GIRL
KEEP FIXIN' IT UP
'CAUSE THERE'S NO STOPPING YOU NOW"

MARY (& ENSEMBLE)

NOT ANYMORE (NO DISTRACTIONS)
(NO, NO, NO)
ANYMORE (NO DISTRACTIONS)

NO, NO, NO, NO, NO!

ACT 1, SCENE 5

- V. FRANKIE'S HOUSE. Alone, DOLLY is fixing up the pillows, tidying the room. She checks the clock. She paces. She refixes the pillows.

KNOCK at the door. DOLLY goes to the door but doesn't open it. TAP TAP TAP-TAPTAP TAP-TAP TAP. DOLLY

*unlocks all her locks and opens the door.
IDA enters. DOLLY locks up.*

IDA

The bus was running late. Is she here already?

DOLLY

Not yet. Bernice is walking her over now.

IDA takes off her hat, coat, and gloves.

IDA

I still have a few minutes then.

*IDA washes her hands in the kitchen sink
and changes her autumn frock into a
tie-back over-dress and apron.*

Without turning:

IDA

I don't like the idea of her walking all over town. It's one thing when she could drive, but walking...

DOLLY

Well, now she can't drive. (beat) Don't worry. This girl, Bernice says she's real nearsighted. Took off her glasses. Called me from the phone on Old Springfield Avenue. Should be here by a quarter past.

*DOLLY checks the clock. She pulls the
curtains closed.*

DOLLY

How are you feeling honey?

IDA

Long day. Lovely son, but his mother was a touch too querying. "Why are you doing that?" "Are you sure you're supposed to be doing *that*?" Spilled soup on my blouse.

DOLLY

You still up for this? We can spin her round three times and send her home. Reschedule.

IDA

No need, I got it.

DOLLY notices IDA's lipstick.

DOLLY

What's this?

IDA

Oh it's new. Revlon. You like it?

DOLLY

Mm-hmm. Very Rita Hayworth.

IDA

Take my picture.

IDA strikes a pose.

Old Springfield Avenue... where did you say she's from?

DOLLY

Roselle.

IDA

They're walking all the way from Roselle? Who do we know from over there?

DOLLY

Didn't recognize the name of the reference. She wasn't one of our clients. Could have been lying but...

IDA

Then how would... I mean I guess it's good for business, but Dolly, if word is traveling that easy--

*TAP TAP TAP-TAPTAP TAPTAP-TAP
TAP.*

DOLLY

That's her.

IDA

Alright.

She puts on some rubber gloves.

I'll be in the back. Looking glamorous.

*She tosses her hair, and tilts her head
down, looking up at DOLLY. She exits.
DOLLY goes to answer the door.*

ACT 1, SCENE 6 - "Anything I Can Do"

VI. BUNNIE'S HOUSE. Dining Room and kitchen. ROY, LYDIA, and FLOYD are seated at the dining table. Drinks are being had.

LYDIA

Yup, just me and three girls in a tiny four story walk-up on Sixteenth Ave.

*BUNNIE enters, carrying a dish of food
which she sets on the table.*

ROY

How alternative.

BUNNIE

What'd I miss?

LYDIA

Oh nothing, come join us. I'm just boring your husband with tales of Brooklyn.

ROY

No, not at all.

BUNNIE

Sounds thrilling to me. All alone in the big city? I can't imagine.

LYDIA

Oh, / it's actually pretty amazing.

FLOYD

So what- oh I'm sorry honey I didn't mean to interrupt you.

LYDIA

No, no, it's fine. What were you saying?

FLOYD

So how did you two meet anyway?

BUNNIE looks to ROY.

BUNNIE

My, where to start? Well, Roy and I go back all the way to Virginia. He was a cashier at Wade's, and he was always giving me these secret discounts, not ringing me up for half the food in my cart and acting like I wouldn't notice. When he went off to Korea, I made him promise that he would write me. And he did. Every month. La di da, a few years down the road, we are blessed with our beautiful little Craigy, this house, and Roy's been promoted to assistant manager at the Key Food!

FLOYD

That's a beautiful story. Lydia, you should take notes! It would make a fine romance novel. Ro----meo and Juliet. Ro----y and Bunnie.

LYDIA

I'm sorry about him.

BUNNIE

You're a writer?

LYDIA

Sometimes.

FLOYD

Don't be modest.

LYDIA

It was just something to keep busy with at the desk when I felt my brain start to melt.

FLOYD

She's working on a collection of stories, aren't you Lydie?

BUNNIE

I'd love to hear some sometime. (to Floyd) What about you? How did you end up down here?

LYDIA

We worked for Simon & Schuster. He was in sales...

FLOYD

She was a secretary..

LYDIA

And the rest is history.

FLOYD

Living in the city that never sleeps gives you one mighty yawn, tell ya that. We needed some beauty sleep! So, here we are.

Beat.

BUNNIE

No one is touching the meatloaf!

FLOYD

I think if I have another bite I'll burst! My stomach is only used to single course meals.

LYDIA

If I made any more, his stomach would strike. He'd never admit it, but Floyd can't stand my cooking. This was perfect Bunnie, thank you. Where did you get this recipe? I must have it.

BUNNIE

Oh you know it's a funny story. My mother always made meatloaf with mushrooms, but I never liked that. I hate mushrooms. So, after a few disastrous experiments, I found my own nifty secret ingredient. No, not ham, tried that. No, not honey -

ROY stands.

ROY

I think, if you'll excuse me, I'm going to go for a smoke. Floyd?

BUNNIE

Go on. Don't worry, I'll give your wife the full scoop; next time she makes you meatloaf, try to guess what the secret ingredient is.

FLOYD

We'll be back for charades.

*FLOYD kisses the top of LYDIA's head.
He exits with ROY.*

BUNNIE

Here, I have a present for you.

*BUNNIE finds a book with a pink cover,
"The Housewife's Guide to Etiquette."*

The Housewife's Guide to Etiquette. It has recipes, tips, tricks, diagrams, how to fold a fancy napkin... Taught me all I know, I'd be nothing without it.

LYDIA

Oh Bunnie, thank you.

LYDIA hugs BUNNIE. BUNNIE wasn't expecting this, she hugs her back, tightly.

BUNNIE

But enough of this, I'm in the presence of a writer! I can't believe you worked for Simon & Schuster, that must've been...

LYDIA

Oh, that feels like so long ago now.

BUNNIE

Do you ever miss it?

LYDIA

A fifty hour work week in a claustrophobic city? Yeah, sometimes. It was madness, but the good kind.

BUNNIE

You and Floyd-not-Lloyd make such a handsome couple it's scary.

LYDIA

I'm glad you think so. He's really something.

LYDIA giggles.

BUNNIE

What is it?

LYDIA

Oh nothing, I was just... A while ago Floyd took me to see *The War of the Worlds*. It was our first date. He held my hand the entire time. There I am, thinking "wow, he's really into me" over and over and over in my head, I didn't even notice our palms get sweaty. Then the lights come up, and there he is, scrunched up, peeking between his fingers because he thought another Martian would pop out. He hadn't been holding my hand, I had been holding his. The scaredy cat.

BUNNIE

We should have a horror movie round of charades, see if he hides behind the couch or the television.

LYDIA

I swear, that man sometimes...

BUNNIE

You don't gotta tell me!

*The HOUSEWIVES emerge and onlook,
gushing, towards LYDIA and BUNNIE.
Like proud aunties.*

HOUSEWIVES

WHOA, WHOA! WHOA, WHOA!

BUNNIE

I SWEAR HE NEVER LISTENS
I GOTTA KEEP INSISTING
I TELL HIM DON'T YOU BRING
YOUR MUDDY BOOTS INTO THE KITCHEN
IT DOESN'T MAKE A DIFFERENCE
IT'S JUST LIKE HAVING CHILDREN
HE'LL DO 'BOUT ANYTHING HE CHOOSES
ANYTHING HE WISHES

I LOVE THE MAN, LORD KNOWS I DO
BUT SOMETIMES I COULD USE
A HELPING HAND OR TWO
I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT HIM, I'M TELLING YOU
BUT SOMETIMES I WOULD TRADE HIM
FOR A MAID, IT'S TRUE!

SO IF THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO
JUST COME KNOCKING AT MY DOOR

AND IF THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO
IF IT'S MOPPIN' UP THE FLOOR
SOMETIMES A WOMAN CAN USE
A HELPING HAND OR TWO
AND IF YOU'RE HUSBAND'S ALL YOU GOT
WELL, THAT'S WHAT NEIGHBORS ARE FOR

HOUSEWIVES

WHOA, WHOA! WHOA, WHOA!

LYDIA

Oh, you think that's bad? Don't get me started. This one time...

LYDIA

WE HAD TICKETS TO ELVIS
THE MAN WAS DRIVING RECKLESS
AND SOON ENOUGH WE LOST OUR WAY
AN HOUR OUT OF MEMPHIS
I TOLD HIM ASK A QUESTION
BUT HE JUST KEPT OBJECTIN'

BOTH

YOU KNOW YOU NEVER CAN
EXPECT A MAN TO ASK DIRECTIONS!

BOTH (HOUSEWIVES)

I LOVE THE MAN, LORD KNOWS I DO (LORD KNOWS I DO)
BUT SOMETIMES I COULD USE A HELPING (I COULD USE A)
HAND OR TWO
THE HEAD OF THE HOUSE, BUT I'M TELLING YOU

LYDIA

BUT SOMETIMES THE MAN
CAN BE A GODDAMN FOOL
SO IF THERE'S

BOTH

SO IF THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO

LYDIA

YOU CAN ALWAYS GIVE A CALL, IF THERE'S

BOTH

ANYTHING I CAN DO

LYDIA

IF HE DRIVES YOU UP THE WALL

BOTH

SOMETIMES A WOMAN CAN USE
A HELPING HAND OR TWO

LYDIA
AND I'M ONLY NEXT DOOR TO YOU,
AFTER ALL

ENSEMBLE

WHOA, WHOA!

*ROY AND FLOYD re-enter as the
HOUSEWIVES scatter and disappear.*

ROY

What are you two birds chirping about?

LYDIA

The ridiculous inflation of birdseed these days. Can barely afford a proper bird bath.

*FLOYD tries to stifle a giggle. Not exactly
successful.*

BUNNIE

Oh! I almost forgot, we have Jell-O cake in the freezer!

*BUNNIE gets up. LYDIA catches up with
her.*

LYDIA

Let me help you with that.

They are now in the kitchen.

BUNNIE

You know there's this neighborhood potluck this weekend. Food, drinks, dancing. It'll be fun! I would love to introduce you to the rest of the block. Only if you're not already busy. I know what passes for excitement around her might seem-/

LYDIA

Sounds swell. And hey, we should catch a game of tennis down at the park this week.

BUNNIE

I would love to but I'm a total ditz with a racket, I almost never play.

LYDIA

Or anything else. Thank you Bunnie, tonight was really wonderful. I'm happy to repay the favor.

AND IF THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO
YOU CAN JUST PICK UP THE PHONE
AND IF THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO
YOU'RE ALWAYS WELCOME IN OUR HOME

BOTH

SOMETIMES A WOMAN CAN USE
A HELPING HAND OR TWO

LYDIA

SO IF THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO

LYDIA (& BUNNIE)

JUST LET ME KNOW (I'LL LET YOU KNOW)

ACT 1, SCENE 7 - "Do You Mind?"

VII. HOSPITAL HALLWAY. IDA, dressed in a nurse's uniform, holding a clipboard.
MARY, dressed in a training nurse's uniform crosses paths. IDA hands her a clipboard.

IDA

Room 2-14.

MARY

Thank you Nurse Bartnick.

They split. MARY enters the HOSPITAL ROOM. Sitting on the waiting table is MATEO, beaten and bruised. There's a

big giant gash across his face. He seems restless.

MARY

Good afternoon, you can call me Ms. Romero.

MATEO

Mateo. Ms. Romero?

MARY

Yes?

MATEO

How long do these things usually take?

I'VE BEEN SITTING 'ROUND HERE WAITING
DON'T MEAN TO SOUND COMPLACENT
BUT IS IT BAD ENOUGH FOR ME TO STAY?

I KNOW I'M A LITTLE BANGED UP
BUT IF YOU SAY IT'S NOT A HANG UP
I CAN LEAVE AND GO ABOUT MY DAY

SO
DO YOU MIND LETTING ME KNOW

About how long this'll be? I mean

MATEO (Cont.)

I DON'T MIND-

It's just-

Looking at MARY, MATEO has a sudden recognition.

Oh!

MARY

Yes?

MATEO

You're the- nothing. Nothing.

MARY

I don't know how long this will take, but you're definitely going to have to wait for a doctor to stitch you up before you go anywhere. But first I have to check you out.

MATEO

(teasing her)

Check me out huh?

MARY

(flustered/blushing)

Not like, I didn't mean...

*MARY takes MATEO's blood pressure,
etc.*

We'll start with

YOUR TEMPERATURE YOUR VITALS
LIFT YOUR ARM UP TO THE SIDE
WHY DO YOU KEEP LOOKIN' AT ME THAT WAY?

MATEO

I'M SORRY PLEASE EXCUSE
ME, NOT TRYIN' TO BE RUDE
IT'S JUST I NEVER FORGET A FACE

MAKES SENSE YOU WORK HERE
SINCE YOU'RE ALWAYS SAVING LIVES

MARY is confused.

WITHOUT YOUR INTERFERENCE
I WOULD'VE CHOKED AND DIED

So thank you for that. Much appreciated.

MARY

I'm sorry?

MATEO

Aren't you that waitress?

MATEO (cont.)

DO YOU MIND ME ASKING,
DO YOU REMEMBER ME?

MARY

NOT PARTICULARLY...

MATEO

WHAT IF I
JOG YOUR MEM'RY?

Still being examined, MATEO suddenly starts elaborately pretending to choke and die. As he's really milking being on the edge of death, he takes MARY's hand and uses it to tap his back. He's alive again. MARY recognizes him now.

MARY

You sure you weren't poisoned? Seems like someone has it out for you.

WHOEVER DID THIS TO YOU
SURE HAD ONE SWING

MATEO

HUGE, NASTY, POWERFUL
CREATURE OF A THING

MARY

Oh?

MATEO

CAN'T YOU TELL?
YOU'RE LOOKIN' RIGHT AT HIM

MARY
YOU DID THIS TO YOURSELF?

MATEO
WELL

Not on purpose

I WORK AT BOB'S MECHANICS
AND TRUST ME I'M QUITE HANDY
BUT I SAT UP WHILE STILL UNDERNEATH

SLICED MY CHEEK UP SOMETHING NASTY
THEN BACKED STRAIGHT INTO A RACK
RAININ' CAR PARTS DOWN ON ME

Wrench to the face. And the body.

MARY
Ow.

MATEO
Yeah... Bob isn't too happy about it. Dented some expensive parts. And we're already not exactly on the best of terms. Which is why I really should be getting back...

MARY
Well, we're almost done. But you're going to have to wait for a doctor to be available.

MATEO
How long will that be?

MARY
I'm sorry, I can't -/

MATEO
That long huh? Bob only gave me an hour...

YOU'RE A NURSE,

MARY

In training

MATEO

TELL ME, WILL I NEED A HEARSE
IF I LEAVE AND GIVE THE STICHES A REJECTION

MARY

Bad idea.

IT'LL ONLY GET WORSE
AND IF HAPPENS TO BURST
YOU'LL WHOLE FACE WILL GET SUBMERSED IN INFECTION

MATEO is incredibly restless. It's clear, he really needs to leave. He keeps checking the time. MARY is bandaging and caring for his minor cuts, etc. Finally, when his body can't tense and tighten nor bounce any faster:

MATEO

Look, thank you so much. But I really got to go, it's okay. Thank you.

He starts to get up/leave.

MARY

I'm sorry, I really can't let you do that. You'll regret it. I know what I'm talking about. Please, sit back down.

MATEO sits back down. He's even more antsy than before.

MARY

DO YOU MIND
KEEPIN' STILL

MATEO

Sorry,

I'M
JUST A LITTLE OVERWHELMED

As she's cleaning up his face, MATEO looks to the sky. His face starts quivering. He's trying not to cry.

MARY
ARE YOU ALRIGHT?

Turning away, trying to blink them away. Regains himself.

MATEO
SORRY, I'M FINE.

MARY
IS THERE ANYTHING YOU NEED?

No, no
MATEO

Beat. Confession:

I MAY LOSE MY JOB
SORRY TO BE SUCH A SLOB
I JUST, I DIDN'T MEAN TO-
Thanks for asking.

MARY
IF YOU DON'T MIND
I COULD STITCH IT UP FOR YOU

Get you out of here in a flash.

MATEO
YOU WOULDN'T MIND?

MARY

FIXIN'S WHAT I DO.

*MARY gets some materials from a cabinet.
She gets to work. Tenderness in the air.*

MATEO

What do you do when you're not nursing?

MARY

Mostly working.

MATEO

Right. What about aside from that?

MARY

Studying. There's a lot of exams.

*Beat. MATEO gathers himself together to
ask her out.*

MATEO

Hey, I was wondering.
I mean, if you have the time-/
-

MARY

-Yes of course. It's a quarter to five.

MATEO

I actually meant... Thanks.

She keeps sewing. She finishes.

MARY

GOOD AS NEW

MATEO

AGAIN, THANK YOU.

MARY

IN TEN DAYS, MAKE SURE
YOU COME GET IT REMOVED.

MATEO puts on his coat. Before exiting:

MATEO

Thank you, Ms. Romero. You saved me. Again.

MARY

It's Mary.

AND SOMETIME
I WOULDN'T MIND
SEEIN' YOU AGAIN.

MATEO smiles.

MATEO

Then it's a promise. And don't worry, I won't tell anyone about your rogue sewing.

ACT 1, SCENE 8 - The Cookout / "The Dandy Bop"

VIII. BUNNIE & LYDIA'S NEIGHBORHOOD POTLUCK. It's a fun block party- people are mingling and dancing. A LIVE SINGER performs as FLOYD, LYDIA, BUNNIE, and NEIGHBORS dance. BUNNIE is really throwing down. There's a long table of mixed refreshments.

LIVE SINGER

STEP RIGHT UP
COME ON NOW, STEP ON DOWN
GIMME A LITTLE MHMMM
IT'S THE HIPPEST CRAZE AROUND

SHAKE AND MAKE AN EARTHQUAKE WITH YOUR TOES
TELL YOUR WORRIES "GET LOST!"
AND THANK THE LORD, NOW LET'S GO

YEAH, WE'RE JIVIN' TO THE DANDY BOP

HOP A STEP TO THE LEFT
 SKIRT A SLIDE TO THE RIGHT
 SPIN 'TILL THE STARS YOUR SEE ARE LIT UP BY THE NIGHT

TWIST REAL SWIFT DON'TCHA WISH IT WON'T STOP
 SEND THOSE PRAYERS TO THE AIR
 NOW DO A BUNNY HOP

YEAH, WE'RE JIVIN' TO THE DANDY BOP

I WANNA SEE YOU RAMMA-LAMMA 'TILL YOU CAN'T NO MORE
 I WANNA SEE YOU FLAMMA-JAMMA 'TILL YOUR FEET GET SORE
 I WANNA SEE EVERYBODY OUT ON THE FLOOR
 JUST SCUBA-DOOBA-DOOPA-DUPIN' UP A STORM

I WANNA SEE YOU BOOGIE WOOGIE 'TILL YOUR OUT OF BREATH
 YOU BETTER FLAP THOSE TOOTSIE-WOOTSIES 'TILL THEIR FLAPPED
 TO DEATH
 I WANNA SEE EVERYBODY DANCING THEIR BEST
 GOIN' AHHHHHHHH!

*The music continues. BUNNIE, tired, exits
 the dance floor, finding ROY, drink in
 hand.*

BUNNIE
 (between breaths)

You sure you don't want to dance?

ROY
 It's just a little ... crowded.

BUNNIE
 Still, quite the bash huh? Are you having a good time? I know this isn't really your kind of-/

ROY
 No, actually... it's pretty nice.

BUNNIE

I saw you over there talking to, oh, what's her name? With the...

BUNNIE gestures to her head.

ROY

She wouldn't leave me alone. And I'm pretty sure she's keeping the entire Eiffel tower underneath her hair.

They share a happy moment. Enter LYDIA.

BUNNIE

Oh Lydia! I see your dish is quite the smash.

LYDIA

I tried a recipe from that book you gave me, but I was over by the trash and it's blanketed in globs of my potato salad. I don't pretend to be a great cook but... the trash? Everyone here seems so good at this stuff. I don't mind talking to people, I just feel like I start a conversation, and then have nothing to talk about.

BUNNIE

Better than me, no one's even touching my Jell-O casserole. Did you like it? It's a new recipe of mine, ham and aspic.

LYDIA

Mm-hmm.

BUNNIE

Roy was just telling me...

She turns, but ROY is gone to get another beer.

Well, anyway he was... He was...

BUNNIE plops down on the floor.

I think I need to sit down.

Enter FLOYD. He doesn't notice BUNNIE.

FLOYD

Honey, there's something nuclear over at the potluck table...

BUNNIE

It's ham and aspic.

FLOYD

Oh, sorry.

LYDIA

Is that Mr. Johnson?

FLOYD

Is she okay?

FLOYD

What? Where? I didn't know he lived around here.

LYDIA

What'd he think of that pich you gave him the other day?

FLOYD

Oh he, well, I never quite got around to it.

LYDIA

Well he's here now. Why don't you go over and / talk to him?

FLOYD

Oh I couldn't... Could I?

LYDIA

Look, he's got a gin and tonic in hand, he's all oiled up for you. Go!

She gives him an encouraging kick in the pants, and FLOYD scurries off.

FLOYD

(to himself)

Hey Mr. Johnson! Hell-o Mr. Johnson. Mr *Johnson*. Funny seeing you here actually...

LYDIA's proud of her handywork. As she turns back to BUNNIE, she notices her hunched, clutching her abdomen.

LYDIA

Oh honey! Bunnie? Are you alright? Bunnie, here, let me help you up.

BUNNIE

You can drive right?

LYDIA

What?

BUNNIE

I need you to take me somewhere. (pained) Mmmn. I can direct you.

LYDIA

Should I get Roy? I think I saw him/ by

BUNNIE

No, let's just go.

I'll tell him when I get back. I just need to visit a friend.

LYDIA

You sure? Let me ask Floyd. Here, come on.

LYDIA helps BUNNIE to her feet, they turn to go in the direction FLOYD walked off to. There is a large red bloodstain on the back of BUNNIE's skirt. LYDIA notices.

Bunnie-?

BUNNIE

Let's just go.

LYDIA ties her cardigan around BUNNIE's waist to conceal the stain. They exit.

ACT 1, SCENE 9 - Welcome to Frankie's.

IX. FRANKIE'S HOUSE. DOLLY is at the table doing the books. The radio playing carries over the music from the cookout.

There's a KNOCK at the door. It's hard to hear over the music. DOLLY turns the radio down and off. More KNOCKING (but noticeably not the TAPS). DOLLY takes a gun out of a drawer and approaches the door. She listens. Silence. More KNOCKING.

DOLLY

Who is it?

BUNNIE (O.S.)

It's me, Dolly.

Breathing a sigh of relief, DOLLY puts the gun back in the drawer. As she approaches and unlocks the door:

DOLLY

Bernice? You know you need to do the knock. The least you could do is call. I wasn't expecting anyone until...

DOLLY opens to the door to BUNNIE, supporting her weight on LYDIA.

BUNNIE

I'm sorry Dolly, it was an emergency. Is Ida in?

DOLLY hurries them in and locks the door back up.

DOLLY

Who's this?

BUNNIE

She's just my neighbor.

LYDIA

It's a pleasure. My name's Ly / dia

DOLLY

(calling back)

We don't take walk-ins. (pointed at Lydia) I think you should leave.

BUNNIE

No she's not- She just drove me here. I need to see Ida.

DOLLY

(calling back)

Ida, we've got guests.

BUNNIE

You can trust her Dolly.

Stiff tension. IDA enters.

IDA

Is this our six o'clock?

DOLLY

No, Bernice just dropped in. She brought a friend.

BUNNIE

Just a neighbor, she lives next door.

IDA

Hello. Oh, I love that color on you, what a lovely coat.

LYDIA
(not knowing where to look)

Thank you.

IDA
Is everything alright Bunnie?

BUNNIE
I'm sorry to barge in like this, it's probably nothing. Something happened at the barbeque. I just got scared.

BUNNIE removes the cardigan from her waist, IDA looks at the stain on her skirt.

IDA
Okay, I'll meet you in the back room, we'll take a look at this. I'll be right there.

IDA first goes to the sink and washes her hands.

BUNNIE
Lydia? Do you mind waiting here? I'll just be a minute.

LYDIA
Okay.

BUNNIE exits, following IDA to the back room. DOLLY and LYDIA are alone together.

DOLLY
(re: paper bag Lydia's holding)
What's in there?

LYDIA
Oh, it's ham and aspic.

DOLLY
Is that supposed to be food?

LYDIA

Bunnie made it.

DOLLY stares at her.

DOLLY

Have a seat.

LYDIA takes off her coat. She stands, sits. She doesn't know what to do with her hands. DOLLY puts a kettle on the stove and slices up a lemon. She gets out two tea cups. After an eternity the kettle sings. DOLLY pours it out into only one cup, adds the lemon. She leaves the other cup.

She sips her tea, staring unwaveringly at LYDIA.

Eventually:

IDA returns, gently scooting BUNNIE out ahead of her. Aside:

IDA

-No, it was good of you to come in, don't be silly I don't see any red flags, but we'll just keep an eye on it and if it doesn't clear up in the next few days, I want you to go see a doctor. Okay? Promise me? I'm glad you came in, it could have been a lot worse.

DOLLY pours hot water from the kettle into the other teacup and adds a teabag. She hands it to BUNNIE.

DOLLY

How are you honey?

IDA

Just some light spotting. She's going to be okay, as long as she stays out of trouble. (to Bunnie)
Like I said, it's normal.

BUNNIE

I'll be fine. I'm sorry to drop in like this, I didn't think... I know it's not much but, I should have a fiver in here.

BUNNIE searches her purse and pulls out a five dollar bill.

IDA

Oh, sweetie, no need. Really.

DOLLY takes the bill. IDA gives her a look. LYDIA looks between them, uncomfortable.

IDA

So, do we need to call you two a taxi?

DOLLY

Ida...

IDA

You're going to make her walk?

BUNNIE

Lydia drove me.

IDA

Oh. You drive?

LYDIA

I do.

IDA

And you have your own car?

DOLLY

Ida!

BUNNIE

Well, we better be getting back. Thank you for seeing me.

IDA give BUNNIE a squeeze .

IDA

You take care now, honey bun, okay?

BUNNIE tries to quickly down the rest of her tea.

DOLLY

Don't forget your ham and aspic.

LYDIA picks up the paper bag, and makes eye contact with DOLLY, steely and distrustful. Chilled, she puts an arm around BUNNIE and they exit. As soon as they leave, DOLLY locks the door and turns to IDA.

DOLLY

I know what you were doing.

IDA

What was I doing?

DOLLY

Don't go making offers to random strangers. We're not hiring.

IDA

She was willing to drive her friend here. It was worth an ask.

DOLLY

That is not your job. I do the books, I make the schedule. If we need more help, it's my call.

IDA

Not everyone is willing to be escorted here on foot, Dolly. What then? Give out our address? We need to think ahead.

DOLLY

It's still my house.

IDA

It's still Frankie's House.

Beat. She's struck a nerve.

I'm going to go get set up. I have things to do before our six o'clock.

IDA exits, DOLLY looks back at the door.

ACT 1, SCENE 10 - Study Date

- X. DINER. It's dusk. As the scene goes on, the sun keeps setting. The diner is calm. MARY, in her waitress uniform, leans on the counter from behind, a textbook open to a diagram. She is studying flashcards, and muttering to herself, practicing.

MATEO walks in, with some flowers, and finds a seat at the other end of the counter. He waits for her to notice him. She doesn't.

MARY

(under breath)

The Myloheid has to be a Suprahyoid, right? Unless... is it an Infrahyoid?

MATEO

Hey there stranger.

MARY

Oh. Hey there.

MARY stands up straight, and goes over to him.

Can I get you anything?

MATEO

I don't know, that didn't work out too well for me last time.

MARY

I'm actually knee deep in throat muscles at the moment, so if it comes down to it...

MARY gestures choking, then pushing something out of her throat.

MATEO

Nice theatrics, but I'm not sure it tops my reenactment. Don't worry, you'll get there one day.

Beat. MARY is still waiting for him to order.

Actually, I'm here to see you.

MARY

Oh.

MATEO

I hope that's not too much.

MARY

No, it's just... (looking back at her books) Now's not really a great time.

MATEO

Oh, sure okay... When would be a good time?

MARY gives a sheepish smile.

Got it. They really keep you guys busy don't they?

MARY

You're welcome to stay. I mean, obviously, public restaurant.

MARY goes back to her flashcards.

MATEO

What if I help you study? No distractions, promise.

MARY considers this.

MARY

Fine. But come over here, it's warmer away from the door.

MATEO gets up, grabs his flowers, and sits by MARY. He takes the flashcards and quizzes her.

MARY

Omohyoid... Sternohyoid... Trapezius, Sternocleidomatoid...

MATEO

Actually, it's the other way around.

MARY

Sternocleidomastoid... Trapezius... Pectoralis Major...

MATEO

There you go.

MARY notices the flowers.

MARY

Are those for me?

MATEO

Oh, yeah. I just thought- here.

He presents her with the flowers, she lets out a short, unintentional sigh.

What? You don't like flowers?

MARY

It's a gift that comes with responsibility. You have to water them, care for them...

MATEO

And you don't like doing that, Nurse Mary?

MARY

I'm sorry, I reserve my skills for people.

*She returns her focus to the diagram.
MATEO returns to quizzing her.*

Pectoralis major-*Minor*. Pectoralis minor. Ugh, I can feel my brain getting all congested.

MATEO

How about this, every time you get one wrong, I get to ask you a question. Bring you out of your head.

MARY

Okay.

MATEO

From the beginning?

MARY

Pectoralis *minor*... Deltoid.. Anterior head... posterior head...

MATEO

It's the other one.

MARY gives him the "go ahead".

Where are you from?

MARY

Queens.

MATEO

One word answers don't count. What brought you out of the city?

MARY

I found a good program. You?

MATEO

I'm from around here. My, uh, family moved here from the Dominican Republic before I was born.

MARY

Yeah? My family's from Cuba, originally.

MATEO

Really?

MARY

My name, Mary, it's actually Mari. Marisol. (pause) I don't always tell people that.

MATEO

No, I get it.... Y tienes un nombre bonito.

MARY

Thanks.

Beat. They start to review again.

Serratus Anterior... External oblique... Rectus Abdominis... Tendinous...

MATEO

Nope, it's-/

MARY

Okay, this time I get to ask you a question.

MATEO

Shoot.

MARY

What's with that pin on your lapel? You don't strike me as the jewelry type.

MATEO

This? It's just an American flag. They give you one when you enlist.

MARY

You--?

MATEO

Yup. U.S. Navy. By this time next year I'll be scouring the skies, riding the waves of pa-what's so funny?

MARY

(stifling giggles)

Nothing... I'm just picturing your little...

She gestures "hat", "uniform". It's kind of a turn on.

MATEO

What, my uniform? It's required.

MARY

No, no... you look good, sailor.

They smile at each other

MATEO

We're supposed to be studying.

MARY

Pectineus.. Adductor Longus... Tensor... Rectus femoris... Vastus lateralis... Vastus Medialis.. Femoral artery... Sartorius...

MATEO

Actually it's the / (sounding it out) ill-oh-pah-so-

MARY

Jesus fucking christ.

MATEO

Woah there sailor.

MARY

Iliopsoas. Iliopsoas. Alright, a deal's a deal. What's your question?

MATEO

Why'd you want to become a nurse?

Big question.

MARY

Ah.. Ha..

MATEO

What?

MARY

No, it's a good question. It's just... well okay. After my little brother was born, my mom started getting these really awful pains in her... I mean- finding her on the floor beside her bed, crying out in the middle of the night kind of pain. And when we went to the doctor, he told her that it was just cramps. I'm sorry, is this too...?

MATEO

Uh, no, no.

MARY

Okay. Well.. God he was so rude, he wouldn't even look at her, he just talked to me like she wasn't even there. (explaining) I was translating. My mom told him she was really worried. And he told her that "women have a low pain tolerance" and she should "just drink some water and get some rest". He wouldn't run a test or anything.

MATEO

What a prick.

MARY

Yeah, no kidding. But there was this nurse. She heard my mom complaining and told her to get a second opinion. And she did. And this other doctor, he actually listened to her, he ran some tests- and they found an ovarian cyst that was causing all this torsion...

MATEO

Oh man. Is, is she...?

MARY

Yeah, she's okay. They removed it, thank God. I don't know what would've happened if it hadn't been for that one nurse. And ever since then basically I've wanted to do that. Just... help people.

MATEO

Your family must be proud.

MARY cocks her head side to side "yes and no."

You miss them?

MARY

Sometimes. A lot. Especially this time of year. My family used to do this thing where we would drive up and out of the city, way upstate to see those big Christmas tree farms. We couldn't get a real one, no way it'd fit in the apartment, but-- I just remember standing under those lights, smelling the pine cones and- it was kind of... magical, I don't know.

A very tender moment. They almost kiss but MARY turns away. MATEO looks at the stack of the flashcards in front of them.

MATEO

From the top?

MARY

From the top.

ACT 1, SCENE 11 - "Better Than This (Reprise)"

XI. HONEYSUCKLE DRIVE. Outside.

LYDIA and BUNNIE enter. Silence hangs in the air.

BUNNIE

Alright, well. Here we are.

LYDIA

Here we are.

BUNNIE

Hey, are you okay? You didn't say a word the whole drive back.

LYDIA

What do you want me to say?

BUNNIE

Nothing.

Beat.

It's getting pretty dark, I better go start supper. I... I can't thank you enough Lydia.

LYDIA

Don't mention it.

BUNNIE

Really, I-

LYDIA

No, really - don't mention it. I can't believe you would do that. I can't believe you would ask me to do that.

BUNNIE

You didn't have to.

LYDIA

And leave you there bleeding? What was I going to do?

Beat.

Does Roy know?

BUNNIE

No.

LYDIA

So you just went to that part of town to go see that woman on your own?

BUNNIE

So that's it huh? I guess you think I'm some horrible person.

LYDIA

I just don't know how you could do something like that. How could you do to yourself, to Roy? If I was-... I would never do something like that.

BUNNIE

God, you have no idea what it's like. It's just not a good time. Roy's been dealing with so much these days, and I barely have time to get everything done as is- imagine what it'll be like when Craig starts walking soon? It's just... Not a good time to bring another kid into the house okay?

Silence.

They're not bad people.

LYDIA

Yeah? How would you know?

BUNNIE

Because I know them. I worked for them.

LYDIA

What?

BUNNIE

I used to drive for them. When I needed their help, I didn't have the money and... Since I hurt my wrist, I haven't been able to be as useful. You don't have to like what they do but- they're helping people.

Silence

I should be getting home. Roy's probably wondering where I am.

LYDIA

(holding out the paper bag)

Here, take your-

BUNNIE

Oh toss it, it's disgusting. That's what I get for diverging too far from the book.

LYDIA

Are you going to be okay?

BUNNIE nods. It's earnest, but not completely convincing. BUNNIE starts to leave.

BUNNIE

You're not going to tell anybody, are you?

LYDIA

Of course not.

Sudden realization, she looks around.

Crap. Crap crap crap.

BUNNIE

What is it?

LYDIA

My coat, I must have left it at the- crap.

BUNNIE

Here, you can pick it up tomorrow.

BUNNIE pulls out a scrap of orange paper and writes down the address.

It's 43 Hemler Way. Just past-

LYDIA

No. I'm never setting foot in that place again.

BUNNIE

Oh okay. Well, I'll try to pick it up for you. Thanks again.

LYDIA

I said don't mention it.

BUNNIE

Goodnight Lydia.

LYDIA

Goodnight.

BUNNIE exits to her house. LYDIA unlocks her own door.

LYDIA

(calling out as she enters)

Floyd, honey? I just...

The house is empty. LYDIA turns on a light.

Floyd?

LYDIA holds herself close. She looks for a note, finds nothing. She doesn't know what to do. She goes to the telephone, hesitates, then dials.

LYDIA

Hi Sally, did Floyd come in? Can you connect me to him?

FLOYD

Hello? Lydia? I'm sort of in the middle of something right now doll, I can call you back.

LYDIA:

Floyd-

FLOYD

Mr. Johnson? *Loved* the pitch. We're working on it right now for Monday.

LYDIA

Floyd, I thought maybe you could read through a story of mine tonight. I think it's almost ready.

FLOYD

I'd love to Liddy but... Well, that can wait can't it?

LYDIA

I was just really hoping to see you. / I had a

FLOYD

Look, I really got to go, I think we're onto something big! What was that?

LYDIA

Nothing.

FLOYD

Hey, we'll read it soon, I promise. Don't wait up. I'll be home before you know it. I love you.

He hangs up.

LYDIA

I love you too.

Heavy silence. LYDIA pulls her notebook out, tries to write. Nothing comes. Puts it away. Pause.

I'LL PUT HIS DISH IN THE OVEN
KEEP THE TEMPERATURE RUNNING
AND WAIT AROUND TILL HE GETS HOME
THEN I'LL DO LAUNDRY OR SOMETHING
OR RESEW A BUTTON

SPEND ONE MORE NIGHT ON MY OWN

IS THIS WHAT YOU ALWAYS WANTED?
AND AREN'T YOU LUCKY, NOW YOU'VE GOT IT.
BUT WHO WOULD'VE KNEW THAT LIVING AS TWO
COULD MAKE YOU FEEL SO ALONE

SO IT DOESN'T GET BETTER THAN THIS, DOES IT?
NO, IT DOESN'T GET BETTER THAN THIS
AS LONG AS WE'RE TETHERED
WE'LL GO ON FOREVER LIKE THIS
WHAT COULD BE BETTER?

ACT 1, SCENE 12 - "Convince Myself"

XII. BUNNIE'S HOME. ROY and BUNNIE are having dinner. ROY is in a good mood, the energy is light. BUNNIE may be a little distracted, but she's trying not to be.

ROY

-And the way he was dancing by the end, flailing all over. I think I saw him spit all over some people while he was screeching into that microphone.

BUNNIE

He did remind me a little of loose chicken.

ROY

I don't know who put him on a stage. I thought it was pretty clear who deserved to be up there. You looked good out there dancing Bunnie. Couldn't take my eyes off you. No one could.

BUNNIE

Oh, no one was staring at me. (off Roy's gaze) Careful, last time you looked at me like that, we ended up with Craigy.

ROY

Fine by me. Nursery's got plenty of room.

BUNNIE

I thought the whole thing was pretty killer-diller. And Mrs. Witherspoon's grasshopper pie?

ROY

If anything's killer-diller...

BUNNIE

Right? And all those people... I thought you did swell.

Beat. She's touched a nerve.

ROY

What's that supposed to mean?

BUNNIE

I just mean-- well, I know crowds can be hard for you...

ROY

I don't have a problem with crowds.

BUNNIE

Alright, my mistake. It was a good turnout is all I meant. Roy?

ROY

What?

BUNNIE

Nothing, just... You know- you can talk to me...

ROY

Maybe I don't always want to talk, alright?

BUNNIE

Okay.

Long pause. The sound of forks.

I picked up your prescription yesterday. I left them on the kitchen counter, did you see?

ROY

Yeah, I did...thanks.

BUNNIE

It's still sealed, Roy.

ROY

I don't feel like taking them.

BUNNIE

Roy, the doctor said your cholesterol levels-

ROY

I feel fine.

BUNNIE

Okay.

ROY

(drops fork)

What the hell is this anyway?

BUNNIE

It's beef bourguignon.

ROY

Why do you always have to make this crap I can't pronounce.

BUNNIE

It's French. I was just trying something new. You used to like that.

ROY

Yeah, well maybe you've lost your touch. That shit you brought to the potluck today...

ROY downs his glass. Stands.

BUNNIE

How many is that?

ROY

It's about to be one more.

BUNNIE stands, she's in between him and the kitchen. She may not notice this herself.

BUNNIE

Here, let me get you a glass of water.

BUNNIE takes the empty glass out of his hands.

ROY

(stern.)

Bunnie.

BUNNIE

The doctor said no more than three.

ROY

You bring that back here.

BUNNIE

Let's just talk, I don't want to wake Craig.

ROY

Bunnie.

ROY tugs BUNNIE's wrist to pull her a little closer to him "look at me".

BUNNIE gasps and drops the glass. It smashes. ROY lets go.

Oh, Christ - is that the bad hand?

He reaches out to her, she flinches. He punches the wall, furious at himself.

Goddamn it, Bunnie, I didn't mean to -

Sounds of baby CRYING. BUNNIE crosses to Craig's room, ROY follows her.

BUNNIE

Shh, shh... It's okay baby, it's okay.

ROY

(gently)

I'm sorry, baby... I don't know what came over me.

BUNNIE

I know.

She must not be hearing him, he takes her face in his hands.

ROY

I love you so much, you know that? So fucking much. I don't know what I would do without you.

BUNNIE

I love you too Roy. Why don't you head up to bed, okay? Let me clean up a bit and put Criag back down. I'll be upstairs in a minute.

BUNNIE comforts the baby and cleans up the shattered glass.

IT'S EASY TO CONVINCING MYSELF
 THAT THIS IS THE WAY IT'S ALWAYS BEEN
 RUNNING THOUGHTS LIKE PAGES
 THINKING BACK AND BACK AND BACK
 RESTARTING THIS DOGEARED CHAPTER AGAIN

'CAUSE IF HE WAS ONCE SHINING
 MAYBE I WAS ONCE TOO
 I REMEMBER HOW THE LIGHT DANCED IN HIS EYES
 IF WE WERE ONCE HAPPY
 WHO SAYS IT'S NOT STILL THERE?

SOMEWHERE JSUT OUTTA SIGHT
 OUT OF PLACE WHERE I CAN'T FIND IT
 BOXED UP IN THE ATTIC
 AND I'M JUST UNAWARE

*She adjusts some photographs knocked
 askew when Roy punched the wall.*

YES, IT'S EASY TO CONVINCING MYSELF
 THERE'S NO EVIDENCE THAT ANYTHING HAS CHANGED
 SAME AS ALL THESE PHOTOGRAPHS
 FROM WAY BACK AND BACK AND BACK
 A THOUSAND HAPPY, SUNNY, LOVING FRAMES

BUT I MUST HAVE BEEN SHINING
 ALL THOSE YEAR AGO
 THEY USED TO TALK ABOUT THE FIRE IN MY EYES
 NO, YOU COULDN'T STOP MY DREAMING
 I'D COUNTER ANY SPITE

IT ALL SEEMS SO FAR AWAY
 IT'S SINKING DEEPER AND I'M FLOATING
 WITH NO WAY OF KNOWING
 WHERE THE TIDE'LL TAKE

*BUNNIE starts to undress in front of a
 mirror and change into her nightgown.
 She unwraps the bandage from her wrist,
 revealing the bruises on her skin. She
 takes a look at herself, as if seeing her
 situation for the first time.*

NO NOTHING'S SHATTERED
 NOTHING'S SCATTERED
 NOTHING'S BREAKING
 BUT MY CHEST

I'VE CONVINCED MYSELF OF LOVE ENOUGH
 I CAN'T KEEP ON KEEPIN' IT UP

I'M NOT PEACHY
 I'M NOT DARLING
 NO I DON'T KNOW WHEN IT CHANGED
 BUT SOMETHING'S CREEPING IN
 AND HARDLY SEEMS LIKE IT'LL GO AWAY

DON'T KNOW HOW
 I DON'T REMEMBER
 WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO MY GAZE
 BUT THE FIRE'S TURNED TO EMBERS
 AND I'M SCARED THEY'RE GONNA FADE

ROY (OS)
 (calling)

Are you coming to bed?

BUNNIE

Just a minute.

OH IT'S EASY TO CONVINCING MYSELF
 THAT THIS IS THE WAY IT'S ALWAYS BEEN
 RUNNING THOUGHTS LIKE PAGES
 FROM WAY BACK AND BACK AND BACK
 RESTARTED THE DOGEARED CHAPTER AGAIN.

ACT 1, SCENE 13 - "The Waiting Game"

XIII. LYDIA'S HOME.

FLOYD crosses from the bedroom to the front door, dressed for work and in a rush. He grabs his coat.

FLOYD

I'm sorry, I'm already late. I love you!

LYDIA comes to the door, still in her night robe and curlers, which seem to be falling out. She straightens his tie for him.

LYDIA

I love you too. Have a good day.

Smooch. Almost out the doorway:

FLOYD

Oh! I almost forgot! I invited a coworker and his wife over for dinner tonight, do you think you could cook something special up?

LYDIA

Tonight? Why didn't you tell me sooner?

FLOYD

Must have slipped my mind. Don't worry, I'm sure it'll be great.

LYDIA

Floyd, I can't prepare my first ever dinner party in six hours!

FLOYD

Why not? Bunnie doesn't seem to have any trouble with it, it can't be that that bad. Right?

LYDIA

I can do it.

FLOYD

I love you.

FLOYD leaves LYDIA standing in the doorway.

A HOUSEWIFE appears from within the home. How long has she been there? She coughs for attention. LYDIA turns and sees her.

The HOUSEWIFE takes out “The Housewife’s Book of Etiquette” from the bookshelf. She hands it to LYDIA.

As soon as LYDIA opens the book, music starts and other HOUSEWIVES appear from within the home. They all are wearing perfectly coiffed smiles.

HOUSEWIFE

IF YOU ARE TO BE A PROPER WOMAN
THERE ARE CERTAIN THINGS THAT YOU MUST DO
BY THE TIME THAT YOU REACH THE KITCHEN
YOU MUST BE MADE UP
IN PEARLS, LIPSTICK TOO

LYDIA is handed a mop by one of the HOUSEWIVES.

YOUR HOUSE SHOULD REMAIN CLEAN AND CLEAR OF CLUTTER
DUST AND MOP AND SWEEP AT LEAST THREE TIMES
IF YOUR HANDIWORK
IS CAUSIN’ YOU ACHES
LIE DOWN FOR A BREAK

LYDIA slips on the mopped area, she lies flat on her back.

...

AND THEN BACK TO WORK

LYDIA gets up, perhaps propelled by the HOUSEWIVES.

DINNER MUST BE PIPING HOT AND READY
BY THE TIME THAT HE WALKS IN THE DOOR

The oven starts smoking. The phone rings. LYDIA takes out a roast that is burned to the crisp.

GREET HIM WITH A FRIENDLY DISPOSITION
 DON'T ASK QUESTIONS UNLESS
 HE GIVES YOU HIS PERMISSION

LYDIA answers the phone.

LYDIA

Hello?

FLOYD

Honey! Great news! Mr. Johnson asked if he and his wife could join the little soiree tonight. And Herbert overheard and asked if he could join as well! You know, Mr. Herbert, the new V.P.?

LYDIA

(definitely not a friendly disposition)

More people?

HOUSEWIFE

VOICES SHOULD REMAIN LOW AND SOOTHING
 REMEMBER HE HAS HAD A LONG HARD DAY
 NEVER COMPLAIN OR ACT ASSUMING
 DON'T TALK TOO MUCH
 IF HE HAS MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO SAY

FLOYD

I thought you'd be excited. (hushed) I think it means he likes me.

LYDIA

(trying really hard to keep a "low and soothing voice")

No, honey, of course I'm excited. Can't wait!

LYDIA dashes around, trying to make her house presentable, more food appears on the countertop. The HOUSEWIVES follow her around, taking notes on a clipboard, and "tsk tsking."

HOUSEWIFE
 FORKS GO ON THE LEFT, THE NAPKIN CENTER
 FIVE COURSE MEALS THESE DAYS ARE ASSUMED
 A HOSTESS SHOULD PREPARE PASTIMES OF LEISURE
 AND NEVER BE HARSH OR CRUDE

LYDIA drops a bowl of food.

LYDIA

Shit! That's it.

*LYDIA dials up BUNNIE. The
 HOUSEWIVES huddle close, listening in.*

BUNNIE

This is Mrs. Duboux.

LYDIA

Bunnie, I need your help. Floyd invited all these people over for dinner tonight and well, I don't know if I'm cut out for this sort of thing.

HOUSEWIFE

The most important thing to remember is that a good wife knows her place.

BUNNIE

Oh honey. I would love to, but I was just about to head out.

LYDIA

Bunnie, please. Wait, you're not going-?

HOUSEWIFE

Respect your husband by not overspending. Make sure he approves of all your expenses.

BUNNIE

Oh, no no. I just have to run some errands. Sort some things out at the bank.

HOUSEWIFE

It is unbecoming to appear suspicious or jealous. If he has something to tell you, he will.

BUNNIE

But Lydia, you can do this! Just use that book I gave you.

HOUSEWIFE

YOU MUST BE KIND TO ALL YOU NEIGHBORS

LYDIA

Well fuck you too Bunnie.

DON'T BE NEGATIVE INSIDE THE HOME
 CLEAN AND PRESS HIS CLOTHES FRESH EVERY MORNING
 REFRAIN FROM CURSING, WHINES, AND GROANS

LYDIA screams. The HOUSEWIVES are not pleased by this. Based on this, LYDIA composes herself, she's really trying to do it proper. She rushes around the house, trying to pick it up perfectly.

A HOUSE SHOULD STRIVE TO BE AN ACTIVE MEMBER
 OF WOMENS-BASED ORGANIZATIONS
 A CHURCH, TENNIS, OR LUNCHEON GROUP WORKS NICELY
 IF YOU FIND ONE YOU SHOULD JOIN A KNITTING CLUB

DING DONG. Immediately the music stops, and the HOUSEWIVES scatter. LYDIA answers the door. Standing there is IDA, holding the coat LYDIA left at the clinic.

IDA

Hello! Oh, did I interrupt something?

LYDIA

Look, my husband is out, but he could be back at any moment.

IDA

I'll be quick - you left this at the house.

IDA hands LYDIA her coat.

Bunnie said you lived next door. I just came to drop it off.

LYDIA

You drove all the way here?

IDA

I took the bus. Wow, you keep a very nice home. It's immaculate in here. And what's that smell? Something smells delicious.

LYDIA

Is there anything else?

IDA

I'm sorry, I'm going.

IDA turns to leave, turns back.

Can I just say- it was really good of you to bring your friend in.

LYDIA

Well it turned out to be nothing, right?

IDA

You can never be too careful. And my husband was an obstetrician, he was the one who taught me how to do it, and I am a licensed nurse, but... it has its risks. Still, it's safer than a lot of other ways... You wouldn't believe the stories we hear, the things these girls do to themselves. A lot of them could use a friend like you.

LYDIA

Well I-/

IDA

And... to be frank, we could really use a driver.

LYDIA

No. I couldn't do that.

IDA

I know how it sounds, but it's really simple - you'd just pick them up from the train station and bring them back from the house. And we could pay you.

LYDIA

Should you even be asking me this? Your friend didn't seem too fond of me.

IDA

She's tough, Dolly, but... it's just because she's careful. She really does care about those girls.

LYDIA

It's not that I don't care, I just- I can't be a part of that.

IDA

I understand. It's a lot to ask. And you... clearly have a lot on your plate. But if you ever change your mind...

IDA writes down a phone number and address on a piece of green paper and hands it to LYDIA.

Take this.

IDA starts to leave.

You really do keep a lovely home.

IDA exits, leaving LYDIA standing in the doorway. A kitchen timer starts to RING. LYDIA rushes back inside.

ACT 1, SCENE 14 - "Stay For The Ride"

XIV. CHRISTMAS TREE FARM. Trees cover the stage.

Enter FLOYD and LYDIA.

FLOYD

Oh, I love this one. And look, it's on sale! What do you think?

LYDIA

(distracted)

Whatever you want, honey.

FLOYD

What do *you* want?

LYDIA

Whatever you want honey.

MATEO and MARY enter from the other side of the stage. MATEO has his hands over MARY's eyes. MATEO trips, the klutz.

MATEO

Watch your feet.

MARY

Okay I'm serious, where are we going?

MATEO

You tell me. Breathe in.

She does.

You smell that?

MARY

Yeah, I smell... Pine and ... peppermint. It smells like Christmas. Where are we?

MATEO removes his hands, MARY opens her eyes. Wide eyed, she immediately squeezes them closed again and takes a deep, full breath in.

Ahh.

MATEO

I know you can't be home for the holidays, but I figured I could bring them to you.

MARY

It's beautiful.

Moment.

Mateo? That man keeps staring at us.

MATEO

What's he think I'm going to do, really? Steal a Christmas tree? It's a Christmas tree.

MATEO dramatically imitates uprooting a Christmas tree by the trunk with great effort, slinging it over his shoulder, and marching off.

MARY

Now he's definitely looking.

FLOYD

Ah, can't you just picture this one right up next to the fireplace, tinsel head to toe. We can make popcorn strings!

LYDIA

(shivering)

Can you just pick one Floyd? I'm getting cold.

Still out of earshot, MATEO notices the couple.

MATEO

Okay, let's just take a note from these guys. Act natural. *(in character, with a new voice)* How about this one my lovely lambchop?

MATEO over-imitates the gestures of FLOYD. MARY plays along, mirroring LYDIA.

MARY

Much too skinny sugar-lips. What do you think of this one?

MATEO

I don't know, a little patchy. But this on the other hand!

MARY

Darling, there's no way we'll be about to fit that one through the door...

MATEO

Well, if we trim the tip, I think it would look nice right by the fireplace. Tinsel head to toe.

FLOYD and LYDIA exit. Suddenly, they aren't imitating them anymore, they're just playing house. MARY gets suddenly very uncomfortable.

MARY

Um, you know what... I think I should go.

MATEO

What?

MARY

Can you take me home please? I could be studying right now or-...

MATEO

Woah, woah. Is everything okay? Is there anything you need?

MARY

What are we doing here, really, Mateo? I'm in school, you're leaving the country in a few months! If we know this isn't going to go anywhere, why pretend it's anything but a distraction. You know I'm not going to marry you. There's never going to be any christmas trees or fireplaces.

MATEO

Hey, breathe. Who said anything about getting married?

MARY

I just don't want to keep wasting time.

MATEO

Is that what you feel like this is?

MARY

No, come on- I didn't mean / -

MATEO

Look I don't know what will happen in a few months. Maybe I'll never see you again. But- I don't know. That's okay. I really like you Marisol. I just want to be around you. Isn't that enough for now?

MARY turns away.

I KNOW YOU'RE NOT DELICATE
BUT EVEN SO
YOU'RE BEING HESITANT
AND YOU AND I BOTH KNOW

YOU'RE SMARTER THAN ME
BUT EVEN I SEE
IT'S CLEAR YOU GOT SOMETHING TO HIDE

MATEO comes around to MARY.

WHAT ARE YOU RUNNING FROM?
WHY PULL AWAY?
WHY ARE YOU SO AFRAID OF A GOOD THING?

I'M NOT TRYNA HOLD YOU BACK
I'D NEVER DO A THING LIKE THAT
I'M JUST HANGING IN FOR THE RIDE
I JUST WANNA BE BY YOUR SIDE
I'M JUST HANGING IN FOR THE RIDE

THIS ISN'T FOREVER
I KNOW YOU GOT PLANS
YOUR TRAJECTORY'S SET
BUT COULD YOU USE A HAND

I'M NOT HERE TO PREVENT
ALL OF THE DENTS
YOU'LL LEAVE COURSING THE WORLD LIKE A LANDSLIDE

STOP BEING PARANOID
TAKE TIME TO BREATHE
IT'S NOT A CRIME TO ENJOY A GOOD THING

FOR NOW WE GOT SNOW
COLD NOSES AND PEPPERMINT
MAYBE IT WON'T LAST
BUT AT LEAST FOR THE MOMENT

I WANNA BE
THE ONE THAT YOU CALL
AND THE ONE YOU SEE
AND THE END OF A LONG DAY
AND AT LEAST
WHATEVER WE ARE
I DON'T CARE WHAT WE ARE
I WANNA SOMEBODY
YOU CAN RELY ON

RIGHT BY YOUR SIDE
LET ME COME ALONG FOR THE RIDE
RIGHT BY YOUR SIDE
I'LL BE HANGING IN FOR THE RIDE
WON'T YOU LET ME STAY
FOR THE RIDE?

MARY kisses him. Snow falls.

FLOYD crosses in front of them, carrying their new Christmas tree. LYDIA trails behind him.

MATEO

(back to his character)

So what do ya say, dollface? Ready to tie this puppy atop the Anglia?

MARY

I shouldn't have done that. I'm sorry. I have to go.

MARY exits opposite MATEO.

ACT 1, SCENE 15- Christmas Dance

XV. LYDIA's HOME. FLOYD hikes up the Christmas tree. LYDIA's head is somewhere else. FLOYD gets up on a stepstool. They are decorating the tree.

FLOYD

Almost there...Liddy, hand me that popcorn string? Liddy? Lydia?

LYDIA

Do you think people will remember you?

FLOYD

What are you talking about?

She doesn't answer, her mind's off somewhere else.

Where are you? Where have you been? Finally we get some alone time together and this is how you... Even right next to me, I feel like you've been somewhere else all night.

LYDIA

I don't need anymore alone time.

FLOYD

First you say you want me home, now you act like you don't care if I disappeared. Which is it? I go out there every day, work my ass off, so I can give you this house, this life. What else do you want?

LYDIA goes to the tree, hanging up a few ornaments.

FLOYD (cont.)

I don't understand why you can't just try a little harder. I'm trying. Can't you see I'm trying. And then you turn around and throw it in my face. Why did- /

She turns, facing him.

LYDIA

Why did you laugh at that stupid joke?

FLOYD

What joke?

LYDIA

At the dinner party. I was telling your friend how we'd met, and how we just moved into this house, and he said, loud enough so the whole room could hear, "Well, guess that's one of the perks of cozying up with the boss."

FLOYD

He was kidding...

LYDIA

I was insulted. And you laughed.

LYDIA turns away, continues to decorate the tree with vigor.

FLOYD

It was just a joke.

LYDIA

You didn't mention that we worked in separate departments?

FLOYD

Liddy, come on, that's just how these guys talk. You're the one who told me to get along with the higher-ups. ... I was just trying to be a good host.

LYDIA

The roast and flowers and chiffon cake and mash and lotus folded napkins weren't impressive enough?

FLOYD

No, of course they were.

He wraps around her.

LYDIA

I'm not good at this Floyd.

FLOYD

Oh Lydia... Of course you are.

LYDIA

I feel like ever since I got here all I've been is some shiny new purchase to be kept out of the dirt and paraded around with the house and the Chrysler. That's all anyone sees. Is that what you see?

FLOYD

Of course not.

Beat.

LYDIA

I miss Manhattan. I miss who we were in Manhattan.

FLOYD

I know, but Liddy- we have saved so much, we have worked so hard, both of us, so we could move out here. You have to give it a chance.

LYDIA

I guess I just thought things would be different.

FLOYD goes to the record player, pulls out a record.

What are you doing?

FLOYD

Some things don't change, huh?

He offers his hand. Reluctantly, she dances with him.

Remember that office Christmas party? When I asked you to dance for the very first time?

LYDIA

You were so nervous, you could barely put one foot in front of the other.

FLOYD

No, I was drunk.

LYDIA

Whatever you say.

FLOYD

I wasn't nervous. I was with you.

They keep dancing, she puts her head on his shoulder.

LYDIA

You know, when Mr. Johnson asked me what I do... I really almost said, "I'm a secretary at Simon & Schuster."

FLOYD

Oh.

LYDIA

And then, I sort of caught myself and remembered. "I'm a housewife."

FLOYD

Yeah?

LYDIA

And the way he nodded, like... Like that's all I am. Just a housewife.

FLOYD

Well, what else do you want, Liddy? What is there, really?

They continue dancing under the glow of the Christmas tree. Lights slowly fade.

ACT 1, SCENE 16- A Goodbye

XVI. LYDIA'S HOME. Day. The Christmas tree still doesn't have it's star at the top.

DING DONG. CLAMMER from the direction of the bedroom. LYDIA enters, fully dressed, holding a duster, pursued by a HOUSEWIFE. The HOUSEWIFE dusts off LYDIA's skirt as she walks.

LYDIA answers the door. It's BUNNIE, with a stroller (and Craig) holding a cake. She steps into the house.

BUNNIE

I just want to stop by. Thought I owed you one of these.

LYDIA

Good morning Craigy, we're spritely today, aren't we?

BUNNIE

You have no idea.

LYDIA takes the cake from BUNNIE

LYDIA

Let's leave it right side up and upside-down this time.

She hands it to the housewife who sets it down on the counter. LYDIA sits, and gestures for BUNNIE too as well. The HOUSEWIFE cleans the kitchen counter.

LYDIA

What have you been up to?

BUNNIE

What do you mean? Just normal Bunnie things. You know, same same. No time for anything else with that one always crawling around. Nothing special.

BUNNIE takes off her coat, and goes to hang it on the coat rack. She notices Lydia's coat.

LYDIA notices her noticing it.

LYDIA

I didn't go back if that's what you're thinking. That blonde woman brought it.

BUNNIE

I wasn't thinking a thing.

BUNNIE comes to sit down. She embraces LYDIA, very tightly. LYDIA's confused, but holds her back.

Thank you.

LYDIA

I thought we agreed not to / talk about it.

BUNNIE

No, not about that. Just... for everything. Thank you.

LYDIA

You're welcome?

BUNNIE

Some days, Honeysuckle Drive can be a lonely place. I'm lucky to have a friend like you.

LYDIA

Bunnie, I'm sorry.

It's BUNNIE's turn to be confused.

I shouldn't have gotten so upset. You know...

She knows.

Lately I've been realizing that some things just aren't what I thought they were. Ask anyone, I've always been sure of my opinions, I've always known who I am. But lately... lately I'm not so sure.

BUNNIE

Oh, honey.

LYDIA

I hate cleaning this house every day. Why doesn't it stay clean? It's not like I'm slinging mud all over it every night. I'm not sprinkling all the food scraps around like confetti. I don't want to write, I don't want *not* to write, I don't want to talk to Floyd about it, I always want to talk to Floyd about it, what's wrong with me?

BUNNIE

Seems to me like you need a change of pace. Something new. That always helps me out a rut. You could find a women's organization? Or join the country club? Maybe volunteer for something, it is the Christmas season. A fresh start. Your house is beautiful, but Lydia...

LYDIA

Yeah. I know. Thanks Bunnie.

BUNNIE stands.

You're leaving already?

BUNNIE

I have a lot to get done today, I'm sorry.

LYDIA

Would you want to stay for a slice? I can pick off all the pineapples?

BUNNIE

That sounds lovely. But really, we better get going.

LYDIA escorts BUNNIE to the door. One more hug.

You've been a great friend Lydia. I'm very lucky. Thank you.

As she walks away, O.S. :

And Merry Christmas Lydia! Goodbye.

LYDIA

Merry Christmas.

LYDIA looks back to the HOUSEWIFE, still cleaning. HOUSEWIFE smiles. It's the same smile she always smiles. She looks to the coat on the door. Picks it up and puts it on.

ACT 1, SCENE 17- "Helping Hand"

XVII. FRANKIE's HOUSE. DOLLY and IDA are at the table.

IDA

Oh! What if we scheduled everyone for late night hours? That way no one sees them arrive?

DOLLY

Who knows who's watching, if someone say even two, three girls arrive in the middle of the night, they'd want to know what I'm keeping hidden. We'd get shut down in days.

IDA:

I'm just thinking out loud. We could... no. Hmm.

IDA gets up.

Tea?

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK. DOLLY goes to get the gun. IDA beats her to the door, and unlocks it except for the chain lock. She sees who it is then opens the door all the way. Standing there is LYDIA. IDA opens the door for her and she comes in.

DOLLY

What are you doing here?

IDA

You came!

DOLLY

You asked her to?

LYDIA

I'll only be a second. I'm here because I want to help.

DOLLY

I can't believe you-

IDA

Just hear her out Dolly!

LYDIA

I JUST NEED A MINUTE
A MINUTE OR TWO
A MINUTE AND I'LL BE GONE

JUST GIVE ME A MINUTE

A MINUTE TO PROVE
 THAT YOU'RE BETTER OFF WITH ME THAN NOT

LYDIA

One minute.

DOLLY

One minute.

*DOLLY picks up a kitchen timer and sets it
 to one minute.*

LYDIA

Okay, well. Um.

I HAVE TIME TO SPEND
 AND A CAR TO USE
 SEVEN HOURS A DAY
 WITH NOTHING TO DO
 I FIGURE YOU COULD USE A HAND
 AND LORD KNOW I GOT TWO

DOLLY
 (looking at timer)

Thirty seconds.

LYDIA

Listen.

I SWEAR I'M NOT HERE
 TO GET IN THE WAY
 I JUST WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE
 WHAT DO YOU SAY?

DOLLY
 WE DON'T NEED A LIABILITY
 TILL YOU'VE HAD YOUR FILL AND LEAVE
 TAKING EV'RYTHING YOU'VE SEEN
 BACK WHERE YOU CAME

LYDIA

WHATEVER YOU NEED
I CAN ACCOMPLISH
WHATEVER YOU NEED
I KNOW THAT I GOT THIS

RING RING. Timer goes off.

DOLLY

Time's up.

NO, I RUN A TIGHT SHIP
AND I GOT A FULL CREW
WE DON'T NEED LOOSE LIPS
AND WE DON'T NEED YOU

SO LET ME STOP YOU THERE
YOU'VE GOT THE WRONG IMPRESSION
LET ME SHOW YOU THE DOOR
AND THANKS FOR YOUR DISCRETION

GOODNIGHT, AND GOODBYE
THANKS FOR STOPPING BY

WE'LL BE FINE

DOLLY (LYDIA)

WITHOUT YOU (I'M NOT THROUGH)

LYDIA

JUST GIVE ME A CHANCE TO PROVE MY WORTH
IF YOU KEEP ME AROUND
I'LL BE MORE THAN DESERVING

DOLLY

STOP YOUR BEGGING, IT'S UNBECOMING
WHY DON'T YOU RUN ON HOME
AND PLAY HOUSE?

WE GOT ENOUGH TO DEAL WITH
WITHOUT YOU FLOATING AROUND

LYDIA

I'VE BEEN FLOATING FOR A WHILE
I'VE BEEN LOST WITHOUT KNOWING
BUT I SEE YOU, WHAT YOU AIM TO DO
AND THE HELP YOU'RE BESTOWING

DON'T BELIEVE ME IF YOU WANT
BUT I FEEL IT IN MY BONES
I AM MORE THAN A DAUGHTER
I AM MORE THAN A WIFE
I GOT MORE TO OFFER
TO DO WITH MY LIFE

SO YOU RUN A TIGHT SHIT
AND YOU SAY I'M USE
WELL I GOT SOME NEWS
IT'S NOT ALL ABOUT YOU
SO DON'T GIVE ME ANOTHER SORRY EXCUSE
'CAUSE THERE'S A GIRL OUT THERE
WHO COULD USE A PAIR OF SAFE HANDS
TO GRAB ONTO

Anyway. Thanks for your time

LYDIA turns to exit.

DOLLY

FINE

ACT 1, SCENE 18- *"Mine /Yours"*

XVIII. MARY'S APARTMENT. MARY is studying, or trying to. She keeps trying to refocus herself, she is not making any progress. She keeps getting distracted. Finally, she throws the book closed in confusion and throws herself onto the bed. The sound of rainfall.

Suddenly, the window smashes as a rock lands inside. MARY jumps back.

MATEO (O.S.)

Sorry!

MARY
(to self)

Mateo?

MARY approaches the window, she's splashed in the face with rain.

MATEO (O.S.)

Can I come up?

MARY holds a finger up to her lips, telling him to be quiet.

What? I can't hear you. I'll be right there.

MARY pulls down the blind, and fixes them to something, in an attempt to block the rain out. This takes a couple methods. KNOCK KNOCK.

MARY answers the door, MATEO comes in, drenched.

MARY

You have to be quiet you're gonna get me in trouble

MATEO interrupts her with a kiss. It's a good one. She kisses back.

MATEO

Don't be sorry. I'm not.

MARY

Me neither. Not really. I... I, well... I like you Mateo. I like you a lot. Can you promise me, no promises?

MATEO

I promise.

Beat.

MARY

You know, my roommate's in Connecticut for the weekend.

MATEO

Oh.

MARY

If you wanted to... Dry off.

MATEO

I think I can do that.

MARY tugs MATEO onto her bed.

MARY

Lemme help you.

IT CAME OUT OF THE MIST
ROSE UP, UNEXPECTED
IF YOU'D HAVE ASKED ME,
I NEVER PLANNED ON CHASING
BUT THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT YOU

NOW DON'T GET ME WRONG
I'M STILL THE SAME WOMAN
I'M STILL GONNA KEEP ON PRESSIN', PRESSIN'
NOW DON'T GET ME WRONG
I DON'T BELONG TO NO ONE
BUT I THINK MAYBE THIS ONCE
I CAN MAKE AN EXCEPTION

I'M MINE, ALL MINE
 BUT TONIGHT I'M YOURS
 DON'T REMIND ME
 WHEN YOU WAKE ME IN THE MORNING
 I'M LETTING GO, PEELING OFF
 TO GIVE IT ALL TO YOU

BABY TAKE ME, TOUCH ME, MOLD ME
 BABY BREATHE ME, OPEN, CLOSE ME
 TEACH ME, LEAD ME
 WHATEVER YOU WANT ME TO DO
 I'M HERE IN SURPLUS FOR YOU
 TONIGHT I'M YOURS

They kiss again, it grows hotter.

SPLIT STAGE: *BUNNIE's HOUSE. ROY enters, adjusting his tie. BUNNIE enters after him, baby in her arms.*

ROY

Alright, I'm off. I'm sorry I'll be back so late, I'll try not to wake you.

BUNNIE

Okay, drive safe sweetie. (to Craigy) Say bye-bye to Papa.

ROY gives the baby a kiss on the head and exits. BUNNIE sees him off waving. BUNNIE hugs Craigy tightly.

BUNNIE

Okay my little man, Mama's got some work to do.

BUNNIE exits.

MATEO

I'M NOT USED TO REALIGNING
 DIDN'T SUPPOSE IT PART OF MY DESIGN

BUT THE WAY THAT THESE CHEMICALS
 LIKE TO LEAP FROM YOUR SKIN TO MINE
 OH, THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT YOU

NOW, DON'T GET ME WRONG
 I KNOW NOTHIN'S CHANGING
 WE'RE BOTH JUST AS HEADSTRONG
 AND JUST AS FREE
 NOW DON'T GET ME WRONG
 I WON'T TAKE THIS AS A PROMISE
 BUT SHOW WE WHERE TO PUT THESE HANDS
 I'LL DO ANYTHING YOU NEED

I'M MINE, ALL MINE
 BUT TONIGHT I'M YOURS
 DON'T REMIND ME
 WHEN YOU WAKE ME IN THE MORNING
 I'M LETTING GO, PEELING OFF
 TO GIVE IT ALL TO YOU

BABY TAKE ME, TOUCH ME, MOLD ME
 BABY BREATHE ME, OPEN, CLOSE ME
 TEACH ME, LEAD ME
 WHATEVER YOU WANT ME TO DO
 I'M HERE IN ABUNDANCE FOR YOU
 TONIGHT I'M YOURS

During the above, BUNNIE has reentered with a suitcase, put Craig in a cradle, and begun packing quickly. Craig starts to cry, she rocks the cradle with her foot and "shh shh shh"s him while continuing packing.

MARY & MATEO
 AND SOMETHING ABOUT YOU, SOMETHING ABOUT
 I'M WILLING TO LET MY GUARD DOWN
 SOMETHING ABOUT YOU, SOMETHING ABOUT
 MAYBE IT'S JUST FOR THE NIGHT

BUT DO YOU MIND IF I CALLED YOU MINE?
MAYBE EVEN PAST THE NIGHT
I MIGHT NOT MIND IF YOU WERE MINE

ROY (O.S.)

What the hell is this?

BUNNIE jumps, ROY enters.

BUNNIE

Roy. You're home early.

ROY

I stopped by the bank to cash my paycheck. You know what they told me? They asked me if I was there to pick up the \$250 my wife had tried to withdraw earlier today. Apparently she didn't take it very well she found out she needed my signature for a sum that large. Why did you want \$250, Bunnie?

BUNNIE

I... I'm going to Arlington. I got a call from my sister today, my mom took a fall and broke her hip. I just wanted to be prepared. Doctors.

ROY

Doctors. Right. When are you coming back?

BUNNIE

I.. I'm not sure. I'll call you when I get there.

ROY

Okay.

BUNNIE

Okay?

BUNNIE goes to the cradle.

ROY

You're taking Craigy?

BUNNIE

Just for the weekend.

ROY

Why not just leave him here with me?

BUNNIE

Roy, come on. You have work tomorrow.

ROY

I think I can take care of my own son for a few days, can't I Craig?

He approaches BUNNIE

What's really going on here, huh?

BUNNIE

You've been drinking.

ROY

No I haven't.

BUNNIE

I can smell it on your breath.

crossing to cradle

Now don't be silly, I told you, my mother-

ROY blocks the exit.

ROY

Don't bullshit me, Bunnie.

BUNNIE

I.. I just need some space. Just a little time to clear my head.

ROY takes a step closer.

ROY

And what exactly are you clearing out?

BUNNIE picks up Craig.

BUNNIE

I don't like it when you act this way Roy, you're a mess. Let me go get you some water.

ROY

Put him down.

MARY & MATEO

I'M MINE, ALL MINE
 BUT TONIGHT I'M YOURS
 DON'T REMIND ME
 WHEN YOU WAKE ME IN THE MORNING
 I'M LETTING GO, PEELING OFF
 TO GIVE IT ALL TO YOU

BABY TAKE ME, TOUCH ME, MOLD ME
 BABY BREATHE ME, OPEN, CLOSE ME
 BABY HOLD ME, COME NOW, SHOW ME
 BABY KEEP ME, OH, EXPOSE ME
 TEACH ME, LEAD ME
 WHATEVER YOU WANT ME TO DO
 I'M HERE FOR YOU

ROY

Bunnie, I said Put. Him. Down.

BUNNIE

Roy...

ROY steps towards her. She has nowhere to go.

ROY

Now, Bunnie.

BUNNIE

Roy please!

ROY

You're my wife Bunnie. Where do you get off thinking you can just DO this huh!?
He stumbles.

Oh Christ.

BUNNIE

Roy?

*ROY falls to his knees. BUNNIE puts
Craig down and rushes to him, she takes
his head in her hands.*

Roy! Look at me.

ROY

I think.. I think I'm having a...

BUNNIE

Just breathe okay? Just keep breathing.

ROY

Call an ambulance .

*As the song continues, ROY closes his eyes
and starts to breathe heavily. BUNNIE
runs for the phone.*

MARY & MATEO

TONIGHT I'M YOURS
TONIGHT I'M YOURS
TONIGHT I'M YOURS

BUNNIE picks up the receiver but hesitates for a moment, looking back at ROY splayed out on the floor,

TONIGHT I'M YOURS

*Lights down. **END OF ACT ONE.***

ACT TWO

Two months later

Act 2, Scene 1 - *“Waiting For My Honey To Come Home (Reprise)” / “Follow Along”*

- I. MONTAGE based in FRANKIE’S HOUSE. Days, weeks pass. Characters and scenes move in and out like revolving doors.

HOUSEWIVES stand in Frankie’s House, like Sweet Adelines.

HOUSEWIVES

OH THE NIGHTS GET LONG WHEN
HE’S NOT BY MY SIDE
SPEND HOURS SITTING PRETTY
MUST’VE BAKED A HUNDRED PIES

WITHOUT HIS EMBRACE, I JUST WAIT
WITHOUT HIM I CAN NEVER BE COMPLETE
YES I AM USELESS, HOPELESS, EMPTY...

DOLLY enters. She hisses at the HOUSEWIVES like you would a racoon She shoos the HOUSEWIVES away. They run for the curtains.

*TAP TAP-TAP TAP-TAPTAP TAP....
TAP TAP. wrong.*

*DOLLY opens the door to LYDIA, and
shuts it in her face.*

DOLLY
(yelling through the door)

Try again.

IDA enters, calling out to LYDIA.

IDA

Almost there, you got it! (to Dolly)

*TAP TAP-TAP TAPTAP TAP-TAP TAP.
wrong*

DOLLY

Again!

IDA

Maybe we should start with something else.

DOLLY

Then how's she ever going to get in?

TAP TAP TAP-TAPTAP- wrong.

LYDIA (O.S.)

Could we do this inside, it's getting cold out here.

DOLLY opens the door.

DOLLY
YOU WANNA KNOW HOW TO WORK HERE?
AND HOW TO EXCEL?
WELL, HONEY, HUSH UP
I DON'T REPEAT MYSELF

IF YOU DON'T PLAY BY MY RULES
 THEN YOU LOSE YOUR RIGHT
 TO STAND IN THE STEPS WHERE I'VE STOOD
 SO EITHER DO IT AGAIN OR...

LYDIA

-Fine.

DOLLY

Let's try again.

*DOLLY slams the door in LYDIA's face.
 TAP TAP TAP-TAPTAP TAPTAP-TAP
 TAP. Correct! IDA lets LYDIA in.*

First thing's first, you'll need a car.

LYDIA

Oh, that won't be a problem. (to Floyd) Floyd?

Enter FLOYD, putting on his tie.

FLOYD

What is it, doll?

LYDIA

Can I borrow the car this week? I have a lot of errands to run.

FLOYD

Eh, how am I gonna get to work?

LYDIA

I thought you could ask Donny McBride to carpool.

FLOYD

McBride? Oh, I don't know.

LYDIA

(to Dolly)

HE WON'T BUDGE WITH THE CHRYSLER

DOLLY

WELL, AREN'T YOU A WRITER?

STROKE HIS EGO WITH PLACEBO MEANS OF LETTIN' HIM BELIEVE

HE'S MUCH HIGHER

LYDIA

It's just, there's so much you deserve that I want to do for you. For us. And I thought you could give McBride one of you patented pitches...

FLOYD perks at the idea, draws his face down "there's an idea".

DOLLY & LYDIA

There we go.

Exit FLOYD.

DOLLY

Told you so.

LYDIA

It doesn't feel right, all this lying.

DOLLY

Well than honey, you should've stayed home.

YOU BETTER WALK THE LINE

DON'T MOVE A MUSCLE

OFF THE WIRE

AND LISTEN CLOSE WHEN I AM TALKIN'

WE'VE NOT BEEN CAUGHT 'CAUSE WE'VE BEEN CAUTIOUS

AND THAT STREAK AIN'T BOUT TO STOP 'CAUSE

YOU'RE A BAD LIAR

FLOYD's back.

LYDIA

Alright, Floyd, I'll be back in a couple hours.

FLOYD

It's after seven. Where are you running off to?

LYDIA

(aside to Dolly)

What do I tell him?

DOLLY

Just say you joined a knitting club or something.

LYDIA

What if he asks about it?

DOLLY gives her a look.

DOLLY

He won't.

LYDIA

I'm, uh, off to my knitting club.

FLOYD

You're in a knitting club now?

LYDIA

Uh-huh.

Beat. Will he buy it?

FLOYD

(nods, disinterested)

Oh.

DOLLY

Not so hard is it?

Enter IDA.

IDA

WE NEED THESE ANTIBIOTICS
ANESTHETIC
MEDICATIONS

IDA (cont.)

STOP BY THE PHARMACIST'S OFFICE
ON SOUTH AND TWENTY-SECOND

DON'T DRAW TOO MUCH ATTENTION
AND WEAR SOMETHING BLUE
WHEN HE ASKS WHY YOU'RE THERE
TELL HIM FRANKIE SENT YOU

LYDIA is diligently copying all IDA says into her notebook. DOLLY rips the page from her and tears it up into little bits.

DOLLY

No, don't write any of this down. *Never* write any of this down. Nothing leaves this house that could lead back to it, you hear me?

DOLLY exits, IDA puts a hand on her shoulder.

IDA

Are you sure you can do this?

LYDIA

Yeah... I think I can.

LYDIA exits. DOLLY reenters.

DOLLY

Where is that girl?

IDA

She'll be here.

*TAP TAP TAP-TAPTAP TAP-TAP TAP.
DOLLY goes to answer the door.*

Oh Jesus.

IDA

You shouldn't use the holy son's name just for fun.

*LYDIA walks in with a headscarf and
sunglasses. It's a little over the top.*

LYDIA

What? I don't want to be recognized.

DOLLY

Sunglasses after dark. Subtle.

IDA

I think it's a good look for you.

DOLLY

Well, at least she's listening.

YOU BETTER WALK THAT LINE
JUST LIKE I TAUGHT YA
OR YOU JUST MIGHT TAKE A SPILL

PARK THE CAR AT THE FAR LOT
WHEN YOU REACH THE STATION
MAKE SURE ALL THE DOORS ARE LOCKED
AND WAIT THERE FOR THE PATIENT

SHE WILL ASK IF FRANKIE SENT YOU
NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO

Do not unlock the door until you hear that. Under any circumstances.

YEAH IF YOU WALK THAT LINE
JUST LIKE I TAUGHT YA
YOU'LL FIND YOU CAN ACHIEVE

MOST ANYTHING BY NOT STEPPIN' YOUR TOE OUTTA THE BOXES
THE WORLD IS YOUR OYSTER, LONG AS YOU'RE ALERT AND
CAUTIOUS
AND IF THE GIRL STARTS TALKING LIKE A GOSSIP
JUST DROP HER OFF, AROUND THE BLOCK

IDA

HAVE YOU LOST IT?
YOU CAN'T TURN A GIRL AWAY FOR HOW SHE TALKS WHEN SHE'S
SCARED SOLID.

DOLLY

We can't take the risk. Not anymore.

LYDIA

I GOT IT

Anything else?

DOLLY

One last thing

*DOLLY takes the gun out of the drawer
and hands it to LYDIA.*

Keep this in your glove box. You never know who's getting in that backseat.

*LYDIA takes the gun, and nods gravely.
She exits.*

Act 2, Scene 2 - "Craig's Lullaby"

II. BUNNIE'S HOME. BUNNIE no longer wears a cast.

BUNNIE

IT'LL BE BETTER
NO MORE WALKIN' LINES
THAT I'VE BEEN TREADING
NO MORE HEADIN' TOWARD NOSEDIVES

BUNNIE (cont.)

FIN'LLY MY MIND
CAN REST ON EASY
CAUSE YOU'RE HERE WITH ME
OH SWEET BABY

Baby coos. BUNNIE picks up Craigy, rocking him to sleep as she sings him a lullaby close and sings him a lullaby.

O WHEN THE SUN RISES
IN THE EVENING
THAT'S WHEN I'LL LEAVE
YOUR SIDE

WHEN BIRDSONG'S BEEN BROKEN
AND THE OCEAN
HAS NOT FLOWED
IN QUITE SOME TIME

EVEN IF THE SKY SHATTERS
IT WON'T MATTER
I'LL LOOK AFTER YOU
I'LL LOOK AFTER YOU
I'LL LOOK AFTER YOU

ROY appears in the doorway, looking on. BUNNIE doesn't notice.

BECAUSE YOU'RE MINE.

ROY
(softly)

Is he asleep?

BUNNIE

Just about.

ROY comes closer, gazing lovingly at his son, He puts his arm around BUNNIE. They talk in hushed tones, as to not wake the baby.

He's so beautiful isn't he?

ROY
(looking into Bunnie's eyes)

Probably the second most beautiful thing I can think of. Here, let me put him down.

ROY takes Craig from her. He gently bounces him a little and puts him into his cradle.

BUNNIE

I think I'm really going to miss this when you have to go back to work. It's nice having you around the house. (beat). It's nice having you back Roy.

A moment.

ROY

You know I-/

BUNNIE

I know.

ROY

I won't- ever again. I swear to you Bunnie. That wasn't me. I swear, I haven't drunk a lick of it since-

BUNNIE

Roy...

ROY

It made me do things, things that aren't me.

BUNNIE

Roy, I know. I'm proud of you. (beat) I put your medication on the dresser while you were napping; Why don't you go take it and get cleaned up for supper. I think you'll like it.

ROY

Only if it's French.

BUNNIE exits. ROY doesn't.

Act 2, Scene 3 - Spring Date

III. A PARK. MATEO lays out a picnic blanket, and gestures for MARY to sit. There is a picnic basket and bottle of wine.

MARY

Why, thank you sir.

*As she sits, she gets dizzy plops down.
Rubs her head, a headache.. MATEO
prepares to sit.*

Wait! Wait!

*She looks around; left, right, the sky,
behind the tree, under the picnic blanket...*

MATEO

What are you doing?

MARY

Just scoping for hazards. But... it doesn't seem like there's anything to trip on or break or... (off picnic basket) oh I don't know about this, you don't exactly have a great reputation with solid foods.

MATEO

(sitting)

Ha ha. Maybe that's why I brought my own personal nurse along.

MARY

Oh, is that what I am?

MATEO

What else?

He kisses her. She kisses back, cute.

MARY

No but, really. What is all of this for anyway?

MATEO

It's nice outside.

MATEO reclines and soaks it in. MARY investigates the picnic basket.

MARY

Oh please, in a couple months you'll be wearing mittens in weather like this.

MATEO

More reason to enjoy it now. San Diego's gonna ruin me.

MARY

Uh huh. What could be worse than being right next to the beach every day.

MATEO

Being in *bootcamp* right next to the beach every day.

MARY

Touche. (off the bite of a sandwich) ugh. What did you put in this?

MATEO
(sitting)

It's just tuna, why?

MARY

Tastes like a tin can. And smells like... I don't think I know anything this pungent.

MATEO

I thought you liked tuna?

MARY

I do.

MATEO

Must just be my cooking, sorry. Maybe we should forgo the food for now. Guess you were right. Here.

MATEO gets up and offers a hand to MARY, he helps her up.

MARY

What are you doing?

MATEO

Showing you that I don't have two left feet.

MARY

Despite your affinity for injury? There's no music.

MATEO

Shhh... there is if you listen.

He pauses, listening. MARY follows suit, Suddenly, MATEO pulls MARY to him, and dances the merengue. MARY laughs. They get into it, MATEO "da-na-nas" a merengue rhythm. He spins her out, over the blanket, she poses. Her face falls

suddenly, it's become pale. She's dizzy. She wavers, perhaps close to losing consciousness. Her knees give and she tumbles, she lands on the picnic basket with her arm. This shatters the bottle. MARY sucks in in pain, and clutches her arm. MATEO rushes to her.

MATEO

Hey what happened? Lemme see that.

He gingerly takes her arm and examines it.

MARY

Just got a little dizzy. (pained, through her teeth) Guess your affinity for injury is contagious.

MATEO

I'm not the expert, but I think we should go see a doctor.

He gently presses on it, MARY involuntarily pulls back.

MARY

Yeah, I think that's a good call, Nurse Mateo.

MATEO helps her up. She reaches for the picnic basket.

MATEO

Leave it.

They exit.

Act 2, Scene 4 - Who Needs the Car?

IV. LYDIA'S HOUSE. FLOYD is on the sofa. There's a TV. LYDIA emerges from the bedroom, she has her headscarf and sunglasses. She doesn't see him.

FLOYD

Well if it isn't Grace Kelly...

LYDIA

Floyd! What are you doing home?

FLOYD

We were halfway to the office when McBride realized he'd forgotten about his daughter's recital, so we doubled back. I figured by the time I got up there again, everyone would be packing up to leaving early for the weekend. Sooooooo instead I went out and got us a little present....

He waits for her to notice.

LYDIA

You bought a television?

FLOYD

I know we're supposed to be saving but... We could make some pancakes, put on a show... I thought we could spend the day together. *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* is on tonight, I hear it's pretty good.

LYDIA

You know you would hate that show. It's supposed to get pretty scary.

FLOYD

Seems like it'd be right up your alley. I wouldn't mind.

LYDIA

I would love to, Floyd, really. But I have to go to the butcher's, the post office... I'll be back before tonight, I promise.

FLOYD

Oh. Alright.

*She collects her things and exits. Beat.
LYDIA reenters.*

LYDIA

Floyd, where's the car?

FLOYD

I took it to the shop.

LYDIA

What!?

FLOYD

It started making all this weird noise while driving it home from the department store. When I got home the engine wouldn't start up again. It's at Bob's down on Pine, they said they'd call when they had an estimate.

LYDIA

You put the car in the shop without telling me? I needed that car today, Floyd.

FLOYD

(confused, well meaning)

Can't you walk? The post office is only half a mile.

LYDIA

Well, I also have my knitting club later. You're missing the point.

FLOYD

Maybe you could get a friend to drive you?

LYDIA

I'm the one who drives them.

FLOYD

Oh. Well, maybe this is just proof you could use a little time with our new window to the future...

LYDIA

What? I'll see you tonight.

LYDIA exits.

Act 2, Scene 5 - Growing Popularity

V. FRANKIE'S HOUSE. IDA is seated at the table, DOLLY is pacing.

Long beat.

IDA

Would you stop doing that?

DOLLY

I'm trying to think.

IDA

We're not going to figure this out unless we talk to each other.

DOLLY

Your husband was a licensed doctor; a nice, white, licensed doctor. Ida, if they arrested him...

IDA

Don't think like that. He was stupid, working out of his office. Anyone in the hospital could have put it together. We just need a new approach.

DOLLY

Do you know how many calls I've been getting? Practically every night. Word is spreading. At this rate, it's only a matter of time before... We can't let that happen. We have to nip it in the bud. This is getting too big.

IDA

You're going to turn them away? These girls need help, we need to figure out how we can help them. Besides, you can't control word of mouth.

DOLLY

We just need to be more cautious. We need to be careful with who we take on. We'll cut our hours down, ask more questions before making them an appointment. Won't have any other visitors over, no one. Change the knock.

IDA

That's not what needs changing.

DOLLY

I think I know what I'm doing Ida, I've been running this, by myself- /

IDA

By yourself?

DOLLY

I think I know what I'm doing.

Beat.

IDA

If we don't change something we're going to get caught.

DOLLY

Well what do you want to do then, stop?

IDA

What? Of course not; I want to get ahead of it. The tide has started. We can't ignore it. There are girls who need us. And they won't stop. If you want to keep this from a big mess... we need to get ahead of it.

DOLLY

It already is a mess. A total fucking mess. With all due respect, *you* have no right to *me* anything about how to run this. You have no right at all. If I say, we're closed, that's it.

IDA

Dolly.

DOLLY

We're doing it my way. Now, I think you should leave.

Act 2, Scene 6 - "Look What You Did Girl (Reprise)"

VI. HOSPITAL. MARY, in a hospital gown, is sitting, waiting. This isn't the perspective she is used to. Her arm is bruised badly.

Enter DR. KOCH, referring to clipboard.

DR. KOCH

Now then, Ms. Mary- Suel.

MARY

Marisol.

DR. KOCH

Right, yes. According to my nurses, it seems your arm got quite knackered.

MARY

I believe some glass may have punctured my left deltoid. Additionally, I have reason to believe there still may be some shards embedded underneath the skin.

DR. KOCH

Very clever, but (tapping on his Dr. badge) that's my job. Could you tell me what happened?

MARY

I fell with heavy torque onto a basket and bottle of wine on my side, in effect causing the bottle to shatter beneath my upper arm.

DR. KOCH

And why did you fall?

MARY

Well, I was dancing...

DR. KOCH

Two left feet? My wife's the same way.

MARY

No, no. I wasn't dancing when I fell. I got dizzy. I think it was just because of my headache.

DR. KOCH

Dizzy and then tripped over it?

MARY

No. I just sort of, fell onto it.

DR. KOCH

Mm. And how long have you been getting these spells of dizziness, lightheadedness? Do you faint frequently?

MARY

Oh, I don't faint. (beat) I suppose I've been feeling that way more frequently recently, but my allergies have been acting up especially bad, it's probably just related.

DR. KOCH

Mmm. Mmm. And tell me, excuse me-?

MARY

You can call me Mary.

DR. KOCH

Mary. Have you been experiencing any other symptoms aside from increased allergic reactions, lightheadedness, headaches, and feeling faint?

MARY

Oh, um, let me think. Well... I mean I think my hair's been falling out a little. But that's just stress. No, I don't think so. Unless you count tuna fish sandwiches tasting like metal.

*That was supposed to be a joke.
Apparently it's not.*

DR. KOCH

Tell me, Mary, is there anything else you've noticed recently? Perhaps more frequent urination patterns, nausea, or an aversion to certain foods based on the feeling of heightened senses?

MARY

Uh...

DR. KOCH

Take your time.

MARY

I guess so? Sometimes when I'm cleaning the counters- I seem to be more aware and disgusted by the smell of cleaning supplies? Does that fit what you're asking?

DR. KOCH

And how long have you been experiencing these symptoms?

MARY

I'm sorry Doctor, I thought I was here about my arm.

DR. KOCH

Mary, I'm going to ask you to come back in a couple weeks for a follow up appointment. I would advise you avoid alcohol, cheap bottles of wine or otherwise.

MARY

Doctor, what are you suggesting?

DR. KOCH

I have cause to believe that you may be pregnant, let me be the first to wish you congratulations. And do not worry, judging by your story, I do not believe your fall would have injured the baby in any way. We will know for sure in a few weeks, make sure you continue to monitor those symptoms.

MARY

(holy shit, she loses all composure)

No, no, there must be a mistake doctor, I am not pregnant. I can't be pregnant. I would like to request a test please.

DR. KOCH

Pregnancy tests are a lot more trouble than they are worth, the easiest thing would just be to wait a couple weeks and see- /

MARY

I would like a test. Today. And I would like to put in a formal request for a therapeutic-

DR. KOCH

I'm sorry, but we do not offer such procedures at this hospital any longer. Besides, all requests for such procedures are reviewed by the administrative board and must be signed by a licensed and practicing psychologist declaring you severely mentally unstable, and a significant risk to others and yourself. Are you severely mentally unstable, Mary?

MARY

Doctor, please. You don't understand.

DR. KOCH

That's what I thought. In that case, I would suggest being a little more grateful. Being a mother is a very rewarding job, at least where I come from. If you are not ready to be mothers, you should all be less irresponsible. I have other patients to attend to, but I will send a nurse in to have a look at that arm, how's that sound? Congratulations, again.

DR KOCH exits.

MARY

Ya sé mami, I know.

YOU HAD PROMISE
BUT NOW WHAT DO YOU GOT?
I WANTED
YOU TO MAKE IT, YOU COULDN'T TAKE IT

BUT SOMETIMES
DESTINY, SHE CALLS THE SHOTS
ALL THOSE BIG PLANS
HAVE BEEN DISINTEGRATED

LOOK WHAT YOU DID, GIRL
YOU'D HAVE BEEN BETTER ON YOUR OWN
ALL THOSE CHANGES YOU'VE BEEN CHASING
WERE FOR NOTHING, YOU FEELING GROWN?

WAS IT WORTH IT? ARE YOU PROUD?
LOOK WHAT YOU DID, GIRL
THERE'S NO FIXING THIS UP
LOOK AT YOU NOW

MARY holds herself tightly. She seethes with anger.

Act 2, Scene 7 - Laundry Day

VII. BUNNIE'S HOUSE. ROY is preparing laundry to be washed. He inspects each piece of clothing, outturns the pockets, looks for stains, flips right-side-out, etc. He is not good at it. Craig is in a cradle, aside. This goes on for a while.

BUNNIE (O.S.)

Honey! I'm back!

BUNNIE enters, carrying paper bags of groceries. She comes around and kisses ROY's cheek.

I'm going to go put these away. Can I get you anything?

ROY

Could you bring me one of those cookies you made last night?

BUNNIE

You betcha. Coming right up.

Before exiting, BUNNIE straightens ROY's collar, then notices something on his cheek. She licks her finger, and scrubs it away. Smiles. Kisses his cheek again. Exits. ROY continues his work. He is having trouble turning a pair of trousers right-side-out. He's frustrated with this task. He hurriedly pulls out his next victim, and an orange scrap of paper flies dancing through the air. ROY goes to retrieve it.

Honey? Would you like a cola? They're cold!

ROY picks up the paper and reads it, trying to comprehend. His face turns from confusion to shock to repulsion. He pockets the paper. He looks at Craigy. He looks to the door BUNNIE walked out of.

Honey? Cola?

ROY picks up Craig. He stands, facing the doorway, waiting.

BUNNIE appears.

BUNNIE

There he is! How are you today, my little hot bun?

ROY
(curt.)

He's fine. We've been great.

BUNNIE

Roy?

ROY

Where've you been?

BUNNIE

Oh, I'm sorry, I thought I told you before I left. I went to the bank, got groceries...

ROY

Dammit Bunnie, you know hate it when you lie. Why do you always have to do this?

BUNNIE

I really don't know what you're talking about.

ROY

God, it just never ends, does it?

Craig starts to cry. BUNNIE reaches for him. ROY pulls him away. He takes a step back.

BUNNIE

Lower your voice, you're upsetting him.

ROY

No, you don't deserve to-... Not when you treat us this way. We're supposed to be a family, Bunnie.

BUNNIE

Have you been drinking?

ROY

No, I don't drink anymore. How many goddamn times do I have to say that! It's like you don't even hear anything I say.

BUNNIE

I don't understand why you're acting this way Roy.

ROY

You know what I don't understand? I don't understand where you disappear. Why none of the women from your book club, your knitting club, your sewing club never come over here, why I've never met a single member. I don't understand how you can treat someone like this who has done nothing but love you and change for you Bunnie, I don't understand how you can treat them like this. Leave them stuck at home, caring for your child, our child, while you're off who knows where.

BUNNIE

Look, you can either tell me what's going on, or I can leave and let you cool off, but I will not stand here and let you treat me this way.

ROY scoffs.

Shhhhh Craigy it's okay, it's okay. Shhh shh shhh. Papa's just pretending. Don't worry.

ROY

(escalating)

I know you're seeing someone else. Stop. Don't try to deny it. Just stop, Bunnie! Let me talk for one second, don't you ever get tired of hearing your own fucking voice? I know you're seeing someone, I know that's where you go. And I know his fucking name, yeah, that's right, and you can bet that when I find him, and I will find him; I'm gonna make him wish he had never laid a finger on my wife. You hear me? I'm gonna fucking kill your little fuck toy. How's that sound? Would you like that? You selfish fucking- /

As he's been talking, he's been moving Craigy around in much jerkier motions than a baby should be moved. He squeezes the baby too tight, and ROY's fingernail pierces the already crying Craigy's skin. BUNNIE watches the blood roll down his chubby little fat baby arm. ROY doesn't notice. BUNNIE looks up to ROY.

BUNNIE

(suddenly disillusioned)

It's you. All this time I thought there was this and then there was you. Separate. Like there was this wild foreign awful thing trapped inside you, and it was strangling you, trying to suffocate you, drown you, and I had to keep it from pushing you all the way under. But it's just you Roy. Here's your cookie.

BUNNY puts the cookie she had brought him in ROY's mouth. ROY is startled. Then, since he has no hands because he is holding Craigy, he tries to eat it out of the way so he can talk again. BUNNIE uses this opportunity to take Craigy out of his hands. She walks, calmy to the door. ROY grabs her wrist.

ROY

Bunnie-

BUNNIE

Let. Go.

He does. Before she exits, turning:

And for the record, so you don't get all braided up in your mind like you're the one who's hurting... I'm not seeing anyone. You were the only man I thought I'd ever love Roy. But I don't feel that way anymore.

BUNNIE exits, with Craigy. ROY is shocked, frozen. He rushes to the door, but they're gone. He runs out.

ROY (O.S.)

Bunnie? Bunnie!?...

Act 2, Scene 8 - "Stay For The Ride (Reprise)"

VIII. DINER. In between rushes. For once, MARY is not studying while working. She goes from table to table, delivering and taking orders. She seems to be somewhere else.

MARY

And what can I get for you?

MATEO

Hey there, stranger.

Seeing him here sends a shock through her system. MARY crosses to behind the counter. MATEO, confused, gets up and trails lagging behind her. He stands at the counter.

I was going to make a joke about you avoiding me, but now I don't think it'd be a joke.

MARY gets a bin for collecting dishes, and crosses to bus tables. As she passes MATEO:

MARY

I'm working.

MATEO doesn't follow this time. He watches her, the more he watches, the clearer it is that something's off. Eventually, MARY returns with the bin, goes behind the counter to drop it off. When she tries to exit out from behind the counter, MATEO steps in front of her.

MATEO

(looking at her, concerned)

Hey. What do you need? What's wrong?

MARY

I'm busy, Mateo, I can't talk. Leave me alone.

MATEO

Did I do something?

She continues finding things to keep herself busy. MATEO sits down. He waits. Watches her some more.

Eventually, she starts to run out of things to do. The last other patrons clear out. She cleans and cleans and cleans one table. She stops. She hangs her head.

MATEO cautiously approaches her. He gingerly taps her shoulder, and she rolls herself around into him, creating his embrace. Her shoulders shake. MATEO holds her.

MARY takes a sharp breath in, and a quick step back. She looks up to the sky and stretches out her cheeks. Back down, through MATEO.

MARY
(pointing, he's in her way)

Excuse me.

MATEO

Mary. Mary, please. What's wrong?

She moves around him. She doesn't stop moving.

MARY

Nothing. (finally:) I went to the doctor.

MATEO

Okay. How's your arm? Are you okay?

MARY

(quick)

I'm fine. (long beat) We shouldn't talk about this now.

MATEO

This? What is this? Mary, please, you have to tell me something. Please. Just tell me what's going on, and I'll leave you alone, I promise.

MARY

You were always going to be bad for me, I knew that. I don't why I ever let you talk me into anything different. Waste of time? No. You wasted way more than my time Mateo. It's not your fault but, just no. (big fat long pause) I can't have a baby Mateo. I just can't. Not now.

MATEO

Wait, are you saying you're....?

MARY nods, keeping a brave face.

I'm guessing this isn't good news. (beat) You don't want to get-/

MARY

No.

MATEO

Because we could. I would, if you wanted. If you wanted we could go get married tomorrow and-

MARY

What are you talking about? And then what? You sail off to San Diego then who knows where while I'm home raising your kid on my own?

MATEO

I just meant you have a choice-

MARY

How could I have been so stupid? How could you have let me be so stupid?

MATEO

But we weren't stupid, we used protection.

MARY

I don't feel very protected right now Mateo. I feel humiliated. The school's going to find out, and since apparently everyone knows it's just common sense to not waste time training someone who's gonna spend the rest of their lives poppin' out lil balls of hair-

MATEO

Mary, don't talk like that.

MARY

It's true. It's part of the contract they make you sign. I know, I read it over a dozen times when I was accepted. "If a nursing student should become pregnant or married during their training, they are subject to immediate termination from the program." So really, you can't say I'm not stupid, can you? Technically, I mean.

MATEO

Mary, hey, breathe...

MARY

I knew I should have stayed focused, I knew you were a distraction, why didn't I listen. I should've fucking listened. I had it all planned out, and now...

MATEO

DISTRACTIONS, THEY'LL HAPPEN

BUT EVEN SO
 YOU CAN MAKE A HABIT
 OF LETTING THEM GO

LIFE DOESN'T LISTEN
 TO WHAT YOU PREPARED
 I KNOW YOUR AMBITION
 SO I'M NOT TOO SCARED

MARY

I DON'T WANT TO BECOME
 JUST LIKE MY MOTHER
 FADING SO OTHERS CAN FLY

MATEO

MARY, YOU GOT YOUR WHOLE LIFE
 I SWEAR YOU'LL SOAR THROUGH THE SKY
 BUT YOU MUST TRY
 JUST TO HANG ON FOR THE RIDE
 THERE WILL BE BUMPS ON THE RIDE

BUT I KNOW THAT YOU'LL BE JUST FINE

MARY

That's not really helpful right now. I don't need you to be all sweet and tender and tell me everything's going to be okay. It's really not going to be okay.

MATEO

Look, We'll figure it out. Whatever you wanna do. Together. I have to go to work, but I'll see you later okay? I'll come by.

MARY

Whatever I want to do? I don't want this baby. But... that's not really an option is it?

MATEO

I have to go to work, but I'll see you later okay? I'll come by.

MARY

Do what you want.

MATEO

I will. I'll be there.

MARY goes back to furiously scrubbing the table.

Act 2, Scene 9 - "Dollhouse"

IX. FRANKIE'S HOUSE.

*TAP TAP TAP-TAPTAP TAPTAP-TAP
TAP.
TAP TAP TAP-TAPTAP TAPTAP-TAP
TAP.
TAP TAP TAP-TAPTAP TAPTAP-TAP
TAP.*

DOLLY

What! I'm coming.

*TAP TAP TAP-TAPTAP TAPTAP-TAP
TAP.*

Jesus christ. (calling out, as she goes to unlock the door) Lydia, I've told you, you don't have to-

DOLLY opens the door to BUNNIE, holding Craig. She looks nothing like the cool, collected BUNNIE we saw last, she's a bit of a wreck.

Oh. Bernice. And, who's this little guy?

BUNNIE

I'm sorry to barge in like this. Again. This is Craig. Can we come in?

DOLLY

Of course, of course. Please.

BUNNIE plops down on the couch.

BUNNIE

I don't know if I just made the best or worst decision of my life. I don't even know if it's a decision. But it's... a something.

DOLLY

What happened?

BUNNIE

He was so hurt, and I just left him. I can't even remember. All I remember is the screaming and the blood and -

DOLLY examines BUNNIE for injury.

DOLLY

Are you alright? Did Roy-?

BUNNIE

No, no. I'm fine, I'm fine. I know he's a good person, I know that. And we were doing so well.... Maybe I was acting too rashly. Maybe I should go back and apologize before everything becomes a great big mess.

DOLLY

Do you want to go back?

BUNNIE

No. Yes? I want to know if he's okay. I hope he's okay.

DOLLY

How are you?

BUNNIE

Me? I'm fine.

DOLLY

Bernice....

No answer.

BUNNIE

I don't know. I wish I did, I really wish I did. But... It feels like I can't keep a single thought in my head at a time. Like as soon as I point at something, it flies away? You know? Maybe I'm just tired... Maybe I'm just... I don't know. I left him Dolly. I left him there. And I don't even feel...What am I even doing?

DOLLY

I don't know, but honey, you can stay here for as long as you like while you figure it out. Okay?

BUNNIE

You know, my mom used to call me Bernice.

DOLLY

Well, it's your name isn't it?

BUNNIE

Thank you, Dolly.

They hug. Sound of keys. IDA unlocks the door and comes in. Upon seeing Bunnie:

IDA

Oh, hello! (to Dolly) I thought we weren't taking visitors.

DOLLY

Bernice, why don't you go on upstairs and rest.

BUNNIE reaches for Craig.

No, I'll look after him. Don't worry.

A tight tension hangs between IDA and DOLLY. Sensing it, BUNNIE goes upstairs. FOOTSTEPS ascend, grow softer.

IDA

I understand now. You want to limit our patients so you'll have more time to devote to your new hotel.

DOLLY

It's Bernice.

IDA

Funny thing is, if I remember correctly, that's exactly what you didn't care about a few months ago.

DOLLY

I don't have time for this.

IDA

No? Too busy cancelling all the appointments of women willing to risk their lives to see us? Or are you just too caught up in your new babysitting gig to have an adult conversation?

DOLLY

This is not an adult conversation.

IDA

Alright. What about this. You are selfish and arrogant and frankly, much thicker than I thought if you think this is a good idea. You don't think her husband isn't going to come looking for his son? I don't know about you, but I've already got plenty enough stacked against me without adding kidnapping to the list. This is a funny way to be more cautious. We've seen things fail before, we know what to avoid. We know what to do. And we know who needs us. We have the opportunity to make a difference Dolly, a big gosh darn difference, even more than I ever thought possible. When you came to me back then, when you offered me this... This was supposed to be ours, Dolly. Ours. Or- theirs I guess. But something happened, I don't know when, and you started making everything all about you. So I hope you frickin' like it. Because when it burns, you'll be inside. You'll be the one who set the fire. And you won't even frickin' realize it.

DOLLY

You can say "fuck" Ida, this isn't *I Love Lucy*. But-

DOLLY gives her a round of applause.

I only wish Lydia was here for that. She could've used it in her next story.

Craig starts crying. DOLLY tries to calm him, but he keeps crying. IDA takes him from DOLLY.

IDA

Bricks we placed
 With bruised up arms
 (we) Painted walls
 We sowed the garden oh-
 -ver the years
 How erosion has played

Dreams we freed
 From locked up safes
 We used to keep
 Beneath the grat-ing oh
 -nly to peer
 When we missed our retreat

This isn't pretend now
 We don't get to close
 our eyes, to what goes on
 Oh hun, I propose

That we're

Too old for a dollhouse
 To be so involved
 Girls aren't like porcelain
 There's more ways to break them

We built a dollhouse
 Hoping it would grow
 Into a mansion
 We've found our imaginings
 Have happened
 So how can you let go

*TAP TAP TAP-TAPTAP TAPTAP-TAP
TAP.*

It's LYDIA. She comes in.

LYDIA

She's waiting in the car, blindfolded like you said. I just wanted to make sure you were ready.
Oh. What's Craig doing here?

Act 2, Scene 10 - "Alone"

X. OUTSIDE. BUNNIE steps outside. She listens, hears nothing. How luxurious.

BUNNIE

IN THE WAKE OF THE STORM
THERE'S A STILLNESS IN THE AIR
AFTER ALL OF THESE DAYS
IN THE DARKNESS HE MADE
I CAN FIN'LY TURN THE PAGE
AND START OUT ON A CLEAN SLATE

ALONE, ALONE

AND A SOUND FILLS THE QUIET
OF A SWEET FAMILIAR VOICE
FROM THE BACK OF MY HEAD
LIKE A LONG-LOST FRIEND
IT'S SO NICE TO HEAR FROM YOU AGAIN

AND ALL MY SENSES ARE WAKING UP
WHEN I DIDN'T KNOW THEY WERE ASLEEP
AND I CAN FEEL IT, IT'S IN MY BLOOD
STILL GOT THAT SHINING LIGHT IN ME

ALONE, ON MY OWN
I'M ALONE BUT I'M NOT LONELY
NOW IT'S ONLY ME, AND THAT'S ALRIGHT
ALONE, ON MY OWN

I'M ALONE BUT I'M NOT LONELY
 'CAUSE I ALMOST FORGOT I'M IN GOOD COMPANY

ALONE, ALONE

SO I'M GONNA BE HAPPY
 LIKE ALL THOSE YEARS AGO
 BECAUSE I STILL GOT THAT FIRE IN MY EYES
 NO YOU COULDN'T STOP MY DREAMING
 AND NOW I'M FULL AWARE
 THERE'S NO NEEDING TO CONVINCING MYSELF
 OF A LOVE THAT ISN'T THERE
 'CAUSE SHE'S HERE, AND I HEAR HER LOUD AND CLEAR

NOW THAT I'M ALONE, ALONE, HMM

Act 2, Scene 11 - "Alone Part 2"

XI. MARY'S APARTMENT. She is on the phone with her mother. She plays with the cord, she sounds very distracted. She's flipping through a medical textbook, trying to find something.

MARY

..... Espera, espera. I missed that, Lo que hice?Oh, me? No, no. Estoy bien.... . No, nada. Nothing's wrong. What do you mean?

She pulls the receiver away, too painful to keep lying.

Okay, I'll tell her. Okay. I love you... so much. Alright. Goodbye. Besistos.

MARY assembles her tools. MARY sits down with a medical textbook. Her hands are shaking. She needs a moment.

Okay. Okay, okay, okay.

MARY lies down and holds a mirror between her legs. The textbook is beside her for reference. She gets to work.

ENSEMBLE

OO, OO, OO

ALONE, ALONE, ALONE, ALONE

HMM, HMM, HMM, HMM, HMM, HMM, HMM.

Act 2, Scene 12 - A Visitor

XII. LYDIA's HOUSE. FLOYD is watching TV. LYDIA rushes in. Rushing around, looking everywhere.

LYDIA

Keys, keys, keys. Do you have the keys? Floyd? I need the keys. Do they know where they are? The bus is going to leave! And I'm supposed to be at the mechanic shop in 20 minutes, and I have no time before I have to be- oh, check the coffee table.

FLOYD

You have knitting tonight, right?

LYDIA dumps out her purse to search it. Lots of clutter falls out. On the top of the pile is the green scrap of paper IDA gave her.

LYDIA

Mhmm. Going straight from the mechanic. Big day, new yarn. You had them last. Think, where'd you put the keys?

FLOYD

Hey, have you seen Bunny recently?

LYDIA freezes.

LYDIA

Why?

FLOYD

You're friends, aren't you? Why, did something happen?

LYDIA

No, no, nothing happened. I actually have not seen her around lately. Surprisingly.

FLOYD

Strange.

LYDIA finds the keys.

LYDIA

Yeah. Strange. I love you bye!

LYDIA rushes out the door.

FLOYD

Hey, maybe we can invite them for dinner, what do you think?

He turns but she's gone. Now that he's alone, FLOYD repositions himself on the sofa for ultimate comfort. As he nuzzles in, he is pricked by something sharp and he jumps up.

Yowza!

FLOYD returns to the sofa and reaches in deep, trying to locate the source of pain. He finds it, pricking himself again as he pulls out a knitting needle. The surprise pinch causes him to drop the needle, it rolls under the sofa. FLOYD bends down on all fours, and reaches, but this is the wrong angle. He comes at the sofa from a different side and reaches, he almost got it. Just a little further... He strains himself, but it is a success. He retrieves the needle

triumphantly. DING DONG. FLOYD rushes to the door, needle first, ready to hand it over. As he opens the door.

You forgot your needles you silly goose!

A COP stands at the door.

Oh. Hello .

COP

Hello sir, Is this the Loewen residence? Are you Mr. Loewen?

FLOYD

(bring the needle down from the cop's face.
Readjusting to seem masculine)

I am, yes.

COP

If you don't mind sir, I would like to ask you a few questions? May I come in?

FLOYD

Um, yes of course...

The COP walks around touching things. He stops right over the pile of LYDIA's purse clutter.

COP

What can you tell me about a green Chrystler?

Act 2, Scene 13 - The Garage

XIII. BOB's MECHANICS. An auto shop. LYDIA enters, looks around, and sits on a chair in the waiting area.

Feet slide out beneath a car. LYDIA picks up her things and goes to them.

LYDIA

Excuse me? (a little louder) Excuse me?

Nothing. LYDIA checks her watch,. She coughs, she coughs louder. She taps her foot.

MATEO (U.C. - Under Car)

Ey, Erick! Grab me the big wrench! ERICK!

MATEO slides out from under the car, he wipes snot from his nose, he has obviously been crying. He is surprised to see LYDIA. He cleans his hands with his oil rag.

Oh, my apologies ma'am. What can we do for you today?

LYDIA

I'm here about a chrysler. It's green. I was told it would be ready...?

MATEO

I'll get someone to check on that for you. Just give me one moment.

MATEO walks to the edge of the stage, yelling offstage:

MATEO (cont.)

ERICK! BRING THE BIG WRENCH AND THE GREEN (checking aside with Lydia) Chrysler? (she nods) AND THE GREEN CHRYSLER! (back to Lydia) Should be out in a minute.

LYDIA

Do you know how long it will be? I have to- there's something I can't be late for.

MATEO

Sorry, you're just going to have to wait. Erick deals with that side of the garage. Not my jurisdiction.

LYDIA

(under her breath)

This is such a waste of my time. Is it that hard to be helpful...

Facing away from her, MATEO hears this and it affects him. It washes over him like a wave. He's shaking, rocking. It's uncontrollable.

LYDIA put a hand on his shoulder.

LYDIA

Hey, are you..are you okay?

MATEO

(sniffing snot back up)

I'm fine.

Here comes another wave, this one is harder to control. He is openly sobbing.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Not this again...

MATEO

(through the tears)

Erick!

LYDIA

Hey, do you want to talk about it? Sometimes that helps.

MATEO continues sobbing.

I've been told I give good advice?

MATEO

I ruined everything. She's right, I am contagious. (big moment of cry) I'm sorry.

LYDIA

Who's "she"? You're girlfriend?

He cries.

Okay, maybe not girlfriend...

MATEO

She's the most amazing girl I think exists. And I ruined her whole life.

LYDIA

Oh, it can't be that bad. What'd you do?

MATEO

She..she..she..she..

LYDIA

She what, honey?

MATEO

She's pregnant. And before you go saying "congratulations" or "what a beautiful blessing" or whatever, no.

He shakes his head.

LYDIA

Actually...

MATEO

She's gonna get kicked out of school, she's going to lose her job, all she ever wanted is ruined. And it's all my fault....

LYDIA

She doesn't want the baby?

MATEO

No. Not at all. But...what can you do, you know?

LYDIA

(whispered) She doesn't have to have that baby. (regular volume) I know some ladies that can help. But first, I'm just going to need you to go jusssstttt outside your jurisdiction, and get that green Chrysler for me.

MATEO

Really? You mean like--?

LYDIA

Mhmm. If that's what she wants, of course.

MATEO

Yeah. Yeah. Here, I'm almost off shift anyway. I'll get your car. Do you.. think you could drive me to her place, it's not that far. I need to tell her.

LYDIA

Uh..

MATEO

Thank you so much. Thank you so so so so so much.

He wipes away some of his tears.

You just...you just saved a life. I'll be right back.

Act 2, Scene 14 - Where's Frank?

XIV. FRANKIE's HOUSE. DOLLY is folding laundry.

KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK.

DOLLY

Back so soon? I said take the afternoon *off*.

DOLLY opens the door. It's ROY. The man is falling apart

ROY

Excuse me, is this...

Roy pulls out the orange paper, reads from it

Forty-three Hemler Way?

DOLLY

Who's asking?

ROY

Roy. Roy Debeoux. I'd like to speak to the man of the house.

DOLLY

This is she.

ROY

No, I want to talk to Frank.

DOLLY

Frank? No, Frankie doesn't live here anymore....

Roy holds up the paper.

ROY

She left this.

DOLLY

What?

ROY

Why would she deliberately leave this for me to find? Do you think she wanted me to find out?

DOLLY

I don't know who you're talking about.

ROY

My *wife*. I'm looking for my *wife*. Bunnie. Do you know her? Have you seen her?

DOLLY

No, I haven't.

ROY stands back, looks around, rubs his forehead.

ROY

Please, ma'am, this is all I have of her. I came all this way--can I take a look inside?

DOLLY

I already told you, she's not here.

Beat. ROY decides how far he's willing to push this.

ROY

I'll just be a second.

ROY brushes past her. He walks stiffly, still in recovery.

DOLLY

Hey! What the hell do you think you're doing?

ROY

Bunnie! Are you in there?

DOLLY

I am one second away from calling the cops, Mister!

ROY

I know she's here! She has to be.

DOLLY

I told you--

ROY

(holding back tears)

Please... if you see her, you have to tell her... You have to tell her I'm looking for her. And tell her I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

He falls to his knees, sobbing.

ROY

Please, tell her to come back. I *need* her.

IDA walks in from the back room, bloody gloves on her hands.

IDA

What's all the--

ROY freezes, takes her in.

ROY

What the hell?

IDA realizes the blood is showing. She hides her hands behind her back.

ROY

What's going on here?

DOLLY retrieves the gun from the drawer.

DOLLY

Go. Get out. Now.

ROY

Now, wait a minute—

DOLLY

I said get the hell out of my house!

Beat. Roy backs away towards the door.

ROY

I don't know what the hell Bunny got herself into... But I'm calling the fucking cops.

He exits. Dolly lowers the gun and looks over at Ida. Lights down.

Act 2, Scene 15 - Finding Mary

XV. MARY's APARTMENT. Music plays over the scene. MARY sits at the edge of her bed, staring out. She's weak.

MATEO

(O.S)

Mary? Mary? I'm coming up, okay? I got good news!

A moment passes. KNOCK. KNOCK.

MARY

It's unlocked.

MATEO enters, waving a scrap of paper.

MATEO

You'll never guess-

He takes a second. Notices his surroundings; the bloody sheets, the textbook open to female anatomy, the tools lined up over a towel.

MARY

I really thought it would work.

MATEO

Mary, what did you do? What did you do? (yelling out the window) Hey lady, wait! Wait! We need you!

Act 2, Scene 16 - "Safe Hands"

XVI. FRANKIE's HOUSE. BUNNIE sits rocking the baby, IDA stands by the door. DOLLY is pacing frantically.

DOLLY

Shit. Shit...

BUNNIE

Roy was here? When?

IDA

While you were out... He found the address in your things.

BUNNIE

Oh, my gosh... Was that why he... I'm so sorry, I forgot... Did he... see anything?

IDA

Enough.

DOLLY

The bastard could be headed straight to the police. Shit. Shit...

BUNNIE

I'm so sorry, Dolly, I didn't mean to...

DOLLY

(a touch forcefully)

It's not your fault!

(softer)

I'm sorry, baby. It's not your fault.

IDA

Dolly, I think you're right. Maybe we need to go under. It's not safe... Let's just stay off the radar for a while. No more appointments. Till we're in the clear.

DOLLY

For how long?

KNOCKKNOCKKNOCKKNOCKKNOCK.

Dolly takes out the gun, goes to answer the door. It's tense.

DOLLY

Who is it?

LYDIA

Open up! It's me, it's an emergency.

Dolly opens the door. Enter LYDIA, MATEO, and MARY in a long trench coat. She is shivering.

DOLLY

Who's this?

LYDIA

This is Mary.

DOLLY

We didn't schedule another appointment.

LYDIA

I know, but--

Lydia takes the coat off Mary's back, revealing a bloody stain on her dress

DOLLY

Oh, Jesus.

Ida leans in.

IDA

What happened?

LYDIA

She tried to do it herself.

IDA

Oh, honey.

Ida puts a hand on Mary's forehead

She's burning like a furnace.

Ida and Dolly look at each other. Ida looks back.

IDA

Okay, sweetie, come with me. You're okay.

MARY

Okay.

Ida takes Mary under her arm and exits.

DOLLY

Who is this?

LYDIA

Mateo. We, uh-

DOLLY

You the father?

MATEO nods. Awkward beat.

Take a seat.

Ida returns.

DOLLY

How is she?

IDA

I don't know what she tried to do, but it's going to get infected. She could go into septic shock. She needs a D&C, antibiotics...

DOLLY

Okay, then do the D&C.

IDA

Dolly... She needs to go to a hospital.

DOLLY

If she goes to a hospital, they won't operate until she admits she tried to do it herself. If we do it now, she can tell them she lost the baby.

IDA

Dolly, I'm not gonna risk having some girl dying on our table...

DOLLY

You'd rather risk her dying on the street?

IDA

Dolly... It's too dangerous. With Roy hanging around...

LYDIA

Roy was here?

BUNNIE

Dolly, be sensible...

DOLLY

(bursting)

Just give her the D&C! Is this Frankie's House or isn't it?!

Beat.

IDA

Okay. I'll try.

Ida exits. Long beat.

BUNNIE

Dolly, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to...

Bunnie reaches out to Dolly. She flinches away. A long pause.

LYDIA

Who's Frankie?

DOLLY

Francine. She... she was my daughter.

AT SEVENTEEN
I WASN'T SUPPOSED TO BE A MOTHER
WASN'T PART OF THE PLAN
BUT MAMA SAID,
"I DON'T CARE WHO'S THE FATHER,
YOU'RE GONNA MARRY THAT MAN"

AND SO IT NEVER WAS
THE WAY IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE
AND EVEN THOUGH SOME NIGHTS
I CRIED MYSELF TO SLEEP
I GAVE THANKS TO GOD
FOR THE CHILD HE'D GIVEN ME
AND AS I TUCKED HER IN
I'D WHISPER HER THE SAME THING

OH, I SWEAR ON MY SOUL
I'LL DO ALL I CAN TO SHELTER YOU
WHEN YOU STUMBLE AND FALL
I WILL ALWAYS HELP YOU STAND
FROM THIS MOMENT AND ON
I'LL GIVE ALL I HAVE TO OFFER YOU
AND I WILL KEEP YOU IN SAFE HANDS
OH, 'CAUSE GOD HAS PUT YOU IN SAFE HANDS

SEVENTEEN
AND SHE'S SO MUCH LIKE HER MOTHER
ONLY SMARTER, ONLY WISER
AND SO BEAUTIFUL, TOO
SHE COMES TO ME, AND TELLS ME,
"MAMA, I'M IN TROUBLE"
WITH JUST ONE LOOK
I ALREADY KNEW

AND SO I PULLED HER IN
AND HELD HER TO MY CHEST

I PROMISED HER I'D FIND
A WAY OUT OF THIS MESS

AND I SAID, ON MY SOUL
I'LL DO ALL I CAN TO SHELTER YOU
I KNOW YOU'RE SCARED, BUT DON'T BE
'CAUSE YOUR MAMA'S GOT A PLAN
YOU'LL BE SAFE, I KNOW
'CAUSE I'LL FIND SOMEONE TO FIX THIS FOR YOU
AND I WILL PUT YOU IN SAFE HANDS
OH, I WILL PUT YOU IN SAFE HANDS

AND SO I GUESS I LEARNED TOO LATE
SOMETHING THAT I NEVER KNEW
SOMETIMES PROMISES WE MAKE
ARE MEANT TO BREAK
'CAUSE WHEN THE BLEEDING DIDN'T STOP
WHEN WE COULDN'T CALL THE COPS
OH, I GAVE IT ALL I GOT
BUT THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD DO

AND I SAID, ON MY SOUL
I'LL DO ALL I CAN TO SHELTER YOU
WHEN YOU STUMBLE AND FALL
I WILL CATCH YOU AS YOU LAND
IF YOU'D ONLY COME HOME,
I'D GIVE ALL I HAVE TO OFFER YOU
BUT GOD STILL TOOK YOU FROM SAFE HANDS
OH, GOD STILL TOOK YOU FROM SAFE HANDS
I WISH I HAD PUT YOU IN SAFE HANDS

Ida returns.

LYDIA

Well?

IDA

It's done.

MATEO

How is she?

IDA

She's stable. But she needs to go to an emergency room. Lydia—?

LYDIA

I'll take her.

IDA

And you? You'll walk in with her?

MATEO

I will.

MARY enters, MATEO hurries over to help her.

MARY

Thank you. How much are we supposed to...

DOLLY

Don't worry about it.

IDA

You take care of yourself, alright? You go to the hospital, you tell them you lost the baby and you woke up this morning with a fever. The doctor who examines you, he might ask about those curette marks. And you—

MARY

I won't say a word.

IDA

Alright.

MARY and MATEO exit together.

IDA

Dolly?

DOLLY

She's going to be okay, right?

IDA

Yeah. She'll be okay.

They hug.

We'll be okay.

Act 2, Scene 17 - Recovery

XVII. *HOSPITAL. MARY lies in bed. MATEO walks in with a balloon.*

MATEO

Déjà vu.

MARY

You brought me a balloon?

MATEO

You said you don't like flowers.

They both laugh. They start to cry. He goes to hug her.

MATEO

Oh, my God. I was so scared.

MARY

It's okay, I'm okay.

He sits at the edge of the bed. She sits up.

MATEO

What did the doctor say?

MARY

He said... Well, it doesn't matter. He thinks I'm lucky to be alive.

Beat.

MATEO

How are you feeling?

Mary sighs. She looks around.

MARY

I'm tired of this place. I always thought, I don't maybe it's stupid but.. I always thought working here was... the best thing a person could do with themselves. Helping people. Healing people. That's all *I* ever wanted to do. But I came to these people for help. I'm not blind, I knew there were problems, but I thought I could fix them. I thought it just needed someone like that nurse who helped my mom, you know? I thought if I proved myself, tried enough... And now... I don't know. I look around. I see all these doctors. And I don't... I don't know what they're doing here.

MATEO takes her hand.

MATEO

Well, I'm just glad you're still here.

DR KOCH enters.

DR KOCH

Ms. "Rue-mer-o"--Excuse me. I'd like to have a moment with my patient.

MATEO

Sure.

(to Mary)

I'll see you later, okay?

DR. KOCH waits for MATEO to exit.

DR KOCH

I noticed some pretty interesting things on your uterine wall during the examination, Ms... may we skip the formalities, Mary? Considering your last visit, I think it would be fair to assume you have something you want to tell me?

MARY

I don't know what you're talking about, Doctor.

DR KOCH

Curette markings.

MARY

How strange.

DR KOCH

My thoughts exactly. Which is why I hope you don't mind that I called in an expert. He'll be by shortly with some questions for you.

Act 2, Scene 18 - "Won't Say I'm Sorry"

XVIII. LYDIA'S HOUSE Lydia enters, feeling shaken. She sets down her purse and takes off her coat. FLOYD enters, stiff and angry.

LYDIA

Floyd! I didn't think you'd be home yet.

FLOYD

I thought I'd come home early and surprise you. I know how stressed you were earlier.

LYDIA

That's so thoughtful.

FLOYD

Were you crying?

LYDIA

Oh, must just be one of those days. I know it's been a while since you asked but... do you want to make some pancakes? I wouldn't mind some breakfast for dinner. Maybe catch a show on our new window of the future?

FLOYD

What have you been up to?

LYDIA

Oh, you know, I just went to the drycleaners.

FLOYD

For four hours? I thought you were -

LYDIA

Well, I also had my knitting club, I told you. And picked up the car.

FLOYD

Right. The car.

LYDIA

It wasn't ready when I got there, that's probably why I took so long.

FLOYD

Who's Frank?

Beat.

LYDIA

Frank who?

FLOYD

I don't know, the cop wouldn't give me his last name.

LYDIA

What cop?

FLOYD

The cop who stopped by the house this afternoon. He said he was looking for the owner of a green Chrysler.

LYDIA

Our car?

FLOYD

I don't know, he didn't have the plate number. And it wasn't in the drive, obviously. But he said it matched the description. It was spotted in Carlton Heights.

LYDIA

Well that could've been anyone's, Floyd.

FLOYD

That's what I told him. I said I've never been to Carlton Heights. And besides, I carpool to work, my wife has the car most of the time. And he said to ask you if you have any friends named Frank who live in Carlton. I said not that I ever heard of. All she does with that car is run errands and go to her knitting club. Right?

LYDIA

Floyd...

Floyd fishes in a drawer and pulls out the knitting needles.

FLOYD

Did you forget these?

(beat)

What's really going on here, Liddy? Huh? My wife is running around behind my back. I'm going crazy just thinking about it. You've always been the other half of me, but now it's like I don't even know you anymore... Just tell me--what the hell is going on here.

LYDIA

No, Floyd, there's nothing...

He yells--he's never yelled at her.

FLOYD

I can't take it, Liddy, please don't lie to me!

LYDIA

(bursting)

I got a job.

Beat.

FLOYD

You got a job? What kind of job?

LYDIA

I'm a volunteer... at a clinic. In Carlton Heights.

FLOYD

What, like a pediatrician?

LYDIA

No, it's... A clinic for expecting mothers.

FLOYD

And you couldn't tell me about this?

LYDIA

I couldn't tell anyone.

Beat.

FLOYD

You can't mean... you're kidding me. That's... Liddy, you could go to jail.

LYDIA

But we have a whole system worked out. No one knows where it is, not even the women who go there. I pick them up from the train station, so they don't know how to find it...

FLOYD

What?

LYDIA

And it's safe, they lend me a gun.

FLOYD

Oh, it's okay, they give you a gun. Jesus Christ...

LYDIA

I wanted to tell you, I did! But no one could know about it...

FLOYD

Except the cop who shows up on my doorstep?

(beat)

This is... this is fucking crazy. Liddy, what would we do if you were caught? I could lose you--we could lose everything.

LYDIA

I know, but... God, you should have seen those kids today. They were so scared. I don't know what would've happened to that girl if we hadn't gotten there in time. I know it's... crazy, but it's important--

FLOYD

More important than us? Liddy, you're my wife--

LYDIA

Yeah? Well ever since we left Manhattan, that's all I've been.

FLOYD

(hurt)

I... I didn't realize that made you so unhappy.

LYDIA

Well, thanks for finally noticing. But this... I get to be more than that. I'm important for once. I mean, don't you want that for me?

Beat.

FLOYD

I just can't believe you would do this. And behind my back. I mean, I'm your husband.

LYDIA

Well, I'm done hiding from you, Floyd. What do you want me to say?

FLOYD

I want the truth. All of it. And I... I would like an apology.

LYDIA

Well I can give you one or the other, Floyd.

I NEVER MEANT TO LIE

NEVER MEANT FOR YOU TO FIND OUT THIS WAY

FLOYD

WERE YOU EVER GONNA TRY TO TELL ME?

LYDIA

GUESS IT'S A LITTLE TOO LATE

NOW, I'VE BEEN SUCH A LIAR
THE THINGS THAT I'VE SAID
I FEEL LIKE A SPIDER
CAUGHT UP IN ITS WEB
THERE'S NO WAY THAT I CAN
UNDO WHAT I DID
IT'S ALL BEEN SAID AND DONE

BUT I...

WON'T SAY I'M SORRY
CAN'T SAY I'M SORRY
CAN'T GIVE YOU "SORRY"
WON'T SAY I'M SORRY
CAN'T SAY I'M SORRY
IT'S TOO LATE FOR SORRY

BABY, DON'T YOU KNOW
NONE OF THIS WAS PART OF THE PLAN
I LIT A CANDLE AND LOST ALL CONTROL
OF THE FIRE I BEGAN

SO THEN, IF YOU WANT WHAT YOU WANT IS
FOR ME TO BE HONEST
I PROMISE I'D DO IT
ALL OVER AGAIN

FLOYD (& LYDIA)

YOU AND I HAD ALL WE WANTED (BUT IT WASN'T ENOUGH)
AND NOW YOU'RE RISKING ALL WE GOT (WISH I COULD FIX IT)
AND I CAN'T UNDERSTAND (BUT TRY TO UNDERSTAND)

LYDIA

I WON'T SAY I'M SORRY
 CAN'T SAY I'M SORRY
 CAN'T GIVE YOU "SORRY"
 WON'T SAY I'M SORRY
 CAN'T SAY I'M SORRY

FLOYD
 IT'S TOO LATE FOR SORRY

Floyd shakes his head and puts on his coat.

FLOYD
 I can't do this. I'm--I'm going to a hotel tonight.

LYDIA
 Floyd.

FLOYD
 I--I'll call you.

*He exits, leaving her in their empty house.
 Lights down.*

Act 2, Scene 19 - Burning House.

XIX. FRANKIE'S HOUSE. DOLLY is cleaning house. She tosses things into garbage bins, it's a cleanse. She opens the curtains, and the window underneath it. She breathes in the air.

The kettle sings. DOLLY pours herself teas with lemon. She sits at the table. She writes, She turns on the radio, and hums along. The world is quiet. And clean.

KNOCK KNOCK.

DOLLY

(to self)

Has everyone forgotten the knock?

She opens the door to a COP.

COP

Ma'am, is this your house.

DOLLY

It is.

COP

Is there anyone else that you are aware that lives at this property?

DOLLY

No, no one I am aware of.

COP

May I come in?

DOLLY

You may not.

COP

Do you recognize this?

He holds up the green paper.

DOLLY

No. Are there any other questions?

COP

Ma'am, are you aware that illegal surgeries have been taking place at the residence?

Beat.

DOLLY

I am.

COP

I am going to have to ask you to come with us, Ma'am.

He cuffs her, and escorts her out.

DOLLY
(looking back)

Goodbye Frankie.

Act 2, Scene 20 - "Any Longer"

XX. DINER. LYDIA is seated at a table, waiting. FLOYD enters.

FLOYD

I'm sorry I'm late.

LYDIA

I was starting to think you wouldn't show up.

FLOYD

Well, I'm here.

(he sits down across from her)

It's funny you'd choose this place to meet, I've only ever driven by here.

LYDIA

Yeah, it's nice.... It's nice to see you.

FLOYD

You too Lydia.

LYDIA

Well, do you know what you want?

FLOYD

I... Yeah, I think I do. I've done some thinking. Liddy... I didn't move to the suburbs for the car or the country club or the white picket fences. I came... Because I wanted to find a place to spend the rest of my life with you. And if you're not happy--we can't have that. We have to change something. I have to change.

Beat.

LYDIA

I meant... Do you know what you want to order. I could eat a cow.

FLOYD

Oh. *Oh*. The, uh... the pancakes look good. Pancakes always look good.

LYDIA

... I shouldn't have lied to you. It became so easy. I convinced myself it was better that way, that you wouldn't want to know anyway. That maybe, you didn't care.

FLOYD

Of course I care. And it sounds much more *tight knit* and interesting than stabbing at yarn with needles. Potentially less dangerous. Those things hurt.

Beat.

Are you still... working?

LYDIA

No, they're... closed for now. Maybe forever.

FLOYD

I'm sorry Lydia. I... I know it was important to you.

LYDIA

It was.

Beat

FLOYD

And I'm really sorry for being late, the bus just...

LYDIA

No, it's okay... I am too.

FLOYD

You got here before me....

No... I'm late.

LYDIA

MARY approaches the table to take their order.

Hi, how are we doing over here?

MARY

Mary stops. She recognizes Lydia.

We're good. How are you?

LYDIA

I'm... I'm doing okay.

MARY
(layered)

Good, I'm so glad.

LYDIA

Thank you. Really.

MARY

*They share a meaningful look. Mary exits.
Floyd looks over his shoulder*

Is...she going to take out order?

FLOYD

Floyd turns back to Lydia

Wait. So you're...?

LYDIA

I don't know. But maybe..

FLOYD

Oh my God. Lydia!

LYDIA

It could be nothing. But, listen, if we're going to do this. I want to do this... together.

FLOYD

Right.

LYDIA

Everything. I'm not gonna be that chipper homemaker waiting all day for you to come home... I want to be your partner, not your sidekick. And I don't want to just keep writing as a hobby, I want to see if I can actually get published. I don't know if I'm any good, but I guess I won't know unless I try. Okay?

FLOYD

Okay. I'm with you.

He takes her hand.

LYDIA

And Floyd?

FLOYD

Mm?

LYDIA

We're going to have to junk that car.

Across the diner, MATEO approaches Mary from behind, he is dressed in a sailor uniform. He pretends to cough and choke on something. She turns, he does a spin "check out my outfit"

MATEO

Well?

MARY

I've said it before but you look good sailor.

MARY dusts his shoulders off.

Don't get it too sandy.

MATEO

I'll do my best.

MARY

Mateo?

MATEO

Nurse Mary?

MARY

Thank you. For everything. You were right, about...a lot. And, I'm pretty sure you saved my life.

MATEO

I was just repaying the favor. One more dance?

MARY

Here?

MATEO clicks a merengue beat with this tongue, and dances with her for tic. They break.

MARY

Goodbye Mateo.

MATEO

Goodbye Marisol. Buena suerte.

MARY drop a check on LYDIA and FLOYD's table. FLOYD picks it up to pay.

FLOYD

I don't want you to be alarmed, but I think our waitress was hitting on me. There's a phone number and it says "please call".

LYDIA takes it from him, from across the diner Mary winks.

Act 2, Scene 20 - "Comets"

XXI. FRANKIE'S HOUSE. Just as it was left.

IDA unlocks all the locks and enters, she scans the place, she breathes, taking it in. She goes to the table and finds the letter Dolly had been writing. A baby cries, IDA looks up. BUNNIE comes down the stairs.

IDA

You're still here.

BUNNIE

For now. I'm going to Arlington to stay with my sister for a while. I really can't thank you enough for everything you've done for me, Ida...I just wish I could have thanked Dolly before they took her in.

IDA

Well, she left us something.

DOLLY enters, but she's not really there.

DOLLY

Last night I couldn't sleep. I went outside and stared at the big lonely sky and it felt it was going to swallow me. I can't remember the last time I looked up at the stars. Ida, you were right. I'm not ready to admit that yet, but I'll get this to you when I am. I've been thinking about how we can do this. Together. They need us. And if that means that our lives become a little more dangerous, well, they already are aren't they? Comets burn up, but as they explode they leave trails, they light up the sky. Even again all the stars, that's what you wish on. I think I'd be alright with being a comet.

RING RING. BUNNIE and IDA can't decide if to pick it up. IDA does.

MARY

I don't know if you remember me, but I remember you. Thank you. I was talking to one of the women you work with. We could really use your advice. I could really use your training Nurse Bartnik. I think we might have a proposition for you.

MARY and LYDIA are now onstage. The women all come together. The sparkling, twinkling, diamond crested sky is suddenly splattered with a flash of comets.

Act 2, Scene 22 - "They"

XXII. ANYWHERE. The show closes with all female members of the cast delivering a focus on the untold stories of some of the women who went to Frankie's House, or somewhere like it.

SOLOIST

LIVING IN A PRISON
THEY SAY I'M TRAPPED INSIDE A DREAM
IF I WAS STRONG ENOUGH TO MUDDLE THROUGH
THEY STILL WOULDN'T AGREE

SOLOIST (cont.)

SHOUTING OUT, INSISTING
PROPELLING REGRET THOUGH
AS IF THEY KNOW

WHAT DO THEY KNOW?
WE ARE OUR OWN
I CAN'T SEE MY SISTERS
BUT I HEAR THEIR BREATH
WHAT DO THEY KNOW?
IN SOLITUDE WE'RE LESS ALONE
NO, THEY COULD, THEY COULD NEVER GUESS

ENSEMBLE

THEY ALL TUNE IN TO LISTEN
 TO THOSE WHO CANNOT TALK
 CAN THEY HEAR MY BLOOD CONVULSING
 CAN THEY SEE ALL OF THE ROCKS
 THEY ARE PILING IN, SPILLING DOWN
 BURYING MY THROAT
 THEY THINK THEY KNOW (WHAT DO THEY KNOW?)

WHAT DO THEY KNOW?
 WE ARE OUR OWN
 I CAN'T SEE MY SISTERS
 BUT I HEAR THEIR BREATH
 WHAT DO THEY KNOW?
 IN SOLITUDE WE'RE LESS ALONE
 NO, THEY COULD, THEY COULD NEVER GUESS

SOLOISTS (& ENSEMBLE)

THIRTY ONE, FOURTEEN MONTHS FROM
 THAT PAPER FOR THE FRAME
 (WHAT DO THEY KNOW?)

FIFTEEN, CONFUSED, LOST
 ALONE, BUT NOT ASHAMED
 (WHAT DO THEY KNOW?)

TWENTY-THREE, A NIGHT THAT DIDN'T
 TURN OUT HOW I MEANT
 (WHAT DO THEY KNOW?)

THIRTY-NINE, DRYING EYES
 IT'S EITHER ME OR THEM
 (WHAT DO THEY KNOW?)

TWENTY-SEVEN
 AND STILL MYSELF A CHILD

NINETEEN, HEM AND FINGERTIPS
 ANYTHING BUT WILD

FORTY-ONE, WITH THREE
AND BARELY GETTING BY

CAN'T THEY RECOGNIZE? (DON'T THEY RECOGNIZE?)

SOLOIST (& ENSEMBLE)

IF IT'S MY OWN,
DOES IT COUNT AS SAVING A LIFE?

ENSEMBLE

WHAT DO THEY KNOW?
WE ARE OUR OWN
I CAN'T SEE MY SISTERS
BUT I HEAR THEIR BREATH
WHAT DO THEY KNOW?
IN SOLITUDE WE'RE LESS ALONE
NO, THEY COULD NEVER GUESS
NO, THEY COULD NEVER EVEN FATHOM IT

SOLOIST

I DON'T HAVE THE ANSWERS
TO WHAT YOU'RE TOO AFRAID TO ASK

ENSEMBLE

JUST IMAGINE THAT