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Butterflies are Free

ACT ONE

SCENE 1

Scene: Don Baker’s apartment on the top floor of a walk-up on the lower east side of Manhattan. L., there is a bed which is raised some six and a half feet from the floor and reached by a ladder. Under the bed is a door leading to the bathroom. d. from the bed is a window and a small bookcase with a few books in it. Above the bed is a skylight, dirty with age. v. from the bed, we can make out some posters and photographs pinned to the wall. v., just L. of c., is the front door. r. of this is the kitchen with sink, stove, cabinets and a vintage refrigerator. d. from the kitchen is an old clawfoot bathtub. A slab of wood has been fitted over the tub to serve as a dining table. There are a couple of cheap stools around the table-tub. r., is a door leading to the next apartment. In front of this is an old chest on which there are some glasses and a couple of bottles of wine. Just below the table-tub, there is an old faded sofa. In front of this is a wood crate which serves as a coffee table. d. c. there is a canvas campaign chair, and d. of this a low rattan stool. There is a telephone on the coffee table, along with an ashtray, a pack of cigarettes and a book of matches. A lighting fixture of colored glass hangs over the table-tub. d. r. there is a thin post which supports a beam.

Before the curtain rises, we hear Don Baker’s voice singing on tape recorder.
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ACT I

DON. (Singing, on tape.)*

"I knew the day you met me
I could love you if you let me
Though you touched my cheek and said
How easy you'd forget me
You said . . .
(There are no words here, so he improvises to
the tune.)
Da de da da da da . . . " etc.

AT RISE: It is a warm day in June. The sun pours in
through the skylight. DON is leaning against one of
the bedposts, drinking a glass of water and listening
to himself on tape. He is in his early twenties, lean
and good-looking. He wears a brown button-down
shirt and sun tan. His hair is neatly combed. The
PHONE RINGS. He looks toward the phone and
speaks to it in a tone indicating he has said this
hundreds of times.

DON. (Speaking to ringing phone—after second ring.)
I'm fine, thank you. How are you? (CrosSES above di-
rector's chair to sofa and turns off recorder.) It's warm
here. How is it in Scarsdale? (CROSSES to sink, puts
glass in it.) Well, it's warm here, too. (CROSSES and picks
up the phone.) Hello, Mother. . . . I just knew. When
you call the phone doesn't ring. It just says "m" is for
the million things she gave your. I'm fine, thank you. How
are you? . . . (SITS sofa.) It's warm here. How is it in
Scarsdale? Well, it's warm here, too. The apartment is
great. I love it. Last night? I didn't do anything last
night. I mean I didn't go out. I had some friends in—a

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little party. . . . I don't know how many people were
here. Do you have to have a number? Twelve and a half,
how's that? . . . No, they didn't stay too late. . . .
When? (Rises, picks up phone, crosses with it onto plat-
form to back of end of dining table.) No! No, not
this afternoon. . . . I don't care. Come to town and go
to Saks, but you're not coming down here. Because we
agreed to two months, didn't we? (Suddenly the noise of
a conversational TV program is heard blaring in the next
apartment.) What? . . . No, I didn't turn on my radio.
It's coming from next door . . . I don't know . . . a
girl. . . . She just moved in a couple of days ago . . .
I don't know her name. I haven't met her. . . . It's her
radio. . . . Don't worry, it won't go on. . . . Yes, I'll
tell her. . . . No, I don't want you to tell her. Just go to
Saks and go home. . . . I can hardly hear you. We'll talk
tomorrow. Goodbye. (DON hangs up, crosses t. to the
doors that connect the apartment and rugs, angrily.) Hey,
would you please . . . (Kno king louder and shouting)
Would you mind lowering your radio? (TV program is
turned off.)

JILL TANNER'S VOICE. Sorry. I couldn't hear you.

DON. I just wanted you to turn your radio down. You
don't have to turn it off. Just lower it, please.

JILL'S VOICE. I haven't got a radio. It's television.

DON. (CROSSES t., sits d. sofa.) Well, whatever. These
walls are made of paper.

JILL'S VOICE. I know—Kleenex. How about a cup of
coffee?

DON. No, thanks. I just had some.

JILL'S VOICE. I meant for me.

DON. (Rises, crosses t. through kitchen t. counter,
lights burner.) Sure. . . . come on in. (DON crosses to
the kitchen and turns the flame on under the coffeepot.
There is a knock at the door as he takes a cup and saucer
from the cupboard over the counter.) It's open.

(JILL TANNER enters, closes door. She is nineteen and
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has a delicate, little-girl quality about her. Her long
hair falls to her shoulders and down her back. She is
dressed in blue jeans and a jar-out, brightly colored
blouse with zipper opened down the back.)

Jill. Hi! I'm Jill Tanner.

Don. (Turning toward her and extending his hand.)

Don Baker.

Jill. (Shakes his hand. Crosses onto platform, R. of
Don.) I hope you don't mind me inviting myself in.
(Turning her back to him.) Would you do the zipper on
my blouse? I can't reach back there. (There is just a flush
of awkwardness as Don reaches out for the zipper and
zips it up. Crosses D. L. to above table. Don gets coffee
jar, spoon and cup.) Your living room is bigger
than mine. How long have you been here?

Don. A month. This isn't the living room. This is the
apartment. That's all there is except I have a big bath-
room.

Jill. (Crosses to in front of refrigerator.) I've got three
rooms if you count the kitchen. I just moved in two days
ago, but I didn't sign a lease or anything—just by the
month. (Crosses D. end of table.) God, you're neat. Every-
thing is so tidy.

Don. It's easy when you haven't got anything. (Pours
water into cup, pot back on stove.)

Jill. (Looking around. Crosses L. to D. end of sofa.)
I haven't got anything, but it manages to wind up all over
the place. I'm afraid I'm a slob. I've heard that boys are
neater than girls. (Looking up, crosses between sofa and
coffee table.) I like your skylight. I don't have that.
(Crosses to ladder.) What's this?

Don. What?

Jill. (Between director's chair and coffee table.) This
thing on stilts.

Don. Oh, my bed.

Jill. (Climbing the ladder onto the bed.) Your bed??!!

Wow! This is WILD!

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Don. Do you like it?

Jill. (On the bed.) This is the greatest bed I've ever
seen in my life . . . and I've seen a lot of beds. Did you
build it?

Don. No, the guy who lived here before me built it. He
was a hippie. He liked to sleep high.

Jill. (Off bed, down ladder, crosses between director's
chair and coffee table to D. L.) Suppose you fall out? You
could break something.

Don. You could break something falling out of any
bed. (Pours the coffee into the cup.) Cream or sugar?

Jill. No, just black.

Don. (Crosses to above coffee table, holds cup out.)
I could have had your apartment, but I took this one be-
cause of the bed.

Jill. (Takes coffee cup.) I don't blame you. (Crossing
to sofa, sits.) You know, I buy flowers and dumb things
like dish towels and paper napkins, but I keep forgetting
to buy coffee. (Sips coffee.)

Don. (Sits director's chair, takes cigarette from table.)
Is it hot enough?

Jill. Great. This'll save my life. I'll pay you back
someday.

Don. You don't have to.

Jill. Do you need any dish towels or paper napkins?

Don. No.

Jill. (Rises, crosses U. C., looks at pictures on wall.)
I've got lots of light bulbs, too . . . everything but coffee.
(At U. R. post.) May I ask you a personal question?

Don. (Lights cigarette, match in ashtray.) Sure.

Jill. (Crosses above L. of Don.) Why don't you want
your mother to come here?

Don. How did you know that?

Jill. If you can hear me, I can hear you. I think the
sound must go right under that door. (Crosses to her
doors.) What's that door for, anyway?

Don. Your apartment and mine were once one apart-
ment. When they converted it into two, they just locked
that door instead of sealing it up. I guess in case they want to make it one again.

**Jill.** (Crosses L. of sofa.) You didn’t answer my question.

**Don.** I forgot what you asked.

**Jill.** (Sits d. end of sofa.) Why don’t you want your mother here?

**Don.** It’s a long story. No, it’s a short story—it’s just been going on a long time. She didn’t want me to leave home. She thinks I can’t make it on my own. Finally, we agreed to letting me try it for two months. I’ve got a month to go.

**Jill.** Why did you tell her you had a party last night?

**Don.** Boy, you don’t miss anything in there, do you?

**Jill.** Not much.

**Don.** I always tell her I’ve had a party . . . or went to one. She wouldn’t understand why I’d rather be here alone than keeping her and the cook company. She’ll hate this place. She hates it now without even seeing it. She’ll walk in and the first thing she’ll say is, “I could absolutely cry!”

**Jill.** Does she cry a lot?

**Don.** No—she just threatens to.

**Jill.** (Rises, crosses d. end of sofa.) If she really wants to cry, send her in to look at my place. At least you’re neat. (Crosses bed to d. r. and toward bookcases.) You’re old enough to live alone, aren’t you? I’m nineteen. How old are you?

**Don.** As far as my mother’s concerned, I’m still eleven . . . going on ten.

**Jill.** We must have the same mother. (Looking at bookcases.) Mine would love me to stay a child all my life . . . or at least all her life. So she won’t age. (Crosses to bathroom door.) She loves it when people say we look like sisters. If they don’t say it, she tells them. (Opens door, looks in, closes door, crosses d. r. post.) Have you got a job?
hated the thought of becoming a grandmother. I'll bet I know what you're thinking.

**DON.** What? (Returns, holds cup out to JILL. Who takes it. DON crosses to D. L. post and leans against it.)

**JILL.** You're thinking I don't look like a divorcée.

**DON.** No, I wasn't thinking that. What does a divorcée look like?

**JILL.** Oh, you know. They're usually around thirty-five with tight-fitting dresses and high-heel patent leather shoes and big boobs. (Over back of sofa and sits; cup on coffee table.) I look more like the kid in a custody fight.

**DON.** How long were you married?

**JILL.** God, it seemed like weeks! (Takes cigarette.) Actually, it was six days. (She lights cigarette.) It wasn't Jack's fault. It wasn't anybody's fault. It was just one of those terrible mistakes you make before you can stop yourself even though you know it's a mistake while you're doing it.

**DON.** What was he like?

**JILL.** Jack? Oh . . . (Uncomfortably, rises, crosses u. c. near u. r. post.) I really can't talk about him.

**DON.** (Crosses and sits sofa.) Then don't. I'm sorry.

**JILL.** No, I will talk about him. (Crosses above coffee table.) Once in a while it's good for you to do something you don't want to do. It cleanses the insides. He was terribly sweet and groovy-looking, but kind of adolescent, you know what I mean? (Flicks ash into ashtray.) Girls mature faster than boys. Boys are neater, but girls mature faster. (Sits director's chair.) When we met it was like fireworks. I don't know if I'm saying it right, but it was a marvelous kind of passion that made every day like the Fourth of July. Anyway, the next thing I knew we were standing in front of a justice of the peace getting married.

**DON.** How long had you known him?

**JILL.** Two or three weeks, but I mean there we were getting married! (Sits back in chair, feet on stool.) I hadn't even finished high school and I had two exams the next day and they were on my mind, too. (Rises, crosses through kitchen to D. L. post.) I heard the justice of the peace saying, "Do you, Jack, take Jill to be your lawfully wedded wife?" Can you imagine going through life as Jack and Jill? And then I heard "Till death do you part" and, suddenly, it wasn't a wedding ceremony. It was a funeral service.

**DON.** (Takes a cigarette.) Jesus!

**JILL.** (Crosses below to u. bench.) You know that wedding ceremony is very morbid when you think about it. I hate anything morbid and there I was being buried alive . . . under Jack Benson. I wanted to run screaming out into the night!

**DON.** (Lights cigarette.) Did you?

**JILL.** (Turns, crosses d. r. post.) I couldn't. It was ten o'clock in the morning. I mean you can't go screaming out into ten o'clock in the morning . . . so I passed out. If only I'd fainted before I said "I do."

**DON.** As long as you were married, why didn't you try to make it work?

**JILL.** (Crosses to coffee table, picks up ashtray.) I did try—believe me. I tried for six days, but I knew it was no good.

**DON.** Were you in love with him? (Flicks an ash from his cigarette onto the table where the ashtray had been before JILL moved it. JILL reacts to this, fleeting, and shrugs it off.)

**JILL.** In my way.

**DON.** What's your way?

**JILL.** (Crosses to ladder, climbs to second or third step.) I don't know . . . Well, I think just because you love someone that doesn't necessarily mean that you want to spend the rest of your life with him. But Jack loved me. I mean he really, really loved me and I hurt him and that's what I can't stand. I just never want to hurt anybody. (Off ladder through kitchen to u. end of table. DON rises, crosses to l. of director's chair.) I mean marriage is a commitment, isn't it? I just can't be committed or involved. Can you understand?
DON. I understand, but I don’t agree. (*Flicks his ashes onto the table again, sits director’s chair. Jill looks at him, oddly.*)

JILL. Then you don’t understand really. What is this? Maybe I’ve got it wrong. Maybe boys mature faster and girls are neater.

DON. What do you mean?

JILL. (*Crosses above table to d. end of table.*) Or maybe you know something I don’t know—like ashes are good for the table? Is that why you keep dropping them there?

DON. Did you move the ashtray?

JILL. (*Holding up the ashtray in her hand, crosses off platform to d. end of sofa; flicks ash into ashtray.*) It’s right here. Are you blind?

DON. Yes.

JILL. What do you mean—yes?

DON. I mean yes. I’m blind.

JILL. (*Puts ashtray on d. end of sofa.*) You’re putting me on.

DON. No, I’m blind. I’ve always been blind.

JILL. (*Crosses above table to d. end of sofa.*) Really blind. Not just near-sighted.

DON. The works. I can’t see a thing. (*Jill crosses l. of Don, leans over and runs her hands across Don’s eyes. When he doesn’t blink, she realizes he is indeed blind.*)

JILL. (*Crosses up to her door.*) God! I hope I didn’t say anything . . .

DON. (*Rises, crosses above director’s chair.*) Now don’t get self-conscious about it. I’m not.

JILL. Why didn’t you tell me?

DON. I just did.

JILL. (*Crosses d. l. off platform.*) I mean when I came in.

DON. (*Crosses above table to d. l. post.*) You didn’t ask me.

JILL. (*Crosses below to d. r.*) Ask! Why would I ask?
JILL. But isn't it rough getting around New York? It is for me!

DON. Not at all. I manage very well with my cane. I've got so I know exactly how many steps to take to the grocery . . . the laundry . . . the drugstore.

JILL. Where's a laundry? I need one.

DON. Next to the delicatessen. Forty-four steps from the front door.

JILL. I didn't see it.

DON. I'll show it to you.

JILL. (Crosses below to end of sofa.) What about here in the apartment? Aren't you afraid of bumping into everything? You could hurt yourself.

DON. I've memorized the room. (Moves about the room with grace and confidence, calling off each item as he touches it or points to it.) Bed . . . bathroom . . . bookcase . . . guitar . . . my cane. (Holds up the white, aluminum walking stick, then puts it back on the hook.)

JILL. (Crosses to r. c.) What are those books?

DON. Braille . . . front door . . . tape recorder. (Moving on. Jill crosses to stool, sits watching.) Dining table . . . bathtub. (Crosses quickly to the chest of drawers against the door to Jill's apartment.) Chest of drawers. (Touching things on top.) Wine . . . more wine . . . glasses. (Opens drawer.) Linens. (Closes the drawer, moves on to kitchen.) Kitchen. (Opens cabinet over counter.) Dishes, cups, glasses. Coffee . . . sugar . . . salt and pepper . . . corn flakes . . . ketchup . . . et cetera. (Returning to sofa.) Now, if you'll put back the ashtray. (She replaces the ashtray on the table and Don stamps his cigarette out in it. He sits on sofa and holds his arms out bravura. Jill kneels by u. end of coffee table.) Voilà! If you don't move anything, I'm as good as anyone else.

JILL. Better. God, I can't find anything in my place. The ketchup usually winds up in my stocking drawer and my stockings are in the oven. If you really want to see chaos, come and look at . . . (She catches herself, self-conscious.)

Rises, crosses away r.) I mean . . . I meant . . .

DON. I know what you mean. Relax. I'm no different from anyone else except that I don't see. The blindness is nothing. The thing I find hard to live with is other people's reactions to my blindness. If they'd only behave naturally. (Don moves stool level with Don, sits.) Some people want to assume guilt—which they can't because my mother has that market cornered—or they treat me as though I were living in some Greek tragedy, which I assure you I'm not. Just be yourself.

JILL. I'll try . . . but I've never met a blind person before.

DON. That's because we're a small, very select group . . . like Eskimos. How many Eskimos do you know?

JILL. I never thought blind people would be like you.

DON. They're not all like me. We're all different.

JILL. (On kneels, end of coffee table.) I mean . . . I always thought blind people were kind of . . . you know . . . spooky.

DON. (In a mock sinister voice.) But, of course. (Rises, crosses below r. to above director's chair.) We sleep all day hanging upside down from the shower rod. As soon as it's dark, we wake up and fly into people's windows. That's why they say, 'Blind as a bat.'

JILL. (On knees by stool.) No, seriously . . . do blind people have a sixth sense?

DON. No. If I had six senses, I'd still have only five, wouldn't I? (Sits director's chair.) My other senses—hearing, touch, smell—may be they're a little more developed than yours, but that's only because I use them more. I have to.

JILL. Boy, I think it's just so great that you aren't bitter. You don't seem to have any bitterness at all. (She sits on end of the sofa.) I've moved. I'm sitting on the sofa now.

DON. I know.

JILL. How did you know?
DON. I heard you—and your voice is coming from a different spot.

JILL. Wow! How do you do that?
DON. It's easy. (Rises. Jill rises, crosses u. end of sofa.) Close your eyes and listen. (He tiptoes through kitchen to l. of d. l. post.) You know where I am?

JILL. There. Hey, it works. (Sits d. end of table, feet on d. arm of sofa.) You're really something. I think I'd be terribly bitter if I couldn't see. I'd sure be disagreeable.

DON. No, you wouldn't.

JILL. I couldn't be cheerful like you. I don't have any marvelous qualities like courage and fortitude.

DON. Neither have I. I'm just naturally adorable.

JILL. You're more than that. I can tell you're a much better person than I am.

DON. Are you speaking to me or Gunga Din?

JILL. I would not “go gentle into that good night.” I would “rage against the dying of the light.”

DON. Dylan Thomas.

JILL. Who?

DON. That's a line from a poem by Dylan Thomas.

JILL. (Delightfully surprised.) It is?! You mean I can quote from Dylan Thomas?

DON. You just did.

JILL. How about that! I've never even read him. I don't know where I learned it. I can quote Mark Twain.

(Rises, crosses u. c.) Do you want to hear my favorite quotation? It's by Mark Twain.

DON. (Squats d. end of table.) Go ahead.

JILL. (Reciting.) "I only ask to be free. The butterflies are free. Mankind will surely not deny to Harold Skimpole what it concedes to the butterflies." (Resuming her normal tone. Lies on table.) I identify strongly with butterflies. Do you like that quotation?

DON. Yes, but it's not by Mark Twain.

JILL. (Sits up.) Why not?

DON. Because it was written by Charles Dickens.

JILL. Are you sure?
ACT I

I say I think. I'll know later this afternoon. I'm auditioning for a new off-Broadway play.

Don. Good part?

Jill. I guess so. It's the lead. (Crosses between sofa and coffee table.) It's about a girl who gets all hung up because she's married a homosexual. Originally, he was an alcoholic, but homosexuals are very "in" now, so they changed it. (Sits sofa.) Are you homosexual?

Don. No—just blind.

Jill. They are in everything now . . . books, plays, movies. It's really too bad. I always thought of them as kind of magical and mysterious—the greatest secret society in the world. Now they're telling all the secrets and you find out they're just sad and mixed up like everybody else. (Shifts to d. end of sofa.) Do you know any homosexuals?

Don. I doubt it. I've been in Scarsdale all my life.

Jill. One of my best friends is gay. Dennis. He's a designer. He made this blouse. (Holds her blouse out for Don to see, then winces to herself.)

Don. (Rises, crosses to bed, puts guitar back, leans d. r. post.) I'm sure it's pretty.

Jill. Actually, he made it for himself, but I talked him out of it. Dennis is campy and fun . . . but I don't like lesbians. They're so heavy and humorless. If guys are called "gay," the girls should be called "glum."

Don. (Sits director's chair.) Tell me about the play. Does the girl convert the husband?

Jill. Almost, but in the end he runs off with her brother.

Don. So her husband becomes her sister-in-law.

Jill. Something like that. Or she becomes her own sister-in-law. I have a good chance of getting the part. The director is a friend of mine, but I have to be approved by the author.

Don. Who's the director?

Jill. You wouldn't know him. His name is Ralph Austin. He's done a few plays here, but never had a hit.
He started in L.A. doing off-Broadway plays on Hollywood Boulevard.

DON. That's what I call off-Broadway.

JILL. We kind of made it together for a few months, but then he wanted to get married. I just couldn't face that again.

DON. Were you in love with him?

JILL. I don't think I've ever really been in love with anyone. *(Rises, swings around d. l., post.)* I don't want to be. It's too ... confining and somebody always gets hurt. Are you hungry?

DON. Not very. Are you?

JILL. Always. My appetite embarrasses me. I told you I think about food a lot ... and care deeply. *(Crosses between sofa and coffee table to front door.)* Why don't I go down to the delicatessen and get something? I know exactly where it is—forty-four steps from the front door.

DON. That's the laundry. The delicatessen is fifty-one steps. *(Crosses, crosses to refrigerator.)* I've got things to eat.

JILL. *(Crosses r. of DON.)* What have you got?

DON. Some bologna and salami and cole slaw . . . and I think there's some potato salad.

JILL. Boy, you are a delicatessen. Can you shop for yourself?

DON. Sure.

JILL. I mean I know you can tell a dime from a quarter, but how do you know the difference between a dollar bill and a five?

*(DON takes his wallet from his hip pocket and takes out a bill. Crosses to above table. JILL crosses d. with him.)*

DON. This is a one. Right?

JILL. How do you know?

DON. Because it's folded once. If it were a five, I'd fold it again . . . like this. *(Folds bill again.)* And a ten I'd fold once more. *(Folds the bill again to demonstrate,*

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then unfolds it and puts it back in his wallet and puts the wallet back in his pocket.) Got it?

JILL. What about twenties?

DON. Who's got twenties? *(Crosses to the counter and gets a tray and two plates which he puts on dining table. He sets about putting the food from the icebox on the plates. JILL sits on table.)*

JILL. Can I do something?

DON. There are some knives and forks in the chest of drawers. You can set the table.

JILL. *(Crossing to chest.)* Let's don't eat at the table. Let's have a picnic.

DON. Where?

JILL. *(Points to area r. of director's chair.)* On the floor.

DON. Okay, set the floor.

JILL. *(Takes a small cloth from the chest and sets it out on the floor r. of the canvas chair.)* Is blindness hereditary?

DON. I've never heard that.

JILL. Can your father see?

DON. *(Taking tray with plates and food to dining table, starts making sandwiches.)* I doubt it. He's been dead for six years. Up till then he didn't have any trouble.

JILL. *(Crosses below to chest, gets two forks.)* I'll bet you miss him.

DON. *(Nodding, sadly.)* Very much. He was the only friend I had growing up. He was the kind of man who would have been my friend even if he hadn't been my father. *(JILL crosses through kitchen to towel rack over sink, takes some off for napkins.)* You know what I mean. But it's been rough on Mom since he died because Mom felt she had to be mother and father . . . and sister and brother and cousin and uncle and doctor and lawyer . . . senator . . . congressman . . .

JILL. *(Crossing to "picnic." Sets forks and napkins.)* I get it, I get it. Why were you born blind? Did the doctor say why?
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starts to eat.) Tell me about Little Donny Dark. It might curb my appetite.

Don. Donny is twelve years old and was born blind like me only it's no handicap to Little Donny Dark. He can drive cars and fly planes, 'cause, you see, his other faculties are so highly developed that he can hear a bank being robbed a mile away and he can smell the Communists cooking up a plot to overthrow the government. He's a diligent fighter of crime and injustice and at the end of every book, as he is being given a medal from the police or the C.I.A. or the F.B.I., he always says, "There are none so blind as those who will not see!"

Jill. I didn't know the police and the F.B.I. gave out medals.

Don. They give 'em to Little Donny Dark. They'd better!

Jill. Boy! Let's have a drink.

Don. (Rising.) I've only got wine.

Jill. That's all I drink.

Don. With bologna?

Jill. With everything. (Don crosses below to the chest.) Do children really read those books?

Don. (Stopping.) Shh! I'm counting—so I don't step in the picnic when I come back. (Don continues to the chest.) ——— steps. (Takes a bottle of wine which has been opened, and some glasses. Jill watches in awe.)

Jill. I could never do that. I'd wind up with both feet in the cole slaw.

Don. (Crosses back to "picnic." He sits, placing the bottle and glasses on the floor between them. He pours the wine.) No, you wouldn't.

Jill. I speak from experience. Did you ever play Pin the Tail on the Donkey?

Don. (Pouring wine.) I've heard of it.

Jill. We always played it at birthday parties when I was a kid. I remember Julie Patterson's birthday. I guess I was about seven. They blindfolded me and started me
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for the donkey and I stuck the pin smack into Mrs.
Patterson's ass.

DON. Oh, no! (Hands glass to JILL, then pours a glass
for himself. Places bottle above cloth.) Well . . . donkey
. . . ass . . . it's all the same, isn't it?

JILL. Not to Mrs. Patterson, it wasn't. She never
believed I didn't do it on purpose. I didn't. I didn't have to.
I mean if you knew Mrs. Patterson's ass—well, you
couldn't miss it . . . just no way. But you'd've won
every prize there. My language gets a little raunchy sometimes.
I hope you don't mind four-letter words like "ass."

(Shakes a long swing of wine.) I'm ready for more.

DON. More what?

JILL. Little Donny Dark. Is she still writing them?

DON. No. She wrote about six. They were pretty
popular . . . no Mary Poppins, but pretty popular . . .
(Wryly.) Unless you happened to be blind. They didn't
exactly tell it like it is.

JILL. (Takes a piece of meat from DON's plate, having
finished her own.) I'm taking some of your bologna.

DON. I guess the books were sort of a projection of
what my mother hoped I'd be—a sightless superman.

JILL. Where did you go to school?

DON. In the living room, I was taught by tutors who

JILL. I thought there were schools for blind children.

DON. There are, but I didn't know that. I didn't know
much of anything until about a year ago.

JILL. (Spears a piece of DON's bologna with her fork.)
You've just finished your bologna. What happened a year
ago?

DON. (Rising, crosses l. between sofa and coffee table to
above director's chair.) A family named Fletcher moved
near us and their daughter, Linda, used to come by to
read to me. She was the first friend I had after my father
died. She was great—a real swinger. She used to drive me
down here and introduce me to people and take me to
parties. All of a sudden, I was living—and learning. At

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home I was like a pet in a cage. Linda gave me something
nobody ever thought to give me—confidence. She talked
me into making the break and she found this place for
me. At first I was scared to death, but I did it. (Crosses
to director's chair.) Maybe it was a mistake . . .
I don't know.

JILL. (Rising, crosses to DON.) No, it wasn't. You've
got to make that break sometime. Your mother isn't
going to live forever.

DON. Don't tell her that.

JILL. Look at someone like Helen Keller. She was blind
and deaf and dumb, but she became . . . Helen Keller.
What became of Linda?

DON. She got married a few weeks ago and she's living
in Chicago. I wish she were here. It would be a lot easier.

JILL. Well, listen . . . I'm here. I'm right next door.
Any time you need me, just knock. You don't even have
to knock. Just whisper and I can hear you. (Looks over
at her door, crosses through kitchen to it.) Hey—you
know what?

DON. (Crosses by ladder.) What?

JILL. Why don't we open this door?

DON. Which door?

JILL. This door to my apartment. There must be a key
for it. (Crosses l. of DON.) Let's unlock it. Then we can
go back and forth without going out in the hall.

DON. The super probably has a key, but I don't think
we ought to ask him. No, I don't think we ought to do
that.

JILL. Why not? We're friends, aren't we?

DON. But we'd be practically living together. How
would it look? (Excitedly, answering his own question,
crosses below l. to chest.) Who cares how it looks? I
can't see, anyway!

JILL. (Crosses to the kitchen, finds large knife and
crosses to her door.) I'll bet we can open it with this big
knife.
DON. We'll have to move the chest. *They grab the edges of the chest.*

JILL. Move it toward you. *They move the chest away from the door into l. corner.* That's fine. *Jill rushes at the lock with the knife. She maneuvers it around, but nothing happens. Don crosses below Jill to r. side of door.*

DON. What's on the other side?

JILL. My bedroom. This isn't working. Boy, a burglar can just smile at a lock and it opens, but honest people like you and me . . . Tsk!

DON. Hey, I heard something click.

JILL. That was me. I went "tsk!" Damn! Maybe we'd better call the super.

DON. Let me try. *Jill places the knife in Don's hand. He feels for the lock and maneuvers the knife around in it. He takes the knife from the lock and, delicately, works it between the door and the lock.* I felt something. *Suddenly the door opens. Jill crosses below Don and into doorway.*

JILL. You did it! It's open! *We can see part of Jill's bedroom with a lot of her things strewn about, untidily. Quickly, embarrassed.* Oh, don't look! It's an absolute pigsty!

DON. *Covering his eyes.* I won't.

JILL. *Sinking; closes to d. l. and sits d. end of coffee table on rug.* I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

DON. Stop being sorry.

JILL. I'll get the hang of it. I just don't know when. *Don closes the door.* Let's leave it open.

DON. *Opens the door again, then crosses to kitchen to put the knife away.* Okay, but tell me if you close it again. I don't want to break my nose on it. *Don crosses above table to r. of d. l. post.*

JILL. Do you wish it were Linda living there instead of me?

DON. I never even thought about it. Why do you ask?
DON. (Dropping the fall like a hot potato.) What happened?

JILL. (Picks up the fall and puts it on the coffee table.) It's just a fall. It's a long piece of hair that you attach to your head.

DON. It's not your hair?

JILL. It's not even my fall. I borrowed it from Susan Potter. I have hair of my own. See? I mean feel? (Places his hand on her head. Don takes in the shape of her head, then moves his hand along her face, over her eyes. A false eyelash comes off in his hand.)

DON. (Rises, backs up onto platform, grabs d. l. post.) God! Now what?!

JILL. Oh damn—a false eyelash. (Takes the eyelash from him and puts it in her pocket.)

DON. Don't you have eyelashes?

JILL. (Kneels d. arm of sofa.) Of course, but these are longer than mine. They make my eyes look bigger. Didn't Linda wear them?

DON. No.

JILL. She probably has naturally long lashes. I hate her. (Placing his hand on her cheek.) Go on.

DON. This is scaring hell out of me.

JILL. It's all right. Everything's real from now on.

DON. (Runs his fingers across JILL's mouth.) Am I not the image of Elizabeth Taylor?

DON. I've never felt Elizabeth Taylor.

JILL. We look exactly alike. Especially if you can't see. (JILL smiles at DON, oddly, as his fingers explore her throat. She takes his hand and places it on her breast.) That's my breast. All mine. Boh of them. (Gently, she pushes him down on the table. She kisses him full on the mouth. DON twists his head away from her and gets off table. Suddenly, anguished, crosses above v. end of sofa.)

What's the matter?

DON. What do you think is the matter?

JILL. (Between sofa and coffee table.) If I knew, I wouldn't ask.

ACT ONE

SCENE 2

When the curtain rises, the remnants of the picnic lunch are still on the floor. JILL's blouse lies in a heap on the floor at the v. end of the coffee table. Her jeans and sandals are on the floor by the v. end of the sofa. Her fall is on the v. end of the sofa, partially hidden by DON's shirt and trousers which are draped over the v. arm of the sofa. JILL is in her apartment. DON, dressed only in his jockey shorts, is on the bed. He is playing his guitar and singing.

DON. (Singing as the curtain rises.)

On that velvet morning
As our love was forming
I said you couldn't hurt me
If you left without warning.
I said, "Butterflies are free,
And so are we."

(JILL calls from her apartment.)

JILL's Voice. I can't find it. I can't find anything in this mess.
DON. (Turns off recorder.) What are you looking for?
JILL'S VOICE. Never mind. It's here somewhere. (Enters from her apartment dressed only in panties and bra and carrying a box a little larger than a cigar box, made of beautiful wood and mother of pearl. She curls up on the bed beside Don.) I found it.
DON. What is it?
JILL. My secret box. I take it with me everywhere. Here. Feel it. (Places Don's hand on the box. He runs his fingers over it.)
DON. Beautiful wood.
JILL. And mother of pearl.
DON. (Smiling.) What do you keep in it?
JILL. (Opening the box and rummaging through it.) Everything important to me. (She takes out a small piece of rock.) This is a piece of the moon or a star. (She places it in Don's hand.) I found it in the desert. I showed it to a geologist who said he'd never seen any mineral like it on earth and it probably fell here from the moon or maybe a star.
DON. It feels like a rock.
JILL. (Taking it and putting it back in the box.) I know, but it isn't. One of my baby teeth. (She rummages through some papers.) My birth certificate. ... A picture of me when I was in "The Mikado" in high school. It's not very good anyway ... my last will and testament.
DON. Your last will and testament???
JILL. (Holding up a sheet of yellow foolscap paper.) And the instructions for my funeral. My entire estate is to be divided, equally, among whoever are my four closest friends when I die. Names to be filled in later.
DON. I thought you didn't like anything morbid.
JILL. But that's the point. It isn't morbid. Funerals don't have to be morbid. I want mine in a large church, but I want all the pews and seats removed and just lots of big cushions for people to lie on. (Down ladder. Don lies on stomach, head d. s.) I don't want anyone dressed in black. They should all be in gay, bright colors and far-out clothes and they should all be drinking or smoking pot or whatever they like. (Crosses above coffee table.) I want Salvador Dali to paint the walls with lots of groovy pictures— (Kneels l. pillow at "picnic." ) and I want tons of flowers, but not formal wreaths. Just tons of wild flowers strewn everywhere.
DON. And butterflies?
JILL. (By d. r. post.) Oh, yes, lots of butterflies. And I want music going all the time. I want the Beatles to write a special memoriam for me and to sing it. (Crosses above director's chair. Don lies on left side, head u., leans on l. arm.) And I want the Rolling Stones to sing, and Simon and Garfunkle and the Doors and the Vienna Boys' Choir.
DON. And me ... .
JILL. (Crosses up ladder, kisses him.) ... and you ... and you.
DON. How about a eulogy?
JILL. (Off ladder, crosses onto platform in kitchen.) Yes—to be delivered by Sidney Poitier. I love his voice. (Crosses above director's chair.) And at the same time I want Andre Previn playing "Ave Maria" on the organ. If he can't come, maybe Leonard Bernstein. (Up ladder onto bed u. of Don.) There's nothing morbid about that, is there?
DON. Not at all.
JILL. (Taking some hippie beads from the box.) Oh, here it is! A present for you. (Slips the beads over his head.)
DON. What is it?
JILL. What does it feel like?
DON. A necklace.
JILL. They're love beads. I wore them when I was a hippie. You ought to wear beads if you're going to play the guitar.
DON. Nobody told me.
JILL. Donovan wears them ... and Jimi Hendrix.
BUTTERFLIES ARE FREE

ACT 1

DON. What else should I wear?
JILL. Oh, some kicky clothes . . . wild. And your hair doesn't exactly blow the mind. (Off bed.)
DON. What's wrong with it?
JILL. (Runs through kitchen to her apartment.) I can fix it. (Exits to her apartment.)
DON. What's wrong with it?
JILL'S VOICE. The way you comb it. It's a little square.
I can fix it. I know I have a comb here. (Jill returns.
She looks toward the refrigerator.)
JILL. Is there anything left to eat? I'm starving.
DON. (Stands on ladder.) So soon?
JILL. Isn't it awful?
DON. (Halfway down ladder.) There should be a couple of apples.
JILL. (Rushes to the refrigerator. She opens it and peers in.) There's an awful lot of lettuce—which is not exactly what I was dreaming of. I only see one apple. (Takes the apple out.)
DON. It's yours. (Down ladder.)
JILL. Thanks. (Sits Don in director's chair.) Come on, sit here. Just sit still.
DON. I don't know that I want to look like a hippie.
JILL. You're not going to look like a hippie. You're going to look hip. (Proceeds to do his hair over.)
DON. When were you a hippie?
JILL. (Combs Don's hair over his forehead.) I guess it was right after my marriage. I used to hang around Sunset Strip and smoke pot and say things like, "Down with the fuzz" and "Don't trust anyone over thirty." The whole bit. I just did it because everybody was doing it. Then I stopped because everybody was doing it. I felt I was losing my individuality—whatever that is. (Presses Don's hair down.) The main thing, of course, was to protest against my mother, but it didn't work. I mean I walked in one day with my hair long and stringy, wearing far-out clothes and beads and sandals . . . she LOVED it! Next day, she had stringy hair and far-out clothes and beads and sandals. Well, I mean how can you protest against someone who's doing the same thing you are? Right? (Steps 1. to inspect the hair style; rejects it, crosses behind Don again, fluffs his hair.) So, I went the other way and joined the Young Republicans for Ronald Reagan. Another mistake. There's no such thing as a young Republican. (Blows on his hair and, crossing D. L. studies it.) There. You look terrific.
DON. It doesn't look too wild, does it?
JILL. (Kneels 1. beside him.) No, no! It gives you charisma.
DON. What do you mean—charisma?
JILL. It's like pizzazz. Star quality. It's better than talent. If you have charisma, you don't need anything else. They'll line up for blocks to see you. (Looks at him for a moment; then kisses him gently; leans against his chest.) You're beautiful, you know? I mean you're a beautiful person inside as well as out.
DON. (Smiling.) I like you, too.
JILL. (Looks at him.) I feel I ought to tell you something.
DON. What?
JILL. Well, before . . . when I put your hand on my breast . . . were you shocked?
DON. Sort of. I don't mean from the standpoint of morals or anything. I was just surprised to be feeling a girl's breast when I wasn't expecting to.
JILL. I wouldn't like you to think that I go around putting men's hands on my breast.
DON. No, I don't think you go around doing that.
JILL. If I want to go to bed with a guy . . . usually, I have a little smile that lets him know I'm interested.
DON. (Reaching his hand out.) Oh, yeah? I want to feel that smile. Is that it?
JILL. (Starts to giggle.) I can't do it now. You're making me laugh. I'll do it later. But I had to use a different approach with you, didn't I? Well, I didn't want you to think I was terrible.
DON. I didn't. I don't.

JILL. (Rises, crosses above him, arms around him.) I hate talking about sex, but I thought maybe you'd like to know that you're... well, really groovy.

DON. (Smiling.) Like the Fourth of July?

JILL. Like the Fourth of July—and like Christmas. (Leans down and kisses his forehead.)

DON. Where are you going?

JILL. I'm going to finish this apple... and maybe I'll have some lettuce. (Crosses to kitchen and puts apple on counter, then crosses to refrigerator, opens door and looks in. DON rises and starts up the ladder to his bed. The door opens, quietly, and MRS. BAKER enters. She is an attractive woman, well dressed, and carrying a Saks Fifth Avenue box. She smiles at DON, silently. JILL turns, sees MRS. BAKER and, in an effort to hide her near nudity, slams the refrigerator door and tries to hide behind the pipes by the sink. MRS. BAKER turns to look at JILL for a moment. She completes the turn, looking back at DON, scowling with disapproval. DON sits on his bed, aware of someone new in the room.)

DON. Hello, Mother! (Blackout.)

CURTAIN

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

SCENE 1

The same. A moment later.

DON is sitting on the bed gritting his teeth and trying not to show his annoyance. JILL is still pecking out from behind the pipes by the sink. MRS. BAKER is still looking at DON.

MRS. BAKER. I'm glad I found you in, Donny.

DON. Jill, this is my mother.

(MRS. BAKER closes the door behind her.)

JILL. (Backing away to above c. of table.) Your mother?! Have I been here a month?

DON. Mother, this is... Mrs. Benson.

(MRS. BAKER studies JILL from head to toe with ill-concealed disapproval.)

JILL. How do you do?

MRS. BAKER. (Coolly. Steps toward JILL.) How do you do, Mrs. Benson? Are you living here, too?

JILL. I live next door. I just stopped in to ask Don to... or... I had trouble zipping up my blouse.

MRS. BAKER. So I see. Where is your blouse?

JILL. (Looking around.) It must be here somewhere. (Sees it on floor and rushes to get it.) There it is. (Crosses between coffee table and canvas chair to blouse, picks it up, crosses r. of MRS. BAKER to kitchen, puts blouse on.) You see I have this long zipper in the back. It's hard
to do alone. (Scrambles into her blouse. Mrs. Baker picks up Don's clothes and places them on his lap.)

Mrs. Baker. Put your things on.

Don. (Rises and puts pants on.) All right, Mom, what are you doing here? We had an agreement.

Mrs. Baker. (Crosses to coffee table, puts Saks box down, opens box, puts shirts on coffee table, then crosses c., looking at poster on r. wall.) I was in the neighborhood . . .

Don. You were at Saks which is on 50th Street and Fifth Avenue. This is 11th Street between Second and Third.

Mrs. Baker. I bought you some shirts and I thought you'd have them sooner if I brought them myself.

Don. I don't need any shirts. You just brought them as an excuse to come down here.

Jill. (Crosses between sofa and coffee table to Mrs. Baker and turns her back to be zipped.) Would you mind, please?

Mrs. Baker. (Glares daggers at Jill's back, but sips the blouse. Jill crosses to above table. Crossing c., glancing at ladder.) And this is what you left home for?

Don. This is it.

Mrs. Baker. (Glancing at bookcase.) It isn't Buckingham Palace, is it?

Don. No, it's the Taj Mahal.

Mrs. Baker. (Moves d., stopping d. r. to look at the "picnic" things on the floor.) Is this where you eat—on the floor?

Jill. (Crosses below to above "picnic," picks up something from plate, leans d. r. post. Mrs. Baker counters u. c. toward sofa.) We were having a make-believe picnic.

Don. It's fun eating on the floor, Mom. You ought to try it. (A withering glance from Mrs. Baker is Don's reply. Mrs. Baker takes in the sofa and chairs.)

Mrs. Baker. (Gloves and purse on u. end of sofa, crosses up into kitchen.) Where did this furniture come from?

ACT II

Don. Some of it came with the apartment and some of it I picked up in a junk shop.

Mrs. Baker. (In refrigerator area.) Don't tell me which is which. Let me guess. (Mrs. Baker crosses to Jill's door and looks inside, in disbelief.) What in God's name is this?

Don. I don't know what you're looking at.

Jill. (Crosses above director's chair.) That's my apartment.

Mrs. Baker. Have you ever thought about hiring a maid, Mrs. Benson?

Jill. (Crosses above u. end of coffee table.) I can manage. I may be sloppy, but I'm not dirty. There's a difference between sloppy and dirty.

Mrs. Baker. I'm so glad to hear that.

Don. So she's not Craig's wife.

Mrs. Baker. (Crosses d. on platform to d. l. post, pointing to Jill's door.) Has this door always been open?

Don. No, it's always been locked. I opened it this morning.

Mrs. Baker. (Crosses off platform to d. l. Jill counters u. c.) What on earth is that?!

Don. Now what are you looking at?

Mrs. Baker. (Crosses above canvas chair.) That's what I'd like to know.

Jill. (Crosses u. end of ladder.) It's your bed.

Don. My bed.

Jill. Isn't that great?

Mrs. Baker. (Incredulously. Crosses to ladder. Jill crosses through kitchen to above dining table.) You actually sleep up there?

Don. Like a baby.

Mrs. Baker. What happens if you fall out?

Don. I go to the ladder and climb up again. (Jill crosses d. end of table to d. l. post.)

Mrs. Baker. (Crosses away c.) Where are your clothes?
DON. There's a closet and chest of drawers in the
bathroom.
MRS. BAKER. And where is the bathroom . . . under
the bed?
DON. That's right.
MRS. BAKER. Of course it is. (Exits to the
bathroom, closes door. DON climbs down ladder
with shirt. JILL rushes to DON.)
JILL. (Takes DON d. l.) Boy, were you ever
good!
DON. About what?
JILL. She never had syphilis. I'm surprised she had you.
(They hug each other.) Why did you introduce me as
MRS. Benson?
DON. I don't know. It makes you sound . . . more
important.
(Offstage we can hear the sound of the toilet flushing.)
JILL. (Crossing above dining table to u. end of ladder.)
What is she doing?
DON. (Putting shirt on, crossing through kitchen to u.
end of coffee table. Love beads outside shirt.) Testing the
plumbing. (Shouting.) She's a nut about plumbing.
JILL. (Crossing to DON.) Sssh! How did you know it
was your mother when she came in? She didn't make a
sound.
DON. Smell.
JILL. (Crosses to u. end of ladder.) What is that?
DON. (Crosses u. c.) It's called Numero Dix and she
uses half a bottle at a time. I always know when she's
around.
JILL. (Crosses to r. of DON.) It's like having a bell on
a cat. (Offstage we hear the sound of a drawer closing.
Crosse above ladder to bathroom door.) Now what is
she doing?
DON. Checking the drawers to see if I have enough
socks and underwear. (Shouting. JILL crosses below ladder
to r. of DON; puts hand over his mouth.) She's a nut
about socks and underwear. What she's really doing is
gathering up evidence to hit me with and try to make me
come home. I was so sure she'd walk in and say, "I could
absolutely cry." She let me down.
JILL. She's not finished. She'll say it.
DON. No, she'd have said it by now. I know all her
routines.
JILL. What do you want to bet she says it? How about
dinner tonight? If she doesn't say it, we eat in my place,
and I pay. If she says it, we eat here and you pay.
DON. It's a bet, but you might as well start shopping.
MRS. BAKER. (Opens door, enters, crosses to u. end of
coffee table, opens box, puts shirts on coffee table. JILL
crosses with DON between coffee table and sofa. JILL sits
r. end of dining table. DON sits sofa with arm across
JILL's knees.) Well, that's some bathroom. No wonder
you hide it under the bed.
DON. Gee, I thought you were going to say something
else.
MRS. BAKER. I haven't finished. I haven't even started.
DON. Well, say it and get it over with.
MRS. BAKER. Well, there's only one thing to say.
JILL. (Aside to DON.) Here it comes.
MRS. BAKER. (Crosses to kitchen, places box on top of
wastebasket.) Perhaps it's a blessing that you can't see
what you're living in.
DON. Right, Mom. I count that blessing every time I
come in the door.
MRS. BAKER. (Crosses u. end of dining table.) Donny,
can I be honest?
DON. Can you?
JILL. (Aside to DON.) This is it.
MRS. BAKER. I am shocked and appalled.
JILL. (Off table, crosses r. to apartment, listening.) I
lose. Seven-thirty all right?
DON. Perfect.
MRS. BAKER. There's no tub in your bathroom.
Don. (Putting on one shoe.) It's under the dining table.
Mrs. Baker. (Looks at dining table, lifts lid, looks, lets lid down, then.) I could absolutely cry! (Jill crosses above dining table.)
Don. (To Jill.) You win! Hamburgers all right?
Jill. Okay. But at least two each.
Mrs. Baker. (Crosses between sofa and coffee table, takes off beads, puts them on coffee table, fixes Don's hair. Don puts on other shoe while trying to stop Mrs. Baker. Jill crosses into apartment, listening.) I am not just talking about this rat hole, Donny, I am talking about you, too. You're so thin. You've lost weight.
Don. I haven't lost anything. I'm exactly the right weight for my height—6'1½—and my age—eleven.
Mrs. Baker. (Crosses to refrigerator.) I'd like to see what you're eating. (Opens the refrigerator and looks in.) There's nothing in here but lettuce... and an apple.
Jill. (Crosses to R. of refrigerator, looking into it. Where?!
Mrs. Baker. Behind the lettuce.
Don. I knew there was another one.
Mrs. Baker. (Closes the refrigerator and turns on Jill.) She stares at her for a moment as Jill grows uncomfortable and backs to above table. Mrs. Baker crosses U. end of table. Jill backs to D. end of table.) Tell me, where is Mr. Benson?
Jill. Who's Mr. Benson?
Mrs. Baker. I assumed he was your husband.
Jill. (Crosses D. L. and below to above "picnic," picks up something from plate.) Oh, Jack. I don't know. Last time I saw him he was sitting outside of Hamburger Hamlet on The Strip. Why?
Mrs. Baker. (Crosses U. of end of table.) I was curious about your marital status.
Jill. (Leans D. R. post.) I haven't any.
Don. Jill is divorced.
Mrs. Baker. (Crosses off platform to U. end of coffee table.) How old are you, Mrs. Benson?
JILL. (Crosses below Mrs. Baker to ladder, climbs up to the bed.) Sure.

MRS. BAKER. And does she approve of the way you're living?

JILL. (Halfway up the ladder.) What "way" am I living? (Sits on bed; puts things back in box.)

DON. Mom, are you conducting some kind of a survey?

MRS. BAKER. (Crosses u. s. end of coffee table.) And you're going to get it. (DON—2 shadow-box punches, JILL whistles. MRS. BAKER turns to JILL.) I'm sure Mrs. Benson doesn't mind answering a few questions. Do you, Mrs. Benson?

JILL. Well, I have this audition . . .

MRS. BAKER. What does your father do?

JILL. Which one?

MRS. BAKER. (Above director's chair.) How many fathers have you?

JILL. Four. One real and three steps.

MRS. BAKER. (R. of director's chair.) Your mother has been married FOUR times?

JILL. So far. We live in Los Angeles.

MRS. BAKER. Then you come from a broken home.

JILL. (Shuts box; picks up sandals, pants, box.) Several.

MRS. BAKER. Why does your mother marry so often?

JILL. (Climbs down ladder, level with MRS. BAKER.) I don't know. I guess she likes it. I mean she likes getting married. Obviously, she doesn't like being married. I'd better get started. Okay? (MRS. BAKER and JILL nod heads once in unison. JILL crosses above MRS. BAKER through kitchen to her apartment, exits to just inside apartment.) See you later, Don.

DON. Good luck!

JILL. Thanks.

DON. Don't forget—seven-thirty here.

MRS. BAKER. (Crosses u. s. end of coffee table.) What happens at seven-thirty here?

DON. Jill and I are having dinner together.

MRS. BAKER. (Sees JILL's fall on sofa; calling.) Mrs. Benson . . . (JILL enters, crosses to above DON.)

DON. Just the two of us. Alone!

(MRS. BAKER picks up fall, gingerly, and holds it out to JILL.)

MRS. BAKER. Mrs. Benson, I think you've forgotten something. (JILL takes fall.)

DON. What is it?

JILL. (Blows DON's hair as she did before, then:) Susan Potter's hair. (Exits to her apartment, closing the door. MRS. BAKER picks up shirts from coffee table and goes to bathroom door.)

DON. (Rises, crosses l. through kitchen to sink, gets glass.) Did you have to be so goddam rude?

MRS. BAKER. Was I rude? (Exits, puts shirts offstage.)

DON. (Crosses to refrigerator, gets ice for glass.) All those questions! What are you—the Attorney General of Scarsdale?

MRS. BAKER. (Enters, crosses u. c. by door, takes off coat.) I think I have a right to know something about my son's friends.

DON. (Crosses edge of platform.) Let's talk about my rights! You're not supposed to be here for another month. Why did you have to come today, huh?

MRS. BAKER. (Steps toward DON.) Since when do you speak to me like this?

DON. Since when do you come sneaking into my room like this?

MRS. BAKER. I didn't come sneaking in. (Hangs up coat on rack, then crosses back to DON.) The door was unlocked.

DON. You could have knocked. I thought it was a raid.

MRS. BAKER. It should have been. (Crosses to sofa, sits c.) Why don't you lock your door?

DON. (Crosses to front door.) Until I know my way
around the room, it was easier to let people come in on their own, but it'll be locked from now on. (Mimes bolting door three different ways. Then crosses to d. r. post.)

MRS. BAKER. I thought my coming here would be a pleasant surprise for you. Had I known I'd be treated like the Long Island Railroad . . .

DON. You'd've come anyway.

MRS. BAKER. And I'm glad I did. My worst fears have been realized.

DON. (Circles d. r. post.) Thank heaven! My worst fear was that your worst fears wouldn't be realized. Can you imagine if you came here and liked it? We'd have nothing to talk about.

MRS. BAKER. Did you have to choose such a sordid neighborhood?

DON. To me it looks just like Scarsdale. (Crosses behind ladder to u. end.)

MRS. BAKER. There are lots of nice places up in the Sixties and Seventies.

DON. I don't trust anybody over 30th Street.

MRS. BAKER. I'd be terrified to live with the type of people down here.

DON. (Crosses d. r. post.) They've been nice to me.

MRS. BAKER. I'll bet they have. This morning you told me you didn't know Mrs. Benson's name.

DON. I didn't. We hadn't met when we talked.

MRS. BAKER. You certainly made friends in a hurry, didn't you?

DON. She's a very friendly girl.

MRS. BAKER. I can see she is. May I ask you a personal question?

DON. No.

MRS. BAKER. Have you slept with this girl?

DON. I thought you'd never ask. Yes, I have.

MRS. BAKER. As if I didn't know.

DON. (Turns to MRS. BAKER.) If you knew, why did you ask?

MRS. BAKER. (Rises, crosses above director's chair.) And now I know why you're so anxious to have a place of your own. Not because you want to do something constructive with your life. Oh no. You just want a place where you can have orgies . . . night and day!

DON. (Crosses to kitchen—edge of platform.) No, Mother. Two's company, three's an orgy.

MRS. BAKER. (Crosses r. of DON, off platform.) I know you, Donny. You've got that Linda Fletcher look on your face again. You're going to fall in love with this girl, too.

DON. Maybe I will . . . Does it bother you that I'm heterosexual?

MRS. BAKER. (Turns away, crosses to u. of ladder, looks at mattress, feels it.) Mrs. Benson is not exactly the sort of girl a mother dreams of for her son.

DON. (Crosses to l. end of table, leans on it.) Mom . . . I'm not interested in the girl of your dreams.

MRS. BAKER. She's obviously a stupid girl.

DON. Not at all. She even quotes Dylan Thomas.

MRS. BAKER. (Crosses to u. end of table.) How wonderful! I can assure you Dylan Thomas never quoted her.

DON. Ho, ho!

MRS. BAKER. And she's not at all attractive.

DON. Oh, come on now . . .

MRS. BAKER. She has beady little eyes like a bird and a figure like . . . a pogo stick.

DON. You've just described the girl of my dreams.

MRS. BAKER. You can't see the difference between good and bad. I can. I can see people's faces. I can see into their eyes. You can't.

DON. Ah, but I can see past their eyes into their souls. Leave us not forget little Donny Dark and all that vision.

MRS. BAKER. You don't know what you're talking about. You've never been exposed to life.

DON. (Crosses between sofa and coffee table to above director's chair.) Whose fault is that? Whose fault is it I didn't go to school with other kids?!

MRS. BAKER. How could you?
DON. (Crosses to ladder.) There are schools for blind children.

MRS. BAKER. We could afford to have you taught at home. I thought that was better than sending you off with a bunch of blind children like . . . a leper.

DON. (TURNS TO MRS. BAKER.) Is that how you see me—like a leper?

MRS. BAKER. Of course not!

DON. (Crosses in toward her a step or two.) Come on, Mom, deep, deep down haven't you always been just a little ashamed of producing a blind child?

MRS. BAKER. It's nothing to be ashamed of.

DON. Embarrassed, then.

MRS. BAKER. You have never given me reason to be embarrassed by you.

(THERE IS A KNOCK AT JILL'S DOOR)

DON. (Crosses between director's chair and D. R. POST.)

Come in.

JILL. (Enters in a different dress. MRS. BAKER crosses off platform to U. C. JILL crosses D. L. between coffee table and director's chair to L. of MRS. BAKER and turns her unsipped back to her.) I hate to bother you.

DON. What's wrong?

JILL. Just another zipper. (MRS. BAKER zips it up in one contemptuous zip. JILL crosses between DON to R. of him.) I think you're winning. Hang in there! (Crosses above DON to R. of MRS. BAKER, taps her on shoulder twice. TO MRS. BAKER, sweetly.) Thank you. (Exits to her apartment, closing the door.)

MRS. BAKER. (Crosses between sofa and coffee table to D. L.) She'll be a great help to you. She can't even dress herself.

DON. That's where I can help her.

MRS. BAKER. (Turns to DON enthusiastically. Crosses between coffee table and director's chair.) Donny, I have a wonderful idea! You come on home with me. I'll have your bed raised . . . there's a ladder in the garage . . .

ACT II

DON. (Crosses d. end of sofa.) Nice try, Mother, but it just wouldn't be the same.

MRS. BAKER. All right! If you insist on staying here, I will not support you. (DON rushes to the telephone and picks it up.) What are you doing?

DON. Calling The Daily News. What a story! "Florence Baker refuses to help the handicapped!"

MRS. BAKER. (Crosses between sofa and coffee table, Grabbing the phone away and hanging it up.) I'm serious, Donny!

DON. (Picking up phone again.) Oh, then I'll call The Times.

MRS. BAKER. (Grabs phone again and hangs it up.) What are you going to do for money? The little you saved must be gone now.

DON. I have some left.

MRS. BAKER. And when that's gone?

DON. (Sits d. end of sofa, feet on coffee table.) I can always walk along the street with a tin cup.

MRS. BAKER. (Sits sofa.) Now, you are embarrassing me.

DON. Don't worry, Mom. I'll keep away from Saks.

MRS. BAKER. Just stop all this joking. I want to know what your plans are.

DON. I'm going to sing and play the guitar. I'm pretty good. You've said so yourself.

MRS. BAKER. I didn't know you were planning to make a career of it. Have you any idea of the competition you're facing?

DON. I have just as good a chance as anyone else. Better, I have charisma.

MRS. BAKER. May I ask you how you arrived at this brilliant decision?

DON. It was elementary, my dear mother—(Crosses L. of table through kitchen to cabinet.) by the process of elimination. I made a lengthy list of all the things I couldn't do . . . like commercial pilot. I don't think TWA would be too thrilled to have me fly their planes
BUTTERFLIES ARE FREE

ACT II

... nor United ... nor Pan Am. (Crosses d. l. post.) Photographer? A definite out—along with ball player and cab driver. Matador didn't strike me as too promising. I half considered becoming an eye doctor, but that would just be a case of the blind leading the blind. That's a little joke. I said it was little.

MRS. BAKER. I suppose Linda Fletcher put this guitar idea into your head.

DON. You might say she was instrumental. (Waits for a response to this.) That was another joke, Mom. You'd better start laughing at something or people will think you're a lesbian. (Circles d. l. post.)

MRS. BAKER. You've certainly picked up some colorful language, haven't you?

DON. You can learn anything down here.

MRS. BAKER. Yes. Well, I think you've learned enough, young man. (Rises, crosses to bathroom door.) I hardly recognize my own son.

DON. What are you doing?

MRS. BAKER. (Enters bathroom and brings out a suitcase.) I'm doing what I should have done long ago. I'm taking you home.

DON. Forget it, Mother. There's no way—

MRS. BAKER. (Crosses to v. end of coffee table and sets suitcase down, loudly, and opens it.) You cannot stay here alone!

DON. I'm not alone, I have friends.

MRS. BAKER. Oh, don't think you've fooled me with all your parties. There are no parties! You have no friends! (Exits into bathroom.)

DON. I have now. I have Mrs. Benson.

MRS. BAKER. (Offstage.) You'd be better off with a seeing-eye dog.

DON. They're not as much fun. Anyway, I've got a seeing-eye mother.

MRS. BAKER. (Enters with clothes and packs them in suitcase.) That's right—and she's taking you home. Mrs. Benson will just have to learn to dress herself.

ACT II

DON. Put that suitcase away!

MRS. BAKER. You're coming home, Donny!

DON. (Firmly.) Give me that suitcase! (Lunges across to where he heard the suitcase placed. Mrs. Baker lifts the suitcase from the coffee table and closes it. Don crosses between coffee table and sofa, trying to find the suitcase.) Where is it? Give me that suitcase, Mother! (He crosses to d. r. post. He stands, holding his hand out.) Give it to me! (Mrs. Baker stands staring at Don for a moment, as iron-willed as he. Suddenly, a wave of resignation comes over her. She tucks Don's hand and places it on the suitcase handle. Don grabs the handle, carries the suitcase to the bathroom, opens the door, throws the bag in, closes the door. His tension ebb and he crosses to d. r. post again.) Mom, please stop worrying about me. I'm going to be all right. If the music doesn't work out, I can always study law or technology. There are lots of things blind people can do now. So, don't worry anymore. (He reaches his hand out to find her.)

MRS. BAKER. (Takes his hand and places it on her face.) Don kisses her cheek.) Well, I have to go, Mom. Thanks for dropping by. (He crosses to his jacket and to wallet on counter in the kitchen.)

MRS. BAKER. Where are you going?

DON. (Putting jacket on.) I have to do some shopping. I told you ... I'm having dinner in tonight ... with Mrs. Benson ... just the two of us ... alone.

MRS. BAKER. (Crosses on platform to v. end of table.) I'll wait till you come back.

DON. (Off platform.) I don't want you to wait. Have a nice trip back to Scarsdale and I'll call you tomorrow. Now, please ... I don't want to smell you when I get back. (Crosses and gets cane.)

MRS. BAKER. I was planning to stay for dinner.

DON. (At front door.) Your plans have changed. Like I said—it's me and Mrs. Benson ... just the two of us ... alone.

MRS. BAKER. And after dinner, I suppose an orgy.
DON. (Opening the front door.) I hope so. At last the
sinister truth is revealed—Little Donny Dark is just a
dirty old man! (Exits. MRS. BAKER looks about the room
with frustration. She crosses to the picnic lunch, picks up
the tray and carries it to counter.)
MRS. BAKER. (Mumbling to herself.) Mrs. Benson!!!
JILL. (Opening her door.) Yes?
MRS. BAKER. (Is startled for a moment, but recovers,
quickly. In friendly tones:) Could you come in for a
moment, Mrs. Benson?
JILL. (Uneasily.) Well, I have my audition. I should
leave in about fifteen minutes. I don't know New York
and I get lost all the time.
MRS. BAKER. (Ingratiatingly. Steps toward JILL a bit.)
Don't you worry. I'll see that you get off in time. (JILL
enters, reluctantly, stands behind table.) I thought you
and I might have a little talk. You know—just girls to-
gether. Please sit down. (JILL remains standing, avoiding
too close contact with MRS. BAKER.) Would you like a
cup of coffee? Tea?
JILL. No, thank you ... (Crosses off platform to l.
of sofa.) but if that apple is still there.
MRS. BAKER. (Crosses to refrigerator, gets apple and
lettuce on plate, crosses to sink.) I'm sure it is.
JILL. (Crosses between sofa and coffee table to ladder,
sits step.) Where's Don?
MRS. BAKER. Shopping. (Washes apple and polishes it
with dish towel.) You must be so careful to wash fruits
and vegetables, you know. They spray all those insec-
ticides on everything now. I'm not at all sure the bugs
aren't less harmful. (Crosses to JILL with apple.) I like
apples to be nice and shiny. (Holds the apple out to
JILL, who looks at it and then at MRS. BAKER oddly.)
JILL. This reminds me of something. What is it?
MRS. BAKER. I have no idea.
JILL. You ... handing me the apple ... nice and
shiny. ... Oh, I know! Snow White. Remember when
the witch brought her the poisoned apple? Oh, Mrs.
Baker, I'm sorry. I didn't mean that the way it sounded.
I know you're not a witch.
MRS. BAKER. Of course not. And I know you're not
Snow White.
JILL. (Takes the apple, rises, crosses below Mrs.
Baker, through kitchen to d. l. post.) I may have to
wait hours before I read. I'll probably starve to death
before their eyes.
MRS. BAKER. (Crosses to kitchen, takes lettuce, picks
off a few pieces, washes them, puts them on plate.) You're
going to get that part, you know.
JILL. What makes you so sure?
MRS. BAKER. Well, you're a very pretty girl and that's
what they want in the theatre, isn't it?
JILL. (Crosses below to d. r. post, away from Mrs.
Baker.) Today you have to have more than a pretty face.
Anyway, I'm not really pretty. I think I'm interesting-
looking and in certain lights I can look sort of ... lovely
... but I'm not pretty.
MRS. BAKER. (Crosses with lettuce, sits c. sofa.) Non-
sence! You're extremely pretty.
JILL. (Laugh.) No, I'm not.
MRS. BAKER. Yes, you are.
JILL. (Turns, leans post.) No, I'm not. I've got beady
little eyes like a bird and a figure like a pogo stick. (Waits
for a reaction from Mrs. Baker. There isn't one.) Well?
Aren't you going to deny you said that?
MRS. BAKER. (Unperturbed.) How can I, dear? Ob-
viously, you heard it.
JILL. (Crosses above director's chair.) There are plenty
of true things you can put down with. You don't have
to put me down with lies.
MRS. BAKER. You know what I like about you?
JILL. Uh-huh. Nothing.
MRS. BAKER. Oh yes. I like your honesty ... your
candor. You're really quite a worldly young woman,
aren't you, Mrs. Benson?
JILL. I suppose I am. (Crosses above "picnic," away}
BUTTERFLIES ARE FREE  ACT II

from Mrs. Baker.) I wish you wouldn't call me Mrs. Benson.

Mrs. Baker. Isn't that your name ... Mrs. Benson?

Jill. But you don't say it as though you mean it.

Mrs. Baker. I'm sorry. Why don't I call you Jill?

That's more friendly ... and I'll try to say it as though I mean it. Now, Jill, (Jill—r. turn, back to audience.) you were telling me about your childhood.

Jill. I was?

Mrs. Baker. It must have been interesting ... having so many fathers.

Jill. (Crosses above director's chair.) Well, it was, actually. All mother's husbands were so different, so I was exposed to all kinds of ideas about life ... and world affairs ... (Sits u. end of coffee table.) even religion. My real father was a Methodist. The next one was a Christian Scientist. The third one was Jewish and the last one was Episcopalian.

Mrs. Baker. Doesn't your mother like Catholics?

Jill. Oh yes, she likes them, but Catholics aren't allowed to marry her, for some reason.

Mrs. Baker. I would imagine she got an X-rating from the church.

Jill. (Rises, crosses between director's chair and ladder to above "picnic.") Too bad. She's really very nice.

Mrs. Baker. I'm sure she is. So it's your childhood that has made you so worldly and understanding.

Jill. (Crosses above director's chair.) Yes ... and being so worldly and understanding, Mrs. Baker, I can tell that you didn't ask me here to discuss my childhood or to tell me how pretty I am.

Mrs. Baker. I was interested in seeing what you and Donny might have in common. He likes you very much.

Jill. (Crosses u. end of coffee table.) And I like him very much. He may very well be the most beautiful person I've ever met. Just imagine going through life never seeing anything ... not a painting ... or a

flower ... or even a Christmas card. I'd want to die, but Don wants to live. I mean really live... (Crosses onto platform to above table.) and he can even kid about it. He's fantastic.

Mrs. Baker. Then you would want what's best for him, wouldn't you?

Jill. (Crosses u. s. end of coffee table.) Now, we're getting to it, aren't we? Like maybe I should tell him to go home with you. Is that it?

Mrs. Baker. Donny was happy at home until Linda Fletcher filled him with ideas about a place of his own.

Jill. (Crosses through kitchen to above table.) Maybe you just want to believe that he can only be happy with you, Mrs. Baker. Well, there are none so blind as those who will not see. (Crosses d. l. post.) There, I can quote Dylan Thomas AND Little Donny Dark.

Mrs. Baker. (Rises, takes lettuce to counter.) You constantly astonish me.

Jill. Well ... we women of the world do that.

Mrs. Baker. (Crosses to "picnic," picks up pillows and cloth, folds cloth.) Funny how like Linda you are. Donny is certainly consistent with his girls.

Jill. Why do you call him Donny?

Mrs. Baker. It's his name. Don't I say it as though I mean it?

Jill. He hates being called Donny.

Mrs. Baker. (Crosses to sofa, pillows at each end, crosses to counter, puts cloth on it.) He's never mentioned it.

Jill. Of course, he has. (Crosses off platform to u. end of sofa.) You just didn't listen. There are none so deaf as those who will not hear. You could make up a lot of those, couldn't you? There are none so lame as those who will not walk. None so thin as those who will not eat ... \n
Mrs. Baker. (Crosses off platform to u. c.) Do you think it's a good idea for Donny to live down here alone?

Jill. I think it's a good idea for Don to live wherever he wants to ... and he's not alone. I'm here.
ACT II

MRS. BAKER. (Crosses u. end of sofa.) Then don't let it go that far. Stop now before you hurt him.

JILL. What about you? Aren't you hurting him?

MRS. BAKER. I can't. I can only irritate him. You can hurt him. The longer you stay the harder it will be for him when you leave. Let him come with me and you go have your kicks with someone who won't feel them after you've gone!!

JILL. I'm not so sure you can't hurt him. Maybe more than anybody. (Crosses above table.) I think you deserve all the credit you can get for turning out a pretty marvelous guy—but bringing up a son—even a blind one—isn't a lifetime occupation. (MRS. BAKER turns U., away from JILL.) Now the more you help him, the more you hurt him. It was Linda Fletcher—not you—(MRS. BAKER turns and looks at JILL slowly.) who gave him the thing he needed most—confidence in himself. (Crossing away l.) You're always dwelling on the negative—always what he needs, never what he wants . . . always what he can't do, never what he can. (Crosses d. end of sofa.) What about his music? Have you heard the song he wrote? I'll bet you didn't even know he could write songs! (Crosses above table.) You're probably dead right about me. I'm not the ideal girl for Don, but I know one thing—neither are you!! And if I'm going to tell anyone to go home, it'll be you, Mrs. Baker. YOU go home!! (Turns and exits into her apartment, closing door behind her. MRS. BAKER watches her go.)

CURTAIN
ACT II

BUTTERFLIES ARE FREE

ACT TWO

Scene 2

The same. That night.

At Rise: The dining table is set for two, including Jill's basket of flowers and some votive candles, lighted. There is a stool at either end of the table. Don is sitting on the floor by the D. R. post, sorting tapes and putting them in boxes. The tape recorder is next to them. Mrs. Baker is in the kitchen by the refrigerator. She slams refrigerator door, opens oven door and slams it, opens cabinet door.

Don. Oh, Mom, what are you doing in there?
Mrs. Baker. I'm looking for some wax paper to wrap the meat in so it doesn't spoil. (Closes cabinet door.)
Don. I haven't any wax paper and the meat won't spoil.
Mrs. Baker. (Takes meat off stove, puts it in refrigerator.) This meat looks terrible.
Don. Who asked you to look at it. (Slams refrigerator door.) Why don't you get out of the kitchen?
Mrs. Baker. (Crosses to sink, wipes hands on linen towel.) What time is it? Midnight?
Don. (Feeling his Braille watch.) It's only twenty to ten.
Mrs. Baker. Only twenty to ten?!!
Don. (Rises, crosses D. R. end of sofa.) I know. She's undependable and unreliable. She's un-everything. What else is new?
Mrs. Baker. (Hangs towel on rack.) You did say seven-thirty. I heard you.
Don. Listen, you don't have to hang around, you know.
Mrs. Baker. (Crosses off platform to R. of director's chair.) I'll just wait until she comes. (Crossing to tape recorder.) I'm not going to interfere with your orgy. I told you that.
Don. No, I told you that. (Mrs. Baker turns the tape recorder on. Don's singing and playing "Butterflies Are Free" is heard. Mrs. Baker listens, impressed. Moving toward Jill's door.) Mom, please turn it off. I want to hear if she comes in.
Mrs. Baker. Is that the song you wrote?
Don. (Crosses D. L. post.) Yes . . . well, it's not finished. (Thinks for a second.) How'd you know I wrote it?
Mrs. Baker. I didn't. I just asked you.
Don. Oh.
Mrs. Baker. It's good. Pretty. (Turns recorder off.)
Don. You mean pretty good?
Mrs. Baker. No, I mean good and pretty.
Don. Wow. (Looks toward his Mother with some surprise as he moves again to Jill's door. Mrs. Baker crosses to U. end of ladder.)
Mrs. Baker. Where do you suppose she is?
Don. Probably still auditioning.
Mrs. Baker. For six hours??!! I'm worried about her.
Don. (Even more surprised.) You're worried about Jill?
Mrs. Baker. Aren't you?
Don. (Leans on table.) Something's come over you. First you like my song, now you're worried about Jill. And you haven't mentioned my coming home for hours. Are you all right?
Mrs. Baker. Don't I seem all right?
Don. (Crossing to bed, gets tapes from it.) No . . . You're not behaving like Supermom. Next thing you'll be telling me you like Jill.
Mrs. Baker. (Crosses U. end of sofa, fixes silver on U. table setting.) I don't dislike her. I just wish she were a different sort of girl.
Don. (Crosses to bookcase, stores tapes.) She is a different sort of girl. That's what you don't like.
MRS. BAKER. When I was her age, punctuality meant something.

DON. What did it mean?

MRS. BAKER. (Crosses between sofa and coffee table.) It meant that if I were going to be three hours late for dinner, I'd call and explain.

DON. You would never be three hours late.

MRS. BAKER. No, I certainly wouldn't not!

DON. You'd be a month early.

MRS. BAKER. (Crosses r. of director's chair.) You know, she might be lost. She said she always loses her way around New York.

DON. Any cab driver could bring her home. (With a quizzical look. Crosses to d. r. post.) She never said she loses her way around New York.

MRS. BAKER. Oh yes—she said it to me.

DON. If she'd said it to you, I'd've heard it.

MRS. BAKER. (Flustered. Crosses to sofa, picks up magazine, flips through pages.) Well . . . I guess it was after you went out.

DON. She was in here while I was out?

MRS. BAKER. It seems to me she was . . . yes.

DON. (Crosses above director's chair.) Why?

MRS. BAKER. Oh, the usual . . . she wanted her dress zipped up.

DON. You did that while I was here.

MRS. BAKER. She just stopped in, that's all. She was only here a minute.

DON. What did you talk about?

MRS. BAKER. I don't remember.

DON. You remember she loses her way around New York. What else did you talk about?

MRS. BAKER. What does it matter?

DON. (Raising his voice. Steps toward her.) If it doesn't matter, then tell me!?

MRS. BAKER. (Slams magazine down on coffee table.) Donny, please don't shout at me! (After a moment.) We talked about Snow White.
ACT II

MRS. BAKER. (Climbs to second step of ladder.) Well, what would you like to be called? I'll try to remember.

DON. Don . . . Donald. You can call me Sebastian or Irving. I don't care. Anything but Donny.

MRS. BAKER. (Off ladder.) I'm not going to call you Sebastian or Irving. I'll try to remember to call you Don. (Is interrupted by voices from JILL's apartment. They both turn toward JILL's door. As the noise grows louder, we can hear laughter and conversation. JILL's voice and a man's. None of it is intelligible. MRS. BAKER crosses through kitchen to JILL's door and listens.)

DON. (Smiling. Down ladder, crosses to coffee table, checks it.) She's home! Okay, Mom. You can go now.

MRS. BAKER. There's a man with her.

DON. Stop listening at the door.

MRS. BAKER. I can't hear anything. They're at the other end, but there's a man with her.

DON. That's probably the television you hear.

MRS. BAKER. Why would she be laughing and talking with a television set?

DON. (Crosses to director's chair, sits.) Mom, please come away from there.

MRS. BAKER. (Moves away from JILL's door, noticing DON is anxious; crosses to coat rack, gets coat, starts to put it on.) I am away from there.

(There is a loud knock at JILL's door.)

DON. Come on in!

JILL. (Enters, gaily, followed by RALPH AUSTIN, a young man, sloppily dressed. JILL crosses D. L. to between director's chair and coffee table. RALPH crosses to D. L. post.) Oh, hi! I'm back! I've brought Ralph Ausin' with me. (Seeing MRS. BAKER.) Oh, Mrs. Baker—you're still here. (MRS. BAKER crosses U. end of table. Making introductions.) Don, this is Ralph Austin. I told you about him. He's directing the play. Ralph, this is Don . . . (JILL crosses U. end of ladder. DON extends hand. RALPH crosses to L. of DON.) and Don's mother,
Ralph. (Sits u. of Jill; leans behind her.) It was sparkling bingumly.
Don. (Excitedly.) Then you got the part?
Jill. And no. I'm not playing the wife.
Don. What are you playing, the homosexual?
Jill. No, his secretary. It's a small part, but I've got one good scene.
Ralph. Jill did a really great audition. Man, I was really proud of her.
Jill. (Rises, crosses d. l.) God, was I nervous. It wasn't the reading, but imagine having to stand out there completely and totally naked.
Mrs. Baker. (Drops a cup which falls to the floor and breaks. Jill crosses to above c. of table.) Sorry . . . I broke a cup. (Gets dustpan and brush and starts to sweep up pieces.)
Jill. Can I help you?
Mrs. Baker. No, thank you. . . . It's already broken.
How many coffees?
Don. None for me.
Jill. I don't want any. (Ralph holds his hand up to Mrs. Baker.)
Don. Why did Jill have to be naked for the audition?
(Ralph crosses r. of Don.)
Ralph. Because there's a lot of nudity involved in this play. We had to see the actors' bodies. The visual here is very important. I hope you don't mind my saying that.
Don. Not at all.
Mrs. Baker. How do you take your coffee, Mr. Austin?
Ralph. Just black, please.
Jill. Now I don't think anyone can call me a prude . . .
Mrs. Baker. I'd like to see them try.
Jill. At first I hated the idea of getting completely undressed, (Mrs. Baker crosses above u. stool, hands Ralph coffee.) but there were like forty or fifty actors all around me . . . all naked. I was the only one with clothes on. (Turning to Mrs. Baker.) How would you feel?
Mrs. Baker. (Handing Ralph his coffee.) Warm—all over! (Sits u. stool. Jill crosses away r.)
Ralph. I was out front with my writer and my producer and the minute we saw Jill naked we knew she wasn't right for the lead.
Mrs. Baker. Tell me, Mr. Austin, is there any story to this play or is that too much to hope for?
Ralph. It has a very dramatic story, Mrs. Baker.
Jill. I die at the end.
Mrs. Baker. Pneumonia?
Ralph. (Rises, places cup down on coffee table, crosses r. of Mrs. Baker.) It's going to be a wild scene. I'm a genius at this kind of thing. (Crosses l. of Don.) Jill will be lying there on the stage dying of an overdose of heroin. (Crosses r. of Don. Jill counters behind ladder.) She's in agony . . . writing across the stage on her back . . . screaming this one word. She screams it over and over and over.
Don. What's the word?
Mrs. Baker. Did you have to ask?
Ralph. (Crosses to coffee table, picks up cup, crosses again to r. of Don.) Well . . . uh . . . I don't know if I should use it here.
Mrs. Baker. You're going to use it on the stage, but you don't know if you should use it here?!!!
Don. That's all right, Ralph. You can say it. What's the word? (Ralph whispers into Don's ear. Don squirms, slightly.) Maybe you'd better not. Ralph, do you think the public is ready for this kind of thing?
Ralph. Are you kidding? They're dying for it. I'm talking about the thinking public—(Crosses u. level with Mrs. Baker.) not those giddy little tight-arsed matrons from Scarsdale. (Everybody freezes. Jill crosses to d. r. post. Ralph slowly becomes aware of the chill in the room.) Have I said something wrong?
Mrs. Baker. Pick anything, Mr. Austin.
JILL. Ralph, Mrs. Baker lives in Scarsdale.

RALPH. Oh. (Trying, with a big smile.) Well, present company excepted, isn't that the rule? Mrs. Baker. I don't wish to be excepted, thank you, Mr. Austin. Tell me, what is the name of your play?

RALPH. It's called "Do Unto Others."

Mrs. Baker. I must remember that; I'd hate to wander in by accident. (Mrs. Baker rises, picks up v. setting. Ralph crosses through kitchen to chest, puts cup on it, crosses d. l. post. Mrs. Baker crosses to shelf, places plate down on counter. Silverware in tray, coffee into cabinet.)

JILL. (Crosses to below Mrs. Baker.) You might like it if you gave it a chance, Mrs. Baker. I mean see it with an open mind.

DON. I should warn you my mother hasn't liked anything since "The Sound of Music."

JILL. (Crosses to stool, sits.) The play isn't really dirty. I wouldn't be in a dirty play. It's true to life.

DON. Not Mom's life.

JILL. This play is really good. It just needs polishing.

Mrs. Baker. I'd've said scrubbing.

RALPH. (Crosses to l. of stool, sits floor, leans against JILL.) We'll just have to try to make it without the support of Scarsdale.

Mrs. Baker. (Crosses d. end of table.) Well, I wouldn't count on this giddy little matron, Mr. Austin. I don't intend to pay money to see nudity, obscenity and degeneracy.

RALPH. Mrs. Baker, these things are all a part of life.

Mrs. Baker. I know, Mr. Austin. . . . So is diarrhea, but I wouldn't classify it as entertainment. (Takes gloves out of coat pocket, puts one on.)

JILL. Listen, Ralph, if this play is going to be closed by the police . . .

RALPH. Don't worry. It'll run two years and I wouldn't be surprised if it made a star out of you.

JILL. (Rises, crosses above Don to d. r. post. Ralph examines stool, places it d.) Wouldn't it be groovy to see JILL TANNER up in lights?

Mrs. Baker. Jill Tanner?

JILL. Benson is my married name, but I'm using my real name—Tanner. Please remember it. I mean it would be terrible if I became a star and nobody knew it was me.

RALPH. (Rising, crosses above Don to JILL.) I've got to get going. Steve is coming over with some rewrites. How long will it take you to pack?

JILL. (With an anxious glance at Don.) Well . . . not long, but you go ahead.

RALPH. I'll wait if you're not going to take forever. How many bags have you got?

(A troubled look comes to Don's face. Mrs. Baker looks at Don, concerned for him.)

JILL. Only two, but it'll take me a while to find things.

RALPH. I can only let you have one closet.

DON. Are you going somewhere?

JILL. Didn't I tell you? (Crosses v. c. to level with Mrs. Baker. Ralph leans d. r. post.) I'm moving in with Ralph. I thought I mentioned it.

Mrs. Baker. No . . . you didn't.

JILL. (Crosses onto edge of kitchen platform. Mrs. Baker takes off gloves, puts them in pocket.) Well . . . Ralph thought it would be a good idea to move in with him.

RALPH. It was your idea.

JILL. It doesn't matter whose idea it was. It was a good one. (To Don—crosses to r. of him.) I'm not really moving away, Don. I mean it's not far from here. (To Ralph.) Where is it?

RALPH. Off Christopher Street.

JILL. Is that far?

RALPH. Across town.

JILL. See? Ralph has a terrific studio apartment . . . something like this . . . with a skylight. He hasn't got a
bed like yours, but it's really great. Wait till you see it.
I mean ... we want you to come over whenever you
like. Don't we, Ralph?
RALPH. (Crosses to r. of Don, puts his shoulder,
crosses u. c. toward door.) Sure. We'll consider you one of
the family.
JILL. (To RALPH.) I told you you'd like Don. (To
DON.) We'll have some groovy times over there. You're
going to love Ralph. He's one of us, I wish you could see
him. He has a good face ... strong and noble. (Crosses
up to RALPH, leads him to l. of DON. JILL—behind DON.)
Let Don feel your face. He can tell what you look like
by feeling your face. It's really a kind face.
RALPH. (Kneels.) Go ahead, Don.
MRS. BAKER. He doesn't want to, Mr. Austin.

(RALPH turns to look at MRS. BAKER. JILL looks at MRS.
BAKER. JILL takes DON's hand and pats it on
RALPH's face. DON runs his fingers over RALPH's
face. He pulls his hand away, quickly. JILL crosses
away r.)

RALPH. (Rises, crosses l. of DON.) Well, it's been
great meeting you, Don. See you soon, I hope. (Crosses to
doors.) Don't take long, hon. Oh, nice to have met you,
MRS. BAKER. I apologize if I offended you.
MRS. BAKER. That's quite all right, Mr. Austin. I can
assure you it won't happen again.
RALPH. (With a parting gesture to JILL.) Hon. (Exits
through the front door, leaving JILL, DON and MRS.
BAKER in embarrassed silence.)
JILL. (Crosses below to d. l. and to apartment door.)
Well ... I'd better get packed. I'll drop in and say
goodbye before I leave. (Exits to her apartment, hur-
rriedly, closing the door behind her. MRS. BAKER looks at
DON, almost unable to bear the hurt on his face.)
DON. Mom? (MRS. BAKER doesn't answer, staring at
DON, thoughtfully. DON rises.) Mom, are you here?
I can’t make it, Mom. I really don’t think I’m going to be able to make it.

MRS. BAKER. Why? Because a girl has walked out on you?

DON. (Crosses D. to stool, knocks into it, sits stool.)

Two girls. Let’s don’t forget Linda.

MRS. BAKER. And it may be ten girls. Girls walk out on sighted men, too, you know.

DON. Is that supposed to make me feel better?

MRS. BAKER. (Below d. r. post.) It’s supposed to make you stop feeling sorry for yourself—You’ve never felt sorry for yourself before. Please don’t start now. (Crosses in to DON.) You’re going to meet a lot of girls. One day you’ll meet one who is capable of a permanent relationship . . . Jill isn’t. She knows this herself. (Crosses above DON to u. end of coffee table.) I think you’re better off staying here. I don’t want you coming home discouraged and defeated. You’ve got your music.

DON. Oh, Christ, Mom, once and for all get it into your head—I am not Little Donny Dark!! I am discouraged! I am defeated!! It’s over!!

MRS. BAKER. Do you remember the first Donny Dark story?

DON. No.

MRS. BAKER. You were five years old. (Crosses L. of DON.) We were spending the summer on Lake Winnipesaukee. Dad took you into the lake. It was the first time you’d been in any water deeper than a bathtub. You were terrified. They could hear you screaming all over New Hampshire. Dad brought you in and I put you to bed. You trembled for hours. That night I told you a story about a little blind boy who could swim the seven seas and could talk to the dolphins . . .

DON. (Remembering, bitterly.) Yeah . . . and the dolphins told him about enemy submarines on their way to destroy the United States Navy and Donny Dark swam home in time to save them. What a lot of crap.

MRS. BAKER. The next day you learned to swim! (DON

ACT II

BUTTERFLIES ARE FREE

(faces MRS. BAKER.) I didn’t write those stories hoping for a Pulitzer prize in literature. I wrote them because I found a way to help you. Whenever you felt discouraged or defeated, I told you a Donny Dark story . . . and you tried a little harder and you did a little better. (Crosses above DON to below d. r. post.) Shall I make one up now—or are you man enough to handle this situation yourself?

DON. A month ago you didn’t think I was man enough. You said I wasn’t ready to leave home. Why have you changed?

MRS. BAKER. I don’t know that I’ve changed. You’re not the boy who left home a month ago. I came down here today hoping you were. (Crosses u. c.) It’s hard to adjust to not being needed anymore. But I can do it now. So you get on with your own life. (Looking around the room for a moment, Crosses to u. end of sofa, picks up pocketbook.) I’d like to see you have some decent furniture. You need some dishes and some glasses. I’ll send some down to you.

DON. Okay.

MRS. BAKER. And some linens. You could use better ashtrays. This place might not be so bad if you fixed it up a little. (Hesitantly.) Can I help you fix it up a little?

DON. Sure.

MRS. BAKER. I’ll call you in the morning and we’ll talk about it. (Crosses toward front door.)

DON. Mom. I’m glad you came.

MRS. BAKER. (Looks at him for a moment, crosses to above him and puts her arms around him.) I love you, Don.

DON. I know, Mom. I know you do. (MRS. BAKER exits. DON crosses to JILL’S door and listens for a moment. He pulls himself out of his despair and, crossing L., raps at the door, gaily.) Hey! How you doin'? (Crosses to sink.)

JILL. (Opens the door and enters carrying two suitcases. Setting the bags down by d. l. post.) I think I
made it. Listen, I left those new dish towels there . . . and the light bulbs, if you want them.
Don. I don't need them.
Jill. Well . . . I'll donate them to the apartment. Oh, and here's the key. (Takes a key from her pocket, crosses below to coffee table and sets it down.) I'll leave it here on the table. Will you give it to the super? (Cresses up to apartment door.) I guess you'd better have him lock this door again.
Don. I'll wait and see who moves in. It might be someone groovy.
Jill. Oh. Yeah. I hope so. Well . . . let's don't have a big good-bye or anything. I'll be seeing you.
Don. (Cresses to ladder.) Can't you stay a minute?
Jill. Well . . . once I'm going somewhere, I like to get going. You know what I mean? (Picks up bags.)
Don. (Cresses to d. r. post.) I'm the same way. I was just going to have a corned beef sandwich on rye. Want one?
Jill. (Cresses through kitchen to front door.) Once I'm going somewhere, I like to get going—(Puts bags down by edge of platform.) unless someone offers me a corned beef sandwich on rye.
Don. (Cresses to refrigerator.) How about a beer?
Jill. Sure. (Cresses to above dining table.) The candles are still lit.
Don. (As he fixes sandwich and beer.) I know. (Closes refrigerator door; crosses to counter with beer, gets glass, pours.) I'm very religious.
Jill. Where's Mama?
Don. She went home.
Jill. I didn't hear her leave. What was the verdict?
Don. (Holds glass out to Jill.) She accepted my declaration of independence.
Jill. (Takes glass from Don.) You're kidding!
Don. (Cresses to refrigerator, gets sandwich.) I gotta hand it to her—she put up a great battle.

ACT II

Jill. (Cresses d. end of sofa.) Maybe she should've won. I mean . . . maybe you would be better off at home.
Don. (Closes refrigerator door, crosses to counter, sandwich on plate.) That's a switch!
Jill. I've been thinking about it.
Don. Come on, girl. It took me a whole day and three pins of blood to convince my mother. I don't want to have to start on you.
Jill. (Cresses between coffee table and director's chair to d. end of sofa.) I like to have things done for me.
Don. Then give up Ralph and the play and move in with my mother. I'm out of mustard. (Moves down, slightly disoriented, and bumps into post d. l.)
Jill. (Sits u. end of sofa, not looking at Don.) I don't care. What do you think of Ralph?
Don. (Looking up, surprised.) Where are you?
Jill. I'm on the sofa.
Don. Oh, I couldn't figure where your voice was coming from.
Jill. You always could before.
Don. (Backs u. Handing her the plate. Jill takes it and puts it on table.) I . . . I wasn't concentrating (Cresses up into kitchen counter.) He seemed very nice.
Jill. Who?
Don. Ralph.
Jill. You didn't like him, did you?
Don. I said he seemed very nice.
Jill. I could tell you didn't like him. You were a little uptight when he was here.
Don. (Cresses above table to d. l. post.) I'm always a little uptight when there's more than one person in the room. I have to figure out who's speaking and if he's speaking to me.
Jill. I guess you didn't like him because he was rude.
Don. (Holds onto d. l. post.) Was he rude?
Jill. Well, you know, putting down Scarsdale like that to your mother.
DON. That was an accident. He didn't know she was from Scarsdale. I'm sorry you think he's rude.

JILL. I don't think he's rude.

DON. Well, you said it. I didn't. Or is there someone else here?

JILL. (Rises, crosses above director's chair.) I know he comes off as a little conceited.

DON. Tell me, Jill, do you like Ralph?

JILL. (With a self-conscious laugh.) What kind of a question is that? I'm moving in with him, aren't I? Why would I move in with a guy I didn't like?

DON. That was my next question.

JILL. (Crosses to bags.) I'd better be going. . .

DON. (Quickly. Crosses off platform, grabs d. arm of sofa.) Come to think of it, I guess I don't like Ralph.

JILL. (Crosses u. end of sofa.) I knew it all along. But why?

DON. (Sits d. end of sofa.) Like you said—he's rude and conceited.

JILL. (Crosses between coffee table and director's chair.) But I've been trying to tell you he's not like that. I knew that's what you thought, but he's not at all conceited.

DON. And thanks a lot for making me feel his face.

JILL. I thought you might like him better if you knew what he looked like. He's got a good face.

DON. To look at, maybe, but it doesn't come across to the touch.

JILL. (Crosses away r. a step or two.) I'm sorry about that. I hoped we could all be friends. (Crosses to bags.) Well, I'd better . . .

DON. (Quickly.) You know something? I'm going to tell you something. YOU don't like Ralph.

JILL. Oh, God!! I just packed two suitcases which are sitting right over there so I can move in with him!!

DON. I don't care if you have thirteen trunks! You don't like him.

JILL. (Crosses through kitchen to above table c.) Boy, you really are too much! You think just because you're blind you can see everything!!

DON. That's right—that sixth sense we've got tells me you don't like Ralph Austin! How about that? Spooky, isn't it?

JILL. (Crosses through kitchen to u. c.) No, it's just stupid. I have two bags which are packed and sitting right there . . .

DON. Tell me—with Ralph, is it like the Fourth of July and like Christmas?

JILL. Not exactly . . . but he has a kind of strength. With him it's more like—Labor Day.

DON. Do you think he's a beautiful person, too?

JILL. In many ways, yes.

DON. Has he got charisma?

JILL. Definitely!

DON. Then I'm selling mine.

JILL. (Crosses u. end of coffee table.) You'd better hurry. It's been known to fade away.

DON. Do you love him?

JILL. Why should I answer that? No matter what I say, you've already made up your own mind.

DON. (Rises.) Go ahead, answer it! Do you love him?!

JILL. Yes! In my way.

DON. This morning you told me you could never love anyone.

JILL. (Crosses d. l. through kitchen to r. of director's chair.) That was this morning. Am I allowed to change my mind or has my first statement already been passed into law by Congress?!

DON. (Crosses d.) Look, I'm not the worldliest human being on the block, but I know that when you're rushing into the arms of the man you love, you don't stop for a corned beef sandwich on rye.

JILL. (Don turns toward her voice.) Which shows how little you know me. Some people wear their hearts on their sleeves. . . . I wear my appetite.
DON. (Crosses to d. r. post, bumps into stool on the way.) Was it something my mother said?

JILL. (Backs away r.) Was what something your mother said?

DON. The reason you're leaving. The reason you didn't show up for dinner. I know you didn't forget. Was it something my mother said?

JILL. You don't even listen to your mother. Why should I?

DON. Then why are you leaving? And don't give me that crap about loving Ralph.

JILL. (Crossing below Don v. between coffee table and sofa.) I'm leaving because I want to leave. I'm free and I go when I want to go.

DON. (Crosses to ladder, hangs onto it, faces away from her.) I thought it might have something to do with me.

JILL. (Sits c. sofa.) It has nothing whatsoever to do with you.

DON. Okay. You're scared to death of becoming involved, aren't you?

JILL. I don't want to get involved. I told you that.

DON. (Turns toward JILL.) That's right—you told me.

No commitments ... no responsibility.

JILL. I have to be able to get out if I get tired of the . . .

DON. Tired of me?

JILL. Anybody!

DON. What if I got tired of you?

JILL. (This hadn't occurred to her.) Of me??

DON. Doesn't anyone ever get tired of you?

JILL. I don't hang around long enough to find out.

DON. (Crosses above director's chair.) With Ralph, you could get out any time you feel like it . . . but it might be harder to walk out on a blind guy, right?

JILL. The blindness has nothing to do with it. Nothing!

DON. (Crosses to v. end of coffee table. JILL crouches in d. corner of sofa.) You know goddam well it has! You wouldn't feel a thing walking out on Ralph or Sebastian or Irving, but if you walked out on Little Donny Dark, you might hate yourself and you wouldn't like that, would you? Hate me—or love me—but don't leave because I'm blind and don't stay because I'm blind!!

JILL. Who are Sebastian and Irving?

DON. (Crosses d. r. post.) Nobody. I made them up.

JILL. Sometimes I don't understand you. (Crosses above director's chair.) We don't think alike and I know I'd only hurt you sooner or later. I don't want to hurt you.

DON. Why not? You do it to everybody else. Why do I rate special treatment?

JILL. I don't want to be another Linda Fletcher. She hurt you, didn't she?

DON. She helped me, too. She was there when I needed her.

JILL. (Steps in to him.) I can't promise that. I don't know where I'll be when you need me.

DON. (Turns away from her.) You need me a helluva lot more than I need you!

JILL. I don't need anybody. I never did and I never will. (Crosses to bags.) I have to go now.

DON. I'm glad you said have to and not want to.

JILL. Boy, I finally said something right. I'll be seeing you.

DON. (Turns front.) Yeah—I'll be seeing you. I'll think about you for years and wonder if you ever made a commitment . . . if you ever got involved.

JILL. I hope not.

DON. Don't worry. It won't happen . . . (Crosses between director's chair and coffee table to d. l.) because you're emotionally retarded. Did you know that? That's why you couldn't face marriage. It's why you can't face anything permanent . . . anything real. You're leaving now because you're afraid you might fall in love with me . . . and you're too adolescent for that responsibility . . . and you're going to stay that way. Oh God, I feel sorry for you . . . because you're crippled. I'd rather be blind.

(JILL exits, closing the door behind her. He turns, crosses...
to the table and starts to clear d. setting. A fork drops to
the floor. Don tries to figure out where the sound came
from, then takes the plate and puts it in the sink. Sud-
denly, he crosses to his tape recorder and turns it on. We
hear the last part of his song as he crosses to kitchen,
stumbling into a stool. He goes to the dining table and
blows out the candles. His hand touches the flowers. With
quiet anger, he crushes the flowers in a tight fist, then
grabs cloth and pulls it off the table, knocking other
things to the floor along with it. He crosses r. toward the
living room. He bumps into the v. stool. He tosses it up-
stage out of his way. He stumbles against the d. s. edge
of the sofa and falls to the floor. He lies on the floor by
coffee table with tears filling his eyes and no interest in
getting up. The front door opens. Jill enters carrying
her bags. She sets her bags down and looks around the
room for Don. When she sees him, a look of pain comes
to her face. Don sits up, quickly, aware of someone in
the room.) Who is it? Who's there?
Jill. (Breaking the tension. Crosses c.) The news is
good. It's not your mother.
Don. What are you doing here?
Jill. (Crosses to him, sits beside him, takes his hand
and kisses it.) What are you doing on the floor?
Don. I was about to have a picnic.
Jill. What a great idea!!

(Don starts to laugh with Jill. He reaches out for her.
She goes into his arms and they cling together,
laughing.)

CURTAIN