

WIFE / MISTRESS

by
Alexander Fraser

2004

WIFE / MISTRESS

A Poignant Comedy in Two Acts

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CHARACTERS

- ROBIN MILLER Age 30 to 45. Blonde, waspish, full-figured and attractive. A former nurse and would-be writer.
- DAWN ZACCARIA Age 30 to 45. Brunette, Mediterranean, boyish figure; attractive. A former teacher and amateur painter.
- GINGER Age 25-35. A pretty sometimes waitress.
- *BILL Middle-aged. Flamboyant, obnoxious, extroverted, cigar-smoking trial lawyer from Texas with a big hat and boots.
- *DALE Middle-aged. Introverted and mousy, wearing glasses, bow tie, white shirt, and too-short pants that show his white socks.
- MARK MILLER MD; ROBIN's husband, age to match ROBIN. A fit tennis player in Brooks Brothers clothing. Wears a plain gold wedding band.
- TONY ZACCARIA DAWN's husband; age to match DAWN. An attorney and fit tennis player with expensive clothing including flashy tie, watch, and rings.

*Ideally, these two roles will be played by one actor.

The roles played by BILL and DALE can be played by one man, giving your favorite character actor a chance to shine. The two men are polar opposites: one is flamboyant and the other is introverted.

TIME & PLACE

The present in a downtown Washington, D.C. picnic area with table or a bench.

SCENE CHANGES

At first glance, it would appear that there are a lot of changes. However, there are only five locales depicted: a bare stage (twice); blackouts (twice); a picnic table or park bench (seven times); an office

(twice); and an apartment (twice). Moreover, and more importantly, each scene requires only a minimum of set pieces: a park bench or a picnic table, for example.

Details of the pieces required are at the end of the script.

ACT I

The action takes place in Washington, DC.

Scene:

- 1: the present at a picnic table or park bench downtown
- 2: the present at a picnic table or park bench downtown
- 3: the present at a picnic table or park bench downtown
- 4: two apartments
- 5: a park
- 6: blackout
- 7: picnic table or park bench
- 8: picnic table or park bench
- 9: two apartments; next day
- 10: picnic table or park bench

ACT II

Scene:

- 1: two apartments
- 2: Haines point
- 3: JOHN's office
- 4: two apartments
- 5: blackout
- 6: MARK's office
- 7: two apartments
- 8: picnic table or park bench
- 9: a park

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ACT I

SCENE 1

At Rise: In a small, urban park with a picnic table or park bench, trash basket, and fake water fountain at lunch time. ROBIN is seated and opens her brown bag lunch. SHE's in business attire. DAWN enters, sees ROBIN and approaches her. SHE's dressed more casually than ROBIN.

DAWN: Hi, may I join you?

ROBIN: Of course, have a seat. I'm Robin Miller.

DAWN: Dawn... Dawn Zaccaria. Wasn't that a funny trial? Have you ever been on a jury before?

ROBIN: Once a few years ago. But, yeah, it was a pretty funny case. The guy tries to burgle the place, falls down the stairs, and breaks his leg...

DAWN: And then sues the landlord. It sure was nice to see the jury show some balls.

ROBIN: Right; none of that "the coffee's too hot" stuff for us. Let's hear it for common sense!

DAWN: You know, this may sound a little goofy, but I heard you talkin' to that woman - the one sitting next to you - and you said something...

ROBIN: Yes?

DAWN: Sorry. I wasn't tryin' to be nosy...

ROBIN: Oh, I think I know what you heard. She said that her husband had just given her a new BMW...

DAWN: Yeah! And you said something like "Whoa. That'll be the day that happens to me." Right?

ROBIN: Well, in so many words, yes; I guess I did sound a little bitter. So?

DAWN: Well, I just want to say I know how you feel. My Tony, he's a nice guy, but, boy, is he cheap!

ROBIN: I know I wouldn't do this if we were ever going to meet again, but, my friend, I can match you cheap for cheap all day long.

DAWN: Okay, your husband...

ROBIN: Mark...

DAWN: Mark. Is he cheap; like, does he buy his shirts at K-Mart?

ROBIN: Oh, no! When it comes to his stuff, he's Mr. Gotta-have-it. He's only cheap with me.

DAWN: Just like Tony! He drives a new Jag; I'm limping along with a nine year old Ford.

ROBIN: Yes! That's Mark style, all right. There's always some reason that he has to have new this and new that - and I'm wearing three year old shoes.

DAWN: It sure is funny. When I got married, I never thought I'd end up like this. What a guy, that Tony.

ROBIN: He doesn't sound like one of nature's noblemen. Does he ever hit you?

DAWN: Naw, Tony's not the hittin' kind. Besides, he knows my brothers would beat the crap out of him if he did.

ROBIN: Well, that's reassuring.

DAWN: How about you, Robin, ever get smacked?

ROBIN: Oh, no. Mark would never raise a hand to me. He's very, very upper crust, you know, stiff upper lip and all that, which really means that when he gets mad, he sulks.

DAWN: He's, what, English?

ROBIN: Born here but both parents came from Blighty. And you're of Italian extraction, I'd judge, but that "Dawn..."

DAWN: Yeah. A lot of people ask where my name comes from. Well, my mother was sure that I was conceived one morning just as the sun came up.

ROBIN: Isn't that romantic? Me, I'm just a mishmash - Scot, German, Irish. So I'd guess that "Tony" means your hubby's from the same background?

DAWN: Right. We grew up next door to each other. So here you are with a Brit and me with a tizio. That makes all the more a coincidence. We both end up married to stingy guys.

ROBIN: But at least they aren't violent.

GINGER: (*enters*) There you are! You guys shot out of the jury room so fast I thought I'd lose you.

DAWN: Hey, we just applied a little common sense. The guy had no case!

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GINGER: Well, I'm glad I found you. Let's see... you're Dawn, right? And you're... Robin! Did I get that right?

DAWN: Yeah. But I didn't get your name...

GINGER: It's Ginger, Virginia really, but, please, call me Ginger. So what are you ladies doing for the rest of the day?

DAWN: Oh, I don't know. Maybe go home and try to finish that still life I've been wrestlin' with for two weeks. How about you, Robin?

ROBIN: Maybe do some shopping. Although, if you want the truth, I don't have all that much to shop with. I'll be glad to get that check for jury duty.

DAWN: That's two of us.

GINGER: Wait a mo', gals. I know we just met but I figured you both for being pretty well fixed. I mean, just the way you talk and all. You must have a pretty good education...

ROBIN: Well, we just met in the jury room so I can't speak for Dawn, but, yes, you're right, and, no, you're wrong.

GINGER: And how's that?

ROBIN: Yes, I've got a pretty good education, and, no I'm not well fixed unless you mean "in a fix."

GINGER: How so?

ROBIN: I was a nurse - for seven long years. We had a deal, my husband and me. I'd put him through med school, then he'd take care of the finances so that I could do what I've always wanted to do.

DAWN: And that is...

ROBIN: Write. I'm working on a short story. It's pretty good, I think. But, I've got a great idea for a novel. Okay, it's a bodice ripper, but they sell. I've got a great heroine and a fine plot. But, when I'm stressed, I can hardly write at all

GINGER: You sure are passionate about it. So what's wrong?

ROBIN: I'll tell you what's wrong! That husband of mine - DOCTOR Mark Miller? He's such a cheapskate that I can hardly keep the house going. He doles out \$5 here and \$10 there and thinks he's doing me a huge favor. What a laugh; I bust my butt so he can get through med school, so that he can earn us a decent living, so that I can finally have time to write.

GINGER: And it's not happening?

ROBIN: Not happening in spades, my friend.

DAWN: But, he did get his license?

ROBIN: Oh, yes, with a specialty.

DAWN: Which is...

ROBIN: The perfect one - dermatology. His patients never die and they never get ill. He's got a freaking annuity whenever someone walks into his office.

GINGER: So, he's making the big bucks but he hangs on to them?

ROBIN: In a word... yes.

MARK: *(We hear him from offstage. Lighting isolates ROBIN.)* Hey, Robin, did you get my dry cleaning yesterday?

ROBIN: *(now relating to and responding to MARK)* Yes. The suit is hanging in your closet and the blazer is on the bed.

MARK: And my shoes, did you polish them?

ROBIN: Yes.

MARK: Good girl. What do I owe you for the cleaning?

ROBIN: It was \$18.75.

MARK: I'll leave a twenty on the dresser.

ROBIN: Thanks a bunch, Mark.

MARK: That's okay.

(Sound of a toilet flushing. Stage lights come up.)

GINGER: Kee-rist. He doesn't even close the door to the can?

DAWN: You know, Robin, that sounds just like my Tony. I was a teacher. Tony wanted to be a lawyer. So, I took two jobs; paid the rent; paid his tuition. And the deal was...

ROBIN: That he'd support you when the practice got rolling?

DAWN: Bingo. So, the practice is rolling and the money is rolling in.

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GINGER: But...

DAWN: But damn little comes my way. Tony always has some excuse. He needs a new car - to impress the clients or he's got to put money into some IPO to get that company's legal business. And he dresses real good - tailor made this and custom made that - to impress the clients. Hell, I really don't know how much he makes. He doesn't give me any details. He's just stingy when it comes to his ever-lovin' sucker of a wife.

TONY: *(We hear him from offstage. Lighting isolates DAWN.)* Hi, it's me.

DAWN: Hi, what's up?

TONY: Well, I know you've been counting on getting away to the beach but I just found out it won't happen.

DAWN: What do you mean "it won't happen"? Don't talk to me like I'm some kid. Why can't we go to the beach?

TONY: Dawn, it's the senior partner. He really needs me on this major case.

DAWN: But, damn it, Tony. This is the third time we've had to cancel, and I just have to paint the ocean...

TONY: Sorry, babe. You can paint it another time. Well, got to go. I'm meeting a client for lunch. See you tonight.

(Stage lights come up.)

GINGER: He doesn't care much what you want to do, does he?

DAWN: You know? I think you're right!

ROBIN: And have you always wanted to paint?

DAWN: Yeah, since I was six years old. The only time I'm really happy these days is when I'm painting. People, animals, trees, flowers - anything! But what I really want to paint is the ocean.

GINGER: In other words, ladies, you both got suckered. You worked your fannies off putting those guys through school. Now that it's payday, you're seeing diddly.

ROBIN: Heck, I'd be happy with diddly! As it is, I'm seeing nothing.

DAWN: Likewise.

GINGER: So, let me guess, when Christmas comes - or your birthday - these guys don't make much of an effort?

ROBIN: You got that right.

DAWN: Right.

GINGER: Let's think about this for a minute. You each got a cheapskate, right?

DAWN: Cheaper than a one-legged hockey player.

ROBIN: Nice visual, kid.

DAWN: Being stingy is only part of it. There's just no consideration! The guy doesn't give a damn how I feel.

ROBIN: Yes, just for instance, wouldn't it be nice if the bastard would close the door to the loo and put the damn seat down?

GINGER: Okay; still thinking. You both married inconsiderate, stingy guys, but we all know that there are some nice guys out there, right?

DAWN: So I'm told.

ROBIN: Oh, of course you're right. Both my sisters married guys who are great. Neither is as well off as my husband, but when it comes to anniversaries or birthdays - wow!

DAWN: I have three cousins. Just like your sisters, they married nice, loving, generous guys.

ROBIN: That's the key word, all right.

GINGER: What is? What did I miss?

ROBIN: "Loving." It isn't so much that I miss having nice jewelry or a new Porsche or help around the house. Mostly it's just that I hate, really hate, not being appreciated, and having that bum I'm married to not show his appreciation or even consideration.

DAWN: Me, too. But, Ginger, what about you? Robin and I have pissed and moaned. What about you?

GINGER: Oh, I don't mind talking about myself. The guy I'm married to isn't anywhere near as successful as your husbands and, believe me, he's just as cheap. Yet, you can see that I dress pretty well. Plus, I've got this ring, and diamonds are a girl's best friend.

DAWN: That is some rock, and it didn't come from hubby?

ROBIN: From what she's told us, I'd bet not. Doesn't your husband wonder...

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GINGER: Naw, I told him it was fake.

DAWN: Well, good for you. How do you do it?

GINGER: Okay, this goes no further than the three of us, okay? I mean, not even my sister knows this. Okay?

ROBIN and DAWN: Okay, sure, fine, okay.

GINGER: No! I'm serious! You've got to promise!

ROBIN: Sorry, we were a little flip. I promise I won't say anything to anybody.

DAWN: Yeah, me too. I promise.

GINGER: Well... this all started about three years ago. I used to be a paralegal, but it got so boring that I quit. I'd spend my mornings at galleries and museums and wait tables afternoons at - well, I won't tell you where, but it's a place I know you know.

DAWN: And...

GINGER: Don't rush me. So, anyway, I'd worked there a few months when this very attractive guy - an older guy - started flirting with me. He always sat in my section. He'd leave huge tips. So we'd just kid around, but it was clear he wasn't just kidding.

ROBIN: So what happened?

GINGER: So, one day, he left his business card. On the back, he wrote "Sure would like to take you to Bermuda some weekend."

ROBIN: Just like that?

GINGER: Just like that.

DAWN: So how was the beach?

GINGER: Very funny! Sure, I was tempted but, remember, I'm married to Joe Lunch-bucket and there was just no way I could leave for a weekend.

DAWN: But you did do something, right?

GINGER: You know I did. I called the guy; his number was right there on his card.

ROBIN: And you said...

GINGER: I figured no reason to beat around the bush. I came right out with it. I said, "Jim, there's no way I can go to Bermuda for a weekend, and I sunburn real easy even if I could. But what would that weekend cost you - maybe five hundred bucks?" And he said, "About that; why?" So I said, "I'm off about 3:00 every day. Somebody told me there's a hotel or two in this town. How's that sound? A hundred bucks for the room; the balance under my pillow, and you won't get sand in your shorts."

ROBIN: But - that's prosti...

GINGER: Hold it right there, sister! I know what you're going to say and you're dead wrong. Or at least 95% wrong. This is a guy I've known for months; it's someone I really like and he likes me. I give him a hell of a lot of pleasure, and, believe me, he's a much better lover than Mr. Lunch-bucket. He's a banker with a PhD in economics. He's a Republican, for God's sake! He's really well off and the money doesn't mean squat to him.

ROBIN: Still...

GINGER: "Still" my ass. I like the guy; he likes me. He's kind - and the sort of man who gives presents to people he likes, so he gives me presents.

DAWN: But, it's money...

GINGER: That just shows how thoughtful he is. Instead of buying me something I may not like, he gives me a check and I buy a gift I know I'll like.

DAWN: Well, since you put it that way, it doesn't sound so awful. Plus, you're keeping the sand out of his shorts.

GINGER: I tell you true, my friends, "awful" it ain't. It's darn good fun and I'm saving up for the time when I can leave Joe Six-pack behind.

ROBIN: But aren't you worried about getting some dreadful disease? Or getting pregnant?

GINGER: Jim had a vasectomy years ago. As for catching any cooties, I made him wear a condom for the first couple of months. By then, I knew I could trust him. He's seeing me twice a week and I know he doesn't have any little swimmers left after he leaves my bed. Oh, and now he picks up the tab for the hotel.

DAWN: You sure do seem to have thought it all out. But why tell us?

GINGER: I wondered when you'd ask that.

DAWN: So, we're asking.

GINGER: Well, Jim is my guy. As I said, I like him; he likes me. We are, in some crazy way, a couple. I'm happier than I've ever been. When I saw how miserable you two were, I got to thinking.

ROBIN: Yes-s-s-s?

GINGER: Yeah, thinking about Jim and me and you guys and jury duty and an old movie.

DAWN: An old movie?

ROBIN: What old movie?

GINGER: Okay, I know this sounds weird now, but hear me out. Did you ever see *Strangers On A Train*? Alfred Hitchcock? It's one of his best, I think.

ROBIN: Sure, I saw it a long time ago. Farley Granger was such a nice guy and that little Robert Walker - he made my flesh crawl.

DAWN: Hey, hey - you two are way ahead of me. First of all, what was the movie about? And second, Ms. Ginger, why bring it up now?

ROBIN: I can tell you what the movie was about. The two men met...

DAWN: On a train, I'll bet...

ROBIN: On a train. I think it was the club car - kind of a rolling bar where people could get a drink and pass the time chatting. Anyway, that's not important. The key to the whole movie was that both men - well, the characters they were playing - wanted somebody killed. Granger was married to a shrewish slut and Walker hated his father. So Walker made a suggestion.

DAWN: Which was?

ROBIN: That Walker would kill Granger's wife and then Granger could return the favor - knock off Walker's father.

DAWN: Whoa! That's cold!

GINGER: Well, that was the story. The basic idea behind the plot is that it is easy to solve most murders. The cops find out who stands to gain from the death, then they really lean on the logical suspect. Maybe he - usually a "he" - hires someone to do it, so he has an alibi. But there's almost always some clue leading back to him: maybe he took a lot of cash out of the bank to pay the killer; maybe he gave a house key to the bad guy. Something...

ROBIN: Yes, there's almost always something. So if Granger were to kill his wife or hire it done, the odds were that he'd get caught right away.

DAWN: I get it! But if Walker killed Granger's wife - someone he didn't even know...

ROBIN: And someone nobody even knew he knew...

DAWN: Then the cops wouldn't have any clue! They might think that a stranger did it, but they wouldn't know who...

ROBIN: And they'd never be able to trace it to the husband of the murdered woman. Because nobody knew the two guys knew each other.

DAWN: What happened then, in the movie?

GINGER: It got real involved. Walker did kill Granger's wife; Granger had never been serious about the plot. And, well, it got real involved. But it wasn't the end of the movie I was thinking about - just the basic idea.

DAWN: And that is?

GINGER: And that is here we are, three strangers. We met in the jury room. No one we know knows that we've met.

ROBIN: I don't know where you're going with this, Ginger, but I can point out that other people on the jury know we know each other.

GINGER: Right. And how many of the other nine do you remember? Can you tell me one name?

ROBIN: Well, there was the foreman. A Mr. - Mr. - what was his name?

GINGER: See! You can't remember one name - not even the most important person.

ROBIN: Okay, you've made your point. We admit that. Right now and right here, no one else in the entire world knows that we know each other. But, hey, you're not thinking of...

GINGER: Murder? No, no. Not my style. Guys usually say it but - I'm a lover, not a fighter.

ROBIN: Well, that's a relief. I'm not getting along all that well with Mark, but I don't want to see him murdered. Not yet, anyway.

DAWN: Yeah, that's how I feel. Tony's stingy, but no way I want him killed.

GINGER: Fine, ladies. We're all on the same page - nobody kills anybody.

ROBIN: But you brought up the idea in the first place.

GINGER: I brought up the idea of an-o-nym-ity. You're below the radar of the rest of the world. You're invisible and that means there are a lot of things that you can do. Things you couldn't do otherwise.

DAWN: Like what?

GINGER: Jim has a couple of friends - good guys, I've met them. Now, I know that this is coming at you out of left field - and I'd never have mentioned it if we really knew each other...

DAWN: Is this going where I think it's going?

GINGER: You're a bright woman...

ROBIN: I don't want to hear any more!

GINGER: Oh, come on, for God's sake! You're all grown up now. Just listening to me can't hurt you. I'm trying to do you a favor!

DAWN: Okay, tell us about this favor.

GINGER: What are you, 35, maybe 38? You're in a lousy marriage, and I guess neither of you has kids, right? (**ROBIN and DAWN nod.**) From what you've told me about your husbands, you'd be idiots to make them fathers. Remember this, kiddos - we're born alone and we die alone. Along the way, you might help make a few other people happy, and, if you're lucky, be happy yourself, at least some of the time. But the bottom line is that there is no bottom line! At the end of the run, it all just fades to black. It's what you do here and now and for yourself that really matters.

DAWN: Geez, that's awful bleak, Ginger.

GINGER: Okay, maybe that was harsh, but, really, I'm just trying to point out that if you don't take care of yourself, nobody else will. What do you think, Robin? Is Mark going to "be there" for you for the next 20, 30, 40 years?

ROBIN: Well, not at the rate things are going...

GINGER: And Tony... what are the odds that he'll change, become more loving, more generous?

DAWN: Well...

GINGER: Well, you both can "well" all day, but at the end of that day, where are you?

ROBIN: I do know this - I have my pride!

GINGER: Congratulations! You've got your pride. Does your pride care if you live or die? If you're happy? Does your pride hold you and tell you how beautiful you are? And even more important - will your pride pay the rent, put food on the table?

DAWN: Uh-h-h-h...

GINGER: Right. Well, let me tell you - I've got pride, too. I'm proud that someone likes me enough - cares for me enough - to want me to be happy. See this bracelet? See this ring? (**whips checkbook out of purse**) See this figure? That's about as close to a "bottom line" as you can get, isn't it? And it's mine, ladies, all mine. Plus, I had fun - damn good fun - making it.

DAWN: Babe, you must have one strong sex drive.

GINGER: Yeah, I guess I do, and you don't?

DAWN: To tell the truth, it's kind of - what do you call it - atrophied.

ROBIN: "Atrophied" hell, almost disappeared is more like it.

GINGER: Well, come on then. What am I offering here? A way to boost your net worth and a way to better times in the sack. Love and money; hard combination to beat.

DAWN: There's somethin' to that.

GINGER: Hey, I'm not suggesting that you jump into a bed with some guy you don't know, or like, or respect. I just want to introduce you to Jim's friends, then you decide.

DAWN: Kee-rist. I can't believe I'm actually listening to this. Half an hour ago, I was on jury duty. Now I'm listening to a woman I barely know try to hustle me.

GINGER: Wrong there, sister. I'm not hustling you. I'm telling you my story and suggesting that you can do likewise. If there's any hustling going on, you're doing it yourself. If you were so all-fired content with your life, you'd have walked away ten minutes ago, right?

ROBIN: Point taken - no one is holding a gun on us.

DAWN: It's just so - so sudden.

ROBIN: I can't believe I'm asking this, but what are their names?

DAWN: And what do they do?

GINGER: I'll tell you when you tell me you want to meet them. It wouldn't be fair to toss their names out if you're not willing to go that far. As for what they do - one is a doctor and the other is a lawyer.

ROBIN and DAWN: No! Ohmigod! No!

GINGER: No, they aren't your guys, but I admit it is a coincidence, isn't it?

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DAWN: Well, okay. Only to meet - nothing else - I'll do it. I mean just for a drink? What's the harm?

ROBIN: Wow. Well, if you're game, so am I. And we're not committed to anything, right, Ginger?

GINGER: Of course, just meet the guys for a drink, or a cup of coffee even. You meet; you talk about the weather...

ROBIN: Don't you mean we talk about "whether"?

GINGER: Good one, Robin. You talk about the weather and then you decide whether you want to go any further.

DAWN: It seems okay...

GINGER: Fine. One man is named Dale; he's the MD. The lawyer is Bill. You can meet the guys right here if you want. Bring your own drink! No one's going to carry you off into white slavery. Now here's my email address; write me and I'll give you the details of who and when. *(exits)*

DAWN: Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Robin, what have we gotten ourselves into?

ROBIN: Now just remember - all we do is meet - and have a drink...

DAWN: And talk about "whether."

(Blackout)

SCENE 2

At Rise: Same as SCENE 1. The time is two weeks later. ROBIN is speaking on her cell phone.

ROBIN: God, Dawn, I'm so nervous I'm ready to wet my pants.

DAWN: **(on a loud speaker)** Hang in there, sister. Think of it as a date...

ROBIN: Date? I haven't had a date in 15 years!

DAWN: Whatever. Just look calm and feel beautiful. Let the guy do the talking. Guys love to talk about themselves. You know that.

ROBIN: Well, all I can do is try. Ohmigod, I think he's coming. He's coming! Okay, gotta go - talk to you later.

DAWN: Hang in there!

BILL: **(enters; strides up to ROBIN)** Hi, there, little lady. I'll just bet you're the Robin I'm looking for. My name's Bill and I fit.

ROBIN: I beg your pardon?

BILL: You know my name's Bill and I fit - fit the bill! It's a kind of pun, you see.

ROBIN: Oh, yes. That's extremely clever.

BILL: Well, I always did say that my daddy didn't raise any idiots. That's one of the things we say down in Texas.

ROBIN: Oh. So you're from Texas then?

BILL: Yes, ma'am, born and bred in the Lone Star State. But, you know, sometimes I do think it should be "bred and born" and not "born and bred" - if you catch my meaning, ma'am. I mean, after all, "bred" is the past tense of "breed" and, don't you see, the "breedin'" would have to come before the "born" part, don't ya think?

ROBIN: Ah-h-h...

BILL: Say, if you don't mind me sayin' so, you look a little under the weather. Are you feelin' all right? Now, you just set there like a nice little filly and I'll get you somethin' that's bound to perk you up.

ROBIN: No, no. You're very kind but I don't think a drink would help. I must beg you to excuse me; I just don't feel at all well.

BILL: Shucks, that's too bad. I was lookin' forward to a nice chinwag with you. Maybe see if you and I could get together some time - have some real fun. You know what I mean?

ROBIN: Yes. I have a pretty clear idea of what you mean. Now - if you'll just excuse me. **(exits)**

BILL: Women!

(Blackout)

SCENE 3

At Rise: Same as Scene 1. It is the next day. DAWN is on her cell phone.

DAWN: So from what you said last night, you date was a bust?

ROBIN: **(on a loud speaker)** Bust? Bust? Is the Grand Canyon a hole in the ground?

DAWN: That bad? You're making me real nervous.

ROBIN: Oh, he wasn't a rapist or anything like that. Nothing at all physical. He was just a self-centered, overbearing oaf. That's all I can think of; he was an oaf.

DAWN: You said he had boots, hat, cigar...

ROBIN: Big belt buckle.

DAWN: You're right. He was a poster boy for oaf-ism.

ROBIN: Or is it maybe oaf-dom?

DAWN: Oaf-ology!

ROBIN: See! You're getting into it. It's all a joke. A giggle, the Brits call it.

DAWN: Yeah, but, Robin, I still don't know how you did it. I feel like everybody who walks by knows why I'm here. I feel naked!

ROBIN: Take it easy, babe. Nobody knows you; nobody knows why you're there. Just take some deep breaths; think of a peaceful sunset on a lovely beach...

DAWN: Lovely beach? I'm in a public park in the middle of Washington, D.C.

ROBIN: I know that. I know that, but you just have to get your mind clear - think of walking on that lovely beach...

DAWN: Geez, you're starting to sound like one of those personal ads where they always say they love "evenings by the fire and walks on the beach."

ROBIN: Dawn, just think...

DAWN: No, I can't think of anything - except I don't want to be here. I just don't know how you did it, Robin. I thought I was tough, but this, this is just too much. I swear if the guy doesn't show up in the next ten seconds, I'm out of here! One, two, eight, nine, ten - I'm gone.

(SHE starts to exit when DALE slides in carrying a half-wilted flower. HE bumps into the exiting DAWN.)

DALE: Uh, sorry - so sorry. My fault. I wasn't looking where I was going. I, uh, didn't hurt you, did I?

DAWN: **(tries to continue to exit)** No, no. I'm fine. Now, if you'll just...

DALE: Uh, I don't want to bother you or anything, but is your name Dawn?

DAWN: Yeah, I'm Dawn, and you must be Dale. Nice to meet you.

DALE: Is it? I wonder about things like that. Do people really mean it when they say something like "nice to meet you"?

DAWN: Well, sure... usually.

DALE: But one thing sure is nice. The coincidence...

DAWN: Coincidence? What coincidence?

DALE: Aw, come on. You must have noticed.

DAWN: No. What?

DALE: Why, both of our names start with the same letter! Here. **(thrusts the flower at her)**

DAWN: Oh, thanks. I wonder if we could get something to put it in?

DALE: Oh, no! We don't want to do that. We don't want to attract attention to ourselves, do we? I mean - people might get the wrong impression - or the right impression.

DAWN: Impression? Impression of what?

DALE: Oh, yes. Any impression really. We can't be too careful, can we? We don't want people to know that we're here to talk about fucking?

DAWN: WHA-A-A-T??

DALE: Oh, that's all right. No offense taken. Now, just what are your favorite positions? I have a bad back and don't want to do anything too kinky. Do you like it on all fours?

DAWN: **(throws the flower at him)** How I like it is absolutely none of your goddamn business, buster. Now, I'm going to walk away, and if you say one more word - just ONE more word - I'll give you a lot more than a bad back. **(exits)**

DALE: Women!

(Blackout)

SCENE 4

At Rise: ROBIN and DAWN, on a divided stage, are in their respective apartments. It is an hour later. ROBIN is dusting. DAWN is setting up an easel. They are speaking on cell, or cordless, phones.

DAWN: And then the geeky bastard says, "We don't want anybody to know we're talking about fucking."
ROBIN: Just like that? He just blurted it out?
DAWN: It was even worse than that. He didn't "blurt." He just kind of said it like he'd say "pass the salt." Just like it was the most natural thing in the world for two strangers to talk about.
ROBIN: Well, I thought good ol' Bill was bad, but your guy wins the "Non-sophisticated for the Year" award.
DAWN: You know, that's good. He's just a weasel. He really didn't know how totally offensive he was - not a freakin' clue.
ROBIN: Well, he is a doctor.
DAWN: What's that mean?
ROBIN: Think about it. He - what was his name, Dale - decided when he was 18 or so that he wanted to be a doctor. From that point on, he took classes in anatomy and physics and chemistry. All science, all the time. Almost no art, music, philosophy. So, at the end of 10 or 12 years, you get a very highly trained, very skilled teenager.
DAWN: My God, you hit that one out of the ball park. That's just what he acted like: a clueless, nerdy teenager, but, still, uuggghhh...
ROBIN: Oh, I agree. Uugggh sums it up nicely.
DAWN: Of course, a lot of women become doctors...
ROBIN: True and they may have the same problem, but women just seem to be more well rounded, don't they? Maybe it has something to do with a subconscious urge to get ready for motherhood.
DAWN: Whatever. God, I don't know which was worse - your corn-pone trial lawyer - or maybe my dweeby doctor without a clue. I mean, what was Ginger thinking of - setting us up with guys like that?
ROBIN: What indeed? To be more or less fair, she really didn't know us at all. Maybe she thought we'd actually like those two. After all, her criteria are pretty straight forward.
DAWN: Right, the guy had to have money.
ROBIN: Yeah, but that wasn't all of it. She's found someone who is kind to her, who really likes her, who takes care of her. If we could have just gritted our teeth, maybe those bozos would have been like that for us. For all we know, her Jim may be just as socially inept as Bill and Dale and she just doesn't care.
DAWN: Or even know.
ROBIN: Well, she did say that her guy is a Republican.
DAWN: Tony has his faults but he is way ahead of Dale. Too bad he's such a tightwad, and so kind of cold.
ROBIN: Oh, I feel the same way. Mark isn't such a bad guy if he'd just be a little more giving.
DAWN: Yeah? You say he "isn't such a bad guy," so he must have some good points. Like what?
ROBIN: This may be kind of superficial, but he is tall and keeps in good shape; smart enough, in his own way; and he has - sometimes - a pretty good sense of humor.
DAWN: You know, that sounds just an awful lot like Tony. **(There's a long, pregnant pause. Both women look at the audience, or not.)**
ROBIN: Are you thinking...
DAWN: What I'm thinking?
BOTH: *Strangers on a Train!*
ROBIN: This is crazy!
DAWN: Totally! Totally crazy!
ROBIN: But...
DAWN: But, could we do it...
ROBIN: If we wanted to.
DAWN: Whoa. Are we talking...
ROBIN: No, we're just speaking...
DAWN: Right; just speaking...
ROBIN: Now, damn it; cut that out. No more Mammet; this isn't Glengarry Glen Ross!

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DAWN: Sorry; I'm just a little woozy.

ROBIN: Well, so am I.

DAWN: Do you really think we could pull it off?

ROBIN: Oh, I know we could if we really wanted to. First, let's look at the pluses.

DAWN: And minuses.

ROBIN: Right, and the minuses. But, before we do that, let's spell out just what we're thinking of. I mean, no harm in that - it isn't like we actually have to do anything.

DAWN: Okay.

ROBIN: Right. So - just talking - what would happen if we swapped husbands? If we took, as lovers, each other's husband?

DAWN: Gee. Oh, God. Geez. That's it; you said it. That's what we're talkin' about.

ROBIN: All right, so what are some of the pluses?

DAWN: Well, I'm damn sure that any lover of mine would treat me better than my husband does.

ROBIN: Right, that's the goal here, isn't it? We're both married to tightwads. Financially for sure and more or less emotionally, and I know Mark well enough to be sure he'll never change for me. But, for a bon-bon like you, *mon cherie*, he could very well become very generous, especially if I tell you what buttons to push.

DAWN: You're takin' the words right out of my mouth, babe. Say a woman goes into an affair and knows everything worth knowing about the man... why, he's dead meat.

ROBIN: Please, this isn't a Hitchcock movie.

DAWN: Sorry, I just meant that the guy wouldn't have a chance.

ROBIN: And that, friend, is just what we want. You and I have spent our time in the salt mines. And all we've gotten is the shaft. I think it's time for a payday!

DAWN: But you said we should look at the minuses too.

ROBIN: Oh, yeah. Let me think. Minuses, minuses. Okay, you've got a sexy new lover, someone who wants to treat you like a queen, someone to put a spark in your life.

DAWN: And those are the minuses?

ROBIN: That's as close as I can get.

DAWN: Oh, that's awful, and I love it.

ROBIN: We do owe a debt to that flake Ginger. She and her *Strangers on a Train* did get us thinking in this direction.

DAWN: Yes, but our way is much better. Sex with some guy Ginger introduced us to could have been dangerous. This way we know that our guys aren't diseased so they won't bring anything nasty back home.

ROBIN: And the beauty part is that WE set this up. We'll know what's going on and the guys won't. They'll be totally in the dark.

DAWN: Right, we will be in control.

ROBIN: Well, don't go Al Haig on me, but you're right. We'll be in total control. So, how do you want to arrange it? I can tell you how to strike up a conversation with Mark. Where do you think I could meet Tony?

DAWN: Do you jog? Do you ever do it at Haines Point?

ROBIN: You know, it just happens that I do...

DAWN: Okay. We can work on that, and both guys love tennis...

(Blackout)

SCENE 5

At Rise: Two days later. MARK is dressed for tennis and has racquet and tennis balls. TONY enters also dressed and equipped for tennis. Optional: use recorded offstage sounds of tennis being played.

TONY: Oh, hi. Are you waiting for a court to open up?

MARK: Yeah; I thought my buddy had reserved a court. Now I find out that he didn't, and he can't even make it today.

TONY: Tough. I took a chance - came down, hoping to get a game. Doesn't look like it's going to happen.

MARK: Well, I talked to the park guy and I'm on standby - if you'd like to hang around...

TONY: Great. That works. Better than going home to the old ball and chain.

MARK: I know what you mean. By the way, my name is Doctor Mark Miller.

TONY: "Doctor Mark Miller?" You know, hey, I don't want to be offensive or anything, but that sounds like your parents named you "Doctor" and "Mark" is your middle name.

MARK: Very funny, mister...

TONY: Zaccaria - Tony. **(they shake hands)** Sorry, I didn't mean to wisecrack like that. Comes from being a lawyer, I guess.

MARK: Ah, an honored member of the bar. But, tell me, counselor, what is it with you guys, using that "esquire" stuff?

TONY: Oh, it's just a custom. I don't know how it got started.

MARK: Forget "how." What about "why?" Didn't anyone, way back whenever, realize that an "esquire" was just a servant for a knight?

TONY: Well, you know what they say, "Once a king, always a king," but once a night is enough for any man.

MARK: Not bad, but once a month is enough for some people.

TONY: Thinking of the ball and chain again?

MARK: Yeah, but don't change the subject. Where did that "esquire" nonsense come from?

TONY: Beats me, pal. Way before my time. Here's one for you: I'd bet a hundred bucks that your receptionist says "Doctor will see you now," not, mind you, "THE doctor will see you now." I had a friend with a PhD. He'd tell the receptionist, "Oh, can doctor see doctor now? Tell doctor that doctor will be there when doctor is ready."

MARK: Why do receptionists say it that way? Custom... just like your jerky "esquire." Tell you what, why don't you get your receptionist to go that route?

TONY: You mean, she should say, "Lawyer will see you now"?

MARK: Oh, no. If you're going to do it, do it right. "Attorney will see you now."

TONY: You know, I kind of like it! Maybe I will do that, start a new custom.

MARK: You been to L.A.?

TONY: Of course.

MARK: Ever look in the yellow pages out there? Here on the east coast, you guys are just "lawyers." Out in la-la land, they are "attorneys."

TONY: Damn, they one-upped us that time.

MARK: Hey, sue the phone company! Class action suit! Irreparable emotional damage!!

TONY: Okay, okay. Sorry I got on your case about "doctor."

MARK: No prob, bro. Where'd you go to school?

TONY: Maryland BA and Georgetown Law. How about you?

MARK: G.W.

TONY: Well, I knew five minutes ago that you weren't Ivy.

MARK: Yeah? Why's that?

TONY: Think about it man. Have you ever met a guy from Harvard, Yale, Princeton, who didn't tell you in the first 90 seconds where he'd gone to college?

MARK: I never have now that you mention it. **(a tennis ball bounces in from offstage; one of the guys catches it and tosses it back, no break in dialogue)** And here's another - you'll never meet a guy who's been in the Navy without him telling you in sixty seconds...

TONY: And a Navy guy who went Ivy?

MARK: Thirty seconds! (*brief pause, they bounce balls with racquets*) You mentioned the “ball and chain.” Married, right?

TONY: Yep, going on 7 years now. You?

MARK: Almost the same, no kids, thank God. You?

TONY: No, also child-free. Thank God.

(They spot a shapely woman. If casting permits, this can be a person crossing the stage. If not, they can indicate her offstage.)

MARK: Whoa! That’s a bit of all right. When I see a woman built like that, it reminds me of Bob Hope.

TONY: Okay, I’m the straight man. Why Bob Hope?

MARK: His theme song, *Thanks for the Mammaries*.

TONY: Groaner. But she was built, all right. Must have been a 38 D cup. Damn, it’s a good thing my wife can’t hear me.

MARK: Mine, too. She’d give me hell. (*falsestto*) “You shouldn’t be discussing a woman’s body parts.” I just tell her I’m obsessive but not compulsive.

TONY: Well, I do enjoy a good set of boobs. None of that IBTC stuff for me.

MARK: IBTC?

TONY: Yeah. Itty Bitty Titty Committee.

MARK: Good one, I’ll have to remember that. But, really, I’m a leg man. Love ‘em long. And lean...

TONY: I know what you mean. But let me tell you a story about legs. I was at an art gallery opening one night. You know - lots of cheap wine - people checking each other out. Well, it was summer and I spotted a woman in shorts, and she had legs...

MARK: Ahh-h-h-h.

TONY: No, on the contrary. Not really “ugggah,” but certainly not “ahh-h-h-h.” Mary...

MARK: Her name?

TONY: Of course, her name. Anyway, Mary had... how to put this gently... maybe unfortunate would cover it. I’ve seen worse, but Mary’s were big, large, not totally like the old song...

MARK: Oh, I’ll bet I know the one you’re thinking of! “She’s got a pair of legs, just like two whiskey kegs.”

TONY: Right. Hers weren’t quite that bad, but close.

MARK: So, what happened?

TONY: Well, we’d been talking, and I was asking myself just how many drinks those legs demanded.

MARK: You mean, you might be able to forget them if you had three drinks, but not two?

TONY: Exactly. Although, with Mary, it would have been more like four or five. Anyway, I was just on the verge - just one drink away from making my move...

MARK: And what happened?

TONY: I could hardly believe it. Some guy came up to us, turned to Mary and said, “I’ve been standing over there, admiring your legs.”

MARK: Son of a bitch!

TONY: My sentiments exactly. Well, that was game, set and match. Mary’s face lit up - you’d think she had won the lottery. In a way, I guess she had.

MARK: Legs, boobs, body parts. Reminds me of one evening when I put my foot in my mouth. I’d met a great looking woman at a party. After a couple of dates, we had gotten as far as the bedroom.

TONY: Ah, ground zero.

MARK: Turned out I was the zero - but that’s getting ahead of the story. Well, I’d known that she had a good body, but when she took off her bra...

TONY: Good ones?

MARK: Way, way better than good. Outstanding, upstanding, perfect. So, gentleman that I am, I wanted to say something nice.

TONY: “Gentleman that you are.”

MARK: So I said - exactly the wrong thing.

TONY: Which was?

MARK: Well, my little buddy was maybe 30, 32, somewhere in there, and I, reaching for what I thought was the perfect compliment, said, “Where did you get the breasts of an 18 year old?” God! Why did I use those words? I could have said, “My dear, what lovely breasts you have.” That’s what I meant!

TONY: So what did she say?

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MARK: First, there was a pause... a looonng pause.

TONY: Never a good sign.

MARK: And I knew I was in trouble.

TONY: Silicone?

MARK: Silicone.

TONY: So that put a little damper on the evening's activities?

MARK: Big damper. But, getting back to your story, do you think the guy liked big legs or just knew that one way to home base is to compliment a woman on something she's not proud of?

TONY: Not a clue, but you're right. Say a woman has a long, thin neck. Some jerk along the way will have told her that she looks like a chicken. So, a very good move is to tell her how much she looks like Audrey Hepburn.

MARK: A young Audrey Hepburn. But you sound like a man with a lot of good moves.

TONY: Old moves, stale moves, out of date moves.

MARK: So, you don't play around?

TONY: Never have. Doesn't mean I never will.

MARK: I know what you mean. An old guy I used to know said, "You get tired of chicken every night." Hell, I don't care if it's chicken - or veal - or even lobster - a man does get a little weary of the same dish.

TONY: What about you? Play around much?

MARK: Believe it or not, never have, but there is something to that seven year itch business. Funny, I haven't mentioned this to anyone - even my shrink - but if the right woman came along - someone really sexy who really wanted me - well, I'm not made of stone.

TONY: Who is?

MARK: *(looks off)* Oh, hey. The park guy is waving to me. He's got a court for us. Are you any good?

TONY: Just good enough to win.

MARK: Ha, care to make it interesting?

TONY: Hundred bucks says I beat you in straight sets.

MARK: Done. Let's go play some tennis, esquire.

(They exit as lights go to blackout.)

SCENE 6

At Rise: Two hours later. The scene takes place during the blackout. A phone is ringing.

ROBIN: *(whispers throughout the scene)* Come on, come, come on! Pick up the phone.

DAWN: Hello.

ROBIN: Oh, Dawn. Thank God you're there. This is Robin. Listen, Mark just got home. He's in the shower now. Listen, he told me he just played tennis with a lawyer named Tony. Is your husband...

DAWN: *(also whispering)* Ohmigod, ohmigod. Tony just got home from playing tennis.

ROBIN: I hope it's just a coincidence, but it's something we'll have to keep in mind. I hope it doesn't mean anything.

DAWN: Okay, keep fingers crossed. Bye.

(Lights come up on SCENE 7.)

SCENE 7

At Rise: The next day. DAWN is at the picnic table (or park bench) of SCENE 1. ROBIN enters. They are both dressed for jogging.

DAWN: I'm really nervous. Do you think we can pull this off?

ROBIN: Relax; it'll be a piece of cake. In school, were you in any plays?

DAWN: Yeah, I was a drama minor. I was Ophelia and Nora and Carmen. Then I was lead in Miss... Miss... you know, Strinberg... what's it called?

ROBIN: Miss Julie?

DAWN: Right, that's the one. Geez, I played Julie. Should have remembered that one. I'm just nervous.

ROBIN: That's natural. But - wow - Ophelia, Nora, Carmen, Julie. That's a wonderful mix, and you were the lead. Well, here you go again, starring in our little production of "Dawn Meets Mark." You're going to be great.

DAWN: Well...

ROBIN: All you have to do is play the part. You and I are writing the script, and we'll rehearse until we get it right. Then...

DAWN: Then, it's opening night!

ROBIN: Yes! The big difference here is that we know we'll get good reviews. I tell you what Mark likes; you prep me for Tony. It's going to be a piece of cake.

DAWN: You seem pretty sure.

ROBIN: The only thing I'm really sure of is that I won't - I can't - go on living on nickels and dimes, and being only half loved, if that. If I leave Mark, I know he'd get the best lawyer in town and I'd end up with zip. This way, I have a fighting chance of taking care of myself.

DAWN: Robin - do you think it might even be fun?

ROBIN: Of course! I know it will be... can be... if we make it fun. *(takes photo from pocket)* Here, here's a photo of Mark. Not a bad looking guy, right? He's *(at this point, SHE will describe the actor who is playing the role of MARK)* and, at least in the beginning, a real sexy guy.

DAWN: Well, here's a shot of my Tony. He's *(describes the actor playing TONY)*

ROBIN: Hey, babe. I heard that "my Tony." I'm not going to take your guy, and I'd probably like to have Mark back, come to think of it. But we've got to trust each other... help each other... or this will never work.

DAWN: You're right, I'm sorry. It just takes some getting used to... the idea of setting my own husband up with another woman.

ROBIN: Look, if we both just concentrate on what we're gaining, we'll be okay.

DAWN: Right, a brand new lover, and we can prove that a mistress is treated better than a wife.

ROBIN: Okay, we're on the same page. Now, did you make out your list? Here's mine. *(takes out a slip of paper from pocket)* Mark likes tennis. Well, you knew that! Anyway, he plays tennis. He's a big Redskins fan but he'll watch any NFL game. Monday nights he's always up until John Madden names the player of the game.

DAWN: Good, I can get up to speed on the football, and I have a halfway good tennis game. What else?

ROBIN: He's not very political but hated Slick Willie.

DAWN: Clinton?

ROBIN: Who else? So you know he can't stand Hillary. He likes Clint Eastwood and Arnold - all the macho flicks. If he goes out to eat, 90% of the time, it'll be Italian. *(DAWN is taking notes.)* He's not a big fan, but seems to enjoy the ballet. He gets the *Wall Street Journal* and *Time* magazine. Oh, and one of his friends has an art gallery on Connecticut Avenue, right at DuPont Circle.

DAWN: Great, this is great. I feel like I know the guy already and you were right. If we think of this as a play... and I'm just learning the back story of the lead male... why, it's going to be easy.

ROBIN: And fun?

DAWN: And fun. Okay, here's what you should know about Tony. He plays tennis, too, but isn't as good as he thinks he is. He's a lawyer, remember? He likes sushi and hates Italian. Doesn't much care for football but goes nuts over basketball. College, pros - even the poor Mystics, but he especially follows the Terps. When Maryland won the championship, he was in heaven.

ROBIN: Time out. Tony went to College Park?

DAWN: Right. So anything that even looks like a turtle catches his eye. Then he went to Georgetown Law but his heart is always with the Terps. How about Mark?

ROBIN: He went to G.W. so he has no interest in college sports, but those 'Skins! So I'll have to read up on the Maryland team. Get some names from last year's team, for example, and you do the same with the 'Skins.

DAWN: How do we do that?

ROBIN: Heck, all we have to do is go to Google and we'll learn enough in 10 minutes to keep a conversation going. Just remember if you ever get stuck, all you have to do is ask Mark about all the good players that the 'Skins traded away. That'll keep him going the entire evening. Anything else?

DAWN: I almost forgot! When we were talking on the phone - when we were first planning this? You said that you played chess. Well, so does Tony.

ROBIN: Is he any good?

DAWN: Shoot, I don't know. He never says he's not good at anything.

ROBIN: Right, attorney Tony.

DAWN: And, Tony used to sail a lot. He's been busy trying to make partner, so he hasn't been on a boat for a while, but I know he still loves it.

ROBIN: Terrific. My family had a cottage on Lake Michigan and we had a nice old sloop, so I grew up with a tiller in my hand.

DAWN: We've covered sports and politics and food...

ROBIN: And avoided sex.

DAWN: So what does Mark like in the romance department?

ROBIN: Well, he does like a little encouragement. Rub his thigh; let him know you're ready. He does like that.

DAWN: Okay, I'll have to do the opposite of what Tony likes.

ROBIN: Opposite? How - opposite?

DAWN: Tony likes to make the moves. It gives him a turn-on if he thinks you might not be ready. In all our years together, he's never done anything rough, so you don't have to worry about that. But, he likes it if I'm not - that is, if you're not - ready to get it on. Partly, it makes him seem in control, and it gives him a rush to think that he's turned you on. It'd probably help if you pretend to be shy so he has to warm you up. Plus, he likes a BJ as much as the next guy, and he really likes it if you have a mouthful of ice chips.

ROBIN: Okay, it beats an Eskimo Pie any day. Now, what about position? Missionary? Hands and knees?

DAWN: Oh, a little of this, a little of that. We never really talk about it, come to think of it. What does Mark like?

ROBIN: He does like me to get on top. Says it gives him more control over when he has an orgasm.

DAWN: He's right about that, saves him from thrusting.

ROBIN: Okay, we're moving right along. Anything else?

DAWN: Oh, Tony hates it when I wear any perfume. He's very sensitive to it, almost allergic. Even store shampoo turns him off.

ROBIN: Gee, glad you mentioned that. I do love my Obsession but I'll wash it all off before I have a date with Tony.

DAWN: I know I'll be fine, but it does sound funny to hear you talking about a "date" with Tony. So, does Mark like your Obsession?

ROBIN: No, for some reason, he likes a floral scent with a spicy top note.

DAWN: Got it. I'll stop by Wal-Mart and see what they've got like that. I'll just have to be careful to shower after and make sure Tony doesn't smell it.

ROBIN: Girl, I think we are just about there. Tell you what... let's meet tomorrow. Same time. Right here. We can do some role playing until we're comfortable with our lines. Then, we can set up "accidental" meetings and the show goes on the road! Yes, "the play's the thing wherein we'll capture..."

DAWN: Oh, damn. I do know that one!

ROBIN: "...wherein we'll capture more than poor Hamlet ever did."

(Blackout)

SCENE 8

At Rise: It is the next day. ROBIN, seated at the picnic table or bench from SCENE 1, is dressed in jogging togs and reads the Wall Street Journal. DAWN enters wearing a Redskins cap and jogging togs. SHE sits on a bench.

DAWN: Excuse me, how did Amazon do yesterday? It's on the Nasdaq, but you probably knew that.

ROBIN: *(speaks in a deep voice, imitating MARK)* Amazon? Let me look. *(flips through paper)* Are you a Redskins fan?

DAWN: Died in the wool. Even when Marty was here, but, God, I do miss Joe Gibbs and Bobby Bethard.

ROBIN: *(imitating MARK)* Oh, don't remind me. Those were glory days, weren't they? Ah, here it is... Amazon. I'm afraid it dropped two points.

DAWN: Oh, don't be sorry. My husband owns it in his name and the only fun I get is watching it do the limbo. You know, "how low can it go?"

ROBIN: *(imitating MARK)* Husband a little on the stingy side, is he?

DAWN: Oh, yeah. You got that right. Well, thanks for the Amazon info... *(starts to leave)*

ROBIN: Oh, no. Don't do that, don't go. Remember, Mark is a doctor, and what did we say about MDs?

DAWN: That they are - are - highly trained teenagers!

ROBIN: Right. Not all, of course, but there's a lot of that in Mark. He's really kind of shy. If you start to leave like that, he'll just let you go. Oh, later, he'd kick himself for not saying something, but it'd be too late by then. So, after you thank him for the stock price, what can you do to hang around while he gets his courage up?

DAWN: How about this? After he makes some comment about my husband, I say, "That reminds me of an old joke. A guy drops two bits and his friend says 'Get that quarter back.'"

ROBIN: That's funny, very good. A double joke - football and stingy at the same time. Good one. And Mark does have a sense of humor.

DAWN: So, who do you think should be the man for the 'Skins this year?

ROBIN: *(imitating MARK)* Quarterback? The guy we've got is pretty good. But, hell, until we got an offensive line, the poor guy is just bait.

DAWN: Too damn bad we got rid of Brad Johnson.

ROBIN: *(imitating MARK)* Yeah, it was dumb to let him go.

DAWN: Right, Bobby never would have done that.

ROBIN: Great, great! You're really getting into it, and - wow - you do know something about football, don't you?

DAWN: I know, but, heck, all you have to do is read the *Post* on Monday. You memorize a few names and facts, and you're a fan! In college I had to study ten times harder than that for a mid-term. Last night I went to a sports bar and laid it on the line.

ROBIN: Laid what on the line?

DAWN: Not what you're thinking. I just sat at the bar, bought a beer and said next to the guy to me, "In ten minutes or less, tell me about football in this town." He about wet his pants. Gave him a chance to show off with something he's crazy about. Of course, he kept hoping he was going to make a touchdown of his own.

ROBIN: So, in two minutes or less, what did you learn?

DAWN: Well, the quarterback is the key man and gets the headlines and the big bucks...

ROBIN: And the chicks...

DAWN: The guy can't do squat without a good offensive line. Guards, tackles, the center... it's up to them to hold off the defense. The receivers receive - duh - and the backs run, for the most part. On defense you've got the line and the line backers. Duh, again. Behind them are the cornerbacks and the safeties. It's really easy to get the basics. Guys just love to talk about it with a woman... at least one who knows enough to keep the conversation going.

ROBIN: Dawn, I'm really impressed. You get an A+ on that part. Now, how do you take it to the next level?

DAWN: I think... I think I'd introduce myself.

ROBIN: Right, and who are you?

DAWN: Who am I? Why, I'm Dawn... uh-h-h Da... oh, oh.

ROBIN: Hum-m-m... we've got to think this one through. Do we use our real names? Make up totally new ones? Stick with just first names? What do you think?

DAWN: Gee, I don't know.

ROBIN: I think our best bet is to make up new first names and just never, ever mention a last name. You can never be sure who knows who, or whom. Any city is just a group of small towns. That play? *Six Degrees of Separation*. It was kind of misleading. I knew a grad student at Stanford. Her prof gave the class the name of a guy he knew in Manhattan. The idea was to see how few degrees there were from the students to the New Yorker. Guess how many.

DAWN: Well, in *Six Degrees* there were some racial lines that had to be crossed. So, Stanford to the Big Apple... I'd guess four.

ROBIN: Two and a half. So let's not tempt fate. We keep things on a first name basis, and new first names. Now, who do you want to be?

DAWN: Oh, this is such a new idea. Let me think. I know! My favorite aunt was named Ruby. It's a little old fashioned but kind of sexy, too.

ROBIN: I like it, and I'm going to be Honey. I don't care if it sounds like I'm a stripper. I've got enough education to disabuse anyone of that idea.

DAWN: Disabuse? I'd say you already have, Honey.

ROBIN: Right. So, you say, "It's nice talking with you. My name is Ruby." And you stick out your hand. Mark'll say something like... (*imitating MARK*) "Hi, my name is Doctor Mark Miller, and I love your name."

DAWN: Damn, that's kind of stuck up. Does he always say it that way? "Doctor Mark Miller."

ROBIN: Up to now, anyway. Maybe you can help him with that.

DAWN: Nice to meet you, Mark. By the way, the 'Skins are on Monday night next week. Think you'll be watching?

ROBIN: (*imitating MARK*) Oh, you bet. You?

DAWN: What do you think, Robin? My guess is that the best setting would be to meet him in a sports bar.

ROBIN: Oh, I agree. Anything more overt would freak him out. So, you can say something like "It'd be fun to watch with you. Like to meet me at Alexander's? They have ten TVs and Samantha Adams on draft."

DAWN: "Samantha" Adams?

ROBIN: Okay, stick with "Sam." Some lesbian friends of mine always call it Samantha. Yeah, best to stick with plain old Sam. Don't want to get too cute and confuse the boy.

DAWN: Right. And by halftime, he'll learn that I'm an artist and love Clint Eastwood and hate the Clintons... all except Chelsea.

ROBIN: Good, good. Now, this next part is tricky but I think it will work. The first night, you rub him a bit and kiss his ear but don't take it any further. Mark's not dumb and he'd be awfully concerned about making it the first night. He's a doctor, for God's sake, and he's cautious by nature.

DAWN: So how do I get around that?

ROBIN: Let me think. I'm sure that after an evening of football and beer and snuggles, he'll ask you out. He'll probably be reluctant to go for the gold and will just ask you to lunch. You tell him lunch isn't good for you, but how about dinner? Dinner is, in order of magnitude, more intimate than lunch.

DAWN: Okay, we go to dinner. I wear my best little black dress and the highest heels I can find. Then what?

ROBIN: You tell him how much you like champagne but really don't know too much about brands. This will give him a chance to order the most romantic of wines and he can pick one that doesn't cost an arm and a leg.

DAWN: And then?

ROBIN: After dinner, you order brandy. At this point, every man I know will be thinking home run!

DAWN: Okay, champagne. Brandy. Won't I be on my ass by then?

ROBIN: Well, you do want a bit of a buzz, but, too, you don't want to pass out. Remember what Winston Churchill said? "I've gotten far more from alcohol than alcohol ever got from me." Before you go to the restaurant, eat a big bread and butter sandwich... lots of butter, and eat some yogurt. All this will slow down the alcohol. Plus, during dinner, you can tip some of your wine into his glass. Look into his eyes when you do it; it's very romantic and intimate.

DAWN: Fine, we're both feeling little pain. Then what?

ROBIN: And now... now... you say, "I really would like to see your office."

(Blackout)

SCENE 9

At Rise: It is the next day. Lights come up on a divided stage; ROBIN is on one side, DAWN on the other like SCENE 4. ROBIN's phone rings.

ROBIN: Hello.

DAWN: Robin, listen. This is Dawn. I've been thinkin' about our talk yesterday, about me having dinner with Mark and all.

ROBIN: Yes.

DAWN: Now, I'm not getting cold feet or anything, but I just think that, well, neither of us has actually done anything like this before...

ROBIN: Advice?

DAWN: Yeah, I know she didn't do us any favors settin' us up with Bill and Dale, but that Ginger...

ROBIN: Hum-m-m. You know, I think you're right. She's as close to an expert as we're likely to find. You and I are raw beginners at this sort of thing. Remember what Dirty Harry always said, "A person has to know her or his limitations." At least, that's what he should have said. Okay, I've got Ginger's number. I'll call her. We can all meet in the park tomorrow at noon.

(Blackout)

SCENE 10

At Rise: The next day. GINGER is at the picnic table or bench. SHE is dressed with too much flash for the time/location. SHE has a purse and at least one shopping bag. ROBIN and DAWN enter dressed for jogging.

GINGER: It was so good to hear from you! Listen, I'm sorry things didn't work out with Bill and Dale. I should have realized that you two were just too good for them.

ROBIN: Oh, it's not that we're too good or anything, but they just weren't our type.

DAWN: No, not our type.

GINGER: So, you have discovered guys who are your type and you want Mama Ginger to give you a few tips?

DAWN: Uh huh, yes.

GINGER: Okay, who are these lucky guys?

ROBIN: Our husbands!

GINGER: Your husbands! Are you crazy? From what you told me, you'll never get those guys to change.

DAWN: We think we've found a way.

ROBIN: Didn't you tell us that a mistress is treated better than a wife?

GINGER: Yes-s-s-s.

DAWN: So we're going to become mistresses... to each other's husband.

GINGER: Oh! That's brilliant! And the guys won't know?

ROBIN: Oh, no, never. You're the only person we've told, and we wouldn't tell you except that we all are...

GINGER: *Strangers on a Train!* I love it. Way to go! All of this because we were on that dumb jury. Now, how can I help you?

DAWN: Robin and I have traded pictures of the guys. We've described them down to their you-know-whats. We've rehearsed how we'll meet them and what we'll say.

ROBIN: Then Dawn called me and said we'd better get some expert advice on this mistress stuff, so we called you.

GINGER: Let me tell you a story. My granddaddy was a sergeant in World War Two. He knew a lot about radar. One day he had to give a lecture to a room full of colonels and generals. He looked out over the room and said, "Gentlemen, there are probably 20 people in the world who know more about radar than I do, but, I see none of them in this room so I will tell you about radar."

ROBIN: I get it. There may be lots of women who know more about this than you do, but none of them is here right now.

GINGER: No, you missed the point. I'm willing to admit that there are 20 women who might know more than I do, but only 20! In other words, ladies, I'm damn good at what I do.

ROBIN: Point taken. So, where can we start?

GINGER: To get what you want, you have to know what you want. Think about that for a minute while we get some details out of the way. Now, you're going to use aliases, right?

DAWN: Right, and we think we should only use first names... less to remember... and keeps a bit of mystery about us.

GINGER: Oh, I agree. This is a huge city but you never know when two lives will cross. You'll each tell the guys that you are married to a stingy, unfeeling man. Just be sure you never mention two things: the man's name and what he does. More tiny town karma to think about.

DAWN: You're right.

GINGER: It'll be tough to say nothing about people who are such an important part of your lives, so you've got to have a list of topics that you can talk about. You're safe in talking about what you do... painting and writing, your hobbies. I know... shouldn't have said that... sorry. Just stick with what you know and love. One thing you've got to do is get an answering service. The guys should never have a way to get to you directly. And beware of caller ID if you call them. Best to use a pay phone. (**ROBIN jots all this down.**) By the way, how's your short story coming?

ROBIN: Oh, it's all written. It's just not down on paper yet.

GINGER: Okay, a few minutes ago I asked you what you wanted.

DAWN: We want to be treated fairly, with more consideration for our feelings.

ROBIN: And, of course, to get what was belongs to us - the financial support we were promised. We put those bozos through college and grad school and, so far, we've gotten zip.

GINGER: Okay, I think you can manage the love and consideration part on your own. I'm sure I can help with the sexual side of things. But, about finances... how do you see that working?

DAWN: Gee, we haven't... we just...

ROBIN: We just haven't thought about it, and I'm so glad you're here to help us. How do you see it playing out?

GINGER: Basically, there are two ways you can structure the deal. Either way, you have to become a fundamentally essential part of the man's life. We'll talk about that later. Right now, I'm thinking about the dough-ray-me and how it gets from his wallet to your purse. Here's one way to do it; you just hint at the nice gifts you'd like to get. Another way is to be right up front with the guy, like I am with my Jim. After an hour or two of exquisite lovemaking, he leaves me five little pieces of paper. On each one is a picture of dear, departed Benjamin Franklin, or maybe a check.

DAWN: Wow; that's five hundred bucks! He visits you twice a week?

GINGER: On average.

ROBIN: Well, I don't think we can count on that much from Mark or Tony.

DAWN: Hey, maybe we can; maybe we can't. We sure can try.

GINGER: No need to decide that now. You know the men; I don't. I've got about ten minutes to tell you what you really need to know. Where I think I can help you most is in how to make yourself... what was the expression I used before?

ROBIN: Fundamentally essential. I do like that.

GINGER: "Indispensable" is another way to put it. Here's the basic fact: not one American woman in a hundred knows what really pleases a man.

DAWN: Aw, come on. That can't be true.

GINGER: Oh, believe me, it is all too true. For all I know, it's probably true for the rest of the world, too. Not one man in a hundred knows what he's missing which, of course, is to your advantage. Once you know how to please the guys - and they compare the sex they've been getting - well, that makes you...

ROBIN and DAWN: Fundamentally essential!

DAWN: Which we want to be. But, you're telling us that, right now, there are things about sex which Robin and I don't know? Give us a for instance.

GINGER: Glad to. Did you do your Kegels this morning?

DAWN: Uh-h-h - no. What are Kegels?

ROBIN: Oh, those are exercises that women do if they have weak bladder control. I was a nurse, remember.

DAWN: Hey, I'm a long way from needing Depends!

GINGER: See? Here's a bright, informed woman and she's gone off in the wrong direction already.

ROBIN: That's partly my fault, I did mention bladder control. You see, Dawn, Kegels work all the muscles at the bottom of the body, including, most importantly...

GINGER: The vagina.

DAWN: Is this going to be, like, an anatomy lesson?

GINGER: Yes, my dear friend, it's going to be like that, and much, much more. I'm going to show you how to please the man. Please the man; you keep the man. Call it old-fashioned, call it male chauvinism, call it anything you like. If you want to go through life without a guy, terrific. Your choice, go do it. But, if you want to have a man in your life, listen to Mama Ginger.

DAWN: Okay.

GINGER: None of this "a woman without a man is like a fish without a bicycle" business. I don't want to waste my time here.

ROBIN: No, we're committed. Go ahead.

GINGER: 'Cause even the exalted Ms. Steinheim did eventually marry, you know.

DAWN: Come on, Ginger. Robin said it for both of us. We're committed.

GINGER: All right, just so we're all on the same page. So, back to my question. I can see that neither of you did those exercises this morning, right?

ROBIN and DAWN: Right.

GINGER: Or ever?

ROBIN and DAWN: Right.

GINGER: Well, it's clear that we're building from the ground up here, which means that neither of your guys has been exposed to really good lovemaking, which means that they'll really appreciate you when you get those vaginal muscles toned.

DAWN: Now, wait a minute. I've never had any complaints about how I make love.

ROBIN: Me either.

GINGER: Ladies, ladies. Guys, most of them, don't know enough about good sex TO complain.

DAWN: Still...

GINGER: Still, nothing. I'm simply stating facts. Look at it like this: you go to New York, you can eat at McDonald's, or the Olive Garden, or at *Le Cote Basque*. Now, the people at Mickey D's aren't complaining, are they?

ROBIN: Are you telling us that, when we have sex, we've been giving the equivalent of a Quarter Pounder?

GINGER: Well, maybe a Happy Meal, but, yes, that's exactly what I'm telling you. "I've had no complaints" doesn't mean squat, my friend. The guy partaking simply doesn't know that an Olive Garden exists, to say absolutely nothing about *Le Cote Basque*.

ROBIN: Hard to believe, but you know more than I do.

GINGER: That's right because sex is what I do.

ROBIN: But you know so much. You sound like much more than just an enthusiast.

DAWN: Yeah, much more.

GINGER: Okay, my first husband? He was a sex therapist.

DAWN: Gee, what's it like, being married to one of those?

GINGER: To tell the truth, it was a mixed bag. Oh, he had technique out the wazoo, but after a while...

ROBIN: You felt like you were in a lab?

GINGER: Yes! Exactly! Damn little real feeling that I could feel.

ROBIN: But let's get back to those vaginal muscles. How do we tone them?

GINGER: I mentioned Kegels, right? In a nutshell they are exercises that deal with the muscles at the bottom of the body. (*her cell phone rings*) Oh, sorry, I gotta take this. Hello. How you doin', lover? Oh? Oh, that does sound like fun. I'll be there in, let's see, 25 minutes. (*ends call*) What a guy! He wants to go to Bermuda for the weekend. He's got the corporate jet ready to go.

DAWN: Bermuda? Just like that?

GINGER: Yeah, what a guy. So I gotta run but, listen, get a book - I know, I know - I'm sounding like a librarian. Anyway, it's called For Yourself by Lonnie Barbach. It's in paperback. Lonnie knows her stuff; you'll enjoy it.

ROBIN: Enjoy learning how to enjoy? Hard to beat that.

DAWN: This does sound like fun.

ROBIN: And it even sounds like the guys will appreciate it.

GINGER: Of course they'll appreciate it - financially, of course - but also by making sure that you are pleased. That's what a real man does.

ROBIN: That's an eye opener. I always wanted the man to have a good time. Now you're telling me that men feel that way, too?

GINGER: The good ones, only the good ones.

ROBIN: And how does a woman go about finding a good one?

GINGER: That would be blind luck. What we're talking about here is creating a good one - or two good ones.

DAWN: What? You expect guys - our husbands - to take advice about sex from us? Guys who won't even stop to ask directions when they're lost?

GINGER: If you try to do it with your own husband, no, it won't happen. But, in the rapture of a new affair - when the man is really trying to please - oh, yes, you've got a good shot.

DAWN: Well, it all does sound great, never to be left in the lurch again. Great! So, go on, how do we get the guys to that point? What do we tell them?

GINGER: What you "share" with them, even with a new lover. You can't just "tell" him anything.

ROBIN: Point taken. What do we "share"?

GINGER: Okay, take it down this path. Say you read a book and learned some things that sorta made sense. Ask for his opinion.

ROBIN: What book? Just for instance...

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GINGER: Bernie Zilbergeld wrote some good ones, or, just go to amazon.com. But the absolute key is to tell your new lover how good he is. Yes, he's great! But maybe, just maybe, a little tweak or two could make things even better. A really good lover does want to please his partner. He'll feel good only when you feel good. Oh, one other thing - no guy wants to be with a woman who is easy, a bimbo with round heels, the town slut. But, he does want, lemme think - "wanton-ness" comes close. The trick is to convince him that you are a wild and sexy woman, but only with him. Well, babes, I gotta run. Give me a call. Let me know if there's anything else I can help with. *(exits)*

DAWN: Wow.

ROBIN: Exactly. The way I see it, we'd better wait for a while. In six weeks or so, we should be ready to take the next step.

DAWN: Or before.

ROBIN: Okay, or before. We'll keep in touch by phone.

DAWN: What do you think - about the idea of hinting for gifts?

ROBIN: As compared to asking for a retainer? I say we go for the gold.

DAWN: Right! We want retainers. We go for the gold!

(Blackout)

End of ACT I

ACT II

SCENE 1

At Rise: Six weeks later. Lights come up on a divided stage. ROBIN and DAWN are speaking on their telephones. Phone rings in ROBIN's apartment.

ROBIN: Hello.

DAWN: You know who this is?

ROBIN: Of course I do - Ruby. How are you? It's been what, almost six weeks? Have you been doing those Kegels?

DAWN: Oh, yes. And it's amazing - the change. I can slice a banana! Plus - I've got some news. I called youknowwho and we've got a date tonight.

ROBIN: Way to go girl. Good luck with Mark. Well, okay, I do have mixed feelings. But this is what we've been waiting for. And we're on our way! Now, what can you tell me so I can meet Tony?

DAWN: He's going jogging around four. He'll probably run around the tidal basin and Haines Point. He always takes a breather when he gets to the Awakening. You know, that giant Giant coming out of the ground?

ROBIN: I know it well. Four o'clock, you say? I'll be there. 'Bye.

(Blackout)

SCENE 2

At Rise: Later that day. ROBIN or "HONEY," wears a Terps T-shirt and is doing pre-jogging stretching. TONY enters, jogging/running. HE looks at his watch and smiles.

ROBIN: You look like you just made a personal best.

TONY: Yeah, five miles in just under 35 minutes. Never make the Olympics - but not bad. Do you run?

ROBIN: Some, but not that fast. You must be in great shape.

TONY: Well, maybe a bit above average. Say, did you go to College Park? I mean, I notice that you're wearing a great T-shirt.

ROBIN: No, I got my degree from Penn State, but I got hooked when they were doing so well. From sweet sixteen on, I watched every game.

TONY: Me, too! Of course, I have an excuse, got my BA from Maryland.

ROBIN: Oh? What in?

TONY: Nothing really. It was just a way to get through undergrad work so that I could go to law school. Don't hate me!

ROBIN: Well, I'll reserve judgment. You haven't sued any fast food places for making kids fat, have you?

TONY: No, no. Not my style. I only deal with real estate. Settlements, that kind of boring stuff.

ROBIN: Well, seeing as how you're a Terp, I guess that's okay.

TONY: I do thank you, ma'am.

ROBIN: **(looks out over the head of the audience, at the Potomac river)** Oh, oh. Somebody's going in the water.

TONY: What? Where?

ROBIN: See that little slope - looks like a Rhodes Bantam, maybe? The guy just tacked - and now he's falling off way too much! He's almost running. He'd better let that sheet out or... there he goes! One of the worst gybes I've ever seen. Oh, well, the river's a lot cleaner than it used to be and the guy's got a life vest on. Sorry, what were we talking about?

TONY: Uh, you were forgiving me for being a lawyer. But, say... all those nautical terms! You really are salty. Where did you learn so much about sailing?

ROBIN: "Salty." That's pretty funny. I did do a lot of sailing, but all on fresh water, Lake Michigan. Don't smirk, that thing can get mighty rough, mighty fast.

TONY: Oh, I know. Edmund Fitzgerald, right?

ROBIN: Well, that was Lake Superior. But, yeah, Michigan can kick up a storm, too. Sorry, I don't mean to sound defensive, but guys who go out on the Bay or into the Atlantic usually think they're better sailors.

TONY: Not me. I just patz around on the river.

ROBIN: You say you patz around; don't tell me you play chess, too?

TONY: I push a little wood now and then. So you must play?

ROBIN: It's been a while but I guess I still remember the moves. By the way, my name's Honey.

TONY: Mine's Tony. I must say, you are one interesting woman. Care to run a way?

ROBIN: Just as long as you don't get so far ahead that you embarrass me. **(they mime running by jogging in place)**

TONY: Where did you park?

ROBIN: In that little lot on the river just past the Kennedy Center.

TONY: Oh, do you get to the KenCen much?

ROBIN: Now and then. I love the opera. Placido is doing *Othello* next week.

TONY: He is? He is? What a great voice; what a major talent. God, you are so lucky to have a ticket.

ROBIN: Do you have a card?

TONY: What? Do I have a what?

ROBIN: Do you have a business card?

TONY: Yeah, sure. **(fumbles in fanny pack)** No lawyer leaves his office, or her office... her office without them. Here.

ROBIN: Do I sense you like opera?

TONY: Oh, yeah, a lot. I love it.

ROBIN: Tony, it's been great talking with you. I have an extra ticket to *Othello*. Maybe you'd like to go with me?

TONY: Would I? Would I! God, yes...

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ROBIN: Good, I'll phone you. (*sprints off*)

TONY: Hey, hey! How can I reach you? (*stops jogging, talks to himself*) Tony, Tony. What happened there? You didn't just dream her, did you? Oh, Honey - call me - call me!

(Blackout)

SCENE 3

At Rise: Ten days later. ROBIN/HONEY and TONY in his dimly lit office. They are just starting a meal; a champagne bottle is near, at least one candle is burning. They sip champagne throughout the scene.

ROBIN: Oh, I agree. This is much nicer than going to a restaurant. Cozy. Private.

TONY: Thanks. I just thought, you know, for our third date, that we should have a simple meal some place where we're not distracted. I mean, the sailing was fun and I almost enjoyed the chess, but I wanted this to be special.

ROBIN: A romantic! How nice. My husband is such a stick-in-the-mud.

TONY: Let's not talk about him.

ROBIN: Good. Let's not. No reason to dwell on the unpleasant. Now, tell the truth - what did you think of the opera?

TONY: Honey, it was the best thing I've ever seen. I really liked it a lot, and to have you there beside me - it's just unbelievable. I'm still amazed that you had tickets and that we met like that.

ROBIN: Hey, you've seen that bumper sticker, "Shit happens?" Well, in our parallel universe, we can say "Great Stuff Happens." So, you really liked Placido?

TONY: Of course, talk about your multitalented guy, and what a voice.

ROBIN: Yep, really wonderful. Did you ever see the Three Tenors?

TONY: Just once, loved them. But that reminds me: did you ever see Pavarotti in that movie "Yes, Giorgio?" Goofy title, right? Anyway, it was a few years ago. There was one scene where the poor guy was playing tennis.

ROBIN: Luciano? Playing tennis? All 300 pounds of him? It boggles my mind.

TONY: Yes, and in shorts with some kind of floppy hat. He looked, for all the world, like Henry VIII on a really bad day.

ROBIN: Still, what a voice. Did you ever hear him sing solo?

TONY: Just once, just once. Frankie Hewitt had a fundraiser at Ford's Theatre. Good God, what talent she got together for that night.

ROBIN: You mean that Pavarotti wasn't enough?

TONY: He was just the icing on the cake.

ROBIN: And the cake was...

TONY: Now, I was just a kid; you might not remember some of these names.

ROBIN: Try me.

TONY: Victoria Principal and Jack Klugman were the MCs. Andy Gibb sang, Johnny Cash sang, June Carter Cash sang. Rodney Dangerfeld told some jokes. There were dancers and a ventriloquist. And - Itzhak Perlman played his violin. What a night! Unbelievable.

ROBIN: Right, what an amazing group. But what I find most unbelievable is that Andy Gibb sang on the same program with Johnny Cash and Pavarotti.

TONY: Well, he and Ms. Principal were an item back then.

ROBIN: So, maybe he did have the balls.

TONY: Oh, I think we can agree on that. Say, you need topping off. *(reaches for the bottle)*

ROBIN: Sir, I may, or may not, need topping off, but, my glass clearly does. *(holds it out to him)*

TONY: Ahh, yes, that's what I meant. Damn, you have one great sense of humor.

ROBIN: Well, I did grow up with five brothers.

TONY: So, it was more or less self-defense.

ROBIN: And, occasionally, offense.

TONY: Six of you then. And where were you? First? Last?

ROBIN: What? You're into that "birth order" stuff?

TONY: Oh, I know it's not the be-all and end-all, but there must be something to it. Something over half of our presidents have been first born. Let me guess about you. Hummm - I'd say one of the middle two.

ROBIN: Hey, I'm impressed. Right on the nose. How did you work that out?

TONY: Pretty basic, really. Middle child has to deal with both older and younger siblings. She has to relate both up and down the age range. Eventually, she becomes a skillful negotiator.

ROBIN: And, if we may extrapolate - reasonable, agreeable, sweet and a joy to be around.

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TONY: I couldn't have put it any better myself. At the risk of spoiling you, I do think you are terrific and I like you a lot.

ROBIN: Just a lot. You said you like opera a lot.

TONY: I like you a lotta-lotta-lotta lot.

ROBIN: (*affecting a Southern accent*) Why, lawsey me, I do think the esteemed counselor has a silver tongue.

TONY: (*same accent*) Miss Scarlet, I do indeed have a silver tongue, which, in the fullness of time, I hope to demonstrate to you. (*kisses the palm of her hand, with a tiny flicker of tongue*)

HONEY: (*pretending to be offended*) Hey, that's a bit forward!

TONY: Yes. Yes, indeed. Yes, indeedy-deed, more than a little bit forward.

ROBIN: Son of a gun, when you put your cards on the table, you do it with a bang, don't you?

TONY: I do, I must admit that I do. Bang.

ROBIN: But you told me you like Clint Eastwood, and didn't Dirty Harry say, "A man's got to know his limitations"?

TONY: Miss Scarlet - rather, Miss Honey - I do know my limitations.

ROBIN: And they are...

TONY: Limited!

ROBIN: Limited limitations?

TONY: My dear Miss Honey, I fear we're becoming bogged down in semantics. (*pulls her to her feet*) Perhaps you'll recall an otherwise forgettable song that included the words "a little less talk and a lot more action."

ROBIN: I do indeed recall that otherwise forgettable song. What action, Counselor, do you have in mind?

TONY: Follow me into a deeper part of the forest and I'll show you. (*leads her toward what would be another room in his suite of offices*)

ROBIN: Should I leave a trail of bread crumbs?

TONY: (*sweeps her up, carries her offstage*) No.
(*Blackout*)

SCENE 4

At Rise: Three weeks later. MARK and TONY, each in his apartment on a divided stage. Both are on the phone. The actors mirror each others actions.

MARK: Hi, David. How's my baby brother?

TONY: Hi, Bob. How's my big brother?

BOTH: Oh, I'm fine. Never better. Ah - yeah, she's doing okay, I guess. We really don't talk that much any more. The truth is, I've found somebody else. *(pause to listen)* Yes, I knew you'd say that. She is a great old girl and she did put me through school. But - oh, hell - we've just sort of grown apart. But, listen, let me tell you about this woman I've started seeing. She likes...

TONY: The Terps...

MARK: The Redskins...

TONY: And sushi...

MARK: And gnocchi...

TONY: And the opera.

MARK: And she paints!

(Men now turn to face each other about two feet apart. Phones are in US hands. The effect is that they are each looking into a mirror as they check for receding hairline, paunch, etc., all done in synch with other.)

BOTH: I tell you, bud, she's great - super - terrific. I've never met a woman like her. Great sense of humor, but not hard, know what I mean? She's really soft, warm, tender.

TONY: Three weeks. Yes, I've only known her for three weeks, but they are the best 21 days of my life.

MARK: Yes, yes, we have and it was wonderful. I can hardly believe how much better sex is with her. She's a super lover.

TONY: A super lover! I thought I knew what great sex was about, but...

MARK: Yeah, yeah, I know...

BOTH: "Don't let the little head tell the big head what to do."

TONY: Okay, I didn't expect you to give me two thumbs up on this.

BOTH: But I had to tell somebody.

MARK: No, I don't know where it's going, but I sure do want to see her again.

BOTH: Yeah, g'bye. Yeah, I love you, too, pal. So long.

(Blackout)

SCENE 5

At Rise: One day later. ROBIN's phone rings during the blackout.

ROBIN: Hello.

DAWN: Hi, it's me, Dawn.

ROBIN: Dawn aka "Ruby?"

DAWN: Yeah. Well, tonight I tell him I need a steady income.

ROBIN: Great, go for it. I've been really mean to him lately, so he'll be in a good mood for you.

DAWN: Okay, wish me luck.

ROBIN: Oh, no. You're acting a part! Break a leg!

(Lights come up on SCENE 6.)

SCENE 6

At Rise: Six hours later. DAWN/RUBY and MARK are on a couch in MARK's office as unclothed as local mores permit. It's clear they are in pre-sex patter.

MARK: God, you are some woman. Until I met you, I had no idea sex could be this good. You're wonderful. I just count the hours until we meet again. Okay, I know I shouldn't be saying this but I just feel so open with you. Lying here next to you, knowing we're going to make love... I can't tell you how good that makes me feel.

DAWN: Oh, I needed that. The "you're wonderful," I mean! Well, I need the lovemaking, too. You have now idea how sexy you are. Sometimes, when I'm alone, I think of you, and I get wet, really wet.

MARK: That's my sexy baby.

DAWN: All that... the great sex... and the "you're wonderfuls"... all that makes it really hard to tell you...

MARK: Hey, hey, talk to me. What's wrong baby?

DAWN: Mark, oh Mark - I'm afraid I can't see you any more.

MARK: Not see me? Not see me? Why not? What have I done? Why can't you see me?

DAWN: Oh, I'm so sad. I shouldn't bother you with my problems.

MARK: Sugar, tell me. I know it's trite, but I'm here, I'm here for you. Tell me what's wrong. You're sure it's not something I've done?

DAWN: Oh, no! You're the sweetest, dearest man I've ever known. That's what makes it so hard to tell you...

MARK: Tell me what? Come on, sweetheart, talk to papa.

DAWN: Well, you know my husband doesn't make much money.

MARK: And he's tight with what he does make.

DAWN: Right, and you know how much my art means to me. It's my life! If I can't paint for hours and hours a day, I'm just miserable.

MARK: Yes, and you are so good. You mustn't ever stop painting.

DAWN: You're so sweet to say so. Anyway, my husband just makes me beg... BEG... for any kind of spending money. So you see...

MARK: See what, baby? Tell me.

DAWN: Well, I've decided to go back home to Queens.

MARK: What? Leave? Oh, no, don't say that! You say you'd be miserable without painting. I'd be miserable without you.

DAWN: Oh, I know, and I'll miss you a lot, honey. I really will, but I just don't see any other way out of it. Mom has never liked my husband. It goes back to some feud in the old country. His family, my family. I don't know, but she's always after me to leave him and move back home. Pop was in the Longshoreman's Union and Mom gets a big pension. She has no money problems, but she hates my husband so much that she won't support me while I'm with him, so I gotta leave.

MARK: This is awful.

DAWN: Mom loves my pictures and she thinks I'll be famous some day. So she's happy to buy my paintings now while they're cheap. If I'm home. Then there is Ziggy.

MARK: Ziggy? Who's Ziggy?

DAWN: Oh, just a boy who was in love with me. I probably shouldn't even have mentioned him.

MARK: This is terrible, just terrible. I feel like I've just found you, and, now, to lose you? I'm not hearing this! You've got to stay; you've got to stay!

DAWN: Oh, you are sweet, but I just don't see how I can go on living on crumbs.

MARK: So, it really just comes down to money, doesn't it?

DAWN: Gee, I guess you could put it that way.

MARK: Now, Ruby, don't get mad, but I'm thinking of a way that maybe we could work something out.

DAWN: Something so that we could keep seeing each other? Oh, Mark, that would be wonderful, but I don't see how...

MARK: Now, you promise you won't get mad at me? I don't think I could stand that.

DAWN: Of course I won't be mad at you. How could I? But I don't know what...

MARK: Okay, now hear me out. Don't say anything before I finish, okay?

DAWN: I promise.

MARK: What if, some way, I were to make a financial difference...

DAWN: Mark!

MARK: Now you promised you'd hear me out.

DAWN: Well, go ahead.

MARK: All right, here's the deal. I think your pictures are just great. Super, really. How long does it take you to paint one, average time?

DAWN: Well, it varies of course, but about a month.

MARK: A month. How much do you get for each one?

DAWN: I've only sold a few but around \$5,000. For one thing, I'm very particular about who I sell to.

MARK: Wow. Five K a month. Wow. Well, okay, how about this? My office needs some art work. Dress up the place. It needs a lot of art. I can buy a painting a month from you for five K.

DAWN: You really want my paintings? You're not just saying that? You aren't just doing this because we're lovers?

MARK: Baby, life is a package. Would I pay \$5,000 a month for art from Gallery X? Probably not. Am I offering you money to sleep with you? Certainly not. I know you'd never accept anything like that.

DAWN: Well, if you're sure... oh, Mark, this is wonderful! I can stay down here; I can still see you and I can paint my little tush off. Kiss me.

MARK: Now, where will you live?

DAWN: Why, silly. I'll live right where I do now. I'm not going to waste money on rent.

MARK: But, gee, I thought we'd have a better place to... oh, that doesn't matter. But what about you and your husband? You don't... you know.

DAWN: Oh, no, not for a long time and certainly not since I found myself such an exciting, wonderful lover. Come here, you sweetheart, you.

MARK: I'm here, baby, I'm here, and I've got something for you, something you know and love.

DAWN: And you know I want it; want it real bad, baby. *(pause)* Tomorrow? I'll just bring around a contract for twelve paintings.

(Blackout)

SCENE 7

At Rise: The next day. As in ACT I, SCENE 4, the stage is divided. ROBIN's phone rings.

ROBIN: Hello.

DAWN: Hi! It's me again.

ROBIN: You sure are chipper. Did it go well?

DAWN: Perfectly, like a freakin' charm. Just what we'd planned.

ROBIN: You let him bring up the money angle?

DAWN: Yes, and I acted shocked, shocked, when he did.

ROBIN: Okay, without the Casablanca overtones. How much?

DAWN: Twelve paintings. At... are you sitting down... five K per.

ROBIN: Excellent! Way to go! Did he ask how much you got for each painting?

DAWN: He did and I told him.

ROBIN: But you didn't mention that the only ones you've ever sold have been to your mother?

DAWN: Nope, somehow that never came up. He asked what I got and I told him. So, tonight, you're going to let Tony talk himself into the publishing business?

ROBIN: Right. A little boutique publishing house...

DAWN: To purchase exclusive rights to a novel - a novel by soon-to-be rich Robin Miller. Or, is it Honey Miller?

ROBIN: Oh, I'll just tell him "Honey" is my pen name and to make the check out to R. Miller.

DAWN: A check for a very reasonable \$60,000 advance and, remember, get a contract!

(Blackout)

SCENE 8

At Rise: Six months later. ROBIN and DAWN are at the picnic table, or park bench, of ACT I, SCENE 1. They are dressed for jogging.

DAWN: Do you think she'll come?

ROBIN: I don't see why not. She was friendly on the phone when I called, but she did seem a bit different.

DAWN: How... different?

ROBIN: It's hard to say. Maybe just a bit reserved?

DAWN: Well, it has been, what, eight or nine months since we saw her. A lot can happen in that time. Oh, here she comes now!

(GINGER enters, dressed much more conservatively than when we last saw her; makeup and hair reflect the change.)

ROBIN and DAWN: Hi! How are you? Good to see you.

GINGER: You, too. You're both looking good.

ROBIN: Well, you are, too, but is this the Ginger we know and love? What have you done to your hair? I mean, it looks fabulous, but you have made some major changes.

GINGER: It does show, doesn't it?

DAWN: Let me guess! A man?

GINGER: Yeah, a man.

ROBIN: Let me guess. Jim! Is it Jim?

GINGER: You sure have one good memory. Yeah, it's Jim.

ROBIN: Rowdy, randy, raunchy Jim? Five hundred bucks a night Jim? He's got you dressing like this?

GINGER: Yes, and don't act so surprised. Even party girls run out of gas, you know. So when Jim popped the question, I didn't think twice.

DAWN: Popped the question? You're married - to Jim?

GINGER: Yes, I am. Mr. Nascar didn't care one way or the other, so Jim and I flew to one of those tiny countries in the Caribbean. I got divorced and ten minutes later we tied the knot.

ROBIN: Well, this is breathtaking news. What a change! My head's swimming.

GINGER: Mine, too. I can still hardly believe it.

DAWN: Well, best wishes, sweetie. Hope you have a long and happy life.

ROBIN: And here we all thought that good, old Jim just wanted your bod.

GINGER: Oh, he still wants that, thank God, but he finally said that he really, really loves me and he just likes to have me around.

ROBIN: Sort of like a favorite pet?

GINGER: Now, you cut that out! I was happy doing what I did. I'm happy now doing what I'm doing. People change, you know.

ROBIN: You're right. I'm sorry. I apologize. I was being a bitch. I'm really happy for you. But, you must admit, it's pretty damn strange. Dawn and I go off and take lovers and you wind up contentedly married. That's pretty weird.

GINGER: What can I say? People do change. I'm meeting Jim for lunch. What can I do for you ladies?

DAWN: It's kind of complicated. We need some advice, but here you are, a married woman.

GINGER: Hey! Just because I'm wearing flats and a suit and a ring doesn't mean I've lost my touch. I'm still the regional expert on he-ing and she-ing, as they say in West by God.

DAWN: Okay, here's the problem.

ROBIN: Well, really, we have two problems.

GINGER: Let's tackle the easy one first.

DAWN: Okay, here's the deal. We all play tennis.

GINGER: All?

ROBIN: Yes, Dawn and Tony and Mark and I.

GINGER: Hold it! Flashing back... old movie, "Bob and Carol and Ted and Alice." Sorry, go ahead. You all play tennis, but surely you don't all play together.

ROBIN: Oh, no; Mark and I live in Cleveland Park. Dawn and Tony live in Georgetown.

DAWN: Right. We've entered a tournament. Married people playing mixed doubles.

GINGER: So, Mark and Tony know about what's going on? What you two have been doing? What they've been doing?

ROBIN: Oh, no, nothing like that! They don't know anything. They don't even know we know each other.

DAWN: But, we're all in this tournament...

ROBIN: Yes, we're in the same tournament, but because we live in different areas we play in different preliminaries. You have to win at that level to advance to the finals.

GINGER: Let me guess. You and Mark won and you and Tony won, and now you have to play in the finals and may even play each other? Who said God didn't have a sense of humor?

ROBIN: Leave her out of this. What do you think we should do, Ginger? The finals are next week. We're sure to meet. Both guys are really pumped about getting this far.

GINGER: Wow, tough one. You two would know the whole story. Each guy would know that both his wife and his mistress were standing right in front of him, but each guy would not know that the other guy was in the same boat. Plus, he wouldn't know that wife and mistress know each other. Wow. Complicated. Are you sure you're not French?

ROBIN: This would probably be easier if we were.

GINGER: All you need is some slamming doors and you have the perfect farce. More movie flashbacks! Sorry. Well, this is a pretty one. Whew. So, you want me to tell you what to do, and you say this is the easy one? You have a tougher problem than this??

DAWN: Not so much a problem...

ROBIN: More like a situation...

GINGER: Tell momma.

DAWN: This is a little embarrassing.

ROBIN: A little more than a little.

GINGER: Hey, I'm all ears.

ROBIN: Flashback to - "Dumbo"?

GINGER: Good one, you got me that time.

DAWN: Well, the fact is...

ROBIN: That we've started sleeping with our husbands again.

GINGER: That's it? That's your "problem?" That's your "situation?"

ROBIN and DAWN: Yes.

GINGER: Well, speaking from my lofty position as a newly married lady, I say congratulations!

ROBIN: Really? Doesn't it seem like a kind of cheating?

DAWN: Yes, Mark has been so good to me...

ROBIN: And Tony to me...

GINGER: Well, that's what you wanted from the beginning, wasn't it? To find a guy you likes, who liked you, who would be generous and loving?

ROBIN: And they are! That's why we feel bad about betraying them!

GINGER: I'm not sure that "betraying" is the word I'd use. Now, both of you are doing this?

ROBIN and DAWN: Yes.

GINGER: And you both feel the same way?

ROBIN and DAWN: Yes.

GINGER: Okay, let me process that for a bit. Are there any other changes from "The Plan"?

ROBIN: That's the other odd thing. Mark, my very own husband, has started being more kind, more loving, and a heck of a lot more generous.

DAWN: Tony is, too. A year ago? I'd never have believed it possible.

GINGER: Is there an undercurrent here? Are you thinking of quitting the double life? Of settling down? Of being true-blue wives again?

ROBIN: Yes, damn it, and don't sound so smug. Isn't that what you're doing?

GINGER: Sorry, you're right. It's just that you've got my head spinning, but you asked for advice and advice is what you're going to get.

DAWN: Oh, boy...

GINGER: I was lucky. I found somebody. Jim is my guy and I'm going to stick with him "in sickness and in health... until death..." well, you know the bit.

DAWN: And you think that we...

GINGER: I think that you're even luckier than I am. You've been married to pretty nice guys all this time. Between the two of you, you've gotten them trained to, ah, listen to their finer instincts. So, kiss the lover goodbye and welcome the husband back home.

ROBIN: That seems like pretty good advice, especially now that I've got my novel finished. Tony set up a company and gave me a great advance. Then, he took it to Random House and they're interested!

DAWN: I've got enough paintings for a one-woman show. I'm pretty sure that I can get into Zenith Gallery next season.

GINGER: Way to go, ladies. Well, in the words of the masked man, "My work here is done."

ROBIN and DAWN: No, no!

DAWN: What should we do about the tennis tournament?

GINGER: Oh, that's a no-brainer, now that you've told me about rehooking up with your hubbies. Go. Play. I think the experience might do your guys a world of good. If nothing else, it'll be mighty interesting. Okay, gotta run. Bye. *(exits)*

DAWN: What do you think, Robin?

ROBIN: It's kind of scary, but I think she's right. The shock might put Mark and Tony right where we want them.

DAWN: Back home. No more complications. The old saying is wrong: may be okay for men but not us.

ROBIN: What old saying?

DAWN: As I said, it's a guy thing. At least, I heard a guy. He said, "It's better to make several women happy than to make one woman miserable."

ROBIN: You're right, that is a guy thing. Here's one for us, "Making two guys happy is twice as hard as keeping one guy content."

DAWN: Right and I'd drink to contentment. So, are we really going ahead with this tournament?

ROBIN: We both know how pumped they are about it. I say let's do it! It'll be an adventure.

DAWN: You sure are right, sister. If you're game, so am I.

ROBIN: Fine. Now we have to rehearse and rehash.

DAWN: Absolutely. Who knows who? Right?

ROBIN: Well, is it really so difficult? I mean, for us? The guys will lose several pounds just sweating. But for us... pretty easy. I can't let on that I know you or Tony.

DAWN: And I can't let on that I know you or Mark.

ROBIN: That's right. That's all there is to it. The guys will be wetting their pants, but there is the little matter of the made up names, Ruby.

DAWN: Yikes, you're right. Well, that'll just be part of the surprise when they meet us as Robin and Dawn.

ROBIN: Big surprise.

DAWN: BIG surprise. You know what? I think it would work best for you and me to set up the meeting. That way, we both will be ready to bluff our way through.

ROBIN: Good idea, no reason to risk turning a corner and, ka-pow, there the four of us are. Remember, we just want to scare the guys. WE don't want them blurting out something which would force us to deal with the whole situation.

DAWN: Sounds great. Now, you and I will have to keep the conversation moving. If I know these men, and you know I know these men, they'll be too stunned to do more than stammer.

ROBIN: You're right. Unless one of the men goofs up, we'll be okay.

DAWN: But, Robin, what if something goes wrong. What if the guys find out what we've been doing?

ROBIN: That, I admit, would be a bummer, but we each have a nice nest egg by now. Plus, I just got a letter from the court. I'm being called for jury duty.

(Blackout)

SCENE 9

At Rise: One week later. DAWN and TONY enter dressed for tennis. From offstage we hear a game being played.

TONY: Okay, okay. It's only 10:30. We're not supposed to play until 11:00. Why did you drag me down here so early?

DAWN: Oh, I just wanted to be sure we're on time and maybe we'll meet some of the other couples. Look, here come some players now.

(ROBIN and MARK enter. TONY turns to look where DAWN is pointing and chokes.)

TONY: Uh-h-h-h.

ROBIN: How nice. You can introduce us.

MARK: Uh-h-h..Hi Tony. Uhhhh, this is... Robin... my wife.

TONY: Uhhhh. Nice to meet you, Robin. This is Dawn, my wife. I told you about meeting Mark, right? It is Mark, isn't it?

MARK: Yes!! Mark! I'm Mark! And this is Robin, my wife, Robin.

ROBIN: Dear, you already said that.

MARK: Did I? Did I? Oh, yes, I did. Didn't I?

ROBIN: So, it's Tony, is it? And you're Dawn? What a lovely name. What do you do, Tony?

TONY: Do? What do you mean "what do I do?" I don't do anything. I mean, I haven't done anything. Nothing! I've done nothing!

DAWN: I think, Tony, that Robin wonders what you do for a living.

TONY: For a living? Living? Oh, I'm a... a... lawyer. Yes, that's right. I - am - a - lawyer. Isn't that right, Dawn?

DAWN: Yes, Tony, you are a lawyer. And, Mark, what do you do?

MARK: I'm a phys - a phys - I'm a doctor.

ROBIN: Well, we're about due on the court. We're supposed to play a couple named Zaccaria. Do you know them?

TONY: That's me! I mean, that is I. I mean - we're the Zaccarias.

MARK: Are you sure, Robin? Are you really, really sure that we're to play the Zaccarias?

DAWN: Well, Tony and I are supposed to play the Millers. Is that you?

MARK: Uh, yes. We - are - the Millers. But, you know, I'm not feeling very well and...

TONY: Oh, if you don't feel well, it wouldn't be fair to play, not now, no... not play... no play.

ROBIN: Aw, that's too bad. Maybe we can get together and play some time.

MARK and TONY: No!

DAWN: Oh, I think that would be fun. Don't you, Robin?

ROBIN: Yes, great, good fun. Tell you what, guys, I'll bet that Dawn and I can beat you. Girls against the boys.

MARK and TONY: Uh-h-h-h.

DAWN: Yes, I'll bet we could. Robin and I can beat you any time, any place.

ROBIN: Yep, I'm sure we can - at any game you want to play.

(Blackout)

END OF PLAY

PROPS

ACT I

SCENE:

- 1: lunch bags, hand bags, cell phone, ring, bracelet, check book, picnic table or park bench, optional trash basket
- 2: cell phone, cigar, picnic table or park bench
- 3: cell phone, eye glasses, flower, picnic table or park bench
- 4: easel, paint brush, canvas, two cell phones, basic apartment furniture
- 5: two tennis racquets, tennis balls
- 6: blackout
- 7: photos, fanny pack, small note pad, pencil, slip of paper, picnic table or park bench
- 8: *Wall Street Journal* newspaper, picnic table or park bench
- 9: two cell phones, basic apartment furniture
- 10: small note pad, pencil, hand bag, shopping bag, condom, banana, picnic table or park bench

ACT II

SCENE:

- 1: cell phones, basic apartment furniture
- 2: watch, business card, fanny pack, trees or shrubs, or a bare stage
- 3: champagne bottle, champagne flutes, candle (optional), basic office furniture, desk and couch
- 4: two cell phones, basic apartment furniture
- 5: blackout
- 6: handkerchief, office couch
- 7: two cell phones, basic apartment furniture
- 8: ring, pencil, small note pad, hand bag, picnic table or park bench
- 9: watch, four tennis racquets, tennis balls, tournament schedule

SOUNDS AND LIGHT CUES

ACT I

SCENE:

- 1: Mark calls from off stage; Robin is isolated in baby spot
- 1: sound of toilet flushing
- 1: Tony calls from off stage; Dawn is isolated in baby spot
- 5: sound of tennis being played off stage

ACT II

SCENE:

- 3: soft candlelight-like lighting
- 9: sound of tennis being played off stage