

RED HAired GIRL

---

A Play in One Act

by

Mitch Moldofsky

U.S. Copyright Registered

127 Castlefield Ave.  
Toronto ON M4R 1G6  
Canada

Email: [m.moldofsky@yahoo.com](mailto:m.moldofsky@yahoo.com)

Phone: 416-944-1912

## Synopsis

Stockbroker Jo Mitchell seems to have it all: a successful career, an upscale apartment, and a revolving door of sexual conquests. When one of those conquests turns violent, however, it brings on an identity crisis that can only be resolved by seeking out the child she gave up for adoption years earlier—her long-lost red-haired girl.

## Staging

The action revolves around four stage areas:

1. Centre: A six-foot table with some chairs, as needed, and a side table. This functions as the Interrogation Room, a Sushi Restaurant, a Coffee Shop and the Dining Room table at the Hamptons house.
2. Stage Right: A double bed with a one-drawer bedside table functions as all the bedrooms.
3. Stage Left: A two-seater couch with a small table delineates Holly's House. It later becomes a park bench.
4. Downstage: A flexible space that serves as a Boxing Ring, Fertility Clinic, Diving Rock and more.

Cast of Characters

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| <u>Jo:</u>     | F, 42, a Wall Street broker.                      |
| <u>Ross:</u>   | M, 30, a police detective.                        |
| <u>Ham:</u>    | M, 23, a musical theatre actor.                   |
| <u>James*:</u> | M, 25, a hotshot stockbroker.                     |
| <u>Alan:</u>   | M, 40 and 63, a Professor and Ham's father.       |
| <u>Ellie:</u>  | F, 39 and 62, Ham's mother, an author and editor. |
| <u>Arnie:</u>  | M, 34 and 57, Alan's colleague.                   |
| <u>June:</u>   | F, 55, Carly's mom, Arnie's wife.                 |
| <u>Violet:</u> | F, 19, Jo as a student.                           |
| <u>Carly:</u>  | F, 23, Ham's childhood buddy.                     |
| <u>Holly*:</u> | F, 40, Violet's mother.                           |

\* DUAL ROLES: Holly and June, Ham and James. (9 actors)

All roles are Caucasian but Arnie, who is Black.

Scene

New York City and the Hamptons.

Time

The present and 23 years in the past.

Pages: 99

Run Time: 75 Minutes

Due to the nature of the storytelling, there may be more stage directions and entrances/exits than in the average script.

Scene 1

SETTING: Interrogation Room

AT RISE: Cast claps and sings "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child" (Public Domain).

JO MITCHELL walks onto the stage as if into an unfamiliar room. She wears a business suit and has short red hair. She sits at the table.

DETECTIVE ROSS ENTERS dancing to music only he can hear on his phone. He's dressed so casually she doesn't know who he is. Jo watches as he crosses to the coffee station without seeming to notice her and pours himself a cup.

ROSS

Want one? Um, I got sugar. Milk's in the other room.

JO

(surprised)

No. Thanks.

ROSS

You sure?

JO

I've been having trouble sleeping.

ROSS

I'll bet.

(ROSS comes over and straddles a chair, looking at JO while he sips his coffee.)

JO  
And you are?

ROSS  
Detective Ross. Homicide.

JO  
(doubtful)  
You're a detective?

ROSS  
You were expecting?

JO  
I don't know.

ROSS  
So, I was hoping you could tell me what happened.

JO  
What do you mean? You know what happened.

ROSS  
Yeah... not so much.

JO  
Mrs. Richmond hasn't told you?

ROSS  
Mrs. Richmond hasn't spoken in two weeks. To anyone.

JO  
(flustered)  
Why not?

ROSS  
Her lawyer's psychiatrist calls it...  
(checks his phone)  
"Hysterical Muteness."

JO  
Oh, God!

ROSS  
..brought on by shock. You religious?

JO

No. My mother was. Is.

ROSS

Which one?

(He stands to pace,  
keeping his eyes fixed  
on her like a bug under  
a microscope.)

JO

I haven't spoken to her in a long time.

ROSS

Really? How long?

JO

Twenty-three years.

ROSS

(whistles)

You ever hear of that before? Hysterical muteness?

(Jo shakes her head.)

Me neither. Then again, I've never lost a husband and son  
on the same day.

JO

(thrown off)

Her son is fine.

ROSS

(quoting from report)

"Detached retinas in both eyes." Legally blind. You call  
that fine?

(she looks away)

I understand this was your first time at the Richmond's  
Hampton's estate?

JO

Yes.

ROSS

Not really your style, is it?

JO

What does that mean?

ROSS

Well, you're from a small town. Just outside of Charlotte? North Carolina?

JO

You've done your homework, Detective.

ROSS

I try.

JO

Do you find this case interesting, Detective Ross?

ROSS

(continuing to gaze at  
her throughout)

Interesting? Yes, yes, I do. I don't like loose ends you know what I mean? Ever since I was young, I loved detective stories. Raymond Chandler, Dick Francis. I was a big fan of Alfred Hitchcock. You ever see Rope? The whole movie was one shot. He adapted it from a play. Or Rear Window: Jimmy Stewart sees a crime committed across the way and he can't help himself, he can't stop until he's figured it out. Hitchcock used him all the time.

JO

(playing along)

In Vertigo.

ROSS

Yes! Yes! The girl he murders practically comes back to life? That was genius. Who was the actress in that?

JO

Kim... Novak?

ROSS

Right, right. He always liked those hot blondes. He had a reputation, you know.

(he watches for her  
reaction; she looks  
away)

You were a guest of Edward Hammerstein's, right? The son.

JO

Yes.

ROSS

But you already knew his father, Professor Richmond. The victim.

JO

I was... I'd been his student.

ROSS

His student? That must have been some time ago?

JO

You seem to know all about it.

ROSS

Hmm. You see, the funny thing is, the more answers I dig up, the more questions I have. It's like trying to kill a Zombie. That's quite a coincidence, isn't it? Your boyfriend's father was your former teacher?

JO

New York's a small town, Detective. It's not that uncommon to run into people you know.

ROSS

Huh. So, was it? A coincidence?

JO

(deciding she may as well tell the truth)

No.

ROSS

(surprised by her honesty)

No shit?

JO

Congratulations, Detective, your little fishing expedition has borne fruit.

ROSS

"Your little fishing expedition has borne fruit." Where'd you get that, Nancy Drew?

JO

Look, I'm just here to--

ROSS

You could have lied, you know. I wouldn't have known the difference.

JO

Is this a game to you?

ROSS

No. I just... In your situation, a lot of people would have lied.

JO

What is my situation?

ROSS

(considering)

I'm not sure. So, it wasn't a coincidence. So, what were you doing at that party?

JO

That's a long story.

ROSS

I love stories!

JO

So you said.

ROSS

Look, Ms. Mitchell... can I call you Jo? Look, Jo, you're a successful woman. You're living in New York since you graduated. You don't have a record, not even a traffic stop. Maybe it would be better if you just tell me your side of things. From the beginning.

JO

(laughs)

"The beginning."

ROSS

All right, then. Let's say: from the time you met Professor Richmond.

(END OF SCENE)

Scene 2

SETTING: Various locations

AT RISE: ROSS and JO stay where they are but watch as ALAN ENTERS, Stage Right. He has a dapper, intimidating presence. He tosses a jacket onto the bed and approaches a downstage MIMED mirror to tuck in his shirt and fix his hair.

ALAN

(humming to himself)

I can't wait for tomorrow...

(ELLIE, stylishly dressed for her job as an editor at a high-end magazine, ENTERS carrying a clear plastic medical cup with an orange lid. She hands him it and goes to put on earrings.)

ELLIE

Don't get too far, you have to fill that before you go.

(Dumbstruck, Alan looks at the cup.)

ALAN

You've got to be kidding. I'm practically dressed!

ELLIE

So? I'm sure that's never stopped you before.

ALAN

Yes, but...

ELLIE

What difference does it make?

ALAN

When our child comes to us 15 years from now and says, "Mummy daddy, tell me about the day I was conceived," I'd like to say it was a beautiful moment, not that I jacked off into a Cup.

(He gets the JACKET from the bed and puts it on.)

ELLIE

The doctor says it's the best way. Come on, I've had to go in for blood tests every day this week to see if I was ovulating, you don't hear me complaining.

ALAN

Has SHE ever had to do this? The doctor?

ELLIE

No, she's 30 and has three kids already. Hurry, I have to drop it off on my way to work. It has to be there within an hour.

(She gets up to leave. ALAN's flip phone RINGS as HOLLY ENTERS Stage Left holding a LANDLINE phone. The RINGS continue while she waits.)

ALAN

(to ELLIE)

Can't you at least... give me a hand?

ELLIE

Oh, Alan, grow up.

(ELLIE EXITS. ALAN answers his phone, laying the cup on the bed. He and HOLLY talk.)

ALAN

Alan Richmond.

HOLLY

Oh, hello Professor I'm sorry to disturb you.

ALAN

Who is this?

HOLLY

I'm the mother of one of your students.

ALAN

How did you get this number? It's my private line.

HOLLY

Oh, I do apologize. I got it from my daughter, you see.

ALAN

And who is your daughter?

HOLLY

Violet Mitchell.

(VIOLET ENTERS and sits  
on the couch. She has  
long red hair and is  
dressed very down to  
earth, like a student.  
ALAN suddenly looks  
worried.)

She's in your Psychology class.

(ROSS, still onstage  
watching with JO,  
speaks up.)

ROSS

(re: VIOLET)

Who's that?

JO

That's me at nineteen.

ROSS

"Violet?"

JO

It was my Dad's pet name.

HOLLY

Hello, Professor? Are you still there?

ALAN

Yes, I'm still here, Mrs. Mitchell. What can I do for you?

HOLLY

Well. I don't really think it's proper to discuss it over the phone, do you?

ELLIE

(off)

Is that June?

ALAN

(to ELLIE)

No. It's work.

(on phone)

All right, Mrs. Mitchell, let me check my agenda. Why don't you come by my office on...

HOLLY

Oh, I'm afraid that's impossible, Professor! I was hoping you could come here.

ALAN

Where?

HOLLY

Shelby. North Carolina?

ALAN

North Carol... You must be joking! It's the middle of the semester. I have classes to--

HOLLY

I could always go to the administration.

ALAN

No!

(suddenly friendly)

No, you don't have to do that! I'll look up your address when I get to the office. I'll come down later this week.

HOLLY

Well. That would be fine.

ALAN

I have to go. I'll see you then. Good bye, Mrs. Mitchell.

(HOLLY and VIOLET EXIT.)

(ELLIE ENTERS.)

ELLIE

Who was that?

ALAN

(thinks fast)

There's a conference. In North Carolina. The keynote speaker dropped out, I said I'd fill in.

ELLIE

When is it?

ALAN

Friday?

ELLIE

This Friday?

ALAN

It's one night. You'll hardly know I'm gone.

(ELLIE stares at him.)

What?

(ELLIE picks up the cup from the bed and hands it to him, then EXITS.)

(VIOLET ENTERS upstage, carrying two plates of SUSHI with chopsticks. She's dressed as a student and wears her red hair long.)

(ROSS and JO relocate to watch from the bed.)

VIOLET

(as she enters)

The Stanford experiment is just so shocking.

(She puts the SUSHI on  
the table. ALAN pockets  
the CUP and walks over  
to hold her CHAIR. He  
takes another chair and  
sits next to her.)

I mean, who would believe that students would treat each other with such cruelty? Especially when they know it's just an experiment. It's like they were automatons.

ALAN

We seem to be hardwired to respond to authority. Without it you couldn't have political movements. It's the basis of mob psychology.

(while ALAN talks,  
VIOLET has trouble  
using her chopsticks;  
he smiles)

You might want to... May I?

(ALAN takes her  
chopsticks.)

VIOLET

Sorry, I've never had sushi before.

(ALAN feeds her)

Mm, it's good. I feel so dumb.

ALAN

I hate how young women always put themselves down. You're brilliant!

(He turns to take a  
bite from his plate.)

VIOLET

You think I'm brilliant?

ALAN

(chewing)

Why else would I be with you?

(she blushes)

You know, the restrooms in this place are kind of famous.

VIOLET

(uncomfortably)

The restrooms?

ALAN

Yes! The wallpaper depicts the Kama Sutra.

(she doesn't  
understand)

Come on, I'll show you.

(ALAN pulls out her  
chair and leads her  
downstage, lecturing)

The Kama Sutra is a scrupulously detailed 2nd Century text  
written in India about "the art of seduction."

(They MIME looking at a  
wall of drawings.)

But most people here know it as an extensive catalogue of  
sexual positions.

(ALAN puts his hand on  
VIOLET's ELBOW; she  
looks at it, then puts  
her other hand on his  
SHOULDER. He places his  
free hand on her WAIST  
and they look in each  
other's eyes.)

(ARNIE ENTERS upstage  
and watches as VIOLET  
takes off ALAN's  
jacket, slings it over  
her shoulder and EXITS.  
He wears a gym outfit  
and carries punch mitts  
and boxing gloves.)

ARNIE

You gotta be crazy, man. Having an affair while you're  
trying to get your wife pregnant? You've got to have some  
kind of death wish.

(ARNIE comes downstage  
and helps ALAN on with  
the gloves.)

ALAN

Sleeping with a student isn't really an affair, Arnie.

ARNIE

Really! What do you call it?

ALAN

(thinks)

Exercise.

(ALAN starts punching  
the MITTS. ROSS, still  
watching from the bed,  
stands up.)

ROSS

(to JO)

What does he mean, exercise?

ALAN

(overhearing; to ROSS)

Just what it sounds like, Detective! Do you mean to stand  
there and tell me you don't "exercise" your sexuality?

(dig)

In your case, even without a partner?

ROSS

What's that got to do with...

ALAN

And sometimes you exercise it with a partner.

(stops boxing and faces  
Audience, lecturing)

Well, what if your partner doesn't satisfy you and you find  
yourself with access to an endless supply of blissfully  
willing and innocent young flowers? Are you going to tell  
me you wouldn't be tempted to, say, smell the roses?

(walks up to ROSS)

Are you going to shun such a cornucopia of opportunity or  
vigorously embrace it?

(ALAN punches his  
gloves together. ROSS  
returns to the bed in  
disgust.)

ARNIE

You're unbelievable, man. I'm in the same boat as you, you know. Only I have more respect for my wife and our obligations to one another.

ALAN

Please! You can't compare Ellie with June. Unless you want to swap? No? Then shut up and hold the mitts, Arnie.

(ALAN starts punching  
again.)

ARNIE

Hey Alan, June says you and Ellie are still doing the turkey baster?

ALAN

How quaintly you put it. Yes, we're doing IUI.

(Unfamiliar with the  
term, ROSS looks it up  
on his phone.)

ARNIE

("jacking off" motion)  
So, how's that going, buddy?

ALAN

Loads of fun. I feel like a Pez dispenser.

ARNIE

You're lucky, man. June has a condition, she can't carry. We signed up for adoption.

ALAN

(stops, interested)  
How long ago was this?

ARNIE

Five months.

ALAN

Private adoption?

ARNIE

We're on a waiting list. She's driving me fuckin' nuts, man. Made me turn the den into a nursery, get a crib and everything. Meanwhile, they say it could take years.

ALAN

I don't think Ellie could wait that long.

(ARNIE helps ALAN take  
off his gloves and  
EXITS.)

(ELLIE ENTERS with  
ALAN's jacket and helps  
him on with it. A  
female DOCTOR, 33,  
ENTERS wearing glasses  
and a lab coat. ALAN  
and ELLIE turn to her.  
*The Doctor is played by  
the actress playing  
CARLY.*)

DOCTOR

Ellie, Professor Richmond. I'm sorry to have to tell  
you, you're not pregnant.

(They glance at one  
another, taken aback.)

ELLIE

What was the problem?

DOCTOR

No problem. As I explained when you first came in, the  
chance of getting pregnant on the first try is about 10 to  
20 percent. Fortunately, the odds do improve the more times  
you try.

ALAN

(to ELLIE)

Gives a new meaning to "getting lucky."

ELLIE

That's not helping.

ALAN

Maybe we should just jump to the test tube. Leapfrog all of this.

DOCTOR

It's up to you. But you still might not succeed on your first try. There's also the chance of multiples.

ELLIE

I'm not going through all that.

DOCTOR

Well, then. Can we say it's settled, then?

(She hands ALAN a new cup.)

The fresher the better!

(The DOCTOR EXITS.)

(ALAN hands the CUP to ELLIE, who EXITS. ALAN takes a box of CHOCOLATES from the jacket pocket and heads over to MIME knocking at HOLLY's front door.

(Meanwhile, VIOLET ENTERS Stage Right to sit on the bed, JO and ROSS move to the centre table, and HOLLY ENTERS Stage Left and places and a plate of shortbread cookies on the table beside the couch. She then "opens the door" for ALAN.)

HOLLY

Professor Richmond. How nice of you to come. Did you have any trouble finding us?

ALAN

No, not at all. This is for you.

(He hands her the chocolates.)

HOLLY

You shouldn't have.

ALAN

It's the least I can do. You have a lovely house.

HOLLY

I've made some tea. Please, sit down.

(HOLLY EXITS to get the tea, taking the CHOCOLATES with her. ALAN sits and takes in a large photo of The Madonna on the table. When HOLLY speaks, he is spooked.)

HOLLY

(off)

Do you take milk or sugar?

ALAN

Just plain, thank you.

(samples a shortbread cookie)

Mm! Did you make these yourself? They're delicious.

HOLLY

(off)

We have no use for store bought shortbread around here, Professor.

(HOLLY ENTERS carrying a tray with tea for herself and ALAN.)

ALAN

Will Violet be joining us?

HOLLY

Well, there are a few things I thought we grown-ups should go over first, don't you?

ALAN

Surely, she's a grown-up?

HOLLY

It may seem that way, but she's still a teenager. There are still some decisions that are best left to adults, don't you agree, Professor?

(HOLLY sits beside ALAN  
and sips her tea while  
he reaches for words.)

ALAN

I'm sorry, I don't quite know what you've called me here to talk about.

HOLLY

(playing her card)

My daughter is pregnant.

ALAN

(adapting quickly)

Have you told the school?

HOLLY

Told them what?

ALAN

Well, she may need to modify her class schedule. She should go to Student Services, they have people to help with these things.

HOLLY

She's not staying in New York, Professor. She's moving home, with me.

ALAN

I don't think that's necessary.

HOLLY

(firmly)

Well I do.

(ALAN stands up and  
looks Stage Right,  
toward VIOLET.)

ALAN

Is that what she wants?

HOLLY

She's a child!

ALAN

It won't look that way in a few months, now, will it? She's not planning to keep it?

HOLLY

That's why I wanted to talk to you.

ALAN

Why me?

HOLLY

(chagrined)

You're not going to make me say it?

(collecting herself)

She says the child is yours.

ALAN

Ha!

HOLLY

I can assure you she was a virgin when she left this house!

ALAN

Maybe so, but a college campus is a hive of raging hormones. There's no telling who she met.

HOLLY

Are you calling my daughter a liar?

ALAN

No, no, of course not! But—I hardly know her. I spent some time with her, to help her out, as I would with any student.

(lecturing the audience)

Sometimes, with a female student, especially one so inexperienced... they get the wrong idea.

(turns back to HOLLY)

Do you see what I mean?

HOLLY

Professor, I...

ALAN

(to audience)

But imagine if some boy gets her into trouble, and refuses to help? What can she do? It might be easier to point the finger at someone with means, if you follow.

(turns back to HOLLY)

I'm sure you want to preserve her reputation.

HOLLY

(stands, shocked)

HER reputation?

ALAN

I know, it's grossly unfair, but these things follow you in life. Even to another school.

(this gives HOLLY  
pause)

Now, I'm happy to help. She's a brilliant student; I wouldn't want to see something like this bring her down. If you leave it to me, I promise I'll take care of everything.

HOLLY

(relieved)

You do understand! I knew we could count on you. Of course, it will have to be a *closed* adoption.

ALAN

P-pardon?

HOLLY

Our Pastor recommends it. It will be easier for everyone.

(ALAN sits down again,  
speechless.)

Are you all right? Would you like some more tea?

ALAN

She wants to have the baby?

HOLLY

It's not really a matter of choice, now, is it?

(ALAN regards THE  
MADONNA with new eyes.)

ALAN

Uh, of course. I wasn't thinking.

(HOLLY sits)

Don't you worry, Mrs. Mitchell, I'll take care of everything. As a matter of fact, I know of a couple looking for a child right now.

HOLLY

Really?

ALAN

Very good people. The best.

HOLLY

Well, that's wonderful! See? It's what I always tell Violet: The Lord doesn't let things happen just for no reason. He has a grand plan. Everything always works out for the best.

(In her bedroom, having overheard everything, VIOLET looks ill. Everyone remains in place as ROSS speaks to JO.)

ROSS

So, you stayed home for the year, then went back to NYU?  
(he walks from the table to the bed and addresses VIOLET)

Didn't you ever "bump into" Professor Richmond on campus?

(VIOLET, surprised at being addressed, looks to JO, who nods her assent.)

VIOLET

I switched to Economics. Psyche is in another building.

ROSS

You never sought him out to ask after your baby?

VIOLET

I was focused on my studies. I was top of my class. Besides, my Mom threatened to withdraw my tuition.

ROSS

Yeah. And we've established that you always listen to your mother.

(VIOLET glances at HOLLY, who looks uncomfortable at the scrutiny.)

VIOLET

It was a morning in early February.

(she stands, remembering)

I'd just been home for Christmas. I felt sick the whole time. Everyone acted like nothing happened. I worked so hard first semester to put it out of my mind, but...

(ALAN strolls downstage)

He was walking in the snow, like everything was great. Like life was one big oyster. I couldn't stop myself. I walked straight across the street like a homing device.

(She goes up to him. ALAN faces her, startled.)

ROSS

What was it you wanted?

VIOLET

I wasn't sure. I felt driven. You should have seen his face! Like I was from SAW or something. He tried to smile but I could see it in his eyes. He was... afraid! Suddenly I knew what I wanted to ask. I spoke up like it was on my mind the whole time, I said: "Tell me."

ROSS

Tell you what?

VIOLET

HE knew.

ALAN

(to ROSS)

I swear, I didn't.

VIOLET

(falls to her knees)

Tell me!

ALAN

What is it, Violet?

VIOLET

The doctor... the Priest... They said it would be better if I didn't know. To avoid bonding.

ALAN

(realizing; to HOLLY)

You never told her the sex of the child.

HOLLY

(to VIOLET)

We all just wanted you to get on with your life!

VIOLET

(to HOLLY)

I never even got to hold it!

(HOLLY EXITS. ALAN watches her go, not paying attention as VIOLET gets up and addresses ROSS)

I said if he didn't tell me right away, I'd go to his house and tell his wife. About everything!

ALAN

(to no one)

Can you believe that?

(ALAN turns to address the audience as the others FREEZE)

Can you believe it? It still happens, you know. I teach psychology, and I... Can you imagine the psychic pain inflicted on the poor girl by such Old World...

(realizing he has broken the fourth wall)

Oh. Sorry. For those of you unfamiliar with theatrical conventions, what I'm doing now is called a soliloquy. It means I speak to all of you as if you were all my cherished companions. It's cheeky, and a cheat, but at least it's true to my character.

(MORE)

ALAN (CONT'D)

(moving about)

Frankly, I find it liberating. No one on stage can hear me, especially not that obsequious Detective Ross.

(he makes a fist)

But I digress. I'm doing this to tell you something you might not otherwise guess, which is that I feel for this girl.

(reacts as if hearing a snicker)

No, really, I do! I never meant to hurt her. And now I have a chance to bring her justice! Only I can tell her what she wants to know—what she needs to know. Only I can give her closure.

(he resumes his place in the scene and speaks kindly to VIOLET)

It was a little girl. A little red-haired girl.

(VIOLET shudders; JO comes over to lead her off; BOTH EXIT; to ROSS)

See? She'll be fine! And it's all thanks to me.

(ROSS scoffs; to audience)

Soliloquy over.

(ALAN bows and EXITS.)

(END OF SCENE)

Scene 3

SETTING: Interrogation Room

AT RISE: JO ENTERS and returns to sit at the Table. For the first time, ROSS pours her a glass of water.

ROSS

Here. Drink up.

(JO drinks; ROSS  
resumes his seat)

Why'd you change your name?

JO

I started going by Jo when I got back to school. I needed a fresh start.

ROSS

And you haven't spoken to your mother since that time. That's what you said?

(Jo nods.)

Did you go to the party looking for revenge?

JO

What?

ROSS

I'm trying to understand. You brought a gun.

JO

(blindsided)

So?

ROSS

You paranoid?

JO

I always carry!

ROSS

Where'd you learn to shoot?

JO

(defensive)

My dad taught me!

ROSS

What, he was a hunter?

JO

No, a cop. Like you.

(gesturing)

A big... ruddy... Irish version of you.

(he's still skeptical)

I live in New York. Alone? As a woman? It's not rocket science.

ROSS

Uh huh. You think all single New York women carry pistols?

JO

They're not all crack shots like me.

ROSS

Were you planning to use it?

JO

No!

ROSS

No? You buddy up to the guy's son, get invited to his party and bring along your "little friend."

JO

It wasn't like that.

ROSS

If you weren't planning to off him, why'd you do all that?

JO

Because... I didn't mean to. I fell in love.

ROSS

(nods)

Eddie.

(HAM ENTERS Stage  
Right, followed by a 3-  
PART CHORUS of the  
actors playing Carly,  
Ellie and Violet.)

*No special costumes.*

JO

The first time I saw him was on the stage.

(HAM, backed by a 3-  
person CHORUS ENTER  
Stage Right. They  
perform "Tit Willow"  
from Gilbert and  
Sullivan's THE MIKADO  
(Public Domain) for the  
audience. ROSS and JO  
watch the performance.

(HAM and the CHORUS  
EXIT.)

*NOTE: During the song,  
the Stage Left couch  
becomes a park bench by  
removing its cover and  
pillows.*

JO

He was in The Mikado. I didn't know who he was. I'd gone to  
see it with James, a guy from my office.

ROSS

Your boyfriend?

JO

No.

ROSS

(guessing)

Your lover.

JO

Yes. That's what made things awkward.

ROSS

Awkward how?

JO

When we got back to my place. He was on my team at the  
firm.

(JAMES ENTERS and  
stands in front of the  
Table like Exhibit A.)

*Note: JAMES is played  
by the actor playing  
HAM, wearing a SUIT  
JACKET and EYEGLASSES.*

ROSS

You go out long?

JO

No, not long. It was never long.

(JO rises and examines  
him like a specimen)

I tried to help them. The young men at the firm. To be  
better at their jobs.

ROSS

You mentored them.

JO

I thought that's what it was.

(she strokes his arm)

My therapist saw it another way. She said I was stuck.  
That's why I always dated newbies, they were the same age I  
was when... You see?

ROSS

What happened?

(END OF SCENE)

Scene 4

SETTING: Various locations

AT RISE: JAMES and JO cross from the table to the Bed. JAMES immediately sits and MIMES getting undressed.

*Note: No one actually removes any clothing during the scene.*

JO

It was when we got back from the theatre. I was still caught up in the musical. I couldn't stop thinking about it. I didn't much feel like having sex. So I said,

(JO sits beside JAMES)

Do you mind if we just sleep tonight?

JAMES

What do you mean, just sleep?

(he gets it)

Oh!

JO

I'm just kind of tired.

JAMES

Should I go?

JO

No, it's okay. I'm having a shower.

(to ROSS)

And then I went to have a shower.

(She goes downstage.)

ROSS

Let me guess: he followed.

(JAMES follows her.)

JO

How did you know? So I was soaping up, and the next thing I know the curtain draws back.

(JO's arms are crossed over her front. JAMES MIMES drawing the curtain.)

JAMES

Save water?

JO

James!

JAMES

(steps into "the tub")

Room for one more?

JO

James, I told you -

JAMES

(prying her arms open to get at her breasts)

Come on!

JO

Get out!

(JAMES puts both hands on her breasts; JO breaks his grip using an UP-THRUST, but he GRABS HER WRIST)

I'm serious. Take your hands off me!

JAMES

Hey watch it! It's slippery.

JO

I'm getting out!

(JAMES keeps hold of her wrist and with his free hand grabs her opposite shoulder)

James, let go of my arm!

JAMES

(chillingly)

You're not the boss in here.

(JO struggles free,  
sending JAMES falling.)

JAMES (CONT'D)

Hey! You could have killed me!  
(enraged, he runs after  
JO, then STOPS SHORT  
when he sees her  
pointing a GUN she has  
retrieved from the  
bedside table)

Whoa!

JO

Get out!

(JAMES doesn't react)

This isn't funny! Get out!

JAMES

Now, calm down.

JO

GET OUT!

JAMES

All right, all right! Can I get dressed first?

(He sits on the bed and  
MIMES getting dressed.)

ROSS

A bit trigger-happy, don't you think?

JO

Oh. Silly me, I should have waited until he raped me.

ROSS

He wasn't gonna rape you.

JO

25% of rapes are perpetrated by a current or former lover,  
and 55% occur in the victim's home.

ROSS

O-kay. Odd that you should know that, but... he works for  
you.

JO

With me. He works with me.

ROSS

Tomato, tomahto. He's not gonna risk his job!

JAMES

(to JO)

You know this is nuts, don't you? I bet if you shot that thing right now, you'd take out the lamp.

(he stands to face her)

Go on, I dare you.

JO

Just please go!

JAMES

(inching toward her)

You know, the guys were right about you. They said you're only hot to trot when you're in control, huh? That's it, isn't it? Cause if you want submissive, I can do that.

ROSS

(to JAMES)

Whoa, man. She said to leave.

JAMES

(to ROSS)

This has nothing to do with you.

ROSS

(to JO)

You gonna shoot that thing or what?

JAMES

All right, all right, I'm leaving. Jeez! See you at work, Chief!

(JAMES salutes JO  
sarcastically and  
EXITS. ROSS points to  
the gun.)

ROSS

Put that thing away before you hurt someone.

(JO lays it ON TOP of  
the bedside stable.)

JO

That night I had a dream. I'd had it before, about a girl.

(*The actor playing*  
CARLY ENTERS and  
crosses the stage as if  
balancing on a curb.)

A red-haired girl. I would see her in playgrounds, parks,  
out shopping. She's grown older over the years. Now she's  
in her early twenties. Eventually, I lose her in a crowd.

(CARLY looks over her  
shoulder as if being  
followed, then EXITS)

Lately, she's been disappearing into the subway.

ROSS

Why don't you follow?

JO

There's like a wall or something. When I try, I wake up.  
What I realized that night was that my life was out of  
control. The guys I'd been spending time with were like  
ghosts, phantoms. The life I'd spent 20 years building was  
just... a distraction. I had to find her.

ROSS

The red-haired girl.

JO

My daughter.

(JO heads back to sit  
at the table.)

ROSS

How'd you meet Eddie the second time?

JO

I went to the Office of Child Services. I figured they  
could show me the adoption record. They couldn't find it.

ROSS

(shocked)

Couldn't find it?

JO

They promised to look into it and get back to me. In the meantime, I should try North Carolina.

ROSS

No luck, huh?

JO

That's when I looked him up.

ROSS

From the play?

JO

No. I looked up Alan.

ROSS

(nods)

Professor Richmond.

JO

He was retired from the university, so I couldn't just go confront him.

(consulting her phone)

One article mentioned that he had a son who worked at a cafe near me. The IUI must have worked after all.

(HAM ENTERS, carrying a coffee and croissant which he puts down in front of JO.)

ROSS

"Intrauterine insemination."

(embarrassed)

The turkey baster.

HAM

"Morning Joe."

JO

(to ROSS)

I hate that joke.

ROSS

He knew your name?

JO

I was there a few times. For the coffee.

ROSS

Uh huh.

JO

Seriously, I just wanted to see if he was an asshole like his Dad.

(HAM clears ROSS's  
coffee cup.)

ROSS

Hey!

JO

(to HAM)

Hey, did I ever tell you I saw you in The Mikado?

HAM

You did?

JO

Eddie Hammerstein, right? You're very talented.

HAM

Wow. No one usually recognizes me.

JO

Am I your first fan?

HAM

After my Mom, yeah.

JO

What about your Dad?

HAM

He'd rather I was a lawyer. I got top marks on my L-SATs.  
(pron: el-satts)

JO

No kidding?

HAM

He said if I went to law school, he'd support me right down the line, but if I chased my Broadway dreams I was on my own. Hence the glamorous day job. Whereas you, who come for coffee at 8 in the morning, seem to have an actual career.

JO

I'm a broker.

HAM

No way!

JO

What does that mean?

HAM

Brokers are the enemy. But you seem nice. Unless it's some elaborate disguise?

JO

Unfortunately, no.

(glances at her watch)

Which means I can't be late.

HAM

Oh! I'll let you enjoy your croissant. Have an awesome day enabling the rich and famous.

JO

You're going to be famous one day too, Eddie.

HAM

It's Ham. For Hammerstein. I took my mom's name to get more auditions.

JO

Like Oscar.

HAM

We're not actually related.

JO

It work?

HAM

I think sometimes it gets me in the door, yeah.

(HAM EXITS. JO heads  
Stage Left to sit on  
the park bench.)

JO

The next time was an actual coincidence. I was sitting in a park near this basketball court where some guys were playing. He found me.

(HAM ENTERS, bouncing a  
basketball.)

HAM

Hey. Jo, right?

JO

Ham! Where did you come from?

HAM

Well, cosmically I'm the result of a billions-of-years evolution process, but locally, I came from the court.

(He sits beside her and  
MIMES CHATTING.)

JO

We got to talking. He was so easy to talk to. Despite myself, I started telling him all this... stuff! It threw me. I actually started to like him.

(HAM tosses the ball  
offstage and they head  
downstage; he MIMES  
talking, using his  
HANDS a lot)

We started going out. It felt weird at first, then... fantastic! He was the same age as most of the guys from the firm, but the total opposite: he had drive, ambition, big plans for his life.

HAM

(nervously)

A couple of friends and I are thinking of making our own show. A revue, kind of, that we can take around the country.

JO

Ham, that's a great idea!

HAM

Whenever people are out of work they can jump in. We'd need funding, though. And bookers, travel planners... It gets very complicated.

JO

At least you have a plan. Most of the guys I work with can't see further than the tip of their nose. Next deal, next meal, next lay. You're different.

(DANCE MUSIC plays and  
they dance.)

It felt incredible. After all those years, it was like I finally made -

HAM AND JO

(together)

A connection!

(DANCE MUSIC FADES. Ham  
takes her hand and  
leads her Stage Right,  
to the bed.)

JO

He was so beautiful! Soon, I forgot all about who his father was.

(HAM and JO fall onto  
the bed to make out.  
JO's RING TONE sounds  
inside her purse, and  
she answers it. ROSS  
watches from the table  
with interest as she  
read a message and  
stands up.)

HAM

What is it?

JO

It's nothing.

HAM

Doesn't look like nothing.

JO

It's from the City. The Office of Child Services.

(gathers herself)

I gave up a baby. When I was nineteen. I'm trying to find her.

ROSS

I can't wait to see his reaction!

HAM

Jo, that's awful. I couldn't even imagine. You must feel terrible. Is there anything I can do to help?

ROSS

Okay, so not an asshole.

HAM

What's it say?

JO

(sighs)

"There is no such record in our database."

HAM

Can I look?

(she hands it to him)

Where was the baby from?

JO

Where I'm from. North Carolina.

HAM

You sure you don't have anything else? You had to sign an agreement, didn't you?

(JO looks alarmed. She turns and EXITS the stage.)

(HAM notices the GUN, still on the bedside table. He stands to examine it, then sits back down when he hears JO returning. She ENTERS and hands him a DOCUMENT.)

JO

It's the adoption agreement. They made me sign it.

(Noticing the GUN  
herself, JO puts it  
into her purse. HAM  
sees this but doesn't  
let on.)

HAM

(reading the agreement)

It gives away all your rights. It looks legit.

(HAM takes out his  
phone and dials. JO  
hesitates.)

JO

What are you doing?

HAM

(listens)

They're no longer at that number.

(searches the name)

I don't see a firm like that listed.

JO

That's impossible!

ROSS

It was a long time ago. They must have shut down.

HAM

I should go.

JO

No, stay.

(She takes his hands  
and sits beside him.)

HAM

I wish I could do something. Maybe I should have been a  
lawyer.

JO

Then we would never have met.

(They kiss. ROSS heaves  
a big sigh and rolls  
his eyes. HAM notices  
the time.)

HAM

Now I really have to go. I have to be at the theatre by  
six-thirty.

(he starts off, then  
stops)

Oh, I almost forgot, my parents are having this anniversary  
party at their house this weekend. Can you come?

(ROSS sits up straight,  
alarmed.)

JO

Where?

HAM

It's their summer house. In the Hamptons.

JO

Oho! So you're a New York brat!

(HAM looks  
embarrassed.)

I didn't mean that.

HAM

It's all right. I guess nobody sees themselves the way  
others do.

JO

How do you see me?

HAM

You're... consistent. You always stop for coffee on the way  
to work. You always look great, even at eight in the  
morning. You seem... together. Just the opposite of me.

JO

The opposite? You do this incredible thing every night and  
still manage to keep your crappy day job.

HAM

I'm an actor. We're nocturnal.

JO

You're polite in the morning, which is impressive. And..

(She turns away.)

HAM

And what?

JO

You have ambition. You work very hard to make yourself better. You don't know how rare that is.

(He's embarrassed by  
her comment.)

HAM

So, can you come?

JO

I don't think so.

HAM

It's like a brunch. We can go up Saturday and stay over. I can show you the diving rock.

(jokingly)

Please, I don't think I can take my family for a whole weekend without you.

(he takes her hand)

It would mean a lot.

JO

All right.

(HAM gestures "Yes!")

HAM

You'll see, you'll have a great time. I promise!

(HAM EXITS, happy. ROSS  
ambles over, smirking.)

ROSS

A date with destiny!

JO

Shut up. Anyway, it turned out mine wasn't the only dirty family secret at the party.

(JO and ROSS EXIT.)

(END OF SCENE)

Scene 5

SETTING: The Hamptons House

AT RISE: ELLIE, now 62 and still just as fashionable, ENTERS and lays down a tablecloth.

JUNE

(off)  
Hi there, I'm here!

ELLIE

In here, June!

(JUNE shimmies in carrying a large ANNIVERSARY CAKE. She wears a revealing one piece party dress and heels.)

JUNE

So? Where should I put it?

ELLIE

Just there.

(ELLIE indicates a spot on the table and JUNE puts it down, then OPENS a box of CANDLES.)

JUNE

It's pretty impressive when you think about it. Forty years!

(In her nervousness, JUNE spills the candles and carefully bends down to pick them up.)

ELLIE

It's a long time, all right.

JUNE

El, I really want to thank you for inviting us. I was beginning to think you'd never speak to me again!

ELLIE

June, don't.

JUNE

I'm just so sorry it ever happened. I can't really fathom it myself.

(standing she starts  
putting in candles)

I mean, I'm sorry to bring it up, but it was just one night, and it was so long ago, and it could never, ever happen again. I just hate to think how it must have made you feel.

ELLIE

The only reason you're here is I don't want the kids suspecting anything.

JUNE

They don't. How could they?

ELLIE

I think we should just drop the subject. Can you hand me that knife?

(JUNE looks where ELLIE  
is pointing and takes a  
long SILVER CAKE KNIFE  
off the side table.)

JUNE

This must be from your wedding!

ELLIE

You should know, you gave it to us.

JUNE

Did I? That's so funny, I don't even remember.

(ELLIE uses the KNIFE  
to fix a stray piece of  
icing on the cake.)

JUNE (CONT'D)

Oh, El, we had such great times. I'd hate to think it all could be... cancelled for one stupid mistake!

(ELLIE sits down,  
annoyed)

No, I think we should be able to talk about it. I mean, if we're going to salvage our friendship, even for the kids, it should be on the right terms, shouldn't it? How did you ever find your way through it?

ELLIE

Well... At first, of course, I wanted to kill you.

(points at her with the  
knife)

Both of you.

JUNE

(nervously)

Oh?

(ELLIE steps downstage  
with the knife, facing  
the audience.)

ELLIE

Especially Alan. I had visions of cutting him up with a machete. Taking the individual pieces and putting them through a meat grinder. Slowly.

JUNE

Well, if you don't want to talk about it...

ELLIE

You, I had other plans for. I imagined us going hiking together, then pushing you off a cliff at a tremendous height. I imagined watching you fall: down, down, down... Like Jimmy Stewart in that movie.

(grows reflective)

It's quite shocking, really. The RAGE. Your mind goes places you'd only read about in checkout magazines. It's like some foreign animal takes up lodging in your soul, making you think of nothing but revenge.

JUNE

(hopefully)

What changed?

(ELLIE heads back to  
the table and picks up  
a cloth to wipe with.)

ELLIE

Well, it's sort of like a wound. At first, it's so painful  
you'd rather be dead. You think it will never heal. Then it  
starts scabbing and peeling. Eventually it drops right off,  
leaving a little, little scar. You can barely notice it.

(she WIPES a spec of  
something off the  
table)

You really can't remember life without it.

JUNE

I never meant to hurt you.

ELLIE

(re: candles)

I don't really think we need those, do you?

(JUNE starts taking  
them out of the cake)

He's a good man, really. After all: one peccadillo after  
all these years! I suppose I should count myself lucky.

(ELLIE EXITS. JUNE  
EXITS, taking the cake  
with her.)

(ROSS and JO RE-ENTER.)

ROSS

Whoa! That was intense!

JO

Stick around, the fun's just starting.

(ROSS takes JO's jacket  
and sits down on the  
bench while JO puts on  
a flowery scarf.)

(HAM ENTERS, passing  
them. JO follows.)

JO

So, this is where you grew up.

HAM  
It's our summer house.

JO  
Just summers, huh?

HAM  
And weekends.  
(calls)  
Mom? Mom!

JO  
What do your parents do?

HAM  
Dad's retired. He was a professor at NYU. Mom's an author and editor.

JO  
What does she write?

HAM  
Bestsellers, mostly. Yeah, mysteries. Ever heard of the Farrell sisters?

JO  
Get outta town! The whole series?

HAM  
That's usually how it's done.

JO  
Wow! The Farrell Sisters!

HAM  
You've read them?

JO  
No, but I hear they're really good. Aren't they making a TV series?

HAM  
They're "in discussions." Mom's been stringing them along for years.

JO

(she looks around)

You sure you got the right date?

ELLIE

(off)

Edward? Is that you?

(ELLIE ENTERS, followed  
by JUNE in a apron.)

ELLIE

There's my angel!

(She gives HAM a  
motherly hug.)

HAM

Mom! Auntie June.

(June hugs him.)

JUNE

Carly will be so glad to see you.

HAM

Carly's here?

JUNE

She has the week off.

HAM

I thought this was a big party.

ELLIE

No. Just us and the Coombs.

HAM

I hope you don't mind, I brought a friend.

ELLIE

Of course not!

(she shakes JO's hand)

It's about time we met some of your friends. Welcome. Call  
me Ellie.

JUNE

(she shakes JO's hand)

Eddie's never brought a girl around before. Or... a... woman. We all thought he was gay. Are you an actor too?

JO

I wish! I'm a stockbroker.

JUNE

Really!

HAM

Where's Dad?

ELLIE

Out fishing. He waited.

HAM

Sorry.

ELLIE

Don't listen to him. He'll do anything to get out of fishing with his father. If you'll excuse us, we still have some things to do. Edward, why don't you show Jo the guest room?

(ELLIE and JUNE EXIT.  
HAM gestures for JO to precede him to the "guest room," Stage Right. HAM sits on the bed, hoping JO will join him, but she stays standing, examining his shelves for an excuse.

(ROSS comes to centre to hear better.)

JO

"Edward," is it?

(laughs)

Your Aunt seems nice.

HAM

She's not really my Aunt. She's my mom's best friend.

JO

Who's Carly?

HAM

Her daughter. She's studying at Oxford.

JO

You grew up together?

ROSS

(to JO)

They're practically twins.

HAM

She's 15 minutes my junior.

JO

Which you lord over her, of course.

HAM

15 minutes is 15 minutes! We practically lived at each other's houses. We knew where the chocolate wafers were hidden. Carly's the one who got me into theatre.

ROSS

Let me guess: She had an audition for a play, you tagged along and got the part.

HAM

They were desperate for guys.

JO

And you blew them away!

HAM

I was terrible. Then I found out I could sing. Who knew?

(remembers)

Hey, want to see something?

(JO assents and he takes her hand. Holding hands, they EXIT upstage of ROSS, then RE-ENTER at the lip.)

(HAM runs to the EDGE  
OF THE STAGE and looks  
over as if from a great  
height.)

What's this?

JO

We used to swim here as kids.

HAM

How high is it?

JO

20 feet.

HAM

You dove off this thing?

JO

We jumped.

HAM

And your parents approved?

JO

They didn't know. There's a little beach down there where  
we used to skinny dip.

HAM

You and Carly?

JO

And other kids.

HAM

Couldn't afford a bathing suit?

JO

We had more freedom then.

HAM

(They sit on the rock,  
facing the audience.)

JO

This is really beautiful. You're really lucky, you know that?

HAM

Dad doesn't let me forget it.

JO

I can't believe he hasn't seen your show.

HAM

It's just a gig, to him. And he's right: you're only as good as your last show. I'll be on the street again before the end of a year.

JO

Is this you talking, or him?

HAM

What about you?

JO

What about me?

HAM

Did you always want to be a stockbroker?

JO

No. I don't know. Sometimes life makes decisions for you.

(She falters.)

HAM

Hey.

(He puts a hand on her shoulder.)

JO

I guess you could say I got everything I THOUGHT I wanted. The big question now is, is it enough?

(They are about to kiss when CARLY ENTERS. She has wavy red hair and sports an adopted British accent.)

CARLY

No making out on the rock, it's a rule.

HAM

Carly!

(HAM jumps up and gives  
CARLY a lift-off-the-  
floor bear hug. ROSS  
stands up and points.)

ROSS

(shocked; to JO)

That's Carly?

JO

(standing as well, in  
wonder; to ROSS)

I couldn't believe it either. It was like the red-haired  
girl walked straight out of my dreams and onto that rock.

CARLY

So, the rumors are true! You did bring a girlfriend.

HAM

When did you get in?

CARLY

Thursday night. I'm still jet lagged.

(HAM's PHONE BUZZES and  
he takes it out.)

HAM

It's Mom. She wants me to open a jar. You guys stay and get  
to know each other. I'll be right back.

(HAM EXITS. JO smiles  
nervously, then takes  
out her cigarettes.)

CARLY

Can I bum one of those?

(Surprised, JO gives  
her one and lights it.)

CARLY

Thanks. Don't tell my mum.

(JO blanches at this.)

JO

(ironically)

Your secret's safe with me.

(She lights up.)

CARLY

He really likes you, you know? I've never seen him smile so much. You're not going to break his heart, are you?

JO

I don't think we're quite there yet.

CARLY

He is. Do you always go out with younger guys?

JO

Why? Are you two...

CARLY

What? Eww gross!

JO

Not even when you were skinny dipping?

CARLY

No! He told you about that? Anyway, turns out I'm not into guys.

JO

(too surprised)

Oh!

(beat; to front)

That sounded too surprised.

CARLY

A bit.

JO

Sorry.

(tentative)

I like your hair.

CARLY

Thanks. I like yours, too.

JO

Your mom's a brunette?

CARLY

Sometimes it skips a generation. Wait till you meet my dad.

JO

Is he a redhead?

CARLY

(visualizing ARNIE)

Not exactly.

(HAM ENTERS.)

HAM

What did I miss?

JO

Carly was just filling me in on her family tree.

CARLY

Yeah. Hey, guess what I have?

(she waves a BAGGIE OF  
WEED at him)

All the way from London!

JO

(alarmed)

You smuggled it in? What if you were caught at the airport!

CARLY

They never check.

JO

They do these days. It was very irresponsible!

(JO checks herself)

Whoa! Where did that come from? I sound like my mother!

CARLY

Um. So are you going to join us or what?

(JO grins. They sit on the rock and light up.

(ELLIE ENTERS with a folded newspaper and sits at the table doing the crossword. ALAN ENTERS tiptoeing, upstage, wearing jeans and a plaid shirt, carrying his catch of FISH.)

ELLIE

(doesn't even look up)  
I told you to clean them at the lake.

ALAN

(caught)  
I wanted to show Arnie. Is he here?

ELLIE

Tomorrow. You're lucky he's coming at all.  
(ALAN starts to move again)  
Are you having a shower?

ALAN

Yes. Why?

ELLIE

Use the regular towels, we have a guest.

ALAN

A guest?

ELLIE

Ham brought someone. A woman.

ALAN

(surprised and pleased)  
I didn't think he had it in him.

ELLIE

I hope you'll be civil?

ALAN

Aren't I always?

(ALAN EXITS, followed  
shortly by ELLIE.)

CARLY

(laughing)

Remember in Grade 8? That girl with the stud?

HAM

Shelly!

CARLY

Her mom remarried this super rich guy and they had this humungous party on his ranch.

(to HAM)

Remember the Snowball?

JO

The Snowball?

CARLY

It's this dance where the girls invite the boys, starting with the birthday girl.

HAM

It was her BIRTHDAY!

CARLY

So we all stand around in a circle and Shelly has to pick someone to start. So who does she pick, of all the guys in our Grade?

HAM

Me? I don't remember that. I DO remember that!

CARLY

You liked her.

HAM

I liked her cause she picked me. We never talked, really, before OR after.

CARLY

We used to go over to their house to watch...

(HAM grins at her. They  
say together.)

CARLY AND HAM

The Wizard of Oz!

HAM

She had the biggest TV on the block!

JO

(sarcastic)

You guys had some exciting childhood.

(CARLY starts bawling;  
alarmed, JO looks to  
HAM)

I was kidding!

(JO reaches a hand over  
to CARLY's knee to  
comfort her)

Hey, it's all right. It's all right, honey.

CARLY

No it's not. There's something I have to tell you.

JO

What is it? We're here for you.

CARLY

I can't. My Mom.

(She pauses to catch  
her breath.)

JO

(glancing at HAM)

June?

HAM

It can't be that bad.

CARLY

My Mom... cheated... on my Dad!

HAM

(rolling on the grass)

HA HA HA HA HA HA! No way! Auntie June? She'd never!

JO

How do you know, dear?

CARLY

My last vacation? I overheard her talking to someone on the phone? And my Dad stayed in a hotel for a week? And when he came back, NOBODY talked about ANYTHING. It was like someone DIED.

HAM

Impossible. You must be mistaken.

JO

Are you sure?

CARLY

I don't know!

(She blubbers into JO's shoulder.)

HAM

I can't imagine them not together. I just can't.

(CARLY dries her eyes and stands up; gets dizzy. HAM comes over to steady her. JO also rises.)

CARLY

I'd better go.

JO

Are you okay to get home?

CARLY

Yeah, it's safe.

JO

Maybe Ham could walk you.

HAM

It's super close.

(JO glares at him)

Oh! All right, then.

(HAM puts his arm  
around CARLY and leads  
her off.)

CARLY

It was really great to meet you, finally. You're really nice.

(to HAM)

She's really nice.

(HAM and CARLY EXIT,  
Stage Left.)

(JO crosses back to the  
bed and lies down. HAM  
ENTERS and crosses back  
to the bed to lie down  
beside her.)

JO

Did anyone see you?

(HAM shakes his head)

Poor Carly.

HAM

She konked out as soon as we got there.

JO

Was someone there?

HAM

Uncle Arnie. He's really nice, you'll meet him tomorrow.  
You know, I always thought about having a girl up here.

JO

(double entendre)

Am I your first?

HAM

Yes. You're my first.

(looks into her eyes)

My first, last and always.

(They kiss.)

*Transition:* HAM rolls  
onto his back and JO  
sits up, her legs over  
the side.)

JO

That night, I had another dream. I'm following the red-haired girl again. Again, she goes to the subway. This time, I go down.

(VIOLET enters Stage  
Left, in front of ROSS,  
and slowly walks to  
centre. JO stands and  
goes to meet her.)

It's the street I grew up on. The red-haired girl is headed for my house. I finally catch up with her, and turn her around.

(VIOLET turns upstage;  
JO comes up up behind  
her and turns her  
around.)

It was me. I mean, Violet. At first, she seemed afraid of me, but then she looked at me with such deep understanding.

(VIOLET hugs JO.)

VIOLET

Everything's going to be all right.

(VIOLET EXITS.)

(ALAN ENTERS and MIMES  
KNOCKING on the bedroom  
door. Ham jumps up.)

HAM

Yes?

ALAN

Are you coming?

HAM

Be right there!

(ALAN EXITS; HAM MIMES  
getting dressed as JO  
returns to the bed)

I promised Dad I'd go fishing with him this morning.

JO

So early?

HAM

"The early worm gets the fish."

(apologetic)

Dad joke.

JO

Maybe I want to fish.

(HAM FREEZES, wondering  
if she's serious)

No, this bed is just too comfortable.

HAM

Just hang out and enjoy the house! I'll be back in a few  
hours.

(He gives her a  
lingering goodbye kiss  
and EXITS. JO settles  
back to sleep.)

(LIGHTS DIM 3 SECONDS.)

(LIGHTS UP. ELLIE  
ENTERS and MIME-KNOCKS  
on the now "open" door  
to the Guest Room.)

ELLIE

Good morning, Jo. You slept well.

JO

(realizes it's ELLIE,  
puts on a big smile)

What time is it?

ELLIE

It's 10:00. The boys will be home soon. How did you find the bed?

JO

Great.

ELLIE

Oh, good. There's still some coffee downstairs, if you want some.

JO

I'd love some. I'll be right down.

(ELLIE nods and heads to the table. JO drops the smile and steps downstage to tidy up and consider herself in the "mirror.")

JO

This is another fine mess you've gotten me into.

(She heads down. ELLIE meets JO with a mug of coffee, then gets one for herself.)

JO

Thank you.

(she sits and sips)

This really hits the spot.

ELLIE

Forgive me if this is a nosy question.

JO

No, that's okay.

ELLIE

Well, you are a little... older, than Edward.

(sitting down)

Do you mind me asking if you've ever been married?

JO

No, I haven't. I'm not sure why.

ELLIE

I'm sure your career is very demanding.

JO

Yes, it is. I forgot to offer my congratulations. Forty years. That's quite an accomplishment.

ELLIE

More than you know.

(changing the topic)

Finance is still pretty much a Boy's Club. Are there many women at your office? I mean other than secretaries?

JO

Some.

(A now 60 year-old  
ARNIE ENTERS. ROSS  
stands up from the  
bench, staring at  
ARNIE.)

ARNIE

Good morning, all.

ELLIE

Good morning, Arnie.

ARNIE

June's not up and I smelled your wonderful coffee all the way at our place, Ellie Mae.

ELLIE

Well, pull up a chair.

(ARNIE gives her a kiss  
and sits down. ELLIE  
gets him coffee.)

ROSS

Hey, I know that guy. He's the best friend!

ARNIE

(to JO)

I don't believe we've met. I'm--

(They shake hands.)

JO

Uncle Arnie, I know. Ham speaks very highly of you.

ARNIE

Does he now? Well, it's about time he brought someone up here. Are you an actress?

ELLIE

Jo is a stockbroker.

ARNIE

A stockbroker! How'd you meet, then? He serve you coffee in the morning? Ha ha! Cause he works at this coffee shop.

JO

I know. I saw him in The Mikado. Off Broadway.

ARNIE

A theatre loving broker! Remind me to get your card, later.

ROSS

Of course, he's Carly's dad! This the first time you met him?

JO

Right. Do you mind?

ROSS

Oh!

(air-quotes)

"Sorry."

(ROSS sits back down.)

JO

What do you do, Uncle Arnie?

ARNIE

Oh, I'm a colleague of Eddie's father at the university.

(thinks)

Jo... That's a very unusual name. It must stand for something.

ROSS

I was wondering that myself. Let me guess. Josephine.  
Jolene? Mary Jo?

JO

Jocasta.

ARNIE

That's beautiful. What does it mean?

JO

"Violet colored clouds."

(JUNE and CARLY ENTER.  
JUNE carries a bottle  
of CHAMPAGNE.)

JUNE

Good morning! Welcome to the first day of the rest of our  
lives!

CARLY

Hi!

(CARLY kisses ARNIE on  
the cheek before  
sitting down.

(JUNE gives ELLIE a  
kiss on the cheek too;  
ELLIE grins and bears  
it, then gets her a  
COFFEE as well.)

JUNE

Ready for the big day? Oh, I hope we weren't interrupting  
anything?

JO

Not at all.

JUNE

Thank you, Ellie.

(From her standing position, ELLIE sees something downstage, "out the window".)

ELLIE

The boys are back.

JO

(gets up)

I think I'll finish getting dressed. Thank you for the coffee.

(JO goes downstage to look "out the window. The group is still at the table, pondering JO's sudden exit.)

(ROSS comes to stand beside JO. He follows her gaze.)

ROSS

Here he comes. You can't escape now.

(The others all EXIT.)

JO

He looked exactly the same. Just grayer.

ROSS

You don't. I bet he didn't even recognize you.

JO

I wasn't going to wait to find out.

(JO, upset, heads off Stage Left, but before she can leave HAM ENTERS.)

HAM

Jo! Where are you going?

ROSS  
Where are you going?

JO  
(to ROSS)  
I thought I could handle it. I wasn't prepared.

ROSS  
For what?

JO  
The anger! The guilt!

ROSS  
Guilt? For what?

JO  
For just being! I had the overwhelming urge to curl up in a ball. To just... erase myself.

HAM  
Jo, what's going on?

JO  
I just have to go. Tell your mother I'm sorry. Can you drive me to the bus?

HAM  
But we were having a good time!

JO  
Yeah, I just remembered. It's stupid. I shouldn't have come. I'm sorry.

(She heads off, but HAM  
holds his ground.)

HAM  
No!

(JO stops)  
I'm not taking you anywhere until you tell me what this is about.

JO  
Ham, I don't have time for--

HAM

What, for me? You don't have time for me? Is that what you're telling me right now? Because I sure have time for you!

(JO feels like she is caught in a trap. She looks to ROSS for help, but he shrugs helplessly. She takes moment to breathe.)

JO

You're not going to believe this.  
(he waits)

It's Carly.

HAM

What is?

JO

I think she may be my daughter.

HAM

Wha-hat? That's crazy!

JO

Maybe. Just take me to the bus, and I'll--

HAM

Look, Jo. I know she's got your hair, but there's a million girls out there that--

JO

Is she adopted?

HAM

Well yeah, but--

JO

Is her birthday August the 22<sup>nd</sup>?

HAM

Holy shit, how did you...

JO

You see why I have to leave?

HAM

But this is incredible! This is fantastic! We have to tell her!

JO

No! She might not be ready.

HAM

Ready? But... Fuck. Holy fuck. There has to be a way.

JO

Ham. Please? I don't want to ruin the party.

HAM

You have a right to know!

JO

Yes, but... just, not, right, now.

(She tries to pull him  
off.)

HAM

Hold on, wait a minute. I think I have a way we can do this. Do you trust me?

ROSS

(seeing JO hesitate)

Well, did you?

(END OF SCENE)

Scene 6

SETTING: The Hamptons House

AT RISE: ROSS EXITS.

EVERYONE ENTERS carrying PLACE  
SETTINGS or CHAIRS.

JO dons SUNGLASSES before she  
sits down.

JO  
Ellie, the food was delicious.

ELLIE  
Alan caught the carp. Where was it, dear?

ALAN  
Haughton Lake. It's up in Michigan.

CARLY  
I heard they have mercury there!

ALAN  
Don't worry, we had George poach it. Kills all the  
gremlins.

ELLIE  
Martin works on Wall Street, doesn't he?

ALAN  
He's your nephew.

ELLIE  
Maybe Jo knows him... I can't remember the name of the firm.

(ELLIE takes out her  
phone to check.)

JO  
I never asked what you're studying, Carly?

CARLY  
English lit. In England.

JUNE

She absolutely adores anything English.

ARNIE

It started with Teletubbies.

JUNE

No, it didn't.

ARNIE

Yes, it did. She used to wear this little red Po hat we bought for her all the time. Even to sleep. She would scream bloody murder if we tried to take it off.

ALAN

(to JUNE)

You took her to a child psychologist, right?

CARLY

You did not!

ARNIE

Take it easy, you were five. She ran a bunch of tests, then sat me us down and said -- I'll never forget it-- "Do you know how intelligent this child is?"

JUNE

I felt like the poster girl for helicopter moms!

CARLY

You were a great mom. I only hope when I have kids one day, I raise them as well as you've raised me.

(JUNE leans over to  
give her a HUG.)

ELLIE

(reading the name of  
her nephew's firm off  
her phone)

Shiffman O'Connor!

(Everyone stops and  
looks at ELLIE, having  
forgotten what she's  
talking about.)

(JO pushes HAM sharply  
on the shoulder, as if  
to tell him, "Now.")

HAM

(to CARLY)

Carly? How do you find you're accepted as a foreign student  
at Oxford?

JUNE

I don't think they even know she's foreign, she's picked up  
the accent so well.

ALAN

I've been trying to figure out who she sounds like. It's  
that singer. You know the one. With "The Deep."

HAM

Adele.

ALAN

(considers, shakes his  
head)

Nope, that's not it.

(JO shoves HAM to get  
him back on track.)

HAM

I knew this girl, Kwan, at theatre school. Vietnamese. I  
googled how to say some things and tried it on her. Turns  
out she didn't speak a word. She was adopted right here in  
Queens.

(This story is met with  
silence. JO picks up  
the gauntlet.)

JO

A guy at my firm was adopted. Didn't find out till he was  
26, 27. Now he's searching for his birth parents.

ELLIE

Ugh!

JO

Did I say something wrong?

JUNE

Ellie isn't fond of the term "birth parents".

HAM

What's wrong with it?

ELLIE

It's not proper English. If you don't parent a child, you can't be its parent. As an editor, I would never allow it.

ARNIE

Yes, Ellie Mae, but "birth parent" means—

ELLIE

I know what it means, Arnie, for God's sake.

HAM

Mom, take it easy!

(Another awkward  
pause.)

JUNE

(to JO)

We have this argument all the time.

ELLIE

All I'm saying is that once someone chooses to give away a child, they don't really have any right to--

JO

(interrupting)

But what about if the mother didn't want to give it up? What if she was forced because she was still in school?

(Hearing this, ALAN  
puts down his cutlery.  
He looks more carefully  
at JO. Then, over her  
shoulder, he sees  
VIOLET ENTER and come  
slowly forward.)

ELLIE

That's a terrible thought.

CARLY

That would never happen today.

JUNE

Don't kid yourself. Not everyone's family's like in "Juno".

(VIOLET ends by standing behind JO, staring at him. ALAN looks to see if anyone else notices, but it seems like ONLY HE CAN SEE HER.)

JO

I just feel sorry for the little girl. I've heard lots of adopted kids feel, I don't know, rootless. Like they don't know who they are.

ARNIE

Why do you say it's a little girl?

(VIOLET turns and slowly EXITS.)

ELLIE

(firmly)

They know who they are as much as any of us does.

(CARLY suddenly stands up, out of sorts.)

CARLY

I'm sorry, something must have went down the wrong way. Excuse me.

(CARLY leaves. ARNIE and JUNE exchange a look, then he goes after her. ALAN puts a plan in motion.)

ALAN

(cheerful)

I can't get over that accent. When Carly left for school, she was one hundred percent New Yorker. Oh! I just remembered, Eddie, there's this shelf in the basement I need you to help me with. It will only take a minute.

(ALAN stands and HAM follows his lead.)

ELLIE

Oh Alan, the boy's hardly finished eating!

ALAN

Before I forget again. Excuse us.

(ALAN leads HAM downstage.)

(The others gather their plates and EXIT, leaving some cutlery behind.)

HAM

Where is it?

ALAN

Where is what? Oh, the shelf! Yes... actually, I just wanted a chance to talk to you, see how you're doing. How are you fixed for money?

HAM

I'm all right.

ALAN

Because you know, I know it's got to be hard living in the city. And, well, you've kind of proven you can manage on your own, I guess, which is all I ever wanted.

(takes out a billfold)

So, you know, if you need a little help, that's what I'm here for.

HAM

(coolly)

Thanks, Dad, I can manage.

(HAM heads back up.)

ALAN

You could find a better place, I bet.

HAM

I'm fine.

ALAN

Listen, son, about this girl.

(HAM stops, like a  
hooked bass, and ALAN  
reels him in)

It's probably none of my business, but, you know.

HAM

Know what?

(HAM inches back to  
ALAN's side.)

ALAN

Well, it's curious. Isn't it? The age difference?

HAM

What's that got to do with anything?

ALAN

Nothing, nothing! It's just that, you know, she's... Older.  
She may want a family.

HAM

So?

ALAN

Do I have to spell it out for you? You're a catch! You're  
young, you come from a well-off family..

HAM

She's richer than me!

ALAN

Yes, but you have a cushion. What if she gets in an  
accident?

(HAM scoffs)

She's in finance, she thinks about these things. I hope  
you're using protection.

HAM

Dad!

ALAN

Because you wouldn't want to be suddenly faced with a "surprise," would you? Not until you have something in writing.

HAM

That's sick!

ALAN

Tsk! You still don't get it, do you? To her, you're like a prize bull. She wants to rope you in.

HAM

(leaving)

I don't need this.

ALAN

All right, all right, I'm sorry. Just tell me this.

(HAM stops)

How did you two meet?

HAM

She came to my show. Which is more than I can say for you!

ALAN

Yeah, yeah. And then?

HAM

She came into Judy's for coffee.

ALAN

Oh really!

HAM

Lots of people come in for coffee!

ALAN

What about the next time?

HAM

I saw her. At the park.

ALAN

Hmm. I guess a lot of people find you in the park, too? Who asked who out first?

(HAM hesitates, hooked.  
ALAN takes him by the  
shoulders and looks  
into his eyes)

Edward. Son. This woman has no interest in you, she's only interested in what she can get.

(HAM tries to release  
himself but ALAN holds  
onto his catch.)

ALAN (CONT'D)

I want you to break things off. Now.

(puts arm around HAM)

But do it gently. You don't want her to know that you know.

HAM

Can I go?

ALAN

No one's stopping you.

(releases him; ALAN  
heads the other way)

And by the way, we're planning to see your show! Just trying to nail down the date.

(ALAN EXITS.)

(HAM arrives back at  
the table to find the  
room empty. JUNE  
ENTERS, returning for  
the cutlery.)

HAM

Where's Jo?

(JUNE shrugs and shakes  
her head.)

Did she say anything while I was gone?

JUNE

About what, honey?

(HAM purses his lips.)

HAM

Nothing.

(JUNE EXITS. HAM EXITS.)

(JO ENTERS downstage  
and sits down at the  
diving rock. She puts  
her SUNGLASSES back in  
her purse and lights a  
cigarette.)

(ALAN ENTERS. JO hears  
him approach.)

JO

(without turning)

He said you didn't know about this place.

ALAN

He was a child. We gave him the illusion of freedom. Still  
smoking, I see. What are you doing here, Violet?

(Jo laughs, weakly.)

You think this is funny?

JO

It just occurred to me. I'm dating your son. One day I  
might take him from you, the same as you took my child from  
me.

ALAN

Is that what this is about? Revenge? Besides, I didn't take  
it, you agreed.

JO

(hotly)

"Her"! Take her! And I was nineteen!

ALAN

Exactly. Your mother was right. You couldn't make that kind  
of decision for yourself. It was for the best.

(she scoffs)

The proof is in the pudding. Look at you. You never would  
have succeeded like this if you were dragging around some  
rugrat. You should enjoy it!

JO

Oh, I do. I do enjoy it. The clothes, the parties... the booze, the meaningless sex...

(ALAN starts CHUCKLING audibly and keeps it up through the rest of her speech)

The hundreds of dollars in therapy every week, the fact that I haven't spoken to my mother in twenty years, the fact that I can't trust men, the fact that when I finally do meet someone I like it leads me right back to the one fucking person in the whole world I fucking hate.

ALAN

(sarcastic applause)

Bravo! And here I thought Eddie was the actor. You don't expect me to believe this treacly shit? Like you could really be interested in some Doogie Howser wannabe whose career will probably implode before it gets out of the gate? Give me a break!

(JO shrugs; ALAN, still chuckling, sits beside her and takes out a chequebook)

How much? Twenty thousand? Thirty? Let's make it fifty.

(he writes JO a cheque, tears it off and hands it to her; she takes it but he holds on, suddenly serious)

Now get out and don't come back. Lose his number. Don't answer the door. I don't want you seeing my son again—ever.

(JO takes the check in her hands, slowly tears it up letting the pieces fall, puts out her cigarette and stands up)

Not enough?

(JO shakes her head in disbelief)

Then why are you here?

JO

(accusingly)

As if you didn't know.

(ALAN looks at her  
sideways, then suddenly  
GRINS.)

ALAN

No. I don't believe it. After all these years? You really know how to make an entrance!

(JO's wonders what he's  
talking about.)

Don't get me wrong, you look amazing! Much better than you did in college. You're a woman, now.

(stepping toward her)

Hey, remember that time at the lake? You were so squeamish about worms. I think was the first time we...

(ALAN tries to embrace  
JO. She recoils.)

JO

What are you doing?

ALAN

Don't worry, Violet. It will be just like old times.

(he tries to kiss her;  
she summons up a gob of  
phlegm and SPITS right  
in his face)

What the fuck?

(he wipes off the spit  
with both hands while  
JO EXITS)

I always said you were a crazy little bitch!

(ALAN EXITS.)

(ARNIE ENTERS, upstage,  
and looks around.  
Spying a wooden box on  
the lower level of the  
dining room side table,  
he heads over and  
slides off the cover.)

ARNIE

Ah!

(ARNIE takes a bottle of SCOTCH out of the box and pours himself a drink. He downs it and exhales his satisfaction. HAM ENTERS and sees him.)

HAM

(concerned)

That's Dad's good scotch.

ARNIE

You bet your sweet ass it is. You want some?

(ARNIE pours HAM a glass; HAM shrugs and takes it)

Here's mud in your eye.

(They drink.)

HAM

Uncle Arnie, have you seen Jo?

ARNIE

Not a hair. Nice lady, though. Personally, I think the cougar play is a good one. At your age, women are under too many illusions. They think they can fix you up, change you into whatever kind of Magic Man they have in mind, am I right? They get older, they realize: what you see is what you get.

(he pours HAM another drink)

Drink up, this is the good stuff.

(they drink)

You still play?

HAM

Yeah, a little. I have a downtown game.

ARNIE

Still keeping up your jab step?

HAM

Yeah.

ARNIE

Show me. Go on, show me.

(they put down glasses  
and come to side of  
table where HAM  
executes a jab step and  
goes past ARNIE)

Yeah, you still got it.

(ARNIE goes back to his  
seat.)

HAM

(nervously)

Uncle Arnie? Can I ask you a question?

ARNIE

What's on your mind, son?

HAM

Carly said something earlier. I probably shouldn't be  
telling you.

ARNIE

Spit it out.

HAM

It was something about... an affair?

ARNIE

Shit. Sorry. What did she say?

HAM

Something about you staying at a hotel?

ARNIE

(sighs)

We tried to keep you kids from finding out.

HAM

She's pretty upset. I know it's none of my business.

ARNIE

No, it is. It is. You're a good friend for bringing it up. Just shows you, a little knowledge is a dangerous thing. You'd better have another one.

(ARNIE tops up HAM's drink, then stands to talk)

About a year ago, June had this one-night stand. Frankly, we were going through a rough patch.

(JUNE ENTERS and looks beseechingly at ARNIE, who ignores her)

I was involved in developing a new course at the university, and...

(he sees HAM lose interest)

Anyway, I won't bore you with the specific details.

(now he stares right at JUNE)

But one night she couldn't keep it bottled up inside any longer. I guess I didn't react great.

(ARNIE walks over and SLAPS JUNE; she looks at him, then EXITS holding her cheek)

That's when I moved into the hotel. I wasn't sure I could hold my temper. In spite of everything, I didn't want to lose her.

HAM

I'm so sorry, Uncle Arnie. Did she tell you who it was?

ARNIE

(assuming he knows)

Alan.

HAM

Alan? You don't mean...

ARNIE

(realizing his blunder)

Unh. Carly didn't know that part, huh? I'm sorry, son. As for me, I should have known better.

HAM

What do you mean?

ARNIE

(considering his glass)

I really shouldn't drink this early in the day. Fer chrissake, don't tell your Mom, but your Dad had a kind of "hobby" back in the day. Every year he made it his mission to make it with a new freshman student. That I was still surprised he would bang his best friend's wife is a real head scratcher.

(ARNIE EXITS, taking the bottle with him.)

(HAM sits down, then downs the rest of his WHISKEY.)

(JO ENTERS from the house, fuming.)

JO

We're leaving.

(HAM doesn't react)

Give me the keys. Give me the keys, I'm getting out of here.

HAM

It was you.

JO

What are you talking about?

HAM

You're Violet. He slept with you.

JO

Ham...

HAM

My Dad. The great Professor Richmond.

JO

What are you... Where is this coming from?

HAM

He's the father. Isn't he?

(JO turns white; HAM  
gets up and faces her)

Isn't he?

JO

Yes.

(she looks away)

It was the first week of classes. I went to him during office hours about some test. I ended up telling him all about my Mom, my Dad, my feelings being away from home.

(HAM walks away from  
her, disgusted)

He listened to me. You don't know what that meant. He seemed wise. He introduced me to museums, art galleries. It sounds corny, but I felt like Alice Through the Looking Glass. Everything was new and a little scary. He made it all come to life. After a while he didn't feel like my Professor, anymore. He had a faculty apartment for when he had to stay late. My mother would have killed me. He made it seem all right.

HAM

Didn't you know he was married?

JO

I had no one else. I knew it was wrong. He bailed as soon as I got pregnant.

HAM

So Carly's his?

(JO nods)

You came here because I was his son, didn't you? Our whole relationship has been a lie!

JO

That's not true! I love you!

HAM

Liar! You stalked me!

JO

I just wanted to see what you were like! I thought you would be like him!

HAM

Were you disappointed?

JO

No! You're nothing like he was! You're kind, and you're generous! You're a million times the man he is!

(she comes close to  
him, takes his hands)

You're my great love! You've got to believe me!

(HAM reaches into her  
purse and pulls out her  
GUN)

What are you doing?

HAM

I'm gonna kill the sonofabitch!

(HAM EXITS, JO hot on  
his heels.)

(END OF SCENE)

Scene 7

SETTING: The Hamptons House

AT RISE: The SOUND OF SPOONS ON GLASS is heard. JUNE ENTERS, carrying the ANNIVERSARY CAKE, followed by ARNIE and CARLY playing their glasses and ELLIE and ALAN last.

The anniversary couple KISS.  
The others CHEER and sit down.  
Only ALAN remains standing,  
holding a piece of PAPER.

ELLIE

Where are they? It's getting late.

CARLY

We should wait.

ALAN

(waving the paper)

I have a speech.

JUNE

Go ahead and read it, Alan. I'm sure they'll be here soon.

ALAN

All right.

(reading)

"I want to thank you all for coming."

ARNIE

Oh, no, he's going to give a lecture!

ALAN

No, old friend, my lecturing days are over. To the rejoicing of many students.

(putting the paper  
aside)

The truth is, I'm one lucky son-of-a-gun. If I hadn't met my Elanor one lonely winter night, I don't know what would have become of me.

(MORE)

ALAN (CONT'D)

I can picture her now: alone, sitting at that little bar on 14th Street, waiting for a blind date that never arrived. It's funny the twists life takes. If he had just showed up, I would never have noticed her sitting there, keeping her chin up, drinking her second vodka-tonic. I wouldn't have walked over and asked to share her table, vowing that if she's only let me buy her dinner, I'd make her forget all about that shmuck.

(HAM and JO enter,  
unnoticed by most, from  
the audience, HAM  
brandishing the GUN)

If he had shown up, the last forty years would never have happened. And that would have been a shame, because—"

HAM

You hypocrite!

(ROSS ENTERS upstage to  
watch.)

ELLIE

Edward!

HAM

All the time playing the model citizen, making me feel like a loser, when all the time you were really off fucking your students!

ALAN

What?

ARNIE

Son, get ahold of yourself.

HAM

You slept with Auntie June! How could you? You slept with Jo, too. You don't care. You got her pregnant. Then you arranged the adoption so the baby could grow up right under your nose! Admit it!

ARNIE

(measured)

Eddie, put the gun down.

CARLY

What are you talking about?

HAM

(he sobs)

I'm sorry.

ALAN

Eddie, this is madness! You've let this woman fill your head with nonsense! She's obviously disturbed!

HAM

Tell the truth! For once! Tell them all the truth or I'll-

JUNE

Ham, you're wrong! We were looking for a baby long before Alan knew anything about it!

JO

(angry)

But the lawyer was fake!

JUNE

No, we met him. Several times.

JO

The adoption was out of State!

JUNE

(exchanges a glance  
with CARLY)

How did you know that?

JO

(with anguish)

From North Carolina!

JUNE

No, dear. She came from Florida.

(JO looks at ALAN,  
disbelieving. He shakes  
his head "no.")

(Meanwhile ELLIE has a  
strange look in her  
eye.)

ELLIE

(to ALAN)

You said Edward was from North Carolina.

(There's a hush as  
everyone digests this.)

HAM

Mom, what does that mean, where I was from? Mom?

ROSS

(the penny drops)

The IUI... it didn't work. It didn't work!

(EVERYONE can suddenly  
hear ROSS, and looks  
toward him)

He lied to you, you didn't have a little girl at all! It  
was... a boy!

(Everyone looks at HAM  
and JO, who look at one  
another with HORROR.)

(ALAN LAUGHS OUT LOUD.)

ALAN

Ha ha! Brilliant, brilliant my dear Detective! Bravo! You  
just forgot one tiny little detail: Why would I lie?

ROSS

Isn't it obvious? You lied so they would never find each  
other. No matter how much they wanted it. No matter how  
hard they tried.

(ELLIE picks up the  
CAKE KNIFE.)

ELLIE

Forty years.

ALAN

(half-laughing)

Wha-hat?

ELLIE

Forty years.

(she touches ALAN's  
face with tenderness)

You bastard.

(ELLIE PLUNGES the  
KNIFE into ALAN's GUT  
and he FALLS. ARNIE  
leans over him as JUNE  
takes the knife from  
ELLIE.)

ARNIE

Somebody call an ambulance!

(The GUN CLATTERS to  
the floor as HAM drops  
it. He EXITS, heading  
for the Diving Rock. JO  
follows him off.

(ROSS picks up the GUN,  
while all the OTHERS  
EXIT.

(HAM ENTERS at the lip  
of the stage and runs  
to the EDGE. JO ENTERS  
and approaches.)

HAM

Don't come any closer!

JO

Ham.

(clears her throat)

Ham, let me—

HAM

NO! No. Stay back or I'll...

(He STAGGERS, almost  
falling over the edge,  
which freaks JO.)

JO

All right, all right. I'm staying. See?

(Ham starts to weep.)

HAM

All I ever wanted was to impress him. To be good enough. And he... And you... I can't... How could you?

JO

(desperate to turn things around)

I don't know what to say. It's fucked up. It's fucked up! But we have to get through this. We can get through this.

(switching gears)

We knew we had a connection, we just didn't know how!

(feeling she's losing him)

We can fix this. The past doesn't matter. Your Dad doesn't matter! The only good thing to happen to me in my whole life is you! I love you! You're my son!

HAM

(desolate)

And you're my mother.

(HAM's whole body SLUMPS and he LETS HIMSELF FALL OVER THE EDGE.)

*NOTE: The actor falls onto the stage itself.*

ROSS

(steps forward)

He jumped?

JO

It was as if the will to live just left his body. I dove in after him. It took me a couple of tries, but I got him.

(JO sits as VIOLET and CARLY ENTER from either side to help HAM into her lap. JO cradles his

head, a pose that looks  
eerily like THE PIETA.)

JO (CONT'D)

I thought I'd lost him, but then he spit up water.

(HAM spits up to her  
great relief.)

HAM

Mom?

(JO looks at ROSS)

Mom?

ROSS

You think he knew it was you?

JO

I don't know. I didn't care.

HAM

Mom?

JO

I'm here, my angel.

HAM

Mom, I can't see. I can't see.

(CARLY and VIOLET help  
HAM get up and walk  
off. All three EXIT.)

(END OF SCENE)

Scene 8

SETTING: Interrogation Room

AT RISE: JO and ROSS are alone, as at the start.

ROSS  
He lost his eyesight in the fall.

JO  
(stands up)  
It's all my fault.

(JO puts on her  
SUNGLASSES. ROSS helps  
her with her JACKET.)

ROSS  
Not from where I sit. The way I see it, you had no choice  
at all.

(ROSS holds out the  
GUN.)  
Here it is. The registration checked. You're free to go.

(JO just looks at it.)

JO  
No... If it's all the same to you, I think I'll leave it.

(She starts to go.)

ROSS  
You're surrendering your firearm?

JO  
Call it a souvenir.

ROSS  
Hey, Jo.  
(she turns)  
He'll come around. I have a nose for these things.

JO  
If he does, I'll be waiting.

(JO EXITS. ROSS tosses  
the gun in his hand,  
then turns and EXITS.)

(CURTAIN)

(END OF PLAY)