

SHARE

A Play in Three Acts

by

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

JESSE, ten years old
MARGARET, in her 40s
HAZEL, in her 40s
TIMOTHY, in his late 20s
BINKY, just turning 20
IRA, just turning 40
LARRY, early 40s
THE COUNTESS, male, 30 years old
WADE, in his 30s
GEORGE, almost 40
RANDY, almost 40

TIME

Summer: 1970, 1979, 1989 and 2009

PLACE

The play takes place in a summerhouse on Fire Island, New York.

ACT ONE

(Lights up. The top floor of a Fire Island beach house. Upstage right is a kitchen area. Stage right is a dining table with four chairs. Downstage right is a sliding glass door that leads to an outdoor railed porch with seating and stairs leading down to the ground floor. The sliding door is open. Center stage is a living area with sofa, chairs, coffee table. A table with an old portable television with rabbit ears. Upstage is shelving holding books, an old stereo system and vinyl records. Also, a folding table holding two turntables, a sound mixer and a microphone. Down left is a stairway that leads down to the bedrooms on the first floor. The fourth wall is windows looking towards the sea. The major pieces of furniture are covered with white sheets.

HAZEL, a woman in her 40s, is onstage. SHE holds a bunch of honeysuckle. SHE takes the sheet off the dining table, folds it. SHE lights a candle, puts it on the dining table, along with the flowers. BINKY, a man in his early 20s, enters and goes to the set of turntables, adjusting volume levels on the mixer. Music plays: loud 70s disco. Donna Summer, preferably. JESSE, a boy about 10, enters. HE wears glasses and carries a plastic beach pail)

I've got the salt water.

(HAZEL stands)

Terrific.

Now what?

Sprinkle some of it in every corner of the house.

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JESSE

Like this?

HAZEL

Sprinkle! Sprinkle! Not splash. Just put a little on your fingers like this: (SHE demonstrates) Okay, you keep doing that while I light the incense.

JESSE

Ooooh, can I? Can I?

HAZEL

Do you know how to light a match?

JESSE

Of course. I watch "Dark Shadows."

HAZEL

Careful.

(HE puts down the pail and lights the incense cone. As HE does, HAZEL takes the sheet off the sofa, folds it. JESSE places the lit cone on a salver in the middle of the table.

Offstage, a man's voice:)

MAN

(Off:) I hope this isn't going to be a Golden Oldies weekend.

BINKY

I love this album.

(The MAN, IRA, enters up the stairs from the first floor)

IRA

Nobody wants to hear this old stuff.

BINKY

I'll play new stuff too. But I like a little glance backwards now and then.

IRA

This is a guaranteed floor-cleaner, I'm telling you. She's got a new album. Play that.

BINKY

I don't like her new album as much.

IRA

How 'bout something from this year, at least?

BINKY

When you get paid for your skills, as I do, perhaps I'll listen.

IRA
That's not very nice.

BINKY
I thought it was nicer than "shut the fuck up." Don't touch anything. I'm gonna see if the speakers by the pool are working.

(HE exits through the sliding glass doors. As HE does, IRA goes to the kitchen, fixes himself a Bloody Mary)

JESSE
Mmm. Smells nice.

HAZEL
Sage.

JESSE
I have strawberry at home.

HAZEL
Strawberry incense?

JESSE
Mmm-hmm.

HAZEL
Ugh.

JESSE
Do I say something?

HAZEL
What, sweetie?

JESSE
Is there an incantation?

HAZEL
Oh. Well. I suppose you could say a prayer, like "Bless this house," if you wanted to. Or make a wish for the house. Or something like that. Whatever you like.

JESSE
Okay, I'm going to do an incantation. Do I have to do it out loud?

HAZEL
Not if you don't want to.

JESSE
I'm doing my incantation now.

HAZEL
Very good.

(SHE takes the sheet off a chair in the living area, folds it. Two MEN, GEORGE and RANDY, enter up the stairs, each holding the end of a baby stroller. The stroller has a plastic hood protecting the baby from the sun. They reach the floor level and put the stroller down)

JESSE

Why is the furniture dressed up like ghosts?

HAZEL

They just finished painting in here. This is the first time anybody's been here. You're the first person that's gonna sleep in the bedroom downstairs. Isn't that exciting?

JESSE

Uh-huh.

HAZEL

Okay, you done?

JESSE

I guess so.

HAZEL

We have to do the downstairs, too, you know.
(SHE picks up the incense and matches and starts to exit down the stairs.
JESSE follows)

Saltwater.

JESSE

Ooops. Sorry.

(HE grabs the pail and follows her down the stairs. IRA has made an extra Bloody Mary and exits to the deck. HE shouts off:)

IRA

Bloodies, darling!

(HE exits down the outside stairs)

GEORGE

Okay, from now on, the stroller stays in the bedroom. Do you think the neighbors always play music this loud?

RANDY

This ain't Martha's Vineyard.

GEORGE

Good. Then I won't feel guilty when the baby starts crying at seven AM.

(Slowly, MARGARET makes her way up the outside staircase with two suitcases)

GEORGE (CONTINUED)

Shit, where's the baby wipes?

RANDY

They're in the side pocket.

GEORGE

No, they're not.

RANDY

Check the underneath thingie.

GEORGE

Not there either.

RANDY

Well, I took them out of the trunk when we... shit. I must've left them in the car.

GEORGE

Well, we'll have to go back.

RANDY

You're gonna take a twenty-dollar ferry ride for a three-dollar box of baby wipes?

GEORGE

So we're going to go a full weekend without baby wipes?

RANDY

Of course not. There's a grocery store.

GEORGE

Baby wipes in the Pines? Dream on.

RANDY

So we'll go to Cherry Grove. Bound to be lesbians with extra baby wipes.

(RANDY exits back down the stairs, passing JESSE who re-enters and turns on the television. It takes a while to warm up. MARGARET has reached the porch and drops the suitcase. JESSE plays with the rabbit ears. BINKY re-enters behind MARGARET, goes to the mixer, fiddles with it. GEORGE takes a baby bottle out of the stroller, goes to the kitchen to heat it. Looks for a microwave, to no avail. Takes the sheet off the refrigerator, folds it. Takes out a pot, fills it with water, puts it on the stove, sticks the bottle in it. Takes inventory of the kitchen, jotting down items on a shopping list. MARGARET gets her breath, picks up the suitcases, enters)

MARGARET

You know what would've been nice? If you'd helped me with these suitcases. Stop snooping.

JESSE

Hazel said I could. They don't get "Dark Shadows" out here.

MARGARET

Well, you'll have to go without "Dark Shadows" for the summer.

JESSE

But I won't know what's going on! They're in parallel time.

MARGARET

Them's the breaks.

JESSE

I'll bet if I play with the antenna.

MARGARET

If that's how you want to spend your summer. What'd you do with Hazel?

JESSE

I didn't do anything with her. She's downstairs. We're blessing the house.

MARGARET

Is it sneezing?

JESSE

Since we're the first people here.

MARGARET

It's not our house.

JESSE

Hazel said I could.

MARGARET

Listen to me for a second. Turn off the television and listen to me.

(HE does)

Now Hazel is being extra nice to us, but that's just because she feels sorry for us. And I don't want you to take advantage. I don't care if she says it's okay for you to paint your face blue, you ask me first. Okay?

JESSE

Okay.

MARGARET

Good. Or she might just tell us to go back to the city. Don't mess things up.

JESSE

How would I mess it up?

MARGARET

I mean the house. Don't make a mess. Keep your room clean and clean up after yourself; I don't want to find Barbie shoes all over the floor. Don't pee on the toilet seat.

JESSE

I won't.

MARGARET

And if she asks you to do something, do it. Don't argue with her like you do me.

JESSE

So if she asks me to steal a million dollars, I should do it?

MARGARET

Absolutely.

(THEY take the suitcases and start down the stairs)

JESSE

But wait a second. You said I should ask you first if she wants to paint me face blue, but then you said that I should do whatever she tells me...

(THEY're gone. BINKY goes to the porch, shouts off:)

BINKY

How's the bass out there?

(A pause)

Hello?!

(A pause)

Hopeless.

(HE exits down the stairs. RANDY comes back up the inside stairs)

RANDY

No microwave.

GEORGE

We'll survive, somehow.

RANDY

No cable. We'll miss "True Blood" on Sunday nights.

GEORGE

I'm surprised there's a color television. Aside from the fact that this place desperately needs some new furniture, it feels...

RANDY

Haunted?

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GEORGE

I don't think haunted is the right word, it's more...

RANDY

Unvacated. Is that a word? The Unvacated Vacation.

GEORGE

Isn't that a Nancy Drew?

RANDY

A what?

GEORGE

Never mind. I like it. It feels like a summerhouse.

(HE takes a sheet off the remaining
covered chair, folds it.)

All rentals have crappy furniture.

RANDY

But this isn't crappy; it's nice. For 1965. You know what they call this house down at The Boatslip? "Joni Mitchell's Acid Flashback."

(RANDY takes out his iPhone)

GEORGE

Well, I prefer it to the houses that look and feel like the owners have picked up their Chelsea apartments and dropped them on the beach. Except with wind chimes.

(IRA re-enters, goes to the turntable
mixer, shouts off:)

IRA

Okay, now what?!

BINKY

(Off:) Turn up the bass!

IRA

The what?

BINKY

(Off:) The bass! The bass!

IRA

The base of what?

(HE looks at the base of the mixer)

BINKY

(Off:) It's on the right!

IRA

Right?

(HE fiddles with something)

(Off:) No, not that!

BINKY

(IRA goes to the porch)

IRA
I think we need walkie-talkies.

GEORGE
Not to detract from your genius status, but can we try to make this a low-tech weekend?

RANDY
No need to try. The reception here is for shit.

GEORGE
Awwwww, da baby.

(BINKY enters up the stairs)

BINKY
You are completely useless.
(HE pushes past IRA, goes to the mixer.
IRA follows him)
See? Here? Bass.

IRA
Oh, I thought you said base.

BINKY
I did. This isn't a fish; you pronounce it "bass."

IRA
No, I know, but... Never mind.

(BINKY makes an adjustment, THEY exit outside)

GEORGE
Okay, I've finished the list. Let's see what we can find at the store.

RANDY
What about the baby?

GEORGE
What do you mean?

RANDY
We just came back from pushing him all the way down here; now we're gonna push him all the way back? That boardwalk was not made for strollers. He'll be fine by himself.

GEORGE
I don't want to wind up on tonight's episode of Nancy Grace, thank you. "Fire Island Fags Leave Baby To Fry in The Sun."

(THEY each take a side of the stroller
and exit down the stairs, passing JESSE
and MARGARET on the way up)

JESSE
Can I sleep in the room with the bunk bed?

MARGARET
Don't you want to stay with me in my room?

JESSE
If you want me to.

MARGARET
No, stay where you want. If you think you'll be okay in a
room by yourself.

JESSE
I'll be okay.

MARGARET
It'll be hard to get down from that bunk bed if you have a
nightmare

JESSE
I'll be okay.

MARGARET
You'll have to ask Aunt Hazel.

JESSE
Hey, Witch Hazel!

MARGARET
Don't call her that!

(HAZEL comes up the stairs)

HAZEL
Oh, that's okay; I think it's cute.

MARGARET
Take your suitcase to your room.

JESSE
Where's my Barbie case?

MARGARET
Isn't it there?

JESSE
No.

MARGARET
Well...

JESSE
You said you took it out of the car.

MARGARET

I guess... hmmm. I must've left them in the trunk.

JESSE

Can't we go back and get them?

MARGARET

We are not spending five dollars on a ferry ride just so you can get those stupid dolls. You'll have them back soon enough.

JESSE

Please?

MARGARET

You can live without them for a few days. You don't want the kids out here seeing you playing with Barbie dolls, do you?

JESSE

I don't care. I'll keep them in my room. Please?

MARGARET

No. That's settled. Go take your suitcase to your room.
(HE takes the suitcase and stomps off
down the stairs)

I think he'd rather have his Barbie and leave ME in the trunk. I don't want the other kids kicking sand in his face.

HAZEL

Out here? Never happen. He'd probably find someone to design a whole new wardrobe for her.

(JESSE re-enters)

JESSE

I think I put my allergy pills in the Barbie case.

MARGARET

They're in my purse. Nice try.

(HE stomps off again)

HAZEL

Oh, the honeysuckle was in full bloom, so I picked you some. Welcome gift. Anything we can use for a vase?

(MARGARET looks under the sink)

MARGARET

Coffee can?

HAZEL

Oughta work.

(SHE hands MARGARET the flowers, who puts them in the can with water)

MARGARET

Oh, they smell so...!

(SHE puts them on the table)

Oh my God, that breeze! That air. It's like... mmmmmm.
Like an ice-cold martini. With extra olives. Ugh, my
armpits... this dress is pasted on me. I just want to rip
it off and jump into the ocean.

HAZEL

Go ahead, hon, no one'll notice. There's a gang of gals
three houses down that play nude volleyball on the beach
every day at noon.

(A pause)

MARGARET

Well, maybe tomorrow.

HAZEL

Speaking of martinis, may I do the honors?

(MARGARET looks at her watch)

MARGARET

Two o'clock. Isn't it a little...?

HAZEL

You're at the beach, sweetie. We usually start at noon.

MARGARET

Not just yet. I'm making Jesse a sandwich. You want one?

HAZEL

Too early for me. Can I help?

MARGARET

Not much to do.

(THEY move to the kitchen to prepare the
sandwich)

No, don't use the wheat bread, he won't eat it. There's
some white bread in the back. Have I thanked you today for
this beautiful place?

HAZEL

Don't be silly. It's nice to hear voices other than my own.

MARGARET

I guess that's something I'll have to get used to.

HAZEL

You're a beautiful woman. You'll have no trouble finding
someone.

MARGARET

Oh, sure. With a ten year old kid. No, no mayonnaise. He
hates it. Use butter. I'm just getting used to the quiet.
It's nice, for once, not to have to... You're going to have
to cut the crusts off or he won't eat it.

HAZEL

Jeez, after this sandwich I need a cocktail. You sure?

MARGARET

Oh, what the hell.

(HAZEL mixes drinks)

I was walking down the boardwalk with Jesse and there were two men coming towards us holding hands. They saw us and they dropped their hands. Then one of them grabbed his friends' hand again and glared at me, just daring me to say something. I wasn't going to say anything; I don't care what they do.

HAZEL

The men don't like us here. They talk about their rights the same way Negroes do. Which is silly, if I do say so myself. I mean, they can always pass. The Negroes can't.

MARGARET

Some can. The light-skinned ones.

HAZEL

I guess.

MARGARET

And not all of them can pass. The art teacher at school. He can't really pass.

HAZEL

If he didn't wear lilac ascots, he could.

MARGARET

Maybe. Are there any Negroes here? I haven't seen any.

HAZEL

One or two. They're hard to find.

(An African American man, WADE, appears on the outside deck. HE sits on the chaise, enjoying the sun)

There's one near the marina living with this old architect, pretends to be his manservant. But we all know better. What does Jesse say when he sees two men holding hands?

MARGARET

I don't know if he notices.

HAZEL

Sure he notices. What do you tell him about my relationship with Fay?

MARGARET

I don't tell him anything; it's none of his business. It's none of MY business.

HAZEL

Still, he must have some thoughts about it.

MARGARET
He thinks you're friends. You think he needs to know more than that?

HAZEL
It might be time for the birds and bees conversation.

MARGARET
He's eleven years old. Not even.

HAZEL
He's asking questions. I found him looking at the instruction booklet from a box of tampons.

MARGARET
Well, why am I signing all these permission slips for sex education? Isn't that their job?

HAZEL
I'm just saying. Cheers.

(THEY toast and drink)

MARGARET
So I'm making a list for the grocery store. Why don't you and Fay have dinner with us?

HAZEL
That's sweet, but I don't think Fay... Once she's ensconced, you need dynamite to get her out of the house. Would you mind if it was just me?

MARGARET
Won't Fay mind?

HAZEL
Probably. But don't worry about it. She's very stuck in her ways. When we first met, she was so bohemian. Now that she's moved in, I can't get her..
(The phone rings)
...to do anything anymore.

MARGARET
And that's probably her, wondering where the hell you are.

HAZEL
Do you want me to get it?

MARGARET
Well, it can't be for me. It's your house.

HAZEL
Well, you can...

(SHE picks it up)

Hello? Hmmm? Oh, sure, hold on. (Puts her hand over the receiver) It is for you.

MARGARET

Who knows I'm here?

(SHE reaches for the phone, changes her mind)

Ask who it is.

HAZEL

May I ask who's calling? (Hand over receiver) Angela McGuire.

MARGARET

Oh, my God. Tell her I'm not here. Tell her... How the hell did she find me out here? Tell her anything, just... Jesus Christ.

HAZEL

I'm sorry, she just stepped away. Can I give her a message?

(A long pause. Eventually, HAZEL hangs up)

MARGARET

What did she say?

HAZEL

You don't want to know. Who is she?

MARGARET

She's the mother of the boy that was driving the other car.

HAZEL

Oh. Well. That explains that.

MARGARET

What'd she say?

HAZEL

I told you, I'm not going to tell you.

MARGARET

Tell me.

HAZEL

No.

MARGARET

How the hell did she find me? I had to change my number back home. She was calling every day.

HAZEL

What does she want?

MARGARET

(Shrugs) Make me feel bad, I guess.

Is she suing you? HAZEL

Not that she's told me. MARGARET

Sure sounded angry. HAZEL

(A long pause)

Like it was my fault. MARGARET
(A long pause)

What's her twenty year old son doing driving around at four in the morning, anyway?

Maybe he was working. HAZEL

Whose side are you on? I thought you were my friend. MARGARET

Sorry. Your side. I'm on your side. But does that mean I have to be on your husband's side? HAZEL

(The phone rings)

(Shouting off:) Jesse! Your lunch is ready! MARGARET
(A pause)
She cursed me, right?

I'm not telling you. HAZEL

That's what she does. She calls up and says she's putting a curse on me, my family, my friends. My milkman. Crazy. Angela McGuire. How bad could an Irish curse be, anyway? I'd be more scared if she was Italian. Or Greek. MARGARET

(JESSE enters. The phone continues to ring. MARGARET puts the sandwich down on the dining table)
What do you want to drink?

Iced tea, please. JESSE

I'm going to the grocery store. Anything special you want? MARGARET

(JESSE shakes his head, eats. HE picks a book off the kitchen countertop, starts to read. SHE pours him an iced tea from a pitcher in the refrigerator. IRA appears on the outside staircase)

IRA
(Shouting off:) It is the phone!

(HE runs in, grabs the phone)

HAZEL
So for your birthday, I'm going to do your chart.

IRA
Hello? Hello...? Shit.

(HE hangs up. Goes to the kitchen,
pours himself another drink)

JESSE
What's that?

HAZEL
It shows all kinds of things. The past. The future.
What's going to happen to you.

JESSE
Is it scary?

HAZEL
No, no. It's good.

JESSE
I don't like being a Cancer.

HAZEL
Why? It's a very nice sign.

JESSE
I don't like being a sick thing. I wanna be something else.
I want to be the owl.

HAZEL
There is no owl.

JESSE
What else can I be?

HAZEL
There are no birds at all, as a matter of fact.

JESSE
I don't like being a crab.

HAZEL
You don't get a choice, sweetie. It's all based on when
you're born. You're a Cancer.

JESSE
I hate it.

(IRA picks up the phone, dials)

HAZEL

Well, they also call them Moonchildren. You can be a Moonchild.

JESSE

A Moonchild?

HAZEL

'Cause they're ruled by the moon.

JESSE

Okay, then, I'm a Moonchild.

MARGARET

It's the perfect sign for him; he spends the whole day digging in the sand like a crab.

IRA

(Into phone:) Hey, it's Ira. Did you just call?...

JESSE

My sand castle is still there. It didn't get washed away in the night.

MARGARET

Full moon tonight. It'll be washed away by high tide.

JESSE

I'll just build one further up the beach.

IRA

Okay, sorry to bother you. Are you going to Tea Dance? Great, I'll look for you.

(HE hangs up, exits down the outside stairs)

HAZEL

Do you remember when we used to call you "the little owl"?

JESSE

No. When was that?

HAZEL

When you were a baby. Remember, Maggie?

JESSE

Why?

HAZEL

'Cause your mother would put you in your highchair, and you'd never cry, never laugh. You'd just sit there staring at us with your lips pursed and these big saucer eyes, watching, watching. Like this:

(SHE demonstrates. This makes JESSE laugh)

MARGARET

You be okay by yourself?
 (JESSE nods)
 What are you gonna do, Little Owl?

JESSE

Read my book.

MARGARET

It's a beautiful day. You should go to the beach.

(JESSE shrugs, continues to read.
 MARGARET looks at HAZEL, shakes her
 head. Picks up her purse. THEY exit
 down the outside staircase. JESSE gives
 them a minute to leave, then gets up,
 goes to the stereo, puts on a record.
 Goes to the bookshelf, picks up a
 telephone book, thumbs through it. Once
 the music starts, A MAN, the COUNTESS,
 enters from the inside staircase. HE
 wears a knit skullcap, a T-shirt and a
 sarong tied around his waist. HE lip-
 synchs to the song on the stereo. WADE
 senses his movement, comes in off the
 porch)

WADE

Good morning, Mary Sunshine. Just getting up?

COUNTESS

Up and down.

(JESSE goes to the phone, dials a number
 out of the phone book. THE COUNTESS
 goes to the kitchen, takes a wealth of
 pill bottles out of the cabinet, as well
 as a small bowl. Begins to put pills
 from each bottle into the bowl)

JESSE

(Into phone:) Hi, Catherine? Oh, well, could I speak to
 Catherine, please? Oh, I'm sorry.

(HE hangs up)

WADE

They just released this on CD. Want me to get it for you?

COUNTESS

(Shakes his head) I like vinyl. One of my few remaining
 comforts.

WADE

What do you feel like for lunch?

COUNTESS

Sometimes I feel like a motherless child.

WADE

Your train of consciousness is starting to grate on my nerves.

COUNTESS

Wasn't there some ancient joke: "I feel like a ham sandwich." "Poof! You're a ham sandwich." Something like that?

WADE

What have you eaten today?

COUNTESS

Well, let's see. I threw up some granola this morning. And then about two hours ago I threw up some yogurt and a banana.

(HE pours a large glass of milk and starts to swallow the pills, gagging uncomfortably with each one. JESSE dials again)

JESSE

(Into phone, pitching his voice higher:) Hello, could I speak to Catherine please? Oh, I'm SO sorry.

(HE hangs up, goes back to his book)

WADE

So do you want a ham sandwich?

COUNTESS

Why? So I can say I threw up a ham sandwich?

WADE

Want me to roll you a joint?

COUNTESS

Not just yet.

WADE

Why do you insist on wearing that dress?

COUNTESS

It's not a dress. I got this in Indonesia. Lots of men wear them.

WADE

It's silly-looking.

COUNTESS

Well, by the time I unbuckle my belt and unbutton my pants and unzip my fly and pull down my underwear, I've already shit my pants. Okay? Now do you understand that it's not a fashion statement?

WADE

Jeez. Sorry.

COUNTESS
How do sick kids take this many pills? Surely they must
makes chewable versions of this shit.

WADE
Think I can get you to leave the house today?

COUNTESS
Doubtful.

WADE
It's a gorgeous day.

COUNTESS
The sun hurts my eyes.

WADE
Wear sunglasses.

COUNTESS
I don't know. My sarong, my big, floppy hat, sunglasses. I
don't want to be mobbed. People'll think it's Garbo.

WADE
Why do we come all the way out here if you're just gonna sit
in the house?

COUNTESS
Just because I'm not frolicking in the surf, doesn't mean
I'm not happier here than in the city.

WADE
This is happy?

COUNTESS
For me? Yes. The smell of the sea helps. I'll take a walk
once the sun goes down.

WADE
Vampire.

COUNTESS
If I'd known this was what it felt like to be one of the
living dead, I wouldn't have watched so much "Dark Shadows"
when I was a kid.

(A pause)
It was a soap opera. With vampires.

(A pause)
Never mind, whippersnapper.

(There is a loud knocking from offstage)

WADE
What's a whippersnapper?

COUNTESS
Put me out of my misery.

WADE

'Scuse me for not knowing your Depression-era expressions, Countess.

COUNTESS

Why do you insist on calling me that?

WADE

It's not my phrase. That's what the boys at the Boatslip call you.

COUNTESS

They should hear what I call them.

WADE

It's only because when you got here you hired those boys to carry you to the house, like Cleopatra.

COUNTESS

Well then, you should explain to them that it's because when my wheelchair hits every uneven board on the boardwalk it makes me feel like my guts are going to fall out my asshole. That oughta shut them up. Don't bother; they'll find out soon enough.

WADE

You're evil.

COUNTESS

It's what gets me up in the morning.

(JESSE puts on a new record. And dials the phone again)

JESSE

(Into phone, pitching his voice lower:) Hey, is Catherine there? Lemme speak to Catherine. Aw, shit, sorry.

(HE hangs up, giggles. HE takes a deck of Tarot cards from a bookshelf, goes to the table, shuffles and deals them.

Again, the knocking from offstage. IRA returns with empty glasses; HE goes to the kitchen to refresh them)

Well, the trip up the stairs and taking those fucking pills has worn me out; I must return to my coffin. What'll you do today?

WADE

I'm going back to the city; I have a class tomorrow morning.

COUNTESS

You are? What if I need something?

WADE

Call your wife. I'll see you tomorrow night.

(HE kisses him and exits through the sliding glass doors, shutting the door behind him. The COUNTESS joins IRA in the kitchen, looks at his medications)

COUNTESS

(Shouting off:) Where are the sleeping pills?

(A pause)

Shit.

(LARRY, a man in his forties, appears on the outside staircase, lugging an overstuffed duffel bag and a case containing a portable typewriter. HE peers in the window, sees IRA. Bangs on the glass. IRA goes to open them as the COUNTESS makes his way back down the inside staircase)

IRA

Hey!

LARRY

What the fuck? Didn't you hear... no wonder you didn't hear me, God, do you think the music's loud enough?

IRA

What?

LARRY

Well, I'm not going to scream over that.

(IRA goes to the mixer, turns the volume down)

Jesus. I was banging on the goddamn door for ten minutes. The downstairs door is supposed to be kept unlocked at all times.

(BINKY enters from outside)

BINKY

What the hell...? Oh. Hey, Larry.

LARRY

What are you two doing here?

IRA

I was going to ask you the same thing.

BINKY

Why did you turn it down? I'm still testing.

(HE goes to the mixer, turns up the volume)

LARRY

Please. Please. Please. Please. I can't think with that.

IRA
This isn't your weekend, Larry.

LARRY
It most certainly is.

IRA
Nope. You traded it for the weekend before Labor Day.

LARRY
Originally, yes. But I took it back.

BINKY
Nobody told us.

LARRY
It's on the calendar.

(LARRY goes to the refrigerator, looks
at the calendar. BINKY joins him)

BINKY
Actually, it isn't.

LARRY
Well, it's been crossed out. Look, you can clearly see that
it says "Larry" and then it's been crossed out.

BINKY
Well, I didn't cross it out.

LARRY
Well, neither did I.

BINKY
See. Look. Here you are. The weekend of the 24th.

LARRY
Those aren't my initials.

BINKY
Of course they're your initials.

LARRY
Well, yes, I know they're my initials, dear. I'm saying I
didn't put them there.

IRA
Well, somebody did.

LARRY
Is Hazel at the Grove house?

(HE goes to the phone)

BINKY
No idea.

LARRY

She'll have to settle it.

IRA

(To BINKY:) What's to settle? We're not leaving.

BINKY

You're perfectly welcome to stay, Larry. But you'll have to share the second bedroom with Tom.

LARRY

I'm not sharing anything. (Into phone:) Hazel? It's Larry. Listen, you've got a problem over here. This was supposed to be my weekend at the house, and there's... well, a plethora of...

IRA

Fuck him. He can sleep in the dunes. Why should he get a free weekend?

LARRY

I'm sorry, Hazel, that's not a satisfactory answer... Well, it is your house; I think you need to take a little more responsibility. No. No. No, I'm not going to argue with you. You are going to haul ass over here and resolve this. That's a fucking cop-out, Hazel and I'm not in the mood. Hazel? Hazel?

(HE hangs up)

Fucking cunt.

(JESSE goes to the phone, dials)

JESSE

(Into phone, seductively:) Hello, this is Catherine. Do I have any messages?

(HE puts his hand over the receiver, giggles. A pause and HE hangs up, goes back to his Tarot cards)

LARRY

Well, listen, we'll work this out because we have to. But I'm here to work. So I'd appreciate it if you could respect that and keep your decibels down to a minimum.

IRA

Well, I'll tell the fifty queens that are coming to our party tomorrow night to walk on tiptoe.

LARRY

Oh, no. Oh, no. That's... that's not acceptable. I've got deadlines. I've got to work.

IRA

So you decided to come to Fire Island on Fourth of July weekend? Brilliant planning.

LARRY

You're going to have to...

IRA

I'm not gonna have to do anything, I'm not dealing with it, I'm going shopping. You coming?

BINKY

Yeah, sure.

IRA

I'll get my wallet and I'll meet you on the boardwalk.

(HE exits downstairs. JESSE goes back to the phone book)

LARRY

Your boyfriend can be a real jerk sometimes.

BINKY

No comment. I'll try to keep him out of your way, but you're gonna have to do your share, too, Larry.

(HE exits downstairs)

LARRY

What the fuck is that supposed to mean?

(JESSE finds a number, dials)

JESSE

(Into phone, mellifluously:) Hello, is this Miss Florence Vogel? Oh, I'm sorry. Mrs. Vogel. This is Gloria De Haven from "Prize Movie." We've selected your number at random and if you are able to identify the following song within ten seconds, you'll win a fabulous prize. Please listen.

(HE holds the phone towards the stereo speaker. LARRY puts his portable typewriter on the dining room table. HE takes a book out of his overnight bag, starts to read. HE goes to the turntables, turns off the music, yet it continues)

Can you identify it? No, I'm sorry, that's incorrect. But we will be sending you our consolation prize, which is a lovely piece of dog doodie.

(HE cracks himself up, puts his hand over the receiver. Composes himself)

May I have your address so we can send it to you?

(Again, HE cracks himself up. TIMOTHY, a man in his late twenties, enters up the inside staircase, holding a satchel)

TIMOTHY

Hi.

(JESSE, terrified, slams down the phone)

Hi. JESSE

Who are you? TIMOTHY

I'm Jesse. JESSE

(A pause)

Hi, Jesse. I'm Tim. TIMOTHY

Hi. JESSE

Where's... um... Miss Ryan? TIMOTHY

Aunt Hazel's at the store. JESSE

Oh. Uh-huh. So. How old are you, um... Sorry. Tell me your name again. TIMOTHY

Jesse. I'm ten and eleven twelfths. JESSE

Wow. Specific. So your birthday's coming up. TIMOTHY

Uh-huh. JESSE

So... Is Aunt Hazel on your mother's side or your father's side? TIMOTHY

I don't know. I guess she's on my mother's side. My father's dead. JESSE

Oh. Right. Jesse. Sorry. TIMOTHY

She's not really my Aunt. That's just what I call her. I also call her "Witch Hazel." JESSE

(Laughs) I don't blame you. I'm sorry to... interrupt you. Go on doing whatever you're doing; I'll just sit here and wait for Hazel. TIMOTHY

Okay. JESSE

(A pause. HE stares at TIMOTHY. Then, goes back to the table and the Tarot cards. TIMOTHY sits on the sofa. The phone rings. And rings again. LARRY jumps up, antsy. Grabs his overnight bag and exits downstairs. The phone continues to ring. Slowly, THE COUNTESS makes his way up the stairs)

COUNTESS

Jesus, this better be good; why the hell didn't I put the machine on? Note to self: re-install bedroom extension.

(HE gets to the phone)

Hello? HELLO?... Excuse me?... Jesus, I got out of bed for this? Yes. Yes, that's exactly what I am, I'm an AIDS-spreading cocksucker. And have you heard the latest? You can contract it through phone wires, so tag, you're it, asshole.

(HE slams down the phone, vibrating in anger. TIMOTHY goes to the bookshelf, thumbs through records. The COUNTESS picks up the phone, punches three numbers. Jots something down, hangs up)

You like this bubblegum stuff?

JESSE

What? I like chocolate.

TIMOTHY

No, the music. This is called bubblegum.

JESSE

Why?

TIMOTHY

I don't know. 'Cause it's sweet and sticky, I guess.

(JESSE looks at him, uncomprehending. The COUNTESS dials a number. Deepens his voice)

COUNTESS

(Into phone:) This is the Sayville Police Department. We've received several complaints that there are male prostitutes using this number to conduct business. We're starting an investigation... And we've been told that they all have dicks the size of toothpicks. Refunds are demanded... Star sixty-nine, motherfucker!

(HE slams down the phone)

TIMOTHY

Playing solitaire?

JESSE

(Shakes his head) Tarot.

TIMOTHY
Really? You know how to read Tarot cards?

JESSE
Witch Hazel's teaching me.

(TIMOTHY puts on a record. A little rockier, but not much. The COUNTESS slowly makes his way back downstairs)

TIMOTHY
Do you like Motown?

JESSE
It's okay.
(JESSE goes back to his cards. TIMOTHY goes back to the sofa, sits. A pause)
Are you her boyfriend?

TIMOTHY
(Snorts) Who, Hazel? No.
(A pause)

JESSE
Are you married?

TIMOTHY
No, no, I'm not married.

JESSE
Do you have a girlfriend?

TIMOTHY
You sound just like my mother.

JESSE
Really? What does your mother sound like?

TIMOTHY
(Laughs) Like you.

JESSE
You mean... she sounds like a boy?

TIMOTHY
No, no. It's... (Laughs) Forget it.

(MARGARET enters from the outside staircase, carrying a grocery bag)

MARGARET
Didn't you hear me screaming? Of course not, you've got that record player...
(SHE sees TIMOTHY)
Oh. Hello.

TIMOTHY

Hi.

MARGARET

(Calls off:) Hazel?! Um... have you seen my son?

(TIMOTHY points to JESSE)

Oh! There you are. Didn't you hear me screaming for you?
Go help Hazel with the groceries.

(Glumly, HE exits)

TIMOTHY

I'm Timothy.

MARGARET

Oh. Are you...? Did you...? I'm sorry. You know Hazel?

TIMOTHY

Yes.

MARGARET

Oh. Good. Sorry. I wasn't expecting... Sorry, I...
She'll be right up.

(SHE puts down the grocery bag in the
kitchen)

I'm... We work together. At the school.

TIMOTHY

Yes, I know. Hazel's told me about you. Thank you for
letting me...

MARGARET

Do you mind if I...?

(SHE goes to the record player, shuts it
off)

It's a little... I'm having trouble hearing you. Here she
is!

(HAZEL enters with groceries. JESSE
follows)

HAZEL

Oh, God. Tim! It's only Thursday! I wasn't expecting...

TIMOTHY

Actually, it's Friday.

HAZEL

No it's not. Is it Friday already?

MARGARET

Yes, it's Friday.

HAZEL

Well, shit.

(JESSE snorts)

Sorry, shoot. Shoot. God. Dizzy me. I... um... Maggie,
this is Tim.

MARGARET
Yes, he introduced himself.

HAZEL
And Jesse.

TIMOTHY
Yes, we're well-acquainted.

HAZEL
Oh. Well. Great. Sorry, sweetie, great to see you.
(SHE puts down her groceries, kisses
him)
Well, you look none the worse for wear, I must say.

TIMOTHY
It's all a giant facade.

JESSE
Did you go by the Driftwood Shop?

MARGARET
What? Yes.

JESSE
Was the owl still in the window?

MARGARET
I didn't notice. Shush, Hazel's talking.

HAZEL
(To MARGARET:) Tim is... I told Tim he could... stay
here. For some time. A few days, maybe. Sorry, I thought
it was Thursday. Jesse, why don't you take Tim down and
show him where the bedroom is.

JESSE
Which one?

HAZEL
Yours.

JESSE
He's sleeping in my room? Where do I sleep?

HAZEL
That's why there's a bunk bed.

JESSE
Well, I wanna be on top.

TIMOTHY
If I had a dime for every time I've heard that...

HAZEL
Tim...

(SHE shakes her head at him:
inappropriate. As THEY exit
downstairs:)

JESSE

I love your hair.

TIMOTHY

Thank you, Jesse.

(THEY're gone. LARRY returns up the
stairs, holding a record album and a
book. HE takes the record out of the
sleeve, puts it on the turntable.
Classical music plays. HE sits on the
sofa to read)

HAZEL

Let me start by saying I'm really sorry about this.

MARGARET

About what?

HAZEL

He called on Monday in tears. His... his friend just walked
out on him. He's in bad shape. So I invited him out. I
thought they'd patch it up by the weekend, but... I
realized I promised you the house...

MARGARET

No, we can go back to the city. I don't want to wear out
our welcome.

HAZEL

Don't, don't, that's not what I'm... I can't say no to him,
he's been there for me plenty of times. If I could think of
another way to work it... Try it for a day. If you don't
get along, we can... come up with something else.

MARGARET

Well, who am I to say? I'm here by your good graces. I
don't have the right to tell you...

HAZEL

No, you DO have rights.

(THEY start to unpack the groceries)

MARGARET

Don't think I don't know that you could be renting this
place out for the summer, and getting, what, a couple of
thousand dollars?

HAZEL

Five, probably.

MARGARET

FIVE? Five thousand? I had no idea.

HAZEL

Stop. Do you want me to completely embarrass myself by telling you that you're worth five thousand dollars to me?

MARGARET

Now I'm embarrassed.

(A pause)

And I know how much worse I could have it. I hear about these women that are suddenly... in my situation and have to think about going back to work. At least I'm not in that boat. Don't know how I'm going to afford the mortgage by myself, but that's another thing. I should put it on the market, see what I can get. With just us two, I don't need that big house. I can find something smaller. Or an apartment, maybe. Closer to work. Can you keep an eye out in your neighborhood?

HAZEL

Do me a favor. Don't think about it. You're here for two months. Plenty of time for worrying, but later. Take at least a week to think about nothing. Give yourself some time.

MARGARET

I don't think I can think about nothing.

HAZEL

Try. At least stop thinking you have to come up with solutions by tomorrow morning. Sit on the beach. Smell the sea air. Just think about yourself. I'll give you whatever you need. Compassion. Comfort. Camaraderie. Compassion. Anything with a "com." Comedy. You name it.

MARGARET

Actually, "camaraderie" is C-A-M.

HAZEL

Well, that's why I'm an art teacher. Okay, it'll include

C-A-M. Ummm...? Campbell's Soup. Just ask. I can handle Jesse, if you need me to. I can take him over to my place, if that'll help.

MARGARET

I don't like being alone in the house at night.

HAZEL

Well, now you've got Tim.

MARGARET

Right. I've got Tim. This place is going to turn into the ASPCA if you keep taking in all these strays.

HAZEL

(Laughs) I love it. Stray Cat Cottage, we'll call it. I'm sure you'll get to like him. We met in Provincetown a hundred years ago. He's an artist, too. Much better than me, hard as that is to say. He designs his own jewelry. Beautiful stuff. He's a sweetie. Very laid-back.

MARGARET

Well, we can both cry on each other's shoulders over losing our men.

HAZEL

That's the spirit.

(IRA and BINKY return, entering from outside. THEY have shopping bags)

BINKY

Jeez, Larry, where's the corpse laid out?

LARRY

What?

BINKY

This MUSIC.

LARRY

Did you see THIS?

(HE takes a portable stereo off the bookshelf)

The boom box I bought last summer, completely corroded through! This was supposed to be stainless steel. The salt air destroys everything.

IRA

(Sings:) "The blossom falls on the mountain, the mountain falls on the blossom..."

LARRY

Should've paid the extra ten dollars for warranty. I'm bringing it back to Crazy Eddie.

IRA

After two years with no warranty? Yeah, that'll work.

(IRA takes a bathing suit out of his shopping bag)

What do you think? Am I too fat to pull off a Speedo?

LARRY

As long as you're pulling it off someone else.

IRA

Go fuck yourself.

BINKY

Should I show him my outfit?

IRA
If you want him to ruin it for you, go ahead.

BINKY
I'm wearing ripped fishnets and a bustier for the party.
I'm calling it a "Deca-Dance." Get it?

LARRY
How original.

BINKY
What? It's been done?

LARRY
You're adorable.

BINKY
Oh, fuck you, Larry.

(HE exits downstairs)

IRA
(Shouting after him:) Hey, Binky? Take mine.

(HE throws him the shopping bag and goes
into the kitchen to make cocktails.
JESSE and TIMOTHY return up the stairs.
JESSE goes back to his cards on the
table)

LARRY
Why do you insist on calling him "Binky"? I mean, it's not
as if the difference in your ages isn't bad enough. Do you
have to infantilize him even further?

IRA
I call him Binky because when I'm feeling colicky he gives
me something to suck on.

LARRY
Ugh. I'm sure someone somewhere might find that charming.
I think it's revolting.

(LARRY goes back to the sofa and his
book. HE makes notes from time to time
on a legal pad)

HAZEL
Is it cocktail time? It is! Tim, what can I get you?

TIMOTHY
Glass of wine?

HAZEL
Lightweight.

MARGARET
I'll get it. Hazel?

HAZEL
Gin and tonic, please.

TIMOTHY
Thank you. Do you use Maggie or Margaret?

MARGARET
Maggie's fine.
(IRA finishes making his drink, exits
outside)
How do the two of you know each other?

TIMOTHY
We met in Provincetown. Summer of '64.

HAZEL
Not '63?

TIMOTHY
No, it was the summer after Kennedy died.

HAZEL
That was '68.

TIMOTHY
The other Kennedy.

HAZEL
Tim's an amazing artist. Photographer. He does it all.
Jewelry designer. Did you bring any of your stuff with you?

TIMOTHY
Just what I'm wearing.

(HE flashes a ring)

HAZEL
Isn't that exquisite?

JESSE
Is that a blue diamond?

TIMOTHY
Aquamarine. My birthstone.

JESSE
Pisces or Aries?

TIMOTHY
Pisces.

JESSE
Oh, good. I hate Aries.

TIMOTHY
You know astrology? How old are you?

It's beautiful. MARGARET

Ten JESSE

Right. And eleven twelfths. TIMOTHY

That turquoise necklace you like so much? Tim. HAZEL

I'm impressed. MARGARET

This is the death card, right? JESSE

What? Well, not necessarily. HAZEL

Doesn't "La Mort" mean death in French? JESSE

Well, yeah, it does, but it doesn't have to mean literal death. It can mean the death of... an idea. A way of life. HAZEL

Huh? JESSE

No, Tim it was the summer of '63. I'd just gotten my new Beetle. And my first major trip was to Provincetown. Almost didn't make it. HAZEL

Didn't you go both summers? TIMOTHY

Yeah, but... HAZEL

I don't understand. JESSE

What? HAZEL

Death. JESSE

Well, like in your life when you move from one way of doing things to another. That old way dies and you move on to something else. HAZEL

JESSE

Like what?

HAZEL

Oh, I don't know... Remember how you used to like Matchbox cars so much? And how you wanted every new one that came out? And then, suddenly, you didn't like them anymore and you started liking Barbie more.

JESSE

Uh-huh.

HAZEL

Well, your interest in Matchbox cars died, sort of.

JESSE

Uh-huh.

HAZEL

In fact, didn't you bury all those cars in the backyard?

JESSE

Yeah.

HAZEL

Well, there you go.

TIMOTHY

No, it was '64 because "Where Did Our Love Go" was on the jukebox at the Atlantic House and those three old ghouls used to lip-synch to it.

HAZEL

I don't remember that.

TIMOTHY

Of course you do. 'Cause when they'd get to (Sings:) "Oh, don't you want me? Don't you want me no more?" We'd all shout, "God, no!"

JESSE

So then what does it mean?

HAZEL

Well, in your case, it probably does literally mean death.

JESSE

Really?

HAZEL

Well not you, stupid.

JESSE

What?

HAZEL

Well, think about it. What's the reason you're out here in the first place?

Oh.
JESSE

MARGARET
Okay, put all that stuff away. Help me set the table.

HAZEL
No, no. I'm taking us all to the Sandpiper for dinner. My treat.

MARGARET
I've already started making dinner.

HAZEL
Well, stop.

MARGARET
I've got all this food.

HAZEL
Well, it's not going to go bad overnight. You can make it tomorrow. Come on. I want us all to get to know each other.

MARGARET
So?

HAZEL
Well, that's not going to happen with you hunched over the stove all night.

MARGARET
But I want to.

HAZEL
Fine. But Tim and Jesse and I are going to the Sandpiper. Jesse, go put on your shoes. Maggie's gonna have dinner all by herself.

JESSE
Yay! Can we go to the Driftwood Shop?

HAZEL
If it's still open.

(HE starts down the stairs)

TIMOTHY
I need to change my shirt.

HAZEL
Meet us on the boardwalk.

JESSE
Come on!

TIMOTHY
What's so great about the Driftwood Shop?

(HE follows JESSE down the stairs)

JESSE

(As THEY exit:) They have this big owl in the window that I want for my birthday. I have an owl collection...

(THEY're gone)

MARGARET

I'm glad my opinion means so much around here.

HAZEL

Oh, come on. Live a little.

MARGARET

You've already done too much.

(SHE starts to clean off the table, but HAZEL takes her by the arm to steer her out the door)

I don't know that I like you teaching Jesse about Tarot cards.

HAZEL

Oh, I don't think he really understands it. He just likes the pictures on the cards.

MARGARET

Even so...

HAZEL

And he's learning French.

MARGARET

Really?

HAZEL

Sure. If he ever gets to Paris and needs a chariot or a hermit, he's all set.

(THEY exit out the sliding glass doors, leaving them open. Music, circa 1979, pours in. LARRY throws down his book, goes to the porch)

LARRY

Guys, please! Please! Hey! Yes, you! Can you just give it a rest over there?

(A VOICE is heard from offstage)

VOICE

(Off:) Shut. Up. You. Big. Queen.

LARRY

You don't know who you're fooling with.

VOICE

(Off:) A fool!

(LARRY goes to the phone and dials.
RANDY enters up the inside stairs,
talking over his shoulder to GEORGE.
GEORGE holds the baby in a blanket on
his shoulder)

RANDY

I'll say something.

GEORGE

No, don't, not on our first weekend here.

RANDY

But he's finally asleep.

GEORGE

If he can sleep through the construction on Eighth Avenue, a
little club music won't wake him.

LARRY

(On the phone:) Fire Island Police, please.

(RANDY goes out to the porch)

RANDY

Have you ever seen anyone in that house prior to sunset? I
think they're vampires.

GEORGE

I have two words for you: meth lab.

LARRY

(Into phone:) Yes, how do I register a noise complaint?

(The COUNTESS enters from downstairs,
goes to the kitchen, starts putting
together his meds)

GEORGE

I'm gonna feed him. Can you get his stroller?

(RANDY exits downstairs. GEORGE walks
the floor, rocking the baby)

(Softly, to the baby:) You're so good. You're so good.

LARRY

Hello, yes, I'm down at the east end of Ocean Walk and I've
got some neighbors that are absolutely blasting their
stereo. It's insane.

(WADE enters from downstairs)

WADE

Is the music keeping you up?

COUNTESS

I can barely hear it.

(WADE goes to the porch)

WADE

Hey, guys! Could you turn it down for just an hour? It's really getting old.

(HE re-enters)

Sorry.

COUNTESS

Actually, I like it. I don't really like the quiet anymore. I get too much thinking done.

LARRY

(Into phone:) What the hell does the time have to do with it? Oh, I see, so if it's prior to eleven o'clock, they can, what, play it so loud you can hear it from the English Channel?

WADE

Do you need help?

COUNTESS

Yeah, you wanna swallow these for me? I'll be fine.

WADE

Are we going out tonight?

COUNTESS

What do you think? You go. Dance for both of us.

WADE

No, I'm fine right here.

(RANDY re-enters with the stroller as WADE picks up a newspaper and sits on the sofa to read. HE puts the rolled joint on the coffee table. The COUNTESS takes the deck of Tarot cards from the table and plays with them on the kitchen countertop)

GEORGE

Just put it by the table.

(RANDY unfolds the stroller, puts it by the table, facing upstage. GEORGE straps the baby into the stroller)

LARRY

(Into phone:) Well, excuse me, but isn't that your job? What do I want you to do? I want you to send someone out here to get them to turn down their fucking music!

(BINKY comes up the inside stairs, concerned)

BINKY

Larry, what the fuck...?

LARRY

You're aware that you're a public servant, don't you?
Hello?

(HE slams down the phone)

Goddamn cops.

BINKY

Larry, Larry. This is what, your second summer out here?

LARRY

Yeah, and?

(IRA comes up the stairs)

IRA

What's going on?

BINKY

Go get dressed. I'll be ready in a second.

IRA

I've been ready for an hour. I'm waiting for you. We're gonna be late.

BINKY

Yeah, we don't want to miss the Parade of The Chicken Hawks. Listen, Larry. I've been coming here a lot longer than you have, and take it from me, you don't want to piss off the cops.

LARRY

Go play with your records, little boy.

IRA

Don't you dare talk to him like that, Larry. You're not even supposed to fucking be here.

BINKY

Ira, Ira... Listen, Larry. While I realize the vestiges of your flower child past cause you to mistrust "the fuzz..."

LARRY

"Vestiges"? I see that NYU education is paying off...

BINKY

...But the rest of us have found a way to get treated with a measure of tolerance.

LARRY

Tolerance? That's your goal?

BINKY

So now I'm going to call them back and try to do some damage control.

LARRY

Oh, please. Tell him I'll lick his ass the next time he swings by.

(HE collects his book and notepad and exits downstairs)

IRA

I don't think I can take much more of this.

BINKY

Can't you just slip him a Quaalude or something?

IRA

It's not drugs. He just needs a big dick up his ass.

BINKY

Don't look at me.

IRA

I didn't.

BINKY

What? Fuck you.

IRA

I mean, I'm out here to relax. But I hear his goddamn flip-flops scuffling across the deck and my blood runs cold.

BINKY

Dance it off. Come on. Is it Low Tea or High Tea? I forget which is which.

IRA

Listen, in case we get separated, I'll meet you on the dock at ten.

BINKY

Why would we get separated?

(THEY exit outside and down the stairs. GEORGE has finished preparing the baby's dinner, and feeds it to him in the stroller. RANDY sits at the table working a crossword puzzle)

WADE

Wow. Did you see the review in the Times about Jimmy's showing?

COUNTESS

Are you trying to start a fight?

WADE

What, I don't like his work anymore than you do.

COUNTESS

It's easy to have a career when all your competition is dead. I'm sure he checks Keith Haring's vital signs on a daily basis.

WADE

Now he'll be even more impossible to live with.

COUNTESS

Thank God I don't have to live much longer.

WADE

Stop.

COUNTESS

The Countess predicts. The cards say: For the next twenty years - Artistic Mediocrity.

WADE

Where did you get Tarot cards?

COUNTESS

They came with the house.

(A pause)

What am I leaving behind?

WADE

What?

COUNTESS

What do I have to show... that I was here?

WADE

Are you asking the cards or me? Your paints are sitting in the crawlspace under the stairs. Get to work.

COUNTESS

I can't. Nothing... seems to...

(HE looks at the baby in the stroller)

GEORGE

What do you think he sees?

RANDY

What do you mean?

GEORGE

I mean, do you think he sees things we don't? Like right now. Look. He's looking at something, clearly. But it's not me. Look. Look at him.

(RANDY moves around to face the baby)

COUNTESS

Let's have a baby.

RANDY

What? He's looking at me.

GEORGE

Well, he's not doing it now. But he was.

WADE

I think your mother missed a step when she explained the birds and bees to you.

COUNTESS

We could adopt. Or you could.

WADE

Please, not this again. You're buying into a heterosexual ideal.

COUNTESS

Oh, please. I don't want to marry you, for fuck's sake. I wanna... raise something... with you.

WADE

Jesus. Maybe we should think about marigolds.

COUNTESS

Please. I'm grasping at straws here, I know, but I need... I want... Listen, what's one more diaper to you?

WADE

Darling...

COUNTESS

Just think about it. Just think. And feel. Not too long, though. I have a time bomb where my biological clock used to be.

WADE

You're not thinking rationally. You're not... thinking.

COUNTESS

I suppose not. But he'll be well provided for. He'll have a beautiful beach house.

WADE

Oh, we're having a boy? Let me get some blue paint.

COUNTESS

No, don't, don't mock me. I'm just... I have nothing to leave behind. Nothing that says I was here. Can you understand that?

WADE

Now stop. You're gonna make yourself all... They're not going to let a wetback like me adopt a kid.

COUNTESS

Well, no, not both of us. I mean, I'd adopt him...

WADE

And I hate to throw ice water on your dreams, but they're not going to let a man who... well, you know. Your chances aren't good.

COUNTESS

Yeah. Or somebody who mixes metaphors as badly as you do. We don't stand a chance. Hazel can adopt him. I haven't thought out the particulars yet. We don't have to talk about it anymore tonight. Just put it in your mind.

GEORGE

Aren't you amazed by how quiet he is? After my sisters' kids, I was expecting sleepless nights. But he just... watches. I mean, I'm glad he's a good baby. But creepy.

RANDY

Don't call him creepy. (To the stroller:) Don't you listen.

GEORGE

Look, he's doing it again.

RANDY

He's probably looking at a moth. You've got post-partum psychosis without giving birth. That's creepy. Come on, sweetie. Bath time.

(HE picks the baby up and takes him downstairs. Music is heard offstage. GEORGE takes the Tarot cards off the kitchen countertop, takes them to the table. LARRY enters from downstairs. HE sits at the table, opens the typewriter case, puts a piece of paper between the rollers)

WADE

I just want to encourage you to start work again. We schlepped all your brushes and paints out here... And they just sit.

COUNTESS

You've been on Long Island too long. Where'd you learn a word like "schlepped"?

WADE

Seriously.

COUNTESS

Seriously! I can't bear the sunlight. How am I supposed to paint?

WADE

Why do you need the sun?

COUNTESS

It's all about the light.

WADE

Make night paintings. Paint what you can see. It's bound to be more interesting than beach landscapes.

COUNTESS
Do you not understand that the joy of working is being able to see what I've done?

WADE
If you're going to spend the night whining, I think I will go out.

COUNTESS
Good. Please. Go.

WADE
I will.

COUNTESS
Good! Goodbye!

(WADE exits down the stairs, as TIMOTHY makes his way up. HE goes to the phone, dials. Listens. Quickly hangs up. HE goes to the kitchen, rolls himself a joint, smokes)

GEORGE
Do you need any help down there?

RANDY
(Off:) No, he's fine, he's... where's his duck?

GEORGE
Should be in the diaper bag. Do you see it?

RANDY
No.

GEORGE
It should be... Do you want me to..?

(GEORGE goes to the head of the stairs)

RANDY
(Off:) Got it!

WADE
(Off:) I'm leaving!

(GEORGE moves back towards the table. THE COUNTESS goes to the top of the stairs)

COUNTESS
Good! Have fun.

(WADE appears at the bottom of the staircase)

WADE
Please come. It'll do you good.

COUNTESS

I can't. The last time I felt like the Masque of Red Death. I cleared the dance floor faster than the new Jody Watley song.

WADE

Maybe tomorrow night.

COUNTESS

Maybe tomorrow night.

RANDY

(Off:) Oh, shit!

GEORGE

What? WHAT?

(HE runs down the stairs past WADE. WADE exits. TIMOTHY sits on the sofa, smoking his joint. THE COUNTESS goes to the CD player, puts in a disc. Then goes back to the sofa, lies down with his head in TIMOTHY's lap. HE takes the joint from TIMOTHY, takes a hit. TIMOTHY gets up, goes to the phone, dials. A pause)

TIMOTHY

Hi, it's me. What, when? No, I was just... Shit. Yes, yes, it was me. Sorry. I lost my nerve. I'm at Hazel's. No, Fire Island. No need to be jealous, it's not much fun. I'm not going out. Well, obviously not, I'm talking to you on the phone, right? Because I don't want to. You've ruined me. I'm like some heroine in a Victorian novel, I feel like I'll never be loved again. Because of you.

(HE cries)

You know, you really should have a warning label, like a pack of cigarettes: "May Be Hazardous To Your Health." When I'm with you, I feel good for a few minutes, a nicotine rush. Safe, comforted. But I know you're eating away at me from the inside out. Yes, of course I'm stoned, I'd never have called you otherwise... Shit. Hello?

(HE hangs up. Goes back to the sofa, takes the joint from the COUNTESS. HE sits on the sofa. The COUNTESS again puts his head in TIMOTHY's lap. THEY continue to pass the joint. GEORGE and RANDY enter from downstairs)

GEORGE

Thanks for scaring me to death.

RANDY

I overreact.

(A pause)

GEORGE

Well, as long as the neighbor's iPod is going to keep me awake all night...

RANDY

What?

GEORGE

Dance with me.

RANDY

Do you recognize it? What is this, Jimi Hendrix?

GEORGE

Tsk, tsk. Hippie faggots.

(THEY dance, slowly, holding on to each other. LARRY starts to type. TIMOTHY cries quietly. The COUNTESS, smoking the joint, appears to see them. Lights fade)

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

(Music. Lights up. JESSE is alone onstage, seated at the table. HE draws on a pad of paper with colored pencils. Slowly, MARGARET enters from downstairs)

MARGARET

Good morning.
(Silence. JESSE sits at the table,
starts to draw on the pad)
Did you sleep good?

JESSE

Uh-huh.

MARGARET

What do you want for breakfast?
(Silence)
How 'bout some scrambled eggs?

JESSE

No thank you.

MARGARET

There's some bananas.

JESSE

Aren't there Cocoa Puffs left?

MARGARET

Wouldn't you rather have a banana?

JESSE

No.

MARGARET

How 'bout I slice up the banana and put it in the Cocoa Puffs?

JESSE

Ikgh.

MARGARET

You're so grouchy in the morning. Just like your father.

JESSE

I saw Daddy last night.

MARGARET

What? What do you mean?

JESSE

Daddy was here. I saw him out by the pool.

MARGARET

You mean a dream?

JESSE

I don't think so. I wasn't in bed. I was by the pool.

MARGARET

Maybe you dreamed you were at the pool. Was it a bad dream?

JESSE

No. He wasn't scary or anything. He was in his suit from work, but he had his shoes off and his pants rolled up. His feet were in the water. He said he was sorry.

MARGARET

Sorry for what?

JESSE

Dunno. He just said he was sorry.

MARGARET

I hope I have that dream. I could use an "I'm sorry." Then what happened?

JESSE

Nothing. He just sat there for awhile and then he disintegrated.

MARGARET

Disintegrated? That sounds pretty scary.

JESSE

No, it was like the TV set at Grandma's. When you turn it off and you can still see the picture for a little while before it disappears. He just kinda slowly went away.

MARGARET

I think you're watching too much "Dark Shadows."

JESSE

Those are vampires, not ghosts. Maybe it's like parallel time.

MARGARET

What's that?

JESSE

On "Dark Shadows", there's a room they go into and they're all the same people, but their lives are all different. It's happening at the same time, but different.

MARGARET

I don't get it.

JESSE

Like if we opened up that locked closet downstairs. And we opened it and on the other side we were all there, but our lives were all different. Like maybe Daddy is still alive in parallel time.

MARGARET

I'm making you some scrambled eggs.

JESSE

Maybe I have a dog. Maybe you're a famous writer. Wouldn't that be great?

MARGARET

Enough with the dog. We can't afford one.

JESSE

In parallel time, we can.

MARGARET

The next time you have a bad dream, you can come sleep in my bed. If you're scared.

(A pause)

Did you hear me?

JESSE

Yes.

(TIMOTHY enters from downstairs)

TIMOTHY

My, but you two are early birds, aren't you?

MARGARET

Eight-thirty is early?

TIMOTHY

On a Saturday? In July? Yes.

MARGARET

Well, if you wouldn't pace the floor at two in the morning...

TIMOTHY

Oh, sorry. Did I wake you?

MARGARET

No, no. I'm a very light sleeper.

JESSE

Wow. Were you still awake at two in the morning?

TIMOTHY

I'm not a morning person.

JESSE

Wow.

MARGARET
Can I interest you in some scrambled eggs?

TIMOTHY
I don't usually... well, sure, if you're making them, that would be lovely.

MARGARET
I'm making some for myself.

JESSE
Okay, I'll have some scrambled eggs too.

MARGARET
Oh. Sure. Now.

(SHE cooks)

JESSE
I've been listening to your new record.

TIMOTHY
Do you like it? I like it.

JESSE
I guess so. I don't like her voice as much as Diana Ross.

TIMOTHY
Well, she's white, for one thing. She's more of a folk singer, really. It's more about what she's singing than the way she's singing it.

JESSE
What does she mean by "we all had caught the same disease"?

TIMOTHY
Well, it's about being at Woodstock. And everyone there was so close, they were all sharing the same thoughts, the same feelings.

JESSE
Uh-huh. They're showing "Woodstock" at the Community in Ocean Grove. Wanna go?

TIMOTHY
That's kind of a schlep. What are you doing, drawing?

JESSE
Gee, you're smart.

TIMOTHY
Wow. Bitchy.

JESSE
(To MARGARET:) Did you hear what he said?

MARGARET
He's right.

TIMOTHY

Okay...

JESSE

I guess it could be the sunset.

TIMOTHY

No, it's the sunrise! Of course it is. It's your picture! And if you want to make the sun rise over the bay, then it does! Just because I'm older than you, doesn't mean I'm always right.

JESSE

(Tearful:) I'm sorry.

TIMOTHY

No, no, don't say "I'm sorry." Say, "It's my picture, and I say it's the sunrise, you big stupid idiot."

JESSE

(Laughs) Okay. You're a big stupid idiot.

TIMOTHY

That's better.

MARGARET

What are you teaching my son?

TIMOTHY

Just to have an opinion.

MARGARET

You'll be sorry.

(GEORGE enters from downstairs, goes to the kitchen, pours himself some coffee and starts making a list)

Now, listen, boys. I'm making dinner tonight, so I need you to stay out of the kitchen. Then Hazel and I are going to that party in the Grove. I'm making fish, so what do you want, Jesse?

JESSE

We just ate.

TIMOTHY

I'll be at the beach.

JESSE

You going swimming? I've never seen you in the water.

TIMOTHY

No, I'm gonna take some pictures.

JESSE

Can I come?

MARGARET

Leave Tim alone, Jesse. Go play by yourself.

TIMOTHY
I think there are some kids your age a few houses down.

JESSE
I know. I don't like them. They're stupid.

TIMOTHY
How are they stupid?

JESSE
They just are. I don't mind staying here.

TIMOTHY
You'd rather sit on the beach with me than be with kids your own age?

JESSE
Of course.

TIMOTHY
Well, I'm flattered.

JESSE
Flattered?

TIMOTHY
No, flattered. It means... when you say something nice to someone. Even if it's not true.

JESSE
Oh. Like... "You're very smart"?

TIMOTHY
Shut up, you little booger.

JESSE
No, you're very smart. (HE laughs) I mean it, you're very smart.

(HE laughs hysterically as they exit downstairs, passing RANDY on his way up)

GEORGE
I've got coffee.

RANDY
Praise Jesus.

GEORGE
Is he still sleeping?

RANDY
Blessedly.

GEORGE
I guess you slept through all of that last night.

Dreaming. RANDY

Unlikely. I was awake at the time. GEORGE

You watch too much "Ghosthunters" or whatever that thing is called. And too much Nancy Grace. RANDY

Maybe. Why don't you take the baby to the beach? GEORGE

What about you? RANDY

I'm going to make a fabulous dinner. GEORGE

You don't mind being stuck in the house? It's gorgeous out. RANDY

I prefer it. GEORGE

If you're sure. RANDY

(HE starts to exit)

Be sure to use the SPF 45. And makes sure it's all over. GEORGE
Top of his head. Feet. And bring the Pedialyte that's in
his room so he doesn't turn into a raisin.

Yes, Mom. RANDY

(HE's gone. GEORGE and MARGARET
continue to work on their separate
meals. GEORGE prepares a roast while
MARGARET makes a salad. HAZEL appears
on the outside steps, holding a
newspaper)

Knock, knock. Oh, good, you're up. Hey, doll. HAZEL

Morning. MARGARET

(Looks at her watch) Only just. HAZEL

(THEY kiss)

Listen, I'm having second thoughts about tonight. MARGARET

HAZEL

No, no, you have to go, I've been talking you up all week. And, listen, here's your horoscope for today. "Pisces: This is the time to drop your inhibitions and your reservations and really be willing to experiment. Other people are likely to flock to your ideas. Use a careful and exclusive selection process to ensure you get the creme de la creme working with you." Well, tonight I'll introduce you to the creme de la creme of Fire Island society.

MARGARET

What exactly is the "creme de la creme"? Fire Island royalty?

HAZEL

Well, there'll be a lot of queens.

(JESSE and TIMOTHY enter from downstairs, TIMOTHY with an elaborate and expensive-looking camera)

JESSE

Witch Hazel! Did you bring my horoscope?

HAZEL

I did. Let's see... Cancer... "Before spending large sums of money, you may want to double-check the transactions in your checkbook over the past few days. Joining assets with a friend or business partner might work out to your advantage, but don't sign anything until you're positive about the final sum."

JESSE

I don't know what that means.

MARGARET

It means you don't have to worry about reading your horoscope for another ten years.

JESSE

What's Tim's?

HAZEL

Same as your Mom. Pisces.
(SHE hands TIMOTHY the horoscope)
Maybe we should try you with numerology.

JESSE

I hate math.

HAZEL

Well, it really doesn't have anything to do with math. No, actually, I guess it does.

MARGARET

Okay, now, listen you two, before you go scampering off.

TIMOTHY
Do we scamper?

JESSE
I know how to scamper.

TIMOTHY
Good. Teach me.

MARGARET
Enough. Dinner is at four o'clock. I want you back by three thirty. Dinner, then 'cause you didn't take one last night, you need a bath.

TIMOTHY
I do?

MARGARET
Very funny. And you need to be out of the bathroom by five-thirty, because I need to get ready. Hazel and I will be leaving by six-thirty and we'll be gone at least until midnight, but that doesn't mean to get to stay up 'til all hours. Tim's in charge. Do whatever he says.

TIMOTHY
Ooooh, whatever?

MARGARET
I owe you one.

TIMOTHY
Oh, it's my pleasure to take care of this little turd.

JESSE
What did you...? Did you hear what he called me?

TIMOTHY
Bird. Little bird. You're a sweet little bird. Hey, did I ever show you how to get honey out of honeysuckle?

JESSE
There's no honey in honeysuckle.

TIMOTHY
There is. See, you pull off one of the flowers. Then you pick off this little green nub at the bottom, and this long string pulls out, and at the end, there's this little drop of...
(HE sucks the tip of the flower. HE picks off another one)
You try.
(JESSE follows his instructions)
Slowly, slowly. Pull that long thing out. Then, see the little drop? No! Don't blow. Suck.
(MARGARET nudges HAZEL, gestures to them)

Mmmmm. JESSE

I told ya. TIMOTHY

I wanna do another one. JESSE

Take it with you. TIMOTHY

(HE pulls JESSE out the door. GEORGE has put his roast in the oven and lies on the sofa, reading the newspaper. During the following, MARGARET goes back to making her salad)

Do you think it's okay for me to leave Jesse alone with Tim? MARGARET

Why? HAZEL

Well... you know. MARGARET

I do? HAZEL

I worry that... that he... now that Carl's not here, I worry about his role models. You know. MARGARET

You could do a lot worse than Tim, don't you think? HAZEL

I guess I worry that... he could turn him into a homosexual. If he spends too much time around him. I mean, I see that Jesse likes him very much... MARGARET

I think you worry too much. HAZEL

Maybe. MARGARET

And it never seemed like Carl was such a great role model, if you don't mind me saying so. At least Tim's getting him to express himself a little more. He needs that. HAZEL

But I mean he's... well, the music he's got him listening to. MARGARET

(SHE goes to the stereo, holds up an album)

MARGARET (CONTINUED)

Diana Ross? Is this really necessary?

HAZEL

Well, he's got Jimi Hendrix here. That's pretty masculine stuff.

MARGARET

And isn't he a drug addict?

HAZEL

Well, I don't know what you expect. I don't think Tim's really into Andy Williams. You might also want to consider that it might be too late to close that barn door.

(MARGARET looks at her, uncomprehending)

Well, not a lot of little boys have a Barbie collection. And I think it's telling that the thing he wants most for his birthday is a piece of interior decor. I don't think the fact that your son has no interest in bouncing or throwing a ball is pathological.

MARGARET

I just worry... what's to become of him.

HAZEL

Well, we can probably rule out championship boxer. But what's wrong with that? Alright, let's lay it out: Hates math and science. Hates sports. Loves: Painting. Movies. Barbie, particularly her evening wear. Negro female singers.

MARGARET

I am not an overprotective mother!

HAZEL

I never said you were.

MARGARET

I thought that's where this was heading. Overprotective mother, absent father. In this case, completely absent. So, what, should I marry the next man that gives me a second glance?

HAZEL

No, no, it has nothing to do with you. That's my point. You can do whatever you want, force him to play football, dress him in combat fatigues, teach him to belch, spit and drink beer, but I fear that particular train has already left the station.

MARGARET

So? What do I do?

HAZEL

Do? What makes you think you need to do anything?

MARGARET
I don't want him to be lonely.

HAZEL
You don't think there are lonely heterosexuals?

MARGARET
Well, no, of course... How did your mother come to terms with... you...

HAZEL
I don't know that she did. She kicked me out of the house. Don't do that.

MARGARET
Tim seems lonely to me.

HAZEL
Well, his boyfriend just kicked him to the curb. I don't think it's fair to judge him at this moment in time. Tonight I'll introduce you to some happy gay people.

MARGARET
Are they happy?

HAZEL
Some are. Some aren't.

MARGARET
Will they judge me?

HAZEL
Probably.

MARGARET
What should I wear?

HAZEL
Wear that black thing. You look gorgeous in it.

MARGARET
Black thing?

HAZEL
With the floral print.

MARGARET
I have no idea what you're...

HAZEL
You wore it yesterday afternoon. With that little skirt.

MARGARET
Hazel, that's a bathing suit.

HAZEL
You must have something a little more... a little less...

MARGARET

Everything's gonna look horrible. I started my period this morning and I'm bloated as a whale. But I'll check my closet.

(SHE exits downstairs as IRA makes his way up the stairs, wearing a bathing suit and a T-shirt. HAZEL jots something down on a piece of paper)

IRA

Hey.

HAZEL

Oh, hey, I was just leaving you a note. Sorry for barging in; I thought you'd all gone to the beach.

IRA

No problem. Just don't expect me to be coherent.

HAZEL

Rough night?

IRA

Long night. Everyone's still in bed, I think. And I heard Larry pattering around, so if you don't want an earful about the mildew level in the bathroom grout, you'd better high-tail it out of here.

HAZEL

Aw, he doesn't scare me.

IRA

No, I'm scared of what I'll do if I have to hear his Manischewitz whine before my drugs have kicked in.

(HE goes to the kitchen, takes some pills out of the cabinet, swallows them. BINKY slowly makes his way up the stairs)

IRA

Jeez. I didn't expect to see you until noon, at least.

HAZEL

Hey, sweetie. I left your "horroroscope" on the table. It's a good one.

(THEY kiss)

MARGARET

(Off:) Hey, are you gonna help me with this or not?

HAZEL

(Shouting downstairs:) I'll be right down. Your potatoes were boiling over.

BINKY

You know, I have absolutely no recollection of coming home last night.

IRA

I'm not surprised.

BINKY

I mean, I remember leaving the dance floor at some point to get some air. The bartender said something to me about the weather. Or the crowd. It was hot. The crowd, not the weather. And then I woke up in bed.

IRA

You were kind of a mess. Painkiller?

BINKY

Maybe. If they were able to drive trucks on this island, I'd swear I'd been hit by one. What are you doing?

IRA

Going to the beach.

BINKY

What's in the thermos?

IRA

Martinis.

BINKY

Well, pack me some Gatorade or something. I need to rehydrate. I feel like a raisin. I fell asleep with my contacts in and when I woke up, they were Krazy-glued to the inside of my eyelids.

HAZEL

I was just leaving you boys a note. We'd love to have you over for dinner sometime soon.

BINKY

Yeah, sure.

HAZEL

What's good for you?

BINKY

Ira?

IRA

Maybe next week sometime.

HAZEL

Great. Wanna say Tuesday?

BINKY

Shit, no, I can't, sorry, I've got a gig on Wednesday night. A club on Fifteenth Street.

Oh. HAZEL

BINKY
And then Larry's out next weekend. Maybe the following weekend.

HAZEL
Terrific. We'll look forward to it.
(A pause)
You're missed.

BINKY
Yeah, I know, I'm sorry. I'll call during the week. I promise. Meanwhile...
(A long pause)
I'm gonna jump in the shower so I can meet you at the beach.

(BINKY exits downstairs)

IRA
(To HAZEL:) How's she holding up?

HAZEL
Oh, you know. Good days and bad days. Although these days a good day is: she gets out of bed. And eats solid food.

IRA
Sorry.

HAZEL
Well.

IRA
If there's anything I can... I don't know what it would be, but if you need anything, either of you...

HAZEL
Just get him to call.

IRA
I will, I will.

MARGARET
(Off:) Come and look at this. Tell me if this is bohemian enough for you.

(HAZEL exits downstairs, as BINKY makes his way up)

BINKY
Oh, I thought you'd gone.

IRA

Okay, listen, I'll be at the beach until three. Then we'll come back, take a hit so that it kicks in by the time we get to the disco, shower, dress, go to tea, stay until seven, no later. Grab a slice at the Marina, come back here for a quick nap and be up by nine. I told the first guests to arrive no earlier than nine-thirty, and the caterers should have set everything up by then.

BINKY

Gee, but it's fun to be on vacation with you. If we do a line at five, or whenever you've scheduled it, I'll never be able to get to sleep at seven.

IRA

Don't worry, I'll give you something. And whatever you do, don't tell Larry where my stash is, or it'll be gone by midnight.

BINKY

Oh, he wouldn't.

IRA

He would, honey, yes he would.

(IRA has packed everything HE needs for the beach and heads for the door)

BINKY

I'll meet you down there.

IRA

Remember, I'm leaving at three.

(IRA exits. BINKY goes to the kitchen for coffee. Then HE goes to the turntables, plays music, works on his set list for the night)

LARRY

Do you think you could go ten minutes without disco? Or do your arteries harden?

BINKY

I'm working. I'm figuring out my set list for tonight. I'll be going to the beach in five minutes, then you can play that "Masterpiece Theatre" shit.

(LARRY goes to the kitchen)

LARRY

Ira's at the beach?

BINKY

Yep.

LARRY

Did he use up the last of the coffee? Motherfucker.

BINKY

Breathe, Larry. I think there's some on top of the fridge.

(HE goes through the cabinets)

LARRY

Where does Ira keep his Percocet?

BINKY

Isn't it in there?

LARRY

No.

BINKY

Then I have no idea.

LARRY

I woke up with such a headache. Probably eyestrain. I think Hazel's got a twenty-five watt bulb in that nighttable lamp. And my stomach was feeling a little queasy in the middle of the night; it woke me up. I think that fish last night was a little off. I mean, Ira's a perfectly decent cook, but even he can't disguise spoiled fish.

BINKY

Larry, I'm going to stop you.

LARRY

What?

BINKY

My mother has no hair and carries around a bucket all day to throw up in. So I don't really want to spend an hour listening to you obsess over an ingrown toenail.

LARRY

Jesus. I hope you get sick someday and no one pays the slightest attention.

BINKY

Thanks. That's sweet, Larry.

(LARRY starts to make coffee with a French press)

You wouldn't have a rubber band, would you?

LARRY

What, cock ring keeps falling off?

BINKY

Hilarious. For my hair.

LARRY

Your hair. So 1968, Mary.

BINKY

You know, it's funny how the only people who comment on my hair are men who are losing theirs.

LARRY

Maybe if you didn't use that Sun-In crap.

BINKY

Believe it or not, my hair naturally lightens in the sun.

LARRY

Not.

BINKY

Ugh. You win. I'm at the beach.

(HE shuts off the turntable as MARGARET re-enters from downstairs. SHE goes to the kitchen and cooks. BINKY takes a beach bag from the kitchen and exits. LARRY sits at the table and reads the paper. RANDY enters from downstairs)

RANDY

I guess I really wore him out. He went down without a peep.

GEORGE

What time is it? Wake him up in an hour, or we'll never get him to sleep tonight.

RANDY

Are you burning sage?

GEORGE

That's dinner.

RANDY

If this house actually does have any evil spirits hanging around, I don't think they're gonna get chased out by a roast leg of lamb.

(JESSE runs in, immediately goes for the stairs)

MARGARET

Back so soon? Look! Look! Stop! You're tracking sand all over the house. That bucket beside the door is for you to wash your feet.

JESSE

Ugh. It's got bugs floating in it.

MARGARET

So am I stopping you from putting fresh water in it?

JESSE

It's too heavy.

MARGARET

Oh, come on, Mary Jane, let me help you.

(THEY go out to the porch and bring in a bucket of water, which THEY dump in the sink and refill. GEORGE gets up to check his roast)

GEORGE
Jesus, didn't I just sweep in here? It's covered with sand.

RANDY
Virgos should stay away from the beach.
(GEORGE gets a dustpan and sweeps up the sand)
I dug up some dirt on why this place has been empty for twenty years. I was talking to this old queen on the beach and from what I understand, it was owned by a lesbian who married a gay man. She died. Then he died. Or vice versa. I don't remember.

(JESSE runs downstairs)
No wills, the estates were in probate forever. It just went on the market a year ago. But that explains the furniture.

GEORGE
So who got it?

RANDY
Not sure.

GEORGE
I was hoping maybe this was Garbo's house.

RANDY
No, but supposedly a famous painter lived here in the '80s. Strigid, I think.

GEORGE
Strigid? Never heard of him. Or her.

RANDY
Gay painter. Died of AIDS, They have some reproductions of his work at the cafe. You'd recognize it if you saw it. Weird landscapes in bright colors.

GEORGE
Oh, St. Rigid! Yeah, his stuff is all over. He lived here?

RANDY
That's what they said.

GEORGE
I wonder if he hid anything under the floorboards. We could buy this house with the proceeds.

RANDY
And there are stories that on dark and stormy nights, you can still hear the strains of Donna Summer and the air is filled with amyl nitrate.

(JESSE returns from downstairs with a roll of film, runs towards the door)

MARGARET
Now where are you running?

JESSE
Tim asked me to get him another roll of film.

MARGARET
Wait, wait, I've got such an itch. Right under my bra strap. Please.

JESSE
Tim's waiting.

MARGARET
Just a quick scratch.

JESSE
Here?

(HE scratches her back)

MARGARET
No. Under. Unhook it.
(HE unhooks her bra)
Aaaah. Yeah, there. Owwww! Not so hard! Better.

JESSE
Okay?

MARGARET
Just another minute. Oh, that's nice.

JESSE
Okay, bye.

MARGARET
Wait! You never talk to me anymore. What do you wanna do for your birthday?

JESSE
I don't care.

MARGARET
Isn't it nice that we can go shopping and not have to pretend to your father that we spent twenty dollars when we really spent fifty?

JESSE
I guess so. Is that enough?

MARGARET
Okay, okay, hook me up.

(HE re-fastens her bra)

You smell funny. JESSE

What? MARGARET

You smell stinky. JESSE
(HE laughs)

Oh, really? Well, at least I don't cry like a baby when I
step on a jellyfish. MARGARET
(HE looks as if HE's about to cry and
stomps off, bumping into HAZEL coming in
from outside. SHE's dressed for the
party and holds a plastic pitcher)
God, he's so sensitive.

That's not what you're wearing. HAZEL

It's not? MARGARET

Come on. HAZEL

(SHE puts the pitcher on the countertop,
takes MARGARET by the hand, leading her
downstairs)

Wait, wait, let me turn down the heat on this. MARGARET

(SHE goes to the stove, then follows
HAZEL downstairs. IRA enters from
outside, in a great hurry)

Hey. Where's Binky? IRA

He went to meet you at the beach. LARRY

Good. Turn your back. IRA

What for? LARRY

Because I don't want you to see what I'm doing, obviously. IRA

What are you talking about? LARRY

IRA

Just do me a favor and go out to the porch for a second.

(LARRY, grudgingly, does)

LARRY

What are you, five?

(IRA goes into the kitchen cabinet,
takes out some pills, puts them in his
shirt pocket)

IRA

Okay, you can come back in.

LARRY

Who's the hot number on the boardwalk?

IRA

Pretend you didn't see him.

LARRY

I knew you were a chicken hawk, but that's a hatchling. By the end of the summer, I expect you'll be hanging out in maternity wards.

IRA

Your grapes are, as they say, sour. Okay, remember: you didn't see me.

LARRY

Aren't you just the least bit concerned that Binky will catch on and dump your sagging ass for someone a little more age-appropriate?

IRA

That's the sad thing. He's not interested in anyone else. He just wants to be married, poor thing.

LARRY

There's a special place in hell for people like you, Ira.

IRA

Said the atheist.

LARRY

Have you seen Hazel today?

IRA

Briefly.

LARRY

That leaking toilet kept me up half the night. Didn't we ask for a plumber two weeks ago? I mean, I know she's a good friend of yours, but really, no more Mr. Nice Guy.

IRA

Larry, when have you EVER been Mr. Nice Guy? You know, if you could direct that energy towards something that actually mattered. Instead of these misperceived slights. You might actually accomplish something.

(HE exits)

LARRY

(To the empty room:) Yeah, well, you're a drug-addicted... sexually compulsive... coke-snorting... self-involved...

(HE exits downstairs, talking to himself)

GEORGE

Can you help me get this out of the oven?

(RANDY joins GEORGE in the kitchen)

RANDY

Holy shit. How many people are coming to dinner?

GEORGE

It's just us.

RANDY

Honey, I appreciate your desire to create happy family moments, but I think you should wait until the baby's eating solid food. We'll be eating the leftovers of this until September.

GEORGE

It was on sale.

RANDY

Okay, you're perfect. Now fetch me my pipe and slippers.

GEORGE

You should probably wake him up.

RANDY

First a shower.

(HE exits downstairs, as JESSE and TIMOTHY enter from outside. GEORGE continues to work on the dinner)

JESSE

What were they doing?

TIMOTHY

They were... I don't know. They were kissing.

JESSE

Why were they naked?

TIMOTHY

I don't know. Maybe their bathing suits were wet and they took them off.

JESSE

I've never seen men kissing each other before.

TIMOTHY

Well... now you have.

JESSE

They had a lot of hair on them.

TIMOTHY

I told you not to stare.

JESSE

Why were they kissing?

TIMOTHY

Well, because they like each other, obviously. I don't want to talk about this anymore.

JESSE

Is this something I should ask my mother about?

TIMOTHY

Definitely not. Forget you saw it. Be right back.

(HE exits downstairs. The COUNTESS slowly makes his way up the stairs, goes to the CD player, turns it on. HE goes to the kitchen. Pours himself a drink and sways to the music. JESSE goes to the record player, puts on a record. Dances with himself. BINKY enters, in his full "Deca-Dance" regalia. Goes to the turntables, plays music. A moment. IRA enters from outside, holding a large tray of hors d'oeuvres)

BINKY

Where the hell were you?

IRA

Can you believe this? The caterers just dumped four trays of hors d'oeuvre on the back porch. Am I supposed to deal with this? Can you help me bring them in? What are you doing, all dressed for the party? Aren't you going to low tea?

BINKY

No, you go. I want to make sure the speakers are okay before the sun goes down. While I can still see what I'm doing.

IRA

You don't mind if I go?

BINKY
So where the hell were you?

IRA
Where the hell were YOU? I said I was leaving at three.

BINKY
I went to our usual spot. You were nowhere to be seen.

IRA
Oh, yeah, I went a little further down the beach. Where it wasn't so crowded.

(WADE enters from outside, dressed in
business attire)

WADE
Look who's awake.

COUNTESS
I didn't expect you for another hour.

WADE
The Long Island Railroad was fast. For once. I caught the earlier ferry. Should you be mixing alcohol with your meds?

COUNTESS
Yes, I wouldn't want to do anything to injure my health. I'm going to fix a cocktail and sit by the pool like a rich white woman.

WADE
Won't you turn into a pile of dust if you see the sunlight?

COUNTESS
No, the sunset I can deal with. I like to see the colors. While I can still see.

WADE
Jesus, can you hold the self-pity until I get my jacket off?

COUNTESS
Well, if I don't pity me, who will? What did the lawyer say?

WADE
Just to keep doing what I'm doing. I'll take the nursing exam in September, and if I pass...

COUNTESS
WHEN you pass...

WADE
Sorry, WHEN I pass, then you put in the application to hire me as your nurse and he tries to get me in.

COUNTESS
So? Why the long face?

WADE

No, nothing. It just seems like... September's a long time away.

COUNTESS

I promise to hang on 'til September.

WADE

Stop. Not what I meant. I just need a shower.

(WADE exits downstairs. IRA shouts downstairs)

IRA

Larry, I could use a hand up here. (To BINKY:) Ask his highness to meet me on the porch when he comes up.

(IRA exits outside as TIMOTHY returns from downstairs, holding a can of film and a sweatshirt. HE changes out of the shirt he's wearing into the sweatshirt)

TIMOTHY

Come on, come on, turn off the record player. I want to get some more pictures before there's no sun.

JESSE

I don't know why you want black and white film when you have color.

TIMOTHY

I like to catch the shadows. They're better in black and white.

(MARGARET enters from downstairs in her party outfit)

MARGARET

Dinner's almost ready.

JESSE

We're just gonna take some more pictures.

MARGARET

Fifteen minutes, no more. Where are your glasses?

JESSE

I hate wearing them to the beach. I look stupid.

MARGARET

That's how they get lost. Keep them on.

JESSE

I wish I could get some of those cool teardrop-shaped glasses.

MARGARET

Well, if they gave those kind free through my health insurance, I would, but they don't, so you can't.

JESSE

Bummer.

MARGARET

Where'd you learn a word like "bummer"? Those glasses are fine.

JESSE

I hate them.

MARGARET

It's simple. When you're able to pay for them, you can get them.

JESSE

Hey, do you want to stay up and watch the sunrise?

TIMOTHY

That's a little ambitious. Sunset. That I can do.

JESSE

Oh, come on. It'll be fun.

TIMOTHY

That's way too early, sweetie.

JESSE

Ohhhh!

MARGARET

Hey, mister, you're to be in bed no later than eleven.

TIMOTHY

Moonrise. How 'bout that?

JESSE

No, we won't go to sleep. We'll stay up until the sun rises, and then go to sleep.

MARGARET

Eleven o'clock.

TIMOTHY

I don't think I've got the energy.

JESSE

Oh, come on. Pleeeeeeese?

TIMOTHY

Let me tell you something, kiddo. Men don't like to be pestered. Once it's no, it's no. If you learn nothing else from me, learn that.

JESSE

Forget it.

(HE stomps off, outside)

TIMOTHY

That tactic doesn't work, either.

(HE exits behind JESSE. BINKY changes the music. HAZEL enters from downstairs)

HAZEL

Those cocktails aren't going to drink themselves.

MARGARET

Sorry! Should I make some hors d'oeuvres?

(SHE pours the contents of the pitcher into glasses)

HAZEL

We've got plenty of time.

MARGARET

Cheers.

(THEY clink glasses)

Oh, this is nice. Sangria, huh?

(SHE starts to move to the music)

I'm taking your advice. I'm relaxing.

HAZEL

'Bout time.

(HAZEL takes MARGARET's glass, puts them both down. Starts to dance with her)

MARGARET

Who's leading?

HAZEL

Relax. I am.

MARGARET

What would Fay say if she knew you were dancing with another woman?

HAZEL

Oh, if she knew it was you, she'd understand. Then again, she might hunt us down and kill us.

(IRA and LARRY enter from outside, each holding a tray of hors d'oeuvres)

IRA

What are you, nuts? What is this, Lawrence Welk?

BINKY

I like it. Not everyone is going to want to listen to thump-thump-thump all night long.

IRA

You remember this is a party, right?

BINKY

Well, this is party music. This is what my parents played when they gave cocktail parties.

IRA

Great. That's exactly the atmosphere I was going for: Lefrak City, circa 1962.

BINKY

Oh, they're all gonna be eating lasagne anyway. I'll pick it up again after the dessert is served. Now leave me alone, I know what I'm doing.

MARGARET

They're all going to think I'm a rube.

HAZEL

Oh, they will not.

MARGARET

Aren't they all artists? Musicians? Writers?

HAZEL

So?

MARGARET

So? "Oh, yes, you had a poem in last month's New Yorker? I'm a public school English teacher. In Queens."

HAZEL

Use my line. I'm an "Artist in the Schools."

MARGARET

"Oh, you play progressive jazz in a club on Bleecker Street? I'm a single mother with a ten year old. And I live in Queens."

HAZEL

You don't have to tell the whole truth. Cultivate some mystery. Maybe you had a love child out of wedlock.

MARGARET

So I don't mention my dead husband?

HAZEL

Well, you might want to think about telling people he was killed in the war instead of on the Long Island Expressway. You'll get more sympathy.

MARGARET

Hard for me to think of him in heroic terms.

(GEORGE goes to the head of the stairs)

GEORGE

Dinner!

MARGARET

And at the risk of you saying "I told you so" I really am grateful for Tim's attention to Jesse. He loves the beach so much, and Carl... well, Carl hated it. He wouldn't even take off his cordovan shoes and socks. And he burned easily.

(RANDY enters from downstairs as GEORGE puts dinner plates on the table)

GEORGE

Where's the baby?

RANDY

Let him sleep. I wore him out. He was a sea creature in his previous life. He could sit at the water's edge for hours and doesn't get bored or cranky. Unlike you.

(The phone rings)

GEORGE

Please, please, we're eating. Let the machine pick up.

MARGARET

Oh, no.

HAZEL

What? Don't tell me that ghoul is still pestering you.

MARGARET

I thought she'd stopped.

HAZEL

Well, we're gonna change this number on Monday morning.

MARGARET

No, no, I don't want you to go through all that trouble...

COUNTESS

(Shouting downstairs:) I'm not getting that!

(HE takes his cocktail and exits outside, as RANDY gets up from the table)

GEORGE

Sit! I mean it.

HAZEL

And in the meantime...

(SHE picks up the phone)

Hello? Yes. Oh, it's only you... Yes, I'm still here.
(To MARGARET:) It's Fay.

(RANDY sits down, eats)

GEORGE

Thank you.

HAZEL

(Into phone:) No, I said it's only you because poor Maggie's been getting these phone calls... Yes, dear, I'm well aware of the time. Yes, yes, in a minute. Yes, dear.

(SHE hangs up)

Good God, she won't go anywhere unescorted. During the day she supervises twenty-five Teamsters, but if she has to walk into a party alone, she turns into a debutante.

(JESSE and TIMOTHY enter from outside, in a hurry)

JESSE

Are we gonna call the police?

TIMOTHY

I don't think the police will... I have to tell you: your son is my hero. He just saved my five hundred dollar camera, for one thing.

HAZEL

What is it? What happened?

JESSE

I think we should call the police.

TIMOTHY

Some punks on the beach called me a faggot. Well, first they called me a long-haired hippie. Then a faggot. And tried to throw me in the water with my camera around my neck. And then my knight in shining armor shows up...

JESSE

I thought you knew who they were at first. Then when you started yelling...

TIMOTHY

All the other queens on the beach tried to act like it wasn't happening. But he came over.

MARGARET

And what?

JESSE

I didn't know what else to do. I'm sorry.

TIMOTHY

What, are you kidding? It was brilliant.

MARGARET

What did he do?

TIMOTHY

He screamed like a girl. At the top of his lungs. And he wouldn't stop.

JESSE

I was thinking about the first time Carolyn sees Barnabas in his coffin on "Dark Shadows."

TIMOTHY

And he kept it up. And he started to draw a crowd. They finally got so freaked out they just ran away. Brilliant.

HAZEL

Picking on gay guys on an all-gay island? We'll find 'em.

JESSE

Yay! The police! Call the police.

HAZEL

No, no, we're not gonna call the police. They leave us alone as long as we don't ask them to do anything for us, like their jobs. The grapevine on the island will work faster. I'll spread the word. (To MARGARET:) Okay, so you know where you're going? Go down Ocean, left on Fisherman, right on Ocean once again, right on Tarpon, and it's number 480.

JESSE

(To TIMOTHY:) Right on tampon?

(HE laughs hysterically. TIMOTHY doesn't)

TIMOTHY

Your sense of humor is going to need some fine-tuning. I need a Miltown.

JESSE

The Supremes?

TIMOTHY

No, not Motown. It's something else.

(HE exits downstairs)

HAZEL

Eight-thirty. I'll see you there.

(SHE exits outside. JESSE heads for the stairs)

MARGARET

Where do you think you're going? Your dinner is ready. Sit.

(SHE goes to the oven, takes out a TV dinner tray using potholders. SHE puts it on a plate, brings it to the table. JESSE starts to eat, reads the newspaper on the table)

GEORGE

You know what I've been thinking? That I might like to go back to work.

RANDY

Well, if you think so. Are you sure?

(A pause)

GEORGE

No.

(MARGARET brings the drink to the table, sits)

MARGARET

Are you sure you're going to be alright with Timothy tonight?

(JESSE nods)

What's that called?

JESSE

Safari Supper.

MARGARET

That looks pretty good. Is it good?
(JESSE nods)
Can I try some?

JESSE

Why?

MARGARET

'Cause I wanna see what it tastes like.

JESSE

How can you see a taste?

MARGARET

Don't be a wiseacre.

(SHE takes a fork to the tray)

JESSE

No.

MARGARET

What's the matter with you?

It's mine. JESSE

Well, I bought it. MARGARET

But it's mine now. JESSE

Jeez. Selfish. MARGARET

What? JESSE

You're very selfish. MARGARET
(A pause. HE bursts into tears and exits downstairs)

Oh, God. (SHE tastes his food. Makes a face)

Yuck. (SHE stands, gets a shawl out of the closet, goes to the top of the stairs)

Okay, boys, you're on your own. Behave yourselves.
(TIMOTHY enters from downstairs)

Have fun. We'll be fine. TIMOTHY

I shouldn't be any later than 11:30 or so. MARGARET

Don't rush. TIMOTHY
(SHE goes to the door. Turns)

I hope you don't think I don't appreciate all you do for Jesse. MARGARET

I don't. TIMOTHY

Oh. Well, good. MARGARET
(SHE exits outside. TIMOTHY goes to the kitchen, pours himself some vodka. Adds orange juice. Picks up the phone, dials. Opens the refrigerator, picks at what's inside. The COUNTESS takes a can of Nutrument out of the refrigerator, opens it, exits outside)

RANDY

What do you think you would do?

GEORGE

I don't know. I feel like everything's dried up for me.

RANDY

I thought the baby was what you wanted to do.

GEORGE

Well, yes, of course, but.. Isn't a man supposed to...? God, it's like I'm living my mother's life all over again.

(BINKY speaks into a microphone attached to the table that holds the turntables)

BINKY

Good evening, one and all, gentlemen and gentlemen. And welcome to our first annual "Deca-dance!"

LARRY

Oh, brother.

(LARRY exits outside, popping an hors d'oeuvre into his mouth on the way)

BINKY

(Covers the microphone:) Drop dead, Larry. (Into microphone:) We're your hosts, Larry at the bar, Binky at the turntable. I've spent a lot of summers out here on this island, but I think this one promises to be the best of all possible summers. And to start things off, a little something from the summer of 1970.

TIMOTHY

(Into phone:) Oh, hi! It's me. What's the matter? Oh, did I? How many times did it ring? I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I just dialed and then forgot what I was... No, no, it's nothing important, I guess I just wanted to check in. I said I'm sorry. Well, then, what took you so long to answer the phone? Were you otherwise engaged? It was a joke. What, no, of course I haven't looked for an apartment, I've been out here... Oh, I see. Uh-huh. Gotcha. And what's her name? What a surprise. And I suppose you just met. You mean to tell me you didn't know him when we were together and he's moving in already? Oh, I see. Well, if it's a question of money, I'll keep paying my share of the rent until I find a place. How's that sound? Uh-huh. Yeah, I thought so. Well, I don't know how I'm going to find a place and get my stuff out when I'm here. And if I don't? Well, why don't you just do that? You seem to take great pleasure in throwing things out into the street.

(HE slams down the phone. JESSE makes his way slowly up the stairs. TIMOTHY pours himself another drink)

Hi. JESSE

Oh, hi. TIMOTHY

Whatcha doin'?' JESSE

I was just... TIMOTHY

Can I have a cocktail? JESSE

Of course. Not. TIMOTHY

You know, I just realized, I've lived a whole de-cade. JESSE

Huh? TIMOTHY

I'm a de-cade. JESSE

You're into God? TIMOTHY

No, dummy. I'm ten. Isn't ten years a de-cade? JESSE

Oh, decade. You mean decade. TIMOTHY

Really? It's not de-cade? JESSE

Yes, you're a decade. And believe me, it'll lose it's charm when you hit the next one. TIMOTHY

So what should we do tonight? JESSE

Anything on television? TIMOTHY

Lemme look. JESSE

(HE sits at the table and reads the paper, resumes eating his TV dinner. WADE enters from downstairs, takes part of the newspaper from the table. Lies down on the sofa to read it. LARRY re-enters)

LARRY

Well, it didn't take long for everybody to get naked.

BINKY

You're kidding.

(BINKY goes to the outside deck, looks
off)

You're not kidding. Is anybody dancing?

LARRY

Some.

(HE comes into the house)

BINKY

Turned out to be a perfect night.

(HE looks into the distance)

JESSE

There's a thing in the paper that says Barbara Hershey wants to change her name to Barbara Seagull. When she was making a movie they killed a seagull and she thinks the spirit of the seagull went into her body. Maybe I'll change mine. Jesse Seagull.

TIMOTHY

Take my word, by the time you're in high school, you won't want that many esses is your name.

BINKY

Look at that seagull. Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could just spread your wings and float like that? No effort, just ride the breeze whichever way it goes.

LARRY

Yeah, and you wind up eating someone else's garbage and then freeze to death in a snowstorm.

BINKY

Dreamkiller.

LARRY

I'm just saying.

(LARRY goes back down to the party)

TIMOTHY

I'm gonna go down to the pool, finish my drink, and feel sorry for myself.

JESSE

Why are you feeling sorry for yourself?

TIMOTHY

'Cause no one else will.

Can I play records? JESSE

Of course. TIMOTHY

Can I play your records? JESSE

Sure. Just be careful of fingerprints. And don't scratch 'em. TIMOTHY

I won't! JESSE

I didn't say you would. TIMOTHY

(HE exits. JESSE goes to the record collection and looks through them. BINKY has returned to the turntables. IRA enters, dripping in sweat, topless, with his T-shirt tucked into the back of his pants. HE carries an ice bucket and goes to the freezer to refill it)

Can't you pick up the tempo a little bit? IRA

My concept is that I'm working my way through the summers up to the present. BINKY

Fuck concepts. They want to dance. The mirror ball isn't working. IRA

Oh, shit, it's not? Maybe the mechanism got wet. I'll take a look at it once I change the record. BINKY

(LARRY enters from outside)

People are complaining there's no vodka left. LARRY

We can't possibly have run out of vodka. Check under the porch. IRA

How many bottles did you get? LARRY

Six. IRA

LARRY

Six? Are you insane? There's forty gay men out there. What'd you think this was, a D.A.R. Luncheon?

IRA

Okay, okay, I'll run down to the marina.

BINKY

You're leaving your own party?

IRA

Fifteen minutes, tops.

BINKY

Thirty minutes, bottoms.

(A pause. THEY look at him)

I thought that was funny, even though I don't know what it means.

LARRY

Now we know where all the vodka went.

IRA

Do you like the spread?

LARRY

The mini-quiche is a little 1973, don't you think?

IRA

The fact that they're passe doesn't seem to have stopped you from scarfing down half a dozen, I've noticed.

LARRY

I haven't eaten all day! And the boeuf bourguignon is lukewarm. You should say something.

IRA

Well, since it's ninety degrees in here, it'd still be hot even if it was room temperature. The correct response, Larry, is "Thank you for inviting me."

LARRY

Inviting me? I live here.

IRA

Fuck off.

(IRA exits. JESSE puts on a record, exits downstairs)

BINKY

Geez, Larry. Maybe you'd be less of a pill if you'd get out there and mingle a little bit.

LARRY

I'm afraid my dick is too small to attract much of a following from that crowd.

BINKY

I'm sure you have other fine qualities. Perhaps you're a good cook.

LARRY

For your sake, I hope so. 'Cause you're about to eat my shit.

BINKY

I'm gonna go see if I can get that mirror ball to spin. Make sure the record doesn't skip.

(BINKY exits outside. LARRY goes to the table, picks at the food. Very slowly, HAZEL makes her way up the outside steps, considerably changed. SHE wears a turban. Her skin is ashen, dark circles under her eyes. SHE wears a kaftan that hangs on her)

HAZEL

Anybody home? Hello?

(WADE, who has fallen asleep, sits bolt upright on the sofa)

WADE

Jesus! You scared the hell out of me.

HAZEL

Sorry, honey.

WADE

No, I'm sorry, Hazel.

(HE kisses her)

So many ghosts in this house, I get scared when a real person shows up. The Countess is out by the pool, I think.

HAZEL

I know. I saw him, but I didn't want to wake him. So if he's the Countess, what does that make me?

WADE

Oh, you'll always be Queen.

(A pause)

Well... You look...

HAZEL

Oh, please, don't even try.

WADE

What are you doing here so late?

HAZEL

I was at a fund-raiser just down the walk. Forty-three thousand. Not bad.

WADE

Not bad.

HAZEL

And I've been holding this reimbursement check for two weeks now. I'm sure you both could use it.

WADE

We could, thanks.

HAZEL

Don't know why they sent it to the Grove address. I'll get it straightened out. Maybe they do direct deposit by now.

WADE

I'm worried about you getting home from here this time of night.

HAZEL

Don't. I'm certainly not going to walk; I'll get a water taxi.

WADE

How you feeling?

HAZEL

Round number four starts next week. I'm feeling like I don't think I can go through with it, but I guess I don't have much of a choice. Maggie has the right idea, She refused to continue after the first round, thinking "once bitten, twice shy." I hung on, hoping, I guess, "third time's the charm." But since there's no platitude for four, I figure I'll either survive or skip on ahead to "six feet under."

WADE

Stop.

HAZEL

Well...

WADE

And thanks again for being so understanding about the other half of our share falling through. I think these queens still don't understand that you can't get it off a toilet seat.

HAZEL

No worries. The way I see it, it's just another five thousand dollars that my hateful sister won't inherit. Any updates on the green card situation.

WADE

Waiting, waiting... If you'd married me instead of him, I could've had my card a long time ago.

HAZEL

Oh, I wish I could marry everyone...

WADE
Can I get you something? A drink?

HAZEL
No thanks, honey.

WADE
A joint?

HAZEL
That sounds nice, but I'll take a rain check.

WADE
Can I walk you to the marina?

HAZEL
That would be very gallant. Just tell him that if he's running out of claim forms, I've got plenty.

(THEY have exited. IRA enters from the inside stairs)

LARRY
Are you back already?

IRA
I got sidetracked.

(HE leers)

LARRY
You're disgusting.

IRA
Cheese it.

(BINKY re-enters)

BINKY
I think I got it going. Somebody needs to tell that guy maybe you can't be too rich, but you can be too thin.

IRA
What are you talking about?

BINKY
The guy sitting at the shallow end of the pool with his feet in the water.

IRA
I don't know who you mean.

BINKY
How could you miss him? Well, no, it's easy to miss him; he's a skeleton. Protein, darling, protein.

IRA
I still don't know who you mean.

BINKY

Go look. He's one of the only people out there not naked. He's wearing this, like, print skirt.

IRA

He's in drag? The heave-ho.

(IRA goes out to the porch)

BINKY

No, no, it's like a sari or a sarong. And I'm sorry, but it's so wrong.

IRA

Well, he's gone now. The shallow end is occupied by Kirk and Glen. I think it's Glen. His head keeps bobbing underwater.

LARRY

Emphasis on the "shallow."

(BINKY lip-synchs to the music)

IRA

(Re-entering:) Jesus, what are you gonna play next, Benny Goodman?

BINKY

Is everybody complaining? I don't care, I love this song. I'm allowed one song for myself, and this is it. It's only three fucking minutes long. I'll go back to thump-thump-thump in... two minutes and thirty-eight seconds.

(HE continues to lip-synch. The COUNTESS enters, lip-synching to the same song. HE goes to the kitchen, takes out his multiple pill bottles, starts taking the pills. Chokes on one, spits it halfway across the room)

COUNTESS

Fucking horse pill! My throat's swollen to the size of a cocktail straw, how am I supposed to swallow a fucking boulder?

(HE opens the cabinet, takes out a bottle of pills)

Well, these are small. Maybe thirty of these will make up for one of the other. Or maybe not.

(HE takes a handful of pills, starts to take them one after the other. BINKY makes his way out to the porch)

BINKY

Oh, look, look! Everybody's dancing! So there. Look! Awww, they're dancing in couples.

(IRA and LARRY exit down the outside stairs. BINKY comes back into the room, continuing to lip-synch. Suddenly, JESSE runs up the inside stairs, lip-synching and dancing wildly to the same song. HE dances with absolute freedom. BINKY and the COUNTESS act as back-up singers. The lights fade)

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

(Music: Disco from the party still in progress. Lights up.

BINKY, on his last legs, is still at the turntable. TIMOTHY and JESSE are on the sofa, watching television in the dark. An easel has been set up to the left of the staircase, facing the windows)

BINKY

(Into the microphone:) Well, boys, it's time to start winding this thing down. Or winding it up. Down. Up? Which is it? Anyway, we gotta call it quits before the cops come by for a third time. So let's say this is last call and I hope you've had as great a time as I've had at our first annual Deca Dance.

(LARRY makes his way up the stairs)

What are you still doing up?

LARRY

Can't sleep with all that fucking going on. Why haven't you called it a night?

BINKY

Ira's in our room with someone.

LARRY

Join them.

BINKY

Not my type.

LARRY

Does that matter to anyone anymore? I'm sorry, but doesn't it drive you insane?

BINKY

What?

LARRY

That fact that your boyfriend is downstairs fucking someone who's not you?

BINKY

Ira came out late. He's making up for what he thinks he missed. I came out when I was eleven. I had all the sex I wanted when I was in high school. It's not such a big deal.

LARRY

I'm not buying it.

(BINKY shrugs. LARRY goes out to the porch)

I can't believe they're still going. I thought it was winding down when I went to my room two hours ago.

BINKY

Is it winding "down"? When did you leave?

LARRY

After the Smirnoff Express arrived. God. All those naked bodies swarming around the vodka; it was like a food drop in Biafra.

(Lights come up on TIMOTHY and JESSE.
Music comes from the television)

JESSE

Is she really dead?

TIMOTHY

Is who really dead? Janet Leigh? No, she did "Bye Bye Birdie" three years later.

JESSE

No, her character. Is that it? She's dead now?

TIMOTHY

Well, of course. Look at her. You don't keep your eyes open if you're unconscious.

JESSE

So she's awake?

TIMOTHY

No, stupid. When you die, your eyes stay open.

JESSE

They do? Ewwwww. Was she really naked?

TIMOTHY

Well, of course. She was taking a shower.

JESSE

So did the mother stab her in the vagina?

(HE giggles)

TIMOTHY

Your questions are getting too weird for me; shut up and watch.

LARRY

Why do you do this, exactly?

BINKY

Do what?

LARRY

This D.J. thing. Since you're obviously not very good at it.

BINKY

Stop being such a bitch.

LARRY

I'm not trying to be mean, really. But come on. You don't match beats; you go from a high energy dance song to a dirge. You don't pay any attention to the dance floor. And you're always yakking. No one is interested in your musical memories. Can't you just play the records?

BINKY

Well, as long as you're not being mean.

LARRY

I'm sorry. I'm tired.

BINKY

I play what I like. Things that mean something to me. I figure if it means something to me, it'll mean something to somebody else.

LARRY

They wanna dance! They don't want meaning! They don't want to think.

BINKY

Maybe my style will catch on.

LARRY

When I first met you, Ira said you were an artist. He even showed me your work.

BINKY

He did?

LARRY

So why this switch to something... you don't seem to have... as much aptitude for?

BINKY

Well, Ira works for a record company.

LARRY

And?

BINKY

Well, I don't sing or play an instrument. So if I want him to help me... I've had to adapt.

LARRY

Don't, honey, don't. Don't try to mold yourself into something you're not. Just to get closer to Ira. I'm sorry if this hurts, but I'm gonna be straight with you.

BINKY

No pun intended.

LARRY

How old are you now? Twenty-two?

BINKY

Don't rush me. Twenty, this month.

LARRY

I've known Ira for a very long time. And I suppose I love him in one way or another, but he can be a total prick. He loves you for your youth. But honestly, you've probably got about five more years before he starts thinking about trading you in for a younger model. Prepare thyself.

BINKY

Well, five years is a long time. If he hasn't taken over the company by then, I don't know how much respect I'll have left for him. I'm sure I'll be ready to move on myself.

LARRY

You...

BINKY

And if he HAS gotten to the place where I expect him to be, he'll find a place for me, if only to get me out of his hair. He'll owe me that much.

LARRY

Well, listen to you. I'm afraid you've been underestimated.

BINKY

(Into microphone:) And that, my friends, is that. Good luck finding your way home. And I hope to see you at our end of the season party in September.

(HE plays his final record)

TIMOTHY

Hey, are you asleep? Jesse? Well, so much for seeing the sun rise.

(HE picks JESSE up in his arms and carries him downstairs. As HE does, we hear the COUNTESS offstage)

COUNTESS

Norman, what do you think you're doing? Don't you touch me, don't!

(WADE enters up the stairs, carrying the COUNTESS in his arms)

No, I will not hide in the fruit cellar! You think I'm fruity, huh?

WADE

I know you're fruity.

(HE puts him down on the sofa)

COUNTESS

I really can walk by myself. It just takes a little longer.

BINKY
See you in the morning.

LARRY
It is morning.

(BINKY exits downstairs. LARRY goes out to the porch to watch the stragglers leave. HAZEL and MARGARET slowly make their way up the outside stairs)

HAZEL
It amazes me that our neighbors are able to get their grass to grow in sand.

MARGARET
They have a lot of that beach grass.

HAZEL
Awww. So naive. That's what I love about you.

MARGARET
I'm gonna go make sure everyone's still alive.

(SHE exits downstairs. The COUNTESS joins LARRY on the porch, as HE makes his way down the stairs)

COUNTESS
Red sky at morning.

WADE
Now what are you mourning?

COUNTESS
No, it's a saying. "Red sky at morning, sailor's warning." Means bad weather today.

(MARGARET returns)

HAZEL
Everything okay?

MARGARET
He's asleep. Or pretending to be.

HAZEL
Want another gin and tonic?

MARGARET
Oh, God. The last time I remember drinking this much was... never. Sure. Make sure it's a light one.

(HAZEL goes to the kitchen to make the drinks)

HAZEL
And was that the first time you smoked pot?

I did NOT smoke pot. MARGARET

I saw you. HAZEL

One puff! One puff. MARGARET

Sometimes that's all it takes. HAZEL

Oh, I didn't feel anything. MARGARET

You fit in quite well, I have to say. HAZEL

Oh, I liked all of them. MARGARET

Really? All? HAZEL

Well... MARGARET

(THEY laugh)

The feeling was mutual, I could tell. You spent quite a bit of time with Joyce. HAZEL

She grew up about ten miles from where I did! MARGARET

I think she's probably got a little bit of a crush. HAZEL

Oh, stop. We were talking. MARGARET

I just wanna make sure you know that... she's... you know. A daughter of Bilitis. HAZEL

Joyce Bilitis? What is that, Greek? MARGARET

Oh, honey, that's not her name. It's like... "A friend of Dorothy." HAZEL

Dorothy who? MARGARET

Dorothy Gale. From Kansas. HAZEL

MARGARET

Which one was she? The one in the muu-muu?

HAZEL

No, it's... You've never heard that expression? "Friend of Dorothy"? Means a fag.

MARGARET

Oh.

HAZEL

And a Daughter of Bilitis...

MARGARET

Oh. Why two different terms? Why not just say "Dorothy Bilitis"?

HAZEL

(Laughs:) Well, you can be sure from now on I will.

WADE

Now the doctor said I can grind these big ones up and it doesn't make them any less effective. And then mix them in with applesauce.

COUNTESS

Can you mix it in with something a little less revolting?

WADE

Like what?

COUNTESS

Oh, I don't know. Crème Brûlée.

(HE brings a plate of pills and a dish of applesauce to the COUNTESS, who lies down on the sofa)

Thank you. Now go back to bed.

WADE

No, no, I'll carry you back down.

COUNTESS

No, please, I feel guilty enough. I think I want to stay up for awhile, anyway.

WADE

You sure?

(The COUNTESS nods)

COUNTESS

Will music bother you?

WADE

Not at all.

(The COUNTESS stands, puts a CD in the CD player. WADE exits downstairs. The COUNTESS goes back to the sofa, takes his pills, lies down)

MARGARET

Well, I don't know about you, but I'm gonna call it a night.

HAZEL

Really? You sure? One more nightcap?

MARGARET

No, God, no.

(SHE stands. HAZEL takes her hand)

HAZEL

Can you give me an extra set of sheets for the sofa?

(SHE goes to the sofa, where the COUNTESS lies)

MARGARET

You don't have to sleep on the sofa. Unless you want to.

HAZEL

Well, I'm not going to make you sleep on the sofa.

MARGARET

No, I don't intend to.

HAZEL

Well, then...

MARGARET

It's a queen size bed. I hate to sleep alone.

HAZEL

Do you really think that's a good idea?

MARGARET

I do.

(SHE kisses her)

HAZEL

You're asking for trouble.

MARGARET

Only trouble if you make it so.

(SHE takes HAZEL's hand, leads her downstairs. The COUNTESS takes his dish of applesauce, goes to the easel. HE looks out the window, starts to sketch with pastels. Occasionally, HE eats. Slowly, JESSE makes his way upstairs. HE goes to the kitchen, pours himself some juice. HE goes to the table and begins working on his colored pencil drawing. The light changes. MARGARET makes her way up the stairs. Goes to the kitchen)

MARGARET

It's good you didn't stay up to watch the sunrise. Since there wasn't one.

(JESSE nods, continues to work)

Must be the last of that hurricane. No beach today, kiddo.

JESSE

You said we would go to the movies in Sayville today.

MARGARET

That's not gonna happen either.

JESSE

You promised.

MARGARET

You want to get on the ferry in this weather?

JESSE

I don't care.

MARGARET

You're crazy.

JESSE

This is the last day "Cry Of The Banshee" is playing.

MARGARET

Well, you'll see it when it comes on T.V.

JESSE

Oh, sure, in ten years. And they'll cut out all the good stuff.

MARGARET

Them's the breaks.

JESSE

Tim will take me.

MARGARET

Tim went back to the city. He won't be back 'til Friday.

JESSE

You're so unfair. I'm bored.

MARGARET

Well, so am I. But I won't always be here to entertain you, you'll have to find ways of entertaining yourself. What do you want for breakfast?

JESSE

I'm not hungry.

(BINKY makes his way slowly up the stairs. HE goes to the kitchen, pours himself some coffee. Flops down on the sofa, reading a book. WADE enters from outside with a bag of groceries and the Sunday Times)

WADE

Look at you. The early bird.

(HE starts to put the groceries away)

COUNTESS

I never understood that saying. What would I want with a worm?

WADE

It's a metaphor.

COUNTESS

Listen to you. Fancy.

WADE

I'm glad you're working.

COUNTESS

Me too. Does it rate a kiss?

WADE

Lemme see.

(HE looks at the painting)

Definitely.

(HE kisses him)

You're awfully chipper for someone who just had their stomach pumped.

COUNTESS

Am I? (A question:) My meds are finally working? I have no idea.

WADE

Such a crummy day, too.

COUNTESS

Maybe that's it. I feel some comfort in knowing that everyone else on the island is feeling the way I do on a regular basis. I don't find that I spend a lot of time sitting around in a fury that I could croak at a moment's notice, that I haven't done anything with my life, that I have no... legacy. No. It's just this constant feeling... A rainy day at the beach.

WADE

(Referring to the picture:) The sun is shining.

COUNTESS

You said I should paint what I see.

WADE

Why aren't you using your oils?

COUNTESS

Oil is too permanent. I wanted something... ephemeral. Unstable. Like pastels. Like me.

MARGARET

Isn't there anything on T.V.?

JESSE

Ugh. It's all tennis and race car driving and baseball crap.

MARGARET

Why don't you play a game? Doesn't Hazel have Scrabble in the closet?

JESSE

It's missing three Es, an R, two Ns and a G.

MARGARET

You could play cards.

JESSE

By myself?

MARGARET

I'll play with you.

JESSE

Where are the cards?

MARGARET

How do I know? You had them last.

JESSE

No I didn't. You took them from me that night two weeks ago when you and Witch Hazel wanted to play.

MARGARET

God. Mind like a steel trap. What did I do with them?

(SHE starts to search the room. LARRY makes his way up the inside stairs)

BINKY

Morning.

LARRY

Yes, I suppose it is.

(HE goes to the kitchen, pours coffee. Goes to the table, looks at his notes)

What are you reading?

BINKY

"Interview With The Vampire."

LARRY

Any good?

BINKY

No.

LARRY

Then why are you reading it?

BINKY

It's that, or poke my eyes out with a fork.

LARRY

Do you want to take a look at the thing I'm working on?

BINKY

Well... I appreciate that you'd be interested in my opinion, but... No offense, Larry, and I'm sure it's my own stupidity, but when I read your stuff... I find myself reading the same paragraph five times and I still don't know what it means.

LARRY

Well, yes, maybe that IS your stupidity.

BINKY

Like I said.

(MARGARET find the cards on top of the refrigerator, gives them to JESSE)

MARGARET

What do you want to play?

JESSE

Gin.

MARGARET

Okay. You deal first.

JESSE

How many cards in a deck of cards?

MARGARET

Fifty-two.

(JESSE counts the cards)

WADE

I got some breakfast-y things, if you're hungry.

COUNTESS

You were gone long enough.

(The COUNTESS comes to the table, starts looking through the paper)

WADE

I didn't know I was on the clock. I had coffee at the marina.

COUNTESS

Alone?

WADE

Of course alone. Who do you think I'd be with?

(The COUNTESS looks at the magazine)

COUNTESS

Oh, you started the crossword puzzle.

WADE

It's too hard.

COUNTESS

I wish you'd... Well, six across is wrong.

(HE picks up a pencil and starts to erase it)

WADE

It helps me with my English.

COUNTESS

Which means that six down is also wrong.

WADE

I just wanted to see if I could...

COUNTESS

And you've done it in pen, so I can't...

WADE

I didn't have a pencil with me.

COUNTESS

And SEVEN down is wrong... goddamnit, why couldn't you... the whole thing is...

(IN trying to erase it, he rips though the paper)

COUNTESS (CONTINUED)

Shit, shit, shit!

(HE rips the page out of the magazine, crumples it, then rips up the magazine)

WADE

Hey, hold on, hold on.

JESSE

...forty-six, forty-seven, forty-eight, forty-nine. There's only forty-nine cards!

MARGARET

Well, we can use slips of paper, or something. Index cards.

JESSE

But then we'll know which cards those are! This stinks!

(HE throws the cards across the room. A pause. SHE laughs)

MARGARET

Okay. Feel better? Now pick those up.

(SHE exits downstairs)

COUNTESS

Do you have any idea that of the very few things I have left to look forward to, and there ARE very few, this crossword puzzle is one of them? Goddamnit. What, and you're smiling? This is funny?

WADE

I know it's just the disease talking.

COUNTESS

Oh, no, my dear, that's where you're wrong. If it was the disease talking, it would sound like this: (Low, guttural:) You cock-sucking, motherfucking son of a bitch, I'd like to chop your head off and fuck the bloody stump.

(A pause)

WADE

Well then, I guess I'm forewarned.

(THEY laugh. JESSE slowly picks up the cards)

BINKY

With this shitty weather, I think we're gonna leave early. So you'll have the place to yourself. Are you gonna stay straight through the week?

LARRY
Haven't decided.

BINKY
I think we'll take the 1:15.

LARRY
Has that ferry ever sunk?

BINKY
What a sweet thought, Larry. Thanks.

(HE throws down his book and exits
downstairs)

LARRY
No, no, I didn't mean it that way. (Under his breath:) Oh,
fuck you.

(HE starts to type, very slowly)

WADE
Let's adopt.

(A pause)

COUNTESS
What was it about that tantrum that made you think "Oh,
he'll be a great father"?

WADE
No, you were saying... about how you have no legacy...

(JESSE puts the cards away, goes back to
his drawing)

COUNTESS
That's very sweet of you, but really, it's too late for
that. Let's talk about you. What happens to you.

WADE
I don't like where this is going.

COUNTESS
I'm just saying: I worry about you. Have you thought about
what happens when your student visa expires? If we're not
able to get your green card before I kick the bucket.

WADE
Stop it. That's not the priority now.

(JESSE goes to the kitchen phone, dials
a number)

JESSE
Oh, hi, could I speak to Catherine, please? Oh, I'm sorry.

(HE hangs up)

COUNTESS

You should find somebody at school who'll marry you. Surely you must have some fag hag buzzing around you. Or some lesbian with a warm heart. And although we've never talked about it, but I want you to know that I have no problem with you... seeing other people.

WADE

Great. Me neither, if that's what you want.

COUNTESS

Yes, it's true. I still turn heads when I walk down the street, but for all the wrong reasons. I'm serious. I think you should have an affair. Or something.

WADE

Furthest thing from my mind right now. I'm here for the duration. That's all. You're the one I'm worried about.

COUNTESS

I told you, that was... a passing fancy. I'm here for the duration now, too. Gimme a kiss.

(HE does. JESSE goes to the phone,
dials)

JESSE

Hi, is Catherine there? Are you sure? I'm sorry.

(HE hangs up)

COUNTESS

Do you still remember what it felt like before sex was lethal? When infidelity was purely an emotional risk and not a physical threat? It's only, what? Not even ten years, and I forget.

WADE

I was more worried about dying of starvation at the time.

COUNTESS

Sorry, that was tacky of me.

(A pause)

There was a party here in the summer of '79. It was supposed to be the first in an annual event. We had one the next two years, but by '82 it was all but forgotten. Forty, fifty guys at least. All dead. I'm the only one left. And not for very much longer. Just ten years, and it's all been... I wonder if we knew then that we were about to enter our last decade, if we...

WADE

If you what?

COUNTESS

If we'd have done anything differently.

WADE

What would you have done differently?

COUNTESS

I'd have met you sooner. Before... When I still had... I was different then.

(WADE goes to the COUNTESS, holds him.
LARRY gets up from the table, sits on
the sofa and picks up the extension
phone, dials. JESSE goes to the kitchen
phone, dials)

JESSE

Hi, could I please speak to Jesse? Oh, crap.

(HE hangs up)

LARRY

Hey, it's Larry, what's up? Nothing, just checkin' in. No, I'm at the beach this week. Yes, of course on MY weekend, it rains. Why don't you come out?

COUNTESS

Wanna go downstairs?

WADE

Whatever you're up for.

COUNTESS

My one moment of horniness this month, better take advantage of it. Follow me to my downstairs lair; I'll shoot you with my poison ray gun.

(WADE takes the COUNTESS downstairs)

LARRY

No, I'm here 'til the weekend. Friday I have to get out. Oh, come on, I'll bet you could use it. Come on, just three days, we'll go back on Friday. Well, it's going to stop eventually. What, are you made of spun sugar? Wouldn't you rather be in the rain at the beach than in that humid, sweltering apartment? Oh, please, what do you need? T-shirts and a bathing suit. What are you talking, it's a train ride. All right, excuse me, a train and a ferry. You can be here in two hours. I thought you quit your job. Well, bring it with you. You can do that work out here. Oh, please. I can pay for your train ticket and the ferry, if that's all it's about. Come on, the mid-week teas are fabulous. Not too crowded, and all the pretty staff boys wander around looking to get laid before their boyfriends show up on the weekends. You're kidding. Listen, if all that's standing between you coming out here is a lousy hundred bucks, I'LL give you a hundred bucks. Uh-huh. Yeah, right. Fine. No, I said fine. I tried to offer you a nice getaway and you don't want it, so go fuck yourself.

(HE hangs up. HE goes to the kitchen, takes a bag of chips, eats. Gets his address book off the countertop, thumbs through it. Finds a number, starts to dial. Thinks twice, hangs up)

LARRY (CONTINUED)

That desperate I'm not.

(HE goes out to the porch to check the rain. TIMOTHY slowly makes his way up the outside stairs, lugging two suitcases)

TIMOTHY

Hey, Jesse, can you get the door for me?

(JESSE jumps up from the table)

JESSE

Tim! Yay! Tim's back!

(HE opens the door, and TIMOTHY enters, bringing his suitcases)

Oh my God, it's been so boring out here, it's rained like every day. We were supposed to go to the movies but then we couldn't because the water was too rough, and there was nothing good on T.V. all week, it was all reruns. I really love that Jefferson Airplane album, I listened to it like fifty times. But I was really careful with it, I didn't scratch it. There's a scratch at the beginning of the fourth song on the second side, but that was there the first time I played it, I swear.

TIMOTHY

Whoa, whoa, slow down buckaroo. I'm here for the duration, I'm just gonna bring my suitcases downstairs. I brought some more records out with me; they're in the wagon. Can you bring 'em in for me?

JESSE

Sure.

(JESSE exits outside, TIMOTHY starts for the stairs, is met by HAZEL on her way up)

HAZEL

Welcome home!

TIMOTHY

You'll be sorry you said that; it'll turn into a self-fulfilling prophesy.

HAZEL

It didn't go well?

TIMOTHY

Well, no, I have no home anymore. I looked at ten apartments; all dumps. I have a storage unit on West 47th Street and these two suitcases.

HAZEL

Did you have a scene?

TIMOTHY

No, it was a monologue. I knew he wouldn't have the balls to be there when I packed. Just a note. The chickenshit. He doesn't like it when I get emotional. Not that I can blame him. I'm sick of hearing me cry, too.

HAZEL

Awww, sweetie. You know it IS possible to fall in love more than once in a life time. I know.

(MARGARET enters from downstairs, as

JESSE slowly pulls a milk crate full of records up the outside stairs)

Speaking of which...

MARGARET

Oh, Tim. You're back.

TIMOTHY

Morning.

MARGARET

Well, needless to say, you've been missed.

TIMOTHY

Thanks. That helps, actually.

MARGARET

Not by me.

(JESSE enters, dragging the crate across the floor)

What the hell have you got now?

TIMOTHY

Oh, he's helping me.

MARGARET

Well, don't drag it across the floor! You're scratching...!

HAZEL

Oh, don't worry about it...

TIMOTHY

I got it, I got it.

(TIMOTHY picks up the milk crate, carries it to a corner of the room)

Thanks, Jesse.

JESSE

Can I look through them? Can we play one?

TIMOTHY

Sure, sure.

(JESSE sits on the floor, looks through
the records)

(To MARGARET, sotto voce:) It turned my day around a
hundred and eighty degrees to come back here and see Jesse.

HAZEL

You should think about being a Big Brother. Or even a
foster parent, maybe.

MARGARET

You should start with a dog.

HAZEL

Maggie, that's not very...

TIMOTHY

No, no...

MARGARET

Well, really. I don't mean anything by it.

TIMOTHY

No, she's right. Who's going to give a child to a homeless
faggot?

MARGARET

No, Tim, I didn't mean...

JESSE

Did you go to any movies?

TIMOTHY

What, Jesse?

JESSE

When you were in the city, did you see any new movies?

TIMOTHY

No, I didn't have time.

JESSE

Did you watch "Dark Shadows"?

TIMOTHY

Actually, yes, while I was packing.

JESSE

Ooooh, what's happening? Where are they?

TIMOTHY

Oh, they're still in parallel time. Hallie saw David in the
room in the west wing wearing clothes from 1879 or whenever,
and then she turned around and saw David in the present
wearing his regular clothes. It was creepy.

JESSE
Oh, I wish I could see it.

TIMOTHY
Well, you'll be going home soon. You'll catch up.

JESSE
Oh, wait'll you see all the beach glass I found!

(HE runs downstairs)

MARGARET
Can you keep him entertained for a few minutes while Hazel and I pick up his birthday cake?

TIMOTHY
Sure, sure.

(MARGARET and HAZEL exit. Very slowly, the COUNTESS makes his way up the stairs, goes back to his easel. TIMOTHY takes his two suitcases downstairs. JESSE returns with a jar of sea glass)

JESSE
Tim? Tim?
(HE goes out to the porch)
Tim?
(HE re-enters)
Witch Hazel? Mommy?
(HE turns on the television. Fiddles with the antenna. After a moment, amid much static, the theme to "Dark Shadows" plays)
I got it! Look, I got it! Tim!
(TIMOTHY returns from downstairs)
Look, look!

TIMOTHY
Look at what?

JESSE
It's "Dark Shadows"!

TIMOTHY
You can't watch that. It's all snow.

JESSE
I can hear it.

TIMOTHY
Well, barely.

JESSE
I'm watching.

TIMOTHY
Have fun.

(TIMOTHY sits at the table, empties the jar of beach glass on the table. LARRY enters from downstairs, goes to the kitchen, makes a very strong Bloody Mary. HE goes out to the porch and sits, sipping it)

JESSE

You know what I don't understand? Why on "Dark Shadows" are they always going back in time to fix stuff. Like, I mean, they're always going back to like 1792. Why don't they just go back to last week to fix it?

TIMOTHY

Well, with Barnabas, they have to go back to before the vampire curse started. The curse happened in 1792, or whenever. Last week, he was still a vampire. They have to go back to the time when he wasn't.

JESSE

Oh. Yeah, I get it.

(LARRY re-enters, goes to the phone, dials)

LARRY

Hi, it's Larry. From last weekend? You weren't going to call me, were you? Well, I'm calling you. How 'bout lunch today? On me. I can meet you at the Boat slip. Uh-huh. Well, I'm out here all week, what's your week like? Oh, that's too bad. No, I'm not back out again until the 20th. Great. Do you still have my number? Okay, terrific. I'd like to see you again. Bye.

(HE hangs up, goes back to the porch.
JESSE clicks off the television)

JESSE

Can't see it anymore. Poop. Oh, look, did you see? Did you see? I found a piece of purple beach glass.

(HE joins TIMOTHY at the table)

TIMOTHY

You did not. Where?

JESSE

Right there.

(HE picks a piece out of the pile)

TIMOTHY

That's not glass. It's a clamshell, you dummy.

JESSE

It is?

TIMOTHY
Well, it's only purple on one side. On this side, it's white.

JESSE
Oh.
(A pause)
You're very smart.
(A pause)
No, I mean it. You're very smart.

TIMOTHY
Eat shit.

JESSE
Oh, I'm telling.

TIMOTHY
Be my guest.

JESSE
What should we do with all of it?

TIMOTHY
Well, we'll make something out of it. Most of this is junk, though.

JESSE
It is?

TIMOTHY
Well, look at this piece, it's still sharp. Just because it's on the beach, doesn't mean it's beach glass. You need to throw some of these back and let them cook a little more.

JESSE
I guess.

TIMOTHY
I mean, we need to pick out just the really beautiful pieces. I don't really like the brown ones. Brown is so... pedestrian. Beer bottles. Brown you can find truckloads of. This green is pretty boring, too. Lots of stuff comes in green bottles; Seven-Up. All that lemon/lime shit. The aquamarine is nice, since Coke is the only thing that comes in an aquamarine bottle. But people drink a lot of Coke, so it's not that rare. The best piece here is this royal blue piece. 'Cause what comes in a royal blue bottle?

JESSE
Milk of Magnesia.

TIMOTHY
Exactly. That's about it. And not too many people have beach parties where they sit around drinking Milk of Magnesia. So this is the rarest.

JESSE
What about a red piece?

TIMOTHY
Never seen it. Have you?

JESSE
Well...

TIMOTHY
Can you think of anything that comes in a red bottle?

JESSE
Ummm...

TIMOTHY
Exactly. No such thing.

JESSE
Maybe if a car crashed into the water, its back lights would break maybe and wash up on the shore. Then you'd have red sea glass.

TIMOTHY
Well. Maybe. I think they're made out of plastic, though.

JESSE
Not an old car. Before plastic was invented.

TIMOTHY
Well, maybe. Keep searching.

(HAZEL enters from outside)

HAZEL
Ira?
(LARRY looks up from his typewriter)
Oh, hi, Larry, I'm sorry, I thought it was the other boys' weekend.

LARRY
No, Hazel, I'm actually allowed out of my cage every other weekend.

HAZEL
Sorry, I didn't mean anything...

LARRY
But I'm glad you're here. The sump pump or whatever that machine is next to my bedroom window is making this god-awful grinding noise. Day and night.

HAZEL
I'll send someone over.

LARRY
And how long is that going to take?

HAZEL

Couldn't say.

LARRY

I'll bet you'd hear it if you went down there.

HAZEL

Well, I'm not a mechanic, Larry, so it doesn't really matter if I hear it or not.

LARRY

I thought dykes knew how to fix everything.

(A pause)

HAZEL

We don't.

LARRY

Sorry. Let me make you a drink.

HAZEL

No, I've got to get home.

LARRY

Come on, one drink. You can't stay for one drink?

HAZEL

Sorry, not today.

(SHE exits outside. WADE enters from downstairs)

LARRY

(Shouting off:) Be sure to tell them it's an emergency! (To himself:) I'm sure you have lots of important carpets to munch.

WADE

Well, It's nice to see you working. And how are we this morning?

COUNTESS

We? I'm afraid I can only speak for me.

WADE

Any difference?

COUNTESS

Well, I can't read the crossword puzzle, goddamnit.

WADE

Oh.

COUNTESS

The only saving grace of the CMV will be when I can no longer see myself in the mirror.

Turning morbid. WADE

Oh, I'm sorry. I'm sliding down a sunbeam into a rainbow-colored ice cream sundae. With puppies. COUNTESS

Okay, that's worse. WADE

Owl's Eye. COUNTESS

Huh? WADE

That's what they call CMV. The virus, under a microscope, looks like the head of an owl. Two big eyes.
(With a piece of charcoal, he quickly sketches in a notebook, flips it over, places it on the easel, facing front)
Owl's eye.

(WADE looks at the COUNTESS' work on the easel)

If it's any consolation, I love that. Are you hungry? WADE

Not in the least. COUNTESS

(HAZEL tiptoes up to the porch, gesticulates wildly to TIMOTHY)

Oh, Jesse, look over here! TIMOTHY

What? JESSE

No, don't look there! TIMOTHY

What? Why? JESSE

No, look at me! TIMOTHY

What, look at what? JESSE

(MARGARET slowly makes her way up the inside steps, holding a birthday cake with lit candles)

MARGARET

(Starting:) "Happy Birthday To You..."
 (HAZEL joins, carrying in a large wrapped box. TIMOTHY joins the song. JESSE is obviously delighted. MARGARET puts the cake on the table. THEY finish singing)

Make a wish!

(JESSE closes his eyes, blows out the candles. Opens his eyes, looks at TIMOTHY)

JESSE

Oh, you're still here.

MARGARET

Jesse, that's horrible.

TIMOTHY

Thanks a lot.

JESSE

It was a joke, dummy.

MARGARET

That's not funny.

TIMOTHY

Well, in spite of that, I still got you a present.

(HE exits downstairs. HAZEL presents her box)

HAZEL

This is for you.

JESSE

I thought I was getting an ice cream cake.

MARGARET

Well, they don't have ice cream cakes at the marina, so you'll have to suffer with this, Ungrateful.

(JESSE rips open HAZEL's gift. It's a large ceramic owl)

JESSE

Oh, you got it! Oh, boy! Oh, I love it, I love it. Thank you. This is the best owl in my whole collection. Thank you.

HAZEL

You're very welcome.

(HE kisses her as TIMOTHY returns with a small wrapped package)

Look, look!

JESSE

Is that the famous owl? Do you get a lot of rodents in your apartment?

TIMOTHY

What?

JESSE

Well, that's what it's for.

TIMOTHY

What?

JESSE

It's a decoy. Farmers put them in the field to scare the rats away. It's like a scarecrow for rats.

TIMOTHY

I don't care, I love it.

JESSE

(HE takes the owl out to the porch, places it on one of the newel posts, facing out)

TIMOTHY

I hurt his feelings, I guess.

MARGARET

Unfortunately, that's pretty easy to do.

TIMOTHY

Well, God knows there's nothing wrong with being sensitive. Better than the alternative.

(HE goes out onto the porch)

TIMOTHY

I'm sorry. You hurt my feelings, so I had to hurt you back. My fault. Happy birthday, bat-breath.

(HE gives JESSE the gift)

JESSE

Thanks, pig face.

(JESSE rips it open. A pair of teardrop-shaped sunglasses)

Ooooh, I love them! I love them!

(HE runs inside)

Look, look!

MARGARET

I didn't hear you say thank you.

JESSE

Thank you, Tim.

MARGARET

Yes, thank you, Tim. But you shouldn't spend that kind of money.

TIMOTHY

Oh, please. They were five bucks on Eighth Street in the Village.

MARGARET

Now, remember: those are only sunglasses. You still have to wear your other glasses.

JESSE

What do you mean?

MARGARET

Well, you can wear those on top of your real glasses.

JESSE

Like this?

(HE puts them on top of the glasses he's wearing)

Oh, no, no, I look like a retard.

MARGARET

You need prescription lenses.

(JESSE takes off his glasses, puts on just the sunglasses)

JESSE

I think these have a little bit of prescription in them. I can see great.

HAZEL

They look really cool on you.

JESSE

They do?

(HE runs to the toaster to look at himself. HAZEL gestures to MARGARET: "Let it go.")

MARGARET

Now you have to find my present.

JESSE

What do you mean?

MARGARET

Well, I didn't wrap it. But it's in the room somewhere.

JESSE

(Looking around:) It is?

MARGARET

Uh-huh.

JESSE
I don't see it. (To HAZEL:) Do you see it?

HAZEL
Well I already know what it is, honey.

JESSE
(To TIMOTHY:) Do you know what it is?

TIMOTHY
No idea.

JESSE
Do you see it?

TIMOTHY
Not yet.

(THEY both look around the room)

MARGARET
See? That's why you need prescription glasses.

JESSE
Is it up here or downstairs?

MARGARET
No, it's up here.

TIMOTHY
Oh, I see it.

JESSE
You do? Where is it?

TIMOTHY
No, you have to find it.

(JESSE moves over by the sofa)

MARGARET
No, you're getting colder.

(HE goes up towards the stereo. As HE does, BINKY enters from downstairs, goes to the sofa, reads his book)

Colder.

(HE moves towards the kitchen)

HAZEL
That's it. A little warmer.

(HE moves towards the table)

HAZEL
 Yep. Warmer.
 (HE moves to the downstage side of the table)

TIMOTHY
 You're getting cold again.
 (HE moves towards the outside door)

MARGARET
 Now you're getting hot.
 (HE moves closer to the door)
 Getting hotter.
 (HE moves upstage)
 Cooling off.
 (HE moves downstage)

HAZEL
 Ooh, hot, hot, hot.

TIMOTHY
 You're burning up.
 (JESSE realizes HE's standing in front of a framed picture on the stage right wall)

JESSE
 Oh.
 (HE touches it)

MARGARET
 It's that picture you've been working on. I thought it was so pretty, we should get it framed.

JESSE
 Oh.

MARGARET
 I think it looks really nice there, but you can bring it home to the city with you.

JESSE
 But I wasn't finished with it.

MARGARET
 What?

JESSE
 I hadn't finished it yet.

MARGARET
 But you signed your name on it. I thought it was done.

TIMOTHY

It looks beautiful.

JESSE

No, no, I still... I was going to put in a little boy building a sandcastle. Now it's just an empty beach.

HAZEL

I still think it's a very pretty beach.

JESSE

No, no. I...

MARGARET

Well, I'm sorry.

JESSE

No, it's okay. I can do another one.

MARGARET

I think this one is perfect, Jesse.

(JESSE slowly exits downstairs. TIMOTHY and MARGARET look at each other, shrug. MARGARET moves to the kitchen, cleans up the cake and plates. TIMOTHY goes out to the porch. HAZEL moves over to BINKY)

HAZEL

What did Ira get you?

BINKY

(Shrugs) I guess he forgot.

HAZEL

You're kidding.

BINKY

I don't think he likes the idea of me getting older.

HAZEL

Maybe he's got something planned for tonight.

BINKY

I doubt it. He said he was leaving early to try to beat the traffic.

HAZEL

Oh, sweetie. Well, come over to the house, we'll make you a fabulous dinner. All your favorites.

BINKY

I don't know if I'm really up for it.

HAZEL

You know Maggie would love to see you today; she just can't make it, her legs are...

BINKY

No, no, really, thank you, but I don't think I'd be very much fun.

HAZEL

What do we care? What are you going to do, just sit here and mope?

BINKY

Please, Hazel. No. I don't want to.

(HAZEL goes to the sofa, kisses him)

HAZEL

Happy birthday.

(SHE exits outside, stands looking towards the beach with TIMOTHY.
MARGARET goes to the top of the steps)

MARGARET

Hey, spoiled brat. I'll tell you what: come with me to the Marina and I'll buy you anything you want at the Driftwood Shop.

(JESSE appears on the stairs)

JESSE

Anything?

MARGARET

Don't make me regret my words. Anything within reason.

JESSE

What's within reason?

MARGARET

You can't have a yacht. Your class assignment came in the mail today. You have Miss Hansen this year.

JESSE

Oh, good. She's supposed to be really nice.
(THEY start to exit down the outside stairs)

Oh, no, wait, it's Mrs. Jantzen that's the nice one. Miss Hansen's supposed to be horrible.

(THEY're gone)

HAZEL

You're welcome to stay as long as you like. Even past the end of the season, if you want to.

TIMOTHY

Oh, God, I can't imagine... that would be too...

HAZEL

Don't think about any of it right this second. Re-group. Re-energize. I kind of like this house being... a stopping point. A way station. For you. For Maggie and Jesse. For souls in transition.

TIMOTHY

Transitioning to what, is what scares me. No, no, I'll be gone before the summer's over, I promise.

(IRA enters from downstairs, goes to the kitchen, pours himself some coffee)

IRA

Wasn't last night fabulous?

(BINKY shrugs)

Oh, come on! When everything hits at once like that. In the middle of a great groove on a great song, everybody with their shirts off, everyone's drugs kicking in at the same time, it's like great sex, there's nothing better. It's so... tribal. Just this glistening mass of gorgeous men, moving as one.

BINKY

Some of those guys could use deodorant.

IRA

Oh, that's all part of the experience, you prissy thing.

(JESSE runs up the stairs and into the house, sobbing. His hair has been cut and shellacked into a kind of pompadour. HE immediately runs downstairs. MARGARET follows up the outside stairs)

MARGARET

It had to be done! You couldn't go back to school looking like that!

TIMOTHY

What happened?

MARGARET

I had to bring him to the barber. (SHE shouts downstairs:) You don't want people to keep thinking you're a little girl, do you?

JESSE

(Off:) I don't care!

MARGARET

You know, you should put away your paints, you're a much better actor!

(JESSE sobs offstage)

TIMOTHY

Come on, Jesse. Lemme see.

No!

JESSE

MARGARET
Please don't encourage his madness.

TIMOTHY
Jesse! Come on, you have to see me sooner or later.
(Slowly, JESSE makes his way up the stairs, pouty)
It's really not so bad.

JESSE
I hate it.

TIMOTHY
It looks fine.

JESSE
I look stupid.

MARGARET
I tired of listening to this.
(SHE exits downstairs)

TIMOTHY
It'll grow back. I don't even think they took that much off.

JESSE
You sound like my father.

TIMOTHY
We could get you a wig.

JESSE
Do you have one?

TIMOTHY
I don't think it would work on you.

JESSE
How long do you think it'll take me to grow it as long as yours?

TIMOTHY
I dunno. Your hair probably grows pretty fast at your age. Six months, maybe.

JESSE
Six months?!

TIMOTHY
You'll look just like Jesus in time for Christmas. You know, it only looks so bad because they put all that greasy kid stuff in. We'll wash it out and I bet you it'll look a hundred times better.

JESSE

I loved my hair.

TIMOTHY

Here's my advice for the day: never love anything too much.

(HE takes JESSE downstairs)

WADE

I can't do crème brûlée, but here, I made you some rice pudding. What the hell is that?

(HE grabs The COUNTESS' hand. There is a blot of red in the middle of his palm.

WADE picks it off his hand)

Oh, my God, I thought you'd developed a stigmata.

COUNTESS

No, it's just a piece of beach glass. Red.

WADE

Wow. Beautiful. It's like a jewel.

COUNTESS

I always meant to make a necklace out of it. Or a ring. Something.

(GEORGE enters from downstairs, wearing the baby in a sling. HE goes to the kitchen, fills a bottle with juice, gives it to the baby. HAZEL enters from outside)

MARGARET

I'm glad you're here. Have you heard from Tim?

HAZEL

No. Why? Should I have?

MARGARET

He didn't come home last night.

HAZEL

Oh. Maybe he got lucky. Last week of the season.

MARGARET

Yeah, but how do I explain that to Jesse?

HAZEL

He's a free man.

MARGARET

I couldn't care less where he is. Jesse's the one. He wants to put out an all-point bulletin. He was still here at two AM, though.

HAZEL

How do you know?

MARGARET

He's a night owl. He paces the floor all night sometimes.

HAZEL

Well, two AM on a Friday out here; the evening's just starting. I'll take a stroll through the meat rack on my way home, see if I can find any clues.

(SHE exits outside. JESSE enters from downstairs)

JESSE

Did the phone ring?

MARGARET

No. Not yet.

JESSE

I'm getting scared. He left his camera behind.

MARGARET

Well, that must mean he's coming back.

JESSE

I don't want to be alone in my room without Tim there. If he doesn't come back by tonight, can I sleep in your room?

MARGARET

Oh, sweetie, Hazel's staying over tonight. You'll be fine in your room. If you have a nightmare, you can wake me up.

JESSE

I'm gonna walk in the other direction on the beach. Maybe he's there.

(JESSE exits down the outside stairs.
GEORGE exits out to the porch. HE sees something offstage)

GEORGE

Hey! Hey, excuse me, but this is private property! Little boy! Can you hear me?

(A pause)

What's the matter? Where do you live? Hello?

(HE goes back inside, shouts downstairs)

Randy? Randy? Come here a minute.

(RANDY enters from downstairs)

RANDY

What?

GEORGE

There's a little boy sitting in our pool.

RANDY

Who is he?

GEORGE

Never seen him before. He's just sitting there, crying. I don't think he hears me.

RANDY

What do you want me to do?

GEORGE

I don't know. Prevent a lawsuit.

(RANDY goes out to the porch)

That's all we need is some little kid drowning in our backyard.

RANDY

Well, he's not there now.

GEORGE

Really?

RANDY

You must've scared him. I'll go look.

(HE exits down the stairs. GEORGE sits at the table, goes through some mail. IRA enters from downstairs, goes to the phone, dials)

IRA

Hey, it's me. Ira. Listen, I'm running low. Can you swing by a delivery today? Fabulous. Same as last time. Two-fifty? Last month it was two hundred. Aren't you having any end-of-season specials? Well, no, of course I still want it, you've got me over a barrel. Send the brunet delivery kid. No, no, the short one. Great.

(HE hangs up, picks up a Pyrex pie plate off the countertop. Takes out a razor blade, starts scraping off the dried contents of the pie plate. LARRY enters up the outside stairs, carrying his overnight bag)

IRA

What the fuck?

LARRY

Okay, I'm totally confused. This is supposed to be my weekend.

IRA

Fuck it, Larry, it isn't! This is twice now. Get your fucking act together.

LARRY

No, this is my weekend.

IRA
Look! Look at the goddamn calendar!
(IRA goes to the calendar)
This is the twenty-fourth, right? Are your initials here?
No. No. This is our goddamn weekend.

LARRY
That must be wrong.

IRA
Oh, for Christ's sake, when I spoke to you last week, you
even acknowledged that this was our weekend.

LARRY
That was two weeks ago, I think.

IRA
It wasn't! It was goddamn Wednesday!

LARRY
I think you got it wrong.

IRA
Look at the fucking calendar. I'm not arguing with you.
Look at the fucking calendar.

LARRY
So does this mean the house was empty all last weekend?
'Cause I wasn't here.

IRA
Well, we weren't either, so... it's ours.

LARRY
Well, how should we resolve this?

IRA
How? You should haul your ass back to the ferry, is how we
should resolve it.

LARRY
What, I have to go back to the fucking city? I've got...
I'm supposed to...

IRA
Yes. You go back to the fucking city. And I'm not arguing
about it.

LARRY
Let's get Hazel on the phone.

IRA
What the fuck does Hazel have to do with anything? It's
your fucking calendar!

(BINKY enters from downstairs)

BINKY

What's the...? Oh, hi, Larry. What're you...?

IRA

You're gone. Go.

(HE pours himself a drink)

BINKY

Are we...? What's going on?

IRA

He fucked up again and came out on our weekend. Look at the calendar.

LARRY

I'm telling you, my list of dates has this weekend. It's in my notebook. I'll show you.

IRA

I don't give a shit. Go home.

(HE takes the drink and exits down the outside stairs)

LARRY

Well... you gonna make me go spend the night in the meat rack?

BINKY

I've spent the night in the meat rack. It's not so bad.

LARRY

No doubt.

BINKY

I was eleven at the time.

(HAZEL enters from outside, quickly)

HAZEL

Where's Jesse?

MARGARET

In his room, I think. Why?

HAZEL

Keep him there. They found Tim. They're bringing him ashore at the end of Fisherman's Path.

MARGARET

Oh, God.

HAZEL

Believe me, Jesse shouldn't see him.

(JESSE appears on the stairs)

JESSE

Witch Hazel. I thought it was Tim.

MARGARET

Listen, Jesse. Come here a minute. Have a seat.

JESSE

What for? I was gonna tell him that I played some of his records, but I took really good care of them.

MARGARET

Tim's not going to be coming back here.

JESSE

What do you mean?

HAZEL

But I know he'd want you to have his records. Isn't that great? You get to keep all his records.

(A long pause. JESSE runs downstairs)

COUNTESS

That was the summer I disappeared. I don't remember where I thought I was going to go. Or what effect I was trying to achieve. I guess I just wanted to know if I'd be missed. And I went east, away from civilization. Don't ask me what I was thinking.

(MARGARET goes out on the porch, calls for JESSE. HAZEL goes to the phone)

I didn't get very far before the skies opened in a thunderstorm. I went and hid under the porch of a house. But the owner, this old hag in a turban and sunglasses, saw me and came after me. With a shotgun, no less. (With a Nordic accent:) "Get away! Dis is private! Private! Private! Private!" She was still screaming "Private!" After I'd run screaming into the underbrush.

(HAZEL joins MARGARET on the porch, who still calls for JESSE)

HAZEL

Don't be so worried. He'll be back. There's a saying that goes "If you love someone, set them free. If the love is there, they'll come back."

MARGARET

Hazel. You know I love you. But you're full of shit. I'm his mother. He's eleven. I don't care if he loves me.

HAZEL

I'll go the marina, talk to the ferry captain. Maybe he's seen something.

(SHE kisses MARGARET and exits down the stairs)

WADE

Where'd you go?

COUNTESS

I don't think it even occurred to me to get on the ferry and go back to the mainland. I just hid in the woods. This was back in the day when you could hide in the woods and if you got bitten by a tick, you didn't immediately think you had a lethal disease.

WADE

The woods? Which woods?

COUNTESS

You know.

WADE

You hid in the meat rack?

COUNTESS

And got quite an education.

WADE

Lucky you weren't raped.

COUNTESS

Well, there wasn't quite the same kind of activity back then.

WADE

Oh, please. I heard Triceratops used to go there for a blow job.

COUNTESS

Well, back then youth wasn't such a precious commodity. Those were clearly men who wanted other men. Not boys.

BINKY

When I started school that year, I found a tick on the back of my neck. I pulled it off and watched it crawl across my desk. Third grade. Ticks didn't scare me. But the teacher saw. She was, like, when a mortal meets Casper the Friendly Ghost for the first time. It was like her flesh jumped off her body, leaving the skeleton behind. It was pretty fuckin' hilarious.

WADE

Okay, I'm gonna try and make the three-thirty ferry. You have everything you need?

COUNTESS

Don't get me started.

WADE

I'll see you on Thursday afternoon. I think Friday's classes are cancelled because of the holiday. Anything you want me to bring you from the city?

COUNTESS

Just you.

WADE

Love you.

(THEY kiss, and WADE exits)

LARRY

Thank you.

(BINKY shrugs)

I just... don't like being out here alone very much. I'll owe you one.

BINKY

You don't owe me anything. Write something I can understand.

LARRY

I don't do coloring books.

(LARRY takes his overnight bag and exits downstairs. The phone rings. MARGARET runs up the stairs and into the house)

MARGARET

Hello? Oh, my God, my God. Listen to me. I'm gonna tell you why you're wasting your time. You can stop calling me. It worked. Your goddamn curse worked. I have no idea where my son is. He's gone. Disappeared. Happy now? I've lost my son, too.

(SHE moves to hang up, but decides to continue)

And even if I do find him, everyone seems to be telling me that my son is a homosexual.

(A pause)

I thought that would shut you up. I understand your son left you a grandson. Who will be there for you on holidays. Your birthday. When you need help. I won't have that. My son won't have children, it's the end of the line. So I hope that gives you some measure of comfort in hell.

(SHE slams down the phone. Exits down the outside stairs, calling for JESSE. IRA returns from downstairs)

IRA

I just spoke to Hazel. Larry was here last weekend.

BINKY

Now don't go all crazy.

IRA

No, I'm sorry, this is bullshit. Larry!

BINKY

I'm sure he's got an innocent explanation.

IRA
Yeah, the innocent explanation is that he's a cheap Jew
who's trying to get a full share for half price. Larry!
Get up here!

(LARRY enters from downstairs)

LARRY
What, what?

IRA
You were out here last weekend.

LARRY
No I wasn't.

IRA
Hazel saw you.

LARRY
What, has she got hidden cameras in here?

IRA
She saw you at the grocery store.

(A pause)

LARRY
And she didn't say hello?

IRA
I assume that happens to you a lot.

LARRY
What's that supposed to mean?

IRA
She probably just didn't want to hear you complain about the
pH balance in the pool for forty-five minutes, or whatever
nonsense you have to bitch about.

LARRY
I... Well... So... Okay. What do you want? Want me to
pay you for the weekend?

IRA
What I want is for you to get your fat ass on the ferry is
what I want.

LARRY
Binky said I could stay.

IRA
'Cause he's got a big heart. Not me. Out. By dinnertime.
I mean it. I'm going to Tea, if you'd care to join me,
Binky.

(HE exits downstairs, A door slams)

LARRY
I think this is Hazel's fault.

BINKY
How is it possibly Hazel's fault?

LARRY
Well, it's her house.

BINKY
And how does that...?

LARRY
She's so busy thinking about fish tacos, she can't keep our schedules straight.

BINKY
All I can hope for you, Larry, is that you never find yourself in a storm at sea and the only lifeboat has a lesbian onboard.

(LARRY exits downstairs as HAZEL enters from outside, once again looking wan and tired, her head wrapped in a turban)

HAZEL
Boo!

(COUNTESS jumps)

COUNTESS
Witch Hazel! Awww, you could've called. What're you dragging your bones all the way over here for?

HAZEL
No, I had to bring you your birthday horoscope.

COUNTESS
Don't tell me. It says "Better luck next time."

HAZEL
No, no, it's good. Well... you look...

COUNTESS
Don't try. Fortunately, I can barely see well enough to tell you how lousy YOU look.

HAZEL
Fair enough.

COUNTESS
Want a drink?

HAZEL
Can't. With my meds.

COUNTESS
Joint?

HAZEL

Now you're talking. What have you got for the munchies?

COUNTESS

Hmmm. A can of Nutrament? Wade's bound to have some plantain chips or something weird hanging around.

HAZEL

Fire it up.

(HE lights a joint as HAZEL reads from
the newspaper)

Here you go: "Once you're able to put your shyness aside (HA!), you'll learn to love the sound of applause."

COUNTESS

Oh, I do.

HAZEL

"Use your creativity to your advantage. Whether it's a knack for art..."

COUNTESS

A knack?

HAZEL

"...music or a similar creative talent, this is the time to capitalize on whatever you have to offer the world." Pretty good, huh?

COUNTESS

Well, maybe if I'd gotten that ten years ago.

(HE gives her the joint)

HAZEL

It looks like you're working again. That's fantastic. I don't remember you ever using pastels. Even when I got you a set when you were a kid. They wound up on the bottom of the toy box.

COUNTESS

I like 'em. I can go all smeary and blurry, and it doesn't matter.

HAZEL

This is great. You always did such amazing things with color. Is it the view out this window?

COUNTESS

Sort of. What I can still see of it. Or remember.

HAZEL

Who's the guy? Not Wade, clearly.

COUNTESS

No, it's me.

HAZEL

It's... well, darling, I certainly don't want to dispute your own sense of self-worth, I mean, I think it's fabulous that you... It looks like you've been spending a lot of time at the gym.

COUNTESS

Yeah, well...

HAZEL

Is it the past?

COUNTESS

No, no.

HAZEL

And the kid making the sandcastle. Is that you, too?

COUNTESS

No, that's my son.

HAZEL

Oh. Have you been keeping secrets from me? Oh, I see. It's the future. When you get well.

COUNTESS

No, no. It's me not sick. It's me, happy. Alive. With my hair gown out, down to my shoulders again. It's me with my son at the beach. It's me in parallel time.

(A pause)

HAZEL

You know, if you do a few more, I can get you a showing.

COUNTESS

Maybe in my next life.

HAZEL

No, no. THIS life.

COUNTESS

What do you want to be in your next life?

HAZEL

I don't know that I'm done with this one yet. Lemme see. An heiress. And I give millions away to all the people and things I like. And I can sing the blues like Sarah Vaughn. And I can dance like Cyd Charisse. That's who I want to be.

COUNTESS

You'd come back as a woman?

HAZEL

Oh. I didn't even think about it. I suppose. Yes. What about you?

COUNTESS
Some kind of bird, I think. A seagull. An owl.

(SHE laughs)

HAZEL
You don't want to come back as a human?

COUNTESS
Knowing what I know? Not with things the way they are, no.
I'm not sure the world is so hospitable to people. Not now.
(A pause)
Are you sorry you didn't have kids?

HAZEL
I have you.

COUNTESS
No, I mean...

HAZEL
No, I know. But really. I'm leaving behind my foundation,
which will do much better things with what I'm leaving
behind. And you. Your work. That'll live on a lot longer
than some whiny little brat.

COUNTESS
Ouch.

(SHE laughs)

HAZEL
You know what I mean. Do you have any claim forms you need
me to send in?

COUNTESS
I haven't looked at my paperwork in a month.

HAZEL
They asked me to take the first semester off. I guess they
think my bald head would put the students into a funk from
which they'd never recover. So by second semester I better
have hair like Jesus if I expect to keep my job.

COUNTESS
You could wear a wig.

HAZEL
Got one you can loan me?

COUNTESS
We'll find you something.

(MARGARET enters from outside. Her head
is wrapped in a scarf. Her clothes hang
on her, her skin is ashen, her eyes
sunken. SHE carries the plastic beach
pail from Act One. BINKY jumps)

BINKY
Jesus! Scare the shit out of me, why don't you?

MARGARET
Well, I figured if I wanted to see you, I'd better come to you.

BINKY
You didn't walk all the way here, did you?

MARGARET
Water taxi.

BINKY
Where's Hazel?

MARGARET
She's coming by in about an hour.

BINKY
How're you feeling?

MARGARET
Look at me.

COUNTESS
You really loved her, didn't you?

HAZEL
More than anything.

MARGARET
So what's keeping you so busy you can't come see me for five minutes?

BINKY
Please, no guilt trips. I've been getting a lot of DJ gigs. And I have to get a set list together for our Labor Day party.

MARGARET
I sure wish you could find your way back to painting.

BINKY
And if I was sitting here with a handful of brushes, what would you be wanting me to do instead?

MARGARET
I always thought you were a terrific artist. You know that.

BINKY
I do?

MARGARET
I framed that picture, didn't I?

BINKY
Yeah, ten years ago.

MARGARET

Well, you don't show me anything anymore.

BINKY

Nothing to show.

HAZEL

She always supported your work.

COUNTESS

Not in the way that I needed.

HAZEL

And how was that?

COUNTESS

No idea.

BINKY

(Referring to the bucket:) You been playing on the beach?

MARGARET

No, I never know if I'll make it to the bathroom in time.

BINKY

Sorry I asked.

MARGARET

I'm okay for the time being, I think. It's worst in the mornings.

BINKY

So aside from making me feel guilty and telling me how I'm wasting my life, what can I do for you?

MARGARET

I'm sorry. That's not why I wanted to see you.

BINKY

You can sit down, you know. Can I get you anything?

MARGARET

Just some water, maybe. If I have an accident, it's not so bad if I've only had water. How's Ira?

BINKY

Oh, please. You hate Ira.

MARGARET

I don't hate Ira. It's just that I'm not so sure how he feels about you, other than he likes the fact that you've got a house in the Pines.

BINKY

Maybe he loves me the way I've come to expect to be loved.

MARGARET
You're really itching for a fight, huh? Okay, if that's gonna make you feel better, slug away. God knows I'm in no position to fight back.

BINKY
What do the doctors say?

MARGARET
I stopped listening. They've been wrong straight down the line.

BINKY
Well...

MARGARET
Do you want me to go?

BINKY
This is pretty much your house, isn't it? I don't have much of a right to kick you out.

MARGARET
If that's what you want.

(SHE heads for the door)

HAZEL
She wanted you close by that summer. That's why we didn't rent it out. She knew it was her last one.

COUNTESS
I was in denial, I suppose. She was so good at kicking ass, I never thought...

MARGARET
I just wanted to make sure you knew... How grateful... I just wanted to thank you. Not for being my son, you had no choice in that department. But for being such a good friend to me all these years.

BINKY
Yeah, funny. What I needed was a mother.

HAZEL
That was her way of saying "I love you," you idiot.

COUNTESS
Well, sure, I know that NOW.

BINKY
All those years we pretended Daddy wasn't an asshole. Lying to him. Afraid to say anything. Afraid to tell him who we really were.

MARGARET
I'm sorry.

Yeah, well. BINKY

Is that it? Do you think it's your father's fault that you're gay? MARGARET

Oh, please. BINKY

So it's my fault? MARGARET

No. If it's anybody's fault, it's mine. I'm the one who likes to have men fuck me. BINKY

Oh, don't. MARGARET

Whose fault is it YOU'RE gay? BINKY

No one's. Well, Hazel's, maybe. She made me love her. I just love her is all. MARGARET

Well, I love her too. Doesn't mean I wanna go down on her. BINKY

I'm going to pray this anger is a passing fancy. MARGARET

You're going to pray? BINKY

What were you so angry about? HAZEL

Think I remember? If I'd known what was headed down the pike for me to really be angry about... COUNTESS

Hazel has this idea that we choose our parents. MARGARET

And how do we do that? BINKY

Prior to our birth, we seek out someone who's going to teach us what we need to discover in our next life. MARGARET

Hazel and her New Age crap. I thought Hazel hated her parents. BINKY

MARGARET

She did. That's just it. She needed to learn to be more independent in this life, so she picked parents that would reject her.

BINKY

Ah.

MARGARET

So what do you think you needed to learn from me?

BINKY

Haven't the foggiest.

(A pause. JESSE enters from downstairs,
sits at the table, draws)

MARGARET

I'm not feeling very well. Would you mind if I lay down for a while?

BINKY

Sure, sure. Use the bedroom on the left. Do you want me to call someone?

MARGARET

No, no, I'm fine.

(SHE exits downstairs)

HAZEL

It used to hurt me that she chose to spend her last moments here. Not in our own home.

COUNTESS

This place was more your home than anyplace else. You opened these doors to every lost soul that showed up on your doorstep. You've created such a spirit of generosity here. No one wants to leave.

(A pause)

HAZEL

Well, lovely to see you as always, but I have a date with Tamoxifen back home.

COUNTESS

Do you need help?

HAZEL

Said the casualty to the paramedic. Love you.

(SHE exits outside as RANDY enters from
downstairs)

GEORGE

There's a letter from the real estate office asking if we want to book for next summer. Jeez. Greedy.

Ignore it. RANDY

Well, we do, don't we? GEORGE

Do we? RANDY

You love it here. GEORGE

You don't. RANDY

It's growing on me. But the kid loves it. That's all that matters to me. GEORGE

By next summer he'll be toddling. We'll have to baby-proof everything. RANDY

I mean, this place seems... it feels much more hospitable than when we first got here. I just need to put my stamp on the place, and I'll start to love it too, I'm sure... By next summer, I'm sure I'll be trading recipes for hash brownies with our neighbors. In our little meth lab by the sea. GEORGE

Who knows where we'll be next summer? RANDY

Where would we be? GEORGE

If you take that job... RANDY

I'm not. GEORGE

You're not? RANDY

No. I'd be out of the house too much. We'd have to get a nanny or an au pair. That's insane. I don't want that. Do you? GEORGE

(A long pause)

If I have to go back to work, I'll get a teaching job.

Who said you have to go back to work? RANDY

GEORGE

Summers and holidays off, and I'd be home by three o'clock. Unless you want to be the one who stays home.

RANDY

If you want me to.

GEORGE

Oh, stop being so fucking agreeable. Of course not. You love your job. And you make twice as much as I ever would. Nap time.

RANDY

You could go back to your music. Teach the kid to play.

(THEY exits downstairs as IRA enters from downstairs)

IRA

Hey.

BINKY

Hey. You're back early.

IRA

Your mother's in our room.

BINKY

Yeah, she was feeling lousy.

IRA

And Larry's in his room.

BINKY

I said he could stay. Sue me.

IRA

I met somebody at Tea Dance. I think you'll really like him too.

BINKY

So?

IRA

Well, how long is your Mom going to stay?

BINKY

I have no idea.

IRA

Well, then, you'll have to get rid of Larry.

BINKY

Why?

IRA

Well, because... He's really a hottie.

BINKY

Listen to me, Ira. We have this share because of me. This is my house. So forgive me if I don't wring my hands because you don't have a place to bring your trick. Doesn't HE have a house?

IRA

Yeah, and nine hundred roommates.

BINKY

Then rent a room at the Boatel. Go to the meat rack, I don't give a shit. But I'm not kicking my dying mother out of the house.

(HE exits to the porch)

IRA

Shit.

(HE goes to the kitchen, scrapes the dust from the Pyrex pie plate into a small bottle, exits back downstairs. As HE does, MARGARET enters from downstairs. Her youth and health have returned)

MARGARET

The ferry leaves at three. Make sure you've got everything. Look under your bed. If you leave something here, you can't come back for it. It's lost.

JESSE

What about next summer?

MARGARET

Oh, who know, Jesse? That's a long time away. A lot can happen between then and now.

JESSE

Between now and then.

MARGARET

Who turned you into such a smart ass?

JESSE

Can you help me carry Tim's records downstairs?

MARGARET

Oh, honey, you can't take all those records, we don't have room. You'll have to leave them here.

JESSE

But Hazel said Tim wanted me to have them.

MARGARET

You can take one. That's it. One.

(A pause. GEORGE enters from downstairs, carrying the baby stroller. HE places it center stage, facing the COUNTESS, checks the baby. Goes to the kitchen)

JESSE

I saw Tim last night.

MARGARET

Oh, really?

JESSE

He was out by the pool. He was having a party. He had lots of friends. Everybody was dancing. The Supremes, I think. Some people were naked. But he was having fun.

MARGARET

I'm sorry, sweetie.

JESSE

Why?

MARGARET

Well, you know... Tim isn't coming back, you know.

JESSE

Oh, I know that. Tim found the door into parallel time. That's where he is. Now if I can find the way in, I'll see him again.

(RANDY enters from downstairs)

GEORGE

I cleaned out the fridge. Did we leave anything else up here?

RANDY

It's good luck to leave something behind. Means you're coming back.

(GEORGE brings a bottle to the baby as MARGARET exits downstairs)

GEORGE

Look, look, he's doing it again. What are you looking at, Little Owl? Whatever it is, it's got him smiling. Let's do one more sweep of the bedrooms, make sure we've got everything.

RANDY

When's the ferry?

GEORGE

Hour and a half.

RANDY

That gives us time for a really good sweep.

(HE swats GEORGE on the butt as THEY exit downstairs. BINKY enters from the porch, goes to the turntables, puts on a record. HE speaks into the microphone)

BINKY

Welcome, gentlemen, to our Tea Dance, the last dance of the season. What I like to call my "Naught-Tea." So go wild. Before you know it, we'll be back in our winter coats, returning Christmas presents, jumping puddles of black slush. So turn it out, boys. I'll see you in nine months.

(HE moves to the music. The baby starts to cry. BINKY acknowledges the baby, turns the music up. The COUNTESS moves towards the stroller, begins to rock it back and forth in time to the music. BINKY picks up the baby's rattle, shakes it in time to the music. MARGARET is heard from offstage)

MARGARET

(Off:) Jesse! The ferry won't wait!

(JESSE jumps up from the table, runs out the door. A beat, and he runs back on again. Pulls an armful of records out of TIMOTHY's collection. Stops and looks in the stroller at the baby. Smiles, and begins to move to the music. Lights fade)

THE PLAY IS OVER.