

*LET ALL MORTAL FLESH*

by

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## ***LET ALL MORTAL FLESH***

### **SYNOPSIS**

It's 1955 (40+ years before the Boston Globe breaks the clergy-abuse scandal) and Christina Gallagher isn't ready for puberty. Her parochial-school education, stern confessor, pious grandmother and run-away adulterous mother have made her distrust her body and pursue spiritual perfection. But her understanding of morality is challenged when her best friend gets pregnant and when she realizes the next-door neighbors—her adored music teacher and her trusted family doctor—are lesbians. Meanwhile, the couple battle their own demons at the close of the McCarthy era, struggling to accept their feelings for each other in the face of fear and guilt and an unscrupulous priest.

### **CAST OF CHARACTERS**

- Diana Clifford: late 20's, a physician. Intelligent, intense, dedicated, independent, caring, critical, vulnerable, clever, demanding, risk-taking
- Lucy Portinari: late 20's, a musician and teacher. Artistic, proud of her Italian Catholic heritage, family-oriented, sheltered, vulnerable, lively, bright, loving; has an excellent singing voice
- Christina Gallagher: 13-14, but young for her age; an 8<sup>th</sup>-grader at St. Kevin's School. A "good girl": smart, hardworking, scrupulous, naive, driven to be perfect, curious about—but terrified of—sex; obsessed with the rules, rituals, and romanticized saints of her religion (whom she finds only slightly less fascinating than the film stars she reads about in her missing mother's old movie magazines); an excellent singing voice
- Deirdre Quinn: 13-14, well into puberty; Christina's classmate, best friend, and foil; intelligent and cynical; impetuous, likes movies and boys
- Father Alexander: 30's, Christina's confessor; handsome, authoritarian, charming; good singing voice
- Bobby Thompson: 15, deep into puberty, classmate and boyfriend of Deirdre
- Vic Ruggiero: late 20's, Korean War vet; engineer; ex-boyfriend of Lucy; energetic, gregarious, attractive, persistent, a man with a mission

### **SETTING**

St. Kevin's Parish, 1955-56

The fluidity of scenes is best accommodated if the set is not naturalistic. Some scenes require only a bare area of stage. Other locales can be suggested by one or two set pieces or props (e.g., a table and two chairs for a restaurant, a step unit for a front stoop). A unit set with several acting areas might best serve the script.

### **SCRIPT HISTORY**

Finalist, Y.E.S. Festival of New Plays, Northern Kentucky University; Semi-finalist (1 of 10), Stanley Drama Award; Semi-finalist, New Play Festival, Center Stage, SC; Semi-finalist, Siena College International Playwrights Competition; Staged Reading, Athena Project Festival, Denver, CO; Staged Reading, Pride Films & Plays, Chicago, IL

ACT IScene 1

SETTING: *April, 1955. Classroom*

AT RISE: *Lights up on FATHER NATHAN ALEXANDER, catechism in hand, conducting a lesson with the seventh grade. He takes a playful, somewhat teasing attitude towards them. CHRISTINA, BOBBY, and DEIRDRE are seated. FATHER ALEXANDER has just asked a question, and CHRISTINA frantically waves her arm in the air to be called on.*

Christina!

FATHER ALEXANDER

*(Leaping up.)*  
 “Thou shalt not commit adultery!”  
*(Sits.)*

CHRISTINA

And the ninth? Robert.

FATHER ALEXANDER

*(Stands.)*  
 “Thou shalt not...” um...

BOBBY

Come on, Bobby—I gave you an easy one. It goes with the other.

FATHER ALEXANDER

*(Whispers to him.)*  
 “Covet thy neighbor’s wife!”

DEIRDRE

*(Sarcastic.)*  
 Thank you, Deirdre.

FATHER ALEXANDER

*(To BOBBY.)*  
 Now Robert, neither you nor I have a wife. So what do you take to be the broad meaning of this Commandment?

BOBBY

That we should be...um...pure.

FATHER ALEXANDER

In what?

*(BOBBY looks blank. CHRISTINA raises her hand. FATHER ALEXANDER dramatically waves her to her feet. BOBBY sits.)*

CHRISTINA

*(Jumps up.)*

In thought and desire!

*(Sits.)*

FATHER ALEXANDER

So if the devil pops an impure thought into our head, is that a sin? No, it is not. When does it become a sin? Deirdre?

DEIRDRE

*(Drags herself up, bored with it all, on automatic pilot.)*

“Impure thoughts and desires are sinful when we willingly take pleasure in them, but not when we try to drive them from our mind.”

*(Sits. BOBBY raises his hand.)*

FATHER ALEXANDER

Yes, Robert?

BOBBY

*(Smiles coyly at DEIRDRE.)*

What if a person takes pleasure in them for just a little bit, but then drives them from their mind? Is that just a venial sin?

FATHER ALEXANDER

If Mother Michael the Archangel were not at the principals’ meeting today, she would be standing here herself to assure you that all sins against the Sixth and Ninth Commandments are mortal sins. So it’s best to avoid them altogether. Given that daunting challenge,

*(Returning to catechism.)*

“What should you do to remain pure?” Deirdre?

DEIRDRE

Aw, Father, you just called on me.

FATHER ALEXANDER

*(Gesturing for her to stand.)*

And your response was so astute, I’m giving you the chance to enlighten us again.

DEIRDRE

*(Stands.)*

“To remain pure I should...one...go to...Holy Communion frequently...

FATHER ALEXANDER

*(Scanning the class.)*

Who can help Deirdre correct that? Christina.

CHRISTINA

“Go to *Confession* and Holy Communion frequently.”

FATHER ALEXANDER

Never, never forget the necessity of the Sacrament of Penance—or the power of the priest, acting in the place of God Himself, to forgive sins.

*(Turns back to DEIRDRE.)*

And two, Deirdre?

DEIRDRE

“Two, be devoted to Our Lady.” And three—I know this one, don’t tell me! Three is—

*(Like a down-hill skier who knows the value of momentum.)*

“Keep away from bad books and magazines, bad pictures, bad shows and movies, and bad companions.”

*(Sits. CHRISTINA raises her hand.)*

FATHER ALEXANDER

Yes, Christina?

CHRISTINA

*(Stands.)*

Father, I was wondering...what is a “bad picture”? If it isn’t a picture in a book or magazine and it isn’t a movie, what is it? I mean where else are there pictures? I know there are pictures in museums. But, well...can art be impure? My grandfather took me to the Walters Art Gallery once and there were pictures of women in flimsy gowns that showed their, you know...and even statues of men without any clothes at all. Well, for that matter, Jesus on the cross is *almost* naked—except for that dirty white cloth. But his body doesn’t look like the naked men at the Walters and—

FATHER ALEXANDER

*(Interrupting.)*

Thank you, Christina—

CHRISTINA

Sorry, Father.

FATHER ALEXANDER

—for raising this critical question. Now I’m going to tell you something very important which must stay within these walls since your parents might not appreciate the trust I place in you—seventh-graders that you are—to comprehend it.

*(STUDENTS lean forward.)*

True art is never impure. Artists, poets, musicians—by virtue of being creators—are like

FATHER ALEXANDER (*Cont.*)

God. They understand the nature of things. If they did not forgive themselves for breaking traditional aesthetic rules, nothing new would be created. And stasis is the death of beauty. God, after all, is Pure Act.

(*Turning back to CHRISTINA.*)

Now Christina, perhaps you can get us back on track with our catechism lesson by giving us the last answer.

(*Reads from his book.*)

“What are the consequences of sins of impurity?”

CHRISTINA

(*Fast, confident.*)

“Besides the harm which impurity often does to a person’s health, the usual consequences of sins of impurity are: one, loss of the love of God; two, disgust for the practice of virtue; three, loss of Faith, and sometimes...final impotence.”

FATHER ALEXANDER

Impenitence. The word is “impenitence.”

(*A shrill bell sounds.*)

Go—you are dismissed. I’ll see you at May Procession practice tomorrow.

(*CHRISTINA and DEIRDRE start stacking their books.*)

(*BOBBY and FATHER ALEXANDER exit.*)

CHRISTINA

Theresa will make a beautiful May Queen, don’t you think?

DEIRDRE

Yeah. But it’s hard to believe she beat out Rosemary for eighth-grade-girl-with-the-highest average. I think she got it because she goes to mass every day.

CHRISTINA

Well, good character is one of the criteria.

DEIRDRE

Don’t worry, Chris. Next year there’ll be no contest. In our class you’ve got the corner on marks *and* morality.

CHRISTINA

I don’t know...sometimes I think it’s dangerous to want something so much.

DEIRDRE

Dangerous?

CHRISTINA

Almost like...extreme desire itself is enough to make you unworthy of the thing. And then not only do you not get it, but God punishes you for wanting it so badly.

DEIRDRE

That's probably some kind of heresy.

*(CHRISTINA shrugs.)*

Anyway, a bunch of us badly wanted a Kotex sanitary napkins machine in the girls' lavatory and we got it.

CHRISTINA

Mother Michael said it was because your mothers asked for it.

DEIRDRE

Don't you think it's a good idea?

CHRISTINA

Oh, well, sure.

*(Beat.)*

But, um, why do we need napkins in the bathroom?

*(Taken aback by DEIRDRE's look of surprise, trying to sound casual.)*

I mean...why have a machine *at school*?

DEIRDRE

I guess so we won't have to bring extras from home when we have our periods.

CHRISTINA

*(Nodding.)*

Of course.

*(Beat.)*

DEIRDRE

Don't you know about periods?

*(CHRISTINA shakes her head.)*

CHRISTINA

How do *you* know?

DEIRDRE

My mom told me.

CHRISTINA

Oh.

DEIRDRE

I'm sorry.

CHRISTINA

For what?

DEIRDRE

Sometimes I just feel bad for...

CHRISTINA

For having a mom around? Don't be stupid. Your mom is great. She gave you a Toni home permanent and took you shopping for a bra and taught you how to jitterbug.

DEIRDRE

Yeah. But she's really strict too. I have to sneak out to see Bobby.

*(Beat.)*

Do you think your mom will ever come back?

CHRISTINA

Maybe. Or she might send for me. When she gets...settled.

DEIRDRE

How long since they left?

CHRISTINA

Four years and two months.

DEIRDRE

You still think she went to Hollywood?

CHRISTINA

Unh-huh.

DEIRDRE

She's definitely pretty enough to be a movie star.

CHRISTINA

You think actors are artists?

DEIRDRE

Sort of. Why?

CHRISTINA

Father Alexander said artists are special people. They're allowed to break the rules. So do you think it's all right for movie stars to go around committing adultery?

DEIRDRE

My dad says Father Alexander thinks its okay for a priest to go around in an expensive car if he fancies himself the Great Caruso.

CHRISTINA

What?



DEIRDRE

My mother nearly “swoons with ecstasy” whenever Father Alexander sings the high mass.

*(Imitating an opera singer.)*

“*Dominus vobiscum!*”

*(They go into hysterics, then roll up their sleeves.)*

CHRISTINA

Guess what? My grandmother says a married couple came to look at Doctor Morley’s house.

DEIRDRE

How old?

*(CHRISTINA shrugs.)*

Maybe they have a daughter we could hang out with.

CHRISTINA

Grandma hopes they’re Catholic.

DEIRDRE

If her father belonged to the Knights of Columbus, she could get us into their swimming pool.

CHRISTINA

If they have a boy, we might be like George and Emily in that play Grandpa took me to see, and we could take each other to our high school dances and all.

DEIRDRE

Didn’t you say that Emily dies in childbirth?

CHRISTINA

I wouldn’t *marry* him, Silly; I’m going to be a nun.

DEIRDRE

They might have *little* kids.

CHRISTINA

Then I could babysit and teach them games and stuff and be like an older sister to them. Or they might have a high-school girl—and she could be like an older sister to me. Someone I could ask about...things.

DEIRDRE

What things?

CHRISTINA

I don’t know. Anything.

*(Beat.)*

Do you want boards or erasers?

*(Lights.)*

Scene 2

SETTING: *May, 1955. Table for two at a posh restaurant.*

AT RISE: *DIANA and LUCY with wine glasses. Background music fades during opening lines.*

LUCY

*(Indicating their surroundings.)*

So. What is the news worthy of this extravagant celebration?

DIANA

Well...Doctor Morley's going to retire.

LUCY

Don't tell me—he's going to sell you his practice!

DIANA

*(A bit deflated.)*

Not exactly. I can't afford it...outright.

*(Seeing the unasked question in LUCY's eyes.)*

And, no, I couldn't possibly ask my father.

LUCY

*(Wanting to mean it.)*

And I admire your independence. You know that.

DIANA

Doctor Morley's going to let me take over his patients—he'll still be available as a consultant. And he'll let me buy out his practice gradually, in installments.

LUCY

*(Raises her glass in a toast.)*

*Complimenti! La mia amica, la dottoressa!*

*(They clink glasses and DIANA leans in.)*

DIANA

His office is in the basement of his home. I'm getting the whole kit and caboodle! A three bedroom end-of-row house with a front porch and a back yard.

LUCY

Diana—that's wonderful!

*(Lowers her eyes.)*

Is it...far?

DIANA

Off Birchfield Boulevard.

LUCY

Sounds like just what you've always wanted.

DIANA

It's not far, Lucy.

*(Puts her hand on the table near LUCY's)*

Really.

LUCY

Do you think they'll be okay with a woman doctor?

DIANA

Hey—it's 1955!

*(LUCY shoots her a look.)*

I'm counting on Doctor Morley's recommendation to help with that.

LUCY

*(Sitting back.)*

You know...you are the most daring woman I've ever met.

DIANA

Me—daring?

LUCY

Here you are jumping into a whole new life like one of those stunt pilots leaping out of the cockpit onto the wing of her plane. You always just decide what you want to do, then rear up and *do* it—no matter how demanding or risky. I remember that from our days at Goucher—you had us all giving blood, buying war stamps, volunteering for the Red Cross.

*(Waves her hand over the table.)*

You're always so...sure...and fearless. It's the way you order dinner, the way you play tennis, the way you live your life. You don't seem to worry at all about failure.

DIANA

Oh but I do. I worry about it all the time.

LUCY

*(Leaning forward.)*

Then how can you do it—the wing-walking?

DIANA

I guess because, for me, failure would be not to.

*(Beat. Sips her wine.)*

Do you ever wonder why we weren't friends at Goucher?

LUCY

Well, I was so wrapped up in my music—

DIANA  
Or in Vic Ruggiero.

LUCY  
*(Ignoring this interruption.)*  
and you were always in the lab or on the playing fields.

DIANA  
*(Teasing.)*  
—which were anathema to you.

LUCY  
*(Teasing back.)*  
As the concert hall was to you.

DIANA  
*(Beat.)*  
Want to come live with me?

LUCY  
*What?!*

DIANA  
You've got to leave home sometime.

LUCY  
It's clear you're not Italian.

DIANA  
No, but I'm a pretty good cook. And I have a whole house to share.

LUCY  
You're serious, aren't you?

DIANA  
Haven't we been friends for two years? I think we're compatible enough to live together without killing each other.

LUCY  
What...what would I do?

DIANA  
The same thing you do now. Sing at your parents' restaurant. Give piano lessons.

LUCY  
To...?

DIANA

There's a parochial school nearby. Just give the principal your number.

LUCY

Do all wing-walkers do this?

DIANA

Do what?

LUCY

Reach back in the plane and pull out their friends?

DIANA

It's just an invitation. You don't have to say yes.

LUCY

Do you really think I should leave my family?

DIANA

Only if you want to.

LUCY

I...I guess I never thought about it.

DIANA

So...think about it.

*(Raises her glass. Lights.)*

Scene 3

SETTING: *Saturday, June, 1955. Steps of CHRISTINA's front porch.*

AT RISE: *CHRISTINA and DEIRDRE are paging together through a copy of Photoplay.*

DEIRDRE

Want to go to the movies ?

CHRISTINA

What's playing?

DEIRDRE

*From Here to Eternity's* been held over.

CHRISTINA

Isn't that a "B" movie on the Legion of Decency list?

DEIRDRE

*(Pretending not to know this.)*

Is it? It won lots of awards. It's about World War II—you should see it. Because of your father and all.

CHRISTINA

Well...I *want* to. But I don't think we *should*.

DEIRDRE

Well, I'm going! It's got Montgomery Clift in it. And I'm almost fourteen. That's practically an adult.

CHRISTINA

But it's not even an "A-2." It's a "B"!

DEIRDRE

Sometimes you are such a...pain! Anyway, I already saw it last week with Bobby.

CHRISTINA

Then why do you want to go ag—

DEIRDRE

Because it was *good*! And besides, I missed the parts when we were making out.

CHRISTINA

At a *matinee*?

DEIRDRE

We're going steady. Anyway, whenever the movie got to the sexy parts—or got too talky—Bobby wanted to French kiss...and stuff.

CHRISTINA

What is that anyway—I mean how exactly do you do it?

DEIRDRE

Well, you just part your lips a little when the boy comes at you. Like this.

*(She demonstrates.)*

And then he puts his tongue in your mouth and sort of moves it around.

CHRISTINA

Ugh. Wouldn't that make a person gag?

*(DEIRDRE is annoyed at CHRISTINA's lack of imagination.)*

What's the picture about?

DEIRDRE

*(In a monotone rush.)*

Montgomery Clift is a soldier who likes to play the bugle. All the other soldiers try to get him to box but he won't, so they make him do all the dirty work around camp. He falls in love with Donna Reed, but she won't marry him because he's not rich.

CHRISTINA

How's he meet her on an army base?

DEIRDRE

She works in a sort of dance hall where soldiers go to drink and meet girls and stuff.

CHRISTINA

But not all the soldiers do this, right? I mean, I'm sure my father didn't.

DEIRDRE

*(Continuing the torrent of narrative.)*

Finally Monty has a knife fight with a mean soldier who killed his best buddy. Then the Japs bomb Pearl Harbor and he gets shot trying to get back to his company.

CHRISTINA

So why is it a "B" movie? Where's the sex?

DEIRDRE

I'm coming to it. The Sergeant is Burt Lancaster. And he falls for Deborah Kerr, who is married to his boss. So they have a date one night and go for a swim in the ocean.

CHRISTINA

*At night!*

DEIRDRE

That's why it's sexy. They get all wet and make out on the sand.

CHRISTINA

Yuk!

DEIRDRE

Yeah. And her hair is all plastered down and she looks a mess.

CHRISTINA

So why does he want to make out with her?

DEIRDRE

Because by that time he's all worked up. You know...ready to go "all the way."

CHRISTINA

And do they?

DEIRDRE

Nah. They just do more kissing and stuff.

CHRISTINA

Then what happens?

DEIRDRE

She wants to get divorced and marry Burt, but only if he'll become an officer. But he won't. So she goes back to her husband.

CHRISTINA

Well, I'm glad. I hate to see Deborah Kerr committing adultery.

*(Beat.)*

So. You going to confession later?

DEIRDRE

I guess. Wanna walk over together.

CHRISTINA

Will you be sorry you saw the movie—twice?

DEIRDRE

Sure. If I didn't, I'd still have my two quarters.

*(Lights dim. DEIRDRE exits. In dim light, CHRISTINA crosses to area where FATHER ALEXANDER sits, facing out. She kneels, facing him. Lights up on Scene 3b.)*



FATHER ALEXANDER

Have you confessed your sins honestly and completely?

CHRISTINA

Yes, Father.

FATHER ALEXANDER

Do you have any questions, Christina?

CHRISTINA

You know how you can pray or make sacrifices or do good deeds and offer it up for the souls in Purgatory and maybe get somebody you love out?

FATHER ALEXANDER

We can't be sure that the merits are applied to a specific person in Purgatory, but the principle is correct. What about it?

CHRISTINA

Could a person be good enough to save somebody from hell?

FATHER ALEXANDER

No. Hell is eternal and irreversible. That's what makes it hell.

CHRISTINA

But what if the somebody's not there yet. Could you save them from going there?

FATHER ALEXANDER

Saint Monica devoted herself to prayer in the hope that her son Augustine would abandon his life of debauchery. And he became one of the greatest saints of the church.

CHRISTINA

So maybe she was even better than she had to be.

FATHER ALEXANDER

No one is ever better than they have to be. Didn't Jesus tell us "Be ye perfect as your heavenly father is perfect"?

CHRISTINA

But is that possible?

FATHER ALEXANDER

The gospel says "All things are possible to him who believes."

CHRISTINA

I have another question, Father.

FATHER ALEXANDER

What is it?

CHRISTINA

If a woman is a widow and she marries again, that's not adultery, right?

FATHER ALEXANDER

Right.

CHRISTINA

What if...what if she's not sure if she's a widow.

FATHER ALEXANDER

Not sure?

CHRISTINA

What if her husband might be dead, might have been killed in the war, but nobody knows for sure?

FATHER ALEXANDER

If there's a chance he isn't, then she shouldn't marry again. You can see that it would cause problems if the husband turned up alive.

CHRISTINA

Yes, but suppose he never does?

FATHER ALEXANDER

But we can't know that he won't, can we?

CHRISTINA

No, but...well, what about the woman?

FATHER ALEXANDER

Would this...hypothetical woman...be your mother?

CHRISTINA

*(Nods.)*

Wouldn't she be...lonely?

FATHER ALEXANDER

She must pray—and so will we—that God gives her the grace to bear her cross of loneliness.

CHRISTINA

What if he doesn't...didn't?

FATHER ALEXANDER

God always gives the grace to those who ask. But perhaps sometimes we don't have the will

FATHER ALEXANDER *(Cont.)*

to accept his gift.

CHRISTINA

Why do some people have the will and some people don't?

FATHER ALEXANDER

God never tests us beyond our strength. If we fail the test, the fault is ours, not God's.

CHRISTINA

Why does God test us?

FATHER ALEXANDER

So that we can prove our love.

CHRISTINA

But some tests are...harder than others. And some people are.... Well, it doesn't seem...fair.

FATHER ALEXANDER

Remember the story of Job.

*(Beat.)*

Do you?

CHRISTINA

The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away.

FATHER ALEXANDER

What's the rest?

*(Beat.)*

Christina?

CHRISTINA

*(Reluctant.)*

Blessed be the name of the Lord.

*(Lights.)*

Scene 4

SETTING: *July, 1955. Living/dining area of DIANA and LUCY's home.*

AT RISE: *A table is turned on its side. DIANA is tightening a wobbly leg.*

LUCY

*(Shouting from Offstage.)*

Diana!

DIANA

In here!

LUCY

*(Runs in.)*

Guess what?

*(Grabs the screwdriver out of DIANA's hand and shakes it in the air.)*

I've got a job!

DIANA

That's great! What is it?

LUCY

I'm taking Sister Hildegard's place.

DIANA

You're not going nun on me?

LUCY

No, no. I'll be the first lay music teacher  
*(She "conducts" with screwdriver.)*  
and choir director the parish ever had.

DIANA

That's terrific. Maybe this will entice your parents to forgive you for deserting them.

LUCY

Oh, be fair—they're coming around. Didn't we have a great time when they were here for dinner last week?

DIANA

Was that before or after they threatened to have me arrested for kidnapping?

LUCY

*(Playfully pokes DIANA's side with the screwdriver.)*

They're just ribbing you.

DIANA

*(Responding to parents' verbal jabs, rather than LUCY's physical one.)*

Ouch.

LUCY

*(Changing the subject, sits on the floor next to DIANA.)*

I feel bad, though, about Sister Hildegard. I don't like profiting from someone else's misfortune.

DIANA

She told me in the ambulance she'd been teaching for sixty-two years. Sounds like her retirement is well-deserved.

LUCY

Nuns don't retire. She'll probably be assigned light housework or kitchen duties after her recuperation.

DIANA

Are you kidding? The woman is eighty-three and just had major hip surgery.

LUCY

You underestimate the power of prayer.

DIANA

*(Laughs, then stops when she sees LUCY isn't joining her.)*

You're serious.

LUCY

Well, I know it's a long shot. But then so was my getting this job.

DIANA

I'd call it coincidence.

LUCY

*(Indicating she will brook no contradiction on this.)*

I'd call it Providence.

DIANA

*(Raising her hands in surrender.)*

Whatever you say. I'm just pleased you'll have work that makes you happy.

LUCY

*(Hugging her knees.)*

I will be happy, won't I? It'll be perfect.

*(Pointedly.)*

*Provisionally* perfect.

*(Becoming quiet and intense.)*

I do believe it, Diana—that this was meant to be. Maybe it's my reward for trusting...for taking the risk.

DIANA

The risk?

LUCY

Striking out on my own...stepping out onto the wing of the plane.

*(Touches DIANA's hand affectionately.)*

With you.

*(Lets out a happy-to-be alive yell and throws back her head, which hits the table.)*

Ouch!

DIANA

*(Teasing, reaching for the spot.)*

Shall I kiss it and make it better?

LUCY

*(Bows her head, submitting willingly to this most unscientific remedy, then raises it till her eyes meet DIANA's.)*

See—you're not such an unbeliever after all.

*(Jumping up.)*

I'm taking you to the carnival tonight to celebrate. It'll be a good introduction to St. Kevin's. I'll treat you to a hot dog and one of Mrs. O'Heaney's legendary tarts. And a snowball—Mr. Walker our next door neighbor's in charge of the snowball stand. And I promised Christina we'd play Bingo at the table she's running. And you can shoot baskets and win us a furry stuffed puppy. And we'll ride the Ferris wheel and scream like scared little girls when the car rocks and jolts and we'll go round and round together right up into the starry sky and look down and see our new home.

DIANA

Sounds lovely.

LUCY

It will be, won't it? Oh, Diana, I don't want it to end.

DIANA

What?

LUCY

*(Struggling for the answer. Then blurting out.)*

*Life!*

DIANA

Don't worry, Lucia.

*(Cupping LUCY's cheek.)*

It's just beginning.

*(Leans her face in and—without their bodies touching—kisses LUCY gently on the lips. LUCY is surprised, offers neither resistance nor encouragement. DIANA straightens. They look at each other.)*

*(Lights.)*

Scene 5

SETTING: *August, 1955. Sacristy of St. Kevin's church, suggested by a clothes rack holding vestments and a small table holding two candelabra and three boxes the size of shoe boxes, one new and two worn with use.*

AT RISE: *CHRISTINA and DEIRDRE are removing used candles from the candelabra.*

CHRISTINA

*(Removing the lid from one of the worn boxes.)*

The left-over candles go in here. But you have to be careful about getting the gold tips off.

DEIRDRE

*(Takes a candle from one of the candelabra and yanks off the brass follower.)*

I see what you mean. The whole top of the candle's still in here.

CHRISTINA

I told you to be—

DEIRDRE

Yeah, yeah. So now what?

CHRISTINA

*(Takes lid off other worn box and removes a can of brass polish, two cloths, and a paring knife. She gives the knife to DEIRDRE and indicates the first box.)*

Scrape it out into here with this.

DEIRDRE

Just think—summer's almost over. If my mother hadn't been so pissed, she would have let me go with my cousins. I could be riding the waves and hanging out on the boardwalk. Instead I'm stuck here whittling wax for the love of God. Life's a crap shoot, isn't it?

*(Pointing to the fluted collar around the bottom of the candle.)*

What's this glass thing?

CHRISTINA

*(Pleased to show off her sacristan's vocabulary.)*

That's a *bobeck*. It's to catch the drippings.

*(DEIRDRE picks off the chunk of wax on the bobeck that makes it stick to the candle, then freely slides the candle up and down inside the hole in the glass. Liking the feel of this,*



*she does it faster and faster, thrusting the candle at CHRISTINA until both start to giggle, though CHRISTINA has no idea why this is funny.)*

CHRISTINA

*(Coming to her senses.)*

Sshh! Mother Michael is just in the sanctuary.

DEIRDRE

Okay, I'm done this one.

CHRISTINA

Now comes the fun part.

*(She reverently lifts the lid of the new box and turns back the crisp tissue, revealing a dozen new sixteen-inch ivory candles. Slowly she lifts one, holds it under her nose, closes her eyes, inhales, and whispers.)*

Pure beeswax!

DEIRDRE

You're weird.

CHRISTINA

I am not!

DEIRDRE

*(Picks up a candle, holds the end of it at her mouth like a cigar, and flips her eyebrows like Groucho Marx.)*

Say the secret word and win the prize!

*(They snort and convulse with laughter. BOBBY enters, carrying his altar boy's cassock and surplus on a hanger over his arm.)*

BOBBY

Lucky thing for you two magpies the Archangel is running that monster polishing machine.

CHRISTINA

Bobby! What are you doing here?

BOBBY

Came to check up on the sacristans.

DEIRDRE

You should be doing my share—considering it's your fault I got the stupid job.

BOBBY

Come on, Dee, I said I was sorry.

DEIRDRE  
Sorry isn't self-control.

BOBBY  
Look who's talking.

CHRISTINA  
Listen, you two—

BOBBY  
Okay, okay.

*(Sidles up to DEIRDRE, nuzzles her neck.)*

How about coming to the baseball game this afternoon. Coach said I could be first on the mound. I'll treat you to ice cream after.

DEIRDRE  
You think one little ice cream's going to make up for a trip to Ocean City?

BOBBY  
It's a start.  
*(Kissing her and rubbing up against her.)*  
I'm sure I'll think of other ways...

DEIRDRE  
*(Pushes him away.)*  
Not here. That's how we got into trouble in the first place.

CHRISTINA  
Maybe we should start laying out the vestments for tomorrow's masses.

BOBBY  
Good idea. And make sure you do Alexander's right.  
*(Hangs his cassock and surplus on the vestment rack.)*  
If everything's not just so, he takes it out on the servers. And I've got his seven o'clock.

DEIRDRE  
You'll be stupid enough to make your own mistakes—don't go blaming us.

BOBBY  
*(Laughing as he exits.)*  
See you at the game.

CHRISTINA  
*(Crosses to rack.)*  
These long white linen things are albs. There's one for each priest, and the used ones get laundered by Mrs. O'Heaney. When we're finished here, we'll carry the bundle over to her house on Oakdale.

DEIRDRE

That's Bobby's street.

CHRISTINA

She'll give us lemonade—and a nickel each.

DEIRDRE

Why?

CHRISTINA

*(Imitating Mrs. O'Heaney's brogue.)*

"I know you do your work for the love o' God, Lassies, but there's no reason you shouldn't be havin' a wee bit o' sweets when it's all done."

DEIRDRE

*(Lifting the bottom of an alb.)*

There must be two feet of lace on this. I wonder how they feel wearing white dresses.

CHRISTINA

The chasuble gets laid out first, since it's the last thing put on—with the back turned up so the priest can just pull it over his head.

DEIRDRE

Why can't they just get their own clothes out of the closet like everybody else?

CHRISTINA

This is Father Bauer's. It's Roman style—no sleeves, like a tunic.

DEIRDRE

*(Taking another chasuble from the rack.)*

This one's different.

CHRISTINA

That's Father Alexander's. He likes the Gothic style.

*(DEIRDRE Raises the heavy circle of shiny fabric, throws it back, sticks her head through the hole in its center, and turns one way and then the other, like a fashion model.)*

DEIRDRE

The green is perfect for me, don't you think?

CHRISTINA

*(In a panic.)*

DE-ir-dre! Mother Michael will...

DEIRDRE

*(Checking.)*

She's way back in the vestibule.

CHRISTINA

So what? It's disrespectful!

DEIRDRE

Take a break from sainthood, will you?

*(Looks down at the chasuble, then slowly raises her arms to shoulder level so that the fabric forms a great half circle that seems to enlarge her stature.)*

Yes, this *would* be Alexander's choice.

*(Slowly she starts snapping her fingers, humming, and turning around in place. Gradually her pace increases until she is spinning frantically like a whirling dervish. Just as she begins to lose her balance, FATHER ALEXANDER enters, but she doesn't see him. She bumps up against one of the candelabra, knocking it to the floor.)*

FATHER ALEXANDER

What's this?

*(DEIRDRE, dizzy, drops to the floor.)*

Deirdre. I see you've taken up Sufi dancing as part of your spiritual exercises. But wouldn't you be more comfortable doing it in your own clothes?

*(DEIRDRE tries to get up, but can't. She manages to get onto her knees and pull the chasuble over her head, extending it to him. He takes the garment and holds it out to CHRISTINA, who steps forward to claim it, then steps back.)*

DEIRDRE

I...don't think I damaged it.

*(He shakes his head ruefully.)*

I'm sorry, Father.

FATHER ALEXANDER

Well, I am too, Deirdre, because now my duty as an adult and a teacher—keeper of the flame of responsible behavior—requires me to give you a sermon. And you must know how little I enjoy that, given that it's not even Sunday and I have here a congregation of two.

DEIRDRE

*(Sits back on her heels.)*

I'm sorry, Father.

FATHER ALEXANDER

Yes, yes, we've done that part. Let's get on with the sermon.

DEIRDRE

Excuse me?

FATHER ALEXANDER

Well, the least you can do is participate. I know—we'll make it...responsorial. Like chanting the psalms.

DEIRDRE

You want me to...sing?

FATHER ALEXANDER

Why not? Expand your routine to *song-and-dance*. I'll get it started.

*(Chants on a monotone.)*

VESTMENTS WORN BY CONSECRATED PRIESTS AT HOLY MASS ARE...

*(He nods to her to complete the sentence. She is dumb-struck. He motions her to sing.)*

DEIRDRE

*(Chants.)*

BLESSED GARMENTS.

*(She gives a questioning shrug. He nods.)*

FATHER ALEXANDER

*(Continues chanting.)*

THEY ARE NOT MEANT TO BE...

DEIRDRE

*(Chanting.)*

WORN BY ANYONE ELSE.

*(He motions her to continue.)*

ESPECIALLY SCHOOL GIRLS.

FATHER ALEXANDER

*(Continues chanting.)*

THEY ARE NOT TO SERVE AS...

DEIRDRE

*(Chanting.)*

COSTUMES FOR DANCING.

FATHER ALEXANDER

There you are. You can give the sermon as well as I. Too bad women aren't allowed to be priests.

DEIRDRE

I didn't mean any disrespect, Father. Things just got...out of control.

FATHER ALEXANDER

And what shall we do about that?

DEIRDRE

What do you mean?

FATHER ALEXANDER

How shall we help you regain self-control?

DEIRDRE

*(Gapes at him blankly, then realizes he expects a response.)*

I...I don't know.

FATHER ALEXANDER

Perhaps a little discipline, a little hard work?

*(She looks at him quizzically.)*

Have you ever trained a puppy, Deirdre?

*(She nods.)*

Well there you have it.

DEIRDRE

Have what?

FATHER ALEXANDER

What do you do when the puppy chews on your slipper?

DEIRDRE

Take it away from him?

FATHER ALEXANDER

But how will he know not to do it again unless there is a negative experience associated with the wrong-doing?

DEIRDRE

You mean a punishment?

FATHER ALEXANDER

A corrective measure.

DEIRDRE

What's my punishment going to be?

FATHER ALEXANDER

I don't believe in harsh corrections. Hmm...let's see. There's some work that needs doing for the Holy Name book sale. Making lists, sorting books. I'm sure your mother wouldn't mind if you spent your Saturday afternoons for the next month or so helping with that.

DEIRDRE

Every Saturday?

FATHER ALEXANDER

Considering your...talent for music and movement, I'm sure you'll fall into a rhythm that will make the work go quickly. What do you say?

DEIRDRE

Do I have a choice?

FATHER ALEXANDER

Of course. You can whine unbecomingly or accept the challenge graciously.

DEIRDRE

Do I have to start today?

FATHER ALEXANDER

When better? Report to the rectory at noon. The housekeeper will let you into the library. Now better clean up this mess before Mother Michael sees it.

*(Exits.)*

CHRISTINA

*(Hanging up the chasuble, angry.)*

I told you you shouldn't have—

DEIRDRE

*(Gathering up the candles.)*

Dammit! It's bad enough I'm wasting Saturday mornings slaving away in the church. Now I've got to spend the afternoons playing secretary at the rectory. What'll I tell Bobby?

CHRISTINA

*(Sarcastic.)*

I'm sure he'll understand.

DEIRDRE

Oh shut up. What do you know?

*(Lights.)*

Scene 6

SETTING: *Labor Day weekend, 1955. Night. Hotel room in Ocean City. Sound of waves crashing on shore.*

AT RISE: *DIANA sits on the bed, applying lotion to her shoulders. LUCY watches her.*

DIANA

One day and you've got a terrific tan.

LUCY

And you've got a terrific burn. Here, let me do that.  
*(Takes lotion from DIANA, sits next to her.)*

DIANA

You were sure having a busman's holiday playing with those toddlers on the beach!

LUCY

It's an addiction.

*(Beat.)*

Do you think you'll ever have children?

DIANA

What? Oh, um, I don't know. I guess. I mean, maybe. Well, probably not.  
*(Knows she should return the question but dreads the answer.)*

LUCY

I think I will always need to have children in my life.

DIANA

*(Not daring to ask what this means.)*

Well...you're so good with them.

LUCY

They're so...*pure*.

DIANA

You've been to too many First Communion.

LUCY

You know what I mean. They're...unspoiled by life. Everything is so new to them. And when I'm with them, I see everything as new too.

DIANA

That's how I feel with you.



LUCY

*(Mock offended.)*

Are you saying I'm a child?

DIANA

You're...guileless...trusting. It's scary sometimes. Makes me want to...protect you.

LUCY

From what?

DIANA

*(Shrugs.)*

Life?

LUCY

Good luck!

DIANA

No, seriously.... At the hospital last week, I told Mrs. Shoemaker she was well enough to go home, but that she still needed lots of rest and that she should get Beth to play some soothing music for her. And do you know what she said?

LUCY

What?

DIANA

"Oh, Beth loves your Lucy! All the choir girls do."

*(Savoring it.)*

My Lucy. My Lucy.

LUCY

*(Lies back.)*

I like the sound of that.

DIANA

*(Sitting next to LUCY, studying her.)*

Today was a perfect day.

*(Gently kisses LUCY's neck, the tops of her breasts above her nightgown. LUCY giggles.)*

Does that tickle?

LUCY

No.

DIANA

Then why are you laughing?

LUCY

Because...I'm happy.

DIANA

I am too, Lucia. Happier than I've ever been.

*(Looks at her intently, then kisses her mouth, at first softly, then passionately. Strokes LUCY's cheek, then slowly runs her hand down LUCY's neck to her breasts, gently caressing each, and moves on to her abdomen. Then, ever so gently, presses against her vulva. LUCY suddenly gives a sharp intake of breath. DIANA freezes.)*

What is it? Did I hurt you?

LUCY

No.

DIANA

Then what?

LUCY

I...

DIANA

Is something wrong?

LUCY

No. I just...I never felt....

DIANA

*(Draws back. Tenderly reaches for LUCY's face and turns it towards her.)*

Is it that you've never...touched yourself?

LUCY

*(Shyly.)*

It's...I grew up believing it's...a sin.

DIANA

*(Sits up. Somewhat incredulous and confused, wondering if she has misread the signs.)*

Lucy...I don't want to do anything that will make you uncomfortable.

*(LUCY begins to cry. DIANA wants to comfort her but fears touching her will aggravate the problem. Finally, she pulls the sobbing LUCY to her and rocks her.)*

You've never...I mean you and Vic never...?

LUCY

We agreed to wait...until we were married.

DIANA

Why did you break up?

LUCY

After graduation and my fiasco auditioning at the Met, I was so irritable, we fought most of the time. I didn't feel like singing any more so I was miserable, and I guess I took it out on him. I didn't know what I wanted.

DIANA

And later...when you started singing again?

LUCY

By that time he had enlisted, and then...Korea.

DIANA

You never heard from him after the war...or tried to get in touch?

LUCY

He stayed in California—his parents said he loved it there. I figured he met someone else.

*(Beat. Tentatively strokes DIANA's thigh.)*

Is it wrong, Diana?

DIANA

You have to decide for yourself.

LUCY

What have you decided for yourself?

DIANA

I think you know.

LUCY

I thought you were.... Have you...have you ever made love with a woman before?

DIANA

No. But looking back...I was always in love with one.

LUCY

Really?

DIANA

The first was Miss Jennings, my high school biology teacher. I adored her. When she leaned over my microscope, with her hand on my shoulder, I couldn't breathe.

LUCY

All high school girls have crushes on their teachers.

DIANA

Not all stop breathing at their touch. Then in college it was Peggy Maroney, captain of the tennis team. But she was two years older—out of my league. And Suzanne LaPorte who, I found out years later, already had a steady girlfriend. Then I met Mark. He was brilliant and dashing and persistent. I figured it was time.

LUCY

And Daniel?

DIANA

To heal the hurt from Mark. But the person who really helped me mend was Kathleen Hunter.

LUCY

The Earth-Mother nurse at the hospital?

DIANA

I just wanted to curl up inside her.

LUCY

But you didn't.

DIANA

It would have been crowded. She was pregnant with twins.

LUCY

And then?

DIANA

I met you. And I understood.

LUCY

What?

DIANA

That you were the reason none of the others had worked out. That I could be happy only with you.

LUCY

You knew this from the beginning?

DIANA

From the moment I heard you sing at the class reunion.

Di...?  
LUCY

Hmm?  
DIANA

LUCY  
Do you think...that if one of us were a man, we would be married by now?

DIANA  
Well...if one of us were a man, we might not have gotten to here.

*(Beat.)*

And frankly, I'm *glad* neither of us is a man because I like the women we are.

*(LUCY pulls back and turns towards DIANA so she can see her face for the response.)*

But to answer your question...yes, I do think we would be married.

LUCY  
I do too. I've never felt this way about anyone, Diana. I've never felt so...right with anyone. I do love you.

*(Kisses DIANA fiercely.)*

DIANA  
*(Takes LUCY's face in her hand.)*  
Are you sure you want to do this, Lucia?

LUCY  
Yes. I'm sure.  
*(Kisses DIANA hungrily, as one eats who has been long fasting.)*

*(Lights fade out.)*

Scene 7

SETTING: *October, 1955. Steps of CHRISTINA's front porch.*

AT RISE: *CHRISTINA and DEIRDRE—still in their school uniforms—are having milk and cookies. Around a portable record player are strewn several 45 rpm records. Sound: Mario Lanza singing “Be My Love.” Both girls sing along with the record attempting a deep voice and exaggerating their gestures. They reach the climactic end and fall together laughing.*

DEIRDRE

*(Having an astounding insight.)*

Wouldn't Mario Lanza be perfect for Miss Lucy?!

CHRISTINA

Well...they do have a lot in common. But what about Doctor Di? Don't you think she'd be lonely if Miss Lucy got married?

DEIRDRE

We need someone for her too. Someone handsome.

CHRISTINA

And smart.

DEIRDRE

And aristocratic.

CHRISTINA

Because Doctor Di is like...like Grace Kelly.

DEIRDRE

Gary Cooper?

CHRISTINA

She can do better.

DEIRDRE

Clark Gable?

CHRISTINA

Definitely not.

CHRISTINA & DEIRDRE

*(Looking at each other and suddenly shouting in unison.)*

Cary Grant!!

DEIRDRE

They can have a double wedding—right?

CHRISTINA

Yeah.

*(But she begins to have reservations.)*

I guess.

DEIRDRE

What's the matter?

CHRISTINA

Well...maybe they don't want to get married.

DEIRDRE

Why not?

CHRISTINA

They seem pretty happy the way they are. I mean they live right next door so sometimes I hear them...laughing and talking and stuff.... Even late at night in my bedroom, I hear...all kinds of things.

DEIRDRE

What things?

CHRISTINA

I don't know!

DEIRDRE

What? Singing? Conversation?

CHRISTINA

Well, it starts out like conversation. I can't hear the words or anything. But I hear Miss Lucy's voice and then Doctor Di's, back and forth. Sometimes they're serious, sometimes lively, or laughing. I think they're drinking something.

DEIRDRE

Booze?

CHRISTINA

More like tea or coffee. It makes a little clatter—like a cup set down on its saucer.

DEIRDRE

*(Disappointed.)*

Oh. What else?

CHRISTINA

Next thing...their voices get so soft I can barely hear them. The first time it happened, I thought they were falling asleep. Because right after that there's no noise at all for a while.

DEIRDRE

And then?

CHRISTINA

Then comes the strangest part: sounds that aren't words at all, but more like groans and sighs. Like they're...doing calisthenics.

DEIRDRE

Show me.

CHRISTINA

What?

DEIRDRE

Do the groans and sighs.

CHRISTINA

I can't.

DEIRDRE

Do it!

*(CHRISTINA demonstrates. DEIRDRE responds with an intake of breath.)*

CHRISTINA

What?

DEIRDRE

Maybe they're having sex.

CHRISTINA

Two women can't have sex.

*(Puzzled.)*

Can they?

DEIRDRE

*(Shrugs.)*

Maybe they're just...practicing on each other till they find the right men.

CHRISTINA

I don't believe it. Miss Lucy would never—

DEIRDRE

Well, look at them—they are *not* the old maid type.



CHRISTINA

Just because you don't have sex doesn't mean you're an old maid.

DEIRDRE

Well, what are you then?

CHRISTINA

*(Cornered, desperate.)*

You're a...career girl. Aren't they both great at their jobs? And don't they both love their work? Do you think they could do that if they had a houseful of kids to take care of? Anyway, why do you want them to get married and move away?

DEIRDRE

*(Shrugs.)*

People do.

CHRISTINA

Well, maybe they don't have to. Maybe they enjoy living here like old maids. Maybe they like things the way they are. They talk. They laugh. They have a good time together.

DEIRDRE

So do we, but that doesn't mean we're going to spend the rest of our lives together.

CHRISTINA

*(Angry without knowing why.)*

Thank God for *that!*

DEIRDRE

What are you so prickly about?

CHRISTINA

I'm not prickly.

DEIRDRE

Yes, you are.

CHRISTINA

No I'm not! I am not...prickly!

*(Storms off. DEIRDRE bites into a cookie. BOBBY enters, having heard the last couple lines.)*

BOBBY

What's she so prickly about?

DEIRDRE

Oh she's had her virginity offended by talk of marriage.

BOBBY

Who's getting married?

DEIRDRE

Nobody. Unless you want to propose. Relax—only teasing. Though it would put an end to all this sneaking around.

BOBBY

*(He sits next to her.)*

Dee—we're just *kids*.

DEIRDRE

Sometimes I don't feel like a kid anymore.

BOBBY

I know what you mean. I'll be fifteen in January.

DEIRDRE

How'd that happen?

BOBBY

Had to repeat fifth grade because of the motorcycle accident with my brother.

DEIRDRE

Why didn't you ever tell me?

BOBBY

I thought everybody knew.

DEIRDRE

Like we all kept track of little Bobby Thompson's attendance record.

BOBBY

Mr. Orlinski's offered me a part time job at the repair shop, and I figure if he likes my work, I could quit school at sixteen. Get out of the house—have a real life.

DEIRDRE

Yeah. Like your old man.

BOBBY

I'm not like him!

DEIRDRE

Don't do it, Bobby.

BOBBY

I thought...you might be keen on it.

DEIRDRE

On having a drop-out loser for a boyfriend. Forget it.

BOBBY

*(Puts an arm around her.)*

Want to go to the movies Saturday afternoon?

DEIRDRE

Gotta work at the rectory.

BOBBY

Oh, right. How's that going anyway?

DEIRDRE

*(Jumping up.)*

What do you care?

BOBBY

Why are you so prickly?

DEIRDRE

I'm not prickly.

BOBBY

Yes, you are.

DEIRDRE

I am not...prickly!

*(She storms off. BOBBY picks up a cookie and bites into it.)*

*(Lights.)*

Scene 8a

SETTING: *November, 1955. Living/dining area in DIANA and LUCY's home.*

AT RISE: *LUCY and DIANA, both wearing aprons, are setting the table for dinner for four.*

LUCY

Don't tell them I didn't grow my own oregano for the eggplant Parmesan.

DIANA

It must be pretty intimidating cooking for chefs—even if they *are* your parents.

LUCY

*Especially if they're your parents—and the recipe is theirs.  
(Pats DIANA gently on the backside and slides her over so she can reach the tray holding the flatware.)*

DIANA

*(Wiggling.)*

Oh, do that again, Miss Lucy!

LUCY

Not now. Anyway, you promised to be good.

DIANA

Aw, come on...they're not here yet.

LUCY

Did you take your stuff back to your room?

DIANA

Will they be taking naps?

LUCY

They *will* be using the bathroom.

DIANA

We could just close the doors.

LUCY

Mothers think you're hiding a mess when you do that.

DIANA

How would they know your night cream from mine? Isn't that the great thing about both

DIANA (*Cont.*)

being girls?

(*Kisses LUCY on the cheek.*)

That and no facial hair.

LUCY

(*Pulls away.*)

They would know I don't keep the *New England Journal of Medicine* on my night table.

DIANA

Why do you get like this? The first Sunday of every month—when your parents come to dinner—like clockwork, you get like this.

LUCY

Like what?

DIANA

Edgy...like you're mad at me for something.

LUCY

I do not!

DIANA

You don't even know you're doing it.

LUCY

Look, don't go trying to put *me* on the defensive. I'm not the one that makes them uncomfortable.

DIANA

Uncomfortable?

LUCY

I know my parents, and they are uncomfortable when you give me little squeezes and call me "Honey."

DIANA

Should I call you Miss Portinari? Pretend I have no affection for you?

LUCY

You can show affection without behaving like we're...

DIANA

Like we're what? Say it! You can't bring yourself to say it, can you? We're LOVERS! L-O-V-E-R-S. It's not a four-letter word. It's not something dirty, to be ashamed of.

LUCY  
I'm not ashamed.

DIANA  
Then what are you?

LUCY  
*Considerate.*

DIANA  
You know, maybe it's just you who's uncomfortable. Maybe you still want to be living at home, being mommy and daddy's good little girl. Maybe being a grown-up with her own life—including a *sex* life—is just too much for you.

LUCY  
And maybe you're the one who's acting like a child—flaunting the forbidden in front of people who are bound to be offended—people who are our guests *and* who happen to be my parents.

DIANA  
It is not your job to protect your parents from adult realities.

LUCY  
Diana, we agreed on this. I asked you not to do anything that would give away our...situation.

DIANA  
You asked. We didn't agree.

LUCY  
Well, you didn't say "No," so I assumed you would honor my request.

DIANA  
And nominate myself for Hypocrite of the Year?

LUCY  
How would you like it if I behaved like that in front of *your* parents?

DIANA  
I wouldn't care.

LUCY  
I don't know if that's true or not, Diana. But I love my parents and I care very much what they think of me. And if you can't accept that, then—

DIANA  
Then what?

LUCY

Then we're in trouble.

DIANA

*(Removes apron, throws it on table.)*

Then I guess we're in trouble.

*(Exits to upstairs. Doorbell rings. LUCY crosses, opens door to VIC RUGGIERO.)*

LUCY

*(Dumbfounded.)*

Vic.

*(Takes her apron off.)*

VIC

I was hoping for a little more enthusiasm.

LUCY

I...I'm in shock.

VIC

I'd settle for pleasantly surprised.

*(Gives her a friendly embrace and a kiss on the cheek.)*

It's good to see you again, Lucy.

LUCY

Yes...uh...come in.

*(They move into the room.)*

I thought you were...in California.

VIC

Not any more.

LUCY

When did you get into town?

VIC

Yesterday.

LUCY

You look...great.

VIC

And you look even more beautiful than I remember.

*(DIANA returns.)*

LUCY

Diana...this is an old friend, Vic Ruggiero. Vic, this is...Diana Clifford.

VIC

Sure, I remember seeing Diana at Goucher.

DIANA

Really? I don't think we ever met.

VIC

We didn't. But I used to watch you play tennis. Great legs.

DIANA

Too bad *we* never got to play. You might have noticed my serve too.

VIC

Hey—I meant it as a compliment!

DIANA

That's the sad part.

LUCY

Vic is, uh, visiting from California.

VIC

Not visiting. Here to stay.

DIANA

Well...that should make your family happy.

VIC

Lucy's too. I dropped in at the restaurant last night and they practically killed the fatted calf.

*(To LUCY.)*

Your mom told me you were living out here. So I thought I'd surprise you.

LUCY

Well...welcome home, Vic.

DIANA

Too bad you didn't call first. As you see, we're expecting company for dinner.

LUCY

It's only my parents. I'm sure they'd love to have you join us.

DIANA

But alas, we have no fatted calf. Our modest fare might prove unworthy.



VIC

*(To LUCY, sheepishly.)*

Actually, your parents aren't coming. They sent me instead.

LUCY

Oh.

DIANA

How *considerate* of them!

VIC

They thought you'd be happy to see me.

LUCY

Oh...I am...I am.

DIANA

Oh-she-is-she-is.

VIC

*(Looking from LUCY to DIANA.)*

Maybe...it would be better if I took you out to dinner one night, Lucy.

DIANA

Better for whom?

LUCY

Well...right now I'm awfully busy with rehearsals. I'm doing *Amahl and the Night Visitors* at Saint Kevin's.

VIC

I could pick you up after rehearsal—we'll do a late dinner at the Belvedere.

DIANA

She usually eats before rehearsal. You must remember how cranky she gets on an empty stomach.

VIC

*(To LUCY.)*

Milkshakes then. Good for acid stomach.

LUCY

Milkshakes?

DIANA

Teen angels at the Dairy Queen—how touching.

VIC

I'll stop by the school hall about nine tomorrow night.

LUCY

Nine-thirty.

VIC

See you then.

*(Moves towards door.)*

Enjoy your dinner—smells just like your mom's eggplant Parmesan.

*(Turning back.)*

Thanks for the invite, Diana. Maybe next time.

*(Exits.)*

DIANA

You're not really going out with him?

LUCY

What was I supposed to say?

DIANA

How about: "No thanks, Vic. I'm not interested in dating you."

LUCY

It's not a *date*. We're just going out for milkshakes. Like any two old friends who haven't seen each other in a long time. To catch up.

DIANA

Will you catch him up on your life of sin?

LUCY

Diana, Vic and I grew up together. Our parents are friends. We lived in the same neighborhood, went to the same elementary school.

DIANA

And—let's not forget—were *engaged*. For Christ's sake, you were going to marry the man!

LUCY

But I didn't, did I? We were never lovers. You know you are the only lover I've ever had.

DIANA

And I want to keep it that way.

LUCY

Well this ball-and-chain routine is certainly not the way to do it!

*(Exits in a huff.)*

*(DIANA drops onto chair. Lights dim. DIANA exits.  
In dim light LUCY enters restaurant area: a small table  
with two tall glasses with straws. She sits next to VIC.  
Lights up on Scene 8b.)*

VIC

I wish you had let me take you to dinner. Or at least to the Owl Bar for a drink.

LUCY

So why did you stay in California after Korea?

VIC

I never saw any place like Los Angeles. People eat in outdoor cafes year round. The ocean's a stone's throw away. There are night clubs full of famous people.

LUCY

So—like the Prodigal Son—you “squandered your inheritance on loose living.”

VIC

No, I squandered it on education. Took advantage of the G.I. bill and got a Master's in Engineering at U.C.L.A.

LUCY

Wow. Congratulations!

VIC

I've got a plan. With my brothers. We're going to start our own construction business. Dominic's already got a truck. His wife Angie's got some business school training—she'll keep the books.

LUCY

Where will you—?

VIC

Right here in Baltimore. Family's important. You and I—we know that, don't we, Lucy?

LUCY

So you'll stay in the old neighborhood?

VIC

Nobody our age stays in the old neighborhood. No, I want a big house that sits by itself—with lots of trees and a garden and a back yard full of kids scrambling over a jungle gym that I've built for them. Maybe in Catonsville, or even farther out, in Howard County.

LUCY

An appealing picture. Sounds like you've got it all worked out.

VIC

All but the most important piece.

*(Takes her hand.)*

I've never stopped thinking about you, Lucy, not in all these years.

LUCY

Surely there've been other girls.

VIC

But none of them was you.

LUCY

I...I don't know what to say, Vic.

*(He moves to kiss her. She pulls back slightly. He stops, shifts in his seat to a more neutral position.)*

VIC

Your parents seem to be thriving. But I think your mom was upset when you moved out.

LUCY

I'm the youngest, so it's hard to let go. But it was time.

VIC

So you and Diana have been roommates for...how long?

LUCY

Since July.

VIC

I don't remember you were friends at Goucher.

LUCY

We weren't, really. We sort of discovered each other at a reunion a couple years ago.

VIC

"Discovered"?

LUCY

Then when she started her residency at Mercy, we'd meet once in a while for lunch at Read's Drugstore or catch a movie when she went off duty.

VIC

And then...?

LUCY

And then Doctor Morley retired and offered her his practice. Suddenly she had lots of space and invited me to share it.

VIC

So you're...sharing space.

LUCY

Well, yes...but not like we're boarders in a rooming house or something. I mean we're...

VIC

What?

*(Beat.)*

LUCY

Good friends.

VIC

Be careful, Lucy.

LUCY

Of what?

VIC

Listen, I saw a lot of these women in the army—before they got dishonorably discharged.

LUCY

What women?

VIC

Unnatural women. Women who are not interested in having families. And I don't mean spinster schoolteachers or those hard-to-get, Katherine-Hepburn career girls who eventually give in to Spencer Tracy. I'm talking about another kind of woman—a man-hating, man-imitating woman...who preys on girls who are too innocent to understand.

LUCY

Why...why are you saying these things?

VIC

Because I don't want you to get hurt, Lucy. I love you. I've always loved you. I want to look after you...for the rest of our lives.

LUCY

Vic, I haven't seen you for seven years. You can't just barrel back into town and expect to pick up where we left off.

VIC

But I never left off. You broke off the engagement. I never even understood why. I knew you were upset about the Met audition, but...

LUCY

I was graduating. My teachers were pressuring me to do something with my talent. You were pressuring me to get married. I didn't know what to do. I needed time.

VIC

I came back in the hope that by now you've had it. I'm asking you to marry me, Lucy, to build a good life and create children together—and to let me take care of you and them with all my strength and all my heart.

LUCY

Vic, I wasn't expecting this...I don't know what...

VIC

You don't have to say anything yet.

*(She relaxes with relief. He kisses her. She does not resist. Lights dim. In dim light, LUCY crosses to a bare part of the stage and kneels facing out. Lights up on Scene 8c.)*

LUCY

Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. It's been three months since my last confession.

*(Beat.)*

I...I committed impure acts...sexual acts. Many times.

*(Listens to Priest's question.)*

With another.

*(Listens.)*

What do you mean?

*(Listens.)*

Well, no, not...intercourse.

*(Softer.)*

It was...with another woman.

*(Listens, then repeats, a little louder.)*

Woman. But it wasn't just lust, Father. I loved her.

*(Softer.)*

Love her.

*(Listens.)*

But we would have been married if we could. We *felt* married.

*(Listens.)*

But it didn't feel unnatural. How can it be a sin? Doesn't God understand all hearts?

*(Listens.)*

I know the Bible says—

*(Listens.)*

But surely—

*(Listens, then resigns herself and prays, as lights fade.)*

“O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended thee and I detest all my sins because I dread the loss of heaven....and the pains of hell.”

*(In dim light LUCY crosses to DIANA in their living room.)*

*Lights up on Scene 8d.)*

DIANA

Are you sure this is what you want?

LUCY

Of course I'm not sure.

DIANA

Then why...?

LUCY

I can't live like this.

DIANA

Has it been such a hard life—the one we've shared here?

LUCY

Your life and mine together—inside these walls—has been...

*(But she dare not go there for fear of breaking her resolve.)*

But there's a world outside these walls, Diana, and we have to live in it.

DIANA

*(Moving towards her.)*

No one has to know.

LUCY

You're the one who can't stand being a hypocrite.

DIANA

I could...I could learn to live with it.

LUCY

At what cost?

DIANA

Surely it would be less than the cost of losing you.

*(DIANA's desperation makes LUCY turn away.)*

But I guess you don't feel that way. I guess I'm just not enough for you.

LUCY

I hate it when you do that.

DIANA

Do what?

LUCY

Make everything sound so either-or, so black or white—as though there weren't any ambiguity.

DIANA

There isn't—for me.

LUCY

Yes there is. You just won't admit it.

DIANA

Oh, so now you know my own mind better than I do!

LUCY

I know your patients would stay away in droves if they had any idea of... I know hospitals would turn you down. And what about Doctor Morley—do you honestly think if he knew what had been happening inside these walls, he'd go on leasing them to you?

DIANA

Maybe.

LUCY

Don't be naive, Diana. You're the scientist—look at the evidence. Everybody from the president to the police think we're sick, dangerous perverts!

DIANA

But we're not! And I'm not going to live my life to suit a bunch of stupid bigots!

*(Beat. Then, stretching out a hand.)*

Lucy, please....

LUCY

*(Wants to take it.)*

I can't.

DIANA

What have we been doing here these four months—playing house? Has it all been a sham? Haven't we been good for each other? Hold on to me, Lucy, We'll make it work.

LUCY

I can't do it.

DIANA

*(Lowers her hand, looks at LUCY. Her eyes go cold.)*

So what will you do? Marry Vic Ruggiero and live unhappily ever after?

LUCY

Don't be cruel, Diana.



DIANA

At least I'm not being cruel *and* stupid.

LUCY

I haven't said anything about getting married.

DIANA

No, but I'm sure *he* has. Was it over milkshakes that first night? Or maybe after the Colts game over pizza? Or before the movie? Or after dinner at Haussner's? Or in church—wouldn't *that* be perfect?

LUCY

Please—I don't want to end it like this.

DIANA

What were you expecting—a thanks-for-the-memories handshake? A polite kiss on the cheek? This is my life you're screwing up—and yours! This is our chance for happiness you're running away from like a cowardly papist sheep!

LUCY

Leave my religion out of this.

DIANA

Your repressive religion is at the core of it!

LUCY

Stop it! You know, Diana, your vehemence gives you away. Sometimes I think you're just jealous of the comfort my faith provides. You have nothing to believe in.

DIANA

Yes, I am jealous. I'd love to believe in an afterlife, in a caring Providence, in an eternal justice. But I've seen too many people suffer without reason and die in misery to buy it. I can't just believe it because I *want* to, because it would give me *comfort*.

LUCY

But there has to be something bigger than us.

DIANA

No, there doesn't. We may want there to be. We may hope—even believe—that there is. But that doesn't make it so.

LUCY

And *not* believing it doesn't make it *not* so.

DIANA

You're wrong about my not believing in anything. I believe in you. I believe in the beauty of our life together. Waking up next to your sweet smell, coming home to your welcoming

DIANA (*Cont.*)

smile, hearing the music in your voice, seeing the joy in your work—*that's* what gives me comfort. That's what fuels my energy and passion and makes my life worth living. Don't leave me, Lucy. Please. I need you.

LUCY

But I need more than you. I guess you're right after all—you're not enough for me. I need the blessing of my parents and church, the approval of my co-workers, the respect of my neighbors.

DIANA

And a man in your bed that you don't love.

LUCY

What makes you think I don't love him?

DIANA

I've seen you in love. And this isn't it.

LUCY

Vic is a good man. He'd make a good husband and father. He wants to take care of me.

DIANA

He wants to control you.

LUCY

Funny. That's what he thinks about you.

DIANA

And what do you think?

*(Beat.)*

LUCY

I think...I should move out.

DIANA

Where to?

LUCY

Back to my parents, I guess. I can't afford my own place.

DIANA

*(Beat.)*

Don't do it, Lucy. Stay here.

LUCY

It's tearing you apart, Di—I can see that. We can't live in the same house and go back to

LUCY (*Cont.*)

being just friends. That's crazy. It won't work.

DIANA

I can handle it.

LUCY

No you can't. All we do is argue.

DIANA

I promise—no more fights. Go out with Vic if you want. But come home afterwards. Please, Lucy, this is your home.

LUCY

But it can't be anymore—that's what I'm saying.

DIANA

Are you going to quit your job?

LUCY

Of course not.

DIANA

Then stay till the end of the school year.

LUCY

Be realistic—that's...seven months.

DIANA

You said yourself you can't afford a place of your own. Think of the hassle of taking buses from your old neighborhood. And what would you do about evening rehearsals for *Amahl*?

LUCY

I...maybe I could borrow my parents' car.

DIANA

What about the music lessons you give here?

LUCY

I can't think about all that now, Diana. I just know I can't stand to see you in this pain.

DIANA

My pain will only get worse if you go away, Lucy. We can do this. We can work it out, I promise. I'll agree to whatever you want. Just...don't leave...please...please stay.

*(Lights fade. DIANA exits. In dim light LUCY crosses to restaurant area and sits next to VIC, who has spread the*

*real estate section of the paper open before them. Lights up on Scene 8e.)*

VIC

I want to take you to look at this four-bedroom, split level on a half acre in Glyndon. And then there's this great Victorian mansion in Ten Hills. But maybe that's too pretentious. How about this rambler with a garage in Westview? Look—it has a yard big enough for your garden.

LUCY

Vic, I know the banks offer special terms for vets, but...you can't really afford any of these, can you?

VIC

Of course not. I'm going to build ours. I just want to get an idea of what you like.

LUCY

*(Her teasing tone does not completely conceal her real feelings.)*

Aren't you being presumptuous?

VIC

I'm wearing you down. You can't play hard-to-get forever.

LUCY

Is that what you think I'm doing?

VIC

*(Puts paper down.)*

I'm not sure *what* you're doing, Lucy. But I wish you'd let me in on it. If you're having reservations about me, I wish you'd tell me what they are so I could clear them up.

*(LUCY laughs.)*

What's so funny.

LUCY

You're such...an engineer.

VIC

What does that mean?

LUCY

You're a planner and a problem-solver. You see the goal, and you roll up your sleeves and have at it.

VIC

Is that bad?

LUCY

No, no. It's good. It's...effective. It's exhausting.

*(VIC laughs.)*

VIC

Am I pushing too hard?

LUCY

Could be you're pushing too hard.

VIC

Maybe I'm pushing too hard.

*(They both laugh.)*

I'm sorry, Sweetheart.

LUCY

*(Kisses him gently. He slides closer and kisses her passionately. After a moment, she pulls back.)*

Vic...have you ever...made love with someone?

VIC

It's not something I'm proud of. She wasn't a "nice" girl. I would never do it with a girl I respected...with you...until we were married.

LUCY

I know you're eager to settle down,

*(Gestures to pictures of houses in newspaper.)*

get on with your life. But I...well, why don't we take some time to...get re-acquainted.

VIC

Yeah, you're right. It's just that, see, I never got unacquainted. I meant it when I said I never stopped thinking about you.

*(Takes out his wallet and removes a dog-eared photo.)*

See this. Not a night went by that I didn't look at this picture.

LUCY

*(Reaching for it.)*

What is it—us at the prom?

VIC

No.

LUCY

*(Looking at it.)*

Oh!

VIC

You were the most beautiful May Queen St. Leo's ever had.

LUCY

My mother's wedding dress.

VIC

Every night in Korea, I'd imagine how you would look in that dress at our wedding.

LUCY

I was fourteen.

VIC

And I was already in love with you. My madonna with the angel's voice.

LUCY

What happens, Vic, when you find out I'm not a madonna or an angel?

VIC

Well, I guess I'd just have to...divorce you!

*(Laughs.)*

I'll take my chances on that one, Lucy.

*(Beat.)*

So. Now that we're getting "re-acquainted," what would you like to do for your birthday next weekend?

LUCY

You remembered!

VIC

I don't suppose you'd like to go to the Notre Dame-Navy game in Annapolis?

LUCY

You're kidding! You've got tickets?

VIC

Dominic's an alum—remember? So that takes care of Saturday. Now what about Friday night? How about dinner and a show? Anything you want. Pull out all the stops. I thought you might enjoy something musical.

LUCY

*(Excited.)*

I've been seeing ads in the paper for the Santa Cecilia Choir from Rome. They're coming to the Lyric.

VIC

*(Not enthusiastic.)*

Hmm...sounds...classy.

LUCY

But maybe you wouldn't enjoy that so much.

VIC

Well it's *your* birthday.

LUCY

We could do something else. I know—how about seeing *The King and I* at Ford's.

VIC

Are you sure?

LUCY

Yes, I'd like that.

VIC

Whew! That was a close one. The new Liberace movie just opened. I was afraid I'd be stuck with pansy piano!

*(He laughs. LUCY looks away. Crossfade. LUCY crosses to dining area of her home. There is a bud vase on the table with a sweetheart rose in it. An envelope leans against it. LUCY admires the rose, then opens the envelope and removes two tickets, and looks at them. We hear the singing of the Santa Cecilia Choir. Lights fade. Music crescendos, and, if desired, plays into intermission.)*

*Intermission.*

ACT IIScene 1

SETTING: *December, 1955. CHRISTINA's bedroom—suggested by single bed and night table.*

AT RISE: *CHRISTINA is in bed. DIANA has just finished examining her and is pulling her stethoscope off.*

DIANA

Miss Gallagher, you are a very healthy young woman!

CHRISTINA

I don't feel so healthy.

DIANA

I guess that's why your grandmother's letting you play hooky.

CHRISTINA

My stomach feels terrible.

DIANA

*(Takes a few packets of pills from her bag.)*

These are for cramps. One every four hours.

*(Pats her hand.)*

Welcome to the club! Now you're one of us.

CHRISTINA

One of you?

DIANA

A woman. Not a little girl any more.

CHRISTINA

I don't feel like a woman.

DIANA

You will.

CHRISTINA

Women are people with husbands and children.

DIANA

Oh?



CHRISTINA

*(Embarrassed, as she realizes her unintended insult.)*

I didn't mean that you have to...I only meant...I'm not...old enough or *mature* enough.

DIANA

But this is the beginning. Lots of physical—and emotional—changes. New discoveries. New experiences. You'll fall in love and—

CHRISTINA

But I'm going to be a nun.

DIANA

That won't stop you.

CHRISTINA

I...I'm not sure I'm ready for—these changes.

DIANA

It's scary, I know. But if we didn't change...we'd be...dead.

*(The matter-of-fact presentation of this gruesome alternative makes CHRISTINA smile.)*

Did your...did your grandmother explain to you...about your period?

*(CHRISTINA gives a half-hearted nod.)*

And how reproduction works?

CHRISTINA

*(Shakes her head.)*

But I read the pamphlets you gave her for me.

DIANA

Do you have any questions?

CHRISTINA

If the...the penis just hangs there in the man's crotch, how can it be "inserted into the vagina"?

DIANA

It becomes engorged with blood and so gets hard and erect—just as the woman's clitoris does—when the couple are aroused.

CHRISTINA

*(Having a hard time imagining this.)*

Oh.

*(There is a muffled noise from the other side of the bedroom wall—LUCY coughing in her own bedroom next door. DIANA turns sharply towards the sound—which is repeated. The proximity of the beds and the ease with*

*which sound travels through the wall registers. She turns back to CHRISTINA and gives her a long, apprehensive look. CHRISTINA looks back reassuringly.)*

CHRISTINA (*Cont.*)

Sounds like Miss Lucy's playing hooky too. You better give her some medicine for that cough—it's only three weeks till *Amahl*.

DIANA

Right.

*(Beat.)*

I hope...her coughing...hasn't disturbed you.

CHRISTINA

Oh no—I never hear anything! Unless it's really loud. I mean it's only noise—not like words you could understand or anything. Like if a book got accidentally knocked on the floor—a big book—a Bible or something—I might hear a thump. A muffled thump. A distant...thump....

*(Pause.)*

DIANA

So. I guess you're excited about *Amahl*, huh?

CHRISTINA

Wait till you see it! Mrs. O'Heaney's making us all costumes. And my grandfather built the set, which is a shepherd's cottage. Everything in it is beat up so you can tell they're poor. And the eighth graders are all shepherds. And Father Alexander—he has a great tenor voice—is Kaspar, the king who's deaf and kind of comic. Sometimes he acts that way between scenes too—when Miss Lucy's giving notes—trying to make her laugh. But she usually doesn't.

DIANA

And what about Christina's performance?

CHRISTINA

Miss Lucy's always telling us to “get into character.”

*(Gestures to the crutch leaning against the bed.)*

So I hobble around on my crutch and try to imagine what it would be like to tend sheep in Judea two thousand years ago. But I've never even been allowed to have a pet, so it's hard. And there's something I don't understand about *Amahl*. If they've sold their last sheep and don't know where their next meal's coming from, how can he be so... cheerful? Miss Lucy says it's because he's a dreamer—like most artistic types. Being able to play his flute and see the stars makes him happy.

DIANA

And what do you think?

CHRISTINA

I think it's because he has a mother who loves him.

DIANA

Maybe...maybe you're both right.

*(Closes her bag. Nods towards glass of water on night table.)*

But now you should take one of those pills and try to sleep. If you think of other questions, Chris, you can always ask me.

CHRISTINA

*(Suddenly, reaching for DIANA's hand and squeezing it.)*

Doctor Di....I...um...thank you...for coming over.

DIANA

You're welcome.

*(Cups CHRISTINA's cheek.)*

I guess you miss your mother a lot, don't you?

CHRISTINA

Grandma won't talk about her any more.

*(Beat.)*

Doctor Di, why do some people need sex more than other people? I mean...why do some people have...less control?

DIANA

Everybody's different. People have...different hormonal levels....

CHRISTINA

So if you have a really high hormonal level, it's not your fault?

DIANA

Having sex isn't a fault. It's a normal, pleasurable activity.

CHRISTINA

But if you're not *supposed* to. I mean if you have it with somebody you're not supposed to have it with, then it's a sin. Isn't it?

DIANA

I don't know about sin. I know that all human beings need love, and for most adults, sex is an important way of sharing that love.

CHRISTINA

So...you don't think my mother is going to hell?

DIANA

I don't think we should judge her.

DIANA (*Cont.*)

*(Stands, lifts a frame from the night table.)*

Is this her picture?

*(CHRISTINA nods. DIANA Sets the frame down and sits on the edge of the bed.)*

Do you...ever hear from her.

CHRISTINA

I'm sure she's very busy. But one day she might send me a plane ticket, and I'll fly out to Hollywood to visit her film set.

*(With mounting excitement.)*

Or she might reserve the Birchfield Theatre for one of her premieres and invite all the students and teachers at St. Kevin's—and you too, of course—to come to the movie.

DIANA

*(Indulging the fantasy.)*

That would be fun!

CHRISTINA

But it's possible she's been in Europe all these years, going from town to town, tracking down my father and then helping him to slowly recover from amnesia.

*(With mounting desperation.)*

That happens, doesn't it? Some soldiers get shell-shocked and then they get amnesia and they don't remember where they're from or who their family is. That's possible, isn't it, Doctor Di, isn't it?

*(DIANA puts her hands on CHRISTINA's shoulders, pulls her into a hug, and tries to calm her.)*

DIANA

Chris...If you ever need to talk about your mother, or about anything else, I'll be happy to listen. But right now, I think it would be a good idea to get some sleep.

*(DIANA gets up, smiles sadly, picks up her bag, and exits.*

*CHRISTINA hugs herself. Sound of muffled sobs from the next door bedroom. "Fantasy" lighting. Music as*

*CHRISTINA, using her crutch, crosses to another part of the stage where she is joined by LUCY for the finale of the opening duet of Amahl and his Mother.)*

CHRISTINA

*(Sings, as Amahl.)*

DON'T CRY, MOTHER DEAR, DON'T WORRY FOR ME.  
IF WE MUST GO BEGGING, A GOOD BEGGAR I'LL BE.  
I KNOW SWEET TUNES TO SET PEOPLE DANCING.  
WE'LL WALK AND WALK FROM VILLAGE TO TOWN,  
YOU DRESSED AS A GYPSY AND I AS A CLOWN.  
WE'LL WALK AND WALK FROM VILLAGE TO TOWN.

CHRISTINA *(Cont.)*

AT NOON WE SHALL EAT ROAST GOOSE AND SWEET ALMONDS,  
AT NIGHT WE SHALL SLEEP WITH THE SHEEP AND THE STARS.

...

GOOD NIGHT...

LUCY

*(Sings, as The Mother.)*

MY DREAMER, GOOD NIGHT!  
YOU'RE WASTING THE LIGHT.  
KISS ME GOOD NIGHT.  
GOOD NIGHT....

*(Lights.)*

Scene 2

SETTING: *January, 1956. DIANA's office, suggested by a chair.*

AT RISE: *DEIRDRE is seated. DIANA stands.*

DIANA

*(Gently.)*

Well, Deirdre...you were right.

DEIRDRE

I'm pregnant?

*(DIANA nods.)*

O my God.

*(Beat.)*

DIANA

What...what do you want to do?

DEIRDRE

What do you mean?

DIANA

Well. You can have the baby. Or you can—

DEIRDRE

No! I could never do...the other.

DIANA

I didn't mean-- What will your parents say?

DEIRDRE

Oh, there's no question about that. I'll be out on my sinful ass.

DIANA

Out?

DEIRDRE

*(Quoting her mother.)*

"There'll be none living under this roof that have sex without benefit of holy matrimony!"

DIANA

Where will you go? Is the baby's father—

DEIRDRE

No.

DIANA

Does he know?

*(DEIRDRE shakes her head.)*

Deirdre, you've got to think about the baby as well as yourself. Perhaps the father—or the boy's family—would be willing to take some responsibility for—

DEIRDRE

No!

*(Pause.)*

DIANA

Would you rather consider...adoption?

*(DEIRDRE shrugs. DIANA stoops in front of her.)*

Whatever you decide, Deirdre, you can't manage on your own. You'll need help.

*(DEIRDRE begins to cry. Beat. DIANA gives her a handkerchief.)*

Did you ever hear of the Florence Crittenton Home? It's over near Druid Hill Park.

*(DEIRDRE shakes her head.)*

It's a place for...

DEIRDRE

“Wayward girls”?

DIANA

I could look into it if you want. I have a medical conference on the West Coast next week. When I get back, I'll—

DEIRDRE

There's no money.

DIANA

Don't worry about that.

DEIRDRE

Do you think I'm “wayward,” Doctor Di?

DIANA

I won't be your judge, Deirdre. You'll have enough of those.

*(Lights.)*

Scene 3

SETTING: *January, 1956. Night. DIANA and LUCY's living/dining room.*

AT RISE: *LUCY has been reading—before being interrupted by DIANA, who has just returned from her trip.*

Move?!

LUCY

DIANA

Not till the end of the school year.

LUCY

To San Francisco?

DIANA

You'd love it there. It's an old city, full of Catholic tradition—founded by Franciscan priests. A beautiful, historic city. Yet it's alive and forward looking. Such a variety of people—Spanish-speaking and Chinese. And Italians too!

LUCY

And we should do this...so we can join this...women's club?

DIANA

Come on, Lucy. The Daughters of Bilitis is an organization that saves women's lives. *Literally*. Phyllis told me they've gotten calls from women who are suicidal.

LUCY

And then what happens? They recount stories of healthy, well-adjusted lesbians and tell her it's okay to be gay. And suddenly her parents, her priest, her employer, and the local police are all converted?

DIANA

That's the long-term goal. That's why they've started a speakers' bureau. There's an attorney who's agitating to get the penal code changed and—

LUCY

Is her name Wonder Woman?

DIANA

It doesn't have to be if she has enough supporters. That's the point.

LUCY

And you want to be one of those supporters?



DIANA

I've agreed to write a series of articles for *The Ladder*—that's their newsletter—refuting the myths in some of the scientific literature.

LUCY

And you need to live in San Francisco to do this?

DIANA

No, I don't need to live there. It's just...I just thought *you*...might live there more comfortably. I mean we might be able to... have a life there...together.

LUCY

Diana...

DIANA

Don't answer now. Think about it.

LUCY

I don't need to think about it—I'm not doing it!

DIANA

Why not? Why do you have to be such a damn coward?

LUCY

Why do you have to be such a blind fool?

DIANA

Isn't that the right of people in love?

LUCY

I can't just pick up and move across the country. That's you. It's not me. Baltimore is my home. I grew up here, went to school here. My family is here—I couldn't leave them.

DIANA

Why not? That's what grown-ups do: they leave home.

LUCY

OR...they take their place in the community and pass on their values.

DIANA

What values would those be? Intolerance? Prejudice? Fear?

LUCY

Generosity, encouragement, loyalty. The grown-up values. I won't move to San Francisco, Diana. I can't leave my family, my job at St. Kevin's, Mother Michael, the children I've come to love.

DIANA

And Vic Ruggiero? Can you walk away from him?

*(LUCY looks away.)*

You could find another job, other colleagues. There are children in San Francisco.

LUCY

Could I find another family?

DIANA

I'll be your family, Lucy.

LUCY

I couldn't ask that of you, Di. No one person can be everything to another.

DIANA

Maybe I wouldn't have to be "everything." Maybe people can have other families than the ones they grew up in—just like they can have other children than the ones they give birth to. What about the nuns? You're always saying they're like a family. These women in San Francisco—I don't want to paint them as perfect. I only met a dozen or so at the meeting and they're a very mixed bag—journalists and factory workers, teachers and waitresses. Some seem bright and clever, some are angry, many are scared. Like any family. But they all have something in common with us. Something important.

LUCY

That might work for you. But can't you see we're different? You were an only child and your parents were...well, you learned not to rely on them, to be brave and independent. You just don't understand how much the love of a good family can mean.

DIANA

What I don't understand is how it can mean so much that you would pretend to be something you're not, just to please them. If they're such a wonderful, caring family, why can't they accept you as you are?

LUCY

Because everything they value is telling them not to—the church, the government, the law...

*(Thrusting an accusing arm at DIANA.)*

doctors!

DIANA

And they're willing to accept the verdict of these...benighted institutions that the dutiful daughter they have cherished for twenty-eight years is a perverted, sinful criminal?!

LUCY

My parents are simple, uneducated people, Diana. They don't question authority.

DIANA

Then the "authorities" must be taught to change their minds. And we are the ones to teach

DIANA (*Cont.*)

them.

LUCY

Not “we,” Diana. You. You’re the wing-walker. Not me.

DIANA

But you’re a great supporter of missionaries. You’re always sending them money and telling the children about their clinics and schools for the poor, their attempts to spread the gospel of love in “heathen” countries. Well, what about the heathen in our own country? What about those who refuse to accept the value of *our* love? This is your chance to be one of the missionaries you so admire.

LUCY

*You go, Diana.*

DIANA

*(Softly.)*

Not without you, Lucy. What would be the point?

*(LUCY cups DIANA’s cheek; DIANA whimpers at this first physical contact in months. LUCY realizes the effect of her gesture and withdraws her hand.)*

LUCY

You...you’ll find someone else.

DIANA

I don’t want someone else.

*(Beat.)*

Do you?

*(Pause, as LUCY confronts her truth.)*

LUCY

No. While you were away, I...I broke off with Vic.

DIANA

*(Lets out sigh of exhaustion/relief/exaltation.)*

Then I’ll stay here.

LUCY

But what about—

DIANA

I’ll write my column. Maybe it will make a difference.

LUCY

Are you sure you—

DIANA

Lucy, I don't need to live in San Francisco. I only thought *you* could be happier there. I was wrong.

LUCY

But can *you* be happy here? I mean, keeping it to ourselves?

DIANA

*(Wanting the answer to be yes.)*

Home is where you are, Lucia.

*(They kiss gently.)*

LUCY

I love you, Di. I could never love anyone else like this. I'm sorry I hurt you.

*(They kiss passionately.)*

*(Lights.)*

Scene 4

SETTING: *February, 1956. Parlor of the Florence Crittenton Home, suggested by a small sofa, where DEIRDRE sits.*

AT RISE: *CHRISTINA crosses to it, stands facing her, staring at her expanding stomach, holding a white bakery box.*

CHRISTINA

Doctor Di went to check on a girl who's running a temperature. She'll be here in a few minutes.

DEIRDRE

Well, you don't need to look so terrified. I'm not *contagious*.

CHRISTINA

*(Plops on the sofa.)*

How do you feel?

DEIRDRE

Fat.

CHRISTINA

Did that just happen in a month?

DEIRDRE

No, Dodo, it takes a little longer than that.

CHRISTINA

No, I mean—never mind.

DEIRDRE

I'm sorry. So what's the scoop from the sacristy?

CHRISTINA

Next month we'll put the purple coverings over all the statues and crucifixes for the last part of Lent.

DEIRDRE

That'll be thrilling.

*(Flicking her fingers at the bakery package.)*

What's this?

CHRISTINA

*(Jumps up and sings with exaggerated dementia Kaspar lines from Amahl.)*

CHRISTINA *(Cont.)*

THIS IS MY BOX, THIS IS MY BOX!  
I NEVER TRAVEL WITHOUT MY BOX!

DEIRDRE

*(Screws up her face into a reluctant smile, then breaks the string on the box with her teeth and opens it.)*

Tea cakes!

*(Pushes past the napkin on top, lifts a chocolate-covered diamond to her mouth and eats it in two bites.)*

CHRISTINA

Doctor Di bought them. Maybe we should wait for her before we eat them.

DEIRDRE

She's okay, you know. I mean she's really been great to me. These are good.

CHRISTINA

*(Selects the cake least sticky with jam, cradles it a napkin, tilts her head confidentially towards DEIRDRE.)*

So are the other girls here mostly teenagers too?

DEIRDRE

*(Nodding towards the other side of the room, speaking softly.)*

Well, that one is. Rich kid from Philadelphia. Nobody back home's supposed to know she "got into trouble." Her mother's telling everybody she's in a boarding school in Europe for a year. Isn't that a riot?

*(Helps herself to a second cake.)*

CHRISTINA

Do you have a school here?

DEIRDRE

No. Anyway, some of the others are older—twenties and thirties. Some already have other illegitimate kids.

CHRISTINA

*(Taken aback by DEIRDRE's casual use of this word.)*

Oh. What do you do all day?

DEIRDRE

I don't know. Kitchen stuff. We take turns serving the meals. Yesterday I was in the laundry. Boring.

*(Beat.)*

So...if you get to be May Queen, will you wear your mother's wedding dress?

CHRISTINA

If it fits.

DEIRDRE

You haven't tried it on?

CHRISTINA

I don't want to jinx my chances.

DEIRDRE

Oh, you'll get it for sure, Chris. You're the smartest girl in the class.

CHRISTINA

I don't know. Beth Shoemaker might have a higher average this year. And I see her at mass every day too. Plus, she plays the organ for funerals.

DEIRDRE

But now that you've been Amahl, won't May Queen be sort of a let down?

CHRISTINA

Oh no! Amahl came out of the blue. Being May Queen is something I've dreamt of all my life. Well, almost.

DEIRDRE

But you got to sing the lead in a real opera. And with Miss Lucy!

CHRISTINA

It was an honor, I know, but a *secular* honor. I mean *Amahl* is a great work of art—but still and all, it's only a show. But the May Procession...wow. There are hymns and prayers and it ends with Benediction. It's one long ritual to honor the Blessed Virgin—almost like a *sacrament*. How could singing in a show compare to that? Besides, I got cast as Amahl because God gave me a good voice. But being May Queen is something you have to *earn*—with good grades and good character.

DEIRDRE

So?

CHRISTINA

So that makes it...worth more.

DEIRDRE

You're my best friend, Christina. But I have to tell you: you are the weirdest person I know.

*(CHRISTINA starts to protest, but DEIRDRE makes the "crazy" gesture, then points at CHRISTINA, and both break into laughter.)*

So...what's going on in the world? I don't get out much.

CHRISTINA

Marilyn Monroe is going to marry Arthur Miller.

DEIRDRE

Who's he?

CHRISTINA

Some famous writer. He's a Communist.

DEIRDRE

*(Not fascinated.)*

Oh.

CHRISTINA

In his sermon this morning, Father Alexander said they deserve each other.

DEIRDRE

*(Stops chewing. Sarcastic.)*

Really?

CHRISTINA

"The Commie Jew and the whore—they'll spend eternity in hell together!" That's what he said.

DEIRDRE

Oh yeah, he's an expert on hell.  
*(Resumes eating.)*

CHRISTINA

The C.Y.O. went roller skating at Carlin's.

DEIRDRE

You didn't have to tell me *that*.

CHRISTINA

Sorry.

DEIRDRE

*(Licking her fingers.)*

Will there be a Valentine Hop?

CHRISTINA

This Saturday. Are you sure you want to hear about it?

DEIRDRE

No, I guess not.



DEIRDRE (*Cont.*)

*(Stares at her stomach. CHRISTINA is at a loss for conversation. Suddenly, DEIRDRE turns and grabs CHRISTINA's hands with her sticky fingers.)*

Listen, Chris. I want you to do something for me.

CHRISTINA

*(Afraid this will be a request for some contraband.)*

What?

DEIRDRE

I want you to...to be nice to Bobby.

CHRISTINA

Bobby?

DEIRDRE

I know you don't think he deserves it. And in a lot of ways, he doesn't. But he's not as tough as he wants everybody to believe.

CHRISTINA

Sure had me fooled.

DEIRDRE

I don't suppose many people are being nice to him these days.

*(CHRISTINA shrugs.)*

He has it rotten at home. His old man's a drunk.

*(Beat.)*

Will you do it?

CHRISTINA

Well...I really don't have much occasion to...I mean I only see him at school.

DEIRDRE

That's all I'm asking. When you see him at school, give him a smile or something. I know! Ask him for the Sadie Hawkins dance at the Valentine Hop.

*(CHRISTINA looks dubious.)*

It's just one lousy dance. Come on—it's Lent. You can offer it up.

CHRISTINA

Well...okay.

DEIRDRE

Thanks. You can have my other cake.

*(Lights fade. In the dim light CHRISTINA crosses to the dance floor, suggested by lighting and music. The Platters*

*are singing "The Great Pretender." Lights up on Scene 4b: CHRISTINA and BOBBY are dancing. Both seem to be going through the motions. The music comes to an end. They stand there awkwardly.)*

BOBBY

So. Wanna go to the movies tomorrow afternoon?

CHRISTINA

Sunday?

BOBBY

My brother ushers there on weekends. He'll let us in.

CHRISTINA

You mean sneak in?

*(BOBBY shrugs.)*

That's stealing.

BOBBY

Okay, I'll ask him to use his passes.

CHRISTINA

What's the movie?

BOBBY

Oh, um...it's the new James Dean.

CHRISTINA

*Rebel Without a Cause?*

BOBBY

Yeah.

CHRISTINA

Okay.

*(Lights fade out. In dark, we hear the sound track from Rebel Without a Cause. Natalie Wood tells James Dean she wants a man who is gentle and sweet, like him, someone who doesn't run away when you need them, the way he hadn't deserted his friend even though the other kids considered him square. "That's what it really means to be strong." The music swells to provide background for their kiss. Soundtrack is cut off by slamming door. Crossfade to Scene 4c. CHRISTINA stomps onto a bare area of the stage. BOBBY runs on after her, intercepts her.)*

BOBBY

What's the matter? Where are you going?

CHRISTINA

Home. Where do you think?

BOBBY

But you squeezed back.

CHRISTINA

What?

BOBBY

When I squeezed your hand. You squeezed back.

CHRISTINA

So? It was the scene where James Dean and his father were fighting. I thought the movie was making you feel bad about your family. I felt sorry for you.

BOBBY

You let me put my arm around your shoulder.

CHRISTINA

I thought you felt like James Dean, that you just needed a friend to make up for your miserable home life.

BOBBY

And you kissed back too.

CHRISTINA

Until you went too far!

BOBBY

Look. I thought you were...interested.

CHRISTINA

Not in *that*!

*(Glancing at his fly—now, thank God, zipped up.)*

What was I supposed to do when you put *that* in my hand?

BOBBY

Oh, *pardon me* for living! Like you're Saint Christina! Like you're some kind of *nun*!

*(CHRISTINA starts to hurry away.)*

Like you're not related to your grandfather.

CHRISTINA

*(Stops in her tracks, faces him.)*

What's my grandfather got to do with this?

BOBBY

Like he doesn't do it with Old Lady O'Heaney.

CHRISTINA

Do what?

BOBBY

*(Pumping his fist at his crotch.)*

It. *It!* Don't be so stupid!

CHRISTINA

You're crazy!

BOBBY

Oh yeah? I see him go in there. I live across the street, remember?

CHRISTINA

So what? He goes in a lot of people's houses. He builds things. He fixes things.

BOBBY

Yeah—he fixes her up real good. Those two old coots are the joke of the parish.

CHRISTINA

*(Swings a closed fist at BOBBY's face, but he grabs her wrist before she can land the blow.)*

You're a stinking, lousy jerk! You don't know what you're talking about!

*(Wrests her arm free of his grip.)*

BOBBY

And what about your slut of a mother?

CHRISTINA

*(Dumbfounded by his sheer malice.)*

You leave my mother out of this!

BOBBY

Come on—you think everybody doesn't remember how she ran off with that loser?

CHRISTINA

You were just...what do you know about it?!

BOBBY

I heard my old man say he wish he had gotten a piece of her ass before she left town.

CHRISTINA

Stop it!

BOBBY

So what's the big deal? Whoring runs in your family. I figured the least you could do is give me a hand job.

CHRISTINA

*(Enraged.)*

Shut your filthy trap!

BOBBY

You're her flesh and blood, aren't you? *Aren't you?!*

*(CHRISTINA's adrenalin surges. She takes a step towards him and kicks her knee hard into his groin. He bends over and screams. She turns and runs off. Lights fade.)*

Scene 5

SETTING: *March, 1956. The living area of DIANA and LUCY's home.*

AT RISE: *DIANA sits on the sofa, lowering the newspaper to her lap.*

DIANA

What possessed you?!

LUCY

*(Laughing.)*

Mother Michael did. She cast a spell—that's what I'm telling you. Pacing the stage and spewing ideas in brogue faster than Gabby Hayes could shoot puffed rice from his cannon. The "Take-Me-Back-to-Tara Trio" of piano, fiddle and flute. The best of the choir girls doing a medley of Irish tunes—"the Four Lassies"—who will double as the

*(Demonstrating striking glasses)*

"Waterford Crystal Quartet"! Oh yes, and a tenor, a tin whistler and step dancers—I had to talk her out of the harp and bagpipes.

DIANA

And this maniacal extravaganza—

LUCY

"The Irish Radio Hour"!

DIANA

Is to be ready by Saint Patrick's Day?

LUCY

I didn't have any more chance against her than Lucifer did against the *original* Michael. She brandished her flaming sword of enthusiasm and—

DIANA

*(Not amused.)*

And you were suckered in.

LUCY

*(Startled out of humor.)*

What's the matter, Di?

DIANA

Does this mean you'll be at rehearsal every night?

LUCY

Well...you work nights too.

DIANA

I have office hours. *Two* nights a week.

LUCY

And you get emergency calls.

DIANA

It's part of my job.

LUCY

Well, this is part of mine.

DIANA

Are you getting overtime?

LUCY

Is that what this is about—the difference in our salaries?

DIANA

Of course not. It's about time...and values. I value our time together.

LUCY

So do I.

DIANA

But you seem to value this other thing more.

LUCY

Why can't I value both?

DIANA

You can. But you can only be in one place at a time.

LUCY

But *you* choose to be other places sometimes. How about when you went to the conference. Was that required?

DIANA

I wouldn't be much of a doctor if I didn't keep up.

LUCY

And what about visiting Deirdre on Sundays—is that an official house call?

DIANA

The poor kid's family has disowned her and—

LUCY

And you want to be a good doctor...a caring person.

DIANA

What's wrong with that?

LUCY

Nothing! That's my point. Being good at what you've chosen to do, really caring about your patients means you have to do more than the basic job, whether you're paid for it or not.

DIANA

But that's not the same as you going—

LUCY

It *is* the same. I want to be a good musician and a caring teacher. This project—crazy as it sounds—provides a chance to stretch. That's why it's so seductive. For all her Irish charm, I'm not doing this for Mother Michael, but because it's a challenge. Performance is putting yourself on the line. It'll make parents feel proud of their kids, and kids feel good about themselves. And yes, okay, I'm doing it because—in spite of all the hard work—it'll be fun!

DIANA

Maybe that's it. Maybe I'm just hurt you have to find your fun someplace else.

LUCY

Di...we have more fun than anybody. We go to the opera and movies and museums, we take long walks, argue about books and ideas. I feel alive with you. Remember the good time we had at the carnival...at the beach....

DIANA

It's only that...I've seen what work can do to families. That's why I wanted to be a G.P. and not a hot shot specialist flying all over the country. And why I wanted my office at home. There's more to life than work.

LUCY

Yes.

*(Touching DIANA.)*

And you are the “more” in my life.

DIANA

Then why do you need...?

LUCY

Because no one—not even you—can be everything to another person.



*(Crossfade to Scene 5b. LUCY crosses with the light to school hall, suggested by a low-back upright piano and stool. On top of the piano is her open briefcase, with sheet music scattered about. FATHER ALEXANDER enters.)*

FATHER ALEXANDER

Am I late?

LUCY

Oh! No, Father. I've just tuned the crystal. The Waterford Quartet finished early, but we're having a serious problem with the glasses going flat.

FATHER ALEXANDER

Try champagne!

LUCY

Maybe it's evaporation.

FATHER ALEXANDER

Want me to help you mark the glasses?

LUCY

I'm sure you have more important things to do with your time, Father.

FATHER ALEXANDER

I'm sure you do too, Lucy.

*(Pats her hand.)*

And I wish you'd call me Nathan.

LUCY

*(Moves to other end of piano, rifles through briefcase.)*

It's just I'm not used to.... Let me just find your music.

FATHER ALEXANDER

*(Holding out his copy of Irish Songs and Dances. He has marked the pages of the three songs with paper clips.)*

You can use mine if you like.

LUCY

Won't you need it?

FATHER ALEXANDER

I've got them memorized.

LUCY

Already?

FATHER ALEXANDER

I wanted to impress you.

LUCY

Well, I *am* impressed.

*(Sits at the piano and opens the book.)*

Which would you like to begin with?

FATHER ALEXANDER

We can do them in whatever order you had planned for the show.

LUCY

To be honest, I haven't thought about the order yet. I've been arranging the music for the Four Lassies and I didn't think you'd be so far a—

FATHER ALEXANDER

*(Coming closer to her.)*

If I could make a suggestion...

LUCY

Of course.

FATHER ALEXANDER

*(Leans over her shoulder and opens to the first piece.)*

I think we should start with the liveliest piece, "McNamara's Band." And we probably want to close with "Danny Boy," the sentimental favorite. That puts "The Rose of Tralee" in the middle. A rose between two thorns.

LUCY

Sounds good. If these are all in the right key for you, we can just rehearse the songs tonight and I can work on the transitions later.

FATHER ALEXANDER

Actually, I have a few ideas myself. I can show you if you like.

LUCY

Swell!

*(Starts to rise from the stool.)*

FATHER ALEXANDER

*(Puts a hand on her shoulder.)*

Stay put. It's just a few bars.

*(She freezes. He bends over and opens the book to the end of "McNamara's Band.")*

We can go from here...

*(He plays the final chord, his cheek close to hers.)*

FATHER ALEXANDER *(Cont.)*

to something like this...

*(He improvises a few more chords, then turns back to the first paper clip.)*

to the beginning of this one....

*(Plays beginning of "Rose of Tralee.")*

LUCY

*(Not daring to nod for fear the movement would bring her face closer to his.)*

Fine.

FATHER ALEXANDER

*(Flips to the end of the second song.)*

Then from here...

*(Plays the last few measures, followed by a short transition, then opens to the last paper clip.)*

right into "Danny Boy."

*(Plays first few measures, then stops. Leaves his hands on the keys, his arms locking her in, and turns his face to hers.)*

What do you think?

LUCY

*(Pulls back.)*

Sounds good.

*(He still doesn't move.)*

Why don't we go over the songs now?

*(He smiles and straightens.)*

You'll be standing center stage when you sing, so you might as well practice your projection.

*(He starts to cross.)*

Oh—and don't be startled if we're interrupted. I'm expecting my brother Tony to come by with a puppy and give me a ride home.

FATHER ALEXANDER

A singing dog act—is that my competition?

LUCY

I'm sure it's not a tenor.

*(Crossfade to Scene 5c. LUCY crosses with the light to the living area. She carries a cardboard box containing the puppy—which need not be visible to the audience.)*

LUCY

*(Checks her watch. To puppy in box.)*

Good. Office hours are over.

LUCY (*Cont.*)

*(Calls offstage.)*

Diana! There's someone here to see you.

DIANA

*(Offstage.)*

A patient? Send them to the side door.

LUCY

No. It's...a friend.

DIANA

*(Offstage.)*

I'll be right up.

LUCY

*(To puppy, putting box down.)*

Sshh. Don't give us away. She's going to love you.

DIANA

*(Enters, sees puppy.)*

Oh!

*(Squats to pet her.)*

What a cutie you are!

*(Smiling, looks past LUCY.)*

Whose is it?

LUCY

*(Beaming.)*

Ours!

DIANA

*(Smile freezes.)*

What?

LUCY

It's a surprise.

DIANA

I'll say.

LUCY

I know you miss your horses. And you had dogs too, didn't you? At home, I mean.

DIANA

They mostly lived in the stable. And there was plenty of space for them to run.

DIANA (*Cont.*)

*(Lets puppy lick her hand.)*

Nice markings. One of Tootsie's litter?

LUCY

The pick, Tony says. Do you like her?

DIANA

How could anyone not like her? But pets are a lot of trouble, Lucy. Somebody's got to be home to feed them and let them out and give them baths and take them for walks. Housebreaking...trips to the vet...

LUCY

I come home for lunch! When the weather's nice, she can stay out in the yard. And when it's not, she can stay in the kitchen. When we go out, we can get Christina to feed her. We'll get one of those collapsing gates. And there's a vet on Birchfield Boulevard—I can walk there!

DIANA

You could have asked me first.

LUCY

But then it wouldn't have been a surprise.

DIANA

Exactly.

LUCY

I thought...I thought she would be good company for you, Di...when I'm at rehearsals.

DIANA

*(Kneels, next to box, strokes the puppy thoughtfully for a moment, then smiles up in surrender.)*

What shall we name her?

LUCY

You pick!

DIANA

Sappho?

LUCY

Or we could just put a full page notice in the *Sun* announcing we're lesbians.

DIANA

Okay, okay. An opera heroine then. Delilah...or Salome.

LUCY

Do you think she's the biblical type?

DIANA

*(Feeling a nibble on her fingers.)*

Ouch! Maybe something with more of a bite. A political heroine. Margaret Sanger?

LUCY

Susan B. Anthony?

DIANA

Eleanor Roosevelt?

*(A bark. Both women screech with delight.)*

I guess that's it then.

LUCY

What'll we call her for short? Ellie?

DIANA

How about Rosie? Then when she bores her teeth into the furniture, we can call her "Rosie the Riveter." She'll be a rose between two thorns.

*(LUCY's smile dissolves.)*

What's the matter?

LUCY

*(Forces herself to smile again.)*

Nothing.

*(Lights fade.)*

Scene 6

SETTING: *Day of the May Procession, 1956. Setting alternates between St. Kevin's and the hospital delivery room.*

AT RISE: *Confessional. FATHER ALEXANDER sits. CHRISTINA kneels, facing his side.*

CHRISTINA

Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. It has been one day since my last confession.

FATHER ALEXANDER

Has something happened between then and now?

CHRISTINA

No. Well, I've been worrying.

FATHER ALEXANDER

About something you forgot to tell yesterday?

CHRISTINA

It's just that I want everything to be perfect today. I want to be a...pure May Queen...make sure I've done everything I should.

FATHER ALEXANDER

And you think there's something you still should do?

CHRISTINA

Well, there's something I *shouldn't* have done. But now that I have done it, there might be something else I *should* do.... To help some other people...to save them.

FATHER ALEXANDER

Let's start with what you shouldn't have done.

CHRISTINA

I...I stole the privacy of my neighbors.

FATHER ALEXANDER

How did you do that?

CHRISTINA

I was in their house—but I had permission...to feed the puppy.

FATHER ALEXANDER

So you were doing a good deed?

CHRISTINA

Well, not really, because they paid me to do it. And anyway, I love...the puppy.

FATHER ALEXANDER

What happened?

CHRISTINA

She's supposed to stay in the kitchen, but when I start to put her water bowl down, she jumps on my arm and water spills into the dining room and is headed for the rug. So I quick open the gate to clean it up and while I'm doing that, she runs upstairs.

FATHER ALEXANDER

Then you have to go up to retrieve her.

CHRISTINA

But she's hiding and I don't know where. So I have to look around. And I sort of take my time doing it, and well...I guess you could say I was snooping.

FATHER ALEXANDER

So that's the something you *shouldn't* have done.

CHRISTINA

Yes, Father.

FATHER ALEXANDER

And now...there's something you *should* do?—for these...neighbors?

CHRISTINA

I don't know. I...I keep thinking about my mother.

FATHER ALEXANDER

What about her?

CHRISTINA

She turned her back on us...on her family, the Church...God. She risked everything. She broke all the rules. And no matter how hard I try, I can't make up for that. My mother is going to hell.

FATHER ALEXANDER

We can't know that for sure. Didn't Jesus forgive Mary Magdalen?

CHRISTINA

She repented.

FATHER ALEXANDER

And so may your mother. We must pray for her.



CHRISTINA

Oh, I do, Father!

FATHER ALEXANDER

But what has this to do with...your neighbors?

CHRISTINA

Well, I...was wondering...

FATHER ALEXANDER

Yes?

CHRISTINA

Is fornication as bad a sin as adultery?

FATHER ALEXANDER

They are both mortal sins.

CHRISTINA

But does it count as fornication if...if the two people doing it are both...?

FATHER ALEXANDER

Are both what?

CHRISTINA

Are both...the same sex?

FATHER ALEXANDER

*(Beat.)*

Why don't you tell me what you found that has you so worried.

CHRISTINA

But it doesn't seem right...to confess somebody else's sin. And anyway, it doesn't even seem like a sin. I mean, most sins hurt people. People that you steal from or beat up or lie about—they suffer because of your behavior. But this is different. They love each other, I know they do. So who's hurt?

FATHER ALEXANDER

God is hurt when his laws are broken.

CHRISTINA

But I can't believe—

FATHER ALEXANDER

Would you question the law of God?

CHRISTINA

No, Father. But...

FATHER ALEXANDER

Perhaps you misinterpreted what you saw...upstairs. Why don't you tell me.

CHRISTINA

*(Deep breath.)*

One bedroom looks unused. The other one has a double bed and two night tables—but one of the night tables matches the furniture in the other room. On the closet hook I saw two robes. Under each night table is pair of slippers—different sizes. And on top of each table, a little stack of books—mostly novels and biographies. But one of the books is called *Female Homosexuality: A Psycho...Psychoana...lytic Study of...Lesbianism*.

FATHER ALEXANDER

And you...

CHRISTINA

Didn't know what it meant. But I looked up all the words.

FATHER ALEXANDER

I see.

CHRISTINA

Father...I don't want them to.... Can you talk to...can you save them?

FATHER ALEXANDER

If they repent.

CHRISTINA

Father...

FATHER ALEXANDER

Yes?

CHRISTINA

Was I right to tell?

*(Crossfade to Scene 6b. DEIRDRE lies in a hospital bed.  
DIANA stands next to her.)*

DIANA

*(Wiping perspiration from DEIRDRE's face.)*

It won't be long now, Deirdre.

DEIRDRE

Where am I?

DIANA

We've just moved you from the labor room to the delivery room.

DEIRDRE

I want to go home!

*(Strains her head up to look around, then suddenly throws it back and howls in pain.)*

DIANA

*(Taking her hand.)*

Breathe, Deirdre. Try to take deep breaths. It will help.

DEIRDRE

There was a man here...

DIANA

Doctor Venegas. The staff obstetrician.

DEIRDRE

Why did he leave?

DIANA

Because you screamed at him to get out.

DEIRDRE

Am I going to die?

DIANA

No. Everything is going well.

DEIRDRE

Then why is it taking so long?

DIANA

I guess some babies are...reluctant to leave the comfort of the womb.

DEIRDRE

The little bastard doesn't want to face the goddam world—who can blame it?

*(Another contraction. She screams.)*

I want my mother!

DIANA

I know, Sweetheart. She's on her way.

DEIRDRE

*(Starts to cry. Whispers)*

Mother.

*(DIANA wipes away DEIRDRE's tears. Crossfade to Scene 6c: bare area of stage. CHRISTINA in a wedding gown, fidgeting with a bouquet; LUCY admiring her.)*

CHRISTINA

*(Embarrassed.)*

It's my mother's wedding dress.

LUCY

It's lovely. And so are you.

*(CHRISTINA looks down.)*

CHRISTINA

She wanted to take me with her...the night they left. I was at the top of the stairs and she called to me: "Chrissie, come down!"

LUCY

And did you?

CHRISTINA

Grandma screamed at her: "God will punish you! You'll burn in hell!" I didn't want to burn in hell with her. Then she started up the steps but Grandma stood in front of her and put out her arms—like Jesus on the cross. She said it would be selfish to take me away from a good home.

LUCY

What about your grandfather?

CHRISTINA

He was...working that night.

*(Beat.)*

I pray that she'll...change, give up her.... But what if she doesn't, Miss Lucy? I can't bear the thought of...

LUCY

God knows our hearts, Christina. He understands. We have to believe that.

CHRISTINA

But if you break his law, wouldn't God have to punish you? In order to be just?

LUCY

Or forgive—in order to be merciful.

CHRISTINA

How can God forgive you—if you don't repent?

LUCY

How can we repent loving—if God is love?

CHRISTINA

Oh, I don't know what to think anymore.

LUCY

Why not put thinking aside for now? It's a day for faith and feeling. And singing!

*(CHRISTINA smiles.)*

If you think about your mother, think how proud of you she would be.

CHRISTINA

I'm going to be a nun.

LUCY

What made you decide that?

CHRISTINA

I want to be perfect.

LUCY

No one can be perfect, Christina.

CHRISTINA

In the gospel, Jesus tells the rich young man, "If you will be perfect, go and sell what you have and give to the poor and come follow me."

*(Close to tears now, but refusing to let them come.)*

That's what nuns do. They follow Jesus in the path of perfection. That's what I want.

LUCY

Do whatever will make you happy, Honey.

*(Takes CHRISTINA's face in her hands.)*

But try to remember: we're just...you, I, your mother, your grandparents, all of us—we're just flesh and blood.

CHRISTINA

But we're spirit too—we have a soul! That's the important part!

LUCY

Maybe both are important.

CHRISTINA

But—

LUCY

*(Puts a silencing finger to CHRISTINA's lips.)*

Today you are beautiful in body and soul. Your mother *would* be proud of you. And I'm

LUCY (*Cont.*)

proud of you too. You've worked hard for this honor—enjoy it!

*(CHRISTINA relaxes. LUCY takes a box from her pocket.)*

I thought you should have a memento of this special day.

*(Extends the box and gently takes the bouquet.)*

CHRISTINA

*(Excited.)*

Should I open it now?

*(LUCY nods. CHRISTINA opens box, lifts a small silver medal on a chain, studies it.)*

It's Our Lady, with a crown!

LUCY

"The Coronation of the Virgin." It's based on a detail—just the head—from a fourteenth-century painting in a church in Florence.

CHRISTINA

I love it! Thank you so much, Miss Lucy.

LUCY

Would you like me to put it on you?

*(CHRISTINA nods. LUCY gives the bouquet back to CHRISTINA, retrieves the box, removes the necklace, puts the box back in her pocket and fastens the necklace around CHRISTINA's neck, then turns the girl around to face her. With mock admonishment.)*

Now we'll need your strong soprano voice pulling up the rear of the procession, so don't be so queenly you forget to sing. Promise?

CHRISTINA

*(Fingering the medal at her throat, sings the line from Amahl.)*

YES, I PROMISE!

*(LUCY laughs and envelopes CHRISTINA in a warm embrace. FATHER ALEXANDER appears.)*

FATHER ALEXANDER

Miss Portinari.

LUCY

*(Slowly releases CHRISTINA, but holds onto her hand as she turns, smiling, to the priest.)*

Yes, Father?

FATHER ALEXANDER

I'd like a word with you.

*(Crossfade to Scene 6d: hospital. DIANA in surgical mask, attends DEIRDRE, who is giving birth.)*

DIANA

It's crowning! I can see the top of the head.

DEIRDRE

Well, give it a yank, will you?

DIANA

We won't need that. Just a few more good pushes.

DEIRDRE

I'm all out.

DIANA

You're doing fine, Deirdre. Just a little longer now. Take deep breaths. And at the next contraction, push as hard as you can.

DEIRDRE

*(Face contorting in pain.)*

Hail-mary-full-of-grace, SHIT!

DIANA

*Push!*

*(Crossfade to Scene 6e: FATHER ALEXANDER and LUCY.)*

FATHER ALEXANDER

Under the circumstances, I have no alternative but to fire you.

LUCY

Fire me? But why?

FATHER ALEXANDER

Let's not be coy.

LUCY

I have no idea what you're talking about, Father. Haven't I been a good teacher? Mother Michael has told me so many t—

FATHER ALEXANDER

I'm sure if Mother Michael had seen what I just saw, she would—

LUCY

What do you mean?

FATHER ALEXANDER

You—taking advantage of that vulnerable girl.

LUCY

You're joking.

FATHER ALEXANDER

Hardly.

LUCY

That child desperately needs the reassurance of a mother's affection.

FATHER ALEXANDER

I'm sure that's always the way it starts.

LUCY

*What starts?*

FATHER ALEXANDER

Your little...seductions.

LUCY

There *are* no seductions.

FATHER ALEXANDER

Do you delude yourself that such an innocent young girl can consent to an illicit relationship?

LUCY

There is nothing "illicit" in the feelings Christina and I have for each other.

FATHER ALEXANDER

And what about the feelings between you and Diana Clifford?

LUCY

*(Thrown off guard.)*

Diana...

FATHER ALEXANDER

Don't insult me and demean yourself with pathetic protestations. I have proof.

LUCY

What proof?

FATHER ALEXANDER

Doesn't matter. I know the truth.



LUCY

Do you?

FATHER ALEXANDER

And would consider it my pastoral duty to make it known from the pulpit if...

LUCY

If...what?

FATHER ALEXANDER

If you are not gone from here by tomorrow night.

*(LUCY emits a stunned cry, turns away.)*

Harsh circumstances call for harsh measures. I have no choice.

*(Pause. Softer.)*

But you do.

*(LUCY turns back.)*

You can change the circumstances.

LUCY

What do you mean?

FATHER ALEXANDER

Turn away from this unnatural relationship. Give it up, Lucy. It's not too late. Make your confession. I'll forgive you.

LUCY

*You'll* forgive me.

FATHER ALEXANDER

In God's name, with God's power—I can give you back your innocence.

LUCY

And then what?

FATHER ALEXANDER

If you...no longer posed the threat of scandal in the parish...there would be no reason to dismiss you. Believe me, Lucy, sending you away would give me no pleasure. I'm very fond of you. And you *are* a good teacher. It's been a delight to have a musician of your caliber to work with. I believe we are kindred spirits—you and I. That's why I can understand how this business came about.

LUCY

What business?

FATHER ALEXANDER

How a woman like Diana Clifford could take advantage of your...naiveté in these matters. You probably were a virgin, weren't you?

*(Beat, as LUCY stares at him in disbelief.)*

I'm sure this was just...an unfortunate diversion...that you are in every way a healthy, normal woman. Except, of course, for your extraordinary beauty and talent. There is every reason to believe that, with the right man, you could discover your true self. Don't you agree?

LUCY

And the "right man" would be...?

FATHER ALEXANDER

Someone who shares your sensibilities—a fellow artist perhaps.

LUCY

Someone I could marry and have children with?

FATHER ALEXANDER

Or...someone who could prepare you for that venerable vocation.

LUCY

How?

FATHER ALEXANDER

By helping you to explore your spiritual depths...by showing you the face of God.

*(LUCY is stunned to silence. Crossfade to Scene 6f: hospital. DEIRDRE and DIANA.)*

DEIRDRE

*(Screams.)*

Godddd.....dammit!!.

*(Sound: newborn's cries.)*

DIANA

It's a boy!

DEIRDRE

Is it deformed?

DIANA

No, it's perfect.

*(Starts to set the infant on DEIRDRE's stomach, but she thrusts it away. Sound: baby howls.)*

DEIRDRE

Get the fucking bastard out of here! Send it back to its pig of a father!

*(DIANA quiets the infant, pulls down her mask and takes DEIRDRE's hand. DEIRDRE strains towards DIANA.)*

I only did it with Bobby once—last summer. He said it wouldn't count—wouldn't be a sin—

DEIDRE (*Cont.*)

if we used a rubber. But I confessed it anyway. And later he said he would tell my mother what a whore I was if I didn't...

(*Sobs.*)

DIANA

Bobby threatened to tell your mother? But why would he—?

DEIRDRE

No! Not Bobby!

DIANA

Who then?

DEIRDRE

He said I could be pregnant because rubbers don't always work. And that I needed to be purified and that he was the only one who could purify me because he was a priest.

DIANA

Purified?

DEIRDRE

He would have to put his thing in the place that was dirty.

DIANA

Who?

DEIRDRE

(*Spitting out his name as if expelling a demon.*)

Father Alexander!

DIANA

Father Alexander had sex with you?

DEIRDRE

He said if I didn't let him purify me, he would have to tell my mother what I had done with Bobby.

DIANA

Why didn't you tell me this?

DEIRDRE

I didn't tell anybody. He said no one would believe me. And it's true.

DIANA

(*Leaning close, stroking DEIRDRE's wet face.*)

I believe you.

DEIRDRE

He said if I didn't let him purify me, I would go to hell.

DIANA

*(Looking intently at DEIRDRE, squeezing her hand.)*

Deirdre, you're not going to hell. You're a normal young girl—who's been raped by a priest. He's the one that's going to hell. I'm going to see to it.

*(Crossfade to Scene 6g: CHRISTINA, holding a small wreath of flowers, kneels before FATHER ALEXANDER, also holding a wreath of flowers. Music: school children singing.)*

VOICES OF SCHOOL CHILDREN

*(Singing.)*

HAIL VIRGIN, DEAREST MARY! OUR LOVELY QUEEN OF MAY!

*(FATHER ALEXANDER places a wreath of flowers on CHRISTINA's head, then, on the next line, helps her to her feet and accompanies her to the edge of the stage.)*

O SPOTLESS BLESSED LADY, OUR LOVELY QUEEN OF MAY!

*(CHRISTINA looks out over the audience as though looking at statue of Mary and lifts the wreath to crown the statue on the last line of the hymn.)*

AND NOW OUR BLESSED MOTHER, SMILE ON OUR FESTAL DAY,  
ACCEPT OUR WREATH OF FLOWERS, AND BE OUR QUEEN OF MAY!

*(CHRISTINA holds the pose as the lights fade out.)*

Scene 7

SETTING: *That evening. Bedroom of DIANA and LUCY.*

AT RISE: *LUCY has been packing a suitcase. DIANA enters.*

DIANA

Lucy!

LUCY

*(Turns from packing.)*

Is she all right?

DIANA

She's fine. The baby too.

*(LUCY collapses into DIANA's arms. They cling to each other. Over LUCY's shoulder DIANA sees the suitcase.)*

What are you doing?

LUCY

I...I've been fired.

DIANA

What?

LUCY

Father Alexander knows about us.

DIANA

How?

LUCY

I don't know.

DIANA

That monstrous pervert!

LUCY

How do you—?

DIANA

He's the father of Deirdre's baby. He raped her.

LUCY

O my God! Deirdre...

*(Collapses onto the edge of the bed.)*

DIANA

What proof does he have?

LUCY

He won't say. Only that he has it.

DIANA

*What?* Someone saw us holding hands on the beach? Leaning our heads together in a restaurant? That doesn't make us....

LUCY

If he tells the parishioners, our reputations are ruined. Your practice will disappear. I'll never get another job.

DIANA

His telling them we're lovers doesn't make it so.

LUCY

But it *is* so! Would you deny it?

DIANA

Would you?

LUCY

It wouldn't matter what we said. He's a priest. People will believe him.

DIANA

That's what Deirdre said.

LUCY

Oh, Deirdre.... I should have said something, done something.

DIANA

It happened last summer. You couldn't have known.

LUCY

But later, when I had my suspicions...

DIANA

What are you talking about?

LUCY

In March, when we were alone at rehearsal one night, he...

DIANA

What?! What did he do to you?

LUCY

He didn't *do* anything...wrong. He just, well, his...intimate attitude, his behavior...made me uncomfortable. It only lasted a few minutes.

DIANA

Why didn't you tell me this?

LUCY

I didn't want to fuel your prejudice.

DIANA

Did he ever try it again?

LUCY

Not till today.

DIANA

Today!

LUCY

He offered his services...to straighten me out.

DIANA

That hypocritical bastard!

LUCY

What are we going to do? We can't let him get away with rape, and blackmail, and God knows what else. Think of the other children. Maybe if we went to the bishop...

DIANA

He can't just be transferred. He could do it again. He's got to be stopped. I'll go to the police!

LUCY

And then what? They question Deirdre. Say she agrees to testify against him. There are no witnesses. Only character witnesses for him. He denies the charges, says—who knows what? That she made them up to protect her boyfriend? Or to get back at an authority figure? He goes free and gets sympathy for being maligned. Deirdre ends up worse off than she is now.

DIANA

But Deirdre wouldn't be the only one. *You* could testify.

LUCY

The woman he denounced for being a lesbian, the employee he fired for moral misconduct. Yes, I'd have a lot of credibility.

DIANA

Goddamn priests! Invent this stupid, sick celibacy thing so everybody's supposed to think they're somehow *superior* to the rest of us...us ordinary mortals, and...and that gives them a...a license for lechery! I don't see how you Catholics can—

LUCY

Diana! I know you're angry. I am too. But you mustn't do this. Not all priests are like this. You don't know many. I do. I have one in my own family. He would never do anything like this. I grew up close to the priests in my parish. Some were my teachers in high school. My confessor. They're good men. Not perfect. Some are arrogant, this one lazy, that one too harsh. But they love God and serve the people as best they can. None are...like this.

DIANA

How do you know?

LUCY

I know. Father Alexander is the exception. We can't forget that.  
*(DIANA looks at LUCY for a moment with steely eyes.  
 Then her whole body droops. She reaches for LUCY  
 and pulls her close.)*

You must be exhausted.

DIANA

What are we going to do, Lucia?

LUCY

*(Pulls DIANA back to the bed and sits her down.)*

I have to leave by tomorrow.

DIANA

What?

LUCY

Someone else will take over my classes.

DIANA

But what will you tell the children? the neighbors?

LUCY

I'm not to see the children. They—like the nuns—will be told I had to leave town because of a family emergency.

DIANA

And your family—what will you tell them?

*(LUCY resumes packing.)*



LUCY

Nothing. I don't want to lie to them. I'll wait two weeks and then send them a postcard from...wherever I am, saying I decided to take a spontaneous vacation—which will be sort of true. And then while I'm on that vacation, I guess I'll...providentially find a new job.

DIANA

Where will you go?

LUCY

I don't know. Somewhere that's not so...that's more...that's safe.

DIANA

Safe?

LUCY

A sanctuary. That's what we need. Ironic, isn't it? That's the way I always thought of the Church. As long as I had the Church and my music, I felt...secure.

DIANA

You still have your music.

LUCY

Yes, they can't take that away.

DIANA

So...where?

LUCY

Maybe...San Francisco. Maybe it's time.

DIANA

I'll need a while longer to see my patients are transferred. I've got a few in the hospital and—

LUCY

Diana, I can't expect you to give up your practice here—

DIANA

Why not?

LUCY

It's what you've always wanted. And now you've got it—and your home—

DIANA

Lucia...you are my home.

*(They kiss. LUCY looks over DIANA's shoulder at the slipper in her hand she was about to pack. Intake of*

*breath as she suddenly pulls back from DIANA.)*

DIANA (*Cont.*)  
 What is it?

LUCY  
 My slipper.  
*(Hands it to DIANA.)*

DIANA  
 It looks like it's been chewed.

LUCY  
 Rosie—

DIANA  
 —has been in this room.

LUCY  
 When?

DIANA  
 I never let her upstairs.

LUCY  
 Me neither.

DIANA  
 She couldn't have gotten past the gate on her own—someone would...  
*(Beat. They realize, then look around the room as though seeing it through CHRISTINA's eyes.)*  
 But why? Why would she tell? I thought...I thought she loved us.

LUCY  
 She does. That's why she told. She couldn't have known it would end like this.

DIANA  
 When she finds you're gone—

LUCY  
 She'll be frantic with guilt. What will you tell her?

DIANA  
*(Looking out, steel.)*  
 I don't know.  
*(Beat. Lights)*

Scene 8

SETTING: *The next day. Living area of DIANA's home.*

AT RISE: *DIANA is kneeling, packing sheet music and books into a carton. There is a frantic offstage banging on a screen door.*

DIANA

*(Calling out.)*

It's not locked.

*(We hear door open, bang shut. CHRISTINA storms into the room in her uniform, out of breath, disheveled, looks at DIANA, scans the living/dining area, looks at the books, then back at DIANA.)*

CHRISTINA

So it's true—she's gone.

*(DIANA nods, not looking at CHRISTINA.)*

But not because of "a family emergency."

*(DIANA shakes her head.)*

Where did she go?

DIANA

*(Still not looking at her.)*

I don't have an address...yet.

CHRISTINA

Are you going too?

*(DIANA nods. CHRISTINA lets out an involuntary whimper.)*

Why don't you yell at me, Doctor Di? It might make you feel better.

DIANA

*(Looking at her now.)*

Will it make *you* feel better?

CHRISTINA

Nothing could make me feel better. I've betrayed you. Like Judas.

*(DIANA smiles slightly at the melodrama. CHRISTINA is horrified by this response.)*

You think it's funny?

DIANA

I think it's...bewildering. Why'd you do it, Chris?

CHRISTINA  
I...I didn't want you to go to hell.

DIANA  
But it seems we got there anyway.

CHRISTINA  
*(On the verge of tears.)*  
I know. I...I'm so sorry. I shouldn't have—

DIANA  
That's right—you shouldn't have!

CHRISTINA  
I didn't mean for it to...I didn't want...I only thought he'd...  
*(Cries.)*

DIANA  
What? You thought he'd what?

CHRISTINA  
Talk to her...

DIANA  
Talk?

CHRISTINA  
Ask her to stop...

DIANA  
Stop what?

CHRISTINA  
*(Miserable with guilt.)*  
I don't know

DIANA  
*(Angry.)*  
Stop loving? Stop living?

CHRISTINA  
I'm sorry...I'm so sorry...

DIANA  
And you think that takes care of it? That this is like the confessional? You say the magic words and the bad things go away? All is forgotten and forgiven?

CHRISTINA

No. I don't think that. I...I don't know what else to do.

*(She sobs. DIANA watches her, angry, then after a long pause, relenting, gives her a handkerchief.)*

I'll miss you both so much.

DIANA

Lucy wanted to say goodbye. She wanted to tell you herself that...that she understands, that she forgives you. Though I can't imagine how.

*(Beat.)*

CHRISTINA

I don't believe in hell anymore.

DIANA

Oh?

CHRISTINA

And I don't want to be a nun anymore.

DIANA

I see.

CHRISTINA

Can *you* ever forgive me?

DIANA

You think you can buy my pardon with your defection?

CHRISTINA

No. My defection is my own. I can't...I don't want to be in the same church as Father Alexander.

DIANA

I can certainly understand *that*.

*(Beat.)*

But...

CHRISTINA

What?

DIANA

Do you want to be in the same church as Miss Lucy?

CHRISTINA

*(Sighs with consternation.)*

How can she do it?

*(DIANA shrugs. CHRISTINA looks away.)*

I don't think I can.

DIANA

That's a big decision, Chris. Why don't you give it some time. Maybe you'll find a way.

CHRISTINA

Why should I?

DIANA

Because it's your church. He doesn't own it.

CHRISTINA

But he's...in charge.

DIANA

Only if you let him.

CHRISTINA

What can I do about that?

DIANA

I don't know. But you might think of something...in time.

*(CHRISTINA takes a deep breath. Lights fade.)*

*End of Play.*