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Imitation Of Life

By Eleanore Griffin

Susie! Susie!
Susie!
The most sensational...
Susie!
Pardon me. Have you
seen a little girl
in a blue sunsuit?
Oh!
Oh, I'm awfully sorry.
No harm done.
I'm looking for my daughter.
Have you seen a little girl
all by herself?
No, but if you'll...
She's lost and I...
Susie!
Relax, lady.
Take it easy.
Susie!
The easiest way
to find Susie
is to go to the police.
Well, where are the police?
Right there.
Right where?
Right down there
under the pier.
You're it!
Come, children.
You hear me, Sarah Jane?
Hot dogs!
Oh, boy!
Come on! Boy!
Hot dogs!
It might be the noise of
that old ocean, but it seems
to me I didn't hear thank you.
I was too hungry.
Thank you!
Thank you!
Honey, you gonna be all right.
I reported you.
Come on, Sarah Jane!
No, you're gonna stay

right here.
Oh!
Else how
your mama gonna find you?
Susie! Oh, Susie!
Oh, my baby! Oh,
I thought you were lost.
Thank you, Officer.
Thank you very much.
And thank you for being
so kind, Mrs...
Johnson.
I'm Lora Meredith.
I've never been
so frightened in my life.
One moment I had her,
and the next moment
she was gone.
Thank Mrs. Johnson
for being so nice.
Thank you!
And say good-bye
to the little girl.
Good-bye? Now?
But, darling, we have
to go back to the city.
But we wanna play!
Please?
Please, Mommy,
please!
Oh, all right.
But only for a little while.
Come on, Sarah Jane!
You're it!
You're it!
You're it!
You're it!
Susie doesn't have many
children to play with
where we live.
I guess Sarah Jane's
kind of lonesome too.
They got along fine
right off.

Sarah Jane's a lovely child.
How long have you
taken care of her?
All her life.
Oh, I wish I had someone
to look after Susie.
A maid to live in?
Someone to take care
of your little girl?
A strong, healthy,
settled-down woman...
who eats like a bird
and doesn't care
if she gets no time off...
and will work real cheap?
Well, yes, if one exists.
Oh, someday.
Why not today?
I'm available.
You?
Me. Annie Johnson.
You mean you'd
consider leaving that
lovely little girl?
Oh, I wouldn't be leaving her.
My baby goes where I go.
Sarah Jane
is your child?
Yes, ma'am.
It surprises most people.
Sarah Jane favors her daddy.
He was practically white.
He left before she was born.
Seems to me, Miss Meredith,
I'm just right for you.
You wouldn't have to pay
no wages. Just let me come
and do for you.
I couldn't do that.
I'd have to pay you,
and I... can't now.
Susie!
I ought to knock
your blocks off.

I'll take care of it,
mister. I'll wham
the hides off both of them.
Susie! What are
you doing?
About time you showed up!
If your husband can't keep
these brats in line...
No use talking to her.
She not only spoils them,
she goes around losing them.
I don't know what
this is all about.
Mommy, look at his stomach.
It went up and down.
It was so funny.
He took our picture.
Will you send me one?
Me too.
Sure. Where?
Send it to Susan Meredith,
450 Prescott Place,
Apartment 32.
Never mind, dear.
See? I remembered.
Thank you.
And send her one too.
Where do you live, Sarah Jane?
Where do I live...
No place.
We'll find a place
come night, honey.
Come on, darling, we have
to go. Say good-bye to
Sarah Jane and Mrs. Johnson.
Good-bye.
It was very nice
meeting you.
Same here.
And good luck,
Miss Meredith.
Mommy, I'm tired.
I know, baby.
I know.

I wanna go home too!
Come on, honey.
Thank you.
Mrs. Johnson.
Oh. Oh, come on.
First.
I don't like
to mention it again, but
you must understand that...
this arrangement
can only be for tonight.
Oh, I understand,
Miss Lora.
There must be plenty of jobs
for a woman like you.
But people won't take in
a woman with a child.
And no matter what, I won't
be separated from my baby.
Hurry up, Mother.
I want to show Sarah Jane
my dolls!
Well, all right.
There's a little place
off the kitchen.
But you could, uh,
hardly call it a room.
Oh, it'll do
for Sarah Jane and me.
And the kitchen,
we can make use of that too.
I'll get you some
pillows and blankets.
Thank you.
Here, Sarah Jane,
you can have Nancy.
It's a present.
Mommy just got it for me.
I want that one.
Frieda's my friend.
I've had her all my life.
Mommy!
Mommy!
Yes?

She took my doll!

Oh.

Sarah Jane.

Where are your manners?

Now give it back.

I don't want the black one.

I'll take those.

It's been a long day
and they're both tired
and cranky.

Yes, Miss Lora.

Everything will be all right.

Come on, come on.

Come on.

I don't wanna
live in the back.

Why do we always have
to live in the back?

Shh, honey.

Thank you, Mr. McKinney.

Shh. Good-bye.

Shh!

Good morning, darling.

Good morning,
Sarah Jane.

I want a kiss too.

Well, of course.

Annie said we had to be quiet
until you got up.

Now we can talk out loud.

Now we can even scream.

Children!

Children! What...

Oh, good morning,

Miss Lora.

Good morning.

How are you
this morning?

Just fine.

I'd love some coffee.

Well, Annie, you shouldn't
have done my laundry.

I like taking care
of pretty things.

Thank you.

Eggs?

Where did they come from?

The milkman was here
a minute ago.

I told him to leave
your regular order.

Oh, no. He didn't come
to leave my order. He stopped
doing that two weeks ago.

May I?

Thank you.

He wanted to collect
something on his bill.

Didn't say anything
about a bill to me.

He was very polite.

Gave me the order and said,
looked like things
were picking up.

He thought you were my maid.

Now he thinks I'm prosperous.

No sin in lookin' prosperous.

Just a way of showin'
your trust in the lord.

Telling him you're ready
whenever he is.

I'll get it, Miss Lora.

Miss Meredith's
residence.

I'll see if it's convenient
for Miss Meredith
to come to the phone.

Is it the landlord

Mr. Berwitt?

Pretty sure he said
the A-Acme Model Agency.

Hello?

Yes, this is Miss Meredith.

Yes. Yes, I can be there
by then.

Fine. Thank you.

Oh, Annie, I've got
a job modeling.

A job?
I've registered everywhere.
But this is the first call.
Now, isn't that fine?
Annie, if you have
no other plans, will you stay
with Susie until I come back?
Why, certainly.
Do you know this will be
the first money I've earned
since I came to New York?
Except for those envelopes.
I was wondering what they were.
I address them
for a mail-order house.
By hand.
It gives them a personal touch,
and I can do them at home.
They should have been
finished yesterday.
Well, can't be helped.
If I get a job modeling,
at least I'll be seen.
Good boy.
Yes, that's fine.
That's what I want.
Hold it. Beautiful.
Just a minute.
Hold it.
How could you sneeze?
I had it.
I'm sorry, but it must be
this flea powder.
No, no, no. Don't move.
You'll unfocus me.
Art they want
and I get sneezes.
Now, don't move a hair.
Not one hair.
Hold it, hold it.
Okay.
Got it. Perfect.
You were
wonderful, Henry.

I never sneeze. Really...
Your check will be
in the mail.
It would be so much
more convenient...
Checks are mailed on Thursday.
We don't want to confuse
the bookkeeper.
Don't forget to leave
the wardrobe.
But wouldn't you like
to have a bite to eat?
Later. Thanks.
You can keep the money
from this batch, Annie.
It'll pay you for staying
today and cooking and...
Uh-uh. That money
goes into our kitty.
"Our"?
Seems as if
you intend to stay.
Seems like I do,
if, if you want it.
You know I do.
But you can see
how bad things are.
Miss Lora, we just come
from a place where,
where my color
deviled my baby.
Now, anything happens here
has gotta be better.
Oh, Annie.
Oh.
Susie? Susie?
I'm home...
Oh, baby.
Mmm. Hi, dear.
Hello, Miss Lora.
Hello, Annie.
Mommy, we had such fun today.
Annie took us to the park
and we caught a squirrel.

No, we didn't.
Well, we nearly did.
Tomorrow I'll take you
both to the park and
we'll really catch one.
How'd it go?
Oh, Annie.
It didn't.
And I'm exhausted.
Walked my feet off
trying to see every
agent on Broadway.
And some off Broadway.
Way off.
I'll get it.
The children have eaten.
Yes?
Hello, this is
Steve Archer.
- Steve Archer?
- I brought the pictures.
You brought the pictures?
The ones of the children
on the beach.
Oh, the man on the beach.
The man on the beach?
The man on the beach!
It's our picture
with the fat man!
Mommy, tell him
to come up.
Yes, please!
Oh, all right. Will
you come up, Mr. Archer?
Come on. Let's see.
Did you bring the pictures?
Hi, Susie, Sarah Jane.
Where is it?
Aren't you kids
supposed to be in bed?
No, we waited for you!
Hello.
Good evening.
If it's that funny,

let me see it.
Don't you think
it's funny, Annie?
I don't know who's funnier,
you or that man.
All I got to say is,
it's lucky I didn't catch
Sarah Jane playing such pranks.
It just ain't
seemly, Miss Lora.
Now, off to bed.
Good night.
Good night.
Good night, Mr. Archer.
Good night, ladies.
Good night.
Won't you sit down?
It was very nice of you
to remember the children.
I like what you did...
for Sarah Jane and Annie.
Well, they didn't have a place
and since I live here alone...
I'm a widow.
Oh, you... are.
What do you think of this?
Mother in distress.
Well, that's good.
Very good.
Who are you anyway?
Well, you don't look
like a photographer.
Apparently the army
thought I did.
Anyhow, they made me one.
Now all I wanna do is
get pictures like this
in The Museum of Modern Art.
Oh, you're aiming high.
Why not?
It doesn't cost anymore.
Don't you believe
in chasing rainbows?
Well, if I didn't,

I wouldn't be here.
I'm an actress.
What's the matter?
Your bones.
What about my bones?
They're perfect.
My camera could easily
have a love affair with you.
Don't you think it's
getting a little late?
I don't suppose you'd like
to have dinner with me.
Maybe. Sometime.
I don't mean right away.
How about tomorrow?
I'm sorry, but I don't like
to miss having dinner with the
children two nights in a row.
I can understand that.
How about lunch?
Lunch?
Would you mind taking me
to Rodney's?
It's a little place
on 45th and 8th.
Unemployed actors
can afford it.
Sort of a poor man's 21.
All right, I'll meet you
there at noon.
Oh, by the way,
the name's Steve.
Everybody in here an actor?
Just about.
So far you're the only one
I really believe.
Thank you. Only so far,
you're the only one
in New York who does.
But someday I'm going to
make them all feel that way.
Aren't you a little late
getting started?
I mean, it's...

Yes, five years late.
That's why every day counts.
Why the five-year lapse?
My husband was
in the theater too.
A director.
A good director.
Everything I know
I owe to him.
It was a small town,
a little theater,
but professional.
When he died,
I had to make a living
doing something else.
I never really wanted
anything but the stage.
Oh, except Susie.
So, it took me five years
to save enough money
to come to New York.
But you did it.
Mm-hmm.
And I'm going to be an
actress, an important one...
Lora?
Lora.
Oh, excuse me.
Nothing in it for me,
honey,
but they're
beginning to cast a new
Tennessee Williams play.
Oh, what agent?
Allen Loomis... today.
So put on
your roller skates.
Oh, thanks, Fay.
Coffee?
I'm sorry,
but I've got to go.
You haven't eaten.
You go ahead.
Good-bye.

How about dinner?
Tonight?
We'll take Susie.
Fine.
Where?
Come and have
dinner with us.
All right.
Good luck.
Thanks, Fay.
But when can I have
an appointment?
How about a week
from today? Thursday.
Put me down.
It's Iris Dawn.
Don't forget it.
Tsk.
I'm sorry to add
to your troubles, but...
I'm afraid I'm a little late
for my appointment.
Name, please.
Miss Meredith.
Mered...
Meredith.
Well, I don't seem
to have you down.
Never mind.
Just tell Mr. Loomis
that Robert Hayes sent me.
Robert Hayes?
From International
Studio.
It's probably just a slipup
from the coast, but, uh,
Mr. Hayes won't
like it at all.
I hope you didn't
slip up.
Me?
Well, if you say
there's no appointment,
um, good-bye.

Well, just a second.
Why don't you sit down
and I'll see if I can
straighten this out?
Thank you.
Mr. Loomis?
Yes?
There's a Miss Meredith here
from Hollywood.
Yes, quite lovely.
Think we should
send her away?
No. I think
you ought to see her.
Fine.
Okay.
Miss Meredith?
You can go in now.
Um, just right in.
Robert sends
his warmest greetings.
Well, thanks.
And how is he?
Marvelous.
He's lost 15 pounds.
You know what an effort
that is for him.
And, uh, what can
I do for you?
Robert thought I shouldn't
do any more pictures before
I did a show on Broadway.
Very sensible.
I'm glad
you think so too.
That's why Robert
sent me to you.
He thought I'd get more...
personal attention
from you.
He could be right there.
You mind?
No.
Incidentally, how's the new

Tennessee Williams play?
Bound to be a blockbuster,
but all cast.
Hello? Oh, Lillian!
What?
Oh, well,
can't you break it?
Oh. No, I don't mind.
I don't mind you
standing me up. I'm fine.
I'll just kill myself.
Yeah.
Never be a bachelor.
There's no security.
I know how you feel.
Yeah? Say, how'd you like
to go with me tonight?
I'm afraid I can't.
Big party.
Lots of important people.
Well, I could see if I could
break a couple of engagements.
I'll call my place.
I'll call.
What's the number?
Montgomery,
...One, two, oh.
Miss Meredith's residence.
Oh, this is
Miss Meredith's residence?
That'll be Annie, my maid.
I'll talk to her.
Annie, uh, call
the Waldorf and tell, um,
you-know-who I cannot have
cocktails and dinner with him.
Uh, I know who?
Oh, yes, Miss Lora,
I'll do that.
Thank you.
Well, Mr. Loomis,
it looks like I'm free.
That'll be just fine.
Should be an interesting

evening for me.
Hollywood actress and...
Oh, that reminds me.
Excuse me.
Yes, Mr. Loomis?
Annette, get me Hollywood,
Mr. Robert Hayes.
International Studios,
right? International...
Um.
Maybe you better not
go through with that call.
You don't think so?
Why not?
Because Robert Hayes
doesn't exist.
I understand.
Annette, cancel the call.
Yes, Mr. Loomis.
I was desperate.
You were pretty good.
You lied. All actresses lie.
I know that.
But I believed you.
I'm sorry.
Don't leave.
You took me in.
For all of 20 seconds,
you took me in,
but I don't mind.
It was a good acting job,
and you're very pretty.
Now, about tonight.
Shall I pick you up?
Um, no, it'll be easier
for me to meet you here.
You'll find me
very prompt, Mr. Loomis.
Come on in.
Sit down. I just have
a few letters to sign.
Oh, drink?
No, thank you.
But aren't we going

to be late to the party?
Plenty of time, plenty.
And I need a drink.
So relax.
Say, you're not allergic
to mink, are you?
Mink? No,
I don't think so.
Good.
Try this on for size.
But whose is it?
Mine. And I only loan it
to very special clients.
I want you to wear it
tonight.
You want me to wear...
Please. Got to think
of my reputation.
I haven't been seen
with a girl without a mink
since the heat wave of '39.
Come on.
We should spend
a little time talking
about our future.
You can act. Well,
that's of no importance
at the moment.
The main thing is,
you're a beaut.
Please, don't.
Oh, and you're decent too.
No doubt possess
some fine principles.
Well, me, I'm a man
of very few principles,
and they're all open
to revision.
But I'm in a position
to do something for you.
You'll get 10% of everything
I make. Isn't that enough?
No. Now,
sit down and listen.

Here it is, short and clear.
You're not a chicken.
You're no high-hearted kid
out of some drama school,
wanting to do or die
for dear old Thespis.
And you're beginning
under a handicap.
I know I'm starting late.
So time isn't on your side.
But you do have
some qualifications.
Your face will pass.
You've good, nice, long
silky legs. I like them.
You have a chest full
of quality and quantity.
I like it.
Aren't you taking
a few things for granted?
Me? I don't count.
But there are certain
people who do, and you're
going to meet all of them.
That is, if you're really
serious about your career.
I am, but...
Good, then you're going
every place with me.
Every party, opening night,
every saloon in town.
With a complete new
wardrobe at my expense.
Oh, it's tax deductible.
This is a tough,
competitive racket.
Although it's a lot
more than any agent
is supposed to do,
I'd do it.
What's this got
to do with acting?
Nothing.
But I'll show you how to

realize your ambitions,
if you do as I say.
If the dramatists' club wants
to eat and sleep with you,
you eat and sleep with them.
If some producer with a hand
as cold as a toad wants to do
a painting of you in the nude,
you'll accommodate him
for a very small part.
It's disgusting!
It pays off.
You're disgusting.
Maybe I am.
But let me assure you,
once you get it made,
you can be idealistic
all of ten seconds
before you die.
You're trying to cheapen me.
But you won't. Not me.
Oh, I'll make it, Mr. Loomis,
but it'll be my way.
You have a wonderful
handwriting, Annie.
Oh, thank you, Mr. Steve.
But my spellin'
won't take no prizes.
I don't think Lora
has anything to worry about
as long as you're with her.
Oh, we'll get by.
I made an agreement
with the landlord.
He's really
a nice person.
Oh?
Just for doin'
the staircases twice a week,
we get \$10 off our rent.
Is that a fact?
I answered an ad
and got a job while
the kids are at school.

Doing what?
Doing shirts
for a gentleman.
He's real persnickety
about his shirts.
Oh, Steve.
Hello.
I'm sorry. It's just
that I got so involved.
We're having
a wonderful time.
How'd everything go?
Oh, just fine. I went
to the 21 with Mr. Loomis.
Everybody there
was somebody exciting.
For the first time,
I felt that I was somebody too.
Is Mr. Loomis gonna
find you a job?
Well, he, uh,
he wanted to represent me,
but...
But I...
Oh, Annie.
What's wrong, Miss Lora?
Everything. Everything.
Now, you just rest.
Everything will work out.
I'll go get you
a glass of hot milk, huh?
Can I help in any way?
No.
No one can.
No one.
I'm so ashamed.
It was horrible.
He tried to make me
feel so cheap.
You could never
be cheap.
You don't know
what I mean.
Yes, I do.

It happens all the time.
Not just in the theater.
I love the theater.
It's what I want.
Then hold onto your dreams.
Forget tonight.
But they seem so stale
after tonight.
So stale I can't believe
in them anymore.
M-Maybe I'm a fool.
Maybe I should see things
as they really are...
and not as
I want them to be.
If I know you,
they'll have to be
the way you want them.
Thanks, Steve.
You're so, so good
for what ails me.
It's all part of
the Archer service...
day or night.
I'll call you soon,
Lora.
Tomorrow.
Yes, please, tomorrow.
Annie, what's happened
to Susie's wrist?
Oh, nothin' serious.
Just a little experiment.
Experiment?
Sarah Jane's fault.
After class, one of the kids
said that Negro blood
was different.
So later this evenin',
Sarah Jane wanted to compare
her blood with Susie's.
Well, I spanked her good.
Oh, well, you know
how children are.
They were only playing.

I hope so, Miss Lora.

I hope so.

Santa Claus has many names
in many different countries.

In Holland, he is
called Sinter Klaas.

In France,
Saint Nicolas.

In Sweden, he is
known as Jul Tomte.

In Germany, he is...

Oh, can I do something
for you?

Sorry to trouble you,
but I brought these
for my little girl.

I'm afraid you've
made a mistake.

I don't have any little
colored girl in my class.

But they said 3-B.

This is 3-B, isn't...

Why, there's Sarah Jane.

There's my baby.

You mean Sarah Jane
Johnson?

Yes, ma'am.

I'm Mrs. Johnson.

Sarah Jane, baby,

I brought you your...

Sarah Jane!

We didn't know.

Sarah Jane?

Wait.

Sarah Jane?

Baby? Wait.

Sarah Jane?

Sarah Jane, wait.

Wait. Now, now,

let me do it.

Now, put your coat on.

What do you want to do,
catch pneumonia?

I hope I do!

I hope I die!
Honey, nothing's hurt.
You shouldn't
have let them...
They didn't ask me.
Why should I tell them?
Because that's what you
are, and it's nothin'
to be ashamed of.
Why do you have to be
my mother? Why?
Why, you're
practically normal.
You two are soaking wet.
Get out of those things
and I'll make some tea.
I'll be fine.
You better get ready.
Mr. Steve's comin'.
Serve him right to wait.
He was due here
over an hour ago.
I just don't want
everybody having colds.
Cups and...
What's wrong?
Sarah Jane's been
passing at school,
pretending she's white.
But I am white!
I'm as white as Susie.
Oh, honey,
don't you see it doesn't
make any difference to us?
Because we all love you.
I'll take you back
to school myself.
I'm never going back
to that school!
Never as long as I live!
Sarah Jane!
Don't cry!
Annie, don't be upset.
Children are always pretending.

You know that.
No, it's a sin to be
ashamed of what you are.
It's even worse to pretend,
to lie.
Sarah Jane has to learn
that the Lord must
have had his reasons...
for making some
of us white...
and some of us black.
Sarah Jane Doesn't
want me with her.
She says I'm not her friend.
She says nobody's
her friend.
Darling, she's upset right now.
But she'll be better soon.
So will you if you get
back in bed. Come on.
Don't worry, Annie.
I'm sure you'll be able
to explain things to her.
I don't know.
How do you explain to your child
she was born to be hurt?
Hello.
Hi. Sorry I'm late.
That's all right.
I'm ready. I thought
you'd never get here.
Why, Steve, you sold it!
More than that, they gave me
a job, a steady one
on the advertising staff.
Oh, that's wonderful.
But, darling, is it really
what you want?
Well, it's not
The Museum of Modern Art.
But they pay you
in the nicest-looking
green folding money.
Which reminds me,

this is the season
for spending it.
Let's go.
We have to get a tree,
and I have a list of gifts
for the kids and Annie.
And I hope you like
what I picked out for you.
Oh, Steve, you...
You have to have something
to put under a tree, don't you?
Well, I know, but...
This way, ma'am.
Oh, I feel awful.
I haven't been able to buy
you anything really nice.
It's been five months
without a job...
Then I guess you'll
have to marry me.
It's the least you can do
for me for Christmas.
I love you.
But, darling, you're...
You're just
getting started and...
It would be foolish.
At least we'd
be foolish together.
But marriage
is such a big step.
I want us to be together.
Well, we are,
most of the time.
Most of the time
you're out fighting
to get somewhere.
Breaking your heart,
trying to do for
yourself and Susie...
what I want to do for you,
what I finally
can do for you.
Pardon me. I'm sorry.

Pardon me.

Oh!

Well, wait a minute.

I want to give you a home,
take care of you, love you.

Oh, Steve, you
don't know me at all.

I still love the theater.

You tried it
and it's only hurt you.

Realize that
and you'll get over it.

I want to be honest
with you, darling.

I want more.

Everything.

Maybe too much.

Don't think I want any less.

So let's settle something
right now. Do you love me?

I think I do,

but...

Come here.

I want to kiss you
so badly.

But if you did,
the way things are right now,
I might say something
I wouldn't really mean.

That's why

I want to kiss you.

That's my phone.

Hello?

Miss Meredith's residence.

- Who, Mr. Loomis?

- She's not in.

She isn't in, Mr. Loomis.

No, not even if it's important.

What? A job?

I... I have to find out.

It could be something.

Yes, Mr. Loomis?

You look good with
a St. Bernard dog.

The St. Bernard dog?
Yes. Uh-huh.
Well, that's you
in the picture, isn't it?
Sprinkling flea powder?
All right, well, I'm here
with David Edwards.
David...
Edwards, yes.
You know,
the prize-winning playwright.
He saw that picture
in a magazine.
He's looking for a girl with
that certain je ne sais quoi
for his new play.
That certain something
you managed to get
with the dog.
It's not a big part, I know...
If this is one of
your jokes, Mr. Loomis...
Jokes? So help me,
I'm only thinking
percentage-wise.
The part calls for
about...
Two and a half.
Two-fifty a week.
I left the script with
my secretary. Can you
pick it up immediately?
Uh, yes.
Yes, Mr. Loomis.
Yes.
He wants me
to pick up a script;
I'm to audition tomorrow.
And you're going
down there?
Of course.
Even after what
happened last time?
This has

nothing to do with Loomis.
I'm to audition
for David Edwards.
How do you know that?
I know. I just know.
But do you know if he's
gonna be any different
than Loomis?
No, I don't.
I don't want you to go.
Don't you realize what
this could mean to me?
I'm not asking you
not to go down there,
I'm telling you.
What makes you think
you have that right?
Because I love you.
Isn't that enough?
No, Steve, I'm sorry.
Good night.
Lora, wait.
I didn't mean
to sound dictatorial or
to try to run your life,
but you have to understand
how I feel.
And what about
the way I feel?
Oh, stop acting.
I'm not acting.
I want to achieve something,
something you'll never
understand.
What you're after isn't real.
At least
I'm after something!
Not the snapshot of
a disgusting old man with
a beer can on his belly.
Is that your idea
of achieving something?
Is a beer can "real"?
Going up and down,

up and down.
Well, I'm going up and up
and up, and nobody's
going to pull me down!
Lora, listen, please.
I've been trying to do
something with my pictures.
It's meant everything to me.
Every minute,
for a long time now.
No, it hasn't.
Or you wouldn't
give it up to sell beer.
I gave it up for
something much better,
something right now: You.
But you're asking me
to give up something
I've wanted all my life,
ever since I was a child,
and I can't do it!
If you grew up,
you could.
What do you mean?
You're not
a child anymore,
and I might not be around
to pick up the pieces
this time.
Good.
I'd like it that way.
Forever.
Joseph and Mary couldn't
find no place at the inn,
so they had to go to the
stable among the animals.
The animals?
Mm-hmm.
And in the manger
Jesus was born.
And the heavenly hosts
sang, "Hallelujah."
There was a shining bright
star in the sky,

and it was
a beautiful time.
That'll be
Mr. Steve again.
Hello?
Hello, Annie.
- Oh, hello, Mr. Steve.
- Has she come in yet?
I'm sorry.
I see.
Well, Merry Christmas,
Annie.
Merry Christmas to you,
Mr. Steve.
Mommy, isn't Steve
coming here tonight?
I think you'd better
go to bed, both of you.
But Annie was
telling us a story.
Oh, all right,
Annie can finish it.
Where were we?
- Jesus was almost borned.
- That's right.
As soon as the holy infant
was born, three wise men saw
a beautiful star in the sky.
The star
of Bethlehem...
Was Jesus white or black?
It doesn't matter.
He's the way
you imagine him.
But Annie said
he was a real man.
He's not a pretend man.
He was real.
He is real.
Then what color was he?
He was like me...
White.
Now, the closet door
is over here.

The clothes closet door
is over there.
The door to your bedroom
is over here.
And you trip over
the vacuum cleaner
over there.
All right,
come on, let's have
your offstage line.
Is anybody home?
Marjorie?
Oh, Marjorie!
Colonel, what are you
doing in there?
Why, Mr. Obermeyer,
why aren't you in Duluth?
Oh, Herbert, you too?
No! No, no,
Miss Meredith.
David, David.
She can do it, David.
I guarantee it.
She's just
a little nervous.
Miss Meredith.
Yes, sir?
This scene is supposed to
be played for high comedy,
with delicate reactions,
not loud,
goggle-eyed takes.
I'm sorry, Mr. Edwards.
But I'm an actress,
and a good one.
But I couldn't play
this part for high comedy.
Nobody could.
Nobody.
I think that's all,
Miss Meredith.
And if you'll forgive me
for saying it,
you're too good a writer

to have such a scene
in your play.
Okay, sister,
this way out.
I might as well confess...
She's not really my client.
Tell her to wait a minute.
Lora!
Lora, wait a minute.
I think we've still
got a chance.
No, I don't...
Miss Meredith.
It's been a long time
since anyone told me off.
Tell me, what would you do
with that scene?
I'd cut it out.
Drop it entirely.
That's not a bad idea.
Let me think.
Yes, but the scene
has a couple of lines
that are important.
Give them to Amy.
Yes, it would work.
Ha!
Think you could play Amy?
Amy?
Of course we'll have to
work very hard together.
I'd love it.
So would I. Tom?
Yes, Mr. Edwards.
Call off auditions
for the day. I'm busy.
You know, I always
believed in that girl.
- Lora Meredith!
- Lora Meredith!
Lora Meredith!
Lora Meredith!
Thank you, David.
They applauded me.

Did you hear them?
Why not? You were great!
Author! Author!
Your turn, Mr. Edwards.
Tom, may I borrow
a dime?
Sure.
I'll pay you back.
Don't rush. You'll be
around a long time.
I'll be right back.
Yes?
Oh, Miss Lora!
- And they liked me too.
- They did? Ohh!
Now, isn't that wonderful?
Do you want Susie?
Yes, please.
Congratulations,
mommy.
Congratulations, Mommy.
Did you remember your lines?
Yes, I remembered
all my lines.
Did they clap for you?
Yes, they did.
I'll be home very soon.
I'll only stay
a little while.
Then I'll come
right home.
Here's a kiss,
mommy.
Ohh.
And here's one
for you too. Mmm!
Let's go. The paper's
will be out soon,
and the party's waiting.
"This should be
a Pulitzer prize play
for David Edwards,
"for tonight we saw
the ranking comedy

of the season,
marvelously performed
by Geraldine Moore
and Preston Mitchell."
Listen
to the Times.
Atkinson says,
"A new star was born.
"Lora Meredith, an actress
who heretofore has been
hiding her light...
"somewhere
in the hinterlands,
gave a great performance
in a small part last night."
Congratulations,
baby.
Thank you, Allen.
Congratulations.
That was really...
Lora, this is
a great night for us.
For us?
Oh. Oh!
Well, I for one can't keep
my beady eyes open anymore.
I'm going home.
Well, good night, David.
Good night,
all you lucky people.
Good night.
Good night, dear.
Good night.
Good night, David.
Good night, Gerry.
Good night, David.
See you tomorrow.
Good night,
David!
Good night, all!
Good night.
Congratulations again, baby.
We did it, all right.
I'll see you first thing

in the morning,
in my office.
Agents.
By morning it'll be all over
town that he wrote your part,
directed you personally...
and was your lover
before you met me.
Well, lady,
there's your new empire.
Not big, just stretches
from 42nd to 52nd street.
But it's
the heart of the world.
You happy?
Oh, yes.
Yes.
I can't thank you...
I can't begin to
thank you for,
for giving me the chance.
No thanks.
It's something
we did together.
Yes.
We'll have more evenings
like this.
More plays.
I promise that.
Please.
And with you,
David.
Always with you.
You are good for me.
You mean that?
Well, you must be,
because I...
I've never felt
this way before.
Never so...
So complete...
and so happy.
I don't think
I could be happier

with anyone else either.
I'm in love
with you, Lora.
Though I must hasten to add,
I always fall in love
with my leading ladies.
Maybe that's all it is.
But I don't care,
because
I'm loving you now.
You and tonight.
Thank you.
Marvelous performance,
darling.
Just as fresh as it was
seven months ago.
Hmm.
Now hurry up
and get ready.
David.
Can't I beg off tonight?
I am so...
Beg off?
Impossible, darling.
Some nice, untouched money
out there from Cincinnati.
Hardware. They want to
meet you to invest in your
success and my next play.
She oughta go to bed now.
Annie, you're much too pretty
to be a watchdog.
And I can bite
sometimes.
Five minutes.
But darling...
While I keep Cincinnati
and the money happy.
Doesn't he ever stop?
He can't, Annie.
If he did
he'd be sure to find out
how sad he really is.
And I know that feeling.

Funny, isn't it?
After all this time,
the struggling and heartache,
and you make it.
Then you find out
it doesn't seem worth it.
Something is missing.
Now David
wants to marry me.
I don't know.
Do you love him?
No.
But he's good for me
in many ways.
At least I'm trying to
make myself think he is.
And of course it...
It would be better
for Susie.
This ain't no time
to make decisions.
You're tired, and you don't
know what you want.
Maybe I don't want
so much anymore.
But what would you do
if you gave it all up?
Well, I could spend
more time with Susie.
And you could stay home
with Sarah Jane.
Do you know,
I haven't been up to see
my baby at school in weeks.
Susie knows you love her.
And you need show business
as much as it needs you.
Oh, Annie, what would
I do without you?
Well. Beautiful.
Do you really
like it?
You're more beautiful
than I could ever

possibly remember.
And we're late.
Good night, Annie.
You see she gets home
at a decent hour.
Annie, I think
we'll try these,
uh, over here.
Miss Lora, we been
spending an awful lot
of money up here.
Do you think we can really
afford to have this place?
We can't afford not to.
Ma'am? Ma'am?
Oh, um...
Would you put it
over there, please?
In front of the window.
Oh, that's fine.
Would you
sign this, ma'am?
Mm-hmm.
Thank you very much.
Come on, let's go, Joe.
Did you see the bills
from Susie's new school?
Mm-hmm.
And it doesn't matter.
But Miss Lora...
No matter what it costs,
Susie's going to have
everything that I missed.
From her letters
she misses you more than
she'd ever miss Latin.
She just wrote
and told me...
Annie.
You still haven't told me what
the doctor said about those
spells you've been getting.
What do doctors always say
when they can't find nothin'

wrong? "Take it easy."
Well, do.
And I mean it.
Oh, Miss Lora...
You can have anyone
you want in here
to help you.
Be more work gettin' 'em
out of my way.
I'll get it.
Hello, Mr. Edwards.
Hello, Sarah Jane.
How are you?
Fine, thanks.
I'm going to The Village.
I'll be back by 3:00.
Annie,
that daughter of yours
gets prettier every day.
And so
sophisticated.
Darling.
Hello, dear.
Oh. Nice.
Yes. It's new.
Didn't you get
my messages yesterday?
Or have you given up
telephones?
Uh, well, we've been so busy
getting the house in order.
Come sit down.
Would you like a drink?
A long one. It's quite
a trek from Manhattan.
Your usual?
Uh-huh.
I'll get it.
All right,
enough chitchat.
Have you read
my new play?
Great, isn't it?
Yes, it's very good.

But David...
Darling, I don't think
I should do another comedy.
No, no, wait a minute.
I've decided to do
the new Stewart play.
That? What part?
Not the dull social worker
with the high dreams
and low heels.
Yes.
It's drama.
No clothes, no sex.
No fun!
I know.
But it's a great chance for...
For good acting.
And that colored angle
in it, it's absolutely
controversial.
- What do you know
about controversy?
- Nothing.
And I don't want to know.
I only know it's a good script,
and they're not easy to find.
Besides, I, I feel I need
something different,
a new experience.
All right,
if you want a flop,
have it on your own time.
I wrote my play for you.
I tailored it
to your every mood.
I never wrote
better laughs
in my life!
And you tell me
you want controversy.
Hmph!
It may sound ungrateful,
after all you've done for me.
You're right.

It is ungrateful.
But then I never
expected gratitude.
Personally,
I couldn't stand it.
May I have
my property back?
Of course.
Good luck, David.
I know
it will be a hit.
It won't without you.
It'll never be done.
Under the circumstances
I think it's best
if I destroy this.
What?
But Mr. Edwards...
There goes my pride,
up in ashes.
Well, good-bye.
What...
Just a theatrical
gesture.
He never makes less
than six copies.
Wasn't she great?
You're going to join us,
aren't you?
No.
Just wish her all the luck
in the world for me.
Tell her
I was wrong.
Oh, Annie,
wasn't Mother
just wonderful?
Susie! Susie, wait!
I've got to hurry.
Mama's bringing them all home.
Sarah Jane!
Oh, yes!
Thank you.
Oh, that's very sweet.

Darling,
you were wonderful.
How sweet.
Wasn't it... Steve!
Hello, Lora.
And congratulations.
Oh, Steve,
I can't believe it.
Oh, Lora, I'd... I'd like you
to know Louise Morton.
How do you do?
How do you do,
Miss Meredith?
I loved your performance.
Thank you very much.
Um, Steve Archer,
everybody.
How do you do?
How do you do?
A very old
and dear friend.
Oh, and, uh,
Miss Morton.
Hi. Hello.
Nice meeting you.
Oh, Steve,
it's been so long.
Ten years.
Oh, and you haven't
changed a bit.
How are Annie
and the kids?
Oh, Annie's fine.
You'd never know
the children, they're
so grown-up and lovely.
Uh, look, we're
all going to my house
to wait for the reviews.
- Why don't you join us?
- Well, let's get going.
You mind us
riding with you folks?
Fine. We have plenty of room.

That'd be nice.
All right.
Mmm. I'm glad
the opening's over.
Now I hope Mother will
have some time for me
before my graduation.
I have a lot of subjects
I wanna discuss with her.
I don't want to forget any.
Annie, do you wanna
hear them?
Sure, honey.
The most important
is Jane Beeler's party.
There are gonna be boys.
And under that
I have an "A" and a "B"
I wanna discuss with Mother.
A... How do I make
a boy like me, and B...
Should I let him kiss me.
Isn't that subject
comin' up a little soon?
The girls in school
discuss it all the time.
My goodness!
They're here already!
Honey, will you run upstairs
and get Sarah Jane?
All right.
All right, ma'am?
It's wonderful.
Thank you.
Annie, are you ready
for a surprise?
Wait till you see
who's here.
Hello, Annie.
Why, Mr. Steve!
Oh, my goodness!
I'll get you
a drink.
You certainly

look fine!
You too, Annie.
How's everything been?
Each day
I count my blessings.
You call doing this

at 1:

a blessing?
Yes, sir.
I can remember when plenty
of ham and eggs was more
than a blessing.
It was a miracle.
Here you are.
Scotch and water.
I remembered.
Thanks, but I'd better
get back to Louise.
She won't even
know you're there.
She's being mesmerized
by Allen Loomis.
Oh, Steve, it's good
to have you here.
I mean it.
Now that we
finally have you back,
we will not let you go.
No, sir, you're
gonna stay with us.
Listen.
I have this Sunday off,
the first Sunday I've had
in weeks.
We're going to drive into
the country for a picnic,
Susie, Sarah Jane and Annie.
How does that sound?
Wonderful.
Steve!
I heard your voice!
Ohh!
This can't be Susie.

So pretty, and not
little anymore.
Little?
Why, I'm graduating
in two weeks!
You'll come, won't you?
I wouldn't miss it
for the world.
Sarah Jane,
look who's here.
Sarah Jane?
Hello, Steve.
It can't be.
Why, you were all legs.
I still have them.
Yes, but they
came up to here.
Steve, don't ever
go away from us again.
Will you promise?
Well, are we holding
the party in here?
Hi, Annie, Sarah Jane.
No, Allen,
we're coming right out.
What a surprise
to see you.
Wonderful
to see you again.
You have an open invitation
to come here any time you can
get away from Madison avenue.
Oh, yes, not just anytime,
but all the time.
Come on.
Even though it is
a long drive.
You forget I used to walk up
three flights of stairs to
see you in the old days.
Oh, Mama, look!
A falling star!
The food's on.
Excuse me.

Did you wish on it?
Mm-hmm.
I wish it could always
be like tonight.
All of us together.
Don't you?
Yes, my darling.
And I'm going to
do something about it.
I will not do another play
for a long, long time.
Ohh, Mama!
Come in.
We're goin' now,
honey.
If that headache ain't gone
in an hour's time,
you take another aspirin.
You hear?
Yes, Mama.
Have a good time.
Mama.
Yes, baby?
Tell 'em I'm... I'm sorry
I had to miss the picnic.
Okay. Okay.
But by the time I find Steve
the fire'll be just perfect.
You let them alone.
Maybe they got things
to talk about.
This is
a fine picnic.
Sarah Jane announces
she's getting the flu.
Mom and Steve just go off.
Oh, well, if this is the way
it's gonna be, I might as
well get on with my list.
I can cross off pink sweater
for Elizabeth and yellow
sweater for Sarah Jane.
Then we skip ahead
to algebra.

Do you think another year of
that stuff is a good idea?

I sure do.

It's gonna come in
mighty handy with prices
always goin' up.

Which brings us
back to boys.

What do you think
about kissing, Annie?

Well, there's kissin'
and kissin'.

I still take pictures
every chance I get.

Still trying
to get them exhibited.

Stop hedging.

What is your job,
really?

I'm Vice President
in Charge of Advertising
for P.C. Beer.

Don't tell anybody.

Why not?

I think it's wonderful.

'Cause I'm quitting
just as soon as I can
wind things up.

But why?

You ever get the feeling
that you're tired of
what you're doing,
that it isn't all
you really wanted?

Did you ever get the urge
not to do what you don't
want to do?

To let yourself go
and follow the wind
or a star,
maybe even
a dusty old rainbow?

Yes.

Well, that's why

I'm going.
Where to?
I don't know.
Around the world,
I guess, for a start.
You going alone?
I'm afraid so, I...
I went through my entire
little black book.
Well, you shouldn't have
skipped my name.
I... I don't know why
I said that, Steve,
except that
I haven't been this happy
with anyone for years.
You know I still have you
in my blood, don't you?
Oh, Steve, do you really?
I never got over you,
Lora.
No matter how hard I tried,
I couldn't.
There's a kind of kissin'
that's not careless
and doesn't lead to harm,
when the two people kissin'
are nice and right.
Kissin' is part of
fallin' in love.
The Lord
wants his children
to fall in love,
when they're old enough
and got sense enough.
Then kissin' is like
yeast is to bread...
Pardon me, Annie,
but I'm starving.
Can't I please find Steve?
Don't think
you'll have to.
Steve! It's time
to cook the steaks!

Even Annie says so!
Telling them
will be wonderful,
but Loomis, ohh.
Why tell him at all?
He has a lot of commitments
he'll have to get me out of.
Susie, will you go see
how Sarah Jane is?
Tell her
I'll be right up.
Okay.
Let me help you
with that.
Thank you, honey.
Hello, Allen?
I...
You've been trying
to call me?
I'm sorry.
We've been out all day.
When?
Oh. Well, that sounds
simply marvelous, but...
Uh, no, not for dinner.
I'm having guests.
Why don't you bring him
for cocktails.
Yes. All right.
Steve!
Amerigo Felluci!
The Italian
movie director.
Yes.
Oh, he wants me
for the part of Rena
in No More Laughter.
His agent is in New York
now to talk to me about it.
I see.
- That means you'd
have to go to Italy.
- Mmm. Of course.
Oh.

Well, I'll have to
give a two-week notice
to the play.

Yes.

Well,
don't be so calm.

They want me
for Rena!

Well, who is she?

Only the best part
since Scarlett O'Hara.

Sarah Jane?

Sarah Jane!

Where have you been?

I've been looking all over
for you! You're supposed
to be in bed...

Shh!

Uh...

Sit down.

Cross your heart.

You won't tell my mama?

No, I won't
tell Annie.

W-Well, what is it?

I've been out.

With my boyfriend.

Boyfriend?

I didn't know
you had a boyfriend!

- Where's he from?

- The Village.

Oh. Did you meet him
in school?

School?

No.

There's an ice cream
parlor in The Village
with a jukebox.

Yeah?

And he used to
stand outside,
and every time I'd walk by,
he'd whistle!

No kidding!
But first I pretended he
wasn't on earth.
Yeah?
But finally I had to laugh,
and he followed me.
And we started to talk.
He's cute.
Really cute.
Is he a colored boy?
Why did you ask that?
Well, I don't know.
It just slipped out.
It was the first thing
you thought of.
I told you,
it just slipped out!
Well, he's white.
And if he ever finds out
about me, I'll kill myself.
But why?
Because I'm white too.
And if I have to be colored,
then I want to die.
What are you saying?
I wanna have
a chance in life.
I don't wanna have to
come through back doors,
feel lower than other people,
or apologize
for my mother's color.
Don't say that!
She can't help her color,
but I can.
And I will.
But we've always
talked things over.
You never told me
this before.
Because I've never had
a boyfriend before.
Because he wants to
marry me someday.

A white boy.

Me.

But how do you think
he'd feel, or his folks,
with a black in-law?
What do you think people
would say where we lived
if they knew my mother...
They'd spit at me.
And my children.

Sarah Jane,
you know that's not true!
It is.

That's why
he mustn't know her.
I don't want anybody
to know her.
What if he comes here?
He doesn't even know
where I live.

I pretend I'm a...
I'm a rich girl
with strict parents.
Well, he's bound
to find out...

How?

I'm going to be everything
he thinks I am.
I look it, and that's
all that matters.
And you're not to say
anything either.
I won't. You know I won't.
I never did, but...

Sarah Jane,
if Mama ever found out
she'd never stand for it.
I don't care.

Your mother
doesn't own me.
I won't be seeing you
before you leave,
so good luck in Italy.
You make that sound

like good-bye.
Why couldn't
we meet in Italy?
What for?
You'll have a film.
You won't need me.
But Steve, wait.
You tell Susie I'll
be at her graduation.
Good-bye, Lora.
Oh, Sarah Jane.
Yes, Miss Lora?
I'm having
some people come
for a business meeting.
Later the dinner guests
will arrive. Could you
help your mother a bit?
Miss Lora,
I... I-I'd like to,
but I have a...
A date?
Is it the Hawkins boy?
Hawkins?
Well, the Miller's chauffeur
down the road.
Why do you say that?
I met him at the station
the other day
and he asked about you.
No.
It's with someone else.
Oh.
All right, you run along.
I'll try to manage here.
Oh, there they are.
Look, honey, why don't you
go over to the party
at the church?
They bore me.
You're makin' a big mistake.
You're young. You shouldn't
be sittin' around.
Miss Lora

feels the same way.
She'll lend you
her car.
Oh, she will?
How nice of her.
I'd be happy knowin'
you're meetin'
nice young folks.
Busboys, cooks,
chauffeurs!
Hmph.
Like Hawkins.
No, thank you.
I've seen your
"nice young folks."
I don't wanna fight
with you, honey.
Not tonight.
I don't feel too good.
While I get started
on the anchovies,
will you take this tray
into Miss Lora
and her friends?
Why, certainly.
Anything at all
for Miss Lora
and her friends.
But signor Romano, why should
she need rehearsals?
Ma scusa, signor.
You know her work.
Felluci always insists
on two weeks' rehearsal.
Pictures are a different
medium than the stage.
She will need rehearsal...
Fetched y'all a mess
of crawdads, Miss Lora,
for you and yo' friends.
That's quite a trick,
Sarah Jane.
Where did you learn it?
Oh, no trick to totin',

Miss Lora.
I learned it
from my mammy,
and she learned it
from old massa 'fore
she belonged to you.
Well...
Excuse me.
Another drink,
Sr. Romano?
Sarah Jane,
why did you do that?
What's the matter
with you?
Annie, did you see
what she did?
I heard her.
You and my mother
are so anxious for me
to be colored.
I was going to show you
I could be.
You weren't being
colored.
You were being
childish.
I don't understand why
you would want to hurt
your mother or me.
I told her
she has to be patient.
Things will work out.
How?
Miss Lora, you don't know
what it means to be...
different.
Have I ever treated you
as if you were different?
Has Susie? Has anyone here?
No.
You've been wonderful,
but...
Then don't ever do this
to us again.

Or to yourself.
It won't solve anything,
Sarah Jane.
Mama?
Oh, please.
Try to understand.
I-I didn't mean
to hurt you.
I love you.
Oh, I know, baby.
You're just like
a puppy that's been
cooped up too much.
That's why I wanted you
to go to the party.
Oh, Mama.
Don't you see
that won't help?
Lora, wait a minute.
I didn't mean the whole thing.
I said...
Sr. Romano, she won't
need rehearsal.
Frankie, you're late.
I thought
you'd never get here.
Let's walk down
by the river.
I wanna talk to you.
We can talk here.
Frankie, I'm...
I'm having
trouble at home.
Your mother?
Yes.
Frankie, you said
you wanted to take
a job in Jersey.
Couldn't we run away?
I'd do anything
to be with you,
anything.
That's not a bad idea.
That's not

a bad idea at all.
Just tell me
one thing.
Yes?
Is it true?
Is what true?
Is your mother
a nigger?
Tell me.
Tell me!
What difference
does it make?
You love me!
All the kids talking
behind my back!
Is it true?
No!
Are you black?
I'm as white as you!
You're lying!
No, I'm not!
You're lying!
No, I'm not!
I'm not!
You are! You're lying!
Don't hit me!
I'm not.
Mmm.
Oh, that felt so good.
And I'm glad
the guests have gone.
I'm glad you're not
going to Italy.
So am I.
Felluci wanted me
in Rome in one week.
But I won't miss
Susie's graduation,
not for anything.
You know,
I can't believe it.
Susie and Sarah Jane
all grown up.
You and I have gone

through a lot together,
haven't we?
The years are flyin'.
I'm getting old.
You never sounded
so solemn before.
Don't you feel well,
Annie?
Oh, just
a little tired.
Well, do you need anything?
Any money?
No, Miss Lora.
Thanks to you,
I'm well fixed.
I've plenty to send
Sarah Jane to college,
something set aside for her,
and enough for my funeral.
Oh, Annie.
That funeral again.
Well, I'm gettin' on.
That's the one thing
I've always wanted
to splurge on.
I really want it elegant.
Got it written down the way I
want it to be, all the friends
I'd like to have there.
It never occurred to me
that you had many friends.
You never have any visit you.
I know lots of people.
Oh, hundreds.
Really?
I belong to
the baptist church.
And I belong
to several lodges too.
I didn't know.
Miss Lora,
you never asked.
Mama, Annie, quick!
It's Sarah Jane!

Oh!
Sarah Jane!
Oh, my baby!
Get some water and towels.
What happened, baby?
What happened?
Leave me alone.
Honey, who did this
to you?
Tell me!
Leave me alone!
You've got to
tell me!
Who was it?
It was her boyfriend.
Boyfriend?
Yes. He found out
I'm not white,
because you keep telling
the world I'm your daughter.
Anything you can spoil,
you spoil!
Stop that.
Stop it!
Don't you talk
to your mother like that.
I told you.
Lies don't help none.
This always happens
when you lie.
It wouldn't if you
weren't always around!
Thank you.
Are you sure Annie
will make it in time?
Honey, you know Annie.
If she says she will,
she will.
Oh, Mama, I'm so happy.
You know, I never really
believed you'd be here.
Are you sorry
about the picture?
I'm only sorry I couldn't

bring your present with me,
but he's a little bit too big.
He? Who's he?
Who's too big?
That thoroughbred
you told me about,
the one you love so?
Yeah?
Well, he's waiting
for you at home.
You mean he's mine?
Yes!
Oh, Mama, thank you!
Happy graduation, angel.
Oh, Mama, look!
It's Annie.
And Steve!
Steve!
Hi!
Susie!
Oh, and Annie,
I'm so glad you've made it.
Steve, you're such
a darling to come.
I meant it when I said
I wouldn't miss it for the...
Lora!
Hello, Steve.
I thought you were
in Italy.
Annie, why didn't
you tell me?
Slipped my mind, I'm afraid.
This came for you
this mornin'.
Oh.
Honey, Sarah Jane's
much better.
I'm glad.
She's sorry
she couldn't come,
but she sends her love.
I think I'm gonna faint.
This is the most exciting

day of my entire life.
I never expected
you'd all be here.
Oh, it's...
It's from Felluci.
He still wants me
for the part, and he'll
wait after all.
He's even made
my plane reservations.
I'm to leave in two weeks.
Two weeks?
Oh, Mama.
Oh! At least that time
will be ours together.
Oh, don't look like that.
Felluci agreed to my terms.
I can't turn him down now.
I know, Mother,
I know.
Look, honey, your mama
feels worse than you.
Girls, the exercises
are beginning. Come on!
Darling.
When do you leave, Steve?
I don't know when I'll
be able to get away now.
Oh.
Would you do me a favor?
Will you look after my child
for me while I'm gone?
Please?
I can think of nothing
I'd like better.
All right?
Fine. Let's ride
down to the river.
Thank you.
Isn't this fun?
I wrote Mother last week
and told her you were riding
like Audie Murphy.
I'll wear my six-shooters

tomorrow morning.
And your black tie
tomorrow night at Bocce's.
Did we make it
definitely tomorrow?
You said Monday night.
I hope you won't
be disappointed.
It's nothing glamorous.
Disappointed with you, Steve?
Never. Come on, I'll race you
back to the old mill.
I hope you won't
be disappointed.
Oh, no. I think
it's romantic.
Good evening.
A table for two?
Please.
What a wonderful place
to end a perfect evening.
I'll have cognac and...
Could I have one too?
Just once?
Mm-mmm.
Maybe a little wine?
No.
Coke. You don't want them
to lose their license,
do you?
No, of course not,
but...
Shall we dance?
Dance?
Oh, I'd love to, Steve.
You know,
you're the only one that
I can talk seriously with.
What about Annie?
I thought she was everybody's
Rock of Gibraltar.
She still treats me
like I was a child, as if
I were just out of rompers.

You don't.
Well, you're
almost a woman.
Almost?
Anytime you have anything
serious on your mind,
you try it out on me.
Well, I...
I do have a problem
that's been bothering me.
Let's have it.
No. Maybe I shouldn't.
I'll bet I know
what it's about.
You do?
Boys.
Oh, no.
You were teasing me.
Yes.
Steve, what's the proper
age for people to...
Well, to get married?
That is a problem.
I'm no authority.
Isn't being in love enough?
As long as it's
on both sides.
But then at your age,
there's always
the possibility of...
being in love with love.
No.
No, it's real.
I am.
In love?
Mm-hmm.
Wanna talk about it?
Well, I...
No. Not yet.
Sometimes though, I...
I feel awfully lonely.
Love is always a little
lonely in the beginning,
especially when you're

not sure the other party
feels as you do.
But it's heavenly, though.
Don't you agree?
I do.
Marvelous.
No substitute for it.
Oh, I'm so glad I'm alive.
I've never been so glad before.
Every time we've been together,
it's been just perfect!
You ought to go out more
with friends your own age.
Than go out with Steve?
Annie, you can't believe
how much we have in common.
Oh, it's Steve!
Now, you're not going out
without a coat.
I was going to
borrow one of Mother's.
Steve's seen all of mine.
Sarah Jane bought
herself a new one.
You can wear hers.
Oh, I'll be right down!
Annie, I haven't seen
Sarah Jane in weeks.
Does she like that new job
in New York?
Oh, yes.
Thank you.
The Head Librarian
thinks she's so good,
why, she even gave her
a raise.
That's wonderful!
She just wrote me the other
day and she said that...
Oh, don't wait up for me.
I'm going to be terribly late.
Good night, sweetie.
Harry's Club?
Hope I didn't keep you

waiting too long, Steve.

Hello?

Is this the Manhattan
Public Library?

Yes, it is.

May I speak to Miss
Sarah Jane Johnson, please?

I'm sorry.

The library's closed.

Yes, I know, but she's
on a late shift.

Reclassifying books
after hours, she said.

There's no one here
by that name.

You have no one there
by that name?

No.

Are you sure?

Absolutely sure?

Yes, I'm sure.

No one.

I see.

Well, thank you very much.

Thank you.

Can I help you, lady?

Is there a girl named
Sarah Jane Johnson
working here?

Never heard of her.

Two?

I thought you were great
tonight, really great.

Thank you.

Where do you go
when you run out of here
every night?

You got a boyfriend?

Could be.

If you weren't such a cute...

Sarah Jane Johnson!

- You put your clothes on
and get out of this place.

- Say, who is this character?

I don't know.
I've never seen her
before in my life.
Quit lyin'. You told me
you had a respectable job
in the library.
Hey, what's going on here?
Well, she must be crazy.
Tell her
my name's Judy Brand.
Make her go away.
Look, lady,
why don't you blow?
You'd better keep out
of this. This girl here
is my daughter.
And if you don't tell her
to go home with me,
her mother,
I'll have the law on you.
Your mother?
Well, I'll be.
Go on, beat it.
She's through, anyway.
Sarah Jane.
What did you
expect me to do...
when I find you dancing
in that lowdown dive?
If it ever got back
to the teachers' college...
that you were mixed up
in such a place,
they would never let you in.
I wouldn't be
found dead in a colored
teachers' college.
Please, come home!
We'll have some coffee
and we'll talk about this.
Honey, nobody's all right
about anything,
and nobody's all wrong.
If you don't want to

be a teacher, all right.
We'll talk about
what you want to be.
Honey, Miss Lora gets home
from Italy in the mornin'
and I'm sure...
Sarah Jane.
Sarah Jane!
Oh. Ooh, dear.
Oh, Susie, darling!
All the flowers!
Oh, it's wonderful.
I was never so glad
to be home.
Annie was up
at the crack of dawn.
Where is she?
Well, I don't know.
Annie!
Annie!
That's funny. She was
so anxious to see you.
Annie?
Annie, what's the matter?
What happened?
Is it Sarah Jane?
"Mama, if you really
want to be kind,
"really a mother,
don't try to find me.
"Just pretend that I died
or was never born.
"This is my life and I'm going
to live it my way.
Sarah Jane."
Darling, I'm sorry.
We'll find her
and bring her back.
No, Miss Lora.
It's her life and I'm done
with interfering.
All I'd like to know somehow
is where she is,
so if she should ever need

anything, I can help her.
Do you have any idea
where she might have gone?
No, ma'am.
I'll bet Steve will know
what to do. I'll call him.
All right.
You lie down for a while.
We're going to take care
of you for a change.
Hello, Steve?
Yes.
Susie.
Let me have it.
Hello?
No, this isn't Susie.
That's right.
Oh, a few moments ago.
Oh, it was wonderful.
Yes.
And thank you for taking
such good care of my child.
Yes, she is.
What's he saying about me?
He thinks you're as cute
as a button, and you are.
Only, Steve,
something dreadful
has happened.
When?
No, I'll put a detective
agency on it...
and I'll report
the moment I hear anything.
Good-bye.
Then under the name
of Linda Carroll,
she got herself a job...
in the chorus line
at the Moulin Rouge
in Hollywood.
Where is she living?
At a motel nearby.
Thanks, Mr. Steve.

I'm going out there.
No, Annie, you can't.
You're not well enough.
I'll go get her myself.
No.
Miss Lora, I have to go.
I've just got to see
my baby once more.
All right, Annie.
I'll have my office make
your train reservations.
Thanks, but I'm not
going by train.
I'm going to fly.
I'm in a hurry.
What's up, honey?
Oh. I don't know.
Just a funny feeling.
Don't forget the guys
are picking us up at 12:30.
I'll rush to the motel
and change. See you there.
Door's open.
I'll be ready
in a minute.
I hope they're not here...
Now, don't be mad, honey.
Nobody saw me.
It was you.
You were there tonight.
Why can't you leave me alone?
I tried, Sarah Jane.
You'll never know
how hard I tried.
Well,
I might as well pack.
Look, baby...
I suppose you've been
to the boss,
lost me my job,
my friends...
I've been no place.
I didn't come to bother you.
Well, you won't.

Not ever again.
Spoil things for me here
and I'll go somewhere else.
And I'll keep on going
until you're so tired...
Baby, I am tired.
I'm as tired
as I ever want to be.
You mind if I sit down?
Yes, I do.
Somebody's coming.
That's why the door
was unlocked.
I'll only stay a minute.
I just want to look at you.
That's why I came.
Are you happy here, honey?
Are you finding what
you really want?
I'm somebody else.
I'm white. White!
White!
Does that answer you?
I guess so.
Then please, Mama,
will you go...
and never do this again?
And if by accident,
if we should ever pass
on the street,
please don't recognize me.
I won't, Sarah Jane.
I promise.
I settled all that
in my mind.
There's just one thing
I wish from you.
What?
If you're ever in trouble,
if you ever need
anything at all,
if you ever want
to come home...
and you shouldn't be able

to get in touch with me,
will you let
Miss Lora know?
Yes.
Yes, anything.
Now will you go?
That wasn't all I wanted,
honey.
That was only part of it.
What's the rest?
I'd like to hold you
in my arms once more...
like you were
still my baby.
All right, Mama.
All right.
Oh, Sarah Jane.
Oh, my baby!
My beautiful,
beautiful baby!
Oh!
I love you so much.
Nothin' you ever do
can stop that.
Oh, Mama!
Oh, my baby.
Mama. Mama.
Oh, my baby.
Come on, Linda,
they're waiting.
Listen, if you're the new maid,
I want to report that my shower
is full of ants.
Oh, I'm sorry, miss.
That must be very uncomfortable.
But I just happened to be
in town and dropped in
to see Miss Linda.
I used to take care of her.
Well, I guess I'll
be running along.
My plane's leaving
in a little while,
Miss Linda.

Good-bye, honey.
You take good care
of yourself.
Good-bye.
Mama.
Well! Get you.
So, honey child,
you had a mammy.
Yes.
All my life.
Hello, Steve.
Hello, Lora.
Some of my girlfriends
get embarrassed
when their mothers...
wear shorts or capri pants,
things like that.
I really don't mind.
That's very big of you.
I mixed you a highball,
but you only get one
before lunch.
Yes, ma'am.
I just had a call
from Loomis.
Don't say a word.
He's got a new role for you.
No, no.
Highball?
Yes.
No, they've flown over a print
of the Italian picture.
He's arranged
a special showing tonight,
and a party afterwards.
Darling, I'd like you
to see it too,
but I'm worried
about Annie.
Ever since she came
back from Los Angeles,
she's changed.
Dr. Miller's quite concerned
about her condition.

I think someone should stay
in the house with her tonight.
Do you mind?
No, of course not, Mama.
I'll see you tomorrow, Steve?
Sure.
What can we do
to help Annie, Steve?
There's no answer, Lora,
never has been.
Not for a broken heart.
Mmm, and I know Mother
didn't understand.
Oh, it was so embarrassing.
And poor Steve.
I mean, what could he do?
She just swept over him
like a tidal wave.
Honey, it's only natural
he'd like to go out
with your mother.
He always enjoyed her company.
You remember that.
But it's different now.
All summer long
it's been Steve and me.
- Annie, you know, don't you?
- Know what?
That I'm in love with Steve.
I've always been in love
with him and always will be.
Sure, Susie,
but like a little girl.
No. I don't think
it even started like that.
In a funny way,
I always knew.
Every time I thought
I liked a boy, it was because
he reminded me of Steve.
And then I'd stop
liking him because...
Because he wasn't Steve.
Susie?

Are you up, darling?
Yes.
I just had to tell you.
I have the most wonderful news.
You're going to do
another picture.
No.
Not a picture,
not a play,
never again.
Oh, I know you
don't believe me.
I can't blame you.
Steve didn't either.
He probably won't until
our tenth anniversary.
A-Anniversary?
Oh, Steve and I have
always been in love.
But it seems I've never
had time for anything
but my work.
So I just up and proposed
that we get married.
Well, Susie,
what's the matter?
Are you all right?
Yes, I'm fine.
I hope you'll be very happy.
Oh, we will be,
all of us.
What is it, darling?
Tell me.
I'm very tired.
Good night, Mother.
Good night, dear.
You know, Annie,
last night when I told
Susie the news,
she was like ice.
It's strange.
I... I thought she
would be ecstatic.
She always seemed to...

To adore Steve.
Something's wrong
with her, Annie.
Do you know what it is?
Miss Lora, you've got
to be very careful
the way you handle Susie.
She's got
a real problem.
Problem?
Why don't I know about it?
Why didn't she come to me?
Maybe because
you weren't around.
You mean, I...
I haven't been
a good mother.
I know you meant
to be a good mother,
the best kind of mother,
but look, I meant to
be a good one too,
and I failed.
But you couldn't have been
a better mother to Sarah Jane.
- Then where's
my little girl?
- But Annie, that's different.
Hers is
a very real problem.
What's complicated
Susie's life?
We made a home for her;
the prettiest clothes;
the best schools.
- Susie's in love.
- Oh, Annie.
Is that all?
Why didn't you say so?
It's not unusual for a girl
Susie's age to be in love.
It's who she's in love with
that's causing all the trouble.
Why? Who is it?

Mr. Steve.

What?

That's impossible.

How did it happen?

Why did he let it happen?

I don't think he knows.

Annie, it can't

be serious!

It is, Miss Lora.

Plenty serious.

I better have a talk
with Susie right now.

Wait, wait.

Susie.

I've just spoken
to Annie.

Have you?

Now I know why you were
so upset last night.

So Annie told you.

That's how you usually
find things out about me.

That's not true!

Let's face it, Mama.

Annie's always been more
like a real mother.

You never had time for me.

By the way, is this
worded correctly?

An application
to college?

Uh-huh.

But you're going
to study in New York.

Denver...

It's 1,500 miles away.

That's quite a distance.

I don't think

I'll be missed.

Don't be unfair, Susie.

You know I'd miss you.

I'm sure you'd be too busy
to miss anyone.

Much too busy.

You give me credit
for nothing.
Yes, I'm ambitious,
perhaps too ambitious,
but it's been for your sake
as well as mine.
Isn't this house
just a little bit nicer
than a cold-water flat?
And your new horse.
Aren't you crazy about it?
Yes, but I...
And that closet of yours...
Has all the dresses fit for
the daughter of a famous star.
Now, just a moment,
young lady.
It's only because
of my ambition that you've
had the best of everything.
That's a solid achievement
that any mother can be proud of.
How about a mother's love?
Love? But you've
always had that!
Yes, by telephone, postcard,
magazine interviews.
You've given me everything
but yourself.
No wonder I went to Annie
last night when I told her
about Steve.
Oh, Susie.
If Steve is going
to come between us,
I'll give him up.
I'll never see him again.
Oh, Mama, stop acting!
Stop trying to shift people
around as if they were pawns
on a stage.
But, Susie, I...
Don't worry,
I'll get over Steve,

but please,
don't play the martyr.
Oh, Mama, I'm sorry.
I didn't want to hurt you.
But last night
I was so unhappy!
Oh, darling.
I... I don't know.
Maybe it was all
to the good because...
this morning I felt
strangely independent and...
Well, I like the feeling.
That's why I think I'd...
I'd like to go away,
at least for a while.
Oh, Mama, please try
to understand.
I'm very sincere
about it.
Ah, it's funny
the way things turn out.
Thank you.
I still can't get over Susie
at the station yesterday.
She looked so... grown-up
when she said good-bye.
Yes, she did.
It does seem awfully
quiet here without her.
Annie and I were talking
about that last night.
With both the girls gone,
we felt so alone
in this big house.
When did this idea
of college come up?
Susie never once
mentioned it to me.
She decided suddenly.
And why Colorado?
So far away.
It's what she wanted.
Miss Meredith, it's Annie.

She's terribly sick.
Did you call
the doctor?
Yes, he'll
be right over.
And she wants
the minister too.
Oh, God, no!
I hate to dispute you,
Miss Lora.
Oh, Annie, don't talk.
I've got to talk.
I've got to.
Oh, please.
Please, not now.
You stop crying.
But I...
No, listen to me.
All right.
I'm listening.
When my bills
are all paid,
I want everything
that's left to go to...
Sarah Jane.
Of course.
Mr. Steve?
Yes, Annie?
Find her, Mr. Steve.
Find her.
I will.
You may be sure.
I will.
Thank you.
Miss Lora,
just tell her...
Tell her I know
I was selfish,
and if I loved her too much,
I'm sorry.
But I didn't mean
to cause her any trouble.
She was all I had.
Tell her, Miss Lora.

Oh, please, Annie!
Promise me?
Promise me?
I promise.
Ohh.
My pearl necklace.
Yes?
I want you to give it
to Susie...
for her weddin'.
Give her a real
bridey wedding...
with all the fixin's.
Our weddin' day...
and the day we die...
are the great events...
of life.
Oh, Annie!
Annie, darling.
There's no cause to cry.
- Reverend?
- Yes, Annie?
I'd like for your wife
to have my fur scarf.
She always admired
that fur.
She never believed me when
I said it was genuine mink.
She did, Annie,
she did.
Oh, please,
you don't have to...
And I want Mr. McKinney...
to have a nice, clean
M-Mr. McKinney?
The milkman at the old
cold-water flat.
Oh.
He was so nice
and understanding
about the bill.
I always send him
a little something
at Christmas time,

in both our names.
You've been so good.
Sure hope you're right,
Miss Lora.
I'd like to be standin'
with the lambs...
and not with the goats...
on judgment day.
And my funeral...
Mr. Steve,
you'll find what I want
in the drawer...
over there.
I've got it, Annie.
I want to go...
the way I planned,
especially
the four white horses...
and a band playin'.
No mourning,
but proud
and high-steppin',
like I was goin'
to glory.
No. I won't listen.
There isn't going
to be any funeral,
not for a long, long time.
You can't leave me.
I won't let you.
I'm just tired, Miss Lora.
Awfully... tired.
Annie!
Annie!
No!
"I will lift up mine eyes
unto the hills from whence
cometh my help.
"My help cometh from the Lord
which made heaven and earth.
"He will not suffer thy foot
to be moved.
"He that keepeth thee
will not slumber.

"Behold, he that keepeth Israel
shall neither slumber
nor sleep.

"The Lord is thy keeper.

"The Lord is the shade
upon thy right hand.

"The sun shall not
smite thee by day...

"nor the moon by night.

"The Lord shall preserve thee
from all evil.

"He shall preserve thy soul.

The Lord shall preserve
thy going out
and thy coming in."

Let me through!

Please!

Please, let me through!

Hey, stand back, miss.

But it's my mother!

Stand back.

I'm telling you,

it's my mother!

Please.

Mama!

Mama!

I didn't mean it.

I didn't mean it.

Mama, do you hear me?

I'm sorry.

I'm sorry, Mama.

Mama, I did love you.

Sarah Jane.

Sarah Jane, don't!

Miss Lora.

Miss Lora,

I killed my mother.

I killed her.

I wanted to come home.

Shh.

Now she'll never know how much

I wanted to come home.

Come with us.