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Local Color

By Mark Rappaport

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(dramatic music)

[Voiceover] I had never heard of the opera before. It was in the romantic vein by a relatively unknown 19th century Pole who was experiencing something of a rediscovery.

It was the American premiere and I didn't know the plot. As soon as I sat down, I started to read the synopsis to no avail.

After a sentence or two I was hopelessly lost. Everyone was someone's brother, son, or twin or masquerading as the brother, son, or twin.

[Voiceover] It was perfectly clear. I understood every word of it.

[Voiceover] It seemed that everyone was in love with the same woman who was the daughter, stepsister, and long lost twin of each of the male leads.

She was masquerading as a man and was loved by the sister of the man she adored who, however, spurned her because he didn't realize she was a woman.

From the little I had read of it, I was sure it would take seven hours for this dense plot to unfold.

But I also knew that once it started, it would become clear.

I think Debbie was singing on stage.

She was the daughter,

the sister, the twin,
the transvestite, everything.

(opera music)

The theater was packed.

I could feel everyone's
eyes riveted on me.

[Voiceover] No one paid the
slightest attention to her.

(opera music)

[Voiceover] At the end
the stage was cluttered with
corpses following an
orgy of poisonings,
murders, suicides,
and general mayhem.

She claimed that she was
covering it for Life Magazine.

[Voiceover] The
National Enquirer.

I can't.

I can't.

(alarm buzzing)

Alvin, Alvin?

[Voiceover] She expected
to wake up and find
herself swimming in his
blood, or worse yet,
in her own blood.
The smell of fresh
coffee reassured her that
he had not yet left for work.

200 million years ago
there was only one ocean.

All the continents
were grouped together
in a super continent,
Pangea, which was made up
of two unconnected
subcontinents.

The northern part Laurasia
was North America,
Europe, and Asia.

The southern part
Gondwanaland was South

America, Africa,
Australia, and Antarctica.
Gondwanaland, I love that name.
Yes, Gondwanaland.
The two parts were so
close together that Boston
was touching the
coast of West Africa.
New York was on the equator.
Volcanic eruptions in
the ocean floor pushed
the continents apart.
That's why the coastline
of South America dovetails
into the coastline of Africa.
North America had the most
changes to go through.
It moved 5,000 miles
west northwest.
We've earned the
right to be the most
powerful nation on Earth.
How long did it take?
Not long, 135 million
years at the most.
65 billion years ago the
continents as we know
them were blocked out.
It's still going
on, it never stops.
That's a scary thought.
[Brian] No, it's exciting.
It should be solid
and unchanging.
Something should be.
Oh no, it's always on
the move, just like us.
But there's nothing
to worry about.
It happens very slowly.
I can see only
this much of it.
My life, the people in
it, that's my world.

If you could see the
larger perspective,
you'd be much happier.
In 50 million years there
won't even be a Mediterranean.

(buzzing)

Hi.

What do you want?

I can't talk now.

I'm very busy,

I'll see you later.

My wife, calls 100 times a day.

Such devotion, you
weren't very friendly.

No, maybe not.

If you could take a
movie of the whole world,
one frame every 200
years, it would look like
a bubbling mass of caramel.
And if we could see that
movie, we'd realize just how
trivial our own problems are.

Yes, you may be right.

I suppose everyone tells
you you have beautiful legs.

They came with the shoes.

It's the shoes that do it.

Fire again.

How many dreams have I
had with fire in them?

Like Herostratus, the
man who wanted to achieve
immortality by burning
down the Temple of Diana.
Fame through destruction,
and so easy to do.

Takes much less time too
than doing it the other way.

I am high on a hill, a
building with a wall of
mirrors behind me, a
sheer precipice below me.
The building is expanding,

leaving less room on
the ledge for me.
The girl in the golden
dress beckons towards me.
I think I'm going
to faint and fall.
Frantically I try to
clutch the glass surface
with my fingers.
I tell her to go away and leave
me alone before anyone sees.
She says the dress
hurts her body.
I pretend I don't
see her or hear her.
She puts on a cape
made of human hair
and goes into the
forest by herself.
Suddenly I see a column
of flame in the forest.
I know what it is.
But I make believe
it's something else.
I feel like a rat.
Mention to shrink.
When will you be home?
Seven, eight.
Don't worry about me, I
can take care of myself.
Stores are open late tonight.
I'm going shopping
with a friend.
Not if I don't give
you the money you're not.
Nah, I was only kidding.
Who with?
Give me a hint, is
it male or female?
Are you starting in again?
Give me 25 bucks.
10, I only got 10.
Are you kidding,
at those prices?

Okay, I'll give you 25.
Why don't you shove it?
Told you not to use
that kind of language.
All I need is 15 anyway.
Touch it.
Give it to me.
What do you want it for?
Why did you show it to me?
[Voiceover] She felt
that the danger which they
both flirted with
was finally at hand.
At this moment she
wouldn't object if he threw
his arms around her
and smothered her in
forbidden kisses and told
her that he would die
if he couldn't possess her.
No.
If you say one word to her.
[Voiceover] The moment
had passed without
his being aware that
it had come at all.
He would never know
how little he was able
to gage her unspoken thoughts.
She was always to elude him.
His inability to act at
that moment permanently
loosened his control over her.
(upbeat music)
Dear diary, today
John M. Called again.
He obviously wanted to
come over and screw.
I told him no dice, he's
good in bed but I don't
think he's sensitive.
Things like the theater,
the ballet, and foreign
films don't interest him at all.

Hm, me too.
Tonight at Teddy's marshmallow
I met the cutest guy,
what a hunk.
We didn't waste too
much time talking.
No sooner had our drinks
arrived when I asked
him over to my place.
I think he was a little
surprised and pleased
when I came out with
it just like that.
I want what I want
and I don't hide it.
I'm nothing if not honest.
I think that's what men find
most attractive about me
aside from my well formed
tits, which I think could
be a trifle larger, although
I haven't gotten any
complaints yet.
We came back here and
let me tell you, I wasn't
mistaken, I know
how to pick 'em.
No sooner do we start in
when the buzzer rings.
My god, I had
forgotten all about it,
I had a date with Leslie.
Mel said I should
invite Leslie up.
Suddenly my mind
was racing like mad.
I had never done anything
like that before.
How do you like it?
It's not for me.
[Voiceover] She was
anxious to continue reading
the story of this stranger.
She wanted to find out

if Leslie was a man or a woman, what happened later on in the evening, and so on. Was there anything else you'd like to see? I think that's it for today. [Voiceover] When she realized that the diary was several years old, her interest cooled. Then she wondered where the woman was now. What was she doing, does she still see what's his name or any of the old people who filled the pages of her old diary? I should have left it there. Maybe this store leaves it out as a customer service instead of magazines. Something to do while you wait. Can I borrow it? What if it's the owner's? I should return it. It's like reading other people's mail. Diaries are meant to be read, why do you think they're written? I might have ended up like that, like her. Only I hate bars. Getting married saved you from that sordid life. Hm, sometimes I think we're strangers. You and me? Well I meant me and Fred. Fred and I. I know, I keep my distance. I feel we could be closer if things were... What?

If I had all the
things you have.
Like what?
What do I have?
None of it seems
so wonderful to me.
That's what I mean,
it's criminal not to enjoy
the things you have.
It's worse to want
what others have.
No, I guess the other is worse.
Tell me, Viv, what do I
have that's so enviable?
People like you.
They see me coming,
they run for cover.
I suppose you're right.
What?
Do you find Fred attractive?
I'll tell you what's missing.
I miss, I don't know, romance.
Is that the right word?
There's got to be another
way and I'm going to find it.
[Viv] You think you
gotta reinvent love?
It doesn't change.
I don't want it squandered
on dirty dishes,
paychecks, laundry,
TV after dinner.
I want it to have
speed, movement, action.
Maybe what you need
is a new Porsche.
What I need can't
be bought in a store.
You think you're
strong enough?
Pioneers, you know, can't
afford to be selfish.
I'm prepared to
make sacrifices.

You're going to
shred your charge card?
No seriously, give
me a minute to think.
Maybe I'll have a baby,
I've been thinking a lot
about it lately.
I hear having your feet
bound is a lot of fun too.
I'm not getting any younger.
Honey, nobody's
getting younger.
You don't like
children, is that it?
No.
No, I think it's a fine idea.
For you.
I hate kids.
Oh not me.
But I don't think Fred
is serious enough.
He'd be fine with boys but I
wouldn't trust him with girls.
Oh, I didn't mean it that way.
I'm never having children.
I know I'd be jealous of them.
Her of all people.
I wouldn't dream
of telling anyone,
but I would never tell her.
I'm so afraid of them and
their fragile little lives.
If only it had been my child.
If I had the
courage I would cry.
What do you do when
you've had enough of
their shitting in their
diapers, vomiting on your
sweaters, howling
in your eardrums?
It must give you a
sense of responsibility.
I guess that's it.

They eat up your life.
Always begging for attention.
[Andrea] Hm?
Oh, I didn't.
I had a very happy
childhood, I guess that
makes the difference.
See that guy?
The postman?
No, the tweedy looking one.
He's been staring at me
ever since we came in.
If he has the nerve to
come over, I'm going to
give him my phone number.
Yes, you are attractive.
You think so?
I wish I had your hair.
And you have very nice eyes.
Intelligent eyes.
Sometimes I wish I were smarter.
But when I look around
I see it doesn't help.
[Voiceover] When they
were children they were
always called the twins,
Andrew and Andrea.
But everyone called
them both Andy
unless they did something wrong.
It was not like being
brother and sister.
It was a special tiny universe
that excluded other people,
as if they had been chosen
for an unusual destiny.
They drifted apart
as they grew older.
Different friends,
different lives.
But it was a fact
that could neither be
ignored nor forgotten.
She tried to bind him

to her with reminders
of a shared past that
could never be erased.
When they died we
both knew it without
being told, didn't we?
Remember we called each
other at the same time?
I dialed the phone and you
picked it up before it rang.
You were trying to call me.
You pretend it's
more than biology.
Then we both called
home and it was true.
There's something stronger
between us, you won't admit it.
I hated being treated
as though I were part
of a vaudeville team.
It was a relief to
go away to college.
I could breathe at last.
When I was in that
car crash, you knew.
You were in pain too.
Haven't you got
anything better to do?
You knew without being told.
That's the way twins are.
Only identical twins.
Forget the past.
When's the estate
going to be settled?
Selfish heart of stone.
Here come the violins.
In a minute you'll be
in tears, I'm leaving.
Why do you let him
talk to you like that?
It's the way we
talk to each other.
I'd teach him some manners.
He could use a

fewmonths in boot camp.
Don't butt in, you
don't understand.
It's something we do.
It's the only way he
can show his love.
You're very generous
when it comes to him.
What does that mean?
What do you think?
Do you want to
know what I think?
Uh oh, I've got the
horrible feeling you're
going to tell me.
No don't say it, I know already.
I even know that you know.
I know that you
know that I know.
I think you have
something on your mind
and it's not me,
that's for sure.
I want something.
I don't know.
No I want something else.
But I don't know what it is.
Be sure to let me
know when you find out.
You bet.
You'll be the first,
you can count on it.
Do you want to
know what I think?
Do you really want
to know what I think?
I think we don't make love
as much as we used to.
No, that's not it.
I can't even remember why
I wanted to marry you,
you know what I mean?
Between the two of them,
Scylla and Charybdis,

do I ever have a moment's peace?

I'm trying to hold things
together in the only
way I know but the old
methods don't work anymore.

I've become a martyr on the
altar of outmoded sentiments.

No.

I need a new lover.

That'll do the trick.

[Voiceover] Lil would have
liked to be Debbie's mother
but Debbie wouldn't permit it.

When she tried to act like
a friend, Alvin warned
her that her solicitude
should find other outlets.

She settled for playing
fellow sufferers,
cohorts in the harem.

Even Alvin accepted that.

It had its limitations, but
it was less complicated.

Do you like it,

it's a French recipe.

Fresh tarragon, leeks,
chicken stock, mushrooms.

It's not bad.

I like Campbell's soup better.

[Voiceover] The tensions
of family life force
them to disguise
their true thoughts.

Despite the air of
feign gayety, grievances
smoldered beneath the surface.

What's the matter?

Don't you like the French soup?

(laughs)

But what really gives it
its flavor is the rat's piss.

(laughs)

[Voiceover] She was
grateful that they had

acknowledged her triumph.
She was temporarily
back on the A team.
[Lil] they dealt
me only five cards.
When I complained, they
all said I was very lucky
and should shut up
because my cards were
much bigger than anyone else's.
Without even looking at
them, I knew they were
all souvenirs from my
recent trip to Europe.
Although I hadn't been
to Europe in 18 years.
The first was a bell
tower, high enough to throw
yourself off or be pushed from.
The second was a door.
I can just imagine who
was waiting behind it.
A window with a balcony.
The window was
closed, thank God.
Then a theater box, heavy
with drapery and gilding.
Someone had been murdered there.
The fifth was a staircase.
(dramatic music)
I had never been to any of
these places, I protested.
All the others began
laughing, oh sure, sure,
you always say that.
[Voiceover] Oh sure,
sure, you always say that.
Come on, make your move.
[Voiceover] Come
on, make your move.
[Lil] I won without
having to show my hand.
I had five of a kind.
I won.

I won.
They let me win.
You awake?
Too tired?
I didn't take her to
the motel, she took me.
Your daughter's a tramp, mister.
If that ain't plain
enough, I can...
[Voiceover] Get
him out of here.
Thanks a lot.
I've been watching
a lot of TV.
I'll be better in a day or two.
You angry, you're
not saying anything.
I'm watching
TV, I'm not angry.
What are you watching?
I don't know, I
tuned it in the middle.
I don't have the papers.
It's with what's her
name, you would know the
one I mean, she used to...
Oh look, now she's dancing.
Oh, I know that movie.
That's the one where she
does the mambo by herself.
You came, I was alone
You were temptation for me.
And she's wearing that
tight black dress, right?
That was in the other
scene, a big party.
She just took it off.
She's wearing a what do
you call it, a peignoir.
That's the one where
her brother's a drunk.
And she's the town
tramp and her brother's
wife is in love with

his best friend.
I didn't see it
from the beginning.
Now her father's
coming up the stairs.
Oh look, he's having a...
He's falling down the
stairs, what's the matter?
Why is he?
He's having a heart
attack 'cause his daughter's
such a slut.
Oh, I see, are you
watching the movie too?
No, I'm talking on
the phone with you.
It's just like our family but
it's the other way around.
Very funny.
[Voiceover] I'm
going to have a baby.
Why do you always
have to start up?
Why don't you just relax
and watch the movie?
Do you want to
watch the movie?
I can call you some other time.
No, no, it's okay, I
can watch it and talk
at the same time.
Uh oh, now he's beating
her up because he thinks
she's having his best
friend's baby, but she's not.
They never even
touched each other.
It's the husband's baby
but he didn't think
he could have children
because he has a
low sperm count.
But he's better now.
Uh oh, I bet she's

going to lose the baby
and it's his fault.

I know.

Later the two men argue
and the drunk pulls
a gun on Rock Hudson.
They struggle over it and
then Dorothy Malone...

That's her name,
I knew you'd know.

Joins in and tries to
take the gun away from
her brother, the gun
goes off, he gets killed.
So of course she knows that
Rock Hudson didn't do it.

What are you eating?
Apple.

Rock Hudson didn't do what?

Well she tries to
blackmail him anyway.

She says if he doesn't
marry her she'll swear
on the witness stand
that he killed him.

But if he marries her, a wife
can't testify against him.

Did you call for
any special reason?

Viv told me you were sick.

I just wanted to
find out how you are.

I'm fine.

I mean, I'm sick but I'm fine.

You need anything?

Fred's been a dear.

He gives me everything I need.

He treats me like an invalid.

Would you rather
watch the movie?

Do you want me to turn it off?

No, I'll call you later.

You sound pissed off.

Why should I be pissed off?

How should I know,
you're always pissed off.
[Voiceover] You've
had a miscarriage.
(dramatic music)
He did this with his hands
and this with his feet.
Nobody knows what the steps are.
Now here, here's where the
nymphs leave the stage.
Now he sees the veil
they left behind.
Pretend your shirt's the veil.
He picks it up and
he looks at it.
Then he goes for the tree.
He lies down on it like this.
What do you mean?
You mean he whacked
off on stage?
It was a big scandal.
They had to change it for
the second performance.
Imagine a foreigner
having sex on stage.
Do you like it?
Sure I like it, I like
the part where he, you know.
But what do I know
about dancing?
I don't know
anything about dance.
That's just it, nobody knows.
It's a lost dance.
Nijinsky was the only
one to ever dance and
the movements were
never written down.
All that's left is descriptions
by people who saw it
and they're all dead.
Why do you want to
figure out a dance that
no one knows anything about?

Doesn't make any sense.
Well this does.
You're always
interested in dead people.
If you want to know what I
think, I think it's morbid.
Fact, another ice age is coming.
Get ready for the glacier.
All the interglacial periods
when the weather in the
temperate zones is mild
like it is now last for
only 10,000 years.
Our time is almost up.
No kidding.
Yes, the winters are
getting colder and longer,
every year a little longer
until every day is winter.
Remind me to get
another pair of earmuffs.
Once the ice starts
moving, it'll come down as
far south as Long
Island and Cincinnati.
Great, then we can pack
up and move to Florida.
I always knew Cincinnati sucked.
Change of pace.
Get up and boogie
Get up and boogie.
I don't want to dance.
I said I don't want to dance.
Cut it out.
I hate it when you act
like a, like a faggot.
At least I know who I am.
Who the fuck do you think
you are, sweetheart?
What do you see when
you look in the mirror?
I don't know what
you're talking about.
Okay, who is it?

Huh?

Anyone I know?

You've been avoiding me, you
can't even look me in the eye.

It's none of my business, you
can fuck anyone you want to.

I'm not seeing anyone.

I just don't want any
trash up here, is that clear?

Make sure you go to his place.

Her place.

Get up and boogie.

Yes, I know she likes me.

Why shouldn't she
find me attractive?

There's nothing wrong with me.

So what if she's married
and has a teenage daughter?

Stranger things have happened.

The age thing doesn't bother me.

I like older women.

But I'm a little afraid of her.

She wants too much,
she's too intense.

She's the kind of woman
who will devour you whole
and spit out the bones.

I think I'll be a little
more distant from now on.

Yes, that's it.

Keep her guessing.

Everyone was invited
to the class reunion.

The invitation said to
wear something attractive
and revealing,
preferably see through.

As I walked in the door,
I suddenly realized that
I was fully clothed.

Everyone there was
much younger than I,
even though at the
time we went to school

we were all the same age.
I was surprised that they
were there, because I
didn't remember them being
in any of my classes.
We had to meet in a museum
where no men were allowed
but no women either.
When my turn came to tell
the story of the picture,
I couldn't think
of a thing to say.
The jury applauded
anyway and gave me an A-.
Lil sucked.
Afterwards we had to check
each other for breast cancer.
(ripping)
Hey.
I could have turned you in.
Hey, take your hands
off me or I'm going to
call the cops.
What for, with that
book in your pocket?
I don't know what
you're talking about.
The book.
Listen, I don't care,
I steal stuff myself.
I didn't steal a thing.
I think you're
trying to molest me.
I'm going to call the cops.
Hey officer, officer!
What do you want?
I saw you in the rearview
mirror in the store.
You should be more careful.
Not everybody's as nice as me.
Yeah.
If you don't let go I'm
gonna kick you in the balls.
Okay, okay, you win.

What do you want from me?

What's the book?

Tell me if you're
doing a survey.

We're doing an in depth
analysis of the reading
patterns of shoplifters.

A glittering saga of the
lives, loves and passions
of a prominent family
in Victorian England.

A panoramic picture of
Imperialist splendor
that roams as far and as
wide as the British empire.

And the sultry outposts
of darkest Africa to the
castles and bawdy houses
of 19th century England.

Drenched in local color
and exotic atmosphere.

I didn't think you kids had
time for this kind of thing.

What?

I thought you were all
too busy shooting up,
having abortions, snorting
coke to be reading books
with a lot of local color.

Took the wrong book,
I don't want this book.

Which book did you want?

What were you
doing in the store?

Why aren't you at work?

What do you do?

Oh, a little of
this, little of that.

I'm sworn to secrecy.

I get it, you're with the CIA.

The KGB.

You're under arrest.

Lucky for me I don't
have fingerprints.

Those weird smears
would give you away.
What was it?
Did it turn you on watching me?
Thought maybe you'd like to
try a little hanky panky?
Where did you learn
words like that?
From my elders.
Didn't they tell you people
don't talk like that anymore?
What are you, let
me guess, 12, 13?
Here, take it.
I bet the book isn't
as corny as you are.
Thanks, maybe I'll
learn something about how
to meet strangers.
Which way are you
going, I'll walk you.
I'm 19.
[Alvin] It happens at
least once a year with
a patient of mine.
We agree to meet,
we drive to a motel,
we fuck, it's all over with.
Painless.
Like drilling with novocaine.
But no more pleasant
than that either.
There's no way of recapturing
that erotic charge
that we both feel when she
is the helpless patient
trapped in the chair,
her mouth wide open
and stuffed with cotton padding.
And me fondling her
jaw, her chin, her gums.
Poking my fingers into
her most private places.
And that look of fear and

supplication in their eyes
when I pick up the
sharp instruments.
Their relieved melting
looks of gratitude when
it is not as painful
as they expected.
And my smile, calm,
reassuring, paternal.
But something more.
Wise and yet seductive.
The patient doctor
transference is complete.
We never recapture
this initial excitement
in the motel room.
None of them has ever
come back to me again,
not even for a cleaning.
Next time I bring my picks
and scrapers with me.
[Voiceover] Now let's
see what this detail
is doing in here.
What are you doing?
(laughter)
[Voiceover] Oh no, dear,
it's chop, I'm tenderizing it.
[Voiceover] Oh, well
that's all right then.
Are you hungry?
No, I ate before.
I'm hungry.
I didn't eat today.
Why didn't you eat
at the restaurant?
I forgot I was so busy.
There's nothing
in the refrigerator.
[Voiceover] Threw
himself on a live Italian.
Do you want to go out later?
No, I'm too tired.
I'm hungry.

(laughter)
[Voiceover] Italian grenade.
What are you two doing here?
Don't buy that crap again.
What crap do you
mean, sweetheart?
[Voiceover] A little
spying here too.
Those frozen gourmet dinners.
You said you wanted it
when you saw it advertised.
I went out and got them for you.
[Voiceover] I don't want
you to get the wrong ideas.
Well I'm sick of it now.
It all tastes like
airplane food.
I like airplane food.
[Voiceover] Now remember
that then forget it.
Why don't you use that
microwave oven I got you?
It cost a fortune.
And get cancer?
Thanks.
There's a freezer full of them.
[Voiceover] Listen, I'm
giving up part of my bed
upstairs, right Edith?
[Voiceover] That's right,
your father's going to
sleep on the sofa.
Just think, Archie, this'll
be the first time in
24 years we ain't
slept together.
[Voiceover] Well that's
the sacrifice you gotta make.
(laughter)
It's about time.
Where the hell have you been?
I want you to answer
me when I talk to you.
Out.

I want you to look at
me when you answer me.
Yes, master.
Don't get smart.
Is that better, dad?
Don't get wise with me.
Leave her alone.
In a minute you'll be yelling.
I'm not yelling.
You were supposed to
be home for dinner.
I ate already.
I want to know where
you've been and why
you didn't call.
Out with friends from school.
Lower your voices, neighbors.
(laughter)
- [Alvin] Will you shut up?
- [Debbie] Not the neighbors.
As for you, young
lady, you better...
Only beats up
women and children.
What are you doing,
I want to watch it.
She doesn't want
to miss a word of it.
Don't talk to me that
way, I'm not your mother.
Remind me how lucky I am.
Listen to the way
she talks to me.
Don't think I don't
know what's on your mind.
Since you're dying to know,
I've been out with
the football team.
I've never done so much
fucking and sucking.
It was great.
Talk like that.
Don't you dare touch her.
You hit her and I'm leaving.

When I'm through with her
I'm gonna take care of you.
It'll be the last
thing you ever do.
Shut up, both of you!
You're both nuts.
The older I get,
the crazier you get.
All grown ups
should be put away.
(laughter)
[Voiceover] Why
are you afraid, Lil?
What are you afraid of?
Do I act as if I'm frightened?
I'm not at all.
Childbirth.
No, never again.
I'll never have grandchildren.
They're all growing up or aging.
Whichever comes first
and then the other.
Wrinkles in the mirror.
I fear that I'll never
stop being afraid.
My child, my child.
Fire.
Fear of illnesses,
doctors, hospitals.
Rare diseases, psychological
symptoms that I
don't even know about,
thank God, because if I
did I'd be sure that I had them.
Fear of a dozen kinds of
cancer that I know have to
do with the kind of life I live.
We live.
On the other hand, I
should count my blessings.
My children will
never abandon me.
I'll never have to take
care of my aged mother

when she gets that way.
She died so long ago.
The fear that I'll be like
her, since I hardly knew her
and yet fear somehow
because of it I'm not the
right kind of woman, that
something is missing.
No fears of destroying my child.
I've done that already.
Fears of destroying myself.
No, not really.
I just say that.
And of course you,
Debbie, especially you,
especially Debbie both of you.
And you, what are you afraid of?
I don't know.
Same things.
More or less.
[Lil] And the others.
What do you think
they're afraid of?
(toilet flushes)
The toilet's broke.
I'm not the janitor.
You didn't do it, did you?
No.
Then it's okay.
Listen.
Shit.
(moaning)
What is it?
Father and his
mistress, his girlfriend.
What a bitch.
You want to hear us,
it's much clearer.
I'd rather hear it
live and in concert.
Debbie, what the hell are you?
Janet.
Well hello, Janet.
The way you two carry on

like a couple of school kids.
You know you ought
to make it together.
Get it out of your systems.
If I told you we did, you'd
have a stroke, wouldn't you?
I wouldn't believe you.
Well if I said we do?
No.
Why not, how would you know?
You'd say anything
to upset me.
This is the 20th
century, you're lying.
What if I told you
something I'd never told
anyone before, that all
my life I'd been waiting
for her to be this age?
Why do you think I wanted
Rita out of the way?
I spent my whole life
raising her, growing her up
so that she'd be perfect for me.
I've got the perfect
girl every man dreams of,
molded by me to fit my
needs, to think the way
I want her to think, to want
what I want her to want.
You're medieval, you're
disgusting, that's what you are.
For years I've been
dreaming of the day she'd
be this age, the
perfect age for me.
And even if she were the
ugliest girl in the world,
which she's not,
I'd still want her.
Because she's mine in
every way possible.
You drove Rita crazy.
She had to kill herself

just to get away from you.

Yes.

I drove her to it.

Did you ever see the one

where the husband turns

the lights down, up and

down, footsteps on the

ceiling, up and down,

drives the wife bananas.

Well I'm like that, that's me.

Well you won't drive me crazy.

We'll see about that.

Stop frightening her.

She's scared, leave her alone.

Be nice to her.

Take her in your arms and

tell her you love her.

The things you never gave
anyone, you stingy bastard.

Prove to her that all

these years with you

haven't been a waste,

make her happy.

Doesn't she deserve it?

Tell her the rest

is just a bad joke.

(romantic music)

At least grab her tits,

fondle her ass, tell her that

her aging flesh drives

you wild with desire.

Screw her, let her

fend for herself.

Where do I fit into all this?

Fit, what do you mean?

Maybe I just made it all up

to put you in your place.

Which is where,

here, with you and her?

What am I, the chaperone?

Cover?

She likes me.

Oh no, you're right.

Not likes me, tolerates me.

It's not much but
it's a beginning.
You know, you make me laugh.
You're all the same
with that social worker
bullshit wanting to
change the world.
So you want to wrestle with
the devil for her soul,
is that it?
I just want to live
some kind of life.
Where you are we
all are in a way.
I mean a happy one.
Well that's another story.
Look, Lil, I don't want
you fucking around with her
trying to turn her against me.
Not that you could,
because she's mine.
You know, I don't need you
as much as you think I do.
I never thought you did.
This is the moment.
Tell her now.
Tell her you can't
live without her.
Maybe I don't love you the
way you want me to, Lil.
Maybe it's not like
it is in the movies.
I don't know, in
some way I need you.
I know it's not
everything you hoped for.
Maybe you're right.
No one should settle
for half measures.
But life isn't long
enough to insist on
perfect relationships.
You're telling me.
What do you want from me?

Whatever you've got to give.
Whatever I can get.
You bluebeard.
You won't get me to make
a false declaration of love.
I mean it when I'm saying
it and forget what it
felt like a second later.
I need you.
I want you to stay with me.
I never said that much to
any woman before, not even...
Debbie?
She's just a kid, my wife.
No wonder she killed herself.
Killed herself, she ran
off with my best friend.
How do you think that makes
me feel, telling a story
like that, it makes me
look like a schmuck.
I'll stay.
For Debbie's sake, poor thing.
You know the
trouble with you, Lil?
You have no sense of humor.
You can never tell when
I'm serious or when
I'm pulling your leg.
There was no doubt about it.
With that son of a
bitch I could never tell
whether I was coming or going.
[Voiceover] They never
discussed it again.
There were times when
Lil was sure that
she had dreamed the whole thing.
Maybe invented it
all to unhinge her.
Alvin's story, if it were
true, no longer filled her
with revulsion and began to
seem like just another story.

The sad things that people
do with their lives.

The cruel things
they do to others.

Nor did she shed any unmasked
for tears over Debbie's fate
or whatever it's
called these days.

She told herself.

[Lil] All of us are
twisted into strange shapes
by the world, we're buffeted
about by 1,000 unseen
and unnamable pressures,
society, family, economics.
We all suffer at the hands of
those who are more powerful.

In some strange way
she's fortunate.

It's rare to be able to
point an accusing finger
at one identifiable source
of oppression and say,
you did it to me, you bastard.

[Voiceover] Alvin had
indeed done it to Debbie,
the bastard.

But I dropped all
thoughts of playing knight
in shining armor to
damsel in distress.

Besides, if there was
anyone who acted as if she
weren't in the least bit
of trouble, it was Debbie.

If she needs saving, she
sure doesn't look like
she's hollering for help.

I on the other hand, I
needed someone to talk to.

Just to talk, a human voice.

Hello?

[Andrew] Hello?

Brian?

[Andrew] Who's calling?
Who is this?
A friend of his.
[Andrew] Brian,
it's for you, a woman.
She wouldn't tell me her name.
I didn't feel prepared
to deal with any more
deceptions than I
absolutely had to.
Whatever was going on, I
didn't want to know about it.
And I definitely did
not want to hear about
mountains and valleys.
What was in a blue envelope?
This came in the mail, they
both came at the same time.
I thought you might
to know your husband
is having an affair
with another woman.
Use this information
as you see fit.
This is not a prank,
a well wisher.
Yeah, I got the same one.
Only it says wife
instead of husband.
His and hers.
Must be a chain letter.
Here it is.
It's probably an ad
campaign for a new magazine.
(phone ringing)
I'll get it.
He's so sick.
It's a man, for you.
He didn't even hang
up when I answered.
Both these letters
spell the same word wrong.
Information is
spelled without an R.

Do you think it means anything?

I think it means you should
stop picking up illiterates.

The phone.

I was surprised
when you called.

Didn't we always
hit it off together?

But you were such a
thrill seeker I thought
you'd be on to greener pastures.

Well I haven't seen
you in such a long time,
you're something of
a novelty yourself.

How do you know I'm not
involved with someone?

Am I the jealous type?

I'm broad minded.

My leather bra is
out to the cleaners.

Not to worry.

Do I ever go
anywhere unprepared?

You caught me at
a weird time then.

I'm an old fashioned girl.

You didn't mind.

I only agreed to
it, I didn't like it.

What really turns you on?

Fucking Andrea's husband?

You sleep with
all of her friends?

She doesn't have as many
friends as she should.

You sleep with all
your friends' husbands?

Got black stockings.

Just for you.

I'm not in the mood.

Come on.

It'll be fun.

I'm going to wear my mask.

Out of sight.

Oh great sacrificial
priest, spare this unworthy
maiden's life just this once.
Good.

You ever do this kind
of stuff with Andy?

Are you kidding,
we're married.

How stupid of me.

Marriage is a special place.
You know why I let you do this?

Because it is the perfect
expression without any
of the usual disguises
or subterfuges of the way
men have always abused
and degraded women.

Your elbow, Andy.

My arm.

So this is what you
do with your spare time.
Do you think this is a proper
hobby for a man your age?

There's more.

I've seen lots
of nude men before.

It's nothing new for me.
You were hoping I'd be shocked,
sorry to disappoint you.

Are you going to Aunt
Betty's for Thanksgiving?

She told me she invited you.

If I come I'm
going to bring him.

But he's...

So am I.

Black.

Then we'll need dark
meat and sweet potatoes.

Here.

Like an idiot I came
here trying to be nice.

You don't like my

darkroom technique?
Wait, there's one
I want you to see.
Cute, isn't he?
Gorgeous.
Brian.
We've met on the phone.
Why are you doing
whatever it is you're
trying to do to me?
Why are you trying
to humiliate me?
You love it.
Go on, deny it.
You feel it gives
you power over me.
I never know what
you're talking about.
[Voiceover] Only by
insulting her did he feel
he could get close to her.
For her the repeated
humiliation she had to endure
at his hands made her
feel how desperately he
needed her and her love.
They could no longer
pretend they didn't enjoy
tormenting and being
tormented by each other.
I think you need help.
That old song again?
You are so sick.
When are you going to
straighten out already?
Such a cold fish.
You push everyone away,
you make fun of everything.
And after you've done for me.
Stop playing Camille, that
pathetic wounded animal
tone in your voice.
If I had a gun I'd put
it out of its misery.

You've grown up to be
exactly like your mother.
Oh, not your mother?
You think the world
owes you a living.
You're just a parasite.
Fred always says.
And I hate Fred.
I've always hated Fred
as much as he hates me.
That's not true.
He hates me more
than I hate him.
You distort everything.
You and your insults.
Being crazy doesn't
excuse everything.
Nijinsky had a sister who
was also a dancer, Bronislava.
Not as well known, not
as good, not as famous.
But pretty good.
She was famous too
but not as famous.
She wasn't mediocre,
but he was very great.
Do you understand
what I'm saying?
She was lucky.
She didn't go crazy.
She had more time to
get her act together.
Go.
Class dismissed.
You're hopeless.
What do you want?
What are you talking about?
What do you want from me?
What do you want from me?
What do you want?
Do you want to kiss me?
Do you want me to kiss you?
I'm sorry.
No.

On the lips.
You understand
what you're doing?
It's not going to
snap your mind.
What about you?
It's too late for
simple solutions.
It probably won't be
the least bit of fun.
As long as it's
therapeutic, who cares?
We should have done it
when we were teenagers.
Like the rest of them.
[Voiceover] They fell
asleep in each other's arms
like children who've
exhausted themselves crying.
They were both thankful
for the small reward
instead of the guilt,
which they half hoped for,
but which hadn't materialized.
Do you remember
when we were children
grandmother would
tell us stories?
Remember?
I remember this one day
she told me while she
was braiding her hair.
It took forever to braid.
It was about a princess
who had no head.
She was the most beautiful
princess in the world.
Except that she had no head.
She couldn't eat or
drink or laugh or see.
And she couldn't kiss.
She ruled at court
with her hands.
She gestured with her pale

white fingers whenever
she wanted something.
And with her feet she
tapped out death sentences
and declarations of war.
But one day she was
defeated in battle
by a king who had two heads.
These two heads were
very troublesome because
they kept getting in each
other's way all the time.
Quarreling, arguing,
abusing each other,
always quarreling.
So the court magician
took one of the heads
and put it on the
head of the princess.
And they no longer
quarreled with each other
but were always
kissing each other,
especially now
that she had lips.
Do you think that
she made that up?
It's from a play.
Disappointed?
Nothing has changed, has it?
No crash of thunder.
No lightning bolts
hurled by angry gods.
[Voiceover] It was
impossible for either of them
to imagine calling up
the other to arrange
another rendezvous.
But seriously, are you going
to Betty's for Thanksgiving?
I almost feel like saying
no myself because that
awful Harold and his three
wretched children are coming.

Brian will be home soon.
Fred will be home soon.
Give my love to Fred.
Give my love to Brian.
(dramatic music)
[Voiceover] The price they
paid for their transgression
was the death of
yet another fantasy.
I don't know why you
had to invite them.
We could have gone out.
He's my brother, I hate
it when you talk like that.
Did you have to
invite his girlfriend?
It's his birthday.
Oh, it's his birthday too?
You didn't tell me
you were triplets.
Stay away then,
you won't be missed.
You owe me something.
I'm not going to be
outnumbered in my own house.
I want you to invite Viv.
Those pansies, those
guys, they ought to have
a chance to meet some
good looking girls.
It might give them some ideas.
I'm not going to risk being
skewered like a shish kebab.
You weren't kidding.
You didn't used
to be like this.
Frankly I don't even know
why I agreed to see you.
You still blame me, I
can see it in your eyes.
It was so long ago it
feels like yesterday.
Why do you avoid me, I've
never done you any harm.

I saw your name in the papers,
you're a famous writer.

Well, not quite.

I knew it had to be
you, I was very proud.

Don't you believe that?

Yes.

I'm not that much
older than you anymore,
not like I was then.

Maybe we can be friends now.

Before you were more like
my own child than a sister.

We're not sisters.

You hated me then, didn't you?

[Lil] Hate, not you.

My mother then.

Is that why you never call her?

She's very hurt.

It's just pretense, there
was nothing between us.

Not that I ever disliked her.

But she could never take
the place of my mother.

I resented it when she tried.

And I knew she was
saving her love
for her own children.

Me.

[Lil] Which is the
way it should be.

But you were jealous
all the same, weren't you?

She's your mother, not mine.

And after my father died...

He was my father too.

Yes, I felt I no
longer owed her anything.

And me, what do I owe you?

Why did you come?

You're not still
thinking about the fire?

That's ancient history,
you were just a kid.

16 is not such a kid.
Careless.
Worse than that.
[Lil] Don't tell me.
After all these years.
What do you know?
Do you know how
the fire started?
That I ran away and forgot
and then I didn't have
the courage to turn back
and run into the burning
house to save your child?
Do you think you could
forgive me if I told you?
And what if you did?
Could your forgiveness help me?
The past, let the
dead bury the dead.
Sometimes the past
never goes away.
Sometimes it stays in your
brain like a red hot nail
and never lets you forget.
You shouldn't have come.
You know what
Freud says, Vivian?
If you can't forgive yourself,
you can never get well.
Now that I've broken the
ice, will you call me?
I'll have to talk
about it with my analyst.
[Lil] I need a
friend, don't you?
[Voiceover] That night
Lil dreamt that she was in
a room filled with grandmothers.
When suddenly the
door opened and Viv.
Hi, I've come
to kill the baby.
All the babies are upstairs.
No, take mine,

you'll like her.
You can kill her but
please don't hurt her.
(dramatic music)
[Voiceover] That night
Viv had the same dream
only the roles were reversed.
She dreamt that Lil
wanted to kill her child.
Viv's dream, however,
didn't include the
photograph of the staircase.
She decided it would be
a cold day in hell before
she called up Lil or would
agree to see her again.
I just knew the way
you know those things
that it wasn't going
to be the kind of party
I would invite any
friend of mine to.
How's business?
How are things at
the restaurant?
I read that Congress
wants to grant statehood
to Israel and the Arab nations.
That would simplify
military appropriations.
But they'd all have
to agree to come in
as the 51st state.
Say, what do you think
transcendental meditation
could do for me?
I feel a pull toward the east.
Yeah.
I didn't know or I wouldn't
have been able to tell.
I wouldn't have
recognized you either.
I baked a birthday cake
with a design of the.

Gemini on top.
The space program?
The twins in the zodiac.
Andrew told me you
were into astronomy.
No, no, geology, the earth.
Oh, I thought the
stars and the heavens.
Don't tell him.
What?
About the cake, I want
it to be a surprise.
You were working on
it for such a long time.
It's lying in a drawer.
Maybe in a year or two.
But one of those
characters is based on me.
If it's a success, I
could become famous.
I only do journalism now.
Feature stories, interviews.
Ugh, I never read
that rag anyway.
Remember what I
talked to you about?
I'm going through with it.
What?
Sometimes I feel like I'm
going to start screaming
and I won't be able to stop.
Do you need any
help in the kitchen?
How do you like the city?
Have you ever been
to New York before?
I've been living
here for three years.
Ah.
I didn't think you wanted me to.
Put the blame on me.
I'm turning over a new leaf.
I want to go to law school.
That's not an evasion.

I need a refill.
Why did you take the
gun, I need it back.
What gun, what are
you talking about?
I want to talk to you,
I have a lot of things
on my mind about us.
Which one of you is older?
She is by 10 minutes.
Hope we can be out

of here by 10:

I don't want to miss
that special on TV.
That makes you
her kid brother.
(laughs)
Is it almost ready?
I don't know how
good it's gonna be.
Save yourself for the dessert.
Andy, the ragu is sublime.
You've got to give
me the recipe.
I don't remember
where I read this.
In a 19th century novel.
Everyone is jammed tight
into a small carriage.
One of the men takes the
opportunity to press his
attentions on a woman
in the only way he can
with her husband present.
So she says in a
very loud voice,
Sir, or probably monsieur, I
think it was a French novel,
monsieur, feel free to
tell me that you love me
if that's what's on your mind.
But please take your
feet off my new shoes.

(laughter)

Andy said you analyze dreams.

Oh no, it's just an
idea I had for a book.

[Andrew] One of many.

A collection of
people's dreams.

I collect things.

[Andrew] That's a polite
way of saying she's nosy.

I never dream but

I had one last night.

I know what reminded me of it.

Do you want to hear it?

If you wouldn't
mind telling it.

Do you want to write it down?

Now I'm embarrassed.

I hope you think it's good
enough to put in your book.

I'm in an elevator, only
it's me as a little boy.

I don't know if the
elevator's going up or down.

It's crowded with people,
although I don't know anyone.

Someone in the back yells,
he's so small for his age.

Did you ever see
anyone so small?

Someone else says, oh,
he's probably a dwarf,
a midget in disguise.

The boy, me, says,
but I'm only 25.

Ah, yes, I read of a
similar case in Dear Abby
where someone wrote
a letter saying...

Please continue.

I'm holding my father's hand.

He looks the way he did just
before he died eight years ago.

My mother's on the other side

of me holding my other hand.
They turn towards
each other and smile.
No wait, it wasn't my mother.
It was you.
But I haven't met you before.
What happens next?
What?
[Viv] What happens
next in the dream?
Let me guess, little
men, also dwarves, dressed
in white come and drag you away.
After dinner we
went to the movies.
It seemed like more
fun than anything else
anyone could think of.
This is what we saw.
Why must we go on like this?
Let me go.
Do you enjoy torturing me?
Answer me.
Answer me!
I'm not your jailor,
you're free to go.
Go.
What are you waiting for?
You'd like that, wouldn't you?
To get rid of me.
Then you'd never have
to remember that night.
That's enough.
You've had too much to drink.
Let me go, you're hurting me.
The bracelets.
Oh, Carlo.
I'm so unhappy.
We loved each other once.
What happened to us?
I'll pretend I'm going
to the ladies room.
You wait a few minutes
before leaving so

it doesn't look suspicious.
Where are we going to do it?
On the concession counter?
It's a dark theater,
there are lots of places.
If you're worried about her,
you're wasting your time.
She couldn't care less.
She knows all about us.
She doesn't know anything,
there's nothing to know.
Is this my punishment then?
A life of misery with
the man I once wanted
more than anything in the world?
You have what you wanted.
Jewels, villas, yachts.
Any woman would give her
soul to have what you have.
I know, I did.
It's all ashes without you.
You were all I ever wanted.
We could go to Brazil,
change our names.
Let's not throw happiness
away a second time.
I know I've been bad,
but I can change.
Believe in me,
darling, trust me.
I love you.
You didn't tell me
your sister was so cute.
If you like her I've
got an aunt in Iowa
you'll really love.
When do we leave?
I can remember when
you were more interested
in teenage boys.
I think I detect
a note of jealousy.
It's so ugly, don't you think?
In a way it's sort of like

seeing you for the first time.

I see.

Suddenly you're
interested again.

In her brother.

(dramatic music)

I'll take the
money from the safe.

They won't find out
until tomorrow evening
and by then we can be...

Together.

Far away.

We can get a boat from port.

Hurry.

I can't bear to leave
you even for a second.

I'm afraid you might disappear.

He's very nice, your friend.

He's not Puerto Rican, I hope.

Are you busy Tuesday
afternoon, because I'm free.

I'm working days this week.

See, you didn't have such
a rotten time after all.

Yeah, it's a lot of fun.

She's not as nice
as she used to be.

She's not so bad.

She used to laugh a lot
more when we were in school.

Didn't we all?

I don't think I want
to see her anymore.

Darling.

Lydia?

(gunshots)

You were right
about me, Carlo.

I'm no good.

But if it makes any
difference to you now,

I did love you once.

That night.

Lydia.

The music.

(dramatic music)

You were good to me, Carlo.

You were the only one
who ever loved me.

(dramatic music)

Do you know much
about Greek mythology?

I thought not.

You always live in the past.
You know the one about the
father who raped his daughter?

I didn't think so.

And then he married
her off because he
couldn't live with his guilt.

He changed his mind
and he wanted her back.

Didn't the husband object?

And then she had a baby
who was also her brother.

Do you follow me?

She wanted to revenge
herself on her father
but she didn't want to
arouse his suspicions
so she fixes dinner for him.

She goes into the
kitchen and brings out
this elaborately prepared meal.

Meat basted in honey,
stuffed with figs.

Sounds good.

You like it, I'll
make it for you someday.

Dates and walnuts.

He can't wait to eat
it, he licks his lips.

All the time she's watching him.

When he's done, when he's
licked the platter clean,
she says to him, do
you know what it was?

Do you know what it was?
Guess.
Come on, guess.
Dog meat.
Cats?
His horse.
I don't know, I give up.
His son.
Her son?
Their son.
You read this in Dr. Spock?
You made it up.
It's true.
They knew how to settle
scores in those days.
They didn't allow themselves
to be taken for granted.
What about the husband?
What?
What was the husband
doing all this time?
Where was he?
Why are you so
interested in the husband?
I want to know.
I'm always interested
in what the husbands
do in these situations, I
identify with the husband.
Then you missed the point.
What is the point?
The father hung himself.
And the daughter?
You are interested
in the daughter.
She was turned into
a bird of prey.
I don't get it.
You mean to tell me that
this is Debbie?
What's the point?
The point is just
watch your step.
Don't.

No, don't.
Want to go to a movie?
What are you typing?
Want to watch TV?
Guess what?
I got you covered.
Where did you get that?
Don't point it at me.
Want to suck it?
Ah, ah, ah.
Dangerous toys are
not for children.
What are you
going to do with it?
Blow your brains out?
No yours.
Some night when you're
sitting around like you are
when you're sleeping,
sometime when you least
expect it, bang.
You're a real mental case.
Give it to me before
you hurt yourself.
Take it.
[Voiceover] This is the
way Andrew planned it.
Brian would try to
take the gun away.
They would wrestle for it.
As in countless grade B
movies, the gun would go off.
It would have been
easy that way.
It would certainly let
the problem of having to
pull the trigger himself.
Someone else would have to do it
and that was all
there was to it.
Brian would not exactly
have been responsible
but he wouldn't have been
completely blameless either.

Andrew felt bad about
the possible guilt
Brian might feel, but
he was sure Brian would
be a better man for it.
Chickenshit.
Is it real?
I bet you it's not even loaded.
Guess again.
Brian, Brian look.
I'm blowing my brains out.
Wonder what's on
the tube tonight.
I'm sorry.
Say you forgive me.
[Voiceover] They bumped
into each other at the zoo.
He was watching the elephants.
She was strolling
through the park.
They talked for the first
time unconstrained by
false ties in a false situation.
She remembered
Andrew's picture of him
as well as his dream.
He remembered the
way she looked at him
at the birthday party.
They found themselves
as if pulled by a
magnetic force in
front of his house.
Andrew was working that day.
She asked if she might have
a cup of coffee or something.
I've got a surprise for you.
I love surprises,
should I close my eyes?
It's not that kind.
I shouldn't have told
you, it's too early.
Well now that you've started.
Come on.

I'm getting my own place.
Some surprise.
Not because of you.
I have to get out
of here anyway.
I've had enough.
Please don't talk
to me about him.
It would make it easier
for us, wouldn't it?
Easier than what?
I like it the way it is.
I like things when
they're complicated.
I like that feeling of, I
don't know, trembling in the
pit of my stomach because
something I hope is
going to happen,
it's part of the...
My husband, your brother.
My brother, your lover.
It's impossible, I can't
keep it under control.
It's terrific.
And I'm just another
minor character in this
plot you've cooked up?
Don't you try to
blackmail me with leases.
I'm not going to marry
you because you're
getting your own place.
I know you're married.
I wasn't suggesting.
I don't want to
break anything up.
I know it's the
oldest one in the book.
But I really do love my husband.
- [Brian] Him?
- [Andrea] In a way.
So what are you doing here?
You're making something

out of this that it's not.
It's not personal.
Just take it a little slower.
I don't dislike you.
So far.
You treat me the
way men treat women.
Yeah, how do you like it?
What do you think
it means when you're
carrying on with your
boyfriend's married twin sister?
I think I love you.
I'll tell you what
it really means.
You like danger.
You don't love me, you
love us, Andy and Andy.
Holy cow it's late,
he's gonna be home soon.
You're gonna have to split.
You think I don't know?
It never had anything to
do with going on the stage.
Nothing like that.
I never thought I'd
be good at that.
You know, playing Hamlet
one night and then
Joan of Arc the next.
I took acting lessons for
a while but I could never
get into being the character.
I would always wonder,
for example, how would say.
Marlon Brando play
this scene or how would
Jean Harlow read this line.
And if I had to do a laugh,
I'd throw back my head
like Betty Davis playing
the evil twin who
killed the good twin.
I wanted to be the best

imitation of Brando playing
the scene I had to do for class.
Doing the scene was
important only if I could
play Brando playing Stanley
Kowalski playing the scene.
Everything I did had a
footnote and cross reference
attached to it.
Everything was removed
two steps away.
They thought I
wasn't serious enough
and asked me to leave.
Then I wanted to be James Dean.
Who didn't want
to be James Dean?
Only the best James
Dean was dead.
I don't know how it
started with Nijinsky.
I saw a book of pictures.
If there hadn't been
captions you never would have
known it was the same man
in all the different stills.
He was transformed,
completely made over
by the roles he was in.
Everybody said that off
stage he didn't look
like much of anything.
He never said much.
Maybe he was even a
little on the stupid side.
But on stage with
costumes and makeup,
he was a god, a creature
from another planet.
Exotic, both male and
female, animal and human.
But neither.
He was everything.
It was as if he realized

his true self in all
those different disguises.
Without them he would
have been an awkward
tongue tied kid that
no one would have
paid much attention to.
Only I'm leaving out the
most important part, right,
that he was a great dancer.
And all that stuff I
pay so much attention to
is just the accessories.
I know, I know.
He earned everything.
The fame, the prestige,
the adulation.
Because of his enormous talent.
He was already famous when I
took my first ballet class.
I'm just a kid from the
sticks who used to read a
lot of fan magazines
and thought he deserved
what the people in
the photos had because
it looked like a lot of fun.
And they didn't look any
different from other people.
I wish I knew what the
fuck to do with myself.
Waiting on tables isn't
all it's cracked up to be.
By the time he was
my age, you know,
he'd already stopped dancing.
The most famous dancer ever.
And a year or two later,
he was hopelessly insane.
Stuck away in a nuthouse.
This is your cue.
This is the part where
you're supposed to tell me
that you love me.

Look how open and
vulnerable I'm making
myself, damn it.
Say it.
Say it!
Okay.
Don't say it.
Someone asked him once
if it was difficult
to stay up in the air as long
as he did when he leaped.
And he said no,
no, not difficult.
You just leap up and
when you're up there
just pause a little.
He lived another 30
years bouncing in and out
of the booby hatch like a
rubber ball on a string.
Shock treatment, psychotic
episodes, catatonia,
the whole trip.
Sometime if you're bad
I'll do my Nijinsky
imitation for you.
Let's go to the bedroom.
From ear to ear.
(laughs)
Somebody help
me, please don't.
(laughs)
(yelling muffled by laughter)
[Lil] The gun.
Where's the gun?
My baby.
My baby.
It was just a game, I
thought we were both playing.
How was it a game?
Could you have stopped it?
If I knew it was
making you so unhappy.
You knew, you knew.

I want you to marry me.
Afterwards we'll go someplace
beautiful, romantic,
someplace we've
never been before.
Mexico, Acopoco.
Yes, a vacation,
go away, a rest.
Just the two of us.
No, just me.
We'll start over.
Yes but alone.
I'll make it up to you.
Without you.
What am I supposed to do?
What about me?
Lil?
What about me?
I love you.
I know I never said it
but some things don't need
saying, you must have felt it.
All these years together, they
must have meant something.
If you leave me, you bitch.
(laughs)
Make it looser, it hurts.
It's supposed to hurt.
It's too tight,
Fred, it hurts.
It wasn't my idea,
you wanted to do it.
I thought it
would be more fun.
[Voiceover] A panoply of
saints paraded through her head.
Saint Sebastians with
arrows, headless Saint
Catherines, Saint Ursulas
broken on the wheel.
[Andrea] If only I
had paid more attention
in Sunday School.
[Voiceover] In a frenzy of

religious and sexual fervor,
it just might work but it
would have to be spontaneous.
Not premeditated slipknots
on the bedroom set.
Untie me.
Say please.
Come on, please?
I'm going to kill you.
If I ever untie you.
Does this really excite
you, I don't believe it.
You're warped.
Afterwards you
can do it to me.
I don't want to do it to you.
I thought this was
supposed to be play acting
at being in pain.
All right, spoilsport.
(grunts)
Aren't you taking your
pictures and photographs?
Keep them for me.
And your books and records.
They're yours
if you want them.
I've been a
monster, haven't I?
I've been worse than that,
I've been a spoiled brat.
You're very young.
You've had a lot of other
things on your mind.
No, I was always
rotten to you.
Both of us were.
He's such a shit, how did you?
Maybe someday we could...
I got you a present.
I didn't know what to get.
(dramatic music)
[Lil] How could I be
sure that my own daughter

would have acted any
differently than this girl
who was often so cruel?
Would it have been easier to
bear if she had been mine?
Now that I'm free of
her and she needs me,
it seems that she was
my daughter all along.
Say something nice to me.
Anything, tell me.
I wish I could say
something meaningful, give
you some words of wisdom
to carry around with you.
I'd be a fine one
to give advice.
Some mess I made.
Could use some
counseling myself.
How awful to be so young.
I don't envy you.
Well, first of all, don't
let anyone push you around,
fight, always fight,
don't let yourself become
your own worst enemy.
What else?
I feel like a cheerleader.
Keep your chin up, don't
take any wooden nickles.
Look both ways before
crossing and keep your
powder dry.
Take good care of yourself
You belong to me.
[Voiceover] Debbie felt that
Lil was holding out on her.
There was some magic
word that she could
but refused to give.
The secret talisman
that would save her the
trouble of everything

she had yet to learn.
Send me lots of postcards
from every place you go.
I love getting mail.
[Lil] Dear Debbie, I am
having a wonderful time.
I adore traveling.
You wouldn't recognize
me, I'm so tan
and healthy looking, Lil.
Dear Debbie, the world
is an immense and
wonderful place.
Sometimes when things
aren't going smoothly,
it's hard to see the forest
for the et cetera, et cetera.
Keep your chin up
too, fondly, Lil.
Dearest Debbie, let me
hear from you sometime,
if only a word or two.
Write to American
Express in Rome.
I really do wish you
were here, love Lil.
Debbie my darling, I am
very happy here and have
taken a large apartment,
so there is room
for you when you come.
I'm expecting you
this summer the minute
school lets out.
Then I can tell you
the answers to all the
questions you never
asked me that night.
I love you and miss you, Lil.
[Alvin] Any mention of me?
[Debbie] No.
[Alvin] Why are you
saving this trash?
I didn't do this to him.

I didn't do anything.
Did you call anyone else?
No.
That damn gun.
Oh god, it is my fault.
The gun.
Do you think the gun did it?
He did it.
No one's to blame.
Had nothing to do with it.
[Fred] No, don't.
The police.
That's right.
I have to call the police.
What a nightmare.
He made this mess.
I hate you, you son of a bitch.
Who's going to clean
this bloody mess up?
Who's going to straighten
it all out for you?
Him, ha.
I have to make the
funeral arrangements.
I have to get your
shit out of here.
And the landlord.
I've always had to clean
up after you, always.
This is the last time.
The last time!
Don't pretend you understand.
We were twins.
It's like two people
with the same shadow.
It's special.
I'm all alone.
Free.
What's the matter with you,
why don't you cover him up?
He's been dead a long time.
You have no right to say that.
What gives you the right?
He knew I was leaving.

He wanted to keep me
here chained to his side.
(sighs)
You better get your
things out of here.
There's no reason for
you to be involved in it.
Here.
Take it.
A souvenir from Nijinsky.
A memento.
Ungrateful.
You ungenerous creep.
I'm going to Los
Angeles or Alaska.
Something where the
elements happen.
Where things are cataclysmic.
I mean where it
happens afterwards.
I love mountains and oceans.
In 10 million years Los
Angeles and San Francisco
will be abreast of one another.
It's something to think about.
I wanted to jump out the
window like Nijinsky's
exit in Spector of the Rose.
A magnificent parabola
in the air that never
touches earth.
It would have been
spectacular but I couldn't
fit through the window.
It would have been too
much trouble to remove
the casement.
Don't hate me too much.
I wouldn't have done it if
it weren't the right thing.
I love you both, Andrew.
Both?
To whoever finds me.
[Voiceover] Lil and

Brian both left work
on the same day.
It was vague office gossip
about the possibilty
of a romance,
infidelities, flight.
They were both at the airline
terminals at the same time
but they were heading
in different directions
and never met.
Much later that night,
Andrea and Brian had
the same dream.
It was to be the
last of the dreams.
Madame and monsieur,
ladies and gentlemen.
For my next number I
will leap into the heart
of a fiery volcano.
I beg you don't do it.
Think of the flames.
Think of the flames.
Think of the children.
I have to do it.
My fans expect it of me.
I'll make a swan dive
into the volcano.
The single most glorious
leap into a roaring inferno
yet on record.
(rumbling)
[Alvin] After she
tried to kill herself,
the last and most
recent time, that is,
she wanted me to
listen to some music.
I want to play you something.
You know I hate that stuff.
Oh you'll like this,
it's from Salome.
You remember the story.

Father had a crush on
his teenage daughter.
[Alvin] It was his
stepdaughter I think.
Well that makes it
all right I suppose.
Why don't you
just sing it for me?
Wait, wait, coming up.
(opera music)
(speaking in foreign language)
You know what that means?
[Alvin] I only took
Spanish in high school.
The mystery of love is greater
than the mystery of death.
The mystery of love is greater
than the mystery of death.
I don't remember
what I answered.
But I wasn't up for
a serious discussion.
She was only just getting
better and I didn't
want to get her excited.
I tried to make a joke of it.
I think I may have said
I hate doctrine thinking.
The mystery of love is greater
than the mystery of death.
Or else I said,
oh that's a deep one.
The mystery of love is greater
than the mystery of death.
Oh I know what I said.
Yes, I said.
I'm not into religion.
That's it, that's what I said.
I'm sure of it.
[Voiceover] He
remembered what Lil said
but had forgotten
what he answered.
She, however, didn't.

It was part of the reason
that she left him forever.
The mystery of love is greater
than the mystery of death.
I guess that
guy never met you.
You must be exhausted.
I'm going to sleep for a week.
Before you do I
think we should talk.
That is if we still
know how to be serious.
You think we can get through it?
Maybe it's not the
right time to start.
If we don't do it now
we'll have to do it later
through our lawyers.
It's gone that far?
Further than you think.
Our life together?
We've gotten used to bad habits.
Even the way we
talk to each other.
The way we don't
talk to each other.
I know what it is.
We've become slaves to
an emotional routine
we both hate and can't stop.
That's it, isn't it?
If we don't stop there'd
be nothing left to save.
Save?
We used to love each other.
We used to be nice to
each other, remember?
Dimly.
Called each other sweetie
and honey all the time.
That wasn't fake.
Honey.
Hm.
Is it too late for us?

If I made a lot of
mistakes I'm sorry.
Don't you think we
can make a go of it?
You're not entirely
blameless, you know.
Maybe I should just shut up.
I almost made a
terrible mistake.
But I won't have
the baby after all.
Yes.
Let's try.
For a little while anyway.
[Voiceover] Viv
finished her novel about
Andrea and Andrew.
Andrew was mistaken.
The novel did not
make him famous.
It didn't even put
Viv on the map.
But it opened many
doors for her.
She began having an
affair with a man who had
seven brothers and sisters,
two ex-wives and five children.
He told her anecdotes and
incidents about everyone.
She took a lot of notes,
knowing there was a
story in there somewhere.
Oh, her novel about the twins
was called Others' Lives.
(upbeat music)