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Bullets Over Broadway

By Woody Allen

[Applause]

##

Toot-Toot-Tootsie good-bye
Toot-Toot-Tootsie don't cry
The little choo-choo train
that takes me
Away from you, You don't know
just how sad it makes me
Kiss me Tootsie and then
Do it over again
Watch for the mail I'll never fail
If you don't get a letter then
you know I'm in jail Hey, hey
Don't cry, Tootsie Don't cry
Kiss me, Tootsie Good-bye

#[Whistling]

Get hot Don't cry, Tootsie Don't cry
Good-bye, Tootsie Oh, good-bye#
I'm an artist, and I won't change
a word of my play...
to pander to some commercial
Broadway audience!
I'm not arguing with you!
Do you see me arguing?
Your play is great as is. It's real.
It makes a point. It's confrontational.
- Then why won't you produce it?
- Because I cannot afford
another failure.
- David, the play's too heavy.
- But not everybody writes to distract.
- [Groans]
- It's the theater's duty
not just to entertain...
- but to transform men's souls.
- Oh, come on.
You're not at one of your sidewalk cafes
in Greenwich Village. This is Broadway.
- You said you believed in my play!
- What do you want me to say?
I'm tapped out. Maybe if we got some
big-time director interested...
- I could scare up backers--
- No, no, no. I'm directing this play.

Ohh, will you listen to this guy?
Where's your track record?
I won't see my work mangled again.
I've been through this twice before.
Two powerful scripts,
could have been tremendous successes...
and I had to watch actors change
my dialogue and directors
misinterpret everything!
I know. I know.
You're an artist.
Let me tell you, kid, that's the
real world out there, and it's
a lot rougher than you think.
Ma
He's makin' eyes at me
Ma
He's awful nice to me
Ma, he's almost
breakin' my heart
What are you waitin' for?
Kill them!
Come on. Let's go
get somethin' to eat.
- I feel like eatin' ribs.
- That's a good idea.
I gotta go shoot crap at Tommy's. He's
got a game at the Ansonia. I gotta go.
Somebody's got to let
Mr. Valenti know what's going on.
He's at the Three Deuces.
- Why don't you go tell him?
- I promised Bobby Doyle.
I can't do nothin'.
- I gotta shoot a game.
- What's a matter, Cheech? Don't
you wanna baby-sit his girl?
His girlfriend's
a pain in my ass.
You gotta see Mama
every night
Or you can't see Mama
at all
You gotta kiss Mama

Treat her right
Or she won't be home
when you call
Now if you want
my company

- Here, doll, take care of this hat.
- You can't fifty-fifty me
- Mr. V. here?
- Yeah, right this way.
-Nice crowd.
-Yeah, we're packin' 'em in every night.
- Right here.
- Monday night I sat alone
Tuesday night
you didn't phone
Wednesday night
you didn't call

- Done.
- Now that's a load
off my mind. How many?
- Four.
- This means we ain't heard the last.
You know Kustabeck's gonna have a fit,
but he'll run scared.
- Maybe.
- Listen, a deal's a deal.
- We got midtown. I mean, eh...
Mr. Valenti does.
- [Whistling]
I don't want that kind
of a sheik
Who does his sheiking
once a week
You gotta see Mama
every night
Or you can't see
You can't see Mama
at all
Not at all.
[Applause]
I'm fed up!
I'm fed up, do you hear me?
You can push your torpedoes around all
you want, but I've had it up to here!

- What is it now?
- I am not sharing a dressing room.
I am tired of getting
bumped into and stepped on.
None of these bimbos knows how to dance.
- Bimbos!
- They're the best line in New York.
- Bullshit! Bullshit!
- Oh, knock it off.
- Hey, clam up over there.
Olive, come on.
- What?
- Olive, it's our anniversary.
- It's not our anniversary.
-You're getting senile.
-It's September 28. Six months to today.
- So?
- I remember it like it was yesterday...
'cause that's the morning
we broke Joey Benjamin's legs.
- Six months? Six months!
- Yeah. Six months.
- And I'm still stuck
in this crummy rat trap!
- Olive. I brought you somethin'.
- What is it?
- Open it.
- No, you open it.
Can't you see I'm dressing?
- I'll open it. Here. Hey.
- What is it?
- Pearls! What the hell
do you think they are?
- Pearls are white.
- These are black pearls.
Don't give me that!
I never heard of black pearls.
Just 'cause you never heard of somethin'
don't mean it don't exist.
What do you think I am? Some kind
of chump? They're black, for God's sake.
- They probably came
from defective oysters.
- The pearls ain't sick.

Black pearls, they're supposed--
What? They're supposed to be black!

- Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

- Don't be that way.

You know I'm nuts about you.

If you're nuts about me, Nickie,
why don't you get me out
of this lousy chorus line?

I came to New York to be an actress.

That's where my gifts are.

You will, baby. You'll be a great
actress. A promise is a promise.

- Yeah, I--

- Come on. Get yourself dressed.

I'm takin' you to Harlem.

- The Cotton Club?

- Yeah, baby. [Chuckles]

[David] I'm telling you,
they read my play, they love it.

But they're afraid of it.

- [Man] It's irrelevant.

- It's not irrelevant!

The point

I'm making is that...

no truly great artist has ever
been appreciated in his lifetime.

- Not one?

- No, no.

- Flender.

- Take, uh, uh... Van Gogh
or Edgar Allen Poe.

Poe died poor and freezing
with his cat curled on his feet.

David, don't give up on it.

Maybe it'll be produced posthumously.

You know, I-I-I have never
had a play produced-- That's right.

- And I've written one play every
year for the past 20 years.

- That's because you're a genius.

The proof is that both common
people and intellectuals find
your work completely incoherent.

- It means you're a genius.

- We all have our moments of doubt.
I paint a canvas every week, take one
look at it and slash it with a razor.
- Well, in your case that's a good idea.
- I have faith in your plays.
- She has faith in my plays
because she loves me.
- Also because you're a genius.
Ten years ago, I-I-I kidnapped
this woman from a very beautiful...
middle-class life in Pittsburgh, and
I made her life miserable ever since.
Hey, Ellen, as long
as he's a good man, keep him.
You know, I think the mistake
we women make is we fall
in love with the artist--
- Hey, you guys, are you listening?
- Yes, yes.
- We fall in love with
the artist, not the man.
- I don't think that's a mistake.
- How is that a mistake?
- [Woman] The artist makes the man.
She's right. You can't
separate 'em. No, look. Say
there was a burning building...
and you could rush in, and
you could save only one thing:
either the last known copy
of Shakespeare's plays or
some anonymous human being.
- You cannot--
- What would you do?
- You cannot deprive the world
of those plays.
- Correct.
- Phone call, David.
- [Girl] It's an inanimate object.
It's not an inanimate object!
It's art! Art is life! It lives!
We got the money.
We can do the play.
What? When? How?

A single backer
goin' for the whole show.
An old acquaintance. I'm up
at the Cotton Club. I ran into him.
- And no hitches?
- Well, uh--
We'll meet tomorrow and discuss it,
all right? Luxor Baths. Noon.
Are you nuts? You think I'm gonna let
some amateur play the lead in my play?
Did I say "lead"?
Did I say "lead," Mr. Genius?
- Some guy's girlfriend 'cause
he's puttin' up the money?
- Did I say "lead"?
I said a part, a role.
I thought maybe Dr. Philips.
- The psychiatrist? It's a key role.
- What key role?
- It's a small part. Key role!
- Who is this woman anyway?
Olive Neal? I don't even know what
she looks like, much less can she act.
He says she's the stuff
that stars are made of.
That's 'cause he's in love with her.
And who is he anyway?
- His name is Nick Valenti.
- How-How-- How do I know
that name? What's he do?
- Ah, he's got his finger
in a number of pies.
- I don't like the sound of this.
- Look, you wanna
get your play on or not?
- I gotta meet her first.
- So you'll meet her.
- I'm conflicted.
-You'll meet her. That's all I'm saying.
-The psychiatrist is not small.
It's not the lead. It's-- It's a
small part. Who do you see in the lead?
- I don't know.
- What about Helen Sinclair?

Oh, sure. I mean, she'd be great.
But can we get her?
Why can't we get her? She's been in
nothin' but flops the past three years.
Yeah, but she's
a major actress.
[Chuckles]
Was.
She'd be great.
I mean, really, she's brilliant.
- She possess the necessary fire.
For the part, she'd be great.
- You really think so?
- I'm glad you think so.
- Think we can get her?
- I sent the script
to her agent, Sidney Loomis.
- You did?
- Did I do wrong? Did I do wrong?
- No, no.
- Did I do wrong not checking
with you first?
- Not at all.
- If so, I stand corrected. I mean that.
- No, really.
- Helen Sinclair... really.
- Get it out.
- She's great.
- Well, all we can do
is hope for the best.
You must be joking!
You want me to play some frumpy
housewife who gets dumped for a flapper?
Don't you remember who I am?
Don't you know who you represent?
- I'm Helen Sinclair!
- Definitely! You are
definitely Helen Sinclair.
I look at you and I say Helen Sinclair!
But who better to play that role?
- Under whose direction? Some novice!
- He's the author.
- Of two flops.
- Julian says it was the directors

that messed up those projects.

Julian Marx! I do plays put on
by Belasco or Sam Harris.

Not some Yiddish pants salesman
turned producer.

My ex-husband used to say,
"If you're gonna go down,
go down with the best of them."

- Which ex-husband?

- Oh, I don't know which ex-husband.

The one with the moustache.

Listen to me. Authors are very often
the best directors of their own works.

She's dowdy! Sid, the ingenue
has all the hot lines.

Even the female psychiatrist
is a better role.

But the role of Sylvia Poston
is the lead.

Sylvia Poston.

Even the name reeks of Orbach's!

I do Electra!

I do Lady Macbeth!

I do plays by Noel and Phil Barry
or at least Max Anderson.

Helen, listen to me. This is
a major part in a serious play.

And let's face it, Helen. You have
not been in a hit in a long time.

- In a long, long, long time.

- I'm still a star!

I never play
frumps or virgins.

You're a star because you're great,
and you are a great star.

- But let me tell you somethin'.

- [Bell Rings]

In the last couple of years...

you're better known as an adulteress and
a drunk-- I say this in all due respect.

I haven't had a drink
since New Year's Eve.

- We're talkin' Chinese New Year's.

- Naturally.

Still, that's two days, Sid.

You know how long that is for me?

- What is it, Josette?

- [Woman] Some flowers.

Well, bring them here,
will you?

The offers are not pourin' in
like they used to.

They're from David Shayne.

"As a small artist to a greater one.

That you merely consider my play...

is all the fulfillment

I require.

Hmm.

- What's he like?

- I hear he's terrific.

A genius ready to emerge.

- I have to be billed over the title.

- Where else?

- Approval of the leading man.

The star's dressing room.

- This is not even a question.

Approval of

all photos of me.

Oh, it's still not

a very glamorous role.

But maybe I could meet with David.

Maybe we could go over the script.

Maybe there's a few ways

we could find to brighten her up. Hmm?

Why am I nervous?

- That was sad. Clara Bow had it rough.

- She's a doll.

- I'd do anything to be in a movie.

- You're pretty enough.

Do you think you could
ever speak to Mr. Valenti?

- Mr. Valenti knows everybody.

He'll do the right thing.

- That's right.

I hear he's gonna make Olive Neal

a Broadway star. [Screams]

[Gunshots]

Go, go, go!

Where'd it happen?
Who'd they get?
Oh, Jesus!
All right, I'm gonna be
at Olive's for about an hour.
You get some more guys downstairs
and call me back on the Masucci thing.
-This is for Leo Kustabeck, you hear me?
-[Olive] Hey!
- You said this was the lead.
It's a smaller part.
- All right.
- I got no time now.
- It's a smaller part.
I don't believe it.
- They just got Vinny and Sal
outside a movie house.
- I counted the lines.
- Sylvia Poston is the lead.
I'm just backing her up.
- You hear what I said?
- I'm tired of backing people up.
I wanna be the lead.
- Julian says you're a doctor.
- A doctor. I don't wanna be
a doctor. I wanna be the lead.
- A head doctor. It's a big part.
A head doctor,
but it ain't the lead.
- So don't try and snow me.
- You'd squawk if they
hung you with a new rope.
- I know a lead when I see a lead,
and this ain't the lead.
- [Phone Ringing]
- A lead is on every single page.
A lead has lots of scenes.
- Hello? Oh, Vito.
- Ya heard? Get everybody
together at the garage.
- I don't get to kiss nobody.
- No, I want it done today!
What is it with you?
- Hey!

- You wanna take your business
outta here? We got guests!

- Call me back.

- I got trouble here.

- I don't care about your trouble.

- What am I supposed to do?
Just foot the bills around here?

- I don't care.

- And I want my say with
this Broadway big shot too.

- Okay, just don't embarrass me.

- I'm lookin' out
for your interests, okay?

- [Woman] Miss Olive?

- There's a Mr. Marx and--

- I know, I know. Send 'em in, Venus.

- Listen. When they get here...

- What?

- charm 'em a little, baby.

- You're the one that
needs charm lessons.

- I told them you're a great actress.

- I am a great actress.

Nick Valenti!
Say hello to David Shayne.

- [Valenti] David, how are you?

- Hello. I'm Olive.

- This is Olive Neal.

- Charmed, charmed, charmed.

- Come on in. Come on.

- Come on in.

- Hey, Dave, she read your play.
She thinks it's great.

- Yes, I read your play.
It's thrilling, turbulent,
a page turner.
Charmed, charmed,
charmed, charmed.
She's a great little actress.
Just needs a break.

- What have you been in, Miss, uh--

- Olive. Olive. Olive.

- Call me Olive, honey.

- You smoke?

- No.

- Olive, ah, your--
well, your experience?

- I love the play.

- Well, I, uh--

- Oh, she ain't got no experience.

- I do too. I have too.

- She's a natural.

- I have experience.

- They ain't talkin' dancin', Olive.

- He doesn't know
what he's talkin' about.

- You don't mean dancin', do you?
She used to wiggle at this joint
in Hoboken. Pick up quarters
off the tabletops with her--

- Hey! Butt out, why don't ya!
They're talkin' to me!

- I'm tryin' to break the ice.

- Who wants a drink?

- I'll have a double anything. Be great.

- [Marx] No, I have an ulcer.

- Venus, a double whiskey.

- Make it two, Venus.

- Do you want the blue
stuff or the green?

- The imported, dummy.

- Oh, you mean from the clean bathtub.
Mm-hmm.

- So you never acted before?

- Honey, honey. Yes, I have acted.
I have acted. I've acted a lot.
I was in a musical revue.
Can you light this for me?
Geez. No manners.
No gentleman.
Yeah, I did a musical revue
in Wichita.
Maybe you heard of it. It was called
Leave A Specimen. I had two songs.

- [Phone Ringing]

- Two numbers. Two thrilling,
show-stopping numbers.
I'm actually feeling

a little sick, really.
I'm actually feeling a little faint.
Can we sit down?
So, one thing I was wonderin'
is who's gonna be playing
the part of Sylvia Poston?
[Chuckles]
Only Helen Sinclair.
Helen Sinclair? [Laughs]
I never heard of her.
- Uh, you follow the theater?
- What are you trying to insinuate?
Hey, don't
gimme that shit!
You tell Masucci he don't play
ball, I'll come down there,
I'll chop his fuckin' legs off!
Don't you pay any attention to Nick.
He's in one of his depressed moods.
I'll cut his throat. I'll come
down there, I'll pull his guts
out through his windpipe!
- Ya hear me?
- What'd ya do? Walk up?
- No!
- You're sweating like a pig.
- I have a bit of a blood sugar
situation now and again.
- Blood sugar?
- What is that?
- Olive, you-- you like the play?
- Mmm. It's sad.
- Well, it's a tragedy.
I'll say, but I got some ideas
how we can goose it up.
- Ideas?
- Mm-hmm. I go to
the movies all the time.
- I got a million clever ideas.
- You burn it down, Cheech!
Burn it down, I said.
- I want it to look like arson!
- I got a crick.
- When?

- A crick?
Everything's tight.
I think maybe we should go.
Oh, no, no, no.
Don't go.
Hey, Venus, let's go
with that hooch!
Uh, uh, Olive, when did you
get interested in acting?
Hey, listen, you think
I came to this town to swing
it around in a chorus line?
Tits and ass. Tits and ass.
That's all they care about. Thank you.
Hey, didn't I tell you
to make "horse durves"?
I don't make nothin' out of horses,
especially "horse durves..."
'cause I don't know what
they are, and neither do you!
Oh, ain't you the big mouth
since you hit your number.
- And I said the imported stuff.
- The imported stuff ate through
the bottle. It's gone !
A likely story. It's very hard
to get good help these days.
- Sorry you guys had to hear that.
- I'm feeling fairly dizzy.
- Some problems with the firm.
- Really? What type of firm is it, Nick?
- [Chuckles]
- It's a "don't stick your nose in
other people's business...
- and it won't get broken type of firm.
- Yeah.
- [Panting] I see, I see. Thank you.
- That's what kind of firm.
I'm feeling a bit unstable.
I think maybe I'll go...
and check into a sanitarium
and get the help that I need.
- And we'll talk later because
it's been good. Hasn't it, Julian?

- Yeah.
- Oh, yeah.
- It's been good.
- This is gonna be
a big event on Broadway.
- Thank you.
Absolutely not!
No!
- You'll work with her, mold her.
It'll be a challenge.
- Out of the question!
She'll win an award. It'll be a great
show business anecdote.
- It will not happen!
- A tribute to you as a director.
You use your actors like clay.
Julian, have you lost
all reason?
Do you believe that that woman
could play a psychiatrist?
That woman? That thing?
- Her voice, her grasp.
- All right.
- She's the woman who picks
quarters off tabletops with--
- Let me level with you.
This is a dog-eat-dog world,
not an ideal world.
If you wanna get your play on, you're
gonna have to make a few concessions.
Life is not perfect.
Plus, it is short.
If you can't figure that out,
you might as well pack up right
now and go back to Pittsburgh.
- [David Screaming]
I sold out! I sold out.
- [Ellen Gasping]
- I sold out.
- David.
[Panting]
- [Gasps]
- What's wrong?
- [Screaming] I'm a whore!

- Oh, my God!
- I'm a prostitute! I'm a whore!
- David, pull yourself together.
- They'll call the police.
- [Panting]
David. Oh, my God!
You look horrible.
Oh, I feel sick.
Please, you'll wake the Finkelsteins.
You want an aspirin?
- David. David.
- Oh, my God! My art! My work!
- What's wrong with you?
- Do I want success that badly?
- David. Come back to bed.
- The answer's yes. The answer's yes.
- Please come back to bed.
- When offered to have my play
backed by a hoodlum, I said yes.
- Please come back to bed.
- It's a deal with the devil,
and the penalty is...
- his girlfriend plays a part.
- Who are you calling at 3:00 a.m.?
[David] Hello, Julian? It's David.
Who do you see in the male lead?
Oh, kid.
[Groans]

It's 3:

- I see Warner Purcell.
- Nah, too fat.
You seen him lately?
Nah, the man's a compulsive eater.
Doesn't matter.
I talked to his agent...
and he's been on a new diet
for four months. He looks fine.
I want him for Lieutenant Masters.
Then maybe I can live with all this.
I can live with
these compromises.
I'll have Warner Purcell
and Helen Sinclair, and then

I can live with that gun moll!
No, not Warner, kid. No.
I had him in Nuns Aplenty.
He'll turn over a new leaf. Then he'll
get insecure; he'll start eating.
By the time we get to Boston, he'll be
as big as my sister-in-law's ass.
No! No more compromises!
It is my play, and I want him!
I want him, and I want him,
and that's it. I'm not a whore!
- David, David, David!
- [Sighs] I'm all right.
[Nick] Olive starts rehearsal
for a show next week.
- I want you to stay with her.
- [Cheech] Yeah.
I want you to make sure
they treat her right up there.
Those theater characters
I don't trust 'em.
The show's costing me a bundle,
and I'm gonna get my money's worth.
- She wants to be a star.
- Yeah. Yeah.
- And I promised her.
- Mr. V., look, it's not
that I don't wanna do it--
Cheech, I'm giving you
an order. What do you do?
I know.
[David]
Monday, September 10.
Today rehearsals began,
and I've decided to keep a journal.
Perhaps my experience
will be of value to others...
just as I pore over with relish
the notes of my idols:
Chekov and Strindberg.
Rehearsals began promptly

at 10:

Warner Purcell was first to arrive

full of bonhomie and good humor.

- Good morning!

- Warner Purcell.

Hello, I'm David Shayne.

- Oh, David, how marvelous to meet you. Well done.

- Thank you.

- It's a wonderful play.

Some lovely speeches.

- I'm honored you're doing it.

- It's my pleasure.

- Our stage manager, Mitch.

- Mitchell Sabine.

I'm here if you need anything.

- Mitchell, nice to meet you.

- That's fine.

- And you're gonna be in dressing room two.

- Lovely.

- And this is my assistant, Lorna.

- Pleased to meet you.

- Lorna, nice to meet you.

We have coffee and Danish, some smoked salmon.

Um, Mitchell, would it be frightfully tiresome if I just had hot water and lemon?

- Not at all.

- Thank you.

- And of course you know Julian Marx.

- Oh, Julian, yes.

- Our swords have crossed.

- Warner, you look wonderful.

- And yourself.

- [Woman Giggling]

[David] Eden Brent, who plays the other woman, arrived second.

She has

a wonderful vivacity.

[Giggles] Good morning! Good morning!

Don't get up. Don't get up.

- I have first-day-rehearsal presents for everybody.

- How thoughtful.

It's nothing. Just some soap and some
potpourri and incense for you, I think.

- Now, have you met Mr. Woofles?

- No. No.

- Oh, don't pull such a sour face.

- Hello, Mr. Woofles.

Oh, be careful.

She's a Chihuahua...

but there's a pinch of Doberman in her
so sometimes she goes for your throat.

- Just kidding.

- [Laughs]

- I think you've met
everyone here. Lorna.

- We talked on the telephone.

I don't know if you've met
our Lieutenant Masters, Warner Purcell.

- Oh, pleased to meet you.

- How was your crossing?

- Well, I came over
five years ago, but it was lovely.

- [Giggles]

Now, my darling, do you want
some milk or something to eat?

- I'll get her a saucer.

- You don't have to bother with
that because I breast-feed her.

- Just kidding, everybody.

- [Laughing]

- Please.

- Julian, nice to see you.

- How are you?

- Mr. Marx.

- Yes, of course.

I'm in the middle, yes?

- [David] Should we take the dog--

- No, no, no, no, no.

It's my baby.

[Giggles]

[David] Olive Neal entered, naturally,
with the force of a hurricane.

- Hey, you gonna hover
over me like dead meat?

- Mr. V. says I stay close.

We've been drivin'

around for 15 minutes.

I told ya he said the Belasco,
not the Morosco, you cementhead!

- Hello, Olive.

- Hello.

- Everyone, this is Dr. Philips.

Olive Neal.

- Hi, nice to meet you.

- You know Julian.

- Yes.

- My assistant, Lorna.

- Hi.

- Eden Brent, Kristen.

- Ah, cute dog.

- Warner Purcell. Lieutenant Masters.

- Charmed, charmed, charmed.

- Stage manager Mitch.

- Mitch, hi, hi, hi, hi.

- And you are?

- I'm with her.

- He's with me. Yeah.

- Okay. Okay.

Well, um, we're just gonna
rehearse for a while, so--
Yeah.

Where she goes, I go.

All right, buster,

why don't you park yourself in
the back row of the theater...
and try not to snore.

Um, I--

- What?

- I don't like other people
watching rehearsals...

- generally as a rule because
the actors are very sensitive.

- What'd you say?

- I-I don't like--

- Hey, hey, who are you? Who are you?

- Whoa, whoa. Easy.

- I'm the director.

- Who is this?

- Wait a minute.

- I'm the director of the play.
- Wait a minute, Mr., uh--
- Cheech. The name's Cheech.
- Mr. Cheech, first of all--
- No, not Mr. Cheech. Ya hear me?
- Yeah.
- Cheech. Simple. Cheech.
- Cheech.

Now, why don't you just take a seat in the back and we'll-- Yeah, go ahead.

- That's it.
- I find this very problematic.
- I'll be over there.
- He'll be unobtrusive, believe me.

He's not gonna bother anybody.

He just wants to watch.

He's my bodyguard.

[Giggles]

- Hi.
- Hello.
- Sorry I'm late.

I'm usually highly professional.

- Oh, I'm sure.
- This is for you.
- Oh, talcum powder. My favorite.
- Thank you. You're a doll.
- Oh, no, you're a doll.

[David] Helen Sinclair came a half hour late, but she had a good excuse.

Please forgive me.

My pedicurist had a stroke.

She fell forward onto the orange stick and plunged it into my toe.

- It required bandaging.
- Oh, my poor darling.

Oh, it's so good to see you.

- We all know and admire Helen Sinclair.
- [Warner] We're old friends.
- Thank you so much.
- Miss Sinclair, this is Mitch.

Oh, yes, yes. Oh, my goodness' sake.

I can't believe I'm here.

Oh-ho, look at this.

Look at this. Would you look?
Oh, this old theater.
This church.
So replete
with memories.
So full of ghosts.
Mrs. Alving.
Uncle Vanya.
There's Cordelia.
Here's Ophelia.
Clytemenstra!
Each performance
a birth.
Each curtain...
a death.
[Mr. Woofles Barking]
Was that a mutt?
[Mitch]
Yes, Miss Sinclair.
- I hate mutts!
- [Barking Continues]
[David] I didn't want to overwhelm
any of the actors on the first day...
so all we did
was read through the play.
I can't live
like this.
The same routine
over and over and over.
The days blend together
like melted celluloid.
Like a film whose images
become distorted and meaningless.
I want a divorce, Sylvia. I've said it
in a thousand subtle ways...
hoping you would realize,
but you refuse to see it.
As a little girl,
I swore one day...
I would have a necklace
made from the Milky Way.
Oh, Kristen, Kristen, if only humans
weren't cursed with the power of memory.
[Olive Reading Flatly]

Dreams are only disguised feelings.
The more we bring these
painful experiences to the fore...
the easier they become
to deal with.

- What's the "fore"?

- The fore. The foreground.

- [Warner] Is it-- Could I?

- [David] Please.

It's a golf term, when you yell, "fore"
when you're coming forward.

- [Helen] I didn't realize that.

- So you're telling me
she's talking about golf?

- Continue!

- What?

[Helen]

Oh, yes, okay. Doctor...

am I unattractive,

worn out?

Spent? Broken?

Desiccated? Old?

[Olive] Come, come, Mrs. Poston.

You're being mas--

- Mas--

- [David] Masochistic.

- Masochistic?

- Yes, masochism is someone
who enjoys pain.

- [Warner] As opposed to sadism.

- Enjoys pain?

What is she,

retarded?

- I don't fuckin' believe this!

- Continue.

[David] After the rehearsal,

I felt exhilarated.

Helen Sinclair suggested

we go for a drink to unwind.

She said she knew

of a little out-of-the-way

speakeasy where we could talk.

- It was wonderful to see old, uh--

- Wasn't it?

- Warner. Yes.

- Warner, yeah. He looks so slim.

- He's on a new diet.

- Who is she? Oh, I need a drink.

Olive. [Chuckles]

Yes. I'm sorry about Olive.

I do apologize.

We needed her to raise the money.

It must be difficult
getting a work like this on.

It's a sad reality
of the marketplace, I'll tell ya.

- We've never really
had a chance to talk.

- No.

- Hi, folks. What can I get you?

- Two martinis, please, very dry.

- How'd you know what I drank?

- Oh, you want one too?

- Three.

- Three martinis.

Uh, I can't judge my own writing,
but I must say...
that just from today's reading,
I can tell how brilliant
you're going to be in this role.

- It's a wonderful play.

- Thank you.

No, no, I mean it. It's so rare
that anything is really about something.
You know-- Well, there's Max Anderson
and Gene O'Neill.

- That's about it.

- You just named my two living gods.

I was a little reluctant at first
to play the part.

The character is so--
She's so, um... uh, colorless.

Colorless, yes.

Well, that's the idea--

- Then I realized what
you were going for.

- You did?

How profound, how complex,

her inner life really is.

I tried to give her
some contradictions.

I was worried.

I'm used to playing
more overtly heroic women.

Less tentative.

More alluring.

Certainly not
frigid.

No, yes, yes. Well, Sylvia Poston
is a mass of neuroses.

In spite of the fact that I
could really find nothing at all
in the play to brighten her up...

- no real passion, no seductiveness...

- Nothing?

I still think that
she's worth playing.

We could work it over, and
a touch here or there could be
changed to make sure you're...

- No, no, no, no.

I wouldn't dream of you...

- comfortable.

changing a word
of your work for me.

God, who am I, some
vain Broadway legend?

You... you're
a budding Chekhov.

I'm not saying I'll distort the play.

I'm just saying I'll reread it
with that in mind.

I mean, after all, Miss Sinclair--
Helen. May I call you Helen?

- Yes.

- Helen...

your instincts as an actress
are impeccable.

And I want the character
to have dimension. I don't mean
for her to be a drone.

- You see through me, don't you?

- Me?

You're clever.

You're brilliant.

What insight

into women.

Don't deny it.

I don't see why

she has to be frigid.

[Nick] Hey, how ya doin', doll?

How'd it go?

[Olive] Ah, they're all

so stuck up.

- Yeah? Anybody botherin' her?

- No.

They expect me to memorize

all these lines.

- Well, that's what you wanted,

isn't it? To be an actress?

- I know, I know, I know.

- I got a headache.

- Cheech'll help you

practice after we eat.

- Me?

- The girl's got stuff

to memorize, all right?

- Yeah, but, Nick--

- Go sit in the tub, honey. Go ahead.

I'm takin' you out to Delmonico's.

You want sirloin or a lobster?

- One of each.

- Listen, Nick, I'm not too good

at this memorizing, and I got a date--

All right, all right, knock it off.

I got a little errand for you to run.

- What kind of errand?

- A message for Charlie Masucci,

and we ain't got a lot of time.

##

Up a lazy river

where the old mill run

Meets lazy, lazy river

in the noonday sun

Linger in the shade

of a kind old tree

Throw away your troubles
Dream a dream--
- Up a lazy river
where the robin's song
- [Water Splashing]
Awakes a bright
new morning--
Can't you see...
you're living out
the exact same pattern...
your mother lived out
with your father?
I am?
Pray tell.
In some way,
you're trying to relive it,
and in the process
of reliving it, correct it.
As if that were possible.
Ha!
-It don't say "Ha."
-I know it don't say "Ha." I added that.
- What do ya mean you added that?
Are you allowed to do that?
- We're allowed to add things.
- How could you add something?
You can't do that.
- You're allowed!
- It's called ad-libbing.
- You can't do that!
I can do that. What do you know? You
don't know nothin'. Shut up and read.
- I think the whole thing stinks.
- I think you're a degenerate
zombie. Shut up and read!
- You better shut up! Just shut up!
- You shut up and read.
- You shut up!
- You're lucky you're Nick's girl.
You're lucky
you're an idiot.
What endeavors you...
to concoct a theory so tenuous?
Mmm-mmm-mm.

I sure pities the poor folks who gonna have to pay to see this play.

- What ya thinking?

- Oh, just about Eugene O'Neill and Max Anderson, you know.

Yeah. You've been rewriting all night and it's only just the first day.

- Is that a bad sign?

- No. I just think that I might have made...

the character of Sylvia Poston a bit too antiseptic.

- She's gotta have a sexual side to her.

- No.

- I think she's the best female character you've written in a long time.

- Says who?

David, you know you always have problems getting into the female mind.

- I know that you think that.

- You've said so yourself before.

We've had this discussion.

All your friends are men. You-- You've always had problems writing for women.

Witness your relationship with your mother, your grandmother...

- your two aunts, your sister--

- I think I try to factor that into my work.

But to be honest with you...

at this moment, I don't think you really understand my work at all.

- Oh! Don't be so defensive.

- I'm not being defensive.

Perhaps my opinions just aren't intellectual enough for you.

Maybe they're just not--

That's a horrible thing to say.

When you have a good idea, I listen to it. I'm responsive.

- In this case, I think you're wrong. That's about it.

- When am I right?

You're right about other things, but not

about Sylvia Poston and her sexuality.

[David] September 17.

The first week is behind me now...

and apart from a few minor incidents,
things seemed to go okay.

There was that moment
between Helen and Eden.

I can't do that speech if she's
going to be fidgeting around upstage!

- Well, that's why I think

I should sit. I'll sit.

- Oh, God!

Sylvia would never ask her to sit
in her own house. She despises her!
She doesn't want me to sit. She doesn't
want me to stand. I guess I could squat.

David, do you realize you're asking an
audience to believe that my husband...
would leave me
for this woman?

- Come along.

- Excuse me. Excuse me, but
I think it's made very clear...

in the speech about erotic attraction,
why he does that.

You fool! He's thinking of me
when he does that speech.

Don't you know anything?

- Only the part about the liver spots.

- Listen.

How long has it been since
you've had a real hemorrhage?

David, I wonder if now would be a moment
to do my soliloquy from Act II?

- [Crying] Did you hear what she--

- Please. Aspirin!

[David] All right, yes, why don't we?

And, Eden, just take five.

- I need an aspirin!

- [Crying Continues]

[David]

Mitch.

[David] Then there was the time when
I tried to cut one of Olive's speeches.

- I like that speech,
and I already got it memorized.

- But it's superfluous.

- It's-- What is it?

- Well, I've overwritten it.

We know how you feel
about Sylvia's breakdown when
you talk with the good doctor.

So it's my fault.

Um, the performance is fine.

But, um...

I like to say it.

- We-- We don't need it.

- Hey!

Are you tryin' to make
my part smaller?

- No, no, every--

- My part's small enough as it is!

Every play needs some cuts, and the size
of the role is not the important thing.

Did you hear what she said? She doesn't
want her speech taken away from her!

- Look, look, Mr. Cheech, I've about--

- I'd rather be shootin' crap myself...

but Mr. V. told me that she's gotta
be up there a lot!

- I wrote this play,
and I'm directing this play!

- I don't care.

You wanna get slapped here or do
you want me to take you outside
and we'll straighten this out?

It's up to you.

[David] Warner Purcell remains
good-spirited and a joy to work with.

And what discipline. Although,
I notice he no longer has just
a cup of hot water and lemon.

[Eden] lf you start it off
at that level--

Well, what are we going to do
about that canine-loving ingenue?

- Did you cast her because
you thought she was attractive?

- She's pretty...
but more importantly, she has a certain perkiness that the character requires. She's perky. She makes you wanna sneak up behind her with a pillow and suffocate her.

- It's a beautiful apartment.

- Josette.

- My beaker of martinis.

- Your taste is exquisite.
My taste is superb.
My eyes are exquisite.
What justifiable confidence.

- I think at some point you're going to have to fire Olive.

- I'm afraid that's not possible.
Oh, how can you take her butchering your poetry? I know I couldn't stand it. No one in his right mind is going to believe she's a doctor, not even a veterinarian.

- [Chuckles]

- I understand, but it's a compromise I have to live with...
and if I want the play to open, I have to find a way to live with it. I plan on reducing the scope of her role if her bodyguard will let me. Can you believe that character?
Imagine, traveling with your own private Neanderthal.

- I wasn't aware that you opened The Master Builder.

- Oh, well.
I had forgotten that you won that drama award.

- Here's to your play.

- Oh, thank you. Our play. To an ideal world with no compromise.
Oh, my gosh,
look at this view!
A million blinking lights.

A million broken hearts.

- You know what's down there?

- What?

- Broadway.

- Ah. That's your street.

Mm-hmm. Yes, that's my street,
but I'd like to give it to you.

- That is, if you want it.

- Who wouldn't want it?

I want you to write a play for me.

Oh, I mean when all this is over.

- Really?

- Your next play, I want you to create
a vehicle for Helen Sinclair.

- I'm honored.

- But it must have size...

an important woman.

- A Borgia. A Curie. You name it.

- Yes!

- I'll dedicate myself to it.

- Oh, and while you're at it...

if you could just have
a look at that scene in Act 11.

If she succeeds in seducing
the Lieutenant instead of
being rejected a second time...

- it could add some variation
to the character.

- Yes, that's a wonderful idea.

The heart is "labyrinthine..."
a maze beset with brutal pitfalls
and mean obstacles.

David, I can't say that line. It doesn't
make sense. It's stupid. I don't get it.

- It's just a stylish way
of expressing a particular idea.

- Idea? What idea?

The agony of love.

The difficulty of relating.

- Why do you have to make it
so hard to say?

- Just say the line.

- No, I can't say it.

It's a mouthful of "ghibberish."

- Gibberish!
- I can't say it, and I will not say it.
- Just do the line.
No! I'm not making
a fool of myself.
[Cheech]
She's right, it stinks.
Oh-ho, Jesus,
another party heard from.
It's a stupid way of talkin',
and nobody talks like that.
- I don't believe this is happening.
- Frankenstein is right.
When I want your opinion,
I will ask for it.
I can't stand to listen to this
garbage. Every day I sit back there...
and I hear the same bullshit
over and over again.
Then leave.
No one asked you here.
[Helen]
Oh, David, take it easy.
Where did you study play writing?
Was it Sing Sing?
"A maze beset
by brutal pitfalls--"
Hey, Olive, I memorized it,
and I'm tellin' ya...
it comes to me all the time,
and it stinks on fuckin' hot ice!
- That's it. I quit. This is crazy.
- [Warner] David.
- Oh, please, I have a little hangover!
- I am famished.
Everyone, everyone,
why don't we take lunch? An hour?
- [Mr. Woofles Barking]
- You don't wanna
say the goddamned line...
- don't say the goddamned line!
- Oh, look at you, Mr. Temperamental.
[Helen] lf that rat on a leash
barks one more time--

-He sounds melancholy. Is he melancholy?

-You can trim the line.

- Because she can't handle it?

- Because you said yourself
you were having trouble with it.

- So you agree with the gorilla?

- David, for Christ sake! It's one line!

- It's not going to wreck the scene.

- That's not the point!

Suddenly I'm taking suggestions from a
strong-arm man with an I.Q. of minus 50.

I've had it!

- David, for goodness' sake. Come on.

- Look who's here.

Oh, God!

Get my rifle!

I guess I'm just hypersensitive because
maybe deep down, I agree with the goon.

- Maybe it is a turgid line.

I don't know. My nerves are shot.

- No. Just calm yourself.

Helen, the play is not working.

It's not working, and it's in my
writing. It's not just Olive.

That's the reason we have rehearsal.

That's the reason we go out of town.

You have such a wonderful attitude.

I'm so lucky.

The best part of this project every day
is that I get to come to work...

and see you and be with you

and work with you.

- I don't mean to spoil the day.

- Then let's not.

Sit down here.

I'm going to show you something.

Okay.

This is my favorite spot
in the park.

And in winter,

when it's covered with snow...

at about 4:

when it's just getting dark

and the lights come on...

it's all misty.

And you can just see the silhouettes of
the Manhattan skyline through the trees.

And it's magical.

It's magical.

Helen, I think I'm falling
in love with you.

Don't.

- I don't know if I can help it.

- David, please, we must be strong.

I've kept a check on my feelings
for so long, but there's
so much that I want to say.

- What are words?

- Oh, gosh.

David, everything meaningful
is in some unexplainable form.

It's-- It's more primordial
than mere language.

- I'm not sure I follow that one.

- Oh, be silent.

- Be silent.

- Helen--

No, let's just sit here
holding our thoughts.

Not revealing them.

Be still.

Let the birds have their song.

Let ours for now remain unsung.

You're amazing.

["Ain't Misbehavin'"]

Stop it.

Stop it.

- I'm not in the mood!

- What do you mean

you're not in the mood?

Honey, you better get in the mood,
'cause he's payin' the rent.

Shut up, Venus!

Just what I said: I'm not in the mood.

- Do I have to be in the mood
every time you are?

- Stop puttin' on the airs.

- I'm not puttin' on airs.
- I never knew you when you wasn't ready for a little action.
Well, today, I'm not ready for action.
I'm tired. Rehearsal is hard.
- Get your motor goin'.
- No!
- Hey, I brought you somethin'.
- What?
- Huh?
- Hmm.
What do ya say?
Come on.
- Nickie.
- Oh, I got a great bottle of French wine.
Joey Foster made it himself.
Pasadena. I'm pooped.
Let's misbehave
There's something wild about you, child--
[David] Today, Ellen came to watch rehearsal.
She was very excited to meet the cast, especially Warner Purcell.
- Warner, Warner, Warner.
This is Ellen. My girlfriend.
- Oh! Pleased to meet you.
- You should be very proud.
He has a rare talent.
- Yes, he does.
[David] The morning proceeded very smoothly for the first half hour.
And then another incident occurred.
The heart obeys its own rules. Ha!
As a doctor, your respect for rationalities is not very profound.
- David, I-- David, can I--
- [David] Yes?
I don't understand the character here.
Suddenly, she's too wise.

And, David, I don't know why she's telling her to dump her fiance.

- She's caught up with the Lieutenant.

- The Lieutenant?

But it's as if she's just mouthing the playwright's philosophy.

- Why would she just up and leave Tom?

- Because she's impulsive.

- It doesn't feel right.

- Well, yeah, and I don't understand, you know...

if I'm a doctor, how come I'm giving her such bad advice?

- It's not bad advice.

- It is bad advice.

But, David, you see, in Act I, she says that Tom changed her life.

- Yes, but she's recklessly driven to the Lieutenant.

- It doesn't make sense.

- Just give it a chance.

- There's something contradictory about it.

- Just give it a chance.

- It's just bad writing.

[Cheech]

I'll tell ya what's wrong.

- Oh, Christ! Julian?

- Now let's wait a minute.

- Let's not get into a situation here.

- She shouldn't leave the guy.

She should stick with him.

Then when the Lieutenant has that fight with his wife and walks out, he should notice her.

That way,

it won't be boring.

Somebody say something!

- I think it's a good idea.

- [Julian] It's not a bad one.

- You're kidding.

- Oh, no.

It's, uh--

It really isn't.

[Warner] Personally, I like it.
I think it's very dramatic.
Ellen, do you see what I'm up against?
Do you see what I have to put up with?
- I think he has an interesting concept.
- What?
Not to say that--
- She doesn't leave the Lieutenant.
- Right.
- She doesn't leave her fiance.
- Right.
We lose that scene, and suddenly
a lot of good possibilities open up.
- [Cheech] It's a helluva lot
better than what you got.
- I actually like it.
- You're taking his side?
- It's not a question of sides.
- David, she's right.
The play always bogged down there.
- Try it.
- That's why the actors
always looked so uncomfortable.
- I can't make those changes.
- Why not? H-H-How do they meet again?
- Because the--
The Lieutenant notices her, right?
And then, he goes after her.
I mean, that's the way
it would happen in real life.
He goes after her. Come on.
You can't force it, kid. I mean, if it's
meant to go in a whole other direction--
- I quit!
- Oh, don't be so egotistical.
- I'm outta here.
- Egotistical? Why?
Because I protect my play?
- Protect it against what? A good idea?
- Oh, thank you for the support.
- No, no, I quit! That's it. Good-bye.
- I'm gonna go shoot crap.
- That's it. I quit.
- Wait a minute.

[Julian]

David. David!

- I'm gonna go shoot crap.

- David.

- [Mr. Woofles Barking]

- Mommy's coming.

If an artist can, it gives us all a much better chance, and he is an artist.

- Is that why he's getting all hot and bothered all the time?

- Artists are very emotional.

- Artists are emotional, are they?

- Yes, they are.

Hey, I've been meaning to ask ya...

is it my imagination

or are you always... Iookin' my way?

- You're a very observant girl.

Yes, I have been looking at you.

- Thank you.

Yeah, well, I notice somethin'.

I notice you have...

a really

big appetite.

- Yes, I do have a big appetite.

- Yeah, I noticed that, but--

- Where's your baby-sitter?

- What, Cheech?

- Yes.

- Ah, you don't have to worry about Cheech. He took off.

- Did he?

- A minute there's a chance, he runs off to play craps.

- Takes about two hours.

- Well, listen, now that you've been let off the leash...

- Yeah?

- why don't we go in...

- and get to know each other a bit better?

- Okay.

That might be pleasant.

[Giggles]

- [Giggles]
- Well.
- Hi.
- Hi.
Hi.
- You're a very attr--
Wait just a minute.
- What? What? What?
- Before we start--
- Yeah?
- What? Oh.
- Just a--
A little poultry.
[Giggles]
Okay.
- All right. Let's go.
- All right.
You do have a big appetite.
[Giggles]
- Pull yourself together.
So he came up with a good idea.
- [Sighs]
- Helen, not you too?
- If you did follow his suggestion...
you'd be able to put in that new scene
in Act Ill that you've always wanted to.
- Yes, but it'd--
- And that, that casts
a whole new light...
on my relationship
with my husband. Yes!
So you're saying
you want me to change it?
At the risk of seeing you
upset on your birthday.
- How did you know it was my birthday?
- Happy birthday.
- Helen! Ohh.
- Open it.
Gosh!
Oh, gosh.
Really. It's--
Don't get too excited.
I didn't buy it.

Cole Porter gave it to me.

It's one of many.

- Now I'm gonna have to take up smoking.

- Hmm.

Have a good time tonight

with your girlfriend.

I'm sure she's taking you out.

- Yes, with the Marxes.

- Yes, well... make a birthday wish.

- I have.

- I hope you get everything

in life that you want.

Helen, have you thought

about what I said before...

- about the way I feel?

- Don't speak.

- But I want to express--

- Don't speak. Don't.

- Just a few things I want to tell you.

- Don't speak.

- When we first met-- [Muffled]

- No, no. Don't speak.

Please don't speak.

Please don't speak.

No! No!

No! Go!

Go, gentle Scorpio, go!

Your Pisces wishes you

every happy return.

- Just one--

- Don't speak!

##

- [Sighs]

- Wow, a wallet!

- That's appropriate.

- It was the nicest one I saw by far.

- The piping. That's real leather.

- Places to put stuff in there.

- You like it?

- It's amazing. Beautiful.

- You like it?

- Yes, really.

- Now all I need is some money,
and it'll hold its shape.

- You will prosper, my friend.
- I promise. [Chuckles]
Am I right, Hilda?
- No, I love it.
- Can I pick 'em or can I pick 'em?
- Oh, you sure can, Julian.
- Happy birthday.
- Thank you. Thank you.
Thanks for spending it with me.
- Oh, it's wonderful.
- Hilda, touch glasses there.
Hey, look who's here
with his girlfriend.
- [Ellen] Oh, no.
- I owe that big Gorgonzola an apology.
What are you talking about?
Now that he's drunk, he's gonna
apologize to everyone. Strangers.
[David] Today at rehearsal,
he came up with that little
suggestion, and I overreacted.
I let my ego get in the way of the work,
and I feel I owe him an apology.
- Ah, you're all right.
You handled it very well.
- I'll be right back.
I take it all back. It was a good
suggestion, and I apologize.
- Say hello to Violet.
- Hi, Violet.
- Hi, nice to meet you.
Who's this, Cheech?
- He's a writer.
- I'm a struggling writer.
- You wanna know what the problem
with your story is?
- What's the problem?
Are you gonna do some more rewrites?
- Sit down. Take a load off your feet.
- Moe, go on. Come here. Get him a beer.
- Why not?
- [Violet] He's a writer?
- Yeah.
- I didn't know you knew writers.

- Do me a favor. Shut up.

Don't tell me

to shut up.

All right,

number one.

See, I don't believe she loves

the guy right from the start.

She's too on, uh, top of him

all the time. That's not love.

That's like keeping somebody in prison.

But if you changed it, right?

And she left him,

then she would feel so bad about it...

- that she would have the

nervous breakdown and go nuts.

- [Music Stops, Applause]

- How ya doin', Cheech?

- Tulio, listen, I gotta see you later.

- I wanna get down on the Cardinals

for the doubleheader, all right?

- You got it.

- Them birds look good.

- Teach your friend some manners

and get him outta here.

- All right, so--

- You were-- You were talking about--

Right, all right.

So, now...

if the doctor feels what Sylvia's

feelin'-- That's her name, Sylvia.

- There's a Sylvia in my neighborhood.

- Oh, yeah?

-Yeah. What was her name? Sylvia Pincus.

-Sylvia Pincus.

Sylvia Pincus. Big, fat Jewish broad,

had a little tiny husband.

She chopped him up with an ax and mailed

his pieces all over the country.

I don't know what

she was tryin' to prove.

That's disgusting. You gotta

tell that story in front of me?

- Relax.

- You know I got a weak stomach.

- You were tellin' me
about the play a minute ago.

- Don't interrupt me.

- You were sayin' about Sylvia?

- Right. So if the doctor feels
what Sylvia's feelin'--

- Uh-huh.

- Know what I mean?
Yeah. She identifies
with her patient, a bit.

Right. This way when she gets jealous,
it makes sense.

- Right.

- Uh-huh.

There's gotta be a time when the
Lieutenant has it out with the doctor.
Why isn't that in there?
You're talking about a whole
different direction for the play.
Definitely.
Think about it.
How would the audience know
Sylvia was feeling guilty? lf--
Oh. I don't know.
Wait a minute.
Yeah. Wait.
You could work it out with maybe you--
you hear what she's thinkin'.
-You mean she speaks her thoughts aloud?
-Sure, why not? It's a play anyhow.
It don't have to be real,
but it'll be stronger.
You think about that.
And you, don't interrupt me no more.
I'm sorry.
So how come you had so much
to say to that Valenti goon?
No, nothing. I was just
thanking him for his ideas.

- What ideas? He only had
the one suggestion, didn't he?

- Yeah.

- That was just it.

- So do you like your wallet?

- What?
- The wallet.
- Oh, yes, yes, it's terrific.
- Are you sure?

Oh, it's very exciting. I love leatherette. Always have loved it.
Boy, are you loaded.

- Yeah.
- Happy birthday.

Thanks.

[David] September 24. I gave the cast the rewrites. Everyone seemed pleased.

- [Helen] These are brilliant! Oh!
- [Warner] They are.

Now Sylvia's not so passive.

She uses her wiles to trap the Lieutenant, and that's what causes her guilt!

[Warner] The whole thing is motivated. It drives on. Wonderful.

- [Olive] You mean I gotta memorize all new lines?
- [Helen] They're wonderful!

- How did you come up with such divine changes?

- They're not really mine--
- Oh, no? Whose are they, God's?
- [Laughing]

- Well, they are mine in the sense that they're mine--

- Your modesty becomes you.

But let's face it; you are a major talent.

A major new voice in the theater.

The word genius gets thrown around so frequently in this business...

- but, darling, if the shoe fits--
- Congratulations.
- It finally has balls.

- Now, if we can do something about Act Ill...

we got a big, fat hit

on our hands.

- [Warner] Three cheers
for the writer! Hip-hip--

- [Cast] Hooray!

[David] I stayed up all night
working on the third act.

I admit it came rather hard...
and before I handed in the pages,
I sent them over to Cheech to read.
He suggested I come down
to his office.

- You missed the idea.

- I did?

Yeah, you did.

Plus, nobody talks like that.

- You got that problem.

You don't write like people talk.

- I take poetic license.

Poetic license, bullshit.

People believe what they see
when the actors sound real.

- Come here. Let me show you.

- What are you doing?

- What does it look like I'm doin'?

- You're gonna write it?

What am I? A fuckin' idiot?

They taught me how to write in
school before I burned it down.

- You burned down your school?

- Yeah, it was Lincoln's birthday.

There was nobody there.

- If you actually write--

- Look, I know how people talk,
all right?

Go shoot a rack,
and let me do this.

But if you actually write it,
then I'm not--

- Don't worry about it.

I ain't gonna tell anybody.

- No?

No. I saw you playin' the big shot.

I know what it's all about.

Where I come from,

nobody squeals.
Go shoot a rack.
Stop starin' at me.
[Helen] What dialogue!
This is better than O'Neill!
Max Anderson
will never touch you!
So you liked it.
It's so full of passion!
It's so full of life!
- I hoped it would lift the story.
- What a difference between this
and your first draft.
You hadn't found yourself yet. The idea
was there, but it hadn't crystallized.
You needed to hear it
on its feet, and now this.
It's no longer tepid
and cerebral.
It's full of life!
It's full of passion!
It reeks with humid sexuality!
It's carnivorous at last!
- You thought my first draft
was cerebral and tepid?
- Only the plot and dialogue.
- But this--
- Was-Was-Was there nothing
in the original draft...
that you feel
is worth saving?
The stage directions were lucid.
Best I've ever seen.
- And the color of the binder.
Good choice.
- Thank you.
I always had a flare
for stage directions.
I went back and reread your
earlier plays. They suffered
from the same problem.
- [Sighs]
- Good ideas, but
too contrived, no real guts.

It's like you

finally happened.

- Helen, I have a confession to make.

- Yes?

[Inhales Deeply]

- I--

- Don't speak!

No, no, don't speak.

I know you wanna deprecate yourself.

I know you do, but you're

going to take this town by storm.

I didn't...

realize what

an inspiration...

you've been

to my writing.

Oh, David.

Dear, dear David.

Pungent,

seething artist.

The cocoon

has opened.

I would give my body freely to

the man who wrote those words.

Those glorious,

powerful words.

- Helen--

- No, don't speak.

- [Mumbling]

- Don't speak. Don't speak.

No. Silence. Silence.

- Don't speak.

- [Mumbles] Please.

[David] September 28.

The play is working much better now.

Helen has been getting on more

pleasantly with Eden, and I

believe she likes Mr. Woofles.

- [Barking]

- Back! Back! Back! Back!

[David] Warner Purcell and Olive seem

to always be exchanging coy glances.

I don't know if it's my imagination, but

he seems to have put on a little weight.

Perhaps the tension of our
upcoming Boston opening has
caused him to cheat on his diet.

[David] Can we go
from "God of our fathers"?

Take it from
"God of our fathers."

[Ellen] Oh! God of our fathers,
help me! Help me!

I was thinkin' about
when Sylvia's in the crazy house--

- Sanitarium.

- Yeah, yeah, yeah.

- She gets the D.T.s,
and she sees things.

- She hallucinates.

- No, she sees things.

You know, like visions.

- Like what kind of visions?

- Like her dead husband,
and then they have that talk.

- The one in the third act?

That's right. She couldn't
face up to him when he was alive.

That's great. That's great.

That's great.

- It is great.

- Why didn't I think of that?

Joe,
gimme a beer.

That's great.

It's all great.

What's the matter?

Nothin'. I just gotta
take a break for a minute.

- You wanna take a break?

- Yeah.

- All right.

- Got a cramp.

[Billiard Balls Clacking]

Man.

[Sighs]

It's a nice-- nice spot.

- Come here a long time.

- Yeah?
- Yeah.
- You from around here?
You live around here?
- New York, born and raised.
West 45th Street.
- Mmm.
- Got a big family?
- No.
Got a sister who
lives in Jersey.
I had a brother,
but he got killed.
- I'm sorry.
- It's all right.
He welshed on some Shylocks.
They took him out to Canarsie,
shot him through the head.
Your brother?
How'd you get into
your line of work?
- My line of work?
- Yeah.
My father.
Was he tough.
You ever think about
doin' anything else?
- Like what?
- Like writing.
- Writing.
- Yeah.
- Come on, I've been collecting
for the Mob since I was 16.
- You have a huge gift.
- Yeah.
- No, I'm serious.
Really, it's-- it's uncanny.
- I mean, your instincts.
Dramatic instincts.
- Listen to me.
- Your play was very good.
Your play was very good.
- Really enviable.
You just didn't use your head.

Sometimes people don't think.

Well, sure, for you
it's simple, you know?

To someone who can draw, it all seems
logical, but for someone who can't--
I studied playwriting
with every teacher. I read every book.

Let me tell you about teachers.

I hate teachers.

Those blue-haired bitches used to
whack us with rulers. Forget teachers.

- There was a boy I knew when I was
growing up, and he played accordion.

- Yeah?

I loved accordion. And I practiced
and practiced, and I got fluent.

Yet he would squeeze one single note,
and the sound of it would make you cry.

-I used to want to dance. You know that?

-Make you cry.

- I mean it.

You ever see George Raft dance?

- Oh, yeah.

- So--

- What?

Mr. Marx says that you, uh, actually
rubbed a few people out. Is that true?

- What is this, the third degree?

- Not at all.

- Then why you sayin' that for?

- I'm just really--

The truth is

I'm fascinated.

- I took care of a few guys.

- Why?

Why, why?

I don't know why.

They cheated Mr. V. They went back
on a debt. I'll tell you one thing.

I never rubbed out a guy
who didn't deserve it.

Uh, so what does it actually
feel like when you actually...

- What?

- k-kill a man?
- It feels okay.
- It feels okay?
- Yeah.
- Even the first time?

First time?

First time was a punk in prison.
He squealed on me, and I stuck
an ice pick in his back.

- An ice pick?

- An ice pick, yeah.

Had to do it over and over, 40 times.

It was a mess. Forget about it.

[Narrating] October 1.

Helen Sinclair gave a party.

It was like being in a dream.

Maxwell Anderson was there...

and George S. Kaufman

and Gertrude Lawrence.

[Helen] Darling, I want you to meet
my playwright, David Shayne.

[Lord Chafee] Oh, you have
quite a find here, darling.

Word's all over the streets.

Oh, well, Helen's made me out to be
quite a hero. You're too kind.

No, I'm not kind.

Helen will vouch for that.

But I read your play,
and it's nothing short of marvelous.

I let him read the rewrite,
not the eunuch version.

- My tongue is hanging out to
present it on the London stage.

- London?

Look at his face, Helen. You're
going to be the toast of Broadway.

Why not the West End, hmm?

-Well, I'm so glad you enjoyed the show.

-It was extraordinary.

What's this I hear

about Helen's latest? Is that true?

- Oh, yes. He's creating
a vehicle for Helen for next season.

- Really?

It's a little idea she's wanted to do for years. She plays Jesus' mother.

- Oh!

- It's a whole Oedipal thing:

He loves her, wants to do in the father.

Well, you can see the complications.

- Of course.

- Of course, we're talking

to Ira Gershwin...

about a modern musical version

of The Hunchback of Notre Dame.

- Quasimodo Jones.

- Helen has such a-a-a-- a new vitality.

- Even her face looks so smooth.

- I know. The monkey glands are working.

Can you leave

your purse here, or is it--

- Why did you close the door?

- I've wanted to be alone with you...

since this

boring party began.

This party, boring?

This party's magnificent! It's glorious!

Make love to me.

Here? Now?

- I see no reason to wait.

- Jerome Kern is on

the other side of the door.

Yes, he's a wonderful composer.

You'll have to meet him.

Now hang up your pants.

I feel good today. You know, I went to 34th Street. I got this new dress.

- You like it?

- It's very nice.

- Isn't it? I think we should go dancin' tonight.

- We're gonna go dancin'.

- I gotta take care of some business.

- Business now?

- Oh, come on.

- I'll take you dancin' in a minute. Just stay there.

All right.

- Hey, I wanna talk to you.

- Hi, Cheech! What are you doing here?

Listen, usually I wouldn't give you
no warning, but you're a good actor.

You're doin' a good job, and it'll
be a big problem if you're not around.

But I'm tellin' you right now:

If you go near Nick Valenti's
girl one more time...

I'm gonna stick my gun in your mouth
and blow a hole in the top of your head.

- All right?

- Cheech, it's so funny how you've
misconstrued the situation.

Listen to me. I said don't give me
no shit now, you hear?

- All right, all right.

- I know what's goin' on.

- I understand, Mr. Cheech.

- You understand?

- I do understand, yes.

- Next time I come back angry.

You hear what I said?

- Yes, I understand.

- And next time you go near
her, you're a dead man.

- Point taken. Thank you, thank you.

- Now get out of here.

Mmm! Waiter!

Waiter.

Could you bring me
some more potatoes, please?

And I'll have the pork loin now. Lovely.

Thank you.

Oh, and one more thing.

I'll have the cheese platter
now as well. Yes, and could you
save me the Nesselrode pie?

Lovely.

Thank you.

[Narrating] October 12.

We opened in Boston.

Ellen came up for it.

Mr. Valenti was there.

It went well, although my heart's
in my mouth every time Olive speaks.

Don't tell me you still think
the world revolves around--

- [Whispering] "You"!

- You.

I saw Max Gordon in the lobby.

He loved it!

- [General Chatter]

- David, did you know
that I have a train to catch?

- Hey, Dave, how was I?

- Wonderful. You finished
that whole speech this time.

- Yeah, I did, didn't I?

- And much improved.

You know, Olive was good.

She still needs work, but--

Hey, Charlie, how are ya?

[David] The first act seems
to be working well.

- I got some flowers for ya.

- Oh, a hundred orchids!

They could only be from Billy Rose.

Yes. They are! They're from Billy.

Oh, they're beautiful.

And you!

Oh! Fabulous.

Oh, thank you so much.

So sweet of you. [Kissing]

Listen, let me go and get changed, and
then I'll meet you at the Lobster Grill.

Could you order me

the shore dinner as an appetizer?

And I'll have roast beef

as the main course.

- How come you didn't
call me over the weekend?

- Oh, you were great.

- I was busy, my dear. I'm busy now.

- Oh, really?

- Excuse me. Could I just
have a word with you?

- No, my friends are up from town.
- We're just going to eat,
and I've got to get changed.
- You don't mind if we talk.
- We'll wait for you.
- We'll just be a second.
- Oh, well, I'll be with you
in two seconds.
- Bye.
- I can't be here. I mustn't--
- When I saw you on stage,
doing that big speech...
- Olive, I'm very tempted.
You're a gorgeous girl.
- you were so, so sexy.
- I mustn't be seen with you.
- What the hell is this?
A corset? Get it off.
- Don't!
- What, what, what?
What are you so nervous about?
- I can't be seen with you.
He threatened to kill me.
- Who threatened to kill you?
- Cheech.
- Cheech threatened to kill you?
Well, how do ya like that?
He finally got wise.
You know what? I wouldn't let it
worry you if I were you.
You're not the type to let some
strong-arm gorilla push you around.
Olive, essentially, I'm an actor. I take
on certain roles that require of me--
You weren't just an actor
when you were taking my underwear off.
You were a big shot.
You were sayin' to me,
"Olive, I have big plans for you.
I want you to star with me.
- Stop it. Listen, Olive--
- I make my own rules.
All this is true,
but we must be realistic.

- Realistic?
- God, I'm starving!
Do you have a sticky bun or--
[Knock At Door]
Open up. It's me, Nick.
Nick?
Nick Valenti?
- I'm dressing.
- Ah, c'mon. I ain't gonna see
noplace I ain't been before.
- [Knocking]
- I'm coming, I'm coming.
Hold your water.
- Hi, baby.
- Ah, there you are.
- You were swell in
the show tonight, Olive.
- Well, thank you.
- I thought so. Wasn't she, boys?
- Oh, yeah.
- What a thrill.
- Come on. Get yourself dressed.
- We got time to grab a drink
before I drive back to New York.
- Well, I don't know.
- Not tonight, Nickie.
I'm a little bit tired.
- Come on, come on.
You been puttin' me off
for weeks now.
- I'm a little bit tired.
- Since when you too tired
to shovel in a little booze?
What a marvelous audience. I thought
the show went quite well, don't you?
Oh, excuse me, Mr. Valenti.
Darling, could you give me that
cue a little quicker in Act 11?
You know the one where your character
is quoting Hamlet?
Oh, well, you know, it's hard,
'cause I always forget the second part.
Yes, I know.
It's "or not to be." Okay?

Because I can't come in until you finish your line, and I go "ooh."

- To be--

- Or not to be.

That's the way it goes. You're tired. You're not taking it in.

[Laughing] And did you notice the way the audience applauded your exit? It'll go better next time if you make it through the doorway and not the upstage wall.

- [Barking]

- Oh!

[Olive]

Get the pooch outta here.

[Eden] Mr. Woofles.

Oh, he smells something.

- You got somebody in there?

- Yeah, right, I got somebody in there.

- Here, pooch, take a hike.

- Come on, darling. Protecting Mommy.

- Bye-bye, bye-bye.

- What's he barkin' at?

- I think you were talkin' about the broad.

- All right, party's over.

Come on, guys. Get outta here.

I gotta change.

Nickie, you too.

One drink, all right? Let me change.

- So who's this Hamlet guy?

- Come on. Outta here.

- Go on, go on.

- Does he live around here?

Hamlet. That's really funny, honey. Bye.

[Whispering]

Go on! Get outta here. They're gone.

Go on! Get outta here. They're gone.

Get outta here. Go on, go on.

No, no, no! Not that way.

The window, the window.

Go on. The window.

I'll be out

in a minute, Nick.

-Oh, my goodness. Warner! Hello, Warner.

-It was a lovely performance.

- Oh, thank you very much.

That's sweet of you.

- We enjoyed it so much.

- Oh, yes, well, did you like the play?

- I loved the play.

- It's a smashing part.

- The second act was wonderful.

- Beautiful scene.

- It's lovely working
with Helen, of course.

- She's so good. She's just lovely.

- She just carries one through.

Could you possibly
give me an autograph?

- I-l'd love to.

I don't have a pen on me.

- Oh, you don't?

It's her. That's what it is. I can't
keep turnin' a blind eye. It's Olive.

She's better than
when we started.

- Sure, she's better.

That don't mean she's good enough.

- Well, I mean, you know--

- This is something
that just bothers you.

- Yeah.

- The critics-- Her notices were decent.

- Decent ain't good enough.

- She's killin' my words.

- Your words? Okay, she's
weaker, but it doesn't matter.

- Weak? I think she's doin'
more damage than you think.

- What am I gonna do, fire her?

- I can't have her ruinin' my show.

- Your show?

- What are you talkin' about?

- All right, our show.

- I put a lot into this.

It could be perfect.

- Yeah, so did I...

but there's concessions
we have to make.

- The show's a hit.

- She's not the best we could do
for the part.

- There's plenty other girls around.

- What are we gonna do, Cheech?
She throws the whole thing
out of whack. Can't you see it?

- The audience doesn't
know the difference.

- Oh, they know.

- They do not know.

- They don't know how to say it,
but they know.

Every time I hear that voice,
it's like a knife in my fuckin' heart.
She can't act!

- You listening to me?

- Cheech, take a shower.

She makes stuff not work. Stuff
she ain't even in comes out twisted.

- I can't fire her! You know this!

- Don't yell at me.

I am not yelling at you,
but you are too close to this.

Leave me alone.

I got a fuckin' headache.

- Leave me alone. I got a headache.

- You're being temperamental.

Very temperamental!

[Narrating]

Fate acts in strange ways.

Everyone seems to be
feeling the pressure of
our upcoming New York opening.

Yesterday, Warner got into a
fight with Eden, and the results
proved Cheech right yet again.

There you are. Mr. Purcell,
you have been stealing our
dog yummys and eating them.

Absolutely not.

That's an outrageous suggestion.

- Then let me see in your pockets.

- Would I eat dog food?

You'd eat anything that didn't eat
you first, you big fat pot of helium.

- This is the sort of food I eat:
prime loin chop.

- Let me see.

I do not steal from animals. Get out
of my trousers, you horrid woman.

Look!

Oh, thief, thief, thief!

It was you that drank
her saucer of milk yesterday.

Ow! Ow!

You fat hunk of blubber!

- She pushed me!

- Ow, my hand! That's 'cause
you were stealin' her dog food.

Somebody ought to stick
a harpoon in you, you big whale.

- Ow.

- I can get you a doctor.

I can get you a doctor.

I guess this means
you'll miss the matinee.

It's okay with me.

One show a day is plenty.

To think I didn't

believe you at first, you dear--

I think I can say this in the company
of-- in the company of all of you.

That a woman of your age
should have leapt past the realm
of such acute narcissism.

- What a difference with
a real actress saying those lines!

- All right.

- The whole play came to life!

- Listen to me.

Don't get carried away.

Don't get any ideas. Olive is going on.

We can get all the backing

we need without Nick Valenti.

Our notices are wonderful.

- People are standing--

- It's not the money. I told ya that.

We dump Olive, you, me,

even the dog will wind up

at the bottom of the Hudson.

It won't take that long.

He'll kill us here in Boston.

We'll be at the bottom of the Charles.

He was right. She wrecks the whole play.

He noticed that.

- What are you talking about?

- Nothing. It's just that
she affects the whole play.

- [David] You were wonderful.

- Yes, yes. Wonderful.

- [Eden] Have you seen
Deliah with my robe?

- Yes, she's coming.

- Listen.

- [Sighing]

- One thing you don't do
is welsh on Nick Valenti.

- On Nick Valenti.

- In future productions,
we can hire somebody else.

- Shh-shh!

We can hire somebody else, but if she's
okay to open in New York, she opens.

- I mean, the play must go on.

I'll do anything--

- She affected the whole thing.

[Helen] I can't tell you
how many times I've seen it.

A show comes into Boston...

crippled, limping, struggling, gasping
for air, trying to find its own life...

and then, somewhere along the line,
a miracle occurs.

A work of art is born.

- It's amazing how much better the show
is working with Olive's understudy.

- Mmm, Olive.

- The thing's breathing and living.

- Yes, it's true.

She's drab, but it's still
going to be a fine, fat hit.

- Mmm.

- Here's to your future...

as the new white knight
of the Great White Way.

- Cheers.

- [Coughing]

- What is this stuff?

- Paint remover. You can cut
it with a little club soda.

- Oh, it's very smooth.

- Yes.

See the little towns go by?
Helen, when I get back to New York,
I'm gonna tell Ellen about us.

- Oh, David!

- No, I've decided.

- Oh, are you sure?

- You know how I feel about you.

Oh, David, you must be gentle.

I-I-I've been hurt so many times before.

I know.

I know.

You stand on the brink
of greatness.

The world will open to you like an
oyster. No. No, not like an oyster.

The world will open to you
like a magnificent vagina.

You okay?

You look a little flushed.

- I've just had a little too much--

- Is it something I said?

- No, just the paint remover.

- Oh.

[Sighs]

Have you ever thought about
whether, when you fall in love...

do you fall in love with
the artist or the man?

What a strange question.

Yes, it is strange, but--

I'm in love with you, Helen. I am, and the time has come for me to act on it.

Oh, the train

is moving so fast.

Oh, David, it's so fast.

Oh, hold me!

- Oh, hold me. No, no, don't speak.

- Helen, I love you.

Don't speak.

B-- Uh, please, don't speak.

- Don't speak. No. Don't speak.

- [Muffled]

No, please.

- Are you having an affair with Helen Sinclair?

- What? No!

- Don't lie to me.

- What are you talking about?

You two are in every gossip column in town. You were all over Boston together.

- You know those columns.

- All those late nights.

- I was working!

- What about this?

- That's a cigarette case I found.

I don't know where I found it.

- "To Helen from Cole.

- Let's do it.

- I remember now. I admired it, and she gave it to me.

-Why didn't you tell me?

-Because there's nothing to tell, Ellen.

Now that you're on the eve of success, you want to dump me and go off with Helen Sinclair.

- That is ri-- That is ridiculous.

- Are you sure?

You know how crazy you sound right now?

- You never encouraged me to stay in Boston.

- I was submerged in my work.

The play's in trouble.

I'm working.

Hey, it's me.

It's David.

You know?

David? Okay?

What an imagination

on this girl.

[David] Listen, Flender,

I'm completely mixed up.

Ellen, Ellen. I love Ellen.

She's been with me the whole time.

Stuck by me. I knew she'd

be happier back in Pittsburgh.

- We've had a great relationship.

- Right.

- I love her dearly. And yet--

- Yeah. Yes. Get to the point.

What is the problem here? It's always
been clear that you've loved Ellen.

I've become involved with

Helen Sinclair, and I feel terrible.

But I can't help myself.

She's so charismatic, and

she's brilliant and beautiful.

I mean, a real artist, and--

and we speak the same language.

- You're wracked with guilt.

- I'm wracked with guilt.

- You're wracked with guilt.

You are wracked with guilt.

- I don't know whether--

- I can't sleep.

- Guilt is petit bourgeois crap.

- An artist creates

his own moral universe.

- I know that. I know--

Well? What is the problem then?

I'm gonna give you some advice.

The same advice that was

given to me many years ago when

I had a very similar dilemma.

- Similar to mine. To--

- Yes. Yes.

What did you do?

What?

You gotta do
what you gotta do.

##

Hot ginger and dynamite
There's nothing
but that at night
Back in Nagasaki where
the fellas chew tobaccy
And the women
wicky wacky woo

- The way they can entertain
- [Nick] She's great in the show, huh?
- Would hurry a hurricane
- [Marx] Oh, the best.
- Back in Nagasaki
- She'll take Broadway by storm.
- And the women wicky wacky woo#
- The part is modest. Still--
Listen, when she gets here, tell her
you're gonna give her some new lines.
- You know, like we discussed.
- Yeah.

Let me level with you, Mr. V.
Do you mind if I call you Nick?
You see, Nick, you don't
fiddle with a winning show.
Every script reaches a point where,
in the professional judgment...
of the producer, the director,
you're finished.
You can't distort the plot.

[Chuckles]

Now, we're about ready to open.
Changes could be harmful.
No, the show is
basically frozen.

- Let's avoid confusion.
- Sure.

She'll get some new
fuckin' lines...
or I'll nail your kneecaps
to the dance floor.
Imagine that director telling me
I'm overacting in the first scene...

and I don't know

what I'm saying.

You know what I'm doing, Cheech, is,
I'm working on a superior laugh. Like:
Ha-ha-ha. Hee-hee-hee.

[Chuckles]

I wanna throw that in when
Sylvia threatens to leave,
and then I burst into tears.

Well, you know, he says no,
but what the hell kind of dull
show is he putting on anyway?

- I don't know.

- Where we goin'? I thought
we were gonna go meet Nick.

[Cheech]

We have to go pick up Nick.

We're gonna pick up Nick? You never
said nothin' about picking him up.

- We just gotta meet him--

- I thought we were gonna
meet him at the club.

How come I have to wear those
dowdy, brown, ugly dresses?

I don't understand--

What are we doin' here?

I thought we were goin' to see Nick.

Yeah, we are.

Nick's got a surprise for ya.

- Nick's got a surprise for me?

- Yeah, come on.

Come with me. You're gonna really like
it. This cost Nick a lot of dough to--

- To do this for you. Come on.

- I don't-- I don't like this.

I don't like this, Cheech.

I can't understand why Nick has
a surprise for me in a warehouse.

He's not treatin' me
like a lady.

-He's got a moonlight cruise.

-A moonlight cruise? I don't understand.

- Just walk right over there.

Go ahead. He's over there.

- I don't--
- Just walk over there. Olive!
- Nickie?
- What?
- I think you should know this.
You're a horrible actress.
[Screaming]
- [Water Splashing]
- Everyone's in love
- Up a lazy river
- Thank God I don't have to hear
that voice anymore.
Up a lazy river
-[Chattering]
-[David] October 25. We open tomorrow.
Olive did not show up
for the run-through today.
We tried calling her,
but there was no answer.
It's possible her understudy might
have to do tomorrow's show.
- Listen to this.
The whole thing's comin' to life.
- Yeah.
- Maybe Olive's got stage fright.
Maybe she won't show.
- Not Olive.
That dame doesn't have
a nerve in her body.
I don't think her spinal cord
touches her brain.
- Oh, God. Listen to this.
- Yeah.
It's wonderful. Where's Cheech?
He'd know where she is.
- He didn't come around.
- Look, I'm in love with the understudy.
- [Chuckling]
- It's so natural. It's--
- Julian?
- Yeah?
- Did you hear about Olive?
- Oh, what now?
She got bumped off.

- What?
- Out at the docks.
A gangland hit.
- [Door Slamming]
- I wanna talk to you.
- Me?
- Yeah, you.
Hey, Joe.
Get lost for a while.
How could you?
How could you!
- Nobody's gonna ruin my play.
- Oh-- Your play?
- That's the second time
you called it your play.
- All right, our play.
- Didn't it cut you up inside
to hear her say it? Huh?
- We would've survived it!
Survived it? Is that what you want? When
we had a great thing, a thing of beauty?
But, Cheech! To...
[Whispering] ...kill her!
- She was a tramp.
- It's a free country.
- Then leave me alone.
- No, I will not leave you alone.
Didn't anybody ever teach you that
it's morally wrong, that it's a sin to--
Who am I talking to?
Jesus Christ!
- The part works better
with the understudy.
- That's not the point.
Let me see if I can explain this
to you in a way you'll understand.
Let's say she was ruining
the play-- which she was not.
She was diminishing it.
- She was ruining it.
- Let's say she was ruining the play.
- Does that mean
that she deserves to die?
- There was no way to fire her.

- What kind of inhuman monster are you?
- I think you'd better leave.
I don't think I will.
I think I'd better stay.
- You should be thanking me.
We're both in this together.
- No, we're not.
I didn't want her dead. See?
You understand what I'm saying?
I'm not in anything.
- You choose her over the show?
- Of course I do! Yes!
You think it's right some
tootsie walks in and messes up
a beautiful thing like this?
- I wanted a great play
as much as you did.
- No, not as much.
- But you don't kill for it!
- Yeah? Who says?
My father used to listen to the opera.
He loved the opera. But if a guy stunk--
- What, he killed him?
- One time, in Palermo.
I'm an artist too, not great
like you, but you know what?
First I'm a human being.
- I'm a decent, moral human being.
- What are you doin' with
Helen Sinclair then?
- What has that got to do
with it? How did you know?
- Everybody in town knows.
Except maybe your girlfriend.
Who you think you're foolin'?
I might not be perfect, but you're
a killer! You're a degenerate animal!
You're a murderer! You b--
You belong in the electric chair!
Listen to me, you.
You listen to me.
Nobody, nobody is gonna
ruin my work, you hear me?
Nobody, huh?

I've fallen in love
with Helen Sinclair...
and I lied to you about it
the other day, which I'm sure
that you probably knew.
I want to let you know I didn't mean
for this to happen. It just happened.
I'm not surprised.
She is extraordinary.
- So are you. It's me
that's all screwed up.
- I have a confession to make.
You knew the whole time,
but you were too damn decent
to confront me while I was--
No, I've been seeing
Sheldon Flender.
- Pa-Pa-Pardon me?
- We've been having an affair.
- Did you say Sheldon Flender?
- Yes, he's been in love
with me for a long time.
Do you know his theory that art
is relational, that it requires two--
the artist
and the audience?
- He feels that way about sex too.
- About-- About sex?
Yes, between the two right people,
it can become an art form.
Are you saying that you and
Flender have raised intercourse
to the level of an art form?
Not just intercourse.
Foreplay too.
- My friend, the unproduced playwright?
- He's been after me a long time.
You never seem to want to get married,
and so, one night we went out,
had a few drinks...
and started discussing art
and literature and Freud and Nietzsche.
And in order to illustrate
a point on Greek etymology...

I noticed he'd
unbuttoned his fly--
No, no, no, no! Please, please!
I don't need to hear any more.
But he's a major talent. You've
said so yourself a million times.
With an intellect that big, you tend
to create your own moral universe.
[Knocking]
- I just wanted to wish you good luck.
- Oh, darling.
You look pale.
No, no, not to worry.
Soon this town will belong to you.
We're having dinner Sunday night
with Gene O'Neill.
He's heard that your writing
is morbid and depressing.
He's dying to meet you.
- Oh, here's that brush.
- I know you'll be terrific tonight.
Oh! They're your words.
I'm just a vessel.
You fill me.
And this? This is
just the beginning.
I've been discussing all kinds of new
ideas for vehicles for me with my agent.
There's a variety of women
I can play. As you get to know me...
you'll see there's no limit
to my range.
They say that I can
still play late twenties...
but I say no, no,
thirty tops.
We'll go to my house
in the Vineyard. It's quiet there.
You can write.
I'll bring you coffee.
Listen, you better go.
I-I-It's 15 minutes to curtain.
I still haven't done
my breathing exercises yet.

Y-Y-You-- Fate.

Fate has thrown us together.

Merde.

[Gasps, Sighs]

[Gasps, Sighs]

[Dramatic Panting]

Take him.

Take him!

Let him leave me bereft,
without a penny. Go ahead. Take him.

But don't think it'll last forever.

The same thing'll happen to you.

Sylvia, I don't know
why you're so unhappy.

- Why you're such
a deeply unhappy person...

- Oh, God!

- but I want you to know that--

- Because you're taking my husband...
my life, the very core
of my being, you stupid idiot!

- I didn't ever mean to hurt you. I--

- [Footsteps]

Oh, Edgar.

- I've just been speaking
with Dr. Philips.

- Yes.

Her explicit instructions are
that we, none of us,
leave the premises as of today.

- [Horse Neighing]

- [Nick] How's she workin'?

[Man]

Good. Good, boss.

Out this morning.

- Cheech.

- What's up, Mr. V.?

Uh, nothin'.

I just wanted to talk.

- Yeah?

- I'm a little sad these days.

- Sure. Yeah.

- You know how it is.

Curtain's gone up already.

Poor kid.
Would've been a star,
don't you think?
Yeah. It's all right.
We'll take care of those Kustabeck guys.
- I wonder if it really was
the Kustabecks.
- Well, who else?
I don't know.
But we got some tips...
- that Charlie K. had
nothin' to do with this.
- Really.
Yeah. Don't make
no sense anyhow.
I mean, the way things
were coolin' off and all.
I'll see what I can find out
on the street, ya know?
- Where you rushin' off to?
- Hey, you know, I told
the guys in the show...
that I, uh, I'd stop by
and wish 'em good luck.
- I got friendly with
some of the stage hands.
- Did you?
- Yeah.
- That's unlike you.
- Why's that?
- Unless they shoot crap.
No, you know, you see
the same faces every day. You know.
Marty Bannister said he saw you pick
up Olive the night she got it, Cheech.
- Me?
- Didn't you tell me you didn't see her?
Me? Yeah,
I said I did.
I picked her up, and I dropped her off
a few blocks from the theater. Why?
- You had nothin' against Olive, did ya?
- Olive? Naw.
- I like Olive. Why?

- I mean, you got along well?
Olive and I, we got along good.
You know, Olive.
Olive was good for
a lot of laughs, right?
- Except for a few tiffs here and there?
- Right.
Olive's-- You know.
We got along.
How come you didn't bring her
to me at the club, Cheech?
She said you changed your mind, that
I should drop her off at the theater.
- The theater. At night?
- Yeah. Yeah.
There was no preview
that night, Cheech. No rehearsal.
Really?
How come you
left her alone, Cheech?
- [Laughs]
- And you didn't come
to the club and tell me?
I'm gonna level with you, all right?
I had a crap game.
I didn't want to miss it.
- Mmm.
- Yeah.
- Why you don't tell me?
- You wanna lay off?
I'm up to here in debts.
- I'm tryin' to get even.
- Yeah?
Yeah. Dice ain't been too lucky for me.
You know. You know how it is.
You keep tellin' me I gotta quit.
Ya know, I should.
- Cheech--
- Listen, listen.
I told the guys I'd wish them good luck
in the show. They're very superstitious.
I'm gonna find out who hit her,
all right? I'll find out.
All right.

I'll see ya later.

He did it, Nick.

I don't know what his grudge was.

Maybe they were

two-timin' ya.

- What are you sayin' to me?

- Take it easy, Nick.

It's only a guess.

But Marty Bannister saw them together...

and that pier is

Cheech's favorite spot.

Can't you see he was lyin', Nickie?

Did you see the look on his face?

- He was scared.

- Look, Nick, I know you
don't like to think it...

- but the gossip is, she
was runnin' around on ya.

- Don't say that!

- I'm only tryin' to help, Mr. V.

- Nickie.

He's only tryin'

to help.

Cheech and Olive.

Fix him.

Oh, it's goin' great.

Yeah, they're eating it up. Before,
I could smell money. Now I can taste it.

- [David] Mmm, yeah.

- Hey, what's the matter?

You look as though you're watchin'
a turkey. It's just the opposite.

- Where's Ellen?

- Oh, she was too nervous to come.

[Warner] This is

Dr. Emilene Philips, a family friend.

- Hey. How's it goin'?

- Cheech, how are ya?

Goin' great. Wonderful.

You need to cheer him up. I don't know.

- What's the matter?

- What do you want?

- It's goin' great, huh?

- You killed Olive, Cheech.

For that I can never
forgive you.
I don't care what kind of
genius you are.
Listen to that audience. Huh? They got
'em right in the palm of their hand.
Hey, Cheech. It's over for you.
You're finished.
[Eden] I had such
a wonderful time.
[Ellen] I can't live like this,
the same routine over and over.
You think the same thing's not gonna
happen to you as happened to me?
You think you're not gonna be here
sitting with a hole in your sweater...
and a drink in your hand
someday?
- Just wait!
- Cheech! You should be out front.
You're about to miss my great scene.
Did you see the first part?
- How did it go?
Do you think they like it?
- [Cheech] Great, great.
- Where's Cheech?
- Get the fuck outta here.
Get outta here.
- Sucker.
- [Play Dialogue
Continues Indistinctly]
- You crapped out for
the last time, Cheech.
- [Eden] I think he's--
I'm in the garden, Sylvia,
tending roses.
[Helen] Oh, darling,
if we just had a baby.
- That's all I think about.
- [Warner] We've been
through all this before.
[Panting]
Cheech! Cheech.
David.

- [Straining] The last line...

- Yes?

in the play.

Tell Sylvia Poston...

to say she's pregnant.

It'll be a great finish.

- Oh, God, that's so great.

- No. Don't speak.

Don't speak.

##

"A masterpiece."

"A theatrical stunner."

"A work of art

of the highest quality.

One of the greatest moments of this
reviewer's experience was in Act III...

when the Lieutenant returns
and confronts his mistress.

We hear distant gunshots,
which get louder and louder...

bringing the Lieutenant's twisted
military past and violent tendencies...
into bold bas-relief.

Writer-director David Shayne
is the find of the decade.

- Where is David?

- I don't know. I assumed he'd be here.

Flender!

Flender, wake up.

It's David Shayne.

I need

to talk to you.

Please, Flender.

Flender!

Ha-ha! Look who's here.

The big Broadway success.

I don't write hits.

My plays are art.

- They're written specifically
to go unproduced.

- Is Ellen there?

- No, she's not here.

- I think she is.

Congratulations

on your hit, David.

- I always knew ya had it in you.

- Yeah, well, you were wrong.

- I have to--

I have to ask you a question.

- What?

Did you love me as the artist
or as the man?

- Both.

- Well, what if it turned out
that I wasn't really an artist?

I could love a man if
he's not a real artist...

but I couldn't love an artist
if he's not a real man.

Th-This is all academic.

She's with me now. You're with me now.

- Do you really want to be with Flender?

- Yes.

- Hey! Flender is a great lover.

- Ohh.

- Hey, I slept with Flender.

He was just okay.

- [Ellen] Really?

[Flender] Rita, please!

What are you talking about?

That was years ago, during
your free-love period.

[Ellen] I feel it's relational.

For me, he's great.

Huh, interesting. Are you talking
pure mechanics or what?

- His technique is prodigious.

- [Flender] Prodigious?

- You're confusing sex and love.

- No, for me, love is very deep.

Sex only has to go
a few inches.

Y-You're all missing the point.

The point is, I can give
pleasure many times a day.

Oh, now really, Flender.

What has quantity got to do with it?

- Quantity affects quality.

- [David] Says who?
- Karl Marx.
- [Rita] Oh, so now
we're talking economics.
- Sex is economics.
- Bullshit. Ellen, come down here.
I wanna talk to you.
I love you. I wanna see you.
Come down here.
- All right.
- What do you mean "All right"?
What about me?
You're great, Flender, but it's no use.
I'll never get over David.
Couldn't you tell? Each time
I climaxed, I'd scream, "David! David!"
I thought you were saying,
"Do it! Do it!"
Flender, stop it.
Leave 'em alone.
Can't you see
they love each other?
I'm finished with it:
living in the garrets...
eating cheese and drinking wine
and analyzing art in coffee houses.
It's over.
I love you.
- I want us to get married.
We'll go back to Pittsburgh.
- But you're a success.
- You have a hit. Why the sudden change?
- We'll have kids.
- Because I've wasted too much
time already. I love you.
- But you're an artist.
No, I'm not.
I'm not.
I'll explain it all to you on
the train back to Pittsburgh.
There's two things of which I'm certain.
One is that I love you.
Two is that
I'm not an artist.

There, I said it,
and I feel free.
I'm not an artist.
- Will you marry me?
- Yes.
We're all alone, no chaperone
can get our number
The world's in slumber
Let's misbehave
There's something wild
about you, child
That's so contagious
Let's be outrageous
Let's misbehave
When Adam won Eve's hand
he wouldn't stand for teasin'
He didn't care about
those apples out of season
They say that spring
means just one thing
To little lovebirds
We're not above birds
Let's misbehave
[Singers Scatting]
Let's misbehave
[Scatting Continues]
Let's misbehave
If you'd be just so sweet and
only meet your fate, dear
'Twould be the great event
of 1928, dear
[Scatting]
Let's misbehave