Butterflies Are Free

By Leonard Gershe
"I knew the day you met me"
"I could love you if you let me"
"Though you touched my cheek and said how"
"easy you'd forget me"
"On that velvet morning"
"when our love was forming"
"I said it wouldn't hurt me"
"if you left me without warning"
I'm fine, thank you. How are you?
It's warm here.
How is it in Hillsborough?
Well, it's warm here, too.
Hello, Mother.
- How did you know?
- When you call, the phone doesn't ring.
It says,
"M" is for the million things she gave.
"O" is... I forgot what O is for.
You seemed to have forgotten
a lot of things lately.
- How are you feeling?
- I'm fine, thank you. How are you?
Very well. How's the weather?
It's warm here. How's it in Hillsborough?
- Warm.
- It's warm here, too.
- How's the apartment?
- Oh, great! I love it.
- What'd you do last night?
- Last night? I didn't do anything.
I mean, I didn't go out.
I had some friends in.
It was just a little party.
I don't know how many people there were.
Do you have to have a number?
- Twelve and a half. How's that?
- Did they stay late?
They didn't stay too late.
- I'd like to come by and see you.
- No!
Donnie, I'm coming into town
tomorrow, anyway.
- I have to go to Saks.
- I said no, and I mean it.
I don't give a damn, I said no.
Because we had an agreement, that's why.
We agreed to two months.
I have one month left
and I want every minute of it.
Donnie, you are so irritating.
I could absolutely cry.
What?
- What is that noise?
- It's coming from next door.
- Who lives next door?
- A girl.
What's her name?
I don't know. I haven't met her yet.
I can hardly hear you. Call me tomorrow.
Hey! Will you lower your television?
I can't hear you. Wait a minute.
Sorry. I couldn't hear you.
Please lower your television.
You don't have to turn it off.
Just hold it down.
It's not a television. It's a radio.
- Whatever. The walls are like paper.
- I know.
You can practically see through them.
No, not really.
Hey, how about a cup of coffee?
No, thank you. I just had some.
I meant for me.
Yeah, sure. Come on in.
Okay.
It's open.
Hi. I'm Jill Tanner.
- Don Baker.
- Would you mind zipping up my blouse?
I can't reach back there.
Hope you don't mind my inviting myself in.
Not at all. Water will be hot in a minute.
Your living room is much bigger than mine.
Nice.
- How long have you been here?
- A month. That's not the living room.
That's the whole apartment
plus the bathroom.
I've got three rooms,  
if you count the kitchen.  
God, you're neat.  
Everything's so tidy.  
It's easy when you haven't got anything.  
I don't have anything,  
but it manages to wind up...  
all over the place.  
I'm afraid I'm a slob.  
Oh, hey, I like your skylight.  
I don't have one.  
- What's this?  
- What?  
This thing on stilts.  
That's my bed.  
Your bed!  
Wow!  
This is wild!  
You like it?  
Oh, it's the greatest bed I've ever seen,  
and I've seen a lot of beds.  
Did you build it?  
No, some hippies lived here before me.  
They built it.  
Suppose you fall out?  
Gee, you could break something.  
You could break something  
falling out of any bed.  
That's true.  
I could've had your apartment.  
I took this one for the bed.  
Cream or sugar?  
Just black, thanks.  
- Here you go.  
- Thanks. This coffee will save my life.  
I bought flowers and dumb things  
like dishtowels, paper napkins...  
but I forgot coffee.  
You need any dishtowels or paper napkins?  
No.  
I got some light bulbs, too.  
May I ask you a personal question?  
Yeah, sure.  
- Why don't you want your mother here?
- How'd you know that?
Well, if you can hear me, I can hear you.
I guess the sound must come right up
from under that door.
What's that door for, anyway?
Your apartment and mine
were once one apartment.
When they converted it into two,
they just locked that instead of sealing it.
- You didn't answer my question.
- I forgot what you asked.
Why don't you want your mother here?
It's a long story.
No, it's a short story.
It's been going on for a long time.
She didn't want me to leave home.
She thinks I can't make it on my own.
Finally, we agreed letting me try it
for two months.
She's to keep away from me
for two months. I got a month to go.
Why did you tell her you had a party?
- You don't miss anything in there, do you?
- Very little.
I always tell her I had a party
or that I went to one.
She wouldn't understand...
why I'd rather be alone,
than keeping her and the cook company.
She's going to hate this place.
She hates it now without even seeing it.
She'll walk in and say,
"I could absolutely cry."
- Does she cry a lot?
- No, just threatens to.
If she really wants to cry,
send her in to look at my place.
At least you're neat.
You know, you're old enough to live alone.
I'm 19.
- How old are you?
- As far as my mother's concerned, I'm 11.
Going on 10.
We must have the same mother.
My mother would love for me to stay a child all my life so she won't age. She loves it when people say to her we look like sisters. And if they don't say it, she tells them. Have you got a job? No, but I play guitar and I got a few prospects. I know. I heard you last night. - Oh, I'm sorry. - No. It was good. Really! I thought it was a record till I kept hearing it over again. I can't read music, so I got to learn by ear. - I'm trying to put together an act. - And then what? I'll try to cash in on some of those ideas. I know one thing: I'm not going back to Hillsborough. - What's Hillsborough? - You don't know Hillsborough? I don't know much about any place up here. I'm from Los Angeles. I've never been north of the Big Sur. Hillsborough is about 10 miles from here. - Is that where you live? - No. - I live here. It's where I used to live. - All right. What did you say your name was? Jill Tanner. Technically, I guess I'm Mrs. Benson. I was married once, when I was 16. Sixteen? How long were you married? It seemed like weeks. Actually, it was six days. What was he like? I'm sorry. I really don't want to talk about it. Then, don't. I'm sorry I asked. No, I'll talk about him.
Once in a while you should do something... you don't want to do.
It cleanses the insides.
Jack was wild-looking.
Sort of adolescent.
Girls mature faster than boys, don't they?
Anyway, we met
and it was like fireworks, rockets.
Every day was like Fourth of July.
Then, we were standing
before the justice of the peace...
getting married.
- How long had you known him?
- I don't know, two or three weeks.
But there we were, getting married.
And I wasn't even out of high school yet.
And I had two exams the next day, and they were on my mind, too.
Then, I heard the justice of the peace say:
"Do you, Jack, take Jill to be your lawfully wedded wife?"
Can you imagine going through life as Jack and Jill?
And then, I heard him say:
"Till death do us part."
Suddenly, it became more like a funeral service then a wedding ceremony.
- Jesus!
- It was so morbid.
I hate anything morbid.
Why didn't you try to make your marriage work?
I did.
I did. I tried for six days.
- But I knew it was a mistake.
- Were you in love with him?
- In my way.
- What's your way?
I don't know.
Just because you love someone doesn't necessarily mean...
you want to spend
the rest of your life with them.
And Jack loved me.
I mean, he really loved me.
And I hurt him.
That's just what I can't stand.
I just never want to hurt anybody.
Marriage is a commitment, isn't it?
And I just can't be committed or involved.
Can you understand?
Yeah, I can understand, but I don't agree.
Well, then, you really don't understand.
I thought I was sloppy.
What do you mean?
Unless you know something I don't,
like ashes are good for the table.
Is that why you keep dropping them
on there?
Did you move the ashtray?
- It's right here. What, are you blind?
- Yes.
- What do you mean, "Yes"?
- I mean, yes, I'm blind.
Oh, you're putting me on. Don't do that.
No, I'm blind. I've always been blind.
You mean, really blind?
Not just nearsighted?
The works. I can't see a thing.
Oh, God! I hope I didn't say anything.
Wait a minute.
Don't get self-conscious about it. I'm not.
- Why didn't you tell me?
- I just did.
- But I mean, when I came in.
- You didn't ask me.
Why would I ask you?
I don't walk into somebody's house,

saying:
"Hi, I'm Jill Tanner. Are you blind?"
I don't meet someone and say,
"Don Baker. Blind as a bat."
I still think you should've told me.
I would've told you.
I wanted to see how long it'd take you
to catch on.
Oh, God!
When I saw you standing at the window all that time.
It's the coolest spot in the room.
I thought you were a peeping Tom.
That's what I call positive thinking.
You know, I nearly called the police.
Suppose I had?
Well, they would've locked you up.
You're so cool. So adjusted.
No, I'm not. I never had to adjust.
I was born blind.
It'd be different if I'd been able to see then went blind.
For me, blindness is normal.
I was 6 before I found out everybody else wasn't blind.
By then it didn't make any difference.
So, let's relax, okay?
You know, if we can have a few laughs, so much the better.
A few laughs?
About blindness?
No, not about blindness.
Can't you forget that?
Well, you're the first blind person I ever met.
Too bad they don't give out prizes for that.
I've seen blind men on the street, and everything, with dogs...
but why don't you have a dog?
They attract too much attention.
I'd rather do it myself.
Don't you have trouble getting around San Francisco?
- I mean, it's tough for me.
- No, I manage very well with my cane.
I know exactly how many steps to the laundry, drugstore, and delicatessen.
Where's the laundry? I need one.
Near the delicatessen.
Outside, turn right, and it's 44 steps from the front door.
- I didn't see it.
- I'll show you.
You'll show...
Wow!
What about your apartment?
Don't you bang into things?
  - You could hurt yourself.
  - No, I memorized the room.
Bed. Guitar.
Bathroom.
Jacket. My cane. Front door.
Bookcase.
Wine, glasses, chest of drawers.
  - Linens.
  - What are these books?
Braille. Dining table.
Bathtub.
Kitchen.
Sugar. Coffee.
  - Gee!
  - Now, if you'll just put the ashtray back.
Voila!
As long as you don't move anything
I'm as good as anybody else.
Better. I can't find anything in my place.
If you really want to see chaos,
come look at...
Oh, I'm sorry.
  - I meant...
  - I know what you mean.
I'm no different from anybody else,
except I don't see.
The blindness doesn't bother me
as much as other people's reaction.
If they'd only behave naturally.
Some people assume guilt,
which they can't...
because my mother
has that market cornered.
So, just be yourself.
Well, I always thought
that blind people were...
you know, kind of spooky.
But of course.
We sleep all day hanging upside-down
from the shower rod.
When it's dark we wake up
and fly in through people's windows.
That's why they say, "Blind as a bat."
No, I'm serious. Now be serious.
Don't blind people have a sixth sense?
No. If I had six senses,
I'd still only have five, wouldn't I?
And my other senses,
hearing, taste and touch...
might be a little more developed
than yours because I use them more.
I'll show you something.
Spin me around.
No, I mean really spin me.
- There's something in front of me.
- The window.
That's wild. How'd you do that?
- It's called shadow vision.
- What's shadow vision?
It's being able to sense that
there's a solid object in front of you.
You can feel it. It's a warning.
Sighted people can do it, too...
- but blind people can do it better.
- I want to try it.
Ouch! My...
There are advantages to being blind.
Oh, I think it's so great you're not bitter.
You don't seem to have
any bitterness at all.
I know I'd be terribly
bitter if I couldn't see.
- I know I'd be disagreeable.
- I doubt it.
Oh, no. I couldn't be cheerful like you.
I don't have any of those marvelous
qualities like courage and fortitude.
Well, neither do I.
I'm just naturally adorable.
You're a lot more than that.
You're a very superior person.
Oh, yeah. I'm fantastic.
"I would not go gentle into that good night"
"I would rage
against the dying of the light"
Dylan Thomas.
- Who?
- It's a line from a poem by Dylan Thomas.
It is?
You mean I can quote Dylan Thomas?
How about that? I never even read him.
I don't know where I learned it.
I can quote Mark Twain.
My favorite quotation is by Mark Twain.
- You want to hear it?
- Go.
"I only ask to be free."
"The butterflies are free."
"Mankind will surely not deny
to Harold Skimpole...
"what it concedes to the butterflies.'"
I identify strongly with butterflies.
Do you like it?
Yes, very much,
except it wasn't written by Mark Twain.
- Why not?
- It was written by Dickens.
- Are you sure?
- Yeah.
Harold Skimpole is a character
in Bleak House by Dickens.
Oh, I never read Dickens.
Actually, I never read Mark Twain either,
but I always thought he wrote that.
Have you read... Oh, God!
I have read Dickens
and I've read most of Mark Twain...
and stop falling apart at every word.
They're published in Braille.
It's awful to ask someone
who's blind if he's read something.
Not at all.
Actually, I read very well
with my fingertips.
Just ask me
if I've felt any good books lately.
- Does anybody ever read to you?
- Yeah, magazines and newspapers.
- Could I read to you sometime?
- If you feel like it.
- What kind of magazines do you like?
- Time, Newsweek, Berkeley Barb.
I like to know what's going on.
I should read those, too.
I never know what's going on.
- I guess I don't really care.
- Now, don't say that.
I mean, animals care, vegetables don't.
You have to care about something
or you're nothing.
Food.
- Food?
- I care about it deeply.
I'm hungry.
How about freedom?
You care about being free, don't you?
Freedom is the most important thing
in the world to me, after I've eaten.
- Help yourself.
- Okay. Thanks.
My appetite embarrasses me.
You have to know a lot about things
to care about them.
- I don't know much about anything.
- You don't like yourself very much, do you?
Why do you say that?
Because you're always
putting yourself down.
Let's say I know my limitations.
You have a lot more potential
than you give yourself credit for.
- Just keep telling me that.
- No, just keep telling yourself that.
"I knew the day you met me I could"
"love you if you let me"
"though you touched my cheek and said"
"how easy you'd forget me, you said"
"Butterflies are free"
"and so are we"
That's wild!
That's the song you sing all the time.
- You like it?
- I love it.
I wrote it.
I could never get those last lines right, but
I really like that thing about butterflies.
"Butterflies are free"
"and so are we"
Oh, that's fantastic.
I know a little bit about music.
I studied it in school.
- Did you finish school?
- I finished high school. Just.
My mother wanted me to go to college.
I was going to go to UCLA,
but I couldn't find a place to park.
- You ought to make a record, an album.
- Well, I'm waiting to be discovered.
Well, after you get discovered,
when you're playing somewhere...
are you going to dress like this?
I'd never really thought about it.
Something's wrong with my clothes?
They look as though your mother
bought them.
That bad?
Well, I guess it depends on
where you're playing.
I mean, they're fine
if you're going to play in a bank.
You ought to wear something
a little more liberated.
My mother does buy my clothes.
I'd love to pick out
something really wild for you.
- Like when?
- I don't know. Whenever you like.
- How about now?
- Right now?
- Yeah.
- Okay.
I don't have anything to do. Come on.
- Won't you take your cane?
- I'm going to take your arm.
- You can see, can't you?
- Oh, yeah.
Wait right there. I got to get my bag.
Be careful.
Forty-four. Hey, you're right.
It's 44 steps to the laundry.
What made you come here?
I wanted to try something different.
- Do you think you'll stay?
- I don't really think about it.
I'll see how it goes. I may be an actress.
I say, "I may." I'll know tomorrow.
I'm auditioning for a part in a new play
with a theater group...
called the Cosmic Workshop.
It's about a girl who gets all hung-up
when she marries a homosexual.
Originally, he was an alcoholic...
but homosexuals are very in
now in movies...
and books and plays, so they changed it.
Are you homosexual?
No, just blind.
- Careful, there's a step.
- Up or down?
Down!
One of my best friends is gay.
Dennis. He's a designer.
He's good, too.
He made this blouse for me.
I'm sure it's very pretty.
Actually, he made it for himself,
but I talked him out of it.
Dennis is so campy and funny.
But I don't like lesbians.
They're so heavy and humorless.
The director is my friend.
He thinks I can do the part.
- I just have to be approved by the author.
- Who's the director?
You wouldn't know him.
His name is Ralph Santori.
He's from L.A.
He's done a lot of little theater there...
but never had a hit...
so he came up here because he got a job with the Cosmic Workshop. We kind of made it together for a while, but then he wanted to get married... and I just couldn't face that again. Were you in love with him? I don't really think I've ever been in love with anybody. I don't want to be. It's too confining. Somebody always gets hurt. Hey, let's go in here. They've got wild things.
- There are steps.
- Up or down?
Up. I can't think of everything.
Hi.
- You need any help?
- No, thanks, we're just looking.
How about this?
- No, that's not for you, that's for Dennis.
- Well, it feels nice.
- I'll buy it.
- I'll buy it for you.
- No.
- Please, let me buy it for you.
- No.
- I really want to buy it for you.
Okay. Okay.
Here, hold this up.
Yeah, it's not bad.
Can't we do better than "not bad"?
Okay, wait.
Yeah. Try that on.
You can take my shirt, too.
Found anything yet?
- Don, this is Mr. Asparagus.
- Hi.
No, my name is Roy Stratton. The shop is called Asparagus. I named it that 'cause I always think of asparagus as being a friendly vegetable. I mean, you might see one potato, or one onion, or one corn... but you never see one asparagus.
They come in bunches. They're involved.

You never see one pea.

Well, I don't like peas.

Hey, this vest will look great with it.

Here, try it on.

Yeah.

Give me your other arm.

Okay.

Yeah, now, that's together. I like that.

Sweet.

I love it.

Does it look like an album cover?

Yeah.

Hey, but what you need is a hat.

Hats are big now.

What kind of hat?

Say, baby, we got everything here.

Over here.

How about a Confederate cap?

We sell a lot of these.

Yeah, I've seen a lot of them.

Now, I like this one.

What do you think?

No, I don't think so.

Oh, just a minute.

Hey, how about this?

A Tyrollean hat.

A Tyrollean hat?

Well.

Yeah, that looks good.

I like that. Take a look at yourself.

What do you think?

No. It makes me look like Heidi.

I got just the thing for you.

Now, it's one of a kind, if I can find it.

Here it is. How about that?

What is it?

It's a cap from the French Foreign Legion.

I love it.

Perfect fit.

Man, you were born with that hat on.

Hey, take a look at yourself.

In the mirror.

Hey, is he...
- Yes, he is. And stop whispering.
- Hey, I'm sorry. I didn't...
- Why, man? It's not your fault.
Don't make a big thing out of it. We don't.
- How much is the hat?
- It's on the house. A souvenir.
How much is it?
And the shirt, the vest, and Jill's blouse?
Hey, they've got the Berkeley Barb.
We'll take one of these, too.
Do you have any dirty books?
No.
Too bad. That's the only thing
they don't publish in Braille.
I guess it was the idea of someone blind
asking for dirty books.
You mean, it would've been all right
if I were sighted?
I don't know.
Anyway, you sure threw him into shock.
- What about you?
- Me?
I've been in shock since I met you.
Could you come out of it long enough
to have dinner with me tonight?
For dinner, I'd come out of a coma.
Are you sure we got enough for dinner?
Salami, coleslaw and potato salad.
All my favorites.
- Can I do something?
- Tablecloth in the chest of drawers.
- You can set the table.
- Let's not eat at the table.
Salami and potato salad and stuff,
that's not table food.
Let's eat on the floor and have a picnic.
I got a better idea.
- Let's go to the beach.
- The beach?
Yeah, I know a little stretch of sand
where hardly anybody ever goes.
- Where?
- Over there by the dining table.
- You can see better if you're blind.
- Oh, really?
Then how come you didn't notice
the tide came in?
I see a much better place.
- Where?
- By the bed.
Perfect.
- Is blindness hereditary?
- I never heard that.
- Can your father see?
- I doubt it. He's been dead for six years.
Till then
he didn't have any trouble, though.
- I bet you miss him.
- Yeah, I do.
He was the only friend I had
when I was growing up.
We were very close.
It's been rough on Mom since he died
because she's had to be both...
mother and father.
And sister and brother.
And doctor and lawyer,
and congressman, congresswoman.
Rabbi, priest, padre.
Oh, I'm sorry.
Do knives go on the left or the right?
- On the right.
- Okay.
Why were you born blind?
Did the doctor say why?
They said it was a virus in the womb,
which means they don't know.
You know, I heard that women
with syphilis give birth to blind babies.
Could your mother have had syphilis?
You meet her, then tell me what you think.
When will that be?
In a month.
I've got a month before she comes here
to see what's going on.
As the clock strikes month,
she's going to walk in that door.
You may have heard of her.
She wrote some books.
Her name's Florence Baker.
No, it's not familiar,
but you can't go by me.
I may even be quoting her
and I wouldn't know it.
She wrote a series of children's books.
Guess what they're about?
Children?
They were all about a blind kid
named Little Donnie Dark.
- Little Donnie Dark?
- That's me.
- You'll say anything to get attention.
- No, it's true, I swear.
I hate that name, Donnie.
Tell me when I hit the beach.
Stop!
This is the first time
I've eaten on the floor.
It's so practical.
You can sit in so many different positions.
You can even lie down, if you like.
Tables are so confining.
Like love?
Yes, and I never knew what to do
with my elbows.
Something is missing.
I know.
- Where are you going?
- You'll see.
Flowers.
I thought it would add
just a touch of elegance.
Now, tell me more
about Little Donnie Dark.
It might curb my appetite.
Donnie is 12 years old.
And he was born blind, like me...
but that's no handicap
for Little Donnie Dark.
He can drive cars. He flies planes
because his other faculties...
are so highly developed. He can hear
a bank being robbed a mile away.
He can smell the Communists
cooking a rebellious plot.
He's a diligent fighter of crime, injustice,
and at the end of every book...
as he is being given a medal
by the police or the FBI, he always says:
"There are none so blind
as those who will not see!"
I'm taking some more of your salami.
Since when do the police and the FBI
give out medals?
Since my mother says they do.
- Let's have a drink.
- All I've got is wine.
- That's all I drink.
- With salami?
With everything.
Do children really read those books?
I'm counting so I don't step in the picnic
on the way back.
You have just finished your salami.
Does she still write them?
No. She wrote six of them
when I was a kid.
They were no Mary Poppins,
but pretty popular unless you are blind.
They didn't exactly tell it like it is.
I guess they were a projection
of what she hoped I'd be.
Sort of a sightless superman.
Did you have to go to any special school
or anything?
I went to a regular school.
When I finished there...
nothing happened to me until a year ago.
What happened a year ago?
A family named Fletcher moved near us.
Their daughter Linda used to read to me.
She was the first close friend I had.
She was fantastic and wild.
She used to drive me here all the time
and take me to all kinds of parties.
Linda gave me something that nobody else
had thought to give me: confidence.
It changed my whole life.
She talked me into leaving home.
She found this apartment for me.
At first, I was scared to death.
But I did it.
- Maybe it was a mistake. I don't know.
- No. No, it wasn't.
You'd have to do it sometime.
What's happened to Linda?
She flipped for a painter we met at a party
and went to live with him in Mexico.
I wish she were here.
It would make it a lot easier.
Well, I'm here.
I'm right next door.
Anytime you need me, just knock.
You don't even have to knock.
You just have to whisper and I'll hear you.
Hey, you know what?
Why don't we open that door?
- Which door?
- That door to my apartment.
There must be a key.
Let's unlock it.
Then we can go back and forth
without having to run down the hall.
The janitor probably has a key,
but I don't think we ought to ask him.
- I don't think we should do that.
- Why not? We're friends, right?
Yeah, but we'd be practically
living together.
How would it look?
Who cares how it looks?
I can't see anyway.
I bet we can open it with this sharp knife.
- We'll have to move the chest.
- Okay. Move it towards you.
There. That's fine.
Damn it!
- Well, We'll have to call the janitor.
- Let me try.
You did it! It's open!
- Don't look! It's an absolute pigsty!
- I won't.
God, I'm sorry.
I'm sorry.
I'll get the hang of it.
I just don't know when.
Oh, let's leave it open.
Okay, but tell me if you close it,
so I don't break my nose.
Do you wish it were Linda living there
instead of me?
I hadn't thought about it. Why do you ask?
I just wondered
if you were still in love with her.
Did I say I was in love with her?
If I get too personal, tell me to shut up.
I get carried away.
Were you in love with her?
Are you?
I think every man should have
some mystery about him.
And that'll be mine.
- What's she like?
- She's very pretty.
How do you know?
I can feel a person's face
and get a good idea what they look like.
I can tell by shapes and textures.
- Do you wonder what I look like?
- Yes.
I'm gorgeous.
Are you really?
I wouldn't lie about something like that.
I've always thought if I could see for
half a minute then I could see how I look.
I'll tell you. Cute and very sexy.
Your hair's very soft.
It's very long.
Jesus!
- Oh, don't be frightened.
- What happened?
Nothing. It's called a fall.
It's a long piece of hair
you attach to your head.
- Not your hair?
- It's not even my fall.
I borrowed it from Susan Potter.
I do have my own hair.
See? I mean, feel.
Oh, God! Now what?
It's just an eyelash.
You don't have eyelashes?
Of course, but these just make
my eyes look bigger.
They're longer than mine.
Didn't Linda wear them?
No.
She probably had naturally long lashes.
I hate her.
Come on.
- This is scaring the hell out of me.
- Don't worry. It's all real from now on.
- Am I not the image of Elizabeth Taylor?
- I never felt Elizabeth Taylor.
We look exactly alike.
Especially if you can't see.
That's my breast.
All mine.
Both of them.
- What's wrong?
- What do you think is wrong?
I wouldn't ask if I knew.
Why are you doing this? What is it?
Be Kind to the Handicapped Week,
or something?
You've been feeling sorry for me
ever since you came in here this morning.
Take him shopping, show him a good time.
Get him into the sack
and that'll take care of my social work.
Thanks a lot, but don't patronize me.
Don't you feel sorry for me.
Well, let me tell you something, big mouth.
I don't do anything for anybody
I don't want to.
And I'll be goddamned
if I'll feel sorry for any guy...
who's going to go to bed with me.
"I knew the day you met me"
"I could love you if you let me"
"Though you touched my cheek and said how"
"easy you'd forget me you said"
"Butterflies are free"

Jill!
- I'm in here.
- What are you doing?
I'm looking for something.
Oh, here it is.

Good morning.
What've you done to your hair?
I just combed it.
- Well, I'll fix it.
- What's wrong with it?
It doesn't go with your new clothes.
I have a present for you.
It's in here.
- Beautiful wood.
- And mother-of-pearl.
I take this with me everywhere.
Everything that's important to me
is in here.
This is a piece of the moon or a star.
I found it in the desert
and I showed it to this geologist.
He said he'd never seen
any mineral like it on earth.
It probably fell from the moon or a star.
- It feels like a rock.
- Well, it isn't.
And this is one of my baby teeth.
Thank you.
And this is my birth certificate.
And this is a picture of me
when I was in The Mikado in high school.
- Oh, it's not very good, anyway.
- No, let me see it.
- You were chubbier then.
- Yeah.
Can you feel that? Oh, I believed you.
I always believe you.
And this is my last will and testament.
Your last will and testament?
And the instructions to my funeral.
My entire estate is to be divided equally...
among whoever are
my four closest friends when I die.
Names will be filled in later.
- I thought you didn't like anything morbid.
- But it isn't morbid.
That's the point.
Funerals don't have to be morbid.
I know just how I want mine.
In a big church...
and I want all the pews removed...
and nothing but big cushions
for people to lie around on.
And I don't want anybody dressed in black.
They should all be in gay, bright colors
and far-out clothes.
They should all be drinking or smoking pot
or whatever they want.
And I want Salvador Dal to paint the
walls with lots of groovy pictures.
And I want flowers.
Tons of flowers.
Not funeral wreaths.
Just tons of wild flowers
strewn everywhere.
And butterflies.
Yes, lots of butterflies.
And other animals can come, too.
I want music playing all the time.
And I want Neil Diamond to write me
a special memoriam and sing it.
I want the Stones to sing...
and Simon and Garfunkel
and the Vienna Boys' Choir.
And me.
Definitely you.
- What is so morbid about that?
- Nothing.
It's like being buried at Disneyland.
Here it is. A present for you.
- What is it?
- What does it feel like?
It feels like a necklace.
They're love beads.
I wore them when I was a hippie.
And I want you to have them.
They look groovy on you,
especially when I fix your hair.
Come on.
Sit right here.
- I don't want to look too wild.
- You won't look wild at all.
You'll look beautiful and romantic
like Lord Byron.
- What did he look like?
- I don't know.
God, I'm hungry.
- There are a couple of apples in the fridge.
- Good.
There's an awful lot of lettuce,
which is not what I'm dreaming of.
- There's only one apple.
- It's yours. I'm not hungry.
Now, relax. It won't hurt a bit.
- When were you a hippie?
- Years ago, when I was a kid.
I guess it was right after my marriage.
I used to hang around the Sunset Strip,
smoke pot, spit at the cops, the whole bit.
I only did it
because everybody else was doing it.
And then I stopped doing it
because everybody else was doing it.
I was losing my individuality.
But the main thing, of course,
was to protest against my mother...
which didn't work.
I walked in one day with long, stringy hair,
dirty sandals and freaky clothes...
and she loved it.
Then she comes in with long, stringy hair,
dirty sandals...
and freaky clothes.
How do you protest against somebody
who's doing the same thing you are, right?
So, then I went the other way
and I joined the Young Republicans.
Another mistake.
There's no such thing
as a young republican.
There. You look terrific.
- It doesn't look too wild?
- No. It doesn't look wild.
- It gives you charisma.
- Charisma?
Pizzazz! Star quality!
I mean, you don't even need talent
if you have charisma.
They'll line up for blocks to see you.
Wow.
You're beautiful.
You're a beautiful person inside and out.
Well, I like you, too.
Yesterday when I took your hand
and put it on my breast...
were you shocked?
Sort of.
So was I.
I don't mean from the standpoint
of morals or anything.
I was surprised to be feeling a girl's breast
when I wasn't expecting to.
I'd hate for you to think that I go around
putting men's hands on my breast.
No, I don't think you go around doing that.
Well, I don't.
I mean, if I want to go to bed with a guy
usually I have this little smile...
that lets him know I'm interested.
Oh, yeah? Smile that smile.
I want to feel it.
- That's it?
- No.
I can't do it now. You're making me laugh.
I'll do it later.
But I did have to use a different approach
with you, didn't I?
Anyway, I didn't want you to think
I was terrible.
I didn't.
I don't.
Oh, I hate talking about sex.
But I did want you to know
that last night you were...
You were really...
Like the Fourth of July?
Yeah. Like the Fourth of July.
And like Christmas.
- Where are you going?
- I thought I'd make some coffee.
Great. We'll have breakfast in bed.
- Hello, Mother.
- I'm glad I found you in, Donnie.
Jill, this is my mother.
Your mother? Have I been here a month?
Mother, this is Mrs. Benson.
- How do you do?
- How do you do, Mrs. Benson?
Are you living here, too?
No, I live next door.
I just came in for a cup of coffee yesterday.
- I had trouble zipping up my blouse.
- So I see.
Where is your blouse?
Now let me see,
it must be around here somewhere.
Oh, here it is.
You see, I have this long zipper
and it's hard to do up alone.
Here, put your things on.
Mother, what're you doing here?
We had an agreement.
I was in the neighborhood.
You were at Saks,
which is halfway across town.
I bought you some shirts...
and I thought you'd have them sooner
if I brought them myself.
I don't need any shirts.
You bought them as an excuse
to come down here.
Would you mind?
Thank you.
- And this is what you left home for?
- This is it.
- It isn't Buckingham Palace, is it?
- No, it's the Taj Mahal.

Is this where you eat, on the floor?
That happens to be a beach.

Where did this furniture come from?
Some of it came with the apartment.
The rest from a junk shop.

Don't tell me which is which.
Let me guess.

What in God's name is this?
I don't know what you're looking at.
I can't describe it.

It's my apartment.

Have you ever thought of hiring a maid, Mrs. Benson?
I can manage.

I might be sloppy, but not dirty. There's a difference between "sloppy" and "dirty."

I'm so glad to hear that.

Has this door always been open?
No. It's always been locked.

- What on earth is that?
- Now what are you looking at?
- That's what I'd like to know.
- It's your bed.
- It's my bed.
- Isn't it terrific?

You actually sleep up there?
- Like a baby.
- What happens if you fall out?
- I go to the ladder and climb up again.
- Where are your clothes?

In the bathroom.
- Where is the bathroom, under the bed?
- That's right.
- Wow! Were you ever right?
- About what?

She never had syphilis.
I'm surprised she had you.

How come you introduced me as Mrs. Benson?
It made you sound more important.
- What's she doing?
- Testing the plumbing.
She's a nut about plumbing.
How'd you know it was her?
When she came in she didn't make a sound.
Smell. It's called Numero Dix.
She uses half a bottle at a time.
And I always know when she's around.
It's like having a bell on a cat.
Now what's she doing?
Checking to see
if I've got enough socks and underwear.
She is gathering evidence to hit me with
and try to make me come home.
She's changed her tactics, though.
She should have walked in and said:
"I could absolutely cry."
- She'll say it.
- No. I know all her routines.
She'll say it. I'll make you a bet.
How about dinner tonight?
Now, if she doesn't say it, then I lose
and we eat in my place and I pay.
But if she says it, we eat here and you pay.
- Okay.
- Here she comes.
Well, that's some bathroom.
- No wonder you hide it under the bed.
- I thought you'd say something else.
I haven't finished. I haven't even started.
- Say it and get it over with.
- There's only one thing to say.
Perhaps it's a blessing
that you can't see what you're living in.
Mother, I count that blessing
every time I walk in the door.
Donnie, can I be honest?
- Can you?
- This is it.
I am shocked and appalled.
Oh, I lose.

- 7:
- Perfect.
There's no tub in your bathroom.
It's under the dining table.
I could absolutely cry.
You win! Are hamburgers all right?
Yeah. But at least two each.
I'm not talking about this rat hole, Donnie.
I'm talking about you, too.
Look at you. What's that on your head?
- French Foreign Legion cap.
- Have you enlisted?
No, I was drafted.
I'm not just talking about that.
You have lost weight.
I haven't.
I'm the perfect weight for my height.
- "6'1" and my age, 11.
- I'd just like to see what you're eating.
Why, there's nothing in here
but lettuce and an apple.
Where?
Behind the lettuce.
- See, I knew there was another one.
- Tell me, where is Mr. Benson?
- See, I knew there was another one.
- Tell me, where is Mr. Benson?
- Who's Mr. Benson?
- I assumed he was your husband.
Oh, you mean Jack. I don't know.
The last I saw him, he was outside
of the Hamburger Hamlet on the Strip.
- Why?
- I was curious about your marital status.
- I haven't any.
- Jill's divorced, Mother.
Well, how old are you, Mrs. Benson?
Nineteen.
Nineteen?
And you've already been married
and divorced?
Yeah.
How long were you married?
Six days.
And on the seventh day, you rested?
No, I split.
I got to change now. I have an audition.
- Audition for what?
- A play. At the Cosmic Workshop.
I was speaking to Mrs. Benson.
A play. At the Cosmic Workshop.
Then, you're an actress.
Well, yeah.
Might I have seen you in anything besides your underwear?
Not unless you went to Beverly Hills High School.
I was in The Mikado.
I played Yum-Yum.
I'm sure you did.
Does your mother know where you are?
Sure.
And does she approve of the way you're living?
What way am I living?
Mother, are you conducting some kind of survey?
You're asking for it, Donnie.
I'm sure Mrs. Benson doesn't mind answering a few questions.
- Do you, Mrs. Benson?
- I have this audition.
What does your father do?
- Which one?
- How many fathers have you?
Four. One real and three steps.
Your mother has been married four times?
So far. We live in Los Angeles.
Then you come from a broken home.
Several.
Why does your mother marry so often?
I don't know. I guess she likes it.
I mean, she likes getting married.
Obviously, she doesn't like being married.
Now, I think I'd better get started, okay?
Ciao!

- Don't forget:
- What happens at 7:30 here?
Jill and I are having dinner together.
- Just the two of us, alone.
Mrs. Benson?
- I think you've forgotten something.
- What is it?
Susan Potter's hair.
- I'm closing the door.
- I don't blame you.
- Did you have to be so goddamn rude?
- Was I rude?
All those questions.
Are you the attorney general
of Hillsborough?
I think I have a right to know something
about my son's friends.
Rights? Let's talk about my rights.
You're not supposed to be here
for another month.
Why'd you come today?
Since when do you speak to me like this?
Since when do you sneak into my room?
- I didn't. The door was unlocked.
- You could have knocked.
- I thought it was a raid.
- It should've been.
- Why don't you lock your door?
- Because until I knew my way around...
it was easier to let people come in.
But I assure you,
it will be locked from now on.
Well, I thought my coming here today
was going to be a nice surprise for you.
- If I knew I'd be treated like this...
- You'd have come anyway.
I'm glad I did.
My worst fears have been realized.
Thank heaven for that.
My worst fear was that
your worst fears wouldn't be realized.
Imagine if you came in here and liked it?
We'd have nothing to talk about.
Did you have to choose
such a sordid neighborhood?
To me, it looks just like Hillsborough.
I'd be terrified to live
with the type of people around here.
They've been nice to me.
I'll bet they have.
Yesterday you told me
you didn't even know Mrs. Benson's name.
That was yesterday.
Well, you certainly became friends
in a hurry, didn't you?
She's a very friendly girl.
Yes, I can see she is.
May I ask you a personal question?
No.
Have you slept with this girl?
I thought you'd never ask.
Yes, I have.
As if I didn't know.
If you know, why do you ask?
Now I know why you were so anxious
to have your own place.
I know you, Donnie.
You've got that Linda Fletcher look again.
You'll fall in love with this girl, too.
And if I do?
Does it bother you I'm heterosexual?
Mrs. Benson is not exactly the girl
a mother dreams of for her son.
I'm not interested
in the girl of your dreams.
She's got beady little eyes like a bird
and a figure like a flagpole.
You've described the girl of my dreams.
You can't see the difference
between good and bad. I can.
I can look into people's faces and eyes.
You can't.
I can see past their eyes, into their souls.
Let us not forget Little Donnie Dark
and all that vision.
I wish you did have some of that vision.
I'm sure you do, Mother.
Deep down haven't you always been
ashamed you produced a blind child?
There's nothing to be ashamed of.
Embarrassed, then?
You have never given me reason
to be embarrassed by you.
Come on in.
I hate to bother you.
What is it?
Just another zipper.
Hang in there. I think you're winning.
Thank you so much.
She'll be a big help to you.
She can't even dress herself.
- That's where I can help her.
- I have a wonderful idea:
You come home, I'll have your bed raised.
There's a ladder in the garage.
Nice try, Mother.
It just wouldn't be the same.
All right, if you insist on staying here,
I will not support you.
- What're you doing?
- Calling the Chronicle.
Florence Baker refuses
to help the handicapped.
- I'm serious, Donnie.
- Then I'll call The New York Times.
What are you going to do for money?
The little you saved must be gone now.
I can always walk along the streets
with a tin cup.
- Now you're embarrassing me.
- No, I'll keep away from Saks.
You just stop all this joking
and tell me what your plans are.
I plan to sing and play the guitar.
I'm pretty good. You said so yourself.
I had no idea you were planning
to make a career of it.
Have you any idea
of the competition you're facing?
I have just as good a chance
as anybody else.
Better. I have charisma.
May I ask how you arrived
at this brilliant decision?
It's elementary, my dear Mother,
by the simple process of elimination.
I made a long list of all the things
I couldn't do, like commercial airline pilot.
I doubt that TWA would be too pleased
of having me flying their planes...
nor United or Pan Am.
Photographer?
A definite out,
along with ball player and cab driver.
Matador?
Didn't strike me as too promising.
Honestly.
I considered becoming an eye doctor...
but that would just be a case
of the blind leading the blind.
That was a little joke, Mother.
I said it was little.
I suppose Linda Fletcher
put this guitar idea into your head.
You might say she was instrumental.
- Oh, boy!
- That was another joke.
You got to start laughing at something.
People are going to think you're a lesbian.
You certainly have picked up
some colorful language, haven't you?
- You learn everything down here.
- Yes. Well, I think, young man...
you have learned just about enough.
I hardly recognize my own son.
- What are you doing?
- What I should've done long ago.
- I'm taking you home.
- Forget it, Mother. There's no way.
- You cannot stay down here alone.
- I'm not alone. I have friends.
You haven't fooled me with these parties.
There are no parties. You have no friends.
- I have now. I have Mrs. Benson.
- You'd be better off with a Seeing Eye dog.
Not as much fun.
Besides, I got a Seeing Eye mother.
That's right and she's taking you home.
Mrs. Benson'll have to learn
how to dress herself.
- Put the suitcase away.
- You're coming home with me.
Give me that suitcase.
Where is it? Give it to me.
Give it to me.
Mom, now please stop worrying about me.
I'll be all right.
If the music doesn't work out,
I can always study law or technology.
There are lots of things
blind people can do today.
Now please, stop worrying.
Well, I got to go. Thanks for dropping by.
- Where are you going?
- Shopping.
I told you, I'm having dinner in tonight,
with Mrs. Benson.
Just the two of us alone.
- Well, I'll just wait here until you get back.
- I don't want you to wait.
Have a nice trip home,
and I'll call you tomorrow.
Now, please, I don't want
to smell you here when I get back.
And after dinner, I suppose an orgy.
I hope so.
At last the sinister truth is revealed:
Little Donnie Dark is just a dirty old man!
Mrs. Benson.
Yes?
Mrs. Benson, might I speak to you
for a moment, please?
I have an audition and
I should be leaving soon.
I don't know this town. I always get lost.
Don't worry,
I'll see that you get off in time.
Please, come in, sit down.
I thought we might have a little chat.
Just girls, together.
Can I get you coffee, tea?
No, thank you.
But if that apple is still there.
I'm sure it is.
Where's Don?
- Shopping.

You must be so careful to wash fruits and vegetables today, you know.
They spray those insecticides all over everything.
I'm not sure that the bugs aren't less harmful.
I like apples to be nice and shiny.
This reminds me of something.
What is it?
I have no idea.
You handing me the apple, nice and shiny.
I know. Snow White.
Remember when the witch brought her the poisoned apple?
I'm sorry.
I didn't mean that the way it sounded.
I know you're not a witch.
Of course not.
And I know you're not Snow White.
Yes, well.
I certainly have enjoyed our talk, and I wish I could stay longer...
but I do have my audition.
Listen, my car is right downstairs.
I'll drop you and we can talk on the way.
You're too kind, Mrs. Baker.
I wouldn't dream of imposing.
You're not imposing.
I'm free the whole afternoon.
No, thanks anyway.
I have to have my lunch first.
I'd love to take you to lunch.
I know the most wonderful restaurant.
They have the best food.
- No, thanks.
- Do you like lasagna?
Is the sky blue?
They make a lasagna with eight different cheeses...
and the sauce is a state secret.
How do you manage to keep your figure, Mrs. Benson?
I wish you'd stop calling me, Mrs. Benson.
That is your name, isn't it, Mrs. Benson?
But you don't say it as though you mean it.
I'm sorry. Suppose I call you, Jill.
That's more friendly.
I'll try to say it as though I mean it.

Now, Jill, you were telling me
about your childhood.
I was?
It must have been interesting,
having so many fathers.
Well, yes, actually, it was.
But why don't you get to the point,
Mrs. Baker?
I know what it is anyway.
You do?
Well, I know you didn't ask me
to lunch to discuss my childhood...
or to tell me how pretty I am.
I was interested to see...
what you and Donnie might have in common.
He likes you very much.
I like him very much.
He might even be
the most beautiful person I ever met.
Just imagine going through life
never seeing anything.
Not a flower, or a painting,
or even a Christmas card.
Wow! I want to die, but he wants to live.
I mean really live.
He can even kid about it.
Wow, he's fantastic.
Then you would want what's best for him,
wouldn't you?

Now we're getting to it.
I knew this lunch wasn't free.
Maybe I should ask him to leave
the apartment and go home with you?
He was happy at home
till Linda Fletcher...
filled him with ideas
about a place of his own.
Well, I think that you believe
that he can only be happy with you.
Well, there are none so blind
as those who will not see.
There! I can quote Dylan Thomas
and Little Donnie Dark.
You constantly astonish me.
Well, we women of the world do that.
It's funny how like Linda you are.
Donnie's certainly consistent with his girls.
- Oh, my goodness, it's after 3:00.
- I'll get the check. Waiter.
Waiter, please.
I hope you won't tell Donnie
that we had lunch together.
Okay, but if he asks, I won't lie.
He won't ask.
- Why do you call him, Donnie?
- Well, that's his name.
- Don't I say it as though I mean it?
- He hates being called, Donnie.
- He's never mentioned it.
- Of course he has. You just don't listen.
There are none so deaf as those
who will not hear.
You could make up a lot of those,
couldn't you?
There are none so lame
as those who will not walk.
There are none so thin
as those who will not eat.
Do you really honestly think that
it's a good idea for Donnie...
to live there alone?
Yes, I really honestly feel
it's a good idea for Don...
to live wherever he wants to.
Anyway, he's not alone.
I'm right next door.
For how long?
Do you have a lease on that apartment?
No.
Then you could move out tomorrow
if you wanted to.
That's right.
You couldn't sustain a marriage for more than six days, could you? 
My marriage doesn't concern you. 
It didn't concern you much either, did it? 
As a matter of fact, it did. 
Have you thought about what marriage to a blind boy might be like? 
Even your mother has not covered that territory. 
Just leave my mother out of this. 
I'm sorry. 
I didn't know you were so touchy about her. 
I'm not touchy about her. 
I don't want to talk about her. 
All right, we won't. We'll talk about you. 
You've seen Donnie at his best in that place that he's memorized. 
He's memorized how many steps to the drugstore, to the delicatessen. 
And you were probably very impressed by that. 
I've seen him in strange surroundings. 
He didn't know I was watching. 
I've seen him lost. I've seen him panic. 
He needs someone who'll stay with him and not just for six days. 
Stop worrying, Mrs. Baker. 
Nothing serious will develop between Don and me. 
- I'm not built that way. 
- Donnie is built that way. 
Oh, please. We're just having kicks. 
Kicks! That's how it started with Linda Fletcher. 
Donnie fell in love with her. 
He will with you, too. 
- Then what happens? 
- I don't know. 
Well, I do know. 
Stop it now before you hurt him. 
What about you? Aren't you hurting him? 
I can't. I can only irritate him. 
You can hurt him.
The longer you stay with him,
the harder it will be when...
Listen to me, let him come home with me.
Have kicks with someone
who won't feel them when you leave.
I'm not so sure you can't hurt him.
Maybe more than anybody.
I think you deserve all the credit you
can get for raising a marvelous guy.
But bringing up a son, even a blind one,
is not a lifetime occupation.
You don't know anything.
The more you help him,
the more you hurt him.
It was Linda Fletcher, not you,
who gave him what he needed most...
confidence in himself.
You're always dwelling on the negative...
always what he needs,
ever what he wants...
always what he can't do,
ever what he can.
What about his music?
Have you heard the songs he wrote?
I'll bet you didn't even know
he writes songs.
You might be dead right about me.
I'm not the ideal girl for Don,
but I know one thing...
neither are you!
And if I'm going to tell anybody
to go home...
it's going to be you, Mrs. Baker!
You, go home!
What are you doing?
I'm looking for some wax paper
to wrap this meat in.
- There is no wax paper, Mother.
- The meat looks terrible.
- Nobody asked you to look at it.
- What time is it?
Twenty of ten.
Twenty of ten?
I know. She is unreliable
and undependable. What else is new?

You did say 7:
Why don't you change your shirt?
Put on one of the new ones I bought you.
Because I like this one.
- You don't have to hang around, you know.
- I'll just wait here until she gets back.
I won't interfere with your orgy.
I told you that.
No, I told you that.
"I knew the day you met me"
"I could love you if you let me"
"Though you touched my cheek and"
"Said how easy you'd forget me"
"You said, butterflies are free"
Please, turn that off, Mom.
Is that the song you wrote?
Yeah. How'd you know I wrote that?
I didn't. I just asked you.
It's good. Pretty.
"On that velvet"
You mean it's pretty good.
No. I mean good and pretty.
Oh, wow!
Where do you suppose she is?
- She's probably still auditioning.
- For eight hours? I'm worried about her.
- You're worried about Jill?
- Aren't you?
Something's come over you.
You like my song,
now you're worried about Jill.
You haven't mentioned
my coming home for hours.
- Are you all right?
- Don't I seem all right?
No. You're not behaving like Super Mom.
- Then you'll be telling me you like Jill.
- I don't dislike her.
I just wish that she were
a different sort of girl.
She's a different girl.
That's what you don't like.
When I was her age, punctuality meant something.
What did it mean?
If I were going to be three hours late for dinner, I'd call and explain.
You'd never be three hours late.
- No, I certainly would not.
- You'd be a month early.
Maybe she's lost.
She said she always loses her way around San Francisco.
Any cab driver can bring her home.
  - She never said she loses her way around.
  - She said it to me.
If she said it to you, I'd have heard it.
Well, I guess it was after you went out.
  - Was she here while I was out?
  - It seems to me she was.
Why?
The usual, she wanted her dress zipped up.
  - You did that while I was here, Mother.
  - She dropped by.
  - She was here for a minute.
  - What'd you talk about?
  - I don't remember.
  - You remember she loses her way.
  - What else?
  - What does it matter?
  - If it doesn't matter, then tell me!
  - Donnie, please don't shout at me.
We talked about Snow White.
Snow White?
And the Seven Dwarfs? That Snow White?
Is there any other?
Why were you talking about her?
What's the difference if we were talking about Snow White?
We didn't say anything bad about her.
I don't want you talking to my friends when I'm not around.
I'll make a note of that.
Donnie?
Did Linda Fletcher give you confidence?
You know damn well what she gave me,
don't try to be funny.
I wasn't trying to be funny.
Did she also give you confidence?
Yes.
Didn't I?
You gave me help.
- I always thought one led to the other.
- Not necessarily.
Why didn't you ever tell me that you don't like to be called Donnie?
I told you a thousand times.
I'd certainly remember something.
I've heard a thousand times.
Well, maybe it was only 999.
- What's wrong with Donnie?
- It reminds me of Donnie Dark.
What's wrong with that?
You work on it.
What would you like to be called?
I'll try to remember.
Don. Donald.
You can call me, Sebastian, or Irving.
I don't care. Anything, but Donnie.
I'm certainly not going to call you Sebastian or Irving.
I'll try to remember to call you Don.
She's back.
She'll be here in a minute.
You can go, Mom.
- There's a man with her.
- Stop listening at the door.
I can't hear anything.
They must be in the living room.
There's a man with her.
Probably her radio.
Why would she be laughing and talking with a radio?
- Please come away from there.
- I am away from there.
- Come in.
- Hi. I'm back.
I brought Ralph Santori with me.
Mrs. Baker, you're still here.
Don, this is Ralph Santori.
I told you about him.
- He's directing the play.
- Glad to know you.
- Hi, Don.
- And this is Don's mother, Mrs. Baker.
How do you do, Mrs. Baker.
Don, I told Ralph all about you.
He's dying to meet you.
Jill told me, you know,
how with it you are.
How adept you are for someone who's,
for someone who can't see.
You can say blind, Ralph.
It's in my vocabulary, too.
I should have known.
You know, Jill told me.
- She said you had no hang-ups!
- Ralph, you don't have to shout.
Mr. Santori, my son is not deaf.
- Sorry.
- It happens all the time.
People think if you can't see,
you can't hear.
- He can hear better than we can.
- No, I can't.
And what a sense of smell.
- Can I fix you something before I leave?
- We already had dinner.
I wouldn't mind a little cup of coffee.
You were expected here for dinner, Jill.
- Don, I'm sorry.
- It's okay.
Everything's so beautiful.
Candles.
Our flowers.
Well, that's me for you.
I completely forgot.
We went to this party
to celebrate and we drank...
a bottle of champagne or whatever.
- It was sparkling burgundy.
- Then you got the part?
Yes and no. I'm not playing the wife.
- Are you playing the homosexual?
- No, his secretary.
It's a small part,
but I have one good scene.
She gave a great audition.
Man, was I proud of her.
- Were you nervous?
- Was I?
It wasn't the reading or anything,
but can you imagine...
having to stand there
in front of those people completely naked?
I'm sorry. I broke a cup.
Can I help you?
No, thank you. It's already broken.
- Sorry. How many coffees?
- I don't want any.
None for me.
Why did Jill have to be naked
for the audition?
There's a lot of nudity
involved in this play.
We had to see the actors bodies.
You see, the visual here is very important.
- I hope you don't mind my saying that.
- No, not at all.
How do you take your coffee, Mr. Santori?
Just black.
I don't think anyone could call me a prude.
I'd like to see them try.
Well, at first I hated the idea of getting
completely undressed...
but there were like 20 or 30 actors...
all around me, all naked,
and I was the only one with clothes on.
- How would you feel?
- Warm, all over.
I was out front with my writer
and my producer.
The minute we saw Jill naked,
we knew she wasn't right for the lead.
Tell me, Mr. Santori, is there any story
connected with this play...
or is that too much to hope for?
It's a very dramatic story, Mrs. Baker.
I die in the end.
Pneumonia?
Jill's scene will be the wildest thing
they've seen on any stage.
I can do this thing
better than anyone in the business.
She'll be lying there, naked...
dying of an overdose of heroin.
Now she's in agony and she's writhing
across the stage on her back...
delirious, screaming.
Do you think the public really needs this?
Are you kidding? They're dying for it.
I'm talking about the thinking public...
not all those little tight-arsed matrons
up in Hillsborough.
Have I said something wrong?
Pick anything, Mr. Santori.
Ralph, Mrs. Baker lives in Hillsborough.
Well.
Present company excepted.
Isn't that the rule?
I don't wish to be excepted, thank you.
Tell me, what is the name of your play?
It's called Do Unto Others.
I must make a note of that, too.
You might like it, Mrs. Baker,
if you just gave it a chance.
You know, saw it with an open mind.
Mom hasn't liked anything since
The Sound of Music.
I think we might be able to make it
without the support of Hillsborough.
Good.
Because I wouldn't count on the support
of this giddy little matron.
I don't intend to pay to see nudity,
obscenity and degeneracy.
These things are all a part of life.
I know, Mr. Santori.
So is diarrhea...
but I wouldn't classify it
as entertainment.
I think we'd better get going.
How long will it take you to get packed?
Not long. I only have two bags.
I'll pick up some food
while you're packing...
and I'll meet you at the car.
You going somewhere?
Didn't I tell you? I'm moving in with Ralph.
I thought I mentioned it.
No, you didn't.
Well, this place is so tacky.
- Ralph thought it'd be good if I moved in.
- It was your idea.
It doesn't matter whose idea it was,
it was a good one.
Ralph has a terrific studio apartment.
Wait till you see it.
We want you to come over,
whenever you like.
If you're alone, just come on over.
Right, Ralph?
Right.
I told you you'd like Don.
We'll have groovy times over there.
You'll love Ralph.
He's one of us.
I wish you could see him.
He has a great face.
Ralph, let Don feel your face.
He can tell what you look like
by feeling your face.
Go ahead, Don.
He doesn't want to.
Well, it's been great meeting you, Don.
See you soon, I hope.
It was nice meeting you, Mrs. Baker.
I apologize if I offended you.
That's all right, Mr. Santori.
I assure you it won't happen again.
I'll stop in to say goodbye before I leave.
Mom?
- Mom, are you here?
- Yes.
I have something I want to tell you.
Is it something awful?
No, you'll like it, but
you'd better sit down.
I'm sitting.
I want to go home.
You get the car and I'll pack.
- Did you hear me?
- Yes.
Why don't you say something?
I intend to.
I'm collecting my thoughts.
Well, do that while you get the car.
I won't be long.
Just a minute.
- I think we should talk about it.
- Talk about it?
Isn't that what you wanted?
Isn't that why you came here?
- Yes.
- Then what's to talk about?
You said it isn't Buckingham Palace.
You said I'm living in a rat hole.
And you said it's the Taj Mahal.
Are you saying
you don't want me to come home?
No.
I'm only saying we should talk about it.
Now put the bag down.
- I'm coming home, Mother!
- Put it down!
Please don't misunderstand me.
I think this place is dreadful.
I doubt I ever will.
But I didn't choose to live here. You did.
You couldn't wait to get
a place of your own.
You rushed into this, now you want out.
I think we should talk about it.
Isn't it funny how you and I
think exactly alike...
only never at the same time.
I can't make it, Mom.
I just know I'm not going to make it.
Why?
Because a girl has walked out on you?
- Two girls. Let's don't forget Linda.
- And it could be 10 girls.

Girls walk out on sighted men, too, you know.
Is that supposed to make me feel better?
It's supposed to make you stop feeling sorry for yourself.
You haven't felt sorry for yourself before, please don't start now.
You're going to meet so many girls.
One day you'll meet one who's capable of a permanent relationship.
Jill isn't. She knows this herself.
I really think that you're better off staying here for right now.
I don't want you coming home discouraged and defeated.
- You've got your music.
- Christ!
For once, will you get it into your head I'm not Little Donnie Dark?
You're goddamn right I'm discouraged.
I am defeated!
It's over.
Do you remember the first Donnie Dark story?
No.
You were five years old.
We were spending the summer at Lake Tahoe.
Dad took you into the lake.
It was first time you'd been in water deeper than your bathtub.
You were terrified. They could hear you screaming all over California.
Dad brought you in and I put you to bed.
You trembled for hours.
That night I told you a story about a blind boy...
who could swim the seas, and talk to dolphins.
The dolphins told him about the enemy submarines...
that were coming to destroy
the U.S. Navy...
and Donnie Dark swam ashore,
in time to save them.
A lot of crap.
The next day you learned to swim.
I didn't write those stories
hoping for a Pulitzer Prize in literature.
I wrote them because
I found a way to help.
Whenever you were discouraged,
I told you another story.
You tried a little harder,
and you did a little better.
Shall I make up a story now,
or are you man enough...
to handle the situation yourself?
A month ago,
you didn't think I was man enough.
You said I wasn't ready to leave home.
Why have you changed?
How do you know that I've changed?
You're not the boy
who left home a month ago.
I came down here today
hoping that you were.
You know, Donnie...
it's not easy to adjust...
to not being needed anymore.
I can do it now,
and you get on with your own life.
I'd like to see you have
some decent furniture.
Some dishes and some glasses.
I'll send some up.
Okay.
And linens.
Bigger ashtrays.
You know...
if you fix this place up,
it might not be so bad.
Could I help you fix it up a little?
Sure.
I'll call you in the morning
and We'll talk about it.
Mom?
I'm glad you came.
I love you, Don.
I know, Mom.
I know you do.
How are you doing?
I'll be right in.
Well, I guess I got everything.
I left my dishtowels and light bulbs
in the kitchen if you want them.
Thanks. I don't need them.
Let's not have any big good-byes
or anything.
- I'll be in touch with you.
- Can't you stay a minute?
Once I'm going somewhere
I like to get going, you know?
I'm the same way.
I was going to have
a corned beef sandwich on rye.
Do you want one?
Once I'm going, I like to get going...
unless somebody offers me
a corned beef sandwich on rye.
I locked the door from the inside.
Will you give the key to the janitor for me?
Sure.
I'm putting it here on the table.
You'd better have him lock up
that door again.
I'll wait and see who moves in.
It might be someone groovy.
Yeah, I hope so.
You want a beer?
Yeah.
- The candles are still lit.
- I'm very religious.
Where's Mama?
She went home.
What was the verdict?
She accepted
my declaration of independence.
- You're kidding?
- No.
I must say she put up a great battle. Maybe she should have won.
- Maybe you'd be better off at home.
- Now that's a switch.
- I've been thinking about it.
- Come on, girl.

It took me a day, and three pints of blood to convince my mother.
- I don't have to start on you.
- Well, I like to have things done for me.
Then give up Ralph and the play and move in with my mother.
- I'm out of mustard.
- I don't care.

What did you think of Ralph?

Where are you?
I'm on the sofa.
I couldn't tell where your voice was coming from.
- You always could before.
- I wasn't concentrating.
He seemed very nice.
- Who?
- Ralph.
You didn't like him.
- He seemed very nice.
- I could tell you didn't like him.
You were uptight.
I'm uptight when there's more than one person.
I have to figure out who's speaking.
- You didn't like him because he was rude.
- Was he rude?
Well, putting down Hillsborough and your mother.
That was an accident.
I'm sorry you think he's rude.
- I don't think he's rude.
- You said it, I didn't.
Or is there someone else here?
I know he comes off as a little conceited.
Tell me, Jill, do you like Ralph?
What kind of a question is that?
I'm moving in with him, why would I
move in with a guy I don't like?
That was my next question.
Well, I'd better be going.
- Ralph's waiting and...
- I guess I don't like Ralph.
- I knew it all along. But why?
- Like you said, he's rude and conceited.
I knew that's what you thought,
but he only seems that way.
I hoped that we could all be friends.
Did you really?
Well, thanks for the sandwich.
I'd better be going.
I'll tell you something:
You don't like Ralph Santori.
God!
I packed two bags,
so I can move in with him.
I don't care if you've got 13 trunks.
You don't like him.
You really are something.
You think because you're blind,
you see everything.
Right.
That sixth sense tells me
you don't like Ralph Santori.
- Spooky, isn't it?
- No, it's just stupid.
I packed two big bags,
sitting right over there.
Tell me, Jill, with Ralph is it
like the Fourth of July and Christmas?
Not exactly.
He has a kind of strength.
With him it's more like Labor Day.
Do you think he's a beautiful person, too?
- In many ways, yes.
- Do you love him?
Why should I answer that?
No matter what I say
you've made up your mind.
- Answer it. Do you love him?
- Yes, in my way.
Yesterday, you told me you couldn't love.
- That was yesterday.
- I'm not the worldliest person...
but when you rush into the arms
of the man you love...
you don't stop for a sandwich!
Was it something my mother said?
Was what something your mother said?
Why you're leaving?
The reason you didn't show up for dinner.
I know you didn't forget.
Is it something my mother said?
You don't listen to your mother,
why should I?
Then why are you leaving?
Don't give me that crap about loving Ralph.
I'm leaving because I want to leave.
I am free and I go when I want to go,
all right?
I thought it might have
something to do with me.
It has nothing whatsoever to do with you.
Okay.
You're scared to death
of becoming involved, aren't you?
I told you all about that.
That's right, you told me,
no responsibilities, no commitments.
It's just that I have to be able to get out,
if I get tired...
Of me?
- Of anybody.
- What if I got tired of you?
- Of me?
- Doesn't anyone ever get tired of you?
I don't know.
I don't hang around long enough
to find out.
With Ralph, you could walk out anytime
but it might be a harder on a blind guy.
- Blindness has nothing to do with it.
- You know goddamn well it has!
You wouldn't feel it walking out
on Ralph or Sebastian or Irving...
but walk out on Donnie, you'd hate
yourself and you wouldn't like that.
Well hate me or love me...
but don't leave because I'm blind.
And don't stay because I'm blind.
Who are Sebastian and Irving?
Nobody.
Sometimes I just don't understand you.
I mean, we really don't think alike.
I know I'd only hurt you, sooner or later.
I don't want to hurt you.
Why not?
You can do it to others.
Why am I an exception?
Well, I just don't want to be
another Linda Fletcher.
She hurt you, didn't she?
Yes, but she helped me, too.
She was there when I needed her.
I can't promise that.
I don't know where I'll be
when you need me.
Girl, you need me
a hell of a lot more than I need you.
I don't need anybody.
I never did and I never will.
I have to go now.
I'm glad you said have to, and not want to.
I finally said something right.
I'll be seeing you.
Yeah, be seeing you.
I'll think about you for years...
and wonder if you ever made
a commitment...
if you ever got involved.
I hope not.
Don't worry...
it won't happen.
It can't...
because you're emotionally retarded,
you know?
That's why you couldn't face marriage.
That's why you can't face
anything permanent.
You're afraid you'll fall in love with me...
and you're too adolescent
for that responsibility.
You're going to stay that way
the rest of your life, thinking you're free.
God, I feel sorry for you...
because you're crippled.
I'd rather be blind.
Taxi!
Hey, Jill!
Come on.
Who is it?
Who's there?
The news is good.
It's not your mother.
What are you doing here?
What are you doing on the floor?
I was about to have a picnic.
Without me?
I didn't know I had a choice.
You're going to be proud of me
when I tell you what happened.
What?
Shadow vision.
What do you mean?
Well, I can do it.
I just did it. It was incredible.
I came within one foot of this obstacle
and I stopped cold.
What was it, a lamppost?
No.
It was Ralph.
I have a confession to make.
I cheated just a little.
My eyes were open.
Well, it's about time.