

Just A Family Affair

by

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A Comedy in Three Acts

Setting :

Modern times, living room of Arthur Thigpen

Cast of Characters

In Order of Appearance

Arthur Thigpen

Harriet (Haddie) Zultan

Geoffrey Zultan

Carole

Stanley

Dr. Dorothy Thigpen

Angela

Mrs. King

Act I

Curtain opens with the sound of vaccuuming, Arthur Thigpen vaccuums himself out the door, buffet table is set up for party. Knock on door, enter Harriet (Haddie) Zultan who surveys the setup with hands on hips for a moment, goes over to buffet and starts eating grapes. She goes to couch with grapes and lies down, picks up magazine. Vacuum off, enter Arthur with party decorations for buffet, he notices grapes gone and looks around, goes back into the kitchen and comes back looking perplexed, Haddie is not readily visible to him. Phone rings.

ARTHUR: Hello, Dorothy! Where are you? ...oh yes, everything's under control... what time does Joanna's plane get in? ...already? I better light the coals now then...why do you say that? I don't think there's too much snow at all...Just the family, no surprises, nothing out of the ordinary....old times yeah....(little laugh) you're right...no, just bring yourself...okay dorothy, yep... see you soon...bye. (hangs up, in the meantime Harriet has gone around to the buffet and put the near empty grape bunch back and is standing directly behind Arthur. He hangs up, turns around and gasps.

ARTHUR: Harriet!

HARRIET: Hello, Arthur, did I surprise you?

ARTHUR: What are you doing here? I thought we decided you weren't coming over today?

HARRIET: I got lonely. Was that your ex on the phone?

ARTHUR: Just one day Haddie, you can be lonely for just one day, can't you? Go for a nice walk or something, take the dog out

and get some exercise.

HARRIET (goes to the couch): I don't have a dog. So what did your ex-wife want?

ARTHUR: Nothing, Look at this mess. I just finished vacuuming and now you've tracked mud all over. I don't have time for this.

HARRIET: I sometimes wonder why you two ever got divorced.

ARTHUR: Because she snores, what difference does it make, its over, its been over for years, now go home, please.

HARRIET: It doesn't sound that way from where I stand. Who did you say was coming today?

ARTHUR: Do you want to write this down? My two daughters and my son-in-law and that's the last thing I say on the subject. I still have the steaks to marinade for god's sake!

HARRIET: And your ex-wife Dorothy.

ARTHUR: I hope you realize you're doing this to yourself. Not me.

HARRIET: I don't think you should have invited her

ARTHUR: Why not?

HARRIET: It makes people wonder about your intentions.

ARTHUR: What people?

HARRIET: ME people.

ARTHUR: Very clever, Harriet, but you're not going to draw me into an argument. Joanna's plane landed 15 minutes ago and the whole works are due to arrive any second now and if there's one thing I know, it is that they are not gonna find you here.

HADDIE: (goes to plate of canapes): Is this the recipe that was in Chatelaine last month?

ARTHUR: (propelling her to door); Maybe you didn't hear me Harriet, read my lips; go home.

Harriet; Arthur, you're not going to like this.

ARTHUR (growing alarmed): we had an agreement.

HARRIET: I know we did.

ARTHUR: In both of our best interests.

HARRIET: Well, not really both. You see...

ARTHUR: I see nothing.

Harriet: You see, I think the time has come to re-evaluate the whole situation. Now listen... (sits).

ARTHUR: It's 4:30 Haddie! Don't sit down!

HARRIET: When we first met, you were still married...

ARTHUR: SEPARATED, in the process of getting a divorce.

HARRIET: That's right, and you told me that it would have been very (pause) unseemly, I think was the exact word you used, for your wife or children to find out about our love affair.

ARTHUR: My god.

HARRIET: I agreed at first, I'll grant you that, I mean whole years went by and you never even spoke to your wife, but lately things have changed. Now you even send her postcards when we go away together.

ARTHUR: Just once I did that, you'll never let me forget it.

HARRIET: I think the time has come for your EX wife and your GROWN-UP children to face the facts about us.

ARTHUR: What facts?

HARRIET: THE facts, Arthur, I want to meet them and I want them to meet me. Today is the perfect chance.

ARTHUR: But after all these years, they've gotten used to thinking of me in a certain way and that certain way doesn't include you, at least as far as they're concerned. It's so comfortable the way it is, why change it?

HARRIET: Because it's not comfortable for me.

ARTHUR: That about the support checks she sends?

HARRIET: Don't be a parasite, go back to work.

ARTHUR: I'm retired.

HARRIET: When Dorothy walks through that door, I want you to introduce me to her as your fiancée.

ARTHUR: I couldn't.

HARRIET: Why not?

ARTHUR: Well, we're not engaged for one thing.

HARRIET: And that brings me to the other point.

ARTHUR: But I'm very hard to live with, Harriet, demanding and chauvinistic and totally set in my ways.

HARRIET: In other words, the man of my dreams.

ARTHUR: you must be very easy to please.

HARRIET: I am.

ARTHUR: Tell you what. I'll think it all over very carefully (propelling her toward door). I'll even sleep on it and first thing in the morning we'll have coffee together and discuss the entire matter in depth. Thank you for understanding Haddie, you don't know how much I appreciate that. (hand on doorknob).

HARRIET: I was afraid you'd say that and so... my contingency plan.

ARTHUR: Contingency plan?

HARRIET: A compromise, see? (takes off coat and reveals a black & white maids uniform, takes his apron) I'm so good to you, what do you think?

ARTHUR: I'm appalled.

HARRIET: This way, you see, nobody gets embarrassed, there are no nasty little surprises. Your family gets used to seeing me here making myself at home, without any shocking emotional up-

heavals. Don't worry I'll stay totally in the background and be just as inconspicuous as I know how. I bet they even grow fond of me Arthur, the same way you did.

ARTHUR: I never knew you had this in you, Haddie. This is blackmail.

HARRIET: Don't exaggerate. You're making yourself all red in the face.

ARTHUR: I've got a heart condition Haddie.

HARRIET: No, you don't. By the way I've invited Geoffrey.

ARTHUR: Geoffrey! I can't even explain you, how can I explain your pain-in-the-ass son?

HARRIET: He thinks the world of you Arthur, that a thing to say.

(ding dong. Harriet opens the door.)

HARRIET: There you are. Hi, Geoffrey, come on in. (dog barking and growling)

GEOFFREY: Sitboy, sit, good boy, sit, sit, STAY.

ARTHUR: Not Dirty Harry, too.

GEOFFREY: Stay! (slams the door)

ARTHUR: Geoffrey! Talk to your mother, tell her she's insane!

GEOFFREY: (goofy laugh): Oh i've always known that. Remember when you used to get mad at dad and nail his socks to the floor?

ARTHUR: I'm starting to feel so anxious.

GEOFFREY: Dad used to say the same thing.

HARRIET: Never mind Geoffrey. Would you like to help Arthur with the barbecue out back, he's running a bit late.

GEOFFREY: Sure I can get it going in a minute. That's what I'm here for. Don't worry about a thing (exits and comes back) Can I borrow some mitts, kinda cold out there, you know.

HARRIET: On the porch. Isn't he a good boy?

ARTHUR: It looks like I'll have to grin and bear it.

GEOFFREY: (calling from offstage) Got any gasoline?

ARTHUR: Use the ~~STARTER~~ fluid!

Geoffrey: There's too much snow!

HARRIET: You'll thank me for this one day.

ARTHUR: I really don't think so.

(Ding Dong, enter Carole and Stanley with bag.)

CAROLE: Dad! Oh, it's so good to see you. You look so.... (Arthur has a fixed grin on his face)...terrible. Look at him, Stanley, what's the matter, don't you feel well?

ARTHUR: Very poorly, Carole, I'd hate to call everything off, your sister would be so disappointed but I just got the strangest... (almost swooning).

HARRIET: (making herself visible) I've seen this happen to lonely bachelors before, they get sickly one day and ~~die~~ unless they're lucky enough to find a woman to look after them.

ARTHUR: There! It's all gone now, funniest thing that... come in.

CAROLE: Well if you're sure now...

ARTHUR: How are you, Stanley, traffic?

STANLEY: You realize you've got a fairly vicious dog on your porch, don't you Arthur?

ARTHUR: Oh yes, I realize, never mind that, just make yourselves at home, I've still got a couple of things to attend to.

CAROLE: We can help.

HARRIET: Don't be silly, you're guests.

CAROLE: Who's that Dad?

ARTHUR: Oh, she's new.

HARRIET: Not that new.

ARTHUR: Oh, yes she is.

HARRIET: Still, I've been here long enough to hear all about your lovely family, and I just can't wait to meet Joanne and your mother. It is so important for broken families to make an effort to get along for the sake of the children. But then again you're not really children are you and little pretenses of affection between your mother and father probably seem ludicrous to you.

CAROLE: Pretenses of affection?

STANLEY: You know what that is don't you Carole?

ARTHUR: Why dont you take their coats Harriet and then we'll go see how the barbecue is coming along.

(Enter) Geoffry; I need another bag of charcoal.

ARTHUR: I had a full bag out there

GEOFFREY: Well, you don't anymore. I can go get some at the corner store if you like.

ARTHUR: You'd better.

GEOFFREY: Got any money? (Arthur gives him some, he exits) Did ya miss me? (to dog)

HARRIET: That's my son, you two will have lots to talk about.

STANLEY: I somehow doubt it.

ARTHUR (is at the door to backyard via kitchen): NOW, Harrie t. (Harriet flings coats on couch as they exit.) HARRIET: Just make yourselves at home.

(Stanley crosses to buffet, looks at grapes, picks up canape, goes to couch and lies down with magazine. Carole hangs up coats.)

STANLEY: I wonder what agency he found that one at.

CAROLE: Poor dad, he must be desperate. How do i look Stanley?

STANLEY (without looking up): Terrific.

CAROLE: Really? Do you really think so or are you just saying that?

STANLEY: Just saying what?

CAROLE: Never mind. I'm awfully nervous today.

STANLEY: What for? It's just your crazy sister and your mother and father for gods sake and the maid and the son and the dog.

CAROLE: Joanna always makes me feel so insecure.

STANLEY: She's good looking, so what, you've got other qualities.

CAROLE: Do I?

STANLEY: Sure.

CAROLE: Tell me what they are, I need reassurance.

STANLEY: You mean like right off the top of my head? Give me a break Carole.

CAROLE: Are you still mad that I talked you into coming here instead of watching that boring old super bowl game?

STANLEY growls at the audience.

CAROLE: I remember the first time you ever sat with me on this couch, do you?

STANLEY: You mean the time your sister walked in on us and ran screaming back to your father and we were married a week later?

CAROLE: That's not at all how it happened.

STANLEY: Hmmph.

CAROLE: It's not the same here with father living all alone.

The house seems so big and quiet and masculine, don't you think? I've got a secret fantasy about dad, can you guess what it is?

STANLEY: He starts a foster home for wayward teenage girls.

CAROLE: No, guess again.

STANLEY: He takes out a huge insurance policy, burns the house down, then collects and moves to Maui.

CAROLE: Nope, one more guess.

STANLEY: Your mother moves back.

CAROLE: How did you know?

STANLEY: I'm wildly intuitive. (looks at his watch) I wonder if the 3rd quarter has started yet.

CAROLE: Wouldn't that be the greatest? They were such a wonderful couple.

STANLEY: They fought like cats and dogs, what are you talking about?

CAROLE: That's passion.

STANLEY: Oh and I always thought passion was like what happened the night you got drunk on Amaretto, 2½ years ago.

CAROLE: I want you to forget that night ever happened.

STANLEY: It was your greatest hour, Carole.

CAROLE: I said, please don't talk about it anymore.

STANLEY: T V's still in the den isn't it? I think I'll go check the score, just give me a call when dinner's ready.

CAROLE: This is a party.

STANLEY: No problem, just give me a call (he exits to den.)

CAROLE: Oh thanks a lot Stanley. I really appreciate that! You're really a great guy!

enter GEOFFREY: ^{Ah} You're pretty nice yourself, you know.

CAROLE: I'm not talking to you! (exits to bedrooms)

GEOFFREY: Oh really? (he looks around the empty room)

(ding dong GEOFFREY exits to kitchen) There's somebody at the door.
(Enter Harriet to answer the door, Arthur comes rushing in just before she reaches it and pulls her back and shoves her into kitchen.)

ARTHUR (opens door): Dorothy, come in, how are you? traffic?

DOROTHY: Arthur, come and give me a hug. It's nice to see you again.

ARTHUR: You look wonderful.

DOROTHY: Thank you... Arthur, tell me something, why do you have a bull dog on your front steps?

ARTHUR: Circumstances beyond my control.

enter GEOFFREY: Mum wants to know where the remote control is for the TV in the kitchen.

ARTHUR: Tell your mother she can turn it off and finish making that salad!

exit Geoffrey.

DOROTHY: Who's that?

ARTHUR: I'll explain later. How have you been Dorothy?

DOROTHY: I have been so busy. I can hardly keep up with things. I usually work Sundays but I had to cancel my last 2 patients to be able to make it today. Oh I'll hear all about it, (rubs forehead) they become so resentful. I try not to let them down like this but neurotics have to deal with the real world too. Let them consider this a learning experience. I can't ignore my private life all the time and I know how important it was to you that I come. you don't look well Arthur, what's the matter, didn't you get my last check?

ARTHUR: Oh yes, I got it. You don't have to do that, you know.

DOROTHY: We've been through this before. You put me through school and not long after that I left you. Now I feel I have to be fair. I don't need a lawyer to tell me that. After all I have to live with myself. One day the checks may stop but for now, Arthur, just enjoy. Where's my fern?

ARTHUR: It died.

DOROTHY: It was so healthy!

ARTHUR: Well, it committed suicide when I stopped watering it.

DOROTHY: You still have underlying feelings of hostility for me, I see.

ARTHUR: No, just ferns.

Enter CAROLE: Hi mom.

DOROTHY: Carole, there you are. Come and give me a hug, don't mess my hair, that's a girl. I bet you're looking forward to seeing your sister again. Isn't she something travelling all through Europe by herself?

CAROLE: I've been sick with worry that her plane was gonna crash.

DOROTHY: It's already landed and she should be going through customs right now.

CAROLE: That's a relief, as long as there are no terrorists in the airport.

DOROTHY: You're so morbid, Carole, not like your sister at all.

(Enter Geoffrey with bowl, goes to outside door.)

ARTHUR: That's my good salad bowl!

GEOFFREY: It's just water. (exits kitchen)

CAROLE: When Joanna gets here mother would you do me a favor and try not to compare us all the time?

DOROTHY: You're slouching, Carole, stand up straight, that's it. Now, what are you saying? I don't compare you do I?

CAROLE: Yes, you do, all the time.

DOROTHY: (gets out notebook): Interesting, now how long have **you** had these feelings of sibling rivalry?

CAROLE: Are you taking notes for a reason?

DOROTHY: I won't if it makes you nervous.

CAROLE: Of course it makes me nervous, you're my mother.

DOROTHY: Do you hear this Arthur? So, where's your husband?

CAROLE: He's watching the game in the den.

DOROTHY: Good. Believe it or not, I approve and if he makes you happy, well, that's even better.

CAROLE: Well...

DOROTHY: Did you make that dress, Carole?

CAROLE: Yes. Do you like it?

DOROTHY: Of course I do. I like ever ything you make, but I want you to look extra nice for your sister's homecoming. Here try this on.

CAROLE: It took me 2 weeks to decide on the pattern. The material cost \$30. I had to put the zipper in twice.

DOROTHY: But it has buttons.

CAROLE: Well it does now.

DOROTHY: Why don't you just run and change into this new one and show your father how nice you look.

CAROLE: What if it doesn't fit?

DOROTHY: I'm sure it will fit. It might need ironing though.

CAROLE: Oh that's okay, dad's got a maid now, I'll get her to do it.

enter HARRIET: I don't iron.

ARTHUR: Oh, no.

DOROTHY: What do I see? Tell me you're joking, Arthur.

HARRIET: Go ahead, Arthur, tell her.

DOROTHY: Is this what you spend my hard-earned money on? I don't even have a maid, Arthur. It's so decadent. (pause) Of course, there's no strings attached and certainly you can spend it on whatever you like.

ARTHUR: Oh, don't worry about that. I pay her very little.

CAROLE: I don't mind ironing this myself, really.

HARRIET: Good idea, the iron's in the closet.

(Exit Carole through bedroom door.)

DOROTHY (circling Harriet): Well, tell me about it Arthur. This is so out of character for you. But then again I suppose I can understand. It is one way of dealing with loneliness. Another human being to fill the empty spaces. A poor imitation of the real thing, though. I'm sorry I snapped at you. I had no idea of what you must be going through. Forgiven?

ARTHUR: Nothing to forgive Dorothy, don't be silly. You've got the wrong idea. I haven't been lonely, I mean...

HARRIET: I suppose I'll have to introduce myself.

ARTHUR: I'll do it. This is my wife, I mean ex-wife...

HARRIET: Of course, Mrs. Thigpen.

DOROTHY: That's Dr. Thigpen, I'm a psychiatrist.

HARRIET: Well, that must come in handy.

Enter CAROLE (with dress & iron): Excuse me, where's the ironing board?

HARRIET: Look in the closet.

CAROLE: I've already looked there.

HARRIET: Well, look on the porch then.

Exit Carole through kitchen door.

DOROTHY: And your name?

HARRIET: My name is Mrs. Harriet Zultan and...

Enter GEOFFREY (with beer can): Did you know you were out of cold beer Mr. Thigpen? Taste this. It's lukewarm.

HARRIET: I told you last night to put the beer in the fridge, Arthur.

ARTHUR: Get in the kitchen!

GEOFFREY (pulls can back): On second thought, you better not.

Never know what's going around these days. (he exits)

HARRIET: That's my son.

DOROTHY: An only child?

HARRIET: Yes.

DOROTHY: Thank God. Now I've got an idea. Why don't you take this cheesecake and put it in the fridge. Do you think you can take care of that?

HARRIET: I love cheesecake. What kind of topping does it have?

DOROTHY: Kiwi. You see, Arthur, I remembered.

HARRIET: Hmmph. Cherry's not good enough I guess. Never had kiwi before. (she exits through kitchen)

DOROTHY: A compulsive eater, I'll bet. Well she'd better keep her fingers off that cake. And be careful Arthur, those 2 look like just the sort to drag you off to Labor Relations one day. Is Geoffrey salaried?

ARTHUR: No!

DOROTHY: That looks bad. You'd better at least give him minimum wage.

ARTHUR: I'm not paying anybody minimum wage to drink my beer.

Enter CAROLE: I've got the iron heating up so don't let me forget. Gee it's so good to see you both again. It's like the old days before you 2 got divorced and I married Stanley.

DOROTHY: She's a romantic, just like you Arthur. Now don't let that iron get too hot or you'll scorch it.

CAROLE: Joanna's late, isn't she? I wonder if something happened to her after all?

ARTHUR: She's always late. Is she bringing that Roberto fellow she wrote about?

CAROLE: You mean the count?

ARTHUR: She wrote me that he was a millionaire.

DOROTHY: Whatever he was, she's left him in Amsterdam.

(Ding Dong) That must be her and don't you feel foolish now being caught in your bathrobe, if you'd gone when I'd told you. (opens door) Joanna! How beautiful!

enter JOANNA: This is the craziest thing. (to offstage) You got my number? Okay. Oh look at that he likes you, don't let him lick. Ciao. I went to grade school with that guy. I haven't seen him in 20 years. He's gorgeous.

DOROTHY: We've missed you so much.

ARTHUR: Who's out there?

CAROLE: I think it's the cab driver dad.

JOANNA: I am totally exhausted. Talk about jet lag. Have you ever had jet lag, Carole?

CAROLE: No, just bus lag.

JOANNA: The food on that airplane. I don't even want to talk about how bad it was. Did anybody miss me? (on couch, legs stretched out). Come on everybody I'm waiting for a hug. You know it almost feels good to be home again. Look at this place, it hasn't changed a bit. (Arthur and Dorothy sit on either side of her)

ARTHUR: I just hope you're too tired, I mean, not too tired, for the party I've planned, Jo.

JOANNA: Tomorrow would have been better but what the hell we might as well get it over with. So...Here I am...I got so much to tell you, I don't know where to begin. (struggling to get her boots off) When did you get that hideous dog? Carole, do you mind? (Carole helps her with boots) How's whats-his-name?

CAROLE: You mean Stanley? He's fine, why do you ask?

JOANNA: Just idle curiosity.

ARTHUR: How's Roberto?

JOANNA: What a jerk. Mother wait till you hear about him. (she goes to get shoes out of bag.)

DOROTHY: You've got to break out of that syndrome, Jo.

ARTHUR: What syndrome?

CAROLE: Going out with jerks.

JOANNA: He was married, can you buy that?

CAROLE: Didn't you know before you started going out with him?
Enter Harriet dusting.

JOANNA: He was separated from his wife, how was I supposed to know. The creep.

DOROTHY: Now you see why your father and I tried to instill some values in you.

JOANNA: Look at you two. I could take a picture of you just the way you are and it would be like 10 years ago. Nobody would ever know the difference.

HARRIET: Something smells hot around here.

CAROLE: The iron! (runs out)

JOANNA: Carole hasn't changed a bit, has she? And that bathrobe has got to be from the year one.

DOROTHY: You're not gonna believe this Joanna, but your father has hired a maid.

JOANNA: Good. I was afraid this was gonna be one of those pitch in and help parties. (goes to buffet)

HARRIET: Don't expect too much.

ARTHUR (to Harriet): Can't you find something to do?

HARRIET: Sure, those cushions you're sitting on need fluffing.

DOROTHY: Right now?

HARRIET: Would you rather that I wait?

DOROTHY: Yes I would.

HARRIET: ALL right, I can wait. (crosses her arms and waits)

ARTHUR: Oh boy. Come and have a bite to eat, Dorothy, look at this (leads her to buffet).

JOANNA: Mmmmm, this is pretty good.

(Dorothy picks up empty grape stem and hands it to Arthur who hands it to Harriet who eats the last grape and puts it back.)

HARRIET: Glad you like it, that's my special liver pate.

JOANNA: It tastes like crabmeat.

ARTHUR: It is crabmeat.

HARRIET: Okay, picky people, call it crab liver then.

JOANNA (puts the 2nd one back): I always thought crab liver was poisonous.

HARRIET: What's the matter, you got allergies?

ARTHUR: Have you finished making that salad?

HARRIET: You know you're very bossy. (Goes to door and retrieves bowl)

DOROTHY: I realize this is inconvenient, but I've got a few calls I have to make. Can you save all the talk till I get back? I don't want to miss anything. Why don't you go freshen up, Joanna, and then I think your father's got a barbecue planned.

JOANNA: In January? You're nuts, you know that? But I love it.

Can somebody get the rest of my bags? (exits)

HARRIET: Sure. (pause) Well get Stanley to do it.

DOROTHY: Do you mind being left all alone for a little while Arthur?

HARRIET: What am I, chopped liver?

ARTHUR: Oh no problem, Dorothy, make yourself at home. The

other phone is in the den.

DOROTHY: Oh, I haven't forgotten. How could I after all the years you and I lived here together. Isn't it funny how much the girls want us to get back together?

ARTHUR: Very funny. (Harriet laughs).

DOROTHY: It's not a bad idea, of course it would never work, but you know I still feel so nostalgic when I come here. I would have thought those feelings would have been dead and buried by now.

HARRIET: Well get a shovel and start digging.

DOROTHY: Now look here Harriet.

ARTHUR: Come Dorothy (leading her to den) make your calls. There should be some paper and pens on the desk.

DOROTHY (exits through den door): I won't be long.

ARTHUR (advances on Haddie): What happened to staying in the background, hmm? What happened to inconspicuous, what happened to quiet, what happened to nice?!

HARRIET: Oh Arthur, you're mad at me. I can't believe it, our first fight in 5 years.

ARTHUR: This is not our first fight but it could well be our last. I am finding this extremely hard to deal with.

HARRIET: I'll be good from now on. I promise. Don't get upset, you won't even know I'm here.

ARTHUR: That's what you said before.

HARRIET: I mean it this time.

ARTHUR: No more catty remarks?

HARRIET: None I swear. (pause) An angel in disguise, I promise. (pause) Do you want me to get out the party hats now?

ARTHUR: No, it's too early.

Enter DOROTHY (leading Stanley by the arm): You're a man Stanley, you should know by now how to deal with minor disappointments.

STANLEY: It's a tie score with 15 minutes to go. I've got money on this game.

DOROTHY: Game! There's the operative word. Is it fair to ask my patients to put their anguish aside while I wait for your 'game' to end?

STANLEY: Who cares about a bunch of nuts, I'm talking SUPER BOWL here!

HARRIET: You tell her Stanley!

DOROTHY: Your subconscious prejudices are showing Stanley. Try to control them. After all your subconscious holds the key to a healthy mind.

STANLEY: I'll let you know when I need an appointment.

DOROTHY: Well don't wait till the last minute. I'm booked solid for the next 6 months. There's Joanna's bags, do you mind?

(They exit out respective doors, Stanley with bags)

HARRIET: You know there's something weird about your family. Have you ever noticed that?

ARTHUR: With a son like Geoffrey, I wouldn't talk.

Ding dong.

enter ANGELA (with motorcycle helmet, dressed punk): Hi! Wow. Is that bike ever fast. Lucky I didn't see any cops.

(Haddie and Arthur are stunned)

HARRIET: yes, lucky.

ANGELA: Hey, I love your outfit.

HARRIET: This old thing?

ARTHUR: Who the hell are you?

ANGELA: Angela.

ARTHUR: I'm afraid you have the wrong house, Angela.

ANGELA: Oh no I don't. 22 Quebec Drive, says right here.

Didn't Dr. Thigpen tell you I was coming?

ARTHUR: No.

ANGELA: I'm her new receptionist, you know, girl friday, kind of thing?

ARTHUR: I don't know anything at all about any of this.

ANGELA: Well, she wanted me to deliver the present she got for her daughter. The one that just got back from Europe.

HARRIET: Do you wanna ask or should I?

ANGELA: Hey, have I made a mistake here? Are you Mr. Thigpen or what?

ARTHUR: Or what. I mean yes. And what present are you talking about?

ANGELA: The motorcycle, what else?

HARRIET: What else? So you're the receptionist? (goes to buffet for canape and then couch)

ANGELA: Yeah, I answer the phone and say hi to the crazies when they come in and I'm learning how to type and stuff but that's not the real fun part. Mind if I come in, this dog...? (closes door) There's . Now what was I saying?

ARTHUR: The real fun part?

ANGELA: Oh yeah, the real fun part, for me that is, is meeting all them crazies and seeing what she does to their minds and sometimes when they're waiting for their appointment I have a little talk with them myself just to stir things up a bit. I got kind of a knack for it I think. People open up to me. Where's Dr. Thigpen anyway?

HARRIET: She's yakking away on the phone right now, with some of the crazies.

ARTHUR: Haddie, why don't you take Angela's coat while she's waiting.

HARRIET: I just sat down.

ANGELA: NO, no don't get up. Here you ^{can} ~~take~~ it, you're not doing anything.

ARTHUR: Why didn't I think of that? (hangs up coats)

Enter GEOFFREY: Mr. Thigpen, did you want the picnic table shovelled off?

ARTHUR: No! I mean yes... Oh I don't know (they exit)

ANGELA: Well, he sounds confused. I've seen that before.

It's not a good sign.

HARRIET: I love him, Angela.

ANGELA: Oh really? (to Buffet) Hm, this looks pretty fancy.

HARRIET: I don't know what to do.

ANGELA: You don't mind if I help myself here?

HARRIET: He's afraid to make a commitment to me.

ANGELA: Why don't you tell him you're pregnant? (pause) Really, it'll either work right away or it won't work at all.

HARRIET: In my case it wouldn't work at all.

ANGELA: Well, it is worth a try.

Enter Carole with dress on, iron and robe in hand.

CAROLE: Dad wants to talk to you Harriet, he's out by the barbecue?

HARRIET: Every time I get comfortable..(gets her scarf) That man is so demanding. Do you know that about your father, Carole? He can't function without a woman around to do his bidding

CAROLE: I know. He's afraid to admit it but he wants mother back and I think she's ready to give it another try. Wouldn't that be wonderful?

HARRIET: But what about me?

CAROLE: Oh, I'm sure she'd keep you on. Dad said you weren't alot of money. (Harriet marches out) Oh I shouldn't have said that. Its so tactless to talk about money to the hired help. I don't know you by the way, I'm Carole, one of the daughters

ANGELA: Oh you're the other sister. I'm Angela, your mother's receptionist. Do you work?

CAROLE: No, I'm a housewife. Did you come for the party?

ANGELA: No I just rode the motorcycle over your mother's giving to your sister.

CAROLE: You're kidding.

ANGELA: But maybe I'll stay. Is it like a real party?

CAROLE: A family affair, you know the kind of thing, barbecue out back and the game on TV.

ANGELA: Oh, is that it? Well I got a family too. My mother's a gutless wonder and my father's a stupid bullying drunk, My brother left home when he was 14 and I was kicked out when I was 13 so we don't have too many of these family affairs. You've got blue eyes don't you? I wish I did.

CAROLE: Why were you kicked out?

ANGELA: I was pregnant.

CAROLE: I never even kissed a boy till I was 16.

ANGELA: Hey, that's funny, I never did either.

CAROLE: But you just said...oh migod. Stanley!

ANGELA: Who's Stanley?

CAROLE: My husband.

ANGELA: Been married long?

CAROLE: A few years.

ANGELA: That must be nice. My record was 10 months.

CAROLE: It is nice as long as you don't end up with a sex friend like I did.

ANGELA: What's wrong with that?

CAROLE: You mean you don't know? (enter STANLEY) Or there you are honey, say hello to Angela, my mothers receptionist.

ANGELA: YOU Never told me he wore glasses.

CAROLE: I didn't know it was important.

ANGELA: But it's so weird. I always fall for guys with glasses, too.

CAROLE: Stanley only wears them to read. (removes his glasses)

ANGELA: Oh don't worry, I'm not gonna flirt with your husband, he's a little too married for me. May be I should get going.

STANLEY: What's your hurry? You just got here.

CAROLE: I'm sure Angela's got a million things more exciting to do than sit around a barbecue with a bunch of people she doesn't know.

ANGELA (warily): I like barbecues.

STANLEY: We could have a snowball fight while we're waiting for the steaks to cook.

CAROLE: How can you flirt with her? She's practically insane.

STANLEY: She is?

CAROLE: Yes, she is. And do you have any idea what she's brought for Joanna from mother?

STANLEY: A vacuum cleaner?

CAROLE: No! A motorcycle. We got a set of encyclopedias and 3 months worth of free therapy when we got married. And she gets a motorcycle just for coming home. The whole thing is obscene. (covers her mouth and runs out).

ANGELA: (holding her ears) Why is she yelling at me like that?
I don't even know her. God... it never stops.

STANLEY: She's not really yelling at you. It's just a little temper tantrum. She has them all the time. It's got nothing to do with you.

ANGELA: Can't people be nice to each other? Nobody's ever nice.

STANLEY: Christ, it's sunday today, and I could be home right now watching the game. Look, she's nice, she's nice, everybody's nice, don't worry about it okay, just forget it.

enter JOANNA: Angela? I've heard rumours, is it true?

ANGELA: Right out front see for yourself. (Joanna exits)

STANLEY: All back to normal now are we? I thought you said you worked for Dr. Thigpen?

ANGELA: I do. I just don't like yelling, that's all.

Enter JOANNA: (yelling) Oh I'm the happiest girl alive. I can't believe mother. She's the best mother in the whole world!!

STANLEY: SSSH.. ssshhh, don't yell. We don't like yelling (winks and motions)

JOANNA: Oh give me those keys. I've just got to go and start it (exits).

ANGELA: Is she a model? If I were as tall as that I would have been a model. My boyfriend takes pictures of me in a bathing suit sometimes but he says I'm too short for the right effect. He's really smart, way smarter than me. He's taught me lots of stuff.

STANLEY: What's he taught you Angela?

ANGELA: Well, right now he's teaching me the names of drinks and how to mix them, like grasshoppers and rob roys. He's got a list of them taped to the fridge and every night he comes over and tests me on them. He says I'd make a great bartender.

STANLEY: What does he do?

ANGELA: I don't know. Something to do with hotels. He's away a lot that's all I know. He was kinda mad that I got this job working for Dr. Thigpen (enter JOANNA) but what the hell he doesn't own me yet.

JOANNA: Own you yet? What a way to look at it. You're as bad as my sister.

STANLEY: I don't hear your bike running Joanna.

JOANNA: There must be something wrong with it I couldn't get it started.

STANLEY: Flooded?

JOANNA: Not likely. Why? You wanna come outside with me and have a look?

STANLEY: Hey, listen, I'm a happily married man.

JOANNA: What a pile of garbage that is.

ANGELA: You should have seen my first husband. He was so cute. I was really in love with him, he's in jail now, I think he gets out next year. He's gonna be real surprised when he sees me again. I was pretty immature when he knew me.

Enter CAROLE: Angela, I want to apologize.

ANGELA: Yeah?

CAROLE: It was wrong of me to say the things I did and I'm very sorry if I upset you. I mean that.

ANGELA: No kidding.

JOANNA (mimicking): Oh Angela can you ever forgive me? I just don't know what came over me. (hand to her head) I am so sorry, so terribly sorry. I'll never be able to face myself again.

CAROLE: What's wrong with you?

JOANNA: Nothing. I just thought you needed a hand there. Give your apology a little more impact.

CAROLE: It's all a big joke to you. You don't know how to be sincere. You've never said you're sorry in your life.

JOANNA: Why should I? I've never done anything I've been sorry for.

CAROLE: What about the time you changed all the grades on your report card?

JOANNA: I never did any such thing.

CAROLE: You were caught, Joanna.

JOANNA: It was a joke, a practical joke.

STANLEY: I bet everybody laughed their heads off.

ANGELA: When I was in the 7th grade I had a math teacher who used to...

CAROLE: WE DON'T WANT TO HEAR ABOUT IT!!

(Angela retreats and covers her ears)

JOANNA: Throw her a rope Stanley, I think she's slipped right over the edge.

STANLEY: Which one?

Enter DOROTHY: There. I'm finished. And I've promised myself not another neurotic for the rest of the day. Just my lovely family.

CAROLE: Sometimes I have the most terrible thoughts about my sister.

Enter GEOFFREY (with party hats): I've got 2 links and 2 blues left, (counting heads) so it looks like somebody's gonna have to share.

Enter HARRIET: I've got an announcement to make.

Enter ARTHUR: Steaks are on. Who's hungry?

STANLEY: I'm hungry.

DOROTHY: I'm famished.

HARRIET: I'm pregnant.

ARTHUR: Rare, medium or well-done?

Pause

DOROTHY: Rare for me. (taking Arthur's arm as they exit) Keep an eye on her Arthur, its too early to tell but we might be dealing with psychotic delusions here. (they exit)

HARRIET (to Angela): Thanks a lot.

ANGELA: Hey, don't blame me I never gave you any guarantees.

Curtain

ACT II Scene 1

A couple of hours later.

Joanna is on the phone laughing. Harriet is at buffet, nibbling.

JOANNA: But listen, that's not even the best part yet...

enter DOROTHY: We don't like to admit it, we can't explain it but it is the strangest thing every full moon there's a definite increase: accidents, suicides, overdoses, nervous breakdowns, mental collapses. I could go on. Tell me why. You must have seen the same thing when you were nursing at the hospital Arthur.

ARTHUR (enters a few steps behind): Ahhhh, we never paid an (attention to that).....

GEOFFREY (runs out interrupting): But look Mr. Thigpen he's really a great specimen. You've never seen him at his best.

DOROTHY: Sit down Arthur, leave that to the help.

GEOFFREY: I've been putting him through this really extensive training course for the last 6 months. You'll never find another guard dog like him.

ARTHUR: I don't like bulldogs.

GEOFFREY: But he's almost a pure bred. At this price he's a steal.

ARTHUR: You expect me to pay for Dirty Harry? I wouldn't take him if you gave him away, no sane person would.

DOROTHY: Do you remember that cocker spaniel puppy you got me for Christmas the first year we were together?

GEOFFREY: I haven't had a single break-in since I've owned him.

ARTHUR: You don't have anything Geoffrey, why would anybody want to break into your place?

GEOFFREY: Why take chances? Anyway I just thought you'd like first shot at him. I put a lot of energy into that dog and somebody's gonna want to give me ten dollar for

DOROTHY: Why don't you just get a real job Geoffrey?

GEOFFREY: If you change your mind, Mr. Thigpen
enter CAROLE with ANGELA on her heels.

CAROLE: That was a lovely dinner dad. I'm just putting a few
of these dishes away.

ANGELA: Yeah, really. So, I said ^{to} him "look, that's like 20
light years from now and if you ask me..." (she follows CAROLE out)

DOROTHY: My neck, Arthur, do you know it still bothers me some-
times? Remember how you used to rub it for me?

HARRIET: My how time flies; next thing you know everybody will
be thinking about going home I guess.

JOANNA: (hanging up) I guess I have to make an appearance here
See you later, bye. Well, it sounds like the old gang really
missed me.

Enter CAROLE & ANGELA

CAROLE: Coffee's almost ready

ANGELA: I didn't believe him at first But sure enough 2 weeks later.

CAROLE: Angela has the most interesting stories to tell about
her rejected boyfriends You should all hear this one. Go on
Angela finish your story

ANGELA: Well I was just gonna say that 2 weeks later he showed
up in an army uniform and said goodbye. I thought holy cow, he
really did mean it, It blew me away. Isn't that something?

GEOFFREY: He enlisted? What an idiot

JOANNA: That's nothing Do you know I had a man kill himself
for me once.

DOROTHY: Pillar

JOANNA: No, a gun. He left the most incredible note I think
I still have it some here. Dear Joanna, By the time you read this...

CAROLE: How can you brag about it? That's a man's life you're

talking about.

JOANNA: Look, I think I know that better than you do I didn't see you at the morgue identifying any bodies. Anyway it wasn't my fault, I can't help who falls in love with me.

DOROTHY: Joanna's right Carole and it takes a very healthy mind not to feel guilty about it. I'm proud of her

CAROLE: I don't even believe her.

HARRIET: I had a man that went insane over me once.

ARTHUR: Harriet!

DOROTHY: Uh oh.

HARRIET: This is true Arthur, isn't it Geoffrey? I never told you this before?

GEOFFREY: It's true allright, I'm the one that called the hospital

CAROLE: What haappened?

HARRIET: This fellow I had been dating every once in awhile had asked me to marry him. I told him I'd think it over and to come to my house the next morning and I'd give him my answer.

ARTHUR: Nothing wrong with that.

HARRIET: The next morning he showed up as he'd promised. I could hear what sounded like singing throught the curtains and I thought "Oh he's serenading me"

GEOFFREY: He was serenading you at first.

HARRIET: I watched him for a minute and then the serenading turned to caterwailing and before you know it he was twitching all over like a madman and shrieking to go along with it right on my front lawn. He never stopped till they came to take him away, strait jacket and all

CAROLE: How embarrassing.

HARRIET: For him or for me?

JOANNA: He sounds beyond embarrassment.

HARRIET: Have you ever heard of anything like that before Doctor?

DOROTHY: Oh yes. I have. It's not as rare as you think. A classic case of conversion reaction, he was undoubtedly afraid that your answer was going to be yes.

ANGELA: Remember our Wednesday afternoon appointment?

DOROTHY: Our?

ANGELA: Yeah, that guy who was tired all the time?

JOANNA: Mother, hadn't you better teach Angela about professional ethics?

ANGELA: I'm not mentioning any names, I just wanted to say that he asked me out.

DOROTHY: I hope you had the sense to say no.

CAROLE: Angela doesn't know that word.

ANGELA: I went out with him and we ended up talking for hours. I think I helped him quite a bit. He said he was starting to feel like he wasn't really crazy anymore.

JOANNA: I bet you're even thinking of opening up your own practice, aren't you Angela?

ANGELA: I think I'd make a pretty good psychiatrist.

DOROTHY: Don't overestimate yourself Angela. It takes years of schooling for one thing and a lot more on the ball than what you've got.

ARTHUR: You're pretty blunt, aren't you?

DOROTHY: I want to nip this in the bud.

(Ding dong)

ARTHUR: Who could that be?

(CAROLE answers the door, enter MRS. KING)

MRS. KING: What a cute little bulldog. What's his name?

DOROTHY: Mrs. King! What are you doing here?

GEOFFREY: That's Dirty Harry.

MRS. KING: My appointments at 6:30

GEOFFREY: He's for sale by the way.

DOROTHY: But I had to cancel your appointment today, Mrs. King.
How did you find me?

MRS. KING: The lady on the telephone.

DOROTHY: My answering service?

MRS. KING: Yes.

DOROTHY: But didn't Angela call you to change it?

MRS. KING: Yes, Angela called.

ANGELA: See what I mean? I already changed her to Wednesday
morning, Dr. Thigpen, at 10:15.

DOROTHY: You see Mrs. King you're changed. (arm around her)
Wednesday morning at 10:15. Will that be allright?

MRS. KING: Oh no, mustn't change my appointment.

DOROTHY: But Wednesday's only 3 days away.

MRS. KING: No, no, mustn't change my appointment.

DOROTHY: This is so awkward. Arthur do you mind? Just a
few minutes of privacy is all we need. Thank you.
Come with me, Mrs. King. It's quite all right.

ANGELA: Do you want me to take notes?

DOROTHY: No, I do not. (They enter den and a second later out
comes STANLEY)

STANLEY: Je sus Christ.

CAROLE: Well, what are we gonna do now?

HARRIET: Let's just talk.

CAROLE: About what?

HARRIET: Oh anything interesting, like our future plans, let Arthur start, it's his house.

JOANNA: I have a better idea, let's not and say we did.

ARTHUR: That is a much better idea. More cheesecake anyone?

GEOFFREY: Sure.

CAROLE: Forget the food dad, come on I want to hear what you have to say.

JOANNA: There goes goody 2 shoes again. Isn't it funny, that I'm the one that just got back from Europe and nobody seems the slightest bit interested in what I have to say?

ARTHUR: Yes, let Joanna talk, after all this party is in her honor.

STANLEY: Why don't you show us your pictures, Joanna?

JOANNA: How'd you know I had pictures? Carole there's more to your husband than meets the eye. I just happen to have a few right here. (gets out a huge pile).

CAROLE: What a good idea. We'd love that.

JOANNA: You might think some of them are a bit risqué, maybe I should show those first.

ARTHUR: I'm gonna go finish cleaning up.

HARRIET: Don't put the leftovers away, I might get hungry later.

ARTHUR: YOU'RE coming with me. (THEY exit)

JOANNA: Okay, they're not in order yet but let me see, okay, this is one taken in Venice. That's me in the gondola, that's Adolfo, and that's Father Giovanni in the canal. Isn't he gorgeous?

CAROLE: Oh. (hand to her head)

STANLEY: What's the matter?

CAROLE: Nothing really. I just got a funny little headache all of a sudden. I think I better go lie down for

for a minute. Sorry Joanna.

JOANNA: You liar.

CAROLE: What?

JOANNA: You heard me? You're not sorry and you don't have a headache either. You just don't want to see my pictures so you make up that convenient excuse. Maybe your husband falls for that one but I don't. I can see right through you Carole.

CAROLE: I'm not going to get upset agin. I know she doesn't really mean all those terrible things she's saying. (deep breaths). I'm just going to calm down. There. Stanley, I think we'd better not spend the night after all. I want to go home. Now. I'll go tell Dad.

JOANNA: Why don't you just admit it Carole. You're jealous of me and you always have been. Really I feel sorry for you.

CAROLE: (whirling on her) All right I admit it. Are you happy now? But not for the reasons you think. I'm jealous because you're inconsiderate and self-centered and a compulsive liar and everybody still likes you better than me.

JOANNA: Why you phony! To think you've always pretended you loved me.

CAROLE: I do love you! And I don't have the slightest idea why!

(The stage is suddenly plunged into darkness by Angela who became 'disturbed' by the yelling.)

together { CAROLE: Stanley!
 JOANNA: What's going on?
 Stanley: Hey! The fuse.

ANGELA: (lights a candle) Ssssshhh, that's better, that's much better. (very soothing) Can you all find a place to sit down? Don't worry about a thing I'm going to help you.

STANLEY: What's going on here?

ANGELA: Relax, you're going to feel much better all of you. No more hostility, no more arguing, just put everything out of your minds. I want you to concentrate on this light. You see it flicker? You feel calmer already.

CAROLE: I don't know what came over me there.

JOANNA: I do.

ANGELA: Don't think about that now. Put it right out of your minds and just think about how relaxed you feel. You're very comfortable and at ease. Your hearts'r' not racing anymore and you feel peaceful. Very peaceful. Relax and listen to my voice. I want to help you. The light is making your eyes feel tired, they want to close, you feel even calmer now and are ready to go to sleep. Very tired, very peaceful. When I blow this candle out you will be totally relaxed and ready to follow my suggestions. I will help you to feel much better. Your eyes are very heavy. and closing. You want to do exactly what I tell you. Now you are asleep. You will wake up only when I relight this candle. Can you all hear me?

ALL: Yes.

ANGELA: Good. This is just as easy as I thought it was going to be. Now let's have some fun. Start going back in your minds to when you were young. First you're 20 years old, now you're 15, back, back, now you're 10, are you

there? (yes) Good and when I blow this candle out you will be 8 years old. Ready? here we go, 1, 2, pouf. (she turns the light on) There? How do you feel? Any different?

(CAROLE reaches for a glass of wine, takes a sip, then giggles)

JOANNA: Carole! I'm gonna tell!

ANGELA: I knew I could do it!

GEOFFREY: Wow! I'm impressed. That's really neat.

ANGELA: Hey! (whirls around to find Geoffrey who has stayed in the background forgotten during hypnosis) It didn't work on you.

GEOFFREY: I guess not. Do you want to try again?

ANGELA: No, I like you fine the way you are. You don't yell at people and get them all upset. Now we can get to know each other a little better. Don't you kids have something you can do?

JOANNA: There's nothing to do around here.

STANLEY: Let's go outside and build a snowman.

CAROL: It's dark out.

STANLEY: There's a full moon out there, it's bright as day.

JOANNA: It's not bright as day, dummy.

ANGELA: Do you date a lot, Geoffrey?

GEOFFREY: Sure I've been out with girls before, what do you think I am?

ANGELA: I think you're nice, that's all.

JOANNA: Has anybody ever seen Amy Klingdoff's feet?

STANLEY: Who's she?

JOANNA: She's a kid in my school.

CAROLE: Yeah I've seen em.

STANLEY: Are they big?

JOANNA: No, they're tiny, they're about this big.

STANLEY: Bull.

JOANNA: They are, it's true. I'm not lieing, I've seen them.

(Stanley grabs Joanna's scarf and runs, Joanna chases him around couch, screaming, Carole jumps up on couch, all yelling like kids)

ANGELA: Shut up! Shut up or I'll send you to bed! There that's better, now be nice children and don't make me angry.

CAROLE: Is that the babysitter?

JOANNA: I guess so.

CAROLE: She's pretty mean.

GEOFFREY: Maybe it's time I took Dirty Harry out for a walk, he must be getting pretty bored out there all by himself.

ANGELA: Oh don't go, stay and talk to me. (grabs his arm).

GEOFFREY: Oh, okay.

ANGELA: You're such a good boy, so thoughtful. My brother was like you, but dad thought he was a sissy and he used to treat him awful.

GEOFFREY: What happened to him?

ANGELA: He dropped out of school and ran away. I think he lives in Las Vegas now, I don't know.

GEOFFREY: I played poker once. Lost \$10. Do you have a dog?

ANGELA: No, but I have 4 cats.

JOANNA: When's mom coming home, we don't like you.

ANGELA: You be good and don't be disrespectful.

GEOFFREY: What do you think Dr. Thigpen is going to say when she comes out and finds them like this?

ANGELA: She is going to have to change her opinion of me, that's

what I think. She said I didn't know anything about anything and there you go. But I'm not spiteful. I don't hold it against her.

STANLEY: Let's play 'hide 'n' seek.

JOCANNA: Okay, odd finger's it. (they play, Stanley is 'it')

ANGELA: Are you gay?

GEOFFREY: No. Are you?

ANGELA: No.

GEOFFREY: Well that makes 2 of us doesn't it? Look I think you'd better change them back now. You've made your point.

ANGELA: Don't be stupid. They're out of the way, aren't they?

GEOFFREY: Cut of the way?

ANGELA: Yeah. I mean in case you wanted to get to know me better or something like that.

GEOFFREY: Do you mean... (Angela nods)... and they're too busy playing to... (she nods)... I see... yes... do you know the last time something like this happened to me I wasn't quite ready for it.

ANGELA: You weren't, hey?

GEOFFREY: No. But now...

ANGELA: Now?

GEOFFREY: Now, I still don't think I'm ready for it. Maybe in a couple of weeks ~~from now~~. I'll get tickets to a hockey game and give you a call. How's that sound?

Enter HARRIET: I've got something important to say, I'm not waiting any longer.

GEOFFREY: Mom, wait.

HARRIET: No, Geoffrey, it's now or never. Would everyone please....

(Girls run screeching to the couch and yell Home Free!)

STANLEY: That's not fair. You never said anything about the couch being home base.

JOANNA: Everybody knows there's home base in hide 'n' seek.

HARRIET: ...sit down?

STANLEY: But you never said where it was, that's not fair.

CAROLE: Big wow.

HARRIET: I need a glass of wine.

ANGELA: Quiet down. Harriet has something important to tell you. Now who wants to get Aunt Harriet a glass of wine?

JOANNA: She's not our aunt!

GEOFFREY: Oh boy.

ANGELA: You're a very naughty girl and I don't like that. I bet your sister Carole would be happy to get Harriet a glass of wine.

CAROLE: I don't know if I can reach the glasses.

ANGELA: Well, just try. (Carole exits Kitchen)

HARRIET: There's something funny going on here. Geoffrey will you get Arthur in here for me.

GEOFFREY: This should be good. (exits)

ANGELA: Do you think my jeans are tight enough?

HARRIET: Tight enough for what?

ANGELA: You know.

STANLEY: Who wants to arm wrestle with me, Joanna?

JOANNA: okay.

Enter ARTHUR: What time is it? Is Dorothy finished yet?

STANLEY: It's (figuring it out) 10 minutes past 6:30.

(Everyone stares at him)

STANLEY: Why are you looking at me? Is that wrong?

(Arthur & Harriet grope for each other and hold hands.

Enter CAROLE with wine glass, walking like a kid, trying desperately not to spill it.)

ANGELA: Careful. You're spilling it.

CAROLE: I'm sorry. I didn't mean it.

ARTHUR: Do you feel allright Carole?

CAROLE: Yes, daddy, and I'm not tired so please don't make me got to bed yet.

(Arthur and Harriet sit on couch, dazed)

ANGELA: Where's Geoffrey? Still in the kitchen? Don't call him, I'll go find him. (exits kitchen)

ARTHUR: Do things seem a little weird to you Harriet?

HARRIET: It's beyond weird Arthur. How much wine did we drink?

STANLEY: Hey! The dumb babysitter's gone. Let's do something.

JOANNA: I got a good idea.

CAROLE: What?

JOANNA: Let's play spin the bottle.

CAROLE: Joanna!

JOANNA: What?

STANLEY: I don't feel like it.

JOANNA: Chicken.

STANLEY: I am not.

JOANNA: Then go and get a bottle and prove it.

STANLEY: All right. I bet you'll chicken out before I do. (exits kit.

CAROLE: Have you ever done this before Jo?

JOANNA: No, but I've seen the big kids play.

CAROLE: Do they really kiss or just pretend?

JOANNA: Just pretend.

CAROLE: Okay, we'll do the same thing. Ssshh, don't say anything.

STANLEY: (returns with bottle) Who goes first?

ARTHUR: I saw an ad in the paper the other day for a trip for 2 to Mexico.

HARRIET: Yes, I've seen those.

ARTHUR: It was \$950 return.

HARRIET: That seems like a lot doesn't it?

ARTHUR: It included 3 nights at the Tijuana Hilton.

HARRIET: That sounds lovely, Arthur

(Above dialogue is spoken mechanically in a dazed manner.)

(GIRLS squeal)

CAROLE: Oh he got himself, now he's gotta kiss himself.

JOANNA: No, he doesn't, he goes again when that happens.

STANLEY: You're making up the rules as you go along.

CAROLE: Go again Stanley, hurry up.

(He spins, Joanna stops it with her foot.)

CAROLE: Hey, you stopped it with your foot!

JOANNA: I did not. Kiss me Stanley.

STANLEY: Ahh, I don't want to play this anymore.

(Joanna leans forward and kisses him quickly)

CAROLE: I'm telling! Dad!! Joanna...(Stanley clamps his hand over her mouth)

STANLEY: Ssshh, you'll get us all in trouble.

CAROLE: Well she said she was just gonna pretend.

HARRIET: Do you feel old Arthur?

ARTHUR: I've never felt so old in my life.

HARRIET: You'd better do something.

ARTHUR: What do you suggest?

HARRIET: Talk to Angela. She knows something.

ARTHUR: She's a strange girl, isn't she? I thought that from the minute I laid eyes on her. Do you think it was a nice party Haddie?

HARRIET: Very nice, Arthur, very nice.

ARTHUR: Thank you.

(Enter DOROTHY And MRS. KING)

DOROTHY: All right Mrs. King, shall we cancel Wednesday and just stick to Sunday then?

MRS. KING: Yes, next Sunday. 6:30

DOROTHY: (opens door). Good bye.

MRS. KING: Nice doggie (door closes.)

DOROTHY: My god, I thought she'd never stop talking. Oh but she's not even the worst of them. Some of them border on the ridiculous. I shouldn't feel this way I suppose but I get so frustrated with all the pettiness sometimes. Of course I can't say big deal when they cry to me about their foolish cat or some such thing. Can you imagine what kind of a practice I'd have if I yawned in their faces and said "Who cares"? That's what I felt like saying though, especially knowing that my precious family was here waiting for me and I was missing all the talk. But when someone is mentally disturbed it can't always be put on hold to suit the doctor, can it?

CAROLE: Hi, mommy. Is the lady all better now?

DOROTHY: (whirls around and laughs nervously) No, of course not Carole, that doesn't happen in one day. Everyone is so relaxed, how nice.

(They are all sitting on the floor, Joanna is pulling Dorothy's stocking)

JOANNA: Boing.

DOROTHY: Joanna, what are you doing?

JOANNA: Look how far I can stretch these out.

STANLEY: I want to practice my sit-ups. Will someone hold my feet?

CAROLE: I will.

DOROTHY: Stanley. Can't you practice your calisthenics when you get home? Really Carole, don't let him get away with that.

STANLEY: What's calisthenics? (sic)

CAROLE: I think she's talking about that game we were playing before.

Now she's gonna get mad at us.

JOANNA: Tell her you're sorry Stanley.

STANLEY: Me!?

DOROTHY: What are you sorry about?

(They all look sheepishly at the floor)

DOROTHY: Why doesn't someone answer me? What's going on here?

(Stanley shrugs)

JOANNA: (nudges Carole) You tell her.

CAROLE: Thanks a lot.

DOROTHY: I'm getting the strangest feeling here.

CAROLE: We were playing spin the bottle; it was Joanna's idea.

JOANNA: Was not!

CAROLE: Liar. Wasn't it Stanley?

STANLEY: I'm not a tattletale.

DOROTHY: I think I feel faint.

HARRIET: I'll get you a cup of tea, Dorothy, I know I could sure use one. (exits kitchen)

DOROTHY: Why are you acting like this? Like children?

STANLEY: I hate it when they say that. How do they expect us to act?

JOANNA: Let's go do something else.

CAROLE: Don't be mad mom, we won't do it again. (kisses her on cheek. They find some cardboard boxes under table and start playing cars.)

ARTHUR: They've been like this for awhile now, maybe they've taken something.

DOROTHY: They don't take drugs, don't talk nonsense.

Enter ANGELA: Hi, Dr. Thigpen. Are you surprised?

DOROTHY: I don't have time to talk to you now Angela. I've got a serious problem to worry about.

ANGELA: Oh you don't have to worry about anything. And I'm not mad at you for what you said to me before. You don't have to apologize, I know you're sorry.

DOROTHY: You're a very presumptuous girl Angela. Now don't you think it's time you went on home?

ANGELA: I can't go home yet I've still (got to)....

DOROTHY: You'll go home now and I'll see you in the office tomorrow. I've got a crisis on my hands, can't you understand that or is it all beyond your grasp?

ANGELA: You think I'm a fool don't you? Well I've got news for you, you're dead wrong. ^{You know something?} I trusted you and you turned out to be just as bad as everyone else. (exits)

ARTHUR: Maybe that wasn't wise, Dorothy.

DOROTHY: Everybody is talking nonsense. Who cares about Angela? We've got a problem Arthur, we have to face up to it. We're talking about a complete mental breakdown here; paranoid delusions, hysterical reactions, the WORKS! And don't kid yourself Arthur, we're not blameless, oh no... It's time

we started accepting responsibility for what the
break up of our marriage did to those poor kids.
Oh, but I never dreamed this would be the price we'd
have to pay.

Enter GEOFFREY: (with tray of mugs) Who wants hot chocolate?

KIDS: Me! I do! Yeah!

DOROTHY: What are you doing? Are you insane? Don't cater
to their delusions. Stay away from the

GEOFFREY: What delusions are you talking about? They're hyp-
notized. Didn't Angela tell you that? Where is she?

DOROTHY: Good Lord. How on earth did she do it?

GEOFFREY: Easy. She used that candle.

ARTHUR: Well somebody had better go find her.

DOROTHY: I don't need to find anyone. I'm not a certified
psychiatrist for nothing. Give me that candle.

(rolls up sleeves)

CURTAIN

ACT II Scene 2

Few hours later. DOROTHY is on the couch reading a bedtime story to the 'kids' who are in assorted pjs. HARRIET is standing by the window.

DOROTHY: (reading) At last however she sat up and looked around. She was sitting on the Kansas prairie and right in front of her was the new farmhouse Uncle Henry had built after the cyclone had carried away the old one. Toto had jumped out of her arms and was running toward the barn, barking joyously. Aunt Em had just come out of the house when she looked up and saw Dorothy running toward her. "Dorothy! My dear Dorothy! Where in the world did you come from?" she cried kissing the little girl again and again. "From the Land of Oz" said Dorothy simply "and here is Toto too. Oh Aunt Em, I'm so glad to be home again."

CAROLE: Read us another one mom.

DOROTHY: Oh no, it's way past your bedtime, even Arthur's gone to bed already. Give me a kiss goodnight. I love you all very much, do you know that?

JOANNA: Yes, mom, we know. We love you too.

STANLEY: Where do I sleep?

DOROTHY: With Carole.

CAROLE: Mom!

DOROTHY: Oh Christ, I forgot. Sleep on the cot Stanley.

CAROLE: Come on Jo. Let's go sleep in the big bed.

JOANNA: Mom I don't want to sleep with Carole, she kicks.

CAROLE: I do not.

DOROTHY: Don't argue. Just go to bed. (They exit) Anyone coming?

HARRIET: No, not a soul.

DOROTHY: I hope Geoffrey can find her.

HARRIET: He's a good boy and stubborn. He won't come back till he does.

DOROTHY: Yes. You're lucky. And Geoffrey's father? Where is he?

HARRIET: ^{He's dead.} He killed himself ~~several~~ years ago.

DOROTHY: How terrible. And you never remarried?

HARRIET: No. Look I have something to tell you...

DOROTHY: Arthur and I have been divorced for several years now ~~too~~, maybe you know that. I thought of remarrying for awhile but ^{he} I always wondered if someday ~~she~~ and I couldn't get back together again. And tonight...

HARRIET: Tonight...?

DOROTHY: Tonight was like old times for awhile, the family together, the stories and the laughing and then Angela does this thing to the kids and what does Arthur do? He goes to sleep, as if he didn't have a care in the world. Oh no, I could never go back to that.

HARRIET: Arthur isn't sleeping. He's lying in bed scared stiff and he doesn't know what to do about it.

DOROTHY: You love him, don't you?

HARRIET: Yes I do and he loves me. How do you feel about that Dorothy?

DOROTHY: That's something I'll have to get used to I guess. We'll all have to get used to it.

HARRIET: He finds it so hard to break free of you.

DOROTHY: We have children together, Harriet, there will always be that bond.

HARRIET: I can live with that.

DOROTHY: They say the 2nd wife always lives in the shadow of the 1st.

HARRIET: I don't believe it.

DOROTHY: I've seen it happen.

HARRIET: Well I hope you're not too disappointed if I'm the exception instead of the rule. I'm not real fond of the back seat.

DOROTHY: (pause) I wish you both luck. I really do.

HARRIET: What's that noise? (dog barking)

DOROTHY: (looks out the window). They're back. Geoffrey's found her! When I get my hands on that girl...

HARRIET: I'd tread lightly if I were you. I'm no expert, but if you ask me she's nuts.

DOROTHY: Do you really think so?

HARRIET: Don't you?

DOROTHY: Well I've seen so many it's hard to tell anymore. Maybe that's why she's got such a good rapport with my patients.

HARRIET: You, of all people, should be kind to her. She needs kindness. What are they doing out there?

DOROTHY: She's crying.

HARRIET: Oh the poor girl, she must feel so alone.

DOROTHY: Well Geoffrey's got his arms around her but it doesn't seem to make any difference, she's crying even harder now.

HARRIET: My GEOFFREY!!?

DOROTHY: The poor girl. She does need kindness.

HARRIET: What she needs is to be locked up! When I get my hands on her.....

CURTAIN

ACT III

The next morning

GEOFFREY is sleeping on the floor, unmade bed on couch, ANGELA is massaging Geoffrey's foot.

ANGELA: Last weekend they had a really crummy band there, that's why I didn't even bother to go, but this weekend should be good. I can get you in for nothing cause I know the brother of the guy that owns the place. I'll bet you're a real good dancer, quiet guys usually are. Don't ask me why. There do you feel that?

GEOFFREY mumbles into pillow.

ANGELA: What?

GEOFFREY: Would you feed Dirty Harry for me?

ANGELA: I did, now, just tell me where you feel this.

GEOFFREY: My foot.

ANGELA: But where else?

GEOFFREY: My ankle.

ANGELA: You're just guessing.

GEOFFREY: Not really, you're twisting it. That's better. I don't really function well this early in the morning.

ANGELA: When I took that course, the guy told me this was your liver and the neck here and the heart and all that. I mean it worked on me, can't you feel it?

GEOFFREY: Some other time of day I might even enjoy this.

ANGELA: Maybe I've got the wrong foot.

GEOFFREY: I've only got 2.

ANGELA: Well, I'm gonna go have a shower before anybody else gets in there, but don't have to worry I'll be right back. (exit hall)

GEOFFREY: Appreciate that but please don't hurry.

Enter ARTHUR: (looking distraught) By god what a nightmare! What am I gonna do? How can I face anyone? Those poor kids, what's going to happen to them. My life's become a shambles.

GEOFFREY: (mumbles into pillow) Coffee.

ARTHUR: Geoffrey! You're here! Talk to me my boy, tell me what happened, tell me it was all a dream, tell me everything's all right.

GEOFFREY: Cream and sugar, one spoon.

ARTHUR: Don't be afraid to tell me Geoffrey. I think I've already faced the worst of it last night. I can take the rest.

GEOFFREY: (sits up, blinking) I'm not a morning person Arthur, please.

Enter STANLEY: (almost ready for work) Good morning Arthur! (jubilant)

ARTHUR: (on guard) Stanley, dressed already? What a good boy. now go in the other room and put on the cartoons while I fix you some cereal.

STANLEY: (putting on tie, looks at Arthur) You're a little young for senility, aren't you Arthur?

ARTHUR: You mean you're all right?

STANLEY: Of course I'm all right. I feel fantastic. As a matter of fact I haven't felt this good in years. (dialing phone)

ARTHUR: And Carole?

STANLEY: The greatest. (on phone) Who won? No kidding. What was the spread? Okay. Thanks Fete. (bangs up) Carole's gone back to sleep, tell her I'll see her at home tonight, I've left her the car. I've got to

run. Great party, Arthur and tell Carole I love her.

Geoffrey... (he exits front door)

ARTHUR: Back to normal I guess. There's only one thing I know of that makes a man feel that good in the morning and its got nothing to do with barbecues the day before. (exit kit.)

Enter JOANNA: Look at this place, what a mess! (token effort at cleaning up)

Enter ARTHUR: Joanna! How do you feel?

JOANNA: I've got a headache and you don't have a single aspirin in the place.

ARTHUR: Thank god.

JOANNA: Thanks alot, I'll remember that.

ARTHUR: Hey, leave that alone, just sit down, let me get you some coffee.

JOANNA: Dad, I want to talk to you about Harriet.

ARTHUR: Harriet?

JOANNA: Yeah, Harriet, remember her, the supposed maid?

ARTHUR: What do you mean Joanna?

JOANNA: What I mean is, she's got to be the worst maid I've ever seen, she hasn't done a thing since I got here, not one thing.

ARTHUR: There's something I've got to tell you about Harriet.

JOANNA: Yeah?

ARTHUR: But I want your sister to be here too. I have to tell you both.

JOANNA: Carole! Get up! Dad wants to talk to us. It sounds ominous.

CAROLE: Be right there! (from offstage)

JOANNA: This reminds me of the time you told us to come to you if we ever got into trouble with a boy. What a joke, that was.

ARTHUR: I didn't think it was a joking matter at all.

JOANNA: Get serious dad, Carole was already married by the time you got up the nerve to say anything.

Enter CAROLE: What's happening? Is Stanley gone already? (putting on shoes & socks).

ARTHUR: Yeah, he just left, he said to tell you he loved you.

CAROLE: Oh Stanley.

JOANNA: Dad's got something he wants to tell us. About Harriet.

CAROLE: Oh don't fire her. She means well. Give her another week or two and see if there's any improvement. Joanna can I borrow your black earrings?

ARTHUR: I think I love her.

JOANNA: That's super dad, what a casanova. I was gonna wear them today.

CAROLE: Thanks alot. Yeah really dad. Isn't that something? Are ^{You seem so nervous these days. Maybe this is just what you need.} you gonna get married again now? What about the hoops?

JOANNA: All right.

ARTHUR: I guess so. I haven't told your mother yet. I'm afraid of how she'll take it. And thank you girls for making this easy for me. I know you've had to roll with the punches sometimes and this is another one.

JOANNA: They're gold, so don't lose them.

ARTHUR: I just hope it hasn't been all bad. God knows I've done my best.

Enter ANGELA: (In Arthur's bathrobe and hair in a towel) I couldn't find the conditioner, Mr. Thigpen, are you all out?

ARTHUR: It's you! In my bathrobe!

ANGELA: Sure it's me. What about the conditioner?

ARTHUR: I don't have any. I don't use it.

ANGELA: That's great. Now my hair's gonna be a big frizzy mess. Thanks alot.

JOANNA: I've got some in my room, Angela, help yourself.

ANGELA: Saved. (exits hall)

CAROLE: What do you think of her Joanna?

JOANNA: It's so weird but she reminds me of a babysitter we used to have.

CAROLE: I know who you mean. A spitting image. Wasn't she committed a few years ago?

JOANNA: I never heard. Is that coffee ready yet, dad? (he exits) You know I've been thinking about when we were growing up. I must have been dreaming about it last night. We had some good times, eh?

CAROLE: Remember that time dad caught you making out in the bathroom with that guy, what was his name?

JOANNA: Oh yeah, Tim. I almost broke dad's arm in the door when I slammed it. Remember when mom used to read your diary? What a riot.

CAROLE: Read it? She used to take it into her secretary and have her type it up and make copies of it cause she said she couldn't understand my handwriting.

JOANNA: Yeah, that's right. I got a copy. You sure got mad when I had a page printed in the school paper.

CAROLE: What are you gonna do now, that you're home?

JOANNA: I've been thinking about taking sky diving lessons.

CAROLE: Stanley's got a friend at the office I think you'd like.

JOANNA: All right, you can fix me up. He can't be any worse than that last creep.

CAROLE: That was Stanley's brother!

JOANNA: I know. That donut shop still open at the corner?

CAROLE: I think so.

JOANNA: Wanna go with me?

CAROLE: Okay. But I'm not going on that bike.

Enter DOROTHY as the girls get their coats.

JOANNA: Oh yes you are you little coward. Morning mom, isn't it a great day?

DOROTHY: I don't know yet.

JOANNA: Well let us know when you figure it out. We'll be right back.

CAROLE: Hopefully.

(Opens door)

JOANNA: Jesus Christ, watch where you step. (they exit)

DOROTHY: Oh god, look at the time. Angela!

ANGELA: What? (from offstage)

DOROTHY: Get out here!

Enter ANGELA: What's the matter?

DOROTHY: Why on earth did I spend the night last night? Who have we got this morning?

ANGELA: Mr. Potter's at 9:15 but he's usually early.

DOROTHY: Get on the phone and change him to 4:30. Hopefully his fragile ego can deal with that. I need at least another hour.

ANGELA: I haven't even had my breakfast yet.

DOROTHY: And then you can drive over to my apartment and get me my brown tweed jacket and skirt. That's a girl. Here's the keys. Don't forget the shoes.

ANGELA: Come on Geoff. Get up. I want you to come with me.

GEOFFREY: I haven't had my coffee yet.

ANGELA: That's okay, we'll ^{cat} _A out, Dr. Thigren will foot the bill.

DOROTHY: I never said that.

ANGELA: But you meant too, I know.

GEOFFREY: Anybody in the bathroom?

ANGELA: No. I'll go make that phone call and then we'll go. I like your hair like that Geoff, don't comb it, just put some gel on it and then it'll stay that way. (they exit)

GEOFFREY: This is not at all the kind of morning I'm accustomed to.

Enter HARRIET: Morning, Dorothy.

DOROTHY: Oh there you are, I was hoping I'd see you before I left. First of all you realize that the checks will stop if you go through with this.

HARRIET: Arthur's been thinking of coming out of retirement anyway.

DOROTHY: Good. As long as you realize, then there's no hard feelings. That would be good for him anyway. And of course you always have your maid service to fall back on.

HARRIET: I think we'll just let that one drop.

DOROTHY: Good idea.

HARRIET: Have you ever been to Tijuana?

DOROTHY: God, yes. I'll never go back, what a terrible place.

HARRIET: Really? Arthur and I were thinking of going there on our honeymoon.

DOROTHY: Oh no, don't do that. Have you set the date yet?

HARRIET: Not exactly. But any time is okay for me.

DOROTHY: Well the place for you is definitely the Bahamas, especially in the late winter. It is fabulous, you will love it.

Enter ANGela

HARRIET: Isn't that expensive?

DOROTHY: Arthur knows how to earn money when he puts his mind to it, don't worry.

ANGELA: I hitchhiked all the way to Louisiana once and it didn't.

cost me a cent. Mardi Gras is unbelievable, definitely worth it.

DOROTHY: What did Mr. Potter say?

ANGELA: Mr. Potter is really deranged. I think you'll have to talk to him.

DOROTHY: They're all deranged Angela.

HARRIET: Coming for dinner tonight Geoffrey?

GEOFFREY: What are we having?

HARRIET: You'll have to ask Arthur.

ANGELA: Oh he's a good cook, we already know that. Do you want me to bring something?

HARRIET: No!

ANGELA: See you later then. I'll go get your suit Dr. Thigpen and then I'll meet you at the office. And thanks for everything, I mean that.

(Open door)

GEOFFREY: Down Harry, down boy. Down! (door closes)

HARRIET: She's got my boy.

DOROTHY: She's harmless. Now where were we?

HARRIET: The honeymoon?

DOROTHY: Yes, what I was thinking was, why don't you get married down there. Then that would give us all a wonderful excuse to fly to the Bahamas for the wedding. Wouldn't that be fun?

HARRIET: I love it! Do you think I should have a **big** wedding with bridesmaids and all that?

DOROTHY: Oh no, something small. Angela will do the invitations if you like. But you have to go down early enough to get a tan. Just think how gorgeous that would look in a white dress.

Enter ARTHUR: Dorothy, I'm glad you're up. There's something important Harriet and I have to tell you. You know I'm the last person in the world that would ever want to hurt you and I don't really know how to say this but I just hope you can understand. You see Harriet wants...I mean... we want....that is...

DOROTHY: Does Arthur still have his tuxedo?

HARRIET: Yes, but he can't get the jacket done up anymore.

DOROTHY: Well 2 weeks of tennis might change that. Shall I check with the travel agents for you? I think you'd be very smart to book ahead.

HARRIET: Good idea. I'll let you know as soon as we've fixed the date.

DOROTHY: Good. Now what were you saying Arthur?

ARTHUR: Coffee anyone?

DOROTHY: Thank you dear.

HARRIET: Are we all out of cream?

ARTHUR: No, there's a carton in the fridge. (exits kitchen)

DOROTHY: And don't forget to defrost something for dinner. You've got company coming tonight.

HARRIET: Isn't he a great guy? I don't know why you gave him up.

DOROTHY: Not my type Harriet. But he's a dear. Now did you want me to book a suite or just a room?

(ARTHUR screams from offstage)

HARRIET: What's that?

DOROTHY: Sounds like an anxiety attack. Nothing too serious but if it continues you might want to make an appointment. (book out) It'd have to be Thursdays at 11, that's all I've got left.

HARRIET: Appreciate that. Now about those rooms, would there be a view?

CURTAIN