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THE TRAP

A Play

by

Marilyn D. Gordon

A Thesis

In

The Department

of

English

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts at
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

May 1992

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ABSTRACT

The Trap

Marilyn D. Gordon

All societies practise codes of conduct that push people into psychological traps. Constitutions, laws, and regulations are formal expressions of society's will. Along with custom, tradition, and fashion, they shape the individual's behaviour. Most people conform readily, maybe never realizing how their lives are being organized for them. Others will not, cannot, or choose not to conform.

The protagonist of The Trap is Andrea Thomas, a clothing designer, who emigrated from England in the sixties. During her marriage, Andrea feels intimidated by her husband, who endorses the idea that women should fulfill a domestic role. Humiliated by Mark's repeated love affairs and his lies about working late, Andrea eventually listens to her children who advise her to rebel. Although she does not emerge as a Virginia Woolf, Andrea does gravitate towards a liberation enjoyed by most modern-day women. The primary theme therefore is a pitting of serious trials of harsh experience against inherent ideas.

A secondary theme is lack of communication. Mark, Andrea, and their children struggle with the difficulties humans have understanding each other. All are so intent on living their own existences, oblivious to the desires of the others, that they think they are not understood. Thus The Trap reflects the twentieth century disease that is the consequence of the egotism of current society.

Although the play addresses contemporary issues such as the single parent versus the nuclear family, permissive sex versus marriage, career women versus homemakers, sexually exploited men versus sexually exploited women, it adheres to a traditional setting and staging in an effort to reach as wide an audience as possible.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The Trap

by

Marilyn D. Gordon

THE TRAP

A play in two acts by Marilyn D. Gordon

Time: The present

Place: Montreal, Quebec

Members of the cast in order of appearance:

ANDREA THOMAS, a housewife in her late forties

LOUISE THOMAS, Andrea's daughter - twenty

JONATHAN THOMAS, Andrea's son - seventeen

PAMELA RILEY, Andrea's friend - fifty

MARK THOMAS, Andrea's husband - fifty-five

JUDITH SWEETMAN, a technical illustrator - thirty-seven

Act One - The Thomas' living room

Act Two - Judith's apartment

ACT ONE

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE Morning.

The set: The action takes place in the living room of a modest townhouse in Montreal. The décor is English: Victorian bric a brac; horse brasses; tea trolley with silver service etc. There is a door to the kitchen at the right. A door UR is the entrance from the outside vestibule. A large window UC shows an external view of identical townhouses. Stairs BL lead to the upper level. A large portrait of a hunting scene is placed in a prominent position on the wall. A smaller picture of the Pope hangs on another wall. Holiday pamphlets to Britain are strewn haphazardly over the chesterfield.

ANDREA discovered ON.

She is balancing the phone with her head while she examines a brochure.

ANDREA

Not in this one, that's for sure...Hold on. I'll look.

(ANDREA puts the phone down, takes up a different brochure, then picks up the phone again.) No. This one is called Spring in Scotland... No. Scotland, not England. I don't

ANDREA (cont'd)

seem to have that one... Oh, here it is: Holidays in England. Page sixteen? (She nearly drops the phone.) Ah, here we are. The Red Lion. Looks very swish... No, I'm from the North... Lancashire actually... No, Wordsworth lived in the Lake District... Do I miss it? What kind of a question is that? Of course I miss it. Every single day I miss it. Especially the robins, little English robins, not those great big thrushes with orange fronts they call robins over here. But don't start me off or I'll be sobbing all the way down memory lane... Oh yes, I can hardly wait. It's been over ten years, you know. I'm going all goosey just thinking about it. Hang on. Someone's coming in.

The entrance door opens.

Enter LOUISE.

She looks rather bedraggled after an all-night party. She tries to creep upstairs behind her mother's back. ANDREA sees her out of the corner of her eye.

Oh dear, you'll have to excuse me, Pam... What's that? The flowers?... Great!... Sure. Come on over. (ANDREA replaces the phone and turns on Louise.) And where do you think you've been?

LOUISE

You know where I've been. At Michael's.

ANDREA

All night?

LOUISE

Yes. Something wrong with that?

ANDREA

He has his own apartment. That's what's wrong with that.

LOUISE

It was an all-nighter. A party. Really, you're so old-fashioned.

ANDREA

How dare you come skulking in at nine in the morning like a randy tom cat that's spent the night prowling up and down back alleys! I'm telling you, Louise, I won't have it.

LOUISE

God, you've got a suspicious mind.

ANDREA

You bet I've got a suspicious mind. Come on, out with it. What've you been up to?

LOUISE

I've not been up to anything.

ANDREA

In my day the worst was assumed when a girl stayed out all night.

LOUISE

Why don't you stop beating about the bush and ask me, "Louise, did you have sex?"

ANDREA

Sex!

LOUISE

Yes, sex! Sex. You know, sex! The stuff you make all the more alluring because you treat it as forbidden fruit.

ANDREA

Don't point your finger at me like that. (pushes her hand away) What have you got to say for yourself?

LOUISE

Nothing. And if you kept your eyes open you'd see we've moved out of the dark ages. It's a way of life now.

ANDREA

Not for my daughter, it isn't. (pushes her)

LOUISE

Hey! Stop that!

ANDREA

And what do you mean "It's a way of life now?"

LOUISE

It's obvious, isn't it? You can't take two steps without coming face to face with it. It's on T.V. In magazines. On posters in the metro. In art. In poetry. In literature. Everywhere. Naughty, ecstatic, wicked sex. It's all around us. Don't you see it? Or is it you don't want to see it?

ANDREA

Cheap talk like that won't get you anywhere.

LOUISE

It's not cheap.

ANDREA

You'll be saying it's not cheap to stay all night at Michael's apartment next!

LOUISE

Can't you get it through your head? It was a party. An all-nighter.

ANDREA

And it'll be the last all-nighter you'll go to. I'm telling you, Louise, fornication is a sin.

LOUISE

Oh, God! The sanctimonious act again! (bows to the picture of the Pope) You hear that, Your Eminence? A sin. A sin.

ANDREA

Don't you mock me.

LOUISE

Come on, you weren't born yesterday. Dad can't even watch a girllie show on T.V. without getting a...Without getting all worked up.

ANDREA

Stop that disgusting talk this instant!

LOUISE

Glve over! Everyone does it these days. And it's better to be open and honest about it than closed and secretive like you. In your day girls got their thrills from smutty books and imagining they were hot hookers. I think there's something very dirty about that.

ANDREA

Stop it!

LOUISE

But I'm forgetting, aren't I? British girls are too refined to even imagine themselves screwing, aren't they?

ANDREA

Stop it! I won't put up with such filth. And I won't stand here listening to you saying it's all right. It's not all right to sleep with someone before you're married.

LOUISE

Michael and I are in love!

ANDREA

Love? Love isn't sex, you know.

LOUISE

Who said it was?

ANDREA

And what's more, sex is only sanctified by marriage.

LOUISE

Why don't you tell dad that?

ANDREA

What's that supposed to mean?

LOUISE

Oh, nothing!

ANDREA

What's dad got to do with it?

LOUISE

Nothing. Forget it.

ANDREA

Well, so long as you don't forget it. The reason why God made your body, that is.

LOUISE (chants)

God made my body to propagate.

ANDREA

Quite right. After you're married. You know, I think we wasted our money sending you to Sacred Heart. Nothing seems to have rubbed off.

LOUISE (bob curtsey)

Yes, Sister Anne.

ANDREA

Don't be cheeky.

LOUISE (mimicking)

Those of you going into the secular world must remember the devil will be beckoning you from all corners. But you're not going to be taken in by his crafty ways, are you?

ANDREA

Well, that's a relief. At least something's sunk in. Any decent woman knows that you show self-control till the Nuptial Mass is over.

LOUISE

Okay, I'll buy that if you can answer this. What do decent men do when the Nuptial Mass is over?

ANDREA

Is this some kind of silly riddle?

LOUISE

Dad's a decent man, isn't he?

ANDREA

Why do you keep harping on dad?

LOUISE

He could tell you.

ANDREA

Tell me what?

LOUISE

What decent men do when the marriage ceremony is over.

Here's a clue. I'm a big girl now - in case you haven't noticed.

ANDREA

Oh, I've noticed all right.

LOUISE

Clue number two. I know all about the birds and the bees. Give up?

ANDREA

I've no idea what you're on about. Yes. I give up.

LOUISE

If dad can screw around, so can I.

ANDREA

If dad can do what?

LOUISE

Come on, you can't be that naive.

ANDREA

Stop patronizing me! Naive about what?

LOUISE

Haven't you ever asked yourself how come dad's so wrapped up
in his work he comes home that late every night?

ANDREA

If you're implying what I think you are, it's not true. (a
note of doubt)...You're wrong.

LOUISE

Am I?

ANDREA

It may be hard for you to believe, young lady, but some men
do have loyalty and dedication, even in this day and age,
and your dad happens to be one of them.

LOUISE

As long as he's got a technical illustrator to amuse him.

ANDREA

What are you saying?

LOUISE

Get with it! Don't you know he's been having it off with
her?

ANDREA

I don't know where you get it from - speaking like that.

LOUISE

No one can be that blind. You must know what's going on.

ANDREA

Be quiet.

LOUISE

You just don't want to hear about it, do you?

ANDREA

I have no idea what you're talking about.

LOUISE

About the affair dad's having with Judith Sweetman.

ANDREA

Judith Sweetman! That's a lie.

LOUISE

You know, I'm beginning to think you don't even know about it.

ANDREA

Don't you dare slander your father to cover up your own dirt.

LOUISE

Oh, all right. If you want to close your eyes it's your funeral. But I wouldn't be so quick to run off to England and give him free rein if it were me.

Enter JONATHAN carrying the mail. He stops to listen.

ANDREA

I won't stand here listening to you maligning your father. Just to change the subject so I'll forget we're talking

ANDREA (cont'd)

about you. And let's get this straight. As long as you're living under this roof, like it or not, you'll abide by our rules. That means you don't stay out all night. You want me to spell it out for you? YOU DON'T STAY OUT ALL NIGHT.

LOUISE

Well, if that's the case, I'll have to live under Michael's roof, won't I? Then I won't have to abide by your rules any longer. (LOUISE pushes JONATHAN aside.)

JONATHAN

Hey, watch it! (LOUISE stamps out the house. ANDREA glares after her.)

ANDREA (shouting)

You wait till your dad gets home.

ANDREA snatches up one of the holiday pamphlets, crumples it up viciously, and slams it into the garbage can.

JONATHAN

What do you want him to do - ground her?

ANDREA

I wish he would.

JONATHAN

Hear! Hear!

ANDREA

You needn't be so smug. Occasionally you're just as bad.

JONATHAN

Ah, but today isn't such an occasion.

ANDREA

Why? What's so special about today?

JONATHAN waves a large brown envelope in the air.

JONATHAN

Look what's come.

ANDREA

What is it?

JONATHAN

It came in the morning mail. (JONATHAN throws her the envelope.) Catch!

ANDREA

Jonathan! You've been accepted. You have, haven't you? I can tell.

JONATHAN

Yep! (excited) Well, go on. Open it. Then bow down before the great, fabulous, almighty, terrific Jonathan Thomas.

ANDREA (reads)

The faculty of arts and sciences is pleased to inform you that an F.W. Davies sports scholarship has been awarded to you for the forthcoming session. (ANDREA stops reading, puts the letter down, and hugs Jonathan.) A scholarship! Congratulations, Jonathan. You are great, fabulous, terrific. I'm so proud of you.

JONATHAN

Not bad for starters, eh?

ANDREA

Why didn't you say right away you'd won a scholarship?

JONATHAN

You didn't ask.

ANDREA

I'll give you didn't ask! (ANDREA playfully swipes him with the letter.) Oh, Jonathan, it's wonderful.

JONATHAN

Yah, I'm pretty pleased about it myself. Just call me Joe Montana of the San Francisco 49ers! You're talking to a super-pro!

ANDREA

(like a sport's commentator) He's running up on the outside. See that man go.

JONATHAN

He kicks. A-a-and....he scores. (JONATHAN throws his arms in the air and jumps around like an idiot.) Yeah for Thomas! Thomas scores again. (He remembers something and suddenly stops.) Talking of scoring. Where's dad? I got him a ticket for tonight's game.

ANDREA

He's not back yet.

JONATHAN

Back from where?

ANDREA

Rivière-du-Loup.

JONATHAN

What's he doing there?

ANDREA

You don't notice anything, do you, Joe Montana? He went up two days ago to check out some dimensions. I thought he would be back by now.

JONATHAN

Gosh, I hope he's home in time. I asked him specially. It's real important to me he attends the game tonight. When he sees me play and talks to the coach after, he'll change his mind. He's got to. I'm not cut out for engineering. I'd be a rotten engineer.

ANDREA

Nobody's going to make you do anything you don't want. He'll be as proud as Punch when you tell him about the scholarship, you'll see.

JONATHAN

Well, I dunno. Dad's always putting me down unless I say I'm going to follow in his footsteps. Anyone would think I didn't have a mind of my own. It's why he's just got to be there to see how great I am.

ANDREA

Don't worry. He'll be back in time for your game.

JONATHAN

Yah, well, maybe you'd better keep quiet about Queen's till after it. I want to show him that sports as a career is

JONATHAN (cont'd)

worthwhile. And it can work - for me anyway. (JONATHAN puts his arm round her.) O.K. mum? A deal?

ANDREA

A deal, but you don't have to prove yourself to your dad or anyone else, do you? Why, you could do whatever you set your mind to. Get in any university you wanted...Even Cambridge.

JONATHAN

Here we go again. Have you any idea how much Cambridge costs?

ANDREA

I'll let you into a little secret. Just between you and me. I have a bank account in England. Money left me by your gran. I've never touched it and it's grown to a fair amount. Enough to pay for your studies if you want.

JONATHAN

Um - well, er - - -

ANDREA

All my life I've dreamt of it. You, drinking sherry with your tutor, discussing the effects of European cultures on our language.

JONATHAN (laughs)

Mum, that's not a dream, it's a hallucination!

ANDREA

Picture it - King's College. History. Refinement.

JONATHAN

King's College! I don't think I exactly fit the bill.

ANDREA

But it's such a wonderful opportunity. Many boys your age would give their back teeth to go to Cambridge.

JONATHAN

Maybe next year, eh, mum?

ANDREA

They have sports at Cambridge too, you know - rugby and cricket. Imagine it, Jonathan, a degree from Cambridge.

JONATHAN (laughs)

Hey, hold it. I'm not even a freshman yet.

ANDREA

I only want what's best for you, Jonathan. I want to give you the opportunity I always craved and never had.

JONATHAN

Yah, well I know your heart's in the right place, mum, but it's a bit late now, isn't it? I'm already accepted into Queen's. So that's that, isn't it?

ANDREA

It doesn't have to be. I took the liberty of sending for application forms. There's still time if you'd like to try.

JONATHAN

Nah. I'll pass up on it - this year. (arm round her affectionately) But thanks, anyway.

ANDREA

It's a real gentleman's university. You'd love it. Punting on the river. Whites for tennis. And everyone in gowns.

JONATHAN

You're going to have to wait till next year, mumsy.

ANDREA

And each college has its own porter, you know. A sort of valet-protector. Wonderful security. They guard the halls far better than any alarm system. No one gets past the porters. I'd feel secure knowing you were safe. You don't hear about crazy idiots showering gun fire on students at Cambridge.

JONATHAN

Listen, mum - I can't go to Cambridge. Ever since I've been little you've gone on about it - what a wonderful university it is - with high standards - the greatest in the world. Well, I wasn't going to tell you, but I made an application, hoping to surprise you.

ANDREA

Jonathan! You made an application?

JONATHAN

Yes. But it kind of back-fired. They didn't want me. I need more courses. (grins at her) I was rejected. Can you imagine? Jonathan Thomas, the great Thomas, turned down! A dud! A real dummy! But I can try again next year. (hugs her) You sure you're not trying to get rid of me?

ANDREA

Queen's or Cambridge. What's the difference? (dolefully)
You'll still be away, won't you?

JONATHAN

Aw, mumsy! Queen's isn't so far.

ANDREA

I'm going to miss you, Jonathan. I'll be all alone.
The doorbell rings.

JONATHAN

No, you won't. (hugs her comfortingly) I'm not going for
good. And Queen's is a heck of a lot nearer than Cambridge.
Want me to get that?

ANDREA (nods)

It'll be Pam with the flowers. I asked her to pick some up
at the market.

JONATHAN opens the door. Enter PAMELA with a bunch of
flowers.

PAMELA

Thank you, Jonathan. (to Andrea) Aren't they beautiful?
Fresh in. Smell them.

ANDREA (opening purse)

Here. Is that right?

PAMELA (taking money)

On the nose.

ANDREA

Thanks for going. You're a doll. (PAMELA hands ANDREA the flowers.)

PAMELA

You're welcome.

ANDREA (nudging Jonathan)

Well, go on. Tell her.

PAMELA

Tell me what?

ANDREA (proudly)

He's won a scholarship to Queen's. (waves letter)

JONATHAN

A sports scholarship.

PAMELA

Come here, young man. Let your Auntie Pam give you a big hug. (hugs and kisses him) You must be very proud of him. Well done, Jonathan.

JONATHAN (bashful)

Er...thanks...(JONATHAN looks as if he wants to leave them to it.) Well...er...if you don't mind 've got one or two things to do ---

ANDREA

It's all right, Jonathan, Pam understands. You don't have to be polite. Here. Put your letter somewhere safe.

JONATHAN takes the letter and exits upstairs.

PAMELA

You must feel very happy about Jonathan, Andrea. He's a bright boy.

ANDREA

I am. Very pleased. If only I could feel as pleased about Louise. I'm most upset with her.

PAMELA

Why, what's Louise done?

ANDREA

She's moving in with that scruffy boyfriend.

PAMELA

Oh, is that all? From the way you said it, I thought it must be a major catastrophe.

ANDREA

It is.

PAMELA (laughs)

She'll soon be back when she has to cook, clean, and do her own laundry. You shouldn't get yourself all hot and bothered over it.

ANDREA

I know I shouldn't, but I do. I'm afraid I'll have to forget about England.

PAMELA

Nonsense! Think of it like this, if she can have fun, why shouldn't you?

ANDREA

No. I'll have to keep my eye on her. I'll lose my deposit, but England's out this time. Thank you for going to the market for these. I'll put them in water. (ANDREA goes through to the kitchen and we hear the water running.)

PAMELA (chuckles)

Come on, Andrea - have you forgotten what it's like to be young? Why, I remember you telling me you chose to go to College in London just to be near your boyfriend. (chuckles again) I bet you didn't tell your parents about that, did you?

ANDREA (still from kitchen)

Of course not.

PAMELA

There you are then. You've no room to criticize poor Louise. She's a good girl really. She doesn't mean to hurt you.

ANDREA (returning with flowers)

Maybe not, but she bothers me all the same. And to think I used to believe marriage and motherhood would be so simple. When I was young I had it all figured out. I used to dream of a thatched cottage somewhere in the Cotswolds, finches twittering in the hedges, country walks down winding lanes, shandy in the pub, wild brambleberries in the fall, a loving family, - and instead, here I am, living in an Arctic wilderness with countless complications.

PAMELA (laughs)

My goodness! The world's coming to an end today, isn't it? You should be in the pink after that good news about Jonathan.

ANDREA

Between you and me, I have mixed feelings. I'll be so lonely not having him around.

PAMELA

Lonely? Where's Mark? How do you figure you'll be lonely when you've got Mark?

ANDREA

Mark's hardly ever home any more. (ANDREA begins to cry.) And now Louise on top of it all.

PAMELA (arm round Andrea)

What you need is a holiday. I went to a lot of trouble to get you on that charter flight to England. And you've already paid your deposit. So go!

ANDREA

No, I can't. I need to be near the children.

PAMELA

On the contrary, you need to get away from them. I prescribe a change. It'd do you the world of good. Make you feel like a new person.

ANDREA

My heart wouldn't be in it.

PAMELA

Nonsense. If you don't go to England, get Mark to take you South. For some beach and sunshine.

ANDREA (shrugs)

I just couldn't - under the circumstances.

PAMELA

What circumstances?

ANDREA

Oh, just circumstances.

PAMELA

What are you trying to tell me? There isn't another woman again, is there?

ANDREA

Louise thinks there is.

PAMELA

And what do you think?

ANDREA

I think there is too.

PAMELA

Well, if that's the case, take off. Flaunt your independence! Have a fling! Give him a taste of his own medicine! I know I would if my Tom kept playing around.

ANDREA

Why? Why? What have I done to deserve this?

PAMELA

Oh, come on. It's not that bad.

ANDREA

Things are worse than you think.

PAMELA

Why don't you tell me about it?

ANDREA

Mark and I never talk to each other any more.

PAMELA

Oh?

ANDREA

He didn't even come home last night.

PAMELA

Oh dear. I see.

ANDREA

Louise says he's having an affair with Judith Sweetman.

PAMELA

How does she know?

ANDREA

I never asked her. But my instinct says she's right. I've had a feeling about it all along. There were signs, but I didn't want to see them.

PAMELA

Fancy keeping something like that all to yourself. You should've confided in someone, you know. A trouble shared is a trouble halved.

ANDREA

Well, I have in a way. An old school friend.

PAMELA

Boyfriend?

ANDREA

Don't be silly. My friend who's a fashion designer.

PAMELA

In England?

ANDREA

Yes. Katie.

PAMELA

Go on.

ANDREA

Well, last month Katie came over on a business trip and she phoned me.

PAMELA

And?

ANDREA

We got together.

PAMELA

And?

ANDREA

It was like turning the hands of the clock back...We had such a good time. You'd like Katie. She's full of vitality. And when we both attended Chelsea Art College, we had so many laughs together. You won't believe this, Pam,

ANDREA (cont'd)

but we used to dress up all arty and hang around the most dingy joints we could find. I remember once we were in a pub off Piccadilly Circus - The Pig and Whistle. And we became obstreperous, shouting loudly, "More ale," and "Which is the way to the plsshouse?" Showing off. Everyone was amused and we were pretty pleased with ourselves. It's the sort of thing we used to do - let our hair down and act silly. We had so much fun...It's the way it always is with Katie. I guess it's why I like her so much.

PAMELA

What did she say about Mark?

ANDREA

She doesn't know how I put up with him. (ANDREA buries her head in her hands.) Oh, God!

PAMELA

She's not butch, is she? You can tell me, you know.

ANDREA (shocked)

No. No, it's nothing like that.

PAMELA

Then what's bothering you?

ANDREA

At first it was just fun and we spent hours reminiscing over old times, but by the time she left I was dreadfully homesick and dying to go back.

PAMELA

And have you heard from her since?

ANDREA

Of course. She even offered me a job if I ever feel inclined to take it.

PAMELA

Is she married? This friend?

ANDREA

No.

PAMELA

I just wondered. Go on.

ANDREA

Well, that's about it. But I've been unhappy about the whole thing. I mean, it's not right to feel so nostalgic when I've made my life here.

PAMELA

Of course it is. The grass always seems greener on the other side, and we're all entitled to a little self-pity. But would you want to go back? For good, I mean.

ANDREA

That's the trouble. I think I would. Oh, I don't know. I shouldn't, and I feel so guilty. What should I do?

PAMELA

Well, seeing as you're asking - I'd say to myself: Whatever Mark can do, I can do better. I'd take a leaf out of his

PAMELA (cont'd)

book. Go on that holiday. Eye the guys up and down. Get it out of your system, so to speak.

ANDREA (smiling)

That's what Katie says. The trouble is, I don't even know if he is having an affair. It's just that Louise says - but maybe she was making it up. To get back at me. I just feel confused and mixed-up.

PAMELA (chuckles)

I'll say you are!

ANDREA

I only want to be happy.

PAMELA

Of course you do. (rising to leave) So, think about my advice. Take that holiday. Meet up with Katie again and have yourself a bit of fun. (looks at watch) Oh God. I've got to run. I have an appointment with a client. Look, Andrea, I'll hold your booking till this evening.

ANDREA

You're a good soul, Pam.

PAMELA

Nonsense! I do what I have to do, that's all. Just as long as we're happy, eh? (winks) Now don't you worry about me if you opt out of the trip. I'll have half of the women's guild for company. (They smile at each other.) Just calm yourself and think things over, and I'll call round this

PAMELA (cont'd)

evening in case you want the ticket, but I'm afraid I can't hold it any longer. I'll have to let it go after tonight. See you.

PAMELA exits leaving her purse on the chair. ANDREA sits at the table in thought. JONATHAN enters from the stairs.

JONATHAN

Got anything to be mailed? I'm going to the post office.

ANDREA

Yes, as a matter of fact, I have. As long as you make sure they weigh it this time. I don't want my friend in the U.K. thinking me a skinflint who never puts adequate postage on my letters. It's upstairs. Hang on. (exits upstairs)

The front door bell rings and JONATHAN answers. PAMELA re-enters.

PAMELA

I'd forget my head if it wasn't screwed on properly. Where did I leave my bag? (sees purse) Ah, there it is. Went to open the car and realized I didn't have the keys.

JONATHAN (handing it over)

There you are.

ENTER ANDREA carrying a large envelope and a pile of Mark's suits and pants.

ANDREA

You back?

PAMELA

Forgot my bag. Must fly.

ANDREA

Bye, Pam.

EXIT PAMELA

ANDREA

Here you are, Jonathan. (ANDREA hands him a bulky large envelope.) And here's the money.

JONATHAN

I thought you said a letter. This weighs a ton.

ANDREA

It's just a few sketches.

JONATHAN (eyeing clothes)

I've got some pants for the cleaners too.

ANDREA

I'm not taking them to the cleaners. (ANDREA begins to empty the pockets.) I'm just getting them ready. Leave your pants on the bed. I'll take them tomorrow...I thought you were going to mail those letters.

JONATHAN

I am...Ciao!

EXIT JONATHAN

ANDREA continues searching through the pockets. Eventually she finds what she is looking for.

ANDREA

Hah! Florida! (reads) Mr. and Mrs. Thomas! Five hundred and thirty-three dollars! For three nights! Mr. and Mrs. Thomas! You bastard!

Lights down.

SCENE TWO Evening

MARK (offstage)

Hello. Anybody home? I'm back.

MARK enters wearing a business suit. He is carrying a travelling bag and a briefcase. He puts them down, goes to the foot of the stairs, looks puzzled, then calls again.

Hello. I'm back...Hallooo! Where is everyone? Hello.

ENTER ANDREA

MARK

Ah! There you are.

ANDREA

Hello.

MARK goes to kiss her cheek.

MARK

It went very well. A big slum clearance job that'll change the face of Rivière-du-Loup. A commercial development and a housing project down by the water - nice little townhouses

MARK (cont'd)

with landscaped gardens. It's got to be cleared by the town planning agency first.

He removes his jacket, places it over a chair, and opens the brief case.

ANDREA

I thought you'd be back last night.

MARK takes a gift-wrapped package out of his case.

MARK

What have you been doing? How's the trip to England coming along?

He hands ANDREA the present and gives her a light peck on the cheek.

ANDREA

I thought you'd be here yesterday.

MARK

What's the matter?

ANDREA

I was worried about what happened to you.

MARK

Nothing happened to me. It all went very smoothly. I just have to sort out the walls on the commercial end of it.

Fire walls. You know. Plasterboard and steel. Flamand -

Dupont want walls with a range of uniform finishes for

load-bearing elements. Walls that give sound reduction.

Have you had your cup of tea?

ANDREA

No. Did you leave this morning then?

MARK

Yes. I could do with a sandwich and cup of tea.

ANDREA

I phoned the hotel.

MARK

When?

ANDREA

Last night. They said you'd checked out.

MARK

Did they?

ANDREA

Where were you?

MARK

On the road.

ANDREA

Then why did you say you left this morning?

MARK

I don't know why I said I left this morning. It just seemed less complicated that way. I checked out of the hotel because I was tired and didn't want to face the whole drive this morning. (MARK puts the cases down.)

ANDREA

Did you go into the office?

MARK

Christ, Andrea, what is this?

ANDREA

You forgot about Jonathan's game.

MARK

Jeez! (MARK hits his head with his hand then looks at watch.)

ANDREA

You're too late now. It started nearly three hours ago.

(ANDREA meets his gaze.) Who were you with?

MARK

Aw, don't be like that, Andrea. You're not usually suspicious.

ANDREA

Yes, I am.

MARK

I don't like you being suspicious. It's humiliating.

ANDREA

I'm doing my best not to humiliate you.

MARK

For you, I mean. It's humiliating for you. (long pause) I drove to Rivière-du-Loup with one of the men. We had a busy day. Signed the contract. Got the hell out of the place. Stayed overnight at Port Joli. Left this morning. Took the contract into the office. Then I came home, not dreaming

MARK (cont'd)

that after twenty-three years I'd have to account for all my movements.

ANDREA

You stayed overnight at Port Joli?

MARK

Yes.

ANDREA

You and this other guy from the office?

MARK

Yes. Can I put my stuff away now? (He picks up his bags.)

ANDREA

How did you sleep? (MARK stops and gives her a blank look.)

Well, did you?

MARK (puts bags down)

Did I what? Oh, what's the point? You'll only say I'm lying.

ANDREA

And are you?

MARK

What's that supposed to mean?

ANDREA

Are you lying?

MARK

About what?

ANDREA

Was Judith with you last night?

MARK

Why Judith?

ANDREA

I know it's her. The name keeps coming up, "Judith's feeling nervous about the construction promotion in Ottawa. Where are the tranquillizers?" "If you're throwing out that end table, I'll give it to Judith for her plants." It's Judith, isn't it?

MARK

Your jealousy is getting on my nerves.

ANDREA

Talk to me, Mark. Tell me about it. (silence) I do know about this sort of thing. We start off like one of those swans destined to spend its life with its mate. The exclusiveness of marriage. The familiar bond of matrimony. The natural way it is. And yet, how strange to find this way of living doesn't always apply to our special case. I don't want anyone else for myself, but sometimes someone comes along, not always the best looking or the most appropriate, but you know in another life, or at another time, it would be him. Or her. Don't you agree?

MARK

Er...well---

ANDREA

There's a small fluttering. A buoyancy of feeling, like the sunlight flooding right through you. Nothing intended, but the chemistry mingles and you catch a glimpse of what it might be like with someone else. And as a sort of politeness, to show you haven't missed it, you suppress it, but not too much because you want to keep the inviting sparkle dancing on the surface. So there is also a sense of promise. All that's needed is the slightest push and you won't hold those feelings back any longer. (ANDREA produces the hotel bill she found in Mark's pocket and pushes it in front of his nose.) Judith. Right?

MARK

Where the Christ did you get that?

ANDREA

Last time you swore it would never happen again.

MARK

I know.

ANDREA

And here you are doing an encore. Don't you have any feelings for me?

MARK

We're still together, aren't we? Don't I keep you clothed and fed? Aren't I paying for the kids to go to college? You have a nice home. A better life-style than many. Of course I have feelings for you.

ANDREA

After Francine you promised faithfully that would be it.
What happened to your promise? Tell me, Mark. If it were
me, you'd ask me.

MARK

Have I ever asked you?

ANDREA

Of course not. Because you know there's no reason to. What
happened last night?

pause

MARK

I spent the night in Port Joli instead of Rivière-du-Loup
and I fibbed to you because it seemed like infidelity. But
what you really want to know is did I sleep with her?

ANDREA

Yes. Did you?

MARK

No.

ANDREA

Did you want to?

MARK

Oh, for Christ's sake!

ANDREA

If it were me, you would ask me.

MARK

I'd respect your privacy.

ANDREA

I've nothing to be private about. Did you?

MARK

And I'd respect your dignity.

ANDREA

Yes, if you were in my shoes, you'd behave admirably, much better than me. But I don't like playing games. Neither do I believe in casual relationships. You know, "How's your lover today, Mark?" "Very well, Andrea. How's yours?" I care, Mark, that's why I'm asking you. Not caring is like not loving. Did you or didn't you?

ENTER JONATHAN through the front door. He is carrying a large sports bag and looks hot and sweaty.

MARK

This is interrogation, it isn't caring. If I had an affair it would be out of need. Care about that, Andrea?

ANDREA

Need? (pause) What do you mean, need?

MARK

You know perfectly well what I mean.

ANDREA throws the gift at him and storms upstairs.

JONATHAN

Why the hell didn't you come to the game?

MARK

I was late leaving Rivière-du-Loup - I mean Port Joli.

JONATHAN

You said you'd be there.

MARK

Look, It's not my fault I was late.

JONATHAN

Oh, come off it. You could've made the last quarter.

MARK

You knew I had an out-of-town job.

JONATHAN

And you knew I'd leave your ticket at the box office. If I were you I'd tell your boss where to shove his housing projects.

MARK

Oh, really?

JONATHAN

I wouldn't have him running me all over the country. I'd quit first.

MARK

And I suppose you think it's easy to find a construction company to hire me at my age.

JONATHAN

I wouldn't let him push me around, especially when my son's playing a big game.

MARK

Unfortunately, Jonathan, that's not the way the business world operates.

JONATHAN

He'd have let you go if you explained.

MARK

Oh, yah, sure.

JONATHAN

Well, he would.

MARK

Look, son, I don't have to explain myself to you, to my boss, or to anyone else. But for your information, I have to work hard if I'm going to make enough money to put you through engineering.

JONATHAN

Yeah, well, I don't know if I want to be an engineer. It's why I wanted you to come to the game. It was important to me. The coach says I'm an excellent defenceman.

MARK

Look, we've been through all this before.

JONATHAN

I still think you could have made it for once. The coach wanted to talk to you.

MARK

I'll come next time - O.K.?

JONATHAN

There won't be a next time. That's it. Last game of the season.

MARK

I know you're disappointed, Jonathan, and I'm very sorry I didn't make it, but, son, I'm afraid business comes before pleasure. (MARK slaps JONATHAN'S back.) A man's got to earn his bread, eh?

JONATHAN (unsmiling)

All the other dads were there.

MARK (shrugs)

I'm sorry, Jonathan. It wasn't my fault.

JONATHAN

You could have come late...like Pete's dad.

MARK

Look, Jonathan, I've said I'm sorry. What more do you want?

JONATHAN

And Robert's pop came late too.

MARK

Sorry, son, but I do have to unpack my bags now.

JONATHAN

Even Billy Palmer's dad...straight from the garage...in his greasy overalls...Said he wouldn't miss Billy's game for all the tea in China. He kept waving and yelling, "Go to it, Billy Boy. You can do it." And Billy did. He actually scored a touchdown.

MARK

Good for him.

JONATHAN

I pretended not to notice Billy played harder when his dad yelled him on, but the more I pretended the more angry I got. There was Mr. Palmer, sputtering saliva through his yellow teeth, waving an orange lunch pail, shouting, "Go to it, Billy Boy. You can do it." And Billy's face like an overripe tomato.

MARK

Look, I just told you, I can't discuss this now. I've got to unpack.

JONATHAN

Why can't you do your work in office hours? You never take time for me.

MARK

Yes, I do.

JONATHAN

Shit! If Mr. Palmer could make it, why couldn't you?

MARK (sighs)

Because I'm not Mr. Palmer.

JONATHAN

You've always got excuses, you have. You piss me off!

MARK

Don't you speak to me like that.

JONATHAN

I'll speak to you how I want. It's about time someone did.

JONATHAN (cont'd)

I'm fucking sick of you. Don't you have any consideration for anyone else but yourself? You think I'm dense? You think I don't know what you're up to?

MARK

Now look here---

JONATHAN

And what about mum?

MARK

What about mum?

JONATHAN

She's always taking shit from you.

MARK

What?

JONATHAN

Yes, shit! Like the hell you put her through with that party last week for your office cronies. To say nothing of all the work (sarcastically imitating Mark's orders) - spring rolls, ginger chicken, garlic shrimp, three kinds of rice - serving all those miserable phonies. You found time for them all right, didn't you? And you're so selfish you walked out and left us to clean up after you.

MARK

Are you through, Jonathan?

JONATHAN

No, I'm not. Why do we have to put up with your rotten office all the time when you can't even give up one lousy evening for my game? (ENTER ANDREA from the stairs. She stops to listen.) And then you give us this crap about not getting home in time because you were tied up with commercial projects in Rivière-du-Loup. Expecting us to swallow that. You must think we're real dodos. Well, treating me like I don't exist is one thing, but I won't have you upsetting mum as well.

MARK

Now you listen to me, Mr. Bigmouth ---

ANDREA (Interrupts)

Jonathan's right. I was worried out of my mind when you didn't come home, especially when Louise decided to play the same game.

MARK

What do you mean the same game?

ANDREA

She stayed the night at Michael's.

MARK

Who the hell is Michael?

ANDREA

If you were around more often you'd know.

JONATHAN

That's it, mum, show him your teeth for a change!

MARK

I'll show you my teeth if you don't shut up - the two of you!

ANDREA

Don't tell us to shut up. This is our home as much as yours.

MARK

What is this? A conspiracy? You think I wanted to miss your game? You think I enjoy working overtime? You think I like staying in strange hotels?

ANDREA

Yes. To be with Judith.

JONATHAN

That's right.

ANDREA

You may as well stay with her.

MARK

I'm sorry I didn't.

JONATHAN

So are we.

MARK

Very well. I will...Oh, get stuffed, the pair of you!

(MARK picks up his bags and exits.)

JONATHAN (shouts after him)

Good riddance. You deserve each other. (The door to the vestibule bangs behind him, followed by the echo of the front door also being slammed, as it does so, the picture of the Pope crashes to the floor.)

ANDREA

Now, at least, we know where we stand. Pick up the picture. I'm going to phone Pam. (JONATHAN picks up the picture, ANDREA lifts up the phone, As she is dialling, the doorbell goes.) Could you get that, Jonathan? (JONATHAN opens the door and PAMELA walks in, ANDREA puts the phone down.)

Mental telepathy! I was just phoning you.

PAMELA

Where's Mark off to in such a hurry? Squealing his wheels. He's asking for a speeding ticket.

JONATHAN

Serve him right.

PAMELA

Oh dear. You had words.

ANDREA

We've both had it up to here. Haven't we, Jonathan?

JONATHAN

Yes. (under breath) The asshole!

ANDREA

So, I'm going on that trip with you after all.

PAMELA

Well, that is good news.

JONATHAN

Good for you.

PAMELA

I'm so glad you've decided. I can't hang on to the ticket any longer.

ANDREA

Strike while the iron's hot. I'll write you the cheque straight away. (She doesn't.)

PAMELA

Jonathan, be a dear. Run and get my brief case out of my car before she changes her mind.

JONATHAN

Sure.

PAMELA

Here's the key...that one. (JONATHAN heads for the door.)
Don't forget to lock it.

JONATHAN

I won't.

EXIT JONATHAN

PAMELA

So obliging.

ANDREA

Yes. I'm going to miss him, especially after the blow up we just had with Mark.

PAMELA

I knew something was going on as soon as I walked in. You could cut the air with a knife. What's happened?

ANDREA

Big row. Mark's gone. To Judith Sweetman. (ANDREA takes hotel bill out of her pocket.) Here, quick, before Jonathan comes back. What do you make of that? Mark's shenanigans have been going on longer than I thought. See that date? He told me he was at a convention in Vancouver. No wonder he was up to his eyeballs in work for weeks after.

PAMELA

He doesn't stint himself, does he? The Fort Lauderdale Marriott on the Beach.

ANDREA

You can say that again. Look at that. Five hundred and thirty-three dollars!

PAMELA

And to think I suggested he take you there. What are you going to do?

ANDREA

I'm not going to do anything.

PAMELA

You're going to do nothing?

ANDREA

That's right. Nothing.

PAMELA

It's not my business, of course, but if it was my Tom, you wouldn't catch me sitting around doing nothing. I'd take myself right down to his girlfriend's place and have it out with him.

ANDREA

How can I when I don't know where she lives?

PAMELA

So find out.

ANDREA

How?

PAMELA

You're avoiding the issue again, aren't you? Frankly, Andrea, you shouldn't let him walk all over you like that. He'd soon change his attitude if you confronted him. I don't understand you. Why don't you tell him? Staying silent and making out everything's all right when it's not, is the worst thing you can do. If you go on pretending things are all right, you're the one who's going to feel hurt not him.

ANDREA (eyes to ceiling)

You're barking up the wrong tree, this time, Pam. I'm not feeling sorry for myself, and I couldn't care less what he does. He can play around with whoever he likes. I'm past being hurt. I couldn't give a damn. He doesn't affect me any more.

PAMELA

You don't have to play games with me, Andrea. I know you better than that.

ANDREA

It's true. In fact, since Katie was here I've been giving a lot of thought to myself. Thinking about what I've given up and what a bore I've become. Once I had hopes of a great future - like reaching the top of my field in children's fashions. And instead, where am I? Neck deep in blighted hopes. I don't suppose there's a Nobel Prize for Jilted wives, is there?

PAMELA

It must be glamorous to be in fashion.

ANDREA

I know it sounds glamorous, but it's not. It's hard work.

PAMELA

I'm sure it is.

ANDREA

But there are good times. There's an Eli award. Probably you've never heard about it because it's in the trade.

PAMELA

No, I haven't.

ANDREA

When I first came to Montreal I managed to win it. Twice. What a thrill it was. I had two great seasons because of it and was pretty much in demand.

PAMELA

I'm sure you were.

ANDREA

And everyone was wonderful - because I was young - the youngest designer in Canada.

PAMELA

The youngest?

ANDREA

So they said. I received the award at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel and everyone cheered and stood up to toast my success. And all I could think of, standing there clutching the trophy was: If only Mark could be here. If only he could see me. Silly, really. He was the last person to be thinking of at a time like that. I mean, I hardly even knew him. He didn't even like me all that much...When I think back on it, when Mark came on the scene, my designing career went out the window. Now I couldn't organize a season if you asked me...All wasted.

PAMELA

Not wasted - surely?

ANDREA

Well, maybe not completely. Katie says I'd soon pick it up again. (wistfully) To think what I gave up when I married Mark.

PAMELA

If that's how you feel, then why did you?

ANDREA

He didn't want a career woman for a wife. He can't stand them.

PAMELA

That's not the case with Judith Sweetman.

ANDREA

Precisely.

PAMELA

Do me a favour. Don't just sit there grumbling about it. Act.

ANDREA (with emphasis)

I will.

PAMELA

The question is, do you want him back or don't you? If you do, it's pointless sitting here doing nothing. Go and deal with it.

ANDREA

You've got it all wrong, Pam. I don't want him back. My mind's already made up. I'm putting a portfolio together and while I'm in England I'll ask Katie to help me get back into circulation.

PAMELA

What?

Sound of front door opening.

ANDREA

I've already set the wheels in motion. Tell you later.

ENTER JONATHAN and LOUISE

JONATHAN

Look what I found!

ANDREA

Louise!

LOUISE

Hello. (kisses Pamela) Jonathan told me you were here.
(to Andrea) I had to come and say sorry about this morning.
I've been feeling guilty all day. (LOUISE hugs ANDREA and gives her a kiss.)

JONATHAN

Here's your briefcase.

PAMELA

Thanks, Jonathan...The keys? (JONATHAN hands them over.)
You locked the door? (JONATHAN nods.)

LOUISE

I really am sorry. (kisses ANDREA again) I'm sorry.

ANDREA

That's all right, Louise. One day, when you have children of your own you'll understand why I was worried.

LOUISE

You see, Michael and me - er - we - er - well ---

ANDREA

What are you trying to say?

JONATHAN

She's trying to say she's got a screw loose.

LOUISE

Idiot! I'm trying to say it's not like you think - between me and Michael. We're going to get married.

JONATHAN

I told you so - off her rocker!

ANDREA

Married! You haven't even finished McGill yet.

LOUISE

I don't mean right now. We're going to live together first to see if it works out.

JONATHAN

Phew! I thought for a minute you'd decided to come back.

I'm moving into your room.

LOUISE

Who gave you permission to move into my room? (LOUISE looks questioningly at Andrea.)

ANDREA

Don't look at me.

LOUISE (to Jonathan)

You don't waste any time, do you? (to Andrea) So I wanted to say I'm sorry I upset you. And Michael says he's sorry too. We were wrong to make you worry. We were out of line. Anyway, we apologize.

ANDREA

Apology accepted.

PAMELA

Sometimes it's hard for a mother to realize her children are growing up and don't need her any more, Louise. Isn't that so, Andrea?

LOUISE (hugs her)

I'll always need you, mum. (as an after thought) And dad too.

JONATHAN

That prick!

PAMELA

Jonathan! (ANDREA frowns at JONATHAN.)

LOUISE

What's going on?

JONATHAN

Dad's run off with Judith Sweetman.

LOUISE

I can't say I'm surprised. He's been having it on the side with her for ages.

ANDREA

Isn't it about time you told me how you know?

LOUISE

Well, a couple of weeks ago, Michael was giving me my first driving lesson. God, I was so nervous! I'd never been behind the wheel of a car before - except at the fairground. I was very, very, nervous. Michael kept saying, "Keep your hands at the ten o'clock position and your left foot near

LOUISE (cont'd)

the brake." So, here I am, making my way nice and slow down this street. God it was busy. Talk about stagefright! Shit! Trucks honking to the left. Taxis to the right. Buses behind. Man, was I scared. I see it: An accident. A fleet of ambulances coming to take us all away. The feeling was so intense I wanted desperately to go home.

ANDREA

Well, that's normal when you're learning.

LOUISE

So, okay. We come to a traffic light. And I say to Michael: "If we don't get the hell out of this traffic right now I'm going to pee in my pants."

ANDREA

Charming!

LOUISE

So I turn right, off the main road. And the road turns right again. Then there's a detour. And the next thing we know, we're lost. Well, Michael starts squirming in his seat, not wanting to admit he doesn't know where we are, so he says, "Pull over. Let's see how you park. Then I'll get my jacket out of the trunk." But I knew he really wanted to look at the street map. So I stop. Michael jumps out. And it was then I saw dad.

ANDREA

Dad? Where?

LOUISE

Picture it. There I am sitting in the driver's seat waiting for Michael to find his Jacket, when dad's grey Civic pulls up opposite us on the other side of the road. Out they jump - the two of them.

JONATHAN

They?

LOUISE

Dad and Judith Sweetman. God, you should've seen all the bags of groceries. What the hell, I say to myself, is going on? He's supposed to be in Halifax. So, out I get and follow them into the lobby to do a bit of detective work. But they've gone. Flit. Vanished into thin air. So I look down the names on the mailboxes and it was like I thought. She's in 102.

PAMELA

Now you can't say you don't know where she lives! Why don't you go over?

ANDREA

What, at this time of night?

JONATHAN

It's only nine o'clock.

ANDREA

Don't be silly. It's nearly bedtime.

LOUISE

You're the one who's silly if you take that crap.

PAMELA

That's what I've been saying.

ANDREA

Why? What am I going to gain from it?

PAMELA

The satisfaction of having faced up to him. He uses you like a door mat. Show him you're not going to take it any more.

JONATHAN

Yes. Show him you're not afraid.

ANDREA

Is that what you think? I'm afraid of him?

JONATHAN

Well...you've always done what you were told.

LOUISE

And turned a blind eye to what he was up to.

PAMELA

Been humiliated.

ANDREA

So you lot think I should add to my aggravation and make myself all uptight and tense just to let him know he's gone too far?

PAMELA

Yes.

ANDREA

I can't just storm into his girlfriend's apartment and start attacking him - just like that...(They all stare at her.)...Can I?...It'd be different if I were twenty years younger.

PAMELA

Twenty years younger? What difference would that make?

ANDREA

I'd have more courage.

LOUISE

Courage! That's the trouble. You've never had any courage. If you'd had courage, you wouldn't have let it get this far.

ANDREA

What did you expect me to do with two young children? Live in poverty in a basement apartment?

LOUISE

It would have been a hell of a lot better than listening to you two arguing every night.

ANDREA

Arguing? For your information, I kept his affairs quiet because of you two.

LOUISE

Maybe you thought you did. You used to wait up till all hours and when he came in you'd speak in riddles so we wouldn't understand, but we got the gist all right. Didn't we, Jonathan?

JONATHAN

Yes. We used to sit at the top of the stairs listening, trying to make it all out.

LOUISE

Straining our ears.

JONATHAN

I remember my tenth birthday...I was in bed...It was very late and dad hadn't come home. And I heard a key opening the front door. Somehow it was done very gently, quietly. Very secretly...but I still heard it. A key. Turning slowly...in the front door. And I ran to the landing - excited, to see what he'd brought. But before I even reached the stairs, you came out and started shushing and whispering. And I thought...'f only I could hear...if only I could catch a word or two...just a couple...I'd understand why he didn't come home.

LOUISE

Didn't you think we knew?

ANDREA (sighs)

What's done can't be undone.

LOUISE

What was the point of keeping it quiet?

ANDREA

I don't know - I was trying to protect you children.

LOUISE

But instead, you made your own life a misery.

ANDREA

I know. - Until a couple of years ago when I suddenly couldn't stand it any longer. That's when I decided to join the art society.

PAMELA

Ah! My advice.

ANDREA

Time's gone quickly since then. Too quickly.

PAMELA

And you've been much happier, haven't you?

ANDREA

Yes. But when Katie came over and I saw how successful she is, something in me started a yearning. "Is this it?" I said to myself. "Is this the best you can do with your life? What happened to your ambitions? Where's your personality?"

PAMELA

So?

ANDREA

So - I've made up my mind.

PAMELA

You're going to see this Judith Sweetman?

ANDREA

No. I'm definitely going to England.

PAMELA

That's a good start. And then?

ANDREA

One thing at a time. Let me get my cheque book. How much did you say the total fare was?

PAMELA

There's no panic. You can write it later.

ANDREA

No. I'll settle it here and now.

Lights down.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

ACT TWO

Night. Judith's apartment.

Judith's living room. Uncluttered and modern. A partly open door leads to unseen hall and unseen front door. One or two other doors to other rooms. A stereo is playing music. Mark's bags are in full view near the front door. JUDITH discovered ON. She is sitting in a lounge chair doing some paper work. A door is opened and MARK enters fresh from the shower - maybe drying his hair with a towel. He is wearing casual outdoor clothes.

MARK

I've run you a bath. (JUDITH looks up and smiles.) Well?

JUDITH

Five minutes. Just finishing my paper work, like you should be doing. Do you want to turn the radio off? (MARK turns off the music.)

MARK

Like my new after-shave?

JUDITH

Very nice. (MARK kisses her hair and looks over her shoulder as she writes. He runs his fingers along the nape of her neck. She pretends to take no notice though it is obvious they are playing a game. He goes to the other side, in front of her, and walks his fingers up her leg. She

takes no notice. He wiggles his hips. She takes no notice. He flashes. She takes no notice. He walks back behind her again, turns fast, and grabs her causing her to laugh. The assault turns into a long embrace.) You're a menace, you are. I'll never get my report written at this rate.

MARK

Sorry. (kiss) Sorry. (kiss) Sorry. I'll be good. Promise. I'll sit quietly and let you finish it off.

JUDITH

No, you won't. It's not working out anyway. I'll give it another shot after my bath.

MARK

Want me to scrub your back?

JUDITH (laughs)

Get lost!

MARK

That's not what you usually say!

JUDITH

Maybe not. (finger affectionately on the end of his nose) But I'm saying it tonight.

MARK (caresses her)

Judith (pulls her to him and caresses her)...Mm...(hot and heavy)...I love you, little bunnikins. Want to --- (MARK whispers something in her ear, laughs, and indicates the bedroom with his head.)

JUDITH

Hey! Keep your maulers to yourself, you naughty boy. (MARK kisses her and whispers again.) No. (JUDITH giggles.) I'm going to get cleaned up first.

MARK

Tell you what. While you soak in the bath, why don't I go home and pack the rest of my things and put an end to it?

JUDITH

An end to what?

MARK

All this running back and forth. Then we can be together all the time.

JUDITH (releases him)

I didn't mean you could move in for good.

MARK

Did I misunderstand you?

JUDITH

Obviously you did.

MARK

Are you trying to be funny?

JUDITH

No.

MARK

You're putting me on, aren't you? My being here never bothered you before.

JUDITH

Before you always went back home. (JUDITH places her finger affectionately on the tip of Mark's nose.)

MARK

You mean I can't move in?

JUDITH

I mean I like my privacy.

MARK

Privacy?

JUDITH

Yes.

MARK

You're kidding, aren't you?

JUDITH

No. I happen to like my freedom and I don't want to share my apartment - at least, not just now.

MARK

What do you mean - not just now?

JUDITH

Well ---

MARK

You're hiding something from me, aren't you?

JUDITH

You're right.

MARK

I knew you were.

JUDITH (bubbly)

You could tell?

MARK

Of course.

JUDITH

Er...er.

MARK

Well, what is it?

JUDITH

You're ready for it?

MARK

Come on. Stop stalling.

JUDITH

Sure you want to know?

MARK

You little tease - out with it!

JUDITH

I've got some good news.

MARK

So I gathered.

JUDITH

You remember when I went to the doctor, before we left for
Rivière-du-Loup?

MARK

For your annual check up?

JUDITH

Yes. Well, she did a pregnancy test.

MARK

Oh God! You're not---

JUDITH (happy)

Yes, I'm going to have a baby. Isn't it exciting? I'm thrilled to bits. It's wonderful. Aren't you happy about it?

MARK (turns back to hide shock)

Oh no. (JUDITH places her arms round his waist and lays her head against his back.)

JUDITH

Oh yes.

MARK (eyes to ceiling)

Christ!

JUDITH

I thought you'd be surprised.

MARK

Are you sure?

JUDITH (ecstatic)

Positive. (affectionately) So, I'll be sharing my apartment with the baby. (tousles his hair) But it won't change things one iota. We'll go on as we've always done.

MARK (turns to face her)

Judith, you're not a young kid any more. You're thirty-seven years old!

JUDITH

So?

MARK

You can't be serious. Babies take time and energy...lots of energy.

JUDITH

I know. I understand all that. And that's exactly why I want a child - while I still have the motivation. It may be my last chance. (cups his face in her hands) Look, I'll have my baby...and things will go on as usual. Can't we just go on enjoying life the way it is? (JUDITH kisses his nose.)

MARK (takes her hands)

The thing is, you're thinking of the baby in the abstract. But if you have this child, he won't be abstract, will he? He'll live right here in your apartment. And let's face it, it's hardly big enough for you, let alone a child as well. You'll have to move to a bigger place. Then you'll have to pay someone to look after it while you work. So we're not just talking about a wonder of creation here. We're also dealing with a problem of economics - which might be a good reason to reconsider your notion of engendering an offspring.

JUDITH

Mark, listen, I want this baby.

MARK

I know you do, but can you be sure it will be healthy?

JUDITH

What?

MARK

Especially at your age. Sometimes women go through nine months of pregnancy and everything is fine until the birth, then they lose it...so much anguish...sorrow. Had they known, it would have been better to abort right from the start.

JUDITH

Abort!

MARK (still holding hands)

It's a suggestion.

JUDITH

Forget it. I've been that path. It was rough, so I have a good sense of what it's like. And I said: "Never again."

MARK

You had an ---

JUDITH

Yes. I was seventeen.

MARK

How come you never told me?

JUDITH

I didn't tell anybody, not even my best friend. You see, I kept persuading myself it wasn't a fully developed baby,

JUDITH (cont'd)

Just a fetus. A nothing. But it backfired because it's constantly on my conscience. I imagine the baby as a beautiful girl. She looks sadly at me, blaming me for depriving her of life. And no matter how hard I try, I can't shake those impressions off. I feel like a murderer. So I'll never go through an abortion again. Never.

MARK (pats her)

I'm sorry. I didn't know.

JUDITH

It was painful, but I learnt certain things from it, too. So, some good has come out of it.

MARK

Like what?

JUDITH

This baby will be a factor in every calculation I make - big or small. She's a constant.

MARK

What happened to that other guy...the father?

JUDITH

I've no idea. Why?

MARK

Just wondering.

JUDITH

What?

MARK

Nothing just...you know.

JUDITH

You must have been wondering something. People don't just wonder nothing.

MARK

If you were...if you were using birth control?

JUDITH

No. What kind of question is that?

MARK

Don't get irritated. You asked me.

JUDITH

You mean you asked me. I was trying to tell you something totally different.

MARK

I made an association, that's all. And it wasn't an unreasonable association.

JUDITH

It was completely off the wall.

MARK

Off the wall?

JUDITH

And you know it.

MARK

It appeared to me to be a thought worth some exploration.

JUDITH (icily)

Well?

MARK

You were on the pill.

JUDITH

I stopped taking them.

MARK

What?! You deliberately set me up?

JUDITH

Are you aware that you're shouting?

MARK

My voice is raised for emphasis - a legitimate use for volume. Because you haven't answered me. Did you set me up?

JUDITH

Not really. I wanted a baby.

MARK

How do I know it's my baby?

JUDITH

What is this crap? I haven't been with anyone else for over a year. Are you insinuating I've been sleeping around?

MARK

No, but there is the ---

JUDITH

You telling me I don't know who the father is?

MARK

I'm supposed to trust your Judgement? Maybe a fog surrounds your memory of the impregnation.

JUDITH

You creep!

MARK

So, it's mine. Then I should at least have some say in what happens to it.

JUDITH

You want me to have another abortion, don't you? That's what this all this is about, isn't it? (They stand glaring at each other.) Oh! (JUDITH swoons.) Oh Mark! (She moves to the chair and slumps down.) I feel awful. Bring me a glass of water. Hurry. I'm so hot. (MARK runs to kitchen.) Open the window. I feel faint. (She leans back and fans herself with a magazine.) This is really depressing. Why are you doing this to me? (He runs back with the water.) I really like you. I really do. I don't want to quarrel.

MARK

It's all right...you just sit there quietly and compose yourself. (He sits on the arm of her chair and holds the glass for her to drink.) There we are. Nice and easy. Take another sip. And another. Slowly...How do you feel now?

JUDITH

Better, thanks.

MARK

But...we do have to talk...about what we're going to do -
right? That's all. O.K.?

JUDITH

Not now, Mark.

MARK

Just don't...I mean...at this moment make any overwhelming -
you know, conclusive decision. That would be absurd. I
mean, we must explore the possibilities.

JUDITH

Later - O.K.?

MARK

I mean this kid thing. You're choosing one way when really
it may be better to choose another.

JUDITH

Drop it, will you?

MARK

I'm just trying to explain.

JUDITH

So am I. I'M KEEPING MY BABY.

MARK

I mean - what do you know about babies?

JUDITH

What is this - some kind of test?

MARK

I'm not being mean. You've had absolutely no experience. What do you know?

JUDITH

I know you came from a screwed up family and had five brothers and sisters, and you were the oldest and had to look after the others cos your father ran off, and that's why you're so hostile about my baby.

MARK

That's right. Mum didn't have it easy bringing up kids ON HER OWN.

JUDITH

No need to shout. I get the message. You're saying I'm a dummy who can't cope.

MARK

Of course not. No. But it's not easy.

JUDITH

If your mother could manage five, then I most certainly can raise one.

MARK

But supposing there's complications - like Down's Syndrome? Statistics prove there is more possibility of the child being retarded in a late pregnancy - particularly with a first baby. There'll be umpteen tests...I'm only thinking of you.

JUDITH

I don't care if there's a million tests.

MARK

And what about when you start showing?

JUDITH

I'm not ashamed. I'll tell the truth.

MARK

Truth!

JUDITH

How can you keep a thing like that quiet?

MARK

Exactly - that's why you should get rid of it.

JUDITH

That "it" is our little baby - yours and mine.

MARK

Precisely - and I should have a say in the matter...Judith, there's a lot more to raising babies than dressing them pretty and wheeling them in carriages.

JUDITH

I'm not exactly thick, Mark. I do know what's involved. I didn't reach this decision overnight. I want this baby and I thought you'd want it too.

MARK

You thought wrong, Judith.

JUDITH

I guess I did.

MARK

That's the trouble with you, Judith, you didn't think at all.

JUDITH

Oh yes I did. I thought it out very carefully. And if you loved me you wouldn't be reacting like this because you'd see it's natural for me to want a child.

MARK

It'd be more natural to get rid of it.

JUDITH

No. It'd be more natural to get rid of you. What a good job you didn't unpack your bags.

MARK

Eh?

JUDITH

Your bags.

MARK

What about my bags?

JUDITH

It's a good job you didn't unpack them. All you have to do now is put them back in the car.

MARK

What are you telling me?

JUDITH

To get out.

MARK

We can't just call it quits like that.

JUDITH

We can. You obviously don't love me any more, so you can get out.

MARK

Judith, please. I'm sorry I suggested that about getting rid of the baby. Be reasonable. There are a lot of hidden factors. My family. Your age. Economics. Making sure it's a healthy baby.

JUDITH

You're not sorry. You meant it.

MARK

It's because I love you, I'm trying to make you reconsider. I'm thinking of your welfare. I want you to weigh all the pros and cons first...before you come to a final decision. Can't you see I'm talking this way because I do love you, Judith?

JUDITH

But I don't love you.

MARK

What?

JUDITH

I don't love you.

MARK

How can you say that?

JUDITH

I can't love someone with your kind of ideas.

MARK

It was just the heat of the moment. The shock.

JUDITH

No, it wasn't. You know that as well as I do. We've had fun together. But you can't call it love. Not real love. Infatuation, maybe, but not love.

MARK

It was love. It was. Look me in the eyes, Judith. I do love you. And you know it. I'd do anything for you. Anything.

JUDITH

It was just a game, Mark. It wasn't something you could build on.

MARK

We can...Please...Judith.

JUDITH

Look, Mark, I don't seem to have made myself clear. I value my independence and I want a child. It's as simple as that.

MARK

What the hell is this game you're playing after giving me the come on? - throw Mark out now we've used him?

JUDITH

That's how you interpret it.

MARK

So where do I go from here?

JUDITH

Where you always go - back home.

MARK

Back home! Don't be ridiculous! That's not what I mean.

JUDITH

O.K. So you're talking about us. Look, Mark, I said you could stay the night, but that's the end of the line. Finito. I don't want you around here after tomorrow morning.

MARK

Just like that, eh? Dropped off the map.

JUDITH

For God's sake - can it!

MARK

Don't you have any feelings?

JUDITH

Yes. I do. And that's why I'm keeping my baby...because, Mark, life is precious and you don't destroy it. You protect and nurture...(MARK goes to leave.)...Where are you going when I'm talking to you?

MARK (throws up hands)

Out. I've had enough.

MARK exits through the front door. JUDITH takes a long drink and swallows a pill. She puts the stereo on. She

fiddles with the stations, selects one to her taste, and goes into the bathroom. Sound of water running. The intercom rings and the bath water is turned off. JUDITH, somewhat irritated, comes out drying her hands on a towel. She picks up the phone.

JUDITH

Who is it?

ANDREA (voice over)

Judith? Judith Sweetman?

JUDITH

Yes. Who is this?

ANDREA (voice over)

Andrea. Andrea Thomas.

JUDITH

What do you want?

ANDREA (voice over)

I want to speak to Mark.

JUDITH

He's not here.

ANDREA (voice over)

He is.

JUDITH

Are you deaf? I said, he's not here.

ANDREA (voice over)

Hurry up. I'm not standing here all night.

JUDITH

How many times do I have to tell you? He's not here.

ANDREA (voice over)

If he's not there, then where is he?

JUDITH

Out.

ANDREA

Then I'll speak to you.

JUDITH

No, you won't. I've got nothing to say.

ANDREA (voice over)

Well, I've got plenty to say. And if you don't open up this door fast I'll create such a scene you'll be good and sorry.

So, if you don't want the whole building to hear what's going on, I'd advise you to let me in...Are you going to open up, or aren't you? (JUDITH presses the buzzer.) ...

Thank you, Judith. (JUDITH pushes Mark's cases into the bedroom, removes other evidence of Mark, smootns her hair, turns off the music, then opens the door. ANDREA appears and stands on the threshold.) Now. Where's Mark?

JUDITH

What does it take to get through to you? I'm not his keeper. He's probably gone for a walk.

ANDREA

Mark doesn't like walking.

JUDITH

Give me a break!

ANDREA

He must be here. His car's outside.

JUDITH

Come in and see for yourself. (JUDITH leads the way. She opens the bedroom door.) The bedroom. Empty. (She opens the bathroom door.) The bathroom. Empty...The kitchen. Empty. All empty. Satisfied?

ANDREA

For now. (She sweeps her eyes over the room.) I didn't realize there were new buildings at this end of town. Surprising. I never visualized Mark in something modern like this. He prefers places with more character and style. (walks to window) A pity your balcony overlooks the parking lot. Spills the view.

JUDITH

Some of us don't have time to sit on balconies admiring views. I, for one, am far too busy.

ANDREA

Yes - with my Mark.

JUDITH

Your Mark?

ANDREA

Yes, my husband.

JUDITH

Hardly - from what Mark's told me.

ANDREA

I shouldn't go by hearsay if I were you. Mark is not the most reliable source of information. But you've only known him a short time, so you won't notice his flaws.

JUDITH

What flaws?

ANDREA

If you'd lived with him as long as I have, you'd know he has a nasty habit of fabricating the truth.

JUDITH

He does not.

ANDREA

I'm afraid he does. You see, I know him.

JUDITH

Ah, but maybe not the same way I do.

ANDREA

All the more reason for you to take heed of what I'm telling you because when the bloom wears off, you'll remember my words.

JUDITH (smirking)

Oh, will I? From what Mark tells me, the bloom wore off you years ago and you could do with a refresher course. So, I don't think I need your advice.

ANDREA

You will when you find out Mark is an outrageous liar. Once he sees another pretty face he'll soon lose interest in you...He's like lover-boy in Cordella.

JUDITH

Cordella?

ANDREA

A movie.

JUDITH (snidely)

Before my time.

ANDREA

Cordella is a working girl, like you. And she comes home tired from a hard day in the office. She walks into her nice apartment: lover-boy has set her up in, plumps herself down, and calls: "I'm home."

JUDITH (catching on)

Hey, what is this?

ANDREA

But this particular night lover-boy isn't there. Cordella is frantic. She bites her nails, runs to the window...Are you sure you didn't see it?

JUDITH

I don't know what the hell you're driving at, but you know damn well I didn't.

ANDREA

So Cordella paces the floor, but lover-boy doesn't come home until the following morning. But he brings her things...to compensate.

JUDITH

No kidding!

ANDREA

There's always compensating factors...little gifts - flowers ...perfume. Now on the surface of it...

JUDITH

Where's all this leading?

ANDREA

...everything seems quite normal for the time being - hunky-dory. Then lover-boy starts going into the office on Saturdays. Then he tells Cordella he has late night dinner meetings, then it's extended business trips.

JUDITH

What is this game?

ANDREA

It's only a movie. Then Cordella goes through the discomfort of phoning the receptionist who is sort of over-courteous. "No, I'm sorry. Lover-boy isn't in yet. May I take a message?" Very careful. Pretending she doesn't know it's Cordella who called half an hour earlier and goodness knows how many times before that.

JUDITH

O.K. I get the point.

ANDREA

Then Cordella discovers lover-boy is seeing sweetie-ple...

JUDITH

...I said, I get the point.

ANDREA

Yes, I suppose you do...What better way for Mark to rejuvenate himself than to find someone younger like you. It must be very flattering for him to have a new partner at his age, maybe even start a new family.

JUDITH

What do you mean - new family?

ANDREA

It's obvious, isn't it?

JUDITH

Come off it.

ANDREA

You read about it in the papers - all the time. It's almost an accepted fact these days. Why, only last week there was an article in "The Gazette" - "Middie-Aged Fatherhood Roles" and it said...

JUDITH

I didn't mean that.

ANDREA

Then what did you mean?

JUDITH

Nothing - I thought you were talking about something else.

ANDREA

What else?

JUDITH

It doesn't matter.

ANDREA

I just meant it was not unheard of. What did you think I meant?

JUDITH

Nothing.

ANDREA

Something must have got to you - Jumping on it like that.

JUDITH

It's nothing. Skip it.

ANDREA

Tell me...What are you concealing?

JUDITH

All right - you asked for it. I thought you'd detected I was pregnant.

ANDREA

I hadn't...Are you?

JUDITH

Yes.

pause

ANDREA (taken aback)

Pregnant?

JUDITH

Yes.

ANDREA

I don't believe you.

JUDITH

It's true.

ANDREA

It can't be...You're lying...Even you wouldn't pull a stunt like that.

JUDITH

Has it occurred to you I want a baby?

ANDREA

No - It hasn't.

JUDITH (flippantly)

Well, it's out now and doubtless you would have heard about it sooner or later.

ANDREA

I hope you're not pinning it on Mark.

JUDITH

Well, it's hardly the immaculate conception!

ANDREA

I didn't think it was - going by your record.

JUDITH

What do you mean - my record?

ANDREA

Your office conquests are no secret. Even I've heard about them.

JUDITH

I wouldn't exactly call you Mark a saint.

ANDREA

You're right. It would be a case of pot calling the kettle black. You're not the first romance he's had - by a long shot...But it is the first pregnancy. Which leaves me wondering who the real father is.

JUDITH

It's Mark, all right. I haven't been with anyone else. We've been going together for over a year.

ANDREA

Oh, have you, now?

JUDITH

Yes.

ANDREA

Then where does Francine fit into the picture?

JUDITH

Francine?

ANDREA

Francine Bélanger. I know for a fact he was seeing her just three months ago. You're telling me you and Mark were together at that time, and I'm suggesting it's a figment of

ANDREA (cont'd)

your imagination and you were sleeping around with someone else.

JUDITH

It's a lie. You're making it up.

ANDREA

No. I think you're the one making it up.

JUDITH

Francine Bélanger? Who the hell's Francine Bélanger?

ANDREA

There you are - you're seeing Mark's flaws already. Either he was two timing - seeing her the same time he was seeing you, or, as you so aptly observed, I'm telling you lies - which I assure you I'm not.

JUDITH

I don't believe it.

ANDREA

You don't have to, but I think you're trying to put the blame on Mark - to claim a legitimate father.

JUDITH

What do you mean - legitimate father?

ANDREA

Don't tell me he went tearing out of my house like a thunderbolt without honourable intentions. I know Mark better than that. If you've planted the idea in his head, he'll try to atone his mistake.

JUDITH

Meaning?

ANDREA

He'll do what's right.

JUDITH

Don't make me laugh.

ANDREA

It's not a laughing matter.

JUDITH (pertly)

Oh?

ANDREA

If you're talking about my husband being caught in an embarrassing situation, I think your humour is poor taste. I don't think it's funny at all. On the contrary. I think it's rather pathetic to see him fall prey to your lust.

JUDITH

I didn't hear him complaining.

ANDREA

You know what I think?

JUDITH

What?

ANDREA

It's a clever ploy.

JUDITH

Ploy?

ANDREA

I know the way your brain ticks. It's the oldest trick in the trade. Hot passionate nights - using sex as a silent negotiator.

JUDITH

For what, exactly?

ANDREA

As if you don't know.

JUDITH

No. I don't. You said I was using my sexual powers as a negotiating tool and I'm asking you what you mean by it. You wouldn't have made a comment like that if you weren't making oblique reference to something.

ANDREA

Don't play games with me.

JUDITH

I want you to explain.

ANDREA

All right. You're claiming Mark is the father.

JUDITH

That's right.

ANDREA

And you're certain - in your mind, that is?

JUDITH

Absolutely.

ANDREA

Well, let's give you the benefit of the doubt and say you're right, and Mark is the father. He would most certainly stand by you. I know he would.

JUDITH

Hold on.

ANDREA

Now, if what you're saying is true...

JUDITH

It is.

ANDREA

...you must have devised a plan. I mean - what are you going to do?

JUDITH

I'm keeping my baby.

ANDREA

I see - so you and Mark have already discussed it and...

JUDITH

We have.

ANDREA

...that puts a different complexion on matters, doesn't it? There's a baby in the picture. I understand that. I only stayed with Mark all these years because I had my own children to consider. But now Jonathan and Louise are older, there's no need to hide the facts any more.

JUDITH

What are you trying to say?

ANDREA

Your ruse has worked. I'm stepping aside. I'll be far happier without him. And obviously you'll be far happier with him.

JUDITH

Hey, what are you telling me?

ANDREA

I'm telling you you can have him. If that's what you want - that's what you'll get. From now on he's yours - lock, stock, and barrel.

JUDITH

What!?

ANDREA

He's yours. You can have him.

JUDITH

Hold on. I'm looking forward to settling down with my baby, but to take on a man, even Mark, is quite out of the question...Someone like you probably can't understand that.

ANDREA

No, I can't. So where does this leave Mark?

JUDITH

Where it's always left him - with you.

ANDREA

With me!

JUDITH

That's what you want, isn't it?

ANDREA

Why do you think that?

JUDITH

Isn't that what you came for?

ANDREA

I thought...

JUDITH

...that he was leaving you. That's not the way it is at all.

ANDREA

I was about to say I thought you knew we were through. You jumped to the wrong conclusion. I don't want him back. Definitely not.

JUDITH

You're joking!...Aren't you?

ANDREA

I've never been more serious in my whole life.

JUDITH

Well, why didn't you say so?

ANDREA

You didn't give me a chance.

JUDITH

When someone starts shooting their mouth off like you did - what did you expect me to believe?

ANDREA

Look, Judith, I don't know how we managed it, but we both misunderstood each other.

JUDITH

I guess we did.

ANDREA

I assumed he'd already moved in with you.

JUDITH

And I assumed you'd come on the war path to take him home.

ANDREA

I must admit my pride was hurt and probably I was more aggressive than I should have been.

JUDITH

And I must say I was pretty snippy too. You see, from the way you came on so strong, I thought it's what you intended.

ANDREA

I wasn't being unkind, vindictive, or whatever else you imagined when I said he was yours - I meant it.

JUDITH

I know that now...But if I'd wanted a chum I'd hardly go to all the trouble of getting pregnant just to find one - would I?

ANDREA

A chum?

JUDITH

Don't tell me you don't know what a chum is?

ANDREA

Of course I know what a chum is - it's a close friend.

JUDITH

That's right - only today it has a different context - a close friend of the opposite sex - who lives with you - something like a marriage without the legal attachments.

ANDREA

Now let me get this straight. Are you saying you want a baby but not a husband?...Or a chum?

JUDITH

Hallelujah! It's what I'm been trying to get through to you. This is incredible. - How can anybody be so out of it? Where've you been hiding?

ANDREA

I'm beginning to wonder myself.

JUDITH

I thought you were putting on an act.

ANDREA

I guess we've just been talking at cross purposes all along, haven't we?

JUDITH (smiles)

I guess so.

ANDREA

I feel a bit of a fool.

JUDITH

Welcome to the club.

ANDREA

I suppose I was venting my anger on you when I really should have been mouthing off at Mark.

JUDITH

Same here.

ANDREA

Here we were like dogs fighting over a bone and now we find neither of us wanted it after all.

JUDITH

How silly we are...Grown up women acting like a pair of kids. For what it's worth, Andrea, I'm sorry.

ANDREA (smiling)

That's all right, Judith, I'm sorry too. I didn't mean to intrude on your privacy, but I had to get it off my chest before I left for England. I've come to the end of my tether and Mark has to hear it.

JUDITH

Well...I'm sure he hasn't gone far.

ANDREA

Would you mind if I waited?

JUDITH

No, that's fine, but if he isn't back soon you'll have to excuse me because I have a report to finish and I want to take my bath. In the meantime, would you care for a glass of iced tea?

ANDREA

Don't put yourself out.

JUDITH

No trouble. It's already made up.

ANDREA

Well, in that case, I would. Thank you.

JUDITH (goes to kitchen)

When are you leaving for the U.K.?

ANDREA

Next week. Actually, I've been wavering, trying to make up my mind, but today I finally decided and paid for the ticket.

JUDITH

It's lovely there at this time of year, isn't it?

ANDREA

Yes, but not as pretty as the spring. I miss the flowers - snowdrops, primroses, and bluebells. The poets certainly were right when they paid tribute to the English countryside in spring.

JUDITH (returning)

That's the trouble here - there is no spring at all. We go right from winter into summer. (JUDITH hands Andrea the drink.) There you are.

ANDREA

Thank you. But the time of the year I like best is autumn. It evokes special feelings...Have you ever been to Britain?

JUDITH

Yes. My grandfather lives there.

ANDREA

Oh, where?

JUDITH

Blackpool.

ANDREA

What a coincidence.

JUDITH

Why? Do you come from Blackpool?

ANDREA

No. Southport - but it's only forty miles along the coast.

Fancy that! Isn't it strange?

JUDITH

Yes.

ANDREA

I mean - here we were squabbling away, not knowing we were from the same county - well almost - your mum or dad must have been born there.

JUDITH

Yes, my father.

ANDREA

It's unreal. A one-in-a-million chance. Let's drink to our common roots. (they clink and drink)

ENTER MARK

MARK

Judith! - (to Andrea) What the hell are you doing here?

ANDREA

Visiting Judith.

MARK

Visiting Judith? You know her?

ANDREA

I do now.

MARK

How did you find out where she lives?

ANDREA

Intuition, Mark! That's the way it is when you're married to a liar.

MARK

Don't call me a liar.

ANDREA

What would you prefer - womanizer?

MARK

Knock it off.

ANDREA

You've always been a liar. And to think I used to be gullible enough to believe those tall tales. Like that last affair you had.

MARK

Shut up!

ANDREA (to Judith)

That was three months ago. He phoned to tell me some some cock and bull story about seeing a dead woman being brought out of a burning car and it gave him a trauma so he had to stay a few extra days to get over it.

MARK (to Judith)

It was true.

ANDREA

A woman gave him a trauma on that trip all right, but she wasn't a dead one. She was very much alive and in his hotel room. Wasn't she, Mark?

MARK (to Judith)

Don't listen to her. (to Andrea) Cut it out.

ANDREA

Mark, tell the truth for once. Go on. You tell Judith who she was. This dead woman. Was she young? Slender? Curvaceous? Go on, tell her.

MARK (to Judith)

Ignore her.

ANDREA

It was Francine Bélanger, wasn't it? That's the way it's always been, Judith. No scruples - sleeps with women all over the place. Even when he was going with you.

MARK

Take no notice.

ANDREA

Don't you tell her to take no notice. You told her a bald-faced lie.

JUDITH

Why don't you admit it, you bastard.

MARK

Listen, Judith, it's not the way Andrea's making it out.

JUDITH

You know what, Mark? I couldn't give a shit.

ANDREA

Whether you did or you didn't, he'd still deny it.

JUDITH (throws up hands)

Look, I don't feel like being caught in the cross-fire. So, if you don't mind, I'll take my bath and leave you both to sort it out. Goodnight, Andrea. Let's have lunch some day and talk about Blackpool. (JUDITH exits to the bathroom.)

ANDREA

Sure, I'll give you a call - and thanks.

MARK

God, you're crafty.

ANDREA

Me, crafty! That's a good one. Don't you call me crafty you pig-headed beast.

MARK

Keep it down. The blasted walls are thin, voices carry.

ANDREA (eyes up)

And to think I believed you when you said that a burnt body gave you a trauma and to think I believed you all those other times you said you were working late.

MARK

You've been with other men.

ANDREA

No, Mark, I have not. Only you. You.

Awkward pause

MARK

Look, I've put all that behind me, so let's forget it.

ANDREA

No, I can't.

MARK

It's in the past.

ANDREA

Not for me, it's not.

MARK

For Christ's sake! Drop it.

ANDREA

Why, Mark?

MARK

They were nothing, brief flirtations.

ANDREA

Not with Judith.

MARK

Even with Judith.

ANDREA

Sure! Anyway, you can do what you like because I'm going back.

MARK

Back? Back where?

ANDREA

England.

MARK

I know - on vacation.

ANDREA

No, to work. In the fall.

MARK

Work? - At what?

ANDREA

I had an exciting career once.

MARK

You mean you're taking up fashion again?

ANDREA

Yes. While I'm over there I'll look into it. It's what I want.

MARK

You don't mean it.

ANDREA

I certainly do. After the trip I'll be back to deal with the legalities.

MARK

What legalities?

ANDREA

It's what I came to tell you. I'm leaving you.

MARK (disbelievingly)

You're over-reacting.

ANDREA

I've thought it through very carefully.

MARK

It doesn't make any sense.

ANDREA

I've instructed Pollack, Abramovitch, and Bronstein to start separation proceedings.

MARK

Separation!? Because I had a couple of affairs?

ANDREA

No, because you've no idea what marriage is all about.

MARK

If we have problems, we should sit down and work them out.

ANDREA

For years and years I've tried to get you to sit down and talk - now it's too late.

MARK

It's never too late. Maybe you're right. Maybe we do need a separation. If we do, let it be temporary - without lawyers. Believe me, there can be a reconciliation even now...I know what you think - I overdid it this time with Judith, but you'll see, I can change.

ANDREA

With a baby to consider?

MARK (stunned pause)

How the hell did you find that out?

ANDREA

Judith told me.

MARK

Believe me, Andrea, it's not my baby.

ANDREA

Don't take me for a simpleton. Of course you're the father. And because of it, you now have a long term responsibility - to both of them.

MARK

I know how it looks, Andrea, but ---

ANDREA

Mark, it's over.

MARK

No, it isn't. I know I haven't always been honest in the past, but I'll make it up to you. You and me, Andrea, we'll start a new life together. I'll take a holiday and we'll

MARK (cont'd)

visit England together. And for Christmas we'll go to the islands.

ANDREA

What do you take me for - a fool?

MARK

You're no fool, Andrea. That's why we'll make this thing work.

ANDREA

If we haven't made it work in twenty-three years, we certainly haven't got a hope now.

MARK

Haven't I always looked after you?! You don't think you can just go out and make a living as a fashion designer, at your age - do you? Stay with me, Andrea. I'll look after you. Please.

ANDREA

Never! It's taken me a long time to come to my senses, but finally I've realized that this isn't the life I want.

MARK

Listen, Andrea - - -

ANDREA

No. You listen, Mark. Last night when you didn't come home from Rivière-du-Loup, something snapped. This, I said to myself, is the straw that breaks the camel's back. At first I sat, feeling bitter, thinking how it's all been you, you,

ANDREA (cont'd)

you. Your life. Your needs. Your women. And how you never once thought of me and what I wanted.

MARK

It'll be different from now on. I promise.

ANDREA

As I sat there, getting more and more angry, I had a strange vision. I saw myself sitting on a stool inside a cage. My head was in my hands and I felt scared and miserable. Then suddenly the sun came out and lit up the countryside, and I saw myself dancing around the outside, laughing and shouting for joy. Yet at the same time, there I was, still trapped inside. I got up, grabbed the bars, and pulled with all my might, straining to get out. And as I struggled, my form gradually shrivelled and vanished like a vapour into the air. And as it floated away, I saw the new me, roaming through the tall grass, happy and content. When I came to, I felt strangely peaceful, as if a heavy weight had been lifted from my shoulders. And I knew without any doubt I couldn't go on like this any longer.

MARK

That was just a dream.

ANDREA

You don't change, do you?

MARK

Who - me?

ANDREA

You take nothing I say seriously.

MARK

Of course I do.

ANDREA

It's not just my career.

MARK

No? Then what is it?

ANDREA

You.

MARK

I resent that.

ANDREA

I'm not saying you haven't looked after us in the past, you have. And you've always provided. It's just that I feel stifled. I was a bright spark once.

MARK

And still are.

ANDREA

No, I'm not. I'm stale...especially inside.

MARK

If you want to go back to work in the fall it's fine by me.

ANDREA

You don't seem to understand. I'm starting a new life and a new year.

MARK (puzzled)

New?

ANDREA

Yes. Autumn. The real beginning of a new year. I've always liked it ever since I was five years old. September when you moved up a class, changed teachers, purchased new books...A new satchel, new clothes. I even came to Canada in the fall. There are people whose year begins with the real calendar, but that's never been me. My year begins in the fall.

MARK

I don't get it.

ANDREA

I'm going back to London - for good.

MARK

London! What about the kids?

ANDREA

They're not kids any more - and I suppose I'll just have to become a commuter mother. I won't be the first to have half of my family on the other side of the Atlantic. Anyway, I shouldn't be surprised if Louise married pretty soon. She'll be setting up her own house then.

MARK

And Jonathan? Surely you're not going to leave him?

ANDREA

This year he's going to Queen's, but next year it'll be Cambridge.

MARK

That's all talk. Like it's always been where he's concerned. (scornfully) Cambridge. How could Jonathan ever make it into Cambridge?

ANDREA

There we have it! You've never understood him any more than you've understood me.

MARK

Oh, come on now, Andrea!

ANDREA

You haven't even congratulated him on his scholarship.

MARK

What scholarship?

ANDREA

The one he got from Queen's.

MARK

This is the first I've heard about it. How could I know he'd won a scholarship if nobody told me?

ANDREA

He gets more recognition from the board of governors at Queen's than he gets from his own father. You've never really cared.

MARK

How can you say that?

ANDREA (shaking head)

You never loved us. You just thought of us as a social necessity. Like carrying on your name. Something everybody did. No, Mark, that love tarnished years ago.

MARK

It didn't.

ANDREA

We were accessories. No wonder Louise and Jonathan were rebelling.

MARK

That's not because I don't love them.

ANDREA

When I look back on it, what a boring life I've had. All with no love.

MARK

I do love you.

ANDREA

No. That's the trouble. You didn't love me. Not in a way that led anywhere. I mean, I thought you loved me, but it was like trying to hug a door that had been slammed in my face...I guess my big mistake was right at the beginning. I revealed myself, bared my soul to you. And you? You remained a closed door. Perhaps I liked the security a closed door gives, but I sure didn't appreciate the

ANDREA (cont'd)

solitude. In reality I was baring my soul to nobody at all.
- And whenever you were out running after women, I used to feel I was a shadow and everything was a dream. All the people I knew - the children, you, and the stars in the night sky, were just phantoms, sparks and smoke from a lonely fire in an endless night. Sometimes I worked myself into such a passion I thought I was going insane. And all because I fell in love with a closed door.

MARK

We could try to open it.

ANDREA

It's no use. I can't stay with you.

MARK

What about your vows? In the eyes of God we'll always be married. You can't tell me you've suddenly relinquished your faith.

ANDREA

No, I haven't. But I can't imagine God interpreting marriage as adultery.

MARK

This has nothing to do with God, has it? It's about you not loving me.

ANDREA

Yes. I no longer love you.

MARK

Can't we give it one more try?

ANDREA

When I found out about Judith, I was convinced you would say, "Andrea, I'm sorry. It was my fault and I deserve your anger. Please forgive me. I'm guilty for the last time. Help me sort it out."

MARK

Will you?

ANDREA

No. Even now that the fear of my finding out about the baby is over, and you no longer have to worry about facing me, you still think we can pick up the threads as though nothing has happened - we can't.

MARK

We can, Andrea - believe me.

ANDREA

No, Mark. This time it's final.

MARK (sighs)

The trouble with both of us is, we've built up a barrier. But, Andrea, there's still time to knock it down.

Intercom phone rings

ANDREA

That'll be Pam. She's been patiently waiting for me.

MARK

Wait. Don't go. There's something else.

ANDREA

Can't keep Pam waiting any longer.

MARK

About the separation.

ANDREA

Yes, you'll be hearing shortly.

MARK

Please, Andrea, reconsider.

ANDREA

My mind's made up.

MARK

It's you I want, Andrea. (Indicates bathroom) Not her.

The intercom goes again.

ANDREA

Pam's getting impatient. (The intercom goes again and MARK picks up the phone.)

MARK

Yes, she is. Hold on. (MARK hands Andrea the phone.) It's Pam.

ANDREA

Pam?...Yes...I'll be right there. (replaces phone) I have to go, Mark.

MARK

I want us back together. It's the truth. Believe me.

ANDREA

How can I? You've always told me lies.

MARK

But this time it's true.

ANDREA

I'm sorry, Mark.

MARK

Don't go! Don't leave me. You're my wife.

ANDREA (moving to door)

Was, Mark.

MARK

Please, Andrea, talk to me. Don't leave me like this.

ANDREA

You know, Mark, I used to say to myself, "Why do you do it? Why do you stay? Why? Why? It's a nightmare, all this." But I'm not blaming you. It's not your fault I chose to act like a wounded animal in a trap. Bewildered. Afraid. It's taken me years of pain and anger to start living again, and I certainly will find the strength to see it through. There's no turning back now, because I have made up my mind never to be cheated out of life again - never! So long, Mark. Good luck with your new family.

ANDREA exits. MARK stares after her.

Lights down.

END