

***DAUGHTERS
OF THE
SEXUAL REVOLUTION***

*By
Dana Leslie Goldstein*

DAUGHTERS OF THE SEXUAL REVOLUTION

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DAUGHTERS OF THE SEXUAL REVOLUTION

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Some women compromise. Others start revolutions.

DAUGHTERS OF THE SEXUAL REVOLUTION

DAUGHTERS of the SEXUAL REVOLUTION by Dana Leslie Goldstein received a developmental production by The Workshop Theater (Scott C. Sickles, artistic director; Joseph Giardina, managing director) in its Jewel Box Theater in New York City. It was directed by Stefanie Sertich and featured the following cast:

Nina Tandon.....Laurie Schroeder
Joyce Horowitz.....Christine Verleny
Stacia Horowitz.....Corie Randolph
Simon Davies.....Luke Hofmaier
Jeffrey Tandon.....Mick Bleyer
Ed Horowitz.....Michael Selkirk

DAUGHTERS OF THE SEXUAL REVOLUTION

DAUGHTERS of the SEXUAL REVOLUTION by Dana Leslie Goldstein received a subsequent developmental production by The Workshop Theater (Thomas Coté, artistic director; Joseph Giardina, managing director) in its Main Stage Theater in New York City. It was directed by Susanna Frazer. Set design was by Jennifer Varbalow, lighting design by Dennis Parichy, costumes by Annette Westerby and sound by Joe Marquet. Chelsea Parrish was the production stage manager, Jonathan Weber was the production manager (assistant: Mary Ruth Baggott) and Robert Bruce McIntosh was the artistic associate. It featured the following cast:

Nina Tandon.....Laurie Schroeder
Joyce Horowitz.....Christine Verleny
Stacia Horowitz.....Alyson Lange
Simon Davies.....Luke Hofmaier
Jeffrey Tandon.....Greg Oliver Bodine
Ed Horowitz.....Michael Selkirk

DAUGHTERS OF THE SEXUAL REVOLUTION

CAST: 3 Women, 3 Men

NINA TANDON	early 30's, a little delicate
JOYCE HOROWITZ	just turning 40, and not unhappy about it
STACIA HOROWITZ	18, Joyce's daughter, a college student, testing her boundaries
SIMON DAVIES	18, Stacia's boyfriend and classmate
JEFFREY TANDON	30's, Nina's husband, a psychiatrist.
ED HOROWITZ	50's, Joyce's husband and Stacia's father, a World War II veteran, now a contractor

TIME: The fall of 1976.

PLACE: Suburban New York and a small liberal arts college in Connecticut.

The play is performed with one intermission.

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ACT I
SCENE 1

At rise, NINA sits on the couch in Joyce's well-appointed, suburban living room. JOYCE sets the needle down on the record on her turntable. A Jefferson Airplane album begins to play. It is evening in the early fall of 1976. Joyce expertly rolls a joint. She offers it to Nina.

NINA. You first. *(Joyce takes a drag. She holds it out to Nina again.)*

JOYCE. *(Flirting.)* My lipstick is on it now.

NINA. I don't mind. *(Nina, less confidently, takes a drag.)*

JOYCE. What did you think of the meeting? It can be overwhelming the first time.

NINA. It wasn't overwhelming at all. It was – inspiring. I didn't know how much I didn't know.

JOYCE. Good.

NINA. I forgot what that felt like. And it was all women.

JOYCE. That's the point. It's a different energy.

NINA. Everyone. Even the leader. That was new for me.

JOYCE. Really? No Girl Scouts? No single-sex health talks in junior high? *(Nina shakes her head.)* You like it?

NINA. Yeah.

JOYCE. The leader was decent tonight. But you should come back again on Thursday. It's my turn.

NINA. Thursday isn't great.

JOYCE. Too soon?

NINA. It's – just not a good night for me. *(Joyce has joined Nina on the couch. They continue to pass the joint.)*

JOYCE. You sure? I promise to raise your consciousness.

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NINA. Why do they call it that: C.R.?

JOYCE. Makes it sound more like T.M. Eastern. Mystical. Less like a bunch of housewives sitting around talking about our feelings -

NINA. Is that what we are?

JOYCE. Some of us. (*Joyce takes a drag. Of the joint.*) This is better than I usually get. Birthday present.

NINA. (*Surprised.*) Is it your - Happy birthday! It's not today, is it?!

JOYCE. Last week. But I'm celebrating all month. It was a big one. 4-0. Don't look so shocked. Or maybe it's good you look shocked.

NINA. I'm not, I - I mean - You don't look it. Not that forty's old -

JOYCE. Easy for you to say -

NINA. I didn't mean -

JOYCE. I'm okay with it. I didn't think I would be.

NINA. Why wouldn't you be? You have everything.

JOYCE. (*Flirting.*) You think I have everything?

NINA. I do. (*Nina has risen, nervously. She wanders the living room.*) Why did you ask me to come back here with you?

JOYCE. Why did you say yes?

NINA. (*Joking.*) I didn't want to be impolite. I mean, that's the only reason I answered the door when you showed up with that welcome basket-

JOYCE. Is it? I think you looked through the peephole. And you were curious. About what was in the - [basket]

NINA. I was.

JOYCE. You know I made those Rice Krispie treats from scratch.

NINA. I wish I had one right now! (*They laugh. Nina has begun to dance to the music.*)

JOYCE. (*Pause.*) I don't invite every new neighbor to meetings, you know.

NINA. Or home from them? (*Joyce watches her dance.*)

JOYCE. That's an even smaller group.

NINA. How small? (*Joyce has risen to dance with Nina. She passes her the joint.*)

JOYCE. Does that matter? (*As Nina is inhaling, Joyce strokes her arm. Nervous, Nina inhales too deeply and begins to cough.*) You okay?

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NINA. I'm not used to this any more -

JOYCE. Any more?

NINA. Ricky – my son – he's eight - he gets migraines. It's my fault. Because I dropped acid.

JOYCE. When you were pregnant?!

NINA. No, no! In college. And after. At the World's Fair. And the Fillmore. On the road with The Dead and –

JOYCE. But not when you were pregnant.

NINA. Doesn't matter. It affects you forever.

JOYCE. Does it?

NINA. Jeffrey – my husband – he says -

JOYCE. Don't disappear on me -

NINA. Jeffrey says illegal drugs – *(Nina gives the joint back to Joyce.)*

They're not safe, like valium. They affect everything. Every part of you.

JOYCE. *(Joyce touches Nina again.)* Not this part.

NINA. You don't know that –

JOYCE. Or this one. *(Joyce touches Nina more intimately, then leans in to kiss her.)*

NINA. I've never...

JOYCE. Never?

NINA. Not with a woman.

JOYCE. I won't bite. Well, maybe a little - *(Nina cuts Joyce off with a kiss. Joyce is surprised but pleased. After a long moment, the phone rings. Joyce breaks off the kiss.)*

NINA. Please don't answer it. *(The phone rings again. Joyce quickly kisses Nina.)*

JOYCE. I have to. *(Joyce answers the phone.)* Hello – Stacia, Honey, it's late – Is everything okay? - You're what – I – Wait. Let me turn down the – *(Joyce motions to Nina to lower the stereo. She does.)* No. Daddy's away. - He won't be back until – I'm reading. - Of course. - Who? - No, I don't think you did - Oh. Oh, my. – Well, you've got my attention now! - No, I - Of course I'm happy for you. - No. I promise not to tell him. - I love you too. I - Sure. Get some sleep. I'll talk to you tomorrow. – Stacia! Be careful. *(Joyce hangs up.)*

NINA. Is everything okay?

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JOYCE. My daughter – she was calling from school –

NINA. So late? Is she all right?

JOYCE. (*In shock.*) She just lost her virginity. She wanted me to know.

NINA. That's so nice.

JOYCE. Nice? You don't have a daughter.

NINA. She told you. She didn't hide it. I still haven't told my mother -

JOYCE. Was I making any sense? I don't know what I said to her.

Should I have congratulated her? I – Oh my god. I was married before I – well, almost - the date was set, but - I don't even know this boy. Why the fuck did she have to tell me that?!!! I don't want to know that!

(*Realizing.*) I have to get her a diaphragm. Or something. Fast. Shit!

(*Nina offers the joint. Joyce shakes her head. Nina puts it down and instead puts her arms around Joyce. She holds her in a swaying embrace, as lights fade to black.*)

SCENE 2

Stacia's dorm room. The same night. STACIA and SIMON sit, fully dressed, on Stacia's bed. Both are eighteen.

STACIA. I don't get it. Why is Ethics a required course? Unless you're a sociopath, you don't need a class in ethics. It's part of being human.

SIMON. I'm not so sure about – [that]

STACIA. Hoffman said it himself. Knowing the difference between right and wrong is the defining characteristic of humanity.

SIMON. I don't think that's what he said -

STACIA. He made it sound like that's the only thing separating us from the animals. Not true at all. We're conscious of our own mortality. We have sex for pleasure, not just procreation. Animals don't have sex for fun.

SIMON. I don't know. I've seen monkeys do some stuff at zoos that might – [change your]

STACIA. Simon, we're studying the Holocaust! Talk about black and white. There's nothing to learn from it.

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SIMON. There's plenty to -

STACIA. Ethically, I mean. It's cut and dried. Hitler bad. No nuance. Plus, it's the only Ethics section that's cross-listed with Jewish Studies. You think they put me in there because of my name?

SIMON. I'm in there too, and I'm not -

STACIA. I want to study Roe v. Wade, the E.R.A. What's relevant now! Maybe there's a Feminist Ethics class I could take instead -

SIMON. I didn't see one listed.

STACIA. Were you looking for one? Be a good way to pick up girls.

SIMON. (*Flirting.*) I took care of that during orientation, remember? (*Simon starts to put his arm around Stacia. She ignores him and picks up the course catalog.*)

STACIA. Maybe cross-listed with Women's Studies -

SIMON. Stacia - (*Stacia is flipping through the catalog.*)

STACIA. Nothing. This is going to be a waste of time. I'm a freshman, and I could write a PhD thesis on the Holocaust. It's Judaism 101. Starts when you're five. They tell you every horrible little detail: shoes, and gold teeth, and medical experiments. Stories about the relatives that didn't make it. They won't stop until you tell them you're having nightmares. They've gotta make sure the whole collective horror has gotten into your subconscious. Then they let it drop.

SIMON. They're not gonna let you out of taking Ethics, Stacia -

STACIA. Did you have nightmares as a child?

SIMON. Sure.

STACIA. About the Holocaust?

SIMON. I'm not Jewish.

STACIA. So you don't get to skip the course.

SIMON. Jews don't have a monopoly on suffering -

STACIA. Come on, you're telling me you've suffered? You're from Santa Barbara.

SIMON. I've suffered.

STACIA. Okay, give me some suffering. Something really traumatic.

SIMON. You don't have to suffer to be an ethical person.

STACIA. You don't have to take Ethics either!

SIMON. (*Pause.*) I'm going to dinner.

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STACIA. What?

SIMON. I'm going to the dining hall. Before they run out of everything -

STACIA. I thought we were having dinner together -

SIMON. I haven't seen my friends all week.

STACIA. But –

SIMON. I'll call you later. *(Simon opens the door to leave.)*

STACIA. *(A brainstorm.)* Let's have sex.

SIMON. What?

STACIA. *(Feigning confidence.)* You heard exactly what I said.

SIMON. Are you serious?

STACIA. We've been together two weeks. What are we waiting for?

SIMON. I can't think of a thing.

STACIA. So let's not wait any more.

SIMON. Okay. *(Nervously, Simon closes the door. Stacia pushes the "play" button on her cassette deck. The instrumental opening to The Moody Blues' "Nights in White Satin" is heard. Simon and Stacia stare at each other for a moment without moving.)*

STACIA. Do you still have those – you know –

SIMON. Yeah. Yeah, I've got one. Should be right – *(Simon goes through his pockets, then his wallet. He can't find the condom.)* I'll find it! *(Simon finds the condom, fumbles with it, drops it, picks it up and holds it out for Stacia to see. Nervously, he switches off the light. They begin to kiss. There is a momentary blackout as the music swells. Then lights rise dimly to reveal Simon under the covers in Stacia's bed. He is asleep. Stacia tiptoes into the hallway and dials on the hall phone.)*

STACIA. Mom. Hi. I'm so glad you're there. – I'm fine. I'm better than - It's just like they say. I'm changed! - Is Daddy with you? - Oh, I thought I heard - Can you keep a secret? - It happened. We... Simon and I. We just - I told you about Simon. I'm sure I did. – Yes. Yes, I did. Anyway... We made love. - Good, I didn't think you were listening. - You're not happy for me. – Are you sure? - I'm... ebullient! Isn't it great that we can talk about this kind of thing? You're so cool. Don't tell Daddy. Promise you won't tell Daddy. - I love you. - I'm gonna go to bed now. - Good night. *(Stacia hangs up. She re-enters her room and stirs Simon.)* You've gotta go. *(Blackout.)*

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SCENE 3

Nina and Jeffrey's living room. A few days later. Evening. JEFFREY is fixing himself a drink. Nina enters through the front door.

JEFFREY. Oh good, you're back.

NINA. I didn't think you'd be here.

JEFFREY. My last patient canceled. I sent the sitter home.

NINA. I'll go kiss Ricky –

JEFFREY. He's already asleep. You don't want to wake him.

NINA. I'll just go take a –

JEFFREY. You're supposed to be working on that - the over-involvement. He's fine. You don't need to check on him. Or watch him breathe –

NINA. I don't do that any –

JEFFREY. Or sleep in his room. *(Pause.)* Come sit with me. *(Nina sits down.)* I got home in time to watch that Bionic Man program again. We should watch it together. There's something there. It's not science fiction. It's modern. We're on the verge of really being able to repair people. Psychologically at least. Weakness and instability are almost a thing of the past. Think how far *you've* come. It's a good time to be alive. I was thinking I might write to them. They could use someone with my credentials.

NINA. *(Distracted.)* Who?

JEFFREY. The Bionic Man people. I may offer to consult. How was your session?

NINA. Fine.

JEFFREY. Any breakthroughs? You can only tread water for so long. What did you talk about?

NINA. Nothing you'd be -

JEFFREY. You can tell me. He's only a psychologist. I'm the one writing the prescriptions. Was there some... general topic?

NINA. The Bicentennial.

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JEFFREY. Still? It's been – [months]

NINA. They haven't stopped shooting at each other in Cambodia. Why are we commemorating a battle when there are people dying? Children dying –

JEFFREY. Nina, it's the other side of the world.

NINA. That musket you made for Ricky –

JEFFREY. It was plywood, it wasn't a real weapon.

NINA. He brought it to school today, and it was confiscated.

JEFFREY. Why?

NINA. An older boy took it away from Ricky and hit another kid with it.

JEFFREY. Is he all right?

NINA. He needed stitches.

JEFFREY. I'll call the parents.

NINA. Ricky saw the whole thing.

JEFFREY. That must've been upsetting. But this kind of thing happens. Boys get into – [scrapes]

NINA. I never should have let you make him a weapon. I protested the war, I marched, I –

JEFFREY. You aren't that person any more. Besides, the Bicentennial isn't a war. It's a celebration.

NINA. Of war!

JEFFREY. Look at me, Sweetheart. You're safe now. Protected. You have a home. Look at our beautiful home.

NINA. That poor boy - If that could happen here - Most children in this country don't live anywhere this safe.

JEFFREY. *(Trying to soothe her.)* That's why we chose this – [neighborhood]

NINA. And most children in the world – well – forget about them – But I can't forget about them – I can't get them - or Ricky – What if something happened to Ricky? I can't get that out of my head. I know it's not the bicentennial's fault. I'm not crazy.

JEFFREY. Slow down.

NINA. How can you want to bring another child into a world with so much violence and starvation –

JEFFREY. No one is starving here –

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NINA. Children are starving all over the world!

JEFFREY. Stop. (*Firm.*) You're not all right.

NINA. I am. I just can't shut my eyes to –

JEFFREY. I'm going to look at your dosage.

NINA. Please don't.

JEFFREY. I haven't seen you like this in - Take a deep breath for me.

NINA. Jeffrey, I - Please don't change the dosage. I just - (*With difficulty.*) I forgot to take it before I left the house.

JEFFREY. Now I understand.

NINA. I just - forgot.

JEFFREY. I don't like to see you like this. You don't need to be like this. No one does. (*Jeffrey goes and gets the pills, takes one out and gives it to her. Gently.*) Take one now. (*Jeffrey watches her take it. He strokes her hair.*) Your next session is Thursday. I'll see if I can get you in before then. Rest now. (*Nina leans back against him.*) It's all right. You'll be yourself again soon. (*Blackout.*)

SCENE 4

Joyce and Ed's living room. The following week. ED watches as Joyce gets ready to leave.

ED. What time do you think you'll be back?

JOYCE. Hard to say. When I'm leading, I have to stay later. Answer questions.

ED. Gotcha. Have fun.

JOYCE. What do you think you'll do?

ED. I don't know. I've got some ground plans to go over. After that I'll probably read. Or maybe write to Stacia. I miss her. The house is so quiet.

JOYCE. Say it's from me too?

ED. I don't have to. If you want to write her together.

JOYCE. She has a new boyfriend.

ED. When did you talk to her?

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JOYCE. I – She called when you were in Pittsburgh. It was late. I was half asleep. I forgot to tell you –

ED. That’s not like you.

JOYCE. She asked me not to.

ED. That’s not like her. What’s going on? Is she okay?

JOYCE. She’s fine. Everyone’s fine. Stop jumping to –

ED. Sorry. I just - I like it when she calls and we get on the receivers, and it’s like we’re all together. Like we did with Peter. At least the first year -

JOYCE. You are a very sweet person.

ED. Don’t tell anyone.

JOYCE. I can keep a secret. (*Ed goes to kiss her; Joyce has her coat on.*)

I should go. (*Joyce hands him a book.*) Here. I picked this up. If you’re bored tonight. It’s supposed to be –

ED. (*Reading the cover.*) “I’m Okay, You’re Okay?” I think I’m better than okay.

JOYCE. That’s not what it’s -

ED. Look at me, Joyce. I’ll read the book if that’s what you want, but I’m not gonna spend the night worrying. You have to tell me. Stacia’s really fine?

JOYCE. Yes.

ED. She’s got a new boyfriend?

JOYCE. Seems like it.

ED. I wasn’t crazy about the last one.

JOYCE. It was high school. It’s over –

ED. Why didn’t she wait ‘til Sunday to tell us together?

JOYCE. I don’t know. Young love? She couldn’t wait.

ED. So she’s in love with this guy already? She’s only been there three weeks.

JOYCE. Ed –

ED. I’m gonna call her –

JOYCE. Please don’t.

ED. Don’t call my daughter?

JOYCE. We’ll have our regular talk on Sunday, just like normal –

ED. Joyce –

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JOYCE. I'm going to be late. Promise me you won't call her. She'll think it's -

ED. What?

JOYCE. This isn't fair. She told me in confidence -

ED. She told you what? What doesn't she want me to know?

JOYCE. (*Pause.*) She slept with him. This new boy. She thought we - I - should know - It's not a big deal -

ED. Not a big deal? She's a child!

JOYCE. She's not.

ED. I'm gonna kill him!

JOYCE. No, you're - Read the book. Have a drink. Take a walk. Just don't call her. All right? I've got to go.

ED. You can't walk out the door after you tell me *that!*

JOYCE. I have to. I'm in charge tonight. Just - It was going to happen some time. We're lucky she told us. She trusts us.

ED. She didn't tell us. She told you.

JOYCE. Don't be jealous. (*Joyce kisses him, trying to leave.*) I love you.

ED. Did you tell her not to?

JOYCE. Not to what?

ED. Sleep with him again!

JOYCE. You think that would stop her? Would it have stopped us?

ED. (*Defeated, Ed sits in his armchair.*) I'm not ready for this.

JOYCE. I know. (*Ed takes her hand.*)

ED. Please don't go.

JOYCE. I have to.

ED. And I'm supposed to - what - sit here - look at plans? Just - put it out of my head?!

JOYCE. What else can we do? (*Ed lets go of her hand.*)

ED. (*Belligerent.*) I can think of a few things -

JOYCE. Promise me you won't do any of them before I get back.

ED. I can't make any promises.

JOYCE. Ed.

ED. All right, all right. Go. (*Joyce kisses him and starts to exit.*) But if she calls, I'm picking up! (*Blackout.*)

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SCENE 5

The entryway of the C.R. meeting room. Later that evening. Nina enters, a little nervously. Joyce is inside setting up. Nina watches her through the doorway. When Joyce notices Nina, she immediately goes to her.

JOYCE. I thought you couldn't come tonight.

NINA. I decided I would rather be here. (*Quietly.*) I wanted to see you.

JOYCE. I like that. There's an empty seat next to me.

NINA. Are you sure that's a good idea?

JOYCE. I saved it for you. Just in case you decided to come. Don't worry. I won't hold your hand in public. But I'll be thinking about it.

NINA. I've been thinking about it all week.

JOYCE. You'll like my topic. "Love and Marriage: Is it a Middle Class Myth?"

NINA. Oh my.

JOYCE. You haven't read Germaine Greer? (*Nina shakes her head.*) We'll have to do something about that. (*Joyce starts to lead her in.*)

NINA. Wait, I –

JOYCE. What?

NINA. I don't know. I'm - I wish we were alone.

JOYCE. We are. Everything I say tonight, I'm saying to *you*. No one else matters. No one else is even here. Follow me. (*Nina follows her inside to a seat. Now more aware of her surroundings.*) Your husband – what's his name again?

NINA. Jeffrey.

JOYCE. Jeffrey. You and Jeffrey should come over for bridge. (*Nina stops.*)

NINA. I couldn't do that.

JOYCE. Don't be silly. It's an easy game, once you get used to it.

NINA. Not bridge, I –

JOYCE. Have you played it before?

NINA. No, I - Yes! Of course I've played bridge, but not –

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JOYCE. I want you to come to my home. Both of you. We're new neighbors. Don't you think we should all get to know each other?

NINA. No! I don't!

JOYCE. It'll be a little awkward at first, but we'll get over it. Men aren't as good as we are at making new friends. So we'll help them.

NINA. Are you sure that's a good -

JOYCE. Saturday night. Then it'll only be two days until we see each other again.

NINA. If I can get a sitter.

JOYCE. Trust me. It'll be fun. (*Joyce puts her hand on Nina's back and leads her to her seat. Nina sits.*) Every word tonight. For you.

NINA. I'd like that. (*Blackout.*)

SCENE 6

Stacia's dorm room. The same night. Stacia is stewing. There is a knock at the door.

STACIA. It's open. (*Simon enters.*)

SIMON. What's wrong?

STACIA. He gave me a D+. A D+! I've never gotten a D+ on anything.

SIMON. College is harder -

STACIA. I've never gotten a C! This is ridiculous. I'm writing another letter.

SIMON. Stacia -

STACIA. He knew. He knew I tried to get out of the class.

SIMON. What did he say?

STACIA. He said it had nothing to do with that. That I got the D+ because he saw no evidence that I'd done the reading at all.

SIMON. Had you?

STACIA. My grandmother has numbers on her arm. I don't need to *read* about World War II.

SIMON. He didn't raise your grade at all?

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STACIA. He said I could do it again. Not a rewrite. A completely new paper! This is so unfair. I'm a really good writer. You wanna hear his brilliant comments? (*Reading from notes on her paper.*) "Excessively flowery. Meandering. Too many words, not enough thoughts." Are you smiling?

SIMON. No.

STACIA. What did you get?

SIMON. On what?

STACIA. You know on what.

SIMON. I did okay.

STACIA. What did you get, Simon?

SIMON. (*Pause.*) I did all the reading. I worked really hard on it –

STACIA. Tell me what you got.

SIMON. No. We shouldn't be in competition with each other.

STACIA. Everyone's in competition with each other.

SIMON. Promise you won't send me back to my room if I tell you.

STACIA. Did you get an A?

SIMON. (*Pause.*) Yeah.

STACIA. You're not even Jewish!

SIMON. Maybe I worked harder on it than you did, to make up for -

STACIA. I don't know when you did that; you've been with me every –

SIMON. Not Tuesday. I even went to the Writing Center. Look, if you want, I could help you with the rewrite.

STACIA. Are you joking?

SIMON. You did write it really fast.

STACIA. I always do.

SIMON. Maybe he's trying to tell you to slow down. Think a little more. Do the reading at least -

STACIA. (*Touches him.*) Do you want me to slow down?

SIMON. I - I don't -

STACIA. Do you want me to think a little more?

SIMON. Depends what you're thinking.

STACIA. You know what I'm thinking.

SIMON. Shouldn't we get some work done first?

STACIA. Wrong. Not what I was thinking.

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SIMON. We have to read about the raid on Entebbe for tomorrow -

STACIA. What's the matter? Afraid you won't get an A?

SIMON. And the Soweto riots -

STACIA. So go back to your room and read.

SIMON. But I brought my toothbrush. (*Stacia smiles and begins to unbutton her blouse, much more confidently than their fumbling in the previous scene.*)

STACIA. Your choice.

SIMON. That's not fair.

STACIA. Can't have everything. (*After thinking briefly, Simon helps her out of the blouse.*) Or maybe you can. (*They kiss as lights fade to black.*)

SCENE 7

Joyce and Ed's living room. The following weekend. Joyce, Ed, Nina and Jeffrey are smoking on the patio. All but Nina are drinking. They enter from upstage, as if through a sliding glass door, in mid-conversation. Joyce leads them in.

JOYCE. Well, we all have crazy ideas in college. I was going to find the Garden of Eden. Every culture has one: a garden, a paradise.

NINA. What a beautiful idea -

ED. Joyce was an archaeology major -

JOYCE. I didn't stay long enough to declare, but that's what I would've been. When I met Ed, he told me that for Jews, it's just a metaphor. Eden.

ED. Reform Jews. Everything's a metaphor for Reform Jews.

JOYCE. But I was convinced that it was this real, physical place. And I was going to be the one to find it. I'd go out on digs. Live with indigenous people -

NINA. I can see you doing that.

JOYCE. My parents couldn't. They would've stopped paying for school, if I'd actually gotten that far. They were so relieved when we got engaged and I forgot about all that nonsense. Eden. I never would've found it.

ED. The suburbs are all the Eden we need.

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JOYCE. Don't make us sound so *bourgeois* -

ED. If we were only on a *cul-de-sac*!

JEFFREY. (*Proud.*) We are. Just around the corner.

ED. Now that's *bourgeois*!

JOYCE. Ed -

ED. Us too. It's the kids do it to you -

JOYCE. Don't listen to a word he says -

ED. You think we'd have all this stuff if we didn't have kids? We'd be living in a garret on Avenue D.

JOYCE. Speak for yourself.

ED. No health insurance. Definitely no life insurance. I play it safe now, for them.

JOYCE. You play it safe because you're middle aged.

ED. I'm not middle aged. I'm almost completely aged!

JOYCE. Who needs a refill?

ED. You get a look at today's paper? That picture of Nixon strutting around -

JOYCE. Oh no, Ed, not politics -

ED. You already brought up religion -

JOYCE. In passing, not as a topic for -

ED. It's exactly two years since the pardon, and he's going to China, he's playing golf -

JEFFREY. What should he be doing?

ED. Wearing stripes. He's a crook, they're all crooks -

JEFFREY. Not all. At least not in this country -

ED. Oh, come on. It's a prerequisite.

JEFFREY. This may not be a popular sentiment, but it's my belief that temperament is to blame. We all want our leaders, our politicians, to be charismatic, exciting, larger than life, but there's a downside. Big personas lead to big choices, big fears to big paranoia. Their missteps reverberate. But they don't have to. I personally believe that if Richard Nixon had been on anti-anxiety medication - they're extremely effective now - he never would have gotten himself involved with those criminals at all -

ED. You're exonerating Nixon?!

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JEFFREY. Nixon's own insecurity was his worst enemy. If he'd had some valium, he'd still be in office.

ED. Screw valium then!

JOYCE. Jeffrey is a psychiatrist, Honey. He believes in pharmacology.

NINA. It's his religion –

JEFFREY. *Legal* pharmacology is much more effective than religion.

ED. *(To Joyce.)* We're back on religion now –

JEFFREY. With the right prescription, Nixon might not have felt the need to tape anyone. Would've been more comfortable with himself. And then we – you, me, the country – wouldn't have had to go through all that. Think of the ramifications. We'd be less cynical. About everything –

ED. We'd be wearing blinders.

JEFFREY. I am, of course, biased. But I've been prescribing more valium than they can keep on the shelves. The results are indisputable. And that's just for your regular folks, your housewives and bus drivers. When a figure in power is able to keep his head on straight, well, you get the open door with China, Détente, you get out of Viet Nam – but with honor. And then, when it's time for re-election, you get calm. No unhinging of the moral compass. *(Realizing.)* I should write a book about it.

ED. We could use a little unhinging right about now.

JOYCE. Scotch or Bourbon?

ED. Politically. At least the nightmare will be over soon. Ford can't get elected on his own.

JOYCE. Ed –

JEFFREY. I will refrain from comment.

JOYCE. *(To Jeffrey.)* Thank you.

NINA. We're ready for bridge, aren't we?

JOYCE. What's the rush? We're getting to know each other. *(To Ed.)* Refresh me?

ED. Always. *(Ed kisses her, then takes her glass and goes to make her a drink.)*

JOYCE. So, how did you two meet?

JEFFREY. I was a medical resident –

NINA. I'd just finished at Berkeley –

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JEFFREY. It was good timing. She was at loose ends, and –

NINA. That's not how I'd – [describe it]

JEFFREY. I proposed three weeks after we met.

ED. Decisive!

JEFFREY. Thank you.

NINA. And he kept proposing until I said yes.

JEFFREY. Persistence is easy when you know what you want.

ED. I'll drink to that.

JOYCE. I have an idea. Let's play "I'd rather be..." Do you know it?

ED. Come on, Joyce –

JOYCE. It'll keep us off politics.

ED. Will it?

JEFFREY. How do you play?

JOYCE. I'd rather be... Hemingway or Gertrude Stein. Don't think. Just choose.

ED & JEFFREY. Hemingway.

JOYCE. FDR or Eleanor? Choose.

JEFFREY. FDR.

ED & NINA. Eleanor.

JOYCE. Woody Allen or Wonder Woman? Choose.

ED. That's not a choice.

JOYCE. Sure it is.

NINA. I wouldn't mind her cup size.

JEFFREY. Nina –

JOYCE. Interesting.

ED. She doesn't count. She isn't real.

JOYCE. Neither is her cup size. Fine. (*Starting over.*) Kissinger or...

ED. She has to be a real person.

JOYCE. Gloria Steinem.

JEFFREY. Kissinger.

ED. Steinem. No contest.

JEFFREY. I like this. I could play it with my patients.

JOYCE. It's better if you've had a few drinks. (*A brainstorm.*) Me. Or Nina. Choose.

ED. That doesn't work. It's two women.

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JOYCE. So what? *(To Jeffrey.)* Choose.

JEFFREY. *(Embarrassed.)* I don't mean to be discourteous. You're a wonderful hostess, but I'm perfectly satisfied with the choice I've made -

NINA. You aren't choosing between us, Jeffrey. You're choosing which of us you'd rather be.

JOYCE. *(Confidentially.)* It's not a sex game.

JEFFREY. *(Mortified.)* Of course not!

ED. Now we've hit all three!

JEFFREY. *(Beyond mortified.)* I'm so sorry -

ED. *(To Jeffrey.)* The real question is who would you rather be married to: me or yourself? Now there's a choice! *(Ed hands Joyce her drink.)*

NINA. Bridge is a long game. If we want to be home in time for the sitter, shouldn't we -

JOYCE. *(Putting a hand on Nina's shoulder to calm her.)* Have a drink.

NINA. *(To Jeffrey.)* Is that all right?

JEFFREY. What do *you* think?

JOYCE. It's my house. Of course it's all right. Martini?

NINA. Yes.

JOYCE. Ed, fix her a martini. Ed makes the best martinis.

ED. *(To Nina.)* How do you like it?

NINA. I - I don't know.

JOYCE. Make it just like mine.

ED. Aye, aye. *(Ed goes to make the martini.)*

JEFFREY. Nina says you have two children.

JOYCE. Barely. They're both in college. Peter's almost finished. Stacia just started. It's not like having little ones. They're - people. Who don't need you.

ED. Except for tuition.

NINA. I can't imagine that.

JEFFREY. It'll be easier when we have more than one. By my age, my father already had five - [boys]

NINA. Ricky still needs my full attention.

JEFFREY. He doesn't.

NINA. He's small for his age -

JEFFREY. You infantilize him -

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NINA. I don't. I let him express his – [emotions]

JEFFREY. They listen to “*Free to Be, You and Me*” over and over.

JOYCE. Oh! I love “It’s All Right to Cry” -

JEFFREY. With a little focus, he could be a brilliant boy.

NINA. He is! He talks about things you’d never expect from children – infinity, reincarnation –

JEFFREY. But he’s different. You can’t dispute that. When Nina was pregnant, she was very anxious -

NINA. You don’t have to tell them that.

JEFFREY. So the baby was agitated too.

NINA. He was very active –

JEFFREY. *In utero* –

NINA. Somersaulting all the time –

JEFFREY. There was a knot in the umbilical cord when he was born - He had to be delivered quickly –

NINA. I don’t remember.

JEFFREY. You were unconscious.

JOYCE. We all were. Don’t know how women did it before general anesthesia.

NINA. I feel like I missed something, not being there.

JEFFREY. You were there, I promise. You didn’t miss anything. (*Ed returns with Nina’s martini. As he offers it to her, Nina hesitates, then looks at Jeffrey.*) You’re an adult. (*Nina looks from Jeffrey to Joyce. She downs the drink.*)

ED. Whoa there –

JEFFREY. Nina’s not really supposed to drink. With her diagnosis and prescriptions, she’s -

NINA. Jeffrey!

JOYCE. Diagnosis?

JEFFREY. Nina suffers from “free-floating anxiety”.

ED. Sounds relaxing!

NINA. Not really.

ED. That’s an actual thing?!

JEFFREY. Which won’t cure itself. Especially when you cancel your appointments –

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NINA. Your patients cancel all the –

JEFFREY. Never without good reason -

JOYCE. (*Saving the day.*) Look at the time! The bridge table is in the den. Ed, why don't you take Jeffrey in. I'll grab the cards.

ED. (*They begin to relocate.*) Don't forget your drinks.

JOYCE. (*A brainstorm.*) Let's not play as couples. How 'bout girls against boys?

ED. Sounds like a plan. (*As Ed leads Jeffrey out.*) You played much bridge? (*Ed and Jeffrey are gone. Joyce puts a hand on Nina's shoulder, stopping her from following them. She puts her finger on her lips in a silent "shh", then kisses Nina.*)

JOYCE. It's not the children that make us *bourgeois*. It's our own lack of imagination. (*Blackout.*)

SCENE 8

Stacia's dorm room. Several weeks later. Stacia and Simon enter wearing jackets, which they peel off immediately. They are in mid-conversation, out of breath, exhilarated.

STACIA. I can't believe you just did that. You almost got arrested! Weren't you scared? What were you thinking?

SIMON. I wasn't thinking. I just - I know even the KKK has a right to march, but not on campus. It looked like it was about to turn into something. I figured if I sat down, maybe other people would too –

STACIA. I didn't –

SIMON. Enough people did -

STACIA. I was chicken -

SIMON. You were there.

STACIA. I'll never do anything like what you did. I'm not selfless enough.

SIMON. You could be.

STACIA. How?

SIMON. You could join the Peace Corps -

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STACIA. My parents would never let me go to Africa.

SIMON. You could do volunteer work –

STACIA. In Connecticut?

SIMON. Why not? Anyway, I didn't really do anything.

STACIA. You singlehandedly prevented the KKK from marching through campus.

SIMON. They could've left the road and stepped over us. I wasn't stopping them.

STACIA. But they would've had to decide to step over you. You made them pause.

SIMON. I kinda did.

STACIA. That's not nothing! I did nothing. I always do nothing. Don't say it's because I'm a girl. It's no excuse. Look at Angela Davis. Jane Fonda. Joan of Arc. I wanna be like them!

SIMON. You just want to be the center of attention.

STACIA. What's that supposed to mean?

SIMON. Forget it -

STACIA. No. You're right. I do.

SIMON. I'm already paying attention. Can't you tell? Besides, I don't want to be *with* Joan of Arc.

STACIA. No?

SIMON. Once in a while – not that often - you get a little confused, and that's when I think you look the prettiest.

STACIA. Shut up!

SIMON. No, I mean it, you get this one part of your face that sort of goes the wrong way, you're not so... solid in what you think, and I don't know – I like it.

STACIA. That's so chauvinistic. You're not attracted to me when I'm confident?

SIMON. That's not what I said.

STACIA. Why did you do it? Put yourself between them like that. It wasn't your fight. You really could've gotten hurt.

SIMON. I don't know. Maybe just because you were watching.

STACIA. Were you trying to impress me or protect me?

SIMON. Which one's less chauvinistic?

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STACIA. They're both good. (*Stacia kisses him.*) I don't want to be away from you for three whole days.

SIMON. You just don't wanna be alone with your family for three whole days.

STACIA. Come home with me next week for the break. You don't have any plans. You're not going all the way back to California for three, measly days.

SIMON. I was going to write that moral quandary paper for Ethics.

STACIA. Another impossible assignment.

SIMON. No, it isn't.

STACIA. Not for you, Gandhi.

SIMON. All Hoffman wants us to do is look at the choices we've made, and describe a tough one. A personal moral quandary. He's right: what we choose, it's who we are.

STACIA. You really believe that?

SIMON. We're changed by our choices.

STACIA. People don't change.

SIMON. I thought you'd like this assignment. You don't have to do any reading, just be honest about yourself!

STACIA. About a personal choice? Sounds salacious to me -

SIMON. It doesn't have to be anything big. Just a moment when you couldn't decide what the right thing to do was. When you were "aswim". I think he's right. Those are the moments that define us.

STACIA. That's such B.S. Those moments don't exist. There's always something that's more right than something else. Something you want more than something else. Right now, I want you. To come home. To Westchester. With me. If the Ethics paper is so easy, you don't need the whole break to get it done. Right?

SIMON. Probably not.

STACIA. So come. I'll go crazy without you -

SIMON. I don't think that's true.

STACIA. Then come because you want to.

SIMON. I wasn't invited.

STACIA. I'm inviting you right now.

SIMON. By your parents. Don't you think they'll mind?

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STACIA. We'll surprise them.

SIMON. I don't know –

STACIA. They're cool. They'll love you.

SIMON. I'll be in the way. They want to see *you* -

STACIA. They're busy. My mother's always got some project or club or something. It'll get me out of her hair.

SIMON. Why do you want me to do this?

STACIA. What do you mean? I'll miss you if you don't.

SIMON. No. You've got some kind of ulterior motive or something.

STACIA. Never.

SIMON. Where am I gonna sleep?

STACIA. That's their problem. (*Blackout.*)

SCENE 9

An independent bookstore. The same day. Joyce enters carrying a stack of books. She walks between shelves, then finds the section she's looking for, removes a book, reads the back, then adds it to her pile. Nina enters, a little lost. She doesn't see Joyce right away.

NINA. Joyce?

JOYCE. Over here. (*Nina joins her.*)

NINA. That's a lot of reading.

JOYCE. It's not all required. (*Joyce holds up "The Second Sex". She hands it to Nina.*) Well, this one is. (*As Nina looks through it, Joyce pulls another book off the shelf. She flips through it.*) Used books are the best. Look, it has notes in the margins. It's like a window into a stranger's mind.

NINA. (*Reading over her shoulder.*) It's chicken scratch. How can you read that?

JOYCE. Come closer. You'll be able to see it better. (*Nina looks around, then comes closer. Joyce kisses her, the stack of books between them.*)

NINA. Joyce –

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JOYCE. I know. It's not as private as the movie theater. Or the woods behind the golf course. Or my car. But it isn't terrible. (*They kiss again.*) Is it?

NINA. (*Breathless.*) No. Not terrible at all.

JOYCE. I missed you this week. I almost came here myself and picked these up for you, so I'd feel like I was with you, just a little. But I'm glad I waited. This is better. I wanted to show this place to you. It's my favorite bookstore.

NINA. I never would've found it on my own.

JOYCE. I know. You have to know it's here. It's like a speakeasy.

NINA. I missed you this week too -

JOYCE. The phone isn't the same -

NINA. But there was no way - Jeffrey was home so much. He's being interviewed for a psychiatry journal. He thinks it could lead to TV.

JOYCE. You're married to a big shot.

NINA. Does that matter?

JOYCE. You know, you can invite us over. It's your turn.

NINA. That's not what I -

JOYCE. It's the neighborly thing to do -

NINA. I'm not the hostess you are -

JOYCE. I'd bring a casserole. Or we could add some Betty Crocker to this stack. (*Referring to the pile of books.*) Not that she'd fit in with the rest of these -

NINA. I used to write in all of my books. Every idea. I never do that any more. I don't know when that stopped.

JOYCE. What did you study?

NINA. Philosophy. And theoretical math.

JOYCE. Really?!

NINA. They're not so different.

JOYCE. I would love to read your notes. If you let me.

NINA. Pretentious, half-stoned, undergraduate scribbles - I'd be embarrassed -

JOYCE. Write in these. Read a chapter, write in the margin, underline, make notes, then let me see it, and I'll write in it too. Before I give it back to you. It'll be like we're reading it together. Book club. Give us an

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excuse to see each other as much as we want. Jeffrey wouldn't object to book club.

NINA. Depends on the book. (*Nina looks at the cover of one of the books.*) "The Female Eunuch"? I can see the look on his face –

JOYCE. Maybe that one needs a book cover.

NINA. Maybe it doesn't.

JOYCE. (*Joyce smiles.*) Good for you.

NINA. Does Ed know you read these?

JOYCE. I leave pretty much everything lying around.

NINA. Must be nice.

JOYCE. To be messy?

NINA. Not to be afraid of your husband –

JOYCE. Nina –

NINA. Not afraid exactly. I didn't mean that. Just - not myself.

JOYCE. (*Joyce pulls a particular book from the stack: Kate Millett's "Sexual Politics".*) Read this one first. (*Beat.*) You don't need to be afraid of anything.

NINA. I do want you to come over. Just you. When he isn't there. And I want you to stay. (*Nina looks up at Joyce for a long moment. Joyce puts down the books and gathers Nina in her arms. She holds her, as lights fade to black.*)

SCENE 10

Joyce and Ed's living room. The following week. Ed sits on the couch reading. He periodically looks at his watch.

ED. (*Calling to Joyce, who is in the kitchen.*) I feel like I shoulda made her a welcome home sign or something.

JOYCE. (*Entering.*) She doesn't need a welcome home sign.

ED. I know. But she'd probably like one –

JOYCE. Let's try to keep it low key.

ED. You don't think I'm low key?

JOYCE. Just don't say anything that'll upset her.

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ED. I never upset her.

JOYCE. You do.

ED. You're projecting.

JOYCE. You finally read it!

ED. Sure. You told me to -

JOYCE. It's good, right?

ED. It's "okay."

JOYCE. Maybe I am projecting. I'm just - I don't know - I'm not sure I'm ready to see her. I'm nervous.

ED. Why?

JOYCE. She's been gone for months. What if she's changed?

ED. She's still our little girl.

JOYCE. Is she?

ED. You never worried this much about Peter.

JOYCE. He's a boy. It's different.

ED. And it's only been six weeks -

JOYCE. Seven.

ED. But who's counting?

JOYCE. She's having sex.

ED. (*Shuddering.*) Did you have to say that out loud?

JOYCE. I never should've said anything. She told me in confidence -

ED. At this point, she's gotta know you tell me everything -

JOYCE. It was a girl to girl thing.

ED. Yeah. But I'm her father -

JOYCE. Maybe she didn't think you could handle it.

ED. I can handle it. I'm handling it fine. I'm pretending it didn't happen.

JOYCE. Wish *I* could get away with that.

ED. (*Realizing.*) Shit, she's been using birth control, right? You talked to her about it -

JOYCE. I made her an appointment tomorrow. She doesn't know yet -

ED. Good luck with that.

JOYCE. Still jealous she only told me?

ED. That part's outside my job description. So, how dumb am I supposed to play?

JOYCE. How dumb can you play?

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ED. Pretty dumb. You know that.

JOYCE. Then that's exactly what you should do. *(The phone rings.)*

ED. She's probably at the station.

JOYCE. Still too early. *(Joyce answers the phone.)* Hello? *(Pause.)* Hi, Nina. *(To Ed.)* It's Nina and Jeffrey. *(To Nina.)* I would love to. But I can't tonight. We can't. Stacia's coming home. It's a mid-semester break or something – *(Pause.)* Um, well – *(Covers phone, to Ed.)* They want us to come for dinner. Bring Stacia.

ED. Don't you think she's gonna wanna see her friends?

JOYCE. So she'll go with her friends. Ricky has a sleep-over. It'll just be grown-ups anyway. *(To Nina.)* I'll call you when she's here. I don't know what her plans are –

ED. I don't wanna go over there tonight.

JOYCE. *(To Nina.)* I'll call you back. - Bye. *(Joyce hangs up. To Ed.)* She heard you.

ED. No, she didn't.

JOYCE. You don't like them.

ED. I like them fine. I just wanna see my daughter tonight.

JOYCE. But she's probably got plans.

ED. You go then. I'd rather stay home.

JOYCE. I'll make a quiche. No. A noodle pudding! *(Joyce exits to kitchen, leaving Ed alone on stage. The phone rings again. Ed picks it up.)*

ED. *(Gruff.)* Yeah? – *(Softening.)* Hey, Honey. How was the trip? - You got in earlier than I expected. That New Haven line's usually so jammed up. - Sure, I'll be there in two shakes - *(Ed starts to hang up, then doesn't.)* Stacia. We missed you. Listen, maybe we can catch a movie tonight – just you and me - if you don't have plans, and you're not too beat from the trip - What? I don't - *(Long pause.)* Oh, I'm sure I'll like him... - Yeah. - Okay. – Uh huh. – No problem at all. I'll see you soon. *(Ed hangs up. Calling to Joyce.)* That was Stacia. I'm going. *(Ed grabs his coat. Joyce re-enters.)*

JOYCE. She's early –

ED. Yeah. Good trains.

JOYCE. I'll ride along –

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ED. Nah. I'm already out the door. She doesn't have plans. But she brought home a friend.

JOYCE. What? Who? That boy?

ED. Can't wait to meet him –

JOYCE. Wait a minute. Ed! Come back here! Don't touch him! Ed! You have to play dumb!

ED. I won't say a word.

JOYCE. I should come too – *(Ed is already out the door. It slams shut.)*
Shit. *(Blackout.)*

SCENE 11

Nina and Jeffrey's living room. Later that evening. Joyce, Ed, Stacia and Simon have just arrived. Jeffrey and Nina are welcoming them in.

JEFFREY. So, how do we handle the drinking question?

STACIA. I'm eighteen. I can drink.

ED. Just barely.

JOYCE. Do your parents let you drink, Simon?

SIMON. The drinking age is twenty-one in California, but since we're in New York -

STACIA. His parents smoke, mostly –

SIMON. It's not like that -

STACIA. California and all.

JOYCE. Are you trying to shock us, Stacia?

STACIA. Is that possible?

JEFFREY. We don't use drugs in this house.

SIMON. No, no, of course not –

NINA. Not the illegal ones.

SIMON. I would love a beer, if that's what everyone's having.

JOYCE. I'm having a martini, but you stick to the beer. Do you have any beer, Nina?

NINA. I need to check.

JOYCE. I'll help you look. *(Joyce and Nina exit.)*

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JEFFREY. *(To Ed.)* Whiskey for you, yes?

ED. Neat. *(Jeffrey begins to make drinks, including a martini for Joyce.)*

STACIA. I'll take an amaretto sour.

ED. Really?!

JEFFREY. I can accommodate that.

STACIA. You don't realize you have a hero in your house, Dr. Tandon.

SIMON. Stacia –

STACIA. Simon was almost arrested for protecting me from the Ku Klux Klan!

SIMON. That's not exactly what -

STACIA. There was a march, and the KKK were practically on campus, and –

ED. What's your last name, Son?

STACIA. Simon's not Jewish, Daddy – He's just brave.

SIMON. Davies. Sir.

STACIA. Anyway, we were all out on the big hill by the library, and the police were coming from one side of the hill, and these white-sheeted thugs were -

SIMON. It wasn't like that at all.

STACIA. Don't be so modest –

SIMON. You're making it sound like there were tanks coming at me –

STACIA. There were armed police. It was very cinematic.

SIMON. It was campus security! I didn't do anything particularly brave. The KKK announced they were going to march because of a speaker we were hosting at school. The police told us to stay inside, out of the way –

STACIA. We didn't!

SIMON. Doing nothing would've been like condoning their march.

STACIA. Simon basically led a sit-in. And he didn't back down. Not even when they started using the loudspeakers. The cops. Everyone was scattering. It was a real moral quandary. You should use it for your Ethics paper –

SIMON. It wasn't a quandary at all -

STACIA. If you don't, I will. I could adapt it!

ED. Where were you in all this, Stacia?

STACIA. Not far. Far enough. I wasn't in danger, Daddy –

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ED. The cops. The KKK. It isn't a game. Kent State happened.

SIMON. It wasn't like that at all, Sir –

ED. Things happen. In the heat of the moment. You got no idea -

STACIA. Oh come on, Daddy. He was fighting the good fight.

ED. You don't know crap about the good fight.

STACIA. Daddy was wounded in action. He has a big scar on his right side.

JEFFREY. I didn't know you fought -

ED. I was in the Pacific. Wish I'd gotten to do more before they sent me home -

STACIA. It was way before he met my mother -

JEFFREY. You're a hero. I had no idea -

ED. Nah. The guy who pulled me out, he was the hero.

STACIA. Daddy fought the good fight. The only good fight. No ambiguity. No question about whether or not it was moral to go in. I'm thinking about becoming an Ethics major next year when I have to declare. It's so interesting. When is a war justified? There's always only one answer.

JEFFREY. At least this century. Nina's obsessed with the Bicentennial. She thinks we're glorifying the American revolution. I say, why shouldn't we glorify the American revolution? It's a source of pride, of national unity! The beginning of the greatest political experiment -

STACIA. Maybe I'll write about *that*!

SIMON. Are you having a personal moral quandary about the revolution?

STACIA. I think I might be.

ED. (*To Simon.*) Your father fight, Simon? Korea?

SIMON. I - No. He's - We're Quaker.

STACIA. You never told me that.

SIMON. I didn't want it to be a big deal.

STACIA. Why would it be a big deal? I think it's great.

SIMON. That's what I mean. I didn't want you to think it was great. It just is. It's not a cause.

JEFFREY. Nixon was Quaker. Most people don't know that.

ED. Stacia went to Hebrew school in a Quaker meetinghouse.

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STACIA. It wasn't really Hebrew school. We learned Yiddish, not Hebrew. And cultural stuff.

ED. I wasn't raised with much Judaism. My parents were old school socialists, Workmen's Circle and all that, and Joyce isn't even Jewish. On that side of the family, Stacia's actually D.A.R.

SIMON. What?

ED. Daughters of the American Revolution -

STACIA. Culturally, I'm *very* Jewish!

ED. All through elementary school, Stacia was the only half-way Jewish kid in her class. And we haven't been to temple in -

STACIA. Daddy -

ED. I can't remember the last time.

SIMON. What about your grandmother? The Holocaust survivor?

ED. You telling that story again?

STACIA. (*Covering.*) I don't know what you -

ED. My mother was a Communist, then a Socialist, then a Miami Beach Republican. A survivor, sure. But not a Holocaust survivor.

SIMON. (*To Stacia.*) Why would you lie about -

STACIA. Simon, please, I -

SIMON. (*To Jeffrey.*) Which way is the bathroom?

JEFFREY. Past the kitchen. (*Simon begins to exit living room. Stacia goes after him.*)

STACIA. Wait! (*Simon turns back to her.*)

SIMON. (*Quietly.*) I don't want to talk to you right now. (*Simon exits. Stacia downs her drink, then turns back to the two men.*)

ED. (*To Stacia.*) I thought you were through with that.

STACIA. Most Jews have at least one relative who escaped the -

ED. You don't.

STACIA. That doesn't mean I don't think about it, or have nightmares from all those terrible pictures you showed me, or -

ED. It was maybe three photos. When you were a kid -

STACIA. Well, they scarred me!

ED. Did they, Stacia? Did they really?

STACIA. Yes! But they gave me a sense of identity too, that I refuse to give up, even if Mom's family came here on the Mayflower!

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ED. Which they didn't.

STACIA. At least then, I'd be *something!*

JEFFREY. (*Now a bit drunk, realizing how long the women have been gone.*) There's beer or there isn't beer. How long does it take to figure out if there's beer?

ED. Maybe they're checking for it out in the garage –

JEFFREY. We do have an icebox in the garage.

ED. (*Ed puts a hand on Jeffrey's shoulder.*) We all do. (*Cross-fade to the garage. Nina and Joyce are kissing. After a moment.*)

NINA. Let's not go back.

JOYCE. Ever?

NINA. Not for a very long time...

JOYCE. You don't think they'd get suspicious?

NINA. I don't care. I like it right here.

JOYCE. I like you.

NINA. Why me?

JOYCE. You still don't know?

NINA. You could have anyone.

JOYCE. I have exactly what I want. I look at you, and you remind me of... hope. Hurt. Joy. Fear. You let yourself feel all of it. That's so brave -

NINA. Is it?

JOYCE. And you're more beautiful every time I see you. How is that possible? (*Nina kisses Joyce.*)

NINA. No one has ever looked at me the way you do. I feel naked. And I'm not ashamed.

JOYCE. Maybe we *should* stay here for a while. (*Joyce leans in to kiss Nina, a long passionate kiss. Simon opens the door to the garage and sees them. He freezes and watches them for a moment. He doesn't know what to do.*)

NINA. I love you. (*Simon exits quietly. They don't notice him.*)

JOYCE. Oh, Honey, that's -

NINA. I could leave him.

JOYCE. What?

NINA. I couldn't imagine it before -

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JOYCE. For me? You don't need to [do that] -

NINA. But I can't stop thinking about it now -

JOYCE. You're frightening me.

NINA. It's a good kind of fear, isn't it? I feel it too -

JOYCE. Nina, think about what you could lose.

NINA. I think about it all the time.

JOYCE. You don't have to. It's possible to be content.

NINA. (*Confident.*) No. It isn't. Not any more. (*Nina kisses Joyce as lights cross-fade back to the living room.*)

JEFFREY. Where you planning to put him?

ED. What do you mean?

JEFFREY. The boy? Where's he going to sleep?

ED. I don't think you need to weigh in on -

STACIA. Where, Daddy? Where should Simon sleep?

ED. Stop it.

JEFFREY. He can stay here, if that's more acceptable. I can see how the whole thing would be awkward at your place. It wouldn't be awkward here. It would be nice. He could have his own room. My den. It's all set up in there. Bed. Television. We could watch the Six Million Dollar Man.

STACIA. Thank you very much, Dr. Tandon, but Simon doesn't need to -

ED. I'll talk to Joyce about it.

JEFFREY. College, well, I can imagine what goes on these days in those dormitories. Not like when we were -

ED. I wouldn't know. Didn't bother with college. Probably shoulda gone. The G.I. bill was sitting right there, but - I don't know - After the war, I wanted to put my hands to something real. Be of use.

JEFFREY. I admire that.

ED. By the time I met Joyce, I had an advantage over all those college boys. I already had my own business. I was in a position to take care of her.

JEFFREY. I know exactly what you mean.

ED. Otherwise, she probably never would've looked at me twice.

STACIA. Daddy -

ED. She got a lot of attention. Still does.

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STACIA. Could I have another cocktail?

JEFFREY. Well, I –

ED. No!

STACIA. Please? (*Simon enters, shell-shocked. All look at him.*)

JEFFREY. We were just talking about you.

ED. Did you find the beer? The bathroom?

STACIA. Simon?

SIMON. Yeah?

STACIA. You okay? We were trying to decide where you should sleep –

ED. Stacia!

STACIA. It's a relevant question. An ethical question really -

ED. Ethics has nothing to do with this.

JEFFREY. I was offering –

STACIA. Thank you, but that's not necessary –

ED. Maybe it is –

STACIA. Daddy, I'm –

ED. What? What are you, Stacia? A grown up? I don't see a single grown-up in this room.

JEFFREY. Don't let my patients hear you say that – (*Joyce and Nina re-enter with beer.*)

JOYCE. We're back with beer. Simon?

SIMON. Yes! Please. (*Nina hands Simon a beer. He quickly takes a large gulp.*)

JOYCE. Should be nice and cold. It was in the icebox in the garage.

ED. (*To Jeffrey.*) See?

JEFFREY. (*To Joyce.*) Here's your martini. Dry. Tell me if it's as good as Ed's.

JOYCE. I will. (*Joyce takes it from him and takes a sip. Stacia notices their interaction.*) Not bad.

JEFFREY. I've been practicing.

JOYCE. I appreciate your efforts. (*Joyce takes another sip.*) Mm. I may have to appreciate a second one later.

NINA. (*To Jeffrey, direct.*) Nothing for me? (*Joyce offers her martini to Nina. Nina drinks some without checking in with Jeffrey.*)

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STACIA. Can I borrow Mom's car tomorrow? I'm thinking I'll take Simon to see the Palisades. Maybe we can hike around the –

JOYCE. I forgot to tell you, Stacia. You have a doctor's appointment tomorrow –

STACIA. Why?

JOYCE. What do we do with Simon while you're there –

STACIA. I don't need to go to the doctor.

JOYCE. You do.

STACIA. No, Mother, I don't. I feel fine. And there's a health center on campus if I - [get sick]

JOYCE. That health center is not –

STACIA. Don't you think I'm getting a little old to see Dr. Weingarten?

JOYCE. I do. You're seeing my doctor -

ED. What time's the appointment?

JOYCE. 9:30.

ED. Perfect. Simon's sleeping here tonight anyway, so maybe he can stick around in the morning -

NINA. Simon's sleeping here tonight?

ED. That okay with you two? Just for the morning? He can do homework or something, while Stacia's at the –

STACIA. I don't need to go to the doctor!

ED. (*Firmly.*) Yes, Stacia. You do.

JEFFREY. No one should be afraid of doctors. We're really very –

NINA. (*Strong.*) Stacia isn't going to a psychiatrist, Jeffrey.

JEFFREY. Well, of course that's none of my -

NINA. (*To Stacia.*) Unless you'd like to. You have to see someone if you want valium. You don't want valium, though, do you?

STACIA. I really don't.

NINA. You don't need it. I can tell. Not everyone does. But if you change your mind, I have a month's supply that I'm not planning to use.

JEFFREY. Nina -

NINA. It's not that I'm anti-drugs. I like them actually. I'm just anti-valium.

JEFFREY. Nina used to be a bit of a flower child. It led her to – less than ideal choices.

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NINA. Jeffrey rescued me.

JEFFREY. When you say it like that, it implies that you don't believe it to be true.

NINA. I know that *you* believe it.

JEFFREY. (*Trying to keep up appearances.*) This is not the - [time to]

NINA. What would have happened to me, do you think, if you hadn't come along, on your white horse, in your white labcoat -

JOYCE. Nina. Don't do this.

NINA. (*To Joyce.*) I have to.

JEFFREY. Nina, please. Come sit -

NINA. Where would I be, Jeffrey, without your... intervention? Living on the streets in Berkeley? Following the Dead? Braiding people's hair in exchange for a miracle or -

JEFFREY. You're not making any sense -

NINA. - or clear-eyed and grounded and finishing a PhD?

JEFFREY. In what?

NINA. In whatever I want!

JOYCE. (*To Ed.*) We should go -

NINA. No. *You* should stay.

JEFFREY. (*To all, apologetic.*) Excuse us. I knew this would be too much. Another time -

JOYCE. We understand.

NINA. (*To Joyce.*) Don't say that!

JEFFREY. (*To Nina.*) You need to calm down.

NINA. That isn't what I [need] -

JEFFREY. And rest.

NINA. That's code! Rest means valium -

JEFFREY. Please, I'm sorry. She gets like this - I apologize -

NINA. What are *you* apologizing for?

JEFFREY. (*To Ed and Joyce.*) *You should go.* Please.

ED. Of course. (*To Stacia and Simon.*) Get your coats. (*Jeffrey hands them their coats.*)

NINA. No! They're staying! (*Ed puts his arm around Joyce, then leads her to the door. Joyce doesn't look back as she exits. Ed ushers a*

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bewildered Stacia and Simon out behind her. To Jeffrey.) You don't control *them!*

JEFFREY. I don't. But they're leaving anyway.

ED. *(At the door.)* Good night. Thank you.

NINA. Joyce! *(Ed exits.)* Please! Don't go! *(Jeffrey closes and locks the door.)* Joyce! *(Jeffrey goes to get the pills.)*

JEFFREY. *(To Nina.)* Shh. This was - overwhelming tonight. I never should've let you talk me into -

NINA. I'm not taking those.

JEFFREY. It's not a choice.

NINA. It is. It's *my* choice.

JEFFREY. Did you... forget to take one again?

NINA. I don't need them!

JEFFREY. You do. Look at you.

NINA. Look at me. This is me. Unmedicated.

JEFFREY. This is you drunk.

NINA. I had one sip of a martini.

JEFFREY. You think I believe that? When you were in the garage that long?

NINA. What do you think I was doing in there?

JEFFREY. Did you – smoke something too?

NINA. No, I didn't - [smoke something]

JEFFREY. When you came back in, that glow in your cheeks –

NINA. *(Overlapping.)* I'm not high or drunk or -

JEFFREY. I thought – it reminded me – When you used to dance - You were dancing the first time I saw you. Your cheeks looked like that. It was on the plaza after – a march or – I was coming off a shift, and there was a bonfire. You let me dance with you. Remember? *(Pause.)* We haven't danced in –

NINA. Don't –

JEFFREY. I knew it would be you from the moment I saw you. I could picture... our future.

NINA. Is this what you pictured?

JEFFREY. Some of it. I used to think I was the luckiest man in the world. We could be that way again.

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NINA. Jeffrey -

JEFFREY. I'm not sorry they left. I'll move my things back into our room. Tonight. That will help. I know it will.

NINA. I'm not ready.

JEFFREY. Nina.

NINA. What if I'm never ready?

JEFFREY. I don't accept that. We can fix this. I know there's a way to fix this. *(Beat.)* If you haven't been drinking, there's no reason you shouldn't take this now. No reason whatsoever. *(Jeffrey holds the pill out to her. Nina looks at it, unmoving.)* But if you think the valium has run its course, fine. I can always prescribe something stronger. Mellaril has had very auspicious results. In similar cases. As you say, your choice. *(Lights cross-fade to the other side of the door. In the half-light inside the house, Nina continues to look at the pill in Jeffrey's outstretched hand. But now the doorstep and path to the driveway are also visible.)*

STACIA. Well, that is not how I thought that would go! *(To Simon.)* Guess you won't be staying over here tonight.

ED. Stacia. Be still.

STACIA. Best laid plans.

ED. Simon will stay in Peter's room.

STACIA. *(To Simon, explaining.)* My brother. You don't want to sleep in there. That room smells terrible.

ED. It smells like teenage boy. Which is exactly what Simon is. It'll be perfect.

STACIA. Peter's gonna love that. Don't you think you should ask his permission?

SIMON. I won't touch anything, I promise -

ED. *(To Simon.)* No. You won't. *(Ed, Stacia and Simon exit toward the driveway. Joyce silently lingers on the doorstep. After a brief moment, Ed re-enters.)* Joyce? You coming? *(Inside the house, Nina turns to look at the door. Joyce stands on the other side of it. Lights fade to black on both couples.)*

END OF ACT 1

DAUGHTERS OF THE SEXUAL REVOLUTION

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