

They're Naked, They're Ugly and They Owe Us Money
By Susinn McFarlen

2017 Grant Street
Vancouver, BC
Canada
Reachsusinmcfarlen@gmail.com

CAST: 6 ACTORS

ANNIE

50-60 years old.

An actress who has lost faith in her marriage, in the theatre, and in the world.

DORIS

Same age as Annie? A literary character come to life, Doris is the character Annie is playing in the play they are rehearsing.

TONY BONES

Annie's estranged, younger, handsome, sexy, talented, philandering husband.

EDIE

Ancient and ferocious, Edie is a foul mouthed powerhouse stage manager who has no time for bullshit or incompetence.

OLIVIER/OLIVIA

Any age/ any gender

A bumbling fool and incompetent director. The kind of guy you love to hate with an arch fake theatrical english accent.

AXEL

A sexy biker, crazy about motorcycles, and Annie.

The action of the play takes place in a decrepit space above a biker clubhouse.

There are three main acting areas: the rehearsal hall which doubles as the performance venue, a wing space on one side of the stage and the booth on the other side.

The play takes place in vancouver, british columbia, but the location can be flexible so long as it takes place on the west coast. the time is now, after a pandemic has closed theatres around the world. (in the future, any event that has closed theatres can be substituted for the pandemic.)

THIS IS A DISMAL WORLD AT THE TOP OF THE PLAY, DEVOID OF COLOUR.

THE KEY TO THIS PIECE IS PACING. IT SHOULD FLY.

SCENE 1

A large room full of old bar furniture and garbage bags. A disco ball hangs from the ceiling. Annie and Tony look at the space, horrified.

ANNIE

Are you sure this is the place?

TONY

This is the address they sent us.

ANNIE

Oh my god, what's that smell?

TONY

Relax, I'll open a window. Remember when Matt had his kidney transplant and his farts were so foul you threw up? When we took him to the hospital, the nurse said, "Ohhh, I recognize that smell, it's blood". He was bleeding internally.

ANNIE

Who in their right mind would think we could rehearse here.

TONY

Do you remember what the nurse said next? "Nothing smells as bad as someone digesting their own blood".

ANNIE

You think it's blood I'm smelling? What the hell is this place?

TONY

I have no idea.

ANNIE

But you think this smell is blood.

TONY

No.

ANNIE

Then what's the point you're trying to make?

TONY

We've smelled worse.

ANNIE

Oh my god! That's your point?

TONY

Yes! It's probably just old garbage. I can't find a window.

ANNIE

This is ridiculous.

TONY

You have to lower your expectations! Maverick warned us. He said "if the theatre comes back, it's going to be poorer".

ANNIE

This isn't poor, it's destitute! Nobody in their right mind would work here.

TONY

Let's look at what we DO have. Great script, great cast, great director. We could win best actor and actress with these parts.

ANNIE

We're the only show in town. If we don't win we're in trouble.

TONY

Maverick says/

ANNIE

/Maverick, Maverick, Maverick! Stop already! Maverick's not going to work in a place like this and neither can I.

TONY

Oh no you don't. You want this as bad as I do and don't pretend you don't.

ANNIE

I did want it, Tony. But all that changed when you fucked the alien.

TONY

I'm just going to ignore that.

ANNIE

At least you're not going to tell me it never happened. We've moved on from there.

TONY

Look, I can't do this without you. The script says the cast has to be a married couple.

ANNIE

Because it was published in 1946 when the world couldn't navigate two people who weren't married doing a bedroom scene. It's hardly the world we live in now.

TONY

Our contract says/ we have to

ANNIE

/Oh, so now you care about contracts? You ever think about our marriage contract when you were fucking the alien?

TONY

Stop! How many times do I have to tell you - she wasn't an alien!

ANNIE

No?

TONY

She was interspecies.

ANNIE

Oh wow, that makes a huge difference. Why didn't you say so?

She starts to exit

TONY

Go ahead, go. My career is over anyway. At my age I should be playing the greatest roles ever written, and instead/ I'm playing

ANNIE

/Oh stop feeling sorry for yourself. You're one of the few actors in the country who worked last year.

TONY

A couple of days on a crappy sci fi movie.

ANNIE

And I would die for a couple of days on a crappy sci fi movie!

They hear a scream from off stage. Then a long Noooooo! A very old woman, Edie Abado, enters hunched over, limping, carrying the handle from a Bunn industrial glass coffee pot.

The bottom is broken right off and she is soaked. She holds up the broken coffee pot.

EDIE

You see this? They told me there was a coffee maker here. No, they said, you don't have to haul your coffee pot up there, they got everything you need, leave it. Okay. So I close the door on the rehearsal hall, where I've already prepped for today, where the room is spotless, the floor is marked, the tables and chairs all set out for the first read, and I come down here only to find out it's a shit hole but because hey, I'm nothing if not flexible, I set up a space for coffee in the hall and get started on this fucking disaster. I'm early, as usual, so I've got a couple hours before the cast gets here and I throw everything we don't need in these big trash bags and I try to make a spot we can actually work in. I'm just about to go back and get all the stuff I left back where we're supposed to be rehearsing when lo and behold what do I find? A coffee pot. Hallelujah! I can't see through it it's so dirty, but it's gonna have to do because the clock is running out so I soak it and then I start scrubbing it out. And that's when all the cracks start to appear. Next thing I know, there's broken glass all over the floor and I am left holding this. And that's when I realize it's all an illusion. This moving forward, this idea that we're surviving, that the theatre is surviving. Because everything is cracked, everything's broken. I'm not shatterproof for fuck's sakes, I'm a god damn human being!

There's an awkward pause then more awkwardness.

TONY

Edie Abado?

She says nothing, just stares. It's awkward.

ANNIE

We're in the cast.

TONY

I'm Tony Bones. And this is my wife/

EDIE

I know who you are.

ANNIE

What are we doing here, Edie?

EDIE

Some dickwad in production leased the rehearsal hall to a church.

TONY

Is Maverick here?

EDIE

WHAT! No one told you? JESUS CHRIST, HOW MUCH MORE OF THIS DO I HAVE TO TAKE?!

(She throws the handle of the coffee pot across the room which narrowly misses Olivier as enters out of a door leading to the washroom.

OLIVIER

Uncle! Uncle!

EDIE

Fuck!

ANNIE

Are you alright?

EDIE

What the hell were you doing in there?

OLIVIER

Well, I got here early/ and I thought

EDIE

/ I could have hit you/

OLIVIER

/nobody was here so

EDIE

/Those washrooms are for our use only. You shouldn't have been in there. Our booking specifically says/

OLIVIER

I'm sorry but I'm/

EDIE

/ Supposed to use the other washroom. The one down the stairs on the other side of the building.

OLIVIER

I didn't realize I was in the wrong place. I thought this was/

EDIE

/Go back down to the lobby and the door is, oh fuck it, just go through that door over there and down those back stairs. That's probably easiest.

OLIVIER

I see. Thank you.

Olivier moves towards a door across the room.

TONY

(to Edie) What were you saying about Maverick?

Olivier stops dead.

EDIE

He's gone.

TONY

What?

EDIE

Nervous breakdown.

ANNIE

Oh god, another one.

TONY

How many directors have we lost at this point?

EDIE

I don't know if there are any left.

OLIVIER

Excuse me?

TONY

I don't believe it. I thought Maverick of all people would make it.

OLIVIER

I'm sorry, can I interrupt?

EDIE

No! Why are you still here? It's right through that door.

ANNIE

We're losing an entire generation of theatre artists. They're dropping like flies.

TONY

Some have made the switch to film.

ANNIE

Same thing. Who's replacing Maverick, Edie?

TONY

Nobody can replace Maverick, Annie.

ANNIE

I know that, Tony, thank you. Who's directing our show, Edie?

OLIVIER

I'm terribly sorry/

EDIE

/Jesus! What is it you don't understand? You want me to open the goddamn door for you? No problem, here you go.

She opens the door to throw him out

OLIVIER

I'm your director!

EDIE AND ANNIE AND TONY

WHAT?!

EDIE

You're not a biker?

OLIVIER

No. Why would you think that?

EDIE

Because you're dressed like a biker in a biker clubhouse?

OLIVIER AND TONY AND ANNIE

THIS IS A BIKER CLUBHOUSE?

EDIE

If you're not a biker, why are you dressed like that?

OLIVIER

It's something I like to do on the first day of rehearsals. A little homage to the era of the play. Have you seen *The Wild One*? I'm Marlon Brando. (he does a bad impersonation) "You think you're too good for me? Anybody thinks they're too good for me, I make sure I knock 'em over sometime. Right now I could slap you around to show you how good you are and tomorrow, I'm someplace else and I don't even know you or nothing."

They are stunned

OLIVIER (CONT)

That's from the movie. *The Wild one*. Have you seen it?

EDIE

Sure. But it's the wrong era. *The Wild One* takes place in the 50's Our play, takes place in the 40's.

OLIVIER

Close enough.

EDIE

Ah, no.

ANNIE

Sorry to break up the party but we're out of here. It's nothing personal. Tony had a hard on for *Maverick* and since he's not directing anymore...

EDIE

Before you two go, I'm going to need a cheque.

ANNIE

What?

TONY

A cheque?

EDIE

If you quit and don't give two weeks notice you have to pay the company. If the company closes and doesn't give you two weeks notice, they have to pay you.

TONY

I've never heard of that.

EDIE

Call your equity representative.

ANNIE

No one answers that phone anymore.

EDIE

What did you say your name was? (To Olivier)

OLIVIER

Olivier Baldwin Frye.

EDIE

Never heard of you. Why didn't admin call me to tell me you were coming?

OLIVIER

It was all very last minute.

TONY

We don't have the money to quit, Annie.

ANNIE

Well, we can't work here, either the smell will kill us or we'll freeze to death. It's colder in here than it is outside.

TONY

Here, take my hat. You lose 75% of your body heat through the top of your head.

Tony takes off his hat and Olivier gasps! In the next bit Olivier gushes and giggles and fawns over Tony.

OLIVIER

No! You can't be! You're Generalissimo Commander Rakton!

TONY

You saw MARFA LIGHTS!

OLIVIER

Saw it? I was paralyzed when you revealed your capacity for teleportation and spontaneous regeneration at the end of the film. I mean, having domain over all the extraterrestrial lifeforms that overtook humans a thousand years in the future but somehow still managing to fall in love with a lowly interspecies character who is half human. Nevermind the fact that you saved her and managed to save the world at the same time! How could anyone forget you!

TONY

Thank you. I'm honored. But the truth is, it was mostly special effects. I had a very small part/

OLIVIER

/Don't. Ever. Say. That! There are NO SMALL PARTS! You are a great actor, my friend, maybe one of the greatest. And humble too. I am so pleased to meet you Mr. Bones.

TONY

Call me Tony.

OLIVIER

Tony Bones. So... my leige also does theatre.

TONY

When I have to. I'm kidding, I trained in the theatre.

OLIVIER

Of course you did. I should have guessed. It's all there in your command of the spoken word. You don't get that in film, do you. Words. Real words. Not just pictures and images. I myself, have always had a thing for words. Language, some call it.

TONY

And this is my wife, Annie Collins.

OLIVIER

(Olivier gets down on the ground and
kisses it)

My lady. Anyone the Commander loves is royalty to me. I kiss the ground you walk on.

EDIE

And I'm Edie. That puddle you're kneeling in is probably urine.

He hastily gets up

OLIVIER

There's such a plethora of magic in live theatre, isn't there. Look at us. While theatres around the world are struggling to survive, we three

EDIE

Four.

OLIVIER

Four. I stand corrected. We four end up here, together, to put on a show like nothing has happened, like theatre artists have come together to do for thousands of years. And out of the blue, shazam, look at what the theatre gods have given us: The Cyberlord of the mutant artificial life force who united THE UNIVERSE! If anyone can save the arts, it's you, Mr Bones.

TONY

Tony.

OLIVIER

Tony. Well, if this isn't pure magic, the magic of the theatre, I don't know what is.

Edie gets a phone call.

EDIE

It's Scott, the production manager, I have to take it. (into phone) "Hello? No way! And the cops are there now? Well, I knew something was up but I couldn't...what's that? Where are they taking him?"

OLIVIER

Is something wrong?

Edie covers the mouthpiece of the phone and talks to the company

EDIE

Marty's been arrested.

OLIVIER

Marty?

ANNIE

The Artistic Director.

OLIVIER

I knew that.

EDIE

(into phone) But that doesn't make sense. We just got a huge grant from the feds.

OLIVIER

The money's gone.

EDIE

(into phone) Hold on. (to Olivier) How do you know that?

OLIVIER

Ahhhh...

EDIE

I've been with this company for 50 years. You've been here less than five minutes!

OLIVIER

This morning I had to renegotiate my salary and move from my hotel into a billet type situation. I just put two and two together.

EDIE

(into phone) Sorry Scottie, what's that? Marty's being charged with fraud and forgery? Fucking Marty. I thought he was being a tightwad because he was trying to get the company through hard times, and all along he's been socking it away so there's more to steal.

TONY

What does that mean for us?

OLIVIER

A tragedy is unfolding in real time before our very eyes. Yet another theatre company is/

EDIE

(putting hand over receiver) Olivier, years ago, when I started in this business, I used to let the little things get to me.

OLIVIER

This is hardly a little/

EDIE

/Can I finish? Until one day during the run of a show, an apprentice stage manager I was training backstage was hit in the head. It was an accident, and she died.

OLIVIER

Oh my god, that's terrible.

EDIE

That's right, THAT was a tragedy. But ever since that day, whenever anything bad happens in this business, and believe me, it happens on a daily basis, you know what I do? I ask myself; is anyone dead? Cause if no one is dead, I can deal with it. If no one is dead it's just a problem I can break down and make right one little piece at a time. If no one is dead, it's not a fucking tragedy, it's just business as usual. So...is anyone dead?

OLIVIER

Not that I've been told.

EDIE

That's right. It's just another fucking day in the theatre. (into phone) Hello. Ya, still here. You're kidding me.

ANNIE

What's happening now?

EDIE

They're letting all the staff go and they've called in the Board for an emergency meeting. They've arrested the president for collusion. The staff are standing around watching the cops throw computers into boxes.

OLIVIER

Can I hear?

Olivier listen's into Edie's phone call. Tony gets a text, looks at his phone and steps downstage to get away from Annie. Annie follows him.

ANNIE

What do you think?

TONY

(distracted) What's that?

ANNIE

It doesn't look good, does it. No matter what Edie says.

TONY

Well then, you must be very happy.

Tony gets another text.

ANNIE
Who keeps texting you?

TONY
Why do you care?

ANNIE
Don't flatter yourself. I'm just making polite conversation.

TONY
It's my agent, if you must know.

ANNIE
Doesn't he know you're in rehearsal and can't take calls?

TONY
Let it go, Annie.

ANNIE
Let what go? Why don't you have your phone off?

TONY
Why can't you just trust me?

ANNIE
Jeez, I wonder. Could it be because I caught you cheating and then when I confronted you, you lied to me and said it was over when it wasn't? Shit, what's that over there?

Oldest trick in the book. He looks and she lunges and surprising him, grabs the phone off him.

TONY
Give it back!

ANNIE
What are you so afraid of? What am I going to see?

TONY
Stop acting childish and give me my phone.

ANNIE
(she looks at the phone) Oh my god! I hate you!

TONY

Can you just try to keep this professional?

ANNIE

Me be professional! I'm not the one fucking everyone I work with. We had a deal. No communication with the alien if you want to stay in the house. It's the only reason you're still living there! It's the only reason I agreed to do this show!

TONY

You know when you come to work in the theatre you're supposed to leave your personal life outside that door.

ANNIE

Ya, well, lucky for us, we're not in a theatre, we're in a fucking biker clubhouse!

EDIE

Guys! We can't hear!

They pause and then continue to fight in whispers. Annie holds the phone up

TONY

I can't work with you when you're like this.

ANNIE

No? Then maybe it's time to start looking for someone else to play your goddamn wife. Because I quit!

As soon as Annie says I QUIT the room goes black (words, monologues, great dialogue from Shakespeare to Chekhov to Ibsen to Moskewitz start writing themselves on the walls. All the characters but Annie freeze on the spot, immobile. We hear a crack of thunder, the sound of pages turning and then a book the size of a planet rips in half. Doris appears like magic.

ANNIE

Holy shit! Did you see that?

DORIS

I can't feel my hands.

ANNIE

What was that? You saw it right?

DORIS

I'm freezing. Why am I so cold?

ANNIE

There doesn't appear to be any heat in the building. (realizing Doris is very, very cold)
Are you okay? Should I call someone?

DORIS

Give me a minute. I can't think until I get my blood moving.

Doris starts to move around the room.

ANNIE

I'm still trying to wrap my head around what just happened.

DORIS

Just keep talking to me, and tell me what you need.

ANNIE

Me? I don't need anything.

DORIS

Then why did you call me up?

ANNIE

Call you up? I don't even know who you are.

DORIS

I'm Doris Verino!

ANNIE

Doris Verino. That's the name of the character I'm playing.

DORIS

So you ARE an actress.

ANNIE

Yes...I never said I wasn't.

DORIS

You said you didn't call me up but that's how it works. We're separate people in the beginning and then after a couple of weeks of rehearsal we're the same person. Actors call their characters to life all the time.

ANNIE

No, they don't. Not literally.

DORIS

Then how do you explain what just happened.

ANNIE

I can't... yet.

DORIS

If I'm not Doris, who do you think I am?

ANNIE

I have no idea. Look, even if you were my character, and I don't for a second believe you are, it wouldn't matter. Because I'm not doing the play.

DORIS

You're not?

ANNIE

No. My husband's a dick.

DORIS

Detective?

ANNIE

No. Lying cheating bastard. Until he charms me, that is, and I take him back. Cause that's what I do. Because I'm an idiot.

DORIS

What does your husband being a dick have to do with your not doing the play?

ANNIE

He's cast in the other role!

DORIS

Ahhh, he's playing Victor.

ANNIE

That's right. And if I did the show I'd have to make love to him every night. Break up and get back together with him 8 shows a week for the entire run.

DORIS

Because that's what happens in the play.

ANNIE

That's right. And I can't do it anymore because I'm starting to lose my mind. I have lost my mind. Look at me, I'm having a conversation with someone who thinks she's my character.

DORIS

What year is this?

ANNIE

2024. (insert actual year here)

DORIS

All that time and women are still sacrificing their careers for men.

ANNIE

I'm not sacrificing anything. I'm finally doing what I need to do which is why I quit.

As soon as Annie says I quit, the blast of words and sound rock the space again.

ANNIE (CONT)

There it is again. What is that?

DORIS

Call it magic, or your imagination or even just an explosion in your frontal cortex, we don't know. But we do know it doesn't just happen. It's a sign you're still somehow connected to the idea of creating this character.

ANNIE

That's a convenient interpretation. My husband/

DORIS

/No one cares about your husband! This is happening to you. This is about you. So tell me, why do you have to quit and sacrifice your career! Why doesn't he quit?

ANNIE

Why is this so important to you?

DORIS

Sweet cheeks, I don't get called into being when an actor's forgotten a line. If I'm here it's for one of two reasons. Because something in your narrative is changing and you need my help. Or something in my narrative is changing and I need yours.

ANNIE

This has happened before?

DORIS

Once, when the censors were demanding changes to the script and I had to convince the writer to fight for my life.

ANNIE

And what happened that time?

DORIS

We lost. They shut the show down but they didn't kill me. Oh no, I'm very much alive.

ANNIE

I don't understand.

DORIS

They said the show was indecent and immoral. I was indecent and immoral. Which was a pile of malarkey. We had great houses every night and the broads were crazy for us. We could a run HEY DORIS for years.

ANNIE

I'd never heard of HEY DORIS before I got cast in the part.

DORIS

You're pulling my leg!

ANNIE

No, I'm serious. No one's heard of it. It was found in a drawer somewhere covered in dust.

DORIS

Well knock me down with a feather. I was out for a long time. No wonder I'm so cold. What did you say your name was?

ANNIE

I didn't. Annie.

DORIS

Well, Annie, an actors imagination is a powerful thing. You've had a lifetime of imagining things for a living. But you're still not convinced I am who I say I am, are you. So, take a gander at this.

Doris points and the lights come up on the actors frozen in motion.

ANNIE

Why do they look like that? What is happening here?

DORIS

It's not them, it's us. They're in the rehearsal hall moving at the same speed as always. We're moving infinitely faster.

ANNIE

Can they see us?

DORIS

According to them we haven't moved at all. We're exactly where we were.

ANNIE

And also here. I'm confused. Where is this conversation that we're having right now taking place?

DORIS

Between the pages.

ANNIE

Can we get back?

DORIS

Anytime you want. Are you doing the show?

ANNIE

Is getting back there conditional on my answer?

DORIS

It might be. How much time do you have? I've got all the time in the world.

ANNIE

Okay, fine, yes. That's what actors do isn't it. Say yes to everything.

DORIS

The good ones do. And now, what were you doing before I got here?

ANNIE

Arguing with Tony.

DORIS

Can you remember what you said?

ANNIE

Is this like a spell?

DORIS

When you say things out loud, you infuse life into them. Little kids know it instinctively. They say things like, "TAKE THAT BACK", as if you could make things disappear by unsaying them.

ANNIE

It was something like, "look for someone else to play your wife because I quit"

The words spin in a circle backwards (video buffering - the spinning circle of death) like on a computer screen

ANNIE (CONT.)

What is that?

DORIS

Making people and things come to life is a lot harder than it looks. You need to remember the words exactly.

Annie stops, thinks, remembers the line.

ANNIE

" Start looking for someone else to play your goddamn wife because I quit!

Thunder and lines from famous plays write themselves on the walls again but backwards. The lights come back up. Tony, Edie and Olivier unfreeze. Edie is still on the phone.

DORIS

This is where you're rehearsing? What on earth happened to the theatre?

Tony reaches towards Annie for his phone.

TONY

Quit with the histrionics and give me back my phone.

Annie is still surprised the spell worked.

DORIS

Is this him? The big palooka making all the fuss?

ANNIE

Yup.

DORIS

You never said anything about him being a looker! Why, he's hotter than a July bride.

TONY

Enough! Give it here already.

He grabs the phone. It rings.

TONY

(into phone) Simon, you motherfucker. What's going on? Anybody getting any work?

He steps away to talk.

OLIVIER

Eddie, I don't understand. What's happening now?

EDIE

They're letting everyone go. Box office, marketing, admin...

OLIVIER

How do you run a theatre without box office?

We start to hear the sound of a multitude of motorcycles arriving from the distance.

ANNIE

Sounds like our bikers are coming home to roost.

DORIS

Here? They're headed here?

OLIVIER

Eddie, did you hear that? The bikers are coming! What should we do?

EDIE

Why are you asking me? I'm a stage manager not a traffic cop!

DORIS

A female stage manager. I'm impressed.

The bikes get louder. The cast have to start yelling over the noise.

OLIVIER

Should we be getting out of here?

EDIE

Why would we do that?

OLIVIER

Are we safe?

EDIE

Those bikers are the least of our problems.

DORIS

(pointing at Olivier) Is that one of the bikers she's talking to now?

ANNIE

That's our director.

DORIS

Why is he dressed like that?

OLIVIER

What's that, Annie? Did you say something to me?

ANNIE

(To Olivier) Yes. I was wondering why YOU, the director, thought we had a problem. Aren't we allowed to be here, Edie?

EDIE

Of course we are.

Axel enters in full biker regalia. He practically knocks the door off it's hinges.

AXEL

Okay, people, pack up and clear out!

DORIS

Now, who do we have here?

EDIE

Who the hell do you think you are? Barging in like this?

AXEL

I run this place.

EDIE

Then you should know we're booked into this dump until the end of the month.

AXEL

You WERE booked. I just got notice to show you the door.

DORIS

Plot thickener.

Edie holds out her phone.

EDIE

Do you mind if I make a call?

Axel pulls out his phone. It's a Mexican
standoff. Phones instead of guns.

AXEL

Do you mind if I get a couple of my guys up here to speed things up?

DORIS

You know what we used to say about a man like this? Ridden hard and put away wet.

EDIE

I was just on the phone with my producer and he didn't say a thing about leaving.

AXEL

Producer? What the hell are you people doing up here?

OLIVIER

We're rehearsing a show.

AXEL

A show? What kind of show?

EDIE

A play.

OLIVIER

Live theatre.

The noise from the bikers cuts out as if by cue

AXEL

(beat) I had no idea I was shutting down a play.

EDIE

You're not. You're not that important. You're merely throwing us out of the building.

AXEL

Is it any good?

ANNIE

You wouldn't think so.

AXEL

You don't think I'd like it?

ANNIE

No. I don't.

Axel is immediately taken by Annie

AXEL

What makes you think that?

ANNIE

I can tell by looking at you it's not your thing.

AXEL

Is that right?

ANNIE

That's right.

AXEL

Are you in it?

ANNIE

I am.

AXEL

What's it about?

ANNIE

What does it matter?

OLIVIER

It's like one of those old musicals from the forties, but without the music.

ANNIE

Who cares! It's not happening anymore.

EDIE

That's right. Just throw us out if you're throwing us out.

AXEL

Hold on. Don't do anything just yet. Give me a minute, will ya?

Axel exits

OLIVIER

What do you think he's doing?

EDIE

Wasting our time. We still have to figure out what our next move is.

OLIVIER

You don't still think we can open/

EDIE

/I've never had a show close under my watch and I'm not about to start now.

ANNIE

It's over, Edie. There's nowhere to go.

OLIVIER

Can't we just move into a different rehearsal space?

TONY

Great idea. This city used to have thirty or forty theatre companies. There's gotta be a space that isn't being used.

EDIE

All the old spaces are condo developments or worse.

TONY

What could be worse?

EDIE

They're sitting empty, boarded up, and no one can afford them.

Axel reenters

EDIE

That was fast.

AXEL

I talked to the boys downstairs and we all want you to do the play here.

EVERYONE

HERE?

DORIS

Is he serious?

OLIVIER

How can we do it here?

AXEL

We do a little variety show here every Christmas with all the proceeds going to the toy run.

ANNIE

In this building? No way!

DORIS

Hear the offer before you reject it.

EDIE

Who did you say you were?

AXEL

I didn't. Name's Axel.

DORIS

That's my favourite part of the car! (Annie looks to her in disbelief) It's the central shaft!

EDIE

Well, Axel, I don't see how/

AXEL

/We'll take half the box office and continue to pay a portion of your salary. It won't be as much as you're getting now but the show will go on. That's the main thing isn't it?

DORIS

You're darn tootin!

EDIE

So...we'd be working for you?

AXEL

Is that a problem?

EDIE

It begs the question why?

AXEL

Maybe I just need to see something with an old fashioned ending. A happy ending. Isn't there always a happy ending in those old 40's comedies?

TONY

They are formulaic, yes. The happy ending is one of the basic tenets of comedy.

ANNIE

Oh for god's sakes, Tony. He's not asking for a lecture on comic structure.

AXEL

A kiss at the end and everyone makes up.

TONY

That's a generalization but yes.

AXEL

It's been a tough couple of years, wouldn't you say? A lot of us could use a happy ending.

He smiles at Annie. She does not smile back.

EDIE

If we decided to go ahead with your offer, and that's a big if, what do you have in the way of tech?

OLIVIER

What she means is, is there any lighting or sound equipment?

AXEL

(to Olivier) I don't need a translator. (to Edie) If you're interested in proceeding all of that'll be worked out.

ANNIE

Look at the size of this place. How many people could we get in here?

TONY

She's right.

ANNIE

Don't agree with me.

EDIE

It doesn't make any sense financially.

AXEL

Why don't you let me worry about that.

EDIE

This is a professional show, Axel. They don't come cheap.

AXEL

I'm prepared to do what it takes to get it up.

DORIS

Said the actress to the bishop.

EDIE

I don't want anyone to get hurt.

AXEL

Why would anyone get hurt?

TONY

What do you say, Olivier?

EDIE

Olivier's job is to direct the show. My job is to get it up.

DORIS

The joke that keeps on giving.

AXEL

Why don't you two step into my office so we can work out the details.

EDIE
Can you give us a minute?

AXEL
Don't make me wait too long.

He tips an imaginary hat to Annie and exits.

TONY
Way to flirt with the biker, Annie.

ANNIE
Flirting? Are you insane?

EDIE
Guys, one problem at a time!

ANNIE
You're not seriously thinking about his offer are you?

DORIS
He's trying to save the show!

ANNIE
(to Doris) Don't be naive. (to Edie) He wants something.

OLIVIER
What have we got to lose?

ANNIE
Are you kidding me? You know what kind of shit bikers do to people? Murder, porn, drugs: that's the business they're in.

EDIE
I say we give him a chance.

DORIS
I'm really starting to like this broad.

EDIE
I can't see any other way to save the show.

OLIVIER
If Edie's in, I am too.

DORIS

There's an old theatre saying that the right show appears just when you need it. Don't you want to know what the lesson is we both have to learn?

TONY

Earth to Annie. We're all waiting for you.

ANNIE

Fine. I'll do it. I don't want to but...

OLIVIER

The show must go on! (sings from Bugs Bunny) Overture, curtains, lights. This is it, the night of nights. No more rehearsing and nursing a part/

EDIE

Olivier, shut up and come with me. We need to sign that contract before he changes his mind. Can one of you do a coffee run?

Edie and Oliver exit

TONY

I got a call to make. Sorry.

Tony exits.

ANNIE

I guess that leaves me then.

Annie exits

DORIS

(sings) " On with the show, this is it!" (She chases after Annie) Annie? Wait for me! Annie!

ACT ONE SCENE 2

Annie enters script in hand in a winter coat, hat and gloves. Doris follows.

ANNIE

I thought you were here to help me build my character. That was the deal because I don't want any help with my marriage!

DORIS

You think he's the first man to cheat on his wife!? Why, there wouldn't be a marriage left on the planet if women started leaving men for reasons of incontinence.

ANNIE

Infidelity.

DORIS

(not hearing) What's that?

ANNIE

You said incontinence but you mean infidelity.

DORIS

Tomato, tomahto. Can you imagine what it's like being Tony? Even if he weren't such a looker, he'd still cheat on you because that's what men do.

ANNIE

I don't know what's worse. The fact that you're defending him or that you're making sexist generalizations about men.

DORIS

It's not their fault. They're born thinking monogamy means sleeping with one woman at a time.

ANNIE

Have you considered the possibility that men and women might have changed since you were written? Maybe Tony's just a major fuck up in a brave new world where most men aren't.

DORIS

How's your sex life? That's why men stray you know, when they're not getting enough at home.

ANNIE

For your information, we had a good sex life.

DORIS

And how long were you married?

ANNIE

Twenty five years.

DORIS

You had good sex after twenty five years and you're letting that man go?

Eddie enters in a sweater, hat, scarf and mitts

EDIE

Oh, you're alone. I thought I heard you talking to someone.

ANNIE

I'm just running my lines.

EDIE

Have you seen Axel this morning?

ANNIE

Not yet.

EDIE

We need heat or we're all gonna die of pneumonia. Keep your coat on. (calls) Okay people, let's go. We got a shitload to do and not enough time to do it in.

Tony and Olivier enter

OLIVIER

Good morning fellow thespians. Isn't this exciting. The first day of rehearsals. Such a sacred event. And for such an occasion I have a little ritual I like to start with before we dive headfirst into the script. Come close, I'd like everyone in a circle holding hands. Including you Edie.

EDIE

Oh ya? I'm kinda busy. How about I just stick a broom up my ass and sweep the floor at the same time?

Eddie hoists a ridiculously huge and heavy garbage bag onto her back and exits. Over the course of the play Edie carries more bags and the room gets cleaner revealing the theatre space underneath.

OLIVIER

Alrighty then. Edie is just going to go ahead and do whatever she needs to do but the rest of us lets join hands.

ANNIE

I'm not taking off my mitts.

TONY

Whatever.

Doris and Annie and Tony and Olivier hold hands in a circle. Oliver begins to pray theatrically

OLIVIER

(he prays) "Oh Mother Theatre, we stand before you, patiently waiting for you to loosen your blouse that we may sup on the nourishing milk of Chekhov, lap up the glistening flow of Shaw, and suckle on the wellspring of Shakespeare. Nourish us Mother. Inspire in us words and rhymes and turn your milk into flowing lines. Such as we are, we are your children, your servants, your lovers."

Eddie reenters

EDIE

And before I forget, there's no toilet paper. If you have to go, take Kleenex with you. And don't drink the water. Don't even wash your hands. There's plenty of hand sanitizer. Okay then, Annie, you're in a red body suit and heels, holding a whip at the top of the show. Victor is tied to the bed.

ANNIE

Will I still be able to get that catsuit, Edie?

EDIE

I'll make a note to find out what's been done with the costumes.

OLIVER

Good news if they're gone, Annie. You won't have to wear that costume anymore.

ANNIE

Why wouldn't I want to wear it?

OLIVIER

I'm just saying...I just can't imagine you...or...myself ...at this age...wanting to reveal.../

ANNIE

Reveal what?

TONY

You know what he's saying, Annie. You've said it a million times.

ANNIE

And I'm allowed to say it. He's not. For your information Olivier, when I gave birth there were nurses, my G.P., my pediatrician, my midwife, and a complete neonatal team looking up my vagina every couple of minutes. So I'm not afraid of being seen in tight clothing.

DORIS

That's my girl.

OLIVIER

Good to know. Let's gather and have a little chit-chat-chin wag- chally- wag, shall we? All of us together. Now Annie, would you agree that Doris and Victor have a healthy sexual relationship at the top of the show?

ANNIE

Victor certainly thinks so.

TONY

Hey! Don't be making decisions about my character!

ANNIE

It's in the script. Have you read the script?

TONY

Not yet. I don't want to get too far ahead of you.

OLIVIER

But we can all agree that in this version of the play/

DORIS

/This version of the play? What does that mean?

OLIVIER

Doris is unhappy because her husband, well, this is awkward, her husband won't...how shall I say this...

ANNIE

Go down on her. He won't go down on her.

TONY

You think that's the only problem they have?

ANNIE

I'm sorry. Are we in the same play?

EDIE

Why don't we just run the top of the show and talk about it afterwards.

OLIVIER

I want to skip to where Tony is tied to the bed.

ANNIE

You don't want to run the opening?

OLIVIER

We'll get back to it.

ANNIE

I do a lot in that scene.

OLIVIER

Don't worry, Annie. We've got nothing but time.

EDIE

We have exactly 10 days. Okay then, why don't we take it from "What the hell doll, what's going on." When you're ready.

TONY AS VICTOR

"What the hell doll, what's going on? Why did you stop?"

Doris jumps to Annie's side and when Annie speaks, Doris the character speaks too. It takes Annie a while to get comfortable with it.

ANNIE AS DORIS AND DORIS

"I'm sorry, Victor. It's just...not working for me anymore."

ANNIE

(to Doris) Are you going to do that for all my lines?

TONY

Do what?

ANNIE

Nothing. Sorry.

TONY

It's our first time through the scene. Forgive me if I'm not doing it perfectly.

ANNIE

Don't get sensitive. I wasn't talking to you.

TONY

Then who were you talking to?

ANNIE

Nobody. Forget it. (to Doris) Just do what you need to do.

DORIS

Just till you get the hang of it.

TONY AS VICTOR

“I don’t understand, is this part of the game? Because you love pretending to break into the house”.

ANNIE AS DORIS AND DORIS

“I know, I just can’t...

TONY AS VICTOR

What? Say it.

ANNIE AS DORIS AND DORIS

I can’t do this anymore.

TONY AS VICTOR

That’s okay baby, why don’t you pretend to be the Nanny? I’ve been a very bad boy, Nanny and I need a spanking.

ANNIE AS DORIS AND DORIS

Not today.

TONY AS VICTOR

Master May I? That’s a good game too.

ANNIE AS DORIS AND DORIS

Victor, I don’t want to tie you up or whip you or spank you anymore.

TONY AS VICTOR

It’s just an off night. I understand. It happens to everyone.

ANNIE AS DORIS AND DORIS

No, it’s over. I don’t enjoy the games anymore.

TONY AS VICTOR

No, don’t say that! That’s our thing, Doris. That’s what we do.

ANNIE AS DORIS AND DORIS

That’s what we DID.

TONY AS VICTOR

But/

ANNIE AS DORIS AND DORIS

/I've been faking it, Victor. For a long time now.

TONY AS VICTOR

"Faking it. Why on earth would you?"

ANNIE AS DORIS AND DORIS

"Do that? Why do women fake anything. To make men happy. To make you happy.

TONY AS VICTOR

Baby, what can I do?

ANNIE AS DORIS AND DORIS

Ohh Tony. What I'd really like is for you to... I mean... I know it's illegal, but just this once could you do to me, what you like me to do to you?

TONY AS VICTOR

Why Doris! You can't mean/

ANNIE AS DORIS AND DORIS

But I do! I do mean it! Why is that so impossible?

OLIVIER

Can we stop for a minute please? Annie, I'm still struggling with what Doris wants in this scene.

ANNIE

She wants Victor to go down on her.

Olivier's completely uncomfortable with that.

OLIVIER

Yes, I know that, thank you. But do you think that's the only problem in their relationship?

ANNIE

I'm not sure, but oral sex is what Annie wants. Isn't that what you asked me. It's the whole point of the play.

OLIVIER

Well...it's just that... I don't think we can do that sort of story line in this day and age.

ANNIE

I thought that story line was exactly why we were doing this play now. Because it was important at one time. Because women saying they wanted oral sex sent hoards of people onto the street picketing to keep the play running while others protested to have the censors shut it down.

TONY

This show was shut down?

ANNIE

Oh my god, really?

OLIVIER

Don't you think this play can also be about reconciliation?

DORIS AND ANNIE

No.

OLIVIER

Just hear me out. Today's audiences aren't interested in that kind of overt sexuality. They want romance, innuendo, a story line without any lasting conflict. That's why Hallmark is so successful. Because it's soothing. Comfort tv they call it. It's a new genre.

ANNIE

Oh my god, is the theatre being asked to compete with Hallmark now?

DORIS

And there it is. That's why I'm here. To save the play again.

OLIVIER

There's enough hard news out there. I'm proposing something a little bit gentler.

ANNIE

Hey, why don't we set our story at Christmas too!

TONY

Don't be so hostile. You said yourself, the play was tasteless.

OLIVIER

All I'm proposing, is instead of a woman who wants...

He can't say it

ANNIE

Oral sex.

OLIVIER

Yes, why can't she just want more equality. It takes place right after the war at a time when women were fighting for equality.

ANNIE

I'm sorry, I don't understand/

OLIVIER

/for a start we're going to take out all the sexual references.

ANNIE

Olivier, it takes place when oral sex was illegal. What Doris is asking for/

DORIS

Wait! What are you saying? It's not illegal now?

ANNIE

Not since 1964.

DORIS

Well, jimminy cricket, that's the best news I've had all day. Why didn't you say so?

ANNIE

You don't think the strides women have made historically are important? Especially now that they're losing their rights?

OLIVIER

If we do the play as written it's just going to get shut down again.

TONY

I can't believe oral sex was illegal.

OLIVIER

I can't believe the writer refused to be flexible. Annie, if we play it a little bit softer at the top/

DORIS

Weak. He means weak.

OLIVIER

/and the relationship between the two of you gains strength throughout the story, the audience will see that growth and fall in love with both of you. That's the happy ending everyone wants. And HEY DORIS will finally be the success it was supposed to be.

DORIS

He has no idea what this play was SUPPOSED to be. It was written by a woman who against all the odds managed to get a play produced in the forties. Can you imagine how hard that was? She had so many producers making her do rewrites it would make your head spin. But she refused to give in on the premise and she got it up. The play opened on Broadway. Finally she was allowed to tell the story the way she wanted to tell it.

Annie looks to Doris to please stop talking

ANNIE

At the top of the show, Olivier, I'm the powerful one. I'm holding a whip. It's my strength that turns him on.

DORIS

You tell him, doll.

ANNIE

The women in screwball comedies are always stronger than the men. That, as Tony will attest, is one of the rules of the genre!

DORIS

Sometimes they even wore men's clothes!

ANNIE

You can't just rewrite a play whenever you feel like it.

OLIVIER

But the playwright is dead.

ANNIE

There's still copyright rules.

OLIVIER

I've changed every play I've ever directed.

ANNIE

That doesn't mean it's not illegal.

OLIVIER

I did a production of Glass Menagerie where Laura married the gentleman caller and the two of them lived happily ever after.

ANNIE

What? You can't do that.

OLIVIER

In my Romeo and Juliet the Capulets and the Montagues became best friends and Romeo and Juliet both lived happily ever after. Seriously. Audiences eat that kind of thing up.

EDIE

That is horrifying.

OLIVIER

/Audiences are looking for entertainment these days. They're tired of having to think.

EDIE

Okay, enough. I need a break so everyone's going to take a break. Grab a coffee, make a call, play on your phone, check your facebook account, your dating profile, whatever. I don't care. Do what you want for 5 minutes and when we get back we're going to get down to work.

Eddie exits

TONY

Where was this, Olivier? That you directed these shows?

OLIVIER

A little town just outside Lethbridge, Alberta.

TONY

Really. There's a professional theatre there?

OLIVIER

God no. I've never done professional theatre.

Tony and Olivier exit.

Axel enters with a lighting board. Tony glares at him

AXEL

Good morning. Is Edie around?

ANNIE

We're taking a break.

DORIS

See how he's looking at you?

AXEL

Wow. I don't know how you do it. It's freezing in here but you in that red coat and red cheeks, well, you look even more beautiful than you did yesterday.

ANNIE

You think I look good now, wait till you see me with hypothermia.

AXEL

I'm sorry. I'm working on getting the furnace fixed. I am. But like I said, it's all working for you.

ANNIE

Well, as long as I'm attractive to you, I guess I've got nothing to complain about.

AXEL

I just read a study that said men spend more money on women when they're wearing red.

ANNIE

Is that right.

AXEL

Ya, they gave a bunch of guys five hundred bucks and said, spend as much as you want on your date, and all the women in red had more money spent on them than the women not in red. Evidently, the colour red sends out a message.

ANNIE

Is that right.

AXEL

Ya. The possibility that the female might be open to some sort of sexual advance.

Annie just stares at Axel. Beat. Edie enters

EDIE

Axel, we're freezing our asses off.

AXEL

Sorry, I've been out looking for one of these babies.

He shows her the lighting board

EDIE

No way! I didn't think there was a board like that left in the country. Where'd you find it?

AXEL

It fell out of the back of a truck.

EDIE

Axel, you promised/

AXEL

/Nobody got hurt.

EDIE

I'm not sure there's anyone left who can run a board like that. They were antiques way back when I started.

AXEL

I could do it.

EDIE

Seriously? You don't know how to run this thing!

AXEL

I do. I grew up backstage. Lighting and sound systems are to me what lego and hockey sticks are to other little boys. In fact, my grandmother/

EDIE

/Save it for later, Axel, we're running late and got a shit ton to do. But if you can run this baby...

AXEL

I can and I will.

EDIE

Why are you doing this for us? Really?

AXEL

Let's just say I'm a good producer.

EDIE

Ya? Then why don't you get us some fucking heat?

AXEL

I'm on it.

EDIE

(she calls out the door) Okay people, we're back! Tony? Olivier?

Axel and Edie exit

DORIS

He may be adorable, but it's important to keep your eye on the prize.

ANNIE

Which is?

DORIS

Getting back together with your husband.

ANNIE

Oh god, Doris, give it up.

DORIS

You shouldn't have thrown him out. You want to punish him but you don't want to lose him.

ANNIE

Why is my getting back together with Tony so important to you.

DORIS

I get back together with Victor at the end of the play. I need to keep you on plot.

ANNIE

I don't understand how you consider HEY DORIS an early feminist work.

DORIS

An early what?

ANNIE

The plot suggests that Doris is a woman ahead of her time. A woman pushing for change, equal rights. And at the same time you're insistent I get back together with a man who doesn't make me happy.

DORIS

I'm a character, Annie. What can I say. It's the way I was written.

ANNIE

Can we just establish that you were written in the 40's after the war and know nothing about how it works between men and women now?

DORIS

So the world worked the same for thousands of years and now in the last 100 years everything has changed?

ANNIE

That's what I'm saying.

Tony enters

TONY

Was that our local drug dealer I just saw in here? What did he want?

ANNIE

He found us a lighting board.

TONY

And how many people had to die for that?

ANNIE

God Tony, how can you be such a moron without even trying?

Tony gets a text and exits. Edie enters

EDIE

Annie, when we come back Olivier wants to take it from the same place again.

ANNIE

Whatever. I surrender.

EDIE

I feel like I have to warn you. He wants to try it with Doris tied to the bed and Victor holding the whip.

ANNIE

Are you fucking kidding me?

DORIS

He can't do this!

ANNIE

He wants to do a play about a man begging for a blowjob. How original, how revolutionary. It's never been done before!

EDIE

You could try to fight it by talking to the producer but I can't imagine a woman in a tight red catsuit tied to a bed doing a sex scene is gonna be considered a bad idea by anyone, let alone a biker. Am I allowed to say that?

Edie exits

ANNIE

He's ruining the play.

DORIS

We need to teach that man a lesson.

ANNIE

How?

DORIS

One of the things I like about men is how they instinctively understand what a quick punch to the head means. One quick jab and everyone knows where they stand.

ANNIE

If you're talking violence I'm not/

DORIS

Not violence, no. We don't have to resort to that kind of banality.

Tony and Edie and Olivier enter.

OLIVIER

Okay people. We're going to do the scene where Victor is tied to the bed only this time Annie will be tied to the bed and we're going to reverse the lines.

EDIE

Tony, you have the whip.

DORIS

You're on your own, dollface. I can't say these lines. They're not mine. I don't know them.

ANNIE

I'm going to need my script.

OLIVIER

Of course.

ANNIE AS DORIS

"What the hell babe, what's going on? Why did you stop?"

TONY AS VICTOR

"I'm sorry, Doris. It's just...not working for me anymore."

ANNIE AS DORIS

"I don't understand, is this part of the game? Because you love pretending to break into the house and..."

TONY AS VICTOR

"I know, I just can't..."

ANNIE AS DORIS

What? Say it.

TONY AS VICTOR

I can't do this anymore.

ANNIE AS DORIS

It's okay babe, why don't you pretend to be the pizza delivery guy because I really need your big pepperoni.

OLIVIER

I'm not sure they have pizza delivery guys in 1946.

TONY

You're impossible to work with.

Tony gets up from the bed and as he crosses the stage, Doris trips him, sending him stumbling across the room where he gets his foot stuck in a bucket and falls into a pile of garbage bags against the wall.

OLIVIER

Are you okay?

TONY

I'm fine.

EDIE

Can you continue?

Of course.

TONY

That was like a Buster Keaton film. We should keep that in the play.

ANNIE

Okay then, let's take it from/

EDIE

Hold on, I want to make some more changes.

OLIVIER

Oh no you don't.

DORIS

Olivier picks up his script. Doris grabs his hand and manipulates his hand so Olivier hits himself in the head with his script

Ouch!

OLIVIER

Olivier?

EDIE

Doris whacks Olivier on the other side of his head with the script.

God damn it!

OLIVIER

Are you okay?

TONY

Doris whacks Olivier a third time.

Stop it!

OLIVIER

Olivier, what's going on? Who are you yelling at?

EDIE

I don't know. It feels like someone or something's doing this TO me.

OLIVIER

ANNIE

Maybe it's the theatre gods.

OLIVIER

Excuse me?

ANNIE

You called them down. Asked them to be with us on our journey. They're probably pissed you're messing with the creative soul of a writer. Dead or otherwise.

OLIVIER

You think so?

ANNIE

What else could it be?

OLIVIER

Oh my god.

Olivier is quite overwhelmed.

EDIE

Why don't you sit for a minute. Why don't we all just sit for a minute.

As Tony goes to sit Doris pulls the chair out from under him.

Axel enters with a space heater. Sees Tony on the floor and is amused. He takes his frustration out on Axel.

TONY

Don't look at me like that! And why are you in here? You're always in here.

ANNIE

He's part of the company.

TONY

Since when? You think because you're a biker you can't be touched? You think I'm afraid of you because you're a big tough guy?

AXEL

I just wanted to bring you a space heater.

TONY

Bullshit. I know what you're up to.

Tony lunges for Axel but Doris steps in and he misses.

EDIE

What the fuck!

Tony tries again. This time Doris pulls Axel aside and Tony goes flying again. Annie gets mad at Doris.

ANNIE

Stop it! Both of you!

EDIE

Enough!

Eddie separates the two of them.

AXEL

I'll be on my way, then.

Axel leaves

EDIE

What is wrong with you, Tony? This is his building! You want to get us thrown out?

TONY

He won't throw us out, he's too busy making the moves on my wife.

ANNIE

Oh my god, really? We're neanderthal now?

TONY

Trust me, a man knows these kinds of things.

EDIE

Do you want some water?

TONY

I've got some. Over there.

EDIE

Let me get it for you.

OLIVIER

I'll get it.

TONY

Everyone stop. I can do it. I'm fine.

ANNIE

You're not fine. You're deranged.

Olivier hands Tony his glass of water.

TONY

Here you go.

As Olivier lifts the water to his lips Doris
knocks the cup so the water hits them both
square in the face. She screams in delight.

TONY

What the hell! Sorry. My hand must have slipped.

We hear a scratching sound and rain on the roof
which continues to get louder. Olivier starts to
panic.

Eddie pulls a huge bath towel out of her stage
management bag. It's so big it's gotta be a gag.

EDIE

Here, both of you, take this and go dry yourselves off before you freeze to death.

Tony and Olivier exit. Doris follows them and
locks the door behind them so they can't get
back in.

ANNIE

What is that sound?

EDIE

It's just rain.

ANNIE

No. It sounds like something's moving behind the walls.

A rat comes running out of the light fixtures.
And then water pours through them.

ANNIE

Oh my god! It's a rat.

EDIE

Look at the size of it. This is insane.

ANNIE

Is that water dangerous?

EDIE

We're not sticking around to find out. Grab your personal gear and get out. Take my computer.

ANNIE

Where?

EDIE

I don't know. Go for lunch. Just get out of the building. I'll go find Axel. If he's still speaking to us. Just let me deal with it. I'll call everyone when I know what we're doing.

ANNIE

Okay.

Tony bangs on the door to get back in.

TONY

Can someone open the door please?

EDIE

They must have locked themselves in.

ANNIE

I'll open it. Go. Go find Axel.

Eddie exits.

Annie goes to open the door for Tony and Olivier.

DORIS

Go. Before you're electrocuted.

ANNIE

Electrocuted?

DORIS

Eddie seems to think it's dangerous and she's no fool. So you should go! Now!

ANNIE

You'll let them out?

DORIS

Of course. You can count on me.

Annie exits. Tony and Olivier continue to bang on the door. Doris doesn't let them out.

TONY

Hello? Hello!

OLIVIER

Oh mother theatre, hear us please. We beseech you and promise not to make any more changes to the script.

TONY

Is anyone there?

OLIVIER

We promise to do the show as written as we continue to prostrate ourselves to your divine spirit.

TONY

Oh, shut up, Olivier. Just, shut the fuck up!

Lights down as Tony and Olivier continue to bang on the door. Doris does a little victory dance.

Sound cue - Ricky Martin's Livin La Vida Loca

Intermission.

ACT TWO SCENE ONE

Annie and Tony are rehearsing a scene in the bedroom. They are openly hostile. Edie and Olivier are sitting off to the side. Annie in a red dress is putting on a coat, hat and gloves, Doris still shadows her. They have that dance down pat. Tony/Victor is in pajamas reading the National Geographic under the covers.

TONY AS VICTOR

You're going out, Annie?

ANNIE

Doris.

TONY

What?

ANNIE

The line is "you're going out, Doris" . You called me, Annie.

TONY

Oh.

TONY AS VICTOR

You're going out, Doris?

ANNIE AS DORIS AND DORIS

I won't be long. I booked a last minute counseling session at the church.

TONY AS VICTOR

At this time of night?

ANNIE AS DORIS AND DORIS

It was their only opening. It's been weeks, Victor. I can't wait any longer. I have to talk to someone.

TONY AS VICTOR

It's inappropriate, Annie. What we do in the privacy of our bedroom/

ANNIE
/Doris! The name is Doris!

TONY
I didn't say Annie.

ANNIE
Yes, you did.

EDIE
Let's keep going, people.

TONY
Now I can't remember my line.

OLIVIER
It's inappropriate, Doris. What we do in the privacy of our bedroom is no one's business but our own.

EDIE
How do you do that? You're not even looking at the script.

OLIVIER
I know all Tony's lines by heart.

EDIE
Why?

OLIVIER
I don't know. His character makes sense to me. His lines make sense to me. Or should I say, he makes sense of the lines. They're unforgettable.

EDIE
Okay....Why don't you take it from "It's inappropriate Doris. What we do in the privacy of our bedroom" again.

TONY AS VICTOR
"It's inappropriate, DORIS. What we do in the privacy of our bedroom is no one's business but our own."

ANNIE AS DORIS AND DORIS
But isn't this what the church asks of us? To confess our deepest longings.

Olivier says this line along with Tony

TONY AS VICTOR AND OLIVIER

No, their area of expertise is sin and we haven't committed any.

EDIE

(To Olivier) Ollie, can you just say the lines to yourself? Thank you.

OLIVIER

Of course.

EDIE

It's distracting.

OLIVIER

I apologize.

Olivier continues to mouth all the lines

ANNIE AS DORIS AND DORIS

You've enjoyed all the "games" we've played over the years, haven't you Victor?

TONY AS VICTOR

You know I have, babe.

ANNIE AS DORIS AND DORIS

Then why can't we try what I want for once?

TONY AS VICTOR

Annie, I wish I could make you happy, I really do.

OLIVIER

Doris!

ANNIE

Yes?

OLIVIER

I'm talking to Tony.

TONY

Yes?

OLIVIER

You called her Annie again.

TONY

I did?

OLIVIER AND ANNIE

Yes.

OLIVIER

You said, Annie, I wish I could make you happy.

TONY

Why do I keep doing that?

ANNIE

I don't know, since everyone knows you're NOT trying to make me happy. Quite the opposite in fact.

EDIE

Try to stay focused please.

ANNIE AS DORIS AND DORIS

I just want/

TONY AS VICTOR

/Don't say it.

ANNIE AS DORIS AND DORIS

I can't even say the word?

TONY AS VICTOR

No.

ANNIE AS DORIS AND DORIS

Can you say it?

TONY AS VICTOR AND OLIVIER

Not in the presence of a lady.

EDIE

(to Olivier) Shhhh.

ANNIE AS DORIS AND DORIS

What if we called it southern cuisine. Would that make it any easier?

TONY AS VICTOR

Call it what you like I'm not eating it.

ANNIE AS DORIS AND DORIS

Do you mind if I do?

TONY AS VICTOR

What you're suggesting, Doris, is a felony.

ANNIE AS DORIS AND DORIS

It doesn't have to be the whole meal. I'd be happy with just the appetizer.

TONY AS VICTOR

Punishable by a lengthy term of imprisonment and/or hard labor.

Annie takes off her coat and hat.

ANNIE AS DORIS AND DORIS

Fine, I'll stay home.

TONY AS VICTOR

You will?

ANNIE AS DORIS AND DORIS

Yes, you convinced me.

TONY AS VICTOR

I did?

ANNIE AS DORIS AND DORIS

I don't want to break the law, Victor. I'm not a criminal, I'm a woman. A woman looking for a little more swirly in her tirty-whirly but I know when I'm whipped.

TONY AS VICTOR

Speaking of whipping.

ANNIE AS DORIS

You naughty boy. How about a nightcap first.

TONY AS VICTOR

Are you having one?

ANNIE AS DORIS AND DORIS

I'm going to pour myself a very large bourbon.

TONY AS VICTOR

Good idea. I'll join you.

ANNIE AS DORIS AND DORIS

This is nice. We haven't had a drink together in weeks. I've missed you darling.

TONY AS VICTOR

And I've missed you. You're full of surprises, Annie.

ANNIE

For Christ's sake! Will you stop calling me Annie!

TONY

Why are you yelling at me?

ANNIE

Because you're pissing me off. I'm Doris right now! Get the name right!

She goes back a line and tries again.
(completely different energy)

ANNIE AS DORIS AND DORIS

This is nice. We haven't had a drink together in weeks. I've missed you darling.

TONY AS VICTOR

And I've missed you. You're full of surprises, DORIS.

ANNIE AS DORIS AND DORIS

Which is why you married me.

TONY AS VICTOR

That's right. Never a dull moment.

Annie hands him a drink. They clink glasses.

ANNIE AS DORIS AND DORIS

To us.

TONY AS VICTOR

To us. Ahhhh.

He tries to initiate sex she puts him off but
remains very flirty, promising sex.

ANNIE

(to Doris) I know this part. Let me do it on my own?

DORIS

(to Annie) I'm here if you need me.

ANNIE AS DORIS

How's National Geographic this month? Good issue?

TONY AS VICTOR

You know I always enjoy my National Geographic.

ANNIE AS DORIS

Yes, it's a wonderful magazine. When you're not home I pore over them for hours.

TONY AS VICTOR

Do you really?

ANNIE AS DORIS AND DORIS

Oh yes, they're full of all sorts of fascinating information about the animal kingdom you might never know otherwise.

TONY AS VICTOR

You're the one who's fascinating, Doris. The way your mind works. I can't figure it out.

ANNIE AS DORIS AND DORIS

Isn't that part of the mystery?

TONY AS VICTOR

It certainly is.

He comes in for a kiss, she evades him.

ANNIE AS DORIS AND DORIS

I was reading about Bonobos, the other day. Have you heard of Bonobos? They're a kind of monkey.

TONY AS VICTOR

They are the third species in our little hominin triad, dear.

ANNIE AS DORIS AND DORIS

My, my, you do know your monkeys.

TONY AS VICTOR

We, in the scientific community like to refer to them as primates.

ANNIE AS DORIS

I stand corrected.

TONY AS VICTOR

National Geographic helps me keep up with a myriad of species.

ANNIE AS DORIS

Then you'll know that Bonobo's also enjoy a bit of southern cuisine.

TONY AS VICTOR

That's enough Doris.

ANNIE AS DORIS

/As do brown bears and lions and dolphins. Beavers now, they are really interesting.

TONY AS VICTOR

We are not talking beavers.

ANNIE AS DORIS

That's too bad. I've always been partial to beavers. Nothing like spotting a beaver in the wild is there. Maybe I'm anthropomorphizing but/

TONY AS VICTOR

Stop it, Doris. Just stop it.

ANNIE AS DORIS

National Geographic says southern cuisine is perfectly natural in the animal kingdom.

TONY AS VICTOR

To hell with National Geographic! What do they know!

Victor disengages and turns off his bedside light.

ANNIE AS DORIS

What are you so afraid of?

TONY AS VICTOR

You, Doris. I'm afraid of you. The way you think.

Eddie's phone rings.

EDIE

Sorry people, I have to take this one. There's fresh coffee in the greenroom. (into phone) Scott, what's going on? Any news?

Eddie exits.

OLIVIER

Tony! That was amazing!

TONY

Sorry Olivier, I have to make a call.

OLIVIER

Certainly. Why don't I grab us both a coffee?

Olivier exits

TONY

(he dials his phone) Simon! Any word yet? Really? What did they say?

Tony exits on his phone. Axel enters script in hand

AXEL

Annie, I've been looking for you.

DORIS

Right on time. Tony exits through one door and this one enters. If I didn't know better, I'd swear this was a farce.

ANNIE

What is it?

AXEL

You don't like me do you.

ANNIE

I like you. I just don't trust you.

AXEL

And why is that?

ANNIE

You wanna get right down to it? Why are you producing this show?

AXEL

The truth?

ANNIE

Why not for a change.

AXEL

I grew up surrounded by show people. I went on the road with my grandmothers's show when I was a kid.

ANNIE

Your grand mother was in the theatre?

AXEL

Burlesque.

ANNIE

She was a stripper.

AXEL

She was an artist. With a great act. She'd come out on stage in one of those old claw foot bathtubs and she'd sing her heart out. She didn't even have to take her clothes off. She was that good.

ANNIE

So she didn't take her clothes off?

AXEL

No. Of course she did. Until one night after the show she was thrown on to the street and she never opened her mouth again. Forty years touring with the same company and then bang, in an instant it's over! They said she was too old, even though she was still packing them in. When I heard you were being thrown out onto the street I knew I had to do something.

ANNIE

Well, that's not what I expected to hear.

AXEL

From the moment we met, I felt like my grandmother was here in the room with us. It's like the room is haunted when you're around.

DORIS

He feels me.

TONY

I feel her right now.

DORIS

What'd I say?

ANNIE

I'm so sorry about the other day with Tony.

AXEL

Hey, it wasn't your fault. And Tony was right. My eyes did light up that first day. And it had nothing to do with my grandmother. It was you. There's something about you.

ANNIE

Ya, well/

AXEL

/Look, there's something I should tell you/

ANNIE

/You don't have to do this.

AXEL

No, listen, there's a couple of things I want you to know about me.

ANNIE

And this probably isn't the right time.

AXEL

Of course, you're in the middle of rehearsal. That's why I'm here, really. I need help with the script.

ANNIE

You do?

AXEL

Ya, I can't figure out, what

He looks at the word and says it slowly,
phonetically.

AXEL (CONT)

"Abyssinia" means?

DORIS AND ANNIE

It's slang for "I'll be seeing you".

AXEL

You think people will know that?

ANNIE

They'll figure it out.

DORIS

Audiences are a lot smarter than we give them credit for.

ANNIE

It sounds like it doesn't it? If you say it fast enough? Abyssinia.

Edie enters

EDIE

Annie, I just got word the costumes are gone. Oh, Axel, I didn't see you.

AXEL

Annie's helping me get familiar with the script.

DORIS

Though he'd rather get familiar with something else.

ANNIE

So no costumes at all, as in nada?

EDIE

Don't worry, we'll figure something out. Either of you seen Tony?

AXEL

Check his car. He's usually in there on breaks.

DORIS

Which is why Axel's in here.

ANNIE

(To Doris) I don't think so.

EDIE

No?

ANNIE

No, I mean, yes. He's probably in his car.

Edie exits.

AXEL

Are you seeing anyone?

DORIS

That was fast.

ANNIE

I'm taking a break from men.

DORIS and AXEL

Why's that?

ANNIE

Because if a man asked me what's for dinner I'd probably kill him. I'm kidding. But seriously, at this age, I have a better chance of being hit by lightning than meeting a man.

DORIS and AXEL

I don't know about that.

ANNIE

Those are the facts, Axel, and facts don't lie.

AXEL

Those are numbers, Annie. Statistics. And you can make them say anything you want them to. Trust me, I'm a numbers man.

ANNIE

I hardly think money laundering makes you an expert/

AXEL

I'm an accountant, Annie. A certified accountant.

ANNIE AND DORIS

What?

AXEL

We're a bike CLUB, not a bike gang. In fact, most of the guys here are dentists.

DORIS

Dentists?

AXEL

With a few engineers sprinkled in. Who else can afford a Harley in this economy?

DORIS

So he's not a bad guy with a heart of gold, he's just a good guy.

ANNIE

Why did you let me think/

AXEL

It gets tiring always being the mild mannered accountant. Look, I've got a ride I do at the end of the day to clear my head and I'd love to share that with you if you thought/

ANNIE

It sounds great, but I think I need to focus on getting the show up right now.

AXEL

Another time then?

ANNIE

Maybe, sure. Thanks for asking.

Axel exits.

ACT TWO SCENE TWO

Doris and Annie on stage

ANNIE

Today, Doris, we have to get the timing right for the light and sound cues at the end of the play. Which means today I have to kiss Tony.

DORIS

And?

ANNIE

I can't do it.

DORIS

Annie! He broke your heart, he lied to you and he patronizes you as an artist. What more damage can the man do?

ANNIE

I know he's a bastard, and still ...

DORIS

What? Spit it out.

ANNIE

There's still chemistry.

DORIS

Ah, that old chestnut. Look, you know all those stories you hear about people performing feats of incredible strength when their kids are in danger?

ANNIE

No.

DORIS

Yes, you do. Parents who jump into fast moving water because their kid's being swept down stream or people who suddenly discover they can lift a car because their kid's trapped underneath it.

ANNIE

How does that/

DORIS

/It's adrenaline, sweetheart. Doing the things you've afraid of produces adrenaline which enables you to do them.

Eddie and Olivier enter

EDIE

We're back, people! Annie and Tony, we'll start when you two are in position.

Annie and Tony move towards the bed.

DORIS

Trust me. We got this one.

TONY

Are you still mad at me?

ANNIE

That depends. Did you apologize to Axel?

TONY

You're kidding me. You're the one who called him dangerous.

ANNIE

I was wrong. And if you gave him a chance I think you'd like him too.

TONY
So we like him now?

ANNIE
He's one of us.

TONY
Don't make me laugh.

ANNIE
He has this side gig, where he performs his grandmothers act from the 30's to raise money and/

TONY
/Seriously, you're making me hate him even more right now.

ANNIE
Just try not to be a dick today.

TONY
No problem from my end. But if I have to look at that prick's face.

ANNIE
You know he's running our lights, don't you?

TONY
No way.

EDIE
He's the only one who knows how to use the board.

TONY
Oh, that's convenient.

ANNIE
Just shut up already.

They both climb into bed. Tony is at the bottom of the bed under the covers.

OLIVIER
Okay everyone. Let's take it from where Tony is tied to the bed.

EDIE

Olivier, we can't keep teching Act one scene one. We have to move on.

OLIVIER

But it's not perfect.

EDIE

It's never perfect. If we never had an opening night booked we would just keep teching till we died. We have to accept what we've got and move on.

OLIVIER

To where?

EDIE

Let's do the big finale and if we have time we can go back.

OLIVIER

Okay.

EDIE

Okay people, We're going to take it from Tony's line " Oh Doris, I've been such a fool".

TONY

Finally.

Tony slops down on the bed. Not under the covers

DORIS

You can do this, Annie. Remember. Lift that car.

EDIE

Standby LX 87 and sound cue 32

AXEL (V.O.)

Standing by.

OLIVIER

Standing by.

TONY

Standing by.

ANNIE

Standing by.

EDIE

Sound cue 32 go.

Doris is standing on the sidelines but no longer speaks when Annie does. She merely mouths the lines along with her.

ANNIE AS DORIS

“Oh Victor. That was amazing.”

OLIVIER AS VICTOR

Oh Doris, what a fool I've been! I had no idea it could be so good without pretending to break into the house. Who could imagine enjoying something as simple as this?

EDIE

LX 87 Go!

Axel goes into the wrong cue. Blackout. Olivier screams

AXEL (V.O.)

Shit!

EDIE

Let's not panic people. Axel, we need work lights down here.

AXEL (V.O.)

Could you come up here for a second?

EDIE

On my way. Actors, stay in position.

OLIVIER

I want to come.

EDIE

Fine. (to Annie and Tony) If we're longer than one minute tell my mother I've killed myself.

OLIVIER

This is hardly the time for jokes.

EDIE

Who's joking?

They exit. Tony stretches out in the bed

TONY

Remember what tech was like when we first started? Everything's changed now. No more stage cars and painters running around finessing the set. No more lighting designers setting levels. Goodbye dressing rooms full of costume people and wig people. Oh my god, wig people! Now it's just a handful of people who don't know what they're doing. They can't even get their shit together to make a two hander happen.

ANNIE

I miss all those big shows.

TONY

They're gone now. Probably forever.

ANNIE

I hope not.

TONY

Actors coming into the business right now will never know what it's like to stand in the wings and watch the great ones work. I don't even know if I'd fall in love with the theatre if I was young today.

ANNIE

I didn't realize you *ever fell* in love.

TONY

Hahaha. Very funny. I was 14 and my parents were offered a summer show on a farm in the middle of nowhere doing a show called OUR TOWN. I'd never heard of it, of course. I had to go with them because I couldn't be trusted to be left at home alone. Even though my older sister could have taken care of me. But that's another story. Anyway, from the very first reading I hated the play. Boring or what! "How can I get out of here was all I thought day and night". "What a waste of a summer" And it was hot. There were rivers and lakes not too far from where we were rehearsing but I couldn't get there because everyone was working all the time. There must have been 80 people building that show, 30 people just on stage. I just disappeared into the back 40 and got stoned every day. Until one day, half way into the run, the kid playing Wally Webb got sunstroke and because I was the only one on the farm who didn't actually have a job I had to go on for him. I had two lines."Aw, Ma! By ten o'clock I got to know all about Canada," and "I'm bright, too, when I'm looking at my stamp collection". That's it. Everyone thought I could do it, no problem. And I would never admit it, but I was scared shitless. I said the lines over and over again and I was sure I was going to fuck up and the audience was going to hate me. And then, when my cue came up, I didn't forget.

I said my lines and that's when it happened. Did I mention we were performing outside? I looked around, this was during the graveyard scene, all the other characters were sitting with me, and the stars were high in the sky, and the moon was coming up and I wanted more. I remember it like it was yesterday. I wanted more lines, more time up there on stage, more everything. And then there was the applause and everyone in the cast slapping me on the back, and the look on my moms face. I pulled it off. I fucking pulled it off. And I really hoped the little prick who was supposed to play Wally Webb never got better.

ANNIE

And did he?

TONY

Oh ya. But it didn't matter. I was hooked. Two little lines.

ANNIE

I realized I wanted to be an actor when I was in high school.

TONY

Do I have to listen to this?

ANNIE

Oh my god, you are such a prick.

TONY

I'm kidding. Continue. Please.

ANNIE

I was in the audience watching the school show. I never saw the notices for auditions. I never realized people were getting together every night after school rehearsing to put on a show. I was somehow disconnected from the school. Disconnected from myself. I guess things were really coming to a head at home. Until one afternoon there was an assembly and we were sent to the cafeteria to watch the dress rehearsal. And I couldn't believe what I saw. I wanted to be up there so much. I made a pact with myself. Never again was I going to sit in the audience. I was going to be up there on the stage no matter what. Crazy isn't it. It was a terrible show. CURTAIN UP. Has anyone even heard of CURTAIN UP? A musical review about all those old musicals. But I loved it. And you know what? Sometimes when I'm getting ready to get on stage, when I'm waiting in the wings, I wonder if there's a kid in the audience tonight who's mind is going to be blown right open, just like mine was. Someone else who will vow to be up there on stage next time too.

They have a moment of connection. Then the lights come back on and we hear Edie and Olivier and Axel hoot and holler. They've fixed the board. For Tony and Annie the moment is broken.

TONY (CONT)

And now look at us, lying in bed in a stinking rodent infested building while a dangerous member of a bike gang tries to figure out the lighting board.

ANNIE

Are there rats in this building?

TONY

How would I know. Probably.

Edie and Olivier enter

EDIE

Okay, everyone, we're going to go back and do that again.

ANNIE

(To Doris) I can't do it. I can't do the kiss.

TONY

We have to. So they can get the timing for the lights.

DORIS

Okay doll, I tell you what we're going to do. You move over and I'll lay between the two of you. That's good. Now lay on your side behind me, facing him. I'll do all the kissing but because he can't see me he'll think it's you. And don't worry if I kiss a little differently. I know you've been married for years. If he suspects anything, which he won't, just tell him this is the way Doris kisses and you're in character.

Doris climbs in the bed

ANNIE

(To Tony while moving to accommodate Doris) Does this feel alright to you? I mean, does anything feel different?

TONY

Stop worrying.

DORIS

See? Easy as pie. We had a threesome in one draft. A threesome is always good on stage.

EDIE

(calling up to the booth) Are we ready, Axel?

AXEL (V.O.)

Ready.

EDIE

Standby actors.

ANNIE AND TONY AND DORIS

Standing by.

EDIE

Sound go.

ANNIE AS DORIS

Oh Victor. That was amazing.

TONY AS VICTOR

Oh my god Doris, what a fool I've been! I had no idea it could be so good without pretending to break into the house.

DORIS

Oh god, this is better than I'd imagined. How can you say no to this?

TONY AS VICTOR

Who could imagine enjoying something as simple as this?

DORIS

It's all coming back to me. Laying in bed with a man who adores you.

TONY AS VICTOR

What have we been doing all these years?

DORIS

All the old feelings are coming back. It's a tidal wave!

Doris grabs Tony and kisses him. It goes on and on. Annie tries to pull her out of it. Doris keeps her lips locked on Tony. Finally the lights go out.

EDIE

Stop! Stop everyone! Axel, what happened?

AXEL

I'm not sure. Something plugged into the wrong hole I imagine.

EDIE

Try moving things around and see what happens. Annie and Tony, that's not where the kiss happens. You jumped a page.

TONY

What happened there? You get a little excited?

ANNIE

I got confused, that's all.

EDIE

Annie and Tony! Is that how long the kiss lasts?

ANNIE

No.

EDIE

Okay then, let's go back. And we're going to keep going back until we get the timing right on this cue.

Doris snuggles in for another kiss.

DORIS

All night, til we get it right!

ACT TWO SCENE THREE

Doris, Annie and Edie in the theatre late that night, having a drink. They are clearly exhausted.

EDIE

(whispering) This is my favourite moment. When rehearsals are over, just before the show opens and I sit down with a drink and put it all together. What's working. What's not working yet. What, hopefully, will work tomorrow night. This is the only place on earth where I find myself, night after night and where I really like what I find. It's my church.

DORIS

(whispering) Why is she whispering?

EDIE

(whispering) I don't want any of the ghosts to think I'm a flake.

Annie and Doris share a look.

DORIS

She can hear me talking to you.

ANNIE

I don't think so.

EDIE

Who are you talking to?

ANNIE

What makes you think I'm talking to someone?

EDIE

You are. I just can't figure out, are you talking to God, or to yourself, or to the audience.

ANNIE

You mean now?

EDIE

In the monologues we've been running for the last ten days

ANNIE

Oh, you mean in the play. You want to know who I'm talking to in the play.

EDIE

Of course in the play. Where else?

ANNIE

I thought maybe you thought I was talking to someone else who was with us right now.

EDIE

You mean the spirits?

ANNIE

Yes, I mean no, I mean I'm sorry, big day, all this adrenaline sometimes makes me act like I'm drunk.

EDIE

We should go. I'll go turn on the alarm.

Eddie exits

ANNIE

She can hear you!

DORIS

You think so?

ANNIE

Yes. She answered you directly. How is this happening?

DORIS

I don't know. Has anything changed from yesterday?

ANNIE

Nothing I can think of except....

DORIS

Except what?

ANNIE

I'm off book. I nailed that last monologue today.

DORIS

You're off book now for the whole show?

ANNIE

Yes.

DORIS

Well then, it's time.

ANNIE

For what?

DORIS

For me to go. You don't need me anymore.

ANNIE

What are you saying? I need you. Knowing your lines means nothing in the big scheme of things. Words are just an actors basic equipment.

DORIS

I know you want to believe that.

Blackout

ACT TWO SCENE FOUR

Axel enters running, dressed in his best leathers carrying a bunch of garments in drycleaning bags. Pre-show music can be heard.

AXEL

Edie!

EDIE

Axel, it's opening night, you should have been here ages ago! Have you seen what's happening out front? People are fighting for tickets. One of your guys screwed up and sold every seat twice. What are we going to do?

AXEL

Edie, look at me. See these? They're our costumes. I got our costumes back!

He holds up two garment bags.

EDIE

Holy shit, how did you? Never mind, we don't have time, we have to get them backstage.

AXEL

We did it, Edie! We're opening! It all came together like magic! Just like you said it would!

EDIE

Oh, we're not out of the woods yet, Axel. Don't get too excited. There's still half an hour till curtain.

We hear an instrumental, the faint strain of WONDER OF WONDER, MIRACLE OF MIRACLES from Fiddler on the Roof. It's playing at the same time as the preshow music.

AXEL

What is that? You hear that?

EDIE

It's from Fiddler on the Roof.

AXEL

I know that but where's it coming from?

EDIE

I don't know what you're asking.

AXEL

It's not playing through the PA system. The preshow music's playing and we only have the one system.

They stop to listen

EDIE

That's impossible. How can two pieces of music be playing at the same time?

AXEL

I don't know. Unless...

EDIE

Yes?

AXEL

I don't want to say.

EDIE

Spit it out.

AXEL

Unless it's magic.

EDIE

Again with the magic, enough! You and Olivier are two peas in a pod. There's no magic! Just a lot of unsung hero's working long hours for no money. Damn it. Now we need to fix whatever's going on with the fucking sound system before the show starts. Stop smiling. I need you to be serious right now.

AXEL

I am being serious. It's just....

EDIE

You really believe that music is just...magically playing.

AXEL

Why not? This is why we love the theatre, right? Because shit like this can happen.

EDIE

When people talk about magic in the theatre, Axel, they mean on the stage, not in the lobby.

AXEL

But what if it's all magic, every moment?

EDIE

Every day?

AXEL

This isn't every day! It's opening night! The most magic moment of all!

EDIE

Look, I can't have this conversation right now, there's still a shitload of stuff to do.

AXEL

Just tell me what you need.

EDIE

Someone's gotta get these costumes back stage, and then we have to get someone out front to deal with the crowds before the cops arrive.

AXEL

Me and a couple of my guys can go out front. Where's Olivier?

EDIE

He's no use to us, he's locked himself in the washroom.

AXEL

What's going on?

EDIE

Opening night jitters. Front of house has been trying to talk him out of there for half an hour.

AXEL

I can get him out.

EDIE

I don't want to know how.

AXEL

And he'll deliver the costumes to the actors.

EDIE

Long as you tell him not to linger back stage. The actors have their own job to do.

AXEL

Where are you going?

EDIE

I'm going to take a look at that sound system.

Axel smiles

EDIE (CONT)

It's not fucking magic.

AXEL

Whatever you say.

They both exit.

ACT TWO SCENE FIVE

Annie is backstage dressed in a housecoat talking to Olivier who has the costumes.

ANNIE

Where did you get these?

OLIVIER

Keep it on the down low, Axel stole everything.

ANNIE

Olivier, the whole gangster thing is a ruse.

OLIVIER

If that's what you choose to believe. Is Tony here? (calling) Tony?

ANNIE

You shouldn't be here now. It's too late.

OLIVIER

This won't take long. (He calls) Tony?

ANNIE

I have things I need to do to get ready.

OLIVIER

If not now, "When shall we three meet again?"

ANNIE

Are you quoting from the Scottish play?

OLIVIER

It's from MacBeth. The witches say that.

ANNIE

Olivier! You can't say that backstage! Now you have to leave the theatre, spin around three times, spit, curse, knock and ask to be allowed back in.

OLIVIER

But we're not in a theatre, we're in a biker clubhouse. It's probably good luck to quote MacBeth here.

ANNIE

You did it again! You can't even say the name of the play!

OLIVIER

Macbeth?

ANNIE

Okay enough! Step outside and turn around three times.

OLIVIER

But.

ANNIE

Now!

Olivier steps off the stage. Then knocks to come back on.

ANNIE

Did you turn around three times?

OLIVIER

I did.

ANNIE

Okay, now ask to come back in.

OLIVIER

Can I come back in?

ANNIE

Yes. But you can't stay.

OLIVIER

How about we make just one little homage to the theatre gods. To appease them?
(Calls) Tony!

ANNIE

He's probably on his phone. He's always on his phone.

OLIVIER

Then how about the two of us put our hands together?

ANNIE

I really don't have time for this.

OLIVIER

It'll take a minute.

They join hands

One, two, three -

ANNIE AND OLIVIER

To silence!

OLIVIER

Well, it's been an honour to work with you, Annie.

ANNIE

And you, Olivier.

OLIVIER

If you see the Cyberlord of the mutant artificial life force, tell him good luck from me, will you?

ANNIE

You know it's bad luck to say good luck, right?

Sorry.

OLIVIER

Just go!

ANNIE

Namaste!

OLIVIER

Olivier exits. Tony enters

ANNIE
You just missed Olivier. He said to tell you good luck.

TONY
But that's bad luck.

He sees the costumes

TONY
Hey! Where did these come from?

ANNIE
Axel.

TONY
I don't want to talk about it then.

ANNIE
Can you turn your back please?

TONY
Why?

ANNIE
So I can get changed.

TONY
Annie, we've been married for 25 years.

ANNIE
My character is getting dressed and she needs her privacy.

TONY

Sometimes you can be such a pain in the ass.

ANNIE

Tell me about it.

TONY

I need to talk to you about something.

ANNIE

Can it wait? I really need to focus on the show.

TONY

I wouldn't ask you if it wasn't important.

ANNIE

Fine. Just make it quick.

TONY

It looks like my film's going forward.

ANNIE

What film?

TONY

The film I've been negotiating for the last two weeks.

ANNIE

I don't know anything about it.

TONY

That's why I've been on my phone all this time. What did you think I was doing?

ANNIE

I tried not to think about it.

TONY

It's big, Annie.

ANNIE

Well, congratulations.

TONY

I want you to come with me.

ANNIE
Where?

TONY
To L.A.

ANNIE
Why would I go to L.A?

TONY
You've never thought about us getting back together?

ANNIE
Seriously, Tony? We're discussing this right now?

TONY
Just answer the question.

ANNIE
Tony...

TONY
Please tell me you've thought about it.

ANNIE
Of course I have.

TONY
Then come with me.

DORIS
He's begging you to come back. What did I say? Everything we've done worked.

TONY
I want my family back.

DORIS
Don't sideline this one, Annie. Take the prize. We played the game and we won.

ANNIE
It's not a game to me.

TONY
Who said anything about a game? This is our marriage I'm talking about, the rest of our lives.

ANNIE

It's true, I loved being married.

TONY

Okay, now you're talking. Please come with me.

DORIS

Say yes for goodness sakes!

ANNIE

Oh god. I don't know...

Tony kisses Annie.

DORIS

There it is! My happy ending.

TONY

I knew there was a chance for us when you kissed me in tech. That was some kiss, wasn't it?

DORIS

Don't say a word!

TONY

We still have the old chemistry, Annie.

ANNIE

It's so hard to say no to you.

TONY

One of the producers is picking me up in his private jet.

ANNIE

Here at the theatre?

TONY

Yes.

ANNIE

Oh my god, Tony.

TONY

Come with me. Fly to LA with me in my private jet!

ANNIE

You finally got your big break.

TONY

And I couldn't have done it without you.

ANNIE AND TONY

Luck, preparation, opportunity.

Axel enters.

AXEL

Oh sorry. I didn't mean to interrupt.

ANNIE

You're not interrupting.

AXEL

I just wanted to say knock em dead. It's a great show and you're both great in it. But I should go check my presets. See you after the show.

ANNIE

Thanks Axel. You too, have a good one!

Axel exits.

TONY

Sucker. Unfortunately for him, you won't be here to congratulate anyone after the show.

ANNIE

I won't?

TONY

No. We have to leave now.

ANNIE

What do you mean, now?

TONY

The jet is waiting now.

DORIS

Bastard!

ANNIE

I can't go now, Tony! It's opening night!

TONY

Of a play. An old play nobody cares about. You said it yourself. None of the critics are coming. Oh wait, I forgot, one guy is coming. One guy who doesn't even have a column anymore. He has a blog.

ANNIE

People read his blog.

TONY

The theatre is dead, Annie. And it's never coming back.

Doris starts to physically weaken.

DORIS

You feel that? A cold breeze is starting to blow.

TONY

We tried to resuscitate it and look where that landed us.

ANNIE

That doesn't mean theatre doesn't matter anymore.

Doris gets colder and colder

TONY

Come, on, Annie, use your head. People throw money at stuff that matters. You think anybody could live on the shit wages we're making here?

ANNIE

That never stopped us before.

TONY

All our lives we've been broke. Working crappy odd jobs in second hand clothes, buying whatever food's on clearance, living in a house on the wrong side of town.

ANNIE

We were happy. We had good friends, a good life.

TONY

Look around you! People are hungry, out of work, living on the streets. You really think this is a good time for the arts?

ANNIE

This is when people need art the most.

DORIS

Tell him we opened after the war. Tell him we made them laugh.

TONY

If it'll make you feel any better I'll ask my producer to buy out the run. They have money up the yin yang. Everyone'll get their paycheck.

DORIS

No!

ANNIE

I want to do the show!

TONY

Annie! We leave right now, or the deal is over. There's one producer holding out. We have to get to LA to meet him and convince him I'm the one before the end of the day.

ANNIE

So it's not even a done deal.

TONY

It's going to happen. Don't you worry about that.

DORIS

I'm shutting down. Annie, I need your help.

ANNIE

What about our friends and families? Everyone we love is out there waiting to see us onstage again.

TONY

They'll understand.

ANNIE

How? I don't even understand.

TONY

Look at the people we're working with. Edie's so old she thinks Shakespeare's contemporary Drama, Olivier's an amateur from somewhere in Buttfuck Alberta, and Axel's a hitman who thinks his grandmother's act from the 30's is something people still want to see. Those are the losers you're staying for? You didn't even want to do this show. I had to talk you into it.

ANNIE

Because I didn't think I could work with you.

TONY

Because/

ANNIE

/You do this kind of thing all the time. For years I pretended you weren't sleeping around. And when I couldn't pretend anymore, I told myself you had so many good qualities it was unfair of me to judge you based on the one thing you couldn't do: be faithful to me. But the fact is, it wasn't your being with other women that destroyed our marriage. It was the years of being told that you weren't. That I was the problem, that I was jealous of your career, that I didn't trust you. Infidelity is nothing compared to that. When everything inside you is screaming "something is wrong" and the person you love and trust the most is telling you you're losing your mind. And now, it's happening again. I decide to give you one more chance only to find out you're going to walk out on everything we've worked towards. It's never going to end is it.

TONY

I'm trying to/

ANNIE

I know what you're trying to. And you're right, it's ridiculous we're working in this filthy freezing room with water running out of the light fixtures but it's all we have left.

TONY

Annie/

ANNIE

/You know why I hated HEY DORIS when I first read the play? I thought it was about a woman who was desperate for her husband to go down on her and I thought it was crude and offensive and dated. But you know what I understand now? Hey Doris is about a woman who just wants more, more than her husband or the world is willing to give her. And that's me too, Tony. I want more too. More respect, more honesty, and more integrity. Qualities you know nothing about.

TONY

You know Maverick never wanted you?

ANNIE

Oh my god, you're just making this so easy.

TONY

I'm out of here.

Tony starts to exit

ANNIE

You know why everyone does OUR TOWN, Tony? Why it's stood the test of time? Because it's true. You never have perspective until it's all over. And then it's as clear as day.

TONY

Maybe if you'd had more of a career you'd understand.

Tony exits.

Doris collapses.

ANNIE (CONT)

Doris! What's happening?

DORIS

I won't lie to you. If we don't have a Victor, I'm finished. I don't exist if the play doesn't.

ANNIE

I don't know what to do! Tell me what to do!

Annie starts to panic. She goes to the door and calls Edie.

ANNIE (CONT)

Edie!

DORIS

Annie!

ANNIE

I'm right here. I'm not going anywhere.

DORIS

You said your daughter and your mother are out there?

ANNIE

That's right.

DORIS

You have to do the show, Annie. You can't let them see everything you've worked for fall apart just because a man walked out on you. Not another generation. It has to stop.

ANNIE

I agree with you but/

DORIS

/No buts. It's time to lift that car.

ANNIE

Words, they're just words.

DORIS

That's how everything happens. That's how history is written, one word at a time.

ANNIE

(she calls again) Edie!

DORIS

You got this one. You can fix this.

She collapses. Edie enters. Annie's on the floor sitting with Doris. Of course she just sees Annie.

EDIE

What's going on?

ANNIE

Tony's not doing the show tonight.

EDIE

What are you talking about?

ANNIE

He's gone. Left the building.

EDIE

Why?

ANNIE

Does it matter? He's not doing the show.

EDIE

He wouldn't do this to us.

DORIS

It's all slipping away. Getting darker and colder.

ANNIE

I'm so sorry.

EDIE

What are you sorry about? You didn't do anything.

ANNIE

I always feel like it's my fault.

EDIE

Well it's not. Slow down. Take a breath. We can figure this out. "Is anyone dead?"

Annie looks to Doris who Edie can't see.

ANNIE

We're very close. If we don't do something soon.

EDIE

But no one's dead yet.

ANNIE

No.

EDIE

So what are the stakes, then? Say it out loud.

ANNIE

It's just another day in the theatre?

EDIE

That's right. Let's get Olivier in here and we'll figure it out together. This'll break his heart. He worships Tony.

ANNIE

I know.

EDIE

He never takes his eyes off him. Watches him like a hawk.

ANNIE

I know.

EDIE

He's memorized all his lines.

ANNIE

I know. He mouths them along with Tony while he's...oh my god, Edie!

OLIVIER KNOWS TONY'S PART!

ACT TWO SCENE SIX

In a blackout we hear a voice over the PA system.

EDIE

Good evening and welcome to tonight's performance sponsored by The Young Juvenile Offenders of Canada. The show will start in 5 minutes.

Lights up to reveal Edie, Olivier, and Annie in consultation. Doris is laying down, wrapped in a drop cloth, freezing, almost comatose.

OLIVIER

Are you out of your mind? Me, replace Tony Bones? There'd be a riot out there.

ANNIE

But you know the part!

OLIVIER

I only know what Tony's doing on stage.

ANNIE

We only want you to play Tony's part.

OLIVIER

I mean, I wasn't paying attention to what you were doing. I don't have a clue what you say or where you move. I wouldn't even recognize my cues.

ANNIE

You NEVER watched my work? What kind of a director are you?

EDIE

Let's stay in solution.

OLIVIER

I can't believe he's gone. Were the last days we shared meaningless?
Did I do this, Annie, curse the show because I said MacBeth?

ANNIE

No! Stop saying that! Please.

EDIE

He's got to go outside and turn around three times.

ANNIE

We don't have time for that now.

EDIE

I don't think we have/a choice.

ANNIE

/He's already done it. Not ten minutes ago. Will you do the show, Olivier?

OLIVIER

I'm thinking about it.

DORIS

Is that a maybe? The show might go on?

Doris struggles to sit up. As soon as the show
MIGHT be happening there's blood moving in
her veins and she's alive

OLIVIER

I just need a little time.

ANNIE

But Olivier, the audience is already in their seats.

OLIVIER

Can't you stall them?

EDIE

With what?

ANNIE

Axel could do his grandmother's act! He told me days ago, everything he needs is still here, in the building.

OLIVIER

You really think Axel's going to say yes? After the way we've treated him? Never. We'll have to cancel the show.

Doris collapses.

ANNIE

Olivier, people will talk for years about the day you saved this show.

OLIVIER

They will?

ANNIE

Yes! This is Canadian theatre history in the making. You are the director who stepped in, refusing to let the last theatre production in this city die.

OLIVIER

I'm the hero in this story?

ANNIE

Absolutely. And Axel would never take that away from you. He loves the biz. Just like you do.

OLIVIER

Everyone get out. I need to prepare!

Doris struggles to sit up again.

EDIE

I'll go find Axel.

ANNIE

Can you find my daughter too? She'll be worried when she doesn't see her dad on stage. Just tell her what's happening but make it sound like it's a good thing he's gone to LA so she still enjoys herself.

EDIE

I don't know if I'm that good a liar, but I'll try.

Eddie exits

OLIVIER

I'm afraid, Annie.

ANNIE

Of course you are. Everyone's afraid before they go on stage but the trick is, you don't let it stop you. Before you make your first entrance, you close your eyes and imagine everyone in the audience naked and sitting on the toilet.

OLIVIER

Really?

ANNIE

You've never heard of that? Thespians have been fortifying themselves with that image since the beginning of time.

OLIVIER

Really.

ANNIE

You'd be surprised how much it lowers the stakes.

OLIVIER

I'm not sure/

ANNIE

/And then you repeat to yourself, they're naked, they're ugly and they owe us money.

OLIVIER

And this works?

ANNIE

If it didn't, it wouldn't be a grand old theatre tradition now would it.

OLIVIER

Alrighty then. What are we waiting for. Let's go.

Doris struggles to stand up.

DORIS

Oh to feel the blood pulsing through my veins again.

OLIVIER

(sings) *'On with the show this is it'*. You know what Shakespeare would say if he was standing here with us right now?

ANNIE

I've no idea.

OLIVIER

LEAD ON MCDUFF!

ANNIE AND EDIE AND DORIS

Nooooooo!

Blackout

ACT TWO SCENE SEVEN

Axel's rolled in, in an old cast iron bathtub on wheels in bubbles that cover his whole body. He performs his grandmother's burlesque act singing Gracie Fields's 1929 hit SINGING IN THE BATHTUB, in drag.

ACT TWO SCENE EIGHT

Annie and Olivier are in the wings . Annie is in a beautiful 40's dressing gown with mules. Olivier in pajamas. They are holding hands, eyes closed and chanting

ANNIE AND OLIVIER

They're naked, they're ugly and they owe us money. They're naked, they're ugly and they owe us money. They're naked, they're ugly and they owe us money.

Lights down. Olivier and Annie walk on stage together, into the bedroom. Annie walks straight to the bar cart. Lights up. Annie has to help Olivier with the blocking and lines. He is very nervous. She cues him with sign language and any means possible.

ANNIE AS DORIS

Nightcap my dear?

He reaches for the bottle and takes a swig.

OLIVIER AS VICTOR

Not tonight dear, I'm nackeded.

She grabs the bottle off him.

ANNIE AS DORIS

Are you sure? It's still early.

She pours herself a drink. He takes it and
downs it.

OLIVIER

No thanks. It's been a long day.

Annie pours another drink. He reaches for it.
She slaps his hand. Moves the bottle and glass
out of his reach.

ANNIE AS DORIS

Alright. I think I'll stay up and read for a while.

OLIVIER AS VICTOR

Don't stay up too late.

Olivier exits the wrong way. Annie fetches him.
He gets in the wrong bed.

ANNIE AS DORIS

Good night dear.

Annie knocks back her drink in one shot. She
pours another and knocks it back too. Victor
turns out his bedside lamp. Immediately we hear
him snore.

ANNIE

Here we go.

Lights shift. Music changes to the theme from
Shaft

Annie puts on dark red lipstick and a pair of red heels. She puts on a cat mask and whips off her housecoat, revealing the skin tight cat suit underneath. Quietly she opens the bedroom window and jumps.

A brick wrapped in fabric sails back through the window and lands without a sound. We see one gloved hand on the window sill and then another, Annie is climbing up the wall and pulling herself up and through the window. She pulls the rope up. It's miles long. (gag) She's climbed 18 floors. She stealthily makes her way across the room in the dark and starts to tie Olivier to the bed. She stops. He sits up.

OLIVIER AS VICTOR

"What the hell, doll, what's going on? Why did you stop?"

ANNIE AS DORIS

"I'm sorry, Victor. It's just...not working for me anymore."

OLIVIER AS VICTOR

"I don't understand, is this part of the game? Because you love pretending to break into the house".

ANNIE AS DORIS

"I know, I just can't..."

OLIVIER AS VICTOR

What? Say it.

ANNIE AS DORIS

I can't do this anymore.

OLIVIER

(whispering) What are you doing? We can't just stop now. You're the one who talked me into this.

ANNIE

(whispering) I'm not...that's my line Olivier. I can't do this anymore is my line.

OLIVIER

(whispering) Oh, I thought you...

ANNIE

(whispering) I know. Can you just say your next line please.

OLIVIER

(whispering, panicked) I'm confused now. What is it, what's my line?

ANNIE

(whispering) Then let's just change it up a bit. We haven't done the nanny for a while.

OLIVIER AS VICTOR

Let's just change it up a bit. We haven't done the nanny for a while. How about you pretend to be the Nanny and I've been a very bad boy.

ANNIE AS DORIS

I don't think so.

OLIVIER

(whispering) You just told me that was the line.

ANNIE

It is. I don't think so is what I say next. It's my line.

OLIVIER

Oh.

ANNIE

Go ahead. We're good.

OLIVIER

I can't do this.

ANNIE

Olivier, you're doing it. Acting it.

OLIVIER

I am?

ANNIE

Yes.

OLIVIER AS VICTOR

(in a big booming voice, over confident) Then perhaps I have a solution. How about we play Master May I?

Annie gives him a thumbs up.

Lights down.

Lights shift. Another cross fade.

ACT TWO SCENE NINE

Eddie and Axel bond in the booth

EDIE

I didn't do anything. Annie fed him a story about some non-existent theatre tradition and got him up there on the stage all by herself. Still, she's got her work cut out for her and so do we so let's concentrate on the job at hand. Next up is the big one. This light show is going to blow their fucking minds. I'll call go once and then you just keep going till the cue is over. Are you ready?

AXEL

I programmed the board so I only have to start the sequence. Then it goes through the cues automatically.

EDIE

You can do that with this old girl?

AXEL

Don't you know, Edie? The old ones are the good ones.

EDIE

Are you sweet talking me now?

AXEL

You know it.

EDIE

Standby disco ball!

AXEL

Standing by!

ACT TWO SCENE TEN

Annie and Olivier are in the bed together, Olivier under the covers at the foot of the bed. (giving Annie head presumably). The disco ball is turning. We hear Enya's ONLY TIME playing softly while Annie orgasms.

ANNIE AS DORIS

Oh Victor, Victor, Victor!

Olivier comes out from under and collapses
beside her.

OLIVIER AS VICTOR

Oh my god Doris, what a fool I've been! I had no idea this could be so good without you
pretending to break into the house. What have we been doing all these years?

ANNIE AS DORIS

Trying to stay out of jail?

OLIVIER AS VICTOR

But why is something that is so good, illegal?

ANNIE AS DORIS

I don't understand it myself. But I won't tell if you don't.

OLIVIER AS VICTOR

My lips are sealed.

ANNIE AS DORIS

That's not what it felt like on this end.

They laugh

ANNIE AS DORIS (CONT)

Any chance you'd like to stay the night?

OLIVIER AS VICTOR

Are you saying what I think you're saying?

ANNIE AS DORIS

Are you hoping I'm saying what I hope you're thinking?

OLIVIER AS VICTOR

I think so.

ANNIE AS DORIS

I hope so. It's what every child wants, isn't it? Their parents to get back together?

OLIVIER AS VICTOR

They never stop hoping.

ANNIE AS DORIS

They never stop hoping.

They kiss. The lights go dim and the sound cue plays at warped half speed. Something is very wrong.

ACT TWO SCENE ELEVEN

Eddie and Axel in the booth.

AXEL

Where's the light show?

EDIE

And the sound! What's happening out there? What the fuck is going on?

AXEL

I don't know.

EDIE

Shit. Can't you get the disco light to revolve?

AXEL

No. Nothing.

EDIE

Just go into the next cue.

AXEL

I can't Edie. The board's not responding at all. I don't understand what's happening at all. It doesn't make sense.

EDIE

Let me at it. See what I can do.

AXEL

It's too late, Edie. The moment is over. I'm so sorry.

EDIE

I will not accept defeat! This fucking system is not cheating us out of our god damn happy ending!

Another cross fade.

ACT TWO SCENE TWELVE

Thunderous canned applause from the would be audience. Annie runs from on stage back out to the wings where Doris stands ready to go.

ANNIE

What happened to the lights at the end?

DORIS

Who cares, listen to them. They loved you.

ANNIE

Wait, why do you have your suitcase? You're not thinking about leaving right now are you?

DORIS

It's time.

A sound cue comes up.

DORIS (CONT)

That's your cue. Goodbye Annie.

ANNIE

No! Wait! It's not fair. You've given me so much. Just when my marriage was killing me, you arrived and put my life in order. I know we struggled at the beginning. I just wish I could have done something for you.

DORIS

Oh, but you have. There are libraries all over this country, Doll, all of them bursting with hundreds, no, thousands of characters, some of the greatest characters ever written. And all of them, all those characters are lying in wait, aching for a chance to speak their truth. That's what you've given me, Annie, LIFE. The greatest gift a character can ask for.

Axel enters as the curtain call cue replays

AXEL

Annie! Olivier is out there by himself.

ANNIE

I thought you took the first bow.

AXEL

I've been and gone.

ANNIE

Shit!

AXEL

Before you go? You were great, are great.

Annie kisses him, albeit briefly.

ANNIE

Oh my god, I'm sorry, I don't know why I did that.

DORIS

I do.

ANNIE

It must be all the adrenaline in my system. It makes me feel like I'm drunk.

DORIS

He liked it.

ANNIE

I should go.

AXEL

Annie!

He kisses her. The board unfreezes allowing the huge light and music show that was supposed to happen at the end of the play to happen now.

DORIS

(To audience while they kiss) All that malarkey about change. You see? It's always been about the kiss.

They stop kissing to look at the light show. It's like fireworks. The music swells. He holds Annie in his arms.

AXEL

What am I doing, this is your moment, not mine. Get out there! I'll see you later.

Axel exits.

Annie starts to go on stage, immediately turning back for one last look at Doris.

Hey Doris!

ANNIE

Ya?

DORIS

Abbisinia.

ANNIE

Abbisinia, kid.

DORIS

Annie exits to go make her bow.

Blackout.