Butterflies are Free

A COMEDY IN TWO ACTS

By Leonard Gershe

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LONDON
BUTTERFLIES ARE FREE was first presented by Arthur Whitelaw, Max J. Brown, and Byron Goldman at the Booth Theatre, N.Y.C., October 21, 1969. The set was designed by Richard Seger, costumes by Robert Mackintosh, and lighting by Jules Fisher. The associate producer was Ruth Bailey. It was under the direction of Milton Katselas.

CAST
(In Order of Appearance)

DON BAKER .......... Keir Dullea
JILL TANNER .......... Blythe Danner
MRS. BAKER .......... Eileen Heckart
RALPH AUSTIN .......... Michael Glaser

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

The entire action takes place in Don Baker's apartment on East 11th Street in New York.

ACT ONE

A morning in June

ACT TWO

Scene 1: A moment later
Scene 2: That night
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Butterflies are Free

ACT ONE

SCENE 1

Scene: Don Baker's apartment on the top floor of a walk-up on the lower east side of Manhattan. 1., there is a bed which is raised some six and a half feet from the floor and reached by a ladder. Under the bed is a door leading to the bathroom. 0., from the bed is a window and a small bookcase with a few books in it. Above the bed is a skylight, dirty with age. 0., from the bed, we can make out some posters and photographs pinned to the wall. 1., just x., of 0., is the front door. 0. of this is the kitchen with sink, stove, cabinets and a vintage refrigerator. 0. from the kitchen is an old clawfoot bathtub. A slab of wood has been fitted over the tub to serve as a dining table. There are a couple of cheap stools around the table-tub. 1., is a door leading to the next apartment. In front of this is an old chest on which there are some glasses and a couple of bottles of wine. Just below the table-tub, there is an old faded sofa. In front of this is a wood crate which serves as a coffee table. 0. c., there is a canvas campaign chair, and d. of this a low rattan stool. There is a telephone on the coffee table, along with an ashtray, a pack of cigarettes and a book of matches. A lighting fixture of colored glass hangs over the table-tub. 0. w. there is a thin post which supports a beam.

Before the curtain rises, we hear Don Baker's voice singing on tape recorder.
DON. (Singing, on tape.) *
"I knew the day you met me
I could love you if you let me
Though you touched my cheek and said
How easy you'd forget me
You said...
(There are no words here, so he improvises to
the tune.)
Da de da da de da..." etc.

At Rise: It is a warm day in June. The sun pours in
through the skylight. Don is leaning against one of
the bedposts, drinking a glass of water and listening
to himself on tape. He is in his early twenties, lean
and good-looking. He wears a brown button-down
shirt and sun tan. His hair is neatly combed. The
PHONE RINGS. He looks toward the phone
and speaks to it in a tone indicating he has said this
hundreds of times.

DON. (Speaking to ringing phone—after second ring.)
I'm fine, thank you. How are you? (Crosses above
director's chair to sofa and turns off recorder.) It's warm
here. How is it in Scarsdale? (Crosses to sink, puts
glass in it.) Well, it's warm here, too. (Crosses and picks
up the phone.) Hello, Mother... ... I just knew. When
you call the phone doesn't ring. It just says "m" for
the million things she gave you. I'm fine, thank you. How
are you? ... (Sits sofa.) It's warm here. How is it in
Scarsdale? Well, it's warm here, too. The apartment is
great. I love it. Last night? I didn't do anything last
night. I mean I didn't go out. I had some friends in—a

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Steve Schwartz.

ACT I

little party... I don't know how many people were
here. Do you have to have a number? Twelve and a half,
how's that... No, they didn't stay too late... When? (Rises, picks up phone, crosses it onto plat-
form to behind d. end of dining table.) No! No, no
this afternoon... I don't care. Come to town and go
to Saks, but you're not coming down here. Because we
agreed to two months, didn't we? (Suddenly the noise of
a conversational TV program is heard blaring in the next
apartment.) What? ... No, I didn't turn on my radio.
It's coming from next door... I don't know... a
girl... She just moved in a couple of days ago... I
don't know her name. I haven't met her. ... It's her
radio. ... Don't worry, it won't go on. ... Yes, I'll
tell her. ... No, I don't want you to tell her. Just go to
Saks and go home. ... I can hardly hear you. We'll talk
tomorrow. Goodbye. (Don hangs up, crosses l. to the
door that connects the apartment and raping, angrily.) Hey,
would you please... (Kno king louder and shouting.)
Would you mind lowering your radio? (TV program is
turned of.)

JILL TANNER'S Voice. Sorry, I couldn't hear you.

DON. I just wanted you to turn your radio down; You
don't have to turn it off. Just lower it, please.

JILL'S Voice. I haven't got a radio. It's television.

DON. (Crosses l., sits d. sofa.) Well, whatever. These
walls are made of paper.

JILL'S Voice. I know—Kleenex. How about a cup of
coffee?

DON. No, thanks. I just had some.

JILL'S Voice. I meant for me.

DON. (Rises, crosses l. through kitchen to counter,
lights burner.) Sure... come on in. (Don crosses to
the kitchen and turns the flame on under the coffeepot.
There is a knock at the door as he takes a cup and saucer
from the cupboard over the counter.) It's open.

(JILL TANNER enters, closes door. She is nineteen and
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has a delicate, little-girl quality about her. Her long
hair falls to her shoulders and down her back. She is
dressed in blue jeans and a far-out, brightly colored
blouse with the zipper open down the back.

JILL. Hi! I'm Jill Tanner.
DON. (Turning toward her and extending his hand.)
JILL. (Shakes his hand. Crosses onto platform, r. of
DON.) I hope you don't mind me inviting myself in.
(Turning her back to him.) Would you do the zipper on
my blouse? I can't reach back there. (There is just a flash
of awkwardness as DON reaches out for the zipper and
sips it up. Crosses d. l. to above table. DON gets coffee
jar, spoon and cup.) Your living room is bigger than
mine. How long have you been here?
DON. A month. This isn't the living room. This is the
apartment. That's all there is except I have a big bathroom.

JILL. (Crosse to in front of refrigerator.) I've got three
rooms if you count the kitchen. I just moved in two days
ago, but I didn't sign a lease or anything—just by the
month. (Crosses d. end of table.) God, you're neat. Everything
is so tidy.
DON. It's easy when you haven't got anything. (Pours
water into cup. puts back on stove.)
JILL. (Looking around. Crosses l. to d. end of sofa.)
I haven't got anything, but it manages to wind up all over
the place. I'm afraid I'm a slob. I've heard that boys are
neater than girls. (Looking up, crosses between sofa and
coffee table.) I like your skylight. I don't have that.
(Crosses to ladder.) What's this?
DON. What?
JILL. (between director's chair and coffee table.) This
thing on stilts.
DON. Oh, my bed.
JILL. (Climbing the ladder onto the bed.) Your bed??!!
Wow! This is WILD!

ACT I

DON. Do you like it?
JILL. (On the bed.) This is the greatest bed I've ever
seen in my life . . . and I've seen a lot of beds. Did you
build it?
DON. No, the guy who lived here before me built it. He
was a hippie. He liked to sleep high.
JILL. (Off bed, down ladder, crosses between director's
chair and coffee table to r. l.) Suppose you fall out? You
could break something.
DON. You could break something falling out of any
bed. (Pours the coffee into the cup.) Cream or sugar?
JILL. No, just black.
DON. (Crosses to above coffee table, holds cup out.)
I could have had your apartment, but I took this one be-
cause of the bed.
JILL. (Takes coffee cup.) I don't blame you. (Crossing
to sofa, sits.) You know, I buy flowers and dumb things
like dish towels and paper napkins, but I keep forgetting
to buy coffee. (Sips coffee.)
DON. (Sits director's chair, takes cigarette from table.)
Is it hot enough?
JILL. Great. This'll save my life. I'll pay you back
some day.
DON. You don't have to.
JILL. Do you need any dish towels or paper napkins?
DON. No.
JILL. (Rises, crosses u. c., looks at pictures on u. wall.)
I've got lots of light bulbs, too . . . everything but coffee.
(At u. r. post.) May I ask you a personal question?
DON. (Lights cigarette, watch in ashtray.) Sure.
JILL. (Crosses above l. of DON.) Why don't you want
your mother to come here?
DON. How did you know that?
JILL. If you can hear me, I can hear you. I think the
sound must go right under that door. (Crosses to her
door.) What's that door for, anyway?
DON. Your apartment and mine were once one apart-
ment. When they converted it into two, they just locked
that door instead of sealing it up. I guess in case they want to make it one again.

JILL. (Crosses l. of sofa.) You didn't answer my question.

DON. I forgot what you asked.

JILL. (Sits d. end of sofa.) Why don't you want your mother here?

DON. It's a long story. No, it's a short story—it's just been going on a long time. She didn't want me to leave home. She thinks I can't make it on my own. Finally, we agreed to let me try it for two months. She's to keep away from me for two months. I've got a month to go.

JILL. Why did you tell her you had a party last night?

DON. Boy, you don't miss anything in there, do you?

JILL. Not much.

DON. I always tell her I've had a party . . . or went to one. She wouldn't understand why I'd rather be here alone than keeping her and the cook company. She'll hate this place. She hates it now without even seeing it. She'll walk in and the first thing she'll say is, "I could absolutely cry!"

JILL. Does she cry a lot?

DON. No—she just threatens to.

JILL. (Rises, crosses d. end of sofa.) If she really wants to cry, send her in to look at my place. At least you're neat. (Crosses bed to d. n. and toward bookcases.) You're old enough to live alone, aren't you? I'm nineteen. How old are you?

DON. As far as my mother's concerned, I'm still eleven . . . going on ten.

JILL. We must have the same mother. (Looking at bookcases.) Mine would love me to stay a child all my life . . . or at least all her life. So she won't age. (Crosses to bathroom door.) She loves it when people say we look like sisters. If they don't say it, she tells them. (Opens door, looks in, closes door, crosses d. n. post.) Have you got a job?
hated the thought of becoming a grandmother. I'll bet I know what you're thinking.

DON. What? (Returns, holds cup out to JILL who takes it. DON crosses to d. l. post and leans against it.)

JILL. You're thinking I don't look like a divorcée.

DON. No, I wasn't thinking that. What does a divorcée look like?

JILL. Oh, you know. They're usually around thirty-five with tight-fitting dresses and high-heel patent leather shoes and big boobs. (Over back of sofa and sits; cup on coffee table.) I look more like the kid in a custody fight.

DON. How long were you married?

JILL. God, it seemed like weeks! (Takes cigarette.) Actually, it was six days. (She lights cigarette.) It wasn't Jack's fault. It wasn't anybody's fault. It was just one of those terrible mistakes you make before you can stop yourself even though you know it's a mistake while you're doing it.

DON. What was he like?

JILL. Jack? Oh... (Uncomfortably, rises, crosses u. c. near u. l. post.) I really can't talk about him.

DON. (Crosses and sits sofa.) Then don't. I'm sorry.

JILL. No, I will talk about him. (Crosses above coffee table.) Once in a while it's good for you to do something you don't want to do. It cleanses the insides. He was terribly sweet and groovy-looking, but kind of adolescent, you know what I mean? (Flicks ash into ashtray.) Girls mature faster than boys. Boys are neater, but girls mature faster. (Sits director's chair.) When we met it was like fireworks. I don't know if I'm saying it right, but it was a marvelous kind of passion that made every day like the Fourth of July. Anyway, the next thing I knew we were standing in front of a justice of the peace getting married.

DON. How long had you known him?

JILL. Two or three weeks, but I mean there we were getting married! (Sits back in chair, feet on stool.) I hadn't even finished high school and I had two exams the next day and they were on my mind, too. (Rises, crosses

through kitchen to d. l. post.) I heard the justice of the peace saying, "Do you, Jack, take Jill to be your lawfully wedded wife?" Can you imagine going through life as Jack and Jill? And then I heard "Till death do you part" and, suddenly, it wasn't a wedding ceremony. It was a funeral service.

DON. (Takes a cigarette.) Jesus!

JILL. (Crosses below to u. bench.) You know that wedding ceremony is very morbid when you think about it. I hate anything morbid and there I was being buried alive... under Jack Benson. I wanted to run screaming out into the night!

DON. (Lights cigarette.) Did you?

JILL. (Turns, crosses d. u. post.) I couldn't. It was ten o'clock in the morning. I mean you can't go screaming out into ten o'clock in the morning... so I passed out. If only I'd fainted before I said "I do."

DON. As long as you were married, why didn't you try to make it work?

JILL. (Crosses to coffee table, picks up ashtray.) I did try—believe me. I tried for six days, but I knew it was no good.

DON. Were you in love with him? (Flicks an ash from his cigarette onto the table where the ashtray had been before JILL moved it. JILL reacts to this, fleeting, and shrugs it off.)

JILL. In my way.

DON. What's your way?

JILL. (Crosses to ladder, climbs to second or third step.) I don't know... Well, I think just because you love someone that doesn't necessarily mean that you want to spend the rest of your life with him. But Jack loved me. I mean he really, really loved me and I hurt him and that's what I can't stand. I just never want to hurt anybody. (Off ladder through kitchen to end of table. DON rises, crosses to d. of director's chair.) I mean marriage is a commitment, isn't it? I just can't be committed or involved. Can you understand?
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I mean I don’t go into someone’s house and say, “Hi, I’m Jill Tanner—are you blind?”

Don. (Closes off platform to d. end of sofa, hand out.) Right—and I don’t meet a stranger and say, “Hi, Don Baker—blind as a bat.”

Jill. (Turns away r., then back to him.) I think you should’ve told me, I would’ve told you.

Don. (Closes l. of stool.) Well... I wanted to see how long it would take for you to catch on. Now you know. Do you want to run screaming out into the night or just faint?

Jill. (Closes d. r. post.) How can you make jokes?

Don. Listen, the one thing that drives me up the wall is pity. I don’t want it and I don’t need it. Please—don’t feel sorry for me, I don’t feel sorry for me, so why should you?

Jill. You’re so... adjusted.

Don. No, I’m not. I never had to adjust. I was born blind. (Jill crosses above stool to r. of him.) It might be different if I’d been able to see and then went blind. For me, blindness is normal. I was six years old before I found out everyone else wasn’t blind. By that time it didn’t make much difference. So, let’s relax about it. Okay? And if we can have a few laughs, so much the better.

Jill. (Closes to front door.) A few laughs? About blindness??

Don. (Closes to v. r. post.) No, not about blindness. Can’t you just forget that?

Jill. (Closes below him to v. r.) I don’t know. You’re the first blind person I’ve ever met.

Don. (Closes to ladder.) Congratulations. Too bad they don’t give out prizes for that.

Jill. (Closes away toward window.) I’ve seen blind men on the street—you know, with dogs. (Closes r. of d. r. post.) Why don’t you have a dog?

Don. (Closes l. of d. r. post.) They attract too much attention. I’d rather do it myself.
JILL. But isn't it rough getting around New York? It is for me.

DON. Not at all. I manage very well with my cane. I've got so I know exactly how many steps to take to the grocery... the laundry... the drugstore.

JILL. Where's a laundry? I need one.

DON. Next to the delicatessen. Forty-four steps from the front door.

JILL. I didn't see it.

DON. I'll show it to you.

JILL. (Crosses below to 2d. end of sofa.) What about here in the apartment? Aren't you afraid of bumping into everything? You could hurt yourself.

DON. I've memorized the room. (Moves about the room with grace and confidence, calling off each item as he touches it or points to it.) Bed... bathroom... bookcase... guitar... my cane. (Holds up the white, aluminum walking stick, then puts it back on the hook.)

JILL. (Crosses to 2d. c.) What are those books?

DON. Braille... front door... tape recorder. (Moving on.) JILL crosses to stool, sits waiting.) Dining table... bathtub. (Crosses quickly to the chest of drawers against the door to JILL's apartment.) Chest of drawers. (Touching things on top.) Wine... more wine... glasses. (Opens drawer.) Linens. (Closes the drawer, moves on to kitchen.) Kitchen... (Opens cabinet over counter.) Dishes... cups... glasses. Coffee... sugar... salt and pepper... corn flakes... ketchup... et cetera. (Returning to sofa.) Now, if you'll put back the ashtray. (She replaces the ashtray on the table and DON stamps his cigarette out in it. He sits on sofa and holds his arms out with bravura. JILL kneels by 2d. end of coffee table.) Voilà! If you don't move anything, I'm as good as anyone else.

JILL. Better. God, I can't find anything in my place. The ketchup usually winds up in my stocking drawer and my stockings are in the oven. If you really want to see chaos, come and look at... (She catches herself, self-consciously; rises, crosses away r.) I mean... I meant...

DON. I know what you mean. Relax. I'm no different from anyone else except that I don't see. The blindness is nothing. The thing I find hard to live with is other people's reactions to my blindness. If they'd only behave naturally. (JILL moves stool level with DON, sits.) Some people want to assume guilt—which they can't because my mother has that market cornered—or they treat me as though I were living in some Greek tragedy, which I assure you I'm not. Just be yourself.

JILL. I'll try... but I've never met a blind person before.

DON. That's because we're a small, very select group... like Eskimos. How many Eskimos do you know?

JILL. I never thought blind people would be like you.

DON. They're not all like me. We're all different.

JILL. (On knees, 2d. end of coffee table.) I mean... I always thought blind people were kind of... you know... spooky.

DON. (In a mock sinister voice.) But, of course. (Rises, crosses below r. to above director's chair.) We sleep all day hanging upside down from the shower rod. As soon as it's dark, we wake up and fly into people's windows. That's why they say, "Blind as a bat."

JILL. (On knees by stool.) No, seriously... do blind people have a sixth sense?

DON. No. If I had six senses, I'd still have only five, wouldn't I? (Sits director's chair.) My other senses—hearing, touch, smell—maybe they're a little more developed than yours, but that's only because I use them more. I have to.

JILL. Boy, I think it's just so great that you aren't bitter. You don't seem to have any bitterness at all. (She shows 2d. end of the sofa.) I've moved. I'm sitting on the sofa now.

DON. I know.

JILL. How did you know?
Don. I heard you—and your voice is coming from a different spot.

Jill. Wow! How do you do that?
Don. It's easy. (Rises. Jill rises, crosses u. end of sofa.) Close your eyes and listen. (He tiptoes through kitchen to l. of d. l. post.) You know where I am?
Jill. There. Hey, it works. (Sits d. end of table, feet on d. arm of sofa.) You're really something. I think I'd be terribly bitter if I couldn't see. I'd sure be disagreeable.
Don. No, you wouldn't.
Jill. I couldn't be cheerful like you. I don't have any marvelous qualities like courage and fortitude.
Don. Neither have I. I'm just naturally adorable.
Jill. You're more than that. I can tell you're a much better person than I am.
Don. Are you speaking to me or Gunga Din?
Jill. I would not "go gentle into that goodnight." I would "rage against the dying of the light."
Don. Dylan Thomas.
Jill. Who?
Don. That's a line from a poem by Dylan Thomas.
Jill. (Delightfully surprised.) It is! You mean I can quote from Dylan Thomas?
Don. You just did.
Jill. How about that! I've never even read him. I don't know where I learned it. I can quote Mark Twain. (Rises, crosses u. c.) Do you want to hear my favorite quotation? It's by Mark Twain.
Don. (Squats d. end of table.) Go ahead.
Jill. (Reciting.) "I only ask to be free. The butterflies are free. Mankind will surely not deny to Harold Skimpole what it concedes to the butterflies." (Resuming her normal tone. Lies on table.) I identify strongly with butterflies. Do you like that quotation?
Don. Yes, but it's not by Mark Twain.
Jill. (Sits up.) Why not?
Don. Because it was written by Charles Dickens.
Jill. Are you sure?
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DON. You sure don't need any enemies, do you?

JILL. Let's say I know my limitations.

DON. That's half the battle. If you know your limitations, you can do something about them. I think you have a lot more potential than you know.

JILL. Keep telling me that.

DON. Keep telling yourself that. (Strums guitar and sings.) "I knew the day you met me/I could love you if you let me/Though you touched my cheek/And said how easy you'd forget me/You said Butterflies Are Free/And so are we."

JILL. Oh, wow. That's wonderful. That's the song you were singing last night.

DON. I wrote it. I've been working on it, but I could never get those last lines right.

(Song by Both, Butterflies are free/And so are we." DON holds guitar on lap.)

DON. What do you think?

JILL. It's terrific! I know a little about music. I studied it in school.

DON. Did you finish school?

JILL. I finished high school... just. My mother wanted me to go to college. I was going to UCLA but I couldn't find a place to park. Have you ever been to Los Angeles?

DON. No. I hear the climate is great.

JILL. The climate is great, but the weather is lousy. I guess it's a good place to live—with gardens and pools and all that. I like it better here. People say New York is a great place to visit but they wouldn't want to live here. What could be groovier than living in a place that's great to visit?

DON. What made you come here?

JILL. (Rises, crosses L., swings around D. L. post.) Nothing made me come, I just thought I'd like to try something different. I think I'm going to be an actress.

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I say I think. I'll know later this afternoon. I'm auditioning for a new off-Broadway play.

DON. Good part?

JILL. I guess so. It's the lead. (Crosses between sofa and coffee table.) It's about a girl who gets all hung up because she's married a homosexual. Originally, he was an alcoholic, but homosexuals are very "in" now, so they changed it. (Sits sofa.) Are you homosexual?

DON. No—just blind.

JILL. They are in everything now... books, plays, movies. It's really too bad. I always thought of them as kind of magical and mysterious—the greatest secret society in the world. Now they're telling all the secrets and you find out they're just sad and mixed up like everybody else. (Shifts to d. end of sofa.) Do you know any homosexuals?

DON. I doubt it. I've been in Scarsdale all my life.

JILL. One of my best friends is gay. Dennis. He's a designer. He made this blouse. (Holds her blouse out for DON to see, then winces to herself.)

DON. (Rises, crosses to bed, puts guitar back, leans d. r. post.) I'm sure it's pretty.

JILL. Actually, he made it for himself, but I talked him out of it. Dennis is campy and fun... but I don't like lesbians. They're so heavy and humorless. If guys are called "gay," the girls should be called "glum."

DON. (Sits director's chair.) Tell me about the play. Does the girl convert the husband?

JILL. Almost, but in the end he runs off with her brother.

DON. So her husband becomes her sister-in-law.

JILL. Something like that. Or she becomes her own sister-in-law. I have a good chance of getting the part. The director is a friend of mine, but I have to be approved by the author.

DON. Who's the director?

JILL. You wouldn't know him. His name is Ralph Austin. He's done a few plays here, but never had a hit.
He started in L.A. doing off-Broadway plays on Hollywood Boulevard.

**DON.** That's what I call off-Broadway.

**JILL.** We kind of made it together for a few months, but then he wanted to get married. I just couldn't face that again.

**DON.** Were you in love with him?

**JILL.** I don't think I've ever really been in love with anyone. (*Rises, swaying around d. l. post.* I don't want to be. It's too . . . confining and somebody always gets hurt. Are you hungry?

**DON.** Not very. Are you?

**JILL.** Always. My appetite embarrasses me. I told you I think about food a lot . . . and care deeply. (*Crosses between sofa and coffee table to front door.*) Why don't I go down to the delicatessen and get something? I know exactly where it is—forty-four steps from the front door. *Don. That's the laundry. The delicatessen is fifty-one steps. (*Rises, crosses to refrigerator.*) I've got things to eat.

**JILL.** (*Crosses r. of DON.*) What have you got?

**DON.** Some bologna and salami and cole slaw . . . and I think there's some potato salad.

**JILL.** Boy, you are a delicatessen. Can you shop for yourself?

**DON.** Sure.

**JILL.** I mean I know you can tell a dime from a quarter, but how do you know the difference between a dollar bill and a five?

(*Don takes his wallet from his hip pocket and takes out a bill. *Crosses to above table. **Jill crosses d. with him.*)

**DON.** This is a one. Right?

**JILL.** How do you know?

**DON.** Because it's folded once. If it were a five, I'd fold it again . . . like this. (*Folds bill again.*) And a ten I'd fold once more. (*Folds bill again to demonstrate,
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DON. (Crosses to counter, brings coke slab and puts it on tray.) They said it was a virus in the womb when mother was pregnant... which means they don't know. Whenever they don't know something, they label it "virus."

JILL. I've heard they women with syphilis will give birth to blind babies. Could your mother have had syphilis?

DON. Wait till you meet her, then tell me what you think.

JILL. (Crosses to sofa, takes the two pillows, crosses back to "picnic," puts a pillow at each u. corner.) When will I meet her?

DON. In a month. I've got one month before she comes down here to see what's going on. As the clock strikes month, she'll walk in the door. You may have heard of her. She wrote some books. Her name is Florence Baker.

JILL. It's not familiar—but you can't go by me. I could be quoting her and wouldn't know it.

DON. They were a series of children's books. Guess what they were about?

JILL. Children?

DON. A blind kid named Little Donny Dark.

JILL. (Incredulously.) Little Donny Dark?!?!?

DON. That's me.

JILL. Boy, you'll say anything to get attention!

DON. (Picks up tray, crosses above table to d. l., crosses below toward c.) It's true, I swear. I hate the name Donny. Tell me when to stop.

JILL. Stop. (DON stops at the edge of the cloth. JILL helps him set the tray down between them. He sits with his legs crossed under him. JILL, jumping up.) Just a minute.

DON. Where are you going?

JILL. (Rushing out.) You'll see. (Runs out and returns a moment later with a small basket of flowers. She puts them under DON's nose for him to smell. He smiles as she places the flowers in the center of the cloth. JILL sits and

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starts to eat.) Tell me about Little Donny Dark. It might curb my appetite.

DON. Donny is twelve years old and was born blind like me only it's no handicap to Little Donny Dark. He can drive cars and fly planes, 'cause, you see, his other faculties are so highly developed that he can hear a bank being robbed a mile away and he can smell the Communists cooking up a plot to overthrow the government. He's a diligent fighter of crime and injustice and at the end of every book, as he is being given a medal from the police or the C.I.A. or the F.B.I., he always says, "There are none so blind as those who will not see!"

JILL. I didn't know the police and the F.B.I. gave out medals.

DON. They give 'em to Little Donny Dark. They'd better!

JILL. Boy! Let's have a drink.

DON. (Rising.) I've only got wine.

JILL. That's all I drink.

DON. With bologna?

JILL. With everything. (DON crosses below to the chest.) Do children really read those books?

DON. (Stopping.) Shh! I'm counting—so I don't step in the picnic when I come back. (DON continues to the chest.) --- steps. (Takes a bottle of wine which has been opened, and some glasses. JILL watches in awe.)

JILL. I could never do that. I'd wind up with both feet in the coke slab.

DON. (Crosses back to "picnic." He sits, placing the bottle and glasses on the floor between them. He pours the wine.) No, you wouldn't.

JILL. I speak from experience. Did you ever play Pin the Tail on the Donkey?

DON. (Pouring wine.) I've heard of it.

JILL. We always played it at birthday parties when I was a kid. I remember Julie Patterson's birthday. I guess I was about seven. They blindfolded me and started me.
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for the donkey and I stuck the pin smack into Mrs. Patterson's ass.

DON. Oh, no! (Hands glass to JILL, then pours a glass for himself. Places bottle above cloth.) Well... donkey... ass... it's all the same, isn't it?

JILL. Not to Mrs. Patterson, it wasn't. She never believed I didn't do it on purpose. I didn't. I didn't have to. I mean if you knew Mrs. Patterson's ass—well, you couldn't miss it. Just no way. But you'd've won every prize there. My language gets a little raunchy sometimes. I hope you don't mind four-letter words like "ass." (She takes a long swig of wine.) I'm ready for more.

DON. More what?

JILL. Little Donny Dark. Is she still writing them?

DON. No. She wrote about six. They were pretty popular. No Mary Poppins, but pretty popular. (Wryly.) Unless you happened to be blind. They didn't exactly tell it like it is.

JILL. (Takes a piece of meat from Don's plate, having finished her own.) I'm taking some of your bologna.

DON. I guess the books were sort of a projection of what my mother hoped I'd be—a sightless superman.

JILL. Where did you go to school?

DON. In the living room. I was taught by tutors who teach the blind.

JILL. I thought there were schools for blind children.

DON. There are, but I didn't know that. I didn't know much of anything until about a year ago.

JILL. (Spears a piece of Don's bologna with her fork.) You've just finished your bologna. What happened a year ago?

DON. (Rising, crosses L. between sofa and coffee table to above director's chair.) A family named Fletcher moved near us and their daughter, Linda, used to come by to read to me. She was the first friend I had after my father died. She was great—a real swinger. She used to drive me down here and introduce me to people and take me to parties. All of a sudden, I was living—and learning. At

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home I was like a pet in a cage. Linda gave me something nobody ever thought to give me—confidence. She talked me into making the break and she found this place for me. At first I was scared to death, but I did it. (Crosses L. of director's chair.) Maybe it was a mistake. I don't know.

JILL. (Rising, crosses to DON.) No, it wasn't. You've got to make that break sometime. Your mother isn't going to live forever.

DON. Don't tell her that.

JILL. Look at someone like Helen Keller. She was blind and deaf and dumb, but she became. . . Helen Keller. What became of Linda?

DON. She got married a few weeks ago and she's living in Chicago. I wish she were here. It would be a lot easier.

JILL. Well, listen. I'm here. I'm right next door. Any time you need me, just knock. You don't even have to knock. Just whisper and I can hear you. (Looks over at her door, crosses through kitchen to it.) Hey—you know what?

DON. (Crosses by ladder.) What?

JILL. Why don't we open this door?

DON. Which door?

JILL. This door to my apartment. There must be a key for it. (Crosses L. of DON.) Let's unlock it. Then we can go back and forth without going out in the hall.

DON. The super probably has a key, but I don't think we ought to ask him. No, I don't think we ought to do that.

JILL. Why not? We're friends, aren't we?

DON. But we'd be practically living together. How would it look? (Excitedly, answering his own question, crosses below L. to chest.) Who cares how it looks? I can't see, anyway!

JILL. (Crosses to the kitchen, finds a large knife and crosses to her door.) I'll bet we can open it with this big knife.
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Jill. (Crosses L. of Don.) I was wondering if you're still in love with her.
Don. Did I say I was in love with her?
Jill. (Crosses around to R. of Don.) If I get too personal, just tell me to shut up. I get carried away. (R. hand on his chest, slinks across him.) Were you in love with her? Are you?
Don. (Crosses to sofa, sits c.) Every man should have some mystery. That'll be mine.
Jill. (Crosses above table to U. end of sofa.) What's she like?
Don. She's very pretty.
Jill. How do you know?
Don. I can feel someone's face and get a good idea of what they look like. I can tell from shapes and textures.
Jill. (Crosses to U. of him.) Do you wonder what I look like?
Don. Yes.
Jill. (Kneels.) I'm gorgeous.
Don. Really?
Jill. I wouldn't lie about something like that.
Don. You know, I've always thought if I could see for just half a minute—I'd like to see how I look.
Jill. (Leans in to him.) I'll tell you. Cute . . . and very sexy.

(Don smiles and reaches a hand to Jill's face. Gently, he runs his finger up the side of her face, exploring. He runs his hand over the top of her head and takes hold of her long hair, lightly pulling it through his fingers.)

Don. Your hair is very soft . . . and very long. (Suddenly, Jill's long hair, which is a fall, comes off in Don's hand, revealing her own hair underneath. Don is startled as he feels the limp hair in his hand.) Oh, Jesus! (He falls back on the sofa.)
Jill. Don't be frightened.

Don. We'll have to move the chest. (They grab the edges of the chest.)

Jill. Move it toward you. (They move the chest away from the door into L. corner.) That's fine. (Jill rushes at the lock with the knife. She maneuvers it around, but nothing happens. Don crosses below Jill to R. side of door.)
Don. What's on the other side?
Jill. My bedroom. This isn't working. Boy, a burglar can just smile at a lock and it opens, but honest people like you and me . . . Tsk!
Don. Hey, I heard something click.
Jill. That was me. I went "tsk!" Damn! Maybe we'd better call the super.

Don. Let me try. (Jill places the knife in Don's hand. He feels for the lock and maneuvers the knife around in it. He turns the knife from the lock and, delicately, works it between the door and the lock.) I felt something. (Suddenly the door opens. Jill crosses below Don and into doorway.)

Jill. You did it! It's open! (We can see part of Jill's bedroom with a lot of her things strewn about, untidily, quickly, embarrassed.) Oh, don't look! It's an absolute pigsty!
Don. (Covering his eyes.) I won't.
Jill. (Sinking; crosses D. L. and sits D. end of coffee table on rug.) I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.
Don. Stop being sorry.
Jill. I'll get the hang of it, I just don't know when.

(Don closes the door.) Let's leave it open.
Don. (Opens the door again, then crosses to kitchen to put the knife away.) Okay, but tell me if you close it again. I don't want to break my nose on it. (Don crosses above table to R. of D. L. post.)
Jill. Do you wish it were Linda living there instead of me?
Don. I never even thought about it. Why do you ask?
ACT I

DON. Why are you doing this? Is it Be Kind to the Handicapped Week or something? Don't patronize me! And don't feel sorry for me!

JILL. (Hustly.) I'm doing it because I want to do it! And I'll be God damned if I feel sorry for any guy who's going to have sex with me!

(They kiss and sink onto the sofa. The lights fade, steadily. The curtain is lowered for one minute to denote the passing of two hours. Over this, we hear DON playing his guitar and singing his song.)

ACT ONE

SCENE 2

When the curtain rises, the remnants of the picnic lunch are still on the floor. JILL's blouse lies in a heap on the floor at the v. end of the coffee table. Her jeans and sandals are on the floor by the v. end of the sofa. Her fall is on the v. end of the sofa, partially hidden by DON's shirt and trousers which are draped over the v. arm of the sofa. JILL is in her apartment. DON, dressed only in his jockey shorts, is on the bed. He is playing his guitar and singing.

DON. (Singing as the curtain rises.)

On that velvet morning
As our love was forming
I said you couldn't hurt me
If you left without warning.
I still, "Butterflies are free,
And so are we."

(JILL calls from her apartment.)

JILL's Voice. I can't find it. I can't find anything in this mess.
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black. They should all be in gay, bright colors and far-out clothes and they should all be drinking or smoking pot or whatever they like. (Crosses above coffee table.) I want Salvador Dali to paint the walls with lots of groovy pictures—(Kneels l. pillow at "picnic") and I want tons of flowers, but not formal wreaths. Just tons of wild flowers strewn everywhere.

Don. And butterflies?

Jill. (By d. r. post.) Oh, yes, lots of butterflies. And I want music going all the time. I want the Beatles to write a special memorial for me and to sing it. (Crosses above director’s chair. Don lies on left side, head v., leans on l. arm.) And I want the Rolling Stones to sing, and Simon and Garfunkle and the Doors and the Vienna Boys’ Choir.

Don. And me . . .

Jill. (Crosses up ladder, kisses him.) . . . and you . . . and you.

Don. How about a eulogy?

Jill. (Off ladder, crosses onto platform in kitchen.) Yes—to be delivered by Sidney Pollock. I love his voice. (Crosses above director’s chair.) And at the same time I want Andre Previn playing “Ave Maria” on the organ. If he can’t come, maybe Leonard Bernstein. (Up ladder onto bed v. of Don.) There’s nothing morbid about that, is there?

Don. Not at all.

Jill. (Taking some hippie beads from the box.) Oh, here it is! A present for you. (Slips the beads over his head.)

Don. What is it?

Jill. What does it feel like?

Don. A necklace.

Jill. They’re love beads. I wore them when I was a hippie. You ought to wear beads if you’re going to play the guitar.

Don. Nobody told me.

Jill. Donovan wears them . . . and Jimi Hendrix.
ACT I

clothes and beads and sandals. Well, I mean how can you protest against someone who's doing the same thing you are? Right? (Steps to inspect the hair style; rejects it, crosses behind Don again, rubs his hair.) So, I went the other way and joined the Young Republicans for Ronald Reagan. Another mistake. There's no such thing as a young Republican. (Blows on his hair and, crossing D. L., studies it.) There. You look terrific.

Don. It doesn't look too wild, does it?

Jill. (Kneels beside him.) No, no! It gives you charisma.

Don. What do you mean—charisma?

Jill. It's like pizzazz. Star quality. It's better than talent. If you have charisma, you don't need anything else. They'll line up for blocks to see you. (Looks at him for a moment; then kisses him gently; leans against his chest.) You're beautiful, you know? I mean you're a beautiful person inside as well as out.

Don. (Smiling.) I like you, too.

Jill. (Looks at him.) I feel I ought to tell you something.

Don. What?

Jill. Well, before . . . when I put your hand on my breast . . . were you shocked?

Don. Sort of, I don't come from the standpoint of morals or anything. I was just surprised to be feeling a girl's breast when I wasn't expecting to.

Jill. I wouldn't like you to think that I go around putting men's hands on my breast.

Don. No, I don't think you go around doing that.

Jill. If I want to go to bed with a guy . . . usually, I have a little smile that lets him know I'm interested.

Don. (Reaching his hand out.) Oh, yeah? I want to feel that smile. Is that it?

Jill. (Starts to giggle.) I can't do it now. You're making me laugh. I'll do it later. But I had to use a different approach with you, didn't I? Well, I didn't want you to think I was terrible.
ACT TWO

SCENE 1

The same. A moment later.

Don is sitting on the bed gritting his teeth and trying not to show his annoyance. Jill is still peering out from behind the pipes by the sink. Mrs. Baker is still looking at Don.

Mrs. Baker. I'm glad I found you in, Donny.

Don. Jill, this is my mother.

(Mrs. Baker closes the door behind her.)

Jill. (Backing away to above c. of table.) Your mother? Have I been here a month?

Don. Mother, this is... Mrs. Benson.

(Mrs. Baker studies Jill from head to toe with ill-concealed disapproval.)

Jill. How do you do?

Mrs. Baker. (Coolly. Steps toward Jill.) How do you do, Mrs. Benson? Are you living here, too?

Jill. I live next door. I just stopped in to ask Don to... er... I had trouble zipping up my blouse.

Mrs. Baker. So I see. Where is your blouse?

Jill. (Looking around.) It must be here somewhere.

(Sees it on floor and rushes to get it.) There it is. (Crosses between coffee table and canvas chair to blouse, picks it up, crosses r. of Mrs. Baker to kitchen, puts blouse on.) You see I have this long zipper in the back. It's hard
BUTTERFLIES ARE FREE

ACT II

to do alone. (Scrambles into her blouse. Mrs. Baker picks up Don's clothes and places them on his lap.)

Mrs. Baker. Put your things on.

Don. (Rises and puts pants on.) All right, Mom, what are you doing here? We had an agreement.

Mrs. Baker. (Crosses to coffee table, puts Saks box down, opens box, puts shirts on coffee table, then crosses c., looking at poster on n. wall.) I was in the neighborhood . . .

Don. You were at Saks which is on 50th Street and Fifth Avenue. This is 11th Street between Second and Third.

Mrs. Baker. I bought you some shirts and I thought you'd have them sooner if I brought them myself.

Don. I don't need any shirts. You just brought them as an excuse to come down here.

Jill. (Crosses between sofa and coffee table to Mrs. Baker and turns her back to be zipped.) Would you mind, please?

Mrs. Baker. (Glares daggers at Jill's back, but sips the blouse. Jill crosses to above table. Crossing d., glancing at ladder.) And this is what you left home for?

Don. This is it.

Mrs. Baker. (Glancing at bookcase.) It isn't Buckingham Palace, is it?

Don. No, it's the Taj Mahal.

Mrs. Baker. (Moves d., stopping d. r. to look at the "picnic" things on the floor.) Is this where you eat—on the floor?

Jill. (Crosses below to above "picnic," picks up something from plate, leans d. r. post. Mrs. Baker counters u. c. toward sofa.) We were having a make-believe picnic.

Don. It's fun eating on the floor, Mom. You ought to try it. (A withering glance from Mrs. Baker is Don's reply. Mrs. Baker takes in the sofa end chairs.)

Mrs. Baker. (Gloves and purse on v. end of sofa, crosses up into kitchen.) Where did this furniture come from?

ACT II

Don. Some of it came with the apartment and some of it I picked up in a junk shop.

Mrs. Baker. (In refrigerator area.) Don't tell me which is which. Let me guess. (Mrs. Baker crosses to Jill's door and looks inside, in disbelief.) What in God's name is this?

Don. I don't know what you're looking at.

Jill. (Crosses above director's chair.) That's my apartment.

Mrs. Baker. Have you ever thought about hiring a maid, Mrs. Benson?

Jill. (Crosses above v. end of coffee table.) I can manage. I may be sloppy, but I'm not dirty. There's a difference between sloppy and dirty.

Mrs. Baker. I'm so glad to hear that.

Don. So she's not Craig's wife.

Mrs. Baker. (Crosses d. on platform to d. l. post, pointing to Jill's door.) Has this door always been open?

Don. No, it's always been locked. I opened it this morning.

Mrs. Baker. (Crosses off platform to d. l. Jill counters u. c.) What on earth is that?

Don. Now what are you looking at?

Mrs. Baker. (Crosses above canvas chair.) That's what I'd like to know.

Jill. (Crosses v. end of ladder.) It's your bed.

Don. My bed.

Jill. Isn't that great?

Mrs. Baker. (Incredulously. Crosses to ladder. Jill crosses through kitchen to above dining table.) You actually sleep up there?

Don. Like a baby.

Mrs. Baker. What happens if you fall out?

Don. I go to the ladder and climb up again. (Jill crosses d. end of table to d. l. post.)

Mrs. Baker. (Crosses away c.) Where are your clothes?
DON. There's a closet and chest of drawers in the bathroom.

MRS. BAKER. And where is the bathroom . . . under the bed?

DON. That's right.

MRS. BAKER. Of course it is. (Exits to the bathroom, closes door. DON climbs down ladder with shirt. JILL rushes to DON.)

JILL. (Takes Don d. l.) Boy, were you ever right!

DON. About what?

JILL. She never had syphilis. I'm surprised she had you. (They hug each other.) Why did you introduce me as Mrs. Benson?

DON. I don't know. It makes you sound . . . more important.

(Offstage we can hear the sound of the toilet flushing.)

JILL. (Crossing above dining table to u. end of ladder.) What is she doing?

DON. (Putting shirt on, crossing through kitchen to u. end of coffee table. Love beats outside shirt.) Testing the plumbing. (Shouting.) She's a nut about plumbing.

JILL. (Crossing to Don.) Sshh! How did you know it was your mother when she came in? She didn't make a sound.

DON. Smell.

JILL. (Crosses u. end of ladder.) What is that?

DON. (Crosses u. c.) It's called Numero Dix and she uses half a bottle at a time. I always know when she’s around.

JILL. (Crosses to r. of Don.) It's like having a bell on a cat. (Offstage we hear the sound of a drawer closing. Crosses above ladder to bathroom door.) Now what is she doing?

DON. Checking the drawers to see if I have enough socks and underwear. (Shouting, JILL crosses below ladder to r. of Don; puts hand over his mouth.) She's a nut about socks and underwear. What she's really doing is gathering up evidence to hit me with and try to make me come home. I was so sure she'd walk in and say, "I could absolutely cry." She let me down.

JILL. She's not finished. She'll say it.

DON. No, she'd have said it by now. I know all her routines.

JILL. What do you want to bet she says it? How about dinner tonight? If she doesn't say it, we eat in my place, and I pay. If she says it, we eat here and you pay.

DON. It's a bet, but you might as well start shopping. . . .

MRS. BAKER. (Opens door, enters, crosses to u. end of coffee table, opens box, puts shirts on coffee table. JILL crosses with Don between coffee table and sofa. JILL sits u. end of dining table. DON sits sofa with arm across JILL's knees.) Well, that's some bathroom. No wonder you hide it under the bed.

DON. Gee, I thought you were going to say something else.

MRS. BAKER. I haven't finished. I haven't even started. DON. Well, say it and get it over with.

MRS. BAKER. Well, there's only one thing to say.

JILL. (Aside to Don.) Here it comes.

MRS. BAKER. (Crosses to kitchen, places box on top of wastebasket.) Perhaps it's a blessing that you can't see what you're living in.

DON. Right, Mom. I count that blessing every time I come in the door.

MRS. BAKER. (Crosses u. end of dining table.) Donny, can I be honest?

DON. Can you?

JILL. (Aside to Don.) This is it.

MRS. BAKER. I am shocked and appalled.

JILL. (Off table, crosses l. to apartment, listening.) I lose. Seven-thirty all right?

DON. Perfect.

MRS. BAKER. There's no tub in your bathroom.
DON. (Putting on one shoe.) It's under the dining table.
MRS. BAKER. (Looks at dining table, lifts lid, looks, lets lid down, then:) I could absolutely cry! (JILL crosses above dining table.)
DON. (To JILL.) You win! Hamburgers all right?
JILL. Okay. But at least two each.
MRS. BAKER. (Crosses between sofa and coffee table, takes off beads, puts them on coffee table, fixes Don's hair. DON puts on other shoe while trying to stop MRS. BAKER. JILL crosses into apartment, listening.) I am not just talking about this rat hole, Donny, I am talking about you, too. You're so thin. You've lost weight.
DON. I haven't lost anything. I'm exactly the right weight for my height—6'1"—and my age—eleven.
MRS. BAKER. (Crosses to refrigerator.) I'd like to see what you're eating. (Opens the refrigerator and looks in.) There's nothing in here but lettuce... and an apple.
JILL. (Crosses to r. of refrigerator, looking into it.) Where?
MRS. BAKER. Behind the lettuce.
DON. I knew there was another one.
MRS. BAKER. (Closes the refrigerator and turns on JILL. She stares at her for a moment as JILL grows uncomfortable and backs to above table. MRS. BAKER crosses u. of end of table. JILL backs to d. of end of table.) Tell me, where is Mr. Benson?
JILL. Who's Mr. Benson?
MRS. BAKER. I assumed he was your husband.
JILL. (Crosses d. l. and below to above "picnic," picks up something from plate.) Oh, Jack. I don't know. Last time I saw him he was sitting outside of Hamburger Hamlet on The Strip. Why?
MRS. BAKER. (Crosses u. of end of table.) I was curious about your marital status.
JILL. (Leans d. r. post.) I haven't any.
DON. Jill is divorced.
MRS. BAKER. (Crosses off platform to u. end of coffee table.) How old are you, Mrs. Benson?

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JILL. Nineteen.
MRS. BAKER. (Crosses c., level with JILL.) Nineteen?
And you've already been married and divorced.
JILL. Yeah. Hey, don't you think I should be allowed to vote?
MRS. BAKER. I think you should be allowed to run.
How long were you married?
JILL. Six days.
MRS. BAKER. And on the seventh day you rested?
JILL. (Crosses above MRS. BAKER through kitchen to her apartment.) No, I split. I have to change now. I have an audition.
MRS. BAKER. (L. turn, crosses to l. of front door.) An audition for what?
DON. A play. An off-Broadway play.
MRS. BAKER. I was speaking to Mrs. Benson.
JILL. (Crosses above u. s. end of table.) A play. An off-Broadway play.
MRS. BAKER. (Steps toward JILL.) Then you're an actress.
JILL. Well... yes.
MRS. BAKER. Might I have seen you in anything... besides your underwear?
JILL. (Crosses to edge of platform, level with MRS. BAKER.) Not unless you went to Beverly Hills High School. I was in "The Mikado." I played Yum Yum.
MRS. BAKER. Yes, I'm sure you did.
JILL. (Steps off platform, picks up sandals and pants.) And about a year ago I did a TV commercial for Panacin.
MRS. BAKER. What is Panacin?
JILL. You know... it's for acid indigestion.
MRS. BAKER. No, I don't know. One of the few problems I don't have is acid indigestion.
DON. (Leans back, feet on coffee table.) There are givers and there are takers.
MRS. BAKER. (Steps d. to DON.) You're asking for it, Donny. (DON makes a shadow-box punch.) Does your mother know where you are?
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MRS. BAKER. (Sees JILL’S fall on sofa; calling.) Mrs. Benson . . . (JILL enters, crosses to above DON.)
DON. Just the two of us. Alone!

(MRS. BAKER picks up fall, gingerly, and holds it out to JILL.)

MRS. BAKER. Mrs. Benson, I think you’ve forgotten something. (JILL takes fall.)
DON. What is it?
JILL. (Blows DON’s hair as she did before, then;)
Susan Potter’s hair. (Exits to her apartment, closing the door. MRS. BAKER picks up shirts from coffee table and goes to bathroom door.)
DON. (Rises, crosses f. through kitchen to sink, gets glass.) Did you have to be so goddam rude?
MRS. BAKER. Was I rude? (Exits, puts shirts offstage.)
DON. (Crosses to refrigerator, gets ice for glass.) All those questions! What are you—the Attorney General of Searsdale?
MRS. BAKER. (Enters, crosses u. c. by door, takes off coat.) I think I have a right to know something about my son’s friends.
DON. (Crosses edge of platform.) Let’s talk about my rights! You’re not supposed to be here for another month. Why did you have to come today, huh?
MRS. BAKER. (Steps toward DON.) Since when do you speak to me like this?
DON. Since when do you come sneaking into my room like this?
MRS. BAKER. I didn’t come sneaking in. (Hangs up coat on rack, then crosses back to DON.) The door was unlocked.
DON. You could have knocked. I thought it was a raid.
MRS. BAKER. It should have been. (Crosses to sofa, sits c.) Why don’t you lock your door?
DON. (Crosses to front door.) Until I know my way
around the room, it was easier to let people come in on their own, but it'll be locked from now on. (Mimes bolting door three different ways. Then crosses to R. post.)

MRS. BAKER. I thought my coming here would be a pleasant surprise for you. Had I known I'd be treated like the Long Island Railroad . . .

DON. You've come anyway.

MRS. BAKER. And I'm glad I did. My worst fears have been realized.

DON. (Circles R. post.) Thank heaven! My worst fear was that your worst fears wouldn't be realized. Can you imagine if you came here and liked it? We'd have nothing to talk about.

MRS. BAKER. Did you have to choose such a sordid neighborhood?

DON. To me it looks just like Scarsdale. (Crosses behind ladder to U. end.)

MRS. BAKER. There are lots of nice places up in the Sixties and Seventies.

DON. I don't trust anybody over 30th Street.

MRS. BAKER. I'd be terrified to live with the type of people down here.

DON. (Crosses R. post.) They've been nice to me.

MRS. BAKER. I bet they have. This morning you told me you didn't know Mrs. Benson's name.

DON. I didn't. We hadn't met when we talked.

MRS. BAKER. You certainly made friends in a hurry, didn't you?

DON. She's a very friendly girl.

MRS. BAKER. I can see she is. May I ask you a personal question?

DON. No.

MRS. BAKER. Have you slept with this girl?

DON. I thought you'd never ask. Yes, I have.

MRS. BAKER. As if I didn't know.

DON. (Turns to Mrs. Baker.) If you knew, why did you ask?

MRS. BAKER. (Rises, crosses above director's chair.) And now I know why you're so anxious to have a place of your own. Not because you want to do something constructive with your life. Oh no. You just want a place where you can have orgies . . . night and day!

DON. (Crosses to kitchen—edge of platform.) I know you, Donny. You've got that Linda Fletcher look on your face again. You're going to fall in love with this girl, too.

DON. Maybe I will . . . Does it bother you that I'm heterosexual?

MRS. BAKER. (Turns away, crosses to U. of ladder, looks at mattress, feels it.) Mrs. Benson is not exactly the sort of girl a mother dreams of for her son.

DON. (Crosses to L. end of table, leans on it.) Mom . . . I'm not interested in the girl of your dreams.

MRS. BAKER. She's obviously a stupid girl.

DON. Not at all. She even quotes Dylan Thomas.

MRS. BAKER. (Crosses to U. end of table.) How wonderful! I can assure you Dylan Thomas never quoted her.

DON. Ho, ho!

MRS. BAKER. And she's not at all attractive.

DON. Oh, come on now . . .

MRS. BAKER. She has brassy little eyes like a bird and a figure like . . . a pogo stick.

DON. You've just described the girl of my dreams.

MRS. BAKER. You can't see the difference between good and bad. I can. I can see people's faces. I can see into their eyes. You can't.

DON. Ah, but I can see past their eyes into their souls. Leave us not forget little Donny Dark and all that vision.

MRS. BAKER. You don't know what you're talking about. You've never been exposed to life.

DON. (Crosses between sofa and coffee table to above director's chair.) Whose fault is that? Whose fault is it I didn't go to school with other kids?!

MRS. BAKER. How could you?
DON. (Crosses to ladder.) There are schools for blind children.

MRS. BAKER. We could afford to have you taught at home. I thought that was better than sending you off with a bunch of blind children like . . . a leper.

DON. (Turns to MRS. BAKER.) Is that how you see me—like a leper?

MRS. BAKER. Of course not!

DON. (Crosses in toward her a step or two.) Come on, Mom, deep, deep down haven’t you always been just a little ashamed of producing a blind child?

MRS. BAKER. It’s nothing to be ashamed of.

DON. Embarrassed, then.

MRS. BAKER. You have never given me reason to be embarrassed by you.

(There is a knock at JILL's door.)

DON. (Crosses between director's chair and 2a. post.) Come in.

JILL. (Enters in a different dress. MRS. BAKER crosses off platform to u. c. JILL crosses d. l. between coffee table and director's chair to r. of MRS. BAKER and turns her unsipped back to her.) I hate to bother you.

DON. What's wrong?

JILL. Just another zipper. (MRS. BAKER sips it up in one contemptuous sip. JILL crosses between DON to 2a. of him.) I think you're winning. Hang in there! (Crosses above DON to r. of MRS. BAKER, taps her on shoulder twice. To MRS. BAKER, sweetly.) Thank you. (Exits to her apartment, closing the door.)

MRS. BAKER. (Crosses between sofa and coffee table to d. l.) She'll be a great help to you. She can't even dress herself.

DON. That's where I can help her.

MRS. BAKER. (Turns to DON enthusiastically. Crosses between coffee table and director's chair.) Donny, I have a wonderful idea! You come on home with me. I'll have your bed raised . . . there's a ladder in the garage . . .
... nor United... nor Pan Am. (Crosses d. l. post.) Photographer? A definite out—along with ball player and cab driver. Matador didn't strike me as too promising. I half considered becoming an eye doctor, but that would just be a case of the blind leading the blind. That's a little joke. I said it was little.

Mrs. Baker. I suppose Linda Fletcher put this guitar idea into your head.

Don. You might say she was instrumental. (Waits for a response to this.) That was another joke, Mom. You'd better start laughing at something or people will think you're a lesbian. (Circles d. l. post.)

Mrs. Baker. You've certainly picked up some colorful language, haven't you?

Don. You can learn anything down here.

Mrs. Baker. Yes, well, I think you've learned enough, young man. (Rises, crosses to bathroom door.) I hardly recognize my own son.

Don. What are you doing?

Mrs. Baker. (Enters bathroom and brings out a suitcase.) I'm doing what I should have done long ago. I'm taking you home.

Don. Forget it, Mother. There's no way—

Mrs. Baker. (Crosses to v. end of coffee table and sets suitcase down, loudly, and opens it.) You cannot stay here alone!

Don. I'm not alone, I have friends.

Mrs. Baker. Oh, don't think you've fooled me with all your parties. There are no parties! You have no friends! (Exits into bathroom.)

Don. I have now. I have Mrs. Benson.

Mrs. Baker. (Offstage.) You'd be better off with a seeing-eye dog.

Don. They're not as much fun. Anyway, I've got a seeing-eye mother.

Mrs. Baker. (Enters with clothes and packs them in suitcase.) That's right—and she's taking you home. Mrs. Benson will just have to learn to dress herself.

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Don. Put that suitcase away!

Mrs. Baker. You're coming home, Donny!

Don. (Firmly.) Give me that suitcase! (Lunges across to where he heard the suitcase placed. Mrs. Baker lifts the suitcase from the coffee table and closes it. Don crosses between coffee table and sofa, trying to find the suitcase.) Where is it? Give me that suitcase, Mother! (He crosses to d. r. post. He stands, holding his hand out.) Give it to me! (Mrs. Baker stands staring at Don for a moment, as iron-willed as he. Suddenly, a wave of resignation comes over her. She takes Don's hand and places it on the suitcase handle. Don grabs the handle, carries the suitcase to the bathroom, opens the door, throws the bag in, closes the door. His tension ebbs and he crosses to d. r. post again.) Mom, please stop worrying about me. I'm going to be all right. If the music doesn't work out, I can always study law or technology. There are lots of things blind people can do now. So, don't worry anymore. (He reaches his hand out to find her. Mrs. Baker takes his hand and places it on her face. Don kisses her cheek.) Well, I have to go, Mom. Thanks for dropping by. (He crosses to his jacket and to wallet on counter in the kitchen.)

Mrs. Baker. Where are you going?

Don. (Putting jacket on.) I have to do some shopping. I told you... I'm having dinner in tonight... with Mrs. Benson... just the two of us... alone.

Mrs. Baker. (Crosses on platform to v. end of table.) I'll wait till you come back.

Don. (Off platform.) I don't want you to wait. Have a nice trip back to Scarsdale and I'll call you tomorrow. Now, please... I don't want to smell you here when I get back. (Crosses and gets cane.)

Mrs. Baker. I was planning to stay for dinner.

Don. (At front door.) Your plans have changed. Like I said—it's me and Mrs. Benson... just the two of us... alone.

Mrs. Baker. And after dinner, I suppose an orgy.
Don. (Opening the front door.) I hope so. At last the sinister truth is revealed—Little Donny Dark is just a dirty old man! (Exits. Mrs. Baker looks about the room with frustration. She crosses to the picnic lunch, picks up the tray and carries it to counter.)

Mrs. Baker. (Mumbling to herself.) Mrs. Benson!!!

Jill. (Opening her door.) Yes?

Mrs. Baker. (Is startled for a moment, but recovers, quickly. In friendly tones.) Could you come in for a moment, Mrs. Benson?

Jill. (Uneasily.) Well, I have my audition. I should leave in about fifteen minutes. I don't know New York and I get lost all the time.

Mrs. Baker. (Ingratiatingly. Steps toward Jill a bit.) Don't you worry. I'll see that you get off in time. (Jill enters, reluctantly, stands behind table.) I thought you and I might have a little talk. You know—just girls together. Please sit down. (Jill remains standing, avoiding too close contact with Mrs. Baker.) Would you like a cup of coffee? Tea?

Jill. No, thank you . . . (CROSSES OFF PLATFORM TO L. OF SOFA.) But if that apple is still there.

Mrs. Baker. (CROSSES TO REFRIGERATOR, GETS APPLE AND LETTUCE ON PLATE, CROSSES TO SINK.) I'm sure it is.

Jill. (CROSSES BETWEEN SOFA AND COFFEE TABLE TO LADDER, SITS STEPS.) Where's Don?

Mrs. Baker. Shopping. (Washes apple and polishes it with dish towel.) You must be so careful to wash fruits and vegetables, you know. They spray all those insects on everything now. I'm not at all sure the bugs aren't less harmful. (CROSSES TO JILL WITH APPLE.) I like apples to be nice and shiny. (HOLDS THE APPLE OUT TO JILL, WHO LOOKS AT IT AND THEN AT MRS. BAKER ODDLY.)

Jill. This reminds me of something. What is it?

Mrs. Baker. I have no idea.

Jill. You . . . handing me the apple . . . nice and shiny . . . Oh, I know! Snow White. Remember when the witch brought her the poisoned apple? Oh, Mrs.
ACT II BUTTERFLIES ARE FREE

flower . . . or even a Christmas card. I'd want to die, but Don wants to live. I mean really live . . . (Crosses onto platform to above table.) and he can even kid about it. He's fantastic.

MRS. BAKER. Then you would want what's best for him, wouldn't you?

JILL. (Crosses u. s. end of coffee table.) Now, we're getting to it, aren't we? Like maybe I should tell him to go home with you. Is that it?

MRS. BAKER. Donny was happy at home until Linda Fletcher filled him with ideas about a place of his own.

JILL. (Crosses through kitchen to above table.) Maybe you just want to believe that he can only be happy with you, Mrs. Baker. Well, there are none so blind as those who will not see. (Crosses r. t. post.) There. I can quote Dylan Thomas AND Little Donny Dark.

MRS. BAKER. (Rises, takes lettuce to counter.) You constantly astonish me.

JILL. Well . . . we women of the world do that.

MRS. BAKER. (Crosses to "picnic," picks up pillows and cloth, folds cloth.) Funny how like Linda you are. Donny is certainly consistent with his girls.

JILL. Why do you call him Donny?

MRS. BAKER. It's his name. Don't I say it as though I mean it?

JILL. He hates being called Donny.

MRS. BAKER. (Crosses to sofa, pillows at each end, crosses to counter, puts cloth on it.) He's never mentioned it.

JILL. Of course, he has. (Crosses off platform to u. end of sofa.) You just didn't listen. There are none so deaf as those who will not hear. You could make up a lot of those, couldn't you? There are none so lame as those who will not walk. None so thin as those who will not eat . . .

MRS. BAKER. (Crosses off platform to u. c.) Do you think it's a good idea for Donny to live down here alone?

JILL. I think it's a good idea for Don to live wherever he wants to . . . and he's not alone. I'm here.
ACT II

MRS. BAKER. (Crosses u. end of coffee table.) For how long? Have you got a lease on that apartment?

JILL. No.

MRS. BAKER. So, you can leave tomorrow if you felt like it.

JILL. That's right.

MRS. BAKER. You couldn't sustain a marriage for more than six days, could you?

JILL. (Upset. Crosses d. r.) My marriage doesn't concern you.

MRS. BAKER. It didn't concern you much, either, did it?

JILL. Yes, it did!

MRS. BAKER. (Crosses above director's chair.) Have you thought about what marriage to a blind boy might be like? Not even your mother has covered that territory!

JILL. Suppose we leave my mother out of this, huh?

MRS. BAKER. I'm sorry. I didn't know you were so touchy about her.

JILL. (Turns away r.) I'm not touchy about her. I just don't want to talk about her.

MRS. BAKER. All right. We'll talk about you. You've seen Donny at his best—in this room, which he's memorized . . . and he's memorized how many steps to the drugstore and to the delicatessen . . . but take him out of this room or off this street and he's lost . . . he panics. Donny needs someone who will stay with him—and not just for six days.

JILL. You can stop worrying, Mrs. Baker. Nothing serious will develop between Don and me. I'm not built that way.

MRS. BAKER. But Donny is built that way.

JILL. Oh, please—we're just having kicks.

MRS. BAKER. Kicks! That's how it started with Linda—just kicks . . . but Donny fell in love with her . . . and he'll fall in love with you. Then what happens?

JILL. (Crosses below to d. end of sofa.) I don't know!!
ACT II

Butterflies Are Free

ACT TWO

Scene 2

The same. That night.

At Rise: The dining table is set for two, including Jill’s basket of flowers and some votive candles, lighted. There is a stool at either end of the table. Don is sitting on the floor by the d. r. post, sorting tapes and putting them in boxes. The tape recorder is next to them. Mrs. Baker is in the kitchen by the refrigerator. She slams refrigerator door, opens oven door and slams it, opens cabinet door.

Don. Oh, Mom, what are you doing in there?
Mrs. Baker. I’m looking for some wax paper to wrap the meat in so it doesn’t spoil. (Closes cabinet door.)
Don. I haven’t any wax paper and the meat won’t spoil.
Mrs. Baker. (Takes meat off stove, puts it in refrigerator.) This meat looks terrible.
Don. Who asked you to look at it. (Slams refrigerator door.) Why don’t you get out of the kitchen?
Mrs. Baker. (Crosses to sink, washes hands on linen towel.) What time is it? Midnight?
Don. (Feeling his Braille watch.) It’s only twenty to ten.
Mrs. Baker. Only twenty to ten?!!
Don. (Rises, crosses d. end of sofa.) I know. She’s un-dependable and unreliable. She’s un-everything. What else is new?
Mrs. Baker. (Hangs towel on rack.) You did say seven-thirty. I heard you.
Don. Listen, you don’t have to hang around, you know.
Mrs. Baker. (Crosses off platform to r. of director’s chair.) I’ll just wait until she comes. (Crossing to tape recorder.) I’m not going to interfere with your orgy. I told you that.
Don. No, I told you that. (Mrs. Baker turns the tape recorder on. Don’s singing and playing “Butterflies Are Free” is heard. Mrs. Baker listens, impressed. Moving toward Jill’s door.) Mom, please turn it off. I want to hear if she comes in.
Mrs. Baker. Is that the song you wrote?
Don. (Crosses d. l. past.) Yes ... well, it’s not finished. (Thinks for a second.) How’d you know I wrote it?
Mrs. Baker. I didn’t. I just asked you.
Don. Oh.
Mrs. Baker. It’s good. Pretty. (Turns recorder off.)
Don. You mean pretty good?
Mrs. Baker. No. I mean good and pretty.
Don. Wow. (Looks toward his Mother with some surprise as he moves again to Jill’s door. Mrs. Baker crosses to u. end of ladder.)
Mrs. Baker. Where do you suppose she is?
Don. Probably still auditioning.
Mrs. Baker. For six hours?!! I’m worried about her.
Don. (Even more surprised.) You’re worried about Jill?
Mrs. Baker. Aren’t you?
Don. (Leans on table.) Something’s come over you. First you like my song, now you’re worried about Jill. And you haven’t mentioned my coming home for hours. Are you all right?
Mrs. Baker. Don’t I see all right?
Don. (Crossing to bed, gets tapes from it.) No ... You’re not behaving like Supermom. Next thing you’ll be telling me you like Jill.
Mrs. Baker. (Crosses u. end of sofa, fixes silver on u. table setting.) I don’t dislike her. I just wish she were a different sort of girl.
Don. (Crosses to bookcase, stores tapes.) She is a different sort of girl. That’s what you don’t like.
ACT II

DON. Snow White and the seven dwarfs? That Snow White?

MRS. BAKER. Is there any other?

DON. Why were you talking about her?

MRS. BAKER. (Irritated.) What difference does it make why we were talking about Snow White? We didn’t say anything bad about her.

DON. I don’t like you talking to my friends behind my back.

MRS. BAKER. It wasn’t behind your back! You weren’t even in the room! (DON crosses to kitchen platform. She is thoughtful for a moment.) Donny?

DON. (Crosses above table.) What?

MRS. BAKER. (Takes earrings off, puts them in pocketbook.) Did Linda Fletcher give you confidence?

DON. (Crosses d. l. and below to r. of stool.) Mother, you know damn well what Linda Fletcher gave me—so don’t be funny.

MRS. BAKER. I wasn’t being funny. Did she also give you confidence?

DON. Yes.

MRS. BAKER. Didn’t I?

DON. You gave me help. (Crosses to ladder.)

MRS. BAKER. I always thought one led to the other.

DON. (Climbs ladder to bed; lies on side, head v.) Not necessarily, I guess.

MRS. BAKER. Why didn’t you tell me you don’t like to be called Donny?

DON. I told you a thousand times.

MRS. BAKER. I’d remember something I heard a thousand times.

DON. Maybe it was only a hundred. What’s this all about? Why all these questions?

MRS. BAKER. (Riser.) What’s wrong with Donny?

DON. It reminds me of Little Donny Dark.

MRS. BAKER. (Crosses to ladder.) And what’s wrong with that?

DON. You work on it.
Mrs. Baker. (Climbs to second step of ladder.) Well, what would you like to be called? I'll try to remember.

Don. Don... Donald. You can call me Sebastian or Irving. I don't care. Anything but Donny.

Mrs. Baker. (Off ladder.) I'm not going to call you Sebastian or Irving. I'll try to remember to call you Don.

(Interrupted by voices from Jill's apartment. They both turn toward Jill's door. As the noise grows louder, we can hear laughter and conversation. Jill's voice and a man's. None of it is intelligible. Mrs. Baker crosses through kitchen to Jill's door and listens.)

Don. (Smiling. Down ladder, crosses to coffee table, checks it.) She's home! Okay, Mom. You can go now.

Mrs. Baker. There's a man with her.

Don. Stop listening at the door.

Mrs. Baker. I can't hear anything. They're at the other end, but there's a man with her.

Don. That's probably the television you hear.

Mrs. Baker. Why would she be laughing and talking with a television set?

Don. (Crosses to director's chair, sits.) Mom, please come away from there.

Mrs. Baker. (Moves away from Jill's door, noticing Don is anxious; crosses to coat rack, gets coat, starts to put it on.) I am away from there.

(There is a loud knock at Jill's door.)

Don. Come on in!

Jill. (Enters, gaily, followed by Ralph Austin, a young man, sloppily dressed. Jill crosses d. l. to between director's chair and coffee table. Ralph crosses to d. l. part.) Oh, hi! I'm back! I've brought Ralph Austin with me. (Seeing Mrs. Baker.) Oh, Mrs. Baker—you're still here. (Mrs. Baker crosses u. end of table. Making introductions.) Don, this is Ralph Austin. I told you about him. He's directing the play. Ralph, this is Don... (Jill crosses u. end of ladder. Don extends hand. Ralph crosses to l. of Don.) and Don's mother,
Ralph. (Sits u. of Jill, leans behind her.) It was sparkling burgundy.
Don. (Excitedly.) Then you got the part?
Jill. Yes and no. I'm not playing the wife.
Don. What are you playing, the homosexual?
Jill. No, his secretary. It's a small part, but I've got one good scene.
Ralph. Jill did a really great audition. Man, I was really proud of her.
Jill. (Rises, crosses d. l.) God, was I nervous. It wasn't the reading, but imagine having to stand out there completely and totally naked.
Mrs. Baker. (Drops a cup which falls to the floor and breaks. Jill crosses to above c. of table.) Sorry . . . I broke a cup. (Gets dustpan and brush and starts to sweep up pieces.)
Jill. Can I help you?
Mrs. Baker. No, thank you. . . . It's already broken.
How many coffees?
Don. None for me.
Jill. I don't want any. (Ralph holds his hand up to Mrs. Baker.)
Don. Why did Jill have to be naked for the audition?
Jill crosses r. of Don.
Ralph. Because there's a lot of nudity involved in this play. We had to see the actors' bodies. The visual here is very important. I hope you don't mind my saying that.
Don. Not at all.
Mrs. Baker. How do you take your coffee, Mr. Austin?
Ralph. Just black, please.
Jill. Now I don't think anyone can call me a prude . . .
Mrs. Baker. I'd like to see them try.
Jill. At first I hated the idea of getting completely undressed, (Mrs. Baker crosses above u. of Jill, hands Ralph coffee.) but there were like forty or fifty actors all around me . . . all naked. I was the only one with clothes on. (Turning to Mrs. Baker.) How would you feel?
Mrs. Baker. (Handing Ralph his coffee.) Warm—all over! (Sits u. of Jill, crosses away r.)
Ralph. I was out front with my writer and my producer and the minute we saw Jill naked we knew she wasn't right for the lead.
Mrs. Baker. Tell me, Mr. Austin, is there any story to this play or is that too much to hope for?
Ralph. It has a very dramatic story, Mrs. Baker.
Jill. I die at the end.
Mrs. Baker. Pneumonia?
Ralph. (Rises, places cup down on coffee table, crosses r. of Mrs. Baker.) It's going to be a wild scene. I'm a genius at this kind of thing. (Crosses l. of Don.) Jill will be lying there on the stage dying of an overdose of heroin. (Crosses r. of Don, Jill counts behind ladder.) She's in agony . . . writing across the stage on her back . . . screaming this one word. She screams it over and over and over.
Don. What's the word?
Mrs. Baker. Did you have to ask?
Ralph. (Crosses to coffee table, picks up cup, crosses again to r. of Don.) Well . . . uh . . . I don't know if I should use it here.
Mrs. Baker. You're going to use it on the stage, but you don't know if you should use it here?!!
Don. That's all right, Ralph. You can say it. What's the word? (Ralph whispers into Don's ear. Don squirms, slightly.) Maybe you'd better not. Ralph, do you think the public is ready for this kind of thing?
Ralph. Are you kidding? They're lying for it. I'm talking about the thinking public—(Crosses u. level with Mrs. Baker.) not those giddy little tights-assed matrons from Scarsdale. (Everyone freezes. Jill crosses to D. R. post. Ralph slowly becomes aware of the chill in the room.) Have I said something wrong?
Mrs. Baker. Pick anything, Mr. Austin.
JILL. Ralph, Mrs. Baker lives in Scarsdale.
Ralph. Oh. (Trying, with a big smile.) Well, present
company excepted, isn’t that the rule?
Mrs. Baker. I don’t wish to be excepted, thank you,
Mr. Austin. Tell me, what is the name of your play?
Ralph. It’s called “Do Unto Others.”
Mrs. Baker. I must remember that; I’d hate to wander
in by accident. (Mrs. Baker rises, picks up u. setting.
Ralph crosses through kitchen to chest, puts cup on it,
crosses d. e. post. Mrs. Baker crosses to shelf, places
plate down on counter. Silverware in tray, coffee into
cabinet.)
Jill. (Crosses to below Mrs. Baker.) You might like
it if you gave it a chance, Mrs. Baker. I mean see it with
an open mind.
Don. I should warn you my mother hasn’t liked any-
thing since “The Sound of Music.”
Jill. (Crosses to stool, sits.) The play isn’t really
dirty. I wouldn’t be in a dirty play. It’s true to life.
Don. Not Mom’s life.
Jill. This play is really good. It just needs polishing.
Mrs. Baker. I’ve said scrubbing.
Ralph. (Crosses to l. of stool, sits floor, leans against
Jill.) We’ll just have to try to make it without the sup-
sport of Scarsdale.
Mrs. Baker. (Crosses d. end of table.) Well, I
wouldn’t count on this giddy little matron, Mr. Austin.
I don’t intend to pay money to see nudity, obscenity and
degeneracy.
Ralph. Mrs. Baker, these things are all a part of life.
Mrs. Baker. I know, Mr. Austin. . . . So is diarrhea,
but I wouldn’t classify it as entertainment. (Takes glasses
out of coat pocket, puts one on.)
Jill. Listen, Ralph, if this play is going to be closed
by the police . . .
Ralph. Don’t worry. I’ll run two years and I wouldn’t
be surprised if it made a star out of you.
Jill. (Rises, crosses above Don to d. r. post. Ralph
examines stool, places it d.) Wouldn’t it be groovy to see
Jill Tanner up in lights?
Mrs. Baker. Jill Tanner?
Jill. Benson is my married name, but I’m using my
real name—Tanner. Please remember it. I mean it would
be terrible if I became a star and nobody knew it was me.
Ralph. (Rising, crosses above Don to Jill.) I’ve got
to get going. Steve is coming over with some revives.
How long will it take you to pack?
Jill. (With an anxious glance at Don.) Well . . . not
long, but you go ahead.
Ralph. I’ll wait if you’re not going to take forever.
How many bags have you got?
(A troubled look comes to Don’s face. Mrs. Baker looks
at Don, concerned for him.)
Jill. Only two, but it’ll take me a while to find things.
Ralph. I can only let you have one closet.
Don. Are you going somewhere?
Jill. Didn’t I tell you? (Crosses u. c. to level with
Mrs. Baker. Ralph leans d. r. post.) I’m moving in with
Ralph. I thought I mentioned it.
Mrs. Baker. No . . . you didn’t.
Jill. (Crosses onto edge of kitchen platform. Mrs.
Baker takes off glasses, puts them in pocket.) Well . . .
Ralph thought it would be a good idea to move in with
him.
Ralph. It was your idea.
Jill. It doesn’t matter whose idea it was. It was a good
one. (To Don—crosses to r. of him.) I’m not really move-
ning away, Don. I mean it’s not far from here. (To
Ralph.) Where is it?
Ralph. Off Christopher Street.
Jill. Is that far?
Ralph. Across town.
Jill. See? Ralph has a terrific studio apartment . . .
something like this . . . with a skylight. He hasn’t got a
bed like yours, but it's really great. Wait till you see it. I mean we want you to come over whenever you
like. Don't we, Ralph?

RALPH. (Crosses to r. of DON, pats his shoulder, crosses u. c. toward door.) Sure. We'll consider you one of
the family.

JILL. (To RALPH.) I told you you'd like Don. (To
DON.) We'll have some groovy times over there. You're
going to love Ralph. He's one of us, I wish you could see
him. He has a good face . . . strong and noble. (Crosses
to RALPH, leads him to L. of DON. JILL—behind DON.)

Let Don feel your face. He can tell what you look like
by feeling your face. It's really a kind face.

RALPH. (Kneels.) Go ahead, Don.

MRS. BAKER. He doesn't want to, Mr. Austin.

(RALPH turns to look at MRS. BAKER. JILL looks at MRS.
Baker. JILL takes DON'S hand and places it on
RALPH'S face; DON runs his fingers over RALPH'S
face. He pulls his hand away, quickly. JILL crosses
away r.)

RALPH. (Rises, crosses L. of DON.) Well, it's been great
meeting you, Don. See you soon, I hope. (Crosses to
door.) Don't take long, hon. Oh, nice to have met you,
MRS. BAKER. I apologize if I offended you.

MRS. BAKER. That's quite all right, Mr. Austin. I can
assure you it won't happen again.

RALPH. (With a parting gesture to JILL.) Hon. (Exits
through the front door, leaving JILL, DON and MRS.
Baker in embarrassed silence.)

JILL. (Crosses below to d. L. and to apartment door.)
Well . . . I'd better get packed. I'll drop in and say
goodbye before I leave. (Exits to her apartment, hur-
riedly, closing the door behind her. MRS. BAKER looks at
DON, almost unable to bear the hurt on his face.)

DON. Mom? (MRS. BAKER doesn't answer, staring at
DON, thoughtfully. DON rises.) Mom, are you here?
ACT II

BUTTERFLIES ARE FREE

I can't make it, Mom. I really don't think I'm going to be able to make it.

Mrs. Baker. Why? Because a girl has walked out on you?

Don. (Crosses r. to stool, knocks into it, sits stool.) Two girls. Let's not forget Linda.

Mrs. Baker. And it may be ten girls. Girls walk out on sighted men, too, you know.

Don. Is that supposed to make me feel better?

Mrs. Baker. (Below l. r. post.) It's supposed to make you stop feeling sorry for yourself—You've never felt sorry for yourself before. Please don't start now. (Crosses in to Don.) You're going to meet a lot of girls. One day you'll meet one who is capable of a permanent relationship... . Jill isn't. She knows this herself. (Crosses above Don to u. end of coffee table.) I think you're better off staying here. I don't want you coming home discouraged and defeated. You've got your music.

Don. Oh, Christ, Mom, once and for all get it into your head—I am not Little Donny Dark!! I am discouraged! I am defeated! It's over!

Mrs. Baker. Do you remember the first Donny Dark story?

Don. No.

Mrs. Baker. You were five years old. (Crosses l. of Don.) We were spending the summer on Lake Winnipesaukee. Dad took you into the lake. It was the first time you'd been in any water deeper than a bathtub. You were terrified. They could hear you screaming all over New Hampshire. Dad brought you in and I put you to bed. You trembled for hours. That night I told you a story about a little blind boy who could swim the seven seas and could talk to the dolphins.

Don. (Remembering, bitterly.) Yeah... and the dolphins told him about enemy submarines on their way to destroy the United States Navy and Donny Dark swam home in time to save them. What a lot of crap.

Mrs. Baker. The next day you learned to swim! (Don

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looks toward Mrs. Baker.) I didn't write those stories hoping for a Pulitzer prize in literature. I wrote them because I found a way to help you. Whenever you felt discouraged or defeated, I told you a Donny Dark story... and you tried a little harder and you did a little better. (Crosses above Don to below l. r. post.) Shall I make one up now—or are you man enough to handle this situation yourself?

Don. A month ago you didn't think I was man enough. You said I wasn't ready to leave home. Why have you changed?

Mrs. Baker. I don't know that I've changed. You're not the boy who left home a month ago. I came down here today hoping you were. (Crosses r. c.) It's hard to adjust to not being needed anymore. But I can do it now. So you get on with your own life. (Looking around the room for a moment. Crosses to u. end of sofa, picks up pocketbook.) I'd like to see you have some decent furniture. You need some dishes and some glasses. I'll send some down to you.

Don. Okay.

Mrs. Baker. And some linens. You could use better ashtrays. This place might not be so bad if you fixed it up a little. (Hesitantly.) Can I help you fix it up a little?

Don. Sure.

Mrs. Baker. I'll call you in the morning and we'll talk about it. (Crosses toward front door.)

Don. Mom. I'm glad you came.

Mrs. Baker. (Looks at him for a moment, crosses to above him and puts her arms around him.) I love you, Don.

Don. I know, Mom. I know you do. (Mrs. Baker exits. Don crosses to Jill's door and listens for a moment. He pulls himself out of his despair and, crossing l., raps at the door, gaily.) Hey! How you doin'? (Crosses to sink.)

Jill. (Opens the door and enters carrying two suitcases. Setting the bags down by d. l. post.) I think I
made it. Listen, I left those new dish towels there . . . and the light bulbs, if you want them.

DON. I don't need them.

JILL. Well . . . I'll donate them to the apartment. Oh, and here's the key. (Takes a key from her pocket, crosses below to coffee table and sets it down.) I'll leave it here on the table. Will you give it to the super? (Crosses up to apartment door.) I guess you'd better have him lock this door again.

DON. I'll wait and see who moves in. It might be someone groovy.

JILL. Oh, yeah. I hope so. Well . . . let's don't have a big good-bye or anything. I'll be seeing you.

DON. (Crosses to ladder.) Can't you stay a minute?

JILL. Well . . . once I'm going somewhere, I like to get going. You know what I mean? (Picks up bags.)

DON. (Crosses to d. r. post.) I'm the same way. I was just going to have a corned beef sandwich on rye. Want one?

JILL. (Crosses through kitchen to front door.) Once I'm going somewhere, I like to get going—(Puts bags down by edge of platform) unless someone offers me a corned beef sandwich on rye.

DON. (Crosses to refrigerator.) How about a beer?

JILL. Sure. (Crosses to above dining table.) The candles are still lit.

DON. (As he fixes sandwich and beer.) I know. (Closes refrigerator door; crosses to counter with beer, gets glass, pours.) I'm very religious.

JILL. Where's Mama?

DON. She went home.

JILL. I didn't hear her leave. What was the verdict?

DON. (Holds glass out to JILL.) She accepted my declaration of independence.

JILL. (Takes glass from DON.) You're kidding!

DON. (Crosses to refrigerator, gets sandwich.) I gotta hand it to her—she put up a great battle.

JILL. (Crosses d. end of sofa.) Maybe she should've won. I mean . . . maybe you would be better off at home.

DON. (Closes refrigerator door, crosses to counter, sandwich on plate.) That's a swilch!

JILL. I've been thinking about it.

DON. Come on, girl. It took me a whole day and three pints of blood to convince my mother. I don't want to have to start on you.

JILL. (Crosses between coffee table and director's chair to u. end of sofa.) I like to have things done for me.

DON. Then give up Ralph and the play and move in with my mother. I'm out of mustard. (Moves down, slightly disoriented, and bumps into post d. l.)

JILL. (Sits u. end of sofa, not looking at DON.) I don't care. What do you think of Ralph?

DON. (Looking up, surprised.) Where are you?

JILL. I'm on the sofa.

DON. Oh. I couldn't figure where your voice was coming from.

JILL. You always could before.

DON. (Backs u. Handing her the plate. JILL takes it and puts it on table.) I . . . I wasn't concentrating (Crosses up into kitchen counter.) He seemed very nice.

JILL. Who?

DON. Ralph.

JILL. You didn't like him, did you?

DON. I said he seemed very nice.

JILL. I could tell you didn't like him. You were a little uptight when he was here.

DON. (Crosses above table to d. l. post.) I'm always a little uptight when there's more than one person in the room. I have to figure out who's speaking and if he's speaking to me.

JILL. I guess you didn't like him because he was rude.

DON. (Holds onto d. l. post.) Was he rude?

JILL. Well, you know, putting down Scarsdale like that to your mother.
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you really are too much! You think just because you're blind you can see everything!

Don: That's right—that sixth sense we've got tells me you don't like Ralph Austin! How about that? Spooky, isn't it?

Jill: (Crosses through kitchen to u. c.) No, it's just stupid. I have two bags which are packed and sitting right there...

Don: Tell me—with Ralph, is it like the Fourth of July and like Christmas?

Jill: Not exactly... but he has a kind of strength. With him it's more like—Labor Day.

Don: Do you think he's a beautiful person, too?

Jill: In many ways, yes.

Don: Has he got charisma?

Jill: Definitely!

Don: Then I'm selling mine.

Jill: (Crosses u. end of coffee table.) You'd better hurry. It's been known to fade away.

Don: Do you love him?

Jill: Why should I answer that? No matter what I say, you've already made up your own mind.

Don: (Rises.) Go ahead, answer it! Do you love him?!

Jill: Yes! In my way.

Don: This morning you told me you could never love anyone.

Jill: (Crosses d. l. through kitchen to w. of director's chair.) That was this morning. Am I allowed to change my mind or has my first statement already been passed into law by Congress?!

Don: (Crosses d.) Look, I'm not the world's best human being on the block, but I know that when you're rushing into the arms of the man you love, you don't stop for a corned beef sandwich on rye.

Jill: (Don turns toward her voice.) Which shows how little you know me. Some people wear their hearts on their sleeves... I wear my appetite.
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DON. (CROSSES TO D. R. POST, BUMPS INTO STOOL ON THE WAY.) WAS IT SOMETHING MY MOTHER SAID?

JILL. (BACKS AWAY R.) WAS WHAT SOMETHING YOUR MOTHER SAID?

DON. THE REASON YOU'RE LEAVING. THE REASON YOU DIDN'T SHOW UP FOR DINNER. I KNOW YOU DIDN'T FORGET. WAS IT SOMETHING MY MOTHER SAID?

JILL. YOU DON'T EVEN LISTEN TO YOUR MOTHER. WHY SHOULD I?

DON. THEN WHY ARE YOU LEAVING? AND DON'T GIVE ME THAT CRAP ABOUT LOVING RALPH.

JILL. (CROSSING BELOW DON R. BETWEEN COFFEE TABLE AND SOFA.) I'M LEAVING BECAUSE I WANT TO LEAVE. I'M FREE AND I GO WHEN I WANT TO GO.

DON. (CROSSES TO LADDER, HANGS ONTO IT, FACES AWAY FROM HER.) I THOUGHT IT MIGHT HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH ME.

JILL. (SIS C. SOFA.) IT HAS NOTHING WHATSOEVER TO DO WITH YOU.

DON. OKAY. YOU'RE SCARED TO DEATH OF BECOMING INVOLVED, AREN'T YOU?

JILL. I DON'T WANT TO GET INVOLVED. I TOLD YOU THAT.

DON. (TURNS TOWARD JILL.) THAT'S RIGHT—YOU TOLD ME.

NO COMMITMENTS... NO RESPONSIBILITY.

JILL. I HAVE TO BE ABLE TO GET OUT IF I GET TIRED OF THE...

DON. TIRED OF ME?

JILL. ANYBODY!

DON. WHAT IF I GOT TIRED OF YOU?

JILL. (THIS HADN'T OCCURRED TO HER.) OF ME??

DON. DOESN'T ANYONE EVER GET TIRED OF YOU?

JILL. I DON'T HANG AROUND LONG ENOUGH TO FIND OUT.

DON. (CROSSES ABOVE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR.) WITH RALPH, YOU COULD GET OUT ANY TIME YOU FEEL LIKE IT... BUT IT MIGHT BE HARDER TO WALK OUT ON A BLIND GUY, RIGHT?

JILL. THE BLINDNESS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH IT. NOTHING!

DON. (CROSSES TO U. END OF COFFEE TABLE. JILL CROUCHES IN D. CORNER OF SOFA.) YOU KNOW GODDEN WELL IT HAS! YOU WOULDN'T FEEL A THING WALKING OUT ON RALPH OR SEBASTIAN

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OR IRVING, BUT IF YOU WALKED OUT ON LITTLE DONNY DARK, YOU MIGHT HATE YOURSELF AND YOU WOULDN'T LIKE THAT, WOULD YOU? HATE ME—OR LOVE ME—but don't leave because I'm blind and don't stay because I'm blind!

JILL. WHO ARE SEBASTIAN AND IRVING?

DON. (CROSSES D. R. POST.) NOBODY. I MADE THEM UP.

JILL. SOMETIMES I DON'T UNDERSTAND YOU. (CROSSES ABOVE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR.) WE DON'T THINK ALIKE AND I KNOW I'D ONLY HURT YOU SOONER OR LATER. I DON'T WANT TO HURT YOU.

DON. WHY NOT? YOU DO IT TO EVERYBODY ELSE. WHY DO I RATE SPECIAL TREATMENT?

JILL. I DON'T WANT TO BE ANOTHER LINDA FLETCHER. SHE HURT YOU, DIDN'T SHE?

DON. SHE HELPED ME, TOO. SHE WAS THERE WHEN I NEEDED HER.

JILL. (STEPS IN TO HIM.) I CAN'T PROMISE THAT. I DON'T KNOW WHERE I'LL BE WHEN YOU NEED ME.

DON. (TURNS AWAY FROM HER.) YOU NEED ME A HELLUVA LOT MORE THAN I NEED YOU!

JILL. I DON'T NEED ANYBODY. I NEVER DID AND I NEVER WILL. (CROSSES TO BAGS.) I HAVE TO GO NOW.

DON. I'M GLAD YOU SAID HAVE TO AND NOT WANT TO.

JILL. BOY, I FINALLY SAID SOMETHING RIGHT. I'LL BE SEEING YOU.

DON. (TURNS FRONT.) YEAH—I'LL BE SEEING YOU. I'LL THINK ABOUT YOU FOR YEARS AND WONDER IF YOU EVER MADE A COMMITMENT... IF YOU EVER GOT INVOLVED.

JILL. I HOPE NOT.

DON. DON'T WORRY. IT WON'T HAPPEN... (CROSSES BETWEEN DIRECTOR'S CHAIR AND COFFEE TABLE TO D. L.) BECAUSE YOU'RE EMOTIONALLY RETARDED. DID YOU KNOW THAT? THAT'S WHY YOU COULDN'T FACE MARRIAGE. IT'S WHY YOU CAN'T FACE ANYTHING PERMANENT... ANYTHING REAL. YOU'RE LEAVING NOW BECAUSE YOU'RE AFRAID YOU MIGHT FALL IN LOVE WITH ME... AND YOU'RE TOO YOUNG FOR THAT RESPONSIBILITY... AND YOU'RE GOING TO STAY THAT WAY. OH GOD, I FEEL SORRY FOR YOU... BECAUSE YOU'RE CRIPPLED. I'D RATHER BE BLIND.

(JILL EXITS, CLOSING THE DOOR BEHIND HER. HE TURNS, CROSSES)
to the table and starts to clear the setting. A fork drops to the floor. Don tries to figure out where the sound came from, then takes the plate and puts it in the sink. Suddenly, he crosses to his tape recorder and turns it on. We hear the last part of his song as he crosses to kitchen, stumbles into a stool. He goes to the dining table and blows out the candles. His hand touches the flowers. With quiet anger, he crushes the flowers in a tight fist, then grabs cloth and pulls it off the table, knocking other things to the floor along with it. He crosses l. toward the living room. He bumps into the o. stool. He tosses it up-stage out of his way. He stumbles against the d. s. edge of the sofa and falls to the floor. He lies on the floor by coffee table with tears filling his eyes and no interest in getting up. The front door opens. Jill enters carrying her bags. She sets her bags down and looks around the room for Don. When she sees him, a look of pain comes to her face. Don sits up, quickly, aware of someone in the room. Who is it? Who's there?

Jill. (Breaking the tension. Crosses c.) The news is good. It's not your mother.

Don. What are you doing here?

Jill. (Crosses to him, sits beside him, takes his hand and kisses it.) What are you doing on the floor?

Don. I was about to have a picnic.

Jill. What a great idea!

(Don starts to laugh with Jill. He reaches out for her. She goes into his arms and they cling together, laughing.)

CURTAIN