

HOLLYWOOD BEFORE BREAKFAST

A Musical Comedy in Two Acts

by

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Opening

Robert early 40s, wearing jeans and a T-shirt which reads, "Talent's Not Enough", is sitting in an armchair, his heavy head propped up by his right hand. He shifts his head to his left hand, then back again to his right. Troubled, he runs his fingers through his hair. (Pause) From outside, the bellowing sounds of a motorcycle fill the room. Robert rises abruptly from the armchair and anxiously begins to pace back-and-forth in front of the sleeper sofa, in the center of the room. He stops, turns, faces the audience and extends his arms, high in the air.

ROBERT (SCREAMS) Ah!

He continues to pace back-and-forth. As he passes a standing wall mirror, he catches a glimpse of himself in it. He stops and faces the mirror.

ROBERT (disgusted, into the mirror) How could you have let this happen?
Stupid!

He slaps himself atop the side of his head. Defeated, he drops onto the nearby sofa and buries his head in his hands. Moments later, he looks up at the audience.

ROBERT (cont'd) (Disgusted)

There's only one thing on earth that can do this to a man! There's only one thing in the world that can disrupt the clarity of a man's mind this way! There's only one thing that can reduce a man to a ball of confusion, indecision and irrationality, (brief pause) simultaneously. Yes! That's right! A woman! (disbelief) It all started so innocently one day, when I paid an unannounced visit to my sister. (regrettably shaking his head from side to side) (forgiving) She was only trying to help. She's like that. She's a good person. She's a Buddhist. You know the type. I don't blame her, nevertheless, she was the catalyst, the one who introduced us. How was I to know that a simple, innocent request, would turn into, (loud) that conforming bondage in which one willingly surrenders himself. (louder) That emotional pitfall devoid of intelligent, logical, boundaries. (even louder) That aberrational state, whose brief encounter has indirectly bestowed more grief and aggravation on mankind, then all the wars, pestilence and famine in history combined! (pause) Yes! I'm in love! (pause) In a brief conversation with my sister that day, I planted a

seed and what blossomed was not the simple, exotic, uncommitted, hedonistic, fruit that I had hoped for, but a flower, (softer) a delicate, sensitive, beautiful flower. A flower, that opened in my cold, empty world and filled it with a transforming warmth. (brief pause) Yes, I'm in love. Probably for the first time in my life, the way one should be. For the right reasons. And oddly enough, she, Holly is her name, she is too. Our relationship was great. Like a dream. An ongoing romantic adventure, in the literal sense of those words, as you will come to understand. (pause) But sometimes the beauty of a flower masks its painful thorns. Thorns that pierce the psyche. Thorns that penetrate deep into the heart of the mind. Thorns that disrupt one's being and send tremors through every living cell, crumbling the walls of emotional security that took a lifetime to build. You see, I'm no longer in control! I've acquiesced! Given up! Surrendered! (pause) I never thought anxiety could be this overwhelming. I liken the feeling to that sudden paranoia one may experience, after a one-night stand, waking up and finding yourself handcuffed to the bed post, your lover sitting quietly by your side, smiling. (pause) Never moving, just smiling. (longer pause) For hours! (pause) Love! (pause) You know that old saying, "Today is the first day of the rest of your life." Well, today, I fear may be the first day of the rest of my strife.

Robert (disbelief) shakes his head back and forth.

ROBERT (cont'd) (introspective) And it all started so innocently.

[ROBERT SINGS "What Will Be"©](#)

Fade to darkness.

INT. LOIS'S APT., NIGHT

A neat, organized, brightly lit, one bedroom apartment. Everything is in its appropriate place. Lois, barefoot, wearing faded cutoff jeans and a white cotton shirt with the sleeves rolled up, is washing carrots in the sink, while listening to a nutritionist on the radio explaining the advantages of antioxidants.

Nutritionist (VO)

So remember, selenium, vitamin C and vitamin E, are three of your more important antioxidants, not only because they gobble up age producing free radicals more readily, but also because they play a valuable role in maintaining the health of our skin, teeth and gums. That's our program for today and be sure to tune in tomorrow, when we'll be discussing the role of garlic in treating infection.

Lois turns off the radio, which sits atop the refrigerator, finishes with the carrots and wipes her hands on a nearby towel which hangs from a towel ring, on the wall, behind and to the right of the sink. On a small table, in another part of the room, is a shrine to Buddha, with a lighted ceremonial candle burning in front of it. Lois walks to the candle, opens the table drawer, takes out some frankincense and sprinkles it over the flame. Small, striated clouds of white smoke, rise and dissipate in the air. Lois closes her eyes and inhales the aroma, as if it were a drug. She places a New Age music CD into a player, that rests on a nearby bookshelf and walks back across the room to the sink and begins juicing the carrots. Soothing music plays. After a few moments, the doorbell rings. She crosses the room to the intercom, at the right of the apartment entrance door and presses the talk button.

LOIS Who is it?

ROBERT It's me, the therapeutic challenge.

LOIS (English accent) Lois went to Bhutan, back tomorrow.

Lois buzzes Robert in, opens the door and waits a few moments as he climbs the stairs to her apartment. Robert, backpack over one shoulder, enters. He's

wearing a black sport jacket, black jeans and a white T-shirt with the phrase "Talent's Not Enough" printed on it. She hugs him.

LOIS Good to see you. You look a little stressed.

ROBERT This city's so nuts. Every time I cross the street, I feel like I'm playing dodgeball. You need eleven eyes. If it's not the bikes, scooters or skate boards, it's the mopeds, cars, or trucks. They come from all directions! Even behind! You have no chance! And the lights: red, yellow, green, stop, go, slowdown, turn. One for cars, one for bikes and one for us. It's endless! And! Then there's the little man walking, the countdown and the hand! The hand! Love the hand. Why don't they just give us the finger!

LOIS (laughing) You're lucky I'm home. Normally I'd be in yoga class, but my yoga instructor had to see her therapist.

ROBERT (puzzled look) (sarcastic)
Now that's balance.

LOIS So what brings you above 14th St.? Poker game?

ROBERT No, no more gambling. When i lose, it screws me up creativity. Besides, I have to cut back somewhere with this inflation.

Lois darts a questioning glance with a tilt of her head.

ROBERT No. I didn't lose my job. Just taking a break. I wanted my time back, so I could focus on writing. Seems the older I get, the harder it is for me to do the things I don't want to do.

LOIS (brief pause) Hey. Under the circumstances, why not.

ROBERT (surprised) So you approve? Is that an approval approval with a foundation of clinical support, or just an approval?

LOIS It's healthy. I think it's important to focus your energy on what you want. And the fact that you are single and have no responsibilities, only works to your advantage.

ROBERT Ah, an approval approval.

LOIS What's it about?

ROBERT (uncertain) I'm not sure yet. (brief pause) I only have a title and some ideas, (certain) but I know I wanna make it light. An escape. Fiction. Maybe a black comedy.

LOIS What's the title?

ROBERT "My life is over, but my heart won't stop beating".

LOIS (straight face) I thought you said it was fiction?

ROBERT (lovingly) Fuck you! (pause) What do you think of someone like Dr. Kevorkian for surgeon general?

LOIS (smiles) So what's the occasion?

ROBERT What occasion?

LOIS Your visit?

ROBERT No reason. I happened to be in the neighborhood. I dropped off my date. She lives over on Columbus.

LOIS Didn't work out?

ROBERT No.

LOIS Well?

ROBERT I don't know?

LOIS What was it this time?

ROBERT She was attractive and all that, but she was (hesitates)...

LOIS Well?

ROBERT I don't know, she was kind of (brief pause) hypoglycemic.

LOIS (chuckles) (brief pause)
Disappointed?

ROBERT (brief pause) Not Really. More tired of the process.

LOIS Well at least you're trying.

ROBERT Barely. It's the first date I had in a month.

LOIS You need to find someone with spunk, someone challenging,
someone who will keep you in line.

ROBERT (sweetly sarcastic) Perhaps someone with a whip?

Lois laughs.

ROBERT (cont'd) I've been thinking more along the lines of (laughs)
A partial lobotomy. I figure it would improve my chances of finding
psychological compatibility.

LOIS That's a sexist remark!

ROBERT You know I don't mean it that way. (a little down and disgusted) It's
just so hard. (he looks down and to the left)

LOIS Maybe easing your priorities might help. How old was this one?

ROBERT (looking back at Lois) Twenty-six, there about.

LOIS What do you expect? You need to date women closer to your age.

ROBERT Probably. But I'm not that attracted to them.

LOIS If you keep buying into the physical. You'll never find anyone.

ROBERT There are bright, mature, 26-year-olds.

LOIS Sure there are, but you won't pick them. Look at some of the women you've dated. Remember the 20-year-old who thought she was supposed to put her birth control pills in her vagina. (brief pause) Or the other one who thought she was doing important research because she was in a pantyhose focus group.

ROBERT Sure pick the worst ones. You know she had a kind of interesting point of view. She felt that the number of uneducated in America was growing so fast that if she got an education, she'd end up in a minority.

LOIS (amused) (brief pause) Remember the astrology fanatic.

ROBERT Who?

LOIS You know, the one who loved sex and shopping.

ROBERT Oh yeah! The Scorpio with princess rising. You know she ended up with a Jewish guy who owned a chain of clothing stores. It was true love.

LOIS Robert face it, you haven't made the best choices. Even if you find a bright one, she's too young for you.

ROBERT (irritated by her remark) Wait a minute! I...

LOIS I know. I know, you're not attracted to women over 35.

ROBERT That's not true. I'm very attracted to them. It's just that not long after, they want more. Their ovaries begin misfiring. Then they start to panic. (brief pause) You know the scenario. Besides it bothers me when I'm with a woman who tells me how much fun she had fooling around when she was younger but doesn't want that anymore. It makes me feel unlucky. (brief pause) I'm better off with the young ones. No procreation pressure.

LOIS You can't blame a woman for wanting children.

ROBERT They can have them! I don't want them.

LOIS But you love kids.

ROBERT Other peoples. You can give them back. Besides, you forgot that all important prerequisite. A relationship! Not to mention some money. And look at this world! Who wants to raise a kid in a country where the single, fastest growing unit of housing is a tent.

Lois pours the carrot juice.

LOIS Here, drink this (she hands Robert a glass of carrot juice) It'll help keep your virile. At the rate you're going, you'll be sixty before you settle down.

ROBERT (takes the carrot juice and makes a toast) To youth, and a simpler time, when the criteria was minimal, and promiscuity reigned supreme.

LOIS (smiles) And men could get it up more than twice a night.

Robert raises an eyebrow surprised by Lois's out of character remark. They touch glasses. Lois quickly brings the glass to her lips and drinks. Robert (pensive) slowly does the same and takes a sip.

LOIS What's wrong? I thought you liked carrot juice.

ROBERT (introspective) No it's not that. I was just thinking about the energy thing. I guess I've been so busy with my so-called career that I've slipped into middle age without noticing. (pause) You're right. When I was younger, I had plenty of energy. Now I barely have enough to pursue my work, no less pursue women. If it takes any effort at all, I lose interest.

LOIS You just need more. You're not going to find it in a younger woman.

ROBERT Maybe. As much as I hate to admit it, every once in a while, I do catch myself fantasizing what it would be like to be with someone.

LOIS There's hope.

ROBERT But the fantasy doesn't last long. It kinda fades into the complexity of it all and becomes mind rubble. Why couldn't it be simple? Why couldn't you choose different qualities from different women and put them into the body of your choice.

LOIS I'm sure there are a lot of women out there just waiting for that cuisinart guy to walk into the room and make her ovaries stand up and applaud. The truth is, there's what you want, there's what get and there's what's good for you. If you're lucky, really, really, really, really, really, really, lucky, they're the same.

ROBERT It all seems so impossible. (a little down) I don't think I'll ever have a relationship.

Lois looks away and is silent. (Pause) (thinking)

ROBERT There you go again!

Lois doesn't hear all Robert said.

LOIS What?

ROBERT (noticeably louder voice) I said there you go again! Do you know what it's like to be having a conversation with a psychologist and suddenly they go silent! There's this aura of extreme paranoia that instantaneously engulfs your entire being.

LOIS I'm sorry if I made you feel uncomfortable, but your response to my silence isn't a generic one.

ROBERT You don't think I'll ever have a relationship! Do you?

LOIS I didn't say that.

ROBERT I know! It's what you didn't say that bothers me.

LOIS (brief pause) I think that if you learn to cope differently it's possible.

ROBERT Cut the psychobabble. You mean change, don't you?
(brief pause) Why can't people accept others for who they are?
Why are they always trying to change the other person?
I can never understand that. Women and men become attracted to each other for who they are, then proceed to try to change each other, destroying that very thing that attracted them in the first place? Why do they bother?

LOIS Because they want more, and it may not be perfect but its better than being alone.

ROBERT If I know what I want, why should I settle?

- LOIS I'm not telling you to settle. I'm just saying that you have to try.
- ROBERT Try! That's why the divorce rate is fifty percent. Because people who shouldn't get together in the first place, try! Do you realize, if divorce were a disease, it would be another pandemic like Covid. No thanks. I'll take my chances.
- LOIS Then be prepared to live with the consequences.
- ROBERT (challenging) What consequences?
- LOIS Life as it is for you now. Life alone.
- ROBERT I'd rather be alone alone, then alone with someone. (pause) (frustrated but determined) I don't have a choice. (pause) I can't deal with any of it anymore. I shouldn't even bother dating. (pause) You know I could probably skip women altogether if it weren't for sex.
- LOIS You know married men live longer than single men. Statistics bear it out.
- ROBERT Yeah. But there's no mention of quality of life. Did you ever wonder why the law only allows a man to have one wife? It's to protect him!
- LOIS (laughs) You're incorrigible. Would you consider modeling for the cover of Psychology Today?
- ROBERT I am not as fucked up as you think. (brief pause) If I just had the physical, I could probably manage without the rest.
- LOIS Could you?
- ROBERT I think so. It would have to be with someone I was comfortable with, (pause) but then again, in order to have that, I have to be more involved than I want at this time, but I can't have that comfort unless I'm involved. So, I can't have that. Round and round I go. Like Don Quixote fighting the two headed dragon of ambivalence. I should just

revert to my old ways. Everything would be so much easier. (brief pause) You wouldn't happen to have a good looking girlfriend who would be willing to "do it", without talking, would you? You know, someone who would consider being ignored by a man as sexual harassment.

LOIS (darts him a look) I'm a therapist not a pimp. (pause) Sometimes I wonder where you came from.

ROBERT I'm sorry if I'm not one of those guys who gets turned on by Home Depot. (pause) Look, I didn't mean it the way it sounded. I thought maybe you had a friend who might need as you put it in your psychological jargon, a transitional object, to help her over the, excuse the pun, hump.

LOIS Robert, you're a middle-aged man. Stop acting like a young, dumb jock.

ROBERT I can't help it, it's just that I can't deal with dating anymore. It's the same problem over and over again. If I'm attracted to them physically, the mental thing is missing and if I'm attracted to them mentally, I end up wishing I were blind. (brief) (pause) I can never find the right balance. Maybe I should date foreign women who don't speak English well. At least it would take a while before I realized we didn't get along.

LOIS (pause) I know it's hard for you. (silence) (looks pensive) (looks away)

ROBERT You're doing it. The silence thing again.

LOIS No I'm not.

ROBERT Yes, you are. (he cups his ear) Listen! Nothing. Hear it?

LOIS I'm not.

- ROBERT She's not pouting and that's not an angry face. (He circles her, staring intensely at her head) What's going on inside my smart, little sisters, pretty blond head?
- LOIS (introspective) I was just thinking. You may be right. A physical thing may be all you can handle. At least at this point. (brief pause) I shouldn't do this but, (pause) I know someone who might be perfect for you. But I don't know? She may be a little further along than you. But then again?
- ROBERT What are you talking about?
- LOIS You know Dana?
- ROBERT She's not my type at all.
- LOIS Not her. She has a friend who, on a couple of occasions, mentioned she wished she had someone she could "take out of the closet whenever..."
- ROBERT (perks up) Oh! You mean like a friend with benefits?
- LOIS But, I don't know?
- ROBERT (disappointed) Oh.
- LOIS I'm sure that thought has crossed most women's minds, at some point in their lives. But even if she were serious. (Brief pause) I don't know?
- ROBERT Don't know what?
- LOIS If you're her type. (brief pause) But it may be worth a conversation.
- ROBERT You're serious, aren't you?
- LOIS Yeah! Aren't you?

ROBERT Yeah. (brief pause) I think so? Why would you do this after what you just said?

LOIS Because you can't help yourself and I understand why.

She lovingly caresses his cheek.

LOIS (cont'd) And I love you and I want to help. (brief pause) Even though sometimes you're a superficial, hedonistic, confused schmuck.

ROBERT Why don't I feel insulted when I know I should be?

LOIS (pause) I'll give her a call this week. If I can reach her, I'll run it by her. I don't think she'd mind. She may even thank me. But I won't push it. Do you think you can handle a woman with a brain who just wants sex? No strings attached.

ROBERT (brief pause) You mean use me like a piece of meat?

LOIS Precisely. You know all those sexual positions men talk about with other men that they get women into? Did you ever stop to think why we let you do that? In case you don't know it, the next best thing to being in love is a good one.

Lois makes a forward thrusting motion with a closed fist, like a man would do, when referring to a good fuck.

ROBERT (pause) (pensive)

LOIS (cont'd) You going sensitive on me now?

ROBERT No. It's just that you make it sound so cold and impersonal.

LOIS Now you know how we feel, when we're interested in a man, and he just wants to get laid.

ROBERT (Silent)

LOIS Having double standard difficulties?
(brief pause) Or, do you finally want more?

Robert Doesn't answer. (pensive, he looks down)

LOIS (cont'd) We can forget it if you like?

ROBERT No. I don't think I have a problem with it. (brief pause) One thing.
What's wrong with her?

LOIS Nothing, she's very nice. In some ways, she's a lot like you, but for
different reasons.

ROBERT What's this? Pathology seeking its own level.

LOIS Well put. And physically, I think you'll do.

ROBERT (taken aback) You think I'll do?

LOIS You're no Elvis!

ROBERT (sarcastically) Oh! She's so beautiful?

LOIS I think she is.

ROBERT You're a Buddhist! You think cockroaches are beautiful! .

LOIS It's up to you. If you want, I'll run it buy her.

ROBERT What's she like?

LOIS Lately un-conservative. She's versatile. Very independent.
(brief pause) I'd say she's your type.

ROBERT And what type is that?

LOIS Let's say she's kind of, oh (brief pause) Hollywood before Breakfast.

A spotlight illuminates Robert.

ROBERT SINGS "Will She Call" ©

Fade to darkness

INT: ROBERTS APT., EVENING:

Robert is seated in an ergonomically designed chair, working at his computer. His busy fingers stop. He raises his head and places his hand over his mouth concealing a yawn. He exits his computer, shuts off the monitor and gets up from his chair. In crossing the room, he stops at the refrigerator, opens it, lifts a container of Tropicana orange juice, drinks from it, puts it back into the refrigerator, closes the door and walks to his bed. (amusingly) He searches the room for the TV remote control, eventually finding it under a pillow. He turns the TV on and lays down. Robert flicks through the channels. The amount of time he spends on each channel reflects his interest in the subject. He Switches stations to WPT poker, turns off the sound, puts a CD into the player and goes into the bathroom. He closes the door behind him. The sound of running water is heard as the shower is turned on. Moments later, the phone rings. Robert's answering machine picks it up.

ANS. MACHINE (V.O) Hi. This is Robert. I'll call you back.

HOLLY (V.O) Hi Robert this is Holly. Your sister gave me your number. Too bad you're not home. I was in the mood. Catch you another time.

Robert, wet from the shower, comes racing out of the bathroom, holding a towel around his waist. He lunges for the phone, clumsily knocking the receiver off the hand set onto the floor.

ROBERT (fumbling to grab hold of the receiver)

I'm here. Wait! Wait! Don't hang up!

He grasps the receiver and raises it to his ear.

ROBERT (Into receiver, out of breath) Hello!

(VO) A click and the dial tone.

ROBERT Shit!

He hangs up the telephone and re-enters the bathroom. As he is about to step back into the shower, the phone rings again.

The answering machine picks up.

ROBERT Shit!

ANS. MACHINE (V.O.) Hi. This is Robert...

Robert races out of the bathroom and grabs the telephone receiver.

ROBERT Wait! Wait! I'm here!

HOLLY (sexy voice) Hi.

The window area, on the back wall of Robert's apt. transforms to a translucent screen where the curvaceous silhouette of a woman appears, holding a cell phone to her ear.

ROBERT Holly?

HOLLY Yeah, I'm here. I heard your voice as I was hanging up.

ROBERT I'm glad you called back. I wasn't sure if I was going to hear from you.

HOLLY After my bath I wasn't sure I was going to call, but as I was patting myself dry, I thought it might be nice.

Robert, stunned and surprised, is silent.

HOLLY Are you there?

ROBERT (nervously) Yeah. Yeah. I'm here.

HOLLY You, O.K.?

ROBERT Yeah, I guess I'm a little surprised.

HOLLY (sexy) You mean it's not every day a stranger wants to come over and do things to you that you only fantasize about.

ROBERT Ugh. Not really. (pause) Holly, can I call you right back?
I was in the shower when you called and I'm still wet.

HOLLY Cleaned and scrubbed, right out of the tub, that's how I like a man.

ROBERT Ugh. What's your number?
Robert fumbles as he picks up a pen.

ROBERT (Cont'd) Wait! Hold it a second.

Robert readies himself to write.

ROBERT (Cont'd) O.K., go ahead. 646 553

Robert begins to write down the number.

HOLLY (cont'd) And the last 4 digits are the same as yours.

ROBERT I'll call you back in a few minutes.

The silhouette of Holly on the back wall of the stage fades, as they both hang up. Robert begins pacing the floor momentarily, his fingers pressing against his forehead as he thinks. He picks up the telephone and dials. Lois appears stage right. She is sitting on the floor, in full lotus position. As she is about to begin meditating, the phone rings. Lois eases out of the lotus position, into a standing position, in one smooth uninterrupted motion. The phone rings again.

ROBERT (begins pacing again) Come on Lois. Answer the phone.

The telephone rings a third time.

LOIS. Hello.

ROBERT (anxious) I'm so glad I got you in. Are you coherent, or in a state of transcendental spill over?

LOIS. I'm here. What's up?

ROBERT Your buddy called.

LOIS I thought she would.

ROBERT What did you tell her?

LOIS. What we discussed.

ROBERT Seriously?

LOIS. Yes.

ROBERT You wouldn't be getting even with me for that time when we were kids and I tied you up and went to the circus without you. Would you?

LOIS. (laughs) Of course not. (brief pause) You know I don't like to see you suffer unless I'm the one causing the pain.

ROBERT So this is for real? No Joke?

LOIS It's for real.

ROBERT You sure?

LOIS (a little annoyed) What word was it you didn't understand?

Robert stops pacing.

ROBERT O.K., O.K..

LOIS When are you going to see her?

ROBERT I don't know? She comes on pretty strong.
Kinda like, Mae West.

LOIS How do you expect a stranger to behave who's calling you to come over and have sex with you?

ROBERT Yeah, I guess you're right but...

Robert starts pacing again.

LOIS You wouldn't be having a problem dealing with a woman who's not into games, would you?

ROBERT That's not it.

LOIS I bet you're pacing back and forth.

Robert stops pacing.

ROBERT No I'm not. It's just that I'm tired and I have an early appointment with my publisher.

LOIS So make it another night. I gotta go.

ROBERT (brief pause) Wait! (brief pause) Lois, she's not one of those West Village babes who wear that "meat me tonight" T- shirt, with the word meet spelled M-E-A-T. Is she?

LOIS (laughs) Not even close. Have fun.

ROBERT Wait! One more thing. She's O.K., isn't she?

LOIS. What do you want! The good housekeeping seal approval stamped on her ass. Don't worry, no diseases. The only thing I know she ever had was cystitis. And that's because she had a young boyfriend. Good night.

ROBERT Good night.

Lois fades out. Robert hangs up the telephone. He goes to the closet, opens it, reaches in, pulls out a shirt, puts it on and sits down. He dials Holly. She answers. Holly's curvaceous silhouette reappears, occupying the space of the window on the back wall.

HOLLY Hello

ROBERT Hi. Sorry about before, I just got out of the shower, and I was dripping wet.

HOLLY I'm all for cleanliness.

ROBERT It's nice to know that we have that in common.

HOLLY I get turned off by men whose personal hygiene is worse than mine. I don't like the way a sticky body feels when it presses up against me.

ROBERT Cleanliness is comfortable.
I like that smooth sensation, smooth and....

HOLLY Warm.

ROBERT Yeah. And soft. What's your skin like?

HOLLY That Mediterranean olive type.

ROBERT My favorite.

HOLLY You sound sensitive.

ROBERT You're perceptive.

HOLLY Astute men notice.

ROBERT And charming.

HOLLY I'll agree.

ROBERT I've always been a little suspicious of the "quote", "unquote" charming type.

HOLLY Why is that?

ROBERT I am skeptical of the word.
Charm can be a sophisticated form of deceit.

HOLLY Do you think I am that way?

ROBERT I don't know, but I don't think it matters with us since we're into basics. Does it?

HOLLY Not really.

ROBERT I'm glad you understand.

HOLLY Believe me I understand. I wouldn't be here if it were any other way.

ROBERT You know, it sounds like we could have the beginnings of some honesty here.

HOLLY You think so?

ROBERT Well, we don't have to like each other except in bed. Honesty could be easy.

HOLLY If you're good in bed!

ROBERT (laughs) A sense of humor. I like that. I think this is going to be very interesting.

HOLLY Interesting! I'd prefer hot.

ROBERT I'm beginning to think it couldn't be any other way with you. This conversation is starting to turn me on.

HOLLY Just wait.

ROBERT I wish I didn't have to get up early.

HOLLY Sorry, I'm not into phone play.

ROBERT It can be fun.

HOLLY I know, but I prefer the real thing.

ROBERT I guess it's time to say goodnight. I'll call you tomorrow.

HOLLY Be sure to get some rest.

ROBERT After this conversation, I may have trouble sleeping.

HOLLY Then call me back.

ROBERT I'll keep it in mind. Goodnight.

HOLLY Goodnight. (brief pause) Wet dreams.

The stage goes dark. A single spotlight illuminates Robert.

ROBERT (excited) How about that, a sexual rendezvous. A man, a woman, passion, lust, free of obligation and responsibility. Like animals in the wild that sniff and smell and do their deed and go separate ways. (brief pause) And without having to pay. What could be better? (pause) (introspective) But something about this wonderful arrangement bothered me. Something deep inside. Something so disturbing, that it would wake me from my sleep. (brief pause) I decided to do some soul searching. I had to examine my inner self and find what it was that was bothering me. And face it. Whatever it was. (pause) I let things lay for a couple of days, while trying to sort it out. One night, it suddenly came to me. In my mind's eye, I saw myself sitting on the couch, talking to Holly on the phone, speaking the words that I spoke, that created this dilemma. As I listened to our conversation, I couldn't help but ask myself, was this what I really wanted? Was this overdressed affair, as enticing as it appeared, enough? (brief pause) Or was this exotic indulgence, my loneliness, desperately reaching out, for a momentary respite, from my life's love dilemma? I wrestled with it over and over. What was this arrangement to me? Was this the step backward that was to propel me forward; to an evolved interaction, based on more meaningful things; spiritual things, love, respect, kindness, selflessness. Or was this a defining point in my life, that would characterize me as jaded, insensitive and spiritually bankrupt. (brief pause) I wasn't sure. (pause)

I began to question if I should go through with it or not. (brief pause) But if I'm attracted to her? (brief pause) (elated) Who knows? (hopefully) perhaps a romance? (brief pause) conversations imply we have the beginnings of compatibility. (pause) But beginnings mean nothing. I don't know her. I only know myself, and know I need both; the physical as well as the mental, if I were to

give anyone a chance. But enough of this fantasizing! First things first. The physical. Will I be attracted enough to sleep with her when I see her? And to be fair about it, will she be attracted to me? (pause) If there was only a way around it?

The stage goes dark. Moments later, the ringing of a telephone is heard. The lights are turned up. Robert is standing center stage, his phone pressed to his ear. On the back wall, where Holly's silhouette previously appeared, is the silhouette of a telephone. It rings again. Holly's silhouette enters the frame. She reaches down and lifts the receiver to her ear.

HOLLY Hello.

ROBERT Hi, Holly. It's Robert.

HOLLY Hi. What'd ya do break a finger?

ROBERT I guess tomorrow was yesterday, wasn't it. (silence)
I'm sorry. Can I explain?

HOLLY You don't have to.

ROBERT I want to. I don't want you wondering or drawing wrong conclusions. (matter of fact) Not that you're necessarily wondering or drawing conclusions. (brief pause) I guess I'm projecting. I try to live by the Golden Rule. Not everyone does. Maybe you don't. Anyway, what I did, it's not my style.

HOLLY Sincerity. You get points for that.

ROBERT (fumbling for words) I wanted to call you, but I couldn't get it together. I didn't want to...
No. I did, but not at that time.

HOLLY Nothing like a clear, succinct explanation.

- ROBERT I'm sorry, I'm not sure exactly how to explain this. I guess the best way is through this dream I had the other night. There were two women. One good looking, with a great body, aggressive. The other, quieter, more sensitive, feminine and somewhat demure. I was attracted to both. I had to make a choice. I wanted to be with the quieter one, even though I was pulled by physical attraction toward the other. As I was trying to explain my feelings to the aggressive one, she got physical. The next thing I knew we were lying in bed next to one another. Don't get me wrong, it's not that I didn't enjoy it. It's just that when it was over, I felt different about it. There was this (brief pause) distance. Not that the distance was new, but it was as if I never really felt it before. (brief pause) Then suddenly I was alone on a tree lined street. It was winter. As I stood looking skyward at tall, bare, dark trees, an iced wind brushed my face. (brief pause) (bewildered) Suddenly, I was one of them. Separate. Alone.
- HOLLY I'm a little confused. Your sister said you were only interested in a physical thing.
- ROBERT I know. And I am. But I'm not.
- HOLLY You sound like a transsexual having gender identity issues.
- ROBERT (laughs) It's just that sometimes I feel I need more. It was one of those moments. Not that I want that. But I do and I don't. But not all the time. It's all so complicated. Relationships.
- HOLLY I understand. I think we all feel that way at one time or another. Sometimes less is all you can handle. For whatever reason. (brief pause) (drifting) You take a chance. When you deal with another person, you never really know if they're there for the same reason you are. No matter what they say, or how well you think you understand what they're saying. You never really know. (brief pause) Sometimes it's semantics. (pause) Sometimes it's deliberate. Much of the time it's naiveté. "Why", isn't important. The results the same. (reflective) Pain. (brief pause) With a physical thing, you know

what you get. It may be empty. It may be cold. But there are no surprises.

ROBERT I'm sorry if I stirred a bad memory.

HOLLY (introspective) History is history is history.

ROBERT You want to talk about it?

HOLLY Not really. You can sum it up as different needs at different times.

ROBERT Sorry.

HOLLY It's O.K.. Time has made it kinda like a rumor. You wonder if it ever really happened. Even though you know it did, it doesn't really touch you anymore.

There is silence

ROBERT Boy, leave it to me to fuck up a fun evening.

HOLLY (laughs) It's probably better we got to know a little something about each other before we get together. Nothing's changed.

ROBERT Do you think this would have come up if we had met another way?

HOLLY I don't know. With the sex thing out of the way, things can get real pretty fast. No jockeying for position and wondering if you're ever going to get in the sack.

ROBERT How about, regardless of what happens, we try and be friends.

HOLLY Sure we can give it a shot. If you want, we can forget about our arrangement? It's not a problem.

ROBERT No. I'm more comfortable with it now.

I'm looking forward to seeing you.

HOLLY I hope the visual thing doesn't get in the way.

ROBERT Just our luck. We're not physically attracted to each other. I hate it when you like someone, but they just don't do it for you. I wish I weren't so superficial.

HOLLY Me too. But we are what we are.

ROBERT Too bad we couldn't find some way around it.

HOLLY We could always do it with bags over our heads.

ROBERT (Laughs). Yeah, glad bags!

HOLLY (Laughs)

ROBERT (laughs) Maybe like in the Victorian days; we could cover our bodies with sheets.

HOLLY (laughs) Bags over our heads, bodies under sheets, sounds more like Halloween.

ROBERT (laughs) I don't see a way out. We'll just have to settle for reality. When can I see you?

HOLLY I'm flexible. What's your schedule like?

ROBERT I'm free after tomorrow night. How about, (brief pause) (excited) Wait! Wait! Night, dark. That's it!

HOLLY What's it?

ROBERT (excited) The dark. It could work. It's a way.

HOLLY Did I miss something? What are you talking about?

ROBERT (excited) Do it in the dark!

HOLLY I don't get it?

ROBERT (excited) Get together in the dark. That would solve it.

HOLLY (brief pause) Solve what?

ROBERT (excited) The problem of seeing each other. The visual dynamic. What we've been talking about. Think about it. If we don't see each other. If we were in complete darkness. We could avoid the visual.

HOLLY What?

ROBERT It'll work. If we don't see each other and meet in complete darkness, we could avoid the only thing that could keep us from being attracted to each other. I can make my apartment completely dark. You can come over. We'll never see each other. We'll avoid the visual.

HOLLY You mean come over and sleep with you without seeing you?

ROBERT Exactly!

HOLLY You're crazy! Have sex with you without seeing you!

ROBERT Yeah! Think about what we just discussed. Why not?' It's a way around our superficial nature. Just imagine.

HOLLY This is supposed to be a hook up, not an experiment in single sense deprivation.

ROBERT Don't look at it that way. Keep an open mind. We're both interested in a sexual thing, right?

HOLLY I'm beginning to wonder.

ROBERT I was being creative. Now you probably think I have some kind of problem.

HOLLY Rule of thumb; if you have parents, you have problems. But this. This is something else.

ROBERT What is it about it that bothers you?

HOLLY (Facetiously) It's a little bizarre.

ROBERT Is it because it's new?

HOLLY (brief pause) I'm sure that that's part of it but, I don't think, that's entirely it.

ROBERT Well then what?

HOLLY I'm not sure.

ROBERT Will you consider it?

HOLLY I don't think so.

ROBERT (convincingly) Look. We've come this far. We're willing to get together, why risk enjoying the sexual experience because of the physical.

HOLLY Have you been listening to Howard Stern? (brief pause) No, I doubt if he's had an experience like this. I doubt if anyone has.

ROBERT Wait a second. Just bear with me. What do people remember about their lovers? It's their touch! Their smell! Their taste! Their voice! Not the way they look. That's secondary. (brief pause) I'm sure you had a boyfriend who, when you described him to your friends, it was something other than his looks that first came to mind.

HOLLY Of course.

ROBERT The physical thing is only important initially. You know how it is after you've had your lover in every conceivable position, if the more important things aren't there the relationship falls apart. The physical thing is the only thing that can keep us from sleeping together. If we meet in complete darkness, we will eliminate the possibility of being turned off. We could bring the way we feel about each other right now, into the sexual experience.

HOLLY I don't think so.

ROBERT (trying to coax her) Come on, Holly. You can't tell me you don't like me. If you didn't, you would have said goodbye.

Holly is silent

ROBERT (cont'd) (coaxing) Come on, Holly. Do this with me.

HOLLY I think I'd rather have a D & C.

ROBERT You can't be serious. Come on. It will be our thing. Imagine what the experience would be like. We can always see each other.

HOLLY I can't believe I'm on the phone talking about sleeping with a perfect stranger, without knowing what he looks like.

ROBERT Great idea, huh? Come on Holly. Where's your sense of adventure?

HOLLY It's original, I give you that.

ROBERT It's only one tiny little step further out than our arrangement.

HOLLY Our arrangement was a stretch for me, but this. I don't know.

ROBERT Don't know? Does that mean you'll consider it?

HOLLY Does it?

ROBERT Maybe it's a little more enticing than you're willing to admit to yourself.

HOLLY Maybe you're a little crazier than you're willing to admit to yourself.

ROBERT Will you do it?

HOLLY You artists.

ROBERT (gently coaxing) Come on.

HOLLY I don't know. (brief pause) I admit though.
(brief pause) It would be new.

ROBERT (coaxing) Holly, it'll be great!

HOLLY (brief pause) I don't know?

ROBERT Come on, Holly.

HOLLY Let me sleep on it.

ROBERT (brief pause) O.K..

HOLLY I'll call you.

ROBERT O.K.. (coaxing) Holly, do this with me.

HOLLY I'll think about it.

ROBERT O.K..

HOLLY Good night. Oh! By the way. You know that golden rule of yours. How does it go, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you".

ROBERT Yeah.

HOLLY Does it apply to masochists?

The stage goes dark. Robert is illuminated by a single spotlight.

ROBERT What can I say. Through the wonder of creativity, by way of avoidance, I've managed to quell my superficial outcry for physical beauty. (elated) The thought of such an experience. I can only describe it, as being comparable to the exhilaration that I feel as an artist, when a creative surge of inspiration bursts forth. (brief pause) (wonder) But this, this is more. This is a fantasy that marries my creative and sexual energy. (brief pause) To explore another human being in a canvass of darkness. (brief pause) (excited) How stimulating this thought! How fascinating this adventure! How new! (pause) True this may not be the most fulfilling experience of my life, but it will be one of the most unique. (with justification) Hey, if it's not love, why not spice it up with something that makes it more exciting! (brief pause) Or in this case take something away. (long pause) In a way, it's not about sex anymore, but the experience in darkness itself, with someone I don't know. (brief pause) I wonder if her experience will mirror mine. (pause) I hope she shares this with me.

Fade to darkness.

INT: ROBERTS APT..

CENTER STAGE:

The telephone, illuminated by a single spotlight, rings three times. The answering machine picks up the caller. (pause)

HOLLY (V.O.) Hi Robert, it's Holly. It looks like my curiosity got the better of me. How do we do this? Get back to me soon. I'm already having second thoughts.

ROBERT SINGS "Will I Be Free Tonight"©

INT: ROBERTS APT., EVENING.

Robert is experimenting with the lighting in his apartment, trying to create the perfect environment that will complement the rendezvous in darkness. He hangs blankets over the windows, then shuts all the lights, except for one lamp. He assesses the setting. The light is too bright. He shuts it off, making the apartment dark. He turns the light on again and covers the lamp with a scarf. Again, unable to create the desired effect, he shuts it off and lights a candle. (dissatisfied) He blows the candle out. Footsteps are heard as Robert walks across the dark room. He turns the bathroom light on and partially closes the door. He closes it almost completely, except for a slight crack which allows a minimal amount of light to enter the room, creating the perfect environment. Robert is barely visible; we are unable to distinguish his features yet can see an outline of his body.

ROBERT Voila!

Robert turns the lights on. He fingers through his nearby CD collection, chooses one, places it into a player and fiddles with the lighting again. He's distracted by the loud bellowing sound of a motorcycle from outside. Robert closes the window, muffling the sound. It continues for a moment and stops. Robert returns

to the CD player and is about to turn it on when he hears the buzzer. He goes to the intercom.

ROBERT (Into intercom) Holly?

HOLLY(V.O.) It's me.

ROBERT Great!

HOLLY (V.O.) I can't believe I'm here.

ROBERT (excited) Me either. Come on up.

Robert presses the door buzzer on the intercom that allows Holly entry. He scrutinizes the apartment one last time. He goes to the bed, fluffs the pillows, twists the champagne bottle in the ice bucket and returns to the door. As he waits, he paces back and forth in a small area adjacent to the door. He stops. There's complete silence. He looks into the mirror and primps some. He realizes what he is doing makes no sense. He positions himself by the door and waits. Two soft knocks break the silence. Robert shuts the lights, re-creating the earlier, faintly lit, setting.

ROBERT Holly?

HOLLY I can't believe I'm doing this.

ROBERT Close your eyes. I'm closing mine.

Robert slowly opens the door.

ROBERT (cont'd) Come in. After you're in, I'll close the door behind you. Don't open your eyes until I tell you.

The door slowly opens, obstructing Roberts' view. Holly's elongated shadow, illuminated by the light in the hall, is projected on the back wall of the apartment, opposite the doorway. The shadow is of a tallish woman, with short, mussed hair, wearing a high waist jacket and knee-high boots. Her arms hang at her sides and in her left hand, she holds a round object; its size and shape, resembling a bowling ball, but larger. She steps into the apartment.

ROBERT Are you in?

HOLLY Yes.

ROBERT Keep your eyes closed.

Robert closes the door behind her. The room goes dark, recreating the faintly lit setting. The darkness is such that one can barely distinguish Robert and Holly's shapes: their faint outlines barely visible.

ROBERT You can open your eyes.

HOLLY Where are you? I can't see anything.

ROBERT Here, behind you.

ROBERT Give me your jacket.

HOLLY Take this too.

ROBERT A helmet. (brief pause) That was you on the motorcycle.

HOLLY Yes.

ROBERT Stay here while I hang your things up.

A squeak is heard as Robert opens the closet door, then the rustling of some clothes and then the squeak again as he closes the closet door.

ROBERT (brief pause) Take my hand. Follow me. Footsteps are heard as Robert leads Holly across the room. How are you doing so far?

HOLLY I feel like I'm in the "Tunnel of Love". (fondly) That's where I gave up my virginity.

ROBERT "Gave up" I like your choice of words. Women usually use the word 'Lost', like they didn't know where it went.

HOLLY (emphatically) Oh. I knew where it went. I was willing. Actually, I couldn't wait.

ROBERT (laughs) Why am I not surprised.

HOLLY This is so crazy.

The footsteps stop.

ROBERT You're sure you're O.K. with it?

HOLLY So far.

ROBERT Sit here.

Holly Sits down.

HOLLY Firm bed. I like firm beds. They're good for your back.

ROBERT Lie back. Get comfortable.

HOLLY I can't believe I'm doing this.

ROBERT Me either. I can't help feeling it's not real, even though I know it's happening. It's so bizarre. (brief pause) And exciting.

HOLLY I think I'm more nervous than excited.

ROBERT Breathe through your nose. It'll help you relax.

HOLLY Let me take off my boots.

Two thumping sounds are heard, as they hit the floor, one after the other. Then movement is heard as she slides back onto the bed, into a more comfortable position.

HOLLY There, that's better.

ROBERT Comfortable?

HOLLY Yeah.

ROBERT How long have you been riding?

HOLLY About three years. You ride?

ROBERT Only spiritually. It's a little dangerous in this city.

HOLLY That's why I have a side car.

ROBERT Smart.

HOLLY I'll take you for a ride sometime. I like to drive along the beach at night and feel the sea air on my face.

ROBERT Sounds nice.

- HOLLY Riding by the beach. It always brings me back to a good place. Probably because it reminds me of my childhood.
- ROBERT Did you grow up near the beach?
- HOLLY No, we spent summers there for a few years when I was a kid. It was a great time, carefree, no worries. I loved collecting shells. It was as if they were jewels. Did you go to the beach a lot when you were a kid?
- ROBERT Not much. My father was always working, and the babysitter would take my sister and me to the park. I played handball a lot.
- HOLLY What about your mom?
- ROBERT She and dad split up. I didn't see her after that.
- ROBERT (brief pause) Give me your hand.
- HOLLY Are you in a hurry?
- ROBERT (softly) Trust me. Give me your hand.
- HOLLY Where are you? (laughs) There you are. Soft hands. Let's see. And fingernails. No hard work here. That's right, Lois said you're a writer.
- ROBERT Here.
- HOLLY What's this? (brief pause) Flowers. (brief pause) Roses. How Sweet. Thank you. The smell so wonderful. And the petals, they're like velvet. (brief pause) I can't remember the last time I touched a flower. (brief pause) I usually just look at them and smell them. (brief pause) Thank you.

The pop of the Champagne cork is heard.

HOLLY Champagne. Champagne, flowers, how romantic. What's next?
Frank Sinatra.

Robert turns the cassette player on. Les Parfums d'autrefois by Liane Foly softly plays.

ROBERT To our experience. May less be more?

The distinctive clinking of champagne glasses toasting is heard.

HOLLY It seems to be that way. (brief pause) You know, I wasn't sure about this, but I'm beginning to think the reality is as good as the fantasy. (pause) What are you wearing?

ROBERT A robe and...

HOLLY No, don't tell me anymore. Let me find out. (brief pause) Boxer shorts, my favorite. I'm glad you're not into sexy underwear. They're so cliché. But these. Mmmmm. (brief pause) (loud) (surprise) Oh!

ROBERT What?

HOLLY If that's you. You should be an organ donor.

ROBERT (laughs) Sorry, it's only my forearm. No panties, how thoughtful.

HOLLY You said get comfortable. Come closer.

ROBERT (seductive) You smell good.

HOLLY (softly) So do you.

ROBERT (brief pause) Your skin is soft. And your lips.

Holly moans softly, as they start to kiss. Moment's pass. The sound of two bodies, one moving on top of the other is heard.

HOLLY (softly moans) Robert.

ROBERT (Moans)

Familiar sounds of passion are accompanied by orange/red embers that appear on the back wall, behind and above the couch/bed. The embers take on the abstract shapes of a man and a woman that wrap around and blend into one another, forming one irregular shape. The shapes orange/red glow intensifies with each passing moment.

HOLLY Put a condom on.

Moment's pass. The abstract form begins to pulsate and expand. Then begins to slowly fade and vanish into the surrounding darkness. There is silence. Seconds pass. The kitchen clock slowly illuminates. The time is 3 A.M. More stirring is heard. Robert gets up from the bed and goes into the bathroom. He turns the bathroom light on and pauses momentarily as he is tempted to look toward the bed at Holly. Able to restrain himself, he closes the door and goes about his business. The bathroom door re-opens. Robert shuts the light, re-enters the room and gets back into bed. There is silence. (seconds pass) Robert begins to whistle. He stops. (pause) He starts to whistle again, and again he stops. Seconds pass.

ROBERT (gently) Holly. Are you awake?

HOLLY (sleepy) Moans. (yawning) I must have fallen asleep.
What time is it?

ROBERT About three.

ROBERT Here

HOLLY Thanks.

Robert places a glass of champagne in her hand.

HOLLY What a good sleep. (Yawns) Did you turn on the light?

ROBERT No. But I was tempted to. Did you?

HOLLY I don't even know where the light is. I can't believe it. I've slept with you, and I don't even know what you look like.

ROBERT Look at the positive side. One less way to be disappointed.

HOLLY (laughs) This is so bizarre. Even talking to you like this without seeing you.

ROBERT Yeah, it's kinda like phone sex in person.

HOLLY(laughs) There is silence. (pause)

ROBERT You know, I wasn't sure you'd come. Even though you said you would.

HOLLY Me either.

ROBERT What convinced you?

HOLLY (hesitates for a second) It was a dietetic decision.

ROBERT A dietetic decision?

HOLLY Well, the other night when, I was home, I found myself craving something to eat. And I'm one of those people who gets these cravings for things and can really pig out. So, I figured, (brief pause) better sex than sweets.

Robert laughs and then grows silent.

HOLLY How come you're so quiet suddenly? You're not one of those guys whose degree of communication is directly proportional to how horny he is. Are you?

ROBERT (laughs) No. I was thinking. I've never had an experience like this before. I can't compare it to anything. (brief pause) How was it for you?

HOLLY Is this where I'm supposed to tell you how great you were! If you're looking for ego stroking, dial a 1-900! They'll tell you what you want to hear.

ROBERT (fast) Wait. Wait. Wait. Where did that come from? Did someone else slip in here when I was asleep?

HOLLY What's that supposed to mean?

ROBERT Where did this hostility come from all of a sudden? You were fine when you got here. And you think you'd be more relaxed after having an orgasm.

HOLLY Well, well. If it isn't Mr. Testosterone! What makes you think I had an orgasm!?

ROBERT What makes me think you had an orgasm! How about.
(Robert makes mimics the sounds Holly made during sex).

Or was that an asthma attack you were having?

HOLLY I'm a good actress.

ROBERT Most women are.

HOLLY (slow and firm) Only if they must be.

ROBERT Well that's a twist. Faking an orgasm with a stranger in the dark. Give it up. You know, I thought being with a woman would be more enjoyable. I thought you'd be more open, but I guess your feminist attitude got in the way.

HOLLY (firmly) My feminist attitude! What's wrong with feminism!?

ROBERT Nothing. That is; nothing's wrong with what feminists stand for. It's their delivery. It comes across overly aggressive. Kinda like "defund the police".

HOLLY You hate women!

ROBERT Only callous, bitter, jaded ones.

HOLLY Liberation makes women tough.

ROBERT Not to mention burned out, depressed and confused (brief pause) You know, the one thing I hate about feminists is that most of them don't realize that they don't have to fight with men who understand, empathize and recognize equality.

HOLLY (calmly) Well if you're so evolved, understanding and empathizing, then why are you being such a dick.

ROBERT Who's being a dick? I asked you a simple question. I asked you what you felt.

HOLLY You asked me how it was?

ROBERT How it was. How it felt. What's the difference?

HOLLY What are you? A Pakistani cab driver! I shouldn't have to explain the difference. You're a writer.

ROBERT It's semantics.

HOLLY It's communication! Or a lack there of.

ROBERT All I know is that I expected an intelligent, in touch reply. One preferably rooted in philosophy. But instead, I got a premenstrual, hostile, bitchy one. I thought you were beyond that.

There is silence.

ROBERT Are you there?

HOLLY I'm here. I'm debating whether to leave or respond.

ROBERT (sarcastically) Sure, leave.

HOLLY Not just yet. Not until I say what's on my mind. I'm not premenstrual and you got that response, because I literally interpreted what you said. "How it was" and "How it felt" have two different meanings. You should know that. Mr. Literal.

ROBERT (strong) It's semantics!

HOLLY (equally as strong) It's communication! Or a lack there of!

ROBERT Well I was looking for a philosophical response.

HOLLY Philosophy, huh?

ROBERT Yes. A verbal summation of... let's call it a... (brief pause) an existential experience.

HOLLY Hey, I came here to get laid! Not give a dissertation on the well-being of having an orgasm.

ROBERT I knew you had an orgasm. You lied.

HOLLY I didn't mean...

ROBERT Wait a minute! Where are you anyway? I can't argue with someone I can't see. (brief pause) I feel like a ranting, religious zealot, shouting on a Times Square street corner.

HOLLY Well put. (Holly chuckles)

ROBERT That's it! I'm putting the lights on.

HOLLY No! Don't!

ROBERT Why not?

HOLLY You'll ruin the experience. And at this moment I'm finding it very amusing.

ROBERT Amusing?

HOLLY Yes, please continue. You were about to scold me.

ROBERT Scold you.

HOLLY Yes, scold me.

ROBERT That's how you interpret it. That's not necessarily the way it is. You misunderstood what I said.

HOLLY I did? "How you felt".

ROBERT Yes. When I asked you, how it felt?

HOLLY You mean, how it was!

ROBERT "Felt"! "Was!" Whatever! I wanted to know what this adventure was like for you. If it was the same as what I was experiencing. I wanted us to share the experience. I'm sorry if I snapped at you. It's just that I felt you weren't accepting me for who I am, but some preconceived notion of what you think I am. You know that "Men thing" attitude that women have.

HOLLY You're serious aren't you.

ROBERT Again with "You're serious". Why do you have such a problem believing me? What kind of baggage are you carrying around?

HOLLY No baggage. Just facts.

ROBERT What facts.

HOLLY Men are full of shit.

ROBERT You see there's that "Man thing" attitude I was talking about. You're assuming all men are full of shit.

HOLLY Because you say you're sincere, you expect me to believe you?

ROBERT Hey, just so you know. Men are usually full of shit when they're trying to get into your pants. Not after. (sarcastically) Don't give me

the benefit of the doubt. (brief pause) Nice way to begin a relationship.

HOLLY You call this a relationship.

ROBERT Well, I thought this was the beginning of something. Maybe not a relationship in the traditional sense.

HOLLY Now that's an understatement.

ROBERT I don't get it. I thought that our experience would be something we'd share. Something between us, something that would be an adventure, an escape from reality. Our own zone. (brief pause) All I wanted to know was, what the experience was like for you. If you enjoyed it as much as I did. If it was as exciting for you, as it was for me. It had nothing to do with my ego.

There is silence for a few moments.

HOLLY I thought this was simply supposed to be sex?

ROBERT It was. And it is. But it evolved to this other thing. This darkness thing. I felt we had created our own little niche. It was comfortable. Well, that is, at least until this argument.

HOLLY Misunderstanding.

ROBERT Whatever. (pause) You know, you should carry a Thesaurus with you when you go out on dates.

HOLLY (sweetly) Robert, shut up.

ROBERT What did you say?

HOLLY I said, shut up (brief pause) and come here.

ROBERT Now she's giving me orders.

HOLLY Come here. Kiss me. We'll talk about it later. (pause) Better now?

ROBERT A little.

HOLLY (pause) How about now?

ROBERT Your body's so hot.

HOLLY (sexy) See what you do to me.

ROBERT Unbelievable! One minute she's yelling at me. The next she's all over me. (brief pause) You sure you're not going through menopause?

Several seconds pass. Daybreak comes. The morning light faintly illuminates Robert, who is asleep, in his bed. He wakes up.

ROBERT (softly) Holly.

Holly is not in bed.

ROBERT (cont'd) (A little louder) Holly.

He gets out of bed, goes to the bathroom and stops at the door. The light coming from the bathroom, through the crack in the door, highlights Robert's naked body. He restrains himself from looking into the bathroom; his body leaning, pulled by curiosity.

ROBERT (softly) Holly? (A little louder) Holly?

There is no answer. He pushes the bathroom door open and steps in. Holly is not inside. He steps out of the bathroom, looks across the room, scratches his head, turns and re-enters the bathroom. The sound of running water is heard as Robert washes his face. After a few seconds, he re-enters the living room wearing a cotton bathrobe. As he wipes his face dry with a towel and he continues to the sink. He lifts a glass tea pot from the stove, half fills it with water, and returns it to the stove. He turns the gas on. When the water comes to a boil, Robert scoops a teaspoonful of instant cappuccino from a jar and puts it into a cup. He adds water from the pot, then sugar, stirs it and takes a sip. (he pauses}

[ROBERT SINGS "Where Did She Go"©](#)

INTERMISSION

ACT II

INT: ROBERTS APT. DAY

Robert, wearing boxers and a T-shirt is closing up the sofa bed and returning the pillows to their appropriate place. The telephone rings. Robert reaches for the handset that sits on the table next to the couch and answers.

ROBERT Hello.

Holly's silhouette appears on the back wall window area as before, a phone pressed to her ear.

HOLLY Good morning.

ROBERT Where did you go? I was starting to wonder
 if last night was a dream.

HOLLY It was real. And you were great.

ROBERT Oh. You wouldn't be overcompensating for what you said last night.
 Would you?

HOLLY No. Not at all. I meant it. It was great.

ROBERT (disbelief) Yeah.

HOLLY Well maybe if you were a little firmer.

ROBERT (defensively) I am forty-five. And it was the second time.

HOLLY (laughs) I was talking about your waistline, silly. A little exercise
 wouldn't hurt.

ROBERT Oh. (brief pause) Yeah. I am a little out of shape, aren't I?

HOLLY It's O.K.. You're a middle-aged man. What do you expect to have the
 body of a thirty-year-old?

ROBERT (sarcastic) Thanks for reminding me. You know, I started working out
 about two years ago. I was planning on writing a book.
 I even had the title. "Forty=Five and Fit". But a after about a year I
 slacked off.

HOLLY (playfully) You can still write a book, just call it "Forty-Five and Fat".

ROBERT Cute.

Both laugh

HOLLY I am sorry about our misunderstanding last night. It shouldn't have happened. I think because of our arrangement, I prejudged you.

ROBERT Wait. Did I hear you correctly? Could you repeat that?

HOLLY I said I'm sorry about what I said last night.

Robert is silent.

HOLLY Hello. Robert are you there?

ROBERT I'm in shock. An apology. Someone call an ambulance.

HOLLY Why is that so odd?

ROBERT Women usually think sex is apology enough.

HOLLY Usually it is.

ROBERT I'm not sure how to take that?

HOLLY It's a compliment.

ROBERT How's that?

HOLLY Sex is all most men care about.

ROBERT You could say that about me.

HOLLY Yeah, but you're up front about it. No stepping on emotions. It shows respect. I like that.

ROBERT Nevertheless, that's what we're about. Just sex.

HOLLY Don't get paranoid. We both want the same thing here. So where do we go from here?

ROBERT How about dinner?

HOLLY How will we see the food?

ROBERT (Laughs) No. We'll go out. I'll take you to Raoul's.

HOLLY What if one of us doesn't like the way the other looks?

ROBERT Then we'll make it take out, order a second drink and chalk it up.

HOLLY Do you want to do that?

ROBERT Sure, why not. (brief pause) You know, every once and a while it hits me how weird this is. We've slept together and never seen each other. (brief pause) Kinda sets it up' for a different type of first date tension.

HOLLY No, I don't mean that.

ROBERT (playfully) Uh Oh. Here we go again. I said, you said. I meant, you meant. I understood, you understood. Where's that dictionary?

HOLLY Relax, I've been thinking.

ROBERT Oh shit! Now I'm really in trouble.

HOLLY (laughs) Calm down and listen. You'll see. It's not that bad.

ROBERT That's what you say. Anytime anyone ever said, "I've been thinking", it either cost me money, complicated my life, or both.

HOLLY (laughs) Well this time it's going to be different. Actually, this is to our mutual benefit.

ROBERT (reluctantly) Alright, let's hear it.

HOLLY Don't be such a pessimist. How do you feel about seeing each other?

ROBERT Fine. Why?

HOLLY Well. You enjoyed our little rendezvous, didn't you?

ROBERT Of course.

HOLLY Well I did too. More than I thought. (brief pause) So, I was thinking, maybe we should meet again in the dark.

ROBERT You mean you don't want to see me?

HOLLY No, I want to see you, but what's the rush. We can always see each other. We can never have this again, at least not with each other. I think we should explore this darkness thing a little more. But it's up to you.

ROBERT Why the change of heart?

HOLLY Because it was fun, exciting and it worked.

ROBERT Is this the same shy, conservative Holly that was hesitant about doing this in the first place.

HOLLY (laughs) You've created a monster.

ROBERT When would you like not to see me again?

Abruptly, the stage goes dark

ROBERT and HOLLY SING "Best We Live There"©

INT: ROBERTS APT, EVENING.

Robert is in kitchen area vacuuming. He is wearing a T-Shirt with the word "Affluain't", printed on it. He stops, puts his hands on his hips, looks around, steps toward the stove and begins to vacuum the top of it. The door buzzer rings. At first, he doesn't hear it, it's sound drowned out by the noise from the vacuum cleaner, but after a few moments, he turns the vacuum cleaner off, walks to the intercom, dragging the vacuum behind, as if it were a reluctant puppy on a leash, and depresses the talk button.

ROBERT Who is it.

LOIS (V.O.) Me.

Robert presses on the door button buzzing Lois in. He opens the door. Lois is carrying a plastic shopping bag which holds two plastic containers with salad from a nearby Korean deli.

ROBERT (warm) Hi.

LOIS (warm) Hi.

They kiss each other on the cheek. Lois enters the apartment and goes to a small table in the kitchen area, while Robert closes the door.

LOIS (cont'd) I see you've been redecorating. A little dark, don't you think?

ROBERT Actually it's perfect.

LOIS (cont'd) I hope you're hungry?

ROBERT Anything to avoid cleaning. You still on that Macro-neurotic diet?

LOIS Mostly.

ROBERT (disapproving look)

LOIS (cont'd) It's good for you.

ROBERT It gives me gas.

LOIS That only happens when your body's toxic.

ROBERT You know, gas is the one thing that I have in common with all mankind. You could say it's spiritual.

LOIS (laughs) Well this should plug you right into cosmic consciousness. It's from the corner deli.

Robert goes to the kitchen cabinet, opens it and removes a bottle of olive oil, then opens the refrigerator door, and takes out a partially filled bottle of Evian water. He glances over his shoulder, in the direction of Lois, who is removing the salads and plastic knives and forks from the shopping bag and setting them on the table.

ROBERT Need forks?

LOIS No, I have.

Robert returns to the table carrying the olive oil and partially filled bottle of Evian water and sets them down on the table. They sit themselves down and begin to eat.

LOIS So what's going on with you?

ROBERT The usual. A lot of possibilities and nothing definite. (brief pause)
What a business. I remember when dad said. "You're going to have a

tough life. Why don't you do something else." I understand what he meant now, better than then, when I thought I knew everything.

LOIS Well at least you can look back and laugh at yourself.
(brief pause) I'm surprised you remembered that.

ROBERT It was right after mom left. Dad was talking to me about life in general. Explaining that things happen that we have no control over. And that you just go on. (brief pause)

LOIS How simple he made a complicated thing.

ROBERT You make it sound like he did something wrong. Just because he didn't go to therapy and all that psych stuff you had to go through, doesn't mean that it was a problem. Besides I don't think they had therapy in the fifties. That is of course unless you associated a cigar with a penis.

LOIS You don't have to defend him. I'm not criticizing.
He dealt with the situation the best way he knew how.
Given the time and the circumstances.

ROBERT You mean we agree?

LOIS Yes. But not about the cigar and the penis.

ROBERT I'll never forget how hard he worked. He'd leave before we got up and get home about seven, eat turn on the T.V. and fall asleep.

LOIS He worked very hard. He'd be asleep as soon as he hit that big old armchair of his. Remember how loud he snored. He'd sit down and all of a sudden. (Lois makes a snoring sound.)

ROBERT Yeah, but it was more like (Robert makes a snoring sound)

LOIS No. It was. (Lois makes another snoring sound)

ROBERT That's it. Again. (snores again) Again. (snores again) Again. (snores again) Again.

LOIS Enough!

ROBERT I'll never forget that. Remember when he snored so loud, he woke himself up. "What was that?" He said. And when we told him what it was, he wouldn't believe us.

Both Lois and Robert smile.

ROBERT (cont'd) And before you knew it he was snoring again. (pause) Remember grandma, she'd cook and clean and knit. What did she call it? Boon-dina. She was great at it. She'd sit for hours and sew, that needle moving with her fingers like a fine-tuned machine.

LOIS She made such beautiful tablecloths and doilies.

ROBERT (pause) You know it amazes me. She came to this country when she was twenty and sixty years later, when she died, still couldn't speak a word of English. But somehow everything got done.

LOIS I hate to think what could have happened to us had they both not been there. They sacrificed everything for us.

ROBERT Yeah.

There are moments of silence.

LOIS I miss them.

ROBERT (brief pause) Me too.

Lois wipes a tear from her eye. Robert holds back, showing no emotion, clinching his teeth and swallowing. A moment passes. Lois gets up and gets herself a glass of water and drinks some of it. She pulls herself together.

LOIS So how'd it go with Holly?

ROBERT Holly? (brief pause) (probing) Haven't you spoke to her?

LOIS She's not someone I speak to regularly. I just know her through Dana.

ROBERT (pause) (looking away from Lois, anxiously searching for an answer)
We got together. (pause)

LOIS (brief pause) Well?

ROBERT Well what?

LOIS Well!?

Robert briefly looks away again searching for an answer.

ROBERT Now who's being superficial?

LOIS Wait. I fix you up with someone and now you're reluctant to talk to me about it.

Robert is silent.

LOIS So I was right. Wasn't I? You found her attractive.

ROBERT (gloating) I love it when you're so sure.

LOIS Come on Robert, it's obvious. Admit it. You like her.

ROBERT Tell me. What makes you so sure?

LOIS Because I've been here for fifteen minutes and you haven't mentioned her. (brief pause) Well?

ROBERT (pause) To be totally honest with you, I don't know how I feel about her looks.

LOIS Does that mean there's more going on than just sex?

ROBERT (thinking) That's safe to say.

LOIS So you're going to start seeing each other?

ROBERT Well, (brief pause) we haven't decided on that.

LOIS Well at least you're communicating. I'm glad it worked out.

ROBERT Better than I thought. (brief pause) Actually, it was unlike anything I'd ever experienced. (brief pause) You might even say it was transcending.

LOIS Sounds like you're describing a religious experience.

ROBERT They're not that wet.

LOIS I guess she enjoyed it too.

ROBERT I think so. We connected on some level. (brief pause) I love her mind. (aside) She must be so ugly.

LOIS What did you say?

ROBERT What?

LOIS I didn't hear what you said.

Robert anxiously rises from the table.

ROBERT Would you like some more water.

As he stands up his elbow catches Lois' elbow, causing some pasta to fall from her fork. It rolls down the front of her T-Shirt leaving three small, but noticeable, oil stains.

ROBERT (cont'd) I'm sorry. I can't believe I'm so clumsy.

LOIS (Examining the three oil spots on her T-Shirt) So much for this shirt.
(brief pause) Well I can always use it to sleep in.

ROBERT I'll buy you a new one.

LOIS It's O.K..

ROBERT (insistent) No. I want to replace it.

LOIS Robert it's O.K..

ROBERT No. (brief pause)

Robert steps backward and looks at Lois' T-shirt. He tilts his head from side to side, like an artist examining a painting he is working on.

ROBERT (cont'd) Wait. I have an idea. Give me your Shirt.

LOIS What?

ROBERT Give me your T-Shirt.

LOIS (puzzled) looks at Robert.

ROBERT (coaxing) Come on. Take it off. Give it to me.

LOIS What for?

ROBERT You'll see. Come on.

Lois takes off her T-Shirt and hands it to Robert. Underneath she is wearing a Tank-Top. Robert takes the T-Shirt, lifts the bottle of the olive oil from the table, and goes to the sink. He puts the T-shirt in the sink, removes the cap from the olive oil and drips a few drops of the oil onto the shirt. He takes the T-Shirt out of the sink and holds it up in front of him, tilting his head from side to side, scrutinizing it as before. He lowers it back into the sink and repeats the oil drop procedure. He stops. Again, he holds the T-shirt up in front of him and peruses it.

ROBERT (overacting) From the runways of Paris and Milan to the Catwalks of Fashion Avenue. From his droplet collection. Voila!

He turns and faces Lois, holding up her T-Shirt, which now has an acceptable oil stained, fashion design.

LOIS Good thing you're not a clothing designer?

ROBERT (smiling) Too natural for you?

LOIS I hope Holly can handle you.
(brief pause) When do you plan on seeing her?

ROBERT (brief pause) I don't know. I don't know if I should see her.

LOIS Why, because you like her?

ROBERT No, not because I like her, Herr Doctor. It's not about that.

LOIS Isn't it?

ROBERT It's not what you think.

LOIS Oh?

ROBERT Could we just leave it there and enjoy this fake crab smothered in nitrites?

LOIS (laughs) Sure.

The stage goes dark. A single spotlight illuminates Robert.

ROBERT I couldn't possibly explain to Lois what was going on, so I decided to let her think whatever she was thinking in that psychological mind of hers rather than let her know what was really going on. (brief pause) As for Holly and me, (brief pause) we continued to not see each other. (brief pause) For some reason this worked. It worked so well it went on for months. She'd call me, I'd call her. Her place, my place. For an afternoon, an evening. Holly's silhouette appears on the back right wall of the stage, opposite the door.

HOLLY Or a quickie.

ROBERT Whatever. Whenever the urge was there.
All it took was a phone call.

HOLLY We made ourselves available to each other and accommodated each other's sexual needs.

ROBERT We both knew never to overindulge or abuse what we had.

HOLLY It was like a favorite food. Have just enough and look forward to having more.

ROBERT It was as easy as ordering in Chinese. And you always got what you wanted. It was sexually perfect.

HOLLY Most of the time.

ROBERT Holly was very direct about her wants and needs. At first, I was a little taken aback. But she confronted me. She said...

HOLLY The shortest distance between two points is a straight line.

ROBERT I had never heard geometry applied quite like that before.

HOLLY If you don't express what you want, you may never get it.

ROBERT No argument there. So, when an occasion arose that I wasn't totally in the mood, or too tired. We'd remedy it.

(v.o.) (sound of vibrator)

ROBERT (cont'd) And expanded the remedy.

(V.O.) (A much louder vibrating sound is heard.)

ROBERT (cont'd) (pause) It was as though this unique sexual adventure had led us into a somewhat, and I use the term with great reservation, normal relationship.

HOLLY Uncommitted, however.

ROBERT (agreeing) Of course. And with it, came a communication that somehow enabled us to see each other more clearly. It was as though the darkness turned us inside out. We saw the things of value like trust and friendship, family and health, and bypassed all that was superficial. It was as though the darkness became our expressway to the light. We didn't have to hide who we were beneath the veneer of politeness that initially masks relationships. That fashion coordinated veneer that takes months to shed before you become yourself with another.

HOLLY We got to know each other better, faster.

ROBERT And found we liked each other.

HOLLY (brief pause) We truly became friends.

Robert looks up at Holly and she at him.

ROBERT (brief pause) (introspective) Yes. (pause) As our relationship grew, beyond the borders of the bedroom, we learned we had many things in common. Old Movies!

HOLLY Sunset Boulevard, Witness for the Prosecution, Casablanca and of course The God Father!

ROBERT But it was Goodfellas that was real. (pause) And art!

- HOLLY Van Gogh, Jasper Johns, DeKooning, Gauguin, Georgia O'Keefe.
- ROBERT Flowers never looked so good.
- HOLLY Theatre.
- ROBERT Mostly off Broadway, Blue Man Group, Cirque de Soleil and on Broadway Hamilton and many others.
- HOLLY We were fascinated and amazed by the Discovery Channel and educated by the History Channel, Ted Talks and Nova...
- ROBERT And of course reruns of that Italian Soap Opera, The Sopranos, Breaking Bad, and Sex in the City, but we felt the women spoke like gay men in the latter.
- HOLLY On TV there was Seinfeld, Monk, the Big Bang Theory and Americas got Talent. But when it came to the news, we longed for the days of Walter Cronkite, instead of the daily endless barrage of editorials.
- ROBERT The elections made us sick and wondered about those Supreme Court appointees. Imagine! (disbelief) Not being able to define gender! In the words of that great Jewish philosopher, Moshe Saul! (longer pause)
- BOTH (together) Oy Vey!
- HOLLY Fortunately our politics weren't that far apart. We both supported green energy. And agreed, you can't go from A-Z without giving any thought to the rest of the alphabet that transitions you there. We were frustrated, angry and indifferent. But we still voted.
- ROBERT (brief pause) Then there were those seemingly intangibles. You know, those things that could make you believe in astrology. That stuff of chemistry, that lives in the metaphysical and occasionally

visits our senses. Don't misunderstand! Our relationship wasn't perfect. We did have differences.

HOLLY But we allowed for those differences and instead of rejecting them, or having the other suppress them, we viewed them openly and tried to understand the others perspective.

ROBERT Neither of us wanted to control the other. And under the circumstances it was easy. Having jumped recklessly into a bizarre sexual affair, it was easy for us to indulge and follow each other into those simpler areas of the others world. One area, food!

HOLLY We were dietetically incompatible. My diet was predicated on health and nutrition.

ROBERT Mine purely on taste. I didn't care about poly or un, or any of those things that you had to have a science background to pronounce, no less understand. I was in it purely for the taste. Not that the healthy stuff wasn't tasty, like the sweetness of fresh carrot juice or the tastiness of Tahini. Then there was my favorite, soba noodles, a glorified pasta, whose high nutritional content would, calm my off-balance system and bring me closer to my center.

HOLLY Robert would turn me onto things, like Bruno's cannoli.

ROBERT The best cannoli in the city.

HOLLY A high caloric, surreal blend, of simple, empty carbohydrates; one part ricotta, one part cream and ten parts sugar, occasionally found containing chocolate chips and pieces of gelatinized fruit, tainted with red dye number three or four or whatever number they designate to those long chain, poisonous, molecular structures, whose name is as long as a short story. And would give you a 20-minute sugar rush and leave you depleted and exhausted.

Nevertheless, I highly recommend it. Then there was, for special occasions, Champagne mixed with Guinness Stout. And of course, our summertime favorite, frozen Margaritas.

ROBERT We shared this beautiful two way street, this superhighway of information exchange, without lights that enhanced and complemented our lives. I think it's fair to say that neither of us had ever felt so comfortable with another member of the human race.

TOGETHER I couldn't believe it was a . . .

Her silhouette faces him.

HOLLY Man.

He looks at her silhouette.

ROBERT (surprised) (slowly) W-o-m-a-n.

They turn away from each other.

BOTH And for the first time.

They look at one another. Then turn away.

BOTH (cont'd) Well at least for me.

They look at each other again.

BOTH Sex didn't get in the way.

HOLLY It only does when the one wants more of a commitment.

ROBERT (surprised) Yeah. (pause) One of the more exciting things we didn't do together was go to the theatre.

HOLLY We'd see the same plays. Sometimes on the same day.
But we'd never sit together.

ROBERT There was an excitement knowing that Holly was somewhere in the theatre, and not knowing who, or where she was. Was she the sexy brunette with the long silky hair and beautiful brown eyes in the front row of the mezzanine?

HOLLY Was he the tallish handsome man with the salt and pepper hair, in the Armani suit, with the half-rimmed glasses resting on his nose, reading the playbill.

ROBERT Was she the beautiful full lipped, blue eyed blonde with the magnetic cleavage, two rows behind me?

HOLLY Was he the artistic looking middle-aged man, in the denim jacket, perusing the crowd.

ROBERT Perhaps the punk rocker, in torn jeans, sitting on the floor near the refreshment bar, with the tattoo of the word "LOVE", in Japanese, just over her heart.

HOLLY One could only imagine.

ROBERT (brief pause) Having this dimension of darkness in our life, entirely changed our perspective.

HOLLY The novelty of it enabled us to find excitement in the simplest and most ordinary things. To the extent that we found ourselves doing things that only tourists do in New York.

ROBERT Buggy rides in Central Park.

HOLLY Day trips to the Statue of Liberty.

ROBERT Rockefeller Center at Christmas time. We even went to; I can't say it. It's too embarrassing. It's so ugh.

HOLLY Go ahead tell them.

ROBERT I can't.

HOLLY Go ahead.

ROBERT I feel like I'm in confession. (pause) We even went to that, (brief pause) (quickly blurting it out) tower of tourist tastelessness. (brief pause) Trump Tower. (pause) Then we reached that point. You know, when everything's so good, you can't believe it. So we began to toy with the idea of seeing one another. Holly suggested...

HOLLY That we do it by slowly revealing ourselves, body part by body part.

ROBERT (cont'd) She liked to do things slow.
(pause) I got this in the mail one day.

Robert removes a small package from his pocket. It is a small box, gift wrapped with a bow. He opens it and he removes a tiny flashlight from inside.

ROBERT She said, "When we first decide to see each other we should do it with this flashlight".

He flicks the flashlight on and off.

ROBERT (cont'd) Exploring each other's body parts one by one, revealing ourselves piece by piece. So, one day we tried it. We decided to start with the feet.

The stage goes dark. Robert's feet are illuminated. The light goes off. Then Holly's feet are illuminated. The light goes off, then both pair of feet are illuminated and darkened, and illuminated and darkened again repeatedly, as the couple step toward one another, eventually coming toe to toe, touching, each other and withdrawing. Getting close again, intertwining, stepping back, then chasing each other; dancing around the stage, in a choreographed routine that culminates with Robert on top of Holly, soles of his feet overlapping hers; Robert's pointing downward toward the mattress, Holly's upward toward the ceiling. They roll over and over and over and stop.

ROBERT Well, what parts next?

HOLLY I can only think of one thing when I'm in this position.

The lights go out. Moment's pass. A single spotlight slowly illuminates Robert.

ROBERT We came away deciding to let this relationship live where it was. Neither of us was willing to jeopardize this crazy wonderfulness that we shared. But nevertheless, the curiosity of seeing each other was still there. Holly couldn't leave things be. (brief pause) She mailed me these.

Robert removes several polaroid pictures from his pocket.

ROBERT (cont'd) Pictures of different body parts; some of them hers. But who knows which ones? She called it postal foreplay. There were six pairs of everything: hands, legs, breasts, thighs, butts, knees, smiles. She even sent me a picture of that part of the face that is between the eyebrows. The part that we have no name for, but the French do. I forget the name they have for it. See for yourself.

Robert hands out the photographs of the different body parts to the audience.

ROBERT (cont'd) I began to feel like Noah gathering two of everything before the great flood. There are 256 possibilities. I felt like I was a four-year-old, playing picture parts. What fun. (brief pause) We were both comfortable and I might add happy with our arrangement. There were times we'd lay for hours in each other's' arms, listening to classical music, in a secure womblike comfort. It seemed as if we forgot we were part of a strange, bizarre, sexual experiment. An experiment that was ours, only ours, that we felt nothing could destroy. (long pause) And then one night, a ghost slipped into our world of darkness, and brought with it the light of reality.

Fade to darkness.

A dim light illuminates Robert, who is in bed asleep. The door buzzer rings, waking him. He turns the light on and as he is struggling to see the time on the clock, the buzzer rings a second time. He gets out of bed and goes to the intercom.

ROBERT (sleepy) Who is it?

HOLLY (V.O.) (anxious) Can I come up?

ROBERT (pleasantly surprised) Sure.

Robert repeats the ritual he goes through when Holly comes to visit: He presses the buzzer allowing Holly entry to the building, unlocks the door and turns the lights off. Moments later Holly enters. Her shadow momentarily appears on the apartment's back wall, opposite the door, and blends with the darkness, as she closes the door behind her.

ROBERT What a nice surprise. I was beginning to wonder what happened to you, it's been a few days. How are you? (pause) You're trembling. What's wrong?

HOLLY Just hold me.

ROBERT (concerned) What is it?

HOLLY Nothing, I'm O.K..

ROBERT (brief pause) I don't think I like you feeling like this.

HOLLY Please, don't care. Not now.

ROBERT Hey, don't worry. Relax. We're friends. Remember.

There is silence.

ROBERT (cont'd) (pause) I just picked up some of those mineral salts, you know, the ones you love. Why don't you take a hot bath? That always relaxes you. I'll light a candle in the bathroom and put some music on...

HOLLY (blurts it out) Robert, I don't think I can stay with you tonight.

ROBERT (surprised) Oh? (pause) I don't understand.

HOLLY I'm sorry. I thought coming over would help me. (brief pause) I thought. I don't know what I thought. I shouldn't have come.

ROBERT Why did you come?

HOLLY I'm not sure.

ROBERT (puzzled) Holly. What's going on?

Holly is silent.

ROBERT Tell me, maybe I can help.

HOLLY No, please. Just let it be.

ROBERT (backing off) O.K.. We'll talk about it another time.

HOLLY (Long pause) (hesitant) Robert. (pause)

ROBERT What?

HOLLY I don't know if I can be with you again.

There is Silence.

ROBERT (pause) So that's it. (brief pause) (gentle acceptance) O.K..

HOLLY Is it. O.K.?

ROBERT Why does it matter?

HOLLY I need to know.

ROBERT (matter of fact) No commitment remember. No obligation.

HOLLY Is that how you really feel, or are you just saying that?

ROBERT (brief pause) I think it's how I feel. It's what we agreed on. (pause) I'm a little shocked and confused, but I'll deal with it. What difference would it make anyway, I have no say in what you do.

HOLLY You sound so cold.

ROBERT Cold? (brief pause) I think objective is the appropriate word. (brief pause) What do you expect! A few days ago, everything was fine. Suddenly you pop up in the middle of the night, tell me you can't see me anymore and won't tell me why. (sarcastic) And you're telling me I'm cold.

HOLLY Robert don't lay a guilt trip on me.

ROBERT I'm not. I'm just relating my experience.

HOLLY (brief pause) I'm sorry. (brief pause) If it means anything, I didn't want it to end this way. I didn't expect this. It just happened.

ROBERT Yeah, I know. Shit happens. (pause)

HOLLY Believe me, I didn't expect it.

ROBERT Did you meet someone?

HOLLY Not exactly. I haven't been with anyone since we started seeing each other. I mean. You know what I mean.

ROBERT "Not exactly." What does that mean? You didn't exactly meet someone, but maybe you did and you're not sure?

HOLLY I don't want to go into it. Please. (brief pause) I...

ROBERT Could you at least give me some idea of what's going on, so I don't start creating scenarios in my head. I don't want to waste my time and energy trying not to think about this.

HOLLY (pause) Robert, I'm not sure what's going on. (brief pause)

ROBERT Well that makes two of us!

HOLLY All right. All right. (brief pause) Remember that relationship I told you about. Well, he's come back into my life. (brief pause) I didn't expect him to. I don't even know if I want it anymore. I only know that I have to give it a chance. I'm sorry. (pause) I mean that. I was happy living with you in the moment. I didn't want this to end. It's just. (brief pause) It's just emotions got 'in the way.

ROBERT I guess history, isn't history. Is it?

HOLLY Robert, please don't make me feel like a hypocrite, I thought he was out of my life for good. I thought I could never be with him again. I was happy with our arrangement.

ROBERT What changed your mind?

HOLLY What he said. He explained... He said he grew complacent, with what we had, simply because he had it. And didn't realize what it meant to him until it was gone.

ROBERT How cliché.

HOLLY I believe him.

ROBERT Obviously.

HOLLY I think he's sincere. He said he knew now that he wanted us to have a life together, to go forward.

ROBERT What about you? How do you feel?

HOLLY I don't know. It's different now. I don't know if I can be with him anymore. I'm not sure how I feel. I don't know if we can ever get back what we had, or even if I want that now. I don't trust him and now when I'm with him, (pause) I don't trust myself. (brief pause} I think of you and what we have. Crazy huh. (pause) But what we have, it isn't real.

There is silence.

ROBERT I understand.

HOLLY Do you?

ROBERT Yeah. I do.

HOLLY I'm sorry this had to happen this way.

ROBERT (pause) Is this how we say goodbye?

There is silence.

ROBERT (cont'd) Holly, stay with me tonight.

HOLLY Robert, please don't make this harder for me than it already is.

There is silence.

HOLLY (cont'd) (emotionally torn) Robert, please. I better go.

Holly's footsteps are heard moving across the floor at a hurried pace. She opens the door and stops. The hallway light partially fills the room. Her shadow appears in its familiar spot on the apartment wall. They cannot see one another, their vision blocked by the door. Holly's shadow head bows, (long pause) then raises up and looks in Robert's direction.

HOLLY (cont'd) (softly, but with strength and conviction) Goodbye, Robert.

ROBERT (pause) Goodbye, Holly.

HOLLY (brief pause) Thanks.

Holly walks quickly through the doorway and down the hall. On the side wall of the apartments hallway, Holly's shadow diminishes in size and vanishes as she leaves the building. The hallway light illuminating the apartment wall slowly fades to darkness, as a single spotlight simultaneously illuminates Robert, who is standing motionless at center stage, his eyes fixed on the open door. He faces forward.

ROBERT Women! (brief pause) It's a good thing it didn't mean that much.
(pause)

The bellowing sound of Holly's motorcycle is heard starting up. Its sound fades in the distance as she rides off. Robert lowers his eyes.

Fade to darkness.

ROBERT SINGS "Paradoxical Surprise"©

INT: ROBERT'S APT.

A disheveled looking Robert, wearing sweatpants and a soiled T-Shirt, is standing on a stepladder installing a new light fixture. His dimly lit apartment is in obvious

disarray, more so than ordinarily; clothes strewn about, dishes and drinking glasses piled thigh in the sink, waste basket overflowing with printer paper, onto the floor, his unopened mail is stacked in a disorderly arrangement on his desk and the bed is unmade. A fan, next to the kitchen sink is blowing on ice cubes that sit in a dish, just in front of it. There is a knock at the door.

ROBERT It's open.

Lois enters.

LOIS Hi.

Robert continues to fiddle with the light fixture.

ROBERT Hi. I'll be right with you. I just want to finish this.

LOIS (noticing the fan blowing on the ice cubes) I like your new air conditioner.

ROBERT I'm afraid it will have to do, the guy at the store said it'll take a week before my air conditioner comes in. I had to order one of those low amp ones. The building's so old, I kept blowing fuses.

LOIS Why the new light?

ROBERT I've been having trouble concentrating and it's been affecting my work. I thought a brighter light might help. (brief pause) That is of course unless it's my allergies.

He tightens a final screw.

ROBERT (cont'd) That should do it.

Robert steps down from the ladder and turns the light on. It is a much brighter light than had previously lit the apartment.

ROBERT (cont'd) What do you think?

Lois looks around at the messy apartment.

LOIS Why would anyone want to make it easier to see this?

ROBERT Who cares?

LOIS People with good taste. (pause) Why do you think it's your allergies?

ROBERT I haven't had much of an appetite lately. And this is the time of year; it's warm, damp, everything's blossoming, pollen and mold spores.

LOIS Why don't you take an antihistamine.

ROBERT Can't, palpitations. I just have to suffer until I get my air conditioner.

LOIS Wait a second. I don't understand. It's been cold all week!

ROBERT So.

LOIS Didn't you say you don't have a problem when it's cold.

ROBERT (certain) I don't, but it's not cold enough. It could be my allergies. I've had these symptoms before.

LOIS (suspicious) O.K.. (casual) So what have you been up to?

ROBERT Not much. It's hard to do anything when you feel like this. I start working, then stop, can't focus. Nothing seems to help. So, I just lay in bed a lot, telling myself I should be doing something, but not having the energy to do it.

LOIS What about women?

ROBERT (brief pause) That's the last thing on my mind. I had a couple of dates, but I don't know. (disgusted) I can't seem to get into it when I feel like this.

LOIS I guess the new light's not helping.

ROBERT It must be my allergies.

LOIS You sure you're not a little depressed?

ROBERT Why, because of Holly? (brief pause) Maybe at first a little, but it passed. (down) She just turned out to be another story. I'm glad I didn't get involved. I should have picked up on it when she said, "People don't necessarily know what they're saying when they say it," that she was talking about herself. (pause) It makes you wonder. Can you ever believe what another person says, (brief pause) or does truth only exist in the moment? I don't know.

LOIS I'm sure she meant the things she said.

ROBERT I'm sure she meant it too. At the time. (pause) (disgusted) I guess the only consistency is inconsistency.

LOIS (brief pause) Emotions know no logic.

ROBERT Understanding doesn't change anything. Imagine if I got involved.

Robert shakes his head from side to side.

ROBERT (cont'd) It would be another Prozac moment. Not me. Not this time. For once I did the right thing. I saved myself. Saved myself from those companion feelings of a bad relationship.

LOIS But you were involved. Even though there was no commitment and you never saw her. Which I still have trouble believing.

ROBERT Yeah, but not to the extent that it would bother me.

LOIS I think it is bothering you.

ROBERT Then why aren't I experiencing that surreal feeling of disbelief, you know when you're wondering if what happened really happened. Not to mention the feelings of insecurity, inadequacy and self-doubt, (brief pause) and rejection.

LOIS Because you weren't rejected, it was more a friendly parting. Abrupt perhaps, but none the less, friendly. And if you wanted to, you know you could see her again.

ROBERT What makes you say that?

LOIS Haven't you spoken to her?

ROBERT No. Why?

LOIS Oh. I thought you stayed in touch.

ROBERT It's not like that.

LOIS But you were friends. There were so many things you liked about her; her candor, frankness, independence, intelligence, humor. How could you just let that go?

ROBERT Yeah, but... Well, that's the way it is. She's gone onto a new life. A complete split is always better.

LOIS But there's so much that you shared and liked about each other. Why cut her out of your life.

ROBERT (pause) She's not part of my life anymore. Why do I get the feeling that you're pleading a case for her?

Lois is silent.

ROBERT (paranoid) She's not pregnant, is she?

LOIS If that isn't a typical male response.

ROBERT I'm sorry, I can't help it. Somehow, I automatically seem to anticipate the worst when it involves women. Experience.

LOIS You're such a cynic.

ROBERT I prefer to look at it as enlightenment. Well?

LOIS I shouldn't dignify you with an answer.

ROBERT Oh. Come on, Lois. Don't I have enough problems?

LOIS (brief pause) No, she's not pregnant.

ROBERT (relieved) Thank God.

LOIS She had a motorcycle accident.

ROBERT (shocked) What! (brief pause) (concern) When? Is she alright?

LOIS Yeah. Just bruises and a sprain. She didn't even need a cast on her arm.

ROBERT How did it happen?

LOIS She skidded on an oil slick and lost control. Why don't you give her a call? I'm sure she'd like to hear from you.

ROBERT I don't want to interfere in her relationship.

LOIS (perks up) They broke up.

ROBERT When?

LOIS The night of the accident.

ROBERT Was she upset about the breakup?

LOIS More angry and disgusted.

ROBERT (pause) I don't know. Maybe it's better to leave things alone. We can't go backward. We can't be the way we were.

LOIS It's just a call. You don't have to see her.

ROBERT It would be the right thing to do. (brief pause) I couldn't see her. She wants more. At least I can lookback at it as an experience. Maybe I'll call her. I don't know. When I think about it, as good as it was, I don't think I could seriously get involved with someone who (cont'd) would be so crazy as to sleep with someone in the dark, without having seen them?

LOIS I thought you liked the fact that she was adventurous.

ROBERT Yeah, but... I don't know if I'd have been with her, had I ever seen her.

LOIS Oh, you'd rather wait for someone to come along who'll fit your preconceived notion of what a person should be like, rather than recognize and be open too what you already know exists with Holly.

ROBERT Yea, but she wants more. If she didn't, she wouldn't have gone back to him. And you know how I feel about that.

LOIS Why don't you give yourself a chance? No. Why don't you try and give yourself a chance? You can always walk away.

ROBERT I don't know.

LOIS You're talking like you had a normal relationship.

ROBERT It was better than normal. It was fun.

LOIS Then why are you denying yourself?

ROBERT I've never seen her.

LOIS But it was good.

ROBERT What if I'm not attracted to her?

LOIS Stop it, Robert. I told you she was attractive.

ROBERT Now she's attractive. Before she was good looking. (frustrated) It doesn't matter. What we had wasn't real.

LOIS The way you communicated was real. That's still there. Even though you've never seen her.

ROBERT I don't want to deal with it, I just want to go on with my life the way it is.

LOIS Robert, look at you. You can't work, you can't sleep, and you can't even get it together to clean your apartment. You've done everything

humanly possible including rearranging this place to keep yourself from confronting your feelings. And you say it's not painful for you. Why don't you call her?

ROBERT You make it sound like I can't go on without her. Like she's everything I ever wanted.

LOIS No one is everything you want. But ask yourself, are you happier now or when you were with her.

ROBERT Maybe.

LOIS Well, that's a start.

ROBERT But I don't know what she looks like.

LOIS Why not find out. Aren't you the least bit curious?

ROBERT Sure, but seeing her could destroy a great memory.

LOIS Is that it? You don't want to see her because you want to preserve some sick perverted memory.

ROBERT It wasn't like that. Maybe it started out like that. It was more.

LOIS Listen to what you're saying. Two minutes ago, you were making light of what you had with her and now you're defending it. It's more than just seeing her, isn't it? You're afraid.

ROBERT It's more a fear of permanence.

LOIS Is it? How can you be sure when you've never had anything permanent in your life.

ROBERT O.K... (obviously disturbed) So what if I'm afraid. Look what's going on out there. How many couples out there are happy with their relationship?

LOIS That may be true, but that's not what it's about.

ROBERT No, What then?

LOIS (sympathetically) Robert, she's not mom.

ROBERT It's not about mom.

LOIS Isn't it.

Robert looks down and away.

LOIS (cont'd) Isn't the fact that you can't have a relationship all about that. Why do you think you always choose the wrong women? Women that you can't possibly have a relationship with. You set it up that way. You set it up that way, so you can't get hurt again. Can't get hurt again like mom hurt you; when she walked out on dad.

Robert is silent.

LOIS (cont'd) Holly may not walk out.

ROBERT Don't you think I know that.

LOIS Then stop denying your feelings. (frustrated) See her.

ROBERT (pause) (looking down and away) I can't.

LOIS (affectionately) Can you go on like this? Look at yourself! You're trapped between how you feel and what you should do.

Robert does not answer.

LOIS (cont'd) Robert, she's out there where you are. Give it a chance.
(pleading) Give yourself a chance.

Lois softly kisses Robert on the cheek, turns and leaves. Robert's eyes follow her out the door. As she closes the door, the new light fixture that Robert had installed, flickers and dims. Robert stands silently in the center of the dimly lit room. He notices the small flashlight Holly gave him resting on the tabletop. He reaches down and slowly picks it up. He flicks it on and off, and on and off again, then places it in the palm of his hand, looks at it for a moment, and closes his fingers over it, affectionately gripping it. A sad smile crosses his lips. He slowly lowers himself into the armchair, leans back in it, and rests his head on the top of its backrest. The light fades to darkness as Robert drifts off to sleep. (long pause)

The music from Holly and Robert's first encounter, *Les Parfums d' autrefois*, begins to play. Moments later, a small light flashes on and off, from the other side of the room.

HOLLY I'm here.

ROBERT. Is that you, Holly?

Holly quickly turns her small flashlight on and off, briefly illuminating a profile of her naked body.

He in turn flashes his tiny light, briefly illuminating himself. They approach one another step by step, each beginning to reveal themselves to the other via strobe like illuminations of individual body parts; hands, legs, buttocks, breasts, crotch,

culminating in a full body illumination, where they see each other for the first time.

ROBERT Look at you, you're beautiful. You're everything I've ever dreamed of and more.

Naked, they embrace. The light goes dark.

ROBERT (cont'd) Oh God! Holly! (loudly) Holly!

The lights go on, Robert is stirring in his chair, still asleep. He wakes up. The power of his telling dream propels him to his feet.

ROBERT Holly!

He looks around the room. It is empty.

ROBERT (cont'd) Holly!

He dashes to the bathroom and pushes open the door.

ROBERT (Cont'd) Holl!

He does not find her. He walks slowly back to the armchair, rests his hand on its arm, pauses, and slowly lowers himself into it. The light fades, Robert looks at the telephone. He extends his hand toward it and pulls it back. He stands up and paces hack and forth in front of the phone, stops and reaches down for it.

The stage goes dark.

INT: ROBERTS APT., EVENING

Robert, dressed exactly as he was in the opening narration, is pacing back and forth. The bellowing sound of Holly's motorcycle stops. A few moments pass. The doorbell rings. He goes to the intercom, stops, wipes his brow and presses the door button, allowing Holly entry, then turns off the lights. Moments later, there is a knock at the door, Robert opens it and Holly steps in, her familiar shadow appearing, for the final time on the apartment back wall. She enters, closing the door behind her. Her shadow blends with the darkness. There is silence.

ROBERT (anxious) Well, here we are.

HOLLY I didn't think this would happen.

ROBERT Me either. Funny, at first, we were afraid to be together without seeing each other, now it's the opposite. (brief pause) It could be very different.

HOLLY I wish I could have left it there, but I can't.

ROBERT We had something for a while.

HOLLY Yea, I know.

ROBERT (brief pause) How's your arm.

HOLLY It'll be O.K. . (brief pause) Robert, I'm sorry this happened. You probably think I'm pretty nuts?

ROBERT Yeah, but if you weren't we wouldn't be taking this little journey.

HOLLY I've thought about us a lot (brief pause) I've missed you.

ROBERT Me too (pause) I have to tell you I'm a little uptight about this. As much, as I want it, I can't help but wonder if I'd feel the same way had I seen you.

HOLLY I guess there's only one way to find out.
You sure you're ready to do this?

ROBERT The only thing I'm sure of right now is that I'm a little nauseous.

HOLLY You know, I was thinking. We should have called one of those talk shows, maybe even Opera. We could have made some money with this. Think of it "United for the first time, on national TV". Imagine! "Today we have with us a couple who dated and slept together for six months and got along fabulously. And they never once saw each other. Today, they'll see each other for the first time. Will they like each other, or should they have quit while they were ahead."

Robert is silent.

HOLLY (cont'd) You're really having a problem with this aren't you?

Robert remains silent.

HOLLY (cont'd) Do you want to think about this some more?

ROBERT I'll be O.K.. I just need a little time.

Holly is silent.

ROBERT (cont'd) O.K..

HOLLY Wait a second.

A rustling sound is heard.

HOLLY (cont'd) (brief pause) O.K..

ROBERT (taking a deep breath) O.k..

There is silence.

HOLLY Well?

Moment's pass. It remains dark.

HOLLY (cont'd) You don't want to do this. Do you?

Robert is silent.

HOLLY (cont'd) I'd better go.

Footsteps are heard as Holly turns and walks toward the door.

ROBERT No wait, Holly. I do. Believe me. I just...

HOLLY Will you get over yourself already!

ROBERT O.K., O.K..

Robert switches the lights on. Holly is standing center stage with a mask of a clown over her face.

ROBERT (cont'd) (snapping) Wait a minute.
What is this? This isn't fair! You can't do this!

HOLLY Don't be upset. I thought I'd lighten things up a little, but it looks like you lost your sense of humor.

ROBERT I didn't lose my sense of humor.
It's just that we agreed to do it together.

HOLLY I changed my mind. (looking Robert up and down) Not bad.

ROBERT That's not fair!

HOLLY Life's a bitch ain't it.

ROBERT (upset) I can't believe this. The first act in our relationship and you violate the trust. Nice beginning.

HOLLY Do you want me to leave?

ROBERT Of course not! Not now. Not after all this. You've seen me. I still don't know what you look like. Well, do I get to see you?

HOLLY You sure you don't want to sleep with the clown first?

ROBERT (more upset) I don't believe this. Here I am, I finally get enough courage to do this. I'm freaking out here and you're playing games.

HOLLY I'm sorry. I just wanted to lighten things up a little.
 (brief pause) I have fears too.

Robert is silent. Holly takes off the mask. She is a very attractive redhead, about 5' 8". Robert is stunned at first, then relieved.

ROBERT (approving) Not bad. (looking her over) Not bad.

Robert is silent for several moments still evaluating thinking.

HOLLY Are you O.K.?

ROBERT Yeah. (pause)

Robert slowly raises his hand to his chest.

HOLLY Are you sure?

ROBERT Yeah. Except for my racing heart. I feel like I just took an antihistamine.

HOLLY Is there anything I can do?

Holly takes a step toward him.

Robert turns the palm of his hand outward toward Holly, motioning her to stop.

ROBERT No. No.

Holly stops her forward progress.

ROBERT (cont'd) I'll be O.K..

Robert sits down. He supports himself by holding onto the chair's arm as he lowers himself into the chair.

HOLLY Are you sure there's nothing I can do?

Robert raises his hand to his chest.

ROBERT (cont'd) I think I'm going to die.

He moves his hand from his chest to his brow and runs his fingers over his eyebrows and breathes deeply with a slight gasp.

HOLLY This isn't going to work. I should leave.

ROBERT (breathing deeply) No. Holly, wait. Please. I'm just a little afraid.

HOLLY A little afraid. If I'd known you had this much baggage, I would have brought a skycap.

ROBERT It'll pass. I know how I feel about you. I just need a little time, so my feelings can catch up with what I know.

Robert reaches into his pocket and takes out a piece of folded, white paper. He holds it out to Holly. She takes it from him.

HOLLY What's this a note from your doctor?

Holly unfolds the note and reads it aloud.

HOLLY (cont'd) I know I love you. (pause) Not for what you have, or what you might become, but for who you are. (brief pause) But I don't know, if love is enough in this complicated world. This world, so filled with distractions and

things; that can change us, to other than who we are. (brief pause) And I'm not sure, if what it is that I have, is what it takes to make a relationship last. Knowing these things, I can only say for certain, that I'll try, and if we're honest and trust in one another, maybe this love will have a chance. This is where I am. My fear aside. I love you.

Holly raises her head and looks deeply into Robert's eyes. She pauses momentarily, then steps toward him. They embrace tenderly, yet passionately.

ROBERT (implying that he wants to bed her) Shall we?

HOLLY (brief pause) How about that dinner we talked about way back?

ROBERT You want to eat now?

HOLLY I want to stretch the moment. (brief pause) (joking) Besides, what do you think, I'm easy. You have to take me out before you can get into my pants.

ROBERT. (joking) Here we go. I can see the writing on the wall. I'll probably never get laid again.

Side by side, they begin to walk toward the door. Robert opens it and places his hand on Holly's back, coaxing her through the doorway first.

HOLLY (looking back over her shoulder her head half turned)
Robert, is it true that people with a fear of intimacy have wet dreams without people in them?

Robert shuts the lights.

THE END

Credits

VOCALS

Lance Soliman@lancesoliman

Olha L @Olhalishchyshyn

MUSIC COMPOSITION

Songs 1 & 2 Boris@composer and Clement Musco

Songs 3,4, 5 & 6 Kasia and Clement Musco

LYRICS

Clement Musco

MIXING and MASTERING

Songs 1,2,3,4,5 & 6 Francesco Montrone for InABagRecords

Individuals who wish to get in touch with any of the aforementioned artists, contact the author for detailed information.