

SIT DOWN AND EAT BEFORE OUR LOVE GETS COLD

An intimate musical

By Barbara Schottenfeld

Copyright 1993, Barbara Schottenfeld

Tom Distler
Brooks/Distler
110 East 59th Street
New York, New York 10022
(212) 486-1400

TIME: The present.

PLACE: New York City.

The set is a flexible unit that portrays many locations in the characters' lives: an apartment, a dress shop, a cafe, an all-night cash machine, an office, a health club, a laundry room, a Chinese restaurant and an Italian restaurant.

CHARACTERS

ABBY: A music teacher and aspiring songwriter in her early thirties. Witty, sexy, upbeat yet vulnerable.

SUE: ABBY'S best friend. Owner of an antique dress shop in early thirties. Pretty, devoted, sweet tempered but passionate.

JOSH: A Ralph-Nader-advocate-turned-Wall-Street-lawyer in his mid to late thirties. Handsome, virile, Ivy League, with a boyish charm.

NOTE TO THE READER: The musical is almost entirely sung, denoted by caps. Any spoken dialogue is in upper and lower case.

The show moves back and forth between the more naturalistic scenes and revue-style numbers that ABBY is writing, inspired by the events occurring in her life. The lighting should reflect this shift and interplay between the two styles.

MUSICAL NUMBERS (SONGS ONLY)

ACT I

"SIT DOWN AND EAT BEFORE OUR LOVE GETS COLD"	Abby, Sue, Josh.	p. I-1
"FIRST CHILD BY 35"	Abby, Sue	p. I-4
"I'M LOOKING FOR A BOY TO LOVE"	Abby, Sue	p. I-15
"I DON'T WANT ANY MORE GOOD FRIENDS"	Sue, Josh	p. I- 18 and p. I-27
"LEGALESE"	Sue, Josh	p. I-33
"HOW DID I COME ACROSS?"	Josh	p. I-45
"I DON'T WANT TO HOLD BACK"	Abby	p. I-47
"SIT DOWN AND EAT" (reprise 1)	Abby, Josh, Sue.	p. I-49
"SIMPLE THINGS"	Abby, Josh	p. I-54
"LOSING TOUCH"	Abby, Sue	p. I-56

ACT II

"I'M SO HAPPY FOR HER"	Sue	p. II-5
"I WANT YOU TO BE..."	Josh	p. II-10
"SIT DOWN AND EAT..." (reprise 2)	Josh, Abby, Sue	p. II-17
"LOSING TOUCH" (reprise)	Josh, Abby, Sue	p. II-18
"WHY DO I ONLY..."	Josh	p. II-29
"REVISIONS"	Abby	p. II-30
"GOOD FRIENDS" (reprise)	Abby and Sue	p. II-42
"SIT DOWN AND EAT" (tag)	Abby/Sue/Josh	p. II-43

ACT I

Scene 1

REVUE LIGHTING as ABBY, SUE, and JOSH sing.

SONG: SIT DOWN AND EAT BEFORE OUR LOVE GETS COLD

ABBY
SOME FOLKS SAY RED MEAT IS BAD FOR YOU,

SUE
THEY SWEAR THE FATTY TISSUES DO YOU IN,

JOSH
THERE'S NOTHING HEALTHY LEFT TO EAT,

ABBY
THEY'VE EVEN SLANDERED CREAM OF WHEAT!

JOSH
THE ONLY THING THAT'S SAFE THESE DAYS...

SUE
IS GIN.

ALL
(THESE DAYS, IS GIN.)

SUE
BUT I'VE GOT QUITE A TENDER PIECE OF FILLET HERE,

ABBY
AND THIS SPECIAL DOESN'T COME EVERY DAY, DEAR.

SUE and ABBY
AND SO, ALTHOUGH THE EXPERTS MAY SAY TO STAY CLEAR,

ABBY
TAKE A SEAT,

SUE
HAVE A TREAT,

BOTH
THERE ARE CERTAIN THINGS IN LIFE YOU CAN'T REHEAT.

SUE and ABBY
LOVE DOESN'T PHONE TO MAKE A RESERVATION, DEAR,
SO WHEN IT DOES DROP BY, YIELD TO TEMPTATION, DEAR,
THOSE BOWLS OF DINNER ROLLS MAY SOON GET STALE AND OLD,
SIT DOWN AND EAT BEFORE OUR LOVE GETS COLD.

JOSH
THOUGH CHILDREN AT THE TABLE MUSTN'T SAY A WORD,

No?
ABBY

JOSH
WE GROWN UP WHEN WE'RE ABLE MUST BE SEEN AND HEARD,

So?
SUE

JOSH
WE OUGHTA HAVE ONE GOOD HOT MEAL A DAY, WE'RE TOLD!

(with physical pleasure) Oh!!
SUE AND ABBY

ALL
MM MMM MMM BEFORE OUR LOVE GETS COLD.

JOSH
AND IN-BETWEEN SIX COURSES OF MY KISSES,

(KISSES, OOH!)
ABBY and SUE

JOSH
YOU'LL TELL ME WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE, WHAT YOU CRAVE,

(BE MY SLAVE)
ABBY and SUE

JOSH
I'LL HEAT YOU UP UNTIL YOUR KETTLE HISSES,

(WOO BOY!)
ABBY and SUE

JOSH
JUST CALL ME MISTER MICROWAVE!

ALL
YOU BETTER HURRY AND
ACT NOW, MY PET, BEFORE THE FIRED OF LOVIN'S GONE,
THE TABLE'S SET AND WE BOTH HAVE OUR OVENS ON,
IF LOVE HAS STRUCK, YOU LUCKY DUCK, THEN WE'VE STRUCK GOLD,
SIT DOWN AND EAT BEFORE OUR LOVE GETS COLD.

Dance break.

ABBY
LOVE, LUST, AND PASSION,

SUE
JEALOUSY,

JOSH
DESIRE AND SLEAZE,

ALL
INGREDIENTS OF ALL MY FAVORITE RECIPES,
LOVE'S A TRAVELING SALESMAN, LET HIS WARES BE SOLD,
SATIATE YOUR HUNGER, SATISFY YOUR THIRST,
LOVE IS THE APERITIF THAT CAN'T BE NURSED,
I MAY NOT BE THE BEST, BUT I SURE AIN'T THE WORST.

JOSH
WHEN SOMETHING'S HOT, YOU KNOW YOU'VE GOT
TO BLOW ON IT FIRST!

(ABBY and SUE scream.)

ALL
SIT DOWN AND EAT,
NEED WE REPREAT?
SIT DOWN AND EAT BEFORE OUR LOVE GETS COLD.

Soup's on!

BLACK OUT.

ACT I

Scene 2

SETTING: ABBY'S apartment.

AT RISE: ABBY is at her piano.

Phone rings and we hear ABBY'S
outgoing musicalized message.

ABBY'S OUTGOING MESSAGE

HELLO, THIS IS ABBY, I'M NOT IN RIGHT NOW,
BUT TALK TO ME TALK TO ME ANYHOW,
I'M OUT OR I'M WORKING, OR I'M FAST ASLEEP,
PLEASE LEAVE YOUR NAME AND NUMBER AT THE BEEP.

SUE'S VOICE

Hi. It's me. If you're moping, pick up, if you're working, don't. (a pause) Well, I guess I'll have to trust you're working. Remember, you're coming by at four, and don't try to get out of it. I've got in a ton of stuff you'd look gorgeous in.

ABBY, at piano, talks into a mini-cassette.

ABBY

Chip. Hi. This first cassette has the first draft of the opening song for the revue on it. Hope you like it. Please let me know what you think. I could use some feedback for the revisions. Oh -- but don't show it to the other producers yet.

(pause; tone gets wistful)

And listen, I hope you don't mind my sending you the material instead of dropping it by, but I'm really not ready to see you yet, ya know?

(shakes head, rewinds, erasing what she's recorded, starts over in cheerful but businesslike tone)

Chip. Hi. This cassette has the opening number on it. I'm about to lay down the female duet I just finished. I haven't come up with an idea for the finale yet. I'll let you know when I do.

(drifting off)

Speaking of finales...

(sighs, shakes head, erases tape, begins again cheerfully)

Chip. Hi. Let me know what you think about Sit Down and Eat. Don't have the finale yet. I'm about to lay down the female duet... It's all about that whole biological clock issue we discussed... once.

(suddenly sarcastic)

Thanks for setting me back another six months.

(yells into the tape recorder, speaking frenetically)

Listen. I just don't think this is going to work out, our working together. I mean, I know I'm supposed to be grateful for the opportunity with the songs, but I just don't --

(stops mid-sentence, erases tape, starts over, in gentle, calm voice)

Chip. Hi. Here's that song.

(BLACKOUT. When the lights come up, ABBY and SUE are sitting on stools revue-style. REVUE LIGHTING)

SONG: "FIRST CHILD"

ABBY & SUE

I HAVE TO HAVE MY FIRST CHILD BY THIRTY-FIVE,
SO I NEED TO BE MARRIED BY THIRTY-FOUR,
BECAUSE ONE NEEDS TO BE MARRIED
FOR A MINIMUM OF A YEAR OR SO,
TO SEE IF IT'S GOT A CHANCE OF WORKING,
BEFORE AT THIRTY-FIVE YOU DECIDE TO HAVE A BABY!

I HAVE TO HAVE MY FIRST CHILD BY THIRTY-FIVE,
SO I NEED TO MEET MY HUSBAND BY THIRTY-THREE,
SAY, AND A HALF,
BECAUSE ONE NEEDS TO LIVE WITH ONE'S FLANCE
FOR A MINIMUM OF, WELL, EIGHTEEN MONTHS,
TO SEE IF HE'S RIGHT, IF HE'S OKAY,
AND ONLY MILDLY NEUROTIC.

(BLACKOUT. ABBY is alone, at piano. Naturalistic LIGHTING.)

ABBY

Good. One down...

ACT I
Scene 3

SETTING:

SUE'S Antique Clothing Shop.

AT RISE:

SUE holds up various dresses to see how they look on ABBY.

ABBY

WHERE ARE THE SIMPLE MEN? HUCK FINN? TOM SAWYER?

SUE

THEY'RE ONLY IN FICTION. NOW, ABOUT MY NEW LAWYER...

ABBY

THE LAWYER?

SUE

TRY IT ON, TRY IT ON!
THE LATEST.
TRY IT ON, TRY IT ON!
WHO LIVES IN MY APARTMENT...

ABBY

(shocked)
WHAT, ALREADY?

SUE

-- APARTMENT BUILDING!

ABBY

(suddenly recalling)
OH, THE LAWYER!

SUE

HOLD IT UP, HOLD IT UP --
THE GREATEST!

ABBY

(about the dress)
TERRIBLE, TERRIBLE! --
WHO LEADS ON ALL YOUR TENANTS --

SUE
(taken aback)
WHAT?

ABBY
-- IN THE FIGHT AGAINST YOUR LANDLORD.

SUE
(relieved)
OH, RIGHT.
TRY IT ON, TRY IT ON!

ABBY
WELL, IF HE'S REALLY AS CHARMING...

SUE
HE'S AS CHARMING...

ABBY
IF HE'S REALLY AS CLEVER...

SUE
BOY, IS HE EVER...

ABBY
IF HE'S REALLY AS HANDSOME...

SUE
YES, HE'S AS HANDSOME...

ABBY
...AS YOU SAY...

SUE
IN A RUGGED SORT OF WAY...

ABBY
THEN PROBABLY HE'S GAY.

SUE
NO, NOT THIS ONE.

(ABBY stops fussing with the clothes and listens.)

SUE
(continuing)
THE PARTY OF THE FIRST PART,
(HERE-IN-AFTER REFERRED TO AS I OR ME)
AND THE PARTY OF THE SECOND PART,
(HERE-IN-AFTER REFERRED TO AS HIM OR HE)
ARE EXPERIENCING SOME DIFFICULTY...

FOR THE PARTY OF THE FIRST PART,
(HERE-IN-AFTER REFERRED TO AS HIM OR HE)
AND THE PARTY OF THE SECOND PART,
(HERE-IN-AFTER REFERRED TO AS I OR ME)
OF LATE, HAVE BEEN LIVING QUITE CELIBATELY.

ABBY

MAYBE HE'S TIRED.

SUE

I DON'T THINK THAT IT'S THAT.

ABBY

MAYBE HE'S BUSY --
(looking in mirror)
THAT MAKES ME LOOK FAT.

SUE

HE WINED, DINED AND RECLINED ME
TO GREAT SATISFACTION,
NOW IT'S JUST CAPPUCINO,
THEN I SEE NO ACTION.

ABBY

HAVE YOU TRIED TO --

SUE

YES, EVERYTHING, USED ALL MY TRICKS.
IT'S A FATAL, UNFIXABLE CASE OF THE YICKS.

(In an effort to cheer her up, ABBY leads SUE in an old teen-age cheer.)

ABBY

REMEMBER THE YICKS? Y. I. C. K. S!
WHEN YOUR LOVE LIFE IS IN A MESS.
WHEN NOTHING SEEMS TO CLICK,
WHEN YOU WANT OUT AND WANT IT QUICK,

(SUE joins reluctantly, laughs despite herself.)

BOTH

WHEN EVERYTHING YOUR BOYFRIEND DOES
IS MAKING YOU SICK.
THAT'S THE YICKS.

(SUE looks through dress rack, ABBY looks in mirror.)

ABBY

You were careful, I hope?

*

Of course I was. SUE

SUE
SO HOW'S THE WRITING?

ABBY
IT'S OKAY. I FINISHED UP A SONG TODAY.
(shows her the music)

"I'M LOOKING FOR A BOY TO LOVE."
IT'S BASED ON THE PROBLEM WITH HECTOR AND YOU.

SUE
CAN YOU BELIEVE IT THAT I NEVER KNEW!

ABBY
YOU WERE IN MY MIND AS I WROTE IT, ALL THE WAY THROUGH.

SUE
YOU WAIT! ONE OF THESE DAYS I'LL TAKE MY CUT.

ABBY
(laughing)
FINE. TEN PERCENT OF ZERO IS ZERO.

SUE
(holding up a dress)
THE LOOK IS CHIC.

ABBY
THE LOOK IS SLUT! IT'S WAY TOO SHEER.

SUE
OH.
(puts it away)
THANK GOD YOU FINALLY GOT A BREAK.

ABBY
(skeptical)
WE'LL SEE HOW MANY SONGS THEY TAKE.

SUE
AND CHIP? HOW'S HE?

ABBY
VIS A VIS ME?
TOTALLY KAPUT, FINI.

SUE
(about herself)
AT LEAST YOU'RE NOT LEFT GUESSING.

(SUE takes a dress off hanger, hands it to ABBY)

SUE

(continuing)
IT'S GOT A SLIT.

ABBY

BUT IT WON'T FIT.

SUE

A WOMAN OF FIFTY GOT INTO IT.

ABBY

(handing her back the dress)
THAT'S REALLY DEPRESSING!

SUE

YOU'RE BETTER THAN CHIP, ANY DAY,
(looks through dress rack)
WHY CAN'T I FIND THAT JUMPER?

ABBY

I KNOW THAT I AM,
(seeing the humor)
ANYWAY, IT'S THE INALIENABLE RIGHT OF THE DUMPEE
TO FEEL SUPERIOR TO THE DUMPER.

SUE

SO?

ABBY

(holding up a pink dress)
SO?

SUE

SO, WHAT D'YA THINK?

ABBY

ABOUT THE PINK?

SUE

ABOUT THE GUY.

ABBY

THE GUY'S A FINK!

SUE

COME ON, BE CONSTRUCTIVE.
(SUE holds up a piece of clothing, and looks at herself in the mirror.)
I'M GREAT IN BED...

ABBY

YES, SO YOU'VE SAID...

SUE
...SO, IT'S NOT THAT --

ABBY
(about the pink dress)
THAT MAKES ME FAT.

SUE
(points to another dress)
NOW, THAT ONE'S SEDUCTIVE.
YOU KNOW THAT CAFE...
(picking out a prissy dress)

ABBY
TOO DORIS DAY!

SUE
(picking out yet another)
...WITH THE GREAT CAPPUCINO?

ABBY
(about the dress)
YOU MEAN FOR ME? NO,
NOT MY DESIGN.

SUE
MEET US AT NINE.

ABBY
WHAT?

SUE
Please -- don't start to wine.
(She picks out a sexy black dress with a plunging neckline.)

YOU CAN PRETEND THAT YOU'VE GONE THERE TO WRITE --
(about the dress)
PERFECT! --
AS IF YOU GO THERE QUITE OFTEN AT NIGHT --

ABBY
(about the neckline)
SLUTTY.

SUE
-- STUMBLE UPON ME AND MUMBLE "EXCUSE ME,"
THEN SAY "SUE! IT'S YOU!"
(adjusting the neckline)
AND A FRIEND! HOWDY-DO!" --
PRETTY!

ABBY
NO, I CAN'T GO.

SUE
ABBY, PLEASE DON'T REFUSE ME.
'CAUSE YOU KNOW THAT I'D DO
THE SAME THING FOR YOU.

WE'LL MEET FOR AN HOUR --
JUST JOSH, ME AND YOU.
YOU'LL SIZE HIM UP,
TELL ME WHAT I SHOULD DO...

ABBY
You are kidding.

SUE
I NEED YOUR ADVICE.
WE'LL ALL SIT THERE DRINKING,
THEN LATER YOU'LL TELL ME
WHAT YOU THINK HE'S THINKING.

ABBY
I'M STAYING HOME...

SUE
ABBY, ABBY!

ABBY
...I'VE TOO MUCH TO DO...

SUE
BULLSHIT, BULLSHIT!

ABBY
...I'M NOT JUST PRETENDING I'M SWAMPED,
SUE, IT'S TRUE.

SUE
DON'T GIVE ME THAT.
(takes scarf from ABBY)
GIVE ME THAT -- IT JUST ISN'T YOU --
YOU NEED TO GET OUT!

ABBY
THERE'S SOMETHING YOU FORGET:
I'VE MUCH TOO MUCH TO DO --

SUE
(picking out a belt)
IT'S JUST THE RIGHT SIZE.

ABBY
I NEED TO FIND SOME GOOD IDEAS FOR CHIP'S NEW REVUE.

SUE
IT GOES WITH YOUR EYES.

SUE
LOOK, I'LL BUY YOU A CANNOLI,
A CRULLER, A CAKE.
A MEASLY HALF-HOUR IS ALL IT
WILL TAKE.
STUMBLE UPON ME AND MUMBLE
"EXCUSE ME," THEN SAY
"SUE! IT'S YOU! AND A FRIEND!
HOWDY-DO!"

ABBY
I'M STAYING AT HOME,
I'VE TOO MUCH TO DO,
TO SPEND TIME PRETENDING
I'M SWAMPED
WHEN IT'S TRUE.

SUE
YOU HAVE GOT TO GET OUT. I WON'T LET YOU REFUSE ME.

ABBY
I'M FINE. I'M ALL RIGHT.

SUE
YOU SIT HOME EVERY NIGHT.

ABBY
I'M WORKING!

SUE
MOPING!

ABBY
COPING!

SUE
JESUS, WOMAN!
STOP TRYING TO BE MISERABLE!
I WON'T LET YOU WORK ON A SATURDAY NIGHT.
YOU'RE REALLY TOO STUBBORN...

ABBY
(about the belt)
IT'S REALLY TOO TIGHT.

SUE
YOU'RE REALLY TOO STUBBORN!

ABBY
ALL RIGHT THEN, ALL RIGHT! I'LL TAKE IT!

SUE
YOU'LL BE THERE?

ABBY
(giving up)
ALL RIGHT THEN, ALL RIGHT!

SUE

Great!

ABBY
But don't expect me to be nice to him.

SUE
Men... You can't live with 'em...

ABBY
And you can't live with 'em...

SUE
I HOPE I'M NOT GETTING DUMPED AGAIN.

ABBY
WE BOTH BETTER HURRY AND FIND GOOD MEN.

SUE
BUT HOW TO FIND THEM, TELL ME WHERE AND WHEN.

(ABBY looks at her watch, begins to rush)

ABBY
MY GOD, I'VE GOTTA GO,
I'VE GOTTA FINISH UP THAT SONG ABOUT HECTOR AND YOU.

SUE
HERE. TAKE THIS COMB, TOO.

ABBY
Thanks

SUE
I LOVE YA.

ABBY
I KNOW THAT. ME, TOO. SEE YA LATER.

SUE
BYE

ABBY
BYE.

(ABBY crosses to her piano, looks at her notebook, hums a possible phrase or two, and sings.)

ACT I

Scene 4

AT RISE:

REVUE LIGHTING. This song is done
revue-style.

SONG: "I'M LOOKING FOR A BOY TO LOVE."

ABBY

OH, I'M LOOKING FOR A BOY TO LOVE...
WHO'S NOT LOOKING FOR A BOY TO LOVE.
IT SEEMS THE MAN OF MY DREAMS...

SUE

(entering)

ALWAYS DREAMS OF THE MAN OF MY DREAMS.

ABBY

I'M LOOKING FOR A BOY TO LOVE...
WHO'S NOT LOOKING FOR A ROY TO LOVE.
IT SEEMS MY SHINING WHITE KNIGHT...

SUE

IS ALONE WITH HIS OWN MISTER RIGHT.

ABBY

I'M LOOKING FOR A MAN WHO I CAN ADORE,
I'D BE TRUE TO HIM AND TO NO OTHER,
I'D EVEN SETTLE FOR THE BOY NEXT STORE,
IF HE HADN'T SETTLED ON MY BROTHER!

SUE

I FOUND THE PRINCE CHARMING I'D BE MARRYING,
ON THIS PRETTY PRINCESS, HE WAS KEEN...
BUT THE WHITE GLASS SLIPPER HE WAS CARRYING,
WAS MEANT FOR A QUEEN!

BOTH

I'M LOOKING FOR A BOY TO LOVE...
WHO'S NOT LOOKING FOR A BOY TO LOVE,
THE PROBLEM GREW SO ACUTE,
THAT I SWITCHED FROM CIARA TO BRUT.

ABBY

IS THERE NO MAN?

SUE

IS THERE'S NO MAN,

ABBY
WHO'S STILL CHARMED,

SUE
WHO'S DISARMED,

BOTH
BY THE FEMININE MYSTIQUE?

SUE
IF HIS PECS ARE DIVINE...

ABBY
THAT'S A VERY BAD SIGN!

SUE
IF HE'S FUNNY AND FRIENDLY AND TRIM...

ABBY
THEN YOU KNOW THAT HIS HONEY'S A HIM!

BOTH
OH, I LOOK AND I LOOK,
I WAIT AND I WAIT,
I LOWERED MY HOOK,
BUT I'VE GOT THE WRONG BAIT.

ABBY
I'LL TRY ONCE AGAIN,

SUE
MY MAN MIGHT ARRIVE,

ABBY
I DONT NEED A TEN!

SUE
ID TAKE FOUR POINT FIVE!

ABBY
ID TAKE HALF ALIVE!

BOTH
OH, I'VE WISHED ON EVERY STAR ABOVE,
FOR SOMEONE TO BE THERE WHEN I DROP MY GLOVE,

SUE
And I don't mean the designer!

BOTH
I'M LOOKING FOR A BOY TO LOVE!!
WHO'S NOT LOOKING FOR A BOY TO LOVE!
(BLACKOUT. Scene changes to:)

ACT 1

Scene 5

SETTING:

A local cafe.

AT RISE:

JOSH and SUE are sitting at a
cafe table, occasionally sipping
their cappucinos.

Both attempt to remain good-
natured in an awkward situation.

JOSH
FRIENDSHIP IS ENDURING.

SUE
THAT'S VERY REASSURING.

JOSH
I GUESS WE'LL JUST BE FRIENDS NOW.

SUE
YES, I GUESS THE ROMANCE ENDS NOW.

(SHE picks up her cup and toasts him ironically. He picks up his and looks
away for a moment, then turns back, not knowing what to say.)

JOSH
FRIENDSHIP IS ENDURING.

SUE
HOW VERY REASSURING.

JOSH
I'M SORRY TO END THE AFFAIR.

SUE
(affecting nonchalance)
THAT'S REALLY OKAY, I DON'T CARE.

JOSH
(surprised)
You don't?

SUE
You said
FRIENDSHIP --

BOTH
IS ENDURING.

SUE
WELL, THAT'S VERY REASSURING.
(gets carried away)
ROMANCE IS JUST A TRIFLE.

JOSH
DO YOU MIND IF WE SHOOT THE BREEZE?

SUE
(dryly)
DO YOU MIND IF I SHOOT MY RIFLE?

(HE doesn't get it.)

SUE (continuing)
Just a joke.

(JOSH freezes. SUE sings.)

SONG: "I DON'T WANT ANY MORE GOOD FRIENDS"

SUE
I HAVE A CONDITION
THAT APPEARS TO BE CHRONIC,
IT CAN'T BE CURED BY A PHYSICIAN,
IT'S CALLED "PLATONIC."

I DON'T WANT ANY MORE GOOD FRIENDS,
IT'S THE EXIT LINE WHEN THE PASSION ENDS.
IT'S THE SMILE THAT'S TOO BIG,
IT'S THE KISS ON THE CHEEK,
IT'S THE ACHING INSIDE,
WEEK AFTER WEEK,
I DON'T WANT ANY MORE GOOD FRIENDS.

I DON'T WANT ANY MORE PRETENDS,
IF YOU MAKE THE BREAK, PLEASE DON'T MAKE AMENDS.
IT'S THE...

JOSH
(stylized)
"HEY, KID, YOU'RE GREAT"

SUE
IT'S THE...

JOSH
"WOW, YOU'RE THE BEST!"

SUE
THAT KEEP MAKING ME FEEL
I'VE GROWN HAIR ON MY CHEST.
I WANT TO BE YOUR GAL,
NOT YOUR PAL!
I DONT WANT ANY MORE GOOD FRIENDS!

YOU EXPECT ME TO GO FROM BEING
LUSTING PUTTY IN YOUR HANDS,
TO SOMEONE WHO'LL SAY THAT SHE'S A
TRUSTING BUDDY WHO UNDERSTANDS.

BUT I DONT WANT ANY MORE GOOD FRIENDS.
I CANT WAIT AROUND WHILE THE JURY PENDS.
I PREFER TO LOSE FACE,
AND ADMIT THAT I CARE,
THAN PRETEND I WANT FRIENDSHIP,
WHEN I WANT THE AFFAIR,
I DONT WANT ANY MORE GOOD FRIENDS.

(ABBY enters, determined to be unpleasant to JOSH.)

HELLO --

ABBY

(to JOSH)
THIS IS ABBY.
(to ABBY)
THIS IS JOSH.
(shrugging)
I'M SUE.

SUE

JOSH
(trying to help ABBY with her coat)
MAY I...?

No.

ABBY

HAVEN'T WE...?

JOSH

No.

(sitting)

ABBY

JOSH
THE PLEASURE IS MINE.

ABBY
THAT'S PROBABLY TRUE.

JOSH
(to SUE, vaguely annoyed)
SHE'S WITTY.

SUE
YES.
(to ABBY)
HE'S SHARP.

ABBY
MORE OR LESS.

JOSH
(to SUE, sarcastically)
YOUR FRIEND IS DIVINE.

ABBY
(to SUE, still trying to be rude)
HE'S PURE CALVIN KLEIN.

JOSH
(more annoyed)
THE BODY IS MINE.

ABBY
(looking him straight in the eye)
WHERE DID SUE FIND YOU?

SUE
Have you got a quarter?
(ABBY takes paperback book out of her bag to get to her change purse. Josh notices the book. ABBY gives SUE a quarter.)
I'll be right back.

(SUE exits. JOSH picks up the book.)

ABBY
(coolly)
CHEEVER?

JOSH
(shaking head in distaste)
ELDRIDGE CLEAVER!

ABBY
(taking book back)
OLD STUFF!

JOSH
(correcting her)
BOLD STUFF!
HISTORIC.

STYRON? ABBY

FIND HIM TIRIN'. JOSH

(teasing him)
DANIELLE STEELE? ABBY

GET REAL! JOSH

SOPHOMORIC. ABBY

(JOSH moves closer to her, intrigued.)

CAMUS? JOSH

WHO? ABBY

CAMUS! JOSH

OH, CAMUS!
(lying)
QUITE A FEW. ABBY

True? JOSH

(HE looks at her. ABBY smiles, acknowledging the truth. SUE returns and watches them flirt from a distance.)

EXERCISE? JOSH (continuing)

Sure! ABBY

What? JOSH

Typing. You? ABBY

Really. Just typing? JOSH

ABBY

No. TENNIS, TOO.

Good! JOSH
AND WEIGHTS --

SUE
(sitting back down)
FOR HIS PECS.

JOSH
(teasing)
SHOULD I FLEX?

SUE
NOT NOW!

JOSH
WHEN?

ABBY
LATER.
(realizing her slip)
NO! NOT LATER!

SUE
(also realizing)
WAITER!

ABBY
(covering embarrassment)
I'M SURE YOU PLAYED FOOTBALL, TOO.

JOSH
LIKE ALL GOOD AMERICAN BOYS.
And you?

SUE

Sex. (THEY both turn to her surprised.)

SUE (continuing)
LIKE ALL GOOD AMERICAN GIRLS.
(to ABBY, motioning toward JOSH)
LATER?

ABBY
(thoroughly embarrassed now)
NO, NOT LATER!

ALL
WAITER!

ABBY
(at a loss)
HAVE YOU TRIED SUE'S COOS-COOS?

JOSH
(surprised)
THAT'S NEWS! SUE MAKES COOS-COOS?

(They both turn to SUE.)

SUE
(dryly, giving ABBY an incredulous look)
Hummus.

(ABBY becomes increasingly flustered.)

JOSH
HAVE YOU TRIED THAI?

ABBY
No.

JOSH
Why?

ABBY
Too hot.

JOSH
Indian?

ABBY
Yeah.

JOSH
Curry?

ABBY
Good stuff!

(By now, ABBY and JOSH'S attraction to one another is clear. SHE is becoming less successful at hiding it.)

SUE
(joining in)
HEALTH FOOD, TOO?

JOSH
(dismissing SUE)
Please!
(To ABBY, with interest.)
Chinese?

(getting carried away) ABBY
 Can't get enough!

GREEK? JOSH

Drek!
 Czech? ABBY

Already? JOSH

Czech food. (laughing) ABBY

Oh! (sharing the laugh) JOSH

Check! (exasperated) SUE

(SUE and ABBY reach for their wallets. JOSH stops them.)

EAST? JOSH

WEST. UP? ABBY

YUP. JOSH

COULD'VE GUESSED. ABBY

SUPPER? (to both of them) JOSH

NO! (embarrassed, thinking HE meant only her) ABBY

OH. JOSH

GO. (to ABBY) SUE
 LET ME DROP YOU? JOSH
 NO! (alarmed) ABBY
 I MEAN, WE'LL BOTH DROP YOU. (innocently) JOSH
 No, thank you. ABBY
 (in state of panic, to SUE)
 SEE YOU.
 WHERE YA GOIN'? SUE
 CITIBANK, THEN HOME, ABBY
 (curly to JOSH, who is thoroughly confused)
 NICE TO MEET YOU.
 I'LL CALL YOU. SUE
 TONIGHT. ABBY
 NO. TOMORROW. SUE
 TONIGHT! ABBY
 YEAH, OKAY. SUE
 (ABBY leaves, JOSH watches her, amused, then turns back to SUE)
 SO...? JOSH
 SO. SUE
 GO, IT'S OKAY,
 ANYWAY, I'M GONNA STAY.
 HECTOR'S DROPPING BY.

A GUY? JOSH

(annoyed)
NO. A TURTLE.
I'LL WAIT FOR THE WAITER. SUE

(edging out)
I'LL SEE YOU. JOSH

YEAH. SUE

SOON -- JOSH

(overlap)
SOONER OR LATER. SUE

(guilt-stricken)
I'LL CALL YOU. JOSH

TONIGHT? SUE

HOW'S TOMORROW? JOSH

YEAH, RIGHT. SUE
(on an impulse)
IT'S JUST OFF OF SEVENTH,
ON CHRISTOPHER...

WHAT IS? JOSH

THE BANK. SUE

OH. 'BYE. JOSH
(exits)

'BYE. SUE
(getting ready to leave)

REPRISE: "I DON'T WANT ANYMORE GOOD FRIENDS."

SUE

IT'S BECOME THE LATEST OF TRENDS,
TO REMAIN THE GREATEST OF FRIENDS,
IT'S WHAT EVERY MAN RECOMMENDS,
AND SO EVERYONE PUTS ON SMILES,
AND PRETENDS,
SO THE YEARNING EXTENDS...
AND EXTENDS...
AND EXTENDS.

(The cafe set disappears.)

BUT I DON'T WANT ANY MORE GOOD FRIENDS.
I THINK LOVE, NOT FRIENDSHIP, IS WHAT TRANSCENDS.
THOUGH YOUR WORDS ARE WELL-MEANT,
I WILL HAVE TO DECLINE,
FOR I CAN'T SWALLOW GRAPE JUICE,
ONCE I'VE TASTED WINE...

I PREFER SAD GOOD-BYES,
TO AWKWARD HELLOS,
I PREFER YOUR GREEN EYES...
BUT THAT'S HOW IT GOES,

I DON'T WANT ANY MORE GOOD FRIENDS.

(SHE exits, and the set changes to:)

ACT I

Scene 6

SETTING:

The Citibank.

AT RISE:

ABBY on line at the cash machine, humming
part of a tune into her micro-cassette. JOSH
enters the bank.

JOSH

SHE'S THERE IN LINE JUST AROUND THE BEND...
SHE'S CUTE, SHE'S SMART...
(hesitates)
AND SHE'S SUE'S BEST FRIEND!

(Deciding to proceed, gets on line behind ABBY.)

HI THERE. JOSH

(shocked)
HELLO. ABBY

WELL, WHADDYA KNOW?
MY CASH FLOW WAS LOW. JOSH

(confused)
THAT MACHINE IS ON THE BLINK. ABBY

OH. JOSH
(about the bank line)
My God, what a line.

WHAT HAPPENED TO SUE? ABBY

WE DECIDED WE'RE THROUGH. JOSH

DECIDED BY YOU. ABBY

NOT TRUE. JOSH
WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE A DRINK?

NO. ABBY
(about him)
My God, what a line!
(The line moves forward.)
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU LEFT HER THERE.

SHE SAID TO GO. JOSH

BUT EVEN SO... ABBY

SHE REALLY DIDN'T SEEM TO MIND. JOSH

MEN, MEN. ABBY
SHE'S A VERY RARE PERSON,
A VERY RARE FIND.

Yeah. JOSH

Well, so? ABBY

Hell, I don't know. JOSH
(joins HER on line)
EXCUSE ME.
YOU SHOULDN'T TAKE YOUR MONEY OUT AT NIGHT,
IT'S JUST NOT WISE.
I'D BETTER WALK YOU HOME OR ELSE
A PROBLEM COULD ARISE.
IT'S REALLY VERY LATE.

ABBY
(aloof)
WELL, THANK YOU JUST THE SAME,
BUT I'M JUST FINE, I THINK.

JOSH
AS LONG AS WE'RE BOTH HERE
WHY DON'T WE HAVE THAT DRINK?

ABBY
NO.

JOSH
IT'S REALLY VERY EARLY.

ABBY
I THOUGHT IT WAS LATE.
(The line moves forward.)

JOSH
COME ON.

ABBY
I HAVE WORK.

JOSH
WHAT'S HIS NAME?

ABBY
(annoyed)
I HAVE WORK.

JOSH
THAT'S A SHAME.
WHY AT NIGHT?

ABBY
'Cause I write! (more annoyed)

JOSH
You do? What?

ABBY
Some songs for a new revue.

JOSH
You mean...?

ABBY
Music and lyrics.

JOSH
All by yourself?

ABBY
That's right. I score alone.

(SHE turns away from him and steps up to the cash machine.)
Oh no.

JOSH
What?

ABBY
My check hasn't cleared.

JOSH
(devilishly)
I'LL LEND YOU...

ABBY
NO, THANKS.

JOSH
REALLY. I'VE GOT PLENTY OF CASH ON HAND.

ABBY
But I thought you...

JOSH
(covering)
I GUESS YOU DIDN'T UNDERSTAND --
I 'M MAKING A DEPOSIT.

(She calls his bluff, handing him a deposit envelope.)

JOSH (continuing)
(moving right along)
IT'S NO BIG DEAL.

I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL.
(takes out his wallet)
WHAT DO YOU NEED?

WELL... ABBY

NOW, DON'T BE SHY. JOSH

WELL, THIRTY, I GUESS -- ABBY
I COULD MANAGE WITH LESS!

JOSH
(putting cash in envelope)
THAT'S SILLY. WHY EVEN TRY?

Thanks. ABBY
(SHE starts to leave. HE follows.)
I'LL SEND IT TO YOU TUESDAY.

JOSH
I'D PREFER YOU BUY ME DINNER.

TUESDAY. ABBY

DINNER TUESDAY? JOSH

ABBY
(firmly)
I'LL SEND IT TO YOU TUESDAY.

JOSH
(taking out business card)
SEND IT WHEN YOU CAN.
My card.

Corporate? ABBY

Kind of. JOSH

Classy. ABBY

Keep it. Can I have yours? JOSH

I don't have one. ABBY

Well, then, JOSH
COULD I HAVE YOUR NUMBER?

IT'S IN THE BOOK. ABBY

THAT'S TRUE... JOSH
SO WHAT'S YOUR LAST NAME?

(about to tell him, then) ABBY
THAT'S IN THE BOOK, TOO.

I SEE. SO... JOSH

THANK YOU, BUT NO. ABBY

DON'T YOU TRUST ME? JOSH

YES. BUT, NO... ABBY
(taking out book)
I'LL WRITE IT DOWN HERE, SO THAT I DON'T FORGET TO SEND --

WHY DON'T YOU TRUST ME? JOSH

(looking him straight in the eye) ABBY
-- SAID THE WOLF TO THE DEER, AFTER DEVOURING HER FRIEND.
I'LL SEND IT TO YOU TUESDAY.

A QUICK DRINK? JUST A QUICK DRINK? JOSH

NO THANKS, NO, BUT THANK YOU... BYE. ABBY

BYE. JOSH

ACT I

Scene 7

AT RISE: ABBY studies JOSH'S card, then puts it down on the piano. SHE turns on her tape recorder.

ABBY
Ideas for the male/female duet... First draft. Um...let's see.

REVUE LIGHTING. REVUE format.
Suddenly SUE and JOSH emerge in ABBY'S imagination. SUE, in a sexy outfit and JOSH, also in a hot outfit. ABBY is amazed and disturbed at what she is creating.

SONG: "LEGALESE."

SUE
HE DID IT TO ME...
AND HE'LL DO IT TO YOU!

THE PARTY OF THE FIRST PART,
(HERE-IN-AFTER REFERRED TO AS I OR ME)

JOSH
AND THE PARTY OF THE SECOND PART,
(HERE-IN-AFTER REFERRED TO AS HIM OR HE)

BOTH
WERE GETTING ALONG EXCEPTIONALLY.

SUE
HE FILLED ME WITH SUCH AWE,
WITH EVERY LEGAL WORD HE SAID,

JOSH
THIS SAME ATTORNEY AT LAW,

BOTH
BECAME ATTORNEY IN BED!

(ABBY watches in amazement, as SUE and JOSH perform their number.)

SUE
HE STARTED WITH "PROSPECTUS,"
THAT REALLY DID CONNECT US,
THEN, "RESJUTICATA" GOTTA SMILE.

(JOSH)
AFTER "WRITAMANDAMIS" WE
SEEMED TO GET ALONG FAMOUSLY,

SUE
SO I TOLD HIM MY NAME AS WE
WENT OVER HIS BRIEFS A WHILE.

JOSH
AT FIRST I SPOKE OF ASSETS,

SUE
I MENTIONED I HAD NONE,

JOSH
I TOLD HER SHE HAD PLENTY,

SUE (and JOSH?)
AND UNFROZE THEM ONE BY ONE.

SUE
A SPECIAL KIND OF FLIRTING,
PURSUED WITH EXPERTISE,
I WAS WOODED WITH LEGAL WORDING,

(JOSH)
IT WAS DONE WITH LEGALESE.

(directed at ABBY)

IT ISN'T THE CAMPARI,
THAT'LL MAKE YOUR EYES ALL STARRY,

SUE
IT'LL BE HIS "CERTIORRARI", WAIT AND SEE...

JOSH
"Certiarani!"

SUE
WITH AWE HE WILL IMPRESS YOU,

JOSH
WITH LAW I WILL UNDRESS YOU,

SUE
HE'LL "HABEASCORPOSESS" YOU,
JUST LIKE ME.

WITH WIT, HE'LL HIT HIS STRIDE,

JOSH
JUST LET MY CONSCIENCE BE YOUR GUIDE,

SUE
WHEN HE DELIVERS HIS "SUBPOENA"

BOTH
I KNOW YOU WILL NOT HIDE...

JOSH
YOU'LL SAY "YES, GO! YES, GO!"

SUE
"Yes! Go! Yes! Go! Yes! Go!"

JOSH
PUT IT IN ESCROW PLEASE!"

SUE
Put it in escrow, please!

JOSH
AND I'LL DO IT,

SUE
YEAH, HE'LL DO IT,

BOTH
DO IT WITH LEGALESE.

(JOSH coos legalese wordage to SUE, who is further seduced by each word. The sizzling dance break between JOSH and SUE both titillates and disturbs ABBY.)

JOSH
Force Majeure.

SUE
Makes me purr.

JOSH
Ipso facto.

SUE
Mmm. Delecto.

JOSH
Parry passu.

SUE
Oh, ooh.

JOSH
Prima Facie. (pronounced "fay-ja")

SUE
It just slays ya.

JOSH
Nunc protunc.

SUE
What a hunk!

JOSH and SUE (to ABBY)
SO GO FIND A...
RICHMAN, A POORMAN, A BEGGARMAN OR THIEF,
A DOCTOR, MM-MM-MM, OR AN INDIAN CHIEF,
'CAUSE ANYONE'S A BARGAIN,
NEXT TO MEN OF LEGAL JARGON,
HE IS JUST A REGAL TEASE...

JOSH
I'M A TEASE!!
(ON YOUR KNEES!)

SUE
HE'LL DO IT,

JOSH
I'LL DO IT,

BOTH
WE'LL DO IT WITH LEGALESE.

(Spotlight goes out, SUE exits, and scene continues in:)

ACT 1

Scene 8

SETTING: JOSH'S office. Legal documents, in-out baskets,
and a dictaphone.

AT RISE: JOSH sees ABBY and stops working.

ABBY
(extremely nervous)
HELLO.

JOSH
HELLO.

ABBY
HERE'S YOUR MONEY.
(puts deposit envelope on desk)
THANKS.

JOSH
THERE'S NO HURRY. THANKS.

(SHE is very awkward.)

ABBY
I'M FINE.

JOSH
(amused)
HOW ARE YOU?

ABBY
(realizing)
I'M FINE. HOW ARE YOU?

JOSH
I'M FINE.
I'M GLAD YOU CALLED.

ABBY
THE MAIL IS SLOW...

JOSH
I'M GLAD YOU CALLED.

ABBY
THE MAIL IS SLOW, IT'S UNDEPENDABLE, AND SO --

JOSH
(stopping her from going on)
I'M GLAD YOU CALLED!
(leaning over, looking at her chest)
YOUR BUTTON...

ABBY
(self-consciously)
What?

JOSH
WHAT'S IT SAY?

ABBY
(realizes it's the button)
Oh!
FREE THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT OF THE ARTS -- N.E.A.

JOSH
I WAS WONDERING WHAT YOU WERE DOING TONIGHT?

ABBY
(cutting him off, avoiding)
TODAY I WAS AT A DEMONSTRATION --

LOTS OF FAMOUS PEOPLE THERE!
 RICHARD GERE, GERRY HALL, BRITNEY SPEARS,
 LAUREN BACALL!
 YES! AND THEY ALL
 MADE A REMARK OR TWO,
 (carried away)
 DOROTHY PARKER, TOO!

JOSH
 DOROTHY PARKER'S DEAD.

ABBY
 (embarrassed)
 OH... WELL, WHOEVER! I LIKED WHAT SHE SAID.

JOSH
 OH, THE EXHILARATION
 OF A GOOD DEMONSTRATION!
 REMINDS ME OF MY NADER-DAYS --

ABBY
 What?

JOSH
RALPH NADER --

ABBY
 (a sudden insight)
 SO THE IDEALISTIC PRINCE OF CONSUMER REPORTS --

JOSH
 HAS TURNED INTO A TOAD WHO ONLY WORKS ON TORTS.

ABBY
 (amused)
 AT LEAST YOU'RE MAKING MONEY...

JOSH
 THAT'S TRUE.
 ONE DAY I'LL HAVE THE LUXURY
 TO GO BACK AND JOIN THE STRUGGLE.

ABBY
 (seeing through him)
 WITHOUT HAVING TO STRUGGLE?

JOSH
 YUP YUP.

ABBY
 YOU THINK YOU'LL GO BACK?

JOSH
 REALLY, REALLY?

YUP, YUP. ABBY

NOPE, NOPE. JOSH

(impressed)
THAT'S VERY HONEST TO ADMIT. ABBY

(turning on the charm)
THAT'S VERY KIND OF YOU TO SAY. JOSH

(suddenly uncomfortable)
I REALLY CAN'T STAY -- I'VE REALLY GOT TO GO. ABBY

(seeing through her)
YOU'RE GOING HOME TO WORK? JOSH

(surprised)
YES, HOW DID YOU KNOW? ABBY

(trying to keep her there)
WHAT ARE YOU WRITING? JOSH
THAT'S WHAT YOU ALWAYS USE -- UH -- SAY.

ABBY
"IT'S A BALLAD, MORNING'S LIGHT."

(teasing her)
"ALL ROSY AND ALL DAFFODILLY
AND WHEN YOU GO AWAY, IT'S CHILLY?" JOSH

ABBY
I SEE, WRITING LOVE SONGS IS SILLY?

JOSH
IT'S VERY RARE THAT A BALLAD IS VALID!

Valid?! ABBY

(vehemently)
WRITERS SHOULD WRITE ABOUT INJUSTICE AROUND THEM,
PROBLEMS THAT SURROUND THEM
EVERY DAY. JOSH

ABBY
(challenging him)
LIKE?

JOSH
LIKE...

ABBY
(sitting down)
LIKE...

JOSH
(sitting next to her)
LIKE I'D VENT ALL MY FRUSTRATIONS
ABOUT MAJOR CORPORATIONS...

ABBY
(intrigued)
WHAT ELSE, WHAT ELSE?

JOSH
(romantically)
I'D MAKE FUN OF POLITICIANS
AND THEIR INSINCERE POSITIONS...

ABBY
(looking into his eyes)
WHAT ELSE, WHAT ELSE?

JOSH
(moving close to her)
BEFORE I WAS THROUGH
WITH MY TRUSTY NUMBER TWO,
I MIGHT JUST TAKE A STAB
AT DIVORCE LAWYERS, TOO...
(dreamily)
WHAT ELSE, WHAT ELSE...

(By now, THEY are extremely close and both feel the electricity. They speak the following lines very intimately.)

ABBY (softly)
Are your parents divorced?

JOSH (softly)
Of course. Aren't everybody's?

ABBY
When you were little?

JOSH
My last year at Brown.

(feeling that the time is ripe)
DINNER?

ABBY
(Pretending not to hear, SHE gets up.)
YOU WENT TO BROWN?

JOSH
UH-HUH.

ABBY
THAT'S REAL FIRST RATE.

JOSH
UH-HUH.

ABBY
I WENT THERE ONCE TO SEE MY COUSIN GRADUATE.
THAT WAS THE YEAR THAT THE VALEDICTORIAN POSED FOR PLAYBOY.
HER SPEECH WENT OVER IN A REALLY BIG WAY.

JOSH
BOY, WHAT AN ASS!

ABBY
AS IN SHAPELY?

JOSH
ASS -- AS IN JERKY.
SHE WAS IN MY CLASS.

ABBY
REALLY?

JOSH
YES.

ABBY
WELL, THEN, I GUESS I SAW YOU GRADUATE.

JOSH
NO.

ABBY
WHY NOT?

JOSH
Story:
MY FATHER SAID HE WOULDN'T GO, IF MY MOTHER WERE INVITED:
"I REALLY CAN'T GO IF YOUR MOM'S GONNA SHOW."
MY MOTHER SAID SHE WOULDN'T COME IF MY FATHER WERE INVITED:
"I REALLY CAN'T COME IF YOU'RE ASKING THAT BUM!"
I TOLD THEM NOT TO WORRY AND SO,
I INVITED THEM BOTH -- AND I DIDN'T GO!

ABBY
IS THAT WHY YOU HAD HER?

JOSH
(going back to his desk)
I THINK THAT WILL DO.

ABBY
SHE'S KIND OF THE BEST FRIEND THAT I'VE ALWAYS HAD.

JOSH
LOOK, MISS ACCUSATION, LET'S GET ONE THING CLEAR:
(sitting down)
YOU CAME HERE!

ABBY
Yes, but the mail is --

JOSH
(finishing her thought)
IS UNDEPENDABLE --
COMMENDABLE OF YOU.
BUT IF YOU WERE NERVOUS
THAT THE U.S. POSTAL SERVICE
WOULDN'T COME THROUGH,
WHY DIDN'T YOU
LEAVE IT WITH MY SECRETARY RIGHT NEXT DOOR?

ABBY
(lying)
I GUESS THAT'S TRUE, I DIDN'T THINK OF THAT BEFORE.

JOSH
(here we go again)
WHY NOT?

ABBY
I DON'T KNOW.

JOSH
YOU DON'T KNOW.

ABBY
I DON'T KNOW.

JOSH
YOU DON'T KNOW -- YOU CALLED ME, REMEMBER?

ABBY
SO?

JOSH
SO...

ABBY
SO, DON'T SIMPLIFY EVERYTHING.

JOSH
DON'T COMPLICATE EVERYTHING.

ABBY
SO, DON'T SIMPLIFY EVERYTHING!

JOSH
DON'T COMPLICATE EVERYTHING!

ABBY
DON'T SIMPLIFY EVERYTHING!
DON'T --
Oh, come on.

JOSH
DON'T COMPLICATE EVERYTHING!
DON'T --

(THEY realize that they've been shouting.)

JOSH
Abby,
I'LL COOK YOU DINNER, FRIDAY NIGHT,
IF THAT'S ALL RIGHT WITH YOU.
YOU COULD COME TO MY PLACE, AT EIGHT-THIRTY,
BUT ANYTIME AT ALL WILL DO.

ABBY
(torn)
THANK YOU,
I WOULD LIKE TO...

JOSH
(anticipating another problem)
But?

BUT I'D RATHER NOT -- I MEAN NOT AT YOUR ADDRESS.

JOSH
'CAUSE MY ADDRESS IS SUE'S ADDRESS?

ABBY
(surprising herself)
BUT MY PLACE WOULD BE FINE, I GUESS.

JOSH
(also surprised)
SO CAN I TAKE THAT AS A YES?

ABBY
(tortured)
Yes!

JOSH
I'LL BRING THE WINE.

ABBY
(lightening up)
THANKS, BUT WE CAN DRINK MINE.
YOU'D BETTER COOK --
UNLESS YOU WANT GRANOLA,
AND DIET COLA.

JOSH
ALL RIGHT, I'LL BE CHEF THEN. HOW'S CHICKEN DIVIN?

ABBY
(all smiles)
DIVINE! SEE YOU FRIDAY?

JOSH
DINNER.

ABBY
FRIDAY.

BOTH
(shaking on it)
DINNER FRIDAY.

(ABBY exits. JOSH starts to work, but is unable to concentrate.)

SONG: "HOW DID I COME ACROSS?"

JOSH
A BIT LESS PRETTY THAN SUE.
MAYBE...MAYBE NOT...NOT REALLY SURE.
A BIT MORE WITTY THAN SUE.
MAYBE...MAYBE NOT...SHE HAS A CERTAIN ALLURE.

SHE'S VERY WARM -- IN A LUKE-WARM WAY.
SHE'S VERY NICE -- IN A NOT-SO-NICE WAY,
SHE'S VERY STRAIGHTFORWARD -- IN A ROUNDABOUT WAY,
BUT HOW DID I COME ACROSS?
DID I COME ACROSS OKAY?

I WONDER IF SHE LIKES ME.
I DON'T THINK SHE LIKES ME.
SHE LIKED ME WELL ENOUGH, 'CAUSE SHE SAID 'YES.'
BUT WHY'D YOU MENTION NADER?
THAT SHOULD HAVE COME OUT LATER!
YOU WERE MUCH TOO EAGER TO IMPRESS!

No...

THE SOCIALLY CONSCIOUS STUFF -- IT GIVES ME DEPTH.
SCORED A POINT THERE, SCORED A POINT THERE!

HOW DID I COME ACROSS?
DID I COME ACROSS OKAY?
I'M NEVER AT A LOSS
FOR CLEVER REPARTEE --
THE FOLLOWING DAY!

THE DUMB THINGS THAT YOU SAID:
"DOROTHY PARKER'S DEAD."
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE CORRECTED HER AT ALL!
YOU RECOMMENDED, AND YOU LECTURED,
CONDESCENDED, AND CONJECTURED --
SHE'S GIVING YOU A CHANCE BECAUSE YOU'RE TALL!

"A ballad isn't valid."

VALID?! OH, MY GOD,
WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU?
THERE YOU LOST TWO!
HOW DID I COME ACROSS?
DID I COME ACROSS OKAY?
MY FLAIR FOR TONGUE-IN-CHEEK,
WAS FOOT-IN-MOUTH TODAY!
WHAT ELSE DID YOU SAY?

YOU TALKED ABOUT YOURSELF TOO MUCH --
ME, ME, ME, ME, ME, ME, ME!
YOU SHOULD HAVE ASKED MORE QUESTIONS!

Let me see...

DID YOU ASK HER ANY QUESTIONS?
I DID ASK HER TO DINNER --
DOES THAT COUNT?
THAT DOESN'T COUNT!
MINUS TWO, LESS ONE, IS MINUS THREE!

AH YES! NOW I REMEMBER!
I ASKED ABOUT HER BUTTON!
SCORED A POINT THERE --
HALF A POINT THERE.
HOW DID I COME ACROSS?
DID I COME ACROSS OKAY?
MY JOKES GET LOTS OF MILEAGE --
ONCE I'M MILES AWAY!
WHAT ELSE DID YOU SAY?

DID YOU COMPLIMENT HER ONCE?
I DON'T THINK YOU DID,
YOU DIDN'T COMPLIMENT THE WOMAN, NOT AT ALL!
WAIT! I LIKED HER SMILE AND SAID SO --
OR DID YOU ONLY THINK IT?
I THINK I SAID SO...NOW I DON'T RECALL!
MAY HAVE LOST A POINT THERE,
WHAT DO I CARE.
WHY SHOULD I CARE?

THERE ARE PLENTY OF FLIRTY WOMEN IN THIS CITY,
BETWEEN TWENTY AND THIRTY, AND EXTREMELY PRETTY,
THERE'S THAT WOMAN WHO SELLS TIES AT SAKS --
SO RELAX!
THERE'S THAT FRIEND OF MAUREEN'S COUSIN
I MET TWICE BEFORE --
THERE'S A DOZEN MORE!
BUT, NEVER MIND, SHE SAID YES!
THERE WERE A HUNDRED OTHER THINGS THAT SHE COULD SAY...
(thinks)
LIKE NO!
HOW DID I COME ACROSS?
I GUESS I CAME ACROSS OKAY!

Well, not too badly anyway.

(BLACK OUT.)

ACT 1

Scene 9

SETTING:

ABBY'S apartment.

AT RISE:

ABBY tries to work at piano,
then gives up.

SONG: "I DON'T WANT TO HOLD BACK."

ABBY
I'M MUCH TOO DEPENDENT
WHERE MEN ARE CONCERNED
IN MY ROMANTIC DEALINGS.
I CAN BUDGET MY TIME,
BUT WHY HAVEN'T I LEARNED
TO CAREFULLY BUDGET MY FEELINGS?

HOW IS IT THAT I CAN IGNORE
THE FRIENDSHIP THAT CAME LONG BEFORE?
BUT HE MAKES ME FEEL WONDERFUL,
WELL, GUILTY -- AND WONDERFUL,
I CAN'T SEEM TO HOLD BACK --
WHY SHOULD I? WHAT FOR?

(Restless, ABBY gets up from the piano, and starts to move around the apartment.)

ABBY (cont.)

I DON'T WANT TO HOLD IN,
I DON'T WANT TO HOLD BACK,
DON'T WANT TO CALCULATE MY FEELINGS,
I DON'T WANT TO KEEP TRACK
I NEVER TEST MY BREAKS
BEFORE I GET TO A HILL,
'CAUSE RIDING FAST IN THE FAST LANE
IS A FAR GREATER THRILL.

I DON'T WANT TO HOLD BACK,
I DON'T WANT TO HOLD IN,
DON'T WANT TO SPEND ONE DAY AWAY
FROM HIS MASCULINE GRIN,
HE'S THE MAN I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR,
IT'S FINALLY REAL,
I DON'T WANT TO HOLD BACK,
I LIKE THE WAY I FEEL...

(with sudden restraint)

USE THE OLD BRAINS.
PULL IN THE REINS,
YOU MIGHT GET HURT IN A SHOWDOWN.
(crosses back to the piano, begins to work)
FEEL LESS. WORK MORE.
WISE UP. SLOW DOWN.
SLOW DOWN... NO!

(ABBY throws down her papers. Filled with passion, SHE moves about freely.)

I'M GONNA GIVE ALL,
I'M GONNA GIVE IN,
WHY DOES WANTING AND NEEDING HIM
HAVE TO BE SUCH A SIN?
THOUGH PEOPLE SAY THE MIND
SHOULD GUIDE THE HEART,
SOMETIMES THE HORSE
HAS GOT TO FOLLOW THE CART!

I CAN'T SEEM TO HOLD BACK,
I DON'T WANT TO TRY,
THOUGH MY WINGS ARE UNSTEADY,
I AM READY TO FLY!
THIS IS SO CERTAIN,
THIS IS SO SURE,
I'M GONNA GIVE ALL I'VE GOT
BECAUSE I FEEL SECURE...

(Suddenly, the joy is gone.)

ABBY (cont.)

A MUCH SLOWER BEAT,
A MUCH LOWER HEAT,
COOL OFF WHILE YOU CAN,
IT'S BEEN WRONG FROM THE START,
FEEL LESS,
THINK MORE,
BE STRONG,
BE SMART...
BE SMART...
HOLD BACK!
HOLD BACK!

ACT I

SCENE 2

SETTING:

ABBY'S apartment.

AT RISE:

SUE and JOSH enter in REVUE
LIGHTING.

ABBY attempts to "hold back" and remain aloof, but JOSH is persistent.

JOSH

DARLING, TELL ME WHICH HORSD'OEVRE
IS THE ONE THAT I SHOULD SERVE
SO I WILL HAVE AN ENTREE TO YOUR HEART, DEAR.
(NOT TO MENTION EVERY OTHER PART, DEAR!)

YOUR PASSION'S BEEN IN JAIL FOR MANY LONELY NIGHTS,
BUT NOW I'VE SET THE BAIL AT FIFTY NIBBLY BITES,
YOU'VE BEEN FED STALE BREAD AND WATER, NOW YOU'VE BEEN PAROLED,
SIT DOWN AND EAT BEFORE OUR LOVE GETS COLD.

SUE

FRIENDS AND FORMER LOVERS WILL GET BURNED, THAT'S TRUE,
I GUESS HE THINKS HIS BUTTER'S BETTERED CHURNED BY YOU,
SO SIZZLE, FRY, AND THEN WHY NOT TRY CASSEROLED?
SIT DOWN AND EAT BEFORE YOUR LOVE GETS COLD.

ABBY (hesitantly, to JOSH)
I MAY NOT SATISFY EACH WHIM AND WISH, DEAR...

SUE (to JOSH)
AND YOU'RE THE TYPE WHO STRAYS, OR SO I'M TOLD,

ABBY (to JOSH)
I'D BE JEALOUS IF YOU SAMPLED SOME NEW DISH, DEAR.

SUE AND ABBY
BUT I'D RATHER BE GREEN WITH ENVY THAN GREEN WITH MOLD!

JOSH (to ABBY)
I DON'T KNOW WHY MY LOVE TALK MAKES YOU WORRY, CHILD,
I GUESS YA SENSE THAT I DON'T SERVE MY CURRY MILD,
MY SPICE IS WHAT ENTICES GALS WHO LIKE IT BOLD.
SIT DOWN AND EAT BEFORE OUR LOVE GETS COLD.

DANCE BREAK.

JOSH (to ABBY)
YOU ASK ME WHAT I'VE GOT? I'M NOT A BOASTER, DEAR,
Sue and Abby: (THAT'S FUNNY)
GALS SAY I'M SO HOT, YOU'LL NEED A COASTER HERE,
Sue and ABBY: (OH, HONEY)
AND THOUGH I'VE GOT A HANDLE, I AM HARD TO HOLD...
Sue and ABBY: (SONNY, SONNY!)
SIT DOWN AND EAT BEFORE OUR LOVE GETS COLD.

I'M REALLY VERY FLATTERED THAT YOU FUSSED, HON,

ABBY
(beginning to succumb)
I'M RAVENOUS, I'M STARVED, I'VE QUITE A YEN...

JOSH
THE FINEST COOKS KNOW TIMING IS A MUST, HON,

ABBY
(even more so)
WITH HEARTS OF ARTICHOKE...

JOSH
AND HEARTS OF MEN.

(ABBY'S conscience again)

SUE
YOU CAN BE BEJWELED, BEDIAMONDED, BELYNXED, MINKSTOLED,
BUT PASSION IS THE FASHION THAT WILL NE'R GET OLD,
THE PRICE IS ALWAYS HIGH, NO MATTER WHERE IT'S SOLD,

SIT DOWN AND EAT. JOSH AND ABBY

WE'LL BE DISCREET... JOSH (to ABBY)

SIT DOWN AND EAT... JOSH and ABBY
BEFORE OUR LOVE

WAIT TIL' YOUR LOVE SUE

GETS COLD. ALL

Mm hm! JOSH

Uh uh! SUE

Uh oh! ABBY

ACT I

SCENE 1

SETTING: ABBY'S apartment.

AT RISE: JOSH is preparing dinner.

JOSH
Can one actually earn one's bread and butter writing?

ABBY
(defensively)

One can.

(then)

One doesn't, but one can.

THERE'S A COFFEE SHOP DOWNSTAIRS, OWNED BY YORGOS THE GREEK,
I GIVE PIANO LESSONS TO HIS CHILDREN THREE TIMES A WEEK,
SO INSTEAD OF HIS PAYING ME THE STANDARD LESSON FEES,
HE SENDS UP THE DAILY DINNER SPECIALTIES.

JOSH
SO HE SWAPS SPINACH PIE AND FETA CHEESE...

ABBY
FOR SOME EASY-TO-PLAY MELODIES.

JOSH
Hey! Can you work out an exchange at Barney's?

ABBY
I'll see what I can do.
(takes top off pot)
SMELLS DELISH!

JOSH
YOU COULD DO IT.

ABBY
I WISH.

JOSH
IT REALLY IS SO EASY WITH A GOOD SIMPLE BOOK.
IT'S AMAZING HOW FEW WOMEN NOWADAYS KNOW HOW TO COOK.

ABBY
MOST WOMEN TODAY ARE NOT AS HELPLESS AS ME,
LIKE SUE'S A GOURMET --

(An uncomfortable pause. Josh pours some oil into the wok.)

JOSH
DID YOU MENTION TO SUE...?

ABBY
NO.
(gasps)
DID YOU?

JOSH
NO.

ABBY
(relaxed)
OH...

BOTH
SO...

ABBY
(evasive)
Mmmmm, SMELLS GREAT.

JOSH
(leaning closer to her, double entendre)
Mmmmm, CAN'T WAIT...

ABBY

(getting up)
JUST SHOWS YA, YA NEVER CAN TELL,
A LAWYER WHO'S A FOUR-STAR CHEF AS WELL!

JOSH

HOLD OFF ON THE COMPLIMENTS TILL AFTER WE DINE.
(HE takes two containers of cold noodles with sesame sauce out of the
second bag.)
OODLES AND OODLES OF SESAME NOODLES.

ABBY

THEY HAPPEN TO BE A WEAKNESS OF MINE.

JOSH

(a devilish smile)
LAWYERS?

ABBY

NOODLES.

JOSH

(pointing to third bag)
SO, WHAT'S IN THAT BAG?

ABBY

CROISSANTS.

JOSH

UMMMM. CROISSANTS. IT SO HAPPENS I ADORE CROISSANTS.

ABBY

Good. THEY'RE FOR BREAKFAST.

JOSH

(catching her)
OH?

ABBY

(embarrassed)
MY BREAKFAST!

JOSH

(slyly)
FIVE?

ABBY

(looks in the bag, feigns surprise)
IT SO HAPPENS I ADORE CROISSANTS.

(JOSH smiles, confidently. HE approaches ABBY. THEY kiss, as the
LIGHTS go down.)

ACT I

Scene 12

SETTING: ABBY'S apartment.

AT RISE: JOSH and ABBY and the Sunday Times. THEY are curled up together in bed, drinking coffee. HE is doing the crossword puzzle. SHE is reading the Arts and Leisure.

In the beginning of this scene, THEY are singing their thoughts, and not actually conversing.

SONG: "SIMPLE THINGS."

JOSH
NOW I'M OFF OF ROCK,
AND BACK TO BACH,
INTO DAYLIGHT AND
SIMPLE THINGS.

ABBY
(entering, joining him on the bed)
LEMONS FLOATING
IN LOW-TIDE SANGRIA,
LAZY SUNDAY MORNINGS,

BOTH
SIMPLE THINGS.

JOSH
THE BREAKFAST SPECIAL FOR A DOLLAR NINETY-NINE,

ABBY
WARM MUFFINS AND MARMALADE,

BOTH
SIMPLE THINGS,
SIMPLE THINGS.

JOSH
A CONCERT IN THE PARK,
ELBOWS TOUCHING IN THE DARK,

BOTH
STAYING UP LATE WITH GABLE.

ABBY
A POTFUL OF TEA
AT THE KITCHEN TABLE,
AS I WRITE MYSELF TO SLEEP...

JOSH
(overlap)
AS YOU SEND ME OFF TO SLEEP.

ABBY
(leaning head on him)
AND IT SEEMS THAT CRICKETS AND VIOLINS,
SUCH GENTLE MUSIC,
STEPS INTO MY DREAMS.

BOTH
HMMMMMMMMM...
SIMPLE THINGS.

(JOSH kisses her, smiles.)

JOSH
I'LL SEE YOU.

ABBY
TONIGHT.

JOSH
(teasing her)
HOW'S TOMORROW?

ABBY
TONIGHT!

JOSH
DONT YOU NEED TIME TO WRITE?

(ABBY shakes her head no, laughing. JOSH smiles, kisses her.)

ABBY
MISS YA.

JOSH
(tenderly)
Ciao.

ACT I

Scene 12

AT RISE:

Lights up on SUE, holding a telephone and dialing. SHE waits a moment as we hear ABBY'S pre-recorded musicalized jingle,

this time in a sexy blues rendition.

ABBY'S VOICE

HELLO! THIS IS ABBY, I'M NOT IN RIGHT NOW,
BUT TALK TO ME, TALK TO ME, ANYHOW,
I'M OUT OR I'M WORKING OR I'M FAST ASLEEP,
PLEASE LEAVE YOUR NAME AND NUMBER AT THE BEEP!

SUE

(imitating jingle)

"Hello, this is Sue, are you in right now? Are you involved in carnal lust and sin right now?" I worked on that all afternoon. No, really, uh, I'm just calling to remind you that the week after next is the third Sunday in the month, and I'm planning to come over as usual around two. Is it my turn to buy the face gunk? Let me know... Give me a call when you get a chance, okay?

(SHE hangs up.)

SONG: "LOSING TOUCH"

SUE

SUDDENLY NEEDING A REASON TO CALL,
BEFORE THIS I NEEDED NO REASON AT ALL.
LOSING TOUCH... LOSING TOUCH.

ALL OF MY MESSAGES LEFT UNRETURNED,
NOTHING'S BEEN SAID, THEREFORE NOTHING'S BEEN LEARNED.
LOSING TOUCH...LOSING TOUCH.

(SHE starts dialing again. The LIGHTS denote a time change.)

I'M STARING AT THE PHOTO ON THE KITCHEN WALL,
THE ONE OF US FROM YEARS AGO--
BUNDLED UP IN SWEATERS IN THE FROST OF FALL...
ARE YOU REALLY THE FRIEND I USED TO KNOW?

(Underscore continues. SUE speaks into phone.)

It's me, Puccini... Not home, huh?...Busy, busy, busy...

(The LIGHTS come up on ABBY, listening to SUE'S voice coming through the answering machine.)

SUE

...I ran into Josh this morning in the elevator, but he seemed to be in a hurry... What did you think of him, anyway?... You know, it's really quiet at the shop today... if you want to stop by. I got in some great roaring --

(The machine cuts her off.)

ABBY

TOO FRIGHTENED TO ANSWER, TOO FRIGHTENED TO CALL,
TOO MUCH OF A COWARD TO FACE YOU AT ALL,
LOSING TOUCH... LOSING TOUCH.

ABBY (cont.)
TIME PASSES SLOWLY, BUT KEEPS MOVING ON,

SUE
LIVING EACH DAY KNOWING SOMETHING IS GONE,

BOTH
LOSING TOUCH... LOSING TOUCH.

DANGLING FOR HOURS IN THE PARK ON SWINGS --
BLUE ABOVE AND GREEN BELOW --
FLYING THROUGH THE SKY AS IF WE BOTH HAD WINGS...

ABBY
SHARING SECRETS OF FRIENDSHIP -- SO LONG AGO...

SUE
ARE YOU REALLY THE FRIEND I USED TO KNOW?

SO FEED ME ANY ALIBI,
THERE'D BE SOME COMFORT IN A LIE,
THEN I'D NEVER HAVE TO ASK YOU WHY

ABBY & SUE
WE'RE LOSING TOUCH,
LOSING OUT,
LOSING YOU,
LOSING ALL,
I NEVER KNEW IT COULD HURT SO MUCH
TO BE LOSING TOUCH.

(END OF ACT 1)

ACT II

Scene 1

(In the BLACKOUT, we hear ABBY's musicalized jingle, this time a Mozartian operatic version)

ABBY'S VOICE

HEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEELLO, THIS IS ABBY, I'M NOT IN
RIGHT NOW,
BUT TALK TO ME, TALK TO ME, ANYHOW,
I'M OUT OR I'M WORKING OR I'M FAST ASLEEP,
PLEASE LEAVE YOUR NAME AND NUMBER AT THE BEEEEEEEP!

JOSH

(amused) Hi. It's me. I just wanted to say I had a wonderful time with you yesterday and I'm really looking forward to seeing you tonight. Give me a buzz when you take a break. Bye.

AT RISE:

SUE holds a bowl of steaming water,
two washcloths, and a jar of face masque.

SUE

(looking around)
I WANT YOU TO KNOW,
I'M VERY IMPRESSED.
THE PLACE LOOKS AS THOUGH
YOU'RE EXPECTING A GUEST.
THE KITCHEN'S EXTREMELY --
(at a loss)
JUST LIKE THE REST!
AND THOSE STORAGE MAJIGGIES
OVER THE STOVE,
COME TO THINK OF IT,
JOSH HAS THE SAME ONES IN MAUVE.

ABBY

(innocently)
HE DOES?

SUE

YES, HE DOES.

ABBY

(changing the subject)
HEY, I'VE GOT AN IDEA!
WHILE THE GUNK IS DRYING,
YOU CAN HELP WITH THE
CROSSWORD I'M TRYING.

SUE

(surprised)
SINCE WHEN DO YOU DO --

ABBY

JUST THE TIMES.

(THEY both start putting the face masque on.)

SUE

I know it's been a while, but everything seems so... so...

ABBY

(glancing down at crossword puzzle)
WHAT'S A NINE-LETTER WORD FOR --

SUE

(looking around)
DIFFERENT!

ABBY

WHAT'S A SEVEN-LETTER WORD MEANING --

SUE

CHANGED?

ABBY

AN ELEVEN-LETTER WORD FOR --

SUE

INTERESTING!

ABBY

WHAT'S A TWELVE LETTER WORD FOR --

SUE

CONSIDERABLE?

ABBY

SEVENTEEN ACROSS...

SUE

(overlap)
A CROSS BETWEEN --

(ABBY finally looks at her.)

SUE (continuing)
WORDS SEEM TO ESCAPE ME!
THE FURNITURE HAS BEEN DERANGED --
(pretending to catch herself)
REARRANGED, I MEAN.
THE PLACE LOOKS INHUMAN --
(trying to joke about it)
THERE'S SO MUCH MORE ROOM IN THE PLACE --
NOW THAT IT'S CLEAN!

ABBY

(agreeing)
CLEAN AND SERENE!

SUE

(still joking, nervously)
SO MUCH LIKE A HOSPITAL -- SO HOSPITABLE, I MEAN.
AND MUCH MORE LEAVEABLE --

ABBY

(putting a little mask on SUE's face)
LIVEABLE.
(pleasantly)
I PUT MY PILES INTO FILES.
I STASHED AND TRASHED MY ODDS AND ENDS.
REMEMBER, THEY WENT ON FOR MILES.

SUE

(pointedly)
REMEMBER, WE WERE SUCH GOOD FRIENDS?

(ABBY tries to ignore her one more time with the crossword.)

ABBY

WHAT'S A FOUR-LETTER WORD FOR...

SUE

(overlapping)
...FOR WHAT FRIENDS DO
WHEN THEY'RE FEELING UNCOMFORTABLE?

ABBY

FAKE?

SUE

TALK?

ABBY

FAKE?

(a request)
TALK?
(a long pause)

SUE

I've been seeing --

ABBY

I know.

SUE

(Both ABBY and SUE blurt out their feelings without listening to one another.)

ABBY
I REALLY DIDN'T WANT HIM,
I DIDN'T WANT TO WANT HIM,
BUT NOW I KNOW I WANT HIM,
YOU MUST BE HURT, I KNOW.

SUE
THE GUY IS NOT THE PROBLEM,
THE GUY IS NOT THE ISSUE,
I REALLY ONLY WISH YOU
HAD CALLED TO SAY HELLO.

ABBY
I FEEL GUILTY THAT I FEEL HAPPY,
I FEEL HAPPY THAT I FEEL GUILTY,
IT MAKES ME FEEL LESS ROTTEN,
THOUGH I KNOW I'M WRONG.

SUE
THAT'S REALLY NOT THE PROBLEM,
THAT'S REALLY NOT THE ISSUE,
I REALLY ONLY WISH YOU
DIDN'T WAIT SO LONG.

ABBY
I FEEL LOUSY THAT I FEEL HAPPY,
I FEEL HAPPY THAT I FEEL LOUSY,
IT MAKES ME FEEL LESS ROTTEN,
THOUGH I'M ROTTEN EVEN SO.

SUE
IT'S REALLY NOT A PROBLEM,
IT'S REALLY NOT THE ISSUE,
WISH YOU HADN'T MADE ME
FEEL FORGOTTEN,
CALLED TO SAY HELLO.

ABBY
I FEEL GUILTY THAT I FEEL HAPPY,
I FEEL HAPPY THAT I FEEL GUILTY,
IT MAKES ME FEEL LESS ROTTEN,
THOUGH I AM, I KNOW.

ABBY
WELL, I'M GLAD WE TALKED IT THROUGH,
AND STRAIGHTENED OUT OUR --

SUE
(wiping off masque quickly)
YES, ME TOO.
SO,
GOTTA GO.
GOT SOME LAUNDRY,
THEN, Y'KNOW,
GONNA HEAR SOME PUNK.

ABBY
GOT A DATE?

SUE
WELL, HECTOR.

ABBY
I'LL CALL YOU TONIGHT --
NO, TOMORROW --

(THEY look at each other awkwardly)

ABBY
TONIGHT!

SUE
YEAH, OKAY.

(ABBY exits. ABBY's apartment disappears, SUE crosses downstage.)

SONG: "I'M SO HAPPY FOR HER"

SUE
I'M SO HAPPY FOR HER, SHE'S IN LOVE,
I'M SO PLEASED SHE'S FOUND A MAN,
SHE'LL BE SMILING NON-STOP,
LIKE RAGGEDY ANN.

I'M SO HAPPY FOR HER, SHE'S ECSTATIC,
SHE'S FLYING ABOUT,
SHE'S BEEN ACROBATIC,
SINCE IT ALL BEGAN.

AND IF IT SHOULD END,
SHE'LL NEED A FRIEND,
AND I'LL BE THERE, I'LL BE THERE,
FOR THAT'S WHEN THE VALUE OF FRIENDSHIP INCREASES,
AND IF IT SHOULD END,
SHE'LL NEED A FRIEND,
AND I'LL BE THERE, I'LL BE THERE, I'LL BE THERE,
TO HELP HER PICK UP THE PIECES.

(realizing)

I can't wait...

HAVE I HIDDEN IT WELL,
OR DOES SHE KNOW,
JUST HOW JEALOUS I AM,
AND JUST HOW LOW?

WHAT SORT OF SUPPORT CAN I LEND?
HAVE I EVER REALLY CARED?
IN THE END,
AM I ONLY HER FRIEND,
WHEN THERE'S PAIN TO BE SHARED?

I WANT TO BE
SO HAPPY FOR HER, SHE'S IN LOVE,
I WANT TO BE
SO PLEASED SHE'S FINALLY FOUND HIM...

WHAT SORT OF SUPPORT CAN I LEND?
HAVE I EVER REALLY CARED?
IN THE END,
AM I ONLY HER FRIEND,
WHEN THERE'S PAIN TO BE SHARED?

WHY CAN'T I BE
SO HAPPY FOR HER?
SHE'S IN LOVE.

ACT II

Scene 2

SETTING: ABBY'S apartment.

AT RISE: They are exercising.

JOSH
LEFT AND RIGHT AND DON'T STOP YET!

ABBY
I'M WORKING UP AN APPETITE.

JOSH
FIRST WORK UP A SWEAT.
(starting another exercise)
THIS IS ABSURD!

ABBY
(thinking he means the exercise)
GLAD YOU AGREE.

JOSH
WE ALWAYS GO BACK TO YOUR PLACE,
BUT YOU NEVER COME HOME WITH ME.

ABBY
(evasively)
DONT YOU LIKE MY APARTMENT?

JOSH
THAT'S NOT THE POINT --
WE SHOULD SPEND TIME AT MY PLACE --

ABBY
(pretending to be in pain)
I'VE STRAINED A JOINT.

JOSH
(getting back to the topic)
I'M SURE SUE WON'T BUMP INTO US.

ABBY
THERE'S NO GUARANTEE.

JOSH
WHEN YOU TOLD HER, DID SHE MAKE A FUSS?

ABBY
WELL, ACTUALLY...
(starting another exercise)
ONE...

JOSH
(overlap)
Oh, Abby...
(stopping)
HAVENT YOU...?

ABBY
NOT EXACTLY.

JOSH
OH, NOW I SEE.
I SWEAR SHE WON'T CARE --
IT WAS JUST AN AFFAIR.
WOMEN, WOMEN!

ABBY
MEN, MEN!
THAT'S ENOUGH FOR ME!
(SHE moves away to the bench. HE approaches her.)

JOSH
(continuing)
WHAT'S THE MATTER?

ABBY
NOTHING.

JOSH
NOTHING?
(a pause)

ABBY
JOSH.
DO YOU THINK THAT I'M TOTALLY OUT OF MY MIND?
WE'RE HARDLY AN ITEM OF ANY KIND.
I'D BE JUMPING THE GUN IF I WENT AND TOLD SUE.

JOSH
BUT I DO HAVE A KIND OF A FEELING FOR YOU.

ABBY
(unmoved)
Yeah, yeah.

JOSH
Abby.

ABBY
What?

JOSH
I don't get it. I thought, well.

ABBY
What?

JOSH
I think of you as... of us as... something.

ABBY
Sure. The romance of the century.

I REALLY LIKE YOU. JOSH

(lightly)
Uh-huh. Good. I like you, too. ABBY

Jesus. JOSH

WHAT'S THE MATTER? ABBY

NOTHING. JOSH

NOTHING? ABBY

JOSH
I WANT US TO BE... SOMETHING EXCLUSIVE.
I WANT US TO HAVE SOMETHING CONDUCTIVE...
TO A KIND OF COMMITMENT.

I did tell her. ABBY

What? JOSH

Sue. I told her. That we were, well... ABBY

Oh. Good. Good. God. That's
(at a loss)
Good. JOSH

So you're talkin' serious? Talkin' something special. Talkin'...
(pointedly)
Long term? ABBY

(taken aback)
Uh, yeah. That's what I mean. Something like... that. Sure. JOSH
(pause)
I mean, I'm not exactly ready to be the father of your children...

ABBY is taken aback by JOSH's sudden hesitance.

LIGHTS change to REVUE LIGHTING, and in ABBY's
imagination, JOSH suddenly appears in
a straw hat, striped vaudeville jacket and dance cane.

SONG: "I WANT YOU TO BE..."

JOSH

I WANT YOU TO BE THE MOTHER OF THE CHILDREN
I'M NOT SURE I WANT TO HAVE,
WAIT, NO! WHAT I MEAN IS,
I WANT YOU TO BE THE LOVELY LOVING WIFE THAT I COME HOME TO,
IF I DO—WAIT, NO!

WHAT IM GETTING AT IS THAT
I WANT YOU TO BE THE LADY OF OUR LOVELY COUNTRY HOUSE,
WITH SEVERAL LOVELY CHILDREN, ME AND YOU.
WE'LL NEED NO OUTSIDE STIMULATION,
WE'LL LIVE IN RUSTIC ISOLATION
AT EIGHTY-FIRST AND SECOND AVENUE.
NO! WHAT I MEAN IS...

I WANT YOU TO BE THE WOMAN I GROW COLD WITH,
NO! GROW *OLD* WITH,
YESSIREE! THERE, NOW...
THAT'S MORE LIKE IT!
I WANT TO BE ONE THE LOOSE,
I MEAN, I WANT TO TIE THE NOOSE,
NO!—TIE THE KNOT!
WHY NOT GIVE IT A SHOT...(GUN?)

I KNOW THAT I WANT TO BE OUT WITH THE SINGLES,
I MEAN, I KNOW I WANT TO SINGLE YOU OUT!
THE WHOLE IDEA'S DEPRESSING—
NO, IT'S MAKING ME SMILE,
AND SO I'LL GLADLY WALK THE PLANK—
I MEAN I'LL WALK DOWN THE AISLE!

I WANT YOU TO BE THE WOMAN WHO EVENTUALLY
WILL MAKE ME BORED IN BED:
NO! SHARE BY BED AND BOARD!
THE WOMAN THAT I WED!
I'M READY TO MAKE THE MISTAKE—
NO, I MEAN, TAKE THE STEP.

(becoming increasingly panicked)

I WANT YOU TO BE THE MOTHER OF
THE MEASLES, AND THE MONO,
AND THE TADPOLES, AND THE TURTLES,
AND THE CANDY IN THE CARPET,
AND THE SITTER, AND THE SETTER,
AND THE BOREDOM IN THE BEDROOM,
AND THE LAWYERS IN THE COURTROOM,
AND THE BATTLE FOR THE CHILDREN I'M NOT SURE I WANT,
I'M NOT SURE I WANT,
I'M NOT ABSOLUTELY, RESOLUTELY SURE I WANT TO HAVE!!!

(BLACKOUT)

ACT II

Scene 3

SETTING: The laundry room in SUE and JOSH's apartment building.

AT RISE: JOSH enters the laundry room with an overstuffed pillowcase, and stops short when he sees SUE.

JOSH

(uncomfortable)
OH, HI...
TODAY I NEED TWO... GOT A BIG LOAD TO DO...

SUE

(matter of fact)
THERE'S ONE OVER THERE.

JOSH

GOOD, I'LL WAIT HERE FOR THE OTHER...
(SHE takes a load out of the dryer)
GOT A BIG LOAD TO DO...
WHEN THAT ONE IS THROUGH...
THEN I'LL HAVE TWO.

SUE

TRUE.
(under breath)
OH, BROTHER!
(casually folding laundry)
"FRIENDSHIP IS ENDURING". ISN'T THAT SO REASSURING?
(pointedly)
I'D SAY FRIENDSHIP IS AVOIDING.

JOSH

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S BEEN AVOIDING!

SUE

What?
YOU NEVER STOP BY TO SAY HI!

JOSH

YOU STOPPED COMING TO RENT MEETINGS, WHY?

SUE

(changing subject)
How's Abby?

Fine... Don't you speak to her? JOSH

No. SUE

(mimics message jingle)
"HELLO, THIS IS ABBY, I'M NOT IN RIGHT NOW."

JOSH
SHE'S VERY BUSY.
YOU KNOW SHE'S BUSY.

SUE
YEAH, I KNOW.
I KNOW ONE THING --
YOU'RE PRETTY POPULAR, I SEE.

JOSH
JUST BECAUSE I'M DOING ALL THE TENANTS' LEGAL WORK FOR FREE.

SUE
I MEANT WITH ABBY, POPULAR WITH ABBY.

JOSH
OH...
(feigning nonchalance)
OH, THANKS.

SUE
(a little joke)
SHE NEVER THREW OUT
ALL HER BACK ISSUES OF VARIETY
FOR ANY GUY BEFORE.

Oh. JOSH

SUE
SHE NEVER CLEARED OFF
THE TOP OF HER PIANO
FOR ANY MAN BEFORE.

Oh. (concerned) JOSH

SUE
SHE WOULD CERTAINLY NEVER TAKE ALL THE TIME
TO PUT UP A TRACK LIGHT
WITHOUT PUTTING UP A BIG FIGHT,
NOT UNLESS YOU WERE SOMEONE SHE'D ADORE.

Oh. (worried) JOSH

(kidding him) SUE
AT LEAST SHE'S NOT DOING YOUR LAUNDRY.

SHE OFFERED. JOSH

Oh! (worried) SUE
(making light of it)
IT SEEMS TO BE QUITE CLEAR
FOR THIS MAN SHE MIGHT
EVEN GIVE UP HER --

Career?! (alarmed) JOSH

No! (sharply) SUE

Sorry. JOSH

(a tirade) SUE
OH, MEN REALLY CAN BE SO VAIN!
I SAID SHE'S IN LOVE. NOT INSANE!

What? JOSH

-- GIVE UP HER APARTMENT! SUE

Oh. (somewhat relieved) JOSH
(loading his machine)
THE COMPLIMENT'S NICE,
BUT IT JUST ISN'T SO,
YOU SAID YOU RARELY SEE HER,
SO HOW WOULD YOU KNOW?
SO SHE LIKES ME ALL RIGHT,
YES, BUT SHE'S NOT IN -- YOU KNOW.
SHE NEVER COULD QUITE...
NO, SHE WON'T EVER QUITE...

(totally frustrated and alarmed)
Damn! I'm all out of All!

SUE
(glibly offering him detergent)
HAVE YOU TRIED TIDE? WITH NEW ACTION ENZYMES?

JOSH
THANKS. I'LL DROP IT BY LATER.

SUE
NO, NOT LATER -- KEEP IT.
(shrugging)
YOU CAN ALWAYS USE IT NEXT TIME.
CIAO.
(SUE exits.)

JOSH
(worried)
CIAO.
(JOSH exits.)

ACT II

Scene 4

SETTING: ABBY's apartment.
SHE speaks/sings into her tape recorder.

ABBY
I HAVE TO HAVE MY FIRST CHILD BY 37,
SO I NEED TO BE MARRIED BY 36...

Chip. Hi. I'm really glad the producers okayed the First Child song. I was thinking it might be a nice running gag throughout the show...like, whenever the woman's having doubts about her life.

JOSH enters. ABBY turns off the recorder.

ABBY
(with enthusiasm)
HOW'S FLOUNDER?

JOSH
FLOUNDER?

ABBY
FOR DINNER?

JOSH
DINNER?

ABBY
(flaunting new cookbook)
I FINALLY DECIDED I'D BETTER LEARN HOW TO COOK,
SO I PICKED OUT THREE DELICIOUS DISHES FROM A BOOK.
SO IT'S EITHER FLOUNDER...

JOSH
OH.

ABBY
OR COTELETTE DE VEAU,
OR POULET MARENGO,
THEN MOUSSE CHOCOLATE,
WITH CREAM OR WITHOUT,
UNLESS I MAKE A MESS OF IT,
AND WE THEN CAN GO EAT OUT.

JOSH
THAT'S REALLY VERY SWEET OF YOU.

ABBY
I HOPE IT'S GOOD.

JOSH
BUT REALLY, I HAD NO IDEA.

ABBY
IT'S A SURPRISE.

JOSH
I REALLY DIDN'T COUNT ON DINNER.

ABBY
(laughs)
What? Me skip a meal?

JOSH
(increasingly uncomfortable)
I'VE GOT TO GO AND MEET MY MOTHER... AND HER NEWEST...
AT SOME MOVIE...

ABBY
(disappointed)
OH, WELL, NO BIG DEAL.

JOSH
I'D INVITE YOU, BUT IT WOULD BE WEIRD. HE'S WEIRD.

ABBY
SURE, I UNDERSTAND.

JOSH
I'D INVITE YOU, BUT IT WOULD BE -- HE'S --
I'M SORRY THAT YOU PLANNED.

ABBY
IT'S JUST THAT I THOUGHT WE WOULD BE
SPENDING THE WEEKEND TOGETHER.

JOSH
WE DID.

ABBY
WE DIDN'T.

JOSH
WE DID.

ABBY
A WEEKEND MEANS ALL SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, TRUE?

JOSH
(trying to be patient)
BUT WE WERE TOGETHER THURSDAY NIGHT AND FRIDAY, TOO.

(ABBY shrugs.)

JOSH
(continuing)
THIS GIVES YOU TIME TO DO SOME WORK,
I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE GOOD FOR YOU.

ABBY
WORK CAN WAIT.

JOSH
(annoyed)
BUT YOU HAVEN'T WRITTEN IN AGES.

ABBY
THAT'S NOT TRUE, I'VE GOT A COUPLE OF PAGES.

(seductively)
MAYBE I'LL EVEN SHOW THEM TO YOU LATER ON TONIGHT.

JOSH
I THOUGHT THAT I JUST MIGHT -- CRASH AT MY PLACE,
SINCE I'LL BE UPTOWN.

ABBY
(covering her disappointment)
SURE, WELL IN THAT CASE,
WHY COME ALL THE WAY DOWN.

JOSH
I'D LOVE TO HEAR YOUR STUFF.

ABBY
(snapping)
YOU MAY HAVE MISSED YOUR CHANCE.
(apologetically)
I PROBABLY WOULD HAVE BURNED THE FLOUNDER, ANYWAY.
WHAT'S WRONG?

JOSH
(tensely)
NOTHING'S WRONG. NOTHING WORTH TALKING ABOUT.
I'LL CALL YOU.

ABBY
TONIGHT?

JOSH
HOW'S TOMORROW?

ABBY
TONIGHT.

JOSH
(pressured)
YEAH, OKAY.
(starts to go)

ABBY
MISS YA.

JOSH
Ciao.

(JOSH exits. ABBY watches for a beat. She crosses to the piano and turns on the tape recorder)

ABBY
I HAVE TO HAVE MY FIRST CHILD BY 39,
SO I NEED TO BE MARRIED BY 41...

Continuation of running gag for First Child. Umm...now for Sit Down and Eat, third revision.

SUE
LOVE'S BANQUET LEAVES YOU DIRTY DISHES YOU MUST WASH,

ABBY
SO IS IT WORTH THE TROUBLE FOR A LOUSY NOSH?

JOSH
(still selling)
LOVE'S A TRAVELING SALESMAN...

ABBY

(wary)
AND HE SELLS FOOL'S GOLD,

ALL

SIT DOWN AND EAT BEFORE OUR LOVE GETS COLD.

JOSH

ROMANCE IS ALWAYS CHANCEY, YET, IT'S STILL WORTHWHILE,

SUE

BUT WHEN THE MAN GETS ANTSY, HE'LL PULL OUT WITH STYLE,

(The music stops. ABBY puts down her pen, exasperated.)

JOSH (annoyed)

Why aren't you writing?

SUE (gloating)

Time for the tragedy lyric.

ABBY

(pushing herself)
WITHOUT GREAT PASSION, TRAGEDIES WOULD NOT HAVE SOLD...

JOSH and SUE

SIT DOWN AND EAT...

(The set changes to the Italian-Chinese Restaurant scene.)

JOSH (to ABBY)

YOU'RE LATE!

SUE (to ABBY)

TAKE A SEAT!

ALL

SIT DOWN AND EAT BEFORE OUR/YOUR LOVE GETS COLD.

JOSH and SUE (to ABBY)

Sit down!!

ACT II

Scene 5

SETTING:

The Italian/Chinese restaurants.

AT RISE:

SUE and JOSH are at two different restaurants. JOSH's table is filled with wine glasses, candle, and breadsticks. SUE's table is filled with tea cups, soy sauce shaker and chopsticks. ABBY sits down in a swivel chair and goes back and forth between them throughout the scene.

ABBY
(to SUE)
I've missed you.

SUE
(to ABBY)
I've missed you, too.

ABBY
(to JOSH)
I've missed you.

JOSH
(irate, to ABBY)
I'm starved.

(ABBY smiles uncomfortably, looks down into the menu. JOSH is not in a pleasant mood.)

ABBY
THE FOOD HERE IS GREAT.

JOSH
YOU WERE REALLY QUITE LATE.

ABBY
TRY THE FETTUCINI.

JOSH
THE FETTUCINI'S TEENY.

ABBY
SO TRY THE SCALLOPINI.

I'LL GET CLAMS. JOSH

(ABBY swivels around to SUE)

I'LL GET THE SUBGUM. NO MSG. SUE

SAME FOR ME. ABBY

(ironic)
FIGURES. SUE

What? ABBY

SUE
YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO GET DIFFERENT DISHES
WHEN YOU GO FOR CHINESE.

ABBY
BUT I REALLY WANT SUBGUM.

SUE
(put off)
FINE. DO AS YOU PLEASE. PASS THE NOODLES.

ABBY
OKAY
(turning to JOSH, handing him gift)
OKAY.

Oh, (overlap) JOSH
AND WHAT IS THIS?

ABBY
THIS IS A KISS.
AND A PRESENT.

JOSH
(distant)
WHO FOR?

ABBY
FOR WHO'D YA THINK?
FOR THE MAN I ADORE.

JOSH
(uncomfortable)
THANKS.

IT'S NICE AND LIGHT. ABBY

IT'LL BE TOO TIGHT. JOSH

GREAT FOR YOUR EYES. ABBY

IT'S THE WRONG SIZE. JOSH

I'LL TAKE IT BACK... ABBY

BUT THANKS A LOT. JOSH

...BACK TO THE STORE. ABBY

YES, YOU HAD BETTER. JOSH

I'LL GET A FORTY-TWO. ABBY

JOSH
THAT'S REALLY VERY SWEET OF YOU,
BUT I JUST DON'T NEED A SWEATER.

ABBY
(hurt)
OH... GOOD...
(turns to SUE)

SUE
(overlap)
GOOD TO SEE YOU.

ABBY
WHAT'S WRONG WITH JOSH?

SUE
(exasperated)
I DON'T KNOW, I DON'T KNOW.

ABBY
OH, WHAT'S WRONG WITH US?

SUE
(encouraged)
YOU AND ME?

ABBY
JOSH AND ME. LATELY, HE LACKS SENSITIVITY.

SUE
(sarcastically)
OH?

ABBY
(turning to JOSH, overlap)
OH, HONEY, CAN YOU PLEASE PASS THE --

JOSH
WHAT'S WITH THE HONEY?

ABBY
WHAT?

JOSH
JUST THEN YOU CALLED ME HONEY,
TELL ME, WHAT'S WRONG WITH JOSH?
WHAT'S WRONG WITH JOSH?

JOSH and ABBY
(as ABBY turns to SUE)
WHAT'S WRONG WITH JOSH?

SUE
EVERYTHING IS JOSH, JOSH, JOSH, JOSH, JOSH.
THE GUY IS JUST A JERK, JERK, JERK, JERK, JERK.
YOU'RE DRIVING ME BESERK, SERK, SERK, SERK, SERK.
NO TIME LEFT FOR YOUR WORK, WORK, WORK, WORK, WORK.
IT REALLY IS A CRIME, CRIME,
HE TAKES UP ALL YOUR TIME, TIME --
DON'T EAT ALL THE NOODLES! --
I MEAN, EVERYTHING IS HIM, HIM, HIS, HIS, HE.
WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THE HER, HER, HERS, HERS, SHE?
WHAT KIND OF FRIENDSHIP CAN OURS BE, BE, BE, BE, BE?
WHEN YOU NEVER THINK OF ME?
AND THAT'S WHAT'S WRONG WITH JOSH.
AND THAT'S WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU!

JOSH
(overlap)
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU, YOU, YOU, YOU, YOU?
I HAVEN'T GOT A CLUE, CLUE, CLUE, CLUE, CLUE.
YOU'VE LOST YOUR POINT OF VIEW, VIEW, VIEW, VIEW, VIEW.
DON'T PRETEND IT ISN'T TRUE, TRUE, TRUE, TRUE, TRUE.
YOUR SHOW GOES ON IN JUNE, JUNE,
THAT'S REALLY VERY SOON, SOON,
DON'T WANT TO INTERFERE, FERE,
I THINK I'D BEST STAY CLEAR, CLEAR?

(ABBY begins to swivel back and forth rapidly until she is almost spinning.)

SUE
I MEAN EVERYTHING IS
HIM, HIM, HIS, HIS, HE.
WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THE
HER, HER, HERS, HERS, SHE?
WHAT KIND OF FRIENDSHIP
CAN OURS BE, BE, BE, BE, BE?
WHEN YOU NEVER THINK OF
ME, ME, ME, ME, ME.
AND THAT'S WHAT'S WRONG
WITH JOSH,
THAT'S WHAT'S WRONG WITH
JOSH,
THAT'S WHAT'S WRONG WITH
JOSH,

JOSH
YOU DO EVERYTHING I
ASK, ASK, ASK, ASK, ASK.
EVERY LITTLE
TASK, TASK, TASK, TASK, TASK.
MY GOD, WHY CANT YOU LET ME
BE, BE, BE, BE, BE?
YOU ONLY THINK OF
ME, ME, ME, ME, ME.
AND THAT'S WHAT'S WRONG
WITH YOU,
THAT'S WHAT'S WRONG WITH
YOU,
THAT'S WHAT'S WRONG WITH
YOU,

ABBY
SHE WANTS ALL OF ME,
HE WANTS NONE OF ME,
HELLO, THIS IS ABBY, I'M NOT IN RIGHT NOW!

ACT II

SCENE 6

(ABBY, SUE and JOSH are each in his/her own space.)

SONG: "LOSING TOUCH" (reprise)

JOSH
WORDS FLYING EVERYWHERE, ANGRY AND CURT,

ABBY
EMPTY OF TENDERNESS,

SUE
LOADED WITH HURT,

ALL
LOSING TOUCH, LOSING TOUCH.

ABBY
I WANTED EVERYTHING, NOW ALL IS LOST,

JOSH AND ABBY
HOW COULD I NOT HAVE CONSIDERED THE COST?

ALL
LOSING TOUCH, LOSING TOUCH.

ALL
NOW I SEE I'LL HAVE TO WAIT THIS OUT ALONE,

JOSH
(I'M BETTER OFF ALONE.)

ABBY and SUE
HOPING PASSING TIME WILL HEAL,

JOSH
(IT'S OVER NOW.)

ALL
CONVINCE MYSELF AGAIN, IT'S BETTER ON MY OWN,

ABBY
NOT HAVING TO ANSWER TO ANYONE...

ALL
NOT HAVING TO FEEL...

SUE
LOSING THE FRIENDSHIP

ABBY
AND I AM TO BLAME,

JOSH
IT ALWAYS STARTS DIFFERENTLY, BUT ENDS THE SAME.

ALL
LOSING TOUCH, LOSING TOUCH.

ACT II

Scene 7

SETTING:

Outside SUE's apartment.

AT RISE:

The lights come up on the hallway outside SUE's apartment. JOSH is slipping leaflets underneath the doors. HE gets to SUE's door, starts to slip the leaflet underneath when SUE opens the door, dressed to go out.

HI, THERE. JOSH

HI, BACK. SUE

JOSH
I JUST WANTED TO DROP OFF
THE ANTI-CO-OP FORM.
IT'S A NEW ONE THEY'RE USING,
AND IT'S RATHER CONFUSING,
SO READ IT THROUGH AND SIGN.

HOW ARE YOU? SUE

I'M JUST FINE -- JOSH
(pause)

HOW'S ABBY? BOTH

(THEY look at each other, surprised.)

(continuing)
HAVEN'T YOU? -- BOTH

ME FIRST. HAVEN'T YOU SEEN HER? SUE

MORE OR LESS. JOSH

LESS, I GUESS. SUE

YES. JOSH

OH. SUE

SO... JOSH

DO YOU MEAN "LESS"
AS IN "NOT AT ALL?" SUE

JOSH
WELL, THINGS ARE SHAKY,
SHE DIDN'T TELL YOU?

(SUE shakes her head "no".)

JOSH
(continuing)
YOU MIGHT WANT TO GIVE HER A CALL.

SUE
(unenthused)
YEAH.
(closing door, locking locks)
WELL, GOTTA GO, GOTTA RUN.
MY SISTER'S IN TOWN ON SCHOOL VACATION.
I'VE GOT TO GO PLAY TOUR GUIDE
AND PICK HER UP AT THE STATION.

JOSH
(making conversation)
What college is she at?

SUE
Junior high school, Josh, Junior high.

JOSH
I WAS ONLY --

SUE
ONLY JOSHIN' YA, JOSH.
SEE YA. BYE.
(starts off down the hall)

JOSH
SUE?

SUE
YEAH?

JOSH
BEFORE YOU GO...

SUE
YEAH?

JOSH
I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT I FEEL LIKE AN ASSHOLE.

SUE
IS THAT SOMETHING NEW?

JOSH
IN TERMS OF YOU AND ABBY --
I SCREWED UP YOUR FRIENDSHIP.

SUE
THAT'S TRUE.

JOSH
BUT IT'S SOMETHING THAT I DIDN'T INTEND,
'CAUSE ABBY WAS YOUR CLOSEST FRIEND.

SUE
YOU DON'T SAY.

JOSH
WELL, ANYWAY,
I WANTED YOU TO KNOW, IN TERMS OF ABBY AND ME,
ABBY WASN'T THE ONE,
IT WASN'T HER DOING --
I WAS REALLY THE ONE WHO DID THE PURSUING.

SUE
BUT SHE'S THE ONE WHO NEVER RETURNS MY CALL.

JOSH
BUT THAT'S MY FAULT --
I SHOULDN'T HAVE PURSUED HER AT ALL.
I NEVER SHOULD HAVE GOTTEN IN BETWEEN YOU TWO.

SUE
SO WHY DID YOU?

JOSH
I DON'T KNOW.

SUE
YOU DON'T KNOW? YOU'RE DROPPING HER LIKE YOU DROPPED ME -- WHY?

JOSH
I DON'T KNOW...

SUE
WHAT DO YOU WANT?

JOSH
(in agony)
I DON'T KNOW!
IT'S BEYOND MY CONTROL,
IT'S NOT SOMETHING I CAN FIX.

SUE
LOOK, NO ONE LIKES TRYING
TO GET THROUGH THE YICKS,
BUT --

The yicks? JOSH

Y'know... SUE

No. JOSH

SUE
YICKS ARE ALL THOSE LITTLE ANNOYANCES,
THOSE INCREDIBLE BOY-OH-BOY-ANCES
THAT START MAKING YOU DOUBT,
THAT MAKE YOU WANT OUT.
BUT YOU'VE GOT TO TRY AND STICK IT,
TRY TO YICK IT OUT.

Any other words of Ms.dom? JOSH

(suddenly) -
Josh. Please. Don't hurt her.

(moved) JOSH
You're a very rare woman, Sue.

SUE
I know. (pause) So is she. (pause) You know, Josh, I'd really like to be you, for a day, so I
could see what the hell it is you're looking for. (then) Listen, my sister's waiting...I gotta go.

(SUE starts to leave.)

Sue? JOSH

Yeah? SUE

Thanks. JOSH

(SUE takes it in, exits. JOSH watches her leave.)

SONG: "WHY DO I ONLY..."

JOSH
THE WOMEN THAT I WANT,
THE WOMEN I RESPECT,
SOON BECOME THE WOMEN
I NEGLECT AND THEN REJECT.
EITHER I WANT THE WOMAN,
OR THE WOMAN WANTS ME,
BUT IT NEVER SEEMS TO HAPPEN SIMULTANEOUSLY.
WHY DO I ONLY WANT SOMEONE UNTIL SHE WANTS ME?

THE WOMEN I PURSUE,
ARE WOMEN I GO THROUGH,
EXTINGUISHING THE FIRE,
I REQUIRE SOMETHING NEW,
EITHER I NEED THE WOMAN,
OR THE WOMAN NEEDS ME,
I NEED HER TILL SHE NEEDS ME BACK,
THEN I BACK OFF INSTINCTIVELY.
WHY DO I ONLY NEED SOMEONE UNTIL SHE NEEDS ME?

WHY DO I ALWAYS PURSUE THE MIRAGE,
WHEN MY LIFE IS ALREADY A CLUTTERED COLLAGE,
OF LIPS AND SKIRTS AND HURTING WHOEVER COMES BY,
OF NAMES AND FACES I TEND TO COLLECT,
OF LIES AND THIGHS, OF PURSUING A PRIZE,
THAT ULTIMATELY I KNOW I'LL REJECT,
THOUGH I DON'T KNOW WHY...

I LOVE A WOMAN BEST
BEFORE HER LOVE'S CONFESSED,
WHEN SHE TURNS AWAY THE PASSION I'VE INVITED.
IT SEEMS THAT I CAN LOVE,
BUT NEVER ON REQUEST,
AND ONLY WHEN MY LOVE IS UNREQUITTED.
EITHER I LOVE THE WOMAN,
OR THE WOMAN LOVES ME,
BUT I NEVER LET IT HAPPEN SIMULTANEOUSLY.
WHY DO I ONLY LOVE SOMEONE UNTIL SHE LOVES ME?

SO IF YOU REALLY LOVE ME,
AND IF YOU WANT TO KEEP ME,
THEN KEEP IT ALL A SECRET,
OR BOTH OF US WILL LOSE,
FOR THE WOMAN WHO DENIES ME,
THE WOMAN WHO DEFIES ME,
WHO'LL CRITICIZE AND MINIMIZE
AND PROMISE TO DESPISE ME,
IS THE WOMAN I WILL CHOOSE.

ACT II

Scene 8

SETTING: ABBY's apartment.

AT RISE: ABBY is at her piano, revising.

Phone rings, message machine picks up. This time there is more abrupt version of the outgoing message.

ABBY'S MESSAGE JINGLE
HELLO, THIS IS ABBY, I'M NOT IN RIGHT NOW.
IF YOUR NAME IS JOSH, I'M NOT IN RIGHT NOW.

There is a pause at the other end of the phone. The caller hangs up.

ABBY plays the opening of "FIRST CHILD".

ABBY
I HAVE TO HAVE MY FIRST CHILD BY...
(realizes)

I'll adopt!

(into recorder) That would be the end of the running gag. Let me know if you like it.
(turns off recorder.) (miserably) I think it's a scream.

Deciding to focus on the music in front of her, ABBY begins to work on the piano intro of a song.

SONG: "REVISIONS."

ABBY
CUT "RHAPSODIC JOYS,"
CUT "THE SYCAMORE,"
KEEP "PICK UP THE TOYS,"
KEEP "DONE THAT BEFORE."
CHANGE IT, REARRANGE IT,
THEN REDO IT ONCE MORE,
REVISIONS.

CUT "NOVEMBER SLEET,"
WHAT? "THE AUTUMN YEARS?"
KEEP CHANGE "THE VAGUE RETREAT,"
CHANGE "SWEET SOUVENIRS."
(gets an idea)
THERE'S A GLIMMER...
LET IT SIMMER...
(loses the idea)
CONSIDER CHANGING CAREERS...
REVISIONS.

WHEN I THINK I'VE GOT IT PERFECT,
WHEN IT'S ABSOLUTELY RIGHT,
I LOOK AGAIN AND I REALIZE
I'LL BE UP AGAIN ALL NIGHT.

CUT "HE STOPPED AND STARED,"
CUT "THE SEXY SMILE,"
KEEP "FRIGHTENED," CUT OUT "SCARED,"
AND KEEP "SO THEY STAY A WHILE,"
INSPECT IT, THEN CORRECT IT,
FINALLY YOU PERFECT IT,

(rereads it, throws it in trashcan)

FOR THE CIRCULAR FILE.
REVISIONS.

(picks up JOSH's photo)

WHEN I THINK I'VE GOT IT PERFECT,
WHEN IT'S ABSOLUTELY RIGHT,
I LOOK AGAIN AND I REALIZE
THAT I'LL TOSS AND TURN ALL NIGHT.

(throws his photo in trashcan)

THINK OF ALL THE BOOKS I COULD HAVE READ,
INSTEAD OF SPENDING HOURS IN HIS BED!
WAR AND PEACE, ANNA KARENINA, TESS OF THE DURBEVILLES.
BUT INSTEAD, I'M ONCE AGAIN IN A MESS,
COULD HAVE PAID MY BILLS,
CAUGHT UP ON ALL MY CHECKS,
DONE MY MAILING LIST,
DONE MY ROLODEX,
ALL THE WORKING TIME I MISSED,
I COULD HAVE SOLVED ACT THREE,
SENT OUT MY RESUMES,
LEARNED EMBROIDERY,
THE WASTED NIGHTS AND DAYS.

(gets up angrily)

SO, CUT "I'LL LOVE AGAIN,"
CUT "AND HOW I CARED,"
BUT KEEP "THE GAMES OF MEN,"
THROW OUT "ALL WE SHARED",

CUT "ALL THE CHAMPAGNE,"
CUT "STAYING UP LATE,"
BUT KEEP, "LOVED HIM IN VAIN,"
KEEP "STORING UP HATE,"
AFFECTION, THEN REJECTION,
ADD HIM TO THE OL' COLLECTION,
NEXT TO CHIP, JIM AND NATE.
REVISIONS.

(suddenly reflective)

BUT I KNOW VERY WELL
WHAT MY SONGS ARE ABOUT,
THE STORIES THEY TELL
ARE OF LOVE AND OF DOUBT,
HE'S GIVEN ME SONGS,
AND MEMORIES TO HUM,
HE'S GIVEN ME FUEL,
FOR SONGS YET TO COME.

LOVE HAS NO RHYME OR REASON,
SO I WILL MAKE A RHYME,
THOUGH LOVE IS OUT OF SEASON,
A WALTZ MAY BLOOM IN TIME.

KEEP YOUR SELF-ESTEEM,
CUT OUT WHAT CANNOT BE,
REWORD THE SAME OLD DREAM,
REVAMP THE MELODY,

CHANGE THE PAIN TO GROWTH,
COME ON, PICK UP THE PEN,
TIME TO MAKE AN OATH,
TO BEGIN AGAIN.

REVISIONS, REVISIONS, REVISIONS.

(Song ends. JOSH enters unexpectedly.)

JOSH
WHAT'S THAT YOU'RE WRITING?

ABBY
I DON'T THINK YOU'D LIKE IT.

JOSH
WHY DO YOU THINK THAT? ABBY, PLEASE...

(SHE sits at the piano and sings what she has written.)

ABBY
THOUGH I'VE DONE THAT BEFORE,
I WON'T DO IT AGAIN --
CONVINCE FRIGHTENED YOUNG BOYS,
THAT THEY REALLY ARE MEN.
THE IDEA SOUNDS APPEALING,
SO THEY STAY A WHILE, BUT THEN,
I'M LEFT TO PICK UP THE PIECES,
AND PICK UP THEIR TOYS,
BECAUSE MOST OF THE MEN,
WERE STILL FRIGHTENED YOUNG BOYS.

Oh.
Nice.

(pause)

JOSH

Thank you. Okay. Shoot.

ABBY

JOSH
I'M SORRY I HAVEN'T CALLED,
BUT I HAD TO THINK ABOUT THINGS.

ABBY
OF COURSE.

JOSH
I HOPE I CAN SAY THIS RIGHT.

ABBY
I'M QUITE SURE YOU WILL.

JOSH
I DIDN'T COME TO BREAK THINGS OFF.

ABBY
(thrown)
NO?

JOSH
NO.

ABBY
OH.
(pause)
SO, WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM THE TWO OF US?

JOSH
THAT'S PRECISELY WHAT I CAME TO DISCUSS.
WE SHOULD TALK ABOUT THINGS -- ABOUT ME AND YOU...

ABBY
(suspicious)
TALK ABOUT THINGS? -- THAT'S CERTAINLY NEW!

JOSH
AND THEN DECIDE IF WE'RE SOMETHING
THAT WE SHOULD PURSUE.

ABBY
(angrily)
LOOK, IT'S EITHER YES OR NO, JOSH,
IT'S EITHER STOP OR GO.

JOSH
WHY?

ABBY
WHAT A GUY.
YOU KNOW IT OR YOU DON'T.

(SHE crosses upstage, continues to write without looking at him.)

JOSH
NO, THAT REALLY ISN'T TRUE.
THAT'S WHY I CAME TO TALK TO YOU.
(taking pencil out of her hand)
TO ME, IT'S REALLY QUITE UNCLEAR --

ABBY
JOSH, YOU'VE PRACTICALLY BEEN LIVING HERE!
YOU'VE SEEN ME ENOUGH, BY NOW,
TO BE ABLE TO KNOW, SOMEHOW...

JOSH
I THINK WE SHOULD DISCUSS OUR DOUBTS AND
EXPECTATIONS --

ABBY
SUDDENLY, YOU WANT TO HAVE PROLONGED CONVERSATIONS?

JOSH
-- AND AIR THE COMPLAINTS THAT WE HAVE ABOUT
EACH OTHER.

ABBY
(crossing away from HIM)
AND THAT'S WHAT'S SUPPOSED TO
GET US TOGETHER! OH, BROTHER!

JOSH
(crossing to her)
THAT'S BECOMING LESS POSSIBLE, MINUTE BY MINUTE.

ABBY
ALL RIGHT, IF THAT'S SO, THEN WHY EVEN BEGIN IT?

JOSH
IT MIGHT LEAD TO SOMETHING.

ABBY
LIKE MURDER!

JOSH
(trying to remain patient)
BY PRESENTING ONE ANOTHER
WITH EVIDENCE OF BEHAVIOR --

ABBY
HEY, MISTER LAWYER, I'M NOT ON TRIAL!
AND BANTERING IDIOSYNCRASIES
ISN'T MY STYLE.

JOSH
I'm sorry, I shouldn't have come by here at all.

(HE starts to go.)

ABBY
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT, I'LL DO IT.

JOSH
GOOD.

ABBY
AND I'LL START!

JOSH
You? YOU MEAN THERE ARE THINGS ABOUT MYSELF THAT YOU
FIND UNAPPEALING?

ABBY
ARE YOU BEING FUNNY -- OR SIMPLY REVEALING?

JOSH
GO ON. START.

ABBY
OKAY.

JOSH
PLEASE BE GENTLE.

ABBY
NO WAY.
YOU'RE VERY IMMATURE,
EMOTIONALLY UNDEPENDABLE.

JOSH
YOU EMOTE TOO MUCH.
YOU DO TOO MUCH.

ABBY
YOU MAKE ME FEEL EXPENDABLE.

JOSH
YOUR AFFECTION'S TOO PERSISTENT --

ABBY
WHEREAS YOURS IS INCONSISTENT.

JOSH
IT WAS BETTER WHEN YOU WERE RESISTANT.

What? ABBY

JOSH
THEN YOU WERE MORE EXOTIC.

ABBY
THAT'S TOTALLY NEUROTIC!

JOSH
AGREED! AGREED!
BUT IT'S MADE WORSE BY YOU.

Me? ABBY

JOSH
YOU'RE TOO DEPENDENT, AB, YOU KNOW IT'S TRUE.
THE REASON YOU ATTRACTED ME WAS THAT YOU WERE REALLY BRIGHT --
NOW YOU NEVER GIVE ME ROOM OR LET ME OUT OF YOUR SIGHT!
I NEED THE REAL ABBY -- INDEPENDENT, WITTY, AND SMART --
NOT JUST THE LOVEY DOVEY, "MOON-UP-ABOVEY" PART.
YOU'RE HIDING ALL THE REST OF YOU --
WHAT I THINK IS THE BEST OF YOU!
I'D LIKE TO APPRECIATE ALL THAT YOU'VE DONE,
BUT THE NEEDINESS AND SELFLESSNESS ARE WHAT MAKE ME RUN.

ABBY
I'M WILLING TO ADMIT,
I OVERDO IT A BIT,
BUT YOU HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO ABILITY TO COMMIT.
IT MAY BE THAT YOU'RE VAIN OR MAYBE JUST UNSTABLE,
BUT IT SEEMS TO ME, YOU'RE TOTALLY UNABLE TO MAINTAIN --

JOSH
(angrily)
I KNOW, I KNOW, THAT'S NOTHING NEW...
(suddenly, softly)
I KNOW, I KNOW, ABBY, THAT'S NOTHING NEW.

ABBY
(gently)
ALL RIGHT THEN, TELL ME, JOSH
TELL ME, WHAT IS IT WITH YOU?

IT'S AS IF YOU'RE IN SOME KIND OF EMOTIONAL DROUGHT.
LIKE YOU TELL ME NOW THAT THIS WHOLE TIME, YOU'VE BEEN IN
SUCH DOUBT.
THERE WAS SOMETHING THAT WAS BOTHERING YOU ALL ALONG,

ABBY (cont.)
BUT YOU NEVER EVEN MENTIONED THAT ANYTHING WAS WRONG.
I ALWAYS HAVE TO GUESS, OR WAIT AND SEE --
YOU NEVER TRIED TO SHARE YOUR FEELINGS WITH ME!

JOSH
I DO WHEN I'M CERTAIN ABOUT HOW I FEEL...

ABBY
(exploding)
THAT'S NOT SHARING -- THAT'S CONCLUDING !
IT'S EXCLUDING ME FROM THE IN-BETWEEN!
YOUR EMOTIONS ARE ALWAYS GIFT-WRAPPED,
NEAT AND CAREFUL, ALWAYS CRISP AND CLEAN,
IN RED AND GOLD AND BLUE AND GREEN...
(calming down, tenderly)
I WANTED TO BE ABLE TO DISCUSS THE SHADES OF GRAY --
I WANTED YOU TO TALK TO ME WHEN YOU DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY.

(THEY look at each other. JOSH is visibly moved. SHE waits for him to respond. The lyrical music from "HOW DID I COME ACROSS" returns.)

JOSH
YOU HAVE A CERTAIN...
YOU'RE VERY...
YOU'RE VERY...
YOU'RE VERY RIGHT.

(THE MUSIC swells.)

JOSH
(continuing)
SO, SHOULD WE TRY TO MAKE IT THROUGH THE YICKS?

ABBY
MAYBE... MAYBE NOT...

JOSH
NOT REALLY SURE?

ABBY
(suddenly)
The yicks?

JOSH
Oh, y'know,
TALKING THINGS OUT,
NOT BAILING OUT,
WHEN YOU BEGIN TO START FEELING THE INITIAL DOUBT.

ABBY
(realizing)
You talked to Sue?

WHY YES, I DID. JOSH

ABBY
(amazed)
YOU MEAN...SHE DIDN'T WANT TO SEE YOU AND ME END?

JOSH
I'M NOT QUITE SURE WHAT SHE MEANT, BUT YOU KNOW,
SHE REALLY IS A VERY GOOD FRIEND.

ABBY
(moved)
YES, SHE IS.

JOSH
(unsure)
DINNER?

ABBY
(equally unsure)
NO.

JOSH
WHY NOT?

ABBY
I DON'T KNOW.

JOSH
(trying again)
DINNER?

ABBY
(giving in)
YES!

BOTH
(smiling)
OH, WHY NOT!

(THEY hug, welling up.)

JOSH
SO, I'LL COOK YOU DINNER AT MY PLACE,
IF THAT'S ALL RIGHT WITH YOU.

ABBY
I'LL COME UPTOWN AROUND EIGHT --
(looks at her work)
NINE --
(looks at him)

EIGHT --
(sighs)
EIGHT-THIRTY,
RIGHT NOW, I'VE GOT SOME WORK TO DO.

(JOSH begins to kiss her. After a moment, SHE gently leads him toward the door.)

ABBY
I'LL SEE YOU TONIGHT --

JOSH
(trying out his new devotion)
AND TOMORROW...

ABBY
(trying out her new independence)
YOU MIGHT...

JOSH
YEAH, ALL RIGHT.
(begins to leave, then turns)
MISS YA...

ABBY
(moved)
CIAO.

(LIGHTS DIM AND COME UP ON:)

ACT II

Scene 9

SETTING:

SUE's dress shop. ABBY is holding a folder of music in her hand.

ABBY
Hello.

SUE
(surprised)
Hello.

ABBY
I thought I'd catch you.

SUE
When the teenagers come to shop, I have to spend an hour hanging things up. But they buy like demons.

Well, we were certainly never like that!

ABBY

Yeah. Worse. (smiles)

SUE

(pause)

I dropped by on my way to audition a song for some rather irate producers. I came by for you to wish me luck.

ABBY

(pause)

That was dumb. I came by to talk.

SUE

Oh?

ABBY

(about a hanging item)

What a neat dress.

SUE

(waits, then)

So talk.

ABBY

I'd like us to make time for one another again.

SUE

(aloof)

I knew you'd be back when he was gone.

ABBY

That's not it at all.

SUE

Really.

ABBY

Really.

SUE

It's okay. I understand. I'm not angry with you. Not Josh either.

ABBY

(relieved)

Great. Sue, thank you for being so understanding through all this.

SUE

You know me.

ABBY

Did you actually encourage Josh to come back to me?

SUE

No. Not really. (then) Why?

ABBY

He suddenly says he wants to try to work things out.

SUE

He does?

ABBY

It's nothing certain. But what a scene. He even cried.

SUE

How sweet. How moving. How sensitive of him. And you? I bet you were incredibly vulnerable and communicative and ripe with feminine emotion.

ABBY

What's the matter?

SUE

What's the matter? What's the goddamn matter?

Well, sweet, silent, understanding Sue thinks he's a louse and you're worse. I don't want him with you! You of all people. Don't tell me you're surprised! What did you expect? My God! You pretended not to know how I felt because it was easy that way for you... because you know I'm the type who holds it in whereas you have your goddamn songs --

(throwing ABBY'S music onto the floor)

Your stupid creative -- outlet.

ABBY

How could I know you were jealous?

SUE

How could you know? Do you expect me to knit booties for your little Joshie juniors?

ABBY

(defensive)

Susan, you told me Josh wasn't the issue!

SUE

I lied. I lied. I realize it now. I lied. To you and to me, and even if I didn't know it, *you* should have... you've known me longer than I have. You know what I mean. *I* do, anyway, and that's just fine because I'm the only one I care about now. Yes, *he's* the issue, and *we're* the issue, and of course I'm jealous, and angry, and ugly and it's all your fault. God I hate you.

(a long silence)

ABBY

(not looking up at first)

I was weak. Lonely. And I wanted to believe you didn't care. I'm sorry.

(picks up scattered music paper; softly, to herself)

And I blew it.

(passes loose dress rack)

Why don't you get this fixed already?

(ABBY is almost out the door.)

SUE

Wait.

(SUE picks up a forgotten piece of music from the floor and crosses to ABBY.)

SUE

(continuing)
(withheld)

Good luck, Puccini.

(A lyrical version of "I DON'T WANT ANY MORE GOOD FRIENDS")

ABBY

I KNOW ONE THING ABOUT GOOD FRIENDS,
IT SURE HURTS LIKE HELL WHEN THE FRIENDSHIP ENDS,
THOUGH I NEVER THOUGHT IT WOULD COME TO THIS NOW,

SUE

WE'LL MANAGE APART.

ABBY

WE'LL MANAGE SOMEHOW.

SUE

FRIENDS DO TO EACH OTHER WHAT NO ONE WOULD DO.

ABBY

PERFECT THEY'RE NOT,

SUE

BUT THEY'RE PART OF YOU.

(ABBY looks at SUE)

DO YOU THINK WE'LL GET THROUGH?

ABBY

(surprised, visibly moved)

I KNOW I'D LIKE TO TRY...

BOTH
GOOD FRIEND.
(SUE and ABBY embrace.)
(LIGHTS DIM. BOWS.)

SONG: SIT DOWN AND EAT (reprise 3, finale)

ABBY
THOUGH LOVE CAN BE SUBLIME, IT CAN BE DISMAL, TOO,

SUE
YA GORGE, AND THEN IT'S PEPTO BISMOL WHEN YOU'RE THROUGH,

ABBY
STILL, YA GOTTA TRY, AND THAT IS WHY THIS TALE WAS TOLD,

ALL
SIT DOWN AND EAT BEFORE YOUR LOVE GETS COLD.

ABBY (to JOSH)
WHEN LOVE IS TOUGH, DON'T SINK INTO DESPAIR, DEAR,

SUE (to JOSH)
YOU MUSTN'T EAT AND RUN...

JOSH
OF COURSE, I KNOW...

ABBY AND SUE
IT SEEMS THE HEART'S AN "A LA CARTE" AFFAIR, DEAR,

JOSH
YOU PAY FOR EVERY MORSEL AS YOU GO!

ALL
(to audience)
SO WHEN YOU LEAVE THE THEATRE, PLEASE REMEMBER, FRIENDS,
TREAT YOUR LOVE WITH KINDNESS, SO IT NEVER ENDS,
IN THIS CRAZY WORLD, IT'S NICE TO HAVE A HAND TO HOLD,
SIT DOWN AND EAT,
LIFE WILL BE SWEET,
SIT DOWN AND EAT...
BEFORE YOUR LOVE GETS COLD.

Good night!

CURTAIN

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED
(c) Barbara Schottenfeld