

THE GRADUATE

By Terry Johnson

Characters

Benjamin

Mrs Robinson

Mr Robinson

Elaine

Dad, Mr Braddock

Mom, Mrs Braddock

Exotic dancer

Desk Clerk

Two Men

Psychiatrist

Wedding Guests

Priest

The Desk Clerk doubles the Priest and the Psychiatrist. The Two Men and the Wedding Guests are doubled by the company.

Setting

California, l 960s.

A flexible, minimalist setting with one door USR and another DSL. Simple furnishings transform the space into:

Benjamin's bedroom; the lobby of the Taft Hotel; Room 515, the Taft Hotel; a downtown bar; the Robinsons' living room; the Braddocks' poolside; a rooming house bedroom, Berkeley; a vestry; a motel room.

The light beyond the windows of these rooms is bright and Californian, slamming through curtains or blinds, lending sharp contrast to the interiors. Similarly, the night scenes share the illusion of illumination from source, with rich amber light spilling from lamps or through doors, sculpting well-defined playing areas from deep shadow.

The effect should be slightly claustrophobic.

Act One

Scene One

In the darkness, the sound of amplified breathing as if through an oxygen mask.

*Lights come up on **Benjamin's** room. Door to en suite bathroom, door to hallway. A bed, a chair. A faint aeroplanes. A fish-tank.*

*It's night. **Benjamin.** sits in semi-darkness amidst the remnants of his pre-pubescence. He is perfectly still, and wears a diving suit. The sounds of a party filtering up from downstairs. The door opens to throw a sheaf of bright light across the room. **Benjamin's father** silhouetted.*

Dad Ben? Ben?

Benjamin *removes the mask.*

Dad What are you doing?

Benjamin You said I should put the suit on.

Dad I said you should put the suit on and come downstairs.

Benjamin I put the suit on.

Dad Then come on downstairs.

Benjamin I lost the inclination.

Dad It's a hell of a suit, isn't it?

Benjamin Yes, it is.

Dad Happy graduation.

Benjamin Thank you.

Dad So, come on down.

Benjamin I'll be down.

Dad The guests are all here.

Benjamin I'll be down soon.

Dad What is it, Ben?

Benjamin Nothing.

Dad Then why don't you come down and see your guests?

Benjamin I have some things on my mind right now.

Dad What things?

Benjamin Just some things.

Dad Ben, these are our friends down there. You owe them a little courtesy.

Benjamin I'd rather be alone right now.

Dad Hal Robinson and I have been doing business together in this town for seventeen years. He's the best friend I have. He has a client in Chicago that he's put off seeing so he could be here tonight ...

Benjamin I don't want to see the Robinsons.

Dad The Terhunes have come all the way from ...

Benjamin I don't want to see the Terhunes. I don't want to see the Robinsons, the Terhunes, the Pearsons or anyone else.

Dad I don't know what's got into you but whatever it is I want you to snap out of it and march right on down there!

Benjamin I just need to be alone right now.

The door opens and Mr Robinson strides in with Benjamin's mother.

Mr Robinson All hail the conquering hero!

Mom Ben, where are you?

Benjamin I'm here.

Mr Robinson Ben!

Benjamin Mr Robinson.

Dad He's wearing the suit.

Mom You're wearing the suit!

Dad He loves it.

Mom Do you like it Ben?

Dad He'd better, or I'm out a coupla hundred bucks!

Mr Robinson It's a hell of a suit.

Dad Isn't it?

Mom Ben, the guests are all downstairs.

Dad Come on Ben, let's go down.

Mr Robinson Ben, I want to shake your hand. Goddammit I'm proud of you.

Mom We're all so proud of you, Ben.

Dad Everyone's lining up down there to shake your hand.

Mr Robinson I took a look at your yearbook, Ben. Head of the debating club. Captain of cross-country. Editor of the school newspaper.

Dad No one appears in that yearbook more than Ben.

Mr Robinson Social secretary of his house. I'm running out of fingers ...
First in your class ...

Benjamin I wasn't first.

Mr Robinson Oh?

Benjamin I *tied* for first.

Mr Robinson Now give me the low-down on that prize of yours.

Benjamin Well, I'm not...

Dad Tell him about it, Ben.

Mom It's called the Frank Halpingham Education Award and it puts Ben through two years of graduate school when he goes into teaching.

Mr Robinson And they chose Ben.

Dad He's into Harvard and he's into Yale. And what's that other one?

Mom Columbia.

Dad Columbia.

Mr Robinson Well ... good God Frank, you bred a gemus.

Dad I guess we did.

Mom I don't know how.

Dad We don't know where he got it from, but well yes, Ben has quite an intellect.

Mr Robinson I've got one thing to say to you Ben. May I say one thing to your son?

Dad Go right ahead.

Mr Robinson I've just got one thing to say, Ben.

Benjamin What's that, sir?

Mr Robinson One word, Ben.

Benjamin One word?

Mr Robinson Plastics, Ben. Plastics. Will you think about that?

Benjamin Yes I will.

Mom Benjamin is going to teach; aren't you Ben?

Benjamin Well ...

Dad Don't hound the boy, now.

Mom Well...

Dad Whatever this boy does...

Mr Robinson Whatever he chooses to do ...

Dad This boy is gonna shine.

Mr Robinson I couldn't be prouder of you Ben, if you were my own son.

Dad (*touched*) Thank you, Hal. Say thank you, Ben.

Benjamin Thank you.

Mr Robinson I have to get to the airport.

Dad You need a cab?

Mr Robinson I'm gonna drive. My wife will need a cab.

Dad We'll put her in a cab.

Mr Robinson Just wait until you can't stand her a moment longer, then put her in a cab. Call a cab and just pour her in.

Mom Oh scoot.

Dad She knows how to enjoy herself.

Mr Robinson She certainly does.

Mom She just needed a little lie down, that's all she needed.

Mr Robinson Ben, don't be a stranger.

Mr Robinson *leaves.*

Dad (*turning*) Ben, you come on down now. Are you coming down, Ben?

Benjamin No I'm not.

Dad Those people down there ...

Benjamin Those people down there are grotesque!

Dad Grotesque?

Benjamin And you're grotesque.

Dad You're calling me grotesque?

Benjamin You are grotesque, and *I'm* grotesque, we're all grotesque. Not actually grotesque, you're not grotesque, but I have this feeling of grotesqueness when I even think about leaving this room, all right?

Dad Ben, you're all tied up in knots. You've just had the four most strenuous years of your life back there ...

Benjamin They were nothing.

Dad Four golden years ...

Benjamin Which add up to nothing.

Dad I'm going to have words with you later. I'm going downstairs to tell these people you are suddenly sick, and I am going to entertain these people on your behalf. And I do not wish to see your face.

Benjamin's *father leaves.*

Mom Are you sick, Ben?

Benjamin Oh, yes.

Mom Well then I guess you'd better get out of that suit.

Benjamin's mother leaves.

Benjamin *struggles to get out of the suit. The door opens to silhouette*

Mrs Robinson. *She watches Benjamin as he struggles, half undressed.*

Mrs Robinson I guess this isn't the spare room, is it?

Benjamin Oh good God ... evening, Mrs Robinson.

Mrs Robinson Good evening, Benjamin.

Benjamin It's down the hall.

Mrs Robinson That's a hell of a thing.

Benjamin Yes, it is. Would you excuse me?

He struggles to make himself decent. Mrs Robinson watches.

Mrs Robinson Is this what they're wearing back east?

Benjamin It's a graduation gift.

Mrs Robinson You sleep in it?

Benjamin My father wanted me to show it off. He wanted a demonstration in the pool.

Mrs Robinson It looks like a prophylactic.

Benjamin A what?

Mrs Robinson For the severely anxious.

Benjamin It's at the end of the hall.

Mrs Robinson What is?

Benjamin The spare room.

Mrs Robinson Ah.

Mrs Robinson *enters the room, a little unsteady.*

Benjamin Mrs Robinson, I'm kind of distraught at the moment. I'm sorry to be rude but I have some things on my mind. It's good to see you.

Mrs Robinson How are you?

Benjamin I'm sorry not to be more congenial, but I'm trying to think.

Mrs Robinson Is there an ashtray in here?

Benjamin No.

He meant she should leave. She lights a cigarette. He takes her the waste bin. She puts her match in it.

Mrs Robinson What are you upset about?

Benjamin Some personal things.

Mrs Robinson Girl trouble?

Benjamin What?

Mrs Robinson Do you have girl trouble?

Benjamin Look, I'm sorry to be this way but I'm just, well right now I'm sort of ...

Mrs Robinson I was feeling a little unsteady myself. Your mother said I should lie down for a while.

Benjamin The spare room's at the end of the hall.

Mrs Robinson Are you drinking?

Benjamin I don't drink.

Mrs Robinson You don't drink?

Benjamin As a rule. Of course I drink, but not as a rule.

Mrs Robinson What do you drink? Bourbon?

Benjamin Mrs Robinson, I have some things on my mind. And I have guests downstairs I should . . .

Mrs Robinson May I ask you a question?

Benjamin Uh-huh.

Mrs Robinson What do you think of me?

Benjamin What?

Mrs Robinson What do you think of me?

Benjamin Um...

Mrs Robinson You've known me nearly all your life, you must think something ...

Benjamin Look, this is a rather strange conversation and I really ought to get downstairs ...

Mrs Robinson Don't you have any opinions at all?

Benjamin No. Look, my father may be up again any minute, and ...

Mrs Robinson Benjamin.

Benjamin What?

Mrs Robinson Did you know I was an alcoholic?

Benjamin Mrs Robinson, I don't want to talk about this.

Mrs Robinson Did you know that?

Benjamin No.

Mrs Robinson You never suspected?

Benjamin No.

Mrs Robinson My God Benjamin, I fall out of cars. I insult senators at fondue parties. Surely you must have formed some sort of ...

Benjamin Mrs Robinson, this is none of my business ...

Mrs Robinson You never even suspected?

Benjamin Would you excuse me?

Mrs Robinson Sit down.

Benjamin I'm going downstairs now.

Mrs Robinson Why?

Benjamin Because I want to be alone.

Mrs Robinson There are three dozen people down there.

Benjamin Then I'll go for a walk. I need to get out of here.

Benjamin *puts on a raincoat. It's older than he is.*

Mrs Robinson Would you drive me home?

Benjamin I'm sorry?

Mrs Robinson I want you to drive me home. My husband's flying to Chicago. I don't like to be alone.

Benjamin My God.

Mrs Robinson What?

Benjamin No. No, Mrs Robinson. Oh no.

Mrs Robinson What's wrong?

Benjamin Mrs Robinson, you didn't- I mean you didn't expect ...

Mrs Robinson What?

Benjamin I mean you didn't really think I would do something like that.

Mrs Robinson Like what?

Benjamin What do you think!

Mrs Robinson Well, I don't know.

Benjamin For God's sake Mrs Robinson, you come to my room, you sit on the bed, you ... smoke a cigarette, then you start opening up your personal life to me and now you're asking me to take you home because your husband's flying to Chicago.

Mrs Robinson So?

Benjamin Mrs Robinson, you are trying to seduce me. *(Certain.)* Aren't you. *(Uncertain.)* Aren't you?

Mrs Robinson Why no. I hadn't thought of it. I feel rather flattered that you ...

Benjamin (*mortified*) Mrs Robinson, would you forgive me?

Mrs Robinson What?

Benjamin Will you forgive me for what I just said?

Mrs Robinson It's all right.

Benjamin It's not all right. That's the worst thing I've ever said to anyone!

Mrs Robinson I've heard worse.

Benjamin Please forgive me. Because I don't think of you that way. It's just I'm all mixed up.

Mrs Robinson All right, calm down.

Benjamin It makes me sick that I said that to you.

Mrs Robinson I forgive you.

Benjamin Can you? Can you ever forget I said that?

Mrs Robinson We'll forget it right now.

Benjamin I don't know what's wrong with me.

Mrs Robinson It's forgotten.

Benjamin Good.

Mrs Robinson Benjamin?

Benjamin Yes?

She stands and turns her back to him.

Mrs Robinson Would you unzip my dress?

Benjamin Un your what?

Mrs Robinson Your mother said I should lie down. The spare bed is piled high with coats. Do you mind if I lie down, Benjamin?

Benjamin No. Be my guest. Good night,

Mrs Robinson Benjamin, would you please unzip the dress?

Benjamin I'd rather not.

Mrs Robinson Do you still think I'm trying to seduce you?

Benjamin No I don't.

Mrs Robinson With your parents just downstairs?

Benjamin I ought to go down ...

Mrs Robinson You've known me all your life.

Benjamin I know that.

Mrs Robinson Would you please? It's hard for me to reach.

After a moment, Benjamin unzips her dress. Thank you.

Benjamin You're welcome.

Mrs Robinson What are you scared of?

Benjamin I'm not scared of anything.

Mrs Robinson Then why do you keep moving away?

Benjamin Because this is my room and if you're going to lie down I don't think I should be here.

She lets her dress fall.

Mrs Robinson Haven't you ever seen anyone in a slip before?

Benjamin Not in my parents' house, no.

Mrs Robinson You still think I'm trying to seduce you, don't you?

Benjamin No. But what if they walked in?

Mrs Robinson Well, what if they did?

Benjamin Well it would look pretty funny, wouldn't it?

Mrs Robinson Do you think they'd be horrified that you saw me in my slip?

Benjamin Well, they might get the wrong idea.

Mrs Robinson I don't see why. I'm twice your age.

Benjamin That's not the point.

Mrs Robinson Benjamin, I am not trying to seduce you!

Benjamin I know that.

Mrs Robinson Would you like me to seduce you?

Benjamin What?

Mrs Robinson Is that what you're trying to tell me? **Benjamin** I'm going downstairs now. I apologise for what I said. I hope you can forget about it. I'm going downstairs.

He steps out the door.

Mrs Robinson Benjamin.

Benjamin What?

Mrs Robinson Could you bring me my purse before you go?

Benjamin No.

Mrs Robinson Please?

Benjamin I have to go downstairs.

Mrs Robinson I really don't want to put this on again; won't you bring it to

me?

Benjamin Where is it?

Mrs Robinson In the spare room. Beside the bed.

Benjamin I'll get your purse. Then I have to go downstairs.

He leaves. Mrs Robinson finishes her drink and goes into the bathroom, leaving the door ajar. Benjamin returns.

Mrs Robinson?

Mrs Robinson (off) I'm in the bathroom.

Benjamin Well, here's your purse.

Mrs Robinson (o.ff) Could you bring it in?

Benjamin I'll hand it to you.

Mrs Robinson (off) Benjamin, I'm getting pretty tired of this.

Benjamin What?

Mrs Robinson (off) I'm getting pretty tired of all this suspicion. Now if you won't do me a simple favour, then I don't know what.

Benjamin I'll put it on the bed.

Mrs Robinson (qff) For God's sake Benjamin, will you hand me the goddam purse.

He crosses and goes into the bathroom. We see him but not her. Mrs Robinson is (supposedly) naked.

Benjamin Oh, God. Oh, my God.

Mrs Robinson Don't be nervous.

Benjamin You're naked. Let me out.

Mrs Robinson Benjamin?

Benjamin Get away from that door.

Mrs Robinson I want to say something first.

Benjamin Jesus Christ.

Mrs Robinson Benjamin, I want you to know that I'm available to you ...

Benjamin Oh, my God ...

Mrs Robinson I want you to know you can call me up any time you want and we'll make some kind of arrangement.

Benjamin Let me out.

Mrs Robinson Do you understand what I said?

Benjamin Yes! Yes! Let me out!

Mrs Robinson Because I find you very attractive, and any time ...

Mr Robinson *(off)* Judith!

A moment, then Benjamin is pushed out of the bathroom.

Mr Robinson *(off)* Judith? *(off)* Benjamin?

Mr Robinson *enters.*

Mr Robinson Ah hah!

Benjamin Ha hah!

Mr Robinson Man of the moment.

Benjamin Mr Robinson.

Mr Robinson Have you seen my squifly little wife?

Benjamin I thought you were going to the airport.

Mr Robinson I turned on the radio and lucky I did. The pilots came out in support of the cabin crews and nothing's flying out until morning. You know how much a stewardess thinks she's worth?

Benjamin No I don't.

Mr Robinson I never saw one didn't think she was God's gift. Wait a minute; that's not stewardesses, that's women, period. Know what I mean?

Benjamin Yes.

Mr Robinson Where is she?

Benjamin Er ... she's in the bathroom. She felt unwell.

Mr Robinson She puke?

Benjamin Well, she...I don't know.

Mr Robinson She drinks so little, you understand. So when she drinks.. Judith? Are you throwing up?

Mrs Robinson I wasn't, but I might.

Mr Robinson I've come to take you home.

Mrs Robinson Give me a few minutes.

Mr Robinson Is anything wrong? You look a little shaken up.

Benjamin No, I'm just - I'm just - I'm just a little worried about my immediate future.

Mr Robinson Ben, how old are you now?

Benjamin I'll be twenty-one next week.

Mr Robinson That's a hell of a good age to be.

Benjamin Thank you.

Mr Robinson I wish I was that age again. Because Ben?

Benjamin What?

Mr Robinson You'll never be young again.

Benjamin I know.

Mr Robinson Ben, can I say something to you?

Benjamin Plastics?

Mr Robinson No, Ben. I want to give you a bit of friendly advice.

Benjamin I'd like to hear it.

Mr Robinson I think you should take it a little easier than you seem to be. Have a good time with the girls and so forth. Sow a few wild oats. Because Ben, you're going to spend most of your life worrying. But right now you're young. Don't start worrying yet, for God's sake.

Benjamin No.

Mr Robinson Before you know it you'll find a nice little girl and settle down and have a damn fine life but until then try to make up a little for all the mistakes you're gonna make down the line. And while you're at it, make up for a few of mine.

Benjamin I will, sir.

Mrs Robinson *comes out of the bathroom.*

Mr Robinson I was just telling Ben here to sow a few wild oats. You think that's sound advice?

Mrs Robinson Yes, I think that's sound advice.

Mr Robinson You look like the kind of *guy* that has to fight them off.

Mrs Robinson Are we going?

Mr Robinson Say, when does Elaine get down from Berkeley?

Mrs Robinson Saturday.

Mr Robinson Ben, I want you to give her a call. Not that she's *any* girl, if you know what I'm saying?

Benjamin I think I do.

Mr Robinson Elaine's a wonderful girl. She's the sort of girl you'd only ever want to treat just right, you understand.

Benjamin Yes I do.

Mr Robinson I just know you two would hit it off really well. Wouldn't they?

Mrs Robinson What?

Mr Robinson Ben and Elaine. They'd like each other.

Mrs Robinson I'm sure.

Benjamin's *mother comes in.*

Mom Oh, you found each other.

Mr Robinson We certainly did.

Mom A shame about your trip, but nice you get to drive home.

Mrs Robinson Good night, Olive.

Mom Oh.

Mrs Robinson Good night Benjamin.

Benjamin Good night.

Mrs Robinson *leaves.*

Mr Robinson Be seeing you, Ben. Olive.

Mom Good night, Hal.

Mr Robinson *leaves.*

Benjamin *puts on some sneakers.* **Mom** What are you putting on, Ben?

Ben, it's a party; you can't wear those old things.

Benjamin I'm not coming to the party, Mom.

Mom Then what are you doing?

Benjamin I'm leaving home.

Mom What?

Benjamin I'm leaving home. I'm clearing out.

Mom You're going away?

Benjamin That's right.

Mom You're taking a trip?

Benjamin That is right.

Mom Well, where are you going?

Benjamin I'm going on the road.

Mom On the road?

Benjamin I believe that's the conventional terminology.

Mom You mean you're just going to pack your bag and go?

Benjamin I'm not taking any bags.

Mom What?

Benjamin I'm taking what I have on.

Mom Are you serious?

Benjamin Yes.

Mom Well, how much money are you taking?

Benjamin Ten dollars.

Mom Well, how long will you be gone?

Benjamin Maybe five years. Maybe ten. I don't know.

Benjamin's father comes in.

Dad Ben, you get your sorry ass down those stairs right now. *(To his wife.)*

What's the matter with you?

Mom Ben, you tell your father, because he's not going to let you do this.

Dad Do what?

Benjamin I'm going on a trip.

Mom He's not taking any clothes. It's nine o'clock at night and he has ten dollars in his pocket and he's...

Dad He's what?

Mom He's going to do the road.

Dad He's what?

Benjamin I'm leaving.

Dad You're what?

Mom Ask him where he's going.

Benjamin I don't know where I'm going.

Mom He's going God knows where and he's leaving tonight.

Dad He's what?

Mom Tell him he's doing no such thing.

Dad You're doing what?

Benjamin I'm heading out. Across the country. Around the world. If I can get the papers, the passport, the whatever you need. I'll go right around the world.

Dad You're gonna bum around the world?

Benjamin I'm gonna work. I'm gonna meet a lot of interesting people. I'm through with all this.

Dad All what?

Benjamin All this. I don't know what it is but I'm sick of it. I want something else.

Dad Well what the hell else do you want?

Benjamin You know what I want?

Dad No, son, I do not.

Benjamin I want simple people. I want simple honest people that can't even read or write their own name. I want to spend my life with those sort of people.

Dad Ben ...

Benjamin Farmers. Truck drivers. Ordinary people who don't have big houses. Who don't have swimming pools.

Dad Don't get carried away now, son.

Benjamin Real people, Dad.

Mom Aren't we real?

Dad You have a romantic notion here, Ben.

Benjamin Real people like Gramps. You remember his hands?

Dad Your grandfather built half of Toledo.

Benjamin If you want the cliché Dad, I am going out to spend some time with the real people of this country.

Benjamin's *father thinks, then takes out his pocketbook and gives Benjamin the contents.*

Dad I want you to take this.

Benjamin I don't want it.

Dad Here.

Benjamin No.

Dad Take it.

Benjamin I won't.

His father puts it in Benjamin's pocket. Thank you.

Mom So do we approve of this?

Dad Do we *approve*? Son, let's you and I walk down those stairs. Let's show that bunch of . . . *grotesques* down there just what Benjamin Braddock is made of.

Benjamin OK.

Dad OK?

Benjamin OK.

Dad Call collect if you get into trouble.

Benjamin I will.

They make for the door.

Mom You have your father's approval, Ben.

Benjamin I know.

Mom Do you think you might be back by Saturday?

Dad By Saturday? Heck no, he won't be back by Saturday.

He and Benjamin laugh together.

Benjamin Why would I be back by Saturday?

Mom Well, I invited the Robinsons over for dinner,

Benjamin Well, I won't be back by Saturday.

Lights fade.

Scene Two

The same. Early morning. Benjamin on the bed, grimy and exhausted. His father in a bathrobe.

Dad So, you're back.

Benjamin I'm back.

Dad Looks like you got a little beard started there.

Benjamin It comes off tomorrow.

Dad Well, how are you?

Benjamin Tired.

Dad You're all tired out.

Benjamin That's right.

Dad Well, two weeks,

Benjamin No. Nine days.

Dad That's a fair amount of time. How far did you get?

Benjamin I don't know. Caluha. One of those towns.

Dad Well, that's where the big fire is. You must have seen it.

Benjamin Dad, I'm so tired I can't think.

Dad How much did you spend?

Benjamin Some.

Dad Did you get some work?

Benjamin Yes.

Dad What kind of work?

Benjamin Dad...

Dad Come on Ben, I'm interested in this.

Benjamin I fought the fire.

Dad That big fire up there? You fought it?

Benjamin That's right.

Dad Well that's right up there by Shasta. You must have been right up there by Shasta country. That's beautiful country.

Benjamin Yes it is.

Dad How much they pay you on a deal like that?

Benjamin Five an hour.

Dad Five dollars an hour?

Benjamin That's right.

Dad They give you the equipment and you go in and you try to put out the flames?

Benjamin That's right.

Dad Well what about the Indians? I was reading they transported some Indians up there from Arizona. Professional fire-fighters. Did you see some of them?

Benjamin I saw some Indians, yes.

Dad This is exciting. What else happened?

Benjamin Nothing.

Dad Where did you stay?

Benjamin Hotels.

Dad Expensive hotels?

Benjamin Cheap hotels.

Dad Talk to a lot of interesting people?

Benjamin No.

Dad You didn't?

Benjamin I talked to a lot of people. None of them were particularly interesting.

Dad Did you talk to some Indians?

Benjamin Yes.

Dad They speak English?

Benjamin Yes.

Dad Well, what else did you ...

Benjamin Dad, the trip was a complete waste of time and I'd rather not talk about it. It was a bore.

Dad Well it doesn't sound too boring if you were up there throwing water on that fire.

Benjamin It was a boring fire.

Dad Well, tell me about it Ben. What kind of people did you bump into? What kind of people gave you rides?

Benjamin Queers.

Dad What?

Benjamin Queers usually stopped. I averaged about five queers a day. One queer I had to hit in the face and jump out his car.

Dad Homosexuals?

Benjamin Ever met a queer Indian?

Dad A what?

Benjamin Ever had a queer Indian try to jump you while you're trying to keep your clothes from burning up?

Dad Did this happen?

Benjamin Mainly I talked. I talked to farmers.

Dad What about?

Benjamin Crops.

Dad Crops?

Benjamin That's all they know to talk about.

Dad And that's who you talked to?

Benjamin I talked to tramps. I talked to drunks. I talked to whores.

Dad Whores?

Benjamin Yes. I talked to whores. One of them swiped my watch.

Dad A whore stole your wristwatch?

Benjamin Yes.

Dad While you were ... talking to her?

Benjamin No.

Dad Then you- then you spent the night with a whore?

Benjamin There were a few whores included in the tour, yes.

Dad More than one?

Benjamin It gets to be a habit.

Dad How many?

Benjamin I don't remember. There was one in a hotel. There was one at her house. There was one in the back of a bar.

Dad Is this true, Ben?

Benjamin One in a field.

Dad A field?

Benjamin A cow pasture. It was about three in the morning and there was ice in the grass and cows walking around us.

Dad Ben, this doesn't sound too good.

Benjamin It wasn't.

Dad I guess you did quite a bit of drinking on this trip.

Benjamin Well, it's not too likely I'd spend the night with a stinking whore in a field full of frozen manure if I was stone-cold sober, now is it?

Benjamin's *mother enters.*

Mom Here's coffee. Now, let's hear all about this trip.

Dad I think Ben needs some sleep.

Mom Where did you go? What did you do?

Dad Let's go down and leave him be.

Benjamin I have to take a shower.

Benjamin *leaves the room.*

Mom Welcome home, Ben ... Is something wrong?

Dad Leave the boy alone. He's fine,

Mom Did something happen?

Dad Nothing happened.

Mom He seems a little disillusioned.

Dad Disillusioned?

Mom Increasingly disillusioned. Today's young people ...

Dad What the hell would you know about *disillusioned*?

He leaves. She follows.

Mom I read in the digest that today's young people ...

Dad Don't talk to *me* about disillusioned.

Benjamin *appears in a phone booth.*

Benjamin Mrs Robinson? This is Ben Braddock. Hi. I was wondering if we could ...no! No. If we could meet for a *drink* or ... Or something. Well ...

Where would you suggest?

Scene Three

Lobby of the Taft Hotel. well appointed. Door USR becomes entrance from street, door DSL becomes a reception desk. Benjamin, hair slicked, rigid with false nonchalance, walks in. As he looks around him, the Desk Clerk looks up.

Desk Clerk Good evening, sir.

Benjamin Good evening.

Desk Clerk Can I help you?

Benjamin No thank you.

Desk Clerk Will you be wanting a room, sir?

Benjamin No. No, thank you.

A phone rings just off-stage. The Desk Clerk disappears to answer it. Mrs Robinson walks in.

Mrs Robinson Hello, Benjamin.

Benjamin Oh. Hello.

Mrs Robinson How are you?

Benjamin Very well. Thank you.

Mrs Robinson Did you get us a room?

Benjamin What?

Mrs Robinson Have you gotten us a room yet?

Benjamin I haven't, no.

Mrs Robinson Do you want to?

Benjamin Well, I ... I mean I could. Or we could just talk. We could have a drink and just talk if you'd rather I'd be perfectly happy to ...

Mrs Robinson Do you want me to get it?

Benjamin You? No. No, I'll- now?

Mrs Robinson Yes. Why don't you get it now?

Benjamin Right now?

Mrs Robinson Why don't you?

Benjamin I will then.

Benjamin *crosses to the desk. Taps the bell, which rings uncomfortably loud. He muffles it. The Desk Clerk returns.*

Desk Clerk Yes sir?

Benjamin I changed my mind. I'd like a room, please.

Desk Clerk A single room or a double room?

Benjamin A single. Just for myself, please.

Desk Clerk Will you sign your name, please.

Benjamin *signs a card, crumples it, puts it in his pocket and signs a second card.*

Desk Clerk Is something wrong, sir?

Benjamin No. Nothing.

Desk Clerk Very good sir. We have a single room on the fifth floor. Twelve dollars. Would that be suitable?

Benjamin Yes, that would be suitable.

Benjamin *gets his wallet out.*

Desk Clerk You can pay when you check out, sir.

Benjamin Oh, right. Excuse me.

Desk Clerk Do you have any luggage?

Benjamin Yes I do.

Desk Clerk Where is it?

Benjamin What?

Desk Clerk Your luggage.

Benjamin Well, it's in the car. It's out there in the car.

Desk Clerk I'll have the porter bring it in.

He rings for the porter.

Benjamin Oh no ...

Benjamin *puts his hand over the bell. The Desk Clerk accidentally thumps*

Benjamin *'s hand.*

Desk Clerk Sir?

Benjamin I mean I'd rather not go to the trouble of bringing it all in. I just have a toothbrush. I can get it myself. If that's all right.

Desk Clerk Of course. I'll have a porter show you the room.

Benjamin No, that's all right. I just have the toothbrush to carry up and I think I can handle it myself.

Desk Clerk Whatever you say, sir.

He hands Benjamin the key. Mrs Robinson comes over.

Mrs Robinson Is everything all right?

Benjamin Oh, yes. Thank you. This is er ... This is my, er ... Did you get it?

Mrs Robinson Did I get what?

Benjamin My toothbrush? I left it in the car. *The phone rings again.*

Desk Clerk Excuse me. *The Desk Clerk leaves.*

Mrs Robinson Shall we go up?

Benjamin Well, yes. But um-- well, there might be a problem.

Mrs Robinson What's that?

Benjamin I got a single room and he um ... the man ...

Mrs Robinson The clerk.

Benjamin The desk clerk. I think he'll be suspicious now.

Mrs Robinson Well, do you want to go up alone first?

Benjamin May I? I mean yes. I would. I mean, I don't know what their policy is here.

Mrs Robinson I'll be up in ten minutes.

Benjamin Ten minutes. Right. OK.

Benjamin *walks away.*

Mrs Robinson Benjamin.

Benjamin Yes?

Mrs Robinson Aren't you forgetting something?

Benjamin Mm? Oh. Mrs Robinson, I really am very grateful for- (this opportunity).

Mrs Robinson The room number, Benjamin.

Benjamin Oh, it's um ... five-eleven. *The Desk Clerk returns.*

Desk Clerk I beg your pardon.

Benjamin That's fine. We're ... I'm just ...

Desk Clerk Would a double room be more suitable?

Benjamin Um ...

Mrs Robinson Thank you.

Desk Clerk I think you'll find it altogether more spacious.

He and Benjamin switch keys. **Benjamin** Thank you.

Mrs Robinson And some champagne?

Desk Clerk No problem at all madam. The elevator's just there.

Benjamin Thank you.

Desk Clerk Thank you. Goodnight, Mr Gladstone.

The lights change suddenly, isolating Mrs Robinson and Benjamin in an illuminated square representing the rising elevator. The scene changes in the surrounding darkness.

Benjamin You seem very ...

Mrs Robinson What?

Benjamin Er ...

Mrs Robinson Do you think I've done this before?

Benjamin Have you?

Mrs Robinson What do you think?

Benjamin I don't know.

Mrs Robinson There's only one right answer Benjamin, and that wasn't it.

Ben I'm nervous.

Mrs Robinson Try small talk. *The lights fade swiftly.*

Scene Four

Room 515, the Taft Hotel. Doors to corridor, bathroom and closet.

Benjamin *standing with his hands in his pockets.* **Mrs Robinson** *sitting on the bed. She has champagne.*

Benjamin About that high. Which may not seem very high, but that's quite high. For actual flames. If you're actually in them ...

Mrs Robinson So did you put it out?

Benjamin Personally?

Mrs Robinson You and the Indians.

Benjamin Yes, we did. And the firemen. We eventually put it out.

Mrs Robinson I'm impressed. I'll get undressed now. Is that all right?

Benjamin Sure. Fine.

She stands up, takes a last pull on her cigarette and turns to put it out.

Benjamin *moves closer and kisses her. When their lips part she exhales her cigarette smoke. Then she unbuttons her blouse.*

Benjamin Do you-

Mrs Robinson What?

Benjamin I mean, do you want me to just stand here? I don't know what you want me to do.

Mrs Robinson Why don't you watch.

Benjamin Oh. Sure. Thank you.

She takes off her blouse. He puts his hand on her breast. She notices a smudge on her blouse, and rubs it off. He takes his hand away.

Mrs Robinson Would you get me a hanger?

Benjamin Certainly.

He goes to the closet.

A wood one?

Mrs Robinson What?

Benjamin They have wire ones or wooden ones.

Mrs Robinson A wooden one is fine.

He struggles to get a wooden hanger out, but they're fixed in. She takes off her skirt. He returns with a wire hanger.

Benjamin The wood ones are fixed to the rail.

Mrs Robinson Would this be easier for you in the dark?

Benjamin No.

Mrs Robinson Are you sure?

Benjamin Yes.

She gives him the hanger with her skirt on it, which he takes to the closet.

She's reaching to undo her bra when he begins to bang his head against the closet door.

Mrs Robinson Benjamin?

Benjamin I can't do this. Mrs Robinson, I cannot do this!

Mrs Robinson You don't want to do this?

Benjamin You have no idea how much. I do. And don't. I do, but I can't.

Now I'm just, I'm sorry I called you up but-

Mrs Robinson Benjamin-

Benjamin I mean don't you see? Don't you see how this is the worst thing I could possibly do?

Mrs Robinson Is that why you're doing it?

Benjamin No. I just - Mrs Robinson, could I take you to a movie?

Mrs Robinson Are you trying to be funny?

Benjamin No! But I don't know what to say, because I've got you up here and now I-

Mrs Robinson You don't know what to do with me.

Benjamin Well, I know I can't do this!

Mrs Robinson Benjamin, do you find me desirable?

Benjamin Mrs Robinson, you are the most attractive of all my parents' friends. And that includes Mrs Terhune. I find you more than adequately desirable, but for God's sake; can you imagine my parents? Can you imagine what my parents would say if they saw us in here right now?

Mrs Robinson What *would* they say?

Benjamin I have no idea Mrs Robinson, but for God's sake. They've brought me up. They've made a good life for me. I think they deserve something a little better than this.

Mrs Robinson *nods.*

Benjamin I mean, this has nothing to do with you. But I respect my parents, and I appreciate what they've ...

Mrs Robinson Benjamin?

Benjamin Yes?

Mrs Robinson Can I asked you a personal question?

Benjamin Ask me anything you want.

Mrs Robinson Is this your first time?

Benjamin Is this what?

Mrs Robinson It is, isn't it? This is your first time.

Benjamin Well, that's a laugh, Mrs Robinson. That really is a laugh.

He laughs weakly.

Mrs Robinson Well, it's nothing to be ashamed of

Benjamin Are you kidding?

Mrs Robinson It's perfectly natural to be nervous if it's your first time-

Benjamin Now wait a minute.

Mrs Robinson Just because you're a little inadequate in one area it doesn't mean-

Benjamin Inadequate!

Mrs Robinson Well I guess I'd better be- (going)

Benjamin Stay on the bed! Sit on the bed. Stay there. **Benjamin** *tears off his clothes, loses his balance, falls over. Blackout.*

Scene Five

*The same. Music. The light through the blinds plays a fague of passing time as **Benjamin** and **Mrs Robinson** make love, unseen beneath the sheets. Summer days come and go. Dawn breaks and the love-making forms a tableau as the closet door (which was also **Benjamin's** bedroom door) opens and we see **Benjamin's** mother beyond it. The lighting indicates we are in two places and two times at once.*

Mom. Ben? It's nearly eleven o'clock. It's a beautiful day, Ben. Are you going to spend all summer in bed?

*She closes the door. **Benjamin** climaxes and the lovers change positions. More time passes until the door opens again and we see **Benjamin's** father beyond it.*

Dad Ben, will you please get up off that bed and clean the pool or trim the lawn, or do *something* for Heaven's sake. You come in at all hours and your scholarship, Ben. When are you going to take up your scholarship?!

***Dad** disappears and **Benjamin** climaxes again. The lovers change positions once more, **Mrs Robinson** firmly guiding **Benjamin's** head beneath the covers. Finally the lights settle to early evening and **Benjamin** emerges.*

Mrs Robinson Don't stop. Benjamin? What's wrong?

Benjamin Mrs Robinson, do you think we could have a conversation?

Mrs Robinson A conversation?

Benjamin Yes.

Mrs Robinson Why?

Benjamin Well we've been coming here and doing this for a couple of months now and we never seem to talk about anything. I just wondered if you'd mind very much if we had a conversation. I mean we're not stupid people are we?

Mrs Robinson I don't know.

Benjamin Well we're not, but all we ever do is come up here and throw off our clothes and leap into bed together.

Mrs Robinson Are you tired of it?

Benjamin I'm not, no. But do you think we could liven it up with a few words now and then?

Mrs Robinson What do you want to talk about, darling?

Benjamin Anything. Anything at all.

Mrs Robinson Do you want to tell me about your childhood?

Benjamin No I don't.

Mrs Robinson Kiss me then.

Benjamin No. Now we are going to do this thing. We are going to have a conversation. Think of a topic.

Mrs Robinson How about art?

Benjamin Art. That's a good subject. You start it off.

Mrs Robinson I don't know anything about it.

Benjamin You what?

Mrs Robinson Do you?

Benjamin Well, yes I do. I know quite a bit about it.

Mrs Robinson Go ahead then.

Benjamin Are you interested in modern art or classical

Mrs Robinson Neither.

Benjamin You're not interested in art?

Mrs Robinson No.

Benjamin Then why do you want to talk about it?

Mrs Robinson I don't. Could we go back to what we --- doing?

Benjamin No. Think of another topic.

Mrs Robinson Why don't you tell me what you did

Benjamin This is pathetic.

Mrs Robinson What did you do?

Benjamin I got up around twelve. I ate breakfast. I had some beers. I went out to the pool. I blew air in my raft, I pull the raft in the water, I floated on the raft. I ate dinner, I watched two quiz shows, then I came here. What did you do?

Mrs Robinson I got up.

Benjamin Is that all?

Mrs Robinson I came here.

Benjamin What did you do in between?

Mrs Robinson I read a novel.

Benjamin An entire novel?

Mrs Robinson Five or six pages.

Benjamin What was the novel?

Mrs Robinson I can't remember.

Benjamin Is that all you did?

Mrs Robinson I fixed dinner for my husband.

Benjamin There! That's something we can have a conversation about! Your husband. I mean I don't know anything about how you work this, how you get out of the house at night, what are the risks involved.

Mrs Robinson There's no risk.

Benjamin How do you get out of the house?

Mrs Robinson I walk out.

Benjamin You walk right out the door?

Mrs Robinson That's right

Benjamin What do you tell him?

Mrs Robinson Benjamin, this isn't a very interesting topic.

Benjamin Please, tell me.

Mrs Robinson He's out all day. He comes home, he takes two Seconal, then it's tomorrow.

Benjamin So I guess you don't sleep together or anything?

Mrs Robinson No, we don't.

Benjamin How long has this been going on?

Mrs Robinson Four or five years.

Benjamin Are you kidding me?

Mrs Robinson No.

Benjamin You have not slept with your husband for four or five years? Man, this is interesting.

Mrs Robinson Calm down, Benjamin.

Benjamin We're talking, Mrs Robinson. We are talking.

Mrs Robinson We certainly are.

Benjamin So you don't love him. You wouldn't say you-

Mrs Robinson I think we've talked enough.

Benjamin But you loved him once, I assume. When you first knew him.

Mrs Robinson Well, no,

Benjamin Never?

Mrs Robinson I never did. Now would you please

Benjamin Well, wait a minute. You married him.

Mrs Robinson Yes I did.

Benjamin Well why did you do that?

Mrs Robinson Let's see if you can guess.

Benjamin His money?

Mrs Robinson Think really hard, Benjamin.

Benjamin You had to? I mean you *had* to? Did you have to?

Mrs Robinson Don't tell Elaine.

Benjamin You really had to.

Mrs Robinson Are you shocked?

Benjamin Well, I never thought of you and Mr Robinson as the sort of people who, I mean...how did it happen? Do you feel like telling me the circumstances?

Mrs Robinson Not particularly.

Benjamin Was he a law student at the time?

Mrs Robinson Yes.

Benjamin And you were a student also?

Mrs Robinson Yes.

Benjamin What was your major?

Mrs Robinson Benjamin ...

Benjamin I'm interested. What was your major subject?

Mrs Robinson Art.

Benjamin Art?

Mrs Robinson Art.

Benjamin How did you get pregnant?

Mrs Robinson Pardon me?

Benjamin Did he take you to a hotel?

Mrs Robinson Benjamin ...

Benjamin I'm curious.

Mrs Robinson We did it in his car.

Benjamin *is delighted.*

Benjamin In his car!? Oh boy. In a car?! What kind of car?

Mrs Robinson What?

Benjamin Do you remember the make of car?

Mrs Robinson My God.

Benjamin Really. I want to know.

Mrs Robinson It was a Ford, Benjamin.

Benjamin A Ford? A Ford! Goddammit, a Ford! That's great.

Mrs Robinson Benjamin, I'm beginning to think sleeping with younger men may have its disadvantages.

Benjamin So old Elaine Robinson got started in a Ford.

Mrs Robinson Don't talk about Elaine.

Benjamin Don't talk about Elaine?

Mrs Robinson No.

Benjamin That reminds me.

Mrs Robinson What?

Benjamin I have to talk about her.

Mrs Robinson I don't want you to.

Benjamin I have to. I've been meaning to all night. I have to talk about Elaine.

Mrs Robinson What about her?

Benjamin I have to see her. I have to go out with Elaine. I have to go on a date with Elaine.

Mrs Robinson You have to what?

Benjamin You see Mr Robinson called my dad and my dad said I was still hanging around the house and they arranged that I should take out Elaine.

Mrs Robinson Benjamin, don't you dare.

Benjamin I have no choice. It turned into a whole big thing about my wasting my life and watching TV all the time and he, my dad, said if I didn't take out Elaine he'd cut off my allowance and throw me out the house. He became irrational, so I said OK. I'll just take her to a movie. Why are you getting so upset?

Mrs Robinson I'm not getting upset, Benjamin, I am telling you you are not to see Elaine.

Benjamin Are you jealous of her? Are you afraid I might like her?

Mrs Robinson No.

Benjamin Well then what?

Mrs Robinson Drop it, Benjamin.

Benjamin I want to know why you feel so strongly about this.

Mrs Robinson I have my reasons!

Benjamin Then let's hear your reasons, Mrs Robinson. Because I think I know what they are.

She ducks beneath the covers.

Your daughter shouldn't associate with the likes of me, should she? I'm not good enough for her to associate with, am I? That's the reason, isn't it? I'm a dirty degenerate, aren't I? I'm good enough for you but I'm too slimy to associate with your daughter. That's it, isn't it? Isn't it?

Mrs Robinson YES!

Benjamin You go to hell.

He gets dressed.

You go straight to hell, Mrs Robinson.

Mrs Robinson Benjamin.

Benjamin Do you think I'm proud of myself? Do you think I'm proud of this?

Mrs Robinson I wouldn't know.

Benjamin Well, I'm not. No sir. I am not proud of spending my time in hotel rooms with a lascivious alcoholic.

Mrs Robinson I see.

Benjamin And if you think I come here for any reason beside pure boredom, then you're all wrong.

She nods.

Because ... Mrs Robinson?

Mrs Robinson What?

Benjamin You make me sick! I make myself sick. This is the sickest, most perverted thing that ever happened to me and you do what you want but I'm getting the hell out.

A pause as he dresses.

Mrs Robinson Do you mean those things?

Benjamin Damn right I do.

Mrs Robinson Well, I'm sorry.

Benjamin Well, I'm sorry too, but that's the way it is.

Mrs Robinson That's how you feel about me?

He nods.

That I'm a sick and disgusting person.

Benjamin Now, don't start acting hurt, Mrs Robinson. You told me yourself you were an alcoholic. You lie there and call me trash, what do you expect me to say?

Mrs Robinson Did I call you that?

Benjamin You did. You lay there and told me I was not good enough for your daughter.

Mrs Robinson If that's the impression you got Benjamin, I would like to apologise. You're as good a person as she is. It's just that under the circumstances I don't think you'd be right for each other.

Benjamin I'm as good as she is?

Mrs Robinson You're as good as she is. Brighter, certainly. In many ways her equal.

She gets up and dresses.

Benjamin What are you doing?

Mrs Robinson Well, it's obvious you don't want me around any more.

Benjamin Well, I was kind of upset.

Mrs Robinson I can understand why I might disgust you.

Benjamin No, no. I like you.

Mrs Robinson I should have realised how sickening this might be for you...

Benjamin It's not! I like it. I like it very much. I look forward to it. It's the one thing I have to look forward to.

Mrs Robinson You don't have to say that.

Benjamin I wouldn't say it if it wasn't true.

Mrs Robinson But you think we should stop seeing each other?

Benjamin No.

Mrs Robinson Shall we go back to bed then?

Benjamin Yes. OK.

Mrs Robinson I'd like that.

Benjamin I just need the bathroom. *He goes into the bathroom.*

Mrs Robinson And you won't go out with Elaine.

Benjamin I'm going to lose my allowance.

Mrs Robinson Benjamin!

Benjamin I have no intention of going out with Elaine.

Mrs Robinson Give me your word.

Benjamin This is absurd.

Mrs Robinson Promise me.

Benjamin I promise! I will not go out with Elaine!

Mrs Robinson Well, good. Immature son of a bitch. *Blackout.*

Elaine *appears downstage, waiting on a downtown street corner. Shadows and neon.*

Elaine Oh, thank you no. I'm waiting for someone. Well, thank you. No. No, I'm fine. I'm waiting for someone. Pardon me? No!

Benjamin *enters.*

Benjamin Hi.

Elaine Oh, hi.

Benjamin Am I late?

Elaine Oh, no.

Benjamin Good.

Elaine *Where are we going?*

Benjamin Inside.

Elaine Oh. Well...that's nice.

The Club Renaissance. A tacky Hollywood bar. A jukebox USR. Two men sit with a pitcher of beer and one of their heads on the table. Benjamin sits with Elaine. She looks childlike and out of place. The Waiter passes.

Elaine What is this place?

Benjamin It's a very lively place. It livens up eventually. You like beer?

Elaine Um, well ...

Benjamin Could we have two beers, please?

Elaine ... yes.

Benjamin Would you like some dinner?

Elaine I'd love some.

Benjamin Could we have a menu?

Waiter Dinner for two, sir?

Benjamin No, just for her.

Elaine Aren't you eating?

Benjamin I'm not hungry, if it's all the same to you.

Elaine Oh. Oh well.

A difficult pause.

Elaine I heard you got a scholarship.

Benjamin I don't want to teach.

Elaine Oh, but a good teacher is a rare and wonderful thing.

Benjamin That's what my parents think.

Elaine Well, it's true.

Benjamin That's not what the world thinks. The world thinks you failed before you began.

*The **Waiter** brings beer.*

Elaine So do you have a job lined up?

Benjamin No.

Elaine Do you have anything in mind?

Benjamin No.

Elaine Would you like to guess what I saw last month?

Benjamin What did you see?

Elaine You'll never guess.

Benjamin Then I won't try. What was it?

Elaine I saw the *Mona Lisa*.

Benjamin Did you?

Elaine The *Mona Lisa*. It's on loan to the Washington Museum and my room-mate Diane and I went on the civil rights march? There were two hundred thousand people. We were lucky to get a hotel room and the day after we went to see the *Mona Lisa*.

Benjamin Was she smiling?

Elaine Well of course she was. Aren't you interested in beautiful things?

*An **Exotic Dancer** enters and puts a dime in the jukebox. Music begins. She flicks a switch to dim the room and another to light some tacky coloured spots.*

Elaine Oh.

Elaine *turns. The **Exotic Dancer** starts her act. One of the men slaps the other on the shoulder. He lifts his head. Elaine realises what she's watching and turns around again, bowing her head.*

Elaine Could we get a table somewhere else?

Benjamin I didn't make a reservation.

Elaine *takes a sip of a drink, then pushes it to Benjamin.*

Elaine Would you drink this for me, please.

Benjamin Why don't you watch the show?

Elaine Benjamin, do you dislike me?

Benjamin What?

Elaine Do you dislike me for some reason?

Benjamin No, why should I?

Elaine I don't know.

The Exotic Dancer dances to desultory applause.

Benjamin You're missing a great effect here, **Elaine** looks.

Benjamin How about that?

Elaine *turns back.*

Benjamin. Could you do that?

The Exotic Dancer comes up behind Elaine and tousles her hair with her costume. The men laugh: One applauds. Elaine starts to cry. Benjamin's discomfort grows until he suddenly leaps up and pulls the plug on the jukebox.

Man Hey!

Benjamin I'm sorry.

Exotic Dancer What do you think you're doing?

Benjamin I'm sorry. My friend's not feeling well. *He offers her a dime. She just looks at him.*

Sorry.

He offers her some crumpled dollars, which she takes.

Exotic Dancer Excuse me if I earn a living.

Glances at Elaine, then strides away.

Man Hey, babe!

Exotic Dancer Back room, kiddo.

She leaves. One man's head sinks back down on the table. The other looks at Benjamin.

Man What's the matter with ya?

Benjamin I'm sorry.

He follows the Exotic Dancer. Benjamin returns to Elaine, who is clinging to her chair.

Elaine Would you take me home now, please?

Benjamin I'm sorry.

Elaine Could you get the cheque, please?

Benjamin Elaine, listen ...

Elaine Please, just take me home.

Benjamin I have to tell you something. This whole idea of the date and everything. It was my parents' idea. They forced me into it.

Elaine Oh. That's nice of you to tell me.

Benjamin I'm not like this.

Elaine Will you drive me home now, please?

Benjamin Well, can't we have dinner or something?

Elaine NO!

Music filters through from the back room.

Benjamin Can we just sit somewhere and talk?

Elaine I want to go home!

Benjamin I want to talk to you first.

Elaine Please, Benjamin.

Benjamin Could you stop crying, please?

Elaine No I couldn't.

Benjamin But could you try?

Elaine No.

Benjamin This is embarrassing. You want to leave?

Elaine No.

Benjamin You said you wanted to.

Elaine I changed my mind.

Benjamin Let's go outside.

Elaine This is where you took me, Benjamin. If it's all the same to you, this is where I'll cry.

Benjamin I want you to know I hate myself.

Elaine Thank you for saving me the trouble.

Benjamin I've been going through a difficult time lately.

Elaine I'm sorry to hear it.

Benjamin My life is bullshit.

Elaine Your life is what?

Benjamin Well, bullshit.

Elaine How can you say that?

Benjamin It's what I think.

Elaine Life is bullshit?

Benjamin My whole life.

Elaine Then I feel sorry for you.

Benjamin I feel sorry for myself.

Elaine I don't believe I'm sitting here with a nihilist. I'm always being attached on to by nihilists. I hate nihilists. I try to avoid them.

Benjamin Feel free to avoid me from now on.

Elaine Have you ever read *The Fountainhead*?

Benjamin No.

Elaine Have you ever seen the *Mona Lisa*?

Benjamin No.

Elaine Well, I have.

Benjamin I know you have.

Elaine The world is full of wonderful things. How can you sit there and say life is bullshit?

Benjamin I've had a very good education.

Elaine Then be grateful. There are people fighting for an education in Alabama. Fighting state troopers for a good education. Do you think they think life is bullshit?

Benjamin Very possibly.

Elaine A monk just set fire to himself in Saigon ...

Benjamin Well, hey.

Elaine Life is precious, Benjamin. How dare you. How dare you sit there and say life is bullshit. When you have so much. When whatever you want you could probably have.

Benjamin You like your life?

Elaine I love my life. Don't you?

Benjamin Once, I guess. When I was a kid.

Elaine What happened?

Benjamin It was unrequited.

Elaine Well, nothing's perfect Benjamin. I'd have liked a nicer nose. I wish

my mother didn't drink so much. I wish I'd never fallen out of that tree and broken my thumb because it so affects my fingering I'll probably never play the violin as well as I'd love to but that's about it for the bullshit, Benjamin. It's only bullshit if you let it pile up. Heaven's in the details. Someone said that. I think Robert Frost said that.

*The **Exotic Dancer** returns having finished her act. Picks up her robe from somewhere near **Elaine**.*

Elaine You look lovely.

*The **Stripper** looks at **Elaine** and **Elaine** looks right back. **Stripper** Thank you.*

Elaine I'm sorry I cried.

Stripper I'm sorry I made you.

*She eyes **Benjamin**, turns back to **Elaine**.*

Stripper So, what, are you screwing him for practice? **Elaine** laughs, surprisingly loudly. *The **Exotic Dancer** smiles.*

Exotic Dancer OK, babe.

*She leaves. **Elaine** continues talking to **Benjamin**. **Elaine** She's nice.*

Ben Nice?

Elaine Nice people. I was in this diner with my room-mate Diane? And this guy came in with a goat on a rope and it turns out the reason he's got a little goat on a rope is he was thrown out the day before for bringing in his dog? But the point is Diane had stood up to leave when she saw the man walk in and she sat straight down again and said, Well if there's a goat I think I'll have dessert. And that's why I love Diane, because if you think like that you not only notice more little goats, you get more dessert. Will she dance again?

Benjamin I don't think so.

Elaine Then let's go!

*She leaps up. **Benjamin** follows her. Do you have a car?*

Benjamin No.

Elaine Good. I love cabs. Don't you? And cab drivers? I think cab drivers are mostly fallen angels.

Benjamin kisses her.

Elaine Why did you do that?

Benjamin Your mouth. It's very beautiful.

Elaine No it isn't.

Benjamin Very *Mona Lisa*.

Elaine No bullshit.

Benjamin *laughs*.

Benjamin No bullshit?

Elaine Well, don't do it again.

Benjamin Don't you like me?

Elaine You're cute Benjamin, but you're kind of morose.

Benjamin I'm cute?

Elaine Way too serious.

Benjamin But cute?

Elaine Yes.

Benjamin How?

Elaine I really have no idea. **Benjamin** Like a goat? **Elaine** Maybe.

Benjamin So would you like to go somewhere and get some dessert?

Elaine Way to go, Benjamin. *She smiles. lights fade.*

Scene Seven

The Robinsons' living room. Front door and stairs. Benjamin waits anxious yet brash, spinning car keys on his finger. Mrs Robinson enters more quickly than she intended. A stony silence.

Benjamin Mrs Robinson, I hope you won't be offended if I say I think you're being a little melodramatic about this. Elaine and I are just going for a drive. I don't think there's any great crisis that necessitates any degree of acrimony here.

Mrs Robinson Turn around and leave the house, Benjamin. Get back in your car and drive away.

Benjamin What exactly are you trying to say, Mrs Robinson?

Mrs Robinson I'm telling you never to see her again. Do I make myself clear?

Benjamin Yes you do.

Mrs Robinson Then the matter's closed.

Benjamin No it's not, because I have no intention of following your orders,

Mrs Robinson.

Mrs Robinson Benjamin, if you think ...

Benjamin Why don't you tell me exactly what your objections are instead of ...

Mrs Robinson Elaine is a very simple girl. She is sweet, uncomplicated and thoroughly honest. And she is thoroughly sincere. And Benjamin, you are none of these things. You are a lot of things, but you add up to nothing.

Benjamin What time does she usually get up?

Mrs Robinson I don't think you need to worry about that.

Benjamin I think we do. I think we have a date and I think she's expecting me.

Mrs Robinson I could make things most unpleasant.

Benjamin In what way would that be?

Mrs Robinson To keep her away from you I would tell Elaine anything I had to.

A pause.

Benjamin I don't believe you.

Mrs Robinson Well, you'd better.

Benjamin I don't think you would do that.

Mrs Robinson You want to watch?

Benjamin Would you do that? Mrs Robinson, I'm asking you not to do that. Please don't do that.

Mrs Robinson Go home now.

Benjamin Please, don't wreck it. I'm asking you please not to wreck it.

Mrs Robinson Wreck it?

Benjamin Please.

Mrs Robinson Wreck what?

Benjamin *hangs his head.*

Mrs Robinson Are you in love Benjamin? Do you have the audacity? The indecency?

Enter Elaine in her dressing gown.

Elaine Benjamin?

Mrs Robinson Elaine, go back upstairs.

Elaine Why are you so early?

Benjamin It's a beautiful day; would you like to get in the car?

Elaine I'm not dressed.

Mrs Robinson Go back upstairs, Elaine.

Benjamin Get dressed, I'll wait down here.

Mrs Robinson Benjamin was just leaving.

Benjamin No he wasn't. No I'm not. **Elaine** Is something wrong?

Benjamin I'll be right here.

Mrs Robinson Benjamin's not feeling well.

Benjamin I'm perfectly all right.

Elaine I don't understand.

Benjamin Get dressed, Elaine.

Mrs Robinson Goodbye, Benjamin.

Elaine Would someone please tell me what's going on? Mother?

She looks at her mother. So does Benjamin. Mrs Robinson looks at

Benjamin, then back at her daughter. Before she can speak, Benjamin does.

Benjamin Elaine, I have something to tell you.

Mrs Robinson Benjamin.

Benjamin I have been having an affair. I have been having an affair with an older woman.

Elaine What are you talking about?

Mrs Robinson Get dressed Elaine.

Benjamin With a married woman.

Mrs Robinson Benjamin's waiting to take you for a ride.

Benjamin I just wanted you to know.

Elaine Well, thank you. I'll get dressed.

She makes to leave, then stops dead. She slowly turns to her mother and

Benjamin.

Elaine Oh my God.

Mrs Robinson Elaine ...

Elaine Oh my God.

Benjamin Listen, Elaine.

Elaine Oh my God. Get out of here.

Benjamin Elaine ...

Elaine Would you please? Oh my God. Oh my God. Would you please get out of here? My God.

Benjamin Should I come back later?

Elaine *looks at him. He leaves. She looks at her mother. Mrs Robinson's knees slowly buckle and she sits on the floor. Using ice and a shaker,*

Elaine *fixes a vodka cocktail and gives it to her mother. Elaine returns to the shaker and pours the rest for herself. The glass is half empty, so she tops it up with vodka. Sits opposite her mother. Mrs Robinson has never seen her drink before. She never has drink before. Elaine drinks her cocktail in two long drafts. Lights transform to evening.*

Scene Eight

Later. Elaine and Mrs Robinson have been drinking.

Mrs Robinson 'Laine.

Elaine Don't want to.

Mrs Robinson Go to bed.

Elaine ... no.

A pause.

Mrs Robinson Mm?

Elaine 'ove you.

Mrs Robinson 'ove you too.

Elaine Huh!

Mrs Robinson Oh yes.

Elaine Don' believe you.

Mrs Robinson In my way, OK? 'Laine ...

Elaine I don't be sick on my blouse.

Mrs Robinson *Don't* be.

Elaine No.

Mrs Robinson Are you?

Elaine No.

Mrs Robinson

Don't.

Elaine No, I won't.

Mrs Robinson I'm not apologise.

Elaine Disgusting.

Mrs Robinson I told you.

Elaine Mmmng.

Mrs Robinson ... believe me?

Elaine Mm.

Mrs Robinson Gu.

Elaine *lurches over on to her hands and knees.* **Mrs Robinson** Not on the rug.

Elaine Not going to.

Mrs Robinson Get off the rug. Turn your head round.

Elaine *rolls on to her back. Begins to cry.*

Elaine He horrible. Everybody horrible. Why so everybody horrible?

Mrs Robinson My horrible?

Elaine Yes.

Mrs Robinson Mnot.

Elaine Nnn. Nwhat are you then?

Mrs Robinson Mbored. Sbored. N I din't anyway I tol' you. Was him.

Elaine Hmph. Hm.

She sits up.

Be sick.

Mrs Robinson Not my rug! ... in your skirt!

Elaine 'S my favourite.

Mrs Robinson 'S horrible. Doesn't suit you.

Elaine It's all right. It's all right. I don't want to.

Mrs Robinson No fashion sense of dress. Never had.

Elaine Rooms going over and over and over.

Mrs Robinson It's ... no, it's the little muscles. In your eyes. You got to relax a little muscles.

Elaine Mmm?

Mrs Robinson In the corner of your eyes. And let your eyes go up.

Elaine Eragh ... !

Mrs Robinson Asright; they just want to drift up so just let 'em and they stay up there.

Elaine Mmmhah.

Mrs Robinson Relax and up they go and get stuck up there. Mmm?

Elaine Oh yeh.

Mrs Robinson And the room stops going over.

Elaine Yeh.

Elaine Mm.

Mrs Robinson Little tip.

Elaine 'Kyou.

Mrs Robinson Now just be still.

Elaine Where's love go?

Mrs Robinson Love?

Elaine Where's it all go?

Mrs Robinson When you was little, I love you all the time.

Elaine When I was little, yes, when I couldn't remember if you say so.

Mrs Robinson I did.

Elaine Well I don't remember and what about when I'm big? You love me?

Look I'm big and you love me I don't think so.

Mrs Robinson I do.

Elaine You don't. Love gets littler and littler and goes away until it isn't there. It's all gone away.

Mrs Robinson You love me?

Elaine No. S'gone. You love daddy?

Mrs Robinson No.

Elaine See.

Mrs Robinson That's long gone away somewhere I

Elaine So where's it go?

Mrs Robinson I met your father, he used to sing to me. We'd be going someplace in the car and he used to sing. He could sing. He could. Same thing as Sinatra. Key. But not the range. Not the high notes. I used to love him. Singing. In the wee small hours. Just some songs he couldn't get to the end. Couldn't get through those high notes to the end. You know those notes. So. So. At school I'd had this teacher. Who taught the choir. And the piano and oboe and things, but the choir. So I know if you singing and you think you breathing *in* as you go up ... You understand? You imagine you singing *in*, not up, not out, but *in*, then those high notes can happen. La la la la .

Elaine La la la la la la .

Mrs Robinson La la la la.

Elaine La la!

Mrs Robinson A's right. See? So. One night. In the car. I taught him. I taught him how to do that. And right away, he got it. How to do it. All the way. Half a thing. Octave. (*She sings a snatch of Sinatra.*) And all the songs he used to sing ... to *want* to sing ... suddenly he could. He could sing them. And you know what? He never sang to me again.

Elaine I never heard him sing.

Mrs Robinson He'll never sing.

Elaine I'm going to have a forever love.

Mrs Robinson Ha.

Elaine No ha, never mind ha.

Mrs Robinson You never find it, sweetie.

Elaine I will.

Mrs Robinson You look hard as you like.

Elaine You don't look. That's the thing. Everyone there's something.

Mrs Robinson Something what?

Elaine Worth loving.

Mrs Robinson Hah.

Elaine No, that's the point. You see? Don't *look*, that's not the point. The point ... The *point* ... You *choose*. You unnerstand?

Mrs Robinson So young.

Elaine The love's *in you*, and you just choose.

Mrs Robinson Anyone 'cept Benjamin.

Elaine *laughs loudly.*

Mrs Robinson *joins in. They laugh together.*

Mrs Robinson 'Xcept Benjamin.

Elaine 'Xcept Benjamin. *Anyone except Benjamin. Lights fade.*

Scene Nine

The Braddocks' front lawn. Mr Braddock is outside. Benjamin comes out

the front door with a suitcase.

Benjamin Dad.

Dad Mm?

Benjamin Sir?

Dad What?

Benjamin I'm going to marry Elaine Robinson.

Dad Are you serious?

Benjamin Yes.

Dad I'll go get your mother. You wait right here.

He leaves. Benjamin puts on his jacket. His father comes back with his mother.

Mom What's all the excitement?

Dad Ben.

Benjamin I'm going to marry Elaine Robinson.

Mom Oh, Ben!

Dad Ha hah!!!

Mom Ah, Ben!

Dad Ben and Elaine are getting married.

Mom Oh Ben, I'm crying.

Mom *hugs him.*

Dad Now *let* him go, let him go.

Mom *holds his hand.*

Dad Let's get the whole story here. Have you set the date et?

Benjamin No.

Dad Have you told the Robinsons yet?

Benjamin No.

Dad Let's call them right now.

Benjamin No.

Mom Oh, Ben.

Dad Ben, we are ... just delighted.

Benjamin I think I should tell you that Elaine doesn't now about this yet.

Dad She doesn't know about what yet?

Benjamin That we're getting married.

Dad What?

Benjamin I just decided an hour ago.

Dad And you talked it over with her?

Benjamin No.

Dad But you've written her about it?

Benjamin No.

Dad You called her?

Benjamin No.

Dad Well good God Ben, you get us all excited here and you haven't even proposed?

Benjamin I'm driving up to Berkeley today.

Dad To propose to her?

Benjamin Yes.

Dad Well that sounds kind of half-baked.

Benjamin I'm moving up there.

Dad To live?

Benjamin Yes.

Mom To *live*?

Dad Now just a damn minute; she's up there finishing school and you're just going to move up there?

Benjamin Yes.

Dad Move up there and pester the girl because you have nothing better to do?

Benjamin I love her.

Dad You hardly know the girl, Ben; how do you know she wants to marry you?

Benjamin Oh, she doesn't.

Dad She what?

Benjamin I'm pretty sure she won't want to initially.

Mom Ben, does she like you?

Benjamin No.

Dad/Mom No?

Benjamin She hates me.

Mom Oh, Ben.

Blackout.

Act Two

Scene One

Attic room, Berkeley hoarding house. Evening. Benjamin stands holding the door open for Elaine.

Elaine Benjamin, why are you here?

Benjamin Would you like to come in?

Elaine I want to know what you're doing here in Berkeley.

Benjamin Would you like some tea? I have tea.

Elaine I want to know why you're stalking me.

Benjamin I'm not.

Elaine I see you on campus. You duck into doorways. On the bus you hid behind a magazine.

Benjamin I've been meaning to speak to you.

Elaine You've been following me around for days.

Benjamin Would you like to come in?

Elaine No.

Benjamin Why not?

Elaine I don't want to be in a room with you. Now why are you up here?

Benjamin I'm just living here temporarily. I thought I might be bumping into you. I thought I remembered you were going to school up here.

Elaine Did you move up here because of me?

Benjamin No.

Elaine Did you?

Benjamin I don't know.

Elaine Well, did you?

Benjamin Well, what do you think?

Elaine I think you did.

Benjamin I'm just living in Berkeley. Having grown somewhat weary off family life. I've been meaning to stop by and pay my respects but have not been entirely certain how you felt about me after the incident with your mother which was certainly a serious mistake on my part but not serious enough I hope to permanently alter your feelings about me.

Elaine *comes in, slamming the door.*

Elaine Benjamin, you are the one person in the world I never want to see again. I want you nowhere near me. I want you to leave here and never come back.

He holds his hands in front of his face.

Promise me you'll go.

Benjamin Elaine ...

Elaine Promise me.

Benjamin *(stares at her a moment)* All right.

Elaine Pack your bags and go tonight.

Benjamin All right!

Elaine So promise me.

Benjamin All right!

He flops down, his head in his arms.

Elaine Goodbye, Benjamin.

Benjamin *(into his arms)* I love you!!!!

Elaine You what?

Benjamin I love you! I love you and I can't help myself and I'm begging you to forgive me for what I did. I love you so much I'm terrified of seeing you every time I step outside the door I feel helpless and hopeless and lost and miserable, please forget what I did please Elaine oh God Elaine I love you please forget what I did Elaine I love you. I love you. Forget what I did. Please forget what I did Elaine, I love you.

Elaine I don't think so.

Benjamin I do.

Elaine How can you love me Benjamin when you're so full of hate?

Benjamin Of hate?

Elaine How else could you have done that?

Benjamin Done what?

Elaine How could you have raped my mother?

Benjamin What?

Elaine You must have so much hate inside you.

Benjamin Raped her?

Elaine *starts to cry.*

Benjamin Did you say raped her?

Elaine Virtually raped her.

Benjamin Did she say that?

Elaine I want you out of here by the morning.

Benjamin No!

He runs between her and the door. **Elaine** Don't you touch me. **Benjamin** I'm not.

Elaine Then get away from the door.

Benjamin What did she say? Tell me what she said.

Elaine Why?

Benjamin Because it isn't true.

Elaine She said you virtually raped her.

Benjamin Which isn't true.

Elaine Is it true you slept with her?

Benjamin Yes.

Elaine All right then, get away from the door.

Benjamin What did she say?

Elaine She said you dragged her up to the hotel room ...

Benjamin I dragged her!?

Elaine ...and you made her pass out and you raped her.

Benjamin I what I drugged her? I dragged her up five floors and I drugged her? I *raped* her?

Elaine You *virtually*, yes.

Benjamin I *what*?

Elaine Could I leave now please?

Benjamin That is not what happened.

Elaine I have to leave.

Benjamin My parents gave me a party when I got home from college. Your mother came up to my room.

Elaine I don't want to hear this.

Benjamin She asked me to unzip her dress.

Elaine May I go now?

Benjamin She took off all her clothes. She stood there entirely naked and she said ...

Elaine screams, long and hysterical. **Benjamin** frozen. She calms down.

He brings her a chair. He brings her a glass of water. She drinks it.

Elaine What did you think would happen?

Benjamin What?

Elaine When you came up here?

Benjamin I don't know.

He begins to pack.

Elaine You just came up here?

Benjamin I drove up. I made reservations at a restaurant.

Elaine You were going to invite me to dinner?

Benjamin Yes.

Elaine Then what did you do?

Benjamin I didn't invite you.

Elaine I know.

Benjamin I just came up here. I got this room. I kind of wallowed around. I wrote you some letters.

Elaine Love letters?

Benjamin I don't remember.

Elaine So what are you going to do now?

Benjamin I don't know.

Elaine Where are you going?

Benjamin I don't know.

Elaine Well, what are you going to do?

Benjamin Are you deaf?

Elaine What?

Benjamin I don't know what I'm going to do.

Elaine Well, will you get on a bus or what?

Benjamin Are you concerned about me or something?

Elaine You came up here because of me. You messed up your life because of me, and now you're leaving because of me. You made me responsible! I don't want you drunk in some gutter because of me.

Benjamin You want me to stick around?

Elaine I want you to have a definite plan before you leave, then I want you to leave.

Benjamin I have no plans.

Elaine Then just make up your mind.

Benjamin What?

Elaine Don't you have a mind?

Benjamin Of course.

Elaine Then make it up.

Benjamin I could go to Canada.

Elaine You want to go to Canada?

Benjamin No.

Elaine You think I can study? You think I can think with you here?

Benjamin Just tell me to leave and I'll leave.

Elaine I have so much work this semester.

Benjamin Would you just tell me to leave, please?

Elaine Are you simple?

Benjamin What?

Elaine I mean what do I have to say to you?

Benjamin I don't know.

Elaine Can't you see the way I feel?

Benjamin Shall I go then?

Elaine Why don't you?

Benjamin Why don't I go?

Elaine Yes.

Benjamin All right. That's all you had to say.

Elaine *goes to the door.*

Elaine You know what she gave me for my eleventh birthday? She gave me a bartender's guide. I made her cocktails all day.

Benjamin She's a strange woman.

Elaine Is she attractive?

Benjamin Yes. Not really.

Elaine Well is she or not?

Benjamin I don't know.

Elaine You don't know which she is or you don't know which I'd like to hear?

Benjamin Either.

Elaine And am I?

Benjamin I'm sorry?

Elaine Am I as attractive as her?

Benjamin Oh, yes.

Elaine I have to go now.

Benjamin Would you marry me?

Elaine Would I what?

Benjamin Marry me. Would you?

Elaine Marry you?

Benjamin Yes.

Elaine Marry you?

Benjamin Would you?

Elaine Why would I?

Benjamin I think we have a lot in common.

Elaine Well, that's true.

Benjamin So will you?

Elaine Marry you?

Benjamin Yes.

Elaine Hah. Ha ha ha. Oh Benjamin, you are something.

Benjamin Am I?

Elaine Yes you are, but I don't know what. Why do you want to marry me?

Benjamin It's the way I feel. I feel we should.

Elaine What about the way I feel?

Benjamin How do you feel?

Elaine Confused.

Benjamin Are you fond of me? *She sniffs.*

Are you?

Elaine Yes, fond.

Benjamin Then let's get married.

Elaine And can you imagine my parents?

Benjamin You mean your mother?

Elaine I mean my father.

Benjamin I think he'd be very happy for us.

Elaine And what if he found out what happened?

Benjamin He won't.

Elaine But what if he did?

Benjamin I'd apologise. I'd say it was a stupid foolish thing and he'd say he was a little disappointed in me but if it's all in the past then that's that.

Elaine You're so naive.

Benjamin Forget about your parents. This isn't about our parents. This is about us. Have you any other objections?

Elaine Yes I do.

Benjamin What are they?

Elaine We're too young to be married. You should do other things first.

Benjamin What other things?

Elaine Well, go somewhere. Asia. Africa. See different places, different people.

Benjamin Elaine, I have no desire to hop around the world ogling peasants. So do you have any other objections?

Elaine Have you thought about finding a place to live and buying the groceries every day?

Benjamin Sure.

Elaine No you haven't.

Benjamin You mean which brand of cereal we should buy?

Elaine Yes.

Benjamin No I haven't.

Elaine Well why not? I mean that's the kid<::: you'll have to be thinking about, Benjamin, an7di :you'd get sick of it after two days.

Benjamin But I wouldn't get sick of you, would I?

Elaine Well yes, I think you probably would.

Benjamin Well no, I wouldn't.

Elaine I'm not what you think I am, Benjamin. I'm just a plain ordinary person. I'm not smart or glamorous or anything like that.

Benjamin So what?

Elaine So why me?

Benjamin Well. You're reasonably intelligent. You're striking-looking.

Elaine Striking?

Benjamin Sure.

Elaine My ears are too prominent to be striking-looking.

Benjamin No, they're very striking.

Elaine I wouldn't be enough for you, Benjamin.

Benjamin That isn't true.

Elaine You're an intellectual, and I'm not.

Benjamin Now listen...

Elaine You should marry someone who can discuss politics and history and art...

Benjamin Ah, shut up. Would you just ... thank you. Now have you ever heard me talking about any of that crap?

Elaine You majored in that crap.

Benjamin Have you ever heard me talk about it?

Elaine That crap?

Benjamin Yes.

Elaine No I haven't.

Benjamin All right then. Goddammit, I hate all that. So will you marry me?

Elaine No!

Benjamin Why not?

Elaine Well for a start I'm studying and you haven't got any money!

Benjamin I'll move up here. I'll get a job teaching.

Elaine I thought you didn't want to be a teacher.

Benjamin Yes, but I could teach.

Elaine You don't have the right attitude. Teachers are meant to be inspired.

Benjamin That's a myth.

Elaine Is it?

Benjamin Oh yeh.

Elaine It is not.

Benjamin Any other objections?

Elaine Plenty.

Benjamin Take your best shot.

Elaine Well, what about babies?

Benjamin Babies?

Elaine Do you want babies? Because that's what I want.

Benjamin Well, I do too.

Elaine Oh, come on.

Benjamin I do.

Elaine You do not.

Benjamin Goddammit Elaine I want babies! Your babies. Triplets! I want to smother in a huge pile of diapers!

She laughs.

I'm serious here. Let's get married.

Elaine Benjamin.

Benjamin What?

Elaine I can't see why I'm so attractive to you.

Benjamin You just are.

Elaine But ... I don't understand.

Benjamin What don't you understand?

Elaine I mean you're a really brilliant person.

Benjamin Elaine, don't start that. I mean it. *She nods. He takes her hand.*

So, shall we get married?

Elaine If you want to marry me so much why don't you just ... drag me off.

Benjamin All right, I will. We'll get a blood test in the morning and I'll just drag you off.

Elaine But you can't. I mean I couldn't. I'd have to see Carl.

Benjamin Can?

Elaine I'd have to talk to Carl first.

Benjamin Who's Carl?

Elaine The boy I met last semester. Carl Smith.

Benjamin Well, what does he have to do with it?

Elaine I said I might marry him.

Benjamin What?

Elaine He asked me to marry him and I said I might.

Benjamin Well, Elaine ...

Elaine What?

Benjamin Why in the hell didn't you tell me about this? **Elaine** I'm telling you.

Benjamin Now? You're telling me now?

Elaine Well there wasn't a before. It was none of your business before.

Benjamin My God Elaine, how many people have done this?

Elaine Proposed to me?

Benjamin Yes.

Elaine I don't know.

Benjamin You mean more than him have?

Elaine Well, yes.

Benjamin How many?

Elaine I don't know.

Benjamin Well, could you try and remember? Six? Seven?

Elaine About that, yes.

Benjamin Are you kidding me?

Elaine No.

Benjamin You mean you have actually had six or seven people ask you to marry them?

Elaine Is this any of your business?

Benjamin Well yes, I think it is. When did he ask you? Was it him on the bus?

Elaine What bus?

Benjamin On the bus to the zoo?

Elaine You followed me to the zoo?

Benjamin No, I missed the bus! When did he ask you? Did he ask you that day? My God, he asked you that day, didn't he? Where did he ask you, did he ask you at the zoo?

Elaine Benjamin, why are you getting so excited?

Benjamin He asked you at the zoo. I missed the bus and he asked you in the monkey house or somewhere. Did he get down on his knees? I hope he didn't get down on his knees. He did, didn't he? What did he say?

Elaine Benjamin ...

Benjamin What did he say?

Elaine He said he thought we'd make a pretty good team.

Benjamin Hah!

Elaine What?

Benjamin He said that?

Elaine Benjamin, what is wrong with you?

Benjamin So what is he, a student?

Elaine A medical student. Final year.

Benjamin And he got down on his knees at the zoo and he said...

Elaine It wasn't at the zoo, it was at his apartment.

Benjamin His apartment?

Elaine Yes.

Benjamin You went to his apartment?

Elaine Yes.

Benjamin But you ... I mean you didn't ... ?

Elaine No, I did not spend the night.

Benjamin *grins.*

Benjamin So good old Carl, the final-year medic, took you up to his apartment and popped the big one, did he ... ?

Elaine Goodbye Benjamin.

Benjamin Did he put music on?

Elaine I have to study.

Benjamin No wait. Wait. Are we getting a blood test tomorrow?

Elaine No.

Benjamin The day after?

Elaine I don't know.

Benjamin Are we getting married?

Elaine Maybe we are and maybe we aren't.

She leaves, closing the door behind her. Benjamin sits. Suddenly the door opens, Elaine walks in, kisses him hard, and waltzes out again. Benjamin grins.

Scene Two

The same. Morning. A knock on the door. Benjamin opens it eagerly. Mr Robinson stands there. He's been travelling all night. He's dishevelled.

Mr Robinson Do you want ... Do you want to try and tell me why you did it?

Benjamin I don't ... I don't ...

Mr Robinson *comes in and sits down.*

Mr Robinson Do you have any special grudge against me you'd like to tell

me about? Do you feel a particularly strong resentment for me for some reason?

Benjamin No. It's not...

Mr Robinson Is there something I've said that's caused this contempt? Or is it just the things I stand for that you despise?

Benjamin It was nothing to do with you, sir.

Mr Robinson Well Ben, it was quite a bit to do with me. And I'd like to hear your feelings about me if you have any. I'd like to know why you've done this to me.

Benjamin There was no personal ... It was nothing personal.

Mr Robinson Nothing personal?

Benjamin No, sir.

Mr Robinson Well that's an interesting way of looking at it, Ben. You sleep with another man's wife ...

Benjamin Mr Robinson, there was no reason for it ...

Mr Robinson Ben, you're a little old to abdicate responsibility . . .

Benjamin I'm entirely responsible. It was altogether my own fault, Mr Robinson, but I would like you to know that ...

Mr Robinson I think we're two civilised human beings; do you think it's necessary to threaten each other?

Benjamin No I don't.

Mr Robinson Then do you want to unclench your fists please? Thank you.

Benjamin I'm trying to tell you that I have no personal feelings about you, Mr Robinson. I'm trying to tell you I do not resent you.

Mr Robinson You don't respect me terribly much either, do you?

Benjamin No, I don't.

Mr Robinson *nods.*

Mr Robinson Well, I don't think we have a whole lot to say to each other, Ben. I do think you should know the consequences of what you've done. I do think you should know my wife and I are getting a divorce.

Benjamin A divorce? Why?

Mr Robinson Why?

Benjamin Well, it shouldn't make *that* much difference, surely? I mean we ... we ... got into bed with each other but it was nothing compared to ...

It was nothing at all. We could have been shaking hands.

Mr Robinson I always thought when you took your clothes off and got into bed with a woman and had sexual intercourse with her that was just a little more than shaking hands.

Benjamin Not in this case.

Mr Robinson Well, that's not saying much for my wife, is it?

Benjamin You miss the point.

Mr Robinson Not at all Ben. I'm sure my wife's bedroom technique could do with a little brushing up.

Benjamin You are distorting everything I say!

Mr Robinson Don't shout at me, Ben.

Benjamin The point is I don't love your wife; I love your daughter.

Mr Robinson Well, I'm sure you think you do Ben, but after a few times shaking hands with Elaine I'm sure you'll find her just as disappointing.

Benjamin I'm sorry?

Mr Robinson A boy called us up and he asked for her hand. Carl is to be a doctor, and he asked for her hand in marriage. There are some fine young men in this world.

Benjamin Mr Robinson ...

Mr Robinson I don't know if I can prosecute or not, but I think maybe I can. In light of what's happened I think maybe I can get you behind bars if you even so much as look at my daughter again. I don't want to mince words with you. I think you're totally despicable. I think you're scum. I think you're filth.

He leaves. Enter Dad.

Benjamin Dad?

Dad I have just driven a grown man four hundred miles, Ben. A grown man crying like a child because of what you did to him. He was sobbing, Ben, beating his hand on the armrest like a little baby. Now pack your case.

Benjamin I can't leave here.

Dad You're driving back with me tonight.

Benjamin I appreciate your concern but I can't leave here.

Dad Hal's going to spend a couple of days with his daughter. And you have an appointment in the morning with a psychiatrist.

Benjamin I beg your pardon?

Dad Get to it, Ben.

Benjamin Well, I don't know if you brought a straitjacket up here with you, but if you didn't..

Dad *hits his son very hard with the back of his hand.* **Benjamin** goes flying.

Dad Forgive me for that, Ben. I'm very badly shaken. I want you to forgive me for that.

Blackout.

Scene Three

A psychiatrist's study.

The Psychiatrist with his back to us. Benjamin, Dad and Mom in chairs facing us. Mom. is nearly hysterical.

Mom Well, I just don't understand what I'm supposed to have done! Why is it all my fault?

Dad Now, that's not what he said.

Mom He said it was my fault.

Dad He didn't say that.

Benjamin It certainly sounded like that.

Dad You keep your goddam opinions to yourself!

Mom Why is everything *my* fault?

Dad Would you ... Would you please... Could you just, for the love of Mike ...say something?

A pause.

Psychiatrist Nothing is anyone's fault.

Benjamin Well, that's encouraging.

Mom I don't understand if you do your very best and you're a perfectly decent person how you can be blamed for things you didn't do even if the person who did them was once, you know, you didn't take him to the zoo or something or he didn't like green beans? I cooked three vegetables half my whole life, I stood in line for a plastic man with the right sort of gun in a blizzard for Heaven's sake, all Christmas Eve ...

Dad Would you just shut up for thirty seconds!

Mom I just want to know ...

Dad Well then, *listen* for once in your life! *A pause.*

Doctor ...

Psychiatrist I'm not a doctor.

Dad You're not?

Psychiatrist But that's OK.

Dad Well whatever you are, I don't know what we're all doing here but the situation's very simple. Our son I still like to call him our son - has behaved so reprehensibly towards the wife and daughter of my oldest and dearest friend there is obviously something not entirely normal ...

Benjamin Define normal.

Dad I'm speaking, Benjamin.

Benjamin You try and put your own son in a hospital with old women muttering obscenities and and murderers peeing in the corridor. Is that normal?

Mom It's for your own good, Benjamin.

Benjamin And they've hidden her. Did you know that? The Robinsons kidnapped their own daughter and took her to New England. Is that normal?

Dad That's just until the wedding.

Benjamin The what?

Dad The whatever.

Benjamin What wedding?

A pause.

What wedding?

Mom I'm not saying I'm entirely blameless ...

Benjamin Am I insane?

Dad It's all for the best, Ben.

Benjamin Excuse me, I asked you a question, am I insane?

Psychiatrist I don't believe so.

Benjamin Thank you.

Benjamin jumps out the window.

Dad Benjamin!

Mom Benjamin!

Dad You come back here!

Mom (*losing control*) Oh God, it's all my fault!

Scene Four

The vestry, First Presbyterian church. Door to the body of the church, door a large cupboard.

*Solemn organ music, then the sound of a row rapidly rising until **Benjamin** bursts in pulling **Elaine** by the wrist. **Elaine** is in full white wedding gown. He slams the door behind them and runs to the other door.*

Elaine Benjamin!

Benjamin It's OK Elaine, everything's going to be OK now.

Elaine What are you doing? Benjamin!

*He flings open the other door and an old pew falls out on him. **Benjamin** Oh God.*

Elaine What are we doing?

Benjamin We went the wrong way.

Mr Robinson (off) YOU SON OF A BITCH!

Mrs Robinson *runs in Just before **Benjamin** slams the door and uses the old pew to barricade it. Immediately, **Mr Robinson's** weight hits the door from the other side.*

Mrs Robinson Elaine!

Mr Robinson (off) Let me in there you filthy degenerate! *Others shout and holler on the other side of the door. **Mrs Robinson** stands getting her breath back, staring at **Benjamin**. **Benjamin** gets his breath back staring at **Mrs Robinson**.*

Mrs Robinson Elaine, get back in the church.

Elaine Benjamin, what is happening?

Benjamin We're getting married.

Elaine I'm getting married to Carl.

Benjamin You're going to marry me.

Elaine I'm marrying Carl. I was just marrying him.

Mr Robison (aff) Open this door, you filthy, degenerate son of bitch!

Elaine You hit my fiancee!

Benjamin He fainted.

Elaine Well, you bloodied his nose.

Mr Robinson (off) Judith, open the door!

Mrs Robinson Open the door, Benjamin.

Benjamin No.

Mrs Robinson Open the door.

Benjamin You think I'm mad?

Mrs Robinson Like a dog. You should be shot.

Benjamin I love Elaine. Elaine, I love you.

Mr Robinson (off) I'm calling the police, you pervert.

Mrs Robinson So this is, what is this, Benjamin? A big romantic gesture?

Benjamin I just want to get married.

Mrs Robinson So does Elaine.

Benjamin Not to him.

Mrs Robinson She wants to get married to Carl.

Benjamin No she doesn't.

Mrs Robinson Yes she does.

Benjamin Elaine, do you want to marry Carl?

Elaine Yes, I do.

Benjamin No she doesn't.

Mrs Robinson Do you want to marry Carl, Elaine?

Elaine Yes I do.

Benjamin No you don't.

Mrs Robinson I think she does Benjamin.

Benjamin You don't have to do this Elaine. You don't have to do everything your mother says.

Mr Robinson (off) You're a dead man, Braddock.

Benjamin Do you love me?

Mrs Robinson Love?

Benjamin Elaine, do you love me?

Elaine No.

Benjamin Well, I think you do.

Mrs Robinson She doesn't love you, Benjamin.

Benjamin Yes she does.

Elaine I don't.

Benjamin You see?

Mr Robinson (off) This is kidnap, Braddock. You could do life for this! You could go to the chair for this!

Mrs Robinson I don't know what you think you're going to achieve here.

Benjamin Well that's because you have a very limited imagination.

Mrs Robinson All that's going to happen is you're going to be seriously assaulted and Elaine is going to marry Carl.

Benjamin I don't think so.

Mrs Robinson Elaine, will you please put this poor boy out of his misery? Will you please tell him he's making a complete ass of himself.

Benjamin Would you tell your mother that you love me? Would you please do that?

Elaine Would you please both stop telling me what I think!

Benjamin So why are you marrying Carl?

Elaine I don't have to tell you that.

Benjamin Because your parents told you to.

Elaine Do you think so little of me?

Benjamin Then why are you marrying him?

Elaine Carl is a perfectly decent man.

Benjamin Perfectly decent?

Elaine I think that's a lot.

Benjamin I think you'll make a great team.

Elaine Well, thank you.

Benjamin But is that enough?

Elaine Of course that's not enough!

Benjamin Then why are you marrying Carl?

Elaine Because I am.

Benjamin Is that a reason?

Elaine Yes it is.

Benjamin No it isn't, it's an evasion.

Elaine Well, it's a fact, Benjamin.

Benjamin Why is it?

Elaine Why is it what?

Benjamin Why are you marrying Carl?

Elaine You know why.

Benjamin No I don't.

Elaine I think you do.

Benjamin Then tell me why you're marrying him!!

Elaine Because if I don't marry Carl you are going to ruin my life.

Benjamin How?

Mrs Robinson Being in it, Benjamin.

Benjamin You're marrying Carl because you love me.

Elaine Benjamin, that is ...

Mrs Robinson Absurd.

Benjamin But it's true. Say it's not true.

Mrs Robinson Say it's not true, Elaine.

Elaine It's not.

Benjamin Say it's not.

Elaine I just said.

Benjamin You love me. I know it.

Mrs Robinson Keep quiet, Elaine.

Elaine If I marry you my life is ruined.

Benjamin No it isn't.

Mrs Robinson Yes it is.

Benjamin It wouldn't be.

Mrs Robinson Believe me, both of you, it would.

Benjamin You know something Mrs Robinson, you are a bitch. I mean I'm sorry to be rude but you are a one hundred carat solid gold bitch. Elaine, take off that dress.

Elaine My dress?

Benjamin You're not getting married. Take off the dress.

Mrs Robinson Benjamin you are digging a very deep hole for yourself.

Benjamin I'm sure you'd like to think so.

Mrs Robinson Immoral behaviour, kidnapping, sexual assault ...

Benjamin All I want is to marry Elaine.

Mrs Robinson He's not what you think he is Elaine. He's not the sensitive soul you think. He's got a selfish streak so wide it hides his vicious streak. What he doesn't disdain he despises. And that includes himself. He's lazy, self-loathing, and not much fun to be with. And he's terrible in bed.

Benjamin No I'm not.

Mrs Robinson Yes you are.

Benjamin Oh no I'm not.

Mrs Robinson Oh but yes you are.

Benjamin Am I?

Mrs Robinson Oh yes.

Benjamin Am I?

Mrs Robinson Yes.

Benjamin Am I?

Mrs Robinson (*faltering*) Yes you are. He is.

Benjamin I love you Elaine. Take off the dress.

Elaine Benjamin, I ...

Benjamin Will you TAKE OFF THAT GODDAM DRESS!

He pulls down the zip and tugs it off her shoulders.

Elaine Ow! Benjamin!!!

Mr Robinson *starts hitting the door with a fire axe.*

Benjamin Jesus.

Mr Robinson You lowlife scum!

Mrs Robinson Oh my God.

Mr Robinson You excremental piece of garbage! *Another blow.*

Benjamin Mr Robinson ...

Mr Robinson You depraved son of a bitch!!!

Another blow and a panel crashes out. An arm through the hole to dislodge the bench and he's in, slamming what's left of the door behind him.

Wedding Guests *peer in.*

Benjamin Mr Robinson, I can understand you feeling quite upset ...

Mr Robinson I'm going to cut your sick head off.

Elaine Daddy, don't.

Guests (*variously*) Calm down, Howard./He ain't worth it,
Howard./Attaboy, Howard./Frank, you shush now.

Elaine Daddy, please.

Mr Robinson It's all right, Peaches. I'm in control here.

Mrs Robinson Take it easy, Howard.

Mr Robinson Everything's under control.

*The **Priest** pushes his way to the front of the throng and examines his vestry door.*

Mrs Robinson Put the axe down, Howard.

Priest Mr Robinson ...

Mr Robinson It's all right, Reverend. I'm in control. I'm in control.

Elaine Daddy, put it down.

Mr Robinson You seduce my wife, you harass my daughter, you abduct her, you attempt to undress her in a holy place ...

Mrs Robinson Howard, put the axe down.

Mr Robinson You said I should kill him. As we ran down the aisle you said: 'Kill him, Howard.'

Mrs Robinson I changed my mind.

Benjamin That's very generous of you.

Mrs Robinson Shut up, Benjamin.

Elaine Daddy, put the axe down. I'm marrying Carl. Nothing's going to change. Everything's OK. A door got damaged. I'm marrying Carl.

Mr Robinson *drops the axe. Slumps.*

Mr Robinson Are you OK?

Mrs Robinson I need a drink.

Elaine I'm fine.

Mr Robinson *looks round at the door. Goes to the **Priest**. Pulls out his wallet.*

Mr Robinson Um ... I don't have anything on me. Reverend, would you do me the courtesy of sending me an invoice for the door?

Elaine Everybody please go back? We'll be out with you soon.

*The **Priest** ushers the throng away.*

Priest Could we all please move back into the body of the church? Is the groom conscious?

Elaine *tends to her father.*

Elaine You have some varnish in your hair.

Mr Robinson I'm fine.

Elaine Are you OK?

Mr Robinson Uh-huh.

Elaine Ready to give me away?

Benjamin Elaine ...

Elaine I don't want to go against the world, Benjamin. I know you hate your parents, and my parents. I know you hate everybody's parents and I know you want to go against the world but I don't want that.

Benjamin *sits, his head in his hands.*

Elaine Daddy.

Mr Robinson Yes.

Elaine *takes his arm and leads him out. A murmur of consent from the congregation beyond.*

Mrs Robinson You know what? You never stood a chance. She never made a decision in her life without climbing into her father's lap for a couple of hours.

Benjamin It's not what she wants.

Mrs Robinson When Elaine was two years old and all the other brats were screaming, she sat and read picture books.

Unseen by Mrs Robinson, Elaine returns for her corsage. When she was seven she never asked for a Tootsie Roll, let alone Disneyland. All through her teens she never came home late, drunk, her blouse unbuttoned or her ears pierced. Elaine's never *wanted* anything.

Benjamin Is that so?

Mrs Robinson I've waited twenty years to see if she developed any personality of her own but no, she's ten per cent me and ninety per cent him. I'm the curiosity, and the eye. He's the dreary diligence and the enduring dullness. Beyond that, Benjamin, there *is* no Elaine.

Elaine Is that what you think?

Mrs Robinson *tums and is speechless.*

Benjamin I don't think that, Elaine.

Elaine That I'm what, that I'm ...

Benjamin I think you're a wonderful person.

Mrs Robinson Elaine ...

Elaine Is that what you *think*?

Mrs Robinson Why should you care what I think? Why should you care what anyone thinks?

Elaine You think I'm nothing?

Mrs Robinson I never said that.

Benjamin That's exactly what she said.

Elaine That I only do what I'm told?

Mrs Robinson You're a wonderful girl.

Elaine If I don't do what I'm told you scream at me.

Mrs Robinson Elaine ...

Elaine You throw my dolls out the window, you tear my posters from the wall, you humiliate me in front of a perfectly nice boy and it's my senior prom!

Mrs Robinson Well then scream back, Elaine. Cover your wall in weeping kittens. Go to your prom looking like a birthday cake. Ignore your mother, the unfeeling bitch, and do what you damn well want to!

Elaine Go to the clinic and get rid of the baby?

Benjamin I'm sorry?

Elaine I said 'Go to the clinic and get rid of the baby.'

Mrs Robinson Are you pregnant?

Elaine No, I'm not. You were. So why didn't you do what you damn well wanted to?

Elaine *starts to cry.* **Mrs Robinson** *can't bring herself to step forward and comfort her.* **Benjamin** *does,* **Elaine** *clings to* **Benjamin.** **Mr Robinson** *returns.*

Mr Robinson Elaine? What in God's name is going on?

Mrs Robinson Leave them alone, Howard.

Mr Robinson What?

Mrs Robinson See to the guests.

Mr Robinson Are you condoning this ... this ... what is this?

Benjamin May I say something?

Mrs Robinson No. Howard would you please go and announce to the guests that the wedding is cancelled.

Mr Robinson You *are* condoning this. What the hell is this? Peaches .. ,

Elaine Leave me alone. Would you both just leave me alone. Leave us alone.

Mr Robinson I don't understand.

Mrs Robinson I think Peaches is rebelling, Howard.

Mr Robinson Elaine?

Elaine I'm sorry.

Mr Robinson Are you going to let her *do* this? Am I the only one left in this family with a shred of decency?

Mrs Robinson Relax Howard, give us a song.

Mr Robinson A what?

Mrs Robinson Sing me a song. Or speak to my attorney.

Mr Robinson (*quietly*) Braddock, one dark night. ..

Mrs Robinson You don't have to kill him Howard. Leave them alone and they'll *bore* one another to death.

Mr Robinson This wedding cost five thousand dollars.

Mrs Robinson Then for Christ's sake let's go get a *drink*. *She moves him out the door.*

Elaine Mom ...

Mrs Robinson It's a little late for affection Elaine. This was my sole gesture of support. Marry this conniving son of a bitch and you're on your own.

Elaine The hell with you.

Mrs Robinson Bless.

Elaine *swings round and kisses Benjamin. They are isolated for a few moments in their embrace before a seedy motel manager unlocks a door and they find themselves alone in ...*

A motel room somewhere in Nevada. Headlights sweep through the blinds.

Benjamin and Elaine *look around them.*

Benjamin It's a dump.

Elaine It's a room. It's cute. It's one o'clock in the mornng.

She takes off the raincoat and stands in her wedding dress.

Well, I guess we did it. I guess we ought to get blood tests. If we want children. I mean if we want them I guess it'd be best they were normal. What are you thinking?

Benjamin What sort of cereal.

Elaine Huh?

Benjamin What sort of cereal?

Elaine Oh.

She smiles.

Cheerios.

Benjamin Cheerios.

Elaine OK?

Benjamin OK.

Benjamin *puts down suitcase and is about to open it.* **Elaine** Would you undo my dress?

He does. She's shy, but continues undressing. **Benjamin** *doesn't move.*

Could I have a cigarette?

Benjamin *lights her a cigarette. She smokes like her mother. She finishes undressing and lies on the bed.* **Benjamin** *doesn't move.*

Elaine Benjamin?

She loses confidence and covers herself. Maybe you're right.

Benjamin *just stands there.*

Elaine Maybe we should wait.

Benjamin *doesn't speak.*

Elaine Maybe I should graduate.

Benjamin *can't think of a thing to say.*

Elaine I mean, you don't have the first idea of what to do with me, do you?

Benjamin *opens his suitcase and looks at her over the lid. then he brings out a pack of Cheerios. She laughs with delight.*

Elaine How did you know that?

Elaine *opens the Cheerios.*

Benjamin I'll go to the front desk. They may have some milk.

Elaine No. Don't go. There never was any milk. I like 'em rocky.

He sits on the bed and eats a handful.

Don't just wolf them, Benjamin. You have to sort them out first. Oatmeal. Wheatmeal. Rice. OK?

Benjamin OK.

Elaine Improves the flavour.

Benjamin Yes, it does.

They sit on the bed and eat Cheerios.

End.