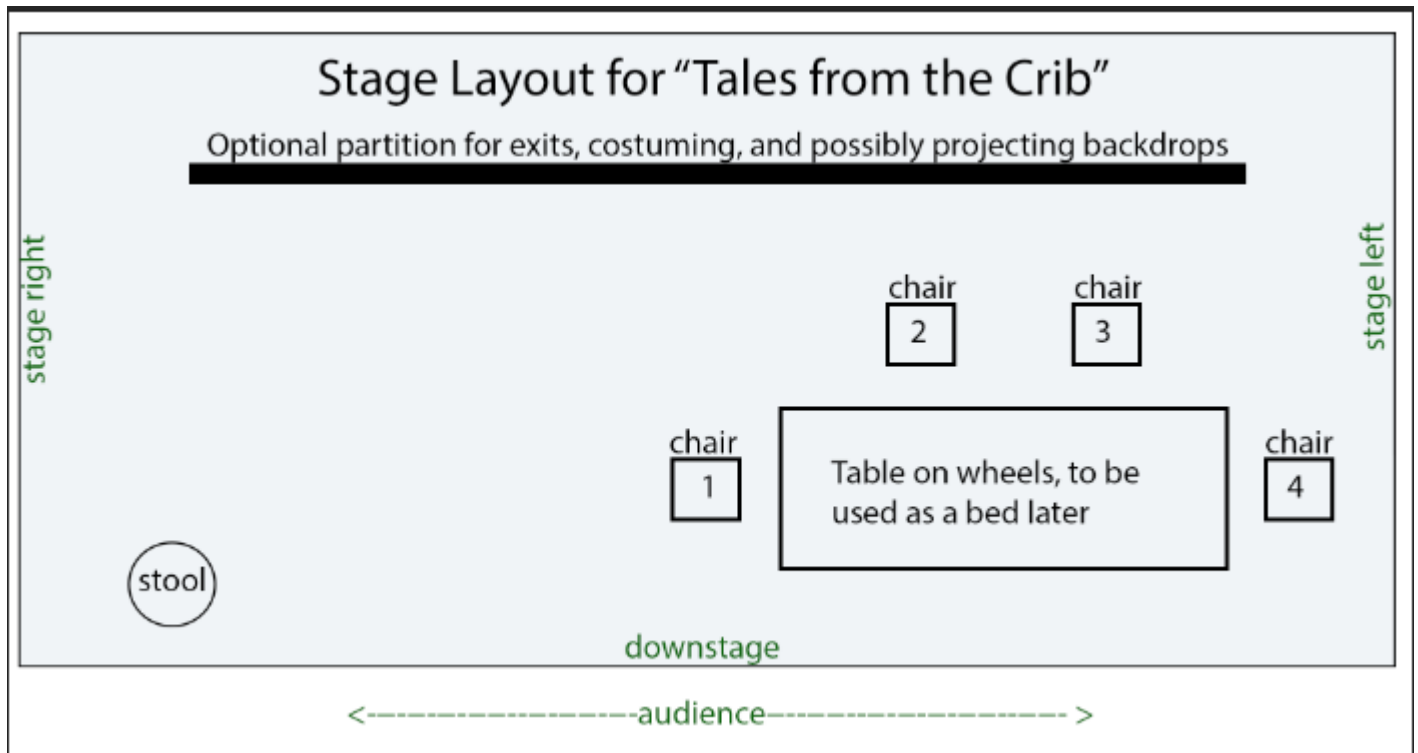


Script of “Tales from the Crib”



ALL BLOCKING & ACTING DIRECTIONS ARE MERELY MY RECOMMENDATIONS AFTER A TEST STAGING WITH WILDSONG PRODUCTIONS IN OCT OF 2023; That said: Directors / Theater Companies should do what works best for them!

CAST OF FIVE TO EIGHT ACTORS, DEPENDING ON HOW YOU DOUBLE-CAST ANY ROLES:

1. **Lucy-Out:** 62 (see notes). Ideally, cast believably looking like she could be Lucy-In later in life. *Hollywood dream casting: a slightly older Tina Fey.*
 2. **Lucy-In:** 39, culturally and seemingly Jewish but half Italian on her mother’s side. *Hollywood: Emma Stone.*
 3. **Anjoli:** early to mid 60s, but takes her looks seriously to pass for younger. A new-agey Auntie Mame. In the closing scene, many years later, she’d briefly be in her mid 80s. *Hollywood: Kim Catrell*
 4. **Jack:** 39, husband to Lucy. Tender, but still very much a guy. Can be both sensitive and clueless to Lucy’s needs. *Hollywood: John Krasinski*
 5. **Man:** Plays several parts, mostly men, though he’ll also be Aunt Rita. Biggest role is a soliloquy with the feeling of a gay southern preacher. Note: **Could** be the same actor as Jack as originally written, but better if Jack is his own actor. Because this is a choice for each theatre, Jack is shown as *Jack where “*” means it could be Man Jack.
 6. **Woman:** Probably the most demanding role, playing many parts, especially (1) **Lucy’s cousin/best-friend, Zoe.** Needs to believably pass for late twenties, though also plays up to late 70s. She sings briefly in a later scene; doesn’t have to be amazing, but able to carry a tune. (2) **a middle-aged male doctor** . (3) Jack’s girlfriend **Natalie** in Act II (4) **Eddie** is a very sexy, early 20s, dumb stud, inspired by the 70’s TV character Vinny Barbarino (see him at <https://tinyurl.com/vinniebarbarino>). NOTE: One director who read the script said that, if he produces it, he thinks it’s worth giving up the humor of the woman playing hot-guy Eddie to have one more male actor – a very handsome, muscular man – play the role so that every woman in the audience (or anyone attracted to men, for that matter) can feel Lucy’s palpable attraction to him
- (7?) **Natalie** played well at the Fringe as her own actress, but could be played by Woman.

TIME: Almost the entire play is in retrospect, about 20-30 years ago. The closing scene jumps to the present.

SETTING: Mostly alters between Lucy's suburban NJ home and mother's Greenwich Village apartment, but includes a hospital, a restaurant and more. This is easily (and inexpensively) handled by a super-minimal set.

STAGING: My vision (though I'm not tied to it) is that the stage be extremely minimal with mostly mimed props. In our staging, the table was wheeled to stage right to be a hospital bed. Optionally, a different bed could be brought in instead of using the table.

COSTUMING: Distinguishing between the man roles of Man and Woman might be purely in the acting or might be served by small touches like a pair of glasses, a handkerchief around hair, a cap, etc. Maybe even a wig if it's doable. The exception is Anjoli: Ideally, she'd have as many costume changes as time and theatre budget allow while almost no one else changes clothes at all, unless minimally to help identify characters.

PARTITION: It's optional, but might allow for better exits, more unseen costume changes for Anjoli, and possibly be great for projecting scene backdrops like a restaurant, car wash, etc.

PLAYWRIGHT NOTES:

I realize that it's a little different to include a personal note from the playwright, but this show is convoluted enough that an explanation up front could make all the difference. I hope this helps.

The first thing to know is that this is a memory play and almost the whole play is in flashback, so there are **two versions of Lucy** in the play. "**Lucy-in**" is the story in the past, covering her life between ages 39 to 40. Lucy-in is always in character in her storyline and never acknowledges the audience. "**Lucy-Out**" is in the present (in her 60s) and talks almost entirely to the audience, like a narrator, although I'd like to see her move through the scenes at times (unseen by the other actors). She could sometimes speak right at the people in her past, who won't hear her, like Scrooge yelling at people whom The Ghost of Christmas Past shows him.

The "**Lucy-in**" world is probably somewhere around 2000-2006. "**Lucy-Out**," though, lives now (or, at least, in the recent past). *Very* briefly, in the ending scene, Anjoli would be in her 80s there and Woman-Zoe would be about 56.

Lucy-in's mother, Anjoli, is both terribly self-absorbed and genuinely excited by the happiness of others. She is somehow simultaneously new-agey and caught up in appearances. Most of her friends are gay men.

For readability of the script, I'll preface the many roles of Man and Woman like this:
Man-Rita, Man-Alfie, Woman-Bernice, Woman-Nurse, etc.

Baby Teddy will be the one major prop: a teddy bear treated totally human. For Act #1, it should be hidden somehow so as not to be seen til the final moments of Act 1.

With all that said, here we go!

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Act I Scene 1 – The break up

Lucy-Out sits on a stool, just right of center stage, watching the other two.as the scene starts with a bit of tense silence.

*Jack is seated at table in chair 4. *Lucy-Out* is in chair 2.

Lucy-in silently mimes or puts a plate of food in front of both settings.

Lucy-in sits down in chair 1. The silence is awkward, like they both have something they want to say.

(in unison)

Lucy-in: I'm pregnant.

*Jack: I want a divorce.

(pause, then in unison)

Lucy-in: What?

*Jack: What?

(pause, then in unison)

Lucy-in: You want a divorce?!?

*Jack: You're pregnant?!?

Lucy-in: Shit.

*Jack: Shit.

(they freeze, as *Lucy-Out* says directly to the audience:)

Lucy-Out: Not how I thought that moment was going to go, 23 years ago...as I presented Jack those pork chops, brussels spouts, and what I **thought** was going to be good news for us. It never goes like *that* (*gesturing at them*) in all those happy pregnancy test commercials, huh? (*chuckles*) In my mind, it was definitely supposed to go more like this:

Lucy-in: I'm pregnant.

*Jack: (*shocked, but happy*) Are you sure? At 39?

Lucy-in: (*chuckling*) Yes, at 39. Doctor says, "Fourth time's a charm."

(*Jack rushes to her upstage side, kneeling, happily)

*Jack: But is *he* sure? After losing Cooper...and the other two...

Lucy-in: Nothing's ever sure, but he's optimistic. I just wasn't sure how you'd feel...since...

*Jack: None of that matters, darling. Forget all the tension. And the bickering.

Lucy-in: And the lemon oil?

*Jack: *Especially* the lemon oil. What matters is I love you and(*he goes back to his chair*) that we'll be a family.

(they freeze, as *Lucy-Out* says directly to the audience:)

Lucy-Out: Now THERE'S the Hallmark moment that had been in my head. But what I got instead was:

Lucy-in & *Jack: Shit.

(Lucy-Out heads over to her stool)

Lucy-Out: Don't get me wrong. I wasn't deluded. I knew neither of us had been happy for quite a while. I mean, sure, I *griped* when Jack started going to his art gallery both Saturday AND Sunday but, to be honest, I wasn't *all* that sorry when he'd leave.

We both tried, kind of, to keep the marriage going. We tried therapy, but...

Lucy-In: His whole therapy office...just gone?

*Jack: It was so vacant. Like he'd never even been there.

Lucy-In: How could he not even call?

*Jack: Maybe he died?

Lucy-In: I think he just couldn't handle breaking up with us. *(Lucy-in and *Jack walk downstage)*

Lucy-Out My cousin Zoe recommended that we try "group tantra".

Lucy-In: Well, *that* was awkward.

*Jack: *(rising)* My fault for taking relationship advice from your cousin.

Lucy-In: I think that blonde with the leotard, the one with the mohawk guy?...had an actual orgasm!

*(*Jack exits)*

Lucy-Out: Well, of course. I mean, who *doesn't* climax when her man touches her ear with his big toe? Besides me, I mean. Since *group* settings weren't right, I went the *other* way with:

Lucy-in: *(like a lightbulb going off:)* "Romantic Getaway!"

Lucy-Out: That could be the answer, right

Lucy-in: *(continued excitement, miming laptop typing)* "Catskills Cabin!...Giant clawfoot tub!"

Lucy-Out: Great idea! But in true Lucy fashion, I tried...too hard.

Lucy-In: *(worried, calling out to him in the bathroom)* Are you okay?

*Jack: *(offstage, annoyed)* Did I *sound* okay? *(re-enters, moving uncomfortably stiffly)* What the hell just happened?

Lucy-In: The woman at the organics store said, to enhance romance, you put two drops of lemon oil into the bath water before you both get in.

*Jack: And?

Lucy-In: I thought we needed more help than that...so I used the whole bottle.

Lucy-Out: *(as *Jack gingerly sits at table, she walks toward him behind table)* So yeah, it turns out that **that** much lemon oil will pretty much eat the skin off you. Especially your more...tender skin. Not my proudest moment as I immediately put both legs up the wall *(raising her arms up as if they were her legs)*, and made the cold faucet gush straight into my overheated hoo-ha. *(drops arms)* But *I*, at least, knew what had happened. *(runs fingers through Jack's hair as she pauses by him)* Poor Jack had no idea! He jumped out of the tub, fanning his privates, running back and forth screaming.

*Jack: *(panicked, to no one in particular, fanning himself)* "What the hell? What the hell? What the hell?"

Lucy-Out: ... with no idea what was happening. *(continues on to stage left)*

Lucy-In: Maybe we can try for some romance later on?

*Jack: *(coldly)* You burned the skin off my dick.

Lucy-In: That sounds like a 'no'. *(heads over to the other side of the stage, about to be younger in flashback)*

Lucy-Out: So, okay, we weren't good. But I thought we were still more at the stage of "Hey, let's try Marriage Encounter" than "Hey, let's divide our assets." Guess I was wrong.

Act I - Scene 2 – Lucy First Meets Jack

*(*Jack crosses more youthfully to stage right as she speaks)*

Lucy-Out: When we first met, we could talk forever, right from the very start.

*Jack: Hey, you're Lucy Klein, right, from...?

UNISON: Creative Writing 201!

Lucy-in: You sat...

*Jack: *(interrupting)* Across from you, yeah! Hey, I read your piece in the Gazette, the parody...

Lucy-in: *(interrupting)* ...of the cafeteria food. Did you like it? It was...

*Jack: *(interrupting)* Super funny! How'd you get to be so funny?

Lucy-In: Self-defense.

*Jack: Against whom?

Lucy-In: *(possibly like Groucho Marx)* Wouldja like to meet my family?

*Jack: *(laughing)* Well, if they help my painting like they help your writing, I'll bring dessert. Jack Rosenbluth *(reaching out to shake her hand)*.

NOTE: If the actor playing Jack is white and could pass for Jewish, use these two lines:

Lucy-In: Jack? Like short for John? Not quite as Jewish as Rosenbluth.

*Jack: Jack is short for Jacob, which is my father's name. And the reason I *won't* answer to that name.

If he isn't white OR is clearly not passing for Jewish, (ie: clearly Irish or Nordic), then use these two lines:

Lucy-In: Rosenbluth? Didn't see that coming.

*Jack: (laughs) No one does. I'm like a clone of my mom and got none of my looks from my Jewish Dad. And before you ask, Jack is short for Jacob, which is my father's name and (*pause*) the reason I *won't* answer to *that* name.

Lucy-In: (*grandly, like the queen*) Then I hereby dub thee, Jack Rosenbluth, Knight of the Friday Fishstick Fiesta.

*Jack: (*grandly, bowing, back at her*) I hate those fish sticks.

Lucy-In: They're putrid.

*Jack: (*laughs*) So is your Dad a crack-up, too?

Lucy-In: Died when I was eight. But my Mom and my two aunts are *buckets* of material.

*Jack: Man. Death sucks.

Lucy-In: Yes! *That's* the right answer! Not what everyone says...

UNISON: (*sarcastically over the top*) "I'm so sorry."

Lucy-in: Thank you!!!

*Jack: Right. It's not like I killed him.

Lucy-In: No, the *mugger* did that. (*she crosses in front of him*)

*Jack: (*soberly*) Oh! I'm so sorry.

Lucy-In: Nooooo. I was just kidding.

*Jack: (*laughing*) Oh, thank God. You got me good there.

Lucy-In: (*laughing*) Yeah, he OD'd on heroin.

*Jack: (*laughs, thinking she's still kidding*) Ooooh! (*still laughing...then a long pause, sobering as he realizes she meant it this time.*) Oh.

(*awkward pause, then:*)

UNISON: Wanna grab a burger?

(*They sit at table in seats 2 and 3, miming eating a breakfast, esp during Lucy-out talking*)

Lucy-Out: Our first date lasted two days and included five meals. Eating out was like courting for us. Dining sometimes served as foreplay and, other times, more like a dessert wine.

Lucy-In: If I could only eat one meal out a day, I think it'd be...

UNISON: breakfast.

Lucy-In: Right?

*Jack: Once I'm all warmed up, I can make the other meals. But in the morning, just cater to me.

Lucy-In: But I don't like *all* things about breakfast.

*Jack: Like what?

Lucy-In: I hope you can handle this. (*faux seriously, like the song:*) I didn't like...Breakfast at Tiffany's.

*Jack: (*laughing*) Me either. Or the Breakfast Club!

Lucy-In: Omigosh! So pretentious!

*Jack: All of them!

Lucy-In: I just wanted to slap them.

*Jack: It's settled then. Breakfast is for food, not film.

Lucy-Out: Breakfasts were light, lunches were social commentary, and dinners were philosophical.

*Jack: So, you're thirty...

Lucy-In: I'm 19!

*Jack: I'm projecting, doofus. You'll BE 30. And you're living your dream. What's it look like?

Lucy-In: (*pause*) You won't laugh?

*Jack: (*takes her hands, faux sincerely*) You KNOW...I can't promise you that.

Lucy-In: (*pulls hands away. Thick Russian accent:*) Zen I tellz you nussing!

*Jack: I promise.

Lucy-In: Okay. This is dumb, but whatever. I have this vision of running, like, an artists' colony. Where young aspiring artists can come stay, for whatever they can afford to contribute, and just make their art happen. I'd work on my novels and they'd do their thing. Whether it's writing...or music...or dance...

*Jack: Painting.

Lucy-In: What?

*Jack: Omigosh. I want to stay at your colony and just paint. It sounds amazing.

Lucy-In: *(laughing)* Well, don't book a reservation just yet. It's only a dream.

*Jack: But a really good one.

Lucy-Out: *(goes to stool)* When I looked into his handsome face and he didn't laugh at my flighty dream vision, I knew it was love. Over the following years, we talked about the art colony occasionally, to keep the dream alive, but, you know...

Both Lucys: *(looking at each other)* Life happens.

Lucy-Out: Through our twenties, his painting got less creative and more...

Lucy-In: *(to herself, maybe miming holding up a painting)* Sellable.

Lucy-Out: And then he began focusing more, very successfully I might add, on representing *other* artists instead.

But I couldn't call him a sell-out. *My* writing went commercial...*literally*. Ad hoc work, freelance columns, even copyediting sometimes. But the ad people paid the most.

*Jack: Which pitch did they go with?

Lucy-In: Not my favorite.

*Jack: But one of *your* pitches? Not one of Bobby's? Or Jonathan's?

Lucy-In: No, it was mine.

*Jack: So let's hear it.

Lucy-In: *(She sighs, then puts on an over the top smile and a big goofy voice:)* Peanut butter Cheerrios! You've never tried nut, nut, nuttin' like 'em!

*Jack: *(he pauses as he tried not to laugh)* It's not...terrible.

Lucy-In: Kill me now.

*Jack: It's better than the one you wrote for that extra sticky tape.

Lucy-In: You didn't love: *(make up a tune)* "Double sticky Double sticky Double Double sticky sticky"?

*Jack: *(laughing)* I still don't know...**who** thought regular tape **wasn't** sticky enough?

Lucy-In: *(laughingly condescending)* Apparently, no one. There were no re-orders.

(the two find their way back to the sitting positions of the original seats at table)

Lucy-Out: Maybe not, but that dopey tagline paid off my Ford Fusion, though! *(standing, gesturing at the couple)* See, we look pretty happy, right? Could I have missed from the beginning...that Jack didn't understand me? Or did he...we....change so much later?

(Back to original scene, the two sitting in original seats at table)

*Jack: Four months? How do you get to four months pregnant without knowing?

Lucy-in: I'm 39. I thought it was the start of peri-menopause. And the amount of weight I've gained is fairly proportional to the number of rice crispy bars I've eaten while you've been at the Gallery. And stop acting like this is something I did *to* you.

*Jack: Okay...

Lucy-in: You know the doctor said it was extremely unlikely that I could conceive again. You knew that I was off the Pill. *(she walks to behind chair #3 as she talks)* No one tricked you. You can still have your stinking divorce, Jack, but don't act like this happened to me alone.

*Jack: *(loud exhale, and dropping his head)*

Lucy-Out: *(crossing to chair 3)* I knew that exhale -sigh. The prosecution rests, your Honor. He just needed a moment to regroup.

*Jack: And I suppose, given...everything...that you're going to keep it?

Lucy-Out: "Given everything."

(Woman-Doctor enters from right side to the middle of stage right.)

Lucy-Out: "Given everything!" What an amazingly non-specific reference to two **second**-trimester miscarriages and then, far worse, that horrific day at the OBGYN's office two years later.

(Lucy-in stands, turns, and walks to doctor.)

Lucy-in: I'm sorry, doctor. What?

Woman-Doc: Severe fetal abnormalities, inconsistent with life.

Lucy-in: I...I don't understand?

Woman-Doc: Cooper's heart is forming outside his body. His lungs are not growing in a way that could function. Other organs are not forming at all.

Lucy-in: We bought a house in NJ! We decorated his room! He has...a Big Wheel! No! What about surgery?

Woman-Doc: There's no surgery for something like this. You need to have a late-term abortion.

Lucy-in: *(pause)* We bought him a Big Wheel! What if we just take a chance and see?

Woman-Doc: Cooper's malforming heart will erupt in the next two weeks and when he dies, he will likely take you with him. There's only one safe option for you here.

Lucy-in: No! *(she turns)* JAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAACK!

*(*Jack runs from the table and holds her)*

Lucy-Out: *(crossing to chair 4)* Jack said all the expected things. He said it wasn't my fault. But after two previous losses, I wasn't sure I **believed** him.

(Jack moves stool up; Lucy-in and Jack return to their spots at the table. Woman-Doc leaves)

Lucy-Out: *(going to step 1)* In the months after losing Cooper, Jack stopped painting entirely. He managed **other** painters, exhibiting THEM in his gallery -- instead of his own work. I started making more trips into Manhattan, where I grew up, to visit my mother, Anjoli...

(enter Anjoli from stage right. Lucy-in stands and turns)

Lucy-Out: ...who was both comforting...and...not.

Anjoli: *(too bubbly)* Darrrrrling, you're here again. Fabulous! **Where** should we go today?

Lucy-in: I just feel like being here at home.

Anjoli: Staying home! Yes, fabulous idea! I'll invite some people over. Good idea. My assistant at the store...oh, what am I saying...you know Alfie...well, he introduced me to this delightful couple at store the other day, Milton and Arthur. Both theater people and each one funnier than the other. You'll love them. I'll invite Clive as well. That stupid ol' wife of his is working today, so he'll be free.

Lucy-in: I was kind of hoping it'd be just you and me, Mom.

Anjoli: Now where's the party in that?!? And what's with that "Mom" thing again? I've been telling you since you were seven to call me Anjoli. Familial nomenclatures are so bourgeois and limiting.

Lucy-in: So you've said.

Anjoli: That **"Mom"** word pushes all my buttons. I refuse to have our relationship defined by your brief connection to my womb *decades* ago. And so it is!

Lucy-Out: *(following Anjoli, to stool)* And that's my moth-...Anjoli. You gotta understand that the universe doesn't just revolve *around* Anjoli. No, she *puts* the planets where she wants them first. *(Anjoli exits OR maybe Milton and Arthur join them, miming fun and champagne)*

But she wasn't wrong. Clive, my mother's married-to-someone-else boyfriend-of-the-month, brought champagne. Milton and Arthur and Alfie got me laughing, despite myself. And I *needed* to laugh. Not just because of the loss of Cooper. But because of the gloom at home.

(Lucy-in returns to the table opposite Jack)

And after two years of that, **he** asks me if I'm keeping the baby.

Lucy-in: *(a bit coldly)* "Given everything"? Yes.

*Jack: *(long-ish pause)* Can I make a radical suggestion?

Lucy-in: *(phony exuberance)* Lunch at the Olive Garden?

*Jack: Right, always with the jokes. Look, it's not like we hate each other, Lucy. *(he paces as he talks)* The marriage has ended, but we get along well enough to be around each other. Let's stay married, live together as friends, raise the baby together, and, y'know, do our own thing.

Lucy-Out: Yeah, man. "Do our own thing!" Groovy, baby!

Lucy-in: I thought you gave up smoking weed.

*Jack: Funny again. Look, I said it was a radical idea. But there was an article in the Times a few months ago about how couples can't afford to divorce anymore. Plus they had kids they didn't want to upset, so they hung out together till the kids went to college. Co-parenting, they called it. Everyone seemed pretty happy with the deal.

Lucy-in: You're out of your mind.

*Jack: Lucy, I'm not going to be an every-other-Sunday father!

Lucy-Out: Ooo...the motherlode of guilt trips.

*Jack: *(to Lucy-out, breaking from the inner scene, near-angrily)* Hey, my father left when I was eight and we only saw him like once a month, til he got himself a whole new family...

Lucy-Out: *(interrupting)* ...and disappeared for years at a time. I know, Jack. Your greatest fear in becoming a father...was becoming *your* father.

Lucy-in: Jack, *(snapping him back into her world)*, you can visit the baby any time you want. We can share custody.

*Jack: I don't want to share custody. I want to be here every day. And let's be practical. Where are you going to live? Anjoli has three-year leases on all her apartments. And married, you have my health insurance. Come on, Lucy! We'd lose a bundle selling this nice house. And we like the schools out here in Jersey. It's the perfect solution!

Lucy-in: Perfectly crazy!

Jack: We'd each have the ultimate babysitter for when one of us wants to go out. Hey, when it's my turn to be on care duty, you can finally write your novel with all your spare time.(miming talking during this:)*

Lucy-Out: Oh yes, my novel. Five years of talking about it and about twenty pages written. Let's see...At the time of *this* argument *(gesturing at the other two)*, my novel's main character, *(vamping and being like Desdemona)* the sad and tragic Desdemona, was still...

Man-Desdem: *(enters, interrupting, greatly melodramatic, southern accent)* ...Standin' on mah front porch, all alone, starin' out into the night, rain pourin' down on me, as I wait for... *(awkward pause)* uh...as I wait for...

Lucy-Out: ...as she waits for something. I was writing her and even I didn't know why the soggy creature was standing there. *(man-Desdemona exits)* But I needed something *profound*...something to prove I could *really* write.

Lucy-in: Jack, you can't bribe me with a house and insurance!

*Jack: How *can* I bribe you then?

Lucy-in: You said you wanted a divorce. Now you suddenly want to be my husband again?

*Jack: No. I don't want to be your husband. I want to be a full-time father to our baby with an offer that'll suit your needs, too. I think it's a fair deal. I don't want a divorce.

Lucy-in: You did three *minutes* ago.

*Jack: Things are different now.

Lucy-in: Because of the baby.

*Jack: Well...yes! So what do you need to make you sure?

Lucy-in: Time to think about it.

*Jack: How much time?

Lucy-in: I will need exactly as much time as I need, Jack! It's a little hard to think. Not sure if you heard, but my husband of ten years just dumped me, so I'm not thinking so clearly.

*Jack: That's fair. (*pause, and then too upbeat:*) Great meal, by the way. The chops are really tender!

Lucy-in: (*softly*) Shut the fuck up.

Act I - Scene 2 – Meeting Zoe

Lucy-Out: (*to stage left*) So, I can't say I ever actually *agreed* to his suggestion...like in *words*...

(**Jack rises, spreads the tablecloth quickly like a stagehand, and exits Left as Lucy-Out keeps talking:*)

...but I didn't refute it. Or come up with a better solution. So we sort of lapsed into trying this crazy notion: Exes who live together to co-raise the child-to-be.

(*Woman-Zoe comes in, upstage right, looks around, as if she doesn't see Lucy-In*)

But in the meantime, hey! Just go on with my life, right? Like nothing's wrong!

(*Woman-Zoe spots Lucy and comes over*)

Woman-Zoe: THERE you are!

(*Lucy-in stands to share cheek kisses with Zoe who sits with her.*)

Lucy-in: There are eight tables in this restaurant. Don't make out like you couldn't find me.

Woman-Zoe: Oh, you. *(teasing)* Still beautiful, even though such a grumpy pregnant girl.

Lucy-in: You'd be grumpy too if someone were treating your bladder like a bouncy-house on your bladder.

Woman-Zoe: Such a glow about you.

Lucy-in: You're not fooling me. You're the one who's glowing. Spill it.

(Woman-Zoe pauses for a big smile, then blurts:)

Woman-Zoe: My boss LOVED my reality show idea and wants us to pitch it to Metromedia. If they sign on, I'll get to produce it! Megabucks!

(Lucy-in and Woman-Zoe give a little scream of excitement, While Lucy-out continues, they stand to hug, sit again, and mime talking)

Lucy-Out: My cousin Zoe was doing well in reality television and it suited her. She came up with...

Woman-Zoe: *(aside to audience, proudly)* "Celebrity Sub!",

Lucy-Out: ...where celebrities kids wouldn't recognize, like Donny Osmond and Val Kilmer try to be substitute teachers for a day. Oddly compelling!

Woman-Zoe: *(aside to audience, proudly)* People still talk about Joe Pesci throwing erasers at that one mouthy kid.

Lucy-Out: And then came...

Woman-Zoe: *(aside to audience, proudly)* "She's Aaaaaaaall Yours!"

Lucy-Out: where two broken-up couples swap exes and all four go on vacations with Chuck Woolery. It made no sense to me...and ran six years.

Woman-Zoe: *(aside to Lucy-Out, proudly)* And led to two marriages and one reconciliation!

Lucy-in: So enough about the money. Which show is it? Oh, is it "When Psychics Date"?

Woman-Zoe: *(back in the scene)* No, that didn't fly.

(enter Anjoli, upstage right, looking around for them)

The psychics weren't playful and the good ones? They anticipated all of our plot twists!

Anjoli: THERE you are! So sorry I'm late.

Woman-Zoe: Anjoli! Lucy hadn't mentioned that she invited you!

(Woman-Zoe rises and hugs Anjoli.)

Lucy-Out: *(puzzled)* 'Cuz...I hadn't!

(Woman-Zoe and Anjoli sit, Anjoli in the middle facing audience.)

Anjoli: (joyfully): How are things with groom-to-be Geoff?

Woman-Zoe: Geoff is...Geoff. I don't want to talk about him right now. I have better news. I was just telling Lucy that I sold my boss, Leonard, on a series this morning!

Anjoli: Ooo! Is it "Pets Gone Wild?"

Woman-Zoe: No, still tweaking that one, but this one is better. It's called "Real Confessions." Everyone wants to know what's being said in Catholic confessionals, right? But no one's ever gotten the chance to hear it before.

Lucy-in: Except priests.

Woman-Zoe: Well, sure, but that's no fun. So, thanks to pixelated faces, we could get real life confessions of what people consider to be their sins. We're betting some are really juicy! You can't make that stuff up!

Anjoli: *Actual* confessions?

Lucy-in: And then, at the end, the person has a huge laugh about this and exclaims, (*goofily*) "Well Jesus, Mary and Joseph, am I on tv?!"

Anjoli: She's right, Zoe. When I was a little girl, I was raised Catholic. And that may be all of twenty years *ago* ...

Lucy-Out: 20? (*both Lucys and Zoe shrug, like "20 years?"*)

Anjoli: ...but even today, no one wants their confessions aired on national television. Why would anyone agree to this?

Woman-Zoe: Because the priest will give them complete absolution if they sign the release! Let us air your confession and you're off the hook with God for whatever you did. Maybe a few Hail Marys but that's about it.

Lucy-in: A 'get out of hell free' card?

Woman-Zoe: Exactly! (*the three mime talking as Lucy-Out continues*)

Lucy-Out: (*touching Zoe's shoulder and sitting*) I treasured Zoe as both family and my best friend. When both of our dads, who were brothers, died really young within a year of each other, we suddenly got thrown together a lot at family gatherings.

Woman-Zoe: (*to Anjoli*) We're talking to Maury Povich tomorrow about hosting!

Lucy-Out: Back then, I was all scholastic and bookish while Zoe was always dreaming of boys and marriage and especially her dream wedding day. But despite our differences, something clicked with this younger cousin I'd barely known til then...and we bonded for life. But that didn't mean I always got her.

Anjoli: How are you going to get the Church to go along with it?

Woman-Zoe: Oh, plenty of churches will probably turn us down, sure. But the show pays \$10,000 to the parish for every confession we're able to air.

Anjoli: Oh, Heavens!

Woman-Zoe: Literally! Churches are hurting and 10K? That buys a lot of votive candles.

Lucy-in: *(possibly like Groucho?)* Imagine the loot from just the men's choir confessions!

Woman-Zoe: Hallelujah!

Lucy-In: Not sure I *like* this idea, but I'd watch it because it's yours, my sweet.

(Woman-Zoe blows her a kiss across the table.)

Anjoli: So! You're probably wondering why I called us all here today.

Lucy-Out: *(puzzled)* She hadn't.

Anjoli: It's time to talk...baby shower!

(simultaneously:)

Both Lucys: No! Woman-Zoe (louder than the other two): Yes!

Anjoli: Yes! I know everything you're going to say, Darling. *(imitating Lucy, mockingly)* It's too soon! Not after what happened last time! I don't want to jinx things! *(back to own voice)*. But that's not how the Universe works. A shower is a positive affirmation. We have to tell the Universe: *(too loudly, standing up)* We welcome this child! We already see him growing and thriving and flourishing! We celebrate him as our son! Our cousin! And our nephew! We accept him...

Woman-Zoe: Nephew?

(Lucy-In shrugs)

Anjoli: ...as already part of this family! And so it is!

(Anjoli sits)

Anjoli: *(to Zoe, more simply after this outburst)* I'm *thinking* carrot cake.

Woman-Zoe: With Prosecco.

Anjoli: *(to Zoe)* Oh, yes! And gifts can go by my Christmas tree.

Lucy-In: Hello? I haven't even said yes yet. And how did it end up at your place?

Anjoli: *(sweetly condescending)* No one's going to New Jersey, dear. *(back to Zoe)* Oh! I'll have Gaston play his lute! And we can *(trail off...Zoe and Anjoli mime continuing to plan as they exit)*

Lucy-Out: And, once again, I am a passenger in my own life's story as these two created how we'd celebrate the baby ...the one I still feared would find some excuse not to come at all.

*(*Jack enters stage right and comes up behind Lucy-in.
Lucy-In turns to face Man Jack)*

*Jack: I don't see what the problem is. You don't have to do anything but show up. Why aren't you fine with this?

Lucy-in: It just feels...premature.

*Jack: At seven months?

Lucy-in: Cooper made it to seven months! It feels wrong to celebrate til we know. And did you know that Jews don't give baby gifts until the baby arrives? Because it's bad luck!

*Jack: You just told me there's going to be shrimp cocktail and Philly cheese steaks at your shower. You're not exactly orthodox.

Lucy-in: That's not the point. Can't you hear that I'm scared, Jack? This is my fourth try. What's wrong with me? I wonder if I'm being punished. I worry that this is God's way of telling me that I'd be a really shitty mother.

*Jack: That's silly, Lucy. *(kisses her forehead)* Don't feel that way.

(Jack exits stage left, leaving her standing there)

Lucy-Out: "Don't feel that way." That was my husband's advice. That I *shouldn't* feel that way. *(crosses to put downstage hand on Lucy-in's shoulder)*

Lucy-In: *(softly, to herself)* But I do.

Lucy-Out: And the only thing worse than feeling this way was reaching out to my husband for *some* sort of emotional connection...and being told not to feel.

(to stage left again) The first few years we were married, we had an apartment in the small complex that my mother had bought in Greenwich Village after Daddy died, across from St. Vincent's hospital.

(Jack re-enters and leads her to stage right where they pretend to be looking at a house)

I could have stayed there forever, but in my sixth month pregnant with Cooper, Jack brought me out to Camden, New Jersey.

Lucy-In: It's big.

*Jack: Big is a good thing in a house.

Lucy-In: It's so far from the city.

*Jack: You can be there in forty minutes.

Lucy-In: *(Pause)* It's not...the city.

*Jack: I know. You love Manhattan. It's your world. But this...is growing up. This will be good for our family. Lucy, the schools here are really good.

Lucy-In: Oooh...damn.

*Jack: What?

Lucy-In: You mentioned good schools and I started to lactate.

*Jack: *(laughs)*. See? Cooper likes it here.

Lucy-In: *(forcing a smile)* Then...I guess we'll take it.

Lucy-Out: *(a little sadly, heading to stool)* Aren't they cute?

*(Lucy-In continues to marvel at the big house. *Jack exits, becoming Man-Rita, reentering with Woman-Bernice. Man-Rita and Woman-Bernice sit at the table. They mime talking.)*

Lucy-Out: They'll move in a few weeks later...having no idea what's in store for them in a month...when that big happy N.J. home...suddenly becomes a huge mausoleum for our dreams...and our marriage.

So, two years later, how exactly do I tell everyone that Jack and I now have a pretend marriage for the baby's sake? The truth might have messed up the sweetness of being surrounded by all that love.

(Lucy-In, walking more pregnantly, heads back toward the table to sit with the aunts. Both have thick NY Jewish tones, but Bernice is sweeter. Rita generally means well, but she has a sharp tongue.)

Act I - Scene 3 – Baby Shower

Lucy-In: *(Lucy-out helps her stand up)* Hey you two! What are you doing here in the kitchen? Everyone's down the hall, singing along with Alfie on the piano.

Woman-Bern: Show tunes?

Man-Rita: No, Bernice. Gregorian chants. *(rolls eyes)* It's Alfie! What do you *think* he's playing?

Lucy-Out: My father's aunts. They're the grandmothers I never got to have.

Man-Rita: *(to audience)* Widowed sisters who moved back in with each other in our 70s.

Woman-Bern: *(to audience)* Even through marriage, we were always each others' best friends. *(then back into scene)*

Lucy-Out: Sharp-minded Rita, who was never quite pleased enough with anything. And sweet, sweet Bernice, a little loopy, but she could stun you with what she'd find good in. They were kind like the Golden Girls...if Blanche had moved out. And if everyone was Jewish.

Man-Rita: That whole church show of Zoe's doesn't make a damned bit of sense to me.

Lucy-In: I'm *with* you on this one.

Woman-Bern: I agree. It's crazy. *This* is why Jews don't have confession.

(All look at her)

Man-Rita: That's *not* why we don't have confession, Bernice.

Woman-Bern: Sure. There's nothing to confess if you don't have a Santa Claus.

Lucy-In: What?

Woman-Bern: Well, Jews don't do Christmas. And if you're not hoping that Santa is going to put you on the good list by doing your confessions, what's the point?

(Lucy-In looks at Man-Rita)

Man-Rita: I pick my battles. I don't have the energy to tackle this one.

Woman-Bern: You believed in Santa for a little bit there, Lucy, when you were little. That was fun.

Lucy-Out: When I was a kid, I asked my mother if there was a Santa Claus. *(sits to watch them)*

(Anjoli, younger, enters and stays Stage Right. Lucy-In goes over to her, now 7 years old. Bernice and Rita mime talking, as if Lucy is still in the chair; lights half dim on them if possible)

Anjoli: Do you want the truth or the bourgeois lie?

Lucy-In: Truth!

Anjoli: Santa's a character, not a real man.

Lucy-In: What about robbers?

Anjoli: Real.

Lucy-In: Monsters?

Anjoli: Fake.

Lucy-In: Witches?

Anjoli: Debatable. It depends on what type of witch you mean.

Lucy-In: The...pointy hats and flying brooms type?

(during this scene, around here, Woman-Bernice either changes something to make it clear in the next scene that she's Zoe or actually exits and re-enters a little differently to make that clear)

Anjoli: Oh, Lucy, they're fake too. Enough! Darling, I could feed you some middle-class pedestrian bullshit about the Tooth Fairy and Santa and the Easter Bunny, but I think more of you than that. You're a child, not an imbecile, and I refuse to lie to you. How will I have any credibility with you later in life if our first years together are based in lies?

Lucy-In: No tooth fairy?

Anjoli: I'm the tooth fairy.

Lucy-In: Oh. And all the tooth fairies are just Mommies?

Anjoli: Yes, but *I'm* not all Mommies. (*totally unaware of the irony:*) I'm not very maternal.

Lucy-In: (*pause*) But...you're my **Mommy!**

Anjoli: (*pause*) Mmmm... (*pause*) So, now that you know all those truths, how does that make you feel?

Lucy-In: Sad, Mommy.

Anjoli: Ahhhh. For that I am genuinely sorry, darling. SO! Two good things have come from our chat. One, you now know that Anjoli would never lie to her little girl. And two, you have expressed your feelings beautifully. I'm sorry that you're sad, but identifying and articulating your feelings is a real breakthrough in a child's development. You're growing up! So let's talk about that "Mommy" word you keep using...

Lucy-Out: We weren't like mother and daughter. We were more like two single women sharing an apartment in Greenwich Village in the seventies [*can change to another decade if that's too long ago*]. Except that I was seven.

(*Lucy-In heads back to other scene, which gets full lighting. Anjoli busies herself with something to bide time*)

Woman-Zoe: Aunt Rita, it's not like anyone pushed them into the confessional and made them say these things. And everyone has to sign a release.

Man-Rita: Hmm...Do all the people they confess *about* get to sign that release, too?

Lucy-In: (*sitting to rejoin them*) Good point. What does Geoff think of all this?

Woman-Zoe: (*laughs humorlessly*) So long as my show doesn't interrupt a Jets game, he has no opinion on it.

(*Man-Rita and Lucy-In exchange a look*)

Lucy-Out: (*standing*) Our not-so-blushing bride-to-be, the one who'd fantasized about her wedding day all her life, had been taking a lot of shots at her fiancé of late.

Woman-Zoe: Yesterday, I tried to get him to taste wedding cakes with me. He said:

Man-Geoff: (*standing to be Geoff for a moment*) If I tell you that I'm **truly** fine with whatever cake you pick, could I just watch the playoffs instead?

Lucy-Out: I actually liked Geoff. I mean, not every man in those days would be comfortable in the other room, singing show tunes, with his arms around a gleeful gaggle of gays who welcomed him. But, more than just wedding jitters, Zoe just seemed to have... lost her shine for him.

(*Anjoli joins the group in the kitchen*)

Woman-Zoe: All I can tell you is that Leonard thinks this show could spin off internationally. He's got contacts he thinks would love this for versions in Ireland, France, Poland, and Rumania.

Anjoli: Oh, Rumania! I love Rumania! Did I ever tell you the story about the time I dated a Rumanian soccer team?

Woman-Zoe: Team?

Lucy-Out: I've heard this story many times and she always drops that word "team" in there like it's nothing...and then never explains it. I'm still torn between deep curiosity... and not exactly wanting to know.

Anjoli: Yes, before I flew to Europe, I had been tipped off that the Rumanians just LOVE a brand of cigarettes called "Kent", but you can't buy them there. So I packed as little as I possibly could in my suitcase and filled most of it *dozens* of cartons of Kent. Then I traded Kents for everything instead of paying money. I probably paid a quarter a pack for them and got dresses and meals...

Man-Rita: And a soccer team.

Woman-Zoe: How exciting! Did you ever go back?

Anjoli: Oh, if only! If *only*! But I'm banned from entering Rumania after a terrible run-in at the airport with this nasty Cossack with a huge machine gun.

Lucy-In: I thought you said he had a rifle.

Anjoli: *(smiling at her, a bit annoyed)* Hush, darling. This is my story. *(back to others)* What happened was, he tried to charge me tax on a rug I was bringing home. But I'd already paid tax on it! I knew this was a bribe and I wouldn't have it!

Woman-Zoe: You fought with a Cossack?

Man-Rita: That nevuh goes well.

Anjoli: Yes, I argued and argued until I was holding up the plane. He started to get uncomfortable at the attention, probably because a supervisor coming over would have sniffed out the bribe, and finally he said to me, *(doing his accent)* "Lady, you take zis rug, get on zat plane, and don't never try to come back to Rumania!"

Man-Rita: Mazel Tov!

Woman-Zoe: Bravo!

Man-Rita: Good for you! That made me want some rugalah.

(Man-Rita heads exits stage right to become Jack again)

Lucy-Out: I'd give anything to have footage of that airport in Rumania to see how that *actually* happened...

Woman-Zoe: Did you ever go back?

Anjoli: I wanted to! But four years later, when I tried to return, my travel agent called me back and said, "There must be some kind of mix-up, but I'm being told you're banned from entering Rumania?" And I yelled, *(and she does, to the heavens, too loudly)* "You rotten Cossack!"

Lucy-Out: ...but then again, another part of me wants to believe every never-quite-the-same version of her story. And all from the woman who just couldn't lie to me about Santa. There was no one who frustrated me more than my mother...or who I loved more thoroughly. *(sits)*

Act I - Scene 4 – Going to the City

*(Anjoli exits stage Left. Lucy-In turns to stage Right and approached *Jack.)*

Lucy-In: Hey there. Can I run something past you?

*Jack: Shoot, kiddo!

Lucy-Out: I didn't expect "baby" or "honey" anymore but I'm not sure how I became "kiddo". And I wasn't sure I liked it.

Lucy-In: Would you mind very much if I spent a few days in the city? A little bonding time with my mother before I'd actually have to leave a baby to go do that? If that's okay?

*Jack: Sure. Besides the fact that, as a single woman, you don't have to ask my permission, right, I think that's a great idea. *(a little too eagerly)* Stay as long as you want!

Lucy-In: Well, don't take it so hard. It sounds like you've already packed a bag for me.

*Jack: No, it's nothing like that. It's just...that...

Lucy-In: *(jokingly)* You have a big date?

(awkward pause)

Lucy-Out: Come on, Jack. Be appalled by the very notion?

Lucy-In: Oh. You...HAVE a big date.

*Jack: I don't know about big, but yeah, a date.

Lucy-In: First?

*Jack: Third.

Lucy-In: *(audibly inhales)* Is she someone...special?

*Jack: *(too casually)* Not sure yet. Anyway, you and Anjoli have a great time being city girls and make sure you get out some. Walking is good for the baby. *(kisses her on the forehead quickly)* Be good, kiddo!

*(*Jack exits)*

Lucy-Out: As I heard the front door shut, I fought down a lump in my throat.

Lucy-In: *(soft and sad, staring at the door he closed while Lucy-out's continues)* Bye Jack.

Lucy-Out: *(standing, staring at the door, too)* Daddy had partied himself into an early grave.

Lucy-In: *(to Lucy-Out)* Zoe's dad had a stroke a week after her Bat Mitzvah.

Lucy-Out: *(to Lucy-In)* We had a series of father-figures borrowed from other families, until each one eventually picked his actual wife over Anjoli.

Lucy-In: *(to Lucy-Out)* Cooper never made it out of the womb.

Lucy-Out: *(to Lucy-In)* And now Jack?

Lucy-In: *(Lucy-In turns to look back at where Jack exited)* ...is...essentially gone too.

Lucy-Out: *(back to audience)* It seemed all the men in my life...were on loan.

Act I - Scene 5 – Coming Clean with Anjoli

(Lucy-in meanders the open right side of the stage, obviously pregnant; she's looking at the City)

Lucy-Out: Walking around Greenwich Village again was healing for me. *(smiling)* Reflecting on my old elementary school, Washington Square Park, my father....

(Anjoli enters from left or back and mimes carrying in bakery box and sits in chair #3)

Lucy-Out: ...I genuinely missed Jack, and probably would have returned home if he protested my absence. But he didn't, so I stayed. And Anjoli took note. *(Anjoli does something to get Lucy-In's attention, which gest her to sit in Chair #1)*

Anjoli: I'm thrilled to have you here, darling...

Lucy-In: Thank you for letting me stay here. *(putting her hand on her mother's)* I really appreciate it. *(takes cannoli)*

Anjoli: ...of course! And "Mi Cannoli, Su Cannoli"...

Lucy-In: They're so good.

Anjoli: To die for. But what I'm getting at is, isn't Jack missing you at home?

Lucy-In: Jack?

Anjoli: Yes...your HUSBAND? I'm a...tad concerned...that you seem to be in no hurry to return to New Jersey. God knows I can't blame you for wanting to avoid suburbia! But seeing how you and Jack **chose** to make your home there, I'm finding myself...in a place of inquiry...as to why you're not there with your husband and baby.

Lucy-In: The baby's not here yet.

Anjoli: The husband is, though. Tell me, darling. *(Anjoli scoots to Chair 2)* You can tell Mommy what's wrong.

Lucy-In: Nothing's wrong.

Anjoli: Darling, remember who I date. I *know* what a troubled marriage looks like.

(Anjoli reaches over to smooth the hair out of Lucy-in's eyes, even though it's not there)

Lucy-In: There's no hair in my eyes, Mother.

Anjoli: I know. But I saw it as a stage direction in a script once and it reflects as maternal, so go with it, darling. Tell Mother.

Lucy-In: *(chuckling lovingly at her mother)* If you stop that, I'll tell you. You're right. Jack's and my relationship has changed. We're sort of married in name only. We'll raise the baby together, but we'll have separate lives.

Anjoli: That sounds like a divorce.

Lucy-In: No, we'll still live together and keep it legal. But we'll just be friends – and co-parents.

Anjoli: Oh! There was an article in the *Times* about this! *(long pause as she looks serious)*.

Lucy-In: You're knitting your brow. This must be a very serious thought because I know you believe that makes wrinkles.

Anjoli: *(shaking her face out)* Well, I got it. You don't have to tell me. I already know.

Lucy-In: You know what?

Anjoli: *(kindly, but matter-of-fact)* That Jack is gay.

Lucy-In: What? No. that's not what this is. Jack is straight as ever.

Anjoli: Nonsense, that boy is queer as they come. I knew it when you two were dating. And you should feel no shame. Like Liza. Embrace it and make it work.

Lucy-In: Mother, Jack is *not* gay. He's already dating! Women!

Anjoli: A cover up, darling. Bet you haven't met them. They're men. He's gay.

Lucy-In: Anjoli! Stop saying Jack is gay!

Anjoli: Why is this upsetting you? You've been in New Jersey too long and it's turning you into a homophobe.

Lucy-In: *(stands)* Oh my God! Look, if Jack were gay, I'd say he was gay, but he's not. He's just not happy with me.

Anjoli: As a woman.

Lucy-In: Yes! No! As the woman that he wants. Because he wants one. Just not me! Do you get it?

Anjoli: *(pause)* Oh. Well...he seems so gay.

Lucy-In: *(sits)* Mother! What is your problem?

- Anjoli: I have no problem, darling. It's just...well, I know someone I always thought Jack would really hit it off with. But if you say he's not gay, then...it probably wouldn't work.
- Lucy-In: This conversation is not happening. I don't even know which crazy thought to build on next.
- Anjoli: It would be so much easier if he *were* gay.
- Lucy-Out: Okay. I didn't see that one coming!
- Lucy-In: Wow. Okay, let's go with that one. Why on earth would it be easier if Jack were gay?
- Anjoli: Because the PR is so much better! If he were gay, no one could say that the break up was because you were difficult...or because of another woman. Oh come now, Lucy, be sensible. Let's tell people he's gay. It'll be such fun.
- Lucy-In: Mother, is that what you think?! That unless my husband is gay, the break-up is my fault?
- Anjoli: *(pause)* Of course not, darling! But you know what imbeciles people can be.
- Lucy-In: I certainly do.
- Anjoli: *(missing Lucy's point)* Well, good. Because, you know I've been through a divorce, don't you?
- Lucy-In: Yes. I believe it was with my Dad.
- Anjoli: It certainly was.
- Lucy-In: And did *anyone* say it was your fault? Or did you just tell everyone he was gay?
- Anjoli: *(with overdone sympathy)* Luuuuuucy. Your father was a drug addict.
- Lucy-In: Frankly, Mother, I can see why.
- (silence as they look in each others eyes for about three seconds. Then Anjoli bursts into huge laughter)*
- Anjoli: I must say, darling, you certainly did inherit his impeccable comedic delivery.
- (Lucy-In joins her in her laugh, and it leads to a seated hug, with Lucy-in's head on her shoulder, but still facing audience. Anjoli starts doing the eye-hair thing again)*
- Lucy-Out: *(stands)* Every time I'm sure she is completely non-maternal, she does something incredibly warm and nurturing. Just as I'm convinced she's putting all the blame on a dead man, she acknowledges that Daddy was quite funny. This woman could be so infuriating I wanted to scream. And then she says the right thing or just laughs at herself...and I adore her again.
- Anjoli: How long do you intend to live this way?
- Lucy-In: Will you stop with the hair?
- Anjoli: I want to see your eyes.

- Lucy-In: Then look at them. There's no hair blocking your view. Why do you keep brushing my hair away? Do you want to just pet me like a cat?
- Anjoli: Maybe I do? Is that such a crime, my little pussycat? Did I ever tell you I had a cat when I was about nine? His name was *(Lucy-In mouths the name as Anjoli says it so we know she's heard this story before)* Cat-tastrophe and my mother couldn't stand him. One of the things he loved to do was curl up in my mother's fur coat which drove her crazy and he –
- Lucy-In: I thought it was her fur hat?
- Anjoli: *(putting a finger to Lucy-In's lips)* Hush, darling. This is **my** story. Well, one time my mother was determined that we were going to have a quiet and peaceful New Years Eve. Nothing like the big bash you and I are throwing here in a few weeks. So that cat, wouldn't you know, it got inside the sleeve of that coat and –
- Lucy-In: Wait...what? *(rising)* **What** New Years Eve bash???

Act I – Scene 6 - Cramping

(During Lucy-Out's brief next few lines, there's a lot of movement: Anjoli pulls chairs #1, 2, and 3 a bit upstage out of the way. Man, about to be Alfie, comes in from stage-left with a two pillows (or maybe one of those big ones with arms) and a blanket. He push the table downstage to the right, turning it so the left side is slightly toward audience. He puts pillows on right side of table, spreads blanket across rest of table to make it look like a bed, and exits. Lucy sits at foot of bed. All of this should happen very quickly, so Lucy-Out may have to pace for that.)

- Lucy-Out: *(laughing, and crossing to ????????)* Yes, even knowing that I'd be eight months pregnant, Anjoli's invitation list had nearly sixty people and my opinion was never asked; I was merely an audience for the...drama du jour! *(sits)*
- Anjoli: *(coming to Lucy's invisible, mid stage bedroom door and mimes opening it to rant)* Kendall thought it would be okay if my chintz icicles were ecru! Ecru! Can you imagine?
- Lucy-In: I...can't imagine chintz icicles.
- Anjoli: Of course you can't! Not in ecru! *(starts to leave but returns quickly for her next line)*
- Lucy-Out: Now, if it were my party, I'd have laid out Costco hors d'oeuvres, but for my mother...
- Anjoli: I've got two caterers cross-referencing with each other to cover six vegans, four low-carbers, two Kosherers, three macrobiotics, and suddenly Iris has a *basil allergy*? Where does she get off?
- (Anjoli goes back to a chair upstage. Man-Alfie enters to sit next to her. He mimes being on the phone)*
- Lucy-Out: But my mother would be disappointed if there weren't some crisis to drive her off to chant her --
- Anjoli: *(closing eyes and extending arms; Man-Alfie plugs other ear as she chants:)*
Nammmmm....myo-ho-reng-gay kyohhhhh!
- Lucy-Out: – so that she could bounce back to be a brilliant planner.

(Lucy-In

Anjoli: *(still in that position)* Tell Darian to replace the truffle cauliflower with his veggie fois gras.
Nammmmm....myo-ho-reng-gay kyyohhhhh! And it needs to be laid out by 8:15 because guests arrive at 9.
Nammmmm....myo-ho-reng-gay kyyohhhhh!

Lucy-Out: My job on Dec 31st was to lay low. Hey, I was entitled!

Lucy-In: *(getting into the bed gets, propped up under covers, opening her mimed laptop)*
Oooh, my back...oooh my feet....

Lucy-Out: My actual writing-time during my refuge at Anjoli's had been a big zero. So, I was just going to do that...until making an appearance around 11 pm, which was still five hours away.

(Lucy-In starts typing as Man-Desdemona enters to say what she's apparently typing)

Man-Desdem: "Desdemona came in from the rain, drenched and dejected. It had been a tough day. Her husband never noticed her come in, much less offer her a towel or a cup of tea. It had been so long since he'd noticed anything about Desdemona.
She went to the kitchen to look for her tea kettle, and wondered where it had gone. So much of Desdemona's life felt misplaced recently."

Lucy-In: *(no longer typing, sarcastically, in her normal voice)* "Thank you," Desdemona said to her crummy writer. "Perhaps in chapter two, you'll allow me to find my kettle for a truly riveting moment." *(sighs)* Sorry, Desi, but so far you haven't....OWWWWW!!!

Lucy-Out: And far, far more terrifying than that awful eighth month cramp...

Lucy-In: OWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWWW!

Lucy-Out: ...was the sickly warmth of the blood...gushing out of me and down my legs.

Lucy-In: Mommmmmm! Heeeelp!!!

(Anjoli and Man-Alfie rush from table into room; Anjoli at her upstage shoulder, Alfie closer to that foot)

Anjoli: Darling, what's wrong?

Lucy-In: *(crying)* Eight months! We got to almost eight freakin' months this time.

Anjoli: What are you talking about?

Lucy-In: *(crying)* I'm losing him. I'm cramping and bleeding...oh god I'm miscarrying again, Mom.

Anjoli: Not again! Not again! *(shaking her fists at the sky)* What kind of wretched karmic retribution is this? Hera...do you hear me? You fix this!

Lucy-In: Mom!

*(Anjoli catches herself and rushes in to hug Lucy-in, moving almost behind her head.
Man-Alfie gingerly starts pulling up the blanket by him.)*

Anjoli: I'm here, darling.

Man-Alfie: Uh, Lucy...you're not...bleeding.

Lucy-In: Yes, I am! I'm soaked in blood. Can't you see that it's all... *(she sits up, pulling back blanket completely, and stops suddenly, seeing it's not blood)*

Man-Alfie: All clear, yes. I'm no lady expert, but if I were back on the farm and you were a cow, *(moving up closer to her head)* I'd bet a week's pay that your water broke and you're in labor.

Lucy-In: *(sniffing)* I am?

Man-Alfie: Yes, and yo' heifer is a-comin'.

Lucy-In: You're sure? *(she grabs his shirt)* I am absolutely positively not having a miscarriage?

Man-Alfie: *(smiling)* Pretty darned sure, sweetie.

Lucy-In: But my due date is February 3rd!

Man-Alfie: Well, someone told *this boy* December 31st.

(Anjoli and Man-Alfie help her up and start walking across the stage slowly)

Anjoli: So early! He's not even here yet and this baby is already a drama queen! Bravo!

Man-Alfie: Can you make the walk across the street to St. Vincent's, if we help you?

Lucy-In: Yes, of course. It hurts but I'm sure that...Wait! *(all pause)* Your party!

Anjoli: Oh, we'll be back by then. How long can a simple delivery take?

(During this next monologue, they start helping her around the stage, as if going outside to cross the street)

Lucy-Out: Anjoli delivered me in under two hours. She firmly believes that women who let it go on **any** longer than that haven't truly manifested their intention to deliver. In her mind, by midnight, my son was going to be held up high at the party for all to praise. Like...Baby Simba in Lion King. But in a tiny sequined tuxedo.

Lucy-In: *(stopping suddenly)* Wait!

Anjoli: What now?

Lucy-In: Jack!

Anjoli: You said he had plans and couldn't come to my party.

Lucy-In: Jack to the hospital, you crazy bat.

Anjoli: Oh, yes. I see. Alfie, be a dear and call Jack for us. She seems to be walking okay and it's only across the street. In fact, Love, you just stay and stir the tofu gumbo...

Lucy-In: *(cramping again, loudly)*...or it'll get pasty at the bottom of the pot.

Man-Alfie: Gotcha. Call Jack. Then stir pot. *(he exits, stage right)*

Anjoli: Or stir *while* you call him, if you don't mind.

Lucy-In: *(arm around mother)* Okay, let's go. *(Anjoli chuckles as they walk further left)* What?

Anjoli: You thought of my party before Jack.

Lucy-In: Well, I AM your daughter, after all. But not a word of that to Jack.

Anjoli: *(smiling)* Never happened, dear.

Act I - Scene 7 – Hospital

(Lucy-In and Anjoli make a loop around the center of the stage to imply walking to hospital and entering lobby. Man-Nurse enters from stage right, resetting the bed. It is turned parallel to the edge of the stage with the pillows on the stage-right side. When Lucy and Anjoli reach the bed, Man and Anjoli help Lucy-In into the bed she just got out of, but now it's in a hospital room. Her lower half, covered with a blanket, will face mostly stage left for when she delivers, but blocking may cheat that out a little if it helps to see her face or hear her. All of this happens in the short time that Lucy-Out has these lines:)

Lucy-Out: In the great relief of knowing I hadn't miscarried, I hardly minded the cramping of labor pains. Or my mother chanting to thank Hera for the miracle. Or the 23 degree weather as I crossed the street, half-dressed. I was rushed to a delivery room where the baby was now...apparently...*not* quite so eager to get to the party as we thought.

(Man-Nurse leaves, stage left or behind partition. Woman-Doctor is a male doctor, maybe with a fake moustache. He'll enter repeatedly to check on Lucy-in, as if time is passing. He keeps looking under the blanket to check her cervix, giving numbers of fingers up for centimeters. Maybe at one point he gives her a five or six for the second time and she groans at the lack of progress.

*Anjoli stands upstage of Lucy-in's head, feeding her too many ice-chips.
Lucy-Out comes more center)*

The doctor kept coming in to check on me and while it was nice, for the first time in 8 months, to have *someone* actually *interested* in my vagina, he **was** the first man ever to actually shake his head in disappointment at what he saw down there. That I ever noticed, anyway.

Woman-Doc: *(shaking head)* Three. *(exits)*

Lucy-Out: *(sitting)* He was a man of few words, leaving me assume that "Three" meant three centimeters of dilation and not, like, three labia or something. After all, he only looked disappointed, not frightened. Usually, he just announced a unacceptable number and left.

Woman-Doc: *(entering)* Four. *(exits)*

Lucy-Out: But even WE could tell it was an unusually busy night there so it wasn't totally his fault. Sometimes, we'd get a *bit* of bedside manner. My mother kept feeding me ice chips...

(Anjoli shoves another ice chip into Lucy-In's mouth; Lucy-in gags on it a bit, coughing lightly)

...though I wasn't feeling thirsty or hot. I'm guessing she'd seen it on General Hospital as a caring gesture.

Woman-Doc: *(entering, as Anjoli moves left to make room for him)* Hello, again. Sorry things are so crazy tonight. How are you doing?

Anjoli: I'm exhausted!

Lucy-In: And besides *that*, I'm doing okay between the contractions. Just want *(she breathes through a cramp)* this to be over with. But I'm concerned that my husband still isn't –

(Anjoli's phone rings)

Oh! That'll be him, thank goodness.

Anjoli: *(into phone)* Hello, darling! Where *are* you? What? Oh, no! Not tonight! That's terrible!

Lucy-In: What's going on? He's coming, isn't he?

Anjoli: No, he needs to stay at home.

Lucy-In: What?! Why?

Anjoli: The caterer brought actual foie gras!

Lucy-In: What???

Anjoli: Can you imagine? Does Francois even **know** me?

Lucy-In: MOTHER! I thought it was Jack!

Anjoli: Don't be ridiculous, darling. Why would Jack be talking to the caterer while you're having a baby?

Lucy-In: Oh my God! I need –

Anjoli: Hold on a second, Alfie! What, dear? Do you need more ice chips?

Lucy-In: *(pause, then coldly)* Yes. Yes, that's exactly what I need, Mother. Ice chips.

Anjoli: I'm right on it, sweetie. *(kisses Lucy's forehead)* You know you come first. *(back into phone as she exits, stage right)* I don't care if it IS too late to save those *particular* geese, Alfie, Kiki will have my head if that murder spread is on my buffet. He's got to... *(Lucy-out watches her leave, shaking her head)*

Lucy-In: Sorry about her.

Woman-Doc: It's okay. I have a mother, too.

Lucy-In: Bet yours isn't banned from Rumania.

Woman-Doc: Excuse me?

Lucy-In: Never mind. Just Jewish one-upmanship. Owwwwwww! How's my number? (*pointing to her pelvis*)

Woman-Doc: (*looking under foot of blanket*) Five still. But you're doing good.

Lucy-In: Do you know my history?

Woman-Doc: History?

Lucy-In: Three miscarriages. One of them really late.

Woman-Doc: I see. Well, this one's as healthy as they come.

Lucy-In: You can tell that from my vagina?

Woman-Doc: (*smiling*) I can tell from all the signs. He's going to be fine.

Lucy-In: You can't really know that.

Woman-Doc: I can't. But I do. You're both good.

(*Jack bursts in, past doctor upstage, to stop by her left side. He's supposedly in a tuxedo, maybe just the bow tie?)

*Jack: Hey, kiddo! Got here as fast as I could when Alfie called.

Woman-Doc: I'll be back. (*exits*)

*Jack: How are you doing?

Lucy-In: Like a Toyota Camry is trying to drive through me, but otherwise okay. A tuxedo? It's a big occasion but not a formal affair. (*he laughs*) Did I interrupt your night?

Lucy-Out: (*getting up to wander right into the scene, standing stage right of the bed*) God, I *hoped* I had interrupted his night. I hope he left his date sitting at the Met, rushing off to be with me.

*Jack: Yeah, you can imagine how well *this* detail went over. My date's sitting there, like "your *what* has gone into *what*?"

Lucy-In: (*laughing*) Oh my God. That's gotta be one of the best fucked-up date stories she'll ever get to tell. If you're in a tux, she must have been all dolled up.

*Jack: (*smiling*) Yeah, she was.

Lucy-Out: (*walking close to and looking at Jack*) But did she look as good as you do? I'd only been at my mom's for a month or so, but it was like (*touches his face, though he can't feel it*) I'd forgotten just how handsome Jack was. Was it the hormones? The tuxedo? Or maybe knowing that I'd just ripped him away from another woman? However messed up our marriage had gotten, he looked awfully good to me.

Lucy-In: (*reaching out to him*) You'll explain it to her in the morning.

*Jack: *(smiling)* Yeah, uh...I don't think I'll be hearing from Sheila again.

Lucy-Out: Sheila? uuuuughh! *(pacing)* Did he have to give her a name? Make her even more real? I changed the topic as we tried to pass the next couple of hours while the doctor took us through the world's slowest count to ten in history. *(sitting)*

Anjoli: *(bursting in and heading straight to Lucy's face, pushing Lucy-Out and Jack upstage)* Out of my way! She needs ice chips! *(pushes them into Lucy-In's mouth)*

Lucy-In: *(choking on them)* Good god, woman. Slow down. I'm not a parking meter you're feeding dimes into!

Anjoli: Well, you said you needed them.

Lucy-In: That was four hours ago.

Anjoli: *(Finally acknowledging him, a blt coldly)* Hello, Jack. *(to Lucy)* On the way to the ice machine, Alfie had an emergency. I had to run home for just a bit.

Lucy-In: An emergency?

Anjoli: The end of the melon baller snapped right off. Can you imagine? After all these years? What are the odds that it would happen tonight?

Lucy-In: Very inconsiderate of it.

Anjoli: Indeed! Well, in the midst of *that*, guests started coming and it was hard to get away.

Lucy-In: I can certainly imagine how it...oooowwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwww!

Anjoli: *(Jack tries to rush to Lucy, but Anjoli pushes through)* I've got this, Jack. Listen to me, sweetheart. Do you see those trees in the wallpaper down there? *(pointing stage left, beyond her feet)* I want you to imagine that there's a birthday cake on the other side of the forest. Breathe in through your nose and try to blow out all the candles. There are six of them. With each breath, you blow out one at a time, until all the flames are out.

Lucy-Out: To this day, I have no idea where any of that came from. One minute, she's the woman who forgot to bring me the ice chips that she thought I desperately needed. The next, she's saying the perfect thing to get me through one of my last labor pains. *(she begins walking (probably downstage of them) to above Lucy-In's head where she'll be for the rest of the scene)*

Anjoli: Well done, dear. *(Lucy out might touch her shoulder as she passes)*

Lucy-In: *(tenderly)* Thank you, Mom.

Anjoli: Oh, that word again. After today, let's let you be the only "mom" in the family.

Lucy-In: Sorry, it slipped ou...oooowwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwt!

Anjoli: Those were close together. I'll get the doctor. *(exits left)*

Lucy-Out: When she did, she left the door open. I could hear nurses and interns gathered around a TV, with Ryan Seacrest talking excitedly about the final minutes to the new year.

*Jack Hey, Lucy. This is getting real.

Lucy-In: You think?

*Jack And there's something I think we need to finally talk about.

Lucy-In: *(Frantically)* Oh God! What are you going to spring on me now, Jack?!?

*Jack What? No, no. Nothing bad. It's just that I knew you didn't want to talk about names because you were so superstitious about the miscarriages, but I *think* we're really doing this and I think he should have a name.

Lucy-In: He does.

*Jack He does?

Lucy-In: He does. It's Teddy.

*Jack *(brightly)* Teddy? After my Mom's dad?

Lucy-In: *(huge pain)* Oooowwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwwww! No, Jack. Teddy, after my favorite fucking Roosevelt.

*Jack *(laughing)* Okay. That was dumb. I love Teddy, thank you for that. So this is it, Lucy...

(Enter Woman-Doc [to foot of table] and Anjoli [to stage right of table] for the delivery)

...This is what we've been waiting for. You got what it takes to deliver this kid into the world and be the best mom ever! Just a couple more pushes!

Lucy-In: Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!

(All but Lucy-Out go into silent slow motion of the delivery process until the 'three-two-one' line, as Lucy-Out narrates:)

Lucy-Out: "A couple more pushes" turned into ten horrible, blurry, painful minutes. But it's funny what your mind locks onto when you're losing touch with it. Suddenly, my ear caught Ryan Seacrest's voice on the lobby TV:

Pre-recorded OR, better yet if casting splits Jack as separate actor, Man, who enters on stage left,:

Hey everyone, looks like they're about to drop that ball toward the crowd in Times Square, so join me when you see that clock counting down on the screen

Lucy-Out: And those doctors and nurses out in the hall all started counting down, not even realizing that they were chanting as much for **me** as for that **ball**...

Recording or Man-Ryan: Ten! Nine! Eight! Seven!"

Lucy-Out: ...and somehow, in that crazy haze, I found it very inspiring.... and pushed really hard.

Lucy-In: Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!

All but Lucy-In: Three! Two! One! *(then totally silent again)*

Lucy-Out: And as the whole lobby blew horns and shouted

Recording or Man-Ryan: *(big energy, but almost miming but heard slightly, like a distant hush):* Happy New Year!!!

Lucy-Out: the small voice of my son, Teddy...let out his first tiny wail.

(Doctor holds up teddy bear, like Simba in Lion King, ideally to a sound cue of a conch shell being blown in the opening theme from Survivor or maybe "The Circle of Life" chorus)

Black out. End Act I. 27 pages of reading = 58 minutes @ 2.14 min per page.

Act II

Act II - Scene 1 – Everyone’s Opinion

(Everyone returns to exactly the position that Act I ended on, except that Ryan Seacrest is gone and the perspective turns 90°. Lucy on the bed is facing the audience, with the doctor’ back to the audience, is holding the baby up, and Jack and Anjoli stage left of the bed. A repeat of the conch shell noise (or whatever sound was played). All but Lucy-Out are frozen until after Lucy-Out’s next line.)

Lucy-Out: And that...was the easy part.

*(Quickly (1) Doctor hands Teddy to Anjoli and exits. (2) Anjoli passed Teddy to *Jack as she leaves. *Jack hands Teddy to Lucy-In as he leaves. Lucy-In looks around, feeling alone, and then meets eyes with Teddy.*

Lucy-In: *(smiles)* Hi. I’m Mommy.

Sound of Baby wailing. Lucy-In’s smile fades. She does everything in her power to stop the crying but it goes on through the next monologue. Make faces, jiggle him, whatever. Nothing works. Before it’s over, about 1/2 - 2/3 through, she should start trying unsuccessfully to get Teddy to nurse.

Lucy-Out: *(crossing to Lucy-in)* Officially, we stay pregnant for nine months because that’s how long the baby needs to be fully-formed, but I think God’s bigger reason is because the mother needs every freakin’ minute of morning sickness, bloating, rib kicking, and finally labor to even *begin* to prepare her for how little she will remember of the woman she was, waaaay back when she found out she was pregnant.

Lucy-In: *(to crying Teddy)* I used to meditate...I baked things...I met people for coffee!

Lucy-Out: That gal you used to be? she’s loooong gone. You can sit shiva for that chick; She’s back in time, dancing in some club. While the new you? She’d give up a thumb – possibly the right thumb – for three straight hours of sleep.

Lucy-In: *(pleading to Teddy)* Pleeeeease drink from the breast. All the other babies like the breast. Every nature film gorilla momma can breast feed. Why can’t I figure this out? Ouuuch!

Lucy-Out: Forget your old clubbing friends; your new circle of friends will be the women from...

Lucy-In: *(on phone)* Hello? Is this the La Leche League? How soon is your next meeting?

Lucy-Out: The La Leche gals became the closest thing I had to a social circle in New Jersey. They couldn’t have had less in common, except two full udders and a kid that they were determined would thrive because of them. *(moves middle chair, crosses to ??????????????????????)*

(Helene enters, coming downstage-left of Lucy in her bed, to monologue to Aud.)

I liked lots of them, but I had my core four. There was Irene, whose family were no longer supporting breast feeding.

Man-Irene: *(mimes holding kid)* Don't they realize how healthy it is to breast feed? Who cares if he's four now? He loves it and so do I. And it's way better for him than those Cheez-Its and freakin' Goldfish pretzels my sister-in-law constantly pushes on HER two year old. *(exits, walking out holding four-year-old's hand, as Hannah enters, going to same spot)*

Lucy-Out: There was Hannah, the righteous rebel:

Wmn-Hannah: *(angrily)* Formula-makers spend an average of \$8,000 per pediatrician per year supplying free gifts to offices. One formula company built a new maternity ward at a hospital, with one provision: that it had to be **far** from the **nursery!!!** Why? Because it makes it more difficult to nurse! They've even secretly paid TV networks that air emergency room dramas to write plots where babies died from "insufficient milk syndrome!" Just to characterize us women who nurse as selfish flakes!

Lucy-Out: I thought that was a lot of militant nonsense til I googled it. All true. That was a wow. And then there was Gloria, whose other daughter was six. The only mother there with perfectly-manicured, two-inch nail tips. And always good for story.

Man-Gloria: *(thick Jewish NY socialite voice, tawks fast)* So's we're at Doris' kid's birthday party, right? And the doorbell rings and who's there but fuckin' Bawney the purple dinosaur. The kids are freaking out like, "omigawd, it's Bawney!" An' they go runnin' over to him and burying their faces in areas I don't wanna repeat. Then I notice that Barney is slurrin' all of his songs and I'm like, "Oh my god, Bawney is sloshed!" Well, befaw long, he falls on his ass against the couch, and all the kids pile onto him, cuz they think he's creating a great big lap for them. Suddenly, Barney yells, "Oh, Fuck!" and then next thing we all hear Barney go *(she makes a vomiting sound)* inside his Barney head. And then he reaches up and I yell, "You take off that fuckin' head in front of these kids and I'm gonna feed you your balls, buddy." So's three of the dads pick him up and carry him out to the front lawn. And we're all thinking, "Holy shit, the kids are gonna freak." But then Doris yells, "uuuummmm, who wants more cake?" and they all run in the kitchen like none of this happened and sing happy boithday again. Meanwhile, who's being hosed down on the front lawn by the Dads, but passed out twenty-two year old Barney. I swear, what IS it about kids and that Barney anyways? *(Man-Gloria exits)*

Lucy-Out: What indeed *is* it about Barney? And lastly, my dear dear Candace. House-wife, home-schooling, church bake sale, Girl scout leader Candace, there with her **fourth** kid. Candace, who saved me from almost giving up on breast feeding, because it felt like Teddy was sucking broken glass out of me.

Wmn-Candace: Now I can't diagnose anything, you understand, honey, but I'm coming right over and you're going to show me your nipples. This sounds a heck of a lot like thrush and if I'm right, you're going call your doctor to insist that he give you a prescription for Diflucan. And when he tells you "I don't know if that's going to help," because most doctors don't know BOO about breast feeding, you tell him "Welllllll....there's no harm in trying!" *(Candace exits)*

Lucy-Out: She was right about what the doctor would say...AND right again about the Diflucan. And for the first time in six painful, tear-filled weeks, I actually got to enjoy the feeding bond with my baby that everyone talks about.

(Lucy-In, still in bed, dials a number on her phone)

Thank God for Candace; no one in **my** family knew a thing about nursing. *(to stage left)*

Lucy-In: Hi Aunt Bernice! It's Lucy.

Wmn-Bernice: Lucy, honey! Hold on a minute. *(louder)* Rita, come to the phone. It's Lucy.

Man-Rita: *(from offstage)* I'm pishing.

Wmn-Bernice: Well, pish faster. She hasn't got all day with a baby and all.

Lucy-In: It's not that urgent, Aunt Bernice.

Wmn-Bernice: Don't you worry. *(sound of toilet flushing)* Yeah, she's coming right now.

Man-Rita: *(entering)* What's the emergency?

Lucy-In: There's no emergency. Hi, Aunt Rita.

Wmn-Bernice: And I'm still here, too! We're on our speakuh phone! It's how you can talk to both of us at once!

Lucy-In: I'm familiar with the concept.

Man-Rita: So what's up, bubella?

Lucy-In: I was wondering how you two handled breast-feeding.

Both aunts: *(pause)* BREAST FEEDING???

Wmn-Bernice: What makes you think we breastfedded?

Lucy-In: You didn't nurse?

Man-Rita: Why would we do that when we had formular? Don't be such a martyr, Lucy. It's not like you're living in the jungle.

Wmn-Bernice: We never even thought about breastfedding. We listened to Doctah Spock.

Lucy-In: Dr. Spock said not to breast feed?

Man-Rita: Not in so many words. He said to trust your instincts. My instincts said, "Breastfeeding is disgusting."

(Both exit, stage-left)

Lucy-Out: *(standing)* Now and then, I'd get out of the house *other* than to see the La Leche Ladies...

*(*Jack enters and comes up on the stage-left side of table.)*

...Jack would say:

*Jack: It's Lucy time!

(Jack, lovingly, takes Teddy into his left arm, offers right arm to help her out of bed, and exits with Teddy)

Lucy-Out: *(crosses to ??????????????????????)* And I'd take my laptop off somewhere to work on Desdemona, or one of my articles.

(Lucy-In settles into Chair #1, which is now in a restaurant, and mimes typing.)

Act II - Scene 2 – Lo Fats Man

Lucy-Out: I parleed Gloria's drunken Barney story into an article called "There's Something about Barney."

Lucy-In: *(reading aloud as she's typing)* "Meanwhile, who's being hosed down on the front lawn by the Dads, but passed out twenty-two year old Barney. What IS it about kids and that Barney anyway? Maybe it's not that surprising. If you take a look at fertility goddesses and symbols of motherhood throughout the ages, the figures always have that rotund belly and soft nurturing arms...like Barney."

Lucy-Out: *(cross to upper right)* Mothering Magazine loved it and put it in their next issue, which barely covered me treating myself to lunch at– the worst-named Chinese Restaurant in N.J.

Man-Waiter hands her menu and leaves.

Lucy-In: *(chuckling)* "Lo Fats!"

Lucy-Out: – but at least I was getting published. And frankly, I'd have paid *them* if it meant getting my Lucy-time alone at Lo Fats because of it. Their food was pretty good, but that...wasn't what pulled me in. I can't believe I'm saying this, but what brought me back...*(ideally, sexy music starts here, maybe "No Ordinary Love" or "Is It a Crime?" by Sade)* ...was the cook.

(Woman-Eddie enters up-stage, slowly cooking in the background. Lucy-in stares at him, giving the back of her head to the audience for a while)

I didn't know his name, but I didn't care who he was. Or that he was like 22. Or that he never came out from the other side of the pass-through window. I just knew that I couldn't...stop...looking at him.

(Woman-Eddie bends forward so the Lucys can check out his butt. He picks up the "bed" and moves it way upstage out of the way. He then goes downstage right to mime sexy cookinghi)

Never having heard a word from him, his every movement, cooking or otherwise, was like a salute to masculine energy.

His perennial V-neck tank tops showed a small tuft of hair that I thought endlessly about running my fingers through. I hadn't touched chest hair since early college...you couldn't find a single one on Jack's chest with binoculars. Was it just that small tuft that I could see from the other room...or was it the beginning of a trail...to the land down under.

But it was more than his looks. It was his...look. The one he'd *give* me...once...sometimes twice per meal from the other side of that pass-through. It wasn't a full-on flirt, but it was a clear acknowledgement. Not of my attraction to him, but of my being a *woman!* Despite the twenty baby pounds that were going nowhere, despite the sweats with dried breast milk on them, at least once per meal, I got the look. And when I got it, instantly, every time, my panties turned into a soup sandwich.

(Man-Waiter enters and heads to her table, but she doesn't notice him at all because she's caught up in Eddie.)

And even though I was never closer to him than ten feet away, there was something wonderful about feeling so alive and vibrant in my fixation on him.

Man-Waiter: *(flatly and slowly)* And the muscles, ma'am?

(Woman-Eddie puts hands behind "his" head to stretch, showing off biceps.)

Lucy-In: *(never losing focus on Eddie)* Oh, yesssssssss. The muscles are so damned beautiful.

Man-Waiter: *(confused)* They are?

(music stops abruptly, perhaps with the sound a record being scratched)

Lucy-In: *(coming conscious again, as Eddie strolls off stage)* What? Muscles?

Man-Waiter: Yes, ma'am. I remember you ordered the Mussels in Garlic Sauce the last two times you were here.

(Anjoli enters from stage left, grabbing chair #3 without stopping as she passes behind the scene; she keeps crossing to put it near the middle of downstage right, and sitting in it, being in the passenger seat of Lucy's car)

Lucy-In: Right. Yes. Mussels. In the sauce.

(Man-Waiter exits. Lucy-In goes upstage-left as if she's in the house. Anjoli enters stage right and grabs a chair to make it the passenger seat of a car, center stage, and sits in it.)

Act II - Scene 3 – Anjoli to the Pediatrician

Anjoli: *(yelling, as she gets into the "car" on her left)* Darling, come out of the house! And don't forget to bring Teddy. *(only use this next line if you can find a great costume for Teddy; we had him in full black leather)* I bought him that new outfit.

Lucy-Out: *(moving stool to ??????????????????????)* Oh, right. Forgot to mention that, almost as soon as Teddy was born, Anjoli announced:

Anjoli: I'm coming to New Jersey because someone needs to take care of that baby!

Lucy-Out: An incredibly generous offer, if it weren't for the fact that she created SOOO much more work...and almost never helped!

(As Lucy-Out continues, Lucy-in gets up, puts the chair that's closest to Anjoli right next to her, making it the driver's seat. Lucy-In mimes putting Teddy in a car seat behind the driver seat and finally gets into the driver's seat.)

Ogling Eddie at Lo Fats was only half the reason for my craving Lucy-time. The other was to escape my mother's "help". I felt like an exhausted, horny, distracted milk cow...and my mother had never in my life been *more* on my nerves.

Lucy-In: Okay, here we go. Hey, thanks for the help with getting the baby in.

Anjoli: *(missing the barb)* Oh, you're welcome! Glad we're on our way finally. Even a trip to the pediatrician feels like a big outing when you're trapped in suburbia.

Lucy-In: No one's trapping you, Mother.

Anjoli: Of course not. Whoever said trapped? I NEVER let myself feel trapped. (pause) Oh, except that one fundraiser that Gloria Vanderbilt had for the Museum of Modern Art. Her speech went on for a full **thirty** minutes!

Lucy-In: I thought you said that was at the Gugenheim Museum?

Anjoli: Oh hush, darling. This is MY story. Can you imagine! A full **forty** minutes! Speaking of the city, what kind of pie do people **eat**?

Lucy-In: What?

Anjoli: Pie. What kind of pie do **people** eat?

Lucy-In: That added no more information to what you just said. What are you talking about???

Anjoli: Kiki, Felix, Alfie, and Fiona are making the pilgrimage out from Manhattan to see me and meet my little nephew... *(looking over the seat at Teddy)*

Lucy-In: *(to no one)* Grandson.

Anjoli: ...and I need to put a little coffee and pie out to serve.

Lucy-In: I don't know. What kind of pie would you normally serve?

Anjoli: Well, I'm sure I don't know, but remind me that we need to pick up pie on Thursday morning. Now let me see. Where...where indeed...would one pick up a pie, darling?

Lucy-In: I'll wager 2000 on this, Mr. Trebek, and say, "What is...a bakery?"

Anjoli: Oh, Jack mentioned having Thursday off so he can drive me to a bakery then.

Lucy-Out: With that, she mercifully shut up...for about a minute. And then, I dunno...she just suddenly became the narrator of all that she saw out the window.

Anjoli: *(pointing at everything she sees in the distance)* Look at all those kids on that bus stop. Where ARE they all going?

(Lucy-in exhales audibly)

Anjoli: Chicken Joe's! Do they make really good chicken?

Lucy-In: *(annoyed)* Haven't been there.

Anjoli: International House of Pancakes! How very cosmopolitan! Tell me, darling, do they only serve pancakes or is there more on the menu?"

Lucy-In: *(annoyed)* What are you talking about???

Anjoli: The International House --

Lucy-In: I heard you. Why are you acting as if you've never heard of IHOP? I'm your daughter, you don't have to impress me by how disconnected you are from mainstream culture. I happen to know that you know *exactly* what an IHOP is.

Anjoli: Darling, I have no idea! You certainly are moody these days.

Lucy-In: Mother, Daddy told me that on your honeymoon, you two ate every breakfast at IHOP and that he'd never seen anyone shovel in quite as many waffles as you could.

Anjoli: *(annoyed)* I was a dancer! I had to carb load for how much I rehearsed!

Lucy-In: At...IHOP! My point is not that you ate large meals. It's that you ate them at *IHOP!*

Anjoli: *(a pause and then feigning remembering pleasantly)* Oh, yes! Now I remember that. Honestly, I came along here to help and you're downright abusive. I'm simply trying to make conversation.

Lucy-In: *(slams on brakes to a screeching sound as the car stops)* Well, let's see. So far, we've talked about pie, where kids go on buses, Chicken Joe's, and IHOP. Riveting! How 'bout asking me how I'm adjusting to motherhood? How 'bout asking if I'm dying inside watching Jack go off to his separate bedroom and call me 'kiddo' every morning? Are you at all curious *why* we're going to the pediatrician this afternoon?

Anjoli: Well, I –

Lucy-In: Might you want to know why, until Candace's advice last week, I was sweating and gritting my teeth every time I nursed? Or how Teddy was born at seven pounds and since he was born, I have dropped only...*nine*?

Anjoli: I did notice –

Lucy-In: How 'bout you take the wheel and drive so I'm not sitting straight on this fucking peanut-sized hemorrhoid dangling from my ass? How about you change a diaper? Or hold the baby so I can shower? Would any of those work for conversation?!?!?

(car honks at her. Lucy-In gives them the finger. Starts car and starts driving again.)

Anjoli: *(a long pause, then, cheerfully:)* So, darling. How's it going?

Lucy-In: *(to self)* Take me back to the hospital.

Lucy-Out: *(crossing in front of chairs)* And then the pediatrician visit was a nightmare. Dr. Comstock and my mother flirted like teenagers and I practically had to wave flags to get him to notice me...or the baby! 20 minutes later, Teddy was pronounced normal. I left with my baby. Anjoli left with the doctor's cell phone number. I didn't bother to point out that the doctor was married; his wedding band was like an invitation to her. After the awkward drive there, I made an offer, attempting to return to civility.

Lucy-In: Thursday morning, I'll take you to a nice little bakery and we'll get a fresh pie.

Anjoli: Mmmm. *(a pause and then:)* What sort of pie do people eat?

Lucy-Out: *(crosses to ??????????????????????)* Again with the “people”! What planet do you fancy yourself from, woman, where you’ve never encountered pie?

Lucy-In: *(controlling herself)* People like...apple pie!

Anjoli: Not pumpkin?

Lucy-In: People *love* pumpkin pie. That’s the perfect choice.

Anjoli: What is mincemeat?

Lucy-In: It’s beef, pork and goat. Kiki’s a vegetarian. So, we should stick to the pumpkin.

Anjoli: She’s wheat-free too.

Lucy-In: Well, Mother, all pies have wheat in them.

Anjoli: Mmmm....I want to look at the pies myself. Does the pie place open early?

Lucy-In: Mom, it’s a bakery! They open at, like, five in the morning!

Anjoli: *(indignant)* Well, I am certainly not getting up at 5 am just to look at the pies. That’s insane!

Lucy-In: *(losing it)* Oh my God! I’m not suggesting we go at 5am! I’m saying that every freakin’ type of pie will all be there for your inspection and endless interrogation at whatever time we show up.

Anjoli: Well, my goodness. You certainly are cranky, dear.

Lucy-In: *(braking the car)* And with that, we’re home.

Anjoli: Maybe you need something sweet. Maybe from that bakery you mentioned. What sort of pie would Jack would like?

Lucy-In: *(to herself)* Fuuuck pie!
(to God) Fuuuuuck pie!
(huge, in Anjoli’s face) Fuuuuuuuuuuck piiiiiiiiiiiie!!!

(long stare down between them)

Anjoli: Perhaps a pound cake then.

(Lucy-in screams and runs from the car, exiting the stage very briefly)

Lucy-Out: Which Jack heard, from inside the house ...so he thanked Anjoli for all her support and helped her pack to return to the city the next day. I don’t know exactly what he said to her...

(Lucy-in re-enters, calmer, and gets into the driver’s seat, as if it’s the next day)

...but it was the kindest thing he’d done for me in a really long time.

By morning, with me driving her home, *(both suddenly smile at each other)* we were both in really good moods – me for my freedom, her for heading back to the Village.

Lucy-In: And here we are! Need help with the bags?

(Man-Felix runs flourishingly to the car, opens it, leaning in to kiss both her cheeks.)

Anjoli: Felix, darling. Bags in the trunk.

Lucy-In: Apparently not.

Anjoli: Well, thank you, my sweet. Remember, if you need anything at all, you just call me.

Lucy-In: *(sweetly)* I certainly won't.

(They kiss cheeks, a quick hug, Anjoli takes a moment to brush non-existent hair out of Lucy-In's eyes, and gets out.)

Anjoli: Felix, my love. You must catch me up on *everything*. I don't know if you've heard but I've been *(disdainfully)* in *New Jersey!!!*

(Man-Felix and Anjoli go arm-in-arm. He mimes holding the suitcase on the other side, as they exit to stage-right.)

Act II - Scene 4 – Before Meeting Natalie

(Lucy-In drives)

Lucy-Out: All was right again. My mom and I were good. We just should never live together, and at 39, that's really not a bad thing to accept.

The next couple of months went well. I spent time with Zoe, ogled my cook-slash-imaginary-lover at Lo Fats while writing a bit more. Desdemona was still stuck in the rain a little longer

Man-Desdem: "I took note of how every puddle had once been its own separate raindrops"

Lucy-Out: ...as I penned more articles, including one about how America has lost a generation of mothers teaching breast feeding to their daughters. To my surprise, **Parenting** magazine rushed it right into the next issue, which is rare. I hung with my La Leche girls, *(cross to stand behind Lucy-In)* did a little shopping, and – after a much-needed two-week hiatus – even started talking to my mother again. *(crosses to Downstage right)*

Lucy-In: *(on phone)* I give up, Anjoli. Who is taking you to Aruba this weekend? ... What? But I'm supposed to be bringing Teddy to him on Friday for vaccinations!... Fine. Mazel tov. Is he bringing his wife?...I was kidding.... Just pulled up to the house so I Gotta go. ...Love you, too.

*(During Lucy-Out's monologue below, Lucy-In getting the baby and a mimed-bag of groceries out of the back seat, carries them in front of the table, as if it were the path up to the house. She circles past Chair #4 and around the table, as if she just came in the kitchen door from outside. Around the time that she is rounding the table, *Jack and Woman-Natalie come from stage right to sit in the two chairs, Natalie left of Jack, which are now the living room couch. They throw a blanket over it to make it look couch-like, so we can't see behind it...this will be important later when that couch becomes a car again so we can't see into the back seat. Lucy-out follows Lucy-in, but stops to remain stage left)*

Act II - Scene 5 – Meeting Natalie

Lucy-Out: As I headed into the house, I noticed an unfamiliar car parked right in front. A perky yellow sports car, (*Lucy-In peers in the car window*), distinctly lacking an infant seat, Pampers, or filthy binkies on the floor. Maybe it belonged to a neighbor, but a little voice inside told me...

Lucy-In: “I don’t think so...”

Lucy-Out: ... and I was pretty certain that the next few minutes were going to be...different

(sound effect of a non-famous movie somewhere in the middle or music that sounds like it could be movie background. Lucy-in puts groceries on table and keeps going to other side as the living room).

...Jack was watching a movie, but he wasn’t alone.

***Jack:** Oh hey, kiddo. (**Jack sits up and uses the remote to pause the film; soundtrack stops*)
I thought you were going to spend the night in the city with Anj?

Lucy-In: I said I was going to show her the Parenting article. It was only two pages.

***Jack:** Ah. Well, Natalie, this is Lucy. Luce, Natalie.

Lucy-Out: I smiled, like Glenn Close at the Oscars, hearing Meryl Streep just beat her once again. Natalie’s silver skull-head ring nearly crushed my fingers as we shook hands.

Wmn-Natalie: Hi.

Lucy-In: Hi. (*awkward pause as they keep shaking hands because they aren’t thinking*)

Lucy-Out: And after that, there’s absolutely NO script for what to say to your husband’s totally-permitted mistress.

Wmn-Natalie: Nice to meet you.

Lucy-In: (*sweetly*) And you!

Lucy-Out: (*sweetly, mimicking Lucy-In*) Fuck you.
(*normal voice again*) Everything about this set-up screamed “fifth date”. Both were barefoot. They’d already had dinner at a restaurant, done some quirky off-beat date, like playing air hockey at an arcade, and certainly had had sex in what used to be my bed. Now, they were renting videos and comfortably hanging in my living room. But, y’know...hi!

(suddenly self-conscious, they both pull their hands back)

Wmn-Natalie: Jack, why don’t I call you tomorrow and we can take Teddy to the park like we planned?

Lucy-Out: This woman was going to take my breast milk out of the freezer and feed **my** son? So people would think *she* was his mother? Yes, dear. Call tomorrow. Buh-bye.

***Jack:** Don’t be silly, babe...

Lucy-Out: Babe??? I'm kiddo and she's already *babe*?

*Jack: ...Lucy doesn't mind if you spend the night, right? *(they look at Lucy-In)*

Lucy-In: *(small pause)* It...might be confusing for Teddy.

*Jack: *(laughs)* Lucy, he's nine weeks old.

Lucy-In: *(laughs)* I guess you're right...

Lucy-Out: *(laughing with fake cheerfulness)* You selfish, insensitive rat fuck.

Lucy-In: Natalie, it's fine. I'm sure Jack's explained our living arrangement.

Wmn-Natalie: Yes, and can I just say: I think you're an exceptional woman. Not a lot of women would put their child first like this. You know, a lot of mothers are quite self-centered.

Lucy-In: *(smiling)* And a lot of fathers.

Wmn-Natalie: *(sincerely)* Absolutely. Slap on my hand for that sexist exclusion.

Lucy-Out: Crap...she just said she found me exceptional. She took a shot from me and turned it into a bonding moment. Dammit... I think I *like* her.

Wmn-Natalie: Hey, wanna watch the rest of the movie with us? I can catch you up.

Lucy-In: Is it any good?

Wmn-Natalie: Nope. Jack picked it.

*Jack: Hey!

Lucy-In: I appreciate that, but I'll leave you two to it. I'm going to have a threesome with two hot guys I've got in the kitchen...Ben...and Jerry.

Wmn-Natalie: Oh.

Lucy-In: Is something wrong?

Wmn-Natalie: *(unconvincingly)* No. *(pause)* Mind if I ask what flavor?

Lucy-In: Chunky Monkey.

Wmn-Natalie: Oh.

Lucy-In: Something wrong with Chunky Monkey?

Wmn-Natalie: No, I love Chunky Monkey! *(pause)* And I hate this movie.

Lucy-In: Did you...want to join me for ice cream?

Lucy-Out: Now who's dating her?

Wmn-Natalie: Would you mind?

Lucy-In: Um, okay, I guess. Yeah, sure.

*Jack: Are you jumping ship on me, babe?

Wmn-Natalie: I am. Better offer.

(they go into the kitchen, where – during Lucy-Out's speech below – they mime scooping ice cream, talking, chuckling...liking each other. Lucy in chair #3; Woman-Natalie in Chair #2).

Lucy-Out: *(crossing in front of ??????????)* Over the next hour, I learned that Natalie was originally from Ohio, now taught Junior High, and was dreaded turning 30 next year. She'd known Jack for three weeks and considered this a significant relationship in her life. In grad school, Jack had worked on paintings for longer than three weeks, and ended up hating many of them. Still, as much as I **wanted** to hate this woman sitting in my kitchen, every time I was right on the brink of loathing, she'd say something that made me laugh, or at least smile. *(sits and watches scene)*

Wmn-Natalie: If I could be a flavor, I think I'd make a good Chunky Monkey.

Lucy-Out: I hated her utter lack of detestability.

Lucy-In: So do you think this whole set up is pretty weird?

Wmn-Natalie: At first I thought Jack was full of shit. I mean who hasn't heard the married guy telling you that he and his wife "have an arrangement", right? But he caught me off-guard by asking if I wanted to talk to you, or get a note or whatnot.

Lucy-In: He was going to have me sign an infidelity permission slip?

(Wmn-Natalie shrugs and giggles at that)

Wmn-Natalie: Do you mind if I ask: what went wrong between you two?

Lucy-In: Honestly...I'm not really sure, Natalie.

Wmn-Natalie: *(disappointed)* Oh.

Lucy-In: Sorry I don't have any great insights for you.

Wmn-Natalie: Oh, it's not that.*(rising)* It's just that Jack said the same thing.

Lucy-In: Dumb and dumber, I guess. At least we don't hate each other, right? That's got to be of some comfort to you.

Wmn-Natalie: Oh, no. *(suddenly serious:)* Quite the opposite.

*(she and *Jack exit, stage right, with Lucy-out following partway but remaining on stage ??????????????????????????????, leaving the chairs as a couch since we'll need them as a car in an upcoming scene.)*

Act II - Scene 6 – Set up for Eddie

Lucy-Out: *(from front & center)* Now that I'd met Natalie and it had gone like a wet dream as far as Jack was concerned, Natalie started to be around a lot more. I was torn. Sometimes, it hurt that he seemed to have moved on so well, especially when our thin walls revealed...

Wmn-Natalie: *(from offstage or behind partition)* Who's been a bad daddy?

***Jack:** *(from offstage or behind partition)* I have, Madame Nanny. And I should be...punished!

Lucy-Out: ...that they had discovered dirty talk. Awwwwkward. But still, a key fact that I couldn't deny was that I was liking her more each day. And damned if she wasn't good with Teddy, to boot. Once I wrapped my brain around the fact that Teddy hadn't lost a bit of love for me...

(Anjoli steps in, upstage right, miming talking on phone; Lucy-out moves a bit right to make room for her)

Anjoli Love is not a finite fountain, Lucy. The more we have, the more we **have!**

Lucy-Out: ...I stopped resenting their time together and reminded myself that I was lucky that his possible-second Mom-to-be was kind, sweet, and certainly showed more maternal instincts than...

Anjoli *(interruption, on phone)* Oh! And perhaps Teddy could call Natalie "Mom" and call you "Lucy"! Hello? Lucy? Are you still there?*(she exits)*

Lucy-Out: ...than another mother I know. And, as a few months passed, *(walks to stage left)* it really started to feel like a new norm. Meanwhile, the closest I'd gotten to any action was eating my "mussels with garlic sauce" while watching that sexy Wolfgang Punk in the restaurant kitchen.

(Woman-Zoe steps in, upstage right, to talk on phone.)

Wmn-Zoe: *(cooly)* So I did something for you...

Lucy-In: Why does that sound like something that I'm going to regret?

Wmn-Zoe: I called Lo Fats and pretended to be a job applicant.

Lucy-In: Because...

Wmn-Zoe: Because *that* enabled me to ask about when shifts start and end. Now I know.

Lucy-In: Know what?

Wmn-Zoe: Your magic chef's name is Eddie...and his shift ends at 5pm.

Lucy-In: Are you serious?

Wmn-Zoe: *(teasingly playful)* I think the question is: Are YOU serious?

(Woman-Zoe puts phone in pocket and stays put, preparing to be Candace on the phone in a moment. Man, not in character, comes out to spread tablecloth on table, never meeting eyes with Lucy-In, then exits stage-left. Lucy-In, now in Lo Fats, pulls out a book from purse and reads).

Act II - Scene 7 – Lucy and Eddie

Lucy-Out: Jack was in the city to prepare for an exhibit at the Gallery. Guilty as it made me feel, I called Candace to see if she could baby-sit for me.

Wmn-Candace: You mean “booty-sit” for you? Go get ‘im, tiger! *(she exits)*

Lucy-Out: At 4:15, I tried squeezing my body into my pre-pregnancy jeans, I felt like a butcher making sausage. After numerous self-deprecating comments, I set them aside and opted for a knee-length skirt and headed to Lo Fats, where I sat trying desperately to look casual...

(Woman-Eddie wanders in from Stage Right, apparently just off work)

...as I did my outstanding impression of “woman reading book.”

Wmn-Eddie: *(thick NY guido-voice)* Hey, Garlic Sauce!

Lucy-Out: Not exactly “Well, hello gorgeous!”, I know. But when you’ve been sex-deprived for more than a year, you take your opening lines as they come. At least it wasn’t “Kiddo”.

Lucy-In: Oh, hi.

(several second pause)

Wmn-Eddie: *(sexy smile)* Well, you enjoy them mussels and your book!

(he turns to leave)

Lucy-In: *(blurting)* So, where can a girl get a car wash?

(he turns back, awkward look between them)

Lucy-Out: Four month of stalking him with dirty thoughts, and my first dirty reference...is my car.

Wmn-Eddie: You need...a car wash?

Lucy-In: *(more awkward than sexy)* Yes. I need...my car...washed.

Lucy-Out: Merciful God, kill me now.

Wmn-Eddie: Uh, okay, yeah. I know a place you can get your car washed. And... *(he leans in)* they give you the little hangin’ pine tree deodorizer for free, too. *(he leans back)*

Lucy-Out: Okay, not exactly Don Juan, but when he *wasn’t* speaking, he was so sexy.

Lucy-In: *(trying too hard, smiling)* And what do I need to do to get this information from you?

Wmn-Eddie: *(pause, then, lightly:)* Aw, you don’t need to gimme nothing’ for that. It’s just, like, across the street.

(*pause:*) Okay, bye.

Lucy-In: (*panicked*) Could you take me there?

Wmn-Eddie: What?

Lucy-In: To the car wash. I'm not...good at finding them.

Lucy-Out: Because car washes are SO hard to recognize. Gawd.

Wmn-Eddie: Um...yeah, okay. I can also buy some smokes while I'm there. So sure.

Lucy-In: (*too excited*) Oh, wow! Then that's great...'cause I'm parked outside.

(*the two walk over to the car with Lucy miming using the fob to unlock so he can walk around to enter the car from the stage-right side. They drive off as Lucy-Out says:*)

Lucy-Out: Good catch. Because otherwise he might have thought my car was *inside* the restaurant.

Lucy-In: Well, here we go!

Wmn-Eddie: Great. Well, it's...right there.

Lucy-In: Oh, that *was* close.

Wmn-Eddie: You just stick your credit card in there, push the second button, and drive up. I dunno how it does it but it just like grabs your car after that and sucks you in.

Lucy-Out: And then he flashed me that smile...that smile that eradicated every good reason why sex with him was absurd. If only he would stop **talking**...because the more he talked, the more the fantasy got ruined.

Wmn-Eddie: Hey, can I tell you somethin'?

Lucy-In: No!

Wmn-Eddie: (*pause*) Well, shit, I never heard that before.

Lucy-In: (*puts finger on his lips to shush him*) Don't talk, Eddie...do!

(*pause as we watch him try to piece this together, have an 'aha', give that killer smile, and then turn to straddle her lap and kiss her. If this is too uncomfortable for the actresses, their lips can be an inch or two apart, but it needs to **look** like real making out; it can from behind without touching*)

Lucy-Out: (*stands*) Eddie was not a real...thinker, but he was, by far, the greatest kisser I've ever encountered. The Michelangelo of lips ... the Baryshnikov of tongues. His thick, warm lips covered mine like a blanket, as his tongue moved with choreography. He was totally in charge without being overbearing. As a rainbow of suds hit my windshield, I'm pretty sure I actually sighed:

Lucy-In: Oh dear God...

Lucy-Out: Which gave him the confidence to say:

Wmn-Eddie: Back seat is better.

Lucy-Out: Panicked that I might lose more of that incredible kiss...

(As best they can without appearing to open doors during a car wash, the actors manipulate themselves into the "back seat" by getting behind the two covered chairs.)

...I complied. Eddie, with unbelievable ease, undid the baby seat and threw it into the back, like this was something he did frequently. I lay back...

(Lucy-In lays down such that the audience can see her head and shoulders sticking out, even though technically that'd be outside the car. Woman-Eddie kneels between her legs and mimes wriggling his own pants down)

Lucy-In: Wait!

Wmn-Eddie: What?

Lucy-In: *(pause)* I'm...Lucy.

Wmn-Eddie: *(pause, big smile)* Yeah, okay. Lucy, you're good. And I'm gonna give you what you've been needing.

Lucy-Out: Was I that obvious? Could he give me what I needed? What *did* I need anyway? Maybe this was exactly the right start to my feeling liberated! And empowered! And free! I could just throw myself into passionate lust with this hot young man.

Wmn-Eddie: Great. Could you pull your panties over to the side so I can keep my hands free? Perfect. Here goes!

(probably balancing himself with one hand on the front seat, he moves a bit closer, to imply that he's entering her)

Lucy-In: Oh!

Wmn-Eddie: *(smiling)* Yeah, that's it!

Lucy-Out: And in that first second he entered me, I felt the thrill of a year of unbridled lust about to be quenched. And then...just as the hot wax sprayed itself all over my minivan, Eddie started...*(losing all passion)*... talking.

(while continually thrusting his unseen hips into her, as evidenced by his shoulders and head, he goes into this speech:)

Wmn-Eddie: I probably didn't mention that I used to work in a car wash. Not 'dis one because they weren't hiring at the time, but about six blocks away. Only we didn't use the big blowers to dry the car. Our managuh was really big on the whole hand towel drying thing and customuhs were willin' to pay maw for that. But really I think these automated ones...uhhhuhhhuhhhhhh...

(Eddie has a big, perhaps almost cartoonish orgasm, ending with a big exhaling sigh, before continuing exactly where he left off in his monologue:)

...do as good a job as the hand-drying car washes...

(Woman-Eddie mimes pulling up pants and zipping up)

...Plus that's a lotta rags to constantly keep clean...

(Woman-Eddie climbs back into the front seat)

...and you're often just spreading the dirt around because you don't feel like bothering to get another clean rag...

(Lucy-in sits up, kneeling and looking over the seat, giving a puzzled look, like, Is this really happening?)

...which you don't really wanna do because every rag you throw in the bin is another one that one of us guys is gonna hafta wash laytuh.

(If the audience is still laughing at Lucy's face, ad lib more about the rags; otherwise, go on to this?)

Lucy-Out: And with that, the car lurched to a stop at the end of the car wash and I looked up to see the sign that said:

(If the show allows for projecting on the partition, SHOW the sign instead of Lucy-Out saying it. Otherwise she says:) "Thank you for coming!" And then just under that. "Please pull out."

Wmn-Eddie: Thanks for that. That felt great. See ya round, Garlic Sauce! We could do that again some time maybe.

(Woman-Eddie offers a fist bump. Lucy-In complies meekly. He hops out, shuts door, walks away, exiting stage right.)

Lucy-In: *(screaming at his closed door)* Maybe???

(Lucy-in awkwardly climbs into the front seat)

Lucy-Out: *(slowly, fuming)* You just got no-strings attached, total self-serving pleasure sex...and doing it again is a...

Lucy-in: 'Maybe'?!?!?

(phone rings, she looks at it, rolls her eyes, and answers annoyed. Woman-Nurse enters on phone.)

Lucy-in: Yes?

Wmn-Nurse: Hello. Is this the closest relation to Jack Rosenbluth?

Lucy-in: Wow. Is there no end to what you telemarketers will say to get someone's attention? That's really just gross.

Wmn-Nurse: Ma'am. This is Silverlake Hospital in Newark. IS this the next of kin of Jack Rosenbluth?

Lucy-in: *(Sober now)* This is...his wife.

Lucy-Out: As the nurse explained what she knew: the accident, Jack's airbag not inflating, and finally the coma he was in, gravity suddenly kicked in...and the evidence of what Eddie said *(making air quotes)* "I needed" totally let loose into my panties. I desperately wanted to shower, ideally with Clorox, but...

Act II - Scene 8 – Jack and Natalie at the hospital

*(Wmn-Nurse comes over to wheel the table back toward stage right, like earlier, but this time, it'll be for Jack in hospital. She grabs the blanket that's behind Lucy-In in the "car". If there's room backstage, she can wheel the table into the wing for *Jack to climb on and then wheel him back on. If no such room, either she or Jack get pillows (upstage side of table) and blanket on there and *Jack enters to get on {NOTE: Jack needs to have a piece of paper/brochure in his back pocket for a later scene}. Woman-Nurse exits, stage left, to become Natalie soon. Lucy-out to ??????????????. During all of this, Lucy-In mimes a phone call to Candace (unseen) while Lucy-Out continues)*

...far more than that, I needed to be next to Jack. Whatever we were, he was...Jack.

Lucy-in: *(Still seated in car, on phone)*...and there's plenty of breast milk in the fridge. You're an angel, Candace. And...I know this is super weird, but Natalie's number is on the fridge. Can you call and tell her? She deserves to be there too. And...can you ask her *(sheepish)* to lend me a pair of...panties? *(pause)* Yes, quite a night indeed. *(pause)* Love you, too.

(She parks car, gets out, shoves chair toward the others, and goes to sit next to Jack's bed, while Lucy-Out continues)

Lucy-Out: He had a nasty cut on his forehead but the seatbelt had likely saved him. In my family, I'm the doer... the fixer... the make-it-right person. So NOT being able to do more than hold his hand was maddening. I eventually looked at the clock, wondering what was taking Natalie so damned long to get here, and it reminded me that what had felt like hours was actually a very reasonable 35 minutes 'til she arrived, just as the doctor popped in again.

(Lucy-Out walks over to the stage-right side of Jack's bed. She'll be quoting the doctor, but in her own voice, not a character.)

I still recall every word of that conversation like it was yesterday.

(Wmn-Natalie bursts in, out of breath running, crossing almost the whole stage from stage left)

Wmn-Natalie: Oh my god. The 280 was a mess.

Lucy-In: I figured.

Wmn-Natalie: I'm so sorry. *(Seeing Jack)* Oh my gosh. Is he okay?

Lucy-In: Dr. Lee just came to update us. Dr. Lee? *(they both look across bed at Lucy-Out)*

Lucy-Out: And you are...?

Lucy-In: Natalie is Jack's...sister.

Lucy-Out: Oh, that's good. You can help us with family health history.

Wmn-Natalie: uh...

Lucy-In: *(too quickly and loudly)* STEP-sister. Later in life. She wouldn't know that sort of thing.

Lucy-Out: Oh, I see. Well, we're doing everything we can for your brother. Damage to his body appears to be minimal. We just don't know what's going on cognitively after such a hard slam. He could just wake up

fine; he could wake with memory or function problems; or he could be like this for...a very long time. I'm sorry but right now, it's about the waiting.

(Lucy-Out turns to go back to her stool area. Lucy-in sits. Wmn-Natalie grabs the lone chair that had been the driver's seat to bring it to sit next to Lucy-In. Wmn-Natalie stares in the direction of the audience, like deep in thought.)

And wait we did. Over the next six hours, we barely spoke. Occasional comments about Jack's condition or or Teddy at home. But mostly we just sat. Every time I looked at Natalie, she was just staring off. By 2 a.m., both Natalie and I looked like an ad for a do-it-yourself lobotomy kit.

Wmn-Natalie: *(tugs at Lucy-In's sleeve)* Lucy.

Lucy-In: *(half-waking)* Hmmm?

Wmn-Natalie: Sorry to wake you, but I can't do this anymore.

Lucy-In: Of course, of course. No one expects you to stay all night. Go home, get some rest, and if Jack wakes up while you're gone, I'll let him know when you'll be back.

Wmn-Natalie: Lucy...I'm not coming back.

Lucy-In: What do you mean?

Wmn-Natalie: I mean this whole situation is too much for me. I don't know where I fit in to all of...this *(she gestures to her surroundings and stands up.)* You're his wife. Teddy's his son. I'm his fictitious step sister.

Lucy-In: *(standing)* Come on, Natalie! I couldn't introduce you as Jack's girlfriend. It would seem weird.

Wmn-Natalie: Because it IS weird!

Lucy-In: And you just realized this **tonight**? *(Lucy-In stands up.)* Not when you walked past me each night to get into my old bed? Or when you took my breast milk to the park?

Wmn-Natalie: It just...hit home tonight...with the doctor.

Lucy-Out: Suddenly, my resentment of Natalie bailing at a time like was transformed. I'd somehow been thinking of Natalie as the winner 'til now. But she wouldn't be able to marry Jack for eighteen **years**. At age 47, she'd never get to have her own kids. And people would assume all those years that she was his mistress.

Lucy-In: What should I tell him?

Wmn-Natalie: Tell him I'm sorry, but the situation is too complicated for me.

Lucy-In: You're **sorry**? **That's** what you want me to tell him?

Wmn-Natalie: I don't know!!! **You're** the writer. Find the right words. I'll just screw it up and say something dumb.

Lucy-In: No! I am not breaking up with Jack **for** you. If you can't handle this, that's your right to leave, but when he wakes up, you're going to have to talk to him.

Wmn-Natalie: IF he wakes up!

*(Wmn-Natalie starts crying and puts her head on Lucy-In's shoulder, but not hugging her. Lucy-in takes a moment, **not** hugging her either, before grabbing her by the shoulders, pushing her back lightly to look her in the eyes.*

Lucy-In: Listen to me! Jack *will* wake up, and when he does, *you* need to dump him. It's the right thing to do. Now go home, get rest, and come back to talk to Jack.

Wmn-Natalie: *(sniffing and gaining composure, trying to almost smile)* Oh, my God. You're right. I'm just so exhausted and...drained. I'll sleep and come back tomorrow afternoon to see him.

(Wmn-Natalie starts toward stage-left, stops, comes back and gives Lucy-In a deep hug. After a moment, Lucy-In hugs her back, for a few seconds, and then they both drop the hug. Wmn-Natalie, starts to exit stage left, gets about halfway across the stage, Lucy-out going to ??????????????????, before Lucy-Out continues:)

Lucy-Out: And as she released that hug and turned... I knew – without question...

(Wmn-Natalie stops, looks back a moment, then exits)

...that I'd never see Natalie again.

Act II - Scene 9 – Post Accident

Lucy-Out: *(crosses to ??????????????????)* As the days passed *(Lucy-In's sits again)*, I got to know all the doctors and nurses, bringing treats to the ones I liked. Sometimes I brought Teddy, hoping his laugh or cry would rouse Jack, but as much as I could, I came alone...and I wrote. *(Lucy-In mimes a laptop)*. I added three equally dull pages to Desdemona's tale. Meanwhile, an editor at "Parents" magazine told me I had a "cool way of using rye humor to make important lessons hit home," and actually suggested some topics she wanted me to take a shot at.

Lucy-In: *(typing and reading as she does)* ...because, at the end of the day, if your baby is fed, dry, and asleep, it doesn't matter what look the pediatrician gave you...you done good, lady. *(she leaves hospital and mimes something from side stage, perhaps changing clothes? brushing teeth? to imply having left and then she comes back in during next sentence)*

Lucy-Out: That got published a week later. And as another week passed...and another, the reality of my situation started to really take its toll.

Lucy-In: *(to Jack in bed)* I know I could be imagining it, Jack, but I really think Teddy misses you. Or maybe he senses me missing you there. Even with Natalie in the mix, at least there was a bizarre sort of...security? Like, if you weren't leaving me for *her*, at least I wasn't *going* to be deserted. Do you have any idea how cavernous that house is with you gone? Both of you? I mean, fuck her, abandoning you like this but I miss the laughter we three created there.

And all of us sharing the work with Teddy. It's a lot, Jack. You left me with a lot. Do you know how many calls I've had to handle for your gallery? I don't know where things are or who you've talked to about what. Your assistant, the one whose name I can never say right, keeps asking me what I want.

(starting to get angry) You know what I want? I want **not** to be making decisions right now. I want to curl up and be left alone and fast-forward to whatever comes next, whether it's with you or without

you. If you'd just divorced me, it'd have been done. If you'd died six weeks ago, they might let me grieve, but you're not dead, Jack. You're just...dead-like. Everyone keeps saying "Poor Jack" but I want to yell, 'No! Poor me!' Because I don't know what to do!

I've cancelled two of your exhibits because...Ernshwal, or whatever the hell his name is, doesn't know how to make them happen without you. I'm paying your staff from the *household* fund because I'm not *on* your business account, but I can't do that forever. Do you get what I'm saying? I may have to close your gallery, Jack. Have you thought of that? The bulk of how we pay for that house is going to die off with you while your hospital bill goes up every day. I want you to come back, Jack, I really do, but some days this limbo is more than I can take and I almost wish that...

Lucy-Out: *(interrupting)* No! You don't!

Lucy-In: *(long pause, then looking Lucy-Out in the eyes, soberly)* I've thought it.

Lucy-Out: *(surprised for a moment, then after a pause)* Thinking it.....isn't wishing for it.

Lucy-In: It's so hard.

Lucy-Out: I know.

Lucy-In: I'm so tired.

Lucy-Out: I know.

Lucy-In: *(pause)* **You** know what's going to happen.

Lucy-Out: *(pause, solemnly)* I do.

Lucy-In: Tell me he's going to be okay.

Lucy-Out: *(shaking her head no)* You know I can't do that.

Lucy-In: Tell me he'll wake up fine.

Lucy-Out: That's not how this works.

Lucy-In: What good is having a future if I don't know how to make it happen?

Lucy-Out: No one knows that.

Lucy-In: *(desperate)* Tell me something!!!

Lucy-Out: *(pause)* I can tell you this.....you're going to get through this.

Lucy-In: *(long exhale and pause, puzzled)* Why are you able to tell me *that*?

Lucy-Out: *(gently, maybe a bit of a smile, maybe touching her)* Because...that....is something you already know.
(pause) And a piece of advice.

Lucy-In: Yes?!?

Lucy-Out: Keep breathing, girl.....because it's about to get wilder.

*Jack: Lucy.

Lucy-In: *(completely breaking from Lucy-Out for good)* Jack? I'm here, Jack.

*Jack: Need to say...something important.

Lucy-In: Yes, Jack! I'm listening!

*Jack: The dogs.

Lucy-In: What?

*Jack: The dogs. They're all out in the street. You have to put them in the garage.

Lucy-In: There's no dogs, Jack. You're in the hospital.

*Jack: *(agitated)* Lucy! They'll be hit by cars. Put them in the garage!

Lucy-In: I will, Jack. Right away.

(Jack exhales and closes his eyes. Lucy can't take stop looking at him.)

*Jack: *(suddenly)* Lucy!

Lucy-In: I'll get the dogs, Jack.

*Jack: The palm tree. Tell the gardener it needs to be trimmed!

Lucy-In: The palm tree. In New Jersey. Okay, I'll tell him.

(Jack exhales and closes his eyes. Lucy stares at him. After a longer pause)

*Jack: Lucy!

Lucy-In: Yes?

*Jack: Stop blaming yourself for what happened to Cooper. It's not your fault.

Lucy-In: What? I...I know that.

*Jack: Your *intellect* knows that; your *heart* doesn't. And your *mind* doesn't know how to make sense of that disparity. So you turned that into *my* blaming you instead. And I don't. I never did.

Lucy-In: I...

*Jack: Luuuuucy.

Lucy-In: Yes?

*Jack: Lucy.

Lucy-In: Yes???

*Jack: The dogs still aren't in the garage.

Lucy-In: I'll go do that right now. You rest.

(Jack exhales and closes his eyes. Lucy can't take stop looking at him. After a pause)

Lucy-Out: And with that, the man who hadn't opened up to me in years gave me something to think about for the next four hours, hoping maybe he'd wake again, before...

(she kisses his forehead and turning to go back to a chair in her home on stage left)

...I finally headed home, those ominous words still in my head. And if there was truth to them, wondering how much more I'd contributed to my failed marriage than I ever realized. *(sits on stool)*

Act II - Scene 10 – Call from Anjoli with split screen wedding

(Anjoli enters upstage, on phone, with Lucy)

Anjoli: But Lucy...that's ridiculous. You've never had *dogs!*

Lucy-In: Well, apparently in coma land, we do. And they're loose.

Anjoli: And that was all he said?

Lucy-In: *(hesitating)* That...was the gist of it, yeah.

Anjoli: What did the doctor have to say?

Lucy-In: That it was good that his speech center seems to be intact, not so good that he wasn't making sense, and again, not so good that we haven't been able to wake him for two days since.

Anjoli: Well, I say it's good. If he woke once, he'll do it again. And get it right next time. And so it is!

Lucy-In: Thanks, Ma...Anjoli.

Anjoli: *(excitedly)* Can I change the subject now? I'm dying to share something.

Lucy-In: I would love *any* news that doesn't involve a hospital.

Anjoli: It doesn't! Brace yourself. Zoe is getting married...

Lucy-In: Was her engagement party your first tip-off?

Anjoli: ...and it's NOT to Geoff!

Lucy-In: What? What happened to Geoff?

Anjoli: Big tear-fest. She told him she felt controlled by him and needed a nest, not a cage. He wept and begged her not to go but she told me that it felt like the best decision of her life.

Lucy-In: Wow. I knew she wasn't really happy, but this is still a shock. I liked Geoff.

Anjoli: He was fine, but I've moved on.

Lucy-In: I'm happy for you. But...wait...you just said she IS getting married?

Anjoli: That's right.

Lucy-In: So who is he?

Anjoli: *(deliciously)* It's not a "he"!

Lucy-In: Oh! Wow. Didn't see that coming. Okay, well, so who is this other woman?

Anjoli: *(even more excited)* It's not another woman!

Lucy-In: I'm...running out of options here. Who is Zoe marrying?

Anjoli: Zoe Klein is marrying...herself!

(Woman-Zoe enters, wearing a veil, doing a wedding march from stage right, behind bed, to come down to near center downstage, where she kneels, facing audience)

Lucy-In: *(disbelief)* What?!?

Anjoli: I know! It's just amazing! Instead of pledging herself to someone **else** who will have his own agenda and life path, she's making a commitment to loving **herself**!

Lucy-In: *(disbelief again)* What?!?

Anjoli: I know! And she asked Alfie to officiate the ceremony!

(Man gets out of bed on stage right side, crossing downstage until stepping behind Woman-Zoe. By his walk, and then voice, he is clearly NOT Jack; he is Man-Alfie. He starts talking almost as soon as he's upright on the ground in a split screen; Anjoli and Lucy are physically watching what will be in the future wedding, but the actresses aren't actually there now)

Man-Alfie: *(like a charismatic preacher)* Dearly, dearly beloved! Today, a woman is marrying herself. How many of you here got your invitation to this little shindig and thought, "Well, now I've seen everything?" Even in New York!*(He nods, smiling, as if he hears chuckles – or possibly a recording of people chuckling)* But wouldn't it be wonderful if *everyone* loved themselves enough to actually *want* to spend the rest of their lives with them**selves**? Now, some of you may be thinking, 'I already **am** spending my life with myself!' But what I'm talking about...is *wanting* to spend the rest of our lives with ourselves. Because I'm here to tell you that most of us...would divorce ourselves if we could. *(recording of people chuckling or agreeing)*

So before you poke fun, take a good look at this child of God. I think Zoe is doing something wonderful here today. She's telling us, men and women and everyone in between, that she's looking within **herself** for happiness. Now some of you are asking yourselves, 'Isn't it okay to look to other people and things for happiness?' **Certainly** it is. **Aaaafter** we learn to love ourselves, reeeeeally love ourselves unconditionally, faults and all. We'll be amazed at how much deeper our love for others and for life becomes.

Anjoli: I feel like you're judging this, Lucy.

Lucy-In: No. Just...absorbing the idea. Actually, I think it's brilliant.

Man-Alfie: When my friend Jennifer was a little girl, away at summer camp, her mother sent her packages of games, candy and especially, macadamia nuts. To this day, when she gets herself some macadamia nuts, she feels like someone is taking care of her. Or that she's taking care of herself!

What are *your* macadamia nuts? Is it ice skating in Rockefeller Center when the Christmas tree is lit? Is it a frozen hot chocolate at Serendipity? Is it taking time to read a magazine while you're in a bubble bath? What makes you feel loved? And why are you waiting for someone **else** to give you that feeling. You do it!

Lucy-In: *(smiling)* My family is insane.

Lucy-Out: Delightfully insane.

Man-Alfie: Zoe, do you promise to love and cherish yourself for all of the days you are blessed with life?

Woman-Zoe: I do!!!

Man-Alfie: Will you obey...your inner wisdom...and always do what you know is best for yourself?

Woman-Zoe: I will!!!

Man-Alfie: And can you do this...without losing respect for the paths of others? And give even more love to the world from this new sense of self-matrimony?

Woman-Zoe: *(proudly)* I can!!!

Man-Alfie: Then by the power that has always been great and glorious inside you, do you declare **yourself** to be the one and only true partner you'll ever need?

Woman-Zoe: *(standing proudly)* 'Til death do me part!

(All four, other than Zoe, applaud, perhaps with recorded applause as well)

Lucy-In: With all the self-loathing in the world, I kinda wish the whole world could be there.

(Man-Alfie hops onto the edge of the "bed", pretending there's a piano in front of him. Possibly, a recording of this part of the song could be played, otherwise she sings cappella)

Man-Alfie: Zoe, this song is yours and the chorus is for everyone!

(Woman-Zoe mimes taking a mike. Sings to the tune of "It Had To Be You")

Woman-Zoe: It had to be me...♪ ... It had to be me...♪
I wandered around...and finally found...my someone to be...
To make me feel free...could finally see...
That I can be whole... deep in my soul ... thinking of me... *(skip in actual song to the chorus)*

For nobody else gives me my thrill
With all my faults, I love me still

Man-Alfie: *(Gesturing to audience)* Everyone!

All five: It had to be me
Wonderful me
It had to be meeeeeeeeeeeeeee!

*(Woman-Zoe throws rice straight up into the air, landing on herself with a big smile, and she skips off, stage right. Man-Alfie gets back under the covers to become *Jack in coma again. Still on the phone, Lucy-In crosses back to sit in chair by Jack's bed.)*

Lucy-In: So, when is this glorious declaration of oneness supposed to take place?

Anjoli: On the Fall Equinox. My idea. The symbolic day of transition. Plus the stars align amazingly on the equinox this year.

Lucy-In: *(rolling eyes)* Ah, the stars.

Anjoli: *(smiling:)* The stars are powerful celestial beings that have wisdom and symmetry beyond what our conscious minds can comprehend, Lucy. And their light guides our very cells. *(pause, more seriously:)* Or...stars could all just be big chunks of light, that just keep shining at us, for no reason at all. *(smiling again:)* I prefer to think of it the other way.

Lucy-In: Touche, m'lady.

Anjoli: And the equinox happens to fall on a Sunday, which is nice. Jack will be all better by then. I'm telling the universe!

Lucy-In: Thanks for putting in a good word for him. Personally, I can't wait to see this. I just hope others will come.

(Jack stirs in bed and opens his eyes; Lucy-Out stands and looks at him)

Anjoli: Of course they will. Neither Zoe nor I ever questioned that. Lucy, I love you, but sometimes you think small. What did your father say about a thousand times?

Lucy-In: *(smiling)* Life is big.

Anjoli: Your father and I didn't have much in common. But *that*...we got.

Lucy-In: You did indeed, thanks. Love you. *(smiling)*

(Anjoli exits stage right; Lucy-out follows her as far as stage left)

Act II - Scene 11 – Jack wakes

*Jack: So do we all have to drive individually since it's a wedding for one? Or can you give me a lift?

Lucy-In: Jack!

(she throws herself at him in an awkward laying down hug)

*Jack: Don't be too excited. My old paintings would have gone way up in value if I'd kicked it.

Lucy-In: I can wait for that. Oh, my god! How do you feel?

*Jack: I've been tuning in and out. I've opened my eyes a couple of times, but I've felt so intensely dizzy that I couldn't manage speech and zoned back out again. Today isn't so bad. Just kinda woozy.

Lucy-In: It's so good to hear your voice.

*Jack: Yours helped me realize I was back. Thanks for visiting so much.

Lucy-In: Of course.

*Jack: *(pause)* Where's Natalie?

Lucy-Out: three...two...one...

Lucy-In: *(blurts)* Scotland!

Lucy-Out: *(sarcastically)* Reeeeeeeally?

*Jack: Scotland?

Lucy-In: Yes. Her uncle there died. They were close. He left her his house and a lot of money. Quit her job. Gone. Said to say goodbye.

*Jack: Wow. Really? It's just...

Lucy-In: *(Bracing herself to be supportive)* Just what?

*Jack: Just that I coulda sworn her whole family was from France. *[sub another country if it suits the actress' looks more believably]*

Lucy-Out: And with **that** geography lesson, we were apparently over five months with Natalie.

*Jack: What was that about life being big?

Lucy-In: Anjoli reminding me, in my admiration of Zoe living so big, that **I** need to also.

*Jack: Zoe IS good at it. Maybe you just need to grab hold of the broom that she flies on.

Lucy-In: Broom?!? She's not a witch (*they chuckle*). More like the jet pack she straps... (*pause of having an idea hit her*). Jack! I could talk to you all day but can I make a quick call before we continue?

*Jack: Take your time. Gotta close my eyes for a while again anyway.

Lucy-In: (*pulls out phone and makes call*) Zoe, it's me... Yes, Anjoli told me all about it and I think it's amazing. Question for you: I've never asked you for a lead before, but remember last year you told me you met someone on staff at Vanity Fair?

(*Lucy-In starts crossing stage left to exit*)

I'm ask... I'm begging you to make an introduction. This idea is a big one!

(*Lucy-In exits, stage left as Anjoli enters stage right*)

Lucy-Out: When I brought Jack home, ten days later, Anjoli was on our front porch with two suitcases.

Anjoli: (*possibly to Lucy-Out*) Someone needs to take care of Jack!

Lucy-Out: "Chopped liver" here hadn't occurred to her, apparently. But as horrible as she was at ever being any help with Teddy, she was wonderful with Jack...

(*Anjoli helps *Jack out of bed and they walk together, him likely miming a walker*)

...and her spirit seemed to be good for him as well.

Anjoli: (*to Jack*) ...and it turned out that I wasn't at a lecture on metaphysics at all! I had wandered into an AA meeting!

*Jack: I thought you'd told me one time that you thought it was a psychic healing lecture?

Anjoli: (*putting a finger to Jack's lips*) Hush, darling. This is **my** story. Well, I kept trying to say, "No, no, I'm not supposed to be here!" and they kept saying, "Honey, it's okay. We all felt that away once."

(*Woman-Nurse comes out, clears the bed of pillows and blankets and pushes the bed back to the original table position. If there's time, she helps Anjoli help Jack into a chair that faces right, away from the table*)

So finally, I yelled out, "Okay, okay! My name is Anjoli and I'm an alcoholic!" It felt surreal, but it made them all so happy and it didn't cost me anything to give them what they wanted.

Lucy-Out: And nine weeks passed like this. We all spent time together. And it was nice. We cooked, we watched movies...we even scrapbooked. And those two...they bonded like I'd never seen before, which gave me time to focus on Teddy (*whom she picks up*) and my articles, **most** of which were getting **published!** One day, I came home from La Leche with Teddy...

Act II - Scene 12 – Jack paints

(*Lucy-In enters kitchen from stage left; Anjoli crosses quickly to her, Lucy-out putting Teddy in her hands*)

Anjoli: (*eagerly*) Lucy, dear, give me the boy. Go out in the backyard.

Lucy-In: *(hands Teddy to Anjoli)*Is everything okay?

Anjoli: Yes. Go see.

(Lucy-In crosses to enter "yard" where Jack is sitting)

Lucy-In: You're...painting!

*Jack: Yes. Been at it for three hours now. It feels really good. Really right. I've been managing others art for so long that I forgot that I love this.

Lucy-In: It's a lovely backdrop. What's going to be in the front?

*Jack: *(gesturing at chair in front of him)* Sit.

Lucy-In: What? Me? No! I'm no model. And I look affright. I'm surprised I don't scare Teddy...yet.

*Jack: Stop! Lucy, your self-deprecation is *exhausting*. Sit....

(Hesitantly, she grabs a chair and sits before him)

...and remember, it's a paint brush. Not a Canon-Sure-Shot. Plus, you look great.

Lucy-In: I do that to myself a lot, don't I?

*Jack: *(Painting)* Mmmmm.

(Moment of just him painting in silence)

Lucy-In: Jack, can I say something that may sound crazy?

*Jack: *(Painting)* Mmmmm.

Lucy-In: I need...to apologize to you...for expecting you to grieve about Cooper exactly the way I did. From any other vantage point, your grief was probably normal, but when it didn't meet *my* needs for how *I* needed help...I think I took it out on you. I can't change that, but I AM sorry.

*Jack: *(stops painting, considers, nods)* Okay.

Lucy-In: Okay?

*Jack: *(Paintingagain)* Okay.

(Moment of just him painting in silence)

*Jack: I'm selling the gallery.

Lucy-In: What?

*Jack: Sit still. Yeah. I'm done with my life being about other people's art. And the place is doing so well that I'll likely make a mint on it.

Lucy-In: What are you going to do?

*Jack: Paint. Luce, I was always supposed to be an artist. I sidetracked. Just being here painting today made that really clear. And, having you right there, like when I used to paint, makes it even clearer.

Lucy-In: Literally in the picture?

*Jack: *(chuckles)* So it seems. *(long pause)* I also had an idea what we should do with the money from the gallery's sale.

Lucy-In: We?

*Jack: Everything's half yours, Luce.

Lucy-In: *(slightly disappointed that it sounds so divided)* Oh. Right. Of course it is. So what's your idea?

(he mimes reaching into a pocket and pulling out a paper and unfolding it to hand to Lucy-in)

*Jack: There's an old resort in the Catskills. One main house and 12 cabins. Would make an amazing artists' colony.

(quiet moment as they meet eyes, touch, and smile)

Act II - Scene 13 – Conclusion (variation 3: Lucy, Zoe, Anjoli & Teddy)

(Both exit gently, stage left, leaving Lucy-Out alone on stage. She comes downstage ?????????? to address the audience directly.)

Lucy-Out: *(smiling and dreamily, looking at them)* That seems like forever ago now. *(back to us)* During the time we were looking into that Catskills property, Vanity Fair magazine took me up on that big pitch: an eight page spread on the woman threw a wedding to marry herself. It put me on the map nationally as a feature writer. And I gave up on poor, boring Desdemona once and for all when "Family Circle" magazine asked me to do a regular column that ran for **twelve years**. I called it, "The Dali Momma."

(Woman-Zoe, now in her late 50s, comes out to join her.)

But even with things going my way with my writing AND Jack's art quickly getting into some nice galleries, we couldn't pay for a property **that** big in the Catskills. So... *(smiling)* we took on an investor.

Woman-Zoe: Her fabulous and now-famous cousin...

Lucy-Out: ...who could **well** afford it, thanks to me! NOT because of that failed confessional reality show idea that never took off.

Woman-Zoe: Oh, that thing. The networks were terrified of the likely backlash from Catholic groups. *(chuckling at her younger folly)* And probably rightfully so. I was young and naïve. But I'm **glad** that bombed...because that freed me up for a much bigger role.

Lucy-Out: Y’see, I sent my Vanity Fair article to the execs at Bravo, who then created the biggest reality show of the decade: featuring full coverage of the wedding of the woman who married herself.

(Anjoli, now in her 80s, comes out to join them.)

Lucy-Out: It was my mother who came up with the perfect title:

Anjoli: “Altar.....Ego”!

Lucy-Out: That series set off a phenomenon of women doing ME-trimony ceremonies across the country.

Woman-Zoe: Twenty-something years later, I STILL get asked to officiate now and then.

Lucy-Out: It took us a few years to get *(gestures around her)* this artists’ colony off the ground, but we got good word of mouth...and some friends in the right magazines didn’t hurt....and...here we are. There’ve been some rough times, sure, with the hurricane...

Woman-Zoe: ...and the septic system...

Anjoli: ...and the squirrel thing...

Lucy-Out: *(rolling eyes)* They get it! So, okay, I’m not going to say that Jack and I lived “happily ever after” but...we did more often than not. What can I say? After that car accident, we got **seventeen** more good years together...so, that’s something.

The heart attack...well, that wasn’t the ending either of us saw, but...it’s the ending we got. And of course *(looking up)*, I miss him every day. I do still talk to him sometimes. Even as pragmatic as I am, sometimes...I feel like I get answers.

(goes to side of table) This is the same old table from New Jersey. The one we almost broke up at and the one we raised Teddy at. One of the few big things we kept from Caldwell when we came upstate. Just too many memories around it to leave it at the curb.

(looks lost in thought at it. Anjoli and Zoe exchange a look. One of them touches her to bring her back and they both smile as Lucy refocuses on audience, stepping back to where she’d been moments before)

We actually had some famous people here over the years. Probably the biggest was Woody Allen with three other musicians. He just loved playing the clarinet. I’ll never forget the morning he called.

(Man-AdultTed comes in and stands next to Lucy-Out)

I was in the shower when the call came in. Soaking wet, I tried to run for my phone on the other side of the bathroom but without a bath mat I slipped and skidded like an ice skater into the wall. Jack was off filling some holes that gophers had made and he *(the following words overlapping Teddy as he interrupts; she probably will only get about half of them out)* didn’t even know who I was on the phone with until much later when

Man-AdultTed: *(interrupting)* Wait, Mom. Mom! MOM! *(she finally silences)* I thought you’d said Dad was fixing the lawn mower.

Lucy-Out: *(putting a finger to Man-AdultTed’s lips)* Hush, darling. *(to audience, with a smile)* This is MY story.

(Black out)