

GLAMOUR

BY

JOHN O'KEEFE

**499 ALABAMA ST.
STUDIO 300
SAN FRANCISCO, CA.
94110
415.255.1048
BEKIN@AOL.COM**

CAST

KIT JACKSON

SCHUYLER JACKSON

LAURA RIDING

ROBERT GRAVES

TIME: SUMMER OF 1939.

PLACE: A FARM ON THE NEW ENGLAND COAST.

GLAMOUR

SCENE 1

PREDAWN. KIT COMES DOWN THE STAIRS IN A BATHROBE. SHE PUTS BREAD IN A POP-UP TOASTER. SHE FIXES COFFEE.

KIT
(CALLING)

SCHUYLER, IT'S TIME TO RISE AND SHINE.

SHE TURNS ON THE RADIO. MUSIC. 30'S VERSION OF BING CROSBY'S.
"EVERYTHING I HAVE IS YOURS."

KIT
(CALLING)

COME ON, DARLING.

SCHUYLER SLOWLY COMES DOWN THE STAIRS. HE HAS A BAD
HANGOVER. SHE WATCHES HIM.

KIT
COFFEE'S BREWING, BREAD'S IN THE TOASTER. I'LL FIX
MYSELF UP.

SCHUYLER SITS AT THE TABLE, HIS BACK TO US. KIT CLIMBS THE
STAIRS. SCHUYLER STARES AHEAD OF HIM IN A STUPOR. THE MUSIC
GOES ON. THE TOAST POPS UP IN THE TOASTER. SCHUYLER TURNS
HIS HEAD TOWARDS IT.

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 2

LIGHTS RISE ON DINING ROOM.

LAURA (OS)

KATHARINE! YOU CAN SMELL THE BUTTERFLIES!

SHE BURSTS INTO THE ROOM. SHE IS CARRYING A CANE. SHE STANDS IN THE
MIDDLE OF THE ROOM TAKING IN THE DÉCOR. FINALLY SHE MAKES HER
PRONOUNCEMENT; REVULSION...

LAURA

AW. (SHE CALLS OUT IRRITABLY TO ROBERT.) ROBERT?

ROBERT ENTERS LOADED WITH LUGGAGE FOLLOWED BY KIT AND
SCHUYLER. ROBERT SURVEYS THE ROOM.

ROBERT
(INDIFFERENTLY)

OH, YES.

ROBERT STARTS TO PUT THE LUGGAGE DOWN, THEN STOPS AT THE
SOUND OF KIT'S VOICE.

KIT

WELL, ACTUALLY, SCHUYLER'S REFURBISHED A COTTAGE FOR
YOU DOWN THE WAY.

LAURA
OH. (TO ROBERT A LITTLE BEWILDERED) Hmm.

KIT
WE THOUGHT YOU'D LIKE YOUR PRIVACY.

LAURA
(ACUTELY DISAPPOINTED)
AH.

KIT
SCHUYLER'S A VERY GOOD CARPENTER.

LAURA
(BEAMING AT SCHUYLER BUT NOT SEEING KIT'S POINT)
I'M SURE HE IS.

SCHUYLER LOOKS AT KIT NONPLUSED.

SCHUYLER
WE HAVE A COUPLE OF SPARE ROOMS UPSTAIRS.

LAURA
(DELIGHTED)
HAVE YOU? ROBERT, WHERE WOULD YOU RATHER STAY? IN THE
COTTAGE, NO DOUBT.

ROBERT
OH. YES.

LAURA
WELL, GOOD THEN.

LAURA WATCHES KIT AND SCHUYLER. KIT AND SCHUYLER SUDDENLY
BECOME AWARE OF ROBERT STANDING WITH HIS CONSIDERABLE
BURDEN. LAURA SMILES.

SCHUYLER
MAY I HELP YOU WITH THOSE?

ROBERT
NOT NECESSARY.

SCHUYLER WAITS FOR KIT TO LEAD THEM UP THE STAIRS. KIT
DOESN'T MOVE. SCHUYLER DIRECTS LAURA AND ROBERT UP THE
STAIRS. AS LAURA AND ROBERT EXIT SCHUYLER TURNS TO KIT
SHRUGS AND EXITS. KIT WATCHES THEM UNTIL THEY ARE OFF STAGE,
THEN TURNS TO US, BEWILDERED.

THE LIGHTS FADE.

SCENE 3

DINING ROOM. THEY HAVE JUST FINISHED DINNER. LAURA IS SITTING ON THE SR SIDE OF THE TABLE. ROBERT IS SITTING ACROSS FROM HER SL. SCHUYLER SITS AT THE END OF THE TABLE DS, HIS BACK TO US. KIT IS SERVING COFFEE. THEY ARE IN THE MIDDLE OF A CONVERSATION.

KIT

DO YOU THINK THERE WILL BE WAR IN EUROPE?

ROBERT

MY DEAR, THERE IS WAR IN EUROPE.

LAURA

HUSH, ROBERT. (TO KIT) ARE YOU AFRAID OF THE WAR, KATHARINE?

KIT SITS.

KIT

OF COURSE, ISN'T EVERYONE?

LAURA

ARE YOU SCHUYLER?

SCHUYLER

YEAH, SURE.

ROBERT

HAVE YOU BEEN IN A WAR?

SCHUYLER

ME? NO, I WENT TO PRINCETON.

LAURA

ROBERT'S BEEN IN A WAR.

KIT

WHICH WAR?

LAURA

(IRONICALLY)

"THE GREAT WAR."

KIT

THE WAR OF 1914?

LAURA

(DELICIOUSLY)

YES. ROBERT HAD A GOAT. ISN'T THAT TRUE, ROBERT?

ROBERT

YES, IT WAS OUR COMPANY MASCOT.

LAURA

ISN'T THAT CUTE.(MOCK POMPOSITIVITY) THEY MARCHED IT AROUND WITH A ROLL OF DRUMS WHILE THEY WORE BUCKSKIN APRONS AND GAUNTLETS. MEN, SUCH SILLY CREATURES.

KIT

DID YOU SEE ACTION?

LAURA

ROBERT WAS WOUNDED ALL OVER HIMSELF. HE NEARLY DIED. IN FACT, HIS FAMILY WAS NOTIFIED OF HIS DEATH. ISN'T THAT RIGHT, ROBERT?

ROBERT

YES

KIT

THAT'S TERRIBLE.

LAURA

NOT SO TERRIBLE, YOU CAN SEE HE'S ALIVE. I TRIED TO DISSUADE MY CLASSMATES FROM SIGNING THE LOYALTY PLEDGE ON THE EVE OF THE GREAT WAR. ALL SOLDIERS ARE WAR CRIMINALS. ROBERT HAD TO PAY FOR IT; HE HAS SHELL SHOCK.

KIT

STILL?

LAURA

HE HAS BAD DREAMS. THAT'S WHY HE'S SLEEPING IN THE COTTAGE.

ROBERT

I KILLED PEOPLE. I AM ASHAMED OF HAVING KILLED PEOPLE, OF HAVING BEEN TURNED INTO A MURDERER BY MY PARTICIPATION IN WAR. AND YOU KNOW, EVEN WORSE, I'M ALWAYS IN DANGER OF IGNORING IT.

LAURA

OH HUSH. (TO KIT) HE'S SO MELODRAMATIC. (TO SCHUYLER)
ALL CONFLICT IS THE RESULT OF A MISUNDERSTANDING OF
MEANING. I'VE COME TO WORK ON A DICTIONARY.

SCHUYLER

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

LAURA

TOO MANY DEFINITIONS.

SCHUYLER

TOO MANY DEFINITIONS?

LAURA

YES, ONE WORD, ONE DEFINITION. NO AMBIGUITY.

KIT

HOW CAN THAT BE?

LAURA

LET'S TAKE THE WORD "WOMAN" FOR EXAMPLE. "WOMAN"
DERIVES FROM THE OLD ENGLISH "WIFMANN" MEANING
"FEMALE MAN"; A CAPRICIOUS TERM NOT MEANT TO DEFINE
BUT TO BE A THING PERCEIVED ALONG WITH OTHER DOMESTIC
ANIMALS SUCH AS A DOG, A CAT, A HORSE. TO SAY "MY WIFE"
IS

LAURA (CONT.)

EQUIVALENT TO SAYING "OH, THAT THING THERE, THAT'S MY
WIFE-THING."

ROBERT BEGINS CHUCKLING. LAURA LOOKS SHARPLY AT HIM.
ROBERT GETS UP, STILL CHUCKLING.

ROBERT

I'M SORRY. IT'S JUST THE LOOK ON YOUR FACES.

ROBERT EXITS CHUCKLING AS THE LIGHTS FADE.

SCENE 4

THERE IS THE SOUND OF SURF. THE LIGHTS RISE ON KIT LOOKING
OUT AT THE SEA THROUGH BINOCULARS. SHE STANDS THERE A LONG
TIME CAREFULLY SCANNING THE SEA. LAURA IS STANDING IN THE
SHADOWS WATCHING KIT. KIT BECOMES AWARE OF LAURA'S
PRESENCE. SLOWLY SHE LOWERS THE BINOCULARS. LAURA STEPS
OUT OF THE SHADOWS.

LAURA
(QUIETLY)

HAVE YOU SPOTTED ANY?

KIT

SCHUYLER TOLD YOU?

LAURA

DID YOU?

KIT

No.

KIT STARTS TO MOVE AWAY FROM HER. LAURA TOUCHES HER SHOULDER.

LAURA

DON'T BE ANGRY. I UNDERSTAND YOUR FEAR.

KIT

YOU DON'T SEEM TO BE AFRAID OF ANYTHING.

LAURA SITS AND LOOKS UP AT KIT.

LAURA

SIT WITH ME.

KIT LOOKS DOWN AT LAURA, REGARDING HER. FINALLY SHE SITS. THEY SIT QUIETLY LOOKING OUT AT THE SEA, THEN...

LAURA

MY FATHER'S NAME WAS NATHAN REICHENTHAL. HE CAME FROM GALICIA, THE POOREST PROVINCE IN POLAND. HE IMMIGRATED TO AMERICA AND WORKED AS A TAILOR IN A SWEATSHOP FOR 16 YEARS. HE MET HIS FIRST WIFE, LAURA LOBER IN THAT DREARY PLACE. THEY WORKED 16 HOURS A DAY, NOT COUNTING THE TWO HOUR WALK TO WORK TO START THE SHIFT AT 4 A.M. SHE DIED OF TUBERCULOSIS AND LEFT HIM WITH MY OLDER SISTER, ISABELLE. HE MET MY MOTHER, "SADIE," IN THAT SAME PLACE. IT WASN'T LONG AFTER THAT THEY HAD ME AND NAMED ME AFTER HIS FIRST WIFE. ISN'T THAT ODD? MY MOTHER "SADIE," IMAGINED THAT SHE SUFFERED FROM BAD EYESIGHT SO SHE WORE A STOCKING ROUND HER EYES WHENEVER POSSIBLE: AT HOME, A WHITE STOCKING; ABROAD, A BLACK STOCKING; AND OCCASIONALLY, TO DEPRESS CIRCUMSTANCES COMPLETELY, A GRAY SOCK OF MY FATHER'S FASTENED AT THE BACK OF HER HEAD WITH A SAFETY PIN. "DO NOT EXPECT MUCH FROM LIFE BECAUSE YOU'RE BOUND TO BE DISAPPOINTED," SHE'D SAY. ONE CHRISTMAS SHE PUT COAL IN MY STOCKING TO PROVE HER POINT. AND THEN THEY HAD "BOBBY" AND I BECAME THE CHILD UNDERFOOT. HE WAS A SQUALLING LITTLE BAG OF MUCUS. ONE DAY I LOCKED MY MOTHER AND HER SCREAMING FILTHY INFANT IN THE BATHROOM. I MOVED IN WITH MY OLDER SISTER ISABELLE AND CHANGED MY NAME TO LAURA RIDING. I WAS THE ONE CONSIDERED UNSTABLE AND

MY LITTLE BABY BROTHER "BOBBY", BRILLIANT. SO BRILLIANT HE DIED IN A MENTAL HOSPITAL. OH, I HAVE KNOWN FEAR, KATHARINE, FEAR OF MY OWN MIND.

KIT
FEAR OF YOUR OWN MIND?

LAURA
YES, AND I'VE CONQUERED IT.

KIT
(PENSIVE)
"AND I'VE CONQUERED IT." THEN YOU DO NOT FEAR?

LAURA
I FEAR BUT I DON'T LET IT MAKE ME COMPULSIVE.

KIT LAUGHS QUIETLY AT HERSELF AND LOOKS AT HER BINOCULARS. .

KIT
LIKE SCANNING THE SEA FOR GERMAN SUBMARINES WITH BINOCULARS?

LAURA
(QUIETLY)
YES.

LAURA LAYS HER HEAD ON KIT'S LAP AND LOOKS OUT AT US. KIT IS TAKEN ABACK BUT LETS HER DO IT.

LAURA
HOW DID YOU MEET SCHUYLER?

KIT LOOKS DOWN A LAURA WARILY. LAURA TURNS AND LOOKS AT KIT, HER HEAD STILL ON KIT'S LAP. KIT LOOKS OUT AT THE SEA.

KIT
HE TRIED TO CAMP ON OUR PROPERTY WITHOUT PERMISSION. I WAS INSPECTING THE ESTATE WITH THE GROUNDS KEEPER AND WE CAUGHT HIM. I ASKED HIM WHAT HE WAS DOING ON OUR PROPERTY. HE SAID HE WAS HUNTING FOR POETS. HE HAD CONVERTED A MODEL-T-FORD INTO A TRUCK AND HAD BEEN ON THE ROAD FOR MORE THAN A YEAR.

LAURA
DID HE FIND ANY?

KIT
NO. ONLY ME. AND I'M NOT A POET.

LAURA
WHAT ARE YOU?

KIT DOESN'T MOVE, THEN...

KIT

I'M SCHUYLER'S WIFE.

THE LIGHTS SLOWLY FADE.

SCENE 5

OFF STAGE THERE IS THE SOUND OF SCHUYLER CHOPPING WOOD. ROBERT IS IRONING. THIS GOES ON AWHILE. SCHUYLER ENTERS CARRYING AN ARM FULL OF WOOD. ROBERT CONTINUES IRONING DURING THE FOLLOWING CONVERSATION.

ROBERT

CHOPPING WOOD?

SCHUYLER

YEP.

ROBERT

RATHER WARM FOR A FIRE.

SCHUYLER

NOT THIS WINTER.

SCHUYLER EXITS OUT ANOTHER DOOR.

ROBERT

OH, CHOP NOW NOT THEN.

SCHUYLER ENTERS HE'S DEPOSITED HIS WOOD.

SCHUYLER

EXACTLY.

SCHUYLER EXITS. ROBERT CONTINUES IRONING. SCHUYLER ENTERS WITH AN ARMFUL OF WOOD. AGAIN HE EXITS WITH IT OUT ANOTHER DOOR.

ROBERT

I BORROWED YOUR IRON.

SCHUYLER REAPPEARS.

SCHUYLER

HMMM?

ROBERT

YOUR IRON.

SCHUYLER

OH. SURE.

SCHUYLER EXITS TO GET ANOTHER ARMFUL OF WOOD. ROBERT CONTINUES IRONING. SCHUYLER ENTERS WITH AN ARMFUL OF WOOD.

SCHUYLER

SHE DOESN'T DO IT FOR YOU, HUH?

ROBERT

NO.

SCHUYLER EXITS THEN RE-ENTERS. ROBERT HOLDS UP THE GARMENT HE HAS BEEN IRONING IN FRONT OF HIM. IT IS ONE OF LAURA'S DRESSES. SCHUYLER STOPS DEAD IN HIS TRACKS.

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 6

IN THE DARK...

LAURA

(SHOUTING IN EXCITEMENT)

WITCHES!

THE LIGHTS RISE IN THE KITCHEN. THEY ARE SITTING AT THE DINNING ROOM TABLE IN THE SAME POSITIONS AS SCENE 3. IT IS AFTER DINNER. THEY ARE HAVING COFFEE AND TEA BISCUITS.

LAURA

I'VE FOUND A PROJECT FOR OUR DEAR KATHARINE. SHE'S GOING TO STUDY WITCHES.

SCHUYLER

WHY WITCHES?

LAURA

BECAUSE THE WITCH IS THE GREAT MOTHER DESECRATED. BEFORE ALL THOSE DICK SWINGING GREEKS CAME ALONG THE MINOAN CULTURE WAS ALREADY URBAN IN 3000 BC. ISN'T THAT RIGHT, ROBERT?

ROBERT

YES.

LAURA

THE MINOAN WOMAN DID NOT PUT UP WITH ANY ORIENTAL SECLUSION. SHE MOVED AT WILL AMONG MEN. SHE ATTENDED THE GAMES, TOOK THE BEST SEAT IN THE THEATER. CRETAN SOCIETY MADE ITS GODS IN HER IMAGE. ISN'T THAT RIGHT ROBERT?

ROBERT

YES.

LAURA

HESIOD, APOLLODORUS, THUCYDIES, SEMONIDES, LUCIAN, ARISTOPHANES THEY ALL DENOUNCED WOMEN. EVEN IN THE AGE OF HOMER, THE DARK AGES, WHEN WRITING WAS LOST AND PEOPLE ATE WHOLE PIGS FOR LUNCH AND ARMIES WERE LITTLE MORE THAN PIRATES, WOMEN HAD MORE FREEDOM THAN IN THE GOLDEN AGE OF PERICLES AND HIS PARTHENON. YES, OUR DEAR KATHARINE IS GOING TO FIND IN THE STUDY OF WITCHES HER OWN BELITTLED, TORTURED AND MARTYRED SELF.

SCHUYLER

THIS SHOULD BE INTERESTING, I'VE NEVER KNOW KIT TO STUDY ANYTHING.

LAURA

I WANT US ALL TO MAKE A CHANGE RIGHT NOW, A VERY IMPORTANT CHANGE. FROM NOW ON YOU ARE TO CEASE CALLING KATHARINE "KIT." SHE WILL BE ADDRESSED AS KATHARINE.

SCHUYLER SNICKERS.

LAURA

I'M QUITE SERIOUS. KATHARINE IS NOT YOUR WIFE. SHE NEVER HAS BEEN. SHE IS KATHARINE TOWNSEND. ISN'T THAT RIGHT, KATHARINE?

KIT

IT WAS MY MAIDEN NAME.

LAURA

"MAIDEN NAME," LISTEN TO THAT. "MAIDEN," HOW POSITIVELY MEDIEVAL! WHAT DO YOU THINK, ROBERT?

ROBERT

KATHARINE TOWNSEND IT IS.

LAURA

AND YOU SCHUYLER?

SCHUYLER

SHE IS MY WIFE. I HAVE THE PAPERS TO PROVE IT.

LAURA

LIKE SOME BREEDING DOG, SOME BITCH, SOME HEIFER. YOU MAY HAVE PAPERS ON ANIMALS. KATHARINE TOWNSEND IS A HUMAN BEING. SHE IS MORE THAN THAT, SHE IS A WOMAN. AND SHE WILL BE TREATED AS SUCH AS LONG AS I AM HERE.

SCHUYLER

I'M NOT SURE IF I LIKE THAT.

LAURA

I'M SURE BUT YOU HAVE NOTHING TO SAY ABOUT IT. DOES HE, KATHARINE?

KIT

WELL, HE IS MY HUSBAND.

LAURA

HE IS NOT. HE IS YOUR FRIEND NOT YOUR OWNER. PERHAPS AT TIMES HE PROVIDES FOR YOU BUT...

KIT BLURTS OUT...

KIT

WELL, ACTUALLY I PROVIDE FOR HIM.

SCHUYLER GIVES HER A SHARP LOOK. KIT LOOKS DOWN.

LAURA

YOU WHAT?

KIT

NOTHING. I'M SORRY.

LAURA

YOU BOUGHT THIS FARM. THIS FARM IS YOURS.

KIT

NO, IT'S OURS.

LAURA

LET ME GUESS. YOU BOUGHT THIS FARM WITH THE MONEY FROM YOUR DOWRY.

SCHUYLER LEAVES THE TABLE IN A HUFF. LAURA BREAKS OUT IN LAUGHTER.

LAURA

OH, SCHUYLER DON'T BE A SPOIL SPORT.

KIT IS STUCK IN HER CHAIR IN A PANIC. SHE LOOKS OVER AT ROBERT WHO CONTINUES MUNCHING HIS TEA BISCUIT CALMLY. LAURA SMILES ADORINGLY AT KIT.

THE LIGHTS FADE.

SCENE 7

MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT. NIGHT SOUNDS, CRICKETS, ETC. SCHUYLER IS SITTING ON THE FRONT PORCH STEPS. HE IS DRINKING WHISKY FROM A BOTTLE. HE IS DRUNK. AFTER A WHILE KIT APPEARS AT THE DOOR. SHE WATCHES HIM IN SILENCE. FINALLY SHE SPEAKS.

KIT

SCHUYLER?

SCHUYLER

SHHHH. LISTEN.

KIT COMES OUT ON THE PORCH AND STANDS BEHIND HIM. THERE IS A HOOT OF AN OWL.

SCHUYLER

NOT THAT. WAIT.

SILENCE. THEN THERE IS THE SOUND OF A MUFFLED CRY.

SCHUYLER

IT'S HIM.

KIT

SCHUYLER, IT'S THREE IN THE MORNING.

A MUFFLED CRY ISSUES FROM THE COTTAGE. SCHUYLER CROSSES IN THE DIRECTION OF THE COTTAGE.

SCHUYLER

LISTEN TO THAT. THAT'S THE SOUND OF THE "THE GREAT WAR." (CAREFULLY PRONOUNCING THE WORDS) "SHELL SHOCK." "SHELL SHOCK." HIM, OVER THERE. (HE LOOKS AT THE AREA WHERE THE COTTAGE IS)

SCHUYLER (CONT.)

HE'S FAMOUS YOU KNOW. HE'S A VERY FAMOUS POET. "ROBERT GRAVES." MY GOLLY. BUT HER, (HE LOOKS AT THE HOUSE) SHE'S THE ONE WITH THE TALENT. I'M ONE OF THE FEW WHO RECOGNIZED IT, IN PRINT, THAT IS, IN TIME MAGAZINE. SHE THINKS I'M A STAFFER THERE. SHE THINKS I'M AN EDITOR WITH TIME MAGAZINE. YOU DIDN'T TELL HER I'M NOT, DID YOU? YOU DIDN'T TELL HER THAT IT'S A ONE TIME SHOT, DID YOU? JESUS CHRIST SHE CAME ALL THE WAY OVER HERE BECAUSE OF MY REVIEW. SHE'S SO INCREDIBLE. RIDING AND

RILKE, THE ONLY TWO TRUE POETS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.

KIT

THAT'S GOING A BIT FAR, DON'T YOU THINK?

SCHUYLER

NO, I DON'T THINK!

KIT

SHHHHHH.

SCHUYLER

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT IT? YOU HORSY BITCH! THAT'S WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT, HORSES.

KIT

(WHISPERING FRANTICALLY)

QUIET DOWN. LET THESE DEVILS SLEEP.

SCHUYLER PUTS HIS HEAD IN HIS HANDS. KIT STARTS TO LEAVE. SCHUYLER WHISPERS TO HER.

SCHUYLER

DON'T GO. YOU'RE ALWAYS SLAMMING A DOOR. YOU THINK YOU CAN ALWAYS HANG UP WHEN YOU DON'T LIKE SOMETHING. IT COMES WITH PRIVILEGE. (SHE STARTS TO LEAVE.) I'M SORRY, I'M SORRY, PLEASE DON'T GO. SIT WITH ME. PLEASE.

KIT SITS NEXT TO HIM.

SCHUYLER

I'VE NEVER FINISHED ANYTHING. I'VE TRIED SO MUCH AND I'VE NEVER FINISHED ANYTHING. I DIDN'T EVEN FINISH THE REVIEW OF RIDING'S BOOK. TOMMY FINISHED IT, TOMMY FINISHED IT.

HE BEGINS CRYING. KIT TAKES HIM IN HER ARMS.

KIT

THEN FINISH SOMETHING. FINISH YOUR BOOK.

SCHUYLER

MY BOOK...

KIT

YOU COULD FINISH IT NOW.

SCHUYLER

IT'S NOT WORTH IT. I'VE LET IT GO TOO LONG. I'VE PICKED AT IT. JUST LIKE THE SOYBEANS. THE SOYBEANS. WHO WOULD PLANT

SOYBEANS? AND WHO'D LET THEIR APPLES FREEZE? AND THEIR WALNUTS ROT? ME. YEAH.

KIT

STOP IT. STOP IT. (A CRY FROM THE COTTAGE.) HOW LONG ARE THEY GOING TO STAY?

SCHUYLER

I DON'T KNOW.

KIT

IF I THOUGHT THEY WERE GOING TO STAY FOREVER I'D DIE.

SCHUYLER

THEY HAVE NOWHERE ELSE TO GO.

AS THE LIGHTS BEGIN TO FADE WE HEAR MORE CRIES FROM THE COTTAGE, CRIES AND MURMURING.

SCENE 8

LAURA AND SCHUYLER ARE STANDING OPPOSITE EACH OTHER. LAURA IS CLUTCHING TO HER BREAST THE "TIME" MAGAZINE THAT HAS SCHUYLER'S REVIEW. LAURA IS IN THE MIDDLE OF A CONVERSATION.

LAURA

I PASSED IT ALL AROUND THE TABLE AND MADE EVERYONE READ IT. DOROTHY SAID, "PERHAPS THE MAN'S IN LOVE WITH YOU." I TOLD HER THAT SUCH A VULGAR THOUGHT DIDN'T DESERVE A RESPONSE. BUT SCHUYLER YOU MUST UNDERSTAND WHAT YOUR REVIEW

LAURA (CONT.)

MEANS TO ME. YES, IT IS FLATTERING TO BE CHOSEN TO SHARE THE TWENTIETH CENTURY WITH RILKE, BUT IT IS MUCH MORE SATISFYING, THRILLING TO HEAR MORALITY BEING MENTIONED IN THE SAME BREATH WITH COMMUNICATION. MORALITY, SCHUYLER, A MORAL USE OF LANGUAGE. NO MORE SLIPPING AND SLIDING AND LYING WITH THE USE OF WORDS. WORDS THAT EXPOSE LIES AND LIARS. YOU MUST KNOW HOW IMPORTANT THAT IS TO ME AND HOW FEW PEOPLE UNDERSTAND IT. THAT'S WHY I TOLD ROBERT THAT WE MUST LEAVE EUROPE AND COME VISIT THE MAN WHO WROTE THIS REVIEW. SCHUYLER IT IS 14 YEARS SINCE I LEFT AMERICA.

SCHUYLER

REALLY?

LAURA

YES. I FEEL AT LAST THAT TIME MAGAZINE WILL PROVIDE ME WITH THE SCOPE I NEED TO STOP THIS IMPENDING WAR. I WROTE CHAMBERLAIN BUT HE DIDN'T ANSWER ME. BUT WITH

YOUR CONNECTION AS POETRY EDITOR OF TIME HE WILL HAVE TO ANSWER ME.

SCHUYLER

WELL, ACTUALLY, THERE IS NO POETRY EDITOR WITH TIME.

LAURA

BUT YOU ARE AN EDITOR, AREN'T YOU?

SCHUYLER

OH, YES. BUT TIME IS MORE OF A CURRENT EVENTS MAGAZINE.

LAURA

OH, I SEE, YOU'RE BEING HUMBLE.

SCHUYLER

No.

LAURA RISES.

LAURA

YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW HARD I'VE BEEN WORKING FOR WORLD PEACE. I FOUNDED A GROUP THAT WOULD CREATE A MODEL FOR A NEW KIND OF SOCIETY. I

LAURA (CONT.)

CALLED IT THE COVENANT OF LITERAL MORALITY. IT CONSISTED OF THOSE "INSIDE" INDIVIDUALS, MALE OR FEMALE, WHO HAD ACHIEVED COMPLETE AND PERFECT FRANKNESS WITH ONE ANOTHER. THE GROUP WOULD SHARE ALL OF THE AMENITIES OF LIFE AND OVERSEE THEIR EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION. IT WOULD BE COMPOSED OF WOMEN OF GRACE WITH NO ULTERIOR MOTIVES; THEN MEN OF POWER WHO WOULD ALSO BE MEN OF GOOD WILL. THEY WOULD BE EXPECTED TO HAND OVER ALL THEIR POSSESSIONS TO BEGIN THE PROCESS OF REDISTRIBUTION. IT WOULD BE A WOMAN-CENTERED SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT. BUT IT COULDN'T GROW IN THE EXHAUSTED SOIL OF EUROPE BUT WITH YOUR CONNECTION WITH TIME MAGAZINE IT CAN BE ESTABLISHED IN AMERICA. IT WAS NO ACCIDENT THAT I CAME BACK TO AMERICA AND IT IS NO ACCIDENT THAT I AM LIVING IN YOUR HOUSE. NOW WE MUST SET TO WORK TO GET MY NAME TO THE AMERICAN PUBLIC.

SCHUYLER SMILES THICKLY. THE LIGHTS FADE.

SCENE 9

FRONT PORCH. AFTERNOON. IT IS HOT AND MUGGY. ROBERT IS SITTING. SOUND OF INSECTS. HE SITS THERE A WHILE LOOKING OUT. THEN KIT COMES OUT OF THE HOUSE.

KIT

IS IT LIKE THIS IN SPAIN?

ROBERT

YES, IT CAN GET QUITE MUGGY.

SHE HANDS HIM A FAN.

ROBERT

THANK YOU.

KIT

WOULD YOU LIKE SOME LEMONADE?

ROBERT

LEMONADE?

KIT

IT'S LEMON JUICE AND WATER WITH A LITTLE SUGAR. IT'S GOOD ON HOT DAYS LIKE THIS.

ROBERT

YES, THANK YOU.

KIT EXITS INTO THE HOUSE. ROBERT FANS HIMSELF. AFTER A WHILE KIT COMES OUT WITH TWO GLASSES OF LEMONADE. SHE GIVES ONE TO ROBERT. HE SIPS IT.

ROBERT

OH, YES. IT'S VERY GOOD.

THEY SIT IN SILENCE AND FAN THEMSELVES.

KIT

IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S GOING TO STORM. (PAUSE) MR. GRAVES...

ROBERT

ROBERT, PLEASE.

KIT

THE WAR...(PAUSE) THE ONE YOU WERE IN...

ROBERT

THE GREAT WAR.

KIT

...YES. I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT.

ROBERT

WHAT IS IT YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND?

KIT

THE TRENCHES.

ROBERT

YES?

KIT

WHY WERE THERE TRENCHES?

ROBERT

THERE'S A SLIGHTLY AMUSING REASON WHY WE GOT TRENCHES. THE GERMANS TRIED TO TAKE PARIS AND THEY ALMOST SUCCEEDED, BUT IN THE END THEY FELL SHORT AND THEY HAD TO RETREAT. AFTER RETREATING FOR FIVE DAYS, THE GERMAN TROOPS WERE TOO EXHAUSTED TO MARCH ANY FURTHER, SO THEY DUG IN ALONG THE RIVER AISNE. THE FRENCH, WHO WERE CHASING THEM, TEMPORARILY RAN OUT OF ARTILLERY

ROBERT (CONT.)

ROUNDS, SO THEY TOO DUG IN. AND SO THAT'S THE WAY IT BEGAN: AN ARMY TOO TIRED TO RETREAT ANY LONGER AGAINST AN ARMY THAT HAD RUN OUT OF AMMO. THE TRENCHES SIMPLY COLLECTED, ONE AFTER ANOTHER. AFTER A FEW MONTHS THE TRENCHES HAD SPREAD 500 MILES FROM THE NORTH SEA TO THE SWISS FRONTIER. FOR THE NEXT THREE YEARS NEITHER SIDE ADVANCED MORE THAN A FEW MILES ALONG THIS LINE. IT BECAME KNOWN AS THE WESTERN FRONT.

KIT

WHAT WAS IT LIKE?

ROBERT

MUDDY, CRAMPED, FILTHY. YOU CAN'T WASH FOR THE NEAREST WATER IS A MILE AWAY. THERE IS NO ROOM AND IF YOU WALK UPRIGHT IN MANY OF THE TRENCHES YOU RUN GRAVE RISKS. YOU SLEEP HUDDLED TOGETHER UNABLE TO STRETCH. LICE, RATS, TRENCH FOOT, TRENCH MOUTH. AND OF COURSE DEAD BODIES EVERYWHERE. MY GOD, WHAT AM I SAYING? I'M VERY SORRY.

KIT

NO, I'M QUITE INTERESTED.

ROBERT

I ENJOYED THE TRENCHES IN A WAY, I MUST CONFESS: I LIKED THE FEELING OF REALLY BEING FRIGHTENED AND IF HAPPINESS CONSISTS IN BEING MISERABLE IN A GOOD CAUSE, WHY THEN I WAS DOUBLY HAPPY.

KIT

BUT PEOPLE WERE SHOOTING AT YOU. WHAT WAS THAT LIKE?

ROBERT

PECULIAR. THE SENSATION OF BEING UNDER FIRE IS RATHER LIKE SPENDING A SLEEPY EVENING AT THE CINEMA AND THEN SUDDENLY FINDING YOURSELF THROWN ON THE SCREEN IN THE MIDDLE OF SCALP-HUNTING SIOUX AND RUNAWAY MOTOR CARS. I THINK WHAT I HATED MOST WERE THE TRENCH RATS.

KIT

TRENCH RATS?

ROBERT

WE DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO BURY THE DEAD SO WE DUG HOLES AND BURIED THEM WHERE THEY FELL. WHEN IT CAME TIME TO REPAIR THE TRENCHES OR DIG NEW ONES WE FOUND THOSE CORPSES JUST BELOW THE SURFACE. PUTREFIED, DECAYED, AS IF THE SINS OF OUR CARELESSNESS HAD COME TO HAUNT US DOUBLE-SCORE. AND OF COURSE, THESE CORPSES ATTRACTED RATS. A PAIR OF RATS CAN SPAWN 880 YELPS A YEAR. THE TRENCHES WERE SWARMING WITH THEM. THEY GREW VERY LARGE. AND VERY BOLD. ON MORE THAN ONE NIGHT I FELT THEM TUGGING AT MY POCKETS. THEY'D BURROW RIGHT INTO A DEAD MAN, USUALLY THROUGH HIS EYE, AND THEN LIVE THERE INSIDE OF HIM UNTIL THEY ATE THEIR WAY OUT. (ROBERT RISES AND CROSSES DS INTO THE YARD.) ONE DAY I SAW SOME RATS RUNNING FROM UNDER A DEAD MAN'S GREATCOAT, ENORMOUS RATS, FAT WITH HUMAN FLESH. HIS HELMET HAD ROLLED OFF. HE HAD THIS GRIMACE. SEE, THE SKULL WAS BARE. IT WAS STRIPPED. THE EYES WERE EATEN OUT. I BENT DOWN TO TAKE A CLOSER LOOK AT HIS FACE. IT WAS JUST THAT WAY, YOU COULDN'T TAKE YOUR EYES OFF SUCH THINGS. AND OUT OF HIS MOUTH LEAPT A RAT. I DIDN'T KNOW HOW REALLY TERRIFIED I WAS. I HAD TO STAY ON THE FRONT, YOU SEE, BECAUSE I KNEW THAT ONCE I WAS AWAY FROM THE WAR THE WORLD WOULD COLLAPSE ON ME LIKE AN INJURY WAITING FOR INFECTION. SO I TRIED TO STAY IN THE WAR AS LONG AS I COULD AND I WOULD HAVE IF THE DOCTOR WHO HAD SAVED MY LIFE THAT PREVIOUS JUNE HADN'T CAUGHT ME IN THE INFIRMARY WITH BRONCHITIS. HE TOLD ME IF HE FOUND ME IN FRANCE AGAIN HE WOULD HAVE ME COURT-MARTIALLED. ISN'T THAT FUNNY. MEN WERE DYING TO GET OUT WHILE I WAS DYING TO STAY IN.

KIT CAN'T TAKE HER EYES OFF HIM. HE LAUGHS. THE LAUGHTER TURNS TO TEARS. THE LIGHTS FADE.

SCENE 10

DINNER. THEY ARE SITTING AT THE TABLE THE WAY THE WERE IN SCENE 3. LAURA IS LAUGHING. THEY ARE IN THE MIDDLE OF A CONVERSATION. ROBERT IS IN A HUFF. HE IS PACING D.S.

LAURA

SO ROBERT FINALLY GOT AROUND TO TELLING YOU ABOUT "THE GREAT WAR." YOU KNOW HE WAS A HOMOSEXUAL.

ROBERT

I WAS NEVER A HOMOSEXUAL.

LAURA

HE WAS A HOMO. I HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO TOLERANCE FOR HOMOS. IN PUBLIC SCHOOL HE WAS IN LOVE WITH A BOY. AND THEN SASSOON DURING THE WAR. HE THOUGHT SEX WITH WOMEN WAS DISGUSTING. I THINK THAT SETS HIM OUT AS QUEER IN MY BOOK.

ROBERT

I NEVER HAD SEX WITH A MAN IN MY LIFE.

LAURA

ROBERT IS NOT QUITE WELL, YOU KNOW.

ROBERT

DO YOU WANT TO KNOW WHY LAURA USES A CANE?

KIT

NOT REALLY.

ROBERT

GEOFFREY PHIBBS.

LAURA RISES.

LAURA

YOU KNOW YOU'RE NOT TO MENTION HIS NAME!

LAURA CROSSES SR. ROBERT CROSSES TO THE COUNTER AND POURS WHISKY IN HIS COFFEE CUP.

ROBERT

GEOFFREY PHIBBS WAS BASICALLY STOLEN FROM HIS WIFE AND BROUGHT INTO OUR LITTLE CIRCLE, MY WIFE NANCY AND LAURA AND NOW GEOFFREY PHIBBS. TWO NIGHTS A WEEK I WAS TO STAY WITH NANCY AND LITTLE GEOFFREY WAS TO SLEEP WITH LAURA. THE ONLY TROUBLE WAS THAT GEOFFREY WAS NOT ATTRACTED TO LAURA. HE WAS QUITE UNABLE TO MAKE LOVE TO HER WHEN HE WAS CALLED ON TO DO SO. AND HE WAS CALLED ON. HE COULDN'T DO IT EVEN WHEN

ROBERT (CONT.)

SHE POINTED TO A CLOCK ONE EVENING AND TOLD HIM SHE COULD STOP IT BY WILL-POWER.

LAURA TURNS ON HIM.

Laura

THAT IS NOT TRUE! GEOFFREY BEGGED ME ON EASTER SUNDAY TO RUN AWAY WITH HIM TO FRANCE AND FOR THE GOOD OF THE HOLY CIRCLE, I DECLINED.

Robert

OH REALLY, THAT'S NOT WHAT I HEARD, MY DEAR. TOM MACGREEVY CONFIDED IN ME THAT "GEOFFREY SAID MY WIFE AND MYSELF WERE VICTIMS OF OUR OWN EXTRAORDINARY SET OF VALUES" AND THAT LAURA RIDING HAD TURNED OUT TO BE A VIRAGO.

Schuyler

WHAT'S A VIRAGO?

Robert

WHAT IS A VIRAGO, LAURA?

Laura

NEVER MIND.

ROBERT CROSSES TO LAURA, GOADING HER.

Robert

A VIRAGO, MY DEAR EDITOR, IS FROM THE LATIN, "VIRAGO," WHICH MEANS "MAN." ISN'T THAT HILARIOUS? IN ENGLISH IT MEANS "A WOMAN REGARDED AS NOISY, SCOLDING, OR DOMINEERING." BUT HE DIDN'T TAKE YOU TO PARIS. HE JOINED THE WIFE HE HAD ABANDONED INSTEAD.

Laura

IT WAS YOU WHO DROVE HIM AWAY. YOU, WITH YOUR WHINING ABOUT HOW CONFUSED AND UNHAPPY IT MADE YOU TO SEE ME WITH HIM.

Kit

REALLY, IT'S NONE OF OUR BUSINESS. WE SHOULDN'T BE HEARING THIS.

Laura

HUSH, KATHARINE AND LISTEN AND YOU SHALL HEAR HOW RIGHT I AM! LISTEN TO WHAT THIS MISTER HIGH

Laura (CONT.)

AND MIGHTY POET DID. I ORDERED HIM TO FETCH GEOFFREY BACK. AND HE DID, DIDN'T YOU ROBERT? HE DID IT WITH ZEST, OUR OLD SOLDIER BOY. HE GRABBED A NIGHT TRAIN, WENT UP NORTH AND DRAGGED HIM OUT OF HIS BED ON THREAT OF HIS LIFE AND BROUGHT HIM TO ME. WE TALKED NEARLY ALL NIGHT TO HELP HIM COME TO A CLEAR DECISION. EVEN NANCY TRIED TO PERSUADE HIM.

SCHUYLER

YOU MEAN YOUR WIFE WAS...

ROBERT

(WITH MOCK DRAMATICS)

NANCY, YES, OH YES SHE WAS THERE. SHE HAD TO BE THERE. SHE WAS THE RUMP OF THE FOUR, WELL ACTUALLY GEOFFREY WAS THE RUMP. (ROBERT SNICKERS.) BUT HE DIDN'T WANT ANY PART OF IT. WE FINALLY GAVE UP. WENT TO BED FOR AN HOUR. BY EIGHT O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING WE WERE AT IT AGAIN. BY NINE HE STILL DIDN'T WANT LAURA BUT HE WOULD TAKE NANCY INSTEAD. "HE WOULD GO WITH HER IMMEDIATELY." HE JUST WANTED OUT OF THE FLAT, THE POOR DOG. HE GRABBED NANCY BY THE HAND AND WENT TO THE DOOR. BUT LAURA STOPPED HIM BY DRINKING LYSOL.

KIT

WHAT?

ROBERT

BUT IT DIDN'T HAVE ANY EFFECT ON HER. I TELL YOU, THE WOMAN IS SUPERNATURAL. AND THEN SHE LEFT THE ROOM, BY THE WINDOW OF COURSE.

LAURA

THAT DEVIL GEOFFREY WANTED SUICIDE AND I GAVE HIM SUICIDE.

SCHUYLER

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

LAURA

I JUMPED OUT OF THE WINDOW.

ROBERT

SHE JUMPED OUT OF THE WINDOW. THREE STORIES UP. SHE SWUNG HER LEGS OVER THE SILL AND SAID, "GOODBYE, CHAPS," AND JUMPED.

KIT

OH, MY GOD!

ROBERT

WE HEARD HER BODY SLAP ON THE CONCRETE. I RAN DOWN THE STAIRS AND JUMPED OUT OF THE FIRST WINDOW I CAME TO. THAT WAS TWO STORIES UP. NANCY CALLED AN AMBULANCE.

LAURA

AND THAT DEVIL GEOFFREY LEFT.

ROBERT

LAURA HAD A BENT SPINAL CORD, FOUR CRUSHED LUMBAR VERTEBRAE AND A BROKEN PELVIS. AND THAT IS WHY SHE USES A CANE!

LAURA CRIES OUT HYSTERICALLY. SHE GRABS HER CANE AND HOBBLER OUT.

LAURA

SHUT UP! SHUT UP! SHUT UP!

ROBERT LAUGHS. THE LIGHTS FADE.

SCENE 11

IN THE MIDST OF A GREAT THUNDER AND LIGHTNING STORM. LAURA IS RUNNING AROUND HER BEDROOM IN TERROR IN THE STROBES OF LIGHTENING. SHE IS MOANING. THIS GOES ON FOR A WHILE. ROBERT STEPS OUT OF THE SHADOWS. LAURA SCREAMS. ROBERT GRABS HER.

ROBERT

BE STILL. BE STILL.

SHE TURNS AROUND IN HIS ARMS TO FACE HIM.

LAURA

I'M SO AFRAID.

HE HOLDS HER CLOSE TO HIM.

ROBERT

I KNOW.

SHE BEGINS SWINGING AT HIM IN HIS ARMS.

LAURA

LEAVE ME ALONE!

ROBERT PULLS HER INTO HIS ARMS.

ROBERT

GOODNIGHT. GO TO SLEEP. BE STILL AS DEATH.

SHE SLOWLY GOES LIMP. THE LIGHTS FADE.

SCENE 12

IN THE DARK THERE IS THE SOUND OF MOSQUITOES. ROBERT IS SPEAKING IN THE DARK. HE CONTINUES SPEAKING AS THE LIGHTS RISE ON HIM. HE IS SITTING ON A CHAIR IN THE MIDDLE OF THE

YARD. MOSQUITOES ARE BITING HIM. HE IS READING FROM DANTE'S "INFERNO." IT IS MORNING.

ROBERT

“PER ME SI VA NE LA CITTÀ DOLENTE,
 PER ME SI VA NE L'ETTERNO DOLORE,
 PER ME SI VA TRA LA PERDUTA GENTE.
 GIUSTIZIA MOSSE IL MIO ALTO FATTORE:
 FECEMI LA DIVINA PODESTATE,
 LA SOMMA SAPIENZA E 'L PRIMO AMORE.”

ROBERT CONTINUES IN ITALIAN BUT SILENTLY AS THE LIGHTS RISE ON LAURA. SHE IS ON HER HANDS AND KNEES SCRUBBING THE DINING ROOM FLOOR. KIT COMES DOWN THE STAIRS. KIT IS SOMEWHAT TAKEN ABACK SEEING LAURA SCRUBBING THE FLOOR.

KIT

I OVERSLEPT. (SHE GAZES DOWN AT LAURA, THEN...) REALLY, YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THAT.

LAURA

I DO, ACTUALLY, KATHARINE. COFFEE'S ON THE STOVE.

KIT CROSSES TO THE KITCHEN. SHE POURS HERSELF A CUP OF COFFEE. SHE NOTICES ROBERT OUT IN THE YARD. SHE WATCHES HIM, THEN CROSSES BACK INTO THE DINING ROOM.

KIT

WHAT IS HE DOING OUT THERE?

LAURA

HE'S READING FROM DANTE'S "INFERNO."

KIT

IT'S A VERY BAD TIME OF THE YEAR TO BE OUT THERE, THE MOSQUITOES ARE TERRIBLE.

LAURA

GOOD.

KIT

WHY IS HE DOING THAT?

LAURA

HE'S PAYING PENANCE.

KIT

WHATEVER FOR?

LAURA

FOR BEING WICKED.

KIT

IS THAT WHY YOU ARE SCRUBBING MY FLOOR?

LAURA STOPS, SITS BACK AND OBSERVES KIT.

LAURA

WHY NO, KATHARINE, I AM SCRUBBING "YOUR" FLOOR
BECAUSE I NOTICED THAT IT IS IN GREAT NEED OF A GOOD
SCRUBBING. IF YOU WISH ME TO STOP I WILL.

KIT

YOU'RE OUR GUEST.

LAURA

IS THAT ALL I AM?

KIT

OF COURSE NOT. I AM VERY HONORED TO HAVE YOU HERE.

LAURA

HONORED? WHY SHOULD YOU BE HONORED? DO YOU LOVE ME,
KATHARINE?

KIT

(NOW COMPLETELY BEFUDDLED)

I'M NOT SURE IF IT IS APPROPRIATE.

LAURA

APPROPRIATE? WHAT A DEVILISH WORD.

SHE GOES BACK TO HER SCRUBBING. KIT TURNS AND CROSSES TO
THE STAIRS AS SHE DOES THE LIGHTS FADE ON HER AND LAURA BUT
REMAIN UP ON ROBERT.

ROBERT

"AT ONCE I UNDERSTOOD AND WAS CERTAIN, THAT THIS WAS
THE SECT OF THE CAITIFFS DISPLEASING UNTO GOD, AND UNTO
HIS ENEMIES. THESE WRETCHES, WHO NEVER WERE ALIVE,
WERE NAKED, AND MUCH STUNG BY GAD-FLIES AND BY WASPS
THAT WERE THERE. THESE STREAKED THEIR FACES WITH
BLOOD, WHICH, MINGLED WITH TEARS, WAS HARVESTED AT
THEIR FEET BY LOATHSOME WORMS."

THE LIGHTS FADE.

SCENE 13

NIGHT. CRICKETS. SCHUYLER IS SITTING ON THE FRONT PORCH. HE
IS DRINKING WHISKY FROM A BOTTLE. EVERY ONCE IN AWHILE WE
HEAR ROBERT'S MOANS COMING FROM THE COTTAGE. LAURA APPEARS
IN THE DOORWAY. SHE IS STILL AND SILENT.

LAURA
THEY'VE GOTTEN WORSE SINCE WE LEFT SPAIN.

SCHUYLER STARTS.

LAURA
IT'S THE IMPENDING WAR.

SCHUYLER
IT FRIGHTENS HIM?

LAURA
ON THE CONTRARY, IT MAKES HIM HUNGRY. THAT'S HIS SOUL
IN THERE SCREAMING TO JOIN THE FRAY.

SCHUYLER
YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS.

LAURA
ARE YOU SAYING I'M A LIAR?

SCHUYLER
I DIDN'T MEAN IT THAT WAY.

LAURA
I ALWAYS MEAN WHAT I SAY, SCHUYLER. DO YOU?

SCHUYLER
I TRY.

SHE CROSSES TO HIM. SHE EXTENDS HER HAND TOWARD THE WHISKY BOTTLE. SCHUYLER ISN'T SURE WHAT SHE'S DOING, THEN REALIZES THAT SHE WANTS A DRINK FROM THE BOTTLE. HE HANDS THE BOTTLE TO HER. SHE TAKES A DRINK AND HANDS IT BACK TO HIM.

LAURA
KATHARINE SAYS YOU WERE A POET, THAT YOU GAVE IT UP.

SCHUYLER
SHE TOLD YOU THAT?

LAURA
WHY SHOULDN'T SHE, SHE LOVES YOU.

SCHUYLER TAKES A LONG DRAW ON THE BOTTLE AND LOOKS OUT INTO THE NIGHT.

SCHUYLER
I RENOUNCED IT. PERHAPS I FAILED AT IT.

LAURA

PERHAPS IT FAILED YOU.

SHE LOOKS AT THE BOTTLE. HE HANDS IT TO HER. SHE DRINKS.

SCHUYLER

FAILED ME?

LAURA SITS NEXT TO HIM.

LAURA

PERHAPS YOU HAVE NOT YET FOUND AN ENDEAVOR PROPER TO YOU.

SCHUYLER

I'M A FARMER. I'M NOT A BAD FARMER ONLY AN UNLUCKY ONE.

SHE HOLDS HER HANDS OUT TO HIM. HE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT SHE WANTS.

LAURA

YOUR HANDS.

SCHUYLER HOLDS HIS HANDS OUT. SHE TAKES THEM AND EXAMINES THEM IN THE MOONLIGHT.

LAURA

THEY'RE HONEST. (SHE RAISES HER EYES TO HIS) ARE YOU?

SCHUYLER DRAWS HIS HANDS FROM HERS AND LOOKS OUT INTO THE NIGHT.

SCHUYLER

YOU KNOW?

LAURA

YES.

SCHUYLER

I'M SORRY.

LAURA

WHY ARE YOU SORRY?

SCHUYLER

WHO TOLD YOU? KIT?

LAURA

DOES IT MATTER?

SCHUYLER

YES.

LAURA

IT MATTERS WHO TOLD THE TRUTH, EVEN IF YOU DIDN'T?

SCHUYLER

WAS IT KIT?

LAURA

NO, SCHUYLER, IT WASN'T KATHARINE. ROBERT FOUND OUT.
HE CALLED TIME.

SCHUYLER

HE WAS CHECKING UP ON ME?

LAURA STROKES SCHUYLER'S HAIR.

LAURA

YOU'RE VERY CONFUSED. THERE IS SO MUCH TO YOU, YET YOU
ACT FROM YOUR WEAKEST SIDE. WHY?

SCHUYLER

WAS HE CHECKING UP ON ME?

LAURA

NO, SCHUYLER. THEY WANTED TO INTERVIEW HIM ABOUT THE
WAR IN SPAIN. HE TOLD THEM HE WAS STAYING WITH YOU.
THEY DIDN'T KNOW WHO YOU WERE.

SCHUYLER

IT WAS TOMMY GOT ME THE JOB. HE'S AN OLD CLASSMATE OF
MINE. HE'S THE EDITOR. HE WAS TRYING TO HELP ME.

LAURA

BUT IT WAS YOU WHO CHOSE ME?

SCHUYLER TURNS TO HER.

SCHUYLER

OH, YES, IT WAS, LAURA, IT WAS ME WHO CHOSE YOU.

SHE WALKS TO HIM. SHE TURNS HIM TO FACE HER. SHE TAKES HIS
HANDS. HE GOES TO HIS KNEES.

LAURA

I WANT YOU TO DO SOMETHING FOR ME.

HE BURSTS OUT CRYING.

SCHUYLER

YES, ANYTHING.

SHE KNEELS AND TAKES HIS FACE IN HER HANDS.

LAURA

I WANT YOU TO BE COMPLETELY HONEST WITH ME. ONLY WHEN YOU CAN BE COMPLETELY FRANK AND HONEST CAN WE HAVE THE SAME CONVERSATION. WILL YOU DO THAT WITH ME?

SCHUYLER

YES, I PROMISE.

LAURA

GOOD. (SHE KISSES HIM ON THE FOREHEAD, THEN CROSSES TO THE HOUSE) PERHAPS YOU CAN HELP ME YET. GOOD-NIGHT, SCHUYLER.

SHE CROSSES INTO THE HOUSE AS THE LIGHTS FADE.

SCENE 14

THE LIGHTS RISE ON SCHUYLER AND KIT STROLLING THROUGH A FIELD ON THEIR PROPERTY. IT'S A PLEASANT SUNNY AFTERNOON. KIT TAKES SCHUYLER'S HAND. SHE KISSES HIM.

KIT

LET'S MAKE LOVE RIGHT HERE IN THIS FIELD. NO ONE WILL SEE.

SHE TRIES TO PULL HIM DOWN. HE RESISTS.

SCHUYLER

COME ON, KIT, WE CAN'T DO THIS.

KIT

WHY CAN'T WE, IT'S LEGAL.

SCHUYLER PULLS KIT FROM THE GROUND. IT IS A CLUMSY MOMENT.

SCHUYLER

WE CAN'T DO THIS HERE.

KIT RIPS HER HANDS FROM HIS.

KIT

WHERE CAN WE DO IT? WE DON'T SEEM TO BE DOING IT IN OUR BEDROOM.

SCHUYLER

DON'T. DON'T ARGUE.

HE LOOKS AT HER HOPELESSLY THEN GIVES HER AN AWKWARD KISS. SHE PULLS HER FACE AWAY FROM HIS AND WIPES HER LIPS.

KIT

I KNOW THAT KISS. THAT'S THE "ICE SKATER" KISS.

SCHUYLER

FOR GOD'S SAKE, KIT.

KIT

LITTLE MARIBEL WITH HER SNAKY HEAD. THE ICE SKATER,
NATIONAL CHAMP IN LIFE MAGAZINE. IS

KIT (CONT.)

THAT WHAT YOU LIKED, THAT SHE WAS IN LIFE MAGAZINE?
JUST TELL ME IT'S NOT HER.

SCHUYLER

I HAVEN'T SEEN MARIBEL FOR OVER A YEAR.

KIT

YOU KNOW WHO I MEAN.

SCHUYLER

LAURA RIDING?

KIT

SHE'S THE ONLY OTHER WOMAN IN THE HOUSE.

SCHUYLER

FOR CHRIST'S SAKE, THEY'RE OUR GUESTS.

KIT

ARE THEY? IS THAT WHAT THEY ARE?

SCHUYLER

THEY'RE EUROPEAN.

KIT

JUST TELL ME IT'S NOT HER.

SCHUYLER

ARE YOU CRAZY?

KIT

I KNOW HOW SHE'LL WORK YOU. SHE'LL APPEAL TO YOUR
VANITY. SHE'S REALLY GOOD. SHE EVEN HAS ME READING
ABOUT WITCHES. AND I'M DOING IT. AND

KIT (CONT.)

SCHUYLER, EVEN THOUGH I NEVER BELIEVED IN WITCHES, I
THINK, MAYBE, SHE'S A WITCH, A REAL WITCH.

SCHUYLER

I DON'T LIKE YOU LIKE THIS.

KIT

LIKE WHAT? LIKE MYSELF?

SCHUYLER

DON'T BE CORNY, WOMEN GOT THE RIGHT TO VOTE TWENTY YEARS AGO.

KIT

BUT I DIDN'T, NOT IN THIS HOUSE. I PAY FOR THIS HOUSE BUT I DON'T GET A VOTE.

SCHUYLER

AND YOU DIDN'T GIVE ME ANY KIDS. MARIBEL HAD KIDS, SHE COULD HAVE GIVEN ME KIDS.

KIT

NOW THAT'S REALLY CORNY, SCHUYLER. YOU'RE SO STUPID. I'M TIRED OF DOING ALL THE GIVING. I WANT SOMETHING BACK.

SCHUYLER

AND WHAT IS THAT? YOU WANT ME TO BE LIKE GRAVES? HE IRONS HER DRESSES. HE EVEN BRUSHES THE CRUMBS FROM HER MOUTH. HE'S HER NAPKIN.

KIT

AND WHAT ARE YOU? OH, GOD, I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU BROUGHT UP THE "KID" THING. THAT'S REALLY LOW.

SHE BEGINS TO CRY.

SCHUYLER

I'M SORRY.

HE TAKES HER IN HIS ARMS.

KIT

WE NEED MORE TIME ALONE TOGETHER. I NEED IT.

SCHUYLER

THEY WON'T BE HERE FOREVER.

KIT

HOW DO YOU KNOW?

SCHUYLER

ROBERT'S GOT SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS. JUST BEAR WITH THEM FOR AWHILE.

SHE TURNS AWAY FROM HIM AND LOOKS AT THE FIELD, THE LIGHT, THE SUMMER'S DAY.

KIT

WHEN I WAS A GIRL I WAS SUPERSTITIOUS. I WASN'T BORN THAT WAY, IT JUST HAPPENED ONE DAY. "STEP ON A CRACK..." I

WATCHED OUT FOR CRACKS. "DON'T POINT AT THE SUN, IT'LL STRIKE YOU DEAD."
 "COVER THE MIRRORS IN A LIGHTENING STORM." I'M NOT THAT WAY ANY MORE. ONE DAY I JUST FORGOT ABOUT IT. BUT YOU KNOW, I LOST SOMETHING TOO, THE FEELING OF "FIRST TIMES."

SCHUYLER
 WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

KIT
 IN SOME CRAZY WAY I FEEL THAT WAY AGAIN.

FROM OFF STAGE WE HEAR ROBERT'S VOICE.

ROBERT (O.S.)
 (CALLING)
 SCHUYLER? SCHUYLER?

ROBERT ENTERS OUT OF BREATH.

ROBERT
 THERE YOU ARE. LAURA WANTS TO SPEAK WITH YOU.

SCHUYLER
 WITH ME?

ROBERT
 YES, COME ALONG.

ROBERT AND SCHUYLER EXIT. KIT IS LEFT ALONE ON THE STAGE. THE LIGHTS FADE.

SCENE 15

THE LIGHTS RISE ON LAURA IN THE MIDDLE OF CONVERSATION. SHE IS IN A BATHROBE, ALONE ON STAGE, APPLYING HER MAKEUP BEFORE A MIRROR. A MIRROR.

LAURA
 MY ACCENT? IN HIGH-SCHOOL JEWISH GIRLS LIKE ME WERE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PILE. I WAS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE BOTTOM BEING A POLE. EVEN WITH MY YELLOW HAIR (I HAD YELLOW HAIR THEN) AND MY BLUE EYES AND MY PRETTY RIBBON I WAS AMONG THE "DIRTIEST." SO YOU SEE, I HAD MY WORK CUT OUT FOR ME UNLIKE SCHUYLER AND ROBERT AND YOU. I HAD TO CHANGE PEOPLE'S PERCEPTION OF ME. I TOOK ELOCUTION CLASSES, ENGLISH GRAMMAR, SYNTAX AND PUNCTUATION. TO EARN POCKET MONEY I READ THE

NEW YORK TIMES TO AN OLD MAN WITH WEAK EYESIGHT. HE HAD A MOST PECULIAR ACCENT. AS A WAY OF AMUSING MYSELF I READ THE ENTIRE NEWSPAPER TO HIM IN HIS ECCENTRIC PRONUNCIATION. ONE DAY, HAVING MASTERED THE OLD MAN'S MISPRONUNCIATION, I KNOCKED ON HIS DOOR AND FOUND HIM DEAD. (KIT ENTERS IN A BATHROBE. LAURA IS FINISHED WITH HER MAKE UP) THERE. NOW IT'S YOUR TURN. COME, SIT.

KIT

WELL, REALLY, I DON'T THINK I'M RIGHT FOR THIS.

LAURA

NONSENSE.

KIT

PLEASE.

LAURA

PLEASE, NOTHING, SIT DOWN.

KIT SITS AND TURNS HER FACE U.S. TO LAURA. WE CAN'T SEE KIT'S FACE. SHE APPLIES LIPSTICK, ROUGE AND LONG EYELASHES.

LAURA

THERE I WAS WITH ALL THAT MISPRONUNCIATION ON MY HANDS, AND TO A CERTAIN EXTENT IT IS STILL ON MY HANDS. BUT I DIDN'T LET THAT DISCOURAGE ME. I SOON REALIZED THAT IT WAS A STRANGE GIFT FOR IT LED ME TO THE DISCOVERY OF POETRY.

LAURA (CONT.)

POETRY IS A PLACE WHERE THE FEAR OF ME SPEAKING IN STRANGE WAYS CAN BE LEFT BEHIND AND AS A WAY OF SPEAKING DIFFERENTLY FROM THE UNTIDY SPEAKING WAYS OF ORDINARY TALK. IN HIGH SCHOOL I TUNED MY EAR TO LATIN, FRENCH; MY EYE, TO FASHION AND FORM, TO HOW WOMEN GAIN THINGS THROUGH WARDROBE AND MAKEUP. IN HIGH SCHOOL I LEARNED SENSIBILITY MORE THAN KNOWLEDGE. WHEN I WAS A GIRL LIPSTICK WAS THOUGHT TO BE USED BY PROSTITUTES AND IF A YOUNG LADY WORE ROUGE SHE DID NOT ADMIT IT. YOU SHOULD DO MORE WITH YOUR FACE. YOU SHOULD NOT BE AFRAID OF YOUR FACE. MAKEUP BRINGS OUT THE GHOST HIDING BENEATH YOUR BONES.

KIT

IT'S JUST NOT ME, LAURA.

LAURA

AND WHO IS THAT, KATHERINE? (SHE IS FINISHED WITH HER MAKE UP. SHE PUTS THE WREATH AROUND KIT'S HEAD) THERE.

KIT TURNS AROUND SO THAT WE CAN SEE HER. KIT LOOKS LIKE A CHEAP PROSTITUTE. SHE TRIES TO LOOK AT HERSELF IN THE MIRROR. LAURA GRABS THE MIRROR AND HOLDS IT BEHIND HER.

KIT

I CAN'T SEE MYSELF.

LAURA

GET UP. GO WITH IT, KATHARINE, JUST FLY. SLIP OFF YOUR BATHROBE.

KIT

I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING UNDER IT.

LAURA

YOU HAVE THE TOGA.

KIT SLIPS OFF THE BATHROBE.

KIT

IS THAT WHAT I AM? ROMAN?

LAURA SLIPS OFF HER BATHROBE. SHE IS ALSO IN A TOGA.

LAURA

COME.

SHE TAKES KIT BY THE ARM AND LEADS HER TO THE HEAD OF THE STAIRS.

LAURA

(ANNOUNCING)

HELLO.

THE LIGHTS RISE BELOW REVEALING ROBERT AND SCHUYLER IN TOGAS HOLDING UP DRINKS TO THE TWO WOMEN. LAURA PRESENTS KIT.

LAURA

LOOK.

SCHUYLER AND ROBERT BURST OUT LAUGHING. ROBERT QUOTES FROM HORACE'S ODE TO PYRRHA IN LATIN.

ROBERT

QVIS MULTA GRACILIS TE PUER IN ROSA...

LAURA

SHUT UP, ROBERT. (TO KIT) WE'RE HAVING A LITTLE CELEBRATION FOR SCHUYLER. I'VE DECIDED TO HAVE HIM WORK WITH US ON THE DICTIONARY.

LAURA RELEASES KIT'S HAND AND STEPS BACK. KIT STANDS ON THE STAIRS, AWKWARD AND UNCOMFORTABLE. ROBERT QUOTES IN ENGLISH FROM HORACE'S ODE TO PYRRHA. THERE IS A PATHOS TO HIS VOICE AS HE ADDRESSES THE POEM TO KIT.

ROBERT

WHAT SLENDER BOY DRENCHED IN PERFUME
COURTS YOU AMONG THE ROSES
IN SOME DARK GROTTO, GORGEOUS PYRRHA?

HOW LONG WILL HE CRY
AT THE ROUGH BLACK SEAS TEMPEST TOSSED
AND GAPE IN SHOCK

WHO NOW INNOCENTLY ENJOYS YOU
LIKE A CALM SUMMER DAY,
IGNORANT OF THE CHANGEABLE TREACHEROUS WIND?

THE LIGHTS FADE.

ACT TWO

SCENE 16

KIT IS IRONING. BEHIND CLOSED DOORS SHE HEARS...

LAURA (OS)

LET'S BEGIN WITH YOUR FIRST ASSIGNMENT, YOUR LETTER TO THE HYPOTHETICAL MR. SHORE.

SCHUYLER (OS)

WHAT'S WRONG WITH IT?

LAURA (OS)

OH SCHUYLER, SCHUYLER, WHAT AM I GOING TO DO WITH YOU? WHAT IS THIS, "I DON'T WANT TO HURT YOUR FEELINGS, BUT...?"

SCHUYLER (OS)

I WAS BEING HONEST.

LAURA (OS)

"I DON'T WANT TO HURT YOUR FEELINGS?" IT'S SENSELESS. IT'S A FOLKSY VERBAL TRICK WHICH INVITES ITS ANTONYM, AS IN, "I DON'T WANT TO HURT YOUR FEELINGS BUT I AM CAPABLE OF WANTING TO HURT YOUR FEELINGS." AND WHAT IS THIS, "I'LL LET YOU KNOW TOMORROW?" IT'S AS IF YOUR STRANGLING HIM AND YOU'LL LET HIM KNOW TOMORROW IF YOUR GOING TO STOP STRANGLING HIM. HOW NICE OF YOU TO "LET" HIM KNOW. OBVIOUSLY HE COULDN'T FIND IT OUT ON HIS OWN.

SCHUYLER (OS)

HE COULDN'T, NOT IN THIS SITUATION.

LAURA (OS)

HE COULD ASK ME.

SCHUYLER (OS)

BUT IT WOULD BE MY BUSINESS.

LAURA (OS)

YOU COULDN'T CONTROL THAT.

SCHUYLER (OS)

WHAT?

LAURA (OS)

IF I WOULD CONSIDER THAT.

SCHUYLER (OS)

THAT DOESN'T SEEM FAIR.

LAURA (OS)

OH, "FAIR?" HMMM. NEVER CAME TO MIND. AND THIS, "DEAR MR. SHORE..."

SCHUYLER (OS)

OH, COME ON.

LAURA (OS)

IT'S A VIOLENT INTRODUCTION. THE SALUTATORY OF A RAPIST. MY "DEAR" SCHUYLER, USING THIS ADJECTIVE IN A TRIVIAL COMMUNICATION-ENCOUNTER EVISCERATES THE WORD OF MEANING. AND YET, THERE IT IS, THAT BULLYING TONE THAT YOU CAN ASSUME TO HOLD HIM "DEAR" EVEN IF HE DOESN'T WANT YOU TO, EVEN IF YOU'VE NEVER LAID EYES ON HIM. THIS IS SURPASSED ONLY BY YOUR VALEDICTORY, "YOURS SINCERELY." OH, GO AHEAD AND SNICKER. WHAT I'M SAYING IS TRUE. THE MISUSE OF WORDS IS NOT ONLY DAMAGING TO THE RIGHT USE OF LANGUAGE BUT TO THE FUNCTIONING OF THE MIND ITSELF.

SCHUYLER (OS)

BULLSHIT!

KIT GRINS.

LAURA (OS)

WHAT DID YOU SAY?

SCHUYLER (OS)

BULLSHIT!

THERE IS A LONG SILENCE. KIT LISTENS. THE SILENCE GOES ON. SHE BECOMES ALARMED. SHE CROSSES TO THE DOOR AND LISTENS. THEN...

LAURA (OS)
(TENDERLY)

YOU MUST MAKE CERTAIN IMPORTANT ALTERATIONS IN YOUR CRITICAL ATTITUDE, MY DEAR SCHUYLER. YOU MUST ADMIT THAT WHAT IS CALLED YOUR COMMON INTELLIGENCE IS THE MIND IN ITS LEAST ACTIVE STATE. A DEVOTED AND DETERMINED MIND MAKES ITS

LAURA (OS)
REAL MEANING CLEARER AND CLEARER AS IT RETREATS FROM THE AVERAGE.

KIT IS DISMAYED. THE LIGHTS FADE.

SCENE 17

DINNER. LAURA IS SITTING IN KIT'S PLACE AT THE HEAD OF THE TABLE. SCHUYLER IS SL WHERE ROBERT USED TO SIT AND ROBERT IS IN SCHUYLER'S OLD PLACE SR. KIT IS SITTING UNEASILY IN LAURA'S OLD PLACE.

LAURA
(TO KIT)

I HOPE IT'S ALL RIGHT. THE CHAIR FITS MY BACK SO WELL.

SHE RAISES HER CANE AS A REMINDER OF HER INJURY.

ROBERT
(TO KIT)

SHE COULD MOVE THE CHAIR.

LAURA
ROBERT'S BEEN DRINKING. HE'S NO GOOD AT IT. (TO KIT) IT IS ALL RIGHT WITH YOU, KATHARINE?

KIT
(HESITANTLY)

WE COULD MOVE THE CHAIR.

SCHUYLER
KIT.

LAURA
I WILL, KATHARINE, IF YOU WANT ME TO. BUT I WONDER WHY.

KIT
I'M JUST USED TO IT.

LAURA

HMM.

ROBERT
YOU MUST LET HER HAVE THE PLACE

KIT
IT'S MY PLACE.

LAURA
IS IT? I WONDER. (SHE PAUSES AND LISTENS TO THE AIR.)
CAN'T YOU FEEL IT?

ROBERT
(HOCUS POCUS)
OH YES, "THE RE-ARRANGEMENT OF ENERGY."

LAURA
(TO ROBERT)
YOU'RE A BORE. (TO KIT) THE ENERGY MUST CHANGE, THE WAY
IT FLOWS THROUGH A HOUSE, THE WAY IT MOVES THROUGH
PEOPLE. INDULGE ME, KATHARINE, PLEASE.

ROBERT STANDS UP. HE STRIDES OVER TO LAURA.

ROBERT
YES, INDULGE HER. HITLER'S IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA.
MUSSOLINI'S IN ALBANIA, FRANCO IS IN MADRID, AND LAURA
IS IN YOUR CHAIR, AND SCHUYLER IS IN MINE.

SCHUYLER STANDS.

SCHUYLER
I THINK YOU SHOULD CALM DOWN, MR. GRAVES.

ROBERT WALKS TO SCHUYLER. HE PUTS HIS FACE CLOSE TO HIS.

ROBERT
EXACTLY. (HE CROSSES TO KIT, DRAWS HER CHAIR FOR HER.
KIT REGARDS THE CHAIR COLDLY THEN SITS. SCHUYLER SITS.)
DON'T WORRY, KATHARINE, THEY WON'T COME TO AMERICA
THERE'S PLENTY IN EUROPE FOR THEM TO FEED ON. BUT THEY
HAVE LAUNCHED A NUMBER OF SUBMARINES IN THE NORTH
ATLANTIC. I'D KEEP A SHARP EYE OUT.

ROBERT MIMICS KIT'S BINOCULARS AND BEGINS LAUGHING.
SCHUYLER STANDS.

SCHUYLER
THAT WILL BE ENOUGH, MR. GRAVES.

ROBERT

"MR. GRAVES." CALL ME ROBERT, JACKSON. (HE CACKLES)
SCHUYLER JACKSON, GET IT, SOUNDS LIKE TWO LAST NAMES.
MR. SCHUYLER, MR. JACKSON.

SCHUYLER

SIT DOWN, "ROBERT."

ROBERT SITS. SCHUYLER SITS.

ROBERT

WE NEED REFORMED WAR. (ROBERT STANDS.) WE COULD HAVE
IT IN SWITZERLAND. THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE COMMITTEE
COULD ACT AS REFEREE. WE COULD HOLD BOUTS, BOXING
MATCHES, INDIVIDUAL COMBAT LIKE MENELAUS AND PARIS.

SCHUYLER STANDS.

ROBERT

HERE HE COMES. IT'S BOXING IT IS.

ROBERT PUTS UP HIS GUARD. SCHUYLER STEPS BACK, PREPARED TO
FIGHT. LAURA BEGINS LAUGHING. SCHUYLER, REALIZING HOW
STUPID HE MUST LOOK, DROPS HIS GUARD, CROSSES TO HIS CHAIR.

LAURA

MEN ARE SUCH CHILDREN. (SHE LEADS KIT TO HER NEW
POSITION AND INVITES HER TO SIT.) WOMEN ARE MUCH MORE
SENSIBLE.

KIT SITS. SCHUYLER SITS. ROBERT IS LEFT STANDING. HE LOOKS AT
LAURA WITH LONGING AND SADNESS. HE JUST STANDS THERE,
SWAYING A LITTLE AS IF ONLY JUST TO HAVE HER LOOK AT HIM FOR A
FEW SECONDS MORE.

THE LIGHTS FADE.

SCENE 18

NIGHT. SCHUYLER AND KIT ARE LYING IN BED.

SCHUYLER

WHAT A FOOL HE IS.

KIT

GRAVES?

SCHUYLER

IT'S FUNNY ABOUT FAME. SOME PEOPLE ARE JUST LUCKIER
THAN OTHERS.

KIT

YOU THINK ROBERT'S LUCKY?

SCHUYLER

I WOULDN'T WANT TO BE HIM. BUT HE'S LUCKY WITH FAME. SOME PEOPLE ARE JUST BORN TO FAME, OTHERS DON'T GET IT NO MATTER HOW HARD THEY WORK.

KIT

LIKE LAURA.

SCHUYLER

YEAH. SHE'S AMAZING. I HAVEN'T FELT THIS WAY SINCE COLLEGE. SHE'S HELPING ME. I FEEL LIKE I'M DOING SOMETHING FOR ONCE.

KIT

SCHUYLER, YOU DID A LOT BEFORE SHE CAME.

SCHUYLER

I KNOW HER, I KNOW HOW SHE THINKS. IT WAS A SHOCK TO ACTUALLY KNOW WHAT SHE WAS GOING TO SAY BEFORE SHE SAYS IT.

KIT

WHAT IS THAT? IS THAT GOOD?

SCHUYLER

YEAH.

KIT

WHAT ABOUT YOUR BOOK?

SCHUYLER

LAURA READ IT. TOLD ME TO FORGET IT. "THAT TIME IS OVER. THAT WAS WHEN I WAS ASLEEP."

SILENCE.

KIT

WHAT'S THAT MAKE ME? A DREAM? SCHUYLER? SCHUYLER?

SCHUYLER DOESN'T ANSWER. HE HAS GONE TO SLEEP.

SCENE 19

KIT AND SCHUYLER'S BEDROOM. NIGHT. DARKNESS. IN THE DARKNESS WE HEAR VIOLENT BANGING AROUND. KIT PUTS ON A BATHROBE AND COMES DOWN THE STAIRS. AS SHE DOES THE LIGHTS RISE ON LAURA WHO IS IN THE MIDST OF TAKING CUPS AND DISHES FROM A CUPBOARD. SHE IS IN A FLURRY OF ACTIVITY AS IF HER LIFE DEPENDED ON REMOVING THE PLATES AND CUPS AND SAUCERS, THE GLASSES AND THE SERVING BOWLS FROM THE CUPBOARD. SHE'S

PUTTING THEM ON THE FLOOR. LAURA IS PITCHING A FIT. KIT LOOKS ON HELPLESSLY.

LAURA
(SCREAMING)

WE'VE GOT TO GET RID OF THESE! KATHARINE YOU'VE GOT TO HELP ME!

KIT
WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO?

LAURA
THESE DISHES, THEY'VE GOT TO BE PUT AWAY. FIND A BOX!

KIT RUNS OFF IN SEARCH OF A BOX WHILE LAURA FRANTICALLY TAKES DISHES FROM THE SHELF.

LAURA
THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH THESE. THERE'S SOMETHING INSIDE OF THEM. THEY'VE GOT TO BE PUT OUT OF THIS HOUSE. SOMETHING'S WRONG WITH THEM AND THIS HOUSE. THEY DON'T GO TOGETHER. (KIT RETURNS WITH A BOX.) PUT THEM IN THE BOX. (KIT HELPS HER EMPTY THE CUPBOARD.) GOOD, WE'LL TAKE THEM OUTSIDE.

LAURA BECOMES FRANTIC. SHE BEGINS THROWING PLATES INTO THE BOX. THEY SHATTER.

KIT
ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT, JUST CALM DOWN. DON'T BREAK THEM, IT'S FINE.

LAURA
GET THEM OUT! GET THEM OUT!

KIT DRAGS THE BOX FULL OF DISHES OUT OF THE HOUSE. LAURA SITS WHERE SHE STANDS, HER HEAD IN HER HANDS. KIT RE-ENTERS. LAURA BEGINS SOBBING. KIT SITS NEXT TO HER. LAURA PUTS HER ARMS AROUND KIT'S NECK AND SOBS IN HER SHOULDER.

LAURA
I'VE BEEN A BEAST. I'M SO SORRY. HOLD ME, KATHARINE, DON'T LET ME GO. (SHE LOOKS INTO

LAURA (CONT.)
KIT'S EYES.) YOU'RE THE ONLY PERSON I CAN TRUST. DON'T LOOK AT ME THAT WAY.

KIT
WHAT WAY?

LAURA

LIKE I'M EVIL. IT'S NOT ME, KATHARINE, IT'S ROBERT. DON'T LET HIM FOOL YOU. WATCH OUT FOR HIS SHADOW BROTHER, HIS WEIRD, THE ONE WHO DRAGS HIM OUT OF THE WINDOW. THE ONE THAT MAKES YOU DO THINGS EVEN IF YOU DON'T WANT TO. YOU UNDERSTAND, YOU'VE BEEN DOING IT WITH SCHUYLER.

KIT
DOING WHAT WITH SCHUYLER?

LAURA
OH COME ON, HE'S A MAN, YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.

KIT
NO, I DON'T.

LAURA
SCHUYLER NEEDS CERTAINTIES, YOU PROVIDE THEM.

KIT DOESN'T ANSWER, BUT SHE KNOWS WHAT LAURA MEANS.

LAURA
WE BRING OUT THE VIOLENT EMOTIONS IN THEM, THE TERROR, THE SHAME. I'VE BEEN IN ROBERT'S SERVICE FOR THIRTEEN YEARS. I'VE GROWN TIRED OF IT. AREN'T YOU TIRED OF SCHUYLER? AREN'T YOU DEAD TIRED OF HIM?

KIT BEGINS TO CRY. LAURA TAKES HER INTO HER ARMS.

LAURA
THERE, THERE, I KNOW, I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL.

LAURA RAISES KIT'S FACE TO HERS AND KISSES HER TEARS. KIT LOOKS AT HER, THEN SUDDENLY SHE KISSES LAURA ON THE MOUTH. LAURA PULLS AWAY.

LAURA
KIT, KIT, WHAT ARE YOU DOING? WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO YOU? I'M NOT THAT WAY. ARE YOU? (SHE TAKES HER INTO HER ARMS.) OH, DARLING, DARLING NO, NO, NO.

THE LIGHTS FADE.

SCENE 20

THE LIGHTS RISE ON ROBERT AND KIT. THEY ARE STANDING ON KIT'S PROPERTY.

ROBERT
HOW FAR DOES IT GO?

KIT

ANOTHER QUARTER OF A MILE.

ROBERT

MY GOD, IT'S A RANCH!

KIT

IT'S A FARM. IT WASN'T WHEN WE GOT IT. SCHUYLER MADE IT INTO A FARM. HE PUT UP THE FENCES TO KEEP THE SHEEP FROM STRAYING, PLANTED 250 BLACK WALNUT SAPLINGS AND 25 ACRES OF SOYBEANS. SOYBEANS, NOBODY KNOWS WHAT TO DO WITH THEM. HIS FATHER HAD A GENIUS FOR BUSINESS, SCHUYLER DOESN'T. SCHUYLER WANTED SO BADLY TO IMPRESS HIS FATHER BUT HE NEVER GOT A CHANCE. THEY SHARED A CABIN ON A LINER RETURNING FROM EUROPE AND DURING THE TRIP HIS FATHER WENT MAD. SO HE NEVER GOT A CHANCE TO IMPRESS HIM. THAT'S AN IRRITATING THING ABOUT CRAZY PEOPLE, YOU CAN'T BLAME THEM FOR ANYTHING. HE WAS THE YOUNGEST OF SIX KIDS. ONE OF HIS BROTHERS JUMPED OUT A WINDOW AND BROKE BOTH HIS LEGS. EVERYBODY THOUGHT IT WAS OVER. THEN A FEW YEARS LATER HE JUMPED FROM THE BROOKLYN BRIDGE AND KILLED HIMSELF. SO SCHUYLER'S NOT SURE OF HIMSELF. HE ENVIES YOU.

ROBERT

ME?

KIT

YOUR FAME.

ROBERT

HE THINKS I'M FAMOUS? MY GOD, I'M COMPLETELY BROKE. I DON'T KNOW WHERE TO GO AND WITH THIS IMPENDING WAR IN EUROPE, I DON'T KNOW WHO WILL PUBLISH MY WORK.

KIT

DON'T GET ME WRONG, IT'S SCHUYLER I'M CONCERNED ABOUT, NOT YOU. I DON'T MEAN IT THE WAY IT SOUNDS. .

ROBERT

YOU MEAN LAURA AND HIM?

KIT

OH, I'M NOT JEALOUS.

ROBERT

YOU AREN'T?

KIT

ARE YOU?

ROBERT

IT DIDN'T CROSS YOUR MIND?

KIT

OH, MY GOD, THEY AREN'T ARE THEY?

ROBERT

NO, IT'S NOT GONE THAT FAR BUT "THAT FAR" ISN'T FAR OFF.

KIT

SHE'S ALL EXCITED ABOUT SCHUYLER? THAT'S WHY SHE'S BEEN SO JUMPY?

ROBERT

MY DEAR GIRL, I'M SORRY, I THOUGHT YOU KNEW.

KIT

WHAT?

ROBERT

LAURA DECIDED ON SCHUYLER WHEN WE WERE STILL IN EUROPE.

KIT

SHE'D NEVER SEEN HIM.

ROBERT

SHE COULD SMELL HIM THROUGH HIS REVIEW.

KIT

HE DIDN'T WRITE THAT REVIEW, TOMMY AT "TIME" WROTE IT, HE HAD A DEADLINE.

ROBERT

BUT SCHUYLER SUPPLIED THE CONTENT. IT WAS HIM IN THERE. HE PASSED HIS GHOST INTO HER.

KIT

WHY DO YOU TALK SUCH CRAZY STUFF?

ROBERT

THAT'S NOT ME, THAT'S LAURA, MY DEAR. LAURA BRINGS ABOUT CHANGE. PLEASE DON'T TAKE THIS WRONGLY, BUT I'VE SEEN A CHANGE COME OVER YOU.

KIT

OH, PLEASE.

ROBERT

SURELY YOU MUST SENSE IT.

KIT

OH STOP. WHY DO YOU PEOPLE INSIST ON READING SO MUCH INTO THINGS? LAURA HAS REALLY MIXED THINGS UP. I'VE HAD TO ADJUST. IT MADE ME AWARE OF THINGS I'VE FORGOTTEN. SOMETIMES I CAN REALLY SEE THINGS, JUST SEE THEM; THE WAY THE LIGHT IS. LIKE NOW. (SHE PAUSES AND LOOKS AT THE LIGHT.) I DIDN'T GO THROUGH THE WAR BUT I'VE KNOWN HELL. WHEN THAT TERRIBLE THING HAPPENS, WHEN SCHUYLER CHANGES.

ROBERT

WE'RE ON THE SAME SIDE, KATHARINE.

KIT

NO, I'M NOT. I'M NOT LIKE YOU. I DON'T WANT TO BE. YOU'VE BROUGHT THAT SICKNESS WITH YOU. YOU

KIT (CONT.)

SMELL LIKE THAT PLACE, THOSE DARK STREETS, THOSE OLD TREES. I CAN'T STAND YOU'RE BREATH. IT SMELLS LIKE EUROPE. GET AWAY FROM ME, GET AWAY!

ROBERT STEPS BACK, STARTLED AND REBUKED.

ROBERT

I'M REALLY SORRY, TRULY I AM.

KIT INTERRUPTS HIM BEFORE HE CAN START.

KIT

STOP IT, MISTER GRAVES, I'M NOT LAURA RIDING. THAT'S WHAT YOU PEOPLE DON'T UNDERSTAND, WE'RE AMERICANS, WE'RE DIFFERENT FROM YOU.

ROBERT

NOT SCHUYLER, KATHARINE.

KIT

MY NAME IS KIT!

ROBERT

ARE YOU SCARED?

KIT

I FEEL ALONE AND I DON'T KNOW WHY. EVERYTHING'S GOING TO FALL APART. THE WHOLE WORLD AND ALL THE PEOPLE. WHEN WILL IT START? WHEN WILL IT END? HOW WILL IT COME OUT? SCHUYLER'S IN LOVE WITH HER, I KNOW IT. WHAT AM I GOING TO DO?

ROBERT

TAKE IT MOMENT TO MOMENT. THAT'S WHAT I DO.

KIT

I DON'T WANT TO DO IT THE WAY YOU DO IT. IF YOU WANT A WOMAN TO BOSS YOU AROUND THAT'S FINE, BUT IT'S NOT FOR ME. I WANT TO GET OUT OF HERE. I WANT TO GET SO FAR AWAY BUT THERE'S NO WHERE TO GO. AND IT'S SO STRANGE, THE WORLD HAS NEVER SEEMED MORE BEAUTIFUL.

ROBERT

"DUINO ELEGIES," "THE BEAUTIFUL IS NOTHING MORE THAN THE APPREHENSION OF THE TERRIBLE," RILKE.

SHE SMILES.

KIT

ROBERT, YOU REALLY ARE A BORE.

SHE SITS. HE SITS.

ROBERT

I'M SORRY IF I SMELL OF EUROPE. I'M SORRY THAT WE BROUGHT SO MUCH CHAOS INTO YOUR LIVES. STRANGE AS IT IS WE ARE "ON THE SAME TEAM," YOU AND ME. WE'RE MUTUALLY REJECTED.

KIT

IT SERVES ME RIGHT. (SHE GRABS HIS HAND) MR. GRAVES, LET ME CALL YOU MR. GRAVES, SCHUYLER CAN BE GOOD. AND HE CAN BE VERY, VERY BAD. AND WHEN HE'S BAD I THINK I BROUGHT HIM TO IT. IT DOESN'T HAPPEN VERY OFTEN, WHAT I MEAN IS THAT I FEEL I FAILED HIM. HE'S GOT NOTHING FROM ME...DO YOU HAVE CHILDREN?

ROBERT

FOUR.

KIT

MY GOD AND YOUR NOT EVEN WITH THEM? HE REMOVED THE BABY ITEMS. I GRIEVED WHILE HE DIDN'T. IF MY BABY HAD LIVED A LITTLE LONGER MAYBE HE WOULD HAVE GRIEVED THE WAY I GRIEVED.

ROBERT

YOU HAD A BABY?

KIT

I HAD A MISCARRIAGE. I HAD TWO.

ROBERT

I'M SO SORRY.

KIT

PLEASE DON'T TELL HER.

ROBERT
I PROMISE, YOU'RE SECRET'S SAFE WITH ME.

KIT
PLEASE DON'T TELL HER. PLEASE. (KIT LOOKS INTO ROBERT'S
FACE AND MURMURS WITH DAWNING APPREHENSION.) MY GOD,
WHAT HAVE I DONE?

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 21

NIGHT. KIT IS LOOKING UP AT THE STARS. SHE STANDS THERE A
LONG TIME IN SILENCE. SCHUYLER APPEARS AT THE EDGE OF THE
SHADOWS.

SCHUYLER
(QUIETLY)
KIT?

KIT IS SILENT, THEN...

KIT
LOOK AT THEM.

SCHUYLER COMES OUT ON THE LAWN AND LOOKS UP.

SCHUYLER
THERE'S A LOT OF THEM.

KIT
THEY'RE SO BRIGHT.

SCHUYLER
WHY ARE YOU UP SO LATE?

KIT
IS IT LATE?

SCHUYLER
YEAH, IT'S ALMOST TWO.

KIT
IS IT?

SCHUYLER PAUSES AND WAITS.

SCHUYLER

ARE YOU GONNA COME TO BED?

KIT

YEAH, IN A LITTLE WHILE.

SCHUYLER WATCHES HER.

SCHUYLER

HEY, KIT?

KIT

YEAH?

SCHUYLER

COME TO BED.

KIT

IN A LITTLE WHILE.

SCHUYLER

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

KIT

I'M LOOKING AT THE STARS.

SCHUYLER WATCHES HER.

KIT

THEY'RE SO CLEAR. IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THEY'RE REALLY
OUT THERE. WE MUST LOOK THE SAME WAY TO THEM, A BRIGHT
SPECK IN A BUNCH OF SPECKS IN THE SKY.

SCHUYLER

COME ON, KIT.

KIT

NO, YOU GO ON ALONG, YOU DON'T NEED ME IN THERE.

THE LIGHTS FADE.

SCENE 22

DINNER. EVERYONE IS SEATED AS THEY WERE IN THE LAST DINNER
SCENE. THEY ARE IN THE MIDDLE OF A CONVERSATION.

LAURA

(LAUGHING)

...THESE POETS AND THEIR CHINESE AFFILIATIONS ARE SIMPLY
SLUMMING WITH LOWLIFES. E.E. CUMMINGS,

LAURA (CONT.)

T.S.ELIOT; COWARDS WHO HIDE IN THE BUSHES CLUTCHING THEIR CHASTITY AND ENNUI AND ALL THE WHILE TAKING POT SHOTS AT PASSERS-BY. (SHE GAZES AT SCHUYLER.) DO YOU SEE WHAT I MEAN?

SCHUYLER

I THINK I DO.

KIT NOTICES THE EXCHANGE.

KIT

DON'T YOU LIKE ANYONE? IT SEEMS SO STRANGE TO ME.

LAURA

(LAUGHING)

DO I LIKE ANY ONE? MY SWEET, KATHARINE.

KIT

YOU SEEM TO HAVE AN OPINION ABOUT EVERYTHING. SURELY, YOU MUST LIKE SOME ONE? YEATS, PERHAPS.

ROBERT BURSTS OUT LAUGHING.

KIT

WHAT'S SO FUNNY?

LAURA

YEATS? SHE'S JOKING, ISN'T SHE SCHUYLER?

SCHUYLER

I DON'T KNOW.

ROBERT

THE BLARNEYMAN? YOU KNOW HE TRIED TO GET MONKEY BALLS GRAFTED ON WHEN HIS WORE OUT.

KIT

(TO SCHUYLER)

I THOUGHT YOU LIKED YEATS.

SCHUYLER

I'M NOT SURE ANY MORE.

KIT

WAIT A SEC, YOU TOLD ME THAT YOU WENT TO IRELAND TO MEET HIM. THAT HE LIKED YOUR POETRY.

SCHUYLER

HE DIDN'T EVEN READ MY POETRY. HE JUST SAID HE DID. TOLD EVERYONE HOW GREAT MY POETRY WAS.

KIT

HOW DO YOU KNOW HE DIDN'T READ YOUR POETRY?

SCHUYLER

BECAUSE I NEVER GAVE IT TO HIM.

LAURA

THE MERIT OF A POEM, KATHARINE, BARES DIRECT MORALITY WITH ITS WRITER. YEATS SAID, "ALL TRUE POETS ARE NATURAL LIARS." HOW CAN YOU ADMIRE A MAN LIKE THAT? AND HOW CAN YOU ADMIRE THE WORK AND NOT ADMIRE THE MAN? WHAT KIND OF FIEND WOULD WRITE A WORK OF GREAT MORAL CHARACTER AND NOT BE A PERSON OF GREAT MORAL CHARACTER?

KIT

WHAT'S GREAT MORAL CHARACTER?

LAURA

DO YOU REALLY NEED TO ASK THAT QUESTION?

KIT

YES, I DO. WHAT DO YOU DO WITH MY HUSBAND SO LATE AT NIGHT?

LAURA

THAT'S REALLY NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS.

KIT

IT IS MY BUSINESS.

SCHUYLER

KIT?

KIT

(TURNING TO HIM)

YES, SCHUYLER?

SCHUYLER

THERE IS NOTHING HAPPENING.

KIT

YES, THERE IS. AND I WANT IT TO STOP OR FOR THE TWO OF YOU... (SHE LOOKS AT ROBERT AND CORRECTS HERSELF.) THREE OF YOU TO LEAVE THIS HOUSE.

SCHUYLER

CALM DOWN.

KIT

I AM CALM. I WANT THIS OVER WITH.

LAURA

WHAT, MY DEAR?

KIT
(SCREAMING)

SHUT UP! WILL YOU EVER FUCKING SHUT UP? I WANT YOU TO LEAVE. I WANT YOU TO LEAVE, RIGHT NOW.

SCHUYLER
JESUS CHRIST, KIT.

KIT
I WANT THEM OUT! I WANT THEM OUT! I WANT THEM OUT!

SCHUYLER
(TO ROBERT AND LAURA)
GO TAKE A WALK.

LAURA AND ROBERT EXIT. SCHUYLER WATCHES KIT GRIMLY .

KIT
WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT?

KIT MOVES BACK AS IF TRYING TO AVOID HIS GAZE, BUT SHE CAN'T KEEP HER EYES AWAY.

KIT
(MOANS IN TERROR)
NO, SCHUYLER, PLEASE!

SCHUYLER RUSHES AT HER AS THE LIGHTS FADE.

SCENE 23

NIGHT. SCHUYLER AND ROBERT ARE ON THE FRONT PORCH. SCHUYLER IS DRINKING FROM A BOTTLE. HE IS DRUNK.

SCHUYLER
I PLAYED SAMSON. YEAH, AT PRINCETON. (HE QUOTES FROM THE PLAY OF THE SAME NAME. HE WALKS INTO THE YARD.)

SCHUYLER (CONT.)
"OUT, OUT HYENA; THESE ARE THY WONTED ARTS,
AND ARTS OF EVERY WOMAN FALSE LIKE THEE,
TO BREAK ALL FAITH, ALL VOWS, DECEIVE, BETRAY,
THEN AS REPENTANT TO SUBMIT, BESEECH,
HOW CUNNINGLY THE SORCERESS DISPLAYS
HER OWN TRANSGRESSIONS, TO UPBRAID ME MINE!"

MILTON.

ROBERT
"SAMSON AGONISTES."

SCHUYLER

YEAH. OF COURSE, YOU'D KNOW. YOU KNOW JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING. I SUPPOSE YOU KNOW ABOUT FARMING.

ROBERT

WELL, ACTUALLY I DON'T.

SCHUYLER

WOW, SOMETHING HE DOESN'T KNOW ABOUT. BUT YOU'RE A NATURE KIND OF GUY, RIGHT?

ROBERT

I'VE DONE SOME CLIMBING.

SCHUYLER

I GUESS. YOU CLIMBED WITH MALLORY, RIGHT?

ROBERT

YES, I DID.

SCHUYLER

HE DIED UP THERE ON EVEREST.

ROBERT

YES, HE DID.

SCHUYLER

AND YOU'RE BUDDIES WITH LAWRENCE OF ARABIA.

ROBERT

YES, I ACTUALLY WROTE A BOOK ABOUT HIM.

SCHUYLER

DID YOU? WELL, I NEVER READ IT. BUT WHO THE HELL AM I, RIGHT? I'M JUST A FARMER. (HE STANDS.) LET US REMEMBER THIS WILD DAY AND ALL THE GLORY;-HOW WE STOOD IN ECSTASY ON THAT WILD SUMMIT; SAW THE SWIRL AND RISE OF ATOMS IN THE WOMB OF AIR- (HE TURNS TO GRAVES.) I WROTE THAT. WHAT DO YOU THINK?

ROBERT

IT'S VOLCANIC.

SCHUYLER

ARE YOU BEING SARCASTIC? BUT THAT'S THE WAY WITH YOU POET-TYPES, ISN'T IT? YOU'RE BEING SARCASTIC AREN'T YOU?

ROBERT

WHY SCHUYLER, WHATEVER WOULD MAKE YOU THINK THAT?

SCHUYLER SITS HEAVILY.

SCHUYLER

I THINK SHE'S HOLY. HARDLY A CRUMB OF ANYTHING SHE SAYS IS IMPURE. YOU DON'T DESERVE HER.

ROBERT

I BEG YOUR PARDON?

ROBERT STARTS TO RISE, SCHUYLER STANDS UP AND SHOVES ROBERT BACK TO A SITTING POSITION.

SCHUYLER

YOU DON'T DESERVE HER! SHE HAS PROTECTED YOU TOO LONG. YOU WOULD BE NOTHING WITHOUT HER. SHE'S THE ONE WHO SHOULD BE FAMOUS, NOT YOU. AND SHE'S SO GOOD, SHE'S SO KIND, SHE CAN'T DO IT HERSELF, SO I'VE DECIDED TO DO IT FOR HER. SHE'S TOLD ME THAT SHE ISN'T GOING TO NEED YOU TO WORK ON THE DICTIONARY ANYMORE. THAT YOU'RE FREE, YOU'RE FREE.

ROBERT IS SUDDENLY ON HIS FEET. HE WRESTS SCHUYLER'S ARM BEHIND HIS BACK WITH MILITARY PRECISION.

ROBERT

LISTEN, MY FRIEND, LAURA IS MINE. SHE WILL ALWAYS BE MINE, EVEN IF I HAVE TO SHARE HER WITH YOU.

HE GRABS SCHUYLER BY THE FACE AND KISSES HIM ON THE MOUTH, SHOVS HIM, THEN EXITS.

LIGHTS OUT.

SCENE 24

NIGHT. LAURA IS UPSTAGE FACING KIT. WE CAN'T SEE KIT'S FACE. LAURA IS CLEANING KIT'S FACE WITH A WASHCLOTH.

LAURA

OF COURSE I'LL LEAVE. WE'LL LEAVE RIGHT AWAY. I'LL WAKE ROBERT AND WE'LL START PACKING.

KIT

OH, NO, NO. NOT RIGHT NOW. IT WILL MAKE SCHUYLER ANGRY. BUT TALK TO HIM.

KIT TURNS AROUND SO THAT WE CAN SEE HER. HER FACE IS TERRIBLY BATTERED.

LAURA
WHAT SHOULD I TELL HIM?

KIT
THAT YOU'RE LEAVING BECAUSE YOU'VE FOUND WORK. TELL HIM IT'S JUST FOR A LITTLE WHILE, THAT YOU'LL COME BACK.

LAURA
BUT THAT'S A LIE.

KIT
PLEASE. PLEASE.

LAURA
OH, MY POOR DARLING.

KIT
I DON'T CARE WHAT YOU'VE DONE WITH HIM.

LAURA
WE HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING TOGETHER EXCEPT WORK ON THE DICTIONARY.

KIT
GOOD, OKAY, THAT'S FINE. JUST LET HIM LOOSE, FOR AWHILE.

LAURA
I DON'T "HAVE" HIM. I'M WORRIED ABOUT YOU KATHARINE. PERHAPS YOU SHOULD LEAVE.

KIT
BUT THIS IS MY HOME.

LAURA
IS IT? IT'S DRIVING YOU CRAZY. IT'S ALL WRONG, CAN'T YOU SEE THAT? I SAW IT THE MOMENT I ENTERED THIS HOUSE. THE FURNITURE, THE CURTAINS, THE DISHES. EVERYTHING'S IN A BAD PLACE. IT'S AS IF THIS PLACE WERE WIRED FOR EVIL. THE DUST IS EVERYWHERE. DUST IS NOT GOOD, KATHARINE. DO YOU KNOW WHAT DUST IS? IT'S DRIED SKIN. WHEN YOU BREATH IT YOU'RE BREATHING IN OTHER PEOPLE'S SKIN. IT'S CANNIBALISM. CANNIBALISM DESTROYS THE BRAIN.

KIT
YOU'RE CRAZY. YOU'RE MAD.

LAURA

LET ME CHANGE THIS HOUSE FOR YOU. LET ME HELP YOU WITH SCHUYLER. LEAVE FOR AWHILE. WHEN YOU COME BACK YOU'LL HAVE A NEW HOME AND A NEW SCHUYLER.

KIT

WHERE CAN I GO?

LAURA

SURELY YOU HAVE FRIENDS. HE HASN'T TAKEN THAT AWAY FROM YOU TOO?

KIT

HOW CAN YOU ASK THESE THINGS, THEY'RE NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS?

LAURA

BECAUSE I LOVE YOU. REMEMBER WHEN I ASKED YOU IF YOU LOVED ME?

KIT

I CAN'T LOVE YOU, I DON'T KNOW YOU. I DON'T LOVE YOU.

LAURA

BUT I LOVE YOU. AND THAT'S YOUR PROBLEM. YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND THE NATURE OF LOVE. LOVE KNOWS NO BOUNDARIES, NO HUSBANDS, NO WIVES. NO POSSESSIONS. YOU SHOULD TRY ROBERT.

KIT

WHAT?

LAURA

OH, I WON'T BE JEALOUS. HE ALREADY GOT A YOUNG WOMAN PREGNANT. IT DIDN'T BOTHER ME AT ALL. THE GIRL'S BODY WAS MERELY AN EXTENSION OF MYSELF WHICH I HAVE WITHHELD FROM ROBERT FOR YEARS NOW. I ARRANGED AN ABORTION FOR HER AND STOOD AT THE FOOT OF THE BED WHILE IT WAS DONE.

KIT

AND THAT'S LOVE?

LAURA

YES.

KIT

AND YOU WANT TO BE WITH SCHUYLER?

LAURA

I DON'T WANT TO "BE" WITH SCHUYLER. SEX IS AN UNNATURALLY ENLARGED INSTINCT. PERHAPS IF MEN GROW UP THEY'LL BE WORTHY OF FUCKING. TELL ME SOMETHING; DO YOU MOUNT HIM? DO YOU EVER STRADDLE HIM? I'LL BET NOT. ADAM AND EVE, "THE GARDEN OF EDEN." FOR WHOM, KATHARINE? NOT FOR YOU. ADAM WAS DIVORCED, YOU KNOW. OH, YES, HE WAS MARRIED BEFORE AND HIS FIRST WIFE LEFT HIM FOR THE DEVIL. SHE COULDN'T HAVE CHILDREN WITH ADAM. THEY COULDN'T COME TOGETHER IN HER WOMB. BUT SHE HAD LOTS OF LITTLE DEVILS WITH THE DEVIL. MORE THAN A HUNDRED A DAY. AND SHE KILLED LITTLE CHILDREN (WHISPERING) BECAUSE OF THE SINS OF THEIR FATHERS.

KIT

YOU'RE NOT TALKING ABOUT ME YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT YOURSELF.

LAURA

AM I, "KIT?" DIDN'T YOUR FATHER COME INTO YOUR ROOM AT NIGHT WHEN YOU WERE ASLEEP?

KIT

No!

LAURA

OH COME ON, THEY ALL DO. JUST LIKE MOTHERS DO TO THEIR SONS. FATHERS AND DAUGHTERS, MOTHERS AND SONS.

KIT

YOU'RE EXCITED BY THIS. (MEANING HER BATTERED FACE) DOES HE DO THIS TO YOU, MISTER GRAVES?

LAURA

No.

KIT

BUT YOU WISH HE DID. IT EXCITES YOU, THE DANGER, LIKE HAVING A VICIOUS DOG.

LAURA

YOU'RE FRIGHTENING ME, KATHARINE.

LAURA BACKS AWAY FROM KIT. KIT APPROACHES HER.

KIT

WHAT DID YOU MEAN, "THEY COULDN'T COME TOGETHER IN HER WOMB?" ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT MY MISCARRIAGES? DID HE TELL YOU? HE PROMISED ME HE WOULDN'T.

LAURA

WHO?

KIT

ROBERT.

LAURA

NO, KATHARINE, SCHUYLER DID.

KIT

OH, MY GOD.

LAURA APPROACHES KIT.

LAURA

OH, MY POOR DEAR, YOU'RE AT YOUR WITS END.

KIT

YOU'RE EVIL. YOU'RE A WITCH.

KIT CHARGES AT LAURA AND GRABS HER AROUND THE NECK. LAURA STARTS TO SCREAM. KIT PUTS HER HAND OVER LAURA'S MOUTH.

KIT

DON'T SCREAM, PLEASE DON'T SCREAM, YOU'LL WAKE HIM. I'LL GO. I'LL LEAVE, JUST DON'T SCREAM. PLEASE.

LAURA NODS HER HEAD IN AFFIRMATION. KIT SLOWLY REMOVES HER HAND. LAURA GAZES AT HER FOR AWHILE, THEN...

LAURA

(SCREAMING)

HELP! HELP!

THE LIGHTS BUMP OUT.

SCENE 25

LAURA AND SCHUYLER IN THE LIVING ROOM.

LAURA

SHE MUST SEE A DOCTOR.

SCHUYLER

I DIDN'T HURT HER THAT BADLY.

LAURA

I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT THAT. IT'S HER MIND. I'VE SEEN THIS BEFORE, WOMEN WHO BECOME POSSESSED.

SCHUYLER

WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO?

LAURA

SHE'S GOT TO BE PUT AWAY WHERE SHE CAN'T HURT HERSELF,
WHERE YOU CAN'T HURT HER.

SCHUYLER

CAN I DO THAT?

LAURA

ONLY YOU CAN DO THAT.

SCHUYLER

WHAT ABOUT HER FACE?

LAURA

SHE DID IT TO HERSELF. SHE REALLY DID, SCHUYLER. SHE
BROUGHT THAT OUT IN YOU. SHE'S NOT GOOD FOR YOU. SHE
BRINGS OUT YOUR DARK SIDE. SHE'S HELD YOU BACK. I CAN
HELP YOU. I CAN TEACH YOU.

SCHUYLER

YOU WANT ME TO HAVE HER COMMITTED?

LAURA

SHE NEEDS TO BE PROTECTED.

THE LIGHTS CROSS-FADE TO...

SCENE 26

KIT ON THE CLIFFS LOOKING OUT AT THE SEA. ROBERT APPEARS
BEHIND HER.

KIT

I'M NOT SURPRISED IT'S YOU. YOU REALLY ARE HER DOG,
AREN'T YOU?

ROBERT

YOU'VE GOT TO COME BACK WITH ME.

KIT

IT WON'T DO YOU ANY GOOD, SHE'LL NEVER TAKE YOU BACK.
SHE HAS SCHUYLER.

ROBERT

IT'S A VERY DANGEROUS SITUATION, KATHARINE.

KIT

(LOOKING OUT AT THE SEA)

DO YOU THINK THEY'RE OUT THERE, THOSE NAZI SUBMARINES?

ROBERT

YES.

KIT

WHAT CAN I DO?

ROBERT

COME BACK WITH ME.

KIT

AND YOU'LL PROTECT ME?

ROBERT

YES.

KIT

WHY DON'T I BELIEVE YOU? SHE'S COMPLETELY MAD, YOU KNOW.

ROBERT

YES.

KIT

AND SO ARE YOU.

ROBERT

YES, I PROBABLY AM.

KIT

WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

ROBERT

I WOULD GO AWAY.

KIT

I DIDN'T THINK IT WOULD BE LIKE THIS. THERE'S BEEN SO MANY TROUBLES. I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN IT WOULD END LIKE THIS. THERE'S A WORLDS FAIR HAPPENING IN NEW YORK. I HEAR THEY'VE INVENTED SOMETHING CALLED NYLONS. BUT WE WON'T BE ABLE TO GET ANY BECAUSE WE'LL BE AT WAR.

ROBERT

NOT HERE, NOT YET.

KIT

SOON. WHERE DO YOU GO NOW, ROBERT?

ROBERT

I HAVE NO WHERE ELSE TO GO. COME BACK WITH ME.

KIT

(MUSING AS SHE LOOKS OUT AT THE SEA)

I WILL. GIVE ME A MOMENT.

ROBERT

I WON'T LET HIM TOUCH YOU.

KIT

HOW CAVALIER. I WON'T LET HIM TOUCH ME EITHER, EVEN IF I HAVE TO TRAVEL TO HELL TO KEEP HIM AWAY FROM ME. (SHE TAKES ROBERT'S HANDS AND KISSES HIM TENDERLY ON THE MOUTH.) COME ON.

THE LIGHTS FADE.

SCENE 27

Robert and Schuyler are sitting at the kitchen table. Laura enters. Robert is empty-eyed. Schuyler is mesmerized. As she speaks she begins to rearrange the furniture.

LAURA

THERE ARE THREE STAGES IN THE STORY BETWEEN US. IN THE BEGINNING THERE WAS ALL THAT CHATTER. (SHE POURS THE WHISKY OUT.) WE WERE ALONE, THERE WAS NO 'WE'. THERE WAS GOSSIP AND TRIVIALITY. SO WE HAD TO GO ON. THAT IS THE SECOND PART. WE LEFT TRIVIALITY AND GOSSIP BEHIND. (She draws the chairs from the table.) THERE WERE SO MANY CONVERSATIONS AND NOBODY WAS REALLY TALKING TO EACH OTHER. IT WAS DANGEROUS. THERE WERE SO MANY POSSIBILITIES FOR ACCIDENTS. (She makes Robert and Schuyler stand. She indicates that they should take the table away. They do.) IN THE THIRD PART, THAT'S THE PART WE'RE IN RIGHT NOW, TRUTH IS TRYING TO TALK AND EACH OF US IS OVERHEARING SOMETHING WE WANTED TO SAY TO THE OTHER. IT DOESN'T MEAN WE'RE OUT OF DANGER, THAT THERE CAN'T BE ACCIDENTS. WE HAVE TO BE AWARE OF WHAT WE HEAR IN OURSELVES. THE GOSSIP. (She starts to turn off the lights.) WE MIGHT BE THINKING WE'RE HEARING EACH OTHER WHEN WE'RE ONLY HEARING OURSELVES. AFTER AWHILE WE'LL START HEARING ALL THOSE SEPARATE

LAURA (CONT.)

CONVERSATIONS AGAIN. (She puts a single standing lamp with a dim naked low watt light bulb in the center of the room.) THEN WE'LL HAVE TO GO THROUGH THE SECOND STAGE ALL OVER. (She takes Robert's and Schuyler's hands and leads them to the lightbulb. They stand looking down at the lightbulb.) SO WE HAVE TO BE PATIENT AND QUIET. IN A LITTLE WHILE WE'LL ALL BE HAVING THE SAME CONVERSATION.

THE LIGHTS FADE.

SCENE 28

KIT IS SITTING ON A CHAIR IN A STRAIGHT JACKET UNDER A TIGHTLY FOCUSED LIGHT.

KIT

I DON'T CARE. YOU CAN KEEP ME HERE. THERE ISN'T ANY PLACE TO KEEP THE "HERE" IN AND YOU CAN'T KEEP IT OUT, SO HERE I'LL STAY FOR AWHILE. IT'S ALWAYS BEEN THAT WAY. I JUST DIDN'T NOTICE IT. BUT THERE ARE A COUPLE OF THINGS I'VE NOTICED. FIRST, THAT I'M MORTAL. THAT I WILL HAVE AN END AND THAT END WILL LAST FOREVER. BUT WHILE I AM HERE, I AM, WE ARE, THE ONLY "LIVING" IN ALL OF OBSCURITY. AND SECOND, ALL THAT LIFE IS, IS CHANNELED THROUGH US AS EXPERIENCE, STREAMS OF EXPERIENCE, RIVERS, CANYONS OF EXPERIENCE. THERE IS NO BLAME FOR WE CAN DO NOTHING ABOUT IT AND WE ARE NOT RESPONSIBLE. TRAGICALLY WE MISTAKE OURSELVES FOR THE EXPERIENCE. LISTEN. (SHE STOPS AND LISTENS.) THE SILENCE.

THE LIGHTS FADE.

THE END

(FEB. 6, 2001)